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"It Is Not Just One English": Negotiating Global Englishes through Critical Sociolinguistic Inquiry in a Mexican Teacher Education Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) and Critical Language Awareness (CLA), the present article examines how pre-service and novice in-service English teachers negotiate their understandings of Global Englishes through critical thinking activities in a sociolinguistics classroom in central Mexico. The study investigates nine pre-service and novice in-service English teachers as they engaged with language variation, accent, native-speaker norms, multilingualism, linguistic legitimacy, and English language teaching through local and transnational experiences within Global Englishes teacher education. This qualitative interpretative case study drew on four course-based data sources: asynchronous online discussion forums, linguistic landscape/photo-essay reports, sociolinguistic observation reports, and an end-of-semester focus group. The results reveal that participants' perceptions were formed through an uneven process of ideological negotiation rather than through a linear transformation—that is, critical awareness advanced in relation to some assumptions while established ideologies persisted in relation to others. Also, they show that experiential sociolinguistic investigation facilitated participants' ability to link theoretical insights with everyday language practices in classrooms, families, public spaces, digital environments, and migration-related experiences. This article argues that sociolinguistics courses can be the basis for Global Englishes-oriented teacher education if they support teachers as they begin to learn about the study of language ideologies in a critical and locally relevant way, providing testimony from a Mexican teacher education context.

Keywords: global Englishes; critical language awareness; teacher education; teacher cognition; critical thinking; sociolinguistics; Mexico

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Introduction

The worldwide spread of English has shaken up longstanding assumptions about what English is, who owns it and what Englishes are "educational" subjects. Global Englishes (GE) represents the integration of scholarship on World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca, and English as an International Language into applied linguistics and English language teaching (ELT) frameworks to foreground the plurality, mobility, and sociolinguistic diversity of English in the wider world (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019). From this viewpoint, English is not a unitary, stable, native speaker-owned system, but a multiplicity of communicative resources employed within multilingual, intercultural, and locally situated contexts. It is particularly significant in the classroom for English teacher preparation as we require English teachers of tomorrow to be afforded opportunities to challenge inherited assumptions held about correctness, standardness, accent, legitimacy, and linguistic authority.

In the face of the theoretical development of GE, ELT is still informed by native-speakerism and standard language ideologies. These ideologies impact pronunciation objectives, textbook models, assessment practices, teachers' identities and learners' constructions of the English language. As a result, GE teacher education will need to extend beyond merely teaching future teachers English as alternate varieties; it will need to craft pedagogies in which they reflect critically about why some of those Englishes are preferred, some are disparaged, and how classrooms work to maintain these hierarchies. Recent research on Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) has recommended pedagogies aimed at equipping students with tools to use English in linguistically diverse environments, rather than orienting learners towards only being taught to adhere to idealized norms of native speakers (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose et al., 2021). Yet comparatively little situated, classroom-based research has investigated how future teachers negotiate GE perspectives in particular social contexts, especially where English is learned and taught as a foreign or additional language (Rose et al., 2021).

As such, it is especially relevant in Global South contexts, where English is often attached to academic mobility, employability, internationalization and social advancement; however, local bilingual realities may continue to be valued comparatively less highly (Kamhi-Stein et al., 2017; Pennycook & Makoni, 2020; Sayer, 2018). In Mexico, English is typically associated with U.S. or British society norms and academic prestige, yet it also passes through migration, heritage language experiences, tourism, digital media, bilingual families and other public linguistic landscapes. These realities suggest that teachers in this setting do not encounter English only as a distant foreign norm; rather, they bring complex, lived multilingual repertoires—shaped by migration, heritage, tourism, and digital media—into their classrooms. In response to this gap between the theoretical development of GE and its situated negotiation in Global South classrooms, the present study explored a sociolinguistics class in a teacher education program in central Mexico as a context for GE pedagogical negotiation.

The course in this study was conceived around critical thinking activities designed to enable students to apply sociolinguistic theory to everyday language practice through online forums, sociolinguistic observation reports, linguistic landscape/photo essay tasks, and a focus group. The study is based on GELT and Critical Language Awareness (CLA). GELT offers the pedagogic framework for rethinking English beyond the norms of native speakers, while CLA offers the methodological approach to analyse the way learners and teachers question language ideologies, power relations, and assumptions of correctness and legitimacy (De Costa & Van Gorp, 2023; Fairclough, 1992; Zhang-Wu & Tian, 2023). This study addresses the following research question: How do pre-service and novice English teachers negotiate understandings of GE through critical thinking activities in a sociolinguistics classroom in Mexico? By studying this process, the article adds an empirical perspective, from a Mexican teacher education perspective, and argues that sociolinguistics courses

can serve as practice-oriented venues for developing critical language awareness in GE teacher education.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Global Englishes and the teaching of English

Global Englishes offers an umbrella framework in the plural forms, functions and ownership of English in modern multilingual settings. In light of World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca and English as an International Language, GE questions the idea that English language teaching ought to be structured at its core toward the idealized definitions of British or American native-speaker norms (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019). GE does not treat English as a fixed linguistic system exclusive to native speakers; it brings to the fore the various ways in which local, transnational, intercultural and multilingual English is utilized. This shift is significant for English language teachers. According to Rose and Galloway (2019), GELT has to grapple with re-thinking the aims, patterns and tools, the methods, the practice, and the conceptions of language that have always influenced ELT. From this point of view the goal is not to replace one model with another but rather to get learners to be able to use English in linguistically multiple communicative situations. Even as GE scholarship gains ground, ELT is still influenced by native-speakerism and mainstream language ideologies. Holliday (2006) and Mora-Pablo (2015) define native-speakerism as an ideology that frames native speakers and their cultural and methodological assumptions as preferred models for ELT. Such ideologies shape the identities of teachers, the aspirations of students, the materials in classrooms, standards for pronunciation and perceptions of the "good" or "correct" English. This dynamic is especially consequential in teacher education, because future teachers who are not given opportunities to interrogate native-speaker norms may reproduce them in their own practice (Borg, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2016). More recent reviews of GE and language teaching have revealed that classroom-based and teacher education research has developed in response to demands for pedagogical change (Rose et al., 2021). However, further situated studies examining the negotiation of GE in live classrooms, particularly when English is taught as a foreign language or an additional language, and where local native-speaker models maintain symbolic and institutional merit, are necessary. This need is particularly relevant in Global South contexts where internationalization, mobility, employability and academic prestige, when coupled with regional multilingual realities, may appear underrecognized in ELT.

Global Englishes in Teacher education

If the plurality of English is to reshape classrooms rather than remain an abstract claim, it must be taken up in the preparation of teachers. Teacher education is an essential platform for developing GE-oriented pedagogies. If future teachers will perceive English primarily in terms of native-speaker norms, GE can remain just an abstract theoretical construct rather than actual classroom practice. Therefore, teacher education informed by GE has stressed the importance of teachers' beliefs, awareness, cognition, and in addition, professional learning (Chen et al., 2023; Rose et al., 2021). Chen et al. (2023) state that preparing teachers from a GE perspective involves not only a consideration of the knowledge that a teacher possesses about particular varieties of English, but also what assumptions teachers may make about language, learners, legitimacy and teaching. GE-oriented courses and interventions can be useful to teacher candidates in questioning normative assumptions about English. For instance, Fang and Ren (2018), discovered that one such academic course on English as a World Language helped students develop awareness of their own English and GE more generally. Although Fang and Ren's (2018) participants were undergraduate students rather than teachers, subsequent work has extended such awareness-raising into teacher education

specifically (Chen et al., 2023; Solmaz, 2023). Similarly, Solmaz (2023) found that in teacher education, the tasks of the linguistic landscape enabled EFL teacher candidates to locate Englishes in everyday life places, create a thorough understanding of English as a Lingua Franca and GE, then begin to imagine possible GE-oriented classroom practices. However, at the same time awareness does not automatically translate into classroom practice. Teachers may feel positive about English diversity in general but still feel bound by textbooks, standardized exams, parental regulations, institutional pressures, and employment language discourses which are biased toward dominant forms (Sayer, 2018; Zhang-Wu & Tian, 2023). This gap in awareness–practice is particularly critical for novice teachers, who are open to the existence of plural views of English but are yet to build the pedagogical confidence and institutional agency to effectively implement them. The notion of negotiation used here draws on scholarship showing that teachers do not simply adopt or reject language ideologies wholesale but rework them in relation to their own linguistic biographies and working conditions (Kumaravadivelu, 2016; Sayer, 2012). This article consequently employs the idea of negotiation to describe the partial, situated, and sometimes contradictory processes through which novice teachers come to appreciate GE based on their linguistic histories, teaching experiences, and local educational realities.

Critical Language Awareness and Language Ideologies

Critical Language Awareness (CLA) is the analytic lens through which novice teachers' engagements with the ideological aspects of English can be analyzed. CLA situates language and power, inequality and critique as such: language is never innocent; it is never neutral, but embedded in social relations, through the production of identities and access to resources and even in the reproduction of hierarchies (Cummins, 2023; Fairclough, 1992). Within ELT, CLA calls upon both teachers and students to question why some accents, varieties, multilingual practices are considered more legitimate than others and how notions of "correctness" in general are socially constructed. Whereas GE broadens the range of Englishes that learners are invited to recognise as legitimate, CLA adds an explicitly critical dimension: it moves beyond acknowledging that many Englishes exist to asking how particular Englishes come to be privileged, stigmatized, institutionalized, or erased through relations of power. This distinction is crucial for the present study, as participants were exposed to more than just English-language types and multilingualisms. They were additionally prompted to consider judgments of accents, code-switching, pidgins, creoles, heritage languages, bilingualism and communication appropriateness. Recent literature has expanded CLA toward Critical Multilingual Language Awareness (CMLA), which calls for the need to acknowledge all learners' linguistic repertoires and examine how multilingual practices are situated in schools and in society generally. De Costa and Van Gorp (2023) also argue that CMLA needs to be focused in language teacher education in order to prepare language teachers with the resources that will allow them to become more proficient using research-based pedagogical practices and developing more socially-responsive pedagogies. Cummins (2023) echoes this by centering teachers as language activists and knowledge producers who can subvert deficit perspectives of multilingual students. According to Zhang-Wu and Tian (2023), teacher candidates are able to develop emerging CLA after exposure to structured opportunities to reflect on linguistic practices, but it is difficult to move from awareness to enactment.

The present study

This research is theoretically informed by GELT and CLA. GELT offers a pedagogical lens through which one can reframe English beyond native-speaker expectations to acknowledge the multiplicity of English in multilingual and intercultural settings. In this study, GELT did not remain an abstract orientation: it informed the design of the course itself, so that critical thinking tasks were built to move participants from describing varieties of English toward interrogating why particular varieties are valued, in line with calls to reconceptualise the aims, models, and materials of ELT (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose et al., 2021). CLA can be analyzed as a lens into how novice teachers challenge

ideologies of language, hierarchies of language use, and assumptions about whether language is correct, legitimate, or appropriate. Taken together, these frameworks frame participants' reflections not as a smooth attitudinal change but as an uneven process of ideological negotiation. By uneven I mean that participants' critical awareness advanced in relation to some assumptions (for example, that unfamiliar accents are "wrong") while established ideologies persisted in relation to others (for example, the continued symbolic value attached to "standard" English), rather than shifting wholesale in a single direction. This article, therefore, responds to the demand for more classroom-based and contextually grounded studies of GE teacher education in the Global South.

Methodology

This is a qualitative interpretative case study and sought to understand how pre-service and novice English teachers negotiated their interpretations of GE through critical thinking in a sociolinguistics classroom in Mexico. Case study research is used to investigate complex educational phenomena in bounded situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018). In this study, the bounded case was a semester-long undergraduate sociolinguistics course conducted in a public university in central Mexico within an English language teacher education program, which was taught by the researcher (see "Ethics and researcher positionality" below). In response to the demands for more practice-oriented as well as contextually rooted GE pedagogies (Chen et al., 2023; Fang & Ren, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2019), the course involved critical thinking tasks designed to enable students to integrate sociolinguistic theory with their experiences and the local linguistic contexts.

Participants and context

The participants were the nine students (one male and eight females) who made up the entire cohort enrolled in the course; participation was therefore based on whole-class, convenience sampling rather than selective recruitment. They were both pre-service and novice in-service English teachers, aged 20 to 27, enrolled in an English teacher education course. All were bilingual Spanish–English speakers. In this program, students commonly begin teaching English in private language institutes or public schools while still completing their degree; the cohort therefore included both pre-service teachers who had not yet begun regular classroom teaching and novice in-service teachers already working part-time, which explains the mixed profile. The course met once a week for three hours. Students discussed subjects ranging from language variation, World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca, language ideologies, bilingualism, translanguaging, linguistic landscapes, and sociolinguistic discrimination. Rather than using purely theoretical approaches to sociolinguistics instruction, this course focused on critical reflection, peer discussion, and inquiry-based activities that encouraged students to examine linguistic practices in context.

Pedagogical tasks and data collection

Data were collected from four course-based sources during the semester of August–December 2025. The activities served several functions: they operated simultaneously as task-based course requirements and as pedagogical elicitation techniques that enabled participants to engage critically with sociolinguistic phenomena. First, students engaged in asynchronous discussion forums within the university's institutional learning platform throughout the semester. The students had the opportunity to respond to sociolinguistically oriented videos and readings in these forums, connect with them on their lived experiences in their own lives, ask questions to classmates, and talk to peers. The second source involved sociolinguistic photo essay reports on linguistic landscapes. Students were able to write down and assess public signs, advertisements, commercial storefronts, graffiti and multilingual texts in relation to their community. The third source was sociolinguistic observational reports. Students took 30–60-minute observations of language use in real-world

settings (schools, cafés, churches, public transport, workplaces, and online), and reported on their observations. Observations were on naturally occurring language practice and sociolinguistic variables (e.g. code-switching, accent, politeness strategies, gendered language, discourse patterns, multilingual interaction). Finally, all students participated in a focus group at the end of the semester. The focus group lasted about 90 mins, in which students reflected on their perceptions of the course, their definitions of GE, and how classroom behavior informed the way they thought about language diversity, multilingualism, and English language teaching. The talk was audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Focus groups are especially useful for revealing co-constructing meaning and negotiating participants' ideas (Morgan, 2019).

Data analysis

The analysis of the data involved reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021), recognizing the role of the researcher for generating themes based on knowledge and insight. This was deemed necessary, because it allowed data from diverse qualitative samples to be analysed flexibly while also paying attention to latent meanings, ideological tensions and participants' dealing with sociolinguistic concepts. The four data sources were first analysed individually and then brought together through data triangulation (Yin, 2018): forum posts and focus-group transcripts were analysed for how participants articulated and revised their views in dialogue, while photo-essay and observation reports were analysed for how participants documented and interpreted situated language use. Convergences and tensions across the four sources (for example, a stance expressed in a forum that reappeared, complicated, in the focus group) were treated as evidence of negotiation rather than as inconsistency to be resolved.

The analysis involved Braun and Clarke's six recursive phases: data familiarization, developing initial codes, constructing themes, reviewing and refining themes, defining and naming themes, and generating the analytical narrative. Using GE, Critical Language Awareness, and language ideology frameworks, coding encompassed inductive analysis and theoretically informed interpretation. Concretely, inductive codes were generated from the data (e.g. "accent as identity," "switching at work"), while a set of theory-informed codes was derived from the frameworks and applied deductively: GELT sensitised the analysis to references to native-speaker norms, models, and the plurality of English; CLA sensitised it to statements about legitimacy, correctness, stigma, and power; and language-ideology theory sensitised it to evaluative talk about "good" or "broken" English. Codes were then compared across data sources and collapsed into the three themes reported below. The data were read repeatedly and searched for patterns of meaning in participants' understandings of English varieties, multilingualism, native-speakerism, linguistic legitimacy, and teaching identities. The codes were then collapsed into broader themes that characterised how participants managed the tensions between dominant language ideologies and more pluralistic understandings of English. Analytical memos were used throughout the entire process of coding and used this process to note reflexive responses and emergent readings. To support the quality and trustworthiness of the analysis in a manner consistent with reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017), coding proceeded through multiple recursive rounds rather than through consensus or inter-coder reliability procedures, and analytic memos and a reflexive journal documented the researcher's interpretive decisions as themes were revisited against the full data set before being finalised. In keeping with this reflexive orientation, member checking was used in a limited, participatory sense: preliminary interpretations of the focus-group data were shared with participants to invite their further reflection and elaboration, rather than to verify a single correct reading of the data.

Ethics and researcher positionality

Because the study was interpretive, reflexivity was at the heart of the research. I played a dual role as course instructor and researcher in relation to classroom interaction, generation of data, and interpretation. Rather than an attempt to strip qualitative research from the experience of subjectivity, the study recognises the role of the researcher in the co-construction of meaning, consistent with the nature of reflexive qualitative inquiry (Braun & Clarke, 2021). I remained aware that this dual role could shape interpretation in at least two ways: participants might frame their reflections to align with what they believed the instructor valued, and my own investment in the course could incline me to read data as evidence of "success." To mitigate these risks, I treated moments of persistence, contradiction, and resistance in the data as analytically important rather than as noise, actively searched for disconfirming cases (for example, continued appeals to "standard" English), and used analytic memos to make my interpretive reasoning explicit and open to revision. Ethical approval was acquired in compliance with the university's institutional research ethics requirements. Participants were informed about the aim of the study and consented to the use of their classwork and focus groups for research purposes. To reduce the power asymmetry between instructor and researcher, participation in the study was voluntary and had no bearing on course grades, and consent to use classwork and focus-group data was sought and confirmed after final grades had been submitted. Pseudonyms were used throughout analysis and reporting to protect participants' identities.

Findings

Results indicate that participants' understandings of GE were not a negotiated set of abstract theoretical constructs by themselves. Instead, these insights came to the fore slowly through their engagement in critical-thinking opportunities that helped them consider language variation, multilingualism, identity, and communicative appropriateness in relation to their own experiences and local contexts. Three key themes arise from this section: (1) reframing English beyond native-speaker norms; (2) developing critical sociolinguistic awareness through experiential inquiry; and (3) reimagining English language teaching through a GE lens. All participant names below are pseudonyms. Although all nine participants contributed data across the four sources, the excerpts presented here were selected as the clearest illustrations of each theme; as a result, some participants (notably Elena, Valeria, and María) appear more frequently than others.

Reframing English beyond native-speaker norms

This first theme captures a first form of negotiation: participants began to loosen a monolithic, correctness-oriented view of English without abandoning evaluation altogether. Participants started to question the monolithic and correctness-oriented concept of English. Some at the start of the semester conceptualized sociolinguistics as mostly about the relationship between language and society. By the end of the course, though, they said it was sociolinguistics, a label for language practices in everyday life, a way to label and analyze these practices. Elena described this transition as follows:

> *For me it's been a lot of change because for example I remember that, I just knew that it was the connection between language and society. But now it's like, interrogating how people use language to act and how these phenomena occur in their daily lives. And I can find a name to the things I go through in daily life.*

Elena's reflection traces a transition from general awareness to analytical focus. Sociolinguistics offered a way for practitioners of everyday language to see through a lens through which they could

interpret their practices. Valeria also transitioned away from perception of language as an isolated product, towards understanding of language in relation to speakers' histories and backgrounds:

> *But now I learned that it involves more than one thing. I mean the concepts, the people's backgrounds. It's not just like they speak a language and that's it. You need to know the background of that person, how that person grew up, how the person learned the language. If he learned in like in a good place with good education, or if he learned like in a different context, and that can influence a lot how this person speaks and thinks.*

This understanding is significant for a GE orientation because it directly contradicts decontextualized evaluations of language use. Instead of simply judging speakers according to their accuracy, Valeria began to appreciate that language practices are influenced by social histories, academic paths and lived experiences. This transformation was particularly evident in participants' thoughts about accent and "correct" English. Valeria remembered a time before the course when she considered unfamiliar accents to be wrong:

> *I learned that there are different accents, and they are not wrong. I had a lot of problem with that at the beginning. Not anymore because I understand. But before, I was also really rude on this part like saying "I don't understand him. He is speaking the language wrong". It's just because of the culture or the context, that's how they speak. So, as teachers we have to respect those accents.*

Valeria's words expose an important ideological movement. Her previous judgment, "*He is speaking the language wrong.*" is emblematic of a standard language ideology — accents are judged through the lens of an assumption of a norm. Her later explanation, "*It's just because of the culture or the context*," suggests that she was moving toward recognizing accents as socially meaningful rather than inferior. Valeria also had reconsiderations of her own accent. When she became enrolled in the teacher education program, she desired to replicate a model of the American native-speaker:

> *For example, when I answered a question in my admission interview I said my accent because I wanted to sound like an American native speaker. Now I don't think about it anymore, but I think I can also have different accents. It's part of who you are. You cannot change it.*

This excerpt shows that with the help of the course, participants were given room to think about their own linguistic self-positioning. Valeria's evolution from wanting to sound "*like an American native speaker*" to realizing accent is "*part of who you are*" represents a movement away from native-speaker approximation toward legitimacy based on identity. Elena, another participant, also remembered previous assessments of writing practices. She said she used to react differently when other people wrote without accents or commas, but subsequently recognized them as part of her own language ideologies:

> *For example, when it's written without accents or without commas. I had these ideas really attached to my ideologies about language. But I think now I can see the value. All of these [are] different varieties, and that is not correct or incorrect, maybe appropriate and not appropriate. And as there is different people around the world, for example, that have adapted to the region they are, where they're living physically, or the history of the regions where they locate.*

This distinction between 'correct or incorrect' and 'appropriate and not appropriate' is central to how participants negotiated GE. Elena did not abandon language evaluation altogether; rather, she began to relocate evaluation within context, purpose, audience, and communicative situation. This illustrates an emerging critical language awareness.

The forum data reinforced this change. In a forum focused on pidgins and creoles, María pointed to how Hawaiian Pidgin is stigmatized despite having its own structure and social value:

> *Speakers in the video explain that Hawaiian Pidgin has often been looked down on as "bad English," even though it has its own rules and expresses local identity. Have you ever been in a situation where the way you spoke (or the language you used) felt judged as "less correct," similar to how Holmes describes attitudes toward pidgins and creoles?*

Laura countered this post by articulating the relationship between language, ethnicity, identity, and legitimacy:

> *Both of Holmes' chapters talk about how language is never neutral, it comes along with ethnicity and identity. For example, the Pidgin language that began as a practical tool of communication, is now considered a form of local identity, It's not just a "broken form of English", it's a legitimate, meaningful language. Do you think languages such as Pidgin should be taught in schools? why or why not?*

On such excerpts from the forum, participants were not just speaking about linguistic difference; they are also giving names to the social attitudes people place to difference. María's mention of "*bad English*" and Laura's rejection of Pidgin as a "*broken form of English*" trace a growing stance toward linguistic legitimacy. Yet, the data also imply that participants' negotiation of GE was uneven or non-linear. Elena's forum post about Spanglish, for instance, utilised High and Low language categorisations that interpreted bilingual practices:

> *I think the concepts of High (H) and Low (L) languages can also apply here. One language is used more for a formal context (job interviews, talking to your boss, etc.), while the other (L) is usually more informal, private, and used only with people you trust (friends, family, etc.). Spanglish could fall into the (L) category because it's more used in family and with people who share your same context and can understand the meaning.*

This comment shows an effort to apply sociolinguistic concepts, but it also reveals how participants were still working through how to categorize multilingual practices without reproducing hierarchies. Thus, the findings point to an emerging and uneven process of ideological negotiation rather than a complete rejection of standard language ideologies.

Developing critical sociolinguistic awareness through experiential inquiry

A second form of negotiation emerged as participants connected GE and sociolinguistic concepts to observed language use through experiential inquiry—that is, through tasks (observation reports, photo essays, and forum discussions) that required them to investigate language in their own everyday environments rather than only in course readings. Through observation reports, photo essays, videos, and online discussion, participants moved from theory-based recognition to situated noticing. The sociolinguistic observation report was especially significant because it promoted students' scrutiny of natural language practices in contexts they were already familiar with.

María identified the observation report as her favorite activity because it enabled her to examine language used in her workplace, María said:

> *I think it was my favorite because I was describing like this conversation that I was having with my boss in English (he is American). I work in a hotel during the week, and suddenly I found myself switching between English and Spanish, like the most natural thing in the world.*

For María, sociolinguistics became a lens through which to see ordinary communication. Her reflection illustrates that language choices were no longer viewed only grammatically; they were connected to context, identity, and interaction. Elena also appreciated the observation reports as they let her connect the course concepts to the world around her:

> *The way it was done, it was very interesting. I enjoyed it a lot. I could connect there a lot of concepts that I display in my everyday life. I could apply all of those concepts. For example, language policy is one of the ones that I saw in my observation report. And also, the one that I liked a lot was the gender analysis because there is a big change in how men and women speak, and before, I hadn't thought about it.*

Elena's remark illustrates how language policy and gendered language became visible aspects of everyday communication. The task increased the areas through which participants became aware of sociolinguistic phenomena. Valeria also described how the observation report strengthened her analytical confidence. She explained that the task would have been difficult at the beginning of the semester, but that later she began to notice multilingual practices beyond the assignment:

> *For example, for me it was pretty interesting to do the observation report. I did it in my job. I analyzed conversations in a conversation club, and it was like the teacher and the students, and so it was like pretty interesting. If I had done this at the beginning of the semester, it would've been a little bit complicated, but now I do it without thinking of doing it. For example, recently my uncle came from the United States. He's Mexican and he's living there [in the US]. And he said "Hi, everybody!" and my family was like "have you forgotten your Spanish?", and my uncle said "this is how I speak!".*

Her engagement with her uncle's speech could indicate that the course activities extended participants' analytical focus beyond that of their classroom assignments. They started to notice multilingual practices in the interactions with family and others in the community that might earlier have been overlooked or judged. In addition, online forums gave opportunity for discussion of topics such as communicative competence and inter-relationship within sociolinguistics and English language instruction. Valeria wrote:

> *Sociolinguistics has shown that language communication involves many factors to consider when interacting with others; for example, linguistic variation. Then, if a student writes a sentence that is linguistically correct but communicatively inappropriate, how can you explain the appropriate way without leaving out linguistic competence?*

Diana replied by proposing students' L1 and contextual comparison:

> *I would use the student's L1 to make a comparison that will help them understand why the sentence doesn't work and it's not appropriate in the given social context. Additionally, I would provide an example of a context in which the sentence would be appropriate so they can see how language use depends on the situation.*

Tom also noted that:

> *First, I consider it would be important to acknowledge their correct grammar, then I'd explain how the language we use may vary depending on the context, the audience and the level of formality. Then, model a more appropriate sentence and briefly explain why it fits in the situation, so they keep both linguistic and communicative competence.*

This exchange shows students collaboratively working through the relationship between form, communicative function, and social context. The forum became a space for practicing GE-oriented thinking. The forums also created space for participants to link multilingualism with identity and

power. In the forum on code-switching and code-mixing, Elena described a friend who speaks and knows both Spanish and English and uses language differently depending on social context and emotionality. After that, she asked classmates if they felt the pressure of one language over another. María wrote:

> *Growing up in the south of the United States as an immigrant child made me feel like I had a target on my back at times. I'd try avoiding using Spanish in certain areas just to avoid conflict or even uncomfortable stares and comments.*

María's response shows how language choice is not neutral or strategic. It may be informed by fear, discrimination, and the desire to avoid conflict. Participants were negotiating GE through this exchange not as linguistic diversity, but instead as a social position. There was a similar link to the discussion on pidgins and creoles in the forum in which Elena connected the stigmatization of pidgins and creoles back to her own situation on moving to Dallas, Texas:

> *Yes, when I was in 5th grade, I moved to Dallas, TX. In the neighborhood where I lived a lot of my neighbors were from Venezuela, Chile, Honduras, and many other Latin American countries. When I moved there a lot of my classmates judged the way I spoke English saying it wasn't correct. They also didn't speak much Spanish, so it was really difficult to try to communicate with them.*

Elena's response shows that participants used course content to reinterpret personal histories of linguistic marginalization. The forum allowed them to connect language stigma in course materials with their own experiences of being judged.

The immigrant family language practices forum generated thoughts on language, dignity, and heritage. Valeria wrote:

> *The video and the reading show how Latin immigrant mothers see language as being right or wrong, not just about words. They think this because they face discrimination for not speaking English well, and also, they make the effort to teach their children to be proud of Spanish and bilingualism and so maintain their heritage language. It is not that they are not willing to learn English, but they are trying to maintain their family's culture and dignity. What do you think teachers can do to show the value of a student's language?*

María replied:

> *I feel like this is more relevant than ever, how adults tell children how a language opens doors. Not exclusively English. A lot of jobs often favor bilingual people so they can connect with as many clients possible. As teachers we can at least create a safe space where our students feel comfortable enough not to feel shame about their culture and language.*

These excerpts highlight advances in CLA because participants considered how language is connected with shame, pride, dignity, and teachers' role responsibilities. Overall, the activities enabled them to move between course concepts, personal experience, peer dialogue, and local observation.

Reimagining English language teaching through a Global Englishes lens

A third form of negotiation appeared as participants began to translate developing awareness into imagined pedagogical practice. As pre-service and novice in-service English teachers who were new to the field, they have been thinking not just conceptually about language ideologies, but also about

how their understanding might shift their practices of how to introduce English, how to react to students' language practices, and also how to build more inclusive classrooms. Elena made this pedagogical responsibility explicit:

> *All of this is important… we as teachers have the obligation, I could say, to help them to be open regarding language and all of these different ideas that we have around language. For example, why are you speaking English here in Mexico? If it is here, we speak Spanish, you know. Or when someone laughs at someone else, because they are just not saying something right. So all of this theory is like, maybe they won't know that theory, but you can share it in a different way.*

Elena positioned teachers as mediators of language ideologies. Students might not need explicit theoretical terminology, but teachers can still help them become more open to linguistic diversity and less judgmental of difference. Valeria also articulated the need to help students identify variation outside the dominant British or American models:

> *I will recommend them to be open to those variations that exist. Like getting to know, in this case, English doesn't mean that they all have to speak like British or American or standard English, but also there are different variations that sometimes we don't even discuss in our classrooms. They can learn a lot from other languages and other people.*

Her reflection suggests that participants were starting to translate GE knowledge into pedagogical commitments, especially for students to engage with linguistic diversity. Elena gave a precise example of how she is already explaining varieties of English to her students, by referring English variation to Spanish variation:

> *Sometimes I tell my students that "basurero" can be trash can or rubbish bin. And all of these different words that for me… it was all my passion. It is not just one English. It is English in general, but it is like Spanish. If you go to the south of Mexico, you will hear a different Spanish. If you go to the north and you go to Spain, if you go to Argentina, it's very different Spanish. It's the same in English.*

This analogy makes GE pedagogies local to the Mexican context. Elena used students' likely familiarity with Spanish variation to make English plurality more accessible, rather than presenting English diversity as distant or abstract. Participants also described more contextualized ways of exposing students to English. Sofía, who works with fourth-grade students, stressed the importance of linking English instruction to students' interests:

> *For example, my brother, he is really into the rap culture. Like he really likes Kendrick Lamar, Kanye West, all of that stuff. And he's so into that that he sometimes uses like that kind of slang.*

Sofía's comment questions decontextualized grammar-first approaches and frames English learning as connected to students' interests, popular culture, and everyday life.

Valeria made a similar point when she suggested introducing English through meaningful interests rather than isolated grammar:

> *Probably, you could tell them to try to find something that you like in that language. For example, in my brother's case, he loves to watch the reviews of Hot Wheels cars in English. And he always is asking me, like, "So what does this mean?" And I'm like, "Oh, this means this." So, they fall in love with the language like I did with my teachers in primary school.*

"*With love*" is not a pedagogical term but an affective and relational notion that informs English teaching. For Valeria, communication in English is not just a matter of grammatical order but consists of substantive and emotionally nourishing interaction with the language.

Heritage language and identity also entered into the rethinking of teaching within which actors participated. Elena wrote that she no longer disapproved of hearing English used at all in Mexico, but learned that for some speakers, such language practices are "part of their identity":

> *But now I realize that that is part of their identity. And it's because they experience a lot of stuff, like what they left there [in the US] because of their heritage language, the practices of their families, the institutions they go. And all of this affects the way they are.*

This reflection shows how Elena began to reinterpret English use in Mexico not as inappropriate or out of place, but as connected to migration, family histories, institutions, and identity. It also suggests that a GE perspective can help teachers understand why students may bring complex linguistic repertoires into the classroom.

Overall, these findings indicate that, for the participants, the negotiation of GE involved more than a change in conceptual knowledge. They interrogated native-speaker conventions, interpreted language variation as being contextually and culturally relevant, related sociolinguistic ideas to practice, and imagined more inclusive pedagogical practices through critical thinking exercises. But even this negotiation was not neat or linear. The participants were still passing between pluralistic conceptions of English and traditional discourses of usefulness, correctness, and standardness. These tensions are key to the question of emerging attitudes of novice English teachers in Mexico to GE, not as well-formed pedagogical stances or positions in the books, but rather as new orientation shaped by classroom inquiry, personal histories, and the realities of the teaching of the L2 in the Global South.

Discussion

This study asked how pre-service and novice English teachers, working within a Mexican sociolinguistics classroom, come to negotiate their understandings of GE through critical thinking activities. The findings suggest that this negotiation unfolded in a gradual, situated, and unfinished fashion. This negotiation took place in three interconnected ways: by interrogating native-speaker norms and correctness-focused assumptions; by linking sociolinguistic concepts to lived experience via critical engagement activities; and by starting to imagine more inclusive modes of English teaching. Global Englishes was therefore not simply content to be learnt; rather, it was negotiated through reflection, observation, dialogue, and emergent teacher-identity work as an uneven ideological process.

To make sense of this discussion, *Figure 1* illustrates how participants negotiated understandings of GE in the sociolinguistics classroom. The model illustrates how critical thinking activities served as a pedagogical starting point for participants to examine language variation, question native-speaker norms, and connect sociolinguistic concepts to lived experience. In this process, GE and CLA functioned as complementary lenses that supported an emerging movement toward GELT. Instead of representing this movement as linear or complete, the figure points out that participants' developing teacher learning is gradual, situated, and uneven. To make the model reproducible rather than merely illustrative*, Table 1* provides an operational definition of each of its four levels, specifying the mechanism through which each stage feeds the next.

Figure 1. Four-level model illustrating how critical thinking activities in a sociolinguistics classroom supported pre-service and novice in-service English teachers' negotiation of Global Englishes through Critical Language Awareness and toward Global Englishes Language Teaching.

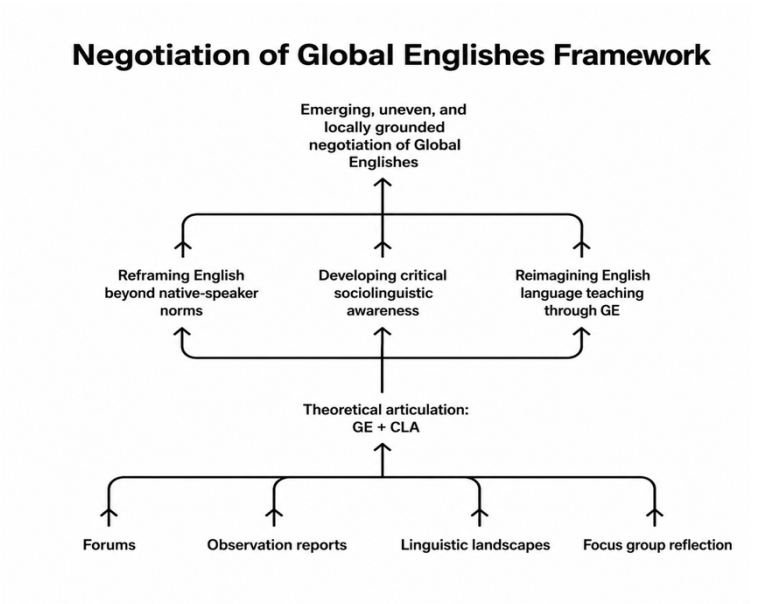

Table 1

Operational definitions of the four levels of the Negotiation of Global Englishes model (Figure 1)

Level (bottom → top)	Component in Figure 1	Operational definition / mechanism
1. Input tasks	Forums; observation reports; linguistic landscapes (photo essays); focus-group reflection	Structured critical thinking tasks that require participants to gather, document, and reflect on situated language use in their own environments, generating the raw material for analysis.
2. Theoretical articulation	GE + CLA	The two theoretical frameworks that informed the course design and the researcher's analysis, and that participants drew on to varying degrees when interpreting this material: GE foregrounds the plurality and legitimacy of Englishes, while CLA interrogates how varieties are valued, stigmatised, legitimised, or erased through power.
3. Negotiation processes	Reframing English beyond native-speaker norms; developing critical sociolinguistic awareness; reimagining ELT through GE	The three themed ways participants reworked their assumptions—relocating evaluation from "correct/incorrect" to "appropriate," noticing language in lived contexts, and translating awareness into imagined pedagogy.
4. Outcome	Emerging, uneven, and locally grounded negotiation of Global Englishes	The overall result: a partial, situated, non-linear teacher stance in which critical awareness coexists with residual standard-language ideologies, grounded in Mexican realities.

Global Englishes awareness as ideological negotiation

One key finding here is that, unlike straightforward transformation, participants' understandings of GE emerged through ideological negotiation. Despite GE scholarship offering a challenge to the idea that English is limited to native-speakerism or should be taught according to narrow British or American norms of operation (Holliday, 2006; Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose et al., 2021), previous findings have suggested that ELT persists through the lens of native speakers and standard language ideologies. This tension was evident in participants' responses. Valeria's earlier quest to sound "like an American native speaker," and her earlier judgment that some speakers spoke "the language wrong," highlight the continued prevalence of native-speaker norms within Mexican English teacher education. During the course, participants also started to read about English variation in relation to culture, context, identity, as well as appropriateness. Elena's opposition between "correct or incorrect" and "appropriate and not appropriate" is particularly important because it represents a step from judgment in a prescriptive sense toward sociolinguistic reasoning. This does not mean that participants shunned all forms of evaluation or adopted a "anything goes" stance. Rather, they began to situate language evaluation within considerations of context, audience, purpose, and social significance. This is a core issue in GE-oriented teacher education where in the future teachers must move beyond binaries of standard/non-standard English but at the same time still support learner situated communicative choices. This finding echoes Fang and Ren's (2018) study, which found that GE-focused courses can help learners challenge native-speaker norms and reappraise the legitimacy of their own English. This study extends this idea in the sense that it suggests that sociolinguistic research about students' everyday experience and local settings might inform this awareness. The study also warns against viewing this process as a total transformation. Participants employed such terms as "standard English," and sometimes talked about how they learned a language using it to prove useful, secure a career, or fulfil institutions' expectations. These tensions matter analytically. They illustrate how novice in-service English teachers can comprehend diversity in language but may also recognize that some forms of English remain of more symbolic and material value. In that sense this is particularly pertinent in the Global South, where English is frequently constructed as a tool for access to jobs, academic advancement, internationalisation, and socio-economic mobility. Hence, participants navigated GE by critically interrogating and pragmatically accounting for unbalanced linguistic markets.

Critical thinking activities as pathways to critical language awareness

The second way participants negotiated GE was through critical-thinking activities that helped them develop critical language awareness. Critical language awareness involves analyzing how language relates to power, ideology, identity, and inequality. Contemporary research in language teacher education also claims that teachers require structured occasions for questioning the ideological significance of multilingualism (De Costa & Van Gorp, 2023; Zhang-Wu & Tian, 2023). The current study corroborates this assertion by demonstrating that participants acquired critical awareness not only by engaging in theoretical discourse, but through activities that called on them to notice, record, describe and challenge language use in social interaction. Sociolinguistic observations were especially useful as they facilitated the transition from learning about theory in an abstract form to the actual recognition of that concept when interacting in real-life situations. María's recognition that she switched from English to Spanish "like the most natural thing in the world" and Elena's linking of course concepts to language policy and gendered language were further examples of how observation-based tasks transfigured sociolinguistic knowledge into an interpretive lens. It is also important to note that the online forums also provided spaces for dialogic negotiation. Participants asked questions, responded to peers, and connected course content to their own life experiences. Valeria's question about how to deal with a sentence that is "linguistically correct but communicatively inappropriate" inspired Diana and Tom to devise pedagogical methods that

combined grammar, context, audience, and appropriateness. This dialogue encapsulates a key question in GE pedagogy: how can English be taught in a way that develops learners' communicative competence without reducing language instruction to binary judgements of right and wrong?

Localizing Global Englishes pedagogy in the Mexican context

The third negotiating action on GE was the localization of GE through local, multilingual, and transnational experiences in Mexico. The bulk of GE research has happened in Asian and European contexts and Latin American contexts are less well-covered. Global Englishes must not be treated as a generic model that can simply be applied across the different settings in which it is enacted. GELT must recognize the needs of local communities, the realities associated with communication, and the complexities of multilingual histories (Rose & Galloway, 2019). In the present study, participants' conceptualizations on GE were influenced by Spanish variation, English in Mexico, migration, heritage language experiences, tourism, family experiences and local pedagogical situations. The comparison Elena drew between English variation and Spanish variation is especially telling in this regard. When she reminds her students that "it is not only one English" and contrasts English variation with Spanish variation in countries such as Mexico, Spain and Argentina, she conveys a GE premise in a culture resonant way. This indicates that GE pedagogy does not have to start with an abstract global map of Englishes. It can start from students' existing knowledge of variation in Spanish, and from the linguistic diversity that they already encounter. At the same time, framing Mexico's repertoire only in terms of Spanish and English risks reproducing a different erasure. Mexico is home to dozens of Indigenous languages, and critical scholarship has shown how ELT can either marginalise or affirm these languages and their speakers (López-Gopar, 2016).

Although Indigenous languages were not a focus of the present cohort's reflections, a fuller localization of GE pedagogy in Mexico would treat them as part of the country's multilingual reality rather than as a separate concern; we return to this as a limitation below. This localization has also been supported by the linguistic landscape/photo essay and the observation component. Sayer's (2010) Mexico study demonstrated how linguistic landscape projects can place students in the role of language researchers and link lessons learned in class with local public spaces. Pennycook and Makoni (2020) emphasize that Global South work should highlight local histories, inequalities, and forms of knowledge. In the findings of the current study, GE became significant to participants when they were linking it to their own experiences as Mexican English users, beginner teachers, siblings, workers, migrants, family members, and community observers. English in Mexico has been analyzed not just as American English, British English, textbooks, or in terms of international tests. It was additionally read as part of the complexity of local and transnational identities.

Situating these Mexican findings within broader Latin American GE scholarship further clarifies their contribution. Across the region, English is widely promoted through the discourse that it "opens doors" to mobility and employability, even as this promise is stratified by social class and unevenly realised (Sayer, 2018). Comparative work on English language teaching in South America documents how national policies, teacher-preparation standards, and native-speaker models circulate across countries such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay, often outpacing the local conditions needed to enact them (Kamhi-Stein et al., 2017). Read against this backdrop, the present cohort's negotiation of GE resembles patterns reported elsewhere in Latin America—ambivalence toward native-speaker norms coexisting with their persistent symbolic value—while also reflecting specifically Mexican realities of migration to and from the United States, heritage-language maintenance, and Indigenous multilingualism (López-Gopar, 2016; Sayer, 2012). Framing the study comparatively thus positions Mexican teacher education as one instance of a wider Global South negotiation rather than as an isolated case.

Institutional constraints on enacting Global Englishes

A recurring limitation of GE-oriented teacher education is that positive attitudes do not, on their own, translate into classroom practice, because novice teachers work within institutional structures that continue to privilege dominant forms of English. In the Mexican context, these structures include standardized national and international English examinations, centrally mandated and often rigid textbook-driven curricula, school assessment rules oriented to "standard" accuracy, and parental and market preferences for native-speaker accents as markers of quality (Ramírez-Romero & Sayer, 2016; Sayer, 2018). Such conditions can constrain even willing teachers, who may endorse the plurality of English in principle yet feel obliged to prepare learners for tests and expectations built around native-speaker norms (Chen et al., 2023; Zhang-Wu & Tian, 2023). This awareness–practice gap is precisely where the notion of negotiation is most useful. The specific institutional pressures listed above are drawn primarily from the Mexican and broader GE literature (Ramírez-Romero & Sayer, 2016; Sayer, 2018) rather than named directly by participants; what participants themselves voiced was a more general, pragmatic attachment to "standard" English and its perceived usefulness for examinations and employment. Read together, the data and the literature suggest that participants were beginning to hold a GE orientation alongside a continuing, pragmatically grounded recognition of such constraints, rather than resolving the tension in either direction. Acknowledging these systemic barriers tempers any claim that a single course can transform practice, and it points to the need for GE-oriented teacher education to address not only teachers' beliefs but also the assessment regimes, materials, and stakeholder expectations within which those beliefs are enacted.

From awareness to pedagogical imagination

Beyond awareness, participants' developing knowledge began to take the form of pedagogical imagination. This shift from awareness to pedagogical imagination is central to GE teacher education, which repeatedly documents a gap between developing awareness and its enactment in the classroom: teachers may hold positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity yet struggle to translate those attitudes into pedagogical practice (Chen et al., 2023; Rose et al., 2021; Zhang-Wu & Tian, 2023). Participants in this study began to imagine alternatives: helping students become open to other ideas about language, breaking from British or American English being the sole models, connecting what they had learnt in the classroom to students' interests, and creating safe spaces in which learners do not feel ashamed for their culture and language. Ultimately, participants negotiated their understandings of GE in a way that was gradual, situated, and unfinished. Critical thinking activities enabled the students to question their assumptions, interpret language in their communities, to relate theory back to their own cultural and professional experience, and to think critically and imaginatively about more inclusive ways of teaching. Their developing understandings were also uneven and not finalized, but that does suggest ways in which GE can be negotiated pedagogically within a Mexican sociolinguistics context and how teacher education in the Global South can make English teaching more critical, local, and socially responsive.

Conclusion

This study investigated how pre-service and novice in-service English teachers negotiated constructions of GE through critical thinking approaches during a sociolinguistics class in central Mexico. The study demonstrates, in response to the research question, that participants' involvement with GE did not stem in a step-wise fashion from a shallow understanding to a genuine acceptance that language variety is possible. Rather, their understandings developed through an uneven process of negotiation in which an emerging critical awareness coexisted with persistent commitments to dominant language ideologies, native-speaker norms, and the perceived

institutional value of particular varieties of English. This tension lies at the heart of the study's contribution. Specifically, the analysis showed that critical thinking activities helped participants reframe English away from dominant native-speaker models. In the context of Mexico, GE was meaningful to the participants who associated it with the Spanish variant, the use of English in Mexico, heritage speakers, migration, code-switching, accent discrimination and local student interest. Therefore, the study reinforces the assertion that GELT should not be considered an imported generic model to be adopted, but rather understood in the light of the social, cultural and historical conditions of specific educational contexts.

The study faces some limitations. It was a single sociolinguistics class of nine participants, so it is not intended to generalise beyond this single classroom context; instead, it offers an in-depth, situated account of one cohort. A further limitation is that the analysis centred on Spanish–English repertoires and did not address Mexico's Indigenous languages, which future GE-oriented work in this setting should incorporate (López-Gopar, 2016). Also, as the researcher was the course instructor the study necessitated reflexive awareness of the double role of data generation and interpretation. Future research might examine how pre-service and novice teachers transfer GE-oriented perspectives into practicum and early professional teaching—for example, through classroom observation and stimulated recall interviews during the teaching practicum—in order to determine how critical language awareness is implemented in lesson planning, interaction, assessment, and materials use. Comparative research between Mexico and Latin America might better understand how GE pedagogy is historically mediated through local histories of English, Spanish, Indigenous languages, migration, and educational inequality. To sum up GE teacher education in the Global South should not be restricted to the exposure of future teachers to a broader variety of English. It should build pedagogical conditions through which teachers can challenge how language hierarchies are developed, how linguistic resources of learners are valued or marginalized, and how English can be taught in ways that are socially responsive, critically informed and locally relevant.

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