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Research Paper

**Examining English Language Teachers'
Perceptions of the EIL Paradigm:
Creating Awareness and Change**

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Abstract

English as an International Language (EIL) refers to a paradigm shift in second language (L2) education as a response to complexities arising from the rapid spread of the English language around the globe in recent decades; therefore, EIL is, now, regarded as a paradigm for thinking, research and practice in L2 teaching. Due to the importance of the teacher's perceptions and attitudes and the influence they can have on their practicing English Language Teaching (ELT), the present study sought to explore what Iranian L2 teachers' perceptions were about EIL and to see if awareness and change could be created in this respect through educational workshops. To this end, an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study was designed and 139 Iranian L2 teachers' perceptions of the EIL paradigm were measured before and after an educational workshop. Also, 22 participants were interviewed to explore their perceptions of the EIL. Results indicated that the participants, by and large, did not possess appropriate perceptions of the EIL paradigm in

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varying degrees but that the workshop proved to be effective for developing appropriate perceptions in teachers. The interviews bore corroborating evidence for the quantitative data of the study. Awareness and change of attitude of the EIL can help L2 teachers make more informed decisions when practicing ELT.

Keywords: EIL, ELT, Global English, Language Variation, Paradigm Shift, Perception

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1. Introduction

There is a fast-growing use of English to fulfill the need for communication between individuals with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in today's interconnected global village. In fact, globalization has resulted in the emergence of English as an international language (EIL) that is also referred to as English as a lingua Franca (EFL), Global English, or World Englishes (WE). Consequently, ELT has been influenced by the spread of EIL, particularly, in the past two decades (Cameron & Galloway, 2019; Matsuda, 2019; McKay, 2018; Simanjuntak & Lien, 2020), and native models of pedagogy in ELT are being replaced by EIL-inspired models of L2 teaching (Sharifian, 2017).

Second language teachers are expected to be aware of the abovementioned changes that are taking place in the nature of the English language (Renandya, 2012). For example, they should be aware that linguistic and cultural native speaker (NS) norms are not the only norms to focus on in ELT and nonnative speaker (NNS) norms are equally important in the new pluricentric view of the language (Cook, 2016; Davies, 2002; Low, 2021; Seidlhofer, 2005; Sharifian, 2017; Vodopija-Krstanović & Marinac, 2019). This perspective can help them, as practitioners of L2

education, to have a better performance and invest their time and energy in more appropriate and more effective teaching/learning activities (see McKay, 2018). This shifting paradigm of using and teaching English known as EIL (Low, 2021; Sadeghpour, & D'Angelo, 2022; Vodopija-Krstanović & Marinac, 2019) is of such a paramount importance that L2 researchers have recently started to explore it from different aspects in Iran (see Monfared, 2019; Monfared & Khatib, 2018; Moradkhani & Asakereh, 2018; Pishghadam & Sabouri, 2011; Tajeddin et al., 2018). However, the previous researchers have just explored the matter from one or two aspects. For example, Moradkhani and Asakereh (2018) studied EFL teachers' attitudes toward accent and culture in light of EIL and they found that English teachers in both public and private schools considered the accents spoken in Inner Circle countries as an ideal pedagogical model. Monfared and Khatib (2018) investigated the attitudes of English teachers from India and Iran measuring cognitive, affective and behavioral attitudes of teachers towards their own English accents. They found that Iranian teachers favored native-speaker and mostly American English pronunciation while Indian teachers highly valued their local forms of English while they were in favor of British English. Thus, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there has been no thorough investigation of the subcomponents of the EIL paradigm (i.e., NS/NNS norms, ownership of English, recognition of the new emerging varieties of English, and the identity of L2 teachers). Nor has there been an attempt to see if awareness and change can be created in the L2 teachers' perceptions of the EIL paradigm as professional development. To this end and to prepare effective users of EIL, some significant changes must occur in L2 teachers' mindset and in their classroom practices (see Friedrich & Matsuda, 2010; Matsuda, 2002, 2006; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008; Sharifian, 2009). There is a fledgling body of research conducted in the past few years to find

out L2 teachers' attitudes towards EIL (e.g., Ahn, 2014; Bernaisch & Koch, 2016; Coskun, 2011; Jenkins, 2005; Llorca, 2007; Selvi, 2013; Zacharias, 2014). The current research is a contribution to ELT by attempting to uncover Iranian English teachers' perceptions and attitudes with regard to the notion of EIL and to see how awareness and change can be created in their perceptions, if required.

2. Review of Literature

It is believed that globalization has dramatically contributed to the popularity of English and forced people to learn it as a requirement to be successful world citizens. The unprecedented use of English across the globe has resulted in the emergence of EIL which is used for intercultural communication amongst both NSs and NNSs in international contexts. As English is used in a wide variety of international contexts and by a large number of NNSs as a contact language, the nature of this language known as EIL is different from the variety spoken by merely NSs (see Sharifian 2017).

EIL is based on the underlying notions known as the subcomponents of the EIL paradigm including NS/NNS norms, ownership of English, recognition of the new emerging varieties of English, and the identity of L2 teachers (McKay, 2018). For example, EIL asserts that NS norms of American and British English are not the only criterion for linguistic correctness and these inner-circle varieties of English (Kachru, 1992) are not to be used as the yardstick against which L2 learners' success or failure is determined (Clyne & Sharifian, 2008; Garrett, 2009; Matsuda, 2003; Sharifian, 2009).

The concept of English ownership is closely connected to EIL, too. Traditionally, NSs were regarded as the owners of the language and the learners of English as an L2 were expected to conform to the NS norms (Matsuda, 2003). The myth of the superiority of the NS which is referred to

as native speakerism (Petric, 2009) contributed to the ideology behind the privileged status of NS norms in L2 pedagogy. However, a factor which should be considered by English teachers is the sociopolitical aspects of teaching an L2 and they should be aware of and sensitive towards linguistic and cultural imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) which can lead to marginalization of nonnative varieties of English and their exclusion from the educational settings by placing them at a disadvantage. This can even be a threat to the identity of the speakers of different varieties of English other than the standard American or British varieties.

Another issue that has been discussed as one of the tenets of the EIL paradigm (see Kirkpatrick, 2007) and researched as a subcomponent of the EIL paradigm in this study is the legitimacy of different emerging varieties of the English language. The global spread of English has not only diversified the form of English, but also changed the demographics of the English-speaking population (Sharifian, 2009, 2017). In other words, English is not used only by the NSs of English, but there is a large body of international communication exclusively among NNS of English (Bernaisch & Koch, 2016; Graddol, 1997; Tajeddin et al., 2019; Widdowson, 1994). In other words, many L2 learners of English very rarely use English to communicate with NSs. Thus, it would be unreasonable to have linguistic and cultural NS norms to teach and against which to measure L2 learners' proficiency level (Cook, 2008). In other words, L2 teaching is not supposed to familiarize L2 students only with the English varieties, people, and culture of the inner-circle countries, but to familiarize them with a variety of Englishes.

Finally, nonnative English teacher identity research has been a critical issue in L2 teaching (Gholamshahi et al., 2021; Yuan, 2019). As L2 teacher identity can be positively developed by creating awareness with regard to the EIL paradigm, the identity of L2 teachers was also regarded as a

subcomponent of the EIL paradigm in this study. Because most ELT teachers seem to be unaware of the current issues under the notion of the EIL paradigm, many academic and social issues arise (Lee, 2019). The result can be misconceptions leading to inappropriate identity construction within the L2 context and futile class activities. Such issues become hard to resolve, particularly when teachers are under the misconception that there is one standard British or American way to speak English (Tajeddin et al., 2019).

The main goal of L2 pedagogy in many non-English-speaking countries has started to shift from the development of NS competence to comprehensibility, mutual understanding, and intelligible use of more varieties of English (Kirkpatrick, 2007). This paradigm shift in L2 pedagogy is due to the global status that English has obtained in the recent globalization process requiring increasing communication between NNSs of English from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds (Sharifian, 2017). Therefore, as Kumaravadivelu (2004) suggests, ELT practitioners need to reassess their position on the instructional model in order to appropriately deal with the linguistic and cultural variations of the English language used globally today.

Nevertheless, L2 teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about different varieties of English which can directly influence their L2 pedagogical practices seem not to have been investigated enough nor have there been enough attempts to create awareness and change in this regard and as Young and Walsh (2010) note, such issues have gone rather unnoticed. If L2 teachers erroneously perceive NS norms of standard British or American English as the only legitimate norms to adhere to, there will be, as Lee (2019) notices, a number of academic and social issues. For example, L2 teachers may get involved in counterproductive class activities by having undue concentration on NS norms while ignoring more important skills required for

being a proficient user of English in today's global and intercultural interactions.

Such misconceptions seem to be prevalent among L2 teachers in expanding-circle countries and particularly in Iran because, as noted by Vodopija-Krstanović and Marinac (2019), insufficient attention has been devoted to helping L2 teachers integrate theoretical understandings of EIL into their teaching. Therefore, as emphasized by Tajeddin et al. (2019), it is essential to reflect on the perspectives of L2 teaching stakeholders, including teachers, regarding the status of EIL and English varieties. Creating awareness in Iranian L2 teachers about EIL as a paradigm shift in ELT can be illuminating for them and can help them replace their old ideologies with newer perceptions which can ultimately lead to more effective class activities.

In summary, it is generally assumed that L2 teachers will have a better performance and invest their time and energy in more appropriate and more effective teaching/learning activities if they are aware of the importance of the linguistic and cultural NNS norms of English in contrast with NS norms per se (Tupas & Renandya, 2020). Therefore, it is important for L2 teachers to develop the perception that the linguistic norms of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation as well as cultural norms possessed by both NSs and NNSs are equally important. This is generally regarded as the appropriate perception towards NS/NNS norms in L2 teaching (Cook, 1999, 2016; Davies, 2000, 2002; Kachru, 1992; Rampton, 1990; Renandya, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2005; Sharifian 2017; Tupas & Renandya, 2020; Widdowson, 1994).

Professional development needs of Iranian English teachers have always been an important issue in ELT (Soodmand Afshar et al., 2017). One way to have such professional development is bringing about awareness and change

in L2 teachers' perceptions that can be accomplished through inservice training or professional workshops. L2 teachers in Iran had better benefit from such trainings because they still maintain traditional views and seem to be adhering to NS norms as they are unaware of the shifting paradigms in light of EIL (Abdzadeh & Baker, 2020; Barzegar Rahatlou, Fazilatfar, & Allami, 2018; Monfared, 2019; Monfared & Khatib, 2018). Some researchers (e.g., Moradkhani & Asakereh, 2018; Pishghadam & Sabouri, 2011; Shahrebabaki, 2018; Tahmasbi et al., 2019; Tajeddin, Alemi, & Pashmforoosh, 2018; Tajeddin et al., 2019) have studied some issues related to EIL, but there are few investigations to see what the perceptions of Iranian L2 teachers about the EIL paradigm are and how awareness and change can be created through educational workshops in this regard.

Considering the foregoing discussion, this piece of research was designed and undertaken to determine how Iranian L2 teachers perceived the EIL paradigm and if awareness and change could be created in their attitudes and perceptions with regard to such concepts within the EIL paradigm as the NS/NNS Norms, ownership of English, recognition of the new emerging varieties of English, and the identity of L2 teachers. Therefore, this research was a step towards empowering L2 teachers to make more informed decisions about their pedagogical approaches.

In sum, this study is an attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are Iranian L2 teachers' perceptions of the EIL paradigm in terms of linguistic and cultural NS/NNS norms, ownership of English, recognition of different varieties of English, and teacher identity?
2. Can educational workshops on EIL help Iranian L2 teachers adopt appropriate perceptions of the EIL paradigm?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

As the main part of foreign language education in Iran is conducted in the Ministry of Education, the participants were selected from the teachers engaged in teaching English in high schools; moreover, coordination for administration of the pretest, posttest and the workshop could be made more easily. The participants were from the L2 teachers teaching in high schools of different regions and districts of Isfahan province. They were 181 L2 teachers who enrolled in the online workshop held as a webinar and answered the questionnaire items designed as the pretest of the study. Out of the 181 L2 teachers above, 139 attended an online workshop at a specified time and date and took a posttest, too. All the participants had academic degrees of B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. in ELT or English translation. They were employed in the Ministry of Education and volunteered to take part in the educational workshop as a means of their professional development. Actually, their participation was based on accessibility and their willingness to cooperate. The participants were male and female teachers whose age ranged from 23 to 54, with different years of teaching experience.

3.2 Materials

3.2.1 Questionnaire

In this study, a questionnaire aiming at exploring the participants' perceptions of the EIL paradigm was needed. Therefore, the required questionnaire was designed and validated. To do so, at first, the status of the EIL paradigm and its key issues and assumptions were reviewed. Next, a number of questionnaires in the related literature were scrutinized and some items were selected for the questionnaire of the present study. Also, some other similar items were included by the researchers to explore the intended issues in the EIL paradigm. A pool of 35 items were collected focusing on

the exploration of the L2 teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about different issues in the EIL paradigm. The questionnaire items were on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). The questionnaire was comprised of the items measuring the participants' perceptions on four subcomponents of the EIL paradigm, including the NS/NNS norms, the ownership of the English language, the recognition of the new emerging varieties of the English language, and the identity of L2 teachers.

As the questionnaire was originally developed for the purposes of this study, it was piloted in two steps: First, two experts in applied linguistics were asked to evaluate the content of each questionnaire item. Besides, several L2 teachers were asked to read the questionnaire items and to comment on the clarity of the language and the content of each item of the questionnaire. Accordingly, a few items were rephrased based on their comments. Also, the questionnaire was pilot-tested on 180 L2 teachers. Based on the pilot data, the items with low item-total correlation values (less than .3) were removed from the final version of the questionnaire. That is, its reliability was computed using Cronbach's alpha as an index of internal consistency, and five items were deleted from the initial pool to come up with the questionnaire of the study with 30 items. In fact, measures were taken to validate the questionnaire employed in the current research. The reliability coefficients for the subscales of the questionnaire measuring the NS/NNS norms, the ownership of the English language, the recognition of the different varieties of the English language, and L2 teacher identity were .859, .707, .764, and .732, respectively. The reliability coefficient for the whole scale was .883. The results displayed reliability coefficients which were acceptable indexes. According to Pallant (2010), reliability coefficients which are above .70 are acceptable. Furthermore, exploratory factor analysis (through the

method of principal components analysis) was carried out to provide evidence for the construct validity of the questionnaire. The 30-item questionnaire measured the participants' perceptions of the four themes or subcomponents of the EIL paradigm: 15 items (i.e., items # 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17, 21, 27, 29, and 30) measured the participants' perceptions of the L2 linguistic and cultural NS/NNS norms; 3 items (i.e., items # 15, 16, and 28) measured their perceptions of the ownership of the English language; 6 items (i.e., items # 3, 10, 11, 14, 22, 24) measured their perceptions of the recognition of the different varieties of the English language; and 6 items (i.e., items # 18, 19, 20, 23, 25, and 26) measured their perceptions of the concept of L2 teacher identity.

In order to quantitatively measure the participants' perceptions of the EIL paradigm, the numerical values of 5 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 1 (*Strongly Agree*) were assigned to the participants' responses to 17 items of the questionnaire (i.e., items # 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 15, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 30), whereas the same numerical values were assigned in a reverse order to each of the five responses for the rest of the items (i.e., items # 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 22, 28, and 29). The possible total scores of the participants' perceptions of the EIL paradigm could range from 30 to 150. The higher scores on the questionnaire were indicative of higher levels of appropriate perceptions of the EIL paradigm (see Appendix A).

3.2.2 Workshop Content

In order to have a blueprint for the content of the workshop, at first, the status of the EIL paradigm and its key issues and assumptions were reviewed. The related literature was probed, and a number of concepts were collected to be presented in the online workshop. Two experts in applied linguistics were consulted to decide about the concepts which were most suitable to be presented in the workshop aiming at increasing the participants' knowledge

and awareness of the EIL paradigm. The required PowerPoint slides were prepared for an effective and comprehensive presentation to the L2 teachers in the current study. The main concepts which were discussed in light of the EIL paradigm included the linguistic and cultural NS/NNS norms, the ownership of the English language, the recognition of the new emerging varieties of the English language, and the identity of L2 teachers.

3.3 Procedure

To investigate the Iranian L2 teachers' perceptions of the EIL paradigm, first, the head teachers in charge of the English Language Department in Isfahan province were contacted to make the required coordination. Agreements were made on the date and time of the workshop for the L2 teachers. Due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, the workshop was held in Skyroom virtual space.

The L2 teachers were invited to the workshop titled, "The EIL Paradigm in Iran". The L2 participants were invited to enroll and to take part in the workshop. In order to enroll in the online workshop, they were provided with a link through which they had to fill out a Google form. The Google form consisted of two parts: Part A which sought the demographic information of the participants and Part B which was comprised of the items of the questionnaire designed and validated for the purpose of this study. The participants' responses to the items on the questionnaire revealed their perceptions of the EIL paradigm before the workshop was launched.

The online workshop was on 23 January 2022. The participants virtually attended the workshop on the EIL paradigm intended to create awareness and change in their perceptions with respect to the EIL paradigm.

At the end of the online workshop, the participants were given the same questionnaire used as the posttest of the study to see if the online workshop could create awareness and change in their perceptions with regard to the EIL

paradigm. In fact, the participants revealed their new perceptions of the EIL paradigm after the workshop.

At the end of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to supply their cellphone numbers if they were willing to take part in an interview related to the topic of the workshop. These interviews were intended to collect the data for the qualitative phase of the study. Twenty-two participants who had expressed their agreements were called for semi-structured interviews with some open-ended questions (see Appendix B). These interviews were carried out for triangulation purposes and for obtaining a better understanding of the participants' perceptions of the EIL paradigm in terms of the NS/NNS norms, the ownership of the English language, the recognition of the new emerging varieties of English, and the identity of L2 teachers.

4. Results

The first research question of the study addressed the issue of what Iranian L2 teachers' perceptions of the EIL paradigm were in terms of linguistic and cultural NS/NNS norms, the ownership of English, the recognition of the different varieties of English, and teacher identity. To find an answer to this research question, the frequencies of responses to the (pretest and posttest) questionnaire items were tallied and tabulated for the four components of the EIL paradigm, and the mean score and standard deviation were calculated for each item. Given the fact that a more accurate perception was represented through a higher value in this Likert-scale questionnaire, the teachers' perceptions were substantialized and compared by means of item mean scores. Simply put, to see what the participants' perceptions were like, the mean score of the Likert scale for each item (i.e., 3) was used as the yardstick for perception measurement. If the participants' perception was larger than the item mean score, the perception was regarded as appropriate/acceptable and if the perception score was lower than the mean

score, that was regarded as problematic perception. *T* tests were used to see if being above or lower than the mean score was statistically meaningful or not.

The total mean scores for all the four subscales are presented in Table 1, which also presents the one sample *t* test results:

Table 1
One Sample t Test Results for Teachers' Perceptions About EIL Subscales on the Pretest

EIL Subscales	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	Overall Mean	Test Value = 3		
				<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper	
NS/NNS Norms	-.163	14	2.98	.873	-.236	.202
Ownership	2.43	2	3.31	.135	-.242	.875
Recognition	3.03	5	3.41	.029	.063	.769
Identity	4.67	5	3.49	.005	.223	.766

The overall mean scores for the four subscales of the EIL paradigm revealed that the surveyed teachers, by and large, did not have a greater-than-average perception of the NS/NNS norms subsection of the questionnaire, as the overall mean score for this subsection was lower than the average value of the choices ($2.98 < 3.00$), but for the subscales of ownership, recognition, and identity, the teachers demonstrated larger-than-average correct perceptions. The extent to which the teachers had correct perceptions about recognition and identity subsections reached statistical significance, as the *p* values for these two subscales were found to be lower than the .05 level of significance, as shown under the *Sig.* (2-tailed) column, but that was not the case with Ownership subsection.

Also, the posttest data were analyzed the same way to unravel whether the perceptions of the teachers about EIL experienced any changes after the treatment or not. The results of these analyses are the following. Table 2 shows the overall mean scores of the different subsections of the questionnaire on the posttest and the results of the one sample *t* test analysis:

Table 2
One Sample t Test Results for Teachers' Perceptions About EIL Subscales on the Posttest

EIL Subscales	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	Overall Mean	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	Test Value = 3	
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
NS/NNS Norms	5.23	14	3.55	.000	.330	.788
Ownership	2.78	2	3.85	.108	-.463	2.170
Recognition	8.24	5	3.81	.000	.558	1.064
Identity	6.36	5	3.96	.001	.573	1.349

It could be seen in Table 2 that the overall mean scores for the NS/NNS norms, ownership, recognition, and identity indicate larger-than-average (and, thus, accurate) perceptions of the teachers about the EIL paradigm, and that the degree to which the teachers held accurate perceptions after the online workshop reached statistical significance for the NS/NNS norms, recognition, and identity subcomponents of the questionnaire.

The second research question intended to see if the educational workshops on EIL could help the Iranian L2 teachers adopt appropriate perceptions of the EIL paradigm. To find an answer to this research question, the data obtained from the pretreatment and posttreatment questionnaires were compared in relation to the four components of the EIL paradigm and analyzed by means of paired samples *t* test (Table 3):

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics Results Comparing the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Teachers

EIL Subscales	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>N</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
NS/NNS Norms Pretest	44.775	5.695	138	.054	-.074
NS/NNS Norms Posttest	53.463	9.356	138	.228	-.612
Ownership Pretest	10.007	1.658	138	.156	.450
Ownership Posttest	11.572	2.237	138	.157	-.894
Recognition Pretest	20.529	2.517	138	-.019	-.237
Recognition Posttest	22.913	3.938	138	.131	-.781
Identity Pretest	21.326	2.771	138	.141	-.308
Identity Posttest	23.789	4.282	138	-.399	-.453

Examining English ...

It can be seen in Table 3 that the posttest mean scores are larger than the pretest mean scores for the NS/NNS norms (i.e., 53.46 > 44.77), the ownership of English (i.e., 11.57 > 10.00), the recognition of different English varieties (i.e., 22.91 > 21.32), and teacher identity (i.e., 23.78 > 21.32). This is all indicative of the enhanced perceptions of the teachers about the EIL paradigm. To see if these improvements were large enough to be of statistical significance, the results of the paired samples *t* test in Table 4 should be checked, but before that, to ensure about the assumption of normality, the values in the skewness and kurtosis columns need to be examined. Because these values are all lower than ± 2.00 , it could be inferred that the pretest and posttest distributions for the four subcomponents of the EIL paradigm form normal distributions:

Table 4

Paired Samples t Test Results Comparing the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Teachers

Comparisons	Paired Differences				<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper			
NS/NNS Norms Pretest — NS/NNS Norms Posttest	-8.68	10.32	.878	-10.42 -6.95	-9.88	137	.000
Ownership Pretest — Ownership Posttest	-1.56	2.92	.248	-2.05 -1.07	-6.28	137	.000
Recognition Pretest — Recognition Posttest	-2.38	4.71	.401	-3.17 -1.58	-5.93	137	.000
Identity Pretest — Identity Posttest	-2.46	5.01	.427	-3.30 -1.61	-5.76	137	.000

The *p* values under the Sig. (2-tailed) column are less than the .05 level of significance for all the four comparisons, indicating that for the NS/NNS norms, ownership, recognition, and identity, the perceptions of the teachers of the EIL paradigm improved significantly. Also, this is represented graphically in Figure 1.

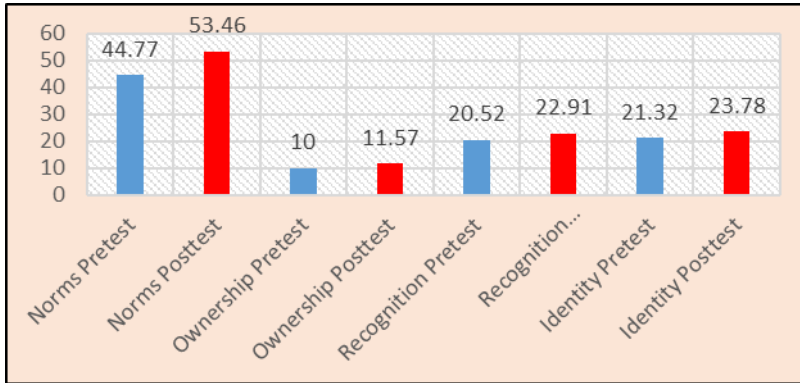


Figure 1. Pretest and posttest mean scores of the teachers

Figure 1 shows clearly that for the NS/NNS norms, there was a considerable improvement from the pretest to the posttest, and there were also improvements from the pretest to the posttest for ownership, recognition, and identity components of the EIL paradigm.

5. Qualitative Results

To delve into and to develop a better understanding of the participants' perceptions and attitudes towards the EIL paradigm, the semi-structured interviews with the L2 teachers were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. At first, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants in the online workshop. Then, phone calls were made to each L2 teacher to be interviewed individually. The interviews, which took about 20 min for each individual L2 teacher, were conducted in Persian. The interviewer tried to keep a neutral position on the issues discussed during the interviews and for confidentiality reasons, pseudo names were used in reporting the L2 teachers' remarks in the interviews (Appendix B for sample interview items).

The interview data were collected from these 22 Iranian L2 teachers after their participation in the online workshop so as to provide further insights into the quantitative results and explain what perceptions the L2 teachers had

with regard to the concepts and issues in the EIL paradigm and to find out how effective the workshop was in creating awareness and change in this respect. Thematic analysis of the interview data from the L2 teachers seem to echo somehow what the quantitative results suggested in terms of the need for and the effectiveness of the workshop for the enhancement of the L2 teachers' perceptions of the EIL paradigm. The analysis of the data generated four major themes including the linguistic and cultural NS/NNS norms, the ownership of the English language, the recognition of the new emerging varieties of the English language, and the L2 teacher identity. These four emerged themes are discussed below.

5.1 Linguistic and Cultural NS/NNS Norms

The Iranian L2 teachers seemed not to have had appropriate perceptions of the linguistic and cultural NS/NNS norms before the workshop was held, and they believed that the workshop was really useful and helped them develop appropriate perspectives towards such norms. About 77% of the participants said that, before attending the online workshop, they unduly emphasized the NS norms in their classes and were not fully aware of the importance of the NNS norms in today's globalized world. Only 23% of the L2 teachers stated that they already had known the NNS norms were as important as the NS ones. For example, when asked to explain their perceptions of the NS/NNS norms and when asked if the NNSs of English needed to observe all linguistic NS norms (i.e., rules of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation), Mr. Karimi, an L2 teacher in Isfahan, Iran said, "When I think back, I remember interrupting my students too often in class for little deviations in their pronunciation of the English words and the grammar they used. I wish I hadn't done so. I have decided to be more tolerant of the students' linguistic mistakes and let it pass as long as the communication

goes on without much difficulty. In a nutshell, this workshop made me reconsider my perspectives about the NS norms”.

Thus, as a result of the workshop, this participant had come to the realization that, as an L2 teacher, the NS norms were not the only norms he had stuck to so hard.

5.2 Ownership of the English Language

Another theme was related to the ownership of the English language. This was the concept most participants had never heard or thought about. About 61% of the participants said that the concept of the ownership of the language was new to them, and they thought English was the language which belonged to NSs only and the other users of the English language had no right as to the ownership of the language. However, the workshop familiarized them with this concept in EIL. Actually, an L2 teacher, Ms. Rajaei, in this regard said, “I feel I have recently gained something . . . I am the owner of English. So, my norms of speaking English are also okay as long as I can be understood by other English speakers across the world”.

Another participant named Ms. Motahari similarly stated, “While speaking English, I feel more relaxed now that I believe I’m the owner of English.”

5.3 Recognition of New Emerging Varieties of English

About 70% of the L2 teachers in the interviews seemed to have developed recognition for the new emerging varieties of English as a result of attending the online workshop and taking part in the related discussions. Before that, they thought varieties other than the NS varieties were of little value and had no legitimacy in ELT. One of the L2 teachers (Mr. Soleimani) said, “Now that we have realized the importance of the different varieties of English, I hope there will come a day when Iranian or Persian English becomes a recognized variety across the world, too. This will happen sooner or later, I think”.

However, there were a few L2 teachers (i.e., about 30%) who asserted that the NS varieties were to be used in class as a source of genuine English for instruction and some nonstandard varieties were to be avoided in ELT. For example, one of the interviewees, Mr. Amani said, "Native English is much more preferable than other varieties. American English sounds more beautiful after all." In sum, the workshop seemed to have been successful in creating awareness and change in the participants' perceptions with regard to this concept within the EIL paradigm. Many of them had actually suspended their traditional perspectives about the new emerging varieties of English. However, from among the four concepts of the EIL paradigm detected in the interviews, it was the hardest to have the L2 teachers develop recognition for the new emerging varieties of English. Changing traditional ideologies that have been lingering around for years seem to be fighting an uphill battle. The solution can be holding more educational workshop for teachers to help them develop more appropriate attitudes for EIL.

5.4 L2 Teacher Identity

One of the themes that emerged by the analysis of the content of the interviewees' replies was the L2 teacher identity. It could be figured out that 65% of the participants had gained a more positive image of their selves, leading to a more acceptable identity development because of their participation in the workshop and due to what they had learned there. There were several remarks in the participants' interviews that were indicative of a better identity construction in the L2 teachers. For instance, one of the participants who had taught English in different contexts (Ms. Shafiei) expressed, "Not only my students but also I myself, previously, favored NSs for no good reason. However, I have started to question this groundless misconception about the superiority of NSs. After all, I have had higher education in TEFL. Why is there preference for a NS lacking any expertise?"

Our merits as professional NNS L2 teachers are numerous in comparison with NSs”.

It is evident in her remarks that she had developed a more appropriate perception of her identity as an L2 teacher in Iran. This must be the result of the discussions she was involved in during the workshop.

In sum, the abovementioned themes and concepts that were generated in the qualitative phase of the study were corroborative evidence for the quantitative findings of the study. Besides, they provided a better and deeper understanding of the perceptions of the Iranian L2 teachers with regard to the concepts in the EIL paradigm.

6. Discussion

As the descriptive analysis of the collected data revealed, the participants in this study had a variety of perceptions with regard to the subcomponents of the EIL paradigm before the workshop was held. For instance, as for the NS/NNS norms, the participants had a low level of perception ($M = 2.98$). Similarly, as for the ownership of English, the mean score was 3.31 which, according to the value shown for statistical significance, failed to be significantly higher than the average. However, with regard to the other two subcomponents of the EIL paradigm (i.e., the recognition of English varieties and teacher identity), the participants had a satisfactory level of perception ($M = 3.41$ and $M = 3.49$, respectively).

However, after taking part in the workshop, the participants' perceptions of all the four subcomponents (i.e., the NS/NNS norms, the ownership of the English language, the recognition of the new emerging varieties of the English language, and the identity of L2 teachers) improved considerably. To put it more objectively, the participants' mean scores for their perception levels in NS/NNS norms, the ownership of English, the recognition of the English varieties, and teacher identity enhanced to 3.55, 3.85, 3.81, and 3.96,

respectively. As it was seen, a great enhancement was created in the L2 teachers' perceptions of the subcomponents of the EIL paradigm, which are well above the average score of the questionnaire, except for the English ownership component that failed to prove to be significantly different from the average. This dramatic improvement led to a relative disappearance of the differences in the participants' perceptions of the EIL paradigm at the end of the workshop. In other words, as the result of being exposed to the EIL discussions in the online workshop, the participants became almost homogeneous in terms of their perceptions of the EIL paradigm, and no significant difference could be detected in their perceptions from the different groups. This was indicative of a noticeable enhancement in the participants' appropriate perceptions of the EIL paradigm. In short, as the results of this study revealed, the online workshop was an effective means of helping the L2 teachers improve their perceptions with regard to the concepts in the EIL paradigm and creating awareness and change in this respect.

This study, in general, and the first research question, in particular, was an attempt to investigate the position of EIL in ELT as far as the Iranian L2 teachers' perceptions are concerned. The findings in this regard are of vital importance because L2 teachers' perceptions can actually influence their classroom practices. From this viewpoint, the results of this study are in line with those of Lopriore (2016, 2018, 2019) who studied ELF in ELT and teacher education as new paradigms in language awareness, specifically in the Italian context.

In another piece of research similar to the present study, Grazzi and Lopriore (2019) tried to investigate the Italian teachers' knowledge of and attitudes to the new status of English, particularly to WE and ELF in contexts of intercultural communication. The main objective of these new trends in ELT research similar to that of the current study is to "take into consideration

the changing scenario of Global Englishes and open new paths to revisit teachers', learners', and publishers' beliefs and offer possible perspectives about classroom practices, assessment and evaluation, and materials development" (Grazzi & Lopriore, 2019, p. 69).

One of the findings of the present study positing that the Iranian L2 teachers favored NS norms of the inner-circle countries is consistent with the finding by Ren, Chen, and Lin (2016) who suggested that the L2 teachers were inclined to believe in the superiority of native standard English and wanted their learners to sound American or British. The L2 teachers' adherence to NS norms, as it was found in both the quantitative and the qualitative data analyses of the present study, exactly echoed what Tajeddin et al. (2019) found and stated that there was a widely shared aspiration among the teachers for NSs' standard English rather than WE in language classrooms.

Some of the findings of this research are similar to those of Estaji and Savarabadi (2020) who conducted a similar study in Tehran and found that the relevance of EIL to ELT in Iran was denied by the L2 teachers. The findings of this study with regard to linguistic NS/NNS norms are in partial agreement with those by Candan and Inal (2020) who investigated the L2 learners' perceptions of EIL in Turkey and found that a great number of learners believed that correct pronunciation was crucial in communication. This perception is a sign of adherence to NS norms. However, in their interviews, "most learners agreed that as long as a pronunciation is intelligible, it can be considered as good" (Candan & Inal, 2020, p. 119). This perception is similar to what most L2 teachers of the present study (77%) stated in their posttreatment interviews and agreed with, as revealed in their questionnaire responses.

As for the ownership of English, the Iranian L2 teachers in the present study did not display a strong sense of English ownership in their perceptions either on the pretest ($M = 3.31$) or on the posttest ($M = 3.85$). This finding is obviously not in agreement with another finding by Tajeddin et al. (2019) indicating the Iranian L2 teachers' acknowledgment of the ownership of English by both NSs and NNSs. Little development of the proper sense of English ownership might have been due to the workshop that was held online. Face-to-face workshops may prove to be more effective.

Lee, Lee, and Drajadi's (2019) finding revealed that the Indonesian preservice teachers had a higher degree of ownership over their own English variety; however, the Iranian L2 teachers in the present study did not have a high level of appropriate perception about English ownership. In general, this study displayed that most of the L2 teachers in Iran are unaware of many of the EIL scholars' belief (e.g., Crystal, 2003; Matsuda, 2003; Ren, 2014; Widdowson, 2003) that English is both NS's and NNSs' possession. However, educational workshops seemed to be an effective means of creating awareness and change in the L2 teachers' perceptions although the faulty perception of the English language ownership within the EIL paradigm was the hardest to rectify.

Teacher identity, as another subcomponent of the EIL paradigm, was explored in the questionnaire of the study and the participants seemed to have little tolerance for pronunciation deviations from NS norms which is in direct contrast with the findings in Tajeddin et al.'s (2019) research where the teachers expressed their desire to retain their own local accent (e.g., Persian English accent) as an expression of their identities when using English internationally. Furthermore, the Iranian L2 teachers' emphasis on NS linguistic and cultural norms, as found in this study, was divergent from the perspectives of some earlier EIL studies (e.g., Jenkins, 2007; Li, 2009; Sung,

2014) which revealed NNSs' tendency to keep their local accent in order to present their lingua-cultural identity. However, it was evident in the participants' interview comments that their harsh perceptions in this regard had been softened due to the online workshop. Moreover, the mean score of teacher identity as a subcomponent of EIL improved from 3.49 to 3.96. This was indicative of the effectiveness of educational workshops to help L2 teachers develop better identities in their ELT profession. In fact, the online workshop of this study proved to be effective in liberating the L2 teachers from being submissive to NS norms. As a result, they could develop better teacher identity.

In line with Lee (2019) who warned against many academic and social issues as the consequences of L2 teachers' misconceptions and unawareness of the current issues under the notion of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and the paradigm of EIL, inappropriate identity construction within the L2 context and futile class activities ought to be prevented. The outcomes of the educational workshop of this study revealed that the required awareness and change could be created in this regard. Of course, these issues become hard to resolve at times, particularly when, according to Tajeddin et al. (2019), L2 teachers are under the misconception that there is one standard British or American way to speak English. The educational workshop of this study proved to be an effective means to ameliorate this problem as there was an enhancement in the L2 teachers' perceptions after the treatment of the study. In fact, as Friedrich and Matsuda (2010) and Sharifian (2009) state, in order to prepare effective users of EIL, some significant changes must occur in L2 teachers' mindset and in specific classroom practices. This is what the results of this study proved to be feasible through educational workshops.

7. Conclusion

The paradigm shift from the traditional methodologies to the EIL-aware ones is clearly well underway. The concept of EIL has had great pedagogical implications for L2 teaching/learning. Thus, the Iranian L2 teachers should be fully familiarized with the notions underlying the EIL paradigm through educational workshops in the form of preservice or inservice training. Then, they will, undoubtedly, reconsider their perspectives, beliefs, and attitudes in L2 education. They will scientifically be convinced to adopt new priorities for their L2 teaching in future. They will focus on class activities which are conducive to essential competencies like ICC, which is required for successful L2 communication in international contexts, rather than on NS norms.

This study was an attempt to examine L2 teachers' perceptions of the EIL paradigm as they could influence the teachers' approaches, objectives, expectations from learners, and class activities employed for L2 education (see McKay, 2018). Compared with previous studies for the exploration of L2 teachers' attitudes, beliefs, or perceptions about the EIL paradigm like the one by Tajjedin et al. (2019), the present research methodology enjoyed several distinct advantages:

Firstly, more facets of the EIL paradigm (i.e., the NS/NNS norms, the ownership of the English language, the recognition of the new emerging varieties of the English language, and the identity of L2 teachers) were included in the designed questionnaire to probe the L2 teachers' perceptions. This resulted in the development of a more comprehensive questionnaire the reliability and validity of which were rigorously put to test in this study.

Secondly, an educational workshop was planned for the L2 teachers of the study to find out if and how the required awareness and change could be created in their perspectives. In fact, the research project did not end by just

examining the L2 teachers' perceptions, but the mission adopted in this project was to find a remedy for a malady in the field of ELT.

Finally, as Vodopija-Krstanović and Marinac (2019) state, "if EIL is to become a new paradigm for teaching, greater collaboration is required between applied linguists and ELF teachers, and explicit guidelines are needed to help teachers integrate EIL into ELT." Thus, this study was intended to be a step towards the integration of EIL in ELT not only in the Iranian context but also worldwide.

This study, which was designed based on new notions and trends in the EIL paradigm applicable to ELT, contributes to the domain of applied linguistics because such studies can give the stakeholders and decision makers in ELT a better image of the mindset of L2 teachers. In fact, such research projects in L2 education can shed light on the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs that L2 teachers hold and that can affect their educational planning for their classes. Such research projects can bring about awareness and change in L2 teachers' perspectives and they can be emancipated from their traditional perspectives through such research.

However, the major limitation of this study could be the online administration of the workshop due to the coronavirus pandemic. A face-to-face workshop may have resulted in greater enhancement of the L2 teachers' perceptions of the EIL paradigm. A more comprehensive treatment could have been achieved if a face-to-face workshop had been administered with the participation of L2 teachers in person. The stakeholders and policymakers of L2 education in Iran can consider the administration of face-to-face educational workshops to develop desirable attitudes in L2 teachers with regard to EIL tenets and to achieve a more successful L2 education in the country.

Secondly, the focus of the current study was specifically on the examination of L2 teachers' perceptions. Future research can benefit from the inclusion of L2 learners alike. This is especially important because L2 learners are one of the main elements in the learning process and their perceptions can definitely affect the quality of L2 learning. Therefore, other studies are required to probe L2 learners' perceptions of the EIL.

Prospective research can also investigate the effect of the EIL workshop for L2 teachers on their student Learning outcomes. There can be studies on the comparison between the student learning outcome of the teachers who attended the workshop on EIL and obtained better perceptions of EIL and that of the teachers who did not. Detailed studies can be designed to see how student learning outcome may be influenced as a result of having EIL-inspired teachers.

Finally, this research was carried out in Isfahan province, Iran and the workshop was conducted only for the high school L2 teachers of the province. The perceptions of L2 teachers teaching in other contexts like private language institutes can be investigated to shed more light on the issue of EIL in ELT. Other similar studies are needed to be replicated in other parts of the country or the globe to see what results are yielded.

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Appendix A
EIL Paradigm Perceptions Questionnaire

Dear Colleagues,

I greatly appreciate you completing the following short questionnaire which seeks to investigate your perceptions regarding *the concepts in the EIL paradigm*.

Part A:

Please complete the following section by providing your demographic information.

Name:

Age:

Gender: Male Female

Years of teaching experience:

Professional qualifications:

- B.A. in ELT or English translation
- M.A. in ELT or English translation
- Ph.D. in ELT or English translation

Part B:

DIRECTIONS: Imagine you are discussing with your colleague about your perceptions of the concepts in the EIL paradigm giving your opinion truthfully. Please choose the option that best corresponds to your level of agreement with each statement below.

<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>				
1	2	3	4	5				
Statements			1	2	3	4	5	
1. Native-like pronunciation is important for communication.								
2. English is just for communication and it is not important to follow standard British or American accent as long as you can be understood.								
3. Following standard American or British accent is important in communication and other accents look somehow irritating when speaking with those accents.								
4. L2 teachers should provide immediate feedback on L2 learners' performance regarding English pronunciation.								
5. L2 teachers should provide delayed feedback on L2 learners' performance regarding English pronunciation.								
6. As long as communication is not adversely affected, we should not insist on native-like pronunciation.								
7. Students should follow standard American or British accent as proper pronunciation.								
8. It is fine when teachers speak English with nonnative accent and they should focus more on learning than imitating the accent of native American or British speaker.								
9. English teachers should demonstrate native-based pronunciation in the class.								
10. L2 teachers should use real conversations among only native speakers in class.								
11. L2 teachers should use real conversations between native and								

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nonnative speakers in class.					
12. In non-English speaking countries (e.g. Japan and Iran), nonnative speakers should acquire the language norms of native speakers of English.					
13. In using English, what is important is mutual understanding rather than native-like accuracy.					
14. L2 teachers should use authentic videos with both native and nonnative speakers.					
15. Native speakers are the rightful owners of the English language.					
16. Those who are fluent enough to speak the language without major problems are the rightful owners of the English language.					
17. L2 teachers should try to promote native speakers' cultural conceptualizations and values in class.					
18. As an English teacher, I regard my bilingualism as a resource rather than a problem.					
19. A bilingual teacher is more resourceful than a monolingual one.					
20. My students rightfully prefer a native speaker teacher to a nonnative one.					
21. The cultural conceptualizations of native speakers rather than those of nonnative speakers of English should be taught in L2 classes.					
22. All nonnative varieties of English (e.g. Indian English and Singaporean English) have their own legitimacy and acceptability.					
23. Native English-speaking teachers are the best English teachers.					
24. To be successful communicators in English, we do not need to learn the cultural conceptualizations of nonnative speakers.					
25. My students and I should be eager to adopt a new identity like those of Americans and Britishers by learning English.					
26. I am ready to suspend my own cultural values and replace them with those of the native speakers.					
27. Globalization will force people towards cultural uniformity and cultural diversity is to be abandoned.					
28. English belongs not only to native English speaking countries but also to other countries which use English for communication.					
29. As a result of the international use of English, nonnative speakers of English do not need to observe all native speaker language norms (i.e. rules of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation).					
30. Linguistic and cultural native-speaker norms are to be followed as closely as possible.					

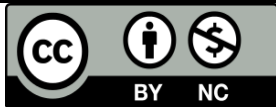
THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND HONESTY.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. Do you believe that it is necessary to make attempts to sound native-like or that you can retain your L1 accent in your English?
2. Do nonnative speakers of English need to observe all linguistic NS norms (i.e., rules of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation)? What about cultural NS/NNS norms?

3. In view of the fact that most of our communications are with nonnative speakers from other countries, don't you think we should get familiar with the new emerging varieties of English accent?
4. Who do you think is the real owner of English?
5. Do you think you should teach the cultural conceptualizations of NSs or NNSs of English? Which cultural conceptualizations do you opt for when teaching English?
6. Who do you think is a better teacher of the English language, a native speaker or a nonnative speaker of English? Why?



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