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FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES Y EDUCACIÓN

DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS

**ANÁLISIS DE LAS DIFERENTES CONCEPCIONES SOBRE LA PERTENENCIA
DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS**

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Licenciado en Educación y Título de Profesor de Inglés

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**AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT CONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE OWNERSHIP OF
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**A bachelor thesis for the degree of Licentiate in Education and the professional title of
Teacher of English**

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One wise man said, "A lesson without pain is meaningless. That's because no one can gain without sacrificing something. But by enduring that pain and overcoming it, he shall obtain a powerful, unmatched heart. A Fullmetal heart."

This endeavor would not have been possible without my family, close friends, and Max. I will be always grateful for your support through all these years and especially at the end of this journey.

Francisco Cortés Vargas

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Claudio Olivares Marambio.

INDEX

ABSTRACT	5
RESUMEN	6
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	7
General Objective:	7
Specific Objectives:	7
Research Questions:	8
Hypothesis:	8
CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	21
CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS	23
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION	28
BIBLIOGRAPHY	31

ABSTRACT

At present, the ownership of the English language has generated a debate that is in vogue among many researchers about who has the legitimacy of the English language and who are its respective owners. Having that in mind, this study's aim is to identify and analyze current conceptions about the ownership of the English language. The methodology used for the present study is that of qualitative research. An analytical-descriptive approach and aspects of phenomenology were incorporated, especially during the reading stage in which papers from countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Iran, and others were considered. Throughout the analysis of the results, it was found that it is possible to conclude that the ownership of the English language belongs to each user who performs the predominant action, which is to communicate in a new language. This action may have different variants that are as valid as those proposed by the countries that claim ownership and purity of the English language.

Keywords: World Englishes - Ownership of English Language – English as an International Language - English as a Lingua Franca - Native Speakers – Non-native speakers.

RESUMEN

En la actualidad, la propiedad de la lengua inglesa ha generado un debate que está en boga entre muchos investigadores sobre quién tiene la legitimidad del idioma inglés y quiénes son sus respectivos propietarios. Teniendo esa mente, este estudio tuvo como objetivo identificar y analizar las concepciones actuales sobre la propiedad del idioma inglés. La metodología utilizada para el presente estudio correspondió a la investigación cualitativa. Se incorporó un enfoque analítico-descriptivo y aspectos de la fenomenología, especialmente durante la etapa de lectura en la que se consideraron documentos de países como Filipinas, Vietnam, Irán y otros. A lo largo del análisis de los resultados, se encontró que es posible concluir que la propiedad del idioma inglés pertenece a cada usuario que realiza la acción predominante, el cual es comunicarse en un nuevo idioma. Esta acción puede tener diferentes variantes que son tan válidas como las propuestas por los países que reclaman la propiedad y pureza del idioma inglés.

Palabras claves: Ingleses del mundo – Propiedad del idioma inglés – Inglés como lengua internacional - Inglés como lengua franca – Hablante nativo – Hablante no nativo.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

English is a language that exists in reality all around us. It is as significant to us as the light that illuminates our homes or as important as the air we breathe. Through centuries of British colonization and globalization (whose dominance originated in the United States), English has been an integral part of our everyday lives. Most of the simple things that we take for granted, such as food, tools, electronic devices, names, and other areas, possess English names on them. Besides seeing it everywhere, we also use it to express our feelings, conduct investigations, teach, learn, and exchange currency. Regarding the communicative aspects, English is increasingly used in different intercultural communication contexts, particularly in quotidian situations. For the last two decades, researchers have debated who are the 'true' owners of the English language, the native English speaker or the person who employs the language to communicate in different settings.

General Objective:

The general objective of this research is to identify and analyze the different conceptions about the ownership of the English language and determine which view is most widely accepted.

Specific Objectives:

The specific objectives of the present investigation are:

- To find out whether current conceptions about the ownership of the English language have a similar orientation or a dichotomic orientation.
- To examine the ideological base of each conception about the ownership of the English language.
- To determine which conception about the ownership of the English language is more adequate for English Language Teaching.

Research Questions:

The research questions used in this study are:

1. Who are the owners of the English language?
2. What is the position of English as an International Language and English as a Lingua Franca regarding ownership of the English language?
3. Are outer circle and expanding circle countries the owners of the English language as well?
4. Who determines the ownership of the English language?
5. Is Standard English the only way to teach and learn the English language?

Hypothesis:

With the growth of English as a global language, more than 80% of interactions in the world occur among speakers whose first language is not English, a fact that endorses the legitimate claim of non-native speakers as owners of the English language.

CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It was the British Empire through its colonies all over the world that helped spreading the use of the English language. After the decolonization process that lasted until well into the middle of the 20th century, places like India, Kenya, Nigeria, among others use English as an official language or for educational and business purposes. Even though these countries began attempting to use the English language following the grammatical, syntactical, and phonological rules of the colonizer country, some changes have inevitable occurred as time has passed, mainly due to the hybridization of the English language as their use of English has been greatly influenced by their own cultures, their own way of expressing things, and their own identity. All these aspects have produced a variety of English that is different from the one used in the United Kingdom.

With the emergence of the United States as a world power after the Second World War, the spread of the English language became a world-wide phenomenon thanks to technology, commerce, politics, and culture, among other areas. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, the United States doubled or tripled its influence throughout the world. Due to unimagined advances in technology, such as the internet and the media, the world became accessible to all countries, independent of its location or its economic status. In culture, Hollywood produced (and still produces) great films that are seen everywhere. The same occurs with TV shows and comics. And all contribute to magnify the culture of the United States and the status of the English language.

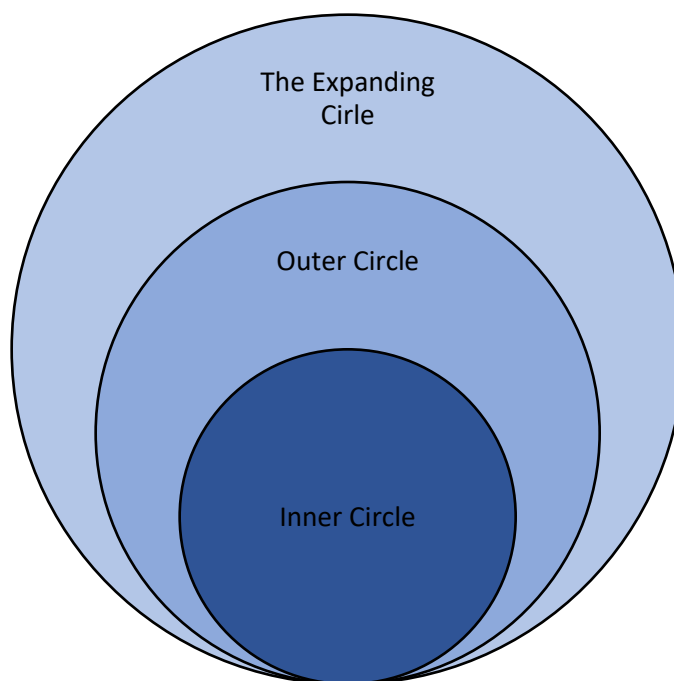
The spread and influence of the English language has been so pervasive that currently it is studied and used in all continents as *the* tool for communication. In this sense, it has become a lingua franca. It is estimated that about 80% of the interactions of people who use the English language for communication are not native speakers. Similarly, it is calculated that more than one billion people who speak the English language are not native speakers, in comparison with 380 million who speak the language as native speakers. That is, there are more people who use the English language in the “expanding circle” than in countries in which the language is used as their first language. This situation creates considerable debate among scholars as the ownership of the English language is problematized by the different varieties that have emerged in various parts of the world. Due to these facts, scholars, since

the last decade of the 20th century, have been asking and studying the issue of the ownership of the English language. One of the main questions of this debate centers on who the actual owner of the language is: the native speakers, the users who are not native speakers, or both. This discussion is looked at from different perspectives such as the social, cultural, geopolitical, and ideological points of view, all of which challenge the traditional paradigm for English language teaching and learning whose central base is “standard English.”

As a matter of fact, Standard English (SE) and World Englishes (WE) are defined as two opposites. SE is a model that comes from countries that form part of the “inner circle” (Kachru, 1985). Some scholars, such as Quirk (1985) describes SE as a “standard” of the natural language that educated English native speakers use; Strevens (1981) provides a working definition of SE as “a particular dialect of English, being the only non-localized dialect, of global currency without significant variation.” On the other hand, from a linguistic perspective, WEs incorporates English as a foreign dialect that is described as “localized” forms of English (Bolton, 2005). Jenkins (2009) describes the concept of WE as encompassing any spoken variety used in the three Kachruvian circles. This tension between the two paradigms, SE, and WE, has yet to be conciliated.

To put the use of the English language in perspective, it is necessary to recur to Kachru’s (1985) model, which is composed of three circles that include all countries in relation to their “position” as to the use of English. According to Kachru, the expanding and evolution of English language throughout the years has generated the need to categorize and regroup the different varieties that exist in the different parts of the globe.

Braj Kachru's Circles:



Kachru classifies the English language in three categories: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle corresponds to those countries in which the English is used as a “native” language, like United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and New Zealand, among others (Lewko, 2021). These countries are considered the legitimate owners of the English language, along with considering themselves the driving force of the international growth of English (Lewko 2021). To the Outer Circle belong those countries which possess a language, or languages, of their own but use English as a second language or as an official language as a product of the historical colonialism that subjugated them during the occupation of the British Empire or the United States. Such is the case with countries such as India, Singapore, the Philippines, Nigeria, and other countries in different parts of the world. To the Expanding Circle belong those countries that traditionally use the English language as a foreign language (MacKay, 2003), and which use the language in a different method regarding range and frequency (Wei Ren, 2014).

Kachru's circles describe, then, native speakers (NS) and nonnative speakers (NNS) of the English language, the first being those who belong to the inner and outer circles, and

the second being those who belong to the expanding circle. As a rule, NS in the inner circle occupy a privileged position in comparison to speakers of the other circles since it is considered that SE is the only way the English language should be used; their English is fluent, perfect and natural and should be emulated by whoever wants to learn or use the language. On the other hand, NNS are those people who use with fluency, perfection, and naturally their own native language but also make use of the English language to communicate with other speakers who share the same condition.

The NS-NNS dichotomy becomes problematic since a large group of researchers are currently working on WE issues to settle the criteria about who can be labeled as NS or as a NNS because a single norm for SE no longer exists especially at a global level (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999, 2001; Davies, 1991; Lin, 1999; Liu, 1999; Mufwene, 2001; Nayar, 1997; Pennycook, 1994, 2001; Wee, 2002; Widdowson, 1994). Higgins (2003) points out that all the mentioned researchers, along with a sizeable number of others, criticize this dichotomy for being more a social construction than a linguistically based parameter and have asserted that speakers' own ideological stances toward their linguistic identities should be more significant than the label they are given by others. At the ideological level, there exists the position in which the traditional approach is labeled as linguistic imperialism whose aim is to preserve the status of the English language; other researchers critique this dichotomy for dividing group of speakers into haves and have nots from a top-down approach without taking the speakers' own perspectives into account (Higgins, 2003). One important point to consider is how people in the different circles of Kachru see themselves regarding the issue of identity, culture, and property of the English language.

In the last decades the English language has established itself as a communicational tool used at an international level. In fact, Promodou (1997) estimates that more than 80% of communication in English takes place between non-native speakers of English, which means that the percentage of interaction among nonnative speakers of English is higher than the percentage of interaction among native speakers of English (Mehdi, Dilek, 2014). This steady increase of NNS of English is responsible for the emergence of a new paradigm in English language teaching and learning, World Englishes, from which two terms dispute the name of

the new paradigm: English as an International Language and English as a Lingua Franca, which are currently used as synonyms.

Bolton (2012) pointed out that Kachru, Smith and other scholars greatly contributed to a major paradigm shift in studies related to the English language which has occasioned a growing recognition of “Englishes” in the plural, as in “varieties of English,” “international Englishes,” “new Englishes,” “English languages” and “world Englishes”. In the same vein, WE is an umbrella term that involves numerous variations, but two terms have established themselves as the most used: English as an international language, or EIL, and English as a lingua franca, or ELF. Both terms open the discussion among English scholars about a series of issues related to the English language, such as linguistic imperialism, identity, native versus nonnative speaker, and the topic of this research, which is the issue of the ownership of the English language. EIL has been defined as “a function that English performs in international, multilingual contexts, to which each speaker brings a variety of English that they are most familiar with, along with their own cultural frames of reference, and employs various strategies to communicate effectively” (Matsuda 2017, p. xiii as cited in J. Lee and K. Lee [5, p.]). Suzuki (1999) defines EIL as English that is free from the cultural and linguistic influence of any one particular country, and which can be used to successfully communicate with other educated native or non-native speakers of English in any country of the world. In the similar way, ELF refers to “interactions between members of two or more different linguacultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue” (House 1999, p. 74, as cited in McKay). Kirkpatrick (2011) mentions that ELF should not be defined simply as English used internationally, but rather as English used between speakers who do not share cultural contexts. Likewise, Boonsuk (2022) expresses that the traditional model of English has been challenged by the development of WE and ELF paradigms, a challenge that also includes the issue of the ownership of the English language. A collateral implication is that English Language Teaching, or ELT, should recognize the diversity and dynamism of English.

The above problematization may be summed up in the following question: Who owns the English language? There are two conflictive positions: those who attribute the ownership of the English language to the countries belonging to the “inner circle” as the main reference

to learn and communicate, which can be verified by a number of tools such as dictionaries, textbooks, materials, and standardized tests that for the most part come from countries that use English as their first language. On the other hand, there is a sector that considers that the English language belongs to each user, this is because they use it to communicate, and it varies in their dialects and largely in their cultural context. Considering the above, the two standpoints imply that, a) the learner should follow the native speaker through imitation and emulation, which would lead the speaker to be a "deficient" speaker, or b) to "appropriate" or take possession of the English language since due to its large number of variants that do not come from countries of the inner circle, the speakers or users have an acceptable level when it comes to the capability to communicate successfully with other nonnative speakers. In sum, the two camps that problematize the ownership of the English language can be stated thus: there are those who believe that things should stay the way they are, and those who believe that communication, and not learning rules, is the most important aspect of using the English language.

With respect to the positionality of authors regarding the issue of the ownership of the English language, three different points of view were detected. A few authors are against the paradigm of ELF, whose main idea is the democratization of the English language; some authors are not really interested in being part of this problematization; the majority of the authors studied in this research favor the new paradigm for English language teaching and learning. These three positions will be presented in the same order.

From the conservative perspective of the ownership of the English language, Hiep (2001) defends the preservation of Standard English, or SE, in contexts such as speaking and writing. He also emphasizes the idea that linguistic and cultural norms are necessary to achieve an effective communication. Similarly, Lewko (2012) brings to light one of the most important arguments about the ownership of the English language, which is the perception that a good number of non-native people have: that the English language belongs to those who speak and use it as native English, that is, people who are born in inner circle countries in the Kachruvian sense. Due to this idealization, the author illustrates the dichotomy between native and non-native speakers, in which those in the first group are the legitimate owners of English. Yoo (2014) affirms that many nonnative teachers belonging to the expanding circle

believe that the fact that they are also the owners of English empowers them. In this sense, Yoo considers that this is a fallacy: nonnative speakers are not the owners of English and feeling empowered is a delusion. He further expresses that ownership and use are completely different ways of relating to the English language. Lastly, Harsanti and Manara (2021), upon investigating the issue of the ownership of the English language at Permata School, Indonesia, found out that a great number of teachers considered that it was necessary to teach English from inner circle countries, including their culture and values.

A few authors studied in this research position themselves in a neutral zone mainly because they are not fully convinced about the validity of WE and hence they present doubts about the issue of the ownership of the English language. Kleban (2012), for example, approaches the issue of ownership of English and discusses the claim that English belongs to various communities of practice, which use it as one of the main communication tools. His conclusion is that a revision of the issue is necessary to understand the context in which the communication takes place. He also mentions that the fact that English is the language that millions of people use for online communication, it leads to different sequels and this situation will create more researching perspectives. Thamasbi, Hashemifardnia, and Namaziandost (2019) investigated a group of Iranian EFL learners to get their perspectives with regards to WE and SE. They wanted to know if there were positive or negative attitudes and whether students claimed ownership of the English language. Most of the participants' views towards WE were positive and supportive, and had the sense that English belonged to them. But together with this perception, they also showed an appreciation for SE and its prestigious accent. In sum, the participants did not present negative views towards WE or SE.

Most authors are researchers who have a positive point of view about not only about the specific issue of the ownership of the English language but also about all perspectives related to the WE paradigm. Widdowson (1993), for example, question how grammar and lexis in SE is a superposed dialect that is socially sanctioned to institutional uses, well suited to written communication but in their spoken form can be manifested by any accent. It is in the graphology that there are contradictions that SE seems not to care since for SE is more important the written variety mainly designed for institutional purposes. This author refers to

the people who pretend to have custody over SE and their complains about the ungrammatical language of the populace, indicating that the perpetrators are outsiders or non-members of the English community and promoting the idea that learning SE is the only way to become a member of this group. Widdowson accepts that English serves the communicative needs of different communities and the fact that its diversity is logical, as well as the thought that it is natural that the English language spreads in unintelligible varieties. To conclude, he mentions that the essential point of SE, like other varieties of languages, is and will be the continuous process of self-regulation to the different conditions of use; that native speakers have no special say in the matter, despite their claims to the ownership of real English as associated with their own particular cultural contexts of use. Taieb (2001) reviewed Widdowson's paper titled "The Ownership of English" and in his analyzes, he concludes that Widdowson's position is as valid as any other position and that it promotes the creation of a "World Standard English." Shibata (2011) considers that the English language is a tool that people acquire just for communication, but later he refuses this idea, and he encourages people to consider English as their language and identity. The author possesses an ideal about the ownership of English: that a positive disposition about it will enlighten the students who accept all the qualities that the ownership gives them.

In a similar vein, Haberland (2011) reflects on the discussion of the International English language as a dichotomy between two forms: the first is an ownership discourse, and the second is a maintenance discourse. The ownership discourse separates the ownership of the English language into purist and pragmatic positions. The purist position supports the idea that the ownership of English lies with native or first language speakers and that newer varieties being developed in the outer circle countries are either deviations from or approximations of native speaker norms (Chisanga and Kamwangamalu 1997:91). In the case of the pragmatic position, it is argued that English is owned by all those who use the language as a communication tool. In the maintenance discourse, the author argues that it "is about whether one should interfere with the language, and if so, who should do it; and Hall (1950) argues that this position is associated with normative rigidity and resistance to the language of every change. Hall also argues that "ownership is simply irrelevant and as such never discussed." With that point of view, the author uses the concept of *a laissez-faire*

attitude where the native speaker knows more than non-native speakers. With that dichotomy, Haberland asks whether ELF is an ownership or maintenance discourse. He considers that ELF is more related to the ownership focus in the pragmatic position. On the other hand, Rudolph (2011) points out the necessity of deconstructing the privileged side of ownership of the English language by inner circle countries. That position will result in the empowerment of nonnative English speakers in schools and will ban the dichotomy of "us vs. them," which, as the author says, "marginalize and divide."

Wei (2014) comments against the point of view of Yoo's article as he demonstrates the necessity and benefit of accepting ELF users' ownership of the English language in the expanding circle. He further discusses Yoo's points of view in four questions as to what the ownership of the English language refers to. In each circle do the countries share the same status? Can a local variety of English emerge in the expanding circle? Will the ownership of English bring about detrimental effects in the classroom? And finally, can local teachers become the ideal teachers? Firstly, Wei mentions that when people in the expanding circle communicates in English, they do not simply conform to native English varieties but adapt their English with changes to fit their own purposes. Secondly, Yoo's argument overlooks the increased role of English for international communication in the European Union (De Houwer and Wilton, 2011) and the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (Kirkpatrick, 2010) where English has become a primary language communication. Thirdly, Wei shows a group of studies that bring up the argument of Yoo in the Korean English as 'broken English.' Fourthly, Yoo's considers that the ownership of English will be prejudicial to the classrooms in the expanding circle. Wei disputes him mentioning that ELF may enhance expanding circle users in their communicative effectiveness. About the last question, both authors agree that an appropriate way to empower local teachers would be to recognize their advantages over native teachers by empowering them as ideal teachers. But if local teachers in the expanding circle cannot claim ownership of the English language, how can they become empowered as ideal teachers? Wei concludes that the only way to empower local teachers is improving their confidence and their status.

Bradley and Colpitts (2015) examine the different points and contradictory opinions about the English's position as a global language. English is present in every country and its

presence obey to different contexts. There are some countries that use the English language to obtain revenues, which has to do with how non-English speaking countries try to appropriate English for financial gain and how the commodification of English is associated to the belief that “the west is better.” A good example is Choi’s study about the University of Hong Kong that deals with how to teach the English language in Standard Chinese as a primary medium of instruction. It is mentioned that there is a common area of concern that the adoption of a lingua franca would reduce the use of the local language and bring it to its extinction. House (2003), and Phillipson (2001) have different opinions about it. House mentions two types of language: the language for communication and the language with which one identifies, where a L1 speaker is linked to their community and culture and through which one pursues to have a sense of identity. Phillipson (2001) comments that English as a global lingua franca endangers local languages. Mufwene (2010) argues that in Africa there is a significant threat to the smaller local languages that fear more the major indigenous languages than the languages associated with colonization or with globalization. Finally, even though the spread of the English language has a colonial past, today people use it to communicate through borders and cultures; having a common language helps to shelter the culture and heritage, as long as the lingua franca do not reemploy local languages or relegate them to a lesser role.

Norton (2018) focus on the central issue that is a constant in the debate about the ownership of the English language: identity. He recognizes a language as a linguistic system and a social practice where identities are forged, imagined, negotiated, and sometimes resisted. He further explains how the social context makes teachers and learners change the identity of English depending on the countries in which English is taught. Using different examples of how native and non-native teachers have developed classroom practices which enhances the investment of the English language, promotes the ownership of language on students and expand the range of identities on teachers and students. All the research examples support how classroom practices may be more important than language learning and ownership of English than the native language of the teacher.

Monfared (2018) brings to light how the ownership of the English language by inner circle countries has allowed English teachers to be influenced by their own native language.

This sway is reflected in the necessity of many teachers to imitate native speaker accents and use inner circle pedagogical material in their classes, an attitude that puts expanding circle teachers in a schizophrenic situation (Medgyes, 1983). In this scenario, the author shares the position of the studies by Llurda (2009) and McKay (2003); they consider the necessity of the re-nationalization of the language, which can develop the idea that English is not limited to one single country and promote a new paradigm in ELT.

Akkakoson (2019) uses the concept of "taking ownership" of the English language by users of different linguistic areas and culturally diverse since the English language is an international and global language. This point of view is reinforced by Widdowson (1994, 1997), who expresses that "native speakers of English that with the status of their language as an international means of communication, they must accept the fact that an international language has to be an independent language."

Sahranavard and Lee (2020) explore the notion of the "Persianization" of the English language, a concept that refers to the process of appropriation and reinvention of English by the Iranian linguistic and cultural context. This process could be possibly through a theory of sociolinguistic re-localization in which the English language changes its status as Iranians' communicative needs. In this case, the ownership of English belongs to an Iranian English language variety as a linguistic and cultural resource that can function as a Persianized entity in the contemporary sociolinguistic ecology of that country. Zeng and Yanga (2022) show how is the present situation of English imperialism in Philippines, describing how the Filipino culture has used the English language to promote and destroy the Filipino language. The researchers introduced the essay with an historical review of English linguistic imperialism in the Philippines from the 16th to the 20th century, where in the first 35 years of the 20th century the English language worked as a distributor of prestige and wealth. All this English language influence provoked the lack of a common language in all the country what boosted the economic and cultural situation of the country, but this linguistic imperialism provoked the endangerment and extinction of different languages of the Philippine's.

Boonsuk and Fang (2022) consider that an increasing percentage of non-native speakers value the different types of English language varieties instead of native English. In

addition, one of the essential objectives of endorsing non-native English language is the intelligibility of speech used by different accents. This point of view allows for the understanding of different English accents "from the broader perspective of the World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca paradigms." In conclusion, the position of these researchers is a reflection that the English language, and all varieties are the property of different individuals who use the English language for communication, adapting it or changing it depending on their various cultural necessities.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Keeping in mind the main objectives of this investigation, the researchers opted for a qualitative approach which according to Hernández Sampieri (2010), during the compilation and analysis of the obtained data the information is refined, and the research questions are modified as needed. Quecedo and Castaño (2002) define qualitative investigation broadly as the type of research that produces descriptive data. This investigation focuses on comprehending the phenomenon of the ownership of the English language taking into account the ideological perspectives of scholars who have studied this issue.

This investigation possesses explanatory features with regards to questions about the ownership of the English language, EIL, and ELF. These concepts are thoroughly analyzed and discussed from which different and contrasting points of view emerge. The researches consciously avoid to present a biased vision about this area of study. Hernández Sampieri (2010) defines the nature of explanatory studies as "studies that go further than the description of concepts and phenomena or the establishing of the relation between concepts; that is, they lead to answer about the causes of the events and phenomena physical or social."

Similarly, this study adopts the phenomenological approach to deal with the conceptual intricacies of the area in question. This method's intent is to comprehend the social phenomena from the own perspective of the actor and seeks to understand the motives and beliefs behind the acts from a personal level. Fuster (2019) considers phenomenology as a methodology that admits a new kind of approximation to knowledge which facilitates the application of their best results in the human or social sciences.

Finally, this work's aim is to analyze the current conceptions about the ownership of the English language. During the course of this investigation, a great quantity of articles dealing with the topic of the ownership of the English language were selected and thoroughly discussed and analyzed to discover the most convincing and plausible argumentations regarding this issue. Every article read was placed in one of these three categories: in favor of democratizing the ownership of the English language, against the democratization of the English language, and a neutral position about the ownership of the English language. From

the knowledge acquired from these three postures, the researchers adopted their own position regarding this important issue.

CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The primary purpose of this investigation is to identify the current conceptions about the ownership of the English language and analyze them to elucidate who is, de facto, the owner of this language. Our position regarding this issue is aligned with those authors that democratize the ownership of the English language to include speakers who belong to the Kachruvian expanding circle.

First, a few words about authors that have a neutral position or are against the democratization of the English language regarding its ownership. Hiep (2001) defends the traditional paradigm of SE and believes it is necessary for effective communication. But it must be kept in mind that the great majority of users of the English language are nonnative speakers who come from the expanding circles. For obvious reasons, they cannot internalize the cultural norms or contexts of SE. Rather, they must use their own realities to establish a natural conversation that leads to the communicative act. Harsanti and Manara (2021), focus their investigation on the teaching and learning of the English language. They consider that the English from the inner circle countries must be taught, including their culture and values. Likewise, Thamasbi, Hashemifardnia, and Namaziandost (2019), show that Iranian EFL students, even though they are sympathetic towards becoming owners of the English language, they prefer to learn SE because of the prestige and because they believe SE is more attractive than their own variety of English. The teachers at Permata School consider that English from the inner circle is better for social status than their variation of the language. These examples show how teachers and students have an ideological vision about the English language. At the same time, they convey the idea that imitating or copying the nuances of the English language used by inner circle countries will grant a better social status. For these researchers, a natural and effective communication is more significant than imitating the dialect or pronunciation from the inner circle countries, which give users the idea of a false kind of standardized English when learning and using the language.

Moreover, those researchers who agree with the traditional ownership of the English language support an approach that considers social and ideological concerns as well as the idea of empowerment with regards to the inner circle. Haberland (2011) delves into the

debate on the dichotomic nature of International English (IE), especially ELF, which translates as an ownership and maintenance discourse with a focus on the rigidity of the English language and its resistance to change. The author describes two positions about the ownership discourse: the purist and the pragmatic. The purist position focuses on the English used as a first language by native speakers and in the new varieties of English developed in the outer circle countries; the pragmatic position argues that the English language belongs to all those that use the language, and it includes users from the inner, the outer and the expanding circles without discrimination. Haberland (2011) also points out that NS do not consider NNS as owners of the English language, which forms a part of the ideological makeup of NS that prevents NNS from enjoying the benefits associated with inner circle countries, in the sense that they are the ones that provide textbooks, materials, and tests which reports them great monetary income. For them, the English language has become an industry not to be shared with outer and expanding circle countries.

Keeping in mind how NS consider the legitimate usage of the English language, Widdowson (1993) brings to the debate the concept of the “keepers” of Standard English, a concept that contains an ironic twist since while these “keepers” judge and complain about the ungrammaticality of people who use the English language they are the ones who create and use alternative forms of the English language. It is not possible for anyone who wants to learn the English language to be a part of the SE cult and share the privileges. While SE continues the process of self-regulation, Widdowson focuses more on the communicative needs because it is better to focus on attaining an effective and understandable interaction with others than try to obtain the invisible medal as a SE user to become a member of the SE society.

Taieb (2001) also supports Widdowson’s position and seeks to establish a World Standard English in which the language will auto-regulate itself, and both NS and NNS will have responsibilities to maintain this English as an International Language. Boonsuk and Fang (2022) found out that an increasing number of NNS value the different varieties of the English language in disfavor of native English. In rigor, it is accurate to declare that NNS use and practice the English language more than NS, and that the emergence of different varieties of English is evidence that the English language adapts into the context of each country or

region that uses it for communication, but it is also true that it is essential to keep the intelligibility of every speech act in all interactions.

Then, based on the substantial evidence presented in the previous pages, it is possible to determine unequivocally who owns the English language: for these researchers the owner of the English language are the users by the significant fact that the users are the main gear in all communicative interactions and the context in which they live can affect their dialect in several ways including the pronunciation. All varieties of the English language are different and unique, and they are a part of people's own identity. At the moment of speaking, all users have their own way of communicating their thoughts, ideas, and needs that also apply to language; no one can come and tell others in what way to express their thoughts. It may well be that there are some cultural and traditional forms of expression in each culture, but in the view of these researchers, no one can impose their own ideas on how to use the language, especially about something as intangible as the ownership of the English language.

The contexts in which the ownership of English is claimed by some people is an important matter to keep in mind. In their research, Bradley and Colpitts (2015) concern about the adoption of English as a lingua franca will result in a reduction in the local language and ultimately lead to its extinction, an example of this is the case of the Philippines. Zeng and Yanga (2022) explain what happened to the Filipino culture when they adopted ELF to create a common language to communicate in all the islands of the country. The mentioned research demonstrates how the use of ELF in different countries can help or destroy. In our view, the situation in the Philippines is not a fault of colonization or globalization, rather it has to do with how the Filipino government and their people have not shown any concern regarding the preservation of the cultures and languages of each island. It is true that the Philippines belong to the outer circle and not the expanding circle as they use English as a second language.

But it is imperative for the users of the English language in the expanding circle to worry about their own culture and traditions as our ancestors passed their knowledge to the next generations. Currently, there are ways to preserve the historical data of the communities or societies that populate the globe. Sahranavard and Lee (2020) refer to a process of

appropriation and reinvention of the English language in the Iranian linguistic and cultural context as they, without erasing their own culture, have re-localized the English language according to their own needs. Similarly, Akkakoson (2019), under the concept of “taking ownership,” concludes that the English language is the property of different individuals who must adapt it or change it depending on their cultural necessities. This example shows clearly that the users who embrace the ownership of the English language have to adapt it depending on the context in which they live. To close this short section about the ownership of the English language and their different contexts, it is essential to understand the particular situation of the countries that use the English language. It is well-known that countries from the inner circle colonized other countries, and that through globalization have imposed the English language and cultures to countries of the outer circle and currently to the expanding circle countries. It is the duty of the users that are the legitimate owners of the English language to care about their contexts and surroundings to not allow the ideology of the inner circle countries to erase their own identity.

Shibata (2011) embraces the ownership of English and encourages people to consider English as their language and identity. Shibata's position stimulates users to be more confident at the moment of using the language, a position shared by Wei (2014), who, arguing against Yoo's investigation, believes that empowering local teachers will lead them to become ideal teachers, but only if they improve their confidence and status. The previous investigations show how the fact of empowerment would improve the use of the English language by the user. In this case, both studies deal with situations that happened in contexts of the expanding circle, where for example, as most teachers and students have been taught English by local teachers, these teachers will have to show to the students a great deal of confidence at the moment of teaching them English. In this way, the students will learn English without the fear or pressure of having to reach the same level of English of native speakers, which is, by all means, impossible. The ownership of the English language gives the users the prerogative to be themselves with the language without losing their identity or way of being.

Rudolph (2011) argues about the necessity of deconstructing the privileged side of the ownership of the English language by countries belonging to the inner circle. This

deconstruction will lead nonnative English speakers to empower themselves in the schools and finish the fight between "us vs. them." Rudolph's investigation recognizes people's actual struggle against the ideology of inner circle countries' ownership of the English language, the constant fight between dictating rules to others and following rules by others must stop. In this case, the discussion of SE and WE is just a fight of how privileged countries, those belonging to the inner circle, want to keep the rights to dictate who can be considered as an owner or official user of the English language when more people outside of their circle use the English language at the same level they use it. Now, it is understood that each country, depending on their history and contexts, adapts the use of the English language to their reality, and it is practically impossible for them to use English according to the reality that exists in the United States or Great Britain. The English language has evolved through the centuries, and it is not the same as the English that Shakespeare used to write his plays and the English used today to write a book, create a script, call our families, and the like. To conclude this analysis, our thoughts about the ownership of the English language are that the users are the total owners of the language and they are the only ones who may determine such an ownership. Perhaps SE is one of the most used forms to learn English nowadays but is not the only one; we propound that users need to empower themselves to this new conception of ownership because for people belonging to the expanding circle, like us, is the best way to improve, learn and use the English language.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

It is well-known that the British Empire and the United States are responsible for the steady growing importance of the English language throughout the world. Today, in the midst, and as a result of globalization, all countries use English for communication. The interactions in English can occur in three circumstances: between native speakers, between native and nonnative speakers, and between nonnative speakers. The last group is where most English interactions take place, a fact that has been evidenced in studies that estimate that approximately 80% of English interactions in the world occur between nonnative speakers. Braj Kachru, who maps the use of the English language in three circles named the inner, outer and expanding circles in what he calls World Englishes, has greatly contributed to the problematization regarding the ownership of the English language, in which two camps have emerged: the first considers that native speakers are the owners since they were born in a country that uses English as a native language and they provide the norms for its use; the second challenges this notion since even though they belong to the expanding circle, they have learned the language and know how to use it successfully. Communication is more relevant than imitating the nuances of SE. Since both groups claim ownership of the English language, these researchers took upon them the task of elucidating this controversial issue.

This study determines that ELF, or EIL, as a new paradigm for ELT, presents an alternative regarding the traditional conception about the ownership of the English language. As explained by Kachru (1982), the English language is divided into three categories, the inner, outer, and expanding circles, in which the origin and use of the English language in different parts of the world are determined. Also, it contemplates a discussion between the countries in the Inner circle, especially the USA and the UK, against outer circle countries, such as India and Kenya, and expanding circle countries, such as China and Chile, about who is the legitimate owner of the English and which type of English should be taught everywhere. This legitimacy is reflected in the dichotomy reflected on the ideological bases of Standard English and World Englishes, where the second concept is currently considered the most appropriate conception of the ownership of the English language. The World Englishes' paradigm, through ELF/EIL, allows us to consider that the legitimate demand by

non-native speakers as owners of the English language is necessary for developing the English language in countries that do not belong to the inner circle.

At the heart of this discussion is the concept of native speakerism, which divides English speakers in native speakers, who use the language naturally and fluently because it is their native language, known as Standard English, and nonnative speakers, who, according to the traditional paradigm, are “deficient” speakers because they cannot emulate the way native speakers use the language in all its aspects. But in the last three decades there has been an enormous increase in the camp of non-native speakers of English, which has resulted in the emergence of the new paradigm designated under the names of World Englishes, English as an International Language, and English as a Lingua Franca, even though they refer to the same phenomenon and are interchangeable.

This research follows the qualitative method since it is analytical and interpretative in scope. The different conceptual positions about the ownership of the English were discussed in the theoretical framework in which more than twenty-five documents related to the issue in question were read and analyzed. Each article was separated according to its positionality: in the first group were the studies that supported the current status of English through the use of Standard English; in the second group were those articles that adopted a neutral position, that is, they did favor neither Standard English nor World Englishes; and in the third group were those articles that supported a change of paradigms from Standard English to World Englishes, or EIL/ELF.

In this research, concrete results were reached. Firstly, in the ideological confrontation between native English speakers and nonnative English speakers as to the legitimate ownership of the English language, the communication factor, as opposed to grammar correctness, must be considered in all cases. That is, to speak “perfect English” as a native speaker is no longer the aim in the teaching/learning of the English language. In this we support the idea that the English language belongs to every person who uses the language. The notion of people who try to communicate using “pure” English as native speakers do is incorrect because imitation and communication are different language skills. In the case of people who adapt the English language to their social, economic, and territorial context, they

implement a reinvention to the English language, which is more diverse and democratic. We hope that this research opens a door for further studies in the area of the ownership of the English language, and by extension, to the area of World Englishes and EIL/ELF as a new paradigm for English language teaching as every language is dynamic and changes through time.

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**La versión final de esta tesis ha sido revisada por todos los firmantes
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