English Variations in ELT: A Case of Rural Schools in North Kalimantan, Indonesia

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Abstract
American and British English variations in Indonesia are mostly known in society and schools. However, the two variations, including others, have not been taught specifically in schools. This current case study discusses English variations in ELT (English language teaching) by involving two senior high schools in rural areas of North Kalimantan, Indonesia, viewed from students’ perspectives. There are two aims of conducting this current research, namely: (1) to identify students’ perceptions of English variations used in learning English at senior high schools and (2) to analyze English variations taught by their English teachers. To collect data, questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis were employed. To analyze data, the interactive analytical model and the statistical formula were employed. Based on the findings, it was found that (1) American English is mostly known among students to speak, and (2) English teachers endorse several kinds of English variations to students. In addition, the teachers still speak mixed English-Indonesian language when explaining materials in the classes. It can be concluded that students in the rural areas of North Kalimantan have been endorsed by several kinds of English variations (mainly American and British English). Yet, the students have not known how to distinguish those variations and when to use them in conversations.

Keywords: ELT, English variations, North Kalimantan, rural schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a globalized language, the English language is always interesting to discuss because the language is used by different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in all transnational aspects of life (Al-Mutairi, 2020; Galloway & Rose, 2013). The language gives privileged access to international markets, scientific knowledge, and expertise (Lauder, 2008). In addition, the sociolinguistic environment of English has undergone a significant transformation as a result of the extraordinary globalization of the English language and the rise of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) throughout the globe (Galloway & Rose, 2014). The language has developed into several variations. The English variations from the inner circle that is most widely recognized internationally, i.e., American, British, and Australian English (Tévar, 2020). Furthermore, it becomes a lingua franca and is used by many people around the world (Manara, 2016; Vettorel, 2018). The English variations are codified in grammar, dictionaries, and manuals of usage. Groups that are becoming more globalized believe that it is crucial to make sure that their contacts with people from different cultures and communities using different forms of English achieve the intended aims (Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Kachru & Smith, 2008). Hence, it can be said that American and British English (abbreviated as AmE and BrE) still exist as standard English around the global communities for conversation, business, and so on, although it has raised many debates significantly in the practice of using first language (L1) linguistic standards (such as British/American English) to English instruction in multilingual situations, such as the outer and expanding circles (Chan, 2017; Kirkpatrick, 2007).

In Indonesia, English variations (i.e., mostly American and British English) are very familiar in society, including in teaching and learning English at schools. The language becomes either the second language for those who only speak Indonesian or the third language for those who speak Indonesian and a local/heritage/mother tongue language (Zein et al., 2020). In ELT (English language teaching), American and British English have been second-language learners’ primary goals (Suroso, 2022). As an expanding circle country, Indonesia has become an interesting discussion about using English variations that introduce EFL (English as a foreign language) in teaching and learning (Al-Mutairi, 2020; Monfared et al., 2016). The variations used are not managed directly in any education regulation in the country. It is in line with Manara (2016), who says that intercultural Engishes have not yet been accepted in formal academic settings. Therefore, the researcher believes that it is necessary to explore different English variations used from students’ perspectives.

Based on the preliminary study conducted by the researcher, several fruitful information was found. First, English variations taught are based on the speaker’s needs and are not introduced completely in schools. Second, English teachers seldom introduce English variations (e.g., American or British English) at school due to limited facilities to access those variations. Third, students’ environments do not demand the use of English in daily conversations, so they lacked exposure and motivation to learn English (Rahim & Chun, 2017). Therefore, the study on English variations usage by EFL learners in Indonesia needs to be further explored.

Several previous studies of perceptions of English variations in ELT had been conducted in different contexts and places. First, Huong and Hiep (2010), in a study of perceptions in Vietnam, analyzed that students tend to speak English with non-native speakers (NNSs) than with native speakers (NS) outside the classroom. BrE and
AmE frequently have preferred models in the classroom. Second, Tsou and Chen (2014) studied that EFL and ELF (English as a lingua franca) college students are aware of the English variations in diverse parts of the world, yet there is a need for a teaching and learning model. Third, Manara (2016) investigated teachers’ perspectives on Englishes communication and pedagogy and concluded that standard English is still strongly believed in the system administration of the institutions. Integrating Englishes into teaching is still an uncharted territory of practice for most teachers in the study. Fourth, Yanti et al. (2018), in a study of the lecturers’ attitude toward English variety in English learning in Padang, Indonesia, concluded that the lecturers realized and accepted the English variation by using most English standards, namely American and British English. Fifth, Hermini (2019) analyzed university students’ AmE and BrE perceptions. The students frequently employed American English in the teaching-learning process because it is easy to learn pronunciation and vocabulary. Sixth, Tévar (2020) studied Chinese EFL students’ perceptions of world English variations and concluded that those students tend to use their foreign English accents. Seventh, Suroso (2022) explored three English lecturers’ views on World Englishes (WE) in ELT and found that those lecturers use different English variations in the classroom. Eighth, Franssisca and Subekti (2022) surveyed Indonesian high school students’ attitudes toward English varieties and concluded that most participants had a moderate level of acceptance toward English varieties. Indeed, they should learn and be taught those varieties of inner-circle countries.

The main reason for conducting this current research is to analyze and extend the line of research regarding English variations during teaching and learning in senior high schools around rural areas viewed from students’ perspectives. Based on the previous explanations, most English variations studies are mostly focused on perceptions of the university level and the urban regions (see Hermini, 2019; Suroso, 2022; Tévar, 2020) and English standards in the teaching and learning process (Manara, 2016; Yanti et al., 2018). Nevertheless, studies on English variations used at the senior high school level are still very scarce, especially schools in Indonesia. In addition, there is no similar study to explore English variations in ELT around rural areas of Indonesia.

To fill out the gap, the researcher explores the variation in two-state senior high schools in rural areas of Nunukan Regency, North Kalimantan, Indonesia. The researcher collected data from students’ perceptions of the two schools about English variations used and how they are taught those variations. Two research questions are addressed in this current research, they are as follows:
1. What are students’ perceptions of English variations used in learning English at senior high schools in the rural areas of North Kalimantan?
2. What are English variations taught by their English teachers at the schools?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Notion of English Variations

In this current situation, English variations have developed within many variations and spread worldwide. Kachru (1985, p. 12) divides English variations within three concentric circles (see Figure 1), namely: the inner circle that relates to
English as the primary language (e.g., USA, Canada, England, New Zealand), the outer circle that relates to English use in social life or official sector (e.g., India, Malaysia), and the expanding circle that relates to EFL (e.g., Indonesia, China, Rusia) (Al-Mutairi, 2020; Wahid, 2013).

![Figure 1. Kachru’s Three Concentric Model (Kachru, 1985, p. 12).](image)

Regarding the fact that Indonesia is one of the expanding circle countries, Tévar (2020) argues that the inner-circle standards (i.e., British and American English) are mostly used by the expanding circle’s speakers. In a similar vein, Yoo (2012) argues that the inner circle is norm-providing from the expanding circle countries, while the outer circle is norm-developing. Moradi et al. (2016) give an example from Omani learners of English that English exposes the learners through local media and advertising, including the need to communicate with professional workers. Butler (1997), cited in Huang (2021), proposes five criteria for determining a native variety of English: (1) standard unique pronunciation, (2) lexicons that express peculiar local ideas, (3) history in the speech community, (4) written literature, and (5) a set of reference works-dictionaries and style guides.

Several previous studies have also discussed English variations, i.e. Wahid (2013) classified variations of English through definite article usage and found significant differences in the usage. A few similarities of the marked use are found among the outer circles. Tévar (2020) studied Chinese students’ perceptions of world English variations related to ethnic race and speaker gender. It was found that Chinese students have a certain preference for monolingual standards, namely: Chinese English accent and gender influences in language attitudes. Tokumoto and Shibata (2011) analyzed attitudes towards pronunciation in Asian variations of English and claimed that each country’s educational goals and particular social environment influence English variations. Evans (2010) identified inner-circle variations of English from Chinese perceptions and concluded that UK (United Kingdom) or British English is more accepted as a standard model than other variations. British and American English are strongly labeled as ‘casual/modern’. Therefore, it can be concluded that English
variations known worldwide are based on Kachru’s model: inner, outer, and expanding circle. Besides, the variations are considered with several criteria, such as pronunciation, locality, history, literature, and style.

2.2 Students’ Perception of Learning English

Perception is always related to an opinion or feeling based on the observation or analysis done to something. It is a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something (Hermini, 2019). Lee (2020) argues that English variations can be comprehended as one’s perception of different variations and accents. Perceptions of language variations have been an important line of research to describe how non-native speakers perceive a language daily (Tévar, 2020).

Several studies have been conducted relating to students’ perceptions of learning languages. For instance, Lee and Lee (2019) learned that English majors had more positive perceptions of both English variations and multilingual/multicultural communication than non-English-major ones among Korean. Kuteeva (2020), in students’ conceptions of English in an EMI program, concluded that English is used as a lingua franca in translingual activities, albeit to varying degrees and concerning various positionings. Lee (2020) studied informal digital learning of English and strategic competence for cross-cultural communication toward perceptions of English variations and suggested that inexperienced EFL students overseas tended to adopt more effective cross-cultural communications strategies when their perception of different variations of English became more positive through their engagement in IDLE activities. Lee and Chen Hsieh (2018) studied that both groups in the university assume their English ownership over their local variations, such as TaE (Taiwan English) and KoE (Korea English).

Hence, it can be concluded that perception is someone’s view toward something in a different way. In learning English, perception is used to evaluate the learning process conducted by a teacher whether s/he has filled out learning goals or not during a whole semester. Also, it is used to know whether the variety of English used by teachers and students is suitable or not. Relating to this current research, it focuses on the perception of the English variety used in the two-state senior high schools in a rural areas in Indonesia (i.e., in Lumbis and Sebuku Districts).

2.3 ELT in Indonesia and Its Relations with World Englishes (WE)

English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia started several decades ago. In brief history, English was officially taught in 1990 and has been reformed until 2018 (Zein et al., 2020). English language teachers must hold Bachelor’s degrees and teaching certificates to teach the English language in Indonesia (Wulyani et al., 2019). In teaching the language, it is a challenge to teach by maintaining standard norms of English (Bhowmik, 2015). Moreover, the language is taught in various contexts affected by global competition, mobility, and technological interconnectedness (Murray, 2020).

Relating to world Englishes, ELT and WE are suggested to view characteristics of WE in ELT practices, so it is not just taken for granted (Rajagopalan, 2004). Lim (2020) assumed that teachers implement WE and ELT by conceptualizing English within the EFL framework. Chan (2020), in the investigation of WE and ELT in Hong
Kong, found that WE influence by holding the English role and evolving language use contexts. Exposing English variations is done by bringing speakers of multiple in the class or sending e-mails, visiting websites, and even watching movies or video clips (Matsuda, 2003).

Several studies have explained ELT in Indonesia, i.e., Kurniawan et al. (2019) compared ELT in Indonesia and Singapore. They found that teaching English in Indonesian is for educational purposes only and generally conducted inside the classrooms rather than outside for daily conversation. Sadtono (2006) explored the history of TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) in Indonesia and concluded that TEFL in Indonesia is better than TEFL in Japan because English language use in big cities of Japan is more difficult than in Indonesia. Rini (2014), in a study about English in Indonesia, concluded that English language learning in Indonesian schools and universities is the standard variety used in books and formal situations. It aims to enrich Indonesian students’ ability in speaking the language as an international language.

Therefore, it can be said that ELT in Indonesia introduces English as a foreign language, not as a first or second language like other ASEAN countries (e.g., Malaysia and Singapore). The language is usually taught by certified language teachers to equip students with language skills. Relating to world Englishes, ELT also introduces existing English variations around the world. Yet, there are no fixed rules that manage what English variations (i.e., British, American, or other Englishes) should be taught and learned among Indonesian students.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design and Participants

This current research employed a case study with supporting data from quantitative to narrate the findings. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), case studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. To dig up the variations used further, two state senior high schools in rural areas of Nunukan Regency, North Kalimantan Province, were chosen as the research objects to gain data about English variations. One school is located in the Lumbis District, and another is in the Sebuku District. Geographically, those districts are located in North Kalimantan, Indonesia, and separated from Nunukan Island. It takes three hours of sea trip to reach the districts using a speedboat through the Sembakung River and adds a four-hour road trip using a car from Nunukan Island, the capital city of Nunukan Regency. Three reasons for choosing the schools as the research objects are: (1) the accessibility to learning sources and language institutes (e.g., private course, language laboratory) in which most students relies on language classrooms to have experiences in learning English (Anditasari & Sitompul, 2022; Reaisi et al., 2020), (2) students’ tendency towards education, especially in learning English that different with students in urban areas (Reaisi et al., 2020), and (3) location of those schools are near in the border area of Indonesia and Malaysia.

Participants involved were 75 students, of which 43 students of the eleventh-grade class at one state senior high school in Lumbis and 32 students from the tenth-
grade class at one state senior high school in Sebuku, Nunukan Regency. The participants were 29 (36.87%) male students and 46 (61.33%) female students. In addition, the participants’ age was categorized into three groups, i.e., 14 to 16 years old (30 students/40.00%), 17 to 19 years old (44 students/58.67%), and above 20 years old (1 student/1.33%). All respondents’ identity was concealed to keep their confidentiality. Their involvement is considered for several reasons, i.e., (1) English scores, (2) readiness to be involved in this research, and (3) class level.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

In this current research, the researcher collected data from three data sources, i.e., questionnaires, interviews, and textbooks. First, a questionnaire consisting of 12 items. It was adapted from several previous studies (i.e., Hermini, 2019; Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011; Tsou & Chen, 2014; Yanti et al., 2018). All questions employed the Indonesian language to ease the participants in filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaire was assisted by Google Forms and divided into three parts: (1) the respondent’s background information (e.g., sex, age, gender, etc.), (2) five questions in the form of multiple choices in which respondents can answer more than one choice for each question, and (3) seven statements by choosing a 4 scale of 1=very disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, and 4=very agree.

Second, an interview was carried out with the four students via Zoom application to meet virtually within a semi-structured interview. There were four students involved in the interview, i.e., two students from one state senior high school in Sebuku (i.e., JI and HL) and the others from one state senior high school in Lumbis (AN and MA). Their identity was concealed to keep their confidentiality. The questions asked were relate to the students’ experiences in learning English variations and the teacher’s teaching method used to introduce those variations.

Third, the researcher also collected documents from the teachers at the schools, i.e., two textbooks used in the teaching and learning process to know what English variations are mostly shown in those textbooks. The two textbooks entitled ‘BAHASA INGGRIS’ (the English Language) for classes X and XI were supplied by the Ministry of Education and Culture (see Figure 2). The books were collected as supporting data besides questionnaires and interview data.

In analyzing data, the researcher relied on two analyses. Qualitatively, it employed the Miles and Huberman model (Sugiyono, 2013), namely: (1) data reduction: the researcher reduced the data collected from the interview session with the two students, (2) data display: the researcher presented the collected data from the previous step to match other data findings, including questionnaire data, and (3) conclusion drawing. Quantitatively, data from questionnaires were analyzed using one statistical formula to account for the percentage of the frequency data:

\[ P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\% \]

Where:
P: Percentage
F: a total of the frequency
N: a total of the respondent
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

This part explains the data findings from the questionnaire, interview, and document. It is explained into two subparts to answer two research questions proposed, i.e., (1) knowledge of English variations, and (2) English variations practice among senior high school students.

4.1.1 Knowledge of English variations among senior high school students

In this first part of the questionnaire, there are six questions about knowledge of English variations adapted from two scholars (i.e., Hermini, 2019; Yanti et al., 2018). The participants can choose more than one option (see Table 1).

Table 1. Knowledge of English variations (adapted from Hermini, 2019; Yanti et al., 2018).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Options</th>
<th>f (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English variations that are known (Hermini, 2019)</td>
<td>American English</td>
<td>53 (70.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>British English</td>
<td>17 (22.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesian English</td>
<td>43 (57.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other(s)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>English variations should be taught at schools (Yanti et al., 2018)</td>
<td>American English</td>
<td>53 (70.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>British English</td>
<td>20 (26.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesian English</td>
<td>45 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other(s)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>English variations used in communication (Hermini, 2019)</td>
<td>American English</td>
<td>40 (50.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>British English</td>
<td>14 (18.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesian English</td>
<td>44 (58.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other(s)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 continued…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English variations are usually used at schools (Yanti et al., 2018)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American English</td>
<td>46 (61.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British English</td>
<td>16 (21.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesian English</td>
<td>48 (64%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other(s)</td>
<td>0 (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elements of English variation differences (Hermini, 2019)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>51 (68%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>48 (64%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>15 (20%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>45 (60%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 1, a majority of English variations known by the respondent were mostly American English, followed closely by Indonesian English variations. It is similar to English variations that should be taught at school, in which most of them tended to choose American English. The result of the questionnaire data was also in accordance with the interview data. From the interview data, JI and HL, the students from Sebuku, stated that they knew kinds of English variations, especially British and American English, but not comprehensively. In another data, student JI felt that British English was harder to pronounce than American (see Excerpt 1). In contrast, student HL thought that pronunciations of British English were taken from French and were hard to pronounce (see Excerpt 2).

Excerpt 1: “…If British English, its pronunciations are mostly taken from French and hard to pronounce…” (INTW/HL/15)

Excerpt 2: “…Hmm…British is more difficult to pronounce than American…” (INTW/JI/17)

In contrast, English variations mostly used in daily communication were reported as Indonesian variations, although the variation was unclear to the students. In fact, the variations generally used at schools were still American English. It is also supported by the participants’ choice that elements of English variations mostly known to distinguish among variations were pronunciation, followed by grammar and vocabulary. The result of the questionnaire data is also in accordance with the interview data. From the interview data, MA and AN, the students from Lumbis, admitted that they did not know about the differences in English variations comprehensively (i.e., British or American English) (see Excerpt 3 and Excerpt 4).

Excerpt 3: “… I never learn English variations. I just know Indonesian English from the book” (INTW/MA/21)

Excerpt 4: “… I do not know how to distinguish English variations…I just use English in general” (INTW/AN/20)

Further findings are from the two textbooks analysis used daily as instructional materials for learning English in the classroom. There were four samples of materials presented for this current research, i.e., two materials from class X and two materials from class XI. From the materials from class X, first, there was pronunciation practice that presented several words (e.g., ‘pen pal’, ‘sound’, ‘run’, etc.), including how to pronounce those words. Second was complimenting. It explained what and when a compliment is used including its expressions (e.g., ‘What a nice dress!’, ‘You look so gorgeous!’, etc.) (see Figure 3).
Next is the other two materials from class XI. First, there was responding to suggestions. It explains several expressions of making suggestions (e.g., ‘Let’s go to the movies’, ‘I think you should go’), accepting suggestions (e.g., ‘Yes, let’s go!’), ‘Okay, if you say so’), and declining suggestions (e.g., ‘No, thank you’, ‘Sorry, I can’t’). Second is the exercise for students. In the exercise, several expressions were to be completed by students within a simple conversation between two people (see Figure 4).

However, the textbooks just showed English in general and there were no explanation, reference, or instruction to explain the English variations used specifically in the book, such as American or British English. From the researcher’s point of view, all those materials were good to teach because the materials suited the students’ level, and the textbook implemented the national curriculum (i.e., *Kurikulum 2013* or...
Curriculum 2013). Nevertheless, it is suggested that examples like words or expressions from several English variations (e.g., American expressions or British English expressions) should be presented in the book, including explanations of how to distinguish American and British English. So, students are not only taught in mastering English skills but also knowledge in differentiating or recognizing English variations that existed in society. This further expands students’ awareness of the many other English variations in this world besides American and British English.

4.1.2 English variations practice at the schools

In this second part of the questionnaire, there are eight statements about English variations practice adapted from the literature (i.e., Hermini, 2019; Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011; Tsou & Chen, 2014), as is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. English variations practice (adapted from Hermini, 2019; Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011; Tsou & Chen, 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Frequency of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English has developed within several variations.</td>
<td>1 (1.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A teacher should introduce English variations to me.</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>An English teacher should teach English variations with interesting and fun methods.</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>English variations influence my English in communication.</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I would like to learn other variations, not only British or American English.</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I would like to be listened to and given examples of English variations of native speakers’ voices.</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I think clarity is more important than grammar in communication.</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>English variations equip my skill in mastering language when communicating in the real world.</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 reveals that a majority of the respondents tend to choose ‘very agree’ and ‘agree’ towards English variations practice at schools. In introducing English variations, a majority of the respondents mostly ‘very agree’ that English variations should be introduced in the class with interesting and fun methods. The result of the questionnaire data is also in accordance with the interview data about teachers’ methods of teaching English. From the interview data, AN argued that she felt comfortable with her English teacher’s methods of teaching English (see Excerpt 5). Another student, MA, added that her English teacher was fun when teaching English, but she felt difficult to comprehend her English teacher’s explanation (see Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 5: “…comfortable, her explanation is comprehensible for me…” (INTW/AN/55)
Excerpt 6: “...her teaching is fun, although I feel confused with her explanation in teaching sometimes...” (INTW/MA/53)

Next, the respondents mostly ‘agree’ if knowledge of English variations equipped students’ skill in mastering language when communicating in the real world. The result of the questionnaire data is also aligned with the interview data. From the interview, JI felt that mastering English was aimed to help her communicate with people from abroad (see excerpt 7). HL further explained that this was because English is a foreign language in Indonesia and the world (see excerpt 8).

Excerpt 7: “...if we meet people from abroad, we can communicate using English...” (INTW/JI/13)
Excerpt 8: “...because English is a foreign language in Indonesia and in some other parts of the world....” (INTW/HL/11)

Talking about the introduction and variations’ examples of the native speakers’ voices, a majority of the respondents in the questionnaire ‘agree’ that it should be listened to because English has developed within many variations in this world (i.e., Australian English, New Zealand English, etc.). The result of the questionnaire data is also aligned with the interview data. From the interview, JI admitted that her English teacher usually introduced English variations to them by making short sentences and explaining how to pronounce them. In contrast, student HL stated that her English teacher has taught variations. Student HL preferred using American English to using other variations during learning in class because, according to him, it is easier compared to other English variations (see Excerpts 9 and 10).

Excerpt 9: “...Usually, the English teacher explains materials of English variations using Indonesian language first, then we are asked to make short sentences, and pronounce them...” (INTW/JI/38)
Excerpt 10: “...Well, I have been taught and given examples of English variations, but I prefer using American because it is easy to use...” (INTW/HL/42)

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this current research are about the students’ perceptions of English variations used in learning English at senior high schools in the rural areas of North Kalimantan and the English variations taught by their English teachers at the schools.

4.2.1 Students’ perceptions of English variations used in learning English

Based on the findings, the students from the rural areas had sufficient knowledge about the existing variations (i.e., British, American, and others) of English around the world, although they were incapable to distinguish those variations comprehensively, such as pronunciation and vocabulary used in sentences in conversations. They perceived an everyday English variety, which they would like to know, to a certain extent (Tévar, 2014). In addition, these students were also introduced of English variations by their teachers through several textbooks distributed by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. However, the researcher believes that it can be
enriched by adding materials from other sources and integrating the cultural information to gain better learning experiences (Sulistiyo et al., 2021). By doing so, it is expected that students can gain more information about English variations while learning the language with their local culture.

The Indonesian high school students from the rural areas of this current study and those from the urban areas who participated in similar studies by Huong and Hiep (2010) and Fransissca and Subekti (2022) were all aware of the variations in British and American English. The variations are used and familiarized in schools, and the students learn and practice using those variations (Tévar, 2020; Tsou & Chen, 2014). These studies also agree that the differences between American and British English are mostly known in pronunciation (Hermini, 2019). Nevertheless, the current research did not focus on English variations in the schools’ system administration (Manara, 2016), stakeholders’ perception of language variation in ELT use (Chan, 2017), and did not further investigate teachers’ or instructors’ perceptions of English variations such as done by Suroso (2022) and Yanti et al. (2018).

From the researcher’s point of view, English variations is a part of language teaching that should be introduced in classrooms. Besides that, selective materials (e.g., English textbooks) should become the main attention of English teachers. It is very important in deciding the topic and the task, including the English variation that are to be taught to students. British and American English might be an ideal model for English teachers to be taught among the expanding circle countries, such as Indonesia. The variations (i.e., British and American English) are well-known among English speakers wound the world because they explain that the UK and US English are labeled as ‘casual/modern’ and ‘strict/traditional’ with positive and negative attributes (Evans, 2010). However, other variations (i.e., Australian and New Zealand English) should also be introduced with a purpose of enriching students’ knowledge in the learning process. Chan (2017) studies stakeholders’ perception of language variation in ELT use around Hong Kong, suggesting that students are given a choice to choose their own English learning targets as a reflection of both the learners’ exposure to English in their everyday ELT practices and assessment requirements.

4.2.2 The English variations taught by English teachers at the schools

In rural areas, the English variations (i.e., British, American, and others) do not have much influence on ELT. Yet, it can be an additional knowledge that English is not spoken in a single variation. Ahn and Kang (2017) add that EFL students do indicate their awareness of different English variations and even learning different variations in other EFL countries. In addition, Reaisi et al. (2020) argue that the process of this learning and teaching can greatly be influenced by the location of schools. Students in rural areas can make their English variations a localized variation due to influences of knowledge from the schools and interactions among people in their areas. Presenting English in different environments challenges existing social practices and identities (Murray, 2020). English has evolved beyond merely being a tool for communication, and the problems facing English instructors today are unparalleled (Bhowmik, 2015; Murray, 2020). Therefore, ELT development has little engagement with pluricentric. Students should be encouraged to be proud to speak the localized variety because English has a larger plurilingual repertoire than bilingual users (Chan, 2020; He & Li, 2021).
Second, English variations among the respondents in this study were accepted and practiced in their schools, although not comprehensively. This means that teachers in the rural areas are similar to those in the urban areas, they also introduced English variations in their classroom (Tsou & Chen, 2014; Hermini, 2019). From the researcher’s point of view, English variations give many benefits to students interested in learning them because the variations can help them learn the world through language use based on the culture and ideology of the speakers. This can be the basis for English teachers or instructors in making decisions on how much they should include different variations of English in their lessons (Fransisca & Subekti, 2022). This familiarization complements the students’ language skills (Huong & Hiep, 2010), such as when they finally do encounter native speakers of different English accents, they can better comprehend the native speakers. Hence, among the goals of learning English is international communication, including interaction with tourists or foreigners of English (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008).

4.3 Pedagogical Implications

Although this current research cannot be generalized to Indonesian EFL students, implications of English variations used in teaching and learning are raised, especially in rural areas. First, it is a note to evaluate the curriculum design of ELT developed by the government as the policy maker because most of the students in the rural areas do not know the variations comprehensively. There should be a curriculum of ELT that can be adapted for students in rural areas. Second, English teachers are suggested to endorse and become role models for implementing English variations in the classroom.

In the ASEAN contexts, English has been welcomed in many Southeast Asian nations with differing degrees of enthusiasm. Some have given English the status of an official language, while others have used it as a de facto working language (Wee, 2020). The Indonesian government is suggested to act in considering what English variations that should be taught in the class, although Indonesia does not implement English as a first or second language. It should be made clear. In the case of rural areas context, the government is also suggested to play its role in facilitating students with English programs to improve their literacy skills in English (Harun & Kabilan, 2020). In Asian variations of English studies, ELT’s implication in responding to English variations is essential in reducing learners’ perception of non-native English and refining their communication flexibility to accommodate the accent diversity (Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011).

5. CONCLUSION

Based on those explanations in the findings and discussion, the researcher can encapsulate answers to the two questions in this current research. First, most of the students from the two schools know that American English is a kind of English variation, although there is another variation mentioned in the questionnaire (i.e., British English). The students perceived that American English is easier to learn and speak compared to other variations spoken in the inner circle countries. Second, the teachers frequently used American English in classroom instruction, such as when
structuring sentences and teaching pronunciation. But they also introduce to the students several variations of English in the classroom, and the students were aware of this even though they could not fully distinguish those variations and did not know when to use them in conversations.

Teachers at the rural schools still speak mostly Indonesian to deliver materials to ensure that their students comprehend materials taught among limited facilities and materials. These schools relied on the textbooks that were supplied by the Ministry and still implement the Kurikulum 2013 (or the 2013 Curriculum) as their guidance in teaching English. The teachers may modify existing materials, including what English variations to use and are suitable for students. Examples are such as providing exercises of American and British English expressions, or how to pronounce words in American or British English. If rural teachers can do so, they can gain the best out of the existing learning and teaching facilities. Therefore, this condition is a good opportunity for English teachers in developing their learning materials (e.g., textbooks) with good instructions in endorsing English variations to increase students’ knowledge on this phenomena.

Last but not least, this current research is still in the first stage, and the samples are still limited to the two senior high schools in rural areas. Those who are interested in studying English variations are recommended to study the perceptions of English variations within bigger samples and settings in the Indonesian context of rural areas, both from teachers and students.

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