Reframing English teacher identity through pedagogy of disjuncture and critical incidents in global Englishes

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Article Info

Abstract

Global Englishes (GE) has challenged long-standing native-speaker norms by affirming the legitimacy of diverse English varieties, yet its classroom implementation remains limited. This article introduces the pedagogy of disjuncture as a conceptual response to this gap. Building on transformative learning theory, it redefines disjuncture as a deliberate pedagogical resource rather than as an obstacle. The core idea of this approach is designed for disjuncture. Unlike traditional uses of Critical Incidents, which often depend on retrospective accounts of classroom experiences, designed disjuncture is intentionally created encounters that expose teachers to linguistic diversity, communicative breakdowns, or intercultural tensions. By structuring these incidents as planned interventions, teacher education can guide participants through cycles of exposure, reflection, and dialogue that lead to the reshaping of professional identity. The contribution of this article is twofold. Conceptually, it combines GE, teacher identity research, and transformative learning into a cohesive framework that broadens the scope of Critical Incident pedagogy. Practically, it outlines how designed disjuncture can be integrated into teacher education curricula worldwide, helping teachers move beyond rhetorical acceptance of GE toward resilient, critically aware professional identities suited for multilingual classrooms.

Keywords: *Critical incidents, global Englishes, pedagogy of disjuncture, teacher identity, transformative learning*

INTRODUCTION

The global presence of English is now undeniable. It is used daily by many more people as a second or additional language than by so-called native speakers, and it circulates across numerous cultural and professional domains. This reality has led to the development of the Global Englishes (GE) paradigm, which highlights diversity and questions the continued dominance of Inner Circle norms (Jenkins, 2015; Galloway & Rose, 2015). However, the shift from theoretical acknowledgment to practical teaching has been inconsistent. In many classrooms, English is still taught and assessed based on native-speaker standards, leaving teachers and learners with little opportunity to recognize their own linguistic legitimacy.

This contradiction has been widely recognized but remains insufficiently addressed. Teacher education programs often respond to GE by making superficial references to Indian or Singaporean English or by offering a brief discussion of English as a Lingua Franca. While these efforts raise awareness, they rarely prompt teachers to reevaluate the deeper assumptions that shape their professional identities. As Rose & Galloway (2019) argue, GE risks staying rhetorical if it does not engage with the ideological work of teacher identity.

The issue is not just about curricular design but also involves ideology. Teachers shape their professional identities based on discourses of legitimacy, authority, and ownership (Varghese et al., 2005; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). For many non-native English-speaking teachers, this creates a conflicting space: they are expected to demonstrate native-like English while being simultaneously seen as lacking (Houghton & Rivers, 2013; Fang & Widodo, 2023). This dissonance is apparent in expanding-circle contexts like Indonesia, where English functions as both a foreign language in the curriculum and a global resource in society (Zein, 2020). While existing studies have highlighted these tensions, few have provided specific strategies for how to promote identity shifts within teacher education.

Transformative learning theory offers a valuable perspective. Mezirow (2000) and Jarvis (2009) explain how genuine learning often starts when familiar frames of reference are shaken up. These moments of dissonance can feel uncomfortable, but they also encourage reflection and create space for new ways of thinking. While this insight has influenced adult education more generally, its use in language teacher training has been limited. Most GE-focused initiatives continue to prioritize raising awareness over designing structured experiences that could trigger the kind of disjuncture needed for identity change.

One promising but often overlooked resource is the tradition of Critical Incidents (CIs). Teachers have long been encouraged to reflect on moments of difficulty or surprise in their practice (Tripp, 1993). In GE contexts, however, such incidents are typically treated as retrospective narratives: teachers reflect on what has already happened. While helpful, this approach relies on chance encounters and cannot systematically challenge deeply held assumptions.

This article introduces the idea of designed disjuncture or the pedagogy of disjuncture. As affirmed by Nolan & Molla (2018), the pedagogy of disjuncture plays an important role in promoting transformative professional learning. This learning is principally context-dependent, based on professional knowledge and experiences, involves "moments of disjuncture and deliberation," and has transformed the profession. Unlike traditional Critical Incidents, which depend on teachers' previous experiences, designed disjuncture are deliberately created encounters that expose teachers to linguistic diversity, communication breakdowns, or intercultural tensions. They are not left to chance but are integrated into teacher education as planned interventions. What sets them apart is their scaffolded approach: teachers experience exposure, guided reflection, and dialogue, fostering conditions for identity transformation. In this way, disjuncture becomes a teaching resource rather than an issue to be avoided.

The purpose of the article is twofold. Conceptually, it combines GE scholarship,

teacher identity research, and transformative learning to expand the scope of Critical Incident pedagogy. Practically, it describes how designed disjuncture can be integrated into teacher education to move GE beyond just rhetorical awareness. The main argument is that without structured disjuncture, GE will continue to acknowledge diversity in theory while enforcing conformity in practice; with them, it can help teachers reconstruct their professional identities for a truly multilingual world.

Global Englishes And The Challenges Of Implementation

Over the past twenty years, the Global Englishes (GE) paradigm has transformed debates in applied linguistics by challenging the dominance of Inner Circle norms and emphasizing diversity in English use (Jenkins, 2015; Galloway & Rose, 2021). What GE has accomplished well is to validate different varieties and to offer teachers and learners a new perspective on ownership. However, the true challenge has never been just recognition. The real test is how this recognition is put into practice.

In this term, the evidence is less persuasive. Studies indicate that GE is often included in curricula in symbolic ways: a listening passage with a non-native accent or a brief module on ELF (Rose & Galloway, 2019). These additions signal awareness but rarely change assessment standards or professional expectations. Dewey (2014) calls this a "plurilithic impasse," while Matsuda (2017) warns that GE risks becoming rhetorical if it is not connected to identity work. More recent research supports this concern, showing that awareness without transformation leaves teachers intellectually convinced but practically limited (Fang & Ren, 2018; Widodo & Fang, 2024).

Teacher Identity As An Ideological Struggle

This gap becomes more evident when viewed through the lens of teacher identity. In education, identity is not just about roles but also about ideology: it is negotiated in relation to discourses of legitimacy, authority, and belonging (Varghese et al., 2005; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). For non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), these negotiations are especially challenging. They are expected to model standards that simultaneously mark them as "less than" native speakers (Houghton & Rivers, 2013).

This struggle extends beyond a single region and has been documented worldwide. Research in Europe reveals similar tensions, with systematic reviews emphasizing how identity is shaped and reshaped throughout teachers' careers (Rushton et al., 2023). In Africa, issues of legitimacy and linguistic hierarchies remain closely tied to colonial legacies, while in Latin America, identity work is linked to transnational and multilingual teacher education contexts (Moonthiya & Stevenson, 2024). In Indonesia, Zein (2020) and Widodo et al. (2020) show how teachers are caught between policy reforms promoting global competence and exams rooted in Anglophone standards. Fang and Widodo (2023) refer to this as "identity dissonance," where teachers may accept linguistic diversity in theory but still feel pressured to reproduce native norms in practice. More recently, Ubaidillah et al. (2023) demonstrate how Indonesian EFL teachers actively negotiate their professional identities within the Global Englishes paradigm, highlighting both struggles and emerging resistance strategies. Existing studies have been valuable in documenting these struggles. However, they often stop at just describing them. What remains largely unexplored is how this dissonance could be used as a resource for growth instead of being seen as a persistent problem.

Transformative Learning And Disjuncture

Transformative learning can be a way forward. Mezirow (2000) explains how disorienting dilemmas shake up usual ways of thinking, while Jarvis (2009) and Illeris (2013) highlight that this disjuncture is key to deep learning. These ideas show that changing one's identity needs more than just awareness. It needs structured opportunities for teachers to confront moments when their old assumptions no longer apply.

In teacher education, however, this aspect has been underdeveloped. Most GE-related

programs still focus on knowledge transmission: teaching teachers that plurality exists. What they often fail to do is create experiences that provoke the disjuncture needed for rethinking legitimacy. As Nguyen & Fang (2023) argue, without deliberate design, transformative learning remains a theoretical promise rather than a pedagogical reality.

Critical Incidents As Designed Disjuncture

One way to operationalize disjuncture is through Critical Incidents (CIs). Initially developed by Flanagan (1954) and later adapted for teacher reflection (Tripp, 1993), CIs focus on moments of tension that stimulate professional learning. They have been helpful in teacher education, but their scope is limited. They are often retrospective, relying on teachers' past experiences, and they tend to stay descriptive, analyzing what happened without exploring why certain assumptions were held (Barkhuizen, 2017).

This article advocates moving beyond traditional methods. It introduces designed disjuncture as a way to intentionally create incidents that expose teachers to diversity, communication failures, or intercultural conflicts. Unlike traditional CIs, which rely on chance, designed disjuncture is integrated into curricula. They are structured so that exposure is followed by guided reflection and discussion. The goal is not just to notice differences but to experience the disjuncture of differences and use it as a starting point for rethinking identity.

In summary, the literature indicates both progress and limitations. The GE scholarship has convincingly challenged native-speakerism but has not provided teachers with tools to reimagine their legitimacy. Research on teacher identity describes dissonance but rarely explains how to transform it. Transformative learning emphasizes the importance of disjuncture but is rarely applied to ELT. Critical incidents encourage reflection but remain reactive and retrospective.

What is missing is an integrative model that connects these strands. To address this, this article proposes a pedagogy of disjuncture and the concept of designed disjuncture. The argument is that disjuncture should not be left to chance or treated as a problem to be avoided. It can and should be intentionally designed as part of teacher education to push GE beyond rhetoric and toward identity transformation.

Conceptual Framework Of Designed Disjuncture

Previous studies on Global Englishes (GE), teacher identity, transformative learning, and Critical Incidents (CIs) have offered valuable insights but also uncovered noticeable gaps. GE scholarship has effectively challenged native-speaker norms, yet it often remains rhetorical in practice. Teacher identity research has documented ideological struggles but seldom goes beyond description. Transformative learning has demonstrated how disjuncture can drive change, but its applications in English language teaching are limited. Critical Incidents have been used to promote reflection, though they are usually retrospective, which restricts their transformative potential. These limitations highlight the need for a framework that combines these areas into a cohesive approach. This paper proposes such a framework by developing the concept of pedagogy of disjuncture and introducing the idea of designed disjuncture.

For the design rationale and research process, this framework was developed through a design-based research (DBR) process involving three iterative stages (Peters et al., 2023; Lehmann et al., 2022): (1) conceptual synthesis of Global Englishes, transformative learning, and critical incident literature; (2) task prototyping through classroom-based design workshops with pre-service teachers; and (3) expert validation by three ELT scholars and two teacher educators. Data collection involved document analysis, reflective journals, and focus-group notes to refine the design principles. Analysis followed a constant comparative approach to identify recurring pedagogical tensions and transformative triggers that informed the final model. Hence, the model was constructed using a design-based research logic, combining conceptual synthesis, iterative prototyping, and expert validation to ensure both

theoretical coherence and pedagogical relevance

Reframing Teacher Identity Through Designed Disjuncture

Teacher identity is not a fixed trait but an ongoing process influenced by discourse, ideology, and practice ([Varghese et al., 2005](#); [Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009](#)). In English language teaching, identity remains highly debated because authority is still associated with native-speaker norms ([Holliday, 2006](#); [Houghton & Rivers, 2013](#)). For many non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), this results in what [Fang & Widodo (2023)](#) call "identity dissonance," which is the tension between professional expectations and perceptions of inadequacy.

Reframing identity in accordance with GE involves moving beyond deficit perspectives. Teachers should see themselves not as inferior substitutes for native speakers but as multilingual professionals whose credibility is based on preparing learners for real-world communication ([Canagarajah, 2021](#); [Marlina, 2018](#)). This shift is unlikely to occur through awareness alone. It requires pedagogical approaches that enable teachers to challenge and redefine their assumptions about what it means to be an English teacher today.

Disjunctural Pedagogy as a Conceptual Innovation

Transformative learning theory emphasizes that meaningful change often starts when familiar frameworks of reference break down ([Mezirow, 2000](#); [Jarvis, 2009](#); [Illeris, 2013](#)). These moments of dissonance can be uncomfortable, but they also create valuable learning opportunities. In teacher education, however, disjuncture is often viewed as incidental or even problematic. Pedagogy of disjuncture inverts this perspective by viewing disjuncture as a purposeful pedagogical tool.

What sets pedagogy of disjuncture apart from more traditional reflective methods is its forward-looking focus. Reflective pedagogy usually encourages teachers to analyze their past experiences. This can foster self-awareness but often leaves broader ideologies untouched. Pedagogy of disjuncture, on the other hand, deliberately creates situations where assumptions about correctness and legitimacy are challenged. These moments are not meant to unsettle for their own sake but to encourage teachers to reflect on why they hold certain beliefs and how those beliefs influence their professional identities.

Critical Incidents as Pedagogical Tools

The Critical Incident tradition has historically highlighted moments of difficulty in teaching ([Flanagan, 1954;](#) [Tripp, 1993](#)). While helpful, traditional CIs tend to be backward-looking, depending on teachers' past experiences, and descriptive, emphasizing what occurred rather than why specific responses were ideologically shaped ([Barkhuizen, 2017](#)).

This article expands the CI tradition with the concept of designed disjuncture. These are not accidental episodes teachers recall, but intentionally crafted encounters integrated into teacher education. They might include curated videos showcasing intercultural misunderstandings, classroom simulations where norms conflict, or role-play exercises that highlight power dynamics in communication. The main point is deliberate intent. Designed disjuncture are scaffolded, meaning exposure is paired with guided reflection and collaborative dialogue. In this way, disjuncture transforms from a destabilizing force into a catalyst that encourages teachers to examine their assumptions and reevaluate their professional identities critically.

Proposed Conceptual Model of Designed Disjuncture

The conceptual model outlined in this article combines Global Englishes, teacher identity, transformative learning, and Critical Incident pedagogy into a unified framework. Its central argument is that disjuncture, which is often avoided in education, can actually be

intentionally used as a pedagogical resource. Instead of waiting for unexpected incidents to inspire reflection, teacher education can establish structured experiences that we call designed disjuncture. These experiences intentionally guide teachers through a process of confronting, questioning, and reshaping their assumptions.
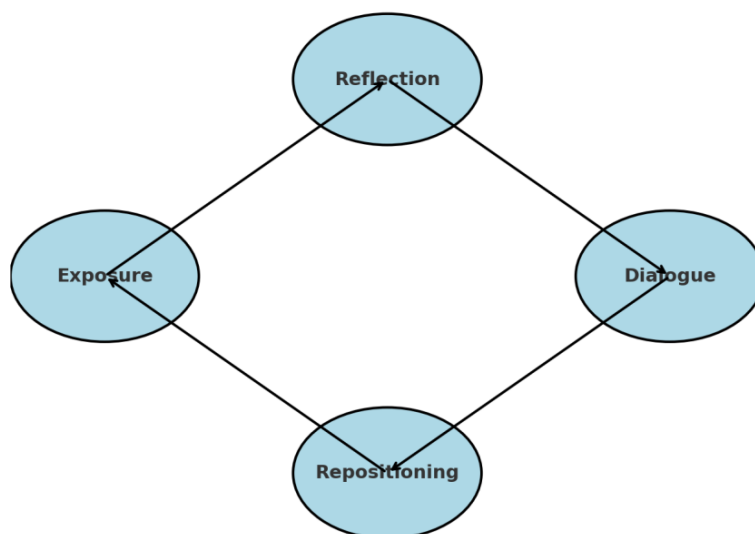
The model is depicted as a cycle with four connected stages: exposure, reflection, dialogue, and repositioning. The process starts with exposure, where teachers encounter moments that challenge their existing beliefs. These might include videos showing unfamiliar Englishes, simulations of intercultural miscommunication, or classroom activities involving multiple varieties of English. The goal is not to embarrass or unsettle teachers but to reveal the assumptions about legitimacy and correctness that might otherwise stay hidden. In this context, teachers are encouraged to go beyond simple description, examining not only what they observed but also why they responded the way they did. Reflection in this model involves questioning the underlying ideologies that link professional confidence to native norms. It is through this critical self-assessment that dissonance becomes constructive rather than overwhelming.

From reflection, the process moves into dialogue. Teachers share their personal reflections with peers, comparing experiences and perspectives. In this stage, the personal becomes social. Teachers see that their struggles are not unique but are widely shared, influenced by broader discourses that position them in conflicting ways. Dialogue allows them to explore different interpretations and collectively develop new understandings. Through repeated cycles of exposure, reflection, and dialogue (see figure 1), teachers start the process of repositioning. This involves gradually rebuilding their professional identity, claiming legitimacy as multilingual professionals, and imagining practices that align with the realities of English use worldwide. Repositioning is not a one-time event. Teachers may revisit earlier stages as new situations arise, making the model iterative rather than linear.

By embedding intentionally designed disjuncture into teacher education, this model expands Critical Incident pedagogy from a primarily descriptive practice to a forward-looking and interventionist approach. Its innovation lies in viewing disjuncture not as a threat to professional identity but as the very condition necessary for its transformation. Although initially conceptualized within Indonesian EFL teacher education, its framework is adaptable to multilingual and multicultural settings across Southeast Asia, where English serves as both a pedagogical medium and a site of identity negotiation.. This adaptability lies in its focus on disjuncture as a pedagogical principle rather than a context-specific intervention. In multilingual regions such as Malaysia, the Philippines, or Thailand, where English serves as both an educational medium and a sociocultural negotiation tool, the designed disjuncture framework can equally function to provoke reflective awareness and repositioning of teacher identities. Additionally, this framework is applicable worldwide. For example, teachers in Europe negotiating migrant multilingualism, in Africa addressing colonial legacies, or in Latin America facing the dominance of the U.S. English all encounter the tension between diversity and standardization. The model does not offer one-size-fits-all solutions, but instead provides a way to engage critically and constructively with these tensions.

Figure 1
Conceptual model: Pedagogy of disjuncture through designed disjuncture

IMPLICATIONS
Theoretical Implications

The model introduced here connects three strands of scholarship that, while rich, often remain separate: GE studies, teacher identity research, and transformative learning. GE scholarship has convincingly challenged the authority of native norms but has been criticized for providing limited guidance on how teachers can reposition themselves in practice (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Sifakis & Tsantila, 2022). Identity research has documented the struggles of non-native teachers across different contexts, yet its contributions are primarily descriptive, leaving the question of how to foster identity transformation unanswered (Fang & Widodo, 2023). Meanwhile, transformative learning emphasizes the importance of disjuncture but has rarely been translated into specific pedagogical designs (Nguyen & Fang, 2023).

By bringing these fields into dialogue, the model introduces what could be called a pedagogy of critical disjuncture. It does not merely extend existing theories but reframes them. GE is repositioned as an identity project, not just a linguistic paradigm. Teacher identity is seen not only as discursively shaped but also as open to intentional disruption and reconstruction. Transformative learning is reimagined not as an abstract theory but as a pedagogical principle operationalized through intentional disjuncture. In this way, the framework contributes to ongoing debates about how professional legitimacy is negotiated in global English teaching.

Pedagogical Implications

In pedagogy, the framework questions how teacher education programs introduce GE. Too often, GE is shown as content delivered through lectures or readings, with the assumption that awareness will naturally translate into practice. Research indicates otherwise: awareness without disruption does little to change deep-seated beliefs (Widodo & Fang, 2024). The framework, therefore, recommends a different approach: designing encounters that encourage teachers to confront, rather than avoid, dissonance.

This orientation has practical consequences. Activities such as role plays, intercultural simulations, or video-based analyses of communicative breakdowns become more than just supplements; they are vital sites for identity work. Their effectiveness, however, relies on proper framing. Without guidance, they risk reinforcing stereotypes. When structured as designed disjuncture, they become moments where reflection and dialogue can lead to re-

evaluation. This requires teacher educators to shift roles—from mere transmitters of content to facilitators of meaningful encounters. Their task is not to provide definitive answers but to create spaces where disjuncture can be explored productively.

To this end, a small-scale try-out is planned with a cohort of teacher education students to test task sequencing and reflection prompts. This pilot will inform the model's refinement and ensure its ecological validity before larger implementation. The small-scale classroom try-out with twenty student teachers is currently underway to refine the sequencing of designed disjuncture tasks and evaluate the clarity of reflection rubrics, providing an empirical anchor for the model's feasibility.

Policy and Research Implications

At the institutional level, the framework raises challenging questions about how legitimacy is defined and assessed. National examinations, accreditation systems, and hiring practices often reinforce native-speaker norms, even as policies claim to value global competence (Zein, 2020; Fang, 2021). The tension suggests that GE-oriented reforms are unlikely to succeed if assessment and evaluation are tied to rigid standards. The message is less a set of rules than a prompt: how might institutions reshape evaluation to reflect better multilingual realities rather than perpetuate old hierarchies?

For research, the model opens multiple paths. As a conceptual proposal, it needs empirical testing. Studies might examine how designed disjuncture work in different cultural and institutional settings, from European multilingual classrooms to African postcolonial environments. Comparative research could reveal how structural and cultural factors influence teachers' engagement with disjuncture. Long-term studies would be beneficial, tracking whether identity repositioning lasts over time or reverts under institutional pressures. Such research would not only test the framework but also deepen it, connecting the theory to real-world practice.

The framework aligns with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's *Merdeka Belajar* policy, which emphasizes learner autonomy, reflective practice, and contextual innovation in teacher education (Kemdikbudristek, 2022). It also supports the *Higher Education National Standard* (Permendikbud No. 3/2020) that promotes outcome-based learning and pedagogical creativity in professional development programs. Hence, the proposed model resonates with Indonesia's national agenda for developing globally competent yet locally rooted educators, both of which emphasize contextual innovation and reflective teaching competence

Overall, the implications of this model suggest that GE cannot remain just a discussion about language diversity. It must become an identity project that tackles the challenges teachers face in gaining legitimacy within unequal global contexts. Pedagogy of disjuncture and designed disjuncture offer one approach to do this, providing a framework where disjuncture serves as a catalyst rather than a threat. As Widodo & Fang (2024) remind us, transforming teacher identity is crucial for the future of English language teaching. By designing for disjuncture, teacher education can push GE beyond mere rhetoric, fostering professionals who are resilient, critically aware, and ready to handle the complexities of multilingual classrooms worldwide.

CONCLUSION

The argument in this article stems from a paradox that continues to influence English language education. While English has become permanently diverse, the teaching methods used to train teachers remain connected to native-speaker standards. Global Englishes research has thoroughly documented this contradiction, yet without strategies for changing identities, its effect on practice has been limited at best. Teachers may understand that English is varied, but knowledge alone does not change how they perceive themselves as professionals.

In response, this article introduced pedagogy of disjuncture and the concept of designed disjuncture as a framework for bridging this gap. Building on transformative learning theory, it argued that disjuncture can be purposefully structured as a pedagogical resource rather than avoided as a problem. By rethinking Critical Incidents as intentionally designed encounters, the framework offers a forward-looking model to help teachers navigate exposure, reflection, dialogue, and ultimately, identity repositioning. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing discussions in Global Englishes, teacher identity research, and transformative learning (Nguyen & Fang, 2023; Widodo & Fang, 2024; Sifakis & Tsantila, 2022).

The contribution, however, has limitations. The framework is theoretical and needs empirical support across different settings. More importantly, disjuncture alone does not ensure change. For some teachers, disjuncture might lead to resistance, defensiveness, or even reinforce stereotypes. These risks must be recognized and studied thoroughly, so that designed disjuncture can be applied with care and sensitivity.

The conclusion here is therefore provisional rather than definitive. The pedagogy of disjuncture model does not claim to resolve the tensions of GE pedagogy permanently. Instead, it provides a way to engage with these tensions more intentionally, viewing disjuncture as a space of possibility rather than paralysis. Its future depends on how researchers, educators, and policymakers test, adapt, and challenge it across different cultural and institutional contexts. What is clear is that if GE is to transition from rhetoric to reality, it must address the struggles of teacher identity. These struggles, and how they are faced, will shape the future of English language teaching.

Acknowledgment

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