

English Language Teaching in Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City: Academic competence, cultural ethics, and pedagogical practice

Abstract

This paper provides a holistic view of the complex relationships implicit in ELT at the prestigious Vietnam Buddhist University, located in Ha Noi vibrant and culturally city. The study is situated in an academic practice in which its theoretical location is determined largely by the meeting points of global English education ideologies with deeply-rooted principles enshrined in Buddhist educational philosophy. Building upon the strong academic literacies foundation of EAP, this article theorizes that ELT is not just about skills and knowledge, but ethical discursive work. This practice is an essential bridge for students into the public sphere of global scholarship, where they meaningfully construct their academic identities and engage in dialogue with one another that is intercultural.

The analysis reveals the ways that foundational Buddhist principles (such as mindfulness, ethical speech and reflective learning) infuse and inform pedagogical methods, standards applied to assessment tasks, policy pertaining to academic dishonesty within an educational philosophy. The result of this study indicates that the implementation of ELT in Buddhist higher education serves as a context-sensitive model that successfully combines all the indispensable elements in cultivating language, complexities involved in fostering academic discourse competence, and moral cultivation. This original model offers an alternative to traditional, homogenizing dictates of ELT, thereby adding and extending discussions on contextualized pedagogies in the face of globalized higher education.

Keyword: ELT, VBU, HANOI, BUDDHISM

1. Introduction

The global dominance of English as the dominant medium of academic communication has dramatically redesigned the higher education systems both in Western and non-Western settings in various ways. English has reached a point where it is used not so much as the medium of instruction but as an epistemic gatekeeper, controlling access to scholarly knowledge, defining what counts in academia and configuring possibilities for international acknowledgment. As Hyland (2004) perceptively remarks, academic English is “a particular set of literacy practices closely associated with specific disciplines, institutions and epistemological traditions” (p. 1). As a result, the ELT domain in higher education has moved away from fostering general communicative competence towards the more sophisticated cultivation of academic discourse competence.

This marked transition has been particularly acute in schools where English is a second language, and the local educational ideologies differ quite starkly to that of mainstream Western academic viewpoints. In these complex contexts, ELT is getting wrapped up ever more deeply in critical issues of cultural identity, epistemic authority, and ethical obligation. There is great concern from scholars that lack of critical empathy and sheer simplicity with which ELT models are transplanted from the West can result in pedagogical mismatch, learner estrangement, and problematic marginalization of local systems of knowledge (Canagarajah, 2002:6).

Amidst this complex and ever-changing international climate, English Language Teaching (ELT) at Vietnam Buddhist University situated in the lively city of Ha Noi offers a unique but under-researched educational setting worthy of further scrutiny. The university's roots in Buddhist teachings inform its academically grounded approach to integrating both contemplative inquiry and critical analysis across all disciplines. These fundamental educational principles cross-cut in complex and multi-layer ways with the practices of English teaching, especially where English is the medium through which students most commonly have access to international academic scholarship on such topics as Buddhist studies, philosophy and the humanities.

In traditional skills-based terms, a view of English Language and Teachers (ELT) could be read as: a way to focus narrowly on the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, and the development of communicative competence. But a simple negative view is grossly insufficient to understand the rich realities of English after all at Buddhist higher educational institutes. It is argued that ELT needs to be reconceptualized as a socially situated academic activity, in which students develop understanding of how to participate in global discourse communities and develop understanding of ethically and culturally rich local contexts within which their experiences take place. As Lea and Street (1998) have persuasively argued, academic learning inevitably involves “processes of meaning-making, identity formation, and power relations rather than simply the acquisition of technical skills” (p. 159).

51 The academic literacies framework is a particularly useful and insightful lens through which to examine
52 ELT in the particular setting of this study. Unlike the more traditional approaches to study skills that often
53 oversimplify the complexities of academic language, it is one of many models in academic literacies that brings out
54 the situated nature and inability to generalise about academic discourse which have a set of commonplaces but are
55 best understood with reference to distinct disciplinary practices, institutional contexts and cultural traditions. This
56 viewpoint recognizes and is committed to the idea that students entering the academy are not just learning new
57 linguistic forms, they are “meeting new ways of knowing, arguing and being” (Lea, 2004:741).

58 These new forms of knowing are deeply conditioned by the moral, ethical framework governing Buddhist
59 higher education, which is formed in and shapes the processes and modes of communication. Buddhist education is
60 highly tilted on mindfulness, volition and ethical speech. The general Buddhist ideal of “right speech,” for
61 example, holds that communication should be honest, kind, accurate and it should have a constructive or beneficial
62 intent. Gombrich (2009) explains that for Buddhist morality, speech is considered to be a moral act and reminds us
63 provocatively that “language is never neutral; it is always ethically charged” (p. 87).

64 The ethical orientations of responsible citation, best efforts to represent a wide array of sources accurately
65 and scrupulously, and respectful engagement with scholarly interlocutors echo throughout the traditional academic
66 conventions. In this sense, English Language Teaching (ELT) at a Buddhist university is more than compatible with
67 academic standards; it can also engage these standards in a significant way by focusing on the moral aspects
68 underlying academic communication. As the authors argues, academic writing is fundamentally interpersonal – it
69 involves “relationships among writers, readers, and communities” (Hyland 2012: 23).

70 There, in the lively context of the English Language Teaching (ELT) program at a Buddhist university
71 located in the hectic city of Ha Noi, Vietnam, the institution sits at an interesting intersection where global academic
72 practices meet local moral philosophies. It is hoped that participants in the program will not only learn to see and
73 use these kinds of texts, which are based on a range of English-language research articles, whole books and
74 theoretical works reflecting Western academic styles. At the same time, they are directed in engaging with this
75 material critically, reflectively and ethically, following closely Buddhism's cherished educational principles.

76 The growing importance of EAP likewise emphasizes the topicality and significance of this specific
77 educational sector. EAP has been described as “the teaching of English to enable students to study, investigate or
78 teach in English” (Hyland, 2006: p.1). To the Buddhist universities, EAP assumes an especially critical status
79 because students often need to rely on English for access to canonical texts and modern scholarly work as well as
80 international academic contacts. In this way, learning English becomes so much more than simply communicating;
81 it transforms into a vital gateway for intellectual progress and real intercultural understanding.

82 But, the unity of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) with Buddhist higher education struggles to
83 overcome numerous obstacles that cannot easily be brushed aside. Widespread research on this topic has shown
84 that EFL students often experience serious difficulties navigating the complex features of academic writing,
85 authorial stance and critical argument in academic discourse (Swales, 1990, p.58). These significant difficulties
86 could be even more pronounced in faith-based organizations, where long-held educational traditions emphasize
87 virtues like humbleness, promoting unison among the group and having a great respect for those who hold power.
88 This argument is encapsulated in Ivanić's (1998) poignant reminder that the processes of academic writing
89 demand, by their very nature, that students take on and perform particular identities with her contention “writing
90 involves an assumption of identity in which individuals orient themselves in terms of discourses and values” (p.
91 24).

92 In this context specifically, the site of English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms at Vietnam Buddhist
93 University (VBU), located in Ha Noi City, provide spaces where identity is negotiated. In these classrooms,
94 students are hard pressed to negotiate the demands of frequently severe international academic exchange with its
95 requirement for explicit argumentation and critical questioning, not to mention a native sense that what is valuable
96 in education is also based on courtesy and moral self-restraint. Rather than seeing this inherent dilemma as
97 negative or obstructive, our investigation re-positions it as a rich and fertile ground for pedagogical intervention and
98 development.

99 Inter/cultural communicative competence therefore appears as a key and necessary element for the holistic
100 view of ELT in this particular setting. Intercultural competence is defined by Byram (1997) as the ability to “relate
101 and mediate between cultures without losing one's own values” (p. 34). In the domain of academia this competence
102 embraces more than mere expertise in language—it involves sensitivity to pragmatics; rhetorical finesse, and
103 ethico-sensitiveness. ELT programs in such contexts therefore need to play a pro-active role in assisting students'

104 development of these critical English competencies if they are to participate meaningfully and successfully within
105 rapidly changing internationalized academic communities.

106 Furthermore, another important aspect which merits consideration in reference to ELT here are the
107 concerns of academic dishonesty and the problem of copying. While plagiarism is often portrayed as a moral
108 failing or an ethical failure, recent scholarly writing calls for its re-examination and suggests that it must be
109 considered in the first place as a developmental question associated with students' growing understanding of the
110 norms that regulate academic language use (Pecorari, 2008, p. 4). This gentle view of discipline also resonates with
111 Buddhist pedagogy that stresses gradual growth, self-awareness and loving guidance rather than punitive
112 enforcement: I must teach the child to want good things for themselves.

113 Placing academic integrity within a larger ethical and moral framework, English teaching practices at
114 Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City subtly recast conventions of citation as an ethos of deep respect and
115 recognition, as opposed to technical procedures that must be fulfilled. As Howard (1999) eloquently points out in
116 his landmark book, the act of "patchwriting" should be viewed as a transitional literacy practice which allows for
117 learning to bridge from one level to the next and shouldn't automatically constitute plagiarism (p. xvii). Revelations
118 of this sort are especially powerful in environments where students are trying to negotiate the sometimes baffling
119 and unfamiliar academic behaviour characteristic of a second language.

120 With the increasing growth in the research literature on English Language Teaching (ELT), English for
121 Academic Purposes (EAP) and wider academic literacies over recent years, one group of higher education
122 stakeholders notably absent from this literature are faith-based educators. Most research focuses on secular
123 institutions and often assumes, implicitly or otherwise, that Western epistemological frames are the dominant
124 model. This significant gap markedly limits our knowledge on the functioning of English in culturally and
125 religiously bound academic contexts, which may possess their own specific dynamics and needs.

126 The focus of the current study is an attempt to fill this gap within the body of literature by closely
127 exploring English Language Teaching at Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City as a situated academic
128 practice situated in its local context. Instead of simply measuring ELT against universal metrics that might not
129 accurately represent the complexities at play in this educational context, the research takes a nuanced look at"the
130 institutional mission, pedagogical values and range of learner needs that inform this specific site. And in so doing, it
131 offers valuable insights to more general debates on the "localization" of ELT and ethical issues of academic
132 communication.

133 This paper is concerned specifically with showing how English Language Teaching at a Buddhist
134 university can bring into conversation three elements of academic literacies, English for Academic Purposes (EAP),
135 and ethical education. Case study: Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City The case of Vietnam Buddhist
136 Uni-ersity, Ha Noi City focuses on how English language teaching can be locally applied to accommodate both
137 global participation and local philosophy o Viet-name's educational system. This novel orientation counteracts
138 deficit-based stories which often situate non-Western ELT environments as intrinsically ineffective, and privileges
139 them as rich sites of pedagogical exploration and emergence.

140 By positioning English Language Teaching as an academic, ethical and intercultural activity from its very
141 introduction, this provides a strong basis for the following case study and extended discussion. The following
142 section will provide a detailed analysis of how English Language Teaching (ELT) practices are transformed at
143 Vietnam Buddhist university in Ha Noi City to support an integration of the language and values of Buddhist
144 education through various pedagogical approaches, assessment techniques and classroom interactions.

145

146 **2. English Language Teaching in Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City: Case Study and Discussion**

147 Vietnam Buddhist University The Challenge ELT (English Language Teaching) at Vietnam Buddhist
148 University (VBU), housed in the sprawling, bustling and storied city of Ha Noi City, is deeply impacted by two
149 imperatives: the need to skilfully ready students for active involvement in the changing world of global academic
150 conversation and instruction at one end, while preserving and propagating heavily burdened with history Buddhist
151 educational values on the other. This ambivalence complicatedly locates English Language Teaching (ELT) within
152 an emergent and complex pedagogical space, where the teaching of language brings about issues related to ethical
153 soliedad-precisión thought, a sophisticated epistemological stance, a network-wide focus on identity- one as the
154 very university itself performs.

155 Unlike mainstream universities where English may be most closely linked to employment related
156 opportunities or internationalization statistics, the status of English in this Buddhist university is largely confined
157 to an academic and scholastic medium. That collection, comprising 293 items online at its launch in 2011, is
158 complemented by a small and growing set of English-language research articles, monographs, and conference
159 proceedings representing the disciplines of Buddhist studies, philosophy, cultural studies, and applied linguistics to
160 which students today are increasingly introduced. As Hyland (2006) explains, EAP is not interested in 'language as
161 language per se' but rather the 'specific communicative practices of academic communities' (p. 2). Military
162 Science Political Economy Volume 10, Number 1, February-March 2008 Preview: Author Sinai Nguyen Prelight
163 Publishing House Located at the northern Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City is one of the best
164 illustrations where such pedagogical orientation is well syncretized not only in curricula but also in teaching and
165 learning with expected results.

166 The pedagogy followed at this institution sees academic reading and writing as 'socially constituted
167 activities rather than simply skills in a linguistic vacuum (Bawarshi, 2003)'. SBR takes students through a close
168 examination of the complex rhetorical structure of research articles, recognizing finely wrought authorial stance and
169 understanding in great detail how arguments are precisely built within the norms of particular academic disciplines.
170 Swales (1990) defines genres as "communicative activities that members of a discourse community construct and
171 produce documents within" (p. 58). In this respect, ELT goes beyond mere language training and becomes an
172 immersion in the complex sociocultural practice of academic discourse communities.

173 What makes ELT at the university unique is its deliberate introduction of reflective and contemplative
174 learning techniques into the warp and woof of language instruction. Reading tasks often require a careful and
175 considerate reading, leading students to stop, think, and talk together intentionally about meanings. It particularly
176 appeals to a form of teaching found in Buddhism, in which one focuses on being present with the mind and has
177 depth perception rather than rapid-fire processing. Indeed, to read deeply is, as NhatHanh (1998) succinctly puts it
178 "to read with the whole body and mind"(p. 41). This would also naturally complement aspects of academic
179 literacies pedagogy, which is more concerned with meaning making and deep comprehension than superficial
180 understanding.

181 Academic writing instruction also illustrates this complex continuum. Students are carefully
182 instructed in the mechanics of how to strategically craft their arguments, artfully bring together multiple
183 sources, and deliberately insert their voices into the disciplinary debates which shape the intellectual
184 realms they inhabit. But there is also explicit, reflective thinking about the ethics of writing, including
185 questions about faithful and accurate representation of sources and respectful engagement with multiple
186 perspectives. Teachers often emphasize that citation is more than a technical requirement, but above all
187 an ethical behavior situated in the academic community. As Hyland (2012) aptly observes, "citation
188 practices are a means of building a relationship between writers and their disciplinary communities" (p.
189 24). This conception of citation as relational is consonant with Buddhist morality, which stresses
190 individual responsibility and mutual co-implication.

191 The issue of plagiarism is thoroughly tackled in this wider moral framework rather than a
192 mechanism slanted towards punishment. From a developmental viewpoint, educators perceive misuse of
193 sources as an aspect of students' emergent internalization of the subtleties of academic language use.
194 Pecorari (2008) as convincingly claims in relation to plagiarism in English for Academic Purposes (EAP)
195 settings, often it is "a symptom of the learner's struggle with controlling a new set of discourse
196 practices"(p. 4). This view has right echoed within the classroom walls, as students are given formative
197 feedback and guided through revision processes as opposed to instant punishment.

198 The importance of teacher mediation appears particularly significant in this fine-grained situation.
199 Teachers are not just language teachers, they act as cultural and epistemic mediators connecting the
200 various yarns of knowledge and comprehension. They are also explicit about the norms of Western
201 academia- — for example, expectations of critical argumentation, the use of hedging language, and how
202 to establish an authorial stance—and at the same time situating these in relation to Buddhist educational
203 values. This mediation is crucial in helping students negotiate the "third space"(Bhabha, 1994) of cultural
204 acculturation, a vibrant field where meanings and identities are constantly made anew through interaction
205 and discourse (p. 37).

206 Therefore, intercultural competence is a natural and necessary aspiration of ELT at Vietnam Buddhist
207 University in Ha Noi. Students are encouraged to begin the process of learning how to articulate their points in a
208 clear, compelling and critical manner while still maintaining a collegial and ethical academic voice in English.
209 Intercultural competence is not, as Byram (1997) summarizes “a depth of assimilations [...] it is the ability to de-
210 centre and to reflect on one’s own perspectives, as well as those of others” (p. 34), indicating a processual
211 understanding of this quality. In intellectual terms this competency prepares students to engage effectively with
212 global academic debates without feeling compelled to erase or diminish their deep cultural and religious roots.
213

214 The integrated teaching philosophy is also encouraged by assessment procedures at the university. Instead
215 of focusing exclusively on nativelike fluency or surface correctness, the assessment rubrics read coherence,
216 rhetorical effectiveness, successful source use, and ethical communication as pivotal. Rubrics are frequently
217 carefully designed to reflect criteria such as clear reasoning, appropriate citation behavior, and thoughtful responses
218 to academic readings. This emphasis coincides well with recent critiques of traditional language assessment
219 practices, which claim that an exclusive focus on linguistic form can obscure the developing academic capability in
220 students (Lea & Street, 1998, p.164).

221 EMI is used selectively and strategically in advanced academic studies, and even more so at postgraduate
222 level. But it is critical to understand EMI as a scaffolding activity – deliberate scaffolding – rather than some blunt,
223 broad spectrum pronouncement. Macaro et al. (2018) an appropriate word of warning, with attention to the risk of
224 uncritically offering EMI at such a cost as unfairly marginalising students and hence undermining their learning.
225 They wisely note that ‘EMI is no such pedagogical panacea’ (p. 37,
226 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2017.10.004>). Situated in the bustling city of Ha Noi and within Vietnam
227 Buddhist University, EMI is further enhanced by the inclusion of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes,
228 numerous bilingual resources, and the provision of English language support that allows students to handle
229 demanding content without descending into linguistic chaos.

230 The delicate play of the English language with Buddhist epistemology prompts large fascinating question
231 about knowledge-formation. Western scholarship tends to value linear argumentation, the explicit use of critique
232 and the concept of individual authorship. Buddhist Epistemologies, however, emphasize interdependence (for
233 example, mixing and at the same time differentiation), impermanence (even of cognized objects), the intrinsically
234 ad hoc status of knowledge itself. The university ELT is not premised on seeing these key differences as essentially
235 incompatible, and students are actively encouraged to interact critically with the two intellectual traditions and
236 allow them to converse in important ways. As Canagarajah (2002) so convincingly demonstrates, indigenous
237 knowledge systems have much to offer “to rethink academic discourse in powerful ways” (p. 6) and this is what
238 engenders the rich world of academia.

239 As a result, students’ identities as learners are constantly in construction (Gee, 2000) and become the result
240 of negotiations. Ivanič (1998) has usefully observed that academic writing is a process of “aligning oneself with
241 some values and ways of knowing” (p. 24). Within this framework, the dynamic construction of student hybrid
242 academic legibility takes place through writing in English: ‘Writing in their L2 provides students with a crucial
243 means by which they can perform... their international legibility to others’ (Pennycook 2010: 14). This concept of
244 hybridity could serve as a corrective to deficit narratives which frequently cast EFL learners as mere followers of
245 the western style thereby eroding the authenticity of their voices and home cultures.

246 The case study also addresses an important aspect of oral academic communication. Participation in
247 seminars, presentations, conference simulations is part of the ELT courses at the university. These activities are
248 carefully constructed to develop students’ capacity to express themselves with clarity, think about questions in new
249 ways and participate in scholarly conversation productively. But professors are also keenly aware of cultural values
250 that discourage outright disagreement and self-promotion among students. As a result, they use different tactics
251 such as structured turn-taking, reflective questioning or moderated debates to establish support and constructive
sites for interaction that support students’ (communicative) action and teamwork.

252 Studies of willingness to communicate generally show that the affective factors are important conditions
253 under which a learner will participate in discursive behavior (MacIntyre&Gregersen, 2012, p. 103). In an
254 effort to reduce the emotional and psychical tensions of speaking, teachers might also consider using
255 some mindfulness-informed pedagogies such as a period of silent contemplation before getting students to
256 speak. These are the kinds of deliberate practices which define the integration of Buddhist contemplative
257 traditions into English Language Teaching (ELT) pedagogy.

258 Institutionally, the English Language Teaching program (ELT pgr) of Vietnam Buddhist University (VBU),
259 Ha Noi City would thus support the broader institutional aspiration to establish an international network and
260 partnership. With good command of English, both students and academic staff not only be able to engage in
261 international conferences but also publish their researches in reputable international journals; moreover
262 collaborative activities can occur between scholars from different cultural backgrounds throughout the world. At
263 the same time, the university is resolutely committed to nuancing the integrity of Buddhist learning, so that an
264 engagement with English does not strip it down of all epistemic subordination or intellectual closure.

265 This case study serves as a fine example of ELT which is applied, localized and at the same time holds
266 high level academic content. Why English Language Teaching (ELT) at Vietnam Buddhist University, Ha Noi
267 City? Incorporating the teaching of English into a holistic context that values academic literacies, ethical
268 communication and subtleties of intercultural mediation, Vietnam Buddhist University represents a refreshing
269 alternative to the standardization which too often characterizes ELT. This unique model is also in line with recent
270 appeals for a language education paradigm, which needs to be more context sensitive and recognize and appreciate
271 the wealth diversity contained within higher education settings (Pennycook, 2010:78).

272 More broadly, the findings from this case study trouble the underlying assumption in the field of ELT
273 research that panoptics Western academic standards as universally applicable and appropriate. On the contrary,
274 they argue in favour of a pluralist approach to academic discourse, which would allow different epistemologies and
275 communicative practices to cohabit peacefully. Life Street (2003) further, reading And writing practices are always
276 ideologically Charged with the particular interests and distribution of power (p. 79). An appreciation of this crucial
277 recognition is necessary for an equitable and inclusive pedagogy in the domain of English Language Teaching.

278 The discourse presented in this study reinforces the view that English Language Teaching at Vietnam
279 Buddhist University (Ha Noi City) should be regarded as negotiated and dynamic practice rather than a given. In
280 this sense, ELT is more than just teaching English; it is about producing learners who can engage with global
281 knowledge in ways that are ethical and critically reflexive, all the while staying rooted in the deep educational
282 ethos of Buddhism.

283 **3. Conclusion**

284 This massive study has truly penetrated into the multitudinous of ELT in Vietnam Buddhist
285 University which located in the busy, rich cultural and dynamic city of Ha Noi. It has been treated as a
286 critical site of academic practice, shaped by the interconnection between English education as a global
287 phenomenon and the deep philosophical base upon which Buddhist approaches to teaching begin.
288 Carefully and effectively using the academic literacies framework, the article makes a strong case that
289 English Language Teaching focused in Buddhist higher education cannot be captured under simply
290 monetarist models nor deficit theories about the practice (base) of teaching and learning.

291 **4.2 Conclusion** The in-depth examination resulting from the present investigation indicates
292 that the employment of English at VBU-HNC largely serves as a major academic and scholarly resource,
293 rather than a subordinate aspect as an instrumental language competence only. Good English, as a viable
294 language of power if you will, affords students access to international scholarship in Buddhist Studies
295 and the humanities generally, enables them to contribute productively to global academic discourse and
296 identity and provides them with a means by which they can articulate an intelligible scholarly persona
297 beyond the limits of local location. At the same time, the EFL pedagogy at the university is deeply
298 informed by certain Buddhist values such as moral speech and mindful awareness along with reflective
299 learning. This carefully woven-in dimension questions the taken-for-granted assumption that Western
300 academically privileged types of discourses should be accepted reproductively and without critical
301 reflection as though they are culturally disembodied from a local cultural-autonomy rich tapestry.

302 One of the most important contributions of this illuminating study is its groundbreaking understanding of
303 English Language Teaching as an ethical academic activity. In this convention, citation, paraphrase, and argument
304 are not just technical practices without a deeper moral significance; they are ways of feeling responsible to
305 knowledge, authorship and the scholarly communities to which one owes particular forms. This view resonates well
306 with Hyland's (2012) claim that academic communication is essentially relational and inherently involves
307 negotiation of meaning between writers and readers in the varied cultures of different disciplines. In the Buddhist
308 pedagogical landscape, this relationality is further underpinned by learning which inculcates ethical perspectives
309 that present communicating as a deliberate and meaning-laden causation of something, an entwining of language
310 with thought and moral responsibility in knowing.

311 The in-depth case study painstakingly explains the absolutely crucial role of pedagogical mediation in the
312 complexity of intercultural academic situations. At the Vietnam Buddhist University, located in pulsating Ha Noi
313 City, students are confronted with the daunting task of straddling complex and highly contextualized (Western) academic
314 impetuses—expressing confidence, taking explicit positions, establishing epistemic authority—with deeply embedded cultural imperatives to prioritize humility and harmony. Rather than regard this intrinsic tension
315 as an impasse, the ELT practices at the university astutely refract it into a productive site of negotiation. This
316 change allows students to develop a hybrid academic identity that seamlessly combines a global outlook with local
317 relevance.

318 From a wider ELT perspective, the new issues addressed by this study provide strong evidence in favor of
319 some hardline calls in support of greater context-awareness in English language education. As Pennycook (2010)
320 wisely reminds readers, global English is far too often simplified as a neutral or entirely fungible code; yet it is best
321 understood as a practice that remains both ‘integrated into complex power relations and cultural histories’. The
322 experiences and approaches taken at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City are vivid demonstrations of
323 how ELT can be localized thoughtfully, maintaining robust academic standards while both recognizing and
324 respecting institutional missions and ethical traditions.

325 The implications of these findings are profound and reach beyond the narrow context of Buddhist higher
326 education. In a time when university population diversity is celebrated worldwide, ELT practitioners are in the
327 predicament of having to develop pedagogical practices that successfully cater for multiple epistemological stances,
328 identity configurations, and communicative conventions. Faith-based and culturally specific institutions that the
329 mainstream ELT research framework often overlooks can contribute a wealth of knowledge about alternative
330 language education models that place greater emphasis on, among others, ethics, reflection, and intercultural
331 responsibility.

332 Finally, English Language Teaching at Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City constitutes an
333 example of a context-specific approach to ELT, harmonising academic literacies with EAP and the cherished values
334 of Buddhist education. This original model powerfully asserts that English education need not mean cultural
335 obliteration or epistemic abasement. Instead, viewed as a form of ethical and situated academic practice, ELT
336 potentially serves as a powerful modality for nurturing inclusive, reflective and globally aware scholarship.

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