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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN VIETNAM BUDDHIST UNIVERSITY IN HA NOI CITY:ACADEMIC COMPETENCE, CULTURAL ETHICS, AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

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Abstract

This paper provides a holistic view of the complex elationships 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. Buildi ng 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 foundatio nal 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 indispensabl e 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.

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

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

These new forms of knowing are deeply conditioned by the moral, ethical framework governing Buddhist higher education, which is formed in and shapes the processes and modes of communication. Buddhist education is highly tilted on mindfulness, volition and ethical speech. The general Buddhist ideal of "right speech," for example, holds that communication should be honest, kind, accurate and it should have a constructive or beneficial intent. Gombrich (2009) explains that for Buddhist morality, speech is considered to be a moral act and reminds us provocatively that “language is never neutral; it is always ethically charged” (p. 87).The ethical orientations of responsible citation, best efforts to represent a wide array of sources accurately and scrupulously, and respectful engagement with scholarly interlocutors echo throughout the traditional academic conventions. In this sense, English Language Teaching (ELT) at a Buddhist university is more than compatible with academic standards; it can also engage these standards in a significant way by focusing on the moral aspects underlying academic communication. As the authors argues, academic writing is fundamentally interpersonal – it involves “relationships among writers, readers, and communities” (Hyland 2012: 23).

There, in the lively context of the English Language Teaching (ELT) program at a Buddhist university located in the hectic city of Ha Noi,Vietnam,the institution sits at an interesting intersection where global academic practices meet local moral philosophies. It is hoped that participants in the program will not only learn to see and use these kinds of texts, which are based on a range of English-language research articles, whole books and theoretical works reflecting Western academic styles. At the same time, they are directed in engaging with this material critically, reflectively and ethically, following closely Buddhism's cherished educational principles.The growing importance of EAP likewise emphasizes the topicality and significance of this specific educational sector. EAP has been described as “the teaching of English to enable students to study, investigate or teach in English” (Hyland, 2006: p.1). To the Buddhist universities, EAP assumes an especially critical status because students often need to rely on English for access to canonical texts and modern scholarly work as well as international academic contacts. In this

way, learning English becomes so much more than simply communicating; it transforms into a vital gateway for intellectual progress and real intercultural understanding.

But, the unity of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) with Buddhist higher education struggles to overcome numerous obstacles that cannot easily be brushed aside. Widespread research on this topic has shown that EFL students often experience serious difficulties navigating the complex features of academic writing, authorial stance and critical argument in academic discourse (Swales, 1990, p.58). These significant difficulties could be even more pronounced in faith-based organizations, where long-held educational traditions emphasize virtues like humbleness, promoting unison among the group and having a great respect for those who hold power. This argument is encapsulated in Ivanič's (1998) poignant reminder that the processes of academic writing demand, by their very nature, that students take on and perform particular identities with her contention "writing involves an assumption of identity in which individuals orient themselves in terms of discourses and values" (p. 24).In this context specifically, the site of English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms at Vietnam Buddhist University (VBU), located in Ha Noi City, provide spaces where identity is negotiated. In these classrooms, students are hard pressed to negotiate the demands of frequently severe international academic exchange with its requirement for explicit argumentation and critical questioning, not to mention a native sense that what is valuable in education is also based on courtesy and moral self-restraint. Rather than seeing this inherent dilemma as negative or obstructive, our investigation re-positions it as a rich and fertile ground for pedagogical intervention and development.

Inter/cultural communicative competence therefore appears as a key and necessary element for the holistic view of ELT in this particular setting. Intercultural competence is defined by Byram (1997) as the ability to "relate and mediate between cultures without losing one's own values" (p. 34). In the domain of academia this competence embraces more than mere expertise in language—it involves sensitivity to pragmatics; rhetorical finesse, and ethico-sensitiveness. ELT programs in such contexts therefore need to play a pro-active role in assisting students' development of these critical English competencies if they are to participate meaningfully and successfully within rapidly changing internationalized academic communities.Furthermore, another important aspect which merits consideration in reference to ELT here are the concerns of academic dishonesty and the problem of copying. While plagiarism is often portrayed as a moral failing or an ethical failure, recent scholarly writing calls for its re-examination and suggests that it must be considered in the first place as a developmental question associated with students' growing understanding of the norms that regulate academic language use (Pecorari, 2008, p. 4). This gentle view of discipline also resonates with Buddhist pedagogy that stresses gradual growth, self-awareness and loving guidance rather than punitive enforcement: I must teach the child to want good things for themselves.

Placing academic integrity within a larger ethical and moral framework, English teaching practices at Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City subtly recast conventions of citation as an ethos of deep respect and recognition, as opposed to technical procedures that must be fulfilled. As Howard (1999) eloquently points out in his landmark book, the act of "patchwriting" should be viewed as a transitional literacy practice which allows for learning to bridge from one level to the next and shouldn't automatically constitute plagiarism (p. xvii). Revelations of this sort are especially powerful in environments where students are trying to negotiate the sometimes baffling and unfamiliar academic behaviour characteristic of a second language.With the increasing growth in the research literature on English Language Teaching (ELT), English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and wider academic literacies over recent years, one group of higher education stakeholders notably absent from this literature are faith-based educators. Most research focuses on secular institutions and often assumes, implicitly or otherwise, that Western epistemological frames are the dominant model. This significant gap markedly limits our knowledge on the functioning of English in culturally and religiously bound academic contexts, which may possess their own specific dynamics and needs.

The focus of the current study is an attempt to fill this gap within the body of literature by closely exploring English Language Teaching at Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City as a situated academic practice situated in its local context. Instead of simply measuring ELT against universal metrics that might not accurately represent the complexities at play in this educational context, the research takes a nuanced look at"the institutional mission, pedagogical values and range of learner needs that inform this specific site. And in so doing, it offers valuable insights to more general debates on the "localization" of ELT and ethical issues of academic communication.This paper is concerned specifically with showing how English Language Teaching at a Buddhist university can bring into conversation three elements of academic literacies, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and ethical education. Case study: Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City The case of Vietnam Buddhist Uni-ersity, Ha

Noi City focuses on how English language teaching can be locally applied to accommodate both global participation and local philosophy o Viet-name's educational system. This novel orientation counteracts deficit-based stories which often situate non-Western ELT environments as intrinsically ineffective, and privileges them as rich sites of pedagogical exploration and emergence.

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

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

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

The pedagogy followed at this institution sees academic reading and writing as 'socially constituted activities rather than simply skills in a linguistic vacuum (Bawarshi, 2003)'. SBR takes students through a close examination of the complex rhetorical structure of research articles, recognizing finely wrought authorial stance and understanding in great detail how arguments are precisely built within the norms of particular academic disciplines. Swales (1990) defines genres as "communicative activities that members of a discourse community construct and produce documents within" (p. 58). In this respect, ELT goes beyond mere language training and becomes an immersion in the complex sociocultural practice of academic discourse communities.What makes ELT at the university unique is its deliberate introduction of reflective and contemplative learning techniques into the warp and woof of language instruction. Reading tasks often require a careful and considerate reading, leading students to stop, think, and talk together intentionally about meanings. It particularly appeals to a form of teaching found in Buddhism, in which one focuses on being present with the mind and has depth perception rather than rapid-fire processing. Indeed, to read deeply is, as NhatHanh (1998) succinctly puts it "to read with the whole body and mind"(p. 41). This would also naturally complement aspects of academic literacies pedagogy, which is more concerned with meaning making and deep comprehension than superficial understanding.

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

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

The importance of teacher mediation appears particularly significant in this fine-grained situation. Teachers are not just language teachers, they act as cultural and epistemic mediators connecting the various yarns of knowledge and comprehension. They are also explicit about the norms of Western academia- — for example, expectations of critical argumentation, the use of hedging language, and how to establish an authorial stance—and at the same time situating these in relation to Buddhist educational values. This mediation is crucial in helping students negotiate the "third space"(Bhabha, 1994) of cultural acculturation, a vibrant field where meanings and identities are constantly made anew through interaction and discourse (p. 37).Therefore, intercultural competence is a natural and necessary aspiration of ELT at Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi. Students are encouraged to begin the process of learning how to articulate their points in a clear, compelling and critical manner while still maintaining a collegial and ethical academic voice in English. Intercultural competence is not, as Byram (1997) summarizes "a depth of assimilations […] it is the ability to de-centre and to reflect on one's own perspectives, as well as those of others" (p. 34), indicating a processual understanding of this quality. In intellectual terms this competency prepares students to engage effectively with global academic debates without feeling compelled to erase or diminish their deep cultural and religious roots.

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

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

The delicate play of the English language with Buddhist epistemology prompts large fascinating question about knowledge-formation. Western scholarship tends to value linear argumentation, the explicit use of critique and the concept of individual authorship. Buddhist Epistemologies, however, emphasize interdependence (for example, mixing and at the same time differentiation), impermanence (even of cognized objects), the intrinsically ad hoc status of knowledge itself. The university ELT is not premised on seeing these key differences as essentially incompatible, and students are actively encouraged to interact critically with the two intellectual traditions and allow them to converse in important ways. As Canagarajah (2002) so convincingly demonstrates, indigenous knowledge systems have much to offer "to rethink academic discourse in powerful ways" (p. 6) and this is what engenders the rich world of academia.As a result, students' identities as learners are constantly in construction (Gee, 2000) and become the result of negotiations. Ivanič (1998) has usefully observed that academic writing is a process of "aligning oneself with some values and ways of knowing" (p. 24). Within this framework, the dynamic construction of student hybrid academic legibility takes place through writing in English: 'Writing in their L2 provides students with a crucial means by which they can perform... their international legibility to others' (Pennycook 2010: 14). This concept of hybridity could serve as a corrective to deficit narratives which frequently cast EFL learners as mere followers of the western style thereby eroding the authenticity of their voices and home cultures.

The case study also addresses an important aspect of oral academic communication. Participation in seminars, presentations, conference simulations is part of the ELT courses at the university. These activities are carefully

constructed to develop students' capacity to express themselves with clarity, think about questions in new ways and participate in scholarly conversation productively. But professors are also keenly aware of cultural values that discourage outright disagreement and self-promotion among students. As a result, they use different tactics 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.Studies of willingness to communicate generally show that the affective factors are important conditions under which a learner will participate in discursive behavior (MacIntyre&Gregersen, 2012, p. 103). In an effort to reduce the emotional and psychical tensions of speaking, teachers might also consider using some mindfulness-informed pedagogies such as a period of silent contemplation before getting students to speak. These are the kinds of deliberate practices which define the integration of Buddhist contemplative traditions into English Language Teaching (ELT) pedagogy.

Institutionally, the English Language Teaching program (ELT pgr) of Vietnam Buddhist University (VBU), Ha Noi City would thus support the broader institutional aspiration to establish an international network and partnership. With good command of English, both students and academic staff not only be able to engage in international conferences but also publish their researches in reputable international journals; moreover collaborative activities can occur between scholars from different cultural backgrounds throughout the world. At the same time, the university is resolutely committed to nuancing the integrity of Buddhist learning, so that an engagement with English does not strip it down of all epistemic subordination or intellectual closure.This case study serves as a fine example of ELT which is applied, localized and at the same time holds high level academic content. Why English Language Teaching (ELT) at Vietnam Buddhist University, Ha Noi City? Incorporating the teaching of English into a holistic context that values academic literacies, ethical communication and subtleties of intercultural mediation, Vietnam Buddhist University represents a refreshing alternative to the standardization which too often characterizes ELT. This unique model is also in line with recent appeals for a language education paradigm, which needs to be more context sensitive and recognize and appreciate the wealth diversity contained within higher educations settings (Pennycook, 2010:78).

More broadly, the findings from this case study trouble the underlying assumption in the field of ELT research that panopticises Western academic standards as universally applicable and appropriate. On the contrary, they argue in favour of a pluralist approach to academic discourse, which would allow different epistemologies and communicative practices to cohabit peacefully. Life Street (2003) further, reading And writing practices are always ideologically Charged with the particular interests and distribution of power (p. 79). An appreciation of this crucial recognition is necessary for an equitable and inclusive pedagogy in the domain of English Language Teaching.The discourse presented in this study reinforces the view that English Language Teaching at Vietnam Buddhist University (Ha Noi City) should be regarded as negotiated and dynamic practice rather than a given. In this sense, ELT is more than just teaching English; it is about producing learners who can engage with global knowledge in ways that are ethical and critically reflexive, all the while staying rooted in the deep educational ethos of Buddhism.

Conclusion:-

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

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

One of the most important contributions of this illuminating study is its groundbreaking understanding of English Language Teaching as an ethical academic activity. In this convention, citation, paraphrase, and argument are not just technical practices without a deeper moral significance; they are ways of feeling responsible to knowledge, authorship and the scholarly communities to which one owes particular forms. This view resonates well with Hyland's (2012) claim that academic communication is essentially relational and inherently involves negotiation of meaning between writers and readers in the varied cultures of different disciplines. In the Buddhist pedagogical landscape, this relationality is further underpinned by learning which inculcates ethical perspectives that present communicating as a deliberate and meaning-laden causation of something, an entwining of language with thought and moral responsibility in knowing.The in-depth case study painstakingly explains the absolutely crucial role of pedagogical mediation in the complexity of intercultural academic situations. At the Vietnam Buddhist University, located in pulsating Ha Noi City, students are confronted with the daunting task of straddling complex and highly contextualized (Western) academic 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 as an impasse, the ELT practices at the university astutely refract it into a productive site of negotiation. This change allows students to develop a hybrid academic identity that seamlessly combines a global outlook with local relevance.

From a wider ELT perspective, the new issues addressed by this study provide strong evidence in favor of some hardline calls in support of greater context-awareness in English language education. As Pennycook (2010) wisely reminds readers, global English is far too often simplified as a neutral or entirely fungible code; yet it is best understood as a practice that remains both 'integrated into complex power relations and cultural histories'. The experiences and approaches taken at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City are vivid demonstrations of how ELT can be localized thoughtfully, maintaining robust academic standards while both recognizing and respecting institutional missions and ethical traditions.The implications of these findings are profound and reach beyond the narrow context of Buddhist higher education. In a time when university population diversity is celebrated worldwide, ELT practitioners are in the predicament of having to develop pedagogical practices that successfully cater for multiple epistemological stances, identity configurations, and communicative conventions. Faith-based and culturally specific institutions that the mainstream ELT research framework often overlooks can contribute a wealth of knowledge about alternative language education models that place greater emphasis on, among others, ethics, reflection, and intercultural responsibility.

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

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