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# Decolonizing English Education in Thailand's Multilingual Deep South: Secondary Education Stakeholders' Perspectives on Global Englishes

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## ABSTRACT

As English becomes the main language for global communication, traditional English Language Teaching (ELT) methods are increasingly questioned for sticking too closely to native-speaker standards, often ignoring the multilingual classrooms they are used in. This study looks at how secondary school students, English teachers, and school administrators in Thailand's Deep South understand and view Global Englishes (GE). Using a mixed-methods approach, this paper analyzed quantitative data from 464 students and 102 teachers with descriptive statistics. This paper also analyzed qualitative data from focus group discussions with 18 students and nine teachers, and interviews with nine administrators, using qualitative content analysis. The findings show a growing acceptance of GE principles among all groups. There is strong support for effective communication, various English accents, and including local culture in learning materials. Students and teachers increasingly prefer being understood over sounding like a native speaker, with teachers showing more support for inclusive materials. Native and non-native English-speaking teachers are seen as equally qualified, though biases towards native speakers still exist, especially in how students are assessed. While people recognize accent diversity and that English is a shared language, strict curricula and institutional limitations continue to make it hard to implement Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT). These findings can help policymakers, curriculum designers, and educators create a more inclusive and relevant ELT framework.

**Keywords:** Global Englishes; Global Englishes language teaching; decolonizing English education; native-speakerism; Thailand's deep south

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## ARTICLE HISTORY

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## Introduction

The way English is taught in English Language Teaching (ELT) has long focused on native-speaker norms, but this is being challenged as English spreads globally and is no longer only spoken in its traditional centers. For many years, ELT followed an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) model that favored Inner Circle English varieties, ignoring the linguistic realities of non-native English speakers (NNEs) (Jenkins, 2014; Rose & Galloway, 2019). Since English is now the main way people communicate around the world, bridging different languages and cultures, there is a growing push to change how we teach it (Baker & Ishikawa, 2021; Fang, 2020; Rose & Galloway, 2019). The traditional idea of sticking to how native English speakers talk does not really work anymore because English is used in so many different ways globally. This creates a disconnect between what is taught in classrooms and how people actually use the language. It is also important to consider that English is now seen as something everyone shares, not just something belonging to places like Britain or America (Galloway & Rose, 2015, 2019). Studies have shown that English variations and accents from non-native speakers are often easier for non-native English speakers (NNEs) to understand than the standard native accents. This raises questions about why native-speaker standards are still so central to ELT (He & Zhang, 2010; Jenkins, 2014).

To get students ready for communicating globally, the goals of ELT need to adapt. Some scholars believe that current EFL methods are out of date because they focus too much on British and American English (BrE and AmE) and do not acknowledge the wide variety of English speakers worldwide (Galloway & Rose, 2018; Jenkins, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019). This disconnect has led to more backing for teaching methods that mirror how English is actually used globally, instead of just focusing on native speakers. The Global Englishes (GE) approach aims to address this by moving away from narrow definitions of English and encouraging linguistic diversity, cultural flexibility, and multilingualism in ELT (Rose & Galloway, 2019). However, despite strong academic backing, GE teaching does not always put into practice, especially in EFL settings where native-speaker norms often still dominate (Fang, 2020; Fang & Widodo, 2019; Galloway & Rose, 2018). This is especially true in Thailand's Deep South (TDS), a region with a lot of linguistic and cultural diversity, which adds to the challenges of teaching English. Despite the unique cultural and linguistic identity of Muslim-majority students there, ELT curricula are still standardized, centrally controlled, and disconnected from local contexts (Kaur et al., 2016). The lack of relevant materials has led to disinterest, as students struggle to connect with Western-focused ELT content that does not reflect their lives (Prabjandee, 2020; Rajprasit & Marlina, 2019). Local teachers should have more say in what they teach and be able to incorporate students' cultural backgrounds into English lessons. When English teaching methods match the local culture, include Islamic values, use local languages, and show students different ways of speaking English, students tend to get more involved. This also helps them develop the language and cultural skills they need to communicate well both in Southeast Asia and around the world.

GE gets talked about more in Thai English language teaching, but most research looks at university students or teachers. Not many studies have examined secondary students, teachers, and administrators at the same time (Akkakoson, 2019; Boosuk et al., 2026; Rajprasit & Marlina, 2019). This study aims to address that by looking into how much people in the three southern border provinces of Thailand know about GE. It specifically aims to understand what they believe GE is and how they feel about using the Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) method in their classes. By providing useful ideas for creating curricula, training teachers, and changing policies, this study aims to help build an English teaching system that is more welcoming and relevant to the local situation, reflecting how English is actually used worldwide.

## Global Englishes: A New Way of Thinking About English Teaching

GE changes how we look at applied linguistics. It redefines how people worldwide see, teach, and use English. GE embraces different languages, cultures, and ways of using English. Instead of focusing on traditional native speakers, it acknowledges that English is always changing and being used flexibly in global communication (Rose & Galloway, 2019). Unlike older models that treated British and American English (BrE and AmE) as the standard (Jenkins, 2014), GE offers a more inclusive view, recognizing all English speakers, no matter their background, as legitimate communicators (Boonsuk & Fang, 2022; Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2011). As a broad and evolving concept, GE combines key ideas from World Englishes (WE), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an International Language (EIL), translanguaging, and the multilingual turn (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019). While WE focuses on standardizing national English varieties in postcolonial areas (Kachru, 1992), GE emphasizes how English adapts in global interactions. Similarly, ELF research focuses on intelligibility and adjustment between speakers from different linguistic backgrounds (Jenkins, 2006). GE also expands on this by considering how English connects with other languages and how people handle communicating in more than one language. While EIL primarily focuses on English's part in worldwide communication, GE also delves into the cultural and identity elements tied to using English.

A key aspect of GE is its link to translanguaging. This approach recognizes that English often appears together with other languages in places where many languages are spoken (Li, 2024). This idea challenges the focus on single languages in language education and supports the multilingual approach in second language learning by highlighting linguistic flexibility and using multiple languages as resources (May, 2014). Recognizing these realities helps GE reject the idea that only native speakers own English. Instead, it promotes a more inclusive idea where English is a shared global resource for all its users. From a teaching perspective, GE has important implications for ELT. It challenges strict native-speaker rules and calls for curriculum changes that reflect the diverse and multilingual ways English is used worldwide (Galloway & Rose, 2018; Xie & Fang, 2025). Instead of sticking to fixed, native-speaker-focused teaching methods, GE supports a communicative, inclusive, and adaptable approach to both teaching and assessment. By using ideas from WE, ELF, EIL, translanguaging, and multilingual research, GE offers a complete framework for understanding English as a dynamic global phenomenon. This view challenges language gatekeeping in education and promotes a flexible, fair, and practical approach to teaching and international communication.

## Rethinking English Pedagogy: The Rise of GELT

GELT framework was developed to address the gap between traditional ELT practices and the reality of English as a global language (Galloway, 2011, 2018). Moving away from standardized native-speaker norms, GELT embraces linguistic diversity, cultural adaptability, and multilingualism in ELT (Galloway & Rose, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2019). Traditional ELT approaches have long favored Inner Circle English varieties, reinforcing linguistic hierarchies that disadvantage non-native speakers. In contrast, GELT challenges these old ideas by promoting a teaching shift that prioritizes communication skills over strict grammatical accuracy.

Research on implementing GELT has grown significantly, especially in TESOL and EFL contexts, where academics and teachers have included various English varieties in curricula (Rose et al., 2021; Xie & Fang, 2025). A detailed review of 38 studies from 2010 to 2020 identified three main areas

of GELT research: teacher education, classroom implementation, and raising awareness through technology (Rose et al., 2021). In teacher education, both short-term training (Love, 2013) and longer professional development programs (Prabjandee, 2020) have successfully challenged narrow views of English, encouraging teachers to use multilingual teaching methods. Cameron and Galloway (2019) highlight the need for GE-informed teacher training, stating that educators must learn to handle global diversity of the English language before teaching it in classrooms. Classroom-based initiatives have introduced new ways to help students understand different English varieties. Sung (2015, 2018) created activities for in-class and out-of-class use to move students beyond native-speaker models, promoting a more flexible and relevant approach to learning English. Similarly, courses on WE and EIL have encouraged students to question native-speaker ideas and develop a more critical understanding of being understood and communicating well (Boonsuk & Fang, 2025; Tardy et al., 2020). Technology has been key in spreading awareness of GELT. Studies on massive open online courses (MOOCs) (McCorkle et al., 2016), WhatsApp learning groups (Bozoglan & Gok, 2017), and videoconferencing classrooms (Lee et al., 2018) show how digital platforms expose people to different English varieties. Research on informal digital English learning (IDLE) (Lee & Lee, 2019) further shows how students encounter these varieties outside of school, stressing the need for ELT to reflect real-world language use. These findings suggest that GELT-based teaching improves language awareness and critical thinking, helping students become more independent and adaptable English users.

In Thailand, where this study took place, ELT is a complex and changing field influenced by national identity and global needs. Recent studies show growing interest among Thai ELT participants in adopting GELT (Boonsuk, 2026a, 2026b, 2026c; Jindapitak et al., 2022; Montakantiwong, 2024; Noknoi & Prabjandee, 2024; Rajprasit, 2023, 2024). Despite more research supporting GELT, significant challenges remain. Experts point out that native-speaker ideas are still deeply ingrained in ELT curricula and assessment, especially where BrE and AmE are still used as benchmarks (Holliday, 2006; Jenkins, 2014; Jindapitak et al., 2022). To address these issues, various GELT-focused initiatives have been introduced. Boonsuk (2025) and Boonsuk et al. (2026) had students interview international students from ASEAN and interact with foreign tourists. This gave them direct exposure to different kinds of English. Rajprasit (2024) looked at how a General English MOOC affected Thai students. Also, Boonsuk et al. (2024) and Rajprasit (2023) used General English video lessons, debates, and presentations in their English teaching programs. While English education has become more inclusive, what's written in policy and what actually happens in classrooms are still far apart. A big issue is that assessments still focus on native English speakers (Galloway & Rose, 2018). This highlights the need for English language teaching to move beyond older methods and create programs that acknowledge the many languages and diverse ways English is used around the world.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Context and Participants***

This study took place in nine secondary schools in Thailand's Deep South (TDS) region, specifically in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. It's a place where English is taught in a multilingual environment. The TDS area is known for its diverse languages and cultures, and students there speak Pattani-Malay, Thai, and English every day. Because of this complicated language situation, the study looked at how the local culture and the use of multiple languages influence how people see GE and GELT in this region. The research used a mix of methods, gathering both numbers and in-depth information. For the quantitative part, 464 secondary students and 102 English teachers answered a survey about their opinions on GE. In the qualitative part, 18 students were selected from each school, representing small, medium, and large school sizes. Additionally, one English teacher and

one school administrator from each of the nine schools participated. Students and teachers joined focus group discussions (FGDs) to share their views on GE in more detail. Administrators provided their perspectives on ELT in the region and relevant policies through semi-structured interviews. Participants were chosen using a combination of purposive and convenience sampling (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Selvi, 2020), following specific guidelines.

All participants had either taken or completed an English course and had international interactions. These interactions included talking with international students, participating in global education programs, or working with others internationally. This ensured participants had experience with different English varieties beyond the multilingual settings in TDS classrooms, where Pattani-Malay, Thai, and English are used daily. This additional international exposure was seen as complementing their existing multilingual backgrounds and crucial for broadening their awareness of global English varieties to meet the study's goals.

### ***Data Collection***

Four main tools were used for this study: student and teacher questionnaires, a GE awareness workshop, FGDs, and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires, given to students and teachers, measured perceptions on eight key aspects of GE: ELT goals, English varieties, role models for English teachers, English accents, performance assessment, learning materials, cultural content in language learning, and English ownership. The questions were adapted from established GE awareness tools (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins, 2014; Sung, 2015) and improved through pilot testing for clarity and reliability. A five-point Likert scale was used, with responses from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Surveys were handed out in person at the schools. To increase student engagement with GE, a six-week GE awareness workshop was held, with 18 hours of instruction over six sessions. Led by two ELT experts, the workshop covered six related topics designed to gradually build participants' understanding of GE principles. The first session introduced the origins, global spread, and different varieties of English using map activities, videos of speakers with various linguistic features, and group discussions. The second session focused on ELF, its features, and communication roles through film and song analysis, brainstorming sessions on global English use, and ELF scenario practice. The third session promoted awareness and appreciation of different English accents from Kachru's three circles, using audio clips, skit creation with assigned accents, and discussions on standard and non-standard varieties, including Thai, Asian, British, and American accents. The fourth session explored GE representation in popular culture, where participants analyzed film and TV scenes featuring diverse accents and language variations. The fifth session looked at multilingualism, code-switching, and mixing languages, using role-play activities with Thai, English, and Pattani-Malay to simulate real communication situations. The sixth and final session compared EFL and GELT teaching methods, encouraging participants to reflect on their English learning experiences and discuss goals, materials, assessments, and classroom language use. These activities aimed to improve participants' understanding of ELF strategies, intercultural communication, and how different English varieties affect their learning.

After the workshop, FGDs were conducted separately with students and teachers. Student discussions explored changing views on native and non-native English accents, intelligibility, and how identity is formed in English communication. Teacher discussions examined challenges in including GE in lesson plans, materials, and assessments. Each session lasted 60–90 minutes, was audio-recorded, and transcribed for analysis. For a wider institutional view, semi-structured interviews were held with school administrators. These interviews focused on ELT policy development, challenges in adapting curricula for GE, and institutional views on non-native English

varieties. The interviews lasted 30-45 minutes and were conducted in Thai, then translated into English for analysis.

### *Data Analysis*

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods were used to examine participants' awareness and views on GE. Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using SPSS software with descriptive statistics (Dörnyei, 2007), including mean scores, standard deviations, and response frequencies, to summarize overall trends in GE perceptions. Qualitative data from FGDs and interviews were analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Selvi, 2020). This method helped identify common themes, patterns, and factors influencing participants' attitudes toward GE. A bottom-up coding approach (Creswell & Clark, 2011) was used, allowing themes to emerge directly from the data. Transcripts were reviewed systematically, and key themes were categorized based on their relevance to the study's goals. Combining statistical analysis with in-depth qualitative insights provided a thorough understanding of GE awareness in TDS secondary ELT. This integration of quantitative and qualitative findings allowed for a deeper exploration of the challenges and opportunities in applying GE principles in secondary education.

### **Findings**

This section presents the results from student and teacher questionnaires, key insights from focus groups, and perspectives from administrator interviews.

**Table 1**

Students' and teachers' perceptions of GE

| Themes                                        | Students      |      | Teachers      |      |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
|                                               | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) |
| ELT goals                                     | 3.81          | 1.00 | 4.03          | 0.86 |
| English varieties                             | 3.66          | 1.02 | 4.00          | 0.91 |
| Role models of English teachers               | 3.65          | 1.01 | 3.99          | 1.08 |
| English accents                               | 3.63          | 1.03 | 3.71          | 1.00 |
| Performance assessment                        | 3.61          | 0.73 | 3.83          | 0.68 |
| English learning materials                    | 3.55          | 0.94 | 4.13          | 0.84 |
| Cultural content in English language learning | 3.44          | 0.97 | 3.67          | 1.01 |
| English ownership                             | 3.20          | 1.11 | 3.21          | 1.08 |
| Overall                                       | 3.57          | 1.01 | 3.79          | 0.97 |

The results show that both students ( $M = 3.57$ ) and teachers ( $M = 3.79$ ) generally had positive views on GE, with teachers showing higher agreement across all topics. Among students, ELT goals ( $M = 3.81$ ), English varieties ( $M = 3.66$ ), and role models for English teachers ( $M = 3.65$ ) received the highest scores. Teachers, meanwhile, rated English learning materials ( $M = 4.13$ ), ELT goals ( $M = 4.03$ ), and English varieties ( $M = 4.00$ ) highest. Overall, both groups showed similar patterns of endorsement, particularly regarding the importance of ELT goals and English varieties, although teachers expressed stronger support for most GE dimensions. English ownership received the lowest ratings from both students ( $M = 3.20$ ) and teachers ( $M = 3.21$ ), indicating that it was the least strongly endorsed dimension of GE.

**Table 2**  
Students and teachers on English learning materials

| Statements                                                                                                                                                                 | Students      |      | Teachers      |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
|                                                                                                                                                                            | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) |
| Including local or cultural content relevant to learners in English language learning activities can increase engagement and make learning more enjoyable.                 | 3.72          | 1.00 | 4.44          | 0.70 |
| Incorporating local or cultural content relevant to learners into English language learning activities can promote learners' positive perceptions toward learning English. | 3.61          | 0.89 | 4.17          | 0.78 |
| English learning materials in Thai ELT classrooms should be linked to the cultures and identities of Thai learners.                                                        | 3.58          | 0.97 | 3.99          | 0.90 |
| Both native and non-native English materials should be included in Thai ELT classrooms.                                                                                    | 3.54          | 0.95 | 4.16          | 0.81 |
| English learning materials in Thai ELT classrooms should be linked to the cultures and identities of Asian nations.                                                        | 3.46          | 0.90 | 4.05          | 0.87 |
| English learning materials in Thai ELT classrooms should incorporate the cultures and identities of native English speakers.                                               | 3.38          | 0.94 | 3.95          | 0.95 |
| Overall                                                                                                                                                                    | 3.55          | 0.94 | 4.13          | 0.84 |

Table 2 also shows that both students ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.55) and teachers ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.13) support culturally inclusive English learning materials, with stronger endorsement from teachers. While students prefer materials linked to Thai identities ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.58), teachers prefer a broader regional approach ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.05), with materials related to native English-speaking cultures being rated lowest by both groups (students:  $\bar{x}$  = 3.38, teachers:  $\bar{x}$  = 3.95). Qualitative data support these findings, with teachers suggesting a balanced mix of local and international content, consistent with GELT principles.

*Seeing Thai culture in my English textbook makes learning more relatable. It feels like something I can actually use. (Student)*

*I enjoy learning about Thai culture in English, but I also want to explore other cultures to improve my real-world communication skills. (Student)*

*Textbooks emphasize Western cultures too heavily. We need more Thai and Asian cultural content to make learning more relevant to our students. (Teacher)*

However, an administrator highlighted challenges in adapting curricula and textbooks since standardized content still favors native English-speaking cultures.

*Most textbooks are produced in Western countries, making local cultural integration difficult without additional resources and teacher training. (Administrator)*

**Table 3**  
Students and teachers on ELT goals

| Statements                                                                                                       | Students      |      | Teachers      |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
|                                                                                                                  | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) |
| The goal of learning and teaching English is to help learners use English effectively in lingua franca contexts. | 4.00          | 0.99 | 4.49          | 0.74 |
| English language learning and teaching should prioritize intelligibility over native-like speech.                | 3.89          | 1.08 | 4.28          | 0.78 |
| The goal of learning English should focus on how to communicate effectively.                                     | 3.80          | 0.99 | 4.15          | 0.80 |
| One goal of learning English is to attain native-speaker proficiency.                                            | 3.78          | 0.99 | 3.78          | 1.08 |
| One goal of learning English should be accurate grammar use.                                                     | 3.56          | 0.95 | 3.43          | 0.88 |
| Overall                                                                                                          | 3.81          | 1.00 | 4.03          | 0.86 |

Table 3 suggests that both students ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.81) and teachers ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.03) support ELT goals prioritizing communicative competence and intelligibility, with stronger endorsement from teachers. Native-speaker proficiency received neutral ratings ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.78), while grammar-focused learning was least emphasized (teachers:  $\bar{x}$  = 3.43, students:  $\bar{x}$  = 3.56), reinforcing a shift toward communicative competence. Qualitative data further support these findings, with both groups highlighting intelligibility and pragmatic competence over adherence to native-speaker models. The goal of learning English is to communicate, not to sound like a native speaker.

*Grammar rules and native-like pronunciation are not essential in real-life situations. We need practical skills. (Student)*

*Students should focus on being understood rather than aiming for perfect pronunciation. (Teacher)*

An administrator acknowledged the difficulty of changing ELT goals because native-speaker norms continue to influence policies.

*Many still see native speakers as the ideal model for learning English, which makes implementing changes hard. (Administrator)*

**Table 4**  
Students and Teachers on English Varieties

| Statements                                                                                                            | Students      |      | Teachers      |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
|                                                                                                                       | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) |
| Understanding varieties of English allows me to adjust my teaching to accommodate interlocutors.                      | 3.97          | 1.03 | 4.30          | 0.76 |
| All English varieties should be acknowledged and accepted.                                                            | 3.93          | 1.01 | 4.30          | 0.85 |
| English exists in many varieties worldwide, including American, British, Chinese, Singaporean, and Malaysian English. | 3.77          | 0.98 | 4.23          | 0.88 |
| The variety of English I use does not matter as long as I am understood.                                              | 3.68          | 0.98 | 4.16          | 0.86 |
| Understanding English varieties, such as Indian, Singaporean, and Chinese English, is important.                      | 3.36          | 1.04 | 3.61          | 1.05 |

|                                                                                                  |      |      |      |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Understanding non-standard English varieties is unnecessary since they are not native varieties. | 3.24 | 1.06 | 3.41 | 1.08 |
| Overall                                                                                          | 3.66 | 1.02 | 4.00 | 0.91 |

Table 4 shows that both students ( $\bar{x} = 3.66$ ) and teachers ( $\bar{x} = 4.00$ ) have positive views on English varieties, with teachers being more supportive. Both groups agree that all varieties should be accepted, though students are less confident about the importance of non-native varieties (teachers:  $\bar{x} = 3.61$ , students:  $\bar{x} = 3.36$ ). Qualitative findings support this, with teachers, in particular, stressing the need to include more global English varieties to reflect how language is used in the real world.

*The variety of English we speak does not matter as long as we can understand each other. (Student)*

*Students should be aware of different English varieties to communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds. (Teacher)*

*It is encouraging to see more students and teachers accepting different varieties. Our aim is to prepare learners for global communication. (Administrator)*

Despite these views, they note that curricula still favor BrE and AmE, although efforts are being made to increase exposure.

*English teaching continues to focus on native speaker models, but we are gradually introducing more diverse varieties. (Administrator)*

Table 5  
Students and teachers on role models of English teachers

| Statements                                                                                                         | Students      |      | Teachers      |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
|                                                                                                                    | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) |
| An English teacher's appearance (e.g., blue eyes, white skin, brown hair) does not determine their qualifications. | 3.98          | 1.08 | 4.42          | 0.88 |
| Both NNESTs and NESTs are equally qualified as role models for teaching English.                                   | 3.80          | 0.99 | 4.27          | 0.83 |
| A teacher's first language does not determine their qualifications.                                                | 3.63          | 0.99 | 4.18          | 0.79 |
| A teacher's nationality does not determine their qualifications.                                                   | 3.61          | 1.05 | 4.04          | 0.95 |
| NESTs are my preferred role models for teaching English.                                                           | 3.46          | 0.96 | 3.44          | 1.11 |
| NNESTs are my preferred role models for teaching English.                                                          | 3.42          | 0.99 | 3.61          | 1.11 |
| Overall                                                                                                            | 3.65          | 1.01 | 3.99          | 1.08 |

Table 5 shows that students ( $\bar{x} = 3.65$ ) and teachers ( $\bar{x} = 3.99$ ) have similar views on English teachers as role models, with teachers being more supportive of inclusivity. Both groups reject appearance and first language as factors determining teaching qualifications, though teachers show significantly stronger support for seeing NNESTs and NESTs as equally qualified ( $\bar{x} = 4.27$  vs. 3.80). Qualitative data reinforce this, with both groups emphasizing that teaching ability depends on qualifications, not nationality or appearance.

*A skilled English teacher can teach effectively, regardless of their native speaker status. (Student)*

*Being a native speaker does not automatically make someone a more effective teacher. Teaching skills and methodology are more important factors. (Teacher)*

While teachers strongly support equal recognition of non-native and native English-speaking teachers, some students continue to prefer native speakers as language models.

*I believe native English teachers provide good language models, but I also learn effectively from non-native teachers who understand our learning challenges. (Student)*

Furthermore, even though one administrator acknowledges the growing acceptance of diverse English teachers, they still recognize that hiring biases persist.

*We observe growing appreciation for non-native English-speaking teachers, but many institutions continue to favor native speakers in their recruitment practices. (Administrator)*

Table 6  
Students and teachers on performance assessment

| Statements                                                                                                                           | Students      |      | Teachers      |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
|                                                                                                                                      | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) |
| Mistakes made by interlocutors are acceptable as long as their meaning is understood.                                                | 3.85          | 1.04 | 4.29          | 0.89 |
| English proficiency should be assessed based on communicative ability.                                                               | 3.71          | 0.96 | 4.01          | 0.95 |
| English proficiency assessment should prioritize intelligibility over adherence to standard English norms.                           | 3.68          | 1.00 | 3.99          | 0.87 |
| English proficiency should be measured by effective language use rather than similarity to native speakers.                          | 3.60          | 0.93 | 3.83          | 0.97 |
| English proficiency assessment should emphasize accurate communication through vocabulary and expressions rather than grammar alone. | 3.47          | 1.01 | 3.60          | 1.00 |
| English proficiency assessment should focus on grammatical accuracy.                                                                 | 3.37          | 0.97 | 3.24          | 0.92 |
| Overall                                                                                                                              | 3.61          | 0.73 | 3.83          | 0.68 |

Table 6 shows that both students ( $M = 3.61$ ) and teachers ( $M = 3.83$ ) had positive views on using communication-based approaches for English assessment, with teachers showing higher agreement on most statements. For both groups, the highest-rated statement was that mistakes are acceptable if the meaning is understood (teachers:  $M = 4.29$ ; students:  $M = 3.85$ ), while the lowest-rated statement was that English assessment should focus on grammar accuracy (teachers:  $M = 3.24$ ; students:  $M = 3.37$ ), supporting a shift towards communicative competence. Qualitative findings further support this, with both groups preferring assessments that reflect real-world communication over strict grammatical correctness.

*Small grammar mistakes don't prevent understanding the message. (Student)*

*Fluency and confidence are more valuable than sounding like a native speaker. (Student)*

*Effective communication is more important than perfection. Assessment should focus on students' ability to convey ideas clearly. (Teacher)*

One administrator noted this growing shift in assessment but pointed out that traditional grammar-based evaluations still exist in some schools:

*We are moving towards communication-based assessment, though the focus on grammar in standardized tests can make this change difficult. (Administrator)*

Table 7  
Students and teachers on English accents

| Statements                                                                                            | Students      |      | Teachers      |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
|                                                                                                       | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) |
| Every English accent should be treated equally.                                                       | 4.23          | 0.55 | 4.40          | 0.87 |
| All English accents should be acknowledged and accepted.                                              | 4.02          | 1.02 | 4.37          | 0.91 |
| Since English is a global language, learning and teaching various English accents is important today. | 3.92          | 0.97 | 4.38          | 0.83 |
| The accent someone speaks does not matter as long as they are understood.                             | 3.84          | 1.01 | 4.36          | 0.73 |
| I aim for American and British English accents when learning or teaching English.                     | 3.55          | 1.01 | 2.90          | 1.17 |
| The Thai accent is easier to understand than a native speaker's accent in Thai ELT classrooms.        | 3.33          | 1.02 | 3.31          | 1.12 |
| I lack confidence in my Thai-accented English as it reflects poor proficiency.                        | 3.30          | 1.14 | 2.82          | 1.22 |
| Speaking English with a Thai accent reflects my cultural identity, which gives me confidence.         | 3.05          | 1.07 | 3.12          | 1.17 |
| Overall                                                                                               | 3.63          | 1.03 | 3.71          | 1.00 |

Table 7 shows that both students ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.63) and teachers ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.71) support accent inclusivity, with teachers showing stronger agreement. While students moderately prefer American and British accents ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.55), teachers rate this much lower ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.90), indicating stronger support for accent diversity. Concerns about Thai-accented English being seen as a sign of poor proficiency are also more noticeable among students ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.30) than teachers ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.82). Qualitative findings confirm positive attitudes toward accent inclusivity, with both groups highlighting the value of diverse English accents in global communication.

*Understanding someone's message is more important than their accent. (Student)*

*English has diverse accents worldwide, all deserving equal respect. (Teacher)*

*Students need exposure to different English accents for effective global communication. (Teacher)*

One administrator acknowledges increasing acceptance of accents but notes that biases still exist.

*Despite progress, many students still associate American and British accents with higher proficiency levels. (Administrator)*

Table 8  
Students and teachers on cultural content in English language learning

| Statements                                                                                                                                                       | Students      |      | Teachers      |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
|                                                                                                                                                                  | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) |
| The English curriculum in Thailand should incorporate regional and local cultures, enabling Thai learners to engage critically with their own cultural contexts. | 3.77          | 0.98 | 3.95          | 1.03 |
| Asian cultures (e.g., Malaysian, Indonesian, Chinese, Singaporean, and Japanese) should be integrated into English learning and teaching.                        | 3.46          | 0.92 | 3.90          | 0.95 |
| Thai and native English cultures should be incorporated as learning and teaching targets in Thailand.                                                            | 3.44          | 0.95 | 3.91          | 0.96 |
| Native English cultures should be Thailand's primary focus on English learning and teaching.                                                                     | 3.36          | 1.00 | 3.02          | 1.08 |
| Thai culture should be the primary focus of English learning and teaching in Thailand.                                                                           | 3.01          | 1.06 | 3.12          | 1.15 |
| Overall                                                                                                                                                          | 3.44          | 0.97 | 3.67          | 1.01 |

According to Table 8, both students ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.44) and teachers ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.67) support including cultural elements in ELT, with teachers showing stronger approval. Both groups show less preference for focusing only on native cultures (teachers:  $\bar{x}$  = 3.02, students:  $\bar{x}$  = 3.36) or only on Thai culture (teachers:  $\bar{x}$  = 3.12, students:  $\bar{x}$  = 3.01), favoring a balanced approach. Qualitative data support these findings, with both groups endorsing a culturally inclusive ELT framework that includes local, regional, and global perspectives.

*Including Thai and Asian cultures in English lessons creates meaningful learning experiences. (Student)*

*Exposure to diverse cultures beyond Western ones helps students understand how English is used in different contexts. (Teacher)*

While students and teachers value integrating both Thai and native English cultures, they prefer a balanced approach over focusing on just one culture.

*English lessons should include both Thai and English-speaking cultures to provide a complete understanding. (Student)*

Table 9  
Students and teachers on English ownership

| Statements                                                              | Students      |      | Teachers      |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
|                                                                         | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) | ( $\bar{x}$ ) | (SD) |
| No single country or culture owns English.                              | 3.85          | 1.04 | 4.29          | 0.89 |
| English belongs to all who use it.                                      | 3.09          | 1.13 | 3.41          | 1.26 |
| All English speakers have the right to claim ownership of the language. | 3.01          | 1.11 | 3.05          | 1.30 |
| British and American people own English.                                | 2.85          | 1.14 | 2.30          | 1.18 |

Table 9 shows that both students ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.20) and teachers ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.21) have neutral views on English ownership, though teachers show a stronger tendency towards inclusivity. Both groups agree that English is not owned by any single country (teachers:  $\bar{x}$  = 4.29, students:  $\bar{x}$  = 3.85), but disagree that it is exclusively owned by British and American people (teachers:  $\bar{x}$  = 2.30, students:  $\bar{x}$  = 2.85). Qualitative data support these views, with both groups recognizing English as a shared global resource, not belonging to one nation or culture.

*English has become a global language that belongs to all its speakers, not just native speakers. (Student)*

*English serves various communication purposes worldwide, making it impossible for any single group to claim ownership. (Teacher)*

One administrator notes a growing acceptance of shared ownership but also persistent attitudes.

*While views are changing, many students still see native English standards as the benchmark for proficiency. (Administrator)*

### Discussion

The findings reveal that students, teachers, and administrators demonstrate an emerging awareness of GE, though a range of institutional, ideological, and pedagogical constraints continue to hinder its adoption. Despite the increasing support for the communicative and intelligibility-based approach to ELT, institutional and ideological constraints continue to impede the adoption of GE. Institutional and pedagogical policies continue to adopt the grammar and native-speaker ideals, restricting the implementation of the intelligibility-based approach to English language learning.

The most notable finding was the respondents' recognition of the need to evolve beyond the native-speaker paradigm in ELT. Participants shared the same perception that learning English should emphasize intelligibility over native-sounding proficiency, which resonated with various studies that investigated the emergence of English as lingua franca (ELF) (Boonsuk & Fang, 2022, 2025; Jenkins, 2006, 2014; Rose & Galloway, 2019). However, the standardized tests and assessment protocols continue to reflect the native-speaker grammar (Fang & Baker, 2021). Notably, teachers and students recognized English variety diversity, indicating their evolving perceptions regarding the acceptance of ELF in ELT. However, the students showed a higher incline to embrace the native-speaker model, particularly with BrE and AmE. Such inclinations demonstrated the need to diversify the ELT materials to include various ELF variations. The findings are consistent with research conducted by Sung (2015, 2018) and Xie and Fang (2025), suggesting that such an approach would enhance students' perceptions of the various English accents and language-specific

strategies. Therefore, the researchers recommend that educators should incorporate experiential learning strategies when teaching English. Such an approach can involve facilitating student interviews with international speakers, exploring diverse multimedia resources to identify accent-specific phonology, and engaging the class in discussions on the relative merits and drawbacks of different accents.

One of the most intriguing findings was the shifting role distribution of NESTs and NNESTs, both of whom were perceived as competent ELT professionals, although the institutional hiring criteria continued to favor the former. The findings were consistent with research conducted by Cameron & Galloway (2019) and demonstrated the presence of ideological constraints that hinder the adoption of NNESTs, despite their pedagogical competencies, in ELT. Although various studies have demonstrated the numerous pedagogical benefits of employing bilingual NNESTs, including their awareness of learner language, empathy, and enhanced understanding of interlanguage (Fang & Ren, 2018; Holliday, 2006), their adoption in ELT has been slow. Interestingly, some students expressed stronger preferences for native-speaker lecturers over their NNEST counterparts, suggesting that they subscribed to the native-speaker ideology. Therefore, the ELT programs should explicitly address the issue of native-speakerism, particularly through critical discussions on the topic of linguistic entitlement.

While most participants acknowledged the need for greater cultural inclusiveness in ELT materials, they differed in their perceptions of the extent to which local and international cultural contributions should be integrated into the ELT course. Whereas teachers preferred a broader scope of cultural inclusion that encompassed Thai, ASEAN, and international cultural elements, students preferred material that resonated with their cultural backgrounds. The findings were consistent with previous research that identified cultural relevance as a critical factor in engaging students in learning English (Fang & Baker, 2021; Rajprasit & Marlina, 2019). The findings also add to the body of literature that has identified the ELT materials as overwhelmingly Western-centric (Galloway & Rose, 2015). Therefore, the researchers recommend that ELT resources and materials should explicitly feature non-Western cultural elements and highlight the global variations of the English language. The researchers also recommend that the educators explore alternative learning resources, including culturally responsive books and articles, and encourage students to develop their language-specific content, including essays and presentations, that can be used in subsequent classes to facilitate discussions on the cultural differences between Thai and international cultures. Such an approach would enhance their intercultural competencies and enable them to become more culturally aware language learners.

Although the findings suggest a greater institutional awareness of the relevance and importance of adopting a GE perspective, they also indicate the presence of key policy-level constraints that hinder the large-scale adoption of the GELT approach. The respondents acknowledged the presence of institutional policies that favored the status quo, which continued to limit the capacity of educators to develop alternative approaches, particularly at the policy level. Such a finding was consistent with the previous research conducted by Jenkins (2014) and Galloway & Rose (2018) that explored the challenges of transitioning from the native-speaker paradigm to the emergent multilingual approach to ELT. The findings indicated that policymakers and administrators must recognize the need for institutional reforms that would enable the adoption of the GELT approach in English language education.

## Conclusion

The findings demonstrate that Thailand's ELT landscape is at a crossroads as the country attempts to embrace the emerging realities of the global use of English while simultaneously grappling with

the entrenched institutional, pedagogical, and policy-level constraints. Despite the increasing awareness among students, teachers, and administrators of the relevance and importance of adopting a GE perspective, the existing institutional and policy-level constraints continue to impede the adoption of the GELT approach. The findings highlighted several areas that should be the focus of future reforms, including the development of communication-based language learning and teaching strategies, the enhancement of intercultural competencies, and the revision of existing institutional policies to facilitate the adoption of the GELT approach.

It is recommended that policymakers, educators, and administrators take a holistic approach to the issue and collaborate to remove the existing institutional and policy-level barriers to the adoption of the GELT approach. It is also necessary to develop alternative approaches, including updated standardized tests and assessments that reflect the emergent realities of the global use of the English language. Furthermore, revising the ELT materials to reflect the diverse range of ELF varieties is essential. Developing new pedagogical approaches, such as experiential learning and training programs for teachers and administrators, would further facilitate the adoption of the GELT approach (Boonsuk & Fang, 2022). The removal of existing institutional and policy-level barriers combined with these alternative measures will ensure that the policymakers and educational administrators can successfully reform the existing ELT framework and equip students with the necessary intercultural competencies to become truly global communicators.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on the implications of the emergent use of English as lingua franca on language learning and teaching practices, particularly in the context of EFL countries, such as Thailand. However, several limitations associated with this research should also be acknowledged. With the exception of the convenience sampling approach, no other sampling strategies were utilized to ensure that the recruited participants met the inclusion criteria. As such, the presence of sampling bias cannot be ruled out, particularly since only participants with prior international experiences were recruited for the study. Therefore, the findings of this study might not be generalizable to the general student population, particularly since those without international experiences were not recruited for the study. However, future studies can explore the relationship between international experiences and GE awareness and attitudes in greater depth by utilizing alternative sampling strategies. Additionally, future research can replicate this study with a larger sample size while also exploring the long-term effects of the adoption of the GELT approach on student performance, as well as the pedagogical and policy-level strategies for facilitating such adoption. The integration of the GE perspectives and the GELT approach into Thailand's ELT framework will enhance the capacity of students to become truly global communicators. It will also challenge the long-standing institutional, pedagogical, and policy-level constraints that have hindered the development and adoption of alternative approaches that reflect the evolving realities of the global use of the English language.

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The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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