

Accept or Reject It? Thai L2 Teachers' Perceptions of the Global Englishes Paradigm and Teaching Possibility

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Article information	Abstract
Article history: Received: 3 Jun 2024 Accepted: 11 Apr 2025 Available online: 18 Apr 2025	<i>As English plays a key role as an international language, the foundations of teaching and learning English may need to change in response to the new, global sociolinguistic landscape of the twenty-first century. Our study aims to investigate Thai L2 teachers' perceptions of the ownership and varieties of English today, their current teaching practices in General English courses in Thai university settings, and the possibility of implementing the Global Englishes for Language Teaching (GELT) framework into their teaching practices. An exploratory sequential mixed methods design was employed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from thirty-five English instructors working in eleven public universities situated in the Bangkok metropolitan and suburban areas. A questionnaire was developed and distributed among the study participants and a number of semi-structured interviews were held based on the GELT framework and previous studies. The main findings show there was general agreement about all users claiming ownership of English and acceptance of its varieties. Implementing the GELT framework in current teaching practices was also considered plausible, even though it would be new and unfamiliar to some L2 teachers, and they believed that their current teaching practices were not problematic. This study sheds light on the growing acceptance of the Global Englishes paradigm in the Thai English Language Teaching (ELT) community, despite the ever-persistent ideology of native-speakerism.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

English plays a vital role today as a language for all global and local communities. However, the ideology of native-speakerism still prevails and is deeply rooted in the minds of many L2 users (learners) of English (Brittain, 2020; Holliday, 2017). L1 and L2 users deserve equal treatment, as they both actively contribute to and engage with the language. By recognizing L2 users as multicompetent individuals, the value of their diverse language skills and perspectives can be appreciated. The reality, though, seems to be different, and the actions, behaviors, and thinking of L2 users can deviate from the norms of L1 users and be seen as errors of language production instead (Fang, 2020). In this regard, many scholars (e.g., Galloway, 2011; Galloway & Numajiri, 2020; Rose & Galloway, 2019; Widodo et al., 2020) have

recognized this issue and called for changes to the way English is taught and learned to respond to the new, global sociolinguistic landscape of the twenty-first century. As such, the concept of Global Englishes (GE) has been proposed to the ELT community as a new paradigm that would better reflect the reality of the English used in multilingual and multicultural communities. The GELT framework (Galloway & Rose, 2015) was also established as an innovative teaching approach for language teachers and researcher-practitioners to view English as it is now in today's globalized world, and to question the norms and monolingual ideology that have so long prevailed in the ELT community (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

L2 teachers are key agents for bringing about these changes to their community. Their beliefs and educational and professional backgrounds are crucial factors in choosing and determining what to teach and how to teach it. Since the introduction of the GE paradigm, many studies (e.g., Lin, 2022; Monfared, 2022; Tajeddin et al., 2020; Ziaabadi et al., 2023) have been conducted to explore L2 teachers' perceptions of GE, touching on factors such as the ownership and varieties of English and the possibility of integrating the GE paradigm in the classroom. Surprisingly, even when the L2 teachers in those studies had positive attitudes about English ownership by diverse users and accepted its varieties, they still maintained the belief that standard English is preferable over other varieties of English.

In the Thai ELT community, the GE paradigm has also garnered significant attention from researcher-practitioners (e.g., Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021; Jindapitak et al., 2022; Prabjandee & Fang, 2022; Rajprasit, 2024) who have endeavored to make changes in their current practices by creating innovative instructional materials, learning activities, classes, and/or courses. Nevertheless, recent research (e.g., Montakantiwong, 2023; Thienthong, 2022) has revealed that although Thai L2 teachers foster a growing awareness of the GE paradigm, some of them still question its applicability and the suitability of the GELT framework for classroom implementation. It is probably because standard English has long been deeply rooted in Thai L2 users since the first introduction of English in Thailand and continues to be regarded as a priority, aligning with the notable rise of English as a global lingua franca (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). In addition, research on Thai L2 teachers' GE awareness remains underexplored, particularly in university contexts. Even though recent research (e.g., Huttayavilaiphan, 2019; Montakantiwong, 2023; Thienthong, 2022) was done with L2 teachers from Thai universities where their beliefs, GE awareness, and teaching practices were emphasized, this topic still needs a fuller description of how the Thai ELT community as a whole embraces the GE paradigm, specifically the L2 teachers who can be key change agents.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to deepen the understanding about Thai L2 teachers' perceptions of the GE paradigm and its applicability to their teaching practices in General English courses at Thai universities across Bangkok. Not to mention, investigating the perceptions of Thai university teachers in General English courses is also another essential area of study that is underexplored and deserves attention. The way they teach will have a direct impact on how students perceive English, and shape students' understanding of its significance and influence in today's world. In addition, the study also aims investigate whether their beliefs and practices were contrastive. For a better background understanding, we first performed a literature review to reveal the current knowledge and studies dealing with GE, GELT, together with teachers' known attitudes and practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global Englishes

The global spread of English has resulted in the emergence of wide varieties of the language and increasing interactions among users from diverse linguacultural backgrounds in various areas and sectors. Thus, well-established paradigms and theories have described English's status and roles in this regard. To illustrate, World Englishes (WE) legitimize various Englishes as varieties of the language and classify the English-speaking world into the three concentric circles (Kachru, 1982). While English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) emphasizes the use of English between people from diverse linguistic backgrounds to negotiate communication and reach their communicative goals (Jenkins et al., 2011; Seidlhofer, 2011), English as an International Language (EIL) pays more attention to the social and pedagogical implications of its concept (Matsuda, 2012). In addition, the field of translanguaging focuses on speakers using their entire linguistic repertoire when communicating (Garcia, 2009; Garcia & Li, 2014), whereas the multilingual turn in second language acquisition theory describes how English and other languages are used and show a growing movement in the field to reject a monolingual bias (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014).

As these paradigms and theories share a similar underlying ideology, they have been brought together under the broader paradigm of GE to align research in diverse but overlapping fields (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020). It is believed that this consolidation can help to “strengthen the evidence base to support calls for change and bridge the theory-practice divide by facilitating research-informed curriculum innovation” (Galloway, 2024, p. 3). Specifically, Rose and Galloway (2019) stress that GE is “an inclusive paradigm looking at the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural diversity and fluidity of English use and users in a globalized world” (p. 4). The paradigm also fosters a shift in traditional ELT to promote multilingualism and English diversity in various ELT contexts (Widodo et al., 2020). In other words, such a shift aims to emphasize the role of English as an integral part of global communication and its linkage to the concepts of culture-freeness, universality, and neutrality in a repertoire of sociolinguistic settings.

Even though the GE paradigm was well accepted and globally implemented in classroom and teacher education levels (Galloway, 2024; Rose et al., 2021), this paradigm is being questioned as to whether it competes with other paradigms, such as WE (Sadeghpour & D'Angelo, 2022), or whether it is synonymous with WE (Widdowson, 2022). In response, Galloway (2024) clarifies that the focus of GE is not to replace or be synonymous with existing paradigms, particularly WE. Rather, adopting a new term or paradigm does not imply overlooking or undervaluing previous paradigms such as WE and ELF. She then emphasizes that it is crucial to prioritize promoting a paradigm shift in the ELT community rather than focusing solely on terminology. The GE paradigm aims to bring about that shift which must involve stepping away from native English norms, especially in light of research across various paradigms. From this vantage point, it can be seen that the GE paradigm can effectively facilitate the teaching and learning of English for (our) students who live in multilingual and multicultural communities. The following section will provide details on how the paradigm can be implemented through the GELT framework.

Global Englishes for language teaching

Originating from the GE paradigm, the GELT framework has been proposed as an innovative ELT paradigm, not simply a method of teaching, which is considered to be appropriate for today's learners in the 21st century. The framework was initially developed by Galloway (2011) and slightly adjusted by Rose and Galloway (2015), in an endeavor to bring about changes to ELT practices, as traditional ELT is unlikely to greatly benefit L2 learners (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020; Rose & Galloway, 2019). Compared with traditional ELT, there are thirteen aspects in which the GELT framework has a different emphasis (see Table 1).

Table 1
The GELT framework (adapted from Rose & Galloway, 2019, p. 21)

		Traditional ELT	GELT
1.	Target interlocutors	Native English speakers	All English users
2.	Ownership	Inner circle	Global
3.	Target culture	Static NE cultures	Fluid cultures
4.	Norms	Standard English	Diverse, flexible and multiple forms
5.	Teachers	Non-NE-speaking teachers (same L1) and NE speaking teachers	Qualified, competent teachers (same and different L1s)
6.	Role model	NE speakers	Expert users
7.	Source of materials	NE and NE speakers	Salient English-speaking communities and contexts
8.	Other languages and cultures	Seen as a hindrance and source of interference	Seen as resource as with other languages in their linguistic repertoire
9.	Needs	Inner circle defined	Globally defined
10.	Assessment criterion	Accuracy according to prescriptive standards	Communicative competence
11.	Goals of learning	Native-like proficiency	Multicompetent user
12.	Ideology	Underpinned by an exclusive and ethnocentric view of English	Underpinned by an inclusive Global Englishes perspective
13.	Orientation	Monolingual	Multilingual/ translingual

Out of the thirteen aspects, some of them are discussed herein to clarify the framework. The first one, "target interlocutors" refer to those who are users of the language, which include both L1 and L2 users and not just L1 users. Based on the GE perspective, all users belong to multilingual and multicultural communities. Therefore, the English taught to L2 learners should go beyond one or two countries; otherwise, their English may seem unrealistic and unpractical in real-life communicative situations. Another aspect is "the English ownership", which is perceived differently from traditional ELT lens in this framework. Essentially, all English users can claim ownership of the language as they effectively use it for communication or interactions for personal and professional purposes (Higgins, 2003; Widdowson, 1994). The other aspect that should be mentioned is related to the "goals of learning". Teaching L2 learners to reach a native-like proficiency level may almost be an insurmountable task when considering the limited hours of teaching and learning in the classroom, and the environment outside of the classroom where the L1 variety of the learners' English is predominantly used in all/most speech communities. Rather, L2 teachers should perform reality check when intending to develop multicompetent users who can use the language both effectively and strategically.

Additionally, the view of “norms” is interpreted in high contrast to traditional ELT views. That is, English has diverse, flexible, and multiple forms and not only one standard (i.e., standard English). The language is not used for communication with L1 users only, but also other users (i.e., L2 users). This is also true for Thai L2 users, specifically learners who tend to have more opportunities to interact with other L2 users and can be exposed to other varieties of English (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021). Therefore, the norm that English has one standard in traditional ELT may be replaced by this norm of the GELT framework (Rose & Galloway, 2019). Especially when emphasizing spoken English, the language use can be diverse because language modifications may take place when the language is spoken by L2 users from different linguacultural backgrounds. Spoken English can also vary depending on its users and this may not emphatically matter so much as with the written form. This is because English can be and is almost continually being modified in terms of phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and other diachronic shifts; thus, the language is diverse in its uses across different speech communities (Ahn, 2017). However, it is undeniable that standard English is required for teaching and learning in classroom contexts. Widdowson (1994, p. 380), for instance, extends that standard English in writing (i.e., spelling, grammar, and punctuation rules) is necessary as it is primarily designed and used for institutional purposes such as education, administration, and business to guarantee effective communication.

Even though the GELT framework poses benefits to the present ELT community, the framework may not be applicable to all ELT contexts without modification, thus requiring teachers to consider their specific classroom contexts (Galloway & Rose, 2015). This is emphasized by Widodo et al. (2022, p. 18), whereby teachers should consider “the geopolitical context, linguistic landscape, cultural landscape, and social purposes of English learning and use”. To determine whether the framework is accepted among language teachers, our study aims to investigate Thai L2 teachers’ perceptions of the GE paradigm and its applicability in General English classrooms.

Teacher attitudes and practices

Teacher attitudes toward English and teachers’ practices in relation to their attitudes represent a critical issue in the classroom context. Teachers play a vital role in the planning, preparation, and teaching of lessons to achieve specific student outcomes. Apart from their professional practices in ELT, their beliefs about and attitudes toward English can be “push factors” in choosing certain content and learning activities, which may or may not facilitate a paradigm shift in the classroom.

To drive change in the present ELT community, teachers are one of the key change agents. Thus, moving away from traditional ELT to another innovative paradigm, like the GE paradigm, is a real challenge. This is because native speakerism is embedded in many aspects of ELT settings, particularly teachers who are norm followers and providers in language classrooms. Such an ideology has been strongly adopted by L2 teachers of English, especially with regards to English ownership, where it is firmly believed that L1 users (and teachers) own the language because of their privileged “White Western norms” (Brittain, 2020). This leads to them prioritizing the acquisition of “native-like” English as a goal in the ELT community (Choi, 2016).

Success in learning English has also traditionally been assessed by native norms, including actions, behaviors, and thinking, and any deviation from these norms has been considered an error of language production (Fang, 2020). Thus, it is inevitable that instructional materials and practices representing both the cultural and linguistic standards of native-speakerism still prevail. As a result, the idea of shifting teachers' perspectives away from traditional ELT norms to embrace the GE paradigm seems far-fetched. Such attitudes can also be transferred either directly or indirectly to L2 learners. This is also true in the Thai ELT community, where standard British and American English are mostly used in teaching and learning the language, and where native-like English language proficiency is the main goal (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021).

Even though many L2 teachers are open and tolerant to the diverse varieties of English used by users in outer-circle and expanding-circle countries, most of them strongly prefer the English used by L1 users when it comes to teaching and learning the language. Some recent studies have revealed such a contradiction between teacher attitudes and practices. For instance, Tajeddin et al. (2020) found that although Persian-speaking teachers concurred with the ownership of English by both L1 and L2 users and the legitimacy of English varieties, they believed that acquiring standard English is still necessary for their students to be able to successfully communicate. Such contradictions were also discovered in Lin's study (2020) where Taiwanese teachers' stated cognitions in relation to GE differed from their actual pedagogical practices. This is also similar in Iran, where it was reported that teachers chose to adhere to American or British English in their actual teaching practices, despite having an increasing awareness of English as a global language (Ziaabadi et al., 2023). Apart from actual teaching practices, language testing can also depict the contradiction between what teachers perceive and what they do. Monfared (2022) uncovered that most teachers from outer and expanding-circle countries (i.e., India, Malaysia, South Africa, Iran, and Turkey) were not reluctant to accept WE norms in theory, yet they disagreed in using such norms in testing their students' English language proficiency, citing major concerns about the standards in language testing. In the Thai ELT community, similar results can be found as well. For instance, Montakantiwong (2023) reported that Thai teachers were aware of the notion of GE, but doubted the possibility of implementing the GELT framework in their classroom practices. Thienthong (2022) also revealed that standard language prescriptivism had repercussions on Thai teachers even though some variant forms had gained teachers' acceptance. Against this backdrop, one of the plausible reasons why contradictions between beliefs and practices exist is related to how the educational policies of each country, especially in the expanding-circle countries, are shaped and implemented. It is more likely that traditional perspectives of native-centeredness are rooted in the ELT community (Manzouri et al., 2024). Therefore, it is of interest to investigate whether there a contradiction exists between teacher attitudes and practices among the university teachers in this study.

Motivated by the GE paradigm and GELT framework, our study attempts to identify Thai L2 teachers' perceptions on English ownership, varieties of English and their current teaching practices in General English courses in Thai universities. To achieve these research objectives, we set out the following research questions, which we then sought to address:

1. What are Thai L2 teachers' perceptions of the ownership and varieties of English?
2. What are Thai L2 teachers' current teaching practices in General English courses?
3. To what extent will Thai L2 teachers consider implementing the GELT framework into their teaching practices?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

An exploratory sequential mixed methods design was employed to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data in our cross-sectional study. Based on this design, quantitative data collection and analysis were first performed, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). We chose this design as it would allow us to identify and quantify the perceptions of Thai instructors of English in General English classroom settings across different Thai universities, and then to delve deep into specific topics arising from the data analysis. Specifically, distributing the questionnaire would help us reach those instructors in the target universities for their data in general, and conducting the interviews would provide us with insightful information about their perceptions and practices.

Research settings and participants

Through our network, we were able to recruit thirty-five instructors working in 11 public universities situated in the Bangkok metropolitan and suburban areas. All of them voluntarily agreed to take part in this study (see Table 2). In terms of gender, female instructors (82.9%) greatly outnumbered their male counterparts (17.1%). About 70% of the cohort had prior experience in teaching General English courses ranging from 5–14 years, and about 23% had worked for their respective institutions for 15–24 years. Roughly 54% hold a master's degree while the others have a doctoral degree (45.7%). Approximately 70% did not use to study and/or had lived in English-speaking countries for more than one year, whereas the rest had such experiences in the U.K., the U.S., Australia, and Canada (28.6%). During their secondary and tertiary education, about 50% had learned English with either British or American English used in the classroom (e.g., in coursebooks), about 30% had learned English with American English only, about 10% learned English with British English only, and the rest had experience learning English of various varieties, including British, American, Australian, New Zealand, and Singapore English. When they studied English at a university level, 60% of them shared that they were exposed to both British and American English in their classroom, 22.8% thought that only American English was used, and 11.4% mentioned that only British English was used by their teachers.

Table 2
L2 teachers' demographic information

Demographic information		N	%
1. Gender	Female	29	82.9
	Male	6	17.1
2. Age (years)	30-39	11	31.4
	40-49	17	48.6
	50-59	5	14.3
	more than 59	2	5.7
3. Teaching experience (years)	less than 5	2	5.7
	5-14	24	68.6
	15-24	8	22.9
	more than 25	1	2.9
4. Educational background	Master's degree	19	54.3
	Doctoral degree	16	45.7
5. International experience (e.g., study and/or live abroad more than a year)	Yes	10	28.6
	No	25	71.4
6. English used in the classroom when I was an undergraduate student	British English	4	11.4
	American English	8	22.8
	Both British and American English	21	60.0
	British and American English together with other varieties of English	1	2.9
	Not sure	1	2.9

Research instruments

Two main research instruments were developed based on the GELT framework and previous studies (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rajprasit, 2022) and used for data collection. The first instrument was an online questionnaire, which consisted of two parts. The first part aimed to retrieve the instructors' demographic information, including educational and professional backgrounds and experience in learning English at a tertiary level. There were eight items in this part, including close-ended questions such as "when you were a student, which variety of English was used in your classrooms (e.g., American English or British English)?" The second part focused on the instructors' perceptions and awareness of the role of English in a changing world and their teaching practices. This part also comprised eight items and each item further contained two sub-questions, consisting of close-ended and open-ended questions. The close-ended questions asked the instructors if they agreed or disagreed with the statements. For items 1-3, the respondents were given two options: Yes and No. For items 4-5, four options were provided: British English, American English, varieties of English, or not sure. For items 6-8, there were also four options on a scale: very important, important, quite important, and unimportant. Open-ended questions were included as well to elicit further details and clarification behind their choices. An example of it is the question "(6.2) Provide reasons for your answer:" following "(6.1) How important do you think the inclusion of diverse varieties of English in English proficiency tests is? Please choose only 1 option." The second research instrument was the use of semi-structured interviews, which comprised seven

questions relating to the ownership and varieties of English, comparisons between TEFL and GELT, current teaching practices, and the possible implementation of the GELT framework to current teaching practices.

As our study primarily relies on self-reports regarding the perceptions and practices of the Thai instructors, some challenges are expected. For one, the self-reported data would possibly have low reliability and less accuracy when those instructors are asked to report on their own attitudes and experiences, as well as their classroom instructional practices. However, Cheng et al. (2023) maintain that teachers' self-reports of their instructional practices remain a prevalent choice in use in educational studies. Such self-reports can be reliable and valid when those teachers are asked retrospectively about describing specific behaviors, not judging the quality of teaching (Reddy et al., 2015). Therefore, these research instruments are deemed appropriate under the scope of our study.

Data collection procedure

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, we initially contacted Thai instructors who taught General English courses via our networks, using a snowball sampling technique. After agreeing to participate in our study, we explained to them the objectives of our research project and data-collection procedure, which included two phases: distributing the online questionnaire and conducting the semi-structured interviews. In the first phase, the questionnaire was distributed to the instructors ($n = 35$) via email. This phase lasted for one week. Afterward, emails were sent to the instructors to invite them to take part in semi-structured interviews, so that we could gain more insightful information about their perceptions and awareness of English as a global language, together with knowledge of their teaching practices. Eight instructors from one university were willing to partake in the interviews in the second phase. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes.

Data analysis

Data analysis in this study consisted of two steps. The first step involved analysis of the quantitative data. From the data collected from the questionnaire, responses to the closed-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics (i.e., number and percentage). For the second step, the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using content analysis. To analyze both sets of qualitative data, categories or codes were developed from the GELT framework and previous studies, which included "1.1_Teaching_objectives", "1.2_Teaching_classroom", "3.1_GELT_perceptions", and "3.2_GELT_possibility" (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020; Rose & Galloway, 2019). All of the data were then coded, analyzed, and interpreted to create themes based on the results. Consequently, four themes emerged: the ownership and varieties of English, comparison between TEFL and GELT, current teaching practices, and the plausibility of implementing the GELT framework to current teaching practices. These themes were also used to report the qualitative results in the following section.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section reports on (1) quantitative findings from the questionnaire (close-ended questions), and (2) qualitative findings from the questionnaire (open-ended questions) and the semi-structured interviews.

Quantitative data

As seen in Table 3 below, most instructors understood what GE was (91.4%) and also agreed that their understanding of GE closely aligned with the definition of GE given by Galloway (2011) and Rose and Galloway (2019) (100%), even though about 97% had heard of GE for the first time. Regarding varieties of English, 60% of the teachers encountered American English most frequently in their daily lives, followed by other varieties of English (20%) and British English (14.3%). Similarly, American English was used by 40% of them in a classroom context, followed by other varieties of English (34.3%). Twenty of them, however, were not sure what variety was used in their classrooms.

Table 3
Perceptions and awareness of the role of English in a changing world and teaching practices

	Response	N	%
1. Can you share your understanding of the GE definition?	Yes	32	91.4
	No	3	8.6
2. Based on the description provided, how closely does it align with your own definition of GE?	Yes	35	100.0
	No	0	0
3. Is the idea presented above something you are hearing for the first time?	Yes	34	97.1
	No	1	2.9
4. What variety of English do you encounter most frequently in your daily life?	British English	5	14.3
	American English	21	60.0
	Varieties of English	7	20.0
	Not sure	2	5.7
5. As a teacher, which variety of English do you use when teaching your students?	British English	2	5.7
	American English	14	40.0
	Varieties of English	12	34.3
	Not sure	7	20.0
6. Do you think it is important to include different varieties of English in teaching listening and speaking skills?	Very important	0	0
	Important	20	57.1
	Quite important	15	42.9
	Unimportant	0	0
7. Do you think it is important to include different varieties of English in listening tests?	Very important	0	0
	Important	10	28.6
	Quite important	25	71.4
	Unimportant	0	0
8. Do you think it is important to adapt your teaching style to better accommodate the diverse contexts of English communication?	Very important	0	0
	Important	27	77.1
	Quite important	6	17.1
	Unimportant	2	5.7

In terms of implementing the GELT framework in teaching practices, about 60% of them believed that it was important to include more varieties of English in teaching English listening

and speaking skills in their classroom. Nearly 40% of them thought that doing so was quite important. In addition, about 70% tended to agree that the inclusion of more varieties of English in listening tests was quite important, while 30% of them thought this idea was important. Roughly 80% believed adapting their teaching practices to suit the diverse contexts of English communication was important while 17% thought that this idea was quite important, and 6% did not think that it was important.

Qualitative data

Ownership and varieties of English

Though English is widely used in multilingual communities, the notion that English belongs only to some nations, such as the U.K. and the U.S., seems to be at odds with the reality of its usage. The instructors agreed with the notion that any user of English can claim ownership of the language. As English is used as a lingua franca or a global language, no matter who the users are (L1 or L2 users), the language belongs to its users as it functions as a communicative tool for people of diverse linguacultural backgrounds to achieve the goal of communication in business operations, commerce, education, and personal interactions. One instructor asserted that “English belongs to everyone who uses it in their own way (Questionnaire_Open-ended_T29).” However, some instructors held the contrary opinion in that English is owned by native speakers, as they were born in English-speaking countries and speak the language as a mother tongue. This belief is reflected in the statement from an instructor where he expressed, “English belongs to its native speakers only. They use it naturally, while non-native speakers must always think and translate before using or speaking it” (Questionnaire_Open-ended_T29). Another instructor added that even though all users can be language owners, they should take care of how they use the language, mentioning that “English belongs to every user, but they should use it correctly in accordance with the standard, e.g., British or American English” (Questionnaire_Open-ended_T33).

In the semi-structured interviews with the instructors, the responses (n = 8) revealed similar opinions, whereby all the instructors were in agreement that any user can claim ownership of English as it is used as a global language in multilingual communities. The language used in different regions or areas may be modified and adapted for use with people’s own culture and context of use in each country or speech community. It also serves as a medium for mutual understanding in intercultural communication between interlocutors from different cultures or backgrounds. As such, even though the use of English is diverse geographically, culturally, and linguistically, its users with different linguacultural backgrounds have the right to make a claim for their ownership of the language:

We are all members of the international global community. We hereby own English. We are affiliated with the dynamics and changes of English. Thus, we are involved in making this language flourish.

(Interview_T6)

Even though all the study participants ($n = 8$) agreed that English belongs to its users, some ($n = 3$) stressed that writing in English should meet certain standards, especially in terms of grammar and spelling. Such an opinion was reflected by an instructor as below:

If we talk about the standards, I have to admit that there are no better candidates than those native speakers who speak English as a mother language, such as speakers of British English and American English, because of the correctness of their grammar, spellings, and pronunciation.

(Interview_T3)

The spread of English, driven by economic aspects such as trade, globalization, technology, education, international business, and media and entertainment, has led to the increasing use of English in every corner of the world, including expanding-circle countries where English has no historical or governmental role, except to facilitate international communication. In the Thai ELT community, educators and practitioner-researchers acknowledge the present roles and status of English, and recognize new forms of English that have emerged as GE. A clear explanation of the term “varieties of English” was even given by one instructor:

Englishes that are used by bilingual/multilingual speakers across the globe whereby they have the right to infuse and express their identities and cultures through such language use.

(Questionnaire_Open-ended_T32)

Comparison between TEFL and GELT

When comparing TEFL and GELT approaches, most instructors ($n = 6$) shared their opinions on how the two approaches are different in terms of the foci of teaching and learning. Specifically, they thought that TEFL places a greater emphasis on native-speaker norms and the attainment of native-speaker standards through language, culture, and communicative competence. L2 users are taught not to focus on their ownership of the language but the correctness of the language use. This differs from the GELT approach, in which users (learners) are trained to be more open-minded to varieties of English and to prioritize mastering communication skills over other aspects:

To me, TEFL is a form of teaching approach where English is used as a foreign language. Therefore, English is taught in accordance with the standards of native speakers in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and idiom usage. In this case, such a language form would be considered correct English. But if we are talking about GELT, English is recognized as a universal language that has diverse varieties of use, which differ depending on different geographical areas. Thus, the teaching objectives, methods, and technique should not be the same.

(Interview_T5)

However, familiarity with the GELT framework and its implementation in the Thai ELT community remain somewhat questionable, as pointed out by some instructors ($n = 2$):

Personally, I do not think that most teachers in Thailand are open to the GELT approach. There are still groups of people who do not believe in adopting such an approach.
(Interview_T3)

Current teaching practices

When asked about current teaching practices, the main learning objective of General English courses as mentioned by all participating instructors (n = 8) is to develop English communication skills. They agreed that such skills are necessary for Thai people, including their students, to use in any communicative situation, whether in domestic and international workplaces or for personal purposes. No matter what careers students pursue in the future, these are basic skills they will require. They need to be able to apply the language knowledge gained and communication skills trained in classrooms in any situation they encounter in an effective manner, whether in the context of listening, speaking, reading, or writing:

Everyone should be able to at least communicate in English at a basic level. There should be an enhancement of communication skills, because no matter how expert our students may be in a certain field, they should be able to communicate in English and learn from English sources.

(Interview_T1)

Implementation of the GELT framework to teaching practices

Teaching practices are one of the key factors that not only help learners achieve learning outcomes but can also change learner attitudes toward the role and status of English. Even though all of the instructors teach General English courses as compulsory courses, which aim to develop students' English vocabulary and grammar knowledge, the instructors are aware of the sociolinguistic reality of English today and are open to different approaches, such as the GELT framework. However, some instructors raised interesting issues about the type of background needed for students to prepare them for other varieties of English. This is exemplified by an instructor saying, "Teachers should study students' learning styles before adding such learning content to the lessons, because it might cause confusion for students. (Questionnaire_Open-ended_T33)." Moreover, some instructors questioned the inclusion of English varieties in tests, adding that:

There still have been queries regarding the effectiveness of non-standard English varieties when compared to British and American English. Because they do not have a native-like English accent, test designers should select speakers who can communicate fluently and speak very clearly.

(Questionnaire_Open-ended_T11).

As most of the instructors (n = 6) adhered to the course syllabi, they mentioned that those syllabi did not explicitly highlight the notion of GE and that they used coursebooks that do not provide students with greater exposure to the diversity of English today. However, some of them (n = 2) had tried to expose their students to English varieties they might encounter in

real-life communicative situations as one teacher mentioned, “I have added a more serious emphasis on actual uses of English in intercultural communication and varieties of English (Interview_T3).” In this regard, most instructors (n = 6) revealed that they were ready to make some changes in their future classrooms and agreed that English should be treated primarily as a communication tool; whereby nothing else matters beyond whether the interlocutors of both parties (i.e., sender(s) and receiver(s)) can understand each other and reach their communication goals:

Another important thing is to create and instill an attitude for students to stop believing that they must necessarily follow standard English norms, but rather, they should focus more on the effectiveness of their communication and treat it as the utmost priority.

(Interview_T3)

All the instructors (n = 8) felt it was possible to implement the GELT framework, but it should be adjusted according to the educational context. They maintained that General English courses are an ideal learning setting where such a framework could be applied, as instructors in these courses would have more opportunities to relate to the notion of GE in their lessons and learning topics:

Lessons of my course cover various topics, such as greetings, small talks, and other forms of conversation. So, I think it is possible to add such GE-oriented activities to my teaching.

(Interview_T2)

As for the context of my university, it is possible because we manage and supervise all teaching and learning processes as policymakers with absolute authority over the selection or management of the form of teaching.

(Interview_T6)

Therefore, those instructors suggested some learning activities that could help broaden their students’ worldview on the present roles and status of English in multilingual communities. Some examples are provided in the following:

We can have our students listen and transcribe what they hear from those videos that show the uses of different English varieties for the same topic in order to practice basic English listening and speaking. This is so that they can feel accustomed to encountering these different varieties.

(Interview_T5)

We might show videos from different sources that include communication in which people communicate by using English as a global language to our students. Subsequently, they would observe and be more mindful of the actual communication goals.

(Interview_T6)

Even though all the instructors ($n = 8$) have positive attitudes about adopting the GE paradigm and developing GE-oriented activities (as mentioned above), they may not be able to fully implement this paradigm into their current teaching practices regardless, as they must follow the course syllabus that has been designed and mandated for all instructors. Thus, such activities could, however, be treated as extra learning activities in their classrooms. Even so, they knew they would have to plan for some changes in their classroom. Apart from that, the instructors ($n = 8$) also expressed doubts about teaching English in Thailand based on the GELT framework, as teaching English at all educational levels today still adheres to the TEFL framework. Therefore, decisions need to be made about selecting appropriate textbooks. For instance, in many cases, commercial textbooks from major publishers are used that tend to rely on native-speaker norms.

DISCUSSION

The status and role of English as a global language has led to a call for changes to the foundations of how the language is taught and learned. Our study responded to such a request by considering Thai L2 teachers of English's perceptions of GE and how the GE paradigm could be implemented in their teaching practices in university settings. Specifically, we attempted to investigate Thai L2 teachers' perceptions of English ownership and the varieties of the language in today's global society, their teaching practices in General English classrooms, and their opinions of the GELT framework and the possibility of its implementation.

Even though the study participants had varied educational and professional backgrounds, most of them were positive about the GE paradigm and the potential applicability of the GELT framework in their classroom contexts. First, Thai instructors in our study agreed that all users have the right to claim the ownership of the English they use. They confirmed support for L2 users (learners) of English to be owners of the language they use, but this does not mean that L2 users should override the ownership of L1 users, as it seems pointless to do so. The main reason to claim ownership should be that English is a global lingua franca and is used by many people who have learned it through formal and non-formal education means. In this sense, English belongs to whoever uses it (Seilhamer, 2015). Many scholars (e.g., Crystal, 1994; Higgins, 2003; Widdowson, 1994) also advocate that L2 users can develop a sense of ownership, which can thus overlook the dichotomy between native speakers and non-native speakers. Such a dichotomy can be a major barrier to communication as it makes L2 users feel inferior to L1 users, which is a result too of the pervasive ideology of native-speakerism, especially in the ELT community (Brittain, 2020; Fang, 2020; Holliday, 2017). Such ideology still persists worldwide today throughout the ELT community (Choi, 2016; Harsanti & Manara, 2021; Tarrayo et al., 2021).

In addition, acceptance of English varieties is unsurprising in the Thai ELT community, as many Thai instructors showed openness to the diversity of English. However, when they referred to teaching and learning English in classroom contexts, some of them emphasize that the teaching and learning must adhere to standard English (i.e., British English or American English), and no other varieties, especially when it comes to writing in English. We agree with them that

users, specifically L2 users, should strictly follow a standard writing and spelling system, and appropriately use the correct word choice. Undeniably, there are two dominant varieties (i.e., British and American English) that are the standard forms commonly used for spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary in formal schooling, language assessment, and official print publications. Such standards cannot and should not be changed, even if used by different users. Widdowson (1994) explains that standard English in writing is created to serve institutional purposes, and it is inarguable to deny it. Nevertheless, spoken English can deviate from standard English when different users use it. That is, the language can shift when it is used in other speech communities over a period of time, leading to phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and other diachronic shifts (Ahn, 2017). This is the truth that has occurred with all existing varieties of English. Acknowledging this, those varieties should be accepted and valued. However, a contradiction between teachers' attitudes and practices is unavoidable. This issue has also been raised in many recent studies (e.g., Lin, 2022; Monfared, 2022; Tajeddin et al., 2020; Ziaabadi et al., 2023), which have found that although the notion of English varieties is gaining acceptance from L2 teachers, British and/or American English are still preferable in their actual teaching practices. Such a case is not exceptional in the Thai context as well (Montakantiwong, 2023; Thienthong, 2022). Historically, Thai L2 users were introduced to British and American English owing to the political and economic power of the two nations, i.e., the U.K. and the U.S. (Trakulkasemsuk, 2018) and both Englishes are dominantly used as references of standard English. Thus, to completely move away from them seems to be a far-fetched idea. Nevertheless, training openness to varieties of the language seems to be a more realistic alternative for L2 users (learners) when discussing exposure to different varieties outside the classroom contexts.

Implementing the GELT framework in General English courses in Thai university settings is also considered doable. This is because the instructors in our study have made some changes in their classrooms or had a plan for revising their teaching practices in relation to the current status and roles of English. Both TEFL and GELT paradigms have their unique characteristics and can benefit language learners when they are introduced and adopted. However, the use of English is a common practice nowadays with people from any linguacultural background. There are also common interactions between L2 English users themselves. That is one of the reasons why Rose and Galloway (2019) "call[ed] for another paradigm shift to reframe language teaching in order to match the new sociolinguistic landscape of the twenty-first century (p. 16)". Therefore, the teaching and learning of English should be done on a realistic basis, meaning that one main goal of the teaching and learning should be the ability to communicate with not only L1 users, but also L2 users of the language. Applying the GELT framework can provide more benefits to today's learners than adhering to traditional ELT practices can. This is because learners will share a widely held view of intercultural communication that their interlocutors are all English users, that English has diverse, flexible and multiple forms, and that communicative competence should be prioritized, not native-like proficiency (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020; Rose & Galloway, 2019).

Even though the GELT framework is proposed as an innovative ELT paradigm, a shift to a new paradigm can be unsuccessful if teachers as key agents are not ready to implement the paradigm or are not familiar with it. This creates a challenge in promoting and making the

framework acceptable to teachers who are used to adhering to traditional ELT norms and believe that it benefits their students as well. Another challenge is how British and American English have long been deeply rooted in Thai L2 users. This seems to be continually regarded as a priority in teaching and learning English in Thailand as well (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). Another challenge is the educational policies that will directly affect Thai L2 teachers' teaching practices, especially in terms of assessments and evaluations. Teaching and learning English in Thailand are still examination-centric in order to measure learning outcomes and student performance. Thus, it is more likely that traditional and deeply rooted perspectives of native-centeredness will continue to persevere for quite some time.

As the goals of learning General English in many Thai universities are to develop learners' four language skills and grammatical and vocabulary knowledge, L2 English teachers may believe that such goals are already attainable and suitable for their learners. It is true that Thai L2 learners need these skills and knowledge as a basis for learning any main foreign language in Thailand. However, L2 teachers should be aware that their learners also learn the language through its realistic use outside of classroom contexts. We have not intended to argue that traditional ELT is outdated, but rather emphasize the sociolinguistic reality of English and its use in today's multilingual societies. The GELT perspective does not suggest that L2 teachers should abandon their previous practices entirely, yet it endeavors to increase awareness of the issues related to the spread of English and preparing learners for the realistic uses of English in varied speech communities. What should be abandoned is "the ideology that underpins curricula (Rose & Galloway, 2019, p. 27)". In this regard, L2 teachers should foresee communicative situations that their learners will encounter and look back to their current teaching practices and courses to consider whether they are well-designed for exposure to English diversity as well, focusing on garnering respect for multilingualism as well as diverse cultures and identities, and practicing ELF strategies in the overall language curricula (Galloway, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Our study sought to highlight the role of L2 teachers of English as key change agents in the ELT community by investigating their perceptions and identify their teaching practices related to the GE paradigm. The main findings reveal that the teachers are in favor of English ownership and accepting its varieties. Moreover, implementing the GELT framework is considered plausible among these L2 teachers, even though only some have familiarity with the framework. Moreover, such findings were beneficial for researchers in the field of GE to gain insight into how L2 teachers perceive and conduct their classes in Thai university settings as it is an area that has not been adequately explored. For course developers and practitioner-researchers, these findings can also serve as a foundation for developing GE-informed professional development courses for in-service L2 teachers (e.g., via teaching practicum, or via pedagogical strategies and practices) of students across different majors, not just English or Linguistics majors. To develop such GE-informed courses, it would have a significant impact on L2 learners' proficiency in using English and being exposed to its various forms in diverse communicative contexts within multilingual and multicultural communities.

However, this study is not without its limitations, and these should be noted. For instance, data collection was based on the responses to a distributed questionnaire and the comments made in semi-structured interviews. Even though we obtained detailed data from these two research instruments, the data which are related to the respondents' perceptions and self-reported teaching practices may not be entirely reliable or accurate. Rose et al. (2021) were also concerned that qualitative methods such as retrospective interviews may be unreliable. Even so, we considered this limitation when committing to these two research instruments. When the instructors were prompted about their self-reported teaching practices, the questions were designed in a way that the focus would be on teachers' retrospective descriptions rather than on them passing judgment on the quality of their own teaching (Reddy et al., 2015). We believed that this approach enhanced the reliability and validity of self-reports (Cheng et al., 2023). In addition, the number of participants ($n = 35$) was quite low in order to make any generalization of L2 teachers' perceptions and teaching practices in the Thai ELT community. These participants were also only recruited from the public universities in the Bangkok metropolitan and suburban areas, not private universities and universities in other regions of Thailand. For further studies, to ultimately contribute to a more robust understanding of teaching practices, classroom observations should be included to confirm whether what teachers believe in, in terms of teaching and learning, and what they actually do in the classroom are relevant and consistent. Besides that, recruiting L2 teachers from different types of universities and from all regions across Thailand may allow one to glean deeper insight of the Thai ELT communities regarding the integration the GE paradigm in teaching practices. Additionally, the demographic information section of the questionnaire should have included details about the respondents' professional backgrounds pertaining to the GE paradigm and the GELT framework as well. Unfortunately, fields such as their research areas, interests, and participation in professional development courses were not included. This crucial factor could have significantly contributed to explaining the some of the self-reported perceptions and practices from the respondents.

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