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# Preparing English Teachers to Teach Global Englishes Language Teaching in Thailand: My Personal and Professional Journey

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## Introduction

My name is Denchai Prabjandee. Currently, I am a teacher educator at the Faculty of Education, Burapha University, Thailand in the Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Teaching English as a Global Language (TEGL) program, which aims to equip in-service English teachers with knowledge about Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) and to prepare them to skillfully implement it in the classrooms. The specific focus of the program has attracted many Thai English teachers and foreign English teachers in Thailand and abroad. Since its establishment in 2011, the program has enrolled 56 English teachers from diverse teaching backgrounds, ranging from novice (newly graduated) to experienced (more than 20 years of teaching experiences), and across school contexts (primary, secondary, and international schools). Collectively, these 56 English teachers have created significant impact for their students more than thousands of individuals. It is my privilege to work closely with these English teachers since it helps me understand GELT implementation across contexts. It is also exclusive for me to listen to their classroom stories, which opens my professional horizon.

Additionally, I am the chair of the Ph.D. program in TEGL, which aims to prepare teacher educators, who are involved in preparing pre-service English teachers to understand GELT and implementing it in the classrooms. Since 2013, the program has produced 33 doctoral graduates, who are currently expanding the field of GELT in their contexts. Many of them developed new GELT-related courses to educate pre-service English teachers and revised their extant teacher education curricula to correspond to the GELT paradigm. Many of them are also actively engaged in conducting research on GELT implementation to push the boundaries of GELT barriers. Anecdotal evidence and stories from our doctoral graduates indicated that they are active agents of change in their contexts. Collectively, I could say that our attempts have gathered the momentum towards a paradigm shift in English Language Teaching (ELT), from protecting native speakerism to appreciating and respecting diversity of English varieties.

As a teacher educator, it is part of my responsibility to provide community services. For six years, I have provided teacher professional development to help in-service English teachers to

implement GELT, which is an ELT paradigm aimed to prepare learners to communicate with linguistically and culturally diverse English users. I believe that GELT is timely and relevant for the ELT profession, especially ELT in Thailand, since it supports learners to have more open views about English use in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to be aware of the complexity of their target interlocutors.

In the past six years, I have provided more than six GELT workshops, reaching out to more than 1,050 English teachers in Thailand. Offering teacher professional development to implement GELT has been a rewarding experience for me since the participating teachers have exhibited welcoming minds to the GELT concept. For six years, I never have a

strong resistance to GELT. The teachers are very open and they are willing to learn about GELT. From their perspectives, GELT is a new ELT approach, so learning about it makes them feel that they have up-to-date knowledge of the field. For the teachers, GELT is equivalent to frontier innovation in ELT that they must learn in order to become the most updated teachers. However, teachers often expressed a strong concern of how to implement GELT in the classrooms. From their perspectives, GELT is very theoretical. This clearly reflects the huge theoretical/practical gap of the GELT concept.



In this essay, I will first describe the theoretical concepts of GELT and argue for the need to implement it in the English classrooms. Since GELT is a very new concept which requires teachers to reexamine their prior assumptions about English and ELT, I believe it is important to share stories of helping teachers to implement GELT in the classrooms so that other teacher educators or researchers can learn from my stories.

### **Global Englishes Language Teaching**

Global Englishes is an ELT paradigm inclusive of interrelated fields such as World Englishes (WE), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an International Language (EIL), and translanguaging (Rose & Galloway, 2019). First, WE explores English varieties and attempts to codify linguistic features of localized Englishes (Galloway & Rose, 2014). Based on WE research, Global Englishes acknowledges that English is not monolithic, but pluricentric. Second, ELF research investigates how English users with different lingua cultural backgrounds communicate with each other (Galloway & Rose, 2014). Drawing the implications from ELF research, Global Englishes realizes how English users negotiate meanings while communicating with each other. Third, EIL recognizes multilingualism and the diversity of English for ELT (Galloway & Rose, 2018). Based on EIL research, Global Englishes argues that English should be regarded as a global ownership since it is used as an international language (McKay, 2018). Finally, research on translanguaging indicates that English users bring with them their full linguistic and semiotic repertoires into

communication, breaking down the boundaries of named codes of languages. Taking these paradigms together, Global Englishes attempts to prepare learners to communicate with culturally diverse English users outside of the classrooms (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

Global Englishes inevitably has implications for ELT. Galloway and Rose (2015) have brought forward six broad proposals, known as the GELT framework to bring change in ELT: increasing WE exposure, emphasizing respect for multilingualism, raising awareness of Global Englishes, raising awareness of ELF strategies for communication, emphasizing respect for diverse culture and identity, and changing English teachers hiring practices in the ELT industry. The GELT framework was further developed by Rose and Galloway (2019), illustrating the differences between GELT and the traditional ELT. To elaborate, the goal of GELT is to prepare learners to communicate with the target interlocutors outside the classrooms who are linguistically diverse, rather than to achieve native-like English proficiency. Since English enjoys the global status, it should be regarded as global ownership. Additionally, the role model for learning English has changed from Native English speakers (NES) to expert English users. Moreover, teachers should include salient materials from diverse English-speaking communities. Finally, learners' first language should be seen as a resource rather than hindrance for learning English (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

Since its establishment, GELT has been challenged as theoretical rather than practical (Galloway & Rose, 2018; Sung, 2015). Tardy et al. (2021) stated that "with the increased recognition of

flexibility, localization, and legitimacy of Global Englishes, practitioners have wrestled with the implications for language instruction” (p. 2). As a result, the calls for more classroom-based research have been encouraged (Galloway & Rose, 2018). Recently, many researchers have implemented GELT in the classrooms to explore the potential benefits of GELT (e.g Fang & Ren, 2018; Galloway & Rose, 2018; Lu & Buripakdi, 2020; Rose & Galloway, 2017; Tardy et al., 2021). Specifically, in Thailand, several researchers have implemented GELT in an English course at the university (e.g., Boonsuk, Ambele, & McKinley, 2021), WE course in the university (Rajprasit, 2021), and in-service teacher professional development (Prabjandee, 2020). Based on these studies, it is observed scholars have started exploring the benefits of implementing GELT in the classrooms, but English teachers in the school contexts still cannot keep up with GELT. It was found that English teachers still believe in native speakerism, an ideology where NES are positioned as better role model than NNS (Holliday, 2006). I believe that it is urgent to help teachers realize that such ideology is problematic for their learners. As a result, I want to reach out to teachers.

### **Personal Journey to GELT**

The journey to engage in GELT as an area of interest for me kicked off with simply trying to conform myself to my professional roles, but later GELT is my passion that wakes me up every morning and go to work. During my master’s degree in 2007, I was initially exposed to the concept of World Englishes in a seminar class. Kachru’s three concentric

circles helped me understand the global spread of English. At that time, Global Englishes had not yet been emerged as a distinctive field of study. In 2010, during my doctoral study, trained to be a teacher educator for culturally diverse learners at University of Northern Colorado, I was aware of the multilingual nature of English users inside and outside of the classrooms. After receiving the doctorate, I came back to Thailand in 2014, and I was assigned to teach in the M.Ed program to prepare in-service English teachers to understand GELT and to skillfully implement it in the classrooms. It was this professional responsibility that I started to immerse myself into the field of Global Englishes. The book, *Introducing Global Englishes*, by Galloway and Rose (2015) is what I carried with me at all times. I welcomed Global Englishes wholeheartedly. Now, I am fully an advocate for GELT implementation in the classrooms.

Studying GELT by myself has been a rewarding experience since it opens my professional horizons. Days and nights, I have immersed myself into the world of GELT. I have read scholarly work by several influential authors, such as Jenifer Jenkins, Nicola Galloway, Heath Rose, Sureh Canagarajah, and Alastair Pennycook. Apart from studying GELT by myself, my previous background knowledge on World Englishes and culturally diverse learners mediate my acceptance of GELT. In 2016, GELT has brought theoretical discussion of how English should be taught. When I studied the concept, I immediately felt the need to help English teachers understand GELT since it is relevant to the globalized use of English, and the learners will be very beneficial for such preparation. However,

when I introduce the concept of GELT to in-service English teachers, I can only describe what it means from the theory. I can only talk about the theoretical foundation of GELT. The practical side remains in the shadows. I felt the urgent need to conduct more research on GELT implementation.

While I welcome GELT wholeheartedly, the public understanding of GELT is diverse, which challenges the acceptance of the concept from a wider community. For example, when I presented the TEG curriculum to the University Council to be approved. The Council wanted us to change the name of the program to “English Language Teaching” because they said that “Teaching English as a Global Language” is ambiguous. They said that English is “the English language,” and saying that it is a global language is confusing and has no meaning. When we presented “English as a Global Language,” the Council thought we would teach English from all over the world. Even though we tried to tell them what it means by presenting concepts from influential authors, the Council refused to listen to us and dismissed us immediately. We did not pass the approval process in the first round. In the second round, the discussion is still centered around what it means by GELT. We tried to tell them, but it was like we were talking to the wall. However, with a strong belief in GELT and preservice to educate the Council, it took us three rounds to finally get the TEG curriculum approved. Based on this vignette, it is clear that GELT is recognized only within the ELT profession. As a result, I felt the need to disseminate the GELT concept to the wider community, not just ELT.

## **Supporting Teachers to Understand GELT**

To prepare in-service teachers to understand GELT, it is important to equip them with an understanding of the global spread of English and its impact on ELT. The teachers need to critically examine their perception about the monolithic nature of English and current ELT practices. To achieve these tasks, the teacher education program should adopt a critical, socialization, and transformative approach to teacher professional development. I started with socializing in-service teachers into the field of GELT by providing a content-based course on Global Englishes. In this course, the teachers were exposed to reading materials about Global Englishes and prompted them to critically question their current ELT practices. Initially, the teachers thought Global Englishes was equivalent to World Englishes. As time passed, they started to develop an understanding of the complexity of Global Englishes, inclusive of language ideology, identity, intercultural communication, issues of native and non-native speakers. This gradual understanding might be the result of the amount of exposure to the field.

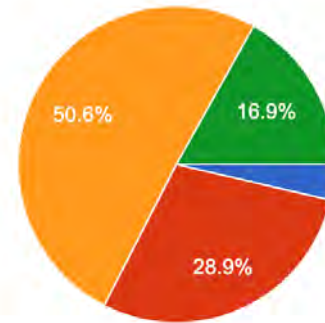
Exposing in-service teachers to current research on Global Englishes is useful to help them understand how practitioners in other contexts implement GELT. It helps them realize the research community they are engaging with. As a result, in the research course, the teachers were assigned to read research articles based on their interests from the pool of resources related to GELT and wrote an article summary with reflections. In the reflection, it was clear that the teachers

understood the concept of Global Englishes and GELT by reading related research articles. The research provided theoretical knowledge about GELT and empirical evidence to support the benefits of GELT.

To complete the M.Ed teacher education program, the teachers must conduct a thesis. The teachers must propose a research study that is relevant to GELT. In doing so, they have to read a lot of research studies and use their research skills to explore GELT implementation. Immersing themselves into the current state of knowledge on GELT research helps them realize how GELT is implemented in many educational contexts.

### The Practicality of GELT

I have offered teacher professional development programs for many groups of Thai English teachers in the past six years. One recent professional development was open to in-service Thai English teachers. In the workshop, I presented the definition of GELT, explained why it is important to implement GELT, and introduced some practical ideas for classroom implementation. It took three hours to go over the core concept. At the end of the workshop, the teachers were asked to respond to a survey to explore their attitudes towards the GELT proposal. Upon asking if GELT is theoretical rather than practical, the majority of teachers reported that it is theoretical, while some felt that GELT is practical.



It was clear that 50.6% agreed and 16.9% strongly agreed that GELT is theoretical rather than practical, while 28.9% disagreed and 3.6% strongly disagreed that GELT is theoretical. Based on these percentages, it was clear that the majority of teachers think that GELT is theoretical rather than practical. This division of diverse opinion indicated that the teachers responded to GELT differently. Thus, to say that it is theoretical or practical depends on teachers' perspectives.

### What's Next?

It has been my privilege to work with many Thai English teachers to support them to implement GELT. Based on these many years of working with teachers, it was found that the teachers who attended GELT teacher professional development showed increased knowledge of GELT, but their attitudes towards GELT and perceived skills to implement GELT slightly changed. For me, this is a good start. I am aware that helping teachers to implement innovation such as GELT takes time and commitment. As a teacher educator passionate about GELT, I will continue offering teacher professional development to other groups of teachers. I will also conduct more research on GELT to explore how to help

teachers implement GELT and to investigate the impact of teacher's learning about GELT on students' performance. It is hoped that by involving English teachers, it contributes to the gathering momentum of the paradigm shift in ELT.

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