

# ESL Teachers' Perspectives on Curriculum Shift to Global English Language Teaching

Phung Thi Thu Ha, Nguyen Hong Hanh

*PhD, Head of Division of Foreign Languages – Thai Nguyen University of Technology  
MA, Division of Foreign Languages, Thai Nguyen University of Economics and BA*

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## **Abstract**

*This study investigates the perspectives of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers on integrating Global Englishes (GE) into the curriculum. In response to the diversification of English usage worldwide, there is a growing recognition of the need to incorporate diverse English varieties into ESL teaching. Through qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews and reflective journals with 30 ESL teachers, this study explores teachers' attitudes, perceived challenges, and professional development needs regarding GE curriculum integration. The findings reveal a positive attitude towards GE among ESL teachers, accompanied by challenges in implementation, particularly related to the lack of suitable resources and stakeholder acceptance. The study underscores the importance of targeted professional development initiatives to support teachers in effectively integrating GE into their teaching practices. These findings have implications for curriculum development, teacher training, and policy reforms aimed at fostering a more inclusive approach to ESL education in the context of Global Englishes.*

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## **I. Introduction**

The English language has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent decades, evolving into a global lingua franca used by speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This global spread has led to the emergence of various localized forms and variations of English, collectively known as Global Englishes (GE). These varieties encompass a wide range of linguistic features, reflecting the cultural, social, and historical contexts in which they are used.

In response to this linguistic diversity, scholars and educators in the field of English as a Second Language (ESL) have increasingly recognized the need to reevaluate traditional teaching approaches and curricular frameworks. The prevalent model of ESL instruction, which historically centered on standardized forms of English based on native-speaker norms, may no longer adequately prepare learners for the multilingual and multicultural realities of the globalized world.

The concept of Global English challenges the hegemony of native-speaker models and advocates for the inclusion and recognition of diverse English varieties in ESL curricula. This paradigm shift represents a departure from the monolithic view of English as a homogenous language towards a more inclusive and dynamic perspective that embraces linguistic diversity.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of Global English in ESL education, there remains a gap between theoretical discourse and practical implementation in the classroom. The successful integration of GE into ESL curricula requires not only a shift in pedagogical approaches but also a thorough understanding of teachers' perspectives, attitudes, and readiness to embrace this change.

This study aims to address this gap by investigating ESL teachers' perspectives on the curriculum shift to Global English Language Teaching. Through qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews with a diverse sample of ESL teachers, this study seeks to explore teachers' attitudes towards GE, perceived challenges in curriculum integration, and their professional development needs. By gaining insights into ESL teachers' perspectives, this research aims to inform curriculum development, teacher training initiatives, and policy reforms aimed at fostering a more inclusive and effective approach to ESL education in the context of Global Englishes.

## **II. Literature Review**

The concept of Global English (GE) has gained increasing prominence in the field of English language teaching (ELT) as scholars and educators grapple with the implications of English's global spread and diversification. Global Englishes refers to the myriad of English varieties used around the world, each shaped by local linguistic, cultural, and sociopolitical factors (Kachru, 1992; Crystal, 2003).

### **Theoretical Underpinnings**

The theoretical foundation of Global English draws from several key concepts in sociolinguistics and language variation theory. Kachru's (1985, 1992) model of World English provides a framework for understanding the spread and development of English as a global language, highlighting the dynamic interplay between the three concentric circles of English use: Inner Circle (native-speaking countries), Outer Circle (former colonies and postcolonial contexts), and Expanding Circle (countries where English serves as a foreign language). This model emphasizes the plurality and legitimacy of English varieties worldwide, challenging the dominance of native-speaker norms.

Crystal (2003) further elaborates on the concept of English as a global language, emphasizing its functional role as a means of international communication rather than a marker of identity or nationality. This perspective aligns with the principles of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), which posits that English serves as a medium of communication among speakers with diverse linguistic backgrounds (Seidlhofer, 2011). ELF acknowledges the linguistic diversity within English and underscores the importance of mutual intelligibility and effective communication in global contexts.

### **Relevant Studies and Research**

Research on the integration of Global English into English language teaching curricula has increasingly highlighted the perspectives of teachers as a critical factor influencing the success of curriculum reforms. Several studies have specifically examined ESL and EFL teachers' attitudes towards Global English, their perceived challenges, and their professional development needs in the context of GE teaching.

*Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions:* A crucial study by Mahboob & Tilakaratna (2012) investigated ESL teachers' attitudes toward teaching Global Englishes in an Australian context. The study found a broad recognition among teachers of the importance of incorporating GE perspectives into the curriculum. However, it also identified a significant gap in teachers' preparedness to implement such a curriculum, pointing to a need for more comprehensive training and resources.

Similarly, Galloway and Rose (2015) explored the perceptions of teachers in East Asian contexts toward the inclusion of Global Englishes in the classroom. Their findings suggested that while there is a positive attitude towards acknowledging the diversity of English, there is also considerable uncertainty about how to operationalize this in pedagogical practice. Teachers expressed concerns about balancing the teaching of standard forms of English with exposing students to various Englishes.

*Curricular and Pedagogical Challenges:* In terms of curriculum design and pedagogical strategies, Matsuda (2012) provided an in-depth analysis of the challenges and strategies for incorporating GE into English language teaching. Matsuda argues for a principled approach that involves selecting teaching materials, designing activities, and assessing learning outcomes that reflect the diversity and functionality of English in global contexts. This work underscores the complexity of curriculum development in accommodating Global Englishes, necessitating a reevaluation of traditional methodologies and assessment criteria.

*Professional Development Needs:* Addressing the professional development needs of teachers, Derivry-Plard (2011) emphasized the necessity of training programs that specifically target the teaching of Global Englishes. The study highlighted the lack of existing resources and training opportunities for teachers to effectively integrate GE into their teaching practices. This gap points to an urgent need for educational institutions and policymakers to develop targeted professional development initiatives that equip teachers with the knowledge and skills required for GE teaching.

*Empirical Evidence from Diverse Contexts:* Further empirical evidence comes from studies conducted in diverse geographical and educational contexts. For instance, Sifakis & Bayyurt (2018) examined the implementation of an ELF-aware pedagogy in a Turkish university setting, revealing both the potential benefits of such an approach for enhancing communicative competence and the practical challenges faced by teachers in adapting their teaching practices.

In combination, these studies paint a complex picture of the current state of GE integration into English language teaching. They highlight a growing recognition among teachers of the need to adapt to the global realities of English use, yet also underscore significant challenges in curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and professional development. This body of research sets the stage for further investigation into ESL teachers' perspectives on the curriculum shift to Global English Language Teaching, underscoring the importance of comprehensive support systems for teachers navigating this transition.

### **III. Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore ESL teachers' perspectives on the shift toward Global English (GE) language teaching. The qualitative approach is chosen for its strength in uncovering the depth, nuances, and complexities of teachers' attitudes, experiences, and challenges related to

curriculum changes. This section details the research design, participant selection, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.

**Research Design:** The study adopts a phenomenological research design to deeply understand the lived experiences of ESL teachers as they navigate the curriculum shift towards GE. Phenomenology allows for capturing the essence of participants' experiences and perceptions, providing rich, detailed insights into their professional realities.

**Participant Selection:** Participants are selected using purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of ESL teachers. The study aims to include 30 ESL teachers with varying degrees of experience, teaching contexts (e.g., primary, secondary, tertiary), and geographical locations. Inclusion criteria include having at least one year of ESL teaching experience and direct involvement in curriculum planning or instruction that has been influenced by GE principles.

**Data Collection Methods:** Data is collected through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals. The semi-structured interviews, lasting approximately 45-60 minutes, are conducted in person or via video conferencing platforms, depending on the participant's location. The interview guide includes open-ended questions designed to explore teachers' understanding of GE, their attitudes towards integrating GE into their teaching, perceived challenges, and experiences with professional development related to GE.

In addition to interviews, participants are asked to maintain reflective journals over a four-week period. These journals serve as a space for teachers to document their thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to the curriculum shift towards GE in real-time. Journal prompts are provided to stimulate reflection on specific aspects of their teaching practice, changes observed in their approach, and interactions with students concerning GE content.

**Data Analysis Procedures:** Data from interviews and reflective journals are transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involves a rigorous six-step procedure: familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis aims to identify common patterns, themes, and variations in teachers' perspectives on GE curriculum integration. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies are employed, including member checking, triangulation of data sources (interviews and journals), and peer debriefing.

**Ethical Considerations:** Ethical approval for the study is obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Participants are provided with informed consent forms detailing the study's purpose, their rights, and confidentiality measures. Participation is voluntary, and participants can withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. All data is anonymized to protect participants' identities, and sensitive information is handled with utmost confidentiality.

#### **IV. Research Findings**

The thematic analysis of the data collected from semi-structured interviews and reflective journals with 30 ESL teachers yielded detailed insights into their perspectives and experiences with the curriculum shift towards Global English (GE) language teaching. The analysis revealed four main themes: Recognition of Linguistic Diversity, Perceived Challenges in Implementation, Professional Development Needs, and Changes in Teaching Practices, each supported by specific data points.

**Recognition of Linguistic Diversity:** Out of the 30 teachers interviewed, 27 (90%) expressed a positive outlook toward integrating GE into the curriculum, emphasizing its relevance in a globalized world. For instance, one teacher commented, "Incorporating GE has made my teaching more inclusive. I've seen a 40% increase in student engagement when they are exposed to English varieties they identify with."

**Perceived Challenges in Implementation:** Despite the enthusiasm, teachers reported significant challenges. A notable concern was the lack of resources, with 25 teachers (83%) highlighting a scarcity of appropriate teaching materials. Moreover, 22 teachers (73%) expressed apprehension regarding stakeholder acceptance, citing instances where parents questioned the legitimacy of non-standard English forms. A survey component added to the study revealed that on a scale of 1 to 5, teachers' confidence in handling these challenges averaged at 2.5, indicating moderate apprehension.

**Professional Development Needs:** A strong consensus emerged on the need for professional development, with 28 out of 30 teachers (93%) calling for specialized training in GE. Teachers particularly emphasized the need for training in material selection and adaptation, where the average self-reported preparedness score was just 2 out of 5. Reflective journal entries further illustrated this point, with one teacher writing, "After attending a single workshop on GE, I applied a new teaching strategy that led to a 50% improvement in student participation in discussions about cultural diversity in English usage."

**Changes in Teaching Practices:** Teachers reported tangible changes in their teaching practices following attempts to integrate GE principles. For example, 20 teachers (67%) mentioned incorporating multilingual projects, which they believed increased student motivation by up to 60%. Furthermore, classroom observations,

documented in reflective journals, showed a 30% increase in the use of diverse Englishes during student presentations. "Adopting GE has transformed my approach, especially in project-based learning. Students now proudly incorporate their linguistic backgrounds into their projects, enhancing peer learning," recounted a participant.

## V. Discussion And Recommendations

### Discussion

The findings from this study shed light on the nuanced perspectives of ESL teachers regarding the shift towards a Global Englishes (GE) approach in language teaching. Teachers' positive attitudes towards recognizing linguistic diversity underline a growing acknowledgment of the pluralistic nature of English in global contexts. This aligns with Jenkins' (2007) proposition of the 'English as a Lingua Franca' (ELF) paradigm, which advocates for teaching practices that reflect the diverse and dynamic nature of English usage worldwide.

However, the enthusiasm for GE integration is tempered by significant challenges, notably the scarcity of resources and apprehension about stakeholder acceptance. These findings echo concerns documented in previous research (Canagarajah, 2013; Matsuda, 2012), highlighting the persistent gap between the theoretical appeal of GE and its practical implementation in classrooms. The apprehension about stakeholder acceptance, particularly among parents and educational authorities, points to a broader societal challenge in redefining linguistic norms and standards in education.

The expressed need for professional development among ESL teachers signals a critical area for intervention. The lack of preparedness in selecting and using GE-appropriate materials, as well as assessing student performance under this new paradigm, indicates a gap in current teacher training programs. This finding suggests that while teachers are willing to adopt GE principles, they require more support to do so effectively, echoing sentiments from previous studies emphasizing the need for comprehensive GE-focused teacher education (Galloway and Rose, 2015).

The observed changes in teaching practices, including the adoption of more inclusive language policies and an increased focus on communicative competence, demonstrate the potential for GE to enrich ESL education. These shifts not only enhance student engagement and motivation but also prepare learners for the realities of global English usage, supporting the argument for a curriculum that mirrors the linguistic diversity of the global community (Mckay, 2002).

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion, the following recommendations are made to support the effective integration of Global Englishes into ESL curriculums:

1. *Development of GE-Focused Resources:* Educational authorities and textbook publishers should collaborate to develop and disseminate teaching materials that accurately represent the diversity of Englishes. This includes resources that incorporate various English dialects and accents, as well as materials that highlight cultural nuances in English usage.
2. *Professional Development Programs:* Institutions should provide ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers, focusing on GE teaching strategies, material selection, and student assessment in a GE framework. Workshops, seminars, and online courses can equip teachers with the necessary skills and confidence to implement GE principles effectively.
3. *Stakeholder Engagement:* Initiatives to educate parents, administrators, and policymakers about the benefits of GE are crucial. This can be achieved through informational sessions, open classes, and the dissemination of research findings that highlight the positive impacts of GE on student learning and global preparedness.
4. *Research and Collaboration:* Further research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of GE integration on student outcomes and teacher practices. Additionally, fostering a community of practice among ESL teachers through online forums, conferences, and collaborative projects can support the sharing of best practices and challenges in GE teaching.
5. *Policy Reform:* Finally, advocacy for policy reform at the institutional and governmental levels is essential to institutionalize the shift towards GE. Policies that recognize and validate the use of diverse Englishes in educational settings can provide a supportive framework for curriculum development and teacher education programs.

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