

When Global Englishes Meet Hong Kong Classrooms: Teachers' Beliefs and Barriers to Pedagogical Change

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Abstract

As English increasingly functions as a global lingua franca within multilingual repertoires, there has been a strong scholarly call for English Language Teaching (ELT) to evolve in alignment with contemporary sociolinguistic realities. In Hong Kong, this imperative is being addressed through an ambitious curriculum reform introducing Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT), scheduled for full implementation in 2029/30. The proposed shift provides a valuable lens for examining how policy initiatives intersect with teacher beliefs, professional development needs, and institutional conditions.

This mixed-methods exploratory study investigates secondary-school ELT teachers' perceptions of GELT and the contextual factors influencing its anticipated uptake. Survey data from 58 in-service local teachers indicate broadly positive orientations toward GELT, with stronger receptivity observed among educators working in lower-band schools, those with fewer years of experience, and teachers in more junior positions. However, follow-up interviews with three participants highlight enduring constraints, including persistent native-speaker ideologies among teachers, students, and parents, as well as assessment pressures associated with Confucian-heritage educational values. These findings demonstrate how curricular reform is negotiated at the nexus of policy expectations, school culture, and teacher cognition.

By foregrounding teacher cognition—an area still under-examined in Global Englishes research—this study offers empirical insights into how frontline educators interpret and anticipate GELT-oriented change. It emphasizes the importance of strengthened institutional support, particularly through targeted professional development that challenges monolithic native-speaker norms and equips teachers to implement effective GELT awareness-raising practices for both learners and educators.

Keywords: Curriculum Innovation; English Language Teaching Methodologies; Global Englishes Language Teaching; Language Policy; Teacher Cognition