27 - 29 November 2026 Vienna , Austria

Analyzing the Paradigm Shift of Thai EFL Teachers: From Native-Speakerism to English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)-Aware Pedagogy in Thailand

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the critical pedagogical transition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Thailand, transitioning from traditional native-speakerism toward an English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)-aware pedagogy. For several decades, English language teaching in Thailand has been heavily influenced by the norm of native speakers (US/UK English), creating linguistic insecurity or anxiety among teachers and learners. However, global interactions between non-native English speakers become increasingly intense, particularly within the ASEAN community. This conceptual analysis explores the necessity of shifting the educational paradigm. Utilizing Sifakis's ELF-aware teacher education framework and Mezirow's transformative learning theory, this article examines the structural, cultural, and institutional challenges Thai EFL teachers encounter during this shift. This analysis demonstrates three major categories of limitations: on the macro level, we find national examination policies; on the meso level, we discover the school administration's expectations/policies; and last, on the micro level, we identify teachers' fears concerning their professional identities. The study concludes by offering tangible suggestions regarding the development of teachers' professional skills and changes in the curriculum to enhance understanding of ELF concept among students in Thailand.

Keywords: English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Native-speakerism, Thai EFL Teachers, Teacher Identity, ELF-aware Pedagogy