



## “DOES IT REALLY MATTER?”: EXPLORING TEACHERS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS STUDENTS’ ACCENTS IN ELF SETTING

**Krittatt Sukman<sup>i</sup>,**  
**Veeravarn Kulchol,**  
**Narawan Chumnumnawin**  
Faculty of Liberal Arts,  
North Bangkok University,  
Thailand

### **Abstract:**

The study investigated how teachers working at an international university view English accents used by their students from expanding-circle countries, namely, Thailand, China, Korea, and Myanmar. The data were collected from 265 teachers, espousing questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as research instruments. The obtained data were then analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. It was revealed that both groups of teachers viewed their students’ non-native English accents positively, with the Thai accent being evaluated most favourably. The findings further indicate that mutual intelligibility and successful communication are prioritised, and there is a strong preference for native English varieties as pedagogical models.

**Keywords:** intercultural competence, English language teaching, educational technology, transversal skills, innovative pedagogies

### **1. Introduction**

For the past decades, it has been undeniable that globalization has brought about a huge change in the sociolinguistic profiles of the English language. Arguably, the most noticeable change is that English is now used as a universally accepted means of international communication. It is unequivocal that the global diffusion of English has made international business, education, media, tourism, science and technology possible. English has also been acknowledged for its use as a lingua franca by people of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds serving a wide range of communicative purposes (Crystal, 2003; McKay, 2002, 2003).

According to Crystal (2008), an estimated number of English language users with considerable competence is claimed to be approximately 2 billion worldwide and seems

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<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [krittatt.s@gmail.com](mailto:krittatt.s@gmail.com)

to grow constantly. He goes on to add that only 328 of them are native speakers of English (Crystal, 2008). As a consequence, it is apparent that the number of non-native speakers is overwhelmingly greater than that of native speakers, and this marks the prevailing status of English as a global lingua franca.

According to Jenkins (2009), in ELF interactions, English is used as a common language of choice for people who share different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. With this in mind, it seems that ELF enjoys the diversity of several varieties of English as it is used among these non-Anglophone speakers. One conspicuous manifestation of such diversity is accent, which is often ascribed to its diverse speakers wherever the language is spoken or used. In this respect, Breiteneder (2009) suggests that present-day English is inexorably used among non-native speakers in non-native settings; therefore, intelligibility and successful communication should be of primary concern rather than the quality of language. Correspondingly, Jenkins (2005) points out that there is no need for non-native speakers to have native-like accents in ELF communication. Still, non-native accents have always been under criticism due to the fact that the ELT industry has been significantly reliant on textbooks, teacher education, syllabus, etc., that are based on standard Anglophone norms: British and General American English, for instance.

Furthermore, a number of previous studies (Fang, 2016; Tamimi Sa'd, 2018; Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021; Frank & Chayanuvat, 2023; Sahrai & Tantiniranat, 2024) revealed that non-native accents were usually viewed less positively by both English teachers and learners, whereas native ideology remains highly entrenched and native model were universally regarded by both native and non-native speakers for being the ultimate goal to achieve. This has prompted the present study to investigate the attitudes toward a variety of non-native English accents from the perspectives of teachers who teach at Thai international universities where English plays its role as a lingua franca and a medium of instruction. In addition, how these non-Anglophone accents are stereotypically seen in society, recognised, and prioritised by the teachers is also important for as much, as their attitudes may provide a better understanding as to what extent ELF gains its ground in Thai society.

Specifically, the current study was guided by the following research questions:

**RQ#1:** What are the English language teachers' attitudes towards students' accents?

**RQ#2:** What are non-English language teachers' attitudes towards students' accents?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and Mutual Intelligibility**

At present, it is apparent that non-native speakers (NNS) tremendously outnumber the native speakers (NS) of English on a global scale, and to emphasize this development, these two labels of English as an International Language (EIL) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), sometimes used interchangeably, have been introduced by a number of

scholars when referring to the international use of English (Jenkins, 2007; Seidellhofer, 2010). According to Jenkins (2007), EIL and ELF usually refer to the same phenomena of English used in international settings. ELF, however, reflects a growing trend of English being used as a contact language among non-native speakers rather than between native and non-native speakers. Seidlhofer (2011 as cited in Jenkins, 2015) provides a summary of ELF that it is "*any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option*". On the same ground, Jenkins (2009) described ELF as a contact language used among speakers who share different first languages. Research into English as a lingua franca is a relatively new area of study, notwithstanding the fact that contact languages like English as a lingua franca have existed long before since the very first settlements of British colonies (Jenkins, 2011).

In ELF communication, Willems (2001) states that English is mostly used in oral situations in multilingual and multicultural settings. Moreover, intelligibility is the ultimate goal, and the success of communication is a result of the quality of language (Breiteneder, 2009). As mutual intelligibility is prioritised, the speakers of ELF do not need to conform to the native model; it leads to the simplification and regularisation of English, such as the omission of the third-person singular -s ending (Breiteneder, 2009). Firth (1996, as found in House, 2003) suggests a certain principle of "let it pass"; an attempt to ignore the sources of trouble rather than explicitly correcting them insofar as a certain level of understanding is accomplished. Lastly, Haberland (2011) urges that ELF communication demands a certain tolerance because ELF speakers often diverge from language norms. This view was seconded by Jenkins (2015), who bemoans that functional usage of English was accentuated in international communication rather than an adherence to the formal conventions of NS norms. This shift in focus toward ELF interaction among NNS provides significant implications for language attitudes, particularly pertaining to accents.

## 2.2 Related Studies of Accents

Several studies have investigated attitudes towards various English accents. For instance, Kaur (2013) investigated ELF accent attitudes from a group of trainee teachers in Malaysian public institutions of higher learning using a questionnaire adapted from Jenkins. The results revealed that the respondents favoured native English accents over non-native English accents. They described native English accents in more positive tones by using pejorative and emotional words, whereas Asian English accents like Japanese and Indian English were described as robot-like, flat, drawly, tongue twister, confusing, weird, etc. Likewise, in the context of China, Fang (2016) examined the attitudes of Chinese students towards non-native accents in an ELF setting. The questionnaire was administered to non-English major students, and 309 valid samples were collected. The questionnaire was constructed with multiple choice questions about accent beliefs and teaching of pronunciation. Nine of the students were also selected to take part in the face-to-face interview. The results indicate that the native norm is still somewhat entrenched in the subjects. Although native-like English accents are not necessarily to be achieved or

the most intelligible ones in international communication (Jenkins, 2000, 2007; Walker, 2010), the students still believe that having native-like pronunciation is the ultimate and meaningful goal to be achieved. Also, Sa'd Tamimi (2018) surveyed 51 Iranian EFL learners' perceptions of accented speech in an ELF setting. The findings disclosed the participants' considerable uncertainty concerning the relationship between accent and socio-economic and educational status as well as their reluctance to display their L1 identity through L1-accented speech. Furthermore, the results indicated that the participants vastly appreciate native accents and hold negative stereotypes of non-native accents.

In the Thai context, Ambele and Boonsuk (2018) investigated Thai undergraduate students' attitudes towards their own Thai English accent. The data from both the questionnaire and interview unfold a controversial perspective on the attitudes of the students towards their own Thai English accent. While most participants show a positive attitude towards their own Thai English accent as they reported that the Thai English accent is good as long as one can be understood, some of them still strive to sound as native-like as possible since they think that the Thai English accent is unintelligible. Frank and Chayanuvat (2023) conducted a study with 99 undergraduate students, investigating their attitudes towards various English accents by looking specifically into their preferences and how these accents influence their learning. The findings report the students' preferences for such accents as British, American, and Thai, respectively, based on likeness, intelligibility, acceptability, preference, and prestige. The participants also reported that British and American accents greatly motivate their English learning journey. Additionally, Sahrai and Tantiniranat (2024) focused on 123 Thai students' attitudes towards native accents, Asian accents, and their own. The data were obtained from online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, which revealed that American accents were overwhelmingly seen as the most favourable and served as the standard for pronunciation. Despite the fact that Asian accents were viewed as intelligible and acceptable, the Thai accent was considered deficient by the students.

Despite extensive research on attitudes towards English accents in various contexts, most studies focus on student populations, particularly in educational environments, leaving teachers' attitudes towards their accents largely underexplored. Addressing this gap should provide a more comprehensive understanding of accent attitudes held by lecturers and the extent to which ELF has gained its ground in Thai society.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Context of the Study**

This study was conducted at the Assumption University of Thailand, Suvannabhummi Campus, where English has been used as a lingua franca and a major medium of instruction. The university is located in the province of Samutprakarn, Thailand and is generally known to be the first and largest international university in the nation. In

particular, there are 89 students of all nationalities taking courses at Assumption University. The survey also revealed that Chinese are the majority of international students, followed by Burmese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Bhutanese (Rattanaphumma, 2011). Other nationalities that can be found are Nepalese, Indian, American, Taiwanese, and Bangladesh, as well as other nationalities from Asia and adjacent regions.

### 3.2 Research Design

The results of this study were based on the data obtained from the questionnaire and semi-structured interview, incorporating methods from both attributes of the traditional division between qualitative and quantitative research. Regarding the investigation of accent attitudes, this study looked into teachers' attitudes towards these four non-native accents: namely, Chinese English, Burmese English, Korean English and Thai English. The rationale behind this selection is that they are the four most dominant accents in the context of the study.

### 3.3 Samples

The population in this study was full-time lecturers at Assumption University; nevertheless, the focus of this study was merely on two main groups of lecturers: full-time English and non-English lecturers. The sample size was determined by the formula proposed by Yamanae Taro (1973). In this study, 126 English language lecturers and 139 non-English lecturers were recruited to participate in this study.

### 3.4 Instruments

This study adopted and adapted the questionnaire from Jenkins (2007). Her research aimed to discover the students' attitudes toward different varieties of English. As an adapted version, the focus of the questionnaire of this present study is on the lecturers in order to be in line with the research objectives. Having used a 5-Likert scale for each item investigated, the questionnaire was intended to elicit the lecturers' attitudes towards their students' English accents in terms of their *intelligibility*, *pleasantness*, *familiarity*, *accuracy/correctness* and *acceptability* for international communication (Jenkins, 2007).

The data was also drawn from a semi-structured interview in this study in which five lecturers of each group of participants who expressed their willingness to be interviewed were randomly selected for the interview, which was equipped with open-ended questions covering the area of the current study and its objectives. In addition, the interview questions were divided into two themes: attitudes towards accents in general and preference for accents. The interview served to confirm and enhance the data obtained from the questionnaire.

### 3.5 Data Collection

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, informed consent was obtained from the head offices of the two groups of samples. With valuable assistance and permission from the departments, the questionnaires were distributed to the samples through the

secretaries of their departments. Each teacher respondent was asked to complete the questionnaire and encouraged to return it to the head office at their earliest convenience. Additionally, the questionnaire demanded approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Upon their approval and willingness to participate in the interview, five lecturers from English language majors and another five from non-English majors were randomly selected to participate in the semi-structured interview, which was conducted in English. Thai lecturers were allowed to use their preferred language at their convenience. All responses given by the interviewees were recorded using audio equipment. For the sake of unbiased and non-prejudicial views, the interviewees were thus not given considerable information about the current study. Lastly, the interviewees were ensured that their anonymities were protected by invented names and that all their personal data was kept confidential.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

#### 3.6.1 The Quantitative Data

After all participants completed an online questionnaire, the quantitative data from the questionnaire were calculated by using descriptive statistics to represent the mean value as the criteria for interpreting levels of the participants’ reactions to each accent. The interpretation of the results from the questionnaire employed Dean’s and Illowsky’s (2009) Class Interval, which is classified into a scale of five as illustrated in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** The Mean Values for Interpretation

Range of Mean Values	Interpretation
4.21 – 5	Strongly agree, the very favourable degree of attitudes.
3.41-4.20	Agree, the favourable degree of attitudes.
2.61-3.40	Moderate, the moderate degree of attitudes.
1.81-2.60	Disagree, the unfavourable degree of attitudes.
1.00-1.80	Strongly agree, the very unfavourable degree of attitudes.

#### 3.6.2 The Qualitative Data

The interviewees’ responses were transcribed into verbatim English and presented in the following section, all of which were categorised under two different themes for content analysis. Then, the data obtained from the two groups of samples was analysed and interpreted in order to determine the extent to which English lecturers and non-English lecturers adopt the ideology of English as a lingua franca.

## 4. Findings

This section is organised into two parts in alignment with the two research questions. Each section presents the results from the questionnaire data first, followed by the findings from the interviews.

## 4.1 RQ#1: English Language Teachers’ Attitudes Towards Students’ Accents.

### 4.1.1 Questionnaire Results

The analysis of teachers' attitudes toward students' international English accents reveals several key patterns. Table 1 summarises the overall mean values of the four accents—Thai, Chinese, Korean, and Burmese—across five attributes: intelligibility, pleasantness, familiarity, correctness, and acceptability. The total mean values indicate that Burmese accents (3.59) received the highest overall rating, followed by Korean (3.28), Thai (3.36), and Chinese (2.92) accents presented below.

**Table 2:** Overall Mean Values of English Lecturers’ Attitudes (N = 126)

Attributes	Students’ International Accents			
	Thai	Chinese	Korean	Burmese
Intelligible	3.45	2.98	3.44	3.60
Pleasant	3.34	2.84	3.19	3.51
Familiar	4.00	3.03	3.25	3.60
Correct	2.55	2.63	3.06	3.52
Acceptable	3.38	3.14	3.48	3.76
<b>Total</b>	3.36	2.92	3.28	3.59

To elaborate, Burmese accents (3.60) were perceived as the most intelligible, followed closely by Thai (3.45) and Korean (3.44) accents. Chinese accents received the lowest intelligibility score (2.98). Burmese accents (3.51) were rated as the most pleasant, with Thai (3.34) and Korean (3.19) accents following. Similar to intelligibility, Chinese accents (2.84) were rated the lowest in terms of pleasantness. Thai accents had the highest familiarity rating (4.00), likely reflecting the local context of the teachers. Burmese accents (3.60) were also perceived as highly familiar. Korean (3.25) and Chinese (3.03) accents were rated significantly lower, suggesting limited exposure to these accents. In terms of correctness, Burmese accents (3.52) received the highest score, while Korean accents (3.06) were rated as moderately correct. Thai (2.55) and Chinese (2.63) accents were perceived as the least correct, reflecting stricter judgments on these accents. Additionally, Burmese accents (3.76) were rated the most acceptable overall, followed by Korean (3.48) and Thai (3.38) accents. Once again, Chinese accents (3.14) received the lowest acceptability rating.

### 4.1.2 Semi-structured Interview Results

Two main themes have emerged from the qualitative data analysis.

#### 4.1.2.1 Neutrality of Attitudes

To elicit the teachers’ overall attitudes, they were asked whether they feel that some English accents are better than others. The interviewees expressed their strong belief that no English accent should be seen as a better or superior accent. Their responses also suggest that mutual intelligibility and successful communication should be prioritized.

The following excerpts are the specimens of such views:

**Example 1:**

*"Does it really matter? I don't usually judge if some accents are better than others, including those four accents from the survey. For me if it's clear and understandable, I will consider that it's good. Some Asian students might have American or British accents and it's good for them to have those accents because most people might prefer to hear native accents. For me, understanding the message comes first. Somehow, when I teach English, I won't teach non-native English accents to my students for sure. It's definitely native English that should be aimed and taught. But in terms of spoken interaction, that's another story. As long as we understand each other, that's it."* (Interviewee A)

**Example 2:**

*"I think we should not say that this accent is better than or superior to that accent. I understand that we are not native speakers of English, so I'm okay with all my students' accents. I don't expect them to speak 100 percent correct grammar or native-like accents. I always try to understand what my students say. They also do the same. I mean, people tend to have different backgrounds since they come from different places where English is not their mother tongue. So we all speak with some accents. And in real life conversation, everyone tries to understand each other, and it is much more important that our mutual intelligibility is met."* (Interviewee B)

#### 4.1.2.2 Preferences for the Accents

The interviewees were asked what accents they aimed at their students when using English. Their harmonious responses indicate a significant preference for native English, yet they did not have objection or negation against their students' non-native accents. The following quote is an instance of this view:

**Example 3:**

*"I always encourage British or American English if it has a lot to do with learning target. But in terms of spoken language, it doesn't really matter, you know if people recognise your foreign accent: Thai or Chinese, for example. As long as my students speak well and manage to communicate effectively, that's more important than speaking English with a native accent."* (Interviewee A)

**Example 4:**

*"Well, as an English teacher, I prefer standard RP. I think that it's important for students to get the correct input and produce the correct output. But then again, it's important that they can communicate, and communication is the main focus. So, I would say any accent that makes them comfortable to speak it's acceptable. Nevertheless, I wish they could master native English accent and be able to use it at the end of the day."* (Interviewee B)



## 4.2 RQ#2: Non-English Language Teachers' Attitudes Towards Students' Accents.

### 4.2.1 Questionnaire Results

The analysis of non-English language teachers' attitudes towards students' international English accents reveals distinct patterns across the five assessed attributes: intelligibility, pleasantness, familiarity, correctness, and acceptability. Table 2 presents the mean values for Thai, Chinese, Korean, and Burmese accents, with the Burmese accent consistently receiving the highest total mean score (3.60). This is followed by Korean (3.38), Thai (3.32), and Chinese (3.20) accents.

**Table 3:** Overall Mean Values of non-English Lecturers' Attitudes (N=139)

Attributes	Students' International Accents			
	Thai	Chinese	Korean	Burmese
Intelligible	3.00	3.15	3.35	3.60
Pleasant	3.32	3.16	3.47	3.51
Familiar	3.93	3.27	3.47	3.60
Correct	2.83	2.96	3.15	3.52
Acceptable	3.53	3.46	3.46	3.76
<b>Total</b>	3.32	3.2	3.38	3.6

For non-English lecturers, Burmese accents (3.60) were perceived as the most intelligible, with Korean accents (3.35) ranked second. Chinese accents (3.15) slightly surpassed Thai accents (3.00), which were rated the lowest for intelligibility. In terms of pleasantness, Burmese accents (3.51) and Korean accents (3.47) scored highly, indicating a positive perception. Thai accents (3.32) followed closely, while Chinese accents (3.16) were rated the least pleasant. Further, Thai accents received the highest familiarity score (3.93), reflecting the local context of these teachers. Burmese (3.60) and Korean (3.47) accents also showed relatively high familiarity levels, whereas Chinese accents (3.27) were rated the lowest. When it comes to correctness, Burmese accents (3.52) were rated the most correct, followed by Korean accents (3.15). Chinese accents (2.96) and Thai accents (2.83) scored lower, suggesting stricter judgments on these accents regarding correctness. Similar to correctness, Burmese accents (3.76) received the highest acceptability score, indicating strong overall acceptance. Both Korean and Chinese accents (3.46) were rated equally acceptable, with Thai accents (3.53) showing slightly higher acceptability.

### 4.2.2 Semi-structured Interview Results

Two main themes have also emerged from the qualitative data analysis.

#### 4.2.2.1 Neutrality of Attitudes

Resembling English language teachers' replies, all interviewees tended to believe that there is no such thing as a better English accent; instead, they pointed to the importance of successful communication and mutual intelligibility. This type of attitude can be seen in the following excerpts:

**Example 5:**

*"No, I do not feel that there are any English accents that are better than others or superior, if I may say this word. Because what we should focus on with the student is communication. That is, as long as we can understand each other. If they can express what they think and feel in English, that's enough for me. From my experience, students' accents are not the thing that causes us to misunderstand each other. It will be something like they do not pronounce the word clearly or lack of intonation. So, if you are asking me if there is better accent, I think no." (Interviewee C)*

**Example 6:**

*"Well, for me, it's no. Because every accent is the same, no accent is better than others. But it's important that we should be aware of these English varieties. Luckily, I've been teaching here in ABAC for some time, so I expose myself to many accents of my students here. And they still speak English anyway, no matter what accent they have. It's still English. We can understand each other. That's it. And many ABAC students are very good at English and have no problem in confronting English conversation most of the time. The point is we use English to communicate, period." (Interviewee D)*

#### 4.2.2.2 Preference for the Accents

Non-English teachers' responses in relation to their preference for English accents are reviewed in this section. Corresponding to English lecturers, all non-English lecturers reflected in their responses that they had some preference for native English varieties, even though they did not express negative feelings when their students' first language accents could be recognised in their English. The following quotes illustrate such opinions:

**Example 7:**

*"Well, I wish, I must say I wish that they could speak with native accents like American, British or Australian because these are the most intelligible accents for me. They are like standard English. Somehow, native accents may not be that intelligible if used among non-native speakers, according to my experience. So, I would say, again, any accent is fine for me as long as we can understand each other." (Interviewee E)*

**Example 8:**

*"In my opinion, in some countries that do not speak as a first language, when people of that particular country speak English, they might not be widely intelligible. For example, I find Singapore English very difficult to understand. So, I think it's best to teach our students to aim at native English in speaking. Well, however, even if their first language accents are heard, I usually don't have any problem understanding them. Any accent is acceptable anyway." (Interviewee F)*

## 5. Discussion

The findings from this study shed light on English and non-English language teachers' attitudes towards students' accents in English, revealing a nuanced perspective shaped by both local and global considerations. The quantitative data suggest that both English and non-English teachers rated Burmese accents the highest across all attributes, including intelligibility, pleasantness, familiarity, correctness, and acceptability. This preference may reflect a combination of familiarity with and perceived clarity of Burmese accents in the local teaching context. Thai and Korean accents also received moderately favorable ratings, whereas Chinese accents consistently scored the lowest across all attributes. These results indicate that teachers hold varying attitudes toward different accents, potentially influenced by the frequency of interaction with speakers of these accents and their linguistic features.

Qualitative data provide additional depth, highlighting a strong emphasis on mutual intelligibility and successful communication over accent quality or nativeness. Both groups of teachers unanimously expressed neutrality, stating that no accent is superior and that communication should be the ultimate goal. This perspective aligns with global English paradigms, where the focus shifts from native-like pronunciation to intelligibility and functional communication. However, the interviews also revealed a preference for teaching native English varieties, such as British and American English, in classroom settings. Such findings resemble those of several previous studies (e.g., Jenkins, 2005, 2007; Walker, 2010; Kaur, 2013; Fang, 2016; Chayanuvat, 2023; Sahrai and Tantiniranat, 2024), highlighting the significance of native English accents as an ultimate goal. These findings reflect a duality in attitudes: while lecturers aim for inclusivity and intelligibility in practice, they still value native English accents as aspirational models. Non-English teachers appeared slightly more flexible in their acceptance of accent diversity, potentially due to their role in fostering cross-linguistic and cross-cultural understanding.

Both English and non-English language teachers demonstrated inclusive attitudes towards accents, valuing communication over conformity to native norms. However, the stronger emphasis on native English varieties among English teachers suggests a lingering influence of traditional language ideologies in English language pedagogy. Non-English teachers, on the other hand, appeared more flexible, potentially due to their role in fostering cross-linguistic and cross-cultural understanding.

### 5.1 Implication

These findings have significant implications for English language teaching and teacher training. First, they highlight the need to promote awareness of linguistic diversity and the legitimacy of non-native English accents in global communication. Teachers should be encouraged to adopt pedagogical approaches that prioritise intelligibility and effective communication while challenging biases against non-native accents. Second, the results underscore the importance of exposing teachers and students to a wide range of English

accents, fostering familiarity and reducing prejudices. Finally, the tension between inclusivity and the perceived superiority of native accents calls for a critical examination of curricula and assessment practices to ensure they align with the realities of English as a global lingua franca.

In sum, while teachers from both groups demonstrate openness to accent diversity, the persistence of native-centric preferences suggests room for growth in embracing a more inclusive and equitable perspective on English language use. By prioritising communication and mutual understanding, educators can better prepare students for the linguistic diversity they encounter in global contexts.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study provides valuable insights into teachers' attitudes toward students' English accents, emphasising both the shared and distinct perspectives of English and non-English language educators. The findings reveal a consistent prioritisation of intelligibility and communication success over accent quality or nativeness, reflecting a growing alignment with the principles of World Englishes and global English paradigms. Despite this inclusivity, a preference for native English varieties, particularly British and American accents, persists among both groups, underscoring the enduring influence of traditional language ideologies.

The study highlights significant implications for pedagogy and teacher training. It calls for a reexamination of curricula and assessment practices to promote linguistic diversity and reduce biases against non-native accents. Teachers must be equipped with strategies to foster awareness of diverse English varieties, preparing students for the realities of global communication. Additionally, the tension between inclusivity and native-centric preferences underscores the need for critical reflection on the role of native English accents in educational settings.

To this end, while teachers demonstrate a commendable openness to accent diversity, this openness must be translated into actionable changes in teaching practices and institutional policies. By embracing a more inclusive approach, educators can support students in navigating the complex linguistic landscape of English as a global lingua franca, ultimately fostering greater equity and mutual understanding in communication.

## **7. Recommendation for Future Research**

In future research related to attitudes towards varieties of English accents, it might be a great idea to develop several methods and instruments so as to triangulate data. Since the two main research instruments of this study were a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview, there were some complaints from the teacher respondents about the unavailability of an accent sample, which caused difficulty for some teachers in generalising the characteristics of the accents varied in students. Therefore, possible

future research is suggested to employ a verbal-guise test, which involves playing recorded speech samples of different accents to the participants and having them rate their impression of the speakers based on stereotypical attributes.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

### **About the Author(s)**

Krittat Sukman, Ph.D. is an adjunct lecturer of English at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, North Bangkok University, Thailand. Prior to his PhD in English Language Teaching from Thammasat University, he obtained his MA in English Language Teaching from Assumption University of Thailand. Recently, he was awarded an MBA from University of Northampton, the United Kingdom. His research interests include corpus linguistics, English as a Lingua Franca, and TESOL methodology.

**Veeravarn Kulchol** is a lecturer in Aviation Business and Service Innovation at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, North Bangkok University, Thailand. She holds an MA in Political Science with a specialization in International Relations and Diplomacy from Thammasat University, Thailand, and an MA in Communicative English from Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand. Her research interests focus on English as a Lingua Franca, Intercultural Communication, and TESOL methodology.

**Narawan Chumnumnawin** is a lecturer of Business English at North Bangkok University, Thailand. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in English Language Studies. She holds a master's degree in Translation for Education and Business and a bachelor's degree in English for International Communication. Her research interests encompass translation, applied linguistics, and cross-cultural communication.

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