

English Language Education in Thailand: Issues and Trends

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English in Thailand has long been taught as a foreign language (EFL) to enable learners to communicate primarily with native speakers. However, global spread of English has caused changing roles of English and results in that there is an increasing demand to use English as a lingua franca (ELF) to interact amongst non-native speakers as well as between native and non-native speakers.

This special session proposes that (1) the teaching paradigm of English in Thailand is being shifted from EFL to ELF to correspond to such demand and additional roles of English; (2) the English language policy should give a clearer guideline on how to implement teaching and learning effectively. Thus, what is stipulated by policy and what occurs in practice should not be problematic; and (3) performance-based assessment should be promoted extensively so that authenticity and positive washback can be observed.

The session combines research-based evidence by synthesising the results of three research projects carried out by the presenters. Both quantitative and qualitative data from adult learners and lecturers of English from the projects will be presented. Thus, jigsaws of English language education in Thailand can be depicted.

This special session is beneficial for policy makers, lecturers of English, language educators, and researchers.