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# Investigation of English Language Learners' Attitudes Toward Global Englishes and Global Englishes Language Teaching in Relation to Their Academic Interests and Experiences With English as a Global Lingua Franca

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates Japanese university students' attitudes toward Global Englishes (GE) and Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT), focusing on how these attitudes are shaped by students' academic interests and experiences using English as a lingua franca (ELF), both abroad and in domestic EFL contexts. Drawing on survey data from 531 undergraduates, the study examines learners' GE and GELT attitudes, including desire for ELF communication, attachment to "native" English, and openness to GELT. Independent samples t-tests revealed that English majors and students with study abroad experience demonstrated stronger support for GELT and ELF communication, and the latter group also showed lower attachment to "native" speaker norms. Structural equation modeling indicated that learners' experiences using ELF locally had complex effects: they increased both the desire for ELF communication and attachment to "native" English, with opposing implications for GELT attitudes. While ELF experience indirectly supported GELT openness through increased ELF desire, it also hindered acceptance via strengthened native-speakerism. The findings highlight a persistent tension in learners' beliefs about linguistic diversity, shaped by deeply embedded ideologies and limited opportunities for multilingual engagement in Japanese local contexts. The study calls for pedagogical environments that recognize and promote ELF affordances and multilingualism to foster more equitable and contextually relevant English language education.

## 要旨

本研究は、日本の大学生の英語の多言語性、流動性、創造性を強調するパラダイム(Global Englishes: GE)に対する態度、そして、GEの内容を取り入れた英語教育(Global Englishes Language Teaching: GELT)に対する態度に、彼らの専攻や国内外での共通語としての英語使用経験が及ぼす影響について、調査するものである。英語を学習している、学部生531名に対して行ったアンケート調査を量的に分析した結果、英語専攻および留学経験のある者は、GE志向およびGELTに対する許容度は高く、さらに留学経験のある場合は、「母語話者」英語志向が相対的に低いことが明らかになった。また、英語学習者が国内で英語を共通語として使用した経験が、彼らの態度に複雑な影響を及ぼすこともわかった。すなわち、使用経験が、GE志向を高めることでGELTへの肯定的関心につながると同時に、「母語話者」のように話したいという気持ち

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も強め、その結果、GELT導入への前向きな態度が阻害されることが確認された。これらの結果は、日本での様々なバックグラウンドを持つ英語話者による多様な英語に触れる機会の欠如、ならびに「母語話者」中心主義の存在が、英語学習者の言語の多様性における信念に、深く関与していることを浮き彫りにしている。それぞれの社会的文脈に根ざした、より効果的な英語教育を行うために、多言語主義の視点が求められる環境を学習者の身近に整備する必要性について論じる。

## 1 | Introduction

In recent years, research on the global spread of English and its implications has gained increasing attention. Much of this research has been conducted within the overlapping paradigms of World Englishes (WE), English as an international language (EIL), English as a lingua franca (ELF), and Global Englishes (GE). Numerous proposals for changes in English language teaching (ELT) have been proposed to better prepare students for future use of English, where they are likely to encounter diverse varieties and interlocutors from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Scholars have emphasized the importance of increasing exposure to WE and ELF, developing effective ELF communication strategies, fostering an appreciation for multilingualism, diverse cultures, and identities, and raising awareness of GE, as summarized in Galloway and Rose (2015). Furthermore, Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) has been promoted as a framework that provides an inclusive and practical guide for curriculum innovation and research (Galloway 2017, 2025; Galloway and Rose 2015; Rose and Galloway 2019). The GELT framework comprises thirteen dimensions, including norms and role models, that characterize the GE-informed curriculum. This global approach embraces linguistic hybridity and positions an expert user as the role model, contrasting with “traditional” ELT, which typically focuses on teaching “standard” English and upholds a “native” speaker as the ideal role model. The framework challenges the “native” speaker ideal (Holliday 2006), acknowledging linguistic and cultural complexity and diversity while expanding language education into sociocultural and sociolinguistic domains. Several pedagogical innovations based on the GELT framework, which include increasing students’ WE and ELF exposure, have been implemented in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, including Japan (Konakahara et al. 2020), Thailand (Boonsuk and Ambele 2020), and Italy (Andreani and McKinley 2025). While these efforts have reported some success in raising students’ language awareness, challenges persist, such as learners’ attachment to “standard” or “native” English (Rose et al. 2021). A more detailed investigation into the relationship between EFL learners’ experiences using English as a global lingua franca, their endorsement of GE, the pervasive “native” speaker ideology, and its connection to openness to GELT is necessary.

Against this backdrop, the current study begins by reviewing GELT in Japan, along with existing research on attitudes toward GE and GELT and the factors that influence them, such as academic interests and experiences with the English language. We then present the results of a GE/GELT-informed attitude questionnaire administered to Japanese university students. This study reveals the detailed relationship between students’ experiences with English as a global lingua franca and their attitudes

toward incorporating linguistic diversity into the classroom. Furthermore, we emphasize the pedagogical implications of these findings.

## 2 | Literature Review

### 2.1 | GELT in Japan

GELT has been utilized in various innovation studies (Rose et al. 2021), demonstrating its practical significance in modern ELT contexts, including Japan. GELT emerged from an action research project in Japan (Galloway 2013, 2017; Galloway and Rose 2014) aimed at curriculum innovation.

Multiple large-scale innovations have been conducted. In alignment with GELT principles, but under the banner of WE, EIL, and ELF, a WE-informed EIL curriculum at Chukyo University (D’Angelo 2012) and a campus-wide program at Tamagawa University (Oda 2017) allowed students to enhance their theoretical and practical knowledge of WE and ELF. Additionally, Hino (2012, 2018) proposed Integrated Practice in Teaching English as an International Language and implemented courses, enabling students to engage with the real world of EIL by watching, listening to, and discussing daily news available on satellite TV and the Internet.

Several small-scale studies that incorporated GE-oriented pedagogy have been conducted in Japan, with most of these studies focusing on university students (Hamada and Suzuki 2021; Konakahara 2020; Lee et al. 2018; Milliner and Dimoski 2019; Suzuki 2011). A few studies have also examined high school students (Aoyama and Denton 2022; Lee 2012). Overall, the findings from these studies have been mixed. Regarding the positive findings, Konakahara (2020) provided ELF-informed instruction designed to develop university students’ critical awareness of English and English communication. The instruction encompassed presentations on the varieties of English and discussions on the reasons behind negative attitudes toward “non-native” English, as well as the pragmatic features of ELF. Similarly, Aoyama and Denton (2022) implemented a WE-informed instructional unit that equipped high school students with the knowledge necessary to critically examine dominant language ideologies through localized activities. For instance, students reflected on the sociolinguistic profile of their first language, Japanese, which facilitated their understanding of language diversity and the concept of a “standard” language. The positive impacts of these interventions included an increased sense of confidence in students’ English (Aoyama and Denton 2022; Konakahara 2020; Lee 2012), a desire to learn about different varieties of English (Aoyama and Denton 2022), positive perceptions of EIL

(Lee et al. 2018), and enhanced perceptual adaptation, successfully accommodating speakers' pronunciation (Hamada and Suzuki 2021). More recently, the lasting effects of innovations have been observed, with continued favorable attitudes toward "non-native" accents, an emphasis on mutual intelligibility through negotiation, and an appreciation for pragmatic strategies that facilitate effective communication over a period of four to five years (Konakahara *forthcoming*).

However, several challenges have emerged. Raising awareness of popular discourses, such as the "native" speaker ideal and explicit knowledge of pragmatic strategies in ELF communication, may not be enough to change their monolithic view of English, which posits that there is one "correct" and "standard" way of using English that all speakers must strive for (Konakahara 2020) and stems from ELT based on "native" speaker norms (Konakahara *forthcoming*). Similarly, exposing students to diverse varieties of English through listening journals has reinforced their stereotypes about "native" and "non-native" varieties of English (Galloway and Rose 2014). Furthermore, Aoyama and Denton (2022) found that introducing the plurality of English underscored the significance and dominance of English over other languages, which contradicts the concept of multilingualism. As Funada (2025) has previously highlighted, it is particularly challenging to instigate change in learners' perceptions of English as a standardized, monolithic language tied to "native" English varieties.

## 2.2 | Current Learners' Attitudes Toward GE and GELT

To overcome challenges associated with GELT innovation, a more thorough investigation of learners' attitudes toward GE and GELT is necessary (Funada 2025; Rose et al. 2021). Allport (1935, 810) defined attitude as a "mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, that exerts a directive influence on an individual's responses to all related objects and situations." From another perspective, attitude can be understood as "a psychological tendency expressed by evaluating a particular entity with varying degrees of favor or disfavor" (Eagly and Chaiken 1993, 1). Understanding such individuals' evaluative reactions to an object is key, as these concepts provide insight into their behavioral intentions, which can predict actual behaviors (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). A review of the literature indicates that examining learners' evaluative reactions to GE and GELT "would not only illuminate curriculum innovation but also highlight potential resistance to change and context-specific barriers to implementing change" (Galloway 2017, 22).

Previous research on students' attitudes toward GE highlights an attachment to "native" English, a desire for ELF communication, and how these can affect their attitudes toward GELT (e.g., Galloway 2013, 2017). Many studies reveal that learners tend to favor "native" English varieties, possibly leading them to react negatively to GELT, which can hinder successful innovation and negatively impact language learning for students. Irham (2023) found that Indonesian students viewed Inner Circle English varieties, such as American and British English, as the appropriate reference. Despite acknowledging the difficulties of acquiring a "native" English accent, students in Germany had a strong

desire to achieve a pronunciation close to that of a "native" speaker (Kresta 2020). In Japan, pre-service teachers recognized the importance of teaching "native" English accents and pronunciations (Uchida and Sugimoto 2020). Such strict adherence to the forms and accents of English as a "native" language may constrain ELF use inside and outside of the classroom. It can further diminish students' confidence in using English, especially in academic settings (Kim et al. 2022). Additionally, students who hold the "native" speaker ideal may resist interactions with "non-native" speakers, particularly international students (Lan 2020).

Conversely, several positive changes have been observed in learners' GE and GELT attitudes, indicating high levels of awareness, acceptance, and desire to communicate in ELF settings, along with a strong link to openness to GELT. Students in Hong Kong, China, demonstrated positive attitudes toward both linguistic and cultural diversity in the global use of English, embracing various English varieties in ELF communication, and did not necessarily perceive "native" varieties of English as superior to "non-native" ones (Sung 2016). More recently, similar attitudes have been documented in other contexts. Ambele and Boonsuk (2021) and Boonsuk and Ambele (2020) revealed that Thai students strongly prefer diverse varieties of English over native ones and support the integration of such ideas into the ELT curriculum. Furthermore, students enrolled in teacher education programs in Thailand and Turkey recognized the widespread use of English and its prospects, advocating for the coexistence of English with other languages and acknowledging the importance of "non-native" speakers regarding English use and language teaching (Karakaş and Boonsuk 2020).

## 2.3 | Factors Affecting Attitudes Toward GE and GELT

The learners' attitudes toward GE, closely linked to an attachment to "native" English and a desire for ELF communication, and GELT are shaped by multiple factors. These factors include their academic interests and experiences with English as a global lingua franca.

### 2.3.1 | Academic Interests

Majoring in English has a significant impact on attitudes toward GE and GELT. Some studies indicate that English majors strive to attain a level of proficiency comparable to that of a "native" speaker for their careers. In contrast, non-English majors often do not rely as heavily on the "native" speaker model, as they need to adapt to different users of English (Curran and Chern 2017; Zeng et al. 2022). Japanese pre-service teachers believed that a teacher's pronunciation should be closer to native-like pronunciation than that of the students to positively influence them and inspire greater motivation and respect for the teacher (Uchida and Sugimoto 2020). Soruç and Griffiths (2024) found that non-English majors from diverse national origins were reasonably tolerant but not openly accepting of non-standard English. However, it has been reported that study majors can also play a significant role in their ELF awareness. English majors held positive views about EIL, eager to introduce their

culture to foreigners and open to multiple forms of Outer Circle varieties of English (Lee and Lee 2019a). Some recognized the importance of prioritizing intelligibility over linguistic accuracy and demonstrated a greater willingness to interact with speakers from diverse backgrounds (Lan 2020).

### 2.3.2 | Experiences With English as a Global Lingua Franca

Attitude formation is closely linked to personal experiences with the English language and its speakers, both within and outside educational systems (Jenkins 2007). Research on the effectiveness of ELF-informed pedagogy has highlighted the crucial role of students' experiences with various forms of English (Suzuki 2011). These may include experiences of using English as a global lingua franca in study abroad and "at home" EFL contexts, which are defined in this paper as local opportunities to use and engage with the English language.

The strong link between study abroad experiences and GE attitudes has been highlighted by several studies. Studying abroad helps (re)shape identities as multilingual speakers (Erduyan and Bozer 2022; Fang et al. 2023; Kaypak and Ortacıtepe 2014) and enhances intercultural awareness, illustrating a shift from a focus on solely national characteristics to an appreciation of diversity in identity (Humphreys and Baker 2021). The positive nature of study abroad has been shown regardless of the type of stay, including studying in an environment where English is used as a lingua franca but is not the official language of the country (Borràs 2024; Heinzmann et al. 2024). That said, studying abroad can also have a negative impact on students due to discrimination related to their accented speech (Véliz and Veliz-Campos 2021).

In "at home" EFL contexts, students' experiences with the English language influence their GE and GELT attitudes. Students' English language education, which tends to be socio-politically dependent on the "native" speaker model, correlates with their familiarity with attachment to "native" English and "traditional" ELT (Chiba et al. 1995; Galloway 2013; Lan 2020; Matsuda 2003). These experiences also contribute to their identity as lifelong language learners (Sung 2020), particularly in relation to their interactions with L1 English interlocutors or "native" speakers (Shibata 2023). Furthermore, these experiences are intertwined with society, which often associates a sense of prestige and value with "native" varieties of English. This includes gaining preferred linguistic capital (Lan 2020), increased confidence upon graduation (Boonsuk and Fang 2022), and a sense of belonging to an imagined community of "native" speakers and "native-like" speakers (Lan 2020). Additionally, proficiency in these varieties is seen as a pathway to significant career opportunities (Kim 2024; Lan 2020).

Learners' experiences with the English language and its users can also greatly influence their positive attitudes toward GE and GELT even in "at home" EFL contexts. Research by Lee and Lee (2019a, 2019b) and Lee (2020) found that Korean students were exposed to diverse forms of English and speakers from different backgrounds through informal digital learning activities. This exposure resulted in more positive attitudes toward linguistic diversity and the use of ELF communication strategies. Fur-

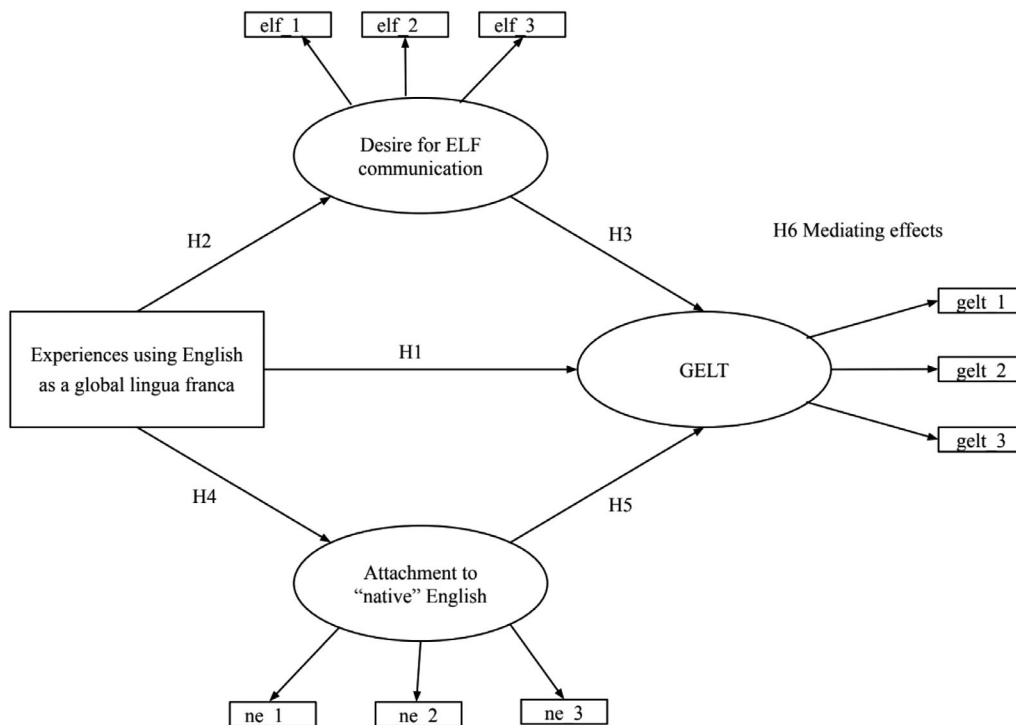
thermore, opportunities for intercultural communication as ELF users on campus in Thailand have been positively associated with the development of students' global English user identities and their views on curriculum innovation aligned with ELF principles (Ambele and Boonsuk 2021; Boonsuk and Ambele 2020).

### 2.4 | Research Gaps, Questions, and Hypotheses

Since seminal research into GELT implementation was conducted (e.g., Galloway 2013, 2017), there has been a growing body of evidence suggesting that students' experiences of using English as a global lingua franca are seen as the foundation for nurturing more positive attitudes towards GE. This central tenet is the very reason why so many GELT and ELF researchers have aimed to increase ELF opportunities and exposure to English varieties for learners (e.g., Lee and Lee 2019a, 2019b; Ambele and Boonsuk 2021). However, this relationship is not always straightforward, because negative experiences may inadvertently reinforce attachments to native English and affect a desire for future ELF communication (Galloway and Rose 2014). These complex areas of language attitudes, in turn, are associated with students' openness to GELT as an approach to learning English (Rose and Galloway 2019). That is, exposure alone does not guarantee, *fait accompli*, an openness to GELT but is instead mediated by such attitudes.

Although factors, such as academic interests and students' experiences with English as a global lingua franca, significantly influence attitudes toward GE and GELT, few comprehensive studies on this subject have been conducted to provide robust evidence of how these factors shape such attitudes (Montakan-tiwong and Funada 2025). Japan is an interesting context within which to explore such attitudes as, unlike other nations such as those in the EU or ASEAN economic blocks, the influence of ELF is a relatively new phenomenon of the 21st century. A paradigm shift from EFL to ELF for global citizenship has been observed in recent Japanese ELT, although the transition from EFL to ELF is not necessarily linked to awareness of the differences between the two (Suzuki 2020). In the realm of tertiary education, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT 2009, 2014) implements various funding projects aimed at developing students' competencies and global mindsets to compete and coexist with diverse others through intercultural communication in universities, potentially increasing opportunities for students to engage with a variety of English speakers. Thus, this study considers how these influential factors shape these learners' GE attitudes, related to attachment to "native" English and desire for ELF communication, and their association with GELT attitudes, focusing on openness to GELT. These findings will resonate with other national contexts, where the transition from EFL to ELF is recently occurring. The research questions for this study are as follows:

- RQ.1 Do Japanese English language learners who have experience using English as a global lingua franca in Japan differ in their attitudes toward GE and GELT according to whether they are English majors or non-English majors?
- RQ.2 Do Japanese English language learners who have experience using English as a global lingua franca in Japan differ



**FIGURE 1** | Hypothesized model of the relationships among the study variables. *Note:* Observed variables are displayed in rectangular shapes, and latent variables in oval shapes.

in their attitudes toward GE and GELT based on their study abroad experiences?

RQ.3 What is the relationship between Japanese EFL learners' experiences using English as a global lingua franca in Japan and their GE and GELT attitudes?

Concerning RQ 3, drawing from the literature review of GE and GELT attitudes, it is proposed that (see Figure 1):

**Hypothesis 1.** *Japanese English language learners' experiences using English as a global lingua franca in Japan have a significant and positive effect on their GELT attitudes.*

**Hypothesis 2.** *Japanese English language learners' experiences using English as a global lingua franca in Japan have a significant and positive effect on their desire for ELF communication.*

**Hypothesis 3.** *Japanese English language learners' desire for ELF communication has a significant and positive effect on their GELT attitudes.*

**Hypothesis 4.** *Japanese English language learners' experiences using English as a global lingua franca in Japan have a significant and negative effect on their attachment to "native" English.*

**Hypothesis 5.** *Japanese English language learners' attachment to "native" English has a significant and negative effect on their GELT attitudes.*

**Hypothesis 6.** *The link between Japanese English language learners' experiences using English as a global lingua franca in*

*Japan and their GELT attitude is mediated by their desire for ELF communication and attachment to "native" English.*

### 3 | Methods

The present study aims to (1) investigate differences in GE attitudes, specifically highlighting the desire for ELF communication and attachment to "native" English, along with GELT attitudes with a focus on openness to GELT among English language learners in Japan between English and non-English majors, as well as between those students who have and those who do not have study abroad experiences; and (2) analyze the relationship between their experiences with ELF in "at home" EFL environments and GELT attitudes, including the mediating effects that their desire for ELF communication and attachment to "native" English may have in this relationship.

#### 3.1 | Participants

Through the first author's professional network, we recruited 642 EFL university students from popular tourist destinations and international student areas in Japan, specifically Kyoto, Osaka, and Tokyo. The selection criteria were (1) speaking Japanese as their first language, (2) primarily experiencing English language learning in Japan, and (3) having contact and interaction with English users other than those who speak "native" or Japanese varieties of English in Japan. The last criterion was established because many Japanese English language learners are limited to interacting with L1 speakers and Japanese speakers of English (Funada 2025). To illustrate, even after applying the first two

criteria, 111 learners had never spoken in English with anyone other than L1 or Japanese speakers of English. As a result, a total of 531 responses from undergraduate students were included in the final sample, comprising 265 (49.91%) women and 266 (50.09%) men. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 22 years ( $M = 19.11$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ), and all participants were Japanese. They had been learning English in Japanese schools for a period of 6 to 9 years ( $M = 8.61$ ,  $SD = 2.60$ ). Approximately 24.86% of the participants ( $N = 132$ ) had studied abroad. Among them, the majority studied in English-speaking countries: the United States (33.33%), Australia (19.70%), Canada (14.39%), the United Kingdom (9.85%), New Zealand (3.75%), and Ireland (2.27%), with the duration of their overseas study ranging from 2 weeks to 3 months. Meanwhile, 75.14% of the participants had never studied overseas. According to the Common European Framework of Reference, study participants' proficiency levels were at or above the lower boundaries of B1, as indicated by all students passing the Grade 2 level on a national English language proficiency test (Eiken) to enter the university program.

## 3.2 | Measures

The questionnaire included four scales: experiences using English as a global lingua franca, desire for ELF communication, attachment to "native" English, and attitudes towards GELT as described below. Additionally, it contained items to collect demographic information from participants, such as age, gender, nationality, university name, year of study, major, experience of learning English, and overseas experience. See Appendix A for all scale items.

### 3.2.1 | Experiences Using English as a Global Lingua Franca in "at Home" EFL Contexts

The amount of experience with ELF was measured using four items, via which learners reported their English language use. This set of items was adapted from Freed et al. (2004). Participants reported their experiences with speakers who were neither "native" nor Japanese, both in and out of class. They were also asked to share their experiences through TV, movies, online videos (e.g., YouTube), music, and social media. These items were rated using a six-point scale, ranging from *very untrue of me* to *very true of me*, based on modifications made by Briggs (2015). This summated scale demonstrated good reliability ( $\alpha = 0.77$ ). The scale was tested with different groups of students before this study was conducted. The researcher conducted a literature review, consulted with a language contact expert to assess the relevance of the items to the measured construct, and held one-on-one interviews with six questionnaire respondents to confirm the instrument's suitability and comprehensibility.

### 3.2.2 | Desire for ELF Communication and Attachment to "Native" English

The learners' desire for ELF communication and their attachment to "native" English were examined using scales that included three items for each construct based on Funada et al. (2020), as well as Galloway (2013, 2017) and Galloway and Rose

(2015). Their desire for ELF communication was measured by how much they wanted to interact with speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Participants were also asked whether they recognized the prestige of American and British English in communication to assess their attachment to "native" English. The scales were developed using a method similar to the language experience scale, which involved a literature review and consultations with two experts in GELT, as well as six students. Additionally, these scales were assessed with two separate student groups. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the first group ( $N = 144$ ) to develop new scales, while confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed on the second group ( $N = 201$ ) to evaluate their validity and reliability (see Appendix B for the statistical validation results). Each item was responded to on a six-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

### 3.2.3 | Learners' GELT Attitudes

The scale (Funada 2025) consists of three items measuring participants' openness to GELT, specifically their endorsement levels regarding the incorporation of diverse English and its users into classrooms, referencing relevant studies (Rose et al. 2020; Galloway 2013, 2017). The validity and reliability of the scale have been tested, yielding good results (Funada 2025). Each item was rated on a six-point Likert scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

## 3.3 | Data Collection

The online questionnaire was distributed via email from December 2018 to December 2019. Students received information about the study and were asked to complete the questionnaire online. Informed consent was obtained prior to completing the questionnaire. Participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous, and they were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The study received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the first author's institution.

## 3.4 | Data Analysis

Data screening was completed before the main analysis. Specifically, we checked for univariate normality, outliers, and missing data. All study variables were screened for normality, indicated by skewness and kurtosis values of less than 1.96. The skewness and kurtosis for the variables were within acceptable ranges. There were no outliers or missing values.

For RQ1 and RQ2, we conducted independent-samples t-tests to examine differences in desire for ELF communication, attachment to "native" English, and GELT attitudes between English and non-English majors, as well as between students with and without study abroad experiences. Before the analysis, we confirmed that there were no violations of assumptions, including homogeneity of variances. We calculated Cohen's  $d$  to evaluate effect sizes, using values of 0.20, 0.50, and 0.80 as small, medium, and large, respectively (Cohen 1992).

**TABLE 1** | English and non-English majors on desire for ELF communication, attachment to “native” English, and GELT attitudes.

Variable	English major		Non-English major		<i>t</i> (529)	95% CI		<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		
Desire for ELF communication	4.24	0.98	3.86	1.03	2.90	0.12	0.64	0.004	0.37
Attachment to “native” English	2.83	1.06	2.91	1.02	0.60	-0.18	0.34	0.546	0.08
GELT attitudes	4.95	0.90	4.62	0.85	2.94	0.11	0.54	0.003	0.38

Note: Mean values for each variable are shown for the English majors (*N* = 70) and non-English majors (*N* = 461).

To address RQ 3 and all six hypotheses, we employed structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the proposed model. We assessed descriptive statistics and calculated Pearson correlation coefficients to understand the relationships among the study variables. Before performing SEM, we verified additional assumptions essential for the analysis, including sample size, multivariate outliers, linearity, multicollinearity, and homogeneity. As a result, we identified eleven multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis distance and subsequently removed them. We then evaluated the fit of the measurement model, which involved latent variables (i.e., desire for ELF communication, attachment to “native” English, and GELT attitudes) based on the results from the CFA. We assessed reliability using composite reliability (CR), with values greater than 0.7 considered acceptable (Hair et al. 2009). Convergent validity was deemed established if (a) CR values were 0.7 or higher, (b) all standardized factor loadings  $\lambda$  were 0.5 or higher, and (c) the average variance extracted (AVE) was 0.5 or higher. Regarding discriminant validity, the square root of each construct's AVE should be greater than the correlations with other latent constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981). We then estimated the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships between all study variables. Both academic interests (English vs. non-English) and study abroad experiences (with vs. without) were accounted for in the analysis. The structural model was estimated using maximum likelihood. We employed the  $\chi^2$ /degree of freedom (*df*) ratio and four other indices to evaluate model fit: the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR). We considered a model a good fit if  $\chi^2/df$  was less than 3, CFI and TLI values were 0.9 or higher, and RMSEA and SRMR values were below 0.08 (Kline 2005). All analyses were conducted using multiple packages in R (R Core Team 2024).

## 4 | Results

### 4.1 | Attitudes of English and Non-English Majors Toward GE and GELT

As shown in Table 1, the independent-sample t-test revealed significant differences in students' desire for ELF communication ( $t = 2.90, p < 0.01$ ) and their GELT attitudes ( $t = 2.94, p < 0.01$ ), with moderate effect size values ( $d = 0.37$  and  $d = 0.38$ , respectively). English majors reported significantly higher levels of desire for ELF communication ( $M = 4.24, SD = 0.98$ ) and openness to GELT ( $M = 4.95, SD = 0.90$ ) compared to non-English majors ( $M = 3.86, SD = 1.03; M = 4.62, SD = 0.85$ , respectively). In

contrast, both groups slightly disapproved of “native” English to the same extent ( $t = 0.60, p = 0.55, d = 0.08$ ).

### 4.2 | Attitudes of Students With and Without Study Abroad Experiences Toward GE and GELT

According to Table 2, statistically significant differences with small to medium effect sizes were found between students with and without study abroad experiences regarding their desire for ELF communication ( $t = 4.25, p < 0.001, d = 0.43$ ), attachment to “native” English ( $t = 2.61, p < 0.01, d = 0.26$ ), and GELT attitudes ( $t = 3.56, p < 0.001, d = 0.36$ ). Students who studied abroad exhibited more positive attitudes towards ELF communication ( $M = 4.24, SD = 1.03$ ) and were significantly more open to GELT ( $M = 4.90, SD = 0.79$ ) than those without it ( $M = 3.80, SD = 1.01; M = 4.59, SD = 0.87$ ). Notably, the two groups displayed a significant difference in their attachment to “native” English. Students who studied in foreign countries demonstrated stronger resistance to “native” English ( $M = 2.70, SD = 1.11$ ) than their counterparts ( $M = 2.97, SD = 0.98$ ).

### 4.3 | Relationship Between Experiences Using English as a Global Lingua Franca in “at Home” EFL Contexts and GELT Attitudes

Before testing the hypothesis model, descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationships among the study variables, as shown in Table 3. Participants had relatively few opportunities to contact or interact with “non-native” varieties and their speakers in “at home” EFL contexts ( $M = 2.91, SD = 1.06$ ). They endorsed ELF communication ( $M = 3.91, SD = 1.03$ ) and GELT ( $M = 4.67, SD = 0.86$ ) while showing slightly negative attitudes towards “native” English ( $M = 2.90, SD = 1.02$ ). Regarding the correlations, experiences using English as a global lingua franca were positively related to desire for ELF communication ( $r = 0.30, p < 0.001$ ) and openness to GELT ( $r = 0.13, p < 0.01$ ). Interestingly, this predictor variable was also positively correlated with attachment to “native” English ( $r = 0.20, p < 0.001$ ). Desire for ELF communication was strongly associated with attitudes toward GELT ( $r = 0.56, p < 0.001$ ). In contrast, attachment to “native” English was negatively correlated with the outcome variable ( $r = -0.12, p < 0.01$ ), as expected. There was no correlation between the mediator variables ( $r = 0.06, p = 0.19$ ), consistent with the expected results.

Construct validity for the latent variables (i.e., desire for ELF communication, attachment to “native” English, and GELT

**TABLE 2** | Students' desire for ELF communication, attachment to native English, and GELT attitudes among those with and without study abroad experiences.

Variable	Study abroad Yes		Study abroad No		<i>t</i> (529)	95% CI		<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		
Desire for ELF communication	4.24	1.03	3.80	1.01	4.25	0.23	0.63	0.000	0.43
Attachment to "native" English	2.70	1.11	2.97	0.98	2.61	0.07	0.47	0.009	0.26
GELT attitudes	4.90	0.79	4.59	0.87	3.56	0.14	0.47	0.000	0.36

Note: Mean values for each variable are shown for students with (*N* = 132) and without (*N* = 399) study abroad experiences.

**TABLE 3** | Mean, standard deviation, and correlations among the study variables.

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Desire for ELF communication	531	3.91	1.03	—			
2. Attachment to "native" English	531	2.90	1.02	0.06	—		
3. GELT attitudes	531	4.67	0.86	0.56***	-0.12**	—	
4. Experiences using English as a global lingua franca	531	2.91	1.06	0.30***	0.20***	0.13**	—

Note: \*\*\* *p* < 0.001; \*\* *p* < 0.01.

attitudes) was established using CFA. The results indicated a good model fit:  $\chi^2/df = 2.69$ , CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.06, and SRMR = 0.04. Construct reliability values (i.e., desire for ELF communication: CR = 0.81, attachment to "native" English: CR = 0.78, and GELT attitudes: CR = 0.75) suggested good reliability. The amount of variance in the variables was adequately captured (i.e., desire for ELF communication: AVE = 0.51, attachment to "native" English: AVE = 0.54, and GELT attitudes: AVE = 0.50), and all standardized factor loadings  $\lambda$  were 0.5 or greater (see Figure 2), demonstrating suitable convergent validity. The square root of each AVE value exceeded the correlation coefficient of the two variables, indicating sufficient discriminant validity.

Structural equation models were constructed to examine the hypothesized relationships between variables. In calculating the effects, we controlled for students' majors (English vs. non-English) and study abroad experiences (with vs. without experiences). The results of the structural model estimation showed an excellent model fit:  $\chi^2/df = 1.39$ , CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.03, and SRMR = 0.03. Figure 2 illustrates the SEM results, highlighting the direct effects of the variables.

The results revealed several important relationships among the study variables. Students' experiences using English as a global lingua franca negatively predicted their GELT attitudes ( $\beta = -0.16$ , *p* < 0.01, 95% CI = [-0.26, -0.07]), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 1. Conversely, this variable positively predicted students' desire for ELF communication ( $\beta = 0.36$ , *p* < 0.001, 95% CI [0.27, 0.44]) and their GELT attitudes ( $\beta = 0.53$ , *p* < 0.001, 95% CI [0.42, 0.64]), thus supporting Hypotheses 2 and 3. Additionally, students' experiences using English as a global lingua franca were positively associated with their attachment to "native" English

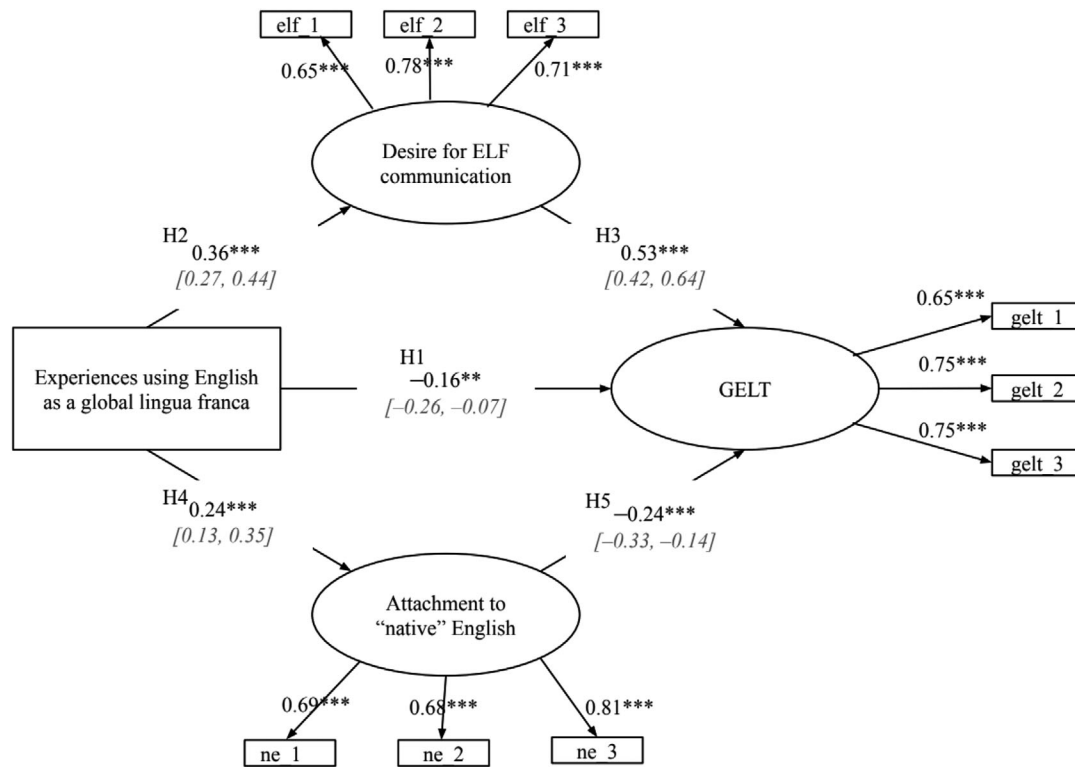
( $\beta = 0.24$ , *p* < 0.001, 95% CI [0.13, 0.35]), which led to the rejection of Hypothesis 4. However, their attachment to "native" English negatively impacted their GELT attitudes ( $\beta = -0.24$ , *p* < 0.001, 95% CI = [-0.33, -0.14]), supporting Hypothesis 5. All antecedent variables explained 30% of the variance in students' GELT attitudes. In addition to the direct effects, a bootstrapping analysis examined the indirect effects, which are presented in Table 4. Mediation effects were found ( $\beta = 0.13$ , *p* < 0.001, 95% CI [0.06, 0.21]). Students' experiences using English as a global lingua franca significantly influenced their GELT attitudes via their desire for ELF communication ( $\beta = 0.19$ , *p* < 0.001, 95% CI [0.12, 0.26]) and their attachment to "native" English ( $\beta = -0.06$ , *p* < 0.001, 95% CI [-0.10, -0.03]), thereby supporting Hypothesis 6.

## 5 | Discussion

The present study explored differences in attitudes of EFL English language learners who have experience using English as a global lingua franca in their local settings based on their study majors and study abroad experiences. Specifically it looked at attitudes toward GE and GELT, focusing on learners' desire for ELF communication, attachment to "native" English, and openness to GELT. We also investigated how their encounters with ELF in local settings influence their openness to GELT.

### 5.1 | Academic Specialties and Attitudes Toward GE and GELT

English majors in the Japanese EFL context demonstrated ambivalent and dual attitudes. They exhibited a significantly



**FIGURE 2** | Results of structural model analysis. *Note:* The solid lines represent direct, significant relationships between the variables. Standardized coefficients are displayed. \*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*  $p < 0.01$ . Major and study abroad experience are included in the analysis but are not shown for simplicity.

**TABLE 4** | Indirect and total indirect effects of the study variables.

Path	B	SE	$\beta$	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Indirect effects					
Experiences using English as a global lingua franca → desire for ELF communication → GELT	0.12	0.03	0.19***	0.12	0.26
Experiences using English as a global lingua franca → attachment to “native” English → GELT	-0.04	0.01	-0.06***	-0.10	-0.03
Indirect effect (total)	0.09	0.03	0.13***	0.06	0.21

*Note:* \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

higher awareness of ELF and a greater openness to GELT than non-English majors. However, no significant difference was observed between the two groups regarding their preference for “native” English. The findings partially align with previous studies (Lan 2020; Lee and Lee 2019a; Soruç and Griffiths 2024), suggesting that English majors show a greater interest in ELF communication and being exposed to a diverse range of English speakers in the classroom, whereas non-English majors do not fully embrace global linguistic diversity. Although both groups held somewhat negative attitudes towards American and British English, they agreed on the significant role these varieties play in facilitating successful communication. This finding corresponds with the research reported by Uchida and Sugimoto (2020). It suggests that English majors share similar hesitancy with non-English majors about completely discarding “native” speakers as models for language learning and the importance of “standard”

forms in international communication (Jenkins 2007). The strong emphasis on “native” norms in their job market (Curran and Chern 2017; Zeng et al. 2022) and their assumptions about what teachers’ pronunciation should be (Uchida and Sugimoto 2020) may have influenced the perceptions of the English majors in this study.

## 5.2 | Study Abroad Experiences and Attitudes Toward GE and GELT

Similar to their academic interests, students with study-abroad experiences showed a stronger interest in ELF communication and more positive attitudes toward GELT. They also held less native-speakerist views than those without such experiences. These results indicate the significant impact of this variable on

students' perceptions. This was consistent with existing literature demonstrating that students' experiences abroad positively affect their attitudes toward multilingualism (Erduyan and Bozer 2022; Fang et al. 2023; Humphreys and Baker 2021; Kaypak and Ortaçtepe 2014), with the exception of Véliz and Veliz-Campos' study (2021), which found negative effects. In Véliz and Veliz-Campos' (2021) study, the Australian academic discourse community into which the Chinese participants attempted to fit did not make sufficient allowances for integration and inclusion. The difference between Vekuz-Campos' (2021) study and the present study may be that the Japanese participants had access to various communities where awareness of linguistic diversity, along with the validity and significance of all varieties of English, was appreciated. This positively affected students' self-image construction and negotiation and their ability to seek and accept opportunities to fit into these communities, leading to a shift away from native-speakerism.

### 5.3 | Experiences Using English as a Global Lingua Franca in “at Home” EFL Contexts and Attitudes Toward GELT

We also examined the relationship between students' experiences with linguistic diversity and their attitudes towards GELT, as well as the potential mediating effects of attitudes towards GE ideology and native-speakerism. The significance of experiences using English as a global lingua franca in predicting openness to GELT was demonstrated, along with the mediating role of endorsement of ELF communication and “native” speaker ideology.

Contact and interaction with diverse English users have been shown to enhance students' desire for ELF communication, positively influencing participants' attitudes toward GELT. Conversely, adherence to “native” norms has been reinforced by this same factor, which has adversely affected openness to GELT. These findings reveal how ELF experiences serve as an indicator of the degree to which individuals are aligned with GE while also highlighting challenges in changing their native speaker ideas, as noted by Aoyama and Denton (2022), Funada (2025), Galloway and Rose (2014), and Konakahara (2020). Given the limited opportunities for using English as a global lingua franca, changing the deeply ingrained mindset of Japanese university students can be challenging, particularly where American and British English have been pervasive in various forms, such as materials, testing, and hiring practices, which have remained relatively unchanged (Matsuda 2003). More concretely, there has been an increased reliance on “native” English speakers in the national educational guidelines (Suzuki 2020). Additionally, an examination of 24 English textbooks approved by MEXT revealed a significant bias toward “native” English speakers, primarily from the United States, while excluding “non-native” speakers, particularly from neighboring Asian countries (Gonja and Musaev 2025). Aoyama and Denton (2022) also highlighted the limited opportunities for WE-informed instruction in Japanese contexts. The ongoing dominance of the “native” speaker model can affect students' perceptions of language norms, ultimately influencing their attitudes towards GELT. This provides further evidence of a gap between the goal of ELT, which aims to foster global mindsets, and its practice, which often promotes a monolingual approach to English (Suzuki 2020). The results

also confirmed that students' views of GE ideology and native-speakerism are reflected in their preferences for GELT, aligning with previous studies that report students' GE in connection with GELT attitudes (Ambele and Boonsuk 2021; Boonsuk and Ambele 2020; Karakaş and Boonsuk 2020; Uchida and Sugimoto 2020).

This study found that experiences with ELF in local settings negatively impact students' attitudes toward GELT. These findings indicate that Japanese English language learners exposed to ELF in their local environment are more likely to hesitate in accepting linguistic diversity in the classroom, despite their generally positive attitudes. This may stem from students' failure to recognize the available ELF interaction-related affordances, defined as perceived opportunities for action provided by the environment or the functional significance of an object, event, or place for an individual (Gibson 1986). Moreover, previous research has indicated that negative experiences of ELF communication might reinforce stereotypes that unfamiliar accents are difficult to understand (Galloway and Rose 2014). Kordt (2018) discussed the social affordances of the instructional environment for multilingual education, arguing that language teachers should create language learning environments that provide multilingual affordances and encourage students to recognize and utilize them. Given the current limitations in creating such environments in EFL classes, we can expand the scope of affordances beyond the classroom to include social spaces. Murray and Fujishima (2013) and Murray (2017) conducted a series of studies in the context of a specific learning space, the English Café, later known as the L-café, which is an informal, out-of-class space located on the campus of a large national university in Japan. The affordances that emerged from learners' engagement with the environment allowed Japanese and international students to learn languages as diverse as English and Japanese and to communicate alongside German, French, Korean, Chinese, Thai, and Serbian. Similarly, Reynolds and Yu (2023) reported on a successful extracurricular program focused on EIL and ELF at a Taiwanese university. This program enabled international students representing various varieties of English from the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle countries to be hired and lead extracurricular learning activities. This initiative created a space for both local and international students to participate, promoting the principles of WE related to international intelligibility.

## 6 | Conclusion

This study demonstrated connections between the academic interests and study abroad experiences of English language learners and their attitudes toward GE and GELT. It also highlighted the significant influence of students' experiences with ELF within the “at home” EFL context on their openness to GELT. The findings revealed that students' experiences with ELF negatively affected their acceptance of linguistic diversity in the EFL classroom.

The study had several limitations. The scales used to measure relevant constructs had limitations because of their complex nature. The language use items only considered varieties and speakers other than “native” and Japanese, thereby excluding the positive effects of those excluded varieties on participants' attitudes toward GELT (Funada 2025). Additionally, the use of English

as a global lingua franca was narrowly defined, potentially overlooking aspects such as watching videos by ELF speakers. The attachment to “native” English scale was also limited to measuring aspects such as preferences for American/British grammar, pronunciation, and speaking styles. Furthermore, the study relied solely on quantitative data, underscoring the necessity for qualitative data to gain a deeper understanding of the findings. This includes examining the negative relationship between local experiences with linguistic diversity and openness to GELT. With more qualitative data supporting the tested model, additional quantitative analyses, such as multi-group SEM, can be performed to examine whether the model remains consistent across variables influencing attitudes, including major and study abroad experience. Additionally, since this research was cross-sectional, it cannot determine cause-and-effect relationships, as it assessed experiences and attitudes simultaneously. Longitudinal studies are needed to establish true causal relationships.

Given the significant role of experiences using English as a global lingua franca in the EFL context, this study highlighted the need to recognize multilingual affordances in “at home” EFL environments in addition to raising GE awareness. As suggested in previous literature (Suzuki 2020), all ELT stakeholders, including policymakers, material developers, and teachers, must reassess their approach to the goals of ELT in the 21st century. The policies should encourage material developers and teachers to incorporate first-hand conversations with multilingual speakers to enhance students’ multilingual awareness and develop communication strategies. Additionally, environments should enable them to perceive and recognize such ELF interaction opportunities, along with the ability and intention to utilize them.

To effectively support ELT curricula that promote equity and more accurately reflect how language is utilized across various global contexts for diverse purposes, more studies on GELT are required that adopt holistic perspectives considering multiple factors. This, in turn, offers insights into nuanced global approaches to language teaching that account for the complex systems between individuals and their environments.

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#### Author Contributions

**Natsuno Funada:** conceptualization, methodology, data curation; formal analysis, writing – original draft; writing – editing. **Heath Rose:** conceptualization, methodology, writing – editing.

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#### Ethics Statement

The study received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the first author’s institution.

#### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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## Supporting Information

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section.

**Supporting File 1:** [ijal70117-sup-0001-SuppMat.docx](#)