



English as a Lingua Franca: Reflections on ELF-Related Issues by Pre-Service English Language Teachers in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The leading position of English as a global language has evidently been continuing for several decades. This pivotal role has inevitably been influencing the agenda of English language teaching and teacher education in most domains of the profession. Although English as a lingua franca (ELF) implications and practices on teaching and teacher education are increasingly researched, they still remain a fairly untrodden territory. For this very aim, this study endeavored to shed lights on the role of teacher education programs through exploration of pre-service language teachers' perceptions on ELF related issues through a questionnaire and interviews. The findings revealed that although a large number of participants accepted the realities of ELF, however, they stated that their perspectives and teaching practices were largely shaped by inner circle native norms of English. The study has significant implications for teacher education programs involving language instructors, students, curriculum designers and material developers.

Keywords: *Pre-service teacher education, English as a lingua franca, English language teaching*

INTRODUCTION

World Englishes, ELF and Standard English

The rapid spread of English as the language of communication has inevitably fostered a big controversy about the status of English and the terms used to define different conceptions about it. Bolton (2004) mentions three possible interpretations of World Englishes (WEs). First, it is considered as an 'umbrella label' covering all varieties of English worldwide and the different approaches describing them. Throughout this article, the term is used in this sense. Second, it refers to new Englishes emerging in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, Kachru's Outer Circle. Finally, it serves as a representation of the pluricentric notion of English.

Another phenomenon is Standard English (SE), which is a hypothetical and monolithic form of English (Jenkins, 2006). With regard to SE, Crystal (2003) states “US English does seem likely to be the most influential in its development” (p. 188). This is the single monochrome standard form of English which is advocated by Quirk (1985, 1990, 1995), who originally raised the debate on WE and SE in opposing sides with Kachru (1985). Quirk (1990) was on the side of Standard English in his discussions stressing that one common standard in the use of English should be adopted in every context. He proposed English language teachers design their teaching based on native-speaker norms and native like performance claiming that English may lose its role as an international language because of the emergence of unintelligible varieties and forms. In response to him, the US linguist Braj Kachru (1985) pointed out that the native norms were irrelevant to the sociolinguistic reality of the other contexts in which English is used. He (1985) suggested that traditional notions of standardization, native norms and models should be challenged as they are only relevant to Inner Circle users. According to Kachru (1985), native speakers seem to lose the sole ownership of English to control its standardization highlighting that the implications of this sociolinguistic reality must be recognized. New paradigms, perspectives, critical pedagogies are required to understand the linguistic creativity and diversity in multilingual situations across cultures (Kachru, 1985).

ELF is defined as part of the more general phenomenon of WE (Seidlhofer, 2005). When English is chosen as a “contact language” between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common national culture and for whom English is the chosen foreign language (Firth, 1996). House (1999) also describes ELF interactions as the ones between members of two or more different linguacultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue. As Seidlhofer (2004) suggests ELF is independent to a considerable degree of the norms established by its native users. In this respect, it is those non-native users that provide the strongest momentum for the development of the language in its global uses as “agents of language change” (Brutt-Griffler, 1998, p.387).

ELF-Related Issues

ELF is a field embedding a wide range of crucial subjects in sociolinguistics (Seidlhofer, 2011), psychology (Medgyes, 1994; Seidlhofer, 2001) and cultural studies (Seidlhofer, 2001; Bayyurt, 2006). It would be perverse to refuse to take ELF and ELF speakers seriously in the current research and discussion in sociolinguistics which has interest in the intricate relationship between linguistic variation, context of use and expressions of identity, insistence of the intrinsic variability of all language, and the natural virtues of linguistic diversity (Seidlhofer, 2011). ELF research and discussions also highlight psychological issues with regard to ELF speakers and teachers in that it studies the dark side of being a NNS, inferiority complex NNSs and NNSTs have (Medgyes, 1994) and ELF, attitude and identity (Jenkins, 2007). Finally, it would be odd to exclude ELF, ELF speakers and teachers and ELF pedagogy from cultural and intercultural studies as ELF research contributes significant developments in our understanding of the relationship between language, culture and identity (Seidlhofer, 2001; Baker, 2015). With highly pivotal references to sociolinguistics, psychology and cultural issues, ELF embraces various subjects such as dichotomy of NSTs and NNST; ELF and EFL; WE and SE; cultural aspects in language teaching and the ownership of English.

The debate of ELF and World Englishes has led to some reconfigurations in teaching English as a lingua franca and critical teacher education models relevant to the current position of English language. Considering the current position of English around the world, language education based on the assumption that learners of English will only communicate with native English speakers will not serve the needs of students as this assumption is outdated (Matsuda, 2012). Thus, it seems not applicable anymore to present English language learners one single

standardized model of English. Instead, it becomes significant to offer them a non-standardized English language by presenting them a broad array of Englishes from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds since the knowledge of English cannot be constrained to one single variety (Jenkins 2000, 2007; Moussu & Lurda 2008).

In one of his articles, Alptekin (2002) questions the validity of the pedagogic model based on the native speaker-based notion of communicative competence asserting that;

...With its standardized native speaker norms, the model is found to be *utopian, unrealistic*, and *constraining* in relation to English as an International Language (EIL). It is utopian not only because native speakership is a linguistic myth, but also because it portrays a monolithic perception of the native speaker's language and culture, by referring chiefly to mainstream ways of thinking and behaving. It is unrealistic because it fails to reflect the lingua franca status of English. It is constraining in that it circumscribes both teacher and learner autonomy by associating the concept of authenticity with the social milieu of the native speaker (Alptekin 2002, p.57).

McKay (2003) addresses significant implications of ELF pedagogy in the agenda of English language teaching. First, the content of English language teaching should not be constrained to the culture of English speaking countries. Also, the stronger qualities of bilingual teachers in terms of their local and intercultural knowledge must be acknowledged. The shift from the monolingual and monocultural perspectives of NSTs to multilingual and multicultural approaches of NNSTs must be accepted to accommodate the current needs of English language learners. Sifakis also stresses this issue suggesting that the best English language teaching situations are those that exhibit variety in learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Sifakis 2004).

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) mentions three types of cultural information that can be used in language classrooms; 'source culture materials' that draw on learners' own culture as content, 'target culture materials' that use the culture of a country where English is spoken as a first language, 'international target culture materials' that use a great variety of cultures in English and non-English speaking countries around the World (McKay, 2002, p.88). Canagarajah (2005) asserts the inapplicability of the distinction between NSTs and NNSTs because of globalization and intense mix of cultures currently taking place in post-modern world suggesting that this situation does not mean that all speakers of English will speak the same variety, preferably an Inner Circle variety but that speakers of multiple varieties of English will have to communicate and negotiate more often and better than before (Canagarajah 2005). Similarly, Rajagopalan (2004) questions the former privileged status of NSs as EFL professionals. According to him, the native speaker is no longer a model speaker of World Englishes (WE). The native speaker may even be handicapped in performing communicative tasks in World Englishes as communicative competence in WE has a multilingual and multicultural nature, and therefore being a monolingual and mono-cultural may actually turn out to be an encumbrance (Rajagopalan, 2004). In his discussions about the bright side of being a NNST, Medgyes (1994) sets up six hypotheses about NNSTs: 1) They provide a good learner model for imitation; 2) They teach language learning strategies more effectively; 3) They supply learners with more information about the English language; 4) they anticipate and prevent language difficulties better; 5) They are more empathetic to the needs and problems of learners; 6) They make use of the learners' mother tongue (Medgyes, 1994, p. 51).

Another crucial issue emerged as a result of ELF and WE debates is the ownership of English. The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it; to grant such custody over it is necessarily to arrest its development and so undermine its international status which can only retain to the extent that it is not their (NSs') language. What follows this logically is that it must be diverse (Widdowson, 1994, p. 385).

Romney (2010) also asserts that English language learners need to be empowered with the ownership of the language.

ELF and WE debates have arisen many questions and critical approaches in the agenda of language teaching and teacher education. What is needed is an approach that will help teachers appreciate principles that arise from ELF research and how these principles might have a bearing on their own teaching context (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015, p.59). The most efficient way to achieve this is to train English language teachers across cultures about the realities of English today and help them gain new paradigms and perspectives in their profession regarding teaching ELF.

There have been many different models of language teacher education and each perspective sheds light on a specific aspect of the multidimensional and complex process of learning teaching (Roberts, 1998). However, the global status of English as the lingua franca of the world makes the situation different in that it creates a great deal of diverse needs for English language learners around the world, which results in a reconfiguration in both English language teaching and teacher education models. As McKay (2002) proposes “the teaching and learning of an international language must be based on an entirely different set of assumptions than the teaching and learning of any other second and foreign language” (p.1). This situation makes it urgent to question the assumptions of teaching standardized English based on native speaker norms, native speaker as a model of competence and native speaker as the ideal teacher in English language classrooms. These assumptions need to be reconceptualized by new paradigms and perspectives within the ideology of ELF. Also these ELF related issues and assumptions need to be referred in order to shed lights on the role of teacher education programs.

METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on the preliminary findings of a dissertation on raising ELF awareness in pre-service language teacher education and it serves as a pilot to the dissertation. The purpose of the study is to explore the pre-service teachers’ perceptions and pre-occupied assumptions on ELF related issues touched upon above. This small-scale study encompasses qualitative data which is collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions. Data was analyzed through content analysis including already existing themes in the literature and additional ones.

Participants

Forty-two pre-service language teachers participated in this study. They were all fourth year students in English language teacher education program of a respected university in Turkey. Their ages ranged from 18 to 22. Almost all of the participants speak Turkish as their mother tongue except a few teacher candidates whose mother tongue is either Arabic or Kurdish.

Almost all of them learned English in Turkey, although some of them had the opportunity to spend some time in English-speaking countries via exchanging programs such as The European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (The Erasmus Programme) which is a European Union (EU) student exchange programme established in 1987. The participants were carrying out their fieldwork during the time of this study. As part of their fieldwork, these pre-service teachers were required to observe classes at primary and secondary schools and teach minimum three classes. Almost all of the teacher candidates had the opportunity to observe a NEST and NNEST either in their fieldwork or in their teacher education program. When they graduate from their departments, most of these teachers take an

exam conducted by Ministry of Education to be assigned to state schools as English language teachers. That is, a great majority carry on their profession in state primary, secondary and high schools.

Data Collection

Data for the study came from three sources: (a) a questionnaire tapping the perceptions of pre-service language teachers on ELF and ELF related issues, (b) semi-structured interviews with 12 pre-service teachers to explore their deeper convictions and assumptions about ELF related issues, (c) two focus group interviews of 6 participants in each to create a platform for the debate of ELF matters.

The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions on five ELF related topics which are (1) the dichotomy of native speaker and non-native speaker teachers, (2) knowledge of ELF and EFL, (3) Standard English or World Englishes, (4) cultural aspects in language teaching, (5) ownership of English. In each topic, there are approximately three open-ended questions. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on the existing related literature on ELF. For the intelligibility and reliability concerns, the questions were checked by three experts in the field.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 12 randomly selected pre-service teachers from the total of 42 to explore their deeper assumptions and their knowledge of ELF. The interviews have the same framework of themes to be explored as the questionnaire. However, when new ideas different from their answers of the questionnaire emerged, they were discussed in depth with the participants. The interviews which lasted approximately 15 minutes were all recorded and transcribed.

Two focus group interviews were also held with 12 randomly selected participants; 6 participants in each. The themes to be investigated were the same as the semi-structured interviews. However, in this phase, the questions were asked in an interactive group setting to let the participants talk with other group members and hold a group debate, which triggered critical reflectivity.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions and the transcribed interview data was done through content analysis. This analysis occurred with data being organized according to themes, or reoccurring patterns (Merriam, 2009). Thus, the researchers determined which categories or themes were present in the transcribed interview data and the questionnaire. This stage in the data analysis process is often referred to as open coding because the researcher is 'open' to any comments or questions that might be worth exploring (Merriam 2009). Finally, the themes and categories identified were checked by three experts in the field and agreement with regard to the categorizations and themes identification was reached.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Dichotomy of NEST and NNEST

The participants were initially asked about the concepts of native speaker and non-native speaker and also were expected to choose the group they feel they belong to. While a great majority stated that they belong to non-native speaker group, some participants suggested that there is no such distinction as native or non-native speaker. They defined native speakers with different aspects. According to them a native speaker (a) uses language efficiently and

effortlessly, (b) speaks language as their mother tongue, (c) is fluent and comfortable with the language, (d) has detailed knowledge of language, (e) has cultural knowledge, (f) has been exposed to language from birth, (g) is from the US or UK, (h) acquires the language unconsciously during critical period.

They were then asked to discuss the communicative competence of native and non-native speakers in international platforms. Four main categories were identified:

Table 1. NEST and NNEST

(a) NS competence	Extract 1 “A native speaker always has the upper-hand against a non-native speaker as s/he knows all dimensions of the language such as culture, discourse, vocabulary and pragmatics.” (Informant 5)
(b) NNS competence	Extract 2 “Non-native speakers are more communicatively competent in international platforms because it is an international setting and consists of mostly multilingual non-native speakers. Actually, English has approximately 360 million native speakers and it is only 5% in world population.” (Informant 7)
(c) No difference regarding efficiency	Extract 3 “It doesn’t matter to be a native or non-native in order to be able to communicate efficiently. A non-native speaker may have the same efficiency if s/he has the schematic knowledge about the topic and the knowledge of the language.” (Informant 11)
(d) Individual differences	Extract 4 “It depends on the personal differences such as social and communicative skills and being introvert or extrovert.” (Informant 3)

The theme, *NS Competence*, is in line with Rajagopalan’s (2004) assumptions. According to him, the native speaker is no longer a model speaker of WE. The native speaker may even be handicapped in performing communicative tasks in World Englishes as communicative competence in WE has a multilingual and multicultural nature, and therefore being a monolingual and mono-cultural may actually turn out to be an encumbrance (Rajagopalan 2004). Similarly, Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) suggest that NNSs are no longer “failed native speakers” of English, but more often they are highly skilled communicators who make use of their multilingual resources in ways not available to monolingual NSs, and who are found to prioritize successful communication over narrow notions of “correctness” in ways that NSs, with their stronger attachment to their native English, may find more challenging. Bayyurt (2006) also suggests that learners seem to be more motivated to learn a language when they have a successful NNS model as guidance.

Table 2. Superior Competencies of NSTs and NNSTs

(a) NST superiority in terms of teaching	Extract 5 “NNSTs may
• aural and oral skills,	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural knowledge, • pronunciation, • triggering students' motivation • authentic communication 	be deficient in so many aspects but NSTs can provide complete and proper language education through the best input about pronunciation and cultural items." (Informant 6)
<p>(b) NNST superiority in terms of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • realizing empathy with their students, • being familiar with their students' socio-cultural backgrounds and learning styles, • teaching the structure of the language and • having no psychological barriers. 	<p>Extract 6</p> <p>"NNESTs are superior because they know their students' socio cultural backgrounds, the circumstances they are brought up and educated, their learning styles and the education system that they are exposed to." (Informant 7)</p>
<p>(c) Field expertise</p>	<p>Extract 7</p> <p>"It is the field expertise that matters most in language teaching. Having the necessary pedagogic and content knowledge is the key factor in language teaching but not nativeness at all."</p>
<p>(d) Professionalism and experience</p>	<p>Extract 8</p> <p>"Professionalism and experience are more important in language teaching than nativeness. Improving one's qualities is realized by years of experience.</p>

In the following section, the participants were asked to discuss the superior competencies of NSTs and NNSTs in language teaching context. Four categories emerged with regard to their perspectives on this issue.

Knowledge of ELF and EFL

In this part of the study the pre-service English language teachers were asked to share their assumptions on the conceptions of ELF and EFL and teaching ELF and EFL.

ELF

The participants shared their assumptions within eight different categories.

Table 3. ELF

<p>(a) No opinions of ELF</p>	
<p>(b) A practical way of language teaching and learning</p>	<p>Extract 9</p> <p>"In ELF approach, you don't go into details of the language. You just teach and learn it for communication and practical purposes. You don't waste your time with detailed forms; you focus on the functional purposes." (Informant 13)</p>
<p>(c) A bridge from one culture to another</p>	<p>Extract 10</p>

	“English is the language of communication between people who don’t share the same mother tongue and the culture.” (Informant 18)
(d) The shared, common and mutual language	
(e) The global and international language	
(f) Commercial purposes and trade	Extract 11 “English is an obligation for international trade.” (Informant 4)
(g) Communicative and functional purposes	
(h) Creating problems	Extract 12 “Teaching ELF can create problems for standard English pronunciation. I think the language loses its international value in this approach.” (Informant 32)
(i) Different variations of English	Extract 13 “I believe this term refers to a higher degree of education which contains different variations of English spoken in different parts of the world.” (Informant 19)

This definition might have resulted from the common agreement on ELF as a medium of intercultural communication.

When English is chosen as a means of communication among people from different L1 backgrounds across linguacultural boundaries, the common term is “English as a lingua franca” (Seidlhofer, 2005). Below is an extract taken from one of the participants’ data.

They associate the concept of ELF with the current status of English across the world. The possible explanation for this finding is about the definition of the concept of ELF as English as a world language (Brutt-Griffler, 2002), English as an international language (Jenkins 2003), English as a global language (Crystal 2003).

This finding is in line with the assumption that the features of English which tend to be crucial for international intelligibility need to be learned instead of the mastery of the fine nuances of native speaker language. This insight conveys the aim of teaching the language for general language awareness and communication strategies (Seidlhofer, 2005).

This assumption may be derived from similar explanations given by Quirk (1990). According to him, one common standard in the use of English should be adopted otherwise English may lose its role as an international language because of the emergence of unintelligible varieties and forms.

EFL

In defining the concept of EFL in comparison to ELF, participants provided different perceptions which were categorized into seven different themes.

Table 4. EFL

(a) English as a foreign language	Extract 14 “It is how we have been learning English for years in Turkey”.
(b) Not separated from the original culture.	Extract 15 “In teaching EFL, teachers do not separate the target language from its original native culture”.
(c) Language learnt after critical period	
(d) Standard English based on native norms	
(e) Related to professional purposes	Extract 16 “We should learn EFL for our professional growth and career but ELF for communicative purposes”.
(f) Protecting the quality of the language	Extract 17 “EFL protects the quality of the language ELF protects the practicality of the language.” (Informant 4)
(g) Deep analysis of the language	Extract 18 “EFL is more detailed and complex. It includes all structures and aspects of language. However, ELF is based on communication. It doesn’t include any complex aspects of language. It is more basic and functional. You learn just what you need to be able to communicate.” (Informant 40)
(h) Artificial language teaching and learning	Extract 19 “Teaching EFL based on native norms is not authentic and realistic”.

Some participants indicated that when you learn a language after the critical period, it becomes a foreign language. When their perceptions are questioned during the interview sessions, it was clear that knowing a language means to become a native-like speaker for them. Since they cannot reach that native attainment, English may remain as a foreign language for them.

This perception is in line with the definition suggested by Jenkins (2005). According to her, a foreign language is used to communicate with NSs in NS settings and it should take standard British English or American English as models to achieve and its norms are NS norms.

This finding is similar to what Kuo (2006) suggests in her study. According to her, in ELF approach, since the structure of the language changes, this distorts the standard language, which is accepted internationally.

This insight is parallel to the review about the model of native speaker based communicative competence made by Alptekin (2002). He indicates that with its standardized native speaker norms, the model is found to be utopian, unrealistic, and constraining since it circumscribes both teacher and learner autonomy by associating the concept of authenticity with the social milieu of the native speaker.

Standard English or World Englishes

In this part of the procedure, the pre-service English language teachers are asked to share their beliefs about adopting a model of Standard English or World Englishes based on the notion of English as a lingua franca. Three categories emerged with regard to their perceptions.

Table 5. Standard English/World Englishes

<p>(a) Attachement to SE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELF may cause confusion and distortions in communication, • ELF approach is lack of clearly defined basis and borders, • ELF damages the quality of original standard English accepted internationally • Standart English is much more prestigious 	
<p>(b) Adopting a model of WE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language must be learned to understand and respect differences, • Successful communication and intelligibility is more important than standardization, • Standard English belongs to native speakers but ELF belongs to the World. 	<p>Extract 20 “WE stimulates creativity, diversity and flexibility”.</p>
<p>(c) Integration of both SE and WE</p>	<p>Extract 21 “Learners should initially be exposed to Standard English based on native norms. However, after learning the language with its original set of forms, they could be presented with different forms of English spoken in different parts of the world to gain awareness”.</p>

More than half of the participants are in favor of keeping the rules of Standard English. In other words, they resisted adopting ELF approach in their teaching context. These assumptions are in line with the explanations in Kuo (2006) suggesting that a native speaker model serves as a complete, appropriate, convenient and appealing point with its socio-cultural richness in second language pedagogy than a description of English which is somewhat reduced and incomplete. In another research done by Dewey (2012), the findings indicated that there are some concerns expressed by a number of teachers about the perceived practical difficulties involved in making space for diversification in their teaching context. They regarded ELF as a non-codified form of English displaying high level of diversity, which makes it challenging for them to reconcile their knowledge with their inherited beliefs about standardization and the monolithic approach this entails.

These perceptions are in line with a number of studies carried out by different scholars in the field. Matsuda (2012) asserts that considering the current position of English around the world, language education based on the assumption that learners of English will only

communicate with native English speakers will not serve the needs of students as this assumption is outdated. Thus, it seems not applicable anymore to present English language learners one single standardized model of English. Instead, it becomes significant to offer them a non-standardized English language by presenting them a broad array of Englishes from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds since the knowledge of English cannot be constrained to one single variety (Jenkins, 2000, 2007; Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

Cultural Aspects in Language Teaching

With regard to pre-service teachers' perceptions about the place of culture in language teaching context, almost all of the participants revealed that there is a close relationship between language and culture and that cultural information should be incorporated to language teaching. Only a very small number of people suggested that there is no such relation between language and culture.

After the participants expressed their views about the relationship between language teaching and culture, they were asked to share their opinions about the components of cultural information to be integrated into their teaching context. They indicated that the concept of culture encompasses "everything about daily life, habits, history, lifestyle, meals, folk songs and dances, historical places, greetings, special days and holidays, literature, jokes, idioms, proverbs, legends, novels and tales, politeness strategies, music, films, ceremonies, celebrations, festivals, politics, traditions, customs, values, norms, fashion, education". Respondents mostly focused on pragmatics and sociological dimensions of cultural content of language classrooms.

Table 6. The Relationship between Culture and Language

(a) Strong relationship between language and culture	Extract 22 "Culture plays a big role in language. Without culture, all languages would be the same. I think students should be exposed to cultural aspects as much as possible." (Informant 9)
(b) No relationship between language and culture	Extract 23 "Language is a set of codifications used among a certain group of people to convey and receive messages".

When they were asked to comment on the aims of presenting cultural information in their teaching contexts, they suggested that cultural information is presented to

- transfer meaningful messages,
- teach the language more sincerely,
- motivate students,
- make students feel closer to the language,
- help them get to know native speakers more closely,
- use the language more efficiently,
- internalize the language, to teach cultural diversity,
- show authentic language,
- vandalize children's brains and thoughts,
- have a better sense of communication,

- teach the register of the language, to provide pragmatic knowledge,
- create curiosity.

Although almost all of the respondents have an agreement on the integration of cultural information into language teaching, they differ with regard to their perspectives on the issue of which culture to integrate into their teaching contexts.

Table 7. Integration of Culture

(a) TLC integration	<p>Extract 24 “Cultural information may consist of everything related to everyday life of native speakers.” (Informant 5)</p> <p>Extract 25 “Students should be exposed to British and American culture because English was born and shaped there. It is meaningful when presented with its original cultural elements”. (Informant 28)</p>
(b) LC integration	<p>Extract 26 “Some cultural information related to learners’ local culture may be chosen as the content to make learners feel comfortable and familiar with the target language.” (Informant 11)</p>
(c) Mixture of international cultures	<p>Extract 27 “Learners should be exposed to cultural diversity rather than just the cultural symbols of native speakers because English not only affects other cultures but also is affected by different cultures around the world. There should be an interaction of international cultures.” (Informant 3)</p>
(d) Integration of TLC and LC	<p>Extract 28 “...for example, we can compare our Sacrifice Fest with their Easter. We can discuss what we do and what they do in these fests. I am sure students will learn a lot of things about language as well as cultural information.” (Informant 10)</p>

The participants suggested that learners should be offered cultural information from both English-speaking and non-English speaking countries to be internationally competent language users. Alptekin (2002) suggests that the aim of English language teaching should be the development of learners’ “intercultural communicative competence” in English to enable

them to cope with issues related to the wider use of English in international contexts within the “global village”.

They believed that language learning may be much more fun and meaningful when making comparisons between TLC and LC. They also felt that through this way, learners feel closer to the target language and native speakers and the materials could be less challenging for them to understand.

The findings with regard to the issue of culture in language teaching show that respondents focused on different dimensions of the content of cultural information in language classrooms. The categories identified in this session are in line with the three cultural contexts which are source culture, target culture and international culture put forward by McKay (2002). McKay asserts that there are possible advantages of including each kind of culture but she highlights three principles about the way cultural content is handled;

“First, the materials should be used in such a way that students are encouraged to reflect on their own culture in relation to others, thus helping to establish a sphere of interculturality. Second, the diversity that exists within all cultures should be emphasized. And finally, cultural content should be critically examined so that students consider what assumptions are present in the text and in what other ways the topic could be discussed” (p. 100).

Ownership of English

Another significant issue to be discussed within the scope of ELF is the ownership of English. There is a strong debate concerning this issue and scholars differ with regard to their perspectives. When the participants of this study were asked to share their assumptions about the ownership of English, three categories emerged.

Table 8. Ownership of English

(a) Global ownership	<p>Extract 29 “In today’s world, English belongs to everybody who speaks it as a first, second, third, fourth or foreign language.” (Informant 12)</p> <p>Extract 30 “It is obvious that English has its origins in Britain. However, as the British Empire prospered English spread across the world, and it has become World English.” (Informant 8)</p>
(b) NS ownership	<p>Extract 29 “I think the ownership of a language is a crucial matter in that a language must have just one source of development. It should have just one source that contributes values of culture, sociological and linguistic elements even if it is spoken in widely large geographical continents” (Informant 38).</p>
(c) No ownership	<p>Extract 31 “None of the languages around the world has owners. Language is just a bridge among people. English is a global language through which we can reflect our own culture. If we accept the idea of ownership, this means we accept that societies who use English have no original cultural characteristics. It is not humanistic at all.”</p> <p>Extract 32 “Language is for all human beings. No one can claim ownership of any languages.” (Informant 1)</p>

Extract 33

“I think all languages are universal.” (Informant 21)

Almost half of the respondents favored the idea of global ownership of English considering the current status of it as an international language. They asserted that English is spoken all around the world by approximately two billion people and native speakers comprise only 5% of this population. Kachru (1985) also pointed out that native speakers seem to lose the sole ownership of English to control its standardization; in fact they have become a minority. Rajagopalan (2004) also claims that English is nobody’s mother tongue because there is a theoretical claim which is “World English”. In the same way, Widdowson (1994) expressed his ideas; “It is a matter of considerable pride and satisfaction for native speakers of English that their language is an international means of communication. But the point is that it is only international to the extent that it is not their language” (p. 385).

The participants in this category believe that it is their language because they shaped the origins and standards of the language. Another opinion is that a language symbolizes the freedom of a specific nation so no other country can claim ownership of another country’s language.

A small number of participants suggested that no country or no nationality can claim ownership of English. According to them English does not belong to any group of people and it is regarded as a means of international communication. They also suggested that language itself is a universal concept without any relevance to ownership.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The current research revealed findings that may have a number of implications in English language teaching and teacher education. Initially, the findings demonstrated that a great majority of the participants resisted adopting ELF approach in their language teaching context. Additionally, more than half of the candidate teachers favored applying the norms of Standard English instead of World Englishes based on the notion of ELF. They also supported the integration of TLC into language teaching to provide appropriate and complete learning. Correspondingly, a large group of participating candidate teachers believed in the superiority of NNESTs in language teaching in terms of various aspects. These results strongly indicate that these pre-service teachers have ELF-related pre-occupied assumptions which they have not questioned yet because of the lack of an awareness-raising ELF-related courses in language teacher education programs. Another study conducted with forty-five NNSTs from five different expanding circle countries has indicated that they preferred to use NS norms rather than features frequently associated with ELF (Soruç, 2015). Dewey (2012) also conducted a study in which teacher perceptions of ELF are examined. The findings of his study reveal that while a growing number of teachers may be starting to share the view that ‘we live in a globalized world and the different varieties might be encountered at some point or another’, there are different concerns expressed by a number of respondents about the perceived practical difficulties involved in making space for the diversification of English in language classrooms, which creates a strong sense of the importance of codification and a firm attachment to Standard English (Dewey, 2012, p.153).

Jenkins (2005) indicates it becomes quite hard for language teachers to give up traditional approaches towards language teaching and learning due to the overemphasis on traditional norms of Standard English in teacher education programs. Blair (in print) also suggests any kind of change, whether social, political, linguistic or professional, takes time.

Thus, is not unusual that it may take some time to internalize the ideology of ELF and its implications both for language teaching and teacher education.

Finally, it is evident that there can be different implications of this study with regard to ELT and teacher education. However, the crucial inference of this study is that language teachers have to be well educated to meet the requirements of this globalized and changing world during their pre-service language teacher education program in which their insights towards language teaching profession flourish. Thus, before it becomes too late, they have to be aware of the concept of ELF, the debates and discussions about ELF and its applicability in language teaching contexts to meet the necessities of this century. As Blair emphasizes the language teachers must be aware that the ideal teachers of English are well-trained, multilingual, ELF-aware, pragmatically and intercultural competent- regardless of their first language. In his chapter, Blair states ‘it is important; if we believe change is necessary- in attitudes, practice, policy or other aspects of our field- that we first attend to those areas where we have real influence’. McKay (2002) identifies some priorities of an ELF-aware teacher as the one ensuring intelligibility rather than insisting on correctness, helping learners develop interaction strategies that will promote comity or friendly relations, fostering textual competence (reading and writing skills for learner-selected purposes), having sensitivity in the choice of cultural content in materials, reflexivity in pedagogical procedures and respect for the local culture of learning (McKay, 2012, p.127). Bayyurt & Sifakis (2015) also describe the notion of ELF-aware teacher putting emphasis on similar aspects as McKay. An ELF-aware teacher 1) engages in a manner of teaching that does not focus primarily on correction but on intelligibility; 2) designs/adapts tasks that do not demand that learners lose their own personality and cultural background to the effect of blindly imitating native speaker behavior; 3) allows for learners using elements (linguistic and cultural from their L1/mother tongue or even other languages they may share (cf. the notion of “colingualism”)); 4) adopts a pedagogy that fosters differentiation in learning.

The ultimate implication within the scope of this research study is that it is urgent to integrate ELF into language teacher education programs either as a separate course or a part of already existing courses which provides the common core for ELF. Through this way the necessary changes may be realized starting from enabling pre-service teachers become ELF-aware critical pedagogues.

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