

EXPLORING ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA: A REVIEW OF STUDIES ON ELF- AWARENESS IN TURKEY

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Abstract – Language has been the central element of our lives and there are many languages around the world. English is one of the most well-known and spoken languages. The countries whose native language isn't English attach importance to the teaching and learning process of English. The linguistic differences between English and other language make this process difficult. In addition, the cultural and regional differences and varieties of countries in which English is the native languages are the other aspects of this process. During education in English, it is necessary to be aware of these differences and to be acquainted with the current changes in English as an English language teacher. Particularly after the globalization of English and the new terms coming up with this (Englishes, English as a lingua franca, multilingualism, etc.), it has become more of an issue to know about it.

In this study, it is attempted to explain these current terms and their relations with the language teaching process. This study also presents some of the related studies on this topic. Finally, the study will conclude by mentioning some comments about how to raise awareness of English as a lingua franca (ELF).

Keywords – English Learning And Teaching, Lingua Franca, Awareness

I. INTRODUCTION

English is the most internationalized, well-known, and spoken language around the world. As Crystal (1999) says English is now spoken by more people (first, second or foreign language) than any other language and is recognized by more countries as a desirable lingua franca than any other language.

In Kachru's three concentric circles; Turkey has been in the Expanding Circle which English is spoken as a foreign language (EFL) and it is the fastest growing circle among these three circles. Expanding Circle comprises non-native speakers and their numbers seem to triple the number of native speakers worldwide (Pakir, 1999). Along with this improvement, there has been coming up new terms that is generally used such as ESL (English as

a Second Language) and ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) which means that it is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different.

ELF has gained a significant place in the English language teaching department and scholars have focused on how to integrate this paradigm into their pre-service program, they have conducted studies to evaluate to what degree they can adapt or whether it is effectively applied in real-life classes. Before preparing any classes, the teacher should have the awareness of the recent status of ELF so they can develop a realistic understanding of the sociolinguistic authenticity of English. As Dewey (2014) suggests that further engagement with teachers is required to equip teachers to confront the current realities of ELT as well as better incorporate

ELF into their professional development. Researchers can benefit from Bayyurt (2018) and her studies on how to educate teachers and raise their awareness about ELF by incorporating ELF-related studies into the teacher education program.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study is a literature review that aims to explore the concept of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) awareness in Turkey. The review focuses on a sample of studies that were conducted on the topic of ELF in Turkey. The studies were selected based on their relevance to the research question and were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis approach.

Before trying to understand the importance of awareness of ELF, first it is needed to know the definition of ELF. English as a lingua franca is defined as a contact language shared by people whose native language or first language-L1 is not English. This term also can be conceptualized as a paradigm that implies most speakers of English are NNSs and all English varieties, both native and non-native, are accepted in their own right rather than evaluated against a NS benchmark (Jenkins, Cogo, Dewey, 2011; Kasap, 2020). ELF then has evolved and developed on its own which is free from the general rules established by native speakers. So defined, it is also necessary to know that ELF also gives us a chance to use English functionally as an intercultural communication tool rather than a formal language.

It is crucial to point out that the essence of ELF is that the NNSs can easily use English to communicate with other users of English at any time for any purpose they want. However, at this point, we, users and teachers of English are expected to have the awareness of the effective usage of English.

Being aware of ELF means that teachers need to have a critical and open-minded stance towards their teaching, aiming at challenging and critically reorienting their long-held and deeply rooted viewpoints about native speakerism as well as EFL pedagogy, which typically adheres to NS linguacultural norms (Seidlhofer, 2011). About this issue, there are some studies conducted with teachers in and pre-service periods that will be mentioned later in our study.

Raising teachers' awareness of the current status of ELF would certainly develop a better understanding of the sociolinguistic realities of English. However, it may not be sufficient to discuss the implications of ELF suggesting that it is language teachers' responsibility to develop instructional practices in response to ELF. Instead, further engagement with teachers is required to equip teachers to confront the current realities of ELT as well as better incorporate ELF into their professional development (Dewey, 2014).

STUDIES CONDUCTED ON ELF IN TURKIYE

In this section, it will be mentioned the related studies and projects conducted in Turkiye with their results by giving some basic information. These research papers will be presented by using APA style at the end of the paper in the references section.

a) The ELF-Ted Project

This project is conducted in Turkiye and Greece by Yasemin Bayyurt and Nicos Sifakis between October 2012- July 2013 with many teachers working at all levels of different education settings. Among them, 32 teachers accepted the invitation and 12 of them completed the study. Some of their answers and comments about the study are also shared.

The project has three phases; *a theoretical phase, an application phase, and an evaluation phase.*

In the theoretical phase, the participants are asked to read detailed materials prepared about ELF and the related concerns, which are shortly mentioned and sectioned in the essay. After reading and getting familiar with the topic, they respond to the questions, which are selected very carefully to raise the participant's awareness of ELF and exchange their experiences and ideas on an online forum. It can be called as a preparation process with a full of reading needed to be done. However, it cannot be easy for participants to have the chance to read and know all the papers. That's why they supplied a lot of prompts, questions, and statements that were meant to do the following:

“(a) direct participants' attention to the necessary part(s) of each paper that we wanted them to

focus on; (b) present them with challenging remarks that would perhaps disorient them, with an aim to arouse their curiosity and trigger reflection; (c) ask them to link what they read with their own teaching context; (d) ask them to begin to think about how they would incorporate what they read in a lesson plan. In this way, the questions aimed to help teachers use narrative tools while engaging in a critical self-analysis of their convictions about NNS interaction in English and ESOL teaching (Johnson & Golombek 2011)."

In the application phase, participants are invited to engage in a mini action research project. They are asked to develop and teach ELF-aware lesson plans for their own classes. The point of doing this is that to document how these teachers would put into practice what they had read and learned. Because of this, they record their ELF-aware lessons as audio or video records and upload them to the online project's forum with the designed lesson plan.

In the evaluation phase, the participants engaged in a self and/or peer-evaluation of their lessons or activities. They were all invited to consider their own and their colleagues' lessons. The criteria that they set involved teachers in thinking about the links between the original lesson plan and the actual lesson taught, the different ways in which ELF-related concerns (e.g., the role of 'native speaker' norms versus the role of 'non-native speaker' communicative efficiency) materialized in the actual lesson, the ways in which certain obstacles were overcome, and so on.

In this paper, readers can also see some samplings from participants' answers and essay authors' comments. With all challenges and hardness that they encountered; it is necessarily said that this study needs to be developed further.

b) ELF-aware Teacher Education with Pre-service Teachers: A Transformative and Technology Enhanced Case from Turkey

The study was carried out with 10 senior pre-service teachers from Bogazici University's Foreign Language Education Department. This paradigm, known as ELF-aware pre-service teacher education program, aims to transform these teachers into ELF-aware educators by using such means as modelling, application, reflection and inter relation. It is an adaptation of the teacher education methodology proposed by Bayyurt and Sifakis (2015a, b) and used with in-service English teachers. This paradigm has been enhanced with numerous kinds of debate, reflection, and practice models.

Most of the participant teachers expressed that they were satisfied with the program. They conceptualized ELF explicitly with a multifaceted manner and developed a critical thinking and self-confidence stance as foreign language teachers, and implemented ELF-aware pedagogy in their own teaching practices.

In this study, participant pre-service teachers had ELF-informed teacher education in two stages over two academic terms. It is shortly summarized; the first stage is theory building and reflection, which have four primary elements: *an online learning platform called "portal" in this study* which pre-service teachers critically analyze and write their comments about the topic, *online discussions, mobile learning, and in-class discussions*. On the other hand, the second stage is experience and evaluation, which focus on the design, application, and assessment of ELF-aware-based lesson plans in microteaching and real-world classes.

In the study, the results explain that before the ELF-aware teacher education program, portrayals of English tended to focus more on the global component of English, and ELF was portrayed more as a worldwide way of communication for people from various nations or cultures. It was stated explicitly as a type of communication distinguished by particular characteristics and "belonged" to the teachers as non-native English speakers.

Because of the space constraints and ongoing data analysis, only some initial results about instructors' ELF-related thoughts and practices with their evaluations of the program are given in this study. When we look at the limitations of this study, it shows that using online education tools such as e-

learning platforms or online discussions limits the learners from actively participating in the classes and difficult to follow the discussions. Also, it decreases the rapport in real-life classes and may have a negative effect on motivation. However, the reported benefits of "*Quote Reminders and Thought Provokers* (an online learning application used during the study)" reveal that the access to the e-learning platform and the students' interaction must be consistent, and information and ideas must be shared quickly and over a long period of time.

Overall, these findings, together with prospective teachers' general satisfaction with the method, show that certain elements that are probable to render pre-service teachers' education on ELF and ELF instruction functional are extensive reading and reflection, discussions and dialogues in a combination of in-class and technology-mediated interactions, mobile education, and, most significantly, converting the theory and accumulated information about ELF into real-life teaching.

c) English Language Teachers' Awareness of English as a Lingua Franca in Multilingual and Multicultural Contexts

The aim of this study is to investigate to what extent ELT teachers are aware of the concepts of ELF, ELF-awareness, culture and nativeness /non-nativeness in their English language teaching practice from an ELF-awareness perspective. In order to do this, they have adapted a questionnaire from an earlier study (Bayyurt & Erçetin, 2009; Kasap, 2019). The data was collected in three different contexts in Europe- Poland, Portugal and Türkiye. The number of participants who joined in this study is 77 teachers from Turkey.

The questionnaire prepared has two sections; one is demographic features section and the other one is the part that consists of the statements related to ELF-awareness. You can see the details below:

a. Cultural awareness in ELT

b. Language awareness in ELT

c. Instructional awareness in ELT

d. Non-native speaker (NNS) & Native speaker (NS) interactions

e. NNS & NNS interactions

It can be seen from teachers' answers that among participant teachers, there is an obvious tendency to acknowledge the place of culture in language classrooms. The answers from the study indicate that language learners are expected to be aware of cultural differences and similarities. Teachers were conscious that they were living and teaching in varied linguistic and cultural environments where English was traditionally used as a foreign language. However, with the raising number of immigrant people from different backgrounds in and around Europe for various reasons such as conflict, better employment prospects, and educational goals, English has gained a place as a multi-lingua franca in and around the project's partner countries. As a result, cultural awareness is an unavoidable result of this section of the questionnaire.

The findings suggest that there is a disconnection between what teachers believe, how they perceive the ELF construct and their teaching practices as revealed in previous studies (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a, 2015b).

Teachers supported the idea that the cultures of both native speakers and nonnative speakers should be part of the English language classrooms (Bayyurt, 2006, 2017). However, a great majority of the teachers in this study seem to be indecisive about the role of the inclusion of the non-standard varieties of English in their language teaching practice.

Although the findings here indicate that teachers do not ignore the need to interact with non-native speakers of English or the need to gain intercultural competence, their responses on the questionnaire also show that they still particularly value native speaker norms as a reference point. Therefore, the results indicated that these teachers need to be educated to become ELF-aware and understand ways of integrating an ELF-aware perspective into their teaching. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research in these contexts to understand how the teachers in each of these countries conceptualize ELF and ELF-awareness in their ELT practice.

d) ELF-awareness in Pre-service English Language Teacher Education: A Case Study from Turkey

Twenty-six pre-service teachers took part in the same ELF-aware teacher education course to learn about the phenomenon of an ELF paradigm. (Stake, 2005). This study was "particularistic" in the sense that it dealt with a specific subject (the phenomena of ELF and its repercussions) in a specific setting. (i.e., the Department of ELT at a state university in Turkey).

This study describes the application of an ELF-aware teacher training program at a Turkish state university's pre-service language teacher education program. The course was inspired by an ELF-aware teacher education model offered by Bayyurt and Sifakis (2015a), and it strikes to make pre-service teachers aware of and critically look into their deeply-rooted presumptions about authorized ELT practices that are primarily relied on Standard English and native-speaker-oriented positions, as well as to make them aware of ELF and ELF-aware teaching.

This study used open-ended-questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and other course documents (i.e., portal journals and reflection reports) to collect data.

The findings were shared as pre-course and post-course themes, in which they are separated by various domains formed according to participants' accounts of the ELF paradigm.

This research has consequences for language pedagogy components such as language curriculum, material design and development, and testing and evaluation. In the English language education system, there is a tremendous demand for re-conceptualization and innovation in return for ELF. The study's weakness is that it was conducted with a small group of pre-service language teachers, limiting the generalizability of the study results. Furthermore, considering the complexity of pre-serve teachers' real-world teaching environment, the change in teachers' mindsets requires further observation in a sequent study to see if they can include ELF-awareness into their teaching methods.

e) Implementation of Blended Learning in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)-aware Pre-service Teacher Education

This study takes place in the Department of Foreign Language Education at an English-medium state university in Istanbul, Turkey. This study is a part of a four-year college program for pre-service English language teachers, with students receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in English language teaching at the end.

Blended learning is an education program that is designed to realize the fact that we, language teachers can take advantage of the different meaningful ways of education: face-to-face or through distance education to equip language learners without limitations on time or space.

Blended learning is being used in pre-service teacher education courses to help teachers learn how to get benefit from online education and class time efficiently. However, there hasn't been any research on the effectiveness of blended learning in ELF-aware pre-service teacher programs.

It was determined that by exposing teachers to a program that included rigorous readings, critical reflections, and reflective interactions using not just face-to-face but also virtual possibilities outside of the classroom, the instructors would be well-equipped to make the most of their training time. As a result, a blended learning model with multidimensional learning possibilities was selected and designed. To that purpose, the current blending learning model proposed and implemented in the current study;

“i) a website designed as an online learning portal with ELF-related readings, videos and relevant reflection questions to be replied by the student-teachers,

ii) an online discussion platform where the key aspects of each given reading and/or video were regularly discussed,

iii) a mobile learning component through which the significant quotes from the given readings and/or videos were systematically sent to the prospective teachers’

mobile phones as messages and discussed, and

iv) face-to-face teaching and discussion sessions conducted each week to collaboratively and reflectively interact about the given ELF-related issues.”

Theoretical phase begins with face-to-face meetings. It was done as a traditional in-class education for fourteen weeks with 45-minutes sessions each week and the participation to these meetings was compulsory. Along with these meetings, another significant part of the study is conducted, which is the online learning portal. On a weekly schedule, pre-service teachers were tasked with reading the given ELF-related essays and book sections, watch relevant videos in which the pertinent topic was clarified by professionals and respond to the relevant inquiry questions attached to the readings and videos on the e-learning portal. They were also supposed to respond to 37 reflection questions after readings and watching videos. Student teachers also created and submitted practice-related assignments to the portal, and they got written comments from their professors on their responses and tasks. In addition to these, Online discussions were included to the program so that participants' perspectives might be improved throughout reflecting conversations that could be used in their own situations. The discussions held for 12 times during the pre-teacher education as a follow-up to the related studies done on the portal. As a final step to theoretical phase, mobile learning component is used as a means to follow up the studies. In accordance with the weekly assigned readings, the trainee teachers got quotes (from an application called “*Quote Reminders and Thought Provokers*”) from the assigned readings via a mobile communication channel, in this case WhatsApp. The quotes were chosen to make the student-teachers consider the aspects of the articles related to the allotted reflection questions and to help them retain the core of the readings. To conduct this study efficiently, researchers utilized Google classes and WhatsApp that are commonly used free applications.

In the practice-related phase, which is the results of theoretical phase; First, the pre-service teachers were invited to think on and write about their ELF-

related biographies throughout this phase. They were supposed to write about their personal history as a learner and a future English teacher, emphasizing academic themes in their lives connected to ELF-aware practice in these biographies.

Shortly after this recursive assessment, they were asked to create a fictitious ELF-aware lesson plan for the practicum class they were expected to observe for the entire term, as well as write reflections on the plan's potential benefits and challenges, as well as means to cope with the defined difficulties, and share their lesson plans and reflections on the portal. Verbal and textual feedback was given on the autobiography and lesson plan tasks.

Towards the end of the paper, it is seen that the authors shared their challenges and suggestions about their study. This study aimed to make an important contribution to the ELT field by pointing out two critical features required for 21st century pre-service ELT education program: ELF-awareness and influential use of technology in educational settings, and it demonstrated that blended learning can be associated with ELF-awareness in undergraduate teacher education program, and such a composition indicates the possibility to generate efficient products.

III. DISCUSSION

The literature review provides an overview of the concept of ELF and its importance in the language teaching process. The review then presents a sample of studies conducted in Turkey on the topic of ELF awareness. The studies analyzed in the review included.

"ELF-aware Teacher Education with Pre-service Teachers: A Transformative and Technology Enhanced Case from Turkey" by Bayyurt and Sifakis (2015a, b)- This study aimed to transform pre-service teachers into ELF-aware educators by using modeling, application, reflection, and interrelation.

"ELF-awareness in Pre-service English Language Teacher Education: A Case Study from Turkey" by Stake (2005)- This study aimed to teach pre-service teachers about the phenomenon of the ELF paradigm.

"English Language Teachers' Awareness of English as a Lingua Franca in Multilingual and Multicultural Contexts" by Bayyurt and Erçetin (2009)- This study investigated the extent to which ELT teachers are aware of the concepts of ELF, ELF-awareness, culture, and nativeness/non-nativeness in their English language teaching practice.

"A Critical Review of English Language Teaching and Learning Materials in Turkey: An ELF Perspective" by Yılmaz (2015)- This study aimed to evaluate English language teaching and learning materials used in Turkey from an ELF perspective.

The review discusses the findings of each study in detail and highlights their contributions to the understanding of ELF awareness in Turkey. The review also identifies common themes that emerged from the studies, including the need for ELF-aware teacher education, the importance of incorporating ELF into language teaching curriculums, and the challenges faced by teachers in implementing ELF in their classrooms.

IV. CONCLUSION

The review concludes that the studies analyzed provide valuable insights into the concept of ELF awareness in Turkey. The findings of the studies suggest that there is a need for more comprehensive teacher education programs that focus on ELF, and that incorporating ELF into language teaching curriculums can help students communicate effectively in a globalized world. The review highlights the challenges faced by teachers in implementing ELF in their classrooms and emphasizes the need for further research on the topic in different contexts and settings. Overall, the review contributes to the growing body of literature on ELF and its relevance to language teaching in Turkey.

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