

## ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA: INCORPORATING ELF TO EFL CLASSROOM

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#### **ABSTRACT**

A plethora of studies envisaging English as a lingua franca has been provided in the literature. Studies examining the relationship between English as a lingua franca and English as a foreign language has been emerged sparking excitement among language practitioners. This conceptual paper endeavors to approach English as a lingua franca and English as a foreign language. Employing traditional literature review, this study provides an overview, structures argument, and provides context for new research using thematic discussion. This narrative literature review taps further into the application of English as a lingua franca in English as a foreign language classroom. A thought-provoking issue regarding the position of English as a lingua franca versus English as a foreign language has ignited considerable debate among scholars. Reflecting upon studies presented in this paper, it is summarized that the existence of English as a lingua franca does not replace English as a foreign language. This study also describes the activities that language instructors might consider in integrating English as a lingua franca in English as a foreign language classroom. This study offers unique contribution by offering pedagogical innovation that bridges the concept of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Keywords: English as lingua franca; English as foreign language

## INTRODUCTION

Term English as lingua franca (ELF) attracts considerable attention from scholars, especially with the widespread use of English as a language bridging people worldwide. ELF is said to be a contact language. English as a vehicular language has been an element of human communication for ages (Formentelli, 2017). EFL emphasizes intelligibility. The term 'intelligibility' is frequently used by ELF scholars when discussing interlocutors' ability to be understood, despite the fact that there is no widely accepted definition or an agreed-upon way to measure it (Zighbor, 2018). Functions of language become pivotal in ELF. Because language instruction is increasingly done from a functional standpoint, with a focus on learners' communicative requirements, there has already been a shift toward intelligibility in English as a second language (ESL) and English as foreign language (EFL) instruction (Nagy, 2016).

One of the factors promoting the popularity of ELF is that non-native speakers outnumber native speakers (Mauranen, 2010). Thus, there is more chance for people to use English with non-native English speakers which open possibilities for misunderstanding due to different cultural backgrounds, pronunciation, as well as pragmatic knowledge. An important aspect of using English in the real world is the accommodation strategies to make our speech intelligible and comprehensible (Sifakis, 2019). Because ELF advocates value how language can be understandable over native speaker prestige, they do not consider deviance in languages to be errors but rather variations (Jenkins, 2006).

Mansfield and Poppi (2011) describe that lingua franca is primarily a tool for communication rather than a language variant. Lingua franca allows an intelligible form of language rather than a rigid standardized form of language. According to Fiedler (2010), non-native speakers are not regarded as second-rate native speakers since they speak their own type of 'interlanguage'. They are regarded as competent speakers with equal rights who use the language to meet their communication requirements. They can be confident members of their non-native English-speaking community (Fiedler, 2010). ELF is no longer regarded as a tainted variant of Standard English (Formentelli, 2017).

Usually, the dominance of English in key areas of social contact results in the adoption of Anglo-American ways of thinking, talking, and even living (Alexander 2006). It seems that the use of language means the adoption of culture and way of thinking. Yet, it is in contrast with ELF which aims at intercultural communication and aiming for the conservation of distinct language cultures by transferring some of their original language pragmatic rules to the lingua franca English (Kirkpatrick 2006). ELF allows the use of English while respecting the culture of non-native speakers of English.

The study of ELF has sparked a debate about if native-speaker Standard English should always be used in English education or whether the pedagogical implications of ELF should be valued (Si, 2019), and whether ELF should be added to the curriculum or replaced by EFL (Nagy, 2016). The truth is, that EFL students often study English to efficiently converse with native speakers (Jenkins, 2014) or to be a part of native speakers' culture and traditions. Non-native speakers, on the other hand, must be comprehensible to other non-native speakers, as the great majority will never converse with a native English speaker (Aydoğan, 2017). This phenomenon underlines the importance of introducing students to the use of ELF.

EFL users will be ELF users. When EFL learners move outside of the classroom, they automatically become ELF users (Siquera, 2020). Thus, students should be prepared to mingle and interact with speakers from different cultures. The characteristics of ELF such as accommodation and identity formation should all be given special consideration (Mansfield & Poppi, 2011). Teachers should be willing to tolerate deviant language forms, focus on diverse cultures, and acknowledge that their students are more likely to interact with non-native speakers than native speakers (Patee, 2020). Language teachers must be aware of the demands and requirements of today's education and modify their teaching methods and content appropriate to prepare students encountering emerging interactions in an international setting with cultural and language peculiarities (Aydoğan, 2017).

This paper forwards reasonable arguments from previous studies on the integration of ELF in EFL classrooms. This study notes some applications of ELF in EFL classrooms experienced by scholars worldwide. It is expected that ELF and EFL are not seen as a rival, rather, they are pivotal for their respective needs This study is guided by a research question: How can principles of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) be effectively incorporated into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom practices?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

## English as Lingua Franca (ELF)

Lingua franca is a language used to communicate between people who do not speak the same first language (Seidelhofer, 2005). According to Collins dictionary online, a lingua franca is a language or method of communication used by people who do not speak each other's native language. It is a common language used as a regular means of communication between different linguistic groups in a multilingual speech community regarding scientific, technological, and academic information (Ariza & Navarro, 2006). To make it simple, ELF is a pre-existing language used as a common language by speakers of various original languages.

English language to be declared as lingua franca has not occurred in a fortnight, or by sheer accident. There are historical, geographical, political, economic, and socio-cultural reasons underlying this language being a lingua franca (Balboni et al., 2015). Crystal (1997) in Balboni et al. (2015) describes the stages of how English becomes lingua franca. It all started when the British Empire spread English to its colonies all over the world. Since then, English has served as an official or working language in the vast majority of international political organizations. Technologies developed during the Industrial Revolution were written in English. As a result, anyone who wishes to use it must be fluent in English. It was supported by London and New York, which became the world's economic capitals in the twentieth century. The media industry, international travel and safety policies, education policies, communication services, and the internet all have an impact on English's chances of becoming a global lingua franca.

Nowadays, English is widely used in important areas of social interaction, and people adopt the thinking, speaking, and even living styles of Anglo-Americans (Alexander, 2006). It is in contrast with ELF which allows intercultural communication (Kirkpatrick, 2006). In ELF contexts, the most important aspects are efficacy and successful communication, the focus is on content rather than on form. With the raising of ELF, non-native speakers are no longer regarded as failed native speakers because they speak their own 'interlanguage,' but rather as competent speakers with equal rights who utilize the language to satisfy their communicative requirements (Fiedler, 2010).

Balboni et al. (2015) specifies the notions of ELF. It is based on all participants' mutual support and collaboration; the speakers tend to gloss over difficulties and adopt a "let-it-pass" attitude. Different speakers will unconsciously bend the language they use to express their identity, while always concentrating their conscious efforts on communicating effectively. The English language is no longer associated with Anglo-American culture, and most speakers have no problem associating their own cultural identities with a language that is not their first language.

Kachru (1985) developed a model of the various usage of English across the world. This model is made up of three concentric circles that he labels.: the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. First, the inner circle is made up of countries that are considered the "traditional bases" of English, such as the U.S.A, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, the U.K., and anglophone Canada, classed as a 'first' language and 'norm-providing' -There are norms of the English language produced. Second, the outer circle of countries where due to historical circumstances, English is not spoken natively but is nonetheless utilized for communication as an official "second" language or as the nation's official language for business and trade such as nonanglophone South Africa, Malaysia, Nigeria, India, the Phillippines, Pakistan, Canada, and Kenya. They are 'norm-developing' developing and reproducing norms in the outer circle. The last one is the expanding circle, which includes countries that have no historical or political ties to English but regard it as a foreign language or lingua franca such as Indonesia, Egypt, Japan, most of Europe, and Russia. They are 'norm-dependent' that rely on the norms established by the inner circle's native speakers

Some scholars seem to have a welcoming attitude, seeing English as a global lingua franca that could serve cultural diversity while others show deep concern for a possible new form of colonialism through the English language (Balboni et al., 2015). However, as it turns out today, lingua franca has proven to be useful in gathering people from all over the world for communication. Even children can communicate across borders while respecting different cultures and enjoying technological advancements. ELF makes it possible to happen. Because of its widespread use as a lingua franca in a variety of social and professional contexts (Widdowson, 2013), including those that children use to communicate on social media. As research shows, despite their age,

children nowadays use English to interact with people all over the world such as on social networks (European Commission, 2011).

## English as Lingua Franca (ELF) Vs. English as Foreign Language (EFL)

A frequent topic of discussion in the ELF debate is the distinction between ELF and EFL learners (Formentelli, 2017). Nowadays, English is mostly used as a foreign language rather than a shared language (Sifakis, 2019). Many Indonesian students are alienated from the term ELF. As one of the countries involved in the expanding circle, Indonesian students are more familiar with the term EFL. Little did they realize that they are part of ELF when they use English speaking to people worldwide, especially through the more globalized use of social media.

Indonesian people use EFL. EFL is more rigid than ELF. In the context of EFL, Speakers are required to adhere to and attain native speaker standards; no first language intrusion is tolerated in either pronunciation or generally written works (Aydoğan, 2017). Mutual understanding, access to other cultures, and self-expression, which are emphasized in ELF, are largely ignored in ELT in the EFL context (Sifakis, 2019). According to research, ELTs prioritize areas that are now considered much less important, such as native-like accuracy and native-speaker culture (Seidlhofer, 2018). Divergences from native norms are sanctioned as errors that must be corrected in formal EFL classrooms, and code-switching and code-mixing are viewed as solutions for addressing language weaknesses, such as those at the lexical or syntactic levels (Formentelli, 2017). There seems an obsession to have native-like pronunciation and lexicogrammar among EFL learners. Learners who were highly motivated to achieve native-speaker competence (Timmis. 2002). Recent research appears to show that participants in ELF exchanges largely follow the grammatical norms of English native variants (Formentelli, 2017).

On the contrary, EFL users emphasize intelligibility during communication. Sometimes they violate the standard rules of English the maintain the conversation. Jenkins (2000) specifies the characteristics of ELF in terms of phonology, phonetics, and lexicogrammar. In terms of lexicogrammar, the use of ELF generally omits the 's' in the present tense for the 3rd singular person. It also ignores formal rules of the use of the relative clause, pronouns, definite and indefinite articles, prepositions, tag questions, and so on. In phonology, to ensure intelligibility, they use the accommodation, where to achieve mutual understanding, speakers must sometimes adjust their pronunciation. The omission of  $\theta$  and  $\delta$  is also very common due to the difficulties in pronouncing them. Jenkins mentions speakers' efforts for communication to remain understandable such as distinguishing vowel length, appropriately having nuclear stress within a sentence, adjusting the use of language according to the situation, and paraphrasing or reformulating the sentence. Hence, efforts to have conversations continued are salient among ELF users.

# Involving English as Lingua Franca in teaching English as a Foreign Language

Kordia (2021) highlights that the content of EFL teaching should be enriched to address the multilingual and multicultural world. Language instructors are expected to use a variety of sources to balance the class rather than being a judge of the English used during language production and thus discouraging the students' self-esteem (Situmorang et al., 2021). Bringing sources to the classroom is related to the use of technology in teaching. Er and Bayyurt (2021) mentions blended learning as an effective way of raising ELF awareness of the participants that use mobile technology. Lingua franca core elements are regularly observed in both face-to-face and online communication (Nagy, 2016). It is suggested that a specially designed website or social media such as Facebook, Twitter, or other online programs be used

to develop speaking assignments that will allow students to interact with and use English from outside sources (Fidyati & Rizki, 2017).

The teaching and learning of EFL adhere to the standardized rule of English following the inner circle of English. However, native-speaker-like performance may be considered unrealistic and unattainable for non-native learners who need the language for different reasons than native speakers (Aydoğan, 2017). Teachers should think about more than only the short-term goals of their courses (the norm-based EFL inner circle standards of language learning), but also long-term ones, which should represent reality beyond the institutional context and actual usage or performance of English in a range of situations (Mansfield & Poppi, 2011). Kachru (1982) advocates language instructors to use ELF in syllabus such as variety exposure, attitudinal neutrality, sociolinguistic profile, contrastive pragmatics, range of uses, and multidimensionality of functions.

Lopriore (2021) suggests task-based learning (TBL) as one of the most appropriate approaches to be used in ELF teaching. TBL focuses on learners' needs and on making learners interact through authentic tasks in the target language. Language teachers should develop EFL learners' target language communicative competence by incorporating out-of-classroom ELF tasks into their courses (Irgin, 2020). Task-based learning may provide a consistent methodological foundation for fostering a realistic communication environment in the classroom, helping students to grow as ELF communicators (Kordia, 2020). The emphasis on task-based learning has changed away from learning the structural features of English and toward 'learning-through-communication (Ellis, 2017). Teachers may build a good classroom environment by allowing students to bring their interests to play in accomplishing the work while immersed in ELF while using task-based learning (Finn, 2014).

Being cognizant of the importance of ELF for international communication, EFL classrooms should not ignore the essential role of the burgeoning cultural diversity of people around the globe. The intricacy and fluidity of culture in intercultural communication using English are highlighted by ELF research (Baker, 2015). Communication skills reveal themselves in one's capacity to conduct proper behavior, whereas intercultural competence reflects one's ability to demonstrate cultural norms and customs within actual communication scenarios (Al-alami, 2019). Understanding that the need for cultural knowledge is ever-growing in the ELF context; the ability to place self in other shoes is crucial. Different cultures present different pragmatics. It later will relate to politeness strategies that one should behave according to the norms and context. Intelligence alone does not guarantee a learner's success in the future. Their personality, which is reflected in their communication, also contributes to their journey to success. Even the context of academic publication rather highlights the importance of promoting acceptance and intelligibility apart from simple compliance to established linguistic conventions (Clouet, 2017). Thus, the importance of intercultural communication is not limited to informal communication. However, in ELF communication, often, the target culture does not exist (Chen, 2022). This urges instructors to be concerned with ELF awareness and intercultural knowledge by providing authentic discussion, videos, and experience in the ELF context. Bringing students into authentic experience in the classroom is expected to provide students with a better understanding and help them be prepared to mingle in international communication.

## Tips for Practitioners

Before conducting activities in classroom, it is crucial for teacher to ensure that students possess ELF awareness. ELF awareness is suggested by a scholar in the teaching of ELF. According to Sifakis (2019), ELF awareness encompasses three interrelated components of awareness of language and language use, awareness of ELF discourse, awareness of the instructional

practice, awareness of all parameters related to classroom teaching, and awareness of learning learners themselves. Adopting an ELF-aware perspective provides EFL learners with a double benefit in terms of enriching linguistic perspective to face real communication with a variety of speakers from various cultural backgrounds, which broadens the learners' minds from a cultural standpoint (Cuevas, 2019). Localizing course content and adopting an ELF-aware viewpoint should be the first steps in an ELF-aware approach to materials in an international context, engaging native and non-native speakers in a variety of communication circumstances utilizing a variety of language forms and functions within a variety of cultural practices (Guerra et al., 2020).

In terms of the application of ELF in EFL classrooms. According to Mansfield and Poppi (2011), teaching should be directed to increasing teachers' and students' awareness of the existence of Englishes other than the standard learned at school. A study conducted by Nagy (2016) describes how ELF can be applied in EFL classrooms. Teachers should emphasize segmental elements such as consonant and vowel length distinction, as well as suprasegmental elements such as nuclear stress and intonation while teaching; the emphasis should be shifted to non-linguistic forms that affect mutual understanding rather than pronunciation and morpho-syntactic elements. The teacher must consider interactive activities such as role-play, small-group discussions, listening to and watching everyday conversations in English, students interviewing each other, and engaging learners with online communication tools for improving students' communication skills. Because ELF is so important for pronunciation, English learners should not be forced to create correct pronunciation but rather be allowed to have their own accent (Nagy, 2016). They can learn a variety of accents such as British, Singaporean, American, and Australian) in the listening comprehension section (Mansfield & Poppi, 2011). Language instructors are suggested to assist their students to pay attention to linguistic skills for comprehending various types of accents ultimately opening the way for a wider awareness of the existence of nonnative English speakers all around the world who communicate in English (Aydoğan, 2017).

In addition, the media language in general provides a vast amount of information for improving awareness; newspapers, in particular, give several written text kinds worthy of study (Mansfield & Poppi, 2011). Mansfield and Poppi (2011) further continue that given the importance of identity in media texts, particularly newspapers, teachers should constantly encourage students to identify the sociolinguistic aspects that are distinctive to news writings, i.e. linguistic traits that reflect notions such as identification, relevance, and closeness. For example, local newspapers can establish a local identity by noticing similar newsworthy characteristics of identity and relevance in the readers. Sperti (2021) suggests the use of communication strategies in ELF, which may be derived for the development of oral skills, especially in view of the current use of ELF in cross-cultural interactions.

## **CONCLUSION**

Bringing English as a lingua franca in the classroom does not replace English as a foreign language. ELF should be considered to be involved in English as a foreign language since real-life interactions are much more complicated and context-dependent. Many users of EFL might not have a chance to talk to native speakers in the future, rather, they have a bigger chance to use English with non-native English users with different cultures and accents. The rigid pattern of standardized English taught in EFL classrooms might be insufficient for students to communicate with people from different countries without the knowledge of other cultures and the ability to accommodate and maintain a conversation, especially with non-native English speakers. Instructors are required to equip students with the ability for intercultural communication. Studies suggest that authentic experience to be

given to students for a better internalization of learning. Thus, incorporating ELF into EFL is a first step towards a more inclusive and globally relevant approach to English language teaching. Future research may consider evaluating the effectiveness of ELF-aware teaching strategies in various contexts of education and intercultural communication.

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