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STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN A MULTILINGUAL COMMUNITY

Research article

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Abstract

This study investigated the perceptions of English Language Teaching (ELT) department students (student teachers) at a university in Northern Cyprus on the use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in a multilingual community. ELF-based teaching pedagogy and accommodation skills in ELF community have been well-recognized and well-documented in the literature; however, research on students' awareness and perceptions of ELF use in the multilingual setting is limited. The data were obtained from students' (n=32) self-reports on the questionnaire and their (n=7) responses to the semi-structured interview questions. The study revealed that ELT students from different linguistic backgrounds were highly aware of the communicative value of ELF and they showed favor towards 'nation-bound' English rather than a 'standard' one. The findings support the view that ELF as a variety of English might be legitimized in order for NNSs to preserve their national identities. The implications of this study are also discussed.

Keywords: English as a Lingua Franca, student teachers' perceptions, ELT, learners' awareness, language learning.

1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, the use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), defined as "a contact language among speakers from different lingua-cultural backgrounds" (Sung 2016, p. 301), has been the center of interest and a highly productive research area in the field of applied linguistics (Pitzl & Ruth Osimk-Teasdale, 2016). The global spread of English and the emergence of its different varieties all over the world have contributed to the popularity of ELF research. It has been proposed that English serves as an operational language to aid nonnative speakers (NNS) with different first languages (L1) in communicating with each other (Jenkins, 2011; Seidlhofer, 2011; Wysocka, 2013). The majority of these speakers, according to Kachru's (1985) three-circle model of World Englishes, are from the "Outer Circle" countries where English was postulated because of colonialism, and from "Expanding Circle" countries where English was positioned as a foreign language. For the past decade, much debate has been devoted to communication strategies leading to mutual cooperation and strong orientation towards securing mutual understanding in linguacultural communities (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011).

Kaypak and Ortaçtepe (2013) investigated three major influential factors in Turkish-speaking English learners' beliefs about ELF such as self-efficacy, learner autonomy, and English use for real-life purposes. Besides what affects ELF communication, much research effort in ELF has been devoted to its major characteristics and implications in the practice of English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. A number of scholars support the necessity and importance of incorporating ELF into ELT curriculum (Goddard, Henry, Monder, & Lacken, 2013; Luo, 2018; Mairi, 2016; Jenkins, 2011; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2013; Sung, 2015; Wysocka, 2013). However, there seems to be no consensus on the use of ELF in school environments. Jenkins (2011), for instance, claims that "Universities represent settings par excellence of English as a (n academic) lingua franca" (p.927), while Mairi (2016) conceives credence is given to the superiority of 'standard' English because of the irreconcilable choice between focus on communicative functions or language forms. Seidlhofer and Berns (2009) claim that no matter how successfully it is used for communicative purposes, ELF use would be counted as a failure as long as it is not confirmed by standard norms. Consequently, "ELT approaches and learners' beliefs toward learning 'standard' English are still affected by a native-language paradigm" (Luo, 2018, p.778).

Many research studies have focused on learners' attitudes towards and perceptions of the use of ELF in language learning classroom settings (Kaypak & Ortaçtepe, 2013; Mairi, 2016; Liu & Fang, 2017; Rivers, 2011; and Turnbull, 2018). What emerges from this research is not consistent or conclusive. While some studies positively evaluated students' perceptions of ELF use (Mairi, 2016), others labeled ELF use non-essential for advanced learners (Turnbul, 2018), or found fewer positive attitudes towards ELF use and showed a continued reliance upon the native-English speaker model regardless of whether ELF use is in agreement or not (Rivers, 2011).

ELF use by an increasing number of NNSs in multicultural communities, the investigation of ELF-based pedagogy, and of accommodation skills in the ELF community have been explored in the last decade (Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2015; Sung, 2015). In a pilot study on implementing a Global Englishes component in a university English course, Sung (2015) found some signs of positive outcomes in raising students' awareness of English varieties and in preparing them to understand these varieties in the ELF community. Addressing the importance of ELF-aware teachers in the implementation of ELF pedagogy, Sifakis and Bayyurt (2015) suggest that non-native teachers operating in the Expanding circle contexts would readily endorse the integration of ELF in their classroom as long as they are aware of the validity and function of their own ELF varieties.

It is clear from the reviewed literature that much of research effort has been put into the investigation of ELF in terms of attitudes taken towards ELF use and its possible implications to be incorporated into ELT. However, almost all of the relevant studies have been conducted from the regional perspective. That is to say, they were carried out in the local context where nonnative English users share the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Research on the perceptions of nonnative English speakers from different lingua-cultural backgrounds on ELF use in their multilingual community has received less attention. As Jenkins et al. (2011) suggest, no matter how effectively an ELF approach including accommodation skills is developed, it would be fruitless without knowledge about the users' perceptions of ELF. Therefore, it would be worth investigating nonnative English-speaking students' perceptions on the use of ELF as the findings would help to increase our understanding of the pluralistic nature of English today and to find a common ground for mutual intelligibility.

The present study, therefore, aims to shed light on the status of ELF in a multilingual community from the perspectives of English language learners with different L1s. In an

attempt to achieve its purpose, the study is primarily concerned with the ELF awareness of the learners majoring in the field of ELT. It explores the extent to which students are aware of ELF communication, and their overall perceptions of ELF use in their academic and social settings in order to determine how exactly ELF is perceived in a multilingual context. Alongside of its context, strength of the present study is that it uses a mixed-method research design, which is rarer in the relevant literature. This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent are EFL learners with different L1s aware of English use as a Lingua Franca in their academic and social settings?
2. What are the perceptions of EFL learners on ELF use?
3. What perspectives do EFL learners have in regard to practicing ELF rather than ‘standard’ English?

2. Method

2.1 Research context and participants

The present study was conducted in the ELT Department of an English-medium university in Northern Cyprus. The students in the Department are mostly international and come from the Middle East and/or Eastern European countries with different mother tongues. In this context English is academically and socially used as a major communication tool.

2.2 Research design

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used to explore learners’ profiles and their awareness of using English as ELF by probing into their thoughts, beliefs, and overall perceptions regarding their ELF use in their academic and social settings. The strength of the mixed method is that “the uses of both methods provide a better understanding of the research problem and question than either method by itself” (Creswell, 2012, p. 535). In this regard, the present study was in the form of explanatory sequential design for the purpose of, firstly, providing a general picture of the research interest through the statistical results of quantitative data, and then extending and explaining the general picture from the participants’ viewpoints through qualitative data analysis.

2.3 Participants

The participants in the present study are international students at the ELT Department (student teachers) of a university in Northern Cyprus. Purposeful sampling was employed to choose the participants. Particularly those who were non-native speakers of English from different linguistic backgrounds were involved in the present study. The target population was 50. As the whole population was not too large, it was targeted as the sample of this study. Thirty-two respondents out of 50 completed and returned the questionnaire. In other words, 64% of the target population volunteered to participate in the study and thus formed the sample. The following table shows the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1. Numbers of females and males by age and year

Year	Age	Males	Females
2	19-20	8	6
3	20-21	6	5
4	21-22	4	3
Total		18	14

Out of the volunteering participants, seven who came from the linguacultural backgrounds were interviewed and labeled as S1, S2 ... in order to keep their identities confidential. The fourth-year students were selected for the interview since they had greater multicultural and multilingual exposure and because, in terms of language proficiency, they were thought to be better able to more precisely explain their thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions. The countries where the interviewees came from and the mother tongues, they spoke are the following: (S1) Egypt-Arabic, (S2) Kazakhstan-Kazakh, (S3) West Africa-Serer, (S4) Israel-Hebrew, (S5) Bosnia and Herzegovina-Bosnian, (S6) Turkey-Turkish, and (S7) India-Tamil. The following table presents the cultural and L1 backgrounds of the participants.

Table 2. Number of participants by country and mother tongue

Country	L1	Number of participants
Bosnia	Bosnian	1
Egypt	Arabic	4
England	English	1
Gambia	Serer	2
India	Hindi/Tamil	1
Israel	Hebrew	2
Kazakhstan	Kazakh	2
Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyz	1
Kuwait	Arabic	2
Lebanon	Arabic	1
Somalia	Somali	2
Turkey	Turkish	6
North Cyprus	Turkish	5
USA	English	1
Total		32

2.4 Data collection instruments

The research instruments employed in the study include a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) developed and used by Groom (2012), and a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix 2). The questionnaire was administered through the online software called "Survey Monkey" for the purpose of providing the participant with comfort in responding to the items, particularly to the audio recordings. After having signed the informed consent form, the participants were sent the link for the survey through email in order to fill out the questionnaire, which was adopted from Groom (2012) with the permission of the author. The interview protocol, which included six questions corresponding to the survey items, was designed to gather the participants' elaboration on their self-reports in the questionnaire. Before the interview, the interviewees were asked to sign informed consent forms.

2.5 Data analysis

The collected data through the questionnaire was descriptively analyzed through the program implementing the survey. The numerical results (i.e., percentages) of both the students' profiles and their responses to the items were reported in order to display the participants' awareness of ELF use. The participants were interviewed individually and asked open-ended questions which directly address the students' perceptions on their ELF use in their multilingual academic and social communities. The interview sessions were conducted out of class hours, and with permission they were recorded to be transcribed for analysis later. For the analysis of qualitative data, an inductive approach was taken following the procedure outlined below. The transcribed students' responses were first analyzed in depth by means of a coding procedure, which involved a careful scrutiny of the data in a

repetitive and comparative manner for themes to acquire a set of focused codes. These acquired codes were then used in the analytical conceptualization and segmentation of the qualitative data, which eventually led to the formation of categories (Charmaz, 1996). Finally, the findings were interpreted and explained in reference to the research focus.

3. Results

3.1 EFL learners' awareness of ELF use

As shown in Figure 1, almost all participants reported using mostly English in their social and academic settings. However, the findings showed that English is used the least in their home.

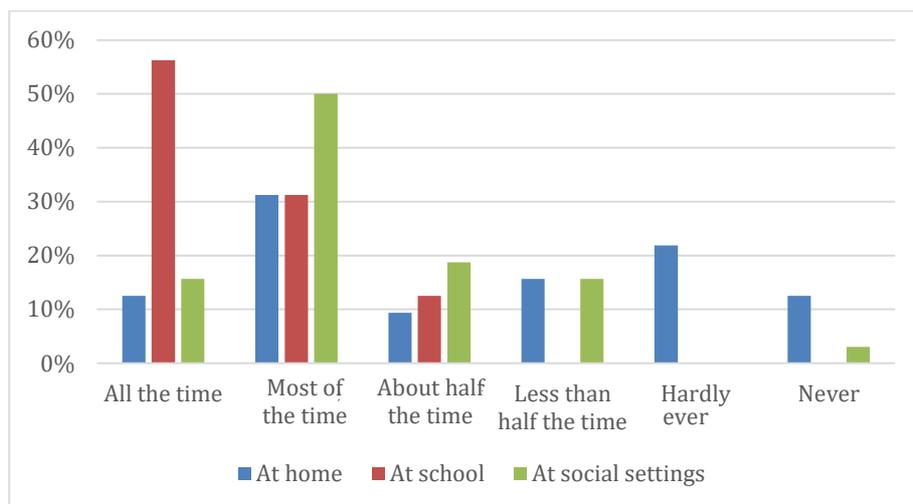


Figure 1. Frequency of English use in different contexts

These statistical results can be confirmed by the reasons of participants for studying English as revealed from their responses to the first interview question. Of seven participants, those coming from Africa, Bosnia, Turkey, and India reported that they loved learning languages (S7), and they most favored learning English (S6) as it is globally used (S3), so they perceived themselves as good users of English (S5). When they were asked to further elaborate on their reasons, most of the participants put great emphasis on the social use of English to communicate with others from all around the world. This is evident in such expressions as “it is very important for my social life since most of my friends are from different countries” (S2), and “when you speak English, you can communicate easily with people from anywhere” (S7). Other reasons found in the participants’ responses were as follows: to help the others learn English (S1), to develop their profession (S2), to learn how to teach English effectively (S4). These expressions reflect the importance of English for the participants’ professional lives.

Those reasons for learning and using English revealed in the participants’ self-reports may also contribute to the interpretations of how much they are aware of nativism. In other words, it might be interpreted to mean that EFL learners learn and use English with a perception of the difference between native and non-native English. The participants’ awareness of this distinction was questioned through their reports on the survey items Q10 and Q11, which required identifying speakers as native or non-native after listening to their recorded narratives. According to the statistical results, 73.50% of the participants correctly identified Speaker A as a native speaker, while 23.50% were not sure. Only one of them was inaccurate. The results are presented in Figure 2 below.

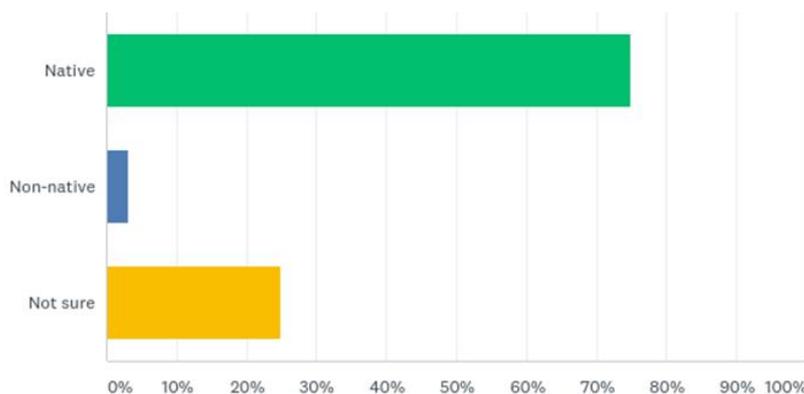


Figure 2. Awareness of native English

Regarding Speaker B, 70.97% correctly identified him as non-native speaker, however, 22.58% were not sure, and 6.45% identified him incorrectly. The above reports can be seen in the following Figure 3.

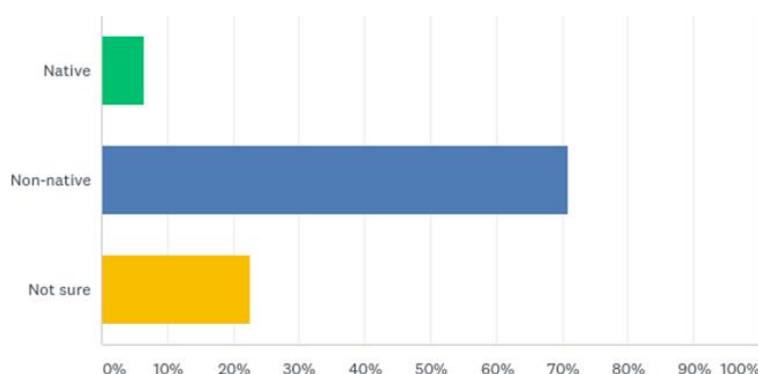


Figure 3. Awareness of nonnative English

Participants' reasons for their choice of native/nonnative English reported in response to the survey item Q12 show the specific language features they used to make a distinction between two English versions. From the 22 responses in total, three major language features that participants focused on were identified: (a) pronunciation (also referred to as 'accent' or 'manner/way of speaking'), (b) fluency, and (c) vocabulary. Among these features, accent was commonly focused on and well-defined as seen in one of the Respondents' (R) (India) remarks:

R (8): "Speaker A has the strong British accent, from England, Speaker B sounded like an Iranian or Arab, but very proficient".

Likewise, the pronunciation feature of English used by the speakers took participants' attention, largely leading them to discriminate between native and non-native English. It was precisely described by R (6) (Egypt) as below:

R (6): "The 'r' sounds in Speaker A speech give away that he is English, and some mispronunciations in Speaker B's speech give away that he is non-native".

The manner of speaking was, interestingly, reported as one of the ways of making a distinction between the speakers by R (27) (Turkey), R (18) (Somali), and R (20) (India). Among those self-reports, the most outstanding comment indicating awareness of nativism was the following:

R (18): “Speaker A sounded British while Speaker B spoke very differently and I couldn’t tell if he is a native speaker by the way he speaks”

Finally, regarding fluency and vocabulary aspects of English, participants’ reports were quite descriptive in terms of identifying English as native or non-native as can be seen in the words of the respondents below:

R (25) (Kyrgyzstan): “Speaker A is native because of the fluent speech; Speaker B is non-native because he does stop/pause sounds like ‘hmm’, ‘ahhh’.”

R (10) (Egypt): “The non-native speaker (Speaker B) struggled with finding words”.

These findings obtained from the quantitative data analysis seem to be confirmed with the participants’ responses to the interview question addressing the communication problems they face in interacting with the different L1s. Even though four of seven interviewees reported that they did not have any difficulty in understanding those who have different mother tongues than theirs, two (S5 and S7) stated that they have some communication problems particularly with those coming from Turkey and Nigeria. S5 (Bosnia) responded conspicuously immediately to the question: *“Ahh!!! Turkish ..., they have some kind of accent that I cannot understand at all.”* She continued by giving a reason: *“Turkish people don’t speak English much, so I cannot be exposed to their English accents to get familiar with”*. In a similar vein, S7 (Indian) complained about not being able to interact with Turkish speakers as *“they are not good at talking about intellectual things, but just only on the surface like ‘hi’, ‘how are you?’”*. The participants from different L1s perceive Turkish speakers’ limited use of English as a source of difficulty in understanding their accent. These expressions suggest that in order to understand those with different L1 backgrounds, non-native English speakers are looking for certain language features including pronunciation/accent, vocabulary, and enough exposure to the language spoken. These specified features are also consistent with the language features revealed from participants’ reports on the survey.

3.2 EFL learners’ perceptions of ELF use

What perceptions the participants have in regard to ELF use was revealed from their preferences for speaking like a native or a nonnative speaker of English. From the results indicating that 40.63% of the participants expressed no preference for speaking like either Speaker A (NS) or Speaker B (NNS), it can be inferred that they are most likely aware of their ELF use that reflects their own way of using English and that they find both options acceptable. Nevertheless, 37.50% showed a preference for Speaker A, and 21.88% preferred speaking like Speaker B (Figure 4).

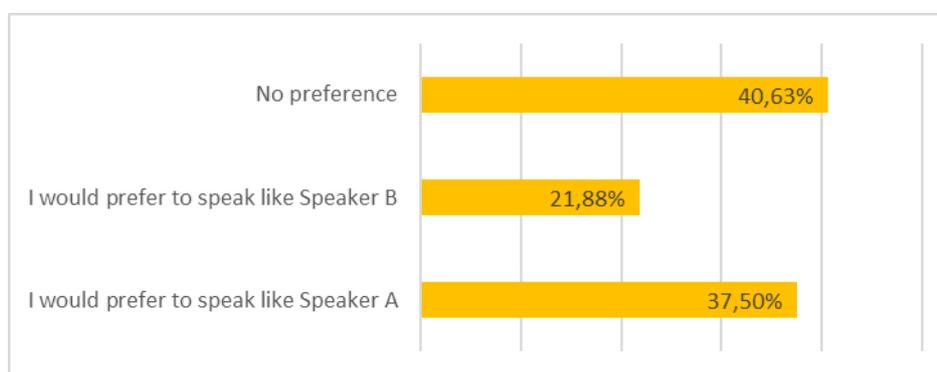


Figure 4. Participants’ preferences to speak like NS or NNS (Speaker A: Native speaker; Speaker B: Non-native speaker).

The most frequent word used in the responses of participants preferring to speak like NS was found to be ‘clarity’. That is, they chose Speaker A since his speech is clearer and therefore easier to understand. Participants attached importance to similar language features including accent and fluent speech. However, interestingly and surprisingly, more than half of the participants found both Speaker A’s and Speaker B’s speech equally easy to understand, and only two reported that Speaker A was easier to understand (Figure 5).

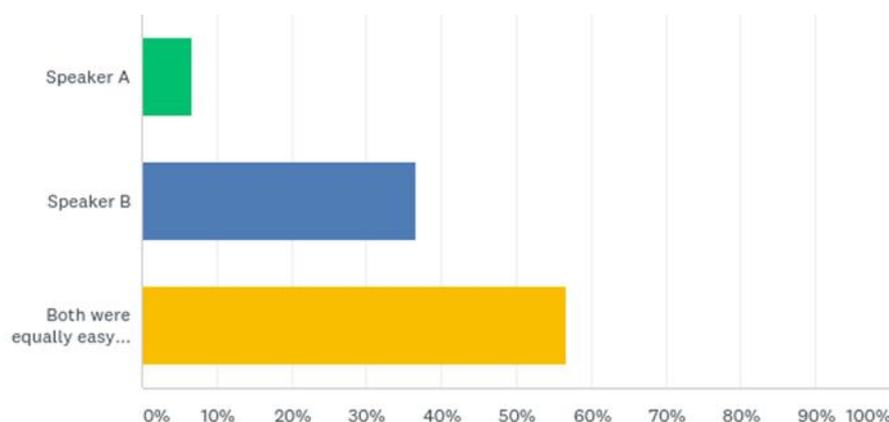


Figure 5. Comprehensibility of NS and NNS

In both cases presented above, the results suggest that the participants might be aware of Standard English, but they seem to prioritize intelligibility. In other words, they find the language spoken acceptable as long as it is comprehensible. This interpretation can be verified through the perceptions of participants on the issues of whether the main focus of their English use is on successful communication or native-like speaking, and whether British and American English are the only standard varieties of English. These issues were investigated through interview questions 4 and 5, respectively. Considering the first issue, four interviewees reported that they focused on successful communication more while the others considered both successful communication and native-like speaking important, as presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Students’ perspectives on ‘standard’ English use

Successful communication	Successful communication and native-like speaking
<i>S1-Egypt: “English speakers are bilingual, not native, so it’s not necessary to have native-like speaking.”</i>	<i>S2-Kazakhstan: “I wanna speak like native, it’s important for successful communication.”</i>
<i>S4-Israel: “It’s very controversial topic what native English is. As long as your message is going through, it’s enough.”</i>	<i>S3-Africa: “I like everything in the full package. I don’t want to prioritize none of them.”</i>
<i>S5-Bosnia: “If I’m able to explain and deliver my message and you understand it, it’s very important. Otherwise, what’s the point of using English?”</i>	<i>S7-India: “If I have native-like speaking, I have a successful communication as well.”</i>
<i>S6 -Turkey: “I want to express what I think”</i>	

When it comes to the issue of standard variety of English, the responses of the participants are quite consistent with their awareness, perceptions and preferences presented so far. To the

interview question addressing “*what varieties of English are considered standard,*” all participants but one responded that they did not believe in Standard English. Rather they considered that each country in the world has its own English. One of the most remarkable responses came from S1 (Egypt) stating that “*English doesn’t have like a standard for pronunciation. American will not understand Indian, but Indians understand each other*”. Another response similar to the previous one points to the necessity and importance of ELF use as in the following: “*There are many Englishes. It depends on where you live, your location. No way that everyone speaks the same*” (S2). In the same way, S5 (Bosnia) provided quite an impressive response: “*I don’t even know what kind of English I speak, it’s like neutral maybe. Every country has their own version of English*” (S5). Finally, agreeing with the idea of Englishes, S4’s and S6’s responses listed a number of varieties of English: European, Canadian, New Zealand, Australian, Indian, Singaporean, and African. In sum, the common ground in the responses of participants was found to be the idea that “nations have their own Englishes”, which confirms the participants’ awareness of the well-established notion of ‘World Englishes’ (Kachru, 1992).

3.3 EFL learners’ perspectives on practicing ELF rather than “Standard” English

In line with their responses to the relevant survey items reflecting evidence of ELF awareness, participants appeared to attribute importance to the pedagogical practice (i.e. teaching of ELF at schools) of ELF. Nonetheless, the statistical results showing the participants’ perspectives towards teaching ELF rather than a native variety of English in schools are not as persuasive as those indicating their ELF awareness. Simply put, their awareness was not thoroughly reflected in their self-reports to the survey item stating that “*European English, rather than a native variety of English should be taught in schools*” (see the explanation of ‘European English’ in Appendix 1). While 31.25% of the participants agreed with the above statement (25.00% agreed; 6.25% strongly agreed), 28.13% disagreed (18.75% disagreed; 9.38% strongly disagreed). On the other hand, a considerable number of participants (40.63%) remained neutral on the notion of pedagogical practice of ELF. Likewise, the statistical results revealed the salient conflict between the participants’ awareness of and perspectives towards ELF use. While half of the participants (50.00%) disagreed (31.25% disagreed; 18.75% strongly disagreed) with the idea of learning different varieties of English instead of Standard English, only 21.88% agreed (18.75% agreed; 3.13% strongly agreed) with this idea. Almost thirty percent (28.13%) of the participants stayed neutral on this issue. Similarly, there is no consistency between the participants’ perceptions of World Englishes and their preferences for being identified as NNS of English. The majority of the participants (40.63%) disagreed (25% disagreed; 15.63% strongly disagreed) with the idea that “*I’d like to be identified as a speaker of European English*”. The percentage of participants who were for this idea was found as 25% (18.75% agreed; 6.25% strongly agreed). The number of participants who were neutral (34.38%) is almost the same as those who disagreed. The results discussed above are presented in Figure 6.

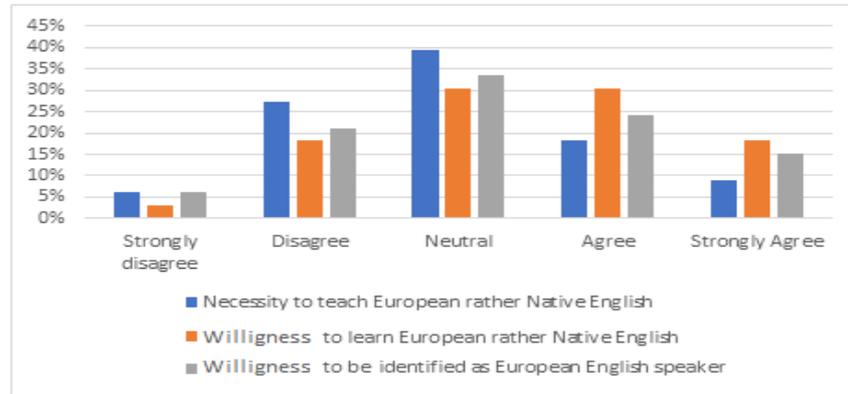


Figure 6. Perceptions on pedagogical practice of ELF

The participants' responses to interview question 6 were in rapport with the statistical results. The participants were asked about their opinion for the ways of improving their own English (i.e. nonnative English) better than the so-called standard. The common views focused on were: internalizing most accents heard (S1), being exposed to different varieties (S2), adhering to one's own English (S5). Besides, several suggestions were offered as regard with teaching world Englishes.

S3 (African): "Teachers should explain different varieties of English; otherwise students would be confused in the future."

S5 (Bosnian): Teachers should force students to speak and practice English.

S6 (Turkish): Teachers should make students aware of different varieties of English.

4. Discussion

The present study investigates English as a lingua franca from the perspective of ELT undergraduate students (student teachers) with different L1s. With its multilingual nature, it intended to provide a clearer picture of ELF as a common communication resource among nonnative English speakers from different parts of the world. Previous studies have reported the alleged superiority of Standard English over ELF use (Mairi, 2016; Sung, 2015), attempts to meet native English norms (Groom, 2012), and preference for standard English (Luo, 2018) by L2 users. It is evident from the findings that English has taken on the role of world language, but English widely used among non-native speakers of English (NNS) is, as Seidlhofer (2011) claimed, not 'standard' English but English as a lingua franca (ELF).

The participants' perceptions with regard to Standard English indicated that they are highly aware of native/non-native English, but expressed unwillingness to subscribe to 'a specific variety of English'. This is evident from such remarks as "no way everyone speaks the same" (S2), and "each country has their own version of English" (S5). The expansion of English-speaking communities seems to be promoting ELF as a vehicle of communication in the multilingual community. As the findings suggest, in a multilingual context NNSs may freely demonstrate features of their particular type of English influenced by their first language. The findings of the current study appear more promising in legitimizing the proposal of ELF as a variety of English for NNSs to achieve effective communication while also preserving their national identities. In this respect, they correspond to the positive outcomes of Sung's (2015) pilot study revealing the students' awareness of English varieties and their understanding of these varieties in the ELF community.

Furthermore, English varieties specified in participants' responses such as European, Canadian, New Zealand, Australian, Indian, Singapore, African can well be linked to the concept of "World Englishes" defined by Pitzl (2016) as "a particular context of language use in which speakers of different first languages use English as their main communicative medium of choice" (p. 294). This result is also consistent with the fact that "there are now many more ELF users than native English speakers worldwide" (Mairi, 2016, p. 413). Considering the language features specified in the study results, ELF users seemed to pay much attention to accent and fluency, which is compatible with the Groom's (2012) findings. However, in contrast with the study results revealing that "accent" was perceived as one of the determinant factors in identifying native or nonnative speakerness, Groom (2012) concluded that it is considered as the principal motivating factor in determining native speakerness.

The overall findings suggest that the participants have a positive attitude toward ELF use. The self-reports of the participants show their awareness of and preference for a nonnative variety of English over its standard use. Further confirmation comes from the participants' communicative purpose of English use and their intention of teaching English effectively to others all around the world. In this regard, the results of the present study are parallel to those of Mairi (2016) and Rivers (2011). That is, students' perceptions on and attitudes toward ELF use were positive, which might be referred to the high awareness of ELF. Nonetheless, Turnbull (2018) found that ELF use is non-essential for advanced learners; however, the study results showed the opposite. Both self-report on the survey and responses to the interview questions showed that participants emphasized the significance of ELF as a means to socially communicate with others from different lingua-cultural backgrounds.

Regarding practicing ELF rather than Standard English, participants' preferences were for successful communication rather than native-like speaking. The underlying consideration appears to be 'mutual understanding' as a major characteristic of ELF (Jenkins et al. 2011). Moreover, the importance of effective communication, bound to its context and purpose rather than language itself (Widdowson, 2015), makes more sense. The main concern for language users with different L1s is to deliver their messages across comprehensibly. It was well articulated by S1 stating: "We are bilingual, not native, so it's not necessary to have native-like speaking". For this reason, the goal of native-like English, as Jenkins (2011) suggests, "no longer holds true for the majority of language users around the globe, and an alternative view is needed to replace it" (p.931).

In contrast to Groom's (2012) study which found that ELF neither motivates nor meets the aspirations of L2 users in Europe, the present study displayed that participants were willing to use ELF for successful communication with speakers of different L1s. Yet, they showed interest in being identified as native English speaker rather than ELF speaker. This interest, however, does not correspond to the participants' culture-bound perspective in using English. In reference to this perspective, the status of English as a lingua franca justifiably requires having knowledge about different varieties of English around the world. Most importantly, there is evidence that pedagogical practice of ELF is worthwhile rather than sticking mainly to standard norms.

Even though the present study yielded important results such as the participants' heightened awareness of and positive attitudes toward ELF use, and a preference for ELF use rather than Standard English, it also revealed a dilemma regarding the pedagogical value of ELF. The participants appeared to be uncertain about the idea of incorporating ELF into the EFL curriculum since the statistical results showed that the participants are in favor of pedagogical practice of ELF on the one hand, but on the other hand, they do not seem to be

willing to learn different varieties of English. This is perhaps because of the fact that there is still an overemphasis on the standard norms of English in academic settings. ELF use may be perceived as a failure when it has not been confirmed by standard norms (Seidlhofer & Berns, 2009). This study showed the participants' preference for pedagogical practice of ELF, but expressed a desire to learn standard English. A similar dilemma was reported in Luo's (2018) study, concluding that participants would like to learn ELF, but they preferred standard English. This contradiction can be explained by the notion that "the transition of English status from standard to a lingua franca has not been so smooth due to strong attachments to the native norms, especially in the Expanding circle's ELF community" (Mairi, 2016, p. 412).

A major implication here is to adopt an inclusive approach to ELF in order to aid the abovementioned transition. For instance, language teacher education programs would certainly benefit from the inclusion of materials that demonstrate various examples of ELF use. Student teachers will be presented with a wide range of variations in terms of using English, which will help to raise their awareness of various Englishes. ELF-aware teacher education would enable pre-service teachers to reconsider their beliefs and practices regarding teaching as well as to develop a deeper understanding of varieties of English. Such awareness may impact their future teaching methodologies as well as pedagogical content, and in return, help to raise EFL/ESL learners' awareness of ELF. As the results of the current study indicated, communicative ability seems to be more important than conformity to native speaker norms, and thus, the acknowledgement of varieties of English used in today's globalized world is indispensable. Ultimately, at the policy-making level, the accommodation of the dynamic variability of ELF in the curriculum would project more pedagogically realistic and socioculturally relevant goals for ELT.

5. Conclusion

The present study highlights the significance of the existence of ELF as a common means of communication for speakers from different lingua-cultural backgrounds. The research findings showed that ELT students with different L1s were well aware of the pluralistic nature of English today. They were able to correctly identify English speakers as native and/or non-native. In keeping with their raised awareness, the study results also demonstrated that the participants were skillful ELF users who aimed at successful communication rather than native-like command. Furthermore, they seemed to treat English as a common resource for communication with one another in a multilingual community in order to achieve mutual intelligibility. According to the results of the present study, ELF was defined as a nation-bound variety of English and was favored over Standard English. However, the participants preferred neither to learn different varieties of English nor to be identified as a nonnative speaker of English. This uncertainty in the participants' perceptions may stem from the incomplete transition of English status from a foreign language into a lingua-franca. When it comes to the pedagogical practice of ELF, it seems that there is a need for English learners to be taught ELF in schools.

Overall, the study results indicated that learners should be provided with multiple varieties of English and relevant pedagogical models to teach them rather than imposing a single restricted model of Standard English. Therefore, a pluralistic view of second language teaching appears to be more sustainable and realistic in terms of the growth of ELF use. More importantly, this may result in clearing away the uncertainty in students' perceptions of and attitudes toward ELF practice in their social and academic lives. As a result, giving students a free choice of English use would most probably help them to develop an open-minded

approach towards the diversity of English and to contribute to the development of self-identity as a nonnative English speaker.

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7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

Background information

1. Where do you come from?
2. What is your native language?
3. Do you speak any other languages?
 Language 1: _____
 Language 2: _____
 Language 3: _____
 Language 4: _____

	All the time	Most of the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	Hardly ever	Never
4. How often do you speak English at home?						
5. How often do you speak English at work/school/university?						
6. How often do you speak English socially?						

You will now hear two speech samples from different speakers. The speakers are describing a video they have just seen. After the recordings, you will be asked to answer some questions about the way the people in the recordings speak. You do not need to remember anything about the content of the recordings.

Please listen to the following recording of Person A: (participants hear one of three NS narratives) Now listen to the following recording of Person B: (participants hear one of three NNS narratives)

Listening responses 7. Which speaker did you find it easier to understand?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Speaker A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Speaker B
<input type="checkbox"/>	Both were equally easy to understand.

8. Which speaker would you prefer to speak like?

<input type="checkbox"/>	I would prefer to speak like Speaker A
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would prefer to speak like Speaker B
<input type="checkbox"/>	No preference

9. If you would prefer to speak like a particular speaker, can you give any reasons for your choice?

	Native	Non-Native	Not sure
10. Do you think Speaker A is a native or nonnative speaker of English?			
11. Do you think Speaker B is a native or nonnative speaker of English?			

12. Can you identify any reasons for your decision that either speaker is a native or non-native speaker of English?

European English

In Europe, English is increasingly being used as a language of communication between people who are non-native speakers of English with different first languages. For example, when Spanish, French, German and Italian people speak to each other in English, they use pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar that is somewhat different to how native speakers might speak. Over time, they tend to use some of these non-native-like features again and again. We could call this emerging nonnative form of English “European English”. Native speakers of English may consider some of its features to be incorrect. However, people who speak European English generally understand each other very well.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
13. European English, rather than a native variety of English (British, American etc.), should be taught in schools in Europe.					
14. I would be happy to learn European English rather than a native variety of English (British, American etc.).					
15. I would like to be identified as a speaker of European English.					

16. Is there anything else you would like to say about the issues raised in this survey?

Thank you very much for your participation in this study 😊

7.2 Appendix 2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

1. What are your main reasons for studying English?
2. How much do you usually care about grammatical and phonological accuracy when you speak English?
3. Do you have any difficulty in understanding the English spoken with people whose first language is different from yours?
4. What aspects of using English do you focus on more; successful communication and/or native-like speaking?
5. What variety of English do you consider standard? Do you think that British and American English are the only standard varieties of English? If they are not, what other varieties of English might be?
6. In what ways might the practice of English be improved and better than the so-called standard?