## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# English Language Teachers' Perceptions of World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca

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## Abstract

English language has already become a world language while the world is changing and globalizing. It has been universally accepted in the academic field that English is now used as a lingua franca (ELF) in intercultural communication, and the lingua franca role of English has started to affect teacher education. Although there have been many of studies about ELF and World Englishes (WE), the perceptions of English language teachers require more investigation to describe the position of English in English Language Teaching (ELT) context. Therefore, this exploratory study aimed to investigate the perceptions of English language instructors who work at different state and foundation universities and English language teachers who work at different institutions at primary, secondary, high school and university level during 2019- 2020 spring semester in Turkey. For this purpose, their perceptions of ELF and ELF-related issues concerning cultural aspects, Standard English and World Englishes, as well as the native and non-native dichotomy were explored through a questionnaire. The results were interpreted to present several implications for language learners, teachers/instructors, material developers and curriculum designers.

#### Keywords

English as a lingua franca, Teachers' perceptions, World Englishes

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## Introduction

English language has already become a lingua franca in a globalized world. It has been universally accepted in the academic field that English is now used as a lingua franca which means the common language among speakers from different first language backgrounds. (Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2001; Walker, 2010). This environment differs from traditional English as a foreign language classrooms because of the fact that ELF refers to the English language spoken by interlocutors who do not share a first language (Tsou & Chen, 2014). In practice, the English being used in the ELF environment is not the same as the version of English (i.e., Standard

English) taught to non-native speakers around the world in EFL classrooms (Jenkins, 2011). In this vein, ELF can be understood as a global form of English as a mother language with a lot of variations (Seidlhofer, 2000). Since there are many learners in the world with different mother tongues, the established concepts of English Language Teaching (ELT) are changing to meet needs of learners and keep up with the time (Ceyhan-Bingöl & Özkan, 2019). Hence, the significant issues to be explored are the place, effects and implications of ELF in the field of ELT.

ELF is a concept which deals with topics in cultural studies (Seidlhofer, 2001; Bayyurt, 2006; Baker, 2011). According to McKay (2002), international cultures should be integrated into language classes to meet various needs of language learners. Canagarajah (2005) points out that culture is a common element, so it does not belong to a particular territory in a global world. In relation to that, Baker (2011) proposes the relationship between languages and cultures in the context of ELF can be seen as situated and emergent. Additionally, Baker (2009) claims cultural norms, practices and frames of ELF may be viewed as adaptive and context dependent. Therefore, ELF needs to include awareness of dynamic hybrid cultures by going beyond the traditional negotiated target language.

Another crucial issue in language teaching is Standard English or World Englishes. WE which is an umbrella term referring to all local varieties that arise from the diversity of use in specific local areas owing to linguistic and cultural differences (Jenkins, 2009). WE scholars' view that new varieties of 'Englishes' are emerging throughout the world with words, expressions, accents, sociolinguistic rules, and even grammatical rules (Berns et al., 2007; Jenkins, 2007; Kachru, 1992; Mesthrie, 2006; Modiano, 1999; Seidlhofer, 1999). Therefore, scholars claim that it wouldn't be appropriate to apply the native speaker English norms to ELT by being restricted to one single variety of the language (Wang, 2012).

The number of non-native speakers has become more than native speakers of English (Graddol, 1997), which has brought about a debate on the native and non-native speakers. Canagarajah (2005) asserts that 80% of English language teachers around the world are non-native speakers. Consequently, the field of ELT has changed the research area from native speaker to both native English speaking

teachers (NESTs) and non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2001).

The number of studies investigating ELF and WE has increased. In a study conducted by İnceçay and Akyel (2014), the perceptions of Turkish EFL teachers about ELF and the role of ELF on language teacher education were explored. Findings of the study revealed a great majority of the participating teachers are resistant to use ELF in their classrooms. In his study, Soruc (2015) investigated the beliefs of non-native English speakers on ELF and found out that the majority of the participants tended to use native-speaker norms. In another study conducted by Deniz, Özkan and Bayyurt (2016), pre-service English teachers' views of ELF related issues were explored and it was found that the majority of the pre-service English teachers refused to integrate ELF into their teaching because of difficulty in making space for the diversification of English in language classrooms. Ceyhan-Bingöl and Özkan (2019) also scrutinized EFL instructors' perceptions of ELF and ELF-related issues and their actual classroom practices. It was concluded that EFL instructors are familiar with ELF and ELF-related issues, and they deal with these issues in their classes. Furthermore, Aydın and Karakaş (2021) explored EFL teachers' beliefs and perceptions about ELF. The findings revealed that most teachers are not aware of ELF as a notion. It was proposed in the study that what lies behind their non-awareness of ELF may be their previous educational experiences, the lack of curriculur support from the Ministry of National Education and teachers' lack of contact with diverse speakers. Moreover, Topkaraoğlu and Dilman (2017) investigated what Turkish EFL teachers understand about ELF and how ELF-aware they are. They found out that ELF awareness of EFL teachers, ELF in syllabus design and reflections of teachers about language policy development were the main factors affecting how Turkish EFL teachers understand ELF in the context of ELT. In the study carried out by Yücedağ and Karakaş (2019), the perceptions of high school language division students towards ELF and it was discovered that language division students desired their teachers to attach much importance to both pronunciation and grammar.

When EFL learners in Turkey are taken into consideration, it can be seen that the real problem is not the different pronunciations and the different usages of the words but the different varieties of English that they are not aware of (Topkaraoğlu and Dilman, 2017). L2 learners are generally willing to speak like a native speaker but they neglect phonological, morphological, syntactic, pragmatic and sociocultural aspects of other Englishes (Jenkins, 1998). Also, if they are not familiar with the concepts of ELF and WEs, they may have difficulty in expanding their knowledge on the target language (Jenkins, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2013). In this sense, it is assumed that this study may may give an insight to foreign language teachers in exploring how teachers and instructors perceive ELF and ELF-related issues regarding cultural aspects in English language teaching, Standard English and World Englishes, the dichotomy of native and non-native speakers and offer implications for developing and integrating the concept of ELF in English language teaching.

## Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Before stating and commenting on the studies concerning the perceptions of EFL or WE, it is necessary to define what is meant by the terms 'English as a Lingua Franca' and 'World Englishes' as there are many interpretations of these terms in the literature. Jenkins (2009) refers to English being used by non-native speakers of English from the expanding circle by using ELF. Seidlhofer (2009), however, claims ELF communication is not based on only Expanding Circle countries, but it covers all three circles. Mauranen (2018) also metions that ELF is not a communication language based on a specific community, but it is used to communicate people from various parts of the world. To correspond to various uses of English, ELF needs to be considered in language teaching and learning approaches. ELF differs from EFL because ELF embraces non-native speakers and their various uses of English instead of native-norm based English (Ceyhan-Bingöl and Özkan, 2019).

WEs refer to the English spoken by native speakers by birth as much as by those who learn it in a classroom setting with severely limited use of English in everyday life (Saengboon, 2015). In this respect, WEs focus not only on linguistic features of those varieties of English but also on such issues as identity (Kumaravadivelu, 2012), mutual intelligibility (Nelson, 2011), and pedagogical options (Nelson & Kern, 2012).

To understand the pedagogical and social implications of WE, it is necessary to explore what teachers perceive about the ownership of English and there are some valuable studies which focus on perceptions of ELF or WE as well as attitudes towards ELF or WE. For example, with reference to language education, He (2015) explored and compared Chinese university students' and teachers' perceptions of China English and WE in the context of English. 984 university students and their teachers at four universities in China participated in the study. He found that the student participants were comparatively positive to China English whereas the teacher participants thought standardized English was preferable. The findings indicate that the features of China English should be incorporated into the native- speaker-based teaching model.

In relation to students' perceptions of WE, Saengboon (2015) tried to find out the perceptions of Thai university students towards WE. One hundred and ninety-eight students from three universities in Bangkok were administered a questionnaire inquiring about definitions of WEs, the Kachruvian concentric circles, the concepts of standard and ownership of English, Thai English and the role of native vs. non-native English speaking teachers. Findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were ambivalent about WE, despite the fact that they prioritized British and American English. Although Thai English was perceived as undesirable, they indicated they did not mind whether Thais may speak English with the Thai accent.

Within the context of WE in ELT, Sadeghpour and Sharifian (2017) investigated perceptions of English language teachers in Australia regarding the existence and legitimacy of WE. To collect data, 27 teachers of English language were interviewed. Qualitative analysis of the interview responses showed that while the majority of teachers acknowledge the existence of some new varieties, not many recognise the legitimacy of the Expanding Circle Englishes. The results indicate that teachers' perceptions of WE are affected more by their formal education than by exposure to WE.

For the same purpose, in a study carried out by Zhang and Du (2018) university students' and teachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards ELF in the Chinese context were explored. 168 non-English major students and 30 college

English teachers from a top university in Mainland China participated in the study. Two questionnaires were distributed to student and teacher participants and a semi-structured interview was implemented afterwards. It was found that neither the students nor the teachers has sufficient knowledge about ELF in spite of their awareness of the lingua franca function of English. Both the students and the teachers seemed to be attached to "Standard English" under the influence of "native speaker norm" in English teaching contents and methods. However, the students hold positive attitudes towards ELF and expressed their willingness to learn about it in class. Within the similar context, Yücedağ and Karakaş (2019) tried to find out the perceptions of high school language division students towards ELF via descriptive survey method and the gathered data showed that most students believed in the importance of teachers' teaching standard English pronunciation to students and language teachers should teach good grammar to their students.

In a similar vein, Eslami, Moody and Pashmforoosh (2019) designed six different activities to find out pre-service teachers' perceptions of WE. After preservice teachers completed them, the effectiveness of these activities was examined based on written reflections and pre- and post- intervention assessments. The data indicated that all activities were beneficial for raising participant's awareness, tolerance, and respect of WE. Results also show the importance of using experiential approaches for the promotion of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching.

There have also been various attempts in Turkish context with regard to perceptions of ELF or WE. Inceçay and Akyel (2014) explored the perceptions of Turkish EFL teachers about ELF, Turkish EFL teachers and teacher educators about the role of ELF on language teacher education. To collect data, questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were utilized. A hundred Turkish EFL teachers working at two universities in Istanbul responded to the questionnaire. Ten randomly selected EFL teachers and 10 teacher educators working in language teacher education departments of two universities were interviewed to elicit their views about the role of ELF in language teacher education. The findings revealed that a great majority of the participating teachers are resistant to use ELF in their classrooms.

For the same purpose, Aydın and Karakaş (2021) explored EFL teachers' beliefs and perceptions about ELF through an open-ended survey questionnaire and the findings revealed that most teachers are not aware of ELF as a notion.

Likewise, in a study conducted by Topkaraoğlu and Dilman (2017), what Turkish EFL teachers understand about ELF and how ELF-aware they are were investigated by means of a cross- sectional survey. They found out that ELF awareness of EFL teachers, ELF in syllabus design and reflections of teachers about language policy development were the main factors affecting how Turkish EFL teachers understand ELF in the context of ELT.

In tandem with the same topic, Deniz, Özkan and Bayyurt (2016) explored 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, they stated that their perspectives and teaching practices were largely shaped by inner circle native norms of English.

In the same vein, Ceyhan-Bingöl and Özkan (2019) investigated the perceptions of EFL instructors working in a school of foreign languages in a foundation university in Turkey. Their perceptions of ELF and ELF-related issues concerning cultural aspects, Standard English and World Englishes, as well as the native and non-native dichotomy were gathered. The study also aimed to shed light on the actual classroom practices of the EFL instructors. The data were collected through a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The findings revealed that a good number of the participants were familiar with ELF and ELF-related issues. Moreover, it was found out that the classroom practices of the participants were in line with their perceptions.

Taking all these into consideration, teachers who are eager to inspire their future students and develop their students' acceptance of ELF and WEs should engage themselves first with these terms. Since knowledge of ELF and WEs in ELT can be seen as an important part to promote the diversity in English education, in light of the results of the research studies mentioned above, it can be understood that it is essential to explore what teachers perceive of ELF and WE to fully comprehend the pedagogical and social implications of them. Hence, the study aims to find out how

English language teachers perceive ELF and ELF-related issues regarding cultural aspects in English language teaching, Standard English and World Englishes, the dichotomy of native and non-native speakers.

# Methodology

## Research design

This exploratory study contains quantitative data collected through a questionnaire previously developed by Ceyhan-Bingöl and Özkan (2019). This study was conducted in order to find out answers to the following research question:

- 1) What are ELF perceptions of English language teachers and EFL instructors on the issues concerning:
- a) Cultural aspects in English language teaching
- b) Standard English and World Englishes
- c) The dichotomy of native and non-native speakers?
- 2) Do ELF perceptions of English language teachers and EFL instructors vary significantly depending on;
- a) Gender,
- b) Academic qualification,
- c) Teaching experience,
- d) Working environment?

# Setting and participants

The population of the present study consists of 110 teacher participants including English language teachers who work at different institutions at primary, secondary and high school level and EFL instructors who work at state and foundation universities in Turkey during 2019-2020 spring semester. Sampling design of the target population was decided as convenient sampling because participants were chosen regarding their willingness to be part of this study and it involves the selection of the most accessible subjects (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

# Data collection tool: questionnaire

To answer the research questions of this research, a questionnaire adapted from Ceyhan-Bingöl and Özkan (2019) was implemented to the teacher participants who accessed it via Google forms as a link. The Cronbach's Alpha score of the final version of the questionnaire was found as 0.83 after necessary editing of the questionnaire was done. While analysing the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaire, frequencies were utilized in order to present the responses of the participants in an informative way. The questionnaire has an introduction presenting information about the aim of the study shortly and clearly. The questionnaire consists of 1-5 Likert scale statements on five main parts: a) background information of the participants, b) ELF part including two items they can simply tick the one that applies to them c) cultural aspects in ELT consisting of 16 statements, d) Standard English and World Englishes including 19 statements, and e) the dichotomy of native and non-native speakers of English comprising 12 statements.

# Data collection procedure

The data were collected by means of a questionnaire which was transferred into electronic format by using Google forms and was administered electronically as an open link. This link was shared with the participants to gather data.

# Data analysis

For the purposes of the study, the data gathered were analyzed by means of quantitative data analysis procedures. The questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 22 in order to get the frequencies. These frequencies were utilized so that the study could present the responses of the participants in an appropriate way. The analysis was based on the categorization in the questionnaire.

## **Findings**

#### **ELF**

Descriptive statistics were administered to investigate English language teachers' perceptions of WE and ELF. Based on the findings of the study, a great number of

teachers (81 out of 110) reported that they are familiar with the ELF concept while 29 out of 110 teachers indicated they are not familiar with the ELF concept.

# Cultural aspects in language teaching

Most of the participants (%91.8) believed integrating culture is important in language classes. A great number of the teachers (%93.6) indicated their students will be more tolerant if they know about other cultures apart from their local culture, Moreover, the majority of the participants (%91.8) agreed to the idea that culture should be integrated into ELT and 94 teachers (%85.4) pointed out all students should acquire intercultural competence. Additionally, the majority of the teachers (%90.9) stated language and culture should be taught together and 97 out of 110 (%88.1) reported participants providing cultural information encourages students to learn English. Also, 102 participants (%92.7) preferred to share with their students what they know about English speaking countries and/or their cultures, 80 teachers (%72.7) encouraged their students to imagine what it would be like to live in English speaking countries and 86 teachers (%78.1) preferred to share with their students about their own cultural experience in English speaking countries. Furthermore, many of them (%82.7) stated they use various visual and/or audio materials to introduce their students to other cultures and most of the teachers (%74.5) indicated they feel that they would spend more time for intercultural aspects in their class.

Table 1. The Teachers' Perceptions about Dealing with Culture in Classes

	Strongly	Diasgree		Disagree	Unable to	Discuss		Agree	Stronoly	Agree
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Integrating culture is important in language classes.	0	0	0	0	9	8.2	27	24.5	74	67.3
If students know about other cultures apart from their local culture, they will be more tolerant.	1	0.9	1	0.9	5	4.5	26	23.6	77	70
All students should acquire intercultural competence.	0	0	3	2.7	13	11.8	34	30.9	60	54.5
Culture should be integrated in English language teaching.	2	1.8	0	0	7	6.4	33	30	68	61.8
Intercultural competence cannot be acquired in ELT context.	53	48.2	37	33.6	13	11.8	5	4.5	2	1.8
Integrating culture is important only if students need to be familiar with it.	22	20	35	31.8	22	20	22	20	9	8.1

Language instructors should deal with culture only if there exist international students in the class.	57	51.8	28	25.5	10	9.1	9	8.2	6	5.5
Language and culture should be taught together.	0	0	3	2.7	7	6.4	28	25.5	72	65.5
Providing cultural information encourages students to learn English.	0	0	3	2.7	10	9.1	30	27.3	67	60.9
I share with my students what I know about English speaking countries and/or their cultures.	0	0	1	0.9	7	6.4	26	23.6	76	69.1
I ask my students what it would be like to live in English speaking countries.	5	4.5	5	4.5	20	18.2	24	21.8	56	50.9
I share with my students about my own cultural experience in English speaking countries.	5	4.5	7	6.4	12	10.9	29	26.4	57	51.8
I ask my students to compare one aspect of their local culture with that aspect in English speaking countries.	3	2.7	8	7.3	17	15.5	42	38.2	40	36.4
I use various visual and/or audio materials to introduce my students to other cultures.	1	0.9	6	5.5	12	10.9	43	39.1	48	43.6
The English programme I have been teaching deals with intercultural awareness.	3	2.7	16	14.5	32	29.1	33	30	26	23.6
I feel that I would spend more time for intercultural aspects in my class.	2	1.8	2	1.8	24	21.8	53	48.2	29	26.4

To find out whether there is a difference between the male and female English language teachers in terms of their perceptions about dealing with culture in classes, Mann-Whitney U test was performed. Table 2 indicates Mann-Whitney U test results.

**Table 2.** Mann-Whitney U Test Results for English Language Teachers' Perceptions about Dealing with Culture in Classes According to the Gender Variable

Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U Statistic	p
Male	29	49.52	1436.00	1001.000	.239
Female	81	57.64	4669.00		

With the male English language teachers having a mean rank of 49.52 and the female English language teachers having a mean rank of 57.64, the Mann-Whitney U test of difference shows that there is no significant difference between the male and

female English language teachers in their perceptions about dealing with culture in classes (p=.239> 0.05).

Kruskal-Wallis test was used to investigate whether there is a academic qualification-based significant difference. The obtained findings are presented in Table 3.

 Table 3. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results According to the Academic Qualification Variable

Academic Qualifications	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	р
Bachelor's degree	62	55.74	4	3.634	.458
Master's degree	14	57.18			
Master's degree in progress	11	54.68			
Phd	2	94.75			
Phd in progress	21	50.36			

The teachers with different academic qualifications have a mean rank of 55.74, 57.18, 54.68, 94.75 and 50.36 respectively, The Kruskal-Wallis test of difference shows that there is not a significant difference between teacher groups having different academic qualifications in terms of their perceptions about dealing with culture in classes ( $x^2 = 3.634$ , p = .458 > 0.05).

The findings gained from the comparison of English language teachers' perceptions about dealing with culture in classes on the basis of the teaching experience variable are given in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Kruskal-Wallis Test Results for English Language Teachers' Perceptions about Dealing with Culture in Classes According to the Teaching Experience Variable

Teaching Experience	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	p
1-5 years	39	56.73	4	3.840	.428
6-10 years	35	53.19			
11-15 years	19	51.26			
16-20 years	12	70.08			
20+ years	5	43.20			

English language teachers with different years of teaching experience have a mean rank of 56.73, 53.19, 51.26, 70.08 and 43.20 respectively. The Kruskal-Wallis test of difference shows that there is not a significant difference between teacher groups having different teaching experience years in terms their perceptions about dealing with culture in classes ( $x^2 = 3.840$ , p = .428 > 0.05).

Table 5 indicates working environment-based comparison of English language teachers' perceptions about dealing with culture in classes. English language teachers' current working environment (State school, Private school, Foreign language institute, Private tuition, State university and Foundation university) have a mean rank of 57.98, 49.42, 21.50, 60.67, 52.20 and 56.55 respectively. The Kruskal-Wallis test of difference shows that there is not a significant difference between teachers who work in different environments in terms their perceptions about dealing with culture in classes ( $x^2 = 2.277$ , p = .810 > 0.05).

**Table 5.** Kruskal-Wallis Test Results for English Language Teachers' Perceptions about Dealing with Culture in Classes According to the Working Environment Variable

Working Environment	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	p
State school	62	57.98	5	2.277	.810
Private school	12	49.42			
Foreign language institute	1	21.50			
Private tuition	3	60.67			
State university	22	52.20			
Foundation university	10	56.55			

# Standard English and world Englishes

36 participants (%32.7) strongly agreed that Standard English is British and/or American English while 34 teachers (%30.9) agreed with the same statement. Also, 62 teachers (%56.3) indicated Standard English is more prestigious in communication and most of the participants (%63.6) pointed out they preferred to use Standard English. In addition to that, 61 teachers (%55.4) stated non-native English learners should be encouraged to learn Standard English and more than half of them (%54.5) believe that English does not belong to the UK and/or USA. However, nearly half of the (%48.1) expressed people around the world should learn Standard English and many of them (%69) believed Standard English is accepted internationally. 40 teachers (%36.3) are not bothered when they make pronunciation errors while speaking English and 46 teachers (%41.8) reported they are not comfortable with their own accents and try to imitate native speakers' accent (See Table 6).

As shown in Table 6, a great number of teachers (%72.7) are familiar with World Englishes (WE) and many of them (%59) prefer to use their own way of using English. Moreover, more than half of the participants (%68.1) stated they are satisfied with their own accent while speaking English and 73 of them (%66.3) believe different uses of English based on different geographical regions should be introduced to English language learners. Additionally, the majority (%80) think communication strategies are more important than Standard English norms and many (%70) indicated World Englishes should be dealt in English language learning programs. Furthermore, %81.8 of the participants believe the idea that different varieties of English can be used as long as they follow the principles of comprehensibility and intelligibility.

Table 6. The Teachers' Perceptions of Standard English and World Englishes

	Strongly	Disagree		Disagree	I Inable to	Discuss		Agree	Stronoly	Agree
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Standard English is British and/or American (Inner Circle counties') English.	9	8.2	7	6.4	24	21.8	36	32.7	34	30.9
Native speakers of English have a right to decide how English should be.	26	23.6	14	12.7	24	21.8	37	33.6	9	8.2
Standard English is more prestigious in communication.	8	7.3	8	7.3	32	29.1	40	36.4	22	20
I prefer to use Standard English.	4	3.6	8	7.3	28	25.5	37	33.6	33	30
Non-native English learners should be encouraged to learn Standard English.	11	10	10	9.1	28	25.5	37	33.6	24	21.8
English belongs to the UK and/or USA.	42	38.2	18	16.4	20	18.2	17	15.5	13	11.8
People around the world should learn Standard English.	14	12.7	12	10.9	31	28.2	38	34.5	15	13.6
Standard English is accepted internationally.	4	3.6	12	10.9	18	16.4	44	40	32	29.1
It bothers me when my students make pronunciation errors while speaking English.	21	19.1	19	17.3	37	33.6	24	21.8	9	8.2
I am not comfortable with my own accent and try to imitate native speakers' accent.	21	19.1	25	22.7	36	32.7	24	21.8	4	3.6
I know and can define what World Englishes mean.	1	0.9	4	3.6	25	22.7	40	36.4	40	36.4
I prefer to use my own way of using English.	4	3.6	13	11.8	28	25.5	42	38.2	23	20.9
Non-native speakers of English have a	22	20	22	20	37	33.6	18	16.4	11	10

right to decide how English should be.										
Communication is to be able to understand and show respect towards cultural, gender, socio-political and personal differences.	0	0	2	1.8	12	10.9	25	22.7	71	64.5
I am satisfied with my own accent while speaking English.	1	0.9	7	6.4	27	24.5	45	40.9	30	27.3
Different uses of English based on different geographical regions should be introduced to English language learners.	4	3.6	8	7.3	25	22.7	39	35.5	34	30.9
Communication strategies are more important than Standard English norms.	0	0	5	4.5	17	15.5	48	43.6	40	36.4
World Englishes should be dealt in English language learning programs.	2	1.8	7	6.4	24	21.8	43	39.1	34	30.9
People can use different varieties of English as long as they follow the principles of comprehensibility and intelligibility.	0	0	4	3.6	16	14.5	44	40	46	41.8

To find out whether there is a difference between the male and female English language teachers in terms of their perceptions of Standard English and World Englishes, Mann-Whitney U test was performed. Table 7 indicates Mann-Whitney U test results.

**Table 7.** Mann-Whitney U Test Results for English Language Teachers' Perceptions of Standard English and World Englishes According to the Gender Variable

Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U Statistic	p
Male	29	46.84	1358.50	923.500	.088
Female	81	58.60	4746.50		

With the male English language teachers having a mean rank of 46.84 and the female English language teachers having a mean rank of 58.60, the Mann-Whitney U test of difference shows that there is no significant difference between the male and female English language teachers in their perceptions of Standard English and World Englishes (p=.088> 0.05).

Kruskal-Wallis test was used to investigate whether there is a academic qualification-based significant difference. The obtained findings are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results According to the Academic Qualification Variable

Academic Qualifications	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	p
Bachelor's degree	62	62.29	4	11.007	.026
Master's degree	14	52.18			
Master's degree in progress	11	53.00			
Phd	2	76.50			
Phd in progress	21	36.98			

The teachers with different academic qualifications have a mean rank of 62.29, 52.18, 53.00, 76.50 and 36.98 respectively, The Kruskal-Wallis test of difference shows that there is a significant difference between teacher groups having different academic qualifications in terms of their perceptions of Standard English and World Englishes ( $x^2 = 11.007$ , p = .026 < 0.05).

The findings gained from the comparison of English language teachers' perceptions of Standard English and World Englishes on the basis of the teaching experience variable are given in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Kruskal-Wallis Test Results for English Language Teachers' Perceptions of Standard English and World Englishes According to the Teaching Experience Variable

Teaching Experience	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	p
1-5 years	39	54.59	4	2.536	.638
6-10 years	35	54.23			
11-15 years	19	55.03			
16-20 years	12	53.71			
20+ years	5	77.60			

English language teachers with different years of teaching experience have a mean rank of 54.59, 54.23, 55.03, 53.71 and 77.60 respectively. The Kruskal-Wallis test of difference shows that there is not a significant difference between teacher groups having different teaching experience years in terms their perceptions of Standard English and World Englishes ( $x^2 = 2.536$ , p = .638 > 0.05).

Table 10 indicates working environment-based comparison of English language teachers' perceptions of Standard English and World Englishes. English language teachers' current working environment (State school, Private school, Foreign language institute, Private tuition, State university and Foundation university) have a mean rank of 61.98, 60.38, 61.50, 53.33, 46.32 and 29.70 respectively. The

Kruskal-Wallis test of difference shows that there is a significant difference between teachers who work in different environments in terms their perceptions of Standard English and World Englishes ( $x^2 = 11.286$ , p = .046 < 0.05).

**Table 10.** Kruskal-Wallis Test Results for English Language Teachers' Perceptions of Standard English and World Englishes According to the Working Environment Variable

Working Environment	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	p
State school	62	61.98	5	11.286	.046
Private school	12	60.38			
Foreign language institute	1	61.50			
Private tuition	3	53.33			
State university	22	46.32			
Foundation university	10	29.70			

# The dichotomy of native and non-native speakers

53 out of 110 participants (%48.1) agreed with the statement that non-NESTs are good role models for their language learners while 48 teachers(%43.6) indicated they are unable to discuss the same statement. Also, most of the teachers (%73.6) believed language learners would like to hear their instructors speaking with a native-like accent. 57 participants (%51.8) reported non-NESTs are regarded as competent as NESTs in teaching English while 38 of them (%34.5) stated they are unable to discuss that statement. However, a good number of the participants (%67.2) pointed out non-NESTs are able to understand language learners' learning difficulties better than NESTs (See table 11).

As shown in Table 11, a great number of the participants (%63.6) considered NESTs are better at pronunciation teaching than non-NESTs. However, most of the participants (%64.5) agreed non-NESTs can diagnose language learners' mistakes and errors stemming from their L1 more easily than NESTs. Moreover, plenty of the participants (%74.5) underlined NESTs have better knowledge of authentic and real-life use of English than non-NESTs. Table 11 also shows half of the participants indicated NESTs are more confident in class than non-NESTs and the majority of the teachers (%69) consider there should not be any discrimination between NESTs and non-NESTs as far as employment opportunity is concerned.

**Table 11.** The Teachers' Perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs

	V tronger	Disagree		Disagree	Unable to	Discuss		Agree		Strongly Agree
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Non-NESTs are good role models for their language learners.	5	4.5	4	3.6	48	43.6	35	31.8	18	16.4
Language learners would like to hear their instructors speaking with a native-like accent.	1	0.9	6	5.5	22	20	49	44.5	32	29.1
Non-NESTs are able to cope with cultural issues more efficiently than NESTs.	3	2.7	8	7.3	43	39.1	37	33.6	19	17.3
Non-NESTs are regarded as competent as NESTs in teaching English.	8	7.3	7	6.4	38	34.5	39	35.5	18	16.4
Non-NESTs are able to understand language learners' learning difficulties better than NESTs.	0	0	6	5.5	30	27.3	31	28.2	43	39.1
Institutions should hire NESTs only from Inner Circle countries: The USA, Britain, Australia and Canada.	19	17.3	19	17.3	39	35.5	18	16.4	15	13.6
NESTs are better at pronunciation teaching than non-NESTs.	2	1.8	7	6.4	31	28.2	32	29.1	38	34.5
NESTs are good role models for language learners.	5	4.5	8	7.3	34	30.9	39	35.5	24	21.8
Non-NESTs can diagnose language learners' mistakes and errors stemming from their L1 more easily than NESTs.	1	0.9	7	6.4	31	28.2	30	27.3	41	37.3
NESTs have better knowledge of authentic and real-life use of English than non-NESTs.	2	1.8	5	4.5	21	19.1	43	39.1	39	35.5
NESTs are more confident in class than non-NESTs.	5	4.5	14	12.7	36	32.7	26	23.6	29	26.4
There should not be any discrimination between NESTs and non-NESTs as far as employment opportunity is concerned.	3	2.7	6	5.5	25	22.7	31	28.2	45	40.9

To find out whether there is a difference between the male and female English language teachers in terms of their perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs, Mann-Whitney U test was performed. Table 12 indicates Mann-Whitney U test results.

**Table 12.** Mann-Whitney U Test Results for English Language Teachers' Perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs According to the Gender Variable

Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U Statistic	p
Male	29	52.83	1532.00	1097.00	.598
Female	81	56.46	4573.00		

With the male English language teachers having a mean rank of 52.83 and the female English language teachers having a mean rank of 56.46, the Mann-Whitney U test of difference shows that there is no significant difference between the male and female English language teachers in their perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs (p=.598>0.05).

Kruskal-Wallis test was used to investigate whether there is a academic qualification-based significant difference. The obtained findings are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results According to the Academic Qualification Variable

Academic Qualifications	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	p
Bachelor's degree	62	58.36	4	4.077	.396
Master's degree	14	43.14			
Master's degree in progress	11	57.27			
Phd	2	80.00			
Phd in progress	21	52.02			

The teachers with different academic qualifications have a mean rank of 58.36, 43.14, 57.27, 80.00 and 52.02 respectively, The Kruskal-Wallis test of difference shows that there is not a significant difference between teacher groups having different academic qualifications in terms of their perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs ( $x^2$ = 4.077, p=.396>0.05).

The findings gained from the comparison of English language teachers' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs on the basis of the teaching experience variable are given in Table 14.

**Table 14.** Kruskal-Wallis Test Results for English Language Teachers' Perceptions NESTs and NNESTs According to the Teaching Experience Variable

Teaching Experience	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	p
1-5 years	39	53.10	4	.438	.979
6-10 years	35	56.10			
11-15 years	19	56.39			
16-20 years	12	58.25			
20+ years	5	60.00			

English language teachers with different years of teaching experience have a mean rank of 53.10, 56.10, 56.39, 58.25 and 60.00 respectively. The Kruskal-Wallis test of difference shows that there is not a significant difference between teacher groups having different teaching experience years in terms their perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs ( $x^2$ = .438 p=.979 > 0.05).

Table 15 indicates working environment-based comparison of English language teachers' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs. English language teachers' current working environment (State school, Private school, Foreign language institute, Private tuition, State university and Foundation university) have a mean rank of 54.69, 53.96, 77.00, 83.00, 55.77 and 51.35 respectively. The Kruskal-Wallis test of difference shows that there is not a significant difference between teachers who work in different environments in terms their perceptions about dealing with culture in classes ( $x^2 = 2.932$ , p = .710 > 0.05).

**Table 15.** Kruskal-Wallis Test Results for English Language Teachers' Perceptions NESTs and NNESTs According to the Working Environment Variable

Working Environment	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	p
State school	62	54.69	5	2.932	.710
Private school	12	53.96			
Foreign language institute	1	77.00			
Private tuition	3	83.00			
State university	22	55.77			
Foundation university	10	51.35			

# **Discussion**

The findings based on perceptions of English language teachers towards ELF demonsrated that they are acquainted with ELF unlike the study conducted by İnceçay

and Akyel (2014) who indicated EFL instructors don't have much knowledge of the ELF concept in their study and Aydın and Karakaş (2021) who found out most EFL teachers are not aware of ELF. This result is also in line with the study of Topkaraoğlu and Dilman (2027). It was discovered EFL teachers are aware of ELF as a notion but the transition from EFL teacher to ELF practitioner is not easy and requires time and encouragement.

The findings based on perceptions about cultural aspects in language teaching showed that culture plays a fundamental role in language teaching. Bada (2000) underlines the importance of culture in language classes by stating it helps learners prevent communication problems. Bouchard (2019) also mentions that people with different cultures and backgrounds can communicate with each other. English language teachers also stood for sharing cultural knowledge and experience with their students. In line with their perceptions mentioning the importance of cultural awareness, Agnes (2016) explains that language learners should be familiar with and respect other cultures. Moreover, intercultural competence enables language learners to be able to understand their own culture and compare cultural differences in societies (Yılmaz & Özkan, 2015). The instructors' views on the integration of culture may demonstrate that they want to prepare their students who are from diverse cultural backgrounds for international communication. In a similar vein, McKay (2002) believes not only target but also local and international cultures should be integrated into language classes to meet different needs of language learners. The perceptions of the instructors may be related to ELF since ELF is intercultural regarding English is not based on only one single culture and it is shaped by different cultures and various speakers around the world.

The perceptions of teachers' about dealing with culture in classes were analyzed regarding the gender of the teachers, their working places, their teaching experience and their academic qualifications. With regard to Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests which were conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between teachers' demographic information and their perceptions about cultural aspects in language teaching, it was found out that

there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' demographic information and their perceptions about dealing with culture in classes.

The instructors' preference to use Standard English and their ideas about the prestige of Standard English in communication are in parallel with the study of Mareva, Kaburise and Klu (2016) who consider Standard English is still the most widely used variety and has a significant role in ELT. At the same line, Üresin and Karakaş (2019) found in their study most Turkish EFL teachers behave under the effect of standard language by attaching stronly with the use of standard languages in formal contexts. Since they lack of awareness about the current sociolinguistic issues of English and Turkish, they don't place non-standard varieties and dialects in their teaching. In tandem with that, Yücedağ and Karakaş (2019) discovered most students put emphasis on the standard English pronunciation and they think language teachers should teach good grammar to them. However, the teachers in this study do not focus on pronunciation mistakes and errors of their students. It may be interpreted that English language teachers have already been influenced by ELF concept.

The findings of the study point out the EFL instructors are familiar with World Englishes, and they consider that English language learners should be introduced to different uses of English in various regions in the world. They also tend to integrate various uses of English into their teaching, which is parallel with Biricik-Deniz (2017) who indicates WE enhance diversity, creativity and flexibility.

When English Language Teachers' perceptions of standard English and World Englishes were analyzed regarding their gender, working places, teaching experience and academic qualifications, the Kruskal-Wallis test of difference shows that there is a significant difference between teacher groups having different academic qualifications and teachers who work in different environments. In the light of these findings, it can be said that having more academic qualification has a positive influence on teachers' perceptions of standard English and World Englishes since teachers who have doctorate degree has the highest mean in the Table 8.

The instructors' views on NESTs reveal that language learners would like to hear their instructors speaking with a native-like accent and NESTs are better at pronunciation teaching, which is also stated by Wahyudi (2012) that NESTs are good at teaching pronunciation. The participants also mention that NESTs have a better

knowledge of authentic and real-life use of English. The perceptions of the teachers may suggest NESTs are still regarded as a source of information about daily English use. In addition, Kramsch (2013) mentions many across schools across the world prefer NESTs due to their knowledge of authentic language. However, non-NESTs are found to be good role models for their students just as Bayyurt (2006) suggests that language learners may be more motivated to learn a language if they see a good role model of non-NESTs. Their agreement about non-NESTs can diagnose language learners' mistakes and errors stemming from their L1 more easily than NESTs and non-NESTs are able to understand language learners' learning difficulties better than NESTs may be because of the fact that they might guide their students by sharing what they have faced during their learning process when teachers are non-native speakers. Furthermore, a great number of the participants indicate that there should not be any discrimination between NESTs and NNESTs in employment positions and opportunities, which is in line with Cook (2007) who argues NESTs and NNESTs should be in the same positions.

The results of the analysis of English language teachers' perceptions regarding their gender, working places, teaching experience and academic qualifications pointed out that there is no statistically significant difference between teachers' demographic information and their perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of the study was to investigate views of English language teachers on ELF and ELF-related issues concerning cultural issues in ELT, Standard English and World Englishes, and the dichotomy of native and non-native speakers. When all findings are considered, it may be concluded that English language teachers are familiar with ELF and ELF-related issues, they deal with these issues in their classes and their responses on the questionnaire also show that they still particularly see native speaker norms as a reference point. What is noteworthy here is English language teachers are aware of how crucial culture is for language classes, and they deal with cultural issues in the classroom to raise intercultural awareness. Moreover, teachers highlighted the idea that intelligibility and comprehensibility are more

important than having a native-like accent. Additionally, it may be interpreted that both NESTs and NNESTs have their advantages in language teaching, but neither of them is regarded as superior to the other one.

This study implies that being aware of ELF and WE is significant for English language teachers to be well-equipped and innovative in their fields. This research also points out that being aware of ELF and WE may help English language teachers to meet different needs of language learners in a globalised world. Since ELF deals not only with the target culture but also with local and international cultures, English language teachers may choose various cultures based on their students' interests and introduce these cultures to their students to enhance their understanding of and promote their respect for different cultures. Moreover, English language teachers may benefit from audio and/or visual materials, including different uses of English to provide options for their students. Additionally, both NESTs and NNESTs can collaborate to improve their teaching practices and create a more authentic and encouraging environment for language learning.

## Limitations and Recommendations

This study was conducted with 110 participants who are English language instructors who work at state and foundation universities and English language teachers who work at different institutions in Turkey. As the target population of the study is the inservice English language teachers in Turkey, the sample size of the study becomes limited. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to the other EFL settings since the teachers' knowledge, past experiences and working places might affect their perceptions of WE and ELF. That is to say, it is important to conduct further research in different contexts to understand how the teachers conceptualize ELF and ELFawareness in their ELT practice. Sifakis and Bayyurt (2018) indicate "Being an ELFaware teacher means finding ways to empower one's learners as competent nonnative users of English, essentially prompting them to become ELF- aware users themselves" (p. 464). When teachers become ELF-aware themselves, they can teach English to learners to help them become competent and confident ELF-aware users of English. Hence, it is important to raise English language teachers' awareness towards becoming ELF-aware teacher to be able to teach English effectively in such diverse contexts.

## **Notes on the Contributor**

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