

# Teacher perceptions of teaching and learning English as a lingua franca in the expanding circle: A study of Taiwan

WEN-HSING LUO

What are the challenges that teachers might face when integrating ELF instruction into English classes?

## Introduction

This study examines Taiwanese English teachers' perceptions of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in relation to English teaching in classrooms. The definition of ELF is: English used as a lingual medium of communication among people of different linguacultural backgrounds (Jenkins, 2009: 200). Concerning the use of English, Taiwan is regarded as a country of 'the expanding circle' (Kachru, 1985, 1992), where English is not an official language, but is learned as a foreign language (EFL) at school and is considered essential for international communication. In Taiwan, English has been traditionally taught as a school subject and learners rarely have opportunities to use English outside the classroom, whereas the design of English pedagogy and curricula in Taiwan, following an EFL approach, is based on native-speaker (NS) norms with the aim of helping learners achieve native-like competence (cf. Suzuki, 2011). Due to the global spread of English, the majority of users of English for international communication are non-native speakers (non-NSs) (Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 1997, 2006); non-NSs of English now outnumber their native-speaker counterparts. In the global context, second language (L2) learners of English will mostly encounter non-NSs, whose 'Englishes' might deviate from NS English usage. Traditional EFL approaches to English teaching, which favor NS norms, may not 'adequately prepare' L2 learners of English to effectively interact and communicate with speakers

'from other English-speaking contexts' (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011: 332). It has become important that English curricula and instruction are designed to prepare English learners to cope with international communication in which English variations are evident.

While issues related to ELF have been widely discussed, data-based studies, particularly in expanding-circle countries in the Asia-Pacific region such as Taiwan are scanty. Following the line of previous research (e.g., McKay, 2003; Suzuki, 2011; Young & Walsh, 2010), the purpose of this study is threefold: (a) to shed light on the understanding of ELF in relation to English teaching in Taiwan through data collected from university English teachers; (b) to illustrate challenges



*Dr. WEN-HSING LUO received her Ph.D. from Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). Currently, she is Associate Professor in the Department of English Instruction at National Hsinchu University of*

*Education, Taiwan. Her research interests include ELF, NEST and non-NEST studies, and English teacher professional development. Email: [wluo@mail.nhcue.edu.tw](mailto:wluo@mail.nhcue.edu.tw)*

that teachers might face when integrating ELF instruction into English classes in Taiwan; and (c) to explore suggestions for ELF pedagogy and teacher preparation in expanding-circle countries. Through individual interviews and a questionnaire survey, this study posed the following questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of ELF?
2. How do teachers' perceptions as such affect their English instruction in classrooms in an expanding-circle country such as Taiwan?
3. What are the challenges that teachers might face when they include ELF instruction in English classes in Taiwan?

Implications arising from research findings for English pedagogy and teacher education are also discussed.

## Literature review

As stated earlier, ELF means English used as a common language for communication among people who do not share the same linguacultural backgrounds (Jenkins, 2009). According to Jenkins, ELF involves common ground, local variation and accommodation skills. She defines the common ground of ELF as linguistic forms shared with English as a native language (ENL) and forms that differ from ENL but have arisen through contact between ELF users (Jenkins, 2009: 201). The accommodation skills frequently used in an ELF context for facilitating communication include repetition, paraphrasing, code-switching, clarification, self-repair, the avoidance of localized vocabulary and idioms, and 'let it pass' strategy (Cogo, 2009; Kaur, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2008; Mauranen, 2006). It is argued that, in addition to common ground, English users need to be aware of ELF-related skills, that is local variation and accommodation skills, in order to achieve smooth communication in an ELF context. While a definition of ELF has been put forward by Jenkins (2009), some studies have suggested viewing ELF, rather than as a variety, as a function of English use (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011: 332) or 'as an activity type' in which the participants of different linguistic backgrounds interact in order to communicate (Park & Wee, 2011: 360). Previous research has looked into the teaching of ELF in expanding-circle countries and argued that teaching English as a native language is not appropriate, considering curricular goals and learner needs (Matsuda, 2003). It is suggested that English teachers should concentrate on teaching English as an intercultural language as well as an

international language (Sifakis, 2004). With this end in view, Sifakis proposes communicative teaching situations with a C-bound perspective (communication, comprehensibility and culture) that prioritizes learners' mutual intelligibility and cultural identity. He also suggests that the schools should prepare learners for realistic situations, such as communication involving non-NSs (Sifakis, 2009).

A few studies have explored teachers' beliefs about ELF and found that although teachers recognized the usefulness of learning ELF (e.g., common ground and local variation in Jenkins' term), they tended to teach English conforming to NS norms (Sifakis & Sougari, 2005). While teachers found ELF 'conceptually attractive', they were not clear about the nature of ELF and were mostly concerned with ways of teaching an English variety appropriate to the local context (Young & Walsh, 2010: 135). A study by Suzuki (2011) investigated student teachers' perceptions of teaching diversity of English in Japan, and found that the informants were unwilling to accept English varieties other than standard American/British English, even though they understood the importance of English diversity. To transform the view that English for international communication is equal to American/British English, Suzuki suggested that teacher educators should convey information about ELF and include the concept of English diversity in school curricula. In line with this, Sifakis (2009) proposes an ELF teacher education program which emphasizes the ability of teachers to use technology to make links with non-NSs from other countries and helps to raise teacher awareness of the communication value of ELF. Instead of focusing on one specific context, Oanh (2012) investigated attitudes toward and conceptions of global and local Englishes among educators, administrators and teachers in Asian countries, including Singapore, Vietnam, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. She found that as individual countries in Asia have modified English for specific purposes, local varieties of English have increased. She suggests that English, as a lingua franca in Asia, 'should ensure a high level of comprehension and a standard form' and 'be responsive to the context of use' in individual countries (Oanh, 2012: 128).

The above discussion highlights arguments about the notion of ELF. As 'global realizations of ELF' can only emerge from understandings of the local context achieved by and for 'the teachers and learners who constitute that context' (Young & Walsh, 2010: 136), the notion of ELF should be

explored from the teacher/learner perspective in context. Bearing in mind that research on ELF in Asia-Pacific countries such as Taiwan has been less documented (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 2008; Kirkpatrick & Sussex, 2012), through this study the author wishes to bring ELF to better light and to provide suggestions on ELF pedagogy and teacher education.

## Research methods

This study examines the notion of ELF from the perspective of university English teachers in relation to English teaching and learning in Taiwan. Research methods consisting of interviewing and questionnaire survey were used to collect data. Individual interviews provided a detailed description of teacher perceptions of ELF in relation to English teaching and learning, while the questionnaire survey allowed the author to document teacher perceptions as such. Through personal contact, seven English teachers (six female and one male) at the university level in Taiwan were invited to participate in individual interviews. The interviews were conducted in English or Mandarin Chinese of the participating teachers' choice. The author asked the teachers about their perceptions of and attitudes toward teaching ELF in the Taiwanese context (see the Appendix for the interview protocol). All of the interview participants were Taiwanese with either a master's or a doctoral degree, and had taught English-skill courses. Their English teaching experience at universities in Taiwan varied from two to 10 years. Each individual interview lasted one to one-and-a-half hours. All of the interviews (seven in total) were tape-recorded and transcribed or translated into English (when the interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese) by the author. For the purpose of data analysis, the interview participants were coded as A, B, C, D, E, F, and G.

A questionnaire in both English and Mandarin Chinese was sent to Taiwanese university professors who specialized in English teaching or TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages). Arguably, professors of English teaching are best aware of the issues related to English teaching and learning presented in the questionnaire. In addition to demographic data, the questionnaire, adapted from Sifakis (2009), consisted of 14 items on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree) regarding teacher opinions about and attitudes toward ELF (see Figure 1 for questionnaire items). The questionnaire survey was sent to the teachers by e-mail,

and yielded a valid sample size of 80 returns, 66 from females and 14 from males. 73 respondents held a doctoral degree and seven held a master's degree. 94% of the respondents had taught English-skill courses at universities. Among those who had experience in teaching English-skill courses, 53% indicated that, at the time of this study, they had taught for more than eight years, while 21% had taught for between five to seven years, 19% for between two to four years and 7% for less than one year. The questionnaire respondents were numbered starting from 01 for the purpose of data analysis.

In this study, data collection included interview transcripts (or translations into English), comments written by the questionnaire respondents (all written in English), and survey quantitative data. Descriptive statistics were used for analyzing the quantitative data. The Grounded Theory method (Glaser, 1998) was employed for coding the qualitative data (interview data combined with comments written by the questionnaire respondents) and for conceptualizing the patterns and themes that emerged from the process of data analysis. The qualitative data were first examined for themes that emerged and were related to the research questions. Next, the themes were compared and a set of focused codes determined, which were used to synthesize, organize and conceptualize the large segments of the qualitative data (Charmaz, 2014). Finally, findings, which were grounded in the data and accounted for by the data, were uncovered. Data analysis mainly focused on the qualitative data supplemented by the quantitative data, but the author was able to compare and synthesize the qualitative and quantitative findings to gain a holistic understanding of the issues being addressed in this study (cf. Ke & Cahyani, 2014).

## Discussion of research findings

In this section, research findings are discussed in relation to the research questions regarding (1) teacher perceptions of ELF, (2) teacher perceptions of giving ELF instruction in the Taiwanese context, and (3) challenges that teachers might face when they included ELF instruction in classes.

### *Teacher perceptions of ELF*

The questionnaire data (see Figure 1) show that most of the respondents are aware of the notion of ELF (item 2, Mean = 4.50 on a 5-point scale, SD = 0.64) and the communicative value of ELF-related skills such as local variation and accommodation skills (in Jenkins' terms, 2009)

**Figure 1: Teacher Survey Quantitative Data.**  
 (5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = no opinion; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree).

Items	5 (%)	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	Mean (N = 80)	SD
1. English teaching should emphasize the strengths of the communicative use of English.	51	47	1	1	0	4.48	0.59
2. You are aware of the notion of ELF for international communication.	57	35	8	0	0	4.50	0.64
3. Your approach to English teaching is based on NS norms, i.e., teaching a standard that would conform to NS norms.	19	57	10	13	1	3.80	0.93
4. The 'English' you learned as a learner was based on NS norms, i.e., learning a standard that would conform to NS norms.	43	45	9	2	1	4.23	0.86
5. You think your students would like to learn Standard English that conforms to NS norms.	25	61	6	8	0	4.04	0.79
6. You are aware of the communicative value of ELF-related skills.	40	54	6	0	0	4.34	0.59
7. Learning ELF-related skills is useful.	34	59	4	2	1	4.21	0.74
8. Learning ELF-related skills is feasible.	22	63	7	4	4	3.96	0.89
9. Learning ELF-related skills is necessary.	23	57	5	10	5	3.83	1.05
10. You think your students would like to learn ELF-related skills.	6	54	14	16	10	3.30	1.13
11. You are teaching your students ELF-related skills.	6	58	16	11	9	3.41	1.06
12. Teaching ELF-related skills is challenging.	24	56	10	9	1	3.93	0.90
13. You consider yourself as an intercultural communicator of ELF as opposed to an EFL user.	40	46	12	1	1	4.23	0.80
14. You consider EFL learners as deficient users of English that is owned by its native speakers.	4	10	21	44	21	2.31	1.04

(item 6, Mean = 4.34, SD = 0.59). The respondents consider themselves as intercultural communicators of ELF (item 13, Mean = 4.23, SD = 0.80) and do not think that English is owned by NSs (item 14, Mean = 2.31, SD = 1.04). It is revealed that the notion and the use of ELF for international communication is well acknowledged by most of the respondents.

The interview data and written comments from the questionnaire reveal the teachers' opinions of

ELF. The most salient points are presented as follows:

*a) Communication-driven English for non-native speakers*

The interview participants acknowledge the function of ELF as a tool for communication. Interview participant A comments that 'ELF is

like an interlanguage used by non-NSs for communication.’ She reports:

ELF is a common language you use for communication when you travel abroad or when you help a foreigner in Taiwan ... it is like an interlanguage among these people. It is a language that you are not quite familiar with, but is used for communication.

Interview participants B and F make similar comments, and think that ‘ELF is used for communication by non-NSs of English because English is a language commonly learned in schools and is recognized internationally.’ Interview participant G says that ‘the focus of ELF is on how speakers utilize English as a tool to communicate with others’ and ‘it doesn’t differentiate between native-speakers and non-native speakers.’ Questionnaire respondents make similar written comments; for instance: ‘... it is a means of communicating across several cultures and languages.’ (Respondent 3); ‘A global language which serves as a common means of communication for nonnative speakers.’ (Respondent 63).

### *b) International-context-restricted English*

Interview participant B states that ELF is ‘restricted to certain context’, namely, the use of ELF is observed only in an international context, where the speakers are from different countries. He comments:

I think ELF is restricted to certain contexts. For instance, in a company, there are people from different countries. The first choice of language they would use for communication would be English. Except for a context like that, people would not use a language that they do not master for communication ... I think the use of ELF is existent only in an international context ...

The above remarks imply that the participant thinks the locus of using ELF is restricted to international contexts.

### *c) Localized and less-standard English*

Interview participant D perceives ELF as localized English without standards. She gives Singapore English as an example, and thinks it ‘presents variations diverging from American or British English because it is localized and affected by local languages.’ The following comments written by the questionnaire respondents also indicate that ELF is perceived as localized English influenced by speakers’ linguistic background: ‘[ELF] includes

a wide variety of lexical and grammatical features influenced by different L1 and even L2 ...’ (Respondent 3); ‘ELF is English used by people from different countries. Its use varies depending on different areas ... and local languages.’ (Respondent 54); ‘To some extent, it will reflect the influence of learners’ mother tongue.’ (Respondent 64).

Interview participant A perceives ELF as less-standard English. She remarks that ELF users might make grammatical mistakes such as forgetting to add <s> to a verb when the subject is third person singular. She also considers that ELF is less standard in view of pronunciation and vocabulary use. Similarly, interview participant F comments that there is no norm for ELF, and users of ELF do not care about accents and spelling as long as they can get their meaning across. Interview participant D says that ‘although varieties of ELF might be accepted for the purpose of communication, I do not use those varieties and always conform to Standard English.’ These comments imply that ELF is perceived by the teachers as less-standard English.

### *d) One perspective/a function of English use*

Interview participant B views ELF as one perspective of English use. He remarks that ELF is less exclusive than EFL because the idea of ELF ‘allows more varieties’ and users of ELF are ‘more tolerant of English varieties.’ In comparison, interview participant E perceives ELF as ‘a functionally defined term’ rather than ‘an independent language structure’ of English. Interview participants B and E are echoed by the questionnaire respondents. For instance, respondent 50 comments that ‘there is no difference between ELF and Standard English concerning lexical and grammatical features; ELF emphasizes communication rather than accuracy of language use.’ Respondent 79 also reports that ELF is ‘English with communicative functions.’ The above comments are in line with Matsuda and Friedrich (2011: 332), who conceptualize ELF as a function of English use ‘rather than a linguistic variety used uniformly’ in international contexts.

### ***Teacher perceptions of ELF in relation to English instruction***

Data analysis reveals some prevalent themes regarding teacher perceptions of teaching ELF in the Taiwanese context. The prominent opinions are presented as follows:

### *a) Ambivalence toward teaching and learning ELF*

Responses to questionnaire items 3, 7, 9, 11 and 12 (see [Figure 1](#)) document the teachers' ambivalent attitudes toward teaching and learning ELF. Most of the respondents agree that their approach to English teaching is based on NS norms (item 3, Mean = 3.80, SD = 0.93), whereas 6% of the respondents strongly agree and 58% agree that they teach ELF-related skills to students (item 11, Mean = 3.41, SD = 1.06). A high percentage of the respondents consider that learning ELF-related skills is useful (item 7, Mean = 4.21, SD = 0.74) and necessary (item 9, Mean = 3.83, SD = 1.05), but teaching the related skills is challenging for teachers (item 12, Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.90). The majority of the respondents think it is challenging to teach ELF-related skills; intriguingly, they also consider that it is feasible to learn these skills (item 8, Mean = 3.96, SD = 0.89).

At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were requested to comment on teaching ELF. The respondents' written comments indicate teacher ambivalence toward teaching ELF. For instance, the teaching of ELF is perceived as 'idealistic' (Respondent 6), 'unfeasible' (Respondent 28), and 'abstract and complicated' (Respondent 43). Two respondents (1 and 59) think it is difficult to put the concept of ELF into practice in Taiwan, although 'it is worth promoting this concept in the age of globalization.' (Respondent 59).

### *b) Teaching native-speaker norms but promoting awareness of ELF*

Interview participant A thinks it would be 'safe' for students to learn standards of English that are 'globally' recognized. She teaches English that conforms to NS standards and hopes her students learn/use 'correct English'. She is concerned that students who adopted the varieties of ELF might be considered less competent and become disadvantaged in the job market in Taiwan, which often expects a good command of English from job applicants. Interview participant D acknowledges the importance of NS norms, and thinks that students would be able to deal with the use of ELF if they have learned Standard English. She would help students to raise awareness of ELF for communication, but does not know as yet how to do so.

Interview participant C remarks that, in view of varieties of English use, it is inevitable for English teachers to follow NS models as a pedagogical norm. She takes teaching English idioms

as an example, and thinks that 'it is impractical for students to learn English idioms used and understood only in Singapore, but not intelligible to English speakers in other contexts.' She believes that students would be able to understand varieties of English used by ELF speakers if they have learned 'the basics of English.' She does not think that the idea of teaching ELF can be realized in the classroom, although it is important for students to be aware of the concepts regarding ELF. Similarly, interview participant B states that English learners should conform to a norm and learn 'the dominant' varieties, that is American or British English.

Coinciding with the interview data, the questionnaire responses show that the teachers emphasize the necessity of following NS norms in English teaching and learning, although they recognize the importance of raising students' awareness of ELF. The following excerpts are some of the examples: 'English learning should conform to Standard English as a norm ... Teachers can inform students of local varieties of English to help students understand the use of ELF.' (Respondent 50); '... ELF for communication is widely accepted. Yet, native-speaker models should be a norm for learning pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Teachers can help students to accept varieties of English, but it doesn't mean that they can use English without following standards.' (Respondent 54); '... Educators of EFL should not overemphasize the justification of using non-standard English. In ESL classrooms, standard English should be considered [as] a norm and a better model before other variations.' (Respondent 79); 'I do believe that English should be taught with certain required standards which conform to NS norms.' (Respondent 80).

Previous literature (e.g., Matsuda, 2003; Sharifian, 2009) argues that the approaches to ELT conforming to NS norms may not equip English learners with ELF for international communication. Contrastingly, teachers in this study think that students would be able to deal with ELF users if they have learned Standard English. It appears that the teachers' perceptions of teaching ELF can be characterized as either strong or weak versions of an ELT approach conforming to NS norms. The strong version claims that teachers should conform to Standard English or native-speaker models as a pedagogical norm (e.g., respondents 79 and 80). The weak version proposes that the concept of ELF be introduced to students and emphasizes teaching of Standard English in classrooms (e.g., respondents 50 and 54).

### **Challenges of giving ELF instruction**

As shown earlier, responses to questionnaire item 12 indicate that the teachers think it is challenging to teach ELF-related skills (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.90). The interviews and written comments by the questionnaire respondents reveal the possible challenges facing teachers. These challenges are categorized as follows:

#### **a) Teacher ability of teaching ELF**

Interview participant B states that he is not familiar with local variation of English and is not capable of giving ELF instruction. His comments coincide with the questionnaire replies. For instance: ‘... even for teachers who [have] lived in English-speaking countries for years, it is a tremendous challenge to introduce various accents and usage of English or cultural implications of English words precisely ...’ (Respondent 26); ‘The major issue is teachers’ understanding of ELF. Features of ELF are closely related to local cultures ... It is a big challenge for teachers to equip themselves with an understanding of these cultures.’ (Respondent 50).

The above comments indicate that to be able to give ELF instruction (or teach ELF-related skills), teachers need to acquire not only knowledge of English but also an understanding of local contexts and related cultures (cf. Sifakis, 2004; Young & Walsh, 2010).

Interview participant C remarks that she does not know what to teach about ELF and thinks it is challenging for teachers to figure out how to approach the instruction of ELF. Similarly, interview participant A is uncertain about teaching ELF, which she considers as less-standard English. She states: ‘It is less-standard English. I don’t know how to teach something that is not standard to students. I don’t know what to teach.’

Written comments from the questionnaire also reveal teachers’ concerns regarding their ability to teach ELF. For instance: ‘The scope of ELF is too broad and there is no standard ... the use of ELF varies depending on context.’ (Respondent 15); ‘Don’t know how to teach ELF and it is difficult to decide what to teach.’ (Respondent 19). This finding is in accord with Young and Walsh (2010), indicating that teachers are uncertain about the nature of ELF and therefore do not know what to teach about it.

#### **b) Students’ preference for Standard English**

Interview participant C comments that students in Taiwan would like to learn American or British

English and do not consider other varieties of English. Replies to the open-ended part of questionnaire item 12 reveal that students’ preference for Standard English is a concern for the teachers when they give ELF instruction. For instance, respondent 14 writes:

I’ve tried to integrate ELF into my teaching, and I think the major challenge is to have students see the purpose of doing this so that they would agree. The majority of them would question whether this would help improve their English. I once received a comment on my course evaluation saying that ‘my English is poor and I don’t want to be influenced by those Africans ... and their funny accent.’

Respondent 26 also writes that ‘... students would like to learn correct or Standard English, which is American English.’ The written comments are corroborated by the quantitative data, in that 25% of the respondents strongly agree and 61% agree that students would like to learn Standard English that conforms to NS norms (item 5 in Figure 1, Mean = 4.04, SD = 0.79). Intriguingly, the questionnaire data also show that 6% of the respondents strongly agree and 54% agree that their students would like to learn ELF-related skills (item 10, Mean = 3.30, SD = 1.13). It appears that the majority of the respondents think their students would like to learn Standard English as well as ELF-related skills. Therefore, they would teach English conforming to NS norms and integrate ELF-related skills in their instruction. This finding, contrasting with results of previous studies (e.g., Sifakis & Sougari, 2005; Young & Walsh, 2010), is supported by the quantitative results of item 3 (Mean = 3.80, SD = 0.93) and item 11 (Mean = 3.41, SD = 1.06).

#### **c) Lack of teaching materials and learning context for ELF**

Interview participant G comments that lack of teaching materials would be a concern if she followed an ELF model for pedagogical norms. Interview participant D says that she would not give ELF instruction because there is no teaching material available. The questionnaire data also show that lack of appropriate teaching materials is an issue for teachers in giving ELF instruction. The following comment exemplifies the teachers’ concerns: ‘Lack of teaching resources ... As an ELF teacher, he or she should know and learn how to give ELF instruction and choose suitable textbooks or resources ...’ (Respondent 36).

Interview participant F remarks that it is a challenge for teachers to develop ELF curricula, because curricula of this kind are sustainable only in an international context, which is not usually available at universities in Taiwan. Echoing the above comments, questionnaire respondents consider that ‘the lack of a systematic way of teaching [ELF] in contextualized situations’ is a challenge facing teachers (Respondent 34).

## Suggestions

In light of the above discussion, the author wishes to make some suggestions. First, the study reveals that the majority of teachers are aware of the concept of ELF, which they find to be worth promoting to students, while emphasizing the importance of teaching/learning English that conforms to NS norms. In view of this research finding, the author suggests that the focus of ELF pedagogy in Taiwan should be on helping English learners to acknowledge the strengths of English use for communication by international communities, and it should not compromise on learning English that conforms to a norm based on NS models. To introduce the concept of ELF to students without depreciating ELF as bad English (e.g., ‘less-standard, localized English’), English teachers need to realize that, like English for academic/specific purposes (EAP/ESP), ELF is ‘one perspective of English use’ (interview participant B’s comment) and ‘a functionally defined term’ (interview participant E’s comment). To enable students to utilize English for the purpose of international communication (i.e., ELF), it is essential for teachers to instruct students in the core principles of English, e.g., ‘the basics of English’ (interview participant C’s term) and ‘the English norms’ (interview participant D’s term), which conform to standards of English. In English classes in an expanding-circle country like Taiwan, it is plausible to assume that core-English norms are based on native-speaker models with an understanding of variations of English use (cf. Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011). The discussion of ELF pedagogy in expanding-circle countries should focus on the appreciation and understanding of English variations used by non-native and native speakers alike, rather than on the declaration of ownership of the English language (cf. Holliday, 2005).

Second, one of the issues arising from teaching ELF-related skills is lack of teaching materials and learning context. To address this issue, the author suggests, in lieu of an international context, English teachers create a learning context where

students can connect with non-NSs in other countries so as to foster students’ awareness of English variation and communication accommodation skills (cf. Sifakis, 2009; Ke & Cahyani, 2014). As for teaching materials, teachers need to take responsibility for developing material content and methods that are appropriate to the Taiwanese context (cf. McKay, 2003). For instance, teachers can utilize teaching resources available on the Internet and create tasks using authentic materials, through which learners can gain exposure to English varieties used in international communication.

Third, to enable teachers to integrate ELF instruction into English classes, the author wishes to call for professional development and teacher preparation programs which equip practicing and prospective teachers with the competence and knowledge to teach skills related to ELF. Courses introducing cultural awareness and communication skills concerning ELF need to be considered in the design of English teacher education curricula in Taiwan (cf. Sifakis, 2009). Additionally, teacher educators should design instructional tasks which allow prospective teachers to realize the importance of ELF for intercultural communication in general, and, in particular, with non-native speakers (see Matsuda & Duran, 2012).

Finally, the author wishes to suggest further research on the teaching and learning of ELF from the student perspective. It is commonly perceived that English learners in expanding-circle countries prefer Standard English, as the teachers in this study comment. Yet the study indicates that the teachers also think their students would like to learn ELF-related skills. It is of interest to explore student perceptions of ELF in relation to their aim of learning English, and to develop ELF pedagogy accordingly.

## Conclusion

This study examines the notion of ELF in relation to English teaching in Taiwan from the perspective of university English teachers. It shows that while the participant teachers are aware of the notion of ELF, they emphasize the importance of teaching English that conforms to NS norms. The study also reveals issues that need to be addressed when teachers include an ELF curriculum in classes, such as teacher ability, the availability of teaching materials and learning contexts, and the preference of students for Standard English. Although the present study focuses on Taiwan, it is hoped that, through this study, the author has contributed to knowledge about ELF in the context



of other expanding-circle countries such as those in the Asia-Pacific region. While the notion of ELF has been animatedly discussed in the field of ELT, the author calls for more data-based research such as the present study, in order to cast light on the conceptualization of ELF with documented evidence.

## References

- Charmaz, K. 2014. *Constructing Ground Theory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Cogo, A. 2009. 'Accommodating difference in ELF conversations: A study of pragmatic strategies.' In A. Mauranen & E. Ranta (eds.), *English as a Lingua Franca: Studies and Findings*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 254–273.
- Crystal, D. 1997. *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Glaser, B. G. 1998. *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Graddol, D. 1997. *The Future of English?* London: British Council.
- Graddol, D. 2006. *English Next: Why Global English May Mean the End of 'English as a Foreign Language'*. London: The British Council.
- Holliday, A. 2005. *The Struggle to Teach English as an International Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, J. 2009. 'English as a lingua franca: interpretations and attitudes.' *World Englishes*, 28(2), 200–207.
- Kachru, B. B. 1985. 'Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle.' In R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (eds.), *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 11–30.
- Kachru, B. B. 1992. 'Teaching World Englishes.' In B. B. Kachru (ed.), *The Other Tongue. English Across Cultures*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, pp. 355–365.
- Kaur, J. 2009. 'Pre-empting problems of understanding in English as a lingua franca.' In A. Mauranen & E. Ranta (eds.), *English as a Lingua Franca: Studies and Findings*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 107–123.
- Ke, I-C. & Cahyani, H. 2014. 'Learning to become users of English as a lingua franca (ELF): How ELF online communication affects Taiwanese learners' beliefs of English.' *System*, 46, 28–38.
- Kirkpatrick, A. 2008. 'English as the official working language of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Features and strategies.' *English Today*, 24(2), 27–34.
- Kirkpatrick, A. & Sussex, R. 2012. *English as an International Language in Asia: Implications for Language Education* (eds.). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Matsuda, A. 2003. 'Incorporating World Englishes in teaching English as an international language.' *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(4), 719–729.
- Matsuda, A. & Duran, C. S. 2012. 'EIL activities and tasks for traditional English classrooms.' In A. Matsuda (ed.), *Principles and Practices of Teaching English as an International Language*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, pp. 201–237.
- Matsuda, A. & Friedrich, P. 2011. 'English as an international language: A curriculum blueprint.' *World Englishes*, 30(3), 332–344.
- Mauranen, A. 2006. 'Signaling and preventing misunderstanding in English as lingua franca communication.' *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 177, 123–150.
- McKay, S. 2003. 'Teaching English as an international language in the Chilean context.' *ELT Journal*, 57(2), 139–148.
- Oanh, D. T. H. 2012. 'Global vs. glocal English: Attitudes and conceptions among educators, administrators and teachers in eight Asian countries.' In A. Kirkpatrick & R. Sussex (eds.), *English as an International Language in Asia: Implications for Language Education*. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 107–135.
- Park, J. S-Y. & Wee, L. 2011. 'A practice-based critique of English as a lingua franca.' *World Englishes*, 30(3), 360–374.
- Sharifian, F. (ed.) 2009. *English as an International Language: Perspectives and Pedagogical Issues*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Sifakis, N. C. 2004. 'Teaching EIL - Teaching international or intercultural English? What teachers should know.' *System*, 32, 237–250.
- Sifakis, N. C. 2009. 'Challenges in teaching ELF in the periphery: the Greek context.' *ELT Journal*, 63(3), 230–237.
- Sifakis, N. C. & Sougari, A. M. 2005. 'Pronunciation issues and EIL pedagogy in the periphery: A survey of Greek state school teachers' beliefs.' *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 467–88.
- Suzuki, A. 2011. 'Introducing diversity of English into ELT: Student teachers' responses.' *ELT Journal*, 65(2), 145–153.
- Young, T. J. & Walsh, S. 2010. 'Which English? Whose English? An investigation of "non-native" teachers' beliefs about target varieties.' *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 23(2), 123–137.

## Appendix

Interview Protocol (adapted from Young & Walsh, 2010)

1. In your opinion, what is English as a lingua franca (ELF)? How is it different from English as a foreign language (EFL)?
2. What kind of 'English' had you learned?
3. What kind of 'English' do you teach in the classroom?
4. What kind of 'English' would you like to teach?
5. What kind of 'English' do you think your students would like to learn?
6. Do you think learning ELF useful? Why or why not?

7. Do you think learning ELF plausible? Why or why not?
  8. Do you think learning ELF necessary? Why or why not?
  9. What might be the challenges facing teachers when/if they shift their pedagogical norm from a native speaker model to an ELF model?
-