
Adapting ELT coursebooks listening materials within an ELF-aware perspective: Voices from Greek and Italian classrooms

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Abstract

This contribution, drawing on the ELF-awareness perspective (Sifakis, 2019), emphasises the need for ELT materials adaptation within the latest ELF and WEs literature and research. Focusing on listening, it showcases adaptations of existing materials in EFL coursebooks used in Italy and Greece and presents data collected through student lesson-evaluations and teacher interviews. The adaptations comprise: a) replacement of prefabricated listening inputs with authentic spoken discourse encountered outside the classroom situation, b) design of follow-up tasks stimulating students' involvement in authentic interactions, and c) inclusion of reflective questions that can trigger teachers' and learners' awareness regarding language use, learning and instructional practices. Findings, indicating that the attempted modifications were successful, provide insights in enhancing our understanding of ELF-awareness integration in ELT.

Keywords: Adaptations, listening, ELF-awareness, reflective practices.

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Introduction

Research on ELF and its presence in ELT course-books (Siqueira, 2015; Tsantila & Georgountzou, 2017; Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013) has revealed that ELT course-books, with some exceptions, still represent native-speaker (NS) norms and cultures, which emphasises the need of a more focused integration and/or modifications of inputs and tasks that portray interactions involving native (N) and nonnative (NN) users of English in the various multifaceted contexts. Given that listening is closely linked with intelligibility (Bayyurt, 2018; Pickering, 2006) and comprehensibility, issues of crucial importance in interactants' effective communication, the design of listening inputs and tasks in which 'real', and not prefabricated, language patterns should be integrated in ELT practices is particularly significant. Learners can thus be exposed to authentic, produced for non-pedagogical purposes (Gilmore, 2007; Nunan, 1989), discourse, engage in activities that allow them to go beyond the mere, superficial, comprehension of content to a deeper appreciation and reflection of the function of English as a global

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language and as an effective means of interaction among N and NN speakers. This contribution, drawing on ELF-awareness (Sifakis, 2019), aims to address the above needs. It presents listening materials and tasks modifications which reflect the global nature of English and attempt to promote learners' and teachers' awareness of language and language use as well as awareness of learning and instructional practices.

ELF and ELT

Undoubtedly, English is increasingly spoken as a foreign or as an additional language by over 1.200.000 nonnative speakers (NNS) (Eberhard et al., 2020). This further corroborates that English, functions as “contact language” (Firth, 1996, p. 240) “among speakers of different L1s for whom [being the only [communicative medium of choice, it is not[only] adopted but adapted by its users” (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 7).

Therefore, this global and growing spread of English (Kirkpatrick, 2007; Jenkins, 2015), has inevitably challenged the norm-bound status of English. These challenges have affected teaching and learning traditions which demand for a shift from the traditional form focused EFL/ESL teaching to the actual focus on the “use” of the language, language teaching, materials development, and language teacher education (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018; Lopriore & Vettorel, 2019). It is essential then that teaching practices should be reconsidered accordingly, should they aim at raising learners' awareness not only of the diversity of ‘World Englishes’ (WEs) but also of the new realities regarding the multilingual and multicultural identities of the school population (European Commission, 2019). Consequently, for a more ‘realistic’ representation of this divergent nature of English in EFL/ESL classrooms, the NN teachers' roles need to be reconsidered so that learners' L2 awareness is enhanced. Considering the above, an ELF-aware teacher education will serve as a springboard for ESOLers' development as effective pedagogues as it is explained below in our study.

An ELF-Aware Pedagogical Perspective

ELF awareness is defined as “the process of engaging with ELF research and developing one's own understanding of the ways in which it can be integrated in one's classroom context, through a continuous process of critical reflection, design, implementation and evaluation of instructional activities that reflect and localize one's interpretation of the ELF construct’ (Sifakis and Bayyurt, 2018, p. 459).

According to the above definition, ELF-awareness can be raised among teachers and learners. Therefore, it can be argued that ELF-aware pedagogues should:

- a) reflect upon the aspects of language “normativity, appropriateness, comprehensibility, ownership of English by N and NN users alike” (Sifakis, 2019),

- b) evaluate, adapt, implement, reflect, and re-consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of their hitherto instructional practices and class materials in relation to the peculiarities of their own, local, “culture-specific” (Holliday & Cooke, 1982, p.128) contexts,
- c) expose to and engage learners with authentic communication which relates to their own interests.

Thus, learners and practitioners can address ELF-awareness as follows. First, by introducing real-life, authentic language use, frequently deviating from standard forms, they develop their language sensitivity skills, notice (Schmidt, 2010) the linguistic features present in the discourse, consider what is, or is not, important in effective communication, and eventually raise their “*awareness of language and language use*” (our emphasis) (Sifakis, 2019, p. 291).

Secondly, by engaging in reflective evaluation of their classroom practices, ELT practitioners develop an “*awareness [of the validity of their own] instructional practices*”, (Sifakis, 2019, p.292).

Finally, by involving learners in authentic, inside or outside the EFL classroom, communication connected with their own interests, experiences, they raise their *learners’ awareness of learning* and turn them into self-confident and successful language users (Seidlhofer, 2011).

ELT Coursebooks & Material Adaptation

One of the most powerful tools in ELT are the coursebooks. Having represented almost all the main changes in language teaching methodology (Richards, 2014), coursebooks “can act as agents of change, encouraging teachers to alter some of their traditional practices” (MacKay, 2012, p.71) in order to respond to practitioners’ and learners’ needs.

In many ways, coursebooks have regularly and significantly instigated changes in teaching habits and offered tools for novel forms of learning. But, in the last 15 years, despite the widely acknowledged global nature of the English language and the research in ELF and WEs, coursebooks have only partly included new forms of Englishes (Galloway, 2018; Galloway & Rose, 2014; Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013) and/or NN cultural representations. In Leung’s and Lewkowicz’ (2018) words:

...although current course-books aim to enhance learners’ social language by including authentic materials and encouraging students to use language to express views and opinions, these two dimensions of social language are not sufficient to truly prepare students for dealing with the complexities of real-life language (p. 66).

Coursebooks, therefore, in order to address the above limitations and in response to the changing ‘states’ of “English in the world” (Leung, 2017), may be gradually adjusted to different international contexts (Waters, 2012; McDonough et al., 2013) “by local classroom teachers [who can] “determine how such materials will be realized in a classroom” (Mackay, 2012, p. 76). Coursebooks, therefore, may offer a springboard for teachers who can rely on them but further adapt and develop their contents. They can, for example, integrate authentic on-line resources and excerpts from TV series, devise appropriate tasks, and/or engage learners in activities in which they are asked to notice (Schmidt, 2010) variable uses of English in oral interactions. Consequently, coursebooks could “look at the multilayered nature of interaction and [English] language use, in all their complexities” (van Lier, 2004, p.1) and be adapted in manners that the ‘local’ would meet the ‘global’.

It is towards this direction that integration of ELF-awareness in course material can contribute through instructional practices that aim to raise awareness of the use of the English language among learners and enhance learning.

ELF and Listening

Listening is a highly engaging cognitive activity involving active processes of decoding and message construction (Vandergrift, 2004), thus, closely connected with intelligibility (Bayyurt, 2018; Pickering, 2006) and effective communication. Hence, teachers should carefully monitor the design of listening activities which can expose learners to authentic N and NN interactions and enable them to develop a deeper appreciation of the function of English as an effective means of cross-cultural communication.

Listening is, thus, selected as the focus of the designed lesson plans after we examined relevant research on ELF and its interconnection with aural comprehension (Galloway and Rose, 2014; Vandergrift, 2004), intelligibility, accommodation, and comprehensibility (Jenkins, 2000) rather than adherence to NS norms and accuracy.

As listening can be examined from different perspectives, we decided to connect listening with two aspects: material authenticity and relevance to learners.

Authenticity

Authenticity and its connection with ELT have been thoroughly explored and discussed over the last forty years (Garton & Graves, 2014; Gilmore, 2007; Widdowson, 1996). Authenticity has also been widely discussed within the latest WEs and ELF research (Thorn, 2013). In this case, authenticity emphasizes ELT stakeholders’ need to focus on their social and local contexts, trust teachers’ own experience and develop appropriate localized materials for specific language groups (Gilmore, 2007). Teachers, particularly non-native English-speaking Teachers (NNESTs) can thus use spontaneous, natural, and

diverse authentic texts, such as newspapers and magazines, radio and TV broadcasts, or internet material to 'provide the best source of rich and varied [real life] input for language learners' (Mishan, 2005, p. 41). Learners' attention can then be drawn on features of genuine speech, [i.e., natural rhythm and intonation, natural starts and stops, hesitations, etc] (Tomlinson, 2010, p. 83), raise their awareness of how language is used, and stimulate their 'whole-brain processing' which can result in more durable learning' (Mishan, 2005, pp. 41-42).

This notion of authenticity thus provides a new role and a different function to local teachers who would become the 'local and legitimate authors' in classroom-based curriculum and teaching materials development (Lopriore, 2017). It is important though that all the authentic forms and functions of English as a *lingua franca* (Alptekin, 2002; Galloway, 2018; Gilmore, 2007; Tan, 2005), mainly produced by NNSs, should not be disregarded. In this study, our attempt is to include, and *not to* disregard, the forms and functions of English as a global lingua franca. Therefore, we present modifications, in the already existing coursebooks, in which forms of authentic and genuine speech produced by NS and NNSs alike are integrated.

Relevance to Learners

Another aspect to be considered in materials adaptation is the inclusion of topics which are *contextually relevant* to the learners. According to literature in ELT (McDonough et al., 2013; Rost, 2016), the topics included in ELT materials must be engaging, appealing, and relevant to the learners' age, interests, and reflect various global, local issues, like environment, travel, music, sports, traditions, immigration etc. so that the learners' curiosity and attention is aroused, and critical reflection is encouraged (McGrath, 2013). In case of a NNS context, "coursebooks [or class materials] should also provide opportunities to encourage learners to critically engage with the content" (Galloway, 2018, p. 476), [and] to consider the role of English in their own context" (Galloway, 2018, p. 478) as well as the role of English as a global lingua franca.

Considering thus the notions of authenticity and of contextually relevant topics, we initiated a research study to investigate how listening inputs and task modifications could be implemented in two diverse but similar EFL countries: Greece and Italy. The two countries were selected because, despite their differences, they present some similarities as outlined in the section below.

From Theory to Practice: A Two-Country Research Study

In what follows, we first present the two contexts where the lessons were conducted. Then, we describe the actual lessons that were developed by 4 teachers in collaboration with us. We continue with the learner and teacher responses and evaluation of the lessons, and we conclude with implications for ELT stakeholders and teacher education programmes.

The Two Contexts

In both countries, English is taught for 13 years, from kindergarten (5 years old) to last grade of senior high school (18 years old) by teachers who are NNESTs and are appointed after national exams which they take upon their graduation. English is taught from 2-4 hours per week depending on the school level (kindergarten, primary, junior or senior high school), type (private or state) and grade. The teaching of English follows the *CEFR levels* and descriptors and in Greece the indicated exit levels are A2 for primary school, B1+ in lower high school, and C1/C2 in high school (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 2016b). In Italy the exit levels are A1+ at primary, A2+ at lower high school, B1+/B2+ at high school (Ministero dell'istruzione, dell'università e della ricerca – MIUR, 2005) (see overall table 1 below).

Coursebooks

In Greece, English coursebooks used at state schools follow the *Common European Framework of Reference* (Council of Europe, 2001) and the *Cross-curricular Unified Framework* (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 2016a). They are provided for free, are designed and published by the Institute of Educational Policy in Greece (IEP) and Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs (MofERA), written by local authors (i.e., *Think Teen* is written by Karagianni et al, 2008a/b), and accompanied by workbooks, CDs and supplementary material.

In Italy, coursebooks are provided for free at primary level, they are chosen by teachers at diverse levels, while several English coursebooks have been written in the years by English, American and Italian authors and often published by Italian publishers (e.g., Loescher, Zanichelli).

It is worth noting that in both countries, expert local teachers have often been the authors of very successful coursebooks providing a diverse perspective as NN authors.

English Language Initial Teacher Education

In both countries English language teachers are qualified as teachers after the completion of their university degree usually through an exam or a public competition.

The Foreign Language Curriculum

The foreign language curriculum is established, supervised and revisited by educational authorities: MofERA and IEP in Greece, and Ministero dell'Istruzione (MIUR) in Italy. In Italy, especially appointed committees, often formed by local experts and teacher

educators, oversee the planning of the foreign language curriculum and of innovations (e.g., early language learning or CLIL). In Italy, the acknowledged role of English as a global language is being addressed in some university pre- and in-service teacher education courses where notions of WEs and ELF are part of the course components (Lopriore, 2021). No such courses, however, are introduced in Greece.

Plurilingual School Population

In the last decade, in both countries, classes have become multilingual because of recent migration flows. Special programs for teaching national languages of schooling as second languages, respectively Italian and Greek, have been developed and provided either in local schools or in specialised educational centres for migrants. Within these multilingual contexts English is often used and taught to migrants and refugees.

International Certifications

Learners pursue international high-stakes certificates, particularly during their high school. In Italy, this is pursued by high-school students because certified language level (e.g., B2/C1/C2) is acknowledged in terms of credits when students enrol at university. In Greece, though, this pursuit, closely connected with good professional prospects, is extremely prevalent from an early age. Therefore, in Greece, learners, besides their regular morning classes, attend private afternoon classes aimed at preparing them specifically for international certificates (Anastasiadou, 2015; Dendrinou et al., 2013).

Research Design

Considering our two contexts, Greece and Italy, and drawing on ELF-awareness, we conducted a study in which inputs and tasks in the existing coursebook were adapted. In this study, carried out according to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) action research model, a plan was initially developed to establish effective collaboration with local EFL teachers throughout the research process. The actual study took place in EFL classrooms in provincial, rural, and urban centres in both countries.

For the purpose of the study, lesson modifications, through listening inputs and follow-up tasks, were introduced in EFL classrooms. The specific modifications, made within the ELF-awareness perspective, aimed at eliciting both teachers' and students' *critical reflection* on: a) language-related issues (i.e., form-focused language vs effective communication), b) participants' attitudes towards NE and NNE, and c) instructional and learning practices.

The lesson modifications and participants' critical reflections focused on *authenticity* and *contextual relevance of topics* as mentioned earlier.

These criteria (McKay 2012; Mezirow, 1997; Tomlison & Masuhara, 2013) were considered to address the three components of ELF-awareness (i.e., awareness of

language and language use, awareness of instructional practices and awareness of learning) and therefore, they were considered as the most relevant for the specific study. Hence:

a) *Authenticity* was attempted through different listening text types which:

- i) displayed features of genuine, authentic, N and NN, discourse, and
- ii) reflected real life situations and interactions.

b) *Contextual relevance of the modifications* was attempted through topics that:

- i) reflected global and intercultural issues,
- ii) were challenging and relevant to the learners' needs, interests, and local contexts.

Table 1

The Two Contexts

	Italy	Greece
English at school	Compulsory for 13 years. Introduced through experimental L2 'awakening to other languages' in over 50% kindergarten schools.	Compulsory for 13 years. Introduced through the <i>English for Young Learners</i> (EYL) programme according to the <i>Integrated Foreign Languages Curriculum (IFLC)</i> (Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, 2016b).
Teachers' qualifications	NNESs, graduated in English; qualified as teachers as a result of a national competition.	NNES of Greek origin; qualified as teachers through University degree and appointed upon taking national exams.
Weekly hours of English instruction	Primary: 1 to 3 hours Middle school: 3 hours High school: 3 to 4 hours	Kindergarten & primary school: 2 hours Middle school: 3 hours High school: 2 hours
CEFR: Exit levels of English	Primary: A1+ Middle school: A2+ High school: B1+ /B2	Primary school: A2 Middle school: B1+ High school: C1/C2
Coursebooks	Designed by major English or Italian publishers in line with the Italian Ministry of Education (MIUR) curriculum guidelines	Designed by IEP and MofERA according to the existing curriculum and published by the state.
The foreign language curriculum	Established, supervised, and revisited by the MIUR.	Established, supervised, and revisited by MofERA and IEP.
Plurilingual school population	Plurilingual and multicultural classes due to migration; Italian taught as a second language to migrants	Some plurilingual classes due to migration; Greek taught as a second language to migrants
International (Intl) certifications	High percentage of Intl. certifications especially – mostly in high schools -and with a view to university enrolment.	High percentage of Intl certificates from a very early (8-9) age, as there is connection with professional prospects.

Research Procedure

The study was carried out within the teachers' own local contexts, taking into consideration the class syllabus, students' level, teaching schedule and each class peculiarities, in terms of school location, (urban or rural), school facilities, and time restrictions.

All participating teachers had initially been contacted and agreed to collaborate in the research. They subsequently (February-March 2018) were introduced by the authors of this paper to the main principles of ELF through:

- i) a handout on the main principles of ELF paradigm and its connections with ELT, and
- ii) 3 subsequent on-line meetings in which the nature, global or non-global character of the existing materials was discussed, examples of modified activities and recommendation within ELF-awareness were offered.

In the next stage, lesson plans were designed by the teachers in collaboration with the authors of this paper and implemented in each different context by the individual teacher. The rationale of all activities was fully discussed with the teachers. In order not to disrupt the syllabus and the class routine, the theme of the planned unit was kept as specified in the coursebook, but either the input(s) were replaced with other authentic material and/or the follow-up tasks were modified. All lesson plans followed the pre-while- and post listening framework in order to:

- i) trigger students' interest in the topic and give teachers an opportunity to introduce the topic and relevant lexis,
- ii) expose students to new, NE or NNE, listening materials (depending on the class),
- iii) engage students in group/class discussions relevant to the topics of the listening as well as the linguistic variety (NE or NNE) they were exposed to, triggering student reflections on issues of intelligibility, use of realistic and authentic language and ultimately of reconsideration of attitudes towards N and NN dichotomy, and
- iv) expand classroom experience with experience outside class.

All lessons were conducted in the Spring of 2018.

The impact of the lessons was noted through student lesson-evaluation tools and teacher feedback, elicited through a teacher self-report grid and subsequent interviews in the contexts in which they occurred.

Participants

Student Profile

Overall, 86 (44 in Greece and 42 in Italy) 13-18-year-old students, of A2-B2 level, participated in the study.

In Greece, the sample consisted of three groups aged 13-15:

- one group of 16 students (English level A2/B1) attended the false beginners' class of grade 1 of lower high school in a mainstream school in Lesvos, island in the Aegean Sea close to the Turkish borders,
- two groups of 12 students each (English level B1/B2) attended the advanced class of grade 1 in a Music school in Athens.

Students were mainly Greeks, and an insignificant number (6 in total) were second-generation migrants.

In Italy, the sample also consisted of three groups:

- one group – 15 students, aged 13-14 (English level A2.2/B1.1) attended the second year of a high-school in a small town the North-east of Italy, and
- two groups aged 16-18 (English level B1.2/B2.1) composed by one class of 14 and one class of 13, for a total of 27) attended the fourth year in two different high schools in the outskirts of Rome; one of the schools is a Lycée, and the other one is a Technical school.

Similar to their Greek peers, students were mainly Italians whereas in the group attending the technical school there were 3 non-Italian speakers (from Albania, Romania and Egypt).

Teacher Profile

All participating teachers worked in secondary education with teaching experience ranging from 10-25 years. In Greece the two teachers had a postgraduate qualification, (M.A and PhD/Teacher #2), had attended several conferences on ELT and teacher-methodology seminars. The two Italian teachers, qualified as permanent teachers, had attended conference presentations also on WEs & ELF.

Lesson Evaluation Tools

Student-Lesson Evaluations

At the end of each lesson, all lessons were evaluated by the students through an 11-item post-lesson evaluation questionnaire (9 Likert scale statements and 2 open-ended questions); in the open-ended questions, students were asked to justify their choices. The evaluation was administered in students' native language in order to avoid misunderstandings. The data reported in this paper comes only from the two open-ended questions of the student questionnaire as they highlight students' attitudes towards the novel interventions of the lessons.

Teacher-Lesson Evaluations and Response

Teachers were also asked to complete a *self-report grid* in which they estimated the time devoted to each activity (i.e., listening, pair-work, etc) and evaluated their group's reaction to the modifications. They indicated whether the lessons were positively, negatively or neutrally received. On subsequent days, *semi-structured interviews* with the teachers were conducted in which teachers further elaborated on the lessons conducted.

Teacher responses to the interviews were also recorded, transcribed, approved by the interviewees and then responses were thematically organised.

Description of the ELF-Aware Lessons

Six different lessons (three in each country) were conducted based on:

- *Think Teen* series in Greece: All lessons were conducted in the first class of junior high school. Greek teacher 1 (GT1) used *Think Teen for Beginners'* (Karagianni et al., 2008a), Unit 4/ "Ecofriendly" (p.44) (henceforth B1/4), and Greek teacher 2 (GT2) used *Think Teen for Advanced* (Karagianni et al, 2008b) Unit 7/ "Tomorrow and beyond" (henceforth B2/7) (p.104), (same lesson was conducted in two groups).
- *Star Prize Books 1* (A2/B1 transition) & *2* (B1/B1+ transition), in Italy; published in 2011 by LOESCHER, Turin, Italy, written by Daniela Calzoni & Angioletta Viviani, both English language teachers & teacher trainers in the Italian school system. The books -used in the upper secondary school - are all accompanied by a series of videos to be used in each lesson. The activities within the "*Varieties of English*" book unit were used by both teachers involved.

All lessons had two phases: in phase 1, the adapted lessons were conducted, in phase 2, students, through the post-lesson evaluation questionnaire, expressed their views on the

modifications and their responses towards NE/NNE. On all occasions, teachers were strongly recommended to act as facilitators only.



The lessons were modified as follows:

Greece

In GT1/B1/4, in accord with the definition of authenticity above, the existing listening input (*A day in the life of a zookeeper*, p.44), a scripted monologue describing the daily activities of a zookeeper, was replaced with a you-tube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhLkuGf4sX8>). In this video, Yumiko, an aquarist from Singapore, describes her daily job-routine. The decontextualized follow-up comprehension activity, (a ‘listen and tick’ activity), was also replaced by a more learner-relevant and real-life task, which was the building of Yumiko’s *active* facebook page in which learners had to complete information related to her birthday, job description and so on.

In the post-listening stage, learners, acting as Yumiko’s facebook-page followers, made comments on the content and/or technical parts of the video (see two examples below):

COMMENT 1: I love your TOUR of SEA Aquarium Singapore video It’s fantastic. I want to come and visit it

COMMENT 3: I wanna b thr  

 44  REPLY

Throughout the lesson, students were encouraged to cooperate for the completion of the information, even if Greek was used at times.

In GT2/B2/7 (p.104) the book listening input and the follow-up information-gap activity were kept untouched since it was a telephone conversation between Sophia, a Native Greek speaker exhibiting all phonetic features of Greek English, and Patrick, a British speaker living in Cambridge. In this conversation, Patrick gives Sophia directions regarding their meeting place in Cambridge. The follow-up listening information-gap activity, asking students to complete missing information, was left untouched as it reflected real life, authentic situations, such as listening to airport/station announcements. Therefore, it can reinforce listeners’ ability to identify specific/factual information. During the listening, students collaborated in completing the information missing and engaged thus in authentic classroom interactions.

In the post-listening stage, students listened to an Austrian speaker (NNES) describing the *House of Music* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ue5QZJyny4A>) and had to complete a grid with information missing.

In phase 2 of all lessons, major importance was placed on reflective and metalinguistic questions, integrated in a handout distributed to the students, upon completion of the actual listening and follow-up activity.

In GT1/B1/4 questions like (i.e., “*did you like the video you saw and why? would you include similar videos in your you-tube searches? was there something that bothered you? do you think that NE is important in communication?*”) were included.

In GT2/B2/7, there were questions like (“*What is Sophia’s nationality? What helped you understand her nationality? if you have done so. Does Sophia’s speech have several pauses, hesitations, fillers, etc? How does Sophia make sure that she understands the exact meeting place that Patrick tells her?*”).

Further questions had to do with their attitudes towards the two speakers (“*which of the two speakers do you like the best and why?*”) or their attitudes towards NS and NNS (“*Do you think that it is important to speak like Patrick or like Sophia? Why? Do you think that when you speak English you should try to sound like a(n) American/British/your own nationality/Greek and why?*”).

Italy

Lessons 1 & 2: Italian Teachers 1 & 2/*Star Prize* 1 & 2 – The unit “Varieties of English”, unit B.8, is one of the last units of the first book. It was chosen because of the specificity of the theme, unusual to find in English coursebooks, and because it provided a way to widen learners’ exposure to authentic uses of English. The interventions and modifications were put into practice using the activities related to the unit, offered in the second section of the book (pp.333-334). Parallel to the tasks already provided by the coursebook, learners were also asked to devise their own post-listening questions. Specifically, they were asked to engage into the spoken input and reflect upon what aural comprehension implied and how they coped with difficulties encountered. The first activity of the section, “Before watching the video”, a ‘pre-viewing’ task, was left untouched in both schools, as it aimed at eliciting students’ personal experiences, with questions regarding the accents they were familiar with, if they found speakers easy or difficult to understand, and if they were familiar with varieties of English.

The second activity was the modification of the third and fourth book activities (pp.333-334), originally meant to ask comprehension questions about a short video presenting people with diverse English accents, followed by questions related to students’ degree of understanding of those people. In the modified activity, students were instead asked what had facilitated their understanding and how they had coped with misunderstandings. They were then asked to listen to an audio-recording from a YouTube video with a few short exchanges in L1 and in L2 – English – used by speakers from different countries. In the listening tasks, students were asked to listen and:

- a) identify speakers' different ways of saying the same things, and, in the post-listening phase,
- b) notice and discuss differences in the speakers' L1 and L2 use.

After that, they were asked whether they were able to identify and understand Italian, Greek, French, Spanish, Turkish speakers among those using English in the exchanges. This was followed by a plenary discussion where students shared their views and comments on the lesson, and they described the strategies they had been using in order to facilitate their comprehension. At the end, students of both classes watched a TV interview with Mario Draghi led by a German TV journalist in English and were asked what had surprised them because it was unexpected, and what, on the contrary, they expected to find.

In the second class, the TV interview section was followed by an activity where students were asked to watch a video and listen to a series of brief exchanges in English by speakers from different parts of the world; they were then asked a series of questions such as: (*“What characterizes those speakers’ speech? What helped you better understand what they say, e.g., paralinguistic gestures? Was there any special slang that you had heard before? Are there any differences in what/how they say things? What strategies did you use to support your understanding?”*)

The modifications regarded the different types of tasks students in both schools were asked to carry out and the type of reflective metacognitive and metalinguistic questions posed to them, as the ones upon diverse ways speakers use to say the same things, upon strategies used to understand and those on noticing differences between L1 and L2 in spoken language.

Findings and Discussion

Overall, the authenticity-focused and contextually relevant modifications and enrichment of the listening material in the coursebooks were favoured by students and teachers as the responses, received through the post-lesson student evaluations and interviews, indicated. It was generally observed that the adapted materials can be successfully integrated in ELT classes. Teachers and learners seemed to appreciate the shift introduced in traditional ELT routines when learners' attention was addressed to spoken language features as well as drawn to the different instantiations of real language use in a diversity of authentic informal exchanges. The acceptance of this shift especially on the part of the teachers involved, may represent the first step into a change within their teaching routines and towards a successful introduction of activities leading to ELF-awareness and of its three components which were fully satisfied. More specifically:

Awareness of language and language use was satisfied through the inclusion of *authentic* listening inputs in both contexts as we can read in the findings emerging in each country.

In *Greece*, all learners' awareness towards language diversity and usage was aroused through their exposure to genuine, authentic NNE (Singaporean and Austrian), but intelligible accent, contrary to their book listening. Moreover, the GT2/B2/7 group had their attention drawn to genuine speech in which the use of accommodation strategies, essential in ELF interactions (Cogo & Dewey, 2012), through Sophia's asking for repetition of information and asking for clarifications, was observed.

Overall, language awareness was also promoted through the metalinguistic questions which instigated reflection and class discussion upon issues such as focus on language accuracy vs communication, N/NN accents and how these accents relate to 'speaker identity'. Students though, in Greece, admitted that the "NS norm" is what is required for their "exams".

In *Italy*, the shift introduced by the modification of the activities affected learners who were offered an opportunity to provide their personal responses to authentic inputs while being engaged in noticing tasks upon L1 use. In their process of learning a foreign language, learners are rarely invited to reflect upon L1 and L2 similarities and differences in speaking and interacting. Inclusion of reflection as such, though, may represent an essential step in enhancing awareness of language, language use and intercultural communication. The YouTube conversational exchanges and the interview in English to Mario Draghi constituted both authentic input rarely offered in coursebooks, but also a challenge for enhancing learners' awareness of language as used in real life. The use of reflective and metalinguistic questions also elicited learners' individual and collective responses.

The awareness of learning [and of instructional practices] was met through the selection of topics and the questions that focused on language-related issues, N vs NN dichotomy and world knowledge. In particular,

In *Greece*, awareness of learning was satisfied through the selection of topics *relevant* to each group and questions prompting learners' reflection upon N and NN accents and dichotomy. Both topics, "aquaria" and the post-listening video on "the House of Music", were very relevant to students' realities as it was confirmed by student responses to the lesson student-evaluations. Moreover, as their teachers explained, the topics were "meaningful" to their students who connected them with "job availability (GT1/B1/4), "culture/music" (GT2/B2/7), "sea-life, environment" (GT1/B1/4), and "travelling" (GT2/B2/7). The inclusion also of metalinguistic questions allowed students to think of speaker diversity and express their positive attitudes towards this diversity.

In *Italy*, students' awareness of what and how they were learning was prompted through questions eliciting both the degree of difficulty they experienced in understanding the diverse accents and varieties of English in both the videos and in the interviews, and in the reflective questions about the strategies learners used. The elicitation of learners' responses demanding them to position themselves within a real-

life input approach represented a further step for developing their awareness of their language learning process.

Awareness of instructional practices was satisfied in both contexts through the modified activities. All teachers willingly engaged in the modification of activities and reflected upon their practices in relation to their contexts. This allowed them to get out of their ‘comfort zone’, be engaged in original ‘ELF-aware’ lessons and eventually gain a very good understanding of how ELF-awareness activities can be integrated in their teaching contexts. Besides, the fact that teachers were strongly recommended to act as facilitators only and avoid interventions of corrective nature allowed most learners to “open-up” and actively engage in group discussions. Therefore, shifting the focus of their lessons from the linguistic accuracy to the effective communication, they realised that student engagement is enhanced, and more authentic interactions and effective language use is promoted.

Leaners’ Evaluations

Further evidence on students’ appreciation of the coursebook modifications derives from their responses to open-ended questions (see table 2 below).

In **Greece**, students welcomed the topics selected as each group’s extensive comments indicated: (*I liked the job of the aquarist. or I mostly enjoyed, “music” and the “magnificent HOUSE OF MUSIC and VIENNA”*). They noticed and positively commented on accent-related issues as indicated in some comments (i.e., “*I liked Yumiko’s pronunciation and accent*”, “*I liked Yumiko speaking in English in a ‘distinct/different’ accent*”) and noticed and discussed the accommodation strategies. One student for example, referring to the Sophia-Patrick dialogue, wrote: “*I liked the way that Sophia could ask questions in order to make us understand*”. Interestingly, they reflected upon and discussed the N vs NN dichotomy and connected it with speaker identity (“*it is ok to speak with our Greek way*”). Overall, they claimed that the modified lessons conducted were a novel and interesting way of learning beyond the coursebook material. Comments such as, “*a totally different lesson from whatever we have done so far*”, or “*the follow-up activities were very clever*”, and “*I liked the fact that I learned something new*” were frequent among all groups.

In **Italy**, students also unveil their positive appreciation of a diversity of topics. They also noticed and ‘surprisingly’ commented on accent-related issues (“*I did not expect Draghi to be able to use English so well*”) and were honestly surprised to discover the implications of the activities they had been involved in for the first time as their answers indicated (“*Together with my friends we didn’t particularly like the idea of devising our questions, I realized later that this way we were more engaged in listening*”). Similarly, to their Greek peers, they also appreciated the novel way of exploiting existing tasks to enhance their awareness and facilitate their learning “*When I first watched the video on the varieties of English, I realized that the previous activity where we discussed differences in dialects and varieties had a purpose: I thought I*

understood better". Importantly, they felt appreciated because they were asked their opinion and the rationale of using meaningful classroom activities. They perceived the fact that they were asked to retrace their comprehension process – both during the video tasks and the audio recording – by identifying the strategies adopted, as a learning suggestion that they could use also in other activities within and outside the school.

Table 2

Learners' Evaluations

Main thematic areas of findings: Learners commented on:	Greece	Italy
<i>The topics:</i> Topics selection and diversity were appreciated and well-embraced	v	v
<i>Accent-related issues:</i> NN accents were noticed and positively commented upon	v	v
<i>The modified lessons:</i> Lessons were a novel and interesting way of learning and the exploitation of existing tasks enhanced learners' awareness and facilitated their learning.	v	v
<i>Own engagement in the learning process</i> because their opinion counted, and classroom activities were meaningfully used		v
<i>N vs NN dichotomy</i> and made connections with speaker-identity	v	

Overall, in both countries, students' comments indicate that learners are open to new realities and seem to enjoy their exposure to novel ways of learning and to linguistic plurality and diversity.

Teacher Evaluations and Responses

All teachers further supported students' responses. They reported that students' collaboration in the follow-up activities, even if their native language was used in their interactions, engaged them in authentic classroom interactions.

Teachers also engaged in critical reflection regarding their hitherto instructional choices and practices as well as the norm-bound attitudes that shaped their instructional decisions. Specifically:

Teachers in **Greece:**

- reported that the "*novel*" lesson interventions greatly contributed to a lively and energetic class environment. As they said, the integration of targeted texts which are "*relevant*" to student interests, include "*intercultural issues*" and reflect the "global nature" of English through the inclusion of "*authentic NN discourse*" is significant as it can trigger student motivation, active engagement in student own learning and class discussions away from "*bookish' NE*". The above observations indicate a shift of perspective regarding teachers' norm-bound attitudes, reported in previous research (Sougari & Faltzi, 2015);

- acknowledged the value of metalinguistic questions in raising their own and their students' reflection and class discussion upon issues related to language accuracy versus communication, the importance of N/NN accents and how these accents relate to *speaker identity*,
- acknowledged that their “*non-corrective stance*” facilitated most students' lesson participation as students, not feeling *threatened* by the fact that they will be assessed on making mistakes and were left free to cooperate and complete the tasks.

Teachers' responses and evaluation in **Italy** indicated that the two Italian teachers involved:

- greatly appreciated their role as co-participants and willingly engaged in the modifications suggested, daring to try out and face the challenges of a diverse approach,
- revealed the stance of their positioning within a research study they had never been involved in before. At the beginning they admitted the reasons why they had not engaged in introducing WE & ELF in their courses claiming that: “*even if interested in introducing WE & ELF in our lessons, we feel we won't have enough time and materials. Coursebooks do not provide enough materials & tasks*”,
- appreciated the video materials and the easiness of their availability on a website, something they did not even plan to do on their own,
- acknowledged their lack of awareness of how to handle listening input and promote meaningful tasks,
- admitted that the inclusion of English NS and NNS was a significant aspect of what they regarded as a feature of ELT that they were very willing to further explore: “*I had never thought this could be an issue, apart from introducing varieties of English in an intercultural approach*” (T.1) and “*I still think that, even if important for learners to be aware of ELF, we teachers should stick to a NS model. I need time to think about it*” (T.2),
- admitted -as for language awareness- it was the first time there was an elicited “*reflection upon L1 and L2 spoken language features and use*”, something never offered in coursebooks.
- said, when interviewed about their overall response to the research study and their role, that they:

particularly enjoyed challenging the SS with an L1-L2 perspective on spoken language, we never do that” (T.1) and “I thought it was important to engage SS in managing the process. I also discovered how traditional I was when dealing with listening. (T.2)

Conclusions and Implications

This study showed that ELF-aware adaptations of existing materials can draw learners' attention to authentic interactions and active class participation especially when they don't feel threatened by being constantly corrected. All that engagement can have a positive impact on students' learning, raising their self-confidence as language users.

Overall, students' responses indicate that their exposure to novel and innovative teaching practices was appreciated. Students' exposure to topics that were relevant to each group's specific contexts and interests triggered their engagement with their learning process. Their exposure to NNE accents and dialogues between NNSs allowed them to think of speaker diversity, express their positive attitudes towards this diversity, refer to the importance of accommodation strategies for effective communication, value the authenticity, "*real*" use of the language each time. Besides, these responses also indicate that if appropriately guided, students can reflect upon and get aware of the "real language usage" reconsidering, thus, their norm-bound attitudes and beliefs (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 199).

Teachers, on the other hand, collaborated in the preparation of lessons within ELF-awareness and, acknowledging the positive outcomes of the lessons for their learners and themselves, seemed eager to further experiment in more ELF-aware lessons and activities. They emphasised that the inclusion of metalinguistic questions triggered both, learners and themselves, to think of the dichotomy of N/NN, and issues of speaker identity, their norm-bound language beliefs, the source(s) of these beliefs, and the importance of effective communication in contrast to language accuracy.

Considering the above, implications can be seen in teacher education programmes, materials developers and publishers. First of all, teachers can be involved in training courses with an ELF-aware component and should be sustained by 'reflection-on-action' (Schön, 1983), starting from the teachers' lessons and making them use on-line authentic materials. Secondly, teachers can raise learners' awareness of the global nature of English and can further develop aural comprehension and spoken interaction awareness.

On the other hand, publishers and materials developers should widen the borders of ELT materials by exploring findings from ELF research, resorting to authentic audiovisual materials and appropriate tasks, gradually catering for learners' needs and redefining teaching and evaluation constructs.

Overall, this study shows that student and teacher feedback and reflection that were received on the lessons conducted can serve as the basis for further planning and signpost a more effective use of the already existing tasks and hopefully, a more effective teaching, "not [necessarily] by [providing] definitive answers to pedagogical questions, but rather by providing new insights into the teaching and learning process" (McKay, 2006, p. 1).

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İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Ders Kitaplarındaki Dinleme Materyallerini ODİ-Farkındalıklı Bakış Açısıyla Uyarlamak: Yunanca Ve İtalyanca Sınıflarından Yansımalar

Öz

Ortak dil olarak İngilizce (ODİ) farkındalığı perspektifinden (Sifakis, 2019) elde edilen bu katkı, güncel ODİ ve dünya İngilizceleri (Dİ) alanyazını ve araştırması bağlamında İngilizce öğretimi materyallerinin uyarlanması gerektiğine işaret etmektedir. Bu çalışma, dinlemeye odaklanarak, İtalya ve Yunanistan'da kullanılan İngilizce ders kitaplarındaki mevcut materyallerin uyarlamalarını göstermekte ve öğrenci ders değerlendirmeleri ve öğretmen görüşmeleri yoluyla toplanan verileri sunmaktadır. Uyarlamalar şunları içermektedir: a) önceden hazırlanmış dinleme girdilerinin sınıf ortamı dışında karşılaşılan gerçek sözlü söylemle değiştirilmesi, b) öğrencilerin gerçek etkileşimlere katılımını teşvik eden takip etkinliklerinin tasarımı ve c) öğretmenlerin ve öğrencilerin dil kullanımı, öğrenme ve öğretim uygulamaları ile ilgili farkındalığımetikleyebilecek düşündürücü soruların dahil edilmesi. Yapılan değişikliklerin başarılı olduğunu gösteren bulgular, İngilizce öğretiminde ODİ-farkındalık entegrasyonu anlayışını desteklemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: uyarlamalar, dinleme, Ortak Dil Olarak İngilizce (ODİ) Farkındalığı, yansıtıcı uygulamalar