ELF Awareness among Turkish ESP Students

Türk ÖAİ Öğrencilerinde ODİ Farkındalığı

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Abstract. The study, which was based on quantitative data, sought to shed light on how much ELF influences language learning goals for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners, how they relate to the new ELF phenomena, and they are aware of the changing role of English, which was one of the least researched areas in the literature. The findings indicated that the Turkish ESP students showed great awareness about the issue that today English is considered a primary Lingua Franca that enables them to communicate and interact with others around the world. It was also revealed that besides the fact that they did not place only native varieties of English or only native speakers in their English learning process, communicating with non-native speakers of English had more importance than native speakers of English in their purpose of ESP learning. They did not see the role of accuracy in English as an ultimate goal as long as intelligibility was achieved in communication. This article calls for more future research and effort devoted to enhancing ELF awareness in Turkish ESP programmes.
Keywords: ELF awareness, English as a lingua franca (ELF), English for specific purposes (ESP), language attitudes.

Öz. Nicel verilere dayanan bu çalışma, Ortak bir dil olarak İngilizce (ODİ) kavramının Özel amaçlı İngilizce (ÖAİ) öğrencileri için dil öğrenme hedeflerini ne kadar etkilediğine, bunların yeni ODİ fenomeniyle nasıl bir ilişki kurduğuna ve İngilizcenin değişen rolünün ne kadar farkında olduklarına ışık tutmayı amaçlamıştır. Bulgular, Türk ÖAİ öğrencilerinin, bugün İngilizcenin dünyadaki diğer kişilerle iletişim kurmalarını ve etkileşimde bulunmalarını sağlayan birincil ortak dil olarak kabul edildiği konusunda büyük farkındalık gösterdiklerini göstermiştir. İngilizce öğrenme süreçlerine sadece anadili İngilizce olanlara yer vermemenin yanı sıra, ÖAİ öğrenme amaçları açısından anadili İngilizce olmayanlarla iletişim kurmanın anadili İngilizce olanlardan daha önemli olduğu da ortaya çıkmıştır. İletişimde anlaşılırlık sağlandığı sürece İngilizcedeki doğruluğun rolünü nihai bir hedef olarak görmedikleri saptanmıştır. Bu makale, Türkiye'deki ÖAİ programlarında ODİ farkındalığını artırmaya yönelik daha fazla araştırma ve çaba gösterilmesini gerektirdiği göstermiştir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Dil tutumu, ortak bir dil olarak İngilizce (ODİ), ODİ farkındalığı, özel amaçlı İngilizce (ÖAİ).

Introduction

The consequences of globalization on English are especially noticeable in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to communicate not only with native English speakers but also with other non-native English professionals, many students participate in ESP programs (Csizer & Kontra, 2012). ESP students, thus, are the possible subjects who are going to work in an international context which the international and intercultural communication dynamics should be taken into consideration while investigating ESP interactions (Elaish *et al.*, 2019). For these reasons, as Bhatia *et al.* (2011) stated, the aim of ESP should be to use English as an ELF speaker, guided by the discourse community. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that ESP has been expanding and changing for about 50 years. Many foreign institutions are becoming more interested in offering ESP courses to students from various fields. Therefore, it is not surprising to see the significant effort being made to publish research in prestigious and high-impact journals, for which English is the language of choice for disseminating research findings to a worldwide audience (Flowerdew, 2015). Additionally, given that 95 percent of publications are written in English nowadays, more non-native English speakers than native speakers have submitted papers to these calls for papers (Hyland, 2013). Moreover, the precipitate growth of English as a global language has led to an estimated 1 billion L2 users (Ilyosovna, 2020). Because of the reasons mentioned above, the impact of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) on ESP has been profound in many ways such as the design of curricula and course materials, students' needs, and teachers' preparation (Flowerdew, 2015). Since the integration of ELF into ESP is an eventual consequence of the globalization that influenced English use worldwide, it raised two questions: to what extent are ESP students aware of the altering role of the English language and to what extent is the process of their English learning shaped by the native speaker ideology? Although there have been several studies conducted on ELF-awareness of tertiary-level students in the Turkish context (e.g. Deniz, Özkan, & Bayyurt 2016; Inceçay & Akyel 2014; Kemaloglu-Er Bayyurt, 2016, 2018; Öztürk, Çeçen, & Altınmakas 2010) in the Turkish context, there was no informative study that investigated how much ELF influences language learning goals for ESP learners, how they relate to the new ELF phenomena, and how far they are aware of the changing role of English. Therefore, the study was conducted to fill this gap.

Literature Review

English as a lingua franca (ELF)

ELF can be defined as "English as it is used as a contact language among speakers from different first language" (Jenkins 2009, p. 142). Moreover, Seidlhofer (2013) defined it as "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option" (p. 7). On the other hand, the definitions of "ELF speakers" have changed over time; in the literature, although the earliest definitions excluded native speakers from ELF users (e.g. House, 1999), the recent views consider all groups (ENL, ESL and EFL) of English users as EFL users (e.g. Jenkins, 2006; Mauranen, 2017).

The fundamental characteristics of ELF can be presented briefly in 5 points: 1) Individuals who speak different first languages (primarily from the expanding circle) use ELF to communicate

with each other, although not exclusively. 2) Depending on the needs and preferences of the speaker (or learner), ELF can be seen as an alternative to EFL rather than a replacement for it. 3) ELF encompasses distinct linguistic innovations that differ from ENL and are commonly used by the majority of ELF speakers in certain contexts. 4) Pragmatically, ELF involves using specific communication techniques such as accommodation and code-switching, as opposed to "one-size-fits-all" English, because ELF forms are highly dependent on the particular communication situation. 5) Competent ELF speakers were interviewed to extract descriptions of ELF that could potentially lead to standardization (Jenkins ,2009).

In the context of ELF, the relationship between language and culture has become more dynamic. ELF communication occurs in emergent, fluid, and situated sociocultural circumstances rather than fixed settings. The linguistic and cultural resources in ELF communication continuously interact with the local, national, and global contexts. The concept of a "third place" in L2 communication is highly relevant in explaining the cultural space of language use (Kramsch 1993, p. 233). This model emphasizes the L2 speakers' ability to mediate and relativize cultures. L2 communication operates in a third place that is neither dominated by the L1 nor the L2, but a new cultural space where intercultural practices and forms are created. In intercultural communication, specific languages and cultures are less likely to provide cultural assumptions and frames of reference. The language used as a Lingua Franca is not owned by any specific culture or country, but by all participants involved in the interaction. L2 speakers involved in intercultural communication with multiple languages and cultures make an effort to mediate and negotiate between their own language and culture and those of others. Furthermore, unlike the traditional and outmoded notion that a language is a separate entity from its culture (see Geertz 1973), language is a synthesis and manifestation of culture; it cannot be regarded as a distinct element from culture (Baker, 2009). However, when we talk about specific languages, in particular international languages such as English, which includes countless cultures due to its speakers from different cultures around the world, language and culture can be divided (Risager, 2006). Yet, "at the level of an individual's linguistic resources or competence, language and culture are again inseparable and develop in tandem based on the individual's life experiences". Therefore, it should be kept in mind that culture can be considered as "a discourse community, but one that is enacted alongside and in relationship with other discourse communities, and one whose role and relevance to communication is emergent in each individual instance" (Baker, 2009, p. 571-573). Intercultural competence involves acknowledging and understanding the distinctions between one's own culture and those of others, accepting those distinctions, and reacting in a manner that avoids offending, ridiculing, or belittling people from diverse cultures. This is an essential aspect of ESP, which emphasizes intercultural competency as a fundamental element. To effectively teach ESP to students, it is necessary to devise a novel instructional approach that integrates intercultural motives (Luka, 2007).

Furthermore, the process of engaging with ELF research and developing one's own comprehension of how it can be integrated into one's school setting through a constant process of critical analysis, design, application, and assessment of classroom instruction that mirror and localize one's interpretation of the ELF construct is described as ELF awareness. (Sifakis & Bayyurt 2017). In Seidlhofer's (2011 as cited in Sifakis, 2017) seminal work, 3 major components of ELF awareness were explained: 1) Awareness of language and language use: Recognizing ELF dialogue, including

interactions between speakers of multiple languages, and creating communication plans utilizing a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic resources. 2) Awareness of instructional practice: Being conscious of textbook- and policy-related practice, such as being conscious of diverse goals set in the learning situation determined by pupil's needs, and also teacher-related instructional practices, such as instructors' own personal theories regarding teaching, their opinions and viewpoints toward the use of language. 3) Awareness of learning: English gets adopted by pupils when it becomes a more common language used in daily interactions and stops being considered a foreign language in the same way that other languages are.

ELF in English for specific purposes (ESP)

According to Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991), who identified the international character of ESP, there are three characteristics of ESP; "internal communication", "transmission of science and technology", and "International communication". The first one is for the post-colonial or ESL countries (Kachru' concentric models of English (Kachru, 1985)) such as India, Nigeria and Singapore where English is needed for internal communication because of its extensive use among especially, educated citizens and also the reason that English is the most neutral language available in these countries. Due to the needs of English in these countries, some of them have their own ESP textbooks in which local speech norms can be traced rather than standard norms of English. Not only textbooks but also new teaching models are required to compensate for the needs of these ESP learners. For instance, in Nair-Venugopal's (2009) study conducted in the Malaysian context, it was firmly put forward that in order to compensate the needs of local learners of English, there should be new models that are beyond the traditional models provided by standardized Western teaching norms. This situation doubtlessly echoes the characteristics of ELF for the reason that ELF refers to the fact that "multilingual speakers will use English for utilitarian purposes with a pragmatic attitude" (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 199) and as House (2012) commented, "a major characteristic of ELF is its multiplicity of voices. ELF is a language for communication, a medium that can be given substance with many different national, regional, local, and individual cultural identities" (p. 365). These former examples indicate that even 50 years ago, the idea of ELF was valid for ESP courses and classroom material development according to many scholars.

The second issue highlights academic publications. It is a well-known fact that the field of ESP has been growing and developing for almost five decades. There has been a growing interest among many international universities for ESP courses offered to students from different departments. Therefore, it is not surprising to observe the serious efforts being made to publish research in renowned, high-impact journals, for which English is the language used to disseminate research results to worldwide public. (Flowerdew, 2015). Furthermore, considering the fact that today, 95% of all publications are in English, the non-native English scholars in these submissions have exceeded the native ones (Hyland, 2013). ESP scholars and graduate students among these scholars have been increasing constantly when considering how fast the current information is getting and also contributing to the literature. Many different disciplines, like science and engineering, also take advantage of web-enabled linked data facilitating online discussions and blog postings and also offer their students access to publications which accelerate this increase in academic publishing. As English for Specific Purposes (ESP) studies gain weight in academic publications, for the most part, the

language that multilingual ESP scholars (especially in science and engineering) use and their attitudes towards English have been changing as well. A recent study conducted by Ferguson *et al.* (2011) indicated that the majority (62%) of Spanish ESP scholars stated that they felt more advantaged than disadvantaged by the dominance of English in science. They also claimed that English is no longer a language that gives privileges to native-speaker academics. For these reasons, ELF in the current era of globalization has been increasingly gaining importance. Therefore, "the nature of English for global communication and collaborations is changing, and changing fast" (Flowerdew, 2015, p. 13). The last one sheds light on the issue that English is primarily chosen as the language of communication among non-native speakers in many occasions in international business. In Graddol's (2006) "English Next" publication, while the current state of English as the global language around the world and its comparison to other prevalent languages (e.g. Arabic, Chinese) were highlighted, he also put forward the historical changes and future-related issues of English education. He stressed the fact that the numbers of speakers who use English as EFL and ESL have exceeded NSs of English, therefore NSs' longstanding traditional linguistic advantage has been losing its influence on both ESL and EFL speakers.

The Aim of the study

This study explores to what extent ELF influences English learning goals of ESP learners, how they relate to ELF phenomena, and how they are aware of the changing role of English. To do this, the researcher has administered a survey adapted from the study conducted by Bayyurt *et al.* (2019) to the ESP students. The information was gathered from the ESP students in 4 ESP programmes given at a state university located in Turkey.

Methodology

The approach of the study was quantitative-exploratory, the design, however, was a non-experimental survey study in which a questionnaire was administered to the participants to get valuable information pertinent to the objectives of the study. In a study based on an exploratory approach, the aim is to enhance understanding of a subject that is not well recognized but requires more attention, and to create captivating ideas regarding a subject that is already established (Swedberg, 2020). It is obvious that the literature fails to present a complete understanding of to what extent ESP students are aware of the current state of English which is a Lingua Franca and to what extent they are aware of the ELF concept regarding their ESP education therefore, the current study, which tried to fill the existing gap in the literature, adopted an exploratory approach. Furthermore, since the study relied on the numeric (quantitative) data gathered through a questionnaire, a quantitative-exploratory approach was chosen as the basis of the study. The data were collected through a questionnaire. The researcher has adapted and utilized a questionnaire based on the study of Bayyurt, *et al.* (2019). The study was conducted in the 2021-2022 academic year. The students were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary. The ethical approval (no: 20021704-604.01.02-16112) was obtained before the study and the researcher complied with all the rules specified within scientific research and publication ethics regulation throughout the study.

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Participants and setting

The total number of the ESP students who participated in this study was 236. The demographic analysis indicated that they participated in the study from 4 different programmes, which were "Hospitality Management", "Food and Beverage Management", "International Trade and Logistics" and "Medical Documentation and Archiving". The detailed demographic information is given in Table 1 below.

Table 1.
The demographic information of the ESP students

Department	Category	Sub-Category	Frequency(N)	Percent (%)
Hospitality Management	**Gender**	Male	28	54.9
		Female	23	45.1
		Total	51	100
Food and Beverage Management	**Gender**	Male	32	64
		Female	18	36
		Total	50	100
International Trade and Logistics	**Gender**	Male	50	65.8
		Female	26	34.2
		Total	76	100
Medical Documentation and Archiving	**Gender**	Male	18	30.6
		Female	41	69.4
		Total	59	100
Total			236	100

The research setting of the study was a state university located in the city of Muğla in Turkey. The researcher adopted a convenience sampling approach for the study because it enables the inquirer to select easily accessible and voluntary participant groups. Since the researcher resided and worked in Muğla, the study was conducted at a state university in the area, which gave the researcher to take care of every step of the study studiously.

Data collection tool

To find out the ESP students' ELF-awareness, a questionnaire, which was developed by Bayyurt *et al.* (2019), was used to collect data in this study. The questionnaire was a 5-point Likert scale and contained a total of 22 items about their ELF awareness. Bayyurt *et al.* (2019) explained

that during the development of the questionnaire, the rotated factor model showed that the items were divided into categories based on 3 factors: "intercultural awareness", "positioning native varieties and native speakers", and "awareness of communication goals". 43.49% of the variation (eigenvalues for the three components were 4.7, 3.1, and 1.7, respectively) was explained by this factor model; variance for the three factors was 0.21, 0.14, and 0.7, respectively). By measuring Cronbach's alpha values, the questionnaire's internal consistency was also investigated. With all the items included, the total questionnaire's internal consistency was .739. The questionnaire was originally developed for English teachers to whether they are aware of ELF yet, for this study, it was adapted to investigate the ESP students' ELF awareness. Therefore, the items starting with "students…" altered as "I…" (only 4 items were changed in total).

In order to pilot the ELF questionnaire developed by Bayyurt *et al.* (2019), the questionnaire was administered to 47 ESP students at the same state university. Following the piloting, necessary changes and corrections were made. A Cronbach's alpha internal co-efficiency, the most popular objective measure of reliability, was used to ensure the reliability of the scales. To observe the reliability of the questionnaire, the alpha reliability coefficient was utilized and was found .705. It was considered sufficiently reliable for use the main study. In light of feedback from the piloting, minor adjustments were made to wording and formatting, along with a participant consent form.

Table 2.
Cronbach alpha reliability estimate

Cronbach's Alpha	N of participants
.705	47

Data collection procedure

Using Google Surveys, the questionnaire was converted into an electronic format and a public link was created for the participants. At the beginning of the term, the researcher attended to their lesson with the permission of their ESP instructor and explained what the aim of the study was. Prior to the questionnaire, the participants were given the consent forms within Google documents, in which the ESP students were informed that confidentiality and voluntary participation were two major features of the study. After the explanation of the study by the researcher, the researcher sent the questionnaire link to the representative students (n:4) of each ESP programme then, the representatives shared the open link of the questionnaire in their WhatsApp groups. The participants had 3 months to answer the questionnaire. The participants answered the questions freely and without any constraints being imposed on them.

Data analysis

The questionnaire data were transferred to SPSS 2.0 for statistical analysis. Firstly, the data were checked in terms of whether the items distributed normally in order to see if the means of the items of the questionnaire were applicable as the representative values of the data, therefore normality test was utilized. As a result of the normality test, the significance value of Kolmogorov-

Sirnov (the sample size of the study was 236) was found .200 which was greater than the alpha value (.05). The data of the study, thus, were distributed normally.

Table 3.

Tests of normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
ELF_awareness	,092	236	,200	,985	236	,113

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

After normality test, in order to calculate the reliability and validity of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency estimation was utilized. Since there were three factors in the questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha values of the three factors were analyzed as .519, .751, and .637 respectively. Then, the percentages of the frequencies of each item in three factors were given separately in the findings part. In order to identify general participant tendency, the percentage for every item was evaluated. The responses of the items were designed on an ordinal scale i.e., higher number means agreement and lower number means disagreement.

Findings

In this section, the findings according to the 3 factors resulting from the factor analysis were presented. The percentages (based on the alternatives on a 5-point Likert scale) for each item were reported in the following section and were grouped under the 3 categories identified by the principal component factor analysis.

In Table 3, the role of culture was highlighted greatly by almost every student participant (agree+strongly agree = 94%) and also the awareness of the differences and the similarities between cultures were seen as such an important issue by them (agree+strongly agree = 80.7%). Furthermore, regarding the English teaching materials, while the student participants indicated a considerable appreciation towards the English teaching materials designed by considering the non-native English-speaking world cultures (agree+strongly agree = 71,3%), they did not deprecate English teaching materials from the native-English world such as Britain and/or the USA (agree+strongly agree = 46,7%).

Table 4.

The ESP students' intercultural awareness of the students

Items on cultural awareness	Students' responses in percentages				
	1	2	3	4	5
Non-native speakers of English should learn about both the target language culture and other cultures to communicate successfully in English.	0	2,3	4,7	53,7	40,3

	1	2	3	4	5
It is essential to learn the similarities and differences between the native English speaking countries and their own country.	1,7	6,7	11	53	27,7
I do not need to know about the cultures of native speakers of English to communicate successfully in English.	20	35	16,7	25	3,3
I need to know about the similarities and differences between my own culture and other cultures.	5	35	20	28,3	11,7
English teaching materials should include cultural elements from Britain and/or the USA.	0	28,3	25	30	16,7
English teaching materials should include cultural elements from countries around the non-native English speaking world.	3,3	15,3	10	35,3	36

Note. N=236, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

In Table 4, the responses of the student participants showed a rather consistent tendency towards the native varieties and native speakers of English. Firstly, the great majority of the student participants indicated that their ultimate speaking targets were not native speakers of English (disagree+strongly disagree = 81%). Moreover, the native-like proficiency (disagree+strongly disagree = 67%) and the native-like accent (disagree+strongly disagree = 88,7%) were not considered the main goals in their English learning process. Furthermore, another opposition was revealed which was about learning only native varieties of English for the practical issue by the student participants (disagree+strongly disagree = 76,6%). They also showed that neither the native English accents (disagree+strongly disagree = 74%) nor a Standard English accent (disagree+strongly disagree = 61,6%) was a necessity for the non-native English-speaking teachers. Although a considerable number of the participants supported the idea that native-speaker models should be utilized by non-native English-speaking teachers for the sake of successful communication (agree+strongly agree = 53,3%), the English teaching materials in written and spoken forms which were designed by only native-speakers of English were not appreciated by the participants (disagree+strongly disagree = 61,7%).

Table 5.
The ESP students' positions towards native varieties and native speakers

Items on positioning native varieties and native speakers	Students' percentages responses in				
	1	2	3	4	5
It is more important for me to be able to communicate with native speakers of English than non-native speakers of English.	29,7	51,3	11,7	5,3	1,3
In learning English, the ultimate goal should be reaching native-like proficiency.	17,7	49,3	18,3	9	5,7
English has many varieties, but to be practical we should only learn American or British English.	18,3	58,3	10	10	3,3
I should be able to speak English with a native-like accent.	33,7	55	3	6,3	2
English teaching materials should include written or spoken texts only produced by native speakers of English.	21,4	40,3	25	11,7	1,6

Native English-speaking teachers should speak English with a British or American accent.	3,3	48,3	21,7	21,7	5
Native English-speaking teachers must have a Standard English accent.	18,3	48,3	5	20	8,3
Non-native English-speaking teachers should speak English with a British or American accent.	20,7	52,3	5	12	10
Non-Native English-speaking teachers must have a Standard English accent.	3,3	41,7	21,7	25	8,3
Non-native English-speaking teachers must rely on native-speaker models to communicate successfully in English.	5,3	48	11,7	11,7	23,3

Note. N=236, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Table 5 showed that the hospitality management students expressed clearly that both native and non-native speakers were their target speakers (agree+strongly agree = 90%). Moreover, the intelligible accent was promoted by the participants since it was considered as an important issue for the good of communication (agree+strongly agree = 63,3%). While accurate grammar was regarded as an essential component in communication among native and non-native speakers of English by the majority of the participants (agree+strongly agree = 55,2%), a considerable number of them indicated an opposition to it (disagree+strongly disagree = 31,6%). The student participants highlighted greatly the impact of getting exposed to non-native varieties of English (agree+strongly agree = 68,2%). They expressed obviously that a native English teacher's job was to teach how to communicate in English (agree+strongly agree = 74,4%). A standard English accent was not considered a necessity by the majority of the student participants (disagree+strongly disagree = 58,4%).

Table 6.
The ESP students' awareness of communication goals

Items on awareness of communication goals	Students' responses in percentages				
	1	2	3	4	5
I need to learn English to communicate with native and non-native speakers of English.	1	5	7	52	35
Intelligible accent is essential for successful communication among native and non-native speakers of English.	5	13,1	8,5	40,3	23
Accurate grammar is essential for successful communication among native and non-native speakers of English.	8,6	23	13,1	40,2	15
Exposing to non-native varieties of English has an impact on my language learning.	1,5	18,7	11,7	39,5	28,7

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	1	2	3	4	5
Native English-speaking teachers must have a Standard English accent.	8,7	49,7	16	19,3	6,3
Native English-speaking teachers' job is to teach students how to communicate in English.	7	11,7	6,7	56,2	18,4

Note. N=236, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

In a nutshell, the findings clearly indicated that the participants demonstrated a strong awareness of ELF and questioned the established norms of Standard English. Specifically, they highlighted English as a primary language for global communication and emphasized the importance of being understood rather than adhering strictly to grammatical accuracy in order to facilitate successful interactions. Interestingly, their target audience for effective communication was not native English speakers (NESs), but rather non-native English speakers (NNESs). Consequently, the study revealed a focus on using English proficiently and meaningfully, rather than striving for native-like fluency or accent. The participants prioritized essential aspects of ELF, such as effective communication and negotiation skills, over attaining a native-like command of the language. The researcher created the next section to present the exact meaning of the results revealed in the current study by exploring the significant points of the research, its implications in different areas of the study, and the improvements that the study can make for future developments.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The findings indicated that the Turkish ESP students showed great awareness about the issue that today English is regarded as a primary Lingua Franca that enables them to interact with others around the world. Regarding three factors that emerged from the questionnaire, the results were expanded on and explained in detail in the following lines.

The study pointed out that the ESP students of the current study emphasized greatly the relationship between language and culture in ELF which is dynamic. They reflected that language and culture have a strong bond. Intercultural awareness, thus, was promoted as a crucial step in ESP education by the ESP students, involving understanding and respecting cultural differences. Furthermore, the majority of them also paid considerable attention to the importance of differences and similarities between cultures regarding the English language learning process. In other words, the ESP students emphasized this intercultural awareness by reflecting the importance of not only language itself but also cultural factors in their English language learning process. The findings about intercultural awareness of the ESP students reflected ESP students' readiness and demands for ELF in their ESP education, therefore, from the ESP students' perspective, the results echoed Bayyurt and Akcan's (2015, p. 16) claim which "the field of intercultural rhetoric has already been flagged as being of increasing importance for ESP studies."

In addition to their high awareness ELF and cultural factors in the process of their English language learning, such as appreciating considerably the importance of both the cultures of native speakers and the non-native English-speaking world, the findings also showed that they do not place only native varieties of English or only native speakers in their English learning process, but also

communicating with non-native speakers of English has more importance than communication with native speakers of English in their purpose of ESP learning. According to the study conducted by Crystal (1997), today nobody would question that the number of non-native speakers (NNSs) using English outnumbers its native speakers (NSs). As Jenkins (2009) stated, with the majority of speakers being non-native English speakers, English has emerged as the most popular language worldwide. Furthermore, most of the interaction in English takes place between NNSs (Graddol, 2006). By not centralizing only native speakers or varieties of English into their English learning process, the ESP students indicated that their goal clearly was to learn English which "enables them to become members of expert communities and to communicate with other members wherever they may be and whatever primary culture they come from" (Widdowson, 1997, p. 144). This result, however, did not match with Kelch and Santana-Williamson's (2002) study in which vocational English students were investigated to observe whether non-native and native speakers indicated any significant differences regarding their attitudes towards various English accents. They found that the students were rather critical of non-native English teachers, and they reflected their dissatisfaction with non-standard English accents. Therefore, the study revealed that the students advocated that the growing trend of globalization and the widespread adoption of English as the dominant language for conducting business led to an increased usage of English not only among non-native speakers in business settings but also in communication pertaining to business with diverse groups worldwide, including potential employees, consumers, and investors who may not have English as their first language (Planken *et al.*, 2010).

Furthermore, the study revealed that the student participants did not see the role of accuracy in English as an ultimate goal as long as intelligibility was achieved in communication. In other words, they chose intelligibility over accuracy for successful communication. A similar conclusion was presented in the study conducted by Xu and Van de Poel (2011) which emphasized that English is recognized as a highly essential means of intelligibility in international communication by non-native speakers. Majority of the ESP students in the study indicated their adherence to the view that the attainment of communicative competence in English was more important than the attainment of linguistic accuracy, which goes in parallel with the claim of Widdowson (1983), in which he put forward the idea that mastering communicative competence, which includes components to clarify a speaker's utterances for achieving intelligibility, is preferred by, especially, non-native speakers to overcome misunderstandings and possible problems in the course of interaction with other speakers. In the same direction, in English learning goals of the ESP students in the current study, they showed that Standard English was not a vital component that needed to be achieved by them. They did not place the native speaker norms at the core of their English learning goals. The findings are comparable with the study conducted by Calvo-Benzies (2017), in which ESP students from different departments (Tourism and Law) were evaluated in order to reveal their preferences for the role of native English aspects in their ESP education, such as pronunciation, accents, etc. The conclusion of the study indicated that the law students showed great interest in native-like abilities over non-native ones, although the tourism students valued both native-like and non-native competences. Their experiences align with Seidlhofer's (2018) assertion that attempting to conform to Standard English, which does not reflect the reality of how the language is spoken, is a futile endeavor for non-native English speakers. Such efforts are unlikely to be recognized and appreciated, but rather seen as flawed or deficient due to the fact that Standard English insists on

ideal standards of proper linguistic behavior rather than representing the language itself. They all wanted to use English communicatively and professionally, regardless of whether they used Standard English. Therefore, when it came to the ESP students' ultimate goals in ESP lessons, the ability to use and speak English effectively and meaningfully was mostly emphasized. Specifically, it was seen that not only they wanted to communicate effectively in English but also wanted to use it meaningfully and intelligibly. It was not surprising to observe that the ESP students in the study highlighted the communicative perspective of English since many previous studies indicated the same points. In the non-experimental research conducted by Alhuqbani (2014), in which 223 ESP students were asked to rate the most important skills in their English learning, the results indicated that speaking was rated as the most important skill for them, besides listening. In another study performed by Prachanan (2012), in which a questionnaire was applied to 40 ESP students in the tourism field to reveal their needs, speaking was chosen as the most important skill that they needed to improve. Therefore, the results matched the fundamental characteristics of ESP courses. For example, the primary objective of ESP courses is to enable students to engage with learning materials actively and develop their vocabulary and comprehension of meanings. Moreover, these courses aim to equip students with the necessary skills to communicate efficiently and appropriately with professionals in their respective fields. Also, ESP courses strive to prepare students to employ the language effectively in practical scenarios and collaborate with colleagues in a professional environment (Živković, 2016).

On the other hand, within the context of Turkish tertiary education, the perceptions of ESP students regarding the inclusion of non-native speakers of English in their ESP learning process were contradictory to existing research. For instance, İnceçay and Akyel (2014) conducted a study investigating Turkish EFL speakers in tertiary education, aiming to uncover their perceptions of ELF. The findings revealed that half of the participants held conservative views towards non-native English speakers, primarily due to their accents. They devalued non-standard English accents within their English education and exhibited a strong resistance to the use of ELF. Similarly, Deniz et al. (2016) examined the ELF perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers and found that while most participants were aware of ELF, their English learning perceptions were still rooted in native speaker norms. In a study by Ekamloğlu-Er and Bayyurt (2016), tertiary EFL students underwent ELF-awareness education to challenge their traditional perspectives on English learning and adopt an ELF-aware approach. Following this intervention, a noticeable shift was observed in their attitudes as they embraced an ELF-aware approach. They integrated diverse forms of English, varied cultures, and students' native languages (L1) and cultures within the classroom. Moreover, they employed correction strategies that prioritized intelligibility as the primary criterion. Therefore, unlike the current study, which witnessed a spontaneous ELF-awareness among ESP students, the existing studies conducted in the Turkish context achieved ELF-awareness through deliberate ELF-awareness education efforts.

This quantitative study aimed to reveal to what extent Turkish ESP students were aware of the ELF concept. The results evidently indicated that the participants reflected considerable awareness of ELF and challenged Standard English norms. Namely, it was stressed that English is considered a primary Lingua Franca that enables them to communicate and interact with others around the world, and in the course of these communications and interactions with other ELF speakers, they emphasized the importance of intelligibility over accuracy for the sake of successful communications and interactions. Moreover, it was seen that their ultimate speaking targets were

not NESs but NNESs. Therefore, it was reflected that rather than achieving native-like proficiency in English and a native-like accent in English, the ability to use and speak English effectively and meaningfully was mostly emphasized. Over native-like language proficiency, the participants placed a significant emphasis on the fundamental tenets of ELF, such as communication and negotiation skills. It should be born in mind that these participants did not get any education or instruction on ELF-awareness which constituted the originality of the study. The majority of the participants were so aware of the current position of English as a Lingua Franca and the principles of their ESP education, which promote the functionality of English rather than native-like accuracy, that they were ready to adopt the ELF concept in their ESP education. The possible reasons of these findings could be that because of the advance of the technology, the participants were in a great state of integration to the globalized world which enables them to see the current situation of English which is a Lingua Franca.

The present study puts forward several recommendations for future research in the field. Firstly, the research can be replicated, including a larger sample size of ESP students from different settings, which can give a more comprehensible status of Turkish ESP students in terms of ELF. Another study would be quite significant if it investigated Turkish ESP instructors' ELF awareness and compared them with their ESP students' ELF awareness because as Alibakhshi *et al.* (2011) stated, a common interest between teacher and learner leads to meaningful interaction and communication, which consequently turns into learning. Additionally, it would be unrealistic to anticipate an immediate transformation in ESP education without the active involvement of ESP practitioners, who play a crucial role in implementing ELF-oriented ESP lessons. It is important to recognize that ESP practitioners are the catalysts for initiating this change in ESP education based on the principles of ELF. As emphasized by Connor and Rozycki (2012), as English continues to gain prominence as the Lingua Franca in business and academic communication, ESP practitioners need to address variations from traditional standards and norms. Intercultural rhetoric provides a well-suited framework to explore and respond to this emerging area of research. Lastly, this study can be replicated in a qualitative research to enrich the data about ESP students' ELF awareness so that the literature can present robust results for future studies regarding ELF in ESP education.

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