

# ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA: POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION AND IMPLEMENTATION IN INDONESIAN EFL CLASSROOM

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**Abstract.** As lingua franca, English has been used as a means to communicate across the globe in every aspect of the situation among people who do not share the same first language. Linguists have been analyzing this phenomenon, and the term English as an International Language, English as a Lingua Franca, or World English (es) emerge and become an interesting topic to discuss, especially how a teacher should interpret and how interpretation can affect their belief and their behavior in English teaching and learning classroom. However, some English teachers Indonesia are still unfamiliar with this term and not aware of its influence on their teaching behavior. This article aims to accommodate those missing parts and brings more enlightenment to the English teacher in Indonesia, in particular, about ELF phenomenon by exploring from the available literature on ELF and scrutinizing possible features of linguistics changes that may influence Indonesian EFL classroom.

**Keywords:** English as Lingua Franca (ELF), teaching and learning classroom

## INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, the advancement of technology has changed the way people communicate. Nowadays, people can easily keep in touch with other people around the globe in just a second. This interconnected global system of communication will need a means as a bridge, and English has already reached all the requirements as its “bridge” as at present English has already been a global lingua franca and is commonly used to communicate in many different

purposes and situations. Global trade, global education, intercultural connection, business, and so forth have mainly use English. People are getting more and more familiar with English as the universal language.

Reflecting those situations, the alteration of the teaching English, especially in EFL classroom, cannot be avoided. The curriculum suggests that the most crucial goal in mastering a foreign language is to enable students to cope with many different people with different first language, accent, and pronunciation. Additionally, the first language grammatical structure will affect how they produce a foreign language. In other words, it is justifiable to state that English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has already played its role in the classroom situation.

Despite the English global widespread, it is still common to find people, especially English teachers, who do not comprehend this term of ELF, and how ELF affects the curriculum in language teaching. Based on this consideration, this article explores more about what ELF actually is and in which part of language teaching that ELF will possibly make a change, particularly in the Indonesian EFL classroom.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### *English as a Lingua Franca*

What does “lingua franca” stand for? What is “lingua franca”? In recent years, this term has already been a question among language teachers and also linguists. According to Seidelhofer (2005), “lingua franca” is a common language used for communication between people who do not share their first language. Additionally, a linguist who also concerns with this phenomenon, Jennifer Jenkins (2007), also states that “lingua franca” is a language used among people who do not share their first language, and is commonly understood as a second language of its speakers. From both definitions above, it is understood that the term “lingua franca” arises because of the spread of a particular language and it also functions as a global level of communication.

Nowadays, it is undeniable that global people are used to using English in some sorts of their communication. Surprisingly, the number of people who use English, whether it is as a foreign or second language, has already outnumbered compared to the people who use English as their native language. The influence of English nowadays appears at the level where international organizations such as the United Nation, WHO, UNESCO, and others officially use English within the communication (Crystal, 2003). Also, it affects the language used in the technological devices which considers English to become worldwide (Crystal, 2003). All of those significant establishments have put English as a lingua franca in more extensive parts of the world. Consequently, it is officially understood that English nowadays could be acknowledged as the world’s lingua franca (Bjorkman, 2013).

## **DISCUSSION**

### *Defining English as a Lingua Franca*

Before defining English as a Lingua Franca, it is important to note the position of the ELF speakers is seen from the linguistics perspective. According to Kachru (in Crystal, 2003), there are three circles in a classification model to English speakers and English varieties around the globe.

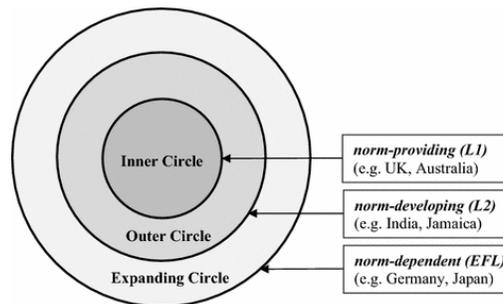


Fig. 1 Kachru's Three Circles of English (2005)

The figure shows that those three classifications are Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle. Inner circle accommodates speakers who use English as its native languages, such as UK, USA, and Australia. Outer Circle contains speakers who use English as a second language, such as India, Malaysia, and Jamaica. Expanding Circle consists of speakers who use English as its foreign language, such as Korea, Germany, Japan, and so on. From those circle, Indonesia is stated in expanding circle which means that we use English as our foreign language.

Regarding the number of countries which use English as their foreign language, it could be assumed that the people who use English in Expanding Circle are also more outnumbered than those in Inner Circle. Nowadays, the native speakers of English are a minority compared to the people in expanding the circle. This situation arises an argument that English is recently not possessed by the native speakers since the community who use English in expanding circle has much more exceeded.

Regarding its functions, Seidelhofer (2011) states that ELF plays on two different levels, among them are local and global level. English functioning in local level occurs when people in one country who have more than one local languages use English as a language to communicate with each other just like in Nigeria. Moreover, English playing its function in global level means that English is used among people from different country who do not use English as their first language. Hence, the development and influence of English in the global domain are surely thrilling. It has already reached almost every aspect of life around the globe and united people from different cultures and languages. By considering the use of English, it can be defined that English has fulfilled its function as a lingua franca.

However, it is not easy to define what English as a lingua franca (ELF) is. It has already been a paradoxical term for all linguists to define ELF since this term has so many resistances from other linguists who refer to World Standard (Spoken) English (WS(S)E). They recall the Quirk's (1985) point of view about "single monochrome standard view," where WS(S)E promotes that English should be based on standard norms such as American or British norms without giving any consideration about the pluricentric view (Jenkins, 2006). Up to the present, the inclusion of native speakers into ELF is still debatable.

Despite those debatable perspectives regarding how to define ELF, Jenkins (2000) and Seidelhofer (2011) define ELF as the use and the role of English as a means of communication among speakers of different first languages (L1s). The example of the situation can be seen intermittently in various events such as international conferences, political negotiations among countries, business meetings, public places, etc. (Jenkins, 2007). Regarding the definition above, how to use English as a way to communicate could change the foreign or second language

teaching approach in the classroom. The next question is about which linguistics aspect that ELF could likely make a change.

### *The Linguistics Features of ELF in Language Teaching*

The data mentioned above prove that recently the number of non-native English speakers is much more than those of native speakers. Consequently, many countries put English as their obligatory subject to learn by the students. However, regarding teaching and learning situation, the English teachers cannot hide from the emerging of ELF and its consequence in teaching approach. Even though Jenkins (2007) clearly stated that ELF could not be taught as a single model of English's variety, it does not mean that it is not essential and needs to be hindered. As a teacher, it is necessary to keep up with the sociocultural phenomenon around them, especially in teaching a foreign language.

This sub-chapter will mainly discuss the possible changes of linguistics features regarding the role of ELF by consideration of EFL or ESL classroom setting, especially in an Indonesian classroom setting. Aminudin Aziz (2003) in his article proposes three points such as (1) the grammar, (2) the lexical, and (3) the discourse strategies which probably influence how the way is teaching English as a foreign language, especially in Indonesia. Additionally, Zikmundova (2016) in the thesis entitled English as a Lingua Franca: Theory and Practical Implications mentions three features such as (1) the lexicogrammar, (2) phonology, and (3) Pragmatics. Considering those arguments, ELF can make a change towards teacher's belief in teaching English. Their differences in belief could influence their teaching pedagogy in the classroom setting.

### *The Lexicogrammar*

It is a common agreement that the aim of communication using English among people having different first language is that our language is understandable or not. In this case, some researchers believe that it affects the language features to be taught in the classroom, and one of them is grammar, and lexicogrammar (Aziz, 2003; Zikmundova, 2016). In Indonesia, specifically, grammar is considered to be one of the difficult parts in mastering the language. It is still arguable as Bahasa Indonesia does not recognize tenses. So, when this distinctive language feature is considered to be a mistake on a certain occasion, it is still arguable. Because once again, the aim of having communication is that it is understandable.

Seidelhofer (2004) found out that there are some lexicogrammar language features influenced by the arising of ELF, among them are: omitting the 3rd person singulars in the present tense, confusing and incorrectly using the pronouns who and which in the relative clause, misusing definite and indefinite articles (using a definite article where there should not be one in Standard English and not using one where there should), overusing prepositions where they are not needed (such as in We have to study about... instead of We have to consider...), using incorrect forms in tag questions (such as in isn't it? instead of shouldn't you?), overusing certain verbs with a very general meaning (such as do, have, make, put, take), using that-clauses rather than infinitive constructions (as in I want that), putting too much stress on exactness (as in black colour instead of black).

### *Phonology*

Indonesia is a country which has a thousand local languages with a different accent. In daily life, it is common to find people using their local language instead of Bahasa Indonesia. Mostly, Indonesian people could conjecture others' ethnic family only by listening to their pronunciation. It shows that their local language (some researchers will say local language as the first language) could likely influence their second or even foreign language's pronunciation. If Indonesia has many different accents which could affect their second or foreign language, what about people around the globe? It is understood that every non-native speaker brings their typical accent with it. Therefore, to ensure the understandable communication, they will always try to adjust their pronunciation as clear as possible.

Some researchers have conducted the research related to phonological features of ELF. In her book entitled "The phonology of English as an International Language", Jenkins proposes some recommendations to build intelligible communication such as a preferable omission of /θ/ and /ð/ in case of problems with pronunciation, addition rather than elision of sounds during consonant cluster simplification, distinguishing vowel length, and using and correctly placing nuclear stress within a sentence (Jenkins, 2000).

### *Pragmatics*

In the communication among people who have not mastered English, misunderstanding between them commonly happen. It occurs since communication gives more attention to the content instead of the form. Mostly, people will use some strategies to cope with it. In her paper entitled "Review of Developments", Jenkins (2011) concludes that non-understanding/misunderstanding is not as common in communication with non-native speakers as it is with native speakers. Furthermore, Jenkins (2011) provides additional strategies that ELF interlocutors use to avoid or solve misunderstandings during communication consisting of: first, repetition which is commonly used to avoid misunderstanding or not being understood.

Moreover, in order to explain the message that has not been understood, the speakers also use clarification and self-repair; secondly, paraphrasing which means reformulating a sentence in their own words in order to avoid prolonged silence and minimal response from the other party or overlapping talk; the next is creating and using own idiomatic expressions to show that the speakers are members of a group; the last is using discourse markers for introduction of the next topic in communication. Discourse markers such as "you know" prove to not to be as prominent in ELF as in communication of native speakers. Native speakers use them to express politeness, involvement or cooperation, whereas non-native speakers use them to introduce the topic they are going to talk about next or to make a topic important.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this globalization era, it is undeniable that people communicate with one another so quickly. Technology develops so amazingly that affects how people communicate with another. This arises a phenomenon where English has already been used as a means of communication. People who share different first language could interact using English. In this case, English has played its role as a lingua franca. Furthermore, this emerging issue influences another example where English is used by more non-native speakers than the native speakers, and likely affects the teaching belief in some countries. Moreover, to understand where ELF should be in the

teaching and learning process by understanding what ELF is and how it can change the language features taught in language classroom will be essential to be understood.

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