

Constructing an ELF Awareness Measure: Validation Evidence from Iranian EFL Teachers and Its Association with Their Self-efficacy

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ABSTRACT

Research on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in language teaching has increased significantly due to its importance in facilitating communication among speakers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. However, the construct of ELF awareness among Iranian English as a foreign language teachers and its relationship with their self-efficacy beliefs is still unknown. This study involved the development and validation of a 41-item language teachers' ELF awareness inventory (TELFAI) with 198 convenience sampled Iranian EFL teachers. The exploratory factor analysis results showed its four-component construct including perceptions about ELF-informed ELT practices (17 items), nativespeakerism (8 items), English language varieties (10 items), and ELF-informed teacher education (6 items). As the study's second aim, the relationship between 96 convenience-sampled EFL teachers' TELFAI scores and their teaching self-efficacy beliefs was investigated through a Pearson correlation. The results revealed a positive, but moderate, relationship. The study provides insights into ELF awareness and its impact on teachers' characteristics such as self-efficacy and teaching practices. It supports educators in designing better training courses, benefits learners through improved instruction, and aids policymakers in developing relevant language education policies..

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Introduction

The worldwide use of English by diverse communities has led to its global expansion and the creation of multiple forms. Technological advancements have significantly impacted the international adoption of English. Additionally, factors such as migration, as well as the language's role in commerce and academia, have collectively contributed to the emergence of multiple English varieties and a growing population of nonnative speakers. Consequently, the constructs of World Englishes, English as an international language, and English as a lingua franca have been assigned a significant position in second language acquisition research. ELF refers to a type of language used when second language speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact, reflecting a significant social and linguistic phenomenon in today's globalized world (Kemaloglu-Er & Bayyurt, 2019; McKay, 2018). Theoretically, ELF challenges traditional native-

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speaker norms by valuing intelligibility and linguistic diversity, fostering intercultural competence essential for effective communication (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011).

The subconstructs of ELF awareness have been addressed by second language acquisition researchers (e.g., Dewey & Pineda, 2020; Soruç & Griffiths, 2023; Wangdi & Dhendup, 2024). They include perceptions about native-speakerism, English language varieties, intercultural communicative competence, and linguistic imperialism. English as a lingua franca, English as an international language, and World Englishes are interconnected concepts that are often used interchangeably in the literature to describe the diverse and evolving functions of English across the globe (Leyi, 2020; Ziaabadi et al., 2023). Referring to English as an international language, Matsuda (2017) defined it as the role English plays in multilingual international settings, where speakers use the variety they know best, apply their cultural perspectives, and employ diverse strategies to communicate effectively (as cited in Tajeddin et al., 2019). World Englishes is defined by McKay (2018) as the full spectrum of English forms used internationally. It emphasizes English's role as a flexible, adaptive medium of communication among speakers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, reflecting its dynamic and multifaceted nature in global contexts.

Teachers' awareness of ELF is vital as it shifts the focus from native-like accuracy to communicative effectiveness in global, multilingual contexts. ELF-aware teachers prioritize practical communication skills and adapt their teaching to diverse learner needs, boosting students' global competence (Soruç & Griffiths, 2023). However, many teachers lack adequate ELF knowledge, limiting ELF pedagogy implementation, making targeted professional development essential to improve ELF awareness and classroom practices (Bayyurt et al., 2019).

ELF could be related to teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching, including their self-efficacy beliefs. Teacher self-efficacy refers to educators' beliefs in their capabilities to effectively plan, manage classrooms, engage students, and implement instructional strategies despite challenges (Alqahtani, 2023). This dynamic and context-dependent belief significantly influences teachers' motivation, persistence, innovative teaching practices, and ultimately, student learning outcomes (Chamani et al., 2023; Lee & Davis, 2020). Comprising linguistic and cultural diversity is a key issue in ELF, recent systematic review findings emphasize teacher self-efficacy as a vital factor in addressing the challenges of culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, as it enhances educators' motivation to implement culturally responsive pedagogy, which is closely tied to their self-related beliefs (Peterson & Jensen, 2025).

In the Iranian context, ELF awareness among teachers is critically important due to the country's unique sociolinguistic and educational challenges. English serves as a foreign yet crucial academic lingua franca, essential for accessing global knowledge and higher education, despite Persian being the official and dominant language (Jalali, 2021). However, language education in Iran faces systemic issues such as limited student proficiency, lack of communicative competence, and a traditional focus on native-speaker norms, which hinders effective English learning (Gholaminejad & Raeisi-Vanani, 2021; Hadizadeh & Youbi, 2024). Research indicates that enhancing the ELF awareness of Iranian teachers can support a shift from native-like accuracy to practical communication, better aligning with Iran's multilingual, globalized realities and helping to overcome current educational barriers (Ganji et al., 2018). Sarvandy and Ekstam (2018) also highlighted a particular need for further exploration in Outer-Circle regions such as Iran and pointed out that ELF is still relatively unfamiliar in this context, despite its promising implications for language educators, learners, their families, trainers, institution leaders, and policy developers.

While English as a Lingua Franca has attracted increasing scholarly attention worldwide, research focusing specifically on language teachers' awareness of ELF remains sparse (Geckinil, 2022; Khatib & Abbasi Talabari, 2018; Khodareza et al., 2020). Most existing studies tend to address learners' perspectives or broader ELF communication patterns, yet few have delved into how well language teachers understand and conceptualize ELF in their instructional contexts. Notably, the relationship between teachers' ELF awareness and their self-efficacy beliefs has not been explored, despite self-efficacy's well-documented impact on instructional quality, motivation, and the effective implementation of innovative pedagogies. In ELF contexts, teacher self-efficacy shapes educators' confidence and willingness to integrate communication strategies that embrace linguistic diversity and challenge native-speaker norms (Nô dos Santos et al., 2024). Teachers with high self-efficacy are more adept at managing varied learner proficiencies and fostering learner intelligibility in multilingual classrooms, which are central goals of ELF pedagogy. This research gap is especially relevant in Iran, where ELF-awareness among English language teachers remains under-researched despite the country's growing multilingual and international educational environment. Addressing this void, the present study seeks to develop and validate an English as a lingua franca awareness questionnaire tailored to Iranian teachers and to examine the connection between their ELF awareness and self-efficacy beliefs. By doing so, the study advances understanding of the key factors influencing the adoption of ELF principles in English language teaching, thereby contributing valuable insights for teacher education and curriculum development.

Literature Review

Teachers' awareness of English as a Lingua Franca represents a vital dimension in contemporary language education, reflecting an informed understanding of English as a global means of communication among non-native speakers. ELF awareness encompasses teachers' recognition of English as a dynamic, pluricentric, and interactionally adaptive language, which prioritizes mutual intelligibility and pragmatic accommodation over traditional native-speaker norms (Seidlhofer, 2011; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2017). This shift challenges entrenched pedagogical paradigms centered on native-speaker ideals and calls for reimagining teacher cognition, identity, and instructional practices to align with the realities of global English use (Taglialatela, 2021).

The sociolinguistic foundation of ELF awareness lies in theories such as accommodation theory and pluricentricity, which explain how interlocutors adjust linguistic features—phonology, lexicon, syntax—to facilitate mutual understanding and social concord in multilingual contexts (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Mauranen, 2012). Translanguaging theory further conceptualizes ELF as a fluid, resourceful phenomenon in which users draw on multiple linguistic and semiotic repertoires to negotiate meaning and identity, thereby contesting monolingual ideologies and informing inclusive pedagogies (Canagarajah, 2013; Pennycook, 2017). These linguistic frameworks ground ELF awareness in a perspective of language as socially situated and interactionally constructed. Pedagogically, ELF awareness transcends mere theoretical knowledge, encompassing critical reflection and pragmatic application. It is distinct from ELF attitudes—which involve affective judgments—by foregrounding conscious engagement with ELF principles to shape teacher beliefs, identity, and classroom practices (Seidlhofer, 2011; Sifakis, 2019). Such critical awareness aligns with transformative theories of teacher learning and agency, emphasizing the interrogation of native-speaker-centric norms and the cultivation of adaptive, context-sensitive pedagogies (Taglialatela, 2021).

Despite theoretical consensus on the importance of ELF awareness, empirical investigations reveal significant variability influenced by sociocultural, institutional, and

individual factors (Jenkins, 2015; Tagliatalata, 2021). Resistance to paradigm shifts grounded in native-speaker norms often hampers the integration of ELF principles in teacher education, highlighting the need for systemic curriculum reforms, authentic ELF input, and reflective teacher development models (Bon & Charubusp, 2024). This underscores ongoing challenges in operationalizing and nurturing ELF awareness as a nuanced, situated professional attribute.

Teachers' self-efficacy, the second key variable in this study, is a critical construct rooted in Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977). It refers to teachers' beliefs in their ability to effectively organize, manage, and implement instructional activities that positively influence student learning and engagement, even in the face of challenges (Alqahtani, 2023; Bandura, 1997). This construct is inherently context- and task-specific, with teachers exhibiting varying confidence across domains such as classroom management, student motivation, and instructional strategies (Bandura, 1997; Lazarides & Warner, 2020).

ELF-aware teachers tend to demonstrate heightened self-efficacy, characterized by greater confidence, motivation, and openness to pedagogical innovation in response to multilingual challenges (Alqahtani, 2023). This reciprocal relationship underscores how cognitive awareness can enhance professional competence and resilience.

The significance of teacher self-efficacy in educational research is well documented, encompassing its influence on motivation, instructional quality, perseverance, and openness to pedagogical innovation (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to set ambitious goals, apply diverse teaching strategies, maintain classroom discipline, and are more resilient amidst challenges, all of which positively impact student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Barni et al., 2019). Moreover, self-efficacy is not static; it fluctuates depending on context and task specificity and may evolve over time through professional development and reflective practice (Bandura, 1997; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Integrating teacher self-efficacy with ELF awareness, the present study foregrounds the synergistic role these constructs play in shaping teachers' adaptive professionalism. ELF awareness can potentially enhance teachers' efficacy by equipping them with conceptual tools to navigate multilingual and intercultural classrooms confidently (Alqahtani, 2023). Exploring this interplay is particularly relevant in expanding circle contexts like Iran, where ELF-informed pedagogy is emergent and teacher efficacy may influence the successful adoption of innovative ELF practices.

A sizeable body of research has addressed teachers' attitudes towards all or some subconstructs of ELF perception including natives-speakerism, English varieties, cultural diversity, and ELF use in the class (e.g., Huang et al., 2025; Wangdi & Dhendup, 2024).

Empirical research on ELF teachers' attitudes and practices reveals a complex and sometimes contradictory landscape. Studies on attitudes toward native-speakerism illustrate polarized positions: some teachers exhibit negative attitudes (Wangdi & Dhendup, 2024), others express positive views (Bon & Charubusp, 2024), while some hold ambivalent stances (Jeong et al., 2022; Khan & Ali, 2023). This divergence indicates a nuanced engagement with native-speaker norms, reflecting teachers' negotiation between entrenched ideals and pragmatic considerations. Despite a general theoretical endorsement of ELF, many teachers still prefer native-speaker norms in practice (Chanwaiwita & Kantisab, 2022), suggesting a gap between ideological acceptance and instructional implementation.

Pronunciation preferences also reveal tension: while the dominant trend favors native speaker accents (Aydin & Karakaş, 2021; Chanwaiwita & Kantisab, 2022), emerging skepticism

challenges this necessity (Wangdi & Dhendup, 2024). Such findings underscore a gradual shift in attitudes but also resistance rooted in traditional notions of linguistic correctness.

Similarly, teacher attitudes toward linguistic diversity highlight a general recognition of the pedagogical value in exposing learners to varied English varieties (Dewey & Pineda, 2020; Wangdi & Dhendup, 2024). Yet, reservations persist, with some educators fearing learner confusion and thus adhering to native-like norms despite some openness to diversity (Bon & Charubusp, 2024; Margić & Vodopija-Krstanović, 2018). This ambivalence points to a need for clearer pedagogical guidelines and support for teachers navigating ELF's multilingual realities.

Cultural awareness research provides evidences of broad teacher consensus on valuing diverse cultures, both native and non-native English-speaking (Bayyurt et al., 2019; Tran et al., 2022). However, the emphasis in some studies on native English cultures (Chanwaiwita & Kantisab, 2022) reflects continuing cultural biases that may limit a fully inclusive intercultural pedagogy.

Examining ELF-informed classroom practices, findings reveal that while some teachers resist ELF integration, fearing communication breakdowns and deviation from standards (Blair, 2017; İnceçay & Akyel, 2014), others welcome L1 use and code-switching as strategic tools (Soruç & Griffiths, 2023; Zhang, 2021). The phenomenon of fear of errors limiting learner communication (Abbasi, 2023) foregrounds the importance of ELF-aligned error correction that prioritizes intelligibility and communication effectiveness over native-speaker norms (Grazzi & Lopriore, 2020; Soruç & Griffiths, 2023). These pedagogical approaches align with ELF research advocating communication effectiveness and intercultural competence as central teaching goals (Bon & Charubusp, 2024; Curran & Chern, 2017).

Limited but promising research in Iranian contexts reveals a persistent preference for native-speaker norms among teachers and trainers, despite theoretical openness to ELF (Asakereh et al., 2019; Jalali, 2021). Iranian educators prioritize native norms in pronunciation, culture, and assessment (Barzegar et al., 2018; Moradkhani & Asakereh, 2018), reinforcing ongoing challenges to ELF integration. Nevertheless, intercultural communicative competence training shows evidences of positive shifts in cultural sensitivity and instructional practices (Atai et al., 2017; Ghajarieh & Safiyar, 2023). Persistent preferences for American English and associated cultural values highlight continuing linguistic and cultural imperialism affecting teaching materials and approaches (RezaeiFard & Chalak, 2017).

Numerous global studies have investigated various facets of ELF, with notable advancements in Asian contexts. Some existing ELF, English as an international language, and World Englishes questionnaire studies lack piloting or factor analysis (e.g., Bayyurt & Ercetin, 2009; Curran & Chern, 2017; Grazzi & Lopriore, 2020), while others have reported piloting and reliability without full validation (Moradkhani & Asakereh, 2018; Öztürk, 2021; Tajeddin et al., 2019). Only a few studies have conducted both development and validation of instruments (Atai et al., 2017; Geckinil, 2022; Khatib & Abbasi Talabari, 2018; Khatib & Rahimi, 2015; Khodareza et al., 2020). A notable questionnaire on teachers' ELF awareness is Bayyurt and Ercetin's (2009) instrument, which was subsequently validated by Bayyurt et al. (2019). It addressed cultural awareness, positioning of native varieties and speakers, and communication goals. Along the same lines, Geckinil (2022) developed and validated two ELF-related scales through factor analysis: one on perceptions comprising English varieties, ELF features, and learning objectives, and another on pedagogical implications including English teachers, target language culture, global cultures, and exams. Recently, Iranian scholars have addressed subcomponents of ELF, but not in their full

range. However, few studies have specifically designed and validated ELF questionnaires tailored to the Iranian context. For example, Khatib and Rahimi (2015) created a validated inventory capturing learners' perceptions of native versus nonnative speaker norms, revealing five factors, focusing deeply on native speakerism but limited in scope and sample. Atai et al. (2017) explored Iranian ELF teachers' critical cultural awareness, aligning with ELF's cultural dimension and uncovering factors related to ELT programs, materials, and general awareness. Despite the growing interest in ELF research, most inventories focus on a limited set of ELF issues and lack fully validated measures adapted to the specific context of Iran. This is while delineating the context-specific construct of ELF is a prerequisite for charting its relationship with teacher characteristics and classroom practices.

Regarding teacher self-efficacy, numerous studies (e.g., Sarkeshikian et al., 2025; Khabazian & Kashef, 2025; Chamani et al., 2023) confirm that higher self-efficacy correlates with enhanced teacher motivation, innovative practices, classroom management, and improved learner outcomes. These findings underscore self-efficacy as a dynamic, context-sensitive construct essential for teacher effectiveness and professional growth (Lee & Davis, 2020). Alqahtani (2023) conceptualizes self-efficacy as teachers' beliefs in their capacity to overcome challenges in classroom management and instruction, an important psychological foundation for embracing ELF-informed pedagogies.

Empirical research examining the relationship between teachers' ELF awareness and self-efficacy remains limited but is gradually gaining attention. Bon and Charubusp (2024) demonstrate that teachers' attitudes toward ELF importantly shape their professional identity and instructional decisions, balancing the tension between native-speaker norms and ELF realities. Nô dos Santos et al. (2024) further highlight how heightened ELF awareness fosters teacher autonomy, critical reflection, and adaptability, enabling educators to design culturally and contextually appropriate ELF-informed lessons. They suggest that self-efficacy may directly support the successful implementation of ELF principles, particularly in fostering communicative competence and intercultural understanding. This interplay remains underexplored in empirical research, especially in Iran, where teachers' ELF-awareness and self-efficacy have yet to be jointly examined. Addressing this gap could inform targeted teacher education interventions promoting both ELF awareness and self-efficacy, thus enhancing pedagogical responsiveness to multilingual, intercultural English communication contexts. Although some studies partly delved into self-efficacy and its relationship with some limited aspects of ELF (e.g., Peterson & Jensen, 2025) was estimated, extensive Iranian research on this topic has yet to be established. The relationship between Iranian teachers' ELF-awareness and their self-efficacy was estimated as the second aim of this study.

The study addressed the following main questions:

1. To what extent is the Teachers' ELF-Awareness Inventory (TELFAI) a valid and reliable measure for assessing ELF awareness among Iranian EFL teachers?
2. Is there a significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' ELF awareness and their self-efficacy beliefs?

Method

Design

The study employed a two-stage design. The first stage involved the development of the questionnaire using a consecutive exploratory mixed-methods design, comprising a small qualitative phase followed by a larger quantitative phase. The second stage adopted a correlational

design to examine the relationship between English as a Foreign Language teachers' ELF awareness and their self-efficacy beliefs. The design allowed for an integrative understanding of both the psychometric properties of TELFAI and its practical implications in relation to teacher beliefs.

Participants

Three groups of participants were involved in this study. For the development of the questionnaire items, six applied linguistics specialists participated in a focus group, all with a strong interest in discourse studies. Four held doctoral degrees and two held master's degrees in applied linguistics. Their professional experience in Iran ranged from 4 to 15 years. Among them, one was an ELF specialist with multiple publications on English as a lingua franca and English as an International Language, as well as experience in questionnaire development and validation. Another participant was deeply engaged in bilingualism research, had conducted workshops for bilingual learners, and taught at universities in Turkey, a multilingual context foundational to ELF research.

The target population of the second and third groups of participants in this study included all intermediate-level English language teachers employed across language institutes in Iran. The accessible population comprised teachers from 15 selected language institutes within Tehran, Mashhad, and Karaj, from whom participants were recruited through convenience sampling based on availability and willingness. A total of 198 teachers (42 male, and 156 female), aged between 18 and 46 years, participated in the TELFAI pilot study. The sample consisted of BA and MA degree holders, including current teachers and students in English-related and other academic majors, with teaching experience ranging from 2 to 15 years. The sample size was determined using the formula recommended by Field (2009), which suggests that the optimal sample size for questionnaire studies equals the number of items multiplied by 10 and then divided by 3, thus justifying the choice of 198 participants. For the correlation phase of the study, a group of 96 teachers (10 male, and 86 female) with similar demographic and professional profiles, drawn through convenience sampling from the same accessible population, completed both the TELFAI and the SLTES.

Instruments

The study utilized three instruments: TELFAI, SLTES, and focus group interview which are described in this section.

Teachers' ELF-Awareness Inventory (TELFAI)

This study involved the development and validation of the TELFAI (see Appendix), designed to assess teachers' awareness of English as a Lingua Franca. The inventory originally consisted of 52 items, but after rigorous item analysis and factor analysis, the final 41 items, rated on a 6-point Likert scale, revealed a four-component structure comprising awareness of ELF-informed ELT practices, anti-native-speakerist orientation, English language varieties, and ELF-aware teacher education (see Results). The items were developed based on an extensive review of existing research and literature on ELF awareness and ELF-based L2 teaching syllabi, alongside in-depth interviews with ELF specialists in applied linguistics. To validate TELFAI, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine its dimensionality, and the inventory demonstrated acceptable reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .81 for the full scale. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Thus, TELFAI serves a dual purpose in this study as both a tool for collecting data on teachers' ELF awareness and an instrument undergoing psychometric evaluation, reflecting its status as a newly developed and validated inventory.

Second Language Teaching Efficacy Scale (SLTES)

Teachers' self-efficacy was measured through the 33-item SLTES inventory developed and validated by Akbari and Abednia (2010) specifically for Iranian language teachers. The SLTES was chosen because, among the limited self-efficacy questionnaires available, it was developed and factor-analyzed to measure second language teachers' self-efficacy within the Iranian context. The instrument demonstrated excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of .93 for the overall scale and subscale alphas of .89, .85, and .83 for efficacy in instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement, respectively. Its validity is supported by a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy of .92 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity, confirming the appropriateness of factor analysis. The nine-point Likert questionnaire took about 10 minutes to complete and was used to assess the relationship between language teachers' ELF-awareness and their self-efficacy.

Focus Group Interview

An online focus group session was conducted with six ELF specialists in applied linguistics to gather expert perspectives on theoretical and practical aspects of ELF in Iran, addressing relevant demands, benefits, and challenges. This qualitative method was chosen for its ability to provide in-depth, contextually rich insights, thereby contributing to the content validity of the study. The session lasted one hour and was recorded. To establish reliability in theme identification, two coders independently coded the data, and their agreement was descriptively evaluated, ensuring consistency in coding decisions.

Research Procedure

The present study followed a consecutive exploratory mixed-methods design, comprising two main phases: (a) the development and validation of TELFAI, and (b) the investigation of the relationship between teachers' ELF awareness and their self-efficacy beliefs using the validated TELFAI and SLTES. The procedure for the first phase—the development and validation of TELFAI—was conducted in several systematic stages to ensure its construct validity and contextual relevance, as detailed below.

Phase 1: Development and Validation of TELFAI

Stage 1: Conceptualization and Construct Definition. The initial and foundational step involved a thorough conceptualization of the "ELF awareness" construct. Informed by the existing literature, ELF awareness for language teachers was defined as a multi-faceted, reflective understanding of English as a Lingua Franca, which guides the critical integration of ELF principles into teaching practices and teacher development (Sifakis, 2019; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2017). This conceptualization moves beyond mere attitudes to encompass a pedagogical philosophy that challenges native-speakerism, embraces linguistic diversity, and prioritizes communicative effectiveness and intercultural competence over adherence to monolithic norms (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011). The construct was theoretically framed to include, but not be limited to, perceptions of ELF-informed classroom practices, orientations towards nativespeakerism, knowledge of English language varieties, and the implications for teacher education.

Stage 2: Qualitative Exploration for Contextual Validity. To ensure the construct definition was grounded in the specific realities of the Iranian English as a foreign language context, a qualitative

exploration was undertaken. A one-hour, online focus group interview was conducted with six applied linguists specializing in ELF and discourse studies at Iranian universities. The discussion was guided by open-ended questions revolving around the theoretical underpinnings, practical demands, potential benefits, and perceived difficulties of implementing ELF-aware pedagogy in Iran. This step was deemed essential because, as scholars have noted, the Iranian EFL context presents unique sociolinguistic and educational challenges—including a strong tradition of native-speakerism in pedagogy and assessment, systemic constraints within the national education system, and a distinct cultural identity that interfaces complexly with global English (Asakereh et al., 2019; Davari & Aghagolzadeh, 2015). Existing ELF instruments, often developed in European or Inner-Circle contexts, were unlikely to fully capture these localized realities. The recorded session was transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was employed by two independent coders to identify recurring themes and context-specific concerns. This process yielded seven primary themes: (1) cultural and linguistic diversity, (2) communication strategies for avoiding breakdowns, (3) cultural/linguistic variations in materials, (4) institutional policies on ELF, (5) teachers' and learners' lack of ELF knowledge, (6) native speakers' pragmatic norms, and (7) the nativespeakerist mindset of stakeholders. This qualitative phase was critical for ensuring the ecological validity of the construct and the subsequent item pool, aligning the theoretical definition with the lived experiences and professional landscape of Iranian EFL teachers (Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2017). Crucially, this qualitative phase directly informed the contextual appropriacy of TELFAI by surfacing issues of paramount concern in Iran. For instance, the theme of "institutional policies on ELF" and "teachers' and learners' lack of ELF knowledge" highlighted systemic barriers that might be less salient in contexts where ELF discourse is more established. Furthermore, discussions around "cultural and linguistic diversity" were deeply interwoven with the participants' insights on Iran's specific position as an Islamic society engaging with global English, thereby ensuring the construct included a critical perspective on linguistic imperialism and cultural hegemony relevant to Iranian teachers (Atai et al., 2017). This phase was therefore critical for ensuring the ecological and contextual validity of the construct, aligning the theoretical definition of ELF awareness with the professional exigencies, ideological conflicts, and pedagogical landscape of Iranian EFL teachers (Sarvandy & Ekstam, 2018; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2017).

Stage 3: Item Generation and Expert Review. An initial pool of 52 items was generated through a multi-pronged approach to ensure comprehensive coverage of the construct.

Literature-Driven Items: A comprehensive review of related literature and existing ELF inventories (e.g., Asakereh et al., 2019; Barzegar Rahatlou et al., 2018; Bayyurt et al., 2019; Curran & Chern, 2017; Dewey & Pineda, 2020) was conducted. This review, combined with the seven themes from the focus group, led to the identification of eight additional theoretical themes, resulting in a total of 15 guiding themes (e.g., intelligibility, linguistic imperialism, intercultural communicative competence, aims of teaching).

Item Wording: Thirty-one original items were crafted by the researchers to directly reflect the nuances of the 15 themes, particularly those emphasized in the Iranian context. A further 21 items were adapted from existing instruments to fit the specific focus and wording of TELFAI. All items were formulated as statements on a 6-point Likert scale.

Expert Validation: The initial 52-item pool was subjected to a rigorous review by a panel of six ELF specialists in applied linguistics (the same experts from the focus group). They evaluated the items for clarity, relevance to the construct definition, representativeness of the theoretical domains, and appropriateness for the Iranian teacher population. Based on their feedback, items

were refined, reworded for ambiguity, and checked for content validity to ensure they adequately sampled the entire domain of the ELF awareness construct.

Stage 4: Pilot Testing and Factor Analysis

The refined 52-item questionnaire was pilot-tested with 198 Iranian EFL teachers. The data collected were subjected to statistical validation procedures. Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was employed to examine the underlying factorial structure. The initial analysis extracted six factors, but after the removal of 11 items due to weak factor loadings ($<.4$) or significant cross-loadings, a clean four-factor structure emerged from a subsequent PCA with Varimax rotation on the remaining 41 items. This final structure, which accounted for 73.80% of the total variance, confirmed the multi-dimensional nature of the construct and aligned with the theoretically defined domains, thus providing strong evidence for the construct validity of TELFAI. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for the overall scale and each subscale was found to be acceptable to good.

Phase 2: Investigating the Relationship between ELF Awareness and Self-Efficacy

Following the validation of TELFAI, the second phase of the study was conducted. A new cohort of 96 Iranian EFL teachers completed the final 41-item TELFAI and the Second Language Teaching Efficacy Scale (SLTES). A Pearson product-moment correlation analysis, following checks for normality and assumptions, was then performed to address the second research question regarding the relationship between teachers' ELF awareness and their self-efficacy beliefs.

Results

The present study serves a dual purpose: firstly, to develop and validate TELFAI, and secondly, to explore the relationship between language teachers' ELF awareness and their self-efficacy beliefs. To achieve the first aim, Principal Components Analysis and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were employed to examine the construct validity and internal consistency of TELFAI. For the second aim, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the association between teachers' ELF awareness and their self-efficacy beliefs.

TELFAI's Factorial Structure

The factorial structure of a 52-item questionnaire was examined using responses from 198 English language teachers, yielding a subject-to-item ratio of approximately 4:1. Normality was confirmed with ratios of skewness and kurtosis falling within ± 1.96 . No extreme mean scores or unusual variances were observed. Factorability was supported by many correlations above .3, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure exceeding .6, and a statistically significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < .05$).

An initial principal components analysis with oblique (Direct Oblimin) rotation extracted six factors with eigenvalues greater than one, explaining 77% of the total variance. The items aligned broadly with six theoretical categories. Eleven items were excluded due to weak loadings or cross-loadings, resulting in a refined 41-item instrument.

Subsequent PCA with Varimax rotation was conducted on the 41-item inventory. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of total TELFAI scores on the retained 41 items. Normality and factorability assumptions were met: Normality was confirmed with ratios of skewness and kurtosis to their standard errors falling within ± 1.96 . There were no extreme mean scores or unusual variances. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was excellent, $KMO=.93$, indicating the sample was highly suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant, χ^2 (820)

=8829.63, $p < .001$, confirming that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix and factor analysis was appropriate. The determinant of the correlation matrix was very close to zero (9.731×10^{-22}), suggesting no issues with multicollinearity. Communalities for the variables ranged from .52 to .83, showing that the extracted factors explained a substantial proportion of the variance for each variable.

Table 1

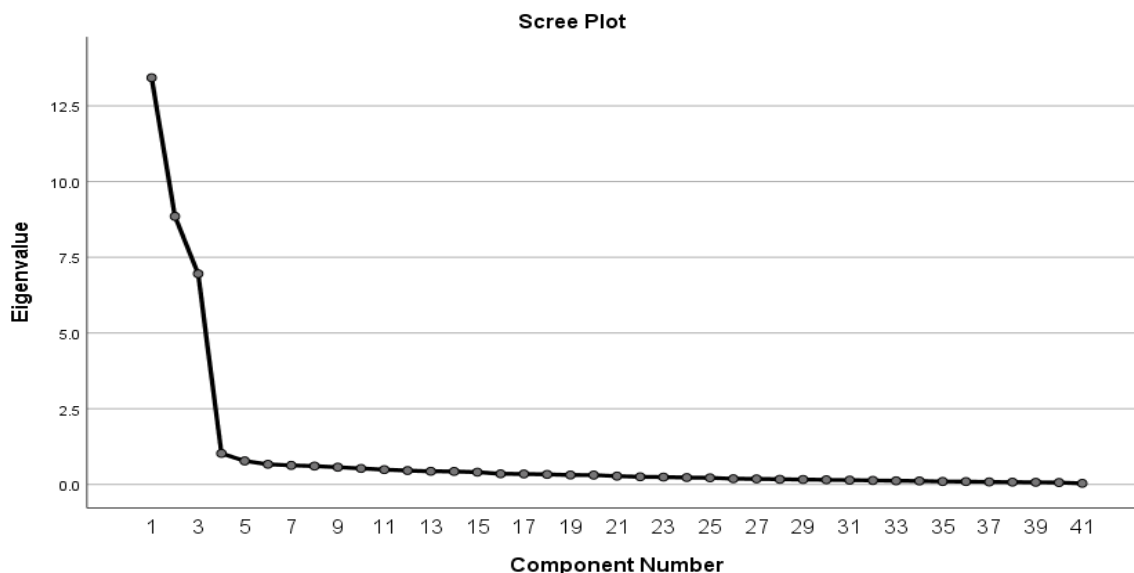
Descriptive Statistics of Total TELFAI Scores.

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
		Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
TELFAI	96	1	6	4.05	1.04	.04	-.49
Valid N (listwise)	96						

The Varimax rotation revealed a four-factor structure accounting for 73.80% of the variance, confirmed by a scree plot break at the fourth factor. Table 1 shows the variance explained by each of the four factors and Figure 1 demonstrates the factor loadings' scree plot.

Figure 1

Scree Plot of TELFAI's Factorial Solution



Factor 1, ELF-informed ELT practices, explained 32.74% of the variance, and contained 17 items (subsuming items 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19, 20, 26, 27, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40). They mainly addressed practical use of ELF in class including learners' building of social and cultural identity, aims of English language teaching concerning ELF role of ELF in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the class, different strategies towards learners' errors and the language used in classroom interactions, and ELT materials and syllabi from an ELF standpoint.

Factor 2, anti-nativespeakerist stance, with 21.58% of the variance comprised 8 items (subsuming items 4, 6, 14, 23, 30, 31, 33, 41). They were mainly germane to proficiency and intelligibility from an ELF standpoint, ownership of English language, ELF as an approach against linguistic imperialism and power inequality, intercultural communicative competence, learners' change of nativespeakerist mindset.

Factor 3, English language varieties, explained 16.96% of the variance encompassed 10 items (subsuming items 1, 8, 12, 15, 21, 24, 28, 29, 32, 34). They were related to the use of different English language varieties for avoiding communication breakdown, use of learners' L1 pragmatic norms in communication in ELF approach, learners' familiarity with different English accents, institutes and stakeholders' stance towards use of different varieties, barriers to the acceptance and use of different English varieties, and probable confusion as a result of using different varieties.

Factor 4, ELF-aware teacher education, with 2.5% of variance contained 6 items (subsuming items 7, 17, 18, 22, 25, 38). They concerned aims of ELF-aware teacher education including necessity of teachers' familiarity with the importance of nonnative English varieties and cultural diversities, and use of effective strategies, role of an ELF-informed teacher in countering nativespeakerism, and benefits of ELF awareness for teachers in understanding English-speaking countries' geopolitical means of gaining power in Eastern countries. The pattern and structure matrices indicating detailed variance and item loadings accounted for by each factor are presented in Tables 2 and 3 respectively.

Cronbach's alpha coefficients indicated satisfactory internal consistency across factors [$\alpha_{\text{Factor 1}} = .87$; $\alpha_{\text{Factor 2}} = .78$; $\alpha_{\text{Factor 3}} = .73$; $\alpha_{\text{Factor 4}} = .70$], and the overall inventory ($\alpha = .81$).

Table 2

Variance Explained by TELFAI's Four-Factor Structure

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	13.42	32.74	32.74	10.33	25.20	25.20
2	8.85	21.58	54.33	10.04	24.50	49.70
3	6.95	16.96	71.30	8.76	21.36	71.07
4	1.02	2.49	73.80	1.11	2.72	73.80

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 3 shows the loadings of each of the 41 items on the four extracted factors obtained through Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization. The rotation converged in 5 iterations, ensuring a stable and interpretable factor structure. As shown in the table, the loadings on factor 1 range from .77 to .90, factor 2 from .79 to .88, factor 3 from .68 to .81, and factor 4 from .60 to .73.

Table 3

Factor Loadings for TELFAI's Four-Factor Structure

Items	Components			
	Component 1 ELF-informed ELT Practices	Component 2 Anti-nativespeakerist Stance	Component 3 English Language Varieties	Component 4 ELF-aware Teacher Education
11	.90			
39	.89			
35	.87			
40	.87			
10	.86			
20	.83			
13	.82			
2	.81			
26	.80			
19	.80			
3	.79			
27	.79			
9	.78			
5	.78			
36	.77			
16	.77			
37	.77			
30		.88		
4		.88		
23		.86		
31		.85		
6		.85		
41		.84		
14		.81		
33		.79		
1			.81	

24	.77	
15	.71	
28	.71	
8	.70	
21	.68	
34	.68	
12	.65	
29	.63	
32	.62	
22		.73
18		.65
38		.63
7		.61
25		.60
17		.60

Relationship Between TELFAI and SLTES

For the second phase of the study, the correlation between teachers' ELF-awareness and their self-efficacy beliefs was calculated. For teachers' ELF awareness, the mean score was 4.31 ($SD = 0.53$), with a range of 3.61 to 5.68. The skewness (0.41 , $SE = 0.25$) and kurtosis (0.83 , $SE = 0.49$) ratios were calculated as 1.64 and 1.69, respectively, both falling within the acceptable range of ± 1.96 (Kim, 2013), indicating a normal distribution. For teachers' self-efficacy, the mean score was 6.89 ($SD = 0.95$), with a range of 4.67 to 8.70. The skewness (-0.21 , $SE = 0.25$) and kurtosis (0.10 , $SE = 0.49$) ratios were -0.84 and 0.20 , respectively, also within the ± 1.96 range, confirming normality. The sample size for both variables was 96.

A Pearson correlation analysis revealed a statistically positive correlation, $r(94) = .66$, $p < .01$, showing a moderately strong correlation. The significance level ($p < .01$) indicates that this correlation is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance.

In summary, this study successfully developed and validated the TELFAI, using factor analysis to refine it into a solid tool with four clear dimensions. Beyond just building the tool, the study also found a meaningful connection between teachers' awareness of ELF and their self-efficacy belief. It highlights how understanding ELF can actually play a real role in boosting teachers' belief in their own effectiveness.

Discussion

The present study was carried out to design and validate teachers' ELF-awareness inventory investigating Iranian English language teachers' perceptions of different aspects of ELF. The results of factor analysis revealed a four-factor construct comprising ELF-informed ELT practices, anti-nativespeakerist stance, English language varieties, and ELF-aware teacher education for the inventory. The results shared some similarities with previous studies on the factors extracted through factor analysis in validating ELF-related inventories. Meanwhile, as the second phase of

the study, the correlation between teachers' ELF-awareness and their self-efficacy belief was calculated and a moderately strong relationship was reported.

TELFAI's four-component factorial structure is consonant with the subconstructs of similar inventories (e.g., Atai et al., 2017; Bayyurt et al., 2019; Geckinil, 2022). More specifically, ELF-informed ELT practices as the first factor of this study aimed to find how ELF is practically used in the classroom, including issues such as aims of language teaching, development of learners' cultural identity, error treatment, and the selection of materials suitable for an ELF-approached class. This factor generally conformed most to Bayyurt et al.'s (2019) two extracted factors of cultural awareness and awareness of communication goals, and Geckinil's (2022) three factors of English language objectives, target language culture, and global cultures. Although Atai et al.'s (2017) study was restricted to validating an inventory on a limited aspect of ELF, that is critical cultural awareness, all three extracted factors had some commonalities with TELFAI's first factor. They highlighted the necessity of integrating cultural issues into ELT programs and materials, and referred to cultural imperialism and the hegemonic spread of Anglo-American culture as important topics that have not yet been thoroughly investigated. It also overlapped with one of the factors of Khodareza et al.'s (2020) study on developing a questionnaire to assess learners and teachers' conceptualization of World Englishes and its relation with the notion of culture. In addition, Khatib and Abbasi Talabari's (2018) research emphasized the significance of culture and identity as a social cultural matter in the ELT context. Two factors of their inventory on Iranian learners' cultural identity overlapped with some issues of TELFAI's first factor. Their study involved learners as participants, whereas the current study focuses on teachers.

Anti-nativespeakerist stance as the second factor of the current study which pinpointed issues such as anti-nativespeakerist mindset, ownership of English language, and linguistic imperialism conformed to one of the factors of Bayyurt et al.'s (2019) study on position of native speakers and varieties. It also had a relative overlap with Khatib and Rahimi's (2015) validated inventory on perceptions towards the native versus non-native speaker norms. The factors achieved from their study were about issues such as the desire to look like a native speaker, comprehensibility in native or nonnative English norms, social status according to the language variety used, and preserving the linguistic properties of English language. TELFAI's items for the second factor revolved around these issues. In addition, Atai et al.'s (2017) all three achieved factors had some commonalities with the second factor achieved in the current study. Taking World Englishes and ELF as nearly the same and interchangeable concepts, the present study's second factor overlapped with Khodareza et al.'s (2020) factor of ownership of English in World Englishes.

English language varieties as the third factor of the current study overlapped with Bayyurt et al.'s (2019) positioning native varieties and nativespeakers factor which assessed teachers' tendency towards native-like accent and proficiency. It also showed strong alignment with the English varieties factor identified by Geckinil (2022) in his first inventory which directly investigated EFL teachers and learners' knowledge of English varieties and their preference. Meanwhile, Khodareza et al.'s (2020) standard English vs. varieties had some commonalities with the third factor achieved in the present study.

According to the existing literature, no specific study has been conducted on ELF-aware teacher education, which is the fourth, newest and most specific factor of this study. On the whole, it seems that the current study on developing and validating an ELF inventory and its achieved factors share the most similarities with Bayyurt et al.'s (2019) study on investigating teachers' ELF awareness and its pedagogical practice. What makes this research distinct from other similar

studies is the dedication of one factor to ELF-aware teacher education. Besides, the study enjoys a combination of different aspects of ELF within an inventory which is specifically designed for the context of Iran. The issue of context gets importance as Atai et al. (2017) strongly affirm that “the substantial cultural gap which exists between Iran as an Islamic country and Western societies make the Iranian context different and special” (p. 11). TELFAI is designed not only to evaluate teachers’ perceptions of ELF but also to address the practical implementation of ELF strategies in the classroom and to examine the need for and feasibility of incorporating ELF-aware teacher education. This positions TELFAI as a comprehensive instrument that progresses toward measuring ELF awareness, surpassing the scope of existing perceptions measures. Furthermore, TELFAI is designed and validated to be particularly suitable for Iranian EFL teachers unlike the ones developed in other countries.

The study found a significant, moderately strong positive correlation between teachers’ ELF-awareness and their self-efficacy belief, supporting research that ELF-focused professional development enhances teachers’ confidence and effectiveness in multicultural classrooms (Lee & Davis, 2020). The ENRICH project, for example, shows that cultivating an ELF state of mind promotes transformative learning and critical self-reflection, which are key to increasing teacher self-efficacy (Sifakis, 2022). Teachers with higher ELF-awareness better adapt their teaching and classroom management, leading to improved student outcomes and motivation (Romijn et al., 2020). These findings highlight the importance of professional development programs that promote ELF-awareness to strengthen language teachers’ self-efficacy and ability to meet diverse educational needs (Alqahtani, 2023; Lee & Davis, 2020).

Conclusion

The changing circumstances of today’s world put people in new situations and impels them to go with worldwide changes hand in hand. Increase of nonnative English language speakers, and subsequently increase of English varieties have led speakers to seek ways of more effective communication with people from different languages and cultures. English as a lingua franca paves the way for better intercultural communication. Nevertheless, lack of research on ELF is quite evident in Iran, and some of its aspects remain largely unexamined. To make changes in English classrooms and students’ attitudes, teachers’ attitudes must be changed first. Iranian ELF scholars (e.g. Asakereh et al., 2019; Barzegar et al., 2018; Sarandi, 2020) acknowledged that lack of ELF-familiarity is evident in Iranian English language teachers. They congruently agreed that in order to observe changes in teachers’ fixed mindsets, a significant change in the education system of Iran in general and teacher training programs in particular is needed.

This study involved the development and validation of TELFAI, as an ELF-awareness inventory for teachers in the Iranian EFL context. Based on data analysis results, TELFAI enjoys a four-factor construct encompassing ELF-informed ELT practices, anti-nativespeakerist stance, English language varieties, and ELF-aware teacher education for the developed inventory. While the first three factors are also present in other ELF inventory development studies, teacher education as the last factor makes this study distinct from other studies. This part, could be a prerequisite to obviating the teacher education need as unanimously suggested by scholars in most of ELF studies. Concerning the second aim of the study, a positive relationship is demonstrated between ELF-awareness and language teachers’ self-efficacy, underscoring the importance of integrating ELF-focused professional development. Enhancing teachers’ awareness of ELF can

strengthen their confidence and effectiveness in diverse classrooms, ultimately benefiting language teaching and learning outcomes.

This study offers key insights into ELF awareness's impact on teachers' confidence and practices, supporting improved training, instruction, and policy development. Creating a reliable, context-specific questionnaire benefits teacher and learner evaluation in Iran by revealing strengths and weaknesses related to English language teachers and learners. This tool helps inform targeted integration of ELF principles in language teaching, providing valuable information to teacher educators, institutional leaders, and policymakers.

The study has limitations. Participants were drawn from only three cities, restricting findings to those specific educational and cultural contexts. Although the sample met minimum size requirements, a larger sample would improve factor stability and generalizability. Due to constraints in data collection, only Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted, which limited our ability to obtain a large independent sample for Confirmatory Factor Analysis. While EFA helped uncover the potential factor structure of the TELFAI, we recommend that future studies apply CFA on new independent samples to provide stronger evidence for the instrument's construct validity. Several ELF aspects remain unexplored, presenting research opportunities. Notably, developing a questionnaire on ELF-aligned teaching materials and a validated ELF-specific assessment tool tailored to the Iranian context is essential for advancing ELF incorporation in English education and evaluation.

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Appendix

Teachers' English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)-Awareness Questionnaire

For each of the following statements mark the choice that best fits the statement in your opinion from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

- 1- I think non-native speakers of English can resort to different languages and/or varieties of English to avoid communication breakdown in their interaction with both native and non-native speakers.
- 2- As a teacher, I avoid accepting Persian-like structures from my students even if they are intelligible.
- 3- Material developers should avoid non-native cultural elements for English language learners.
- 4- It is necessary for language learners to sound like native speakers of English to be considered proficient.
- 5- Learners' listening ability will improve more effectively if they are exposed to input from both native and non-native speakers.
- 6- Those speaking English as their first language do not own English as it belongs to anyone who speaks it.
- 7- Language teacher education should aim at providing teachers with effective strategies for enhancing learners' ability to communicate with speakers of different cultures.
- 8- Non-native speakers' awareness of different English language varieties is important owing to the rise of intercultural communication.
- 9- I favor an "English only" policy while teaching English.
- 10- Teachers should ignore learners' L2 errors that do not impede communication.
- 11- Nativespeakers' pragmatic norms (e.g., norms related to the production and comprehension of apologies, requests, refusals ...) should be set as a main target of English language teaching.
- 12- Non-native speakers should find space to speak and write in English in accordance with their L1 pragmatic norms.
- 13- ELT materials should introduce pragmatic elements from both native and non-native English-speaking communities.
- 14- Non-native speakers should invest in achieving the ability to communicate with speakers of different cultures rather than native-like proficiency.
- 15- I think it is important for non-native speakers to be familiar with different English accents (both native and non-native).
- 16- Learners' reading skill will improve more effectively if they are exposed to reading texts produced by both native and non-native speakers.
- 17- Language teacher education courses need to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of pragmatic competence for intercultural communication.
- 18- A language teacher education course that familiarizes teachers with critical movements against the native speaker ideal is necessary.
- 19- Learners' speaking ability will improve more effectively if they are geared to comprehensibility, rather than native-likeness.
- 20- English language teaching should aim at enabling learners to be successful users of English while maintaining their social and cultural identity.

- 21- Imposing native-speaker pragmatic norms (e.g., norms related to the production and comprehension of apologies, requests, refusals...) on non-native speakers impedes the development of the ability to communicate with speakers of different cultures.
- 22- A language teacher education course needs to raise teachers' awareness of the importance and nature of different non-native English language varieties.
- 23- Non-native speakers' awareness of the concept of linguistic imperialism (i.e., the transfer of a dominant language to others for power) is necessary.
- 24- Introducing different varieties of English language is impossible owing to native-like competency standards of English language institutes and other stakeholders like parents in Iran.
- 25- Language teacher education should raise teachers' awareness of the English-only policy in ELT as English-speaking countries' geopolitical means of gaining power in Eastern countries.
- 26- Learners' productive skills could improve through an awareness of the target culture's social and pragmatic norms.
- 27- English language syllabi should contain tasks that emphasize native-like proficiency.
- 28- Considering English language varieties legitimate in intercultural communication leads to the interactants' confusion.
- 29- Non-native speakers' L1 social identity is a resource that can enrich communication in English.
- 30- Attempts at changing the mindset of nativespeakerism among non-native speakers are likely to fail.
- 31- Eradicating the nativespeakerist ideology is IMpossible owing to the power inequalities between East and West.
- 32- It is of little impact to introduce different English language varieties owing to long-praised native-like proficiency standards.
- 33- Non-native speakers with native-like proficiency sound more educated and intelligent.
- 34- Part of English language proficiency is the ability to behave like native English speakers in different social and cultural situations.
- 35- Language teaching should partly aim at preparing learners to interact with other non-native speakers of English.
- 36- Overemphasis on native-like accuracy in English has a negative effect on students' confidence when they try to communicate in English.
- 37- Teachers should avoid exposing learners to non-native English accents (Indian accent, Chinese accent, etc.) in ELT syllabi.
- 38- If designed carefully, teacher education programs can play a role in resisting nativespeakerism.
- 39- Promotion of English-as-the-only-medium-of-instruction approach is UNrelated to East and West power inequality.
- 40- To induce communicative competence, materials should emphasize native-like language use norms and standards.
- 41- Effective communication with other non-native speakers of English needs an awareness of their language use norms.