

ELF-awareness and Teachers' Attitudes Towards Classroom Materials' Evaluation: A Mini-survey Results

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Abstract

The present article focuses on the impact of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research on English language pedagogy in relation to teaching materials and, more specifically, the way culture and different varieties of English are included in them. Moving beyond the traditional native speaker norm-based approach to teaching English requires a substantial reassessment and rethinking of teachers' current beliefs, assumptions and classroom practices. The author seeks to investigate teachers' prevailing attitudes towards this development. The first part of the paper discusses some vital theoretical issues concerning ELF and their implications for teaching English with special attention paid to classroom materials. The concept of ELF - aware teaching is also introduced. The findings of the empirical study which aimed at investigating whether English language teachers in the Polish context follow ELF-aware pedagogy based on cultural diversity are presented then. More specifically, the respondents' attitudes towards ELT materials embracing various cultures and accents are discussed.

Keywords: English as a Lingua Franca, ELF-aware pedagogy, classroom materials.

Streszczenie

Nauczanie ze świadomością ELF oraz postawa nauczycieli w odniesieniu do materiałów dydaktycznych – wyniki mini-ankiety

Niniejszy artykuł skupia się na wpływie wyników badań nad językiem angielskim jako lingua franca (ang. English as a lingua franca – ELF) na nauczanie języka angielskiego w odniesieniu do materiałów dydaktycznych, a w szczególności na sposób, w jaki kultura i różne odmiany języka angielskiego są w nich przedstawione. Odchodzenie od tradycyjnego nauczania języka angielskiego opartego na normach wyznaczonych przez rodzimych użytkowników języka angielskiego wymaga dokładnej oceny obecnych przekonań i założeń nauczycieli oraz ewaluacji ich działań w klasie. Celem artykułu jest analiza dominujących postaw nauczycieli wobec rozwoju, jaki niosą za sobą badania nad językiem angielskim jako lingua franca. W pierwszej części omówiono kilka istotnych zagadnień teoretycznych dotyczących ELF i ich implikacje dla nauczania języka angielskiego, biorąc pod uwagę przede wszystkim materiały dydaktyczne. Przedstawiona została również koncepcja nauczania ze świadomością ELF (ang. ELF-aware

teaching). Następnie zaprezentowane zostały wyniki badania, które miało na celu ocenę, czy nauczyciele języka angielskiego w Polsce propagują pedagogikę opartą na ELF, która skupia się na różnorodności kulturowej. Zanalizowana została postawa respondentów wobec sposobu, w jaki różne kultury i akcenty są przedstawione w materiałach dydaktycznych.

Słowa kluczowe: angielski jako lingua franca, nauczanie ze świadomością ELF, materiały dydaktyczne

1. Introduction

The English language has a special status nowadays because of its spread around the globe to an extent recognised never before. It is suggested that this “is simultaneously the consequence and the principal language medium of globalising processes” (Jenkins et al. 2011: 303). It is prominent in many vital aspects of life in the 21st century: international business, law, travel, economy, the media, scientific research, education etc. As Erling (2005: 40) observes, because of the increasing amount of communication among and between speakers of English as a second and foreign language, scholars have had a strong compulsion to provide a variety of labels for English, such as e.g. English as an international language (Widdowson 1997 as cited in Erling 2005: 40, Modiano 2001 as cited in Erling 2005: 40, McKay 2002), English as a global language (Crystal 2003; Toolan 1997 as cited in Erling 2005: 42) and English as lingua franca (Jenkins 2000 as cited in Erling 2005: 41; Seidlhofer 2001 as cited in Erling 2005: 41). In the present article the term *English as a lingua franca* (henceforth ELF) has been chosen as the preferred one.

2. English as a lingua franca - theoretical background

Defining ELF has been a problematic issue because of the controversy among ELF researchers concerning whether or not to include native English speakers (NES) in the definition. One of the most popular definitions in which NES are excluded is the one provided by Firth (1996), for whom ELF is

a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication.

(Firth 1996 as cited in Seidlhofer 2004: 211)

In an attempt to define a lingua franca, House (1999) also describes it as one involving non-native English speakers (NNES) only.:

ELF interactions are defined as interactions between members of two or more different linguacultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue.

(House 1999: 74)

Both of the definitions above describe a contemporary use of English in NNES-NNES interactions and the ELF user can thus be defined as any person using English for international purposes, regardless of which English variety they employ.

Jenkins (2014), however, points out that most ELF researchers include NES in their definitions. According to Seidlhofer (2011: 7), ELF should be regarded as “any use of English among speakers of different languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option”. This definition embraces both NNES-NNES and NES-NNES interactions. It refers to situations when English is used for communication when at least one speaker uses it as a second language. ELF is plurilinguistic, hybrid and fluid in nature. Of course, because NNES far outnumber NES, NES are the minority of ELF interactions and thus, contribute far less than NNES to the evolution of ELF. For the purpose of the current study, the term ELF is understood in the second sense.

Since the early 1990s, ELF research has undergone some considerable shifts (Sifakis and Tsantila 2019: 15). The early ELF-oriented research focused on describing the ELF construct from a range of perspectives with the main aim to establish a set of properties of ELF at different linguistic levels, particularly with reference to lexicogrammar (Seidlhofer 2004 as cited in Jenkins et al. 2011: 289), pronunciation (Jenkins 2000 as cited in Jenkins et al. 2011: 282) and pragmatics (Firth 1996 as cited in Jenkins et al. 2011: 286, House 1999 as cited in Jenkins et al. 2011: 286). At the beginning of the 21st century, the interest shifted from trying to establish ELF as a distinct variety of English to concentrating on the knowledge, strategies and skills of successful ELF users (Seidlhofer 2009). Most recently, it has become crucial to redefine ELF within the context of multilingualism and translanguaging¹ (Garcia, Wei 2014; Jenkins 2015; Kirkpatrick 2010).

In the early period of ELF research, ELF was identified as an ‘emergent’ variety of language or a set of such varieties (Seidlhofer 2001). However, more recently the views of ELF, adopted also for the purpose of the current study, define it as a language which does not have the standard form but is characterised by dynamism, fluidity and lack of specific norms to follow (Sifakis

¹ Translanguaging means openness to many languages and thinking of them not as separate boxes, but rather as co-existing codes (Lewis, Jones and Baker 2012) which provide the user with a rich stock of resources (Hawkins 2018: 58) to be used in successful communication.

and Bayyurt 2015). This means that it cannot be considered a distinct codifiable language variety because of its inherent changeability and hybridity.

3. ELF and pedagogical implications

It seems clear that the complex, heterogenous, multilingual and multicultural nature of ELF should have influence on EFL (English as a foreign language) classroom practices. As Sifakis and Tsantila (2019: 17) notice, though, there is a gap in the field: the authors emphasise that the implications and applicability of ELF research for English language teaching (ELT) still remain largely unexplored. Seidlhofer and Widdowson (2019: 41) stress the need to reconceptualise ELT so that “the global learning of English needs to be based on its global use”.

Among key aspects of ELT that need reviewing are normativity and the role of NES/NNES. In particular, rejecting the native speaker language model in ELT and going away from a conception of English dominated by its L1 standards are highlighted. The global character of English needs to be stressed, which entails foregrounding the complexities of linguistic and cultural diversity² of ELF communication. As a consequence, EFL teachers' normative mindset and their Standard English preference have been questioned. All this has important ramifications for ELF empirical work and research, which should raise questions concerning current practices in the ELT, especially in the following areas: the nature of language syllabus, approaches and methods of instruction, teacher education, language assessment and testing and teaching materials.

It needs to be stressed at this point, however, that presenting an alternative model of English that could be teachable in all contexts as a monolithic version has never been the aim of ELF researchers. Instead, “ELF researchers feel their responsibility is to make current research findings accessible in a way that enables teachers to reconsider their beliefs and practices and make informed decisions about the significance of ELF for their own individual teaching contexts” (Jenkins et al. 2011: 306). The notion of *ELF awareness* proposed and developed by Sifakis (2014, 2017) seems to be of great relevance here. As far as teachers are concerned, it may be defined as

the process of engaging with ELF research and developing one's own understanding of the ways in which it can be integrated in one's classroom context, through a continuous process of critical

² Including cultures of inner, outer and expanding circle countries (to learn more about the distinction into three concentric circles see Kachru 1985)

reflection, design, implementation and evaluation of instructional activities that reflect and localize one's interpretation of the ELF construct.

(Sifakis and Bayyurt 2018: 459)

4. ELF implications for coursebooks and classroom materials

ELF research findings encourage ELT stakeholders, especially English language teachers, syllabus writers and coursebook designers to rethink their beliefs, attitudes and assumptions concerning ELT materials design and evaluation. In particular, it is necessary for them to critically respond to the needs of learners who should be nowadays thought of as intercultural users of English in a global scale.

As Matsuda (2002: 184) argues, textbooks are an important source of exposure for learners to a variety of users and uses of English, having, therefore, great influence on their perceptions of the English language. Referring to English as an international language, Modiano (2001a) identifies two major teaching areas: language varieties and culture. He argues that following the traditional EFL pedagogy and exposing learners only to native English varieties, such as British English, American English, Australian English etc. makes them perceive other varieties and cultures as less important. Matsuda (2003: 721) points out that “the limited exposure to English varieties in the classroom may lead to confusion or resistance when students are confronted with different types of English users or uses outside of class.” She adds that, of course, it is possible to select one variety as a dominant target model but awareness of different varieties is crucial for functioning in the globalized world. Linguistic, cultural and intercultural diversity of English and its plurilithic nature (frequently marked by the use of the word *Englishes* instead of *English*) should be reflected in teaching materials.

When discussing the issue of teaching materials representing EIL (English as an International Language) users, Matsuda (2003: 724) proposes that textbooks might include more main characters from outer and expanding circle countries, in this way promoting the inclusion of various cultures. She also suggests incorporating dialogues presenting the use of ELF in multilingual outer circle and expanding circle settings. Jenkins (2006: 173) also notices that teachers and learners need to learn not one variety of English but different varieties, discuss their similarities and differences and attention should be paid to intelligibility issues. According to Baker (2012:69), “the use of English as the global lingua franca highlights the need for an understading of cultural contexts and communicative practices to successfully

communicate across diverse cultures.” Thus, students need to be exposed to a vast repertoire of cultures and accents, not only connected with inner circle countries, but also outer and expanding ones.

Sifakis and Tsantila (2019:20) argue that “[c]oursebook designers should provide more authentic non-native user usage and more extensive contextualisation of learning activities and tasks.” Indeed, there is a need to incorporate examples of successful ELF communication between speakers of different origins and first languages, showing that the main aim of ELF interaction is mutual intelligibility. What is more, it would be beneficial for learners to be presented with accents and cultures of their prospective interlocutors in situations similar to those that they may encounter in the future. For instance, they may be exposed to accents of people from neighbouring countries, in the case of Poland e.g. Czechs, Germans or Ukrainians speaking English.

Moreover, awareness raising activities seem to be worth incorporating in teaching materials (Matsuda 2003: 721, Jenkins 2006: 173-174). In order to boost learners' knowledge of the diversity of English, it might be useful to include discussions of the issues connected with e.g. the reasons for the spread of English, the emergence of new standards or the future of English. Also, global issues, such as health, nature, technology could be discussed in textbooks in connection with globalization, internalization and the spread of English. This type of activities could raise learners' confidence in their own varieties, making them abandon the desire to achieve an often-unattainable goal to sound native-like.

5. Study – ELF awareness and teachers' attitudes towards classroom materials' evaluation

The present study was carried out in 2016. It aimed at examining to what extent EFL teachers in the Polish context might be perceived as following ELF-aware pedagogy in terms of textbook and materials selection, focusing more precisely on the cultural representations³ and the range of accents included in them. The primary objective was to investigate to what extent incorporating a range of English accents and cultural topics connected with inner, outer

³ In the present study *culture* is identified by national origin; it refers to the practices and products of a particular nation, including its customs, beliefs, values, art, habits etc.; It is worth noticing, however, that by some ELF researchers cultures may be interpreted as „fluid, dynamic with blurred boundaries” (Baker 2017: 83) and it is suggested that it may be problematic to “posit an inexorable link between particular languages and cultures, especially at the national level (e.g. English and Anglophone cultures) in intercultural communication” (Baker 2017: 91).

and expanding circle countries was considered important for EFL teachers in Poland. Secondly, the author wanted to find out whether they thought the way culture was portrayed and the different accents were presented as important criteria when choosing a coursebook and supplementary materials.

5.1. Participants

The participants were 127 EFL teachers in Poland. They were accessed through e-mails or social networking sites. Among the subjects there were 6 (5%) nursery school teachers. The group of primary school teachers constituted the largest group: 62 (49%). There were 40 high school teachers (31%) who filled in the questionnaire. Nineteen (15%) of the subjects declared to work in private language schools. As far as their teaching experience is concerned, the results are as follows: 0-5 years: 28 (22%), 6-10 years: 31 (25%), 11-15 years: 18 (14%), 16-20 years: 26 (20%), and over 20 years: 24 (19%).

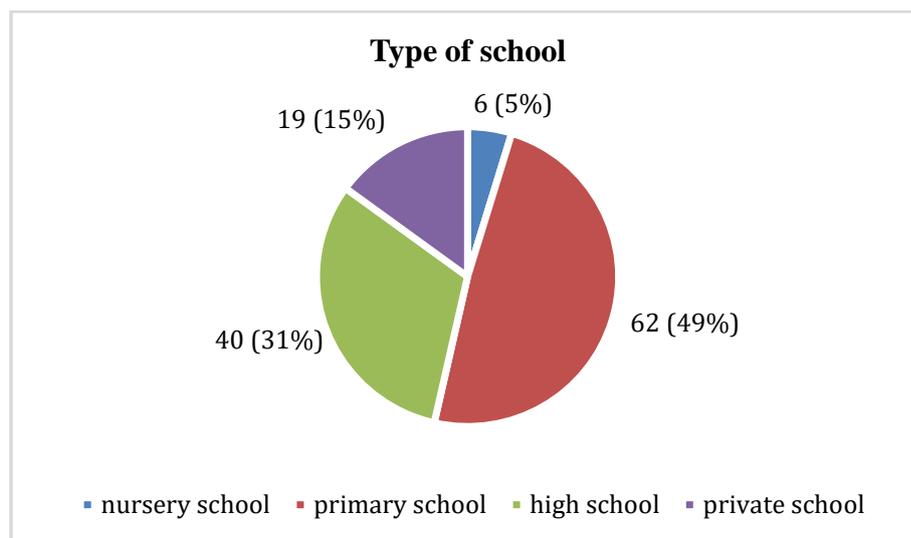


Figure 1. Type of school the participants work at – questionnaire results

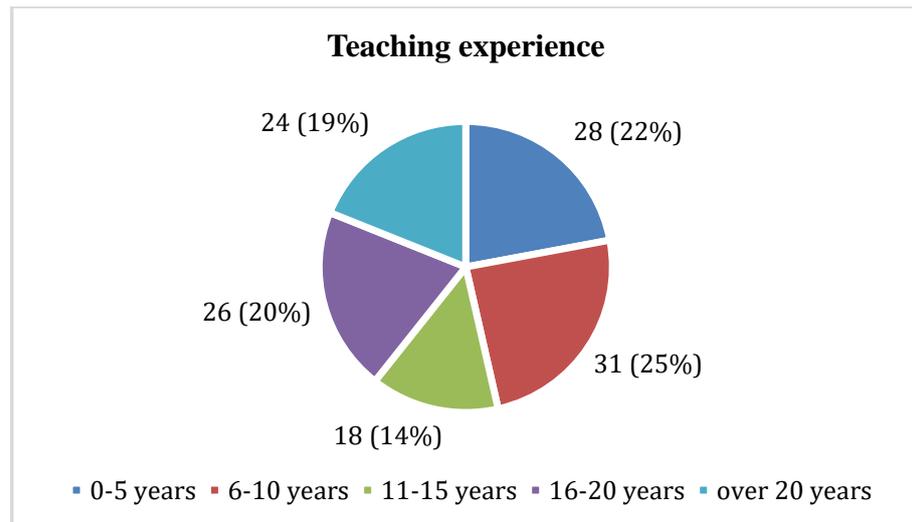


Figure 2. Teaching experience – questionnaire results

5.2. Instrument

The data for the study were collected by means of a questionnaire. It was subjected to a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The questionnaire was distributed on the Internet, mainly by e-mails and social networking sites. The participants accessed the questionnaire from their computers and completed it anonymously. The instrument was in Polish. It consisted of 10 questions (divided into three sections). The first section including personal details was placed at the beginning of the instrument. In this part the respondents were asked to provide the information about the type of school they work at and their working experience. Next, there were 6 closed-ended questions; 3 of them concerned teaching about a range of culture (the degree of importance of different types of culture and the extent to which various cultures are presented in textbooks they use and additional materials they use in class) and the other 3 were related to familiarising learners with various accents of English (analogically, the degree of importance of different accents and the extent to which various accents are presented in audio materials in textbooks they use and additional material they use). In the third section of the questionnaire there were 2 open-ended questions: 1) When choosing a coursebook, do you assess it in terms of a variety of cultures they refer to? and 2) When choosing a coursebook, do you assess it in terms of the diversity of accents included in recordings? Their aim was to complement and add detail to the quantitative data from the second section.

5.3. Results and discussion

Table 1. When teaching culture, how important are the following aspects for you? – questionnaire results

	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Rather unimportant	Totally unimportant
British culture	45 (35%)	66 (52%)	14 (11%)	2 (2%)	0
American culture	27 (21%)	65 (51%)	30 (24%)	5 (4%)	0
Culture of other English-speaking countries (e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand)	6 (5%)	50 (39%)	40 (32%)	31 (24%)	0
Culture of non-English-speaking countries (e.g. Spain, Japan, Brazil)	2 (2%)	20 (16%)	51 (40%)	46 (36%)	8 (6%)
Culture of neighbouring countries (e.g. the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Slovakia)	4 (3%)	22 (17%)	50 (39%)	35 (28%)	16 (13%)
Polish culture	42 (33%)	52 (41%)	21 (17%)	9 (7%)	3 (2%)
Global cultural issues (e.g. social, economic, technological)	32 (25%)	78 (61%)	15 (12%)	2 (2%)	0

The results show that for a substantial majority of the respondents British and American cultures have the most significant relevance in teaching culture. Nobody perceives British and American culture as totally unimportant. This may entail that they are still closely attached to traditional pedagogy in which native speakers and their culture are regarded as the reference norm. There are divided opinions and mixed feelings in the way the participants evaluate the significance of teaching about culture of other English-speaking countries (e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand) and non-English-speaking countries (e.g. Spain, Japan, Brazil). The former, however, seems to be of a little more significance than the latter. Still, both aspects are treated by many participants as neither important nor unimportant. Again, these findings

indicate the respondents' reluctance towards employing ELF-aware pedagogy which focuses on the cultural diversity. There is also some uncertainty about the significance of teaching about culture of the neighbouring countries. In this case the most common answer was 'neither important nor unimportant'. The respondents, however, treat Polish culture as important to incorporate in their teaching. The group seems to be quite homogenous as far as teaching about global cultural issues (e.g. social, economic, technological) is concerned: for the majority of the respondents it is either important or very important.

Table 2. To what extent does your coursebook focus on...? – questionnaire results

	Very much	Much	So so	A little	Very little	Not at all	I have never thought about it
British culture	18(14%)	32 (25%)	57 (45%)	16 (12%)	2 (2%)	0	2 (2%)
American culture	4 (3%)	23(18%)	44 (35%)	36 (28%)	14(11%)	2 (2%)	4 (3%)
Culture of other English-speaking countries (e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand)	0	8 (6%)	21 (17%)	48 (38%)	30(24%)	12 (9%)	8 (6%)
Culture of non-English-speaking countries (e.g. Spain, Japan, Brazil)	0	7 (6%)	17 (13%)	36 (28%)	43(34%)	14 (11%)	10 (8%)
Culture of neighbouring countries (e.g. the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Slovakia)	0	1 (1%)	4 (3%)	18 (14%)	28(22%)	63 (50%)	13 (10%)
Polish culture	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	45 (35%)	34 (27%)	13(10%)	23 (18%)	8 (6%)
Global cultural issues (e.g. social, economic, technological)	8 (6%)	27 (21%)	54 (42%)	15 (12%)	11 (9%)	6 (5%)	6 (5%)

In the respondents' view, generally the coursebooks they use do not include a lot of cultural issues. However, there seems to be a clear predominance of cultural representations of inner circle countries, especially British and American culture. Similarly, global cultural aspects are also covered in textbooks, but not too much. Taking into account culture of other English-speaking countries and non-English-speaking countries, in the teachers' opinion they constitute little or very little coursebook content. Even less coursebook material is devoted to culture of neighbouring countries. In this case the most common answer to question: 'To what extent does your coursebook focus on...?' was 'not at all'. The teachers report not much reference to Polish culture. The most common answers were 'so so' and 'a little'. The results definitely show that materials designers still focus on native cultures and treat them as norms. It may also entail that incorporating a variety of cultures is not a crucial criterion for the respondents in the process of textbook selection.

Table 3. How often do you use additional materials related to...? – questionnaire results

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely or very rarely	Never
British culture	38(30%)	49 (39%)	31 (24%)	9 (7%)	0
American culture	14(11%)	54 (42%)	44 (35%)	14 (11%)	1 (1%)
Culture of other English-speaking countries (e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand)	1 (1%)	16 (13%)	64 (50%)	29 (23%)	17 (13%)
Culture of non-English-speaking countries (e.g. Spain, Japan, Brazil)	1 (1%)	8 (6%)	30 (24%)	51 (40%)	37 (29%)
Culture of neighbouring countries (e.g. the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Slovakia)	0	2 (2%)	32 (25%)	42 (33%)	51 (40%)
Polish culture	2 (2%)	34 (27%)	56 (44%)	26(20%)	9 (7%)
Global cultural issues (e.g. social, economic, technological)	14(11%)	58 (46%)	34 (27%)	13 (10%)	8 (6%)

Analysing the teachers' answers to question 'How often do you use additional materials related to...?', similarly, British and American cultures are prevalent. Culture of other English-speaking countries appears to be not so commonly discussed. The answer 'sometimes' was chosen by 50% of the respondents. The same refers to Polish culture (the answer 'sometimes' - 44%). A majority of the teachers claim that their additional materials are rarely, very rarely (40%) or never (29%) connected with culture of non-English-speaking countries. Materials connected with culture of neighbouring countries are also rather unpopular. It seems clear that the cultural representations in additional materials used by the respondents indicate that they do not follow ELF-aware pedagogy. Cultural topics connected with outer and expanding circle countries are rather irrelevant for them. A substantial number of the respondents, however, supplement the coursebook with materials referring to global cultural issues.

Table 4. How important is familiarising your learners with the following accents for you? – questionnaire results

	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Rather unimportant	Totally unimportant
British	56 (44%)	61 (48%)	6 (5%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)
American	27 (21%)	80 (63%)	15 (12%)	5 (4%)	0
Other English-speaking countries (e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand)	6 (5%)	32 (25%)	32 (25%)	39 (31%)	18 (14%)
Non-English-speaking countries (e.g. Spain, Japan, Brazil)	0	22 (17%)	28 (22%)	42 (33%)	35 (28%)
Neighbouring countries (e.g. the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Slovakia)	0	26 (20%)	20 (16%)	44 (35%)	37 (29%)
Polish	8 (6%)	45 (36%)	37 (29%)	27 (21%)	10 (8%)

With reference to familiarising learners with a range of accents, the vast majority of the respondents claim the British accent is very important (44%) or important (48%). The American accent is very important for 27% of the teachers and important for as many as 65% of them. Although there is a clear preference of both British and American accents

visible, the British accent seems to be a bit more appreciated. As to accents of other English-speaking countries, the respondents have divided opinions. Taking into consideration accents of non-English-speaking countries, they appear to be less important. Nobody chose the answer 'very important'. It is rather unimportant for as many as 33% of the subjects and totally unimportant for 28% of them. Similarly, nobody claims accents of neighbouring countries are very important. They are given rather a low or very low level of significance. The teachers show their attachment to traditional pedagogy and treat the accents of the inner circle world as the most relevant in their teaching. The accents of outer and expanding circle countries appear to be rather insignificant for them. Taking into account familiarising learners with the Polish accent, the respondents have divided opinions.

Table 5. How many recordings are there in your textbook with the following accents? – questionnaire results

	Very much	Much	So so	A little	Very little	Not at all	I have never thought about it
British	61 (48%)	48 (38%)	9 (7%)	3 (2%)	4 (3%)	0	2 (2%)
American	11 (9%)	44 (35%)	29 (23%)	22 (17%)	8 (6%)	5 (4%)	8 (6%)
Other English speaking countries (e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand)	0	6 (5%)	28 (22%)	29 (23%)	27(21%)	26 (20%)	11 (9%)
Non-English-speaking countries (e.g. Spain, Japan, Brazil)	0	3 (2%)	23 (18%)	20 (16%)	22(17%)	48 (38%)	11 (9%)
Neighbouring countries (e.g. the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Slovakia)	0	1 (1%)	6 (5%)	27 (21%)	32(25%)	48 (38%)	13 (10%)
Polish	0	3 (2%)	20 (16%)	19 (15%)	31(24%)	39 (31%)	15 (12%)

The accents used in audio materials in coursebooks are recognised by the respondents as demonstrating almost exclusively British and American English. As far as accents of other English-speaking countries are concerned, the teachers report mainly little or very little exposure to them in textbooks and even less to accents of non-English-speaking countries - almost 40% of the teachers chose the answer 'not at all'. According to the respondents, accents of neighbouring countries seem to appear in recordings rather rarely. The same refers to the Polish accent. Interestingly, in each case there were a number of respondents who chose the answer 'I have never thought about it'. This may suggest that they are either inattentive or may feel not knowledgeable enough to recognise and teach about a range of accents. The following extracts from the open-ended questions support this⁴:

'(...) I personally feel better at British English and I think that students should feel very familiar with this accent. There is no need for them to know the differences between, for example, Scottish English or Irish? I often do not recognise them and I'm still good at English. ha ha'

'I don't care what accents there are in a coursebook because (...) sometimes I simply can't recognise them.'

Definitely, the range of accents presented in textbook audio materials is not an important criterion for the respondents when choosing a coursebook.

Table 6. How often do you use additional materials including recordings with...? – questionnaire results

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely or very rarely	Never
British accent	67 (53%)	42 (33%)	17 (13%)	1 (1%)	0
American accent	34 (27%)	59 (46%)	21 (17%)	13 (10%)	0
Accents of other English-speaking countries (e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand)	2 (2%)	8 (6%)	56 (44%)	46 (36%)	15(12%)
Accents of non-English-speaking countries (e.g. Spain, Japan, Brazil)	0	4 (3%)	34 (27%)	48 (38%)	41(32%)

⁴ All the citations of the respondents' answers were translated by the present author.

Accents of neighbouring countries (e.g. the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Slovakia)	0	0	17 (13%)	67 (53%)	43(34%)
Polish accent	15 (12%)	46 (36%)	36 (28%)	25 (20%)	5 (4%)

British and American accents are the most frequently used in additional materials the respondents use. For both options nobody chose the answer 'never'. Focusing mainly on familiarising learners with accents of inner circle countries indicates the respondents' unwillingness to adopt ELF-aware pedagogy. Most of the teachers sometimes (44%) or very rarely/rarely (36%) use accents of other English-speaking countries. Accents of non-English-speaking countries are even less popular. They seem not to include accents of neighbouring countries in supplementary materials. The Polish accent, however, is quite often presented in them.

As far as the analysis of the open-ended questions is concerned, when asked whether they take into account the way cultures are presented when choosing a coursebook, 35 respondents answer 'YES', 4 of them sometimes do it, and 88 people (almost 70%) admit that they do not pay attention to these aspects. The reasons for not taking them into consideration are various. A number of teachers comment that other aspects are more important for them. For instance:

'Shame to admit, but rather not. I take into account other issues, such as the level of difficulty of exercises, layout and overall impression.'

'No, I focus more on the content or I just check if the tasks are at the right level and of interest to the learner.'

Similarly, the subjects' responses to the second open-ended question, in which the teachers were asked whether they assessed the coursebook in terms of accents included in the recordings in the process of coursebook choice, show that almost three quarters of them (74 - 94%) do not treat it as an important criterion. Five (4%) respondents sometimes do it and only 29 (23%) report to take it into consideration. A great number of the respondents also referred to the fact that other issues are of greater relevance for them.

Additionally, in both open-ended questions some of the respondents relate to the fact that exam (both high-stakes proficiency exams and school leaving exam) preparation takes up a large part of their teaching time, e.g.

I am mainly conducting exam preparation sessions and I am much more attentive to exam content. I like it when there is a lot of cultural background in reading texts, but this is not the most important element when choosing a textbook.

Interestingly, the analysis of the answers to open-ended questions shows that many of the respondents still link teaching culture with culture of inner circle countries and treat the English language as owned by its native speakers. The following extracts provide evidence of that:

Yes because I think that if we learn a language, we must also know the culture and customs of the nation.

Yes, I believe this is very important when learning a language, as we will use someone's tongue, which is part of their culture.

Yes, knowledge of languages means knowledge of their culture.

No, the amount of grammatical material does not leave us too much time to explore the culture of English-speaking countries.

The last comment may be also linked to another issue mentioned by a large group of the teachers surveyed: the lack of time for cultural lessons and familiarising learners with a range of accents.

Moreover, a number of the subjects admitted that the coursebook is imposed on them, e.g.:

I work on a coursebook chosen by a large language team and I have no influence on it.

The coursebook is imposed by the school headmaster.

Unfortunately I'm forced to use the book that I do not choose.

Some teachers state that they do not pay much attention to the cultural content of the coursebook and accents presented in recordings because they prefer dealing with this topic with the use of supplementary materials. For instance:

'(...)When it comes to teaching cultural aspects, I use the additional materials... I choose what really interests my students at the moment'

Interestingly, there are a number of comments in which the respondents suggest it is not necessary to expose learners to a variety of cultures and accents in class because nowadays they are surrounded by English.

'Nowadays English is omnipresent. Learners have the possibility to listen to different accents on YouTube for example. They also watch films, listen to music. It is not important, and even impossible, to teach about every culture and show every accent of English.'

'(...)in class learners should learn about cultures of the UK and the USA. They can expand their knowledge at home. English is everywhere.'

Nevertheless, a few comments show the teachers' appreciation of a range of cultures embraced and accents incorporated in the coursebook, e.g.:

'Yes, I like textbooks with texts from which students can learn about cultural issues in different countries, such as festivals, holidays or famous people. I also appreciate exercises where students compare their culture with others. This will be useful to them in the future.'

'(..) I want my learners to listen to various accents. It is sometimes funny... They like such lessons when they hear for example a Scottish person. (...) I often use additional materials in class, for example videos on YouTube where people from different countries speak English. It's even easier to understand them for my learners.'

6. Conclusions and pedagogical implications

Because of the growing popularity of the theme of English as a lingua franca and its relevance to teaching and learning English for multicultural communication, numerous studies within this area have been recently conducted. There have been relatively few empirical projects of this kind carried out in the Polish context (see e.g. Szymańska-Tworek 2016), and the present study is an attempt to fill in this gap. Drawing on the notion of *ELF-awareness* and focusing on the implications of ELF for classroom teaching, the present study aimed at addressing some pertinent questions related to this aspect of ELT in general, and in particular to teachers' decisions concerning the choice of the didactic materials to be used in class. The emphasis was on investigating if English language teachers in the Polish context might be perceived as following ELF-aware pedagogy in terms of textbook and materials selection. The data was collected by means of a specially designed questionnaire and analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The analysis of the empirical data reveals that the teachers are rather attached to traditional pedagogy. They express their strong preference for cultures and accents of the native English speaking world, especially the UK and the USA. Most of the English language teachers surveyed seem not to be aware of the findings and implications of ELF research and theory. When choosing classroom materials, a substantial majority of them do not take into account the need for familiarising learners with a variety of cultures and accents. While assessing coursebooks and supplementary materials they seem to adopt a conception of English dominated by native speaker norms. It appears relevant for them to focus mainly on native varieties of English and cultures of native-English-speaking countries. What is more, there are numerous indicators that they treat the English language as belonging to native speakers of English and thus, consider teaching about inner circle countries, especially the UK and the USA as crucial.

Although most of the respondents show little awareness of the advances connected with ELF and its pedagogical implications, there are some instances where the teachers admit that exposing learners to a range of accents and cultures is important. For example, there are a few comments in open-ended questions that demonstrate some of the respondents' willingness and readiness to take into account the way culture and accents are presented as a criterion in the process of classroom materials selection.

This project is not free from limitations. The basic problem of the study is that the questionnaire is short and only some aspects of ELF are tapped. Even though anonymity was provided to the participants, they could feel obliged to answer in the way they feel they should. What is more, there are not very many respondents in the study.

Future research in this area might employ some other tools. Various data collection instruments (interviews, class observations) might deepen the understanding of teachers' attitudes and classroom practices. Moreover, the issue seems to be worth investigating among a larger group of subjects. A more in-depth analysis of the data might explore the possible differences in perceiving ELF among teachers of different age groups (nursery and high school learners inevitably have different educational needs concerning their participation in global communication). It might be interesting to find out about other stakeholders' attitudes to ELF too. For instance, learners' expectations seem to be worth investigating. The analysis of available coursebooks and classroom materials in terms of how and what culture is portrayed and what accents are presented in audio recordings might be valuable.

There seem to be numerous reasons why few teachers follow ELF-aware pedagogy. First of all, they may have limited knowledge about ELF research and its pedagogical implications. They do not realise that most of their learners will not be using English to communicate with NSE, but with NNSE. Furthermore, the problem may be connected with their personality traits. They may not be open to change in their professional practices. They often treat themselves as custodians of Standard English, feeling that they are expected to teach a specific native variety of English. Moreover, they encounter many context-dependent constraints, such as e.g. the lack of appropriate ELF-aware teaching materials, the established syllabus based on traditional pedagogy, the examination boards testing only standard varieties and the expectations of others (e.g. learners, parents, school headmasters).

The results of the present study may be of interest to teachers, teaching materials designers and teacher educators. A critical approach to ELT materials should be included in teacher education in order to promote a more plurilithic nature of English. Teachers need to become aware of the advances that ELF research and theory bring forth and be ready to critically reflect

on, analyse and assess the existing materials they use and supplement them with different resources that support ELF-aware pedagogy. A modification of pre-existing activities to embrace a multicultural perspective should not be difficult. Teachers need to take into consideration the need to expose their students to and familiarise them with a variety of accents and cultures. The time for the process of transformation of attitudes and practices in Poland has arrived. However, teachers are not required to completely change their perspective. Importantly, ELF scholars do not recommend replacing EFL (English as a foreign language) with ELF (as a specific codifiable variety) but they perceive ELF as working within EFL (Jenkins 2012: 492). The extent to which it will be integrated into EFL depends on the teaching context. As Sifakis (2017) points out, the notion of ELF awareness offers “the capability and choice to decide the extent to which ELF and EFL can be linked depending on the idiosyncrasies of each specific context”. Moreover, the focus on the standard variety does not mean that ELF-aware teaching is abandoned: attending to the “mainstream” British/American/Australian English in terms of “channeling” linguistic competence in this direction, does not rule out the incorporation of other cultures and accents in the syllabus. While developing competence in British or American English, teachers may and should expose the learners to different varieties, including non-native Englishes.

All this indicates that a serious and in-depth discussion of such issues as ELF and its implications for teachers, ELF-aware pedagogy and the role of various cultures and accents should be incorporated into teacher education. Special conferences, trainings and projects might be organised for in-service teachers to encourage them to boost their understanding of ELF.

Importantly, as rightly noticed by Sifakis (2017), the process of ELF-awareness should refer to all ELT stakeholders, that is not only teachers but also materials designers and school headmasters. Materials designers must be ready to include a variety of cultures and accents in the textbooks they compile. School headmasters should not impose any materials on teachers but allow them to choose what they prefer. Furthermore, ELT products, such as language learning materials and textbooks, may also be subjected to the process of ELF-awareness. They should promote a multicultural nature of English and include some evidence of successful ELF interactions with activities which will raise learners’ self-confidence as ELF users.

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