Describing Lexico-Grammatical Features of English as a Lingua Franca in Kurdistan and the Issue of Intelligibility

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled: “Describing Lexico-Grammatical Features of English as a Lingua Franca in Kurdistan and the Issue of Intelligibility” is my own original work and hereby certify that unless stated, all work contained within this is my own independent research and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree at any institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

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Supervisor's Certificate

This Thesis has been written under my supervision and has been submitted for the award of the degree of 'MA' in 'applied linguistics and TESOL' with my approval as supervisor.

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Examining Committee Certification

We certify that we have read this thesis: 'Describing Lexico-Grammatical Features of English as a Lingua Franca in Kurdistan and the Issue of Intelligibility' and as a committee have examined the student 'Zainab Nizar Karam' in its content and what is related to it. We approve that it meets the standards of a thesis for the degree of 'Master of Arts in English – Applied Linguistics/TESOL'

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my supervisor, Dr. Zana Ibrahim, for his support, guidance, and on-going motivation.

Zainab Nizar Karam

2021

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Abstract

Due to the widespread of the English language, and as English now is the language of business, technology, and education, the number of non-native speakers has increased rapidly and lately exceeded the number of its native speakers. Now the vast majority of communications are taking place among non-native speakers in international settings, often without the presence of native speakers. Consequently, this dominance of the English language has led to the emergence of a new conceptualization of using the language, which is that as a result of being used in international settings, new varieties of the language have emerged which might not necessarily conform to native-speaker standards. This is known as English as a lingua franca (ELF). ELF is a new field in applied linguistics, but large body of research has been conducted investigating various related areas. The current study fills a gap in the literature by identifying systematically repeated lexical and grammatical features of proficient users of English in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The research compares against other ELF features previously identified in various contexts. The corpus of this study included data collected from both written and spoken interactions. A corpus of 42,094 words of authentic English use by 10 master's students in one of the English-medium universities in the Kurdistan Region. The written corpus was from 10 final papers and 10 response essays written by the participants as part of their MA coursework, and the spoken corpus included recording six hours of the participants' discussions during one of their modules in their studies. The analysis resulted in identifying a number of deviations which were both similar and different from those found in previous studies. The results indicated deviations in the use of articles, prepositions, the third person singular –s, redundant marking and non-marking plural nouns, and verbs with high semantic generality. The findings of this research suggest that although a number of lexico-grammatical deviations occur systematically in the ELF in this context, their occurrences did not seem to impede intelligibility or the flow of communication amongst the participants. Importantly, there were no cases of breakdowns in communication as the English users did not make use of requests for clarifications, reformulations, or repetitions. More empirical research is warranted to identify more and other grammatical, lexical, pragmatic and pronunciation features of the local ELF which characterize ELF in Kurdistan, as this study was guided by previous studies and focused merely on identifying features which were available in previous studies.

This thesis concludes with a discussion of theoretical and practical implications of the findings. As this study focused merely on identifying features which were available in previous studies, more empirical research is warranted to identify more and other features of the local ELF such as grammatical, lexical, pragmatic and pronunciation features which characterize ELF in Kurdistan. The results will of this study add to the body of knowledge in the field and can be beneficial for English teachers and practitioners in both language pedagogy and assessment areas.

Key words: English as a lingua franca (ELF), lexical and grammatical features, standard English, non-native speaker deviations, non-native users of English

Contents

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List of Abbreviations

ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EIL	English as an International Language
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ELFA	English as a Lingua Franca for Academia
ELSpecs	English Language Specialists
ELT	English Language Teaching
ENL	English as a native Language
IELTE	Institute of English Language Teacher Education
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
L1	First Language
LFC	Lingua Franca Core
MICASE	Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English
NS	Native Speaker
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
PTE	Pearson Test of English
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test Of English as a Foreign Language
TOEIC	The Test of English for International Communication
USUWL	The Uzbek State University of World Languages
VOICE	The Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English
WE	World Englishes

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 The Status of English Language in the ELF Context

Nowadays proficiency in the English language is considered compulsory and a major requirement in different domains around the world. English is by and large the language of technology, business, tourism, and academia. This need for the English language in these various domains has led to its widespread use worldwide, and as a result of this spread in what Kachru (1992) calls the Expanding Circle countries, particular features have appeared which do not necessarily conform to native-speaker standards. English is now used differently in different parts of the world, in varieties which are called world Englishes, English as an international language, global English, and lately English as a lingua franca (ELF).

Hülmbauer, Böhringer and Seidlhofer (2008) have stated that English became a lingua franca globally at the beginning of the 21st century when the number of the non-native speakers exceeded its native speakers. This unprecedented phenomenon consequently led to a need for the recognition of the language as being derived from its main cultural origins and varying communicative environments. According to House (2009), the way English is used has changed as a result of globalization and internationalization, which consequently led to the emergence of a new variety of English in international settings. This variety is called English as a lingua franca and is used by speakers whose L1 is not English, usually in the absence of native speakers.

According to Greenbaum (1996, p. 4), ELF is defined as "the English used in countries where it is not a medium for communication between natives of the country". Most English learners, as well as English educators, might hold the aim of reaching perfection measured against native-speaker norms, particularly in using accurate grammar and pronunciation. However, this is not necessarily needed for most learners or users, as they are mainly required to be able to communicate and interact with others effectively. This means the ability to convey ideas, or to discuss a variety of topics without creating any breakdown in communication, in most cases without the presence of native English speakers. Jenkins (2012) found in her study that the majority of English language users are non-native ones, and they do not need to produce error-free sentences all the time as long as they are able to communicate effectively. In addition, Jenkins (2012) has stressed the importance of native English speakers' role in shaping their own variety of the language

during their interactions with non-native speakers. This is a concept which is closely related to sharing the ownership of English as legitimate users of the language. Graddol (1997) for example states that, "Native speakers may feel the language 'belongs' to them, but it will be those who speak English as a second or foreign language who will determine its world future" (p. 10).

1.2 The Context of the Study

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the status of English has changed dramatically in the last decade. English has become a dominant language as it is now needed for employment and most jobs require some degree of proficiency in English. English is also necessary for higher education now. In English-medium institutions, evidence of English proficiency is required for admission for undergraduate studies. For admission into all public and private postgraduate studies at the master's and PhD levels, evidence of English proficiency is necessary. Moreover, to gain employment at universities and colleges, an international English test score has to be provided.

Previously, there were no private schools; however, nowadays hundreds of private schools are found in the Region. The vast majority of these private schools use English as the medium of instruction. Families pay for these private schools motivated primarily by the prospect of their children being schooled in English. As a result, the use of English has become dominant and is gaining more popularity as people use it widely and for a variety of purposes.

Using English is not restricted to being used by local Kurds only. The number of expats from different backgrounds has lately also increased in the Kurdistan Region, and consequently English is now a necessary language for daily communication in addition to Kurdish. The English that both locals and expats use for communication for the purposes of work, studies and daily business can fall under the umbrella of English as a lingua franca because in the vast majority of cases, the interlocutors do not speak English as their mother language.

Additionally, and perhaps under the influence of internationalization, the use of the English language in people's access to the outside world has grown significantly, and this is reflected in the choice of films, music, and other media (Kerim, 2015). This trend of using English more has been at both individual and public levels. For example, many

companies use English labels on their goods and products, and some use English in their advertisements. English is being used widely in the public domain such as in restaurant menus, names of businesses, and throughout business activities targeting a fraction of the society who cannot speak the local languages.

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq is therefore considered one of the expanding circle regions, where English is used as a lingua franca. This research is the first of its kind to investigate the lexico-grammatical features of the English variety used here. This may include deviations from the standard form which is typical of English as a lingua franca in general. However, to have the right population, the current study was conducted in one of the public universities in the Kurdistan where English is the medium of instruction. This was aimed at taking a sample in which English is used on a daily basis and by proficient users rather than learners of the language. The students of this university are considered users of the target language because without obtaining an acceptable score in an international English proficiency test, they would not have been admitted in the first place. In particular, MA students in Applied Linguistics were chosen to be the sample of this study because their use of English falls well with the focus of this study which is describing ELF grammatical and lexical features of advanced or proficient users of the language.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The concept of English as a lingua franca is relatively new in applied linguistics. Despite that, there has been much interest in it evident in the substantial body of publications aimed at investigating this new variety of English and its implications in various contexts and domains, such as understanding its lexico-grammatical features, stakeholders' perceptions, or how this might affect English teaching and teachers; however, no previous studies have been conducted in regard to ELF in the context of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, nor have any studies focused on identifying the lexical and grammatical features of ELF in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. This has been an almost completely unexplored field. Hence, it was necessary to conduct this study that aims to investigate the features of ELF in this geographic context. However, since this study is the first of its kind, it makes use of existing studies on ELF features elsewhere. It will therefore take established features of ELF identified in other studies as the basis for this investigation.

1.4 Significance of the Study

To the best of my knowledge, no previous attempts have been taken to investigate lexical and grammatical features of ELF here in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Hence, this study will be a pioneering study in this Region in which the lexico-grammatical features will be identified. This study is therefore an addition to the body of research on ELF. Secondly, the results will be beneficial for teachers and stakeholders to get an understanding of the descriptive aspects of ELF and the deviations of proficient users make here, and how to deal with these deviations which might be considered by some as "errors" or "mistakes". Moreover, this research looks into whether these deviations or lexico-grammatical features constitute any problems during interactions among interlocutors, such as if they impede the intelligibility of meaning or pose a threat to communication. In addition, this study could be regarded as the first of its kind to open discussion about the potential initiative of considering the local variety of English in this geographic context to be deemed acceptable, which in turn might have implications for a number of areas such as for teaching, recruitment of teachers, and English language assessment systems. This study might also enable or encourage other scholars to expand this line of research by conducting more studies in this domain, especially empirical studies regarding the features of ELF, and attitudes toward ELF in the local population.

1.5 Research Questions

Lexical and grammatical features constitute an important distinction of ELF which might be key to its difference with the native-speaker English, and they are perhaps more reflective of how ELF is considered a deviation from the standard English. That is probably because phonological differences are taken for granted while systemic vocabulary and grammar differences are considered as deviations. Thus, the current thesis aims to investigate the ELF lexical and grammatical features in the English used by proficient users in the Kurdistan Region. This thesis is informed by the following research questions:

1. Which lexico-grammatical features identified in previous studies are available in the English used in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq?
2. Do these lexical and grammatical features constitute any threat to intelligibility and mutual communication?

It is important to mention here that while these two research questions guide this research, this study is a modest attempt since describing all lexico-grammatical features of any language variety is likely impossible within a master's thesis. Therefore, this study takes previously published works on lexico-grammatical features elsewhere as the basis of the study. Moreover, in answering the second research question, only observational tools of data collection are used. Further research will need to expand the scope of this study in the future.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter begins with an introduction about the status of the English language in the ELF context, the context of the study, statement of the problem, the significance of this study, and the research questions which guide this research. Chapter Two presents an extensive review of the literature starting with a general introduction about the topic, and moving to present the origin of ELF through including the definition of the term lingua franca. The chapter also includes a comparison between English as a lingua franca (ELF), English as a foreign language (EFL), and English as an international language (EIL). The implications of ELF on assessment, pedagogy, teacher training, and academia are also discussed in this chapter. The chapter also reports literature on ELF features, including lexico-grammatical, pronunciation, and norms features. Finally, teachers and students' perceptions were also included in this chapter. The third chapter is about the methodology of this study including the research design, sampling, participants, instruments, the corpus of this study, and finally the steps of the data analysis. Chapter Four presents the results of the empirical study, which are categorized in five main headings. Chapter Five includes a detailed discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of the findings including how this research will contribute to the existing body of research on ELF, and how local language policymakers and stakeholders might benefit from this study which is the first attempt to systematically describe the major grammatical and lexical features of English used by proficient users in this local context. Finally, Chapter Six includes the conclusion of this thesis and presents a summary of the findings and the contributions of this research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

English has become an international lingua franca, a special linguistic status in the history of mankind, and the planet appears to have voluntarily selected English (Frath, 2010). According to Beare (2018), there has been a massive increase in the number of English learners which has exceeded one billion speakers in different parts of the world, and the number might continue to increase and might reach two billion users of the language in the near future. Recently, that number of non-native users of English has even exceeded the native speakers (Llurda, 2004, p. 320). Mainly, and according to Kachru's (1992) pioneering circles, English language speakers can be categorized into three circles (inner, outer, and expanding circles). The inner circle, which encompasses the UK, the US, Canada, and Australia, includes the native speakers of English language. The outer circle consists of countries which were under the colony of the inner circle countries, such as India and Singapore, where English serves as a dominant second language. Finally, the expanding circle includes the countries in which English is considered as a foreign language.

Seidlhofer (2005) states that as a result of the global use of English, it was influenced by its non-native speakers at least as much as its native speakers. According to Graddol (1997) and Llurda (2004), the English language is not owned by native speakers anymore, and those who use English as a second or foreign language are the ones who will determine the form of English language in the future. Seidlhofer (2001) pointed out that during the last decade, a special focus has been directed to investigating the international spread and usage of English, stressing the essential cultural, socio-political and psychological problems. It has been repeatedly shown in different debates that the use of the English language takes place in lingua franca domains, where no native speakers are involved in the interactions. However, the majority of English language teachers are still using the native norms as the benchmark mainly because the sources that they use, represented by textbooks, dictionaries, and grammar books have not been adjusted according to the changes that took place in the research of applied linguistics. Hence, this has led to a conceptual gap that was not managed immediately in ELT discourse (pp. 133-134).

Seidlhofer restated in a later study that the reasons behind the global spread of

English language, and its repercussions were the main focus of recent critical debates. However, these debates have not taken into consideration or shed lights on the changes that have been and still occurring regarding the form of the language. Thus, more focus should be directed to the English used in the expanding circle countries to find out the potential repercussions it has on conceptualization, improvement, and education of English (Seidlhofer, 2004, pp. 209 & 212).

Many scholars conducted studies to investigate the consequences of the global spread of English on the language use, and to highlight language diversity that resulted from this rapid global spread. Scholars used a number of terms to identify these variations in the language use, such as English as an international language (EIL), English as a global language, World Englishes, and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), which constitutes the focus of this paper.

Nowadays, the word lingua franca is predominantly associated with English, a new area of study, "English as a lingua franca" has arisen over the last 15–20 years, leading to hundreds of books, articles and a whole journal devoted to the phenomenon related to the extraordinary dissemination of English across the world throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. The researchers writing on this subject also provide definitions of their new area, which makes comparing their differing conceptions possible (Brosch, 2015). Brosch has stated that some of these definitions imply native speakers beside the non-native ones, such as Jenkins (2009) who defined ELF as “English being used as a lingua franca, the common language of choice, among speakers who come from different linguacultural backgrounds” (p. 200). Jenkins explains that despite the fact that this definition might refer to include non-native speakers of English, it also does not exclude the native speakers. Moreover, most researchers of ELF include the native speakers of English when defining ELF, but the key point is that when native speakers of the inner circle engage in contact with ELF, they will not set the linguistic agenda. On the other hand, Firth (1996) refers to ELF as “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” (p. 240). The latter definition is used by a fewer number of ELF researchers in which the native speakers of English are excluded for not being considered as ‘foreign language’ speakers.

Etus and Schultze (2014) have claimed that no language has gained a prominent

status of the world's lingua franca as the English language. Today English is the language that controls various domains, including the press, trade, technology, communication and education.

Jenkins (2012) has pointed out that English has long been used by different L1 speakers to interact and communicate. However, its present international appearance as a lingua franca is very recent. Moreover, after identifying ELF and applying a number of empirical studies throughout two decades or so, the status of ELF has developed and moved to be a main scope in applied linguistics, and more focus has lately been given to its effect on education (p. 486).

2.2 The Origin of English as a Lingua Franca

In the following subsections, the term Lingua Franca is going to be elaborated, followed by a comparison between the terms ELF, EFL, and EIL.

2.2.1 Introduction to the Term Lingua Franca

According to some definitions, Samarian (1968) has mentioned that Lingua Franca is a pidgin language (mixed language), although this is not accurate that all lingua francas are pidgins. Brosch (2015) stated that this pidgin language was used across the Mediterranean, particularly between almost the 14th and the 19th centuries AD on its southern and eastern coast. However, this pidgin has never evolved into a creole. Hence, lingua franca soon vanished after national languages, in particular when French took over its field of use. Samarian (1968) also stated that a second demand often found is to use a lingua franca for commercial intentions, although this does not necessarily apply to lingua francas, as they sometimes appear in commercial contexts. Moreover, Samarian mentions a number of terms which were used to refer to the languages served as a lingua franca, such as trade language. This term is used for a language which is not found in the main languages of the world and used in commercial contexts by certain people as a second language, for example, Kituba and Hausa in Africa.

Contact language is a lingua franca the use of which is not generally common. A third term is International (or Universal) language which is a lingua franca used internationally. Finally, an auxiliary language is usually used to characterize a lingua franca created artificially, such as Esperanto. According to Ostler (2005), cited by Jenkins,

Cogo, and Dewey (2011), Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Arabic, and Portuguese were languages which have been used as lingua francas in different periods. English started to be the lingua franca when some of the outer circle countries in Asia and Africa, such as India, Singapore, Nigeria, and Kenya, came under the British colony from the sixteenth century on. However, the scholars who first conveyed ELF in its recent concept were the German scholars Hullen (1982) and Knapp (1985, 1987). And the focus during that period was on two major aspects which included teaching ELF, and conducting empirical research that could help to recognize its features (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011).

2.2.2 A Comparison Between English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as an International Language (EIL)

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the rapid spread of English has led to the emergence of a variety in the use and form of the English language. Some may not be able to notice the difference between these variations, as many of these terms may overlap in their meaning and uses. Thus, it was necessary to introduce a brief comparison among these varieties before moving to the main focus of this study which is the features of English as a lingua franca and the perceived challenges to intelligibility.

2.2.2.1 English as a Lingua Franca VS English as a Forging Language

EFL differs significantly from ELF, as Jenkins (2006) has suggested that EFL has different goals and considerations. Obtaining a native-like proficiency constitutes the primary goal of EFL research that enables its learners to interact fluently with native speakers. Moreover, linguistic, pragmatic or sociocultural variations have been considered as errors emerged as a result of imperfect acquisition of the language, and consequently need a treatment. Jenkins also pointed out that code-switching/code-mixing reflects gaps in the awareness of the suitable NS norms. Hence, NS norms constitute the benchmark in EFL communication.

In the case of ELF, Jenkins claimed that all what have been mentioned above is not applicable to the nativised English of the outer circle, or the expanding circle lingua franca. In these contexts, the communication does not include any native speakers. Therefore, NS norms cannot be considered as a basic reference for correcting errors.

NNSs, according to Jenkins, Cogo, and Dewey (2011), are not considered as

incompetent communicators, or as ‘failed native speakers’ of English. Rather, their multilingualism provides them with resources not available in monolinguals. In addition, those NNSs are able to perform effective interaction over narrow notions of ‘correctness’, which NSs themselves might consider challenging, such as cod-switching which is widely employed by the NNSs. This is basically used to support consistency, reflect their cultural identity, or because they try to adjust to their various L1 interlocutors, and consequently this adjustment leads to ‘errors’ in the norms of native English (p. 284).

2.2.2.2 English as a Lingua Franca VS English as an International Language

Tosuncuoğlu and Kırmızı (2019) have shown in their study that the two terms, EIL and ELF, overlap greatly as many researchers refer to and define these terms as the language that is used by speakers of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, all these different terms are attributed to the global spread of English language. For the great overlap of these two terms, we noticed that in her study, Jenkins (2006) has used ELF as an alternative for EIL. Ke and Cahyani (2014) pointed out that they envision all these terms, including EIL and ELF, as a function or a fact of how English is utilized in the world, not as a linguistic diversity, moreover, that all these expressions are used as labels representing the global usage of English.

2.3 ELF Implications

English language learners will have numerous aims for using English language after their graduation, and most of their interaction will include non-native speakers as the majority of English language users nowadays are non-native ones (Fang, 2017). Thus, these users will use English as a lingua franca as a means of their communications with others. Hence, and as a result of the diversity of the goals and objectives of the language users, it has become important to reassess whether the English language programs currently available are compatible with the development taking place in communications. Moreover, students are exposed to English for many years at schools, however the focus of these English classes is on how to pass their exams, thus the educators pay attention on educating vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. On the other hand, a little focus will be on educating those learners how to use English (Curran & Chern 2017, p. 137). The rapid spread of English, and the various purposes English used for have had its repercussions on

various aspects including assessment, pedagogy, teacher training, and academia. All that will be discussed in this section.

2.3.1 ELF Implication for Assessment

Applying ELF might face some challenges, particularly regarding assessment, as most international tests, such as IELTS, TOEFL, and TOEIC which follow monolingual approach, require the non-native speakers to apply the native norms as the benchmark, otherwise they will be penalized (Fang, 2017). Jenkins and Leung (2017) have mentioned that the focus on assessing ELF is a recent phenomenon, yet, and as World Englishes (WE) had a role in the first conceptualization of ELF, some of the important problems regarding assessment have already been discussed in world Englsihes. The first issue discussed in WE by Lowenberg (1993) is the incompatibility between the way the international tests are evaluated and the way the language is used by non-native speakers, "an implicit, and frequently explicit, assumption ... that the universal target for proficiency in Standard English around the world is the set of norms which are accepted and used by highly educated native speakers of English" (Lowenberg, 2000, p. 67). The start point of involving ELF in assessment debates was in 2006 in the form of "point and counterpoint" between Jenkins and Taylor. Jenkins (2006) pointed out that "recent changes in both users and uses of English have become so far-reaching that a major rethink of English language teaching goals is called for" and "that this will first require a substantial overhaul of English language testing" (p. 42). On the other hand, Taylor (2006), who was a member of one of the international language examination boards, and who was highly supporting the native norms in assessments, presented significant point referring to testing as "the art of the possible" (p. 58), adding that the contemporary changes in English language have had repercussions on examination boards work and made it harder.

An essential issue regarding English language testing is the ground of its language norming has not connected with the recent developments in English. The washback consequence, however, is that test reinforces an out-dated view of English discourse as being relatively fixed and native-normative, while a major outcome of English globalization is that the language has become increasingly dynamic, versatile, dependent, and often non-native influenced in its global contexts (Jenkins & Leung, 2013).

Jenkins and Leung (2017) also categorized the problems regarding ELF assessment

as practical and conceptual. Regarding the practical aspect, the traditional methods of assessment, in which the native norms are the benchmark, cannot be applied to ELF, as ELF interactions are characterized by their emerging nature, as well as ELF users have a great variety, consequently, the tests based on specific founded norms cannot be used. In addition, despite that some scholars referred to concentrating on alternative areas regarding ELF assessment, these alternatives require main reconsideration and investment by the examination boards who tend to keep their practices which are extremely commercially effective. The strong impact of the founded transnational and national English language assessment framework in different parts of the world is another related problem. The prominence of these frameworks is achieved via complicated procedures of ideological articulation and political approvals, and even some "big tests" still tend to consider some distinctly Anglo-centric practices as "international". Assessment framework, such as IELTS, portray themselves as international due to their marketing internationally. Hence, as the Anglophone practices are the basis for the assumptions and norms, language assessment professionals reforming attempts are considered as complicated and long-term effort (pp. 12-13).

2.3.2 Implications for Pedagogy

The effects of ELF on teaching foreign language were the main focus of many studies over the last few decades. Nagy (2016) pointed out to a very important question that if ELF should be incorporated into the curriculum or substitute EFL. Nagy's study has a number of aims, including giving an insight into the research conducted on English as a lingua franca, particularly focusing on the idea of lingua franca core. Moreover, the study reflects the effect of the ELF results on English as a foreign Language (EFL) education. A number of models were presented as an alternative for teaching a national variety. For example, Applying ELF as an alternative for EFL which requires a "common core" curriculum that encompasses non-native uses with features which are regarded as ungrammatical by the grammatical standards, such as, *she go and people which.* A large number of educators might refuse the inclusion of these models, and other educators may propose the integration of various models for a number of reasons. First, the lack of ELF materials, and the difficulty in shifting the previous methods of teaching, and teachers are not regarding any of the mentioned models as practical for teaching in the classrooms. Nagy continues

the discussion and pointing out to the difficulty of applying ELF researchers' expectations about not following any native variety as norm due to considering ELF as a communication tool rather than a language variety, so it cannot substitute standard variation in the classrooms.

Ur (2010) also presented four different models for teaching English in lingua franca contexts. The first model, which is extensively used, included selecting one of the native varieties, whether British or American. However, these varieties cannot be applied fully to ELF contexts, as each variety has its own local characteristics which are inapplicable internationally. Moreover, many locally-based materials writers tend to inspect linguistic models which are agreeable worldwide regarding grammar, vocabulary and other skills to be used as grounds for textbooks rather than any native model. The second option included the application of a "common core" syllabus based on non-native uses. Forms as *she go* and *people which*, which were also mentioned earlier, are commonly used but have not been introduced officially as the grounds for an English syllabus. And despite many claims, such as by Jenkins (2006) that learners are not required to follow the native norms, and should be given the freedom to use forms of their own variety, still Ur (2010) showed that teachers reject to accept these forms and tend to teach their students the native norms which are considered internationally acceptable and constantly correct their students' errors to create "fully competent" users of the language (p. 86). The third model included an integration of different models, this model is preferred by the majority of people as they don't tend to be restricted to one standard form, in favour of pluralism, variation and heterogeneity. However, this model cannot be functional for teaching in classes. The limited time teachers worldwide have is needed to be exploit to help students control the language regarding the forms and meanings. When teachers teach their students different varieties, students will not be able to acquire a minimum amount of the syllabus of the language which they demand. Ur continues the discussion adding that despite that the use of a combination of models is not applicable, still the use of one native variety is also inapplicable due to some of the Local native usages, such as *fortnight*, *prepone*, *aluminum, ain't* are not fundamental in ELF curriculum. The last model offered by Ur was a standard international variety. This model encompasses internationally accepted usages which also regarded as the best choice for the educators, and used by fully qualified speakers. However, this model is not very popular, in addition to have some drawbacks.

This model is ideologically rejected by proponents of pluralism and diversity, as diversity is not denied in ELF classes. The use of one set of forms and meanings does not constitute an obstacle regarding being exposed to other diversities. In a sense, there is a necessity for an essential standard to appreciate variety. The other disadvantage of this model is that some assumed it does not exist, and has no official codification in grammar or dictionary, however, this does not negate existence. Dictionaries and grammars will have codification as a result of the need of the teachers and the writers of the textbooks for knowing the common forms of English around the world to be used in the classes and material design, in addition to identify the characteristics of the Englishes of specific areas, such as European English, Asian English, etc.

2.3.3 Implications for Teacher Training

A wide number of implications for teacher training programs were resulted from the international demand for English in Lingua Franca contexts, and as the majority of the teachers of English language worldwide are non-native speakers, the quality of their professional training and the degree of their skill in the language were major concerns (Snow, Kamhi-Stein & Brinton). In their review, Snow, Kamhi-Stein and Brinton (2006) have surveyed research on NNE teachers regarding teacher training throughout two examples of teacher training practices in Egypt and Uzbekistan to highlight real preparation issues. For Egypt case, Pharos, a project aimed at enhancing the standard of English teaching in Egyptian schools, addressed some primary issues related to in-service teacher preparation in lingua franca contexts. Hence, Pharos project set some standards for English teachers, teacher trainers, educational leaders, and in-service training programs. These standards, which must be based on particular sociocultural contexts, can assist the teacher professionalism development and proficiency of the language. Only three examples were mentioned in this review, including variety of English, methodology, and professionalism, which were considered as sufficient to offer an overview of how guidelines can build a path to improve professionalism and language skills.

As for Uzbekistan, it was decided that the Uzbek teacher training programs lacked language proficiency as well as having inadequate professional preparation, as a consequent, goals were set to handle these competencies in a cooperation between both IELTE (Institute of English Language Teacher Education) and ELSpecs (English

Language Specialists). IELE's specified requirements consisted of adjusting the current curriculum of teacher training and developing a new course for the fourth year syllabus, preparing for IELTE's next accreditation by the USUWL administration, reviewing entrance test and other evaluation tools, improving teacher's ability with computers, managing teacher's skills regarding pronunciation and grammar, and arranging students educating and senior project courses' supervision. As for ELSpecs stated requirements included adjusting lesson delivery, managing language problems in content classes, developing teachers' abilities regarding pronunciation and academic writing, deciding 4-year TESOL syllabus regarding optimal domain and courses sequence, and assisting IELTE faculty gain appropriate guidance skills**.** According to the two cases, teacher training programs in ELF contexts have to be based on carefully-defined goal, moreover, the settings have a significant role in shaping these goals.

Snow, Kamhi-Stein and Brinton indicated a number of suggestions regarding teacher training programs. First, teachers should be exposed to a variety of English language beyond the inner circle which as a consequent leads to expose their learners to these varieties as well, the programs should also assist to deconstruct the native speaker fallacy and provide chances for participants to identify and value themselves as intercultural speakers, moreover, combining approaches which are appreciated in the local setting and represent the specific needs and interests of the students, Aligning teacher training with the students' requirements in schools, the local conceptualization of what shapes professionalism should direct the training programs, additionally, the programs should encourage language learning through increased access to the target language, awareness-raising activities and direct feedback, promoting the significance of nonstop reflective practice and constant learning attempts, local and outside experts corporations should be promoted by these programs, and finally offering the teachers the chances to advance along the continuum of professionalism via exposition to standards and a range of career advancement opportunities.

2.3.4 Implications for Academia

Higher education worldwide has gone through a number of changes during the last decade, basically in the medium of instruction which was presented through the use of ELF (Björkman, 2011). Universities started offering programs in English which in its turn had

been considered a beneficial enterprise for attracting more students, and boosting universities' public image and competitive opportunities in education market (Björkman, 2010). Björkman added a number of advantages resulted from the extended use of English, such as easing staff and students exchange, active cooperation between universities, and more employment opportunities, however, the use of ELF, beside its benefits, has some complications, consequently, investigating the impact of changing the medium of instruction on teaching-learning situation is significant.

Björkman (2010) pointed that lecturing in ELF settings needs to be investigated for the massive difference between monologic and dialogic genres, because ELF settings have a number of complications regarding the form, interlocutors with various language skill and variety of L1. In this study, in which the data was collected from 21 lectures given by 13 different lecturers in a large Swedish university, Björkman has focused on two parts. First, exploring the non-standardness of morphosyntax in speech, which was shown not constituting any breakdown in the communication. Second, transcribing and inspecting four recordings of lectures given by different lecturers to explore the pragmatic strategies applied by those lecturers. Commenting on terms and concepts, repetition strategies, signalling importance, and questions were four main strategies included in this study. The results showed a slight usage of the pragmatic strategies by lecturers compared to students, moreover, lack of using questions. A variety of implications arise from the results of the analysis, first, for the lecturers regarding the modification of lectures to lingua franca settings. In lingua franca settings, and monologic lectures, learners have less opportunities for inspecting their assimilation, in addition to having problems with comprehension, hence teachers should create these opportunities for the learners through the use of pragmatic strategies in lingua franca settings. These strategies have created active interaction, boosting assimilation, and prohibited confusion. The explored strategies in this study are pragmatic comments to illustrate terms and concepts, to give specific contents of the assignment, to provide information on the structure and context of the discourse, and to clarify the intention and create common ground.

In addition to these strategies, the inquiry included repetition, questions, and signalling significance. All mentioned strategies are used in changing degrees spontaneously by lecturers, and the importance of such strategies is much higher in lingua franca settings. Implications for speakers in general who work in lingua franca settings

regarding what makes an active speaker in these settings was also resulted from the analysis. It was noticed that a professional language user, whether native or native-like, cannot be effective enough if the use of language was not accompanied with the use of suitable pragmatic strategies, as these strategies create transparency for the listener, as well as facilitating the production of the desired outcome of the speaker.

Björkman (2010) referred that this point creates implications for teaching in any settings where English is the medium of instruction, hence, language policies at the macro level should be defined including training for both parties (teachers and students), and as for micro level, through in-house preparation and courses that could be offered for both students and teachers. In his later study, Björkman (2011) has also pointed out to the inappropriateness of seeing the native as the perfect target for spoken production, and discussed modifying EAP for ELF settings and its theoretical and practical implications.

As for practical implication, a number of suggestions were made to modify EAP education and testing in ELF contexts, with regard to three issues in EAP education. First, determining the requirements and anticipations of a particular learner group, which accordingly leads to take into account the norms and standards with a description of standard English however, determining the standards is difficult, taking into consideration a wide variety of learners, hence, a distinction between various groups of learners and understanding their requirements and anticipations can be done, for example, some learners need to use the language in settings where the speakers are native ones, while some others need to use English with non-native speakers. Prioritizing comprehensibility in teaching language is the second important issue in ELF contexts. This issue was raised in the 1970s "with the functional hypothesis and the Functional Sentence Perspective" Björkman (2011, p. 92), however, it needs to be put in practice, and as a consequent it is necessary to determine what should teachers do, and what sort of adjustments are proposed for classroom language? This leads to the third issue which is the application of actual course resources and evaluation criteria for spoken production.

Regarding applying realistic materials, Björkman includes in this study the items that should be prioritized as follows: pragmatic strategies inclusion in speaking and listening resources, which in its turn can lead to attaining communicative efficiency, so after applying authentic use materials (listening), students can perform role-play or other activities for practicing these skills. Moreover, the inclusion of syntactic construct which

assists raising explicitness, offering the students realistic speech which includes heads and tails/pre-and post-dislocation, and this will assist them to realize how these elements can be used. Materials practicing characteristics whose absence appear to cause overt disturbance should be included and prioritized, such as, questions and word order should be practiced more in various classroom activities. Inclusion of listening comprehension resources that encompasses non-native accents as the learners in ELF settings will encounter a variety of accents, these realistic recordings enable the learners test their understanding and note-taking abilities, in addition to boosting the learners' consciousness of what is genuine English in international environments. As for testing issue, any collection of criteria for assessing learner's spoken performance would require to take the following into account: one of the sorts of the non-standard usage of morphosyntactic is effective decreases of redundancy, such as, not marking plural nouns, this does not refer to teach the non-standard form, it only indicates not to penalize the learners on aspects which do not impede contact and improve communicative performance.

One more non-standard morphosyntactic usages is about characteristics that generate more explicitness, such as pre- and post-dislocation which are regarded in traditional grammar books as wrong, they enable to make the meaning explicit, and educators should not penalize their students for this usage. Dialogic speech provides us with more details about disruption, pragmatic techniques and how performers negotiate meaning in communication, hence for evaluating the spoken production of the learners, monologic and dialogic events should be assigned to them. For assessing the spoken production of the students, native accents should not be regarded as the only agreeable accent for getting highest marks. Hence, and according to all what have been mentioned above, testing criteria should be modified and focusing on using language effectively.

2.4 Features of ELF

2.4.1 Lexico-grammatical Features

Lexico-grammatical deviations constitute the most obvious feature in ELF; however, few studies have investigated this feature. An enormous corpus is needed to get dependable results, which can be achieved through setting up a research that includes big and convenient corpus devoted to catching the use of ELF by a variety of L1 speakers and in various fields. This corpus is represented in the VOICE corpus (the Vienna Oxford

International Corpus of English) which is under Seidelhofer's direction at the university of Vienna (Seidelhofer, 2004). Spoken ELF is caught in VOICE which is characterized as unscripted and including direct communication among speakers of a variety of L1 whose English language was not included in their raising and education. A wide range of situations, purposes, in addition to various members' roles and relations were included in the transcribed and recorded speech events. Particular regularities had been brought to light through a number of theses and conference projects showed on VOICE data, such as typical "errors", which are considered by most English teachers as errors that requires direct adjustment and treatment which in its turn requires a lot of time and energy during the lessons, do not really constitute an obstacle in communication. Those errors are summarized as the following:

- Eliminating the third person present tense –s
- Confounding the relative pronouns which and who
- Misusing the definite and indefinite articles, such as omitting them where they should be used, and inserting they where they shouldn't according to ENL norms.
- Using wrong forms for tag questions (*e.g., isn't it? or no? instead of shouldn't they?*)
- Adding unnecessary prepositions as in (*We have to study about*…)
- Overusing verbs with high semantic generality, such as *make, do, have, put*
- Using that-clauses instead of infinitive-clauses, as *I want that*
- Exaggerating in the explicitness, as (*black color rather than just black*)

Seidelhofer (2004) added that problems in communication and misunderstandings can occur due to some recurrent events through the interactions. Lack of knowledge about some vocabulary can cause communication problems, especially if the speaker did not have the ability to paraphrase. "Unilateral idiomaticity" can also give rise to problems especially when the interlocutors are unfamiliar with these types of idiomatic speech which are represented in metaphorical language use, idioms, phrasal verbs, and some expressions of ENL that are fixed, such as *can we give you a hand* (Seidlhofer, 2004, pp. 219-220).

Mauranen (2010) also confirmed that lexis and grammar are considered the areas in which ELF differs greatly from Standard English. Using grammatically non-standard forms looks acceptable by ELF speakers. The results of her study were almost similar to

Seidelhofer's, as a consequent, Mauranen argues that Such repeated findings cannot be dismissed as arbitrary errors. Some of them are only passing tongue slips which conversationalists tend to ignore just as the case in L1 interaction. The inclusivity of the anomalies does not demand an explanation specific to ELF, but their frequent characteristics. For example, morphological over-productivity tends to derive from the nature of morphology, which is highly productive and is retrained by tradition rather than rules. By constantly creating new vocabulary, academic language makes good use of this flexibility. Mauranen adds that she tends to understand new formations by comparison, such as femininish which was not accompanied with any significant interlocutor reaction in MICASE possibly because -ish is vastly productive.

The Asian Corpus of English, which involves spoken English that takes place innately by qualified English language users, was used to find out the ELF lexicogrammar features in China-ASEAN interaction contexts. The results of this study included six various non-standard use of English which categorized in to the following aspects lexical innovation, prepositions, grammatical disagreement, non-standard omission, subject pronoun copying, and tag questions. The lexical innovation, which despite being considered as wrong, still it did not constitute any problem in comprehending. This finding showed that the speaker formed a new word to keep the conversation going and to facilitate the interaction. The findings also showed three various ways regarding the use of the prepositions. The first refereed to extra use of the prepositions which can be resulted according to the impact of speaker's L1, or to highlight the continuity of the process. Also those speakers tend to use the prepositions in ways different from the standard use, such as by the same time and surprised about. Finally, omitting prepositions occurred in three contexts, omitting *to* with the infinitive as a result of the Chinese language, when showing directions, and omitting the prepositions that follow the intransitive verbs.

The third ELF feature available in the result is disagreement in grammar which involved pluralizing uncountable nouns, and non-marking the plural ones. The other category of grammar disagreement included subject-verb disagreement, omitting the 3rd person singular in particular. Using the singular form of *there is* was very common with plural nouns. Omitting the subject and the object was the fourth mentioned category in the results of this study pointing that the anaphoric subjects were deleted when referred to earlier. As for omitted objects was a result of either the impact of Chinese language or in

the case of overriding transitivity directions. Fifth was subject pronoun copying, the Chinese speakers tend to mention the pronoun right after mentioning the subject, such as (*shanghai ports and dalian ports (1) they have different situations sometimes so it's...*). Finally, tag questions were less used by those speakers, and even those speakers tend to use simpler forms.

The progressive in many SLA literature has been considered as one of the topics that constitute a problem due to its "extended" use, in addition to considering it one of the most difficult topics in learning English language. A number of explanations for this difficulty were presented. One of these explanations attributed to either the progressive is unavailable in the speaker's L1, or due to differences in the use of the progressive in English and in the speaker's L1, such as elective use of the progressive in some specific context in Spanish, while being considered obligatory in standard English. In addition to its general meaning as "action in progress", the progressive in standard English can indicate a number of different meanings and has various functions. For example, referring to temporary action, plans for the near future, or larger emotional focus. Ranta (2006) also adds that these explanations do not take into account the primary purpose of the L1 speakers, they are merely trying to provide excuses for speaker's 'misbehavior'.

On the basis of these excuses, Ranta raises several questions, including whether something is considered "odd" in a language, as is the case in the progressive, so the issue may be to avoid what is odd or substitute it with a simpler form, or if the situation is the "extended" use of L1 speakers. Ranta wondered why they committed these mistakes. Moreover, the speakers might be affected by their teaching system and educational materials, or, finally, just an innovation from the speakers. According to the results of her study, Ranta has classified the non-traditional use of the lexico-grammar regarding the progressive in to three categories. The first category included non-active verbs which were used in the progressive in ELFA settings in contrast to the standard English norms, those non-active verbs included verbs that indicate perceiving (*hear, see*), intellectual or emotional state (*understand, mean, know*), or relation (*consist of, own*). The second category indicated verbs that refer to general validity or habitual activity. The last category where speakers of ELF use the progressive for points in (past) time, which means that the progressive is not used for an action in progress. Ranta also pointed out that L1 speakers tend to correct their utterances, but not in the case of the non-traditional progressive, in

addition that the misuse of the progressive did not constitute any breakdown in the communication.

2.4.2 Pronunciation Features

Phonology is somewhat a closed framework, and almost all users of ELF use the language with some indication of their L1 tone (Seidlhofer, 2004, P. 215). One of the main studies regarding phonology is by Jenkins (2000), which was cited by Seidlhofer, in which Jenkins shows that the most common source of intelligibility issues in ELF communications is pronunciation. Jenkins conducted an empirical study which lasted for a number of years and included speakers with various L1 through the use of a variety of methods (observation, recordings of students accomplishing activities in pairs or groups, and investigating various L1s production and reception of nuclear stress), and the data analyzed in regards to find out which error in pronunciation led to a problem in intelligibility and which one did not. Jenkins has categorized the analyzed data in to two categories: Lingua Franca Core (henceforth LFC) which indicates the errors that caused intelligibility problems, while the others which did not constitute any problems were categorized as non-core. The core features were summarized in a number of studies (Seidlhofer, 2004; Zoghbor, 2018) as the following:

1. The consonants record, without dental fricatives such as /θ/ and /ð/, and dark l [ɬ], have not resulted in any intelligibility issues within the collected data.
2. Further demands of phonetics: aspiration of word-initial voiceless stops that include /k/, /t/, /p/. These were usually understood as their lenis counterparts, which were /g/, /d/, and /b/. Also, the vowel sound shortening preceding the fortis consonants as well as the maintenance of the length prior to the lenis consonants. For example, the short /æ/ in the word *sat* compared to the longer usage of /æ/ in the word sad.
3. Consonant clusters contain not one omission in word-initial clusters. For example, in the word proper as well as strap, the sound omission in the middle or the final clusters are only allowed based L1English guidelines of syllable organization. Hence, the word friendship could change into /frenʃɪp/ instead of /frendɪp/ or /fredʃɪp/.

4. Vowel sounds: maintenance of the distinction between long and short vowels, which include /I/ and /i:/ that can be found in the terms live and leave. L2 local vowel qualities then comprehensible provided they are used constantly.
5. The nuclear stress production and placement, particularly when applied contrastively , for example, *He came by TRAIN vs. He CAME by train*.

Seidlhofer (2004) added, in the present sense, Jenkins LFC does not contain, for example, those sounds that are perceived and taught as 'especially English' (and also extremely hard) in numerous classes, such as the th- sound /θ/ and /ð/ and the dark l allophone [ɬ]. Throughout the interactions studied by Jenkins, the knowledge of these sounds proved not essential to shared comprehension, and the same is proper of the upcoming characteristics: "vowel quality, weak forms, other features of connected speech such as assimilation, pitch direction to signal attitude or grammatical meaning, word stress placement, and stress-timing".

2.4.3 Norms Features

The contradiction between recognition and acceptance is considered the basic element that stands against the adoption of the norms of the non-natives (Bamgbose, 1998). People generally claim that they support the native norms, however, their actual use of the language is not compatible with their specified preferences (Soruc, 2015). Bamgbose (1998) adds that from one side these non-native norms are considered as an indication for identity and solidarity, and from other side there is a strong tendency for the native norms, despite recognizing the importance of the non-native norms in sociocultural conditions, still the replacement of the native norms is unaccepted by people.

Kirkpatrick (2010) supposed that conveying the pragmatic and cultural norms can be found in the Asian ELF, which can ease communication if the interaction was with other ELF user who might have some cultural norms in common, such as praising people is not favoured in Asian cultures as they refuse to be praised face to face. One more example about the cultural norms is that Asians tend to beat about the bush before getting to the point in their topics, while this can be accepted if the interaction is between Asians, it can cause a breakdown in communication with native speakers.

2.5 Perceptions Towards ELF

2.5.1 Teachers' Perceptions

Nowadays, English is used internationally as the language of communication due to the effect of trade, technology, and the media, which consequently has directed the researchers to document how English language is used by different speakers in different settings. The traditional methods of teaching English, particularly in expanding circles, stayed the major focus of the teachers, and this has resulted in fears among scholars about learners' readiness for facing challenges in their academic work or employment (Chern & Curran, 2017, p. 145). In their study, Chern and Curran (2017) aimed to measure if the pre-service teachers in teacher training programs had any awareness of the principles related to an ELF perspective, and whether this awareness might influence selections they might make in their future performances. The study investigated the attitude of four groups of participants as the following, English majors, students minoring in English, graduate students, and interns. The participants stood up for a wide range of key concepts characteristic of ELF perception despite not comprising any debate of ELF in their training programs. Those characteristics included concentrating on the use of English for actual communication, dignify all diversities of English, readiness to grasp further about intercultural communication, an assertion on improving all the skills of the language. The results of the study showed that interns and English majors preferred being restricted to native-speakers model for educating and learning. The response of the graduate students was neutral to the majority of the items on the survey. ELF perspective was supported by the last group, the English minors, as they used English in another discipline they could recognize the wider role of English language.

Soruc (2015) in a mixed method study, surveyed 45 university teachers from five different expanding circle countries, including Turkey, Italy, Egypt, Germany and China, to avoid restricting the research to a single setting that might not represent the expanding circle. The participants were required to fill out a questionnaire on their use of the 'typical' ELF features list. Ten of the participants were also interviewed to give explanation about their response in the questionnaire. The results of this study showed teachers' preference for ENL features, and they justified that ENL enables to preserve communication and clarity, decreases pressure and anxiety, enhances self-confidence, and affords psychological assistance. Teachers also agreed that ENL generates career opportunities

and receives respect and reputation, while the use of ELF attracts negative responses. The participants explained the disadvantage of ELF for students that it has a negative impact on their essays, term papers, or ever when taking high-stakes exams. In addition to the difficulty of applying ELF in the classroom due to the resources and time limitation, moreover, ELF demotivate the learners as they tend to learn the standard form.

Through semi-structured groups interviews of teachers of two schools in Germany, selective and non-selective schools, regarding their attitude towards ELF, Decke-Cornill (2002) has pointed that both schools staff has some major grounds in common. First of all, all the staff highlighted their willingness to open their learners' minds to the variety of people and cultures, and shared their desire to infuse interest in various forms of living and thought. Regarding the importance of ELF in the curricula, none of the teachers of both groups had ever reflected explicitly on this subject. Moreover, the teachers assumed that ELF constitute a danger of losing solid linguistic ground. In addition, ELF, for those teachers, could cause the damage of significant and complex interaction, turning teaching and learning process into minor and superficial. The selective school staff were much more restricted to the use of the native features, and considered ELF as by-product, less interesting method, cultureless and by some means neutral, bare and abstract, while the non-selective ones showed a bit more comfort to the moving away from conventional English education, linguistically and culturally, also they assumed that the use of ELF standard supports communication with other L1 speakers. Generally, the results of this study presented that teachers prefer to be restricted to the native features, and showed some hesitations about a reduction of linguistic, regional or cultural reference for teaching English.

Trainee teachers' attitudes, regarding how they perceive the accents of NNS and NS, were also examined in a study conducted by Kaur (2014). A questionnaire adopted from Jenkins (2007) was used to collect the data. The questionnaire distributed to 72 trainee teachers of a public university, however, only 36 of them were included in the final analysis. The results of this study showed respondents' preference to NS English over the NNS English. British and American accents were viewed as higher-level than any other NNS English accents due to one major reason is that the materials and books used are all NS-centric. The respondents showed biasness towards the native norms despite being exposed to both concepts of EIL and ELF.

Ranta (2010) conducted a study surveying Finnish teachers' and learners' attitude towards NS vs NNS. Regarding teachers' attitude, and as their experience ranged between one to 34 years, they were divided into two groups: younger-generation teachers, and Older-generation teachers. A questionnaire including qualitative and quantitative questions was used. The results of this study had two directions, real-world English and school English. The teachers, particularly the younger-generation teachers, presented their realization to the role of ELF and the repercussions it should have on their teaching. This realization of the role of ELF in the real world led the teachers to think of ways to deliver it for the learners as they believe that their students will need to use English as a tool to communicate with other non-natives. The Finnish teachers then were less restricted to the native norms and more willing to other diversities. However, and despite their willingness for ELF forms, the teachers tend to educate the native form to their students in their classes, considering the native variety as the benchmark for measuring their students' progress. In addition to that, the matriculation examination dictated the subjects and approaches they followed in their teaching.

2.5.2 Students' Perceptions

English language is not owned by the native speakers anymore due to the increasing number of speakers of English around the world who use it as a lingua franca (Fang, 2016, p. 68). The number of the students studying in ELF contexts has also increased (Kaypak & Ortactepe, 2014, p. 355). As a consequent, a number of studies focused on investigating the learners' perception towards the use of ELF, and to find out whether they tend to be restricted to the native norms or accept the ELF as a variety.

108 Students from four different Finnish schools were selected in a study conducted by Ranta (2010) in an attempt for exploring their attitude towards varieties of English, as well as their use of English through a qualitative and quantitative questionnaire. The results showed a split in students' minds between "school English" and "real world English" (p. 156). The students showed their awareness and understanding of the role and significance of ELF in their future, and their expectations regarding using English as an instrument for communicating with other non-natives. The majority of the students pointed that being native like was not at their priority, on the contrary, they showed their tendency for keeping their non-native identity. Some others tended to mix

both British and American accents. Some others, who were less competent in English, showed their inability to use a particular variety. Grammatical mistakes were also the concern of some students which as a consequent prevented them from practicing English. Ranta added that ELF could be a good choice for the last two groups of students. Finnish students' preference for non-native English is resulted mainly from their experience with English language usage, or due to the effect of the media. On the other hand, and despite students' positive perception towards the non-native English, students were also content with what was taught at schools for seeing it the only way of teaching English, in addition to their knowledge that the testing will be based on standard English.

Fang (2016) investigated the attitudes of some university students, who had intermediate and higher-intermediate level of English, in a mixed-method study included a questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire contained multiple options regarding students' perception towards accents, and teaching pronunciation. The results reflected that the native form is instilled in the students' minds, as the majority of them were exposed to the native English form, and their goal was to gain the native accent. Hence, Fang believes that teachers should increase their students' knowledge about ELF features. The results also showed students dissatisfaction with their own pronunciation, and their strong preference for native ones, and considering themselves as incompetent users of the language. Very few of the participants in this study showed acceptance for their own accent, and questioned the significance of considering the native model as the standard.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The widespread of the English language and the conflicting opinions on whether or not obtaining the native speaker proficiency is necessary have been controversial issues; on the one hand, success in learning a second or foreign language is usually measured against reaching native-speaker fluency, and the use of English for international communication by people from all walks of life on the other hand warrants abandoning native-speaker norms. ELF has therefore been suggested as an alternative concept. This has recently led ELF to be of much interest to researchers who have produced both conceptual and empirical works on this topic. Previously and perhaps to the present day, ELF is considered as deviations from the native language norms. ELF varieties were considered as "errors". However, based on the ELF conceptualization, these "errors" are regarded as the inherent features of ELF, as outlined in a number of empirical studies into describing features of ELF. These studies have been conducted in different contexts and focused on various aspects such as pronunciation, pragmatics, lexis, and grammar. This study is similar to these studies but in a new, unexplored context which is ELF in the Kurdistan Region, as there have been no previous studies investigating ELF features in this context.

However, since no previous attempts at describing ELF of this context have been made, it was thought that an initial study into ELF features found elsewhere from previous works would be more appropriate. First, this would be a starting point for such an ambitious project which will ultimately be to describe all lexical, grammatical, phonological and pragmatic features of ELF in Kurdistan. Secondly, it would be interesting to see if the same features found in other contexts also exist in the local ELF. Thirdly, it would be beyond the scope of a master's thesis to include all features of any language variety since this requires more time, effort and much bigger corpora.

For identifying the lexical and grammatical features, a corpus-based study was conducted, which represents the qualitative method of this study. The corpus included both written and spoken corpora. The written corpus consisted of both final papers and response essays of MA students at one of the public universities in which English is the medium of instruction. The students were proficient users of English as they had been admitted after meeting rigorous admission criteria including satisfactory English test scores and written and oral exams. The spoken corpus was collected to achieve more authentic data, as

speaking in natural settings is considered more spontaneous and, unlike the written data, is not adjusted, edited or even pre-planned. Four MA sessions were recorded by the researcher to collect the spoken data. One session was attended in person while the other three sessions were recorded online due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In addition to recording the live sessions, the researcher was making systematic observations to identify any instances of breakdown in communication, cases of unintelligibility, and/or difficulties in interactions.

3.2 Sampling

Since this study majorly aims to explore the lexical and grammatical features of ELF, it was believed that advanced users of the English language would be the right population to target. Lower level users or those who are still actively in the process of learning the language might not qualify to constitute legitimate speakers of ELF because their use of the language is still being shaped by further learning. Thus, it was compulsory to select proficient users of the language as the sample for this study so they represent independent, confident and proficient users who use the language regularly for their daily business and who do not make mistakes of English learners. In other words, they are the ones whose deviations from the native-speaker standard are considered an inherit property of their language variety.

3.3 Participants

The sample included 10 master's students at an English-medium public university in Erbil, the Region's capital and largest city. The students were all specialized in English language and graduated from different universities in Kurdistan, and a few of them had some experience in teaching English. However, the samples were all advanced, proficient users of the target language. The students were studying a master's degree in Applied Linguistics/TESOL at the university. They were coming from various backgrounds and different first languages, including Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkmen. Prior to their admission, these students had all received minimum 6.5 on IELTS or 58 on PTE. They had also passed written exams and oral interviews. Therefore, they were at a satisfactory level of English proficiency to use the language for their postgraduate studies. Moreover, almost all of them were working full-time or part-time jobs at international institutes,

organizations or companies where their language of work was primarily English. They would use English on a daily basis for work, studies and daily interactions.

3.4 Instruments

To identify the lexical and grammatical features of a language variety, a relatively large database is required. Therefore, it was necessary to make use of a naturally-occurring but also big enough corpus so that the results of the study would identify systematically repeated deviations in ELF interactions by proficient users. Hence, a corpus study was conducted to analyze patterns in a database of language use in natural settings and for authentic purposes rather than for the study.

3.4.1 The Corpus

This study is mainly a corpus study aimed at exploring the lexical and grammatical features of English as a lingua franca in the Kurdistan Region, as used by advanced users. The corpus included 42,094 words in total. The written data included 23,398 words which were taken from both 10 final papers and 10 response essays of 10 MA students at an English-medium university in the Erbil city.

On the other hand, the spoken data consisted of 18,705 words. The spoken data was collected through naturally occurring recordings of students' discussions during one of their modules in the second semester of their first year of coursework. The module was an advanced course in applied linguistic and TESOL, in which students engaged in discussions about a related topic. The major reason for including the spoken component was to get more authentic and spontaneous use of the English language by those students in an ELF setting. In principle, a corpus was used to collect enough data to have a meaningful database and eventually to get results which are valid and representative of ELF. The spoken and written data collected constitute most of the data of this research, and therefore they shaped the findings in regard to the lexical and grammatical features of English as a lingua franca in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

3.5 Data Analysis

As this study is an attempt to describe the lexico-grammatical features of ELF in the Kurdistan Region, it was necessary to concentrate on the systematically repeated deviations available whether in the written or spoken data which differ from the standard English forms. The analysis of this research was based on investigating the lexical and grammatical features identified in earlier studies. A number of previous studies conducted in various contexts (e.g., Turkey, Europe, Asia) were taken as the backdrop to inform the current analysis. The features identified in these previous ELF works are listed in Table 3.1, which represent the base for this analysis.

Amongst the studied which informed this thesis was the VOICE, which is one of the major studies regarding lexico-grammatical features of naturally occurring ELF interactions by speakers with varied L1 backgrounds. The VOICE project was conducted by Seidlhofer (2004) and her associates, through which she reported eight ELF features which appear systematically in ELF interactions which also deviate from the standard English. Another study conducted by Onen (2015), which primarily focused on the deviations available in ELF interactions in terms of prepositions, was also used to guide this analysis. Imperiani and Mandasari (2020) have also presented a study exploring ELF features in Indonesia which also indicated some ELF features and was also adopted as the basis for our analysis. Breiteneder's (2009) work was on one of the features that appeared in the VOICE project which is the third person –s in ELF interactions in Europe. These features, which were identified in previous studies and in different contexts, were used to guide the analysis; the analysis focused on identifying these features in the corpus as a first attempt to describe the lexical and grammatical features of English in the Kurdistan Region.

Table 3. 1 Features available in the previous literature on ELF

Seidlhofer (2004)	• Use or non-use of definite and indefinite articles
	• Replacing infinitive construction with *that*-clauses
	• Inserting redundant preposition
	• Overusing certain verbs of high semantic generality
	• Confusing the relative pronouns *who* and *which*
	• Tag question usage
	• Overdoing explicitness
Seidlhofer (2004); Breiteneder (2009)	• Dropping the third person present tense –s
Imperiani & Mandasari (2020)	• Marking and non-marking of plural nouns
	• Omission of prepositions
Onen (2015); Imperiani & Mandasari (2020)	• Substituting the standard preposition by other prepositions

At the beginning of the analysis, it was necessary to go through the methods of the analysis of a number of previous studies conducted on describing lexical and grammatical features of ELF in other contexts. For identifying the verbs with high semantic generality represented by Seidlhofer (2004), Wordsmith tools were used for finding the frequency of the lexical items used in the corpus. However, it was also necessary to do the analysis manually as the Wordsmith tools show the total frequency of each word regardless of its part of speech. For example, *have* is used sometimes as a main verb, and as an auxiliary verb at other times. The results shown do not categorize the words' parts of speech, but only the total frequency of each word. Therefore, the Wordsmith tools were used to only highlight the most frequent verbs used in each paper. Then manual analysis was conducted for each paper individually to determine each highlighted word's part of speech, and to pick up verbs with high semantic generality used in the corpus.

As for the other parts in the grammatical analysis of the corpus, first, the written corpus was analyzed. Each final paper and response essay of the students was analyzed

individually by going through the papers thoroughly and carefully, highlighting any deviations from the standard English found in each of these final papers and essays. This first step was followed by creating a table at the bottom of each paper. In the table, the sentences containing any grammatical divergences were copied, next to different categories of the divergences to determine the type of the deviation from the native English norms as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3. 2 Examples of the initial analysis and coding of the features of written corpus

Response essay 8	**Category**
This problematic situation had led *to* the students to be late at the educational level. They did not even know the multiplication table.	Inserting redundant preposition
The teacher defended his students, saying that {the} students knew the answers and {the} accusations are related to racial and economic views on students. {the} Students were required to retake the exam. Finally, they were able to get 4 or 5 scores out of 5 and refute all the allegations.	Missing article

*The words between the brackets have been added by the researcher to show the missing articles

After the analysis of the written data, the spoken data was analyzed. The total time of all the recordings of the attended sessions were six hours, after excluding the lecturer's presentation at the first hour of each attended session. During each session, one and sometimes two of the students were presenting a seminar for about 25 minutes engaging his/her colleagues in a discussion on a related topic. Almost 85% of the recordings were transcribed, as the recordings sometimes were not clear either as a result of the students' unclear speech, all the class speaking together, or in some cases weak internet connection. The recordings were checked and listened to more than twice to avoid any mistakes, as it is difficult at times to catch, for example in the case of the third person singular –s, whether the participant really dropped or pronounced it. The lecturer's speech was also excluded as his usage of the English language did not include any ELF features. The same procedure of the written data was conducted for the spoken corpus analysis. All the transcribed data was surveyed manually and meticulously for several times, and all the ELF usages were highlighted, copied and identified according to their deviation from the standard English form in a number of tables. Each table was categorized according to the deviation found in the data as shown below in Tables 3.3:

Table 3. 3 Examples of the initial analysis and coding of the features of spoken corpus

Dropping the third present tense s
so the first thing is that this person need to be psychologically prepared
You know the writer ask what could possibly the common between him and the students
they turned to the teacher asking him if he believe in zoos

In all the sessions the researcher attended, both in person and online, an observation sheet was used to detect any occurrences of breakdowns in communication or lack of intelligibility. The researcher was looking out for cases of requests for clarifications, reformulation, or repeating a verbal account. However, requests for explaining a concept or saying more about a topic were not considered as they were not

related to linguistic or lexical aspects of language. An observation sheet was used (attached in the Appendix) to record all these cases of unintelligibility, breakdowns in communication, and requests for repetition, clarification, and reformulation.

Chapter Four: Results

During the data analysis, a number of features available in the previous studies which were also mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, were identified, as shown in Table 4.1. A number of deviations, different from what has been reported in the literature, were also identified in the analyzed data; however, these features were left out, as this study is based on identifying grammatical and lexical features available in previous works on ELF in the English used here locally.

Table 4. 1 ELF features found in the corpus

ELF features found in the corpus
• Dropping third person singular –s in the simple present tense
• The use, non-use, or redundant use of definite and indefinite articles
• Redundant use, omission, and substitution of prepositions
• Verbs with high semantic generality
• Redundant marking and non-marking of plural nouns

Below, I present the findings from the verbal and written corpora in detail, through examples. In addition to that, I will report my observation findings in regard to whether or not these deviations caused any breakdown in communication or difficulties in getting the speakers' message through to the audience.

4.1 Subject-verb Agreement

According to the standard form of the English language prescribed in English grammar books, the rule for using a verb with the third person singular differs from other person categories. While the third person singular subject requires to carry an –s suffix, with the other person subjects the verb is used in its base form. This rule is further clarified in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2 3rd person singular in standard English (adapted from Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 27):

Form	Symbol	Example	Functions
Base	Verb	Call drink put	(a) all the present tense except 3rd person singular: I/ you/ we / they *call* every day (b) imperative: *Call* at once! (c) subjunctive: He demanded that she *call* and see him (d) the bare infinitive: He wants her to *call*
-s form (third person singular present)	Verb-s	calls drinks puts	3rd person singular present tense: He/ she/ it *calls* every day

As such, the use of a third person singular subject is characterized by the addition of the suffix -s (or –es) with the regular verbs. However, some verbs such as *have* and *do* can be considered irregular in this regard. These verbs will be turned to *has* and *does* respectively with a 3rd person singular subject and in their base forms with other person categories. Any deviations from this agreement rule will be considered as an agreement mismatch and as such as a deviated form.

One of the prominent areas that has been identified by researchers as an ELF feature has been in the area of subject-verb agreement. Most of the research in this area has focused on the deviations in the use of the 3rd person singular *–s* in the present simple tense. It is often also referred to as the *s*-dropping. However, as I will present in what follows, some of the relevant deviations involve the "addition" of an -s to verbs which do not require it. It is therefore more appropriate to account for both related issues under the broad heading of "subject-verb agreement" since that label includes the omission and addition of the 3rd person singular -s.

Seidlhofer (2004) was the first scholar who referred to unmarking the 3rd person –s in ELF interactions in the VOICE project, the largest ELF corpus collected primarily from European contexts. In addition, the findings of Imperiani and Mandasari's (2020) work,

which was conducted in the Asian context, showed dropping the third person –s in three sentences only, as the data collected in that study contained little use of the third person in the sentences, and most sentences included the first or second person subjects mainly. In another study by Breiteneder (2009), 25 sentences were not marked with the 3rd person singular –s out of 151 sentences which needed to have a 3rd person singular –s.

Breiteneder (2009) attributed the occurrence of the morpheme –s in the correctly-used sentences with an –s to the fact that this morpheme is widely used in chunks in English. They are usually found in "prefabricated chunks" as in *it depends, it makes no sense, this means,* and *it seems*. This implies that the marking here probably did not occur as a result of speakers' knowledge of the standard English form, but due to the usage of fixed and widely used phrases. The suggested evidence for this interpretation is that, right after the occurrence of these expressions, the users tended to unmark other verbs with –s, as in *he make, he get* which required a third person singular –s.

4.1.1 Dropping the Third Person Singular -s

In the analysis of the current study of the collected corpora, non-marking the third person –s was evident as it appeared in 46 sentences out of 292 sentences that requires the addition of the morpheme –s in both the written and spoken data. The written corpus included 11 sentences with zero marking of the third person singular –s, and there were 35 sentences with zero marking in the spoken corpus. Dropping the third person singular –s was found with a diverse set of verbs.

During the analysis of the data, it was found that dropping the –s was continuously used in some sentences and encompassed all the relevant verbs in a stretch of discourse. However, in the first example below taken from the speech of Student 3, the third person singular –s appears at the end of the student's speech in "*he wants*". This can be considered an instance of a "prefabricated chunk":

> If someone doesn't like something it's so difficult he *learn* it. So first of all he *need* to think about it and he *need* to like it and he *need* to digest all of the information in his mind, and his brain *do* a brainstorming what he *wants* to learn and put an aim. Student 3
>
> Before starting the semester, having a 10-mins quiz before each lesson,

> reviewing the lessons and the one who *provide* wrong answer *get* a funny punishment. Response essay 3

Also in another instance in the findings, dropping the third person singular -s can be assumed to have occurred by mistake, as the student was referring to a generic noun *private schools* which means referring to private schools in general, without specifying any schools, but here it did not indicate "s" plural. Thus there was a mismatch between the subject and the verb:

> Private school *pay* attentions to decoration of classes, providing qualified teachers, *train* and *update* them with the latest means of technology.
> Final paper 10

The least observed case regarding unmarking the third person –s was the correction for zero marking, which was identified only in one sentence in the spoken interactions:

> The economic situation of a country as a whole *provide, provides* support to policies of minority especially in the cases where the minorities live in remote places. Student 1

The omissions of the third person singular –s did not impede the intelligibility of meaning among the participants, inferred in the fact that the interlocutors did not ask any follow-up questions nor did they ask for any clarifications.

4.1.2 Overgeneralizing the Third Person Singular –s

On the other hand, there were four sentences showing the overgeneralizing in the usage of the 3rd person singular –s, which means it was used with the verbs which, according to the standard English grammar rule described above, do not require the addition of this morpheme. For instance, in the following sentences, the subjects are plural –s *the schools* and *types of motivation* but the verbs are found with an -s suffix:

> The students who are out of control and the schools which *lacks* of facilities are found everywhere. Essay 7
>
> The Impact of Motivation on Language Learners in Learning Second Language and the Types of Motivation that *Improves* Students' Second Language. Final paper 4

In these two sentences, the writers might have been misled by the existence of the relative clauses *which* and *that* as they extend the distance between the subject and the verb making it difficult to establish the connection between the two clauses' components, which were *schools* and *types of motivation*, which are both plural nouns that require a verb in the base form to follow them.

Another deviation from the standard English grammar was found in the corpus regarding the addition of the third person –s in the causative construction. The causative construction in English is built with the auxiliary verb *make* followed by another verb that has its own lexical meaning. The second verb in the causative construction necessarily comes in its base form, and as such it cannot be inflected with the -s suffix even when the subject of the sentence is a third person singular. The construction is summarized as follows:

Make + object + base form of the verb

This is illustrated in the following examples:

"The teacher makes Jack write a composition."

"The teacher made Jack write a composition."

As it was observed in the instance in our corpus, the student tended to add –s to the second verb, the verb following the auxiliary *make*, as in:

> He made each one of the students *faces* his fear and overcome it. Response essay 7

According to the English grammar rule mentioned above, the verb following *make* must be in the base form; however, the data from the corpus showed the addition of the third person singular –s to the verb *face*, which reflects a deviation from the standard form.

To summarize, agreement mismatches were seen in two manners: by dropping -s and by overgeneralizing it to be used with verbs that have non-3rd person singular subjects. The dropping was seen at a higher proportion while overgeneralizing appeared in four sentences. The impact of chunk expressions did not seem to be remarkable as in the Breiteneder's (2009) study, since there were only two instances that could be counted to fall under this category. A particular structural reason generating such agreement mismatches (especially in the form of overgeneralized -s marking) involves structural complexity: When the verb is preceded by a relative clause or by a subject that is a complex noun phrase or a coordinated noun phrases, the speaker/writer might be having difficulties in establishing the subject-verb relationship properly which leads to the mistaken or deviated use of the verb form.

It was noticed from the observation of the live class sessions that the dropping of the suffix –s did not constitute problems to mutual understanding nor did it cause any breakdown in the communication among the students; the interlocutors did not need to make any corrections as neither the teacher nor the students asked for any clarifications or showed any objection upon the occurrence of this deviation from the standard English grammar. This deviation might have resulted from that the suffix –s does not have any semantic meaning but only a syntactic nature. As can be assumed, native speakers do not face difficulties in using this non-semantic feature because they have acquired it as part of their overall first language repertoire, non-native speakers need to learn the rules mostly explicitly and perhaps in relation to similar features in their L1. Therefore, this could potentially be a source of difficulty because they may not comprehend the necessity of using them.

4.2 Redundant marking and Non-marking of Plural Nouns

The plural in the English language is subject to a number of rules considering that some words are countable and others are uncountable, and this is the case in most other languages. The countable nouns in the English language are also divided into the regular plural, in which the suffix –s can be added in seven various ways depending on the ending of each word. This means that if the noun ends with a vowel, consonant, or –y, then the addition of –s takes a particular form such as: vowel (+ -s), consonant (+ -s), ss, sh, ch, x (+ -es), vowel + y (+ -s), consonant + y (+ -ies), vowel + o (+ -s), and consonant + o (+ -

es) (Imperiani & Mandasari, 2020). Regarding the irregular plural nouns, each word takes a form without being subject to any specific rules, and the suffix –s does not occur in the irregular plural nouns.

Generally, ELF users deviate in regards of irregular plural nous; they tend to add the suffix –s to the uncountable nouns, such as *informations* (Seidlhofer, 2004). This might be attributed to overgeneralizing the rules of L1 to the English language, as the word *information* in most languages, such as Arabic and Kurdish, is a countable noun. In the interactions of the ELF users of this study, the users tended to apply their L1 rules at times. However, the analysis of the data showed only one case of this deviation, as shown in the following example taken from the spoken data:

> Interventions in positive psychology refers to some kind of *humours* and jokes or some kind of activity that can be included into the class of language or language forging language learning. Student 7

Despite being considered an uncountable noun, the word *humour* was used in the corpus in the plural form, which reflects the ELF user's tendency to add the *plural -s* to uncountable nouns. The addition of *plural -s* to the noun 'humour' might be attributed to the existence of the quantifier *some* preceding it, which might have confused the user as it can be followed by both countable and uncountable nouns.

The deviations by the users in the collected corpus were evident in the regular plural forms. The analysis of the corpus identified 23 sentences indicating non-marking of plural –s. The written data included 9 sentences which were supposed to indicate regular plural nouns, such as *definition*, *village*, *human*, and *level*. On the other hand, the spoken data included 14 sentences lacking the marking of plural nouns, as in *teacher*, *type*, and *themself*.

There was a tendency by the students in both the written and spoken corpora to drop the plural –s despite the existence of determiners such as *some, all, a lot of*, and *many* which require the plural form of the countable nouns that follow them, as in the examples beneath:

> As we know that this conception is totally wrong because we don't have

> just British English, American English we have *many kind* of Englishes nowadays. Student 2
>
> By creating an environment, sociologically and psychologically, and motivating students by using *a lot of activity* that according to the need of the students. Students 4

This might be attributed to the students' confusion as most of these determiners such as *some, a lot of,* and *all* can be followed by both plural countable and uncountable nouns. Also it might be a result of the occurrence of some plural nouns afterwards, such as in *many kind of Englishes*, which might distract the speaker and cause the omission of the plural –s due to its presence in the word which follows the word immediately after the quantifier.

The omission of the plural –s was also recognized despite the presence of *these* and *those* which both are used to refer to plural nouns following them, as in the following extracts taken from the spoken data:

> Foreign language learning like *those kind of intervention* can be music laughter poetry gratitude and so on you are familiar with those kind of things and then these of course *these kind of activity* help students and teachers to strengthen the experience on one hand. Student 7

The findings also included the students' tendency to drop the plural –s with generic nouns. Generic nouns can be referred to in their singular or plural forms; however, here in the corpus, the students tended to use both forms in a single sentence, as shown in the following example:

> Each one with his/her own accent and it does not require them to be fluent, how the different forms exist even among British cities and *village*. Final paper 6

The omission of the plural –s can be attributed to the students' knowledge that the quantifiers available in these sentences, such as *a lot of, many,* and *some,* already refer to

plural nouns, and the listener can easily understand the speakers' intention to refer to a plural noun. Moreover, these quantifiers can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns which could distract the students, and this might have resulted in the omission of the plural -s. In addition, the omission of the plural –s in these countable nouns might occur as a result of the occurrence of some plural nouns afterward in the same sentences, as in *some kind of humors and jokes*, and *many kind of Englishes*, which might distract the speaker and cause the omission of the plural –s due to its presence in another following word. Despite the omission of plural –s with the countable nouns in the written and spoken corpora, it did not impede the intelligibility of the meaning as none of the interlocutors asked for any clarifications or tried to correct the mistake committed by the speaker.

4.3 Verbs with High Semantic Generality

ELF interlocutors tend to use some verbs that have high semantic generality such as *make, take* and *do* in novel collocations which deviate from the standard English native-speaker usage (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). Although the participants used these high semantic generality verbs quite frequently, the deviation was limited. As shown in Table 4.3 below, the deviations were identified in five sentences only and included deviations in collocations with the following verbs: *do*, *make*, *take*, and *have*.

Table 4. 3 Deviations found in the use of verbs with high semantic generality

Make	In agreement with Dörnyei (2001), motivation is essential for second language learners because it is the force which encourages them to *make an action* in a specific direction and with specific goals
	Language centres usually *make ads* on social media to promote their business
Do	He believed that step by step he could *do a great change*
Take	Mr. Escalante took the challenge he asked for and *took extra hours* and convinced the students to come to the extra hours in the summer
Have	The students in the beginning also were *having bad behaviour* due to the lack of support and encouragement from their schools, and friends

The first deviation was noticed in the use of the verb *make* in two sentences. In the first sentence, the verb *make* was combined with the noun *action*. However, in the standard native English, this is considered incorrect because the verb *make* is not normally used with action; it is usually preceded by one of the following verbs: *take, call for, agree on, leap, carry out, bring* and *keep* (Ozdic Collocation Dictionary):

> In agreement with Dörnyei (2001), motivation is essential for second language learners because it is the force which encourages them to *make an action* in a specific direction and with specific goals. Final paper 4

The second deviation regarding the use of *make* was in using it with the noun *ads*, as shown below. According to Ozdic Collocation Dictionary, the word 'advertisement' can be used with the following verbs: *place, put, take out, carry, display, publish, run, show, find, see, spot, answer, reply to* and *respond to*. The data analysis showed that the ELF users innovatively used the verb *make* with *ads*.

Though it is difficult to assume the exact reason behind this usage, it might be attributed to the effect of the interlocutor's mother language. In the Arabic language, the same sentence can be said as 'ينتج اعلان', and in Kurdish, the verb 'دەکات' is used with ads, which is a literal translation of *make*. As such, the mother tongue rules might have been applied by the ELF user to the English collocation and used a literal translation:

> Language centres usually *make ads* on social media to promote their business. Final paper 10

The third deviation occurrence was in using *do* instead of *make*. Usually, in standard English, the verb *do* is a "general-purpose verb" which takes numerous usages, and it is possible to confuse this verb with the verb *make* at times. On the other hand, the verb *make* is often used for talking about generating or constructing something (Swan, 1995, pp. 162-163). In the data, the verb *do* was used instead of the verb *make* in a collocation with the word *change*; however, the correct verb to be used with the word *change* is make as in *we will make some changes*. This sentence reflects the ELF users' deviated usage of collocations and their inability to differentiate between *make* and *do* in

this particular collocation:

> He believed that step by step he could *do a great change.* Response essay 1

Nonetheless, the use of the collocation *do a change* did not seem to impact the intelligibility of the meaning among the students.

The data analysis also revealed an innovative usage of the verb *take* in the collocation *take extra hours*, which is not found in the standard English. The student should have used the verb *taught* instead:

> Mr. Escalante took the challenge, he asked for and *took extra hours* and convinced the students to come to the extra hours in the summer. Essay 6

The last innovative usage of collocations in ELF interactions was found in the data was regarding the unessential use of the verb *have* which was used with the word *behaviour*. However, this is considered as a deviation from the native-speaker standard, and the user had to use the verb *show* or only *behave* instead:

> The students in the beginning also were *having bad behaviour* due to the lack of support and encouragement from their schools, friends and family. Essay 10

The whole data-set contained five instances with deviations in the use of verbs with high semantic generality. Some of these could be attributed to the negative transfer of the users' first languages, while others cannot be explained in light of the impact of L1. Those incorrect uses did not seem to pose a threat to intelligibility or mutual communication amongst the users.

4.4 Definite and Indefinite Articles

Through the analysis of the spoken and written data, it was noticed that the largest amount of deviation was identified in the use of both definite and indefinite articles. By nature, articles might be difficult for English learners because they are frequently used, and not all languages follow a similar system of using articles. They therefore can be a major source of difficulty, and thus deviations. Previous research (e.g., Cogo & Dewey, 2012) has found that English-as-a-lingua-franca users often use English articles in innovative ways. The findings of this research support this hypothesis, and interestingly, they were evident in both the written and spoken corpora, and even more often in the written corpus. This might suggest that the ELF users of this research could have had insufficient knowledge competence regarding the use of articles. Nonetheless, it may also be the case that English as a lingua franca users develop a unique system of applying English articles in ways which are different from the native-speaker norms. In other words, rather than due to assigning less or more importance to articles or using them less or more frequently, ELF users might differ from native speakers in deploying articles (Cogo & Dewey, 2012).

Intuitively, the notions of definiteness and indefiniteness are very simple; definite implies a referent that is identified, or recognized to the speaker and listener, while indefinite expresses a referent that is new, unknown, or unfamiliar. There are three main articles in English, which are *a, an,* and *the*. The first two are called indefinite articles, and the third is called the definite article. (Brinton & Brinton, 2010).

The indefinite articles *a* and *an* in standard English are followed by singular countable nouns, as in this example: “I feel terrible. I need *a friend*”. Also, these articles are used to present a new particular entity in the discourse, as presented in the following example: “Police are looking for *a scruffy man* aged 17 to 21”. The indefinite article is also used to classify an entity as in: “My husband is *a doctor*”. Here, the article *a* refers to “what is typical of any member of a class” (Biber et al., 2000, p. 260). As for the definite article *the,* it may be used with both countable and uncountable nouns. The definite article *the* states that the referent of the noun phrase is perceived to be identified to the speaker and the addressee. This identification may be based on the previous text preceding the mention of the noun, as in the following example: “*A doctor* was allowed to carry on working after telling fellow general practitioners *he* had contracted Aids, health officials revealed yesterday. *The doctor,* who died last summer, broke health service guidelines”

(Biber et al., 2000, p. 264).

Definite articles are also used to refer to "the shared situational context of the speaker and hearer" an example of this type is in the sentence: "I think there is somebody at *the door* now" (Biber et al., 2000, p. 264).

The deviations in the data analysis can be divided into three types as the following:

4.4.1 Non-use of Definite and Indefinite Articles

Missing articles was among the most frequently identified deviations that were found in the dataset. Their deviation from the native norms was obvious and found almost in the majority of the final papers and response essays written by the students. However, missing articles was less frequent in the spoken dataset. The total amount of the missing articles found was in 101 sentences. The majority of the sentences in which the definite and indefinite articles were not used were found in the written data, in 96 sentences. The rest, which were 5 sentences lacking the definite and indefinite articles were found in the spoken corpus. The results showed that the definite article *the* seems to be the article most frequently missed by the students, while the indefinite articles *a/an* were also noticed to be omitted but with less frequency than the definite article.

According to the standard English, and as mentioned earlier in this part, the indefinite articles *a* and *an* precede singular countable nouns., However, the data analysis revealed the absence of these articles before singular countable nouns in a number of occasions. Possibly this reflects a feature of ELF in that *a/an* articles are not used regularly with all singular countable nouns as in the native-speaker standard. Below are some examples of the absence of use of *a/an* by ELF users:

> Stand and Deliver is a 1988 film based on *true story* of a math professor who had a goal to teach potentially failing students in a Los Angeles high school AP calculus class in one academic year. Response essay 10

> He was tormented by the hooligan students and faced many difficulties teaching them because the students were in problematic working-class families and did not own *high level* of academic skills. Response essay 9

> when people travel around the world even in the expanding circle are using the language for *purpose*, such as, for business, asking for the price, and asking for direction. Final paper 6

> Consequently, learners would love school and education and they will have *affiliation* towards them, and vice versa. Final paper 1

> As u know guys learning a second language is very different from learning the first one its *on-going process*. Student 5

> We see most people when they learn *language* they reach a stage of fossilization we've talked about this many times. Student 10

The extracts above taken from the spoken and written corpora all lack the use of the indefinite articles *a/an*, despite the existence of singular countable nouns which require the use of these indefinite articles, and consequently reflects ELF users tendency to deviate from the native English norms. However, the observed data indicated that the non-use of these indefinite articles did not constitute any obstacles to understanding.

The definite article *the* was also not used in a number of cases where its use was obligatory, such as with the superlative adjectives and some fixed expressions, e.g., the UK, the USA. Below are some examples from the data which lack the definite article *the*:

> In this movie, *teacher's* tolerance and morale had a great impact on me in such a way that encouraged me to use the same power in class and toward my students. Response essay 9

Here, the speaker refers to the teacher in the movie Stand and Deliver, who are known to both the speaker and the hearer. As such, the use of definite article *the* is necessary. However, the user did not use it.

> *Students* were required to retake the exam. Finally, they were able to get 4 or 5 scores out of 5 and refute all the allegations. Response essay 8

We can also see in this extract that the speaker pointed out to the students in the same movie mentioned earlier in the previous extract without using the definite article *the* despite referring to a specific and known group, known to both the speaker and hearer:

> He classified the use of English through three renowned circles, the countries with in *inner circle* those which English was their first language such as *(UK, US*, Australia and New Zealand), the countries with in *outer* circle represented by the postcolonial nations such as (India, Singapore, Nigeria and *Philippines*), the countries with in *expanding circle* those which English is considered as an international language such as (China, France and Japan). Final paper 3

The use of the definite article *the* is obligatory when referring to a known and specified entity. However, in the extract above, the omission of the definite article *the* was evident and frequent with a number of known nouns. Though it is not easy to attribute these errors to a specific cause, it appears that this particular user did not feel it was necessary to use *the* with these nouns, because it is almost apparent which entities the user was referring to.

4.4.2 Redundant Use of Definite and Indefinite Articles

The second obvious deviation found regarding the articles was the insertion of articles where they were not needed. This deviation was found in 29 sentences. The indefinite articles *a* and *an*, according to the standard English rules, are used with singular countable nouns, as mentioned earlier in the previous section. However, the data analysis showed redundant use of the indefinite articles *a / an* in 7 sentences in various cases. Redundant use of indefinite articles was obvious with both uncountable nouns and plural nouns as in the sentences shown below:

> This paper can also be *a significant guidance* for anyone who is interested in this field. Final paper 9

In the sentence above, the deviation is probably due to the user's wrong application of the indefinite article *a* to a phrase which starts with an adjective and then an uncountable noun. The user would probably meant to say a guide rather than guidance. However, the wrong word choice here could have resulted in using *a* inaccurately.

According to the standard English norms, the plural countable nouns do not require the use of the indefinite articles *a* or *an*. However, the data analysis demonstrated the use of these articles with words like *results*, s*ubjects* and *courses* as shown in the extracts below taken form the corpus:

> The students will get progressed and al, also they will get *a great results* in learning the language. Student 2
> Chouefat school at the beginning of its establishment regarded Kurdish and Arabic languages as *an optional subjects*. Final paper 5
> It's important for the teachers to participate in *a training courses* to tell them how psychologically how to deal with the students. Student 8

In these sentences, the use of the indefinite article *a* is redundant, as all the words following the indefinite article *a* are plural countable nouns. Hence, the use of these indefinite articles is considered a deviation from the native norms and another innovative way of using articles in ELF contexts.

The definite article was also used redundantly in 20 sentences, particularly and repeatedly in referring to generic nouns in a number of sentences. According to the standard English rules, the reference is generic when a noun phrase indicates an entire class rather than a particular person or object. The rule for uncountable nouns is to use zero article to express generic references as in "*if there is wine on the table, then have a drink*". With the countable nouns, generic references are represented in a number of means. The most resilient form uses zero article with countable plural nouns "*Roses are red, violets are blue. I'm writing to tell you, I'm in love with you*". On the other hand, less common mean for generic references is the use of definite and indefinite articles with singular countable nouns "The Americans are so jealous because they haven't got a Royal Family of their own" (Biber et al., 2000, pp. 265-266). The data analysis resulted in a number of

deviations regarding the use of articles with generic nouns as shown in the following extracts:

> Nowadays, *the people* are obsessed with the social media and spent most of their time on Facebook, Instagram and etc. Final paper 6

> In my opinion, the inductive approach to teaching grammar to *the public school pupils* in Kurdistan is not effective due to several reasons. Final paper 7

> Similarly, *the English grammar*, as an important part of English, is studied and taught in most of the countries in the world. Final paper 7

> At international schools *the subjects* like (Kurdish, Islamic religion and social) must be studied in Kurdish. Final paper 5

> First of all in *the curriculum*, when you got a curriculum to present let's say in a class for the teacher when he's got different students with different cultural backgrounds. Student 9

The redundant insertion of the definite article *the* can be attributed to the impact of the users' mother tongue as the definite article is found in both Kurdish and Arabic languages.

4.4.3 The Use of the Wrong Article

As mentioned earlier in this section, the use of definite articles *a/an*, and the definite article *the*, is subjected to a number of rules. However, the data analysis revealed wrong uses of these articles in four sentences.

When mentioning a new entity in any sentence in the standard English, the indefinite articles *a* and *an* are supposed to be used. However, in the corpus, the students tended to use the definite article *the* for mentioning an unknown entity instead, as shown in the following extracts:

> The movie based on *the true story* in California, which talked about a math teacher who joined a high school in an underprivileged community. Response essay 2

> The movie is about *the true story* of a teacher who was supposed to teach math subject in a high school situated in a poor residential neighbourhood in California**.** Response essay 8

In these two extracts taken from the corpus, the students used the definite article *the* for introducing the noun *story* which is an unknown noun for the reader, hence requires the use of the indefinite article *a*.

The definite article *the* is used particularly when referring to a specific and known noun, as mentioned earlier; however, the data analysis revealed replacing the definite article *the* with the indefinite article *a*, as shown below:

> Mr. Escalante, who is considered to be from a Hispanic background, was able to connect with *the students* at the school and neighbourhood possibly because *a majority* of them were also from a similar background. Response essay 10

The student here referred to a specific group of students who were mentioned earlier in the same sentence, which eventually made the referent a known noun for both the author and the reader. Therefore, it required the use of the definite article *the*.

The deviation in the use of articles found in the written and spoken corpora was evident in three major categories: *non-use of the definite and indefinite articles*, *using redundant article*, and *the use of wrong definite and indefinite articles*. However, this divergence in the use or non-use of both definite and indefinite articles did not seem to impede the intelligibility between the interlocutors, apparent from no evidence of breakdown in communication, no request for clarifications, and lack of occurrence of self-repetitions.

4.5 Prepositions

One of the most common problems which non-native speakers of English face is in the use of prepositions. As Cogo and Dewey (2012) stated, prepositions constitute an intrinsically unpredictable field of lexico-grammar, and are especially subject to extensive variation which can be attributed to that in many cases prepositions have "little or no semantic value" (p. 52). And this is clear with the "dependent prepositions" in which selecting a preposition rather than another largely depends on its collocation with a previous lexical object (p. 52). Cogo and Dewey (2012) also add that the use of prepositions also varies in standard English varieties, as is the case with the adjective *different* that can be followed by *from, to,* and *than* in both the British and the American English. All these variations are widely used, but are viewed differently regarding their correctness, as some speakers consider both *different than* and *different to* incorrect.

In this study, the English users made quite a large number of deviations in using prepositions as compared against the native-speaker English standard. Their deviations in using them can be considered one of the highest compared to other grammatical features mentioned above. While this is in line with some previous research in other ELF contexts (e.g., Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Önen, 2015), this finding might confirm the challenges learners face in using English prepositions in general. The variations were frequent and easily identifiable throughout both the written and spoken corpora. The analyses showed frequent deviations in the use of a number of prepositions, as shown in Table 4.4 below. The users' deviations were found in three different categories as explained below.

Table 4. 4 Most frequent prepositions in the written and spoken corpora with the deviations

Preposition	Frequency	Percentage	No. of deviations	Percentage
Of	1358	28%	13	28%
To	1460	30%	6	13%
In	1118	23%	11	24%
As	339	07%	4	09%
On	236	05%	3	06%
For	359	07%	9	20%
Total	4870	100%	46	100%

4.5.1 Using Wrong Preposition

The use of a wrong preposition had the largest percentage among the other categories related to prepositions, in which 19 deviated usages from the standard English norms were found in the dataset. As mentioned previously, this might be attributed to the multi-functionality of some prepositions, as in the case of *in* and *at* which can be substituted by another similar preposition without much change in the communicative function of a sentence.

The preposition *of* was substituted by another preposition in five sentences throughout the dataset. In two cases, the preposition *on* was used in place of *of*, as shown in the extracts below:

> From my understanding *on* concept, every learner is able to acquire second language skills and achieve high levels of language proficiency with proper motivation. Final paper 4

> It is more interesting to step outside the received research evidence and focus on the psychological aspects of motivation to gain a deeper understanding *on* the relationship between motivation and attainments of second language learners. Final paper 4

The user here tended to use the preposition *on* twice in a collocation with the word *understanding* while the preposition *of* must be used in these collocations.

In another case, *of* was substituted by the preposition *for* in the following extract:

> The ministry's committee were accusing them *for* being cheating without finding a proof because getting such a high degree was not expected. Response essay 2

The verb *accuse* in the standard English is always followed by the preposition *of*, and this makes the use of the preposition *for* with the verb *accuse* grammatically wrong. The extract mentioned above reflects ELF users' deviation regarding the usage of this

preposition when followed by a verb.

The preposition *for* also substituted the preposition *of* in another sentence in the corpus. The extract below shows an ELF user's deviation from the standard English norms:

> Another example *for* the strategies is the comprehension passage which mainly focuses on (Wh-) questions beside some extra details. Final paper 2

The word *example* in standard English is usually followed by the preposition *of*, rather than *for*. Yet, it does not seem that the user thought using *for* would make the statement unintelligible.

Another preposition which was frequently substituted with other prepositions was the preposition *in*. This preposition was substituted in 6 sentences in the corpora of this study. In four out of these six sentences, the preposition *in* was substituted by the preposition *at*, which reflects the ELF users' confusion regarding the use of these two prepositions.

In standard English, the prepositions *in* and *at* can be both used with locations, and more specifically with buildings; however, the distinction in their use is that the preposition *at* indicates the building with "its institutional or functional aspect", while in the case of the preposition *in*, it is used to refer to the building as "a three dimensional structure" (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1989, p.148). The difference is clarified in the following examples:

He is at school (BrE)

= He attends/is attending school

He is in school (AmE)

He is in school (BrE) = He is actually inside the building not on the playing fields.

The data analysis found substituting the preposition *in* with the preposition *at* for referring to the word 'class' in two sentences as shown below, which, according to the

English grammar rules mentioned above, are considered an innovative or a deviated usage of prepositions:

> The movie that we have just watched *at* the class and is based on a true story shows the reality of the teachers' life in which they suffer from bad systems as well as students. Response essay 5

> Beside that there are some strategies that might help the learners in any task related to what they study *at* class (e.g. vocabulary can be identified from the meaning of the context not just be memorizing the vocabulary and its meaning). Final paper 2

The analysis also showed the substitution of the preposition *in* with the preposition *at* in referring to or indicating time. Quirk and Greenbaum (1989) stated that the distinction in using the prepositions *in* and *at* according to the standard English is that *at* is used mainly for points of time, more specifically as for "clock-time". However, the preposition *in* is used to indicate periods of time, such as *in the winter*, *in the evening*, *in September*, etc. (p. 154).

In the extract mentioned below, the preposition *at* replaced the preposition *in* for referring to the future, which is considered a deviation from the standard form:

> Then he talks about why, because his students are Muslim, Arabic French speakers, North Africans, IV league bounds, *at* the future they're going to IV League schools, like Cambridge, Oxford, Columbia. These are all called IV League. Student 10

As mentioned above, for referring to a period in the future, the preposition *in* must be used; however, the user here substituted it with the preposition *at*. Despite replacing the preposition with another preposition and despite not being bound by the rules of the native English language, the meaning was clear to the participants, and no one asked for any explanations, and nor the professor or the students corrected their colleague.

The preposition *for* was also substituted by other prepositions, such as, *with*, *by*, *of*,

and *on* in four different sentences. The first extract shows the substitution of *for* by *on* when used with the word *purpose*:

> Motivation should become a part of curriculum *on* the purpose of increasing awareness about how to be a creative person. Final paper 1

Moreover, in the extract below, the user substitutes the preposition *for* with *of*:

> And if we blame learners *of* demotivation, we have to search for the reasons why learners do not have motivation in second language learning. Final paper 1

The word blame is usually followed by *for*, rather than *of*; however, the student here deviated from the standard English forms. This therefore represents an innovative use of prepositions in this ELF context.

4.5.2 Inserting Redundant Preposition

This deviation has been identified earlier by Seidlhofer (2004) as "inserting redundant prepositions, as in: We have to study about…". A similar result was obtained in this study as well. The data analysis resulted in 17 sentences containing the use of redundant prepositions in both the written and spoken corpora.

The preposition *of* was used redundantly in the data twice with the verb *lack*, as shown below in the extracts taken from Response Essay 7. The word lack can be used in native English as a verb and as a noun as well. When using *lack* as a noun, it can be followed by the preposition *of*. However, the students here tended to use the preposition *of* with the verb *lack*, which is considered grammatically wrong:

> The students who are out of control and the schools which *lacks of* facilities are found everywhere. Response essay 7
>
> They *lacked of* information about math, they were hesitated towards participating in the class, and not willing to answer the questions related to the subject in spite of knowing the answers. Response essay 7

The insertion of the preposition is grammatically incorrect in this structure. However, the insertion could be obligatory if the sentence structure was different, for example *in the lack of facilities in the schools*. This indicates that adding the preposition in this case was not arbitrary, but it is rather attributed to previous uses. Nevertheless, the writer might have been unaware of the difference in the structure of the sentences and consequently added it based on its prior use.

The results also showed the redundant use of the preposition *of*, although it was clear that there was no need for the insertion of this preposition. This error may be attributed to the confusion between two words that are closely related and have the same meaning as in the example shown below from Final Paper 2:

> To be honest, despite *of* the low percentage of teachers who are aware of the concept of self- regulation but they are there and found. Final paper 2

The writer here might have been confused between *despite* and *in spite of*, which have the same meaning and almost the same form and utterance.

In the final paper 9, the preposition *as* was used redundantly with the word 'mentioned' in three sentences presented below:

> Based on the ideas *as* mentioned earlier, non-native speakers of the English language in many expanding circle countries have certain myths and misconceptions about native speakers. Final paper 9
>
> The concept of lingua franca, as elucidated above, can be one of the most important weapons to battle all the myths *as* mentioned above about the native speaker model. Final paper 9
>
> Ministries of Education and Higher Education need to open workshops and conferences for English language teachers to address the issues *as* mentioned earlier to combat all the common myths about the native speaker. Final paper 9

In the extracts above, the preposition *as* was used redundantly in particular with the

word *mentioned*. This can also be attributed to consider this collocation again as a "prefabricated chunk" widely used in native English and applied by non-natives.

4.5.3 Omitted Prepositions

The data analysis also showed ELF users' tendency towards omitting prepositions in situations where their usage is obligatory. The omission of the prepositions was evident in both the written and spoken corpora in 12 sentences.

The data analysis showed that the omission took place in three prepositions in particular which were *of, in,* and *at*. Each of these prepositions were omitted in four sentences in the analysed data.

As for the preposition *to,* it was omitted in four sentences in the data. The first case is shown in the following extract:

> I think it refers to the way how we have to have good attitudes towards life how *we need think positively*, how we, how people make use of our behaviours and our ideas to be positive in life. Student 5

In the standard English, when followed by another verb, the verb need must be accompanied by the preposition *to*; however, the user here tended to use the verb following *need* in the base form without adding the preposition *to*.

In another case of the omission of the preposition *to* was with the words *relevant* and *respond,* which both require to be collocated with the preposition *to*. The user however omitted the preposition and used these two nouns in an innovative way:

> Well so there are two points I would like to mention is that the first one is the second language curriculum should be *relevant local linguistic ecology*. Student 10
>
> Respectively, the students were *responding the teacher's requests* and they apply their utmost effort to improve. Response essay 9

The last case for the omission of the preposition *to* is shown in the following extract:

> And the last problem which needs to be *put in consideration* is the inability of educational centres to develop communicative learning. Final paper 1

In the standard English, the word *consideration* is usually preceded by the preposition *into*. Yet, the analysis revealed that the preposition *in* was used in place of *into*.

The preposition *in* was also omitted in four more sentences in the analyzed data. The following extract shows the omission of the preposition *in* which should have been added before the noun *interaction*:

> So in this regard positive psychology in institution recognize that how teacher control their emotion *while they are interaction with* the students even when they have challenges in their personal life. Student 7

The extract above deviates from the standard English forms, as the student omitted the preposition *in*. Hence, this sentence is considered grammatically wrong, unless the student either added the preposition *in*, or changed the word *interaction* into *interacting* to be considered grammatically correct. At the same time, this sentence reflects the student's innovative use and deviation from the standard English norms. However, this deviation did not seem to impede the intelligibility of meaning for the student.

In the standard English, both the verbs *interfere* and *participate* are usually followed by the preposition *in*; however, the data showed the omission of this preposition with these two verbs in two sentences in the corpus:

> He sometimes *interfered* their personal life and advised them in person to find out solutions for their problems. Response essay 8

> Most of the people do like their children to *participate* ministerial exam at 12th grade instead of SET exam. Final paper 5

The last case showed the omission of the preposition *in* was in the extract below:

> Ministry of Education has to work on this issue seriously, next generations must be able to read and write in Kurdish as well as *English.* Final paper 5

The insertion of the preposition *in* is obligatory here as the student mentioned it first *in Kurdish*. Therefore, it must have also been added before the word *English.*

The preposition *of* was also omitted in four sentences with the expressions *regardless*, *aware*, *purpose*, and *ability* as presented in the extracts below:

> Teachers should be more *aware* the method of teaching and about the learning styles. Final paper 1

> The students that I met now in high school is contracting his own style of studying *regardless* what has been planned for him by his teacher. Final paper 2

> *For the purpose* applying the inductive approach, each class should be at least two hours so that the teachers and pupils can have enough time to read the passages to find the grammar rules. Final paper 7

> Then he believed in them and clarified the main idea for motivating all the students that nothing is hard or impossible everyone has *the ability* success. Response essay 7

In the extracts above, the preposition *of* was omitted. All the expressions in these sentences required the use of this preposition; however, the users omitted it. Moreover, all the cases were found in the written corpus, in which, although the users were able to revise their writing before submitting it, they did not recognize the omission of the preposition *of.* This might reflect the clarity of the meaning despite the absence of this preposition in their sentences.

To summarize, the data analysis resulted in three innovative ways of using prepositions in the ELF context summarized in 'using the wrong preposition, inserting redundant preposition', and 'omitting prepositions' in different frequencies in both the written and spoken data. These deviations in the use of prepositions confirm what was mentioned earlier at the beginning of this section, which is that the use of prepositions can be confusing and problematic for those non-native speakers of the English language. However, through the class observation or the recorded lessons, it can be inferred that whether the prepositions were omitted, inserted redundantly, or used in wrong ways, the intelligibility of the meaning was not affected. The same can be concluded for the written corpus, in which the students did not even notice their deviated use of these prepositions despite the opportunity for revising and editing their papers before submitting them to the course teacher.

In summary, the results of the data analysis showed a major deviation in the use of articles, both definite and indefinite, in three categories, non-use of articles, redundant use of articles, and using wrong articles. The second major deviation was in the use of prepositions, which were also in three varieties; using wrong preposition, inserting redundant preposition, and omitted preposition. The third feature in the results included subject-verb mismatch in which the most frequent mismatch was found in the use of the third person singular –s. The deviation was found majorly in the non-use of the third person singular –s, with less frequency regarding the overgeneralization of the use of third person singular –s. The forth feature in the current study was the redundant marking and non-marking plural nouns. The results showed a major deviation in non-marking the plural nouns with the plural –s; however, only one case showed marking an uncountable noun with the plural –s. The last and least frequent feature in the current study appeared in the deviated use of verbs with high semantic generality, which mainly included deviations in the use of the verbs *make, do, take,* and *have*.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This study focused on identifying the lexical and grammatical features of ELF users in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, motivated primarily by the fact that there have previously been no studies conducted on finding these features in this context. The research was guided by the following research questions: What are the lexico-grammatical features of ELF in the Kurdistan Region? And do these so-called deviated features pose any threats to intelligibility?

To answer these research questions, a corpus study was conducted including written and spoken data, guided by previously-identified ELF features in other contexts and as reported in the literature. The written data included 10 final papers and 10 response essays of MA students majoring in Applied Linguistics and TESOL at an English-medium university in the city of Erbil. The spoken data was collected through attending and recording 4 sessions of the same MA students. All the audios were then transcribed, and the data was analyzed through a number of steps. First of all, the researcher started searching for any errors or deviations in the collected data thoroughly, listing the deviations in tables, coding the type of the deviation throughout. A number of grammar books and online dictionaries were also used to check against the deviations found in the data. The data analysis revealed a great number of deviations from the standard English. However, the focus of this study was on a number of features which had been found in previous studies. The aim of this research was to find out whether or not these features also existed in this context, and whether they appeared in a different way than other contexts. While identifying deviations other than those already found in the literature about ELF in other contexts was not in the scope or the objective of this study, these would be an interesting area for future research.

5.1 The Major Features of ELF in Kurdistan

Interestingly the most frequently identified deviations from the native speaker standard in the dataset was related to the use of articles in the English language. Deviations in the use of articles were found in three categories: non-use of definite and indefinite articles which were missing in 101 sentences in both the spoken and written corpora; the redundant use of definite and indefinite articles were found in

30 sentences in the corpora; and the less frequent deviations which were in the use of wrong articles were identified in 8 sentences only. Similar results regarding the use of articles were found in a study by Yamaguch (2018), conducted on 25 speakers; however only five speakers' recordings were selected as they all talked about a shared topic (the weather). Unlike the current study, Yamaguch's (2018) participants were not frequent users of the English language. Some of them were teachers of Japanese language which might suggest their infrequent use of the language, and the rest were undergraduate students who were using English extensively. The study showed results similar to the current study, as the definite and indefinite articles were used in ways similar to what was found in the current study. Among the results, the articles were not used in cases that required their use, in particular the indefinite articles which were omitted less frequently, and that was also found in the current study, in which the indefinite articles were omitted in 35 sentences only. Similarly, the articles were replaced, or used in wrong ways, and using articles redundantly was also apparent in that study.

Mauranen (2010) also conducted a study investigating the ELF features in academia, and the articles were among the most frequent deviations identified in the ELF uses, similar to the categories found in the current study. In another study by Imperiani and Mandasari (2020), which indicated analysing a small talk which lasted for an hour of a number of ELF users. The results showed the omission of the definite and indefinite articles, and these results were similar to the current study as the major omission of the articles was in the definite article *the*, and a less frequent omission was found in the use of indefinite articles. The current study showed more variations in regards to articles, and this might be attributed to that this study took as sample longer hours of attended sessions in addition to the written corpus in comparison to the study conducted by Imperiani and Mandasari (2020), which included only an hour of small talk. On the other hand, the settings of these two studies also are varied; the current study was conducted in an academic setting, while Imperiani and Mandasari's (2020) study took place in a club.

The second most frequent deviation was in the use of prepositions which was found in three categories: the use of wrong preposition which was found in 19

sentences in the written and spoken corpora; inserting redundant prepositions, identified in 18 sentences; and finally omitted prepositions which were found in 12 sentences. Interestingly, despite the differences in the settings and the participants in the study conducted by Imperiani and Mandasari (2020) and the current study, the results showed the same categories with a variation in the use, non-use, or wrong use of prepositions. In their study, Imperiani and Mandasari (2020) showed a major deviation in the redundant use of prepositions, unlike the present study in which the redundant use of the prepositions was the second frequent deviation. In contrast with the current study, the use of wrong prepositions was the least frequent deviation in Imperiani and Mandasari's (2020) study; however, both studies showed major deviations in the use or the replacement of the preposition *in* with other propositions. It seems that this replacement of the preposition *in* is due to the influence of the mother tongue, although this has occurred in speakers of different mother languages as suggested by Ji (2016). In the previous studies, this deviation was interpreted to be either because the speakers were confused in using this preposition (Imperiani & Mandasari, 2020), confusions in regard to transitive and non-transitive verbs (Ji, 2016), or because the speakers used this preposition in an innovative way (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). It appears that in some languages, this preposition is used differently, and this could have been the main reason behind this deviation.

Önen (2015) conducted a study investigating the use of prepositions by undergraduate students from different backgrounds in Turkey, who participated in various speech events, interviews, and included also a focus-group meeting. In her study, Önen (2015) presented deviations in the use of prepositions of similar categories as the current study; however, regarding the use of redundant prepositions, Önen's findings were the same as those reported by Seidlhofer (2004) and Cogo and Dewey (2012) on the redundant use of the propositions *about* and *to*. The current study also showed deviations in the redundant use of the preposition *about,* but with a rare occurrence, as it was apparent in only two sentences. However, the major redundant use in the use of prepositions was in the use of the preposition *of*. It is worth saying that Önen's study included merely a spoken corpus, unlike the current study which included both spoken and written corpora.

The third frequent deviation found in the corpus was related to subject-verb agreement, in particular deviations in the use of third person singular –s. The dropping of the third person singular –s was found in 35 sentences. Cogo and Dewey (2012) also referred to this feature as one of the prominent ELF features in their corpora which, unlike the current study, included only spoken data collected from various speech events which mainly took place in institutional contexts with more informal interactions and less semi-formal settings as seminars and presentations. Their corpora were collected from a large number of participants with various sociolinguistic backgrounds. However, and as the interactions in their study included English native speakers, the participants showed a tendency to include the third person singular –s when English native speakers were involved in the interaction, and dropping the –s when interactions were taking place between non-native speakers. In addition, the occurrence of the third person singular –s was mainly available with particular verbs, or with some fixed or commonly used chunks, such as "depends on" and "looks like". Imperiani and Mandasari's (2020) study also reported dropping the third person singular –s, but only in three sentences, as their corpus was taken from a small talk which lasted for an hour. However, the participants of that study did not overgeneralize the addition of the morpheme –s, which was a feature found in this study. Similar to the current results, the deviation in the third person singular –s was a major feature in the VOICE project (Seidlhofer, 2004).

Another feature which appeared in the current study was the use of plural formation. In the previous literature, ELF users have shown a deviation from the standard English by marking the uncountable nouns with the plural –s (Seidlhofer, 2004); however, the current study identified one case of marking an uncountable noun with the plural –s. The major deviations were found in non-marking the regular plural countable nouns with the plural –s, which were found in 23 sentences, in line with a study conducted by Imperiani and Mandasari (2020) who reported the same results with almost the same frequency of this deviation in their corpus, which appeared in 30 sentences. Hence, these results reflect ELF users' tendency toward non-marking plural nouns in both academic and non-academic settings.

The last feature with the least frequency found in the current study was the innovative use of verbs with high semantic generality including the verbs 'make, do, have' and 'take'. The current study showed the ELF users' innovative use of these verbs with high semantic generality, and how they deviated from the standard English use of these verbs, but with limited frequency, as these deviations appeared in 5 sentences only. Seidlhofer (2004) has referred to the extensive use of these verbs in the VOICE project which included a wider range of verbs, such as *do, have, make, put* and *take*. Cogo and Dewey (2012) also pointed to the innovative use of these collocations; however, their corpus included innovative collocations with the verb *get* as well. In both previous studies, the range of the verbs with high semantic generality was wider, as the current study included the innovative use of the verbs *have, make, do* and *take*. However, the verbs *put* and get were not found in innovative collocations in the current study, unlike the two studies reported earlier by Seidlhofer (2004) and Cogo and Dewey (2012).

In short, the innovations in the ELF users found in this study resemble in some ways what other studies have reported previously especially in the use of the third person singular, articles and prepositions. However, a number of features were found to be used differently by ELF users in the Kurdistan's context. This suggests that ELF users might use different innovative features in their localized English varieties, which could in part be due to the influence of the users' first languages as well as the impact of teaching and exposure to the language. It is therefore important to perceive ELF as a number of varieties of using the language, rather than one form across nations, people and users. However, while this study did not detect any cases of misunderstanding or threats to intelligibility or mutual interactions amongst the users, this does not necessarily suggest that such cases do not occur when users from various geographical and cultural backgrounds user English in international settings.

5.2 Possible Reasons Behind the Deviations

After presenting the main features which appeared in the current study, it is perhaps imperative to contemplate the possible reasons behind the existence of these features in ELF communications. This could be helpful in not only

understanding why these deviations occur, but perhaps more importantly to learn about what forms an ELF variety as opposed to other ELF versions in other contexts. Although the following discussion could be limited to possible interpretations based on observations and subjective assessments, as for the best of my knowledge there is no mention for the possible reasons behind these deviations in the literature, it is nonetheless important to open the door for further research and investigation into potential sources of the deviations.

The first major reason can be the impact of the first language. The participants in the current study belonged to different backgrounds, and their first languages varied as well. The language used in the Kurdistan Region is primarily Kurdish, but Turkmani and Arabic are also widely used. Each of these languages has its own systems and linguistic features. These languages, which are the native languages of the participants, might have contributed to some of those deviations, such as in the case of the plural formation. The use of the plural form of the noun 'humors' can be attributed to the influence of the mother tongue of the ELF user, as this noun in both Kurdish and Arabic languages is countable. Hence, the ELF users could have been affected by the mother tongue and had applied the rules of it on the English language as well. This can also be seen in the innovative use of the verbs with high semantic generality, in which the influence of the mother tongue can be seen with the use of the verb *make* with the noun *ads*. The participant used a literal translation of the mother tongue when referring to the noun *ads*, as in both Kurdish and Arabic languages the verbs used with this noun is *make*.

Another reason which can be behind these deviations is that some of these features do not have any semantic meaning. Therefore, their absence in the communication does not necessarily constitute a breakdown in communication, nor does it hinder the intelligibility of the meaning, as in the case of dropping the morpheme –s in the third person singular. As the third person singular –s does not convey any meaning, the absence or the presence of it does not always create issues or problems in mutual understanding. Moreover, none of the languages in the context of the current study has the feature of the morpheme –s; thus the ELF users might not have noticed the absence of this feature in their speech.

In addition to the previous reasons, the deviations found in the current study

probably were not perceived as important in the ELF interactions, possibly because the students were so focused on the communicative fluency that they did not focus on grammatical or lexical accuracy. As a result, they probably did not pay attention to the complex features of the language. We might assume that the more complex a language feature is, the more likely EFL users make mistakes or deviations in its use especially in verbal communications. It was noticed in the current study that the ELF users committed these deviations as they were immersed in the discussions and focused on conveying their messages to the others; however, their knowledge about these features was also evident as they did not commit these mistake elsewhere, as in the case of the third person singular –s, which was dropped in some sentences, and added somewhere else, which then reflects the users' knowledge about this featureAs such, linguistic competence does not always lead to linguistic performance in the case of the ELF features. As the speakers might use certain features inaccurately in certain contexts not because they do not have the linguistic knowledge of them but because they cannot access that knowledge or always apply it properly, we might conclude that ELF users do not always follow native-speaker norms especially under certain challenging circumstances. This then raises the issue of whether we need to abandon native-speaker norms as English is now being shaped by native as well as non-native users (Wang, 2016).

Confusion can be also considered one of the reasons behind these deviations. This can be evident in the use of prepositions and articles. Many non-native English users were confused in the use of the prepositions *in* and *at*, which also appeared in the current study, as the participants replaced the preposition *at* with the preposition *in* in various sentences. Articles can also constitute an area of confusion for the ELF users, as the users did not focus on when to use the definite or indefinite articles which can be attributed to their attention to conveying more necessary information than the correct use of these articles.

Another possible interpretation could be due to fossilization. As is the case with most contexts, English is taught by non-native teachers. And those non-native teachers themselves perhaps were exposed to deviated forms of the language. This could therefore lead to permanent states of fossilization. Additionally, since these learners are not expected to reach native-speaker levels in English, generating

language forms free of grammatical and lexical deviations is probably not a goal of learning and use.

5.3 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The features identified in this study can be considered a novel contribution to the study of ELF in general. This contribution is to the theoretical understanding of the concept as well the practical implications. Therefore, this study might open new doors for more research and other researchers to identify a whole range of grammatical, lexical, and pronunciation features of ELF as used by English users in the context of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. On the other hand, policy makers, teachers and educationists might benefit from this research to implement changes as a result of this research's findings, especially in regard to the issue of intelligibility, English teaching and assessment, and rethinking the native-speaker standards in teaching.

In the previous literature and in particular the studies that focused on teachers' attitudes towards ELF, there seems to be a clear preference toward applying native-speaker English norms in the classroom. To many English teachers, native-speaker norms are to be followed because it preserves communication and intelligibility and enhances learners' self-confidence. On the other hand, they consider using other forms of the language including ELF as 'broken English'. This concern seems to stem from the fear that following ELF might lead to negative consequences for learners including their preparedness for writing papers and passing proficiency exams which both require conforming to native-speaker English. In addition, applying ELF in the classrooms will be difficult as most of the instruction materials available are based on the standard English. Moreover, teachers need to devote more time to applying these features in the class (Soruc, 2015). As such, although accepting the notion of ELF might be legitimately appealing, it faces much resistance at many levels especially in the teaching arena.

However, a number of scholars have pointed out that we are no longer obliged to follow native-speaker standards as the language is now being used by non-native users across the globe. Therefore, ELF does not constitute any issues in

language use. Alptekin (2007) for example stated that languages are not neat structures, otherwise there would not be accents or varieties. Therefore, the emerging linguistic features of English as used in international settings deserve to be deemed acceptable now, although they were regarded ungrammatical earlier. This research adds to the body of knowledge on describing these systematic features of ELF in a new, unexplored context. Describing these features is the first step in recognizing the widely use of this variety of the language; therefore, previous research has called for studies into describing ELF features in the context of Kurdistan (Ahmed, 2021).

An important conceptual contribution of this research lies in the finding that ELF interactions did not suffer from the lack of intelligibility. Therefore, it is important for learners to be able to maintain interactions intelligibly with a fair level of accuracy rather than being consumed by accuracy at the cost of communication. This is especially true in international settings. While students who are studying in native speaking contexts and interacting with native speakers need to learn the native form for academic purposes, the ELF context is different (Alptekin, 2007). International ELF settings might hardly include any native speakers, and the vast majority of interaction is NNS –NNS communication. Thus, conforming to native-speaker standards might not be necessary. As Deniz, Özkan and Bayyurt (2016) stated, the globalized world is constantly changing and the requirements also change, so teachers must be aware of these changes and requirements taking place in order to be compatible with new learner needs.

Importantly, this research has put forth not only some paramount features of English in this local context, but it has also established that with the presence of these non-native deviations, intelligibility remains unthreatened. This is significant evidence and backing for the claim that ELF does not equal bad English or ‘anything is all right’. Rather, it has found that deviations occur in a systematic manner, and they represent the localized English as a result of the influence of the context, what the language is used for, and speakers’ expectations.

5.3.1 Pedagogical Implications

It was noted that the presence of these features in the current study did not impede the clarity of the meaning nor did they create any breakdowns in communication, evident in that that there were no comments, amendments or corrections to any of the errors occurred, whether by the listeners or the speakers themselves. Therefore, it is possible to infer that committing such errors does not pose a threat to intelligibility. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to be aware of the results of this study because they might be spending too much energy and resources on preventing learners from these deviations. Whether we decide to consider these deviations as acceptable or not from a linguistic perspective, it is perhaps relieving to see them as natural and perhaps unavoidable.

Moreover, as these deviations characterize the English in this local context, even proficient users and English teachers might have them in their language use. As such, abandoning native-speaker or native-like teachers is probably warranted because non-native users might be considered legitimate language users rather than life-long learners of the language. This recognition can also empower non-native English teachers to be more confident, and instead of worrying about avoiding errors, they could focus on improving their teaching skills.

5.3.2 Implications for Assessment

Since these features characterize the local English here, users should not be penalized for displaying those deviations. This is probably a difficult-to-swallow idea for many practitioners, teachers and stakeholders, but relying exclusively on international language tests to determine users' ability and knowledge of English is probably unfair and unrealistic. The majority of these users will not need the language in English-speaking countries, and as such displaying these ELF features will have no impact on their performance and ability in this context. This could mean developing new assessment models for testing English users in this context which factor in these systematic features of the language (Ibrahim, in press). While this may not be feasible immediately, English teachers might benefit from this concept to start tolerating these deviations in their assessment practices.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the Main Findings

This research aimed at describing lexical and grammatical features of ELF as used in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The study was based on collecting both written and spoken corpora of proficient users of English at one of the English-medium universities in the Region. The research is primarily an initial attempt at identifying and comparing features in the local context against grammatical and lexical features already found in other ELF contexts elsewhere, motivated by the research gap of the lack of ELF description in this context. As such, the major ELF features identified from previous research were used as the guiding framework for the analysis of two sets of data: written and verbal corpora collected from an academic setting in which postgraduate students in applied linguistics produced both forms of the data while engaged in the authentic mission of doing their studies at the university.

A number of features found in previous works were also identified in the current study. The findings showed that ELF in this context is characterized by deviations in the use of both definite and indefinite articles in three categories: redundant use, non-use, and using wrong articles. Moreover, the findings showed major deviations from the standard English in the use of prepositions, which were also identified in three categories: redundant use, non-use, and using wrong prepositions. The omission of the third person singular –s was also one of the features that the English as a lingua franca in this context tended to have which is similar to ELF in other contexts, in addition to a less tendency for overgeneralizing the addition of the third person singular –s. The fourth identified feature was regarding redundant marking and non-marking plural nouns which interestingly, unlike previous works on ELF in other contexts, the major deviation was in non-marking regular plural nouns with the plural –s. The last finding of the current study was identified in the innovative use of verbs with high semantic generality, especially *make*, *do*, *take* and *have*, which were all found in innovative collocations that deviated from the standard English, albeit in a limited frequency.

The existence of these features in the local variety of ELF interactions can be attributed to a number of reasons. First, there might be a great impact of the first languages of those ELF users in which some of these features do not exist in the mother tongue or exist in a different way. Moreover, some features that appeared in the current study do not

carry any semantic meanings; hence, the users might have overlooked the absence or the necessary use of these features in their interactions, because the absence of these features did not seem to impede the intelligibility of meaning or cause any breakdowns in communication. Also one of the reasons behind the existence of these deviations can be attributed to the ELF users' confusion in using these features, as was the case with prepositions; that is to say, in real-work conditions, users might be confused because they might be under much pressure by the need to execute the task or get a message across. In addition, the existence of these deviations can be attributed to the possibility that these deviations were fossilized in the users as they had also been taught by ELF users of the language which consequently led to learn the language in a form that deviates from the standard form.

Although these features exist in ELF interactions in this context, it has been noted that they did not cause any problems in comprehension, or the natural flow of communication especially and perhaps more importantly in verbal. This finding especially has important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it suggests that successful interactions are equally possible in international settings where English is used as a lingua franca, and that systematic deviations characterize ELF. Practically, it could mean that English language teachers probably need to be aware of these features and should perhaps be more tolerant toward them in their learners. At a broader level, this finding might suggest that these features might need to be deemed acceptable especially when English is used in this specific context. The use of these deviations does not constitute a threat to the primary purpose of language which is to make communication amongst people feasible.

To conclude, ELF users in this context tended to use these features in their interactions extensively; hence, these features must be taken into consideration from different perspectives. English teachers and practitioners must be more tolerant with the existence of these features. Assessment criteria must be reconsidered or adjusted to be fair to ELF users in the future. Also, employers need to understand that these features characterize English as used by advanced, proficient users including English language teachers. Therefore, teachers should not be penalized for using this variety of English; it is an inherent part of a language going global.

6.2 Limitations

As this study is the first attempt at investigating the lexical and grammatical features in this context, there were a number of limitations which must be taken into consideration. First, this study was based on investigating the features that were available in previous literature. Therefore, the findings are directly related to existing features from ELF in other contexts. In addition, the current study investigated ELF features only in the academic field, which means that the findings represent users who use English in this particular setting only. Although the users used English for other purposes and in other areas on a daily basis, more research might focus on other fields where English is used especially in a field where international communication takes place. The last limitation is that there weren't any empirical or exploratory method to investigate the second research question.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Hence, a number of recommendations can be presented in the following:

- Future studies can investigate more lexical and grammatical features in this context.
- Other settings can be investigated to get more comprehensive results.
- Larger number of participants can be investigated to create larger corpora.
- Collecting data from more naturally-occurring interactions to get more authentic data.
- Teachers' perceptions regarding these lexical and grammatical features can also be investigated.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Observation sheet

Users : 10 MA students	Setting: 4 sessions at the UKH 1 attended sessions 3 class delivery mode	Date: 1st session: February 23, 2020 2nd session: June 11, 2020 3rd session: June 18, 2020 4th session: June 25, 2020
Duration: 15 hours (each session 3 h)		

Unintelligibility incidents	Not found
Misunderstanding incidents	Not found
Trouble understanding due to language incidents	Not found
Request for repetition incidents	Not found
Request for clarification incidents	Not found
Request for reformulation incidents	Not found