

# The Use of Prepositions in English as Lingua Franca Interactions: Corpus IST-Erasmus

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## Abstract

The growth of English into a lingua franca has inevitably created linguistic deviations and innovations in the use of English. These emerging uses that result from the needs and preferences of speakers whose mother tongues are all different can be broadly identified as lexico-grammatical and pronunciation features and they compose one of the main arteries of study in English as lingua franca communication. In an effort to investigate shared and systematized uses of English as a lingua franca (ELF) and their possible codification have formed the focus of considerable research in the field. This paper introduces an ELF corpus, Corpus IST-Erasmus, which is compiled as part of a PhD study to investigate the lexico-grammar of ELF interactions. The corpus consists of 10 hours 47 minutes of recorded speech and 93,913 words of transcribed data. It is compiled by means of 54 speech events, 29 interviews and 25 focus group meetings. The participants of the study are 79 incoming Erasmus students, representing 24 first languages. These languages are namely Arabic, Azerbaijan, Basque, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, French, Galician, German, Greek, Italian, Korean, Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Spanish, Suriname, Turkish, and Ukrainian. The focus of this paper is to examine whether there are variations from standard English as Native Language (ENL) forms with respect to the use of prepositions in spoken ELF interactions, as have been outlined in ELF research (Seidlhofer, 2004). The paper also aims to present the emerging patterns in the use of prepositions and suggest implications for an ELF-aware pedagogy in English Language Teaching. Although there is an increase in the number of empirical studies, there is still a gap in the description of ELF discourse. In order to fully identify the characteristics of ELF, more corpora studies should be conducted. These studies will provide data for ELT professionals in designing an ELF-oriented pedagogy and materials. Besides, there is limited research on the English use of international students- none in the Turkish setting. The present research, therefore, aims to fulfil this niche in the ELF research.

**Keywords:** English as a Lingua Franca, ELF interactions, Corpus IST-Erasmus, ELF lexico-grammar

## 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of globalization paved the way for one indisputable consequence: the need for a global language. As individuals interconnected on commercial, technological, ethnographic and ideological levels on a global scale, English gradually fulfilled this need. Transcending borders and becoming a contact language among speakers from different mother tongues, it grew into a world-wide lingua franca. This unprecedented spread of English as a lingua franca (ELF) paralleled the diversity it entailed: as English spread geographically and across domains, the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of its speakers duly extended, and ELF interactions manifested changes in the language. This transformation naturally affected the “standards” of the language that were drawn and sanctioned by its native speakers for centuries. “Standard English” as known was exposed to variations in the tongues of English speakers all over the globe. Today, ELF research confirms that ELF speakers exploit the potential of English and not only deviate from native norms but use the language innovatively. It can be said that research has investigated mostly spoken ELF forms in an effort to identify phonological, morphological, lexico-grammatical, pragmatic and idiomatic features involved. Typical structures that systematically emerged from close analyses through the use of concordance became attributed to “typical spoken ELF”. These, appear as the deviant but the preferred structures that replace the native English forms, as Cogo and Dewey (2012) indicate. More intensive and extensive research aims to provide data towards the discussion of possible varieties in ELF.

## 2. English as a Lingua Franca

The term *lingua franca* is commonly defined as “any lingual medium of communication between people of different mother tongues, for whom it is a second language” (Samarin, 1987: 371; as cited in Seidlhofer, 2007: 138). The original lingua franca is said to be a pidgin derived from some Italian dialects, but also reflects Arabic, French, Greek, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turkish features (Knapp & Meierkord, 2002: 9; as cited in Jenkins 2007: 1). Lingua francas can function both intra-nationally and internationally. Mandarin in China,

Bahasa Indonesia in Indonesia, and Swahili in East Africa are national lingua francas used to provide communication in linguistically diverse areas (Kirkpatrick, 2007a: 7). Today, the most obvious example for international lingua franca is English. It is also the most important lingua franca of ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) and of Europe. There were, however, other lingua francas, such as Arabic, Latin, and French, which previously served as international lingua francas.

While Samarin's definition is useful in describing local lingua francas, it does not apply to English, today's global lingua franca (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7). As House (2003: 557) puts forward the term lingua franca was initially used to refer to an intermediary language between Arabic speakers and travelers who come from Western Europe. Then, its meaning extended and lingua franca, as a single variety, was used to refer to the language of commerce. This meaning of lingua franca still does not describe ELF which is functionally flexible and variable. Besides, ELF is not spoken in a single area like the local lingua francas; but has spread to all parts of the world. As House (2003: 557) states ELF does not have a restricted code; therefore, it is not like a pidgin or a language for specific purposes. Besides, it is not an interlanguage; but a language for communication.

In line with Samarin's definition, which excludes the native speakers, Firth (1996: 240) defines 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". However, as Seidlhofer (2011: 7) puts forward, excluding native speakers from the definition of ELF is not accurate as ELF interactions do include Inner and Outer Circle English speakers as well, e.g. in an academic conference held in Seattle or at a touristic journey to India. Therefore, Seidlhofer (2011: 7) proposes the following definition for ELF: "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option".

On the other hand, there are a few terms that are used interchangeably with ELF. These are 'English as a world language' (Mair, 2003), 'English as a global language' (Crystal, 1997, 2003), 'World Englishes' (B. B. Kachru, 1992; Brutt-Griffler, 2002), 'English as an international language' (Widdowson, 1997a; Modiano, 2001; McKay, 2002; Timmis 2002), and 'English as a medium of intercultural communication (Seidlhofer, 2003a). As Bolton (2004: 367; as cited in Pakir, 2009: 225) points out 'World Englishes' serves as an umbrella term containing all the above mentioned varieties of English, but it normally implies 'new Englishes' (the 'indigenized', or 'nativized' varieties).

According to Jenkins (2007: 3) the term ELF has several advantages over the above mentioned terms.

ELF emphasizes the role of English in communication between speakers from different L1s, i.e. the primary reason for learning English today; it suggests the idea of community as opposed to alienness; it emphasizes that people have something in common rather than their differences; it implies that 'mixing' languages is acceptable... and thus that there is nothing inherently wrong in retaining certain characteristics of the L1, such as accent; finally, the Latin name symbolically removes the ownership of English from the Anglos both to no one and, in effect, to everyone.

(Jenkins, 2000: 11)

However, Phillipson (2008: 250) questioning the neutrality of the term ELF states that "[l]abelling English as a *lingua franca*, if this is understood as a culturally neutral medium that puts everyone on an equal footing, does not merely entail ideological dangers – it is simply false". As he points out English serves many purposes in the major social domains, both intra-nationally and internationally. Therefore, he suggests defining English with more explicit terms.

*a lingua economica* (in business and advertising, the language of corporate neoliberalism),  
*a lingua emotive* (the imaginary of Hollywood, popular music, consumerism, and hedonism),  
*a lingua academica* (in research publications, at international conferences, and as a medium for content learning in higher education), or  
*a lingua cultura* (rooted in the literary texts of English-speaking nations that school foreign language education traditionally aims at, and integrates with language learning as one element of general education)

(Phillipson, 2008: 250)

In order to understand what ELF is and what scholars mean with the term ELF, it is necessary to make a comparative analysis. Table 1 presents various definitions of ELF suggested by ELF scholars. The dates provided in the Table may give an insight about the historical development of the term ELF.

**Table 1: ELF definitions**

ELF Scholar	Year / Page	ELF Definition
Firth	1996: 240	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
House	1999: 74	ELF interactions occur between members of two or more different linguacultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue
	2001b: 2	English as a lingua franca is nothing more than a useful tool: it is a "language for communication", a medium that is given substance with the different national, regional, local and individual cultural identities its speakers bring to it. English itself does not carry such identities, it is not a "language for identification"
	2003: 559	ELF appears to be neither a restricted language for special purposes, nor a pidgin, nor an interlanguage, but one of a repertoire of different communicative instruments an individual has at his/her disposal, a useful and versatile tool, a 'language for communication'
Kirkpatrick	2007a: 155	a medium of communication by people who do not speak the same first language
Jenkins	2006a: 160	in its purest form, ELF is defined as a contact language used only among non-mother tongue speakers
	2007: 2	an emerging English that exists in its own right and which is being described in its own terms rather than by comparison with ENL
	2009: 143	it is English as it is used as a contact language among speakers from different first languages
Seidlhofer	2011: 7	any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option

As can be seen, the term ELF is perceived in at least four ways. According to this:

- ELF 1. The use of English in an interaction where at least some of the participants are non-native speakers (NNS) of English
- ELF 2. The use of English in an interaction where all the participants are NNSs and do not share the same first language
- ELF 3. The use of English in an interaction where all the participants are NNSs and all share (or similar) first language
- ELF 4. A (new) code used for interaction among NNSs, not standard English but based on standard English (SE)

(Elder & Davies, 2006: 282-284)

The main characteristics of ELF, has been described by Jenkins (2009: 143-145) as follows:

1. It is used in contexts in which speakers with different L1s (mostly, but not exclusively, from the Expanding Circle) need it as their means to communicate with each other.
2. ELF is an alternative to EFL rather than a replacement for it, and depends on the speaker's (or learner's) potential needs and preferences.
3. Linguistically ELF involves innovations that differ from ENL and which, in some cases, are shared by most ELF speakers.
4. Pragmatically, it involves the use of certain communication strategies, particularly accommodation and code-switching. This is because ELF forms depend crucially on the specific communication context rather than being an 'all-purpose' English.
5. Descriptions of ELF that may lead to codification are drawn from communication involving proficient ELF speakers.

As can be understood from the items above, native speakers are not excluded from the definition of ELF, though most of the ELF interaction takes place between non-native speakers. Moreover, as opposed to the commonly held belief, ELF will not supersede EFL rather both will exist to meet people's varying linguistic needs. For speakers who wish to attain native like proficiency, EFL will remain as the most appropriate variety. However, it is important to raise learners' awareness of the differences between EFL and ELF. The third item, on the other hand, emphasize that speakers of ELF can use both the globally common features of ELF and the features of their local ELF. It is also important to understand the pragmatics of ELF. The use of ELF varies depending on the context of communication such as the setting, interlocutors, and the topic. In order to adjust themselves to a

specific linguistic context, ELF speakers use various communication strategies among which accommodation and code-switching are the commonest. Finally, although ELF communication includes speakers who are still in the process of learning the language, when codifying the features of ELF only the proficient ELF speakers' use of language is taken into consideration (Jenkins, 2009: 144-145).

On the other hand, there have been several misinterpretations of ELF. These are summarized by Seidlhofer (2006; as cited in Jenkins, 2007: 20) in five points:

Misconception 1: ELF research ignores the polymorphous nature of the English language worldwide.

Misconception 2: ELF work denies tolerance for diversity and appropriacy of use in specific sociolinguistic contexts.

Misconception 3: ELF description aims at the accurate application of a set of prescribed rules.

Misconception 4: ELF researchers are suggesting that there should be one monolithic variety.

Misconception 5: ELF researchers suggest that ELF should be taught to all non-native speakers.

(adapted from Jenkins, 2007: 20)

As opposed to the misconception 1, ELF aims to provide diversity. In fact, the purpose of corpus studies is to contribute to the diversity of Englishes. As for the second misconception, there is a distinction between core and non-core features in ELF. Core areas are considered as the norms to be followed; however, in non-core areas there is permission for variation, so long as mutual intelligibility is ensured. On the other hand, the aim of ELF is not to present a set of prescriptive rules and ask its speakers to stick to them. Conversely, it is descriptive in nature and aims to provide alternatives to the (NS-based) prescriptive rules. Moreover, ELF scholars do not claim that ELF is a single variety; there is always allowance for local variation. Finally, EFL and ELF serve for different purposes; therefore, learners themselves should decide which variety they need to learn (Seidlhofer, 2006; as cited in Jenkins, 2007: 20).

## 2.1. Studies on English as a Lingua Franca

The global spread of English has greatly impacted the interest in ELF research. Studies have been conducted to shed light on written and spoken ELF discourse. While some ELF researchers investigated the lexico-grammar of ELF (Seidlhofer, 2001, 2004; Dewey, 2007a; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Breiteneder, 2009), others investigated the phonology (Jenkins, 2000; Walker, 2010), and pragmatics of ELF (Björkman, 2011a; Firth, 1996; Firth & Wagner, 1997; House, 1999, 2002; Kaur, 2011; Meierkord 2000; and Mauranen, 2006a, 2006b). Besides these, there have been studies which investigated pre-service and in-service teachers' (Murray, 2003; Jenkins, 2005a, Llorca, 2005; Young & Walsh, 2010) and students' (Dalton-Puffer, C., Kaltenboeck, G. & Smit, U., 1997; Timmis, 2002; Groom, 2012) perceptions of ELF. At the present, ELF research is inclined to focus on pragmatic aspects of ELF and investigates the sociolinguistic features of the phenomenon.

On the other hand, in order to identify the nature and characteristics of ELF interactions, several corpus studies, such as Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE), the Corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA), the Corpus of Written English as Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (WrELFA), and the Asian Corpus of English (ACE), have been conducted. Hence, studies on ELF can broadly be grouped into three: descriptive linguistic studies, attitude-based inquiries and corpus-based studies.

The research in ELF began with the phonological, lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic descriptions of ELF interactions. Jenkins' (2000) "The phonology of English as an International Language" and Seidlhofer's (2001) "Closing a gap: the case for a description of English as a lingua franca" works are milestones in ELF research as they played a major role in the development of ELF as an independent discipline. Jenkins (2000) aimed to identify the phonological units that are necessary for mutual intelligibility among non-native speakers of English, and proposed the Lingua Franca Core (LFC). Seidlhofer (2001) in her seminal paper, proposed the need for a systematic investigation and description of ELF. In her later studies, investigating ELF lexico-grammar, Seidlhofer (2004: 220) revealed the following units as emerging patterns in ELF interactions.

- Dropping the third person present tense *-s*
- Confusing the relative pronouns *who* and *which*
- Omitting definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in ENL, and inserting them where they do not occur in ENL
- Failing to use correct forms in tag questions (e.g., *isn't it?* or *no?* instead of *shouldn't they?*)
- Inserting redundant prepositions, as in *We have to study about ...*)
- Overusing certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do, have, make, put, take*
- Replacing infinitive-constructions with *that*-clauses, as in *I want that*
- Overdoing explicitness (e.g. *black color* rather than just *black*)

With respect to the ELF corpora, VOICE (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English), which is compiled by Barbara Seidlhofer and her team at the University of Vienna (accessible at <https://www.univie.ac.at/voice/>), is the first large-scale corpus consisting of one million word of naturally occurring ELF interactions. The focus of the project is the linguistic description of spoken ELF discourse. The number of ELF speakers in the corpus is 1250, with 50 first languages represented. The corpus is compiled through diverse speech events, such as interviews, press conferences, service encounters, seminar discussions, working group discussions, workshop discussions, meetings, panels, question-answer sessions, and conversations. The domain of these speech events are professional, educational and leisure. In several master's and doctoral studies on ELF (Reiter, 2013; Dorn, 2010; Pitzl, 2011), VOICE have been used as a source of data.

ELFA (the Corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings) is another large-scale ELF corpus which consists of one million words. The corpus is collected by Anna Mauranen and her team at the University of Helsinki (accessible at <http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/kielet/engf/research/elfa/>). It is a corpus of spoken academic ELF compiled through lectures, seminars, PhD thesis defences, conference discussions and presentations. The domain of the speech events are social sciences, technology, humanities, natural sciences, medicine, behavioural sciences, economics and administration. The number of ELF speakers in the corpus is 650, with 51 L1s represented. The ELFA project consists of two main parts, the ELFA corpus project and the SELF (Studying in English as a Lingua Franca) project. Detailed descriptions of ELFA corpus has been presented in Mauranen (2003, 2006a, 2007a); and Mauranen & Ranta (2008).

WrELFA (The Corpus of Written English as Lingua Franca in Academic Settings), which is also compiled by the ELFA team, is another corpus which aims to investigate the academic ELF discourse. This corpus, however, is based on written academic ELF interactions. It consists of 774,000 words, containing over 400 authors, with 37 L1s represented. The data is gathered primarily through two text types: preliminary examiners' statements for PhD theses, and research blogs in which published papers are discussed.

A more recent large-scale ELF corpus, compiled by Andy Kirkpatrick and his team, is ACE (Asian Corpus of English). It consists of one million words of naturally occurring spoken ELF interactions. The corpus is compiled through interviews, press conferences, service encounters, seminar discussions, working group discussion, workshop discussions, meetings, panels, question-and-answer sessions, and conversations. These speech events contain the domains of education, leisure, professional business, professional organization, and professional research / science (accessible at <http://corpus.ied.edu.hk/ace/>).

The present corpus study aims to gather a totally different corpus, instead of studying the data from VOICE or other ELF corpora. The collected data of 93,913 words gathered in 10 hours, make up the IST-Erasmus Corpus and is unique in its contribution. The study aims to contribute to the growing body of ELF corpora by investigating the lexico-grammatical features<sup>1</sup> of spoken ELF discourse. This paper primarily examines the use of prepositions in spoken ELF interactions and addresses the following research question that have been outlined in ELF lexico-grammar research (Seidlhofer, 2004; Cogo and Dewey, 2012) as a unit of investigation:

*Research Question:*

*Does English as a lingua franca reveal any variations from standard ENL forms with respect to the use of prepositions?*

### 3. Methods

This quantitative and descriptive study is an analysis of a small scale corpus of spoken ELF interactions gathered in settings where English is used as a language of communication by non-native English speakers. The corpus of this study is a collection of transcribed recordings of spoken interactions between users of ELF. It consists of 10 hours 47 minutes and 26 seconds of recorded data and 93,913 words of transcribed data. As the main stages of constructing a spoken corpus are 1. recording, 2. transcribing, coding, and mark-up, and 3. management and analysis (Adolphs & Knight, 2010: 3), the recording stage was the data collection phase of this study. The data collection period lasted for three months, from March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 to June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The second stage was to transcribe the recorded data based on spelling and mark-up conventions. Firstly, all the recorded speech was transcribed verbatim. Then, the codings and mark-ups were added to the raw transcriptions. Finally, the transcribed data were analyzed to answer the research questions of the study.

#### 3.1. Speech Events

The data of spoken ELF interactions were compiled by means of 54 speech events, 29 interviews and 25 focus group meetings. The primary objective of these speech events was to encourage the participants to talk as much

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<sup>1</sup> The lexico-grammatical units investigated in Corpus IST-Erasmus Project are 3<sup>rd</sup> person present tense –s, the relative pronouns 'who' and 'which', definite and indefinite articles, tag questions, prepositions, verbs that denote semantic generality, infinitive constructions, and explicitness. However, due to the space limitations, this paper only describes the use of prepositions.

as possible. Each speech event was piloted and necessary changes were made before the study. The interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis with one participant. The focus group meetings, on the other hand, were conducted with two participants. During the speech events the language of communication was English. In order to avoid the use of native language, the pairs that would participate in the meetings were selected from different L1s. The speech events were intended to last approximately 15 minutes. All the speech events were recorded using a digital voice recorder.

### 3.1.1. Interviews

The number of interviews conducted in the study was 29. In the interviews, the participants were asked to answer 15 open-ended questions impromptu. The interview questions were as follows:

1. At what age do children start school in your country?
2. What is the language of instruction in your schools? Does it change according to the level (primary, secondary, university)?
3. At what age do students start to learn English?
4. What are the criteria to be accepted to the Erasmus program in your country?
5. Do you rely on your English in terms of communicating in a foreign country?
6. Do you agree with the idea that English is the language of communication in the world?
7. Are you satisfied with your English language proficiency (in terms of grammar, writing, vocabulary, speaking)?
8. What are/were your expectations before coming to Turkey (academic, leisure, cultural)?
9. What are the difficulties of living and studying in a foreign country?
10. Of all the courses you are taking this term, which one interests you the most, and why?
11. Have you seen any differences between the university in your home country and the university in Istanbul? Could you please explain (academic, physical, technical, facilities, administrative)?
12. Do you speak any other foreign languages besides English? If not, which one would you like to learn?
13. Have you noticed any cultural differences between your country and Turkey? Could you please give a few examples?
14. Can you describe the place you live in Istanbul? Is it a hostel, dormitory, or an apartment? Do you have roommates?
15. Can you talk about your family?

The purpose of these questions was to initiate conversation among the participants. Apart from these, several follow-up questions that extended the discussion of the question matter and/or used the remaining time allotted for the event were asked. Especially when the participants answered the questions very rapidly, other questions had to be asked in order to hold the conversations.

### 3.1.2. Focus Group Meetings

The number of focus group meetings conducted in the study was 25. In the meetings, the participants came together to discuss the topic of their choice among the previously arranged topics impromptu. The discussion topics were as follows:

1. Should attendance to lessons be obligatory at university level? Why/not?
2. Which do you think make better teachers of English - native speakers or non-native speakers of English?
3. Do social networks kill "real" relationships? Or do they lead to "more real" friendship?
4. Do you think that it is important to attain a Standard pronunciation (American or British accent) or is it sufficient just to be intelligible?
5. What interests you most in a foreign culture? (traditions, daily life, food, history etc.)
6. Do you think that English can be the language of all cultures?
7. How would you define "an ideal partner"?

The participants were prompted with questions when there seemed to be gaps and participants stopped talking. At dead ends, the participants were also allowed to switch to another topic from the list.

## 3.2. Setting and Participants

The population of this study consisted of the incoming exchange students, primarily Erasmus students, studying at Turkish universities in Istanbul in the 2012-2013 academic year. Hence, the name Corpus IST-Erasmus. The total number of participants in the research was 79, with 24 first languages (L1s) represented. These L1s were namely Arabic, Azerbaijan, Basque, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, French, Galician, German, Greek, Italian, Korean, Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Spanish, Suriname, Turkish, and Ukrainian. Moreover, there were 6 bilingual participants (S36: Turkish and German, S49: Dutch and Suriname, S59: Spanish and Galician, S61: Bulgarian and Turkish, and S62: Bulgarian and Turkish) in the

study. The participation in the study was on a voluntary basis without any effect on students' academic records.

The study was primarily conducted at Istanbul University campuses. However, some of the speech events were held at three foundation university premises, namely Bilgi University, Yeditepe University, and Bahçeşehir University. Particularly, the international day organizations that took place at these foundation universities contributed immensely to the data collection process.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis procedure started with the transcription of the recorded data. First of all, all the speech events were transcribed verbatim. This process was performed manually, without the use of any software which converted voice to text. The existing software programs were not able to properly transcribe the speech of non-native English speakers. Before starting, it was necessary to determine the spelling conventions to be followed in the transcriptions. For example, *“only alphabetic Roman characters are used in the transcript. No diacritics, unlaunts or non-roman characters are permitted in the running text: a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z”*. As stated in Adolphs and Carter (2013: 12) *“...transcribers cannot be too idiosyncratic, and at the same time there is a need to follow certain transcription guidelines in order to make them reusable by the research community”*. As one of the purposes of the study was to contribute to the current research in ELF, it would be better to adopt the conventions of an existing ELF Corpus. Therefore, the transcription conventions of VOICE, one of the largest corpora of spoken ELF, were decided to be used in the study.

The second step in constructing a spoken corpus, subsequent to the recording, was “transcribing, coding, and mark-up”. The transcription of the recorded data based on the spelling conventions lasted for two months. Then, the coding and mark-up stage began. This stage, the annotated transcription, included the addition of codes and markings to the transcriptions. In this stage again a standard convention, the VOICE mark-up conventions, were followed. However, while the spelling conventions remained the same, the mark-up conventions were adapted to suit the purposes of the research by excluding some of the conventions that referred to domains (such as pronunciation variation and coinages, onomatopoeic noises, spelling out, breath) that remained outside the scope of this study.

The next step was the management and analysis of the corpus. It is analyzed in two ways: (1) by means of WordSmith Tools 6.0, a corpus analysis software, and (2) manually. The first step in a corpus analysis is to obtain a word list of all the transcriptions that constitute the corpus. A wordlist displays all the words in a corpus according to their frequency orders, gives the percentages of their occurrences in the corpus, and presents the overall distribution of the words in each text. When a wordlist is created, it is possible to make concordance analyses, examine the collocations and clusters in the corpus, create a keyword list of the corpus by taking a relatively larger corpus as a reference corpus, and compare the wordlist with those of other corpora. To this end, the 54 transcription files are converted into text files and uploaded to the software, and thereby the wordlist of Corpus IST-Erasmus is created.

### 4. Results

ELF literature suggests that the use prepositions by ELF speakers display variations from standard ENL forms. As Seidlhofer (2004: 220) puts forward “[i]nserting redundant prepositions, as in *We have to study about...*” is an emerging pattern in ELF interactions. Such variations in the use of prepositions are also observed in Corpus IST-Erasmus. Besides, there are novel collocations formed with prepositions. To start with, the most common prepositions that occur in the corpus are as follows.

**Table 2: The most common ten prepositions in Corpus IST-Erasmus**

Preposition	Ranking	Frequency	%	Texts	%
to	5	2 248	2.39	54	100
in	6	2 136	2.27	54	100
of	11	1 277	1.36	54	100
for	17	1 009	1.07	54	100
with	36	584	0.62	54	100
about	42	464	0.49	53	98.15
at	47	415	0.44	53	98.15
on	60	333	0.35	53	98.15
from	75	240	0.26	54	100
between	157	93	0.10	37	68.52

Table 2 displays the most common ten prepositions that appear in the corpus. As can be seen, ‘to’ is the most frequent one, appearing in 2248 contexts in the corpus. The most frequent ten prepositions in ENL, on the other hand, are respectively, *to, of, in, at, on, for, with, from, about, and by* (Carter et al., 2000: 218). Except for

the preposition 'by', the most frequent ten prepositions in ENL and ELF are similar, though their frequencies differ. While 'between' appears 157 times, 'by' appears only 57 times in Corpus IST-Erasmus.

The concordance analyses of these prepositions reveal that there are indeed redundant uses of prepositions in the corpus as proposed in ELF literature. For example, in the following extracts, the prepositions 'to' and 'about' in lines 111 and 187 are used redundantly.

**T20INT14 (S26: Italian)**

111 cetera but (.) it's good to: it's sympathetic to **ask to** the person who walks in the

**T39ME16 (S54: Korean)**

186 S54: =<slow>or something like that if someone posted bad feeling (.) maybe

187 other friend misunderstood (.) **misunderstand about** her or him like this</slow>

According to Cogo and Dewey (2012: 56), the redundant uses of the prepositions in ELF can be indicative of "the extension of an already existing pattern". That is, for example, in ENL varieties the verb 'ask' takes 'to' in a context like 'I would ask to play with her' (ask + to + infinitive + somebody); but, not in a context like 'I would ask her for your address' (ask + somebody + for + something). In contrast to this, in ELF interactions, 'to' appears in the latter context as well. As can be seen in the following examples, ELF speakers tend to generalize the function of 'to' in an already existing structure to zero contexts.

**T14ME4 (S17: Italian)**

106 care about it if they want to know something i **ask to** a person i don't need

**T31INT21 (S41: French)**

145 next to it (.) there was (1) a woman (1) and when he **asked to** the (.) to the guy in

Another key aspect of preposition use in Corpus IST-Erasmus is the tendency to substitute alternative prepositions for the standard forms. For example, in T37ME14 and T16ME6 below, 'to' is substituted by 'with' and 'of', respectively. On the other hand, in T31INT21, 'to' is used in place of 'in' and in T38ME15 in place of 'with' or 'in'.

**T37ME14 (S50: Lithuanian)**

100 S50: i guess this is the most thing which worries me (.) <slow>all like

101 most</slow> (1) i hope it's something **happens with** my future husband if i'm

102 gonna have one @@

**T16ME6 (S22: Bulgarian)**

123 S22: <slow><19>everybo</19>dy **respect (.) of** him</slow>

**T31INT21 (S41: French)**

24 S41: the toefl s- score (1) score that you have to reach to to (.) to **participate to**

25 the erasmus program but (.) i think that's it

**T38ME15 (S53: Chinese)**

30 classmate (.) and it will **help you to**: about your relationships an:d (.) and i also

The substitution of the prepositions is observed even after the verbs that the prepositions collocate with. For example, 'go' is among the most common collocates of 'to' in the corpus ('go to'). The concordance analysis reveals that there are instances of substitutions even after 'go'. While in T8INT5 below, 'to' is substituted by 'in', in T52ME24 it is substituted by 'at'.

**T8INT5 (S11: German)**

16 go there and if you could **go in** french kindergarten in germany and then they

17 speak to you in german and french so: it depends actually what the parents want

**T52ME24 (S76: Italian)**

123 open (.) for all the people (1) if i don't want come (2) i don't want if i don't

124 want to **go at** university (1) there is one (.) other things to do (1) and=

The concordance analyses also reveal that in a reverse manner the prepositions are omitted in places where it should be used. For example, in line with the findings of Cogo and Dewey (2012), 'to' is omitted after the verb 'listen', which is a strong collocate of 'to' in ENL varieties. The concordance of 'listen' and 'listening' shows that in 8 out of 11 contexts in the corpus, 'to' is omitted.

**T20INT14 (S26: Italian)**

71 S26: i i need to learn more and i have to: be able to **listen (.)** english because my

77 S26: i am here since two months and i try (1) not every but (.) two maybe three

78 times in a evening to **listen** some movie (.) but

**T27INT18 S36: Turkish/German)**

73 **listen** native turkish speakers (.) and learn some: (1) er and get better in turkish

**T54INT29 (S79: Czech)**

22 english because we are always singing songs and (1) just er **listening** something

The omission of 'to' is not restricted to the verb 'listen'; there are other 'to' requiring verbs which are not used with it. This is seen frequently in the corpus. For example, the following extracts display the omission of 'to'



after the verb 'go'.

**T48INT26 (S70: Korean)**

79 S70: yeah i think because (.) when you go anywhere: (1) or some (1) if you go  
80 **india:** or korea:n and japanese or china or europe in europe (.) they can speak (.)

**T40INT24 (S56: French)**

158 okay in english (.) and she's learning polish also because she want to go **erasmus**  
159 there (.) a:nd (1) yeah like that (1) what can i say i <@>don't

However, although there is omission in the last extract, "...she want to go **Erasmus** there...", the preferred ENL form might not be always 'to', depending on the speaker's intention it can also be 'for'.

The variability observed in the use of 'to', is also seen in the use of other prepositions in the corpus. For example, the variability in the use of 'on' is also very common. Besides its redundant uses, there are cases where 'on' is substituted for the standard form.

*The redundant use of 'on'*

**T20INT14 (S26: Italian)**

136 education (.) you the teacher is really: (.) competitive okay **respect on** italian for  
137 me (.) you are younger (.) than italian and you speak english (.) and not so much

*The substitution of 'on' for 'to'*

**T28ME15 (S52: Ukrainian)**

48 just e:r (1) **responding on** some: (.) i don't know of (1) advertisement com-  
49 commercials or: (.) what other people just (.) just posted or: (.) told about you so:

*The substitution of 'on' for 'in'*

**T20INT14 (S26: Italian)**

194 and for this reason you wanna come again and again **on july** we wanna go maybe

**T27INT18 (S36: Turkish / German)**

192 so she's been a high level **on german** when she moved to germany (.) to live

*The substitution of 'on' for 'at'*

**T29INT20 (S38: Dutch)**

114 countries had for example we had it of (.) about south africa: the apartheids (1)  
115 and we really learn (.) more than i (1) learnt **on on my school** about it

While the examples above basically indicate that there is a tendency among the ELF speakers to insert 'on' in non-obligatory contexts, the following extracts illustrate the substitution of 'on' by other prepositions in obligatory contexts. It is usually substituted by 'in' or 'at' in the corpus.

*The substitution of 'in', 'by', and 'at' for 'on'*

**T2INT1 (S3: Spanish)**

99 S3: mhm erm: **it depends in** the country but i think we are speaking @ about  
100 turkey?

**T20INT14 (S26: Italian)**

32 had to go you have to have a good english (1) but **it depends by** university in  
33 which you go for example istanbul is e:r b one level

**T13INT10 (S16: German)**

37 S16: erm it's also **it depends at** whi- whi- which university you are and to which  
38 city you want to go for me it was quite easy i only had er (.) little talk with my

These examples are chosen specifically because they are very telling. That is, *it + depends + on* is a very common collocation in ENL and also in ELF. However, the variability in the use 'on' occurs even after this pattern.

Another preposition which displays extensive variability in its use from the standard ENL norms in the corpus is 'about'. The following extracts present the redundant uses of 'about' and also the use of 'about' in place of the standard prepositions.

*The redundant use of 'about'*

**T52ME24 (S75: Basque)**

109 giving a buddy (1) and not (1) and maybe you **consider about** that because it's:  
110 (1) okay (1) big percentage of the people pass the: (.) course without it then into

*The substitution of 'about' for 'in'*

**T2INT1 (S3: Spanish)**

92 have good good weather for travel (.) around turkey (.) and also about the  
93 language i was **interested about** learning turkish (1) but i'm no:t studying too

*The substitution of 'about' for 'of'*

**T22ME8 (S30: Italian)**

- 20 S29: =<1>perception</1>=  
21 S30: =**perception about** that i like it because is always very different from (.) i  
The substitution of 'about' for 'to'  
140 in germany in school and not in university and it's really interesting to see how  
141 the (.) turkish students **react about** that because (.) erm the teachers said that (.)

In addition to describing the variability observed in the corpus, it is also necessary to display the innovative preposition use in ELF interactions. For example, one of the emerging patterns observed in the corpus is formed with the preposition 'about'.

*discuss + about*

**T45ME20 (S65: Polish)**

- 210 S65: =yeah i was also discussing about it with my friends

**T1ME1 (S1: Greek)**

- 3 S1: <1>okay</1> so today: we are gonna discuss about what interests US more in a  
4 foreign culture?

**T41ME17 (S58: Lithuanian)**

- 84 S58: =yeah e:r discussed about some photos and all events=

As can be seen in the extracts above, the speakers use the preposition 'about' together with the verb 'discuss', where the preferred form in ENL would be no preposition between verb and object, as in 'I was also *discussing it with my friends*'. In line with Cogo and Dewey (2012), the appearance of '*discuss + about*' is very common in Corpus IST-Erasmus. Thus, it can be considered as an emerging pattern in spoken ELF discourse. Besides, there is some degree of systematicity in the use of this pattern. As stated in Cogo and Dewey (2012), ELF speakers tend to generalize an already existing pattern to other contexts. In this sense, the first pattern, '*discuss about*', might be the extension of the ENL pattern '*have a discussion about*'. In 4 out of a total of 6 occurrences in the corpus, the verb '*discuss*' combines with the preposition '*about*'. Therefore, as Cogo and Dewey (2012: 58) put forward, this can be interpreted as "an extension of the noun-preposition combination (*discussion about*) to the verb class".

Another emerging pattern formed with 'about' in the corpus is '*difficulties about*'. In ENL varieties, the noun '*difficulty*' takes either '*in*' or '*with*' depending on the context (i.e. '*have difficulty in doing something*' or '*have difficulties with something*'). However, as can be seen in the following extracts, speakers tend to substitute 'about' for '*in*' and '*with*' respectively.

**T6INT3 (R: Turkish)**

- 136 R: okay any **difficulties about** studying

**T49INT27 (S71: Azerbaijan)**

- 72 communicate with peoples that's why i began to (2) to speak in turkish and now i  
73 haven't got any **difficulties about** it and (.) but a little bit **difficult was about** (.)

Resonating Cogo and Dewey (2012), besides the grammatical reasons there are also semantic reasons for ELF speakers' tendency to extend the use of a preposition. That is, speakers tend to overgeneralize a preposition when the words have similar connotations. In this respect, since '*problems*' and '*difficulties*' denote the same thing, the use of 'about' in '*problems about*' (although the standard form is '*have a problem with something*', it is also very common to say '*have a problem about something*') might have been extended as '*difficulties about*', though in ENL the standard form would be '*difficulties in*' or '*difficulties with*'.

There are also emerging patterns formed with other prepositions in the corpus. In the following extracts, the emerging patterns formed with '*with*' are exemplified. As can be seen, '*with*' is combined with '*different*' (different with) and '*difference*' (difference with) in contexts where the required ENL form would be '*different from*' and '*difference in*', respectively.

**T5ME3 (S7: Czech)**

- 48 i think that er that daily life is not so (.) **different with** er the daily life in europe  
49 (1) of course you can find some (.) some things and er but er before i came here i

**T29INT20 (S38: Dutch)**

- 158 muslims here a:nd er (2) yeah it's for example the the boys the mens are (.) erm  
159 (1) are (.) how do you say they are **different with** each other they are kissing

**T48INT26 (S70: Korean)**

- 107 S70: no actually (1) it is case by case you know some: classes big some classes  
108 small (.) korean too so i i (.) i think it is not that big **difference with** this

**T11INT8 (S14: Polish)**

- 183 think the difference of: programs are made differently so the **difference with** the  
184 <@>attitudes towards psychoanalysis</@> i have also much more classes in

Consequently, as exemplified in the extracts taken from the corpus, the redundant use of prepositions is quite

widespread as suggested in ELF literature. Besides, there is a general tendency among ELF speakers to omit the prepositions or substitute alternative ones in place of the standard forms. Finally, in line with the previous lexicogrammatical studies (Cogo & Dewey, 2012), there are also innovative preposition uses in Corpus IST-Erasmus as presented in the examples above.

## 5. Findings and Discussions

The findings reveal that, in line with the ELF literature, there are variations from standard ENL forms with respect to the use of *prepositions* in Corpus IST-Erasmus. Although the most commonly used prepositions, e.g. 'to, of, in, at, on, ...', are the same in ENL and ELF corpora, there are variations in the way these prepositions are used in ELF. First of all, as proposed by Seidlhofer (2004: 220) and Cogo and Dewey (2012: 48), "[i]nserting 'redundant' prepositions, as in *We have to study about ...*" is also an emerging pattern in Corpus IST-Erasmus. For example, in the sentences "*it's good to: it's sympathetic to ask to the person who walks in the...*" and "*other friend misunderstood (.) misunderstand about her or him...*", the prepositions 'to' and 'about' are used redundantly. As Cogo and Dewey (2012: 56) suggest, the redundant uses of prepositions can be explained by the extension of an already existing grammatical unit. For example, the use of 'to' in the grammatical structure: '*ask + to + infinitive + somebody*' (*I would ask to play with her*), is extended as "*if they want to know something i ask to a person...*". Furthermore, there are also semantic reasons for the redundant uses of the prepositions. ELF speakers tend to extend the use of a preposition in a standard ENL pattern to another pattern when the words used in these two patterns have similar connotations. For instance, 'problems' and 'difficulties' have similar connotations. Therefore, ELF speakers tend to extend the use of 'about' in 'problems about' as 'difficulties about'.

Besides inserting redundant prepositions, ELF speakers also tend to omit the prepositions in obligatory contexts, as in "*listen native turkish speakers*". Moreover, they substitute the standard prepositions in given contexts by other prepositions. For instance, in the sentence "*just e:r (1) responding on some: (.) i don't know of (1) advertisement*", 'to' is substituted by 'on'. Finally, in line with Cogo and Dewey (2012: 57), the innovative preposition uses is also widespread in Corpus IST-Erasmus. 'Discuss about', 'difficulties about', 'different with', 'difference with', 'interested to' are among the most salient ones.

In light of this study and previous corpus studies in ELF, it is considered important to examine the current practices in English language teaching and suggest pedagogical implications for teaching and learning English as an international language. The international use of English as result of an unprecedented spread is becoming particularly common among nonnative speakers (Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 1997). In line with the previous corpus studies, this corpus study, which comprises of nonnative speakers' spoken interactions, reveals that there are variations in the form and use of English as a lingua franca. Following other phonological, pragmatic variations, these lexico-grammatical variations, suggest serious changes first in the teaching of English and second in English Language Teacher Education. The findings of these studies pose possible avenues of change in the teacher training programs around the world. Courses focusing on ELF and World Englishes and their integration into English language pedagogy could be considered as imperative so that prospective and in-service English teachers will be aware of the characteristics of ELF interactions, know how English as an international language is actually used and use these contexts in their teaching. Thereby, they can better address the needs of their learners who learn English for international communication and will use it mostly with nonnative speakers.

This corpus study is based solely on spoken ELF interactions. Thus, in order to be able to make generalizations regarding the key aspects of ELF lexico-grammar, corpus studies based on written interactions and digital media should also be conducted. Also, in this way comparisons can be made between the spoken and written ELF interactions. Furthermore, in future corpus studies, apart from the lexico-grammatical structures examined in this study, other lexico-grammatical units, such as *tenses, modals, passives, if-constructions*, should also be investigated. Finally, more empirical studies are needed to fully reveal the characteristics of ELF lexicogrammar.

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