

**College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences**  
**Teaching Innovation Award 2016/17 (Research Degree Student category)**  
**Post-conference sharing of the winner**

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The ELF and Changing English ---- the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of English as a Lingua Franca (conference website: <http://www.helsinki.fi/elf10/2017/>) was held on 12-15 June in Helsinki, Finland. As its name suggests, the conference centred on both theoretical and practical issues in the ELF (English as a lingua franca) paradigm. The presentations at the conference gave me some new insights into English language teaching in this era of globalisation. The following is a brief summary of what I felt most helpful for my future teaching career.

**Expose students to different Englishes.** As a lingua franca, English is widely used in communication between people with different native language backgrounds. This brings English into constant contact with other languages. Consequently, people from different language backgrounds may speak and use English with their own characteristics. Therefore, when teaching English to university students, who are very likely to contact different varieties and versions of English in this multicultural society, the teacher needs to expose students to not only the English used by native speakers, but also the English used by non-native speakers. In this way, the students may have chance of developing their repertoire of English in a broader sense and get equipped for future communication with both native and non-native speakers.

**Raise students' awareness of their potential audience.** In the traditional English class, native speaker English dominates as input for learners. It may give students an impression that the purpose of learning English is to use it like native speakers. However, in this globalised world, learners will be more likely to meet non-native English speakers than native English speakers because the former far outnumber the latter. Therefore, it is the teacher's responsibility to raise students' awareness of their potential audience both in oral and written communication. To communicate successfully, learners need to master not only the linguistic and cultural knowledge which is at the core of communication, but also accommodation skills catering to different situations with different audiences.

**Set practical aims for the course.** As there are more foreign language learners and non-native speakers using English than native speakers, the aim of English courses should not be merely to help students use English like native speakers do, but should be to promote their communicative abilities. Therefore, native norms are no longer the eventual objective of English courses, for they are hardly attainable. Instead, successful communication replaces native norms as the aim of English teaching and learning.

**Address learners' problems affecting communication.** At the ELF conference, some researchers, including Gea Dreschler, Yasuhiro Fujiwara, Irina Shchemeleva, and Charlotte Stormbom, analyse some features of ELF academic writing, such as syntactic structures, use of epicene pronouns, repetition of nouns for reference, and expression of epistemic stance. These comparisons reveal the discrepancies between the native speaker style and the English learner style in academic writing, which may explain why learners sometimes cannot convey their meaning effectively in writing. However, in teaching and learning, only those discrepancies that most affect meaning expression should be given top priority.