ALL TEACHERS ARE EQUAL, 
BUT SOME TEACHERS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS: 
TREND ANALYSIS OF JOB ADVERTISEMENTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING 

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Introduction 

From generative linguistics to applied linguistics, different disciplines perceive the native speaker (NS) construct differently. While theoretical linguistics places NSs in an idealized position and assumes that they are the only reliable source of linguistic data, formulating the construct of an “ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech-community” (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3), foreign/second language research, under the dominance of the idealized NS model creates a “monolingual bias in SLA theory” (Cook, 1997) that “elevates an idealized native speaker above a stereotypical ‘nonnative’ while viewing the latter as a defective communicator, limited by an underdeveloped communicative competence” (Firth & Wagner, 1997, p. 285). This dichotomy of competence versus incompetence results in defining the non-native speaker (NNS) as a deficient or as less-than-a-native (“near-native”, Valdes, 1998, p.6).

In English as a foreign or second language teaching, “researchers and educators are increasingly embracing the fact that English is spoken by more people as a second language than as a mother tongue” (Llurda, 2004, p.314). In the past two decades, there has been an ongoing discussion in the field of second and foreign language teaching in regard to the NS-NNS dichotomy (Amin, 1997; Braine, 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Davies, 2003; Kramsch, 1997; Llurda, 2005; Medgyes, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Widdowson, 1994). Research suggests that despite the facts that non-native English speakers outnumber native speakers three to one
(Crystal, 1997) and that the majority of ESL/EFL teachers in the world are NNSs of English (Braine, 1999; Canagarajah, 2005; Graddol, 2006; Liu, 1999), non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) are not given opportunities equal to those of native English-speaking teachers (NESTs).

In a thought-provoking formulation of the concept of “linguistic imperialism”, Phillipson (1992) coined the term “native speaker fallacy” to reflect the belief that “the ideal teacher is a native speaker” (p. 185). The notion of native speaker fallacy could be perceived as an integral aspect of what Holliday’s formulation of “native speakerism” which was defined as “an established belief that ‘native-speaker’ teachers represent a ‘Western culture’ from which springs the ideals of both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology” (Holliday, 2005, p.6). The prevalence of native speakerism in the English language teaching profession leads to “unprofessional favoritism” (Medgyes, 2001), which frequently result in hiring discrimination (Clark & Paran, 2007; Flynn & Gulikers, 2001; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman & Hartford, 2004; Moussu, 2006). Program administrators in the ELT profession unfortunately often accept the native speaker fallacy and believe that there is a significant difference between NESTs and NNESTs. While NESTs are seen as the ideal teachers, NNESTs are viewed as less instructionally qualified and less linguistically competent than NESTs (Lippi-Green, 1997; Maum, 2003). The NS favoritism which refers to hiring practices solely on the basis of nativeness status has reached such an level that even NESTs from non-Center countries like India and Singapore are often perceived as less credible and competent than their counterparts from the Center, which “legitimize[s] this dominance of Center professionals/scholars” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 85).
Discriminatory practices against NNESTs have generated a series of institutional anti-discrimination statements and initiatives. The earliest of these statements was the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages’ (TESOL) “Statement on nonnative speakers of English and hiring practices” (1992):

Whereas TESOL is an international association concerned with the teaching of English to speakers of other languages and composed of professionals who are both native and nonnative speakers of English, and whereas employment decisions in this profession which are based solely upon the criterion that an individual is or is not a native speaker of English discriminate against well qualified individuals (p. 23).

Fourteen years later, the prevalence of discrimination on the basis of native speakerism necessitated the “Position statement against discrimination of nonnative speakers of English in the field of TESOL” (TESOL, 2006). These statements paved the way for the establishment of Centers for English Language Training in South-East Asian countries, whose goal is finding local solutions to local needs by means of local tools (Graddol, 2006). Despite the fact that there have been a number of institutionalized efforts to overcome discriminatory practices, hiring practices in English language teaching still follows a business model where stakeholders play the “native speaker card”.

**The Market Value of Native Speakerism in ELT: an Overview of Literature**

Very little research has focused on administrators’ or recruiters’ attitudes, beliefs, and hiring practices towards NNESTs. The only group of decision-makers that has undergone scrutiny is Intensive English Program (IEP) administrators, primarily in the United States and United Kingdom (Clark & Paran, 2007; Flynn & Gulikers, 2001; Mahboob et al., 2004; Moussu, 2006). IEPs are an integral part of higher education systems in these countries and provide
English language instruction to international students who do not have the required level of proficiency to join the mainstream education in the university.

In their study, Flynn and Gulikers (2001) examined the hiring preferences of IEP administrators. The authors identified advanced production skills (i.e. writing and speaking), a deep understanding of American culture, and advanced education in TESOL or applied linguistics among the qualities expected from NNESTs. In addition to pioneering research on the issue from the perspective of decision-makers, Flynn and Gulikers presented curricular implications for M.A. TESOL programs, including specific courses in applied linguistics and mandatory practicum classes that involve observation and teaching in a variety of different levels and settings.

In a study that investigated the hiring criteria of 122 IEP administrators in the United States, Mahboob et al. (2004) revealed that for two out of three administrators, “native English speaker” was either an “important” or “somewhat important” criterion in the process of ESL teacher recruitment (p.201). Mahboob et al. (2004) revealed the influence of native speakerism in the professional frameworks of ELT employers in U.S. institutions of higher education. Another interesting finding of the study was the negative correlation between the importance attributed to the “native English speaker” criterion and the number of NNESTs employed at a given IEP. The results of this study clearly documented the sway of the nativeness argument.

Moussu (2006) studied 25 U.S. IEP administrators’ perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of native- and non-native-speaking teachers. Interestingly, “foreign accent” was called a salient deficiency of NNESTs (p.147). A number of IEP administrators also noted that the tendency to hire NESTs is a political and money-driven strategy. IEP administrators also
included educational background and teaching experience among the teacher recruitment criteria.

Finally, Clark and Paran (2007) focused on the recruitment of NNESTs in the United Kingdom. They received 90 responses to questions related to native speaker status as a criterion for hiring decisions at English language teaching institutions. The results showed that 72.3% of respondents judged the “nativeness” criterion to be either “very important” or “moderately important” (p.417). These results applied to the sample as a whole as well as to the sub-sections of the sample, including private language schools and universities.

The study

Research Questions

The present study investigates the extent to which native speakerism appears in job advertisements by answering the following research questions:

1. What criteria do employers in the ELT sector consider when recruiting English language teachers?

2. What importance do employers in the ELT sector place on a teacher’s being a native English speaker?

Method

Moussu and Llurda (2008) considered the body of research on issues related to non-native English-speaking teachers in the last decade impressive, but they also highlighted the necessity of building new areas of investigation and generating new approaches in future studies. In this vein, the current research project contributes to the expansion of the methodological boundaries of this growing body of literature by focusing on online job
advertisements found at two leading websites, TESOL’s Online Career Center and the International Job Board at Dave’s ESL Café, by means of the content analysis method.

Content analysis is one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences, especially in the fields of psychology, journalism, political science, and management. This method of analysis is based upon the systematic collection and analysis of communication by means of visual, auditory, print, and online media. One of the earliest formulations of content analysis comes from Berelson (1952), who suggested that content analysis is “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p. 18). More recently, Babbie (2003) defined content analysis as “the study of recorded human communications, such as books, websites, paintings and laws” (p. 350), and Krippendorff (2004) views it as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” (p. 18).

Choice of Data Sources

A number of professional journals, mailing lists, and websites host job advertisements aimed at English language teachers at various levels (e.g. pre-K, K-12, IEP, ESP, EAP) in various settings (EFL or ESL) for various positions (e.g. lecturers, professors, and administrators). Of these sources, there are two particularly important job advertisement repositories, namely TESOL’s Online Career Center (<http://careers.tesol.org>) and the International Job Board at Dave’s ESL Café (<http://www.eslcafe.com/joblist>).

TESOL’s Career Center is an electronic recruitment resource where employers and recruiters from all over the world can access professionals in English language teaching. The unique importance of TESOL’s Online Career Center lies in the fact that it is hosted by TESOL,
the world’s leading professional association for English language teachers to speakers of other languages. It has over 14,000 members in more than 120 different countries across the world.

TESOL’s Online Career Center operates at two different levels. First, job seekers can view job postings, submit their resumes, and schedule interviews directly with the employers through the online module. Second, job seekers can view job postings, submit their resumes and schedule interviews at the Job MarketPlace (JMP), the pioneering English language teaching job fair, which takes place during the annual TESOL Convention in every spring. The primary rationale behind focusing on TESOL’s Online Career Center is to investigate the extent to which native speakerism appears in the job board of an international institution that fights against discriminatory practices in the profession.

Another venue of job advertisements is the International Job Board section at Dave’s ESL Café. Founded in 1995 by Dave Sperling, it has quickly become one of the most visited ELT websites, with an average of about 2,000 hits per day in 1996 (Oliver, 1996) to “millions of hits per month” (Sperling, n.d.) as Sperling mentions on his website. The International Job Board section of the Café (originally “Joblinks”) was added in February 1996 to provide connections to employment information for English language teaching-related jobs all around the world. The primary reason behind the selection of Dave’s ESL Café as a source for the current project is that it is a very popular website that carries a large number of advertisements for the positions across the world.

Procedure

The positions advertised on these websites represent a wide range in terms of context (EFL and ESL), level (from pre-K to IEP), and job function (e.g. English language teaching,
research, lecturing in TESOL programs, and directing programs). Both databases were monitored daily for a period of three months from January 1, 2009, to April 1, 2009. All job advertisements (n = 70 in TESOL Career Center; n = 462 in Dave’s ESL Café) that were published in the databases during the given time frame were saved electronically by converting the web pages into Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). Later on, these advertisements were re-organized for the purposes of the current study. The re-organization of the data started with classification of the advertisements by assigning them into monthly folders. Next, the data was re-processed to exclude job advertisements for positions other than English language teachers (e.g. “lecturer”, “tenure-track assistant professor”, “administrator”), which are beyond the scope of the current study. The advertisements that were published more than once were counted as a single advertisement. Once finalized, each advertisement was coded for the following aspects: title of the position (e.g. EFL instructor, English language faculty, Instructor, etc.), level (e.g. preK-12, IEP, etc.), country, context (EFL or ESL), nativeness as a job requirement, educational background, teaching experience, other skills, and any further relevant wording that puts emphasis on the applicants’ nativeness (e.g. “attention ALL native speakers”, “we hire only native speakers”, etc.). The use of online databases enhanced the process by enabling the researcher to re-examine the databases to ensure no data loss occurred during the analysis. Following content analysis as a methodological foundation, the researcher analyzed each advertisement using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Results

TESOL Career Center
The total number of advertisements listed in TESOL’s Career Center in the first quarter of 2009 was 70. When multiple postings and advertisements other than those for English language teaching positions were discarded, 54.2% of the advertisements (n = 38) were retained for the current project. The advertisements in this repository showed that there is no uniform title for professionals in the English language teaching profession. While IEPs in EFL contexts emphasized either the context (e.g. “EFL Instructor or Teacher”) or institution (e.g. “IEP faculty or instructor”), PreK-12 institutions in the United States tended to employ “ELL instructors”. Nevertheless, many job advertisements included very specific non-uniform titles including “senior teacher” or “oral English teacher”.

As shown in Table 1, IEPs (both in EFL contexts and in U.S. contexts) comprised the greatest number of advertisements in the database, accounting for about 66% of all advertisements. IEPs across the world were followed by English language teacher recruitment agencies, which play the role of intermediary between employers and employees, and corporate bodies, which recruit teachers for teaching English for specific purposes. The advertisements of recruitment agencies and corporate bodies accounted for 10.5% of the entire pool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Top Employers</th>
<th>No. of Advertisements / Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>IEP (in EFL settings)</td>
<td>19/50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>IEP (in U.S.)</td>
<td>6/15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>English language teacher recruitment agencies</td>
<td>4/10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Corporate bodies</td>
<td>4/10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PreK-12 School Systems (in U.S.)</td>
<td>3/7.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Ranking of the top employers in TESOL’s Career Center database
Figure 1 below shows the dominance of advertisements in EFL settings. Interestingly, the United States accounted for the entire ESL segment (24% of all advertisements), which is a manifestation of the English language teaching landscape in the United States. The advertisements suggest that ELT jobs in the United States occur in two main categories: English language instructor positions at IEPs, which are as part of the world’s leading higher education system (66% of ads for jobs in the United States), and PreK-12 ESOL teachers hired by public schools as a response to the exponential increase in English language learners (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2002).

Figure 1. Demographic division of job advertisements

The results indicate that 60.5% of the advertisements required “native or native-like/near-native proficiency” as a qualification for prospective applicants, as summarized in Table 3 below. Interestingly, some employers further narrowed the definition of a native speaker by adding qualification statements like “native English speaker or English speaker with native-like proficiency with at least 15 years of residence in North America”, “Native English
speaker or speaker with native-like abilities with citizenship from one of the following countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States”. In addition, some advertisements clearly required degrees from or professional training at American or Anglophone universities. A total of 26.3% of all advertisements (43.4% of the ads with discriminatory traits) included a second or even third degree of discrimination, such as specifying acceptable locations of residence, country of academic/professional training, or English variety. The analysis also showed that discriminatory qualifications were mostly found in EFL contexts (50% of all advertisements and 82% of the advertisements with discriminatory traits). Table 2 below summarizes the classification of discriminatory advertisements in TESOL’s database.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of discriminatory ads (EFL/ESL)</th>
<th>Percentage within the entire database (EFL/ESL)</th>
<th>Percentage within the discriminatory ads (EFL/ESL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nativeness as a job requirement</td>
<td>20/3</td>
<td>60.5/7.8</td>
<td>86.9/13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of English spoken*</td>
<td>4/0</td>
<td>10.5/0</td>
<td>17.3/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of academic degrees attained**</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>13.1/5.2</td>
<td>21.7/8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of residence/citizenship***</td>
<td>8/1</td>
<td>21/2.6</td>
<td>34.7/4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All of the advertisements that discriminated in “variety of English spoken” favored American English.
** All of the advertisements that discriminated in “location of academic degrees attained” favored either American universities or Anglophone countries.
*** The distribution of advertisements that discriminated in “location of residence/citizenship” was as follows: North America (n=5), North America, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, UK, or S. Africa (n=2), North America, UK, or Australia (n=1), United States (n=1).

Table 2. Classification of discriminatory advertisements in the database
Advertisements in the database were also coded for educational background as a required qualification. About 40% of the advertisements required at least a bachelor’s degree, with varying degrees of expectations including “B.A. degree in TESOL”, “B.A. degree in English”, “B.A. degree in Education”, “B.A. degree with TEFL/TESL certificate”, whereas the rest required a “Master’s in TESL/TEFL or linguistics (or related field)” or doctorate degree. A total of 13.1% of all advertisements (21.7% of the advertisements with discriminatory traits) called for either educational/professional training from American or Anglophone institutions as a qualification for prospective applicants.

Teaching and complementary skill requirements in the advertisements varied considerably. While some advertisements did not specifically state teaching experience as a requirement, others required applicants to “have experience”, some required 2 to 5 years of teaching experience, and some stipulated very specific experience preferences including “5 years of teaching experience in Middle East” or “2 years of IEP teaching experience”. Only about 8% of all advertisements focused on experience teaching to international students. As for additional qualifications, a great majority of advertisements included generic statements such as “excellence”, “teamwork”, “professionalism”, or “genuine love”, as well as statements that emphasized the importance of culture including “cross-cultural skills” or “intercultural understanding”.

International Job Board at Dave’s ESL Café

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4 The reader needs to be reminded at this point that the “Joblist” section of Dave’s ESL Café consists of three sections: (1) International Job Board, Korea Job Board, and China Job Board. The fact that there are separate job boards for Korea and China also signify the massive size of ELT market in these countries. The current research project focuses on the job listings which appeared in “International Job Board” which also includes numerous posts from Korea and China.
A total of 439 advertisements were published at the International Job Board at Dave’s ESL Café in the first quarter of 2009. When multiple postings and advertisements for positions other than English language teaching (e.g. administrative positions) were eliminated, 50.3% of the advertisements (n = 211) were used for the analysis. As shown in Table 3, corporate bodies (e.g. private language institutions, summer camps providing English language classes) comprised more than half of the advertisements found in the repository. Teacher placement organizations and PreK-12 schools had a moderate number of advertisements in the database (n = 47 and n = 26, respectively). Interestingly, while TESOL’s Career Center is dominated by IEP advertisements, this category accounted only for 8% of the pool at Dave’s ESL Café.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Type of Employers</th>
<th>No. of Advertisements / Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Corporate bodies (e.g. language schools)</td>
<td>121/57.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>English language teacher recruitment agencies</td>
<td>47/22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PreK-12 schools</td>
<td>26/12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IEP (intensive English programs)</td>
<td>17/8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>211/100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Ranking of the top employers in TESOL Career Center database

The immense English language teaching market in EFL settings and massive need for ELT professionals are validated by the number of advertisements that sought ELT professionals in EFL settings: a total of 204 advertisements accounted for 96.6% of the data pool. Similar to advertisements in TESOL’s database, the majority of ESL jobs were located in the United States. Figure 2 below represents the proportions of advertisements for EFL settings. The chart shows that Asian countries (e.g. Japan (67), Thailand (17), Taiwan (15), Indonesia (15), China (6) ) dominate the job advertisements, followed by Middle Eastern countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia (20),
Qatar (2), Morocco (2)), European countries (e.g. Turkey (4), Spain (2), Italy (2)), and South American countries (e.g. Mexico (4), Chile (3), Peru (2)).

Figure 2. Advertisements for EFL Contexts

The results from the International Job Board revealed that 74.4% of the advertisements (n=157) required “native or native-like/near-native proficiency” as a qualification for prospective applicants. Similar to TESOL data, the trend of narrowing the concept of native speaker is also evident in the International Job Board. Unlike TESOL’s Career Center, a small portion of advertisements (n = 17, or 8%) in the International Job Board used “native speaker” in the title of advertisements. The advertisements that favored native speakers showed considerable variation: While some advertisements stated “Real English teachers needed” in the advertisement title and “native English speakers” in the description, others did not make any distinction, accepting “teachers from any native English-speaking country”. The NEST-favoritism has reached such a level that job employers included statements such as: “do not apply if you don’t have at least a BA or are not a native English speaker”; “North American women or men who are eager to teach kids are encouraged to apply even with minimal or no
experience”; “must be a Native English Speaker i.e. English will be your first language”.

In addition to discriminating on the basis of native speaker status, 21.7% of all advertisements included a second or even third degree of discrimination on the basis of location of residence, country of academic/professional training, or English variety. About 12.5% of the advertisements (n = 26) discriminated based on country of location by including qualifications such as: “passport from the US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa”; “applications from American, Australian, South African and Canadian teachers with EU passports”; “North American’s (sic) whose first language is English (no heavy accents)”. Some of the advertisers justified their native speaker preference as the manifestation of the market value of the English language. For example, a Japanese employer stated, “SESJ is marketed as a British school and therefore priority is given to British teachers”. Employers also referred to institutionalized discriminatory practices in their national education systems. For example, an Italian employer specified, “[D]ue to European employment regulations we can only consider applications from American, Australian, South African and Canadian teachers with EU passports”; an Indonesian employer stated, “Due to strict immigration regulations we can only consider applicants who are nationals of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA”. Such unprofessional discriminatory practices also lead some employers to demonstrate explicit arrogance through such qualification statements as “we require a Native speaker from Canada, Britain, US, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand with a Degree (Others need not apply please)”. However, another advertisement specified, “[N]ear native English proficiency speakers from European countries will also be considered”. Table 3 below summarizes the
classification of discriminatory advertisements (n=172, or 81.5% of all advertisement) in the current database.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of discriminatory ads (EFL/ESL)</th>
<th>Percentage within the entire database (EFL/ESL)</th>
<th>Percentage within the discriminatory ads (EFL/ESL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nativeness as a job requirement</td>
<td>157/0</td>
<td>74.4/0</td>
<td>91.2/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativeness in title</td>
<td>17/0</td>
<td>8/0</td>
<td>9.8/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of English spoken*</td>
<td>2/0</td>
<td>0.94/0</td>
<td>1.16/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of academic degrees attained**</td>
<td>3/0</td>
<td>1.42/0</td>
<td>1.74/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of residence/citizenship***</td>
<td>26/2</td>
<td>12.3/0.94</td>
<td>15.1/1.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All of the advertisements that discriminated against “variety of English spoken” favored American English.
** All of the advertisements that discriminated against “location of academic degrees attained” favored either American universities or Anglophone countries.
*** The distribution of advertisements that discriminated against “location of residence/citizenship” was as follows: North America (n=9); North America, UK, Australia, New Zealand, or S. Africa (n=6); North America, UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand (n=4); North America, UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand (n=3); United States (n=2); North America, UK, Australia, New Zealand, or Philippines” (n=1); North America, UK, Australia, or New Zealand (n=1); UK or Canada (n=1); North America or UK (n=1); UK and Ireland (n=1).

Table 3. Classification of discriminatory advertisements in the database

Advertisements in the database were also coded for educational background as a required qualification. Quite interestingly, 23.6% of the advertisements did not include any educational requirement from the prospective applicants, 1.8% required an associate’s degree (combined with a TEFL/TESL certificate), 69.1% required or preferred a bachelor’s degree, and 5.2% required a master’s degree or above. However, the expectations of bachelor’s degrees were quite diverse. While some advertisements specifically required a B.A. in English or TEFL/TESL, others required a “B.A. degree in any field”, “B.A./B.S. (in any field)”, or “4-year university/college degree”. The requirement of academic degrees or professional training from
American or Anglophone institutions was also present in International Job Board postings (n=3, or 1.42% of the all advertisements).

Teaching experience as a requirement was another component of the content analysis. The results indicated that 39.8% of the advertisements did not include any requirement for teaching experience, and 8.5% of the advertisements either explicitly required “no experience” or stated that “teaching experience is helpful, but not necessary”. The rest of the advertisements in the database (i.e. 51.8%) consisted of those that required experience. Of these, some did not specifically define experience (33.1%), while others called for less than one year of experience (1.8%), one year (3.7%), two years (6.6%), three years (2.8%), or three or more years (3.3%). As mentioned before, two of the advertisements included the phrase “no experience needed” in their titles. Similar to advertisements found at TESOL’s Career Center, a very limited number of advertisements at the International Job Board placed importance on prior teaching experience in teaching international students.

**Discussion & Conclusion**

The starting point of the current research project was anecdotes of discriminatory employment practices that favor native English-speaking teachers (i.e. Center professionals), and marginalize their non-native counterparts (i.e. Periphery professionals). Research results presented in the previous section empirically validated impressions of an undemocratic and unethical employment landscape in the English language teaching profession. The current study revealed the multifaceted nature of discriminatory hiring practices, emphasized asymmetric credibility between Center and Periphery professionals, demonstrated institutionalization of
discrimination, and, consequently, echoed the need for reconfiguring the profession (Canagarajah, 1999).

**The Multifaceted Nature of Discriminatory Hiring Practices**

As mentioned earlier, the point of departure for the current study is to bring empirical scrutiny to the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992). Thus, the native speaker fallacy served a litmus test to analyze job advertisements found in two very frequently used job advertisement sources. Unfortunately, research results empirically showed that almost two decades after the coinage of the term, the native speaker fallacy is a practical reality. A vast majority of the advertisements investigated favored native English-speaking teachers and rejected their non-native counterparts by stating categorically that “others need not apply”. When scrutinized, discriminatory advertisements also suggest that the notion of discrimination (i.e. NS and others) is a multifaceted phenomenon, one dimension of which is Phillipson’s (1992) “native speaker fallacy”. More specifically, both databases included advertisements that discriminated on the basis of nativeness as well as variety of English spoken, location of academic degrees attained, and location of residence or citizenship. Such second and third degrees of discrimination not only lead to monopolization of the jobs in the ELT profession by NESTs but also to overgeneralization of discrimination to the entire discourse promulgated by native English speakers. In other words, by discriminating based on variety of English spoken (a euphemism for American English, in the advertisements analyzed for the current study), job advertisements promote American English as the norm for the English-speaking world and English language learners. Similarly, by discriminating by location of academic degrees attained, job advertisements legitimize the Anglophone education system as the gold standard of teacher
education. In the same vein, by discriminating based on location of residence or citizenship, job advertisements view possessing a passport of a Center country as a *sine qua non* for prospective English language teachers.

*Asymmetric Credibility between NESTs and NNESTs*

The multifaceted nature of discriminatory hiring practices in our profession reinforces the existing asymmetry in the perceived credibility of NESTs and NNESTs. Such perceptions lead to unfounded arguments that put forth English language teaching the birthright of native speakers of English. In this scenario, native speakers are believed to be equipped with a genetically endowed capacity to teach the language, whereas non-native speakers are perceived as deficient imitators of the language they are trying to learn. Based upon this irrational but widely accepted argument, native speakerism acts as the sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of NNESTs across the world. The research results of the current study documented that “native speakerism” was more important than relevant education background and sufficient teaching experience. A job advertisement that echoes this perspective proudly states that “ABC Language Course has brought northern Mexico a unique and extremely successful system for learning English using 100% native English speakers”. This implies that “using 100% native speakers” is the reason behind “unique and extremely successful system”.

A great majority of global teacher placement organizations that exploit such bandwagon effects (the phenomenon also known as “social proof” to describe the observation of that popular beliefs, things, actions tend to attract even greater popularity because many other people do and believe the same things) on the students, especially in EFL contexts, and
conducts interviews across North America to recruit new NESTs in order to convert the native speaker fallacy into U.S. dollars. For instance, a job advertisement posted by a recruiter offering short Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) training programs and guaranteeing job placement states, “So if you are a Native English speaking adult and have a degree in any discipline you are eligible to apply. You do not need any previous experience of work or the knowledge of a foreign language”. What might be the rationale behind assuming that a student who graduates as a marine biologist, petroleum engineer, or software developer can successfully meet the expectations of the students in a classroom in rural Thailand, metropolitan Tokyo, or suburban Beijing, only as a result of a few weeks of training, provided that he or she is a native speaker of English? That being said, “it is time for NESTS (sic) to leave the comfort of their nests and see what is happening in the real world” (J. Bear, personal communication, April 13, 2009), and it is time for NNESTs to become more active by “raising awareness, building advocacy and demonstrating activism” (Selvi, 2009).

Institutionalization of Discrimination

One can use a number of adjectives to describe the results of the current study: expected, in the sense that they validate anecdotes of discriminatory practices; Machiavellian, in the sense that they indicate that some organizations make either deliberate or indeliberate efforts to proselytize existing prejudices that serve as good marketing tools that students demand; dramatic, in the sense that they reveal that discriminatory practices have become institutionalized routines in different contexts. The cases in Italy (“due to European employment regulations we can only consider applications from American, Australian, South African and Canadian teachers with EU passports”) and Indonesia (“due to strict immigration
regulations we can only consider applicants who are nationals of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA”) suggest that the multifaceted nature of discriminatory practices against NNESTs have become a common practice. The situation in the United States demonstrates that sometimes preventive measures are not enough to overcome discrimination. A number of employers from the United States include the acronym “EEO” (Equal Employment Opportunity) to indicate their compliance with anti-discriminatory employment practices on the basis of race, sex, creed, religion, color or national origin. According to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), it is illegal to discriminate in a number of aspects of employment, including job advertisements and recruitments. Despite the fact that discriminatory practices prohibited under these laws include “employment decisions based on stereotypes or assumptions about the abilities, traits, or performance of individuals of a certain sex, race, age, religion, or ethnic group, or individuals with disabilities” as well as “denying employment opportunities to a person because of marriage to, or association with, an individual of a particular race, religion, national origin, or an individual with a disability” (The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2009), it does not specifically address linguistic origins of discrimination. For this reason, the United States government should broaden the definition of EEO to prevent future discriminatory employment practices on the basis of linguistic origin.

Additionally, TESOL, as the largest professional organization that unites English language teachers all around the world, could be the anti-discriminatory voice of the profession by issuing a new position statement that puts specific emphasis on “native language” as a job requirement. The importance of a position of statement of this kind is twofold: first, it is
particularly meaningful in establishing institutionalized anti-discriminatory practices; and second, such a statement might be instrumental when NNEST entities contact job recruiters about such practices.

The Need for Reconfiguring our Profession

Research results, combined with the multifaceted nature of discriminatory hiring practices, emphasize the asymmetric credibility between Center and Periphery professionals, demonstrate the institutionalization of discrimination, and, consequently, provide a rationale for justification for reconceptualization of the hiring practices. Intellectual positioning of the current study is in line with Canagarajah’s (1999) formulation of the needed reconfiguration:

[T]he case I am making here is not setting aside Center positions for Periphery professionals or for placing restrictions on the employability of Center professionals in the Periphery. Even the good laissez faire exchange practices should suffice: free competition, free movement, equal sharing of products and ideas, and open employment prospects for both Center and Periphery ELT professionals. It is such democratic practices that will ensure a healthy sharing of experiences, views, and expertise that can set our profession on solid intellectual and pedagogical footing. The native speaker fallacy affects the egalitarian nature of these interactions and exchanges, helping Center professionals monopolize these resources and, thus, serving to impoverish our profession (p. 88-89).

One of the unique characteristics of our profession is its all-encompassing scope, which welcomes ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity (Selvi, 2009). Therefore, native speakerism cannot be a defining norm for our profession. It must be replaced by professionalism that seeks to overcome a discourse of binary opposition between NESTs and NNESTs and to establish the discourse of NEST and NNEST collaboration.
References


