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I. Setting the Context
INTRODUCTION

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In the introduction to his forthcoming anthology, “The NNEST Lens,” Mahboob follows Yamuna Kachru (1994) in choosing to see Nonnative English Speaking Teachers as a metaphorical lens that can bring to light new perspectives and original insights on applied linguistics and English teaching. This is so true—in trying to respond to the needs of NNES teacher candidates in 2001 we in the AU TESOL Program reconfigured our practicum structure in ways that benefitted all students (Brady & Gulikers, 2002). In looking into challenges that NNESTs had in teaching pronunciation we found additional evidence of the role that identity plays in modifying one’s pronunciation (Brady, Kim & Taylor, 2004). In 2006 while researching ways to respond to issues with NNEST self esteem we found evidence that caused us to add a new unit to American University TESOL Program’s capstone methodology course (English Language Teaching III) to address self esteem issues that affect all teachers. Finally, an action plan originally developed for NNES teacher candidates was used in the AU TESOL 2007 Summer Intensive Workshop on NNEST issues became an assignment for all students in the aforementioned English Language Teaching III course.

This is not surprising. As Mahboob goes on to note, NNESTs are, almost by definition, multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic. Thus, research on NNEST issues is research on diversity and how we can accommodate it, honor it, and make our ESL/EFL classrooms as well as our professional practice, more inclusive.
This issue of what was to be the “AU TESOL Working Papers” (which has now become the first volume of the “WATESOL NNEST Caucus Annual Review”) grew out of an attempt to become more inclusive. After the 2008 Washington Area TESOL (WATESOL) Association Spring Conference, a group of us who were members of the WATESOL NNEST Caucus gathered for lunch. The discussion turned to how we could be better supportive of current students and new teachers in their professional development. We decided that we were doing a good job supporting NNEST Caucus member’s efforts conference presentation submissions, but that we were not as successful in supporting publication efforts. We tried to brainstorm publications where new practicing teachers could have a reasonable opportunity of being published, but the list was not extensive. I hit upon the notion of seeing if we could dedicate an issue of the “Annual Review” to NNESTs and at some point someone suggested inviting the leaders of the 2007 NNEST AU TESOL Summer Intensive Workshop to contribute to this volume as a way of building a bit more visibility for this special NNEST issue.

For that reason, we are very proud to include as authors in this volume, George Braine, (the founder of the NNEST movement in TESOL in 1996) and Ahmar Mahboob (who along with Braine were two of the leaders for the 2007 American University Summer Intensive Workshop: *NNESTs At Work: Principles and practices for nonnative English speakers professional development*. In the spirit of inclusivity we are also including articles by colleagues at a number of Washington Area TESOL institutions: Jessica Lee who just received her Ed.D. from George Washington University, Sarah Shin Associate Professor and Sunyoung Park, a teacher at Myeong Moon High School in the Kyeonggi Do province of South Korea, and Ali Fuad Selvi, Ph.D., Candidate in the Second Language Education & Culture program at University of
Maryland, College Park. The American University TESOL Program is here well represented by a recent MA in TESOL graduate, Kumiko Akikawa and a current student, Huijin Yan.

Our aim to be more inclusive was prescient because in July 2009, American University made a decision which at least in a limited manner, seemed somewhat exclusive. To accommodate the wishes of the authors it was decided to seek another publication venue. After discussion, it was agreed that the “Working Papers” should be published through the WATESOL NNEST Caucus website. Although some may hold that online publication is not as prestigious as print publication, online resources provided quicker ways to disseminate the information and certainly are in line with trends of the times (consider TESOL’s electronic “TESOL Journal” due to appear in Spring 2010). We hope that this choice of venue will give readers from around the world greater access to these studies, and allow the readers to easily engage in online interactions with the authors.

This introduction is followed by a short piece from George Braine, “NNS English Teachers and Accents,” which shows the broad scope of TESOL research. Here, George reminds us of the curious paradox inherent in the dual notions of “intelligibility” (one can be understood) (cite?) and “comprehensibility” (one can be understood with ease): these characteristics are determined by the listener not the speaker, so that a native English speaker’s dialect may be unintelligible to a native speaking listener of from another dialectal community while this same listener might find many nonnative English speakers quite comprehensible. So if intelligibility/comprehensibility should be the goal of pronunciation instruction and not accent reduction, why do studies show that so many competent, highly articulate NNESTs seek to be perceived as
having a “native accent” (of some sort)? Shouldn’t we instead be working legitimatize a variety of accents and to develop strategies and techniques for accent tolerance? George suggests some ways to go forward.

II. NNEST SELF-PERCEPTION STUDIES

Reflective NNEST self-perception studies go back at least 15 years, but the studies in this volume innovative that they look all look at NNEST backgrounds and experiences as sources of teaching strength.

Jessica Lee’s paper, “Nonnative English Speaking Teachers’ Experiences and their Pedagogy in the ESL Classroom” looks at the backgrounds and experiences that five Washington DC area NNESTs bring to their teaching and finds that they use their NNEST status to inform their methodological approaches in the classroom. They see their multilingualism as an asset and believe that their own experiences as language learning and cross cultural experiences help them not only to anticipate the challenges that their learners will face, but also give them insights into the best approaches for providing instruction. Consequently Lee encourages NNESTs to reflect on their backgrounds and experiences, and to draw upon these experiences in their teaching. Her research suggests, along with other work by others, such as Lia Kamhi-Stein (Kamhi-Stein, et al, 2002), suggest that that the native speaker paradigm perhaps needs to be turned on its head, that in fact, NNESTs may make the best teachers.
The theme is echoed in two studies that I am particularly proud of: Kumiko Akikawa and Huijin Yan both look at their experiences and perceptions of teaching ESL and their respective native languages in the same semester. In “Teaching Pragmatics as an Native and a Nonnnative Speaker, “ Akikawa looks at the experience from the standpoint of pragmatics instruction. Anxious about her language proficiency, she at first begins to accepts the native speaker fallacy, wondering how anyone who has not grown up in a speech community can teach its pragmatics. However, as she begins to teach Japanese she discovers that pragmatics instruction is still difficult for her because she was not aware of her cultural ideologies and therefore could not provide good explanations for Japanese pragmatic conventions. As she says, “I could provide the ‘what’ but not the ‘why.’”

Akikawa finds that to effectively teach interlanguage pragmatics, one must have a foundation in the principles of discourse analysis, and that being multicultural and multilingual actually makes one much more adept at being able to analyze and teach how language is used. She even dares suggest that monolingual native speakers who have limited cross cultural experience may never be as effective as teachers as those who have rich, multilingual, multicultural backgrounds.

Huijin Yan in “Teaching As a Native (Chinese) Speaker and a Nonnative English Speaker: Different Identities, Similar Needs,” makes similar observations, noting that as a native speaker of Chinese, she had complete fluency and deep cultural understanding, but she had never learned the formal structure of Chinese, had no idea about how to teach a tonal language, and found that she was occasionally baffled about why learning the language was so difficult for the
U.S. students in her Chinese class. However in her ESL class, her students confidently accepted her authority on grammar, and as an international teacher, Yan could approach cultural issues from a critical perspective, encouraging all members of her multicultural classroom to share their diverse perspectives on U.S. culture. Yan probes her growth as a teacher through an assessment tool developed by Taylor (2008) to self-estimate one’s professional competence. She finds that she rated herself similarly both in her competence as a teacher of Chinese and English, but that the specific elements of her skills and knowledge that contributed to those ratings differed for the two languages. Yan sees teaching skills and teaching knowledge as much better predictors of classroom success than simply whether one is happens to be teaching their first or another language.

III. STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF NNESTs (AND NESTs)

Student perception studies have also become common and in the last few years have provided an ever growing body of evidence that once students get to know teachers, they stop do pay attention to whether they are native or nonnative speaking teachers, and concentrate inside on their personal characteristics and teaching attributes (e.g., Lasagabster & Sierra (2005), Pacek (2005), and Moussu (2002). Of the student perception studies in this volume, one is unique because of the instructor role (as writing tutors in U.S. universities) and the other because it is based on a discourse analysis of student comments about NEST and NNEST instructors, rather than simply reporting student reactions to instructors of different language backgrounds.
In the first, “She immediately understood what I was trying to say: Student Perception of NNESTs as Writing Tutors” Sunyoung Park and Sarah Shin investigate the attitudes of Korean international students at U.S. universities towards their native English speaking and Korean nonnative English speaking writing tutors in one on one writing conferences. The research was based on the attitudes of four Korean students at a U.S. university who worked with four tutors, two native speakers of Korean and two native English speakers educated in the U.S. Park and Shin feel that their results indicate that NNESTs who share an L1 with their students can be as effective, indeed possibly even more effective than NESTs in helping English Language Learners improve their writing. They go on to say that students who only worked with NESTs felt that tutor comments were too general and did not adequately respond to questions about grammar and rhetoric, whereas those students who worked with NNEST Korean tutors were able to switch to Korean to negotiate the meaning of the tutor’s comments and that this greatly enhanced their understanding of the writing process.

Caroline Lipovsky and Ahmar Mahboob in “Students’ Appraisals of their Native and Nonnative English Speaking Teachers,” make the argument that while many surveys have been done of attitudes expressed by English Language Learners about their native and nonnative English speaking language teachers, few to none have actually evaluated the language of those comments to determine what the discourse of the written student evaluations reveals about the attitudes and stances of the learners towards their instructors. Based on a study of 10 Japanese high school students attending an intensive orientation program in the U.S., Lipovsky and Mahboob use an Appraisal Framework to analyze the feelings, judgments, and evaluations that the respondents’ language choices reveal. They attempt to analyze the learners’ words to
determine their attitudes towards their NEST and NNEST teachers in the areas of Linguistic Competence, Oral Skills, Competence in the Learners’ L1, Literacy Skills, Grammar, Vocabulary, Culture, Teaching Methodology, Personal Factors, Empathy towards Students, Tenacity, NNESTs as Role Models, and Enjoyment. The study tended to confirm suppositions made by others (e.g., Benke & Medgyes (2005), Cheung (2002), and Mahboob (2003)) that students perceived NESTs and NNESTs as having complementary skills (e.g., NESTs were usually praised for oral skills, whereas NNESTs, not at times praised for their oral skills were more consistently praised for their teaching of literacy skills, grammar, and making clear how these skills are independent of linguistic skills). NNESTs were also praised for their teaching methodologies, empathy towards students, and their tenacity in mastering English (which made them positive role models). The study seems to suggest that once again, English Language Learners do not prefer to be taught by either NNESTs or NESTs—rather it is the knowledge and teaching expertise the instructor possesses.

Part IV: ADVOCACY ISSUES

While almost all of the previous studies in this volume have demonstrated progress that NNESTs have made in being accepted as professionals and how this progress maybe be changing attitudes towards NNESTs, Ali Fuad Selvi’s study, “All Teachers Are Equal, But Some Teachers Are More Equal than Others: Trend Analysis of Job Advertisements in English Language Teaching,” is a cautionary tale that reminds us of how far we have yet to go. Analyzing position announcements from the “TESOL Placement Bulletin” and the “International Employment” section on “Dave’s ESL Café,” Selvi establishes convincingly that the “native
speaker fallacy” and discrimination against NNESTs is still widespread, especially in EFL settings. In fact Selvi finds a surprising amount of secondary and event tertiary discrimination (that is, in addition to requiring native or “near native” English competency, position announcements will also specify the applicants’ countries of origin or request degrees from specific (“inner circle”---Krachu, 1985) countries. Selvi also demonstrates convincingly, how little concern these position announcements generally pay to the value of teaching experience—implying that in English Language Teaching experience doesn’t really count, but that one’s native language, one’s country of origin and the country in which one matriculated in (regardless of major) are the actual sources of instructional effectiveness.

Selvi awakes us all to the fact that even in our supposed “post-racial” world, discrimination is far from over. Professional associations and academic institutions need to stand more strongly against NNEST discrimination.

It has been an honor to be the editor of this annual review. While this is a diverse anthology that does not contain any major studies; every study in this collection represents an expansion of the NNEST research field and every one, breaks new ground—often with innovative research methods that can be used and adapted by others. As the WATESOL NNEST Caucus celebrates its fifth anniversary, its members can be proud of this significant contribution to NNEST research, in addition to all the other worthy achievements which their commitment to the WATESOL NNEST Caucus has made possible.

Brock Brady

October 10th, 2009
References


NNS English Teachers and Accents

George Braine
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

After a recent trip to Singapore, I boarded a flight on the return leg to Hong Kong. As everyone knows, the pre-flight safety regulations are droned out by flight attendants, who may have announced them many times to disinterested passengers. But this time, as I watched the young Asian man with the microphone at his mouth, I was stuck by his inability to read what was before his eyes. He made numerous grammatical mistakes, displayed no awareness of stress and intonation, and above all, had the most incomprehensible accent I had heard in a long time. I barely understood what he said. As the flight came in to land in Hong Kong, he performed no better with the disembarkation announcement.

This reminded me of another incident which occurred a few years ago. A flight from Taiwan to Hong Kong had crashed with much loss of life. At a friend’s house, I fell into a conversation with an air traffic controller who worked at the Hong Kong airport, one of the busiest in the world. What I remember most vividly about the conversation is his unintelligible Australian accent. Knowing I was an English teacher, he began to complain about the poor English language skills of Asian pilots, but I was at sea most of the time, desperately trying to read his lips in order to respond to him. If I, who have taught English to students from around the world for 40 years in addition to being an avid watcher of CNN International, BBC World News, and Al Jazeera (i.e. I had heard English spoken with hundreds of international and regional accents), could not understand him, how on earth would regional pilots with limited usage of the English language?
The flight attendant and the air traffic controller, a non-native speaker (NNS) and a native speaker (NS), respectively, appeared to be unaware of their own accents. In contrast, according to a study by Jenkins (2005), some NNS English teachers are not only deeply conscious of their accents but also wish that they spoke like English NSs. Jenkins, who has authored a number of books on English as a lingua franca (ELF) conducted hour-long in-depth interviews with eight NNS English teachers from Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Poland, and Spain. All were university graduates—six also had master’s degrees—and were highly proficient in English.

When queried about their attitudes toward their own accents, all the teachers displayed some ambivalence. Three respondents were positive, four were negative or uncertain, and one claimed never to have thought about the matter. When asked how they would feel if “someone thought...[their] accent was a native-speaker accent” (Jenkins, 2005, p. 543), even those who had earlier spoken positively about their own NNS accents expressed various degrees of attachment to a NS accent. The four respondents who had been negative or uncertain about their accents were more consistent with these views, one saying that she would be “very happy” if hers was considered a NS accent. Another said that she “would be proud of it” and the third said that she would be “flattered”.

According to another respondent, she “worships” NS pronunciation and claimed that a NS accent would lead her to greater career success. Jenkins states that NNS English teachers may “want a NS identity as expressed in a native-like accent” (p. 541). According to the participants in Jenkins’ study, such an accent would be “good”, “perfect”, “correct”, “proficient”,...
“competent”, “fluent”, “real”, and “original English”. In the NNS teachers’ view, a NNS accent would be “not good”, “wrong”, “incorrect”, “not real”, “fake”, “deficient”, and “strong”.

Jenkins’ (2005) study is significant because it provides unusually frank insights into the self-perceptions of these teachers. Despite their high level of education and high proficiency in English, all eight teachers showed a preference for a NS accent and identity. These findings display an unusual honesty but also a deep feeling of inferiority among the teachers who were studied. Unlike most researchers who have delved into NNS issues, Jenkins is a native speaker of English and her research method consisted of lengthy interviews with each participant, during which she used prompts that brought up underlying and largely subconscious reasons for the teachers’ attitudes. Perhaps the teachers felt freer in opening up to a NS of English. However, the in-depth interviews may also have revealed common perceptions that remain suppressed. The use of questionnaires, the most common instrument in research on NNS English teachers, may not be taken seriously by respondents, and their responses may be superficial or limited by the prompts on the questionnaire.

As NNS teachers of English, should we be highly concerned with our accents? Research suggests otherwise. Kelch and Sanatana-Williamson (2002) investigated the extent to which teachers’ accents contributed to ESL students’ attitudes towards NS and NNS English teachers. Their study, carried out at a community college in southern California, involved 56 students at intermediate and high-intermediate levels of English proficiency. Most of the students were Spanish speakers. The others came from Korea and Vietnam.

Students’ attitudes towards accents were elicited through audio-recordings made by six female English teachers representing six varieties of English: Standard American, Southern
American, Standard British, and English spoken by a Portuguese, a Japanese, and a German speaker. After listening to each speech sample, the students completed a questionnaire to measure their attitudes toward the accents. Specifically, the researchers sought to determine students’ ability to distinguish NS accents from NNS accents and students’ perceptions of the advantages of learning English from NS and NNS teachers.

The results indicate that the ESL students were not able to differentiate between NS and NNS accents with a high degree of accuracy. The Standard American speaker was judged to be a NS by 70% of the students. However, the Southern American and Standard British speakers were judged to be native by only 39% and 27% of the students, respectively. As for the NNSs, the Portuguese, Japanese, and German accents were judged native by 40%, 30%, and 5% of the responding students, respectively. The Portuguese speaker’s native rating was second only to that of the Standard American speaker. I dare not speculate on how these students would have reacted to the accent of the air traffic controller in Hong Kong!

Jenkins’ (2005) findings should provide us with food for thought. After all, what is an accent? As Kumaravadivelu (2008) commented recently in response to Hong Kong’s obsession with accents, an accent is “no more than one’s way of speaking, the way one sounds when speaking, the way one uses sound features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation” (p. E4). As the anecdotes at the beginning of this article indicate, everyone, both NS and NNS, speaks with an accent. In the case of NSs of English, accent may be determined by the geographical area or social class to which speakers belong. In the case of NNSs, the accent is related to one’s mother tongue.
What is critical, then, is not accent but intelligibility—that is, “being understood by an individual or a group of individuals at a given time in a given communicative context” (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. E4). By this standard, both the flight attendant and the air traffic controller failed because their speech was not intelligible to me. This is dangerous because I (and airline pilots, in the case of the air traffic controller) may not be able to follow their instructions during a life-threatening situation. However, the English teachers in Jenkins’ (2005) study displayed not only unmerited low self-esteem and a yearning for what they could never become, NSs of English, but also what Philip Yeung (2006) in Hong Kong calls “linguistic white worship” (p. E4) that is unworthy of highly proficient and well educated English teachers.

This brief article is not a broad investigation of the self-perceptions of NNS English teachers nor of accents. Rather, it intends to raise awareness of the self-imposed prejudices that burden our perceptions of ourselves.
References


II. NNEST Self Perception Studies
NONNATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCES AND THEIR PEDAGOGY IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

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Introduction

Teaching and learning by experience is a concept that is commonly used in education. However, research in general education often devalues and ignores individual experiences and backgrounds that may impact how teachers teach in the classroom (Freeman, 1996; Golombek, 1998). For more than a decade, teachers’ knowledge or their ways of knowing have been based on the notion that teaching and learning can only be transmitted to teachers (Freeman, 1996; Johnson & Golombek, 2002). Furthermore, traditionally, scholars have focused more on a set of separate teaching behaviors or routines drawn from quantitative research of what effective teachers do rather than giving attention to teachers’ perspectives and experiences (Freeman, 1996; Golombek, 1998; Johnson, 1996). Thus, it is often believed that teachers needed to learn theoretical and methodological models to prepare them for teaching in the classroom (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). However, Jackson (1990) points out in his classic, Life in Classrooms, that “teachers often do not rely on learning theory to guide their actions” but instead use their personal experience to justify their pedagogical decisions and teaching preferences (p. 167). More recently, many researchers have begun to view teaching in more complex ways, recognizing that teachers’ methods reflect beliefs and practical knowledge gained through their prior teaching and learning experiences (Berry, Clemans & Kostogriz, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 1999; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Lortie, 2002). These studies have
finally come to acknowledge that “teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills”, but that they have prior experiences and cultural and personal values that inform and shape their pedagogy (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 401).

Weedon (1997) further argues that, in light of the everyday experiences of teaching professionals, we “should not deny subjective experience, because the ways in which people make sense of their lives is a necessary starting point for understanding” how one teaches in the classroom (p. 8).

However, in the field of language teaching, most attention has been and continues to be paid to the different variables of second language learners, while far less attention is given to teachers and how their experiences impact the classroom. Although the literature regularly states that students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds play a key role in schooling (Au & Maaka, 2001; Fox & Gay, 1995; Nieto, 2001), research on the backgrounds and experiences that nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) bring to the ESL classroom and how these influence instruction is rare. In fact, there is a paucity of research examining the dynamic relationship between’ NNESTs’ experiences and their pedagogical approaches in the ESL classroom.

Around the world, nonnative speakers of English play central roles in English language teaching. Indeed, nonnative speakers of English outnumber native speakers at a four to one ratio (Crystal, 2003). This ratio is similar to that of native to nonnative English-speaking language teachers. According to Canagaragh (1999), it is estimated that 80% of English language teachers in the world are nonnative speakers. Thus, NNESTs’ experiences and how these have influenced their pedagogical approaches in the ESL classroom are of great importance for both
language teachers and students. This study focuses on NNESTs in the ESL teaching profession using a qualitative case study approach to explore the kinds of experiences that influence their pedagogical approaches in the ESL classroom. According to Simon (1987), pedagogy implies “the integration in practice of particular curriculum content and design, classroom strategies and techniques, and evaluation, purpose, and methods” (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 2002, p. 262). Drawing on Simon’s work, the terms “pedagogical approach” or “teaching approach” are used in this study interchangeably with the term “pedagogy” to refer to the integration of teaching methods, classroom techniques, and instructional practices, as well as to how teachers perceive the nature of learning and what they do to create conditions in teaching students a second language.

The Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to increase understanding of NNESTs by exploring the kinds of experiences that have influenced their pedagogical approaches in the ESL classroom. Specifically, this study examines the kinds of experiences that have influenced their classroom practice. The overarching question that guides the study is the following: How do NNESTs’ experiences inform and guide their pedagogical approaches in the ESL classroom?

Related questions are:

1. What experiences/background do NNESTs draw upon when teaching ESL?
2. What approaches are used by NNESTs in the ESL classroom?
3. What cultural experiences inform and/or influence NNESTs’ pedagogical approaches in the ESL classroom?
4. What linguistic experiences inform and/or influence NNESTs’ pedagogical approaches in the ESL classroom?
5. What educational experiences inform and/or influence NNESTs’ pedagogical approaches in the ESL classroom?
Participants

NNEST participants in this study were recruited from various adult ESL programs and college-level intensive English programs in the Washington, D.C., area. These programs include private language programs and university academic ESL programs that serve adult international students and immigrants. It was within these contexts that the researcher recruited five NNESTs by distributing recruitment letters and contacting appropriate people to seek research participants for the study. Thus, the case study contexts in this research project were limited to NNESTs who work in various adult ESL programs and college-level intensive English programs and did not include NNESTS working in the K-12 context.

Since the purpose of this study is to understand NNESTs, it was important to select participants who had an L1 other than English and who had been educated outside of the United States. This was to ensure that the participants were culturally and linguistically different from native English-speaking teachers (NESTs), but also to be certain that the participants self-identified as NNESTs. The participants in the study were selected according to four criteria: (a) the participants must self-identify as NNESTs; (b) English must not be the participant’s first or native language; (c) the participants must currently be pursuing a master’s degree in a field related to TESOL/ESL education or have recently graduated from a program related to TESOL/ESL education; and (d) the participants must currently be working ESL instructors or teaching in a practicum in their master’s degree program. The participants were Suzanne1 from Egypt, Timothy from Korea, Cathy from Japan, Hannah from China, and Amanda from Argentina. The methods of data collection included: (a) in-depth interviews in person; (b)

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1 All participant names are pseudonyms.
open-ended and semi-structured email interviews; (c) review of lesson materials; and (d) class observations using an observation protocol adapted from Benke and Medgyes’ (2005) survey instrument. Only aspects of NNESTs’ teaching that had been found relevant to this study by the researcher were included in the observation protocol. A variety of data sources were used as a means of triangulation (Merriam, 1998).

Results and Discussion

Past Linguistic, Educational, and Cultural Experiences Inform Pedagogy

Freeman and Johnson (1998) argue that what teachers know about teaching is “largely socially constructed out of the experiences and classrooms from which teachers have come” (p. 400). In other words, Freeman and Johnson contend that much of what language teachers know about teaching derives from their past experiences as students, language learners, and language teachers. The data collected in this study support Freeman and Johnson’s argument and particularly demonstrate that participants’ pedagogical approaches are heavily impacted by their linguistic, educational, and cultural experiences. Even though the participants grew up in different countries, had different native languages, and learned English in different environments, they all asserted in their interviews that their experiences as second language learners influenced their current pedagogical approaches to language teaching in the ESL classroom. For example, in describing how his past linguistic experiences influenced his current pedagogical approaches, Timothy said,

There are about 20 students in my ESL class. As I was observing their struggles to learn English, I immediately felt deep compassion for them, and I wanted to help them the best way I could. Being a second language learner myself, I positioned myself as a student, not as a teacher as I thought about how to help them. I knew that could help me to facilitate students to learn more efficiently. My experiences as a second language
learner are incorporated in teaching ESL. Though these experiences are good or even bad sometimes, I try to incorporate what I learn from those situations to come up with teaching methodology that is appropriate for my students.

Similarly, Lee and Lew (2001) reported that nonnative teacher trainees enrolled in a M.A. program in TESOL “unanimously agreed that the most valuable asset is their experience as learners of English” (p. 146). They presented the following quotation from one of their participants who believed that her linguistic experiences positively impacted her lesson planning: “I can understand and feel what the professor is saying about the theories, and I can put myself into the learners’ shoes when I am preparing a lesson plan” (p. 146). Like the participants in the Lee and Lew’s study, all teachers in the current study indicated that they drew upon their language learning experiences and educational backgrounds to guide and inform their pedagogy in the ESL classroom.

In the interview transcripts, the participants in the study specifically elaborated on their language learning experiences to provide context to which their methods of language learning were used and indicated that their previous experiences provided a solid basis for developing further as language teachers. For instance, looking back at their linguistic experiences, all of the participants eloquently shared their personal experiences with the unsuccessful and successful way they were taught English. Although most of their language learning experiences were not positive as they talked about the poor methods that were often utilized in their native EFL classrooms, they built on both negative and positive aspects of their language learning experiences to develop methods that they felt were beneficial to their ESL students. For example, in explaining her approach to ESL teaching utilizing her own experience as an ESL learner, Amanda commented,
My former teachers used too structured ways of teaching. They used set books that were very tedious with lots of exercises, and they focused on rote memorization on grammar rules and passages. I think it was the way I learned a language that helped me the way I teach right now. Because I didn’t like the behaviorist model of teaching, I vowed not to have my classes too structured. I learned from my former bad and good English teachers by not incorporating what I didn’t like but incorporating what I liked when learning English to help me teach my students.

In addition, the participants in the study believed that their educational experiences in English-speaking countries inspired their pedagogical approaches in the ESL classroom. Three of the five participants specifically recalled that when they arrived in an English-speaking country for the first time, they felt inadequate since they could not successfully communicate with native English-speakers. It was through this experience they realized that the ability to communicate competently in the target language should be a fundamental component of language learning. The participants then modified their teaching methods to accomplish this goal. As Timothy explained:

In the EFL teaching situation, the context is very different in terms of their cultural elements. There are also many obstacles in practicing the CLT [communicative language teaching] in an EFL class. The teacher has more authority and students are not active in the class activities. Even though I didn’t learn English through CLT approach, I would definitely adapt the CLT approach to the EFL and ESL situations as much as possible because language learning is achieved by real communication, not through textbooks only. So, I try to use CLT approach as much as I can in my current ESL classroom. It is very important for ESL students to communicate with English-speaking people. I would not want my students to go through what I went through when I first came to the United States.

While all teachers similarly expressed that their use of alternative teaching approaches derived from their past linguistic experiences, they also indicated that they could not have generated different methods of teaching without having gone through educational programs in
English-speaking countries. All teachers noted that going through their master’s degree programs in TESOL or related fields of education in the United States forced them to reflect on their own language learning and teaching experiences, which allowed them to construct their own understanding of what constitutes good ESL teaching. In such programs, the participants were able to compare and contrast their learning experiences to create a “new sense of meaning and significance” and to take appropriate teaching action in their ESL classrooms (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 42). Reflecting on her linguistic and educational experiences, Cathy provided this response about how her master’s program was influential in teaching her own class:

In Japan, I was in a very traditional classroom where the teacher was the authority figure. A teacher would just have a lecture, and students will take notes from that kind of environment. So I know that affected my teaching in a way. To me inductive learning is important. So I intend to take a learner center approach..... However, sometime I found myself being very deductive, doing a lecture like presentation. So for me, to ensure I use a learner center approach, basically, I have or I normally give them some prompts that encourage students to have a discussion in class. If I didn’t receive education here in this M.A. program, I wouldn’t know how to do that. Because a deductive approach is the only one I knew, if you don’t know any other way or have other knowledge, you would start teaching based on what you know. Having gone through this education system helped me think about my past experiences in learning English. I think eventually that helped me come up with ideas what I can do in the classroom.

Regarding this point, Hannah similarly commented:

My teaching methodology comes from my professors’ instruction in my graduate program as well as my own learning and teaching experiences. I combine all of them in my class. If there is really a hard concept that I want to teach my students, then I use my own experience to come up with an idea. How did I learn this? Then, they usually get something from it.
It was through this process that the participants also learned what was important in language learning and also deepened their understanding of what was faulty with their countries’ educational systems. It was their exposure to different learning and teaching contexts in the American higher educational system that afforded them with new ideas for pedagogical approaches that were relevant to their ESL classrooms.

Scholars have argued that pre-service teachers who come to the art of teaching with little cross-cultural experience and knowledge may not only be ill prepared to teach, they may also have limited visions of what cultural teaching entails in the classroom (Fox & Gay, 1995; Nieto, 2000). Being NNESTs, the participants in the study have necessarily had personal experiences in cross-cultural issues; they are culturally and linguistically diverse individuals and also have varied ESL and EFL teaching experiences. As a result of these experiences, the participants did not have any problem appreciating and acknowledging their students’ different backgrounds. In fact, this understanding has influenced the teaching in their ESL classrooms. For example, the participants expressed that their understanding of their own culture, as well as that of others, allowed them to be open-minded to various ways of learning and teaching in the ESL classroom. The following excerpt from Timothy’s interview transcripts is an example of how he was able to integrate cultural knowledge into his ESL instruction.

My Korean cultural experiences are incorporated in teaching ESL. With understanding of various cultural differences among students in ESL classrooms, I try to create appropriate activities to ensure that there is cultural diversity and cultural understanding in teaching. For example, some Asian ESL learners are more reluctant in expressing themselves compared with other cultural ethnic groups, such as South American students. So, I come up with group activities to direct them to participate in the activities by not making them feel embarrassed.
Most NNESTs are often bilingual or multilingual, and the participants commented that their understanding of their own cultural differences helped them easily appreciate students’ different cultures and thus provide appropriate pedagogical approaches in their ESL classrooms. This finding is consistent with several previous studies (Amin, 2004; Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Medgyes, 1994) that found that NNESTs’ experiences as ESL learners positively impacted their teaching ability because they had a “privileged understanding” of the potential linguistic and cultural issues of their ESL students (Tang, 1997, p. 578). For example, Amin’s (2004) study of minority immigrant women teachers of ESL reported that since NNESTs are multilingual and familiar with a number of cultures, they are able to use these qualities to implement “successful pedagogical strategies” beneficial to their ESL students (2004, p. 69).

It appears that the participants’ broad, reflective worldviews of their linguistic, educational, cultural experiences help them not only to have patience and appreciation for students’ diverse backgrounds but also to include diverse ways of teaching that are more linguistically and culturally appropriate for their ESL students. As Dewey (1938) argues, when teachers reflect on their experiences and “question their own assumptions as they uncover who they are, where they have come from, and what they know and believe, and why they teach as they do” (Johnson & Golombek, 2002, p. 5), they more fully recognize the contexts in which they teach and are able to change the conditions and take appropriate actions in educating their students.

**NNESTs Do Not Prefer Traditional Teaching Approaches**

Previous studies have shown that native speaker (NS) and nonnative speaker (NNS) teachers have distinctly different teaching approaches or behaviors in language classes (Arva &
Medgyes, 2000; Benke & Arva, 2005; Medgyes, 1994). For example, these studies identify NESTs as being informal and flexible, using different techniques, methods, and approaches in the teaching of ESL, while NNESTs rely mostly on textbooks, utilizing traditional forms of teaching that focus more on structured lesson plans and teacher-centered learning.

In contrast, in the survey results of the current study, 20% strongly disagreed and 80% disagreed with the statement that they prefer traditional forms of teaching in the ESL classroom. The survey responses did not vary considerably among the participants, and the results coincided with the participants’ stated teaching practices in interviews and their actual teaching practices in the ESL classroom observations. The majority of the teaching practices that were explored in the survey indicated that none of the participants favor traditional forms of teaching, rather focusing more on communicative skills when teaching in the ESL classroom. In fact, the results of the survey indicated that the participants preferred using more authentic lesson materials over textbooks in the class, in order to provide activities that are student-centered and communication-focused.

The observation data revealed that all the participants used more non-traditional forms of teaching, relying on pair and group work in the ESL classroom and adjusting their classroom practices to meet the needs of their students. For example, many of the participants’ planned and improvised activities required interactions in the target language among students and between the teacher and students. Furthermore, the participants indicated that they encouraged expression of thoughts and ideas by their students on a regular basis to ensure that students had participated actively. This also allowed the participants to better understand their students in the classroom. This practice was evident during observations: students often
responded spontaneously to questions posed by the instructors or fellow classmates. The participants also used a variety of classroom activities and instructional strategies to teach their students, focusing primarily on authentic communicative skills, in particular on improving students’ speaking and listening skills. In order to accomplish these objectives, the participants utilized authentic reading and listening materials that included audio and on-line video resources. For instance, all of the participants used pair and group work regularly in class and often employed ample supplementary materials to make learning more interactive and meaningful for the students.

To accomplish the objective to teach communicative skills, the majority of classroom practices integrated active and cooperative learning through pair and group work by purposefully utilizing discussion strategies and interactive language prompts (e.g., for giving opinions or asking questions). These practices engaged students’ interests in the language content as well as the topic covered in the class. Despite the fact that all of the participants were themselves mostly taught by traditional lecture methods, where the teacher was perceived as the authority in the classroom, none of the participants identified themselves as lecturers or traditional teachers. The results of this study contradicted previous findings that suggested that, NNESTs tend to prefer traditional forms of teaching while NESTs adopted a more flexible teaching, judged from both teachers’ and students’ perspectives (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Benke & Medgyes, 2005).

All of the participants, with the exception of Suzanne, rarely relied on textbooks and instead used authentic language materials to teach the target language. Some of these authentic language materials included pictures, newspaper articles, on-line resources, and real
life scenarios. While only two out of five participants had actual lesson plans and followed them, three participants indicated that they generally did not craft formal lesson plans for each lesson. Despite their lack of formal lesson plans, these three participants created some type of informal lesson outlines that had goals to accomplish in the classroom and planned lesson objectives and activities for each class session to ensure that they had productive classes that followed the curriculum guidelines of their schools.

*Nonnative Status as a Source of Pedagogy*

In second or foreign language teaching, it is often believed that language teachers who teach their native language have more advantages over teachers who are not native speakers of the language they teach (Canagaragh, 1999; Phillipson, 1992). This notion is referred as the native speaker fallacy because obviously, not all native speakers make good language teachers (Phillipson, 1992). However, due to this fallacy, NNESTs are often not considered as competent as their NEST counterparts (Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Lee, 2008; Thomas, 1999). Furthermore, in the past there was even a notion that in order for NNESTs to become “good teachers”, they should not only “improve their linguistic skills to match those of native speakers, but they should also adopt the teaching practices and methods of NESTs” (Mahboob, 2004, p. 139). To illustrate this point, Sheorey (1986) supported the idea that the goal of NNESTs was to bring their own teaching practices “in line with those of native teachers” (p. 310). However, since then many scholars have maintained that NNESTs can be successful ESL teachers. Having undergone the process of acquiring English as an additional or foreign language themselves, they are more aware of their students’ linguistic needs (Cook, 2005; Medgyes, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Tang, 1997).
Similarly, the findings of the current study showed that the participants’ pedagogical approaches in the classroom were not only heavily influenced by their past linguistic, educational, and cultural backgrounds but were also impacted by their status as NNESTs. Being nonnative speakers, the participants were able to utilize their L2 experiences as well as their cultural and educational experiences to become more effective teachers in the teaching of ESL by providing the social conditions that have been conducive to language learning (Norton-Pierce, 1995). For example, the participants voiced their ability to appreciate more clearly their students’ linguistic and cultural problems in learning English because they had similar difficulties in acquiring the target language. For instance, Amanda provided this response, “NNESTs probably know the students’ native language and culture... [we] offer a variety of perspectives and use [our] experiences as immigrants and second language learners as sources of knowledge.” As a result of this understanding, the participants, especially Suzanne, Timothy, and Cathy, stated that they provided more wait time when students spoke in the classroom and created abundant opportunities for congenial social interactions that encouraged timid students to participate in a more comfortable environment, often utilizing pair and small group work. Drawing on her nonnative status to help her students in the classroom, one of the participants, Cathy commented:

Since I speak another language and learned English same as my students, perhaps I can better understand students and of their difficulties as well as frustration in learning a second language. I think being bilingual is similar to being a nonnative speaker teacher. In that sense, I feel I can offer some strategies to help them overcome their challenges so they can learn English more efficiently and effectively. In the classroom, I explain concepts more in a detailed fashion because I want to ensure they get what I am trying to teach them. I tend to be very patient with my students but especially with my struggling students. I know exactly how they feel.
Cathy here expresses that one teaching strategy she uses in her ESL classroom is to automatically give more in-depth explanations of concepts since she does not take for granted concepts that may seem familiar to mainstream students but are often unfamiliar to international ESL students. Timothy used a similar activity to allow more timid students to participate in a non-threatening environment; he often used small group activities to teach students new language expressions. In fact, all the participants in the study claimed that being nonnative teachers provided them with a privileged understanding of the problems and weaknesses their students face in learning English and that this understanding allowed them to develop appropriate pedagogical approaches in the ESL classroom (Amin, 2004; Tang, 1997). These participants have demonstrated convincingly that “a good pedagogy is not the province of the native speaker” (Amin, 2004, p. 73) but is dependent more on developing their own teaching models of ESL as they embrace their status as NNESTs.

Conclusion

While it has been noted in the literature that NNESTs often disregard or sometimes disguise their status because they are often not considered as competent at English language teaching as their native English-speaking counterparts (Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Liu, 1999), research may actually suggest that nonnative status is a professional asset in teaching ESL. Similar to Kamhi-Stein’s (1999) findings, which suggested that “nonnative status contributes to the development of positive self-perceptions regarding [teaching] practices” (p. 97), this study found that the participants utilized their status as NNESTs to positively inform their pedagogical approaches in the ESL classroom. All of the participants in the study indicated that they do not use the native speaker as their model; rather, they implement effective pedagogy in the ESL
classroom based on their differences as language learners and NNES teachers in various contexts. Using their varied linguistic, educational, and cultural experiences as language learners and NNESTs, the participants were able to comfortably teach in new ESL contexts using alternative teaching methods that may have seemed unconventional to them in the past.

Thus, the major implication of this study is that nonnative teachers must take pride in their status as NNESTs and start to embrace their differences and their varied experience to explore new possibilities in their classrooms. Insights from the interview data and observations have illustrated that the NNESTs described in the study are able to convey the message that they are highly competent and capable in the ESL teaching contexts despite their self-perceived deficiency as NNESTs. As was evidenced in this study, NNESTs have unique strengths and experiences that their native English-speaking counterparts often do not share. Therefore, even though NNESTs are often perceived as less competent language teachers (Kamhi-Stein, 2004), they should not let these perceptions limit their teaching possibilities in the ESL classroom.

Furthermore, since the data in this study show that the participants’ pedagogical approaches have been influenced by their past linguistic, educational, and cultural experiences, the study suggests that teacher education programs should encourage future NNES students to examine their varied linguistic, educational, and cultural experience in relation to theories of language acquisition, language teaching, and curriculum design. When NNESTs are encouraged to draw upon their past linguistic, cultural, and educational experiences and make effective connections between their past and present experiences, they are engaged in exploring new perspectives in second language learning and teaching. Kamhi-Stein (1999) makes a strong case for M.A. TESOL programs to incorporate curriculum and instruction on issues related to
nonnative speakers by asserting that such actions will instill confidence in future NNESTs that their diverse experiences and differences are important sources of skillful second language learning and teaching. When teacher education programs help future teachers to foster an understanding of their diverse backgrounds and differences, they will not only promote improvement of NNESTs’ teaching competency, but they will also assist NNESTs to view their nonnative status as a professional asset in ESL teaching (Kamhi-Stein, 2004).

Several scholars agree that research on non-native teachers has become widely recognized and will continue to grow, as there is tremendous interest in issues related to NNESTs in both ESL and EFL contexts (Braine, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Liu, 1999). While the scope of this study is obviously limited, as it studied only five subjects, the study does argue for the importance of understanding the backgrounds and experiences that NNESTs bring to the classroom when they are teaching diverse ESL students. However, in order to better understand the complexity of NNESTs in the ESL teaching profession and how their experiences influence their pedagogy in the classroom, it is important to consider that great variation among NNESTs emerges in terms of their experiences, their challenges, and their teaching approaches. Thus, more in-depth studies should be conducted in different contexts around the world to examine individual differences among NNESTs.
References


Introduction

Research on nonnative speaker (NNS) teachers issues has attracted increasing attention and numerous studies on NNS teacher self-perceptions and comparisons of native speaker (NS), and NNS teachers’ differing advantages have been carried out in the past decade (for a brief overview, see Braine, 2004; Moussu & Llurda, 2008; also see Braine, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Llurda, 2005). Yet, few have explored how teachers’ NS or NNS status affects their instruction of pragmatics. Considering reported insufficient pragmatic abilities among advanced language learners (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Beebe & Takahashi, 1989; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1995; Félix-Brasdefer, 2003; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987) and the existence of references to NNS teachers’ relatively weak sociopragmatic ability (e.g., Liu, 2004; Medgyes, 1994, 1999), it is worth examining how NNS and NS teachers relate to teaching pragmatics (be it in a native language or a second language) and how their perceptions influence instruction. Drawing on my own teaching experience as both a NS teacher of Japanese and a NNS teacher of English, this study explores three questions regarding instructional pragmatics: (a) how is pragmatics instruction affected by a teacher’s nativeness or nonnativeness; (b) how does a teacher’s native or nonnative status affect teaching competency; and c) how does one become a competent teacher of pragmatics?
The first part of this study examines the challenges and difficulties I faced as a NNS teacher of pragmatics. The second section compares my experience of teaching Japanese pragmatics as a NS teacher and teaching English pragmatics as a NNS teacher. In particular, I examine whether NS teachers have a genuine advantage in teaching pragmatics because of their familiarity with the target culture and their linguistic fluency. While knowledge of the target culture and adequate language proficiency are of course, necessary for successful language teaching, they are likely not sufficient. Other areas of second language (L2) instruction, such as appropriate professional preparation, are also needed for quality teaching (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 2005; Medgyes, 1999; Paternak & Bailey, 2004). Consequently, I was intrigued about the ways in which target culture knowledge, language proficiency and professional preparation function differently when one is teaching one’s first language (L1) vs. teaching an L2, especially in pragmatics instruction, an area of teaching commonly thought to play to NS teachers’ strengths and NNS teachers’ weaknesses. Finally, I emphasize the value of collaboration among teachers in regard to pragmatics instruction as a means of empowering NNS teachers who lack self-confidence, and for developing critical awareness for both NS and NNS teachers.

Challenges

Even advanced L2 learners with high linguistic proficiency sometimes lack pragmatic competence and experience frustration, embarrassment, or even communication breakdowns as a result. This group of learners includes NNS teachers of a language who were born and educated in a foreign language setting (see the author’s narrative in Liu, 2004; Medgyes, 1999;
and Elena’s case in Pasternak & Bailey, 2004). While such NNS teachers have acquired a high level of linguistic competence and might have even earned an advanced diploma as educators, they often have few opportunities to interact with NSs or competent NNSs in the target language and little exposure to an authentic language use in context. Therefore, the development of their L2 pragmatic knowledge and linguistic skills is often limited.

This is my case. I was born in Japan and studied English as a foreign language. My exposure to the language was limited to formal educational contexts and restricted to one specific variety of English; that is, academic English primarily for reading and writing. After my graduate study at Japanese and British universities, I was fairly confident in my English skills: I enjoyed reading English books, wrote lengthy research papers, and was able to handle basic communication during my one-year stay in England. Although my English language skills had been developed mainly through reading and writing in graduate school, I was somehow confident of my overall English language skills, including oral communication. I had even no hesitation about teaching English at Japanese universities, even when I was scheduled to teach English conversation classes.

It was when I came to the US to pursue an MA degree in TESOL that I realized my English could be misleading, confusing, and sometimes even incomprehensible. I was quite shocked at the fact that my language could still be misunderstood or unintelligible even after years of study as an English major. Since miscommunication happened in various modes of communication—including face-to-face conversations, e-mails, and telephone conversations—I began to realize that these communication difficulties were not due to accent alone. Gradually I
came to learn that there were social conventions I was not aware of, and that confusion or misinterpretation often occurred when I violated those behavioral and linguistic norms.

As researchers have pointed out, L2 speakers who come into contact with a new discourse community notice that it is not linguistic competence which makes one communicatively competent, but pragmatic competence as well (e.g., see Liu, 2004; Medgyes, 1999). This realization may be more vivid for L2 speakers with relatively high linguistic competence as they are likely to be frustrated at being unable, despite their high English proficiency, to make themselves understood or to interpret the intention of their interlocutor.

As an English speaker with extensive learning experience and the proficiency to teach English at the university level, I was shocked and embarrassed by every occasion when I was misunderstood or I misinterpreted other speakers. For instance, I discovered that sometimes when making a polite request, my interlocutor became confused and failed to interpret my request as a request. I did not realize that Japanese request strategies, such as implying and hinting, were not only ineffective but confusing to those socialized in U.S. language communities. I was even unaware that my request strategies were in fact, Japanese, and that there are different kinds of pragmatic strategies specific to particular cultures. It also surprised me to learn that sitting back and quietly listening to someone else can be taken as a sign of indifference or passiveness rather than as a sign of respect. What I realized after spending some time in the US was that I had to employ appropriate pragmatic strategies, know and use conventional language forms, and support those conventional forms with my non-verbal behavior to achieve communicative needs.
During my MA TESOL program in the U.S., I was introduced to an area of study called interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), which deals with such issues as how L2 speakers acquire pragmatic competence and how L2 pragmatics can be effectively taught (see Kasper & Rose, 2002; Rose, 2005, for a review). I was fascinated by ILP research and eager to learn about it. As I learned more about it, I was also motivated to teach L2 pragmatics so that I could help other L2 speakers. All my embarrassing experiences and struggles became motivation to learn and teach pragmatics.

Therefore I agreed without hesitation to teach pragmatics-focused lessons as a guest speaker in an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) course which a colleague was teaching. The EAP course was designed to familiarize international undergraduate students with U.S. higher education culture and help them to make a smooth transition to that discourse system. I soon noticed that students’ pragmatic skills were generally weak in comparison with their linguistic skills, and that their unfamiliarity with U.S. educational culture and low pragmatic awareness made it difficult for them to adjust their language according to context.

These students responded well to my pragmatics-focused instruction and seemed highly motivated to learn about pragmatics and very appreciative of my lessons. I taught similar course sessions the following semester which were also well received, and students’ positive feedback and their improved performance as determined by pre-/post-instructional assignments convinced me of the validity and effectiveness of a pragmatics-focused approach to teaching such students. This first attempt to teach L2 pragmatics increased my motivation and excitement about pragmatics instruction. In particular, I was pleased to see that my
learning experiences as a NNS could serve as a resource for my teaching: I could point out misunderstandings about American culture that are common among international students and highlight some important linguistic forms and cultural assumptions which students tend to miss.

In spite of the general success of these early attempts and my excitement, I was not very comfortable teaching about a culture other than my home culture, and I had not gained great confidence in my teaching. At the time, my exposure to the target culture was rather limited and my knowledge about the discourse system of higher education in the U.S. as well as my own English pragmatics skills made me wonder if I was ready to teach them to others. My doubts about my pragmatic abilities made me self-conscious about my NNS status, and I was nervous about how students might react to a NNS teacher with limited experience in teaching the pragmatics of American English. I could not overcome this insecurity about my teaching even through careful, advance preparation. In the end, I began to suspect that only a NS, who was socialized into this culture, and who had internalized its pragmatic norms, could teach pragmatics confidently and comfortably. It seemed to me that only one’s NS status would allow one to claim sufficient expertise in the target culture.

Coincidentally, just this time when I was beginning to wonder if teachers’ NS or NNS status had a significant influence on the effectiveness in pragmatics instruction, I was given a chance to teach pragmatics of my native language. I was invited to be a teaching assistant in a third-year Japanese course which focused on the development of students’ pragmatics-related skills. In this course I assisted the instructor by facilitating discussions about Japanese culture and providing comments as a NS informant, as well as teaching a few self-designed lessons.
**Discovery 1: Proficiency and Ability to Teach**

When teaching lessons in the Japanese course, I noticed that my attitude toward teaching the pragmatics of my native language were very different from the one I had toward teaching English pragmatics. I was much more comfortable and almost never felt nervous, as I did while teaching in the EAP course. Self-confidence in my language proficiency and knowledge about the target culture alleviated all hesitancy about my teaching and provided a sense of security. Students’ trust and interest in my comments as a cultural informant also enhanced my comfort and confidence. I began to be convinced that being a NS teacher provided a great advantage in terms of one’s knowledge about the target culture, proficiency, and above all, assuredness.

However, the sense of empowerment did not last long. My self-confidence was soon shaken. I found myself unable to answer students’ questions, especially when they asked for reasons and explanations (”why”) rather than appropriate language forms (”what”). As a NS, I could tell students what is appropriate and what is not, but I had difficulty explaining why some forms are considered appropriate in a given context and why others are not. For instance, in a situation where a student wants to give a compliment to a professor on an excellent lecture in Japanese, the student should not say “Your class was really great” as one might do in English. Instead, it is more appropriate for the student to say “Your class was very helpful.” In this instance, I could easily tell which of the two compliments was more appropriate but I could not clearly explain why. Only later did I became aware that the former, inappropriate form—*your class was great*—sounds to someone acculturated in Japan as if the student (with lower social
status) were evaluating the professor’s (with higher social status) performance, which is considered impolite in Japanese culture. In contrast, the latter form—your class was helpful—emphasizes the benefit of learning from the professor’s lecture. Being merely a NS of the language did not enable me to provide such on the spot cross-cultural interpretations although a teacher of pragmatics should be able to do so as well as explain underlying cultural values (Ishihara, in press; Meier, 2003).

Although I was proficient in the target language as a NS, I was unconscious of my own cultural ideologies and unable to provide cross-cultural interpretations, which professional preparation would have made possible. This supports claims made by several researchers that what matters in the teaching of a language (in addition to competent language proficiency, of course) is adequate professional preparation, which makes a teacher a skilled analyst of the language (Wright & Bolitho, 1997). By the same token, having advanced proficiency as a NS of the language does not guarantee one’s ability to teach the language (Medgyes, 1994; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004). In the Japanese classroom I experienced feelings of helplessness despite my competence in the language, and this came as a blow. However, it also caused me to reject the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992), which I had begun to give credence to because of my confidence shaking experiences as a NNS teacher. Only after I had formally studied speech acts of compliment in Japanese, could I explain the underlying cultural assumptions about such compliments. Therefore, being an effective pragmatics instructor proved to be less a matter of being a NS of the language than it was the result of having gained formal knowledge about the pragmatic feature being taught.
Discovery 2: Linguistic Competence and Pragmatic Awareness

My experiences as both an NS and NNS made me realize that being a NS does not guarantee perpetual pragmatic success, nor does it provide the formal knowledge needed to analyze language pragmatics and explain them to others. As my pragmatic awareness increased (both from formal study and simply from more exposure to English in use) I came to pay more attention to other people’s language use, analyzing its appropriateness in context and identifying underlying cultural assumptions. While doing so, I was surprised to encounter some NSs of both English and Japanese while they were clearly proficient in their respective languages, were not always pragmatically appropriate. For example, although most of my native English speaking students showed appropriate deference to me in their email messages, some also sent me pragmatically inappropriate request emails. Similarly a Japanese coworker surprised me. While she was a completely fluent NS, she was far too casual in business settings-to the point at seeming unprofessional (see Ninio & Snow, 1996, for other examples of native speaker inappropriacy). Even viewing these instances in the light of personal, generational, and gender differences, these native speaker interactions could not be judged as pragmatically successful.

Conversely, I encountered a number of NNSs who possessed solid linguistic and pragmatic competence. Many of these NNSs provided me with authentic language samples, which I presented as examples of appropriate language use in my English pragmatics class. It was encouraging and empowering to encounter such pragmatically competent NNSs, particularly when I was not confident about my own pragmatic ability as a NNS. These fellow
NNSs provided evidence that pragmatic competence is not something granted in accordance with one’s NS/NNS status but something one must learn and acquire to be a competent language user.

As I was exposed to authentic language use during my stay in the US, I noticed that my pragmatic knowledge and skills gradually developed. Although I had been immersed for a relatively short period of time, a second language context provided me with ample opportunities to apply my formal knowledge analyse other people’s language use, as well as to try to incorporate new linguistic forms into my own production. I felt that I became more able to perceive subtle nuances created by slightly different wordings and strategy choices, and to better able to discern (in)appropriateness of language use in both languages through my formal study. Such pragmatic awareness allowed me to employ language forms which were already a part of my lexicon with more comfort and confidence, and encouraged me to expand my repertoire by trying to use different expressions. Compared to when I was teaching in the EAP course earlier, I felt my sociolinguistic skills and pragmatic awareness had improved. This realization and the resulting boost in self-esteem, were crucial to my professional growth because they allowed me to overcome the sense of inadequacy I had come to feel because of my Nonnative English Speaker Teacher (NNEST) status.

What I came to realize was that if I were able to heighten my pragmatic awareness and use appropriate language, surely other L2 speakers could improve their pragmatic skills as well. Just as I was encouraged by other NNS colleagues, I too could be a source of encouragement and empowerment for my students. As a NNEST we can indeed represent an attainable model
for students (Brady, 2007; Medgyes, 1994, 1999), and this is particularly true when teachers and students share similar educational backgrounds. Understanding the potential of NNS teachers to be seen both as role models and fellow language learners/users greatly encouraged me to continue teaching as a NNEST.

**Discovery 3: Variables of Pragmatic Norms**

As I learned more about the target culture as a NNS, I could not help noticing a wide range of L2 pragmatic norms, which made pragmatics instruction more complicated, challenging, and sometimes controversial. When being asked by students, for example, “What is the best way to say No to an invitation to a party?”, it is impossible for teachers to provide one definitive answer which works in every situation. The response varies depending on contextual factors such as the social status of the speaker relative to the addressee (e.g., the invitation is from the speaker’s classmate vs. boss in his/her workplace), their relationship (e.g., the inviter is the speaker’s close friend vs. a relatively new colleague), and intensity (e.g., a friend’s birthday party planned a month ago vs. a spontaneous invitation) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In addition to this *intra-lingual variation*, pragmatic norms differ according to region, gender, ethnicity, and generation (*macro-social variation*, Barron, 2006). Judgment about “what is best” is inevitably subjective and personal and the best that teachers can do is to show range of acceptable options in context.

Because of the elusive nature of pragmatic norms and the creative nature of language, teachers must remain open-minded when teaching pragmatic norms and be aware of danger of unconsciously imposing their own values, based on their subjective point of view. Developing
critical awareness of pragmatic variability may often be more difficult for teachers who have limited experience in other discourse communities, as will be the case for many monolingual NS teachers. In terms of enhancing critical awareness, highly multicultural and multilingual NNS/NS teachers likely have a greater potential for helping students understand the variety in language form and use when compared to some monolingual NS teachers with limited cross discourse experience (Ellis, 2004, 2006; Kachru & Nelson, 1996). These monolingual NS teachers may be gifted teachers in other respect, but lack the tools of cross-cultural analysis and negotiation needed to help their students be open and observant enough to note and accept pragmatic norms different from their own.

**Discovery 4: L2 Identity and Multicultural Awareness**

Lastly, what I came to think of as a great asset to teaching pragmatics was my own experience in developing an L2 identity, which I could share with students who are likely going through a similar process as they are forming their L2 identity.

Although “obviously inappropriate” behaviors exist in language communities, there is also a range of appropriate conduct that varies according to varieties of Englishes and the speaker’s personal preference, which may be dependent on factors such as age, ethnicity, gender, regional group, and personality (Barron, 2006; Ervin-Tripp, 2001; Ishihara, 2008, in press; Siegal, 1996; Thomas, 1983). Recalling my own experience, once I became able to establish the bounds of inappropriate behavior in the L2 community, I could often make individual choices regarding L2 pragmatic norms. I realized that what guided my decision-making about which norm to use was my own sense of politeness as part of my L1 identity. Just
as my personal values are influenced by my L1 cultural values, so too are my pragmatic norms (both in L1 and L2 settings). Being an adult, my L1 identity is firmly established as are many of my L1 pragmatic norms. Therefore, my attempts to respond to L2 norms became an attempt to find a compromise between L1 and L2 norms that would be pragmatically acceptable in the L2 community while still maintaining my sense of personal identity (for more examples of and discussions about negotiation of L2 speakers’ subjectivity, see Ishihara, in press; Medgyes, 1999, Siegal, 1996).

For instance, in graduate school in the U.S., I insisted on addressing professors with titles even when they did not mind or even preferred being called by their first names. I wanted to be polite and respectful just like most of my peers did, but under a strong influence of my L1 norm, my intent was manifested differently from my peers’. While I was fully aware that addressing these professors with their first names was acceptable in this specific context, it seemed disrespectful based on my Japanese norm. I knew how I addressed professors was different from the usages of some of my peers’ but it seemed to me that this was my choice as an individual. A few explicit conversations with professors and peers about this topic also assured me that while some professors may mind being addressed by their first names, others who prefer to be called by their first names would not be offended by being addressed with titles. So, I decided to make this formal manner of address my personal L2 norm, and I behaved according to this norm until I later found other ways to express politeness and respect in the same social context. As I became aware of more options, I made slight changes to my behavioral code and as my L2 social identity developed, I was both able to better function in the L2 community and balance my L1 cultural norms with L2 norms.
Although properly addressing one’s professors is a relatively minor pragmatic issue, teachers should be aware that prescriptive instruction about what to say or do in such situations might run counter to students’ cultural values and practices. As Liu (2004) has noted, forming a new identity based on a different cultural values sometimes causes conflicts among a person’s multiple identities, requiring L2 speakers to constantly negotiate with the L2 community so that they can establish their own norms which do not conflict with either their L2 or L1 cultures. To support students, teachers must be aware that L2 speakers often go through this complicated and wearying process when they are living in the L2 community. Language teachers who are able to reflect on their own experiences in developing an L2 identity can not only build understanding and empathy with students, but also show students ways to balance multiple roles. In fact, L2 users’ choices regarding pragmatic norms seem to be often the result of cultural negotiation and their ability to balance multiple identities (Ishihara, 2008, in press). As a result, multicultural, multilingual teachers can model for learners the ways in which they negotiate interactions across diverse intercultural terrains.

In addition, it is likely that multicultural/lingual teachers have developed a healthy critical awareness about their L1 culture and personal values, since the formation of L2 identity often develops through observation and analysis of L2 norms and comparative reflections on personal values in relation to both L1 and L2 norms (Kramsch, 1993). Perhaps, this is why multilingual/cultural teachers seem to have more critical awareness of both their L1 and L2 than monolingual teachers and thus have a richer resource for language teaching (Ellis, 2004, 2006; Kachru & Nelson, 1996).
Thus what matters is not whether or not a teacher is a NS, but whether or not that teacher has cultural sensitivity, empathy for students as they go through challenging cultural negotiation/adaptation process, and awareness of the elusive nature of pragmatic norms. In case of the teaching of the English language in particular, one must be aware of the diversity of this language and the complex variation of pragmatic norms that this diversity implies. Since tolerance toward other varieties develops as teachers develop multicultural perspectives and identities, being multilingual and having critical awareness of one’s own culture and the cultures of others seems to be the key to being a competent teacher of pragmatics.

**Collaboration among NS/NNS Teachers**

Through my experience teaching as a NS and a NNS teacher, I have become convinced that what plays the key role in L2 pragmatics instruction is not whether one is a NS or a NNS but whether one (1) is a linguistically and pragmatically competent language user, (2) is professionally trained, and (3) has critical awareness of numerous varieties in pragmatic norms. Although developing pragmatic competence may be challenging to NNS teachers educated and working in an FL context due to general lack of exposure to the target culture, I believe their progress can be accelerated through conscious analysis of language use, utilizing various materials available on-line, relevant research findings and resources for teaching (e.g., for sample lesson plans to teach English pragmatics, see Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Tatsuki & Houck, in press; for teaching pragmatics in general, see Ishihara & Cohen, in press).

Another challenge NNS teachers might face in the course of teaching is the loss of self-esteem, which can negatively affect teaching practice (e.g., Brinton, 2004; Kamhi-Stein, 1999;
Lee, 2004). However, in my case, my loss of self confidence also had a positive outcome. My anxiety about pragmatic knowledge spurred a great deal of reflection and analysis. My emotions caused me to continually question the rightness of my judgments, and consequently, I made special efforts concerning the appropriateness of the materials I used in the classroom. I consulted NNS and NS colleagues whenever possible to obtain as many possible perspectives and interpretations as I could. I admit that anxiousness and uncertainty were my major motivations for this care, yet I came to realize how insightful such conversations were, and they enabled me to present a variety of pragmatic norms in the classroom. My self-doubt as a NNS led me to be better prepared as a teacher.

Consequently, consulting colleagues on language usage has proved to be an essential part of preparing to teach pragmatics. For NNS teachers, collaboration can be a rich resource for enhancing their own cultural awareness as well as expanding their linguistic repertoires. For NS teachers, NNS teachers’ learning experiences, struggles, and challenges in balancing multiple identities provide them with insights into how they can more effectively teach and support their students. Sharing different perspectives with other competent speakers can be an eye-opening experience, particularly when collaborators are from different educational/cultural backgrounds (see de Oliveira, 2008; de Oliveira & Richardson, 2004; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2004).

With regard to English language teachers, given that English is spoken in such a broad range of countries and each has its own norms of use, English teachers’ instructional decisions should ideally reflect the norms of as many varieties as possible, including nonnative varieties (Kachru & Nelson, 1996). In today’s globalized world English serves as a medium of cross-
cultural communication, and English language learners should not only develop their linguistic ability but also develop better multicultural awareness (e.g., Sharifian, 2009). In classroom instruction therefore, teachers should try to expand students’ multicultural awareness by identifying and validating a wide variety of cultural norms and then helping students develop strategies for finding and negotiating such norms through observation and analysis.

In case of English teaching, collaboration among NNS colleagues can be a way to empower NNS teachers who have little self-confidence (e.g., see Lee, 2004). Reflecting on my own experience at the time when I was acutely aware of my lack of pragmatic competence, research establishing the competency and strengths of NNESTs could not help me to overcome self-consciousness and embarrassment. Although the claims made sense, they did not convince me of my value as a teacher. I had to actually see or hear about NNS colleagues who were admired and respected as models of successful learners. I was very fortunate to find wonderful NNS colleagues who could provide such powerful personal narratives. They allowed me to start believing that success as a NNS TESOL practitioner was not limited to a few elite researchers, but also extended to so many of my NNS colleagues, and in fact—maybe—even to me. It is of great importance for NNS teachers to find other NNS professionals who can serve as attainable models, or even companions in the process of gaining self-acceptance, just as each NNS teacher can be a learning model for her or his students.

**Conclusion**

Looking through the lens of being both a NS and NNS teacher of pragmatics, I can respond to my first research question, “How is pragmatics instruction affected by the teacher’s
nativeness or nonnativeness?”. By acknowledging that my NS/NNS status was a strong influence on my self-perception as a teacher, it affected my teaching practice both positively and negatively. While anxiety I felt as a NNS teacher led me to strive to be better prepared, my NNS status also made me self-conscious and anxious, which likely made my instruction less effective than it could have been. Conversely, while I felt extremely comfortable teaching my own language and culture and could therefore provide instruction more confidently, I noticed that this comfort and self-confidence could sometimes result in hasty judgments and less attention to acceptable pragmatic variations which differed from mine.

Therefore, whether I was teaching as an NS or an NNS pragmatics teacher, I had challenges to meet, but the problems were different: As an NNEST my challenge was to increase my self-esteem and confidence. As a NS teacher, I needed to develop better critical awareness of the variability of pragmatic norms among Japanese speakers.

The second question, “How does a teacher’s native or nonnative status affect teaching competency?”, it can be answered by discussing the third: “How does one become a competent teacher of pragmatics?”. First of all, a native speaker’s pragmatic competence does not necessarily translate into an ability to teach pragmatics. To be able to explain underlying cultural assumptions and to make cross-cultural interpretations, professional training is required regardless of whether one identifies as an NS or an NNS. In fact, since NS teachers may often be unaware of their own cultural assumptions, explicit and conscious training is likely more critical for achieving effective teaching. Moreover, there may be cases at times when native language proficiency does not guarantee comparable pragmatic competence.
Consequently, a teacher’s NS or NNS status is not a major component of effective pragmatic instruction; rather demonstrable linguistic and pragmatic competence along professional training is the primary sources of competent teaching.

Competent teachers should possess critical awareness of the variability of pragmatic norms and remain open-minded to acceptable forms that they themselves might not use. Although it is impossible for teachers to become familiar with all permissible forms, especially considering all the varieties of English; having critical awareness and acceptance of pragmatic diversity will allow teachers to help their students develop cultural sensitivity and tolerance so that they can observe and analyze pragmatic norms different from their own and make their own pragmatic choice (Ishihara, 2008; in press).

My experiences also suggest that multilingual and multicultural teachers may often have a greater potential to help and support L2 learners to establish L2 identity. Since acquiring L2 pragmatic competence inevitably involves cultural negotiation and balancing multiple identities, teachers’ own experiences likely enable them to impart cultural negotiation strategies and to serve as models just as language learning experiences support ESL teachers by offering rich resources for their teaching practice (Ellis, 2004, 2006).

Finally, we should remember that among competent teachers, those who make a constant commitment for professional participation (see Brady, 2008 for a distinction between “professional participation” and “professional development”) have the greatest potential to be good teachers (Pasternak & Bailey, 2004). Collaboration with colleagues, especially those who come from different backgrounds but pursue the same professional goals, provides
opportunities to broaden our perspective and to develop critical awareness. Above all, collaboration with colleagues who are dedicated to the profession brings us the strength to make constant efforts to grow professionally.
References


TEACHING AS A NATIVE (CHINESE) SPEAKER AND A NONNATIVE (ENGLISH) SPEAKER:

DIFFERENT IDENTITIES, SIMILAR NEEDS

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Introduction

Presumably, teaching a language as a non-native speaker is in some ways a different experience from teaching a language as a native speaker. Here I examine my experience of teaching ESL as a non-native English teacher at the same time as I was teaching a class in my native language, Chinese, to explore the differences I perceived.

A native speaker is defined by Chomsky (1965) as “an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly.” Being born and being raised in China, I acquired Chinese as my first language and I identify as a native Chinese speaker. Having only started to learn English as a teenager and having never spoken it at home, I identify as a nonnative English speaker.

Although much research has been done on non-native English teachers’ (NNEST) self-perceptions (Medgyes, 1992; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Samimy & Griffler, 1999; Inbar-Lourie, 1999; Liu, 1999; Liu, 2005; Llurda & Huguet, 2003), and students’ perceptions of NNESTs (Liang, 2002; Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005), one type of self-perception research that has been missing is comparative studies of those who teach their first language (L1) and another language (often a second language or L2) at the same time. Having had opportunity to teach Chinese as a native speaker while simultaneously teaching English as a
non-native speaker, I have had the opportunity to reflect on the similarities and differences of these experiences. This has helped me better understand my strengths and weaknesses both as a native and non-native language teacher. In particular, this research has led me to realize the important role professional development plays for any language teacher.

**Background**

As a second year MA student at an American university, I was offered two teaching positions in the fall of 2008: one, teaching beginning Chinese to undergraduate students at American University, and another, co-teaching high-beginning English to a group of adult learners, as part of my master’s practicum at Montgomery College in Silver Spring, MD. Teaching the two languages at the same time made me aware that I have different identities when I teach different languages: in my Chinese class, I am a native speaker teacher who has a high command of the target language and who is well familiar with the Chinese culture. In my ESL class, I am a non-native speaker teacher who is still learning the nuances of the target language while at the same time being “obligated to represent a foreign language with its cultural load” (Medgyes, 1994, p.37). This research compares my perceptions of these roles and identities as I taught each of these classes.

Both student audiences were new to me. Before entering the MA program at American University, I taught Middle School English in China for three and half years. The proficiency of most of my Chinese students was beginning level—their first task was to learn the Roman alphabet. Although students in my U.S. classes were also deemed to be at beginning level, they were all adults who were more much more mature. Consequently classroom management,
participation, and students’ approaches to learning differed. Despite these similarities, the students in the Chinese language class were all highly literate in their native language (English) and reasonably well self-disciplined. Also, the course syllabus and course texts were designed for a U.S. audience, so they conformed to the students’ cultural and educational expectations well.

The literacy and language backgrounds in my ESL class was much more diverse (as I determined through needs analysis survey conducted in the first class) with several native languages being represented and many students having experienced limited or interrupted education in their own countries. Consequently, regardless of the language I was teaching, I was also teaching two different student audiences—student audiences I had never encountered in teaching before.

In order to take on both roles successfully, I needed to overcome various challenges in both classes--some of the challenges were relative to my language competence, and some of them related to my lack of other professional skills, such as classroom management and lesson pacing. To meet these challenges, I had to grow as a professional and this study is a reflection of that process.

What is a “professional” language teacher?

A professional, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is “a person engaged in a profession, esp. one requiring special skill or training; a professional person, or a member of the professional classes” (OED, 2009). According to Webster’s Third International New English
Dictionary, a professional is “one who belongs to one of the learned professions or is in an occupation requiring a high level of training and proficiency.”

One attempt to establish the qualities of professional competence in teaching is Taylor’s (2008). She has created a model of professional competence that represents various professional teaching qualities in terms of how they can balance one another. Taylor portrays professional competence as a triangle (Figure 1), with each leg representing “practice,” “commitment,” and “relationship.” Taylor notes that “practice” is the element teachers are most commonly evaluated on. For Taylor, “practice” includes elements such as designing good lesson plans, managing classes effectively, and delivering clear instructions. “Commitment” refers to the teachers’ commitment “to their students, to the institution, to the profession, and to communication” (Taylor, 2008). “Relationship” refers to the teachers’ relationship with themselves, their colleagues, supervisors, and of course, their students.

![Figure 1: The Triangle of Professional Competence.](image)
To quantify those three dimensions of professionalism, Taylor asks teachers to assess their own teaching competence by assigning each leg a value of 1 to 3 points. Taylor also proposes that to be minimally effective as a teacher, one needs to be evaluated at a score of 2 or more on each leg. A score of 1 on any leg will make the triangle unstable and consequently, the teacher cannot be considered as an efficient or “professional” teacher. Additionally, Taylor insists on whole number ratings to force user commitment to the process. Scores with fractions (e.g., 2.5) are not allowed. Moreover, scores are based on the teacher’s competence only (comparing one’s self to others, especially those more advanced in the field, is not allowed). Finally, a teacher’s total score should be evaluated within the context of that teacher’s life. For example a financial, family, or health crisis can obviously affect commitment to teaching, so a temporary decline in one’s commitment, while never desirable, may be understandable in a broader context.

To show audiences how to this model operates, Taylor (2008) employs case studies. For example:

Katherine is a teacher “loved by her students; she is a model teacher at her school; she satisfies all obligations, but does not attend optional events or participate in faculty social events; she is thought of as friendly despite not being around a lot; and she calls in sick more often than other teachers.” In this case, Katherine might be evaluated as a score of 3 for “practice,” a 2 for “commitment,” and a 2 for relationship. Although Katherine doesn’t earn a perfect score, she is still considered to be an adequate instructor because she earns at least a 2 for each leg (slide 11)

Another case is Ben. Ben is a retired missionary; he has lived abroad for 30 years; he is new to teaching adult ESL; he has not received TESL training; he
has strong rapport with his students; he is reliable and dedicated; he is never late. However, he talks too much in class; his lessons lack opportunities for student practice; and he provides minimal corrective feedback to his students. In this case, Ben might obtain a 1 for “practice,” a 3 for “commitment,” and a 3 for “relationship.” Since he earns less than a 1 for one leg, he would not be considered as a “professional” teacher according to Taylor (slide 12).

When I applied this model to my own self-evaluation, I found I was not able to consider myself a fully professional teacher of Chinese before my class started. As a Native Chinese Speaking Teacher (NCST), I had an excellent command of fluent, idiomatically correct language forms. I also knew the cultural connotations and pragmatic usages of Chinese. However, I had not yet received any formal training in Chinese linguistics or teaching. For example, I am still learning the underlying rules of Chinese and I am still seeking effective methods for teaching Chinese characters. Consequently, even if all the training that I have received as an English teacher could be successfully transferred to my Chinese teaching I believe that, I would still score low on the “practice” leg of the triangle. Therefore, I would rate my “practice” as 1. That is to say, I lack explicit knowledge about teaching Chinese and this makes my triangle of professional competence unstable.

As for “relationship,” even though I was confident about building a good rapport with my students and other instructors, I still felt I could not yet rate myself a full 3 because I was only beginning to establish relationships with students and other teachers. Therefore, I decided that a score of 2 might be more appropriate. As for “commitment,” I was passionate and determined to commit myself to my students, the program, and the profession. I believe I earn a “3” in terms of the “commitment.” Therefore, I rated my overall professional competence in
my Chinese class as 1 for practice; a 2 for relationship; and a 3 for commitment. If this self-assessment is reasonably accurate it suggests that I am not yet a competent Chinese language teacher, and to become one I need to address limitations in my “practice.”

As for my ESL class at Montgomery College, I couldn’t entirely consider myself a professional there either. I feel that my knowledge of English is not yet sufficient, especially in terms of cultural knowledge and pragmatic skills. When I taught in China, I was proud of myself as a professional English teacher, and I was recognized as a professional by my colleagues and students. I was confident in my knowledge in English, my teaching skills, and my “standard” pronunciation. Therefore, it was frustrating to discover that my “excellent English” (as it was judged in China) had suddenly become problematic in the context of an U.S ESL classroom (see Mahboob, 2007 for a discussion of a familiarity based approach to evaluating language proficiency). It caused me to doubt my ability to be an ESL teacher in the U.S., even though I know: (1) I can be a good ESL teacher without being a perfect user of English, and (2) that students “largely tolerate of the differences between their NESTs and NNESTs, including accents” (Braine, 2005, p.22.). Still, anxieties persisted, “How can I be a professional teacher if I am not a perfect user of this language?” “What am I going to do if students doubt or laugh at my ‘Chinglish’ (spoken or written English which is influenced by Chinese)?” “How can I responsibly explain to my students elements of a language that I do not completely command?” Such insecurities caused me to rate my “practice” leg in ESL as 1.

Considering “relationship,” as was the case with my Chinese language class, I was only starting to build relationships with the students and colleagues, so I rated myself a 2 for
“relationship.” Still, I was as committed to my ESL class as I was to my Chinese class, so I evaluated my “commitment” score as 3. Overall then, I evaluated my professional competence in my ESL class with the same numerical ratings as I had given myself for Chinese teaching: a 1 for practice; a 2 for relationship; and a 3 for commitment.

These results spurred me to try to grow professionally as quickly as possible. I started to develop strategies to work on all three legs of my professional competence triangle simultaneously. I found that despite having different teacher identities in each class, my areas of professional need in both classes were quite similar (see Professional development I and II below). What was different was the nature of the specific challenges and how to address them so that I could grow in practice (see Professional Development III below).

**Professional Development I: Relationships**

“Relationship,” as was mentioned before, refers to teachers’ relationships with “themselves, their colleagues, supervisors, and students” (Taylor, 2008). In both of the classes, I made continuing efforts develop relationships of mutual respect with my students, friendly relationships with my colleagues and supervisors, and a trusting relationship with myself.

In my Chinese class at the beginning of the semester, I designed a questionnaire to learn about students’ educational and foreign language backgrounds, their interests, goals, and learning styles. I then tried to design lessons based on those needs. For example, many students had language learning experiences before and had therefore had some clear ideas on how to learn a language effectively. To make use of this knowledge, I held a discussion session, allowing students to share their learning methods. By doing so, students who hadn’t yet had
any language learning experiences were able to benefit from their peers’ experience in order to develop some strategies to succeed in their learning, and those with experience were empowered for having their learning strategies validated.

At mid-term I asked student to provide me with a second evaluation to give me suggestions to improve the class. In the feedback, many students said they preferred the “One-to-One Kazoo Correction” activity over the “Kazoo Dialogue” (kazoos were used to develop students’ awareness of tones in Chinese). Also, I learned that a few students were interested in taking field trips. I adjusted my class accordingly. Students were pleased that I responded. Respecting students, valuing their voices, and being modest about my own authority earned me the students’ respect.

In addition to developing a good rapport with students, I also wanted to build relationships with my Chinese colleagues at American University. Throughout the entire semester, I had informal conversations over lunch with the two Chinese professors with whom I worked. We could discuss the questions and concerns I had as a novice Chinese teacher and I share my feelings with them. This relationship became an indispensable element in my professional development. It provided me with chances to observe the others’ classes which strengthened my “practice.” By comparing their classes with mine, I was more aware of where I needed to improve and where I was doing well. For example, I was not comfortable giving enough wait time in Chinese class. After observing my colleagues, I began to develop a sense of how much time students needed for processing questions, and I was able to build it into my classes. So strengthening my relationships also strengthened my practice.
Also, I paid attention to developing a friendly relationship with my supervisor. I invited her to observe my class and afterward she provided me with feedback. I also asked her for suggestions when I encountered unexpected problems. Particularly in terms of how to deal with administrative matters, she was an invaluable resource.

These efforts paid dividends. They helped me earn respect and trust from students, colleagues, and supervisors. Although I still viewed myself as a novice teacher, my positive interactions with others increased self esteem and allowed me to develop a better relationship with “myself,” as well as with students and colleagues.

In my ESL class, I made similar efforts to grow in terms of “relationship.” At the beginning of the semester, I handed out a questionnaire similar to the one I gave to my Chinese students. From the questionnaire, I learned many students in my ESL class still had literacy issues. Consequently, I tried to provide them with some basic learning strategies, such as when and how to take notes. In addition to the questionnaire, I made other efforts show my respect for my students. First of all, my limited knowledge of the cultures of my students’ home countries such as West Africa and Ethiopia made me feel distanced from them. For example, I was not sure how to pronounce the names of many students. However, I did learn all their names before the course began. I also made an effort to pay attention to each student, giving all fair opportunities to practice in class. Third, I never went to a class unprepared. I felt strongly that I maintained my “relationship” with my students well.

Feedback from a mid-term evaluation increased my confidence, since most students mentioned how much they enjoyed the class. This reduced my anxiety about my English
competence. I came to realize that what really mattered to the students was not my identity as an NNEST but my professional competence. The evaluation also showed the students’ appreciation for the independent learning resources I had provided (e.g., as online dictionaries with sound files for pronunciation). Paying attention to the students’ needs and their voices helped me earn their respect.

As for “relationship” with the colleagues, because my host instructor was the only teacher with whom I interacted on daily basis in my ESL class, I tried my best to be as good a guest as possible in her classroom and balance our relationship; particularly in regards to how much I should be involved in her class and what roles I should play. For example, I did my best to design my lessons to fit her lesson format and I sent my lesson plans to her, asking for her feedback, before I taught the lessons. I also took an active role in arranging pair-work, group work, and in helping students who needed additional attention. I believe the efforts earned me my host instructor’s respect and support. In return, she provided me with helpful feedback. The mutual trust that developed gave me enough flexibility to be able to develop my own teaching style while respecting the procedures and practices of her class.

My students’ trust and the host instructor’s support made me more confidence about my ability to teach the ESL class. It helped me develop trust in myself, which was crucial to my success for professional development. I started to believe that even though my NNEST language competence was different from that of NESTs, colleagues and students evaluated me in terms of teaching skills as much as my English proficiency. In fact, I realized how other professional
skills can balance language proficiency, so that NNESTs like me can be identified as competent English teachers.

**Professional Development II: Commitment**

My primary “commitment” was keeping my students engaged and motivated. In both my Chinese class and the ESL class, I used all the available resources and methods I could find to make my classes more fun and effective. For example, in my Chinese class, I designed a game of charades, which proved to be a fun and efficient way for my students to learn the Chinese characters. By acting out what they saw on the character cards, students could practice character recognition and pronunciation at the same time. In my ESL class, I downloaded many pictures of my students’ home countries as discussion points of departure and used examples related to their work to motivate their background knowledge. In both classes, I encouraged my students to become my “Skype” (an on-line audio chat tool) friends so we could initiate more informal conversations in the target language whenever they felt comfortable.

My commitment to professional growth also caused me to seek out additional feedback. I invited one of my MA in TESOL classmates, a seasoned ESL teacher, to observe my Chinese class during the first two weeks. After each class, we would discuss our perceptions of the class. We looked at my pacing, instructional language, class atmosphere, and the difficulties she encountered when she also tried to learn Chinese in my class. Those discussions not only helped me to be more aware of learners’ attitudes about my class, and also inspired me to develop new ways of teaching. For example, applying to knowledge gained in the Teaching Pronunciation course we had taken in our TESOL program, my classmate encouraged me to use
kazoos to help students heard better hear the tonal differences of Chinese. While some students were doubtful of using this toy at first, they later saw its benefits, giving it the highest rating for effectiveness of all the methods they evaluated on a midterm feedback form.

I also made a commitment to interview many of the second year Chinese learners at American University, asking them for suggestions for useful resources for learning Chinese. From them, I learned of on-line resources such as Zhongwen.com (Harbaugh, 2006) and Yellow Bridge” (Lau, 2009) and shared them with my current students. My colleagues also encouraged me to join the Chinese Language Teachers’ Association (CLTA), so I became a member and have begun to participate in this community.

As part of my professional commitment to my ESL class, I regularly attended professional workshops, observed my host instructor’s classes, and other ESL teachers’ classes. I joined professional organizations such as TESOL and WATESOL, just as I had joined comparable Chinese teacher associations. Professional participation has provided me with different perspectives about developing professionally. Professional dialogues have helped me accept that language teachers can be competent in many different ways, and to understand that there will never be a perfect language teacher. I now remind myself of this whenever I begin to feel anxiety about my English proficiency.

In the end, my commitment to being a professional language teacher implied a commitment to professional growth. I realized that it didn’t matter whether I was a native speaker language teacher or a non-native speaker language teacher, what mattered was having
“commitment” to professional competence. If I wanted to be professional, I needed to make same kinds of efforts in both classes.

**Professional Development III: Practice**

Reflecting on the matter of “practice” in language teaching, Let us consider a model of “practice” consisting of teaching knowledge and teaching skills, and then, language knowledge and language skills. “Teaching knowledge” includes knowledge of linguistics, second language acquisition and intercultural communication. “Teaching Skills” consists of teachers’ various abilities, such as designing good lesson plans, motivating students, managing the class effectively, and knowledge of approaches to intercultural communication. Teaching knowledge and skills tend to be transferable to the teaching across a variety of languages. “Language knowledge” refers to knowledge of the structure of a particular language, knowledge of the language’s pragmatic conventions, and sociocultural practices associated with that language. “Language skills” refers to one’s language proficiency and degree of acculturation within a particular speech community (Gee, 2008). Language knowledge and language skills tend to be more language specific (see Figure 2 below).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Knowledge of the structure of the language and the language’s pragmatic conventions, and sociocultural practices associated with the language.</td>
<td>Knowledge about Second Language Acquisition, Linguistics, and approaches to intercultural communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Language proficiency and degree of acculturation in the speech community.</td>
<td>Various teaching skills such as designing good lesson plans, motivating students, and managing the class effectively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Elements of “Practice”

Of these four elements, I feel that teaching skills and teaching knowledge transfer from teaching one language to another quite directly. That is to say, I use the same kinds of teaching skills and knowledge in my Chinese class and my English class. I may make different instructional choices in different classes, but they are all drawn from the same repertoire of teaching skills and knowledge. On the other hand, I have different language skills and language knowledge in my two classes: in my Chinese class, I have excellent language proficiency in the target language but I have stronger language knowledge (especially regarding its structure) in my English class.

3.1 Developing My Teaching Skills

Communicative language teaching (CLT), which largely emphasizes on improving learners’ communicative competence as well as their linguistic competence (Savignon, 2001), is now held by many to be to be a more effective approach to language instruction than audio-lingual or notional-functional methods (Nunan, 1999). Therefore I wanted to make my Chinese
and my English classes as communicative as possible. In both classes I used techniques such as information gaps, collaborative learning, and simulations so that learners would feel that they were using language authentically to solve communication problems they were likely to encounter.

3.2. Teaching Culture and Other Pragmatic Skills

A goal of teaching a language is to increase students’ communicative competence for interacting with people in the target culture. Therefore, in addition to teaching the linguistic aspects of a language, culture and other pragmatic skills should also an integral part of language instruction (Peck, 1998).

I felt very competent and comfortable in bringing cultural information and pragmatic skills to my Chinese class. As someone who had grown up in China, I was aware of the culture in all its diversity--its values, beliefs, social roles, and relationships--and I easily incorporated this knowledge into my class. For example, I told students not to respond to Chinese people too explicitly or negatively—for example it is not customary for Chinese people to say “我不好( I am not fine.),” even when they are in bad mood. Similarly, one should not open gifts directly in front of their friends to avoid the possibility of showing disappointment to the giver. I also helped my students to familiarize themselves with various forms of appropriate non-verbal communication, such as the meaning of gestures and facial expressions in Chinese culture, and encouraged them to use appropriate gestures and expressions in the role plays they created. To expose them to more of the culture and the proper use of the language, I arranged a field trip
to a well known Chinese dim sum restaurant, where they ordered food and communicated with people in Chinese.

Interestingly in the ESL class, although I am a NNEST who has less cultural knowledge than NESTs about U.S. culture, I did not feel less competent incorporating culture in the class. The difference was that in the ESL class we engaged in more critical discussion looking at U.S. culture from a multicultural point of view. This was quite natural since all the students came from different cultural backgrounds and could bring their own experiences of living in the U.S. to bear on what we were learning. As a L2 learner who studied English for almost 15 years but only came to the U.S. country a short time ago, I was extremely sensitive to the differences between the English that I had learned in China and the authentic English that is used in the U.S. So, when I found an interesting cultural phenomenon, I would share it with my students. For example, I found out that the reason why cashiers were not responding to my question of “Fine, thanks. And you?” after they greeted me with “How are you today?” was because what I perceived as a question was actually intended only as a greeting by the cashiers, not a genuine question. When I shared this experience with my students they enthusiastically shared similar experiences with me. It was exhilarating. In my Chinese class, I was the font of cultural knowledge, but in the ESL class, I was simply a more seasoned member of a team of cross cultural explorers and all our discoveries had potential value.

3.3. Teaching Pronunciation

Although both of the classes were beginning classes, I taught pronunciation in different ways. In my Chinese class, I emphasized pronunciation a great deal. I started the first class by
introducing the Pinyin system (the Romanization System for Mandarin) and the four tones of Chinese. Implementing techniques from the audio-lingual method, I asked students listen and repeat. When students mispronounced a sound or tone, I would correct them immediately.

Later in the semester, when students had been exposed more to the language, I asked them to record their own voices reading the texts that were covered in the class. I then listened to these audio files, took notes of each student’s pronunciation errors, and corrected them in the next class. As a native Chinese speaking teacher, I was confident in my ability to hear their pronunciation errors and correct them accordingly.

Nor as a native Chinese speaking teacher did I feel I needed to make an effort to earn students’ trust about the accuracy of my pronunciation or my judgments regarding pronunciation errors. The students had no hesitation about accepting me as their pronunciation model. They regularly asked me to evaluate their pronunciation. They accepted my corrections and tried to change their pronunciation accordingly.

In my English class, because of my lack of confidence about my pronunciation, I tried to eliminate (and if not possible, reduce) the activities that required me to teach pronunciation. I realized that I have always doubted my ability to correctly pronounce new vocabulary, even when I am completely familiar with it. In fact, I preferred to play audio files recorded by native speakers, hoping that students could succeed in imitating these “correct” models.

Doubting my ability was the result of many miscommunications that I encountered when I first entered the U.S. I can still remember the expressions on a clerk’s face when I told him I want to buy an eraser / ɪˈraɪə/. After asking me several times what I wanted, he finally
showed he understood, saying “oh, eraser /əˈrɛlsər/,” as if he were solving a difficult puzzle. I also continue to experience difficulty when calling automated switchboards using an artificial intelligence programs (AI). The avatars often respond that they do not understand me. Also, as I have worked as a receptionist in our TESOL program office and encountered situations where I needed to tell callers that they were eligible for a token gift and they heard me say that they could get a free “kitchen /ˈkɪtʃən/” instead of a “key chain /ˈkiːtʃiːn/.” I sometimes viewed such miscommunications as representing “fatal flaws” for me as a NNEST, at least in terms of teaching pronunciation.

In my ESL class, when students pronounced certain vowels or consonants incorrectly, I typically didn’t correct them, because I found the students comprehensible most of the time. I only corrected them on occasions when there was a huge gap between their pronunciation and the target pronunciation. This was quite different from my Chinese class where I had absolute confidence about pronunciation and tended to correct my students at will. Now I realize that I may have occasionally over corrected, and I try to take a second to evaluate before offering a correction. In my ESL class, students sometimes showed doubt about the accuracy of my pronunciation and my ability to provide useful feedback on their pronunciation. At times, they looked to my native speaking host instructor in the back of the class for confirmation of the “correct” pronunciation. That this reaction had an effect is clear, because whenever they looked back to my host instructor for confirmation, I did as well.

To ease students’ concerns, and to model good learning strategies, I also began regularly accessing an on-line dictionary (Oxford, 2009) with our classroom smart board (an
interactive, electronic whiteboard which can enhance instruction and learning) so that students could hear the audio files that “pronounced” each entry and confirm my pronunciation. In this way, students began to accept my feedback and I gradually earned their trust as an effective pronunciation instructor—thanks to judicious use of this tool.

3.4. Teaching Grammar

In my Chinese class, after each language presentation, (i.e., “a particular element of language, or aspect of language learning, to be focused on as the first major stage of a class period” (Crooks., & Chaudron, 2001, p.30), I would ask students to engage in many activities, such as role plays, pair-work, or games. Very rarely would I spend much time explaining grammatical rules. One justification was the principle of “focus on form,” which “entails a focus on meaning with attention to form arising out of the communicative activity” (Ellis, 2006). It is believed that “focus on form” can better assist in the acquisition of implicit knowledge than “focus on forms”; i.e., accuracy. However, another reason that I avoided explaining Chinese grammatical rules was that I was not confident in my ability to do so. I was actually shocked to see all the grammar rules listed at the back of each chapter of our textbook, and I was even tempted to disagree with some of them because they were too prescriptive. My problem as a native speaker was that I had acquired the language but never learned its underlying rules or received any education on Chinese grammar. Therefore, I was not able to teach grammatical rules well.

Inevitably, as students learned more and more Chinese and began to discover its complexity, they would ask questions on the linguistic points that were confusing to them.
When students asked me a grammar question that I found hard to answer, I would often have to resort to providing many similar sentences, hoping to explain the rule from a descriptive view; or I would need to put the question temporarily in my “parking lot” (a space on the board where the teacher notes issues to be visited later so as to not to distract from the lesson). Then before the next class, I would look up the matter in a grammar book or consult a colleague, so I could provide the students with a satisfactory answer.

In my ESL class, I felt I was much more competent and confident when answering students’ grammar questions and explaining grammar rules. I could point out students’ grammar errors in their writing almost instantly and provide explanations with many examples. Accordingly, they never hesitated to ask me grammar questions and never showed any doubt about my grammatical competency or judgment.

Moreover, as Brady (2002) points out, teaching is about empathy. Seidlhofer (1999) also suggests that NNESTs can often better pinpoint areas where students will have linguistic or non-linguistic problems than NESTs since they have gone through similar learning experiences. Because I had gone through the process of learning English, I was empathetic toward my students, which helped me anticipate the potential mistakes and share tricks that I had used to “conquer” English grammar. For example, one mistake which learners can easily make is the omission or mismatch of the subject and verb. To build students’ awareness of the problem, I required them to underline the subject and write a big dot under the verb of each sentence in the textbook. When I learned English, I used this as my strategy to learn the subject-verb agreement. I asked them to use this strategy to check their own writing. Students took to this
self-editing strategy, and gradually remembered to check the subject-verb agreement in this way even when I didn’t require it of them.

In my Chinese class, although I read grammar rules from the textbook, I didn’t have the same kind of empathy for my students. I hadn’t expected them to make so many grammar mistakes and consequently I didn’t take preventive measures to set them up for success. For example, one difference between Chinese and English sentence structure is that in Chinese there is a structure called “subject- adjective predicate.” In sentences using such structure, an adjective can function as a verb; therefore, verb like “是” (is) is not needed. For instance, to express “I am fine,” you’d only need to say “我 (I) 很好 (fine).” Although I mentioned this grammar rule (because I read it in the textbook), I didn’t realize how difficult it would be for the students, so I failed to provide sufficient practice and the students accordingly did not internalize the pattern.

Professional Development IV: Earning Honor and Increasing Self-esteem

I feel my efforts to grow in practice were rewarded in both classes. As Sherrie Carroll, the Director of the non-credit ESL program at Montgomery College told me, “Students love you, and you will definitely make yourself a place at Montgomery College!” In my Chinese class, I was able to see students’ respect for my professionalism in their evaluations, such as one which read, “This is my favorite class!” Such approval from my students and my supervisor increased my self-esteem and my sense of identity as a professional teacher. This validation makes me
more willing to trust myself, and helps me feel I am a professional language instructor—whether I am teaching English or Chinese.

**Conclusion**

Overall, my experience as a NNEST and NCST has made me realize that one’s first language only plays a small role in the professional teaching competence. As Taylor (2008) has suggested through her model of professional competence, a teacher’s teaching competence should be judged in three areas: practice, relationship, and commitment (not only on practice, which has often been the case traditionally). These areas of competence should be well balanced. Similarly, criteria for determining whether a language teacher is a “professional” or not should also follow models such as Taylor’s, which look at the “whole teacher” not just certain elements of practice.

There are a number of reasons for giving priority to overall professional competence rather than focusing only on a teacher’s native language. First of all, non-native language speaking teachers should be reminded that language proficiency is only part of their overall competence. Their commitment to the profession, their relationships with students and other stakeholders, and other elements of practice are crucial to defining the truly competent teacher.

Second, by working on the other aspects of professionalism (commitment, relationship, and teaching skills), non-native language speaking teachers can contextualize language proficiency in terms of other strengths and skills. However, this does not mean NNEST have no obligation to continue to improve their English (Braine, 2003), especially in regards to pronunciation and cultural knowledge. Just as native English speaking teachers need to make
an effort to learn the grammar rules of the own language and help their students develop

effective learning strategies, so too do non-native English speaking teachers need to work on

aspects of “practice” such as pronunciation and knowledge of idioms.

Third, in terms of hiring decisions, evaluation of the “relationship” and “commitment”

should be considered as important as evaluating “practice.” Most often, aspects of “practice”

(the ability to use latest teaching methodology, to manage the class, and to make students

engaged and involved etc.) are the only focus in teacher evaluations (Taylor, 2008). This

exclusive focus on practice is also seen in the Praxis II teacher licensure and certification

assessment series description, which explicitly states that “Praxis II tests measure general and

subject-specific knowledge and teaching skills” (Educational Testing Services, 2009). Neglecting

the other two elements of professionalism results in an incomplete assessment of teaching

competence and therefore, one that is invalid. This may particularly frustrate NNESTs, who feel

that they are treated like a “second class teachers” because the other talents that they bring to

instruction remain ignored while undue attention is paid to their command of English. Such

“invisible barriers” (Braine, 1998) may cause employers to reject competent, qualified NNEST

teachers solely on their nonnativeness (Mahboob, et al., 2004).

Fourth, perhaps language teacher training programs need focus more on including

training that develops competencies related to the headings of “relationship” and

“commitment,” such as interpersonal skills and strategies for developing good student rapport.

Last but not least, language teacher training programs should continue to develop ways
to address different training needs for native speakers and non-native speaking teachers, as
they have needs for different kind of knowledge. For NNESTs, courses might be better designed to focus on improving their English proficiency and fluency, including standard pronunciation, idioms, and other nuances of language, as well as courses aiming to develop their cultural awareness; whereas course work for native speaking teachers might emphasize on improving explicit grammar knowledge and techniques for explaining it. (Mahboob, forthcoming).
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III. Student Perceptions of NNESTs (and) NESTs
“SHE IMMEDIATELY UNDERSTOOD WHAT I WAS TRYING TO SAY”: STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF NNESTS AS WRITING TUTORS PEDAGOGY

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Introduction

The last two decades have seen significant growth in the number of studies that examine issues concerning non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs). Perhaps the central question that characterizes the non-native English-speaking teacher literature is this: who is best qualified to teach English, the native or the non-native teacher? Many studies have described the relative strengths and weaknesses of native and non-native teachers by investigating student and/or teacher perceptions through surveys, interviews, and journals (e.g., Braine, 1999; Davies, 1991; Medgyes, 1992; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Liu, 1999). For example, native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) are assumed to be superior in linguistic competence as compared to non-native speakers and are considered owners of proper, authentic English (Widdowson, 1994). Conversely, NNESTs are credited with more conscious knowledge of grammar, language learning experience that they can share with learners, and the ability to empathize with language learners, as well as with serving as good role models (Braine 1999; Mahboob, 2004; Shin, 2008; Tang, 1997).

While several studies have documented the relative strengths of NESTs and NNESTs as language teachers in general, few studies have specifically investigated students’ perceptions of
NESTs and NNESTs as teachers of writing. The current study aims to contribute to filling this gap by investigating perceptions of ESL students who received tutorial help from native and non-native English-speaking writing tutors through one-on-one writing conferences. Specifically, this study examines the educational benefits to English learners when the students and their tutors come from the same first language and cultural background.

**Research on Student Perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs**

Recent research suggests that student perceptions of NNESTs may depend on a number of factors, including students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds and the extent of their experience with NNESTs. For example, Saito (2005) examined students’ attitudes toward non-native English-speaking teaching assistants at a university in the United States. The results showed that while English-speaking American students tended to view their NNESTs’ lack of fluent command of English as a problem, students who had learned English as a second language were more likely to consider the first language background of their NNESTs as an asset. Similarly, Moussu (2007) demonstrated that although ESL students generally have more positive attitudes toward NESTs than NNESTs, students who are taught by NNESTs tend to be more positively inclined toward NNESTs than those who have not had NNESTs as teachers.

In another study of ESL students’ perceptions of their NNESTs, Bae (2006) showed that her student participants had positive attitudes toward their NNESTs and appreciated NNESTs’ knowledge about language structure and pedagogy. The students felt that NNESTs could understand their language learning difficulties better than could NESTs and viewed NNESTs as language learning role models who could inspire and encourage them in the learning process.
Not surprisingly, NNESTs scored higher on affective factors (e.g., more patient, understanding, and caring) than NESTs who had never learned another language. In a study of the perceptions of students enrolled in an intensive English program, Mahboob (2004) found that students perceived NESTs to be best at teaching oral skills, vocabulary, and culture and NNESTs to be more effective in teaching literacy skills and grammar. Students in his study recognized the unique attributes of NESTs and NNESTs and sought to benefit from interacting with both groups.

Turning the focus to EFL contexts, Rao (2008) surveyed Chinese EFL students’ views of NESTs teaching English in China. The students in this study identified three main problems with their NESTs: (1) they tended to be less sensitive to the students’ language learning difficulties than Chinese English teachers; (2) their Western teaching styles were often in conflict with Chinese students’ learning styles; and (3) they had little familiarity with the local culture and the Chinese educational system. The author notes that the clash between the different teaching and learning expectations of NESTs and their Chinese EFL students is particularly significant. Most Chinese students accustomed to teacher-centered instruction and providing one correct answer to close-ended questions find the more holistic student-centered teaching approaches of Western teachers to be foreign, and NESTs often wonder why their Chinese students seem reticent to speak up and express their ideas. The author encourages Chinese English teachers to work collaboratively with NESTs to provide the maximum instructional benefit to the students.
Method

Participants

The current study is part of a larger investigation of native- and non-native teachers’ feedback on college-level ESL students’ writing (cf. Park, 2008). Four Korean ESL students (two male and two female) and four writing tutors (all female, two Korean and two American) served as participants. All four students were in their early twenties and were educated in Korea before coming to the United States. At the time of this study, all four students were enrolled in an intermediate reading and writing course in an intensive English program at a U.S. university. All four writing tutors were taking a course in teaching reading and writing to ESL students and were working toward their master’s degree in TESOL at the same university. The two Korean tutors received their bachelor’s degrees in Korea and came to the United States to pursue their M.A. in TESOL. As pre-service ESL teachers, none of the four tutors had much prior experience in teaching writing.

Procedures

Each student was paired with one of the four tutors for one-on-one writing conferences. As noted in Table 1, two pairs were each composed of a Korean student and a Korean tutor (NNEST pairs 1 and 2), and the other two were each composed of a Korean student and an American tutor (NEST pairs 1 and 2). Each pair had three separate one-on-one writing conferences about the students’ first drafts on three different writing assignments from their intermediate reading and writing course. The three assignments were the second, third, and fourth essays of a total of five assignments in the course and focused on three aspects of
academic writing: narration, analysis, and comparison and contrast. Each conference lasted at least thirty minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NNEST pair 1</td>
<td>Jiong (F)</td>
<td>Jongsoo (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNEST pair 2</td>
<td>Mikyeong (F)</td>
<td>Minhee (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEST pair 1</td>
<td>Patty (F)</td>
<td>Jihoon (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEST pair 2</td>
<td>Sue (F)</td>
<td>Boram (F)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The four tutor-student pairs

At the conclusion of the third conference, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with each student participant. The student participants were interviewed in Korean so as to allow them to express their views freely in the language in which they felt most comfortable. The following questions were used to guide the interviews:

1. 선생님이 해주신 조언 중에 자신이 동의하지 않았던 것이 있었나요? 있으면 동의하지 않은 이유는 무엇입니까? (Was there anything on which you did not agree with your tutor? If so, what was it and why did you not agree with her?)

2. 본인이 의도했던 의미를 선생님께 설명하는데 어려움이 있었나요? 있으면 주로 어떤 것이었나요? (Did you have any difficulty explaining your intended meanings in your writing to your tutor? If so, what was it?)

3. 과외 도중 선생님의 피드백을 이해하는데 어려움이 있었나요? 있으면 주로 어떤 것이었나요? (Did you have any difficulty understanding your tutor’s feedback during the conferences? If so, what was it?)

4. 훌륭한 영어 쓰기 선생님의 자격이 무엇이라고 생각합니까? (What do you think are the qualifications of a good English writing teacher?)

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2 All participant names are pseudonyms.
5. 미국 선생님 혹은 한국 선생님에게 특별히 배우고 싶은 것이 있나요? 있다면 어떤 것입니까? 그 이유는 무엇입니까? (What aspect of English would you like to learn from an American teacher? What aspect of English would you like to learn from a Korean teacher?)

Analysis

All of the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The interview data was analyzed to identify what the student participants thought of the conferences and how they perceived their tutors. In the results section, we highlight some of the recurring themes in the student responses.

Results

Advantages of having a shared mother tongue

Our analysis of the student interviews revealed that having the option to switch to the first language to talk about writing was one of the most significant benefits of having an NNEST as a writing tutor. The two students who were paired with American tutors obviously did not have this option and felt restricted in their ability to communicate their intended meanings. For example, Jihoon felt that his lack of oral skills in English prevented him from expressing his ideas fully during the conferences:

의사소통에 어려움이 생기니까 하고 싶은 말이 있어도 그냥 포기해 버릴때도 많았어요. 선생님의 제안에 제 의견을 덧붙이거나 내 본래 의도를 이야기하고 싶어도 영어가 되어야 하죠.
(Because I had difficulty communicating in English, I often gave up trying to explain what I really wanted to say. I wanted to add my opinions to my tutor’s suggestions and express my intended meanings but I couldn’t because of my poor English.)

또 제가 쓴 표현을 선생님이 이해를 못하겠다고 설명을 해보려고 무슨 뜻으로 쓴건지. 그런데 한국말로 설명하면 진짜 간단한 건데 영어로 제의도를 설명하려고 하니까 한숨밖에 안나와요. 설명한다고 해도 잘 설명했나 의문스럽고...그래서 그런 아예 설명을 할려고도 하지 않은 적도 많아요. 되게 답답해요.

(Another thing is that when she asked me to clarify some of my expressions, she couldn’t understand. It’s really simple to explain things in Korean, but when I tried to explain it in English, it was so hard I just sighed the whole time. When I did try, I wasn’t sure whether I explained things right in English...So I often didn’t even try to explain. It’s really frustrating.)

In addition to a communication barrier caused by her limited oral proficiency in English, a difficulty Boram encountered was not being able to understand why her American tutor kept telling her to end her essay on a direct, conclusive note when she had always been taught to end an essay on an indirect note, a prominent feature in good Korean writing:

또 다른건 마지막에 한국식으로 여운을 남기는 말을 쓰고 싶었는데 선생님은 그걸 딱 지적하시면서 까놓게 결론을 지어야 한다고 하셨어요. 한국식으로 돌려서 함축적으로 말을 하고 싶은데 그런건 항상 지적을 하시더라고요. 그렇게 쓰면 안된다고.

(Another thing is that when I tried to end my paper with some indirect expressions [as writers are expected to in Korean writing] my tutor pointed out that it was not good, that I should use direct expressions and conclude cleanly. I like to write by implication, but she always pointed those out and said I shouldn’t write like that.)
In contrast, Jongsoo and Minhee, who were paired with Korean tutors, did not seem to have any communication difficulties during the conferences. In fact, the NNEST pairs often resorted to Korean to negotiate meaning and discuss language learning strategies. For example, Minhee stated,

처음에 영어로 할때는 제가 하려고 하는 말을 잘 이해하지 못하셔서 제가 동의할 수 없는 피드백을 주셨던 적이 있어요. 그래서 제가 결국 한국말로 그런 뜻이 아니라고 설명했어요. 그리고 한국말로 했을 때는 그런 적이 없었어요.

(When I first tried to speak in English, my tutor didn’t really understand what I wanted to say and gave me some feedback I did not agree with. So I explained in Korean that that wasn’t what I had meant. Once I started speaking in Korean, I didn’t have this difficulty.)

Similarly, Jongsoo appreciated the explanations his tutor provided in Korean:

한국말로 했기때문에 전혀 어려움이 없었어요. 제가 항상 궁금해 하고 어려워했던 것을 선생님이 시원시원하게 가르쳐 주셔서 좋았어요... 또 구구절절 설명하지 않아도 제가 무슨 말을 쓰려고 한다면 바로 이해를 하시고 도움을 주셨어요. 그런 선생님도 한국 사람이고 한국 학생들의 오류를 잘 이해하기 때문이겠죠.

(Because I was allowed to use Korean, I didn’t have any difficulty. I loved that my tutor clearly explained things I was always curious about and what I thought was difficult...And even though I didn’t explain my intended meaning in nitty gritty detail, she immediately understood what I was trying to say. It’s probably because she is Korean and she understands Korean students’ errors.)
Wanted: explicit, detailed feedback

All four students stated that they would like their writing teachers to provide explicit, detailed feedback on their writing. According to the students’ accounts of the conferences, the Korean tutors provided more detailed feedback that was more closely matched to the students’ needs than did the American tutors. This was probably due to the fact that the Korean tutors themselves had learned English as a second language and could identify with their students’ difficulties. The native English-speaking tutors, on the other hand, had little knowledge of the specific linguistic and rhetorical challenges that the students faced when writing in English. For example, Jihoon felt lost when he was repeatedly asked by his tutor to add more details to his writing without being given concrete examples:

미국 선생님은 항상 원가 내용이 부족하다고 하셨어요. 전 할말을 다했는데 항상 더 쓰라고 한니가 뭐 써야할지 모르겠어요.

(My American tutor always told me that my content was insufficient. I wrote everything I wanted to say, so I really didn’t know what else to add.)

Boram felt that her tutor’s general feedback on her essay was not detailed enough. Like most other ESL students planning to study in American universities, she was eager to have every error corrected in her writing (cf. Leki, 1992).

선생님이 자세하게 한 문장 한 문장 설명하시지 않았고 그냥 전체적으로 간단하게 피드백을 주고 저한테 질문을 받는 식이었거든요. 좀 더 피드백을 자세하게 받고 싶은건 있었어요. 최대한 많이 틀린걸 지적해 주기를 원했거든요.
(She didn’t try to look at my paper sentence by sentence; she gave me broad feedback over my whole paper and had me ask questions. I wanted to get more detailed feedback. I wanted her to correct my mistakes as much as possible.)

In contrast, Minhee and Jongsoo seemed considerably more satisfied with the kind of feedback they received from their Korean tutors. Specifically, Minhee appreciated her tutor’s thorough explanations of grammar and writing strategies:

한국 선생님이 한국말로 뭔가 시원하지 않은 문법이나 학습 방법 같은 것들을 시원하게 설명해 주시잖아요...이번에 한국 선생님과 공부하면서 아웃라인 잡는 거라든지 쓰기 전략같은 방법적인 측면에서 많이 배웠어요. 이제 글쓰는게 더 자신감이 생기구요 실력도 많이 늘어나서 기분이 좋아요.

(Korean teachers use Korean to clearly explain grammatical points or learning strategies that I have not been sure about...While studying with my Korean tutor, I learned a great deal about outlining and writing strategies. Now I feel more confident about my writing. I feel like my writing has improved. I’m happy about that.)

Jongsoo also valued the English learning strategies that his Korean tutor shared with him:

한국인 선생님이 가르쳐 주실 때는 본인이 공부했을 때 경험을 살려서 잘 설명을 해주셨어요. 학생 입장에서 본인에게 어려운 게 뭐였나를 먼저 생각하고, 어떤 방법이 효과적이었는지, 또 학생들에게 더 이해되기 쉽게 설명하려고 하니까 좋았던거 같아요.

(During the tutoring sessions with my Korean tutor, she explained things to me based on her own experiences as a language learner. I liked the way she shared what was difficult for her and what methods worked for her and how she tried to explain things in ways that are easy for students to understand.)
Students seemed to notice that their non-native tutors, having been second language learners themselves, “have deeper insights into...the learning process” (Medgyes, 2001, p. 437).

Reflecting on their own language learning experiences, non-native teachers can understand why their students make the language errors they make and can share their own strategies for improving language skills. Moreover, non-native teachers provide ESL students with an attainable model for what non-native English speakers could accomplish (Shin, 2007).

One technique often used by native English speakers to edit their writing, namely reading their paper aloud to see if every sentence sounds right, is not a very useful technique for ESL writers because they lack native speaker intuitions for knowing what sounds right in English (Shin, 2002). Instead, many ESL writers benefit more from formal explanations of grammar because many of them learned English through grammar-based methods. In the following, Jihoon shares that he did not receive adequate explanations about why one sentence was better than another:

(Whenever I asked questions concerning grammar, my American tutor just said that one sentence is right because it sounds natural, without explaining why...She might never have thought of the reasons because it’s her native language. That’s when I felt like I didn’t quite understand things.)
Jihoon reasons that his American tutor does not have to think about English grammar because English is her native language. He thinks that NNESTs who share the same native language with students can better understand students’ intended meanings and predict their difficulties:

미국 선생님은 틀렸다고만 하지 왜 그렇게 쓰면 안되는데 시원하게 설명해 주지 않아요. 그러니까 다음에 또 틀리고 그래요. 그냥 한국 선생님이 속시원히 설명해 주시면 좋겠어요. 같은 한국 사람으로써 한국 학생들에게 왜 그런 문제가 발생하는지 더 잘 설명해 줄수 있잖아요.

(American teachers usually say something is wrong and don’t explain clearly why it is wrong. That’s why I keep making the same mistakes again. I would rather like to learn those things clearly from Korean teachers. I think that they can better explain why Korean students make the mistakes they make because they are also Korean.)

Boram concurred that Korean teachers are better at explaining English grammar and writing than native speakers:

문법이나 쓰기는 한국 선생님이 더 잘 설명해 주는 것 같아요. 미국 선생님께 배웠던 것을 생각해보면 체계적으로 문법을 배운거 같지는 않아요. 그냥 알고 있던 것을 조금 더 자세하게 알게 되었다는 정도구요.

(I think that Korean teachers teach English grammar and writing better. When I think back to my experience of learning English grammar from American teachers, I feel that they were not very systematic. It’s like I learned just a little more than what I already knew.)

Jongsoo also felt that Korean teachers have much to offer students in terms of learning strategies:
내가 공부해 보니까 이런게 알리더라 그럼 이렇게 이해를 하고 외우면 쉽다라든지..같은 모국어를 쓰니까 비슷한 실수나 문제를 가지고 있더라구요.
그니까 자신이 했던 실수를 학생은 좀 더 잘 극복할 수 있도록 도움을 주고 그러는게 좋았어요.

(For example, she pointed out a few things that were confusing to her when she was a student and let me know how to understand and memorize them easily. Since we speak the same native language, we make similar mistakes and have similar problems. It was great that she helped me overcome those mistakes.)

Overall, the students recognized distinct advantages of receiving writing help from Korean tutors. As Cook (1999) points out, multilingual (non-native speaker) teachers are probably more capable and qualitatively different from monolingual (native speaker) teachers. With non-native teachers who share students’ mother tongue, students not only use their first language as a communicative resource to negotiate their meaning but also benefit from detailed feedback that accurately addresses problems in their writing.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The current study sought to examine ESL students’ perceptions of native- and non-native English speakers as writing tutors. Specifically, this study investigated students’ perceptions of non-native English-speaking tutors who shared the students’ first language and culture. Contrary to the popular perception that NESTs are more highly qualified as language teachers than NNESTs, the results of this study indicate that NNESTs who share students’ mother tongue can be as effective as, if not more effective than, NESTs in helping ESL students improve their writing in English.
Although this study is limited by the small number of participants, the findings revealed that the student participants clearly preferred Korean tutors over native English-speaking tutors. The students who were paired with native English-speaking tutors experienced difficulties in orally communicating their intended meanings in English during the writing conferences. Explaining the subtle nuances of their thinking in English proved to be quite painstaking at times, which sometimes led the students to give up on trying to express their ideas altogether. These students also felt that their tutors’ comments were too general and did not adequately answer questions regarding English grammar and rhetoric. In contrast, the students who were paired with non-native English-speaking (Korean) tutors welcomed and took advantage of the option to switch to Korean to negotiate meaning. As a result, they received explanations that were carefully matched to their specific language learning needs. They felt that their tutors diagnosed their writing difficulties precisely and suggested useful techniques to overcome their difficulties.

It is noteworthy that the students’ expectations for their writing tutors closely matched what many NNESTs consider their strengths and qualifications for language teaching: the ability to understand students’ errors, share language learning strategies, and explain English grammar rules and rhetoric in ways that students can understand (Braine, 2004; Medgyes, 2001). Because the NNESTs are also second language learners, they tend to possess deeper insights into the process of acquiring language skills. Moreover, they tend to score high on empathy toward students trying to master a second language and serve as successful models of what students can aspire to become. Although the students in this study preferred Korean tutors over native English speakers for their writing tutorials, they recognized the unique
contributions of NESTs. The students agreed that NESTs are superior to NNESTs in teaching oral English skills and introducing students to the target culture. This finding is consistent with Mahboob’s (2004) observation that students tend to prefer learning listening and speaking skills from NESTs but writing and grammar from NNESTs. On the whole, the students in this study, as those in previous studies, accepted the unique strengths of NESTs and NNESTs and wanted to benefit from both types of teachers.

This finding carries an important implication for teacher recruitment and professional development. Since NESTs and NNESTs have complementary strengths, it seems worthwhile to maintain a balance of NESTs and NNESTs in English language programs, in order to provide students with the best learning opportunities. NESTs and NNESTs should be encouraged to work together to complement one another and maximize their potential as language professionals (Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Mahboob, 2004; Medgyes, 2001; Rao, 2008). De Oliveira and Richardson (2004) describe a collaborative NNEST-NEST partnership in which the authors were able to benefit from each other’s expertise. For example, by collaborating with De Oliveira (an NNEST from Brazil), Richardson (an American NEST) became better able to understand the process of learning ESL or EFL. De Oliveira shared strategies that she used to learn English, many of which Richardson subsequently suggested to her students. In turn, De Oliveira gained in-depth knowledge about American culture and acquired idioms, vocabulary, and pragmatic competence. When NESTs and NNESTs collaborate, students ultimately benefit from the shared expertise of their teachers.
The findings of the current study are significant not only for English education in Korea, but also for that in other countries where English is taught and learned as a foreign language. Since the two NNESTs who participated in this study shared the students’ native language and culture, the results can apply to other EFL contexts where the students and teachers share the same language and culture. Despite increasing awareness of NNESTs’ apparent strengths in TESOL, NNESTs continue to exhibit low self-confidence in their linguistic and teaching skills (Moussu, 2007). The fear of being viewed by students, fellow teachers, and administrators as incompetent teachers can be overwhelming for NNESTs. However, with greater awareness of their strengths as language teachers and persistent efforts to build high levels of English competence and pedagogical knowledge, NNESTs can realize their full potential as TESOL professionals.
References


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STUDENTS’ APPRAISAL OF THEIR NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING TEACHERS

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Introduction

In recent years a number of studies have explored attitudes towards and perceptions of non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs). However, most of these studies, not unlike other work on language attitudes, have used surveys (Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Moussu, 2006) and/or qualitative data that focussed on emerging themes/content (Mahboob, 2004; Mahboob & Griffin, 2006). While survey data provide a statistical analysis of participants’ attitudes (based on a predetermined set of comments and/or criteria) and the qualitative data document participants’ attitudes in terms of the categories of comments that emerge from the data, the actual language used by students to project their perceptions is left unanalysed. The results of the existing studies that do look at qualitative data are presented in terms of categories of comments that were recorded in favour of or against teachers’ native-speaker status. The actual discourse of evaluation is not analysed. Thus, missing from the current literature is an analysis of the actual language used to comment on NESTs and NNESTs in interview and other qualitative data. It is our contention that an analysis of students’ language of appraisal will add to the richness of our understanding of perceptions. The goal of the present study is therefore to examine students’ perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs by conducting a linguistic analysis of students’ texts.
**Background and methodology**

Data for this project come from essays written by 19 Japanese high school students attending a 4-month ESL orientation program at the beginning of a year-long study abroad program in the United States. The program was taught by two TESOL professionals: one an NEST and another an NNEST. Program participants were asked to write a diagnostic essay at the beginning (T1) and end (T2) of the program on the topic:

Some students think that only native speakers can be good language teachers. Others think that non-natives can also be efficient teachers. What is your opinion about this issue? Please feel free to provide details and examples.

These essays were collected with two goals in mind: 1) to evaluate students’ writing and grammar, and 2) to explore any shift in students’ perceptions towards native and non-native English speaking TESOL professionals. The essay task was based on Mahboob (2003) in which the essays written by ESL students in an intensive English language program in the United States were studied for their attitudes towards NNESTs. Mahboob (2003) used the grounded approach to study these data and observed that ESL students did not prefer native or non-native speakers but rather found them to bring unique attributes to their classes. Following Mahboob (2003), Griffin and Mahboob (2006) also applied the grounded approach to their study. Corroborating earlier findings, they found that students’ comments could be placed into three broad categories: linguistic factors, teachings styles, and personal factors. The first group, linguistic factors, includes “oral skills”, “literacy skills”, “grammar”, “vocabulary”, and “culture”; the second group, teaching styles, includes “ability to answer questions” and “teaching methodology”; and the third group, personal factors, includes “experience as an ESL learner”,

“hard-work”, and “affect”. Within each of these categories, they reported both positive and negative comments (examples of these categories are provided in Appendix A.)

The results of the study showed that the trends in student responses did not change over time: e.g., NESTs were still considered strong in teaching oral skills and NNESTs were considered strong teachers of literacy skills. The results also indicated that ESL students in this study found the distinction between NESTs and NNESTs less relevant after being exposed to both in an ESL setting. However, like previous work in this area, students’ language of appraisal was not studied. It is here that the present study adds a fresh perspective to this body of work.

**Theoretical framework**

The Appraisal Framework is an extension of M.A.K. Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory. The model emerged from work by functional linguists on the role of evaluation in narrative in the context of secondary school and workplace literacy. Their concern was to build a comprehensive framework of evaluative meanings that could be used systematically in discourse analysis (Martin, 2000, 2003). As Martin (2000: 144) contends, ‘What ha[d] tended to be elided in SFL approaches [until then] [...] is the semantics of evaluation—how the interlocutors are feeling, the judgements they make, and the value they place on the various phenomena of their experience’. Since its inception, the Appraisal Framework has been applied to the analysis of spoken and written texts across a wide range of areas, including conversation (Eggins and Slade, 1997; Precht, 2003), institutional talk (Lipovsky, 2008), spoken academic discourse (Hood & Forey, 2005), academic writing (Hood, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006), literacy (Rothery & Stenglin, 2000), media discourse (e.g. White, 1997, 1998, 2006; Martin, 2004), medical discourse (Jordens, 2002), and so on.
The Appraisal framework describes the linguistic means by which individuals encode their feelings and beliefs (or attitudes), how they grade the strength of these feelings and sharpen or blur their utterances, and how they position themselves with regards to these values and possible respondents, hence the three sub-systems of Attitude, Graduation and Engagement (see Figure 1). The system of Attitude especially is concerned with all types of evaluative assessments, both positive and negative (see Martin, 2000; White, 2002, Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005; or White, 2005 for further description). More specifically, it might entail how individuals share their feelings (e.g. how happy or unhappy, or satisfied or dissatisfied they are), assess people’s behaviour (their capacity, their tenacity, and so on) and appraise the value of things and performances (e.g. how significant something is), hence the three categories of Affect for presenting emotional responses, Judgement for evaluating human behaviour, and Appreciation for evaluating products and performances. These three categories are illustrated in the examples below (Attitudes are in bold):

- **Affect:** He *likes* teaching English.
- **Judgement:** He is a *brilliant* teacher.
- **Appreciation:** His classes are *exciting*.
ATTITUDE

Values expressed by the speaker/writer

AFFECT

for presenting emotional responses

JUDGEMENT

for assessing human behaviour

APPRECIATION

for evaluating products or performances

FORCE

intensifies/downgrades the speaker’s/writer’s attitudes

GRADUATION

FOCUS

sharpens/blurs the speaker’s/writer’s attitudes

Figure 1: System of Appraisal (adapted from Martin & Rose, 2003)

Each category of Attitude in turn includes a variety of subcategories. They are summarised in Figure 2. These categories will be drawn upon hereafter as required in the course of our analysis.
Is the person secure?

(Dis)satisfaction

Is the person satisfied?

Confidence / Trust

Ennui / Displeasure

Interest / Admiration

Normality

Is the person special?

Capacity

Is the person capable?

Tenacity

Is the person committed?

Veracity

Is the person honest?

Propriety

Is the person beyond reproach?

JUDGEMENT

(evaluating behaviour)

Social esteem

Capacity

Social sanction

Veracity

Propriety

APPRECIATION

Reaction

Impact

Did it grab me?
(evaluating texts, processes, and natural phenomena)

Quality

Did I like it?

Balance

Did it hang together?

Complexity

Was it hard to follow

Valuation

Was it worthwhile?

Figure 2: Subcategories of Attitude (adapted from Martin, 2000)

The system further distinguishes feelings that involve reactions to a ‘realis’ stimulus (e.g. ‘she liked English’) from intentions towards an ‘irrealis’ stimulus (e.g. ‘she wanted to learn English’). It also differentiates ‘inscribed’ Attitudes that are made explicitly, using attitudinal lexis (e.g. ‘a knowledgeable teacher’), from ‘invoked’ Attitudes or ‘tokens’ that are evoked through descriptions of one’s experience (e.g. ‘a teacher who could answer all the questions that I asked’).

Performance and capacity of the performer are of course strongly connected. So a positive or negative Appreciation of a performance may imply a positive or negative Judgement of the performer, as in the following example:

Her pronunciation is good [+APPRECIATION: Valuation] [t, +JUDGEMENT: Capacity].
In this statement, ‘good’ realises the student’s Valuation of her NNEST’s pronunciation. In doing so though, the student also provides a positive Judgement of her teacher’s oral skills.

Lastly, Attitudes are gradable, so they can be amplified (as in ‘a very good teacher’) or downgraded (as in ‘a teacher a bit boring’). Utterances can also be sharpened (e.g. ‘a real teacher’) or blurred (e.g. ‘some kind of teacher’). In the Appraisal system, this is referred to as Graduation (see Figure 3). Hood 2004a, Martin and White 2005, or Hood and Martin 2006 provide detailed descriptions of Graduation.

![Diagram of Graduation System](adapted from Martin & Rose, 2003)
The system thus provides an effective tool for analysing attitudinal meanings. In the context of the present study, it is effectively used to investigate students’ attitudes towards their NESTs and NNESTs.

Results

The T1 and T2 essays were coded, counting every instance of Attitude (Affect, Judgement and Appreciation) and Graduation (Force and Focus). Some students included in their essays narratives on non-native speakers who were not teachers, or related their own experience of teaching Japanese to foreigners. These examples were not included in the analysis and only evaluations pertaining to teachers and ALTs (‘Assistant Language Teachers’, that is, native speakers of English who teach conversation classes in Japanese schools) were accounted for. Then, to give a better representation of the students’ evaluations of their teachers, we found it necessary to differentiate instances of Judgement (Capacity). Thus, we distinguish in our discussion teachers’ linguistic competence (in both Japanese and English) from their teaching ability.

The Appraisal analysis gave a detailed representation of the students’ attitudes towards their NESTs and NNESTs. In the students’ essays, emotional responses were infrequent and most evaluations were applied to either the N/NESTs themselves (i.e. Judgements), or their performance (i.e. Appreciations). In the next section, we discuss their linguistic competences and teaching ability, as well as some personal factors, presenting various examples taken from the students’ essays in doing so.
Linguistic competences

In their Judgements and Appreciations of NESTs’ and NNESTs’ linguistic competences, the students commented on their teachers’ oral skills (i.e. listening and speaking/pronunciation), literacy skills (reading and writing), grammar, vocabulary and knowledge of culture. Some students also commented on their N/NESTs’ competence (or lack of competence) in the native language of their students.

Oral skills

We included in this category the teaching of listening and speaking/pronunciation, as well as conversational skills. All the evaluations of the NESTs were positive, e.g.:

(1) Native speaker has **good** [+APP Valuation] sound of language [t, +JUD Capacity]. Student #9 / T1

(2) Of course her [NEST’s] pronunciation was **much** [GRA: Force: intensity] **better** [GRA: Force: intensity] / +APP Valuation] than Japanese teachers [t, +JUD Capacity]. Student #18 / T2

(3) Their conversations [NNESTs’] are **so** [GRA: Force: intensity] **cool** [+APP Valuation] ! [GRA: Force: intensity] Student #19 / T1

NESTs’ oral skills were viewed as ‘good’, ‘natural’, ‘real’—even ‘cool’! This view is supported by comment (2), which seems to imply that native speakers possess ideal skills (see ‘of course’). Note, however, how NESTs are evaluated through a comparative (‘her

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3 The extracts from the essays are shown as written by the students. Numbers refer to students. ‘T1’ refers to the first set of essays, ‘T2’ to the second set. The coding for Attitudes is indicated in the brackets. ‘AFF’ stands for ‘AFFECT’, ‘JUD’ for ‘JUDGEMENT’, ‘APP’ for ‘APPRECIATION’ and ‘GRA’ for ‘GRADUATION’. ‘+’ indicates a positive Attitude whereas ‘-’ indicates a negative Attitude. The letter ‘t’ for ‘token’ indicates an evoked or non-explicit Attitude. Attitudes are marked in bold; Graduations are underlined.
pronunciation was much better), which does not preclude NNESTs’ good pronunciation (see Mahboob & Lipovsky (2007) for further discussion).

NNESTs on the other hand received both positive and negative evaluations, e.g.:

(4) Her pronunciation is really [GRA: Force: intensity] good [+APP Valuation] [t, +JUD Capacity].
Student #15 / T1

This student valued her NNEST’s pronunciation highly, as shown by the intensifier ‘really’. A number of students however viewed their NNESTs’ oral skills negatively, e.g.:

(5) They [NNESTs] sometimes speak like Japanese pronunciation [t, -JUD Incapacity]. Student #6 / T2

(6) In Japanese school, we are taught English by non-natives teachers. Their pronunciation is so [GRA: Force: intensity] bad [-APP Reaction / t, -JUD Incapacity]. And we can’t learn [t, -JUD Incapacity] listening, we are not used to listen from natives teachers [t, -JUD Incapacity]. so it is hard [-APP Reaction / t, -AFF Unhappiness] for us. When I came to U.S, I couldn’t listen a lot of [GRA: Force: quantity: amount] words [t, -JUD Incapacity]. Student #4 / T2

Example (6) highlights the connection between performance and ability, as the student’s negative Appreciation of NNESTs’ pronunciation of English (‘their pronunciation is so bad’) entails a negative Judgement of their speaking skills. This in turn resulted in a series of negative Judgements of the student’s listening skills (‘we can’t learn listening’, ‘we are not used to listen from natives teachers’ and ‘when I came to U.S, I couldn’t listen a lot of words’). This also occasioned negative feelings on the part of the student (‘it is hard for us’). This exemplifies how an Appraisal analysis provides more fine-tuned information than a Thematic analysis, such as
bringing to light the impact of N/NESTs’ competences onto their students’ competences, even highlighting students’ feelings over the process.

**Competence in the learners’ native language**

A number of comments dealt with N/NESTs’ competence (or lack of competence) in their students’ native tongue. Some students viewed this as an incentive for practising their conversation skills in English, e.g.:

(7) This teacher [NEST] doesn’t speak our language and understand what I say [t, -JUD Incapacity] so I must speak teacher’s language and I’ll become a **good** [+APP Valuation] speaker! [GRA: Force: intensity] Student #6 / T1

This aspect did not emerge in Mahboob’s study (2003) since the essays that discussed the learners’ experience in their own country were discarded. What is of particular interest to us within the scope of the present study though is that what would have been picked up as a deficiency in the Thematic analysis (NESTs do not speak Japanese and therefore cannot communicate in this language with their students) turns out to be an advantage since it obliges learners to communicate exclusively in English, thus contributing to their progress. Note how the negative Judgement on the NEST (‘this teacher doesn’t speak our language and understand what I say’) is explicitly linked to a positive Appreciation of the learner’s skills (‘so I must speak teacher’s language and I’ll become a good speaker!’).

On the other hand, some students viewed NESTs’ lack of knowledge in their students’ native language as an obstacle to learners’ comprehension, e.g.:
(8) It is a problem [-APP Valuation] that we sometimes cannot figure it out only with explaining from native speakers [t, -JUD Incapacity]. [...] So we need our mother tongue, Japanese to understand the meaning of words more clearly. Also, if we asked some questions to native speakers, they didn’t answer them clearly [t, -JUD Incapacity]. Student #5 / T2

This student appreciated negatively the fact that NESTs cannot provide explanations in the learners’ native language, especially as far as the learning of vocabulary is concerned. NESTs’ answers to their students’ questions were also considered unclear, possibly because of the language factor. In effect, NESTs’ inability to speak their students’ tongue and answer their questions in that language puts more onus on the students. Mahboob (2003) does not discuss this aspect, since the participants in his study are intermediate and advanced students.

Examples 7 and 8 also show the advantage of an Appraisal analysis over a Thematic analysis, as they highlight how some students can view a factor as an advantage, while some others view the very same factor as a disadvantage.

Likewise, NNESTs’ ability in their students’ tongue was viewed as either impeding their speaking skills, or, on the contrary, as facilitating their learning and understanding of English, as the two examples below illustrate:

(9) The best [GRA: Force: intensity] of good [+APP Valuation] things [about NNESTs] is to be able to speak same language with students [t, +JUD Capacity]. If we have a question, we can ask English or first language [t, +JUD Capacity]. If we cannot speak [t, -JUD Incapacity], first language is better [+APP Valuation / GRA: Force: intensity] than English. Student #6 / T2
(10) When I talked to non-natives in no our language, and I found the language, I spoke our
language and teacher may help [+JUD Capacity] us. but this help is far [GRA: Force: intensity] from
good [-APP Valuation] speakers, I think. Student #6 / T1

In example (9), NNESTs’ ability in the students’ native language is viewed as an advantage for
language learning. However in example (10), this ability is viewed as a disadvantage since it
might hinder learners’ progress. Examples 9 and 10 highlight another instance when the
Appraisal analysis proves more fine-tuned than the Thematic analysis, as it shows how the
same factor can generate either a positive or a negative Appreciation.

Literacy skills

Students evaluated NNESTs’ literacy skills (reading and writing) positively, e.g.;

(11) He [NNEST] has mastered [JUD Cap / GRA: Force: Intensity] speaking, writing, and listening [t,
+JUD Capacity]. Student #12 / T1

(12) My high school’s English teacher can’t speak English well [t, -JUD Incapacity]. But, I can learn
good [+APP Valuation] writing at his class [t, +JUD Capacity]. Student #7 / T1

This latter comment suggests that NNESTs can have good literacy teaching skills, independently
of their ability in other skills. On the other hand, another student wrote:

(13) Some Americans cannot write in English in formal style or are confused between expressions
for speaking and for writing [t, -JUD Incapacity]. Student #5 / T2

These comments illustrate students’ awareness that literacy skills are learned, and thus
independent of other skills.
Grammar

Students valued NNESTs’ knowledge and teaching of grammar positively, e.g.:

(14) His [NNEST’s] grammar is better [GRA: Force: intensity / +APP Valuation] than native speaker in his university [t, +JUD Capacity]. Student #12 / T1

(15) I think it [NNEST’s class]’s good [+APP Valuation] for us to teach grammar. Student #6 / T2

Example (14) highlights how NNESTs’ linguistic competences can even surpass the NESTs’.

Grammar is also the category in which NNESTs received the strongest comments in Mahboob’s study (2003).

In the following extract, a student reflects about her NESTs’ teaching skills for grammar:

(16) Someday I asked her [ALT] to teach grammar. But she said “I don’t know what should I teach you [t, -JUD Incapacity]”. I was very [GRA: Force: intensity] surprised [-AFF Insecurity] because I was thinking that people from English spoken country, they all can teach us perfectly [t, +JUD Capacity]. Student #18 / T2

This comment illustrates how native speakers actually may not know about grammar until they learn how to teach it.

Vocabulary

Students stated that NESTs were good for learning vocabulary, e.g.:

(17) If native speakers teacher teaches English to students, they can learn English slang [t, +APP Valuation]. Student #17 / T2
Example (8) above however highlighted how students may find it difficult to learn vocabulary from their NESTs because of their inability to explain the words in the students’ native language. This of course is specific to an EFL context.

Evaluations of NNESTs on the other hand were mixed, e.g.;

(18) She [NEST] knows many [GRA: Force: quantity: amount] words which are very [GRA: Force: intensity] difficult [-APP Composition] [t, +JUD Capacity] therefore even natives don’t know.

Student #15 / T2

(19) Certainly, if we want [AFF Desire] to be a good [+JUD Capacity] English speaker, it is effective [+APP Valuation] that we learn speaking English with native speakers. That is because there are a lot of [GRA: Force: quantity: amount] idioms or expressions that non-natives don’t know in their English [t, -JUD Incapacity]. Student #5 / T2

These comments exemplify how the knowledge of slang and idioms distinguished NESTs from NNESTs.

Culture

A few comments dealt with the teaching of culture. Both NESTs and NNESTs received positive evaluations in this category, e.g.:

(20) They [NESTs] know any them history and country very [GRA: Force: intensity] good [+APP Valuation] [t, +JUD Capacity]. so [GRA: Force: intensity] good [+APP Valuation]. Student #13 / T1
(21) They [NNESTs] know about other country’s cultures or their country’s culture [t, +JUD Capacity]. Student #7 / T2

Interestingly, two students viewed NNESTs’ classes as an opportunity to learn about a third culture.

*Teaching methodology*

Some students also commented on their teachers’ teaching methodology. Only NNESTs were appraised in this category, always positively, e.g.:

(22) They [NNESTs] know which word we learned fast [t, +JUD Capacity]. Student #2 / T2

(23) Non-natives teachers teach me how to learn second language, how to make friend in the country I don’t know anything, and many other things [GRA: Force: quantity: amount] [t, +JUD Capacity]. Student #4 / T2

(24) Non-natives have some great [GRA: Force: Intensity / +APP Valuation] necks [knacks] they prooted because they became the language teachers by doing their own necks, not learned when they were babies like native speakers do [t, +JUD Capacity]. And then, they can tell their students about that [t, +JUD Capacity]] [GRA: Force: intensity]. Student #19 / T2

These comments highlight how NNESTs were attributed specific skills that stem from their own experience as language learners, and how students perceive that they can benefit from these skills.
Personal factors

Students also commented on personal factors related to their teachers. Interestingly, all these comments are in support of NNESTs. Factors include NNESTs’ empathy with their students, and their tenacity in learning English.

Empathy with the students

Students perceived their NNESTs as having empathy with them, since they experienced the same difficulties in learning English. The following comments illustrate this point:

(25) I think that non-natives teachers is better [+JUD: Capacity / GRA: Force: intensity] than natives teachers. Because non-natives teachers are knowing that we can not understand language which we are learning easy [t, +JUD Capacity]. Student #4 / T1

(26) Non-native speakers [...] know which word we learned fast [+JUD Capacity]. They know what kind of words we can use [t, +JUD Capacity]. They understand [+JUD Capacity] us. Student #2 / T2

(27) I also think someone who study language very [GRA: Force: intensity] hard [+JUD Tenacity], they can teach [t, +JUD Capacity] it very [GRA: Force: intensity] well [+APP Valuation]. Because, they know how to learn it is the best [+JUD Capacity / GRA: Force: intensity]. And they also know students feeling [t, +JUD Capacity]. #20T1

These comments highlight students’ perception that NNESTs’ empathy vis-à-vis their students impacts onto their teaching. However, students also seemed to value the feeling of empathy itself (see ‘they also know students feeling’, ‘they understand us’).
Tenacity

A number of students commented on their teachers’ hard work. Some recognised that proficiency in the language is not sufficient to make a good teacher. In the following example, the student states that tenacity is a characteristic of both NESTs and NNESTs who are good teachers:

(28) The most [GRA: Force: intensity] important [+APP Valuation] thing is not native or non-native. If you want [AFF Desire] to be a good [+JUD Capacity] language teacher, you have to spend a lot of time [GRA: Force: Extent: Scope: Time] on studying [t, +JUD Tenacity] language. What you need is efforts [+JUD Tenacity]. Student #15 / T1

Students recognised though that greater effort and tenacity were necessary on the part of NNESTs, as shown in the following comment:

(29) I think that if we [NNESTs] effort [+JUD Tenacity] to learn English, we can teach [t, +JUD Capacity]. It may be so [GRA: Force: intensity] hard [-APP Reaction] [t, -AFF Unhappiness] but I think it is important [+APP Valuation] for non-natives speaker to try [GRA: Focus: Fulfilment] their best [+JUD Tenacity / GRA: Force: intensity]. Student #12 / T1

This evaluation not only underlines the need for tenacity, but also highlights the emotional impact on NNESTs through a token of Affect, stressed by an intensifier (‘It may be so hard’)—again, this is additional information gained from an Appraisal analysis over a Thematic analysis.

A number of students wrote in their essays narratives highlighting their NNESTS’ tenacity to exemplify how they had become proficient in English, hence good teachers. The extract below presents an example of text where Tenacity is strongly represented. In this extract, the
student provides a particular example of a NNEST whom she is familiar with to illustrate how non-natives can achieve proficiency in their non-native language (exemplified by the NNEST receiving a scholarship to study abroad, being first in her English class in Great Britain, and eventually becoming a teacher of English in Japan):

(30) I have a good [+JUD Capacity] English teacher ho is non-native speaker in my high school. She speaks very [GRA: Force: intensity] well [+APP Valuation] even though she is non-native speaker [t, +JUD Capacity]. One day, she talked me about her exchange student’s life in British. She has been to British for only three months as an exchange student. when she was twenty years old. She has wanted [AFF Desire] to go abroad since she was in junior high school. But sadly [-AFF Unhappiness], she was so [GRA: Force: intensity] poor [-JUD Normality] that she couldn’t go abroad. When she was in university, she study English very [GRA: Force: intensity] hard [+JUD Tenacity] she found an information which said that if she pass the examination, she could be an exchange student for free. She was very [GRA: Force: intensity] good [+APP Valuation] at writing in English [t, +JUD Capacity] at that time. But she had one big [GRA: Force: quantity] problem [-APP Valuation], “speaking English” [t, -JUD Incapacity]. She has never talked native English speakers. “I tried to speak to foreign people when I found them at the station, park and even at the hospital [GRA: Force: Extent: Scope: Space] [t, +JUD Tenacity].” She said. She passed the examination [t, +JUD Capacity] with these great [GRA: Force: quantity: amount] efforts [+JUD Tenacity]. But she had only three months. She kept studying very [GRA: Force: intensity] hard [+JUD Tenacity]. In British university, she got first prise in English class [t, +JUD Capacity]. After she went abroad, she took an examination to be an English teacher. But she didn’t stop [GRA: Force: Extent: Scope: Time] studying [t, +JUD Tenacity]. She studied English harder and harder [GRA: Force: intensity] [+JUD Tenacity]. She knows many [GRA: Force: quantity: amount] words which
are very [GRA: Force: intensity] difficult [-APP Composition] therefore even natives don’t know [t, +JUD Capacity]. She showed me that everybody can be a good [+JUD Capacity] teacher with great [GRA: Force: Quantity: Amount] efforts [+JUD Tenacity]. Student #15 / T2

Our coding of inscribed Attitude, that is, using explicit attitudinal lexis, is outlined in Table 1.

Evaluations focus on the NNEST’s linguistic skills and her determination to improve her English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appraising items</th>
<th>Affect</th>
<th>Judgement</th>
<th>Appreciation</th>
<th>Appraised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>+capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very well</td>
<td></td>
<td>+valuation</td>
<td></td>
<td>NNEST’s speaking skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wanted</td>
<td>+desire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>go abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sadly</td>
<td>-happiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being too poor to afford going abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so poor</td>
<td>-normality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being too poor to afford going abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very hard</td>
<td>+tenacity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very good</td>
<td></td>
<td>+valuation</td>
<td></td>
<td>NNEST’s studying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>big problem</td>
<td></td>
<td>-valuation</td>
<td></td>
<td>NNEST’s writing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great efforts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NNEST’s speaking skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very hard</td>
<td></td>
<td>+tenacity</td>
<td></td>
<td>passing the examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harder and harder</td>
<td></td>
<td>+tenacity</td>
<td></td>
<td>NNEST’s studying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very difficult</td>
<td></td>
<td>-composition</td>
<td></td>
<td>NNEST’s studying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td></td>
<td>+capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td>words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great efforts</td>
<td></td>
<td>+tenacity</td>
<td></td>
<td>teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Inscribed Attitude in Extract 30
Instances of invoked Attitude are outlined in Table 2 (with ‘t’ marking ideational tokens/evoked evaluations).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appraising items</th>
<th>Affect</th>
<th>Judgement</th>
<th>Appreciation</th>
<th>Appraised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>speaks very well</td>
<td>t,+capacity</td>
<td>NNEST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very good at writing in English</td>
<td>t,+capacity</td>
<td>NNEST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she had one big problem “speaking English”</td>
<td>t,-capacity</td>
<td>NNEST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tried to speak to foreign people [...] at the hospital</td>
<td>t,+tenacity</td>
<td>NNEST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she passed the examination</td>
<td>t,+tenacity</td>
<td>NNEST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she got first prise</td>
<td>t,+capacity</td>
<td>NNEST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she didn’t stop studying</td>
<td>t,+capacity</td>
<td>NNEST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she knows many words which are very difficult</td>
<td>t,+tenacity</td>
<td>NNEST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Invoked attitude in Extract 30

These ideational tokens extend the positive prosody of Tenacity and Capacity inscribed through the explicit attitudinal lexis. It culminates in the evaluation that ‘everybody can be a good teacher with great efforts’. Note also how the student uses Graduation to either intensify the Judgements of Tenacity (e.g. ‘study English very hard’, ‘great efforts’, ‘kept studying very hard’, ‘studied English harder and harder’), or to evoke Attitude through the grading of non-attitudinal terms (‘I tried to speak to foreign people when I found them at the station, park and even at the hospital’, ‘she didn’t stop studying’) (see Lipovsky and Mahboob (2008) for further discussion on the students’ use of Graduation). Thus, the NNEST is construed as determined to
improve her English, and rewarded in her efforts as she becomes quite competent in the language, knowing ‘many words which are very difficult therefore even natives don’t know’. The student assumed her reader(s) to align with the idea that native speakers are more proficient in their own tongue than non-native speakers. The word ‘even’ challenges this view, and thereby sets to demonstrate that tenacity is rewarded—‘everybody can be a good teacher with great efforts’.

**NNESTs as role models**

An effect of NNESTs’ success in their language learning is that it emulates their students. The following comment illustrates this point:

(31) They [NNESTs] became great [GRA: Force: intensity / +JUD Capacity] speakers of the specific [GRA: focus] language even they are not native speakers. To learn the language which is not first language for students by the teachers who are not native, students can be encouraged [+AFF Happiness]. Student #19 / T2

Likewise, NNESTs’ tenacity is a model that their students are keen to follow:

(32) I learned her if we think we want [AFF Desire] to be something and study hard [+JUD Tenacity], our dream [AFF: Desire] come true [+APP Valuation]. Student #1 / T1

**Enjoyment**

A last category of comments concerns the pleasure or enjoyment that can derive from learning a language. The following evaluation exemplifies this point:
(33) I think that non-natives are also good [JUD Capacity] teachers. Because they can teach us the pleasure [APP Reaction] of learning new language! [GRA: Force: intensity] If there had not been Japanese English teacher, I would never know the pleasure [APP Reaction] of learning English. Student #19 / T1

The absence of similar comments about NESTs does not mean that no pleasure can be derived from attending their classes:


Discussion

This study highlighted how students perceive NESTs and NNESTs as having complementary strengths. NESTs were usually praised for their oral skills (in particular their pronunciation and conversation) and knowledge of vocabulary (including slang and idioms). However, this did not preclude a number of NNESTs from being praised for these skills as well. On the other hand, NNESTs attracted positive evaluations for their teaching of literacy skills and knowledge and teaching of grammar, highlighting how these skills are independent of linguistic skills as they can be learned. NNESTs were also appraised positively for their teaching methodology, stemming out of their own experience and skills acquired as language learners, and that their students could benefit from. Likewise, students felt that their NNESTs shared empathy with them, since they had experienced the same difficulties in learning English, while their tenacity to master the language became a role model some students were keen to emulate. N/NESTs’ competence (or lack of competence) in their students’ native tongue (L1)
was viewed as either an advantage or a liability. Some students viewed their teacher’s lack of knowledge in their L1 as an incentive for honing their own speaking skills in English, while some other students viewed it as impeding comprehension as the teacher’s explanations were at all times provided in English. Conversely, the availability of L1 use could deter students from asking questions in English and prevent them from progressing in their L2, or on the contrary facilitate their comprehension of their teacher’s explanations. Significantly, the Appraisal analysis highlighted the strong link that students perceive between their teachers’ linguistic skills (pronunciation and knowledge of students’ L1) and their own performance.

Regarding the language of evaluation specifically, the students in their essays generally shunned negative evaluations to favour positive evaluations of their N/NESTs. The data contain few negative explicit Attitudes. When they do, negative Judgements and Appreciations often derive from negations, that is, the student negates a positive performance, rather than stating directly that it is bad, e.g.:

(35) My high school’s English teacher can’t speak English well [t, -JUD Capacity].

(36) My English teacher does not good [-APP Valuation] accent [t, -JUD Capacity].

In (35), the student states that her teacher ‘can’t speak English well’, rather than writing that s/he speaks English badly. Likewise in (36), the student states that her teacher ‘does not good accent’, rather than stating that her accent is bad. This mitigation denotes some reticence on the part of the students to be critical of their teachers—although there are a few exceptions (as
in example (6) above). Another way students mitigated their evaluations was to use invoked Appraisal, as in the following example:

(37) They [NNESTs] sometimes speak like Japanese pronunciation [t, -JUD Incapacity].

In this example, rather than criticising NNESTs directly through explicit negative lexis, the student chose to invoke her criticism through a comparison. Note also how this token of Judgement actually only states that NNESTs’ pronunciation is non-native. Students’ use of invoked Attitudes through the expression of ideational meanings also demonstrates an attempt to be objective rather than subjective.

Example (37) highlights another particularity of students’ Appraisal of their N/NESTs in that it was commonly comparative. Here is another example:


In (38), the NEST’s pronunciation is qualified as ‘much better than Japanese teachers’—rather than ‘good’. The intensifier ‘much’ points at a criticism a contrario of NNESTs’ pronunciation—although the way it is merely implied makes it impossible to determine whether their pronunciation is bad or just not as good as NESTs’. Of course, this tendency to compare NESTs’ with NNESTs’ skills could be attributed to the nature of the task that the students were given.

Students’ evaluations of their N/NESTs were not only mostly positive, but also highly graduated, e.g.:

(39) Her pronunciation is very [GRA: Force: intensity] good [+APP Valuation]
(40) They became great [GRA: Force: intensity / +JUD Capacity] speakers of the specific language even they are not native speakers.

(41) Their conversations [NNESTs’] are so cool [GRA: Force: intensity] [+APP Valuation] ! [GRA: Force: intensity] Student #19 / T1

In (39), the pre-modifying intensifier ‘very’ amplifies the positive Valuation of the teacher’s pronunciation—alternatively, the teacher’ pronunciation could have been said to be ‘good’ or ‘kind of good’. In (40), the intensifier is fused within a lexical item that also serves a semantic function, as ‘great’ can be unpacked as ‘very’ + ‘good’. In (41), the intensification is realised through the pre-modifying intensifier ‘so’ as well as the exclamative. Thus, the students not only positively appraised their teachers, but often also amplified their positive evaluations of them (see Lipovsky & Mahboob, 2008 for further discussion of students’ use of graduation).

This analysis also revealed the advantage of an Appraisal analysis over a Thematic analysis, as the former appeared more fine-tuned than the latter. For instance, the Appraisal analysis highlighted aspects of N/NESTs’ (lack of) knowledge that are doubled-sided, such as when it showed how NESTs’ lack of knowledge in their students’ L1 or on the contrary NNEST’s knowledge in their L1 could each either be viewed as an advantage or a drawback.

The Appraisal analysis also highlighted affective issues that had been downplayed by the Thematic analysis. Students in examples (6) and (29) above highlighted how learning a foreign language can be ‘hard’. This explicit negative Valuation actually brings to light more private affective issues—as shown by the double-coding as a token of Unhappiness—highlighting how discouraging mastering a foreign language can at times appear. Examples (31) and (32) on the
other hand highlighted how students can be encouraged by their NNEST’s success in learning another language.

Another benefit of the Appraisal analysis comes from the fact that it takes into account the co-text of the evaluations. Students’ evaluations about their N/NESTs did not come in a void. They were often stringed to narratives developing a particular aspect—the way Tenacity is discussed in example (31) is one example. The analysis highlighted how students’ Appraisals of their NESTs and NNESTs often recurred throughout their essays, with long strings of text devoted to some given evaluation, with the result of an ongoing cumulative effect. Furthermore, the students often amplified their evaluations through intensifications or repetitions. In other words, ‘the volume is turned up so that the prosody makes a bigger splash which reverberates through the surrounding discourse’ (Martin & White, 2005: 20). This highlights the advantage of Appraisal over Thematic analysis, as Appraisal ‘unfolds dynamically to engage us, to get us on side, not with one appeal, but through a spectrum of manoeuvres that work themselves out phase by phase’ (Martin & Rose, 2003: 56). As such, the analysis of extended units of meanings underlined the semantic prosody of the students’ essays and provided more finetuned information.

Conclusion

The present study supports other studies that found that students do not necessarily prefer being taught by NESTs or NNESTs, but rather value the combination of their qualities, as shown in this comment:
(42) It is not that natives teachers know better [JUD: Capacity / GRA: Force: intensity] than non-natives teachers. So I think that teaching to each teachers is important [APP Valuation] things for us. Student #4 /T1

At a time when communication in English more often concerns L2 speakers than L1 speakers, and the status of the native speaker of English becomes less significant, this analysis challenges the view that a sole native speaker model should be the goal of language learning and teaching. Importantly, the analysis of students’ language of Appraisal in their evaluations of their N/NESTs also brought a new perspective to the existing body of literature as it highlighted not only what the students said and thought about their N/NESTs, but also how they said it, providing added fine-tuned perspective con the topic.
References


functional perspective (pp. 737-762). London: Equinox.


Mahboob, A. & Griffin, R. B. (2006). Learner Perspectives of Native and Non-Native Teachers, 40th Annual TESOL Convention Tampa, FL.


Appendix A

Examples of categories from Mahboob & Griffin (2006)

Linguistic Factors

Oral Skills

Positive Comment NEST: I wanna learn English by native speakers because I wanna be like a native speakers. Their conversations are so cool! Non-native’s conversations are not real...(TS: T1)

Negative Comment NNEST: And non-native speakers is dificult. I think non-native speakers no beautiful. I think native speakers is natural. non-native speakers is no natural...(MT: T1)

Grammar

Positive Comment NNEST:...If we want to learn grammatical English, non-natives are better...
(ES: T1)

Writing

Positive Comment NNEST: My high school’s English teacher can’t speak English well but, I can learn good writing at his class...(ME:T1)

Negative Comment NEST:...And, my English school’s teachers are all American and Canadian. They teach me writing not so much...(ME: T1)

Culture
Positive Comment NEST:...natives teachers teach me many slangs, American culture, and about American...(AKA: T2)

Teaching Styles

Ability to Answer Questions:

Negative Comment NEST:...if we asked some questions to native speakers, they didn’t answer them clearly... (ES:T2)

Teaching Methodology

Positive Comment NNEST: I think that non-natives are also good teachers because they can teach us the pleasure of learning new language! If there had not been Japanese English teacher, I would never know the pleasure of learning English...(TS:T1)

Personal Factors

Experience as an L2 Learner

Positive Comment NNEST: I think that non-natives can also be efficient teachers. Because this four month, we learned with non-native and native. Sometimes our accent were not correct, but non-native understood what we want to say more than native. When we talked, they understood more than host family. Non-native speakers know how to learn English from teacher. They know which word we learned fast. They know what kind of words we can use. They understand us.(AM:T2)
Hard Work

Positive Comment NNEST: I think that non-native speaker can be also be efficient teachers. Because I think that if we effort to learn English, we can teach. It may be so hard but I think it is important for non-natives speaker to try their best. My high school English teacher is non-native speaker, but he have tried his best for twenty years. So he is as good as native speaker...(MHO:T1)

Negative Comment NEST: For example, if you native teachers, you haven’t to study English very hard. Because they were born in America. That’s they have spoken English...(SK:T1)

Affect

Positive Comment NNEST:....how to make friend in the country I don’t know anything, and many other things. And non-natives teachers support us, when we have homesich or something...(AKA: T2)
IV. Advocacy Issues
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 & Samimi, 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](image)

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*¹

¹ 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>211/100%</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>Classification</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


V. Author Biographies
Kumiko Akikawa received her MA in TESOL from the American University. She is currently teaching English and Japanese at a college level. Before coming to the US, she earned MAs in English (Japan, UK) and completed her doctoral studies in English (Japan). Since she arrived in the US, she has focused on language teaching and related research and given presentations at local and international conferences. Her research interests include instructional pragmatics, non-native speaker teachers, and classroom-based research. Her co-authored pragmatics-focused lesson plan will appear in D. Tatsuki and N. Houck (Eds.) (in press), TESOL classroom practice series: Pragmatics volume.

Brock Brady current President Elect of TESOL, served as Coordinator then Co Director of the AU TESOL Program for twelve years, teaching courses in English language teaching methodology, assessment, teaching pronunciation, intercultural communication, online learning, and curriculum and materials design. Currently he works as a educational consultant for Peace Corps. His research interests in addition to NNEST studies include program and course design, cross-cultural discourse analysis, pronunciation teaching, classroom assessment, distance learning, and teacher training. Brady was an early member of TESOL’s NNEST Caucus, founder of the WATESOL NNEST Caucus, and Chair Elect of TESOL’s NNEST Interest Section, 2008-2009.

George Braine teaches at the English Department of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He has also taught in Sri Lanka, the Sultanate of Oman, and the USA. His co-edited volume (with Diane Belcher) Academic Writing in a Second Language (1994) is now considered a classic in the field. His Non-native Educators in English Language Teaching (1999) is regarded as the groundbreaking publication in the area of nonnative speaker English teachers. He has also edited Teaching English to the World (2005), which describes English language teaching in 15 countries. His forthcoming book, Nonnative Speaker English Teachers: Research, Pedagogy, & Professional Growth will be published by Routledge in 2010.

Jessica Lee is a recent graduate of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at the George Washington University. She received an Ed.D degree in the Curriculum and Instruction program, with a specialization in the teaching of English as a foreign or second language and teacher education. Her areas of research interest include student beliefs and attitudes in second language learning and issues related to nonnative English-speaking (NNES) teachers. Ms. Lee is currently serving NNEST Caucus of the Washington Regional TESOL Organization as outreach coordinator to raise awareness of NNESTs.
### Caroline Lipovsky

Caroline Lipovsky is a lecturer in the Department of French Studies at the University of Sydney. She has taught French language and culture at all levels in a range of institutions in South Korea, Hong Kong and Australia. She has involved in a number of projects investigating self-presentation in job applicants’ résumés and cover letters, and a study of candidates’ non-verbal communication in job interviews. She is also currently collaborating with Dr Ahmar Mahboob, analysing students’ evaluations of their native and non-native speaking teachers in TESOL.

### Ahmar Mahboob

Ahmar Mahboob teaches linguistics at the University of Sydney, Australia. He earned his PhD at Indiana University, Bloomington. Ahmar has worked in the areas of language policy development, pidgin and creole languages, NNEST studies, additional language acquisition, additional language teaching and teacher education, World Englishes, pragmatics, and issues surrounding minority languages in South Asia. Ahmar is the Past President of Indiana TESOL and the Past Chair of the NNEST Caucus in TESOL International. Ahmar is the co-founder of the Free Linguistics Conference with Naomi Knight.

### Sunyoung Park

Sunyoung Park is currently teaching English conversation courses to third graders of Myeong-Moon high school, in Kwang-Myeong city, Korea. Her in depth study of *English Writing Education in Korea, China, and Japan* earned her an award from the Korean Ministry of Education in 2004. She received her MA in ESOL/Bilingual Education from the University of Maryland, Baltimore Country and her thesis, “*Native and Non-native English Speaking Tutors’ Feedback on College-level ESL Student Writing*” is the basis for her article with Sarah Shin that appears in this volume. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, the oldest and the most selective honor society.

### Ali Fuad Selvi

Ali Fuad Selvi is a PhD candidate in Second Language Education and Culture program at the University of Maryland College Park where he also works as a gradate research/teaching assistant. His particular research interests include but not limited to the global spread of English, language teacher cognition, cultural aspects of language teaching, and issues related to non-native English-speaking teachers. He is the currently serving as the president of the WATESOL NNEST Caucus. His publications appeared in *NNEST Newsletter*, *Essential Teacher* and *World Englishes* (forthcoming).
Sara Shin is an associate professor in Education at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Her primary area of research is childhood bilingualism. She is interested in children's acquisition of two languages and the role that language plays in their education and growth. She is also interested in second language writing and professional development of teachers. She is interested in teacher feedback on student writing, individual conferencing, and the role of reflection on teacher development. Her most recent projects investigate the development of academic English by ESL students in middle and high schools.

Huijin Yan will complete her MA in TESOL Program at American University in December 2009. A Merit Awards scholar at AU, Huijin earned her bachelor's degree at the Beijing International Studies University in 2003. She spent 3 years teaching English in a middle school in Beijing, sharing in every single triumph that her teenage students achieved in their English study. Huijin enjoys living in the United States when she can develop a deeper understanding of American Culture. Huijin intends to continue to teach both Chinese and English to nonnative speakers, and is much involved in professional organizations related to the instruction of both languages.