

Research Article

Do Indonesian Students Favour Native English Speakers Teachers in Their Classes?: A Survey Study on Indonesian EFL Students

Moh. Hilman Fikri^{1*}, Abd. Syakur², and Gigih Dwi Ananto³

¹ Department of Literature, Universitas Kristen Cipta Wacana, Malang, Indonesia, 65149

² Postgraduate Program of English Education, Universitas PGRI Delta Sidoarjo, Sidoarjo, Indonesia, 71118

³ Department of Literature, Universitas Kristen Cipta Wacana, Malang, Indonesia, 65149

*Corresponding Author: hilmanfikri@cwcu.ac.id | Phone: +6282234006044

ABSTRACT

The creativity of English L2 speakers exploiting the language provoked the researcher to explore students' preference for having native English speaker teachers (NESTs) and non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs) in their classes. Thus, the current study aimed to explore EFL students' perceptions of native English speaker teachers (NESTs) and non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs) teaching English in a class. The study recruits a hundred EFL students across Malang, East Java, piloting survey design on the basis of a convenience sampling technique. In general, the study unpacked the students' positive attitudes toward NNESTs. They agreed that they should have NNESTs at primary, secondary, and university levels. However, they suggested that NESTs should teach speaking and pronunciation. In addition, the respondent preferred having both NESTs and NNESTs in a class to be more engaging and stress-revealing. Therefore, initiating a class team teaching between NESTs and NNESTs is paramount for the stakeholders to be taken into account.

Keywords: Native English Speaker Teachers (NESTs); Non-native English Speaker Teachers (NNESTs); EFL students; perceptions

1. INTRODUCTION

The reigning of traditional concepts, disposing of British and American accents, has shattered. English classical tenet has shifted into a pioneering tenet of the Lingua Franca since the native speaker cannot get to the language's colossal expansion (Jenkins, 2000; Jenkins, 2007; Kachru, 1985; Seidlhofer, 2011). The outer and expanding circles have overtaken the language application of its' natives (Crystal, 2019; Graddol, 2006). Their creativity in exploiting the language to peculiar forms leads to the shift of learners' objectives in mastering the language (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020; Wei, 2020). Moreover, TESOL scholars seriously challenge the traditional belief that NESTs are inevitably the best English teachers (Floris, 2016; Floris & Renandya, 2020; Jenkins, 2006; Wang & Fang, 2020). Thus, the traditional tenets encourage the researcher to explore EFL students' preference for NESTs, NNESTs, or both teaching English in their classes.

Although the NNESTs outnumber the NESTs, the classical tenet may remain controversial, and its' dichotomy (NESTs and NNESTs) may also linger. The NESTs may always hold the privilege over the NNESTs (Mahboob, 2010). Wang and Fang (2020) investigated that many stakeholders skewed their preferences toward the NESTs. However, the awakening of Global Englishes may impact students' attitudes toward NESTs and NNESTs preferences (Wang and Fang, 2020). They may lean on the NNESTs since they share the same L.A.D system, linguistic, cultural, and educational systems (Chomsky, 1965; Rao & Yu, 2019). Fauzi and Hashim (2020) unpacked that EFL students initially had positive attitudes toward the NESTs but eventually preferred NNESTs as their teachers.

In addition, several scholars have explored many studies on NESTs and NNESTs (Hsieh et al., 2022; Sajinčič et al., 2023; Tajeddin et al., 2023). However, none schemed students' perspectives having NESTs, NNESTs, or both teaching specific elements of the language (speaking, listening, writing, reading) in their classes. Vraciu and Curell (2022) also investigated teaching strategies between NESTs and NNESTs. The study found that NESTs provide more support to comprehensible input whether NNESTs focus on students' participation. In Japan, Uchida and Sugimoto (2020) portrayed survey research, recruiting a hundred students as their samples, but they geared their research only on pronunciation. Haque and Sharmin (2022) also conducted a survey study on Saudi higher education students, yet, the current study recruits a hundred senior high school students. The stakeholders' tenets on skewing the NEST as the best model for English teachers are likely predetermined. They lamentably perceived that having NEST may elevate the customers' trust in the institution, prompting other complexities (Floris and Renandya; 2020). Interestingly, Alshammary (2021) analyzed

job advertisements in Saudi Arabia to portray the stakeholders' preferences in recruiting English teacher candidates. The study found that being lavish native speakers was the ubiquitously encountered condition, promoting professional inequity. Nevertheless, the stakeholders should put forth the qualification, not the standardization (unqualified stereotype) since the NNESTs comprise epistemologically hegemonic experienced socio-professional phenomenon intersecting with other categories of identity (Selvi et al., 2023).

Furthermore, myriad studies in the field of World Englishes, Translanguaging, English as Lingua Franca, and Global English have been investigated to overthrow the traditional belief, yet, the notion remains persistent, pivoting the traditional tenet into current English education (Colmenero and Lasagabaster, 2020). The recent ELT nuance also mismatches modern beliefs (World Englishes), deviating from students' actual practices in/outside the classroom (Rose et al., 2020). Therefore, the study came up with a single research question (how do EFL students perceive NESTs and NNESTs teaching English in a class?). The research question was then broken down into three sub-research questions: 1. How do EFL students perceive their general preferences of NESTs and NNESTs, 2. How do EFL students perceive NESTs and NNESTs in teaching language skills and components, and 3. How do EFL students perceive NESTs and NNESTs in assessing language skills and components ?.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

A survey design, applying a quantitative approach, was employed in this study. The study adapted a questionnaire from Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002) on the students' perceptions of native and non-native English speaker teachers consisting of twenty questions and divided into four points: 1) The general preferences of native and non-native English speaker teachers, 2) Native and non-native English speaker teachers in teaching language skills and components, and 3) Native and non-native English speaker teachers in assessing their language skills and components. Open and close-ended questionnaires were administered in the instrument. Furthermore, one hundred students from a state senior high school students in Malang, East Java, were recruited on the basis of convenience sampling technique due to its practicality (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, Razavieh, 2010). In addition, the participants were recruited due to their involvement with a native teacher to augment the data reliability.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Students General Preferences of Native and Non-Native English Speaker Teachers

The study was initially established with students' preferences for Native English Speaker Teachers (NESTs). The first point inquired about students' preferences for NESTs as their English teacher in general, students' preferences for NESTs teaching English in primary education, students' preferences for NESTs teaching English in secondary education, students' preferences for NESTs teaching English in higher education, students' preferences for NESTs and NNESTs having team teaching in English classes. The data clearly shows that students prefer to have native English speaker teachers. It looks like the paradigm of native English speaker teachers gives highly effect to them. Their trust level to non-native English teachers is low. Moreover, NES would become the good role model because their English was considered appropriate, accurate, and original (Floris, 2013). They believe that native English speaker teachers are the best teacher model to teach English because of their nativeness. However, the use of English is no longer connected to the culture in inner circle countries (McKay in Suryaningtyas, 2013). Therefore, non-native English speaker teachers must improve their pedagogical knowledge to make the students believe that non-native English teachers are better in teaching English, Cook (in Zacharias, 2006) suggests that bilingual teachers may be a better model than the model embodied by native speakers. In line with that, a research from Floris (2013) one of her interviewee, Teacher D said that, "It does not matter whether you are a native speaker or not. The important aspect is that you can speak in English and your English is intelligible". Having a good mastery of English is important but having skills to teach in different levels and make the students understand is more essential.

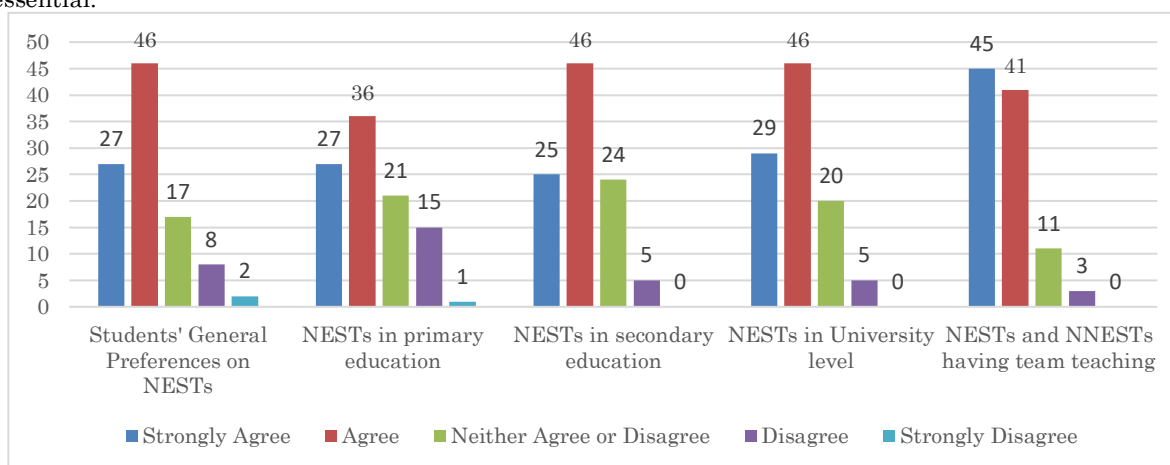


Figure 1. Students General Preferences for Native and Non-Native English Speaker Teachers (NESTs and NNESTs)

Meanwhile, sometimes an institution hires a native English speaker teachers is only because they are native and do not have any enough knowledge about the structural of the language because they acquire the language naturally. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002) said that in the BAC some NSTs (Native Speaker Teachers) lacking TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) qualifications have positions at language academies simply because of their native status. Therefore, being a native does not guarantee them to be the best model of being an English teacher since having knowledge about the structural of a language is not such as an heritage. It is acquired with a long process. Moreover, Revés & Medgyes (1994 in Floris, 2013) pointed out, native speakers may not be aware of the internal mechanisms operating in the acquisition of a second language, since for them the language is acquired naturally and subconsciously. In contrary, non-native English speaker teachers acquire the structural with long process consciously. As in Cook (as cited in Medgyes in Ma, 2012) NNESTs in learning English can make them be good learner models of English. Therefore, they do not only acquire the structural but also experiences to teach since they had many references to teach by watching their teachers taught them. Moreover, in section 1 point 61 attached a point about a native English speaker teacher and a non-native English speaker teacher teaching together in the same class. The result is definitely shocking that stadents extremely agree that they prefer to have both native English speaker teacher and non-native English speaker teacher share the same class. Tajino and Tajino (2000) said that team-learning can encourage the students and the teachers to face the activities in the class by creating more opportunities to the students to exchange ideas and discuss with the other students. This is a good teaching method to boost students' attention. In line with that, Medgeys' and Samimy and Brutt-Griffler's respondents (in Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002) shows that when respondents were asked which of the two teacher-types was more successful, respondent indicating that they thought both teacher types were more successful.

In addition, I also attached an open question to ask the students' reason about their own opinion to the method. The most answers were "It is more interesting when we have two teachers NEST and NNEST share the same class". In line with that, The Course of Study for Upper Secondary School Foreign Languages (as cited in Handbook for Team-Teaching in Tajino and Tajino, 2000) conveyed that, team-teaching can improve students' abilities, motivation to communicate using English, interest in English and understanding the native English speaker teachers culture. Furthermore, I also specified the question in section I point 8 in what field native English speaker teachers should teach English. The data shows that a native English speaker teacher (NEST) is better teaching speaking and pronunciation. Meanwhile, ...NES would become the good role model because their English was considered appropriate, accurate, and original (Floris, 2013). Moreover, I also attached open question which the most common answer was "because they are native, so they speak more fluently". In line with that, Zacharias (2006) in his research stated that one of his respondents' reasons for preferring native English speaker teachers to teach speaking and pronunciation was because they provided the "right" exposure to language use with regard to appropriacy, accuracy, and naturalness. On the other hand, the comment they put forward for not suggesting native English speaker to teach grammar because they realized that native speaker often made a mistake. Moreover, Law (1999 in Ma, 2012) found that students appreciated NESTs' accurate pronunciation, greater varieties in teaching materials, focus on teaching pronunciation, relaxed classroom atmosphere, and their own opportunities to listen to and use English.

3.2 Students' Perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs in Teaching Language Skills and Components

The growth of English language of course affects the growth of its teaching methods. English language teaching methods nowadays have so many methods applied. It is according to the teacher how the teacher utilizes the methods. Therefore, the issue from students might come up. They may of course compare who is the best teacher to teach them language skills and its components. This topic deals with the students' perception on native English speaker teachers in teaching language skills and components. Chart 3 below presents the percentages (point 9 to 15) of the students' perceptions on native English speaker teacher in teaching language skills and components.

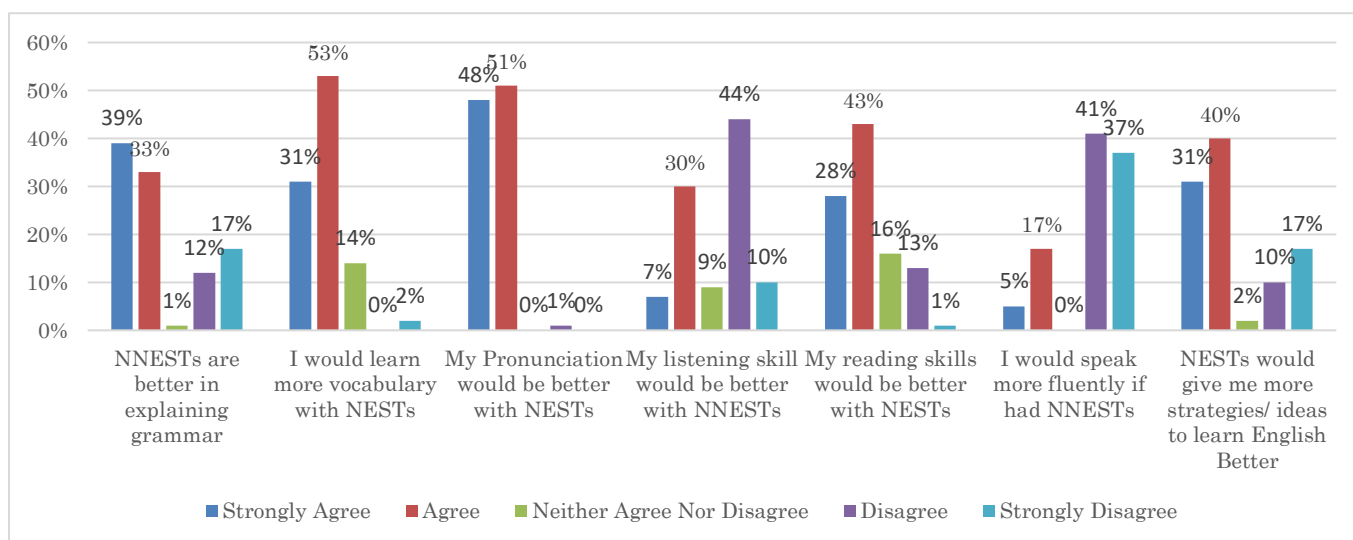


Figure 2. Students' Perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs in Teaching Language Skills and Components

This topic discussed the students' perceptions of native English speaker teachers teaching language skills and components. The data showed that the students preferred to have non-native English speaker teachers to teach grammar. When teaching grammar, they might have native intuition of what is grammatically acceptable and what is not, but may not have the metalanguage for explaining grammatical rules (Ma. 2012). Moreover, one of Floris' interviewees (2013) shared his experience "I had once taken an English course at XYZ, and I found that my American teacher's explanation sometimes were confusing". It is better to have NNESTs in teaching grammar. They discuss the grammar carefully instead NESTs focus with the way we say it. Mahboob (2010) also argued that NNESTs have a considerable strength in providing better explanation difficult words and grammar since they share the same L1. Meanwhile, the students prefer to have native English speaker teachers in speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The result is almost matched with the two previous researches from Zacharias, 2006 and Floris, 2013 that native English speaker teachers only match to teach speaking skills and the components in it. The two previous researches take teachers' perceptions on native English speaker teachers. Therefore, there is a little different with the present research. In this research on taking the students' perceptions on native English speaker teachers, the students perceive that their reading skills would be better if they had native English speaker teachers.

Furthermore, the students believe that having native English speaker teachers can ease them to learn English for native English speaker teachers have more experience as English users. Furthermore, native English speaker teachers can give them more learning strategies to acquire English. However, non-native English speaker teachers had more experiences in learning English (as their additional language) than native English speaker teachers. Therefore, it should be the benefit of being non-native English speaker teachers to give the students more learning strategies. Murph-O'Dwyer (in Ma. 2013) adds that the formal learning of knowledge about English helps them develop language. Moreover, Medgeys (in Ma, 2012) they can teach language learning strategies more effectively. Self-efficacy is judgement of a person to his capabilities to plan and implement the action to reach certain goals (Mukhid, 2009). In an academic context, self-efficacy reflects how confident students are in performing specific tasks (Perez & Ye, 2013). Self-efficacy plays a role in academic motivation and learning motivation (especially students' ability to manage their learning activities), and resistance.

3.3 Students' Perception of Native and Non-Native English Speaker Teachers in Assessing Language Skills and Components

In this point, the students believe that native English speaker teachers assess their listening, reading, speaking, and pronunciation better than non-native English speaker teachers. Because of tendency toward monolingualism in English speaking countries, English speakers are judgmental and less tolerant of those with accented speech (Greenwood, 2002 in Kolokdaragh, 2009). Only in writing. the students prefer non-native English speaker teachers assess better than native English speaker teacher. Moreover, as a study done by Medgeys (in Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002), NESTs do not make any critical assessment unless the students make a mistake in term of communication. Self-efficacy is judgement of a person to his capabilities to plan and implement the action to reach certain goals (Mukhid, 2009). In an academic context, self-efficacy reflects how confident students are in performing specific tasks (Perez & Ye, 2013). Self-efficacy plays a role in academic motivation and learning motivation (especially students' ability to manage their learning activities), and resistance. Being able to speak with confident and pronounce well as real English users might also influence the students' preferences in the assessment. According to Murtiana (2011), native speakers do not have difficulties in pronunciation because they have acquired naturally and they are able to judge which utterances are grammatically acceptable and which are not. However, Pacek (in Walkinshaw and Oanh, 2014) investigated the perspectives of 89 English learners from various countries studying at a U.K. university; these learners generally valued their non-NESTs' pedagogical expertise, metalinguistic awareness, and interpersonal skills.

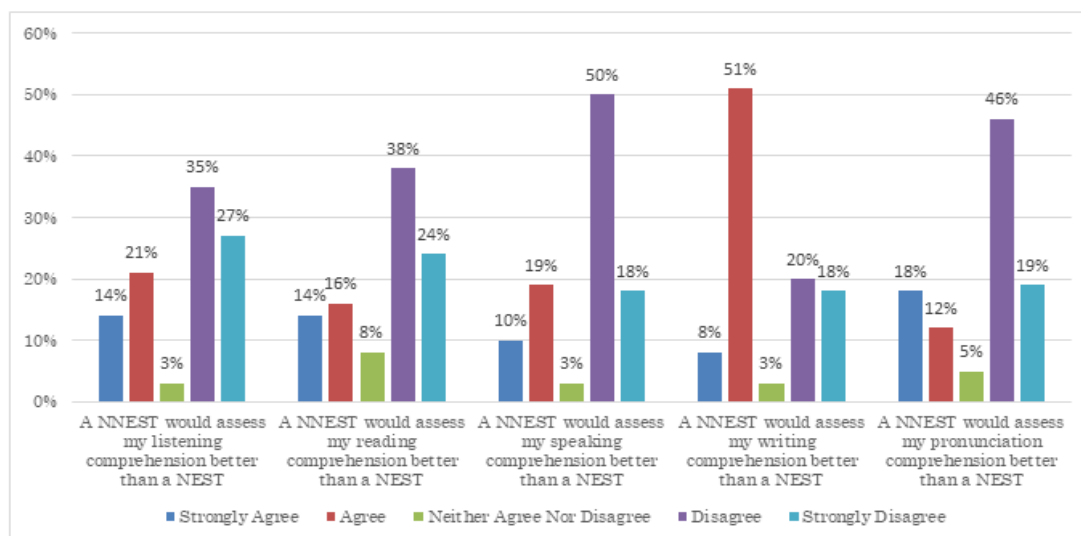


Figure 3. Students' Perception of Native and Non-Native English Speaker Teachers in Assessing Language Skills and Components

4. CONCLUSION

The current study aims at knowing the students' perception of native English speaker teachers with three emerging themes. Those are students' general preferences of native English speaker teachers, native English speaker teachers in teaching language skills and components, and native English speaker teachers in assessing language skills and components. To sum up, the data showed that students preferred to have NNESTs. The respondents skewed their preferences on NNESTs due to having similar L1. However, they believed that NESTs should be fitting in teaching speaking and pronunciation. The students also perceived that NNESTs are appropriate to teach grammar since they have better explanations in explaining grammar and share the same L1 to assist the students in solving their handicaps in the difficulties they had. In addition, they perceived having both teachers in the class would give more theoretical and practical understanding of the teaching material. Initiating a class team teaching between NESTs and NNESTs is also paramount for the stakeholders to be taken into account.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Hiring native English speaker teachers should not only hire them because of their nativeness. They should select a native English speaker teacher with a high qualification of being TFL teachers. Moreover, an institution having qualified English speaker teachers do not only attract students, but also gives more benefit to the students because they are taught by qualified native English speaker teachers to enhance students' motivations to study English and their English insights. The findings would be more interesting if the future researchers involved more than one school as the sample. Moreover, university students' perceptions are also suggested for the future researcher. In addition, the classifications of successful and unsuccessful students and gender differences are also required. More adequate classifications may boost the satisfactory data. Furthermore, the employed sampling technique was convenience sampling for a limited time. Employing other sampling techniques is suggested to generalize the data descriptions since the data obtained in employing convenience sampling is not able to reflect as general descriptions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank Universitas Kristen Cipta Wacana for supporting the current study.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors have contributed to the manuscript from the start to its final publication process.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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