An Analysis of STKIP AL MAKSUM Students' Attitude Towards Native and Non Native English Speaking Teachers

Elisa Haddina[1)*], Venika Sutrisna[2)]
[1,2]STKIP Al Maksum Langkat

*Email : elisahaddina@stkipalmaksum.ac.id

Abstract

There was an argument that native English teachers have many advantages than non-native English teachers and students preferred native to non-native teachers; however, the argument had to be assessed. Many researchers had been exploring students' perceptions of native and non-native English teachers worldwide in formal education institutions. This study aimed to explore students' perceptions of native and non-native English teachers in a non-formal education institution. This was a qualitative study based on a descriptive approach conducted using three instruments: close-ended questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and documentation. The study revealed that native and non- native English teachers had their own specific roles in the Indonesian context. Students needed native more than non-native teachers because the latter were bilingual having the same mother tongue as them, and they enabled a successful learning process because of the effective learning strategies they shared. Also, non-native teachers helped students deal with difficulties and challenges in their learning process

Keywords: Perception, native English teachers, non-native English teachers

I. Introduction

English is the most popular international language used all over the world. For this reason, English must be taught in all education levels. People are required to speak like a native. Hence, many parents send their children to non-formal education institutions, like English courses, to let them learn English more intensively. In this case, the existence of English courses in Indonesia is growing rapidly years to years with the

presence of native and non- native teachers. Many institutions employ these two types of teachers to promote the language learning process. "The competencies of English teachers as Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) and Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) have become a significant matter of discussion" (Tsou & Chen, 2019). This case happens worldwide including in Indonesia which uses English as a foreign language.

The issue about the effectiveness of the NESTs and NNESTs is not a new case in English teaching and learning. It has become a questionable and debatable issue in EFL and ESL studies over the years since it contains two opposite points of view and has been a researchable issue by many scholars, not only in EFL but also in ESL contexts; (Tajeddin & Adeh, 2016), (Novianti, 2018); (Lourie, 2019); (DY & Oladele, 2019). The debates are about the thought to decide whether NESTs or NNESTs compete with each other in terms of teaching preferences.

English education in various settings has been connected to the instructors' capacities, and it is believed that teachers who communicate in English as their first language can be more powerful study hall professionals than those whose first language isn't English. Besides that, there is a worldwide negative bias against NNESTs around the world (Tosuncuoglu, 2017). NESTs are frequently decided to be predominant to the NNESTs, both by people who have not reflected fundamentally on the natural contrasts between realizing how to utilize a language and knowing how to teach a language and by people who accept that NNESTs are not accurate speakers. In non-language English country especially in the classroom situation, there is a big picture that portrays NESTs as better teachers or lecturers considering their inherent language English ability (Lourie, 2019).

Notwithstanding, research on the marvel of NESTs and NNESTs shows that the last can be more powerful a direct result of their experience of being language students. Further, teaching a language is not really connected with the teachers' status; native or non-native. Teaching a language requires people to be trained and prepared to be teachers since teachers are made not born, whether native or non-native. As a result, NESTs are not a guarantee that they are much better than NNESTs in teaching the language. However, we can see some advertisements around us promoting English courses with the natives. This is because of the claim mentioned previously.

In fact, since English is recognized as the international language that is taught worldwide across varieties of education levels, the number of NNESTs is increasing gradually all over the world and recent information reveals that they have outnumbered the NESTs, including in Indonesia. Even, as cited in Jaber (2016), Richardson states that nine out of ten English teachers around the world are non-native and Freeman, et al (as cited in Floris and Renandya (2020) add that 80% out of the 15 million English teachers are NNESTs. It may indicate that more people put more trusts on the NNESTs.

There have been various investigations in the field of NESTs and NNESTs all throughout the places. Be that as it may, since there is no solid observational demonstrate to point whether NESTs or NNESTs can add to the learning aftereffects of EFL students, more assessment is required, (Chun, 2014). In fact, there has been a few clear investigations in the East Asia, Central Asia and South Asia context raising different issues (Sun, 2017); (Nguyen, 2017); (Tajeddin, 2018). Further, currently, very few studies on students' perceptions exist on NNESTs and their professional status has raised an area of interest. Therefore, in this study, the researchers tried to explore students' perceptions towards their native and non-native English teachers. The purpose of this

study was to investigate the perspective or perceptions of students based on the NESTs and NNESTs in EFL teaching. While other similar studies focused on the formal education institutions, this study focused on the non-formal education institution which referred to as English course that hired both native and non-native English teachers. A native speaker of a language is someone who has obtained the language as their first language since early childhood. They are considered to master their language instinctively and to utilize it precisely, smoothly, and appropriately.

All in all, a long way from being a goal name, the English "local speaker" is labelled with the political and social conditions of its introduction to the world. Therefore, a native speaker is noticed as an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community who knows the language perfectly and is unaffected by grammatically irrelevant conditions such as memory limitations, distractions, shifts in attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his language knowledge in actual performance (Lowe, 2020).

II. Literature Review

For these reasons and study, (Chun, 2014) recommends that native speakers should not be hired solely because they are native speakers, and that they should not be given preference over NNESTs. It is because sharing the same mother tongue as the students would bring its own advantages in teaching learning process, also, becoming an English teacher is not fundamentally related to the status of nativeness. Even though the English proficiency level is a vital component in professionalism, becoming a teacher is not something born. Regardless of their first language and proficiency level, teachers should have satisfactory training to teach a language. In other words, they should be trained in an organized educational system and prepared to be English teachers.

As the researchers mentioned previously, there have been numerous studies in the field of NESTs and NNESTs. The study was initiated by Medyges in London in 1992 who found out that most of his respondents preferred NNESTs to NESTs. Since then, many researches have been conducted with the same issues, Gurkan & Yuksel (2012) who conducted a study on the performance of NNESTs and NESTs in the classroom. The results showed that the NNESTs and the NESTs are not different in the terms of pedagogy. Then, Brown (2013) carried out a similar study in Sweden which showed that both NESTs and NNESTs were confident in their language abilities and there were significant differences of perception among the respondents towards their NESTs and NNESTs. The results of the study showed that students thought that it did not matter whether the teachers were native or non-native as long as they were good teachers.

In a study conducted by Walkinshaw & Oanh (2014) to university students in Vietnam and Japan, it was found that students viewed NESTS as models of pronunciation and correct use of language, but also found that NESTs were poor in explaining grammar and created tension between their different cultures. NNESTs were regarded good grammar teachers and were willing to revert to the first language of the students if necessary. Students considered classroom experience with NNESTs easier since they share cultures. Pronunciation of the NNESTs was inferior to that of NESTs, yet easier to understand. Some students recommend learning from both NESTs and NNESTs according to the skills and abilities taught to the learners. Other research was conducted by Novianti (2018) to the 4th grade students of English Department at a university in Cimahi, West Java. The study showed that students have positive perceptions towards NESTs and NNESTs, though, in some conditions, students face few

issues in their learning process, so that both NESTs and NNESTs were required to overcome the difficulties experienced by students

III. Research Method

A qualitative analysis based on a descriptive approach was used to investigate the perspectives of the students on NESTs and NNESTs. The students' views on NESTs and NNESTs were gathered in the form of standardized questionnaire data (quantified for analytical purposes) to answer the research questions because the researchers wanted to examine rather than evaluate specific attitudes and beliefs (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). To endorse the questionnaire, interviews were also used. Furthermore, the researchers decided to leverage the evolving nature of the qualitative analysis, keeping the design relatively loose and flexible to respond to evolving knowledge (DÖrnyei, 2011). This section describes the technique used in this study, including the participants, instruments, and data collection methods.

The study participants were students from EF English First Cilegon, Banten Province since both NESTs and NNESTs were recruited. The participants were chosen by using a purposive sampling technique. The samples were 20 students whose classes had ever been accompanied by both NESTs and NNESTs.

The Instruments

A close-ended questionnaire was employed to gather data on students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs. This instrument allowed for the collection of a significant amount of data in an easily processed format, and it followed the same methodology as other questionnaire-based research on the issue (Brown, 2013; Tajeddin & Adeh, 2016; Novianti, 2018). The questionnaire was in the form of scaled questions by using Likert- scale from 1 to 5 ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The questions were structured by paying attention to the indicators forming the theories, the concepts of writing the questionnaires, such as the contents and aims of the questions, the vocabulary used, styles and forms   of the questions, the length of the questions, the order of the questions, and the questionnaires' physical appearance. In addition, a semi-structured interview and documentations were used to elicit more detail information on the study and triangulate the collection of data.

Data Collection Procedures

As demonstrated by DÖrnyei (2011), this research may well be thought of a quantitative one because it included data collection procedures primarily resulting in numerical data which was then analyzed primarily using statistical methods. Since it used a 5-point Likert- type scale, it was referred to as quantitative. The responses of students were counted and translated into percentages; however, a descriptive method of the study was performed, and, based on probability theory, descriptive statistics were not advanced. The qualitative information was used to address the research questions. The data from the semi-structured interview with the director of EF English First Cilegon belongs to qualitative.

Furthermore, the writers employed some procedures in this study, they were: (1) planning, (2) gathering the data, and (3) processing and analyzing the data. In the planning process, the study method and the participants were determined by the writers, as well as organizing the questionnaire and the delivery technique of the questionnaire,

also the method and data collection technique. In this study, there was only one variable: the perspective of students on the NESTs and NNESTs. A close-ended questionnaire to collect the quantitative data was conducted while collecting the data. Next, using a semi-structured interview, the qualitative data was carried out and documentation was used to generate more detailed information and triangulate the data.

To address the research questions, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to evaluate the questionnaire and interview data that were obtained in the second step of this inquiry. The descriptive statistics including frequency counts and percentages were determined. Interview data was then analyzed by using content analysis. To promote research, answers were carefully read, keywords were highlighted, and documentation was used.

IV. Discussion
Students' Perception towards Native English Speaker Teachers (NESTs)

Referring to the students' personal opinion about their preference for having the NEST (Q1), 45% of students agree that the NEST is necessary for their learning process since they speak English more fluently. Even, 10% of students strongly agree with this statement. As to meet their learning needs (Q2), 55% of students agree that clear and accurate pronunciation of the NEST will affect their natural ability to speak in English. So, they need more exposure to meet their learning need; that is being able to speak in English fluently with clear and accurate pronunciation in a natural way. This is supported by the interview result with the director of EF English First Cilegon who stated that,

"They [the NESTs] have been exposed to English since childhood, so their language is more natural. This natural is something that we want our children to have. So we apply English here in EF also to make our students more natural in becoming a speaker,…we bring native here to give more exposure to our students from natural English." (I1)

In the second indicator (Q3 & Q4), 55% of students agree that the idioms used by the NESTs motivate them to enhance their learning skills, especially in speaking. The same number of students also agrees that those idioms make them want to learn English more to enhance their skills. However, for young learners, the idioms do not seem to play an important role in their learning process, and even for the adult learners, memorizing idioms as they are will not work. We have to bring the idioms into the contexts as the interview result showed,

"I'm not sure about idiomatic grammar because we have so many young learners here. We cannot use idioms here in the class. But our native teachers try to motivate the students using fun activities, like games or songs or chants. So, it will motivate them more rather than using language they don't understand."(I2)

For the third indicator saying that native speaker understands and uses the standard language, 35% students agree, and even 45% of them strongly agree, that the NESTs understand their utterances even though they pronounce the words incorrectly (Q5). Moreover, 40% of students agree that their NESTs can make immediate correction according to the standard language even though the NESTs themselves have different accents, dialects, pronunciation since they come from different places of origin (Q6). The interview revealed that:

"Well, based on my opinion, yes [native speaker understands and uses the standard language]. But we have to remember that they have special accents as well and sometimes it's different from the common language or general English language that we

learn…but for grammatically correct, I can say yes…sometimes they have different accents, dialects, pronunciation even though they come from the same country."(I3)

In the next indicator, 40% of students agree that their NESTs' spontaneous discourse can enhance the communication flow in the learning session (Q7). Most students (40%) also think that the wide range of communicative competence possessed by the NESTs enhances their language skills (Q8). For example, students can speak much longer, write varieties of ideas with a wide range of vocabulary, understand better various types of texts, and understand better the meaning of spoken communication during listening sessions. All of
those language skills developments must consider the level of the learners as the interview added that,

"…yes, because it's their first language; their mother tongue. So, of course, it will be different but sometimes we have to find out sentences to give instructions to the children…So the communicative competence should be adjusted to the learner levels and also the language proficiency of the audiences." (I4)

In the fifth indicator, 45% of students agree, and even 20% of them strongly agree that the NESTs are competent in writing to expose students to different text types, for example descriptive, narrative, and recount (Q9). Students are also involved in regular classroom activities and a two-week-program of writing class in which they must enrol creative writing sessions, writing news items, and writing essays. The curriculum and program are also linked to the NESTs writing competency, so that it will produce the better result of students' writing ability. In other words, the NESTs support the students in improving their writing skills (Q10). As the interview mentioned, "…we had a program for writing only and it's only two weeks program. In the programs, they [the students] created many kinds of writings like creative writings, news, and essay… students will have specific session for writing about something and they will discuss first and decide the topic, the main idea, the supporting sentences. And after that they will write…" (I5)

In the last indicator (Q11), 40% of students agree that their NESTs can interpret oral texts in speech form to help them understand the materials better, for example in giving instructions and doing exercise. Also (Q12), the same numbers of students agree that the NESTs can easily explain the meanings of unfamiliar words found in written materials or texts in a more comprehensible way to the students without looking up to the dictionary. However, from the teacher's point of view, this is not the case. Interpreting and translating texts need hard work at the beginning and a lot of trainings as the interview mentioned,

"Maybe it's not easy for the first time…they will take time at the beginning while they join EF, but here at work, I think they will be more flexible in the lesson because they already know the strength or weakness, or the cracking point they can fit in…so it's not easy in the beginning but as the time passes by, it will be a lot easier for them…".

Table 1 Students' Perception towards Native English Speaker Teachers (NESTs)

Item No.	Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
1	I prefer native English speaker teachers because they speak English more fluently.	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	9 (45%)	2 (10%)
2	Since the native English speaker teachers acquire the language from early childhood, they pronounce words clearly and			4 (20%)	11 (55%)	5 (25%)

accurately which I need for my learning.

3	The idioms used by the native English speaking teachers give me motivation in learning English.	3 (15%)	11 (55%)	6 (30%)
4	The idioms used by the native English speaker teachers make me want to learn English more.	4 (20%)	11 (55%)	5 (25%)

V. Conclusions

Based on the findings, it could be concluded that both NESTs and NNESTs have their own specific roles in English language teaching in Indonesian context. In students' perspectives, they need NNESTs more than NESTs because they share the same background of the first language. They believe that NNESTs can bring successful teaching-learning process since they truly understand the appropriate strategies in learning the language. Further, the NNESTs are helpful in dealing with students' difficulties in learning.

On the other hand, the institution does not really differentiate between NESTs and NNESTs. They hope that the students will have the same experience in learning English in fun ways. Nevertheless, the existence of the NESTs is the best way to give more exposure of natural English to the students. Hence, the students will be motivated and confident in their English ability.

The suggestion that can be drawn from this research that the NESTs should reduce the speed of speaking when explaining the material, to better balance the students to make it easier to follow the learning process, then re-explain the vocabulary related to the material to be discussed, so that students are not confused. In addition, it is also recommended to study students in their class so that they can memorize and understand the characteristics of their students, and make it easier for the learning process. In other hand, NNESTs use students' mother tongue effectively and are more disciplined and consistent with time and manage classes appropriate. In addition, it is also recommended to practice speaking with proper English spelling and accent to provide the correct example to students

References

Braine, G. (2011). Nonnative Speaker English Teachers: Research, Pedagogy and Professional Growth. Applied Linguistics, 32(4), 466–469. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amr028

Brown, E. (2013). Native and Non-native English Speaking ESL / EFL Teachers in

Sweden : A Study on Students ' Attitudes and Perceptions towards the Teaching

Behavior of Native and Non- native English Speaking Teachers. 1–36.

Chun, S. Y. (2014). EFL learners' beliefs about native and non-native English-speaking teachers: Perceived strengths, weaknesses, and preferences. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2014.889141

Davies, A. (2003). The native speaker: myth and reality. In The Cromwell Press Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0889-4906(03)00032-2

Davies, A. (2017). Commentary On The Native Speaker Status in Pronunciation Research. Second Language Pronunciation Assessment, 185.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling, 53, 160. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004

DÖrnyei, Z. (2011). Research Method in Applied Linguistics - Quantative, Qualitive, and Mixed Methodologies. Oxford University Press.

Dy, Channy & Oladele, O. M. (2019). Students ' Perception of Native and International Lecturers of English Language , a Case of Selected Universities in the Kingdom of Cambodia. 25(4), 1–18.

Floris, Flora D. and Renandya, W. (2020). Promoting the Value of Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers. PASAA, 59.

Gurkan, S., & Yuksel, D. (2012). Evaluating the Contributions of Native and Non-Native Teachers to an English Language Teaching Program. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 46, 2951–2958.https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.596

Jaber, H. (2016). Native and Non-native English Language Teachers : A deficit or a difference. 1–15.

Kirkpatrick, A. (2011). English as an Asian lingua franca and the multilingual model of ELT. Language Teaching, 44(2), 212–224. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444810000145

Lowe, R. (2020). Uncovering Ideology in English Language Teaching. English Language Education, 19.

Lourie, O. &. (2019). EMI Lecturers in International Universities: Is a Native/non-native English Speaking Background Relevant? International Journal Education and Billingualism, 1-13.

Meidita, R. (2019). Students' perception Toward Native and Non-Native Teachers At SMAN 1 Rejotangan Tulungagung. Tulung Agung: IAIN.

Nguyen, M. (2017). TESOL teachers' engagement with the native speaker model: How does teacher education impact on their beliefs?. . RELC Journal, 89-93.

Novianti, A. (2018). Native Versus Non-Native English Speaking Teachers: An Insight into Indonesia Students' Voices. Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra, 18(1), 44–57. https://doi.org/10.17509/bs

Selvi, A. F. (2011). The non-native speaker teacher. ELT Journal, 65(2), 187–189. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccq092

Sun, Y. (2017). Major Trends in the Global ELT Field: A Non-Native English-Speaking Professional's Perspective. . Asian-Focused ELT Research and Practice: Voices from the Far Edge, 17.

Sutherland, S. (2012). Native and Non-native English Teachers in the Classroom: A Re-Examination. Awej, 3(4), 58–71. www.awej.org

Tajeddin, Z., & Adeh, A. (2016). Native and nonnative English teachers' perceptions of their professional identity: Convergent or divergent? Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 4(3), 37–54.