

PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' BELIEFS REGARDING NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE
ENGLISH TEACHERS' PRONUNCIATION AT A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study investigated the pre-service teachers' beliefs regarding native and non-native English teachers' pronunciation at a private university. To this end, 19 pre-service teachers from seventh semester were selected randomly assigned to 3 groups: Focus groups, Interviews and Questionnaires in which students could share those specific beliefs that describe native and non-native teachers in terms of pronunciation. This exploratory study is framed within a qualitative design, and systematization of experiences methodology. Additionally, the results of the study reveals that students tended to label teachers in different categories: Pronunciation, Fluency, Accent, Didactics and Language, where they describe their beliefs about teacher's speech, the way they produce sounds, the advantages and disadvantages native and non-native teachers have about pronunciation, and the accent variation they have according to their place of origin.

Literature Review

In order to support this project which focuses on the beliefs of pre-service teachers regarding non-native and native English teachers pronunciation at a private university and

taking into account that previous studies are important foundations to have a successful development through the research, it was proper to search some of them and analyze their connection with the proposal. In this way, three studies were selected which are mentioned below.

The first study was conducted by Shin, Teow Wan and Manochphinyo, Apinya (2017). A qualitative study that aimed at exploring from a socio-cultural perspective, the perception of Malaysian students towards Native and Non-native ESL Teachers regarding beliefs about certain linguistics abilities teachers have. The participants were selected randomly out of a 7 students' Of group from an undergraduate program. As the concept of belief has gained importance within the studies associated to sociolinguistics, the participants share their beliefs through the Y experiences they had with Native and Non-Native teachers in order to support the theories and studies that have showed that beliefs are "individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a preposition" (Pajares, 1992, as cited in Fives & Gill, 2015 p. 1). That means, people build their own perceptions based on what they consider is true or not. However, this concept has been defined from different factors such as Religion, Politics, Education, Ethics, among others. For gathering this data, the instruments were a survey questionnaire of 15 questions and online interviews that were developed with the purpose of clarifying certain issues that were not elaborated enough in the survey. The study came up with the idea of showing the way native and Non-native teachers are judged based on their personality and abilities, not for their nativity.

The second study was carried out by Viáfara (2016). The author's proposal was to generate an increase in the awareness of and dismantle the idealization that native speakers represent the goal that students and teachers and the foreign language education field need

to achieve. Highlighting the idea in Viafara`s study, undergraduate pre-service teaching is a fundamental pillar in education field and its idealizations must be taking into account as well. That is why it becomes relevant in the way that future teachers can be more aware of those beliefs, understand and help to dismantling them. Some aspects regarding the context show that Colombia has some multilingual communities where Spanish and indigenous languages are spoken. Although most of the population speaks Spanish over the recent years of Colombian history, English and its speakers have been increasing. González (2010), remarks that though American English has traditionally enjoyed the highest prestige in the country, British English is the second most popular variety (as cited in Viafara, 2016). Both cultures have significantly influenced the different processes within the country, such as education, politics, economics, among others, that is to say that it is a tendency to rely on abroad models and wish to adopt an idealized English Native Speaker accent as the ultimate goal of language competence (Vélez-Rondón, 2003, González, 2010, as cited in Viafara, 2016).

The methodology in this project was mixed, it employed qualitative and quantitative techniques. The participants in the study were two groups of students of two public universities. The first group from a Modern Languages program and the second one from a Foreign Languages program. It was found in common that both programs have the participation of teachers or assistants generally from USA or England to support the classes. In this sense, the methods to collect the data were surveys and semi-structured interviews. Those instruments were helpful to know the participants` background and self-perceptions as future non-native speaker EFL teachers. All this information was analyzed and it also consisted in describing the participants perceptions through detailed comparison and reduction of data, the identified patterns in the answers were grouped to form categories and sub-categories. As part of the results, the study showed that most of the participants`

perceptions were very connected to the myth and idealization regarding native speakers and its fallacy, and that many aspects of English speakers impacted teachers' visions in the way they could perceive disadvantages in their future jobs if they do not achieve certain features. Such as, pronunciation, intonation, accent or even fluency. Moreover, this project helped participants to find out the capacities and potentials that can emerge from the beginning and develop during their processes and that they can be successful in their professions, without thinking that their own culture and language characteristics modify or affect skills development.

And finally, the third study was conducted by Buss, Larissa (2016) in which a research about pronunciation took place. This investigation was addressed to 60 EFL and ESL teachers with the purpose of finding beliefs regarding EFL and ESL teaching pronunciation. The Brazilian teachers in this qualitative study show how comfortable they feel teaching pronunciation. In addition, a desire to continue improving the teaching of pronunciation through training emerged among the online surveys made as a data collection method. English pronunciation is one of the most difficult skills to acquire and learners should spend lots of time to improve their pronunciation (Aliaga García, 2007; Martínez-Flor, 2006; Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016). However, it is considered as an important aspect for the effective transmission of the communication. Although it is a complex skill for certain people, it is necessary to have native or non-native teachers of the English language properly trained. Thanks to that, the articulation will be evident and the message can be received correctly by the receiver.

As it was previously mentioned, these studies supported the project since they are a guide to know what it has been studied and how to continue researching the aspects, problems, situations and phenomena that are related to languages education field. Likewise,

these previous studies would serve as a tool to propose a methodological framework that meet the needs and expectations aimed in this project.

Statement of the problem

The variety of teachers profile in the process of learning and teaching a language plays an important role in the students' second language learning. Among those profiles we find native and non-native teachers. In this sense, regardless of whether the pronunciation of non-native speakers is close to the pronunciation of English as a native language, it does not imply that their foreign language is not of a high quality. According to Holliday (2006), there is an established belief that native speaker's teachers of English represent the English culture which also generates different ideals regarding the knowledge of the language and the methodology to teach it; that is to say, native teachers are considered to be better language educators due to their pronunciation and their identity as natural language users. In this way, non-native teachers should care more about their professional development in all facets of the teaching, more than just simply sounding like a native speaker. Many tendencies try to locate the native speaker as the best teacher. However, it is important not to fall into these generalizations and idealizations, since a non-native foreign language teacher can have appropriate language performances, pedagogical and didactic skills to teach the students. In the same way, this stigma affects the self-esteem of non-native teachers since they feel that they do not have a native pronunciation and question their foreign language (FL) skills and therefore question their identity as FL teachers. For instance, pronunciation considered by students as one of the relevant abilities to achieve a good performance in the target language is sometimes misunderstood due to they tend to confuse it with accent.

Hereby, it would be significant if the foreign languages teacher education program promoted/offered spaces in order to analyze the role of pronunciation from a more critical and reflexive way. In that sense, it can be understood that it is more important the good pronunciation and being intelligible without being regulated by prejudices and beliefs that establish that good teachers must follow certain standard issues, for instance the language and pronunciation. In addition, it would be important to gather pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding the processes the pre-service teachers have had through the education program. In the same way, in the courses that are emphasized more in pronunciation, for instance phonetics courses, to consider whether teachers have had that kind of reflection or not. Finally, it is suggested the creation of spaces that allow to discuss this kind of situations and in a certain way to lead the development of a critical thinking about English pronunciation and its impact on pre-service teachers' processes. It is relevant to highlight that the foreign language program is made up by Native and Non-native teachers also the pre-service teachers must reach a certain level with a standard test as a requirement to do the practicum.

Question

What are the pre-service teachers' beliefs regarding native and non-native English teachers' pronunciation at a private university?

Justification

The training process in a foreign languages teacher education program is influenced by different factors such as native accent modeling, cultural issues, thoughts and ideas about what being a "good" teacher means, and aptitudes and skills a teacher requires. The fact of cultivating a suitable educational practice and valuing the skills that educators develop are

key elements when it comes to considering that not only native teachers have what it takes to teach English as a foreign language.

As cultural diversity comprises a wide range of language differences. As K. Hirose, A. Sakurai and H. Konno (1994) mention, “language learners tend to develop prosodic features such as accent, rhythm and intonation by imitating native-like speaking” (pp.1124). Although EFL learning implies to assimilate and accommodate structures, learners and non-native English speakers do not have to adopt or develop a given model in order to communicate effectively. Since all the previously mentioned aspects influence the training processes of EFL teachers, it is primordial to study the phenomena behind beliefs, regarding English pronunciation. Taking into account that, this issue has become relevant in the education field, this work would serve as the basis for further research.

By considering pre-service teachers’ beliefs, this study can contribute to raise awareness about the actual role of educators when it comes to teaching and learning pronunciation skills. During their training process, future language teachers are able to understand, recognize and reflect upon the abilities developed. There are certain misconceptions regarding standard accent or variations that come from cultures like the American and British ones. However, there is a need to comprehend that learning English as a FL entails to admit the wide variety of English speakers around the world, the amount of people that decide to study this language and therefore the variant characteristics of each person, the place where they are from, and the native accent they have that has nothing to do with pronunciation.

Certainly, pronunciation as a feature which is developed during the learning process, allows speakers to say the words in an appropriate way, making themselves understandable or intelligible. In that case, nor accent nor intonation are strong points to consider because what really matters is the communication. Based on that, pre-service teachers should reflect

on the ideologies and prejudices that establish that native English pronunciation defines if teachers are good or not.

With this study about the beliefs that are going to be collected, the foreign language teacher education program could take the entire process and analyze it from critical perspectives. This project would be the entrance to the awareness of English pronunciation impact on foreign languages teachers and, from a general perspective, the program would take into account the idea of becoming more reflexive and value what the non-native teachers learn and do to be great educators. In that sense, they would recognize the abilities that two or more languages speakers can develop, without having in mind, as the big ghost, that the native pronunciation and traditions are only based in certain cultures.

General Objective: To identify pre-service teachers' beliefs regarding native and non-native English teachers' pronunciation at a private university.

Specific Objectives:

- To explore pre-service teachers' beliefs concerning native and non-native teachers' pronunciation.
- To describe pre-service teachers' beliefs in terms of pronunciation and accent in relation to native and non-native teachers.
- To contrast pre-service teachers' beliefs regarding native and non-native teachers' pronunciation.

Conceptual References

In consideration of pre-service teachers' beliefs regarding English pronunciation in native and non-native teachers, which is the purpose of this project, it is important to take

some key concepts, describing their definitions in order to have a deeper knowledge and understanding of them and the research as well. The concepts are mentioned below.

Belief

Belief is a wide concept that has been defined from several fields such as religion, politics, education, ethics, among others. According to general points of view, beliefs can be conceptualized as an “individual’s judgement of the truth or falsity of a preposition” (Pajares, 1992, as cited in Fives & Gill, 2015 p. 1). That means, people build their own perceptions based on what they consider is true or not. In most of the cases, those judgments can determine everyone’s behaviors, decisions, actions and the like. In addition, Pajares (1992) remarks that “people’s beliefs strongly affect their behavior” (pp. 324-326).

In other authors’ definitions, a belief is any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase ‘I believe that’ (Rokeach 1973, p. 113). That is to say that some people may tend to rely on others’ behaviors, opinions, actions and the like, and build their own beliefs or thoughts about certain things.

Teacher beliefs have been defined as constructs that provide an understanding of a teacher’s practice (Nespor, 1987; Richardson, 1996 as cited in Herrera, 2010). This also means that teacher's practice beliefs have been built taking into account how educators develop their teaching abilities; in the current study, teaching profession beliefs must be part of the concepts since it encompasses the field of education, specifically the language teaching one.

Native and non-native teacher

Native teacher and non-native teacher are terminologies that became a research issue in the last decades. Péter Medgyes is a non-native English speaker teacher who opened several discussions about the non-native teachers' role in education. In the same line, the author has supported and integrated their ideas and results from different researches to set a large range of aspects that define and characterize native English-speaking teachers and non-native English-speaking teachers (NESTs and NNESTs). When looking for direct and concise definitions, it is found that those definitions vary according to the studies, since NEST and NNEST are concepts that are explained from diverse fields or aspects such as pedagogy, language teaching and learning, teacher's profession, among others.

Medgyes (1994) affirms that NNESTs have experienced two improper conditions: inferiority complex and a type of schizophrenia. The first condition shows a connection with the idea that NNESTs are not able to follow the linguistic standards, especially the one about accent from US or UK models, what makes them feel that their abilities and efforts in the second language are inadequate (Cook, 1999); and the second condition is supported by the pressure that NNESTs may be in the way to lose their identity due to the assimilation process with the target culture and language. To summarize, we can affirm and understand that NNESTs have been judged and set in a list of prejudices which do not reflect veracity from their roles as non-native English teachers, this kind of assumptions can put them in a low level or in disadvantage.

Even though the previous aspects show a negative perspective towards NNESTs, there are six features found out by Medgyes (1994) that give credibility to the NNESTs and the way they teach. In this sense, the author points that non-native teachers are able to contribute with good learner model for imitation, teach effective language learning strategies since they have explored the pedagogy field provide learners with more information about the English language, anticipate and prevent language difficulties better, be more empathetic

to the needs and problems of learners, and make use of the learners' mother tongue (Llurda, 2005). The challenge is to become aware of those abilities and reflect upon them during the teaching practices since they will be present in both, non-native learners and teachers.

It was anteriorly mentioned that the NEST and NNEST are concepts that have been intensively discussed and their definitions and interpretations are now extensive because of the different fields these concepts have been explored and studied through. “In the eyes of many people, native speaker supremacy still enjoys a great professional reputation, both within and outside the language teaching profession” Llurda (2009) as cited in Martínez (2017). In similar words native teachers, in the English teaching context, have shown a high level of language that creates a favorable image that guarantees in somehow satisfactory processes.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is a common term talking about English language teaching due to is closely related to speaking, one of the four skills when learning a second language. Pennington and Rogerson (2018) define pronunciation as “the foundation of messaging in speech through articulating words and their combinations in grammatical and discourse units and through projecting multiple facets of social and contextual meaning”(Pennington and Rogerson, 2018, p.1). That means, the capacity to produce sounds that are intelligible and well delivered on the context.

On the other hand, Brown (2014) defines teaching pronunciation as” the process of teaching learners to produce the sounds of a language”(Brown, 2014, p.5). That is to say, for teachers pronunciation is a topic in which they must have some knowledge due to they are teaching students not only words but the better way to deliver a message that must be clear and contextualized for others to understand. Pronunciation also helps teachers to

identify the students' development during their learning process given that this field requires not only the good performance by pronouncing word but the listening and the grammar coherence to be understood.

In this sense, as it is mentioned “pronunciation is a key aspect of communicative competence that goes far beyond being understood in the sense of speaking in such a way that the audience is able to recognize the words being spoken” (Pennington and Rogerson, 2018, p. 6). This can be linked to the aim of this project viewing pronunciation as natural and general process that can be developed by both Native and Non-native teachers taking into account that the progress can vary depending on the exposure and the practice itself.

Fluency

This characteristic is not accurately defined due to certain definitions of this concept co-exist and also is “an epiphenomenon to which many individual (and interrelated) factors contribute”(p.26) according to Götz (2013). However, fluency may be considered as the ability people have to speak without pauses or hesitations conveying the message directly to the receiver. Additionally, it has been recognized as one sub-skill of speaking because of the way it goes linked in terms of oral communication. Certain authors have studied this phenomenon, like Dotan-Eliaz (2008) who states that “a good fluency does not mean that a person speaks a language but indicates better communication and transmission of ideas conducting to better proficiency” (pp.14)

David Crystal is an expert linguistic who has studied deeply the English language. Accent has been one of the features he has researched about and this concept has been defined in many of his books.

His extended works have also included Ben Crystal's knowledge, for instance the book "You Say Potato" in which they talk just about accents. Ben's suggested, in Crystal & Crystal (2014), "the heart of the answer is the notion that accents express our identity – who we are, which part of the country we come from, or where we belong socially or professionally. And identity is a very emotional issue" (p. 15). To add, accent does not only relate to the place and regional variations, it also includes aspects such as the social class, the educational background and the religion beliefs or connection (Crystal & Crystal, 2014). The aforesaid leads to decipher that every person has an accent which reveals several features from that person's life as from the past as from the current moment.

Accent is a concept that can be analyzed from different points of view. Those interpretations allow understanding that there is a particular function of accent: "it can convey our personal identity to the rest of the world. This is the recognition factor" (Crystal & Crystal, 2014 p. 16). This means that because of the accent, we are able to identify and recognize someone based on their voice as well as other characteristics that show more details about an individual; each person around the world belongs to some place in the world, then each person has an accent that is shown when speaking, and that reveals a general background.

Standard English pronunciation

The expansion of English has generated the emergence of many new varieties of English, which has taken lots of debates regarding what standards ought to be promoted in the teaching of English. As Lee (2010) mentions,

Standard language is the term generally used to refer to that variety of a language that is considered the norm. It is the variety regarded as the ideal for educational

purposes, and usually used as a yardstick by which to measure other varieties and implement standard-based assessment (p. 109).

Furthermore, Wardhaugh (2011) states that standardization refers to “the process by which a language has been codified in some way. That process usually involves the development of such things as grammar, spelling, books and dictionaries, and possibly a literature” (p.33). Albeit, the author argues that it is not all easy to define Standard English because of a failure to agree about the norm or norms that should apply. Wardhaugh cites Trudgill (1996, 5-6) that defines Standard English as the variety:

- Usually used in print
- Normally taught in schools
- Learned by non-native speakers
- Spoken by educated people
- Used in news broadcasts

Additionally, according to Milroy (2012),

Standardization is motivated in the first place by various social, political and commercial needs and is promoted in various ways, including the use of the writing system, which is relatively easily standardized; but absolute standardization of a spoken language is never achieved (p. 19).

Undoubtedly, the aforementioned concepts are the basis of this research and its comprehension and domine allow this process to be truthful and concise. That is to say, the knowledge and the path that each concept leave enrich the research and state strong foundations to support and carry out in a successful way the process.

Methodology

Given that this research aimed at identifying the pre-service teachers' beliefs regarding native and non native English pronunciation, this exploratory study is framed within a qualitative design, and systematization of experiences methodology. Bearing this in mind, we implemented focus groups, semi structured interviews and questionnaires as data collection methods.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that qualitative design involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach, stating that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 2). In virtue of the above, these aspects are fundamental for this research since the exploration of beliefs about Standard English pronunciation is an essential feature to build interpretations and answer the research questions.

When it comes to systematization of experiences, Falkenbach (2009) defines it as the research process in which a reflection and self-reflection of some subjects is encouraged from their own experiences in educational actions. At the same time, it allows to shape and share new meanings and new knowledge with the practitioners themselves, or with those who have access to the experiences. Furthermore, in order to achieve systematization of experiences, it is paramount to have clear steps to follow. In the first stage, there is a need to establish a goal to be achieved, as well as determining what the purpose of the systematization is, and the population that participates in the project. Moreover, it is required to define what data collection methods are more suitable to collect meaningful information according to the research methodology.

The most relevant step is the socialization of the analysis and results built with each experience, in which there might be reflections that can lead to meaningful learning for both,

the participants and researchers alike. Jara (2006, as cited in Hargreaves and Mariluz, 2009) states that,

Systematization is the critical interpretation of one or several intervention experiences. Through the process of ordering and reconstructing the experiences, systematization assists us to discover or explain the logic of the intervention process, the different factors that influenced it, and how and why the elements of the intervention related to each other in a particular way (p.10).

By the same token, Carrillo (2010) points out that through the systematization of experiences, teachers manage approaches, tactics, procedures and a series of research-oriented positions that enrich the quality of their practices, while incorporating the systematization of their own experiences with the objective of promoting their popular education identity. Taking into consideration the above, this project uses that research methodology as a tool through which the participants' background, related to their beliefs regarding Standard English pronunciation, can be gathered. In fact, they can contrast their experiences with the current state and provide critical and proactive reflections upon the subject matter.

The participants of this study were a group of pre-service teachers from a foreign language teaching education program. In this sense, the criteria for selecting them is based on three aspects:

- pre-service teachers from seventh semester.
- pre-service teachers doing their practicum.
- pre-service teachers who have had learning experiences with both native and non-native teachers.

Seventh semester was chosen since it is considered that at that level the students are expected to use English for subjects as, Research, Sociolinguistics, Didactics, Academic Writing and teaching practicum. Moreover, from this semester they begin the final part of the academic program where they are expected to be more critical when developing and training themselves as non-native teachers.

Concerned with the purpose of this research project, and after describing the research problem, explaining the study design and selecting the participants, we decided to implement focus groups with dual moderator, the semi structured interview and the questionnaire as data collection methods. Data collection methods are described as resources to “gather different facets of data, and their combined effects build on each other to compose a more three-dimensional perspective of the phenomenon” (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014, p. 262). To carry out the steps in the data collection procedure, it was required to select a representative sample. It was considered a number of six participants for each focus group, four participants for individual interviews and the three researches of this project for the reflection.

This overall process results in an appropriate way to know participants perspectives and have an approach to their thoughts through a free and open way, as those methods allow it to be.

Focus groups make part of qualitative research methods and these include exploration and discovery, understanding things in depth and in context, and interpreting why things are the way they are and how they got that way. By implementing focus groups, the participants have the opportunity to freely answer to several questions and at the same time they may be open to new ones that possibly emerge while the discussion takes place (Morgan, 1997). During that procedure, the researchers assign themselves the moderator, who is in charge of the register and observation of roles. In this case, this method development implies that the moderators work together; two of the performances for one

moderator is asking the questions and leading the session, and the other one guaranteeing that all questions are asked and any new modifications are discussed further; the record of the data is fundamental since it is transcribed to draw interpretations and conclusions.

Regarding interviews, Altrichter, Posch and Somekh (2000) explain that interviews are useful for communicating opinions, positions, conceptions and connotations with the purpose of obtaining a vast understanding of a situation. In this way, the researchers formulate a list of questions which must be asked during the conversation with the possibility that new inquiries emerge. In that case, the researcher may ask them taking into account only the participant's opinion. Equally important to the method described above, in the semi structured interview observations, informal and unstructured interviews are required for the implementation of the method. This guarantees that new questions will be developed according to the previously raised ones. In this way the collected information will be clearer and complete (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Questionnaires have been implemented as part of the research as well, with the purpose of gathering the experiences had by the researchers in their practicum process. Besides, they already have experienced working as a teacher in some institutions. That is why are considered their experiences as a support of this investigation. Gangrade (1982) defines questionnaires as "the method designed to collect data from large, diverse and widely scattered groups of people" (p.713); the author also mentions some of the advantages that this method has as the confidence that the participants have because of the minimum pressure to answer the question immediately. Moreover, this method could be applied as a way to gather experiences guided by questions.

It is important to clarify that all the testimonies and data provided by the participants will be collected with prior consent. Their personal identity will remain anonymous and the information will be stored in reliable places. At the time of disseminating the information,

the identity of the participants will be hidden and only the disclosure of all the information will be used and given if required for further clarification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting some worthy information throughout interviews, questionnaires and focus groups the triangulation of information begins with the answers collected from the participants.

Students' perceptions and beliefs regarding pronunciation

Based on the gathered data, we can evidence that pre-service teachers conceived pronunciation as a relevant aspect to maintain an accurate communication with the students and be understandable for them. However, one of the most important aspects mentioned by the participants is that all teachers need to be intelligible. This term refers to “a listener’s ability to accurately recognize and record individual words” (Lochland, 2017, p.3). That is to say, to have the capacity of being understandable for others. In addition to this, having in mind that our main objective for this project aimed at identifying pre-service teachers’ beliefs regarding native and non-native English teachers’ pronunciation, we can analyze that pre-service teachers have developed different perspectives on this issue. For instance: a) there are some students that prefer native teachers’ pronunciation, and b) others show preference towards non-native teachers’ pronunciation. These subcategories will be developed as follows.

Preservice-teachers' preference towards native teachers' pronunciation.

The 53% of seven-semester students (ten participants) of the foreign language teaching program who participated in this exercise, expressed that native teachers serve as a

model to learn the appropriate way the language as they have the innate condition to pronounce the language in a proper way. Therefore, they believe that their pronunciation can be strengthened if they are in direct contact with teachers who have a natural and native pronunciation (focus group 1). This can be evidenced as well in the words of two of the participants, “For me it is more meaningful to listen to a native person speak because I can imitate the sounds that, that he does, right! the pronunciation, how the correct way to pronounce it is” (Own translation, Interview part.1, March 27th, 2019); “Speaking specifically of the pronunciation of a native teacher, I think it is difficult but necessary in terms of a conscious process of formation” (Questionnaire part.3, March 31st, 2019).

In this case, the stating can be associated with the data provided by Llurda (2009) as cited in Martínez (2017) there, it is exposed that for certain people NESTs stills relish an exalted reputation in the language teaching field.

As it is evident in the previous excerpt, students interviewees reinforce the belief that native teachers’ pronunciation influence in an important way the pre-service teachers’ learning process, although it is difficult for them, they consider that it is necessary to have a good performance on their teaching practices.

Preservice-teachers’ preference towards non-native teachers’ pronunciation.

The 47,3% of the participants (9) found the non-native pronunciation as clear and intelligible in comparison with the native teachers’ one. Likewise, they expressed that non-native teachers’ input is meaningful for their educational process since it is closer to their realities as language learners. Additionally, since non-native teachers perform in the target language through different accents, students feel challenged to understand different ways of spoken English, enriching their linguistic knowledge and their abilities to learn and teach the language (Interview 1, March 27th, 2019). As it is expressed by two of the participants in the following words, “For me, it is easier to understand a non-native teacher who has a

correct pronunciation than a native teacher with good pronunciation because that good pronunciation from the non-native comes with an accent that I know” (Own translation, Focus group part.3). “I have boosted my pronunciation in the way I have to check before teaching” (Questionnaire part.1, March 31st, 2019).

In that way, this perception can be connected with the theory exposed by Medgyes (1994) referring to the NNESTs concept. There are presented six features including topics as the NNEST as a good learner model, able to provide students with effective learning strategies and having the capacity to anticipate and prevent difficulties due to the empathetic relation and mother tongue.

As it has been expressed in the previous statements by the preservice teachers, the non-native teachers’ beliefs are described as positive features in which the seven-semester students can identify themselves with the non-native teachers. In spite of their preference about native teachers they highlight the contributions as methodologies, strategies that a non-native one can offer while teaching pronunciation.

Fluency

Fluency was one of the features found in the data collected. This characteristic is related to certain beliefs seventh semester students have regarding native and Non-native teachers’ pronunciation. On the first hand, 21% of the participants (4) mentioned that native teachers have an accuracy pronunciation in terms of communication. Thanks to this, it is somehow complex for non-native people to understand what a native one is saying. Secondly, non-native teachers are characterized by participants’ beliefs as those who tend to speak English slower than those who are natives.

One of the participants pointed out that “Native teachers speak quite fast most of the times” and “Non-native teachers do not talk so fast, and the prosodic features like intonation,

stress and accent are not so natural” (Questionnaire Part.1, March 17th, 2019). This is supported by Götz (2013) when she states that fluency is “an overall oral proficiency in speech” (p. 12). This author’s opinion was taken from a research which displays that previous investigations have concluded that fluency is a terminology that is not accurately defined because “firstly, various definitions of the concept of fluency co-exist and, secondly, fluency is an epiphenomenon to which many individual (and interrelated) factors contribute” (Götz, 2013, p. 25).

Moreover, these participants tend to confuse fluency with the speed at which the native ones speak. *“Con lo de la pronunciación y las diferencias yo digo que es también lo de la velocidad como hablan, obviamente nosotros como no nativos tendemos a hablarlo más despacio, a reflexionar más antes de hablar, mientras que los nativos lo hablan así a la velocidad que nosotros hablamos el español”* Explain participant 5 (Focus group, 11th April, 2019). According to Fillmore (1979), as cited in Pradas Macías (2004) «la fluidez es la habilidad de llenar el tiempo con habla y que una persona que es fluida en este sentido no tiene que pararse muchas veces a pensar qué es lo siguiente que quiere decir o cómo decirlo» (p. 78). Regarding these conceptions, fluency might be different in each person taking into account the diverse abilities and language variety people have in speech.

Accent

Taking accent as part of the language features we wanted to explore in this research, when analyzing the information given by seventh semester pre-service teachers it was found that accent is a category which displays a variety of interpretations and beliefs, for both native and non-native English teachers.

Regarding this category the participants let us know their beliefs through four main sub-categories. These were the influence of accent and pronunciation in communication: being intelligible, definition of accent, the accent they have and try to imitate, and the most

common accent they believe in native and non-native English teachers is. Before evincing some of the beliefs that the participants expressed, as a general idea of what was obtained, accent is still an issue that goes in two ways: beliefs that show a preference regarding native teachers but also beliefs that demonstrate how communication and intelligibility are what really matter, without pointing to native and non-native English speaking teachers.

Influence of accent and pronunciation in communication: being intelligible

English is nowadays the universal language and for that reason this language is being taught in many places around the world. These learning processes are determined by aspects like the ability to communicate accurately. However, the accent feature has influenced every single process since every single speaker brings a particular and unique accent at the time of speaking. “There are as many accents in a language as there are people who speak it. Everyone has an accent. It’s like fingerprints, but on a grander scale.” (Crystal & Crystal, 2014, p. 17). Based on the participants’ answers, 42.1% of the them (8) were in agreement that the precise communication does not depend on the accent but on the pronunciation. As it was mentioned by one participant, “I don’t think accent is important... if you make yourself understandable accent doesn’t matter” (Focus group Part.2, 18/03/19). Besides, another participant mentioned “we need to communicate and be intelligible, and we can achieve intelligibility if we pronounce correctly. It does not matter the accent” (Questionnaire, Part. 1, 17/03/2019). A third evidence, which supports this project participants’ beliefs, was found in a study carried out by Liang (2002) where he discovered some students opinions about their teachers’ accent; Liang’s research’s results were that accent did not have a negative impact and it was not a problematic issue, on the contrary the students opinions showed that they had positive attitudes towards their NNS teachers.

In this sense, we can deduce that making ourselves understandable means being intelligible, what is in other words, being able to transmit the message accurately. Munro and Derwing, as cited in Levis (2018, p.16) affirmed that “intelligibility may be broadly defined as the extent to which a speaker’s message is actually understood by a listener” (1999, p. 289). The aforementioned shows how the seventh semester pre-service teachers’ beliefs in regards to accent and intelligibility are theoretically supported.

Definition of accent

Before selecting the participants sample for this project, one of the criteria was being in the seventh semester since at this point the participants have already gone through relevant subjects that permit them to understand concepts and theories in a deeper way. Taking their answers regarding accent, it was evidenced how 31.5% of them felt domain at the moment of defining the word accent. In this case, the participants had similar beliefs and ideas when asserting that accent is affiliated to the regional variation, cultural history, and also that accent is a language pattern. To properly clarify, two of the answers that revealed common beliefs were “*acento, pues eso le ayuda a uno mucho como a identificar ciertos patrones que las personas nativas tienen y uno así poder adquirir la lengua un poco mejor*” (Interview, Part 2., March 27th, 2019) and the other participant commented “I think that non-native teachers are a really good model to show the accent differences and the regional variation. Accent shows things from them as people and teachers” (Questionnaire, Part 1., March 17th, 2019). To support the previous general ideas, accent does not only relate to the place and regional variations, it also includes aspects such as the social class, the educational background and the religion believes or connection (Crystal & Crystal, 2014).

The accent that the participants have or the one they try to imitate

This category was also identified in the participants beliefs when talking about their pronunciation during their practicum process. Some of them commented more on their accent and shared what they have noticed in themselves when speaking. In this sense, their beliefs were connected to the accent they have and the accent they try to imitate when giving their classes as well as during their learning process. Furthermore, this category incorporated ideas regarding their teachers' pronunciation and the influence in their formation process. To have a precise data, 31.5% of the participants believed that it is easy to recognize accents such as the American and the British ones, and they had tended to adopted those accents, and sometimes mixed them or just chose the one they believe is easier for both, understanding and speaking.

For example, one participant said “sometimes I combine the British accent with the American accent, sometimes British accent can be easier than the variation in American accent so it depends, for me, in the, on that eh.... fact” (Focus group 1, Part 6. March 18th, 2019). There were also some different answers regarding how a non-native teacher speaks, the first case is clear when the respondent said “for me, non-native teachers develop their accent based on their native one, sometimes we try to have a neutral accent and we can get it with practice” (Questionnaire, Part 1., March 17th, 2019), which was at the same time opposed to the one who commented “when we want to speak another language, we do it with our regional accent and, in my opinion, it sounds a little fake when we try to imitate foreign accents, instead of sounding natural and understandable with ours” (Questionnaire, Part 3., March 31st, 2019). Having explained this, it is clear that their beliefs are not completely unanimous and they are not supported by other studies that have showed the same. However, in the recent investigation by Wong (2018), he found out that pre-service teachers in Hong Kong had preferences towards native English teachers in regards to teach and learn; and from the varieties of native English, the participants in the study also preferred the accent from United Kingdom.

The most common accent in both NEST and NNEST

This fourth element from the accent category was found in 42% of the participants. Their beliefs showed what they believed the most common accent in NEST and NNEST was. Following similar ideas among the participants they mentioned in several answers the American and British accents, in some cases they related both accents to the teaching aspects as well as the teaching practices. This previous idea also means that some of them considered that the role of American accent is used more for oral communication, which is contrary to what they perceived regarding the material and resources for learning which is in most of the cases based on British culture, accent, and the like. Furthermore, they were quite specific when assigning characteristics to their teachers by mentioning that, based on their experience, it has been common to have teachers with an American accent. To evidence some answers, “estamos más influenciados por personas americanas y por ende más profesores americanos. (Int, Part 1., 27/03/2019); “maybe, a mix of English accents, but regarding American or British, the first one is the most common to me” (Questionnaire, Part 2., 31/03/2019).

Didactics and Language: These two concepts emerged from the research as one of the beliefs seventh semester students have regarding native and non-native teachers' pronunciation. However, they could be taking into account for future research process.

These two concepts are framed in a brief description that pre-service teachers do according to the methodological way that native and non-native teachers have to teach. The native teachers have a wide cultural baggage about their region or country, therefore they have a very own way of referring to a specific topic, or to a subject to be taught. The pre-service teachers state that they understand the native teacher, but not in their entirety, due to

what we mentioned earlier, their fluency. Thanks to this, the native must create a solid base of his language and how to teach his mother tongue, in this case English.

In spite of everything, the native teacher uses a series of resources and methodologies that can be used to teach his language. On the other hand, non-natives, as they know how the process of teaching a second language has been and knows how to compare English and Spanish grammar on some occasions, pre-service teachers say they easily understand the grammatical subjects taught. Likewise, the methodology used by non-natives is also an innovative source, providing knowledge and interest in learning.

According to these two resources, we can say that the methodologies used by native and non-native teachers are appropriate for pre-service teachers, and as long as there is an accompaniment of the two teachers (native and non-native) so that the Learning process is strengthened by both perspectives.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, we could say that the General Objective was accomplished. Since at the beginning of the research, it was planned to identify pre-service teachers' beliefs regarding native and non-native English teachers' pronunciation. This exercise took place at a private university with 19 students from the foreign language teaching program as participants.

It is quite rewarding to find certain beliefs held by the pre-service teachers. Thanks to them, we were able to classify the information based on emerging terms in the research, which were: Accent, Pronunciation, Fluency, Didactics and Language. These last two concepts emerged from the research exercise with the purpose of comparing native and non-native teachers according to their teaching methodology. However, we consider it a good source for future research. The other terms were very useful to explore the beliefs heard in our stay by the university and also, in our work, whereas Bachelor students we already have a trade as teachers for more than a year.

Additionally, we find this research appropriate in terms of teaching, because we find that its nativity is not a failure to teach a foreign language, in this case English. Therefore, it is notorious that native and non-native teachers have certain advantages such as pronunciation, accent and fluency according to their mother tongue. Although the non-native of the English language lacks a perfect pronunciation, his communication is relevant to teach. In this instance a bit of intelligibility could be spoken, as part of the investigation.

It is clear that the seventh-semester students of the foreign language teaching program agree on the fact that pronunciation plays a fundamental role in their education process to become future language educators. Below, some of the beliefs found will be mentioned:

First of all, students agree with being intelligible, however some of the students we have had during our research disagree with this because of the lack of knowledge about the

term. Furthermore, as it is mentioned before pronunciation has been considered the top characteristic native or non-native teachers may have, since the students consider that a good pronunciation can help them to have a better assimilation and understanding of the language. Secondly, students argue about being fluently, with this term they could tell us some features that they have detected about native and non-native teachers. Such as, the native one's speech is quite complex to understand because of the natural fluency they have, while the non-native ones could have a slow speech, clear, concise; articulation and utterance are evident as well. Pitifully, students clarify that some problems related to pronunciation are evident in some cases.

In addition to this, Accent was one of the terms that generated certain discussion among the participants because they tended to confuse it with pronunciation. Given the clarification by the researchers, students express preference with American accent because it is considered by them as the easiest one to learn. Though, participants also mentioned that it is better understood by non-native ones because of the accent, or *paisa* accent as they denominated it. Nonetheless, the desire to learn the language from a native teacher is still evident. Due to pre-service teachers want to train the ear from a native perspective to better imitate the accent natives have.

Finally, in regards to the challenges we had during the research process, we could evidence that among pre-service teachers there was not a theoretical clarity in terms of the concepts: pronunciation, accent and fluency. Thus, this is one of the reasons why misunderstandings may take place when such concepts are addressed. Additionally, through this study, we analyze that pre-service teachers evidence a big interest in learning from the kinds of teachers; that is, natives and non-native ones since both can make great contributions to their foreign language teaching education process. To finish, having in mind the theory and the evidence collected in this study, further research could be conducted on

subjects such as the development of the teaching identity on non-native foreign language educators.

Appendix

Consent form:

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS BELIEFS REGARDING NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS PRONUNCIATION AT A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

Usted ha sido escogido como participante en un proceso de investigación a través del cual se pretende identificar las creencias que los docentes en formación del séptimo semestre tienen acerca de la pronunciación del inglés en los docentes nativos y no nativos. Para esta selección se ha tenido en cuenta 6 participantes de dicho semestre en una universidad privada.

Su participación en este estudio es necesaria y consistirá en dar información que permita a los investigadores conocer sus creencias acerca de la pronunciación en docentes nativos y no nativos, a través de métodos cualitativos, en este caso, el grupo focal, el cual consiste en responder libre y abiertamente a determinadas preguntas en presencia de otros participantes, con la posibilidad de nuevas preguntas diferentes a las planeadas.

RIESGOS Y BENEFICIOS

Su participación no representa riesgo alguno. No obstante, será necesario destinar un tiempo prudencial para la realización de las acciones anteriormente mencionadas.

ANONIMATO

La información siempre permanecerá en el anonimato y solo será suministrada en caso de ser requerida para validar la información. Al momento de describir el estudio, tanto escrito como verbalmente, se usará un seudónimo que le será asignado a fin de proteger su nombre y sus datos personales.

Entiendo que mi participación es completamente voluntaria y sin ningún tipo de consecuencias.

Nombre del participante que acuerda:

Firma del participante que acuerda:

Fecha del acuerdo: _____

Focus Group:

PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS BELIEFS REGARDING NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS PRONUNCIATION AT A PRIVATE INSTITUTION

Questions for data collection methods

Focus group

1. What do you believe regarding pronunciation in native and non-native teachers? / What do you believe regarding native and non-native teachers pronunciation?
2. What do you believe regarding accent in native and non-native teachers?
3. To what extent the native and non-native teachers have impacted your teaching practice?
4. Do you believe your pronunciation has boosted/ has strengthened through your teaching practices? How ? Why?
5. Do you believe you started your teaching practices with a good pronunciation? Why?
 - Has any native or non-native teacher influenced your teaching practices regarding your pronunciation?

6. Do you believe the foreign languages program has contributed to critical reflection regarding the native and non-native teachers role in the foreign language teaching?

Interview

1. Have you had any learning experience with native and non-native teachers? / Can you describe some experiences you have had with native and non-native teachers?
2. What differences do you find between native and non-native teachers regarding pronunciation?
3. What differences do you find between native and non-native teachers regarding accent?
 - What do you believe is the most common accent in native teachers?
 - What do you believe is the most common accent in non-native teachers?
4. How do you perceive yourself as a non-native teacher?

Triangulation:

Analysis for Triangulation

Categoría	GF1	GF2	Entrevistas 1, 2, 3, 4	Cuestionario
Fluidez	-They tend to speak a little faster, so for me speech can also have an impact, yeah! impact in what we want to say. (Part 4)	-Con lo de la pronunciación y las diferencias yo digo que es también lo de la velocidad como hablan, obviamente nosotros como no nativos tendemos a hablarlo más despacio, a reflexionar más antes de hablar, mientras que los nativos lo hablan así a la velocidad que nosotros hablamos el español (Part 5) -Entonces por eso a nosotros se nos dificulta un poquito también por la velocidad entenderles a los nativos y ser más comprensibles los no nativos con los otros. (Part 5)	-profesores nativos tienen una fluidez un poco mayor (Part1) Ya la diferencia puede establecerse en su mayoría en acento y tal vez un poco de fluidez (part1) -uno normalmente <u>eh</u> digamos tiende a hablar con fluidez pero hay ciertos patrones de pronunciación que obviamente uno tendría que tener más énfasis (Part 1) -pensamos en hablar muchas veces con fluidez pero hay veces, también en ocasiones perdemos ciertos	-Native teachers speak quite fast most of the times. (K) -Non-native teachers do not talk so fast, and the prosodic features like intonation, stress and accent are not so natural. (K)
			factores específicos dentro de la pronunciación que hacen que sea más clara. (Part 1,) -Pues en un profesor nativo es un poco más evidente pues que hay una mayor fluidez (part3)	

<p>Acento</p>	<p>1-we usually judge eh the the accent in in teachers but, (Part 3)</p> <p>-the accent in some cases also can affect the stress for example to words, mm, eh when they are talking. (Part 3)</p> <p>5 -we have to learn the the the common</p>	<p>-Porque esa buena pronunciación del no nativo se viene acompañado de un acento que yo conozco (part 3)</p> <p>-Viene de la mano con ese acento del lugar de donde él (nativo) viene, que vienen con sonidos que yo nunca he escuchado.</p> <p>2-El nativo perdón, pese a que tienen un acento que</p>	<p>-Ya la diferencia puede establecerse en su mayoría en acento y tal vez un poco de fluidez (part1)</p> <p>3- acento, pues eso le ayuda a uno mucho como a identificar ciertos patrones que las personas nativas tienen y uno así poder adquirir la lengua un poco mejor (Part 2,)</p>	<p>2-I believe that in all cases it will be the factor that hinders good understanding (J)</p> <p>4 -when we want to speak another language, we do it with our regional accent and, in my opinion, it sounds a little fake when we try to imitate foreign accents, instead of sounding natural and</p>
	<p>accent (Part 5)</p> <p>2- I don't think accent is important.. if you make yourself understandable accent doesn't matter. (Part 2)</p> <p>2- - I could not say that accent is important because we are Colombian [laugh] teachers teaching English (Part 2)</p>	<p>yo desconozco, sonidos raros para mí de todas maneras he podido captar la idea de lo que me está comunicando (part 3)</p> <p>4 -Si un profesor dice no se pronuncia water ('wɑ:.tə. US) sino water ('wɑ:.tə. UK) vamos a, nosotros mismos vamos a poder seleccionar cuál de todas las pronunciaciones nos va mejor a nosotros y así mismo <u>puliéndonos</u> a nosotros y adquiriendo nuestro acento y nuestra</p>	<p>2-hay ciertos no nativos que tienen una muy buena pronunciación y se puede entender muy bien, ehh como se dicen todas las palabras a pesar de que no tengan un acento digamos como tal de nativos (Part 2)</p> <p>5 - llegar a un acento nativo sería muy complejo (Part 1)</p>	<p>understandable with ours. (J)</p> <p>-There are moments in which the accent of the natives is difficult to understand. (J)</p> <p>-A non-native person depending on many things, including the region where they live, may be easier or complex to understand. (J)</p> <p>-American and British (J)</p>

<p>Pronunciación</p>	<p>- I usually believe that pronunciation or correct pronunciation or right pronunciation aa.. is based not if you are native person or just a teacher (Part1) -if you want to have a good pronunciation, it depends all of you, you have to study, it doesn't matter if you</p>	<p>-Un profesor nativo ellos ya tienen las bases exactas para hablar de una manera apropiada (part 1) -Una persona que ha aprendido el lenguaje puede tener mucho más claro a la hora de pronunciar ya que ellos ven la fonética, ven como... más allá de una pronunciación rápida, ellos tratan de ser un poco más focalizados en lo que ellos están diciendo (part 1)</p>	<p>-en cuanto a la pronunciación, ambos pueden tener una pronunciación acertada (Part 1, Ent 1y2) - para mi, significa mucho más poder escuchar a una persona nativa hablar porque yo puedo imitar los sonidos que, que hace, cierto! la pronunciación, como se pronuncia</p>	<p>-I believe that the pronunciation does not define whether a teacher is really good or not. (J) -the pronunciation is an important factor speaking about the teaching (J) -Speaking specifically of the pronunciation of a native teacher, I think it is difficult but necessary</p>
	<p>are foreigner or not, you are the one who decides how to pronounce it, do it right or not.(Part 1) -about the pronunciation I don't think that there is a difference in my opinion regarding native or non-native, (PART 2) -</p>	<p>-Los non-native teachers siempre estamos tratando de imitar la pronunciación (part 2) -A veces creemos que tenemos ventaja con un non native teacher por que la pronunciación de él es muy similar a como nosotros pronunciamos esas mismas palabras (part 2) -Un profesor nativo por ejemplo, él pronuncia de</p>	<p>correctamente (Part 2, Ent 1y2) - hay ciertos no nativos que tienen una muy buena pronunciación y se puede entender muy bien (Part 2, Ent 1y2) - yo consideraría que un profesor no nativo, podría llegar a una muy buena pronunciación (Part 1, Ent 1y2) -en cuanto a la pronunciación, con los</p>	<p>in terms of a conscious process of formation. (J) -I feel that the more classes I give the more I learn not only in my teaching practice but in my pronunciation (J) -I consider that I started with a good level of pronunciation (J) -I believe that pronunciation is one of the most important</p>

Lengua		-El no nativo también por lo que decía el compañero Participante 1 que es alguien que generalmente le tocó estudiar bien la	-los nativos, pues obviamente ellos tienen su manejo de la lengua (Part 2, Entr 1y2)	-For me, most of the non-native teachers are aware of how important the practice is and about the process that learning
		lengua para poderla enseñar (part 3) -Mientras que de pronto los nativos vienen es... Listo a ayudar a esparcir la lengua de ellos pero de pronto no tuvieron un estudio previo hacia la enseñanza del idioma como tal (Part 3) -Ya uno de por sí aprendiendo una lengua uno se está abriendo muchas puertas (part 3)	-En ese sentido si digo que los que no somos nativos debemos ser muy cuidadosos y a parte pues de... de practicar bastante hay que estudiar bastante...eh. Lo que es ese...ese ámbito o esa parte fonética que tiene el idioma.(Part 3)	a new language implies. (K) -I have learned from native teachers many things regarding oral abilities and aspects from the language itself. (K) -I have learned about being autonomous and practicing to get what I aim regarding the language. (K) -In non-native teachers I have noticed how well they explain topics; they study the language in a deeper way and I have learned from them more details about the language. (K) -I consider I have practiced a lot many

<p>Didáctica</p>	<p>Non native language teachers are eh...can help us to improve a lot. (Part 2)</p>		<p>-según el manejo que hayan tenido los profesores en su pregrado, la influencia también que hayan tenido ellos o el acento que más hayan estudiado (Part 1, Ent 1y2)</p>	<p>-I believe that my non-native teachers have contributed more to my process than the native ones. (J)</p> <p>-I had the privilege of having qualified professors who were</p>
			<p>- pero es más por un desarrollo digamos que autónomo del docente (Part 1, Ent 1y2)</p> <p>-En cuanto a pues a otras características como didáctica eh... pienso que al ser un profesor no nativo en un contexto no nativo también se me hace más fácil eh... explicar y llegar al estudiante de una manera tal de que me comprenda con más rapidez...muchas veces cuando no es un profesor nativo eh...</p>	<p>professionally prepared in my training process. (J)</p> <p>-I feel that the more classes I give the more I learn not only in my teaching practice but in my pronunciation (J)</p> <p>-The fact that I have to talk to him and teach my students English requires me to perfect my foreign language every day. (J)</p> <p>-Non.native teachers are really good in terms of methodology because they have already started so they're</p>

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