การวิเคราะห์การรับรู้ของนักศึกษาที่มีต่ออาจารย์สอนภาษาอังกฤษที่เป็นเจ้าของ
และที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษาต่อการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่สอง
An Analysis of Students' Perceptions Towards Native and Non-Native
English-Speaking Teachers and Their Second-Language Learning

วิไลพร คงเกิด*
Wilaiporn Kongkerd*

*อาจารย์ประจำภาควิชาภาษาอังกฤษ คณะมนุษยศาสตร์และการจัดการการท่องเที่ยว มหาวิทยาลัยกรุงเทพ
*English Lecturer, English Department, School of Humanities and Tourism Management, Bangkok University.
*E - mail : Wilaiporn.k@bu.ac.th

บทคัดย่อ

เนื่องจากบทบาทที่เพิ่มขึ้นของภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารสากล ดังนั้นความ
ต้องการครูสอนภาษาอังกฤษที่เป็นเจ้าของภาษาที่มีมากขึ้นในหลายๆประเทศจึงเป็นสิ่งที่หลีกเลี่ยงไม่ได้
ทั้งนี้เนื่องจาก ผู้เรียนภาษาจำนวนมากมีความเชื่อว่า ครูผู้เป็นเจ้าของภาษาเป็นผู้ที่สามารถให้ความรู้แก่
นักศึกษาได้เป็นอย่างดี เนื่องจากพวกเขาเหล่านี้มีความคล่องแคล่วในการใช้ภาษาของตนเอง ในทางตรง
กันข้ามผู้เรียนเป็นจำนวนมากมองว่าครูสอนภาษาอังกฤษที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษามีความสามารถในการสอน
ภาษาอังกฤษที่ด้อยกว่า บทความนี้จึงนำเสนอการวิเคราะห์การรับรู้ของนักศึกษาที่มีต่อครูภาษาอังกฤษ
ทั้งที่เป็นเจ้าของภาษาและไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษาจากผลการวิจัยต่างๆ ในด้านของวัฒนธรรม วิธีการสอนและ
การประเมินผล ความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษ รวมไปถึงการวิเคราะห์ผลของการรับรู้เหล่านี้ที่มีผลต่อ
การเรียนของนักศึกษาในด้านต่างๆด้วย และในตอนท้ายบทความนี้ได้เสนอแนะแนวคิดการจ้างครูสอน
ภาษาอังกฤษว่า ไม่ควรพิจารณาความเป็นเจ้าของภาษามากจนเกินไปในการจ้างครู แต่ควรพิจารณาจ้าง
ครูที่มีคุณสมบัติเหมาะสมที่สามารถให้ความรู้แก่นักศึกษาอย่างเพียงพอสำหรับการสื่อสารระหว่าง
วัฒนธรรมได้อย่างประสบความสำเร็จ เป็นสำคัญ

คำสำคัญ : ครูสอนภาษาอังกฤษที่เป็นเจ้าของภาษา ครูสอนภาษาอังกฤษที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษา
การรับรู้ของนักเรียน

Abstract

Due to the increasing role of English as an international communicative language, unavoidably native English speaking (NES) teachers are in great demand in a wide range of countries since many language learners believe that NES teachers can be their English knowledge providers owing to their first language proficiency. Non-native English speaking (NNES) teachers, on the other hand, are considered to be inferior in teaching English. This paper therefore discusses students' perceptions, based on many study results, towards NES and NNES teachers in the areas of culture, teaching styles and assessment, as well as English capability. Additionally, the implications of students 'opinions about their English teachers towards their language learning are also mentioned in the paper. Finally, this paper suggests that English teachers' qualifications should be given more attention than their nativeness in employing English teachers. Recruiting teachers who are able to provide students with adequate knowledge to complete intercultural communication goal should be taken into consideration.

Keywords : NES teachers, NNES teachers, students 'perceptions

Introduction

With the growth of worldwide English language users in global communication, producing a lot of proficient English communicators is necessary. In order to achieve the indicated goal, native and non-native English-speaking (NES and NNES) teachers play the most significant role in equipping English-language learners with adequate skills and knowledge to interact effectively with other people. Consequently, numerous empirical studies have been carried out over a few decades to explore NES and NNES teachers in many aspects, particularly in the area of teaching effectiveness as well as students' perceptions towards them (e.g. Arva & Medgyes 2000; Faez, 2011). The majority of English-language learners possibly consider NES teachers to be more qualified to teach English due to the proficiency in their mother-tongue. On the other hand, some realize that they can gain more benefits if they are taught by English teachers who know both their first and target language. Therefore, it is interesting to analyze how numerous students from various studies perceive NES and NNES teachers in terms of the cultural knowledge, teaching styles and assessment, as well as English proficiency. Additionally, how these perceptions affect learners' second language learning is discussed in this paper.

Definition

To have a richer understanding of this issue, the definitions of native and non-native speakers of English should be clarified. There has been argument over the term 'native speaker', since it appears to be somewhat ambiguous. Cook and Devies (cited in Butler, 2007) point out the important components such as the age of first- language acquisition, language ability, and identity are generally used to identify a native speaker. Similarly, Medgyes (1994) also claims that two features used to provide the definition of a native speaker by many researchers are the place of birth and the language ability of that person. This seems clear that the birth and the language competence have been taken into consideration in defining the term of "native speaker". For instance, Kramsch (1995, p.20) defines a native speaker by birth as "a person who was born into a language was considered to be a native speaker of that language, and they have grammatical intuitions that non-native speakers do not." Although, many consider that birth is an important factor in providing the term of a native speaker, several scholars indicate that the language education seems to have a role to play in this term. MacDavid (cited in Kramsch, 1995) states that a native speaker refers to a person who continuously acquires the language since an early age without

conscious study. However, this perspective is contested by Davies who believes that a non-native speaker being able to acquire the language skills as equally as a native speaker should be identified as a native speaker (Kramsch, 1995). As a result of this ambiguity, other terms such as 'proficient' or 'competent-user' are proposed to replace the native speaker term by some educators (Kramsch, 1995). It is likely that several scholars provide many definitions for "a native speaker" in order to escape vagueness. As a consequence, some definitions provided by several researchers (e.g. Stern, Crystal, Richards, et al., David) are concluded by Medgyes below:

1. was born in an English-speaking country; and/or
2. acquires English during childhood in an English-speaking family or environment;
3. speaks English as his/her first language;
4. has a native-like command of English;
5. has the capacity to produce fluent, spontaneous discourse in English;
6. uses the English language creatively;
7. has reliable intuition to distinguish right and wrong forms in English. (Medgyes ,1994, p.10)

Although, the mentioned definition conclusion seems broad and tends to avoid critical views, Medgyes still expresses some arguments against it. For instance, regarding language competence, he states

that the criteria used to evaluate a native speaker's language competence are unclear. In addition, the place of birth used to identify a native speaker is still complicated. He expresses doubt that one defines a native speaker as a person who was born in an English-speaking country, if a child who was born in the UK and after birth he/she moves to live in a non-English speaking country, whether he/she is identified as a native speaker. Therefore, it seems difficult to provide a clear definition of a native speaker in the face of many researchers' points of view. However, this native speaker definition issue may be more clarified by the three concentric circles of Kachru (cited in Medgyes, 2001, p.3) which divide countries into three types: the inner circle, which refers to the countries using English as a first language, the outer circle, which consists of the countries that used to be colonized by the inner circle countries, and the expanding circle, which simply refers to the countries using English as a foreign language. Therefore, it is possible to say that the countries belonging to the inner circle are native speakers of English. Regarding the definition of a non-native speaker, this term tends to be less complicated to define. Davies further points out that the term of a non-native speaker could be defined in the opposite way of a native speaker. In other words, it means that if they are not native speakers, they

are native speakers (Grubbs, Jantarach & Kettem, 2010). Besides, Medgyes (2001) also added that a non-native English-speaking teacher refers to people who use English as a second language or as a foreign language, use English for career purposes, and have to teach students having the same mother tongue. After obtaining a clearer understanding of native and non-native speaker terms, it is interesting to know how students perceive NES and NNES teachers in the next part.

Students' Perceptions towards NES and NNES Teachers

It is undeniable that NES and NNES teachers seem to be differently perceived by students in a variety of aspects. However, in this paper much attention is given to three main aspects: culture, teaching style and assessment, and English proficiency.

- Cultural Knowledge

To start with the cultural knowledge, it goes without saying that the language and the culture are inseparable. Thus, learning another language, learners will inevitably learn the cultures of people who use that language in order to communicate with them effectively. NES teachers who speak English as a mother tongue are seen to possess the knowledge of the target cultures, history, and customs by a

lot of students, according to the study of Jin and Cortazzi, (1995). Similar to the previous research, Rao 's study finding (2010) revealed that NES teachers were considered to be knowledgeable about English-speaking country cultures by most students in the study since they were able to respond to students' cultural questions. Not only do NES teachers physically represent the cultures from which they come, but sometimes, they tend to present their cultures in other ways. For instance, their ideas and values are consciously and unconsciously expressed through teaching or making comments on the focused issues. Kramsch (1995) indicates that NES teachers are likely to transmit their views, and values based on the native speakers' point of view in teaching language, while NNES teachers appear to express their views on the world through their own cultures. Thus, presenting the teachers' cultures is unavoidable in the classroom. Besides, students believe their NES teachers are representatives of Western cultures. This may be as a result of the use of teaching and learning materials produced in the western countries. It can be seen that many English-speaking country cultures are contained in English-language textbooks written by American or British writers. Alptekin (1992) claims the contents of textbooks are primarily focused on the American or British cultures because

the native-speaker textbook writers are familiar with their cultures. As a result, they may find it easy to produce English textbooks reflecting their cultures because they do not need to experience the difficulty of learning about other cultures with which they are not familiar. This may influence students to automatically absorb something of the American or British cultures from the English-language textbooks they are using.

NES teachers may be viewed by students as knowledgeable people regarding the target cultures. In contrast, NNES teachers are seen to lack a high level of knowledge of the English cultures. Some students possibly think that NNES teachers; especially teachers who have never been to English-speaking countries before are poor at providing some cultural information on the target cultures because teachers may not be familiar with them. As a result, NNES teachers could not provide much information about those cultures to them. By contrast, NNES teachers are possibly thought to be representatives of the learners' cultures. This occurs due to the use of teaching and learning materials or classroom activities that are related to the learners' own values or cultures. Byram and Flemming (1998) express interesting ideas about this issue that transmitting the teachers' cultures cannot be avoided in the second language classroom since the

teachers may consciously or unconsciously deliver their cultures while teaching. NNES teachers may use examples and activities that students are familiar with help students understand some lessons more clearly. Overall, it can be concluded that NES teachers are seen as the target language representatives while NNES are believed to be the source of the learners 'culture.

As mentioned above, NES and NNES teachers tend to present or represent only the English- speaking country cultures. However, nowadays English has become a lingua franca used by a large number of people around the world. Learning and understanding only their cultures or the target cultures is not sufficient. In order to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds successfully; students need to be aware not only of their own cultures but others. Therefore, teaching students to become an "intercultural speaker" seems to be a significant goal of NES and NNES teachers in the era of intercultural communication. The intercultural speaker is defined as " a person who mediates between relatively well -defined linguistic and cultural entities and between people whose ways of thinking and acting are strongly influenced by these linguistic and cultural entities", (Jaeger, 2001, p. 56). Furthermore, Byram, Nichols, & Stevens, further explain that an intercultural

speaker has "a willingness to relativise one's own values, beliefs and behaviours, not to assume that they are the only possible and naturally correct ones, and to be able to see how they might look from the perspective of an outsider who has a different set of values, beliefs and behaviors" (Myers, 2006, p.2). Thus, it is interesting to note that intercultural communicative competence should be taken into consideration by both NES and NNES teachers in teaching English as a second language in the era where the majority of English users are not native speakers of English.

- Teaching Styles and Assessments

With regard to teaching styles and assessments, it is noticeable that NES and NNES teachers are perceived by students to be different in the areas of teaching styles and assessments. This distinction could be clearly noticed in teaching between NES teachers and NNES teachers who come from Asian countries. Due to the fact that the Western and Asian cultures are significantly different, teaching styles and assessments appear not to be the same. For example, NES teachers seem to teach by using a student-centered teaching approach, while NNES teachers are likely to pay attention to teacher-centered teaching methods. Thus, NES teachers may encourage students more to

participate actively in classroom activities, work as a group or initiate questions when they do not understand. Jin and Cortazzi (1995) comment regarding the Western teaching culture that in the language classroom teachers have the teaching purpose of communication skill development and they tend to use learner-centered methods and a task-based or problem-solving approach in the teaching process. Thus, classroom interaction seems to be extremely important in the teaching process. On the other hand, Asian NES teachers seem to spend a lot of time giving lectures rather than organizing learning activities for students or encouraging students to have interaction in the classroom. Take Chinese teaching culture as an example: according to the Chinese teaching culture, mastering knowledge of grammar and vocabulary means successful learning and this knowledge can be mainly obtained from teachers and books (Jin & Cortazzi, 1995). As a result of this culture, the Chinese teachers are likely to be the center of teaching and learning in the classroom. One realizes that this situation appears to be similar to other Asian countries such as Thailand.

In addition, NES and NNES teachers are viewed to be contrasted in providing assessments to students. Many students believe NES teachers to be less strict in providing feedback than NNES teachers.

Having different teaching purposes could be a significant explanation of this situation. Medgyes (1994) points out that NES teachers aim at teaching English for communication while NNES teachers focus primarily on teaching grammar rules. This can explain why NES teachers do not consider students' errors as a severe issue and they seem to be able to tolerate them. Sheorey's study (1986) revealed that NES teachers assessed students' written work with less strictness compared to NNES teachers, giving higher scores for written assignments than were given by NNES teachers to the same assignments. On the one hand, NNES teachers are thought to be more strict and serious with form and accuracy, and they correct students' errors more often in the oral classroom. This may be due to the education system in their countries aiming at preparing students for examinations. Thus, teachers need to place great emphasis on teaching grammar rules and be strict with error correction. Thus, NES and NNES teachers are differently viewed by students, both as regards teaching styles and assessments.

- **Language Proficiency**

Regarding language proficiency, it is obvious that sounding like a native speaker appears to be the most significant goal for second-language learners. Thus, NES teachers are viewed by students as the model of standard English because they are able to use their language perfectly and naturally. On the other hand, students seem not to have trust in NNES teachers' language capacity. According to several studies, the results reveal that NES teachers are considered to be more proficient in using accurate language to teach students; especially, teaching vocabulary, pronunciation or oral skills (e.g. Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Medgyes, 1991). As a consequence, students have strong preference for NSTs to teach oral and pronunciation skills (e.g. Grubbs et al., 2010). Although, NNES teachers are thought to be good at explaining grammar rather than NES teachers, according to many research findings (e.g. Grubbs et al., 2010; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002), many students may not have confidence in their ability because of NNES teachers' foreign accents. Numerous language learners evaluate others' language ability based on their accents and pronunciations. The results of some studies (e.g. Nelson, 1991; and Solomon 1991 cited in Butler, 2007, p.7) demonstrate that parents and students consider teachers who have native accents to be smarter than teachers who possess foreign accents. Therefore, NES teachers' language proficiency is viewed as superior to NNES teachers based on the accent. In short, it can be seen that NES and NNES teachers are differently viewed by English-

language learners. Thus, it will be interesting in the following sections to explore how these perceptions have an impact on students' second-language acquisition

The Effects of Students' Perceptions of NES and NNES Teachers towards English-Language Learning

Students' perceptions of NES and NNES teachers possibly have direct impacts on students' second- language learning in various ways. However, as far as I am concerned three significant issues are particularly noteworthy: motivation, educational decision making, and teaching and learning behaviors.

- Motivation

Motivation needs to be mentioned first because it plays a significant role in successful language learning. Motivation can encourage students to frequently practice and try harder to learn the language successfully. Although motivation in learning English can be derived from various sources, perceptions of students towards NES teachers' cultures tend to have a key role in promoting their learning motivation. Students may have strong motivation if they are interested in the target cultures. According to Coleman's study (1997), the finding indicates that European learners are motivated to learn a foreign language by their interest in the

target cultures. As a result of being representatives of the English-speaking country cultures, NES teachers are likely to have positive effects on students' motivation because students want to be exposed to both language and cultures through studying with NES teachers. This tends to encourage them to pay more attention to learning English with NES teachers rather than NNES teachers. Moreover, having the major goal of speaking like a native speaker is another factor that possibly contributes to promoting learners' motivation. A large number of students who have a *high* level of *achievement motivation* may learn and practise as hard as they can to achieve the goal of sounding like a native speaker. Thus, students' motivation can be derived from learning from NES teachers. On the other hand, some students may find learning with NNES teachers more interesting because they perceive that NNES teachers to be capable of teaching English grammar and difficult vocabulary. Students who strongly believe that their knowledge is centrally grammar and vocabulary may have motivation to learn with NNES teachers.

In addition, corrective feedback from NES and NNES teachers appears to have a role to play in encouraging students' learning motivation. One may think that the majority of students prefer

NES teachers' providing feedback; especially, in the conversation classroom since their primary purpose of teaching is communication. Therefore, they may provide more implicit corrective feedback to students in the oral classroom. Implicit corrective feedback such as recast appears to stimulate students to have more motivation in taking part in classroom events. Students, specifically, in Asian countries, may be very shy to speak English because they are afraid of making mistakes. If their teachers provide appropriate corrective feedback to them, they will not feel embarrassed and try to engage actively in activities. The more students take part in activities, the more students have a chance to practise and learn. It seems to be true that motivation can come from teachers' appropriate feedback. However, it is not always true that NES teachers seem to create more learners' motivation. NNES teachers possibly promote students' motivation in learning as well since it depends on teachers' individual characteristics and teaching styles.

- Educational Decisions

Regarding educational decision-making, the perceptions of NES and NNES teachers can influence students' decision-making on education. As mentioned above, various students consider that NES teachers

are more qualified to teach students the English language since they can use their language perfectly and fluently. Furthermore, they are a good role model of accurate English usage. Thus, many students may prefer to study English with NES teachers to NNES teachers. They may look for various ways to study with them such as taking extra courses at private language institutions or learning English abroad. Some students may decide to abandon their current studying in their own countries to participate in some projects giving them a chance to be exposed to English in native-speaking countries. Moreover, these perceptions towards NES teachers may greatly influence students in making a decision to pursue their degrees in universities which offer courses taught by NES teachers; even though, they do not like that field. This decision possibly has huge impacts on students' future careers and lives because they may have to suffer from doing undesirable jobs for their entire life. Furthermore, some students may decide not to take some subjects that they are extremely interested in because lecturers in those subjects were not native speakers of English.

This is because both numerous second language learners and NNES teachers may hold the same view that NES teachers know and are able to use their own mother tongue well. Referring to the

study of Phothongsunan & Suwanarak (2008), the result indicated that the majority of Thai English instructors in the study agreed that NES teachers were superior to NNES teachers in English knowledge. Consequently, many students who pursue different degrees in English speaking countries prefer to study with NES teachers to NNES teachers because they think that NES teachers know their language well and therefore understand the content of the subject better than NNES teachers. As a consequence, they choose to study with NES teachers, even though NNES teachers are qualified and knowledgeable about that subject.

Take my classmates as examples: many of my friends taking the Master's degree in one university in the UK complained a lot when they had to take classes with NNES instructors. They thought that NNES instructors would not possess adequate knowledge to teach them. Thus, they decided not to take those optional subjects taught by NNES instructors, even though the NNES instructors possessed adequate knowledge to teach those subjects. On the contrary, they took another course that they didn't like because the lesson was delivered by NES teachers. Thus it is obvious that students' perceptions towards NES and NNES teachers can affect their education decision-making and their future careers.

- Teaching and Learning Behaviors

Lastly, teaching and learning behaviors can be affected by misunder-standing of cultural differences. Due to the fact that NES teachers' cultures and learners' cultures in many countries are very different, this can create teaching and learning problems in the second language classroom. Additionally, this difference may lead to changing some teaching and learning behaviors for both teachers and students. For instance, NES teachers who teach students in Thailand may feel uncomfortable when students do not engage actively in classroom discussion. In addition, they may not appreciate students who do not raise questions when they do not understand. As a result, NES teachers may feel unhappy to teach Thai students. However, if NES teachers understand and know more about the learners' cultures, they will more understand students' behavior because Thai students' learning styles are possibly influenced by Thai learning culture. Liu (cited in Prommee, 2010, p. 104) indicates that Thai classroom norms and the lack of language ability are causes of being passive students. Besides, Liu further explains that referring to social norms of appropriate classroom behavior, good students are expected to be attentive and silent learners and they should not speak if the teachers do not ask them questions. Due to this norm, many Thai

students tend to be passive in the classroom. However, being embarrassed at making mistakes may be another reason for not taking part in classroom activities. Thai students are very shy to speak English because they do not want to lose face when making errors. Therefore, if NES teachers are aware of this difference, they may understand and adjust their teaching styles to suit the learners. At the same time, if the students learn more about their teachers' teaching cultures, they could change their behavior in the classroom. However, cultural differences may not create the problem for NNES teachers because the teachers know the learners cultures well. As a result, problems may not occur in the classroom. In short, although, in fact there are many impacts caused by students' perceptions of NES and NNES teachers, the three mentioned issues seem to be obvious in the second language classroom; especially, in Asian countries such as Thailand.

Conclusion

To summarize, students' perceptions as regards NES and NNES teachers tend to exert great influences on second-language learners as mentioned above. Moreover, NES teachers appear to be positively perceived by students in the second-language learning because they are able to use their mother tongue effectively and fluently. However, as far as

I am concerned one should not evaluate teachers' teaching qualifications only from their accents or nationalities. On the other hand, other qualifications such as language ability, professional training and experience need to be considered when referring to qualified English teachers. Therefore, NES teachers who have insufficient language capability or who have never been trained or have no second-language teaching experience may not be able to teach students as well as NNES teachers who have advanced English knowledge and have experience and professional certificates. However, in an age of globalization where English has become a lingua franca, teaching students to become proficient in English seems not to be enough to make them communicate successfully with people from different cultures. On the other hand, raising students' awareness of other cultures is likely to be another role of both NES and NNES teachers to play in language teaching, nowadays. Consequently, it would be better if both NES and NNES teachers could work together to provide students with both language knowledge and intercultural communicative skills in order that they can effectively communicate with other people in the world of international commercial, scientific, scholarly and human contact.

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