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Students' Expectations and Attitudes towards Nonnative-English-Speaking Teachers in ESL and EFL Settings: Teachers' and Students' Own Perspectives

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**Students' Expectations and Attitudes towards Nonnative-English-Speaking
Teachers in ESL and EFL Settings: Teachers' and Students' Own Perspectives**

Lindsei Pereira da Silva

**Thesis submitted to the
Eberly College of Arts and Sciences
at West Virginia University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

**Master of Arts
in
Foreign Languages**

**Approved by
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**Keywords: Nonnative-English-speaking teachers, ESL and EFL students' attitudes,
teachers' perspectives**

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Abstract

Students' Expectations and Attitudes towards Nonnative-English-Speaking Teachers in ESL and EFL Settings: Teachers' and Students' Own Perspectives

Lindsei Pereira da Silva

The number of nonnative-English-speaking English teachers (non-NESTs) has been increasing tremendously both in EFL and in ESL settings and so has the number of language learners who are taught by these professionals. As a result, the interest among researchers in the field in investigating the characteristics of this group of language professionals as well as the challenges that they have been facing in the world of second/foreign language teaching has increased. The present study investigated ESL and EFL students' expectations and attitudes towards their native and nonnative-English-speaking teachers regarding their teaching styles, attitudes in class, and advantages and disadvantages as language teachers through questionnaires, interviews, and class observations. The findings revealed that language learners in both instructional settings appreciate both groups of teachers for what they can do best in the classroom. However, such findings were insufficient to determine whether or not ESL and EFL students definitely prefer to be taught by a certain group of teachers. In addition, the study also examined native and nonnative-English-speaking teachers' perspectives concerning students' potential expectations and attitudes towards them. Similar issues, such as teachers' knowledge of grammar and pronunciation, were identified by the teachers in both settings regarding their students' expectations, but a comparison in terms of nativeness was not possible due to conflicting results. Further research is needed in order to address the issue of preference, since the field lacks studies that confirm whether or not students prefer NESTs to non-NESTs or vice-versa.

Dedication

To my family.

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Introduction

The number of nonnative-English-speaking English teachers (non-NESTs) has been increasing tremendously both in EFL and in ESL settings. According to Rajagopalan (2006), nonnative English teachers represent 80% of the total ELT workforce worldwide nowadays. As a result, there has been an increasing interest among researchers in the field to better investigate the characteristics of this group of language professionals as well as the challenges that they have been facing in the world of second/foreign language teaching. The importance of doing research on this topic is directly related to the importance of how students and instructors interact in the language classroom. A positive instructional environment is crucial to a successful teaching/learning process to occur. Students who are frustrated with their classes simply because they are being taught by nonnative speakers will probably not develop their language skills as much as they could, and teachers who know that their students feel that way will probably feel frustrated and unmotivated themselves. Even more alarming, though, as stated by Thomas (1999), is the fact that language school administrators, believing in such a scenario, may avoid hiring nonnative professionals, turning these teachers into outcasts in their own field. Thus, more needs to be learned about how EFL and ESL students really perceive their native and their nonnative-English-speaking teachers so that realistic and effective steps can be taken towards the acceptance of both NESTs and non-NESTs as successful members of the ELT workforce worldwide.

The investigation of issues of nativeness in the field of second language teaching can be said to be a very recent area of interest among researchers, since the first publications dated from the mid 1990s. It is of common agreement among theoreticians, as stated by Llurda (2006) and Braine (2006), that the Hungarian English teacher Peter Medgyes was the pioneer in this area of study and that his seminal work *The non-native*

teacher (first published in 1994) opened the debate about the strengths and weaknesses of nonnative-English-speaking teachers and their acceptance (or lack of it) in the world of second language teaching. This Hungarian researcher conducted three surveys in order to investigate how NESTs and non-NESTs differ in terms of their language proficiency as well as their teaching behavior. In addition, he believed he could show that the discrepancy in language proficiency accounted for most of the differences found in their teaching behavior, and that both NESTs and non-NESTs could be equally good teachers on their own terms.

His first survey was a 17-item questionnaire that was completed by 28 respondents (25 native speakers and 3 bilinguals) who were his colleagues at an American university in 1989. His second survey was conducted through 1990-1992, and it involved 216 respondents in ten countries (Hungary, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Israel, Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Russia, Sweden, and Mexico). Only 18 of the participants were native speakers. All the participants answered a 23-item questionnaire. The third survey was conducted in 1992 in Hungary, and it involved 81 Hungarian teachers of English who answered a 14-item questionnaire.

The results reported a few years later (Medgyes, 2003) presented sound evidence that NESTs and non-NESTs differ in terms of language proficiency (“better English/poorer English, use English more confidently/less confidently”) and teaching behavior (“more flexible approach/more guided approach, more casual/more strict, focus on fluency/focus on accuracy”) (pp. 55-56). Regarding his belief that both groups of instructors “can be equally good teachers in their own terms” (p. 25), the author explained that both groups of teachers presented positive and negative characteristics, showing that both NESTs and non-NESTs have weaknesses and strengths as language teaching professionals. In order to defend his claim that “the discrepancy in language

proficiency accounts for most of the differences found in their teaching behavior” (p. 25), Medgyes stated that each group of teachers focuses on those aspects of language that they feel more confident about, because “it is only logical to deduce then that they place the emphasis on those aspects of the language that they have a better grasp of” (p. 56). He uses non-NESTs’ preference for frontal work as an example: “as groupwork and pairwork often create unpredictable situations full of linguistic traps, non-NESTs favor more secure forms of classwork, such as lockstep activities” (p. 57).

Peter Medgyes’ findings represented a very important initial step in terms of exploring the native speaker/nonnative speaker issue in second language teaching. Since he started this “movement” in 1994, several other researchers (e.g., Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Celik, 2006; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2006; Mahboob, 2007; Pacek 2006) – mostly non-NESTs themselves – have investigated nonnative-English-speaking teachers’ self-perceptions, anxieties, weaknesses, and strengths, especially in the United States. However, as stated by Llurda (2006), “very few authors have seriously dealt with non-NESTs in EFL contexts” (p. 3), which is an aspect of the issue of nativeness that still lacks further research. In addition, Braine (2006), when considering the different foci presented by studies in the field, observes that “only a few have covered students’ attitudes and preferences – probably the most crucial factor in the study of nonnative-English-speaking teachers” (p. 14). Thus, there is a clear need for further research that encompasses both ESL and EFL settings, and that focuses on students’ attitudes towards nativeness, since several studies have already been conducted in order to verify teachers’ self-perceptions.

Considering these factors, the present research investigates ESL and EFL students’ expectations and attitudes towards their nonnative-English-speaking teachers according to their own perspectives and their native and nonnative teachers’

perspectives as well. More specifically, ESL and EFL students' opinions regarding their native and nonnative instructors' teaching styles, attitudes in class, and advantages and disadvantages as language teachers are explored through questionnaires and interviews, which were also answered by the instructors so that the students' point-of-view and the teachers' beliefs about their students' perceptions could be compared. In addition, class observations were conducted in order to verify if students' attitudes in class, as well as the teachers', corroborate the information reported by teachers and students concerning the instructors' teaching styles, their advantages and disadvantages as NESTs and/or non-NESTs, as well as students' alleged preference for a certain group of teachers due to nativeness issues. Since this research study is conducted in both ESL and EFL settings and collects information from both students and teachers (native and nonnative) through a variety of instruments, it is expected that findings will provide the field with enriching insights into what ESL and EFL students truly prioritize in terms of language learning as well as into what the weaknesses and strengths of NESTs and non-NESTs are, which will enable language professionals to address nativeness issues in EFL and ESL classrooms more appropriately and efficiently.

In order to conduct this study, some fundamental literature concerning several aspects of the NEST/non-NEST issue was reviewed, such as the teachers' self-perceptions, the students' attitudes towards their teachers, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each group of instructors. In the following chapter, a few position papers and some primary studies are examined, and some key information about each article is presented, including the researcher's main goals, the sampling, the procedures, and also the major results found, since these are the most essential aspects of each research study. The major findings of previous studies are then summarized, and the research questions of the current study are introduced. The third chapter presents the

research methods that are used in this study, including information about the sampling, the instruments, the data collection procedures, and the methods for data analysis. The fourth chapter reports the main findings of the present research study by discussing each of the themes and sub-themes in which the written data are categorized according to recurring patterns identified during the examination of the raw data collected through the questionnaires, interviews, and class observations. The last chapter provides a discussion of how the major findings of the study answer the research questions and corroborate the results from previous studies. Furthermore, the implications of such findings to the field of English language teaching as well as the limitations of the present study and suggestions for further research conclude the final chapter.

Literature Review

The goal of this literature review is to use the analysis of the findings presented in previous research to guide the execution of this project, since the information reported in previous studies helped shape the present study in terms of what has already been done in the field and what needs further investigation. The present literature review focuses on previous findings regarding the following issues: non-NESTs' self-perceptions, NESTs' and non-NESTs' advantages and disadvantages, and students' attitudes towards non-NESTs. More specifically, the studies reviewed discuss non-NESTs' lack of confidence and low self-esteem due to their linguistic disadvantage (discrimination of non-NESTs in hiring practices is briefly discussed as well), weaknesses, strengths, and challenges of NESTs and non-NESTs, and students' alleged negative attitudes towards nonnative teachers – especially in ESL settings. These topics were identified during the examination of several articles concerning English teachers' native/nonnative status in both ESL and EFL settings. Some of these texts represent accounts of primary studies, others represent accounts of non-NESTs' own experiences.

Information about non-NESTs' lack of confidence and low self-esteem – according to their own perceptions – can be found in Amin (1999), Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999), Liu (1999), Moussu (2006), Rajagopalan (2006), Tang (1997), and Thomas (1999). The authors argue that these negative feelings result from non-NESTs' beliefs about NESTs' superiority in terms of speaking, pronunciation, and other skills and/or from their awareness of their students' preference for native speaker teachers. A few authors discuss the way that TESOL programs fail to address international students' specific needs and the discrimination against non-NESTs in hiring practices by describing their own experiences, which illustrate these unfortunate situations in ESL education – some claim that discrimination on the basis of nativeness happens even in

EFL settings. Among them are Amin (1999), Canagarajah, (1999), Kamhi-Stein (1999), Mahboob (2007), Maum (2002), Moussu (2006), and Rajagopalan (2006).

English teachers' weaknesses and strengths – especially considering non-NESTs – and/or the challenges they face in the language teaching profession were investigated by Benke and Medgyes (2006), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), Ling and Braine (2007), Maum (2002), McNeill (2006), Moussu (2006), Pacek (2006), and Tang (1997). These authors bring different aspects concerning NESTs' and non-NESTs' advantages and disadvantages, some related to the teachers' self-perceptions and some related to the way the teachers are perceived by their students. Finally, Benke and Medgyes (2006), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), Ling and Braine (2007), Mahboob (2007), Moussu (2006), and Pacek (2006) discuss EFL and ESL students' attitudes towards their nonnative language instructors. The articles that examined the three main topics aforementioned are summarized next. However, it is important to point out that some of these topics overlap in some of the studies. Therefore, such studies are discussed in each section according to the topic in question only, in order to avoid the presentation of repetitive information about each study.

Non-NESTs' Self-Perceptions

These articles report that nonnative-English-speaking English teachers have some professional concerns that are not shared by their native-English-speaking colleagues. Non-NESTs face anxieties regarding their nonnativeness itself, for example. In addition, they worry about how they are perceived by others because of their “condition.” As a result, many of these professionals have conducted research studies in order to investigate different aspects related to issues of nativeness. Summaries of the findings of a few studies in the field follow.

Tang (1997) analyzes the results of a study that she conducted in Hong Kong with 47 nonnative-English-speaking teachers who work in ESL settings and who were selected through convenience sampling. These teachers were given questionnaires related to their status as nonnative speakers of English in terms of language proficiency, roles in the classroom, and advantages and disadvantages for ESL students of having NESTs or non-NESTs. The questionnaires were applied during a teacher retraining course. Tang hypothesized that non-NESTs' identity was developed by the feeling of being compared with others – NESTs. Besides, she believed that these attitudes demonstrated by non-NESTs in relation to themselves shaped their roles in the classroom. The results of her study showed that non-NESTs felt inadequate as language teachers and also that they considered native-English-speaking teachers superior in terms of speaking, pronunciation, listening, vocabulary, and reading. In addition, they confessed they experienced a great degree of anxiety when working with NESTs, since they were afraid of being compared and possibly rejected by ESL students.

In her article, Amin (1999) reports the results of a study that she conducted involving 5 non-white non-NESTs that were selected through convenience sampling. Each of them participated in a 2-hour semi-structured interview about their experiences as ESL teachers in terms of their students' attitudes towards them. Her hypotheses were based on her own experience as an ESL teacher in Canada, and her beliefs that the ESL profession privileges the white teacher and that students as well do not see a non-white teacher as a "real" one. The participants' accounts about varying incidents that had occurred during their professional life in Canada showed that ESL students arrive in English-speaking countries with certain assumptions in mind: "only white people can be English native speakers" and "only native speakers can teach 'real', 'proper' English" (p. 94). Based on these findings, the author claims that the ideal ESL teacher, according

to ESL students' expectations, is white, Anglo, and male. The author explains that the gender aspect is related to "authority" issues, which seem to be a universal advantage held by men. Also discussed in the article is the fact that the students' expectations lead non-NESTs to a strong fear of unfavorable comparisons with their English-native-speaking colleagues, causing nonnative teachers to spend longer hours preparing classes and to work harder trying to anticipate students' questions.

Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999) present some theoretical background information about the native versus nonnative English speaker teacher dichotomy by reviewing three existing positions on the matter: those who advocate nativeness, those who challenge it, and those who maintain the dichotomy. The authors defend the necessity of more empirical studies on the subject and bring some information about a study that was conducted by Medgyes (1994). Based on Medgyes's findings, they conducted a 10-week study involving 17 nonnative-English-speaking participants who were all MA or PhD TESOL students in an American university. Data were collected through questionnaires – during the first phase, and also through in-depth interviews and autobiographical accounts of the participants, which happened during a whole semester in a seminar format. Students met once a week for two and a half hours. The aim was to analyze how non-NESTs see themselves in terms of their linguistic competence, communicative competence, and teaching methodology/techniques. The idea was to promote some critical thinking about their experiences and professional lives in order to help them develop a positive identity as English teachers, since it was observed that these students had low self-esteem as language educators due to the fact that they were not English native speakers and felt inferior professionally. Most argued that their students did not see them as they saw NESTs, so the necessity of discussing the advantages and disadvantages of both groups – NESTs and non-NESTs as language

professionals – was identified. The article reports that by the end of the study these international graduate students had developed an awareness of themselves as international professionals, a sense of group identity, and means to contributing to other international professionals' careers. According to the authors, these findings have significant implications for ESOL teacher education, such as the adoption of discursive practices that place non-NESTs at the center rather than at the periphery, the exploration of the diversity of their international experience, and the examination of how their goals and values contribute to the shaping of the international language professional.

Liu (1999) explains the results of an 8-month study involving 7 international TESOL professionals who were his co-workers and agreed to participate. The study was carried out through e-mail messages and face-to-face interviews, and it focused on the impact that non-NESTs have on their students and on professional issues related to native vs. nonnative status. Liu aimed to answer the following questions: How do “native speaker” and “nonnative speaker” labels affect teaching and learning in the language classroom? What impact does the “nonnative speaker” label have on learners who are taught by these professionals? To what extent can a nonnative-English-speaking professional encourage or discourage ESL students? Since the interviewer did not ask the participants any specific questions related to these topics – they were asked broad questions about being a NEST vs. being a non-NEST and their answers would guide new, narrower questions – all the conclusions presented were totally based on the interviewees' perceptions and experiences; that is, the researcher looked for differences, similarities, and personal positions in the spontaneous answers he received from the participants in order to confirm his hypotheses. The conclusions presented by Liu include the idea that a good ESL professional is constituted by professional training, linguistic and sociolinguistic competence, understanding of the students' needs,

continuous encouragement of students' efforts, and realistic expectations of students' progress, regardless of nativeness. Thus, the native/nonnative speaker status should be analyzed as a continuum and not as a dichotomy, since the teachers' impact on learners is determined not only by who the teachers are, but also by what they do in the classroom, that is, both NESTs and non-NESTs have advantages and disadvantages, so what really matters is the teachers' professionalism.

Thomas (1999) describes her own experience as a non-NEST who constantly notices some disappointment in her students' attitudes when they realize they are going to have English classes with a nonnative speaker. The author states that ESL students' attitudes towards teachers who are nonnative English speakers are the main cause of non-NESTs' lack of confidence and professional anxiety. She claims that, as a non-NEST, one is under constant pressure to prove oneself. However, she also points out the strengths of non-NESTs, such as the shared language learning experience, the fact that they represent successful second language learning stories, and their role as attainable models, which represent advantages for both teachers and learners in the language learning process.

Moussu (2006) presents the results of a quantitative study conducted in the United States involving 25 Intensive English Programs at different universities – these IEPs were selected in terms of accreditation and only 16 allowed their students to participate in the study. As to the participants, 96 teachers – 78 NESTs and 18 non-NESTs – and 21 administrators were asked and agreed to answer the questionnaires, in addition to 804 students. Data were collected twice, that is, each group – students, teachers, and administrators – received two questionnaires. The students answered paper questionnaires and the teachers and administrators answered online questionnaires, all about issues related to teachers' native/nonnative status. One of the aims was to analyze

the different challenges faced by NESTs and non-NESTs and their self-perceptions about their teaching experience and language skills. Thus, one of Moussu's research questions was, "What are the self-perceptions of NESTs and non-NESTs regarding their strengths and weaknesses, and their opinions about nonnative-English-speaking ESL teachers in general?" (p. 12). Generally speaking, the results found stated that NESTs were clearly more confident than non-NESTs about the strengths of their teaching and language skills. However, both NESTs and non-NESTs agreed that non-NESTs' strengths were the fact that they were positive role models and shared language learning experience. In terms of weaknesses, foreign accents, low self-esteem, and limited knowledge of American culture were mainly pointed out.

Rajagopalan (2006) claims that, although nonnative-English-speaking-teachers constitute about 80% of the total ELT workforce worldwide, "non-NESTs are typically treated as second class citizens in the world of language teaching" (p. 283). The author believes this is due to the fact that native speakers are usually regarded as the only reliable source of "authentic" language and that the target language is considered to be "whatever the native speakers speak" (p. 286). This researcher conducted a survey on English teachers' anxieties in Brazil involving both quantitative and qualitative means of data collection. As to quantitative data, 500 copies of a questionnaire containing 8 questions were sent out, which had a return rate of 90%. The results of the questionnaire showed that most participants felt they were "undervalued as professionals, handicapped when it came to career advancement, and doomed to be chasing an impossible ideal" (p. 289). The qualitative data were collected through one-to-one informal, open-ended interviews. This instrument elicited more spontaneous responses, which led to interesting findings: teachers with less teaching experience and from younger generations had higher self-esteem as English teachers and worried less about

being nonnative English speakers than their peers who had been in the profession for about ten years or more.

The studies discussed above show that ESL nonnative-English-speaking teachers usually have low self-esteem and suffer from anxiety as language professionals due to their fear of being compared to their native-English-speaking colleagues. Non-NESTs believe that native speakers are superior, especially in terms of pronunciation. Even though there was only one study conducted in an EFL setting in order to support this idea, Rajagopalan (2006) confirms that nonnative English teachers in Brazil feel frustrated in their pursuit of an impossible ideal: knowing English as well as a native speaker. Two position papers by Canagarajah (1999) and Kamhi-Stein (1999) corroborate non-NESTs' anxieties, since they show that discrimination against nonnative English teachers in hiring practices do exist, and that nonnative TESOL students' needs are not addressed in most graduate programs in the USA, even though international students are largely represented in American institutions nowadays. A brief discussion about each article concludes this section.

Canagarajah (1999) reports on the discrimination in hiring practices that is suffered by non-NESTs in the United States and also in other countries. He claims that, although many international students graduate from TESOL programs in American universities every year, the job market in the field has been keeping a "gatekeeping" policy when it comes to hiring those people (p. 77). The author also questions the belief that native speakers are good teachers, "Does the fact that one displays good pronunciation and correct grammar make one a successful teacher of that language?" (p. 80). Canagarajah states that language teaching requires complex pedagogical preparation and practice, so it is not possible to assume that all native speakers may be good teachers of their first language.

Kamhi-Stein (1999) defends the inclusion of issues that are related to nonnativeness in language teaching in the curriculum of teacher preparation programs. The author claims that several students in TESOL programs nowadays are nonnative English speakers who aim to teach English back in their countries or even in the United States. Therefore, it becomes necessary to adapt the curriculum in these teacher training programs so that they become more relevant to the needs and interests of this group of students that has been largely represented in graduate programs in American institutions. Kamhi-Stein states the importance of providing these international students with opportunities to examine the nonnativeness issue in relation to teaching methodologies and curriculum design, and cultural and social factors that affect L2 development. One suggestion offered by the author is to address these issues through classroom activities as well as out-of-class activities, such as conferences and forums.

NESTs' and Non-NESTs' Advantages and Disadvantages

A few authors have investigated the weaknesses and strengths of NESTs and non-NESTs regarding different aspects of their English proficiency and teaching skills. Such studies have been conducted both in ESL and EFL settings and were based on both the teachers' and students' points-of-view. Two of them (Tang, 1997; Moussu, 2006) were discussed previously in terms of teachers' self-perceptions. Therefore, they are only briefly reported in this section as to NESTs' and non-NESTs' advantages and disadvantages.

During a teacher retraining course, Tang (1997) gave 47 ESL non-NESTs questionnaires related to their status as nonnative speakers of English in terms of language proficiency, roles in the classroom, and advantages and disadvantages for ESL students to have NESTs or non-NESTs. The results showed that non-NESTs considered native-English-speaking teachers superior in terms of speaking, pronunciation, listening,

vocabulary, and reading. However, some advantages of being a nonnative speaker were also pointed out, such as better knowledge of students' problems and difficulties in learning as well as better understanding of errors due to language transfer.

Maum (2002) also discusses non-NESTs' strengths as language teachers. The author explains that nonnative-English-speaking teachers have gone through the same process of acquiring English that their students have to face. Therefore, they are more aware of their students' linguistic and cultural needs and are probably more capable of using language differences as an asset in class. Maum also states, though, that non-NESTs' strengths are usually underestimated by colleagues and students and that credibility in the workplace is one of the main challenges faced by this group of teachers who are constantly required to prove they are effective, even though they do not have native pronunciation.

Benke and Medgyes (2006) conducted a study in Hungary involving 422 low-intermediate to advanced learners of English who had had at least one year of instruction with a native English speaker. Most participants were in their late teens or early twenties. The purpose was to identify the most characteristic features of native-English-speaking teachers and of nonnative-English-speaking teachers according to the students' perspectives. In addition, the researchers aimed to verify to what extent the learners' perceptions of their teachers corresponded to their teachers' perceptions of themselves by comparing the results of the study in question with the results of a previous study by Arva and Medgyes (2000). Students were given a multi-item questionnaire during a regular class session, which included questions about general characteristics of NESTs and non-NESTs as well as questions about the advantages and disadvantages of each group. The general results show that students and teachers provided very similar answers. Both groups seem to believe that non-NESTs are more

demanding and traditional and that NESTs are more casual and talkative, and that both groups are patient with students. In terms of advantages, non-NESTs are seen as good at teaching and explaining grammar and NESTs are considered more capable of getting their learners to speak in the target language. As to disadvantages, non-NESTs' pronunciation and outdated language use were pointed out while NESTs' different language and cultural backgrounds were considered a frequent cause of communication gap between teachers and students.

The study conducted by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006) was especially concerned with the confirmation of the hypothesis that EFL students prefer a NEST in the specific areas of vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, culture, attitudes, and assessment, and a non-NEST in the areas of grammar, listening, reading, and learning strategies. The researchers decided to test this hypothesis based on the results of previous studies conducted by Tang (1997), Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999), Seidlhofer (1999), Barratt and Kontra (2000), and Arva and Medgyes (2000), which all agree that language teachers themselves believe that NESTs are better at pronunciation, vocabulary, and speaking, and that non-NESTs are better at grammar and have the advantage of sharing their students' L1. Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2006) study involved 76 volunteer university students – most of them were Philology majors – between 18 and 36 years old (16 male and 60 female). The participants were asked to answer two questionnaires in class (one right after the other). The first was answered by students individually and presented several statements with which respondents should agree or disagree. The second questionnaire presented open-ended questions to be answered in groups of 4 or 5. The results concerning the first questionnaire showed that, in general, students prefer to have a native English speaker as their teacher. However, the hypothesis suggested by the authors was confirmed, since students showed a clear preference for NESTs in the

areas of pronunciation (81.5%), culture (71.1%), and speaking (64.5%), and about half the participants stated that non-NESTs would help them more with strategies to learn better. As to the second questionnaire, it was observed that most positive comments about NESTs were related to pronunciation and cultural knowledge of English speaking countries. Surprisingly, the most negative comments about NESTs were related to intelligibility (it seems to be more difficult for students to understand their teachers who are native speakers), which was followed by teaching abilities (students stated that NESTs do not know how to explain grammar well and that they are not aware of students' difficulties). Regarding non-NESTs, most positive comments were related to the teaching of learning strategies and the understanding of learners' mistakes. The negative comments, as expected, referred mostly to pronunciation, since students seem to be afraid of learning their teachers' pronunciation mistakes.

McNeill (2006) conducted a study on awareness of lexical difficulty in pedagogical texts in order to investigate the similarities and differences in the way native-English-speaking teachers and nonnative-English-speaking teachers predict learners' vocabulary difficulties in reading texts. The author also investigated the similarities and differences in the way novice and expert teachers predict vocabulary problems. Sixty-five teachers and 200 secondary school students from 10 different schools in Hong Kong participated in the study. The students were given 20 minutes to complete a 40-item vocabulary test, in which they were supposed to write the Chinese equivalent of each word in the list. Then, the students were asked to read a 600-word general science passage about laser surgery, typically used in the secondary school system in Hong Kong. The passage included the 40 target words from the vocabulary test, which students retook after reading the text.

The teachers were divided into four groups: “non-native speaker expert”, “native speaker expert”, “non-native speaker novice”, and “native speaker novice”. All the teachers were asked to read the passage and select 12 words that they believed to be unfamiliar to the students and necessary for the general understanding of the text. McNeill’s (2006) results show that the two groups of nonnative-English-speaking teachers performed better than the two groups of native speakers. Even though the “native speaker expert” group performed better than its “novice” counterpart, both groups of native-English-speaking teachers (“novice” and “expert”) failed to identify the words which students found difficult. Actually, the correlation between their selections and the difficulty level of the words did not reach significance level. On the other hand, both “novice” and “expert” non-NESTs succeeded in predicting learners’ vocabulary problems, since both groups of teachers produced significant correlations with the student data.

A very interesting finding from this study, though, is the fact that the “non-native speaker novice” group, the one with no real background in education or applied linguistics, was the most successful of the four groups of teachers. McNeill (2006) explains that all the nonnative-English-speaking novice teachers who participated in the study spoke the same L1 as their students, and were close in age and experience. The researcher believes that “teachers who speak their students’ L1 have a distinct advantage in knowing where their students’ language difficulties lie. (...) In fact, it might be argued that the NNN group were at an advantage over their NNE colleagues inasmuch as they had not been influenced by any linguistic or educational theory which might have interfered with their selections and possibly clouded their intuitive judgment” (p. 116). However, McNeill (2006) acknowledges the need for follow-up

work with nonnative-English-speaking teachers who teach students whose mother language they do not know.

Moussu (2006) had 96 teachers – 78 NESTs and 18 non-NESTs – and 21 administrators from 25 IEPs in the USA, and 804 students from 16 IEPs answer two questionnaires about issues related to teachers' native/nonnative status. It aimed to analyze the different challenges faced by NESTs and non-NESTs, their self-perceptions about their teaching experience and language skills, IEP administrators' beliefs concerning NESTs and non-NESTs in terms of linguistic preparation, international awareness, and teaching experience. Thus, some of Moussu's research questions were as follows: What are the self-perceptions of NESTs and non-NESTs regarding their strengths and weaknesses, and their opinions about nonnative-English-speaking ESL teachers in general? What are the Intensive English Program administrators' hiring practices and beliefs about NESTs and non-NESTs? Generally speaking, NESTs were clearly more confident than non-NESTs about the strengths of their teaching and language skills. In addition, non-NESTs' foreign accents, low self-esteem, and limited knowledge of American culture were pointed out as their main disadvantages as ESL teachers. Nevertheless, both NESTs and non-NESTs agreed that non-NESTs' strengths were the fact that they were positive role models and shared language learning experience with their students.

Pacek's (2006) study included two groups of participants: 57 students from diverse language and cultural backgrounds who were taking an elective vocabulary class and five Japanese students who were secondary school teachers in their country and were taking mandatory classes in a teacher-training program with a nonnative-English-speaking teacher in a British university. Both groups answered two questionnaires, which were given a week apart from each other (the researcher also sent

the questionnaires to 68 ex-participants of the Japanese teacher-training program, and this group was also included in the analysis). The first questionnaire asked about the most and least important characteristics of a language teacher in general. The second questionnaire involved 3 areas, one of which was the most important advantages and disadvantages of having a non-NEST. Based on the first questionnaire Pacek (2006) found that both groups of participants considered sensitivity to students' needs and problems, sound knowledge of the language system, and being well-prepared as the most important characteristics of a language teacher. However, the answers concerning the least important characteristics of a language teacher go against the findings of all the other studies mentioned in the present paper because, besides gender, age, and appearance, students stated native pronunciation, something that has been declared as one of students' main concerns by several researchers, such as Benke and Medgyes (2006), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), and Moussu (2006). Regarding the second questionnaire, variety of teaching methods, sensitivity to students' problems, clearer explanations, and detailed knowledge of grammar were mentioned as the advantages of having a non-NEST. The disadvantages identified were the use of less idiomatic/colloquial English and nonnative pronunciation. Similarly to the other group, the Japanese participants pointed out variety of teaching methods as an advantage and non-native pronunciation as a disadvantage, adding poor familiarity with the British culture as another drawback. The results show that, although students do not consider native pronunciation as one of the most important characteristics of a language teacher when they think about the issue in general, they do ascribe more importance to it when it refers to their own teacher in an ESL setting.

A study conducted by Ling and Braine (2007) aimed to answer two research questions: "(1) What are the attitudes of university students in Hong Kong towards NNS

teachers of English? (2) From the perspective of the students, what are the specific strengths and shortcomings of NNS English teachers in Hong Kong?” (p. 261). The study involved 420 undergraduates from seven different universities in Hong Kong. They were either in their second or third year of study, and they all answered a questionnaire survey, which was based on the International Teaching Assistants Questionnaire by Plakans (2007). The modified version of the questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part I focused on the participants’ personal data. Part II focused on the participants’ experiences with nonnative-English-speaking English teachers. Part III was designed to cross-check the participants’ responses on their perceptions of their nonnative teachers. Students who were willing to take part in interviews were supposed to write their contact information on the last page of the questionnaire. However, there were only 10 volunteers from three universities. The 10 participants answered three main questions during the semi-structured interviews, which were conducted in English. The first question was about their experiences with non-NESTs. The second question was about nonnative teachers’ strengths and weaknesses. Finally, the third question addressed the qualities of a competent English language teacher according to the participants’ perspectives.

Regarding their second research question, Ling and Braine (2007) found that students believed that non-NESTs taught as effectively as NESTs and that they had no difficulties in understanding and answering students’ questions. As to the interviews, the participants’ responses explained nonnative teachers’ strengths and shortcomings more specifically. They stated that, because their local nonnative teachers had gone through a similar educational system, they were able to apply effective strategies in teaching, as they shared their students’ cultural background and were aware of their language learning difficulties. On the other hand, participants believed that nonnative-

English-speaking teachers overemphasized past exam papers during the lessons, and overcorrected students' mistakes in English usage.

The articles presented in this section stated the main advantages and disadvantages of native and nonnative-English-speaking teachers according to the teachers' self-perceptions as well as the students' perspectives. The studies were conducted in both ESL and EFL settings, and involved mostly questionnaires, but also interviews. The results found are very consistent in that teachers and students believe that NESTs are better at speaking, pronunciation, and cultural knowledge, whereas non-NESTs are better at grammar and at identifying students' difficulties.

Students' Attitudes Towards Non-NESTs

Concerning students' attitudes towards non-NESTs, six primary studies are analyzed in this section of the literature review, among which are Benke & Medgyes (2006), Lasagabaster & Sierra (2006), Moussu (2006), Pacek (2006), Ling & Braine (2007), and Mahboob (2007). They were conducted through interviews and/or questionnaires, and short essays involving ESL/EFL nonnative-English-speaking teachers and/or ESL/EFL students. All of them – with the only exception of Mahboob (2007) – have been discussed in previous sections of this chapter. Therefore, a brief summary containing only some key information about how each of these studies explored the issue of students' attitudes will follow.

In Benke and Medgyes' (2006) study, 422 low-intermediate to advanced learners of English in Hungary were given a multi-item questionnaire during a regular class session, which included questions about general characteristics of NESTs and non-NESTs as well as questions about the advantages and disadvantages of each group. In general, this study presented very positive results since, based on their findings, the authors stated that "learners appreciate both groups of teachers for what they can do best

in the classroom” (p. 208). Besides, the majority of participants argued that “in an ideal situation both NESTs and non-NESTs should be available to teach them” (p. 208), which shows that second language learners do not judge their teachers’ competence based only on nativeness, but also on their ability to help students learn the target language.

The study conducted by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006) aimed to confirm the hypothesis that EFL students prefer a NEST in the specific areas of vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, culture, attitudes, and assessment, and a non-NEST in the areas of grammar, listening, reading, and learning strategies. Seventy-six volunteer university students were asked to answer two questionnaires in class (one individually and one in groups of four or five). The results showed that, in general, students prefer to have a native English speaker as their teacher, especially regarding the areas of pronunciation (81.5%), culture (71.1%), and speaking (64.5%). As to non-NESTs, most positive comments were related to the teaching of learning strategies and the understanding of learners’ mistakes, which confirms the authors’ hypothesis.

Moussu (2006) conducted a quantitative study in the United States involving 25 Intensive English Programs at different universities. Ninety-six teachers – 78 NESTs and 18 non-NESTs – 21 administrators, and 804 students agreed to answer two questionnaires. One of the main objectives was to analyze ESL students’ attitudes towards their native and/or nonnative English teachers considering factors like gender, native language, level of proficiency, and class subject. Some of Moussu’s research questions were as follows: “What are the initial attitudes of ESL students towards NESTs and non-NESTs? What teacher and student variables (such as gender, first language, and so on) influence ESL students’ attitudes towards NESTs and non-NESTs?” (p. 11). Generally speaking, the results found stated that students’ attitudes

towards NESTs were more positive than their attitudes towards non-NESTs, and in terms of level, students with higher English proficiency demonstrated more positive attitudes towards non-NESTs than students at lower levels.

Pacek (2006) investigated the attitudes of ESL students towards a nonnative-English-speaker teacher who was teaching at a British university. Two groups were included in this study: 57 students who were taking an elective vocabulary class and 5 Japanese students who were in a teacher-training program (68 ex-participants of the Japanese teacher-training program were included in the data analysis). All participants answered two questionnaires. The first questionnaire addressed the most and least important characteristics of a language teacher in general. The second questionnaire involved 3 areas, two of which were: students' initial reaction to a non-NEST and changes in their attitudes by the end of each course. The first questionnaire showed that sensitivity to students' needs and problems, sound knowledge of the language system, and being well-prepared to class were the most important characteristics of a language teacher according to the respondents. Regarding the second questionnaire, the initial reactions of the participants from the vocabulary class were divided: some claimed to be unconcerned about having a non-NEST, others showed a negative attitude, and the remaining half stated that they had not realized that the teacher was a nonnative speaker. By the end of the course the group was still divided: there were positive reactions related to teaching methods and negative reactions related to foreign accent. Only three Japanese students presented a negative initial attitude, which changed by the end of the course since all students reported positive attitudes towards the nonnative teacher. The results show that students tend to value nativeness more when they encounter non-NESTs in an ESL setting. As Pacek observed, "while it seems more acceptable for students to have a non-NEST in their home country, when they go abroad they expect to

be taught by native speakers” (p. 260), which confirms the findings by Liang (2002) as stated by Braine (2006).

A study conducted by Ling and Braine (2007) investigated the attitudes of university students in Hong Kong towards NNS teachers of English. Four-hundred twenty undergraduates from seven different universities answered a questionnaire survey composed of three parts, and 10 volunteers (out of the 420) participated in individual interviews. Ling and Braine (2007) found that university students in Hong Kong presented a favorable attitude towards their nonnative-English-speaking English teachers. According to the researchers, the participants stated in their questionnaires that they did not have any problems with their teachers regarding their nonnativeness. In addition, students claimed that non-NESTs taught as effectively as NESTs and that they had no difficulties in understanding and answering students’ questions.

Mahboob (2007) conducted a study in an Intensive English Program at a large Midwestern university in order to explore ESL students’ perceptions of both NESTs and non-NESTs. The author decided on this topic because he noticed that program administrators perceive “nativeness” to be significantly important to ESL students and that this belief influences their hiring decisions. All students enrolled in the IEP previously mentioned – where they are taught by both NESTs and non-NESTs – were invited to participate in the study, but only 37 volunteered. The participants were asked to write an essay in order to show their reactions to the following stimulus: “Some students think that only native speakers can be good language teachers. Others think that nonnatives can also be efficient teachers. What is your opinion about this issue? Please feel free to provide details and examples” (p. 124).

Students were given 35 minutes to write their essays. During data analysis, five essays were discarded because students wrote off topic. So Mahboob’s (2007) findings

are based on 32 essays that were coded by four readers according to the categories that “emerged” out of the analysis. These were “linguistic factors”, “teaching styles”, and “personal factors”. General results show that students’ perceptions of non-NESTs may be different (and may change) based on whether or not they have studied with a non-NEST in the United States. In terms of linguistic factors, all negative comments about NESTs were related to grammar, whereas most positive comments about non-NESTs were exactly about the teaching of grammar. Regarding reading, writing, and culture classes, the essays suggest that students believe non-NESTs can teach these subjects as well as NESTs. However, non-NESTs were considered to prepare students better for standardized tests such as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication). The researcher claims that these results may be due to the fact that nonnative-English-speaking teachers have taken those tests themselves, so their experience as standardized test takers help them prepare their students for the demands of this kind of examination.

Considering teaching styles, all comments about NESTs’ ability to answer questions were negative, while all comments about non-NESTs were positive. Students stated that they are more satisfied with the way non-NESTs answer questions and give explanations. Students’ comments that were classified as belonging to personal factors also presented more positive results concerning non-NESTs since all comments about NESTs were negative. Students see non-NESTs’ experience as L2 learners as an advantage, because nonnative teachers are more aware of the problems students may face whereas NESTs lack this shared language learning experience. Nevertheless, the author claims that the general results of the study show that “ESL students in the United States do not have a clear preference for either NESTs or non-NESTs; rather, they feel that both types of teachers have unique attributes” (p. 142).

The six primary studies that were presented in this section discussed whether or not ESL and EFL students have different attitudes towards their native and/or nonnative-English-speaking teachers. Their findings show that it is difficult to identify a clear preference for NESTs or non-NESTs, since students in different settings pointed out weaknesses and strengths regarding both groups of teachers. However, three of them (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2006; Moussu, 2006; Pacek, 2006) indicate that initial attitudes tend to be somewhat negative towards non-NESTs, and that students usually have more positive things to say about their native teachers. A summary of the major findings from all the research studies reviewed in this chapter is presented next.

Summary of the Major Findings of Previous Research

All the studies previously mentioned presented interesting and relevant results to the field of language teaching and especially to the issues with which the present research is concerned. Through interviews, questionnaires, and even autobiographical accounts, the researchers had the chance to access and present valuable information concerning nonnative-English-speaking teachers' beliefs about themselves and about the way their students perceive them in the classroom as well as second language learners' perspectives on nonnativeness in language teaching as described by the students themselves. The main findings of the primary studies discussed above are briefly summarized in Table 1 and further discussed next.

Table 1

Summary of the primary studies

Primary studies	Setting	Participants	Instruments	Non-NESTs' self-perceptions	NESTs' and non-NESTs' advantages and disadvantages	Students' attitudes towards non-NESTs
Tang (1997)	ESL	47 non-NESTs	Questionnaires	Non-NESTs consider NESTs superior in terms of speaking, pronunciation, listening, vocabulary, and reading.	Non-NESTs have better knowledge of students' difficulties and better understanding of errors due to language transfer. However, NESTs are superior in terms of pronunciation, listening, vocabulary, and reading.	
Amin (1999)	ESL	5 non-NESTs	2-hour semi-structured interviews	Fear of unfavorable comparisons with NESTs.		
Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999)	ESL	17 nonnative TESOL students	Questionnaires and interviews (seminar)	Non-NESTs have low self-esteem and feel inferior professionally.		
Liu (1999)	ESL	7 international TESOL instructors	e-mail messages and face-to-face interviews	Both NESTs and non-NESTs have advantages and disadvantages, so what matters is the teachers' professionalism.		

Moussu (2006)	ESL	96 teachers, 21 administrators and 804 students	Questionnaires	Non-NESTs are less confident than NESTs about their teaching and language skills.	Non-NESTs' have foreign accents, low self-esteem, and limited knowledge of American culture. However, they are positive role models and share language learning experience with their students.	Students' attitudes towards NESTs were more positive than their attitudes towards non-NESTs. Also, students at higher proficiency levels had more positive attitudes towards non-NESTs than students at lower levels.
Rajagopalan (2006)	EFL	450 non-NESTs	Questionnaires and interviews	Non-NESTs feel undervalued as professionals and handicapped when it comes to career advancement.		
Benke and Medgyes (2006)	EFL	422 students	Questionnaires		Non-NESTs are good at teaching grammar, but their pronunciation and outdated language use are seen as disadvantages.	Learners appreciate both groups of teachers for what they can do best in the classroom.
Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006)	EFL	76 students	Questionnaires		NESTs are better at pronunciation and culture while non-NESTs are better at teaching learning strategies and	Students prefer NESTs, especially regarding pronunciation,

				understanding learners' mistakes.	culture, and speaking.
McNeill (2006)	EFL	65 teachers and 200 students	Vocabulary test	Non-NESTs are better than NESTs at predicting students' vocabulary problems.	
Pacek (2006)	ESL	57 students and 5 teachers	Questionnaires	Non-NESTs use a variety of teaching methods, are sensitive to students' problems, and know grammar well. However, they use less idiomatic English and lack native pronunciation.	Positive reactions related to teaching methods, and negative reactions related to foreign accent. Students seem to value nativeness more when they encounter non-NESTs in ESL.
Ling and Braine (2007)	EFL	420 students	Questionnaires and interviews	Non-NESTs share their students' cultural background and are aware of language learning difficulties. They overemphasize exam papers, though.	Favorable attitudes towards non-NESTs. Students claim that non-NESTs teach as effectively as NESTs.
Mahboob (2007)	ESL	37 students	Essays		Students do not have a clear preference for either NESTs or non-NESTs. Both groups of teachers have unique attributes.

Most studies presented similar findings concerning non-NESTs' self-perceptions. In all the studies in which this topic was explored (Amin, 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Liu, 1999; Moussu, 2006; Rajagopalan, 2006; Tang, 1997; Thomas, 1999), researchers found that nonnative-English-speaking teachers have low self-esteem and lack confidence in their language skills due to beliefs in native-English-speaking teachers' linguistic superiority and/or due to some fear of unfavorable comparisons with their native colleagues. Rajagopalan (2006) even claims that,

“Indeed the fact of not being a native speaker and, worse still, of never being able to become one no matter how hard they [non-NESTs] tried, often became a source of anxiety and job frustration, tormenting their lives around the clock and making them constantly feel the tantalizing sensation of hankering after an unattainable ideal” (p. 287).

Concerning the advantages and disadvantages of being a NEST or a non-NEST, the studies by Benke and Medgyes (2006), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), Ling and Braine (2007), Moussu (2006), Pacek (2006), and Tang (1997) claim that both groups of language professionals have their weaknesses and strengths, and focus on the characteristics of nonnative-English-speaking teachers. Among their advantages as language teachers are the fact that non-NESTs tend to better understand students' difficulties and errors due to language transfer, since they share the experience of language learning, and also that non-NESTs represent role models to their students as they are examples of successful language learning stories. Besides, the studies by Benke and Medgyes (2006), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), and Pacek (2006) report that students believe that non-NESTs are better at teaching and explaining grammar. Pacek (2006) also found that students prefer non-NESTs' teaching methods, and Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006) and Ling and Braine (2007) stated that non-NESTs are better at

teaching language learning strategies to their students. McNeill (2006) identified another advantage of nonnative teachers: their awareness of lexical difficulty. He found that non-NESTs are much more successful than NESTs at predicting words that language learners will find difficult when reading texts. Therefore, nonnative-English-speaking teachers are more likely to prepare efficient reading lessons in terms of vocabulary learning.

Regarding the disadvantages of non-NESTs, they are mainly related to their lack of confidence (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Moussu, 2006; Tang, 1997), their foreign accents (Benke & Medgyes, 2006; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2006; Moussu, 2006; Pacek 2006; Tang, 1997), and their lack of cultural knowledge (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2006; Moussu, 2006; Pacek, 2006), considering the target language. Ling and Braine (2007) also reported students' dissatisfaction with non-NESTs' overemphasis on exams and overcorrection of learners' mistakes. Although pronunciation is clearly an issue that concerns language learners, Pacek (2006) presents an interesting "variation" of the belief that all language learners prefer NESTs' pronunciation. This researcher claims that "nonnative accent is seen as an advantage by some students, as they find it easier to understand (and perhaps imitate), while some others see it as a disadvantage, as it is not 'authentic' (and not worth imitating)" (p. 256). In a way, this observation goes against the results of all other studies examined in this paper, including her own, since all findings showed that nonnative pronunciation is always pointed out by students as a disadvantage of non-NESTs. However, a few students in Pacek's study did state that nonnative-English-speaking teachers have "clearer pronunciation" that is "easier to understand" (p. 253). Thus, Pacek's observation brings into question the validity of this "given" in the field

that nonnative pronunciation is non-NESTs' main disadvantage. The results of her study indicate the need for further investigation on this issue.

In the articles by Amin (1999), Benke and Medgyes (2006), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), Liu (1999), Mahboob (2007), Moussu (2006), and Pacek (2006), research showed that students tend to have negative attitudes towards non-NESTs, at least at an initial stage – usually at the beginning of a new semester – due to beliefs about nativeness. Something that is important to point out here is that Amin's (1999) and Liu's (1999) findings were totally based on the teachers' perspectives, since the information about students' attitudes towards non-NESTs was obtained through interviews with the teachers only, that is, the way ESL students see their nonnative-English-speaking teachers is described according to what the teachers themselves *observe/think* about their students' behavior. On the other hand, Benke and Medgyes (2006), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), Mahboob (2007), Moussu (2006), and Pacek (2006) found such results based on the students' perspectives, as they conducted their studies through different types of questionnaires that were answered by language learners in ESL and/or EFL settings. Going against all these findings, Ling & Braine (2007) reported that university students in Hong Kong have a favorable attitude towards their nonnative-English-speaking English teachers, even though a couple of shortcomings regarding these instructors were identified.

It is important to observe, though, that these findings are not exactly similar, since they were obtained through different instruments and in different settings. Benke and Medgyes (2006) and Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), for example, conducted their studies in EFL settings, but Benke and Medgyes found that students would like to have both NESTs and non-NESTs as their instructors, whereas the students surveyed by Lasagabaster and Sierra demonstrated to prefer NESTs in terms of pronunciation,

speaking, and culture, and seemed to be concerned about “learning” their non-NESTs’ pronunciation mistakes. Regarding ESL students, Moussu (2006), Pacek (2006), and Mahboob (2007) also bring varying results. Moussu (2006) stated that learners presented negative attitudes towards non-NESTs at an initial stage of the study, but that these attitudes improved a little by the end of the semester, although nonnative pronunciation remained an issue. Pacek (2006) observed that nativeness was not very important for students while they were studying English in their home countries. However, when they studied abroad, in an English-speaking-country, they clearly expected to be taught by native speakers. Ling & Braine (2007) and Mahboob (2007), on the other hand, found similar results to those of Benke & Medgyes (2006) in EFL settings: that students appreciate having both NESTs and non-NESTs as their second language instructors.

The lack of definitive results regarding ESL and EFL students’ expectations and attitudes towards language teachers who are nonnative speakers shows the necessity of further research concerning this issue. Even though most studies reported similar findings related to the advantages and disadvantages of NESTs and non-NESTs, they failed to determine if there is some clear preference for a certain group of teachers, which in turn would mean that students do have negative attitudes towards the group of teachers that did not meet their idealized expectations. As Benke and Medgyes (2006) stated, “while the NEST/non-NEST issue has been extensively studied from the teacher’s point of view, less has been written about learners’ attitudes to teachers who come from divergent language backgrounds” (p. 196). In addition, all the studies reviewed in the present paper focused only on one teaching/learning environment, that is, either ESL or EFL settings, and only Moussu (2006) involved both teachers and students (as well as IEP administrators). Furthermore, most studies used only one

instrument in order to collect data, either questionnaires or interviews mostly. Very few combined different measures of data collection. Therefore, there is a clear need for new research that encompasses data based on language learners from both ESL and EFL settings, and that includes data collected from both instructors and their students through a variety of instruments.

The Present Study

Based on what has already been done in the field and what still requires further examination, the present study aims to investigate the expectations and attitudes of second language learners in both ESL (in the United States) and EFL (in Brazil) settings in terms of being taught by instructors who are nonnative English speakers. The objectives are to identify how learners deal with the fact that they are studying a second/foreign language with someone who also learned that language as a second/foreign one, and to examine if the teaching/learning environment affects students' point-of-view, that is, if it is more "acceptable" for learners to have a nonnative-English-speaking teacher when they are not in an English-speaking country. Therefore, the study will involve both teachers and students from both EFL and ESL settings, and data will be collected through questionnaires, interviews, and class observations. Consequently, this research study will provide more insights into our understanding of the topic under investigation, as the results will be triangulated among data collected through the different procedures used. Specifically, the present study will address the following research questions:

- (1) Are students' expectations and attitudes toward native and nonnative teachers different in an ESL setting? If so, how?
- (2) Are students' expectations and attitudes toward nonnative teachers different in ESL and EFL settings? If so, how?

(3) What kind of students' expectations and attitudes do teachers observe in ESL and EFL settings? How are native and nonnative teachers' perspectives similar or different?

Methodology

In order to answer the research questions, a variety of data sources were collected from teachers and students at two instructional settings, and were analyzed qualitatively with some frequency data. The following sections in this chapter describe the participants in both EFL and ESL settings, the instruments used with both teachers and students, the data collection procedures, and the methods of data analysis that were adopted.

Participants

Students and teachers from two instructional settings – EFL and ESL – were recruited to participate in this study through convenience sampling, since the present researcher happened to have access to such groups. The participants in the EFL setting included one nonnative-English-speaking teacher and seven students, aged from 14 to 18, from the Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Inglesa, a British language institute located in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, in the very south of Brazil. The institute is widely recognized and respected in that state due to their connections with British educational institutions and their accreditation in terms of Cambridge examinations. The group of students in question was taking classes in their intensive program during the winter break (that is the reason for the limited number of students in the group). Therefore, the teacher and the students met six times a week (from Monday through Saturday) for two and a half hours a day, with a ten-minute break. Similarly to almost all other language institutes in Brazil, Cultura Inglesa provided the students with integrated skills classes.

As to the participants in the ESL setting, they included two teachers – one native and one nonnative English speaker – and 25 students, aged from 18 to 32, from the Intensive English Program at West Virginia University, which is located in Morgantown, West Virginia, in the United States of America. The students were taking

regular grammar classes during the Fall semester, so they met three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) for fifty minutes each day.

Three teachers were involved in the study: one native speaker in the ESL setting, one nonnative speaker in the ESL setting, and one nonnative speaker in the EFL setting. The original plan was to include a native speaker in the EFL setting as well. However, the language institute in Brazil – which is known to have native English speakers on their staff – had not hired any native speakers that semester, so some changes were made in the design of the study. Regarding the ESL setting, the same class, the same group of students was taught by a non-NEST during the first half of the semester, and by a NEST during the second half. This unique arrangement led to a more controlled comparison, since the same group of students from the same class could be observed as they interacted with both teachers.

As to the students, they represented the second highest English proficiency level group from each setting. This was necessary because the questionnaires and interviews were done in English, so it was important to ensure that all participants had the required language level to express themselves clearly. Interestingly, it became clear after the class observations that the EFL group of participants was much more proficient in the target language than the ESL group. Regarding their language background, all EFL students were native Portuguese speakers. Nevertheless, the ESL students came from different language backgrounds, such as Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, and Turkish.

Instruments

Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and class observations. The questionnaires for teachers and students were identical in order to facilitate comparisons among the answers from the different groups of participants. Teachers

were asked to answer the questions as they thought their students would, so that a comparison between how students perceived their instructors and how the instructors believed to be perceived by their students could be made. The questionnaire that was developed for this study was meant to be answered in 20 minutes, and presented a total of 13 main questions and a few sub-questions, including open-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, and statements with which the participants were supposed to agree or disagree. The first and the third sections of the questionnaire referred to demographic information. The second, the fourth, and the sixth sections aimed to elicit information on students' preferences. The fifth section aimed to elicit students' perceptions of their teachers in terms of teaching styles, and the seventh, in terms of advantages and disadvantages (the questionnaire is attached in Appendix A). This questionnaire was adapted from four different questionnaires from three sources (Benke & Medgyes, 2006; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2006; Medgyes, 2003). The adaptation was necessary due to the different foci of previous studies, which did not intend to answer the same questions that are addressed in the present study. The questionnaire by Benke and Medgyes (2006), for example, proved very helpful, since they also investigated students' expectations in relation to their language teachers. However, their questionnaire asked for students' opinions about native and nonnative teachers in two separate sections, which made the survey too long. This was considered a limitation because the participants would probably not be willing to spend a long time answering a four-page questionnaire. Therefore, the statements about native and nonnative teachers that were considered relevant to this study were blended into one section, in which the participants were supposed to check if each statement applied only to a native speaker, only to a nonnative speaker, or if it applied to both groups of teachers.

As to Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), they focused on different language aspects separately (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and so on), which again made the questionnaire too long and repetitive, since participants had to answer all 42 questions the same way, that is, indicating if they *strongly agreed*, *agreed*, *disagreed*, or *strongly disagreed* with what was being claimed. So all questions that were considered useful for the purpose of this study were presented in one section, independent of which language aspect was being discussed. Regarding Medgyes (2003), two of the questionnaires that he had developed for previous studies presented very interesting multiple-choice and open-ended questions about the strengths and weaknesses of native and nonnative teachers. Nevertheless, his questionnaires were addressed to the teachers themselves and how they felt professionally. Since both students and teachers were the focus of the present study, most questions were modified so that they would elicit the kind of information that was being investigated. Actually, most questions and statements from all 3 sources had to be modified in different ways in order to match the purpose of this study.

The semi-structured interviews with teachers and students were as similar as possible in order to facilitate data comparison. They were all recorded and transcribed by the researcher, and lasted about 20 minutes each. The students answered seven main questions. The first four referred to demographic information. Question number five asked students to describe the major differences between NESTs and non-NESTs. Question number six asked whether the differences between the teachers represented advantages or disadvantages. Finally, question seven aimed to elicit students' general preference. The interviews with the teachers included five main questions only. In the first question, the teachers were supposed to describe the major differences between NESTs and non-NESTs. Question number two asked whether the differences between

the teachers represented advantages or disadvantages. Question three was about who the teachers believed that their students would prefer: NESTs or non-NESTs. In question four, the teachers were supposed to state what they believe that students appreciate about their teaching, and in question five, what the students do not appreciate about their teaching (a list of interview questions can be found in Appendix B). The interview questions were adapted from questionnaires by Benke and Medgyes (2006) and Medgyes (2003). While analyzing these sources during the development of the questionnaire for this study, some questions presented by the authors – and/or some slightly different versions of them – seemed to be relevant to the purpose of this research. However, due to the fact that the kind of information being asked required further clarification and possible justification, interview sessions proved more appropriate, since the participants had the chance to express themselves more spontaneously, and the researcher was able to ask more detailed questions that became necessary.

During the class observations, a rubric was used in order to help the researcher keep focused on issues that were relevant to the study, such as the interaction between teachers and students, students' participation and interest in class, students' confidence in teachers' answers, and so on. These issues were analyzed through the observation of practical situations in the classrooms. The rubric, which was based on Stallings (2007), included items like the activity being developed, the materials being used, the size of the group directly involved in each task, and so on. In addition, after each class observation, the notes were reread and some critical comments and/or questions were added to the notes, such as why the teacher made a certain choice in class, why some students repeat certain inappropriate behavior and are not reprehended, and so forth. Through these systematic class observations, the researcher was provided with more

information on class dynamics and students' behavior, which contributed to a better understanding of the relationship between students and teachers in classroom interactions. The class observations proved valuable opportunities to examine students' and teachers' behavior as to how their actions corroborated (or not) their perceptions of themselves and of each other (the rubric can be found in Appendix C).

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected as similarly as possible in both ESL and EFL settings. However, since the present researcher collected all the data herself, the periods for data collection differed. Data from the EFL setting (Brazil) were collected by the end of the first semester of 2008, more specifically from July 21 to July 31. The EFL teacher and her students met every day (with the exception of Sunday) for two and a half hours. Therefore, it was possible to collect a considerable amount of data during a few days. On July 21, the researcher was introduced to the students (she had had a meeting with the teacher and the school principal the week before) at the beginning of their class. She gave them the cover letter, explained the questionnaire, and told them that they would have 20 minutes to complete it, and so would their teacher. Once they were all finished, the researcher collected the questionnaires and explained that she would be back the next day in order to start the class observations, which lasted until July 31, adding up to a total of 18 hours. On the last day of class observations, which was also their last day of class, the teacher dismissed them early, so the three students who had been randomly selected to participate in the interviews were interviewed individually for about 20 minutes each right after their class, and so was the teacher.

Data from the ESL setting (USA) were collected in the second semester of 2008, more specifically from August 25 to October 22. It is important to point out that the ESL students had two teachers during the same semester for the same class (a nonnative

speaker during the first half, and a native speaker during the second half), and that they met three times a week for fifty minutes. Therefore, on August 25, the nonnative-English-speaking teacher introduced the researcher to the students as she started the class (it was not their first day of class in the semester, and most of them already knew the researcher, actually). The researcher gave the students the cover letter and told them about the questionnaire, explaining that they would be given 20 minutes to complete it, and so would their teacher. Once they were all finished, the questionnaires were collected, and they were told that the class observations would start on the following class. Thus, the class observations started on August 27 and lasted until September 22 with the non-NEST, who was interviewed individually on that same day after her class. Since the native-English-speaking teacher started working with the ESL group in the middle of the semester, when the class observations were already going on, the researcher asked her to answer the questionnaire out of class (on September 26), and restarted the class observations on the native teacher's third session with the students, which was on September 29, so that she and the students would have some time to adapt to the new routine. The class observations with the NEST lasted until October 22, and she was also interviewed on the last day of the observations, right after her class. Both NEST and non-NEST were observed during eleven 50-minute sessions each, meaning that each teacher was observed for nine hours and 10 minutes, adding up to a total of 18 hours and 20 minutes of class observations in the ESL setting. By the end of the last class that was observed, which was not the last class in the semester, the interviews with the five students who were randomly selected were scheduled for the next two days, so that they would not miss any class time. Accordingly, the ESL students were interviewed individually for about 20 minutes on October 23 and 24. It is important to point out that the interviews in both instructional settings involved only a subset of

students, rather than all of the participants, due to time constraints and participants' limited availability for individual sessions.

The dates and procedures discussed above are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Schedule for Data Collection Procedures

EFL		
Dates	Instruments used	Participants involved
July 21	Questionnaires	Non-NEST and all students
July 22 – 31	Class observations	Non-NEST and all students
July 31	Interviews	3 selected students
July 31	Interview	Non-NEST
ESL		
Dates	Instruments used	Participants involved
August 25	Questionnaires	Non-NEST and all students
August 27 – September 22	Class observations	Non-NEST and all students
September 22	Interview	Non-NEST
September 26	Questionnaire	NEST
September 29 – October 22	Class observations	NEST and all students
October 22	Interview	NEST
October 23 – 24	Interviews	5 selected students

It is also important to mention that all the data were collected according to the norms and with the permission of the WVU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Research Subjects. In addition, the participants had the right to

refuse to participate in the study if they did not want to. None of the participants were forced to participate as a requirement for their classes or anything of the kind.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was all based on written data from the teachers' and students' answers to the questions in the questionnaire, from the transcribed interviews with randomly selected participants, as well as from the detailed class notes. The answers to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the participants' responses in the interviews were analyzed in terms of identifiable recurring patterns. Therefore, the information collected through these instruments had to be coded by the researcher and categorized into themes and sub-themes in order to become more "workable". The thematic analysis method was adopted as a way to make sense of all the data collected and interpret them properly, and it was based on Dörnyei's (2007) discussion of qualitative content analysis. As to the class notes, they mainly played a supportive role in the data analysis, in that the themes and sub-themes previously categorized were corroborated (to varying extents) by the interactions observed in class. Regarding the multiple-choice questions from the questionnaire, they represented frequency data, which were averaged. Each question was addressed individually, and a percentage number was identified. It becomes important to point out that the use of different data collection procedures and analyses allowed the triangulation of the results to take place, which represents greater support for the findings that are presented in the next chapter.

Findings

This chapter reports the main findings of the present research study based on the analysis of the EFL/ESL instructors and students' answers to the questionnaires and interviews, as well as on the class observations that were conducted in both settings. The interpretation of the data collected through the aforementioned instruments led to the identification of recurring patterns in the participants' expectations and attitudes. Such patterns, henceforward referred to as "themes," include the points-of-view expressed by both teachers and students and their classroom behavior as well. Regarding the questionnaires and the interviews, certain topics and issues, such as teachers' pronunciation and grammar knowledge, were raised over and over again by most participants. As to the class observations, recurring behavioral aspects from both teachers and students were noted, such as how many times students asked questions, which students usually asked the questions, how many times the teachers needed to refer to their books or dictionaries, how many times the teachers had the students help each other instead of providing them with the answers right away, and so forth. The themes in question are discussed in detail next.

Teachers' Role as Seen by the Students

According to the students' answers to question number 13 in the questionnaire, EFL learners and ESL learners have different opinions regarding what makes a good teacher, that is, what the teacher's role in the classroom is. The EFL participants stated that a good English teacher makes the class fun and is a fluent speaker who knows what to do in class. This issue was not directly addressed in the interviews. However, the class observations confirmed that the EFL group expected the classes to be fun, since students would ask the teacher to let them show videos in class, and would usually be very excited about playing games. In addition, there was this informal, friendly

atmosphere that seemed to be highly appreciated: students were constantly telling little jokes or saying funny things. Actually, they would even make fun of each other. An example was when they were playing the game “Survivor” and student P made a decision that did not sound good to student LL, who said, “That’s why you’re dead!”, and they all laughed a lot, including the teacher.

Different from the EFL group, the ESL students did not mention “teaching fun classes” as a part of the teacher’s job at all. The ESL participants stated that, in general, a good English teacher has good pronunciation and teaching abilities, and answers students’ questions well. The behavior observed in their classes with both teachers, the native and the nonnative speaker, confirmed what most of them claimed in the questionnaires, since both teachers had to answer a lot of questions every class, and both had their answers/explanations challenged by some of the students at some point, that is, certain students would disagree with the teachers’ answers and try to prove their own point of view at times. Even though most questions referred to grammar, there were also questions about pronunciation and American culture, showing that ESL students expect their teachers to provide them with information on a variety of topics, even if they are not related to the subject in question.

Teachers’ Advantages and Disadvantages as Seen by the Students

Regarding NESTs and non-NESTs’ advantages and disadvantages, five items in the questionnaire (questions 4, 5, 10, 13c, and 13d) addressed this topic indirectly. As to the interviews, the participants were explicitly asked to report their beliefs, and the class observations contributed to the corroboration of the students’ points-of-view. Even though EFL and ESL students’ answers were not identical, they expressed very similar opinions, as their responses fell into the same categories/themes, which are discussed below.

Teachers' vocabulary knowledge. Teachers' vocabulary knowledge proved more important in the EFL setting than in the ESL setting. Despite the fact that a few ESL students mentioned vocabulary as one of the advantages of native-English-speaking teachers in their questionnaires, the interviews and the class observations showed that EFL students expect their English teachers to be “walking dictionaries,” that is, they expect the instructor to know the exact answer to any vocabulary question right away.

In their questionnaires, the EFL participants wrote that native speakers are better at vocabulary, an idea that was reinforced in the interviews and class observations. For example, in her interview, student LL declared that non-NESTs “have to look up things on the dictionary, and native speakers don't do that.” Similarly, student E explained in her interview that “sometimes the nonnatives they don't know some words, and something like this, and we, we, we always have to see in the dictionary, so we don't know if it's really right.” This issue that was explicitly raised by these two participants was clearly recognized during the class observations in the EFL setting. The students sought the teacher's help regarding vocabulary many times throughout the observation period and, confirming what the students had claimed in their questionnaires and interviews, their instructor – a non-NEST – needed to use the dictionary several times. In fact, the students asked her vocabulary questions in five out of the eight sessions that were observed. The teacher needed to look the words up in three of them, and the students challenged her answers in the other two. Also, on one occasion when the teacher said “competitive sports,” student LL “corrected” the teacher's word choice by saying that she probably meant “team sports.”

As to the ESL group, only 3 out of the 24 respondents wrote in their questionnaires that vocabulary knowledge was one of the native-English-speaking teachers' advantages. In addition, none of the students who were interviewed gave

vocabulary knowledge as an example of the NESTs' advantages. In fact, student FAH declared in her interview that the native-English-speaking teachers' speech was more difficult to understand exactly because of the words they choose to use when they speak, which she considered a disadvantage. Considering the class observations, the ESL students sought the teachers' help with vocabulary twice only, once with each instructor, the native and the nonnative, and they accepted the answers from both teachers right away on those occasions.

Teachers' cultural knowledge. The instructors' knowledge of the culture in English-speaking countries did not represent a relevant issue during the analysis of the questionnaires, since only one ESL student brought it up. During the interviews in the EFL setting, though, student P stated that students can learn more about culture from NESTs. Nevertheless, she also stated the fact that nonnative-English-speaking teachers who come from the same country as their students have the advantage of being familiar with and understanding the students' culture. Thus, for this participant, different types of cultural knowledge can be positive in different ways. The class observations in the EFL setting did not contribute much to the investigation of this issue, since there was only one lesson that included some cultural aspect – clichés. The little that was observed that day was that students felt comfortable discussing that cultural topic with the non-NEST, and seemed to agree with her examples and explanations.

Regarding the ESL group, only one interviewee stated that the non-NESTs' lack of cultural knowledge was one of their disadvantages. On the other hand, this same student said that the fact that some nonnative teachers came from a similar cultural background as he did was actually an advantage. The most interesting pieces of information came from the ESL class observations, though. While the students were being taught by the nonnative-English-speaking teacher, no aspect of the American

culture was ever discussed. In fact, one of the students asked the teacher a question about American football one day, and she quickly told him that she did not know much about football and started correcting the homework assignment right away. However, while the same ESL students were being taught by a native-English-speaking teacher, different aspects of the American culture were discussed in class in six out of the eleven lessons that were observed. The native teacher told the students about the Homecoming Week and the way American college students elect a Homecoming Queen. She told them about the way Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, and about football games. She also talked to them about the International Festival at the university, and diversity in America. Actually, she used these as the topics of the grammar exercises that she gave them to complete. Since the teacher was bringing these topics to class, the students started asking questions about these typical American events. For example, student AB asked the teacher, “How do they become queen?” right after the correction of a sentence about the girls in the Homecoming parade. When the teacher talked about the Thanksgiving break, student CAN and student AH asked her about Black Friday. It seems that students were more interested in knowing about American customs than they thought they were when they answered the questionnaire and the interviews.

Teachers’ pronunciation. Students in both settings declared pronunciation as the ultimate advantage of native-English-speaking teachers. Five out of the six EFL students who answered the questionnaire, and 16 out of the 24 ESL respondents stated that NESTs have better pronunciation/speaking and can teach students the “right accent.” However, three ESL students wrote in their questionnaires that the non-NESTs’ “easier accent” is an advantage, because they can understand such instructors better when they speak. The interviews in the EFL setting indicated that most students believe that only native speakers can teach them appropriate pronunciation, since the three

participants claimed that they could learn better pronunciation and fluency from NESTs, and the “right accent” issue was raised again. As to the interviews in the ESL setting, the results were a bit surprising: five out of the five interviewees stated that the non-NESTs’ pronunciation was easier/better to understand, and none of them said that the NESTs’ pronunciation was better or represented the “right accent.” For example, student RA explained that there are more comprehension checks with non-NESTs, “I think he speak slowly, not very fast, and he, he teach me every word, do you know this word? No. He tells to me now.” Also, student AC said in her interview that nonnative teachers “speaks more clearly. [...] For to the nonnative teachers is, I think is better because they speak, they speak with, um, a better pronunciation so you can, um, hear words better and, um, I think is better.” This student also complained about native speakers’ connected speech, “And I think that native speakers, um, (...) the words are more, um, are, are not separated, sometimes. So I understand more to the nonnative.”

The class observations in both EFL and ESL settings did not contribute much to the confirmation (or not) of the results from the questionnaires and interviews, because there were very few instances of situations when the students requested the instructors’ direct attention to pronunciation issues. In the EFL setting, there were only two occasions when the students had some pronunciation problems with a couple of words and asked for the teacher’s help. They accepted the teacher’s answers well, even though she had to look them up, which in a way supports the idea that students are more likely to get appropriate information about pronunciation from NESTs than from non-NESTs, who might make pronunciation mistakes themselves. In the ESL setting, the nonnative-English-speaking teacher was not required to deal with pronunciation issues at all during the lessons that were observed. Since the native-English-speaking teacher was asked about correct pronunciation only once, it becomes difficult to interpret this fact as

some kind of preference for one teacher or disbelief in another. It might simply be the case that ESL students are in contact with native pronunciation constantly in and out of school, so they do not worry so much about it in class, as opposed to EFL students who have limited exposure to the target language, and rely on their lessons to acquire most of their English knowledge.

Teachers' knowledge of grammar. This theme was as “popular” as the previous one, but this time, regarding non-NESTs. Most participants in both settings stated in their questionnaires that nonnative instructors are better at grammar. In the EFL interviews, though, only student LL mentioned this issue, and she explained that “nonnative speakers they worry about what they are saying with grammar rules [...] but we have to worry about grammar because, um, when we have to do, when we have to write something important for a test or something, we need to know it, we need to know the rules.” As to the ESL interviews, none of the five participants included grammar in their answers, which is surprising, considering that most students raised this issue in the questionnaire.

Regarding the class observations in the EFL setting, most lessons confirmed that the students seek the teacher's help and clarification when they are doing activities directly related to grammar. However, on one occasion, they challenged her explanation about modals, and insisted on checking what the textbook said about it. On a different lesson, about adjective order, the students taught the teacher a strategy to remember the correct adjective order. Nevertheless, when they were supposed to use the adjectives properly according to their type, they needed the teacher's help, and kept asking her things like, “Is bouncing an opinion? Is fat size, shape, or opinion?” This shows they understand that even though the teacher does not know everything about English grammar, she is able to help them when they need her to.

In the ESL setting, the students asked for the instructors' help with grammar rules in every lesson with both teachers, the nonnative and the native speaker. Although the students sought the NEST's help as often as they did with the non-NEST, they questioned the native teacher's answers and explanations more. In fact, on one of these occasions, when they were discussing Future Perfect, student KHAL asked her why he could not say "She will has eaten." The teacher simply replied, "I don't know why. It's just the way it is." Even though that was an honest answer, it was probably not what the students were expecting to hear from their grammar teacher. This kind of situation may have influenced their confidence in her explanations.

Teachers' teaching styles. Some differences as well as some similarities were identified in the students' answers and in the teachers' behavior during the class observations. The answers to the questionnaire in the EFL setting showed that most students believe that both NESTs and non-NESTs apply pair/group work regularly in class, help students develop speaking skills, run interesting classes, are interested in their learners' opinions, help students with their pronunciation, and answer students' questions satisfactorily. However, only half of the respondents believed that both groups of teachers prepare conscientiously for the lessons, as the other half reported that only nonnative-English-speaking teachers do so. As to providing students with learning strategies, the answers were evenly distributed: a third of the EFL participants checked "native speakers", a third checked "nonnative speakers", and another third checked "both." Similarly, most ESL students claimed that both NESTs and non-NESTs apply pair/group work regularly in class, prepare conscientiously for the lessons, run interesting classes, are interested in their learners' opinions, provide students with learning strategies, and answer students' questions satisfactorily. On the other hand, most students stated that NESTs are the ones who help students develop speaking skills

and their pronunciation. It is important to remark though, that the option “both NESTs and non-NESTs” achieved almost the same number of “votes,” showing that the group’s opinions were quite divided. These results from the questionnaire indicate that EFL and ESL learners appreciate both groups of teachers, but also that EFL students rely on non-NESTs to help them with learning strategies, and that ESL students rely on NESTs to help them with speaking and pronunciation.

The interviews in both settings corroborated the results of the questionnaires in that similar issues were raised by the interviewees. The participants talked about the fact that native speakers are more fluent, and therefore more likely to help students with their speaking skills and pronunciation. They also stated that non-NESTs provide them with more “learning tips,” because they understand that learning English as a second language is difficult. Interestingly, even though half of the EFL students reported in their questionnaires that only non-NESTs prepare conscientiously for classes, while most ESL students claimed that both groups of teachers do that, it was an ESL student who directly addressed this issue in his interview. According to student O, “the nonnative speakers prepare more the class. They are more worried about the, the structure of the class. [...] I see that the nonnative speaker teachers are more organized.”

In terms of class observations, all three instructors in both settings seemed to have prepared all their lessons. They always had enough material to discuss with the students, and they were clearly following a plan, with no last-minute improvisation. In a way, their organization raises another issue: were they prepared because that is their usual style, or was it because they knew that another teacher would be observing their classes on a regular basis? As to applying pair/group work regularly, the EFL non-NEST, for example, had the students work in pairs or small groups in all her lessons, which could be considered to be interesting ones, since she used a variety of materials and activities

in class, such as videos, games, handouts, and so on. The nonnative-English-speaking teacher in the ESL setting had the students work in pairs or small groups regularly, at least once every class. However, her lessons were very “traditional,” that is, they involved explanations on the board and textbook exercises for the most part. Only occasionally would she bring them a handout or a game. Regarding the native-English-speaking teacher, she did not apply pair/group work as regularly as the other two instructors, probably once a week only. In addition, what made her lessons more interesting were the cultural aspects that she tried to incorporate in the activities, since she mostly used the textbook and some handouts in class (except for the last lesson observed, when she brought the computer cart to class).

Teachers’ Advantages and Disadvantages as Seen by the Teachers Themselves

The instructors’ answers to the questionnaires showed that they share very similar views concerning the advantages and disadvantages of both native and nonnative-English-speaking teachers. They all stated that NESTs are better at pronunciation and communication skills/speaking, and that non-NESTs are better at predicting students’ difficulties and grammar. The native teacher also claimed that NESTs are better at the “cultural component/ specific uses of the language,” and the EFL teacher added that NESTs are also better at vocabulary, and that non-NESTs are better at grammar because they study a lot in order to answer students’ questions.

The interviews with the instructors corroborated their answers to the questionnaire. The first interview was with the nonnative teacher in the EFL setting. She reinforced the idea that NESTs are better at pronunciation and vocabulary, and that non-NESTs are better at grammar, “in terms of grammar, I really trust myself.” She also said that, when she had native-English-speaking colleagues, they would constantly ask for her help with the grammar topics that they were supposed to teach to their students, “so the idea I

have is that we work so hard to be good that sometimes we know even more than what they know.”

The next interview was with the nonnative-English-speaking teacher in the ESL setting. She also stated that NESTs’ main advantage is their pronunciation, but she emphasized the fact that non-NESTs are able to anticipate problems due to L1 transfer (when they share the students’ native language), “if you are Brazilian, you speak Portuguese [...] and you are teaching Brazilian students, you know in advance where they might have problems, and then you go prepared to class, and, and this doesn’t happen to a [...], to the native speaker.”

Finally, the native teacher corroborates the other instructors’ opinions by stating that non-NESTs “are usually good people to ask grammar questions about, because they’ve studied the particulars of grammar, like, I might, I know the correct answer, but they know the rule because they’ve learned it. I have to usually look up the rules.” She also mentioned the non-NESTs’ ability to anticipate mistakes that students from their own countries would probably make. The instructors’ interviews showed that teachers and students are “on the same page” concerning the advantages and disadvantages of NESTs and non-NESTs, since they all brought up the same main issues.

As to the class observations, they did not contribute much to the investigation of the present theme, but some of the information provided by the teachers in their questionnaires and interviews could be recognized during their lessons. For example, the nonnative teacher in the EFL setting emphasized that non-NESTs will never be able to know as much vocabulary as NESTs, and admitted that she needs to look up words all the time. This fact was clearly identified in her classes, since students constantly asked her vocabulary questions, and she needed to check the dictionary more than half the time. Another example is that the native teacher wrote in her questionnaire that

NESTs are better at the “cultural aspect.” Accordingly, her lessons were the only ones that directly involved and explored events that are related to the American culture in the grammar exercises and class discussions.

Students’ Preferences

Based on their answers to the questionnaires and interviews, the EFL and ESL students’ preference for NESTs or non-NESTs will be discussed. The questionnaire included four sets of questions that inquired the students about their preference. In the interviews, the participants were explicitly asked to state who they would rather be taught by – NESTs or non-NESTs. The teachers were asked to indicate in their questionnaires and interviews the answers they believed their students would give. Therefore, the students’ preference for native-English-speaking teachers or nonnative-English-speaking teachers will be reported below according to the students themselves and also according to the teachers’ beliefs/impressions. The class observations did not reveal any specific pattern that would clearly indicate a certain preference, but they will be briefly discussed as well.

As seen by the students themselves. According to the EFL students’ answers to the questionnaire, they all believe that both native and nonnative-English-speaking teachers are successful in teaching English and can be effective teachers. However, three out of the six respondents declared that students may benefit more from classes taught by native-English-speaking teachers. This specific answer represents a contradiction in that the same three students stated that both groups of teachers are equally successful and effective as well as that students would probably benefit more from classes being taught by native speakers. It seems they cannot truly believe that NESTs and non-NESTs are equally successful and effective language instructors, since they are stating that being taught by NESTs would be more beneficial to their learning process. As to the

interviews, the answers were completely divided: one participant said that she preferred native speakers because they could teach her the “right accent,” another participant stated that she preferred nonnative speakers because they were more informal in their teaching style and knew the students’ culture better, and the last participant explained that students’ preference should depend on their purposes: if they want to travel abroad, they should be taught by NESTs; if they want to get good grades on tests, they should be taught by non-NESTs. The class observations were not very helpful in this case because all the lessons were taught by the same teacher – a non-NEST – so it was not possible to compare the students’ interaction with a native speaker.

Regarding the ESL setting, the students’ answers to the questionnaire showed that about 60% of the participants believe that both NESTs and non-NESTs are successful in teaching English. In addition, about 83% of the respondents stated that both groups of teachers can be effective, and that the only thing that matters is their teaching ability, not their nativeness status. Nevertheless, 65% of these same ESL students declared that they might benefit more from classes taught by native speakers. Similar to what happened in the EFL setting, this response contradicts the previous ones. The results of the interviews were a bit divided as well. Three out of the five interviewees claimed that they prefer to be taught by nonnative-English-speaking teachers because these instructors have gone through the same second language learning process, so they know what is probably difficult or easy for the students. As student AC stated, “I think, um, sometimes is better a nonnative teacher because maybe they know sometimes how difficult is to learn another language.” One of the participants stated that it did not matter for her if the teacher were a native or a nonnative speaker, as long as the teacher did not speak too fast in class. Finally, the last interviewee said that he preferred to be taught by an experienced native speaker, so that he could learn more about American

culture in a class that involved all the students, that is, with a teacher that made all the students participate.

As to the class observations, the same students were observed during the same semester with the same textbook but with two different teachers: a non-NEST and a NEST. Based on the participants' behavior during all the lessons, it was not possible to identify a clear preference for any of the instructors, since the students presented the same attitudes with both teachers: the group of students that usually asked the questions in the non-NEST's class, kept asking questions to the NEST; the group of students who did not participate actively in the non-NEST's class, did not participate in the NEST's class either; the students who were usually late to the non-NEST's class, were usually late to the NEST's class as well; the girl who dozed off in class sometimes, did so with both teachers. In summary, there was not any student who changed their attitude in class in a significant way, indicating some issues towards the teacher. On the contrary, the students' behavior was very consistent throughout the semester. Considering EFL vs. ESL, both groups presented divided results, and both groups had contradictory responses. Therefore, it is not possible to claim that EFL or ESL students definitely prefer NESTs or non-NESTs, especially because they all described strengths and weaknesses regarding both groups of teachers.

As seen by the teachers. The three teachers were instructed to answer the questionnaires according to what they believed their students would say. The three of them wrote in their questionnaires that both NESTs and non-NESTs are successful in teaching English. They also agreed that both groups of teachers can be effective, and that students may benefit equally from classes taught by either native or nonnative teachers. However, the native-English-speaking teacher, in contrast to her nonnative peers, disagreed with the statement that a teacher's native language does not matter,

only their teaching ability. Besides, the same contradiction that occurred with the students' questionnaires was presented by the teachers: after claiming that students can benefit equally from both NESTs and non-NESTs, the native speaker in the ESL group and the nonnative speaker that taught the EFL group stated that students might benefit more from classes taught by native teachers. Even though it represents a contradiction, it also means that these two teachers perceived their students' preferences successfully, as they answered the questionnaire similarly.

Regarding the interviews, both the native-English-speaking teacher who taught the ESL group and the nonnative-English-speaking teacher who taught the EFL group declared that the students prefer to be taught by NESTs. The native teacher explained that she had heard comments that students expect to be taught by native speakers because of the correct pronunciation. The nonnative teacher explained her response by saying that students cannot see that non-NESTs work very hard in order to know as much as they can about the target language. Different from her peers, the nonnative teacher who taught the ESL group answered the question about the students' preference in a personal way, and stated that she did not believe her students had a problem with her being a non-NEST. Interestingly, the students' and the teachers' answers were very similar in that they were divided and indicated some contradictions. Thus, even though they did not offer much clarification on the subject, they did show that teachers and students "are on the same page," even if it is an illegible one.

This chapter reported the major findings of the present study. The results found indicate that ESL and EFL students share similar perspectives regarding their native and nonnative-English-speaking teachers. However, their points-of-view are not identical. Even though they seem to agree that each group of teachers have strengths and weaknesses, ESL and EFL students seem to value such characteristics differently. As a

result, a clear preference for NESTs or non-NESTs could not be determined in neither instructional setting. As to the teachers, they also recognized that they all have advantages and disadvantages. Nevertheless, they could not agree on whom their students would prefer: NESTs or non-NESTs. In the following chapter, the findings reported here will be discussed according to the research questions that guided the execution of the present study. Our findings will also be examined in order to determine whether or not they corroborate what previous research studies in the field have found.

Discussion

In this final chapter, the major findings of the study are summarized and analyzed in terms of how they answer the research questions proposed and how the results found here corroborate or contradict previous findings. Then, the implications and applications of the study regarding the field of English language teaching are also presented. In addition, the limitations concerning this research study are stated, followed by recommendations for future research. Finally, a few closing remarks conclude the study.

Major Findings of the Study

This study aimed to answer three research questions regarding the interactions between ESL/EFL students and native/nonnative-English-speaking English teachers. The following discussion of the findings is organized in relation to each research question, that is, each research question is discussed according to how it is answered by the major findings and how such results confirm or contradict the findings of previous studies.

(1) Are students' expectations and attitudes different toward native and nonnative teachers in an ESL setting? If so, how? According to what was found through the questionnaires, interviews, and class observations, the answer to this first question can be said to be “yes”, since the ESL students who participated in this study pointed out different characteristics regarding NESTs and non-NESTs, who were both considered to have weaknesses and strengths as language teaching professionals. Confirming the results found by Pacek (2006) and Mahboob (2007), the questionnaires showed that ESL students believe nonnative-English-speaking teachers to be better at the teaching of grammar. In addition, the respondents stated that non-NESTs are more helpful than NESTs in terms of providing students with learning strategies, which corroborates Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2006) findings in an EFL setting. This advantage held by

non-NESTs is due to the fact that they share with their students the experience of learning English as a second language, that is, they have gone through the same learning process regarding the same second language.

As to native-English-speaking teachers, their main strength pointed out by the students in the questionnaires was their native pronunciation, which confirms the results found by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006). However, their pronunciation was also considered a drawback, since all ESL interviewees declared that NESTs speak too fast and do not express themselves clearly, especially in terms of word choice, which makes their classes harder to follow.

Interestingly, students also claimed that the non-NESTs' pronunciation is actually easier for them to understand, which was declared by all the ESL interviewees. Even though these results may seem a bit surprising, since studies in the field have reported that non-NESTs' foreign accent is considered to be their main weakness (Moussu, 2006; and Pacek, 2006), they actually support Lasagabaster & Sierra's (2006) findings in that the participants in their study claimed that NESTs' main disadvantage was related to intelligibility. Apparently, it is more difficult for students to understand their teachers who are native English speakers.

When asked about NESTs' and non-NESTs' teaching styles, most ESL respondents stated that both groups of teachers apply pair/group work regularly, prepare conscientiously for the lessons, run interesting classes, and answer students' questions satisfactorily. Nevertheless, the majority of the students stated that NESTs are the ones who help language learners with speaking skills and pronunciation. This belief may be the reason why most respondents declared that students may benefit more from classes taught by native speakers, since most of them stated that a good English teacher has good pronunciation and that NESTs can teach students the "right English." The point-

of-view represented by such statements shows that ESL students have different expectations concerning NESTs and non-NESTs in that they expect their learning experience with native speakers to be more fruitful. Students seem to believe that being taught by native speakers will provide them with opportunities to listen to and practice the “right way” of speaking English, whereas being taught by non-NESTs may cause them to “learn” their teachers’ “wrong” accent. Even though most of them stated that both groups of teachers are successful and can be effective, their answers to the questionnaire also pointed out NESTs as most ESL participants’ favorite instructors. In contrast, most interviewees declared that they prefer to be taught by non-NESTs exactly because of their “easier” accent, as it was mentioned earlier.

Unfortunately, these conflicting results in terms of students’ preferences were not clearly solved by the class observations, since, as was described in chapter four, ESL students’ interactions with both teachers were very similar, for example, the amount of participation, their engagement in class, tardiness, and so forth. In addition, there were no major issues related to pronunciation or grammar, even though these two topics were strongly represented in the questionnaires as well as in previous findings. In terms of pronunciation, the ESL students never sought the nonnative-English-speaking teacher’s help, neither did they challenge her pronunciation. The native speaker’s help was sought only once, very briefly, indicating that students do not tend to address pronunciation issues during their grammar class, being the instructor a native speaker or not. As to grammar, the ESL participants sought both teachers’ help by asking questions and taking notes, but they also challenged both teachers’ explanations once or twice. In fact, they seemed quite uncomfortable with the native speaker’s explanations a couple of times, especially on one occasion when she told them explicitly that she did not know the reason why a certain answer was the right one.

The teachers' knowledge of American culture became an important aspect of the class observations, though. As it was stated in the questionnaires, ESL students believe that NESTs know more about American culture, an issue that was raised by one of the interviewees as well. Similarly, Moussu (2006) and Pacek (2006) had reported that non-NESTs' limited knowledge of American culture is seen by language learners as a disadvantage. During the class observations with the native-English-speaking teacher, several cultural aspects were addressed in class, for example, the Homecoming Week, the Thanksgiving Break, and so on. On the other hand, during the class observations with the nonnative-English-speaking teacher, American culture was not a part of the lessons at all. Actually, the one time a student asked the non-NEST a question about the university football game, she changed subjects almost immediately. This shows that knowledge of American culture is not only a matter of students having different expectations towards their teachers, but it is really a defining difference between NESTs and non-NESTs.

Based on the information presented, it seems clear that ESL students have different expectations towards their native and nonnative-English-speaking teachers according to their beliefs as to how each group of teachers can help them in their language learning process. Even though students' attitudes in class were very similar, it was possible to confirm that students' questions and interests in class were at least partially shaped by their teachers' strong points (culture vs. grammar, for example). In addition, due to the discrepancy between the results of the questionnaires and interviews, it was not possible to identify a clear ESL preference for NESTs or non-NESTs, but it was definitely possible to confirm that students recognize the strengths and weaknesses of both groups of teachers, and are able to appreciate their instructors for their distinguishing teaching styles, even if to a limited extent only.

(2) Are students' expectations and attitudes toward nonnative teachers different in ESL and EFL settings? If so, how? The answer to this second research question is also "yes." ESL and EFL students seem to have different priorities regarding their second/foreign language learning process. As a result, their perspectives of their nonnative-English-speaking teachers' weaknesses and strengths vary considerably. The best way to exemplify this fact is probably by discussing their expectations concerning their teachers' vocabulary knowledge. While the issue of vocabulary was not even brought up in the ESL questionnaires and interviews, it was consistently raised in the EFL setting. This is probably because EFL students have limited exposure to the target language, and see their teachers as their main (if not only) source of new vocabulary. The EFL participants stated in their questionnaires that NESTs are better at vocabulary than non-NESTs, and the interviewees complained that nonnative speakers need to look up words all the time, which makes students wonder if the usage they are told is really right. The class observations proved very helpful on this matter, since the EFL students sought the teacher's help many times, whereas the ESL participants did so only once with each teacher. In addition, the EFL non-NEST needed to use a dictionary before answering the students' questions several times, confirming what the participants had claimed in their questionnaires and interviews. These results can be related to McNeill's (2006) findings, which stated that non-NESTs are more successful than NESTs at predicting students' vocabulary problems, in that, during the class observations, the EFL teacher was always ready to answer questions about the material in the textbook, corroborating McNeill's (2006) findings based on reading activities. The words that she did need to look up would come up during pair/group work, role-plays, and/or open discussions. This fact supports Medgyes's (2003) belief that nonnative-English-

speaking teachers tend to favor frontal work in order to avoid unpredictable situations in class.

According to the questionnaires, both ESL and EFL students believe that nonnative-English-speaking teachers are better at grammar, which confirms the results found by Benke and Medgyes (2006), Pacek (2006), and Mahboob (2007). In addition, the respondents in both settings stated that non-NESTs teach students “how to study,” which corroborates Lasagabaster and Sierra’s (2006) EFL findings. Nevertheless, ESL and EFL participants present very different points-of-view regarding non-NESTs’ pronunciation. EFL respondents see their nonnative-English-speaking teachers’ pronunciation as a weakness only. This is not a surprise because most studies in the field have reported that non-NESTs’ foreign accent is considered to be their main disadvantage as language teachers (Benke & Medgyes, 2006; Moussu, 2006; and Pacek, 2006). On the other hand, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the ESL participants stated in their questionnaires and interviews that non-NESTs have an “easier accent,” that is, students claimed that the non-NESTs’ pronunciation is actually easier for them to understand. This difference in the way ESL and EFL students perceive nonnative speakers’ accents is probably due to the fact that EFL students usually have very limited exposure to native pronunciation, which causes them to believe that only native speakers can teach them the “right English.” ESL students, though, are exposed to native pronunciation all the time, especially out of class. Therefore, they are better able to appreciate non-NESTs’ clearer, more intelligible accent.

As to non-NESTs’ teaching styles, ESL and EFL respondents mostly agreed. Both groups stated that nonnative-English-speaking teachers apply pair/group work regularly, prepare conscientiously for the lessons, run interesting classes, provide students with learning strategies, and answer students’ questions satisfactorily. Interestingly, most

EFL participants believe that non-NESTs help language learners with speaking skills and pronunciation, while most ESL participants do not. This statement is a little contradictory, since the EFL students were the ones who perceived non-NESTs' pronunciation as a weakness only, while the ESL students declared that the nonnative speakers' pronunciation was one of their advantages in that it was easier to understand. The idea represented here seems to be that ESL students appreciate their nonnative-English-speaking teachers' intelligible accents, but do not want to speak like them.

According to Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), Moussu (2006), and Pacek (2006), EFL and ESL students believe that the non-NESTs' limited knowledge of American culture is a disadvantage. The results of the present study corroborate their findings in that the ESL participants stated in their questionnaires that NESTs know more about American culture than non-NESTs. In addition, both ESL and EFL interviewees claimed that they can learn more about culture with native speakers. During the class observations with both nonnative-English-speaking teachers in both settings, it was confirmed that providing students with cultural information was not a concern in their classes. For example, the non-NEST who taught the EFL group never addressed American culture directly in class, except for the one lesson when the textbook required a discussion on clichés. Similarly, the one time an ESL student asked the non-NEST a question about the university football game, she changed subjects almost immediately, as stated earlier in this chapter.

Regarding their preferences, both ESL and EFL students stated that non-NESTs are successful and can be effective teachers, and that students may benefit equally from classes taught by NESTs and/or non-NESTs. However, most participants in both settings also stated in their questionnaires that students may benefit more from classes taught by NESTs. This statement is probably due to the students' beliefs regarding

native pronunciation, and may explain why most ESL respondents stated in their questionnaires that their favorite teacher was a native speaker. However, contradicting these results, most ESL interviewees declared that they prefer to be taught by non-NESTs, and so did most EFL respondents.

The class observations in both settings were not very helpful in terms of solving the issue of students' preferences, since the ESL and EFL students' interactions with their nonnative-English-speaking teachers were quite similar. In both the ESL and the EFL settings, student behaviors were consistent in terms of class participation, punctuality, and so on. Besides, there were no major issues related to pronunciation, since the ESL students never sought the non-NEST's help, and the EFL participants did so only twice. As to grammar, both ESL and EFL participants sought their teachers' help by asking questions and taking notes. However, they also challenged the non-NESTs' explanations a couple of times.

The findings indicate that ESL and EFL students have different expectations towards their nonnative-English-speaking teachers, which is why they perceive non-NESTs' weaknesses and strengths as language teaching professionals differently. ESL and EFL students' attitudes in class were quite similar, as they shared some perspectives regarding grammatical and cultural knowledge, for example. Nevertheless, their views on nonnative pronunciation and vocabulary knowledge showed that language learners prioritize different aspects of the target language according to the instructional setting in which they find themselves. Finally, the data collected from the questionnaires, interviews, and class observations did not clearly indicate whether or not ESL and EFL students prefer being taught by NESTs to being taught by non-NESTs, since there was a contradiction between the results from the questionnaires and the results from the interviews. It was possible, though, to recognize that both ESL and EFL students

appreciate non-NESTs for their strengths as language teachers, even if each group of learners perceives such strengths differently.

(3) What kind of students' expectations and attitudes do teachers observe in ESL and EFL settings? How are native and nonnative teachers' perspectives similar or different? This third research question is answered mostly according to the teachers' responses to the questionnaires and interviews. The results indicate that the teachers' perspectives are partially similar and partially different in an interesting way, since there was agreement between the teachers in the ESL and EFL settings, but not between the two nonnative speakers as one would expect. Actually, the native-English-speaking teacher who taught the ESL group and the nonnative-English-speaking teacher who taught the EFL group expressed very similar opinions regarding almost all of the topics addressed in the questionnaire and interviews, such as the main differences between NESTs and non-NESTs, and the students' preferences. However, the nonnative-English-speaking teacher who taught the ESL group mostly disagreed with the other two instructors. Therefore, it was not possible to reach a definite answer to the third research question, as there was agreement and disagreement in terms of instructional setting and native/nonnative status.

According to Amin (1999), Maum (2002), Tang (1997), and Thomas (1999), non-NESTs fear unfavorable comparisons with NESTs, and feel that they are under constant pressure to prove they are effective language instructors. The teachers' answers to the questionnaire and interviews show that the ESL native speaker and the EFL nonnative speaker support this view in different ways. The EFL non-NEST claimed that students prefer to be taught by native speakers because they do not know how hard nonnative-English-speaking teachers work in order to know as much as they can about the target language. However, she also stated that nonnative speakers will never know as much

vocabulary as natives. The ESL NEST reported that she had heard comments about the fact that students prefer to be taught by native speakers because of their “correct pronunciation.” The ESL non-NEST answered the question about students’ preference in a personal way, so it is not possible to compare her answer with the others’.

As to the teachers’ teaching styles, the three instructors who participated in this study agreed that both NESTs and non-NESTs apply pair/group work regularly in class, help students develop speaking skills, run interesting classes, are interested in their learners’ opinions, and answer students’ questions satisfactorily. Nevertheless, some of their answers were divided. The two non-NESTs stated that only nonnative speakers provide students with learning strategies, and the EFL non-NEST also declared that only nonnative speakers prepare conscientiously for their lessons, which reinforces her statement that students prefer NESTs because they do not know how hard non-NESTs work, and corroborates Amin’s (1999) findings that non-NESTs work harder preparing lessons. Furthermore, in relation to helping students with their pronunciation, the three instructors disagreed: the ESL native speaker claimed that both NESTs and non-NESTs help students with their pronunciation, the ESL nonnative speaker claimed that non-NESTs are the ones who help students with their pronunciation, and the EFL nonnative speaker selected NESTs. The ESL nonnative-English-speaking teacher’s response is quite interesting, especially if we consider that only two out of the 25 ESL students selected that option in their questionnaires. In addition, her perspective contradicts Tang (1997), who found that nonnative-English-speaking teachers tend to consider native speakers superior in terms of speaking and pronunciation.

Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of NESTs and non-NESTs as language instructors, the teachers’ responses in both settings were very similar to each others’ and to the students’, indicating that native and nonnative-English-speaking

teachers observe similar characteristics in relation to themselves and to the students' perspectives of them. For example, just like most ESL and EFL students stated, the three teachers claimed that non-NESTs are better at grammar while NESTs are better at pronunciation. In addition, both the native and the nonnative speaker who taught the ESL group stated that non-NESTs are also better at anticipating students' mistakes. Concerning NESTs, the ESL native speaker added cultural knowledge and language use to their list of advantages, whereas the EFL nonnative speaker claimed that NESTs know more vocabulary, which reinforces the importance of vocabulary knowledge to the EFL participants.

The three instructors agreed that both NESTs and non-NESTs can be effective teachers, even though they may have different teaching styles, and that students may benefit equally from classes taught by either native or nonnative speakers. However, the native speaker who taught the ESL group disagreed with the statement that a teacher's native language does not matter, only their teaching ability. This is probably due to her native status, as a native speaker tends to value nativeness the same way that a nonnative speaker tends to value teaching skills. Similar to what was found in the students' questionnaires, two instructors (the ESL NEST and the EFL non-NEST) declared that students may benefit more from classes taught by native speakers. This represents a contradiction in that the same instructors had stated that students might benefit equally from classes taught by either group of teachers. However, this also indicates that these two instructors perceived their students' perspectives, since their responses were similar to their students'. Interestingly, the ESL non-NEST disagreed with her peers, showing again that most of the similarities between the ESL and the EFL teachers' perspectives were actually found between a native and a nonnative speakers' perceptions of their students' expectations and attitudes towards them, since

the two instructors who agreed with each other the most were the ESL native speaker and the EFL nonnative speaker.

Implications

The results reported above indicate the importance of raising native and nonnative-English-speaking English teachers' awareness of their weaknesses and strengths as language teaching professionals. The ESL and the EFL students' responses to the questionnaires and interviews, along with their attitudes during the class observations, showed that students in both instructional settings appreciate NESTs and non-NESTs for what they can do best in the classroom. Therefore, nonnative speakers especially should realize that their hard work is recognized by their students, and that their strong points as ELT professionals are valued. Once such facts are understood, nonnative-English-speaking teachers should be able to overcome their low self-esteem and lack of confidence issues, which should enable them to do their job more confidently and efficiently.

The recognition of specific advantages should allow non-NESTs to develop teaching strategies in order to meet their students' expectations regarding their ESL/EFL classes. It seems to be a given in the field that nonnative speakers are better than native speakers at the teaching of grammar. Accordingly, students expect non-NESTs to be more helpful than NESTs in terms of grammar lessons, and also to answer students' grammatical questions well. Nonnative-English-speaking teachers need to explore this advantage the same way that native speakers tend to explore their speaking skills and cultural knowledge. In addition, as the weaknesses are identified, non-NESTs should work even harder in order to improve those aspects of their language skills and/or language teaching methods. Then, they should make sure to address such issues in their classes, as a way to do the best they can for their students. For example, if not

knowing much about American culture is considered a disadvantage, not addressing cultural issues in class at all is certainly worse. Non-NESTs (and NESTs as well) should explore their strengths to the fullest, and work on their weaknesses as to minimize them and eventually turn them into positive characteristics.

Embracing one's weak points and trying to develop them by interacting with your students is not simple. That is why a system of collaboration among teachers would be so efficient, as suggested by Moussu and Llurda (2008). Since it is confirmed that both NESTs and non-NESTs have different advantages and disadvantages as language instructors, there is no reason why these two groups of teachers should not work together in order to help each other improve their language skills and/or teaching methods. It was reported in this study that one of the NESTs' advantages is their native pronunciation, as one of the non-NESTs' advantages is their ability to provide students with learning strategies. This is an example of how NESTs and non-NESTs should use their strengths to help each other improve their weaknesses. The native speakers should assist their nonnative colleagues with their pronunciation issues, as the nonnative speakers should discuss with their native peers common second/foreign language learning difficulties and how to help their students overcome them.

Concerning teacher training, as stated by Kamhi-Stein (1999), it is important to prepare nonnative-English-speaking teachers for some of the situations that they may encounter in their professional lives. Since pronunciation is such a strong issue, for example, teacher training programs should provide non-NESTs with additional training regarding English pronunciation, not only in terms of how to improve their own, but also in terms of how to address pronunciation problems appropriately and effectively in the ESL/EFL classrooms. Also, cultural knowledge has been identified as one of non-NESTs' main drawbacks as language instructors. Therefore, nonnative speakers should

be given opportunities to discuss cultural issues that may arise in the classroom as to how such topics should be addressed and how they can be included in their lessons on a regular basis.

The information presented in this research study confirmed that students may benefit from classes taught by either NESTs or non-NESTs, and that neither ESL nor EFL learners have a clear preference for native or nonnative-English-speaking teachers, since the students from both settings recognized the advantages and disadvantages of both groups of teachers. Furthermore, the fact that NESTs and non-NESTs can actually complement each others' teaching abilities when they work together was also stated, indicating that students may benefit even more from having both native and nonnative-English-speaking instructors. Therefore, it becomes imperative to declare that hiring practices in the ELT world should not discriminate against nonnative speakers due to false beliefs that students definitely prefer to be taught by NESTs. Benke and Medgyes (2006), Ling and Braine (2007), and Mahboob (2007) had reported what was confirmed by the results of the present study: students appreciate both NESTs and non-NESTs for their unique teaching attributes. Thus, one major implication of these findings in the field is that nonnative speakers should be given the same job opportunities as native speakers, since both groups of teachers can contribute to ESL/EFL students' language learning process in their own ways.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the propagation of English as an International Language. According to Moussu and Llorca (2008), "new varieties of 'Englishes' are emerging throughout the world [...] with words, expressions, accents, sociolinguistic rules, and even grammatical rules transformed and adjusted to fit the different contexts" (p. 331). Considering this new reality, it becomes clear that exposing students to multiple accents and cultures is only beneficial to them, as this linguistic

“adaptability” that is required in today’s world can be more easily achieved if students are presented with different English varieties not only through their international classmates, but also through English instructors from multiple linguistic backgrounds.

Finally, the importance of the interactions between students and instructors in the foreign/second language classroom should also be addressed in this section. A positive instructional environment is crucial to a successful teaching/learning process to occur. Inasmuch as the major findings of the present research study showed that ESL and EFL students value nonnative-English-speaking teachers as much as they do native speakers, yet regarding different aspects of their teaching abilities, non-NESTs should feel more comfortable with and motivated about their classes and about working with ESL/EFL students, since the teachers’ attitudes in class influence the students’. Considering that language learners have shown to have positive expectations and attitudes towards their teachers, the instructors should take advantage of this fact and enjoy themselves during their lessons, creating an appropriate, stress-free learning environment.

Limitations and Further Research

Even though the present research study was carefully planned and executed, there were some limitations as to sample and data collection procedures, mostly. The major concern regarding the participants is definitely the fact that there were two nonnative-English-speaking teachers, but only one native speaker. As was explained in the methodology chapter, the present researcher did not have access to a native-English-speaking teacher in the EFL setting during the semester in which the data collection took place. Nevertheless, it is imperative to recognize that the lack of data regarding an EFL NEST crippled the results in that students’ interactions with a native speaker could not be observed in that setting, which limited the comparisons between the two instructional settings and the two groups of teachers.

Another issue related to the participants is the number of students involved in the study in each setting. There were more than three times as many students in the ESL than there were in the EFL, so a larger amount of data could be collected in the ESL setting. In the EFL setting, though, the opinion of one single student represented a high percentage in itself, which probably affected the averaged results. As to the interviews, they did not include all the participants as the questionnaires and the class observations did. The results found through the interviews were based on the responses of a small number of participants in each setting, which may not represent the points of view of the majority of the students in each group. Furthermore, the ESL participants knew the researcher beforehand, as some of them had been her students in a previous semester, and others still were her students in a different class (TOEFL preparation). This fact may also have affected the results in that some “halo effect” may have occurred, that is, the participants may have tried to please the interviewer by providing her with the responses they believed she would approve of.

In addition, the two student populations differed greatly in terms of goals. Whereas most ESL participants were studying English in order to attend an American university, the EFL participants were mostly interested in traveling abroad or accessing information more efficiently by learning English, a “world language.” Therefore, their expectations concerning the teachers’ attitudes in class were probably different as well, since the EFL students’ motivation was not as academically-oriented as the ESL students’ motivation was.

Regarding the programs in each country, there were many differences. In Brazil, the students were taking an integrated skills course, and they met everyday for two and a half hours. In the USA, the students were taking a grammar course, and they met three times a week for fifty minutes. The focus of each class may have affected students’

attitudes in that learners probably expect more from an integrated skills class than from a class with more specific goals, such as grammar. Besides, the class schedules affected the amount of work that could be done in each session, and it also affected the number of hours of class observations. Since the EFL group met on a daily basis, and they were taught by a non-NEST only, more hours of instruction with the same teacher could be observed in that setting in a short period of time. As to the ESL group, their weekly hours equaled the EFL group's daily hours. Consequently, a longer period of class observations was necessary in the ESL setting so that a similar number of hours of class instruction could be observed. In addition, the ESL students had two instructors (a non-NEST and a NEST) during the same semester, which also caused the number of hours of class observations with each teacher to be reduced in that setting. Therefore, the results reported according to the class observations in the EFL were based on a larger amount of data than the results of the ESL setting were.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the difference in the ages of the student participants. The ESL participants were considerably older than the EFL participants, as on average, the students in the USA were in their early twenties, and the students in Brazil were in their late teens. This age difference may have affected their responses in terms of maturity level and amount of experience as language learners. Besides the difference in age, there were also differences regarding cultural backgrounds. Whereas all EFL students were Brazilian and native Portuguese speakers, the ESL participants came from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which may influence what students expect from their instructors.

Therefore, it is necessary to conduct studies that account for cultural differences. In the present study, even though the students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds were verified, they were not addressed in the data analysis procedures. Future research should

aim to investigate whether or not students' cultural backgrounds affect their expectations and attitudes towards their language teachers in terms of native/nonnative status. Besides, it would be important to observe how the students' cultural backgrounds affect their view of teachers' roles. For example, in a culture where teachers are seen as "all-knowing," students would probably expect their instructors to be able to answer all their questions right away, while in other cultures it may be more acceptable for teachers to refer to books or dictionaries before answering students' questions.

Also related to teachers' roles is the issue of proficiency level. Studies in the field have failed to address non-NESTs' English proficiency level. Students in general expect their teachers to be fluent English speakers. In EFL settings, most teachers are nonnative speakers. In ESL settings, though, it is becoming more common for institutions to have both native and nonnative-English-speaking teachers. Future research should investigate whether or not having a native-English-speaking teacher affects the students' perceptions of proficiency level, and also how non-NESTs' proficiency level affects the students' perceptions of their instructors and attitudes towards them.

Finally, considering the information reported throughout this research study, it seems clear that the field is in need of studies that address the issue of preference. Several researchers have examined NESTs' and non-NESTs' advantages and disadvantages according to the students' perspectives, but the field lacks studies that confirm whether or not students prefer NESTs to non-NESTs or vice-versa. It is important to investigate this issue more carefully in order to establish if the current lack of evidence is due to a lack of research on this topic, or if it really represents ESL and EFL students' perspectives. In order to conduct such investigation, future studies should include both NESTs and non-NESTs in both instructional settings, so that ESL and EFL

students' interactions with both groups of teachers can be examined through class observations, and their expectations towards their teachers can be analyzed based on more controlled comparisons.

Closing Remarks

The present research study succeeded in informing the field about ESL and EFL students' expectations and attitudes towards their native and nonnative-English-speaking teachers, but to a limited extent. The findings presented revealed that language learners in both instructional settings appreciate both groups of teachers for what they can do best in the classroom, which seems to be helping students with their grammatical difficulties (non-NESTs) and with their pronunciation/speaking skills (NESTs), for example. However, the results reported were insufficient to determine whether or not ESL and EFL students definitely prefer to be taught by a certain group of teachers. Furthermore, the third research question was not answered satisfactorily either. The teachers in both settings identified similar issues regarding their students' expectations, but a comparison in terms of nativeness was not even possible, as the two nonnative-English-speaking instructors who participated in the study mostly disagreed with each other, while one of them agreed almost completely with her native speaker peer.

Taking into consideration the reality in today's world, where about 80% of the ELT workforce is represented by nonnative speakers, it is clear that more research on this topic is in demand. The number of English language learners is growing all over the world, and so is the need for English teachers. Non-NESTs have felt underestimated and underappreciated for years, mostly due to students' alleged preference for NESTs. Further research is needed in order to put this dilemma to rest. ESL and EFL students recognize nonnative speakers' teaching qualities, and can definitely benefit from their language classes. Therefore, it is time to demonstrate with scientific findings that non-

NESTs can be as effective and successful as NESTs, and should be given the same opportunities.

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Appendix A

Native and Nonnative-English-Speaking Teachers

Dear Participant,

Please complete the questions in the first part and circle the appropriate answers in the second part. It will take you no more than 20 minutes to answer the questions. The questionnaire is anonymous. All data will be handled confidentially.

Thank you for your cooperation!

1. What is your native language? _____

2. How old are you? _____

3. Why are you studying English?

4. Suppose you were the principal of a private language school in a non-English-speaking country. Would you prefer to hire:

More native speakers than nonnative speakers? ()

An equal number of native speakers and nonnative speakers? ()

More nonnative speakers than native speakers? ()

Explain your preference.

5. Suppose you were the principal of a private language school in an English-speaking country. Would you prefer to hire:

More native speakers than nonnative speakers? ()

An equal number of native speakers and nonnative speakers? ()

More nonnative speakers than native speakers? ()

Explain your preference.

6. How many nonnative English teachers have you had? _____
7. How long have you been taught/were you taught by nonnatives? _____
8. How many native English teachers have you had? _____
9. How long have you been taught/were you taught by natives? _____
10. Who do you think is more successful in teaching English?

Native-English-speaking teachers ()

Nonnative-English-speaking teachers ()

Both groups of teachers are successful ()

Justify your answer.

11. Which teachers...	Native speakers	Nonnative speakers	Both
Apply pair/group work regularly in class?	()	()	()
Prepare conscientiously for the lessons?	()	()	()
Help students develop speaking skills?	()	()	()
Run interesting classes?	()	()	()
Are interested in their learners' opinions?	()	()	()
Provide students with learning strategies?	()	()	()
Help students with their pronunciation?	()	()	()
Answer students' questions satisfactorily?	()	()	()

12. Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the sentences below.

SA – Strongly agree

A – Agree

D – Disagree

SD – Strongly disagree

It does not matter what the teacher's native language is, the only thing that matters is their teaching ability.	SA	A	D	SD
Native and nonnative teachers usually have different teaching styles, but both can be effective teachers.	SA	A	D	SD
In general students may benefit equally from classes taught by either native or nonnative teachers.	SA	A	D	SD
In general students may benefit more from classes taught by native teachers.	SA	A	D	SD

13. Complete the sentences below so that they express your opinion concerning the characteristics of English teachers. Use as many words as you consider necessary.

a) In general a good English teacher_____

b) The favorite English teacher I've had was (native/nonnative). He/She_____

c) A nonnative teacher is usually better at_____

d) A native teacher is usually better at_____

Thanks for participating!

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview (Students)

1. How many nonnative English teachers have you had?

2. How long have you been taught/were you taught by nonnatives?

3. How many native English teachers have you had?

4. How long have you been taught/were you taught by natives?

5. Based on your experiences and/or impressions, describe the major differences between NESTs and non-NESTs.

6. Do you think that these differences represent advantages or disadvantages? Explain.

7. In general do you prefer to be taught by a NEST or by a non-NEST? Why?

Semi-Structured Interview (Teachers)

1. Based on your experiences and/or impressions, describe the major differences between NESTs and non-NESTs.

2. Do you think that these differences represent advantages or disadvantages? Explain.

3. In general do you think your students prefer to be taught by a NEST or by a non-NEST? Why?

4. What do you think your students appreciate about your teaching? Explain.

What do you think your students do not appreciate about your teaching? Explain.

Appendix C

CLASS OBSERVATION SHEET

School _____ Teacher _____ Course Title _____

Date of Observation _____ Duration of observation _____

Number of students enrolled in class _____

Number of students present _____

What time was class supposed to begin? _____

What time did class actually begin? _____

What time was class supposed to end? _____

What time did class actually end? _____

What you see						What you think
Activity	Start	End	Materials	Group size	Descriptive notes	Comments