

Native Speakerism in EFL Classrooms: Analysis of Impact on Students' Proficiency, Motivation, and Teacher Preference in NEST and NNEST Contexts

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Abstract

This study explores the various levels of English proficiency, the differences in learning motivation, and the distinctions in teacher preference between students taught by native English-speaking teachers (NEST) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNEST). The author designs a mixed-method quasi-experimental study with 50 eleventh-grade students in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class located in Eastern Indonesia. Quantitative data are observed with the use of pre- and post-tests and analyzed with the paired sample t-test, while qualitative data are collected with the help of a semi-structured interview. The study shows that the students taught by NEST improved more in communicative performance, while students taught by NNEST had greater improvements in grammatical accuracy and language use in structured forms. The results of the interviews showed that students preferred NEST teachers based on their perceived fluency and interactive class, while students preferred NNEST teachers based on their ability to give clear explanations and support their understanding of the material. The results of the study give evidence that NEST and NNEST have complementary roles with respect to language learning, and the integration of communicative and instructional approaches can mitigate imbalances in the development of learners' English language proficiency.

Keywords: EFL students' proficiency, EFL students' preference, EFL students' motivation, native speakerism, NEST, NNEST

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji perbedaan kecakapan bahasa Inggris, motivasi belajar, dan preferensi guru antara kelas yang diajar oleh Native English-Speaking Teachers (NEST) dan Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers (NNEST). Penelitian menggunakan desain kuasi-eksperimental metode campuran yang melibatkan 50 siswa EFL kelas XI di Indonesia Timur. Data kuantitatif diperoleh melalui pre-test dan post-test yang dianalisis menggunakan paired sample t-test, sedangkan data kualitatif diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa yang diajar oleh NEST mengalami peningkatan lebih besar pada performa komunikatif, sedangkan siswa yang diajar oleh NNEST menunjukkan perkembangan lebih kuat pada ketepatan tata bahasa dan penggunaan bahasa yang terstruktur. Hasil wawancara mengungkapkan bahwa siswa cenderung memilih NEST karena kelancaran berbahasa dan suasana kelas yang interaktif, namun mereka menghargai NNEST karena penjelasan yang jelas dan dukungan pemahaman. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa NEST dan NNEST memiliki peran yang saling melengkapi dalam pembelajaran bahasa dan bahwa integrasi paparan komunikatif dengan pengajaran eksplisit dapat mendukung perkembangan bahasa Inggris yang lebih seimbang.

Kata Kunci: Kemampuan Siswa EFL, Preferensi Siswa EFL, Motivasi Siswa EFL, Penutur Asli, NEST, NNEST

INTRODUCTION

The English language has become a global means of communication over linguistic and cultural barriers (Wang & Fang, 2020). Therefore, teaching English in English as a Foreign

Language (EFL) contexts requires not only linguistic competence but also psychological dimensions of teaching. Key elements of EFL teaching and learning are language competence as well as the motivation to learn.

The English language proficiency of learners means their ability to communicate efficiently in the target language, which encompasses speaking ability, grammatical accuracy, appropriate use of vocabulary, and comprehensibility (Ghane & Razmi, 2023). Learning motivation, on the other hand, is the inner and/or outer driving force of a learner that impacts their initiative to act, persistence on a learning task, and the striving to enhance their language proficiency (Al Roomy, 2022). In EFL contexts, where learners have limited/zero access to real-life language inputs, motivation is a significant factor that buoy learners' engagement and reflects positively on their outcomes.

The presence of native English-speaking teachers (NEST) as opposed to non-native English-speaking teachers (NNEST) is often cited as an influencing factor regarding both NEST/NNEST proficiency and motivation. This is a reflection of the native speaker bias phenomenon, which suggests that native speakers possess greater teaching competencies and teaching appropriateness (Holliday, 2006; Selvi et al., 2023). In several teaching contexts, including Indonesia, a belief is held that native teachers also deliver quality teaching that includes models of correct pronunciation and levels of communicative competence; in contrast, non-native teachers—even when they present ideal teaching credentials—are viewed as less professional (Adara, 2019; Ugahara & Suryani, 2023).

The goals of this study were informed, in part, by preliminary classroom observations that noted variability in the learning behavior of the different groups of students. Those students who were taught by a NEST demonstrated greater participation in the speaking activities and a higher willingness to communicate. In contrast, students who were taught by the NNEST exhibited greater proficiency in the grammar and written tasks. Locally-constructed interviews indicated that a number of students valued the presence of a NEST because they sought to develop a native accent; in contrast, a number of students appreciated the presence of the NNEST because they were able to provide better learning explanations by using their first language.

The roles of Native English-speaking Teachers (NESTs) and Non-Native English-speaking Teachers (NNESTs) have been studied to differing degrees of success. Some research argues that NESTs are more beneficial for the cultivation of speaking fluency and the building of communicative confidence, whereas NNESTs are better at teaching grammar and the strategies for more effective learning (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014; Wang & Fang, 2020; Fuangkarn & Rimkeeratikul, 2020). Other research posits that social perception and ideology, rather than true teaching effectiveness, are the main reasons for students' attraction to NESTs (Ruecker & Ives, 2014; Harsanti & Manara, 2021). Although these studies are valuable, most research studies have examined an isolated phenomenon of either proficiency or perceptions.

A further research gap is the study of the interplay of proficiency outcomes, motivation to learn, and teacher preference through the lens of native speakerism, especially in underrepresented contexts like Eastern Indonesia, where students have limited contact with native speakers.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference in the English proficiency of students taught by NNESTs versus NESTs?
2. Is there a difference in students' learning motivation in classes taught by NNESTs versus NESTs?
3. Do students' teacher preferences reflect native speakerism?

The purpose of this study is to provide a clearer comparison of students' English proficiency, to provide a more focused study on teacher preference shaped by native speakerism, and to provide a study on students' learning motivation.

The research can be appreciated theoretically as it contributes to expanding speakerism studies beyond the area of perceived studies to integrated learning outcomes. From a pedagogical perspective, the findings may inform educational institutions that efficient teaching of English may necessitate the integration of communicative interaction with a native English speaker teacher (NEST) and overt linguistic explanation by a non-native English speaker teacher (NNEST) to promote a more uniform development of the different aspects of a language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this paper, the author reviews various sources, including empirical research studies, review articles, book chapters, credible websites, and essays, to provide a wide-ranging overview of native speakers.

First and foremost, according to Wang & Fang (2020), drawing from Chomsky (1965), the term “native speaker” (Chomsky, 1965) of a language is someone who speaks this specific language from they are born till death and knows the language skills well, such as reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Furthermore, the term “non-native speaker” (Chomsky, 1965) refers to someone interested in learning a language other than their first language. Therefore, when non-native speakers learn a specific target language, it becomes their foreign or second language, not their first language. The term native speaker also refers to monolingual people (Panaligan & Curran, 2022), implicitly assuming that people can speak only one language: their mother tongue.

In English Language Teaching, the bias between English teachers is based on their first language identity. Currently, native English speakers hold a higher position than non-native English teachers. In contrast, Wang & Fang (2020), drawing from Medgyes (1994), stated that in English Language Teaching, the concept of native and non-native speakers is the same; the focus here is not only on native and non-native speakers but also on the ways teachers teach the students and on their level of proficiency in the target language. Instead of problematizing the native and non-native, the focus is on how teachers deliver the materials in the classroom, how they manage their classroom, how they incorporate all students, and how they create inclusive classrooms (Ghane & Razmi, 2023). Moreover, in English Language teaching, the term “native speakerism” (Holliday, 2006; Holliday, 2018) is one of the dominant language ideologies. The concept of native speakerism implies that native English teachers are appropriate language teachers (Holliday, 2006), while non-native English teachers are less ideal English teachers in the classroom (Fuangkarn & Rimkeeratikul, 2020).

Most people generally believe that native speakers are the ideal teachers. In contrast, non-native speakers are labelled as less outstanding teachers because they do not represent a Western culture and do not have experience in the English language culture (Selvi et al., 2023). Moreover, Native speakerism also refers to skin colour racism, where white skin-color teachers are considered native speakers. In comparison, teachers not identified with white skin but were born in English-speaking countries are still categorised as non-native English teachers. For instance, a native speaker with color who was born and raised in an English-speaking country is still categorized as less prestigious than white people who were born and raised in an English-speaking country.

The impact of native speakerism also comes at work (Ruecker & Ives, 2014). The bias can be seen from the recruiting process to the treatment in the daily activities (Harsanti & Manara, 2021). Also, most job ads only hire native speakers or teachers with a native level. Many companies or schools in Indonesia prefer native English teachers from English-speaking countries rather than local teachers who earned their degree in a university in Indonesia. Even if the non-native speakers can teach English, they have not had opportunities in the ESOL program or to pursue an English language teaching degree. For instance, if there are applicants who come from Indonesia and neighbouring countries such as Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore applying for the same job to become an English teacher. In that case, human resource development would prefer recruiting from neighbouring countries to Indonesian local teachers (Adara, 2019), even if they have the same degree and experience. According to Adara (2019), in the Indonesian educational context, many companies, schools, teachers, students, and families are exposed to the concept of native speakerism, where they tend to prefer white native English teachers and teachers who come from other countries compared to non-native English teachers from Indonesia in terms of the ways of teaching and experiences.

Many studies have investigated students' preferences for native or non-native English speakers. Especially in Southeast Asia, there have been many studies addressing students' preferences for their English teachers, such as research conducted by Walkinshaw and Oanh (2014), Wang & Fang (2020), Lin et al. (2018), and Kun and Ke (2009). This previous research claims that native and non-native teachers have their own strengths and weaknesses (Wang & Fang, 2020). The results of their studies showed that students prefer native English teachers

because they have good models in pronunciation, the instinct to use the English language well, and much experience in the Western environment; however, native English speakers do not emphasize the grammatical structure and are poor at explaining it. In contrast, students prefer to have non-native speakers because non-native speakers emphasise the grammatical structure and the ability to switch to their native language when needed to explain materials. Also, the non-native English teachers understand the students' culture and personality. They can easily approach the students using their mother tongue if they think they have an issue in teaching and learning.

In the current digital age, EFL students have unprecedented opportunities to learn English through digital media, which has both positive and negative implications for creating an inclusive EFL learning environment. The use of digital technology, such as social media, has been seen to have a positive impact on EFL learning through increased engagement and interaction among EFL students, such as the use of English among Generation Z on Facebook and YouTube, which has fostered ESL-like qualities among EFL students (Davydova, 2024). In this regard, EFL teachers play a critical role in creating an inclusive EFL learning environment through the use of digital multimodal composing (DMC) and technology resources, which have the potential to foster multiliteracies development among EFL students and bridge the gap between digital and print-based literacy learning (Jiang & Jiang, 2017). The use of mobile phones and technology, such as Zoom, has been seen to have a positive impact on EFL learning through interactive and engaging experiences, although challenges such as technical hitches and long-term engagement exist (Zhang, 2013; Yassin & Abugohar, 2024). In this regard, EFL teachers must develop technological pedagogical content knowledge and digital competence, which is critical to creating an inclusive EFL learning environment through the effective integration of technology into the curriculum, which has a positive impact on job engagement (Rezai et al., 2024). In addition, the convergence of English as a lingua franca (ELF) and EFL has the potential to create an inclusive EFL learning environment through the consideration of diverse linguacultural factors, which has been seen to be critical during the COVID-19 pandemic through the collaborative efforts to create an inclusive EFL learning environment through equitable access to learning opportunities among EFL students during remote education in Chile (Glas et al., 2021). By leveraging the pedagogical potential of social media and hyper-collaboration, EFL teachers can create an inclusive EFL learning environment through increased participation and engagement among EFL students, which has a positive impact on EFL learning environments (Kessler, 2013).

Al Roomy (2022) states that "Inclusive education" is about respecting all differences, including cultures, languages, identities, or behaviours. Furthermore, English teachers do not expect to know every culture in the world to make their classes inclusive; they need to respect each other, whether with colleagues or students. Creating an inclusive language education contributes to several factors, including "global Englishes" (Selvi et al., 2023) and "translanguaging" (Chau et al., 2022). Apart from that, everyone has their own identity, culture, and background. Sometimes, people's behaviour, ways of thinking, and actions reflect their identity and are hard to remove, and this concept is aligned with the concept of English as a "global Englishes" (Selvi et al., 2023). As English is a Foreign language in Indonesia, many students struggle to catch up with it, especially in speaking skills, where their local dialect and accent are still reflected when they speak English. In this situation, EFL teachers should emphasise to their students that everyone should be proud of their accents because everyone has an accent, and a "foreign accent" is not an issue in creating an inclusive classroom environment. Sometimes, students do not feel confident speaking because their accent or pronunciation is not native-like; they assume that perfect English is to be able to speak like native speakers. Having this lousy mindset would decrease their motivation to practise English. Therefore, EFL teachers should emphasise that every dialect and accent is welcome in the classroom because this is a part of the global Englishes. Learning motivation influences how engaged and active students are in the learning process. Research has demonstrated that both the design of instruction and the media used in learning impact learners' motivation and their propensity to participate in class. For example, the incorporation of interactive learning materials has been said to improve the motivation and learning engagement of students (Rahmawati et al. 2024).

As the largest archipelago country, Indonesia has over 17,000 islands (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013), with the five biggest islands, and each island has its own culture

and languages. In learning a language, students would bring their local accents into English language learning, and the inclusive classroom should contribute to all students. Noticing that all students are welcome, and the classroom is a place to learn the language, therefore making mistakes is fine, and we will learn from mistakes to be better learners. All things considered, language learning is part of the student's identity, not only from global Englishes but also from Indonesian Englishes. In facing this phenomenon, teachers play an essential role in creating an inclusive learning environment for their students. Using a variety of activities and tools and integrating digital media would help teachers and learners create an inclusive classroom and achieve their language and content objectives in English language teaching (Razmi, 2023).

METHOD

This research used a mixed-methods quasi-experimental design involving qualitative and quantitative data. The study took place during the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year and was conducted at a public senior high school in Eastern Indonesia. The school was chosen because it is a typical representation of secondary schools in the region where students have little to no contact with native speakers of English in a formal learning context.

The target population included all the students in the 11th grade at the school. Participants were described using purposive intact group sampling because the school administration had created the classes, and no random assignment could be done. Two founded classes were involved in the study, with a total of 50 students. One class was taught by a native English-speaking teacher (NEST) and the other by a non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST). All students had experienced learning English in class from the 7th grade, so it was a national mandate, and for the majority of the students, this was the first time they had encountered a native English teacher.

This study utilized two research instruments: an English Proficiency test and a semi-structured interview guide. Both the pre- and the post-test consisted of a ten-item English proficiency test that focused on the following indicators: speaking proficiency and understandability, grammatical accuracy, appropriate vocabulary usage, and contextual meaning. The test measured students' proficiency development following the instructional period in both NEST and NNEST classes. The semi-structured interview guide aimed to scrutinize students' learning motivation, perceptions of teaching efficacy, and teacher preferences related to native speakerism. To promote clarity of expression, students could respond in English or Indonesian. Each interview lasted 10 - 20 minutes and was conducted and recorded with the participants' consent. All instruments were validated via expert judgment. Three English language teaching experts evaluated the instruments on a validation worksheet that focused on relevance, clarity, language appropriateness, and each criterion's alignment with the stated research objectives on a 4-point scale. Items suggested for revision were modified in the study. The test instruments were evaluated for reliability following pilot testing via Cronbach's Alpha, which indicated acceptable internal consistency. Before the data collection, the interview guide was modified in accordance with the feedback from the validators.

Students' initial proficiency was measured using a pre-test, necessitating completion prior to any further instructional treatment. After this pre-test, the treatment was given in two different classes: one taught by a NEST and the other by a NNEST. As such, students were required to complete a post-test. After this stage of the study was quantified, the remainder of the participants were invited to provide voluntary follow-up interviews. Five participants were selected, consisting of three students from the NEST class and two students from the NNEST class. Participants were provided with the transcriptions of the interviews to verify credibility prior to the return of interviews.

Quantitative data were analyzed using the software SPSS and paired sample t-tests to assess the NEST and NNEST classes to determine if students were able to demonstrate increased proficiency and if a measurable difference existed in the degree of proficiency between the two groups. Qualitative data using the Miles and Huberman interactive model to explain and assess the patterns associated with motivational factors and teacher preference from the data in a systematic manner. The interactive model involves data reduction and analysis through coding and proposition formation to present a summary of the data, and to demonstrate a systematic organization of themes in the data to explain the present conclusion to the associated motivational patterns and teacher preference. When reviewing the data, method triangulation was utilized in

order to analyze and evaluate the qualitative interviews and quantitative test data to determine and compare the test data to evaluate the qualitative data to verify and confirm the qualitative data.

RESULTS

A paired-sample t-test was performed in order to analyze scores from the pre-test and post-test of both instructional groups. Both the NNEST class ($M = -10.80$, $p < .001$) and the NEST class ($M = -13.76$, $p < .001$) experienced statistically significant changes in scores. Negative mean differences are due to the pre-test and post-test score calculations, in which bigger negative values signify greater improvement after instruction. The NEST group had a greater mean gain than the NNEST group, meaning the NEST group had greater improvement during the instructional time. The data does show improvement in learning outcomes, but does not show the instructional context, if any, that led to NNEST outcomes. The NNEST class and the NEST class both received instruction in English. Patterns of improvement in both classrooms are not uniform, which gives further support to the qualitative findings.

Table 1. Paired-sample t-test results of pre-test and post-test scores

Group	Mean Difference	SD	SE	95% CI	df	p
NNEST Class	-10.80	7.18	1.4	[-13.76, -7.84]	24	< .001
NEST Class	-13.76	6.44	1.9	[-16.42, -11.10]	24	< .001

Interview analyses uncovered varied learning orientations in both classes. Increased confidence in speaking and greater willingness to communicate were described by students taught by the native English speaker. They saw the class as interactive and supportive in that making errors and participating in discussions were encouraged. Students taught by the non-native English-speaking teachers focused on the comprehension and analysis of the language system and the building of vocabulary. Clear explanations and the occasional use of the L1 reduced anxiety and facilitated comprehension, which in turn, reinforced their effort to complete the tasks. The findings suggest that the NEST classroom emphasized the motivation to communicate, while the NNEST classroom emphasized the motivation to be accurate.

Students' NEST and NNEST preferences also show reasoning related to native speakerism. Students viewed NESTs as teachers who possessed fluent and accent-free speech and, as such, expected that interacting with NESTs would result in students developing more fluent and natural speech. On the contrary, students appreciated NNESTs because they could provide more in-depth explanations, teach grammar, and provide L1 clarifications. As such, students preferred NESTs for speaking practice and NNESTs for learning the rules of the target language. This indicates that preferences were based, in part, on perceptions related to language ownership, language learning objectives, and the effectiveness of teaching. Furthermore, the findings show that both teacher types have complementary roles as opposed to one type having greater quality teaching over the other.

Student 1

"Saya sangat ingin memiliki aksen seperti guru saya. Accent Amerika yang dimiliki oleh guru saya sangat sexy seperti di film Hollywood dan mudah dipahami. Saya berharap ke depannya saya bisa berbahasa Inggris lancar seperti beliau."

"I really want to sound like my teacher; her American accent is so sexy, like in the Hollywood movies, and easy to understand. I hope someday I can sound like her."

Another student emphasised the importance of learning from native speakers:

Student 2

"Saya rasa cara yang paling baik untuk belajar bahasa Inggris ya dengan berkomunikasi langsung dengan native speaker, karena ini adalah bahasa mereka, pasti mereka sangat pandai, dan kita bisa memiliki aksen dan cara berbicara yang sama dengan orang Amerika. Kalau saya berbicara dan berlatih dengan penutur bahasa Inggris asli, pasti suatu saat nanti saya akan memiliki aksen yang sama dengan mereka."

"I think the best way to learn English is from native speakers; they know their culture and are really smart in English, especially in pronouncing the words. If I practice English with native speakers, I will sound like a native too one day."

Another student also emphasised that their NEST always allows them to speak up during the class. Furthermore, making mistakes is fine because learning is part of the process, and everyone makes mistakes.

Student 3

"Guru saya sangat memotivasi saya untuk berani berbicara dan jangan takut salah ngomong di dalam kelas. Ia selalu mengatakan bahwa salah itu hal yang wajar dan semua orang pasti berbuat kesalahan dalam belajar bahasa. Hampir di setiap pertemuan kami diberi kesempatan untuk berdiskusi dengan teman sebangku. Selain itu, ia selalu menekankan bahwa jangan takut klo grammar yang kita gunakan salah-salah selama Bahasa kita bisa di pahami oleh teman kita itu Adalah proses belajar"

"My teacher always motivates me to speak up and not fear making mistakes. She emphasises that making mistakes is normal; everyone inevitably makes mistakes when learning a language. She allowed us to discuss things with our classmates in almost every meeting. She also said that we should not be afraid of grammar or using the wrong tenses in grammar as long as our friends understand our language, which is the most important."

Those statements indicate a broader trend among treatment group students, who strongly preferred NESTs. Furthermore, this finding aligned with previous research (see also, e.g., Wang & Fang, 2020), which expressed that the NEST has a more substantial influence on students' spoken skills rather than written skills. Many participants appreciated the NEST teaching preparation, incorporating student-centred activities, comprehensive guidance, effective communication, enthusiasm, and interactive online tools like Kahoot, Blooket, and Bamboozle. In contrast, students from the control group said that their teacher focused on grammar and vocabulary.

Student 4

"Guru saya selalu menekankan struktur bahasa yang baik, seperti bagaimana cara penggunaan kata kerja lampau atau sekarang. Kita diajarkan banyak tenses yang ada dalam bahasa Inggris dari formnya dan kapan kita menggunakan tenses tersebut. Selain itu kita juga selalu belajar untuk menghafal kosa kata baru dengan cara yang beragam, bahkan setiap pertemuan kita disuruh menghafalkan kosakata baru"

"My teacher always emphasises the importance of grammar, such as how to use the past or present tense. We always thought about English tenses, their functions, and their forms. Additionally, we always learn to memorize new vocabulary in various ways, and we have to memorize new vocabulary given by the teacher at every meeting."

Student 4

"Kadang dalam latihan grammar di akhir kita disuruh latihan, sering sekali kita diberikan 1 cerita pendek dan kami diminta untuk menentukan kira-kira tenses apa yang digunakan dalam kalimat tersebut."

"We are often given a short story and asked to determine the approximate tenses used in the sentences."

Student 5

"Di kelas, guru kami sering menggunakan bahasa Indonesia sehingga memudahkan kami untuk memahami pelajaran. Beliau juga kadang mengganti Bahasa nya kedalam Bahasa Indonesia jika mengajarkan grammar, jadi kami sangat senang dan paham Ketika beliau menjelaskan dan kami dapat bertanya menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia"

"In class, our teacher often switches her language to Indonesian, making it easier for us to understand the lessons. While explaining the grammar concept, she sometimes switches the language into Bahasa Indonesia so it is easy for us to understand the tenses."

From those responses, many students appreciated the NNEST for their deep understanding of grammar, language structure, and vocabulary, which helped clarify complex concepts. Some students also appreciated the NNEST because it provided unique insights into the cultural aspects of language learning, enriching the educational experience. Furthermore, the

NNEST often shared a similar language background with the students, making it easier to explain nuanced language points. These responses highlight an apparent dichotomy in the perceived teaching approaches between NESTs and NNESTs among the students.

DISCUSSION

The study results demonstrate that both NEST and NNEST teaching contexts led to the students' development of English language proficiency, albeit in different ways. The greater development in the NEST class, especially related to the communicative performance improvement, can be accounted for in terms of the interaction hypothesis, which posits that language acquisition is fostered through meaningful interactions and the negotiation of meaning. The students in the NEST classroom had more opportunities to interact beyond the need for precise grammatical construction, which fostered the volume of language output and communicative interactions. Such teaching environments enhance the development of fluency, as the students emphasize the importance of meaning rather than grammatical accuracy. This substantiates the findings of earlier studies that report a tendency among native English-speaking teachers to enhance speaking confidence and communicative competence.

Students taught by NNESTs showed greater focus on the development of students' grammatical knowledge and the facilitation of learning in a more ordered and structured fashion. This is consistent with the theory of explicit teaching, which posits that a learner's knowledge of the rules and structures of a language is critical for the development of the learner's accuracy, and in turn, the learner's awareness of the language. The use of the first language during explanations lowered the cognitive load and made it easier for students to grasp the mechanisms that govern the language. This has been found in previous studies where it has been shown that non-native teachers are more effective in teaching grammar and learning strategies as they understand the linguistic background of their students and empathize with their learning challenges.

The qualitatively different aspects of motivation presented the different motivational structures that empirical studies have used when discussing the frameworks of motivation. The NEST classroom was found to develop a willingness to communicate, which is consistent with the principles of the communicative approach and the teaching of CLT, where communication, risk-taking, and the development of fluency are encouraged. The NNEST classroom, on the other hand, was more likely to develop motivation that is focused on achieving a high level of understanding of the rules and attaining correctness. Rather than suggesting that one approach to teaching is superior to the other, the findings in this study show that both teaching styles utilize different motivational structures, constructive communicative confidence, and cognitive confidence.

It is important to clarify the role of student preference within the scope of native speakerism ideology. Students tend to regard native teachers as having authentic accents and natural, flowing speech in a language. This reflects the ideational perception that language ownership is linked to native speakers. Conversely, students appreciated the NESTs for popular, clear, and easy-to-understand instruction. This shows support for the sociolinguistic analysis of the Global Englishes, which states that teaching and active learning are effective when the teacher does not possess the native accent but holds substantial pedagogical and situational analysis to make the teaching and learning process possible and effective. This means that preference for NESTs is likely to derive from social perception rather than effective teaching and learning.

The overall analysis suggests that learning from NESTs and NNESTs is different, though both combine to yield language learning improvements. Communicative exposure is better for developing fluency, while explicit explanation is better for developing accuracy and language awareness. Given these different strengths, the natural conclusion is that a balanced approach in teaching where communication is integrated with explanation is likely to facilitate improvement in language acquisition.

The results suggest that bilingual education systems ought not to place NESTs and NNESTs in a hierarchical order. In learning environments where interpersonal communication and teaching in a classroom exist, native and non-native speakers' biases towards each other create a more equitable teaching and learning system that increases students' English fluency and accuracy.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the impact of teacher nativeness on English language proficiency, motivation, and teacher preference among students taught by native English-speaking teachers (NEST) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNEST). The quantitative data indicated that both educational environments played an essential role in the students' development of the English language, but the areas of improvement and scope differed. In relation to communicative performance, students in the NEST classroom displayed greater improvement in terms of confidence and willingness to speak. In comparison, students in the NNEST classroom displayed more improvement in regard to the organization and utilization of language in a grammatical sense. Thus, instructional technique(s) prior to the nativeness of the teacher have more influence on the kind of learning achievement.

The qualitative findings indicated additional motivational differentiation. The NEST classroom fostered an interactive learning community; students were more inclined to participate and tolerate errors without making corrections. In contrast to the NEST classroom, the NNEST classroom, as a result of his/her first language and instructional clarity, students were better able to comprehend the linguistic structure and, thus, eliminate learning anxiety. The students in the NEST classroom developed communicative confidence, while in the NNEST classroom, the students developed a more mastery-oriented motivation.

Students' preferences showed evidence of underlying perceptions of native speakerism. While learners viewed native teachers as having and demonstrating 'authentic' pronunciation and 'natural' forms of communication, they recognized non-native teachers as providing clearer explanations and more systematic instruction. These results indicate that preference is more about learners' attitudes regarding the ownership of the language and the objectives of learning. Thus, no single type of teacher is better than the other; rather, both hold distinct, valuable contributions to the language learning process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational institutions should avoid hierarchical assumptions that position native English-speaking teachers as more competent than non-native teachers. Instead, schools may implement collaborative teaching models in which NEST focus on communicative exposure and authentic interaction while NNEST provide structured explanation, learning strategies, and linguistic clarification. Such collaboration may help learners develop comprehensive language competence while reducing native speakerism bias in the classroom.

Teachers are encouraged to design lessons that combine meaning-focused communication and form-focused instruction. Communicative activities such as discussion and interaction can increase students' confidence, whereas guided explanation and strategic use of the first language can support comprehension and accuracy. Teacher education programs should also prepare educators to recognize and critically address native speakerism so that teaching quality is evaluated based on pedagogical competence rather than linguistic background.

For future research, studies involving larger and more diverse samples across different regions and educational levels are recommended to confirm the generalizability of these findings. Longitudinal research may also examine how exposure to different teaching approaches influences learners' long-term proficiency development, motivation, and identity formation. Additionally, further investigation into related variables such as language anxiety, classroom interaction patterns, and lea

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