

Non-Native Language Teachers

Educational Linguistics

Volume 5

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Enric Llurda
Editor

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Perceptions, Challenges and
Contributions to the Profession

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Dedication

To Dolores, Angels and Roger

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As a non-native teacher of English, I have always been sensitive to the cause of the thousands of teachers of English who, like me, have had to struggle with the language and overcome the threats to their self-confidence posed by the perceived inferiority of non-natives in lieu of native teachers. Fortunately, excellent recent work—a good deal of which led by the TESOL NNEST Caucus—has helped to increase the status and professional self-esteem of non-native teachers, bringing them to the forefront of research in educational linguistics. This book is an attempt to move further in this direction by gathering several works by leading researchers with the explicit goal of contributing serious discussions and empirical studies on the role of non-native teachers in the language teaching profession.

I am indebted to all of the book's authors for their enthusiastic support of the project and their unfaltering willingness to participate in it. Their commitment kept me going in those few moments when despair seemed to be imminent. I am also indebted to the authors who broke the ice with research dealing with non-native teachers: Péter Medgyes, George Braine, Vivian Cook, and Jun Liu are among the contributors to this volume. A few other names must be mentioned here as well: Lia Kamhi-Stein, Janina Brutt-Griffler, Keiko K. Samimy, Cecilia Tang,, Nuzhat Amin, Thea Reves, Valéria Árva, Paul K. Matsuda, Barbara Seidlhofer, and many others. Their work provided inspiration for my own research and stimulated my embarking in this adventure, although it is quite likely I would not be involved in research dealing with non-native teachers had it not been by the initial push and the sensible advise given by Tracey M. Derwing, an excellent friend and advisor.

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Chapter 1

LOOKING AT THE PERCEPTIONS, CHALLENGES, AND CONTRIBUTIONS... OR THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A NON-NATIVE TEACHER

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1. INTRODUCTION

When in 1999 George Braine's book on non-native speaker (NNS) English teachers appeared, a lot of NNS professionals in TESOL, including myself, felt that an important area of study was finally becoming visible. After reading the book, I immediately wanted to be part of the shared effort to bring to the forefront of educational linguistics the task carried out by thousands of non-native language teachers all over the world. A few years earlier, Medgyes (1994) had opened the floor for a debate on this issue, bringing together experiential facts and theoretical principles in a rigorous and clear manner. Braine's volume consolidated the work in the area by gathering a unique collection of papers written by a group of authors actively involved in the contribution made by NNSs to the language teaching profession. Those were the seminal books that somehow prompted the recent interest in NNS teachers. However, it must also be acknowledged that during the 1990s, a portion of research on educational linguistics was turning to the social context in which language teaching took place. Thus, without explicitly addressing NNS and NS issues, the works of Holliday (1994, 1996), Ballard (1996), and Cortazzi & Jin (1996), significantly contributed to the understanding of the complex relationship between NS teachers

(BANA, in Holliday's terminology, standing for *British, Australasian, and North-American*) and NNS teachers (TESEP, standing for *Tertiary, Secondary and Primary* education in non-English speaking countries), and addressed power relationships in language teaching as well as differences in teaching cultures. Cortazzi & Jin (1996: 192) reported on a study based on 105 university students' essays on the theme 'Western ways of teaching and Chinese ways of learning', which showed a remarkable coincidence with the results of research specifically addressing the characteristics of NS and NNS teachers. Although the above studies is rarely mentioned in bibliographical lists devoted to research on NNS teachers, they well deserve being acknowledged here as part of the initial efforts to assert the status of NNS teachers of English in the world.

Now, ten years after Medgyes' pioneering work, research on non-native teachers has become widely accepted and several authors have gained respect for their active involvement in academic forums. Furthermore, research on NNS teachers has moved beyond the former *ghetto* of non-native authors. A look at the list of contributors to this volume will suffice to illustrate that although non-natives still greatly outnumber natives writing on this topic, native speakers are also involved in the study of NNS teachers. The work of authors such as Vivian Cook, Marko Modiano, Arthur McNeill, Tracey Derwing, and Murray Munro is indicative of the growth of interest among NSs in NNS issues, and also demonstrates that research on NNS teachers is increasingly conducted by NNSs and NSs alike. A further confirmation of this increasing interest in NNS issues is Bailey's (2001) explicit identification of research about non-native teachers as necessary for teacher preparation and development. And it is very indicative of the importance of this area in language teaching research that the TESOL International Research Foundation (TIRF) 'Call for Research Proposals 2003-2004' identified the following research priority:

The relationship between teachers' proficiency in English, effectiveness in teaching English as a second or foreign language or as a medium of instruction, and student achievement.

(retrieved from: <http://www.tirfonline.org/AboutTIRF/pages/callforproposals.html>)

All of the above point to a great momentum for studies about NNS teachers. Although the need has probably always been there, the interest has only recently appeared. Unfortunately, many authors still have difficulties finding widely read publication channels to disseminate their studies, which lie hidden as 'unpublished manuscripts' (see Braine, this volume). Thus, important findings remain unknown to the research and language educational community. Another limitation thus far is the fact that research

on the topic has been conducted mainly in North America. One of the necessary conditions of research on NNS issues is that it should take into account the specific characteristics of the local setting where the teaching will take place. The local component determines to what extent and in what way being a NNS teacher may affect a language teacher's identity. More work is needed that takes into consideration the relevance of the local context in any analysis of the implications of being a NNS language teacher, thus moving from global perspectives to locally meaningful settings. With the exception of Medgyes' work, very few authors have seriously dealt with NNS teachers in EFL contexts. This volume's aim is therefore twofold: it helps to disseminate research about NNS teachers, and it also fills a gap by bringing in research conducted in EFL settings, such as the Basque Country, Brazil, Catalonia, Hungary, Israel, and Sweden, in addition to some innovative research in the more deeply studied ESL contexts.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUME

This book contains 14 more chapters, which are organized in five sections that attempt to deal with NNS teachers from a range of different perspectives. The first section provides a set of introductory works by George Braine and Marko Modiano. Braine, from his position as the initial driving force in the constitution of the *TESOL Caucus on non-native English speaking teachers* (NNESTs) and the editor of an influential volume (Braine, 1999), writes a historical review of research on NNS teachers, structured around the two main approaches in existing research: self-perceptions of NNS teachers, and students' perceptions of NNS teachers. Braine's critical review of recent research about NNS teachers concludes with the acknowledgment of an emerging recognition of studies in this area, which he states is becoming a *global phenomenon*, and the identification of a paradoxical finding that appears in most of the reviewed studies: the realisation of NNSs' lower proficiency in English is combined with the increase in appreciation of NNS teachers' characteristics by students who have had longer contact with those teachers.

Braine's chapter is followed by Modiano's account of the impact of the increasing role of English as an international language in the language teaching profession. Modiano is a NSs of English who is based in a northern European EFL setting (*i.e.*, Sweden), in which a vast majority of citizens can speak English (81% of the population, according to data published in the *Eurobarometer 54 on Europeans and languages* - INRA, 2001), and where this language is becoming increasingly present in everyday life, and more specially in academic life (see Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999, for an

account of how English is penetrating domains in Scandinavia that used to belong to national languages). Modiano develops a coherent account of cultural studies in the light of the role of English as a Lingua Franca. He compares NNS teachers who are 'supportive of the NS norm' with those who are committed to the promotion of English as a lingua franca (pages 25-43). Taking Sweden as an example, Modiano argues that models of English in Europe are evolving from NS-dominated to linguafranca-oriented. Although, this shift may be partially impeded by the slowness of educational materials to adapt, change is in progress, and the increasing influence of cultural studies programs can facilitate NNSs to embrace the notion of English as the European (and global) lingua franca.

The second section of the volume is devoted to aspects of language teaching, with a look at NNSs' performance in language classrooms. The four contributions in this section range from the more theoretical (Cook, Macaro) to the more experiential/experimental (Cots & Díaz, McNeill).

Cook builds on his previous work on multi-competence (Cook, 1991) and on the idea of the *L2 user* (Cook, 2002) as opposed to the *L2 learner*, more traditionally used in applied linguistics. His chapter presents the main characteristics of L2 users, as opposed to native speakers, and the implications of these characteristics for language teaching, emphasizing the unique contribution NNS teachers can make to language teaching in their undisputable condition of L2 users.

Chapter 5 takes one of the aspects considered in Cook's paper and looks into it in a more detailed manner. Ernesto Macaro builds his text around the following eight questions:

- Why is codeswitching in the L2 classroom such a contentious issue?
- Is codeswitching contentious as classroom behaviour just for the teacher or also for the learners?
- What do language teachers think of the practice of codeswitching?
- For what purposes (or communicative functions) do language teachers codeswitch and how much codeswitching goes on?
- What do learners think about teachers codeswitching during lessons?
- What are the effects of codeswitching or not codeswitching on classroom interaction?
- What are the effects of not codeswitching on the learner's strategy development?
- Can codeswitching be a systematic, principled and planned part of the L2 curriculum?

Macaro's questions explore the uses of codeswitching in the L2 classroom from a wide range of perspectives. Four questions concern the diverse

attitudes towards codeswitching in the classroom, whereas three more questions are about the causes and consequences of codeswitching. Finally, the last question comes as a conclusion, indicating some guidelines for the use of codeswitching in the classroom, which according to Macaro, should not be used in a random or haphazard fashion, but restricted by clearly articulated principles, since otherwise L1 use might become ‘a discourse carried out entirely in L1 with only a marginal reference to the L2’ (page 72).

The use of functional linguistics to account for classroom performance is the link between Macaro’s chapter and Cots & Díaz’s micro-analysis of six classes taught by different teachers: four NNSs and two NSs. In chapter 6, Cots & Díaz open an innovative perspective by applying standard discourse analysis tools to the study of NNS teachers’ classroom performance. The authors look into the six lessons to find out how teachers construct social relationships and how they convey linguistic knowledge discursively. In their analysis, social relationships are built through power strategies and solidarity strategies, whereas linguistic knowledge can be conveyed through categorical knowledge strategies and non-categorical knowledge strategies. A parallel analysis is carried out on the use made by different teachers of personal pronouns (*i.e.* I, you, we) and the verbs that are used after each of these pronouns.

If, as we said above, chapter 6 represents an innovative attempt to apply standard discourse analysis procedures to the study of NNS teachers, the next paper contributes to the field with a quantitative study comparing NS and NNS teachers’ capacity to predict learners’ vocabulary difficulties in reading texts, as well as the effect of expertise in developing this capacity. In chapter 7, McNeill presents a study involving sixty-five teachers, divided into four groups according to nativeness and expertise, which were asked to identify difficult vocabulary, and contrasted their answers to the actual results obtained by students in a vocabulary test, thus empirically establishing which group of teachers was better at predicting vocabulary difficulty.

Teachers-in-training are considered in section three. Although the three papers in this section deal with TESOL students in North American graduate programs, the perspectives are rather different. Llorca, in chapter 8, presents the results of a survey conducted among practicum supervisors in graduate TESOL programs. The survey was conducted with thirty-two supervisors from a wide variety of institutions. Based on their experience observing student teachers in the practicum, supervisors had to respond to questions regarding their language skills and teaching skills. One of the main findings in the study is that it is very difficult to characterise all NNSs as a single group given the wide range of variation in language skills of NNSs attending graduate TESOL programs. It is claimed that such variation is at the heart of

the problems experienced by NNS teachers in asserting their status as competent language teachers.

In contrast to the overview of TESOL student teachers given by Llorca, Liu opts for an intensive approximation to the experiences of four Chinese Graduate Teaching Assistants teaching freshman composition, with the particularity that their students are native speakers. In Chapter 9, Liu refers to some of the fundamental topics in research about NNS teachers: teachers' own perceptions towards their teaching; the challenges and difficulties encountered by NNS teachers; the problem of establishing credibility as NNS teachers; the strategies for teaching; and students' perspectives. Liu advocates establishing support networks, and facilitating peer mentoring, as possible ways to help NNS student teachers cope with such potentially stressful situations as the teaching of composition to NSs.

In Derwing & Munro's contribution, their experience as teacher educators in two TESOL programs in Canada is outlined. They adopt a pragmatic view that allows them to consider teacher education requirements regardless of their students' native or non-native status. They point to the challenge created by 'the wide variation in English proficiency' among their students, both native and nonnative. The authors identify some aspects that are important for ensuring the preservice teachers' success, such as language proficiency, personality, past experiences of the cooperating teacher, gender, cultural background of ESL students, and the hosting school characteristics. Derwing & Munro thus present a set of practical reflections that should be kept in mind by coordinators of TESOL programs in North America with both NS and NNS students.

Although students' preferences have been repeatedly cited as the reason why many school administrators prefer to hire NS teachers over NNSs, to our knowledge no studies had been conducted examining students' attitudes towards NNS teachers until recently. It was as though researchers felt they already knew what the result would be, and so there was no need to conduct such research. Only very recently some researchers started eliciting students' views (Cheung, 2002; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Liang, 2002; Moussu, 2002). Somehow, section 4 of this book further covers this inexplicable gap in research, as it focuses exclusively on students' perceptions of NNS teachers.

In chapter 11, Eszter Benke & Péter Medgyes present the results of a survey among Hungarian students regarding their perception of their NNS teachers. The authors point to several advantages and disadvantages of both native and non-native teachers, which confirm previous statements by Medgyes (1994), such as NNSs' advantage in grammar teaching and—in EFL settings—their greater familiarity with the local educational environment. On the other hand, NNS teachers seem to be more prone to use the students' L1 in class, which is often perceived as a disadvantage. The

authors warn readers of the complexity of the picture and the high degree of variability among different students' preferences

Chapter 12 presents David Lasagabaster and Juan Manuel Sierra's study questioning Basque students about their preferences with regard to native or non-native teachers. The results of their closed questionnaire tend to confirm that EFL students have a preference for NS teachers over NNSs, but they also show that a combination of NSs and NNSs is even more appreciated. Some interesting differences among students of different ages can be observed, as university students seem to be more inclined towards NS teachers than younger students. The authors also conducted an open questionnaire, in which students had to indicate the main pros and cons they would associate with native and non-native teachers. Responses support previous statements, particularly those made by Medgyes (1994) in his characterisation of the bright and the dark sides of being a NNS teacher, and are therefore consistent with the findings reported in Benke & Medgyes' chapter.

Chapter 13 aims at the same type of question but employs a very different methodology. Instead of questioning a wide number of students about their preferences, Dorota Pacek has chosen to conduct a case study with two groups of international students taking ESL classes in a British university. Of particular relevance is the observation that the attitudes of many students towards their NNS teacher evolved positively as the course advanced and students gradually became used to the teacher.

The last section of the book is devoted to NNS teachers' self-perceptions. Although this is probably the most extensively developed area of study in NNS teacher research (see, for example: Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Liu, 1999; Llurda & Huguet, 2003), Ofra Inbar-Lourie and Kanavilil Rajagopalan offer two original approaches. In chapter 14, Inbar-Lourie explores the self and perceived identities of EFL teachers and places her study within a social-psychological framework. EFL teachers had to 'ascribe themselves as NSs or NNSs of English' and specify whether they thought other teachers and students perceived them to be NSs or NNSs. Students were also asked about their teachers' identities as NS or NNSs. A gap was found between self and perceived identities, showing that EFL teachers find it natural to function in a multi-identity reality that is accepted as a natural part of their professional life.

The book concludes with a look at NNS teachers' anxieties. In a study involving Brazilian teachers, Rajagopalan analyses the causes underlying negative self-perceptions by NNS teachers', and proposes a 'pedagogy of empowerment' that will help NNS teachers 'overcome their lack of self-confidence'. Rajagopalan's paper brings us back to the point of departure in

this book, as he links his discussion to the present role of English as an international language.

It is the intention of this volume to provide readers with a broader understanding of what it means to teach a language that is not the teacher's L1. One of the premises is that NNS teachers are ideally endowed with the capacity to teach a language that belongs to the wide community of its speakers worldwide. Most contributors to this volume have openly committed to the establishment of NNSs as legitimate language teachers. In addition, this book also gives clues that may ultimately help identify NNS teachers' qualities, improve teacher training programs, and guide administrators in their selection of the best possible teachers for a given setting.

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PART I

SETTING UP THE STAGE: NON-NATIVE
TEACHERS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Chapter 2

A HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON NON-NATIVE SPEAKER ENGLISH TEACHERS

GEORGE BRAINE

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

1. INTRODUCTION

Research on the self-perceptions of non-native speaker (NNS) English teachers, or the way they are perceived by their students is a fairly recent phenomenon. This may be due to the sensitive nature of these issues because NNS teachers were generally regarded as unequal in knowledge and performance to NS teachers of English, and issues relating to NNS teachers may have also been politically incorrect to be studied and discussed openly.

Despite the pioneering work of Medgyes (1992, 1994), it took nearly a decade for more research to emerge on the issues relating to NNS English teachers. In fact, there has been a surge of such studies recently, partly as a result of the establishment of the Non-native English Speakers' Caucus in the TESOL organization in 1999 (see Braine, 1999, or go to <http://nnest.moussu.net/> for more information on the Caucus). At the recently concluded TESOL 2003 conference in Baltimore, USA, more than 20 presentations included the acronym NNS in their titles, and most of these presentations were made by NNS English teachers themselves. This not only indicates that NNS English teachers appear to have a powerful new voice through the Caucus, but also that they are no longer reluctant to openly acknowledge themselves as NNS speakers.

A movement in an educational context could be relevant and popular, but it cannot grow without the backing of sound research and pedagogy. The purpose of this opening chapter is to critically examine the recent studies on

NNS English teachers. One characteristic of these studies is that they have been conducted mainly by NNS researchers. Another is that only a few have covered students' attitudes and preferences—probably the most crucial factor in the study of NNS teachers. A third characteristic is that these studies have been conducted in both ESL and EFL contexts. Because most of these studies were conducted for the purpose of Masters' theses or doctoral dissertations, most are yet to be published.

This chapter will describe the objectives, methodologies, and findings of the following studies: Reves & Medgyes (1994), Samimy & Brutt-Griffler (1999), Inbar-Lourie (2001), Llurda & Huguet (2003), Moussou (2002), Liang (2002), Cheung (2002), and Mahboob (2003). Based on their objectives, the studies have been classified into two categories: self-perceptions of NNS teachers and students' perceptions of NNS teachers. Although every effort has been made to examine all recent studies on NNS English teachers, some may have not been included for the obvious reason that many theses and dissertations are difficult to access because they remain unpublished.

2. SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF NNS ENGLISH TEACHERS

No review of research into NNS English teachers could begin without reference to Péter Medgyes, himself a non-native speaker, who appears to be the first to have brought the issues concerning NNS English teachers to the open. His two articles in the *ELT Journal* titled 'The schizophrenic teacher' (1983) and 'Native or non-native: who's worth more?' (1992), were also the forerunners of his groundbreaking book *The Non-native Teacher* (first published by Macmillan in 1994 and reissued by Hueber in 1999), in which Medgyes mixed research with his own experience as a NNS English teacher and first-hand observations of other NNS teachers, and boldly discussed previously untouched topics that would be considered controversial even today: 'natives and non-natives in opposite trenches,' 'the dark side of being a non-native', 'and who's worth more: the native or the non-native'. Medgyes also advanced four hypotheses based on his assumption that NS and NNS English teachers are 'two different species' (p. 25). The hypotheses were that the NS and NNS teachers differ in terms of (1) language proficiency, and (2) teaching practice (behavior), that (3) most of the differences in teaching practice can be attributed to the discrepancy in language proficiency, and that (4) both types of teachers can be equally good teachers on their own terms.

Reves & Medgyes (1994) was the result of an international survey of 216 NS and NNS English teachers from 10 countries (Brazil, former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Israel, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Sweden, Yugoslavia, and Zimbabwe). The objective was to examine the following hypothesis: NS and NNS English teachers differ in terms of their teaching practice (behaviors); these differences in teaching practice are mainly due to their differing levels of language proficiency, and their knowledge of these differences affects the NNS teachers' 'self-perception and teaching attitudes' (p. 354). The questionnaire consisted of 23 items of which 18 were addressed to both NSs and NNSs and five to NNSs only. Most of the questions were closed-ended and meant to elicit personal information of the subjects and their teaching contexts. The open-ended questions were meant to elicit the subjects' self-perceptions and their opinions relating to the three hypotheses. The overwhelming majority of the subjects, by their own admission, were NNSs of English. In their responses, 68% of the subjects perceived differences in the teaching practices of NS and NNS teachers. Eighty-four percent of the NNS subjects admitted to having various language difficulties, vocabulary and fluency being the most common areas followed by speaking, pronunciation, and listening comprehension. Only 25% of the subjects stated that their language difficulties had no adverse effect on their teaching. In view of these findings, Reves & Medgyes (1994) suggest that 'frequent exposure to authentic native language environments and proficiency-oriented in-service training activities' (p. 364) might improve the language difficulties of NNS teachers. Further, in order to enhance the self-perception of these teachers, they should be made aware of their advantageous condition as language teachers.

In their research, Samimy & Brutt-Griffler (1999) applied the Reves & Medgyes (1994) approach to survey and interview 17 NNS graduate students who were either pursuing a MA or Ph.D. in TESOL at a university in the United States. Their students, referred to as 'rather sophisticated group of non-native speakers of English' (p. 134) by the researchers, were from Korea, Japan, Turkey, Surinam, China, Togo, Burkina Faso, and Russia. In addition to using a questionnaire to collect quantitative data, Samimy & Brutt-Griffler also gathered qualitative data through classroom discussions, in-depth interviews, and analysis of autobiographical writings of the subjects. The aims of the study were to determine how these graduate students perceived themselves as professionals in the field of English language teaching, if they thought there were differences in the teaching behaviors of NSs and NNSs, what these differences were, and if they felt handicapped as NNS English teachers. Responding to the questionnaire, more than two thirds of the subjects admitted that their difficulties with the

language affected their teaching from 'a little' to 'very much'. Nearly 90% of the subjects perceived a difference between NS and NNS teachers of English. They identified the former group as being informal, fluent, accurate, using different techniques, methods, and approaches, being flexible, using conversational English, knowing subtleties of the language, using authentic English, providing positive feedback to students, and having communication (not exam preparation) as the goals of their teaching. NNS English teachers were perceived as relying on textbooks, applying differences between the first and second languages, using the first language as a medium of instruction, being aware of negative transfer and psychological aspects of learning, being sensitive to the needs of students, being more efficient, knowing the students' background, and having exam preparation as the goal of their teaching. However, they did not consider the NS teachers superior to their NNS counterparts. The differences in the teaching practices of NS and NNS teachers, as stated by the subjects of this study, could be attributed to contrasting sociocultural factors embedded in Western and Asian societies. Whereas Reves & Medgyes (1994) focus on the differing levels of language proficiency and their effects on teaching practices, the differing teaching practices identified by Samimy & Brutt-Griffler (1999) may be attributed to cross-cultural differences.

The third study of the self-perceptions of NNS English teachers was conducted by Ofra Inbar-Lourie at Tel Aviv University in Israel, in one of the first studies at doctoral-level on NNSs' issues. Titled 'Native and non-native English teachers: investigation of the construct and perceptions', Inbar-Lourie's (2001) study, conducted in two phases, set out to investigate why some teachers in Israel perceived themselves as NS of English, and the effects of the native versus non-native distinction on the pedagogical perceptions of the teachers. In the second phase of the study, which is more relevant to the topic of this chapter, Inbar-Lourie specifically sought to discover if there were differences in perceptions between teachers who claim to be NS of English and those who do not, with regard to the following factors: differences between NS and NNS English teachers; the teaching and status of the English language; English teaching in Israel; and English teaching and assessment methods. Further, Inbar-Lourie also sought to determine the effect of personal and professional background variables on the pedagogical perceptions of the teachers regarding the above issues.

In the first phase, data was gathered through a self-report questionnaire distributed to 102 English teachers in Israel. In the second phase, self-report questionnaires were distributed to 264 English teachers (93 NSs and 171 NNSs) followed by semi-structured interviews with nine teachers. Results from the first phase indicated that the teachers' native speaker identity could be explained by nine variables, two of which could best predict this identity:

having spoken English from the age of 0 to 6, and others' perception of them as native speakers of English. Results from the second phase of the study indicated that differences between NS and NNS teachers could be detected only in some categories, mainly the superiority of the NS teachers (as espoused by the NS teachers themselves), the degree of confidence in teaching specific language areas, and in student-teacher relations. No differences were found in perception categories relating to teaching and assessment practices, defining students' knowledge of English, the status of the English language, and goals of teaching English. In fact, perception differences in these areas arose not from the teachers' status as NS or NNS but from personal and professional variables such as country of birth, length of residence in the country, school level, and perceived type of school. NNS teachers reported having better relations with students and feeling more confident in using the L1 to facilitate teaching. Interviews with nine teachers confirmed the results from the self-reports.

In a more recent study, Llurda & Huguet (2003) investigated the self-awareness of 101 non-native English teachers in primary and secondary schools in a Spanish city. Through a set questionnaire (partially inspired by Medgyes, 1994) administered orally in one-on-one interviews with the subjects, the researchers aimed to determine how the subjects perceived their own language skills, how these skills affected their teaching, and how the skills had evolved over time; the subjects' teaching ideology as expressed through their preferences for designing a language course and their goals as language teachers; and the subjects' position in the NS-NNS debate, specifically with regard to the preference for NSs or NNSs as language teachers, and the need for cultural knowledge on the part of English teachers.

Although the research approach was qualitative, Llurda & Huguet relied heavily on statistics in the analysis of their data. In the case of language skills, they found that the secondary teachers showed more confidence in their skills than primary teachers, especially in general proficiency, grammar, knowledge of grammatical rules, and reading comprehension. Although primary teachers admitted that they did experience certain difficulties in teaching English, they did not attribute these difficulties to their proficiency in English. As for language improvement over time, the primary teachers displayed a greater awareness of their language improvement and believed that this improvement came through conscious study of the language.

In terms of language courses and language teaching goals, the majority of primary teachers (81.6%) chose communicative functions and topics as the foundations for language courses. Only half the secondary teachers did so, although more of them (38.1%) opted for language structures and habit

creation than their primary counterparts. In the case of teaching goals, almost all the primary teachers (97.2%) preferred communicative strategies, while only two-thirds of the secondary teachers did so.

In the NS or NNS debate, the primary teachers appeared to be more influenced by the native speaker fallacy, half of them stating that they would hire more NSs than NNSs for a language school, although the other primary teachers did state that they would hire equal numbers of NS and NNS teachers. As for secondary teachers, nearly two thirds chose the balanced option of hiring teachers from both groups. In fact, most of the secondary teachers (65.6%) believed that being a NNS was an advantage. As for the need for cultural knowledge, the teachers clearly preferred British culture, with situations involving the English language being closely associated with British NS.

3. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF NNS ENGLISH TEACHERS

The research described so far has focused on the self-perceptions of NNS English teachers. Research on students' perceptions of these teachers, as crucial as the self-perceptions if not greater, has a more recent history. One of the first studies in this area was by Lucie Moussu, whose M.A. thesis at Brigham Young University, USA, was titled 'English as a second language students' reactions to non-native English-speaking teachers' (2002). Moussu's research questions were as follows: (1) What feelings and expectations did the students have at first when taught by NNS English teachers, and why? (2) What other variables (such as gender, age, first language, etc.) influence the students' perceptions of their NNS teachers at the beginning of the semester? (3) How do the variables of time and exposure to NNS teachers influence the students' perceptions of their teachers?

Moussu's subjects were four NNS English teachers from Japan, Argentina, Ecuador, and Switzerland, and 84 ESL students above the age of 17, both males and females, from 21 different countries. All the students were enrolled in an intensive English program attached to a US university. The students responded to two questionnaires, one given the first day of class the second given fourteen weeks later on the last day of class. Over the 14-week semester, three separate sets of interviews were also conducted with six students. Analysis of the data shows that from the beginning of the semester, the students had positive attitudes towards their NNS teachers. For instance, 68% of the students said that they could learn English just as well from a non-native speaker as from a native speaker, and 79% expressed admiration and respect for their non-native speaker teachers, and as many as

84% of the students expected their class with a such a teacher to be a positive experience. The Korean and Chinese students expressed negative feelings toward their NNS teachers more frequently than other students. Time and exposure to the teachers only made their opinions more positive by the end of the semester. For instance, to the question 'Would you encourage a friend to take a class with this non-native English-speaking teacher?' only 56% of the students had answered 'yes' at the beginning of the semester. By the end of the semester, 76% had answered 'yes' to the same question.

Kristy Liang's Master's research (2002) at California State University, Los Angeles, also investigated students' attitudes towards NNS English teachers. Specifically, the study was designed to investigate 20 ESL students' attitudes towards six ESL teachers' accents and the features of these teachers' speech that contribute to the students' preference for teachers. Five of the teachers were NNSs from different language backgrounds and the other was a NS.

The students listened to brief audio recordings delivered by the six NNS English teachers and rated and ranked the teachers' accents according to a scale of preference. Data was collected through questionnaires which included information on the students' background, their beliefs about teaching, and their ranking and preferences. The results showed that, although the students rated pronunciation/accent in the ESL teachers' speech as very important, pronunciation/accent did not affect the students' attitudes towards their previous NNS English teachers in their home countries. In fact, the students held generally positive attitudes toward the teachers in their home countries, and believed that pronunciation/accent was not as relevant as it appeared in the first place. Further, personal and professional features as derived from the teachers' speech, such as 'being interesting', 'being prepared', 'being qualified', and 'being professional', played a role in the students' preference for teachers. In conclusion, Liang (2002) suggests that, instead of focusing on ESL teachers' ethnic and language background, the discussion on NNS English teachers should focus on their level of professionalism.

So far, what has been missing is an investigation of both teachers and students in a single study, and Cheung (2002) filled this need with her Masters' research conducted at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Cheung's objectives were to determine the attitudes of the university students in Hong Kong towards NS and NNS teachers of English, the strengths and weaknesses of these teachers from the perspective of students, and their capability of motivating the students to learn English. She also attempted to determine if there was any discrimination against NNS English teachers in Hong Kong.

Cheung triangulated her data collection with the use of questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and post-classroom interviews. The questionnaire was distributed to 420 randomly selected undergraduates from a variety of majors at seven universities in Hong Kong. Most of the students (98%) were Cantonese or Putonghua speakers, and 99% of them had learned English either in Hong Kong or China. Ten students from three universities, were also interviewed. In an unusual approach, Cheung also sought the opinions of twenty-two university English teachers, ranging from head of department to instructor, at six universities. A majority of these teachers were expatriates with about 60% being NS of English. Nearly 90% had been resident in Hong Kong for more than 6 years. The results showed that both students and teachers saw NS and NNS teachers having their respective strengths. A high proficiency in English, ability to use English functionally, and the awareness of the cultures of English speaking countries were the strengths observed in NS teachers. In the case of NNS teachers, the ability to empathize with students as fellow second language learners, a shared cultural background, and the emphasis they placed on grammar were seen as their strengths. As for teacher competency, both students and teachers stated that teachers should be well-informed about the English language, able to make learning relevant and fun, good at motivating students, able to encourage independent learning and thinking, sensitive and responsive to students' needs, and able to respect students as individuals with their own aspirations. Not all students and teachers were of the opinion that there was discrimination against NNS English teachers in Hong Kong.

All the studies of students' perceptions of NNS English teachers described so far have been conducted at the Masters' level. The only doctoral research into this issue was just completed by Ahmar Mahboob (2003) at the Indiana University in Bloomington, USA, under the title 'Status of non-native English teachers as ESL teachers in the USA'. Mahboob's study was conducted in two phases. First, using a questionnaire, he examined the hiring practices of the administrators of 118 college-level adult English language programs, the demographics of the English teachers in these programs, and the demographics of the students enrolled in the programs. Mahboob found that the number of NNS teachers teaching ESL in the United States is low (only 7.9% of the teachers employed at these programs), and that this low figure is disproportionate to the high number of NNS graduate students enrolled in MA TESOL and similar teacher-education programs. Mahboob attributes the low figure to the preference given by most (59.8%) program administrators to 'native English speakers' in hiring practices.

The second phase of Mahboob's study is more relevant to this chapter because it examined students' perceptions of NNS teachers. Instead of using

questionnaires to survey the students, Mahboob used the novel and more insightful ‘discourse-analytic’ technique, asking 32 students enrolled in an intensive English program to provide written responses to a cue that solicited their opinions on NS and NNS language teachers. The student essays were coded individually by four readers who in turn classified the students’ comments according to linguistic factors (oral skills, literacy skills, grammar, vocabulary, culture), teaching styles (ability to answer questions, teaching methodology), and personal factors (experience as an ESL learner, hard work, affect). The analysis of these comments showed that both NS and NNS teachers received positive and negative comments. In the case of NS teachers, the majority of positive comments related to oral skills, with vocabulary and culture also being viewed positively. Negative comments on NS teachers related to grammar, experience as an ESL learner, ability to answer questions, and methodology. In the case of NNS teachers, experience as an ESL learner earned the most number of positive comments, followed by grammar, affect, oral skills, methodology, hard work, vocabulary, culture, ability to answer questions, and literacy skills. NNS teachers received negative comments with regard to oral skills and culture.

4. CONCLUSION

The most obvious factor to emerge from the above description of research is that issues relating to NNS English teachers have now become a legitimate area of research. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, despite the pioneering work of Medgyes in the early 1990s, studies on these issues began to be published in the United States only a decade later. The gap may be due to the fact that Medgyes’ research was published in a journal which is not widely read in the US, and that his book *The non-native teacher* was published only in the UK and was difficult to obtain in the US until it was reprinted by another publisher.

Although the influence of Medgyes on issues relating to NNS English teachers is in the area of teachers’ self-perceptions, his research has stood the test of time and will form the benchmark for many more studies to come. More recently, he has also embarked on the study of NNS teachers’ classroom behavior (Árva & Medgyes, 2000 and learners’ observations of the differences in teaching behaviour of NS and NNS teachers (Benke & Medgyes, this volume) that are bound to become models for future research.

As mentioned earlier, the study of NNS English teachers is a global phenomenon. The research itself has been conducted in Asia (Hong Kong and Israel), Europe (Hungary and Spain), and North America (USA). The