

Enric Llurda (ed.) 2005: *Non-Native Language Teachers. Perceptions, Challenges and Contributions to the Profession*. New York: Springer. xii + 314 pp.

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Research on the perceptions of non-native speaker (NNS) English teachers, those held by themselves, by their students, or by native speakers (NS), is an issue relatively recent in the academic arena. In fact, and as mentioned throughout the volume under review, there seems to have been a surge of such studies since the establishment of the Non-native English Speakers' Caucus in the TESOL organization in 1999 and the seminal work by Braine (1999) that same year. The lack of published material previous to the 90s on the challenges that NNS English teachers have to face in different parts of the world seems, at least, striking if one considers that the bulk of English language teaching remains in the hands of NNS teachers (more than 80% according to Canagarajah 1999). That is one of the reasons why the publication of the present volume, edited by Enric Llurda (Universitat de Lleida), is so fitting and should be welcome. Its goal is twofold: on the one hand, it helps to make research about NNS teachers widely available and, on the other, it fills a gap by presenting research carried out in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings such as the Basque Country, Brazil, Catalonia, Hungary, Israel and Sweden, together with other works on the better studied contexts of English as a Second Language (ESL). The contributors to the book also provide guidelines about how to boost NNS English teachers' self-confidence and how to heighten their awareness of the knowledge they may convey to students.

The book is made up of an introduction and 14 chapters organized into five sections, each of them presenting NNS teachers from a different perspective. In the introductory chapter, "Looking at the perceptions, challenges and contributions ... or the importance of being a non-native teacher," Enric Llurda briefly reviews how and when this interest in the role of NNS teachers arose by referring to the seminal work by Medgyes (1994) and Braine (1999) and also to authors whose work on the relationships between NS and NNS teachers and the differences in teaching cultures in a way set the stage for the topic dealt with in the current volume (Ballard 1996; Cortazzi and Jin 1996; Holliday 1994). After presenting the main aims of the book, Llurda briefly comments on each of the contributions and concludes with some remarks on the overall intention of the volume, which is, as mentioned above, to facilitate access to and understanding of the issues faced by NNS teachers all over the world.

The first section of the book "Setting up the stage: Non-native teachers in the twenty-first century," comprises two chapters. In chapter 2, "A history of research on non-native speaker English teachers," George Braine critically reviews recent studies on NNS English teachers focusing on two research areas: (i) the self-perceptions of NNS English teachers, and (ii) students' perceptions of NNS English teachers. His conclusion is that issues relating to being a NNS English teacher are now an established legitimate research area. Most of this research has been carried out by NNS teachers themselves, which could pose a methodological problem regarding the validity and reliability of the data obtained, but at the same time speaks for the value of the researchers who now acknowledge themselves as non-native speakers and openly talk about their problems.

The main findings of the research on NNS teachers' self-perceptions reveals the realization of their lower language proficiency and different teaching behavior in comparison with their NS counterparts; research on students' perceptions indicates that they tend to be more supportive of NNS teachers the longer they are taught by them. In chapter 3, "Cultural studies, foreign language teaching and learning practices, and the NNS practitioner," Marko Modiano takes Sweden as an example of how English language teaching and learning practices are in a process of change that leads to consider the role of English as a lingua franca in today's world. Within the backdrop of the multicultural nature of English, he presents the advantages of the NNS teacher over the NS teacher in language and also in cultural studies.

In the second part of the book, "NNS teachers in the classroom," we find four contributions. In chapter 4, "Basing teaching on the L2 user," Vivian Cook argues that the concepts of *L2 user* ("a person who uses another language for any purpose at whatever level") and *multicompetence* (the knowledge of two or more languages in one mind) have implications for language teaching. He presents the main characteristics of L2 users and argues that the goal of teaching should be trying to make students independent L2 users, rather than encouraging a closeness to NS models (see Ortega 2005, who mentions the crisis of the native speaker as a model and norm for L2 learning as one of the issues with important ethical dimensions in second language acquisition research). Cook presents the pros and cons of native and NNS teachers from the L2 user perspective and concludes with a re-examination of the role of the first language (L1) in the classroom. Chapter 5, "Codeswitching in the L2 classroom: A communication and learning strategy," deals precisely with the issue of the role of the L1 in the second language classroom. Ernesto Macaro provides answers to questions related to the reasons that make code-switching (by definition only available to the bilingual teacher) a contentious issue in the L2 classroom and the purposes and frequency of codeswitching. He finally advances a pedagogical proposal based on an interaction between functionally based codeswitching (the use of the L1 is beneficial because it facilitates classroom interaction or improves the learning of the L2 or both, see also Storch and Wigglesworth 2003) and its quantitative use (the NNS teacher needs to be aware of what the threshold for L1 use is). In chapter 6 Josep María Cots and Josep María Díaz study the role of NNS EFL teacher talk from a functional perspective. The main goal of their contribution "Constructing social relationships and linguistic knowledge through non-native-speaking teacher talk" is to test whether the semantic notions of *modality* and *participant inscription* help to identify particular discourse strategies. The microanalysis of data from six EFL classes, four taught by NNS teachers and two by NS, identifies different strategies distributed alongside two continuums: (i) the representation of social relationships (from a discourse of power to a discourse of solidarity), and (ii) the representation of knowledge (from a categorical to a non-categorical discourse). As the authors themselves mention in the concluding remarks, their contribution offers interesting empirical evidence that can complement the more common use of data from questionnaires in this area of research. Finally, in chapter 7, "Non-native speaker teachers and awareness of lexical difficulty in pedagogical texts," Arthur McNeill examines the issue of NS and NNS teachers' sensitivity to language difficulties from a learner's perspective. He reports empirical work based on a comparative study in which a secondary focus was the role of teacher expertise

(experienced vs. novice teachers) in identifying lexical problems. By contrasting the results obtained from the 65 teachers participating in the study with those obtained by 200 secondary school students in a vocabulary test, McNeill shows that ESL teachers who share their learners' L1 are generally more accurate at identifying lexical problems in reading texts. Interestingly, the most successful teacher group was the novice non-native speaker group.

The third part of the book is entitled "Perspectives on NNS teachers-in-training" and we find three contributions about this population, each focusing on a different aspect. Thus, in chapter 8, "Non-native TESOL students as seen by practicum supervisors," Enric Llorca reports the results obtained from the answers to a written questionnaire sent to thirty-two practicum supervisors in graduate TESOL programs in North America where, as the author mentions, one out of three TESOL graduates is a NNS of English (120). The questionnaire enquired about the general characteristics of NNS students, their language skills, their performance in the practicum and their possibilities of professional opportunities. On the basis of the supervisors' responses, the author concludes that not all TESOL students would be eligible for teaching responsibilities in ESL contexts at advanced levels and it would be those NNS teachers with a high language proficiency that will be better prepared and stand better chances of doing so. In chapter 9, "Chinese graduate teaching assistants teaching freshman composition to native English speaking students," Jun Liu adopts an ethnographic case study methodology and focuses on the experience of four NNS Chinese teachers whose task is teaching first-year composition to NS in the United States. Using data from email messages and face to face interviews, the author reviews the participants' reactions when they first learned what their teaching assignment was, the challenges they faced and the difficulties they had to cope with, how they tried to establish credibility as NNS teachers and what benefits they obtained from teaching first-year composition. The students' opinions about their teachers are also discussed. Liu concludes by pointing out that the problems these particular teachers faced could be due to different sets of cultural expectations for teachers and learners and intercultural miscommunication and misunderstanding. He suggests that program directors should facilitate support to this type of NNS teachers who are, at the same time, graduate students taking their own courses. In chapter 10, "Pragmatic perspectives on the preparation of teachers of English as a second language: Putting the NS/NNS debate in context," Tracey M. Derwing and Murray J. Munro present the context-specific characteristics of two teacher-training programs in Vancouver and Toronto. As teacher educators, their view of the roles of NS and NNS English teachers is pragmatic and they are mainly worried about the standards prospective candidates in their programs will have to meet for graduation. In their programs a match is established between the students and a cooperating teacher considering criteria such as the level of the ESL students' linguistic proficiency, the personality of both the student and the cooperating teacher, past experiences of the cooperating teacher, communication skills of the student (both NS and NNS), gender and cultural background. Derwing and Munro disregard blanket statements about NS or NNS teachers as inappropriate and speculative concerns about NS vs NNS as unhelpful. Instead they believe that more attention should be paid "... to current teacher trainer activities that already seem to be addressing some of the real underlying issues." (190).

The fourth part of the book, with three contributions, covers “Students’ perceptions of NNS teachers”, an under-researched area until very recently. In chapter 11, “Differences in teaching behaviour between native and non-native speaker teachers: As seen by the learners,” Eszter Benke and Péter Medgyes provide answers to the following questions: (i) in the learners’ judgment, which are the most characteristic features of NS and NNS teachers, (ii) in which aspects of teaching behaviour are the differences between the two groups the most apparent, and (iii) to what extent do learners’ perceptions correspond to those held by the teachers themselves. Four hundred and twenty two Hungarian learners of English answered a multi-item Likert-type scale questionnaire. In the light of the results obtained, the authors conclude that NS and NNS teachers form two easily identifiable groups. In general, learners spoke highly of the NS’s ability to teach conversation classes and to serve as perfect models for imitation, they are seen as friendlier and their lessons as livelier. The advantage of NNS teachers, according to the students, is related to the teaching and explaining of grammatical issues, to the more effective promotion of language learning, and to their acting as suppliers of the exact lexical item. These perceptions seem to match those held by the two groups of teachers themselves. In chapter 12 David Lasagabaster and Juan Manuel Sierra answer the question which gives the title to their contribution “What do students think about the pros and cons of having a native speaker teacher?” The subjects participating in their study were 76 Basque university students who completed both a close and an open questionnaire. The results of the study are consistent with those reported in the contribution by Benke and Medgyes: the Basque students, like their Hungarian counterparts, preferred “... NS teachers for pronunciation, culture and civilization, listening, vocabulary and speaking, whereas they preferred NNS teachers in the areas of grammar and strategies” (233). The findings of the studies reported in chapters 11 and 12, both with students’ perceptions of their teachers, should be born in mind by both NS and NNS teachers in order to reflect on those aspects in which weaknesses are obvious. The last chapter in this fourth part of the book is “Personality not nationality: Foreign students’ perceptions of a non-native speaker lecturer of English at a British university,” by Dorota Pacek. The author reports a small-scale study among Birmingham University international students to find out what two different groups of learners expected from an English language teacher (ELT) and to establish what their reactions were when they were taught by a NNS in an ESL context. Pacek used two questionnaires to survey vocabulary class students, aged 18-19, from different parts of the world and Japanese secondary school teachers of English (JST), aged 35-45. Her results show that nationality and students’ educational background seem to play an important role in what characteristics they perceive to be more or less important in a foreign language teacher. In general, learners could be persuaded by a NNS teacher if the latter introduces appropriate teaching methods and displays personality features favored by them.

The final part of the book deals with “NNS teachers’ self-perceptions” and comprises two more chapters. In chapter 14, “Mind the gap: Self and perceived native speaker identities of EFL teachers,” Ofra Inbar-Lourie places her study within a socio-psychological framework and considers the issue of language identity (self and perceived) and how it is particularly relevant for EFL teachers. She reviews variables that have been noted to affect language teachers’ perceived native and non-native

identities such as "... pronunciation, familiarity with the target language and its culture, self-efficacy in teaching the various subject matter components and perceptions as to who qualifies as a native speaker of the language" (269). Using a self-report questionnaire with open-ended questions in a sample of one hundred and two mostly female EFL teachers in Israel, Inbar-Lourie asked them to ascribe themselves as NS or NNS of English. They were also questioned about how others (NS, NNS and their students) perceived them. The findings confirm the existence of a gap between self and perceived identities, a gap that is assumed by EFL teachers as belonging to the multi-identity reality they function in. The final chapter in this section, and also the one concluding the book, Chapter 15 "Non-native speaker teachers of English and their anxieties: Ingredients for an experiment in action research," is by Kanavillil Rajagopalan who explores in detail the underlying causes of the so-called native speaker myth in English language teaching and the resulting marginalization of the NNS teacher. He presents quantitative and qualitative data from a questionnaire completed by 450 EFL teachers in Brazil and then puts forward a "pedagogy of empowerment" which will hopefully allow NNS teachers to overcome their lack of self-confidence. This idea brings back the points brought up in Vivian Cook's contribution (chapter 4) and emphasizes the importance of making NNS teachers aware of their strengths.

As is common in most edited books, writing styles differ greatly from one paper to another and there is some overlapping in the background section of some of the chapters. There are also some minor typographical errors that have already been forwarded to the editor. I believe, however, that this is a much-needed volume which offers everything it announces in its subtitle: the perceptions different groups of people, including themselves, have of NNS teachers and the challenges of the group. The work (i) brings to the fore the complex theme of the challenges NNS teachers face all over the world and the need for discussions and proposals based on empirical research, (ii) emphasizes the strengths and assets NNS teachers have and provides interesting guidelines to overcome their weaknesses, (iii) presents NNS teachers evaluated by students, NS teachers, practicum supervisors in TESOL programs and by themselves, (iv) features research conducted in both ESL and EFL contexts adopting several methodological instruments, and (v) provides a detailed reference section after each contribution, which will facilitate in-depth coverage of the different research topics presented in the contributions and a final and helpful index. This book will be useful not only to researchers in the field and graduate students pursuing a degree in TESOL but also to advanced undergraduates in teacher-training courses who need to be made aware of how much they, as NNS teachers, have to offer to their future students. The volume will, no doubt, encourage further studies that will lead to an informed decision-making process in the corresponding institutions.

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