



Native and Non Native Teachers' Impact on the Preparatory Year Students' Achievement in English Courses at the University of Tabuk

Kosay Moneer Al-Shewaiter

Department of English and translation, University of Tubak

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Original Research Paper
Received Jan. 2019
Accepted Apr. 2019

Keywords:

Non-native speakers,
achievement and preparatory year

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of using native and non-native English teachers on the achievement of preparatory year students at the University of Tabuk for academic year 2017/2018. To achieve the purpose of the study, a pre/post-test was constructed to measure students' level in English skills. The test consisted of four parts listening, reading, writing, structure. A speaking test was also conducted to measure the students' level in speaking skill. The study sample consisted of eight groups from the intermediate level taught by both native and non-native English speaker's teachers.

The researcher used a descriptive statistical analysis T-test (means and standard deviations). The findings of the study showed that there was a significant correlation between listening and speaking skills in favour of native speakers. And there was a significant correlation between writing and grammar skills in favour of non-native speakers. And there was no statically significant in the achievements of students in reading skill. Also, there were no statically significant differences in the student's achievement due to gender. In the light of those findings, the study recommends that both native and non-native English speakers are important for the learning process.

1. Introduction

English as a foreign language courses are basically concerned with English language for international communication. It has developed to be the most widely used language in the world. Learning English as a foreign language has become a very common phenomenon in most of the Arab countries. English language is significant for being a tool that facilitates learning in relevant fields. Learners' ability in English language has not been promising, as it neither relates to their demands or ambitions, nor substantiates the efforts and financial support expended on learning English in Saudi Arabia (Al-Omrani, 2008).

Nowadays, only fifth of the population speaks English. It is the language of choice at work and travel. Many language institutes, schools and universities in Saudi Arabia that teach English language as a compulsory course prefer native English teachers because they claim that native teacher teach better English compared to non-native English speakers (Ismaiel, 2017).

Language specialists and educational experts are concerned with non-native teachers of English who may transfer their negative pronunciation and speaking habits to the students at this stage. But this situation is avoidable if teachers are well qualified. The time that students can start learning with a native English teacher is when they have the basic needs of conversational skills. This may help them acquire correct pronunciation and

new vocabulary. Situation problem that might be shown at this stage is the issue of some native speakers who have inappropriate command of grammar; therefore it is important to hire qualified English native speakers (Alseweed & Daif-Allah, 2012).

Al-Omrani (2008) mentioned that within the Saudi context, students who plan to study in English speaking countries as a foreign language (EFL) programs in Saudi Arabia expect NNESTs to teach their EFL courses. But Saudi students who come to USA to study English as a second language (ESL) for academic purposes do not expect this at all. They expect that ESL classes to be taught by Americans for whom English is the mother tongue. As a matter of fact, some Saudi ESL students are surprised when a non-native speaker of English teaches an ESL class in the U.S. This situation can raise some questions regarding the 'effects of being taught by NNESTs on learning English as a second/foreign language'.

A central question that possibly characterizes the non-native English-speaking teacher literature is, 'who is best qualified to teach English: the native or the non-native teacher?' Many studies have described the relative strengths and weaknesses of native and non-native teachers by investigating student and/or teacher perceptions through surveys, interviews and journals (Al-Nawrasy, 2013; McNamara, Morton, Storch, & Thompson, 2018; Rahimi & Zhang, 2015). For example, native speakers are assumed to be superior in linguistic competence as compared to non-native speakers and are considered owners of proper and authentic English. On the other hand, non-native English speaking teachers are credited with more conscious knowledge of grammar, language learning experience that they can share with learners, serving as good models and, the ability to empathize with language learners (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015).

A heated debate continues among language specialists about choosing native or non- native English teachers. Most researchers recommend native speakers to help students speak about daily life situations, vocabulary, popular phrases and pronunciation that people use when they travel or live in an English speaking country. A native speaker is appropriate if the students' or learners' main goal is to learn how to communicate or to interact with native speakers easily (Al-Omrani, 2008).

On the other hand, if the students need to know more about the four skills, or students specialize in English then they need to choose professional non-native English teachers who will provide them with an academic teaching that includes grammar, spelling and phonetics. Non-native teachers are also familiar with the difficulties that face students while learning English. The native versus non-native teacher issue is very controversial from both pedagogical and sociolinguistic perspectives (Lin & Lu, 2016; Ling & Braine, 2007; Peaci, 2016).

2. Literature Review

All that raised a question of 'who is best qualified to teach English—the native or the non-native teachers?' Many studies have described the strengths and weaknesses of native and non-native teachers by investigating student and/or teacher perceptions through surveys, interviews and journals (Al-Nawrasy, 2013; Ismaiel, 2017; Samuel, 2017). For example, one of the strengths of native teachers are quite clear in their accent, their competence and their command of the language while non-native teachers are more qualified in fields such as grammar and they have formal education in teaching the language, besides, they identify with the students and they understand their needs more than native teachers, basically they empathetic with their students (Ismaiel, 2017). Separating teachers into native and non-native speakers is one of the most difficult concepts in English language teaching despite of the advantages and disadvantages of such separation. Some researchers say that logically this separation does not exist (Hobbs, & Payne, 2010) or that it is impossible to determine (Lin & Lu, 2016), while others insist upon actively discarding this distinction (Amin, 2001; Butler, 2007; Elder, McNamara,

Kim, Pill, & Sato, 2017).

Instead of looking at NSs and NNSs as two separated groups, comparing which one is better or more qualified to be teachers than the other, Hobbs, Matsuo, and Payne (2010) Who work at ARIZONA State University emphasize cooperation and mutual help between NS and NNS teachers, since both groups of teachers have specific strengths and weaknesses. However, in spite of the existence of successful research experiences on NSs and NNSs cooperation, such as De Oliveira and Richardson (2001), they are still very difficult to find in the literature.

Samuel (2017) argues that the native speaker norm results in dividing the English language teaching profession according to a class system and that it should be eliminated. Kachru and Nelson (1996) argue that viewing teachers through the lens of the native/non-native dichotomy maintains a monocultural and monolingual point of reference.

Lee (2005) suggests six defining features of a native speaker that some authors such as (Braine, 2013; Kubita, 2004; Maum, 2002) support and agree with. These are: "the individual acquired the language in early childhood and maintains the use of the language, the individual has intuitive knowledge of the language, the individual is able to produce fluent, spontaneous discourse, the individual is communicatively competent and able to communicate within different social settings, the individual identifies with or is identified by a language community, and the individual does not have a foreign accent." Many researchers have declared that the definition of native and non-native speakers is problematic and unfair (Al-Omrani, 2008; Braine, 2013; Daif-Allah, 2010; Lee, 2005; Samuel, 2017).

Being a monolingual speaker of a language (which is rare) and being born in a particular place does not adequately facilitate the quest in defining the native speaker since many native speakers of a language do, in fact, speak other languages besides their own; and monolinguals may be the exception rather than the norm (Ling & Braine, 2007).

In their research, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999) surveyed and interviewed 177 non-native graduate students from Korea, Japan, Turkey, Surinam, China, Togo, Burkina Faso, and Russia. In addition to using a questionnaire they used classroom discussions, and in-depth interviews. They identified the NESTs as being informal, fluent, accurate, using several techniques, methods, and approaches, being flexible, using conversational English, using authentic English, giving positive feedback to students, and having communication as the goals of their teaching. NNESTs were perceived as depending merely on textbooks, applying differences between the first and second languages, 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 former to be superior to the latter.

Cheung (2002) reported that NESTs had better oral skills, greater vocabulary, and insight into "Western" (presumably British, Australasian and North American) culture. On the other hand, their lexico-grammatical knowledge was poor and they struggled to explain complex constructions. In addition, some teachers lacked understanding of language teaching methodology. Similar findings emerged from Mahboob's (2004) study of 32 L2 learners in an intensive English program in the USA. Conversely, the non-NESTs in these two studies were valued for their own experience as language learners, their use of strict methodology and their work ethic; however, they were perceived as having weaker oral skills and less cultural insight than their native-speaker counterparts.

Pacek (2005) revealed a bigger concern for teachers' engagement, preparation, qualifications, and professional background than for their linguistic background. Having learned the target language through conscious study rather than childhood acquisition, non-NESTs "may have a sounder grasp of English grammar and even be more effective...than the so-called native speakers" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 80) in teaching lexical, grammatical and metacognitive skills (Mahboob, 2004; Seidlhofer, 1999). And if explanations about grammar are ineffective or insufficient in the L2, non-NESTs who share their students' L1 may use the shared L1 to facilitate understanding (Üstünlüoğlu, 2007).

Research on non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) is a fairly recent phenomenon as issues relating to such matters used to be politically incorrect to be studied and discussed openly (Zughoul, 2003). The place of nonnative speakers as English teachers has probably been an issue as long as English has been taught internationally. However, the majority of students worldwide learn English in foreign language contexts, and, consequently, most English teachers work in such contexts too (Üstünlüoğlu, 2007). In addition, most English language learners in the world are taught by NNEST teachers (Butler, 2007; Ling & Braine, 2007). Medgyes's work in the early 1990s (1992, 1994) has laid emphasis on issues relating to NNESTs in the area of teachers' self-perceptions as well as learners' perceptions of their EFL teachers whether they are native or non-native. Issues relating to NNESTs and NESTs have been studied by many researchers (Widdowson, 1994).

Kim (2009) investigated native and non-native teachers' judgments of oral English performance: a mixed method approach to examine how native English-speaking (NS) and non-native English-speaking (NNS) teachers assess students' oral English performance. This empirical study used a semi-direct oral English test as the research instrument. The evaluation behaviors of two groups of teachers (12 Canadian NS teachers and 12 Korean NNS teachers) which consisted the sample of the study were compared with regard to internal consistency, severity, and evaluation criteria. Findings of a many-faceted Rasch Measurement analysis showed that most of the NS and NNS teachers maintained acceptable levels of internal consistency, with only one or two inconsistent raters in each group. The two groups of teachers also exhibited similar severity patterns across different tasks.

Likewise, Al-Nawras (2013) conducted a study to investigate the effect of the native English language teachers in comparison with non-native English language teachers on students' achievement in speaking skills. The subjects of the study were 6 native English teachers (NESTs) and 6 non-native English teachers (NNESTs), and their 196 10th-grade students in the Institute of Applied Technology in the UAE. The instrument of the study was a speaking test implemented at the end of term one of the academic year 2008/2009. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference among students' overall speaking achievement test scores amongst 10th graders at ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the native-ness of the teacher. However, the in depth analysis showed that there was a significant correlation between native-ness and pronunciation in favour of the NESTs and a significant correlation between accuracy and nativeness in favour of the NNESTs.

In brief, non-native teachers can never be treated or seen as native speakers especially in teaching English as a second language. Most native teachers have more chances to be employed at different workplaces where non-native teachers are seen as unqualified to teach English or simply less qualified compared to native teachers. Not second language learners only, but sometimes even the parents, view non-native teachers as lacking of various aspects in English such as pronunciation, accent, and fluency. However, this is not true because it is bias obviously. Non-native teachers can very well teach English as a foreign or second language. And it is true that native teachers cannot teach English as a foreign or second language. Non-native speakers have a lot of chances to succeed in teaching the second language once they turn their weaknesses into strengths.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were selected based on convenience sampling from the total population of Preparatory Year students at University of Tabuk 2017/2018. The number of male and female students' population is almost (3800) students. The study sample consisted of eight groups from the intermediate level, four male groups (128 students) and four female groups (128). Two of the male groups were taught by Native Speaker and two groups were taught by Non Native Speakers and the same situation in the female section. That is, the sample of the study consisted of 256 students. Each group consisted of 32 students. All of these students finished the first semester of the academic year 2017 / 2018. All of these student's study fifteen hours of English per week and all of them came from the secondary school to the university directly. This study used a random sampling process for the Preparatory Year students at the English Language Course at the University of Tabuk in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to answer the research questions. All the individuals in the defined population have equal and independent chance of being selected.

3.2. Instrument

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher developed an achievement test; a pre/post-test was constructed to measure students' level in English. The test consisted of four parts listening, reading, writing, structure each part consists of four multiple choice questions. A speaking test was also conducted to measure the students' level in speaking skill. The researcher depended on the "Text Book" to design the research instruments.

3.3. Pre-test: (T-test)

To ensure of the equality of the two groups the researcher prepared a pre-test for these targeted groups. After the researcher decided the classes where the experiment should take place, he made the test on the sample of the study. The test consisted of five main parts, each part includes four multiple choice items, except the speaking test which was only oral test and it was done before the beginning of the experiment. The pre-test was set in order to know the degree of equality in information in both groups male, female in English language course, after these procedures the researcher calculated the degrees of both male, female and he emptied these results in order to make the statistical processing and to measure the differences in results between (native teacher's group) and (non-native teacher's group). T-test was used for the independent results in order to measure the significant statistical differences between the average scoring within the two groups in the pre-test and post – test for the achievement test.

Table1: Means and Standard Deviations of the Achievement according to Groups Taught by Native and Non-Native Speakers on the Pre – test

Skill	Teacher	No.	Means	Std.	t	Sig.
Listening	Native	128	10.44	2.41	0.713	0.476
	Non	128	10.23	2.32		
Reading	Native	128	11.04	2.25	1.793	0.074
	Non	128	10.55	2.14		
Writing	Native	128	10.77	2.14	1.519	0.130
	Non	128	10.35	2.22		
Structure	Native	128	12.03	2.29	1.674	0.095
	Non	128	11.58	2.03		
Speaking	Native	128	10.88	1.88	1.317	0.189
	Non	128	10.57	1.91		
Total	Native	128	55.16	9.94	1.559	0.120
	Non	128	53.27	9.38		

Independent samples t-test was employed in order to catch the significant difference between native and non-native speaker as depicted in Table 1, the result shows that there is no statistical significant difference at ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) in the performance of the sample of the study in the pre-test and also the results are the same according to the (native, non-native variable), which shows that the study groups are equal.

3.4. Post-test: (T-test)

After making sure that both groups in the sample of the study were equal, the researcher used a native speaker to teach the first group, while the other group was taught by a non-native speaking teacher, and to make sure of the study hypothesis, all data were statistically processed by using (t-test) as the following:

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of the Achievement according to Groups Taught by Native and Non Native Speakers on the Post – test

Skill	Teacher	No.	Means	Std.	t	Sig.
Listening	Native	128	15.71	2.31	3.77	0.00
	Non	128	14.59	2.43		
Reading	Native	128	14.96	2.21	0.699	0.485
	Non	128	15.16	2.26		
Writing	Native	128	13.67	2.25	7.695	0.00
	Non	128	15.84	2.31		
Structure	Native	128	15.18	2.05	7.796	0.00
	Non	128	17.19	2.07		
Speaking	Native	128	16.66	2.00	5.530	0.00
	Non	128	15.22	2.18		
Total	Native	128	76.19	9.71	1.423	0.15
	Non	128	77.99	10.57		

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations of the Achievement according to the Male Groups Taught by Native and Non Native Speakers on the Post – test

Skill	teacher	No.	Means	Std.	t	Sig.
Listening	Native	64	14.39	2.03	3.725	0.00
	Non	64	13.09	1.91		
Reading	Native	64	13.55	1.72	0.363	0.717
	Non	64	13.66	1.69		
Writing	Native	64	12.91	1.97	4.332	0.00
	Non	64	14.34	1.78		
Structure	Native	64	13.95	1.61	6.410	0.00
	Non	64	15.73	1.54		
Speaking	Native	64	15.48	1.72	6.054	0.00
	Non	64	13.72	1.58		
Total	Native	64	70.28	7.85	0.195	0.846
	Non	64	70.55	7.59		

Having depicted the results of the (T-test) in Table 3, the result shows that there are no statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ between the results of the post-test (total grade). There are statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ in the post-test results of the two groups in the (Speaking and Listening) in favour of the first group (students taught by native speaker teacher). There are statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ between the results of the two groups in the (Structure and Writing) post-test and that was in favour of the second group (students taught by Arab teacher). There are no statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ between the results of the post-test at (Reading) test.

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations of the Achievement according to the female groups taught by native and non-native speakers on the Post – test, as displayed in the next section

Skill	Teacher	No.	Means	Std.	T	Sig.
Listening	Native	64	17.03	1.77	2.880	0.005
	Non	64	16.09	1.91		
Reading	Native	64	16.38	1.68	0.945	0.347
	Non	64	16.66	1.69		
Writing	Native	64	14.44	2.26	8.081	0.000
	Non	64	17.33	1.76		
Structure	Native	64	16.41	1.69	8.135	0.000
	Non	64	18.64	1.41		
Speaking	Native	64	17.84	1.51	4.115	0.000
	Non	64	16.72	1.58		
Total	Native	64	82.09	7.58	2.524	0.13
	Non	64	85.44	7.41		

By viewing the results of (T-test) in Table 4, the results show that no statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ between the results of the post-test due to gender. There are statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ in the post-test results of the two groups in the (Speaking and Listening) in favour of the first group (students taught by native speaker teacher). There are statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ between the results of the two groups in the (Structure and Writing) post-test and that was in favour of the second group (students taught by Arab teacher). There are no statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ between the results of the post - test at (Reading) test.

4. Discussion

The main aim of this study was to examine the impact of Native and non -native teachers on the achievement on the Preparatory year students at the University of Tabuk. The whole process took place over four weeks' period. This part discusses the results obtained after analysing the data, which were collected through the study. The findings of this study reveal that, there are statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ in the post-test results of the two groups in the (Speaking and Listening) in favour of the first group (students taught by native speaker teacher).

This result agreed with previous studies such as (Al-Omrani, 2008; Kim, 2009; Pacek, 2005) which stated that the Learners performances of studying oral skills, conversation and listening are in favour of NESTs. This result was also supported by the results of some studies such as (Alseweed & Daif-Allah, 2012; Elder et al., 2017; Peaci, 2016; Üstünlüoğlu, 2007).

There are statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ between the results of the two groups in the (Structure and Writing) post-test and that was in favour of the second group (students taught by Non Native teacher).

Data analysis results which concur with Al-Omrani (2008) revealed that students prefer to study grammar with NNESTs. This result also agreed with previous studies such as (Canagarajah, 1999; Mahboob, 2004; Pacek, 2005; Seidlhofer, 1999). There are no statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ between the results of the post-test at (Reading) test.

This agreed with the results of Rahimi and Zhang (2015) that believed that NESTs were superior to NNESTs in reading (72 per cent). Although some studies disagreed with this result such as (Walkinshaw & Duong, 2012).

There are no statistical differences at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ in the students' achievement due to gender.

Ismaiel (2017) revealed results that disagree with this result but some other studies such as (Lin & Lu,

2016; Samuel, 2017; Üstünlüoğlu, 2007) agree with this result. That they consider gender is not an effective factor to show the impact of NNESTs AND nests.

5. Conclusion

The researcher believes that the reason of such results could be attributed to the equivalence of male and females in the educational background, social and economic circumstances. Moreover, the closeness of readiness, interests, and wishes are achievement for both males and females. It is very clear that the result of this study was consistent with the results of the previous studies although it differed in the size of the sample, the age of the subjects, the instructional material, the population and the curriculum.

In light of results of this study, the research proposed the following recommendations to the concern. It is highly recommended to alter the hiring criteria for both native and non-native speakers of English to avoid discrimination and to ensure better quality because speaking the language doesn't mean that you can teach it and also there are so many non-native English speakers that are highly-qualified and talented and they can prove very proficient in the classroom (Ismail, 2017; McNamara et al., 2018; Peaci, 2016; Rahimi & Zhang, 2015).

Encouraging collaboration of NESTs and NNESTs. Team-teaching approach in which a NEST and a NNEST share the same class develops cross-cultural awareness and boosts the confidence of the non-native teachers. The study recommends further research on the effect of gender on influencing students' explicit and implicit attitudes towards their NESTs and NNESTs and on larger sample sizes in various geographical regions.

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