Korean Students in the Philippines: Their Perceptions of Native and Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers in ELT Classroom

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Abstract— *This paper examines the native and non-native speaker teachers' dichotomy in one of the English Language Learning schools the Philippines. Aside from the discussion regarding the issues and debates about the legitimacy of the speakers of the 'standard' English as well as the marginalization towards non-native speakers' teachers based on previous studies, this paper also looks at how the power of the user of English language is not anymore based on who is using it rather how the language is used to create meanings that are relevant for them. Based on the result of the study, the paper shows that the participants have no clear preferences between NESTs and NNESTs. The paper does identify parallel results to the previous studies conducted in outer and expanding circle countries; however, the result reveals the incongruence specifically the marginalization among the NNESTs focusing on the Korean students conducted in Korean context. It seems that in the Philippine context, this dichotomy between the two groups of teachers is not problematic. The finding of this paper suggests that probably it is high time to consider that regardless of the background, the highlight of the discussion should start focusing on the effectiveness and efficiency of the teachers.*

Keywords— *Native and non-native speakers, English Language Teaching, perception.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The global rise of English adopted by people from inner circle to the expanding circle countries has evolved in many different ways. English which is considered as 'global language' (Crystal, 2012) is used, shared and owned by speakers in different contexts regardless of their nativeness or non-nativeness. The traditional notion that 'native' speakers as the legitimate speaker of 'standard' English language shows a barrier that other speakers of English are marginalized. However, reality shows as Crystal further says that non-native speakers of English outnumber native speakers by far. As non-native speakers of English spread, the power of the user of that language will not anymore based on who is using it rather how the language is used to create meanings that are relevant for them.

This scenario is similar in the English Language Teaching (ELT) profession. Canagarajah (1999, 2005) states that 80% of English language teachers worldwide are non-native English- speaking teachers (see also Selvi, 2014 p.574 and Liu, 2005, p. 156) both as English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). However, in spite of this result, discriminations against NNESTs have been reported (e.g. Braine, 2010; Clark & Paran, 2007; cited in
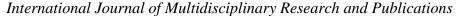
Sung 2014 and Selvi 2014). Studies show that when it comes to employment native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) are preferred highly over the non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) for the reason that students prefer to be taught by native speakers (Braine, 2010; Sung, 2011). Arva and Medgyes (2000) also point out discrimination on 'required standard' that some administrators are unwilling to hire even highly proficient NNESTs because 'they can never truly become 'native', no matter how proficient in English they become' (Cook, 1999).

While the NESTs/NNESTs issues have been studied for years in different contexts from students' point of view, the results appeared to be incoherent. Thus, students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs need further investigation focusing specifically on the Korean students who are taking up English language in one language learning center in the Philippines. Looking into similar researches stated in this paper, the present study wishes to contribute to the NESTs/NNESTs issue by answering the following questions: 1) Which are the most characteristics features of NESTs and NNESTs as judged by the learners? 2) In which aspects of teaching behavior are the differences the most apparent between the two groups of teachers?

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The NESTs and NNESTs dichotomy in ELT profession attract much attention for almost two decades, in particular, focusing on the misconception of 'labeling' as the former considered as the 'ideal users of the language and serve as the best models for language learners' (Mahboob, 2011, p.52) which only shows that native-English teachers are much preferred and privileged over non-native English teachers. However, scholars (e.g. Canagarajah, 1999; Medgyes, 1994; Phillipson, 1992 to name a few) argue that regardless of their linguistic background, through appropriate teaching training of NNESTs they can be as successful English teachers as NESTs.

Empirical studies have been conducted in some countries so far regarding students' perceptions about NESTs and NNESTs. The results of these studies are somewhat inconsistent when it comes to students' preferences. Two studies included in this paper clearly reveal that students prefer NESTs over NNESTs. For instance, Kelch & Santana-Williamson (2002) conducted study in the United States of America (an inner circle country) regarding the university

ESL students' attitudes towards the English accents of their native and non-native teachers. They found out that there was a high correlation in the preference of the students to native over non-native teachers when it comes to proficiency in speaking and teaching. In another study were 76 university students as participants, Lasagabaster & Sierra's (2005) result showed that half of the population (50.6%) prefer native English teachers, 35.5% have no clear preference and only 3.9% chose non-native English teachers.

However, there are other studies conducted which showed positive attitude of students towards their NESTs and NNESTs. One of which is the study of (Mahboob 2004 cited by Sung 2014) focusing on the university ESL students in the USA which showed that students have no clear preference for NESTs and NNESTs for both have distinct and unique qualities. Also, similar results revealed in Pacek (2005) study on ESL students in British University and Moussu and Braine (2006) research on ESL students in USA. Their results showed that participants appreciated both both groups of teachers. Moreover, there are three recent related studies conducted in Hong Kong context. Cheung and Braine (2007) who investigated university students' attitudes towards their NNESTs. Though the teaching approach and limited use of English in class were seen as NNESTs shortcomings, the participants complemented that this group of teachers are able to empathize with students' diverse cultural backgrounds and use effective strategies in teaching English. Another is the work of Ma (2012) which focused on the strengths and weakness of NESTs and NNESTs from the NNESTs perspective and very recent study of Sung (2014) which focused on Hong Kong secondary students' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of both NESTs and NNESTs. It can be seen that participants in these studies are different but the result showed that NESTs and NNESTs were perceived to have unique and complementary linguistic, sociocultural and pedagogical strengths and weaknesses. Particularly, NNESTs have pedagogical strengths but linguistically poor, in contrast, NESTs have linguistic strengths and show pedagogical weaknesses. It is shown in the studies above that the NESTs and NNESTs dichotomy are still problematic. Though there are more studies which state the positive views for both groups of teachers still there are those participants particularly in the inner circle country who still show inequality towards these two groups of teachers.

In Korean context as expanding circle country, there is one study conducted eight years ago. Butler (2007) studied Korean elementary pupils and found out that they have high preference for NESTs. Specifically, she discovered that there was a significant difference on pupils' attitudes towards American-accented English versus Korean-accented English but not regarding 'general teaching strategies'. While Butler (2007) study explored the NESTs and NNESTs from the perspective of Korean pupils in Korea, it is the aim of the present study to explore the perception of Korean students who are studying in the Philippine context towards their NESTs and NNESTs in one language learning center in the country. It is to be noted that the purpose of this study is not to enhance the native-non-native dichotomy or to give pre-

assumptions about these teachers. Rather, it is the intention of this paper to establish that both NS and NNS teachers are legitimate language teachers, irrespective of being a native or non-native speaker of the language concerned, both are endowed with the capacity to teach effectively.

III. METHODOLOGY

The participants

The participants of this study were 75 Korean students from Enderun College, Language Learning Center (LLC) in Philippines ages 16-22 years old and stayed for almost three months in the country. They have eight NNEST Koreans (in Korea) before they study in the Philippines, two NNEST Filipinos and two NESTs while studying in the said LLC in the Philippines.

The instrument

The data were collected by means of a multi- item questionnaire (adopted version of the questionnaire, see Apendix A). The instrument was divided into four sections: The first section of the instrument contained the background information. The second to fourth sections each contained a set of 23 items, one designed for NNESTs (Korean and Filipino) and an identical set for NESTs. The respondents have to apply a five-point Likert-type scale to assess the extent to which these statements, in their view, characterized these groups of teachers respectively. The statements covered classroom management and personal issues.

Procedures

Through the help of a colleague, the questionnaires were distributed and retrieved. For the central part of the questionnaire eliciting differences between NESTs and NNESTs, mean and percentage were used from students' perceptions marked on the Likert scale.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the sections below, the results of the data analysis of the questionnaire are presented and discussed.

4.1 Non-native speaker teachers (Korean)

Table 1 presents learners' opinions about NNEST Koreans. The statements expressed in mean and percentage and ranked according to the degree of agreement, in descending order.

Based on the survey result, most of the respondents agree (20%) to strongly agree (40%) that the most likely behavior or characteristics of NNEST Koreans prefer traditional forms of teaching. While the least likely behavior or characteristics is preference to teaching 'differently'. As shown at the bottom part of the table, the learners' preference to teaching is the least likely behavior of NNEST Koreans. Although, the degree of their agreement is 40%, it is still the statement having the least mean value selected by the respondents.

TABLE 1: Responses for NNEST (Koreans) as perceived by the learners

Statement	Mean	Response (%)				
		1	2	3	4	5
Prefers traditional forms of teaching	4.0	0	0	40	20	40
Is happy to improvise	4.0	0	0	10	80	10
Sticks more rigidly to lesson plan	3.9	0	0	40	30	30
Sets a great number of sets	3.9	0	0	20	70	10
Prepares learners well for the exam	3.8	0	0	50	20	30
Assigns a lot of homework	3.8	0	0	30	60	10
Is interested in learners' opinion	3.8	0	0	40	40	20
Focuses primarily on speaking skills	3.7	0	0	40	50	10
Relies heavily on the coursebook	3.7	0	0	50	30	20
Prepares conscientiously for the lessons	3.7	0	0	40	50	10
Runs interesting classes	3.7	0	0	50	30	20
Is too harsh in marking	3.6	0	0	60	20	20
Speaks most of the time during the lesson	3.6	0	0	60	20	20
Is patient	3.6	0	0	40	60	0
Puts more emphasis on grammar rules	3.6	0	0	60	20	20
Uses ample supplementary material	3.6	0	10	40	30	20
Assesses my language knowledge realistically	3.6	0	10	40	30	20
Provides extensive information about the culture of English-speaker countries	3.6	0	10	40	30	20
Applies pair work regularly in class	3.5	0	0	50	50	0
Applies group work regularly in class	3.5	0	0	50	50	0
Corrects errors consistently	3.5	0	0	50	50	0
Directs me towards autonomous learning	3.4	0	0	60	40	0
Prefers teaching 'differently'	3.4	0	0	60	40	0

4.2 Non-native speaker teachers (Filipino)

As opposed to Table 1, Table 2 shows learners' judgments about NNEST teachers.

TABLE 2. Responses for NNEST (Filipinos) as perceived by the learners

Statement	Mean	Response (%)				
		1	2	3	4	5
Applies pair work regularly in class	4.2	0	0	20	40	40
Applies group work regularly in class	4.2	0	0	20	40	40
Is patient	4.2	0	0	20	40	40
Focuses primarily on speaking skills	4.2	0	0	20	40	40
Prepares learners well for the exam	4.1	0	0	20	50	30
Speaks most of the time during the lesson	4.0	0	0	40	20	40
Sets a great number of sets	4.0	0	0	30	40	30
Directs me towards autonomous learning	4.0	0	0	30	40	30
Is happy to improvise	3.9	0	0	30	50	20
Is interested in learners' opinion	3.9	0	10	20	40	30
Sticks more rigidly to lesson plan	3.8	0	0	40	40	20
Runs interesting classes	3.8	0	0	40	40	20
Assesses my language knowledge realistically	3.8	0	0	30	60	10
Provides extensive information about the culture of English-speaker countries	3.8	0	10	20	50	20
Prefers traditional forms of teaching	3.6	0	10	30	50	10
Prepares conscientiously for the lessons	3.6	0	0	50	40	10
Uses ample supplementary material	3.6	0	0	50	40	10
Prefers teaching 'differently'	3.4	0	0	70	20	10
Relies heavily on the coursebook	3.4	0	20	30	40	10
Corrects errors consistently	3.4	0	10	60	10	20
Assigns a lot of homework	3.2	0	10	60	30	0
Puts more emphasis on grammar rules	3.1	0	20	60	10	10
Is too harsh in marking	3.0	10	20	40	20	10

Most of the respondents answer falls under agree to strongly agree, each contributing 40% of the response. This means that the respondents characterized NNEST Filipinos as those applying pair work regularly in class. Based on the result, applying pair work regularly topped the list of the most

likely behavior of NNEST Filipinos (agree and strongly agree, together amounting to 80%). On the other hand, the lowest mean indicates that majority of the learners neither agree or disagree that NNEST Filipinos are too harsh in marking contributing about 40% while agree to strongly agree and disagree to strongly disagree both contributed 30% each. This means that even though it is the least likely chosen behavior of the NNEST Filipinos, some still have considered it as not as less likely as it is.

4.3 Native speaker teachers

TABLE 3. Responses for NESTs as perceived by the learners

Statement	Mean	Response (%)				
		1	2	3	4	5
Prepares learners well for the exam	4.4	0	0	20	20	60
Applies pair work regularly in class	4.3	0	0	20	30	50
Provides extensive information about the culture of English-speaker countries	4.3	0	0	20	30	50
Focuses primarily on speaking skills	4.2	0	0	30	20	50
Sets a great number of sets	4.1	0	0	30	30	40
Is patient	4.1	0	0	30	30	40
Is happy to improvise	4.1	0	0	20	50	30
Applies group work regularly in class	4.0	0	0	40	20	40
Prefers traditional forms of teaching	4.0	0	10	20	30	40
Speaks most of the time during the lesson	4.0	0	0	30	40	30
Corrects errors consistently	4.0	0	0	40	20	40
Is interested in learners' opinion	4.0	0	0	30	40	30
Directs me towards autonomous learning	3.9	0	0	30	50	20
Puts more emphasis on grammar rules	3.9	0	10	20	40	30
Assesses my language knowledge realistically	3.9	0	0	30	50	20
Sticks more rigidly to lesson plan	3.7	0	0	60	10	30
Prefers teaching 'differently'	3.7	0	0	50	30	20
Prepares conscientiously for the lessons	3.7	0	0	50	30	20
Runs interesting classes	3.7	0	0	60	10	30
Uses ample supplementary material	3.7	0	0	50	30	20
Is too harsh in marking	3.2	10	10	50	10	20
Relies heavily on the coursebook	3.2	0	10	70	10	10
Assigns a lot of homework	3.1	10	10	60	0	20

Surprisingly, most of the respondents strongly agree that the most likely behavior or characteristic of NESTs is preparing learners well for the exam topping the list at 80% (agree and strongly agree). On the contrary, the lowest mean reveals that most of the responses fall on neither agree or disagree about assigning a lot of homework, there is 20% responses on disagree and strongly disagree and also 20% on strongly agree. This means that to 40% of the respondents, said that NEST assigns a lot of homework but 60% neither agree or disagree. Perhaps to those respondents who agree, the least likely behavior for them which assign a lot of homework is a possibly fair enough.

V. CONCLUSION

From the findings, the item- by-item analysis of the respective features reveals that there are distinct characteristics of native and non- native English-speaking teachers which are also parallel to the results conducted in outer and expanding circle countries mentioned in the literature part of the present study. The participants in this study have no clear preference between NESTs and NNESTs though these are not conclusive

due to the limited number of participants, who cannot be considered to be a representative sample.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the results here are somewhat different from Butler (2007) who found that Korean elementary students prefer NESTs over NESTs. Possible reasons for this may be due to the different pedagogical tasks, different institutional expectations to these groups of teachers, different contexts and individual differences of teachers and learners. It seems that in the Philippine context, the dichotomy between these two groups of teachers is not problematic. Therefore, probably it's a time now as Farrell (2015) argues that 'we should move on from the discussions of the distinction between NNESTs and NESTs and start discussing what an effective, qualified teacher is regardless of their background' (p.9).

APPENDIX

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant,

With this survey, the researcher would like to obtain information on the attitudes of Korean learners of English to native and non-native (Korean and Filipino) teachers of English. The researcher is interested to find out about the differences between native and non-native teachers as perceived by the learners. Please fill in the questionnaire by circling the appropriate answers and complete the questions in the final part. It will not take more than 20 minutes to answer the questions. The questionnaire is anonymous. All data will be handled confidentially.

Thank you for your cooperation.
Susan F. Astillero

I. Profile

◆ Age of respondent: _____
◆ Gender: (please check)   _____male   _____female
◆ Institution where you are currently studying English: (please check)
    ___ secondary/bilingual secondary school
    ___college
    ___university/
    ___language school
◆ Number of months of English study in the Philippines: _____
◆ How many non-native (Korean) teachers of English have you had? _____
◆ How many non-native (Filipino) teachers of English do you have? _____
◆ How many native teachers of English do you have? _____

II. On non-native (Korean) English teachers
    Please decide whether the following statements are typical/ true of your non-native Korean teachers of English

and indicate the extent to which you agree with them. Kindly encircle the number of your answer.

Strong disagree	-	1
Disagree	-	2
Neither agree, nor disagree	-	3
Agree	-	4
Strong agree	-	5

The non-native (Korean) English teacher...

1. Sticks more rigidly to lesson plan
1   2   3   4   5
2. Is too harsh in marking
1   2   3   4   5
3. Prepares learners well for the exam
1   2   3   4   5
4. Applies pair work regularly in class
1   2   3   4   5
5. Applies group work regularly in class
1   2   3   4   5
6. Prefers traditional forms of teaching
1   2   3   4   5
7. Speaks most of the time during the lesson
1   2   3   4   5
8. Sets a great number of sets
1   2   3   4   5
9. Directs me towards autonomous learning
1   2   3   4   5
10. Is patient
1   2   3   4   5
11. Is happy to improvise
1   2   3   4   5
12. Focuses primarily on speaking skills
    1 Y 2   3   4   5
13. Puts more emphasis on grammar rules
1   2   3   4   5
14. Prefers teaching 'differently'
1   2   3   4   5
15. Relies heavily on the coursebook
1   2   3   4   5
16. Prepares conscientiously for the lessons
1   2   3   4   5
17. Corrects errors consistently
1   2   3   4   5
18. Runs interesting classes
1   2   3   4   5
19. Assigns a lot of homework
1   2   3   4   5
20. Uses ample supplementary material
1   2   3   4   5
21. Assesses my language knowledge realistically
1   2   3   4   5
22. Provides extensive information about the culture of English-speaker countries
1   2   3   4   5
23. Is interested in learners' opinion

1   2   3   4   5

III. On non-native (Filipino) English teachers

Please decide whether the following statements are typical/ true of your non-native Filipino teachers of English and indicate the extent to which you agree with them. Kindly encircle the number of your answer.

Strong disagree   -
        1
Disagree   -
        2
Neither agree, nor disagree   -
        3
Agree   -
        4
Strong agree   -
        5

The non-native (Filipino) English teacher...

1. Sticks more rigidly to lesson plan
1   2   3   4   5
2. Is too harsh in marking
1   2   3   4   5
3. Prepares learners well for the exam
1   2   3   4   5
4. Applies pair work regularly in class
1   2   3   4   5
5. Applies group work regularly in class
1   2   3   4   5
6. Prefers traditional forms of teaching
1   2   3   4   5
7. Speaks most of the time during the lesson
        1   2   3   4   5
8. Sets a great number of sets
1   2   3   4   5
9. Directs me towards autonomous learning
1   2   3   4   5
10. Is patient
1   2   3   4   5
11. Is happy to improvise
1   2   3   4   5
12. Focuses primarily on speaking skills
1   2   3   4   5
13. Puts more emphasis on grammar rules
1   2   3   4   5
14. Prefers teaching 'differently'
1   2   3   4   5
15. Relies heavily on the coursebook
1   2   3   4   5
16. Prepares conscientiously for the lessons
1   2   3   4   5
17. Corrects errors consistently
1   2   3   4   5
18. Runs interesting classes
1   2   3   4   5
19. Assigns a lot of homework
1   2   3   4   5
20. Uses ample supplementary material

1   2   3   4   5
21. Assesses my language knowledge
    realistically
1   2   3   4   5
22. Provides extensive information about
    the culture of English-speaker countries
        1   2   3   4   5
23. Is interested in learners' opinion
1   2   3   4   5

IV. On native teachers

Please decide whether the following statements are typical/true of your native teachers of English and indicate the extent to which you agree with them. Kindly encircle the number of your answer.

Strong disagree   -   1
Disagree   -   2
Neither agree, nor disagree   -   3
Agree   -   4
Strong agree   -   5

The native speaker teacher...

1. Sticks more rigidly to lesson plan
1   2   3   4   5
2. Is too harsh in marking
1   2   3   4   5
3. Prepares learners well for the exam
1   2   3   4   5
4. Applies pair work regularly in class
1   2   3   4   5
5. Applies group work regularly in class
        1   2   3   4   5
6. Prefers traditional forms of teaching
1   2   3   4   5
7. Speaks most of the time during the lesson
1   2   3   4   5
8. Sets a great number of sets
1   2   3   4   5
9. Directs me towards autonomous learning
1   2   3   4   5
10. Is patient
1   2   3   4   5
11. Is happy to improvise
1   2   3   4   5
12. Focuses primarily on speaking skills
1   2   3   4   5
13. Puts more emphasis on grammar rules
1   2   3   4   5
14. Prefers teaching 'differently'
1   2   3   4   5
15. Relies heavily on the coursebook
1   2   3   4   5
16. Prepares conscientiously for the lessons
1   2   3   4   5
17. Corrects errors consistently

1   2   3   4   5
18. Runs interesting classes
1   2   3   4   5
19. Assigns a lot of homework
1   2   3   4   5
20. Uses ample supplementary material
1   2   3   4   5
21. Assesses my language knowledge
    realistically
1   2   3   4   5
22. Provides extensive information about
    the culture of English-speaker countries
        1   2   3   4   5
23. Is interested in learners' opinion
1   2   3   4   5

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