



32nd International Conference of the Spanish Association of Applied Linguistics (AESLA):
Language Industries and Social Change

Students' preferences regarding native and non-native teachers of English at a university in the French Brittany

Noemi Rámila Díaz^{a*}

^aUniversité Paris Nanterre, 200 avenue de la République, Nanterre Cedex 92001, France

Abstract

Recent research documents the interest toward the subject native and non-native English speaking teachers. Although studies have focused mainly on teachers (Medgyes 1994; Árvá & Medgyes 2000; Llurda 2004, 2005), there is a growing body of research on students' preferences (Chit Cheong 2009; Mahboob 2004; Lasagabaster & Sierra 2005). The present study was conducted at a university in the French Brittany among 78 students of the License en LEA (Applied Foreign Languages Program). For this purpose, a survey was carried out and students were asked about their preferences in regards the type of teacher. Although the majority of students taking part in the study acknowledged preferring native English speaking teachers when asked in general, the results of the analysis in detail are not clear-cut.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of Universidad Pablo de Olavide.

Keywords: native and non-native teachers; students' preferences; éducation nationale

1. Introduction

The present study attempts to be a contribution to the body of work on the dichotomy native English speaking teachers (hence NEST) and non-native English speaking teachers (hence NNEST). The aim of this study is twofold. In the first place, I intend to explore which are the preferences, if any, of the students in the Applied Foreign Languages Program at the University of Rennes 2, in the French Brittany, towards being taught by NEST, NNEST or both of them. In the second place, my aim is to discover whether the level of studies plays a part in these

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: noemi_ramila@yahoo.es

students' preferences. As some scholars have suggested, the two groups of teachers have different styles and strategies. For example, Árvá and Medgyes (2000, p. 464) pointed out that native teachers seem to be more tolerant towards students' errors and non-native teachers would be more committed to teaching (2000, p. 369). Clark & Paran (2007, p. 10) state that NNEST have some advantages such as the fact that they share students' first language and have a shared cultural background.

Building on recent research (Chit Cheong, 2009; Mahboob, 2004; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005), the first hypothesis is that university students in this particular university would prefer a different kind of teacher depending on whether background knowledge/first language is needed to fully grasp the subject. That means that NEST would be preferred to teach speaking, pronunciation, listening and culture; NNEST would be regarded as more suitable for grammar and learning strategies; and BOTH for vocabulary and reading. The second hypothesis is that the most advanced the students, the more they will prefer being taught by BOTH (Cheung & Braine, 2007; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Madrid & Pérez Cañado, 2004; Moussu & Braine, 2006).

For this study, a questionnaire was carried out among 78 students of the three years Licence en LEA (Applied Foreign Languages Program). Students in this program learn two compulsory languages (in this study, all had chosen English and Spanish) and they have two study options, whether they want to become translators or international commercial agents.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 NEST vs. NNEST?

According to some authors (Mousu & Llurda, 2008), an analysis of the two types of teachers seems to implicitly acknowledge differences between them. Although it is not the aim of this study to tackle this dichotomy in itself, some explanations are to be included for the sake of clarity. In this paper, the terms NEST and NNEST would be related to the fact that teachers in this particular study have different origins whether they were born in France or in an English-speaking country. Indeed, in France, traditionally the public education system hired only teachers with French nationality. From 1992 onwards however, the system had to accommodate to the dictates of the Treaty of Maastricht that opened the system to teachers coming from other European countries. According to Derivry-Plard (2004, p. 50), that also led to the birth of a new category of teachers to be included in the yearly statistics: the native speaker teacher.

2.2 NEST and NNEST in France

As the development of English seems unstoppable, many positions for teachers of English have been created worldwide. In this situation, although the majority of the language teaching relies in NNEST' hands (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 91), NEST are sometimes preferred over NNEST by employers (Mahboob, 2004, p. 121). In France, teachers of all subjects have to pass a selective civil servant competition, the CAPES or the Agrégation in order to be able to work in the public education system. At university, only PhD holders are allowed to have permanent positions, although there are some posts for teachers having passed the Agrégation. As a result, the difficulty of this process legitimizes the intellectual status of educators (Derivry-Plard, 2004, p. 49), irrespective of their origin. Indeed, Árvá & Medgyes add that teachers "should be hired solely on the basis of their professional virtue, regardless of their language background" (2000, p. 358).

In her study, Derivry-Plard (2004) demonstrates how foreign teachers, despite of French teachers' worse prospects, do not outnumber local teachers. Nevertheless, she also shows that NEST' success in national competitions is higher in certain languages: e.g. in English and in German.

More specifically, in this particular university, in the Departement d'Anglais LEA (English as Applied Language Department), out of 18 teachers, 7 of them are Anglophones, including 2 *lecteurs* (a *lecteur* is a young person who holds a temporary position with no research obligation and who is native of the language taught).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1111539>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1111539>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)