

## Native and Non-native English Teachers in the Classroom: A re-examination

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### Abstract

Native English speakers are often claimed to be better language teachers than non-native English speakers, both by those who have not reflected critically on the inherent differences between knowing how to use a language and knowing how to teach a language, and by those who assume that non-native English speakers are by definition not fluent. Nativeness is thus equated with pedagogical superiority. This claim, whether it is made by students, parents, hiring boards, or other interested parties, is detrimental to non-native English teachers as educators and to the students who learn from them. Non-native English speaking teachers may be demoralised or discriminated against in hiring practices. Students lose when they are taught by teachers with nativeness as their defining characteristic, rather than by the best teachers. In this article the native speakers model, itself a problematic concept, is analysed to show how supposed nativeness is difficult to define accurately. Then the benefits of being taught by native English speakers and non-native English speakers are outlined, with a view to promoting more just hiring practices and sounder educational results for students of English worldwide.

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