

Native and Non-Native English Speaking Teachers' Advantages and Disadvantages

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Abstract

The present study discusses the results of a case study conducted to explore how students perceive the advantages and disadvantages of having native and non-native English language teachers. The study also reports native and non-native teachers' perception of their own teaching qualities as well as employers' perception of both groups through student feedback. The study was carried out in two locations, a private university in Kabul Afghanistan and a government funded language school in Wales UK. Responding to the questionnaires and structured interviews, students named the following as their native teachers' advantages: teaching ability, grammaticality and idiomaticity, use of the standard English language accent, and their competence in dealing with spontaneous responses in the classroom. Non-native teachers, on the other hand, were perceived as role models, empathetic, better culturally aware and capable of delivering efficient instructions. A small number of the students were less satisfied with non-native teachers' command of the English language teaching in different social contexts. The results will be beneficial for native and non-native teachers in terms of realizing their strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the results also reveal that native teachers are not always preferred by learners, despite their indisputable command of the target language. Similarly, non-native teachers, contrary to the popular belief, are preferred over native teachers for their possession of distinct advantages as far as cultural and language-learning problems are concerned.

Keywords: English as a Foreign language (EFL), English as a Second language (ESL), English for Speakers of Other languages (ESOL) Native English Speakers (NES), Non-native English Speakers (NNES)