

Students' and Instructors' Attitudes and Perceptions towards Native and Non-native EFL Teachers in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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Abstract

English has evolved into an internationally-used language due to the increase in the number of its learners. With the growing demand for English learning, over the last 30 years, the topic of Native English-Speaking Teachers and Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers has become a topic of debate. Thus, the purpose of the current mixed method study was to find out students' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Since students' and teachers' attitudes and perceptions have not been explored about this issue, this study might benefit learners, teachers, stakeholders, and recruiters. In the study, student questionnaires and teacher interviews were administered to answer the following research question: What are students' and instructors' perceptions and attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs, and what strengths and weaknesses do they identify about NESTs and NNESTs? The participants were 345 university students, and 24 EFL teachers. The quantitative data obtained from the student questionnaire were analyzed through SPSS V. 25, and the qualitative data from the teacher interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the students prefer NESTs over NNESTs. However, they also showed positive attitudes towards NNESTs. Similarly, the teachers believed that NESTs and NNESTs have their positives and negatives. The NESTs were preferred for being fluent, natural speakers, and being better at colloquial language. In contrast, NNESTs were thought to excel at having a stronger connection with students, being sympathetic, and understanding students' needs and difficulties.

Keywords: English language learners, English language teachers, perceptions and attitudes, Kurdistan region of Iraq, native English-speaking teacher, non-native English-speaking teacher, native-speakerism

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Introduction

Kurdistan Region of Iraq is an autonomous region located in the north of Iraq where Kurdish people live, who are an Indo-European ethnolinguistic group (Sofi-Karim, 2015). Even though English is taught as a foreign language and not a second since there is no exposure to English beyond the educational institutions (except for the radio, television, and/or the internet), however, compared to the rest of Iraq, the situation of English teaching and learning in KRI is relatively good (Avci & Doghonadze, 2017). Additionally, Kurdish people in the region generally hold a positive attitude toward English as it is seen as a means for professional development, employment, and introduction of the Kurdish issue to the world (Sofi-Karim, 2015).

It is assumed that most Iraqi Kurdish students prefer Native English-Speaking Teachers. However, the main problem is that their attitudes and perceptions have not been explored. Therefore, the current study aims to explore the perceptions and attitudes of learners and teachers towards learning English by Native English-Speaking Teachers and Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers. The study also attempts to explore what strengths and weaknesses NESTs and NNESTs have from students' and teachers' points of view. This research slightly differs from previous works as it focuses on both students' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq towards native and non-native speaking English teachers. For this purpose, the following questions will be addressed in this study:

1. What are students' perceptions and attitudes towards NESTs?
2. What are students' perceptions and attitudes towards NNESTs?
3. What are instructors' perceptions and attitudes towards NESTs?
4. What are instructors' perceptions and attitudes towards NNESTs?
5. What strengths and weaknesses do learners and teachers identify about NESTs and NNESTs?

The study is conducted as mixed-methods research. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are applied. Students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs are explored by using a questionnaire. Moreover, interviews are conducted with teachers in to explore their attitudes and perceptions towards NESTs and NNESTs. The study was conducted in five universities in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq.

This paper starts with a literature review which gives a background about Native Speakerism. Then, the research methodology of the study is put forward in which the research questions are given along with the aim, participants, and data collection and analysis tools. In addition, the results and findings of the study are shown. Finally, the conclusion of the study is drawn followed by its implications.

Literature Review

English has been and still is one of the most used languages in the world for years. The current goal of English language proficiency is vastly influenced by globalization and the spread of technology. Since English is also used in countries where English is not the L1, the number of English learners is forever increasing. Thus, the number of Non-native English Speaking Teachers has also increased. Whether an English language teacher is native or not has long drawn

professional attention. According to Qiu and Fang (2019), this attention has been based on the “assumption that the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the two groups of teachers may influence their teaching methods and attitudes, such as their personal characteristics and attitudes toward teaching and teaching culture” (p. 3). Throughout history, Native Speakers (NSs) have been preferred for teaching language. For example, linguists believe that an NS can be a model for L2 learners and are regarded as the main reliable source of linguistic data (Chomsky, 1986).

Gupta (2001) defines an NS of a language as someone who has acquired their native language in infancy, before acquiring any other languages. However, it might be challenging to determine an NS solely based on one's birthplace or L1, and having a language as one's native does not guarantee that one can succeed in teaching it. Moreover, Medgyes (1992) states that it is similarly controversial from a linguistic perspective. Therefore, Phillipson (1992) interrogated the validity of the nativity concept and entitled this notion as the “native speaker fallacy” by suggesting that the fluency and competence of NSs can be taught to non-native speakers. The ownership of the English language has similarly been investigated (e.g., Hall, 2012; Holliday, 2015; Phillipson, 2008, as cited in Leonard, 2019). Their studies argue that since English is now a global language, it cannot belong to a single group. Instead, it has become a “property” of everyone. As a result of the points raised above, the idealness of the NS comes under question. One of the first times ‘non-nativism’ was focused on was when Paikeday (1985, as cited in Moussu & Lurda, 2008) stated that the NS is dead, which means that the idea of the NS only exists as a figment of the linguists' imagination. Instead, he recommended the term ‘proficient user’, which stands for any expert speaker who uses the language successfully. To illustrate, the NS is no longer regarded as a model for three reasons. Firstly, now that English is an international language, proficient NNSs are a more relevant target for learners of a language than an NS (Cook, 1999). Secondly, there is a growing realization that NESTs and NNESTs have their strengths and weaknesses and that one is not superior to another; instead, they are different from each other (Medgyes, 1994). Thirdly, being an effective teacher is related to some other factors such as professionalism, dedication, and willingness to develop (Todd & Pojanapunya, 2009). Viewing natives and non-natives as two distinct objects has influenced learners and teachers equally. Cook (1999) argues that this demand on native teachers has curbed the success of L2 users and has created an unreachable goal for L2 learners since learners constantly feel that they fail to reach a native-like proficiency. In non-English speaking contexts, it is common to see teachers encouraging their students to act, and sound like NSs. What they do not realize, according to Ballard and Winke (2017), is that their goal is based on a prestigious, and biased viewpoint. Applied linguists, however, assert that what is necessary is not sounding like a native, but rather being intelligible.

Despite their large numbers, NNESTs are frequently regarded as fewer professionals than NESTs, and this leads to discrimination in employment. Regardless of high qualifications, NNESTs often undergo discrimination in being hired (Clark & Paran, 2007), for example, Novianti (2018) mentions that NESTs without teaching qualifications have a higher chance of being recruited than qualified NNESTs in EFL contexts. Even though most of the qualified English teachers in the world, according to Braine (2010), are NNSs, however, NESTs tend to be preferred over non-native English speaking teachers. This creates a challenge for educational administrators because even though native teachers are preferred, there are not many qualified NESTs, and the number of NNESTs who need to be employed is increasing. To conclude, it is evident that NESTs

are preferred in the majority of job advertisements, especially in contexts such as China, Korea, and the Arabian Gulf (Elyas & Alghofaili, 2019), and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) is no exception (Talib, 2020).

It is crucial to explore students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs because according to Abriel (2015), students are in charge of the amount of information they absorb. In other words, if students have a negative attitude toward a teacher, they are more likely to feel unmotivated, and disconnected. Thus, students are assumed to assign either positive or negative emotions to whether their teacher is native or non-native, and have a different set of features and beliefs towards the two groups. Moreover, it is believed that even teachers themselves have certain attitudes towards the concept of native and non-native teachers which they have held through personal, professional, and/or educational experiences (Richardson, 1996, as cited in Moussu, 2006). Oppenheim (1996) describes attitude as a "state of readiness, a tendency to respond in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli" (p. 174) and he analyzes that attitudes are "reinforced by beliefs (the cognitive component) and often attract strong feelings (the emotional component) which may lead to particular behavioral intents (the action tendency component)" (Oppenheim, 1996, p. 175). Likewise, Pickens (2005) portrays attitudes as a complex combination of beliefs, personality, value, and behavior. Perception, on the other hand, is seen to be closely related to attitudes. Pickens (2005) defines perception as the process of interpreting, and organizing sensations to create a meaningful experience of the world. However, this person's perception may substantially be different from reality, and thus perception differs from someone to someone else (Pickens, 2005). Similar studies have previously been carried out focusing on students', and teachers' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs. To mention some of them, Reves and Medgyes (1994) surveyed 216 native and non-native English teachers from ten countries. The study attempted to find out the teachers' perceptions about their own practice and teaching attitudes. The participants suggested that in terms of classroom practice, the NESTs use natural and real language, while the NNESTs are more concerned with accuracy and more formal features of the language. Additionally, Moussu (2006) attempted to focus on students' attitudes about native and non-native English-speaking teachers, and teachers' self-perceptions, and administrators' hiring beliefs and practices. Moreover, Kayalp's (2016) study aimed to identify students' and teachers' attitudes concerning NESTs and NNESTs in North Cyprus. Pae (2017) also studied the differences between NESTs and NNESTs. In addition, Wang and Fang (2020) investigated university teachers' and students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs in China. Their findings revealed that NESTs cannot be idolized merely because they have a native-speaker identity and that stakeholders do not make a significant distinction between the two types of English language teachers. Finally, Karakaş, Uysal, Bilgin, and Bulut (2016) aimed to investigate Turkish EFL learners' attitudes toward NESTs and NNESTs in Turkey. The findings of their study demonstrated that the students preferred NNESTs (local Turkish teachers). The study justifies that cultural proximity may have a positive influence on learners' motivation and attitude.

Coming to the context of the current study, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, most ELTs are NNESTs, especially in public schools. However, few private schools and universities have employed NESTs. To exemplify, among five universities (one public, and four private) in Sulaymaniyah city of Iraq, about 11 ELTs are NSs of English among the total of 116 ELTs in the four universities. This fact is in line with Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2002) study, which mentions

that in the Basque Autonomous Community of Spain, most teachers are NNESTs. The high number of NNESTs worldwide has been reinforced by Canagarajah (1999), who shows that 80% of the English language teacher population in the world is NNESTs. Similarly, Braine (2010) justifies that NESTs are scarcely present in 'Outer Circle' and 'Expanding Circle' countries. In countries such as Bangladesh, India, Cambodia, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, NNESTs are not found due to low amounts of monthly salary (Braine, 2010). Nevertheless, the increase of the so-called 'international schools', and private universities have opened doors for NESTs to travel to KRI, however, a very limited amount of studies have been conducted in KRI regarding the debate of NESTs and NNESTs. Barany and Zebari (2018) aimed to explore perceptions of Kurdish ELLs of their NESTs and NNESTs. One hundred students studying English participated in their study from four private universities in KRI. Data was collected via a 14-item questionnaire. The study indicated that Iraqi Kurdish students have a more positive attitude toward NESTs than NNESTs. The student participants further claimed that NESTs are better than NNESTs in teaching speaking, listening, pronunciation, and vocabulary. On the other hand, they preferred NNESTs over NESTs in teaching them grammar.

Method

The present study has utilized a mixed method, descriptive, non-experimental design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect and analyze data. The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions and attitudes of students and teachers towards learning English language by NESTs and NNESTs in KRI. In this research, a mixed methods approach is used as a means to offset the drawbacks inherent within one approach with the strength of the other (Creswell, 2009). Similarly, Moussu (2006) admits that quantifying beliefs and attitudes has its own shortcomings, therefore, balancing quantitative data with qualitative fortifies the research design. In specific relation to the topic of this research, Moussu and Llurda (2008) noted that more empirical studies are needed in the development of understanding of the issue of NESTs and NNESTs, in particular quantitative approaches with numerical data which could legitimize previous theoretical analyses.

The participants were 345 volunteering students from IEPs and Departments of English at five different universities in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, and 20 teachers (both NESTs and NNESTs) who have been teaching in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The study was conducted in five universities (one public, four private) in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. The universities were the University of Sulaimani, Komar University of Science and Technology, Cihan University of Sulaymaniyah, Qaiwan International University, and the American University of Iraq – Sulaimani. These research sites were chosen because the language of instruction is English, and most of them have/had employed both NESTs and NNESTs. For recruiting participants, this study adopted a combination of convenience sampling and purposive sampling which are two forms of non-probability sampling. According to Merriam (1998, as cited in Aneja, 2017), convenience sampling is selecting a sample based on time, money, location, availability and permission. Purposive sampling, on the other hand, is an intuitive sampling method which involves an intentional selection of participants based on their ability to offer insights into a specific concept, theme, or phenomenon (Robinson, 2014). Similar to the students, the teacher participants who were interviewed were 24 teachers who volunteered to participate. They were contacted based on the fact they have all taught EFL in KRI.

Research Instruments

Quantitative data was collected from the student participants via a Likert-scale questionnaire to investigate their perceptions and attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs. Qualitative data was obtained via semi-structured interviews with English language teachers to explore their perceptions and attitudes towards the issue. Both quantitative and qualitative data were attitudinal, eliciting the students' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the case of NESTs and NNESTs.

The student Likert-scale questionnaire of the current study consisted of 20 items about NESTs and the same 20 items about NNESTs. Each set implicitly consisted of three major anchor items, each having a bunch of cross-check items validating the anchor items either positively, or negatively. To analyze the student questionnaires, the SPSS V.25 was used to analyze the 40 attitude scales in the questionnaire. The quantitative data from the questionnaire was examined by using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of each item, to demonstrate the participants' responses to the statements.

As for the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, first, the audio tracks were manually transcribed and coded. The coding procedure employed both deductive and inductive coding to obtain different insights from the raw data. The coding process was then followed by thematic analysis, which involves identifying, describing, analyzing, reporting, and writing up patterns and themes drawn from the coded data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Research Procedures

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the data collection procedure lasted longer than expected (from March to June, 2020) and both face-to-face and online questionnaires were applied to the students, as well as face-to-face and telephone interviews with the teachers. The reason why five different universities were chosen was because of certain constraints such as an insufficient number of students in classes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Before beginning the data collection procedures, approval from the five sites was collected.

Student participants were recruited using the paper questionnaire distributed in class (for the face-to-face surveys), and using online Google forms sent to them by their head of departments. The aim of the study and its ethical factors were overtly stated on the questionnaire. Those students who volunteered to participate were asked to sign their consent, and then invited to complete the survey which took about 10 minutes to complete.

On the other hand, 24 EFL teachers were contacted and informed about the aim of the study, and once they volunteered to participate, they were given the interview questions several days before the actual interview for the teachers to reflect on their own experience and thoughts. For those who were telephone-interviewed, the questions were sent to them via email. At a mutually convenient time and place, the interviews were carried out with individual teacher participants which took about 20 minutes. They were required to sign the consent form and were informed that their voice was being recorded, which they all approved. During the interview, the researcher showed objectivity and refrained from imposing any influence on the subjects' responses, making sure that they are free to express what is on their minds with no conditioning

restrictions or prompts from the side of the researcher. The researcher took field notes while and after the interviews.

Results and Findings

Results and Interpretation of the Quantitative Data

Part One: Students' Perceptions and Attitudes towards NESTs:

In this section, the quantitative data of the questionnaire related to the students' perceptions of NESTs are shown. This part initially consisted of 20 attitude statements in which the student participants had to express their opinions about NESTs.

Table 1. *Summed results of the anchor items about NESTs*

Attitude Statements about NESTs	“Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree” or “Somewhat Disagree”	Neutral	“Strongly Agree”, “Agree” or “Somewhat Agree”	M	SD
Anchor 1: I prefer a NEST for my English class.	8.4	7.2	84.3	5.99	1.42
Anchor 2: My English improves with a NEST.	10.7	4.3	85	6.02	1.42
Anchor 3: A NEST motivates me to learn the English language.	10.2	7	82.9	5.92	1.4

(M) Mean (SD) Standard Deviation (NEST) Native English-Speaking Teacher

As can be seen in Table one, many more than half (84.3%) of the participants indicated that they prefer a NEST for their English classes. In comparison, only less than one-tenth (8.4%) of the participants disagreed with having a NEST, and 7.2% of them showed a neutral tendency. Moreover, 85% of the participants agreed that their English improves with a NEST, only around a tenth (10.7%) of them showed disagreement towards the statement, and 4.3% of them were neutral about whether or not their English improves with a NEST. Coming to the item “A NEST motivates me to learn the English language”, around 83% of the participants expressed their agreement, while 10.2% of them disagreed, and only 7% of them chose to stay neutral about the given statement.

The quantitative data are presented by applying a funnel technique. Therefore, the three anchor items were cross-checked by their sub-items to detect whether they were positively or negatively supported. For example, 84% of the participants said that they prefer having a NEST because it forces them to speak in English. Moreover, there was a significant tendency toward disagreement about an item that stated that “A NEST only uses the course book”. To put it clearly, 74.8% of the participants disagreed that NESTs only use the course book. However, in response to Item 7, “A NEST knows about the students' culture (Kurdish culture)”, 44.1% (Mean 3.95) of the students disagreed that NESTs know about the students' culture.

In conclusion, among the twenty attitude statements about NESTs, there seemed to be a significant tendency towards agreement (average mean: 5.57).

Part Two: Students' Perceptions and Attitudes towards NNESTs

This section presents and analyzes the quantitative data obtained from Part Two of the questionnaire, which was the student participants' perceptions of NNESTs. Similarly, this part consisted of 20 attitude statements related to NNESTs.

Table 2. *Summed results of the anchor items about NNESTs*

Attitude Statements about NNESTs	“Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree” or “Somewhat Disagree”	Neutral	“Strongly Agree”, “Agree” or “Somewhat Agree”	M	SD
Anchor 1: I prefer an NNEST for my English class.	44.9	14.2	40.9	3.94	1.96
Anchor 2: My English improves with an NNEST.	43.5	13.3	43.2	3.96	1.8
Anchor 3: A NNEST motivates me to learn the English language.	33.9	17.1	49	4.4	1.77

(M) Mean (SD) Standard Deviation (NNEST) Non-Native English-Speaking Teacher

Table two illustrates the summed percentages of the three anchor items relating to students' perceptions of NNESTs. In some ways, there seem to be similar amounts of agreement, disagreement, and neutrality among the participants' responses towards the three primary items about NNESTs. For example, almost 41% of the participants agreed that they prefer an NNEST for their English class (Item one, Mean 3.94). In comparison, around 45% of them showed disagreement towards the statement, with about 14% of them declaring neutrality. Similarly, 43.2% of the participants agreed that their English improves with an NNEST, and 43.5% disagreed that their English improves with an NNEST. However, when the participants were asked to rate “An NNEST motivates me to learn the English language” (Item three, Mean 4.4), almost half of the participants (49%) showed agreement. In comparison, just around 34% of them expressed disagreement, and approximately 17% of them conveyed neutrality. This indicates that half of the student participants believed that NNESTs motivate them to learn the English language.

Each of the three anchor items about NNESTs was supported by a set of sub-items. To mention the significance, 66.1% of the respondents agreed that “a NNEST understands students' questions in class” (Mean 5.31). When asked whether “a NNEST knows about the students' culture (Kurdish culture)” (Mean 5.89), more than three-fourths of the participants (78.95%) agreed that a NNEST knows about the students' culture.

More importantly, when students were asked whether their English language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) and areas (Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation) improved if they have a NNEST, it was noted there was a rather higher amount of agreement among the participants about their skills and areas improving with a NNEST which ranges between 40% to about 48%, however, the range of disagreement about whether their skills improve with a NNEST runs from 30% to 40%. However, it is clearly noted that It is also worth mentioning that there seems to be a consensus of neutrality among the respondents with a range of about 17% to

24%. In conclusion, the student participants seemed to be in favor of NNESTs as higher amounts of agreement could be seen throughout the statements.

To summarize, among the 20 attitude statements about NESTs, there seems to be a moderate tendency towards agreement (average mean: 4.47).

Results and Interpretation of the Qualitative Data:

The qualitative data of the current study is taken from the teacher participants through semi-structured interviews. After the teacher interview transcripts were thoroughly analyzed, patterns were detected, and the below inductive themes emerged (See Table 3).

Table 3. *Organization of inductive themes emerged from the teacher interviews*

Themes	Sub-Themes
Teaching Abilities	Teaching Methodologies and Techniques
	Rule-based
Teachers' Language Abilities	Pronunciation
	Knowledge about the Language
	L1 'First Language'
	Colloquial 'Day-to-day' Language
	Natural and Fluent Language
Teachers' Personality and Character	Literal Translation
	Personality and Character of the Teachers
	Hard-working VS. Over-confident
Teachers' Perceptions concerning Others' Perceptions	Prestige and Privilege
	Students' Perceptions
	A Shift of Perception
Qualification and Recruitment	
The Relationship between Students and Teachers	
Proficiency Level of the Students	
Teachers' Understanding of Student Needs and Difficulties	
Culture and Background	

Teaching Abilities

Teaching Methodologies and Techniques

Most teacher participants agreed that NNESTs are more knowledgeable about teaching techniques and methods because they had learned the language as compared to NESTs who acquired it.

Rule-based

Most teacher participants agreed that NNESTs comply with rules more often, and are more accuracy-driven. For example, T6 said that “we (NNESTs) are not native, what we teach is what we think is right, we teach according to books... there are many things that we non-natives say and write only because that's how it was in a course book”.

Teachers' Language Abilities

Pronunciation

Several teacher participants made remarks on pronunciation and believed that it has a prominent link with the controversy of NESTs and NNESTs. Most teacher participants believed that NNESTs' pronunciation is not as accurate nor natural as one of the NESTs.

Knowledge about the Language

Even though NNESTs were seen to apply practical techniques of teaching the language compared to NESTs, however, their knowledge of the language is seen to be rather insufficient. For example, T10 noted that "*since English is not my first language, sometimes in class you run into a word that you don't know the meaning of. Sometimes a student asks you a question about a word, they know the Kurdish word, and they're asking us for its English equivalent, and we get stuck.*"

L1 'First Language'

As it is known, what makes NNESTs different from NESTs is that, in most cases, the NNEST and the students share the same L1, especially in EFL contexts. In the interview, when the teacher participants were overtly asked whether it is essential for a language teacher to know the native language of the students, some of them expressed their agreement while others believed otherwise. For example, two teachers agreed that knowing the students' L1 is crucial, especially with students of lower levels (beginners)". However, another said that "*it's better for the teacher to not know the native language of the students because in this way students are forced to speak in English, or the target language*".

Colloquial 'Day-to-day' Language

Colloquial language is used as a characteristic of informal, casual, familiar, unbookish, and conversational expressions and communication (Merriam-Webster, 2005). Most teachers agreed that speaking a colloquial language is a valuable quality of NESTs. For example, T6 mentioned that "*students learn idioms, connotations, and the everyday language much easier if they have a native teacher*".

Natural and Fluent Language

Most teachers believed NESTs speak a more fluent and natural language than NNESTs. For example, T22 said that "*not being fluent in the language is the most common weakness of non-native teachers*".

Literal Translation

Literal translation, or word-to-word translation, was seen as a weakness of NNESTs by some teacher participants. T13 said that "*a weakness (of NNESTs) is translating word for word; literal translation*".

Teachers' Personality and Character

Personality and Character of the Teachers

Even though most of the teachers agreed that personality and character could not be generalized based on whether one is native or non-native, various teachers viewed NNESTs to be

more energetic and resilient but insecure. For example, T5, who was a NNEST herself, reflected that:

One of the valuable qualities is that most of us are energetic. We have such energy that we are not even aware of. The fact that I have learned English myself made me notice how hard it is to learn the language, and I am very energetic to deliver my knowledge and share my experience with my students.

Similarly, T1, who was a NEST with six years of teaching experience in KRI, expressed her opinions about NNESTs:

They (NNESTs) genuinely love what they do, and they want to see a difference in the system, so I guess they have resilience in their job, because of what they have been exposed to, let's say, their education system, so now they know how and they know what to do to make it better. They (NNESTs) work hard to give what they did not receive when they were students.

However, despite their hard work, NNESTs were seen to lack confidence as one teacher noted that "*they (NNESTs) lack confidence. Since they are compared with native speakers in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation, so most of the non-native teachers lack confidence*".

Hard-working VS. Over-confident

There seemed to be a strong consensus among most teachers that NNESTs are more hard-working whereas NESTs usually over-trust themselves. To start with, T21, who is a NEST with 21 years of teaching experience, said that "*in my experience, I noticed that NNESTs strive much harder, they contribute more and are more involved because they want to excel and push forward*".

Teachers' Perceptions concerning Others' Perceptions

Prestige and Privilege

The teacher participants believed that NESTs possess a prestigious power that may have perpetuated prejudice towards the NNESTs. When the teachers were asked whether being native or non-native has helped or hindered their job as an English language teacher, their responses were as follows. T21, who was a NEST, admitted that "*it (being a NEST) can help because I think that it carries with it some recognition, I think on average, it's easier to get a such position as an ESL instructor in some facilities*", and T11, who is a NNEST, noted that "*in terms of salary, we (NESTs and NNESTs) receive different treatments*".

Students' Perceptions

In the interview, the teachers were asked '*Who do you think students generally prefer to have as an English language teacher? Why?*'. This questions aimed to explore how the teacher participants thought they were viewed by their students, and to ultimately explore their implicit attitudes. The results showed that almost all of them believed that students in KRI prefer NESTs over NNESTs.

A Shift of Perception

In the interviews, several teachers demonstrated that there had been a change of perception among university students in KRI concerning NESTs and NNESTs. From the teacher participants' points of view, in the past, students used to prefer only NESTs. At the same time, they now have

realized that being a NEST alone is not sufficient, but rather qualification and experience are more significant.

Qualification and Recruitment

The teacher participants mentioned the state of NESTs and NNESTs in employment in which the former is privileged and the latter discriminated. When T4 was asked if being an NNEST has made his job difficult, he felt that being an NNEST “*makes everything difficult for me, especially if I work in a place where they only employ native speakers. Even though I might be very qualified, they would still not accept me because I'm not native*”. Not only were the NNESTs aware of it, but the native teacher participants similarly admitted their privilege in terms of recruitment in the region. For example, T13 said, “*I got this job based on the fact that I lived in the UK. That was the only reason I was employed*”.

The Relationship between Students and Teachers

On the one hand, few teacher participants believed that students are more motivated and easily encouraged when they have a NEST. On the other hand, the majority of the teacher participants thought that the relationship between NNESTs and their students is better because they share a stronger connection, empathy, and sympathy, and are more able to communicate easily.

Proficiency Level of the Students

The results showed that teachers concluded that NESTs are more appropriate for students of higher proficiency levels. In contrast, NNESTs are suitable for students of lower proficiency levels since NNESTs speak the first language of the students.

Teachers' Understanding of Student Needs and Difficulties

Owing to having learned the English language rather than acquiring it, NNESTs are believed to understand students' needs and difficulties from almost all the teacher participants' points of view.

Culture and Background

When the teacher participants were asked to think of strong and weak points of NESTs and NNESTs, culture and background were two recurring themes that almost all of them referred to during the interviews. It is worth mentioning that culture, in this sense, might either relate to the *source culture* i.e., the culture of the students (in this study: Kurdish), or to the *target culture* (which is English). The qualitative findings revealed two contradicting viewpoints from the teacher participants' opinions. A few teachers suggested that NESTs are better equipped because they are knowledgeable about the cultural aspects of English. In contrast, more than half of the teacher participants agreed that culture is a strength of NNESTs since they and the students share the same culture and background.

To summarize, the quantitative data were taken from the student participants via a questionnaire. In contrast, the qualitative data were taken from the teacher participants via interview. The results of the student questionnaire revealed that the majority of the students would strongly prefer NESTs while only half of them would prefer NNESTs. At the same time, the

findings of the teacher interviews indicated that most of the teachers believed that NESTs and NNESTs have their positive and negative qualities and that one is not more successful than another; rather, they are different from each other.

Finally, the strong and weak qualities of NESTs and NNESTs were summarized from students' and teachers' points of view from the quantitative and qualitative data (See appendices). Shortly, according to the students and teachers, the main valuable qualities associated with NESTs were teaching of language skills and areas, motivating and encouraging students, being knowledgeable about the cultural aspects of English, speaking fluently and naturally, having accurate pronunciation, and being better at colloquial language. On the other hand, students and teachers thought that the foremost valuable qualities associated with NNESTs were related to having easier communication with students, being knowledgeable about the culture of the students, having a strong connection with students due to sharing similar linguistic, native language, and cultural background, being more sympathetic towards students, understanding students' needs and difficulties, being more hard-working, energetic, and resilient, having more knowledge about teaching methods and techniques, and recognizing the students' potential pitfalls.

Discussion

In the following sub-sections, the results and findings are discussed and aligned with the research questions.

Research Question One: What are Students' Perceptions and Attitudes towards NESTs?

According to the results of the student questionnaire, a significant tendency of preference towards NESTs was seen among the student participants. The results revealed that the majority of the student participants in KRI preferred having a NEST for their English classes. A great amount of the student participants believed that if they are taught by a NEST, their English improves, they would be motivated to learn the language, and they will be obliged to speak English in class. In addition, the student participants claimed that all four of their language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) and language areas (Vocabulary, Grammar, and Pronunciation) will improve immensely if they learn from a NEST. Finally, they perceived NESTs to make the environment of their classes interesting, to make sure that their students are active in class. Even though the student participants expressed a strong preference for NESTs, however, they believed that NESTs are not aware of the students' culture, and students usually feel nervous in class when they have a NEST. The results of the current study are consistent with numerous studies in the literature. Firstly, similar to the current research, Barany and Zebari (2018), who aimed to explore the perceptions of Kurdish private university students of their NESTs and NNESTs, found out that students have a more positive attitude towards NESTs rather than NNESTs.

Research Question Two: What are Students' Perceptions and Attitudes towards NNESTs?

When the attitude statements about NNESTs from the student questionnaire were thoroughly analyzed, it was seen that there was a close proximity in the amounts of agreement, disagreement, and neutrality towards NNESTs from the student participants' points of view. This could be interpreted that the student participants being somewhat hesitant in their perception of NNESTs. To summarize, less than half of the students showed their preference for having a NNEST for their English classes, a little less than half of them believed that their English improves

if they learn English from a NNEST. Exactly half of them expressed that they would feel motivated to learn the language if they are taught by a NNEST. Despite the seeming hesitance among the student participants, a moderate tendency towards agreement could also be seen among most of the items. For instance, the majority of the student participants believed that NNESTs understand when students ask them questions in class due to sharing the same native language. Moreover, the majority of the student participants claimed that NNESTs are knowledgeable about the culture of the students. Thus, they understand each other at a more robust level. The current study is somehow congruent with previous studies, such as when Karakaş et al. (2016) revealed that Turkish EFL learners preferred NNESTs since their cultural proximity led to a higher amount of motivation among students.

Research Question Three: What are Instructors' Perceptions and Attitudes towards NESTs?

When the teacher interviews were thoroughly analyzed, the findings revealed that the teacher participants believed that NESTs speak more fluently and naturally in general. More specifically, they thought that NESTs have a more accurate and natural pronunciation. This finding is consistent with two studies (Medgyes, 1992; Reves & Medgyes, 1994) In addition, from the teacher participants' points of view, NESTs are better at everyday casual language i.e., colloquial language, in the sense that they can expose the students to the firsthand way of speaking the language. The majority of the teacher participants believed that NESTs are more preferred among students, and can easily make students motivated and encouraged to learn the target language. Despite their positive perceptions of NESTs, the teacher participants held some negative attitudes towards them as well. The findings revealed that the teacher participants believed that NESTs are not as hard-working as NNESTs and that they usually are over-confident and over-trust themselves only because they are native speakers of the language. They also said that they are less experienced, are often unqualified, and are less knowledgeable about teaching techniques and methods because they acquired the language rather than learned it. Finally, they considered NESTs not to understand students' needs and difficulties because they had never gone through the process and experience of learning the target language the same way as NNESTs. The final finding is somehow in congruence with Abriel's (2015) study, which revealed that NEST participants in the study felt that they were disconnected from their students due to cultural and language differences and could not foresee what their students might struggle with.

Research Question Four: What are Instructors' Perceptions and Attitudes towards NNESTs?

When the interview transcripts were carefully analyzed, the findings viewed that the teacher participants held positive attitudes towards NNESTs because they and the students share the same background and culture. This is consistent with Medgyes' (1992) study that views cultural proximity as an advantage of NNESTs. In addition, the teacher participants claimed that NNESTs understand students' needs and difficulties better because they learned the language themselves, which echoed three studies (Medgyes, 1992) that claimed that NNESTs are aware of students' needs and difficulties in the English language owing to being an English language learner. The teacher participants also viewed NNESTs to have a better relationship with their students for sharing a stronger connection, understanding, and sympathy, and can communicate easily, which may be because of their cultural and linguistic proximity. The current finding is similar to that of Reves and Medgyes (1994) and Abriel (2015), who revealed that NNETSs are more empathetic towards their students, can express more complicated feelings and thoughts with

students, and feel more connected to their students. Moreover, NNESTs were viewed by the teacher participants as more hard-working, energetic, and resilient. Additionally, they also agreed that NNESTs are more knowledgeable about teaching techniques because they learned the language, which is consistent with Reves and Medgyes' (1994) study, which revealed that NNESTs possess a deeper insight into the English language, and are more qualified than their NEST counterparts. Even though the teacher participants mostly held positive attitudes towards NNESTs, they still believed that they had some weaknesses. The majority of the teacher participants believed that NNESTs speak a less fluent and natural language, their pronunciation is neither as accurate nor realistic as that of NESTs, their knowledge of the language is somewhat insufficient, and they are not knowledgeable enough about the cultural aspects of English. They also claimed that NNESTs are not good with colloquial language, which is consistent with the findings of Reves and Medgyes (1994) that revealed that NNESTs are more concerned with more formal features of the language to the point that they often overuse traditional registers. Nevertheless, even though the majority of the teacher participants thought that students in KRI prefer NESTs over NNESTs, however, they believed that a shift of perceptions among ELLs in KRI can be seen in the sense that students now had realized that being a NEST alone is not sufficient, but qualification and experience are more significant as compared to before in which students used to prefer NESTs only. This is inconsistent with the literature as Ballard and Winke (2017) claimed that in non-English speaking contexts, teachers usually force their students to act like native speakers. In other words, unlike Ballard and Winke's (2017) study, the findings of the current study showed that most teachers are now aware that the goal of native-like proficiency is based on a prestigious, and biased viewpoint.

The current research has three limitations. Firstly, this study is based on attitudes, and since attitudes normally involve deep, inner feelings and prejudices that the person having the attitude might not even be aware of, thus, using questionnaires and interview might not elicit their implicit attitudes. In the future, this study can better be replicated by using research methods specially designed for eliciting implicit attitudes (Todd & Pojanapunya, 2020). Secondly, even though the number of student participants was large, they were all studying in Sulaymaniyah city of Iraq. If data was collected from different cities, significant relationships could have been identified. The third limitation is that the researcher herself is a non-native English speaking teacher, therefore, the teacher participants who were interviewed might have been affected by this factor. To reduce bias, the researcher refrained from interfering and created an environment to make the teachers feel that they are welcome to say whatever they feel like without feeling verbal and/or non-verbal judgments.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the perceptions and attitudes of students and teachers towards learning English by NESTs and NNESTs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The study collected quantitative data from students using a questionnaire, and qualitative data from teachers using interview. The study concludes that the majority of the students would strongly prefer NESTs. At the same time, only half of them would prefer NNESTs, even though a moderate preference was also shown towards the NNESTs among the student participants. As for the teacher participants, the findings reveal that most of the teachers believed that NESTs and NNESTs have their own

positive and negative qualities and that one is not more successful than another; rather, they are different from each other.

Implications

The results and findings of the current study may offer the following pedagogical implications. Firstly, the current study provides feedback to ELTs, administration, and recruiters of IEPs since it gives them an insight into learners' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs in KRI. To be more specific, the study implies that professional development programs should be planned and implemented for all ELTs in KRI regardless of their 'nativeness'. Secondly, the study further enables students, recruiters, and stakeholders to acknowledge that NESTs and NNESTs, provided that they are trained and efficient teachers, can both teach the language successfully. In addition, since the participants of the current study claimed that NESTs are not aware of the culture of the students, it is recommended that NESTs become mindful of the cultural aspects of the students, and one way of achieving this might be to stay in the country for a period of time before starting to teach. Moreover, NESTs were seen to lack awareness of the needs and struggles of the learners precisely because most NESTs were thought to speak only one language. Therefore, NESTs are urged to raise their awareness of student needs, such as by learning a language other than English.

About the Authors

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Appendix A: Student Questionnaire (English)

Dear Student,

I am a master student of English Language Teaching at Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus. The aim of my study is to explore students' and teachers' opinions about native and non-native English-speaking teachers. Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Your participation is voluntary which means that you are free to participate or not and you are allowed to withdraw at any point during the study. This questionnaire takes around 10 minutes to respond to. You can contact the researcher via phone or e-mail if you have any questions about the questionnaire or if you are interested in the findings once the study is completed. Thank you very much for your collaboration.

<p>Researcher: Shay Kamal Ahmed</p> <p>Shaykalahmed@gmail.com</p> <p>Sulaymaniyah, Iraq</p> 	<p>Supervisor: Necdet Osam</p> <p>Necdet.osam@emu.edu.tr</p> <p>Dept. of Foreign Language Education</p> <p>Eastern Mediterranean University</p> 
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If you agree to participate, please sign:

Date: _____
 Full Name (your name will NOT be shown): _____
 Phone number (optional): _____

Native English-Speaking Teacher: English language teachers whose first language is English (for example, someone from USA, UK, Canada, Australia, etc.)

Non-Native English-Speaking Teacher: English language teachers who learned English as a second language (for example, an English language teacher who is Kurdish)

A- Background Information: Please provide the background information below.

1. Country and city of birth: _____
2. Nationality: _____
3. Gender: Female _____ Male _____ Other _____
4. Age: _____
5. First language: _____
6. University: _____
7. Department: _____
8. Year (Grade): 1st year of university _____ 2nd year of university _____
3rd year of university _____ 4th year of university _____
9. Have you ever had a native English-speaking teacher? Yes ____ No ____
10. If yes, how many native English-speaking teachers have you had? _____
11. Do your parents speak English?
 - a) only my mother _____
 - b) only my father _____
 - c) both of them _____
 - d) none of them _____
12. How many years have you studied English? _____
13. Have you ever been in any English-speaking countries? Yes ____ No ____
14. If yes, for how long? _____

B- Attitude Statements: Please circle a number based on your opinion, and experience.

Example:

	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	
Part One: Native English-Speaking Teacher	Strongly	Agree	Somewhat	Neutral	Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly	
1. I prefer a native English-speaking teacher for my English class.	Agree	Agree	Agree		Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	
2. My English improves with a native English-speaking teacher.	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
3. A native English-speaking teacher motivates me to learn English language.	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
4. A native English-speaking teacher makes me nervous in learning English language.	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
5. I prefer having a native English-speaking teacher because it forces me to speak English in class.	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
6. A native English-speaking teacher understands students' questions in class.	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
7. A native English-speaking teacher knows about the students' culture (Kurdish culture).	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
8. A native English-speaking teacher makes their classes interesting.	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
9. A native English-speaking teacher is able to control the class.	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
10. A native English speaking teacher makes sure students are active in class.	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
11. A native English-speaking teacher uses body language.	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
12. A native English speaking teacher only uses the course book.	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
13. A native English-speaking teacher asks for the students' opinions.	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree
Agree	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Disagree

15. My grammar improves with a native English speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

16. My vocabulary improves with a native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

17. My pronunciation improves with a native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

18. My listening improves with a native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

19. My speaking improves with a native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

20. My reading improves with a native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

21. My writing improves with a native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

Part Two: Non-Native English-Speaking Teacher

1. I prefer a non-native English-speaking teacher for my English class.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

2. My English improves with a non-native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

3. A non-native English-speaking teacher motivates me to learn English language.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

4. A non-native English-speaking teacher makes me nervous in learning English language.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

5. I prefer a non-native English-speaking teacher because I can speak Kurdish in class.

6. A non-native English-speaking teacher understands students' questions in class.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

7. A non-native English-speaking teacher knows about the students' culture (Kurdish culture).

8. A non-native English-speaking teacher makes their classes interesting.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

9. A non-native English-speaking teacher is able to control the class.

10. A non-native English speaking teacher makes sure the students are active in class.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

11. A non-native English-speaking teacher uses body language.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

12. A non-native English speaking teacher only uses the course book.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

13. A non-native English-speaking teacher asks for the students' opinions.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

14. My grammar improves with a non-native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

15. My vocabulary improves with a non-native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

16. My pronunciation improves with a non-native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

17. My listening improves with a non-native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

19. My reading improves with a non-native English-speaking teacher.

Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree



Agree +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 Disagree

Appendix B: Teacher Interview Questions

Letter of consent for interview

I am a Master candidate of English Language Teaching at Eastern Mediterranean University and my research study aims to explore perceptions of students and teachers towards native and non-native English-speaking teachers. Your participation is voluntary which means that you are free to participate or not in this study. The interview might take around 20 minutes and will be tape-recorded. Your name will not be shown and you are free to withdraw any time. Your information will only be used in this study. If you have any other questions, please contact the researcher.

Thank you very much.

<p>Researcher: Shay Kamal Ahmed</p> <p>Shaykamal95@yahoo.com</p> <p>+9647708689066</p> <p>Sulaymaniyah, Iraq</p> 	<p>Supervisor: Necdet Osam</p> <p>Necdet.osam@emu.edu.tr</p> <p>Dept. of Foreign Language Education</p> <p>Eastern Mediterranean University</p> 
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I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me, and I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without any problem. I hereby confirm my participation.

Name: _____
 Signature: _____
 Date: _____

Closed Ended Questions

- Place of birth: _____
- Nationality: _____
- Gender: Female _____ Male _____ Other _____
- Age: 20-30 _____ 30-40 _____ 40-50 _____ 50+ _____
- Do you consider yourself a:
 a. Native speaker of English? _____ b. Non-native speaker of English _____
- What is your first language? _____
- Have you been to any English-speaking country? No _____
 If yes, how long and what for? _____
- How many years have you been teaching English? _____
- What qualifications do you have? a) BA _____ b) MA _____ c) PhD _____
 d) All of above _____
 e) other, please specify: _____
- In what university/universities have you completed your degree(s)? _____
- Have you enrolled for any course relating to teaching English?
- Yes _____ No _____
- Please specify what teaching certifications you have, if any. (Ex: TEFL / TESOL / TESL / CELTA / DELTA / COTE / DOTE)
- Have you participated in any seminars abroad? Yes _____ No _____

Open Ended Questions

- Is it important for an English language teacher to be a native English speaker?
- Being a native/non-native English-speaking teacher, explain your thoughts and experiences when this status has aided/hindered your teaching.

3. Is being able to speak the students' native language important? If yes, why? If no, why not?
4. Who do you think students generally prefer to have as an English language teacher? Why?
5. What do you think are the most valuable qualities of NESTs, if any?
6. What do you think are the most serious weaknesses of NESTs, if any?
7. What do you think are the most valuable qualities of NNESTs, if any?
8. What do you think are the most serious weaknesses of NNESTs, if any?

Note:

NESTs: Native English-Speaking Teachers

NNESTs: Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers

Appendix C: Quantitative Data of the Student Questionnaire

Attitude Statements about NESTs										
Attitude Statements about NESTs	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	M	SD
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)		
Q1: I prefer a NEST for my English class.	8 (2.3)	0 (0)	21 (6.1)	25 (7.2)	25 (7.2)	89 (25.8)	177 (51.3)	345 (100)	5.99	1.42
Q2: My English improves with a NEST.	5 (1.4)	3 (0.9)	29 (8.4)	15 (4.3)	19 (5.5)	92 (26.7)	182 (52.8)	345 (100)	6.02	1.42
Q3: A NEST motivates me to learn English language.	3 (0.9)	3 (0.9)	29 (8.4)	24 (7)	32 (9.3)	86 (24.9)	168 (48.7)	345 (100)	5.92	1.4
Q4: A NEST makes me nervous in learning English language.	28 (8.1)	72 (20.9)	43 (12.5)	61 (17.7)	69 (20)	14 (4.1)	58 (16.8)	345 (100)	4	1.89
Q5: I prefer having a NEST because it forces me to speak English in class.	5 (1.4)	1 (0.3)	20 (5.8)	29 (8.4)	17 (4.9)	84 (24.3)	189 (54.8)	345 (100)	6.07	1.36
Q6: A NEST understands students' questions in class.	21 (6.1)	15 (4.4)	64 (18.6)	56 (16.3)	49 (14.2)	83 (24.1)	56 (16.3)	344 (100)	4.65	1.74
Q7: A NEST knows about the students' culture (Kurdish culture).	42 (12.2)	20 (5.8)	90 (26.1)	65 (18.8)	43 (12.5)	58 (16.8)	27 (7.8)	345 (100)	3.95	1.75
Q8: A NEST makes their classes interesting.	8 (2.3)	8 (2.3)	44 (12.8)	52 (15.1)	42 (12.2)	99 (28.7)	92 (26.7)	345 (100)	5.25	1.59
Q9: A NEST is able to control the class.	9 (2.6)	6 (1.7)	49 (14.3)	69 (20.1)	42 (12.2)	112 (32.7)	56 (16.3)	343 (100)	5.29	4.09
Q10: A NEST makes sure students are active in class.	6 (1.7)	2 (0.6)	46 (13.3)	77 (22.3)	41 (11.9)	98 (28.4)	75 (21.7)	345 (100)	5.14	1.49
Q11: A NEST uses body language.	1 (0.3)	2 (0.6)	54 (15.7)	70 (20.3)	33 (9.6)	100 (29)	85 (24.6)	345 (100)	5.23	1.46
Q12: A NEST only uses the course book.	97 (28.1)	130 (37.7)	31 (9)	43 (12.5)	35 (10.1)	5 (1.4)	4 (1.2)	345 (100)	3.96	1.68
Q13: A NEST asks for the students' opinions.	4 (1.2)	5 (1.4)	35 (10.1)	43 (12.5)	31 (9)	130 (37.7)	97 (28.1)	345 (100)	5.52	1.44
Q14: My grammar improves with a NEST.	9 (2.6)	6 (1.7)	30 (8.7)	38 (11)	32 (9.3)	105 (30.4)	125 (36.2)	345 (100)	5.58	1.56

Q15: My vocabulary improves with a NEST	8 (2.3)	2 (0.6)	19 (5.5)	16 (4.6)	16 (4.6)	113 (32.8)	171 (49.6)	345 (100)	6.05	1.31
Q16: My pronunciation improves with a NEST.	5 (1.4)	0 (0)	21 (6.1)	19 (5.5)	14 (4.1)	88 (25.5)	198 (57.4)	345 (100)	6.17	1.31
Q17: My listening improves with a NEST.	5 (1.4)	1 (0.3)	28 (8.1)	18 (5.2)	21 (6.1)	92 (26.7)	180 (52.2)	345 (100)	6.02	1.39
Q18: My speaking improves with a NEST.	5 (1.5)	5 (1.5)	30 (8.7)	21 (6.1)	11 (3.2)	106 (30.8)	166 (48.2)	344 (100)	6.11	3.54
Q19: My reading improves with a NEST.	6 (1.7)	4 (1.2)	30 (8.7)	44 (12.8)	26 (7.5)	109 (31.6)	126 (36.5)	345 (100)	5.64	1.49
Q20: My writing improves with a NEST.	9 (2.6)	3 (0.8)	31 (9)	37 (10.7)	29 (8.4)	93 (27)	143 (41.4)	345 (100)	5.68	1.55

(M) Mean (SD) Standard Deviation (N) Number (%) Percentage (NEST) Native English-Speaking Teacher

Attitude Statements about NNESTs										
Attitude Statements about NNESTs	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	M	SD
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)		
Q1: I prefer a NNEST for my English class.	63 (18.3)	17 (4.9)	75 (21.7)	49 (14.2)	37 (10.7)	71 (20.6)	33 (9.6)	345 (100)	3.94	1.96
Q2: My English improves with a NNEST.	49 (14.2)	21 (6.1)	80 (23.2)	46 (13.3)	61 (17.7)	68 (19.7)	20 (5.8)	345 (100)	3.96	1.8
Q3: A NNEST motivates me to learn English language.	31 (9)	12 (3.5)	74 (21.4)	59 (17.1)	52 (15.1)	74 (21.4)	43 (12.5)	345 (100)	4.4	1.77
Q4: A NNEST makes me nervous in learning English language.	64 (18.6)	17 (4.9)	69 (20)	86 (24.9)	23 (6.7)	58 (16.8)	28 (8.1)	345 (100)	3.79	1.87
Q5: I prefer having a NNEST because I can speak Kurdish in class.	91 (26.4)	14 (4.1)	49 (14.2)	51 (14.8)	26 (7.5)	72 (20.9)	42 (12.2)	345 (100)	3.84	2.16
Q6: A NNEST understands	12 (3.5)	6 (1.7)	52 (15.1)	47 (13.6)	30 (8.7)	72 (20.9)	126 (36.5)	345 (100)	5.31	1.74

students' questions in class.											
Q7: A NNEST knows about the students' culture (Kurdish culture).	10 (2.9)	6 (1.7)	19 (5.5)	38 (11)	13 (3.9)	76 (22)	183 (53)	345 (100)	5.89	1.58	
Q8: A NNEST makes their classes interesting.	21 (6.1)	1 (0.3)	55 (15.9)	90 (26.1)	38 (11)	88 (25.5)	52 (15.1)	345 (100)	4.72	1.63	
Q9: A NNEST is able to control the class.	14 (4.1)	6 (1.7)	53 (15.4)	93 (27)	44 (12.8)	80 (23.2)	55 (15.9)	345 (100)	4.75	1.58	
Q10: A NNEST makes sure students are active in class.	21 (6.1)	1 (0.3)	59 (17.1)	86 (24.9)	48 (13.9)	82 (23.8)	48 (13.9)	345 (100)	4.67	1.62	
Q11: A NNEST uses body language.	22 (6.4)	5 (1.5)	72 (20.9)	94 (27.3)	46 (13.4)	73 (21.2)	32 (9.3)	345 (100)	4.4	1.58	
Q12: A NNEST only uses the course book.	20 (5.8)	15 (4.3)	46 (13.3)	85 (24.6)	38 (11)	82 (23.8)	59 (17.1)	345 (100)	4.7	1.71	
Q13: A NNEST asks for the students' opinions.	17 (4.9)	9 (2.6)	61 (17.7)	72 (20.9)	49 (14.2)	87 (25.2)	50 (14.5)	345 (100)	4.7	1.64	
Q14: My grammar improves with a NNEST.	31 (9)	15 (4.3)	65 (18.8)	69 (20)	60 (17.4)	76 (22)	29 (8.4)	345 (100)	4.32	1.69	
Q15: My vocabulary improves with a NNEST.	27 (7.8)	13 (3.8)	73 (21.2)	72 (20.9)	61 (17.7)	70 (20.3)	29 (8.4)	345 (100)	4.31	1.64	
Q16: My pronunciation improves with a NNEST.	42 (12.2)	18 (5.2)	81 (23.5)	61 (17.)	51 (14.8)	66 (19.1)	26 (7.5)	345 (100)	4.05	1.77	
Q17: My listening improves	32 (9.3)	16 (4.6)	85 (24.6)	74 (21.6)	41 (11.9)	68 (19.7)	29 (8.4)	345 (100)	4.14	1.7	

with a NNEST.										
Q18: My speaking improves with a NNEST.	30 (8.7)	21 (6.1)	71 (20.6)	65 (18.8)	50 (14.5)	75 (21.7)	33 (9.6)	345 (100)	4.27	1.74
Q19: My reading improves with a NNEST.	25 (7.2)	15 (4.3)	69 (20)	85 (24.6)	45 (13)	74 (21.4)	32 (9.3)	345 (100)	4.33	1.65
Q20: My writing improves with a NNEST.	34 (9.9)	9 (2.6)	61 (17.7)	82 (23.8)	43 (12.5)	79 (22.9)	37 (10.7)	345 (100)	4.37	1.74

(M) Mean (SD) Standard Deviation (N) Number (%) Percentage (NNEST) Non-Native English-Speaking Teacher

Appendix E: Strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs from the perceptions of student and teacher participants

Strengths of NESTs	Strengths of NNESTs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know about the target culture (English) Have a broader range of vocabulary Have an accurate and natural pronunciation Better at colloquial (day-to-day) language Are good at fluency Force students to speak English Use different and various materials Better at teaching the language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing Better at teaching the language areas: Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation Make students motivated Uses body language Asks for students' opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know about the culture of the students (Kurdish) Have a stronger connection with students Have better communication with the students Know the students' needs and difficulties due to having 'learned' English Know the students' native language and thus the origin of their mistakes/errors Are hard-working Have better teaching methods and techniques
Weaknesses of NESTs	Weaknesses of NNESTs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are (Often) unqualified in Teaching English Do not know the native language of the students Do not know about the culture of the students (Kurdish) Do not know the students' needs and difficulties due to not having 'learned' English Not being able to explain complex grammatical structures consciously Are over-confident and less hard-working Make students nervous in learning the language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not knowing about the target culture (English) Negative transfer from their L1 while speaking in English Less accurate and natural pronunciation Give misinformation about the language Do not know the colloquial (day-to-day) language Know a limited range of vocabulary Only uses the course-book Are less flexible Are less confident