



# BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

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Facultad de Lenguas  
Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés

*Mexican graduate and undergraduate  
students' attitudes and perceptions towards  
the issue of nativeness in ELT.*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Languages for  
the Degree of

Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés

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and perceptions towards the issue of nativeness in ELT.***

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and is considered worthy of approval  
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This thesis is dedicated to Mikolt.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Subject and purpose of the research**

#### **1.2 Significance of the study**

#### **1.3 Context of the research**

#### **1.4 Background of the researcher**

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## 1.0 Introduction

Voltaire once said: “With great power comes great responsibility.” There might be a slight confusion how Voltaire’s original concept could be connected in any way to our field of ELT. English has become a powerful language, a language with high privilege. Once in a while there is a need to remember that people who do not speak English as their mother tongue do not have to play a secondary role in this idealized language, language is there for people’s usage. While English grows every day as a main means of communication among people, its wide usage as an international language brings to surface different issues as well: English and its ‘original’ national identity, World Englishes, ownership, and the issue of nativeness among others. Some people still like to think of English as a once used and taught standard English, but there is need to rethink our global understanding of this language. English is no longer used only within its original boundaries; every day more and more people use it, and therefore it goes through unquestionable transformation.

Although there are different points of view on the issues mentioned previously, I believe we need to rationally rethink that our human capacity of becoming a competent language speaker cannot be limited by geographical boundaries. People can become competent in more than one language and feel free to express their beliefs to own the usage of another language. Students and teachers need to adopt a new understanding of English. They need to rethink their notion of nativeness “...and move towards ‘linguistic repertoire’ or even just ‘language’ as a non-countable noun, where nationally-defined boundaries do not count so much... It is a mentality that needs to change...and then, equipped with that understanding, resist all the old, stale views that are still so prevalent around the world” (Saraceni cited in Floris, 2013, p. 3).

Some might wonder whether the issue of nativeness and non-nativeness is still a relevant factor to be discussed or not in the field of ELT. Lurda (2009) observes that the division between native and non-native speakers is still dominant in most ELT contexts, it is still discriminatory against non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs). Lurda on one hand associates this to non-native speakers' (NNS) subordination to native speaker (NS) norms, and he highlights that this continues to happen despite the fact that research has shown an absence of a clear-cut division between the categories of 'native' and 'non-native'. Modiano (2009) shares the same insight in European context: that native-speakerism is still the dominant ideology in European ELT. Holliday (2009) also claims that this still serves as a basic criterion for labeling English speakers around the world.

### **1.1 Subject and purpose of the research**

As mentioned above, this research is investigating a currently still widely existing issue in the field of ELT: the issue of nativeness. "The term native speaker as opposed to non-native speaker is as widely used in the professional jargon of both teachers and researchers today as ever" (Arva & Medgyes, 2000, p. 356). The notion of 'native speaker' had become obsolete in a modern world where people are often native speakers of more than one language, and where linguistic boundaries are no longer clear (Canagarajah, 1999). With the World Englishes (WEs) and the Lingua Franca (LF) paradigms, it is crucial that we rethink our notion of nativeness. If we want to understand the sociocultural importance and development of English, we need to disengage our notion of English 'from its supposed ancestry' (Dewey & Leung, 2010).

The present study explored two contexts of the presented issue: the problem from undergraduate students' perspective who were studying their major in ELT at the time of the

study, and the issue from graduate students' perspective as master's degree students as well as teachers in ELT at the moment of the study. It aimed to develop an understanding how undergraduate students perceived the native and non-native concept, and to reach an insight to graduate students' notions of the nativeness issue at the beginning of their master's program and at the end of it. The present issue is closely connected to the participants' professional lives and development. The participants were in two different stages of their professional development, graduate students were mostly experienced English teachers, whereas undergraduate students were studying to be English teachers.

### **1.2 Significance of the study**

The issue of nativeness has been an object of concern among many scholars, teachers, teacher instructors, and students in the field of ELT. The significance of the present study is to have an understanding about the participants' approach on the mentioned issue and to raise students' and teachers' awareness that there is a need to reevaluate current beliefs and practices in language pedagogy, to revise their perception and framework in language teaching in the light of the currently valid norms. Canagarajah (cited in Dewey & Leung, 2010) discusses the importance of adopting a multi-norm approach in language teaching, where norms are locally defined. He proposes a 'revised' framework for language teaching, where concepts like 'nativeness' and 'authenticity' are replaced with qualities connected to 'expertise', 'local practices', and 'relevance'.

### **1.3 Context of the research**

The nativeness issue in language teaching has presented different issues and different points of view throughout many years already. The importance of the issue gives place and reason to the birth of many articles and research in the area. Katchru (1985) categorizes the

different countries according to their English language usage as Inner, Outer or Expanding Circle, which categorization has been since used in the context of the issue of nativeness. Medgyes (1992) has contributed to the investigation of this area with a research with Hungarian students and categorized his findings as advantages and disadvantages of native English speaking teachers versus non-native English speaking teachers (NESTs vs. NNESTs). Meadows and Muramatsu (2007) have contributed to the area by investigating 187 students' perception and attitude towards NESTs vs. NNESTs to receive results where this issue stands from students' points of view. Sutherland's (2012) research offers insight what Japanese teachers believe about their own norms of competence vs. NESTs.

Different current works have been published in the light of new norms and from English as a Lingua Franca perspective, analyzing nativeness and ownership issue from a different direction, as well as introducing the importance of cultural and intercultural competence (Alred & Byram, 2002; Baker, 2012; Block, 2009; Canagarajah, 1999; Klickaya, 2009; Jensen, 1995).

#### **1.4 Background of the researcher**

In the past ten years I had the possibility to travel and live in different countries where I met people with different cultural backgrounds and with whom the communicational channel was always English. It was an interesting experience to be able to engage personally in conversational situations where the input and output were established by using different Englishes. Later on, I had been introduced to new norms and concepts in the field of ELT, among which was the concept of World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca. With these concepts, my interest towards the issue of nativeness was almost automatically born.

Beside the personal interest and connection to the issue, due to the wide existence of the matter in the field of ELT, it is highly beneficial in our area to understand our professionals' perceptions and where they stand concerning the nativeness issue (professionals referring to the participants in the study described above).

### **1.5 Location of the research**

This research was completed at a language department of a public university located in a big city in the central part of Mexico. It is a faculty that gives place for majors in languages and also the possibility for students to continue their professional development in the area on masters' level. The current research participants (both graduate and undergraduate students) were majoring or studying their master's in the field of English language teaching (ELT). The other reason why the current study was completed at the place recently mentioned, is the researcher's personal and professional connection to the faculty described above.

### **1.6 Aims**

In light of the previous mentioning, this study aimed principally to explore and understand master's degree level students' perceptions and attitudes towards their non-nativeness. The study's next purpose was to explore and understand undergraduate students' opinions and perceptions towards native English speaking teachers versus non-native English speaking teachers (NESTs vs. NNESTs), how – according to their beliefs – the advantages and disadvantages of learning English with a NEST versus a NNEST could be defined. In order for possible reevaluation of the current beliefs, practices, and framework in their language pedagogy could be achieved for the graduate students' as teachers, the results of the undergraduate students' perceptions were presented to the teacher participants. As so, the

current study's last aims were to interpret how graduate students responded (as English teachers) to the undergraduate students' opinion on this issue, as well as to analyze whether there were any changes in the graduate students' beliefs from how they observed the issue at the beginning of the master's program and at the end of it. This is an important aspect of the investigation because it allowed the researcher to gain insights into how the participants reflected upon and possibly modified their preexisting notions on the nativeness issue through the time of their professional development on master's level.

### **1.7 Objectives**

Data were collected from previously completed autobiographies by graduate students. Self-completion questionnaires were distributed to a group of 42 undergraduate students. For further analyses of the key concept of the issue, a group interview was conducted with a sample of 4 students who had finished their professional development on master's level by the time of the interview.

### **1.8 Research questions**

The current study contributes to the nativeness issue in ELT by investigating undergraduate and graduate students' beliefs toward NESTs and NNESTs, and explores three research questions:

RQ1 What are graduate students' perceptions and attitudes towards their non-nativeness?

RQ2 What are undergraduate students' opinions and perceptions about NESTs versus NNESTs?

RQ3 How do graduate students respond to the undergraduate students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs and to their own previous perceptions on nativeness and non-nativeness?

## **1.9 Chapter summary and overview of thesis document**

This chapter outlined an overview of this research study and the key factors that support it: why this topic was researched, the significance of the study. It established the context of the research, the background of the researcher, the setting where this study was carried out and why, the aims, and research questions. In the following chapters, the theoretical framework, the literature review and the methodology will be presented as well as the analysis of data, which will lead to the conclusion of the study. Finally, the limitations of the study will be presented with suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **2.0 Introduction**

### **2.1 Defining the native speaker**

### **2.2 Multilayered facets of the English language**

#### **2.2.1 World Englishes**

#### **2.2.2 English as an international language**

#### **2.2.3 English as a Lingua Franca**

##### **2.2.3.1 Latin as a Lingua Franca and its connection to English**

### **2.3 The perceptions of nativeness and non-nativeness today**

#### **2.3.1 Who owns English?**

##### **2.3.1.1 Competence or geographical limitations**

#### **2.3.2 Identity in ELT**

#### **2.3.3 Cultural and intercultural competence in language teaching**

### **2.4 Research on NESTs and NNESTs**

#### **2.4.1 The native/ non-native dichotomy**

#### **2.4.2 Scholars' perceptions on the native and non-native factor**

#### **2.4.3 Teachers' perceptions on the native and non-native factor**

#### **2.4.4 Students' perceptions on the native and non-native factor**

### **2.5 Conclusion**

## **2.0 Introduction**

Chapter two is providing us insight into the theoretical framework and to the review of the literature on the issue of nativeness in ELT. First, we will start with the presentation of the different definitions about who a native speaker is considered to be, being this the guiding concept of the study. This will follow the possible distribution of the different World Englishes, then, the characteristics of English as an international language will be analyzed; after this, the presentation of English as a Lingua Franca will happen and its correlation to Latin as a Lingua Franca. Later on, some of the perceptions of the nativeness issue will be discussed and within that, the issue of ownership, identity in ELT, and cultural and intercultural awareness in language teaching. Further on, existing research on NESTs and NNESTs will be reviewed, which will start with the presentation of the native and non-native dichotomy. It will also be part of this frame the presentation of the native and non-native concepts from scholars', teachers', and students' perspective. Finally, we will find the chapter's conclusion.

### **2.1 Defining the native speaker**

There is a wide variety of points of view in the EFL context when defining the native speaker to the point where some scholars even reject the idea of using the so called 'native speaker' labelling as to refer to the standard norm conventions as the yardstick of communicative competence. Kachru and Nelson (2006) define the term "native speaker" as referring to someone who learned English in a natural setting as a first language during childhood. Holliday (2009) perceives native speakerism as such: "...the way in which the NNEST Caucus deals with the native–non-native-speaker issue is that it is *political* rather than largely *linguistic*. While language is still the prime focus, it is the *politics* of English as

a potentially imperialist force, rather than concerns with linguistic models...” (p. 24). Kramsch (1995) argues that native speakership is “neither a privilege of birth nor of education” but “acceptance by the group that created the distinction between native and nonnative speakers” (cited in Braine, 1999, p. xv). Davies (2003) presents different situational differentiations as for who can be considered a native speaker:

- by birth (that is by early childhood exposure),
- by being an exceptional learner,
- through education using the target-language medium (the lingua franca case),
- by virtue of being a native user (the postcolonial case), and
- through long residence in the adopted country.

We have tried to present different approaches who a ‘native speaker’ is considered to be, but we need to be aware that “if English has now become an ‘international language’, then questions such as who is a native speaker and who should a *near-native* speaker try to emulate can no longer be taken for granted” (Ali, 2009, p.43).

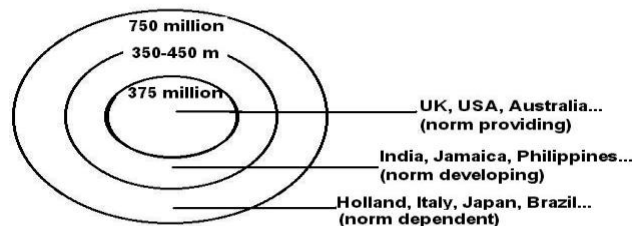
## **2.2 Multilayered facets of the English language**

English has evolved and spread to many different areas as the main means of communication, gaining the highest prestige and usage that a language has ever gotten in history. However, its prestige entails different complex issues too when analyzing its functionality from various perspectives. We can recognize its colorful facets in the different mediums, how people change it, shape it, own it differently. Some perspectives and categorizations in its usage are discussed below.

### **2.2.1 World Englishes**

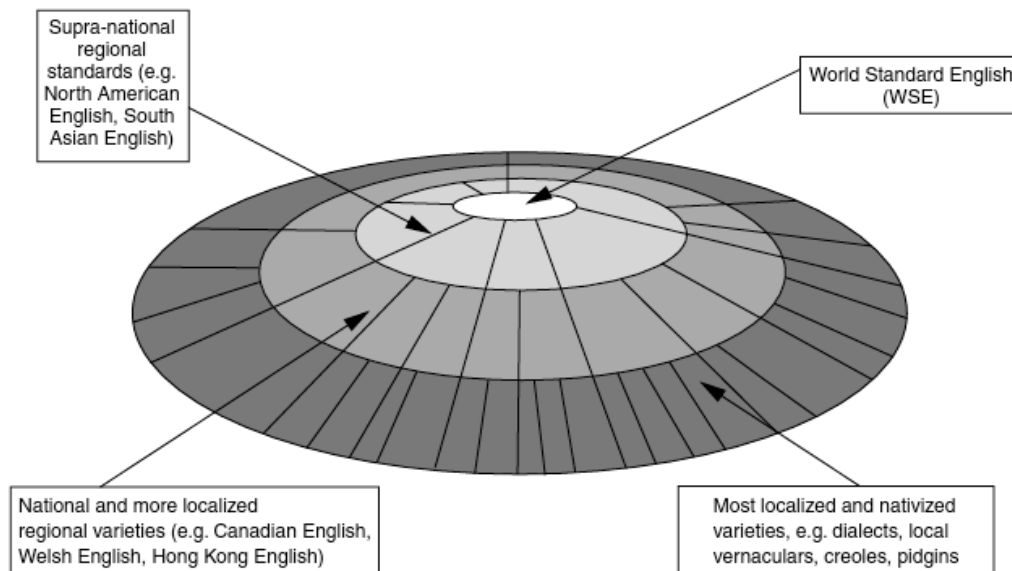
With the spread of the English language around the world, this has diversified into different varieties known as World Englishes (WE). These are “varieties of English used in

diverse sociolinguistic contexts” (Bhatt 2001, p. 527). According to the environment where they are spoken, these act differently. “They adopt new words, their syntax is changing and they present a wide variety of accents, all of this being influenced by the countries themselves, by their cultures and by languages spoken there” (Jenkins, 2003, p. 23). Among the different varieties of English which can be seen and heard today are: Indian English, Australian English, Singapore English, British English, American English, Irish English etc. Kachru (1985) proposed a model of concentric circles (the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles) to describe the spread of English worldwide based on the historical context, status, and functions of English around the world. These classifications (Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle) correspond respectively to the ENL, ESL, and EFL distinction. In the Inner Circle are countries where English is the first language e.g. the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The Outer Circle shows the postcolonial Anglophonic contexts, such as Nigeria and Zambia in Africa and India and Singapore in Asia. In these countries English is only one of the languages spoken as an official, co- official, legal, or educational language; English language functions within a non-English culture as a second language (ESL). The third, the Expanding Circle refers to those countries that recognize English as an international language, but within their borders it does not have a special status; English functions as an international and a foreign language (EFL) e.g. English in Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, and China.



*Fig. 2.1* The Three Circles Model (Kachru, 1985).

Svartvik and Leech (2006) present their model of World Englishes, where the Inner Circle countries are found around the rim rather than at the hub. They highlight that “a number of experts – including Braj Kachru himself, the inventor of the three-circles model – have pointed out that as English has become a global language, the differences between the circles are getting less clear, and also less important” (p. 226). They believe that the native speaking Inner Circle countries are beginning to lose their status as models for English learning around the world. Although World Standard English is being strongly influenced by American English, this cannot be identified with any native-speaker variety (Svartvik & Leech, 2006). It is also important to mention that according to the authors of the following model, the center of the wheel is placed higher up than the rim because this carries more prestige and represents the goal of education. “It is the form used for international communication: its goal is **intelligibility** across national and cultural frontiers (ibid., p. 226).



*Fig. 2.2* A model of world English (Svartvik & Leech, 2006).

Sharifian (2009) also highlights that this distribution of the different Englishes in circles is not necessarily always valid, as there are countries where many World Englishes are spoken. For example, Australia, which is however considered an Inner Circle country as we have seen above, there are different Englishes used for communication, such as: Indian English, Chinese English, Malay English, and so on. Therefore, the 'clean' differentiation of what English is used where, and with that, what country belongs to which circle, is not entirely possible.

Graddol (1997) likewise criticizes Kachru's three circle model by asserting that this division will not be effective in the twenty-first century, as it places the native speaker at the center of global use of English. He believes that the L2 speakers, who already outnumber native speakers, will become the new 'centre of gravity', while native speakers will find it challenging to maintain their position as 'representatives of the tongue.' Canagarajah (2006) shares this opinion, claiming that World Englishes can no longer be viewed through the 'three Circles' metaphor. As a large number of speakers from the Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle countries now live in the Inner-Circle countries, even native speakers of English are increasingly exposed to World Englishes. This means revising the notion of 'proficiency' even for the English of native speakers. Kirkpatrick (2007) proposes the differentiation of some varieties of English as 'nativised' rather than 'native': "It is difficult to find rational criteria for classifying varieties of English as "native"; it is easier to classify them as '**nativised**'... By a nativised variety I mean a variety that has been *influenced by the local cultures and languages* of the people who have developed that particular variety" (p. 7).

Canagarajah (2006) maintains that, "in a context where we have to constantly shuttle between different varieties [of English] and communities, proficiency becomes complex...one needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication"

(p. 233). The concept of the need to be ‘shuffling’ between the different varieties of Englishes takes us to our next topic reviewed, which is English as an international language.

### **2.2.2 English as an international language**

Sharifian (2009) declares that the ‘issue that lies at the heart’ of English as an International language (EIL), is ‘communication *across* Englishes’. EIL contexts are ones in which English is used between speakers from different cultural and national backgrounds. EIL does not refer to a specific version of English, it actually rejects the idea of any particular variety of English to be used as a Lingua Franca for international communication. EIL emphasizes that English is a language of international, and therefore *intercultural*, communication; “it refers to a paradigm for thinking, research and practice...” (ibid., p. 2). Modiano (2009) asserts that “...what distinguishes English as an international language and ‘English as a lingua franca’ is the notion that both represent an attempt to gather English language users into an all encompassing ‘cross-cultural communication’ taxonomy” (p. 64).

Smith and Bisaza (cited in Berns, 2008), include all speakers of English as possible participants in international communication: “EIL then, can summarily be defined as that English in all its linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects which is used as a vehicle for communication between non-native speakers only, as well as between any combination of native and non-native speakers” (p. 329).

We have seen English and its many varieties and how this is the main connector globally among people; however, Maley (2009) presents the reality that teachers need to face while guiding students through reaching English acquisition:

[Teachers teach] a standard variety of English to satisfy curricular and examination requirements within an educational bureaucracy, while [they also prepare] their students in some measure for the bewildering variety of

English usage they will certainly encounter in the outside world... Teachers are faced with an impossible task. They are expected to square the circle. With limited time, institutional constraints of syllabus and examinations, they are additionally expected to raise awareness of the reality of the variability which their students will face, if ever they have to use English internationally. The best they can do, in my opinion, is to make students aware that, although they are learning a 'standard' variety of English, they will inevitably meet many other varieties in the outside world" (p. 195).

### **2.2.3 English as a Lingua Franca**

If we want to understand the sociocultural importance and development of English, we need to disengage our notion of English 'from its supposed ancestry' (Dewey & Leung, 2010). English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is the use of the English language as a means of communication for speakers of different first languages. "Today, English acts as a lingua franca in many different parts of the world, and is the nearest thing there has ever been to a global lingua franca" (Svartvik and Leech, 2006, p. 232). ELF is also "defined functionally by its use in intercultural communication rather than formally by its reference to native-speaker norms" (Hülmbauer, 2008, p. 27) while English as a foreign language aims at meeting native speaker norms and gives importance to native speaker cultural aspects.

ELF interactions concentrate on function rather than form, therefore, efficient communication (understanding the message) is more important than correctness (Cogo, 2008). As a consequence, ELF interactions often are very hybrid (Firth, 2009). Speakers conform to each other's cultural backgrounds and may also use code-switching into other languages that they know.

English language as a LF is in the process of dissociation from its national culture/s and is embracing different cultures through its use. The linguistic and cultural forms of English are always in constant process as well; they are affected and motivated by both local

and global environments. They never remain static. They are always in constant change. Therefore, the knowledge, awareness, and skills associated with intercultural awareness (ICA) will be constantly under revision as well.

To communicate in ‘global settings’, learners and users of English need to be aware of the differences between cultures. They need to become culturally competent and tolerant. “...they [referring to the majority of ELF researchers] believe that as far as ELF interactions are concerned, any participating mother tongue speakers will have to follow the agenda set by ELF speakers, rather than vice versa, as has been the case up to now” (Jenkins, 2006, 161). ELF researchers do not seek or recommend a monolithic use of English like World Standard (Spoken) English (W(S)SE) does, but they rather “seek to identify frequently and systematically used forms that differ from inner circle forms without causing communication problems and override first language groupings” (Jenkins, *ibid.*). They recommend the recognition and usage of certain language forms that are highly used among English speakers from different first language backgrounds. ELF however, does not discourage the usage of local English in local context. ELF users are the widest number user of English as “to the extent that they learn and use English more for interlinguacultural communication than to communicate with speakers who share their first linguaculture (or, for that matter, with native English speakers)” (Jenkins, 2006, 164).

As mentioned above in the definition of ELF, English is a means of communication for speakers of different first languages. While some ELF scholars share this view, others look at its function somewhat differently. Maley (2009) finds it unrealistic to try to isolate one single type of interaction, referring to ELF as channel of communication between NNS and NNS. He compares this clear separation with an impossible challenge: it is as hard as attempting to separate the yolk, the white of the egg and the milk from an omelette mix.

Although Maley (2009) makes a point here, the need of the emergent or emerging version of English not necessarily has to do only with having a 'common' channel that promotes smoother communication cross-culturally, but also because of other reasons. This is especially valid when it comes to our context: users by being aware of this means of communication, native-like usage seeking would possibly lower, power issues would reduce; the mere concept would bring positive assets for any NNS in using the language globally and have measurements accordingly for the users. Practicing ELF could also give space to users for more confidence, knowing that strong borders of Standard or American English are broken in ELF norms.

I agree with Maley's (2009) conceptuality according to which ELF does not have a restriction to NNS-NNS' communication. As Modiano (2009) states: "When a native speaker of English uses his or her English with a group of people for whom English is an L2, it is used in that capacity as a lingua franca by the native speaker as well... To exclude the L1 speaker from this fraternity is to limit our understanding of how English operates globally as Europe's and the world's primary lingua franca" (p. 61). English as a Lingua Franca is not limited only to NNS-NNS usage. It can be present between NS-NS users or between NNS-NS too. NS-NS users although share the nativity, when communicating with NSs of a different local variety of the language, they move on from using always a standard form of English; boundaries widen and tolerance is born in finding the optimum communicational channel for both participants. When two people of different local variety users of English (native or non-native) engage in communication and they recognize possible features of miscomprehension, they share their thoughts on a lingua franca level when trying to find a common core in exchanging ideas successfully. My personal perception on the issue is not so much the importance of finding THE common cores that can be valid internationally and

cross-culturally, but more of recognizing the cores that interrupt momentarily the successful change of input and be ready, flexible to leave the personal everyday practiced boundaries to find that channel where communication can be successfully fulfilled.

The way how easily – or not – communicators can overcome these language barriers, depends on different factors: how proficient they are in the involved parts of the English language, number of speakers, levels of noise, the predictability of the speech event, complexity of the event, degree of shared specialist knowledge, among others (Anderson & Lynch, 1988). ELF variety changes are more moment and context-determining; corrections are possible in case of misunderstanding and there is chance for clarifications if needed because until a certain level NS and NNS share the same basic lexis and pragmatic features. Baring the knowledge of these common core features allow them to start communicating from the very beginning. Therefore, instead of trying to locate the common cores of the language that would allow international usage of a unified version of English, what is necessary is to raise awareness among users that Standard English or American English variety norms are not the only ones that serve as base of communication in English. Rather, for a successful change of ideas *flexibility*, to be able *to negotiate differences*, and *to facilitate intelligibility* are necessary features to be able to express ideas outside of the local norms. I can imagine how new varieties are constantly born and present, but not for them to remain as norms for the future. While native or non-native users communicate in different contexts, diverse varieties emerge to locate the channel where they can meet to communicate successfully. Meiercord (2004) reports that, ‘unlike dialect contact, ELF cannot be conceived as a permanent form of English, since its users do not constitute a stable community. Rather, it is a variety in constant flux, involving different constellations of speakers of diverse individual Englishes in every single interaction’ (p. 115).

Although there is no easy way to approach the concept of ELF, raising awareness of the existence of ELF would help to approach the issue of nativeness (too) from another perspective: in the light of new norms and varieties. As teachers, we could “teach [students] how to deal with diversity, [to develop] respect for difference and a positive attitude to accommodation” (Maley, 2009, p.197).

### **2.2.3.1 Latin as a Lingua Franca and its connection to English**

Llurda (2004) makes an interesting correlation between English and Latin both from the Lingua Franca perspective. He reports that the vast majority of many millions of non-native speakers of English are not conscious of their being speakers of EIL. In the light of the native/non-native issue, he also highlights that when non-native speakers become aware of their status, native-speaker control of the language will end, and non-native speakers will feel entitled to the use of a variety of the language that belongs to them. He compares the situation with the globalization of the English language with what happened in Europe 15 centuries ago when the Roman Empire collapsed and the different communities in all Europe continued to use Latin without respecting the original source of the language. Although they had evolved their own varieties, they managed to keep using Latin as a Lingua Franca for almost 1000 years. Llurda (2004) emphasizes that these countries did not “mimic” the evolution and changes of Latin, they kept the international form of the language. He points out that English with its level of internationalization, local changes should not be transferred to the international use of the language. However, as Popan (2011) points out, “as opposed to English, Latin was no longer anyone’s mother tongue, it did not belong to anyone in particular and everyone had to learn it, so there was justice in communication, to some extent” (p.179).

## **2.3 The perceptions of nativeness and non-nativeness today**

We have seen it above that despite of many people's beliefs, the division between native and non-native speakers is still dominant in most ELT contexts, it is still discriminatory against NNESTs. However significant changes have not occurred in recent years to diminish NNESTs' discrimination, there are current norms to consider if we want to reevaluate our notion of nativeness. Some of these are presented below.

### **2.3.1 Who owns English?**

Shohamy (cited in Dewey & Leung, 2010) argues that "English as a language can no longer be regulated by the 'rules' of any one particular set of speakers. English is a free commodity...it is free to be used, shaped and molded by anybody in different ways, as in the case for its million users who construct and create endless types of Englishes. English does not belong to anybody specific, not to a nation, not to a group, it belongs only to those who want to own it" (p. 5). Norton (cited in Medgyes, 2001) shares this idea when endorsing that "English belongs to all people who speak it, whether native and non-native, whether ESL or EFL, whether standard or non-standard" (p. 417).

Graddol (1997) claims that "there are three kind of English speaker: those who speak it as a first language, those for whom it is a second or additional language, and those who learn it as a foreign language. Native speakers may feel the language 'belongs' to them, but it will be those who speak English as a second or foreign language who will determine its world future" (p.10). Widdowson (1994) argued that if native speakers own English because they speak it more correctly than non-native English speakers (NNESTs) do, then some native speakers own bigger shares of English because they speak it more correctly than other NESs do. Ali (2009) takes a stand in the subject of ownership from EIL perspective: "...people

from the English speaking West will always be called 'native' English speakers. However, those English speakers who belong to non-English speaking countries should not be treated like the 'generalized Other' because globalization is ensuring that English no longer belongs to any one kind of people; it is an international language and belongs to everyone who uses it" (p. 44).

The widespread use of English is making the use of the term native competence 'increasingly redundant' (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005). Sutherland (2012) claims that the ELF paradigm changes the answer when talking about the ownership of English. With WEs native speakers of English are no longer in a powerful position because they are not native speakers of WEs (Bruton, 2005). Many of the users of WEs may be more communicatively competent than NSs of English. Dewey and Leung (2010) highlight that with the WEs paradigm it is crucial that we rethink our notion of nativeness. They claim that English can be as foreign to a speaker living in an Inner Circle city, as " it is to people in any context conventionally classified as ESL or EFL settings, or as 'native' to a speaker of English in Singapore as it is to speakers in any of the traditional ENL settings" (p. 4). As English belongs to wherever it is spoken, the notion of foreignness is quite unimportant (ibid.).

Widdowson (1994) agrees with Kachru's allegation against Standard English and the ownership, sustaining that native speakers cannot claim ownership of English:

How English develops in the world is no business whatsoever of native speakers in England, the United States, or anywhere else. They have no say in the matter, no right to intervene or pass judgment. They are irrelevant. The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it. To grant such custody of the language is necessarily to arrest its development and so undermine its international status. It is a matter of considerable pride and satisfaction for native speakers of English that their language is an international means of communication. But the point is that it is only international to the extent

that it is not their language. It is not a possession which they lease out to others, while retaining the freehold. Other people actually own it (p. 385).

With its globalization, English has taken a significant turn: the native speakers of this language appear to have lost the exclusivity to control its standardization and have become a minority. We need to look at English from current and valid perspectives based on new and constantly renewed paradigms (Kachru, 1985). English is a living discipline and due to that, it goes through significantly constant changes. People shape it and own it according to their needs.

#### **2.3.1.1 Competence or geographical limitations**

In the light of proposals that are being made to move beyond the native speaker as the model in language teaching, Modiano (2009) argues that proficiency in English is no longer determined by birth, but by the capacity to use the language efficiently, being native or non-native. “In this context, it is unfortunate that Kachru’s three circles model has become so ingrained in our belief system about English in the world, since it tends to reinforce the idea that competence derives from provenance, whereas they are so clearly separate in reality.” (Maley, 2009, p. 198).

#### **2.3.2 Identity in ELT**

Teachers have the responsibility to present the ‘multifaceted reality’ in which the new language is used and to help learners to express their own identity, which will help them to become multicompetent speakers (Cook, 1999). However, achieving in practice the concept of learners ‘expressing their own identity’, might be more complex than we would think. The native and non-native dichotomy affects English language users on the level of identity too: Sharifian (2009) expresses that some learners of English sometimes show preference in

practice for native accent to distance themselves from their L1 identity. He connects this happening with the fact that many speakers around the world are stigmatized for their L1 accent sometimes within their country of origin, or outside it. Holliday (2005) also points out his concern: “We need to remember how difficult it has been for people, who have found themselves the victims of this process, to struggle for identity while wishing and trying to take part in an educational venture which leads to love and hate at the same time” (p. 176). However, positive feedback has also been introduced recently concerning the issue. Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015) speak about the concept of *global professional identity*. “The ELT field today requires a professional identity that is also globally minded, that is, aware that any teaching context is situated at both global and local scales simultaneously” (Kanno & Stuart; Varghese, cited in Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015, p. 14). I perceive this idea in teachers’ professional lives not as an extra skill, but rather a necessary complement in our English teaching practice as a global language. Further on, when discussing competence and intercultural competence, we will see circumstances where local English is acceptable and preferable. However, the concept that English has become a global language, needs to be actively present in our teaching practices, needs to be viewed with a global mind from all users’ stand. To encourage this view in practice and in the light of the importance of critical pedagogy for language teacher development, Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015) designed an online pedagogical intervention, which they implemented with Colombian and US graduate groups of students simultaneously during one semester. The online educational platform *Schoology* offered the chance to unite both nationality students to dialogue while residing in distinct geographic locations, and by that, to promote critical reflection among the participants. They highlight how this practice also helped students in gaining knowledge about global and local perspectives.

NNS teachers require the opportunity to make connections with each other and that the benefit is maximized when these collaborations can be accomplished in transnational, globalized spaces. As teacher educators, we found this pedagogical intervention to be a way to encourage in our graduate students the type of global professional identity that will serve them professionally (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015, p. 15).

Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015) introduced students three critical readings from which four themes emerged: the role of ELT, institutional constraints, whose culture to teach, and linguistic diversity in language teaching. After each reading, individuals in one class posted messages to the Schoology Wall about their reactions to the readings. Students in the counterpart class then typed comments on each post, and so, a conversation chain developed as comments and responses were born on both sides. They highlight how this practice helped graduate participants “to formulate their ideas about language teaching and to build their professional voices in reciprocal relationships with fellow language teachers” (p. 16). We need to emphasize that all participants were NNESTs; the Colombian participants were considered as expert teachers, while the graduate students at the US site as novice teachers. All US site participants were international students, who planned to obtain their master’s degree in the United States and return to their home country to start their professional career there as English teachers. Due to lack of space, we are going to present Guerrero Nieto and Meadows’s (2015, p. 19) findings of the currently discussed case study with the table that they presented in their article: (TEPIC referring to participants on the Colombian site and TEPUS referring to participants on the US site).

Table 2.1 *Summary of Themes with Accompanying Descriptors* (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015).

Themes	TEPIC Descriptors	TEPUS Descriptors
The Role of ELT	ELT as transformative and empowering	ELT as an economic/educational commodity; potential for loss of native language
Institutional Constraints	From a teacher perspective, challenge-packed curricular models; promote locally relevant language education policy	Acknowledged the institutional constraints on teacher practices from a student perspective
Whose Culture to Teach?	Support “third space” culture; sensitive to the dangers of colonialism	American culture is the focus of instruction; see future selves as conduits of American culture
Linguistic Diversity in Language Teaching	Support diversity in principle; reintroduce that which is erased by standard language ideology and colonialism	Diversity allowed, but for pragmatic reasons and as long as it does not impinge on superiority of the standard

We can briefly see how the two groups perceived the four themes. I would like to highlight some participants’ view here as they are closely connected to our present study. Paola (Colombian site) shows awareness how education systems around the world privilege standard languages and by that causing negative effect:

Hi [Qiang], it is very nice to know the name of some dialects of your country but unfortunately, because of the existence of standard languages, we are not aware of them. I do believe that if a person sounds weird when he speaks with a special accent in a specific community, it is because the society has chosen the “right” languages to be used in specific context and the “not appropriate” or informal ones (in Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015, p. 23).

Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015) highlight that Paola was able to see the negative effect of standardization both in China and Colombia as similar representative of global happenings, which ‘undoubtedly’ contributed to Paola’s global professional identity. However, US site participants reported in interviews that they would return to their countries to represent their students authentic American English and culture: “I came here to learn

authentic English, so I will tell my students, 'Listen to me'." (Jun in *ibid.*, p. 22). "This conclusion gives us inspiration for updating the TEPUS coursework to better reflect the critical knowledge students will need as NNESTs as they progress into the profession" (*ibid.*, p. 24).

Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015) view peer dialogue as a valuable opportunity for raising critical awareness of professional teacher identity in a globalized world. They believe that practical experiences and the sharing of those experiences with colleagues help professionals to acquire a 'healthy' global professional identity. They also find these programs important as according to them, these are "collaborative project[s] of professional meaning-making" in professional development (p. 16).

Two TEPUS participants described the will to use Schoology in the future to give language students the chance to cross national borders to practice their English and to speak about their local contexts. Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015) highlight that this suggests that these two participants are breaking through their comfort zones in which native speakers are the only genuine partners for English language practice.

### **2.3.3 Cultural and intercultural competence in language teaching**

Different views can be found in the field when determining the meaning of 'culture.' Hymes (1972) views it as communicative competence; Kramsch (1993) implies that culture should not be considered as an extra fifth skill, it should be always present to reflect the limitations of the learners' communicative competence and to challenge their ability to understand the world around them.

Intercultural speakers' intercultural competence can be defined as "the ability to behave appropriately in intercultural situations, the affective and cognitive capacity to

establish and maintain intercultural relationships and the ability to stabilize one's self-identity while mediating between cultures" (Jensen, 1995, p. 41). Block (2009) mentions two 'pre-conditions' of intercultural competence: the capacity to handle one's culture, beliefs, and value systems relatively and an acquired knowledge about cultures different than one's own. He names three skills that originate from the mentioned two pre-conditions:

*savoir comprendre* – knowing how to read culture via various media;

*savoir apprendre* – knowing how to learn from contacts with new behaviours, belief systems, values and so on;

*savoir faire* – knowing how to interact in an interculturally appropriate manner (p. 142).

Alred and Byram (2002) refer to a person owning the mentioned *savoirs* as 'intercultural mediator.' In the light of this, at first, they mention the existence of two types of socialization: primary socialization, which refers to the interval while a person learns the essentials of being a member of a particular culture; secondary socialization represents the individuals' introduction into different institutions, such as education and work. Byram (1990) adds a third type of socialization, which is called tertiary socialization with what he refers to the introduction into the behavior, beliefs, and values of a second culture either early in life or later in life. This also includes "the FL learning experience, which ideally is about breaking with beliefs, concepts and schemata acquired during primary and secondary socialization" (Block, 2009, p.119).

The various uses of World Englishes have showed that English language is not limited to the linguistic or sociocultural norms of English in the Inner Circle countries. It has become "a contact language between interlocutors with different languacultures" (Baker 2012, p. 63). For successful intercultural communication, a common aim for users is "to become aware of the culturally based norms, beliefs, and behaviors of their own culture and other cultures"

(Baker 2012, p. 65). With the variety of Englishes, it cannot be presumed that an English language speaker could have knowledge of all the different cultural milieus. Baker (2012) proposes a re-evaluation of cultural awareness' (CA) attributes, a combination of knowledge of specific cultures with "an awareness of cultural influences in intercultural communication" (p. 66). He presents a list of components of intercultural awareness (ICA) by complementing the some of the already existed features of CA. These twelve features are placed and presented in three levels: basic cultural awareness as level one, advanced cultural awareness as level two, and intercultural awareness as level three. "These twelve elements of ICA delineate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a user of English as a global Lingua Franca needs to be able to communicate successfully in these complex settings" (Baker, 2012, p. 67).

Block (2009) highlights: interculturality infers the possibility of conversational breakdowns taking place when interlocutors come from different sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds. Interculturalists see these breakdowns as 'misunderstandings' resulting from the lack of intercultural competence on the part of the non-local interlocutor. Block (2009) does not mention misunderstanding with a native/non-native distinction, but he rather mentions the possibility and importance of correct input decoding between a local and a non-local interlocutor. I believe that this highlights at the same time that local practices on local English level usage - as Canagarajah (1999) pointed it out as well above - have more importance than the native/non-native concept or following a standard version of English. The norms are locally defined and we cannot use on Outer Circle English users Standard English norms as measurement because some forms under this measurement may be called fossilized errors or deficient. These errors may have such labelling in the Standard American or British English, but locally may be perfectly acceptable. Kilickaya (2009) presents an

example of the usage of tag questions in Indian English (p.36 adapted from Bhatt, 2005, p. 39-40):

a) You have taken my book, isn't it?

b) You are soon going home, isn't it?

Kilickaya (2009) highlights that the tag does not carry the meaning of the proposition, but instead it carries social meaning. "These two examples show how the linguistic form is constrained by cultural constraints of politeness... in Indian English [these tags] are governed by politeness principle of nonimposition" (p. 36). These tag questions would have a totally different form if we took into account the Standard English norms, using the same subject with a *correct* modal auxiliary:

a) You have taken my book, haven't you?

b) You are soon going home, aren't you?

Although the use of tags... in Indian English seem odd and can be regarded as the violation/deviation of rules, it can be agreed that they are acceptable in its own context rather than being regarded as signs of fossilization. However, if these forms are used in international context where English is used as a means of communication by members of different cultures, there may be some communication breakdowns or misunderstandings (Kilickaya, 2009, p. 36).

Depending on which context the English language is being used to communicate, different norms have to be taken into account. As presented previously, it is necessary to be familiar with local norms in local context. Englishes used in Outer and Expanding Circle countries are influenced by local norms and culture, and used accordingly. Standard English rules and norms may not function as measurement for Englishes outside of the Inner Circle. In this part, although not only cultural competence, but also the characteristics and importance of intercultural competence were presented, these aspects can be found and

analyzed from another point of view in the English as an international language section and in the subsection of English as a Lingua Franca.

## **2.4 Research on NESTs and NNESTs**

In the following section we will try to define who is considered as a ‘native speaker’ and to give an insight how the issue of nativeness and non-nativeness is present from the different perspectives in the field of ELT: from the scholars’, from the teachers’, and from the students’ perspective through the different research that have been done on the topic.

### **2.4.1 The native/ non-native dichotomy**

The notion of ‘native speaker’ had become obsolete in a modern world where people are often native speakers of more than one language, and where linguistic boundaries are no longer clear (Canagarajah, 1999). He discusses the importance of adopting a multi-norm approach in language teaching, where norms are locally defined. He proposes a ‘revised’ framework for language teaching, where concepts like ‘nativeness’ and ‘authenticity’ are replaced with qualities connected to ‘expertise’, ‘local practices’, and ‘relevance.’ Dewey and Leung (2010) highlight the importance to raise awareness among teachers of English about the complex and pluralistic nature of the language. This could be the first step in reevaluating current beliefs and practices in language pedagogy. That, and ending the usage of the labelling term ‘non-native speaker’, which despite its many inconveniences, it is still widely used for lack of a better alternative.

### **2.4.2 Scholars’ perceptions on the native and non-native factor**

As previously seen, when defining ‘native speaker’, scholars have different perceptions on the definition and this can be closely connected to the variety of points of view that scholars present when discussing NESTs’ versus NNESTs’ teaching practices.

Medgyes (1992) brought up the controversy whether a non-native speaker can ever become a native speaker or not. He believes that a non-native speaker's competence is limited, by justifying that non-native speakers are by nature norm-dependent. He goes forward, and states that if language competence were the only aspect involved in the teaching skills, NESTs would always be better than NNESTs. But there are additional variables to be considered in teaching: experience, age, sex, aptitude, charisma, motivation, training, etc. Finally, he agrees that native and non-native have the same opportunity in achieving professional success. Medgyes (1992) presents six non-NEST advantages that overcome the superiority of the NESTs:

1. They provide a good learner model to their students.
2. They can teach language strategies very effectively.
3. They can provide more information about the language to their students.
4. They understand the difficulties and needs of the students.
5. They are able to anticipate and predict language difficulties.
6. In EFL setting they can use the students' native language to their advantage.

Like many scholars, he argues that the ideal school is one that has a good balance of NESTs and NNESTs. In this setting, one can complement the other in their strengths and weaknesses. Garcia (1997) does not share Medgyes's idea when reporting that NESTs and NNESTs are always better in different aspects, but he agrees with the ideal setting in school where NESTs and NNESTs work together.

As mentioned above, there are many variables to consider when choosing for the idea of an ideal teacher. Cook (2001) agrees with Medgyes in stating that the multicompetent, multilingual teacher is qualitatively different and more capable than the monolingual teacher. Canagarajah (1999) claims that NESTs are better teachers in EFL contexts for their unique

cultural knowledge, while NNESTs are better teachers in ESL contexts because of their multicultural experience. One cannot incline towards one or another type of teacher, as both have assets and drawbacks to offer (Arva & Medgyes, 2000). Foreign languages bring something qualitatively different from their NESTs partners to the classroom, but this is equally valuable (Meadows & Muramatsu, 2007).

Although during the completion of this research I became aware of the existing discrimination between NNESTs and NESTs, it was hard to face Holliday's (2005) description on how he sees NNESTs' treatment in practice: "...the perceived monolithic 'non-native' group is characterized as people who are described as 'dependent, collectivist, passive, docile, lacking in self-esteem, easily dominated, traditional, static, rigid, need to be trained, and empowered', and so on" (p. 19–20). Trabant (1996) describes his similar perception of NESTs towards NNESTs: that according to them, the rest of us speak an unbearable version of English; he highlights that on the other hand, they make no effort in speaking anything but their local version of English.

There are other scholars as Medgyes who rather take into account professional training and teachers' pedagogical ability when taking a stand on the discussion of native and non-native English speaking teachers, such as Boyle (1997) who argues that:

...the non-native speaker, trained in ESL/EFL and a good pedagogue, is very probably a better teacher of English than a native speaker who is alternatively trained and a poor pedagogue. On the other hand, a native-speaker teacher who is alternatively trained but is a good pedagogue, may well be compensate for the lack of ESL/EFL training by native-speaker language ability and may in fact be a better teacher than a non-native speaker who is trained in ESL/EFL but is a poor pedagogue (p. 169).

There are different aspects that can be and need to be taken into account when so much as only approaching in trying to define who is favorable and more effective in teaching

English. However, I am convinced of one thing: that not so much comparing one to another but rather than seeking how they complement each other and by that achieving not to be placing one above the other, would be a much favorable and may I say valid perspective. The skills that both NESTs and NNESTs need to prove competence in are both linguistic and pedagogical.

#### **2.4.3 Teachers' perceptions on the native and non-native factor**

Culture, local beliefs, institutes' policies are determinant aspects in deciding from which angles are teachers measured for a teaching position. Although there are many outer factors that can limit a NNEST, studies show that teachers are often limiting themselves by practicing the fossilized labelling according to which they are 'less' than NESTs. Sutherland (2012) presents findings from interviewing NNESTs in Japan about the importance of having native English assistants as part of the class. According to them, students receive high quality input only a couple of times a month, when native assistants are present. While scholars have different views about who and ideal FL teacher is – some not rejecting the idea that non-NESTs can develop professionalism as competent as NESTs' –, Japanese NNESTs tend to think that they are non-competent against native assistant pedagogues (Sutherland, 2012). During the interview, Teacher 01 referred to the English spoken by native English assistants as 'real English.' Teacher 05 had a similar opinion when stating that students were excited to listen to the 'real English.' Sutherland (2012) states that by this, "teacher 05 has implicitly marked her own English as something other than real" (p. 181).

As an interesting fact, it needs to be mentioned that both Teacher 01 and teacher 05 had master's degree in TESOL, Teacher 01 in the United States and teacher 05 in the United Kingdom. Sutherland (2012) expresses that although these teachers could be referred to as

expert speakers, “they relegate the English they themselves speak to the status of something else, something inherently less valid if it is being denied the label of being ‘real’...they did not see their English as authentic” (p. 182).

One of the causes why NNESTs see themselves as such in practice, is the strongly labelled differentiation between NESTs and NNESTs on many different levels: from (some) scholars, sometimes from students, and also from the part of academic environments in general. We cannot be surprised that these cause a negative effect in practice on teachers. “...not simply *being* a ‘non-native speaker’, but being *called* a ‘non-native speaker’ is itself a form of discrimination” (Holliday, 2009, p. 27).

And just when we would think that NNESTs face discrimination for not meeting the native-speaker characteristics, we need to realize that in practice the situation affects sometimes even native speakers due to their physical appearance. Ali (2009) presents the unfortunate experience of an English language teacher from a leading institution of higher education in Pakistan whose first language happens to be English:

Four years ago as I sat waiting to be called for an interview outside an employer’s cubicle during TESOL Arabia’s annual conference job fair I realized that I was the only ‘brown’ candidate and the only one not called by any employer. I sat for four hours. Finally, a friendly Caucasian woman came to sit next to me and casually explained that she had already received two job offers but wanted to try her luck with the university of her choice. She asked me how many interviews I had had and much to my own dismay I had to tell her that I was not interviewed at all. I presume she pitied me because eventually she let me in on her secret that she was not a native speaker of English, German being her first language. Then she looked at me with a very serious face and pointed out that I could not even claim to be a native-speaker because I am ‘brown’. Funnily her observation had some truth to it because although my first language is English I was not called for any interview that day. (cited in Ali, 2009, p. 38).

Ali (2009) presents Mahboob’s ‘concrete steps’ that can be followed by teachers from

the Outer Circle to ‘create a more professional and non-discriminatory atmosphere’ in English language teaching. He suggests that ‘non-native’ teachers should ‘become familiar with literature on World Englishes and that they should ‘question the native-speaker-as-model in SLA research’. He agrees and believes that these are the first steps that NNESTs can take to gain self-confidence and argue their position on the job market.

#### **2.4.4 Students’ perceptions on the native and non-native factor**

The wide variety of perceptions previously presented on the issues, can be also perceived when analyzing the native/non-native phenomenon from the students’ perspective. Meadows and Muramatsu (2007) present their findings after analyzing 187 students’ attitudes regarding NESTs and NNESTs in FL classroom of Japanese, Chinese, Spanish and Italian, at a major American university in the Southwest. They organized the four languages into two geographically based distinct groups: Asian and European. Spanish was chosen as part of the analytical class whose results showed a NNESTs preference, whereas the Italian data contradicted this. Students’ favorable English class set was when a NES assistant would accompany NNESTs. Students claimed that with the respective knowledge both NESTs and NNESTs possess, they would need both to succeed in their language study. Meadows and Muramatsu (2007) suggest providing FLs more opportunities to receive NNS-led language instruction. I wholeheartedly endorse their suggestion according to which students should be increasingly exposed to NNS-led input in order to have a chance to rectify the inaccurate assumption that NNESTs have less to offer in their FL classroom.

It is interesting how students sometimes can go beyond the prejudices that were mentioned above by different scholars. They are able to perceive the issue from a more practical, valid point of view. Ali (2009) in his study presents Eiman’s response on the issue

whether students should be involved in the employment process of English teachers:

I would love it if I am asked what type of English teacher I want. I have suffered from being taught by an unqualified teacher for two years and if I had been taught by another teacher my learning experience would have been so rewarding. Teachers should be selected because of their skills, qualification, and dedication, not the university they studied in, or English country they lived in (email interview) (p. 48).

Inbar (2001) highlights that teacher hiring should be based on professional expertise and personal attributes rather than on native speaking background; however, many institutions prefer hiring only native speakers. With this, they define ‘people negatively, in terms of what they are not’ rather than embracing their ‘multiple linguistic competence’ (Phillipson, 2005, p. 14).

Timmis (2002) presents in his study what NNES teachers and learners think about the most appropriate pedagogic model of English. Based on 580 completed questionnaires (400 responses from students from 14 countries, and 180 teacher responses from 45 countries) and 15 interviews with students, he found that (67%) of all students preferred native pronunciation to accented non-native pronunciation. However, this does not apply to students from three inner- or outer-circle countries: South Africa, Pakistan and India, where 64% of participants revealed a wish to retain the accent of their countries. Timmis came to the conclusion that NNES learners’ preference towards native speaker norms of pronunciation, “is probably context-sensitive” (Timmis, 2002, p. 242). He presents similar findings about grammatical norms, where 68% of all students preferred to be able to “use all the grammar rules that native speakers use, even the informal grammar that native speakers use when they speak to each other” (Timmis, 2002, p. 244).

I would like to conclude this section about the complex view of a multilayered English with Bern’s (2008) words “...native speakers have an important role, not as norm-setters, as

they historically have been, but as partners with non-native speakers regardless of their linguistic, social, or cultural backgrounds when negotiating meaning for either intelligibility, comprehensibility, or interpretability, or all three” (p. 329). I believe in a situation where native and non-native speakers are viewed as partners working next to each other rather than above one another. When we manage reinforcing this belief in action too rather than only in theory, what we will be able to achieve, might surprise the world.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In chapter two, the theoretical framework and the literature review were presented. First, the different definitions about who a native speaker is considered were presented. Then, the possible distribution of the different World Englishes was discussed. After that, the characteristics of English as an international language were analyzed; this was followed by presenting English as a Lingua Franca and its correlation to Latin as a Lingua Franca. Later on, some of the perceptions of the nativeness issue were discussed and within that, the issue of ownership, identity in ELT, and cultural and intercultural awareness in language teaching. Further on, existing research on NESTs and NNESTs was reviewed. The native and non-native dichotomy was also part of this frame, as well as the presentation of the native and non-native concept from scholars’, teachers’, and students’ perspective.

## **CHAPTER THREE: STUDY METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Chapter introduction and overview**

### **3.1 Researcher's philosophical stance**

### **3.2 The study participants**

#### **3.2.1 The graduate students**

#### **3.2.2 The undergraduate students**

### **3.3 Research methods**

#### **3.3.1 The graduate students' autobiographies**

#### **3.3.2 The undergraduate students' questionnaires**

#### **3.3.3 Group interview with semi-structured question design**

### **3.4 Data collection procedures**

#### **3.4.1 The graduate students' autobiographies**

#### **3.4.2 The undergraduate students' questionnaires**

#### **3.4.3 Group interview with semi-structured question design**

### **3.5 Data handling**

#### **3.5.1 The graduate students' autobiographies**

#### **3.5.2 The undergraduate students' questionnaires**

#### **3.5.3 Group interview with semi-structured question design**

### **3.6 Conclusion**

### **3.0 Chapter introduction and overview**

The research methodology is described in this chapter. First, the researcher's worldview with the philosophical stance, then the arguments for the present choice of methodology are offered. Later on, the study participants will be introduced. The description of the research methodology follows after that, continuing with the data collection procedure. Finally, the description and procedure of the data analysis will take place.

#### **3.1 Researcher's philosophical stance**

It could be said that humans' strength is in the capacity to acquire and use knowledge of the world. This knowledge provides the foundation of how we live, we construct, and how we perceive the reality or non-reality around us. Our practical need to acquire more knowledge – and to constantly improve this knowledge – about the world, leads us to the construction of a worldview along the way, which provides the frame or lens to interpret our worlds. The chosen worldview for this study is constructivism, as in the light of this paradigm the researcher is no longer outside the system, but part of it in order to have an in-depth understanding of human behavior. From its epistemological position, constructivism sees knowledge as something created in interaction between investigator and respondents. The aim in constructivism is understanding and reconstructing the mechanism that people initially hold by being open to new interpretations. The goal of a qualitative investigation is to understand the complex world of human experience and behavior from the point of view of those involved in the situation of interest. Participants' personal opinions are very important to be taken into account, not only because of the view of the paradigm, but also because analyzing *with* participants can lead us to a better and deeper understanding much rather than analyzing *on* participants.

According to Creswell (2009) to determine whether an investigation is qualitative or quantitative, the following aspects need to be considered: the basic philosophical assumptions researchers take into the study, the types of research strategies used in the research, the methods, and how these strategies are conducted. As for the paradigm of methodology in constructivism, this is hermeneutical and dialectical. Individual constructions can be elicited only through interaction between/among investigator and respondents. These constructions are interpreted by using hermeneutical techniques and they are compared through a dialectical interchange. Advocacy and activism are key concepts in this view. Another important aspect that determines the outcome of a research design is the importance of the inquirer. Some critics position the inquirer's role (in the constructivist view) beyond reasonable expectations of expertise and competence. As another important feature that needs inclusion, is meaning. Meanings are sometimes referred to as culture, norms, understandings, social reality, and definitions of the situation, ideology, beliefs, worldview (Lofland & Lofland, 1996). According to Lofland and Lofland (1996) meanings are transbehavioral as they do not only describe behavior, but they also define and interpret it as well. The way in which meaning is constructed, is the task of qualitative research.

The broad rhetorical assumption in qualitative research is that this is not seeking the truth, but instead reporting how participants perceive reality. Researchers report on what they see and hear in the most objective way possible; research reports are humanistic and they interpret and describe thoroughly the research results (O'Neil, 1998).

The role of the researcher is building meaning, co-constructing experience with the participant with little direction from the interviewer. With the qualitative research the investigator is allowed to explore a certain phenomenon from the views of the participants, understanding the meaning they attribute to it. The goal of a qualitative investigation is to

understand the complex world of human experience and behavior from the point of view of those involved in the situation of interest.

“Phenomenography is a research method adapted for mapping the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, perceive, and understand various aspects of the world around them. ... Phenomenography investigates the qualitatively different ways in which people experience or think about various phenomena” (Marton, 1986, p. 31). This ‘experience’ is an internal relation between an individual and a phenomenon in the world, an internal relation between the ‘experiencer’ and the experienced. The term ‘a way of experiencing a phenomenon’ can be used interchangeably with other terms like conception, understanding of a phenomenon, or perception of a phenomenon, which is the core concept of the present study; meaning, how undergraduate and graduate students perceive the issue of nativeness: first from graduate students as NNESTs’ point of view and later from the undergraduate students’ point of view. A second order perspective was maintained throughout the study as an essential element of phenomenography, in that, the emphasis was on trying to see the phenomenon through the participants’ eyes.

### **3.2 The study participants**

As the current study is strictly connected to ELT, to reach an insight how graduate and undergraduate student perceived the issue of nativeness, it was highly important to invite participants for the study who were either already practicing their English teaching profession or they possibly would in the near future. A selection of purposive sample took place, which led to the decision of inviting eighteen graduate and forty-two undergraduate students to participate in the study. The whereabouts for both undergraduate and graduate participants at the time of the data collection was a central public Mexican university where at the time

of the study the participants were studying their BA and/or MA in ELT. At the time of the procedures, participants showed willingness to participate with positive attitudes, cooperation, and interest.

### 3.2.1 The graduate students

The graduate students at the time of the study were enrolled in a masters' degree program in ELT at a central public Mexican university. Eighteen possible candidate participants' permissions were asked for their previously written autobiography to be reviewed and analyzed. In the first year of their enrollment to the program, students were asked to write an autobiography where under a specific section they also had to express their attitude and perception about them being NNESTs. Eleven graduate student participants were finally selected from the group of eighteen; those eleven graduate students who had expressed their opinion about them being NNESTs in their autobiography. The graduate students were in-service English language teachers. The following table contains more information about them to have a better view about our participants:

Table 3.1 *Graduate Participants' Characteristics.*

Code names	Gender/Age	Years of experience in teaching English	Level of English they teach
<b>S1B</b>	Female/27	4	High School
<b>S2B</b>	Male/28	4	University
<b>S3B</b>	Female/29	5	University
<b>S4B</b>	Female/29	6	Private classes for children
<b>S5B</b>	Female/41	18	High School
<b>S6B</b>	Female/60	37	University
<b>S7B</b>	Female/50	34	Primary, Secondary, and High School
<b>S8B</b>	Female/31	5	University
<b>S9B</b>	Male/28	3	University
<b>S10B</b>	Female/40	15	University
<b>S11B</b>	Female/25	3	Primary

### **3.2.2 The undergraduate students**

One main purpose of this study was to investigate how graduate students saw themselves as NNESTs and at the same time how this topic was viewed from undergraduate students' point of view. At the time of the study, the undergraduate students were studying their ELT major at a large public central Mexican university. 42 undergraduate students agreed to participate in the study, 28 female and 14 male participants, between the age of 21 and 25; they were mostly pre-service English language teachers. The study aimed to acquire insight how graduate students saw themselves as NNESTs and how NESTs and NNESTs were perceived from undergraduate students' perspectives within the same public language institute. This was the first reason to select undergraduate participants from the same public Mexican university, while it also gives a different importance to the study the fact that these undergraduate students will most likely practice their English teaching profession themselves in the near future.

### **3.3 Research methods**

Qualitative research gives the researcher the possibility to explore the human elements of a given topic, to examine how individuals see and experience the world. This is closely connected to the phenomenographic approach in research as Linder and Marshall (2003) highlight: the fundamental unit of phenomenographic research is a way of experiencing something, "where 'experience' is an internal relation between an individual and a phenomenon in the world—an internal relation between the 'experiencer' and the experienced" (p. 273). I believe that this approach in the study offered favorable conditions in understanding how the participants experienced and perceived the first order element (the nativeness) in their lives, for which three different instruments served as tools in gathering

such information from participants; these data sources will be presented and analyzed in detail below.

### **3.3.1 The graduate students' autobiographies**

The reader needs to know that autobiographies were not used as instruments as a whole for the study, only a subheading from them, where graduate students' autobiography had to be completed as a reflection how they see themselves as NNESTs. These parts of the autobiographies were written at the beginning of students' masters' degree program and they served as a starting point in analyzing the graduate students' perceptions on the issue. Students had absolute freedom when expressing their view on the matter (meaning that without any guidance, participants could choose how detailed description of their perception or which aspects of their experience and view to include to the correspondent subheading in their autobiography). The latter group interview served not only to acquire longitudinal data, but also to obtain information in order to achieve a complete rather than a partial view on the specific elements of the present issue in two different time frames.

### **3.3.2 The undergraduate students' questionnaires**

The questionnaire for undergraduate students provided attitudinal data on the issue (Dornyei, 2007) and was provided by Walkinshaw and Oanh (2014). The study that provided the tool for this present study aimed to analyze how graduate and undergraduate students perceive the issue of nativeness. The present study shares the same purpose. Although the set of questions meets many requirements in order to be implemented as a successful research instrument (e.g. it permits the respondent to specify the answer categories most suitable for their purposes; responses can be easily classified, making analysis very straightforward), there is some disadvantage to it as well: they 'suggest' answers that respondents may not

necessarily consider mentioning. Although this set of questions had already been put in practice in a similar study, the questionnaire was still piloted in order to decide: whether the questions as they were expressed would achieve the desired results, whether the questions had been placed in the best order, whether the questions were understood by all levels of undergraduate participants, if additional or specifying questions were needed, and whether the instructions to interviewers were adequate.

### **3.3.3 Group interview with semi-structured question design**

While structured interviews have a rigorous set of questions that do not allow one to deviate from, semi-structured interviews are open, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewees say. The interviewer or a moderator generally has a framework of themes to explore in a semi-structured interview or group interview. The specific topic or topics for the interview need to be – and therefore were in this study – well thought out in advance, based on the area that meant to be explored. There was an interview short guide prepared that helped to focus the group interview on the topics at hand, and more specifically facilitated to focus on the order of the topics without constraining them to a particular format. The (possible) questions for the group interview were composed by the guidance of the research question (RQ3), which the study aimed to explore. The short, but necessary information and instruction given, and the open-ended nature of the questions defined the topic and the connected areas of research, but they provided opportunities for participants of the group interview to discuss the topics in detail.

### **3.4 Data collection procedures**

The data collection of the study started with piloting students' questionnaire and piloting their possibility of analysis. Participants for the piloting were ten randomly selected

undergraduate students in ELT at a large public Mexican university. The next step was to contact graduate students in order to receive their permission for the analysis of a specific part of their autobiographies. The procedure was followed by implementing the questionnaire for 42 undergraduate students parallel with the collection of graduate students' autobiographies. After this two parallel data collection had been finished, graduate students were contacted and invited to participate in a group interview. These were those graduate students whose opinion on the present research topic had been previously expressed in their autobiography. The group interview was the second and last step in the data collection procedure.

#### **3.4.1 The graduate students' autobiographies**

As there is a longitudinal aspect to the study – meaning that the graduate students' views were gathered at two different times and then compared, the issue was first collected and analyzed from their autobiographies as being that the first received perception on the issue. In order to obtain the written subsection on how the graduate students saw themselves as NNESTs at the time of the autobiography writing (see Appendix A), permissions were collected from all 18 graduate students. It is important to mention that that there were no more graduate students to survey; hence, the undergraduate student sample is not identical with the graduate student one in numerical terms. After the collection and careful analysis took place from the 18 possible candidates, 11 graduate students were chosen to remain active participants until the completion of the study. This number represents *all* the participants who expressed their opinion at some rate on the issue of nativeness. The remained 8 graduate students from the original group of 18 could not continue as active participants, as they had no mentioning at all in their autobiographies on the currently researched matter.

### **3.4.2 The undergraduate students' questionnaires**

After necessary adjustments had been made with the piloted questionnaire, parallel in the study data collection, the implementation of the students' qualitative questionnaire took place (see Appendix B), for which, the participants were 42 voluntary undergraduate students, studying their BA in ELT at the public university described above. All 42 questionnaires were handed out and completed by the students on the same day and they were collected right after they had been answered. The place at the time of the instruments' completion was the students' classroom where they attended classes on a daily basis.

### **3.4.3 Group interviews with semi-structured question design**

The use of interviews as a data collection method begins with the supposition that the participants' perspectives are meaningful, intelligible, and able to be made explicit. The group interview provided possibilities for follow-up, as well as it allowed the presentation of the present graduate students' perceptions on the results of the undergraduate students' questionnaires. After the interview protocols had been piloted, the group interview took place, for which each potential participant (11 in total) had been contacted via email and offered a possible day, time, and location for the group data collection. The whereabouts for the group interview (on common agreement) was the classroom at the public central Mexican university where graduate students used to attend their master's degree classes. Therefore, the environment provided a quiet and familiar atmosphere at the time of the interview. Other instruments used at the time of the interviews were: an audio recording while the interview was taking place (permissions of the participants were obtained beforehand) and field notes to collect information on the observable elements.

Generally, it is presumed that being part of a group lowers respondents' anxiety and

provides a more comfortable setting for discussion. This assumption rests on the notion that a one-on-one situation can make respondents feel anxious and restrict honest discussion, while a group talk or interview spreads this anxiety. However, the risk is that the overall sense of responsibility and involvement may also be spread among group members, resulting in less information and superficial responses (Greenbaum, 1988). Greenbaum also presents the main reasons why researchers prefer using a group interview over other qualitative methods. These are: reduction of anxiety, stimulating talk and self-disclosure, and direct observation of peer influences. However, interviews allow the researcher to locate specific ideas with particular individuals, which is not always possible within focus groups (Denscombe, 2003).

A discussion involving a small group of participants led by a moderator gives opportunities to the researcher to gain an insight into the participants' experiences, attitudes and/or perceptions (Hennessy & Heary, 2005). The group interview lasted 51 minutes and it was facilitated by a moderator whose goal was to maximize the interaction of group participants in a non-threatening environment (ibid.).

At the moment of the group interview, the undergraduate students' beliefs with the questionnaires' results were also presented to graduate students; this additional information – how the graduate students received as NNESTs the undergraduate students' results – was also recorded and collected.

### **3.5. Data handling**

Morse (1994) believes that all qualitative analysis, regardless of the specific approach, involves: *comprehending* the phenomenon under study, *synthesizing* a portrait of the phenomenon that takes into account relations and links within its aspects, *theorizing* about

how and why these relations appear as they do, and *recontextualising*, or placing the new knowledge about the phenomenon back into the context of how others expressed the developing knowledge. In the light of phenomenography, the most distinct feature in carrying out research is the experienced, conceptualized content, the description of people’s experience with the first order elements, their reported insights of the various aspects of the world. This first order element for this study was the concept of nativeness and the experience of it; the way it was perceived by the different groups of participants, is presented from a second order perspective.

Fig. 3.1 Research design

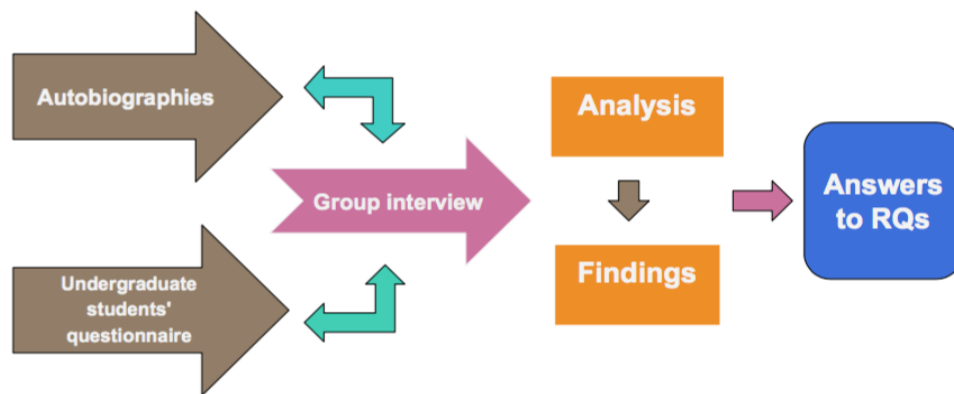


Table 3.2 Summary of the methodological chronology

1. Piloting students’ questionnaire and their possibility of analysis
2. Contact graduate students to receive their permission for the analysis of their autobiographies
3. Implementing the questionnaires for the undergraduate students, which happened parallel with the collection of the graduate students’ autobiographies
4. Implementing the group interview

### 3.5.1 The graduate students’ autobiographies

Personal documents are first-person interpretations of events and experiences. These ‘documents of life’, such as autobiographies, can help the evaluator understand how the

participant sees, experiences the world and what she or he wants to communicate to an audience. Unlike other sources of qualitative data, collecting data from documents requires minimal cooperation from participants within the setting being studied (Fetterman, 1989).

While interpreting qualitative data, researchers suggest looking for patterns, themes, and regularities as well as contrasts, paradoxes, and irregularities (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The autobiographies and the undergraduate students' questionnaires were parallel analyzed. Before looking for specific patterns in the autobiographies, the aim was to recognize which participants from the 18 were willing to give personal description on the issue in general. The chosen candidates' works later on were analyzed based on RQ1; specific items were coded and categorized, which helped to answer the RQ by using inductive analysis.

### **3.5.2 The undergraduate students' questionnaires**

Phenomenography seeks the understanding not so much of the individual conceptions on a certain phenomenon, but rather the possible categorization of conceptions that help understand human functioning. The categories are stable and generalizable because they appear in different situations. Questionnaires were analyzed by creating specific meaning units and so, statements were identified accordingly. The questions that formed part of the questionnaire served the purpose of grouping/separating the different categories of beliefs starting from the moment the participants started completing the instrument. The questionnaire sought to explore how the undergraduate students perceived NESTs and NNESTs, more specifically what they felt were the advantages and disadvantages of each (see Appendix C). Similarities and differences of participants' perceptions were recognized and categorized later on.

### **3.5.3 Group interview with semi-structured question design**

In phenomenography, the different ways of experiencing the phenomenon discussed by participants are the units of analysis. The purpose of the evaluation was maintained in sight during the whole process. End-use strategizing was a present concept as well, as thinking about the purpose of the study before beginning the coding procedure gave a higher chance to receive useful results. The analysis of the interview started with the moderator listening to the tapes and writing a verbatim account of everything that was said. Transcription of the raw data included word-for-word quotations of the participants' responses (see Appendix D). This was possible as only one person spoke at a time. After the interview had been transcribed, the ideas, concepts and themes were coded in a systematic way. The different categorizations of the results were necessary as comparison of data also took place, analyzing the possible changes in points of view on the issue of the graduate students within the two-year difference.

### **3.6 Chapter conclusion**

In this chapter, the research methodology was described. First, the researcher's worldview with the philosophical stance, then the arguments for the present choice of methodology were offered. Later on, the study participants were introduced. The description of the research methodology followed after that, continuing with the data collection procedure. Finally, the description and procedure of the data analysis were presented.

## **CHAPTER IV: THE DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS**

### **4.0 Introduction**

### **4.1 The research questions**

### **4.2 Autobiography analysis (RQ1)**

### **4.3 Undergraduate students' questionnaire analysis (RQ2)**

### **4.4 Group interview analysis (RQ3)**

### **4.5 Chapter conclusion**

## **4.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, the findings based on the study's research questions will be presented. From the parallel collected graduate and undergraduate students' data, first, the graduate students' perceptions of their non-nativeness will be described and analyzed. After that, the undergraduate students' opinions will be presented and discussed, the way they perceived learning English with NESTs vs. NNESTs. Last, graduate students' attitudes and beliefs will be examined and analyzed concerning the undergraduate students' results, as well as their perception about their own attitude, the way they expressed their beliefs on the issue at the beginning of the master's program and at the end of it.

### **4.1 The research questions**

The research questions that guided this work, also presented in chapter 1, are the following:

RQ1 What are graduate students' perceptions and attitudes towards their non-nativeness?

RQ2 What are undergraduate students' opinions and perceptions about NESTs versus NNESTs?

RQ3 How do graduate students respond to the undergraduate students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs and to their own previous perceptions on nativeness and non-nativeness?

### **4.2 Autobiography analysis (RQ1)**

RQ1 attempted to understand how graduate students perceived their non-nativeness. For this part of the present study's parallel data collection and analyzes, a specific part of

graduate students' autobiographies was chosen, where they had been asked to reflect how they felt about their non-nativeness, whether that perception influenced or not their teaching, and if yes, how. The autobiography (including the mentioned subsection of it) was asked as a written task in a certain subject at the beginning of the master's program which the participants had recently initiated when this task was required from them. Taking into account this, I invited all 20 masters' degree students from the central public Mexican university to be part of the study and share via e-mail the part of their narrative and with that, their opinion on the issue. Self-selective data of 18 from the 20 participants agreed to participate and shared their full autobiographies. From the 18 – after a careful and complete reading of each autobiography, I came to the conclusion that 11 participants had presented a certain degree of opinion on the issue (see Appendix A). These 11 participants were numbered from 1 to 11 with the order who sent his/her autobiography first, until the last receiving the number 11. The identification of S1 and so refers to Student 1-S1 until Student 11- S11.

In the part of their autobiographies, participants were neither asked nor expected to write a single possible 'pure version' of their perceptions about themselves as NNESTs, rather, from each received autobiography that touched the issue, I was trying to receive an insight how each participant constructed his or her version of the issue, how he or she perceived and experienced the concept. They testified their self-knowledge and they had the freedom to define themselves from their own personal point of view how they had perceived the issue in their real lives that far. All participants' expressed opinions on the issue are subjective and interpretative. Specific facts are not present, the importance lies in how the participants chose to interpret their own perception and experience.

With the graduate students' autobiographies both deductive and inductive analyses were used; new meanings were formed as possible categories when analyzing data while students' perceptions were also connected to the theories reviewed in the second chapter. Modiano (2009) argues that proficiency in English is no longer determined by birth, but by the capacity to use the language efficiently, being native or non-native. S1B shared the idea of this theory; she highlighted her belief about the non-importance of geographical boundaries, the insignificance where one is born when it comes to language acquisition, while expressing at the same time the key for success in acquiring a language:

*Learning a language is not a matter of being born in the place, it is commitment and effort.*

We previously saw a significant aspect of how Medgyes (1992) defines his opinion on NNESTs: he believes that a non-native speaker's competence is limited, by justifying that non-native speakers are by nature norm-dependent; but he also agrees that native and non-natives have the same opportunity in achieving professional success. Both offer different positive attributes to the field. From these, Medgyes (1992) presents six NNEST advantages that overcome the superiority of the NESTs:

1. They provide a good learner model to their students.
2. They can teach language strategies very effectively.
3. They can provide more information about the language to their students.
4. They understand the difficulties and needs of the students.
5. They are able to anticipate and predict language difficulties.
6. In EFL setting they can use the students' native language to their advantage.

I found it important to mention these highlighted attributes of NNESTs in this part of my thesis as well, as I found diverse opinions in students' autobiographies according to which

they actively believed to be practicing some of the qualities that Medgyes (1992) underlines as NNEST advantages.

*...I also believe that being a non-native speaker has a certain advantage because we walked the same path that our students are facing in relation to differences between both languages, to mention a few: idiomatic expressions, use of auxiliaries, pronunciation and most importantly culture, whereas native teachers sometimes assume that students will understand naturally as I experienced from time to time (S7B).*

S7B mentioned as a NNEST advantage that they had also learned the language as a second or a foreign language, which leads them to the possibility of a better understanding of what students are facing in their language acquisition process. The participant's opinion can be connected to what Medgyes (1992) underlines primarily as number 4: that NNESTs understand the difficulties and needs of the students; I believe that number 2 and 3 attributes can also be found here somewhat implicitly: student S7B expressed that NNESTs are more effective in offering understanding to students about the differences between both languages and therefore "they can provide more information about the language to their students" (Medgyes's number 3 attribute), they do not ... *assume that students will understand naturally...* (S7B). S1B student's opinion is very closely connected to Medgyes's number one highlight, according to which NNESTs provide a good learner model to their students. S1B reported that:

*I feel quite comfortable at being a non-native speaker because this way I can tell my students if I did it you also can.*

According to S1B, the concept of being a non-native English teacher is a positive tool of encouragement for students, a living proof that they can also achieve to acquire the language.

S10B shared other similar beliefs when presenting NNEST attributes that she had experienced in her professional life:

*Being a non-native English teacher can be an advantage because I can understand better how my students think and feel because we speak the same mother tongue and I can understand better what their needs are.*

This student also mentioned the value of a deeper understanding from the teacher's position about what students need to face in their language acquisition process; she believed to be practicing as advantages many attributes from Medgyes's (1992) list, primarily number 4, referring to be able to understand the difficulties and needs of the students; as well as number 6, which speaks about how in EFL setting NNESTs can use the students' native language to their advantage. Cook (2001) underlines that the multicompetent, multilingual teacher is qualitatively different and more capable than the monolingual teacher.

S11B's point of view can be strongly connected to what we saw from Sutherland's (2012) findings when interviewing NNESTs in Japan:

*I believe that any foreign speaker improves by having **real communicative experiences** [emphasis added] with native speakers... before I traveled, I had not been in contact with any native speaker and I was not sure if I would be able to communicate.*

The word 'real' caught my attention and I would like to highlight the existence of this special connection between the beliefs of a teacher with a master's degree practicing his/her English teaching profession in Japan and an active teacher studying her masters' program in Mexico. In his study, Sutherland (2012) refers to his participant as Teacher 01 who referred to English spoken by native English assistants as 'real English.' Teacher 05 had a similar opinion when stating that students were excited to listen to the 'real English.' Sutherland (2012) expresses that although these teachers could be referred to as expert speakers, "they

relegate the English they themselves speak to the status of something else, something inherently less valid if it is being denied the label of being ‘real’...they did not see their English as authentic” (p. 182). I believe that S1B participant in my study referred to the same idea by mentioning the importance of *having real communicative experiences with native speakers*: that the communication she practices in English that is not with a native speaker, cannot be that ‘real’ or authentic, as Sutherland (2012) mentions in his study. She even went beyond this, saying that before having the chance to communicate with native speakers, she was not sure whether she was able to communicate at all or not. The idea of need of reinforcement from native speakers can be found in student S5B’s words as well when reporting:

*Being in an English speaking country and communicating with people from different nationalities made me feel a lot more confident about being a non-native speaker.*

According to S5B, the possibility of being in a native speaking country and being able to communicate with different nationalities, gave her reassurance and confidence about herself as a non-native speaker. S3B spoke not so much about a need, but more about a positive asset of living in a native-speaking country:

*I must say that due to the fact that I lived in California for many years made it easy to get a job. Even though I was not a native speaker, I had a good pronunciation and my employers liked it.*

S3B showed evidence of how in her belief living in a native-speaking country helps acquiring a native-like pronunciation; she found her pronunciation ‘good’ comparing to a native speaker’s one, using a native speaker as a point of reference. S7B student belongs also to this category due to her belief that the nativeness factor somewhat influenced her personal/professional life. She mentioned that:

*...I also had the “ghost of the native speaker”. In regards to this, I believe on the one hand, that when you learn a language, you have to sound as closely to it as possible out of respect; nevertheless, it is very difficult to ignore the importance and the strength of someone’s accent. Accent is a very personal characteristic that shows our personal and social identity when communicating. It shows where we have been and with whom we have associated, the level of education we have and our cultural background, (Moyer, 2013).*

S7B and S3B spoke about the importance of the kind of pronunciation one practices as an English speaker. However, S7B expressed that she is searching for a correct balance between maintaining a faithful pronunciation while being proud of one’s accent, as this carries special aspects of one’s identity and cultural background.

There is a group of beliefs among participants whose professional confidence overcame their fears of being NNESTs. They overcame students’ or other teachers’ prejudices while receiving a certain ‘labelling’ from them.

*Teaching Business English was definitely different from teaching Spanish. This was mainly because I was a non-native teacher. Holliday (2005) describes in detail how Non Native Speakers are categorized as the “the others” by the dominant group of Native Speakers. In my opinion this same phenomenon happens with NNs students in regards to NNs teachers. At the beginning it had an influence in my behaviour towards the class but I manage pass through it due to my proficiency of the English language (S4B).*

S4B student highlighted how her non-nativeness had affected at the beginning her behavior in class, but she overcame this by relying and believing in her proficiency in the English language. We can connect the way their opinion changed to what they saw and experienced in practice; Canagarajah (1999) discusses the importance of adopting a multi-norm approach

in language teaching where norms are locally defined. He proposes a 'revised' framework for language teaching, where concepts like 'nativeness' and 'authenticity' are replaced with qualities connected to 'expertise', 'local practices', and 'relevance.' S8B reported about a 'revised' perception of herself as NNEST and a revised concept of expertise in practice:

*Regarding the topic of being a non-native English teacher, I must admit that at the beginning of my professional development I felt kind of insecure of myself since most of the times students have the wrong belief that native teachers are better because of their language proficiency. As time passed, I gained some more confidence and then I realized that being a native teacher did not have to do with language proficiency at all, it was related to strategies and techniques in order to be a good teacher in and outside the classroom.*

S8B reflected on the beginning of her professional development with some insecurity, as she perceived the presence of negative prejudice and labeling from the students who carried a guiding misbelief that NESTs are 'better'. She reported how she gained confidence about herself as a NNEST when she realized that the key for being a 'good' teacher lies on strategies and techniques not so much on the level of language proficiency.

Student S9B's confidence as professional in class also lies on his language proficiency and reported how example and practice made him realize what should serve as base for a 'successful' teacher, success that is not influenced by non-nativeness:

*...in order to be a successful teacher, native-like language knowledge is not necessary. Yet, the language teacher is required to have a certain level of language proficiency in order to teach the language efficiently and not to depend on teaching resources during class. I could see a moment of awareness in Guanajuato when all my in-service classmates were too devoted to teach without worrying about being a native speaker of the*

*language. Hence, I understood my knowledge and skills in teaching the language were not influenced by my non-nativeness.*

The student placed emphasis on language proficiency; he presented a certain point of awareness in his professional development and with that defining one aspect of his stand on the issue of nativeness: that his performance as an English teacher was not influenced by the fact that he is a NNEST. S9B and S8B agreed on the aspect that the kind of performance they achieve in class as English teachers is not influenced by the fact that they are NNESTs. S8B mentioned the kind of strategies and techniques used with students as importance of relevance and not so much one's language proficiency, while S9B believed that "*a certain level of language proficiency [is required] in order to teach the language efficiently.*"

Participant S10B also highlighted the great importance of language proficiency:

*During my teaching experience, I have seen that one of the most important attributes a non-native English teacher has to have is to speak the language like a proficient.*

One student presented no reaction to being a NNES at all when she had to analyze her beliefs about herself as NNEST:

*I must mention that not being a native speaker, now that native speaker versus non-native speaker issue has become a big issue among English language teachers and researchers, has never affected me at all...Perhaps the fact that I had always been surrounded by foreign teachers and friends and being accepted in my job as anyone of them had never given me a reason to reflect or think that a native speaker English language had to be the model to follow (S5B).*

The probability of her indifference (according to her) relies in the fact that she always had contact with foreigners; at her work she felt accepted and non-discriminated. This could be seen as what Dewey and Leung (2010) highlight as the presence of the awareness of the

complex and pluralistic nature of the language. Finally, from the autobiographies one student did not show explicit opinion on the issue, but more of a statement of awareness:

*At the present time, English usage is not reduced to specifically native speakers. It is an international language that no nation can have custody over it. Widdowson, (1997, 2003, cited in Kirkpatrick, 2007).*

He simply showed awareness of the widely existing English as EIL and agreement on the importance of the no-ownership of English as an international language. Llurda (2004) highlights that the vast majority of many millions of non-native speakers of English are not conscious of their being speakers of EIL. In the light of the native/non-native issue, he also highlights that when non-native speakers become aware of their status, native-speaker control of the language will end, and non-native speakers will feel entitled to the use of a variety of the language that belongs to them.

#### **4.3 Undergraduate students' questionnaire analysis (RQ2)**

This part of the study is going to present the findings from the undergraduate students' questionnaires (see Appendix C), information that tends to answer to RQ2 of the present study. A total number of 42 undergraduate students took part of the study and answered a questionnaire about their own beliefs towards native and non-native English teachers' advantages and disadvantages. Questionnaires were completed in class. The questions presented in the survey were adapted from Walkinshaw and Oanh (2014) (Appendix B) study of 100 Vietnamese students, where the focus of the study was also to elicit findings of students' beliefs on NEST and NNEST advantages and disadvantages.

All students of the current study were learning English as a major at a central public Mexican university. The students were given unlimited space and time to complete the

answers for each question. When receiving back from students the written questionnaires, formats were numbered from 1 to 42 referring simply to the order according to which the written data were handed in. The participants are going to be referred to as UND from the word *undergraduate* and with a number next to it from 1 to 42 (e. g. UND24).

Recognition of recurring concepts took place first by highlighting each one with different colors accordingly. Then, the categorization of findings continued the already established direction in the questionnaire. A total of four categories will be presented, meaning: advantages of NEST, disadvantages of NEST, advantages of NNEST, disadvantages of NNEST and finally, in point V, participants had the chance to add extra comments if they wished to express some additional thoughts on the matter. Next, the table with the findings is being presented without the students' further comments, which are being referred to later on in the text as part of the analysis.

Table 4.1 *Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages of Studying English with Each Type of Teacher.*

<i>UND Students: Total of 42</i>	
NEST advantage	
Improve pronunciation	30 (71.4%)
Learn about teacher's culture	10 (23.8%)
Improve vocabulary and idioms	6 (14.2%)
Improve speaking skills	3 (7.1%)
Give motivation	3 (7.1%)
Improve listening skills	2 (4.7%)
NEST disadvantage	
Poor teaching methodology	8 (19.0%)
Cannot speak students' L1	8 (19.0%)
Difficult to understand when a NEST speaks	7 (16.6%)
Lack of local cultural knowledge	3 (7.1%)
Cannot teach grammar/lexis well	3 (7.1%)
NNEST advantage	
Can speak and explain in L1	16 (38.0%)

Understand students' difficulties	8 (19.0%)
Better grammar/structure function explanation	7 (16.6%)
Better/clearer explanation	4 (9.5%)
NNEST disadvantage	
Poor pronunciation	24 (57.1%)
Lack of some vocabulary	8 (19.0%)
Teachers make mistakes in L2	5 (11.9%)
Lack of cultural knowledge	4 (9.5%)
Students talk in their L1	2 (4.7%)
Give high importance to grammar	2 (4.7%)

I believe that it is no surprise that students' most commonly mentioned feature was pronunciation. It is an inevitably emerging issue especially when comparison of native and non-native English teachers is taking place. 30 out of 42 participants (71.4% in total) revealed in their answers as advantage NEST pronunciation, describing native pronunciation as *better, intelligible, correct, more accurate, the most accurate, nice*, generally meaning that a NEST helps to improve students' pronunciation. With this number, this was by far the most common feature found as NEST advantage among the answers. As pronunciation plays such an important role in the findings, I find it essential to mention and compare the revealed results with the students' opinions on the most common NNEST disadvantage, which was NNESTs' *poor pronunciation*, as mentioned by 24 students out of 42 (57.1%). Here too, among the present features the most frequently listed one was the issue of pronunciation as a NNEST disadvantage. The numbers demonstrate how essential native pronunciation was for the undergraduate participants. Therefore, uppermost attention is also given to this issue in the analysis. Chapter II did not offer much attention to pronunciation itself, but is tending to do it now, as the emerging results from the questionnaires are simply demanding it so.

Derwing and Munro (2005) speak about a known outcome concerning pronunciation and non-natives: that foreign accents are a normal consequence of second language learning.

They highlight how “numerous studies have shown that most people who acquire a second language after early childhood, are likely to exhibit nonnative patterns of communication” (p. 383). Although some works imply that adult L2 learners may occasionally achieve native-like speech patterns, Derwing and Munro (2005) emphasize that this occasionally happens with a small number of ‘highly motivated individuals.’ Scovel’s study (2000) shares this view, meaning, that for those English language users who acquire English as L2 after their early childhood, native-like pronunciation is almost unreachable. “Though all learners should be encouraged to reach their full potential, which may well exceed the minimum required for basic intelligibility, it may do more harm than good for teachers to lead learners to believe that they will eventually achieve native pronunciation or to encourage them to expend time and energy working toward a goal that they are unlikely to achieve” (Derwing & Munro, 2005, p. 384). Instead, they propose a set of realistic goals for L2 students. They too use *intelligibility* as a key concept in their findings.

Taking into account students’ numerous mentioning of pronunciation and its importance (resulting pronunciation as the most common topic in the questionnaire), we could think that they were not highly aware of the difficulty it implies acquiring native-like pronunciation in L2; or they are truly ‘highly motivated individuals’ as Derwing and Munro (2005) mention. Beside the difficulty of the task, there are some other features to consider as well if aiming for a native-like pronunciation.

In the past, the native speakers, British, colonized many countries around the world and with that, they also influenced the languages. Some of these countries still use English as the official language. Therefore, deciding which pronunciation is the ‘right or accurate’, would be a hard task just by itself. My participants described native pronunciation as *better, intelligible, correct, more accurate, the most accurate, and nice*. Not only are these adjectives

used in the descriptions, but also comparatives, and especially the superlative(s) that truly demand attention: it is quite clear already that we cannot speak about one single outstanding pronunciation as the possible ‘chosen’ one. Geographical affiliation among many other characteristics would define what individuals’ first hand choice of pronunciation would be: there are many who would choose English as ‘the model’ from Great Britain, the United States or Canada, and some others’ options would be Indian or Singapore English.

Many scholars affirm that what truly matters in the issue, is *intelligibility*. “Intelligibility is the single most important aspect of all communication. If there is no intelligibility, communication has failed” (Munro, 2011, p.13). There are several factors that influence intelligibility in oral interaction:

*...[communication] is between two (or more) individuals who bring their own experiences with English, their own attitudes toward English and English speakers (whether Inner, Outer, or Expanding Circle), and their own cultural norms—all of which impact the outcome of the interaction. [...] communication is a two-way street [...]. Each [speaker and listener] carries the responsibility to be understood; each must make an effort to understand (Berns, 2008, p. 329).*

The word intelligibility origins from the Latin verb *intellegere*, which means to understand or to perceive; it refers to one’s ability to express ideas in a way that the receiver perceives the originally proposed meaning. Smith and Nelson (1985) present the concept of intelligibility in a three-layer framework:

- *Intelligibility*: recognition of words or utterances
- *Comprehensibility*: recognition of meanings of words or utterances
- *Interpretability*: recognition of meanings behind words or utterances.

Therefore, the addresser is responsible for creating recognizable sounds, utterances; the

addressee needs to recognize the utterances as the first layer, identify the meaning as the second layer and grasp the addresser's intention in order to achieve intelligible communication. This is a two-way street as many say and it can be achieved only if both transmitter and receiver contribute to it. In chapter II we saw that L2 English speakers outnumber native speakers, and English interactions happen more and more among NNS-NNS interlocutors rather than among NS-NNS participants. In this context, in EIL context, native accent cannot serve as norm regarding intelligibility. "...for international intelligibility in English, native models are no longer relevant..." (Joshi, 2013, para. 15). During my investigation, I followed certain websites and blogs where English speakers of different countries express freely their personal stand and experience on the issue of nativeness, on pronunciation more precisely. On one of these blogs (<http://www.quora.com>), on the topic of *Is it possible to obtain a perfect native accent in a second language as an adult learner?* Guus Goorts, a native Dutch speaker (who had studied English, Mandarin, Spanish, German, French, Latin and Ancient Greek up to varying degrees) expressed:

*I'm still trying to perfect my English grammar, but when I speak, I don't mind people hearing that I have a slight Dutch accent. In the end, everyone has an accent and if I would need to sound perfectly native, I would need to choose an accent. Would I want to sound like someone from Texas, Irish or the English that's spoken in Birmingham, UK? From those choices, I rather have people identify my accent as Dutch, because after all, that's who I am.*

Hung (2009) mentions that one of the main motivations for L2 learners to adopt a native variety of pronunciation has been due to the belief that a native or a native-like pronunciation is more widely understood all over the world than any 'non-natives' varieties in English. He presents Smith and Rafiqzad's famous experiment (cited in Hung, 2009),

where 8 different accents of English (one native, the rest non-native) were played to a large number of international individuals, and their intelligibility measured. The native variety turned out to be the second least intelligible of all. Hung (2009) highlights that the ‘unmistakable moral’ of this experience is that from an international point of view native accents have no advantages over non-native ones in terms of intelligibility. Walker (2014) asserts that we should strongly reflect on the notion that intelligibility and accent are two different things: one can be perfectly intelligible even if having a marked accent. He presents features in three categories (very important, important, not important) that truly matter/or not in achieving international intelligibility. Length of vowels, almost all consonants, and clusters are key assets and therefore very important for international intelligibility. He points out that word stress is not important, however sentence stress is, immensely. Stress timing and tones are also not important features and he categorizes weak forms and schwa as not desirable features as they can reduce intelligibility (Walker, 2014).

To improve the chances for L2 individuals become proud users of English without feeling the need of acquiring a native pronunciation, many aspects need to be considered. Hung (2009) mentions one that is in our control to modify: “One implication for language teaching is the need for English textbooks and materials which reflect our own culture and identity (and not just those of native English speakers), and engage our learners in expressing their own culture and identity rather than mimic that of others” (p. 41). There are goals that we as individual teachers can also set: we can raise students’ awareness about the importance of international intelligibility and create a less stressful environment where achieving the goal is no longer set by an almost unreachable bar, where sounding native is not the target anymore, but offering and encouraging students that their accent is not only accepted but also welcomed. This should not be judged and much less rejected, as it represents their identity,

who they are; they do not have to leave that behind in order to become internationally intelligible. This would provide with a less stressful environment for a non-native teacher too, practicing with students in action the idea that by no means he or she should feel less or different in order to be professionally competent. Walker (2014) underlines that any NNEST with an internationally intelligible accent is a perfect model for students to follow. Students can have a realistic, inspirational model as he/she went through the same steps as students need to.

It needs to be clarified that there is nothing wrong if an L2 user can produce native-like utterances. However, I believe that that should be just a free option in communication for any user, not so much as an obligatorily felt skill to acquire. After all, intelligibility is the center concept of communication and that is the notion we should focus on and transmit as teachers, students, and everyday users of English.

Analyzing Pacek's (2005) finding with her student participants, we can recognize in their expressed opinion the *international* view presented above. Pacek (2005) in her study worked with two groups: a vocabulary group and a teacher-training group. Here, findings only of the first group are being mentioned, as the issue seen by teachers is being analyzed in another section of the study. Pacek (2005) worked with the group with a total of two questionnaires. 43 students answered the first questionnaire and 38 the second one. The first questionnaire was meant to identify what students generally considered to be the most/least important characteristics of a FLT. The objectives of the second questionnaire were to identify students' initial reaction to a NNEST, to find out if their attitudes changed by the end of the course, and to identify typical views on advantages/ disadvantages of a NNEST. The students came from three areas: Far East (22 students), Europe (14) and Latin America (7). From the Europe/ Latin America group (with a total of 21 participants) 9 mentioned as

part of the most important features of FLT's the 'clear pronunciation' concept. This represents 42.8% of the total number of the Europe/ Latin America group. From The Far East student group 15 out of 22 (68.1%) mentioned this feature in the most important characteristics, which means that from the total number of 43 students 24 found it significant, which represents 55.8% in total. It's important to highlight that although the pronunciation feature was present among the most important characteristics of FLT with a 55.8% in total, this was not described with a *native* concept, instead, the students described their expectations of FLT's pronunciation to be *clear*. The importance of native pronunciation was actually presented among the least important characteristics, highlighted by 7 students out of 43.

The second most common NEST advantage found in our current study 10 (23.8%) was their ability to supply with cultural information to students. e.g. UND4 and 14 reported: *Students can learn about culture*. UND30 shared the same view: *We can also learn about culture*. The found feature shares the findings in Benke and Medgyes's (2005) study with the 422 Hungarian English learners, where the second most common characteristic of NESTs was also their ability to share cultural knowledge with the students. Four students mentioned as NNEST disadvantage their lack of cultural knowledge of the target language, which positions this disadvantage on 4<sup>th</sup> place on the result table. UND2 highlighted: *[Teachers] may lack knowledge about topics related to culture*. It is always meaningful to get a better insight of different cultures as well other than our own. However, if we look at this issue from WEs or LF view, we realize that the concept of culture is becoming global (as well), therefore, focusing on one particular English speaking country's culture should not be the goal.

Walkinshaw and Oanh's (2014) study of 50 Vietnamese and 50 Japanese learners of English interestingly share the first two most common features of NEST advantages with the

ones found in the present study: pronunciation being the most mentioned feature and the possibility to be learning about the teacher's culture as the second. Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) findings in their study with 76 university students present the same results: that the highest preference for a NEST was in the areas of pronunciation (81.5%) and secondly in culture and civilization (71.1%). Barratt and Kontra's (2000) research reports the same findings. They undertook three studies, two in Hungary and one in China with 116 students and 58 teachers. The authors report that the most positive comments of NESTs were concerned with authentic pronunciation, wide vocabulary, and information about culture.

As for the rest of the categorized NEST advantages in the present study, improving speaking (3 (7.1%)) and listening skills (2 (4.7%)), motivation (3 (7.1%)) features came to be in the last three rankings. The third most highlighted NEST advantage for students was the teacher's ability to improve students' vocabulary and idioms 6 (14.2%):

*Students receive richer vocabulary.* (UND27)

*Students' vocabulary increases.* (UND29)

*It's easier to learn some expressions and idioms.* (UND30)

In Benke and Medgyes's (2005) study, the most attributed NNEST advantage is related to grammar explanation and being able to translate to and from students' L1: "Being on the same wavelength as their learners, as one respondent put it, they can promote language learning more effectively. Furthermore, they are of invaluable help in supplying the exact Hungarian equivalent of certain English words and developing translation skills" (p. 206). However, later on, it was mentioned as a drawback teachers sharing L1 with students, as several participants mentioned that teachers tend to use too much Hungarian during the lessons. Benke and Medgyes's (2005) findings are similar to our study's outcome: *Can speak and explain in L1* received the highest NNEST advantage rate with 16 (38.0%). Although in

ELT many have argued about using students' mother tongue in the class – as by practicing that, students will not learn and develop their English skills –, Medgyes (1992) points out: “only non-NESTs can benefit from sharing the learner's mother tongue” (p. 347). Some teachers choose to use the students' mother tongue when meeting real difficulties in class. In such cases, a NEST will also try to explain the meaning of a difficult expression, however, it is harder to know whether the students truly comprehend the true meaning of the word. It has to be stated (as mentioned by Benke and Medgyes's participants) that this advantage turns into a disadvantage if students' mother tongue is being used excessively in the classroom. It should serve only as a positive tool to be used when truly necessary. Participants in our study found this advantage important not only in clarifying difficult expressions, but also in understanding more complex concepts (similarities and differences in both languages):

*[NNESTs] give chance to negotiation of meaning through both languages. (UND7)*

*Through L1 the teacher can offer a better understanding of certain topics. (UND10)*

*L1 can be helpful in understanding difficult concepts. (UND15)*

*They can use L1 for students' better understanding. (UND17)*

*L1 can be used for communication when the student lacks vocabulary to express him/herself. (UND22)*

*They can offer a better understanding through students' L1. (UND25)*

*Teachers as well as students can use the L1 to explain and clarify difficult concepts. (UND29)*

*Can use L1 to present meaning. (UND34)*

*They can use L1 to highlight similarities and differences between the two languages. (UND39)*

*L1 can be used sometimes when needed. (UND40)*

S10B participant of our study as a teacher expresses similarly:

*Being a non-native English teacher can be an advantage because I can understand better how my students think and feel because we speak the same mother tongue and I can understand better what their needs are.*

The second most mentioned NNEST advantage with an 8 (19.0%) rate became *Understanding students' difficulties* category. "Only non-NESTs can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of their learners", highlights Medgyes (1992, p. 347). He points out that in language teaching NNESTs are more sensitive to their students, they are aware of students' needs, as they were also once L2 learners. As our S7B graduate student participant pointed out: *...I also believe that being a non-native speaker has a certain advantage because we walked the same path that our students are facing in relation to differences between both languages, to mention a few: idiomatic expressions, use of auxiliaries, pronunciation and most importantly culture...*

NNESTs' last two mentioned advantages by the undergraduate students were: *Better grammar/structure function explanation* with 7 (16.6%) and a *better/clearer explanation* in general with a rate of 4 (9.5%). In Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) study, the second highest percentage in favor of NNEST (39.5%) was in the area of grammar. In the present study, this feature ranked in third place in *NNESTs' advantages* analysis:

*Better knowledge of the function of the language. They are able to answer the 'why' questions. (UND12)*

*Deal with lots of grammar and listening. They help me to analyze what I am saying. (UND28)*

*They offer a better explanation about the structure of the language. (UND40)*

It is interesting how in many areas one teacher's advantage becomes the other teacher's disadvantage: NNESTs' main advantage in our study became NESTs' second main disadvantage. In Barratt and Kontras's (2000) study, participants' main complaint about

NESTs was that most of them were not language teachers and lacked experience. In Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) study, seven groups mentioned their fear over the capacity of NESTs to teach effectively. This is relevant to mention, as in our study NESTs' main disadvantage was their *poor teaching methodology*. Although this concept received first place in the classification, it needs to be mentioned that the percentage of this is relatively low to be presenting the highest ranking on the *disadvantage* list: 8 mentioning with 19.0%. The second NEST disadvantage received the same percentage as the first mentioned feature, representing the concept that *NESTs cannot speak students LI*. We have already seen in better details the importance and/or unimportance of this feature, therefore special attention is not being given to it here.

In section V of the questionnaire, students were given the chance to mark any extra information they found important to mention: 9 students (21.4%) outlined their preference to have more NESTs than NNESTs at their current language learning environment or simply a general preference towards NESTs:

*Learning with more NESTs would give students the chance for 'real practice.'*  
(UND17)

*If we really want to learn English, NEST is a better option because we can improve our four skills.* (UND25)

*We want more native speaker teachers.* (UND29)

*...Somebody who was raised in an English environment and society...allows us to learn how to use English in a correct way....* (UND31).

The high rate of students' interest towards the native pronunciation would seem to indicate a preference for native teachers. However, it is important to introduce students' other mentioning in section V. These offer evidence that although students found nativeness important in the area of pronunciation, when it came to teaching and learning the language

in general, students practiced professional thinking and evaluation: they gave equal chances to NESTs and NNESTs. They were characterized as *good teachers/or not* by measuring their professional preparation:

*Non-natives can be as good as natives and the other way around. (UND1)*

*Being a native speaking teacher does not imply to be a good teacher. (UND2)*

*No matter if teachers are native or non-native, they have to be prepared. (UND4)*

*I think it is irrelevant if the teacher is native or not as long as he or she is truly a teacher of the English language. (UND6)*

*Being a NEST it doesn't imply that the teacher is better than a NNEST. (UND23)*

*To achieve a successful learning, the most important is the attitude, the knowledge, and the techniques that teachers implement. (UND24)*

*I don't care if they are not native speakers. They should be good teachers. (UND36)*

*The most important is the knowledge (of the teacher). (UND41)*

From all the studies (including the present one), we can say that most of them coincide in emphasizing that NESTs are better at pronunciation than NNESTs. From the teaching profession's point of view, NESTs are more fluent in vocabulary and speaking, while NNESTs are more comfortable with grammar and can take advantage of sharing their students' L1.

#### **4.4 Group interview analysis (RQ3)**

This part of the study is going to present the findings from the group interview, information that tends to answer to RQ3 of the present study. Participants of the group interview were graduate students, whose perceptions on nativeness has already been presented above in section 4.1.1. All 11 graduate students were invited to participate in the group interview, as with this last RQ, the study's purpose was to: 1. get an insight and present

how graduate students perceived the undergraduate students' results presented during the interview; 2. to analyze whether there was a change in how the graduate students saw the issue of nativeness two years ago at the time of writing their autobiography, and how they perceived it at the time of the interview. All 11 graduate participants were contacted individually and were offered three different dates as possibilities to hold the interview. One specific day was chosen by 10 of them, which became the final day of the interview, after which, the location and the hour were confirmed too with all 10 of them. From the 11 possible candidates, 4 were present at the group interview: S4B, S5B, S7B, S10B, all female participants. The simple order and procedure was explained by the moderator, after which, the questionnaire applied to undergraduate students was introduced, then, printed graphics were presented to all participants with the undergraduate students' results. It was asked how they perceived the shown results, where the graphics with the most common results on NESTs and NNESTs advantages and disadvantages seemed to catch their attention. After the introductory question – which purpose was to ease the discussion – participants had the freedom to interexchange and build up their perceptions about the shown results. The moderator intervened with some questions once in a while, simply assuring that the discussion was being maintained on the topic(s) that had been previously planned to receive data for from this interview. All participants were cooperative, some offered quite a thorough insight to their beliefs on the presented results, by supporting their stands with examples.

From the four graphics, first, the undergraduate students' results on NESTs advantages were presented (all first hand results have been already presented in the present research in section 4.3). Here, the first results showed that 71.4% of the undergraduate student participants chose as NEST advantage their skill to improve students' pronunciation.

Graduate students showed variety in their attitudes towards the presented results. S7B claimed:

*I too totally agree that that is one of the biggest problems, pronunciation, and... or the advantages in this case, of the native speakers because if you're going to learn a language, you need to be able to communicate accurately, sometimes mispronunciation can even get you into trouble... I do agree with the results that you have here and I totally support that.*

S7B found these results representing her personal view on the importance of nativeness referring to pronunciation. She believed that NSs are in advantage *to be able to communicate accurately*. S10B highlighted that *some non-native English teachers can have a good pronunciation* and she gave an extra asset to teachers as such: *...and it can give the student enough motivation because they say: well, the teacher speaks correctly, so I would like to take class with her....* As Medgyes (1992) defines NNESTs' first advantage: They provide a good learner model for students. S4B expressed no surprise towards the NEST advantage category results:

*I totally agree with that; I think I can see why they give that much importance to pronunciation... I think, we all feel like if we pronounce, we are more getting into the native stage...*

She expressed understanding towards the students seeking native or possibly native-like pronunciation, inferring that users in general plan heading and reaching that stage. S5B however, did not provide much importance to native or native-like pronunciation. She went beyond the native and non-native dichotomy, and in the light of successful communication, she presented that: *...if we are understood, I feel like, that is the best thing, I've already presented an exam....*

Both S10B and S4B agreed with the general results of the presented NEST advantages according to the undergraduate students:

*...if I were giving the same options I would put them in the same order...perhaps the percentages are a little bit extreme like 71% of pronunciation, but also, I think the others are quite important too, vocabulary, idioms, things that, you know, not everyone knows (S4B).*

*...teachers' culture and the advantages of having a native speaker teacher culture is part of the motivation too, because...sometimes students are eager to ask about [teachers'] countries of origin and that's part of language learning I think...(S10B).*

S10B also added that probably due to lack of experience on the professional field, undergraduate students tend to have preference towards receiving classes with NESTs:

*...they are only students, they are not teachers, language teachers yet, so, probably they believe that having a native speaker teacher can be more... they can be more successful if they can take classes with a native speaker rather than a non-native speaker... so, I think their age, they are not experienced, so, probably they put more emphasis on that...*

S5B reported that studying phonetics is the only key element when it comes to pronunciation:

*I believe that you can study phonetics and it doesn't matter if your teacher is a native speaker or a non-native speaker. S7B responded to this indication with an example, where*

*mispronunciation – although following phonetics rules – caused breakage in communication.*

Although this was clearly a situation where due to breakage communicational channel had to be reestablished by negotiation of meaning, this situation could be happening not only between a NNS and a NS, but also between a NS and a NS. This can be an example where English is used as a Lingua Franca; the way we have already seen it in the present study, whenever there is another variety than the local English spoken between two interlocutors,

we not only need to widen our comfortable linguistic periphery, but also to maintain a global mentality. While all graduate participants but one could relate to undergraduate students' results preferring native speaker teachers as they improve students' pronunciation, when participants of the group interview were asked which native pronunciation is the one worth embracing, it was not that simple to define an answer. S7B reflected:

*It makes me wonder now... and I guess having a great, like an ample variety of accents and even native and non-native teachers, that could be a great advantage to the student; but now you made think about it, because it's true, they're so different. Scottish is so hard to understand, right? So yeah, that is true, which one is real nativeness, no? Which one is the real nativeness?*

S10B shared her experience the first time she took English classes with a native speaker from Great Britain:

*...suddenly a British guy appeared and he started to give classes; he was very young, very, very young and we immediately: "Oh a British guy! so we were surprised and we were happy because we finally had a British teacher. When we arrived to his class the first time, we couldn't understand anything, anything... and that was a problem.*

The topic(s) of the presented results raised awareness among graduate students on different levels: that choosing *the* one native accent is not an easy task and may I say pointless in global settings. With S10B's example presented above, we could see in practice how pronunciation does not equal intelligibility (Walker, 2014). S10B connected her experience from a previous stage of her professional development with the insight reached recently during her master's program: *Or even when we saw in our class, the Englishes around the world....* Therefore, S5B's revelation, according to which the most important element is that she can make herself understood, received a different attitude from S7B as well as from S4B:

*S7B: I totally agree with that, yeah, because that is communication.*

*S4B: Exactly.*

Regarding NESTs disadvantages (Poor teaching methodology 19.0%, Cannot speak students' L1 19.0%, Difficult to understand when a NEST speaks 16.6%, Lack of local cultural knowledge, 7.1%, Cannot teach grammar/lexis well 7.1%), S4B reported that

*...these are more balanced... I think students are giving that much emphasis to these three, because they have experienced something with their teachers; perhaps they have questions or they want to know... they don't understand quite the grammar...sometimes the native teacher knows to say it, but cannot explain exactly how it works, so that the student could grab it or get it as easily as perhaps with a non-native speaker teacher.*

S10B highlighted that the undergraduate participants paid special attention to certain assets of language teaching, as they themselves are going to be English teachers too: *...probably they give importance to methodology because they are from the 'licenciatura' to become English teachers, so, they know it, they can realize about it, they observe....* S5B would have chosen the third category as NESTs biggest disadvantage: *...you can feel frustrated when you're learning a language and you don't understand what they are saying, so I would put this in the first place....* S4B also commented on this disadvantage: *...it is also difficult when you are not being understood by the teacher....*

NNEST advantages section was distributed and presented to graduate students as: Can speak and explain in L1 38.0%, Understand students' difficulties 19.0%, Better grammar/structure function explanation 16.6%, Better/clearer explanation 9.5%. S10B agreed with the first listed advantage, reporting that by practicing this, students can take part of their acquisition process in a less stressful environment:

*Well, definitely, the first that they can speak and explain in their students' mother tongue. It's the most important because teachers can understand exactly what students want to ask or want to know, and that makes students feel less stressed.*

What she verbally highlighted as advantage, S5B considered it as a disadvantage to use students' L1 in class, therefore other language than English:

*I would say that the teacher can understand students' difficulties and they try to explain better, but I don't think that that it's a good idea...they shouldn't be speaking in L1, well not all the time at least...*

While there was a disagreement among the participants along the interview whether L1 should be used or not in class, Medgyes (1992) also considers this as one of the main 6 advantages that he attributes to NNESTs. S7B agreed with him, seeing L1 usage useful especially for grammar explanation:

*Mostly with grammar explanations, no? That is difficult to transmit what a preposition is, then you go like: should I fly? So, they will understand what over is, you know? How do I explain it? It's easier to just translate it because in that case it is vocabulary... I guess it's easier than grammar explanation, no?*

S7B was also in agreement with students' second most mentioned advantage of NNESTs, however, she found it surprising that the result on this matter represented a much lower rate than the previously seen element:

*I agree with 'understand students' difficulties', but not in the 19%. For me, I would say that that is like higher, the number, the percentage must be higher because 'can speak and explain in L1' how come that is important?*

The last graphics showed to participants during the group interview were undergraduate students' view results referring to NNESTs' disadvantages (Poor

pronunciation 57.1%, Lack of some vocabulary 19.0%, Teachers make mistakes in L2 11.9%, Lack of cultural knowledge 9.5%, Students talk in their L1 4.7%, Give high importance to grammar 4.7%). For S10B, the only disadvantage she found relevant was the last matter:

*For me, I think that the only disadvantage that, for me, for me is relevant, in the case of non-native English teacher is giving importance only to grammar. That's more relevant for me, rather than the rest because, yeah I know that there are many teachers that give importance only to grammar and they focus all the course only on grammar, and they avoid for example giving culture, or idioms, or I don't know... other use of the language... they say: no, no, that's...I don't consider it important, it's because I'm preparing my students in order to pass the exams. Sometimes they do it, or probably is a comfort zone for some of them.*

She agreed that some teachers' main focus point is to help students prepare for their exams, which most of the time requires specific and deep grammatical concepts. For some, this might be simply the comfort zone as they have been (probably) practicing that approach for years already. S7B believed that the characteristics of the class truly depend on individual teacher's style and decisions:

*So, again it's like depending on the teacher, no? The quality of class, even the aim that you have in your class, no? If you are just willing to pass your students or that your students pass an exam...but if you want to teach them the language, then... and I do agree with these percentages.*

As referring to the general results shown on the graphics, S5B reported:

*I disagree with this because I think that the main disadvantage will be that teacher makes mistakes in second language, because you learn that and then you don't get that. I don't think the pronunciation is a disadvantage*

*because you can listen to the tape records, to TVs...the vocabulary perhaps, that would be another disadvantage.*

As NNESTs' poor pronunciation was presented as students' may concern, among graduate participants too this became a topic to be re-discussed along the interview. S7B reported that *I agree with them*. S10B connected students' such point of view on NNESTs' pronunciation with the high possibility that undergraduate students will become English teachers themselves: *they will become English teachers, so that's why they consider the pronunciation*. When participants were asked whether they consider their own pronunciation as poor, a variety of concepts were born. S4B found this context dependent: *Sometimes, it depends who I am talking to*. S7B associated this possibility with the level she teaches:

*Sometimes, it depends on the level. If I say don't... but it depends on the level... sometimes, when you find yourself with a new word... god knows, or an expression that you haven't heard before, so, in my case yeah, I have found that it has been a disadvantage....*

S10B believed that students' perceptions on the issue do not refer to all NNESTs in general, but teachers with truly marked accent:

*... I don't consider ourselves [having] poor pronunciation...I think that they refer to poor pronunciation when they hear that teachers have very, very marked Spanish accent when they speak in English. I think that they refer to this as poor because when they hear that you have not a native speaker teacher pronunciation but you have a similar pronunciation as a native speaker, they see that: oh ok, this teacher could be good, because you are giving or you are making an effort, but when they hear the Spanish accent is when they say: ugh! Forget it, don't take classes with them!*

S10B discussed the concept where *making an effort* to achieve native-like pronunciation is a key factor for students when deciding who they want to take classes with. S10B was not alone with this idea among the group interview participants:

*I guess and this is totally like my own perspective and is very personal, but I think that if you learn another language it's like kind of respectful to at least try to emulate, you know? Or to mimic... because when I hear an American person trying to speak Spanish and their accent is so strong I want to say: come on! Can't you just learn a little bit more? You know like, it is possible! ... just try harder and that would make me feel better that you're using that language correctly... (S7B).*

By suggesting that one should at least try to mimic (although who to 'mimic' is not an easy decision by itself as we have seen it above), S7B highlighted that from her own personal perspective, **it is** possible to improve pronunciation (towards native or at least native-like), which would also mean that *you're using that language correctly*. Although above we experienced a moment of awareness among graduate student participants when we talked about which pronunciation they refer to among many as native pronunciation, it needs to be mentioned that this awareness-moment did not last long and was not mentioned when undergraduate students' results on NNESTs' poor pronunciation was discussed. Participants highlighted how important they consider English users to have or try their very best to achieve native-like pronunciation. It was important to clarify whether they consider intelligibility as 'enough' when communicating or they also analyze the 'quality' of the users' accent. S7B claimed:

*As a teacher, I do care... When I listen to my students using the language nicely and correctly, and their pronunciation, I feel so proud of my classes, like I go: wow! They were paying attention, so they are trying to copy at*

*least the pronunciation and they have good ear, so when I listen to my students it is really rewarding, is really rewarding.*

For S5B this was also important, however she did not find this as the most important asset: *I think this matters, I think you have to work very hard to achieve that, to have a good pronunciation, but... this is not the most important.* S10B formulated the reality: *No, it shouldn't be.* In practice however, the situation is rather different. It is interesting that S5B – who we saw previously embracing the importance of intelligibility rather than focusing on native pronunciation – here, she agreed with trying to reach a certain ‘level’ as teachers:

*S5B: If they don't speak exactly as the native speaker as you were saying, that they're different, so, there must be just a level, perhaps, for us as teacher I think that we should study more... I believe that we should study phonetics and we have to try very hard to speak as...*

*S7B: As closely maybe as possible? Or as as...*

*Moderator: To which pronunciation?*

*S5B: Well, there is no one exactly...*

*S7B: The thing is that I would go with a neutral, to a neutral point; like, when they don't know where you are from, they don't even identify where you are from, that, for me is flattering, when they say **where are you from?** So, they don't know I'm Mexican or they don't know if I am like from anywhere...*

I found it important to include this part of the group interview (a piece as a whole around this topic and in the same order as it occurred) to highlight the level of how necessary native-like pronunciation was according to them. Although S4B practiced her global identity as a teacher referring to the issue, she still agreed with the other participants on the importance of ‘making an effort’:

*It's a little bit different the perspective as a teacher and as a global person that travels and everything; you want to be understood and you want to get your message by... you have colleagues and classmates from China, they speak , but the point is that at the end of the class they all have to receive the same thing, the same knowledge, the same idea, I think **that** would be more important than the teacher speaking perfectly, but I think also if we see it from the point of view of the teacher, they have to make an effort... (S4B).*

The importance, the relevance of native pronunciation versus intelligibility among users of English, the challenges and the reduced possibility that learners of English have in acquiring native pronunciation, have all been discussed in section 4.3, where the undergraduate students' results were presented. Therefore, I would like to conclude this section with Francois De La Rochefoucauld's words:

*“The accent of a man's native country remains in his mind and his heart,  
as it does in his speech.”*

After having finished with the discussion on undergraduate students' results, the graphics were collected and the printed parts of their autobiography were handed out (all presented in section 4.2 of this chapter) to be read by them. Interest and wonderful re-encountering could be seen on their smiling faces with their 'old personalities and beliefs'. We wanted to know if their perceptions changed on the nativeness issue and about their non-nativeness, and if yes, in what way.

Most participants offered a straight-forward, convincing answer: *Ok, mine is just the same (S7B)*. S5B presented the same conclusion: *Mine is the same, I think*. Although S4B reflected thoroughly on her opinion from two years ago at the beginning of her master's program, she highlighted the same main ideas as she had done in her autobiography.

Therefore, in her case too, we can conclude with her own words: *I think I also agree with what I wrote*. S10B reflected in this section (too) on some notions she did not agree with from the undergraduate students' results; however, she confirmed her beliefs presented in the autobiography:

*Well, in my case I believe that I still think as my piece of writing I did two years ago, but in this discussion... I have different perception for example about what is important for students when they have a native or a non-native teacher; but I still believe that as in the piece of writing I did, that when you are a non-native English teacher, you can understand better the students because you speak the same language as them, that's an advantage and is what they answer actually in the advantages. So, I think that we have the same perceptions sometimes as students because we lived this, we have the same experience as them, we were students also and now we are teachers and now we can understand them what they need or what difficulties they have, so I still believe in my...I have the same ideas....*

S7B highlighted some assets of her previous writing:

*Yeah, yeah I have the same ideas but I saw something here that was said, for example, accent shows where we have been, with whom we have been associated and the level of the education we have and also our cultural background so, you know, that says a lot, it's a personal thing, a very personal thing, you decide if you want to have a strong accent or to slowly trying to get rid of it.*

She offered an example where for personal choice her son preferred keeping his accent influenced by his L1, which at a moment in his professional life caused him difficulties of being hired. It is necessary to mention that here his accent created a barrier between him and his interviewer to be understood. Walker (2014) reminds us that accent and intelligibility are two separate concepts. This is another example of a frequent situation where users of English

do not make this necessary differentiation between accent and intelligibility. At the end of the group interview, S5B formulated the valid question:

*So, I agree with myself and they agree with what they said, so, it makes me think that they live some changes, so, there must be something strange here. I don't know what you're going to do, nothing changes. So, how would you make people change? sometimes you can change as the example she said, she mentioned that, but how could we change?*

It is certainly a valid question. S5B highlighted, finding it 'strange' that all participants went through changes, they experienced different situations, they enriched or deepened their professional lives with new or reinforced information during the master's program in ELT; however, no significant change could be perceived from their description on the topic. *...nothing changes. So, how would you make people change?* - presented S5B with a surprising concluding reaction in a moment of awareness. I believe it is essential to introduce these concepts in the early stages of students' (future NNESTs) professional development. It is not just any issue in the field of ELT, these are key concepts which determine individuals' views about themselves as professionals as NNESTs, as well as the expectations they form upon these beliefs from their present and future students. The introduction and the depth of these concepts and elements along students' professional development are the only key chances for them to evaluate themselves and students under valid norms in the field of ELT. We have witnessed moments of awareness with our participants on the discussed assets of English teaching and learning from the undergraduate students' point of view, however, in order to actions and practice could follow these moments of awareness, continuous and profounder importance needs to be given to these notions along the journey of students' professional development beforehand.

The purpose of this study was to identify graduate and undergraduate students' perceptions about the issue of nativeness and non-nativeness in ELT. In this chapter, the findings based on the study's research questions were presented. From the parallel collected graduate and undergraduate students' data, first, the graduate students' perceptions of their non-nativeness were described and analyzed. Second, the undergraduate students' opinions were presented and discussed, the way they perceived learning English with NESTs vs. NNESTs. Last, graduate students' attitudes and beliefs were examined and analyzed concerning the undergraduate students' results, as well as their perceptions of their own attitude, the way they expressed their beliefs on the issue at the beginning of the master's program and at the end of it.

## **CHAPTER V: IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **5.0 Introduction**

### **5.1 Summary of the findings and significance**

#### **5.1.1 Autobiographies**

#### **5.1.2 Undergraduate students' questionnaires**

#### **5.1.3 Group interview**

### **5.2 Aims of the study and answers to research questions**

### **5.3 Study contributions and implications**

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### **5.5 Suggestions for further research**

### **5.6 Reflective account**

## **5.0 Introduction**

In this final chapter, the summary of the findings will be presented first. After that, the aims of the study as introduced in chapter one will be discussed, which are followed by the contributions and implications of the present research. Later on, the limitations with recommendations and suggestions for possible further research will be presented. Finally, the chapter will be concluded with a reflective account referring to the study as a whole.

### **5.1 Summary of the results and significance**

The results of this study were presented in detail in Chapter IV. Therefore, the findings that are being presented in the following sections, are the summaries of the former [4.2], [4.3], and [4.4]. Different research instruments were used in the present study, with each one of the research questions were targeted to be answered.

#### **5.1.1 Autobiographies**

With the analyses of specific parts of graduate students' autobiographies, we wanted to form an image how they feel about their non-nativeness, whether that perception influences or not their teaching, and if yes, how. Medgyes (1992) presents six NNEST advantages that overcome the superiority of the NESTs. According to the diverse opinions in students' autobiographies, they actively believe to be practicing most of the qualities that Medgyes (1992) underlines as NNESTs' main advantages. Some of these are the following: they understand the difficulties and needs of the students, in EFL setting they can use the students' native language to their advantage. They provide a good learner model to their students, and they can provide more information about the language to their students. Some of the participants highlighted that being a non-native English teacher is a positive tool of

encouragement for students, a living proof that they can also achieve the acquirement of the language.

The need of reinforcement from native speakers claimed having high importance. That they were capable engaging in oral communication with native speakers, gave them reassurance and confidence about themselves as NNESTs. Others reported that with time they gained confidence about themselves as NNESTs when realizing that the key factors for a 'good' or 'efficient' teacher lies on strategies, techniques, and language proficiency.

### **5.1.2 Undergraduate students' questionnaires**

With the undergraduate student questionnaires, we meant to receive insight what the participants believed about learning English with NESTs vs. NNESTs, what they considered to be their main advantages and disadvantages. We found most of Medgyes's (1992) ideas present in students' responses referring to what he considers as NNESTs' main advantages. 30 out of 42 participants (71.4% in total) revealed in their answers NEST pronunciation as an advantage, describing native pronunciation as *better, intelligible, correct, more accurate, the most accurate, nice*, generally meaning that a NEST helps to improve students' pronunciation. This was the most common attribute found as a NEST advantage among the answers. Therefore, the most commonly listed element as NNEST disadvantage became their 'poor pronunciation' as mentioned by 24 students out of 42 (57.1%). We also witnessed with the second most mentioned characteristic as a NEST advantage (23.8%) that for students it was quite important to receive cultural information from their teachers. The third most highlighted NEST advantage for students (14.2%) was the teachers' ability to improve students' vocabulary and idioms. As for the most common NEST disadvantage, students mentioned their poor teaching methodology, that they cannot speak students' L1, and the

difficulty to understand them when they speak.

‘Can speak and explain in L1’ had the highest NNEST attribute rate (38.0%). The other two most mentioned features in the group of NNEST advantages were: that they can understand students’ difficulties and they offer a better grammar/structure function explanation. Beside NNESTs’ poor pronunciation as we have already mentioned, teachers ‘lack of some vocabulary’ and that ‘they make mistakes in L2’ were also frequently discussed.

### **5.1.3 Group interview**

With the group interview we wanted to reach an insight how graduate students perceived the undergraduate students’ results presented during the interview and to analyze whether there was a change in how they saw the issue of nativeness two years ago at the time of writing their autobiography and how they perceived it at the time of the interview. Participants showed in most concepts recognition of their own beliefs in the presented undergraduate students’ results. On the issue of pronunciation, graduate students felt closely related to the undergraduate students’ questionnaire results, and all, but one expressed high importance towards native or native-like pronunciation. The topic(s) of the presented development raised awareness among graduate students on different levels: that choosing *the* one native accent is not an easy challenge; one participant claimed preference towards intelligibility vs. native or native-like pronunciation. There was disagreement among participants whether students should use their L1 in class or not. Participants agreed that NNESTs quite often give more importance to grammar than to other areas in language teaching.

Although we experienced a moment of awareness among graduate student

participants when we talked about which pronunciation they refer to among many as *native* pronunciation, this awareness-moment did not last long and was not mentioned when students' results on NNESTs' poor pronunciation was discussed. Participants highlighted how important they consider English users to have or try their very best to achieve native-like pronunciation.

With the second part of the group interview we wanted to find out whether graduate students' perceptions changed on the nativeness issue and about their non-nativeness, and if yes, in what way. According to their claim at the time of the group interview, we can conclude that there was no major change in participants' judgment when comparing their perceptions on the issue(s) at the beginning of their master's program and at the end of it.

## **5.2 Aims of the study and answers to research questions**

One of the principal aims of the study was to explore and understand master's degree level students' perceptions and attitudes towards their non-nativeness in ELT. This aim is directly connected to RQ1 and was accomplished through the analysis of specific parts from students' autobiographies. What we discovered was thoroughly presented in section [4.2] and briefly discussed above in this chapter under section [5.1.1].

RQ2 guided the study's next purpose, which was to explore and understand undergraduate students' opinions and perceptions towards native English speaking teachers versus non-native English speaking teachers, how - according to their beliefs - the advantages and disadvantages of learning English with a NEST versus a NNEST could be defined. This aim was reached through the analysis of the applied questionnaires to undergraduate students. The detailed results of these can be found in section 4.3 and then, shortly presented above under section 5.1.2. We discovered that although undergraduate

students gave NNESTs' different advantages in their English learning process, in one of the most important asset as they mentioned – pronunciation –, they described NNESTs as this being their most common disadvantage, which led us having pronunciation as NESTs' first advantage.

The last aims of this present research were guided by RQ3. In order for possible reevaluation of the current beliefs, practices, and framework in their language pedagogy could be achieved for the graduate students' as teachers, the results of the undergraduate students' perceptions were presented to the teacher participants. As so, the last aims of this current study were to interpret how graduate students responded (as English teachers) to the undergraduate students' opinion on this issue, as well as to analyze whether there were any changes in the graduate students' beliefs from how they observed the issue at the beginning of the master's program and at the end of it. These aims were accomplished through the analysis of a group interview. We discovered that graduate students felt very closely related to the undergraduate students' opinions; their own perception on the issue presented during the group interview compared to what they had defined on the reviewed concepts at the beginning of their master's program, hardly changed.

### **5.3 Study contributions and implications**

The way we perceive ourselves professionally while completing our everyday duties, truly defines the quality of our work. Sometimes we build up a barrier convincing ourselves that there is a certain limit regarding how competent we can get to be in the field of ELT. Students, scholars, institutional authorities, and ourselves as NNESTs quite often believe that we are in considerable disadvantage compared to NESTs in many ways. The present study presented different examples of these beliefs. Each individual has the freedom to build up

perceptions on different concepts and issues, but the importance lies in whether we analyze these concepts in the light of valid contexts and norms or not. To have the possibility to do that, information about these valid norms has to arrive to us in some way. We saw it previously in the study that certain information introduced during the master's program to graduate students had the effect of raising awareness about the main issue of the study, as presented in the written up results of the group interview. The group interview participants had finished their master's program by the time we held the interview; during the program they were introduced to new concepts, which also served as basis for reflection and for showing moments of awareness in the discussion of the nativeness issue. The main contribution of this present study lies in the concepts described above. Not only did we gain insight into how a group of Mexican graduate students saw themselves as NNESTs and how a bigger group of Mexican undergraduate students (studying a BA in ELT at that moment) perceived NESTs and NNESTs, but we also witnessed for a moment that graduate students considered reevaluating their ideas due to having new information on the issue compared to what they had had at the beginning of the master's program. In the context where the present study took place, students of ELT are introduced to the issue of nativeness and to the concepts that are closely connected to it at a later moment in their professional development. This may effect the way these individuals see and will see themselves as professionals after finishing their program. Therefore, it is quite possible that individuals who will stop their institutional professional preparation at BA level (in the context of this present study), will have a view about themselves as NNESTs based on information and ideas they came in contact with during their undergraduate program. Therefore, the present study would like to recommend the introduction of these concepts at an earlier stage of students' professional development in ELT in the context where this present study was carried out. If teachers are aware and

richer in their professional lives with the concepts described above, then they can also raise students' awareness about the importance of *international intelligibility*. Taking also into account that from an international point of view native accents have no advantages over non-native ones in terms of intelligibility, teachers could create a less stressful learning environment, where the goal is no longer set by an almost unreachable bar, where sounding native is not the target anymore; in such context, students' accents could be encouraged and highlighted that their accent is not only accepted, but also welcomed. This should not be judged and much less rejected, as it represents their identity, who they are; awareness needs to be raised that they do not have to leave that behind in order to become internationally intelligible. We should always keep in mind that intelligibility and accent are two very different things (Walker, 2014). After all, intelligibility is the center concept of communication and that is the notion we should focus on and transmit as teachers, students, and everyday users of English.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

The main limitation of the study was the number of participants involved in the group interview. From the 11 graduate student candidates whose work had been self-selectively chosen with their autobiographies to be part of this present research, only 4 were present at the time of the group interview. More participants' opinions on the reviewed undergraduate students' results and on their own previous concepts, would have offered valuable insight to the study.

Although we had a bigger number of participants (than at the time of the group interview) whose work became part of the studies' analyses from their autobiographies, this number was self-selectively also reduced by the fact that -although requested by the teacher

as part of the completion of students' autobiographies- not all participants had mentioned the issue that this research meant to investigate; we found only 11 out of 20 possible participants who had referred to our topic at some rate.

Another limitation was time in the meaning that applying the group interview at an earlier moment with the graduate student participants (possibly right after they had completed their master's program), would have been probably better and more enriching. It was complicated and took time until a possible day and hour was born to held the group interview, as participants were quite busy with their personal and professional lives: they had started working at a new place after completing their master's program or busy writing and finishing up their theses. Although we had agreed on a time and place to meet for the interview, in practice, we were not able to have present many of the participants.

### **5.5 Suggestions for further research**

The following ideas as possible suggestions for further research are directly connected to the study's limitations introduced above. A larger number of participants would give a deeper and therefore a more valid insight into the topics that are being researched. Additional research could be carried out by completing the reflection on participants at an earlier stage, right after the completion of their master's program and with that ensuring that the participants for both research instruments are closer in number. Additional research may also include according to their perceptions what can be done as active ELT professional (as teachers, coordinators, researchers) to overcome this negative differentiation between NESTs and NNESTs. Later on, some of their ideas could be implemented in their contexts and the effects and/or possible changes could be analyzed.

## **5.6 Reflective account**

I think I can say that the choice for my research topic almost flawlessly appeared along the way of completing my master's degree program in ELT. I have always been interested how others in the profession see themselves in their professional lives, the way they perceive their context, whether in the 'original me' tries to emerge or not another side of the 'professional me', the way they choose – or not – to contemplate involved individuals' beliefs especially in terms of nativeness. When we were introduced to the different categorization of WEs, ELF, and EIL, I was entirely convinced that there was nothing else I would rather be working with than the issue of nativeness. Having been introduced to these new ideas, I began to wonder whether any of these ideas would affect master's students' professional and practical thinking compared to what they had thought on the issue at the beginning of our professional development on master's level. Having as a common feature the context of our professional development but on different levels, my interest towards BA students' attitude on the native and non-native concepts also became part of my research relatively fast.

The process of completing this research sometimes seemed quite challenging, however, I never lost the interest towards my topic, and enjoyed this journey from the beginning till the end. It became clearer to me than ever that being aware of our multilayered facets of our profession in ELT can be essential the way we perceive our everyday work, place, and mission as professionals.

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## **Appendices:**

### Appendix A

S1B: *I feel quite comfortable at being a non-native speaker because this way I can tell my students if I did it you also can. Learning a language is not a matter of being born in the place, it is commitment and effort.*

S2B: *At the present time, English usage is not reduced to specifically native speakers. It is an international language that no nation can have custody over it. Widdowson, (1997, 2003, cited in Kirkpatrick, 2007).*

S3B: *I must say that due to the fact that I lived in California for many years made it easy to get a job. Even though I was not a native speaker, I had a good pronunciation and my employers liked it.*

S4B: *Teaching Business English was definitely different from teaching Spanish. This was mainly because I was a non-native teacher. Holliday (2005) describes in detail how Non Native Speakers are categorized as the “the others” by the dominant group of Native Speakers. In my opinion this same phenomenon happens with NNs students in regards to NNs teachers. At the beginning it had an influence in my behaviour towards the class but I manage pass through it due to my proficiency of the English language.*

S5B: *Being in an English speaking country and communicating with people from different nationalities made me feel a lot more confident about being a non-native speaker.*

S6B: *I must mention that not being a native speaker, now that native speakers versus non-native speaker issue has become a big issue among English language teachers and researchers, has never affected me at all.*

S7B: *...I also had the “ghost of the native speaker”. In regards to this, I believe on the one hand, that when you learn a language, you have to sound as closely to it as possible out of respect; nevertheless, it is very difficult to ignore the importance and the strength of someone’s accent. Accent is a very personal characteristic that shows our personal and social identity when communicating. It shows where we have been and with whom we have associated, the level of education we have and our cultural background, (Moyer, 2013). On the other hand, I also believe that being a non-native speaker has a certain advantage because we walked the same path that our students are facing in relation to differences between both languages, to mention a few: idiomatic expressions, use of auxiliaries, pronunciation and most importantly culture, whereas native teachers sometimes assume that students will understand naturally as I experienced from time to time. I also believe that a non-native person never stops learning and we continually self-correct ourselves by adjusting our pronunciation in order to clarify what we mean (ibid).*

S8B: *Regarding the topic of being a non-native English teacher, I must admit that at the beginning of my professional development I felt kind of insecure of myself since most of the times students have the wrong belief that native teachers are better because of their language proficiency. As time passed, I gained some more confidence and then I realized that being a native teacher did not have to do language proficiency at all, it was related to strategies and techniques in order to be a good teacher in and outside the classroom.*

S9B: *Canagarajah (cited in Richards, 2011) underlines the prejudice that in order to be a successful teacher, native-like language knowledge is not necessary. Yet, the language teacher is required to have a certain level of language proficiency in order to teach the language efficiently and not to depend on teaching resources during class. I could see a*

*moment of awareness in Guanajuato when all my in-service classmates were too devoted to teach without worrying about being a native speaker of the language. Hence, I understood my knowledge and skills in teaching the language were not influenced by my non-nativeness.*

*S10B: During my teaching experience, I have seen that one of the most important attributes a non-native English teacher has to have is to speak the language like a proficient; Being a non-native English teacher can be an advantage because I can understand better how my students think and feel because we speak the same mother tongue and I can understand better what their needs are.*

*S11B: I believe that any foreign speaker improves by having real communicative experiences with native speakers.*

*... before I traveled, I had not been in contact with any native speaker and I was not sure if I would be able to communicate.*

## Appendix B

For the questionnaire that was piloted then applied to voluntary undergraduate students in ELT, a previously used instrument on the problem provided the source: (Walkinshaw and Oanh, 2014, p. 4).

1. In your opinion, are there any advantages of learning English with a native-speaker teacher? If so, what are they?
2. In your opinion, are there any *disadvantages* of learning English with a native-speaker teacher? If so, what are they?
3. In your opinion, are there any advantages of learning English with a *non-native* – speaker teacher? If so, what are they?
4. In your opinion, are there any disadvantages of learning English with a *non-native* – speaker teacher? If so, what are they?
5. Are there any further comments you would like to make?

## Appendix C

### I. Advantages of NESTs:

UND1. Pronunciation, grammar structure taught differently than with a non-native

UND2. NESTs can teach specific topics related to culture, places

UND3. Pronunciation. Gives more motivation in the learning process.

UND4. Learning from a NEST raises self-confidence. Students can learn about culture, native like pronunciation.

UND5. Native like pronunciation. He/she can teach students about cultural aspects of his/her native country.

UND6. Help improve pronunciation and speech structure.

UND7. Students may improve pronunciation and cultural knowledge.

UND8. They can share cultural aspects.

UND9. Brings motivation to study harder as there is no L1 to help you out in understanding the language.

UND10. Pronunciation.

UND11. Helps improve pronunciation.

UND12. Receive the example of a better pronunciation. They can give insight about the culture of the target language.

UND13. They help with intelligible pronunciation and idioms.

UND14. Students can learn about culture.

UND15. 'Correct' pronunciation. Being able to be listening to the 'real, true' English.

UND16. 'Correct' pronunciation. They can teach learners different point of views.

UND17. NESTs help to improve students' pronunciation.

UND18. Students have the chance to learn a 'more accurate' pronunciation and grammar.

UND21. Students learn native pronunciation.

UND22. Students acquire the "correct pronunciation." "Native speakers are more responsible."

UND23. Students can learn the "correct" pronunciation.

UND24. "Improvement of vocabulary and pronunciation." Receiving information about the culture of the teacher's country.

UND25. Students can improve their listening and speaking skills.

UND26. Classes are more interesting. "Nice accent, and when they talk, that sounds beautiful." They are a better motivation for students.

UND27. Students receive richer vocabulary from NESTs and they listen to the correct pronunciation.

UND28. Full contact with the language. Pronunciation. Better opportunities to improve language knowledge with NESTs as NNESTs don't correct the mistakes often enough.

UND29. Students' vocabulary increases. NESTs correct students' oral mistakes.

Students improve their oral skills. "We get to use the accent of the language."

UND30. "We can learn the accent. We get to use and listen to English all the time in class. We can also learn about culture.

It's easier to learn some expressions and idioms."

UNS31. "... allows us to learn how to use English in a correct way...."

"... the most accurate pronunciation from a native speaker."

- UND32. Students can have “better” practice.
- UND33. Students can learn about culture.
- UND34. Students can learn the “correct” pronunciation.
- UND35. Students can improve their pronunciation. (Mentioning at the same time that NNESTs can also have a ‘good’ pronunciation).
- UND36. Students can learn idioms and improve pronunciation.
- UND37. Better pronunciation.
- UND38. Students “can follow the correct pronunciation.”
- UND39. “They have advantages just when in oral communication as they have a better pronunciation.”
- UND40. Learning with NESTs improves students’ listening skill.

## II. Disadvantages of NESTs:

- UND1. Poor teaching methodology, classes are less fun, interactive, and interesting. NESTs do not know students’ mother tongue, therefore cannot understand students’ difficulties.
- UND2. May lack of local cultural knowledge.
- UND3. They think sometimes there is no need of class preparation. They rarely help students with grammar or writing. Lack of local cultural knowledge may lead to misunderstanding between teacher and students.
- UND4. Do not consider grammatical points that important; do not explain grammatical points in the same way
- UND7. Sometimes they present poor teaching methodology. Not knowing students’ L1 may lead to difficulties.
- UND8. Sometimes they master the language, but not in the pedagogical aspect.
- UND11. Sometimes they cannot help you with grammar.
- UND12. Sometimes they are given the teaching position just for the fact that they NESTs and they don’t have teaching competence.
- UND13. If they don’t speak students’ L1, this can cause interference.
- UND15. Students at basic levels might not understand them without their L1.

- UND16. Lack of students' L1 might cause interference.
- UND20. NNESTs speak 'quickly' and it's hard to understand them.
- UND21. UND21 has problems sometimes understanding instructions in English.
- UND23. There are NESTs whose teaching methods are not the optimum ones, resulting to be "bad teachers."
- UND24. Lack of professional preparation. Teachers may lack of knowledge in students' culture.
- UND26. Sometimes he/she finds difficulties in understanding the teachers.
- UND27. Sometimes he/she finds difficulties in understanding the teachers.
- UND28. Sometimes the teacher is not well prepared enough.
- UND29. Students sometimes don't understand completely what NESTs say.
- UND31. If students' listening skills are not sharp enough, there might be loss of continuum of the info.
- UND33. Lack of L1 knowledge might cause trouble for students to express the word(s) they are looking for in English.
- UND34. Sometimes it's hard to understand them due to their extent vocabulary and fast-talking.
- UND39. They don't understand the link that could be made between the L1 and English.
- UND40. They expect the same output from all students even though some have lower and some have higher level of language knowledge.
- UND42. Students can have difficulties understanding teachers due to their fast speaking.

### III. Advantages of NNESTs:

- UND1. They are conscious about s's difficulties in the language learning process.
- UND2. Has his/her own perspective of being a language learner, which offers a better understanding of students' issues, problems.
- UND3. Difficulties can be explained and clarified in students' native language.

UND4. They focus on development of the students' skills. Better understanding towards students.

UND5. Deeper grammatical explanation.

UND7. Give chance to negotiation of meaning through both languages. NNESTs can identify with students' difficulties, as he/she has been a learner of the same language too.

UND9. Better and easier explanation of certain topics. L1 brings a plus in hard-core situations if necessary.

UND10. Through L1 the teacher can offer a better understanding of certain topics.

UND11. Have the experience of studying the language. They focus on grammar too; they have better structure knowledge.

UND12. Better knowledge of the function of the language. They are able to answer the 'why' questions.

UND14. Students can learn the language through topics about their own culture and country.

UND15. L1 can be helpful in understanding difficult concepts. UND15 feels more comfortable to clarify concepts with a NNEST.

UND16. Good understanding of students' needs.

UND17. They can offer clear explanation. They can use L1 for students' better understanding.

UND21. L1 can be used for communication when the student lacks vocabulary to express him/herself.

UND22. L1 can be used for communication when the student lacks vocabulary to express him/herself.

UND23. Can offer better explanations.

UND24. Better grammar knowledge. Know common techniques in teaching to offer a better understanding.

UND25. They can offer a better understanding through students' L1.

UND28. They understand students better. Deal with "lots of grammar and listening."  
"They help me to analyze what I am saying."

UND29. Teachers as well as students can use the L1 to explain and clarify difficult concepts.

UND30. L1 can offer a better understanding of aspects in the English language.

UND31. They worry about improving their teaching strategies. They can use L1 to explain and clarify difficult concepts.

UND32. When having doubts, it's easier to talk to a NNEST.

UND33. They know both languages; UND 33 thinks that students sometimes need to receive information on their mother tongue.

UND34. Can use L1 to present meaning.

UND37. Easier acquisition of grammatical concepts.

UND38. They understand difficulties that the students face.

UND39. They can use L1 to highlight similarities and differences between the two languages.

UND40. L1 can be used sometimes when needed; they offer a better explanation about the structure of the language.

UND42. "...they speak slower than a native speaker and we can understand better."

#### IV. Disadvantages of NNESTs:

UND1. They can have grammatical errors.

UND2. May lack knowledge about topics related to culture. Depending on level proficiency, he/she may lack mastering grammar. Pronunciation.

UND3. They don't have native like accent.

UND4. Lack of cultural knowledge. They lack of native-like pronunciation.

UND5. First language may influence the usage of English language, possible mistakes may occur.

UND6. Cannot polish pronunciation.

UND7. Students can fossilize some errors of the teacher if he or she uses something incorrectly.

UND9. Lack of "good" pronunciation.

UND11. Sometimes they lack of 'good' pronunciation.

UND12. Lack of 'good' pronunciation. May not have knowledge of cultural background.

UND13. They might not know some uncommon vocabulary.

UND14. Pronunciation. There's possibility that they do not understand and use slang.

UND15. May lack of 'good' pronunciation and familiarity of some vocabulary.

UND16. May lack of 'good' pronunciation and familiarity of some vocabulary.

UND17. May lack of 'good' pronunciation.

UND21. Pronunciation is not as a native teacher's one.

UND22. Students spend more time talking in their L1 than in English.

UND23. They have "bad pronunciation and make a lot of mistakes."

UND24. “Teacher doesn’t know how to pronounce certain words. The teacher doesn’t know about the English speaker culture.” (Implying that there is one kind of English speaker or country????) Teacher may lack of certain vocabulary.

UND26. Students don’t learn the “correct pronunciation.”

UND27. Sometimes teachers let students to use their L1 in class; therefore they don’t have the chance to practice English.

UND28. NNESTs don’t correct the mistakes often enough. They give more importance to grammar and too little on speaking.

UND29. Students receive a more formal like, book based English rather than knowledge of a less formal, “real life” English.

UND30. “Teachers use the grammatical language...in real life native speakers don’t use it that much.”

UND31. May have “bad pronunciation.”

UND32. May lack of ‘good’ pronunciation.

UND33. Teachers sometimes cannot translate words or idioms.

UND34. Pronunciation.

UND36. Sometimes they lack of ‘good’ pronunciation and some vocabulary.

UND37. Disadvantage: “Just pronunciation.”

UND38. “Sometimes pronunciation or writing is not correct.”

UND39. “Only the pronunciation.”

UND40. “Sometimes pronunciation is not that good.”

UND41. Disadvantage: “just pronunciation.”

UND42. Intonation.

## **V. Further comments:**

1. “Non-natives can be as good as natives and the other way around.” UND1 mentions that NNESTs can arrive having native like teaching, those “teachers who have been exposed for long periods with the language they teach.”
2. “Being a native speaking teacher does not imply to be a good teacher.” UND2 thinks that both NESTs and NNESTs have advantages and disadvantages.
4. “No matter if teachers are native or non-native, they have to be prepared.”
6. Nativeness by itself it is not enough: “he or she must be well prepared or trained as an English teacher.” The same participant adds: “I think it is irrelevant if the teacher is native or not as long as he or she is truly a teacher of the English language.”
10. What really matters is the teacher’s preparation not so much whether she or he is native or not.
11. Native speakers have better knowledge of the language than NNESTs. Both can be ‘very good teachers’ as long as they are prepared to be teaching the language.
12. Both NESTs and NNESTs have advantages and disadvantages. A good teacher is the one that is fully prepared in all aspects.
13. Beside teacher preparation, students’ attitudes are key aspect in language learning.
15. Both NESTs and NNESTs have advantages and disadvantages.
16. Both NESTs and NNESTs have advantages and disadvantages.
17. Learning with more NESTs would give students the chance for ‘real practice.’
18. Students ‘need to listen to native speakers’.
21. “In my case, I really hate when a non-native speaker teacher mixes British and American English because it is more difficult to understand the classes.”
22. UND22 expresses her/his preference to be learning English with a NEST.

23. "Being a NEST it doesn't imply that the teacher is better than a NNEST."
24. To achieve a successful learning, "the most important is the attitude, the knowledge, and the techniques that teachers implement."
25. "If we really want to learn English, NEST is a better option because we can improve our four skills."
29. "We want more native speaker teachers."
31. As an advantage to NESTs, UND31 expresses: "...somebody who was raised in an English environment and society...allows us to learn how to use English in a correct way...."
- "It's good to be listening to the most accurate pronunciation from a native speaker."
33. UND33: "I think that both kind of teachers are very important in the develop(ment) of a student in the learning process."
36. UND36: "I don't care if they are not native speakers. They should be good teachers."
41. "The most important is the knowledge (of the teacher)."

#### Appendix D: Transcription

Moderator: OK...Thank you for coming. What you see in front of you is the questionnaire that I applied for the *licenciatura* students to find out or try to find out what their opinion... opinions are on the advantages and disadvantages of native teachers and non-native teacher. Therefore, you can see...

In your opinion are there any advantages of learning English with a native speaking teacher? If so, what are they?

If there are any disadvantages of learning English with a native speaker teacher? If so, what are they?

And they answered the same advantages and disadvantages about non-native teachers and if there were any extra comments that they wanted to share, they had the opportunity to share. OK I'd like to share with you the results I received after analyzing their answers, so, I'd like you to take a package... and the pages are in order as you can see, the questions. In your opinion are there any advantages of learning English with a native speaker teacher? If so, what are they? So, next stands for native English speaker teacher? If so, what are they? Just please take for now the first page. On the first page you can see the 71.40% of the students think that native teacher's advantage is that they improve students' pronunciation.

S7B: Hmmm, of course...

The second with 23.80 % is that they can learn about the teachers' culture. With 14.20 % is that they improve vocabulary and idioms. The fourth most common feature mentioned was that they improve... Students can improve their speaking skills and almost the last was to keep motivation, I didn't realize that the last one is not marked.

S7B: Probably is other things or other reasons, no?

Moderator: So, let's look at the second page. It is marked the most mentioned disadvantages of a native teacher according to the *licenciatura* students. 19%, their poor teacher methodology. It's again with 19% is that they cannot speak the students mother tongue, their L1. With 16% difficult to understand when a native English speaker teacher speaks. With 7.1% teach they mentioned lack of flow of cultural knowledge, student felt kind of important that their teacher knows the local, their culture as well and again with the 7.1 %t teach cannot teach grammar or lexis as well.

Let's go with the non-native English speaking teachers' advantage. Their advantage with 38%, their highest advantage according to the students is that they can speak and explain in L1. With 19%, they understand students' difficulties and most of the time here they added that because they went through the same learning as the students. With 16.6%, they have a better grammar or structure function explanation and with 9.5% is that they have a better, clear explanation just in general.

And on the last page you can see the most mentioned non-native English speaking teachers' disadvantages according to students and the highest is with 57.1% which is their poor pronunciation. With 19%, lack of some vocabulary. 11.9% mentioned that teachers make

mistakes in L2. 9.5%, mentioned lack of cultural knowledge. 4.7% students talk in their L1 and again, is the last with 4.7% is that they keep high importance to grammar.

I'm going to give you couple of minutes to look at it if you'd like to and then, I'd like you to share what your opinions are on the seen *Licenciatura* students' results.

S7B: In regards to question 1? Moderator: We can go in order...let's start with the native teachers' advantage.

S7B: So, what do we think about the graphics that we see...?

Moderator: The results and that's why I tried to show not only like the percentage but more, what is that they find the most.

S7B: I too totally agree that that is one of the biggest problems, pronunciation, and... or the advantages in this case, of the native speakers because if you're going to learn a language, you need to be able to communicate accurately, sometimes mispronunciation can even get you into trouble, you know, because you don't know how to pronounce something and having a native teacher, native speaker, right...That helps you a lot, so I do agree with the results that you have here and I totally support that.

S5B: I disagree a little bit because I think that they give more motivation than we think, so, the pronunciation is not the best thing, I think the motivation is the one that we have.

S10B: Well, I... I believe that some non-native English teachers can have a good pronunciation and it can give the student enough motivation because they say: well, the teacher speaks correctly, so I would like to take class with them, and that's a kind of motivation also, but for example the rest of the answers they give, they learn about teachers' culture and the advantages of having a native speaker teacher culture is part of the motivation too because they eager, that sometimes students are eager to ask about their countries of origin and that's part of language learning I think , so, that's another point that motivates students

S4B: I totally agree with that, I think I can see why they give that much importance to pronunciation because I think we all feel like if we pronounce we are more getting into the native stage, but I think also culture is very important...and when I was a student, I taught Spanish when I was living in UK and it was an experience that the students there felt like: ah an exotic girl that is speaking very funny!, you know, how is Mexico, tell us a little bit

something about that, and they were motivated to learn also because they wanted to know or to travel or to see some other places.

S7B: You were there a native speaker...

S4B: I was a native speaker there...very rare

Moderator: Is there anything that surprised you with the result or there is the result that were expecting students to have?

S4B: I think they are more, I think I would have the same kind of the same grading if I could... if I were giving the same options I would put them in the same order...also I think another important thing, perhaps the percentages are a little bit extreme like 71% of pronunciation, but also I think the others are quite important too, vocabulary, idioms, things that, you know, not everyone knows.

S7B: May I add something? The thing is that I guess students give more importance to the speaking part and that is why they prefer to have a native teacher because if you look it like... hm, from a grammar point of view or, you know, it's different because you really don't pay that much attention to nativeness but they want to speak the language and that's why they choose this option like, better.

S5B: For me, it was like you were having an exam so if you talk to a native speaker it means that they understand you that's why they chose motivation, this is the main, the most important for me.

Moderator: The most important for you is to be understood...?

S5B: It's the best, yeah.

S10B: Yeah, and also I think that *licenciatura* students have a specific idea of why is learning a language because I don't know probably their age, they are only students they are not teachers, language teachers yet, so, probably they believe that having a native speaker teacher can be more... they can be more successful if they can take classes with a native speaker rather than a non-native speaker so, I think their age, they are not experienced so, probably they put more emphasis on that...

Moderator: Do you think that students could have a better pronunciation with a native speaker than a non-native teacher, students could learn a better pronunciation?

S10B: Some can, but I think it depends on their skills because...

S5B: I don't think so. I believe that you can study phonetics and it doesn't matter if your teacher is a native speaker or a non-native speaker.

S7B: Can I share a personal experience with you? I'm knowing a little bit about phonetics I read a word like get another... right? but I understood that it was a pomegranate, you know, because of the rules of pronunciation and last years, I'm a very old person but last year I was at the supermarket and I asked for some of this fruit and they didn't understand what I was saying and I learned that from a non-native speaker and from my personal experience regarding phonetics and everything. Then, I talked to my friend and I said: How come they didn't understand? And she said: what did you want? I want this, and she said: what is it? So, she said it is a "pomegranate" /'pɒməgræni/ so, it doesn't have to do anything with phonetics in there, you know, like, I would say that it was read 'pomgranet or pomegranate. No, the correct pronunciation is /'pɒməgræni/...totally different. So, if I had had a teacher that day that I was learning the word, a native teacher, then I wouldn't have had this problem, so, for me, it is an advantage, mainly when you are learning the language, later you can discern or you can look it at in internet and correct your pronunciation and everything but at the beginning when you are learning a language, I guess the most important thing is that, you become really acute to differentiating the sounds the very subtle that changes in pronunciation so...

Moderator: I have had the experience of, for example I have experiences working with both people from Great Britain and people from the United States and then who is the native one? Because the pronunciation is very different if you put with people from New Zealand or Australia or Scotland.

S7B: That is true...

S10B: I have an experience here in Puebla, well, for example my... my teacher Scott, was my teacher, Marsha was my teacher and suddenly a British guy appeared and he started to give classes; he was very young, very, very young and we immediately: "Oh a British guy! So, we were surprised and we were happy because we finally had a British teacher. When we arrived to his class the first time, we couldn't understand anything, anything.

S7B: That's true...

S10B...and that was a problem.

Moderator: So, if you learn English from a native with American pronunciation, how would that be helpful for you? To communicate with an Australian, with an African, with a British, with a Scottish.

S7B: It makes me wonder now... and I guess having a great, like an ample variety of accents and even native and non-native teachers, that could be a great advantage to the student; but now you made think about it, because it's true, they're so different. Scottish is so hard to understand, right? So yeah, that is true, which one is real nativeness, no? Which one is the real nativeness?

S10B: Or even when we saw in our class, the Englishes around the world, listening to a Chinese speaking English is so hard...

Moderator: So, what would you say after this... connected to pronunciation?

S7B: I would stick to my point but the thing is that... it is like in Spanish, the same thing, which Spanish are you going to learn? Right? But the thing is that you are learning Spanish from a specific place and then you can add to it like the word: *plantín* or banana or things like you can add to that, but yeah...

S5B: So, I would say that this is wrong and it has to be this...

S7B: No, it's not wrong, it's what people think...

Moderator: What you think about what was mentioned on making yourself understood? And the receiver to understand the most important part...

S10B: As a non-native...?

Moderator: Yes, native or non-native...

S10B: Yeah, that's important I think that's why students say: well, it's good to have a non-native speaker because they can understand you, they can even explain to you in your mother tongue but, in certain cases when it is necessary, they can do it, but...

Moderator: I'm sorry I'm referring to the idea that "the biggest proof, the exam is that I can make myself understood."

S7B: I totally agree with that, yeah, because that is communication.

S4B: Exactly.

S7B: You are able to communicate your idea, so, yeah, I agree with that.

S5B: That's what happens when we travel to other countries: if we are understood, I feel like, that is the best thing, I've already presented an exam.

Moderator: It doesn't matter if you go to Greece or to the United States..

S5B: Yeah, it doesn't matter.

S7B: You were understood.

S5B: Then I'm so happy, yeah.

Moderator: Let's look, let's check what are the native teachers' disadvantages. What do you think about these results?

S4B: Well, these are more balanced, like they have more, or they give the same importance into these three categories, the methodology and the language they cannot speak L1. And this is obviously related to difficult to understand the student when he or she is asking a question, I think students are giving that much emphasis to these three, because they have experienced something with their teachers; perhaps they have questions or they want to know, I don't know, they don't understand quite the grammar; sometimes the native teacher knows to say it, but cannot explain exactly how it works, so that the student could grab it or get it as easily as perhaps with a non-native speaker teacher.

S7B: It's interesting to notice that students are evaluating methodology, I mean, how did they know about that, like probably they are comparing it to one of their non-native speaker teachers that put a lot of emphasis in their classes to grammar, so, when they want to learn grammar from a native teacher they can't. They learn other things, right? I guess.

S10B: Well, probably they give importance to methodology because they are from the *licenciatura* to become English teachers, so, they know it, they can realize about it, they observe, and well, that's my perception...

S5B: I would that the disadvantage would be that they are difficult to understand and because you can feel frustrated when you're learning a language and you don't understand what they are saying, so I would put this in the first place...

S4B: But also, it is also difficult when you are not being understood by the teacher, for example: oh, sorry I don't that and you feel demotivate or motivation goes down, like: oh no! I'm never going to speak like him or her...

Moderator: Ok, let's see, non-native teacher teachers' advantages according to students.

S10B: Well, definitely, the first that they can speak and explain in their students' mother tongue. It's the most important because teachers can understand exactly what students want to ask or want to know, and that makes students feel less stressed.

S5B: I think that that is a disadvantage. I would say that the teacher can understand students' difficulties and they try to explain better, but I don't think that that it's a good idea because they shouldn't be speaking in L1, well not all the time at least, they should understand...

S10B: No, but sometimes when it is necessary they can do it, yeah.

S5B: I believe that you can find a way to explain...

S10B: Specially with students that you as a teacher look at them and they are lost, you have to speak to them their... yeah it's necessary.

S5B: Just a few cases I think...

S10B: Yeah a few, I don't say that it would always...

S7B: Mostly with grammar explanations, no? That is difficult to transmit what a preposition is, then you go like: should I fly? So, they will understand what over is, you know? How do I explain it? It's easier to just translate it because in that case, it is vocabulary... I guess it's easier than grammar explanation, no?

S4B: And also, not only they speak in L1 but also they understand sometimes the mistakes they have in L2 because they are transferring from L1... to understand exactly...

S5B: So, that would take us to the second one...

S7B: Yeah, it's related... Yeah, and I agree with 'understand students' difficulties', but not in the 19%. For me I would say that that is like higher, the number, the percentage must be higher because 'can speak and explain in L1' how come that is important? What I have noticed in my students, the youngest ones, is that I'm using English in the class and they're not paying attention, they totally like close their ears completely: ah, she is using English, God knows what she's saying, all of a sudden you start to use Spanish and they pay attention, so you go like, you have to get used to pay attention when I use English as well, not only Spanish, you know? They're so used to listening to an English teacher speak in Spanish that when they listen to English they totally lose interest.

Moderator: Do you think that non-native teachers have better grammar or structure function explanation?

S10B: Yeah, it could be possible...

S4B: Yeah, it depends on the teacher...

S7B: It depends on the teacher, if it's a teacher that loves grammar, then you look at the best explanations in the world, but if that teacher does not like grammar so...it depends totally on

the teacher. And the thing is that, it is true and they're totally co-related, you went through the same thing as a non-native speaker you went through the same process, so, you probably sympathize more, right? But that doesn't mean that you're better or worse, it depends totally on the teacher explanation.

Moderator: OK. And let's see the last, non-native English speaking teachers' disadvantages

S10B: For me, I think that the only disadvantage that, for me, for me is relevant, in the case of non-native English teacher is giving importance only to grammar. That's more relevant for me, rather than the rest because, yeah I know that there are many teachers that give importance only to grammar and they focus all the course only on grammar, and they avoid for example giving culture, or idioms, or I don't know... other use of the language and they refuse it, they say: no, no, that's... I don't consider it important, it's because I'm preparing my students in order to pass the exams. Sometimes they do it, or probably is a comfort zone, for some of them.

S7B: So, again it's like depending on the teacher, no? The quality of class, even the aim that you have in your class, no? If you are just willing to pass your students or that your students pass an exam, so, but if you want to teach them the language, then... and I do agree with these percentages.

S10B: Yeah, yeah, they are real, they are completely real...

S5B: I disagree with this because I think that the main disadvantage will be that teacher makes mistakes in second language, because you learn that and then you don't get that. I don't think the pronunciation is a disadvantage because you can listen to the tape records, to TVs...the vocabulary perhaps, that would be another disadvantage.

S4B: I think, for me, pronunciation is not that bad, for example I had teacher when I was very, very young that they only spoke in Spanish, all the class was in Spanish and they couldn't pronounce things maybe if couldn't be that bad for me, they couldn't pronounce but did they contrived to give the teaching English, that for me, it could be worse to have a teacher that teaches in Spanish and only talks in Spanish and explains the exam in Spanish and things like that.

S10B: Is according to the teacher.

S7B: I prefer that a teacher tells me I don't know what that word is than to invent something, I had a case with this, I don't know the pronunciation of the word: chinos, like the pants that

guys use, no? Well, there are a type of pants that are called “chinos” and they’re informal like when you go and sail but those are only for guys, right? And I had this student this year that told me: no! Last year teacher told me that chinos were this and then I was like: oh my god, if you don’t know say: I don’t know, you know?...

Moderator: So what do you think having 57.1% of students who themselves ‘were born to be’ English teachers too?

S4B: I think they are wrong.

S7B: I agree with them...

S10B: In this case as they are going to be teachers, they will become English teachers, so that’s why they consider the pronunciation.

S5B: I believe it depends on the culture because some, as it was said that we tend to lie as Mexican people, so maybe they are not going to accept that they have mistakes as long as they have good pronunciation.

Moderator: Do you consider your pronunciation as non-native teachers as poor?

S4B: Sometimes, it depends who I am talking to...

S7B: Sometimes, it depends on the level. If I say don’t... but it depends on the level... sometimes, when you find yourself with a new word... god knows, or an expression that you haven’t heard before, so, in my case yeah, I have found that it has been a disadvantage, and then you know what? Students test you because they know that you’re a non-native speaker, so they test you they really know what buttons to press, you know? And then, when they see that you are honest and maybe you say I don’t know, you know? let’s look it up or things like that...then you have to gain their respect for them to really pay attention to your class, no?

S10B: But I don’t consider ourselves [having] poor pronunciation...I think that they refer to poor pronunciation when they hear that teachers have very, very marked Spanish accent when they speak in English. I think that they refer to this to poor because when they hear that you have not a native speaker teacher pronunciation but you have a similar pronunciation as a native speaker, they see that: oh ok, this teacher could be good, because you are giving or you are making an effort, but when they hear the Spanish accent is when they say: iugh! Forget it, don’t take classes with them! I have heard some comments on some students and even some teacher of us, colleagues that were in the ‘Facultad de Lenguas’ in the ‘Tronco

Común', they have told me that sometimes students refuse to take classes with them because they have a marked Mexican accent and they refuse them, they have heard comments about that...

S10B: Native-like pronunciation is still 'good' for students.

S7B: I guess and this is totally like my own perspective and is very personal, but I think that if you learn another language it's like kind of respectful to at least try to emulate, you know? Or to mimic... because when I hear an American person trying to speak Spanish and their accent is so strong I want to say: come on! Can't you just learn a little bit more? You know like, it is possible! You know? Like to, or if you're going to learn Chinese or any other language, to at least try to sound similar, you know? Because sometimes they don't even try and you hear some Americans and you go like: come on! You can say perro, you can say that, just try harder and that would make me feel better that you're using that language correctly...

Moderator: So, what you are looking for, for example taking this example into account, you are looking for hearing a pronunciation similar to what you are used to? Or you are truly looking for understanding without any difficulty? Would you still care about their accent if you understood them without any problems from the beginning?

S7B: As a teacher, I do care...

S4B: It's a little bit different the perspective as a teacher and as a global person that travels and everything; you want to be understood and you want to get your message by and you want the people do it get across the message you want to give them, and you understand exactly what they are saying and perhaps you are in a classroom in, I don't know Europe and you have colleagues and classmates from China, they speak , but the point is that at the end of the class they all have to receive the same thing, the same knowledge, the same idea, I think **that** would be more important than the teacher speaking perfectly, but I think also if we see it from the point of view of the teacher, they have to make an effort...

S7B: When I listen to my students using the language nicely and correctly, and their pronunciation, I feel **so** proud of my classes, like I go: wow! They were paying attention, so they are trying to copy at least the pronunciation and they have good ear, so when I listen to my students it is really rewarding, is really rewarding.

S5B: I think this matters, I think you have to work very hard to achieve that, to have a good pronunciation but this is not the best thing, this is not the most important.

S10B: No, it shouldn't be...

S5B: If they don't speak exactly as the native speaker as you were saying, that they're different, so, there must be just a level, perhaps, for us as teacher I think that we should study more.

Moderator: The understanding, like being yourself understood. Is that that? Or is that...

S5B: I believe that we should study phonetics and we have to try very hard to speak as...

S7B: As closely maybe as possible? Or as as...

Moderator: To which pronunciation?

S5B: Well, there is no one exactly...

S7B: The thing is that I would go with a neutral to a neutral point, like, when they don't know where you from, they don't even identify when you are from, that, for me is flattering, when they say **where are you from**? So, they don't know I'm Mexican or they don't know if I am like from anywhere, so, I would go like, there more than British or Jamaican or whatever.

S5B: There are certain difference for example if you say table (teibl) or table (table)...so, that's what I mean...

Moderator: So, if you pronounce (table) I think we could all agree that nobody would quite understand, so, indirectly, probably what you are saying is that making yourself understood in a way that different nationalities could understand you without really giving much importance where you are from?

S7B: Yeah, you can easily blend, you know? Be like standing out because of your pronunciation, something neutral, or something... It's hard...these questions are hard...

Moderator: So, if you cannot recognize this piece of your work, I can tell you that this is what your opinions were almost two years ago, when you started the master's program about yourselves as non-native English speaking teachers and on the issue of nativeness... I'd like you to re-read your thoughts and I'd like to know and ask whether your opinion on the issue is different to what you presented in this part of your autobiography two years ago?

S7B: Ok, mine is just the same.

S5B: Mine is the same, I think. It says: being in an English speaking country and communicating with people of different nationalities made me feel more confident about being a non-native speaker and I totally agree with 'me'...

Moderator: Would you have something to add? Or nothing?

S5B: No, I believe that's the idea.

S4B: I think also I agree with what I wrote; I think also I wrote that teaching business English was different from teaching Spanish and it was mainly because I was a non-native teacher and sometimes the non-native speakers are categorized as the others but the dominant group, and sometimes I think I agree with what I wrote because in back then, I remember that some students were like: you are not native, you're not good teacher, you're never going to teach me exactly what I need or, you know, exactly because it was a very specific class of business, you're not going to be able to teach me exactly what I need. And I think I did because not only because I speak English but also because I have knowledge in business, in business degree, that's why I think is not only related to nativeness or non-nativeness but also the knowledge that you have...

S10B: Well, in my case I believe that I still think as my piece of writing I did two years ago, but in this discussion... I have different perception for example about what is important for students when they have a native or a non-native teacher; but I still believe that as in the piece of writing I did, that when you are a non-native English teacher, you can understand better the students because you speak the same language as them, that's an advantage and is what they answer actually in the advantages. So, I think that we have the same perceptions sometimes as students because we lived this, we have the same experience as them, we were students also and now we are teachers and now we can understand them what they need or what difficulties they have, so I still believe in my...I have the same ideas....

S7B: Yeah, yeah I have the same ideas but I saw something here that was said, for example, accent shows where we have been, whit whom we have been associated and the level of the education we have and also our cultural background so, you know, that says a lot, it's a personal thing a very personal thing, you decide if you want to have a strong accent or to slowly trying to get rid of it. My son had a very strong experience with this, he had a job interview in Skype and I always told him: "Luis, try to polish your pronunciation because your accent is too strong." And he said: "I'm Mexican and that's what I want to show, that

I'm Mexican." And I told him: "Yes, but it is hard to understand sometimes what you say because you're using your accent really strongly." During that Skype job interview, he realized how important it was to at least sound a little closer to what the general pronunciation was because the lady could not understand him...

S10B: As you said, as neutral as possible.

S7B: So he said: "You know what mom, it is important." He was really proud, his friends they even call him ah, there was a character on TV, Fez, I don't know if you have seen that program, that 70's show and the friends in America, they call him Fez because he had this very strong accent and it was on purpose; he knew how to pronounce correctly but on purpose he decided that he was going to show the world that he was a Mexican until he had the need to use the language correctly, so, now he is a little bit more neutral...

Moderator: So, what you think about using the language correctly in this case would mean?

S5B: That you're going to be understood when...

S7B: Yes, exactly...

Moderator: So, in this case the accent was important because it was a barrier... between two people understanding each other, do you agree that sometimes native can cause or can have barriers too, although you are a native?

S7B: I have seen it, that some Americans don't make or some... I don't know, my experiences with Americans, they don't make the effort to understand what you're saying, you have to really say it right, they force you to, they don't go like: hmm, probably what she's trying to say is this, no, they want to hear the exact words, so, I guess that is part of the pressure, that is part, they go, even Mike has corrected me sometimes because he said: what are you referring to? And then finally he goes like: oh! What you want... but at the beginning he was not even trying to understand what I was saying and I was saying it wrong, I know that, right? But he was, that just one example...

S5B: So, I agree with myself and they agree with what they said, so, it makes me think that they live some change so, there must be something strange here, I don't know what you're going to do, nothing changes, so, how would you make people change? sometimes you can change as the example she said, she mentioned that, but how could we change?

S10B: Change in what?

S5B: Our beliefs... because I believe that it was right two years ago and I believe that this is OK now and you believe the same thing and everybody.

S10B: It's like probably as the example with her son, he was like: "No, I'm Mexican, I need to sound like a Mexican." When he had the opportunity, he realized how important was it. He started to change...his attitude about it...

S7B: A real life experience.

Anything else? Do you have another question?