Critical Literature Review

NATIVESPEAKERISM WITHIN THE ASIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT. This article provides a comprehensive review of Nativespeakerism: its definition in English Language Teaching (ELT), how it operates on a practical level, its historical background, and the current states of affairs as well as the research carried out so far in relation to the native-speakerist phenomenon. Even though the current multilingual paradigm has disproved the inherent superiority of the "native" English Speaker (NES), mainstream ELT markets still demonstrate strong preferences for the native over the non-native speaker. While research has already begun to demonstrate how pedagogical proficiency and linguistic competence are more important to student success than a teacher's status as a native or non-native speaker of a language, further research into teacher classroom performance is needed to debunk pervasive myths that native speaker status perceived proficiency, and race are sufficient qualification for effective language teaching.

RÉSUMÉ. Cet article fournit un examen complet du "Nativespeakerism": sa définition dans l'enseignement de la langue anglaise (ELT), son fonctionnement sur le plan pratique, son contexte historique et l'état actuel des choses, ainsi que les recherches menées jusqu'à présent en relation avec le phénomène des locuteurs natifs. Même si le paradigme multilingue actuel a réfuté la supériorité inhérente de l'anglophone "natif" (NES), les marchés principaux de l'ELT continuent de privilégier fortement l'anglophone natif par rapport à l'anglophone non natif. Ds recherches supplémentaires sur les performances des enseignants en classe sont nécessaires pour démystifier les mythes omniprésents selon lesquels la nativité, la compétence et la race suffisent à elles seules pour un enseignement efficace.

Keywords: *NEST, NNEST, Native-speakerism, discrimination, Asia.*

ENCOUNTER WITH NATIVESPEAKERSIM

I am originally from Argentina. When I finished my MA in TESOL at an American university, I thought I was ready for what would be a great job somewhere in the world. I was curious to try my chances in other countries. I was especially keen to acquire teaching experience in some non-Spanish speaking countries as well as, perhaps, benefitting from the better socioeconomic situation in these other countries since Argentina was (and still is) going through a harsh economic crisis. I was sure that with the experience I had at the time; around 6 years of language teaching experience, and my advanced qualification; an MA in TESOL, finding a decent job as an EFL teacher would not be difficult. Due to Europe's economic downturn and employment protectionist policies, I considered Asia as my best option. However, to my surprise, I learned after an extensive job-hunt that getting a position in South Korea, Japan or China would not be as easy as I had envisioned, given that I was lacking one so-called qualification in high demand by many Asian employers: I am not a Native English Speaking Teacher (NEST).

My example is not an isolated case. There are a number of documented instances of discriminatory hiring practices in Asia, as I will enumerate throughout my literature review. Based on these experiences, I'm seeking to understand the following phenomena: 1) Why Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) are still considered superior to Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) in many international language schools; 2) How misperceptions about NES or NNES status can influence hiring practices within the Asian context?; and 3) What type(s) of research could help counteract current biases towards NNESTs? To answer these questions, I will briefly trace the historical underpinnings that have led to what is known today as nativespeakerism, and I will analyze how this pervasive ideology permeates the language teaching market in Asia, leading to unfair hiring practices, and potentially leading to negative learning outcomes for language students.

NATIVESPEAKERISM

The idea of nativespeakerism equates native speakers with "the Western culture from which springs the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology" (Holliday, 2005, p. 6). Holliday's definition suggests that the native speaker is the most successful teacher of a target language. Students, recruiters, and Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) themselves often attribute superior status to Native English speaking Teachers (NESTs) for different reasons. First, as "owners" of the English language (Widdowson, 1994), NESTs' superior language skills, which conform to the norm of native-speaking models (Kachru, 1992) are considered by many to be the best target-language role models (Phillipson, 1992; Rao, 2005), especially for pronunciation teaching (Jenkins, 2005). The conceptualization of the NEST as having superior language skills is inherently problematic for a number of reasons. Not only is it a misguided attempt to put perceived linguistic proficiency ahead of teaching qualifications and experience, the underlying presumptions that language schools have concerning the superiority of NESTs over NNESTs are spurious; in fact, they may achieve the opposite of what most language schools are purporting to do; that is, to hire the best language teachers on the market.

Language schools' preference for NESTs is prevalent in many different contexts. One only has to look at teaching job-ads in East Asia, which regularly require applicants to be native English speakers holding a passport from an Inner-Circle country (i.e., countries where English is the native language of their inhabitants such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia) (Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Ruecker & Ives, 2015). Indeed, these native-speakerist indicators are framed as the primary required qualifications and are more often listed as necessary for the position than qualifications and/or experience in teaching (Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Selvi, 2010). Often a bachelor's degree from an English speaking university in any unrelated field is considered adequate education, as long as the candidate is a native speaker. Some countries such as South Korea (EPIK, 2013) and China (State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, 2018) have enforced national policies compelling foreign language teachers to *only* teach their mother tongue. Under this rationale, Spanish teachers should hold passports from Spanish speaking countries and English teachers should hold passports from English speaking countries, though it is important to note that specific policies vary greatly in terms of which countries can be considered as English speaking

countries. The conflation of nationality with language proficiency is problematic given that a certain nationality does not necessarily guarantee that a potential teacher is proficient in the desired language. For example, in Canada 7.7 million citizens, or 23.2% of the population, speak French as their first language, while a further 1.8%, or 600,000 Canadians are neither fluent in French nor English (French and the francophonie in Canada, 2018). In the United States, 63 million people speak a language other than English at home, and of these 63 million, 41% (25.6 million) told the Census Bureau that they speak English "less than very well" (Bedard, 2018, para. 7). Therefore, making the association between a national passport and an expected level of specific language proficiency is inherently problematic. Further, even so called inner circle countries are experiencing demographic changes that problematize the idea of a native standard variety of English (Yano, 2009). Yano suggested that this phenomenon can be witnessed with the increase of Hispanics and foreigners in the United States for the last ten years. Hence, Hispanification is bringing a new reality to the English spoken in an inner-circle country like the United States with expressions such as "mi casa es su casa," "mano a mano," and a broad arrangement of vocabulary imported from the Spanish language. Another similar phenomenon is the use of the invariable tag "in it", as in "you are happy, in it," by Londoners younger than 25. This phenomenon is attributed to the influx of immigrants from South Asia (Yano, 2009). These two examples show how inner-circle English varieties might be taking on characteristics of so-called non-native varieties and even non-English words into its standard inner-circle English repertoire. This is why equating linguistic proficiency and a specific standard variety of English with citizenship is not only reductive, it is inaccurate.

A secondary problem with the preference for native speakers is that the idea of a native speaker itself is inherently problematic. What is a "native speaker" of a language? How can a clear-cut answer be achieved about who is native and who is a non-native speaker? Common sense answers to these questions vary depending on who is defining the term, as well as the type of language ideology applied. For example, Bloomfield (1935) defined the native language as "the first language a human being learns to speak" (p. 43). However, no account is made of instances where the second language a child acquires becomes their dominant language, and where the speaker becomes more proficient in that second language. These examples serve to challenge the somewhat commonsensical assumption (for many) that a native speaker of a language is, by extension, inherently proficient. Further, McArthur, Lam-McArthur and Fontaine (2018) have offered another somewhat vague definition of a native speaker as "[a] person who has spoken a certain language since early childhood" (p. 45). Davies (2003), in a more extensive analysis, used six characteristics to define the native speaker: age of acquisition, grammatical intuition in the L1, intuition of how the L2 grammar differs from the L1 grammar, and discoursal, creative and translation (to L1) capabilities of the native-speaker. Based on the "age of acquisition" characteristic, Davies argued that "it is difficult for an adult non-native speaker to become a native speaker of a second language precisely because I define a native speaker as a person who has early acquired the language" (p. 213). While Davies affirmed that a non-native can acquire native-speaker communicative competence, his definition automatically excludes anyone who was not born speaking a language from native status, which is problematic given the power and status granted to native over non-native speakers.

Scholars in the 1990s began to challenge the native/non-native dichotomy and its inherent bias for the native over the non-native. Kachru and Nelson (1996), for example, do not use the term native speaker but instead refer to "users" of English and "types of users" (p. 77). Kachru (1992) also explains that a deviation from a certain model (e.g., General American, Received Pronunciation) should not be considered as a mistake coming from "deficient Englishes" (p. 66), but rather a deviation from a unique variety of English (e.g,. Indian English, Nigerian English, Singaporean English, etc.).

Rampton (1990) also challenged the validity of assumptions of superiority associated with the native-speaker by stating that "nobody's functional command [of English] is total: users of a language are more proficient in some areas than others" (p. 98). Rampton's argument is that some non-native speakers could be better at, for instance, writing academic papers than native speakers. Rampton generates a more nuanced conceptualization of linguistic proficiency through the introduction of the concept of expertise. A language presents different domains (for example, speaking competency, writing competency) that users of that language might have command of to a greater or lesser degree. Expertise accentuates the aspect of individual domain-specific competency. As Rampton (1990) explained, "Expertise is partial. People can be experts in several fields, but they are never omniscient" (p. 99); and further, he noted that expertise is "learned, not fixed or innate" (p. 98). According to Rampton, as well as Kachru and Nelson (1996), the description of someone's expertise as a user of English is not only a more accurate way of viewing a person's abilities in English, it avoids the pitfalls of conflating citizenship with competence.

Nativespeakerism as a Colonial By-Product

The final issue with the use of native or non-native speakers is in its race-based origins, given that the ideal NEST is considered a white Anglo-Saxon (Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Kubota & Lin, 2006). The perception of the inherent superiority attributed to the native speaker, also referred to as the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992), has been traced back in the literature to two historical developments. The first is the Commonwealth Conference of the Teaching of English as a Second Language held in Uganda in 1961. Phillipson (1992) has noted that one of the key tenets held by attendees of this conference was that "the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker" (p. 185). Indeed, this tenet has had a lasting effect in the British commonwealth which Kachru (1992) described as a kind of linguistic schizophrenia that has kept users of English from recognizing the legitimacy of nativized varieties of local Englishes (e.g., Indian English, Nigerian English, etc.) by equating difference to deficiency in varieties not pertaining to the inner-circle varieties such as British and American English, above all (Kachru, 1986).

The race-based ideal of the native-speaker was not limited to the British Commonwealth. Within the American context, references to the native speaker fallacy are found in the application of the Direct Method (also known as "the Berlitz method") and in private language schools such as Berlitz where "native-speaking teachers was the norm" (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 12). The Berlitz, or Direct method, (coincidentally criticized for its lack of theoretical foundation), has also had a long-lasting effect on the evolution of language teaching methodology. Even today, the Berlitz school promotes their "teachers with native language" as one of the reasons why students

should choose the Berlitz school (Learn to speak with confidence, n.d). The Berlitz language schools (as demonstrated in its marketing) rely on the mythical value of the native speaker to promote its schools. The widespread adoption of this method in the mid-twentieth century meant that the Native-speakerist ideology associated with it was also dispersed and adopted in many markets worldwide.

Despite the popularity of the Direct Method in the mid-twentieth century, other teaching methodologies, such as the Grammar Translation Method, did not promote the idealization of the NEST's alleged superiority. As Richards and Rodgers (2014) explained, the Grammar Translation Method was characterized as follows: the foreign language is learned with the goal of reading its literature or to benefit from the mental discipline of language study, the major focus includes reading and writing the foreign language, the foreign language grammar is taught deductively, and the student's native language is the medium of instruction. Hence, teachers utilizing this method required declarative (rather than procedural) grammatical knowledge (for an explanation on declarative vs. procedural knowledge, see Saville-Troike, 2012). In the Grammar Translation Method, knowing grammatical rules and facts was more important than communicative competence in the target language. Furthermore, using the Grammar Translation Method, the teacher should be able to speak the student's first language, or L1 to teach the target language. Clearly, a monolingual NEST would be rendered useless under these circumstances.

Chomskyan Monolingual Bias

Perhaps, the most important factor bolstering the native speaker fallacy has been Chomsky's notions of native speaker competence. Although Chomsky was not primarily interested in language learning, his works have nonetheless been of major influence on ELT. Chomsky's (1965) conception of the native-speaker was of "an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance" (p. 3). There are two big limitations in Chomsky's assumptions about native speakers. The first is Chomsky's assertion that homogeneous monolingual communities are a societal norm, when, as Ortega (2019) argued, that this so-called norm is just a political imposition of the nation-state project pushing for unity. Ortega (2019) provided the example of Spain, to illustrate his point suggesting that even though Spanish is Spain's official language, there are many established minorities in the country that speak Catalan and Galician along with Spanish. Ortega (2019) also pointed to Cameroon as a linguistically diverse nation: it accounts for 13.5 of Africa's language diversity, even though the country only represents 2% of Africa's total population. Ortega's examples demonstrate the fallacy of Chomsky's belief that linguistic communities are generally homogeneous and Ortega showed that heterogeneity is indeed more common.

The second important limitation of Chomsky's concept of the native speaker is that he disregards multiple aspects of language performance. Chomsky's failure to account for aspects, such as distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic), have the

effect of positioning the native speaker as a perfect model of the language. Chomsky's model of the native speaker as the ideal speaker encompasses erroneous assumptions involving the idea that native speakers don't make mistakes, and, if they do, we should disregard these because they do not represent the idealized underlying native speaker competence (Chomsky, 1965). Does this mean that a highly proficient non-native speaker's slip of the tongue reflects a defective underlying competence, while a native-speaker's does not? Given that the native speaker is set above all others as the model for linguistic competence, the second language speaker's mistakes can be used to call their linguistic competence into question.

Chomsky's assumptions of the superiority of the native speaker have been taken up by applied linguists and subsequently disseminated widely within the English teaching profession. For example, Selinker (1969) based his term interlanguage on Chomskian ideas of native speakerism. Intended to be used as a tool to evaluate students' language learning progression, Selinker defines interlanguage as "the observable output resulting from a speaker's attempt to produce a foreign norm, i.e., both his errors and non-errors" (Mahboob, 2003, p. 28). The term interlanguage sets up a "comparative fallacy" where "foreign norm" is placed in subservient opposition to an idealized "native norm" (Bley-Vroman, 1983, p. 1).

Along with interlanguage, Selinker's (1972) theory of fossilization implies that the second language learner is incapable of achieving native speaker norms, a supposition which further cements a negative bias against second language speakers. Theories such as Selinker's interlanguage (1969) and fossilization (1972) have been ontologically influential in the field of applied linguistics, second language acquisition and, by extension, language teaching. The danger in the widespread acceptance of theories such as Selinker's are that they have served to spread a negative bias towards non-native speakers. More recent language theorists have argued a move away from a native/non-native binary towards alternative ways of understanding language learning. Bley-Vroman (1983), for instance, argued that looking at the learner's process, rather than the teacher's status, is more fruitful, and, moves away from any bias against non-native speakers: "the learner's system is worthy of study in its own right, not just as a degenerate form of the target system" (p. 4). Furthermore, cross-linguistic research in the last decade has demonstrated that "crosslinguistic effects arise among all the languages of a multilingual and across proficiency levels" (Ortega, 2019, p. 25). Put another way, a multilingual speaker's language will possess characteristics that are inherently different from those of a monolingual. This does not necessarily mean the multilingual speaker is making errors; rather, that the multilingual has speech patterns with different distinctive characteristics based on how the two or more languages interact together. As Cook (1999) succinctly put it, "Multicompetent minds that know two languages are qualitatively different from those of the monolingual native speaker in a number of ways" (p. 191). If one follows this definition, the assumption that a bilingual mind is the sum of two monolinguals should be recognized as completely erroneous (Grosjean, 1989). This is why multilinguals should not be studied as defective monolinguals when studying the additional language(s) that they have acquired. The fluid semiotic code mixing, irrespective of which language is being used (L1, 2, 3) should be taken into account within Second language and applied linguistic science (Ortega, 2019).

Pedagogical Competency

Due to native-speakearism, it is assumed that a native speaker is inherently endowed to teach their native language. However, linguistic competence is not the only skill necessary to become a successful teacher. Reducing effective language teaching to native language proficiency is a disservice to the language teaching profession. Pedagogically informed decisions play an essential role in teaching language, and so pedagogical competence should have at least equal weight with linguistic skill when evaluating the overall competence of a language teacher (Brown & Lee, 2015). Seidhofer has cautioned against automatically extrapolating "'from competent speaker to competent teacher based on linguistic grounds alone, without taking into consideration the criteria of cultural, social and pedagogic appropriacy'" (as cited in Árva & Medgyes, 2000, p. 369). Although language proficiency in the target language is an extremely important skill for a multilingual teacher's toolbox (Houghton, 2018), proficiency in a particular language should not be the determinant of success for a language teacher.

According to research in applied linguistics, to be an effective teacher means, among many other qualities, having enough subject knowledge (Lamb & Wedell, 2013; Mujis & Reynolds, 2001; Pachler, 2007), which, in language teaching includes "knowledge of second language acquisition theory, pedagogical knowledge, curricular and syllabus knowledge and cultural knowledge, as well as teachers' proficiency in the target language and an awareness of the structure and features of the target language" (Richards et al., 2013, p. 232). Many of the above-mentioned skills should not be inherently definitive of a teacher's status as a native speaker or a proficient speaker of a certain language. Acquiring knowledge of second language acquisition theory, pedagogical knowledge, curricular and syllabus knowledge requires many hours of professional development. Usually, these skills are acquired in teacher education through a certification that can take up to four years. Formal education and teaching experience allow teachers to make pedagogically-informed decisions that help them be effective teachers (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Clearly, language proficiency alone is not enough to be an effective teacher and, as I will be discussing in the *NEST/NNEST classroom performance research* section, hiring proficient/native English speakers without pedagogic competence could hinder the students' language education.

CURRENT TRENDS IN RESEARCH ON TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Two decades since the beginning of the NNEST movement, many changes have come about in the fight against nativespeakerism and towards equality in the English teaching field. First, a number of anti-discrimination statements that address nativespeakerism have been published by important organizations: TESOL International Organization (2001; 2006); KOTESOL (2016); TESOL Spain (2016). Resistance to the native speaker bias started at a colloquium at the 30th Annual TESOL convention (organized by George Braine), evolved into a Caucus, and became a full-fledged Interest section in the TESOL organization by 2008. However, even if advocacy against discrimination practices towards NNESTs has gradually increased, there is still a long way to go before reaching full equality in the ELT industry.

Second, frameworks such as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Jenkins, 1998), World Englishes (WE) (Kachru, 1992) and the multilingual paradigm (Ortega, 2019) have deconstructed and disproved the absolute entitlement placed on the native-speaker as a role-model of appropriate English language. However, these theories have not yet influenced mainstream society's belief system, but only individuals within academia. Much of the research carried out so far indicates Native-speakerist-related phenomena is as strong as ever within the Asian context, as is the example in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, China, Thailand (Fithriani, 2018; Wang & Lin, 2013). The general audience, English teachers, students and recruiters, still grant the Inner-Circle native-speaker ownership over English (Widdowson, 1994). First, based on English teachers' self-perception research carried out in Asia, some major issues appear reiteratively. NNESTs express anxiety of what they perceive to be their lack of proficiency and constantly look to NESTs as references for the target language and culture (Bouchard, 2017; Lee, 2016; Lee, Schutz & van Vlack, 2017; Rivers, 2011; Wang & Lin, 2013). In addition, most NNESTs hoped to reproduce NESTs pronunciation and oral fluency (Hertel & Sunderman, 2009; Jenkins, 2005; Lee, 2016, Mullock, 2003) suggesting that native-like pronunciation and fluency are the goalpost to be attained, again granting the native speaker ownership over the English language. And even if several exceptions are found (Huang, 2018) in which Chinese teachers expressed significant respect for Singaporean English teachers regarding their language accuracy and fluency, these instances of recognition towards English teachers outside of the inner-circle context are not commonplace within the Asian context. As mentioned above, paradigms such as ELF, WE, and multilingualism, although now acknowledged and respected within academia, have not yet trickled down to the general English Language Teaching field. Conclusively, NNESTs seem to take a deficit stance in terms of their language proficiency in a similar way as Medgyes (1994) originally conceptualized it, as the NNEST language handicap.

Third, research demonstrates that students also express greater preference to NESTs, recognizing them as language authorities, cultural ambassadors, and models for speaking and/or pronunciation (Chun, 2014; Huang 2018; McKenzie & Gilmore, 2017; Rao, 2005; Rivers & Ross, 2013; Tang, 1997). Students' biases are also cultural and racial, as they express a preference for teachers with Western Anglo-Saxon Whiteness (Appleby, 2017; Fithriani, 2018; Hickey, 2018; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Leonard, 2019; Lowe & Pinner, 2016; Rivers & Ross, 2013; Stanley, 2013). Stanley (2013) and Leonard (2019) provided specific examples of how the "performance of foreignness" (Leonard, 2019, p. 168), closely tied to ethnicity, influenced students' perception of their foreign teachers. Stanley's (2013) study explored how a Chinese Canadian English teacher, strived to exaggerate a cultural identity of *Westernness* in order to overcome his apparent *Asian-ness* and establish authority as a native speaker. The NEST in Stanley's (2013) study exaggerated their *foreign-ness* as a strategy to avoid students conflating the teachers' ethnicity with their country of origin, and erroneous judgment of the teachers' linguistic competence (Stanley, 2013; Leonard, 2019).

Despite some of the discouraging results mentioned above, other research into students' perception of NESTs and NNESTs have shown encouraging results. For example, Chang's (2014) implementation of a Word Englishes (WE) course at a Taiwanese university has helped students "acquire a deeper understanding of the language beyond rote learning of American or British standards" (p. 26). Indeed, applying conceptual frameworks such as WE or English as a Lingua

Franca (ELF) offers legitimate alternatives to challenge students' Nativespeakerist views. Students, as customers with demands (Holliday, 2008) that influence recruiters' hiring practices, could play an important role in helping to overcome discriminating practices against the hiring of NNESTs. Still, documented examples of how students' perceptions are changing remain infrequent within the ELT field outside of academia.

Recruiters/Policy Makers' Perceptions of NESTs/NNESTs in the Asian Context

Research in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Poland regarding recruiters' and policy makers' perceptions of NESTs/NNESTs, (e.g. Clark & Paran, 2007; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman & Hartford, 2004; Kiczkowiak, 2019; Zhang & Zhan, 2014) has found that teaching experience, skills, methodology are necessary and important requirements for recruiters/ administrators. Clark and Paran (2007), for example, reported that 72.3% of respondents "consider a job applicant's being an NES either moderately or very important" (p. 417); while 45.9% of respondents in Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman & Hartford (2004) gave a rating of "moderately to highly important" (p. 109) to teachers of native English speaker status. In Zhang and Zhan (2014), two out of the six administrators expressed strong preference for native-speakers, while the other four emphasized the importance of language proficiency in NNESTs, some indicating "near-native proficiency" (p. 574). Even when Kiczkowiak (2019) attempted to separate out language proficiency and nativeness, one out of the five recruiters interviewed stated that regardless of actual linguistic proficiency "a 'native speaker' would be advisable [to teach a C2 level]" (p. 13). Unfortunately, being a native speaker or having near-native proficiency is still a significant aspect in the teacher recruitment process in many cases, even if Mahboob et al. (2004) show some encouraging results towards potential change in the native speaker bias. Within the Asian context, research in the form of surveying and interviewing both administrators and recruiters has been conducted through collection of data from teachers' accounts of hiring discrimination based on race or nationality, or on analysis of job ads. In Kubota and Lin (2006), one of the authors recounted her experience at her former university in Hong Kong. Her Chinese superior, the program leader, decided to grant the position of deputy leader of the TESL program to a Caucasian, native speaker who did not hold a doctoral degree, demonstrating preferential treatment to the native speaker over Lin, who, although she held a doctoral degree and experience in the position, was Chinese, rather than Caucasian. According to Lin, this decision was made in an effort "to boost the public profile of [their] program in the local community" (p. 471).

While both nativespeakerism and Whiteness are at play in Kubota and Lin's (2006) study, Hsu (2005) in contrast, describes how being a native speaker with a passport from an Inner Circle country might not suffice in a context like China[i]. The author, a native speaker, and American Born Chinese (ABC), described his frustration with multiple rejections, obtaining replies like "You know, now in China, many students want their foreign teachers to have a white face. It is extreme, but it is understandable" (2005, para. 6). As Shao (2005) described, the English fever in China is so strong that recruiters frequently opt for less qualified teachers as long as they are NESTs and Caucasians (or even just Caucasians in some cases).

The preference for the hiring of NESTs is also evident in the online job ads placed by Language schools. Using a sample of ten English-teaching hiring websites, Song and Zhang (2010) showed that 78.5% of the total ads required applicants to be NESTs from an inner circle country. Ruecker and Ives' (2015) extensive analysis of 59 websites within the Asian market indicated that 81% of job postings had NES status as one of the requirements. Those which did accept non-native speakers stated that NNES candidates had to "display greater qualifications" and that "a non-native will be scrutinized more [than native-speakers]" (p. 742). Furthermore, although not explicitly mentioned on the websites, the visuals (e.g. TEFL Haven and Hess International Educational Organization) conveyed limited responsibility "on teaching and the dominant presence of Whiteness" (p. 749). Through the use of the NEST fallacy and implicit prejudice, "the ideal candidate is overwhelmingly depicted as a young, white, enthusiastic, native speaker of English from a stable list of inner-circle countries" (p. 733).

Finally, accounts of private training centers recruiting white, unqualified people of Slavic ethnicity abound in endless numbers. For example, Braine's (2010) account of Ozgur Parlak, who was hired as a teacher in Thailand "based on his looks [rather than] his qualifications" (p. 74); or Hartley & Walker's (2014) example of Eric from Norway who was hired without needing to show any qualifications/teaching experience proof, and started teaching two hours after his interview. Braine's research (2010), along with the work of Hartley and Walker's (2014), demonstrate the implicit preference maintained by language schools for the hiring of ethnic Caucasians that continues to disadvantage non-White teachers. Kubota and Lin (2006) and Hsu (2005) have noted that one of the main alleged reasons for this type of racism is to comply with students' demands. More research into recruiters' perspectives via direct interviews (which is scant if, rather, non-existent) could provide further insights into the reasoning behind these discriminatory practices.

Native-speakerist issues prevalent in the Asian ELT context equate ethnic Whiteness (often performed as foreign-ness) to linguistic competence, and perceived linguistic competence with teacher effectiveness. The literature reveals that language school teachers, recruiters, and students share concerns over their teachers' perceived language proficiency, and that high language proficiency seems to be more valued than teaching skills. In many cases preference for NESTs over NNESTs is justified on the grounds of perceived linguistic proficiency, especially regarding oral fluency and pronunciation. To please their "customers" (Holliday, 2008, p. 121), recruiters will frequently opt to hire teachers with less experience and education as long as they are proficient in the language, and as long as they are ethnically Caucasian. The Chinese and Korean government, in an attempt to raise language educational standards, are restricting working visas to foreigners holding a bachelors in any field and a passport from specific English speaking countries (EPIK, 2020; State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, 2018). Consequently, many institutions are opting to hire individuals who might be much less pedagogically qualified and/or experienced than teachers who are unable to apply due to their citizenship status or mother tongue. The outcomes of these discriminatory hiring criteria are problematic. Equating or even preferring a native language proficiency, and ethnicity, over experience and qualifications in teaching is detrimental to the future of students' education as well as the English language teaching profession.

NEST/NNEST Classroom Performance Research

The systematic employment of these unfair hiring practices risks negative consequences on students' language acquisition/learning. Performance-related research on teachers hired via these unfair practices is scant, but research into determining factors for language acquisition has shown that a teacher's pedagogical competency, rather than their NES or NNES status, is what determines outcomes of higher success for students (Li and Zhang, 2016; Shin and Kellogg, 2007). In Li & Zhang's study (2016), even though 70% of student participants indicated they preferred to be taught by a NEST, research results showed students had had significantly better pronunciation improvement with the NNEST. Both Levis et al. (2016), as well as Li and Zhang (2016), have suggested that pronunciation teaching does not, and should not, have to be a NEST domain. Li and Zhang's (2016) research also showed that students' perceptions of their teacher suitability can be specious and should not be taken as a legitimate reason to prefer NESTs over NNESTs.

CONCLUSION

The term native speaker evokes a binary that places value on the native over its inferior counterpart, the non-native speaker. Even though the current multilingual paradigm, along with ELF and WE disprove the superiority previously attributed to the NEST, these ideologies have not yet trickled down to the mainstream ELT market where language school professionals act as gatekeepers of who gets hired to teach. By conflating NEST/NNEST with country of origin and ethnicity through a monolingual-deficit lens, those not identified as the 'ideal' (e.g. white/foreign looking) NEST are discriminated against and automatically disqualified from applying for English teaching jobs. Research has already begun to demonstrate how pedagogical proficiency and linguistic competence are more important to student success than a teacher's status as a native or non-native speaker of a language. More research into teacher classroom performance, modelled in the studies of Li and Zhang (2016), Shin and Kellogg (2007), and Levis et al. (2016), will further help debunk pervasive myths that nativeness, proficiency, and race, on their own, are enough for effective teaching. In order to achieve authentic language learning, we must ensure that continued research reaches the mainstream English teaching markets and receives political attention, given that the risk of remaining in the academic ivory tower will ultimately not help the millions of teachers being rejected from different institutions/countries.

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[i] With the impact of globalization, im/emigration, transcultural flow of information/ideas, and the fluidity of geographical and political boundaries, scholars have questioned the limitations of Kachru's circles in modern society (Leimgruber, 2013). Most specifically, Yano (2009) described how even Inner Circle countries are experiencing demographic changes that pose questions to the Inner Circles "native" variety (e.g., the increase of Hispanics and foreigners in the United States for the last ten years; the emergence of native speakers of Singaporean English in Singapore, who speak this language not only at school, but at home and other environments). However, it is the fixity of Kachru's circles called into question (regardless of whether we agree or not) that works as a useful metaphor in this article to express the ideology espoused by stake-holders in Asia: a fixed viewpoint as to what a "native speaker" is/looks like and how that fixity in connection to the inner, outer and expanding circles can lead to conflating ethnicity, native language, and nation-state imageries all together based on stereotyping. This is why concepts such as "foreign authenticity" play an important part in the explaining aspects of stake-holders perceptions. It helps explain how teachers obtain authority based on fixed stereotypes espoused by stake-holders on what a foreigner/native speaker is (or should be).