English Language Students' Attitudes Towards Native and Non-native English Teachers

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English language students' attitudes towards

native and non-native English teachers

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Abstract

One of the main arguments for unfair treatment of NNESTs and hiring policies, by which NESTs are prioritized and given precedence over NNESTs, is that students prefer to be taught by NESTs. The aim of this study is to investigate whether students share such preference, and explore what their attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs are.

The study involved 40 students, enrolled in the first and second year of the M.A. program in English language, at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka. The findings reveal that the majority do not perceive NESTs superior to NNESTs, but indicate both have their respective strengths and weaknesses. The students mainly emphasize NESTs' language proficiency, standard pronunciation and advanced communication skills. They describe them as confident and praise NESTs' flexible teaching, authentic materials and broad culture knowledge, while they advance scarce grammar knowledge, lack of explicit knowledge about language and inability to understand learners' needs and difficulties as NESTs' weaknesses. The students hold that the fact NNESTs are language learners as well, enables them to predict learners' needs and difficulties, and understand how language is learned and taught better. However, they address NNESTs have problems with pronunciation, do not focus enough on interaction and seem less confident. The students mainly express no preference regarding a NEST or a NNEST holding a course, or a NEST's or NNEST's teaching methods, but have a clear preference regarding who they want to teach them different language skills. Throughout the questionnaire, the majority emphasize that personal and professional qualities, pedagogical skills and knowledge of ELT methodology, not nativeness, ensure teacher competence.

Keywords: NEST, NNEST, native speaker ideal, teacher competence, students' attitudes, students' preference

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1. Introduction

The English language has taken on the role of the unrivaled world's lingua franca and is characterized as "the fastest growing language in the world" (Mahboob, 2005: 63). The fact that non-native speakers outnumber native speakers of English is undisputed. Some projections (eg. Crystal, 2004) show that out of the two billion people who use English, only around 400 million are native speakers, other 400 million being non-native speakers who use it as a second language (SL) and the remaining, being users who use it as a foreign language (FL) (Hansen, 2011), and are "capable of communicating to a useful level in English" (Crystal, 2003). In other words, the ratio amounts four to one (Crystal, 2012; Kachru & Nelson, 1996). Latter projections estimate, that by around 2040, the number of English language speakers will amount around three billion, about half the world's population today (Graddol, 2006).

This honorary position English language enjoys today, as the first language "that's been spoken by more people as a second language than a first" (Crystal, 1999: 2), is attributed to its superiority in domains such as politics, economics, the press, advertising, broadcasting, motion picture, popular music, international travel and safety, education and communication (Crystal, 1999). The knowledge of English language is deemed to increase and improve: 1) global understanding, 2) employment potential, 3) chances for entry into colleges or graduate schools, 4) study abroad options and 5) understanding of another culture (World Languages and Cultures, 2010).

In view of its current status, English language is no longer the property (Widdowson, 1994) or "the privilege of native speakers" (Medgyes, 2001: 429), but belongs to "those who speak English as a second or foreign language" (Graddol 1997: 10) as well, and is deemed as "ours and everyone's: […] truly a world possession" (Strevens, 1982: 427). Therefore, these speakers are and will be the ones reshaping the language, and "the resulting changes and

divergences" (Paradowski, 2008: 93), or result of non-native speakers' usage of English, will not be perceived as errors (Jenkins, 2004) or "a deterioration in the standard" (Paradowski, 2008: 93), but rather accepted, given the language continues to serve its communicational purpose.

In regard with English, deemed as global language and taught in different contexts to learners with different requirements and needs, the question is whether the NS ideal is relevant in today's reality and who should (be allowed to) teach it?

1.1. Native speaker ideal

The notion of native speaker being perceived as an ideal, and language proficiency defined in comparison to native speaker's abilities is in the focus of second language acquisition (SLA) research. This belief can be traced back to "the Chomskyan representation of the idealized native speaker-hearer" (Selvi, 2014: 576), and his "distinction between competence and performance; where the former is defined as the underlying cumulative system of rules governing knowledge, whereas the latter is formulated as the actual manifestation of this knowledge by the speaker" (Selvi, 2014: 576). This implies competence is unaffected by social factors and relies completely on native-speaker intuition, i.e. competence is defined as mental property. Selinker's (1972) concepts of interlanguage[1] and fossilization[2] rest upon the claims that L1 is a starting point for learning L2 and although, learners are unable to achieve 'native' proficiency, the ultimate goal for L2 learning is

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[1] Interlanguage is defined as linguistic system evidenced when L2 learner (learners who have passed puberty, i.e. critical period) attempts to express meanings in L2. It is perceived as a separate linguistic system, systematically different from native and target language, but is believed to be linked to both, by interlingual identifications in learner's perception (Tarone, 2006).

[2] Process whereby learner's interlanguage stops developing and is believed to be permanent. It explains why learners, who start to learn second language after the critical period, are not successful in developing a linguistic system as proficient, as children who acquired it natively.

achieving 'native-like' proficiency (Selvi, 2014). In his Interaction Hypothesis, Long (1983) claims conversations with native speakers are "the necessary and sufficient condition for second language acquisition" (as cited in Tran, 2009: 2) and by stating this, he, among others, appointed native speaker ideal serving as the benchmark in English language education (Mahboob, 2010). Consequently, language learners "are expected to emulate the communicative skills of native speakers" (Kramsch, 1997: 359), which has been deemed an unrealistic goal that often results with learners becoming (or being perceived as) "imitation or failed native speakers" (Cook, 1999: 195), or even "a defective communicator, limited by an underdeveloped communicative competence" (Firth & Wagner, 1997: 285). Further, even the exact definition of standard English is controversial. Seidlhofer (2005) points out that there is a considerable disagreement about what standard English is, and argues that "in terms of numbers of speakers and domains of use, an insistence on StE [standard English] as the only option for all purposes is [...] difficult to justify" (as cited in Jenkins, 2006: 171). Finally, he concludes that speakers should be able to develop their own norms and not accommodate to the native speaker ones. Instead, the learners "have the right to use a foreign language for their own purposes" (Hansen, 2011: 2), and thus, are able to avoid inferior position that is assigned to them as native speaker is considered "always right" (Kramsch, 1998: 16). Speaking English that is appropriate to speakers' local contexts allows them to remain within their own culture, and does not require adoption of completely new identities. This enables them to "exploit their communicative resources to suit their pragmatic purpose" (Qian & Jingxia, 2016: 84) and "frees" them from having to "pretend to belong to a particular 'national' English speaking culture, when they obviously do not" (Pölzl, 2003: 4).

In line with the discussion so far, the attention has been drawn to questions why and whether it is right that "native speaker's 'competence', 'proficiency' or 'knowledge of the language' is "a necessary point of reference for the second language proficiency" (Stern, 1983:

341). Clearly, English language education in both ESL and EFL settings, including Croatia, relies heavily on the NS ideal (Anchimbe, 2006; Drljača Margić & Vodopija-Krstanović, in press); its focus has been and is primarily on native-speaker cultures, and it mainly adopts teaching methods and materials designed in Inner Circle countries[3] (Holliday, 2005). This is bound to change as today's learners are, more than ever, "speakers of different linguacultural backgrounds in global and local interaction" (Drljača Margić & Vodopija-Krstanović, in press), and understood as "intercultural speakers" (Hansen, 2011: 31). The attention is then bound to be placed on "interaction between interlocutors in a given context so that learners ultimately acquire the ability to decenter and take up the other's perspective on their own culture" (Byram, 1997: 42). This should allow learners to acquire "a whole range of rules of interpretation that they use knowingly and judiciously according to the various social contexts" (Kramsch, 1998: 27).

1.2. Native and non-native English teachers

The NS ideal still has a great influence on the employment policy in English language education and has intensified the NS-NNS dichotomy, whereby native English teachers are perceived as more competent than non-native ones. The common belief "if you can speak it, you can teach it" (Johnson, 2009: 41) ensured that the Western culture is the one "from which springs the ideals both of the English language and English language teaching methodology'' (Selvi, 2014: 579). This initiated the common perception that NNESTs are inferior in knowledge and performance to NESTs, and has fostered unethical treatment and hiring discrimination against NNESTs (Clark & Paran, 2007; Mahboob & Golden, 2013), while on

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[3] **Refers to Braj Kachru's Three Circles Model of World Englishes, where the Inner Circle refers to countries where English language functions as an L1 (or native language), i.e. the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.**

the other hand, NESTs experience unprofessional favoritism (Medgeyes, 2001). All this has an impact on NNESTs' self-perception, self-esteem and in-class performance and contributes to NNESTs overanalyzing and doubting their competence and professional qualifications (Liu, 1999).

In order to understand the NS- NNS dichotomy, which is deemed to be linguistically unacceptable, but nevertheless, socially present (Moussu & Llurda, 2008), it is crucial to define who native and non-native speakers of English are. The most common definition of a native speaker is that he/she is "someone who speaks English as his or her native language" (Medgyes, 2001), in other words, English being the first language that person learned to speak. Stern (1983) identifies following features to be vital constituents of 'native speakerism': 1) a subconscious knowledge of rules, 2) an intuitive grasp of meanings, 3) the ability to communicate within social settings, 4) a range of language skills and 5) creative usage of language. However, others (eg. Cook, 1999) argue that these features are not evident among all native speakers and deems this classification dubious; he elaborates some speakers lack metalinguistic skills, do not act appropriately in given social settings and are not creative with language (Medgyes, 2001). In addition, Lee (2005) amounted the findings by scholars in fields of Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and English Language Teaching and listed the following features, deemed to be a part of native speakers' intuitive knowledge that differentiate them from non-native speakers. Those features are: 1) appropriate use of idiomatic expressions, 2) correctness of language forms, 3) natural pronunciation, 4) ability to adapt to cultural context using 'response cries', swear words and interjections, 5) above averaged sized vocabulary, 6) knowledge of metaphors, 7) knowledge of frozen syntax, i.e. binomials or bi-verbials and 8) nonverbal cultural features. Further, he sums up the findings of what native speakers are able to perform and lists the following: 1) spontaneous, fluent discourse, 2) circumlocations, 3) hesitations, 4) predictions of what

interlocutor will say and 5) clarifications of message through repetition in other forms. Again, it is possible to conclude the knowledge and performance of listed features varies from one native speaker to another and Kramsch (1997), therefore, concludes that "the notion of a unitary speaker is artificial". On the other hand, non-native speakers are defined as "speakers of a language that is not their L1" (Boecher, 2005: 68) and differ from former (having acquired) in that they are still acquiring English (Medgyes, 1999). Most commonly, they work in EFL environments and share the same native language as their students (Medgyes, 2001).

Although, the research (Birdsong, 1992; Davies, 2004; Medgyes, 1994; Phillipson, 1996) shows non-native speakers are able to acquire all or most of the elements that define the concept of a native speaker[4] through sufficient opportunities, motivation and effective training, native English teachers are, in most cases, a preferred employment choice (Braine, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999). Of late, more attention has been redirected from nativeness towards adequate pedagogical training and proficient knowledge of language (Derwing & Munro, 2005), and the notion that native English teachers are more competent than non-native ones has been challenged. The reasons for this are following: language competence is perceived as only one of the variables involved in teaching (others, such as experience, age, sex, aptitude, charisma, motivation and training are deemed as equally important) (Medgyes, 1992), 2); native English teachers are no longer able to "satisfy the escalating demand for ETL services" (Paradowski, 2008: 97), and the fact that the majority of today's English

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[4] **Some authors hold that certain areas of linguistic competence, like grammar, natural pronunciation and cultural competence, pose trendemous challenges for non-native speakers which are most difficult (even impossible) to overcome (eg. Liang, 2003; Lee, 2005). The research, in the respective area, is quite contradictory; some authors claim non-native speakers' competence is limited and native speakers are always better at reaching communicative goals in English (Medgyes, 1992), while others (eg. Merino, 1997) claim non-native speakers can acquire native-like proficiency in English.**

teachers are non-native ones (Canagarajah (1999) asserts that 80% of the world's English teachers are precisely non-native ones).

The pioneering work of Medgyes emphasizes that NESTs and NNESTs should be perceived as "two different species" (Medgyes, 1994), as they differ in terms of language proficiency and teaching behavior. He attributes different teaching behaviors to difference in language proficiency, and states both "can be equally good teachers on their own terms" (Braine, 2006: 14). The implications of his findings are that the attention is drawn from the analysis what NNESTs can and cannot do in comparison to NESTs, to acknowledgement both NESTs and NNESTs have their respective strengths and weaknesses. This notion enables these strengths and weaknesses to be identified, and certain measures to be undertaken, in order to ensure both NESTs and NNESTs have positive impact while engaging in language teaching.

1.3. Differences in teaching behavior of NESTs and NNESTs

While examining teaching behaviors, Braine (1999) identifies that NESTs speak more fluently and confidently, and correct their students intuitively. Their pronounced sociolinguistic competence allows them to appropriate their language and speaking to different contexts more than NNESTs. Following, Cook (1999) states that creativity in language use and knowledge of standard and non-standard English is one of NESTs' biggest advantages, which is supported by Gill and Rebrova (2001), who claim NESTs' language is authentic and living. This finding might suggest NNESTs use too formal, outdated language. Further, Reves and Medgyes (1994) state that NESTs teach language in a more authentic and creative way and use more innovative teaching methods, while NNESTs tend to teach language in context-poor environments or in isolation (Liaw, 2012). According to Medgyes

(2001), NESTs are more likely to focus on meaning and place more emphasis on pronunciation and syntax (Reves & Medgyes, 1994), while NNESTs tend to stress accuracy, forms and grammar rules, i.e. formal features of English, or even teach those aspects of language "they have a better grasp of" (Medgyes, 2001: 434). Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999) advocate that NESTs tend to focus on interaction with students and emphasize communication more than exam preparation, which is in contrast to NNESTs' behavior, who focus more on exams and often lack communicative competence (Braine, 1999), i.e. favor frontal work. NESTs prefer free activities (they employ pair and group work more frequently), adopt more flexible approach in teaching (improvise) and use various materials, whereby NNESTs tend to follow more guided approach, rely more on textbooks and employ translation assignments frequently (Arva & Medgyes, 2000). Finally, NESTs, undoubtedly, are able to provide more cultural information (Medgyes, 1994) and offer their students rich and unique insider perspective.

NESTS	NNESTs
Use of English	
Speak better English	Speak poorer English
Use real language	Use "booklish" language
Use English more confidently	Use English less confidently
General Attitude	
Adopt a more flexible approach	Adopt a more guided approach
Are more innovative	Are more cautious
Are less empathetic	Are more empathetic
Attend to perceived needs	Attend to read needs
Have far-fetched expectations	Have realistic expectations
Are more casual	Are stricter
Are less committed	Are more committed
Attitude to Teaching Language	
Are less insightful	Are more insightful
Focus on:	Focus on:
Fluency	Accuracy
Meaning	Form
Language in use	Grammar rules
Oral skills	Printed work
Colloquial registers	Formal registers
Teach items in context	Teach items in isolation
Prefer free activities	Prefer controlled activities
Favour groupwork/pairwork	Favour frontal work
Use a variety of materials	Use a single textbook
Tolerate errors	Correct/punish errors
Set fewer tests	Set more tests
Use no/less first language (L1)	Use more first language (L1)
Resort to no/less translation	Resort to more translation
Assign less homework	Assign more homework
Attitude to Teaching Culture	
Supply more culture information	Supply less cultural information

Table 1. Perceived differences in teaching behavior between NESTs and NNESTs (Medgyes, 1994)

However, NNESTs excel in different areas. Medgyes (1994) advances following assets that NNESTs offer their learners, which NESTs cannot. He claims that NNESTs are better (imitable) models for learners, able to anticipate language difficulties learners might face, teach learning strategies more effectively and provide more information about the English language. NNESTs can make use of L1 to explain complex structures (Braine, 1999) and

make comparison between L1 and L2. In addition, having been language learners themselves, NNESTs tend to know more about the process of language learning and have "language awareness" (Medgyes, 1999) or metalinguistic skills, i.e. explicit knowledge about language and linguistic rules, which native speakers often lack. This personal experience of language learning enables NNESTs to predict the areas of relative difficulty for learners and allows them to create effective lesson plans and employ more appropriate teaching methods. Secondly, it enables them to recognize learners' needs better than NESTs and have more realistic expectations regarding expected competence and performance from their students. Cook (1999) and Filho (2002) emphasize that the advantage of NNESTs is that they are able to estimate learners' potential and serve to their learners as an attainable model. This way, they claim, NNESTs are able to alleviate learners' anxiety, while NESTs may even intimidate learners "with their linguistic perfection and unfamiliar cultural expressions" (Boecher, 2005: 70). Finally, Medgyes (2001) states that NESTs' proficiency enables them to have better intuitions about what is right and wrong in language use, while NNESTs' personal experience of learning English enables them to be more aware of sheer language learning process, i.e. what is easy and what is difficult, and concludes both "are potentially equally effective teachers, because in the final analysis, their respective strengths and weaknesses balance out" (p. 440).

2. Previous research on students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs

Braine (1999) holds that students' attitudes and preferences are the most crucial factor in the study of NESTs and NNESTs; one of the main arguments for discrimination against NNESTs is that students prefer to be taught by NESTs. Until now, a handful of studies had

been conducted (both in an ESL and EFL settings) investigating whether this claim is, indeed, true and varying results were obtained. As this study was conducted in an EFL setting, the following results are withdrawn from the studies conducted in the corresponding settings.

Samimy and Bruff-Griffler (1999) investigated whether non-native students in a graduate TESOL program perceive any differences in teaching behaviors of NESTs and NNESTs. The data were collected by means of classroom discussions and in-depth interviews. The results show that more than two-thirds of the students believe difficulties in language use affect language teaching and they perceive NESTs as fluent and accurate, using authentic English and knowing subtleties of the language. They state that NESTs put communication as the goal of their teaching and use various teaching methods, while NNESTs tend to rely on textbooks, use their first language as a medium of instruction and put exam preparation as the goal of their teaching. However, they claim that NNESTs are familiar with students' background and are sensitive to students' needs. Despite the differences, the students do not perceive NESTs superior to NNESTs.

Diaz (2001) questioned the attitudes of 78 students in the French Brittany by means of questionnaires and has found that students, in general, do not have preference for neither NESTs or NNESTs. The students express preference for NNESTs to teach them grammar, whereas they opt for both NESTs and NNESTs to teach them vocabulary, learning strategies and culture and NESTs to teach them pronunciation, reading and oral skills. The author concludes that students' attitudes towards both NESTs and NNESTs is positive and that they deem both NESTs and NNESTs equally competent and valuable.

Cheung (2002) examined attitudes of 420 Hong Kong university students towards NESTs and NNESTs, by means of questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations and post-classroom interviews. The students hold that both NESTs and NNESTs have their strengths: they emphasize language proficiency, fluency and cultural knowledge as NESTs'

biggest strengths, while they state NNESTs' advantages are that they share cultural backgrounds with learners, empathize with students and put emphasis on grammar. They conclude that professional skills (preparing lessons, motivating students and encouraging independent learning), informedness about the English language, relevant and fun teaching, and being sensitive to students' needs is what, ultimately, makes a competent teacher.

Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) conducted a study in the Basque Country on 76 university students and asked them to complete both close- and open-ended questionnaires. They report that 60% of the students show a preference for NESTs and 35% do not have a preference. The students prefer NESTs to teach them pronunciation, vocabulary, listening and speaking skills and culture, while they pick NNESTs to teach them grammar. While students prefer NESTs at university level, they prefer NNESTs at lower levels of education (primary and secondary schools) and perceive them as imitable models and useful resources of learning strategies.

Xiaoru (2008) conducted a study in China and examined 75 university students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs, by means of close- and open-ended questionnaire. The students emphasize language proficiency, functional use of English and culture knowledge as NESTs' strengths, while they praise NNESTs' ability to empathize with students and the focus they put on grammar and learning strategies. The author found that the students have a clear preference for NESTs, mostly because they put great emphasis on language fluency and pronunciation.

Alsweed (2012) investigated Saudi undergraduate university students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs, by means of questionnaires and interviews. The students express overall preference for a NEST; the students report that they would feel more motivated and have more positive attitudes towards learning English from NESTs. They agree classes with NESTs seem more relaxed and they perceive them as nicer and more responsible than

NNESTs. However, they elect NNESTs when being asked about awareness of students' needs and language difficulties and consciousness of students' learning styles. The students perceive that NESTs use innovative teaching strategies, prepare students for independent learning and encourage them to speak English better, i.e. encourage students to speak more. They elect NNESTs when being asked who would provide more clear explanations and emphasize that NNESTs would be able to use Arabic to explain ambiguous terms. When the students were asked who they prefer to teach them English, about 70% of the students opted for a NEST.

Gutierrez Arvizu (2014) conducted a study on 167 Mexican students and asked them whether they prefer NESTs or NNESTs to teach them listening, speaking, writing, grammar, vocabulary and culture. She administered a questionnaire in form of a Likert scale; 55% of the students find both NESTs and NNESTs equally capable to teach English, although this finding is controversial, because later on, the students express preference for NESTs to teach them the majority of language skills: 50% of the students opt for NEST to teach them listening, 53% speaking, 47% vocabulary and 90% culture (the students chose NNEST to teach them reading skills). Regarding writing and grammar, the results are evenly distributed, i.e. the students do not express a clear preference. The author concludes that the students, in general, are not biased toward neither NESTs or NNESTs, but have preferences when asked who they want to teach them different language skills. The author attributes this finding to the impressions students have about which aspects of language NESTs might teach better than NNESTs, and vice versa.

Aslan and Thompson (2016) aimed to question 160 Turkish students enrolled in different universities in Turkey, about the perceived differences in NESTs' and NNESTs' teaching practices. The students perceive that NESTs are more focused on speaking skills, interaction and communication in class, while NNESTs tend to be more efficient while motivating students and supporting effective learning, i.e. they provide students with useful

learning strategies. Turkish students perceive NESTs as more effective, but do not express strong beliefs on the matter and the authors conclude that the students believe both NESTs and NNESTs are equally efficient and do not believe one group is superior or inferior to another.

Alghofaili and Elyas (2017) examined Saudi students' attitudes towards NESTs, by means of open-ended questionnaires. The majority of the students believe teacher's nativeness has an effect on their learning process. Half of the participants state they prefer to learn reading from NESTs, while the other half praise NNESTs' usage of reading strategies (the ability to translate to L1 and code switch). As for listening skills, half of the students state there is no difference between NESTs and NNESTs, while the other half prefer NNESTs to teach them listening skills, mostly because they are considerate of learners' struggles. The students do not express particular preference regarding speaking skills; those few who opted for NESTs elaborate they provide a better pronunciation model, whereas those who opted for NNESTs state they are more considerate of students' struggles, speak slowly and use repetition drills to help their students. Others state there is no difference between NESTs and NNESTs. Further, the students state there is no difference between NESTs or NNESTs teaching writing skills. Regarding interaction and communication, the preferences vary as well. The students who opted for NNESTs elaborate they are more connected to their students and seem easier to communicate with. On the other hand, those who opted for NESTs elaborate they interact with students easily, motivate students to use language and employ various activities in their teaching. Finally, the students' preferences vary according to language skill concerned, and they hold that it is a teacher's personality, competence and experience, what ultimately, makes a qualified teacher.

Other studies (Chit Cheong, 2009; Liaw, 2012; Sung, 2009; Walkinshaw & Oanah, 2014) found similar results. The students find both NESTs and NNESTs competent and seem

able to emphasize their strengths and weaknesses. However, they show a clear preference for NESTs to teach them oral and speaking skills, pronunciation, culture and vocabulary, while they opt for NNESTs to teach them grammar.

3. Methodology

3.1. Aims and research questions

The aim of the study is to enquire into English language students' (future teachers of English language) attitudes towards native and non-native English language teachers. The author aims to investigate students' (dis)agreement with common beliefs about NESTs and NNESTs and identify how competent they perceive a NEST and a NNEST to be. The scope of the study is to determine whether students have preferences while being taught various language skills and to identify strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs. Additional aims are to investigate whether students' have preference while enrolling in course held by a NEST or a NNEST and to find out whose teaching methods they prefer more.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are students' attitudes towards native and non-native English language teachers?

RQ2: Do English language students prefer a NEST or a NNEST to teach them different language skills?

RQ3: What do English language students perceive to be respective strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs?

RQ4: Do English language students perceive a NEST or a NNEST to be a more competent language teacher?

3.2. Participants

The sample comprised 40 students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka. All the participants were enrolled in the first and second year of the M.A. program in English language and one of the following second majors: Croatian language (13), Italian language (4), German language (2), Computer science (1), Pedagogy (9), Philosophy (7), History (2) and Art history (2). The sample consisted of both male (27,5%) and female (72,5%) students aged between 22 and 25 years. The approximate years of studying English language both through formal (primary and secondary) education, self-study and private English courses varied from 12 to 20 years with the majority of the participants (98%) rating their overall proficiency as advanced. Around 82% of the participants stated that they had 2 to 3 NESTs throughout their education, while the rest of the participants stated that the number varies in range from 1 to 6. As NNESTs are concerned, they stated that the number varies in range from 10 to 18 NNESTs throughout the participants' education.

3.3. Instrument

The data were collected by means of a questionnaire, designed by the author and administered in class. The questionnaire consisted of four parts.

In the first part, the participants were asked to provide personal data (gender, age and academic major). They were asked to provide answers to questions about years of studying English, the number of native English teachers and non-native English teachers throughout their education and to self-rate overall proficiency in English.

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In the second part of the questionnaire, the participants were presented with 14 statements, 7 statements about a NEST and 7 statements about a NNEST and were asked to rate on a five-point Likert scale the extent to which they agree with them. It was enquired whether the participants agree with the commonly accepted beliefs about NESTs and NNESTs, obtained from the previous research.

In the third part of the questionnaire, the participants were presented with the chart containing the following statements: I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me pronunciation; speaking skills; listening skills; reading skills; writing skills; vocabulary; grammar; culture. The participants were asked to express their preference by putting a check mark in NEST or NNEST column and were given the possibility to put a check mark in both columns, if their choice was both a NEST and a NNEST. The participants were also asked to provide explanations for each of their answers.

The fourth part consisted of six open-ended questions investigating the following: 1) preference for the course held by a NEST or a NNEST; 2) perceived strengths and weaknesses of a NEST; 3) perceived strengths and weaknesses of a NNEST; 4) preference of NEST or NNEST teaching methods; 5) perceived NESTs' teacher competence and 6) perceived factors ensuring teacher competence.

3.4. Data analysis

The written data were typed and word-processed, generating 41 pages of comments from the participants. After the initial reading, the key points were highlighted and the comments were categorized and coded according to the questions in the questionnaire. Regarding the close-ended questions part, the author calculated how many participants opted for each of the given options and the number were then, converted to percentages. The results were later compared with the ones from the previous studies in the respective field.

4. Results

The results are classified according to the following categories: 1) Statements about NNESTs and NESTs, 2) Preference for NESTs or NNESTs teaching language skills, 3) Perceived strengths and weaknesses of NNESTs, 4) Perceived strengths and weaknesses of NESTs, 5) Preference for courses held by NESTs or NNESTs, 6) Preference for NEST or NNEST teaching methods, 7) Perceived NESTs' teacher competence and 8) Perceived factors affecting teacher competence.

4.1. Statements about NNESTs and NESTs

The participants were asked to express their agreement with the following statements by circling numbers ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) on a five-point Likert scale. In order to make the results more transparent, positive (agree and strongly agree) and negative (disagree and strongly disagree) responses were combined.

In general, the participants' responses to the statements about NNESTs varied. The majority of participants agree on only two statements: a NNEST being more capable of predicting students' difficulties than a NEST (87,5%) and a NNEST teaching just as effectively as a NEST (87,5%). More than half of the participants (57,5%) agree that NNESTs are better learning models because they have gone through the same language learning process, while around third (27,5%) are neutral. Fewer than half of the participants express agreement with the following statements, but that percentage is barely higher than the rest of their responses: 45% of the participants agree a NNEST provides useful learning strategies more than a NEST, whereas 40% of them express neutral attitude and 15% disagree with the statement. Following, 40% of the participants agree a NNEST relies much more on textbooks

than a NEST, while 35% do not think this is the case and 25% opt for neutral attitude. The largest percentage (40%) express neutral attitude regarding NESTs' teaching being more exam-oriented than NESTs', around 38% disagree, while 22,5% think this is, indeed, the case. The participants are divided over the statement that a NNEST uses English less confidently than a NEST.

STATEMENTS (NNEST)	Strongly disagree (1) Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Strongly agree (5) Agree (4)
1. A NNEST is more capable of predicting students' difficulties in learning English than a NEST.	7,5% (3)	5% (2)	87,5% (35)
2. NNESTs are better models in English learning because they have gone through the same language learning process.	15% (6)	27,5% (11)	57,5% (23)
3. A NNEST provides useful language learning strategies more than a NEST.	15% (6)	40% (16)	45% (18)
4. A NNEST uses English less confidently than a NEST.	35% (14)	32,5% (13)	32,5% (13)
5. A NNEST's language teaching is more exam-oriented than a NEST's.	37,5% (15)	40% (16)	22,5% (9)
6. A NNEST relies much more on textbooks than a NEST.	35% (14)	25% (10)	40% (16)
7. A NNEST teaches just as effectively as a NEST.	2,5% (1)	10% (4)	87,5% (35)

Table 2. Participants' (dis)agreement with common beliefs about NNESTs

Regarding the statements about NESTs, the results varied as well, with the participants expressing agreement or neutral attitude towards the majority of statements. More than half of the participants agree that NESTs show a higher self-confidence while using English language (70%) and are more focused on language in use than NNESTs (55%). Following, 45% of the participants perceive that learning English with a NEST is more interesting and witty than with a NNEST, while 30% disagree with the statement and 25% have neutral attitude. A

NEST being aware of students' needs and difficulties to the same extent as a NNEST is perceived by 37,5% of the participants, whereas 32,5% disagree with the statement and 30% cannot decide whether this is the case. These results are contradictory with the ones obtained in the chart above, where 87% of the participants agree that a NNEST is more capable of predicting students' difficulties than a NEST. Further, 37,5% of the participants agree and the same percentage have neutral attitude towards the statement a NEST is more flexible in teaching than a NNEST, whereas 25% disagree with the stated. Lastly, the participants express mainly neutral attitudes towards a NEST preparing students for independent learning more than a NNEST (50%) and a NEST implementing more innovative teaching methods (52,5%), whereas around 30% of the participants disagree with these statements.

STATEMENTS (NEST)	Strongly disagree (1) Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Strongly agree (5) Agree (4)
1. Learning English with a NEST is more interesting and witty than with a NNEST.	30% (12)	25% (10)	45% (18)
2. A NEST is aware of students' language needs and language learning difficulties just as a NNEST.	32,5 (13)	30% (12)	37,5% (15)
3. A NEST has higher self-confidence using the English language than a NNEST.	12,5% (5)	17,5% (7)	70% (28)
4. A NEST prepares students for independent learning more than a NNEST.	30% (12)	50% (20)	20% (8)
5. A NEST focuses more on 'language in use' than a NNEST.	20% (8)	25% (10)	55% (22)
6. A NEST is more flexible in teaching than a NNEST.	25% (10)	37,5% (15)	37,5% (15)
7. A NEST implements more innovative teaching methods in his/her courses than a NNEST.	32,5% (13)	52,5% (21)	15% (6)

Table 3. Participants' (dis)agreement with common beliefs about NESTs

4.2. Preference for NESTs and NNESTs teaching language skills

Regarding preference for a NEST or a NNEST teaching various language skills, both NESTs and NNESTs are preferred by the majority of the participants for the following four skills: listening skills, reading skills, writing skills and vocabulary. A NEST is a preferred choice by the majority of the participants for teaching pronunciation, speaking skills and culture, while a NNEST is preferred choice for teaching grammar.

	NEST	NNEST	BOTH
1) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me pronunciation.	70% (28)	5% (2)	25% (10)
2) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me speaking skills.	52,5% (21)	2,5% (1)	45% (18)
3) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me listening skills.	20% (8)	17,5% (7)	62,5% (25)
4) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me reading skills.	10% (4)	17,5% (7)	72,5% (29)
5) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me writing skills.	20% (8)	12,5% (5)	67,5% (27)
6) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me vocabulary.	35% (14)	12,5% (5)	52,5% (21)
7) I prefer NEST/NNEST to teach me grammar.	7,5% (3)	47,5% (19)	45% (18)
8) I prefer NEST/NNEST to teach me culture.	67,5% (27)	5% (2)	27,5% (11)

Table 4. Participants' preference for NEST and NNEST teaching language skills

A majority of the participants (70%) state they prefer a NEST to teach them pronunciation, while only 5% of the participants prefer a NNEST and 25% chose both. The majority who opted for a NEST, provided the following elaborations:

Pronunciation, mostly because NESTs speak British or American variety, which is widely used and most appealing (23).

I would prefer to learn pronunciation from a NEST, because of the native accent and I believe they would immediately correct my mistakes. I think NNESTs are not as strict in this area as NESTs are (28).

A NEST, because it is unlikely that he/she would have some sort of accent influenced by their L1, which could hinder their pronunciation and teaching. However, they should not require the same NS proficiency from their students nor insist on a particular EL accent (BE or AE) (29).

Regarding the speaking skills, the percentage of the participants opting for NESTs is smaller (52,5%), but they are still a favored option, while almost half of the participants (45%) opted for both a NEST and a NNEST. Those who chose NESTs exclusively, elaborate their preference by stating they have natural speaking patterns (structure, coherence and flow) and higher competence, i.e. superiority, and describe them as more: 1) confident, 2) flexible and 3) relaxed. One of the participants provided a following elaboration: "*I think that NESTs could be better in teaching speaking and practicing conversation skills, just because students are 'forced' to use English, and that improves their ability to interact meaningfully and with confidence with an English-speaking person*" (14).

The substantial number of participants (45%) report that they perceive both a NEST and a NNEST competent to teach speaking skills.

My overall experience in this department with NNESTs was positive (25).

I really have no preference, because I believe that speaking skill can be developed just as good with a NEST, as with a NNEST (37).

The first thought was that NESTs surely have a better pronunciation and better speaking skills, but I wouldn't say that's always the case. I have encountered a large number of NNESTs and the majority of them had great pronunciation and speaking skills (10).

The participants are even more inclined towards both NESTs and NNESTs when it comes to the following language skills: listening, reading and writing skills. The majority of the participants elected both a NEST and a NNEST to teach them listening skills (62,5%), reading skills (72,5%) and writing skills (67,5%).

Listening, reading and writing skills are generally more universal so it is not important if the teacher is native or not, as long as he/she can successfully transfer the knowledge (22).

For language skills, it doesn't make a difference for me whether I am being taught by a NEST or a NNEST, as long as the teacher is competent enough and is using appropriate teaching methods (3).

I think that there is no difference between a NEST and a competent NNEST in teaching, speaking/ listening/ reading/ writing. The quality of one's teaching depends upon one's own education and gained competences, not so much upon the L1 background of the teacher (29).

Speaking, listening, reading, writing skills; both are equally capable to teach these, so there is no preference (23).

Almost a quarter of the participants (20%) chose NESTs to teach them listening skills. They elaborate their choice by stating NESTs have overall listening superiority and can teach

them listening strategies. Around 17% of the participants opted for a NNEST. They advance that NESTs are more sensible towards students, because they have better understanding of the difficulties students might face, and might give cues or propose strategies to overcome difficulties while listening.

The participants (20%) who opted for a NEST to teach them writing skills elaborated:

Writing depends upon the 'spirit' of the language something is written in and a   NEST understands that 'spirit' better (20).

They know how to write in English (we, on the other hand, often write in   English, but still think in Croatian) and think in English at the same time (36).

I think culture, pronunciation and writing skills are areas in which it is harder for a NNEST to thrive and pass on their knowledge. You can almost always find traces of person's L1 in their written texts (19).

The participants (12,5%) who elected a NNEST to teach them writing skills, explain NNESTs might be a better choice, because they are more familiar with writing forms accepted in the country, able to provide explanations in native language and are better in spelling and orthography than native speakers.

When asked about the vocabulary, more than half of the participants (52,5%) opted for both a NEST and a NNEST and stated the following:

When dealing with vocabulary, it is hard to decide because one can benefit from both (27).

Regarding vocabulary, this is also individual. A NEST might have a better "starting point" for a wider vocabulary range, but if he/she doesn't develop it further, through reading and learning, it does not make them more "elaborate" than   the NNEST, who works hard to build his/her own vocabulary (29).

*Teaching grammar and vocabulary is something to be done according to the rules, you learn them, apply them, and then use them, until they become spontaneous   * (36).

Although half of the participants chose both NESTs and NNESTs, their overall elaborations go in favor of a NEST (even though there are only 35% of the participants who chose a NEST exclusively), and they explain NESTs have: 1) wider vocabulary, 2) knowledge of more complex and less frequent words and are able to provide more associations for each item.

The largest number of the participants (47,5%), opts for a NNEST to teach them grammar, and this is only the second skill (apart from reading skills, where 17,5% of the participants opted for a NNEST and 10% for a NEST) for which the participants favor NNEST over NEST.

With grammar, NNESTs should be better, because they were learners as well, and they would understand why we have certain problems and could explain grammar rules better than NESTs, who automatically know when something is used, but not why it is used (28).

I believe NNESTs would provide more learning strategies and cues how to learn something, while NESTs know how to use grammar, but do not know how to explain it (39).

Can switch to L1, compare L1 and L2 grammar (16).

I chose a NNEST for grammar, because I believe there is a great possibility that NNESTs are more suitable for grammar, since it is not their L1. In some cases, nativeness could mean that they did not bother learning the rules thoroughly, since the grammar comes naturally to them (12).

Almost a half of the participants (45%) do not perceive grammar should be taught by a NEST or a NNEST exclusively, but opt for both a NEST and a NNEST. The reasons they provide for such choice vary; few participants perceive grammar as a set of rules and state: *"...everybody can learn grammar rules"* (20). Others opt to take the best from both worlds and elaborate: "*I prefer a NEST, because he has more knowledge of using grammar and a NNEST, because he is better at explaining grammar rules*" (80).

A majority of the participants (67,5%) elected a NEST to teach them culture, and only a minority (5%) opt for a NNEST exclusively; one third (27,5%) of the participants support both. Those who opted for a NEST elaborated on their preference by stating:

I would rather hear about culture form a NEST, because they have, after all, experienced this culture throughout their life, they have lived with it and are more personally involved, so to say (14).

It is more natural to learn culture from a NEST, rather than a NNEST; a NEST can provide you with first-hand experience, while a NNEST just talks about things (facts) from textbooks (34).

I opted for a NEST in terms of teaching culture, because of obvious reasons. NESTs were born and raised in the EL speaking culture, so it is logical that they

have more knowledge about it and can provide more concrete examples from their own life, etc (29).

Definitely a NEST. Because it is their culture, and who can teach me better than a native speaker (37).

The participants who chose both a NEST and NNEST elaborate by stating they would be acquainted with different perspectives on culture, which could prove to be useful because *"...both native and non-native perspective on a culture can be equally challenging and interesting* " (17). Some elaborate by saying: "*...NESTs are preferred since they come from that specific culture and are more in contact with people from other countries (which is not the case in Croatia), although NNESTs may have lived in another country (culture), so they may bring some interesting information and knowledge about the culture with them*" (23).

Finally, a fifth of the participants (20%) do not express preference for neither a NEST or a NNEST in any of the provided language dimensions, but have put ticks in both columns. They elaborate that competence in language teaching depends upon personality and attitudes of an individual person, i.e. how motivated a person is and his/her knowledge of ELT methodology.

I've put tick for both NESTs and NNESTs, because I think that it doesn't matter whether a teacher learned English as L1 or L2, maybe even L3. It is more important that a person is capable and competent. The fact that English is his/her mother tongue is less important than his/her pedagogical and language competences (5).

I chose both a NEST and a NNEST in all of the cases, because I think that both can be equally efficient in all of the aspects of a language. I think that it depends mostly on

the personality and the attitudes of an individual, rather than on   their   linguistic

background (1).

I think that both a NEST and a NNEST can provide me with quality materials and excel

in different areas of language competence. You take the best from both worlds   (32).

4.3. Perceived strengths and weaknesses of NNESTs

The participants were presented with a chart and asked to indicate (in terms of entry-words) what they perceive NNESTs' strengths and weaknesses are. More than 77% of them deem NNESTs, having been learners themselves, is their most obvious strength. Consequently, they are therefore, familiar with EFL teaching, and the participants believe that NNESTs are aware of "the tricky parts of the language" and could be better at predicting possible difficulties that might occur while learning a language. The participants state NNESTs have "the *knowledge of what might be difficult for second language students because they have been through the same language learning process*" (31), might *" put more effort into their teaching because they had to learn the language instead of acquiring it*" (37), and therefore, would be able to "*guide their students through the learning process more efficiently"* (18). The ability to provide students with learning methods and strategies (tricks) better than a NEST is recognized by 37,5% of the participants. They hold that NNESTs would provide them with effective teaching methods, useful strategies for learning trickier parts of the language and explain (grammar) rules more clearly. NNESTs being more emphatic and understanding is identified by 32,5% of the participants, who elaborate that it is easier to connect with NNESTs, as they seem more approachable ("*down to earth*" (10)) and helpful. Few of the participants hold that this is the case, because NNESTs share the same culture and experience with students. Also, 35% of the participants address that the knowledge of first

language is an advantage and elaborate that NNESTs are able to make connections with L1 and can "*explain complex concepts in various ways if students don't understand them immediately* (14),i.e. are able to simplify. Around 7% of the participants mention NNESTs' more explicit and analytical approach to language, while 5% of them hold NNESTs' "*great knowledge of language and near-native accent*" (23) can " *motivate students, by showing it is possible to achieve high proficiency in L2*" (10).

When it comes to NNESTs' weaknesses, 60% of the participants state that pronunciation and speaking skills are their biggest drawbacks and elaborate they have *"...a strong accent [...] due to the L1 influence*" (29) and "*worse pronunciation and speaking skills than a NEST*" (17). Around 17% of the participants hold that NNESTs are less focused on speaking skills and do not put enough emphasis on interaction in class, i.e. "*are not as focused on language in use*" (30). The same percentage of the participants indicate NNESTs' "*possible lack of knowledge*" (16), "*lack of intrinsic knowledge of a language structure*" (36) and "*greater possibility of incorrect use of TL in the classroom*" (18) might be the reason NNESTs seem to feel less confident than NESTs. That lack of confidence in their "*abilities and skills*" (23) is recognized by 35% of the participants who state it can be detected in their performance in class. One of the participants points out they may even be "*prone to a more traditional learning/teaching style because of a lack of confidence*" (17). Furthermore, 32,5% of the participants mention NNESTs' "*inadequate exposure to cultural context*" (34), which might result in the lack of cultural knowledge.

> *They lack the "first-hand experience" of the EL speaking countries culture and historic background*   (29).

Sometimes, they lack contextual, everyday knowledge of some things they are teaching

about, which could be acquired only in natural environments (4).

Lack of authentic experience, therefore, cannot teach culture as well as someone who

has lived that culture (37).

That NNESTs rely more on textbooks and do not provide that authentic materials was recognized by 15% of the participants, who report that they " *rely heavily on textbooks and lesson plans*" (26), "*...stick to the literature and books too much*" (3) and seem "*less focused on [...] authenticity of the content*" (14). Around 12% of the participants hold that NNESTs focus too much on grammar and "*formal properties of language*" (9), while 5% of the participants emphasize that they may be more inclined to traditional teaching style or teach language "*the way they were taught, which is not always the best way*" (19).

4.4. Perceived strengths and weaknesses of NESTs

Regarding NESTs' strengths, most participants (62,5%) indicate native (standard) pronunciation as NESTs' most obvious strength and elaborate NEST have "*better pronunciation*" (37) and are "*proficient speakers, which is important for teaching pronunciation*" (36). The participants (32,5%) praise NESTs' speaking skills by stating they have "*better speech coherence*" (3), "*more sensibility for communication, i.e. for speaking and listening*" (17) and "*know the difference between formal and informal discourse and can evaluate them properly*" (36). A substantial number of the participants link this with NESTs being "*very focused on using the language*" (28) and "*better at teaching language in use*" (34), which helps them in motivating and encouraging students to speak the target language and engage in discussions. A great knowledge of language with "*almost no possibility of*

mistakes and errors" (13) is recognized by 35% of the participants and some of them hold that this is the reason NESTs have "*different approach to language teaching*" (40) and employ "*effective teaching methods*" (23).

> *Intuitive knowledge of the language and the ability to adapt to different levels of students*' knowledge(35).
>
> *Feel comfortable using the language, without focus on grammar, which comes naturally and can, in that way, provide a more diverse language* (18).
>
> *More "closer" to the language than NNESTs* (14).

Almost a third of the participants (27,5%) hold that NESTs are more self-confident, which can be seen in "*speaking and overall usage of the language*" (32). Regarding vocabulary, 22,5% of the participants state that NESTs have wider vocabulary range than NNESTs. More than half of the participants (55%) mention NESTs have a wider knowledge of culture as they are "*emerged into the culture*" (25). This enables them to "*teach culture more authentically*" (37) and connect "*language teaching with their culture*" (11). A fifth of the participants (20%) recognize that NESTs "*provide the authenticity aspect to lessons*" (18), whether that authenticity reflects in "*authentic language*" (21) or "*more innovative, authentic materials*" (28). A minority (5%) hold that NESTs "*have bigger expectations from students*" (33) and encourage students to be more independent. The participants reflect upon personal characteristics as well, with 12,5% of the participants claiming NESTs are more creative, flexible and spontaneous and "*seem to use humor more efficiently*" (22).

Regarding NESTs' weaknesses, the majority of the participants (62,5%) highlight the fact that NESTs are not language learners and do not undergo the same language learning

process as non-native learners. Consequently, they cannot presume what might be problematic for learners and are not aware of learners' needs. Some mention they often lack empathy.

If the only language that a NEST knows is his/her first language, he/she might not understand the processes and the difficulties of learning a second language (1).

Do not understand non-native speakers' struggles/ problems (36).

May not be able to fully adapt to non-native speakers' needs and problems when it comes to language learning (40).

Around 23% of the participants hold that NESTs "*tend to know grammar intuitively*" (35), i.e. know how to use grammar, but are not able to explain grammar explicitly, while 15% of the participants claim they have a scarce knowledge of grammar rules. One of the participants even imposes the question: "*Are they really aware of the rules?*" (25). Furthermore, the participants (17,5%) address that not knowing L1 interferes with NESTs' teaching, as they are not able to explain troublesome parts of the language or "*compare L1 and L2*" (16). A minority of the participants (7,5%) consider NESTs too demanding and maintain that they might be "*expecting too much from their students or underestimate their skills*" (34) and perceive their teaching too implicit and oriented towards everyday life. NESTs' accent and speaking too fast is indicated by 5% of the participants, who elaborate they might be even "*insisting on using the native-like accent (teaching students explicitly in that accent)*" (23). However, 15% of the participants did not list any weaknesses, and instead, provided the following elaborations:

Knowing a language perfectly doesn't mean that someone is a good teacher of that language (10).

To be a native speaker does not entail being a better teacher. We decide if someone is a good language teacher, not only based on his/ her knowledge but other things, what makes a good teacher in general (16).

Not necessarily good language teachers, if they lack knowledge of teaching methodology (9).

4.5. Preference for courses held by NESTs and NNESTs

The participants were asked to express their preference regarding the enrollment in courses held by NESTs or NNESTs, and the obtained results are following: 16 participants (40%) express no preference. The participants elaborate nativeness is not relevant in this particular case, but emphasize they prefer a teacher who is competent.

I have no preference. It depends more on whether or not someone is actually good at teaching and knows how to transfer content and make it interesting (31).

I would be pleased with both if they are competent enough (24).

I prefer taking a course by a competent and outstanding teachers. It makes no difference to me whether they are a NEST or a NNEST (19).

I do not think that nativeness plays a role in my preference. Personally, teacher's competence and expertise are much more important (2).

Some of the participants hold that individual characteristics of a teacher are the most important prerequisite for ensuring teacher competence. They list motivation, helpfulness and organization as factors ensuring satisfactory performance. They elaborate: "*I don't have a preference, because I think nativeness does not affect teachers' ability to transfer their*

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knowledge. A native speaker could very easily be a bad teacher if they are not motivated, inspired or love their job, just like non-native teachers, The greatness of a teacher lies in their personality and professionality, not their L1" (12) and "*I don't have a preference. For me, some other traits are more important, such as teacher being well educated and prepared, organized and helpful. He/she has to be respectful and should be able to establish both working and friendly atmosphere"* (14).

Besides, 11 participants (27,5%) explain their preference of a NEST and a NNEST depends on the content of a particular course, and elaborate they would prefer a NEST if it is a culture- and literature-related course, while they would opt for a NNEST when being taught grammar and language skills (reading, writing, listening skills).

> *It depends on the teacher, but what is actually most important is the course content. So if I am interested in a course, I will not check whether the teacher is a native speaker when picking it* (23).

> *It depends on the course, if it deals with culture or literature, I would prefer a NEST, and for language or other topics, I would choose a NNEST, because I believe they have more understanding of students' learning strategies and the pace of their learning* (33).

> *I do not have a straight and clear answer here, it depends on the content of the course. For example, if it is a language workshop, I prefer listening to a NNEST, because they are capable of transferring to Croatian (if /when needed) and understand the difficulties their students may encounter; if it is a course related to culture (American culture and civilization), I would rather listen to a NEST, because they can teach things which cannot be found in the textbooks* (34).

Further, there are 9 participants (22,5%) who opted for a NEST and 5 (12,5%) who opted for a NNEST exclusively. Those who opted for a NEST provided the following reasons: 1) authentic language, 2) native pronunciation, 3) broader language knowledge, 4) broader knowledge about culture and history and 5) different approach and concept of courses. Also, the participants emphasize speaking in target language exclusively and greater possibility to communicate and practice speaking skills: "*I prefer a NEST, just because I don't get that many opportunities to listen to a NEST in person, while I have many opportunities to interact with a NNEST*" (3) and "*I would rather take a course held by a NEST. because I think that meaningful conversation and practicing speaking skills are one of the most important aspects of language learning. I feel like a NEST elicits much more interaction from their students*" (14). The participants who opt for a NNEST elaborate they undergo same language process and are, therefore, able to address learners' needs better and use L1 to explain problematic concepts.

> *I would prefer NNESTs, because they can understand learners' problems and their learning progress better. I believe NNESTs are more appropriate models, as the native standard should not apply to EFL students* (17).

> *Generally, I would prefer a NNEST. NNESTs are more aware of the differences between Croatian and English, and are ,therefore, able to adapt their language lesson. As far as content is concerned, NNESTs can devise and implement better coping strategies (e.g. use Croatian versions for certain problematic concepts to make students understand them better). NNESTs would generally have a more analytical approach to language as a whole, which suits my personal preferences* (40).

4.6. Preference for NESTs' or NNESTs' teaching methods

The participants were asked to indicate their preference regarding teaching methods used by NESTs and NNESTs, and to elaborate on their choice. NESTs' teaching methods are preferred by 17,5% of the participants, who provided the following comments:

I prefer learning through exposure, texts, conversation, writing, so I prefer NEST's teaching methods (18).

NEST; because it often turns out (even though it doesn't have to be the case) that they are better at teaching language used in real life situations (20).

I guess NESTs encourage discussions and provide authentic materials, they are not focused on syllabus as much and it is more important to them to have us participate and share opinions on different topics. NNESTs are more focused on language and not so much on the content and do not encourage discussions, so I will go with NESTs (39).

The participants, who elected a NEST, think that NESTs are focused on language in use and speaking skills, provide authentic materials and seem more spontaneous. One of the participants elaborates NESTs' teaching methods would be appropriate at university level as language learning is advanced, while NNESTs should teach English at lower levels (elementary and secondary school). However, some of the participants find NEST's approach too relaxed and report that there were times they needed more explicit instructions than given. Following, one of the participants holds a NEST unable to decide upon and use "...*the most 'correct' methods, because they are almost too proficient and less aware of the rules that govern language*" (25).

As for NNESTs, 15% of the participants opt for their teaching methods and elaborate NNESTs undergo same learning process and, therefore, understand learners better.

> *NNESTs', because they went through the same language learning process, so they know how to help us, they understand us more and can make language learning easier for us* (11).
>
> *NNESTs'; knowing the language does not mean that you are methodologically advanced* (25).

Around 17% of the participants opt for both a NEST and a NNEST and explain they believe both can be effective. They perceive that their teaching is different, but "*...good in different aspects. A NEST gives us more authentic materials and discuss more with us which makes us use language more. A NNEST is not as spontaneous as a NEST, but provides good explanations and makes sure we understand the content*" (8). Few participants claim one could benefit from both and elaborate: "*There should not be this division between a NEST and a NNEST, because both have good and weak points, and they should complement each other*" (23) and that "*the best would be a combination of the two, because there is a benefit from each*" (12). A majority of the participants who opted for both (15%), indicate that they do not perceive any difference in teaching methods of a NEST and a NNEST. The same reason is emphasized by other 15% of the participants, who admit that they do not have preference and claim they perceive their teaching methods quite similar. The largest percentage of the participants (27,5%) holds teaching methods depend exclusively upon an individual teacher and not nativeness per se. Some consider that that much depends upon course content and teacher's pedagogical knowledge.

I think that teaching methods are not connected with nativeness or non-nativeness of a
teacher. Every person will use different methods, based on his/her knowledge of
methods' effectiveness or their own preference (5).

I would not say that the choice of teaching methods depends on whether someone is a
NEST or a NNEST, so I cannot answer this question. I prefer those that give the best
results (10).

I think there is no strict distinction between a NEST and a NNEST teaching methods.
Teaching methods depend upon individuals. For example, one NNEST teacher might
have better teaching methods than some NEST teacher and vice versa, but this cannot
be generalized (35).

4.7. Perceived NESTs' teacher competence

The participants were asked whether they perceive NESTs as more competent to teach
English than NNESTs. The great majority of the participants (85%) disagree, and elaborate
nativeness nor language knowledge ensure teacher competence ("*Knowing the language*
doesn't mean you will be able to teach it" (8)). A number of the participants indicates that
NESTs often lack methodology knowledge.

No. I think the key is methodology, knowing which teaching methods to use. Knowing
the language does not mean you will be able to teach it (8).

Not necessarily, since they still might not know how to teach some aspects of language,
such as grammar, listening or reading, which require more thorough planning and
structuring of lessons, regardless of what your L1 is (20).

No, it takes more than being proficient in a language to be a language teacher, i.e. knowledge of teaching methodology and being able to transfer knowledge of language to the students properly. In this regard, the students might be able to relate more to NNESTs than NESTs, because the native standard should not apply to ESL or EFL students (9).

Some elaborate NESTs might have initial advantage, but indicate it ultimately comes down to an individual person and list the other factors, which are crucial for competence in teaching: 1) social skills, 2) awareness of learners' needs and 3) knowledge of adequate teaching methods. One of the participants holds that the fact a NEST is perceived as more competent is "*a common opinion, but should be seen as a stereotype or even prejudice. This only means that NNESTs are not competent English teachers just because of their L1. I think that to be a teacher, not only an English teacher, it is not enough to be competent in your field. You also need to have some social skills and be able to transfer your knowledge. Someone can be highly proficient in English (i.e. speak fluently, know the vocabulary/grammar), write excellent essays, know a lot about the culture...), but still not know how to get the ideas across*" (36).

I would say that they have a better starting point, but that does not make them more competent to teach EL. The most competent teacher of EL is the one who puts effort in getting to know his/her class, their needs and wishes and accommodates to them accordingly, by utilizing his/her own teaching skills gained from formal and non-formal education (29).

No. NESTs do have a slight advantage because they are native speakers, which is always a plus. However, I don't think that competency is measured solely with that. If

a NEST has no idea how to teach, knows nothing about the content, doesn't know how to evaluate students […] then they are definitely not competent to teach English, even though they are native speakers (14).

Several participants think that both NESTs and NNESTs are competent, but indicate there is a need for an improvement in both NESTs' and NNESTs' teaching and explain: "*A NEST should focus on learning how to teach grammar, while a NNEST should work on expanding vocabulary, pronunciation and providing authentic view on culture*" (28) and "*...there are some aspects NNESTs should take from NESTs, like authentic materials, more discussion and more 'language in use'*" (39).

Following, 7,5% of the participants hold that NESTs are more competent to teach English than NNESTs and elaborate NESTs are "*more confident while teaching and more proficient in their language*" (21) and "*...beneficial to their students learning process. There is no better way to learn a language than to listen to native speakers and communicate with them. After all, that is why we learn languages in the first place*" (18).

4.8. Perceived factors ensuring teacher competence

The participants were asked about the factors affecting competence in teaching, i.e. whether they perceive nativity is important for being a competent teacher, or other factors (personal and professional qualities and pedagogical skills) are more important. All participants elaborate that other factors like personal and professional qualities and pedagogical skills are more important. They indicate "*balance between different competences is what a language teacher should strive for*" (16). While they agree that nativeness might be

an advantage, language proficiency is not sufficient for one to be considered a competent teacher, and they elaborate in detail how they perceive a competent teacher.

> *In my opinion, other factors, such as personal and professional qualities as well as pedagogical skills, are more important while teaching a language. Nativity may be important for some individuals who perceive British/American English as the only varieties that one should strive for, but majority is more interested whether the teacher is charismatic and possesses good and effective teaching skills. Being aware of your weaknesses is very important, because it is a basis for further development and learning (23).*

> *A good teacher needs to have both professional and personal skills. They have to be experts in their field of interest, but also know to communicate, transfer knowledge, recognize students' needs, etc... There is no rule here. It would be wrong to generalize and say that NESTs are better at teaching English, just because it is their L1. Nobody should be privileged. Every person and every professor is unique. regardless of their L1 background (34).*

5. Discussion

The data collected via the questionnaire reveal that the participants do not perceive NESTs superior to NNESTs, and do not agree nativeness ensures teacher competence, which is consistent with the findings obtained by the majority of the presented studies; apart from the research by Alsweed (2012) and Algofaili and Elvas (2017), who found that the participants perceive nativeness a crucial factor in language teaching. When asked whether they perceive a NEST to be more competent to teach English, the participants support their

negative answer with the argument that the crucial prerequisite for being a competent teacher is the knowledge of ELT methodology, i.e. what teaching methods to employ, what the most efficient techniques to transfer particular content are and how to evaluate students (cf. Cheung, 2002). Consequently, the participants emphasize that personal and professional qualities and pedagogical skills are of vital importance for teacher competence. They elaborate that a successful teacher should complete a language teaching course and strive to balance out various components, i.e. have adequate language proficiency, employ effective teaching skills and opt for communicative approach in their lessons. Besides, they emphasize that competent teacher should be highly motivated, flexible and creative, and simultaneously, willing and able to sympathize with learners, identify their needs and adapt teaching to learners' individual progress.

The participants were asked to express their preference regarding NESTs and NNESTs teaching following language skills: pronunciation, speaking skills, listening skills, reading skills, writing skills, vocabulary, grammar and culture. In most cases, they address that they would be pleased with both a NEST or a NNEST to teach them listening skills, reading skills, writing skills and vocabulary. They elaborate their choices by stating those skills seem "more universal" (22), and argument that teacher's success depends not on nativeness, but (individual) competence. Diaz (2001) found that his participants opted for both NESTs and NNESTs to teach them vocabulary, while Algofaili and Elvas's (2017) participants chose both to teach them writing skills. Different results were obtained by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005), whose participants chose a NEST to teach them listening skills and vocabulary and Gutierrez Arvizu (2014), whose participants favor NESTs to teach them listening skills and vocabulary, NNESTs to teach them reading skills and did not express particular preference regarding writing skills. Alghofaili and Elvas (2017) found that the half of the participants opted for both or a NNEST to teach them listening skills. Further, the participants mainly

chose NEST to teach them pronunciation, speaking skills and culture. They elaborate NESTs have a native accent (British or American variety), which is most widely used, show more confidence while speaking, have better language coherence and flow and are, simply, more competent, i.e. superior to NNESTs. They perceive NESTs would expect from students to speak target language exclusively, could offer an insider perspective and provide more information about culture. These results are in line with ones obtained by Reves and Medgyes, (1994), Diaz (2001), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) and Gutierrez Arvizu (2014), but are in contrast with the ones by Algofaili and Elvas (2017), who found the participants did not express preference regarding speaking skills, i.e. half of the participants opted for a NEST and other half for a NNEST. The only language skill the participants prefer to be taught by a NNEST is grammar and they elaborate a NNEST, being learner as well, would provide them with adequate learning strategies, cues and better explanations, as he/she possesses explicit knowledge about grammar (cf. Diaz, 2001; Cheung, 2002; Walkinshaw & Oanah, 2004; Lasgabaster & Sierra, 2005; Chit Cheong, 2009; Liaw, 2012).

The preference for NEST and NNEST teaching different language skills, the participants expressed previously, is supported by perceived strengths and weaknesses of a NEST and a NNEST. They mainly hold a NEST's biggest advantage is standard pronunciation (62,5%), pronounced communicative skills and focus on language in use (32,5%), which explains why the participants prefer NESTs to teach them pronunciation and speaking skills (cf. Samimy & Bruff-Griffler, 1999; Diaz, 2001; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Alsweed, 2012; Gutierezz Arvizu, 2014; Aslan & Thompson, 2016). Following, they (35%) emphasize NESTs' language competence, i.e. being fluent and accurate (cf. Samimy & Bruff-Griffler, 1999; Cheung, 2002; Xiaoru, 2008) and reveal that they are more confident while using the language (cf. Medgyes, 1994; Braine, 1999). The participants (55%) note that the knowledge about culture is one of NESTs' most obvious strengths, the finding which is supported by the

majority of previously mentioned studies and the participants mainly state they prefer to learn about culture from NESTs. Also, the participants (62,5%) describe NESTs as more flexible and spontaneous (cf. Samimy & Bruff-Griffler, 1999; Alsweed, 2012; Algofaili & Elyas, 2017), contributing to authentic aspect of language learning, by providing them with various and authentic materials and support independent learning (cf. Medgyes, 1994; Alsweed, 2012; Alghofaili & Elyas, 2017). Regarding NNESTs' strengths, 77,5% of the participants emphasize the fact NNESTs are language learners as well, which subsequently allows them to predict difficulties in language learning. This is noted by the participants in all previously mentioned studies. Secondly, 37.5% of the participants mention NNESTs' ability to provide learners with useful learning strategies and tricks while learning English, the finding which is obtained in the studies by Lasagabaster and Sierra, (2005), Xiaoru, (2008), Alsweed, (2012), Aslan and Thompson, (2016) and Algofaili and Elyas, (2017). The ability to use L1 and, thus, providing better explanations, is recognized by 35% of the participants (cf. Alsweed, 2012; Alghofaili & Elyas, 2017), while 32,5% mention NNESTs are more emphatic and easier to connect with, which is supported by the findings by Medgyes (1994), Samimy and Bruff-Griffler (1999), Cheung (2002), Xiaoru (2008) and Alghofaili and Elyas (2017).

Regarding the perceived weaknesses, the participants (62,5%) mainly emphasize the fact a NEST is not a language learner, which makes him/her unable to understand why students might struggle with particular language content or dimension. They (22,5%) mention NESTs' lack of explicit knowledge about grammar, which makes them less suitable to teach it, because they "*tend to know grammar intuitively*" (35), and are aware "*when something is used, but not why it is used*" (28). Similarly, the majority of authors found students preferred NNESTs to teach them grammar, apart from Gutierrez Arvizu (2014), whose participants did not express clear preference. The inability to switch to L1 and, thus, provide better explanations of complex terms and draw parallels between language is mentioned by 17,5%

of the participants, followed by NESTs being too demanding (7,5%) and speaking too fast (5%). On the other hand, the participants list the following weaknesses of NNESTs: 60% of the participants emphasize NNESTs often have problems with pronunciation and do not focus enough on speaking skills (17,5%), which might explain why the participants express preference for NESTs to teach them oral dimensions of language (cf. Diaz, 2001; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Aslan & Thompson, 2016). Also, they mention NNESTs' lack of cultural knowledge (cf. Medgyes, 1994) and confidence while using the language (35%) and hold that they rely too much on textbooks (15%), i.e. provide less or no authentic materials (cf. Samimy & Bruff-Griffler, 1999; Sung, 2009 and Alsweed, 2012).

The participants (40%) largely state that they do not have preference regarding a NEST or a NNEST holding a course, but elaborate their primary interest is whether a teacher is competent or not, i.e. able to transfer the knowledge, implement adequate and innovative teaching methods and make lessons interesting. Some consider that learners of different age groups might benefit from different teachers; they elaborate that NNESTs might be more suitable for young learners, as they are able to switch to L1 (cf. Braine, 1999) and propose useful learning strategies for different contents and language skills, while older learners might benefit more from NESTs, as they expect students to speak target language exclusively and are able to initiate more complex interaction (cf. Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Liaw, 2012). Further, 27,5% of the participants deem lesson content important factor, while opting for a NEST's or a NNEST's course. They elaborate that they would prefer to learn vocabulary, literature- and culture-related courses with NESTs, and language-related (grammar) courses with NNESTs (cf. Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Alsweed, 2012).

As for the preference for NESTs' or NNESTs' teaching methods, the biggest percentage of the participants (27,5%) believe that the teaching quality cannot be ascribed to teacher's nativeness or non-nativeness, but depends upon individual teacher and his or her knowledge

of how effective certain learning methods are (whether that knowledge stems from their own learning experience or simply, their own preference). Around 18% of the participants, who opted for a NEST, elaborate they prefer more communicative approach, exposure to authentic materials and praise the emphasis they put on the development of speaking skills and language used in real life situations (cf. Medgyes, 1994; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Sung, 2009; Aslan & Thompson, 2016). The participants (15%) who opted for NNESTs' teaching methods explain that the fact that NNESTs undergo the same language learning process makes them more aware of how the language is learned and, subsequently, taught. They emphasize that NNESTs have explicit knowledge about the language, while NESTs often lack the knowledge about language rules and seem unaware how to teach and practice different language skills. They ascribe this to the fact that NESTs acquire language, rather than having to learn it explicitly (cf. Medgyes, 1999). Furthermore, around 18% of the participants opt for both NESTs' and NNESTs' teaching methods and explain they either do not perceive any differences in their teaching or suggest "*a combination of the two*" (12), i.e. being taught by both NEST and NNEST, would be ideal.

Finally, the obtained findings are in line with the ones found in the majority of the previously conducted research. The participants, to a large extent, do not perceive NESTs as superior to NNESTs, but perceive both NESTs and NNESTs have their own respective strengths and weaknesses (cf. Medgyes, 1994; Samimy & Bruff-Gruffler, 1999; Diaz, 2001; Cheung, 2002; Sung, 2009; Gutierrez Arvizu, 2014; Walkinshaw & Oanah, 2014; Aslan & Thompson, 2016 and Alghofaili & Elyas, 2017). This finding is in contrast to one obtained by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005), Xiaoru (2008) and Alsweed (2012), whose participants show clear preference to be taught by a NEST. All studies found that the participants, while not perceiving exclusively NESTs or NNESTs to be competent teachers by default, express clear preference regarding who they want to teach them different language skills. As it can be seen

from the obtained results, the participants refute the belief that the teacher's nativeness or language proficiency guarantee teacher competence. They emphasize that various different factors (adequate teacher training, professional qualities, language proficiency, knowledge of ELT methodology, pedagogical skills and personal qualities) are of vital importance and, eventually, determine whether students perceive a particular teacher competent or not.

6. Concluding remarks

The present study examined university students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs and investigated whether students prefer NESTs over NNESTs. As it can be seen from the obtained results, the participants do not prefer NESTs over NNESTs, nor they believe NESTs are more competent than NNESTs. Rather, they report both have their respective strengths and weaknesses and regard them distinct (cf. Medgyes, 1994), but "*good in different aspects*" (8). As Urkmez (2015) points out, the effectiveness of a teacher needs to be determined by linguistic, instructional and intercultural competence, not teacher's nativeness and the obtained findings support this idea. The participants are able to specify both efficient and inefficient practices in NESTs' and NNESTs' teaching, and their reported preference for respective groups to teach them different language skills, imply what should NESTs and NNESTs focus on and, ultimately, improve, to enhance their teacher competence.

The insights provided by this research show NESTs' strengths are NNESTs' disadvantages and vice versa. The participants imply NESTs should possess explicit knowledge about language, aim to learn learners' L1, as to be able to compare L1 and L2 and be more aware of learners' position, i.e. understand possible struggles and difficulties learners might face. As for NNESTs, they should work on their pronunciation and focus on interaction in class and the development of learners' speaking skills. Also, they are bound to work on

their confidence while using the language, learn more about the culture and rely less on textbooks, i.e. provide learners with authentic materials. By contrast, the participants praise NESTs' standard pronunciation, language proficiency, advanced communication skills and confidence. They suggest NNESTs should assume NESTs' more flexible teaching approach, focus more on language in use and provide them with abundant authentic materials. As for NNESTs, the participants greatly emphasize their awareness of learners' position, i.e. ability to predict and understand their struggles and deem their abilities to compare L1 and L2 and explicit knowledge about language useful and necessary in both NNESTs' and NNESTs' future teaching practices. As Medgyes (2001) points out, their respective strengths and weaknesses do seem to balance out.

Therefore, it has to be noted that NNESTs are generally perceived to be as capable of delivering efficient instruction as NESTs (cf. Chang, 2016) and their teaching practices are equally (if not distinctly) praised by the participants. Accordingly, that students prefer to be taught by NESTs, the argument for the existing favoritism of NESTs and hiring discrimination against NNESTs, should be refuted. It is visible that the participants' perception of competent language teacher is not determined by teacher's nativeness, but rather his/her other competences, like personal and professional qualities, pedagogical skills and knowledge of ELT methodology. Such findings should encourage changes in overall belief NESTs are superior in knowledge and performance to NNESTs, and lead to changes in both perception and treatment of NNESTs.

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Appendix

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Questionnaire

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The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine students' attitudes toward Native (NEST) and Non-native (NNEST) English teachers and determine whether there is a preference for one group over the another. Please reflect upon your personal experience with NESTs and NNESTs and respond to the following statements and questions as honestly as possible.

Please answer the following questions or encircle the applicable answer.

1. **Gender:**   M   F

2. **Age:** _____

3. **Academic Major:** _____

4. **How long have you been learning English? (Including self-study and private English courses)**

    _____

5. **How would you rate your overall proficiency in English?**
Beginner   Intermediate   Advanced

6. **How many Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) have you had since you started learning English? (approximate number)**

    _____

7. **How many Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) have you had since you started learning English? (approximate number)**

    _____

Perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs' English instruction

1) Respond to the following statements by circling a number that expresses your view the best.

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
STATEMENTS (NNEST)					
1. A NNEST is more capable of predicting students' difficulties in learning English than a NEST.	1	2	3	4	5
2. NNESTs are better models in English learning because they have gone through the same language learning process.	1	2	3	4	5
3. A NNEST provides useful language learning strategies more than a NEST.	1	2	3	4	5
4. A NNEST uses English less confidently than a NEST.	1	2	3	4	5
5. A NNEST's language teaching is more exam-oriented than a NEST's.	1	2	3	4	5
6. A NNEST relies much more on textbooks than a NEST.	1	2	3	4	5
7. A NNEST teaches just as effectively as a NEST.	1	2	3	4	5
STATEMENTS (NEST)					
1. Learning English with a NEST is more interesting and witty than with a NNEST.	1	2	3	4	5
2. A NEST is aware of students' language needs and language learning difficulties just as a NNEST.	1	2	3	4	5
3. A NEST has higher self-confidence using the English language than a NNEST.	1	2	3	4	5
4. A NEST prepares students for independent learning more than a NNEST.	1	2	3	4	5
5. A NEST focuses more on 'language in use' than a NNEST.	1	2	3	4	5
6. A NEST is more flexible in teaching than a NNEST.	1	2	3	4	5
7. A NEST implements more innovative teaching methods in his/her courses than a NNEST.	1	2	3	4	5

2) **Respond to the following statements by putting a check mark (✓) in the column according to your preference (NEST or NNEST). If your answer is both NEST and NNEST, you can put a check mark (✓) in both columns.**

	NEST	NNEST	BOTH
1) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me pronunciation.			
2) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me speaking skills.			
3) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me listening skills.			
4) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me reading skills.			
5) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me writing skills.			
6) I prefer NEST/ NNEST to teach me vocabulary.			
7) I prefer NEST/NNEST to teach me grammar.			
8) I prefer NEST/NNEST to teach me culture.			

Briefly elaborate on each of your answers, i.e. why did you choose NEST, NNEST or both.

3) Respond to the questions below and elaborate on your answers.

1. Do you prefer taking a course held by a NEST or a NNEST? Why?

2. What would you say the strengths and weaknesses of a <u>NNEST</u> are?

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES

3. What would you say the strengths and weaknesses of a <u>NEST</u> are?

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES

4. Do you prefer NEST or NNEST teaching methods?

5. Would you say that NESTs are more competent to teach English? Explain.

6. Is nativity an important factor for being a competent teacher or other factors, such as personal and professional qualities and pedagogical skills, are more important? Elaborate.

THANK YOU!