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Non-native English-speaking English language teachers: History and research

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Although the majority of English language teachers worldwide are non-native English speakers, no research was conducted on these teachers until recently. After the pioneering work of Robert Phillipson in 1992 and Peter Medgyes in 1994, nearly a decade had to elapse for more research to emerge on the issues relating to non-native English teachers. The publication in 1999 of George Braine's book Nonnative educators in English language teaching *appears to have encouraged a number of graduate students and scholars to research this issue, with topics ranging from teachers' perceptions of their own identity to students' views and aspects of teacher education. This article compiles, classifies, and examines research conducted in the last two decades on this topic, placing a special emphasis on World Englishes concerns, methods of investigation, and areas in need of further attention.*

1. Non-native speakers in applied linguistics: revisiting the native/non-native debate

1.1 Introduction

Linguistic theory has traditionally considered native speakers (NSs) as the only reliable source of linguistic data (Chomsky 1965). It is therefore not surprising to find only a limited number of works focusing on non-native speakers (NNSs) prior to the 1990s. The first attempt to put '(non-)nativism' onto the centre stage of linguistic inquiry by challenging current undisputed assumptions on the matter was Paikeday's (1985) *The native speaker is dead*, in which it is argued that the native speaker 'exists only as a figment of linguist's imagination' (Paikeday 1985: 12). Paikeday suggested using the term 'proficient user' of a language to refer to all speakers who can successfully use it. A few years later, Rampton (1990) similarly proposed the term 'expert speaker' to include all successful users of a language.

Davies (1991, 2003) further delved into 'native speaker' identity, and thus formulated the key question of whether a second language (L2) learner can become a native speaker of the target language. His conclusion was that L2 learners can become native speakers of the target

language, and master the intuition, grammar, spontaneity, creativity, pragmatic control, and interpreting quality of 'born' native speakers.

Following a different approach, Piller (2002) noted that one-third of her interviewed L2 users claimed they could pass as native speakers in some contexts. In a similar vein, Inbar-Lourie (2005) found that 50% of the non-native teachers participating in her study felt that other non-native speakers perceived them as native speakers. In other words, Inbar-Lourie's data show that many self-ascribed non-native speakers can actually pass for native speakers in certain situations. Similarly, some self-ascribed NSs in Moussu's (2006) study were taken for NNSs by their students. More recently, Park (2007) analyzed how NNS identities are co-constructed through interaction, and Faez (2007) confirmed that linguistic identities are complex, dynamic, relational, dialogic, and highly context-dependent.

It is necessary, then, to recognize the importance of a speaker's acceptance by a community as one of its members, as it is what will ultimately be determining the social recognition of the NS/NNS identity. This social recognition is often based on judgements of the speakers' accent. People typically display a fairly high ability at spotting accentedness in speech (Munro & Derwing 1994; Fledge, Munro & Mackay 1995; Munro & Derwing 1995). If the speaker's accent is different from the listener's, and this listener cannot recognize it as any other 'established' accent, the speaker will be placed within the non-native speaker category. Thus, even though a dichotomy vision of the NS–NNS discussion does not appear to be linguistically acceptable, it happens to be nonetheless socially present, and therefore, potentially meaningful as an area of research in applied linguistics.

The arguments for the inappropriateness of labelling a certain group of speakers as 'native speakers' notwithstanding, thousands of language teaching jobs, specifying that only NSs will be considered, are advertised in many different countries and educational institutions and contexts, addressing a hypothetical preference by L2 learners for NS rather than NNS teachers,[1] and many NNS teachers are not even considered for ELT jobs (Clark & Paran 2007), in spite of recent studies (Benke & Medgyes 2005; Lasagabaster & Sierra 2005; Pacek 2005; Moussu 2006) showing that many students can appreciate the value of NNSs and do in fact prefer them to NSs in certain contexts and for certain classroom tasks.

The above situation of discrimination against NNS teachers has led an increasing number of people to raise their voices against it. Language discrimination, as is pervasively argued by Lippi-Green (1997), is rarely considered a true discriminatory practice, and judges are inclined to believe that accented speakers may objectively not be suitable for certain jobs in which language plays a key role. With regard to the language teaching profession, however, the myth of the native speaker as the ideal teacher has been deconstructed through showing the lack of substantial evidence behind such a concept. Phillipson (1992) argued that since most NNSs had learned their second language as adults, they were better equipped to teach the L2 to other adults than those who had learned it as their L1 when they were children. Kramsch (1997) further questioned the idealization of NSs and attributed it to the great importance given during the sixties to oral communicative competence in foreign language teaching. In her opinion, non-native teachers should forsake the useless pursuance of nativeness, and

[1] See, for example, Dave's ESL café <http://www.eslcafe.com>.

concentrate on finding their own voices as non-natives, in order to contribute with their own language learning experiences and their multicultural backgrounds:

Whereas students can become competent in a new language, they can never become native speakers of it. Why should they disregard their unique multilingual perspective on the foreign language and on its literature and culture to emulate the idealized monolingual speaker? (Kramsch 1997: 359f.)

1.2 Dichotomy vs. continuum approaches to native and non-native identities

A significant body of the literature on non-native speakers has been devoted to showing the inappropriateness of using a dichotomy approach by which NSs and NNSs are viewed as two opposing and clearly separated constituencies.

Three arguments have been used to attack the legitimacy of this dichotomy: First, every language user is in fact a native speaker of a given language (Nayar 1994), and therefore speakers cannot be divided according to whether they have a given quality (i.e., native speakers) or they do not have it (i.e., non-native speakers), based on whether English is their first language or not. In fact, what this criticism shows is the unfairness of Anglo-centrism, through which English is taken as the only language in the world that deserves attention, and speakers are accordingly classified regarding their relationship with that language: either they belong to the exclusive group of L1 speakers, or they do not. Nayar quite rightly attributes the prevalence of such a dichotomy to linguistic imperialism:

My own view is that in the context of the glossography of English in today's world, the native–non-native paradigm and its implicational exclusivity of ownership is not only linguistically unsound and pedagogically irrelevant but also politically pernicious, as at best it is linguistic elitism and at worst it is an instrument of linguistic imperialism. (Nayar 1994: 5)

The second argument also centres the discussion on English, and focuses on research on World Englishes and indigenized varieties of English around the world (Higgins 2003). Here, the central point is that English has become an indigenized language in many of the countries that Kachru categorized as the Outer Circle (Kachru 1976, 1981), and therefore speakers of English in such countries cannot be dismissed as non-native speakers of English just because they do not speak a centre variety of the language, in the same way as Australian speakers of English are not considered non-native just because their English is neither British nor American. As Mufwene (1998: 112) points out, 'it is misguided to split new varieties of English around the world into those said to be 'native', such as British and American Englishes; and those identified as 'non-native', such as Indian and African Englishes'. Higgins, following Norton (1997) suggests that the concept of 'ownership' can provide an alternative to the NS–NNS dichotomy, as speakers have 'varying degrees of ownership because social factors, such as class, race, and access to education, act as gate keeping devices' (2003: 641).

Finally, the NS/NNS dichotomy has been criticized for its lack of contextualization, on the grounds that it disregards the interdependence between language teaching and the local context where it takes place. Thus, Rampton (1990), J. Liu (1999a), and Brutt-Griffler & Samimy (2001) provided evidence from case studies of individuals who could not easily be

categorized as either native speakers or non-native speakers, as they themselves had problems in stating whether they belonged to one group or another. What these authors claimed was the existence of a continuum that accounted for all possible cases between the two extreme options, each corresponding to the two idealized notions of what traditionally was considered a native speaker and a non-native speaker. According to this view, individuals may stand on any given point along this continuum.

Yet, despite all previous objections to the existence of a NS–NNS dichotomy, some authors have acknowledged the practical convenience of maintaining the distinction between NSs and NNSs, and in fact, all work based on the study of NNS teachers is implicitly accepting the separation between NSs and NNSs. Árva & Medgyes (2000: 356) provide an example of this pragmatic position: 'the term native speaker as opposed to non-native speaker is as widely used in the professional jargon of both teachers and researchers today as ever'. This undoubtedly constitutes a paradox for many researchers who, while working towards the spread of the idea that nativeness is a fairly irrelevant feature in language teaching, at the same time need to accept the division between NS and NNS in order to start constructing their supporting argumentation. Additionally, many speakers consider themselves to be either native or non-native speakers of a given language, and these self-allocations within or outside a linguistic community are frequently used as a way of positioning themselves as members or as aliens in a particular social community.

1.3 English (non-)nativeness in a World Englishes framework

As has been discussed above, although the NS–NNS distinction can be a useful one, it must be stressed that there is still no theoretical evidence for the need to distinguish between these two categories. Indeed, there are several cases of people who, due to the environment where they acquired a particular language, can hardly be classified as either NSs or NNSs of that language, as is the case of bilingual speakers.

One good example of the theoretical incongruity of the term 'native speaker' is the situation that may eventually develop if children in countries where English is a non-native variety learn and use English as their first language (e.g., India, Nigeria). In such a case, we would have a NS of a 'non-native variety'. Similarly, it may be quite difficult to refer to all non-native speakers as though they belonged to a fairly homogeneous group, given the many and very diverse geographical, cultural and linguistic backgrounds they may bring with their non-native status. If we follow Modiano's (1999) argument regarding English as an international language, we may even claim that many NNSs of English are more communicatively efficient speakers of English in international contexts than a great deal of NSs, especially those who speak fairly local or substandard varieties of the language, and whose language is hardly intelligible for speakers of other varieties of English. In other words, many so-called NSs can be far less intelligible in global settings than well-educated proficient speakers of a second language.

In sum, it has been shown in the above section that the two categories, 'NS' and 'NNS', are constructs that have evolved from some roughly intuitive generalization of perceived differences among people with a diversity of expertise and experience as language users.

These two categories fail to reflect the real conditions and level of command of a language by a given speaker, and are sometimes misleading in suggesting that one group of speakers has a superior capacity to communicate efficiently and intelligibly than the other. Given the arguments against the existence of such a categorization, as well as the well-attested differences among language users, it would be wise to deal with them with extreme caution.

2. Research on non-native speakers English Teachers: issues and prospects

2.1 Teacher education in ESL and EFL settings

2.1.1 Students in TESOL programs

It has become recurrent in the last few years to point out the ever-growing number of non-native speakers and learners of English in the world (e.g., Govardhan, Nayar & Sheorey 1999; Graddol 1999, 2006; Crystal 2002, 2003). Braine (1999), J. Liu (1999a), Prodromou (2003), and Graddol (2006) explain that as a result of these escalating demands in English instruction, the majority of trained ESL/EFL teachers in the world must be NNS teachers. Canagarajah (2005) adds that 80% of the English teachers in the world are NNSs. These teachers are used to provide English instruction exclusively in EFL contexts, but now are found occupying teaching positions in English-speaking countries as well.

While many NNSs are trained and remain in their own countries, the number of those who go to English-speaking countries to attend TESOL MA programs is increasing. England & Roberts (1989) surveyed foreign students and program administrators in TESOL MA programs in the United States. They found that about 40% of all TESOL students were NNSs of English, a number corroborated by D. Liu (1999).

In more recent years, Llurda's (2005b) study of 32 TESOL graduate programs in North America noted that 36% of the teacher trainees in those programs were NNSs of English. Of these NNSs, 78% had travelled to the US to attend the TESOL program and were likely to return to their countries after graduation. Polio's (1994) survey of 43 NNSs MA TESOL students also showed that 90% of them planned to return to their countries to teach English after obtaining their degrees.

In contrast, there are no similar studies conducted in the EFL context: Medgyes (1999) estimates that the majority of students in EFL TESOL programs are non-native speakers of English.

2.1.2 The content of TESOL training programs

One point of consideration is whether NNSs receive adequate teacher preparation, specifically addressing their needs. England & Roberts' (1989) study showed that none of the 123 Master's programs they surveyed offered additional or different training for NNSs, mostly because of lack of research in this field as well as limited financial resources of

the schools or departments. Curiously, program administrators recognized linguistic and cultural differences between NSs and NNSs yet did not see a need for special adjustments to accommodate NNSs' needs.

Flynn & Gulikers (2001) explain that in order to better prepare teachers to teach in Intensive English Programs (IEPs), MA TESOL programs should offer courses in both applied linguistics and curriculum design, require all student teachers to do a practicum, and give them the opportunity to observe and teach in different contexts (primary and secondary schools, community colleges, IEPs, etc.). However, a survey of 194 TESOL programs in North America by Govardhan et al. (1999) shows that several of the courses taught in these programs relate only vaguely to English teaching and in particular to teaching English in EFL contexts. Similarly, Polio & Wilson-Duffy (1998) note that few courses in MA TESOL programs address the issues and challenges facing NNSs student teachers planning to go back to their countries to teach English. In the same vein, several scholars (e.g., Braine 1999; D. Liu 1999; Oka 2004; Canagarajah 2005; Holliday 2005) suggest that the theoretical and pedagogical courses taught in North American TESOL programs do not always correspond to what is needed in EFL contexts.

Kamhi-Stein (1999) argues for the inclusion of specific issues related to non-native speakers in language teacher education programs as a way of empowering non-native English speakers of TESOL. Cullen (1994) emphasizes the fact that both NSs and NNSs could benefit from being taught a course in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and culture. Such courses would help future teachers in the areas of vocabulary building, pronunciation, culture, and general fluency (Lee 2004; Lin, Wang, Akamatsu & Riazi 2005). They would also teach the value of collaboration of native and non-native English-speaking teachers, show how to take advantage of their respective strengths and weaknesses (de Oliveira & Richardson 2001, 2004; Matsuda & Matsuda 2004; Gebhard & Nagamine 2005), and sensitize native speakers of English to issues such as culture shock, language learning difficulties, and other intercultural and sociolinguistic issues (Perdreau 1994; Reid 1997; Brady & Gulikers 2004; Pasternak & Bailey 2004).

Llurda (2005b) shows that although practicum supervisors agreed that their NNS student teachers had higher language awareness than NSs, most of them also said that they would recommend NNS to teach primarily low-level classes. Similarly, most practicum supervisors thought their NNSs would feel more comfortable teaching in their own countries rather than in the US. In contrast, many practicum supervisors acknowledged that their program was highly competitive and only accepted the 'cream of the crop', that some of their NNS students were very bright, and that NNSs brought diversity to the program.

Recognizing the assets NNSs bring to TESOL programs, Kamhi-Stein (2004), corroborating Brinton's (2004) findings and suggestions, emphasizes the idea that TESOL programs tailored to the needs of the NNSs of English would increase the future teachers' motivation and therefore their self-esteem. Such programs would allow NNSs to develop an understanding of their own assets, values, and beliefs, and 'promote an improvement of the teacher-trainees competencies' (Kamhi-Stein 2004: 148). As Brinton explains, '[t]eacher educators have the responsibility to assist [NNS student teachers] in gaining a sense of self as teacher, in creating an atmosphere that fosters respect, and in providing guidance in culturally appropriate norms of behavior and discipline' (Brinton 2004: 202).

Moussu (2006) asked 96 native and non-native English-speaking ESL teachers about their overall teacher preparation. Responses showed that several teacher education programs did not allow NNSs to do student teaching (teaching practicum) either in an Intensive English Program attached to the TESOL MA program or at a separate school. This corroborates Reid's (1997) and Mahboob's (2003) observations about the lack of practical training available to many NNSs. Brady & Gulikers (2004) clearly explain that even when positions are available for student teachers to do their practicum, many teacher educators hesitate (or in many cases refuse) to let NNSs apply, fearing that NNS teachers' lack of experience or poor linguistic skills impede the ESL students' learning.

In EFL settings, the situation seems to be quite similar. Medgyes (1999) reports on the Center for English Teacher Training in Budapest, Hungary, where most administrators do not see the need for additional instruction for NNSs of English. NNSs, however, demand additional classes in pronunciation and vocabulary. Berry (1990), Nelson (1992), Eguiguren (2000) and Llurda (2004) support this argument and hope for classes that would increase NNSs' confidence in their language and teaching skills, and as a consequence would facilitate language use in the classroom, address the learners' needs and diverse backgrounds, and present different methodologies to student teachers who intend to teach in other countries of the world and may not necessarily want to learn a monocentric teaching methodology.

Finally, Giauque (1984) felt that NNSs were not the only ones who could become better teachers with better preparation. He explains that even though it is imperative for NNSs to acquire a good knowledge of the language, it is equally essential that NSs gain a good knowledge of contrastive linguistics before being qualified to teach their own language. This argument is supported by Rampton (1990), who states that being born into a language does not mean that one inherently speaks it well. Seidlhofer (1999) complements this view by using the following metaphorical image: 'native speakers know the destination, but not the terrain that has to be crossed to get there; they themselves have not travelled the same route' (238).

2.2 Advantages of native and non-native English speakers in the ESL/EFL classroom

2.2.1 As seen by others

Some of the first reflections regarding the differences between native and non-native speaking ESL/EFL teachers came in the eighties (e.g., Kachru 1981; Pride 1981; Nickel 1985; Coppieters 1987; Kresovich 1988). Edge (1988), for example, advocated for the importance of giving 'real' models (that is, native speakers of the ESL/EFL students' languages) to the students. These 'real' models speak the language of the students natively and have learned to speak English well, as opposed to the 'foreign' models (NSs), who do not share the cultural, social, and emotional experience of the students, a perspective shared later on by McKay (2003).

In the early nineties, Medgyes wrote the first article (1992) comparing native and non-native English-speaking teachers, in which it was stated that

- the ideal NS teacher is the one who has achieved a high degree of proficiency in the learners' mother tongue;
- the ideal NNS teacher is the one who 'has achieved near-native proficiency' in English (Medgyes 1992: 348f.).

Canagarajah (1999) added that NSs will be better teachers in EFL contexts, because of their unique cultural knowledge, whereas NNSs will be better teachers in ESL contexts, because of their multicultural experience. Interestingly, as seen earlier, this claim is not supported at all by TESOL practicum supervisors, who seem to believe that NNS teachers would be better teachers in their own countries (Llurda 2005b).

In a later discussion about NNS teachers' advantages and disadvantages, Medgyes (1994) described six positive characteristics: 1) They provide a good learner model to their students; 2) They can teach language strategies very effectively; 3) They are able to provide more information about the language to their students; 4) They understand the difficulties and needs of the students; 5) They are able to anticipate and predict language difficulties; and 6) In EFL settings, they can use the students' native language to their advantage. Medgyes then explains that if the language 'deficiencies' of the NNS teachers are remedied, native and non-native English-speaking teachers have equal chance to achieve professional success.

After these reflections and discussions, several studies were conducted that investigated the linguistic and pedagogical differences that may exist between native and non-native English-speaking teachers. In comparing expert and novice NSs and NNSs in an EFL context, for example, McNeill (2005) noticed that novice Chinese NNS teachers were very skilled at predicting which words would be easy and difficult to understand for Cantonese-speaking EFL students. Conversely, both expert and novice NS teachers were quite incapable of making accurate predictions. Following Ellis' (2004, 2006) arguments, this might have to do with monolingualism vs. bilingualism rather than native or non-native status of such teachers.[2] When it comes to finding and correcting errors, although Sheorey (1986) claimed that NNSs were often less tolerant of errors than NSs when grading college-level ESL compositions, Porte (1999a) discovered that NSs and NNSs error judgments in an EFL context were rather similar, and he suggested that NNSs living and working overseas for an extended period might incorporate some of the features typically found among NNS teachers (Porte 1999b).

Regarding language awareness, Barratt & Kontra (2000) showed that NS teachers could also easily discourage their students since they are rarely able to make useful comparisons and contrasts with the learners' first language. Additionally, according to Barratt & Kontra, NSs are often unable to empathize with students going through the learning process.

Árva & Medgyes' (2000) results corroborate those obtained by Barratt & Kontra (2000). Their study shows that a unique advantage NNS English teachers have over NS teachers is that they can empathize very well with their students' learning difficulties and understand what it is to be homesick and to experience culture shock (in ESL contexts). Finally, and very importantly, NNS teachers can be greatly admired by their students because they are successful role models and are often very motivated (Lee 2000). As Cook (2005: 57) explains,

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[2] As one of our reviewers kindly pointed out, the assumption that native speakers of English are monolingual speakers is frequent in many of the articles discussed here but is nonetheless wrong.

NNS teachers 'provide models of proficient [L2] users in action in the classroom [and also] examples of people who have become successful [L2] users'. That is, NNSs demonstrate to their students what it is possible to do with a second language and their appreciation for that language and its culture.

In a study that asked US school host teachers for their opinions about the NNS student-teachers who were assigned to their class for their practice teaching, Nemtchinova (2005) described the NNS trainees as having usually a good contact with their ESL students, using correct, authentic, and fluent English in general, and being very well prepared for class although they did not always make good use of class time. The NNS trainees in her study also seemed to build good relationships with their students, understood their needs, communicated well with them, and gave them positive feedback and fair evaluations. Finally, NNS trainees usually seemed to have a sufficient cultural awareness of the target culture and language context. Several host teachers noted, however, that many of the trainees self-evaluated themselves very harshly and sometimes lacked self-confidence.

Looking at the issue from a different perspective, P. K. Matsuda (1997) and Matsuda & Matsuda (2001) explain that rather than comparing competencies or deficiencies, an ideal model for both native and non-native English-speaking teachers would look at all teachers as a 'cooperative learning community and consider their development holistically' (P. K. Matsuda 1997: 13). Instead of looking at NSs and NNSs as two distinct groups, one necessarily better or more qualified to be teachers than the other, Matsuda & Matsuda emphasize cooperation and mutual help between NS and NNS teachers, since both groups of teachers have specific advantages and weaknesses. However, in spite of the existence of successful research experiences on NSs and NNSs cooperation, such as de Oliveira & Richardson (2001, 2004), they are still very difficult to find in the literature.

2.2.2 As seen by themselves

Several scholars have asked non-native teachers, student-teachers, and teacher educators directly for their opinions and self-perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses. For example, Reves & Medgyes (1994) conducted a study that showed that the perpetual fear of their students' judgment made the participating 216 non-native English-speaking EFL teachers feel constantly self-conscious of their mistakes. According to Reves & Medgyes' participants, this 'self-discrimination' often leads to a poorer self-image, which further deteriorates language performance, which, in turn could lead to an even stronger feeling of inferiority.

This point of view may seem extreme, and yet other language teachers, new teachers of all languages, or any teacher with poor self-esteem, might experience similar feelings. It is interesting to notice, however, that it seems acceptable for NS teachers to make some occasional mistakes while teaching, or not to know all the details about the English language (Amin 2004). In contrast, when NNS teachers make the same mistakes or do not know everything about the English language, their teaching abilities and competencies are often immediately questioned (Canagarajah 1999, 2005). This attitude from the students, NS colleagues, and often even from the NNS teachers themselves, will often lead to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubts (Braine 2004; Morita 2004).

In another study about self-perception, Samimy & Brutt-Griffler (1999) investigated how seventeen non-native English-speaking TESOL graduate students perceived themselves as future NNS teachers. While all the participants were currently students in a TESOL program, several of them were, or had been, teaching ESL or EFL for a number of years. The respondents seemed to be aware that factors such as the age and level of the students, the goals and objectives of the program, and the personality and teaching skills of the teachers made a significant difference in how successful a teaching/learning experience could become.

Participants to the Samimy & Brutt-Griffler (1999) study also felt that it was sometimes harder for them to feel qualified and appreciated in an ESL context, where their competences are more often questioned. In contrast, they thought it easier to see themselves as role models 'in social, cultural, emotional, or experiential terms' (138) and to be valued and respected as professionals when teaching in their own countries.

Amin (1997) interviewed five 'visible minority' women about their teaching experiences in Canada. These women believed their students thought that only Caucasian teachers could be native speakers of English. They also believed that only Caucasian native speakers of North American English could know 'real' and 'proper' English. Consequently, those teachers felt constantly judged and compared with native, white, teachers (see Holliday 2008 for similar concerns). Gender also seemed to be a serious issue for women teachers who have difficulties establishing their authority. According to Amin, ESL students' referent thus seems to be a white, native-English-speaking Anglo male. This attitude towards 'whiteness', as well as its resulting conflicts with identities and legitimacy, was also felt by Golombek & Jordan's (2005) interviewees.

A few other studies were conducted on teachers' self-perceptions. J. Liu (1999a, 2005) investigated the thoughts and perceptions of university ESL faculty members and graduate students responsible for the teaching of undergraduate courses. His results show that their teaching experiences were affected by: the level of students (graduate students respected and admired NNSs more than undergraduates did), the race and accent of the teachers, the course the NNSs were teaching, and the teachers' individual teaching methods. Similar results were obtained by Tang (1997) and Moussu (2002, 2006) (see also Moussu & Braine 2006), who found that non-native ESL and EFL teachers experienced different reactions from students coming from different countries.

Maum (2003) asked 80 primary and secondary school teachers about their beliefs and experiences as native and non-native ESL teachers in adult education. Her study showed that NNS teachers, more than NS teachers, found the ESL teachers' cultural background and training in linguistics to be very important, and also that including cross-cultural issues into the teaching of ESL had much value. Surprisingly, the NS teachers in this study were not aware of any discrimination against NNS teachers, while NNS teachers clearly expressed their frustration towards their isolation and 'marginalization in the profession' (162).

In another study, Kamhi-Stein, Aagard, Ching, Paik & Sasser (2004) asked 55 native English-speaking and 32 non-native English-speaking primary and secondary school teachers about their self-confidence in speaking and teaching English. Both NSs and NNSs seemed to be confident in their language skills, although NNS teachers' responses were slightly less positive than NS teachers'. A surprising result was that NNSs did not rate their pronunciation

and communication skills as negatively as expected, while grammar was not ranked as NNSs' strongest skill, a result contradicting previous findings but later corroborated by Moussu (2006), who followed up on Kamhi-Stein et al.'s (2004) study.

In a very different context (Spain), Llurda & Huguet (2003) asked 101 non-native English-speaking EFL teachers in primary and secondary schools about their perceived language skills, pedagogical skills, and views on issues related to the NS–NNS teacher debate. Secondary teachers perceived their English skills as overall higher than those of primary teachers, and they held a more critical position regarding the NS–NNS teacher debate, expressed through a more supportive attitude towards NNS teachers and a lower dependence on the native speaker as the ultimate model in language teaching. In the same context, Llurda (forthcoming) found that length of time spent in English-speaking countries was a significant factor in determining NNS teachers' self-perceptions. Supporting Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck & Smit's (1997) results pointing to a more critical attitude on teachers with long stays abroad, Llurda (forthcoming) found that NNSs teachers who had never or hardly ever stayed in English-speaking countries were more eager to support the native speaker as the ideal teacher, and British English as the variety they would like their students to end up speaking, as opposed to American English, or International English.

In another EFL context (Greece), Sifakis & Sougari (2005) asked 421 teachers about pronunciation issues such as their attitude towards their own accent or the frequency of feedback on pronunciation. They found differences in the frequency of pronunciation feedback given by NNS primary and secondary teachers, and they additionally observed that the adoption of a model of English pronunciation according to the notion of English as an International language (Jenkins 2000, 2007) was not considered.

In Turkey, Dogancay-Aktuna (forthcoming) asked 21 non-native English-speaking teacher educators about their status as non-native speakers of English, professional identities, and self-perceived skills. Most of these participants rated their language skills and competences in English as high, overall, although some noted a need to improve their knowledge of idiomatic expressions and conversational English. At the same time, slightly more than half of the participants had experienced prejudice because of their non-native status and many felt that this status was disadvantageous to their professional careers and teaching experience. They agreed, however, that being NNSs in an EFL context allowed them to understand the issues related to this context better than if they were NSs of English. Bayyurt (2006), who interviewed 12 Turkish NNS teachers about their beliefs regarding the teaching of culture in the EFL classroom, additionally showed that NNS teachers were aware that EFL students regarded them as good language learning models and guides.

In the Japanese context, Butler (2007) investigated Japanese elementary school teachers' attitudes towards the privileged status of NS English teachers and their self-evaluations of their English proficiency. First, she found out that approximately 60% of her 112 respondents supported the notion that native speakers of English were the best ESL/EFL teachers and only 13% did not. These teachers also believed that 'standard English' only (British and American English) should be taught to EFL students. Second, her respondents self-evaluated themselves as having stronger reading skills than writing and oral (fluency, grammar, and vocabulary) skills. Interestingly, the teachers who believed they had the lowest English proficiency were also those who most strongly believed that English was best taught by NSs.

A different approach to NNS teachers' self-perceptions was taken by Ellis (2002, 2004), who focused on NNS teachers in Australia as multilingual speakers and the advantages reported by their multilingual condition. Her findings show that both NSs and NNSs multilingual teachers have 'more in common with each other than with the monolingual teachers' (Ellis 2004: 96), an element that, as the author points out, has several implications for further research into the NS–NNS dichotomy.

An overall pattern is apparent in all the studies discussed above, as it becomes clear that if NS and NNS teachers perceive their strengths and weaknesses differently, it is not always clear as to how and why.

2.3 Attitudes and beliefs of ESL and EFL students

Although native and non-native teachers can bring interesting and useful insights about their perceived differences, strengths, and weaknesses, they cannot always be objective judges of how their students perceive them. This is why several studies have investigated ESL students' attitudes and beliefs about NS and NNS teachers in different settings.

Some of the first studies on non-native English-speaking ESL/EFL teachers and the opinions of their students were Master's theses and doctoral dissertations carried out at the beginning of this decade. Moussu's (2002) project, for example, was conducted based on the assumption that ESL students at a US university would not like to be taught by NNS teachers at first, but might change their mind with time and exposure to NNS teachers. The 97 ESL participants answered two questionnaires, one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end. Results showed that the first language of both the students and their teachers made a significant difference in how teachers were judged. Korean and Chinese students held the most negative attitudes towards their NNS teachers, while NNS teachers who sounded and looked 'foreign' were less appreciated by their students than NNS teachers who looked or sounded more like native speakers of English. In addition, students who intended to go back to their countries after their ESL studies held a more negative attitude towards NNS teachers than students who wanted to stay in the US for a longer period of time. Finally, students' attitudes towards NNS teachers were not as negative as expected at the beginning of the semester and had become quite positive by the end of the semester. Later, Moussu (2006) repeated her first study on a much larger scale (with 1600 ESL students) and confirmed her initial results.

Another MA study, regarding teacher accent, was conducted by Liang (2002) at California State University, Los Angeles. Liang investigated the opinions of 20 ESL students towards six ESL teachers, five of whom were non-native English speakers from different language backgrounds and one of whom was a native speaker. Data was collected through questionnaires asking students for their opinions about their teachers' accents. The results showed that accent did not negatively affect students' attitudes toward their NNS teachers. In fact, the students held generally positive attitudes toward the teachers and believed that accent was not as problematic as expected. Additionally, personal and professional features, such as 'being interesting', 'being prepared', 'being qualified', and 'being professional', played a central role in students' opinions of their teachers, and students appeared to base their

opinions more on the level of professionalism than on the language background of their teachers.

For his doctoral dissertation, Mahboob (2003; see also Mahboob 2004 and Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman & Hartford 2004) conducted another study on student's perceptions. Using questionnaires with open-ended questions, he asked 32 students enrolled in an intensive English program to write about their native and non-native teachers. The analysis of the responses showed that both NS and NNS teachers received positive and negative comments. Native speakers were praised for their oral skills, large vocabulary, and cultural knowledge, but criticized for their poor knowledge of grammar, their lack of experience as ESL learners, their difficulties in answering questions, and their teaching methodology. Non-native speakers were valued for their experiences as ESL learners, and the respondents also recognized their knowledge of grammar and their 'stricter methodology,' hard work, ability to answer questions, and literacy skills. Unsurprisingly, as with Moussu (2002), negative responses about NNSs included poorer oral skills and lack of knowledge about the 'English-speaking' culture.

Kelch & Santana-Williamson (2002) conducted a much more focused research study. They aimed to determine if ESL students could identify a native from a non-native accent and if they held a more positive attitude towards teachers with 'native' accents. The researchers used audiotape recordings of three native speakers of different varieties of English and three non-native speakers reading the same script. Fifty-six students identified each reader as NSs or NNSs, and rated them with an attitude questionnaire on issues of 'teacher education and training, experience, teacher likeability, teaching expertise, desirability as a teacher empathy for students, and overall teaching ability' (Kelch & Santana-Williamson 2002: 61). The results showed that students were able to correctly identify native and non-native speakers of English in only 45% of the occasions, and that their perception of the teachers' nativeness strongly influenced the attitudes they held towards them. Additionally, teachers who were perceived as native speakers were seen as more likeable, educated, experienced, and overall better teachers, especially for speaking/listening skills. However, students also mentioned the importance of NNS teachers as role models, source of motivation, and language learners who understood students' learning difficulties.

In the EFL context, Cheung (2002) (see also Cheung & Braine 2007) studied the attitudes and opinions of university students in Hong Kong towards NSs and NNSs, the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers from the perspective of students, and the capability of these teachers to motivate students. Cheung used questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and post-classroom interviews to collect her data. The questionnaire was distributed to 420 undergraduates from a variety of majors at seven universities. Ten students and twenty-two university English teachers from different universities were interviewed. The results showed that language proficiency and fluency, as well as cultural knowledge, were especially appreciated with native-speaking teachers. In the case of NNS teachers, their ability to empathize with students, a shared cultural background, and their stricter expectations were seen as strengths. As with previous studies, participants agreed that professional skills (such as knowledge of their subject, preparation, being able to make lessons interesting and fun and to motivate students, etc.) were more essential than language skills.

In a study somewhat similar to that of Kelch & Santana-Williamson (2002), Butler (2007) asked young Korean students to evaluate different accented tape-recordings of the same person in order to investigate if a foreign-accented teacher was perceived more negatively than an American-accented teacher and which qualities or weaknesses were associated with the foreign-accented teacher. Her results showed that the American-accented teacher was perceived as being more confident and fluent in English and had a better pronunciation. In addition, the American-accented teacher was preferred over the foreign-accented teacher by the participants, but there did not seem to be a significant difference in students' comprehension of these two teachers. Similarly, ESL students in Kim's (2007) study seemed to prefer ESL teachers with a less foreign accent, which they perceived as easier to understand, although Kim's results also show that students actually understood NNSs as correctly as they did NSs, indicating that students' perceptions of intelligibility did not always correspond to the reality and that negative attitudes towards NNSs did not necessarily affect intelligibility.

Looking at the above issues from a different perspective, Barratt & Kontra (2000) investigated the opinions of one group of students in Hungary and another in China, by asking them to free-write about their experiences with their teachers. Positive comments made about NNSs teaching in foreign cultures included language authenticity, knowledge of culture, positive and humorous personalities, a more relaxed attitude toward error correction, and the use of new teaching methodologies. Negative comments made about these NS teachers included lack of pedagogical and professional preparation, poor teaching styles, lack of organization and preparation, poor knowledge of the local culture and educational values, problems with different English accents, and poor understanding of students' learning difficulties.

The most recent papers published on students' perceptions on NNS teachers are to be found in Llurda (2005a): Benke & Medgyes (2005) present a comparative analysis of students' opinions regarding NS and NNS teachers based on a Likert-scale questionnaire. Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) complement their previous study (2002) with a detailed account of students' responses to an open-ended questionnaire, in which they were asked about the pros and cons of NS and NNS teachers. Finally, Pacek (2005) conducts a more personal study of two groups of ESL students taught by the same NNS teachers at a British university. Overall, the results are positive regarding the attitude of students towards the NNS teachers.

From these results, it appears that students do not seem to have a strongly negative attitude towards their ESL/EFL non-native English-speaking teachers in general and recognize that experience and professionalism are more important than native language backgrounds. Most importantly, these studies also show that different contexts and variables could influence students' attitudes towards NS and NNS teachers.

2.4 Beliefs and practices of intensive English program administrators

Very little research has looked into IEP administrators' attitudes towards NNS teachers, as well as their hiring practices and beliefs. These programs are very common in US universities as they are useful in providing intensive English teaching to foreign students who do not

have the required level of proficiency to follow regular studies in that university. This lack of extensive research about IEPs may be due to the lack of unity among IEPs, which are organized and administered completely differently from one university to the other, or to a tradition of doing research IN IEPs but not ABOUT IEPs.

Flynn & Gulikers (2001) wrote an article from the IEP administrator's perspective, addressing issues that influence the hiring of ESL teachers and more specifically NNSs. They explain that excellent writing and oral skills are important, as well as a good understanding of American culture and adequate education in TESOL or Applied Linguistics. Important too is experience, especially in EFL contexts. Flynn & Gulikers also explain that in order to better prepare teachers to teach in IEPs, MA TESOL programs should offer courses in both applied linguistics and curriculum design, require all student teachers to do a practicum, and give them the opportunity to observe and teach in different contexts (primary and secondary schools, community colleges, IEPs, etc.). At the same time, good IEP administrators should always provide mentors to new teachers, both NSs and NNSs.

After surveying several IEP and TESOL program administrators, Reid (1997) noticed that several IEP administrators had concerns about the ethics of providing ESL teachers who were not qualified to teach students who were paying a lot of money to learn English. A remarkable conclusion reached by several TESOL program and IEP administrators who participated in that survey was that these two groups of administrators spoke different languages, had different goals, were 'fundamentally different' (Reid 1997: 26), and could not reach a common ground.

Mahboob (2003, 2004) asked a large number of IEP administrators for their hiring criteria. Of the 122 administrators who responded, 59.8% considered 'native English speaker' to be an important or somewhat important criterion when hiring ESL teachers. Furthermore, a correlation analysis showed that the more importance administrators gave to 'native English speaker', the smaller the ratio of NNSs working in those programs was.

Finally, Moussu (2006) asked 25 IEP administrators about how they perceived NS and NNS teachers' strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, the respondents readily recognized NNSs' pedagogical skills and praised them for their '[knowledge on] how to use multiple techniques,' and 'curricular flexibility', as well as their 'strong collegiality', 'dedication', 'creativity in the classroom' and high academic and proficiency standards and expectations for students. On the other hand, the participating administrators identified three major weaknesses in NNSs: foreign accent, 'over-dependence on didactic presentation of grammar' or 'focusing too much on grammar', and lack of self-confidence. Several administrators noted, however, that few of these weaknesses were particular to NNSs and that hiring NSs was often a political and money-driven move. (Interestingly, Holliday (2008) provides a very strong response to the claim that 'the customers' demand native speakers only by arguing that such discrimination would never be accepted if 'the customers' demanded only male teachers or white teachers.) Additionally, when asked about hiring criteria, the participating administrators explained that past teaching experience, degrees in language education, international experience, and native-life fluency in English were factors that they looked for in their teachers.

3. Theoretical and practical implications

3.1 Native and non-native speakers' status and empowerment

In 1992, Phillipson formulated the concept of 'linguistic imperialism' and denounced the 'native speaker fallacy,' that is, the belief that 'the ideal teacher is a native speaker' (185). Responding to this fallacy, Medgyes (1994) discussed the notion that non-native speakers of a language, in spite of their potential linguistic barriers, have certain qualities that native speakers of English do not possess. Canagarajah (1999) also explained how the notion of 'native speaker' had become obsolete in a modern world where people are often native speakers of more than one language or more than one variety of a language, and where linguistic boundaries are no longer clear.

Building on these beliefs, Braine (1999) and Kamhi-Stein (2004) added that both NS and NNS teachers were necessary and even indispensable in contexts where they could collaborate and use their skills and competencies to the fullest. Finally, in 2005, Canagarajah re-examined the distinction between native and non-native speakers and concluded that it simply did not apply anymore, not only because of the definition of the words but also because of globalization and the intense mix of cultures currently taking place in the postmodern world, which does not mean that all speakers of English will speak the same variety, preferably an INNER CIRCLE variety (Kachru 1981), but that speakers of multiple varieties of English will have to communicate and negotiate more often and better than before.

Canagarajah's beliefs appear to be confirmed by students' responses in Higgins (2003), particularly when they are analyzed by variables, such as gender, first languages, etc. Responses grouped by teachers' first languages, for example, seemed to suggest that students' classifications of NSs and NNSs may not always correspond to the teachers' own classification of their (non-)nativeness or even to linguists' classifications. Similarly, students' responses did not match the common preconception that NNSs are the best Grammar teachers and NSs are the best Speaking/Pronunciation teachers. Judging teachers' pedagogical and linguistic skills on a construct that can no longer be unmistakably defined thus seems unwise and, in light of this study's results, unfounded. English-teaching proficiency must be seen as a 'plural system' that abandons the notion of native versus non-native speakers and adopts instead the distinction between, for example, 'novice and expert' teachers (Tsui 2003; Canagarajah 2005). That is, a 'good language teacher' in addition to mastering a combination of linguistics, pedagogical, and methodological skills will need to have experienced the process of acquiring and using a new language in order to understand students' learning process and experiences (Ellis 2006).

This change of perspective is slowly becoming visible through, for example, TESOL's 'Statement on non-native speakers of English and hiring practicing' (TESOL 1992, also found in Braine 1999: xxi) and 'Resolution on discrimination' (TESOL 2006), as well as the creation of 'Centers for English Language Training' in South-East Asian countries to respond to local needs with local tools, as proposed at the ASEAN conference in December 2005 (Graddol 2006).

3.2 Classroom implications

Classroom implications include what needs to be done to give all the necessary tools to NSs and NNSs so that they are able to meet the expectations of the ESL and EFL students. Indeed, the literature discussed above shows a distinct need for TESOL preparation programs offering additional courses tailored especially for future NNS teachers but also for NS teachers. This need is recognized by student teachers (Moussu 2006), language educators (Kamhi-Stein 2000; Golombek & Jordan 2005), and language program administrators (England & Roberts 1989; Flynn & Gulikers 2001; Llurda 2005b). Such classes could help ensure not only that future ESL/EFL teachers will be ready pedagogically for their teaching assignments but also that native speakers of English become aware of their strengths and weaknesses and learn to collaborate with NNSs to offer the best they can offer. This preparation and collaboration of both NSs and NNSs is particularly important when NSs will be teaching in countries where English is not the main language and where NNSs may be at a distinct advantage (Medgyes 1994; Govardhan et al. 1999; Dogancay-Aktuna forthcoming). At the same time, recognizing, and working with the multiple identities of native and non-native ESL/EFL future teachers would help establish their legitimacy as teachers (Golombek & Jordan 2005).

Regarding what takes place in the ESL/EFL classroom, the implications of the above discussions and studies are numerous, although some studies seem to contradict each other. In general, however, in view of the place English holds in the world (Kachru 1986, 1992; Crystal 2003; Dürmüller 2003) and the fact that globalization is still shaping the workplace (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja 1998; Graddol 2006) and language curriculums around the globe (St. John 1987; Murray & Dingwall 1997; Block & Camedon 2002; Dürmüller 2003; Gnutzmann & Intemann 2005), it seems that exposing ESL and EFL students to multiple accents and culture can only be beneficial to them. No study has demonstrated that ESL/EFL students see NNS teachers in a negative light, although the myth of the native speaker seems to hold strong among students and teachers as well.

Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink (2007) explain that youth plays an important role in today's globalization and the spread of English. Indeed, English is strongly influencing the lives of children and young adults to face a world where the economy, educational reforms, politics, culture, and societies at large are shaped by their knowledge (or lack of knowledge) of English. It seems doubtful, however, that this knowledge of English will be restricted to one single variety of the language. Instead, new varieties of 'Englishes' are emerging throughout the world (Kachru 1992; Modiano 1999; Seidlhofer 1999; Jenkins 2000; Mesthrie 2006; Berns et al. 2007; Jenkins 2007) with words, expressions, accents, sociolinguistic rules, and even grammatical rules transformed and adjusted to fit the different contexts.

Taking into consideration the above changes in the use of English today, it seems crucial not to teach ESL/EFL students one single accent or model. Instead, it becomes imperative to present them with a large array of English varieties represented by teachers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Jenkins 2000, 2007). Then, as Bentahila & Davies (1989) explain, ESL/EFL students can make a choice and decide for themselves what is most relevant to their experience and context.

4. Methods of research: past, present and future

4.1 Research methods in the study of native and non-native speakers

The study of non-native English-speaking teachers has only recently enjoyed wide attention from researchers and language teaching professionals. A quick glance at the reference list section at the end of this paper will be enough to observe that most of the work on this topic has been conducted within the last decade. The relative youth of this research area is unquestionably one of the elements that has characterized the methods used in those studies. In other words, the lack of past experience researching non-native teachers has determined the simplicity of some research designs, and in some cases a rather 'naive' approach. Additionally, the intrinsic characteristics of the subject under study have also conditioned the orientation of studies and the methods used. Researchers on NNSs are not involved in the study of a language phenomenon or a language teaching procedure, or even a particular behaviour, but do instead focus on the characteristics of a diverse group of people whose professional activity consists in teaching a second or foreign language. There is a clear-cut difference between 'describing and interpreting a particular activity or feature' and 'describing and interpreting the characteristics of a group of professionals', which suggest access to those professionals' inner self, a rather unattainable goal.

Therefore, existing research on NNS teachers is lacking in many aspects, and still needs to move further and beyond its current achievements. However, as this section will show, it has already advanced a lot from its early attempts to the wide range of studies conducted during the latest few years.

It is not our intention here to get into the debate between the convenience of using quantitative vs. qualitative methods of research in applied linguistics, but it seems necessary to insist on the need to complement the insights provided by qualitative research, represented for instance by a micro-analysis of a group of people, with the results obtained through comparison of groups, based on a set of previously established hypotheses and research questions. Although we are aware of the impossibility of achieving total objectivity in the social sciences, the degree of objectivity obtained through the latter method combines perfectly with the detailed perspective obtained within a qualitative approach. We are convinced that no research agenda can work without contemplating both paradigms, as they do need each other. It is this evidence, however, that makes us claim the urgent need for more data-driven quantitative empirical studies, as this has been so far the less trodden path in studies on NNS teachers.

Looking back at what has been done so far, we may identify five different types of studies dealing with non-native teachers:

1) non-empirical reflections on the nature and conditions of NNS teachers
2) personal experiences and narratives
3) surveys
4) interviews, and
5) classroom observations

4.1.1 Non-empirical reflections on the nature and conditions of non-native speakers

Some of the key concepts that would later characterize the literature on NNS teachers were already present in the earlier writings by Medgyes (1983, 1986), and constituted a central element in his book (Medgyes 1994), which set the basis for more extensive research, and gave the topic a new status as a subject suitable for scientific investigation.

Looking back at the research methods used, it is quite striking to observe that a large number of studies are based on non-empirical think-pieces that stress the need to reconsider the role of non-native language teachers and to value their important contribution to the teaching of languages worldwide (e.g., Greis 1984; Seidlhofer 1996; Amin 1997; Braine 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy 1999; Lee 2000; Llurda 2004; Derwing & Munro 2005; Modiano 2005; Rajagopalan 2005).

As important as these pieces of writing have been for the development of a research agenda on issues related to NNS teachers, the excessive reliance on this kind of work poses a clear danger to the field, with the likely scenario of authors running out of new views and the field ending up with an inflationist repetition of the same ideas in different words and by different authors. As necessary as it still may be to raise awareness on the importance of being a non-native teacher (Seidlhofer 1996), the field should not stay forever wondering about the need to increase NNSs' prestige and professional self-esteem, if we want to consolidate the area as one of the most active current research topics in the language teaching profession (Bailey 2001). It is only natural, then, that research on non-native teachers is becoming more sophisticated and ambitious in trying to further explore the characteristics of this group of teachers, as well as exploring new lines and new methods of research. Failing to do so would only lead to an abandonment of interest in NNS teachers by the applied and educational linguistics research community.

4.1.2 Personal experiences and narratives

Besides theoretical thinking and analysis of characteristics of non-native teachers, some researchers have centred their work on sharing their personal experiences as successful non-native teachers. These narrative accounts (e.g., Braine 1999, 2005; Connor 1999; Thomas 1999; de Oliveira & Richardson 2001, 2004) have typically been intended to become sources of inspiration for other non-natives, who can see their own personal experiences reflected more clearly in such an account than in a set of figures coming from a more formally complex empirical study. Narratives are an excellent way to describe a situation or experience, giving it full internal coherence, in such a way that the narrated story becomes a transforming reality in itself as the epitome of all other untold stories shared by all readers who can see themselves reflected in it (Pavlenko 2007). The role of narratives as a way of establishing a tradition, and ultimately creating reality was clearly discussed by Bruner (1991), who compared their explanatory power to that of positivist scientific research methods:

Unlike the constructions generated by logical and scientific procedures that can be weeded out by falsification, narrative constructions can only achieve 'verisimilitude'. Narratives, then, are a version of reality whose

acceptability is governed by convention and 'narrative necessity' rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness, although ironically we have no compunction about calling stories true or false. (Bruner 1991: 5)

This approach to NNS teachers' reality, or rather, this way of constructing the reality of NNS teachers, has given us a few individual stories which have become the 'tokens of broader types' (Bruner 1991: 6). Although some of these narratives have appeared in non-research publications, others have made their way into more research-oriented environments (e.g., Braine 2005; Bayyurt 2006). The adoption of narratives as a research mechanism constitutes a very positive outcome in language teaching research. However, research on NNS teachers still needs widespread recognition, and to become well established by the research community it needs to be complemented by more studies using quantitative data collection methods which follow the empirical conventions established in the social sciences.

4.1.3 Surveys

Once researchers interested in the development of current understanding of NNS teachers moved beyond the theoretical personal analysis of their professional situation, it became obvious that more empirical data was needed. The subjective nature of previous research needed the complement of more objective accounts, based on quantitative approaches that provided numerical data that could help legitimize the scientific nature of this area of study.

Surveys have proved to be a very popular method of research since Reves & Medgyes (1994) asked NNS teachers about their self-perceptions. Many other studies have later resorted to the use of surveys (e.g., Cheung 2002; Moussou 2002; Llurda & Huguet 2003; Mahboob 2003, 2004; Kamhi-Stein et al. 2004; Llurda 2005b; Nemtchinova 2005; Bayyurt 2006; Moussu 2006; Dogancay-Aktuna forthcoming), certainly up to a point where it may be agreed that a certain saturation of questionnaires and surveys has already been reached. One of the agreed problems with surveys is the extraordinary facility with which one may come up with a questionnaire and implement it with a ready-made group of participants. As Dörnyei (2003) explains, it is rather easy to prepare a questionnaire, but preparing and implementing a good questionnaire is a much more difficult task. Dörnyei provides some basic elements that are needed for the design of questionnaires that can contribute to research in the social sciences by moving beyond the simplicity of asking a set of ad-hoc questions to a group of people available to the researcher. Still, it must be acknowledged that one of the main values of research on non-native teachers based on this method has been its capacity to document aspects that previously had only been pointed out through reflection and reports on personal experiences. Questionnaires also allow to report on very large numbers of participants and to duplicate studies easily, and therefore, they must be credited for providing the first empirical accounts on the nature and perceptions regarding non-native language teachers: as seen by students (e.g., Cheung 2002; Lasagabaster & Sierra 2002; Moussu 2002; Higgins 2003; Benke & Medgyes 2005; Lasagabaster & Sierra 2005; Pacek 2005; Moussu 2006) by program administrators and supervisors (e.g., Mahboob 2003; Llurda 2005b; Nemtchinova 2005; Moussu 2006); or by NNS teachers themselves (e.g., Reves & Medgyes 1994; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler 1999;

Inbar-Lourie 2001; Cheung 2002; Liang 2002; Llurda & Huguet 2003; Mahboob 2003; Maum 2003; McKay 2003; Kamhi-Stein et al. 2004; Inbar-Lourie 2005; Moussu 2006; Llurda forthcoming).

A more careful analysis of those questionnaires, however, would show that many of them do not comply with some of the requirements determined by Dörnyei (2003). Reves & Medgyes (1994), for instance, distributed their questionnaires among representatives of The British Council in different countries on the five continents who were in turn asked to distribute them among both native and non-native teachers. The fundamental breakthrough of that study in opening the field of applied linguistics to research on non-native professionals notwithstanding, it is now obvious that such a method incorporated some flaws, particularly when one looks at such issues as the selection of participants. Current surveys tend to control the identity of participants in an attempt to obtain more reliable and valid results (e.g., Lasagabaster & Sierra 2002; Maum 2003; Benke & Medgyes 2005). This effort to reach higher degrees of objectivity is not incompatible with the tendency in some recent questionnaires to incorporate open-ended questions (e.g., Mahboob 2003; Maum 2003; Lasagabaster & Sierra 2005; Moussu 2006), which allow respondents to express their views on the matter without the constraints posed by closed questions previously established by the researcher, with no margin for respondents to incorporate their own intuitions and perceptions.

4.1.4 Interviews

Another fruitful method that has been implemented in research on non-native language teachers is based on the use of personal interviews, which have proved very rich in providing insights into the minds of NNS teachers and related people. The following extract from Holliday (2005) is an excellent example of the great explanatory power of interviews, which convey a direct view of the minds of the subjects under study:

I can speak and understand English, Urdu, Arabic, Punjabi, Sindhi, and French (in order of proficiency) but I can only read and write in English and Arabic. I have to struggle with Urdu but if I try I can manage to read and write it. I have studied English as a first language and Arabic as the second language; never studied Urdu in school. I don't know myself what I am. If I'm a 'non-native' speaker of English then I don't know what is my native language. Yet, I'm not a native speaker by many linguists' definitions. (Holliday 2005: 34)

Interviews with NNESTs have been conducted in different formats: face-to-face, by email, or by telephone. In all cases, they have yielded data that is more complex and deeper than simple responses to questionnaires, even when these may have included open-ended questions. The use of interviews, either face-to-face or via email, allows researchers to construct narratives based on the reports of participants, who thus lend their own words to the shared construction of non-native language teachers' identity (e.g., J. Liu 1999a, b; Tsui 2003; Ellis 2004; D. Liu 2004; 2005; Morita 2004), but others have also used it as a complement to questionnaires (e.g., Kachi & Lee 2001; Cheung 2002; Holliday 2005; Bayyurt 2006).

Although interviews are somewhat qualitative in nature, this must be no obstacle for a certain degree of objectivity being pursued by studies using such methods. Thus,

researchers should be very serious about not exerting any influence on subjects' responses, and offering guarantees that the reported responses freely and spontaneously originated from the participants, with no conditioning restrictions by the researcher. Unfortunately, sometimes this is not very easy to achieve. For example, Samimy & Brutt-Griffler's (1999) study had a problem with participant selection: The participants were 17 TESOL NNS graduate students attending an optional seminar with the title 'Issues and concerns related to NNS professionals', offered within their program by one of the researchers, with a list of readings that may have likely affected students' views. Furthermore, the interviews took place 'throughout the academic quarter depending on the availability of the participants' (Samimy & Brutt-Griffler 1999: 132), with no further indication as to when each of the interviews were conducted, whether at the beginning or at the end of the semester, a variable that may certainly have had some effect on the responses given by the participants, as the readings and the discussions that were taking place during the course would gradually affect the students' views and their responses.

Another study that made use of interviews was Llurda (2003), and the issue of participant self-selection was also problematic: the interviews were conducted among practicum supervisors who had previously responded to a written questionnaire in which they were asked to compare native speakers and non-native speakers on their MA programs. One may wonder what the responses to the interviews would have been if they had been conducted among supervisors who did not respond to the questionnaire. It is reasonable to expect more positive attitudes towards non-native teachers among those who devoted some of their time to responding to the questionnaire than those who did not.

These two examples illustrate the need for more interview studies in which the population is strictly controlled, so as to avoid some of the intervening factors that may have affected this type of studies in the past. Only then will personal narratives be seen to transmit a reality that lies at a deeper level than what can be accounted by the sheer use of figures and tables provided by survey-based quantitative studies.

4.1.5 Classroom observations

Very little research has actually looked at what happens within the language classrooms involving NNS teachers. We will refer here to three studies that focus on classroom performance with the aim to learn more about non-native teachers and their unique contributions to the language teaching profession. These studies are, however, very different from each other, as the focus of the first one (Árva & Medgyes 2000) was to compare five native and five non-native teachers teaching in Hungarian secondary schools, first by using interviews that showed teachers' self-perceptions, and then by analysing one class taught by each of the ten participants in the study. The results were dealt with in a rather broad manner, mostly by commenting on the differential behaviours between natives and non-natives, and concluding that each of the two groups may be better qualified to teach different types of classes. Cots & Díaz (2005), on the other hand, conducted a micro-analysis on how four NNS teachers in Catalonia constructed social relationships and linguistic knowledge in the classroom through the use of teacher talk. Finally, Morita's (2007) study also used classroom

observation (in addition to interviews and self-reports) to investigate NNSs' perceptions of linguistic identity and participation in their predominantly English-speaking classes.

The shortage of studies using a classroom-observation method points to an urgent need for more studies into NNS teachers' classroom performance, as we need to know more about their use of teacher talk, grammar explanations, promotion of varied interactional patterns, use of the textbook, and all the many specific NNS 'characteristics' that have been mentioned in the literature (cf. Medgyes 1994; Reves & Medgyes 1994; Tang 1997; Seidlhofer 1999).

4.2 Areas in need of further attention

4.2.1 Diversity within non-native English-speaking teachers

Research so far has typically approached NNSs as a single group, as though they could all be described through a single account. This may be partially due to the nature of the term we have been using in describing NNSs (i.e., non-native), which does not identify any particular characteristic of this group except for the negation of their native speaker condition.

Two problems can be observed here. One is the use of a negative particle to claim an identity, or better a 'non-identity'. The second problem is the fact that the identity they claim not to have (i.e., native) is a particularly elusive one, as Paikeday (1985), Rampton (1990), J. Liu (1999a), Brutt-Griffler & Samimy (1999), Davies (1991, 2003), and Faez (2007) have extensively discussed. No feature, other than birth within a fairly homogenous linguistic community, has been discovered to support the existence of a 'native speaker' identity. Ultimately, what appears to be the most distinguishing feature is simply whether one considers herself a native speaker of a given community and is recognized as such by other speakers in the community. A concept that is so elusive to characterize, and which has been so loosely applied to all speakers who would not meet the rather subjective and discriminatory criteria to belong to the 'native speaker' category, is prone to suffer from overgeneralization. As a consequence, there have been several studies which have dealt with the broad category of NNSs without any further detailing of the particular conditions and settings of that 'group of speakers', and without any distinction of different circumstances and characteristics within the NNS constituency.

Holliday (2005, 2008) gives a detailed account of how NNSs are categorized as the 'Other' by the dominant group of NSs, and how this 'otherness' entails a necessary simplification and suppression of complexities similar to what happens in other instances of what Holliday names as 'culturism', the most common examples of which are found in the generalization of the other, typical of racism and sexism. Culturism, and more particularly 'native speakerism', creates a stereotypical myth by which the 'other' (i.e., the NNS) is seen as 'uncritical, static, rigid, with a fixed view of knowledge, intellectually interdependent, wishing to preserve knowledge, good at memorizing', who also needs 'to be trained, treated sensitively, understood, involved, given ownership, empowered', finds 'decision-making difficult', and prefers 'frontal teaching' as she is 'exam-oriented' (Holliday 2005: 21).

Differences do obviously exist within the NNS group, but they have been disregarded, probably for different reasons, by both NSs and NNSs. NSs have most likely fallen within

the trap of 'native speakerism' by perceiving just one single entity of NNSs, instead of many. NNSs have probably disregarded differences in their attempt to claim their status and their role in the profession, a goal more easily achievable from a unified perspective than through the emphasis on internal differences. Obviously, native speakers do have differences among themselves, but this has been taken for granted by the research community as it is commonly assumed that different (NS) teachers have different ways of teaching. It is true that the literature on NNS teachers has also tried to characterize NS teachers as a group, probably as a reaction or need to establish a parallel contrast between the two. Our perspective, however, is that we cannot generalize and there is a need to deepen our knowledge of language teaching and how different factors among individual teachers may affect their performance.

We are perfectly aware it would be a temerity for us to undergo here a classification of the subgroups to be found within the NNS constituency, and we see the risk of establishing our own new generalizations if we pursued that goal. However, we think we may clarify what we mean when we claim the existence of differences within the NNS group by mentioning just a few that can be easily accepted, and which can benefit from further research.

One such difference is created by the setting where teachers develop their professional activity: whether the language taught is present in the social environment or not. In the tradition of English language teaching, these two settings are called ESL (when the language is commonly present in the environment) and EFL (when the language is foreign, and therefore cannot be heard often outside the classroom). This is a fairly substantial difference, as the students, the resources, and even the status of teachers may be quite different in one context or another.

With regard to different geographical settings, a variable that the authors have sometimes heard of in informal conversations or even in some hands-on professional presentations, but not as yet in many scholarly research reports, are the possible differences among NNSs based on their country of origin, or rather the region of the world they come from or the first language they speak (cf. Moussu 2006, for example). An example of that would be a recurrent commentary made by experienced teacher trainers comparing some specific features attributed to Asian NNS teachers to others attributed to European NNS teachers. One word of caution is required here. Even though this is a difference that deserves further research, we must pay attention to Holliday's (2005, 2008) warning regarding the fact that 'regional' or 'national' characterization may be another expression of 'culturism', as it often comes together with the simplification of 'the other', thus simply reinforcing previously acquired unfounded stereotypes.

Another difference that must be necessarily contemplated involves the level at which instructors are teaching: whether they are working in primary, secondary or tertiary education is going to impact on how they conduct their professional activity, what recognition they obtain from it, and their ultimate status within the profession. This variable has already been considered by Llurda & Huguet (2003) in their study on primary and secondary teachers' self-perceptions on their own level of proficiency in English, their teaching ideologies, and 'political issues' regarding the role of NNS teachers and English as an international language, but more studies looking at how teachers at different levels teach and how they conceptualize their own teaching are needed.

Yet another variable that was briefly singled out by Medgyes (1994) was the amount of time spent in countries in which English is spoken. Medgyes obtained significant correlations between this variable and preference for NS teachers. However, Llurda (forthcoming) found that EFL Catalan teachers with prolonged stays in English-speaking showed a greater awareness of NNS strength and the importance of promoting English as an international language. In other words, they appeared to be less affected by the 'inferiority complex' that is much more apparent in some of their colleagues with lesser experience abroad. That study showed, among other things, how important it is to conduct replication studies in order to obtain further evidence to support or discard initial findings.

Another different, though related, factor must be considered: the difference that may exist between NNS teachers who hold degrees in a country that is internationally acknowledged as a home country for that language (in the case of English, those countries would clearly be the UK, the US, Canada, and Australia), and those who do not. In one of the interviews reported by Holliday (2005), an informant claims that many employers in non-English speaking countries value the possession of certificates from dominant English speaking countries more than any other professional experience. No empirical study has been conducted on this particular difference, but the research question is clearly presented here for any willing researcher to tackle it.

Finally, we must deal with differences among NNS teachers created by different levels in target language proficiency. This is the only difference that has been regularly contemplated as part of the discussion on the role of NNSs in language teaching, and more often than not it has been mentioned as the main handicap suffered by NNS teachers in the exercise of their profession, except maybe for the 'fortunate ones' who are sometimes labelled as 'near-natives' (J. Liu 1999a; Moussu 2006). Despite Canagarajah's (1999) strong defence of the teaching potential of NNS teachers, including those whose language skills are low, it is normally assumed that the greater the language proficiency, the better the teacher. However, language proficiency has never been used as an independent variable in order to observe and describe differences among NNS teachers. Such an analysis might greatly contribute to our understanding of the role of the teacher's language proficiency in language teaching.

4.2.2 Research on student teacher supervisors and program administrators

To this day, very little has been done to involve student teachers' supervisors and IEP administrators in research projects. Pasternak & Bailey (2004) discussed issues of preparation and professionalism, and Brady & Gulikers (2004) presented their experience with NSs and NNSs and suggested how TESOL MA programs could cater to NNES student teachers' needs. However, few scholars besides Llurda (2005b) and Nemtchinova (2005) have surveyed teacher educators regarding the NNS and NS student teachers under their supervision. An increase in research on teacher educators' perspectives on NNSs (as opposed to the student teachers' perspectives) is needed to help NNS student teachers be better prepared to teach in different contexts.

With regard to language program administrators, Mahboob (2003) and Moussu (2006) surveyed several IEP administrators in the United States, but the EFL context is in great

need of further studies about practices and beliefs of language program administrators. Individual anecdotes and a few articles (see Braine 1998, for example) tell of the difficulties NNS teachers encounter when trying to find teaching positions in an EFL context, and Flynn & Gulikers (2001) wrote an article that provided several suggestions to NNSs on how to prepare themselves professionally, from their IEP administrators' perspectives. However, issues related to the preparation, hiring, and supervision of NNSs are still rarely, if ever, mentioned in language program administrator handbooks (see Christison & Stoller 1997, for example).

Further investigations of hiring practices, personal beliefs, and administrative procedures of language program administrators, as well as the study of economical or political factors that could influence hiring and teaching conventions and measures could prove valuable.

4.2.3 More classroom observation based studies

As has been made clear in the above sections, most research on NNSs has heavily relied on teacher self accounts, by means of narratives, surveys, or interviews. Therefore, it is the teachers' voices that are normally heard, and through their perspective a research corpus has been established. In section 4.1.5 above, we have referred to the few classroom observation studies that (to our current knowledge) have been conducted so far, dealing specifically with NNS teachers. This shortage of studies points to a major lack in research using this method.

Pairing native and non-native teachers has been reported as a good way to complement the strengths of both native and non-native teachers (Medgyes 1994; de Oliveira 2001, 2004). However, this practice has revealed some problems in context like Japan, where this practice has been institutionalized (Kachi & Lee 2001), and more research is needed. Pairing NSs and NNSs in the same classroom and observing how they distribute their roles in different contexts would certainly help understanding to what degree the performances attributed to each group do actually appear in the classroom.

A further challenge for the future is to set an agenda that seeks to establish connections between what the teachers have reported about themselves and what they actually do in the classroom. This research agenda will need to consider the differences among NNSs, and therefore will have to look for some patterns of generalization without losing track of the essentially individual nature of what may be called 'the art of language teaching'. We would not be surprised to find out that some generalizations that have been made to all NNSs apply to some but not to others. The route is open and unexplored and the vastness of the task may appear discouraging, but once we have started looking at the nature and characteristics of NNS teachers, it would not be rational to be satisfied with a list of generalizations that supposedly apply to all NNSs, and then leave this field without accomplishing the ultimate goal of describing the nature of language teachers as a way of: (1) removing discrimination against them, and (2) better understanding language teaching in general, and more particularly in those situations in which the teacher is a member of the silent non-native speaking majority in the profession.

4.2.4 Exploration of new methods and topics

The amount of research on non-native English-speaking teachers conducted in the last ten years is impressive, considering the little – and rather scattered – work that had been done in this area prior to 1999. Given the enormous task of presenting the foundations of a new area of research, it is remarkable how much has been achieved in such a short period of time. However, as often happens, recent research has opened new questions and areas of investigation and has necessitated new approaches in future studies. Clearly, more qualitative ethnographic research and the exploration of experimental designs are needed. Longitudinal studies are also required, as very few studies (e.g., Moussu 2006) have looked at their subjects over a period of time. Also, the use of mixed methods and triangulation, such as that used by Morita (2004) and that proposed in Cots, Llurda & Irún (2008) combining qualitative and quantitative methods, could provide greater insights into the area. Another aspect that could be considered is students' actual performance, namely, how different teachers' practices affect students' learning.

Some of the questions that have already been answered in exploratory studies, but still deserve further exploration, range from issues of professional self-esteem, collaboration between native and non-native teachers, interaction patterns found in classes with NNS teachers, or even students' judgments of what it takes for a teacher to be a NS or a NNS. Another set of topics that need further attention concerns aspects that have already been researched, but never from a NNS teacher's perspective. One such topic is the effect of teacher education on actual teaching: How different contents and methodologies used in different teacher training programs worldwide affect native and non-native teachers in different settings. Teacher education and its effects on actual teaching practices is a fundamental area of research in order to improve the quality of language teaching, but it will not be complete without a specific observation into the processes by which NNSs gain teaching expertise (Tsui 2003), together with an understanding of how NNS teachers' self-perceptions are altered by experience and expertise.

As stated above, one of the most urgent needs at this point is to develop a research agenda that focuses specifically on classroom observation and the analysis of the actual teaching performance of NNS teachers, complemented by a triangulation of results obtained through different methods. Only by doing this will the field be able to overcome the feeling of stagnation that may eventually appear once the results of recurrent surveys conducted in different contexts and with different subjects fail to add any new perspective on what has already been found. This methodological shift towards classroom practices will surely bring a new set of topics or a new perspective to those already existing, such as the comparison of teachers at different educational levels and in different contexts, or the grammatical knowledge and level of language awareness displayed by NNS teachers in the classroom.

5. Concluding remarks

As a growing number of people around the world want to learn English and the number of non-native English teachers is consequently increasing, greater attention is being placed

on how those teachers are perceived and what they bring to the language classroom. This state-of-the-art article thus attempted to compile, classify, and examine research conducted during the last two decades regarding linguistic, pedagogical, and educational issues related to NNS ESL/EFL teachers and student teachers.

Since theses, dissertations, articles, books, and research projects addressing these issues have followed a number of theoretical frameworks, we have organized our article in a chronological order, trying to identify trends in research and looking at what could and should be done in the years to come. We hope that more research will be conducted, in particular within the World Englishes framework, in order to renounce the native vs. non-native dichotomy and instead promote an appropriate language teacher model such as the one discussed by Ellis (2006).

In our quest to compile most of the writings related to NNS ESL/EFL teachers and student teachers, we have noted that the largest part of the literature discussed issues related to North American situations and the ESL context. While we realize readers from different contexts might not relate to all the issues discussed above, it is our hope that this article will show the need for, and inspire new projects in countries throughout the world and in particular in the context of English as an international lingua franca.

Similarly, we have often wondered about the teaching of other languages and noticed that very little has been done to investigate how non-native teachers of languages other than English are perceived by their students and supervisors.[3] This shortage of research probably reflects the special status of English as a global lingua franca, which gives this language an international dimension that other languages do not have. Nevertheless, studies comparing the issues presented in this review article with those encountered by teachers of languages other than English would be very enlightening.

We hope that we have conveyed through the present article the idea that research on non-native teachers is advancing rapidly not only in terms of its goals and results, but also in the kinds of questions being asked. We are convinced the future will bring us increasingly complex and enlightening research perspectives on the many layers that can be found to constitute a (non-native) language teacher.

Acknowledgements

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[3] Although we have not systematically pursued this quest, the reader may find it interesting to look at Callahan (2006), and Valdes (1998) as examples of similar research involving non-native teachers of Spanish.

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