The Native Speaker Fallacy and Dutch EFL Students

A study into student preference for native or non-native English speaking teachers.

By Stijn Huys

BA Thesis English Language and Culture

Supervisor: Dr S. van Vuuren

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to see if Dutch English as Foreign Language learners, at Radboud University Nijmegen, have a preference for either Native English Speaking Teachers, or Non Native English Speaking Teachers? Previous studies found students often have an overall preference for NESTs, although this preference is less one-sided when looking at specific subject areas. Students often indicate different preferences depending on the subject area. A questionnaire was used to measure student preference in the Netherlands, which was handed out to two student groups, the English majors at Radboud University Nijmegen, and English students at the Radboud In'to Languages centre. The results showed Dutch students express an overall preference for the NEST, although their preference was more complex for specific subject areas. Students showed the clearest preference for the NEST for pronunciation instruction. Surprisingly the students did not show a preference for overall oral proficiency. For grammatical subjects they either have no preference, or prefer a NNEST.

Key words: NEST, NNEST, student preference, native speaker fallacy, native-speakerism.

Contents

1. Introduction

The position of English as a lingua franca means that a great number of English speakers do not have English as a first language. Most of the non-native speakers will have to be taught the language by English teachers. Some estimate that up to 80% of English teachers are non-natives (Richardson 2016). Yet this group reports they are discriminated against in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). Qualified non-native teachers report they are denied jobs on the basis of being non-native speakers, while at the same time a native speaker gets the same job without any qualification. Studies looking into this claim in both Asia and the Middle East found that discrimination is indeed part of the hiring process in those regions (Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Selvi 2010). Part of the studies looking into the difference between native speaking teachers and non-native speaking teachers look at what students prefer. After all, what students prefer is probably an essential factor in the hiring process.

Student preference has been well researched in Asia and the Middle East, and to lesser extent in Europe. It has not, however, been researched in the Netherlands. Although it might be easy to assume this does not happen in The Netherlands, a bureaucratic country where most everything is determined by rules and regulations, this is not certain until it has been researched.

1.1 Topic

The aim of this study is to measure student preference for either Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs), or Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs). Research into this topic is the result of the privileged position the native speaker often has in English Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. This privileged position is most commonly seen in discriminatory hiring practices, which have been demonstrated by studies such as Mahboob & Golden 2013, Selvi 2010, and Richardson 2016. Richardson (2016) argues that employers often defend their hiring practices by claiming that since students want a NEST they are left little choice but to hire a NEST. A growing number of studies recently began looking into student preference on this issue. Yet while many of these studies take place in Asia (e.g. Ling & Braine, 2007; Kung, 2015; Chang, 2016) or the Middle East (e.g. Javid, 2016; Ürkmez 2015), fewer are done in Europe, and none have yet looked into this in the Netherlands. This study therefore hopes to build on these previous studies and initiate evaluation of this subject in a Dutch context.

In order to research student preference, this study will look at Dutch students from Radboud University Nijmegen. The university has two major types of EFL learners. The first

group consists of students studying English Language and Culture, hereafter referred to as English majors. These students are interesting to look at, since many of them will likely become NNESTs themselves. The second group are students of the Radboud In'to Languages centre. Radboud In'to Languages is "the centre of expertise for language and communication at Radboud University Nijmegen" ("In'to Languages"). It provides several English courses aimed specifically at improving certain aspects of the participant's English. This group will hopefully provide results, which are representative of the average Dutch EFL student. This group will hereafter be referred to as In'to students.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

- Main research question: Do Dutch English as Foreign Language learners, at Radboud University Nijmegen, have a preference for either Native English Speaking Teachers, or Non Native English Speaking Teachers?
- Sub-question 1: Do students view their Non-Native English Speaking Teachers in a positive way?
- Sub-question 2: Do the English majors differ significantly from the In'to students in their preferences?

The main question aims to discover if students prefer NESTs, NNESTs, or have no preference at all. Not only their general preference will be evaluated, but also their preference on specific subjects. These specific subjects are, pronunciation, oral proficiency, grammar, literature, vocabulary, linguistics, and writing.

The first sub-question looks at the way students view their Non-Native English Speaking Teachers. It tries to establish whether students are confident of the NNESTs abilities, if they are comfortable being taught be NNESTs and how the NNESTs compares to NEST. The second sub-question compares the results of the English majors to those of the In'to students. It will aim to find out if there are substantial differences between these two groups who have different goals for their English instruction.

1.3 Hypotheses

The hypothesis for the main research question is that students do not have a clear preference for either type of teacher. Although there might be some preference in specific

subject areas, their overall preference is expected to be neutral. This expectation is based on the presumption that the hiring policies of the university are effective in guaranteeing the quality of the teachers, both native and non-native. One specific subject area where students are expected to have a preference is pronunciation. For this area previous literature, such as Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005), Diaz (2015), and Javid (2016), has shown students often have a preference for the NEST. One area where the NNEST is sometimes preferred by students is grammar instruction; since Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005), Diaz (2015), and Ürkmez (2015), show that their students also prefer the NNEST. Students will likely have a near-neutral preference for other subject specific areas.

For the first sub-question the hypothesis is that students show a positive attitude towards NNESTs. Students are probably confident in the NNEST's ability to teach and feel the NNESTs abilities are comparable to those of the NEST. Students are probably also comfortable being taught by NNESTs. This once again because it is presumed that the NNESTs at the university are skilled teachers regardless if they are native or non-native speakers.

The hypothesis for the second sub-question is that overall the two groups are likely relatively similar although the English majors are perhaps slightly more favourable towards the NNEST. This is speculated since it is likely that a certain amount of them will become NNESTs upon completing their degree. The teachers at the English department are also all accomplished researchers in their respective fields, which probably also increases the English majors' opinion of the NNEST.

1.4 Method

A literature study was first conducted to establish what previous studies had found in terms of student preference. An empirical study, in the form of a questionnaire, was then adapted from two of these studies to help answer the research questions posed in this study. These two studies are Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) and Ling & Braine (2007). Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) looks into student preference, while Ling & Braine (2007) looks into student attitude towards NNESTs. This questionnaire was then handed out to the two students groups. The results were analysed, discussed and led to a conclusion.

1.5 Structure

The main body of this thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the

relevant literature. First it introduces the concepts of the Native Speaker Fallacy and Native-speakerism. It then discusses the problematic nature of the native- and non-native speaker. This is followed by an illustration of how discriminatory hiring practices are part of EFL teaching. Finally it shows what previous studies have found and how it relates to student preference. Chapter 3 explains the methodology of this study, the questionnaire, the number of participants and the way the results are analysed. Chapter 4 shows the results, both quantitative and qualitative. Chapter 5 then discusses these results and relates them to the literature. The study is then concluded in chapter 6.

2. Academic Background

This chapter will provide the relevant literature on this subject. It will highlight some important concepts, the issues relating to these concepts, and provide relevant studies on the NEST versus NNEST discussion. Section 2.1 will discuss the concepts of the native speaker fallacy and native-speakerism. Section 2.2 shows the difficulties with defining the native and non-native speaker. It will also illustrate the objections some researchers raise to the use of the terms NEST and NNEST. Section 2.3 will look at discriminatory hiring practices in the EFL field. Finally section 2.4 will discuss previous studies looking into student preference.

2.1 The native speaker fallacy and Native-speakerism.

'The native speaker fallacy' is the misconception held by many people that the native speaker makes for a better language teacher than a non-native speaker (Phillipson 1992, 193-194). Phillipson coined this phrase to address the issue that native speakers were treated differently from non-native speakers in English Language Teaching (ELT). He believes the native speaker fallacy "dates from a time when language teaching was indistinguishable from culture teaching, and when all learners of English were assumed to be familiarizing themselves with the culture that English originates from and for contact with that culture" (195). This was a time when the global status of English as a lingua franca was less acknowledged than nowadays, but English was instead a subject to enable people to communicate with native English speakers, which people believed required extensive knowledge of their customs and culture. Canagarajah (1999) argues that Noam Chomsky's linguistic concepts lie at the heart of the discourse "that promotes superiority of the native speaker teacher", claiming that "the Chomskyan notion that the native speaker is the authority on the language and that he or she is the ideal informant provides an understandable advantage to the native speaker in grammaticality judgments"(78).

Regardless of its origin, Phillipson (1992) and Canagarajah (1999) both call this idea a fallacy, an idea that "has no scientific validity" (1992, 195). Phillipson even argues that non-native teachers may in fact be better qualified than native speakers, as long as they have gone through the process of acquiring English as a second language and if they have insight into the linguistic and cultural needs of their learners. Canagarajah (1999) claims the native speaker fallacy is linguistically anachronistic. He argues that the idea "flies in the face of some basic linguistic concepts developed through research and accepted by contemporary scholars" (79). Examples of such concepts are that linguistically no dialect is superior over another; or that

language is a "creative cognitive and social process" that follows its own trajectory rather than depend completely on the teacher (79).

Native-speakerism is a concept developed by Holliday. It was the result of a series of critique on Phillipson's concept of the native speaker fallacy, and sought to address some of its problems (Lowe & Pinner 2016, 30). Holliday (2006) explains it as follows "Native-speakerism is a pervasive ideology within ELT, characterized by the belief that 'native-speaker' teachers represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology"(385). It explores political inequalities within ELT, such as the native speaker ideal which influences for instance hiring policies in some areas. Where Phillipson's native speaker fallacy was criticised for focussing too much on the causes rather than the effect (Pennycook qtd. in Lowe & Pinner 2016), or that Phillipson made the native speaker fallacy too over-deterministic by underplaying the role of agency (Hyland qtd. in Lowe & Pinner 2016); native-speakerism tries to deal with the issues of culture and politics in ELT by including discussions of culturalism and Orientalism (Lowe & Pinner 2016, 30).This is why Lowe & Pinner (2016) consider it an important theoretical and descriptive concept which unites different areas of critical thought on the cultural and political dimensions of ELT (31).

2.2 The problematic nature of the 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker'

One problem raised in much of the literature is that native speakers to non-native speakers are often compared, even though it is rather unclear what a native speaker is precisely. Although most people will have a feeling what makes someone a native speaker, and so feel they know if someone is a native speaker or not, the concept eludes clear definition. Medgyes (2001) for instance gives several examples of the grey area between native speakers and non-native speakers. A classic example of such people are bilinguals, people who were raised speaking multiple languages, and as a result speak these languages on a native-speaker level. Despite these difficulties some scholars have attempted to clearly define the native speaker (Davies, 1995; Lee, 2005). Lee's (2005) list of features is a collection of criteria that "numerous scholars in the field of Second Language Acquisition and language teaching support and agree with" (4)

1. The individual acquired the language in early childhood and maintains the use of the language.
2. The individual has intuitive knowledge of the language.
3. The individual is able to produce fluent, spontaneous discourse.
4. The individual is communicatively competent, able to communicate within different

social settings.

5. The individual identifies with or is identified by a language community.

6. The individual does not have a foreign accent.

Yet this native speaker is not what most people would consider a native speaker to be. Being a native speaker is often thought to be something inherent in a person, but as the first criteria shows, it is also thought to be something skill-like that needs to be maintained. So does someone who emigrates away from his country of birth and does not maintain the L1 stay a native speaker? Another problem raised with the concept of the native speaker is that the native speaker is often expected to be able to make quick grammatical judgements, and although Davies argues native speakers are indeed able to do just that, they do not necessarily agree with one another (2003, 213).

Since the native speaker is a difficult to define concept, some people devised alternative ways of distinction. Kachru (1985) attempted to diversify the dichotomy by making a 3 circle model. These three concentric circles are the inner circle, outer circle, and the expanding circle (12). The inner circle represents traditional areas of English, regions where it forms the primary language such as the UK, the USA, and New Zealand. The outer circle consists of speech communities where English is one of two or more spoken languages. In these countries people speak several different languages, but English is used as a lingua franca in these multilingual societies (Kung 2015, 28). The third circle, termed the expanding circle, contains English as a world language. Where the inner and outer circle usually have histories of colonisation, nations ranked in the expanding circle do not necessarily have any colonial influence (Kachru 1985, 13). Others, such as Canagarajah (1999), tried to introduce new terminology which they feel avoids the issues the native and non-native dichotomy encounters. Canagarajah (1999) argued for using 'Center speakers of English' and 'Periphery speakers of English' (79). Yet it seems this terminology failed to catch on in the general discussion.

Silvana Richardson (2016) warns against the pitfalls of using litotes to define "80% of the teachers of English in the world" (80). Litotes is a rhetorical device to negate one quality or characteristic in order to emphasise its opposite. Richardson raises the issue that the majority of English speakers are defined by a quality they do not have, namely being a native speaker (80). Richardson is not alone in believing the term non-native speaker is a problematic one. Cook (1999) also argues that "people cannot be expected to conform to the norm of a group to which they do not belong, whether groups are defined by race, class, sex, or any other feature"(194). And yet he believes that many people expect the non-native to be the exception to this, since differences in pronunciation and grammar are seen as "signs of L2 users' failure

to become native speakers", rather than seen as accomplishments of learning an L2 (Cook 1999, 195). It is because of this that he argues that language teaching should "place more emphasis on the student as a potential and actual L2 user and be less concerned with the monolingual native speaker" (Cook 1999, 196). As a solution Cook proposes a model of multicompetence, where the focus of L2 acquisition is to become a competent language user rather than to aim and fail to become a native speaker. Cook (2016) recently noticed, however, that despite increased significance and use of his model "by and large research still falls back on the L2 user meeting the standard of the native speaker".

Despite repeated arguments against using the terms native and non-native speaker, they are still commonly used. Cook (1999) warns that it is unrealistic to abandon the native speaker completely, because "this model is so entrenched in teachers' and students' minds" (196). Richardson (2016) also showed objections to the use of the terms NEST and NNEST but is unable to avoid them (80). The terms native and non-native, and by extent NEST and NNEST, are still commonly used in the literature because they "have a very real currency within the popular discourse of ELT" (Holliday 2006, 385). Since coining a more appropriate term is beyond the scope of this study, this paper will also continue to make use of the terms NEST and NNEST.

2.3 Discriminatory hiring practices

The native or non-native dichotomy is not merely an academic discussion, but is part of a larger sociological issue, namely discriminatory hiring practices in language institutes. Richardson (2016) explains that employers often defend these hiring policies by claiming it is what their students prefer, or even ask for (82). While this idea is often treated as a "universally acknowledged truth", employers usually base this truth on "a few memorable encounters with vocal students" rather than consulting reliable data gathered from all their students (82).

That employers discriminate between NESTs and NNESTs is shown by both anecdotal evidence as well as empirical evidence. One NNEST who shared her experiences on a blog claims that despite graduating with an above average grade, she is still often told during job interviews that students usually prefer a NEST and "because of this the company's hands are tied" (Guerriero, 2016). Many NNESTs share similar experiences, as Richardson confirms from both personal experience and people who shared their experiences with her (81). In an attempt to reinforce anecdotal evidence with empirical results Sevli (2010) seeks to show discriminatory hiring practices in the ELT profession.. He argues the results "validated impressions of an

undemocratic and unethical employment landscape" in the ELT profession (172). Selvi (2010) furthermore argues that it is unfortunate that two decades after the term 'the native speaker fallacy' was coined it is still a "practical reality" (173). In their investigation of hiring practices in Asia and the Middle East, Mahboob & Golden (2013) show that there is a strong preference for hiring NESTs over NNESTs (77). They argue that these native speakers are associated with Inner Circle Englishes since the Outer Circle countries were not specifically mentioned as places from which a native speaker would be accepted (77).

Some language institutes feel these hiring practices are so problematic that they publicly argue against it. The CATESOL (California TESOL) for instance issued a position statement against discrimination. They believe that discrimination in favour of NESTs trivialises the professional development teachers received as well as their acquired experience in teaching, and they "ultimately harm all teachers (native or not) by devaluing teacher education, professionalism, and experience" (CATESOL 2013).

2.4 Student perception research

Although language institutions often defend their hiring practices by saying that students ask for native speaker teachers, this idea is not necessarily supported by empirical evidence. Studies looking into what students actually prefer have been growing steadily over the years. Some of these studies state their participants prefer NESTs, others show their subjects preferred NNESTs, and there are also those whose participants show no clear preference for either.

Most studies report their participants feel an important advantage of the NNEST is that they share a language learning background with the student. The students feel that teachers who have undergone the same learning process as themselves are better able to foresee certain language learning difficulties and help the students overcome them. Kung (2015) for instance reports that students "feel closer to those non-native teachers in that they know what it is like to learn English as non-native speakers" (30). Javid (2016) also shares this belief, stating that "by virtue of their personal experiences as language learners themselves, they have been perceived to understand their students' questions and language difficulties in a better manner…"(115). Seventy-five percent of the students in Ürkmez (2015) believe that NNESTs know better what English language difficulties their students face than NESTs as they passed through the same experience (330).

Some students also believe that the shared background enables the NNEST to develop better learning materials. The teachers' personal language learning experience as well as high

cultural awareness is thought to allow them to tailor language learning materials to the needs of the students. Students in Ling & Braine (2007) believed that the NNESTs' personal experience of the local educational system allowed them to "apply effective strategies in teaching English" (267). Although the students in Ling & Braine's study saw this as a benefit of the NNEST, one of the shortcomings of the NNEST reported by students in that same study was that "[t]hey remembered being spoon-fed in English lessons, and an over-emphasis on past exam papers during English lessons" (2007, 267). This drawback seems to stem from the NNESTs personal experience of Hong Kong's educational system; as Ling and Braine later explain that the "local NNS English teachers have long been criticized for their over-reliance on textbooks,…for over-emphasizing the two public examinations in their day-to-day lesson planning,…(269). It seems this particular issue of over-emphasising tests is a local cultural issue ingrained in the educational system of Hong Kong.

Cultural instruction is one of the subjects where studies report different preferences among students. Some show participants prefer to be instructed by NESTs on this subject (Lasagabaster & Sierra 2005, Ürkmez 2015), while others describe a more neutral preference (Chang 2016, Javid 2016). Chang, for instance, concludes that "NNS English teachers can also help students understand the culture of English even though they are not English native speakers" (55).

Grammatical instruction is the area where studies report students most often prefer a NNEST. Ürkmez (2015) reports 85% of participants preferred NNESTs for grammar lessons (330). The first year participants in Diaz (2015) also showed a preference for NNESTs when it comes to grammar instruction. Second and third years, however, showed no preference for either, instead inclining more to answer 'both'(95). The participants in Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) show a clear preference for NESTs in almost all subjects, yet the subject where students do not show a clear tendency towards NESTs is grammar assessment (33),where students show no clear preference for either. Medgyes (1994) shows NNESTs themselves also believe grammatical instruction is their strongest subject. According to Chang (2016), however, students feel that their NNESTs sometimes over-emphasise the grammatical aspects of language instruction. One student says: "My English teacher likes to correct almost every grammatical mistake I made in class, which makes me feel very nervous and anxious when I want to express my opinions in class"(57). This opinion is also expressed by students in Ling & Braine (2007, 267). NESTs on the other hand generally seem to be less concerned with grammatical perfection. Medgyes (1994) argues this is because the native speaker usually sees language as a means of achieving some communicative goal (63). He believes NNESTs on the

other hand probably see English primarily as a school subject and secondarily as a communicative medium (63).

The single most recurring subject where students report a preference for NESTs is oral proficiency, and pronunciation in particular. Where other subjects such as teaching vocabulary or cultural courses usually get mixed results, students are mostly quite clear that they prefer NESTs for oral proficiency courses such as pronunciation and fluency instruction. Walkinshaw & Hoang Duong (2012) asked students to compare the importance of native-speakerness with seven qualities of an English language teacher. The students rated all the qualities higher than native-speakerness except for linguistic fluency. Walkinshaw and Hoang Duong claim "the self-report data strongly suggests that pronunciation is the issue" since most of the respondents believed that NESTs had an advantage because of a native pronunciation, and a non-native pronunciation was a handicap of NNESTs (11). They add, however, that since the respondents' comments were generally non-specific it is difficult to grasp the precise nature of this issue (11). Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) also report that participants most indicate a preference for NESTs for pronunciation and speaking (33). NESTs were also most preferred for teaching 'speaking skills' and pronunciation by participants in Javid (2016, 109-10). Diaz (2015) even shows around 85% of participants preferred NESTs for pronunciation and around 80% for oral exercises (96). Nearly all of the participants (96%) in Ürkmez (2015) said they preferred NESTs over NNESTs for speaking skills (330).

3. Methodology

This chapter will describe the study's methodology. Section 3.1 provides details of the questionnaire and the way it is set up. Section 3.2 will then describe the study's participants. Finally, section 3.3 will show the methods of analysing the results.

3.1 Questionnaire

This study used a questionnaire to determine student attitudes and possible preference towards NESTs or NNESTs, which is in line with other studies looking into student preference. Two previous studies lie at the basis of this questionnaire, Ling & Braine (2007) and Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005). Ling & Braine (2007) looked into student attitudes towards NNESTs while Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) looked into student preference. For this reason the general scale questions and the assessment scale questions were taken from Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) to measure student preference, while the introductory questions as well as the communication and learning scale questions were taken from Ling & Braine (2007).

All the scale questions were given a five-point scale. The questionnaire in Ling & Braine used a four point scale, while Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) use a five point scale. For this questionnaire it was decided that a five point scale was more suitable. The choice for a four point scale would force students to make a choice, and not be complacent in their answers. There is a risk when using a five point scale, on the other hand, that students give a neutral answer. They could simply give the neutral answer to quickly finish the questionnaire instead of reading the questions clearly and making a well-thought-out choice. Yet this risk is worth taking since it is possible that students have no preference for either NESTs or NNESTs, and so forcing participants to make a choice between NESTs or NNESTs could skew the results.

Changes were also made to the introductory questions taken from Ling & Braine (2007), to make them more applicable to the Dutch educational system. example is a question in Ling & Braine (2007) that is about the native language of the students, which was deleted in this questionnaire since the Netherlands, unlike China, does not have multiple native languages. Instead being a native speaker of Dutch was made a prerequisite for participation. The prerequisite of Dutch as native language was added to exclude foreign students from influencing the results. In accordance with Lasagabaster & Sierra's questionnaire the general scale questions and the assessment scale questions were alternated to sometimes ask for native speaker and sometimes non-native speaker. This was done to ensure participants continue to

pay attention while filling in the questionnaire. The communication scale questions and the learning scale questions did not alternate since they only inquire after student attitudes towards NNESTs.

Lastly the questionnaire featured several open questions at the end, to help interpret the results of the questionnaire. The open questions were added to allow students to expand on their answers in the scale questions. Other studies tended to use interviews to achieve a similar result, but since the purpose of this was to help interpret why students gave certain answers, the open questions were deemed equally effective. The three open questions were as follows,

"If you expressed a personal preference towards either native speaker teachers or non-native speaker teachers in any of the specified domains, would you care to elaborate on why you believe this is the case?"

"If you feel both teachers are equally suited to teach, would you care to elaborate on why you believe this is the case?"

"Do you have any remarks or thoughts that you wish to express with regard to this questionnaire?"

The first two questions allowed students to explain their preference or lack thereof, while the last question allowed students to express any thoughts they might have had while filling in the questionnaire.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study can be divided into two groups, the English majors and the In'to students. A total of 59 students participated in the study, 42 English majors, and 17 In'to students.

The English major participants were gathered in three seminars, they were then asked to fill in the questionnaire during the break. These three seminars were a first-year, second-year, and a third-year course. Although it was hoped that this would provide a good sample in all three years in order to study if years of study influenced results, this was not achieved since the first-year class combined almost as many students as the other years combined. There were eighteen first-year students, ten second-year, nine third-year, and five fourth year or higher. Seven participants were male and thirty-five female. The youngest student in this group was eighteen years old, the oldest thirty years old, with an average age of 20.38 years. The majority of students noted pre-university education (VWO) as their highest degree. None of these students have spent any time studying in an English-speaking country.

The In'to students were gathered in a similar fashion during class visits. Unlike the English majors, however, the In'to students were not asked to fill it in during the break, but rather to fill it in at home. This is possibly why the number of participants is so much lower than for the English majors, since the number of students attending the seminars were of around equal size in both groups. For this group the youngest student was also eighteen years of age, although the oldest participant in this group was forty-nine. The average of this group is 27.00 years old. Four of the In'to students have spent time abroad studying in an English-speaking country.

3.3 Analysis

Since some of the scale questions alternated, sometimes referring to a native teacher, and sometimes to a non-native teacher, these questions were recoded to ensure that they all referred to non-native speakers. The recoded questions are general questions 2, 3 and 6 as well as assessment questions 2, 3 and 5. The questions were recoded so they all asked for NNESTs, which means that a score above the mean of 3 indicates an inclination towards NNESTs and a mean beneath 3 shows an inclination towards NESTs. General question 7 as well as the communication and learning questions, however, were not recoded. This is because general question 7 only asked if students would choose a NEST as instructor, rather than compare the two. The learning and communication questions already focus on the non-native speaker so do not need to be recoded.

In order to determine if students show a preference for NESTs, NNESTs, or neither, one-sample T test analyses were performed on the scale questions using SPSS. The test value was set at 3 in order to compare to a neutral preference. The H_o, therefore, is that students show no preference for either teacher, while the H_1 states that students do show a preference for a specific type of teacher. With a significance of less than .05 the H_o will be rejected which means this indicates students have a preference.

4. Results

Chapter four will discuss the results from the one-sample T tests performed on the scale questions as well as the results from the open questions. The quantitative results from the T tests will be shown in section 4.1. Section 4.1.1 will show the results for the general preference of students. In section 4.1.2. the subject specific results will be listed. The student attitude towards NNESTs will be shown in section 4.1.3. Finally, section 4.2 will discuss the qualitative results obtained from the questionnaire. The mean will be indicated with M=, while the significance will be shown with p is greater or smaller than .05. The tables list the actual p value for each question. The t(df)= shows the t value with the degrees of freedom indicated between brackets.

4.1 Quantitative results

4.1.1. General preference

When asked if the students would prefer a native speaker as instructor, the majority of English majors agreed which shows a marked preference for the NEST (M=3.63 with $t(40) = 4.436$ and $p <.05$), as can be seen in Table 1. Table 2 shows the In'to students on the other hand, do not show a clear preference towards the NEST (M=3.20 with $t(14) = .676$ and $p= >.05$). The English majors' marked preference becomes less clear when looking at some of the later questions. Communication question 6, and learning questions 2 and 6 inquire how NNESTs compare to NESTs on several teaching aspects. The results for communication question 6 for both English majors (M= 4.32 with $t(40)= 10.288$ and $p <.05$), in Table 1, and In'to Languages students (M= 4.00 with $t(14)= 4.583$ and $p <.05$), in Table 2, show that students believe the NNESTs show the same level of concern as NESTs. Table 1 further shows that the English majors believe they can learn just as well from a NNESTs (M=4.17 with $t(40)= 8.684$ and $p <.05$) and that they believe many NNESTs teach just as effectively as NESTs (M=4.56 with $t(40)= 18.175$ and $p <.05$). Although the In'to students' responses are less pronounced, they express similar opinions as the English majors. Table 2 demonstrates they also feel they can also learn as well from NNESTs as from NESTs (M= 3.54 with $t(12)= 2.214$ and $p < .05$), and that many NNESTs can teach as effectively as NESTs (M= 4.31 with $t(12)= 6.278$ and $p <.05$).

Table 1: English major results from one-sample T test

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General 7	41	3.63	4.436	40	<.001
Comm. 6	41	4.32	10.288	40	<.001
Learning 2	41	4.17	8.684	40	<.001
Learning 6	41	4.56	18.175	40	<.001

Table 2: In'to student results from one-sample T test

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General 7	15	3.20	.676	14	.510
Comm. 6	15	4.00	4.583	14	<.001
Learning 2	13	3.54	2.214	12	.047
Learning 6	13	4.31	6.278	12	<.001

4.1.2. Subject-specific preference

The first group of subject-specific questions is about pronunciation. Table 3 demonstrates that the English majors respond with a marked preference for the NEST (M= 1.78 with $t(40)$= -9.872 and p <.05) to the question who they prefer to teach pronunciation. It also shows they prefer a NEST for the assessment of pronunciation (M=2.65 with $t(39)$= and p <.05), although the mean shows this preference is less strong than for the teaching of pronunciation. The In'to preference for the teaching and assessment of pronunciation is shown in Table 4. It shows that the In'to students seem to prefer NESTs for the teaching of pronunciation (M=2.53 with $t(14)$= -1.388 and p >.05), although these results are not significant enough to clearly conclude a preference for NESTs. For assessing pronunciation the In'to students do clearly prefer NESTs (M=2.50 with $t(11)$= -2.569 and p <.05)

Table 3: English major results from one-sample T test for group one

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General 3	41	1.78	-9.872	40	<.001
Assess. 4	40	2.65	-2.058	39	.046

Table 4: In'to Languages results from one-sample T test for group one

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General 3	15	2.53	-1.388	14	.187
Assess. 4	12	2.50	-2.569	11	.026

The second group of subject-specific questions measures oral skills. The first question asks who students prefer to teach them fluency. Although the results for both groups seems to indicate a relatively minor preference for NESTs regarding both questions, none of the results are significant enough to conclude a preference for either teacher. Table 5 shows that the English majors have little to no preference for the NEST when it comes to teaching fluency (M=2.90 with $t(40)$= -.598 and p >.05), and although they show slightly more preference for the assessment of speaking skills (M=2.70 with $t(39)$= -1.864 and p >.05) the results are not significant enough to conclude a definite preference for the NEST. The In'to students' results, as shown in Table 6, are similar to those of the English majors, since they again indicate a preference for the NEST for teaching fluency (M=2.73 with $t(14)$= -1.468 and >p .05), as well as for the assessment of speaking skills (M= 2.58 with $t(11)$= -1.603 and >p .05). These results, however, are also not sufficiently significant to conclude a preference for the NEST.

Table 5: English major results from one-sample T test for group two

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General 4	41	2.90	-.598	40	.553
Assess. 2	40	2.70	-1.864	39	.070

Table 6: In'to Languages results from one-sample T test for group two

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General 4	15	2.73	-1.468	14	.164
Assess. 2	12	2.58	-1.603	11	.137

The questions in the third subject group are grammar related. They measure student preference for teaching and assessing grammar. The results seem to indicate a slight inclination towards the NNEST. The English majors showed a near neutral preference in the case of grammatical instruction (M= 3.07 with $t(40)$= .621 and p >.05), but a clear preference for the NNEST for assessing grammar(M= 3.38 with $t(39)$= 2.940 and p <.05), as is shown in Table

7. The results listed in Table 8 show the In'to students, on the other hand, incline towards the NNEST for teaching grammar (M= 3.27 with $t(14)= 1.293$ and $p >.05$), but have a near-neutral preference for assessing grammar (M= 3.08 with $t(11)= .364$ and $p >.05$). Since the In'to Language results for teaching grammar are not significant, however, it is not possible to conclude a preference for the NNEST here.

Table 7: English major results from one-sample T test for group three

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General 1	41	3.07	.621	40	.538
Assess. 5	40	3.38	2.940	39	.005

Table 8: In'to Languages results from one-sample T test for group three

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General 1	15	3.27	1.293	14	.217
Assess. 5	12	3.08	.364	11	.723

The questions in the final subject-specific group are about literature. General question six asks for a preference to teach literature courses. Assessment question one asks who students prefer to assess their reading comprehension. Table 9 demonstrates that the English majors have a significant preference for the NNEST regarding the teaching of literature courses (M= 3.32 with $t(40)= 2.955$ and $p <.05$). For the assessment of their reading comprehension, however, the English majors prefer a NEST (M= 2.53 with $t(39)= -3.128$ and $p <.05$). Table 10 shows the In'to students show a similar preference for the assessment of their reading comprehension (M= 2.42 with $t(11)= -2.548$ and $p <.05$) which means they too have a preference for NESTs here. The question on teaching literature courses was not analysed since the In'to students have no literature courses in their curriculum, which means this question is not relevant for this group.

Table 9: English major results from one-sample T test for group four

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General 6	41	3.32	2.955	40	.005
Assess. 1	40	2.53	-3.128	39	.003

Table 10: In'to Languages results from one-sample T test for group four

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Assess. 1	12	2.42	-2.548	11	.027

General question two asks for a preference in teaching vocabulary. The English majors show a clear preference for NESTs for their vocabulary instruction (M= 2.46 with $t(40)$= -3.830 and p <.05) as can be seen in Table 11. Although the results for the In'to students, which are listed in Table 12, indicate a similar preference for the NEST (M= 2.47 with $t(14)$= -1.740 and p >.05), this preference cannot be definitively concluded on the basis of these results. For the teaching of linguistic courses the results for the English majors do not show a preference for either NESTs or NNESTs (M= 3.05 with $t(40)$= .374 and p >.05). Similar to the question on teaching literature, this question was not analysed for the In'to students since linguistics is not part of their curriculum. The final subject-specific question is on assessing the students' writing. Although the results indicate a preference for the NNEST for this subject (M= 3.20 with $t(39)$= 1.388 and p >.05), this cannot be concluded based on the its significance. The In'to students on the other hand, do not show a clear preference for assessing their writing (M= 3.08 with $t(11)$= .364 and p >.05).

Table 11: English major results from one-sample T test for group five

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General 2	41	2.46	-3.830	40	<.001
General 5	41	3.05	.374	40	.710
Assess. 3	40	3.20	1.388	39	.173

Table 12: In'to Languages results from one-sample T test for group five

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General 2	15	2.47	-1.740	14	.104
Assess. 3	12	3.08	.364	11	.723

4.1.3. *Student attitude towards NNESTs.*

Unlike the general and assessment scale questions, the communication questions measure student attitude towards NNESTs. The responses given to communication question 1 indicate that both the English majors (M= 3.20 with $t(40)$= 1.016 and p >.05), and the In'to

students (M= 3.47 with $t(14)$= 1.705 and p >.05) would not object to talking with a NNEST about a communication problem. The results of the English majors are listed in Table 13, and those of the In'to students are listed in Table 14.Since neither of these results are significant, however, this cannot be concluded with certainty. Table 13 demonstrates that the English majors generally believe the NNEST communicates effectively in the classroom (M= 4.27 with $t(40)$= 16.203 and p <.05). Table 14 shows a similar result for the In'to students (M= 4.00 with $t(14)$= 5.916 and p <.05), so they too are satisfied with the NNESTs ability to communicate in the classroom. Communication question 3 received negative results from the English majors (M= 2.44 with $t(40)$= -4.628 and p <.05), listed in Table 13, as well as the In'to students (M= 2.73 with $t(14)$= -1.293 and p >.05), listed in Table 14. Although the results from the In'to students are not statistically significant, the English major ones are. Since there is no similar question for the NEST, it is not possible to establish if this is better or worse than their relationship with NESTs. When students encounter communicative problems with their NNESTs they feel they can improve the situation. Table 13 shows the majority of English majors believe they can improve upon communicative problems (M= 2.07 with $t(40)$= -6.189 and p <.05). The In'to students express a similar opinion (M= 2.00 with $t(14)$= -4.583 and p <.05) as is shown in Table 14. The English majors' responses to communication question 5 suggest that students feel comfortable talking about personal concerns with NNESTs (M= 3.27 with $t(40)$= 1.919 and p >.05), but since these results are not statistically significant this cannot be concluded with certainty. Table 14 shows the In'to students are even more open to talking about personal concerns with NNESTs (M= 3.53 with $t(14)$= 2.256 and p <.05), and for them the results are statistically significant.

Similar to the communication questions, the learning questions also measure student attitudes towards NNESTs. The response to learning question 4 show students are positive about the NNEST's abilities. Learning question 4 asked if students believed NNESTs are capable of understanding and answering students' questions. The results show the English majors do not believe NNESTs have any difficulty in understanding their students(M= 1.68 with $t(40)$= -11.673   and p <.05). Although results seem to suggest the In'to students also believe NNESTs are capable of understanding and answering students' questions (M= 2.54 with $t(12)$= -2.144 and p >.05), although these results are not statistically significant. Learning question 5 asks students if they believe NNESTs should be barred from teaching English. The English majors clearly show they do not believe NNESTs should be barred (M= 1.37 with $t(40)$= -16.803 and p <.05) as can be seen in Table 13. The In'to students also believe NNESTs should not be barred from teaching (M= 1.62 with $t(12)$= -6.501 and p <.05) which is shown in

Table 14. More surprising are the results of learning question 3. The question asks if students would pick a course taught by a NNEST if they had the choice. The English majors (M= 2.49 with $t(40)$= -4.049 and p <.05), as well as the In'to students (M= 2.54 with $t(12)$= -2.521 and p <.05) disagree with this statement. Unfortunately this questions is too ambiguous to determine if this means students rather have a NEST as course instructor, or if they would not specifically chose a NNEST. Another remarkable result is the answers students give to learning question 1. This question asks if students would transfer to another class if their NNEST had a weak foreign accent. In response to this question both groups show they would not. The English majors are most opposed to changing class (M= 1.88 with $t(40)$= -7.532 and $<p$ .05) as Table 13 demonstrates. Although the results for the In'to students suggest they are also opposed (M= 2.62 with $t(12)$= -1.443 and p >.05), their results are not significant enough to conclude this definitively. These results suggest that the teacher's accent is not a defining aspect to students. Even if a teacher has a weak foreign accent they will generally not transfer class.

Table 13: English major results from one-sample T test

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Comm. 1	41	3.20	1.016	40	.316
Comm. 2	41	4.27	16.203	40	<.001
Comm. 3	41	2.44	-4.628	40	<.001
Comm. 4	41	2.07	-6.189	40	<.001
Comm. 5	41	3.27	1.919	40	.062
Learning 1	41	1.88	-7.532	40	<.001
Learning 3	41	2.49	-4.049	40	<.001
Learning 4	41	1.68	-11.673	40	<.001
Learning 5	41	1.37	-16.803	40	<.001

Table 14: In'to Languages results from one-sample T test

Question	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Comm. 1	15	3.47	1.705	14	.110
Comm. 2	15	4.00	5.916	14	<.001
Comm. 3	15	2.73	-1.293	14	.217
Comm. 4	15	2.00	-4.583	14	<.001
Comm. 5	15	3.53	2.256	14	.041
Learning 1	13	2.62	-1.443	12	.175
Learning 3	13	2.54	-2.521	12	.027
Learning 4	13	2.54	-2.144	12	.053
Learning 5	13	1.62	-6.501	12	<.001

4.2 Qualitative results

The first open question asks students to elaborate in case they expressed a personal preference towards either native or non-native speaker teachers. This question was most often answered by students showing a preference for NESTs when it comes to oral proficiency and specifically pronunciation. Nine English majors and one In'to student give a similar response. Respondent 14 (English majors), for instance, believes "[n]ative speakers seem to be more qualified to judge pronunciation and speaking". Respondent 3 (English majors) also expresses a similar opinion: "[i] prefer native speakers because they would help me improve my pronunciation". In'to Languages respondent 11 argues, "[o]n pronunciation I would prefer a native speaker as they often sound more natural (less exaggerated) than a non-native speaker". English major respondents 1 and 15 both express a preference for the NEST in specific areas. Respondent 1 writes "I believe native speakers are the superior teachers for the subjects that require a certain native pragmatic intuition. For the rest of the subjects I don't believe it matters if the teacher is a native speaker or not". Respondent 15 expresses a similar belief, "I think pronunciation would be better if taught by native speakers, but in general i believe they are both equally suited to teach". Three other English major students, on the other hand, expressed a preference for the NNEST. Respondent 7 writes "[p]robably non-native speakers, because I always have a Dutch safety net", while respondent 21 prefers "non-native speakers. Because sometimes even as a student of English it is difficult to explain something in English when you find a topic really difficult. So it's easy to sometimes switch to Dutch, because that is our L1". Respondent 34 argues: "I think that non-native teachers can be really good teachers, because

they know better what difficulties the students might stumble upon".

Question two asks students to elaborate in case they did not have a clear preference either way. Seventeen English majors and four In'to students argue that being native or non-native is not the defining trait for a good teacher. Respondent 2 (English major) for instance writes "It depends on the skills, capability and personality of the teacher". English major respondent 3 argues "[i]t should not be a matter of whether they are a native or not, but a matter of their competence and their understanding of the material". In'to Languages respondent 8 writes "I don't think the quality of teaching is in whether or not a person is a native speaker. Other teaching skills are far more important". In'to Languages respondent 12 argues "[i]n my opinion both could be equal. I think the quality of the teacher is also very important. You could have a very professional non-native speaker, but also a bad native speaker". Some students in the English major group believe that the teachers at the English department are all experts in their respective fields regardless of being native or non-native. Respondent 22 for instance writes "[b]ecause at university non-native language proficiency just be high, and both are professionals". Respondent 18 believes, "[b]oth native and non-native instructors are qualified to teach the courses they teach. They have all studied in this field and are just as competent".

5. Discussion

This chapter relates the results from the previous chapter to the literature discussed in chapter 2. It will attempt to answer to the main research question as well as the sub-questions. Section 5.1 discusses what the results mean for the main research question. Section 5.2 will argues what the results mean for the sub-research question. Section 5.3 compares the two groups to determine if they differ significantly. Finally, section 5.4 evaluates this study.

5.1 Main research question

The main research question tried to establish if Dutch English as Foreign Language learners at Radboud University Nijmegen have a preference for either NESTs or NNESTs. It was hypothesised that, although students might have preferences on specific subject areas, overall they would lack a clear preference. In general the English majors express a preference for the NNEST. And although the results for the In'to students also indicate a possible preference for the NEST, this cannot be concluded based on these results. At the same time, however, students seem to feel there is little difference between the NEST and NNEST. Students feel NNESTs tend to show the same level of concern for their students as NESTs. They also feel NNESTs can be equally capable teachers, and that they can learn from NNESTs as effectively as from NESTs. It seems therefore that although they indicate a preference for NESTs, they believe overall both teachers are equally capable teachers.

In accordance with the hypothesis, the subject-specific questions found several areas where students did have a preference. This study found students showed the clearest preference for pronunciation instruction and assessment of pronunciation. The quantitative data clearly show the English majors have a preference for the NEST, a finding reinforced by the qualitative data, since students specifically name pronunciation as an area where they believe the NEST is better suited than the NNEST. For the In'to students this preference is less pronounced, but they too show a preference for the NEST for the assessment of pronunciation. Participants in Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) also indicated the clearest preference, in favour of the NEST, on the subject of pronunciation. Diaz (2015), and Ürkmez (2015) also found a clear preference for the NEST in the case of pronunciation. Another subject area where the English majors show a clear preference for the NEST is vocabulary instruction. This preference is not clearly shown for the In'to students.

NNESTs were preferred for the teaching of literature courses by the English majors.

Students showed a distinct preference for the NNEST on this subject area. The NNEST was also preferred by the English majors for assessing grammar. Similarly, Ürkmez (2015) found the majority of participants showed a preference for the NNEST for grammar lessons. The In'to student did not show this preference for assessing grammar, and since literature courses are not part of their curriculum that question was not analysed for them.

The students did not show a clear preference in other specific subjects. The English majors showed a neutral preference for the teaching of grammar. They also showed a near-neutral preference for the teaching of fluency, and for the teaching of linguistic courses. The In'to students showed a neutral preference for assessing students' writing, and assessing grammar. For some subject areas, such as assessing speaking skills, the results seemed to indicate a possible preference for students, although this preference was not clear enough to conclude it definitively. That students do not show a clear preference for the teaching and assessing of oral skills is remarkable, since Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) found students preferred the NEST for speaking skills, and Javid (2016) also finds a preference for the NEST for teaching speaking skills.

This means the findings confirm the hypothesis with regard to the specific subject areas. On the general preference the hypothesised results were not found, instead students showed some inclination towards the NEST. Since this is in-line with some previous research this result is not completely unexpected, yet it was expected that Dutch students would perhaps yield different results.

5.2 Sub-question one

The first sub-research question asks if students view their Non-Native English Speaking Teachers in a positive way. It was hypothesised that students would have a positive opinion towards NNESTs, that they are confident in their ability to teach, and feel the NNESTs abilities are comparable to those of the NEST. The quantitative data collected from the communication and learning scale questions show that students are generally positive towards the NNEST. Other studies that looked into student attitude towards NNESTs, such as Ling & Braine (2007) and Chang (2016), also found that students are generally favourable towards NNESTs. The qualitative data reveal two other findings in accordance with Ling & Braine (2007). Firstly, that some students appreciate the NNEST for their ability to speak the students' native language. This allows students a safety net in case they have difficulty expressing themselves in English. Secondly, that some students are aware of the NNESTs personal learning background and how

this can be a strength to them.

What the quantitative data also reveal is that plenty of students feel that if a teacher is a native speaker or not should not be an issue. They argue that being a native speaker does not automatically make one a good teacher, other qualities are more important. Participants in Walkinshaw & Hoang Duong (2012) also expressed a similar opinion and ranked native-speakerness as one of the least essential aspects of a teacher. The responses given to learning question1 by the English majors show that students are unlikely to transfer class even if the teacher has a weak foreign accent. Which also suggests that the teacher's accent is not a defining aspect to students. Even if a teacher has a weak foreign accent they will generally not transfer class.

The answers given to the learning and communication scale questions, as well as some of the responses in the open questions show that students are generally favourable towards the NNEST, and students seem to have no objection to being taught by one. This means the hypothesis for the sub-research question was correct.

5.3 Sub-question two

The second sub-question wants to know if the English majors differ significantly from the In'to students in their preferences? The hypothesis for the second sub-question is that overall the two groups are likely relatively similar although the English majors are perhaps slightly more favourable towards the NNEST.

Overall the results for the English majors and the In'to students were rather similar. There were, however, a few notable differences. Firstly, the results of both groups on the matter of teaching pronunciation differed greatly. Not only was the In'to students' preference not sufficiently significant to conclude such a preference, although it indicates there possibly is one, it was also much less pronounced as that of the English majors. This is probably due to the goals the English majors have for their language learning process. The website of the English department at the university formulates a near-native competence in English as one of the final requirements (Radboud English Department). This is probably why a near-native pronunciation is so important to these students, and why they would prefer a native to instruct them in these courses.

Further difference can be seen in the results for the grammar questions. The results for the English majors show a neutral preference on the subject of teaching grammar, but a preference for the NNEST for assessing grammar. Those of the In'to students on the other hand show a neutral preference for assessing grammar, while suggesting a preference for NNESTs

for teaching grammar.

The responses for some of the learning and communication questions also notably differed. This was on the question on transferring class in case the teacher has a weak foreign accent, and the question on the capability of NNESTs to understand and answer students' questions. The results indicate that the In'to students are less opposed to transfer class when their teacher has a weak foreign accent. This seems remarkable seeing as how their preference for a NEST for teaching pronunciation is so strong. The results further demonstrate that the In'to students are less confident in the NNEST's ability to understand and answer the questions students ask.

These results mean that the hypothesis is partly wrong, although the English majors are indeed more positive to NNESTs in certain areas, such as grammar assessment and their attitude towards the NNEST. The students also express a clearer preference for the NEST for pronunciation; one that is more pronounced than that of the In'to students.

5.4 Evaluation

There are some noteworthy limitations to this study which are important to mention in relation to these results and what they imply.

Firstly, it should be noted that the English majors are a specific group of EFL learners. Their goals in learning the language are very different to most other learners. It is therefore not necessarily the case that their results are representative of all Dutch EFL learners. It is because of this reason the In'to students were added to this study to attempt to make it more representative. The low number of participants, however, prevented this study from achieving that goal. Even though the In'to results seem to suggest little difference between the two groups, this cannot be concluded with certainty until more extensive research has been done.

Secondly, the size of the questionnaire was kept somewhat short. This was done to ensure it held the respondents attention. A more elaborate questionnaire could, however, have also looked at student attitude towards NESTs and compared that to student attitude towards NNESTs. This could lead to a more extensive conclusion on student preference.

Despite these limitations, however, this study managed to show where Dutch student preference is similar, and where it is different from students studied in previous studies. And although further research could be more representative of all Dutch EFL learners and create a more detailed image of student preference, as an initial step this study achieved its goal.

6. Conclusion

The results of this study suggest students would generally prefer a NEST as instructor, although their preference is less one-sided for specific subject areas. For the teaching of pronunciation the results indicate a preference for the NEST, which is in line with findings in Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005), Diaz (2015), and Ürkmez (2015). The results suggest a preference, or a neutral preference for the subject of grammar. The English majors prefer a NNEST for assessing grammar and show no preference for either for the teaching of grammar. The results for the In'to students, however, indicate their preference is the other way around. Unlike participants in Lasagabaster & Sierre (2005) and Javid (2016) the participants in the present study did not express a clear preference for the NEST for oral proficiency skills other than pronunciation.

The results further suggest both student groups have a positive opinion of the NNEST. Students are confident in the NNESTs abilities as teacher and believe NNESTs can be just as competent as NESTs. Both the qualitative results and the quantitative results reveal that the students' opinions differ little from those found in Ling & Braine (2007) and Chang (2016). The results indicate students are aware of the NNESTs background as language learner and how this can be a strength. Some students furthermore expressed that they believe that whether a teacher is a native speaker or non-native should not be important. This is largely in line with the findings in Walkinshaw & Hoang Duong (2012) who also found students find other aspects more important than native-speakerness.

Although these finding suggest an overall preference for the NEST, and a divided preference for specific subject areas, this remains to be confirmed by larger studies with a greater number of participants, and more diverse participants as well. This study looks at students from one city in the Netherlands. So in order to adequately measure the preference of Dutch students, participants from all over the Netherlands would have to be measured.

One possible shortcoming in the present study is that the results for the In'to students are, for the most part, not significant. This is likely due to the low number of participants. The results from this group however, suggest that these students do not differ overly much from the English majors. The In'to results mostly indicate similar preferences to the English majors but these indications cannot lead to definitive conclusions due to the low statistical significance. Ideally the group of In'to students would have been more substantial, leading to more conclusive results.

Next to increasing the number of participants, there are a few points that might prove beneficial to future research. Firstly a clarification on the way of questioning could be

beneficial. It seems a few students were slightly confused by the way the questionnaire works. These students were unsure if the answer 'totally disagree' would mean they had no preference for either teacher, or would mean they had a preference for the other teacher. This issue was raised by a couple of participants while filling in the questionnaire, as well as by In'to participant eight who argues that "Some questions were a little steering. Like for instance you asked if one was better in teaching grammar. If I disagree, does that automatically mean I think their equal, or that the other one is better? Because you didn't ask them the other way around. So that wasn't always clear for me…".

Furthermore, in order to obtain a complete image of the difference between NESTs and NNESTs in the Netherlands, other areas will have to be investigated as well. One substantial group of EFL learners not included in this research are high school pupils. However, another possible line of inquiry for future studies is to look into teacher identity, do NESTs and NNESTs themselves perceive a difference. Or investigate hiring practices in the Netherlands in order to determine if there are any discriminatory practices.

All in all, this study takes an initial step in exploring student preference for NESTs, NNESTs, or neither in a Dutch context. Although the results of this study show that Dutch students are not dissimilar to students from previously studied regions there are still enough opportunities for further research. Hopefully studying the differences between NESTs and NNESTs in an EFL context will, in time, help create a more equal field for both NESTs, NNESTs, and students to enjoy.

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8 Appendices
8.1 Questionnaire

Student preference

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to fill out my questionnaire. This will take about 5-10 minutes of your time.

This questionnaire is only for English majors with Dutch as their native language.

Make sure you read the questions carefully. There are no right or wrong answers, so please check the answer that is most appropriate to you.

Student preference

1.

Gender: *

○ Male
○ Female

2.

Age: *

[   ]

3.

Which certificate do you have and what grade/score did you get in English? (More than one answer possible)

☑ VWO [   ]
☐ HAVO [   ]
☐ HBO [   ]
☐ Foreign Education [   ]

4.

At which University are you enrolled? *

○ Radboud University Nijmegen
○ Other [   ]

5.

Current year as English major at university: *

○ 1st
○ 2nd
○ 3rd
○ 4(+)

6.

Have you spent time studying at a university in an English speaking country?*

○ Yes
○ No

7.

When you studied English in secondary school, were your teachers:*

○ Native speakers of Dutch
○ Native speakers of English
○ Both native speakers of English and Dutch

8.

Have you ever had a course with a non-native English instructor at university?*

○ Yes
○ No

9.

Have you ever had a course with a native English instructor at university?*

○ Yes
○ No

For the following questions please fill in the option that is most appropriate for you.

Scale:
(1) Strongly disagree
(2) Disagree
(3) Neither agree nor disagree
(4) Agree
(5) Strongly agree

10.

General Questions:

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
At university a non-native instructor is better at explaining grammar	○	○	○	○	○
At university a native instructor is better at teaching vocabulary	○	○	○	○	○
At university a native instructor is better at teaching pronunciation	○	○	○	○	○
At university a non-native instructor is better at teaching fluency	○	○	○	○	○
At university a non-native instructor is better at teaching linguistic courses	○	○	○	○	○

Scale:
(1) Strongly disagree
(2) Disagree
(3) Neither agree nor disagree
(4) Agree
(5) Strongly agree

11.

Communication with non-native speaking English teachers:

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
If I had trouble understanding a non-native teacher, I would talk to him/her after class	○	○	○	○	○
Many non-native English instructors usually communicate effectively in the classroom	○	○	○	○	○
I am on friendly terms with my native English instructors more than my non-native English instructors	○	○	○	○	○
When there are communication problems between students and non-native English instructors, students cannot do anything to improve the situation	○	○	○	○	○
I feel comfortable talking about personal concerns with non-native English instructors	○	○	○	○	○
On the whole, non-native English instructors show the same level of concern for students as do native English instructors	○	○	○	○	○

Scale:
(1) Strongly disagree
(2) Disagree
(3) Neither agree nor disagree
(4) Agree
(5) Strongly agree

12.

Learning from non-native speaking English teachers:

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
If I got a non-native English instructor with a weak foreign accent, I would try to transfer to another class	○	○	○	○	○
I can learn just as well from a non-native English instructor as I can from a native English instructor	○	○	○	○	○
If I could choose the course myself, I would choose a course taught by a non-native English instructor	○	○	○	○	○
Many non-native English instructors have difficulty understanding and answering students' questions	○	○	○	○	○
It would be better if non-native English instructors were not allowed to teach in English language programmes	○	○	○	○	○
There are many non-native English instructors who teach just as effectively as native English instructors	○	○	○	○	○

Scale:
(1) Strongly disagree
(2) Disagree
(3) Neither agree nor disagree
(4) Agree
(5) Strongly agree

13.

Assessment:

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
A non-native instructor would assess my reading comprehension better than a native instructor	○	○	○	○	○
A native instructor would assess my speaking better than a non-native instructor	○	○	○	○	○
A native instructor would assess my writing better than a non-native instructor	○	○	○	○	○
A non-native instructor would assess my pronunciation better than a native instructor	○	○	○	○	○
A native instructor would assess my knowledge of grammar better than a non-native instructor	○	○	○	○	○

Please note: the following questions are not obligatory

14.

If you expressed a strong personal preference towards either native speaker teachers, or non-native speaker teachers, would you care to elaborate on why you believe this is the case?

15.

If you feel both teachers are equally suited to teach, would you care to elaborate on why you believe this is the case?

16.

Do you have any remarks or thoughts that you wish to express with regard to this questionnaire?

Thank you for filling in my questionnaire.

8.2 English major responses to open questions:

	If you expressed a strong personal preference towards either native speaker...	If you feel both teachers are equally suited to teach, would you care to el...	Do you have any remarks or thoughts that you wish to express with regard to...
respondent 1	I believe native speakers are the superior teachers for the subjects that require a certain native pragmatic intuition. For the rest of the subjects I don't believe it matters if the teacher is a native speaker or not.		distinction between the meaning native and non-native unclear
respondent 2	I really depends on the skill level of the non-native teacher. I know a lot of non-native instructors who are very capable but I also know quite a few who do not live up to the standards	It depends on the skills, capability and personality of the teacher	
respondent 3	I prefer native speakers because they would help me improve my pronunciation.	It should not be a matter of whether they are a native or not, but a matter of their competence and their understanding of the material.	
respondent 4			
respondent 5		Because it depends on your knowledge, not your language	
respondent 6	I don't really have a strong personal preference	Because it only really matters in pronunciation and fluency and not really in grammar because that are rules and hey rules are rules and nobody beats Pieter de Haan	I like bross :) and good luck with your thesis. I think the questionaire was very well structured
respondent 7	Probably non-native speakers, because I always have a Dutch safety net.	I like the idea of being able to confirm things in Dutch, and a Dutch teachers might be able to identify the cause of my problems more easily.	
respondent 8			
respondent 9		It depends on the individual whether or not a teacher is good.	

respondent 10			
respondent 11			
respondent 12	I think that native teachers can assess our pronunciation better than non-native teachers for they really know when something is "off" in our pronunciation.		
respondent 13			
respondent 14	Native speakers seem to be more qualified to judge pronunciation and speaking		
respondent 15	I think pronunciation would be better if taught by native speakers, but in general i believe they are both equally suited to teach.	I don't see how native or non-native speakers would be different in teaching literature or linguistics.	
respondent 16		Because it does not necessarily have any consequences for their ability to teach a subject.	
respondent 17		I have only had one native speaker as a teacher before, but I have found both the native speaker and the non-native speakers to be capable teachers. Just because someone is a native speaker doesn't mean they are automatically good at being a teacher. Anyone can be good at teaching if they take the time to learn the necessary skills, both native and non-native.	Nope.
respondent 18		Both native and non-native instructors are qualified to teach the courses they teach. They have all studied in this field and are just as competent.	
respondent 19		I think it depends on your education? You can be a native speaker but still suck at explaining grammar.	

respondent 20		Teaching is a skill, doesn't matter whether you are a native or non-native speaker.	
respondent 21	non-native speakers. Because sometimes even as a student of English it is difficult to explain something in english when you find a topic really difficult. So it's easy to sometimes switch to Dutch, because that is our L1.	Because it doesn't matter if their L1 is English or Dutch, as long as they have knowledge on the topic they are teaching.	no
respondent 22		Because at university non-native language proficiency just be high, and both are professionals.	
respondent 23		There are few fields where I feel native would be better at teaching than non-native. I could see why non-natives are more meta-linguistically aware at other topics	
respondent 24	I don\'t really have a strong preference but if it is possible I would prefer a native. It depends more on the quality of his/hers teaching skills.		For me, in many cases, it would not matter if they were native or not, but more on ehat type of person it is. So the questions looked a bit weird..
respondent 25	A native teacher is the perfect example of a perfect accent but that's the only thing	They're educated and selected to teach the subject sufficiently	No
respondent 26			
respondent 27		It dependance on the person and what subject they teach.	
respondent 28		They both studied for this and had to have a job interview, so they are both qualified.	No, it was very clear and easyto answer.
respondent 29	native speakers speak english all the time		
respondent 30	i dont have a preference	Because their teaching skills are not dependent of their native language	no. hope you get a good grade!

respondent 31			
respondent 32	Not a strong preference, but native speakers do have some skills since they started speaking.		
respondent 33		It depends on the person and what subject they teach.	
respondent 34	Yes, if it would influence the level of the courses	No	I think that non-native teachers can be really good teachers, because they know better what difficulties the students might stumble upon.
respondent 35			
respondent 36			
respondent 37		For some courses it really is bout the knowledge. For example literature. Then, it doesnt really matter whether the teacher is native or non natge speaker. As long as he/she knows enough to teach us	
respondent 38	I think native speakers would be better for pronunciation since they have a natural accent and way of speaking in English.	For all other subjects and parts of English Language and Culture, I think non-native and native teachers are equally suited to teach because before teaching grammar, you need to study it yourself anyway.	
respondent 39	I don't really have a strong personal preference	Both have studied their subject and most of the times have equal knowledge on the subject. Sure Native speaker teachers have more experience in the real field but that's not always important. Experience isn't the only important factor when it comes to teaching	
respondent 40	-	-	-
respondent 41	I didn't.	If someone managed to become a teacher, I would say they are	

		qualified enough. People should not be judged on their nationality and nativity, but on their qualifications.	
respondent 42		Non-native English speakers have studied hard to perfect their English. Sometimes they even have better grammar and pronunciation than some native speakers, so I see them as equal.	

8.3 In'to student responses to open questions:

	If you expressed a personal preference towards either native speaker teache...	If you feel both teachers are equally suited to teach certain subjects, wou...	Do you have any remarks or thoughts that you wish to express with regard to...
respondent 1			
respondent 2			
respondent 3			
respondent 4			It is a very hard questionnaire if you hadn't lessons from both kind of teachers.
respondent 5			
respondent 6			
respondent 7	I would prefer a native teacher as I believe they have the most knowledge of the English language and can thus teach me the most.		
respondent 8		I don't think the quality of teaching is in whether or not a person is a native speaker. Other teaching skills are far more important.	Some questions were a little steering. Like for instance you asked if one was better in teaching grammar. If I disagree, does that automatically mean I think their equal, or that the other one is better? Because you didn't ask them the other way around. So that wasn't always clear for me. Good luck on your thesis!
respondent 9			
respondent 10			
respondent 11	On pronounciation I would prefer a native speaker as they often sound more natural (less exaggerated)	I think on reading scills both teachers would show equal skills as most rules also attend to Dutch texts. And vocab	I think a lot of questions about the teachers more depend on their personality than the fact that they are native or non-native. In my opinion, if you

	than a non-native speaker.	is something you can learn.	get along with your teacher well and his didactic abilities are good, you will learn a lot.
respondent 12		In my opinion both could be equal. I think the quality of the teacher is also very important. You could have a very professional non native speaker, but also a bad native speaker.	It think the risk of a non native speaker is, that students could easily switch to their own language, if they ask them a question and cannot find the words in English.
respondent 13			
respondent 14			
respondent 15	I don\'t have a hard felt preference	What matters is the years of experience they have teaching. I believe native speakers have some advantage over non-natives, but I also believe non-natives can overcome this disadvantage with experience.	-
respondent 16			
respondent 17		As long as the level of non-native teachers' English fluency is almost as good as native speakers, I see no problem in them teaching.	