ABSTRACT

Globalization is connecting the world in social, economic, cultural and political aspects. This is why English has become a *lingua franca* (a language used among peoples whose main languages are different). Therefore, the increase of non-native teachers in the entire world is a reality nowadays. Because of this growing tendency, a stereotype has come out and it states that native teachers are better instructors than non-native teachers. The stereotype is based on the idea that native teachers own the target language. However, a debate arouse regarding the use of the term *native.* The pioneer of this study, Peter Medgyes, mentions that the term *native* should not be used since there is no "nativity" in a language. This issue, native-non-native teachers, has provoked problems of credibility from the students' perspective, credibility from the viewpoint of professional academic organizations, and credibility in terms of administrators. Credibility is important because it has the power to disturb the students´ learning experience since if there is no trust in the teacher, people will hardly trust in his/her knowledge, which can affect the learning process. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of both types of teachers will be analyzed to show that native as well as non-Native teachers can become successful in the teaching of the English language.

Key Words: Native Teachers, Non-Native Teachers, Dichotomy, Stereotype, Credibility, Weaknesses, Strengths.

Gabriela Peralta
Alejandra Valdez

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CARRERA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA

"Native English Speaking Teachers vs.

Non-Native English Speaking Teachers"

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Tutor: Dr. Rafael Argudo

Autoras: Gabriela Peralta

Alexandra Valdez

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AUTHORSHIP

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Gabriela Peralta   **Alexandra Valdez**

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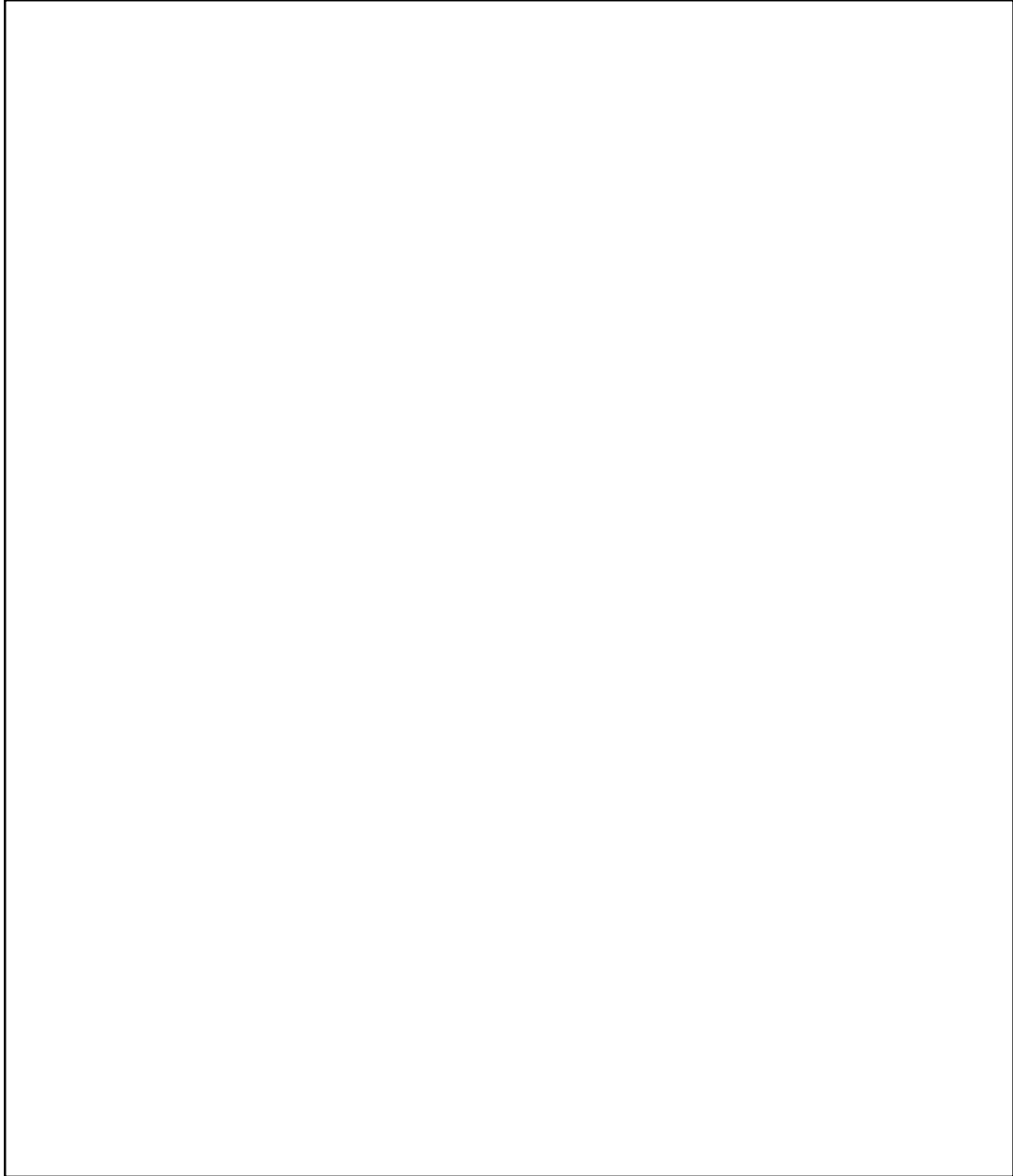
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INTRODUCTION

Since English became a *lingua franca*, the number of non-native speakers of it has increased extremely. According to Holliday, a *lingua franca* is a language used among people whose native languages are different (qtd. in Sharifian 21). Thus, an already high demand for non-Native English teachers has augmented too. Nevertheless, the requirement of English teachers has generated a controversy which takes for granted that native English speaking teachers are better than non-Native English teachers because it is believed that natives know the language perfectly; this is because they learn it when they are little kids. However, this dichotomy has been debated by experts such as Anchimbe, Shin, Medgyes, and so on. Anchimbe states that for a long time there has been a general conception which states that native speakers are considered infallible when using their native language (4). But Medgyes argues against the aforementioned general conception since being a native speaker is not a synonym of supremacy (431). Thus, a study of the terms *native* and *non-Native* will be analyzed deeply in order to see what the implications of both terms are. It is important to realize that being an English teacher is not a natural quality, since academic preparation is needed to fulfill this profession. That is why being a native speaker should not be the only factor to be taken into account in order to achieve success when teaching English. Teaching involves a whole process, and both types of teachers, native and non-Native, can accomplish. Moreover, a study of problems concerning the credibility of non-Native teachers is presented since these problems are faced by non-Native English teachers daily. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of both types of teachers will be analyzed briefly in order to draw attention to the fact that the concepts of native and non-Native differ regarding their skills, but that in spite of their differences both of them can be good at teaching English as a second language. Medgyes, Braine, and Widdowson, among others, are the authors who have argued in favor of non-Native English teachers by analyzing their strengths as well as

their potential -- both qualities which have been underestimated. In summary, this research has been carried out in order to prevent students from negatively stereotyping non-Native English teachers.

CHAPTER 1 THE PROBLEM

Topic:

"Native English Speaking Teachers vs. Non-Native English Speaking Teachers"

1.1   Purpose

The purpose of this project is to determine whether there is a preconception with respect to the effectiveness of teachers who speak English natively as opposed to teachers who are not native English speakers.

1.2   Description of the Problem

For a long time there has been a stereotype in the entire world which states that a native speaker is by nature the best person to teach his/her language. Through the realization of this investigation, we intend to give recommendations and study related theories in order to inspire society to appreciate the efforts of both types of teachers: native teachers as well as non-Native teachers.

Throughout our education, we have researched and often heard about the dispute regarding non-Native speaking teachers and native speaking teachers. Medgyes has indicated that until a couple of years ago, they were considered to be two entirely different categories. In recent years, however, he highlights that it is ambiguous to dispute the differences between these groups of teachers, since both of them have had success when teaching a foreign language (429). We completely agree; however, there are still students who raise this issue when taking their English classes. This is

perhaps due to these students being very critical of the non-Native speaking teachers' weaknesses. Nevertheless, it is important to understand all teachers go through ups and downs to be accepted in the society they live in.

1.3   Justification

In order to diminish society's prejudice against non-Native teachers, we must create a sense of confidence in English students themselves, and make them feel equally comfortable when they learn from a non-Native speaking teacher as from a native speaking teacher. Moreover, the aim is to show students how capable both groups can become as English teachers. This will make students and society realize that it is incorrect to automatically assume that native speaking teachers are the best English teachers; just because a teacher can speak English well does not mean that he/she is an excellent English educator. To become a good teacher, he/she must go through a process which implies previous learning methodology as well as good pedagogical procedures – a process by which both groups can succeed.

1.3.1   Research Questions

Are native English speakers better teachers than non-Native speakers?

We know many non-Native teachers as well as native teachers who have succeeded, and many who have failed. Both teachers have the same goal: to get involved with and succeed in the teaching field. Teachers and students alike need to know that both types of educators are able to teach the foreign language successfully. There are many ways to fulfill the teaching objective. What is necessary is to strengthen previous knowledge about the subject. Thus, to become a good English teacher, one must educate oneself. In fact, a person must have a desire to become a good teacher. The final results will

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ultimately be determined by the students; they are usually the only ones who perceive when teachers are good or not.

1.4 Objectives

General Objective

To determine the degree of teaching competency of both native speakers of English and non-Native speakers of English.

Specific Objectives

- ✓ To show students that learning from both native and non-Native teachers can be a worthwhile experience.
- ✓ To encourage Ecuadorian students to accept non-Native speakers as their foreign language instructors.

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Background: English as a Lingua Franca

Due to globalization, English has become a universal language. Graddol states that "with the death of distance, the disappearance of many national boundaries, and the prioritization of regional and trans-national economies, prospects for widespread lingua franca, English being one of the most prominent, have tremendously increased" (qtd. in Anchimbe 3). According to Holliday, *lingua franca* means a language used among people whose main languages are different. In other words, since English has become widely used throughout the world, it has become a *lingua franca*. That is, people who speak a different language as their native one have learned English for communication purposes (qtd. in Sharifian 21).

By the same token, Enric Llurda states that the wide spread use of English has been criticized by some scholars. That is the case for Pakir and Muhlhausler, who have labeled English as the "Killer language" (qtd. in Llurda 314). Because of the spread of the English language, a clasification of English speakers has developed. Kachru claims that around the world there are three kinds of speakers: "the native (ENL), the second language (ESL) and the foreign language (EFL) speakers" (qtd. in Anchimbe 11). Crystal tries to quantify the speakers within the aforementioned categories. By his/her estimation, there are 375 million of ENL, 375 million of ESL, and 750 million of EFL. Therefore, the number of non-Native speakers is thrice than the amount of native speakers (qtd. in Anchimbe 11). Graddol, as well, affirms that the number of non-Native English speakers exceeds native English speakers (qtd. in Medgyes 429).

2.2   Stereotype

As a result, this massive expansion of English language usage has generated a demand for teachers. Furthermore, this augmentation of English teachers has created a stereotype between native English speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-Native English speaking teachers (non-NESTs). Widdowson states that "native speakers are assumed to be superior in linguistic competence as compared to non-Native speakers and are considered owners of proper, authentic English" (qtd. in Shin 58). By the same token, Anchimbe points out that for a long time there has been a general conception which states that native speakers are considered infallible when using their native language. Even in publicities there is usage of discriminatory words like "All of our English teachers are native-speakers, teaching natural English as it is spoken in real conversation" (4). Chomsky states that there is a conviction which takes for granted that native speakers can at any time give valid and stable verdicts on their language. Moreover, they are able to recognize ill- formed grammatical expressions in their native language even though they are not able to explain why these expressions are wrong. This is because native speakers learn the language from infancy, and there is no extra language that interferes with this process of acquisition (qtd. in Achimbe 7).

Similarly, Hocking declares that "the point is that what is correct in a language is just what native speakers of the language say. There is no other standard" (qtd. in Achimbe 7). This author also states that "the native speaker is error-free and since s/he learns the language from infancy, s/he has an unquestionable proficiency and efficiency in it" (8). In sum, native speakers are considered to be better instructors when teaching English. Nevertheless, the purpose of this analysis and discussion is to show that both types of

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teachers, native as well as non- Native, can become successful in spite of their dissimilarities. This analysis is also focused on the rejection of the concept that native speakers are simply better than non-Natives. To support this idea the strengths and weaknesses between NESTs and non-NESTs will be analyzed. Moreover, different topics regarding this issue will be discussed.

2.3   Native vs. Non-Native Dichotomy

First of all, Mufwene affirms that the distinction of the term *non-Native* became noticeable during the colonial time. That is, when British settlers colonized North America. Thus, people from that time used the term *non-Native* when referring to primitive as well as non-literate people. People from the masses which mostly were Africans used to be called incompetent English speakers (qtd. in Anchimbe 8). One reason for this situation, perhaps, as stated by Kachru, was that people from high status (British settlers) wanted to preserve the difference between them and the masses. That is, they wanted to maintain the distance between "the rulers and the ruled" (qtd.in Anchimbe 8). As we can see, the term *non-Native* was used to differentiate between the nobles and the masses. Today, the term still remains in our society, but now it is associated to a different connotation.

The term *non-Native* has come to be used in its present meaning because of the widespread use of English. It has happened in order to distinguish between people who were born in native countries and people who learn English as a second language because it is vital but is not their native language. Furthermore, this distinction has come to be applied to English teachers as well. Thus, the term *native* is associated with words like "superior" or "infallible," as mentioned before. As a result, a polemic has been generated since Medgyes, a pioneer in the non-Native study, affirms that this distinction must not be rejected "but rather subjected to close scrunity" (Medgyes 429).

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Subsequently, Medgyes states that the terms *native English teacher* and *non-native English teacher* are considered incorrect phrases, politically speaking; currently, people who use these terms can be accused of using discriminatory terminology (429). That is why there has been a long trajectory focused on the rejection of discrimination against non-Native English teachers, particularly since they make a great effort in order to become good educators. With this in mind, Llurda, a well-recognized non-Native English speaker, performed a study of many people who contributed to make the non-Native English teachers' condition visible. Llurda states that the study of non-Native English teachers (Non-NETs) began when a book written by George Braine appeared in 1999. After he read this book, he felt the necessity to make the world aware of the enormous effort that Non-NETs put forth when teaching. Llurda also mentions that a few years earlier to the emergence of Braines' book, Medgyes (1994) opened a debate about the Non-NETs' real situation by using his own experiences and hypothetical principles. Therefore, the study of non-Native English speakers is a recent phenomenon. Braine and Medgyes' books were the first ones which referred to this problem (2).

An important point that Llurda makes is that despite Medgyes pioneering in the study of non-Native speakers' condition, it took nearly a decade before it became a significant issue (2). At the present time, the study of this problem is a big controversy since many linguists discuss whether the term *native speaker* should still be used or not. Moreover, some of them have analyzed what the implications are when a person is either a native or a non-Native English speaker.

2.4   Implications of Being a Native Speaker

Being a native speaker does not imply infallibility when teaching, as Hocking tries to persuade. That is, native speakers are not perfect; in fact, "most native speakers of English in the world are native speakers of some nonstandard variety of the language" (Anchimbe 7).Therefore, Anchimbe mentions that being a native speaker neither means that there is a guarantee for competence when communicating, nor that the native is a proficient speaker. Communication is more than a simple process, since it takes into account a huge "infrastructure of social and cultural elements that determine what must be said and how it must be said" (8). Moreover, Anchimbe highlights the fact that aspects such us "language change, dialect variations, sociocultural contexts, professional backgrounds, cultural variation and so forth" (8) must be taken into account when teaching English. Furthermore, from the grammatical point of view, poor and incompetent speakers are still found in native states (Anchimbe 8).

After coming to recognize that being a *native speaker* is not a synonymous of superiority, it is important to see what should be taking into account when teaching English as a second language. Thus, Anchimbe claims that "competence or proficiency and not origin must be judged as a prerequisite for especially ELT positions" (12). He also emphasizes that English language teaching (ELT) means a process which involves preparation and efficiency. Furthermore, Anchimbe states that being a native speaker does not mean that she/he acquires a perfect language, since non-standard dialects are found in native areas. Therefore, not all native speakers can be proficient when teaching English, in view of the fact that ELT itself is not a natural quality that native speakers have (12).

By the same token, Widdowson states that "teaching English is not a biological quality but a craft, a skill that has to be learned and mastered" (qtd.in Shin 59). Cook proposes that attention should be placed on the second language user rather than focused on the nature of being a native

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speaker. In doing such a thing, the language teaching would be much more beneficial (qtd. in Shin 59). And as Widdowson points out, "when the emphasis is moved from the contexts of use to contexts of learning, the advantage that native speaker teachers have disappears" (qtd. in Shin 59).

2.5   Who is the Native Speaker?

"A native speaker of English is traditionally defined as someone who speaks English as his or her native language, also called mother tongue … or L_1" (Medgyes 430). Keeping this definition in mind, there are also some parameters to determine who a native speaker is. According to Medgyes, the person who was born in an English- speaking country is considered a native speaker. However, there is a debate about the aforementioned topic, since birth does not always define whether a person is a native English speaker. For example, Christine was born in the United States but moved to Austria at the age of one. Is she a native speaker? Even though she was born in an English speaking country, she did not learn English; clearly it would be wrong to state that she is an English native speaker. By the same token, if we take into account mixed marriages, the native speaker could disappear. For example, if Pablo's father is Colombian and his mother is Finnish, he may be bilingual. But if Pablo and his parents live in Australia, he may be trilingual. Thus it would be strange to say that Pablo is simply an English native speaker (430).

In addition, countries play an important role here. If a person is born and raised in an English speaking country, he or she would normally be labeled as a native speaker. Therefore, it is important to determine which countries are English speaking ones. The United States, the United Kingdom, and

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Australia, among others, could fit into this category. Nevertheless, it is difficult to settle on the English speaking countries because in some of them, such as Nigeria, India, and Singapore, English is not the native language, but it is extensively spoken (Medgyes 430). As can be seen, it is a difficult task to decide which English speaking countries are, and which ones are not. Therefore, according to Kachru, (qtd. in Medgyes 430) to make this easier, countries are organized into three concentric circles. First, the Inner Circle nations where English is the main language, belong to this category. Second, the Outer Circle includes countries where English is the second language used for communication. Third, the Expanding Circle contains countries that have accepted English as the essential international language for communication as well as for teaching purposes. All in all, neither birth nor countries are decisive factors when deciding whether a person is a native speaker or not.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, linguists, as well as language educators debated about using the terms *native* and *non-Native speakers*. Medgyes emphasizes this by referencing a book titled *The Native Speaker Is Death!* by Paikeday (qtd.in Medgyes 431) in which the phrase *native speaker* does not exist anymore. Language educators suggest that instead of using the aforementioned terminology, the words "more or less accomplished and proficient users of English" (Medgyes 430) are good terms when referring to English speakers. In a similar way, Rampton claims that the term "language expertise" instead of non-native is a good term when referring to non-Native English speakers (qtd.in Shin 59). He also points out "the notion of expert shifts the emphasis from "who you are" to "what you know" (qtd.in Shin 59). Likewise, Davies clarifies that "the native speaker is a fine myth: we need it as a model, a goal, almost an inspiration. But it is useless as a measure; it will not help us define our goals" (qtd. in Medgyes 431). Thus, most learners of English as a second language should take the term *native* only as a motivation rather than an implication of supremacy.

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Considering the dispute about using the term *native*, Medgyes states that it is challenging to describe a native English speaking teacher (NEST), since the concept involves nationality, academic preparation, surroundings, self-esteem, and political allegiance, among others. This is why Medgyes points out two ways by which to organize this chaos. The first route abolishes the term *native teacher* versus *non-Native teachers*. On the contrary, Medgyes presents the idea of a line where non-Native English speaking teachers (non-NESTs) move in the direction of the native end. The second one refers to the improvement of both teachers' weaknesses. The first route is more suitable in theoretical terms; however, the second one is more forthright in practical terms. Therefore, Medgyes defines non-NESTs as instructors who use English as a foreign language, work in an English atmosphere, have monolingual students and use the same language as their students. On the other hand, NESTs have characteristics opposite to non-NESTs (433).

All in all, after analyzing the implications of the word *native,* Medgyes points out that English is not someone's property; therefore, nobody can be the owner of this language. Norton also states that English "belongs to all the people who speak it" (qtd.in Medgyes), and it does not matter if the person is a *native* or a *non-Native* speaker. Thus, Kramsh proposes that it is important to note that non-Native speakers, who make an effort towards achieving a good level of English, can use the English language ingeniously until they become efficient when communicating (qtd. in Medgyes 431).

2.6   Problems of Credibility toward Non-Native Teachers

After analyzing the previous issues, it appears that non-NESTs suffer from credibility problems. Then credibility is defined as ''the attitude of a receiver which references the degree to which a source is seen to be believable''. Therefore, a teacher's credibility refers to the level of trust which colleges and

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students have in their teacher. As a consequence, investigators agree that credibility has the control to interfere the learning experience. For instance, teachers might be ignored by their administrators, or their students might pay no attention, if there is no trust (McCroskey& Young 24). Following this farther, the following issues are analyzed: problems of credibility from the students' perspective, credibility from the viewpoint of professional academic organizations, and credibility in terms of administrators (hiring policies).

2.6.1   Credibility with Students

The first issue that of credibility from the students' perspective, is critical. Thomas, an Indian Ph.D. teacher, mentions that English speaking students often find their credibility on the English teachers' race, appearance, and accent, which is a reality within and beyond the profession. Thomas relates that on her first day teaching American students she got nervous before entering the classroom. However, reminiscing on her 7 years of teaching experience gave her the confidence boost to step into the room; she proceeded with chalk and a projector to start the class. Suddenly, she noticed a girl that looked confused. The girl stood up, went outside to check the room number and asked; "Is this English class?" This is just one example of the challenges that Non-NESTs face daily within the profession (5). Similarly, Okawa mentions that his credibility as a teacher was based on his race, language and accent. He feels that sometimes Non-NESTs are considered strangers. Thus, he suggests teachers need to be intelligent, and try to convince students that Non-NESTs can do the same job as natives, or even better. For example, they must not respond directly, "Yes, this is an English class," in frustration, since there are situations where teachers have first to establish credibility before being taken seriously as professionals. Okawa quotes, "I sometimes feel that I have to do twice as well to be accepted". Once teachers gain creditability with their students, they can focus

on their students' success since creditability means confidence (qtd. in Thomas 5).

Likewise, Braine mentions that many Non-NESTs informed him that some of their students complain when they realize they will be taught by Non-NESTs. These students want first to make sure that Non-NESTs are as good as NESTs in order to feel comfortable and take classes with them. Braine tells about his own experience in the ESL context. "I was assigned to teach two courses, the first NNEST to be given this responsibility in the program. About 2 weeks after classes began, I was informed that two students had complained about my accent and requested transfers to classes taught by native speakers" (22-23). Undoubtedly, this is a clear example of the lack of students' perception of the teacher's credibility which can affect the teachers' self-confidence as studied below.

Because of the lack of students' confidence in the them, Non-NESTs sometimes get very preoccupied with seeking perfection of the language in order to be considered a good teacher. According to an interview in *Greta*, a journal for English teachers, Horowitz states that some people believe that become monolingual is the main English teachers' goal; however, this is an unwise aim, and one that no one is able to fulfill. Even native English students who speak English and study any other language will not be monolingual anymore, and certainly cannot become native speakers of the other languages. Perhaps this theory is related to the teachers' wish to acquire the native accent. However, there are not many native speakers; if a person travels abroad for a long time, this person's accent becomes foreign. Therefore, it is essential for instructors to value the language skills they *do* have, instead of the ones that they do not. Horowitz also states that sometimes when she is in workshops with other teachers she asks them if they allow their students to make mistakes. Their reply was that they let students make a few mistakes, and if they were to correct every

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single mistake the students won't be able to handle it. Elaine also asks if the teachers allow themselves to make mistakes, and finally advises them not to get obsessed over language perfection and give themselves a break as well ("Classroom Management").

2.6.2 Credibility with Academic Professional Organizations

In addition to the problems of credibility that Non-NESTs may have with their students, Thomas makes reference to the lack of credibility from the professional Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organizations where some Non-NESTs currently work. The role of Non-NESTs is not clear in these organizations, and this is why: Non-NESTs who have recently joined TESOL organizations feel they have not been accepted cordially (5-13). For example, during meetings Braine has been asked several times about his name. Others with years of English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching experiences have judged his accent because it is sometimes difficult to understand him, and he has also been told that his skin color and accent do not match his name; as a result, he has spent hours explaining his historical background. Through this example, we see clearly that despite the growing number of Non-NEST´s the lack of good sense and sensitivity toward these educators is not uncommon (15).

In the same way, academic journals play favorites as well. Instead of being independent, some of them are being controlled by a tiny group (NESTs). Non-NESTs need to fulfill certain parameters established by their NEST colleges in order to publish in those journals. But the problem is that even if Non-NESTs are allowed to publish their work, they are considered minor articles. Unquestionably, TESOL does not stand foreign writing in texts or changes in the English language (Thomas 5-13). This shows that it is still hard for Non-NEST´s to incorporate into and work uniformly with TESOL organizations.

2.6.3   Credibility with Administrators - Hiring Policies

It is disappointing that TESOL does not voice its full confidence in Non-NESTs. Equally important is that the problems of credibility with administrators are highly discussed. While native speaking teachers get good jobs, non-Native teachers suffer a disadvantage in terms of job opportunities since schools prefer to hire native teachers (Medgyes 432). Here, we have an example by Illes of a letter of rejection given to a non-NEST by the principal of a school in London: "I let you know that all of the teachers are native speakers and students do not travel from far places to London to learn from a non-native teacher" (qtd. in Medgyes 432).

These situations cannot be considered isolated since this is a reality that Non-NEST´s face daily. In the same way, Third World teachers who travel to English-speaking countries face more issues than teachers who travel from America to Third World countries. Non-NESTs have to deal with prejudiced people in order to be accepted. In addition to the subject they teach, they deal with the foreign language; however, administrators sometimes do not understand the extra effort Non-NESTs have to make. On the other hand, American teachers who leave their homes to find opportunities in other countries have it easier. During the past three decades, the Peace Corps has sent thousands of U.S. volunteers to teach English abroad. Many of these teachers have gotten engaged with their jobs and have remained in the profession, earning higher degrees. All of them earn better wages than Non-NESTs, which has been prejudicial to those Non-NESTs who have studied English as a second language (Braine 15).

As a result, Flynn, an administrator from Glendale Community College in the USA, mentions that teachers who would like to apply for jobs in the USA or any place in the world need to improve the following basis in order to be

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more reliable: good comprehension of grammar, understandable accent and notion of the norms of classroom behavior. If teachers who apply for jobs make grammatical or writing mistakes on the cover letter, it shatters an applicant´s opportunity to get an interview. She comments that every year she receives numerous letters which have grammatical mistakes, even in the introductory sentences. This means those letters do not to lead to interviews (7).

Flynn also states that the modification of accent does not solely apply to foreign teachers. In order to find a job in Southern California, she had to mask her New York accent. She learned to speak slower, adjust her vowels and use less East Coast expressions. Even though she speaks English as a native, it was hard for her to adapt her accent to another one; however, it was necessary to model the local pronunciation to get the job she wanted. Regarding school norms in the USA, Flynn advises Non-NESTs to understand and adapt to the norms of cultural behavior. Once, Flynn received complaints about a teacher who showed religious videos as part of her class. The teacher was told that religious videos were not allowed in public schools, but the teacher refused to understand since it was different in her country (7).

Aside from all the problems of credibility, it is also useful to look at the evolution that credibility has gone through. As we can see, the evolution is not yet complete, but non-Native teachers are at least getting more opportunities. Before institutions did not take non-Native teachers into consideration; nowadays, those same institutions give opportunities to those teachers. In 1991, the executive board of TESOL changed its stance on its discriminatory hiring policies and decided to stop all kinds of limitations on the grounds of race, ethnicity, language background, disability, health/medical condition, age, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. Consequently, we can see how discrimination is disappearing with time and

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teachers are getting more opportunities on the English teaching field (Medgyes 432).

2.7 Native Teachers' Strengths and Weaknesses

Medgyes indicated that one of the advantages of the native teachers is the higher capacity to communicate in a natural and spontaneous way as a result of their higher linguistic and communicative aptitude of the English language. Similarly, it is important to mention the high motivation that students feel when teachers do not speak the same language as them. These teachers are not as strict with mistakes and give their classes in a casual way. In this case, the communication goal becomes a reality in the class, which undoubtedly requires extra effort from the students as well. By the same token, the cultural insights learners can pick up are uncountable. The knowledge of the philosophies, customs, beliefs, and systems of meaning of another country is unquestionably a fundamental part of foreign language learning. Native English teachers also use an enormous amount of extra material such us: newspaper clippings, photocopies and realia, whereas non-Native teachers followed the books devotedly (qtd. in Madrid and Pérez 129).

In contrast, one of the best known pitfalls of the native teachers is the poor knowledge of grammar. They often say, "This is wrong, and this is the correct way you should say it; I know, but cannot explain why it is wrong or right". For some of them, it is a deal to explain grammar since it requires previous study and preparation this is why it should be taken into consideration when assigning teaching functions and duties to English teachers (qtd. in Madrid and Perez 128).

2.8 Non-Native Teachers' Strengths and Weaknesses

According to Medgyes, a questionnaire was taken in order to see if people thought that one of the two types of teachers, *native* or *non-Native*, was better than the other. The results showed no significant difference between people's perception of them. Twenty-seven percent answered that native English speaking teachers were better than non- Native English speaking teachers, but 29% said that non-NESTs were better. Finally, 44% said that both are equally good teachers (436). Medgyes, focusing on the results, states that non-NESTs, in spite of their linguistic handicap, must have some exclusive characteristics since they have been preferred by those interviewed as much as NESTs (436).

In support of this, Medgyes offers some hypotheses which say that Non-NESTs, when contrasted with NESTs, can

1. provide a better learner model
2. teach language-learning strategies more effectively
3. supply more information about the English language
4. better anticipate and prevent language difficulties
5. be more sensitive to their students
6. benefit from their ability to use the students' mother tongue (436).

Beginning with the first assumption, Medgyes points out that native English speaking teachers are "better *language* models" (436) since they learn English when they are children. But non- Native English speaking teachers are "better *learner* models" (436) due to the fact that they have learned English after they have acquired their native language.

Additionally, Medgyes contends that being good learner models is a feature which, in the future will help them become successful teachers; it follows that bad language learners do not become good language teachers. There is

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always the possibility of finding ineffective learners who have exceptional teaching skills which ultimately compensate for their language deficiency, but those kinds of learners are uncommon. Medgyes also states that being a good learner it is not enough to become an expert teacher; natives, only by definition, would be innately successful teachers in every case, which is clearly not true. Moreover, not all non-Native learners are successful teachers. In conclusion, it seems that becoming excellent educators is associated with being good learners of English; however, it is not the only condition necessary (436).

In terms of the second assumption stated by Medgyes, non-NESTs teach language- learning strategies more effectively. It is factual that some people learn faster and more efficiently than others. This is due many factors, previously mentioned, such as "background, motivation, age, intelligence, aptitude, level of education, and quality of instruction, as well as knowledge of other foreign languages" (437). In addition, the use of "language learning strategies" is also important when referring to success (437). Wenden and Rubin define the specific practices designed to assist in the learning process, and the ways in which one or numerous elements of proficiency are evoked, as the language learning strategies (qtd. in Medgyes 437).

Furthermore, all learners study through strategies. Therefore, it is important to select the appropriate strategies for a specific learning task in order to achieve success and effective learning. On the one hand, good learners are able to select the appropriate strategies which blend well with their own way of learning, as well as their personalities. On the other hand, there are less successful learners who struggle to do so. That is why well-instructed teachers who can help these kinds of learners are so important; they must be prepared to prevent a failure in the learning process (Medgyes 437). Even though researchers have tried to figure out what the most adequate manner of teaching the strategies is, they have not decided on just one specific way. Hence Stevick, after interviewing seven successful learners, concludes that

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there is no any model pattern to follow, since each person learns in his/her own way. Thus some strategies can be efficient for some but ineffective for others (qtd. in Medgyes 437).

Focusing on the fact that non-NESTs are good learners, it can be assumed that they are "conscious strategy users, able to tell which strategies have worked for them and which have not." Thus it follows that non-NESTs triumph over NESTs when making their students aware about using these strategies. This ability is due non-NESTs' ability to convey their own experiences as learners, and their willingness to help their students to find different ways of learning that will work for them as individuals.

On the subject of the third assumption, which states that non-NESTs supply more information about English language, Medgyes points out that the overall ability of a teacher is composed of three elements: "(a) language proficiency, (b) language awareness, and (c) pedagogic skills" (437). The first element refers to the skills regarding to English language (L2). The second one means having explicit knowledge of the L2, which is not the same as assuming "near-native language proficiency." Last, but by no means least, every single teacher possesses different levels of pedagogical skills. Medgyes also claims that non-NESTs supply more information about English because the acquisition of English in non-NESTs is deeper than NESTs. That is, consciousness in non-NESTs is more substantial regarding to the process of learning English, whereas NESTs are unaware of the mechanisms involved in this process of acquisition. As a consequence, NESTs are less capable of giving information about the L2. In other words, NESTs are more intuitive when giving advice about what is right or wrong in language use; on the contrary, non-NESTs "have deeper insights into what is easy and difficult in the learning process" (437).

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The fourth assumption emphasizes just that; that non-NESTs better anticipate and prevent language difficulties. Medgyes contends that non-NESTs have better perception than NESTs when referring to languages difficulties. Thus, non-NESTs do not need a lot of time to discover language troubles with their students, since it is a natural ability for them. Medgyes also states that almost all non-NESTs have developed a "sixth sense," and the teachers who have a long history in their work are capable of predicting problems easier than their native counterparts. In other words, non-NESTs who have been working for years can predict, with a high level of accuracy, "what is likely to go wrong before the student opens his or her mouth" (438). Therefore, non-NESTs have a very good chance of preventing linguistics difficulties. Medgyes points out that non-NESTs are good with anticipating and preventing language difficulties since they penalize errors when teaching. Perhaps they do such a thing because they perceive English only as a subject that has to be mastered in school rather than as a standard for communication purposes. In contrast, the NESTs' goal is the accomplishment of communication; therefore, they do not correct every single error in their students (438).

In regards to the fifth assumption, which states that Non-NESTs are more sensitive to their students, Medgyes highlights a variety of ways that non-NESTs are more sensitive than their counterparts. First, non-NESTs are more aware
about their students' real needs. Second, since non-NESTs are more familiarized with the teaching-learning context, they can set up genuine needs for their students. For instance, non-NESTs are more conscious of the "constraints of the national curriculum, the teaching materials available, and the examinations to be taken" (438). Third, non-NESTs are usually stricter than NESTs since they have deeper knowledge of the dominant circumstances. In other words, if non-NESTs are cognizant of an "imminent

language examination", they will adapt the appropriate techniques for accomplishing it.

Finally, the sixth assumption stated by Medgyes affirms that non-NESTs' ability to use the mother tongue is beneficial for the students. Native teachers felt frustrated when trying to teach the English language because of the lack of knowledge of the student's mother tongue. This is why Medgyes points out that non-NESTs have an advantage over NESTs because they can carry out monolingual classes (429). However, it is important to establish a balance when using the students' mother tongue.

All in all, after analyzing the aforementioned assumptions, which are positive qualities of non-Native English speaking teachers, it is important to realize that the speaking skill is the main weakness of non-NESTs. According to Medgyes, non-Native English speaking teachers show poorer linguistic competence as compared to their counterparts (NESTs) since non-NESTs acquired English language through hard studying. In contrast, NESTs learn it spontaneously. As a result, non-NESTs face pronunciation problems. Also, they lack of knowledge of slangs since the acquisition of English language is learned through textbooks where colloquial expressions are limited (qtd. in Madrid and Pérez 129).

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1   Basic Methodology

3.1.1   Literature Bibliography

The new trend in education is to work with bibliography reviews and field research. This is what we have done so far in order to find relevant titles, and collect accurate information for the development of our investigation. Among the most important authors we have found Peter Medgyes as the pioneer of the study of the non-Native teachers. For that reason, we have read one of his works,   *"When the Teacher is a Non Native Speaker,"* Unit Number Five of the book *"Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language".* This approach has given us a better perspective of some of the differences in the teaching behavior of native versus non-Native teachers. Besides this book, we have also checked and read a few articles, journals and newspapers that have spanned our previous knowledge of the topic.

3.2   Data-gathering techniques: field research

3.2.1 Expert interviews

Two English teachers have been asked to support our research: Sandra Cabrera, a non-Native teacher at the University of Cuenca, and Andrew Smith, a native teacher at Concelt.

3.2.2 Non-Native Teacher –Sandra Cabrera

First of all, she mentioned her fears as a non-Native teacher. Sandra told us that one of her main fears, when she started teaching, was the fact of having native students in her classes. So, her main fear was based on her mispronunciation because she did not know if her students were judging her

while speaking English. Also, Sandra stated she has always tried to do her best, even though she has never travelled to an English-speaking country. Regarding the benefits of being a non-Native teacher, the use of the mother tongue can be useful when students do not understand something in English. They need to understand that non-native teachers do their best and are great without the need of travelling abroad. On the other hand, in the case of native teachers, students can learn right pronunciation and about the American British culture as well.

3.2.3 Native Teacher-Andrew Smith

We interviewed Andrew at the Concelt School on June 11 at 5 pm. First, he pointed out the non-Native teachers' strengths and weaknesses; the fact of having learned English by themselves brings a lot of experience to the table. Non-Native teachers can relate their own experience to the students´ struggles and difficulties. While Smith speaks English perfectly, his lack of knowledge of pedagogical methodologies needs to be enriched. One of his weaknesses is related to the desire to use the native tongue (Spanish) during English classes. About the hiring policies, Smith has not faced any situation about non-Natives´ discrimination, although he thinks it might be because of their accent and pronunciation.

3.2.4 Survey

A survey was carried out in order to find out what the students´ perceptions are regarding native teachers as well as non-Native teachers.

3.2.5 Data-collection planning

3.2.6 Interviews

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We interviewed Sandra Cabrera in front of the building of the Faculty of Law at the University of Cuenca, on Saturday, March 31 at 6:15. First, we contacted Sandra and explained to her the purpose of our thesis and the necessity of interviewing a non-Native teacher.   She did not hesitate in letting us know her experiences and points of view about being a non-Native teacher. After a quick review of the questions, the recording started and went for 6 minutes.

Equally, Andrew´s interview, which lasted 7 minutes, was carried out bat the University of Cuenca in the Concelt building on Monday, June 11. Prior to the interview, we prepared 5 questions related to his experience and asked him to give us the opportunity to talk to him. He met us to 2 days after in his office, where we had a round table discussion on the topic of native teachers versus non-native teachers.

3.3   Survey

The survey was applied to 10 students at the Salesianas High School, located on Simon Bolivar and Mariano Cueva Streets on Thursday, March 27. Two days before, a letter was sent to the school´s Principal for a previous permission. After a positive answer, Intermediate students, from 13 to 16 years old, were chosen to take the questionnaire, which consisted of 8 questions. The survey response options were composed of 2 multiple-choice answers and 1 open answer, where they had to give their own examples and personal opinion.

3.4   Data-processing Planning

Once we got the data, for our investigation, we made a brief summary of the results obtained in the interviews; these are explained below. In the case of the survey, we counted the scratch marks the students have made next to

each answer to determine the number of people surveyed who have chosen that option. Next, we have counted the total number of completed surveys. We divided the number of people who chose each answer by the total of respondents to tabulate the percentage of respondents who had chosen that particular answer. At the end, we showed the percentages in charts.

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

The questionnaires were aimed to investigate the perceptions towards native teachers and non-Native teachers. After we had interviewed Sandra, we realized that good teachers do not need to study abroad to show their strengths and capacities when they teach English. Self-study is one of the first goals we must set up in order to fulfill a successful career, especially in communication. We can also point out that her pronunciation and fluency were pretty good and the fact of being a non-Native speaker of English gives her the opportunity to understand how difficult it is to learn a language. Therefore, non-Native teachers must work hard to accomplish an advanced level, to avoid and elude the students´ perceptions. Also, Smith suggested the use of English 100 percent outside and inside the classroom, which might encourage the students to use the language in real situations; consequently, we should not miss this opportunity to interact with students in real situations.

According to the results of the survey, we discovered that the main reason for the students' preference of native teachers is related to the native teachers' good accent and pronunciation. Therefore, we could grasp that what Shiri Lev-Ari and Boaz Keysar stated "when listening to a heavy foreign accent, the listener would immediately get the sensation of receiving an untruthful message" is true. Consequently, we are the only ones who can break this prejudice by practicing and studying the English language all the time. It is up to us to get the necessary academic preparation to show people how able and capable we are.

We illustrate the results of the survey through diagrams, with the corresponding percentages followed by brief explanation.

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1. Do you think speaking English is important in our society?

0%

100%

■ yes

■ no
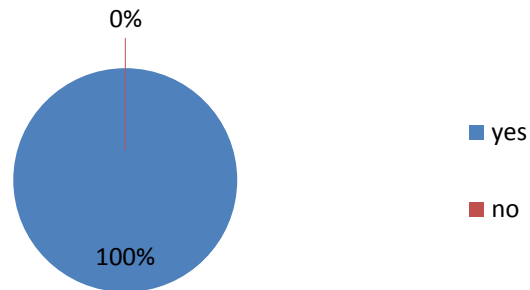
All of them agreed that it is important to know English in our society. They stated that Globalization is connecting us in social, economic, cultural and political aspects. This is why they consider English as a necessity for their future careers.

## 2. Do you feel self-confident when you speak English in front of your classmates?

20%

80%

■ Yes,

■ No
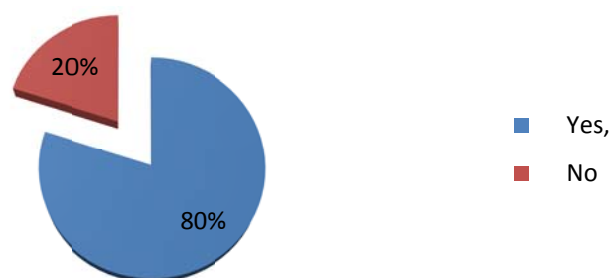
Most of the interviewees said that speaking in front of their classmates helped them learn from their classmates´ mistakes as well as from their own

mistakes. Few of them say that their low self-confidence make them feel nervous and shy when they talk in front of their classmates.

3. Can you understand your teacher whe he/she speaks English?

0%

100%

- Few words
- Some words
- Most words
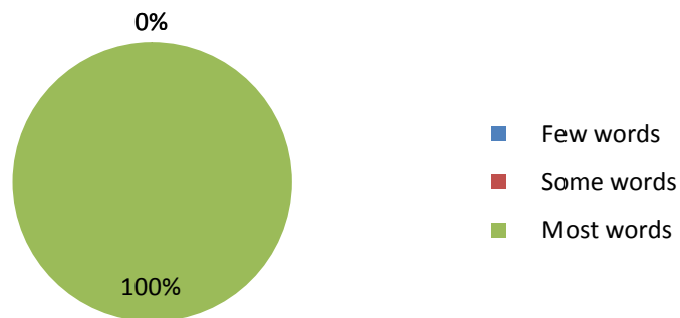
All of the students agreed that they highly understand their teachers when they listen to them. Most of them are familiar with the listening skill.
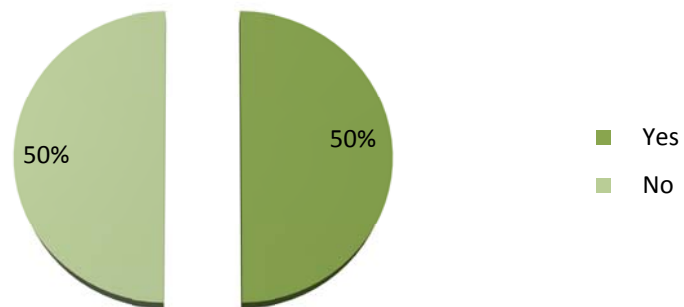
4. Would you rather work with?

20%

80%

- Native speaking teacher
- Non Native speaking teacher
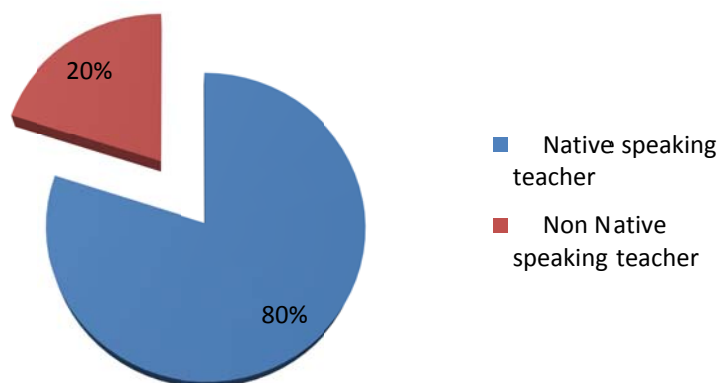
Most students prefer native speaking teachers when they have to take English classes. They refer to native teachers´ good accent and writing.

5. Do you think that non-Native teachers have the same ways of teaching as native teachers?

Some students say there is no difference between these two types of teachers; they use similar ways of teaching when they teach English. However, some of them point that native teachers are better because of the fact that they own the language.

6. What do you suggest in order to improve your English?

0%

50%   50%
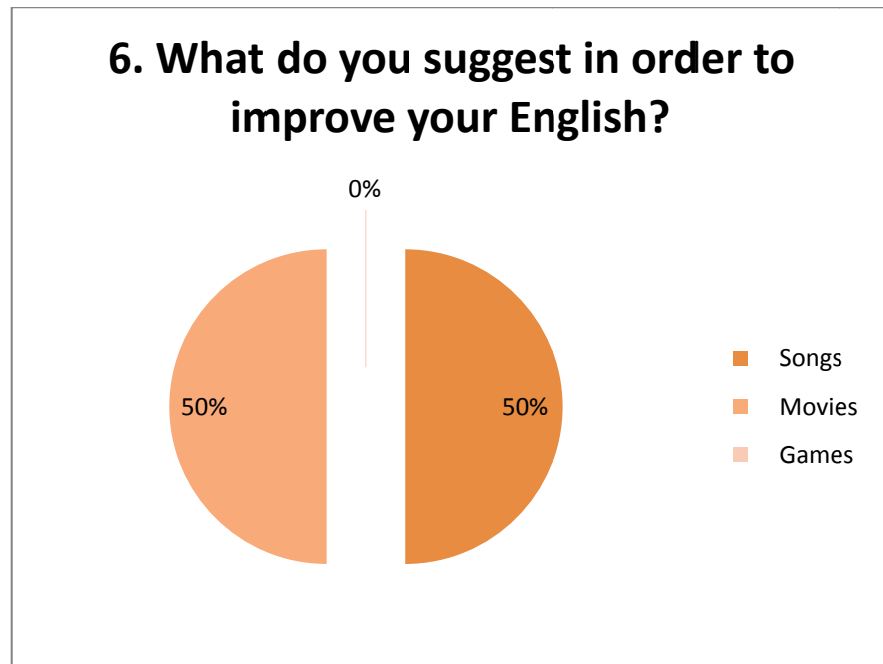
- Songs
- Movies
- Games

All the interviewees agreed that the use of songs and movies improves their English language skill. They are really interested in these ways of learning because they learn vocabulary, expressions and accent through these methods.

7. Which languages do you speak mostly during your English classes?

30%

60%

10%
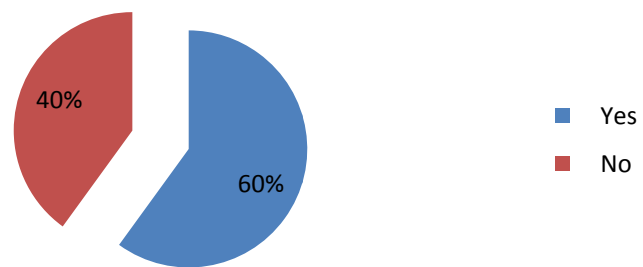
- English
- Spanish
- Both of them
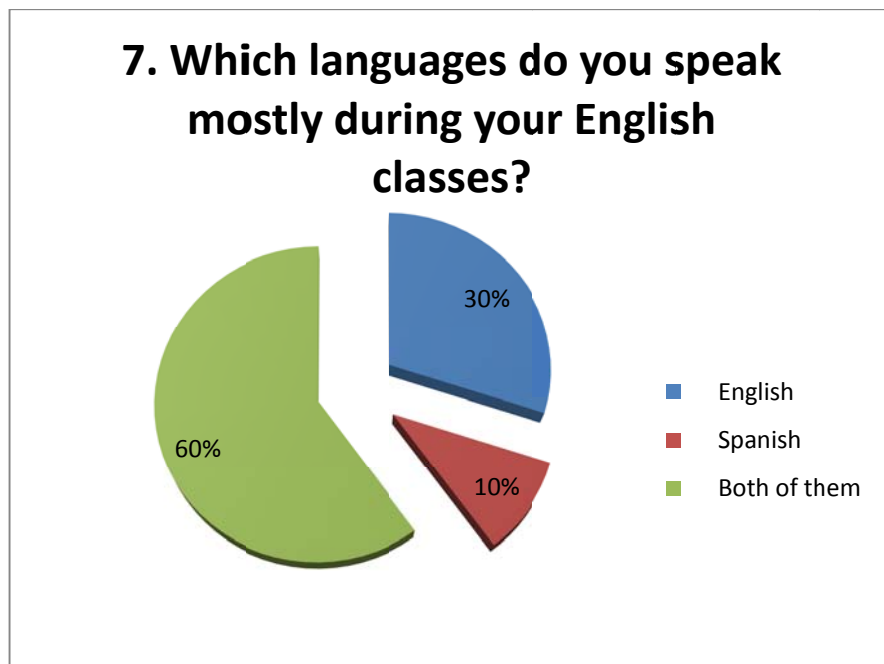
Most of the questioners mentioned that they speak both languages during their English classes. Spanish, when they do not know how to say certain expressions in English, and English when teachers ask them to speak English.

8. Are there any differences beteen a non-native teacher and a native teacher when you talk to them?

The majority found certain differences between native teachers and non-native teachers. They say non-Native teachers sometimes let students speak Spanish and speak it slowly.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   Conclusions

As a final point, the study of the topic "Native Teachers versus Non-Native Teachers" has allowed us to confirm that there is an inclination toward native instructors. This preference can be traced to the idea that they are the original English speakers, and consequently the only ones who can teach the language in an effective way. Nevertheless, after analyzing both teachers' issues we have found that teaching English is not a feature simply attained at birth, but an *ability* which implies previous pedagogical and methodological studies. It is wrong to assume that English speakers are good teachers just because they were born in an English-speaking country.

Under these circumstances, we have also investigated the problems of credibility that non-Native teachers experience with their students, academic organizations and administrators. As future non-Native English teachers, we must consider the consequences of these negative stereotypes, and how to counter them. If students or administrators do not trust in our knowledge, they would hardly be willing or able to learn from us, or hire us. This often happens because they find we are not well prepared in the field of teaching English, especially in the speaking skill, which is our biggest weakness; therefore, we would like to mention that the lack of academic preparation should be overcome by non-Native teachers. The fact that we live in a country where English is not spoken outside classes means that we must make an extra effort to be always up-to-date. With respect to both teachers' weaknesses and strengths, we can say that they balance each other in these terms; nevertheless, the necessity of continuing to work on the weaknesses was found in order to obtain more equal opportunities in the near future.

4.2   Recommendations

It is beneficial to keep in mind the following suggestion: to become better non-Native speaking teachers and give a better impression when speaking and teaching:

Enrich Vocabulary: Get as much vocabulary as you can for each specific topic you teach.

Use of extra materials: Do not follow only the textbook because this could make students get bored, and this would affect the learning process.

Improve your pronunciation: Practice listening to sounds, since an improper pronunciation or intonation can break real communication.

Word Stress: Do not change the meaning of what you want to say. The true meaning of the message is understood through the stressing of words.

Be fluent: Recognize the words and expressions that are frequently used in English and practice them as much as possible with a native speaker.

Co-teaching: Working with counterparts (NESTs) can help to improve the speaking skill, and thus credibility from students will arise.

Use technology: Bring some brief videos related to English speaking cultures.

This way, the students will recognize your interest for teaching them not just the language but also culture. Also, this will teach to express themselves freely.

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Gabriela Peralta
Alejandra Valdez