

Beyond the Native Speaker in TESOL

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Abstract

This paper traces the factors that centralized the role of the native speaker in TESOL and Applied Linguistics. Based on a survey of relevant literature, I argue that the 'native' speaker was centralized in Applied Linguistics and TESOL as a result of the Chomskian paradigm. However, starting in the early 1990s a body of literature questioned these assumptions and unpacked the various factors that are glossed over and merged into the term 'native speaker'. As a result of this problematization of the term, there is now a growing body of work that has demonstrated that being 'native' is not a sufficient or a necessary condition for becoming a successful and effective teacher. I highlight current research that stresses the need for expertise (both in language and pedagogy) and professional credentials over linguistic inheritance. And, in this, I hope, we have gone beyond the native speaker.

Introduction

I still remember the words of one of my good friends who called me one evening in the winter of 1996 after she was told that she could not be hired as an ESL teacher in the language program affiliated to her department:

Now, this is what gets me so mad: I am here- a student in their MA program, but they refuse to hire me because they say that students only want native speakers as their teachers. You know what: I don't believe them. They only want to hire their own people. They only want me for my money. I am so mad. I want to sue them. I am good enough

to be getting straight 'A's; I am good enough to be paying a hell of a lot of money; I am good to leave here and teach English in my country; but, I am not good enough to teach in the program. Is this crazy or what?

Although I remember this case very vividly, this is not the only person that I know who was refused an ELT job based on their status as a non-native speaker of English in the United States. Stories such as my friend's are unfortunately, much too common. These stories are not only based in the English-speaking western countries, but all across the globe. I have met a number of young bright and qualified Asians who find it hard to get suitable employment after returning home from the US/UK/Australia with an MA in TESOL/Applied linguistics. One of the factors behind not being hired is a belief shared by many employers (Mahboob *et al.* 2004) that native speakers are better teachers than non-native teachers and that students prefer native speakers. What are the causes behind such beliefs? What evidence is available to support/contradict them? These are some of the questions that will be discussed in this paper.

The issue of discrimination based on the way one speaks is not a new one. Neither is the gate-keeping power of accent/pronunciation a recent discovery. These issues have been talked about both in popular literature as well as in linguistic research. In literature, a well-known example is that of Eliza Doolittle in George Bernard Shaw's 'Pygmalion'. Eliza's desire to learn to speak better was rooted in her dream to open her own flower shop. She knew that she would not be able to successfully operate her own business if she spoke with an East End accent (an accent that was marked as that of uneducated and uncultured people).

Thus, she was willing to pay to learn her own tongue. Discussing a similar theme, Michael Halliday (1968) wrote:

A speaker who is made ashamed of his own language habits suffers a basic injury as a human being: to make anyone, especially a child, feel so ashamed is as indefensible as to make him feel ashamed of the color of his skin (p.165).

This statement explicitly reflects on discrimination based on language and speech and compares it to racism. On a similar note, Labov (1969) stressed that the language of one group should not be measured against that of another. For example, the language of Afro-Americans should not be compared to or evaluated in terms of the norm of the Anglo-Americans. Labov argued that such comparisons are ethnocentric and therefore unjustifiable. In contrast to the fairness of these arguments, in practice (as evidenced in my friend's frustrated remarks), these philosophies of equality based on linguistic backgrounds seem to be often ignored in the profession of teaching English as a second language.

In this paper I will first present some key findings of studies that indicate how these philosophies are violated in the ESL profession. I will then present an overview of studies that discuss various historical influences on the profession and how these influences centralized the role of the native speaker in TESOL and applied linguistics. After exploring the ways in which the native speaker has been mythologized, we will look at research that demystifies them. The paper will end with a reevaluation of the role of nonnative speakers and will direct us to look beyond the native speaker in TESOL.

The status of non-native English speakers in TESOL

Today, it is an uncontested fact that English is the fastest growing language in the world. It is also accepted that there are more non-native speakers of English than there are native speakers (Alatis & Straehle, 1997). According to a British Council report (1986), there were as many as two billion people learning English globally and who have ‘some awareness of English’ (p. 4). Keeping these facts in mind and considering that there are a limited number of native speakers who choose to be English teachers, it can be concluded that the large majority of English language teachers are non-native speakers. In fact, Reves and Medgyes (1994), based on a survey of 216 ESL/EFL teachers in ten countries, report that “in two-thirds of the schools there were no NESTs [Native English Speakers in TESOL], while only one third of the schools employed both NEST and non-NESTs” (p. 356). Canagarajah (1999) states that up to 80% of the English language teachers globally are non-native speakers of English.

Although a majority of English language teachers are nonnative speakers of the language, they have been treated as step-children (Mahboob *et al.* 2004). And, in many places (where equally qualified native and nonnative speakers are both available), preference is given to native English speaking teachers. In a study that explored hiring practices in college-level English Language Programs (ELPs) in the United States, Mahboob *et al.* (2004) showed that out of a total of 1,425 ESL teachers in 118 programs only 112 were NNESTs. Thus, the number of NESTs working in ELPs was found to be substantially higher than the number of NNESTs. The results of this study also showed that more

program administrators considered “native English speaker” an important criterion than not (59.8% of the respondents considered it at least “somewhat important”). The results of a correlation analysis between the various hiring criteria and the ratio of NNESTs working in a program further suggested that there is a link between a low number of NNESTs in ELPs and administrators’ emphasis on “native English status.” A negative correlation was reported between the relative importance given to “native English speaker” in the hiring process and the ratio of NNESTs in a program. This negative correlation suggested that the more importance a program administrator gave to a teacher’s status as a native speaker, the smaller the ratio of NNESTs in that program. In addition to the correlation, a regression analysis with the ratio of NNESTs being the dependent variable and 10 potential hiring criteria being the independent variables was conducted. The results of this regression analysis showed that the criterion “native English speaker” most significantly explained the ratio of NNESTs in a program. Two other independent variables that significantly explained the ratio of NNESTs in a program were “recommendation” and “teaching experience.” However, the single most important criterion in making hiring decisions was ‘nativeness’.

Mahboob et al. (2004) is the first study that statistically shows the importance of being native in the job market; earlier studies assumed such a bias against non-native speakers and explored possible reasons behind it. For example, Medgyes (1992), focusing on the United Kingdom, stated that program administrators preferred native speakers because they were “aware that international students studying in Britain preferred to be taught by native-speaking English teachers. This demand would have to be satisfied by the school principal...” (p. 344). Cook (2000) agrees with

Medgyes and believes that the main reason for program administrators not hiring NNESTs is their perception that ESL students who enroll in their ELPs expect NESTs. Thus, according to these papers, NNESTs are not hired because program administrators believe that students do not want them.

While literature on NEST-NNEST issues suggests that administrators' belief that students prefer NESTs over NNESTs, studies of ESL students' perceptions do not corroborate these beliefs. In one study of students' perceptions, Cook (2000), using data collected through a questionnaire survey, reports,

The NS teacher was preferred by 18% of Belgian 15-year-olds, 44% of English children, and 45% of Polish children. Looked at in reverse, 47% of Belgian, 32% of English, and 25% of Polish children preferred nonnatives, the rest having no preference. (p. 331)

In discussing these results, he states, “No where is there an overwhelming preference for NS teachers. Being an NS is only one among many factors that influence students' views of teaching” (p. 331). Thus, his study shows that students do not simply prefer teachers based on their status as a native or a non-native speaker, but rather their preferences are more complex. However, while Cook's work shows that students may not have a clear preference for either NESTs or NNESTs, his work does not explore the reasons for these diverse views.

In another study of students' perceptions, Mahboob (2004) found that ESL students in his study (based in the United

States) do not have a clear preference for either NESTs or NNESTs; rather, they feel that both types of teachers have unique attributes. Based on an analysis of students' essays, he reports that students find strengths in the way NNESTs teach them when compared to NESTs. This is an important finding and shows that students are not naive and do not necessarily buy into the "native speaker fallacy" (Phillipson, 1992) that only native speakers can be good language teachers. The findings of this study demonstrate that the importance given to the "native English speaker" hiring criterion by program administrators (Mahboob *et al.* 2004) is not shared by students. Mahboob concludes by stating that both NESTs and NNESTs working collaboratively can provide a better learning environment to ESL students. [This study will be discussed at greater length in a later section.]

With current research revealing that native speakers are not better teachers than non-native speakers (Cook, 2000; Mahboob, 2004), the question that we need to ask is: how and why did the notion of 'native speaker' gain prominence in TESOL and applied linguistics and how has it been maintained? This question will be discussed at length in the following section when we look at ways in which the 'native speaker' has been mythologized in applied linguistics and TESOL literature.

Mythologizing the native speaker

Chomsky's use of the 'idealized native speaker-hearer' (Chomsky, 1986) as an abstraction for theoretical linguistic research has been extensively used in second language acquisition (SLA) research. The influence of the Chomskyan paradigm on SLA can be measured by the following

statement from Gregg (1993), “in SLA... the overall explanandum is the acquisition (or non-acquisition) of L2 competence, in the Chomskyan sense of the term” (p. 278). Bhatt (2002) evaluates the influence of Chomsky in applied linguistics in detail and states,

Most of the constructs used in second language acquisition (SLA) theories, especially the cognitivist approaches, derive their meaning from the epistemology and methodology of the Chomskyan paradigm - the study of language as a cognitive system. Leading experts in the SLA field, such as Coder (1967, 1973), Selinker (1972) and Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), embraced this view uncritically.

We will return to discuss Bhatt’s work in more detail later on in this section. Let us first examine how cognitivists, such as Selinker and others, use the Chomskyan paradigm to centralize the role of the native speaker in TESOL and applied linguistics. Selinker’s theory of fossilization implies that learners of a second language are unable to achieve ‘native’ proficiency in a second language. Inherent to this theory is a journey in which a second language learner begins with their L1 and their ultimate goal is to achieve native-like proficiency in L2. At any given stage during this process of language learning, a learner’s language is labeled as ‘interlanguage’. Selinker (1969) defines this as following,

An ‘interlanguage’ may be linguistically described using as data the observable output resulting from a *speaker’s attempt to produce a foreign norm*, i.e., both his errors and non-errors. [emphasis added]

Intrinsic in this definition of ‘interlanguage’ is a learner’s ‘attempt to produce a foreign norm’. However, it is worth questioning this assumption: do learners of a language want to achieve native proficiency? This question has not been sufficiently addressed in research and needs to be taken up.

In addition to ‘interlanguage’, Selinker (1972) also introduces and defines the term ‘fossilization’,

... the real phenomenon of the permanent non-learning of TL structures, of the cessation of IL learning (in most cases) far from expected TL norms.

This definition of ‘fossilization’ defines learners’ language in terms of their shortcomings in relation to native speaker (or target language) norms. In addition, he states that ‘fossilization’ is the end result of most of the learners- implying that most language learners are unable to achieve native proficiency in their second language. A critical examination of the terms ‘interlanguage’ and ‘fossilization’ reveals a hidden ideology in these terms which privileges the native speaker. The terms ‘interlanguage’ and ‘fossilization’ imply that the goal of a second language learner is to be just like a native speaker and that if one does not achieve this goal then s/he has ‘fossilized’.

Regardless of the ideological and attitudinal loading of these terms, they have gained status in applied linguistics and TESOL. This status and authority of the terms ‘interlanguage’ and ‘fossilization’ can be measured by their inclusion in the ‘Unabridged Random House Dictionary’. This dictionary defines the two terms as following:

Interlanguage: "...the linguistic system characterizing the output of a nonnative speaker at any stage prior to full acquisition of the target language." (p. 995)

Fossilization: "... to become permanently established in the interlanguage of a second-language learner in a form that is deviant from the target-language norm and that continues to appear in performance regardless of further exposure to the target language." (p. 775)

As can be seen, the dictionary definitions of these terms also use the reference to the 'acquisition of the target language' and 'deviance from the target language'. The inclusion of these terms and definitions in a dictionary legitimizes the terms in general and gives authority to these views.

As a result of the focus on the 'target language' norm in the operational definitions of 'interlanguage' and 'fossilization', Selinker's work has given authority to the native-speaker model in SLA and, by extension, in language teaching models (this will be discussed in more detail later). Thus, a majority of research in second language acquisition evaluates learners in terms of how well they have acquired 'native-speaker' norms. For example, in his overview of SLA research, Ellis (1994) writes: "learners often failed initially to produce correct sentences and instead displayed language that was markedly *deviant from target language norms*" (p. 15) [italics added]. This description of learner language clearly reflects Selinker's hypothesis. Long's (1981) stress on the role of native speakers in their ability to provide ideal language input is another example of the influence of the native speaker model in SLA. Long states, "participation in

conversation with NS... is the necessary and sufficient condition for SLA” (p. 275). Cook (1999) in his evaluation of the use of native speakers norm in SLA states that the native speaker model may have some use as a ‘temporary’ measure but must not be used to measure final achievement. He states,

An unknown object is often described in terms of one that is already known (Poulisse, 1996); someone who has never seen a tomato before might describe it as a rather soft apple with a large number of pips. But this description is no more than a temporary expedient until the individual has understood the unique properties of the object itself. The learner’s language is an unknown object, so SLA research can justifiably use native speakers’ language as one perspective on the language of L2 learners, provided it does not make native speakers’ language the measure of final achievement in the L2. (p. 190)

In addition to the description of learner language in terms of native norms, SLA methodologies themselves seem to be influenced by this ‘comparative fallacy’ (Bley-Vroman 1983). Some of the most widely used research methodologies in second language acquisition, including grammaticality judgments and error analysis, by definition, require a comparison of learner language to native speaker norms.

This importance of native speaker as being the model and native-like language being the goal of a language learner is not restricted to theoretical research in SLA and applied linguistics, but has also been expressed by language teacher educators. In one such work, Stern (1983) states,

The native speaker's 'competence' or 'proficiency' or 'knowledge of the language' is a *necessary point of reference for the second language proficiency concept used in language teaching*" (p. 341). [emphasis added]

More interestingly, Medgyes (1986) in one of his earlier papers in which he discusses the problems with the communicative approach in an EFL setting states,

For all their goodwill, native speakers are basically unaware of the whole *complexity of difficulties that non-native speakers have to tackle*. Native-speaking teachers tend to ignore, among other things, the fact that a great proportion of the energy of their non-native colleagues is inevitably used up in the constant struggle with *their own language deficiencies*, leaving only a small fraction attending to their students' problems. (p. 112) [emphasis added]

Medgyes' use of the term 'language deficiencies' shows that he had fallen into the trap of the 'comparative fallacy'. [However, to be fair to Medgyes, his later work shows a different positioning on this issue. These later papers will be discussed in a following section.] In another paper Reves and Medgyes (1994) state,

Because of their relative English language *deficiencies*, non-NESTs are in a difficult situation: *by definition they are not on a par with NESTs* in terms of language proficiency. Their deficit is greater if they work in *less privileged teaching*

situations, cut off from NESTs or any native speakers.
(p. 364) [emphasis added]

This quote shows that Reves and Medgyes not only buy in to the 'comparative fallacy', but they also believe that NESTs provide a better teaching and learning model and the NNESTs may not perform well if they are not in contact with NESTs. This agreement of Medgyes with the 'native speaker model' may be interpreted in light of the findings from language attitudes studies. Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum (1960) found that in their study of attitudes towards English and French in Montreal both English speaking (high status) and French speaking (low status) respondents gave favorable and positive ratings to the English guises. Lambert *et al.* called this the 'minority group reaction' and stated that individuals who are members of low status group may assume and accept the values promoted by members of the high status group. Based on this understanding, it is possible to classify Reves and Medgyes' acceptance of the 'comparative fallacy' as a 'minority group reaction'.

In a recent paper, Bhatt (2002) presents an extensive analysis of discourse in applied linguistics and TESOL to show how the native speaker myth has become the ideological reality for TESOL and applied linguistics. Bhatt states that the purpose of his paper is to,

...demonstrate how the pronouncements of the ESL/ELT experts contribute to "regimes of truth" around the legitimization of Standard English ideology. These regimes establish as fundamentally unquestionable the propositions that there has to

be a single "correct" standard of usage for the English language. (p. 75)

Bhatt argues that in order to establish the authority of standard or native English, the field has evolved a number of axioms. These axioms, he argues, are held "above debate; the assumptions shared are not propositions to be defended or attacked" (p. 75). He lists three such axioms in TESOL and applied linguistics:

1. There is a standard language that provides access to knowledge,
2. Only those few who speak the standard can command linguistic authority over non-standard speakers, and
3. Myth and history are indistinguishable. (pp 76-77).

Bhatt (2002) discusses six ways in which the 'native speaker norm' is maintained and promoted in English language teaching practices. In doing this he critically examines Quirk (1990). Bhatt states that his choice of using Quirk is based on Quirk's status in the field as an 'expert'. Bhatt also attempts to show how these six arguments promoted to maintain the 'native speaker norm' are controversial and have been challenged by other applied linguists.

Bhatt believes that one of the ways in which the native speaker norm is projected in the teaching of English is 'strategic discoveries' (p. 88). Bhatt states that experts in the field, e.g. Quirk (1990), refer to work that support their point of view and refer to it as being 'interesting' and

'sophisticated'. Bhatt uses the following quote from Quirk (1990, p.6) to illustrate his point, "In a range of interesting and sophisticated elicitation tests [referring to Coppeters' (1987) work], the success rate of the non-natives fell not merely below but outside the range of native success..." (p. 88). He argues that the use of the terms 'interesting and sophisticated' raise the status of these findings and mark them as prominent and 'strategic discoveries'. Bhatt further states that the 'interesting' and the 'sophisticated' work in Quirk's statement have been challenged on several grounds in the field. He specifically refers to Birdsong's (1992) study that replicated Coppeters' work and found that there were no significant difference in the performance of fluent nonnative speakers and native speakers.

A second strategy used to maintain the 'native speaker norm' in English language teaching is the 'deficit discourse' argument. Bhatt once again cites Quirk (1990) who states that the teaching of English in non-English dominant countries is a problem because the teachers themselves are not proficient users of English. Bhatt refers to work in 'The Other Tongue' (Kachru, 1992) which documents that English in different parts of the world has been indigenized with their own local norms. In fact, in some of these countries, only a minority of people prefer Standard British English (2% in India; Kachru, 1977). This aspect of 'deficit discourse' is manifested in a number of studies that discuss the role of NNESTs (e.g. Sheorey, 1986).

A third strategy that Bhatt discusses is the 'ideological intoxication argument'. Bhatt states

... Quirk (1990; 9) argues against the efforts of those - "ideologically intoxicated" - members of

the linguistic discourse community who have attempted to democratize language use... Quirk makes oblique reference to alternative ideologies – like liberation linguistics and language variation – but denigrates them to the benefit of the standard language ideology, using the *moral fiber* argument. (p. 90) [emphasis original]

Bhatt labels a fourth strategy used by Quirk as ‘the discourse of nostalgia’. He states that this strategy of promoting a ‘standard’ and ‘native speaker’ norm is a recurrent one. He also states that the argument that the standards of the English language are falling have been advanced since the eighteenth century. Based on claims that suggest that the standards of English are falling, the argument presented by Quirk (1990) is that unless a standard is maintained, the various varieties will get out of hand and will blind “both teachers and taught of the *central linguistic structure* from which the varieties might be seen as varying” (p. 4) [emphasis original].

‘The discourse of tutelage’ is a fifth strategy that Bhatt recognizes in Quirk’s (1990) argument in favor of standard native speaker norms. Based on his discussion of Coppieters’ (1987) work [discussed earlier], Quirk argues that “the implications for foreign language teaching are clear: the need for native teacher support and the need for non-native teachers to be in constant touch with the native language” (p. 7). In this statement Quirk explicitly gives status to the native speaker and sets the role of a nonnative speaker subservient to that of a native speaker. Reves and Medgyes’ (1994) work discussed earlier is one example in which academics use the ‘discourse of tutelage’ to state that

NNESTs need to be in constant touch with native speaker models.

Bhatt states that a last strategy used by Quirk is to make the above arguments 'obvious and self-evident'. Quirk argues that since native speakers are more proficient than nonnative speakers (by referring to Coppieter, 1987), they provide better pedagogical models to English language learners.

Bhatt argues that as a result of using these six strategies productively, the Chomskyan paradigm has dominated the applied linguistics and TESOL discourse. He further argues that the power yielded to the cognitivists may be defined in Foucault's (1980) notion of *regimes of truth*. Bhatt defines *regimes of truth* as "sets of understandings that legitimize particular sociolinguistic attitudes and practices" (p. 79). Thus, in terms of this paper, the 'particular sociolinguistic attitudes and practices' that hold the native speaker as the ideal model for language acquisition and learning are forwarded and maintained through references to and an understanding of the Chomskyan paradigm in applied linguistics. The emphasis on the cognitive approaches and the focus on ideal-native speaker model in applied linguistics has resulted in what Firth and Wagner (1997) call 'a skewed perspective' (p. 295). They define this 'skewed perspective' as one

... that is accompanied by an analytic mindset that conceives of the FL [foreign language] speaker as a deficient communicator struggling to overcome an underdeveloped L2 [second language] competence, striving to reach the "target" competence of an idealized NS. (pp. 295-6)

This emphasis on ‘striving to reach’ the native-speaker norm creates a situation in which a L2 user, regardless of their proficiency or ability to communicate, is felt compelled to match the native-speaker norm (parallels ‘deficit discourse’ and ‘discourse of tutelage’ arguments above). This generous and approving attitude towards native speakers at the cost of nonnative speakers has negative effects on the creativity and confidence of NNESTs. It discourages them and makes them feel unappreciated. Tollefson (1995) also discusses this issue and states that this imbalance in socio-linguistic power results in a life-long apprenticeship for the L2 speaker in which s/he has no hope of enunciation. Kachru and Nelson (1996) also raise a similar issue when they write,

When we say “English as a second (or even third or fourth) language”, we must do so with reference to something, and that standard of measure must, given the nature of the label, be English as someone’s first language. This automatically creates attitudinal problems, for it is almost unavoidable that anyone would take “second” as less worthy, in the sense, for example, that coming in second in a race is not as good as coming in first. (p. 79)

This statement reflects an awareness that terms like ‘first language’ and ‘second language’ are not neutral but attitudinally loaded (as is the term ‘native speaker’). It is this attitudinal loading of terms such as ‘first language speaker’, ‘mother tongue speaker’, or ‘native speaker’ that has translated into a preference for such speakers as language teachers/models in TESOL. However, the exposing of these attitudinal and political loadings in the recent years as well as the questioning of assumptions

behind terms like 'interlanguage' and 'fossilization, is leading to a demythologizing of the native speaker. The following section looks at this demythologizing in more details.

Demythologizing the native speaker

The acceptance of 'native speaker norms' as the model to be acquired and as the model that students should be exposed to has recently been challenged by a number of academics. For example, Phillipson (1992) challenges the notion that native speakers make better teachers. While he concedes that native speakers might be able to make instinctively better grammatical judgments, he argues that they are at a disadvantage when trying to explain specific questions about their native language unless they have received training to do so. He refers to the importance given to native speaking models as the 'native speaker fallacy' (p. 194).

Phillipson sees the spread of English and the focus on native norms of usage and culture as a symbol of a new form of imperialism, 'linguistic imperialism'. In his book, Phillipson argues that motivations behind the post-colonial spread of English are economic, political and cultural. Referring to a director of an international chain of English language schools, he writes,

As the director of a dynamic worldwide chain of English language schools puts it, 'Once we used to send gunboats and diplomats abroad; now we are sending English teachers' (p. 8).

Other sociolinguists have also raised the issues of culture and identity in regards to language standards. Crystal (1985)

writes that all “discussion of standards ceases very quickly to be a linguistic discussion, and becomes instead an issue of social identity” (p. 9). Thus, these experts argue that the issue of being native is not simply a linguistic issue, but rooted in economic, political and cultural issues.

In a different, but powerful take on this issue, Rampton (1990) problematizes the term ‘native speaker’. He suggests that the term ‘native speaker’ should be dropped from usage and replaced by other more inclusive terminology. He argues that the concept of a native speaker as it is currently used includes three aspects and that each of these is non-overlapping and therefore needs to be referred to separately. The three aspects that he refers to are: language expertise, language affiliation, and language inheritance. The difference between language expertise and language affiliation and inheritance can be understood if we place them on a continuum that uses an individual’s identification with the language as a measure. Thus, language expertise is different from inheritance and affiliation in that a language expert does “not have to feel close to what they know a lot about. Expertise is different from identification” (p. 98). The difference between language affiliation and inheritance can be explained in terms of heritage. In language affiliation, a person may identify with the language or the group of people who speak that language, but has not inherited it from her/his parents. Rampton states,

The crucial difference between them [language affiliation and inheritance] is that affiliation refers to a connection between people and groups that are considered to be separate or different, whereas inheritance is concerned with the continuity

between people and groups who are felt to be closely linked. Inheritance occurs within social boundaries, while affiliation takes place across them. (p. 99)

Rampton further argues that expertise is learned and is relative to other experts' knowledge. Two other characteristics of a language expert are that "expertise is partial. People can be expert in several fields, but they are never omniscient"; and "to achieve expertise, one goes through processes of certification, in which one is judged by other people" (p. 99). Rampton argues that because of these characteristics of a language 'expert' it is "fairer to both learners and teachers" (p. 99).

A use of Rampton's terminology helps in clarifying different issues that are clouded by the terms 'native' or 'mother tongue' speaker. In using this terminology, it is possible to differentiate a person who may not be a 'native' speaker of a language, but may have more 'expertise' in the language than a 'native' speaker and may or may not 'affiliate' him/herself with the language. The term 'native' in this case loses its use. Language inheritance, the aspect that is most closely associated with the 'native' or 'mother tongue' speaker, becomes only one of the three aspects that need to be considered in evaluating a person's skills in a language. In this sense, the title of Paikeday's (1985) book 'The Native Speaker is Dead' is very symbolic. In this book Paikeday argues,

I am convinced that "native speaker" in the sense of the sole arbiter of grammaticality or one whose intuitions of a proprietary nature about his or her mother tongue and which are shared only by

others of his own tribe is a myth propagated by linguists, that the true meaning of the lexeme "native speaker" is a proficient user of a specified language, and that this meaning satisfies all contexts in which linguists, anthropologists, psychologists, educators, and others use it, except when it directly refers to the speaker's mother tongue or first-acquired language without any assumptions about the speaker's linguistic competence (p. 87).

In contrast to Rampton and Paikeday, Cook (1999) takes a somewhat different approach to this issue. He argues that there is a 'qualitative difference' between the minds of monolingual and bilingual speakers. He believes that the two are different in their language competencies, both of their L1 and L2. Cook writes that while the effects of L1 on L2 are easy to identify and have been studied extensively, "the effects of the L2 on the L1 have been little discussed" (p. 191). Cook uses the term 'multicompetencies' and defines it as:

A neutral term for the knowledge of more than one language, free from evaluation against an outside standard... the term multicompetencies implies that at some level the sum of the language knowledge in the mind is relevant, not just the portions dedicated to the L1 and the L2. (pp. 190-191).

He argues that the mind of a multicompetent person is different in both its 'language processing' and 'thought processes'. These differences between monolingual and multicompetent people imply that people who learn English

as a second language and users of English who learn a second language are both qualitatively different from monolingual English speakers. Based on these differences, Cook argues, “L2 users have to be looked at in their own right as genuine L2 users, not as imitation native speakers” (p. 195).

By problematizing the concept of a native speaker and by unpacking the various dimensions of this term, the literature discussed here has contributed to the demythologizing of the native speaker. This problematizing and demythologizing of the native speaker has generated (and is generating) research that reevaluates the role that being native plays in TESOL. Some of this research is presented in the following section.

Reevaluating the native speaker in TESOL

After a discussion of the various aspects of native/nonnative issues presented in the previous sections, we will look at some research that reevaluates the role of the nonnative speaker in TESOL.

As has been discussed, the blind acceptance of the native speaker norm in English language teaching has come into question. Liu (1999) refers to several studies in reference to pedagogical implications of being an NNEST:

1. D'Annunzio (1991) - "attributes the success of his program to the hiring of bilingual tutors 'who shared the students' experiences' (p. 52)".
2. Philipson (1992) - "posits that they have gone through 'the laborious process of acquiring English as a second language and... have insight into the

linguistic and cultural needs of their learners" (p. 195)

3. Auerback (1993) - "argues that 'it is not just the experience as a language learner, but the experience of sharing the struggles as a newcomer that is critical' (p. 26) and that ESL programs therefore benefit greatly from hiring nonnative-English-speaking professionals".

In addition to the work cited in Liu, Medgyes (1992, 2001) argues that based on their unique experiences, NNESTs can make positive contributions to the field. He lists 6 unique assets that NNESTs have and that NESTs cannot offer:

1. Only non-NESTs can serve as imitable models of the successful learner of English.
2. Non-NESTs can teach learning strategies more effectively.
3. Non-NESTs can provide learners with more information about the English language.
4. Non-NESTs are more able to anticipate language difficulties.
5. Non-NESTs can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of their learners.
6. Only non-NESTs can benefit from sharing the learners' mother tongue. (pp. 346-7)

Based on these six unique assets, Medgyes argues that ESL/EFL students benefit from NNESTs in ways that they cannot from NESTs.

In a recent study, Mahboob (2003, 2004) examined Medgyes' assumptions in light of attitudinal data collected from adult ESL learners in the United States. Although most of Medgyes' assumptions are supported by Mahboob, one of them is partly contradicted (# 1). Participants in Mahboob's study believed that NNESTs' pronunciation is not perfect and therefore they are not the ideal 'language models' for spoken language (Medgyes, 2001, p. 436). The negative perception of NNESTs' oral skills in Mahboob's study is also supported by a number of other attitudinal studies that evaluate perceptions of individuals from various countries and language backgrounds towards varieties of English. For example, Forde (1996) studied the attitudes of Chinese elementary school children towards different varieties of English and reported that the respondents preferred native varieties of English (both American and British) over local models. Forde also found that the respondents linked teachers' variety of English to their ability to teach. In other studies of language attitudes, Chiba, Matsuura, and Yamamoto (1995), Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997) and Jarvella, Bang, Jakobsen, and Mees (2001) found attitudes towards Japanese, Austrian and Dutch varieties of English, respectively, to be less favorable as compared to American/British varieties of English. Thus, results of Mahboob's study, focusing on an ESL setting, support these findings in EFL settings.

The participants in Mahboob's study viewed that NESTs are better "language models" when it comes to pronunciation. One of the participants in Mahboob's study stated,

I want the *truth pronunciation* [emphasis added]
 which non-natives teachers can't speak or use voice
 like native speakers...

This individual's use of "truth pronunciation" reflects the belief that there is an "ideal," "true," and/or "correct" pronunciation of English and reminds us of the influence of the Chomskian (1986) notion of an "ideal native speaker" in TESOL (as discussed in an earlier section). This perceived importance of an "ideal native speaker" model for pronunciation is especially interesting because there is ample evidence in SLA studies that adult ESL learners cannot achieve native-like pronunciation. Thus, the goal to learn the "truth pronunciation" is one that needs to be critically examined in the classroom. Letting adult learners believe that they can learn to speak like native speakers when there is substantial evidence that most of them will not sets up expectations that cannot be fulfilled. Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997) raised a similar point and argued that "the prominence of native speaker in language teaching has obscured the distinctive nature of the successful L2 user and created an unattainable goal for L2 learners" (p. 185).

Returning to a discussion of Medgyes' list of NNEST assets, Mahboob's (2004) study (as pointed out earlier) supports most of them. Participants in this study believe that NNESTs' understanding of L2 teaching is based on their own L2 learning experience and results in their ability to anticipate and explain concepts better than NESTs. This positive evaluation of NNEST teaching methodology is especially interesting when considered in light of the research conducted in the 1980s. In the 1980's there was a perception that to become good teachers, NNESTs should

not only improve their linguistic skills to match those of native speakers, but they should also adopt the teaching practices and methods of NESTS. The following extract from Sheorey (1986), himself a NNEST, illustrates this point:

the study gives an indication of which errors are most irritating to native ESL teachers, a finding which we can use to bring our own error-evaluation practices in line with those of native teachers. I am assuming here that acquiring a native-like sensitivity to errors is a proper goal (however elusive it might be) for non-native ESL teachers, and that we should seek to adjust our error-evaluation practices accordingly (p. 310).

This quote suggests that the goal of NNESTs' should be to acquire native-like teaching sensitivity. The results from Mahboob's study of student perceptions not only negates the need for NNESTs to become native-like in their pedagogical practices, but indeed suggests that they have unique characteristics that students find lacking in NESTs, especially in the teaching of grammar and the ability to answer questions. Thus, statements from earlier studies, such as Sheorey, need to be reexamined in light of new findings. "Acquiring a native-like sensitivity" is not "a proper goal" for NNESTs; rather, the unique teaching abilities of both NESTs and NNESTs complement each other and together provide a better learning environment for L2 students. Providing a positive learning environment for our students is not a question of choosing between native or nonnative speakers, but of looking beyond the concept of nativeness in TESOL.

Conclusion

The paper argues that the native speaker was centralized in applied linguistics and TESOL as a result of the Chomskian paradigm. Early applied linguists and SLA researchers used the 'native speaker' norm as being the goal of all language learners. And, any learner language that fell short of this norm was considered interlanguage. Furthermore, if an individual did not show 'improvement' in the interlanguage overtime, they were considered to have fossilized. Such terminology and its inclusion in reference books led to a general belief that language learners should speak a language like native speaker and therefore only native speaker can serve as genuine and worthy models/teachers.

However, starting in the early 1990s a body of literature questioned these assumptions and unpacked the various factors that are glossed over and merged into the term 'native speaker'. Rampton (1990) presents a strong argument that we need to consider at least three aspects that are lumped together in this term: language expertise, language affiliation, and language inheritance. He argues that it would be more beneficial for the field if we consider language expertise over language inheritance when it comes to language teaching.

This paper also shows that there is now a large and growing body of literature that has demonstrated that being 'native' is not a sufficient or a necessary condition for becoming a successful and effective teacher. There is evidence that ESL/EFL learners do not have a preference for NESTs and that they are perceptive to the strengths of both NESTs and NNESTs. Research has documented that NNESTs have some unique attributes that NESTs do not have and that

many of these emerge from NNESTs' experience of having learned English as an additional language.

This paper began with the comments of one of my friends who was frustrated and angry at not being hired as an ESL teacher because of her status as a non-native speaker of English. It was my conversations with her and other friends who were in a similar position that led me into working on this aspect of applied linguistics and TESOL. In pursuing this issue, I investigated and questioned the nature of arguments that were presented to glorify the native speaker. The present paper is a result of this study of the literature and shows that current literature stresses the need for expertise (both in language and pedagogy) and professional credentials over linguistic inheritance. And, in this, I hope, we have gone beyond the native speaker.

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