Investigating Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of Native and Non-Native English Educators and Speakerism

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Abstract

English as a lingua franca (EFL) and World Englishes (WEs) challenge traditional English language teaching paradigms that centred around native-speaker norms, often rooted in the ideology of native speakerism, a persuasive ideology in English language teaching, often leading to biases against Non-native English Speaker Teachers (NNESTs). This study aims to understand pre-service English speaker teachers' overall attitudes toward NESTs and NNESTs and explored the factors influencing pre-service English teachers' preferences. 15 pre-service English teachers in their fifth semester participated in this descriptive qualitative method, which was collected from the questionnaires and interviews. The results showed positive attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs, with a slightly negative attitude towards NNESTs in teaching pronunciation due to native speakerism. In terms of pedagogy, NESTs were engaging and varied in approach, while NNESTs were monotonous but provided bilingual support. Culturally, NESTs provide first-hand exposure, but NNESTs highlighted global English diversity. Linguistically, students prefered NESTs for the genuine pronunciation of authentic language elements such as slang. These findings revealed there was a tendency for native-speakerism, with evidence from participants' responses. Future research can explore training programs or classroom activities that help students understand that both native and non-native English teachers have their own strengths. Researchers can also see how teaching materials that include different English accents and cultures may help students respect English diversity. This way, future studies support a more equal and open-minded learning environment.

INTRODUCTION

English's role as a global language has grown significantly and has made learning English increasingly essential as individuals seek international success in our globalised era (Agustiana et al., 2024; Kurniawan, 2023). This skill enhances access to education, employability, and professional growth worldwide (British Council, 2021; Rao 2019). English that is used worldwide has emerged as a diverse linguistic entity functioning as a global lingua franca (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011). English being used as a lingua franca means the common language of choice among speakers who come from different cultural backgrounds (Jenkins; 2009). This linguistic diversity is well explained by the concept of World Englishes (WEs), which emphasises the global diversification of English, recognising it as a pluricentric language with unique regional varieties (Kachru, 1985). Kachru's model of the "Three Circles" includes the Inner Circle (English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia), the Outer Circle (former British colonies such as India, Nigeria, and Singapore), and the Expanding Circle (countries where English is learned as a foreign language, such as China, Japan, and Brazil). This

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framework helps explain the global spread of English and its adaptation in various sociocultural contexts. The number of English speakers in the Outer and Expanding Circles is much larger than that in the Inner Circle (Medgyes, 2001). Thus, in most cases, interactions in ELF involve non-native speakers. This diversity reflects the different contexts in which English is used, encompassing various dialects, accents, and cultural influences (Yunhua & Budiman, 2024). For this reason, scholars support the promotion of linguistic diversity within ELF interactions, using inclusive communication strategies that respect and include various cultural perspectives.

The recognition of ELF and WEs challenges traditional English language teaching (ELT) paradigms, which have historically centred around native-speaker norms or refer to someone who has been speaking English in the first place since birth and raised in that language (Chomsky, 1965). This is often rooted in the ideology of native speakerism, which is a persuasive ideology in English language teaching, often leading to biases against Non-native English Speaker Teachers (NNESTs) (Halliday, 2005). This ideology-directing perspective positions Native English Speaker Teachers (NESTs) as ideal models for language instruction and is supported by studies highlighting students' preferences for NESTs (Adara, 2019; Lai, 2020; Rasyid et al., 2023; Thararuedee & Musigrungsi, 2024). However, the concept shifts the focus from native-speaker norms to mutual intelligibility and adaptability (Seidlhofer, 2001). Preference for NESTs can overshadow the unique cultural insights and teaching strategies that NNESTs offer, which may be better suited for local learners (Calafato, 2019; Cheng & Zhang, 2021; Deng et al., 2023). Therefore, the primary aim of learning English should not be to achieve native-like pronunciation but to communicate clearly and effectively (Baker, 2015). Both NESTs and NNESTs bring unique strengths and areas for improvement to the classroom. This shift in focus has prompted a reevaluation of English teaching standards, emphasising the importance of intercultural communicative competence (Iswandari & Ardi, 2022).

While many studies have explored students' and teachers' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs (Deng et al., 2023; Kakar & Sarwari, 2024; Rahman & Yuzar, 2020; Rasyid et al., 2023; Yıldırım & Önal, 2022), there is less research focusing specifically on pre-service English teachers' views concerning overall attitudes, pedagogical skills, cultural relevance, and linguistic proficiency. These are significant in fostering successful internationalisation and multilingual initiatives (Shodiyarovna, 2024; Xin & Luo, 2024). Pre-service English teachers are essential to perceive since they hold an important key to future learning (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009). If they have a preference in NESTs concerning native speakerism they will not emerge the varied Englishes as its real function such as English as Lingua Franca, but if they don't have any preference in NESTs due to the issue of native speakerism will respect students' cultural identities and support their social and academic well-being, helping them build positive relationships and a stronger sense of belonging (AMLE, 2023; Instructional Strategies, 2023) and raise awareness and acceptance of different English varieties (Eslami et al. 2019) by using examples from global Englishes and fostering critical discussions on how English functions differently worldwide (Rose et al., 2021; Wilczewski & Alon, 2022). With those regards, this study aims to explore the factors influencing pre-service English teachers' preferences for NESTs and NNESTs, and understand their overall attitudes toward both. Therefore, the research questions of this research are:

1. What are the overall attitudes of pre-service English teachers towards NESTs and NNESTs?
2. What specific factors influence pre-service English teachers' preferences for either NESTs or NNESTs, including how native speakerism shapes pedagogical skills, cultural relevance, and linguistic proficiency?

The significance of the study theoretically contributes to the existing literature by exploring how pre-service English teachers perceive NESTs and NNESTs in relation to pedagogical skills, cultural relevance, and linguistic proficiency. It focuses on the role that pre-service teachers of English play as key agents in encouraging a more inclusive and culturally responsive approach to

language teaching, which can help promote a more equitable global educational context. The practical implications of this study are that its findings can be used to inform teacher training programs so that pre-service teachers enter into service equipped with knowledge and skills to embrace the diversity of English as a global lingua franca that bridges communications across diverse cultures and contexts in today's globalised world.

METHODS

Research design

This research employs descriptive qualitative methods to understand how pre-service teachers perceive and differentiate between NESTs and NNESTs, especially in terms of their overall attitudes, pedagogical skills, cultural relevance, and linguistic proficiency. Descriptive qualitative research design focuses on providing rich, detailed accounts of participants' perceptions and experiences while remaining close to their voices and the desire to know the who, what, and where of events (Sandelowski, 2000), which is exactly what this study intends to do.

Research participants

Participants totalled 15 students (13 females and 2 males) aged 20-21 years old, in the 5th semester from one of the Islamic universities in North Sumatra. The total number of participants acquired since the sample size in qualitative research is not determined by a fixed number, but by the depth and adequacy of the data (Mason, 2010; Sandelowski, 2000). The research participants chosen were using convenience sampling based on their availability and willingness to take part in the study (Cresswell, 2012), and thus representative of subjects already exposed to NESTs and NNESTs in their current classes. It had to be the 5th semester because, in this instance, the students were the only ones who had had experience with both NESTs and NNESTs, thus making their views and reflections on the research questions.

Data Collection

The data collection in this study has been carried out through the application of two main approaches: two questionnaires and interview. The questionnaires were distributed among students in the English Education Department through a link shared by the class representative. Participants had the flexibility to complete the form online at their convenience, and responses were automatically collected for analysis. The first questionnaire consists of 6 Likert-scale statements (1-4 scale) for the data of overall attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs, adapted design by Wu (2009) because of his statement that on Likert-scale statement, there is no right or wrong answer, which is the reason to adopt the case study to seek further explanation from the participants about their responses. Another questionnaire contains 16 items, out of which 4 questions are open-ended and 12 are closed-ended for the data of pre-service English teachers' perceptions toward the three factors: pedagogy, cultural, and linguistic.

To support the reliability of the instruments, the questionnaire items were adapted from previous research and designed to consistently measure participants' perceptions of pedagogy, cultural relevance, and linguistic proficiency. During the distribution, participants were also encouraged to ask if any item was unclear, which helped ensure consistent understanding of the questions.

Semi-structured interviews were used with selected participants, depending on their potential answers to the previous questionnaire. Interview methods were added to delve deeper into their preferences. 2 participants who preferred NESTs and one participant who preferred NNESTs were

selected. These will last various minutes each and allow an in-depth look at students' specific factors that influence their preference, allowing the participants to elaborate on their reasoning and experiences with NESTs and NNESTs. Responses from the interviews will be captured in non-verbatim transcripts of the main themes and insights discussed by the participants.

Data Analysis

The research participants' responses from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which complements the descriptive qualitative approach to explore the views of pre-service English teachers concerning NESTs and NNESTs, with the help of the software tool ATLAS.ti. Key themes and insights shall be coded from open-ended questions, whereas in close-ended questions, reasons for the participants' attitudes towards both NESTs and NNESTs shall be gauged. In the case of interviews, responses would be transcribed and coded to identify patterns and factors that shape their preferences. This approach provides a clear and detailed understanding of participants' perspectives.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations will be pursued with strict severity, including confidentiality measures to anonymise participants' identities and informed consent procedures to ensure their willingness to participate and understanding of the purposes of this research project.

RESULTS

This section represents the entirety of the findings of this study, as perceived by pre-service overall attitudes toward NESTs and NNESTs, and NESTs and NNESTs' pedagogical skills, cultural relevance, and linguistic proficiency based on students' perceptions. Although close-ended questionnaire results were collected, its aligned with the qualitative findings, reinforcing the overall positive attitudes towards both NESTs and NNESTs. The participants' answers below have been translated from Indonesian into English.

Overall Attitudes toward NESTs and NNESTs Indicating Native Speakerism
The table below presents overall attitudes in NESTs and NNESTs that have already been analysed by thematic analysis, followed by an explanation of the findings.

Table 1. Survey Results on Pre-service English Teachers' Overall Attitude towards NESTs & NNESTs

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	NESTs are good at helping you achieve expected score test.	-	-	33.3%	66.7%
2	NESTs are good at explaining grammar points.	-	-	93.3%	6.7%
3	NESTs are good at teaching pronunciation teaching	-	-	-	100%
4	NNESTs are good at helping you achieve expected score test	-	-	60%	40%
5	NNESTs are good at explaining grammar points	-	-	66.7%	33.3%

6	NNESTs are good at teaching pronunciation teaching	-	40%	60%	-

Students generally held positive attitudes towards both NESTs and NNETs regarding the ability to assist students in achieving expected test scores. 66.7% of students strongly agreed, and 33.3% agreed that NESTs were helpful in reaching desired test outcomes. This indicates a high level of confidence in NESTs' ability to prepare students for exams, which may stem from their perceived expertise as native speakers and their familiarity with standardised test formats. Not quite far enough, 60% of students agreed, and 40% strongly agreed that NNESTs could help the students in achieving their targeted scores. These findings highlight that while students generally place a slightly higher level of confidence in NESTs for this role, they still recognise NNESTS as effective and capable instructors in helping them reach academic milestones. This perception suggests that students value both native and non-native instructors, acknowledging the strengths each group brings to the classroom.

When it comes to teaching grammar, students have a strong approval of both NESTs and NNESTs. 93.3% of students agreed that NESTs explained grammar well, and 6.7% strongly agreed about that. This overwhelmingly positive response suggests that students perceive NESTs as highly capable of breaking down grammatical concepts, possibly due to their intuitive understanding of the language and natural fluency. Meanwhile, 66.7% of students agreed and 33.3% strongly agreed that NNESTs were also effective in teaching grammar. These results indicate that students recognise NNESTS' ability to teach grammar comprehensively, which could stem from NNESTs' own experience in learning English as a second language, allowing them to approach grammar instruction in a structured and relatable way.

Pronunciation teaching was perceived as a notable strength of NESTs, with a number of 100% of students agreeing that NESTs were effective in teaching this language aspect. This unanimous response highlights the strong belief among students that NESTs possess superior pronunciation skills, likely due to their status as native speakers. Students may feel that NESTs provide authentic models of pronunciation, including accurate intonation, stress, and rhythm, which can enhance their ability to sound more like native speakers themselves. On the other hand, 60% of students agreed and 40% disagreed that NNESTs were effective in teaching pronunciation, indicating some scepticism among students regarding NNESTs' pronunciation teaching capabilities. This divide suggests that students may associate native speakers with "ideal" pronunciation and view NNESTs' pronunciation as less authentic or less aligned with native norms. These findings underscore the importance of emphasising pronunciation skills in NNEST training programs to bridge this perception gap and further improve students' confidence in NNESTs as effective pronunciation instructors.

Pre-Service Teachers' Views on NESTs & NNESTs Including how Native Speakerism Shapes Pedagogical Skills, Cultural Relevance, and Linguistic Proficiency

Pedagogical Skills
The table below presents participants' perceptions of pedagogical skills in NESTs and NNESTs that have already been analysed by thematic analysis, followed by an explanation of the findings.

Table 2. Participant Perceptions of Pedagogical Skills in NESTs and NNESTs

No	Theme	NESTs	NNESTs	Participant Responses
1	Engaging Learning	√		*"The way they guide me feels very professional, and I feel more confident when*

				speaking in English with them.'' (Participant 13, Questionnaire)
				"NESTs clearly have the ability to teach me English, based on my experience." (Participant 11, Questionnaire)
2	Teacher Traits	√		*"Learning directly from them feels more motivating, they are always expressive, they always appreciate our small achievements, and their way of thinking is truly positive. It helps us open our minds to broader perspectives, and that's really amazing."* (Participant 12, Questionnaire)
				"Whenever the lesson starts, it always begins with fun games and listening to music, which makes me excited and motivated to learn. I also really like the direct method because it allows me to always listen to native speakers, gives me a lot of experience, and allows me to practice English directly." (Participant 2, Questionnaire)
3	Language Barrier	√		*"Yes, we've experienced this quite often, like, 'Huh? What do you mean? But they are amazing and patient, so they always explain it again until we understand. They even put in a lot of effort to explain, speaking slowly." (Participant 1, Interview)*
				"They adjust their teaching style to suit us. They explain things slowly and then ask if there's anything we don't understand. If someone says they don't get it, they'll repeat the explanation and ask specifically what part we find unclear. In our class, if we still don't understand, my friends usually help explain what the NESTs were teaching." (Participant 2, Interview)
4	Bilingual Explanation	√		*"I understand the lessons taught by NNESTs better because they often switch languages, and their explanations are more detailed and easier to comprehend." (Participant 1, Interview)*
				"NNESTs, it's still mixed language." (Participant 2, Interview)

| 5 | Monotonous | √ | *"Most of the methods are lectures, group presentations, and lots of journal writing, which makes the learning process a bit less enjoyable"* (Participant 2, Interview) |
| | | | *"So far, I haven't found any interesting methods because they usually feel monotonous."* (Participant 9, Questionnaire) |

Students reported that NESTs are competent and professional in the classroom, which encourages enthusiasm and expressiveness in students. These positive attributes encourage learners to be more active and confident in their language acquisition journey. The reflections by students highlight that the NESTs have a positive impact on learners' confidence and learning experiences; for instance, Participant 13 mentions that receiving professional advice about speaking in English is boosting their speaking proficiency, which reinforces an earlier point that NEST teachers put into effect. That would have served to indicate how their competence and teaching methodologies assist and culminate in a successful learning process.

The positive and expansive thinking of NESTs has a great impact on students and helps them to see the learning of a language not as a burden but as growth and exploration. This will enable the students to approach the language with more eagerness and an open mind. Small achievements are encouraged NESTs provide a setting in which students feel supported in their process of language learning. Moreover, the lessons are felt more fun and motivating as the NEST's attitude is much appreciative and can create an exciting learning atmosphere with a variety of methods that are not offered initially by the NNESTs through fun teaching methodology and add some excitement in students' process of learning, which successfully captured students' attention.

On the other hand, participants preferred NEST pedagogical skills are somehow confusing since this learning process could be blocked sometimes when the NESTs cannot speak a student's local language, so NESTs should speak slowly, carefully choose the exact words that suit their proficiency level even though there are a number of methods while joyful. Students normally find themselves asking for repetitions; yet, due to the patience and persistence of NESTs in re-explaining the material using simple terms, they understand better.

Meanwhile, some students are quite confident when NNESTs teach them, when they use bilingual explanations. This highlights the pivotal role of bilingual teaching strategies in enhancing students' comprehension and confidence, especially in contexts where learners may struggle with fully immersive English instruction.

Despite their strengths, NNESTs face certain challenges in creating a joyful and meaningful learning experience. Their teaching methods are often criticised for being monotonous, potentially reducing student engagement. This sentiment reflects a broader concern that traditional, repetitive methods may not fully cater to students' needs for dynamic and interactive learning environments. These limitations suggest the importance of diversifying teaching strategies to foster greater enthusiasm and participation in the classroom.

Cultural Relevance
The table below presents participants' perceptions of cultural relevance in NESTs and NNESTs that have already been analysed by thematic analysis, followed by an explanation of the findings.

Table 3. Participant Perceptions of Cultural Relevance in NESTs and NNESTs

No	Theme	NESTs	NNESTs	Participant Responses
1	Authentic Cultural	√		*"Yes, since they are native speakers, they often share stories about their culture. For example,*

	Insights		*they'd say things like, 'In my country, on this date, we celebrate this,' or 'In my country, just like Indonesia, we also have many tribes, such as the Seminole tribe.' I was surprised because I didn't know about that before."* (Participant 2, Questionnaire)
			"Yes, there was a time when we learned about the Indigenous people of England and their young, inspiring figures. We discussed famous women who have inspired many others through their work. One of them was Princess Nokia, a female singer whose songs have inspired women in America." (Participant 9, Questionnaire).
2	Cultural Diversity	√	*"Yes, we once learned about cross-cultural understanding, where we explored various cultures from the tribes in Indonesia. The learning process involved exploring the cultures and works originating from these tribes." (Participant 11, Questionnaire)*
			"Yes, we've had NNESTs teach us, particularly in the CCU course (though they didn't talk much about this in other subjects). Even though they're not native speakers, they could explain things clearly and in a way that was easy to understand, drawing from their own experiences learning English." (Participant 1, Interview)

NESTs help them understand the English culture in a way that sounds real to them. Most students expressed that NESTs shared experiences about real-life culture, adding relevance to the lesson and making it relatable to how they envision such a culture from a native point of view, because they had a chance to experience the lesson with first-hand cultural experience. By sharing first-hand cultural experiences and real-life stories, NESTs made lessons more relatable and interesting for students. Through such culturally rich lessons, NESTs provide students with a broader worldview, deepening their appreciation of the English language in its cultural context.

In contrast, NNESTs reflect effectively on how to balance teaching about students' own cultural context with insights into global cultures, which turns the scales as far as their relevance in teaching cultural studies is concerned. Such an approach contributes to enriching not only their language but also broadening their view of the world, making the learning process more relevant and meaningful. By integrating both local and international cultural elements, teachers help students connect language learning to real-world cultural dynamics. However, even though NNESTs try to present a more complete cultural education, students expressed a preference for NESTs when teaching about cultural studies. This is because students feel, NESTs-as native speakers-are able to provide a far richer and profound exploration of the cultures of the countries of English-speaking nations that further enhance their students' understanding in a manner that feels very much more immersive and firsthand.

Linguistic Proficiency

The table below presents participants' perceptions of linguistic proficiency in NESTs and NNESTs that have already been analysed by thematic analysis, followed by an explanation of the findings.

Table 4. Participant Perceptions of Linguistic Proficiency in NESTs and NNESTs

No	Theme	NESTs	NNESTs	Participant Responses
1	Clear Pronunciation	√		*"NESTs have a clear pronunciation and repetition." (Participant 10, Questionnaire)* *"The paragraphs we read were still quite easy, and if there was a word or sentence that we rarely heard, they would immediately correct our pronunciation." (Participant 2, Interview)*
2	Grammar Teaching		√	*"Grammar method, because by learning grammar, we become familiar with the word order we will use." (Participant 7, Questionnaire)* *"It also helps explain things more in detail and makes it easier to understand, especially when it comes to grammar and structure" (Participant 1, Interview)*
3	Comprehensive Elements	√		*"When we learned about slang, my NEST explained the context of its use in daily life in their country, such as words commonly used by young people. That was very helpful." (Participant 12, Questionnaire)* *"Especially in terms of speaking English, whether it's about slang or other things." (Participant 7, Questionnaire)*

NESTs successfully demonstrate the exact pronunciation and highlight how students benefit from authentic language input and real-life language. The focus on authentic language use further enhances their ability to communicate in real-life contexts, making the learning experience not only educational but also practical and impactful. There was a time when NESTs liked to demonstrate some texts in front and ask some students as volunteers to read them out loud while NESTs were fixing the pronunciation if there was a mispronunciation. By addressing mispronunciations in real time, NESTs helped students internalise proper pronunciation patterns, ensuring a more accurate and fluent use of the language in future interactions.

On the other hand, some students agreed that NNESTs are good at pronunciation and agreed that NNESTs have standard pronunciation. While NNESTs are believed to be great at teaching grammar and have become one of the students' favourites

Students also mentioned the technique that NESTs used in the classroom, where language aspects and the use of authentic slang as the elements that assisted them in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of English. This practical exposure to authentic language use

allowed students to connect their classroom learning to real-life situations, equipping them with the cultural and linguistic tools needed for effective communication in diverse settings.

DISCUSSION

The overall attitudes toward NESTs and NNETs are positive toward both, but there's a slight bias towards NESTs in teaching pronunciation. This reflects the influence of native speakerism, where native speakers are perceived as the ideal model for language teaching due to their fluency, authenticity, and cultural familiarity (Deng et al., 2023; Rasyid et al., 2023; Selvi et al., 2023). Moreover, NESTs were rated as superior in teaching pronunciation, again aligning with the native speakerism ideology of prioritising "native-like" accuracy (Listyani et al., 2024; Treve, 2023). Overcoming this would require a shift in focus from native-like standards to effective teaching practices oriented toward the students' needs regarding international communication. However, NNESTs were also found to be strong in teaching grammar and supporting students academically (Fuangkarn & Rimreekaratikul, 2020; Moraczewska, 2024), because they are more structured in their approach and can empathise with students learning the language. Native speakerism may still be a strong factor in influencing students' perceptions, but it seems that both NESTs and NNESTs have important strengths to offer.

The participants described NESTs' teaching methods as interactive, enjoyable, and effective because they usually changed their methods to hold students' attention (Munna & Kalam, 2021), such as the direct method (Dakhalan & Tanucan, 2024). On the other hand, some participants commented that the lack of bilingual support on the part of the NESTs themselves may hinder comprehension when students do not understand certain vocabulary or complex ideas (Leech & Tualaulelei, 2021; Tukan, 2024). However, the NNESTs are seen as more responsive to the students' needs since the bilingual instructional approach can easily bridge gaps in understanding and help a difficult concept fall into place (Fuangkarn & Rimkeeratikeul, 2020; Selvi et al., 2023). While their explanations were reported to be lucid and logical, the NNESTs were also said likely to use repetitive teaching methods (Wang & Fang, 2020) not like NESTs did. These preferences raise important questions about whether participants' favorability toward NESTs stems from objective pedagogical strengths or is influenced by the pervasive ideology of native speakerism. The belief that native speakers naturally excel at teaching English may overshadow NNESTs' proven abilities to adapt their methods to suit diverse student needs.

Cultural insights became one of the most decisive factors in shaping participants' perceptions about NESTs and NNESTs (Selvi et al., 2023; Wahyuningsih, 2023; Deng et al., 2024). It is highly valued that NESTs can actually share personal experiences and authentic knowledge concerning cultural relevance (Rasyid et al., 2023; Selvi et al., 2023), which enriches the process of learning to connect language skills with very real cultural dynamics. Some participants also noticed that some NESTs draw on non-English-speaking cultures and add variety to their lessons, but it's still related to their personal NESTs' life rather than teaching the students about the culture of global English. Nevertheless, many participants still showed a preference for the NESTs' explanation of cultural aspects locally and globally, emphasising the perceived authenticity that only native speakers can provide (Deng et al., 2023). The participant's preference for NESTs as cultural informants underscores how the ideology perpetuates the perception that only native speakers can provide "authentic" cultural knowledge, potentially undervaluing the diverse and inclusive perspectives that NNESTs bring to the classroom.

The linguistic proficiency of NESTs was universally identified as one of their strong points (Bing et al., 2023; Pariyanto, 2020). The participants appreciated their native-like pronunciation, use of authentic slang, and providing real-life input into the language (Listyani et al., 2024; Treve,

2023). These features were considered instrumental in enhancing students' fluency and comprehension. Meanwhile, NNESTs were praised for their bilingual approach and their ability to teach grammar effectively (Fuangkarn, Rimreekaratikul, 2020; Moraczewska, 2024). While participants noted that the pronunciation of NNESTs was good, they lacked the authenticity and exposure to natural language use that NESTs provide (Pennington, 2021; Treve, 2023). These differences likely drove the overall preference for NESTs among these participants. This bias likely contributed to the participants' preference for NESTs, even though NNESTs demonstrated strong linguistic competence and pedagogical skills.

The findings from this study reflect a tendency in native speakerism – the idea that native speakers are the "ideal" English teachers. It has the same results as previous studies (Adara, 2019; Lai, 2020; Rasyid et al., 2023; Thararuedee & Musigrungsi, 2024). Many students believe that being a native speaker automatically makes someone great at teaching pronunciation, as we can see 100% of students said so. These findings align with Halliday's theory (2005) that described native speakerism as a powerful belief system that often puts NESTs on a pedestal. This is also supported by several studies, which position NESTs as inherently superior educators based on their nativeness rather than their pedagogical skills, leading to the prioritisation of NESTs over NNESTs in several key areas (Cengiz & Mede, 2024). We can highlight the theory from Will Baker (2015) about how English is a global language used by people from many different countries and cultures, so the goal shouldn't be to sound like a native speaker but to communicate clearly and effectively and teaching should focus on helping students succeed in real-world communication, not just chasing native-like perfection.

Kachru's (1985) idea of English as a pluricentric language – meaning that English isn't owned by any one group, but has many varieties worldwide – is also quite relevant here where NNESTs were praised for bringing both local and global cultural perspectives into their lessons, making students feel more connected to their learning students still preferred NESTs when it came to teaching cultural aspects, saying they felt NESTs were more "authentic." Other than that, this is supported by several studies that said NNESTs were also appreciated for their bilingual support, ability to adapt to students' needs, and use of local cultural content in their teaching (Luo, 2024: Quaidy et al., 2023) alongside the bilingual support and adaptability of NNESTs (Fuangkarn & Rimkeeratikeul, 2020; Selvi et al., 2023). The suggestion from Sheidlhofer (2001) suggests that we should stop focusing on native-like language and instead focus on helping people communicate effectively and adapt to different situations. This matches Sheilhofer's idea that teaching should be about making things practical and easy to understand rather than trying to mimic native speakers.

CONCLUSION

The results showed positive attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs, with a slightly negative attitude towards NNESTs in teaching pronunciation due to native speakerism. In terms of pedagogy, NESTs were engaging and varied in approach, while NNESTs were monotonous but provide bilingual support. Culturally, NESTs provided first-hand exposure, but NNESTs highlighted global English diversity. Linguistically, students preferred NESTs for genuine pronunciation of authentic language elements such as slang. These findings revealed there was a tendency for native-speakerism, with evidence from participants' responses. Since both NESTs and NNESTs have their own uniqueness, this study highlights the importance of collaboration between NESTs and NNESTs and underlines the idea that leveraging the strengths of one may enrich students' experiences while challenges would be tackled against the concept of native speakerism.

This study has a limitation in that the sample size is small and from a specific context of instance, that is, pre-service teachers in one institution. Such factors may well restrict the generalizability of results. Future studies can focus on how to reduce native speakerism bias in

schools. For example, future research can explore training programs or classroom activities that help students understand that both native and non-native English teachers have their own strengths. Researchers can also see how teaching materials that include different English accents and cultures may help students respect English diversity. This way, future studies can support a more equal and open-minded learning environment.

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