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Native English-Speaking Students' Perceptions of a Nonnative English-Speaking Writing Teacher, Teaching Effectiveness, and Language Performance

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My experience as a writing instructor at my current institute began with challenges due to taking over two writing courses in the midst of a semester already five weeks into the session when the original instructor quit. After meeting with the instructor to learn about the course objectives, expected outcomes, the students, the class dynamics, and observing two class periods, I revised the initial syllabi, adding what I believed to be necessary, then entered classrooms, full of native English-speaking students (NESSs). The classes did not go as smoothly as I had desired, and the students' evaluations were not as high as I expected. While I appreciated students' positive comments and ratings regarding my teaching, I was taken aback by several comments that were not on my teaching, but on my nonnative English-speaking teacher (NNEST) status and language. Comments such as "A good teacher, but too bad she is Chinese" and "She does not speak English well" I perceived as racially and linguistically discriminatory.

I understood that the sudden change of instructors, teaching style, and content would cause anxiety to students as they strove to adapt. Also, for most students, I might be the first NNEST of their entire academic experiences. These reasons alone could lower the evaluation scores; however, some students' negative comments about my NNEST status and linguistic competence made me intellectually and emotionally restless. As an introduction to my background, I am a female native speaker of Chinese, born and raised in China. I earned my BA in English literature and a master's certification of English pedagogy in China, and instructed English at a Chinese university for eight years. Then I earned my master's in applied linguistics and ESL and doctor-

ate in composition and TESOL in the US. I am experienced in composition instruction at universities in the US. I began to teach writing as a doctoral student in the US. At the previous U.S. universities where I instructed, I taught research writing courses for graduate students, focusing on teaching thesis writing development. With almost twenty years of university-level English teaching experience in the US and China, my educational background and teaching experience should more than qualify me as a writing instructor. While my current university is a small public HBCU, more than 85% of the students are white. The majority of the students are only first-generation college students, and I am the only NNEST in the English department.

Truly, students' evaluations are valuable; yet, their linguistic and racial bias against NNESTs is damaging. It undermines NNESTs' teaching authority in the classroom, creates an unhealthy teaching-learning environment, and accordingly, negatively affects students' learning. Perceived bias against NNESTs also sways NNESTs' self-esteem and academic reputation, particularly if student evaluations are a key measurement on faculty retention, promotion, and tenure. My experience intensified my interest in exploring whether the mediocre evaluations I received were simply an isolated incident due to the abrupt change of instructors, my NNEST status cause students' dissatisfaction, or did I not teach well. Further, since language performance is closely related to teaching effectiveness, student evaluations of my teaching are likely based on my language performance and their acceptance of a NNEST. Hence, this study investigated NESSs' perceptions of having a NNEST teach writing and their evaluations of the NNEST's teaching effectiveness and language performance.

Research on Nonnative English-Speaking Teaching Professionals

Numerous studies have discussed NNESTs, including international faculty (Aneja, 2016; Braine, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Llorca, 2004; Reves & Medgyes, 1994) and international teaching assistants (Bresnahan & Kim, 1993; Fox & Gay, 1994). Topics of linguistic bias, racial and gender discrimination are the foci (Bresnahan et al., 2002; Canagarajah, 1999; Kaur & Raman, 2014; Lazos, 2012; Lippi-Green, 2012; Vargas, 2002). Among them, the notion of native speakers being ideal English instructors (Chun, 2014; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010; Saraceni, 2015; Saunders, 2001) and learners favoring native speakers' accent (Kaur & Raman, 2014; Kumaravadivelu, 2008) are discussed most. NNESTs' linguistic proficiency and teaching credibility are constantly questioned by students, native English-speaking colleagues, even NNESTs themselves (Crystal, 1997; Thomas, 1999).

Gail Shuck's (2009) study addressed the existence of the native-nonnative dichotomy, pointing out the fact that people often perceive native speakers as English experts with no accent and understandable in comparison with nonnative speakers. Rosina Lippi-Green (2012) also disclosed a phenomenon in educational settings that when native speakers are confronted with an accent, particularly Asian accents, either unfamiliar or foreign to them, they can decide whether to participate in the communication or not even "reject their responsibility" and "demand that a person with an accent carry the majority of the burden in the communication" (p. 72). Due to ethnocentrism (Bailey, 1984), failure in native-nonnative communications is often blamed on nonnative speakers' proficiency or accent, but rarely on native speakers' willingness and ability to understand (Kang et al., 2015). Accordingly, native speakers are habitually ranked higher than nonnative speakers in terms of correctness, pleasantness, familiarity, and acceptability for communication (Kaur & Raman, 2014).

While we cannot deny that nonnative speakers' language may make communication harder; yet intelligibility is a joint constructive effort by both speaker and listener in communication (Rajadurai, 2007). According to Stephanie Lindemann (2002), natives speakers' lack of willingness to understand nonnative speakers can impede the interaction. Consequently, even though NESSs may understand their NNESTs well, some still rate the communication as dissatisfactory. Dan Villarreal's (2013) model of the communication gap between undergraduates and their international faculty also disclosed the linguistic bias against NNESTs. As he introduced, "accent misunderstanding" and "accent bias" are two separate terms, the former relates to "linguistic, cognitive, and cultural factors; both instructor and students create the misunderstanding gap," the latter however, relates to "social and cognitive factors; students only create the gap in communication" (p. 10). Therefore, NNESTs receive lower ratings even though students learn as much from them as from their NESTs (Finegan & Siegfried, 2000).

Kent Saunders (2001) once pointed out that an instructor's native language does not affect student learning; rather, the instructor's native language not being English caused them receiving "significantly lower ratings compared to the instructors whose native language is English" (p. 352). Sadly, Asian instructors' race and language are particularly perceived as a disadvantage, being rated more negatively than their colleagues who have common U.S. names (Lippi-Green, 2012; Subtirelu, 2015). Back in 1999, William Becker and Michael Watts already criticized that instead of rating instructors' teaching effectiveness, some students rated based on their "expected grades, instructor's popularity, even teacher's age, sex, or ethnic background" (p. 344). While two decades have passed, racial and linguistic discrimination against NNESTs

still seems to exist; NNESTs are rated nonobjectively, their races and accents are blamed. A foreign name, appearance, accent, even gender may still trigger a skeptical attitude toward NNESTs' teaching credibility. This situation is largely influenced by a Western monolingual and mono-cultural perception of English instruction (Kachru, 2009) and the observation that English teaching jobs favor native speakers (Saraceni, 2015).

Thankfully, the focus has shifted discussing from native-nonnative dichotomy to the importance of being professional. In 1992, Robert Phillipson criticized discrimination against NNESTs, lamenting the native-speaker fallacy. Peter Medgyes (1994) argues that nonnatives may have more fully developed skills, such as explicit knowledge about the linguistic structure of English. Likewise, Suresh Canagarajah (1999) asserts "multilingual speakers' proficiency in more than one language system develops a deep metalinguistic knowledge and complex language awareness" (p. 80). NNESTs also prove themselves skilled in teaching methods, identifying and solving students' problems, explaining rules, and delivering knowledge as they have gone through the learning process themselves (Lipovsky & Mahboob, 2010; Ma, 2012; Mahboob, 2004; Moussu & Llorca, 2008).

With the increasing numbers of NNESTs teaching rhetoric and composition in higher education, studies regarding nonnative-speaking composition instructors have begun to emerge. Priti Kumar (2002) revealed experiencing her NES students' apprehensions about her teaching credibility after seeing her appearance and hearing her Indian accent. Over years, student evaluations of her composition classes still reflect their "apprehensions and preconceived notions about [her] ethnicity" (2002, p. 286). Even though students' attitude changed from apprehension to acceptance and praise after taking her writing courses, some students admitted being biased against her because she did not grow up speaking English but was teaching English. Kumar asserted the importance of self-confidence and improvement, but also affirmed the significance of colleagues' support while empowering her professional authority. Similarly, Xue-Lan Rong (2002) reflected on the misunderstanding, ignorance, and racial bias from her colleagues and students when first hired, pinpointing that students' attitude is also influenced by her colleagues' attitude and the ethos of the institution. Hence, she stressed the importance of new instructors rapidly learning about the students and the undercurrents of school academic, administrative, and political culture. She also proposed the need for addressing colleague and school attitudes toward minority faculty, believing that their positive outlook can have a positive impact on students' attitude toward NNESTs. Monika Shehi (2017) revealed the social and academic barriers she encountered in composition classrooms and the difficulty facing linguistically privileged NES

students. Thus, she advocated for linguistic diversity. Similarly, Todd Ruecker and colleagues (2018) introduced the intertwined bias NNESTs often encounter, endorsing NNESTs' needs for linguistic diversity and pedagogy support. These studies, from the viewpoint of NNESTs, discussed the experiences most nonnative-speaking composition instructors have encountered. My study, from NES students' perspectives, explored their perceptions of a nonnative-speaking composition instructor and their evaluations of a NNEST's teaching effectiveness and language performance.

Design and Methodology

This study consists of two surveys followed by interviews (see Appendices). Survey I, entailing two parts, attempted to discover NES students' perceptions of having a NNEST teach them writing and their evaluations of my teaching effectiveness in multiple aspects. Part I has eight open-ended questions, asking about NES Students' opinions and experiences of having a NNEST; Part II contains close-ended Likert-scale questions, asking about NES students' evaluations of my instruction in 17 aspects. Based on the preliminary results of Survey I collected over three semesters, I designed Survey II as a complement to Survey I. Survey II, with five multiple-choice questions and two open-ended questions, investigated NESSs' perceptions of my language performance, as it determines my teaching effectiveness and NESSs' opinions of a NNEST. At the concluding portion of Survey II, I requested additional volunteers to participate in a follow-up interview in order to further explore students' insights on my linguistic capability. Five volunteers responded and participated. Both surveys and the interviews with unstructured questions helped me gain thorough and in-depth opinions of NESSs' perceptions of a NNEST.

Participants for the surveys and interviews were undergraduate NESSs who took my research writing course from different departments and programs in five semesters. Research writing is a required course for all undergraduates to take with college writing as a prerequisite. Both surveys were anonymous; students received a copy two weeks before the end of the semester, and then voluntarily turned them in at the end of each semester. That way students would experience my teaching performance holistically throughout the semester, and still have the time to carefully form their reflective evaluations. Participants for Survey I were students from five research writing classes over three semesters. Excluding incomplete submissions, 84 surveys were valid for further analysis. Participants for Survey II and follow-up interviews were students from three subsequent research writing classes over two

semesters. Among the collected surveys, 63 were completed for analysis, with five participants interviewed one-on-one after the semester was completed and all the students' grades were turned in.

As described, my data sources were two surveys and follow-up interviews. I employed a modification of Steven Terrell's (2011) sequential explanatory strategy for data collection: surveys including both quantitative and qualitative data were collected followed by qualitative data refinement through interviews. The quantitative data provided a basic and broad understanding of NESSs' perceptions of me as a NNEST, my teaching effectiveness, and language performance. The qualitative data included in the surveys and interviews allowed me to learn their opinions better and in more depth. I utilized descriptive analyses and percentage of responses to analyze the quantitative data and employed inductive interpretation to analyze the qualitative data.

One limitation is that even though I conducted the interviews after submitting the participants' grades, more objective data might have been obtained if someone else conducted the interviews. Also, the interview results could only represent the five participants' opinions. Yet, as an instructor and researcher, the advantage was that I was able to identify specific aspects and moments of the course that an outsider would not have been privy to.

Findings

The results of the two surveys and interviews indicated that overall, most NESSs accepted my NNEST status and were satisfied with my teaching and language performance. Survey I revealed that despite some initial skeptical attitudes when first seeing me and hearing my accent, the vast majority of NESSs experienced improvement in their writing and research skills, including the very few who disliked my NNEST status. The majority of NESSs believed that they had made a correct decision to stay in my classes. The ones who disliked my NNEST status but stayed due to their schedules, intellectually admitted that staying in my class was a correct decision; yet emotionally, they felt uncomfortable due to my NNEST status. These implied that although NESSs were overall satisfied with my teaching, racial discrimination against my NNEST status might still be a factor with those who preferred only NES teachers. Further, students' evaluation results indicated that my language performance and NNEST status were not rated as highly as other aspects in terms of teaching effectiveness. Survey II indicated that while NESSs comprehended my English and accepted my language performance, slightly less than one third responded that

occasionally my accent, sentence structure, and vocabulary use occasionally caused minimal distractions in comprehension. Nevertheless, they did not perceive any observed language flaws affected my teaching effectiveness. NESSs were satisfied with my language performance, and there was no miscommunication.

Survey I Results: NES Students' Perception of My NNEST Status and Teaching Effectiveness

In responding to whether they knew I am a NNEST or not (Question 1), 66 of 84 participants (78.57%) stated that prior to meeting me, they did not know, nor did they care. The other 18 (12.43%) knew my NNEST status because either they had taken my other courses before or when their friends recommended my course. Regarding students' concerns of having a NNEST teach them writing (Question 2), most of the participants demonstrated an open and accepting attitude without concerns. A few examples are "I don't judge professors on their native languages; realizing you had to learn English and earn your doctorate, you would know what to teach."; "I picked you specifically because someone recommended you." And "I admired the fact that you are able to teach English to Americans." Yet, some confessed to an initial skeptical attitude, being unsure about my teaching and linguistic capability. However, they stayed after taking my first class. A few admitted hesitations but stayed due to their restricted schedules or thought I "deserved an opportunity." Two of them, however, were greatly concerned about my NNEST status. As one wrote, "It bothered me greatly that you are a nonnative."

When answering whether the right decision was made to stay in my class (Question 3), almost all participants responded positively; very few however, reported both "yes" and "no" including the two who disliked my NNEST status. One wrote "yes because my English writing has improved, but no because sometimes you expected too much." The other wrote, "Yes I learned new things from you, but I found it [is] hard to take the grammatical criticism from someone who is not a native to the language."

Regarding my strengths as a NNEST in teaching (Question 4), all except one observed my strengths as clear instruction, knowledge of writing, constructive and detailed feedback on assignments, and good communication with students. To my surprise, quite a number of participants praised my spoken English in particular; they also expressed their enjoyment of learning the differences between Chinese and American rhetoric. The two who complained about my NNEST status also listed some of my strengths, such as I

gave “specific and to the point directions,” my feedback “was always thorough and detailed throughout,” and I “cared for students, which is rare among faculty and it’s a good quality to have.”

Regarding my weaknesses (Question 5), the majority reported no weaknesses being found; however, a few stated that my occasional awkward sentence structures and uncommon vocabulary use were distracting. One of the two students who disliked my NNEST status wrote a complaint: “You don’t *spe*ak English well.” A unique comment, which drew my attention, was “sometimes you take the American meaning of something too literally because you lack cultural understanding.” To some extent, I admit that not being raised in the US, I lack some culture-specific understanding. Regarding suggestions on my teaching improvement (Question 6), in addition to suggesting that I fix the issues mentioned in Question 5, students expressed their appreciation of having me as their writing instructor.

When asked whether NNEST status would influence their course selection for English-department courses (Question 7) and non-English department courses (Question 8), almost all participants demonstrated a high acceptability of NNESTs, answering “No” to both questions. Language intelligibility, nonetheless, is a decisive factor for four participants. For them, a NNEST status would not sway their decisions on choosing English courses offered by English faculty; but it would be one criterion in choosing non-English courses offered by other departments or programs such as math, computer science, etc. due to NNESTs’ heavy accents. Their answers implied that NNESTs who teach English courses are exposed to concentrating more on accent compensation. A couple of other participants held an opposing opinion however, preferring NESTs to teach English, but not caring if NNESTs teach non-English courses. One participant expressed a changed attitude regarding courses offered by NNESTs and wrote, “Before taking your class, I cared whether my professor is an American or not, but not anymore.” Not surprisingly, the two participants who had zero tolerance toward NNESTs only wanted courses to be taught by NESTs regardless of the subject-matter being English or non-English classes.

Part II of Survey I contains 17 Likert-scale questions with a scale of 1 to 5: 1=Poor, 2=Average, 3=Good, 4=Excellent, and 5=N/A, yielding a mixed evaluation of my teaching. Figure 7.1 shows the most relevant questions about my teaching with students’ evaluations of the following aspects: 1) feedback/comments on written assignments, 2) interaction, handouts, email communication, and individual conferences with students, and 3) instructor’s accessibility/flexibility, which earned me over 90% of “Excellent” and 100% positive rate, if including both “Excellent” and “Good”. In addition, I received a

positive rate of 96.4% (n=81) on my knowledge of rhetoric, 92.8% (n=78) on research skill instruction, and 95.2% (n=80) on my overall course instruction.

However, evaluation results (see Figure 7.2) also indicated that two aspects regarding my language performance included a handful of “Average” ratings although no “Poor” ratings. For example, 15.48% (n=13) participants rated my language use in speech as “Average,” even though 66.66% (n=56) rated “Excellent” and 17.86% (n=15) rated “Good.” Likewise, 22.61% (n=19) rated my grammar use as “Average,” although 64.29% (n=54) rated “Excellent” and 13.10% (n=11) rated “Good.” These results matched the perceived weaknesses addressing my language performance in Part I.

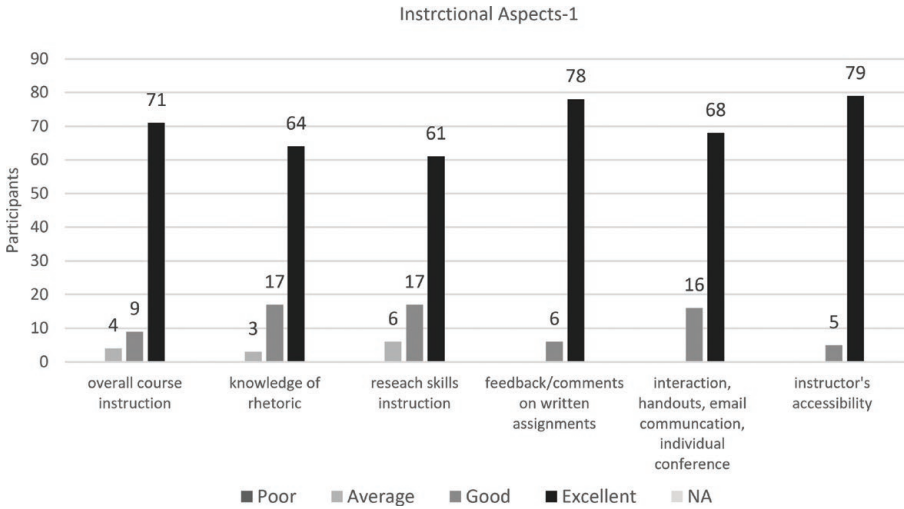


Figure 7.1. Selected evaluation of NNEST's instructional aspects-1.

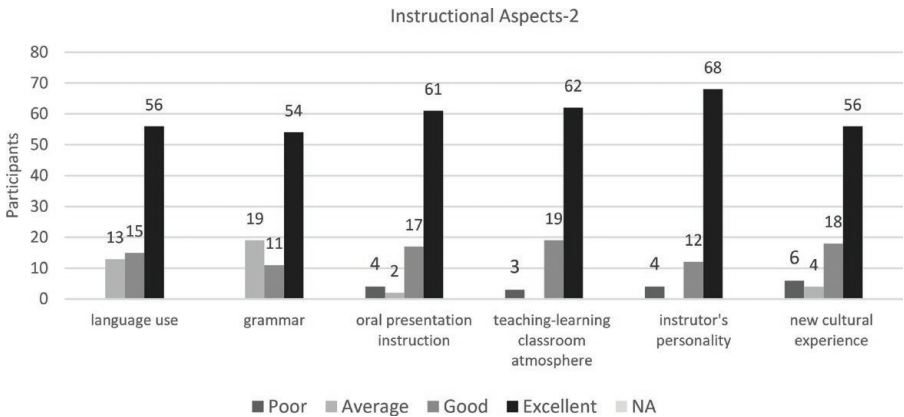


Figure 7.2. Selected evaluation of NNEST's instructional aspects-2.

Moreover, I received “Poor” ratings in oral presentation instruction (4.76%, n=4), teaching-learning classroom atmosphere (3.57%, n=3), and instructor’s personality (4.76%, n=4). These “Poor” evaluations drew my attention because these items directly relate to my NNEST status and language performance, which motivated me to conduct Survey II and interviews to further investigate my language performance as a NNEST. Regarding new cultural experience, the rhetorical references and analogies from Chinese culture incorporated in the course, earned the most “Poor” ratings (7.14%, n=6). This result may entail students’ ignorance or lack of interest in other cultures.

Survey II and Interview Results: Students’ Perceptions of My Language Performance

Language performance is pivotal in instruction. Imparting knowledge, expressing and negotiating ideas, and interacting with students is all done via language. Being a NNEST, learning about students’ opinion of my language performance is vital especially given NESSs’ evaluations of my teaching effectiveness in Survey I.

Survey II Results

The results of NESSs’ understanding of my English (Question 1) indicated that 80% (n=51) of them had “No difficulty” understanding me, while 20% (n=12) “Somewhat” did. Among these 12 participants, they chose the following reasons: sentence structure (n=5), vocabulary use (n=5), grammar (n=2), accent/pronunciation (n=2), and a mix of all above (n=4). Regarding my language performance (Question 2), no “Poor” ratings were selected; two participants (3.17%) rated “Acceptable, but not ideal”; 40 participants (63.50%) rated “Good,” and 21 participants (33.33%) rated “Excellent.”

Since study findings indicate that although students comprehend NNESTs fully, they may still not accept NNESTs’ accents/pronunciations (e.g., Lindemann, 2002), I asked about NESSs’ comprehension level (Question 3) and acceptance level (Question 4) of my accent/pronunciation. The results suggest that 44.5% (n=28) of the participants comprehended my accent/pronunciation, yet 19% (n=12) of them had to listen carefully and 36.5% (n=23) comprehended me with minimal distraction (see Table 7.1). In comparison, participants’ acceptance level of my accent/pronunciation was extremely high. However, one participant expressed discomfort.

Regarding whether my speech errors hindered students’ comprehension or not (Question 5), 16 participants (25.4%) were not aware of any errors in my

speech, nor did they have issues comprehending me, 22 (34.92%) fully understood me without meaningful distractions, another 22 (34.92%) felt that my errors caused only minimal distractions, and three (4.76%) believed they were occasionally confused, such as by my unfamiliar vocabulary usage.

When asked to list other difficulties with my language performance (Question 6), one wrote, "You talked a mile a minute!" In terms of providing suggestions on my language improvement (Question 7), positive and rewarding comments such as "I don't think you have any language issues. You speak as clear as American professors"; "I love the way you speak; it's very clear and specific!"; "You speak much clearer than lots of Americans, and your English is better than many professors." I was encouraged by comments such as "Teaching in a new language is hard, but you have done a beyond excellent job" and "I honestly don't see any issues. I was highly impressed with how well you could speak English. It's hard to teach a class in another language."

For appraisals and constructive comments, participants identified my accent, but did not believe it was heavy or disruptive. As one wrote, "I don't know how to fix your minimal accent. I have a southern accent, and I don't fix it. So it's not your fault." Another wrote, "Your accent is just unique, it's easy to comprehend and causes no trouble." One participant even suggested that students take more responsibility and commented, "Having an accent isn't a bad thing, nor is your fault. If people have trouble with your accent, it's their fault for being so close-minded."

Participants also observed that I frequently use "full stop" to refer to a "period." In this regard, my early English learning experience in China might be a reason. In late 1970s to 1980s, British English was dominant and prevalent in China. The most popular English TV program was *Follow Me*, produced by BBC; the most widely used English textbook was the *New Concept* series, teaching British English. My first English dictionary was *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Many courses I took at university were about British literature.

Table 7.1. NNEST's Accent/Pronunciation Comprehension and Acceptance Level

<i>Comprehension Level</i>		<i>Acceptance Level</i>	
hard to comprehend	0 (0%)	not acceptable	0 (0%)
comprehensible, but have to listen carefully	12(19%)	acceptable, but uncomfortable	1 (1.58%)
comprehensible with minimal distractions only	23 (36.5%)	acceptable, mostly comfortable	24 (38.1%)
fully comprehensible without difficulty	28 (44.5%)	totally acceptable and comfortable without issues	38 (60.3%)

Due to my British English learning background, I may habitually utilize British English vocabulary. Just as one participant described, “Your English is always easy to understand. Occasionally there might be a few words I don’t use. But I still could understand what you meant.” Obviously, my vocabulary repertoire differs from my NESSs’ vocabulary, which could confuse some students. Additionally, several students suggested that I slow down while talking. This comment also appeared in their answers to Question 6, which reinforced the idea of slowing my pace in speech for clarity purposes.

Interview Results

I conducted five individual interviews with three male and two female undergraduates in my office after the semester was completed and grades submitted. Each unstructured interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. When interviewing, I took notes and asked follow-up questions for them to elaborate more. All interviewees were NESSs with pseudonyms, except for Liz, a bilingual in English and French. Among them, three were first time taking a NNEST’s class (see Table 7.2).

As mentioned previously, linguistic issues revealed in both surveys targeted my awkward sentence structure, uncommon vocabulary use, grammatical use, and accent. Thus, I asked interviewees purposefully about their experiences and opinions regarding these issues and my language performance as well as their suggestions for improvement. None of the five noted issues with my sentence structure. As Rich claimed, “I never thought about it, nor as I was aware of [it].” For my vocabulary use, Liz could tell that some of my words were British English, but she understood them. Abbey said that she learned “full stop” means “period.” Similarly, Mark had heard of “full stop,” but did not really understand it until he was in my class. In terms of grammatical errors, Mark recalled my tense use was wrong few times, although he understood what I meant.

Table 7.2. Interviewees’ Demographics

Name (gender)	Native Language	Major/ Program	School Year	1st NNEST Experience
Liz (f)	English & French	Chemistry	Sophomore	Yes
Abbey (f)	English	Education	Sophomore	No
Rich (m)	English	Biology	Freshman	Yes
Mark (m)	English	Music	Senior	No
Jack (m)	English	Computer Science	Freshman	Yes

When asked about my accent, participants could identify it, but did not feel it was heavy. As Liz said, "I was already surrounded by many international students, so I had no issues with your accent." Rich did not recall any moments that he could not understand me. For Jack, my accent was not "obvious" and I spoke "clear enough" so he had no difficulty understanding me. Mark argued that "compared with other nonnative English-speaking professors, your accent is much easier to understand." However, according to Abby, my accent required her "a little more effort to listen." According to her, my intonation was different, not my pronunciation.

In responding to my language performance and teaching effectiveness, none observed any negative consequences; rather, they commented positively on my teaching. Abby contended, "I don't think your teaching effectiveness is negatively affected by your language. I think you do both well," even though she was the one who had to listen to me closely. Similarly, Liz, Rich, and Jack expressed their enjoyment taking my class; they disagreed that my language flaws affected my teaching. Mark revealed that this was his second attempt to take the same course, because he had failed it once with a different instructor. As Mark shared, taking my class in the beginning, he just "wanted to get it done" because he had already taken the class once and did not expect to learn anything new. According to him, he did not hold a serious attitude in the beginning. However, my class made him "put effort" into each assignment. In Mark's eyes, I was "the best English professor" he had ever had, even though I am a NNEST. His observations also showed in his improved attitude and grades.

Regarding language performance improvement, Liz and Rich did not make any specific suggestions; they encouraged me to continue my way of speaking and teaching. Abby, Mark, and Jack confirmed my language performance. They also suggested that students listen carefully and keep focused. As Jack stated, "teaching and learning are joint efforts. We can't depend on the instructor's effort only; we should involve in the learning more active and stay focused in class." Since the survey results suggested that I speak too quickly, I particularly asked about their opinions of it. None of the five respondents thought I spoke too fast; rather, they believed my speed was about right. Yet, Abby pointed out that due to my intonation, students might expect me to slow down.

The interviews revealed that students were satisfied with my accent/pronunciation even though it required them to pay closer attention when I spoke. My linguistic use and errors in speech could occasionally cause minimal interference with comprehension, which required my further explanations and their greater concentration. Regardless, my teaching effectiveness was not negatively affected by my language performance.

Conclusion

Overall, NESSs perceived me as a competent NNEST, holding a favorable attitude toward my instruction. They comprehended my language and accepted my accent. NESSs were generally confident with my language performance and teaching effectiveness. The study results indicated that receiving unsatisfactory evaluations in my initial writing instruction was likely influenced by my unexpected substitution as their instructor. However, that a small number of students continued to express limited confidence in my credibility could explain more than why I initially had received biased comments; it suggested that linguistic and racial bias existed toward me as a NNEST. The study results indicate that NNESTs' races, linguistic backgrounds, genders, experiences, personalities, and teaching contexts are all variables that can determine students' perception of NNESTs with aggravating or mitigating biases.

This study disclosed my linguistic and cultural deficiencies, which require continued refinement of my linguistic competence and cultural understanding. It also suggests that NESSs reflect upon their biases against NNESTs and build awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity in academia.

The study results together with my teaching experience indicate that some NESSs, especially first-generation and freshman students, may not be familiar with NNESTs' teaching methods, language use, and accent. Thus in classroom, NNESTs may need to shift their teaching method from an authoritative lecturing to interactive discussion. Complementing verbal communication instruction with written forms via visual aids (e.g., handouts, emails) is also an effective strategy in amplifying linguistic intelligibility. One-on-one assistance works extraordinarily well in my classes because students seem more attentive when getting direct help. Moreover, consistent communication with students helps students understand NNESTs' expectations for them and assess NNESTs' strengths. Further, NNESTs should be willing to employ culturally appropriate management strategies (Weinstein et al., 2003) to promote mutual sociocultural understanding and respect between NNESTs and NESSs. Once students realize that instructors care for them on both instructional and personal levels (Meyers, 2009), they tend to be more accepting and appreciative of their instructors, no matter native or nonnative; in turn, reinforcing both their and their instructor's performances.

Being a NNEST, I suggest that in the classroom, we keep our identity, authenticity, and authority by introducing our backgrounds and credentials to reduce students' skepticism, and be professional, competent, and confident to demonstrate our intellectual strength and knowledge. On the other hand, NESSs should also realize that language is not the only factor determin-

ing NNESTs' teaching quality (Kim, 2002). Rather, their ability to deliver well-prepared classes and a caring and willing-to-help personality are crucial. NNESTs are expected to educate students the value of inclusiveness, empowering students through encouraging and accepting their intellectual challenges, but also offering them new and meaningful cultural experience. That way, students may gradually change from resistance to appreciation of NNESTs.

This study advocates that NNESTs negotiate racial, linguistic, and cultural difference throughout their professional lives (Hune, 2011) and that students realize the equality of language variety and racial diversity in classrooms. This study calls for a joint effort by all writing instructors, native and nonnative, writing programs, and institutions to understand that English is not the sole domain of or a privilege for native English speakers; rather, it belongs to all English users. The increasing adoption of English as the language of education, business, and culture demonstrates that we live in a multicultural and world Englishes environment of plurality. This reality requires academia to abandon any pre-conceived attitudes toward NNESTs and experience a transformation of their mindset. Teachers, therefore, should encourage students to step outside of their comfort zones and expose themselves to understanding that NNESTs can be and many are subject-matter experts in numerous fields, including English. NNESTs in particular, should work to inspire students to see the value of racial and linguistic differences, and promote equality and plurality in the classroom. My study may resonate with some NNESTs who experience similar challenges. But the main purpose is to seek greater understanding and support from writing programs. More importantly, we NNESTs can display our indispensability in Western academia, earn NNESTs the respect of students, colleagues, institutions, and build confidence in ourselves, by demonstrating our qualifications as knowledge informants and promoting the value of linguistic, racial, and cultural diversity.

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Appendix 1: Survey I

You are invited to complete this survey about having a nonnative English-speaking writing instructor teach native English-speaking students writing. Your insight is highly valued as it will help me better work for writing students. Please be aware completing this survey involves no risk to you, your relationship with me, and your course grade. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential, even the instructor will not be able to identify your answers because it is anonymous. If you are interested in completing this survey, please return this survey face down the last day of the class of this semester into a designated box. Thank you for your time and insight.

Please answer the following open-ended questions based on your true opinions:

- i. Before registering for this course or meeting me, did you know that I am a nonnative-English speaker teaching you this writing course? Put a check mark "✓" at the suitable places.

Yes _____ No _____ I don't care _____

2. After meeting me for the first time and/or when you realized that English is not my native language, did you have any concerns regarding whether or not you would stay in this class due to my nonnative English speaker status? If “yes”, please explain whether you wanted to drop or switch to a different instructor who is a native English speaker? Or did you decide to stay simply because it fit your schedule, or since this course is required, you had no better choices. Please be specific.
3. Since you stayed in this class, do you think your choice is a right one? Please explain.
4. What are some *strengths* you have observed in me as your writing instructor? Please explain.
5. What are some *weaknesses* you have observed in me as your writing instructor? Please explain.
6. In what ways, do you think I could have done better? Please be specific.
7. In general, does a “nonnative English-speaking instructor” status affect your choosing any *English courses* if you know your instructor is a nonnative English speaker? Please explain.
8. In general, does a “nonnative English-speaking instructor” status affect your choosing any *other courses* if you know your instructor is a nonnative English speaker? Please explain.

Please choose the number that can best represent your experience taking this writing course in each aspect by putting a check mark “√”.

	1=Poor	2=Average	3=Good	4=Excellent	5=N/A
Instructional Aspects	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, course instruction					
Course syllabus, e.g., policies, assignment requirements					
Knowledge of rhetoric, e.g., genre, organization, structure, etc.					
Research skills instruction, e.g., method and application, data collection, analysis, presentation, etc.					
Instructional language use, e.g., sentence structure, vocabulary, etc.					
English grammar					
Academic format and citation skills					
Composing research proposal, outline, questions for participants					

	1=Poor	2=Average	3=Good	4=Excellent	5=N/A
Instructional Aspects	1	2	3	4	5
Searching and selecting scholarly reliable and relevant sources					
Documentation: literature review/annotated bibliographies					
Interaction, handouts, emails, and individual conferences					
Feedback/comments on assignments					
Oral presentation skills					
Teaching-Learning atmosphere, e.g., inviting, low-anxiety					
Instructor's accessibility/flexibility					
Instructor's personality					
New culture/knowledge experience					

Appendix 2: Survey II

- Do you have difficulty understanding my English?
 Yes ____ Somewhat ____ No ____ If your answer is “Yes” or “Somewhat”, please circle the cause that applies to you.)
 Accent/pronunciation
 Grammar use
 Sentence structures
 Vocabulary use
 A mix of all the above
- Thinking of comprehension, how would you rate my language performance? Mark the one that best indicates your comprehension level of my language.
 Poor ____ Acceptable, but not ideal ____ Good ____ Excellent ____
- What is your level of comprehension in regards to my accent? Mark the one that best indicates your comprehension level.

Hard to comprehend___

Comprehensible, but have to listen carefully___

Comprehensible with minimal distraction only___

Fully comprehensible without difficulty___

4. Regarding my level of accent what level did you experience? Mark the one that best indicates your acceptance level.

Not acceptable at all___

Acceptable, but uncomfortable___

Acceptable, mostly comfortable___

Totally acceptable, comfortable without issues___

5. I might have errors in my speech while teaching. Did any errors hinder your comprehension? If so, to what extent? Mark the one that best indicates your answer.

Totally blocked my comprehension___

To some degree, they confused me___

Only occasional minimal distractions___

Fully understand without meaningful distractions___

None of the above I am aware of, nor did I realize or catch any errors___

6. In your opinion, what are some other issues in my language performance that you have identified? Please list them below and explain specifically.
7. In your opinion, what should I do to improve my language performance?