

Students' Perceptions of their Native and Non-Native Teachers' Effect on their Oral Fluency: EFL Context as an Example

Mohammed Hadj Said University of Kasdi Merbah
Ouargla

Dr. Dina Al-Jamal Yarmouk University Jordan

Prof. Djamel Goui, University of Kasdi Merbah
Ouargla

ملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي أثر المعلمين الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية والمعلمين الناطقين بغيرها على الطلاقة الشفوية للطلبة من خلال وجهات نظر طلبة الصف العاشر. وُزعت إستبانه على 50 من طلبة الصف العاشر درسهم أساتذة ناطقون باللغة الإنجليزية و 50 طالبا من نفس المستوى درسهم أساتذة ناطقون بغير اللغة الإنجليزية. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلبة لا يرون فروقا ذات دلالة إحصائية بين أثر الأساتذة الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية و أثر الناطقين بغيرها في مجالات القواعد اللغوية الشفوية، إتجاه الأستاذ و المفردات اللغوية الشفوية. في حين لوحظت فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في تصورات الطلبة على مجالات : اللغة الشفوية في إدارة الصف، طريقة النطق، والطلاقة الشفوية. بناء على نتائج الدراسة، يوصي الباحث بالإعتماد على تمكن الأستاذ و تدريبه قبل النظر إلى هويته، من أجل التخلص من جدلية "أستاذ ناطق باللغة الإنجليزية و أستاذ ناطق بغيرها".

كلمات مفتاحية : الأساتذة الناطقون باللغة الإنجليزية، الأساتذة الناطقون بغير اللغة الإنجليزية، طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية، الطلاقة الشفوي

Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating the effect of teachers' nativeness on students' oral fluency through students' perceptions. The participants in the study included 50 tenth grade EFL students taught by NESTs and 50 tenth grade students taught by NNESTs, who responded to a questionnaire. Students perceived no statistically significant difference between NESTs and NNESTs in oral language grammar, oral language teacher's attitude and oral language vocabulary. Yet, there was a statistically significant difference in students' perceptions of oral language classroom management, overall oral fluency and oral language pronunciation. In light of the findings, the researchers recommended to focus on teachers' proficiency and training rather than their Identity to get through the native-nonnative speaker dichotomy.

Keywords: Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs), Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs), EFL students, Oral Fluency

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of teachers' nativeness arouse with the arising of English as an international language, and with the phenomenal growth of EFL/ESL learners. Yakoub (2011) claimed that The Commonwealth Conference on Teaching of English as Second Language (1969) was the first event where the term "nativeness" was introduced. This paved the way for further suggestions and critics towards the use and efficiency of this term. Philipson (1992) neglected the term and called this issue "the native speaker fallacy". Many linguists, according to Davies (1996), stood against the term "Native Speakers" by arguing that English is now an international language and it is no more the own property of Britain or America. The terms Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) and Non-native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) are widely used today. As a result of the wide spread of English over the world, the issue became very controversial (Liu, 2006). The dichotomy between NESTs and

NNESTs can be obviously perceived in the writings on TEFL or Teaching English for Speakers of Other languages (TESOL). Both, NESTs and NNESTs, are defended at some points and criticized at some other points.

One of the pioneers that investigated the concept of teachers' nativeness is Medgyes (1994) who considered NNESTs to be successful in their career, and that they are superior to NESTs. Supportively, Ribut (2012) affirmed that the same linguistic background is a privilege because Language 1 (L1) can be used when explaining complicated topics; he also stated that NNESTs are the best grammar teachers because they had the same experience as students, so they can predict some learners' difficulties and they can also be imitated as past successful learners. Liu (2006) believed that NNESTs feel inferiority towards the accent and the spontaneous language of NESTs, and that they have to work with their students harder than NESTs; they are also all the time struggling to prove their competence as foreign teachers of that language.

Much research elaborated on the topic from students' and teachers' perceptions and recommended several suggestions. For example, Alseweed (2012) reported that Saudi students always prefer to interact with a teacher from another culture, in addition to their preference of communicating with a native speaker in a comfortable room out of any anxiety. Yet, the same learners preferred to be taught grammar, writing, and learning strategies by a local teacher. Almost all EFL/ESL learners thought that NESTs are better at teaching speaking, pronunciation, and cultural issues. In spite of this, there were no significant differences at speaking tests scores between those who were taught by a NEST and the ones who were taught by a NNEST (Al-Noursi, 2013; Yakoub, 2011). Medgyes (1994) affirmed that teachers believe that there is no Ideal teacher because of many circumstances that are taken into consideration and related to classroom setting. Medgyes (1994) concluded that competent teachers are more important than native teachers. Conversely, Yakoub (2011) stated that teachers preferred NESTs to teach oral skills and NNESTs teachers to teach other skills in addition to Grammar. Additionally, she stated that local teachers feel inferiority towards their being foreign language teachers of English. Goktepe (2013) claimed learners feel afraid of engaging in speaking activities because of their poor vocabulary. Supportively, Koizumi and In'nami (2013) declared that most of the researchers agreed on the multi componential nature of vocabulary and its effect on different basic language skills. They added that enhancing vocabulary improves the learner's speaking proficiency. Precisely, Nouralian, Jahandar, and Khodabandehlou (2013) stated that teaching speaking by emphasizing on vocabulary improves better students' speaking skills. They added that students feel satisfied because they are given time to prepare their vocabulary items before the oral performance.

The classroom management is another circumstance that affects students' oral fluency and speaking as a whole. Benmoussa (2012) claimed that teachers should be aware of the importance of classroom management, and that they have to provide a relaxing environment for students to speak. She added that teachers should motivate their students to engage in speaking activities so that they can improve their oral fluency. Chelbi (2010) declared that classrooms should be well ordered and equipped with the all possible tools in order to make students do their best to respond positively to teachers' instructions and the course process. Khouitem (2010) established that teachers can encourage students to talk by reducing their speech time in classroom and by inviting students express themselves freely. She went further by stating that teachers should force their students to talk until they get rid of their anxiety and shyness.

Among the other factors that affect student's oral fluency, is pronunciation, which is considered as a crucial component in the communicative process. Since sounds are prominent for communication. Pourhosein (2012) suggested that TEFL teachers should give much importance to teaching pronunciation as a good indicator of students' oral fluency. Wojcik (2002) declared that native speakers feel unsatisfied with bad pronunciation and find trouble in understanding bad speakers. Along with, Atli and Bergil (2012) stated that the instruction of pronunciation affects students' overall speaking skills positively. Accordingly, TEFL teachers should focus on students' pronunciation because it is very influential on students' communication. However, ESL/EFL speakers believe that what worth more is the intelligibility of speech more than the way they pronounce words or the accent they have (Wojcik, 2002).

Overall fluency is another factor that reflects learners' oral fluency. According to McCarthy (2009), overall fluency can be perceived in: speed in delivery of speech, automaticity, gestures, pauses, and the right use of communicative strategies. Counter to the previous claim, Tauroza and Allion (1991) stated that speech rate differs depending on the context and the speech genre. Accordingly, they concluded that speech rate is not an informative tool for measuring fluency. McCarthy (2009) excluded pauses by stating that they may also signify a complex planning or cognitive effort; not necessarily a communicative failure. Surprisingly, Paschak (2010) declared that using appropriate gestures while speaking helps students to convey the right message better.

In addition to the previous factors, teacher's attitude in the classroom is another factor that affects students' oral fluency and the learning process generally. Smadi and Al-Ghazo (2013) confirmed that stereotypes and superficial contact with the target culture affect negatively teachers' attitudes towards teaching that foreign language, and by result the learning process. They added that the learning and teaching process are influenced by both positive and negative attitudes. In a similar vein, Walker, Shafer and Liams (2004) stressed that negative attitudes are quickly developed but slowly changed.

The last factor is Grammar, which is also an index that reflects the learner's oral skills. Kianiparsa and Vali (2010) stated that learners should understand English language structures accurately to become fluent speakers. They went further by saying that it is impossible to develop communicative skills without mastering grammar and structures of the target language. However, Kianiparsa and Vali (2010) concluded that learners think that mastering grammar is complementary to speaking, while some other learners believed that grammar should be first learnt before speaking.

1.1 Limitations of the Study : The generalization of the results of the study will be limited to the following factors:

- 1-The intentional sample of teachers and students; namely, NESTs and NNESTs at private schools in Irbid (Jordan) second directorate of education and tenth grade EFL students at the American University Schools of Middle East and the International Grand Academy schools, and two other private schools from the same directorate.
- 2- The time setting: The second semester of the academic year: 2015/2016.
- 3-The instrument of this study is a perception questionnaire for students.
- 5-The definition of "oral fluency" was limited only to some of the aspects that Lennon (2000) provided in his broad definition of oral fluency.

1.2 Problem : It has been believed for a long time that NESTs are better to teach EFL/ESL learners oral fluency (Barlow 2009). However, Yakoub (2011) claimed that student's performance in oral fluency is affected by many circumstances and assumptions that the student makes about the learning process. Jordan as one of the countries that use English as a foreign language, is also included in that problematic issue. As an attempt to shed more light on that issue, the researchers will elaborate on the effect of teachers' nativeness on students' oral fluency based on students' and teachers' perceptions. As such, the current study attempted to answer the following question:

1. What is the level of perceptions of students taught by NESTs and those taught by NNESTs towards the effect of their teachers on their oral fluency?
2. Are there any statistical significant differences between perceptions of students taught by NESTs and perceptions of students taught by NNESTs towards the effect of their teachers on their oral fluency?

1.3 Pedagogical Implications of the study The study is expected to:

- 1- Provide information for institutions, policy makers, and textbook designers about the effect of the teachers' nativeness on students' oral fluency in light of the research findings so that some improvements can be added.
- 2- Introduce further research potential on the effect of the teachers' nativeness on students' oral fluency.

- 3- Clarify the effect of the teachers' nativeness for students in order not to be confused about the issue, and not to affect their achievement by result.

2. METHOD

The recent study followed the descriptive study design where quantitative (i.e. questionnaire) research was used in order to investigate the effect of teachers' nativeness on students' oral fluency. The population of the study consisted of all tenth grade private schools in the second directorate of education in Irbid city. As the study compared between NESTs and NNESTs, the researchers found only two private schools that hire a NEST for tenth grade in Irbid city, namely the American University Schools of Middle East and the International Grand Academy. Participants in the study consisted of two categories: firstly, 50 tenth grade EFL students that were taught by a NEST at the two previously mentioned schools, and 50 tenth grade EFL students that were taught by a NNEST that were purposefully chosen from the same directorate.

The questionnaire was adapted from Lennon's (2000) broad definition of oral fluency, and the outcomes defined by the Jordanian Ministry of Education that tenth grade students should master by the end of the upper basic stage. The questionnaire consisted of six sections, in each one of them three to six statements that detailed the different components of that section. Four sections of the questionnaire were built on Lennon's broad definition of oral fluency and the 10th grade speaking skills outcomes stated by the Jordanian Ministry of Education. However, the two remaining sections were added based on the idea that the study deals with teachers' effect. By result, the researchers added two sections which are: *oral language classroom management* and *oral language teachers' attitude*. The *speech rate* was included in Lennon's (2000) definition of oral fluency but not in the 10th grade speaking skills learning outcomes. Consequently, the questionnaire considered the following sections:

2.1 The sections of the questionnaire

2.1.1 Oral language classroom management:

- Correction of mistakes: it deals with the teacher's responses towards students' mistakes while talking. Precisely, is the teacher very corrective or not?
- Motivation: the degree of motivation that students receive from the teacher to make them talk.
- Topics provided for speaking: it means the authenticity of topics provided for speaking and whether or not it fits students' interests.
- Time devoted: is the time devoted to practice speaking regular or arbitrary? and is it enough for better achievement?
- Classroom atmosphere: do students feel relax when they speak? Do classmates encourage each others during practice? e.g. are they afraid of being laughed at?
- Topics choice: it is related to a previous statement; namely: students can sometimes be given chance to choose topics on their own to enjoy speaking about it.

2.1.2 Oral language vocabulary:

- Classroom vocabulary items: are students provided with vocabulary items that they usually use in classroom communication?
- Words familiarity: does the teacher increase the degree of difficulty by providing students with unfamiliar words and encourages them to use these words, so that they can regularly improve their oral skills?
- Words appropriateness: are students taught to use the right words for the suitable situation?
- Daily vocabulary items: does the teacher provide students with useful vocabulary items for daily conversations?

2.1.3 Oral language pronunciation:

- Words pronunciation: does the instructor teach students how to correctly pronounce words?
- Intonation: it refers to using the right intonation while producing sentences.
- Pronunciation practice: it is concerned with the extent to which pronunciation is practiced in class to attend a native-like pronunciation?

2.1.4 Overall oral language fluency:

- Speech automaticity: does the teacher encourage and help students to speak without undue pauses or hesitation.
- Use of interjections: are students taught to use interjections instead of pauses?

- Sentence production: it means whether the student can finish the sentence by himself or with the help of others.
- Priority of meaning: is the meaning prior than form in students' speeches?
- 2.1.5 *Oral language teacher's attitude:*
 - Information about English speaking countries: It refers to the amount of information provided about English speaking countries as a motivational aspect for students.
 - The attitude towards the local culture: is the teacher sensitive towards the local culture?
 - The attitude towards the target language culture: is the teacher open to the target language culture?
 - Predictability of oral problems: can the teacher easily predict and understand his students' oral skills problems?
- 2.1.6 *Oral language grammar:*
 - Functional use of structural rules: are students taught to use appropriate rules functionally?
 - Global errors: does the teacher teach students to avoid errors that affect the whole meaning of the sentence.
 - Tenses use: do students use the right tense for the right situation?
 - Speech general meaning: does the teacher help students to provide comprehensible speeches?

3. RESULTS

3.1 Students' level of perception

The following Table summarizes the rank orders, the mean scores, the standard deviations, and the degree of effect in the six sections of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of sections

No.	Section	NESTs		NNESTs	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
01	Oral language classroom management	4.10	0.41	3.62	0.99
02	Oral language vocabulary	4.00	0.60	3.73	0.87
03	Oral language pronunciation	4.48	0.41	3.51	1.36
04	Overall oral language fluency	4.24	0.50	3.63	1.03
05	Oral language teacher's attitude	4.20	0.47	4.07	0.61
06	Oral language grammar	4.15	0.53	4.22	0.72
Total		4.18	0.28	3.79	0.73

Table 1 shows that that the highest section in terms of means and standard deviation for NEST was "Oral language pronunciation", however the lowest section was "Oral language vocabulary". Concerning students taught by NNESTs, the findings showed that the highest section in terms of mean and standard deviation was "Oral language grammar", while the lowest section was "Oral language pronunciation".

Table 2: Means and standard deviations of oral language classroom management

Oral Language Classroom management					
No.	Item	NESTs		NNESTs	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
01	Is not very corrective during students' talk.	2.87	1.40	3.17	1.60
02	Motivates students to speak as much as possible.	4.45	0.55	3.82	1.08
03	Provides easy and authentic topics for speaking.	4.22	0.89	3.84	1.09
04	Always keeps a specific time for speaking.	4.18	0.88	3.43	1.33
05	Provides a relaxing atmosphere to speak.	4.70	0.47	3.68	1.25
06	Sometimes gives chance to students to choose topics by their own.	4.16	0.85	3.80	1.39
Total		4.10	0.41	3.62	0.99

Table 2 shows that the highest mean in item regarding NESTs' effect was the item "provides a relaxing atmosphere to speak", however, the lowest one was "Is not very corrective during students' talk". As for NNESTs' effect, the highest item in terms of mean and standard deviation was "Provides

easy and authentic topics for speaking”, while the lowest one was “Is not very corrective during students’ talk”.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of oral language vocabulary

Oral Language Vocabulary					
No.	Item	NESTs		NNESTs	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
07	Provides students with vocabulary items needed in classroom communication.	3.92	0.93	4.00	0.85
08	Improves students’ oral fluency by using unfamiliar words while speaking.	3.82	0.90	3.35	1.24
09	Helps students to use the appropriate terms for the right context.	4.10	0.70	3.86	1.02
10	Provides students with useful words daily conversations.	4.16	0.87	3.70	1.30
	Total	4.00	0.60	3.73	0.87

Table 3 shows that the highest mean in perceptions of NESTs’ effect was “provides students with useful words for daily conversations”, however the lowest one was “improves students’ oral fluency by using unfamiliar words while speaking”. Concerning perceptions of NNESTs’ effect, the highest item was “provides students with vocabulary items needed in classroom communication”, while the lowest one was “improves students’ oral fluency by using unfamiliar words”.

Table 4: Means and standard deviations of oral language pronunciation

Oral Language Pronunciation					
No.	Item	NESTs		NNESTs	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
11	Teaches students how to pronounce words correctly.	4.70	0.51	3.64	1.43
12	Teaches students how to pronounce a sentence with the right tone.	4.36	0.67	3.43	1.36
13	Provides students with excellent pronunciations practice that enables them to have a native-like pronunciation.	4.38	0.70	3.47	1.55
	Total	4.48	0.41	3.51	1.36

Table 4 shows that the highest mean in perceptions of NESTs’ effect was “teaches students how to pronounce words correctly”, however the lowest mean was “teaches students how to pronounce a sentence with the right tone”. Regarding perceptions of NNESTs’ effect, the highest item in terms of mean was “teaches students how to pronounce words correctly”. While the lowest one was “teaches students how to pronounce a sentence with the right tone”.

Table 5: Means and Standard deviation of overall oral language fluency

Overall Oral Language Fluency					
No.	Item	NESTs		NNESTs	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
14	Encourages students to speak without many pauses and hesitation.	4.38	0.88	4.04	0.98
15	Teaches students to use interjections instead of pauses.	4.36	0.67	3.41	1.42
16	Teaches students to finish the sentence on their own without the help of their classmates.	4.34	0.63	3.78	1.13
17	Help students to focus on meaning rather on form.	4.86	0.95	3.27	1.35
	Total	4.24	0.50	3.63	1.03

Table 5 shows that the highest item in terms of means and standard deviation of perceptions of NESTs’ effect was “helps students to focus on meaning rather on form”, while the lowest one was “teaches students to finish the sentence on their own without the help of their classmates”. Concerning perceptions of NNESTs’ effect, the highest item in terms of mean and standard deviation was

“Encourages students to speak without many pauses and hesitation”, however the lowest one was “helps students focus on meaning rather on form”.

Table 6: Means and Standard Deviations of Oral Language Teacher’s Attitude

Oral Language Teacher’s Attitude					
No.	Item	NESTs		NNESTs	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
18	Provides enough information about the culture of English speaking countries.	4.28	0.80	4.31	0.83
19	Is not sensitive to the local culture.	3.92	0.98	4.07	0.86
20	Is open minded to the target language culture.	4.36	0.60	4.00	0.92
21	Understands students’ oral skills problems.	4.24	0.66	3.88	1.06
	Total	4.20	0.47	4.07	0.61

Table 6 shows that the highest item in terms of mean and standard deviation for perceptions of NESTs’ effect was “Is open minded to the target language culture”, while the lowest one was “Is not sensitive to the local culture”. Regarding perceptions of NNESTs effect, the highest mean was “Provides enough information about the culture of English speaking countries”, however the lowest one was “Understands students’ oral skills problems”.

Table 7: Means and Standard Deviations of Oral Language Grammar

Oral Language Grammar					
No.	Item	NESTs		NNESTs	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
22	Teaches students how to use appropriate structural rules functionally.	4.00	0.95	4.21	1.04
23	Helps students to avoid global errors that affect the whole meaning.	4.10	0.70	4.17	0.88
24	Teaches students to use the right tenses.	4.20	0.67	4.13	0.88
25	Helps students to provide comprehensible language.	4.30	0.74	4.37	0.93
	Total	4.15	0.53	4.22	0.72

Table 7 shows that the highest mean and standard deviation in perceptions of NESTs’ effect was “Helps students to provide comprehensible language”, while the lowest one was “Teaches students how to use appropriate structural rules functionally”. Regarding perceptions of NNESTs’ effect, the highest item was “helps students to provide comprehensible language”, however the lowest one was “Teaches students to use the right tense”.

Starting with the first section (oral language classroom management), the total degree of effect of the section signified that NESTs were perceived as good oral language classroom managers, more flexible with students’ misbehaviors. Specifically, five statements (namely; 5,6,4,3 and 2) were reflected such **High** degree of effect. The fifth statement (namely; provides a relaxing atmosphere to speak) findings agree to some extent with previous research findings, like Chung (2014) and Ribut (2012) who claimed that NESTs do better at classroom management, flexibility at using different topics within classroom sessions. However, the only statement that was rated as **Moderate** in terms of degree of effect was the first statement (namely; is not very corrective during students’ talk). This result showed that even NESTs focused to some extent on correcting students’ mistakes during speaking. Such result did not agree with most of previous research, like Yakoub (2011) and Inan (2012) who stated that NESTs focus always on fluency and keep the automaticity of the speech.

Oral language vocabulary was the second section that was assessed as **High** by students in terms of nativeness degree of effect. Particularly, all statements of the section (namely, 10,9,7 and 8) were also perceived as **High** in terms of degree of effect. The results of the section signified that NESTs showed that they have a good command of vocabulary items, they provide vocabulary items needed for daily conversation and classroom communication, and they try to improve their students’ vocabulary command by providing unfamiliar words. The general results of the section corresponded to some of the previous related studies; Al-Shammari (2011) and Medgyes (1994) who agreed on the point that NESTs serve well as vocabulary teachers.

Oral language pronunciation was the highest perceived section in terms of nativeness degree of effect, mean scores and standard deviation. The total degree of effect of the section was perceived as **High**, on the whole and for each statement of the section. The results of the section, according to the researchers, can be considered as logical since English is the NESTs' mother tongue and they are seen by students as models. All previous related studies agreed with the findings of this section. Researchers like Murtiana (2011) stressed that students generally prefer to be taught pronunciation and speaking generally by a NEST.

The third section (namely; overall oral language fluency) was also perceived by students as **High** in terms of nativeness degree of effect; the same thing is true for all statements of the section. The total degree of effect of the section agree with most of the previous related studies; for example, Merino (1997), Pasternak and Bailey (2004) asserted that NESTs' automatic use of English helped their students to focus more on fluency and automaticity of speech rather than focusing on accuracy aspects. Additionally, the researchers support Merino's (1997) and Pasternak's and Bailey's (2004) research in their claim and believes that NESTs generally do not care much about correcting mistakes rather they give much importance to the intelligibility of speech.

Oral language teacher's attitude section was perceived as **High** by students in terms of nativeness degree of effect on the whole as well as all its statements. The researchers think that students' perceptions entail the following interpretation: NESTs provided enough information about the target language culture and showed open mindedness towards the target language because it is their mother culture and language. Second, students' perception that NESTs understand their oral skills problems can be attributed to the fact that they considered them as models and they feel themselves excited to talk to a NEST. All in all, the total nativeness degree of effect of the section as agrees with some the previous related studies. Medgyes (1994) for example asserted that NESTs can better teach cultural issues and provide much information about English speaking countries.

The last section (namely, oral language grammar) was perceived by students as **High** in terms of nativeness degree of effect. The total nativeness degree of effect of this section is surprising, according to the researchers, because it does not agree totally with previous related research findings. Butler (2007), Mahboob (2010), and Marino (2011) stressed all that NNESTs are always preferred as grammar teachers over NESTs. However, the present section revealed totally the contrary. In detail, the study reported high scores related to Grammar.

3.2 Statistical Analysis of Students' Perceptions

To answer this question, a T-independent Test for all sections and the total score of the sections was conducted. The following table shows the following findings:

Table 8: Independent T-Test for sections and total score

Section	Student	Mean	T-value	Degree of freedom	Statistical significance
Oral language classroom management	Native	4.093	3.160	97	0.002*
	Non-native	3.619			
Oral language vocabulary	Native	4.000	1.860	97	0.066
	Non-native	3.724			
Oral language pronunciation	Native	4.480	4.842	97	0.000*
	Non-native	3.510			
Overall oral language fluency	Native	4.235	3.806	97	0.000*
	Non-native	3.622			
Oral language teachers attitude	Native	4.200	1.272	97	0.206
	Non-native	4.061			
Oral language grammar	Native	4.150	-0.512	97	0.610
	Non-native	4.214			
Total	Native	4.174	3.518	97	0.001*
	Non-native	3.789			

*Statistically significant at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Table 8 shows that the values in the table indicated the following:

- The T-values showed that there were no statistically significant differences between students' perceptions regarding the sections: oral language vocabulary, oral language teacher's attitude, and oral language grammar.
- The T-values showed that there are statistically significant differences between students' perceptions regarding the sections: oral language classroom management, oral language pronunciation, overall oral language fluency, and the total scores of sections.

Results of the second question showed that students' perceptions of the effect of their NNESTs' nativeness on their oral fluency were generally assessed as **High** in terms of degree of effect. The study reported that teachers' effect varied between being **High** and being **Moderate** in terms of nativeness degree effect. Three sections namely: *oral language grammar, oral language teacher's attitude and oral language vocabulary* were perceived as **High** in terms of degree of effect; however, three other sections (namely; *overall oral language fluency, oral language classroom management and oral language pronunciation*) were assessed as **Moderate** in terms of the degree of effect.

Beginning with "oral language classroom management" section, the total degree of effect in this section was **Moderate**. However, four statements of the section were rated as **High** in terms of nativeness degree of effect together with two other statements namely (1 and 5) that were rated as **Moderate**. The degree of effect in the first statement was not surprising since it is generally perceived that NNESTs are better at accuracy rather than on fluency. Medgyes (1994), Madrid and Canardo (2004), Alseweed (2012) agreed on the claim that NNESTs focus on accuracy aspects, like grammar and vocabulary; that is why the researchers believe that their degree of effect in the first statement was **Moderate**.

Within the first section, the fifth statement, namely: "provides a relaxing atmosphere..." obviously disagreed with Goktepe's (2013) claim that students are not willing to speak because they are afraid of being laughed at. The degree of effect of the section as a whole did not correspond to Medgyes' (1994) findings which entail that NESTs are better in terms of classroom management, flexibility at changing topics whenever needed.

The second section (namely; oral language vocabulary), was perceived by students as **High** in terms of nativeness degree of effect. The findings in oral language vocabulary section agreed to a huge extent with Diaz (2015) and Yakoub (2011) findings. The latter found that even NNESTs do well at teaching vocabulary, and that there are no significant differences between NESTs and NNESTs at teaching vocabulary items. While, it was not the case with Medgyes' (1994) findings who found that NESTs are best teachers of vocabulary because English is their mother tongue.

Oral language pronunciation was the lowest perceived section in terms of mean scores, standard deviation and degree of effect. The total degree of effect in the section was rated as **Moderate**, as well as to all its statements. The findings of this section are congruent with a large number of the previous studies who stated that NNESTs are not preferred to teach pronunciation in all its aspects. For example, Al-Sammari (2010), Barlow (2009), and Brown (2013) and others agreed on the advantage of NESTs over NNESTs at teaching pronunciation in all its components.

Like the previous section, the overall oral language fluency was perceived by students as **Moderate** in terms of nativeness degree of effect. The statements varied between **High** and **Moderate** in terms of degree of effect. Two statements, namely ("encourage students to speak without many pauses and hesitation" and "teaches his students to finish the sentence on their own without the help of their classmates") were scored as **High** in terms of degree of effect. While the two other statements ("teaches his students to use interjections instead of pauses" and "helps his students to focus on meaning rather than on form") were perceived as **Moderate**. The total degree of effect of the section agreed to some of the previous research findings. For instance, Butler (2007), Chung (2014) and Merino (1997) found that when speaking about oral fluency, NNESTs are not at the same level of proficiency as NESTs.

Oral language teacher's attitude was classified within the advantages of NNESTs. Students scored the degree of effect of their oral language teacher's attitude as **High**. All statements were also

perceived as **High** in terms of nativeness degree of effect. Regarding the statements, the researchers believe that students perceptions are logical because of the following reasons: first, even though the first statement, namely (“provides enough information about the culture English speaking countries”) does not agree with most of the previous research, such as Medgyes (1994), and Yakoub (2011) who claimed that NESTs are better at providing students with useful information about culture of native English speaking countries. However, according to teachers perceptions gained by interview stated later in this chapter, they provided information about English speaking countries culture and students felt excited to know about the target language culture which helped them to get integrated better in the learning process.

Second, the second statement (namely; “is not sensitive to the local culture”) can be considered as a logical fact because it is their mother culture. Third, the third statement, (namely; “is open minded to the target language culture”) is greatly related to the first one because it is considered as one of the motivating factors that encourage students to interact better in the classroom. Fourth, the fourth statement, namely (“understands his students’ oral skills problems”) goes along the same line with some previous research like: Murtiana (2011) and Nemtchinova (2005) who claimed that NNESTs understand better their students’ oral skills problems better than NESTs.

The sixth section (namely; oral language grammar) was perceived by students as the highest section in terms of nativeness degree of effect. All statements degree of effect were assessed as **High**. The findings about this section agreed totally with the general perception about NNESTs’ proficiency at teaching grammar. For example, Rosie (2015), and Srivastava (2014) stressed on the advantage of NNESTs over NESTs because of their being previous EFL learners and the shared background they have about students’ first language and its effect on the target language.

3.3 Discussion of the Results Related to the Second Question: it aimed at finding if there are any statistically significant differences between perceptions of students taught by NESTs and perceptions of students taught by NNESTs towards the effect of their teachers on their oral fluency.

The findings of the second question showed that there were statistically significant differences for some sections (oral language classroom management, oral language pronunciation, overall oral language fluency). However, there were no statistically significant differences for other sections (oral language vocabulary, oral language teacher’s attitude, oral language grammar).

The findings in this question agreed to some extent with some previous research and disagreed with some others. Concerning oral language pronunciation and overall oral language fluency, the findings agreed with most of the previous research that claimed that NESTs do better at teaching pronunciation and show more fluency while speaking since they are native speakers of that language.

Regarding oral language vocabulary, the findings disagreed with Medgyes (1994) who found that NESTs can serve better as grammar teachers. In addition to that, the findings also disagreed with most of the previous studies which stated that NNESTs are best grammar teachers as they were previous grammar teachers.

3.4 Reflections

Based on the research findings and the implicit issues drawn from the discussion of results, the researchers shed light on the following points:

1. Like many fellow researchers; namely, Rampton (1990); Cook and Friend (1995), and Paikeday (1985), the researcher stresses that the term *native speaker* is deceptive and does not really signify the language competence. Lee (2005) stated that using alternative terms instead of the native speaker shifts the attention away from ‘who you are’, to focus the attention on what we are actually attempting to accomplish in language teaching. Along with the previous claim, Davies (1996) questioned the issue by wondering about what to achieve native speaker talk or English proficiency. The researchers believe that it is better to move over Native and Non-Native dichotomy and asserts that it is better to use the term “expert teacher, proficient teacher” or any other term that values the language competence rather than the teacher’s Identity.
2. It is known that the native speaker took the advantage over second and foreign users of English by mastering some specific language components. What if a non-native speaker masters the

same components, can he/she be considered as a native speaker? Or it is just about being born in that English speaking country; in this case even a new born child is already considered as a native speaker and holds a better status than a proficient non-native speaker! It is ridiculous according to the researchers.

3. The researchers believe that the best solution for non-native students is a well-trained local teacher. Many of the previous research proved that local teachers showed more empathy towards their students since they are from the same cultural background; however NESTs are doing the job generally for pragmatic reasons (Marino, 2011). Furthermore, the research repertoire indicated also that local teachers hold better understanding of students' learning problems and use better learning strategies. The issue of pronunciation is not a big deal as long as words can be understood and meanings can be gotten. At the level of instilling local cultural and national values in our minds, the native teacher may never serve better than the local teacher.
4. The researcher believes that the best solution for non-native students is a well trained local teacher. Many of the previous research proved that local teachers showed more empathy towards their students since they are from the same cultural background; however NESTs are doing the job generally for pragmatic reasons (Marino, 2011). Furthermore, the research repertoire indicated also that local teachers hold better understanding of students' learning problems and use better learning strategies. The issue of pronunciation is not a big deal as long as words can be understood and meanings can be gotten. At the level of instilling local cultural and national values in our kNo.s' minds, the native teacher may never serve better than the local teacher.
5. The researcher believes that the oral fluency differs upon the topic. The speaker may make too much pauses to stop and think about the right word or the next information to be delivered in a topic that he/she does not know too much about; so he is considered as fluent in some topics and non-fluent in some other topics.
6. According to Jordanian EFL teachers, the recruiting policies made them feel inferior towards their native EFL teachers mates. They expressed that they wish if they were evaluated based on their proficiency not their Identity.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions summarize the findings of the present study, in light of the questions of the study and the implicit issues that were drawn from the discussion of the results.

1. Based on the comparison between the degree of effect in perceptions of students taught by NESTs and those taught by NNESTs, it can be concluded that there was no observed difference between NESTs' effect and NNESTs' effect on students' oral fluency.
2. The T-Test showed that there was a statistically significant difference between students' perceptions regarding oral language classroom management, oral language pronunciation, overall oral language fluency.
3. The T-Test showed that there was no statistically significant difference between students' perceptions regarding oral language vocabulary, oral language teacher's attitude, oral language grammar.

Acknowledgement

The authors are very thankful to all the associated personnel in any reference that contributed in/for the purpose of this research.

REFERENCES

- Al-Noursi, O. (2013). *The effect of native and non-native English language teachers on secondary students' achievement in speaking and writing skills and their attitudes towards English in the United Arab Emirates*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Amman Arab University for Graduate Studies, Jordan.
- Al-Shammari, S. (2011). *Investigating views of "nativeness" of English teachers in a multilingual, multicultural setting*. Unpublished MA thesis, American University of Sharjah, UAE.
- Alseweed, M. (2012). University students' perceptions of the influence of native and non-native teachers. *English Language Teaching*, 5(12), 42-53.
- Atli, I and Bergil, S. (2012). The effect of pronunciation instruction on students' overall speaking skills. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 3665-3671.
- Barlow, L. (2009). *The effect of nonnative accent on EFL students' listening comprehension*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Exeter university, Exeter(UK) .
- Benmoussa, R. (2012). *The impact of effective classroom management in enhancing students speaking skill: the case study of 2nd year LMD students- university of Biskra*. Unpublished MA thesis. Faculty of arts and languages, University of Mohamed KhNo.her- Biskra, Algeria.
- Brown, E. (2013). Native and non-native English speaking ESL/EFL teachers in Sweden: A study on students' attitudes and perceptions towards the teaching behavior of native and non-native English speaking teachers. Retrieved from <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:624579/fulltext01.pdf>
- Butler, Y.(2007). How are nonnative English speaking teachers perceived by young learners. *TESOL*, 41(4), 731-755.
- Chelbi, R. (2010). *Motivating students to perform better orally in a communicative language teaching frame work*. Unpublished MA thesis. Faculty of letters and language, University of Constantine, Algeria.
- Chung, S. (2014). EFL learners' perceptions about native and nonnative English speaking teachers: perceived strengths, weaknesses, and preferences. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural development*, 35(6), 563-579. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01434632.2014.889141#.VUspB_yqqko
- Cook, L. and Friend, M. (1995). Co-teaching: an illustration of the complexity of collaboration in special education. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 20, 9-27.
- Davies, E. (1991). *The native speaker in applied linguistics*. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.
- Davies, A. (1996). Proficiency or the native speaker: what are we trying to achieve in ELT? In G. Cook & B. Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Principle and practice in applied linguistics*, (145-157). Oxford: OUP.
- Diaz, N. (2015). Students' preferences regarding native and non-native teachers of English at a university in the French Brittany. *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 173, 93-97.
- Goktepe, T. (2013). Speaking problems of 9th grade high school Turkish learners of L2 English and possible reasons for those problems: Exploring teachers' and learners' perspectives. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116, 1875-1879.
- Inan, B. (2012). A comparison of classroom interaction patterns of native and nonnative EFL teachers. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 2419-2423.
- Khouitem, Kh. (2010). *The effect of classroom interaction on developing the learners' speaking skill: the case of third year LMD students at the university of Constantine*. Unpublished MA thesis. Faculty of letters and languages, Mentouri university- Constantine, Algeria.
- Kianiparsa, P and Vali, S. (2010). The effect of grammar learning on speaking ability of learners. *El Tweekly*, 53. Retrieved from: <http://eltweekly.com/2010/03/53-research-paper-the-effect-of-grammar-learning-on-speaking-ability-of-efl-learners-by-parnaz-kianiparsa-and-sara-vali/>
- Koizumi, R. and In'nami, Y. (2013). Vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency among second language learners from novice to intermediate levels. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4(5), 900-913.
- Lee, J. (2005). The Native speaker: An achievable model. *Asian EFL Journal*, 7(2), 42-54.
- Lennon, P. (1990). Investigating fluency in EFL: A quantitative approach. *Language Learning*, 40, 387-412.
- Lennon, P. (2000). The lexical element in spoken second language fluency. In Riggenbach, H (Eds.), *Perspectives on fluency*, (25-42). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Liu, J. (2007). Empowering nonnative-English-Speaking teachers through collaboration with their native-English-speaking colleagues in EFL settings. In Liu, J (Eds.), *English language teaching in China: New approaches, perspectives, and standards*, (107-123). New York: Continuum.
- Madrid, D. and Canado, P. (2004). Teacher and student preferences of native and nonnative foreign language teachers. *Porta Linguarium*, 2, 125-138.
- Mahboob, A. (2010). *The NNEST lens: Non native English speakers in TESOL*. Cambridge Scholars.
- Marino, C. (2011). Reflecting on the dichotomy native-non native speakers in an EFL context. *Anagramas-UniversNo.ad de Medillin*, 10(19), 129-142.

- McCarthy, M. (2009). Rethinking spoken fluency. *ELIA*, 9, 11-29.
- Medgyes, P. (1994). When the teacher is a non-native. Retrieved from <http://teachsl.pbworks.com/f/When+the+teacher+is+a+non-native+speaker.PDF>
- Merino, I. (1997). Native English speaking teachers versus non-native English speaking teachers. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingles*, 10, 69-79. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/3662685/Native_English_Speaker_Teachers_NESTs_versus_Non_Native_English_Speaker_Teachers_NNESTs_in_TESOL
- Murtiana, R. (2011). Students' perceptions of native speaker and non-native speaker teachers: implication for the teacher education. Paper presented at the 5th international seminar: teacher education in the era of world Englishes, Staya Wacana Christian University, Salatiga, Indonesia. February 21-22.
- Nation, I. (1989). Improving speaking fluency. *System*, 17(3), 377-384.
- Nemtchinova, E. (2005). Host teachers' evaluation of non-native English speaking teacher trainees- a perspective from the classroom. *TESOL quarterly*, 39(2), 235- 261.
- Nouralian, R. and Jahandar, S. and Khodabandehlou, M. (2013). The influence of vocabulary knowledge on Iranian intermediate learners' speaking ability. *Indian Journal of Applied and Life Sciences*, 3(3), 188-192.
- Paikeday, T. (1985). *The native speaker is dead!*. Mississauga, Ontario.
- Paschak, P. (2010). Why is talking with gestures easier than talking without them. *Scientific American*. Retrieved from <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-is-talking-with-gestures-easier/>.
- Pasternak, M., and Bailey, K. (2004). Preparing nonnative and native English speaking teachers: issues of professionalism and proficiency. Retrieved 04-28-2015 from <http://nnest-evo2009.pbworks.com/f/Pasternak+&+Bailey+2004.pdf>
- Philipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Pourhosein, G. (2012). The significance of pronunciation in English language teaching. *English Language Teaching*, 5(4).
- Rampton, B. (1990). Displacing the native speaker: expertise, affiliation and inheritance. *ELT Journal*, 44(2), 97-101.
- Ribut, W. (2012). Native English speaker teachers (NESTs) versus nonnative English speaker teachers (NNESTs) in TESOL. Paper presented at the 4th NELTAL conference, the University of Malang, Malang, Indonesia. March 1-9.
- Riggenbach, H. (2000). *Perspectives on fluency*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Rosie, M. (2015). Nonnative English speaking teachers in the English teaching profession. Retrieved from: <http://www.ericdigests.org/2003-4/teaching-profession.html>
- Smadi, M. and Al-Ghazo, A. (2013). Jordanian teachers' attitudes toward foreign language teaching and their relationship to these teachers' classroom practices. *Journal of Education and practice*, 4(17), 62-86.
- Srivastava, Sh. (2014). Accuracy vs fluency in English classroom. *New Man International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 1(4), 55-58.
- Tajino, A. and Tajino, Y. (2000). Native and non-native: What can they offer? *ELT Journal*, 54(1), 3-11.
- Tauroza, S and Allison, D. (1991). Speech rates in British English. *Applied Linguistics*, 11(1), 90-105.
- Walker, A, Shafer, J. and Liams, M. (2004). "Not in my classroom": Teachers attitudes towards English language learners in the mainstream classroom. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, 2(1), 130-160.
- Wojcik, M. (2002) *How important is good pronunciation for communication?* Retrieved from: <http://www.antimoon.com/forum/2002/47.htm>.
- Yakoub, E. (2011). *Attitudes of Jordanian graduate students and teachers towards native and non-native English language teachers*. Unpublished MA Thesis, Mno.dle East University, Jordan.

APPENDIX

The questionnaire

Dear student, the questionnaire is designed to help you to identify your perceptions towards your English teacher. You are kindly requested to respond to the questionnaire by filling the gap that corresponds to your perceptions according to the following scale: 1- Strongly agree. 2- Agree. 3- Undecided. 4- Disagree. 5- Strongly disagree.

*the anonymity of your answers is guaranteed.

Native English Speaking Teacher						
Oral language classroom management						
	statement	Strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Is not very corrective during students' talk.					
2	Motivates students to speak as much as possible.					
3	Provides easy and authentic topics for speaking.					
4	Always keeps a specific time for speaking.					
5	Provides a relaxing atmosphere to speak					
6	Sometimes gives chance to students to choose topics by their own.					
Oral language vocabulary						
7	Provides students with vocabulary items needed most in classroom communication.					
8	Improves students' oral fluency by using unfamiliar words while speaking.					
9	Helps students to use the appropriate terms for the right context.					
10	Provides students with useful words for daily conversations.					
Oral language pronunciation						
11	Teaches students how to pronounce words correctly.					
12	Teaches students how to pronounce a sentence with the right tone.					
13	Provides students with excellent pronunciation practice that enables them to have a native-like pronunciation.					
Overall oral language fluency						
14	Encourages students to speak without many pauses and hesitation.					
15	Teaches students to use interjections instead of pauses, eg: hmm, wow, aha, etc.					
16	Teaches students to finish the sentence on their own without the help of their classmates.					
17	Helps students to focus on meaning rather on form.					
Oral language teacher's attitude						
18	Provides enough information about the culture of English speaking countries.					
19	Is not sensitive to the local culture.					
20	Is open minded to the target language culture.					
21	Understands students' oral skills problems.					
Oral language grammar						
22	Teaches students how to use appropriate structural rules functionally.					
23	Helps students to avoid global errors that affect the whole meaning.					
24	Teaches students to use the right tenses.					
25	Helps students to provide comprehensible language.					