Dissertation Title:
Native and nonnative English-speaking English
as a Second Language Teachers: Student attitudes,
teacher self-perceptions, and Intensive English Program
administrator beliefs and practices

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Summary:

The number of learners of English as an international means of communication increases hand in hand with the number of nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) of English as a Second Language (ESL) and the number of Native English-Speaking ESL teachers (NESTs). At the same time, scholars (Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Liu, 1999; Llurda, 2005) have estimated non-native English speakers to account for 40% to 70% of the North-American student teacher population. However, few studies investigated the working conditions of NESTs and NNESTs at Intensive English Programs (IEP) and the different factors that affect their successes and challenges. This research project thus investigates 1040 ESL students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs, the variables (students' first languages, gender, class subject, level, and expected grade, as well as teachers' native languages) that influenced students' responses, and the effects of time on students' attitudes, with questionnaires completed both at the beginning and at the end of the fall 2005 semester. Online questionnaires also solicited 18 NNESTs and 78 NESTs' self-perceptions about proficiency and teaching skills, as well as 21 IEP administrators' beliefs about, and experiences with NNESTs and NESTs. Results showed that overall, students' attitudes were more positive towards NESTs than towards NNESTs, although students taught by NNESTs held a significantly more positive attitude towards NNESTs in general than students taught by NESTs. Positive attitude towards NESTs and NNESTs increased significantly with time and exposure. Results also showed that students and teachers' first languages, among others, strongly influenced students' responses. Additionally, NNESTs were not necessarily seen as grammar experts but could be esteemed Listening/Speaking teachers. Teachers' responses revealed NNESTs' lack of confidence in their linguistic and teaching skills but also their beliefs that NNESTs' language learning experience was an asset for ESL students. Finally, administrators also recognized NNESTs' strengths as well as their poor self-confidence. While they did not use nativeness as hiring criteria, they emphasized the importance of linguistics preparation and international awareness, as well as teaching experience.

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