Re-imagining the NS/NNS dichotomy: bicultural teachers

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RE-IMAGINING THE NATIVE – NON-NATIVE DICHOTOMY: BICULTURAL TEACHERS

A Thesis Submitted to

The English Language Institute

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the Degree of Masters of Arts in TEFL

By Heba H. Fathelbab

May, 2010
RE-IMAGINING THE NATIVE – NON-NATIVE DICHOTOMY: BICULTURAL TEACHERS

A Thesis Submitted by Heba H. Fathelbab

To the Department of Teaching English as a Foreign Language

English Language Institute

May, 2010

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Masters of Arts

has been approved by

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ABSTRACT

EFL teachers have been categorized using the NS/NNS (native speaker/non-native speaker) dichotomy into NESTs (native English speaking teachers) and NNESTs (non-native English speaking teachers). However, this inaccurate dichotomy does not take into account other possible categories that may fall between these two extreme notions, and has shown to have several ramifications. First, students’ perception of teacher nativeness may influence students’ attitudes and learning (Sahin, 2005). In addition, this perception could have an effect on students’ evaluations of their teachers (Al-Issa & Sulieman, 2007). Further, this biased dichotomy contributes to NNESTs’ low self-confidence (Butler, 2007). Finally, it may cause unequal job opportunities in the EFL market (Canagarajah, 1999).

This qualitative study explores how students identify the ideal EFL teacher and how they perceive bicultural teachers (BCTs). BCTs represent one of many categories that do not fit in the dichotomy and are defined as teachers that have acquired native or near native competence in two languages. They have also been immersed in the cultures of both languages, where one of these two languages is the mother tongue of the learners.

The participants included 61 undergraduate and 32 graduate upper-intermediate EFL students at the American University in Cairo. The students were surveyed on their opinions about teacher nativeness and the ideal teacher using a questionnaire. In addition, focus groups were conducted to clarify the results obtained from the questionnaire.

Results show that students perceive the ideal teacher as possessing a combination of different qualities, only some of which are influenced by nativeness. In addition, students have difficulty identifying BCTs, although a few students are able to see beyond the dichotomy and use a different conceptual approach to identify them. Moreover, once students
are able to identify BCTs, they see them as possibly highly competent teachers that combine qualities of both NESTs and NNESTs. Results also imply that the NS fallacy still exists as the participants tended to associate accent, appearance and names with teacher-competence. Therefore, the dichotomy should be modified so that the EFL community will refrain from judging teachers based on a pre-conceived notion of the NEST being the ideal EFL teacher.
ABBREVIATIONS

AUC: American University in Cairo

BCTs: Bi-Cultural Teachers

EFL: English as Foreign Language

ESL: English as Second Language

ELI: English Language Institute

IEP: Intensive English Program

L1: First language

LET: Local English Teacher

NESTs: Native English Speaking Teachers

NET: Native English Teacher

NNESTs: Non-Native English Speaking Teachers

NNS: Non-native speaker of English

NS: Native speaker of English

TC: Target culture

TESOL: Teaching English to speakers of other languages

TL: Target language.
Chapter 1: Introduction

The NS/NNS (native speaker/non-native speaker) dichotomy has been investigated extensively by many EFL researchers (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001; Liu, 1999; Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Rampton, 1990) and has been a source of controversy in the EFL community. This dichotomy has been strongly criticized by researchers (Amin, 1997; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Liu, 199; Norton, 1997; Rampton, 1990) because it overlooks other categories that may exist in between the two extreme notions of being native or non-native speakers. On the other hand, some researchers (Arva & Medgyes, 2000) have argued that the practicality and convenience of such a dichotomy provides a clear distinction between NSs and NNSs.

Several researchers (Brutt-Griffler and Samimy, 2001; Liu, 1999; Medgyes, 1992; Rampton, 1990) have provided evidence that there are individuals that cannot be categorized using the dichotomy, such as individuals that have grown up bilingually, biculturally or have multiple native languages. This evidence supports Medgyes’ (1992) & Liu’s (1999) vision of the existence of a language competence continuum, a continuum that begins with NNS competence and ends with NS competence. Such a continuum allows individuals to be positioned at any point on the line, and thus be defined more accurately.

Bicultural teachers (BCTs) represent one of many categories that cannot be identified using the dichotomy and are, therefore, evidence of its inaccuracy. It is important to note that there are several types of BCTs that are discussed further in Chapter 5 (Figure 5-1). However, for the purpose of this study, only one type of BCTs is discussed. This type is a BCT that is closer to a NS of both languages and has lived in both cultures. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, BCTs are defined as teachers that have acquired native or near native competence.
in two languages (usually since early childhood). These teachers have also been immersed in the cultures of both languages, where one of these two languages is the mother tongue of the EFL learners (Fathelbab, 2009).

Therefore, BCTs cannot be defined using the dichotomy because they are different from pure NESTs and pure NNESTs. This raises the question of how students perceive BCTs and if they are able to identify BCTs’ qualities. This study attempts to provide some insight into this third category of teachers and to explore how they are perceived by EFL students. In addition, the study examines how students perceive the ideal EFL teacher and investigates which type of teacher (NESTs, NNESTs or BCTs) is closer to the students’ image of the ideal teacher.

Statement of the Problem

Using the NS/NNS dichotomy to categorize EFL teachers represents not only an ethical problem, but also a pedagogical problem. The ethical problem is illustrated in the fact that most EFL students see the NEST as a white, monolingual teacher with a native English accent and believe that no other prototype exists (Amin, 1997; Filho, 2002). This belief is a discrimination that may be unfair to other qualified and competent non-NESTs (BCTs, NNSTS, etc.), which leads to an inaccuracy in the categorization of EFL teachers. This inaccurate categorization should be amended so that students will not associate their perception of nativeness exclusively with teacher competence. In addition, the inaccurate NS/NNS dichotomy can influence hiring practices in the EFL market, as it may cause a conflict between commercial realities and the equality principle between NESTS and NNESTs (Illés, 1991). Therefore, addressing this inaccuracy in the dichotomy could minimize the differences between NESTs and NNESTs in terms of job opportunities, promotions and salaries (Canagarajah, 1999; Mahboob, 2003; Moussu, 2002). Moreover, it
might provide NESTs and NNESTs with even opportunities and allow teachers to be judged according to their individual teaching capabilities and professional knowledge.

The association of teacher-nativeness with teacher-competence could also lead to a pedagogical problem as it might cause students to have less confidence in their teacher’s instructional ability. As a result, students’ attitudes could be affected and consequentially, students’ achievement. Research has investigated the effect of teacher- nativeness on students’ attitudes and explored how students’ perception of their EFL teachers may influence their attitudes towards the target language. Ismat Sahin (2005) administered a questionnaire to 1075 preparatory class students (13-15 years old) surveying the effect of native speaker teachers on these students’ attitudes towards the target language. He divided the students into two groups, where the first had been exposed to native English teachers, and the second group had not. In comparing the results, he found that NESTs contributed to positive student attitudes towards the target language and that there was a significant correlation between student achievement and their attitudes towards the target language. This suggests that student perception of teachers has an effect on achievement. Brown’s (2001) study provided further support regarding the effect of perception on achievement. He investigated students’ attitudes in classes taught by NESTS and concluded that students were more willing to learn in such classes. Similarly, Moussu’s (2006) quantitative study investigated 1040 ESL students’ attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs using questionnaires. The results revealed that students showed more positive attitudes towards NESTs.

In addition to the ethical and pedagogical problems previously mentioned, this biased perception of EFL teachers by students may have an effect on teachers as well. Firstly, student evaluations of their teachers could be influenced by the perception of their teachers. Al-Issa & Sulieman (2007) conducted a study that surveyed 819 students at the American
University in Sharjah on their opinions regarding factors that influenced student evaluations of their teachers. Seventy-six percent of the students stated that their evaluations were affected by the nationality of their teachers. These results imply that there are factors related to teacher nativeness that influence students’ evaluations of their teachers.

Secondly, non-NESTs have been found to have lower self-esteem than NESTs (Butler, 2007; Mahboob, 2004) because they feel that their credibility is constantly being judged due to the superior status given to NESTs in the EFL community. Davies (1996) supported this notion by stating that the distinction between NESTs and NNESTs is one of confidence and identity. Reves and Medgyes (1994) investigated this issue in their study that surveyed 216 teachers from ten countries on NNESTs’ self-image. The results showed that NNESTs constantly felt self-conscious because they feared judgments made by their students. This fear led these NNESTs to have poor self-images that affected their performance in class and caused a feeling of inferiority when compared to NESTs. Similar implications were discussed by other researchers (Amin, 2004; Braine, 2004; Morita, 2004).

In conclusion, the above section shows that the inaccurate dichotomy has several problematical aspects. First, students’ perceptions towards their teachers may have an influence on students’ attitudes and achievement. In addition, this perception could affect students’ evaluations of their teachers and disadvantage them in hiring opportunities and promotions. Further, it promotes the NS fallacy, which contributes to NNESTs’ low self-confidence. Finally, it may cause unequal job opportunities and unequal pay where hiring practices are not solely based on teacher competence, but are influenced by nativeness. Therefore, the EFL community would benefit from an awareness of the inaccuracy of this dichotomy in order to avoid prejudice in judging teachers based on a pre-conceived notion of the NEST being the ideal teacher (Phillipson, 1992).
Importance of the Study

Although extensive research has been conducted on NESTs and NNESTs, there is a lack of research on BCTs and how they are perceived by students. As well as looking at BCTs, this study attempts to elucidate some of the unanswered questions about how students perceive the ideal teacher in an EFL context. This represents an important issue, as it is essential to raise awareness of the different qualities that contribute to an ideal teacher in order to minimize the association of teacher-nativeness with teacher-competence. In addition, this might help change the focus from categorizing teachers according to physical appearance, accent, names or any other nonlinguistic factors, to judging them based on teaching qualities. Unfortunately, there are very few studies that have discussed how students perceive ideal EFL teachers. In addition, the inaccuracy of the NEST/NNEST dichotomy highlights a very important ethical issue, since discrimination based on nativeness is unfair. Hence, the findings of this study will be an addition to EFL research, as it might add more insight into the current debate in categorizing EFL teachers.

The Ideal Teacher

Researchers have attempted to define the ideal teacher (Arnon & Reichel, 2007; Gill & Rebrova, 2001; Medgyes, 1999). Gill & Rebrova (2001) suggested that the ideal teacher is one who is “qualified, experienced, bilingual and bicultural” (p.2), while Medgyes (1999) stated that an ideal teacher includes a combination of certain factors such as experience, personal traits, motivation and love of students.

Medgyes (2001) viewed the ideal EFL environment as one that maintains a balance between NESTs and NNESTs in order to allow students to benefit from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of the two categories of teachers. He believed that the ideal NEST
and ideal NNEST come from different directions but in the end stand near one another, as they both serve similarly valuable purposes in their own ways. Moreover, he described the ideal NEST as one with knowledge of students’ L1 (first language), while he described the ideal NNEST as one with near-native competence. This raises the question of whether BCTs might be the combination of the ideal NEST and the ideal NNEST.

Research (Arnon & Rachel, 2007) has shown that students are aware of the different qualities that contribute to an ideal teacher, and that they describe the ideal teacher using two main components: personality and personal knowledge. However, students have also been shown to associate accent with teacher competence, describing the competent teacher as one having the right accent (Filho, 2002). In addition, some students have associated physical appearance with competence, perceiving only white teachers to be NESTs (Amin, 1997; Filho, 2002). Thus, whether students are aware of the different qualities that contribute to an ideal teacher or have a different pre-conceptualized image of the ideal teacher is an issue that warrants for further investigation.

**Identifying Nativeness**

The term native speaker has caused great controversy in the EFL field. Researchers appear to have found it difficult to determine a clear-cut definition for the term due to the presence of many different variables influencing native speakership. Davies (2003) suggested that the only way to define a NS accurately is “not to be a NNS” (p.213). Other researchers have suggested birth as the only true way to identify a NS (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). However, Kramsch (1997) views native speakership as being accepted by “the group that created the distinction between NSs and NNSs” (p. 363). Furthermore, she stated that social recognition of the NS/NNS identity has been based on the acceptance of the speaker by a
community, which uses several factors in making this judgment, such as accent and physical appearance. As a result, nativeness has become a “socially constructed identity and not a linguistic category” (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001, p.100).

**The NS/NNS Dichotomy**

The NS/NNS dichotomy of EFL/ESL teachers was strongly criticized as soon as its ambiguities and restriction of social and professional identities were discerned (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001). This skewed dichotomy might be a possible reason for students’ stereotyped images of NSs and the use of nonlinguistic factors to help identify NSs such as physical appearance, accent, nationality, ethnicity and names. Moreover, it seems that students have a pre-conceived perception of a NS as a stereotyped blonde-haired, blue-eyed, American or English looking and sounding NS with an *English* first name (Filho, 2002).

BCTs are an example of cases that are undefinable using the dichotomy. Liu (1999) investigated how ESL teachers (NNESTs and BCTs) categorize themselves using the dichotomy. The results revealed that most of them were unable to identify themselves using the dichotomy and described it as being a simplistic reduction of the complex phenomenon of nativeness. As a result, Liu concluded that nativeness could not be described using a crude dichotomy or even a unidimensional one; rather a multidimensional continuum that can account for the complexity related in defining such a construct is needed (1999).

**NESTs and NNESTs**

EFL/ESL teachers have heretofore been classified into two clearly distinguishable categories: NESTs and NNESTs. Despite the growing number of NNESTs teaching English as a second or a foreign language, which has reached eighty percent of ESL/EFL teachers
worldwide (Canagarajah, 1999), NESTs still maintain their superior position in the EFL job market. This superior position is due to students’ belief that the ideal EFL teacher is a NEST, which is what Phillipson (1992) refers to as “the native speaker fallacy” (p.185).

Researchers investigating the differences between NESTs and NNESTs, in an attempt to discover which of the two types of teachers is a better EFL teacher, have reached the conclusion that there is no such better teacher. After many years of research, it has been established that the two categories of teachers complement each other, where each category has both strengths and weaknesses. Medgyes (2001) believed NESTs and NNESTs to be two distinguishable groups and viewed them as “two different species” (p.429). He stated that the main differences between them were language proficiency and teaching behavior, and believed that both types of teachers could be successful teachers. Celik (2006) also discussed the differences between NESTs and NNESTs, focusing on four main differences between them. First, NESTs have more linguistic knowledge. In addition, NNESTs have more experience in learning English. Further, both NESTs and NNESTs have different teaching styles. Finally, they have different cultural backgrounds (NESTs have more knowledge of English language based cultures and NNESTs have more knowledge of the students’ culture). However, it is not about “who is worth more” (Medgyes, 1992, p. 340), but rather how these two categories of teachers are “worth more together” (Gill & Rebrova, 2001, p. 1). This concept has been explored through team teaching (Carless, 2006; Carless & Walker, 2006; Tajino & Tajino, 2000) as well as other collaborations between NSs & NNSs (De Oliveira & Richardson, 2001). Could the ideal EFL teacher represent such collaboration between NESTs and NNESTs?
Bicultural Teachers (BCTs)

Students’ perceptions of bicultural EFL teachers’ characteristics is relevant and under-researched in the EFL literature. The significance of multilingualism and multiculturalism on EFL/ESL teaching has only recently become apparent to the EFL community, thus replacing the concept that monolingualism and monoculturalism are qualities that identify the ideal EFL/ESL teacher (Kramsch, 1997). Therefore, being a monolingual or a bilingual teacher is an important distinction among EFL teachers, as they tend to show different teaching behavior resulting from their different language backgrounds (Arva & Medgyes, 2000). However, this distinction seems to be overlooked by the EFL community as the focus has heretofore remained only on the distinction between NESTs and NNESTs (Ellis, 2004).

In addition to language background, the use of L1 in the classroom has become an important factor in language teaching (Medgyes, 1994). Furthermore, teaching the target culture (TC) has also been described as essential to language teaching because second language learners face challenges when applying pragmatic strategies that are transferred from their L1 cultures. Therefore, if a second language learner becomes socially incompetent when dealing with NSs in a native speaking community without appropriate cultural knowledge (Crozet and Liddicoat, 1997). Moreover, the importance of the target culture in language teaching has accentuated the superior status of NESTs. This accentuated status is because NESTs have shown to possess higher cultural competence, which leaves NNESTs at a disadvantage.

The previously mentioned qualities reveal the value of BCTs, as they have the advantage of possessing knowledge of both English language based culture and the students’
culture (in an EFL context) as well as knowledge of both languages. However, there is a clear ambiguity regarding how BCTs are categorized which suggests a gap in the way EFL teachers are identified by the EFL community. This gap should be addressed in order to raise awareness in the EFL community regarding the inaccurate categorization of EFL teachers.

Research Questions

1. How do students perceive the ideal EFL teacher?
2. How do students perceive bicultural teachers?
   a. Do they categorize them using the NS/NNS dichotomy?
   b. Do they use a different conceptual approach?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is two-fold. First, to investigate how students identify the ideal teacher and what qualities they associate with such a teacher. Second, to investigate how students perceive BCTs and if they consider them closer to their image of the ideal EFL teacher than NESTs or NNESTs.

Delimitations

This study will only look at student perceptions of NESTs, NNESTs and BCTs; therefore, the findings will depend on how truthful the participants are. Although it is important to explore how far these perceptions are matched by reality, this study will not look at the actual performance of NESTs, NNESTs and BCTs in their classrooms, nor will it look at students’ evaluations of these teachers. In addition, the study is confined to looking at how students perceive these teachers, and not at these teachers’ self-perceptions or how they define themselves.
Definition of Constructs

Language proficiency (of English). Language proficiency is the direct observation of an authentic competent use of the language, according to the ACTFL 1986 proficiency guidelines as cited in Coppieters, (1987).

Knowledge. Knowledge is defined as a combination of pedagogical and didactic knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge is defined as educational methodology skills and didactic knowledge is defined as expertise in teaching methods, solving unexpected problems, providing guidelines and being creative (Arnon & Reichel, 2007).

Personality. Personality is defined as a combination of general and personal qualities, empathy, leadership, and attitude (Arnon & Reichel, 2007).

Motivation. Motivation is defined as the combination of effort and desire made in order to achieve a goal (McGroarty, 1996).

Ideal teacher. An ideal teacher is a teacher that combines certain factors such as knowledge, personal traits, motivation and love of students (Medgyes, 1999).

Bicultural teachers. BCTs are teachers that have acquired native or near native competence in two languages (usually since early childhood) and have been immersed in the cultures of both languages, where one of these two languages is the mother tongue of the EFL learners. (Fathelbab, 2009)
**Definition of Terms**

*Native speaker (of English).* A native speaker is a speaker who has acquired English as a first language in early childhood (Moussu, 2006).

*Non-native speaker.* A non-native speaker is a speaker who has acquired English as a second or foreign language (Moussu, 2006).

*Native English speaking teachers.* NESTs are teachers that come from countries that speak English as a native language and are native speakers of English (Medgyes, 2001).

*Non-native English speaking teachers.* NNESTs are teachers that come from countries that speak English as a second or foreign language and are non-native speakers of English (Medgyes, 2001).

*Near-native speaker.* A near-native speaker is one that has acquired a degree of language proficiency and pronunciation that is near that of a native speaker.

*Native language.* The first language a person acquires is his native language (Bloomfield as cited in Amin, 2001).

*Native Accent.* A way of pronunciation that is specific to a certain group of individuals. In this case, these individuals are native speakers (Green, 1997).

*NS/NNS dichotomy.* A notion by which NS and NNS are seen as conflicting and different constituents (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

*English as a second language.* English is considered a second language when it is commonly present outside the classroom. (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

*English as a foreign language.* English is considered a *foreign* language when it is not commonly present outside the classroom (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).
Team teaching. Team teaching entails two teachers present in the same classroom and both are involved in the teaching process. (Carless & Walker, 2006)

Target culture. Target culture is the culture of the language (the target language) being taught.

Center teachers. Teachers from countries that speak English as a native language and are perceived as NSs by students. (Phillipson, 1992)

Periphery teachers. Teachers from countries that speak English as a foreign language and are perceived as NNS by students. (Phillipson, 1992)
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

How students perceive their teachers has been the topic of much debate in the EFL field over the past two decades (Benke and Medgyes, 2005; Ebata, 2008; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Ling & Braine, 2007; Moussu, 2002; Moussu, 2006). Research has shown that students heretofore have used the NS/NNS dichotomy to categorize their teachers (Ebata, 2008; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Moussu, 2006). This dichotomy divides teachers into two separate groups: NESTs and NNESTs, ignoring other possible categories that cannot be defined using the dichotomy, such as bicultural teachers. Unfortunately, there is a lack of research on this category of teachers, a category of teachers that combines qualities such as language competence, native accent and knowledge of the English language based culture possessed by NESTs, as well as knowledge of students’ L1 and knowledge of students’ culture possessed by NNESTs. Could BCTs be the link between NESTs and NNESTs? Do they combine the advantages of both?

Students find it difficult to identify bicultural teachers as they know no other image except those of their stereotyped NESTs and NNESTs, and tend to associate a NEST with a competent teacher and a NNEST with a less competent one (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Moussu, 2006; Phillipson, 1992). Therefore, raising students’ awareness of the different qualities that comprise the ideal teacher is essential in order to minimize judgments that are based on nonlinguistic factors and the association of such factors with the ideal teacher.

This chapter is divided into seven main sections: Section one: The ideal teacher and how he/she is perceived by both research and students; Section two: Native speakership,
which discusses how a native speaker is defined, the concept of ownership of English, World Englishes, and language identity; **Section three**: NESTs and NNESTs, which discusses the controversy surrounding this dichotomy, collaborations between NESTs and NNESTs, and the native speaker fallacy and its effect on the EFL community; **Section four**: The NS fallacy; **Section five**: The NS/NNS dichotomy and the presence of categories that do not fit into either category; **Section six**: Bicultural teachers and the main qualities they possess: bilingualism, biculturalism, communicative competence and knowledge of L1; finally, **Section seven**: Student perception of NESTs, NNESTs and BCTs and how they define nativeness.

**Section One: The Ideal EFL/ESL Teacher**

This section will discuss the perception of the ideal EFL/ESL teacher from two different perspectives: the researcher’s perspective and the EFL/ESL student’s perspective.

**Researchers’ Perception of the Ideal Teacher.** Identifying the ideal teacher is essential to this research in order to be able to conceptualize students’ image of the ideal EFL teacher. Research has investigated the concept of the ideal teacher and the qualities contributing to such a teacher. Medgyes (1999) suggested an ideal teacher that combines certain factors such as aptitude, experience, personal traits, motivation and love of students. Strevens (1980) also discussed the ideal teacher, where he described ideal teachers as teachers who “know their pupils, encourage them, show concern, find out their interests, discover their learning preference, monitor their progress with a sympathetic eye, unravel their difficulties—cherish them as humans being engaged in a collaboration of learning” (p. 28). Phillipson (1992) saw the ideal teacher as a one with near-native proficiency in the target language, and comes from the same “linguistic and cultural background” (p.195). In addition, Gill and Rebrova (2001) identified the ideal teacher as being the top of an imaginary
pyramid, where the ideal teacher is a teacher that is “qualified, experienced, bilingual and bicultural” (p. 2). Lamm (2000) discussed four major prototypes for the ideal teacher. The first is acculturation, where a teacher is a provider of culture, the second is socialization, where a teacher is a social agent, and is socially involved with students, third is individualization, where a teacher is a tutor for each student, fourth is disciplinary expertise, where an ideal teacher transmits the content knowledge of their subject to the students.

Moreover, Medgyes (2001) believed that the ideal teacher could not be assigned to either NESTS or NNESTs as the can both be successful in their own ways. He described the ideal NNEST as one with near-native English proficiency and the ideal NEST as one with knowledge of students’ L1. Could bicultural teachers be a combination of the ideal NEST and the ideal NNEST? More importantly, do students see them as this combination?

Students’ Perception of the Ideal Teacher. Several studies have investigated how students describe the ideal teacher and have revealed that students believe a combination of two components result in the ideal teacher: teaching skills and good rapport with students (Arnon & Reichal, 2007; Blishen, 1969). Arnon and Reichel’s (2007) qualitative study examined students’ perception of the ideal teacher through a questionnaire administered to 89 students at two colleges. The findings showed that the students’ perceptions were divided into two main components: personal qualities and knowledge of the subject taught. Blishen’s (1969) study discussed the qualities that students desired in a teacher, which were all related to personality, such as understanding and patience, being personal and recognizing the value of students. Kubovi (1992) also found that students valued teachers who respected students, acknowledged the identity of each student and showed care. In addition, Fathelbab’s (2009) pilot study showed that students were aware of the different qualities that contribute to the ideal teacher. She proposed an image of the ideal teacher, which was based on 60 IEP
students’ perception of the ideal teacher. The resulting image of the ideal teacher combined six factors: teaching experience, personality, accent, English proficiency, knowledge of students’ L1 and knowledge of both English language-based culture and L1 culture. Hence, the more a teacher possesses of each quality, the closer he/she is to becoming the ideal EFL teacher.

From the above research, it is clear that students’ characterization of the ideal teacher is not unidimensional. They define ideal teachers using two fundamental categories: personality characteristics and teacher’s professional knowledge. This is not a dichotomous division, but rather two components that combine on a continuum in different proportions (Arnon & Reichel, 2007).

In summary, identifying how students perceive the ideal teacher is essential in understanding if students relate nativeness to the ideal teacher. Research shows that, in reality, there is no truly ideal teacher but characteristics that have been found to be associated with such a teacher. Therefore, the more a teacher possesses of these qualities the closer he/she is to becoming the ideal teacher. Research also shows that students consider personality as an essential component of the ideal teacher as well as professional knowledge. However, few studies have discussed whether students associate nativeness with this image of the ideal teacher, an issue that is pursued further in this study.

**Section Two: Native Speakership**

Identifying nativeness is an essential part of this study as it relates to the main focus of the study, which is identifying BCTs; therefore, this section will discuss how a native speaker (NS) is defined. It will also discuss the effect of World Englishes on identifying nativeness, the concept of English ownership and how teachers are defined according to their
country of origin. Finally, this section will look at the social influence of nativeness perception on the EFL community, which has moved language beyond being a means of communication to becoming an expression of identity.

**Defining a Native Speaker.** Despite criticism, the term NS is still widely used. This term raises many important questions regarding how a NS is defined. Can an individual be a NS of more than one language? If an individual has been speaking two languages since birth, which one is considered his/her native language? Researchers have not been able to accurately answer these questions or reach a consensus regarding the definition of a NS and a native language.

Many researchers have tried to define a native language (Bloomfield, 1933; Kangas, 1981; Suarez, 2000). Suarez (2000) stated that the word *native* signifies the local vicinity in which a person is born or raised. Bloomfield (1933) described a *native language* as the language a person learns to speak first (p.43). Furthermore, Kangas (1981) used four features to describe a native language: “origin (language learned first), competence (language known best), function (language used most), and attitude (language one identifies with and is identified by others as a native speaker of)” (p. 14-15).

In addition, defining the *native speaker* has caused much controversy. Davies (2003) suggested that the only operational definition to define a NS accurately is “to be a NS means not to be a NNS” (p.213), which is based on his belief that it is less difficult to define a NNS than it is to define a NS. Similarly, Medgyes (2001) defined the NNEST as a teacher that has acquired English as a second or foreign language, who teaches in an EFL context, has monolingual groups of learners and speaks the same L1 as his/her students. He then described the NEST as being “the opposite of the NNEST” (p.433).
Other researchers have also attempted to define the native speaker (Cook, 1999; Davies, 2003; Nayar, 1994). Cook (1999) defined the NS as a speaker of the language learned first. Another definition was provided by Davies (2003) as a person who acquires a language during childhood. Nayar (1994) constructed a list of ten features describing a NS, which have been referred to in the literature: 1) primacy: being the language learnt first, 2) manner and environment of acquisition, 3) acculturation: by being raised in the community that speaks the language, 4) phonological, linguistic, communicative competence, 5) dominance, frequency and comfort of use, 6) ethnicity, 7) nationality, 8) self-perception of linguistic identity, 9) perception of others with respect to linguistic membership and eligibility, 10) monolingualism (p.4). He stated that if an individual failed to meet all of the previous conditions he/she could still be considered a NS if he/she has a physical appearance, ethnicity and nationality similar to that of a NS. However, those who fail to qualify as a NS are considered NNSs.

The identity of the NS has been described as elusive (Davies, 2003; Liu, 1999; Rampton, 1990) where birth within a community that speaks English as a native language is the only feature that truly identifies a NS (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). However, Kramsch viewed native speakership as more than a privilege of birth, as it involves being accepted by “the group that created the distinction between NSs and NNSs” (1997, p. 363). Any person who falls outside these definitions suffers from the overgeneralization of being a non-native speaker (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). This is obvious in the dismissal of ethnic and linguistic minorities, which are not included in the “abstract notion of an idealized NS of English” (Rampton, 1990, p. 546). These minorities could have been born and raised in English speaking countries or communities, and still not be considered NSs of English (Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997).
**World Englishes & Ownership of English.** The belief that the native speaker is the only owner of the English language is a fundamental cause for the native speaker fallacy, which is the belief that the ideal teacher is a NS (Phillipson, 1992). However, this belief has changed with the wide spread of English internationally, in addition to immigration. Moreover, this change in belief has altered the previously perceived boundaries that have become blurred or even non-existent. Therefore, how the concept of ownership of English was perceived and how it has changed is important and relevant to this study.

The view of English ownership around the world has changed, rejecting the NS of English as the only owner of the English language, and therefore, revealing a flaw in the existing NS/NNS dichotomy. Widdowson (1994) argued against this sole ownership of English, basing his argument on the fact that English is an international language and native speakers can no longer claim sole ownership. Norton (1997) discussed the importance of language, identity and ownership in her position paper where she stated that “English belongs to people who speak it, whether native or nonnative, whether ESL or EFL, whether standard or nonstandard” (p.427). Therefore, degrees of ownership vary according to different social factors such as class, race and education (Norton, 1997).

**Kachru’s concentric circles.** “Kachru’s circles” have been referred to frequently by researchers in the ESL/EFL field. Kachru (1985) associated the identity of the English user with the country he/she comes from. He described these countries using three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle. The inner circle includes countries that speak English as a native language, where English is the language of all public discourse. Examples of inner circle countries are the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The outer circle includes countries where English plays an important role in education, governance, etc. and English is considered a second or additional language.
Examples of such countries are Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa and Zambia. The third circle is the expanding circle, where English is commonly used in education, taught as a foreign language and is considered the most essential international language. Examples of these countries are China, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea and Nepal (Kachru & Nelson, 1996). Egypt, however, is not mentioned in the study. This might be because, at the time, English was not as widely used in Egypt as it is today. However, if Egypt were to be placed into one of the three concentric circles, it could be placed in the expanding circle. Furthermore, Egypt is rapidly moving from the expanding circle into the outer circle, where English is starting to play a crucial role in education and other areas in the Egyptian community.

**Center and periphery teachers.** Phillipson (1992) simplified Kachru’s categorization into a distinction between *Core* or *Center* English-speaking countries and *Periphery* English-speaking countries. Center English-speaking countries are countries where native speakers of English are the dominant group and these countries are sometimes even considered exclusively English speaking such as the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Center countries are similar to countries that belong to Kachru’s inner circle. Periphery English countries are countries in which English is considered an international language and is spoken as a foreign language such as Scandinavia and Japan. These countries are similar to countries that belong to both Kachru’s outer and expanding circles.

**Language as an Identity.** As a result of this stereotyped image of the NS, the NS/NNS dichotomy has become a “socially constructed identity rather than a linguistic category” (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999, p.100). This identity is recognized when the speaker is socially accepted by a given community (Mousse & Llurda, 2008). Hence, language is viewed as a marker of identity linking the speaker to a certain group. As a result,
both social identity and ethnicity have become significantly maintained by language
(Gumperz, as cited in Inbar-Lourie, 2005).

The identity gap. Davies (2003) defines native speakership as a way of self-

- ascription. However, a gap is often created between self-identity and perceived identity. This
is a phenomenon seen in the difference between how NESTs and NNESTs perceive their own
nativeness compared to how they are perceived by their community. This gap can occur both
ways i.e. NESTs perceived as NNESTs or NNESTs perceived as NESTs. NESTs perceived
as NNESTs may be due to several factors previously discussed such as physical appearance,
accent and names. However, NNESTs perceived as NESTs is usually due to the NNEST
becoming a “pseudo NS” which is showing near-native competence and confident language
use (Medgyes, 1994, p.17). Liu (1999) sought to investigate the existence of this gap in his
qualitative study. He interviewed seven professors and compared how they perceived their
own nativeness to how students perceived their native identity. The results confirmed the
existence of the gap between self-identity and perceived identity; however, the reasons
behind the existence of this gap need further investigation.

In summary, according to the above review of literature, research has found it difficult
to identify the native speaker. Several researchers have tried to define the NS, but the term
remains obscure. Furthermore, EFL teachers have been categorized as NESTs or NNESTs
according to their ethnicity, and whether they come from a country that is considered part of
the inner circle or not. In addition, students have shown different attitudes and perceptions
towards teachers from different categories of these countries. Center (inner circle) teachers
are given preference over periphery (outer or expanding circle) teachers. Students reject not
only NNESTs, but also NESTs from countries they do not perceive as center English-
speaking countries (Inbar-Lourie, 2005). As a result, being a NS has become dependent on social perception and not on linguistic competence.

**Section three: NESTs and NNESTs**

The difference between NESTs and NNESTs is a relevant point to this study that needs to be discussed. Identifying the qualities that distinguish each category is essential in order to compare these qualities to those of BCTs. Moreover, research has shown the significance of both categories and how they might be stronger together rather than individually. Furthermore, research has changed its direction from trying to determine which of the two categories are better teachers, to investigating how combining the qualities of both types of teachers could allow students to benefit from their strengths (Carless, 2006; Carless & Walker, 2006; Tajino & Tajino, 2000). This section will discuss the difference between NESTs and NNESTs, their strengths and weaknesses, and the advantages of joining these strengths. The section will discuss the previous points in two subsections: the NEST/NNEST controversy and NEST & NNEST collaborations.

**The NEST/NNEST Controversy.** The controversy regarding whether NESTs are better ESL/EFL teachers than NNESTs has been debated in EFL research for the past two decades. Several researchers have investigated NESTs and NNESTs (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Butler, 2007; Gill & Rebrova, 2001; Ling & Braine, 2007; Kamhi-Stein, 2001; Medgyes, 1992), and have all reached the conclusion that both categories of teachers have strengths and weaknesses.

Medgyes (1992) was the first to discuss the differences between NESTs and NNESTs. He argued that NNESTs should be given the same chance as NESTs to be successful EFL teachers, despite the difference in competence between them. He also discussed the strengths
and weaknesses of both categories in his study. He stated the main strengths of NESTs as being high language proficiency and communicative competence, and the main strength of NNESTs as being successful learner models. In addition, being language learners themselves and having knowledge of their students’ L1 allows NNESTs to anticipate difficulties their students might face when learning English.

Arva and Medgyes (2000) conducted a study that analyzed the teaching behaviors of 10 Hungarian EFL teachers who varied in teaching experience and qualities. Videotapes of their teaching were examined, and the teachers’ stated and actual behaviors were compared. The researchers reported that NESTs served as “perfect language models” and “rich sources of cultural information” (p. 367), and that the “NNESTs’ classes were poor in cultural content” (p. 367). However, Medgyes (2001) discussed some advantages of NNESTs such as efficacy in teaching language-learning strategies, ability to provide more information about English, and sensitivity towards students. Furthermore, he categorized NESTs and NNESTs as “two different species”, due to the significant differences that exist between them (p.429). Medgyes concluded that these existing differences provide significance to each type of teacher but do not imply that either of them is a better teacher (2001).

**NEST and NNEST Collaboration.** Research regarding NESTs and NNESTs has shown a great change over the past decade, as it has altered its attempts to find out who is the better EFL/ESL teacher into attempts to discover how NESTs and NNESTs might complement each other. In other words, it is not about “who is worth more” (Medgyes, 1992, p. 340), but about how they are “worth more together” (Gill & Rebrova, 2001, p. 1).

Benke & Medgyes (2005) conducted a quantitative study, where 422 Hungarian learners of English were administered a questionnaire surveying their opinions about NESTs
and NNESTs. The results showed that students were aware of the strengths of each category of teacher, but considered the ideal situation to be the availability of both NESTs and NNESTs to teach them. Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) reached the same conclusion, where they surveyed 76 university students. Their results showed that 71.6% preferred having both NESTs and NNESTs.

Therefore, for the past few years, research has investigated how NESTs and NNESTs complement each other and are trying to find ways to help NEST and NNEST collaborations succeed. This concept has been explored through team teaching between NESTs and NNESTs in EFL contexts (Carless, 2006; Carless & Walker, 2006; Tajino & Tajino, 2000), as well as other types of successful collaborations such as professional collaborations between NSs & NNSs (De Oliveira & Richardson, 2001).

Medgyes (1992) discussed an ideal environment as one where NESTs and NNESTs are both present because of the qualities NESTs and NNESTs possess that complement each other. When combined in a classroom, they help the teachers draw out their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. The Japan Exchange and Teaching program (JET) explored this idea further by employing young native-speaking teachers (NETs) to collaborate with Japanese teachers of English (LETs) (Gorsuch, 2002). However, the inexperience of the NETs limited the contributions they were able to make to this collaboration (Carless, 2006). Institutions in Hong Kong also used this new collaboration technique between NETs and LETs; however, in this case NETs were more experienced and were able to contribute more to the program (Carless & Walker, 2006).

Carless and Walker (2006) conducted a qualitative study, in which data were collected through interviews and class observations from two case studies in Hong Kong. The purpose of the study was to explore the collaboration technique between NESTS and
NNESTs. The results showed that students benefited highly from this collaboration because they were able to draw on the strengths of both teachers, which are the strong lexical knowledge and pronunciation from the NET (Native English Teacher), and the knowledge of L1 and the learning opportunities provided by the LET (Local English Teacher). In addition, hearing both teachers communicate together provided the students with authenticity, and an opportunity to hear more than one accent and delivery speed. The presence of two teachers in class also allowed more support for the students, and therefore, task completion rate was higher. In addition to the students, the teachers seemed to benefit from this experience as well. The LETs said that it helped them improve their English proficiency, and the NETs said they were able to develop a better understanding of the Chinese culture, and therefore, their students. It is important to note that the teachers involved in such a collaboration need to be well trained, open minded, and sensitive to personal and cultural differences (Carless & Walker, 2006)

Although the aforementioned studies have shown much promise, the research done on team teaching has reported conflict as well (Carless, 2006; Tajino & Tajino, 2000), as LETS and NETs sometimes seemed to be confused about the role of each in the classroom, which has led to a feeling of anxiety. In addition, some teachers were not collaborating effectively, which has stressed the need to investigate the practicality of team teaching further in order to understand if this concept is an effective way to combine the strengths of NESTs and NNESTs.

Tajino and Tajino (2000) emphasize that the most important factor that contributes to the success of team teaching is not considering the two teachers as two separate entities (X + Y), but rather as one whole teacher (XY). Could bicultural teachers be the personification of that whole teacher (XY)?
In conclusion, researchers have shown both NESTs and NNESTs to have strengths and weaknesses, which provide special qualities to each type of teacher. Research has attempted to make use of the qualities that belong to each type of teacher by combining these qualities through different NEST/NNEST collaborations. However, results have been inconclusive.

Section Four: The NS fallacy

The belief that the ideal teacher is a native speaker of English has been termed by Phillipson (1992) as “the native speaker fallacy” (p.185). This is due to the common assumption that a teacher who is a NS of the target language is automatically considered a competent teacher. Phillipson refuted the NS fallacy and believed that “teachers are made rather than born whether teachers are native or non native” (1992, p.194). The UNESCO (1953, cited in Phillipson 1992) also had an opposing position to this fallacy stating that “a teacher is not qualified to teach a language merely because it is his mother tongue” (p.194).

Effect of the NS fallacy on NESTs’ status. Even with the large number of NNESTs teaching English as a second or a foreign language, which has peaked to almost 80% of ESL/EFL teachers worldwide (Canagarajah, 1999), the NEST has always had a superior status (Liu, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 1999). NESTs’ superior position was derived from Chomsky’s notion of the ideal speaker-hearer being a NS, which personifies the NEST as the only teacher capable of having full competence (Ellis, 2003, p.42). In addition, the emergence of the communicative approach which emphasizes the English only approach (instruction being in English only) allows NESTs to teach in different countries worldwide without having to learn other languages (Swan, 1985).
Effect of the NS Fallacy on NNESTs. Davies (2003) discussed his view regarding the native speaker construct and the fact that it is not properly understood by the EFL community. This was an attempt to fill the gap that had emerged from the lack of understanding of the NS construct by providing accountability of its major parameters. He also discussed the effect of nativeness on EFL teachers’ self-confidence, which varies according to their language background (being NSs or NNSs). He stated that NSs are associated with having confidence, power, authority and identity, and if a NNEST shows enough confidence, he/she may be mistaken for a NEST (Davies, 2003). On the other hand, NNESTs suffer from “I’m not a native speaker syndrome” which affects their morale and self-confidence (Suarez, 2000, p.3). In addition, NNESTs feel that their credibility is challenged constantly, leading to an inferiority complex where NNESTs feel they can never measure up to NESTs (Medgyes, 2001, p. 434).

Effect of NS Fallacy on Hiring Practice. Canagarajah (1999) discussed the political and economical consequences that stem from the NS/NNS dichotomy such as unequal job opportunities and unequal pay. Moussu (2002) stated that the dichotomy exists in hiring practices and that some teachers are not hired because they are not native speakers. Some online job advertisements for EFL teachers still specify being a native speaker as a qualification. Schools are keen on hiring NESTs because advertising that their teachers are native speakers attracts parents and allows them to compete with other schools (Sahin, 2005). Mahboob (2003) stated in his qualitative study that 59.8% of administrators surveyed in his study think being a NS is an important criterion in the hiring process. Most administrators believe that students’ demand is for NESTs (Halliday, 2008) and that students expect NESTs (Cook, 2000), which is why administrators have reservations about hiring NNESTs (Eun-Young, 2009).
TESOL published *A Position Statement against Discrimination of Nonnative Speakers of English in the Field of TESOL* (TESOL, 2006) which states that employment decisions based solely on native speaker criterion is discriminatory against well-qualified individuals. It also states that TESOL is against such discrimination and that employment should be based on language proficiency, as well as other criteria, without any reference to nativeness. Nevertheless, NNESTs still feel they are at a disadvantage (Mahboob, 2005) and are not given equal job opportunities compared to NESTs (Mahboob, 2004). In addition, the statement given by TESOL regarding this issue shows that TESOL is well aware of the existence of this problem.

In conclusion, the NS fallacy has been shown to have an influence on EFL teachers where the NEST retains an undeniable superiority over the NNEST, leaving the NNEST with a sense of inferiority and low self-confidence. In addition, the NS fallacy is also believed to have an effect on hiring practices where NESTs may be given more job opportunities and higher pay.

**Section Five: The NS/NNS Dichotomy**

This section is important and relevant to this study as it discusses the inaccuracy of the NS/NNS dichotomy. The NS/NNS dichotomy has been the subject of much criticism because it cannot account for different degrees of nativeness (Amin, 1997; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Liu, 1999; Norton, 1997; Rampton, 1990). It categorizes ESL/EFL teachers as either NS or NNS without taking into account the continuum, a continuum with the two idealized notions (NS & NNS) on either end (Rampton, 1990). Medgyes (1992) also described interlanguage as a continuum on which a NNS progresses in order to reach the goal, which is to be a NS. However, he stated that the NNS could only progress on this
continuum to a certain point (near-nativeness), as there is an imaginary wall that prevents the
NNS from becoming a NS. Liu (1999) modified this continuum by suggesting that the
language proficiency continuum is more of a multidimensional continuum that is too complex
for a simple NS/NNS dichotomy or even a unidimensional continuum due to the multiple
factors involved in defining nativeness.

Categories that do not fit into the NS/NNS Dichotomy. Several researchers have
discussed this issue and given examples of categories that could not be defined using the
NS/NNS dichotomy (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Liu, 1999; Medgyes, 2001; Rampton,
1990). Medgyes (2001) gives an example of a little boy who was born in the United States,
moved to Togo at the age of four, and then attended a French school. Would he be considered
a NS of French or English? Could he be a NS of both languages?

An example of one of these indefinable categories is BCTs. Liu (1999) interviewed
seven TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) professors in a qualitative
study, which investigated how these professors categorized themselves. Most of the
participants could not identify themselves using the dichotomy. For example, one of the
participants was Danish, and had come to the US at the age of ten. This teacher considered
herself a native speaker of both English and her mother tongue. Another participant, who was
Korean, came to the US at the age of nine and considered himself bilingual and bicultural in
both English and his mother tongue. However, what is interesting about these two
participants is that the Danish participant stated that she was not considered a NNEST by her
students, while the Korean participant mentioned that he was categorized as a NNEST by his
students. This shows that racial features has an effect on the judgment of nativeness, as the
Danish participant was not considered a NNEST because she looked like the prototypical NS,
even though the Korean had moved to the States before the Danish woman had.
Similarly, heritage language speakers are also difficult to fit into the dichotomy. These speakers are brought up in a home that speaks a language other than English and either live in an English-speaking community or are immersed in English education (Katz, 2003). Similarly to Liu (1999) and Medgyes (1992), Rodriguez-Pino (1997) described heritage speakers as speakers existing on a continuum, with U.S. born individuals of a third or fourth generation that use English predominantly at one end, and individuals of a first or second generation with a variety of fluency and proficiency levels at the other end.

In conclusion, the dichotomy has become inadequate and cannot account for all possible cases between the two extremes (NS and NNS), cases which can only be defined using a continuum (Rampton, 1990; Liu, 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001). Moreover, these indefinable categories are expanding, and as a result, the current ethnic and linguistic categories are insufficient to describe personal language use adequately (Leung et al, 1997). BCTs are evidence of the inaccuracy of the NS/NNS dichotomy and will be discussed further in the next section.

**Section Six: Bicultural Teachers (BCTs)**

In contrast to research discussing NESTs and NNESTs, there is a lack of research on BCTs in the EFL field. BCTs are defined as teachers that have acquired near native or native like competence in two languages, usually since early childhood, and have been immersed in the cultures of both languages (Fathelbab, 2009). BCTs have not been explicitly defined by research; however, they have been associated with certain qualities. These qualities are a combination of qualities that are present in NESTs such as knowledge of English language based culture, communicative competence and qualities that are present in NNESTs such as
knowledge of the students’ culture as well as knowledge of their L1 (mainly in EFL contexts).

This section will discuss the qualities associated with BCTs through the following subsections: Bilingualism, Biculturalism, Knowledge of L1 and Communicative Competence.

**Bilingualism.** Bloomfield (1933) defined bilingualism as a native-like control of two languages. However, he continued to discuss the difficulty of the distinction between a foreign speaker and a true bilingual because the distinction is considered relative. Haugen (1969) discussed the notion of a continuum for bilingualism as well, a continuum that starts at the point where learners can produce adequate and meaningful sentences in the second language and pass through all the degrees of proficiency until they reach the other end of the continuum where they can be considered a NS. In addition, Davies (1996) stated that if a second language learner acquires a language in early childhood, then he/she is a native speaker of both the L1 and the target language (TL).

**Association of bilinguals with NNSs and monolinguals with NSs.** The assumption throughout existing EFL/ESL research is that the prototypical EFL/ESL teacher is a monolingual NS (Ellis, 2003). Kramsch (1997) associated bilingualism with NNESTs where she described it as being a privilege that NNESTs possess. Collingham (1988) stated that (at that time) “most ESL teachers are monolingual and white, and most learners are bilingual and black” (p.85), which was the situation at the time in the UK. He emphasized that the previous racial image needed to be changed in order for ESL to reflect the multiracial composition of the British community accurately. Moreover, Kershaw (1996) agreed with using the term bilinguals to identify NNESTs, as this takes away the deficiency of the prefix non and instead emphasizes the advantage that they possess which is that they speak two languages.
However, the problem is that associating bilingualism with NNESTs makes this term unavailable to describe NESTs that speak two languages.

The distinction of NESTs as monolinguals and NNESTs as bilinguals causes true nativeness to be dubious for bilinguals (Brutt-Griﬄer & Samimy, 2001). Ellis (2003) argued the importance of revising this notion because not all NESTs are monolinguals and not all bilinguals are NNESTs, which is a misconception that often leads to confusion in the language backgrounds of NESTs and NNESTs. However, all monolinguals are NESTs and all NNESTs are bilinguals. Furthermore, Ellis (2003) categorizes EFL/ESL teachers according to monolingualism or bilingualism into several categories. The first category is NNESTs that have learned the same content (English) as their students and in the same way (as a second language). The second is bilingual NESTs that know the same content (English) but have learned it in a different way, and have learned a different content (second language) in the same way. The third category is monolingual NESTs that know the same content (English) but have learned it in a different way, but have had no experience in learning a second language.

Therefore, differences exist between monolingual and bilingual teachers, whether NESTs or NNESTs (Corcoran, 2007; Ellis, 2006). Ellis (2006) challenged the assumption that a monolingual teacher can understand how to teach a second language without having learned one. She presented this notion by establishing a theoretical framework within which she argued that language learning is an important factor to EFL teachers, which affects professional practice. The data were derived from a study (Ellis, 2004) of thirty-one EFL teachers in Australian language centers. The purpose was to explore the inﬂuence of teachers' language learning background on their professional knowledge and beliefs. The results show that monolingual EFL teachers do not have the same resources as bilingual EFL teachers.
Similarly, Corcoran (2007) greatly criticized monolingual EFL teachers who teach a foreign language without having actually learned one themselves.

**Multilingual teachers and the importance of language background.** Research has discussed the effect of multilingualism and language background on EFL/ESL learning (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Cook, 1999; Ellis, 2003; Ellis, 2004). NESTs and NNESTs have shown different teaching behavior due to their different language backgrounds (Arva and Medgyes, 2000). Cook (1999) discussed how L2 users have “multicompetence” (p.191) which is a combination of L1 and L2 competence. He also stated that these speakers of more than one language (L2 users) are not in a position to be compared to monolinguals (NS) and therefore should not be treated as “deficient NSs” (p.195). Nevertheless, multi-lingual competence or the knowledge of more than one language has been shown to be an advantage for EFL teachers as it facilitates the teaching of a second language and allows them to become successful language teachers (Canagarajah, 1999). Belz (2003) provides a theoretical argumentation in her article supporting the use of more than one language in the EFL classroom. She discussed the presence of multiple identities in the classroom and encouraged multilingualism by both teachers and students.

Ellis (2004) conducted a qualitative study that aimed to explore the influence of language learning on ESL teachers’ professional knowledge. She interviewed 31 ESL teachers in Australian language centers, both bilingual and monolingual NESTs and NNESTs, and investigated the effect of multilingualism on these teachers. Her results showed that multilingual teachers were able to draw upon their experiences as language learners to help them deal with their students’ difficulties and facilitate the process of their students becoming successful learners. In addition, their students saw them as successful learners, which highly motivated them. Ellis (2004) also associated the lack of concern regarding
multilingualism in hiring practices with the absence of the distinction between multilingual and monolingual EFL teachers, as the focus is on the NEST/NNEST distinction.

Moreover, being a successful language learner of a foreign language should be a minimum requirement in order to be an EFL/ESL teacher (Phillipson, 1992), and Medgyes (1994) even rated language background as a top selection criterion because of its significance and influence on language teaching. Therefore, research has shown the benefit of multilingualism in English language teaching and describes an EFL teacher possessing this quality as a better EFL teacher. However, research is insufficient regarding this issue and should be investigated further.

**Biculturalism.** Culture is similar to language in that both are acquired from birth (Han, 2004). Webster’s dictionary defines biculturalism as “the existence of two distinct cultures in one nation” (p.369). Moreover, when those two cultures are combined third cultures emerge which are a result of the contact between these two cultures (Paulston, 1978). In addition, biculturals should not be confused with bilinguals. Hence, being a bilingual does not necessarily mean that the individual is a bicultural; however, being a bicultural indicates that the individual is also a bilingual (Baker and Prys-Jones, 1998).

**The Importance of Culture in Language Teaching.** Integrating culture into language teaching is essential (Celik, 2006), because a learner who knows the language but lacks cultural knowledge will be a fluent speaker but will lack social competence in dealing with a native speaking community (Crozet and Liddicoat, 1997). Celik (2006) showed the important role culture plays in language learning and teaching by demonstrating its functions such as listening, speaking, reading, and translating.
Furthermore, an EFL teacher is considered a mediator between cultures, where he/she needs to consider the learners’ cultural expectations as well as introduce them to a new culture in the target language. Therefore, personal experience is important in teaching culture, as without it learners doubt their teachers’ credibility as cultural informants. In addition, Kramsch (1993) believes culture can be acquired more effectively when the differences between the learner’s culture and the target culture are compared. Therefore, culture should be taught explicitly, especially in EFL contexts, where the learner is not immersed in a native speaking community. However, the focus in teaching culture should be on trying to create an intercultural space for the second language learner, where the appropriate norm is a bilingual position and not one of a NS (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1997).

Several studies have investigated how NESTs and NNESTs deal with culture in EFL teaching and whether an apparent difference exists between them. NESTs were found to be “perfect language models” and “rich sources of cultural information”, while NNESTs’ classes were considered “poor in cultural content” (Arva and Medgyes, 2000, p.5). Lazarton (2003) conducted a qualitative study where he examined the cultural knowledge of two NNESTs. He concluded that cultural competence of an EFL/ESL teacher does not only involve knowledge of the target culture but also knowledge of culturally accepted behavior. In addition, Samimy & Brutt-Griffler (1999) surveyed nonnative-English- speaking TESOL graduate students to investigate their perceptions of NNESTs. The results showed that most of the participants reported NNESTs to have trouble with cultural knowledge, which might be due to a lack of training in teaching culture. As a result, teaching culture becomes even more difficult for NNESTs that have not personally experienced the target culture (Lazarton, 2003).

Knowledge of L1. Medgyes (1992) and Cook (2005) consider the ability to use L1 in the classrooms a competence that NNESTs possess. When the EFL teacher has knowledge of
both languages, he/she is able to make sure there are no false assumptions when referring back to L1 (Piasecka, 1988). In addition, it enables the teacher to compare and contrast different aspects of both languages which helps students become aware of certain conceptual and cultural differences between them (Hopkins, 1988). This is why Phillipson (1992) believes that NNESTs might have better qualifications as EFL teachers because they are aware of the differences between the target language and students’ L1.

**Importance of L1 in Language Learning.** Several studies have discussed the importance of L1 in second language learning (Chavez, 2003; Cook, 2001; Harbord, 1992; Littlewood, 1984). One of the main advantages second language learners gain when using L1 is that they can use it to organize the second language data they are receiving. They relate it to their own language, and therefore, do not have to start from scratch (Littlewood, 1984).

Cook (2001) disputed the claim that L1 should be avoided in the EFL classrooms. In his position paper, he stated several benefits to using L1 in the EFL classroom and discusses how it makes “authentic L2 users” (p.402). Harbord (1992) explored the different theoretical language learning views that impel learners to use L1. He gave six benefits to using L1 in second language learning: a strategy preferred by students, a humanistic approach as it helps students say what they want, an efficient use of time (however, it should not be used as a way to make it easier for the teachers or students), helps communication (especially with complete beginners), creates good rapport between students and their teachers, helps students acquire a second language. Therefore, second language learners have two languages that they can use in different ways; however, these two languages have different functions in the classroom and an EFL teacher should make use of both of them (Chavez, 2003). Furthermore, when L1 is completely taken out of the classroom the learners might feel “alienated and deprived of their
cultural identity” (Phillipson, 1992, p.193). Students could also feel that their identity is threatened because it is so closely linked to their first language (Piasecka, 1986).

**Communicative Competence.** With the emergence of the communicative approach, NNESTs have found it more challenging to teach effectively (Brown, 2001) because communicative competence emphasizes oral interaction and communication, which are the main strengths of NESTs and the main weaknesses of NNESTs. However, Swan (1985) disagreed with the current steps involved in the communicative approach, as they do not take into account students’ L1 or their prior knowledge.

Lee (2005) discussed the efficacy of the native speaker model in language learning and stated that several features of communicative competence related to being a NS. These features included being able to carry on a conversation fluently and spontaneously, being able to use circumlocutions and hesitations accurately, being able to predict what would be said in the conversation by the interlocutor, as well as being able to make clarifications. It is assumed that these features are more commonly present in NESTs than NNESTs, which contributes to their superior status.

In summary, the above review of the literature shows that bilingualism may need to be considered a fundamental quality in EFL teachers. This is based on the assumption that to teach a second language, the teacher needs to have experienced learning a second language himself/herself. In addition, biculturalism in teachers offers two main benefits: possessing knowledge of the target language and the target culture, and at the same time, possessing knowledge of the students’ first language and culture. Therefore, BCTs can use their knowledge of both languages and cultures to facilitate learning. In addition, communicative competence has been associated with NESTs, while knowledge of students’ L1 is a quality that has been associated with NNESTs. However, both of these qualities can be found in
BCTs, as they possess a combination of qualities from both NESTs and NNESTs. Finally, research has supported the use of L1 in the EFL classroom and shows that it has several positive aspects, which gives BCTs another positive quality.

Section Seven: Student Perception of NESTs, NNESTs and Bicultural Teachers

This section is a fundamental part of this review, as it is the focus of the study: student perception. Unfortunately, there is a lack of research on student perception of BCTs. Therefore, this section will discuss the literature regarding students’ perception of NESTs and NNESTs to explore their general perception of nativeness. It will also discuss the variables that affect students’ perception of nativeness such as physical appearance, accent and names. Finally, the relation between students’ perception of nativeness and their notion of the ideal teacher will be discussed.

How NESTs and NNESTs are perceived by students. Medgyes (1994) emphasizes that perception is more important than the qualities exhibited. Therefore, several studies have explored how students perceive NESTs and NNESTs (Benke and Medgyes, 2005; Ebata, 2008; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Ling & Braine, 2007; Moussu, 2002; Moussu, 2006).

Ebata (2008) conducted a qualitative study to discover students’ attitudes towards NNESTs and NESTs. The survey was given to three different levels of language classes and showed that advanced level students preferred NESTs, as they thought they were more professional and better prepared for their level. On the other hand, they felt more relaxed and understood better with NNESTs. However, most of the students did not have a preference as long as the teacher had good pronunciation and treated them nicely. Filho (2002) also conducted a qualitative study where the participants were 16 students in an IEP (Intensive English Program) in a university. He investigated how learners perceived NESTs and
NNESTs using a questionnaire, class observations and audiotaped interviews. The results showed that most students viewed both kinds of teachers as successful teachers.

Lasagabaster & Sierra (2002) conducted a quantitative study to investigate how students perceived NESTs and NNESTs. They surveyed 76 undergraduates, and found that the general preference was for NESTs or a combination of NESTs and NNESTs. Similarly, Moussu (2006) investigated 1040 ESL students’ attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs through questionnaires that were analyzed quantitatively. The participants were all from different IEPs in the US. Results showed that students’ expressed more positive attitudes towards NESTs, although students taught by NNESTs had a more positive attitude towards them than students taught by NESTs.

In addition, Ling and Briane (2007) conducted a study in Hong Kong to investigate the attitudes of 420 students from seven universities towards their NNS English teachers through a questionnaire and interviews. The students showed a favorable attitude towards their NNESTs, despite being aware of their weaknesses.

Therefore, students have been divided into different groups regarding their preferences towards NESTs and NNESTs. The first group prefers NESTs and find them more competent than NNESTs (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Moussu, 2006), while the second group prefer NNESTs because they can better understand students’ difficulties (Ling & Braine, 2007). The third group do not have a preference for either type of teacher as it finds that both NESTs and NNESTs have strengths and weaknesses (Ebata, 2008; Filho, 2002). The main strengths of NESTs, as perceived by students, are that they have better speaking and communication skills, high language proficiency and are better informants of the target culture. On the other hand, students perceive the main strengths of NNESTs as having better knowledge of grammar and knowledge of the students’ first language (mainly in the EFL
context), as well as the students feeling more relaxed and understanding better from a NNEST.

**Variables involved in Perception of NESTs and NNESTs.** The perception of NESTs and NNESTs is based on many different variables, which have caused their identification to be a difficult task. These variables are related to both teachers and students.

**Teacher Related Variables.** Some of the variables related to teachers are language proficiency, social identity, place of birth, time spent in the TC, bilingual background as well as physical traits (Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Liu, 1999; Medgyes, 1992; Phillipson, 1992). In addition, effectiveness of teaching methods has been shown to play an important role in EFL/ESL teachers’ perceived language identities (Amin, 1997; Braine, 1999). Liu (1999) also discussed similar variables in his study where he stated that teachers’ self-ascription as NSs or NNSs depended on their former linguistic environment, whether English was an official language or a foreign language, age of acquisition, duration of exposure to English and the teachers’ cultural identity.

**Student Related Variables.** There are several factors that affect students’ perception as well, such as learners’ knowledge of the language and their perception of nativeness, age, social background, and past experiences with NESTs and NNESTs (Inbar-Lourie, 2005).

**How Students Perceive Nativeness**

**Aspects Related to how Students Perceive Nativeness**

**Physical Appearance.** Students tend to perceive only white individuals to be NSs of English (Amin, 1997; Filho, 2002). Amin (1997) conducted a qualitative study in Canada, where he interviewed five minority female ESL teachers. The results showed that the teachers believed that ESL students assumed that white people were the only true native speakers of
English and therefore, were the only teachers that were true Canadians and knew proper Canadian English.

Studies also show that skin color has an impact on how students define NNESTs (Liu, 1999; Thomas, 1999). Hence, the NS is associated with being white and the NNS is associated with being non-white. This misconception is not only discriminatory against NNESTs, but also against NESTs that do not fit into either category (i.e. nonwhite NSs) (Kuboto and Lin, 2006). Wee (2002) discussed how Singaporeans were not perceived as NSs despite the fact that some of them consider English their mother tongue, in addition to it being the only language spoken at home. Rubin (1992) revealed similar results in his study where he investigated how 62 North American undergraduates’ perception of their teachers was affected by ethnicity. He compared students’ perception of Asian and Caucasian EFL/ESL teachers, and his results showed that Caucasian teachers were considered superior to Asian teachers, as Asians were not considered NSs regardless of whether they actually were NSs.

Hence, students view center teachers and periphery teachers differently. Center teachers or inner-circle teachers are perceived as NSs by students, while periphery teachers or outer-circle and expanding-circle speakers are perceived as NNSs by students (Phillipson, 1992). The reason for this perception could be that periphery teachers do not look like NSs of English, even though they might actually be NSs. This suggests that students believe they can identify nativeness using physical appearance (Filho, 2002).

Accent. Pronunciation is considered a key aspect in perceiving nativeness, which is referred to as the “accent bar” (Kachru, as cited in Inbar-Lourie, 2005). The accent of a NNEST creates an auspicious or inauspicious impression (Amin, 1999) as it is compared to the inner circle accent of a NEST, which is considered a social aspect of language identity.
(Amin, 2001). As a result, students tend to favor EFL/ESL teachers that have the right accent (Filho, 2002) or teachers with less of a foreign accent (Kim, 2007); however, the definitions of the terms foreign and right are relative. Amin (1999) also stated that a speaker with an American, Canadian or British accent was considered higher in status.

Kelch and Williamson (2002) conducted a quantitative study investigating the extent to which accent affected students’ perception of their teachers’ nativeness. The 56 students listened to audiotaped passages read by three NESTs and three NNESTs, after which the students identified the teachers’ English accents as N or NN. The researchers made sure that the individuals represented different varieties of English so that their accents would confuse the students. The results revealed that the students were only able to identify 45% of the accents correctly, as their opinions were greatly influenced by their perception of nativeness. The mere presence of an accent caused doubt in the students’ minds about the teachers’ nativeness, even native accents that were unfamiliar to the learners were considered NN.

Names. Names have also been shown to be a way of identifying NESTs and NNESTs. Filho’s (2002) results showed that students identified teachers as NNESTs if they had names that did not sound English to them, similar results were found in Fathelbab’s (2009) pilot study. For this reason, EFL teachers attempt to conceal NN identity by using English names, especially in interviews, to avoid being overlooked before their qualifications are considered (Liu, 1999).

Do Students Associate their Perception of Nativeness with the Qualities of the Ideal EFL Teacher? Siedlhofer (1996) discussed the danger of associating a “competent speaker to a competent teacher” (p.69). Teachers are considered informants and instructors of the target
language; however, being good informants of the language does not automatically make NESTs competent instructors (Widdowson, 1992).

Moussu (2002) investigated students’ perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs, and his results showed that NNESTs who sounded and looked more like NSs were better appreciated by their students. Rubin’s (1992) study confirms the previous belief as the results showed that students associated a foreign accent with a poor teacher. In addition, most students assume that teachers that do not look English will not be able to teach English effectively (Shaw, 2001), as it does not occur to these students that these non-English looking teachers might have lived their entire lives in an English-speaking country. This raises an important question of whether students still automatically think that a NEST is a competent teacher and a NNEST is a less competent one. Are they aware of the different qualities that contribute to an ideal teacher?

Do Students perceive BCTs as being close to the image of their ideal EFL teacher?

This question is quite difficult to answer, due to the lack of research on BCTs. Fathelbab (2009) attempted to answer this question in her pilot study, where she investigated the perception of 60 undergraduate university students at a prestigious English medium university in Egypt. Results showed that students had trouble identifying BCTs and were uncertain whether they should be considered NSs of English or NSs of their L1 because they did not look like pure NSs. However, once they were able to move beyond the identification difficulty, they had a tendency to favor BCTs, perceiving them as a combination of NESTs and NNESTs. Some of these students considered BCTs to possess qualities attributed to both NESTs and NNESTs, such as accent, communicative competence, English proficiency, English language based cultural knowledge, and at the same time, knowledge of the students’
L1 (in this case Arabic) and knowledge of the Egyptian culture. However, these results are exploratory due to the small sample size.

Conclusion

Bicultural EFL teachers and how they are categorized by their students is pertinent, novel, and most importantly a serious ethical issue in ESL/EFL research. Research shows that NESTs and NNESTs can both be successful EFL teachers, as they both possess their own strengths. However, the NS fallacy still exists in the EFL community, and therefore, it has become a challenge for NNESTs to maintain their credibility as competent teachers. Furthermore, some students tend to associate ideal teacher qualities with nativeness, a misconception that should be rectified in order to raise students’ awareness of the inaccuracy of the dichotomy and the presence of competent teachers that do not necessarily fall into their stereotyped image of the ideal teacher.

This study will attempt to elucidate some of the many unanswered questions regarding how students view BCTs in Egypt and how they categorize them. It will also explore how students perceive the ideal EFL teacher and which type of teacher they consider a closer image to that ideal EFL teacher. The results of this study might help amend the inaccuracy in the dichotomy currently used to define EFL teachers. In addition, it will shed some light on this possible third category of teachers and help the EFL community perceive other categories, similar to BCTs, which cannot be categorized using the dichotomy.
Chapter 3: Methodology and Data

As this chapter will explain, a questionnaire and focus groups were used to explore EFL students’ opinions about the ideal EFL teacher, in addition to how they identify BCTs. This chapter will first explain the research design used in this study and provide a brief description of the participants. Further, it will explain the methods of collecting data and provide a detailed description of the procedures.

Research Design

The design used for this study is a qualitative/exploratory/applied design. It is an exploratory study as it attempts to examine students’ attitudes and perceptions and does not seek to test certain hypotheses (Perry, 2005). In addition, it is an applied study as it deals with a societal problem in an attempt to find solutions to this problem (McKay, 2006).

Participants

The participants of this study were divided into two groups: a convenience sample of 61 undergraduate upper-intermediate EFL students (6 intact classes), and a convenience sample of 32 graduate upper-intermediate EFL students (3 intact classes). All participants attended the IEP (Intensive English Program) at AUC (American University in Cairo), which is an intensive English program that prepares students for their content classes at AUC.

Student consent. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to all the classes participating in the research. Each participant received a two-page consent form (see Appendix A). The first page included more information about the study, which the students were allowed to keep; the second page included the consent form, which the students were asked to sign. Finally, time was given for questions from the students about the study.
Method of Collecting Data

Due to the nature of the qualitative design of the study, and in order to triangulate findings and increase credibility, two methods of data collection were used:

1. Questionnaires
2. Focus groups

The Questionnaire. A questionnaire (see Appendix B) was used to collect data from both the undergraduate and graduate students. The questionnaire was chosen as a data collection method in this study as it is a convenient method to gather a large amount of attitudinal data in a short time (McKay, 2006). The questionnaire served two purposes: it helped derive a profile of the students, and the data obtained from it were crosschecked with the data obtained from the focus groups. This triangulates the findings and gives the results more credibility.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first sought to collect demographic data about the students and the second sought to survey the students’ views on NESTs, NNESTs, BCTs, and the ideal EFL teacher. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The use of closed-ended questions was based on Brown’s (2001) discussion of how closed-ended questions help preserve uniformity of the answers provided. He also stated that closed-ended questions make it easier for participants to interpret and answer questions, as well as decrease the number of questions skipped by students due to length and complexity. The questionnaire also included some open-ended questions to allow for free input.

Piloting the Questionnaire. The questionnaire was piloted by the researcher in Spring 2009, to 50 undergraduate students (three intact classes) in the IEP at the AUC. After piloting
the questionnaire, some changes were made, which included rewording some of the questions that were confusing, changing the order of some of the questions and grouping them into a more logical organization. In addition, some new questions were added in order to help address the research questions of the current study. Finally, the layout was improved and made into a colorful booklet to attract the students’ attention (see Appendix B).

**Preparing the new version of the questionnaire.** The researcher used a classroom for all the pictures and videos used in the questionnaire for two reasons. First, it was important that the pictures have the same background, and that the videos have the same setting and same content in order to avoid the introduction of any uncontrolled variables. Second, the researcher sought to provide a classroom setting that helped the students envision these teachers as actual teachers in a classroom.

**Pictures.** All the pictures were taken with the same background (white board in a classroom) and were all the same size.

**Videos.** Videos were all equal in length (about one minute each), and included the same setting. Teachers were asked to read the same text, which was a short explanation of the present perfect. The text was chosen to include an English teaching context in order to help the participants see these teachers as EFL teachers.

**Teachers.** The teachers were chosen in order to provide a variety of different images of NESTs, NNESTs and BCTs. There were eight teachers involved in the questionnaire: three NESTs, two NNESTs and three BCTs. BCTs were chosen from a variety of different cultures under the condition that one of the two cultures in which the BCTs had been immersed was the Egyptian culture. It is important for the purpose of the study to provide a summary of each teacher’s background.
The NESTs included: \textit{T1}: A NS of English, American nationality, white-skinned, blonde-colored hair, brown eyes, eight years experience; \textit{T4}: A NS, African/American ethnicity, black-skinned, black-colored hair, brown eyes, seven years experience; \textit{T6}: A NS, American nationality, white-skinned, brown-colored hair, brown eyes, five years experience in teaching.

The NNESTs included: \textit{T3}: A NNS, Egyptian nationality, fair-skinned, brown eyes, blonde-colored hair, over twenty years experience; \textit{T8}: A NNS, Egyptian nationality, fair-skinned, veiled (wears a headscarf), brown-colored eyes, five years experience in teaching.

The BCTs included: \textit{T2}: A BCT, British/Egyptian nationality, mother is British and father is Egyptian, fair-skinned, black-colored hair, brown eyes, over twenty years experience; \textit{T5}: A BCT, Swedish/Egyptian, her mother is Swedish and her father is Egyptian/Turkish, white-skinned, blonde-colored hair, blue eyes, over twenty years experience in teaching, spent her life between the UK, the United States and Egypt; \textit{T7}: A BCT, American/Egyptian nationality, both parents are Egyptian, moved from Egypt to the United States at the age of eight and returned to Egypt recently, fair-skinned, brown-colored hair, brown eyes, four years experience in teaching. T7 is also referred to as BCT2 in the study.

\textit{The Researcher}. The researcher is also referred to as \textit{BCT1} in the study, as she is one of two BCTs that teach the undergraduate classes participating in the study. The researcher was born in Ontario, Canada. She grew up speaking English as her first language, and could not speak Arabic until she was a teenager. She is of Egyptian ethnicity, and after moving to Egypt as a teenager, can now speak Arabic fluently.
The researcher was not included in the questionnaire to avoid introducing an uncontrolled variable, as she administered the questionnaire to the participants herself and therefore, the participants would have heard the researcher speak more than the rest of the teachers in the questionnaire. However, her class results were examined and compared to the overall results, as can be seen in the next chapter.

**Focus Groups.** Focus groups were used to collect additional data from the undergraduate and graduate students as they allowed students to share their views on different issues. Focus groups were chosen over interviews to allow a greater number of students to participate and allow the exchange of ideas, which can provoke debates and discussions. Three classes were involved in the focus groups: two undergraduate classes and one graduate class. The two undergraduate classes were chosen because they were taught by the three types of teachers (NESTs, NNESTs and BCTs), while the graduate class was chosen to examine the influence of age on the students’ opinions.

The focus groups were conducted a week after the questionnaire to allow the students time to reflect on the topic. They were all conducted by the researcher to control for any differences that might occur due to the presence of a different moderator for each focus group. The focus groups were conducted using pre-specified questions that were prepared beforehand based on the students’ responses to the questionnaire. In addition, the three focus groups were conducted within two consecutive days to control for the time variable. An example of these questions was: Can a NS of English look Egyptian? Why/ Why not? (See Appendix C for a list of the questions used in the focus groups.)
Procedures

1. Oral consent to participate in the study was obtained from all the participants in the IEP. The researcher guaranteed complete anonymity for all participants. (See Appendix A for student consent form). The IRB has already ruled this study as exempted (See Appendix D for IRB proposal & Appendix E for IRB acceptance letter).

2. The student questionnaire was administered to all classes by the researcher during three consecutive days to control for the time variable, and minimize the time students had to talk to each other about the topic, which might have influenced their responses.

3. Before the students were asked to answer the questionnaire, some terms were explained: bicultural teachers, code-switching, native speaker, non-native speaker and English culture. This was done to ensure that all the students understood these terms.

4. Students were asked to fill out the demographic part of the questionnaire first.

5. Next, the students were shown pictures of different teachers (NESTs, NNESTs, BCTs) on the computer screen and asked to fill out Question 1 of the questionnaire. They were then asked to watch a short (one-minute) video of the same teachers speaking, and answer Question 2 of the questionnaire.

6. Afterwards, the students were given time to complete the rest of the questionnaire.

7. Students were then given a few days to reflect more on the topic before conducting the focus groups.

8. A week later, focus groups were conducted by the researcher with three classes from the IEP: two undergraduate classes (taught by NESTs, NNESTs & BCTs) and one graduate class. The researcher conducted the focus groups using a prepared list of questions, which was created in order to complement the student questionnaire. In
other words, results of the questionnaire were analyzed first in order to discover any new patterns or issues that appeared in the questionnaire, which might need further clarification. The focus groups were videotaped.

**Method for Analysis of the Data**

**Questionnaires.** The questionnaires of each class were analyzed separately in order to detect any differences among classes and between age groups. This also enabled the researcher to disregard the identifications given by students for their class teachers, which would have introduced an uncontrolled variable into the analysis. The responses of the closed-ended questions were counted, tabulated and then analyzed using percentages or frequencies. The open-ended questions were transcribed and then analyzed to discover recurring patterns, and significant quotes were extracted. The responses from the participants were divided by variable into groups and compared together to discover any important differences that might have been influenced by those variables. Some of the variables that were considered were age, gender, languages spoken by students, type of past schools, experience with past teachers and cultural experience. In addition, percentages obtained from the closed-ended questions were compared to the patterns found in the open-ended questions to examine any differences between both results.

**Focus groups.** The focus group sessions were videotaped and then transcribed. Afterwards, a content analysis was conducted to capture the main ideas in the data. The transcribed data were also coded for positive and negative remarks made about NESTs, NNESTs and BCTs. In addition, significant quotes were extracted from the transcribed data. Finally, patterns from the focus groups were compared to the results obtained from the questionnaire to triangulate the data.
Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, the results obtained from the questionnaire and the focus groups are reported. They are organized in a question-answer format, where the results obtained from each question are reported with the aid of some illustrative charts. The results are divided into two sections: Questionnaire, which includes the results obtained from the questionnaire and Focus Groups, which includes the results obtained from the focus group. The section reporting the results from the questionnaire is divided into two subsections: Survey Questions, which includes the information derived from the students’ responses to the survey questions, and Demographic Data, which includes significant demographic data derived from the demographic section in the survey. The results are discussed as overall results of all participating classes (61 undergraduates and 32 graduates). In addition, the results of each class were calculated separately to account for any differences among class responses. Any significant differences found between classes are mentioned, and correlations with demographic data are noted as well.

Two of the undergraduate classes were taught by the three types of teachers (NESTs, NNESTs and BCTs). The BCTs of these two classes are referred to as BCT1 and BCT2, where BCT1 is the researcher and BCT2 is one of the BCTs in the questionnaire (T7). In addition, identifications made by students regarding their own class teachers were disregarded as the results showed that they all identified them correctly, which is because they are already familiar with these teachers and their backgrounds. This was confirmed by some statements made by the students when their class teachers appeared on the screen, such as “We don’t need to see the video, we already hear her every day.”
Questionnaire

Survey Questions

Q1 & Q2. The first two questions asked the students to identify eight teachers and categorize them as NESTs, NNESTs or BCTs. The first question asked the students to identify the teachers based on their pictures only (before the watching the video), while the second question asked the students to watch a one-minute video of the same teachers and then identify them once again (the students were allowed to change their responses from Q1). The students were asked to make eight identifications after seeing the pictures and then eight identifications after watching the videos, resulting in 16 identifications. The average number of correct identifications per student was 9 out of 16, with a maximum number of 14 correct identifications and a minimum number of 3 correct identifications (see Figure 4-1).

Figure 4-1. Number of correct identifications given by students.
As illustrated in Figure 4-2, it can be seen that the teachers with the highest number of correct identifications were T1, T6 and T8, followed by T3 and T4. However, it is clear that there is a considerable difference between the number of correct identifications for teachers T2, T5 and T7 and the rest of the teachers shown in the questionnaire, as the number of correct identifications is greatly fewer for these three teachers, who are the three BCTs.

The students were asked to identify eight teachers: three NESTs, two NNESTs and three BCTs. By taking a detailed look at the results of each teacher, we notice the following: (Please note that the correct identification for each teacher is shown in the charts as a bold and larger font).
Most students identified this NEST correctly (See Figure 4-3).

This BCT was identified as a NNEST by most students. Even after watching the video, the number of students that identified T2 as a NNEST increased (see Figure 4-4).
Figure 4-5. Identification of T3.

This NNEST was identified correctly as a NNEST by most students. However, there were some students that identified her as a BCT (see Figure 4-5).

Figure 4-6. Identification of T4.

This NEST was identified correctly by many students. However, there were some students that identified her as a BCT (see Figure 4-6).
This BCT was perceived as a NEST by a large number of students before watching the video. However, after watching the video, there was a noticeable drop in the number of students that identified her as a NEST, and more students identified her as a NNEST or BCT (see Figure 4-7).

This NEST was correctly identified by a large number of students. However, some students identified her as a BCT (see Figure 4-8).
This teacher was identified as a NNEST by many students. However, she was also identified correctly as a BCT by several students as well (see Figure 4-9).

This teacher was identified correctly as a NNEST by most students (see Figure 4-10).
Q3-A: What is a native speaker? Before asking the students how they perceive BCTs, it was important to know how they identified a native speaker. The answers to this question were quite similar, such as “someone whose first language is English”, “someone who is American”, “who comes from America or Canada that English is the first language to him”, “a person who lived in a place that talked English like America, England, etc.”, “he/she speaks English and lives in an English country and brought up in English culture”, “who speaks the first language he learnt as a child”, “someone whose first language is English”, “mostly look like English people or other ethnics who live in UK, USA, etc.”

Q3-B: What does a native speaker of English look like? This question was asked in order to clarify the extent to which students depend on appearance in their perception of nativeness, and if they have a pre-conceived notion or stereotype of how a NS should look like. Many of the responses referred to the common perception that a native speaker is “blonde” and “has green eyes”. Other noteworthy statements that were mentioned by the students were “looks like he lives abroad”, “unveiled and blonde”, “looks white” and “look like an American/ foreigner”.

Other statements show that some students are aware that a NS does not have to be blonde, white and blue-eyed, such as “some are black some are white”, “I am against stereotyping, white and black people both talk English” and “may be negro, may have blue eyes and yellow hair”. In addition, there were responses that showed that some students did not think that native speakers looked a certain way, as some of the students said, “it doesn’t matter how he looks like”, “it doesn’t depend on the shape” and “doesn’t have to be blonde”. Even though the question asked about appearance, there were several responses that referred
to accent or speech, such as “talks in a specific way”, “his way of talking”, “I can assume it from pronunciation”, “speaks with a perfect accent” and “it all depends on the accent.”

Figure 4.11. What does a NS look like?

Figure 4-11 shows the percentage of responses for each of the following categories: speech/accent, blonde/white/blue eyes, white or black, general appearance, attitude, the way he/she dresses, depends/differs/no specific look and no response provided. As can be seen in the figure, the most frequent characteristic students used to identify NSs was accent, followed by being white, blonde, blue-eyed and then general appearance characteristics. It is also noticeable that 16 students did not respond which may indicate confusion, no strongly held opinions by this group of students or disinterest in the topic.
**Q3-C: Would you consider a bicultural teacher a NS of English, a NS of Arabic or other?** This question is crucial to the study as it explores students’ perception of BCTs.

![Pie chart showing responses to Q3-C](image)

**Figure 4-12**. Would you consider a bicultural teacher a NS of English, a NS of Arabic or other?

As shown in Figure 4-12, both choices (NS of English and NS of Arabic) were chosen almost equally with a slightly larger number of students that perceive BCTs as NSs of Arabic (42%), rather than NSs of English (37%). Fifteen percent of the students chose “other” in the questionnaire and their comments included “no difference because he lived in both cultures”, “speaks English and Arabic well”, “has a balance between them”, “depends on the time spent away from NS country”, “both Arabic and English”, “both, depends on lifetime” and “speaks both languages with same skill and perfect accent.”

**Q4-A&B: Can you tell a teacher is a native speaker of English before/after you know his/her name? If yes, how?** To clarify further how students identify nativeness and native speakers of English, they were asked if they could identify NSs before or after they knew their names. A large number of students (71%) stated that they could identify NSs before they knew their names, while some students (29%) said they could not. Similarly,
many students stated that they could identify NSs after they knew their names (60%), while some (40%) said they could not. The second part of this question was open-ended, asking the students to specify how they could identify NSs before/after knowing their names. The results are illustrated in Figure 4-13 & Figure 4-14.

**Figure 4-13.** How students identify NS before knowing their names.

The data show a great dependence on accent to identify NSs before knowing their names together with appearance. A few students stated that attitude and style of the individuals also influenced their perception before knowing a NS’s name. Some of the responses given were “his looks”, “by the accent and attitude when speaking”, “accent and style of clothes” and “different in the way she acts, talking or smiling.”
The results also show that most students use name, together with accent, to identify native speakers after they know their names. When asked how they use the name for identification, some of the responses given by students were “the name will say if he/she is from Arab countries or American and European”, “her name will indicate whether she is a NEST or not”, “native teachers have different names than Egyptians”, “they have special names” and “because the names of NSs are English names.”

**Q5-A: Would you prefer to be taught by a NEST, NNEST, BCT or does not matter?**

In order to explore students’ preference regarding EFL teachers, they were asked if they would prefer to be taught by a NEST, a NNEST or a BCT. As illustrated in Figure 4-15, students expressed a higher preference for NESTs followed by BCTs, and finally, NNESTs with the lowest number of preferences. It is also noticeable that a number of students chose *does not matter*, which indicates that some students are aware the nativeness is not the only factor to consider in an EFL teacher.
By comparing the two undergraduate classes taught by BCTs, it can be seen that the classes taught by BCT1 (researcher) and BCT2 (T7) show different results from the total. The class taught by BCT1 did not show a difference in the overall preference of NESTs (58%). However, the second preference was for NNESTs (25%), followed by BCTs (17%), which...
differs from the total. In addition, the class taught by BCT2 (T7) shows a remarkable preference for BCTs (82%); the rest of the students (18%) chose does not matter. The possible reasons for these differences are mentioned in the discussion section.

When asked for the reasons behind their preference of BCTs, the students gave various comments which included “she would know Arabic and English culture”, “to learn more about cultures”, “because he has both languages and is perfect in both”, “to give me the culture of the other country and understand me at the same time” and “because she will be able to contrast and illustrate something by the language which I am native of.”

Comments regarding their preference for NESTs included “she will teach better English skills”, “because I will learn more and very well”, “she will help me talk English all the time”, “they have better accent, grammar and vocabulary”, “to learn the right accent”, “to learn the real accent” and “to learn the real English”. Comments regarding their preference for NNESTs were few and included “I can understand everything a NNEST explains”, “easy to deal with, understood accent, able to translate to my language” and “to be able to communicate with us more.” There were also some interesting comments from the students that chose does not matter, such as “they will benefit me from different sides”, “it depends on his way of teaching”, “it depends on teacher qualifications and the ability to deal with students” and “the most important thing is to be knowledgeable.”

**Q5 B: Which type of teacher did you learn better from?** This question was not worded accurately, as it assumes that all the students have experienced the three types of teachers, which is not the case. However, by looking at the students’ responses to this question, it is clear that their responses indicate a future conditional that would occur in the
event of experiencing the three types of teachers. Based on the previous reason, the data from this question is displayed due to its significance to the study.

The data show a higher preference for NESTs, followed by BCTs, and finally, NNESTs with the smallest number of preferences (see Figure 4-18). It is also noticeable that a large number of students chose does not matter which indicates that some students are aware that nativeness is not the only factor to consider in an EFL teacher.

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**Figure 4-18.** Which type of teacher did you learn better from?

**Figure 4-19.** Which teacher did you learn better from? (BCT1 class)

**Figure 4-20.** Which teacher did you learn better from? (BCT2 class)
By comparing the results from the classes taught by the BCTs to the total results, it can be seen that the results from the class taught by BCT1 (Figure 4-19) and BCT2 (Figure 4-20) show a noticeable difference from the total (Figure 4-18). The students in the class taught by BCT1 did not show a considerable difference in the overall belief that they learned better from NESTs (50%). However, the second preference was for NNESTs (33%), followed by BCTs (17%) which differs from the total. The class taught by BCT2 (T7) strongly believed that they learned better from BCTs (36%), as opposed to 18% for NNESTs and 9% for NESTs. Another clear difference in the results of this class from the rest of the classes and the overall results was the large number of students that chose no difference (36%). The possible reasons for these differences are mentioned in the discussion section.

By comparing responses of graduate and undergraduate students (see Figure 4-21), it can be seen that many graduate students state that they learn better from a NEST, followed by no difference, BCTs, and finally, NNESTs with noticeably lower percentages. Even though undergraduate students also state that they learn better from a NEST, the percentage of
undergraduate students that think they learn better from BCTs (38%) is considerably higher than the percentage of graduate students that believe that they learn better from BCTs. Similar to graduate students, some undergraduates think that the type of teacher makes no difference.

When asked to clarify their answers, students that stated that they learn better from NESTs gave reasons such as “they make us feel there’s too much to achieve, so we try and try,” “she is a good teacher,” “because she is a NS,” “because she teaches us the right language,” “she has more experience,” “NSs’ influence is better than others” and “they have a better way in teaching.” Some of the reasons given by the students for learning better from a BCT were “she knows our culture and at the same time teaches us other cultures”, “because she knows both languages” and “she knows what the problem is easier because she know both cultures and languages” Some of the reasons given by the students for learning better from NNESTs were “easy to understand her”, “some difficult words in English are better to be understood in Arabic”, and “they know we aren’t very good in English.” Finally, some of the reasons given by the students for no difference include “it depends on the personality of the teacher not where they came from” and “it depends on the teacher’s way of teaching.”

Moreover, the results from Q5-A (Would you prefer to be taught by a NEST, NNEST, BCT or does not matter?) were compared to the results of Q5-B (Which type of teacher did you learn better from?), where different responses to these two questions were given a code and similar responses were given a different code. A total number of different responses and a total number of similar responses were obtained. The results showed that more than 50% of the students had different answers to both questions.
**Q5 C: Does having a NEST or NNEST affect how well you learn?** The data indicated that students’ responses to this question were almost equally divided (53% of the students responded with *yes* and 47% of the students responded *no*). However, there were slightly more students that thought that the type of teacher *does* affect how well they learn. Among the comments from the students that chose *Yes* were “everything in the process of learning can be affected by the teacher”, “if NEST teaches you, you will be like a NEST”, “NEST increase my knowledge of English”, “NEST is better for my accent”, “NESTs will always talk with you in English so you will learn a lot from her accent and how she speaks” and “I’ll try to copy her style that makes me like NS.”

Examples of some comments made by the students that chose *No* were “I can learn from both”, “it depends on the quality of the teacher first”, “I can deal with both any way but it depends on my effort to learn”, “both NEST and NNEST should be qualified enough to be a good teacher” and “it depends on how this teacher can deliver information.”

![Figure 4-22. Does having a NEST or NNEST affect how well you learn? (UGs vs. Grads)](image)

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On comparing the data obtained from graduates and undergraduates regarding this question (see Figure 4-22), the data indicate that undergraduates chose both options almost equally with a slightly higher percentage of students choosing \textit{no}. In addition, a higher percentage of graduate students think that their teachers have an effect on how well they learn (62\%) as opposed to 38\% that think that they do not.

\textbf{Q5 D: Do you think it is important for your teacher to speak your first language?}

The results show that students are indecisive on whether it is better that their teacher knows their first language, as 48\% of the students that think it is important and 52\% of the students think that it is not important. Some of the reasons given by the students for why knowledge of their first language was important were “to understand me if I am not able to explain in English” and “it does not have to be fluent but at least have basic background about our cultures and languages.” In addition, some of the reasons given for why it was not important were “it doesn’t matter as long as we can interact and “it's not imp for me because I need to force my English only.”

\textbf{Q6 A: Name three qualities you think are most important in an English teacher.} As illustrated in Figure 4-23, the quality mentioned most frequently by this group of students as an important quality for an English teacher was accent, followed by being friendly and caring, knowledge of English, good teaching strategies, having a strong personality, teaching experience, and finally, being patient and understanding. Note that the data ranked with minimal results are not displayed.
Q6 B: Can all the qualities you mentioned (in the previous question) be found in NESTs only, NNESTs only or BCTs only? To clarify their preference for teachers further, the students were asked if they could find the most important qualities, they had mentioned in the previous question, in NESTs only, NNESTs only or BCTs only. The majority of the students chose either NESTs or BCTs, with a slightly higher percentage of students that chose NESTs. The NNESTs choice has a noticeably smaller number of votes from the students (see Figure 4-24). An interesting point was that several students (22%) did not choose any of the three options, as they thought these qualities could be found in all three. Some of the comments mentioned by those students were “it can be found in any kind of teacher”, “all teachers could have these qualities” and “it can be all three.”

Figure 4-23. Most important qualities in an EFL teacher.
Some of the reasons given by students for why they thought the qualities they mentioned in the previous question could be found in NESTs only were “it's better to learn English from people that speak it the most”, “it's their native language” and “they have good accents”. Reasons for why they believed these qualities were found in NNESTs only included “he knows how to treat the people of his country and he was a student before them” and “NNEST can be more patient because he knows or understand our situation”. Finally, reasons given for why they believed BCTs were the only teachers that possessed these important qualities included “she knows the culture of these languages”, “he know Arabic and English”, “she has both cultures experience” and “has more than one culture which affect us in a correct way”.

Q6 C: Which of these qualities is the most important in an English teacher? As shown in Figure 4-25, when students were given a more closed-ended question (with only four choices) regarding the most important quality in an English teacher, teaching experience was chosen as the most important. This choice was closely followed by accent, then
knowledge of English and the least important quality to this group of students was knowledge of their first language (Arabic).

Figure 4-25. Most important qualities in an EFL teacher.

**Q6 D: Do you think knowledge of the English culture is important in an English teacher?** The results show a clear belief by these students in the importance of English language-based cultural knowledge in their English teachers (76% of the students said yes and 24% of the students said no). Some of the reasons mentioned by the students regarding its importance were “important because when you teach something you should know everything about it”, “when learning a new language you must know its culture”, “helps in understanding the language”, “he can’t teach without it” and “we want to speak language to another country, we have to know how they think and what situation they use them.” Other reasons given by students who felt it was not important were “I don’t need to know the culture to speak the language”, “we learn languages not cultures” and “it doesn’t matter in teaching.”
**Q7 A: What are the characteristics of an ideal teacher?** This open-ended question was coded for different characteristics mentioned by the students, each of these characteristics was then counted and tabulated. Data ranked with minimal responses are not displayed (see Figure 4-26).

![Figure 4-26. Qualities of an ideal EFL teacher.](image)

As illustrated in Figure 4-26, accent is the most frequent quality mentioned by students in their description of their ideal EFL teacher followed by teaching experience, knowledge of English, and being friendly and caring. Other qualities that were also mentioned frequently were patient and understanding, strong personality, good teaching strategies, ability to motivate students, knowledge of English language-based culture, Arabic language-based culture, and knowledge of the Arabic language.

**Q7 B: Which of type of teacher is closest to your image of an ideal EFL teacher?**

As can be seen in Figure 4-27, students chose NESTs (44%) and BCTs (43%) almost equally as representatives of their ideal teachers. In addition, NNESTs were chosen by only 9% of
students, leaving only 4% of students that did not think a specific type of teacher was closer to their ideal image of an EFL teacher.

Some of the reasons given by students to clarify their choice of a NEST were “they are more knowledgeable and can teach us better”, “they are aware of their English culture”, “they have better ways in teaching” and “he will be the only one who can make the image true”. Some of the reasons given by students that chose NNESTs were “they have the same culture and also know English” and “he may know my language well and give the students more attention”. Finally, reasons given by students for perceiving BCTs as a closer image to their ideal teacher were “she is having Arabic and English native”, “knows both cultures”, “he/she will be able to relate with me” and “she has a lot of experience.”

Moreover, on comparing the results from Q5-A (Would you prefer to be taught by a NEST, NNEST, BCT or does not matter?) to the results of Q7-B (Which type of teacher is closest to your image of an ideal EFL teacher?), more than 60% of the students had the same answers for both questions.
**Demographic data.** The influence of several demographic variables on the students’ responses to the questionnaire was examined. These variables were age, gender, languages spoken by students, type of past schools, experience with past teachers and cultural experience. However, the only variables that showed a noticeable effect were experience with past teachers and age. The effect of age on the results has been discussed throughout this chapter by comparing undergraduate to graduate students’ responses, only data that showed considerable differences were displayed. This section discusses the second variable that showed an effect on the students’ responses, which is *experience with past teachers*.

**Experience with past teachers.** As illustrated in Figure 4-28, students participating in this study were mostly exposed to NNESTs during their school experience, with only few students who had experienced NESTs and BCTs. This is calculated as a percentage of students exposed to each teacher, so if a student was exposed to two types of teachers it would be calculated towards both. In addition, it is important to note that the students were not categorized as students that have experienced only one type or more than one type of teacher, but rather if they had experienced each type of teacher at all in order to investigate if that would affect their responses.
Figure 4-28. Type of teachers the participating students were exposed to at school.

When asked if having a NEST or NNEST affects how well they learn, students that had been taught by NESTs did not think it had an effect, students taught by NNESTs seemed to be undecided with almost equal numbers for both choices, and students taught by BCTs show a clear belief that it has an effect (see Figure 4-29).

Figure 4-29. Effect of past teachers on students’ opinion about teachers’ effect on learning.
As can be seen in Figure 4-30, the data indicate that students taught in school by NNESTs saw NESTs and BCTs as closer images of the ideal teacher, while students taught by NESTs and BCTs saw BCTs as the closest image to the ideal teacher.

*Figure 4-30. Effect of past teachers on ideal teacher perception.*
Focus Groups

How many types of teachers did you think there were before you participated in this research? When students were asked how many types of teachers, they thought there were before participating in this survey, it was a consensus that they thought there were two types: NESTs and NNESTs. Some mentioned that they had experienced BCTs but could not categorize them at the time.

Why do you think accent is the most important quality in an English teacher? The results from the questionnaire showed that these students believed accent to be the most important quality in an English teacher. During the focus groups, students were asked why they thought it was important and their answers mainly included “to get the accent”, “to learn better”, and “to understand better”.

Do you think it is important that your teacher have knowledge about Arabic culture? The questionnaire included an explicit question on whether students thought knowledge of English language-based culture was important in an English teacher, but it did not include a question regarding the importance of Arabic language-based cultural knowledge. During the focus group, they were asked about the importance of knowledge of Arabic language-based culture and their response was that they believed it was important. The main reason behind this belief was that they thought it would be easier for their teacher to “deal” with them. During the focus groups, several comments were made that showed the importance of knowledge of Arabic language-based culture as well as English language-based culture in an EFL teacher to this group of students, such as “it is better if a NEST understands our culture”, “I prefer NESTs but they must have some knowledge about my culture” and “the advantage of a BCT is that she knows the Egyptian culture.”
Do you think it is an advantage for your teacher to speak Arabic? Some students said yes, some of the reasons were “it’s better for our teacher to know Arabic because she can figure the problems we suffer from” and “to help us with difficult words”. Others disagreed and thought it was not important that he/she speak Arabic because, as one of the students said, “we are learning English not Arabic.” Some even saw it as disadvantage because “sometimes BCTs and NNESTs use Arabic in class.”

Do you feel more comfortable when you know that your teacher speaks Arabic even if she does not use it class? Why? Most of the students said yes. Some of the reasons given were “she can support us” and “she can help us if we need it.”

If you could choose between a NEST of English with very little teaching experience and a NNEST with a lot more experience, who would you choose? Why? Some of the students said that they would choose the NEST because of the accent. Others said they would choose the NNEST because teaching experience was more important. Some of the students’ comments were “to know how to deal with students” and “because it is not only about experience in the knowledge but also how to make a good relationship with students”. There were other interesting comments made by some students, such as “it’s all about how to deliver the message” and “an intermediate teacher should be Arabic, while an advance teacher should be native”.

Do you think that a BCT is different from a “pure NEST” or a “pure NNEST”? The students participating in the three focus groups all agreed that a BCT was different from a “pure NEST” and a “pure NNEST”. One of the students said, “something in the middle”. Other comments included “different”, “have features of both NESTs and NNESTs” and “a combination of both NESTs and NNESTs”.

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The results of the questionnaire showed a very close preference between NEST/BCT, do you think there is a difference between both? Why? All students agreed that there was a difference. Some of the comments made about NESTs were “they have better English”, “better ways of teaching”, “always better at teaching”, “more sense” and “can present her culture better.” Some of the comments mentioned about BCTs were “can understand Arabic words”, “understand our culture”, “they have the dual advantage” and “may still make mistakes”.

How do you categorize a BCT? Some of you said that you would consider a BCT a NS of English, some said a NS of Arabic and some said both. Why? An interesting point that arose in two of the focus groups regarding how BCTs were categorized was that they all agreed it depended on where teachers had spent their childhood, and that they would be more similar to a NEST if they had spent their childhood in an English-speaking country and vice-versa. They also mentioned that it was a matter of “relating” to a specific country or culture, one student said, “It depends on the person. One can be related to Egypt more or America more.” She then used T2 (a BCT) as an example of a teacher that related more to Egypt because of her style of clothing. In addition, several students thought that it was difficult for a BCT to be equally fluent in both languages and that one language was usually stronger than the other one was.

How do you identify a BCT? When students were asked how they identified BCTs, they said, “when they introduce themselves”, “from their accent, it’s close to a NEST” and “the shape is different”. Another comment made by a student was “the features of NESTs and NNESTs found in one teacher”. During the focus groups, the researcher asked the students how they would identify her. Some students said a BCT because of the accent, and several students said a NNEST with a “perfect” accent because she “looked like an Egyptian”.

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However, when she asked about T7 (BCT2) most of the students identified her as a BCT even though they thought she looked Egyptian as well. The possible reasons behind this conception are mentioned in the discussion section.

**Can a NS look Egyptian?** Students were confused and could not come up with a definitive response to this question. Some thought it was possible: “US has different cultures”, “yes, born and raised as a second or third generation” and “if an Egyptian spent their entire life in the USA.” Others thought it was not possible: “still looks like her culture” and “a NS has a definitive look.”

**Most of you thought that T2 was a NNEST, and T5 was a NEST, what made you think so?** T7 was confusing to most of you, what confused you about her? After analyzing the questionnaire, the researcher noticed that each of the BCTs were identified differently, T2 was mostly identified as a NNEST, T5 as a NEST and T7 as a NNEST or a BCT. She asked the students to clarify these choices, and many of the students were still confused or still had difficulty identifying the BCTs. They engaged in side conversations discussing their opinions during the focus groups. The main reasons given by the students for their identification of the three BCTs were:

T2: “features”, “the way she dresses”, “accent close to Egyptian” and “speaks slowly like an Egyptian.”

T5: “features”, “the way she looks” and “looks like a foreigner”.

T7: “accent” and “face looks Egyptian”

**Identifying Nativeness.** An interesting point that several students made throughout the focus groups was that they could identify NESTs by their style, clothing and attitude. “It’s
a feeling you get” was a comment made by one student. Another student said, “It’s not something tangible, it’s something you feel.”

**Coding of the data.** The data from the focus groups was coded for positive comments made by the students, in addition to how frequent each comment was mentioned. It is important to note that only questions that allowed free input on the three types of teachers were coded.

Table 4-1.

*Positive comments.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BCTs</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand us</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better ways of teaching</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure out problems we suffer from</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve my English</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have features of both NESTs and NNESTs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not use Arabic in class</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right accent</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know both languages</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More English knowledge</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know Arabic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have knowledge of both cultures</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total frequency</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESTs</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with translation of diff words</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier to deal with</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows Arabic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More English knowledge</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total frequency</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNESTs</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total frequency</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen in Table 4-1, the positive comments made about BCTs included seven different categories, those made about NESTs included five different categories and the positive comments made about NNESTs included only three different categories. By looking at the frequency of comments in each category, the data indicate 26 positive comments about BCTs, 19 positive comments about NESTs and 6 positive comments about NNESTs.

Table 4-2.

Negative comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BCTs</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>NESTs</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>NNESTs</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use Arabic in class</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May make mistakes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks quickly</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not make class interesting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not speak fluently</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk in Arabic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total frequency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 4-2, the negative comments made about BCTs included two categories, those made about NESTs included two categories, and the negative comments made about NNESTs included three categories. By looking at the frequency of comments in each category, the data indicate four negative comments about BCTs, five negative comments about NESTs and six negative comments about NNESTs. It is important to note that only questions that allowed free input on the three types of teachers were coded.
Chapter 5: Discussion & Conclusion

This chapter is divided into two sections: Discussion and Conclusion. It will summarize and discuss the results presented in the previous chapter. In addition, it will explain the conclusions of this study and their implications for the EFL community. Finally, the limitations of the study will be presented, followed by proposed recommendations for future research.

Discussion

This section includes a discussion of the findings presented in the previous chapter. It is divided into the following categories: identifying nativeness, students’ preference of EFL teachers, effect of teacher nativeness on learning, students’ perception of EFL teacher qualities, students’ perception of the ideal EFL teacher, and the effect of demographic variables on results.

Identifying Nativeness. How students identify nativeness is relevant to the present study, as it helps identify how students perceive BCTs, which is needed in order to answer the research questions. As seen in the results section, the teachers who received the highest number of correct identifications in the first and second questions of the questionnaire (which asked the students to identify teachers as NESTs, NNESTs or BCTs after seeing their pictures and then once again after watching a short video of them) were T1, T6 and T8. By looking at their characteristics, it is clear that students were influenced by visual characteristics in their identification of these three teachers, since T1 (NEST) is a Caucasian with blonde hair, T6 (NEST) is a Caucasian with brown hair, and T8 (NNEST) wears a veil. This suggests that students are affected by stereotyping, as the teachers that were identified correctly by most
students were typical images of the NEST and the NNEST. However, T3 and T4 were more difficult for students to identify, which could be due to the fact that T3 is an unveiled NNEST who has been teaching for over 20 years at an American university and therefore, has been in contact with many NESTs over the years. This theory corroborates Reves and Medgyes’ (1994) findings that NNESTs’ frequent contact with NESTs enables them to communicate more fluently and with greater language authenticity. In addition, T4 is an African American who could resemble certain Egyptian ethnicities, and therefore, might be mistaken for an Egyptian, which could account for the number of students that identified her as a BCT (about 36%). Another interesting observation in the results of these two questions was that the teachers with the least number of correct identifications were the three BCTs. This suggests confusion and inability to categorize these teachers.

**Identifying NSs and NNSs.** Some of the students defined a native speaker as a person whose “only language” is English, which supports Phillipson’s theory of the monolingual fallacy that the ideal English teacher is a monolingual NEST. However, the most common definition given by students when defining NSs was “a person whose first language is English”. This response could have been influenced by the researcher as she had explained the terms NEST, NNEST and BCT to the students before they were asked to complete the questionnaire. In addition, an obvious pattern of using nationalities to identify NSs was found in the responses given by the students, they identified NSs as being of certain nationalities, which were mainly American and British (a few mentioned Canadian). Other factors that were found to be used by students to identify NSs were time spent in an English-speaking country and experience with English language-based culture.

Results also show that many students were confused when asked to identify what a NS looks like, which was obvious in the many responses given by students that included
accent, which is not related to appearance. It appears that many students misunderstood the question, mentioning accent (29 students) and attitude (4 students) as ways to describe what a NS looks like, despite the fact that these are not visual characteristics. However, this also indicates the importance of accent to this group of students in identifying NSs. The results confirm Filho’s (2002) statement about students believing a NEST was white, blonde and blue-eyed. This can be noticed in the high number of responses that included any of the above three words (20 responses), which were the most frequent responses given after accent. However, some students did state that a NS could be white or black, where black is assumed to be a word used by students to describe African Americans. However, it must be noted that only two ethnicities were mentioned by the students when identifying NSs, with no reference to other ethnicities, such as Asians or Hispanics. The reason for this might be that the students use nationalities to identify NSs. From the responses given in the questionnaire, students have shown to associate a NS with an American nationality, which they may believe is represented by Caucasians or African Americans only.

By triangulating these results with those of the focus groups, the students’ confusion in identifying a NS was confirmed. When students were asked if a NS could be Egyptian, they seemed confused and had opposing opinions. However, only a few students were able to make the connection and identify this case as that of a BCT. Therefore, most students see NSs as individuals possessing a certain physical appearance, and would assume any individual lacking that traditional appearance to be a NNS. In addition, it seems that students have another tool to help them identify NSs, which is names. Comments made by the students regarding using names to identify NSs suggest that they only perceive individuals with English names as NSs.
Even though the results show that most students use accent and appearance to identify NSs, some students seem to be aware of the fact that a NS does not have to have a specific appearance and that not all NSs are white and blonde individuals. This was clear in some of the statements made by the students, such as “it doesn’t depend on the shape”, “doesn’t have to be blonde”, “no specific look” and “like anyone else”.

In conclusion, the most important key element to this group of students in identifying NSs was accent. Appearance is the second factor, which implies that a NEST that did not look like a typical NS would be considered a NNEST until proven otherwise. Similarly, NSs with non-English names or accents would not be identified as NSs and would be assumed NNESTs.

**Identifying BCTs.** This section will examine how students identify and categorize BCTs in order to answer the second research question of this study: how do students perceive bicultural teachers?

a. Do they categorize them using the NS/NNS dichotomy?

b. Do they use a different conceptual approach?

By examining how students identified each BCT, it was clear that each BCT was identified differently. The following is a discussion of how each BCT was identified and the possible reasons behind each identification:

**T2.** T2 is a BCT who was identified by most students as a NNEST from the picture (before the video), with an increase in the number of students identifying her as a NNEST after watching the video. When asked during the focus groups why they identified T2 as a NNEST, one of the students said, “She relates more to Egypt, you can tell from her clothes.” Other students said, “Features”, “accent close to an Egyptian”, and “she speaks slowly like an
Egyptian.” Therefore, it seems that she was identified as a NNEST because of her appearance, which did not resemble that of a NS. In addition, the soft British accent and lower speed with which she spoke may resemble an Egyptian English accent.

T5. T5 is a BCT who was identified by most students as a NEST after seeing only her picture. However, after watching the video the number of students identifying her as a NEST dropped greatly, with more students identifying her as a NNEST or a BCT. When students were asked during the focus groups about the reasons for their choice, some of the responses were “the way she looks”, “she looks like a foreigner”, and “she has a different accent.” This implies that the students saw the white, blonde, blue-eyed teacher as a typical image of a NEST, but when they heard her speak with a “different” accent, became confused and began to identify her differently.

T7. T7 is a BCT who was first identified by most students as a NNEST, and as a BCT by a number of others. However, after watching the video, some of the students changed their response from NNEST and BCT to NEST, which indicates that perhaps T7’s American accent confused them. Students were asked the reasons for their identification of this BCT, and their responses included “accent”, and “face looks Egyptian.” It seems that students had difficulty identifying this BCT as her features resembled that of an Egyptian but her accent did not. However, an interesting observation is that all the students taught by T7 identified her correctly as a BCT, which implies that students may have less difficulty identifying BCTs after getting to know them.

In addition, students felt confused when asked to categorize BCTs as either NESTs or NNESTs with both choices being chosen almost equally (see Figure 4-12). On the other hand, a few students were able to categorize BCTs as being different from either NESTs or NNESTs, and therefore, were not able or willing to use this dichotomy in categorizing them.
Furthermore, during the focus groups when the researcher explicitly asked the students if they thought a BCT was different from a pure NEST and a pure NNEST, there was a consensus that a BCT was different. Moreover, many students saw BCTs as being a combination of both NESTs and NNESTs, which is clear in some of the statements made by the students such as, “have features of both NESTs and NNESTs.”

By triangulating and crosschecking the data from the questionnaire together with data from the focus groups, the fact that students had been using the NS/NNS dichotomy to identify teachers was established. The students participating in the focus groups stated that they previously thought there were only two categories of English teachers: NESTs and NNESTs, which implies that they were unaware of the possibility of a third category of teachers before they were introduced to BCTs during the questionnaire session. However, some of these students had been exposed to BCTs and were able to understand that these teachers were different but had not been able to categorize them.

Probing further during the focus groups into how these students categorized BCTs revealed that they believed that it depended on where this teacher spent his/her childhood. The reason behind this could be the lack of the “perfect” accent in teachers that have not spent their childhoods in English-speaking countries, which has been shown to be an essential factor in identifying NESTs. In addition, some of the students thought it was about how much time a BCT spent in an English-speaking country, which might account for the perception of BCT2 (T7) as a BCT by more students than those that perceived BCT1 (researcher) as one. These opinions were expressed by a few students in the focus groups and the rest of the students strongly agreed. Another point, which arose in the focus groups and coincided with the results from the questionnaire, was that the students agreed that it was not just accent or appearance that helped them identify BCTs, but also style of clothes and attitude.
In conclusion, students seem to have difficulty identifying BCTs as a NS of either language. Instead, they perceive them as a different type of teacher who combines different qualities of both NESTs and NNESTs. There are perhaps two reasons for this. First, although some students seemed to have difficulty using the N/NN dichotomy to identify BCTs, they still tried to categorize them using the dichotomy, rather than another conceptual approach. This suggests that students are used to identifying their teachers using the dichotomy, but after being exposed to the concept of a BCT, may decide that they cannot be categorized using this dichotomy. In addition, a small number of students were aware of the fact that these teachers were different and tried to use another conceptual approach to categorize them as they saw them as a combination of both NESTs and NNESTs.

**Students’ preference of EFL teachers.** Another important dimension of student perception relates to their preferences for NESTs, NNESTs or BCTs. The findings of this study show an overall preference of NESTs (51%), followed by BCTs (32%), then NNESTs (5%) and no preference (12%). The results of this study corroborate Amin’s (1999) results, which support the existence of the NS fallacy among EFL/ESL students.

Even though the overall preference for this group of students was for NESTs, BCTs were still chosen as the preference for a substantial number of students. The results of the two classes taught by BCTs were examined to see if this had an effect on students’ perception of BCTs. The class taught by BCT1 (researcher) showed a higher preference for NESTs (58%) but at the same time showed a high percentage for preference of NNESTs (25%) followed by BCTs (17%). Similarly, the class taught by BCT2 (T7) had different results than the total as the majority of students (82%) chose BCTs as their preference and the remaining 18% chose *does not matter*. The reason behind this preference could be due to the fact that BCT2 was
identified by all her students as a BCT, while BCT1’s students were confused as to whether she was a NNEST or BCT.

In addition, by analyzing the focus groups and coding them for positive and negative comments made by the students about each type of teacher, it can be seen that more positive comments were made about BCTs (26), closely followed by NESTs (19) and finally, NNESTs with the least number of positive comments (6). The reason for the higher number of positive comments made about BCTs could be because the students now know more about them and see that they have many positive qualities. The positive qualities BCTs have, as perceived by the students, were a combination of traits found in NESTs and NNESTs. Examples of these traits are knowledge of both the target language and the students’ first language, knowledge of both the target culture and the students’ culture, having the “right” accent and being able to understand the students and the problems they encounter. Nevertheless, there were some negative comments about BCTs (4), which were made with lower frequencies than negative comments about NESTs (5) and NNESTs (6). The negative comments regarding BCTs included using Arabic in class and the possibility of BCTs making mistakes related to language proficiency.

Upon comparing the responses given by the students Q5-A (Would you prefer to be taught by a NEST, NNEST, BCT or does not matter?) to the results of Q5-B (Which type of teacher did you learn better from?), it was found that only 50% of the students had the same answer to both questions. The conflicting responses imply that many students may not prefer teachers because they learn better from them, but rather could be due to other factors.

In conclusion, it is clear that the native speaker fallacy still exists for most students. However, BCTs are preferred by many students especially once they are able to identify them. It is also apparent that their preference for both NESTs and BCTs emerges from their
concern about the right accent. In addition, although fewer in number, some students prefer NNESTs, as well as others that do not believe that a teacher’s nativeness has an effect on his/her teaching competence. Moreover, it appears that students’ preference for teachers is based on factors other than how well they learn from the teacher.

**Effect of teacher nativeness on learning.** Students were asked explicitly in the questionnaire if they thought the nativeness of their teacher had an effect on how well they learn. Their responses showed confusion, as students were divided between affirmative and negative responses to the question. However, comments made by students in describing their preferences for NESTs suggest that even though some do not explicitly state that the nativeness of their teachers affects how they learn, this belief is still clear. Moreover, it can be seen in many of their statements, such as “she will teach better English skills”, “because I will learn more and very well”, “to learn the real accent”, “to learn the real English”, and “if a NEST teaches you, you will be like a NEST”. Some of these statements also imply that nativeness is associated with teacher competence, as some students believe that merely being taught by a NEST would help them acquire better language skills and speak with a “real accent”. However, some students think the nativeness of their teacher does not necessarily result in better learning on their part, but rather good teaching qualities and skills are more important factors to be considered in a teacher.

**Students’ perception of EFL teacher qualities.** This group of students believe that a number of different qualities are important in an EFL teacher. However, the most important one to them is accent. During the focus groups, when asked to elaborate on the reasons behind this choice, students responded with comments such as “to get the accent” and “to learn better”. On asking the students to clarify why accent was such an essential quality required in their teacher, several students stated that it would help them acquire a NS’s
accent. The researcher then probed further, and asked if they thought they could have the exact same accent as their NESTs and one of the students replied, “Yes, with enough practice.” This implies that these students are unaware of the fact that, as second language learners, it is very unlikely that they will be able to acquire a native accent (Kachru, 1994).

Furthermore, the difference in frequencies between accent (45 times) and teaching experience (24 times) indicates the importance of accent to this group of students. This was also supported in the focus groups, where when asked to choose between a NEST with little experience and NNEST with a lot of experience, many students still chose a NEST with the response “because of the accent” being repeatedly given as their reason for this choice. However, some of the students said they would prefer a NNEST in this case because teaching experience was more important.

Knowledge of both English language-based culture and Arabic language-based culture were seen as important qualities of an EFL teacher, as students believe that knowledge of the Arabic culture helps their teacher connect with them on a personal level as well as understand them better. This corresponds with Filho’s (2002) study, where his results showed cases of students who had had bad experiences with NESTs because these NESTs had offended them in some way due to lack of knowledge about these students’ cultures. In addition, Liu (1999) reported conflicts between students and teachers, which were due to misunderstandings based on cross-cultural differences.

Knowledge of the Arabic language was also seen as important, where 52% of the students stated that they thought it was important that their teachers have some knowledge of their first language. Other qualities mentioned, in order of importance to students, were being friendly and caring, knowledge of English, good teaching strategies, having a strong personality, teaching experience, and finally, being patient and understanding. It is clear that,
with the exception of knowledge of English, all of these qualities can be found in any type of teacher. This suggests that students are aware of the different qualities that contribute to the ideal teacher.

Moreover, results indicate that most students find the important qualities that should be found in an EFL teacher more in NESTs and BCTs (see Figure 4-25). However, some students said that they could be found in all three despite the fact that this choice was not given as an option in the question. This is a clear indication of how strongly these students felt about this opinion and their belief that teacher competence does not depend on nativeness. Also, had this question been an open-ended one, it is highly probable that more students would have chosen that response.

In conclusion, students believe that accent is the most important quality in an EFL teacher, which indicates the importance of nativeness. However, the fact that the students chose several other qualities as well, qualities that can be found in NEST, NNESTs and BCTs, suggests that students have the ability to value a teacher regardless of his/her nativeness.

**Students’ perception of the Ideal EFL teacher.**

*Qualities.* This section will answer the first research question of the study: how do students perceive the ideal EFL teacher? It will also shed some light on the factors contributing to this image and the possible implications associated with such an image. This group of students perceive the ideal teacher as possessing a combination of several components: accent, teaching experience, knowledge of English, good teaching strategies, ability to motivate students, personality, being patient and understanding, being friendly and caring, knowledge of culture and knowledge of students’ first language (see Figure 4-26).
Each factor was given a percentage of contribution to the ideal teacher according to the frequency it was mentioned by the students in Q7-A, which means the more times it was mentioned by the students, the higher the percentage of contribution to the ideal teacher image. This image of the ideal teacher indicates that students see accent and teaching experience as important factors contributing to their ideal teacher, but at the same time, believe that they are not the only factors and that the ideal teacher possesses a combination of different qualities. It is important to note that, qualities relating to a teacher’s personality such as being friendly, caring and patient are very important to students, as these combined contribute the highest percentage to the ideal teacher image. However, this image does not represent each student’s point of view; it represents the view of this group of students as a whole. It is important to be aware of the fact that the importance of each category could be perceived differently by each student.

In conclusion, to answer the first research question, students perceive the ideal teacher as possessing a combination of different qualities. The first are qualities related to NESTs, such as accent, knowledge of English, knowledge of English language based culture (which represent 37% of the ideal teacher). The second are qualities related to NNESTs such as knowledge of students’ culture and knowledge of their first language (which represent 4% of the ideal teacher). The third are qualities related to teachers in general (which represent 59% of the ideal teacher). It is important to note that qualities related to BCTs would be a combination of qualities related to NESTs and NNESTs, which would represent 41% of the ideal teacher. The fact that the highest percentage of the ideal teacher is comprised of qualities that can be attributed to any type of teacher suggests that nativeness is not the largest contributing factor to the students’ image of the ideal teacher, but rather personal teacher qualities and teaching skills. Nevertheless, it appears that most students use this logic only
when explicitly asked about the qualities they find important in their ideal teacher. However, when asked implicitly (questions about teacher preference or which teacher is closer to their ideal teacher) students do not seem to use that logic to identify their ideal teacher as the results show that many students still identify the NEST as their ideal teacher.

*Teacher closest to the image of the ideal EFL teacher.* The results show a clear selection of NESTs (44%) and BCTs (43%) as the closer images to the ideal teacher over NNESTs (9%) or all three (4%). This suggests that qualities related to nativeness such as accent and knowledge of English language-based culture have a great effect on how these students perceive their ideal teacher. Even though the students stated that there were several other factors that contributed to the ideal teacher, they still preferred NESTs, BCTs, with only 4% of them believing that all three teachers could be a representative image of the ideal teacher.

Moreover, on comparing the responses to Q5-A (Would you prefer to be taught by a NEST, NNEST, BCT or does not matter?) to the results of Q7-B (Which type of teacher is closest to your image of an ideal EFL teacher?), the results show that a large number of the students’ responses to both questions are the same. This implies that students’ preference for their teachers is associated with their image of the ideal teacher.

In conclusion, students show a clear preference for NESTs (44%) which implies that the native speaker fallacy still exists. This might be because subconsciously students still perceive the NEST as the ideal teacher despite their awareness that nativeness is not the only factor contributing to an ideal teacher. It could also be a result of associating language competence with teacher competence. However, the results also suggest that after students become aware of BCTs and their qualities, many students (43%) saw them as a closer image to the ideal teacher.
**Effect of demographic variables on results.** Different demographic data were used as variables to measure their influence on the students’ responses. These variables were age, past teachers, gender, language used by students with friends and family and type of schools attended. The only variables that showed an influence on the students’ responses were age and past teachers.

**Age.** The results from Q5-A (See Figure 4-22) show that undergraduates have a higher preference for BCTs (36%) and NNESTs (15.5%) than graduates do (15% & 6%, respectively). Possible reasons for this could be the lack of awareness of BCTs by older students. This lack of awareness could have been caused by the unquestioned use of the dichotomy for so many years, and the fact that it has only recently been shown to be inaccurate in categorizing teachers. Moreover, a larger number of graduates think that being taught by a NEST or NNEST affects how they learn (64%) (See Figure 4-23) which coincides with the results from Q5-A and suggests that they believe they learn better from NESTs.

**Past teachers.** The results show that students who were taught by NESTs, NNESTs and BCTs all show higher preferences for NESTs and BCTs. However, the students taught by NNESTs are the only group that chose NNESTs as a preference (7%). This might imply that experiencing a NNEST may have influenced students’ responses and allowed them to see NNESTs as capable and competent teachers as well (See Figure 4-31).

In addition, the results show that a large number of students, who had been taught by NESTs (60%), thought that having a NEST or NNEST did *not* affect how well they learned. This implies that the NS fallacy starts to diminish after students have actually experienced NESTs as they see that competence does not depend on nativeness.
Conclusion

Review of study and findings. The purpose of this study was two-fold. First, to explore how students identify an ideal EFL teacher and what qualities are associated with such a teacher. Second, to investigate how students perceive BCTs in order to shed light on this possible third category of teachers, and at the same time, investigate how students identify their teachers according to nativeness.

The first research questions this study sought to answer was: how do students perceive the ideal EFL teacher? The results of this study show that students perceive the ideal teacher as a combination of different qualities. The first are qualities related to NESTs, such as accent, knowledge of English, and knowledge of English language-based culture. The second are qualities related to NNESTs, such as knowledge of students’ culture and knowledge of their first language. The third are qualities that relate to teachers in general, such as personality, being friendly and understanding. Accent is the most important quality contributing to the ideal teacher image as perceived by this group of students, which suggests the continued existence of the NS fallacy. Nevertheless, qualities that relate to teachers in general occupied the largest portion of the ideal teacher quality pie suggesting that it is a combination of factors, and not nativeness alone, that comprises the ideal teacher. However, it is essential to note that the importance of each of these qualities could be perceived differently by each student.

The second research question this study sought to answer was: how do students perceive bicultural teachers? A) Do they categorize them using the NS/NNS dichotomy? B) Do they use a different conceptual approach?
The results of this study show that students have trouble identifying BCTs as NSs of either language. Instead, they perceive them as a different type of teacher that combines different qualities of both NESTs and NNESTs. Students try to categorize these teachers using the dichotomy but seem to have difficulty using the N/NN dichotomy to identify BCTs. Despite the difficulty students have in identifying BCTs, most students still try to categorize BCTs using the dichotomy rather than try to use another conceptual approach. However, a small number of students seem to be aware of the fact that these teachers cannot be categorized using the dichotomy and try to use another conceptual approach to identify them. This conceptual approach involves identifying BCTs as a unique type of teacher who is different from pure NESTs and pure NNESTs and at the same time, combines qualities of both NESTs and NNESTs (see Figure 5-3).

\[\text{Figure 5-1. BCTs as the intersection between NESTs and NNESTs.}\]
Based on the answers to the research questions and the analysis of the findings of this study, the conclusions of this study are as follows:

First, students identify the ideal teacher as possessing a combination of different qualities (see Figure 4-26), some of which are influenced by nativeness but many of which are not. This confirms Liu’s (1999) theory that teachers are defined using a multidimensional continuum rather than a unidimensional one as suggested by Medgyes (1992). Moreover, students see the BCT as an image similar to that of the NEST, one that is close to their image of the ideal EFL teacher.

Second, the native speaker fallacy still appears to exist among EFL students. Students tend to associate being a native speaker with being a competent teacher. Moreover, students appear to use their perception of a NS and its association with certain features, such as appearance, accent, ethnicity, nationality or name to identify their teachers. As a result, there appears to be some confusion in identifying teacher-nativeness, where teachers who do not fit the students’ stereotyped image of the NS are automatically considered NNESTs. This concept is supported by Davies’s (2003) definition of a NS, which is “to be a NS means not to be a NNS” (p. 213), and Medgyes’s (2001) definition of a NS, which is “a NEST is the opposite of a NNEST.” (p. 429) As a result, nativeness has become a socially constructed identity rather than a perception of linguistic competence, and at the same time, depends on the teacher being accepted by his/her students into a certain category.

Third, students have difficulty identifying BCTs, as they are accustomed to using the NS/NNS dichotomy to categorize their teachers. Only a small number of students are able to see beyond the dichotomy and use a different conceptual approach to identify them, which implies that student awareness needs to be amplified in order to allow students to see beyond the boundaries of the dichotomy. When students are able to identify BCTs they see them as
highly competent teachers who combine the qualities of both NESTs and NNESTs. In addition, they also use different aspects to identify BCTs such as time spent in an English-speaking country, accent and language proficiency. This suggests that biculturalism is seen as a multidimensional continuum that allows for different degrees of biculturalism (see Figure 5-2).

![Bicultural Continuum](image)

*Figure 5-2. Bicultural continuum.*

As can be seen in Figure 5-2, this multidimensional continuum helps define BCTs. If a BCT lays in *Quadrant A* (BCT A), he/she would be closer to being a NS of both language A and language B. Similarly, a BCT in *Quadrant B* (BCT B) would be closer to being a NNS of both languages. In addition, BCTs found in *Quadrants C & D* (BCT C & BCT D) would be closer to a NS of one language and a NNS of the other language, where one language
would be stronger than the other would. However, the degree of biculturalism of a BCT would depend on the degree of nativeness of language A and language B, causing a variation in a BCT’s position on the continuum. It is important to note that a variety of different languages and different cultures may be associated with BCTs. Therefore, there is a wide diversity within the category of BCTs, as there are different types of BCTs according to the two languages and cultures involved.

Finally, some students think that BCTs are different from pure NESTs or pure NNESTs, which implies that BCTs should not be categorized using the NEST/NNEST dichotomy or compared to such teachers as they are viewed as different. This coincides with Cook’s (1999) conclusion, where he stated that speakers of more than one language are not in a position to be compared to monolingual NSs and therefore, should not be treated as “deficient NSs” (p.195).

**Implications.** The implications to these findings are three-fold, which include implications for teachers, students, and the profession as a whole. Firstly, the implications for teachers are that many BCTs may have become silenced biculturals, as the EFL community does not acknowledge the skills they possess as biculturals. Moreover, BCTs and NNESTs would perhaps have more self-confidence if they felt their skills were acknowledged. In addition, the implications regarding the hiring process would be noticeable, as it would be a step towards more equality in hiring opportunities, promotions and salaries among different types of teachers.

Secondly, implications for students are that they would be able to see beyond the nativeness of their teachers and value them for their skills. This might have a positive effect on their learning as the study shows that almost half of this group of students believes that the nativeness of their teacher affects how they learn. As a result, students would be able to
provide a fair evaluation of their teachers in which nativeness would be less of an influencing factor. In addition, students will be able to benefit from the rich resources of different teachers, which are currently undervalued.

Finally, implications for the overall profession are that the EFL community would become more aware of the inaccuracy of the dichotomy and would start to refrain from associating nativeness with competence. In addition, the EFL community would benefit from being aware of the different possibilities of rich resources that could be provided by different types of teachers. In addition, the equality principle among teachers in hiring practices might be implemented more effectively, providing fair job opportunities for all EFL teachers. Therefore, helping to alter how students perceive nativeness and the ideal teacher could have an impact on the employment of EFL teachers, as it would provide a fair chance for all EFL teachers, and allow them to be perceived by the EFL community according to their different teaching qualities rather than nativeness.

**Limitations.** The main limitation was the obtrusive method used for observing the focus group. The focus group interviews were taped using a video camera, which the students seemed to be overly aware of while participating in the discussion. This might have hindered them from acting naturally and expressing their opinions freely. Another limitation of this study was the use of pictures of teachers in the IEP at the AUC in the questionnaire, as students might have seen them before or known them from a previous semester. In addition, since the researcher administered the questionnaires to all the classes and conducted the focus groups herself, this might have introduced the researcher effect. In addition, one of the classes that participated in the focus groups was the researcher’s own class, which could have influenced their answers. Another limitation was the sample, as it was chosen on a convenience basis, and was not large enough to generalize the findings beyond this group.
Finally, researcher bias could be a possible limitation of this study as the researcher belongs to the suggested new category of teachers (BCTs). However, the researcher tried to control for this by presenting all the obtained results objectively in the results section with no personal interpretations. This allows the readers to make their own interpretation of the data and compare it to that of the researcher. In addition, the researcher had other fellow researchers examine her results to ensure that there was minimal bias in the interpretation of the results.

**Recommendations for Future Research.** Future research is needed on bicultural teachers in order to be able to make stronger conclusions regarding this issue and to raise students’ awareness of this category of teachers. This is especially so given the limited prior research on bicultural EFL teachers. It would be interesting to conduct a study on only BCTs and examine which factors influence the degree of biculturalism perceived. Further, more research should be conducted on the importance of culture in EFL teaching as it has been under-researched even though it has been found to play an important role in EFL learning (Celik, 2006, Crozet and Liddicoat, 1997). It would also be interesting to compare student-perception of teacher nativeness to teacher-perception of teacher nativeness. In addition, investigating the actual performance of NESTs, NNESTs and BCTs could provide more insight on the differences between these types of teachers. Moreover, looking at the actual achievement of students in classes taught by NESTs, NNESTs, and BCTs would give a clearer picture of the effect of nativeness on student achievement. Finally, the influence of teacher nativeness on hiring practices is another important issue that needs to be researched further, as the results may have a significant effect on the EFL job market.
References


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Appendix A

Student Consent Form

Participant Information Statement

The purpose of the study Reimagining the NS/NNS dichotomy: Bicultural teachers is mainly two-fold: first, to find out how students identify an ideal teacher, and what qualities they associate with such a teacher; second, to investigate how students perceive bicultural teachers. The information will be collected using anonymous questionnaires, focus groups and interviews.

Anonymity will be preserved for all students and their participation will have no effect on their grades. All copies of focus group recordings (MP3 files) and questionnaires will be stored in a secure place and will be destroyed after seven years. The information obtained will be used in an MA thesis, conference research papers and/or journal articles and participants will not be identified by name. Results will be available after the study is completed.

If at any time a participant wishes to withdraw from the project, they may do so without penalty or prejudice. Questions about the research, participant rights or research-related injuries should be directed to Dr. Phyllis Wachob, at 2615-1923.

If participants have any complaints in relation to this research project, they may contact Graham Harman, Chair of the IRB at gharman@aucegypt.edu
Consent form:

I give my consent to participate in the Reimagining the NS/NNS dichotomy: Bicultural teachers project.

I understand that my privacy will be maintained.

I understand that I may withdraw from the project at any time without penalty or prejudice and I may contact the principal investigator, Phyllis Wachob, at 2615-1923.

I understand that if I have any complaints, I may contact Graham Harman, Chair of the IRB at gharman@aucegypt.edu

Signature _________________________________ Date ____________________
Appendix B

Questionnaire

Data collected from this survey will be used to complete a research project in a Master’s program for Teaching English as a Foreign Language at the AUC (American University in Cairo). I am conducting this survey to find out how students perceive teachers with different native languages and cultures, and the reasons behind this perception.

This survey will not affect your grades and will be kept completely anonymous.

Please answer the following questions before you start the survey. Mark all the answers that apply.

1. Gender:
   - ☐ male
   - ☐ female

2. What is the language you speak with your parents?
   - ☐ Arabic
   - ☐ English
   - ☐ French
   - ☐ German
   - ☐ code-switching
   - ☐ Other: __________

3. What is the language you speak with your friends?
   - ☐ Arabic
   - ☐ English
   - ☐ French
   - ☐ German
   - ☐ code-switching
   - ☐ Other: __________

4. Where did you mainly learn English?
   - ☐ At school
   - ☐ living abroad
   - ☐ courses at language institutes
   - ☐ other

5. In what kind of school did you study English?
6. In school you were taught by

- a native speaker (NS) of English
- a nonnative speaker (NNS) of English
- a bicultural teacher

If you were taught by more than one type of teacher, which type did you prefer? Give reasons for your answer.

________________________________________________________________________________________

7. Have you ever experienced any cultures other than Egyptian? Explain

________________________________________________________________________________________

SURVEY

Question 1:

You will see pictures of five teachers on the computer screen. Write which type of teacher you think each one is: a NEST, NNEST, or a bicultural teacher.

1) 2) 3) 4)

Question 2:

Listen to each of the teachers as s/he speaks. If you want to change any of your answers from question 1, rewrite your choices beside the correct numbers.

1) 2) 3) 4)

*Please answer the following questions. Make sure to mark only one answer for the multiple choice questions.*

Question 3:
A. What is a *native speaker*?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

B. What does a native speaker of *English* look like?

__________________________________________________________

C. Would you consider a bicultural teacher that speaks English with a native English accent and Arabic with a native Egyptian accent

☐ A NS of English with a lot of knowledge about Arabic?

☐ A NS of Arabic with a lot of knowledge about English?

☐ Other: specify___________________

**Question 4:**

A. Can you tell a teacher is a native speaker of English *before* you know his/her name?

☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, how? __________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

B. Can you tell a teacher is a native speaker of English *after* you know his/her name?

☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, how? __________________________________________________________

**Question 5:**
A. Would you prefer to be taught by

- a NEST?
- a NNEST?
- a bicultural teacher?
- does not matter

Why?___________________________________________________________

B. Which type of teacher did you learn better from?

- a NEST.
- a NNEST.
- a bicultural teacher.
- There was no difference.

C. Does having a NEST or a NNEST affect how well you learn?

- Yes.
- No.

Why?___________________________________________________________

D. Do you think it is important that your teacher speaks your first language?

- Yes.
- No.

Why?___________________________________________________________

**Question 6:**

A. Name three qualities you think are most important in an English teacher.

1)                                         2)                                            3)

B. Can all the qualities you mentioned (in the previous question) be found in

- NESTs only?
- NNESTs only?
- Bicultural teachers only?

Why?___________________________________________________________

C. Which of these qualities is the most important in an English teacher?
D. Do you think knowledge of the English culture is important in an English teacher?

☐ yes  ☐ no

Why? _____________________________________________________________

Question 7:

A. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of an ideal EFL teacher?

____________________________________________________________________

B. Which of these teachers is closest to your image of an ideal EFL teacher?

☐ NEST  ☐ NNEST  ☐ Bicultural teacher

Why? ______________________________________________________________

Thank you for your cooperation. I greatly appreciate it.

Heba Fathelbab

American University in Cairo (AUC)
Appendix C

Focus Groups Questions

1. How many types of teachers did you think there were before you participated in this research?

2. Do you think it is important that your teacher has knowledge about Arabic culture?

3. Do you think it is an advantage for your teacher to speak Arabic?

4. Do you feel more comfortable when you know that your teacher speaks Arabic even if she doesn’t use it class? Why?

5. If you could choose between a NEST of English with very little teaching experience and a NNEST with a lot more experience, who would you choose? Why?

6. Do you think that a BCT is different than a “pure NEST” or a “pure NNEST”? Why?

7. The results of the questionnaire showed a very close preference between NEST/BCT, do you think there is a difference between both? Why?

8. How do you categorize a BCT? Some of you said that you would consider a BCT a NS of English, some said a NS of Arabic and some said both? Why?

9. How do you identify a BCT?

10. Can a NS look Egyptian?

11. Most of you thought that T2 was a NNEST, what made you think so? Most of you thought T5 was a NEST, what made you think so? T7 was confusing to most of you, what confused you about her?
Appendix D

IRB Proposal

Proposal of Research for IRB approval

Title of Project:

Reimagining the NS/NNS dichotomy: Bicultural teachers

Principal Investigator:

Phyllis Wachob, Assistant Professor, MATEFL in the English Language Institute

Secondary investigator:

Heba Fathelbab, Fellow student, MA TEFL program MATEFL in the English Language Institute

Description of the Project:

Bicultural EFL teachers and how they are categorized by their students is pertinent, novel, and most importantly a serious ethical issue in ESL/EFL research. This proposed study will attempt to discover how students perceive an ideal teacher. It will also attempt to elucidate some of the many unanswered questions regarding how students view bicultural teachers in Egypt.

The inaccuracy of this dichotomy represents a very important issue as it is essential that the EFL community is aware of the different qualities that contribute to an ideal teacher, to avoid
associating teacher competence with nativeness. The findings of this study will be an addition to EFL research, as it will herald a new approach in categorizing EFL teachers.

Number of participants:

Approximately 100 undergraduate upper-intermediate EFL students (eight or nine intact classes) in the IEP (Intensive English Program) at the AUC, and around 30 graduate upper-intermediate EFL students (two intact classes) in the IEP at the AUC.

Data Collection Methodology:

The data collection will be over a period of two weeks. Students will be asked to answer an anonymous questionnaire surveying their perception of an ideal teacher and investigating their view of bicultural teachers. The questionnaire is comprised of demographic questions and opinion questions. The questionnaire will be followed by audio recorded focus groups conducted with about 45 students (3 focus groups using 3 classes).

The focus groups will be asked probing questions to further clarify the students’ answers in the questionnaire, such as If you could choose between a NS of English with very little teaching experience and a NNS with a lot more experience, who would you choose? Why? The recordings will be stored in the form of MP3 files in a secure place (personal laptop with a password).
Finally, one on one interviews will be conducted with about 10 students which will only involve note-taking on the part of the interviewer (there will be no audio recording), and anonymity will be maintained. The questions will also probe for further clarification, such as If you had a choice between a native speaker, a non-native speaker and a bicultural teacher, which would you prefer and why?

Some of the students involved could be under 18 years of age but are fully registered at AUC. Students will be asked to sign an consent statement (see attached) before participating. All data will remain anonymous and stored in a secure place.

Type of review category:

The data that will be collected in the research will include voice recordings made for research purposes and, therefore, falls into the expedited review category B. (6).
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST

To: Phyllis Wachob (ELI), Heba Fathelbab (ELI)
From: Dr. Graham Harman/ Chairman, IRB
Date: November 5, 2009
Re: approval of proposal

This is to inform you that I reviewed your revised research proposal entitled "Reimagining the NS/NNS Dichotomy: Bicultural Teachers", and determined that it used appropriate procedures to minimize risks to human subjects and that adequate provision was made for confidentiality and data anonymity of participants in any published record. I believe you will also make adequate provision for obtaining informed consent of the subjects, and therefore I believe the proposal qualifies for exempt review, meaning that I have approved it without convening the full Institutional Review Board.

Thank you and good luck.

[Signature]

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