

NATIVE SPEAKER OR NON-NATIVE SPEAKER TEACHER?: A REPORT OF STUDENT PREFERENCES IN FOUR DIFFERENT FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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To date, discussion of the native and nonnative speaker (NS and NNS) teacher issue has been primarily limited to the field of English language teaching (ELT). This study aims to expand the scope of this issue by exploring student attitudes and preferences toward NS/NNS teachers in non-ELT contexts in order to allow more reasonable generalizations. Adopting a theoretical stance informed by Multicultural Education, the present study employed a mixed-method (questionnaire and interview) to explore student perceptions of NS/NNS teachers in four foreign language (FL) courses (Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, and Italian) at a southwestern American university. Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively based on the categorization of geographically divided language groups (i.e. Asian/ European). Questionnaire results revealed a stronger student preference for NS teachers in Asian language classrooms than in European counterparts. However, interview results showed that student attitudes are not unequivocal. Interview results surface themes such as students' conflicting expectations of roles, favorable attitudes toward NS/NNS teacher combination, and the link between language learning goals and NS/NNS preference. Counterintuitive results from Italian language classes (resemblance to those from Asian language classes rather than to those from Spanish classes) brought into question the geographically-based categories used for analysis. It is inferred that two possible influences on this contrastive behavior between students in Spanish and Italian classes are the prominent position of Spanish as the 'default' FL in the region and student motivation for learning. Based on the findings, suggestions to language program administrators are provided aimed to address the hiring inequities that result from misconceptions about NNS teachers in FL classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

When one embarks on the arduous process of learning a new language, he or she naturally desires to study under a teacher who is both knowledgeable of the target language and effective as an instructor. Often times, commonly held assumptions view the native speaker (NS) teacher as the ideal language teacher. For many, it only seems logical: Who can be more expert in a language than a NS? However, we contend that following this line of thinking leads one to neglect other models of instructor which are just as beneficial to his or her language learning. In particular, we are speaking of NNS teachers of foreign languages (FLs) who bring something qualitatively different from their NS counterparts to the classroom but equally valuable

(Medgyes 1994). For example, Medgyes (1994) reports that NNS teachers represent to students an achievable learner model. Also, they have metalinguistic knowledge about the target language due to their experience as a second language learner. They can capitalize on this metalinguistic knowledge in lesson delivery to students. Nevertheless, despite their learned expertise in the target language and pedagogical training, NNS teachers are, in many cases, still seen as less effective language teachers due to their lack of native-ness only.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Multicultural Education

Our approach to language learning has been heavily influenced by multicultural perspectives on education as outlined in Nieto's (1994) *Language, Culture, and Teaching*. In this influential volume, Nieto positions *multicultural education* within the vast family of academic critical discourses which seek to expose the current systems of social inequity for the purpose of reforming society according to the tenets of social justice. *Multicultural education* is more than just an add-on component to the already-existing curricula; it is pervasive, influencing all aspects of education so that all students of all backgrounds receive an education informed not by artificially-imposed social hierarchies, but one informed by notions of human social equality.

Multicultural education draws from scholars of critical pedagogy who perceive the current mainstream education system as a mechanism for propagating ideologies that reinforce social inequities (Friere 1970; Giroux 1983; Pennycook 1998). One step central to this process is to provide students with the means to deconstruct prevailing stereotypes and conventionalized notions that benefit the political elite structure (Diaz-Greenberg & Nevin 2003, p.215). In other words, students are to question convention, conduct their own investigatory activities, and arrive at their own conclusions.

Multicultural education attacks convention, positing that the current educational system fits students with "cultural blinders" (Nieto, p.37). leaving them, at best, ignorant of the true human diversity in culture and language around them (Nieto 1994). At worst, these blinders compel them to actually antagonize diversity. While this dilemma is present across the educational spectrum, we find it particularly troubling in the FL classrooms of the United States. In our experience, we have observed FL teachers who, rather than prepare students for a multilingual society, are instead training students for a fantasy monolingual community which hardly exists outside of textbooks. Some assert that at least half of the world's population is multilingual, not monolingual (see Saville-Troike 2005). Thus, there is a real disconnect between the language environment portrayed in the classroom and the actual linguistic community into which second language learners eventually enter. This fantasy monolingual community is a likely product of what is called the NS/NNS false dichotomy.

The Issue of Native & Non-Native Speaker Teachers

The issue of NS and NNS teachers in the field of applied linguistics has become a rapidly growing, emergent field of research today. The beginning of the dichotomy is believed to be one of the tenets created at the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language held in Macarere, Uganda, in 1961. This controversial tenet, stating that the ideal English teacher is a native speaker, provoked scholars to question its validity. The most cited, probably, in response to this view is Phillipson (1992) whose term “native speaker fallacy” (p. 195) has been quoted widely. He argues that NNSs can be trained to gain abilities that are, according to the tenet, associated with NSs (i.e., fluency, correct usage of idiomatic expressions, and knowledge about the cultural connotations of English). Moreover, Phillipson evaluates NNS teachers’ learning processes as a valuable quality. Ever since the assumption of NS superiority has become a controversial issue in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), much research has been conducted to explore the issue of NS/NNS dichotomy in language teaching. A colloquium organized by George Braine at the 1996 Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Convention, where NNS teachers expressed their experiences of unfair treatment due to lack of NS status, was well received by other NNS teachers. This successful colloquium led to subsequent presentations and publications on the issue, which had not been publicly discussed until then (e.g., Braine 1999a; Medgyes 1992, 1994). As a result, the issue of Non-Native-English-Speaking Teachers (NNEST) has developed as an emerging field of research. The NNEST Caucus in TESOL was established in 1998, which has grown to have over 1,000 Caucus members worldwide today, and more than 500 articles on the NNEST issue have been published to date.

The core issue within NNEST has gradually changed with its development as a field of research. Started with issues concerning NNESTs’ self-perceptions (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy 1999; Reves & Medgyes 1994) and their credibility (Amin 1997; Braine 1999b; Thomas 1999; Tang 1997), the focus has shifted to students’ and administrators’ perceptions (Lasagabaster & Sierra 2002). Scholars have pointed out strengths that NNESTs bring to teaching and expressed that both NSs and NNSs have advantages that can complement each other’s strengths (Matsuda 2003; de Oliveira & Richardson 2004).

Traditionally, the NS/NNS issue has been associated exclusively with the teaching of English. This is understandable given the high number of English language programs around the world which, due to necessity, hire many NNESTs. Thus, it is not uncommon around the world to attend English classes taught by NNESTs. Due to their high numbers and the nature of the TESOL academic field, NNESTs have found their critical voice to bring to everyone’s attention real inequities that exist.

Nevertheless, the research from the ELT context may not be applicable to situations outside of ELT. The current literature on the English

context in regards to the NS/NNS issue does not tell us much about this particular issue in other language teaching contexts. We suspect that the current student attitudes toward NNS teachers of English are partly due to the hegemonic status of English around the world. Therefore, in order to really understand the NS/NNS issue, it is helpful to carry out research which investigates the NS/NNS question in contexts outside of ELT. The NS/NNS issue requires a more global perspective which considers the comparative situation of NNS teachers in FL classrooms such as Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, and Italian. There still are FL teachers who are identified as NNSs of the language they teach, who have not been viewed as target populations of research while the situation for NNEST has been discussed widely. Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, a NNS teacher professional group for languages other than English does not exist. Therefore, our study aims to fill the gap between the TESOL context and the context of other languages. Instead of taking the conclusions of TESOL studies wholesale, we are looking at the NS/NNS issue in more global terms, asking the question to students of languages other than English. As a result, our research will provide insights into the NS/NNS issue which may be more generalizable to a wider range of language teaching situations.

One such study exploring FL teachers is that of Ferguson (2005), which was conducted at a southwestern American university with NS and NNS Spanish as a FL teachers and their students (N=89 and 154, respectively). She investigated how NS/NNS teachers are perceived by their students, in terms of students' general attitudes and the amount of credit (in terms of pedagogical effectiveness) they give to their teachers based on their teacher's native language (L1). Among the findings of her study was a stronger student preference for NNS teachers than for NS teachers, despite the larger amount of credit given to NS teachers over NNS teachers. From our perspective, Spanish is the most common FL studied at universities like the one featured in Ferguson's (2005) study. Therefore, even though her study considered the NS/NNS issue in a non-English context, we cannot assume that her results will hold in other FL teaching situations. In short, Ferguson's study has left the question: Will the same trend hold for language courses with much lower overall student enrollment such as Japanese, Chinese, and Italian?

THE STUDY

As described above, this study attempts to expand the NS/NNS issue to non-English contexts while at the same time expanding on the findings of Ferguson (2005). Branching from the Spanish FL context, we considered attitudes toward NS/NNS teachers in a variety of FL settings. We looked at student attitudes regarding NS/NNS teachers in the introductory FL classrooms of Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, and Italian at a major American university located in the Southwest. We organized the four languages into two geographically-based distinct groups: Asian (Japanese and Chinese) and European (Spanish and Italian). We established these two groups (Asian and

European) according to our awareness of ethnic stereotypes which perceptually divide Asia from Europe (see Said 1979). To investigate if conventionalized images of Asia affect student attitudes toward NNS teachers in the classrooms of Japanese and Chinese languages, we analyzed the data according to two categories: Asian and European.

The present study was motivated by our desire to explore whether students learning Asian languages express similar attitudes towards their teachers with those learning European languages. At the beginning of the study, we assumed that a stronger preference for NS teachers would be found in Asian FL classrooms than in European FL classrooms. Thus, through interlingual comparisons of FL classrooms, our particular interest was to see whether students in Asian FL classrooms would exhibit a similar NNS preference as was found in Ferguson's (2005) study. Hence, the research questions were the following: (1) Is there a preference between NS/NNS in the introductory FL classrooms of Japanese, Chinese Spanish, and Italian at an American university? (2) Is there a difference in NS/NNS preference between Asian languages (Japanese/Chinese) and European languages (Spanish/Italian)? (3) What can we infer as to the reasons behind such a difference between Asian and European language classes, if it exists?

Participants & Procedure

Participants of the present study were 187 students enrolled in introductory-level courses of the four FLs at a southwestern American university. The breakdown of the participants is shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Breakdown of Participants

	Asian Language Group			European Language Group			Total
	Japanese	Chinese	Group total	Spanish	Italian	Group total	
Male	34	25	59	35	5	40	99
Female	15	23	38	36	14	50	88
Total	49	48	97	71	19	90	187

The four languages were chosen for the following reasons: (1) Spanish was chosen to investigate whether or not Ferguson's (2005) findings could be confirmed, (2) Japanese and Chinese were chosen for they are the only two Asian languages taught at the institution, (3) Italian was chosen because of its comparable student enrollment numbers to Japanese. The students in these FL classes were informed that their participation was voluntarily and it would have no impact on their course grades.

Initially, a Likert-scale questionnaire was distributed to the participants on one occasion during the fall semester of 2005 (see Appendix A for the questionnaire). Besides items investigating demographic information,

the questionnaire included opinion statements about FL teachers such as *I prefer a native speaker as my foreign language teacher*. The students indicated whether or not, and to what degree, they agreed with each statement. At the time of the questionnaire, the students were asked to provide contact information if they agreed to be in a participant pool for subsequent individual interviews.

Whereas the above-mentioned questionnaire investigated general attitudes quantitatively, nine respondents further participated in 30-minute individual interviews, which yielded valuable qualitative data. Of all the participants who provided contact information in the questionnaire, those who had expressed extreme responses (e.g., strongly agree or strongly disagree) in the four FL classes were contacted for the audio-recorded interviews. It was reasoned that students who expressed strong opinions would naturally have more to say during future interview encounters. In the interview, the participants were asked to provide reasons behind their expressed attitudes in the questionnaire based on their personal experiences with NS/NNS teachers. The interview results will be discussed in the qualitative data section below.

DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative Data & Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data extracted from Japanese and Chinese classes were grouped as the Asian language group, and those from Spanish and Italian were put together as the European language group. For each item, the questionnaire responses (4-strongly agree, 3-agree, 2-disagree, 1-strongly disagree, and 0-no response) were numerically calculated for the mean score. The data were analyzed using a one-factor between subjects ANOVA, with the factor language group (Asian and European) for the responses Q1-Q7. The results for these questionnaire items are shown in Table 2. Significant differences between the Asian and European language groups were found for Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, and Q7 (for Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5, and Q7, $p < .001$, for Q3, $p < .005$). There was no significant difference for Q6.

Table 2. Numerical Averages of Survey Responses

Survey	Asian Language Group			European Language Group		
	Japanese	Chinese	Average	Spanish	Italian	Average
Q1	3.34	3.40	3.37	2.36*	3.12	2.74
Q2	2.98	2.98	2.98	2.21*	2.80	2.51
Q3	2.53	2.50	2.52	2.94	2.69	2.82
Q4	2.00	2.16	2.08	2.75*	2.00	2.38
Q5	2.23	2.57	2.40	1.77	1.93	1.85
Q6	3.14	3.02	3.08	3.11	2.91	3.01
Q7	2.98	3.02	3.00	2.11*	3.00	2.56

* Indicates a marked distinction in behavior between Spanish and Italian data groups

The data indicated that students in the Asian language group expressed a stronger preference for NS teachers than for NNS teachers. The average result of Q1 (*I prefer a native speaker as my foreign language teacher*) was 3.37 which is well above the 2.5 midpoint dividing NS/NNS preference. The data also showed that their NS preference is not unequivocal. Q3 (*It doesn't matter if my foreign language teacher is a native speaker or not*) and Q5 (*I would be disappointed if my foreign language teacher was not a native speaker*) both yielded marginal results (Q3=2.52, Q5=2.40). This tells us that although they indicated the NS preference, they were still agreeable to NNS teachers. Thus, as can be expected, a student's attitude toward NS/NNS teachers is never simple.

A further consideration is the intragroup diversity between languages in the European language group. For example, Table 2 is marked for the very clear distinction between Spanish and Italian student attitudes. While the Spanish data upheld Ferguson's results (NNS preferred), the Italian data contradicted it. In other words, NNS preference was not found in the Italian classroom. Contrary to our assumptions, this large amount of diversity suggests that NS preference has little to do with geographical origin of a language of study. As evidenced in Table 2, the data from the Italian classroom performs closer to those from the Asian language classrooms than those from the Spanish classroom.

Qualitative Data & Analysis

Combining quantitative and qualitative methods contributes to greater study reliability. Also, mixed-methods afford researchers a more holistic and accurate picture of their object of analysis. In this particular study, the opinion survey only touched the surface of underlying student attitudes regarding NS and NNS teachers that develop over time and experience. Thus, the second part of our study involved a series of interviews with a subset of the student participants in order to elicit more detail regarding their attitudes and opinions. An additional aim of the interviews was to help fine-tune the results in numerical form from the opinion survey conducted during the first phase. Individual interviews with students help us to more accurately interpret the numerical data produced by the opinion survey.

In total, nine invitees agreed to participate in the second phase of the study. The breakdown of interviewees by language of study is as follows: (Japanese=3; Chinese=2; Spanish=1; Italian=3). Typically, the informal, conversation-style interview session attended by each informant and the researchers lasted approximately thirty minutes. Each session was audio-recorded with the informant's permission and later transcribed. The general pattern of each interview took the following format. First, we began by asking the participant to review their responses to the seven items of the opinion survey and to retrospectively verbalize their thinking process that went into each response. Participants were invited to change their answers if they wished. Second, we asked the students a series of open-ended questions not

featured in the original opinion survey instrument. A list of these questions may be found in Appendix B. Primarily, the open-ended questions were designed to pull out the participants' attitudes toward NS and NNS teachers and these teachers' effectiveness in the classroom. For example, participants were presented with common negative stereotypes of NNS teachers and were asked to respond. Also, the students were given the chance to imagine three different team-teaching scenarios which featured various combinations of NS and NNS teachers (i.e., NS-NS, NNS-NS, and NNS-NNS) and to choose the one that they would most prefer.

The individual interviews yielded valuable insights into the initially expressed student attitudes. We identify three themes in the interview results. First, we found that students hold conflicting expectations of roles during the language learning process. For themselves, when asked if they considered themselves L2 speakers of the language of study, they responded in the negative because of their inability to communicate effortlessly in the target language. Pronunciation was not included in the criteria for judging a successful speaker of a foreign language. Seven out of nine students felt this way. On the other hand, the primary criteria for good and/or effective FL instructors were pronunciation and cultural knowledge. These two conflicting expectations translate into two very different scales of evaluation. The students see themselves as successful only by obtaining basic communicative competence, while they hold their instructors to much higher standards. FL teachers must pronounce the language the way that the students believe to be the standard.

The second theme concerns differing student expectations expressed for NS and NNS teachers. In the interview, students were given a hypothetical team-taught classroom with three possible combinations (NS-NS, NS-NNS, NNS-NNS) and asked to indicate their combination preference. Six out of the nine students chose the NS-NNS combination. Three students chose the NS-NS combination, and no students selected the NNS-NNS combination. They explained the reasons behind the preferred arrangement by stating different contributions NS and NNS teachers make to their FL learning. They acknowledged the respective expertise which both NS and NNS teachers possess, and said that they would need both to succeed in their language study. Verbatim responses included the following:

- *The Native Speaker is a model, and the Non-Native Speaker is an interpretation of the language* (student of Japanese).
- *Perfect. It provides immersion culture, accent, and grammar* (student of Italian).

Of the three students who preferred the NS-NS teacher combination, a student of Japanese stated that the NS-NNS arrangement would still be good for most students in class (excluding himself). He attributed his special preference for the NS-NS arrangement to his desire to achieve a native-like proficiency in Japanese.

The student response immediately above also exemplifies a third theme we identify in the qualitative data. That is the apparent link between the goal of attaining NS fluency and NS teacher preference. Eight out of the nine respondents expressed their goal of becoming a native-like speaker in the language of study. The one interviewee who did not prefer a NS teacher showed no interest in gaining native-like fluency. Thus, in our interview data, NS preference and the goal of native-like attainment appear to be locked in a one-to-one correspondence. At this point, we can only take note of this apparent one-to-one correspondence and leave to future study the task of defining the link. Since we did not specifically plan for this link when designing the study, our data should not be used to explain the one-to-one correspondence. Within the limits of our data, our general impression is that students who enroll in less-accessible language classes like Japanese, Chinese, and Italian in the American Southwest enter their language study with different ultimate goals than their counterparts in the Spanish language classroom, which is characterized as the more commonly offered foreign language in the Southwest region.

DISCUSSION

This study began with three research questions: (1) *Is there a preference between NS and NNS teachers in the introductory FL classrooms of Japanese, Chinese Spanish, and Italian at an American university?* (2) *Is there a difference in NS/NNS preference between Asian languages (Japanese/Chinese) and European languages (Spanish/Italian)?* (3) *What can we infer as to the reasons behind such a difference between European and Asian language classes, if it exists?* Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data, we can arrive at some clear answers. In regards to the first question, the quantitative data showed that our subjects enrolled in Japanese, Chinese, or Italian classes--on average--preferred NS teachers over NNS ones. Conversely, student subjects attending Spanish language classes prefer NNS teachers according to the same data. This finding confirmed Ferguson's (2005) earlier results. Quantitative data also provided an answer to our second research question. The differences between the Asian and European language groups were statistically significant on six out of seven survey items. Our third research question challenged us to infer as to the reasons behind the preference discrepancy between the Asian and European language groups. Before answering that question, we made two important observations. First, the survey responses between the Spanish and Italian languages are highly contradictory. The grouping of the two languages together may be problematic and that a different categorizational scheme should be devised. Second, it seems, in the qualitative data, that student desire to mimic a native speaker seemed to influence their NS/NNS preference. Namely, students who said that they desire to speak the target language like a NS would consistently display a negative view of NNS teachers. Continued research is needed to pinpoint the

most influential factors on NS/NNS preference in the FL classroom. Suggestions will be discussed immediately below.

The NS/NNS question placed in the FL context demands continued investigation. This study raised as many questions as it answered. Future inquiries should seek to explain why the Spanish language students in our study performed so differently from the Italian language students. We suspect it is due to Spanish's position as an everyday artifact of life in the American Southwest. Perhaps its familiarity (along with the large number of Americans who speak Spanish) to American students elicits the perception that Spanish is somehow less-foreign compared to other languages like Italian or Japanese. To answer this question, a study design is needed that measures student attitudes in a context where Spanish is not the 'default' FL for young people. One prospective location is Hawai'i where Japanese, not Spanish, is the *de facto* FL of study. Additionally, future studies should address the suggested link between individual student goals of L2 attainment and NS/NNS preference. This link appears in our qualitative data, but was not anticipated on the quantitative survey instrument. Future research should more explicitly test the link between student motivation and teacher preference.

Along with addressing the questions raised by our research, future studies should consider exploration of student NS/NNS preferences at various levels and in other language classroom contexts. It is entirely possible that student preferences change as they advance into the higher levels of a given language of study. We restricted our study to the entry-level classroom. Future studies should not.

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS FOR FL TEACHING

After considering the data, it is very clear that the NS/NNS issue need not be restricted to the TESOL situation alone. Our study demonstrates that this issue is just as salient to the non-English teaching domain as it is to the English one. The NS/NNS issue in the context of non-English teaching situations is still an untapped area of research. Every language context is of course different with its own individual peculiarities and complexities. Nevertheless, the NS/NNS issue is at its heart a question of authority and legitimacy. No matter if it is the English or any other language classroom, the power issues are the same. Within the domain of language teaching, those with NS status are afforded prestige and symbolic power at the expense of those with NNS status. Both NS and NNS instructors bring respective strengths to the language classroom. Unfortunately, many in the field (students, teachers, and administrators) internalize the *native-speaker fallacy* and replicate it in their actions and attitudes. The result of this is a shutting out of a whole population of competent teachers judged solely on their NNS status. At the same time, in some cases, NS-ness is an exclusive qualification considered in hiring practices, ignoring other qualifications related to teaching performance.

We suggest two strategies for re-balancing the power relations between NS and NNS teachers. One, we recommend providing students of FLs with more opportunities to receive NNS-led language instruction. Increased exposure will allow students a chance to rectify the common (but inaccurate) assumption that NNS teachers have little to offer to the FL classroom. Two, we implore language program administrators to diversify their teaching staff, providing students with a fair balance of NS and NNS instructors. Some may feel that this amounts to 'lowering the standards' in hiring. We emphatically argue that this is not the case at all. Instead, we are suggesting to administrators to consider a balance of pedagogical training and native language background when making hiring decisions. We are confident in making these recommendations precisely because our student participants indicated that they desire a NS-NNS teacher combination in the FL classroom if given the choice.

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APPENDIX A

Study Questionnaire

Participant's demographic information: (Please check the appropriate blank.)

1. Age: ___18-20 ___21-23 ___24-26 ___27 and older
2. Gender: ___Male ___Female
3. Academic standing: ___Freshman ___Sophomore ___Junior
___Senior ___Graduate
4. Native language: ___English ___Spanish ___Other ()
5. Have you ever had a non-native speaker of the target language as a foreign language teacher?
___Yes ___No

Here are opinion statements about foreign language teachers. Please choose **only one** answer for each statement. You may circle or place an 'X' to indicate your response. There is no right or wrong answer, so please give your honest feelings about foreign language teachers in general. There is an option of "No Response" for each statement.

**You are NOT asked about your current foreign language teacher. Please give your general feelings.

Explanation of Response Codes

SA	A	D	SD	NR
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response

Directions: Please choose only one response to each statement. You may circle or place an 'X' over your answer.

1	I prefer a native speaker as my foreign language teacher.	SA	A	D	SD	NR
2	I think that a native speaker can make a better teacher than a non-native speaker.	SA	A	D	SD	NR
3	It does not matter whether my foreign language teacher is a native speaker or not.	SA	A	D	SD	NR
4	I prefer an American teacher because I can ask questions in English.	SA	A	D	SD	NR
5	I would be disappointed if my foreign language teacher was not a native speaker.	SA	A	D	SD	NR
6	I think that a non-native speaker teacher is qualified if she/he has lived and/or studied in the country where the language is spoken.	SA	A	D	SD	NR
7	A native speaker teacher makes me more interested in learning.	SA	A	D	SD	NR

APPENDIX B

Follow-up Interview Question Items

What are strengths of NS teacher from your perspective?

What are the strengths of a NNS teacher from your perspective?

Conversely, what are the weaknesses you see in NS teachers for you?

Also, what are the weaknesses of a NNS teacher for you?

Some say a NS teacher is better because they can provide a model of what you are aiming for as a FL student. They also have the definitive answers to questions regarding language and culture. Can you comment on that statement?

On the other hand, some say a NNS is better because they provide a model of the student which is more attainable for the FL student. They also provide better insights into the FL culture and language because theoretically they 'came from the same boat' as you. Can you comment on that statement also?

Can you define what it means to be a native speaker of a language? How about a non-native speaker?

Can you be a native speaker of two languages simultaneously? Can you become a native speaker of a language?

Do you consider yourself a (Japanese/Chinese/Italian) speaker? Why or why not?

What does a good FL teacher do/not do?

What does a bad FL do/not do?

Do you plan on becoming a native-like speaker of (Japanese/Chinese/Italian)? Or is it enough to become a successful multilingual?

If presented with three possible teacher arrangements, which would you pick and why?

1. NS teacher and NS teacher
2. NNS teacher and NNS teacher
3. NS teacher and NNS teacher

If chose the 3rd option (NS and NNS) would you rather the NS teacher cover one subject and the NNS cover another? Or does it not matter as long as both are qualified?