

## POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS NON-NATIVE SPEAKER TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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### Introduction

This article is a discussion of a study into attitudes towards NNS teachers of ESOL in a London College of Further Education. Attitudes towards 'non-native' speaker teachers of English matter because of the reality that, 'on a global level the ELT profession is perhaps the world's only profession in which the majority face discrimination' (Ali, 2009: 37). It has been estimated that currently 80% of English teachers worldwide are non-native speakers of the language (Braine, 2010).

It is not only the problem of discrimination which reflects poorly on the ELT profession but also the negative consequences of the strongly held 'birthright mentality' (Thomas, 1999: 6); the belief that being a native speaker is a qualification for language teaching in itself. As teacher educators we should actively resist what Adrian Holliday (2005) refers to as 'native speakerism.' The material consequences of excluding NNS teachers from employment are manifestly unjust. Furthermore, there is no pedagogical basis for the notion that a native speaker teacher possesses any innate ability to teach more competently.

This issue has received a great deal of attention over the last 20 years. Most of this research considers the ELT profession as a global phenomenon. There are some good reasons to view ELT as a single entity. However, English language teaching is as diverse as the many countries and regions in which it takes place. It is influenced and shaped by the histories and cultures of those places, and adapts itself to the needs and demands of learners, institutions and states. Therefore, whilst it would be naïve to dismiss the influence of the modern, global ELT industry, it is also a mistake to believe that any one set of values or attitudes determines how English teaching operates in any particular place or time.

Attitudes towards NNS trainees and teachers of ESOL at the college I study here are quite different to those in previous research. It is a small sample in a particular place at a particular time, but it indicates that NNS trainees and teachers are not viewed there as problematic, unusual, or even exotic. In fact, they are in many ways preferred. This also matters, not because it in any way undermines what has been found in different contexts but because it challenges the presupposition that marginalisation is natural or normal. It is surely important as teacher educators to be aware, not only that discrimination does exist but also that it can be resisted. We should be able to communicate to our trainees that it is not inevitable that NS speaker teachers will be valued over NNS teachers.

Nevertheless, my aim is not to construct what Maggie MacLure refers to as the 'celebratory discourse of insider-hood' (MacLure, 2003: 103). Conflicts and contentions surrounding the 'ownership' of English and the status of its many varieties are much in evidence in the college.

Although a detailed examination of these issues is outside the scope of this article, they are also important aspects of the challenge facing ELT educators.

### 'Native-speakerism', native speaker fallacy and linguistic imperialism

Robert Phillipson's highly influential work *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992) examined the mechanisms of power, which have contributed to the world dominance of the English language. He explicitly makes the connection between this and what he calls the 'native speaker fallacy' (1992: 195).

The 'native speaker fallacy' refers to one of the tenets of The Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English in 1961. This was that, 'The ideal teacher of English is a native speaker.' Phillipson maintains that this has remained an

important tenet in the English language teaching profession to this day.

It is not only the NNS teacher who is disadvantaged by the fact that, 'the native speaker became the potent and awe-inspiring trademark of the billion dollar EFL industry worldwide' (Rajagopalan, 2006: 285). The consequence of this has been that ELT has been associated with underqualified teachers and a lack of professionalism. The rejection of this perception of ELT is very much part of the 'discourse of the professional ESOL teacher' which seeks to distance itself from the 'birthright mentality'. I will examine how ESOL teachers in the college represent themselves in relation to these 'other' teachers in my analysis.

### Alternative perspectives

However, 'native-speakerism' is by no means the only discourse available to discuss the 'ownership' of English. One of the major topics increasingly woven into the discourse of resistance to this is the rise and future significance of international varieties of English and the role that non-native speakers will have in its development.

Postmodern discourses of globalisation and mobility have incorporated ways of talking positively about multilingual people and have created a space for the NNS teacher as role model and stakeholder in the development of new varieties of English. As Claire Kramsch declares, 'It is time to take our cues not from monolingual native speakers but from the multilingual NNS that constitute the majority of human beings on the planet' (Kramsch, 1993: 49). Similarly, according to Enric Llurda, 'the confluence of recent research on EIL<sup>1</sup>, together with the increasing appreciation of NNS teachers, both in ESL and EFL contexts, are creating the right conditions for the gradual acceptance of ELF with the consequence of a decrease in the role of native speaker teachers in setting the principles and norms on which this lingua franca will be taught in the future' (Llurda, 2004: 314).

In ESOL teaching in the UK, it is the notion of EIL, which is a particular site of contention. It appears to be the case in the

college I study here, that a teacher whose native language is a variety of English which is considered 'non-standard,' or low status often has greater difficulty in being accepted than a NNS teacher of English who has acquired a standard variety. The issue of contention is then one of acceptability of language use rather than the native or non-nativeness of the speaker. As Moussu and Llurda point out, 'It is necessary to recognise the importance of a speaker's acceptance by a community as one of its members, as it is what will ultimately be determining the social recognition of the NS/NNS identity' (2008: 316).

### The study: context

The study took place in Lewisham College in 2011. This is a college of further education with a large ESOL department employing more than 50 teachers. 32.7% of these teachers are NNS. Many of these teachers have been employed following completion of the CELTA/PTLLS course which is also run in the department. This is therefore a good context to examine attitudes of teacher trainers as well as managers. In common with many colleges of further education in the UK, Lewisham has a long history of catering for learners who are marginalised from mainstream education, and because of its location in an ethnically and culturally diverse area, is used to educating multilingual learners.

One of the characteristics of ESOL teaching in the UK is that much of it takes place in multicultural cities. This closely connects ESOL, more than other areas of ELT, with the consequences of immigration and globalisation. ESOL teachers have always faced the practical needs of their migrant students and cannot avoid the realities of discrimination and marginalisation, which many of them face. This is more than just a description of the context in which ESOL teachers work but is inextricably linked with how the ESOL profession perceives itself. As Melanie Cooke and James Simpson point out: 'For many in the field the political side of ESOL, its relationship with matters of social justice is part of their identity as teachers...' (2008: 41).

Another salient characteristic of ESOL teaching is that most of it takes place within

<sup>1</sup> English as an International Language

the state education system. This means that ESOL teachers are detached from the demands of the market. In pedagogical terms, it has meant a close connection between general learning theories and ESOL, whereas EFL teaching has tended to emphasise methodologies which apply specifically to language teaching, such as the monolingual approach.

ESOL has increasingly focussed on adapting practice to cultural pluralism. In this atmosphere of promotion of multilingualism, 'ESL organisers *actively recruited* teachers with backgrounds similar to those of their students, and these teachers then undertook the same training and gained the same qualifications as native speakers of English'- my italics (Rosenberg, 2007: 122). It is seen an advantage to have teachers who can understand the culture and language of the students. The result has been a profession in which the dominant discourse about NNS teachers is that it is common sense to view their presence as normal and desirable.

### The research context

In their article entitled 'Non-native English Speaking English language Teachers: History and Research' (2008) Lucie Moussu and Enric Llurda review research carried out in this field since the 1990s. In their final section '*Areas in Need of Further Attention,*' they identify research into differences among different kinds of NNS teachers as being under researched. They explicitly mention the fact that ESOL teaching is one of these areas, and also attitudes of teacher educators.

The only published study into attitudes towards NNS teachers in ELT in the UK was carried out in 2007 by Elizabeth Clark and Amos Paran at the Institute of Education. Clark and Paran surveyed UK ELT institutions about their criteria for employing English language teachers. 72.3% of the respondents judged the native speaker criterion to be either moderately or very important. However, very few of these responses came from FE colleges and they state that there is some indication that the NNS criterion is less important in those institutions.

### The study: methods and methodology

My research question was as follows: 'What are attitudes at Lewisham College towards Phillipson's 'native speaker fallacy'; that the ideal teacher of English should be a native speaker?' I believe that this is an issue of discrimination rather than a 'neutral' or value free discussion about what type of teacher is best. I recognise that I cannot take an 'objective' stance. In examining what other perspectives exist I am also acknowledging that other perspectives *do* exist: each with their own 'facts' 'truths' and 'realities' which form which Foucault (1980) refers to as 'regimes of truth' or ideologies: each with their own ways of seeing and ways of talking about the world, which are constructed in discourses. I define discourses here as 'practices for producing meaning, forming subjects and regulating conduct within particular societies and particular historical times' (Maclure, 2003: 175).

Although Phillipson's *Linguistic Imperialism* has greatly influenced debates about control and power in ELT his perspective is essential structural. That is, he views the issue as being one in which people are either dominant or dominated. More recent post structural approaches present alternative models of power. I define post structuralism here as a rejection of the idea of universal truth and objective knowledge and the assertion that truths are always partial and knowledge is always 'situated'. This perspective sees ideologies as being capable of existing in parallel to one another.

This is not a denial of the concentration of power within certain groups but an account of a more complex and diffuse explanation as to how this occurs. For Foucault this concentration of power is directly linked to discourse practices and these practices are inextricably linked to institutions, for example education.

My study consists of both qualitative and quantitative data; that is, a survey and interviews. The aim of the survey was not primarily to provide quantitative evidence for my hypothesis but to set a context for analysis of the interviews. It was intended to be confirmatory rather than exploratory since I had strong expectations about the outcome, based on my experience at the

college. In doing it anonymously, I also hoped to allow for a range of different responses which might not otherwise emerge from the interviews.

However, attitudes are complex entities and my intention is not just to show whether any particular set of attitudes exist or not, but to examine how these attitudes are constructed. I therefore took a linguistic discourse analysis approach in my analysis of the interviews. I view these interviews not as *confessional* in the sense that the subjects are expected to 'reveal' things, but as situated and constructed social interactions. The research interview is more than a fact gathering exercise. As Deborah Cameron (2001) points out, research interviews are not really 'innocent' conversations, especially when the topic is something as delicate as discrimination. Although I made efforts to background my own opinions and to remain 'neutral' it is necessary to admit that 'accounts of their own (*or my own*) attitudes may be contaminated by social desirability response biases, reflecting the commonly held view that it is 'not nice' to display, or admit to, categorical thought in general or negative beliefs about other ethnic groups in particular' (Condor, 2000: 176).

In analysing *how* discourses are constructed I will refer to various linguistic and paralinguistic features which are employed to do this.

### Description of data: interviews

The data consists of seven interviews with members of staff. Four of the seven teachers were NNS. Three of these NNS teachers had previously completed the CELTA/PTLLS course at the college and were therefore in a position to judge attitudes of teacher trainers towards them. I chose teachers with varying lengths of teaching experience. The three native speaker teachers were all chosen because they also work or have worked as teacher trainers. People in these roles 'set the tone' for the dominant discourse; are gatekeepers for teachers entering the profession and are in the position to 'police' attitudes.

The interviews were semi-structured. I asked each interviewee the same initial question, which was; 'Do you think the best teacher of ESOL is a native speaker?' I then

asked them to talk about their personal experience of this issue.

None of the seven teachers interviewed thought that the ideal teacher of ESOL should be a native speaker. Of the four teachers interviewed whose first language is not English, none had encountered negative attitudes towards them at the college.

### The survey

Respondents were asked their opinion about 'general' attitudes to NNS teachers. This includes teacher trainers, employers inside and outside the UK, students and colleagues at Lewisham College. None of the respondents believed that colleagues thought that teachers should be native speakers. 75% also disagreed with the statement that teacher trainers have a negative attitude towards NNS trainees and 70.8% disagreed that NNS might find it difficult to find work in the UK. The highest percentages relating to negative attitudes towards NNS relate to perceived difficulties in finding work *outside* the UK, with 50% saying this might be a problem.

100% of respondents disagreed that teachers of ESOL should be native speakers of English. 79.2% also disagreed that teachers of English should be 'indistinguishable' from native speakers.

### The study: analysis of interviews

#### *The liberal discourse of productive diversity: The 'value' of the NNS teacher*

#### 1. Background to the discourse

In the 1970s and 80s the dominant histories and cultures in ESOL teaching in Further Education in the UK tended to be reproduced in discourses of equal opportunity or social justice. Much of the language of these discourses remains; for example in notions such as 'inclusivity', but increasingly, since the 1990s these earlier ways of talking have been replaced by liberal discourses of productive or positive diversity which appeal to the 'value' of difference.

I will begin by looking at some of the linguistic features used to construct the discourse of productive diversity in relation to the NNS teacher.

#### 2. Linguistic features

**Comparatives and superlative structures**

That the NS/NNS are taken-for-granted categories is a presupposition underlying the frequent use of comparatives and superlatives to refer to the two types of teachers. For example:

‘...you can empathise a lot more with what the students are experiencing and you can give advice so it’s more authentic’ (Claudia, NNS teacher: 167)<sup>1</sup>

‘the people who know most about language are often the teachers who have studied it themselves because they’ve studied it in a way that most native speakers have never studied it’ (Ann: 154)

‘a lot of non-native speakers have a **much** better understanding of grammar as it is **taught** \than native speakers\’ (Angela: 80-82)

‘...and there was certainly in the area where I was working a **distinct preference** to have speakers of community languages’ (Angela, talking about a preference for employing NNS teachers: 132)

**Vocabulary: Positive adjectives**

The notion that the NNS teacher is different from the NS teacher, and that this diversity is a positive attribute is also reproduced in the vocabulary used to describe these teachers. Adjectives such as ‘inspiring’ and ‘positive’ are both used more than once and Ann states that NNS teachers are:

‘...perfect people for going out (to teach in the community) (Ann: 36)

Interviewees also use a range of nouns to refer to the ‘value’ of the NNS teacher; ‘benefit’, ‘asset’ and ‘advantage’. For example:

‘...there are also a lot of advantages to being not a native speaker’ (Claudia: 165)

These advantages are not only an explicit understanding of language structure but also the ability to provide a ‘role model’ to students:

‘...we then provide a role model for our learners that arriving in the country with no English is not a barrier’ (Angela: 188)

This role model is described as:

‘...something which students can aspire to’ (Ann: 369) and ‘...they admire it’ (Claudia: 143)

**Vocabulary: synonyms/overwording**

If the dominant discourse within ESOL teaching in the UK is that of productive diversity we would expect to find evidence of what Fairclough (1992) refers to as ‘overwording’. He defines this as, ‘a sign of intense preoccupation pointing to peculiarities in the ideology of the group responsible for it’ (1992: 194). This does seem to be the case. Angela and Ann, both of whom are senior managers, use the word ‘variety’, or near synonyms, 17 times during the course of their interviews. For example:

‘I think we should here concentrate on having speakers of a wide variety of languages\’ (employed as teachers) (Angela: 188)

(Talking about students) ‘they need to be exposed to a wide variety of different voices and accents’ (Angela: 180)

(In defending the ESOL profession from the ‘charge’ of ‘native speakerism’) ‘...there’s always been a lot of *multilingual teachers*’ (Ann: 23)

(Talking about how it is important for students to accept teachers with ‘different’ accents) ‘...in London there are *people with all sorts of different accents*’ (Ann: 132)

It seems that ‘multilingual’ and ‘variety’ function as synonyms for ‘diversity’ in these interviews. A wish to represent herself as investing in this diversity is apparent in two statements made by Angela:

‘... I’ve worked with teachers of **all** varieties of English...’ (Angela: 41)

(Talking about previous times when there were more NNS teachers in ESOL teaching) ‘...we had **very large numbers** of teachers who spoke a variety of the community languages’ (Angela: 136)

<sup>1</sup> In this analysis section italicised names and line numbers in brackets refer to transcripts.

**Extreme case formulations**

Ann is very keen to display her rejection of the idea that the ideal teacher of ESOL should be a native speaker. In response to my question: ‘Do you think the ideal ESOL teacher should be a native speaker?’ she answers:

‘...no no of **course** not’ (Ann: 14)

This is an example of a linguistic feature which is characteristic of many of the interviewees’ responses. Condor (2011) refers to these as ‘extreme case formulations’ which are designed to display investment in rejection of an idea’ (*ibid*: 13).

Angela’s response to the same question is similar:

‘...no not at all’ (Angela: 13)

The use of ‘extreme case formulations’ to ‘defend’ the acceptance of NNS teachers at Lewisham College is also apparent in NNS teacher Claudia’s interview:

J: ‘did you feel that you might be judged/that it might be difficult for you as a non-native speaker/’

C: ‘absolutely not no\I just thought that this college seems to have a very good awareness of the benefits...\’ (Claudia: 103-106)

And later,

J: ‘and have you come across any beliefs or attitudes that you think that indicate that people think that native speakers might be better teachers/’

C: ‘absolutely not, no\and I can also see that a lot of people here are non-native speakers’ (Claudia: 125-131)

ESOL teaching as a whole is also defended by Ann:

J: ‘so as far as you’re concerned then in state ESOL teaching it’s really always been the case that it’s not a problem to be a non-native speaker of English\’

A: ‘certainly in adult and further education definitely not no\’ (Ann: 90-92)

And Kasia:

J: ‘...and has there ever been (at Lewisham College) has anybody ever mentioned anything that made you

think\ oh you know they prefer native speakers here\’

K: ‘again no I can’t think of any situations where that’s ever happened no’ (Kasia: 239)

Ann goes so far as to say:

A: ‘...it never occurred to me that anybody would think that it (employing NNS teachers) wasn’t a positive thing **mad**’ (Ann: 40)

She also uses an extreme adjective to describe her reaction to the same issue:

A: ‘I’m just **amazed** about this business’ (Ann: 163)

**Discourse markers**

There is some evidence that interviewees do indeed feel that I intend for them to reveal discriminatory attitudes. When asked why she is surprised that recent studies in the UK have found such discrimination, Ann replies:

A: ‘**well** because everywhere I’ve worked\whether it’s been in schools in secondary schools in the UK\ a private language school on Spain and in London\in adult and further education\there has always been a lot of multilingual teachers... I’m just really **surprised**’ (Ann: 20-29)

Cameron points out that

‘well’ is, ‘commonly found prefacing answers to interview questions to indicate the respondent does not entirely agree’ (2001: 156)

The discourse marker ‘to be honest with you’ is also used by two interviewees in responses to questions about discrimination. When asked if he had experienced discrimination at Lewisham College, Miri (a NNS teacher) replies:

M: ‘not really to be honest with you...it hasn’t been an issue here at all’ (Miri: 253)

And Shada (a bilingual teacher):

J: ‘ and nobody’s ever said to you that you might find it difficult to find work/’

S: ‘ never I’ve never heard that to be honest with you Jane no’ (Shada: 155)

### 3. Representation of 'the other': the 'menace' of the NS teacher and the 'birth right mentality'

#### Background

I define representation as the means by which groups of people are identified in talk; and I define 'othering' as, 'a process of representing an individual or a social group to render them distant, alien or deviant' (Coupland, 1999: 5). The representation of others by means of linguistic 'theying', is context specific. I take the following examples of the use of the pronoun 'they' together with representations of stereotypical social groups and behaviour to have been designed to convey certain ideas which are understood to be negatively distancing. This understanding has been informed by my insider's knowledge of the context.

Kasia introduces the idea of the harm that 'native-speakerism' has done to ELT early on in her interview. She says she would not emphasise the advantages of a NS teacher because of the negative consequences of an initial preference in Poland for NS teachers:

'... there was a trend in Poland where **everybody** wanted to be taught by a native speaker\ and they kind of preferred them to you know Polish teachers\ and after a while there were lots of teachers who **just** spoke English\ but they had no experience\so you know they were native speakers but they were not actually very good teachers\' ( Kasia: 20-25)

' I think for a **while**\what it was we got a lot of kinda young Americans er I suppose travelling doing Europe they ended up in Poland kinda thinking that's a good opportunity\ and that's all they could offer **just** the fact that they spoke **English**\ er so people were a bit disappointed'(ibid: 32-37)

Here Kasia uses 'they' to refer to two distinct groups; Polish people and NS speaker teachers. The use of 'they' to refer to NS teachers distances herself from this group which she does not want to claim professional allegiance with. What Kasia seems to be conveying is a sense that NNS teachers are now valued in Poland *because of*

the poor reputation that NS brought to ELT.

Ann represents a similar stereotype:

'in the late 70s where sometimes people will still be travelling around and they think oh I need to make a bit of money perhaps I can teach a few English classes\' (Ann: 191-193)

The references to 'travelling around', 'doing Europe', 'making money' and 'young Americans' are not accidental. These are understood as stereotypes in the world of ESOL teaching to represent teachers who do not see their work as a long-term vocation but just as a way to travel or make money.

The strongest expression of the 'birthright mentality' in the NS teacher comes from Angela when talking about tensions between NS and NNS teachers on ESOL teacher training courses:

'... everybody in the group is new to the situation and sometimes native speaker trainees will feel that the **gift** (sarcastic tone)/ {hand gesture} that they're bringing\ is their fluent English\ and so "why is someone else being given a better observation grade" than them for example "when they can't even speak English properly"\(angry tone)( Angela: 224-231)'

Angela's hand gesture is used to illustrate the handing over of a gift; this, and her use of a sarcastic tone at the same time are used as contextualisation cues to signal a strong disapproval of this mentality. She also uses the 'voice' of this stereotypical NS teacher to represent opinions she disapproves of. The use of reported speech to represent the 'voices' of others is another salient feature of the interviews.

### 4. Small stories: dealing with discrimination

#### Background

All three of the NS interviewees mentioned that they were aware of discrimination against teachers. This discrimination was typically perpetrated by 'others' and was described in situations which they were obliged to 'deal with.' It is important to say that many of these descriptions were elicited by me, because I was aware that such

situations were an issue in the college also that, 'The construction of diversity requires a counterpart: discrimination' (Matus & Infante, 2011: 304).

The notion of prejudice has a long history within liberal thought, especially within state education in London. I therefore approach representations of resistance to discrimination as instances of impression management, or attempts, 'to avoid the stigma of prejudice' (Condor, 2000: 175).

Some of these situations were recounted in the form of short narratives, or what Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) call 'small stories'. The small story approach recognises narrative orientation in conversation; not just in the elicited and extended retelling which reflects and represents past events but how people 'use stories in everyday situations to create and perpetuate a sense of who they are' (*ibid*: 378).

#### **The representation of others in small stories: 'dealing with' discrimination**

In answer to a question as to why teachers working in ESOL state teaching continue to feel a lack of confidence, despite policies and practices which support them, Angela recounts the following story:

A: {sigh}(.) I think **un**fortunately you do still come across OFSTED inspectors for example/ who criticize/ erm a few years ago (.) I was(.) erm part of an inspection where a teacher with Nigerian English/ was **criticized** \ for speaking non-standard English and the observer who **should** have known better \wrote in the report that they didn't know how the students could understand the teacher and you know clearly it was an observer from outside London/ **no** London based observer would ever have written anything like that\ and **none** of the students had (.) **ever** commented and why **would** they \ that's the sort of language they were used to\ it made no difference to anybody/ and not to any of her colleagues\ but obviously it knocked **her** confidence **appallingly** and unnecessarily\ (Angela: 197-210)

This story opens with a sigh, which functions as a paralinguistic discourse marker to signify that it is a situation which

wearies or exasperates Angela. The characters in the story are represented as 'insiders': London inspectors, colleagues, the teacher, students and the interviewer. That the interviewer is understood to be an insider is signalled by the phrase '*you know clearly it was an observer from outside London*', both '*you know*' and '*clearly*', indicating that she assumes a shared understanding between herself and the interviewer. The 'outsider' is the inspector from outside London. That this story has a moral purpose is indicated by Angela's evaluation of the actions of the inspector; that he '*should have known better*' and that his actions affected the teacher '*appallingly*' and '*unnecessarily*.' Later on (*line 256*) Angela mentions that this episode was '*taken up and dealt with*'. Her use of the passive without a subject means that we are not sure exactly who did this, but it is clearly important for Angela to mention that such episodes *are* dealt with in London colleges. Angela's judgement is directed at two opinions which the inspector expressed; that the teacher was speaking non-standard English and that he did not think the students would be able to understand her. These two opinions place the inspector firmly outside the liberal discourse of diversity.

This is just one example of the many 'small stories' which were recounted during the interviews. What is remarkable about these stories is that although the interviewees were aware that the topic of the interview was NNS teachers, the stories were not necessarily about NNS, but examples of episodes where the language spoken by the teacher was not deemed appropriate. In the case of the Nigerian teacher, this might well have been a NS. The implication is that NNS English is understood by interviewees to be just one of the many varieties of English in existence and is to be judged on the basis of its acceptability in the local context rather than whether it is spoken by a native speaker or not.

#### **Conclusion**

The survey and the interviews do seem to confirm the hypothesis. There is little evidence that NNS teachers at Lewisham College are discriminated against by teacher trainers or colleagues. This is a challenge to



the idea that NNS teachers are always and everywhere disadvantaged. The premise of most previous research has been that discrimination is all pervasive and inevitable. However, much of this research assumes that the practice of English language teaching is determined by ideologies that people cannot reflect on and respond to and that trainers and teachers are disconnected from the debates which have circulated in ELT for the last 20 years. These debates do not only occur in academic contexts but also in staff rooms and classrooms. Given this circulation of discourses there is every reason to be optimistic that attitudes which are apparent in one college also exist in others.

ELT teacher educators are 'gatekeepers', we set the tone and can in many ways 'police' attitudes. We should make trainees aware that 'native speakerism' or the 'native speaker fallacy' has no place in ELT and is not inevitable. Attitudes at this college demonstrate this to be the case.

One of the most important factors contributing to positive attitudes towards NNS teachers must be the multicultural and multilingual context of the study. Not only is Lewisham a multilingual community; but decades of educational policies and practices in London have supported and normalised the concept of diversity. That NNS teachers of ESOL are viewed as positive examples of this diversity is reproduced in the talk of the interviewees. However, in recent years the idea of globalisation has created a space in very many contexts in which the multilingual person is viewed positively and has seen an increasing understanding that English does not 'belong' to the native speaker. As teacher trainers we need to encourage our trainees to believe that they are investing in a profession which values the NNS. The motivational benefits of this for NNS teachers are clear, but NS teachers and teacher trainers have much to gain as well. It is likely that the 'native speaker fallacy' has been one of the major contributing factors to the low status of ESOL/EFL teachers.

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