English Language Learners' Opinions of EFL Native and Nonnative Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at finding out the opinions of Kurdish English language learners of their native – nonnative teachers of English as a foreign language; identifying which group of teachers is more useful to them ; native or non-native English language teachers and in which language skills. The study has hypothesized that Kurdish university students show positive beliefs of native English language over nonnative English language teachers.In order to validate the objectives and hypotheses of the study, a questionnaire consisting of (14) items that included (9) general items and (5) items on the teaching of each of the following language skills grammar; vocabulary; pronunciation; listening ; reading and speaking was given to one hundred students studying English at four private universities in Kurdistan of Iraq. SPSS V.22 (Statistical Packages for Social Science) was used to determine the significant differences between native English language teachers and nonnative English language teachers of English as a foreign language as perceived by students at all levels of language learning skills item by item for all the (14)items used. The ANOVA 1 test was used to determine the difference and significance of the dimensions of the study. The study has revealed that, in general, students significantly preferred to have native English language teachers more than nonnative English language teachers. However, students significantly preferred nonnative English language teachers to native English language teachers in teaching them grammar. On the other hand, students thought that native English language teachers were better than nonnative English language teachers in teaching them speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary and listening.

KEYWORDS : Applied Linguistics, EFL, Language skills, native nonnative foreign language teachers, TESOL.

1. INTRODUCTION

Scholars, linguists and foreign language learning experts have had different views as who makes a better foreign English language teacher (EFLT); the native English language teacher henceforth (NEST) or non-native English language teacher henceforth (NNEST). This issue has started since English language began to be taught internationally. There have been attempts to define each term in relation to foreign /second language teaching (Paikeday 1985; Coppieters 1987; Medgyes 1992; Widdowson 1994; Liu 1999) with advantages and disadvantages, areas of strength and weakness of each group in relation to language skills and teaching tasks and strategies (Medgyes 1994; Braine 1999; Matsuda 1999; Maum 2002; Madrid and Cañado 2004; Kim 2009, among others). Other studies,

including the present study focused on students' attitudes, opinions and perceptions towards NESTs and NNESTs. Some of those studies (Braine 2004; Kirkpatrick 2010) revealed that students perceived NESTs as the ideal model for language production. They are characterized by grammatical correctness and pronunciation (Wang 2012) and their knowledge competence in cultural elements of the TL. On the other extreme, learners perceived NNESTs as they lack perfect grammatical and pragmatic knowledge, poor pronunciation and inferior knowledge about TL culture (Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman, & Hartford, 2004). However, these last ideas were refuted in favour of the NNESTs by scholars who maintained that second / foreign language learners tend to put significant importance on certain pedagogical, linguistic, and personal qualities than on a teacher's linguistic background (Walkinshaw and Oanh 2014).

Aim of the study

This study aims at investigating the opinions of Kurdish English language learners of NESTs or NNEST in order to find out with which group of teachers Kurdish students believe they learn more. Also to Find out which group of English language teachers (Natives or non-natives) are better in teaching language skills and grammar.

Hypotheses

This study puts the following hypotheses : There is a statistically significant difference in the students' opinions of their NESTs or NNEST. In general, Kurdish university students think positively of their NESTs over NNESTs.

Research questions

As mentioned above, this study is an attempt to give accredited responses to the following question :

1. What are the student's perception on NEST and NNEST?

2. Which language skills are taught better by either NEST or NNEST from learners points of view and why?

Significance of the study

This study is expected to be of value to teachers of English as a foreign/second language, learners, administrators and applied linguists. For teachers in general, it will give them feedback on how their students think of them. It will be of importance to students themselves who will be aware of the fact who can be a good language learner and teacher. It is also of significance to applied linguists who will have insight of how students perceive teachers from different backgrounds taking into consideration linguistic and paralinguistic variables. It will be of value to educators who can make benefit of the results of this study in assessing and selecting professional teachers of English.

Limitation of the study

This study is limited to the perception of a number of English language learners to NEST and NNEST in four local universities in Kurdistan of Iraq.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The status of nonnative speakers as teachers of English has been a debatable issue since English language began to be taught in different parts of the world. This issue, in fact, has become progressively acknowledged and has created an argument among linguists and educators as who is better and to rely on in teaching foreign languages in general and English language in particular (Madrid and Canado 2004). Some researchers (Árva and Medgyes (2000) ; Lasagabaster & Sierra (2002); Torres (2004); Madrid and Cañado (2004); Moussu (2002); Şahin (2005 ; Alseweed (2012)) believed that NEST cannot make good EFL teachers because their points of strength are not clearly identified and well established and their potential and contribution to the EFL field are not somehow well known and thus underestimated. On the other hand, a number of researchers believed that NNEST can make good EFL teachers and can contribute to the field (Braine, 1999; Maum, 2002). Others have emphasized on the potentialities of both NESTs and NNESTs by working together and share "linguistic, cultural, and educational insights within a model of joint collaboration" (Matsuda, 1999; Matsuda and Matsuda, 2001) cited in Madrid & Cañado (2004, p.128).

Native versus Non-Native English Speaking Teachers

There are many studies that focus on the Native Speaker ('NS') vs. Non-Native Speaker (NNS) classification with regard to teachers of English (Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Chueng & Braine, 2007). Much of this research has focused on ESL students, though the number of investigations into EFL instructors has increased (see Crooks, 2009). In the past NS and NNS teachers were viewed as two different groups. However this notion has been recently studied extensively (Medgyes, 1992).

The Native Speaker

According to Chomsky (1965) native speakers (NSs) were the only dependable source of "linguistic data".This is probably why there was little of research on non-native speakers (NNSs) before the 1990s.

Applied Linguists, scholars and language teaching experts have different opinions of what constitutes a native speaker (NS) or how they can accurately be identified. Lightbown and Spada (1999, p. 177) cited in Torres (2004, p.8) gave the following definition to the native speaker : "Native speaker : a person who has learned a language from an early age and who has full mastery of the language. Native speakers may differ in terms of vocabulary and stylistic aspects of language use, but they tend to agree on basic grammar of the language". Crystal (2003 : 308) simply defined the native speaker as : "A term used in linguistics to refer to someone for whom a particular language is a first language or mother tongue. The implication is that this native language, having been acquired naturally during childhood, is the one about which a speaker will have the most reliable intuitions, and whose judgments about the way the language is used can therefore be trusted." This study favors this definition.

Native Speakers as Teachers

Native speakers as teachers of English as a foreign or second language have benefits and they are useful and of interest in the classroom (Reves and Medgyes 1994; Filho 2002). Reves and Medgyes (1994) made a survey on EFL and ESL teachers and reported that native English speaking teachers (NESTs) were "more capable of creating motivation and an 'English' environment in the school…, taught the language rather than about the language, and [applied] more effective and innovative teaching techniques" (p. 361). NESTs were also favored in teaching specific language skills as pronunciation or culture. Filho (2002 : 80) also reports that "a large majority of…students said they would prefer a NS teacher for American culture, communication skills and pronunciation classes".

Ulate (2011 : 62) cited in Çakir and Demir (2013 : 38) lists the following qualities of NESTs which make them distinguished foreign language teachers :

"Subconscious knowledge of rules, intuitive grasp of meanings, ability to communicate within social settings, range of language skills, creativity of language use, identification with a language community, ability to produce fluent discourse, knowledge of differences between their own speech and that of the 'standard' form of the language, ability 'to interpret and translate into the L1 of which she or he is a native speaker". We can sum up the advantages of NESTs in the following statements : NESTs can serve as a real model for learners (Edge 1988; McKay 2003). They can be good teachers because of their exceptional "cultural knowledge" (Canagarajah 1999).However, Llurda 's (2005) study did not support the idea that NNESTs could make better teachers as reflected in the reactions of "TESOL practicum supervisors" who were included in the study.

Non-Native English Speakers as Teachers

As mentioned before the number of the NNESTs in the discipline of English language teaching (ELT) has been growing with the growing of learners of English as a foreign/second language worldwide (Crystal 19997, 2001, 2003). Canagarajah (1999, p. 93) states that "80% of the world's English language teachers are non-natives" and Kachru (1990) estimates that there are four non-native English speakers for each native English speaker.

Medgyes (2001 : 433) defined a NNEST as "a teacher for whom English is a second or foreign language, who works in an EFL environment, whose students are monolingual groups of learners and who speaks the same native language as his or her students". This study adopts this definition and views NNESTs are teachers for whom English is a required tool of their professors. Cook (1999) thinks highly of non-native speakers and calls them as 'multicompetent' language users who can use successfully use and teach second language (L2). Medgyes (1992, p.343) commenting on "modified interlanguage continuum", stated that "non-native speakers can never be as creative and original as those whom they have learnt to copy" especially when first language competency is taken into consideration though at the same time he maintains that NNELTs are competent and professionally successful in the classroom. Medgyes (1992 : 346-347) went on to say NNESTs can be "imitable models of the successful learner of English… [And]…can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of their learners". Milambling (1999 :) cited in Torres (2004 : 9-10) confirmed Medgyes' opinion on NNESTs saying they "have had the experience of learning English themselves". Medgyes (1994) cited in

Moussu (2006, p.23) offered the following six advantages of NNESTs. They" 1) provide a good learner model to their students, 2) can teach language strategies very effectively, 3) are able to provide more information about the language to their students, 4) understand the difficulties and needs of the students, 5) are able to anticipate and predict language difficulties, and 6) can (in EFL settings) use the students' native language to their advantage". Medgyes then maintains that both NESTs and NNESTs can equally achieve professional success. Lee (2000 : 19) talking about herself as a NNEST strongly believed that ""what makes [NNESTs] good English teachers has nothing to do with their nationality or their accent. Rather, it is the drive, the motivation, and the zeal within the NNEST to help their students and make a difference in our teaching that makes them better". Chung (2014 : 19) believes that the linguistic, cultural, and learning experiences that nonnative speaker teachers share with students are considered to be the most powerful resources that contribute most significantly to teachers' professional strengths. For example, Ling and Braine (2007) cited in Chung (2014 : 19) show that university students feel that the main strengths of nonnative English speaking teachers is their empathy for students' experience and their shared cultural background with students. Medgyes also (1994) identified positive characteristics of nonnative English speaking teachers, which were later summarized by Moussu and Llurda (2008) as follows : "1) They provide a good learner model to their students; 2) They can teach language strategies very effectively; 3) They are able to provide more information about the language to their students; 4) They understand the difficulties and needs of the students; 5) They are able to anticipate and predict language difficulties; and, 6) In EFL settings, they can use the students' native language to their advantage" (p. 322). Similarly, in his investigation of ESL students' perceptions of nonnative speaker teachers, Mahboob (2004) found that students considered the teachers' own experiences of learning second languages to be their biggest strength. Students felt that this factor enabled teachers to give more satisfactory explanations and to be more empathetic. On the other hand, naturally NNESTs have disadvantages and they cannot always make perfect foreign language teachers. A number of studies have explored the shortcomings of nonnative speaker teachers (Chung 2014). The findings of Reves & Medgyes (1994) show that the most frequently mentioned areas of difficulty were vocabulary, speaking and fluency, and pronunciation and as follows :

1. Vocabulary : NNESTs face difficulties in this area because many words have different meanings

according to the context and situations. The use of idioms, phrasal verbs and synonyms constitute difficulties for foreign teachers unless they have full mastery of the language.

2. Fluency : Fluency is a problem for many NNESTs because it needs certain skills which those teachers lack because it is sometimes too difficult for them to use the language appropriately.

3. Pronunciation : It is apparent that non-NESTs have their own foreign accent that interferes with students' transference and understanding.

Nonnative English language teachers do not have only problems in pronunciation but also with lexicon as well. They use the words that are known to them. Many times these words have hidden connotations or are out-of-date or slang (Medgyes 1992 : 342b; Merino 1997 : 70). They have also difficulties in cultural contexts especially in the choice of language in relation to a social situation. Medgyes (1992) thought that NNEST face difficulties as to this aspect because their knowledge of the target language culture is limited. It happens so often that NNESTs use structures that native speakers would not use in the same situations due to cultural variation consequently pragmatic breakdowns occur (Medgyes 1992 : 342b; Merino 1997 : 70). Mahboob (2004) explains that nonnative speaker teachers received negative comments from their students with respect to teaching speaking, culture, and pronunciation. Additionally, the students did not regard nonnative speaker teachers as good learner models, a conclusion which contradicts the findings in Medgyes (1994) and Cook (2005). Cook (2005) also notes that nonnative speaker teachers feel at a disadvantage in terms of their level of fluency In addition, though negative aspects were considered to be influenced by the local context, Ling & Braine (2007) reveal the weaknesses of nonnative speaker teachers in Hong Kong, which include using an exam-oriented teaching approach, over-correcting students' work, and exhibiting limited use of target language.

Comparison between native and non-native English Language Teachers

Some of the first reflections regarding the differences between native and non-native speaking ESL/EFL teachers came in the eighties (e.g., Kachru 1981; Pride 1981;; Coppieters 1987; Kresovich 1988). Edge (1988), for example, advocated for the importance of giving 'real' models (that is, native speakers of the ESL/EFL students' languages) to the students. These 'real' models speak the language of the students natively and have learned to speak English well, as opposed to the 'foreign' models (NSs), who do not share the cultural, social, and emotional experience of the students, a perspective shared later on by McKay (2003). Medgyes (1991 : 347) summarizes the

differences between NESTS and non-NESTS in the following points :

a. Only non-NESTS can serve as imitable models of the successful learner of English. Depending on the extent to which they are proficient as users of English, they are more or less trustworthy models, too. On the other hand, though NESTS can act as perfect language models they cannot be learner models since they are not learners of English in the sense that non-NESTS are.

b. Non-NESTS can teach learning strategies more effectively. Non-NESTS have adopted language learning strategies during their own learning process. In spite of the considerable differences between them in degrees of consciousness, in theory they all know more about the employment of these strategies than native colleagues who have simply acquired the English language.

c. Non-NESTS can provide learners with more information about the English language. During their own learning process, non-NESTS have gained abundant knowledge about and insight into how the English language works, which might be presumed to make them better informants than their native colleagues.

d. Non-NESTS are more able to anticipate language difficulties. This anticipatory skill, which becomes more and more sophisticated with experience, enables non-NESTS to help learners overcome language difficulties and to avoid pitfalls.

e. Non-NESTS can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of their learners. Since they never cease to be learners of English, they encounter difficulties similar to those of their students, albeit at an obviously higher level. As a rule, this constant struggle makes nonnatives more sensitive and understanding. f. Only non-NESTS can benefit from sharing the learners' mother tongue. In a monolingual setting, the mother tongue is an effective vehicle of communication in the language classroom, which can facilitate the teaching/learning process in countless ways.

Medgyes (1994) cited in Arve &Medgyes(2000 : 357) distinguishes between NSTs and NNSTs are " two different species " who "differ in terms of their language proficiency, in their teaching behavior, the discrepancy in language proficiency accounts for most of the differences found in their teaching behavior and finally they can both be equally good teachers in their own terms". However, Medgyes (2001) reported by Çakir and Demir (2013 : 39) further examines the differences in teaching behavior between NESTs and NNESTs. The table below is based on a survey carried out to 325 native and non-native speaking teachers and it summarizes the differences between NESTs and non-NEST.

What Makes a Good Language Teacher

Astor (2000 : 18) maintains that "a qualified teacher of English should be a professional in at least three fields of knowledge : pedagogy, methodology, and psycho and applied linguistics". He also believes that it is not enough for the language teacher to be competent only in one of these areas but in all the three areas. Furthermore, Astor adds that language teachers should learn and practice these three areas. Moussu (2006 : 30) also believed that both NESTs and NNESTs should have knowledge and background in applied linguistics methodology, pedagogy and grammar. The same ideas were confirmed by Cullen (1994) and Lee (2005) who believed that both NESTs and NNESTs should benefit from courses in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary and culture as such courses would help them in their future careers and make them good language teachers. Giauque (1984) went further to include knowledge in contrastive linguistics an idea confirmed by Phillipson (1992) as reported by Chung (2014) explaining that a good language teacher whether NEST or NNEST should have "knowledge of the target language and insight into language learning process". Chung (2014) maintains that nonnative teachers' linguistic, cultural and learning experiences are very important aspects that add to their professional capacity. On the other hand, according to Merino (1997 p.74) teachers can be divided, in this context into two groups : " the ideal NEST and the ideal non-NEST". He thought the ideal NEST is the one whose qualities of teaching match those six qualities described by is described by Medgyes (1994) and which we mentioned above in this study. One of the important qualities emphasized by Marino above is that the NEST has to learn or to know the students'.As regard to the NNEST, Merino (1997 p.74) asserts the importance of "a near-native proficiency of English". Lee (2000) added other qualities including "drive, the motivation, and the enthusiasm within the NNEST"; these qualities will motivate students and help them become good learners.

To sum up the main qualities of good foreign language teachers whether NESTs or NNEST those teachers should have linguistic, psychological, cultural and pragmatic knowledge of both L1 and L2. They must also have the zeal, enthusiasm and belief in themselves, their students and their profession. They need to continuously participate in professional development programs to update their knowledge and to improve their skills.

Empirical Studies on Native and Nonnative Teachers

The following section deals with a number of studies arranged chronologically on NESTs and NNESTs focusing on different foreign language teaching and learning areas which support ideas mentioned in the previous section of this study. Árva and Medgyes (2000) have studied the various qualities of NESTs and NNESTs including their educational and classroom behavior. The study was carried out in Hungary, with five NESTs from England, and five nonnative speakers of NNESTs from Hungary. They were all secondary school teachers. The NNESts were interviewed on how they thought of their teaching skills; ten video recordings were made of their performance in class.

The study came up with the following differences :

a. NESTs spoke English better than their NNESTs counterparts. NESTs used English as "a natural means of communication in class".

b. Nonnative teachers had a better knowledge of English grammar than NESTs.

c. NNESTs used and followed textbooks faithfully, whereas NESTs used gamut of activities (newspaper clippings, photocopies, posters, realia) other than those in the textbooks and they rarely depended on textbooks in their instructions.

d. NESTs were much more tolerant than NNESTs with students' mistakes.

e. NESTs were able to motivate more than NNESTs because students were obliged to use the L2 as a means of communication since NESTs were unable to speak Hungarian.

f. NNESTs were more professional and more careful in preparing their lessons.

g. In terms of L2 culture, NESTs were better in exposing and providing the students with cultural elements and information. What was interesting about one of the recommendations is that the study supports the notion that "teachers should be hired solely on the basis of their professional virtue, regardless of their language background". Mahboob (2004) carried out a study on student's perceptions of their NESTs a NNESTs.. The subjects were 32 students who were enrolled in an intensive English program and who were asked to write about their native and nonnative teachers. The study revealed that both NESTs and NNESTs were perceived positively and negatively as reflected by the students' comments. NESTs were thought to have better "oral skills, large vocabulary, and cultural knowledge", but were described as having "poor knowledge of grammar, lack of experience as ESL learners, difficulties answering questions, and poor teaching methodology". NNESTs were praised for their "experiences as ESL learners, and the students also appreciated their knowledge of grammar and their "stricter methodology," hard work, ability to answer questions, and literacy skills". On the other hand NNESTs were criticized for their poor oral skills and lack of knowledge about the "English-speaking" cultures. Madrid and Cañado (2004) carried out a

study in which they included both teachers and students. He aimed at getting insight on how students and teachers perceived NESTs and NNESTs and their influence on the English language classroom. The results showed that there were "relevant differences between the pedagogical behavior of native and nonnative teachers". Students preferred NESTs because they thought that NESTs increased their academic level, and they valued their NNESTs because have been with them since the Primary Education stage. His sample consisted of 459 students and 35 teachers from all educational levels (from Primary Education to University. The results of the study revealed that students do not show a preference for NESTs; they valued NNESTs better than NESTs. However, the teachers in were "slightly inclined towards NESTs rather than towards NNESTs.They acknowledged "the advantages the NESTs have in the language teaching/learning process". Moussu (2006) conducted a study investigating the attitudes of 1040 ESL students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs. She took into consideration such variables as "students' first languages, gender, class subject, level, and expected grade, as well as teachers' native languages" that could influence students' judgments on both groups of teachers. The study also included teacher's perceptions of themselves in language proficiency and teaching skills as well as IEP administrators' beliefs about, and experiences with NNESTs and NESTs. The results revealed students had positive attitudes towards NESTs more than NNESTs in spite of the fact that students taught by NNESTs had a "significantly more positive attitude towards NNESTs in general than students taught by NESTs". It was also revealed that students and teachers' first languages "strongly influenced students' responses". The results were in favor of NNESTs in teaching grammar and surprisingly were praised for oral skills (listening and speaking).On the other hand teachers' responses showed that NNESTs lacked confidence in "their linguistic and teaching skills" though they thought their language learning experience was an advantage for them in teaching ESL learners. Administrators included in the study also acknowledged NNESTs' strengths and believed they did not have enough self-confidence. In terms of hiring, the study showed that IEP administrators did not use ' nativeness' as 'hiring criteria', though considered "linguistics preparation,international awareness, and teaching experience important elements for hiring both NESTs and NNESTs. Alseweed (2012) carried out a study in Qassim University, in Saudi Arabia. He asked (169) Saudi university students about their general perceptions of their NESTs and NNESTs in the English language

classroom. He also tried to find out "with whom Saudi university students believe they learn more : with native or with non-native EFL teachers". To achieve the aims of the study, Alseweed (2012) used questionnaires and interviews including both quantitative and qualitative data collected in two stages. The results showed that the Saudi students under study were significantly favored NESTS. It was also shown that "students' previous learning experiences may affect their general preference for NESTs since they were taught by both types of teachers". Respondents also believed that NESTS were better than NNESTs in teaching strategies. As far as the learning environment, students thought that NNESTs provided a more serious learning environment and they also were able to realize their needs. Çakir and Demir (2013) conducted a study in Turkey to find out Turkish students' perceptions and attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs. The students included in the study were (96) Turkish students who studied at Basic English Department in Middle East Technical University, Turkey. They used a questionnaire, which was "partly taken from Moussu's (2006) study".The results showed significant differences between NESTs and NNESTs instructors as perceived by students. Turkish students under study thought that their NESTs were better in teaching "such language skills as speaking, listening, pronunciation and vocabulary" than NNESTs whereas NNESTTs were perceived to be better in "teaching grammar and building communication with their students". This study also revealed that NESTs were more able to motivate students than NNESTs and the formers "were seen as better sources of motivation". Chung (2014) conducted a study investigating the factors affecting NESTs and NNESTs' teachers' "professional identities and the dominance of nativeness" in second language learning and teaching". Semi structured interviews were carried out with nonnative speaker teachers of English, Spanish, Japanese, and German. She found out that "the most critical factor contributing to teachers' self-empowerment is the notion of their "near-nativeness," a concept which reflects their nonnativeness as well as their experiences learning a second language and their attainment of a high level of proficiency in their second language". The study came up with interesting findings suggesting that "nonnative speaker teachers can become successful teachers by embracing their nonnative speaker identities and by capitalizing on their particular awareness of the language learning process". These findings are very useful for NNESTs as it provides them with insight on how they can construct their own teaching identities and consequently it adds to their teaching effectiveness. Finally, Diaz (2015) conducted a

study investigating French students attitudes, at a university in the French Brittany, towards NESTs and NNESTs and which group of teachers those students preferred in teaching them. The study which included 78 students also tried to "discover whether the level of studies plays a part in these students' preferences". The participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire consisted of 18 items asking them to point out which group (NESTs, NNESTs or both) would they prefer. The students were told that the study was voluntary and they were free whether they wanted to answer it or not.It is worthwhile to say that questionnaire and the instructions were in French. The results revealed that students preferred NESTs in teaching pronunciation and oral skills. Respondents were in favor of NNESTs or both in teaching grammar, culture, learning strategies and vocabulary. These results are interesting in the sense that they were "positive regarding NNEST as whenever both types of teachers are given a high score, non-native teachers seem to be considered as equally valuable as NEST" (Diaz 2015 : 96).

METHODOLOGY and DATA
Methodology
The main objective of this study is to investigate the perceptions of university students towards NESTs and non-NESTs of English as a second/foreign language in Iraqi (Kurdistan of Iraq) context in order to find out which type of teachers students believe is better, why and in which domain of language learning. A questionnaire was given to 100 students studying English at four private universities in Kurdistan of Iraq. These are the Qaragh University in Sulaimaniya, Kurdistan University of Hawler, Lebanon-French University in Hawler and Jihan University in Erbil. We have chosen these universities because the language of instruction is English and there is a mixture of both NESTs and NNESTs teaching at these universities. The respondents consisted of 48 male students and 52 female students; their ages varied between 20 to 25 years old. The language of instruction is only English.

They were all asked to respond freely and neutrally to the 14 items of the questionnaire as shown in Appendix 1.
Questionnaires
The reason for choosing questionnaires is because of our student's limited English proficiency. In this regards, Moussu (2006 p.45) clearly states that "one of the independent variables is the level of English proficiency of the students. Using a qualitative design such as interviews of students would have limited the study to those participants understanding the questions and speaking English well enough to respond. Questionnaires, in contrast, could be translated so that all students can understand the questions and respond accordingly". The items of the questionnaire were borrowed and modified mainly from Alseweed (2012), Moussu (2006), Torres (2004) and Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002). The questionnaire includes 14 items addressing learners' perception towards NETs and non-NETs teachers. It included (9) general items about both types of teachers and (5) items on language skills.

In order to check the validity of the designed questionnaire, the questionnaire (Appendix 1) was given to four juries who are professors from University of Duhok and Mosul University and who have a long teaching and research experience. The questionnaire was modified and finalized according to the juries' comments and suggestions who finally agreed that the items are relevant and valid. The SPSS V.22 (Statistical Packages for Social Science) was used to determine the significant differences between NESTs and NNESTs as perceived by students at all levels of language learning skills item by item for all the 30 items. The ANOVA 1 test was used to determine the difference and significance of the dimensions of the study.
Data Analysis and Discussion
The following table (No. 1) shows the overall assessment for each item which we discuss below :

Table (1) : Students' perceptions of Native and Nonnative

Statements	Frequency		Mean	Std. Dev.	t	Sig.
	Non Native	Native				
G1 In general I would prefer a (native / non- native) speaker as a teacher.	41	59	1.410	.494	28.525	.000
G2 I feel more comfortable in class with a (native / non- native) English teacher.	44	56	1.440	.499	28.864	.000
G3 The (native / non- native) English teachers are very nice and very responsible	40	60	1.400	.492	28.434	.000
G4. If I could choose, I would prefer to	48	52	1.520	.502	30.272	.000

have both a native and a non-native English teacher						
G5 A (native/non-native) English teacher is aware of students' language needs.	37	63	1.370	.485	28.234	.000
G6 Many (native/non-native) English teachers have difficulty understanding students' questions.	39	61	1.390	.490	28.355	.000
G7 A (native / non- native) English teacher knows the English language difficulties of their students.	44	56	1.440	.499	28.864	.000
G8 A (native/non-native) English teacher is friendly because he provides a relaxed learning environment.	38	62	1.380	.488	28.288	.000
G9 A (native/non-native) English teacher is experienced because he is more conscious of the students' learning styles.	47	53	1.470	.502	29.305	.000
G10 In general (native/non-native) English teacher is better at explaining grammar	51	49	1.510	.502	30.055	.000
G11 In general I would learn more vocabulary with a (native/non-native) English teacher	36	64	1.360	.482	28.191	.000
G12 In general my pronunciation would be better with a (native/non-native) English teacher	34	66	1.340	.476	28.146	.000
G13 In general my listening would be better with a (native/non-native) English teacher	36	64	1.360	.482	28.191	.000
G14 In general my reading skills would be better with a (native/non-native) English teacher	34	66	1.340	.476	28.146	.000
G15 In general I would speak more fluently if I had a (native/non-native) English teacher	34	66	1.340	.476	28.146	.000

Discussion

The first 9 items ask students general questions about their perception, reactions and preference to either native or nonnative English language teachers as follows. In general students prefer to have native English language teachers as shown from the results of G.1 as out of 100 students (41) students preferred NNESTs and (59) students preferred to have NESTs teaching them English language with a mean value of (1.410) and (.494) SD ; t value (28.525) and the difference is significant as shown from the table above.This result is consistent with Alseweed (2012) who found out that the Saudi students learning English generally prefer NETs and with Luk (2001 p.32) whose respondents " believed that their English proficiency would be improved through the increased opportunities to use English with NESTs who speak more standard" English This result will be supported also by students' responses to other items of the questionnaire. We also think that our respondents preferred to have NESTs because they might believe that their English proficiency could be improved if they have NETs practicing their English with them. Students felt more comfortable with NESTs than being with NNESTs as shown in the results of item G.2 above ; (44) students thought they felt more comfortable with NNESTs whereas (56) of them felt more comfortable with NESTs with a mean value of (1.440) ; SD (.499) ; t value (28.864) and the difference is statistically significant. This result is consistent with Tang and Johnson (1993) and Poon & Higginbottom (2000) who found out that "students appreciated the friendly and hard-working attitudes of their NESTs and enjoyed their relaxed and lively classroom atmosphere" It is also in line with Alseweed (2012, p.47) who found out that, "the Arab student likes to communicate with a native teacher in a relaxed classroom setting without any sense of fear. Such a relaxed teaching-learning environment

motivates students to speak the target language and achieve an ultimate aim of language learning". We also think that this result could be due to the rapport NETs teachers try to establish with their students as well as to their learning styles. Unexpectedly, students believed that NESTs are nicer and more responsible than NNESTs as the results of G.3 reflect ; (60) students believed that NESTs are very nice and very responsible against (40) students who believed that NNETs are very nice and responsible ; the mean value is (1.400) ; SD (.492); t(28.434) – the difference is statistically significant.Again as shown above this feeling might be due to the close relationship between teachers and students ; it could be that NESTs are more friendly with students than NNESTs. This result is consistent with Alseweed (2012) who also found out that the "Saudi students thought that the NESTs are friendly and more lenient toward students' mistakes and attendance and very often NESTs are not particular about discipline and informality" (p.47) and with Wu and Ke (2009) who studies the "perceptions of (107) Taiwanese university students toward NESTs"" and found "the majority supported native-speaker teachers as friendly, informal, and a source of encouragement to students". Item G.4 asks students If they could choose, would they prefer to have both a native and a non-native English teacher and their responses were that (52) against (48) students would prefer to have both NESTs and NNESTs with a mean value of (1.520) ; SD (.502) and t (30.272) which makes it statistically significant. We think this result is reasonable as for learners to have a mixture of NETs and NNETs which helps them have different learning and instruction styles from both groups which could facilitate learning and could even expose them to different teaching methods.In this regard Medgyes (2001, p.441) claimed that " in an ideal school there should be a good balance of NESTs and NNESTs who complement each other in their strength and weaknesses", also see (Ulate 2011, p.63). In his regard Liu (2008, p.40) suggested a model of collaboration between NESTs and NNESTs based on reflection, through learning and via team –teaching. He also maintained that" instead of looking at NESTs and NNESTs as two distinct groups, one necessarily could better or more qualified to be teachers than the other". Matsuda and Matsuda (2001) as reported by Moussu (2006 p.25) also asserted on the "cooperation and mutual help between NESTs and NNESTs, since both groups of teachers have specific advantages and weaknesses'. The results of Item G.5 which asks students about whether NESTs or NNESTs are more aware of learners needs. We expected that NNESTs would be more aware of students needs but that was perceived differently as (63) students thought that NESTs were more aware of their needs while (37)

students believed NNESTs were more aware of their needs with a mean value of (1.370); SD (.485) and t (28.234) – statistically significant. It seems from this result that our respondents had more confidence in NESTs and they were probably more serious more committed to their job; an idea which needs investigation.This result is not consistent with Alseweed's(2012) result "whose respondents believed that NNESTs are more competent due to their awareness of the students' culture and learning needs" (p.48) and with Medgyes (1992) reported by Hadla (2013,p.182)   who confirmed that "NESTs can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of their learners because they never cease to be learners of English and this is why " they encounter difficulties similar to those of their learners"(p.347). As regard to item G.6, it has been found that NESTs have more difficulty in understanding students ' questions than NNETs as (61) students said that their NESTs found difficulties in understanding their questions and (39) students thought that their NNESTs had difficulties in understanding their questions; (1.390) mean value; SD (.490) and t (28.355) – statistically significant. This result could be due to students native language as NNETs could understand their students even when they speak inappropriately whereas we believe that NESTs could not easily understand their students questions due to differences between the students native language and NESTs native language ; it might also be due to cultural difference ; a point that needs investigation. This result is consistent with Hadla (2013) and Medgyes (2001) who argue that NNESTs who speak their students' first language have more background information about their students and can predict their difficulties in learning English. The above result can also be connected with the result of item G.7 which asks students who knows the English language difficulties of their students' ; NESTs or NNESTs. Forty four students thought that their NNESTs know their English language difficulties better whereas (56) students though NESTs know their difficulties in English language better with mean value of (1.440); SD (.499); t (28.864) – statistically significant. This result, we believe, is due to NESTs knowledge of their native language. This result is contradicts with Murphy-O'Dwyer (1996) who concluded that NNESTs' formal learning of knowledge about English helps them develop language awareness and with Medgyes (1994) who believed that that awareness enables NNESTs to provide adequate linguistic information about the language to learners. It is believed that "NNESTs can be more sensitive to students' learning problems" (Boyle, 1997; E. Lee & Lew, 2001 ; Ping,2012),   and can anticipate their learning difficulties, especially when sharing the same first language (L1) with learners (Medgyes, 1994;

Phillipson, 1996) also see Ma (2012). However, our results on this point did not go with that direction. Respondents believed that their NESTs teachers were more friendly than their NNETs as the results of item G.8 show – (62) students thought that their NETs teachers were more friendly with them whereas (38) thought their NNETs were more friendly with them with a mean value of (1.380) ; SD (.488) ; t (28.288) – statistically significant. This result might be due to the close relationship that NESTs try to establish with their students and the educational system in which they have been grown up. This result supports Arva and Medgyes (2000) who reported that NNESTs were stricter teachers because they have stronger feeling of responsibility and awareness and because they are more restricted by rules at work and by administrative tasks,(see Hadla 2013,p.149). Item G9 results show that NESTs teachers were more experienced than NNESTs as (47) students believed so against (53) students who believed that their NESTs were more experienced with a mean value of (1.470) ; SD (0502) ;and t value of (29.305) – the

differences are statistically significant. This result is consistent with Ulate (2011) whose NESTs had long teaching experience and Alsweed (2013) who reported that one of his students described his NESTs as a "cup filled with knowledge"(p.48). However, Mahboob (2004) found that students considered the teachers' own experiences of learning second languages to be their biggest strength. Students felt that this factor enabled teachers to give more satisfactory explanations and to be more empathetic. On the other hand, Ellis (2004) maintains that nonnative speaker teachers of English have multilingual and multicultural experiences from which their particular knowledge and insight about successful teaching may develop. The total results of the (9) items of the questionnaire which represent students general perception on their English language teachers show that 52 students, in general, prefer to have NETs and 48 preferred to have NNETs with a mean value of (1.520) ; SD (.502) and Coefficient of variation of (33.026) as table No.(2) shows. As shown in table 2 below :

Table (2) : General students' reactions to NESTs vs. NNESTs

Dimensions	Questions No.	N	Non Native		Native		Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
			Fr.	%	Fr.	%			
General	9	100	48	48%	52	52%	1.520	0.502	33.026

This result reveals that students tend to have NESTs more than NNESTs. It is consistent with some studies such as Hadla (2013); Alsweed (2012); Xiaoru (2008); Torres (2004); Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002); Medgyes (1994); who found that students have more preference for NESTs.

Grammar

Item G.10 asks students about their perception on the teaching of grammar, i.e. who is better at teaching

grammar a NEST teacher or a NNEST teacher. Our respondents thought that teaching grammar is better taught by a NNET than a NET as (51) students were in favor of NNESTs and (49) preferred NETs –the mean value is (1.510); the SD is (.502) with a t value of (30.055) and the difference is statistically significant as shown in table 3 below :

Table (3) : students' reactions to the teaching of grammar by NNESTs vs. NESTs

Dimensions	Questions No.	N	Non Native		Native		Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
			Fr.	%	Fr.	%			
Grammar	1	100	51	51%	49	49%	1.510	0.502	33.245

Grammar has always been known to be more comfortable to be taught by NNESTs (Hadla 2012,p.178) because they have better command of grammatical rules than NESTs (Medgyes, 1994) due to the fact they had learned the rules the rules of English

(Medgyes,1992.1994,2001; Barrat & Kontra, 2000 ;Lasagabaster & Seirra,2002; Benk and Medgyes,2005; Hadla,2013). We would like to confirm that this result is consistent with Cheung & Braine (2007) ; Mahboob ((2004); Pacek (2005); Çakir & Demir (2013) who studied

Turkish students perceptions at Basic English Department in Middle East Technical University found out that their students were in favor of NNESTs in teaching grammar and building communication with their students and Walkinshaw & Duong (2014) whose respondents were in favor of NNESTs in teaching grammar but it is in contrast with Utale (2012) and Ma (2015) whose respondents preferred NESTs teaching them grammar. However, in Moussu's (2006) study, students at the end of the semester changed their perception on who is better at teaching grammar from NESTs to NNESTs who strongly believed that their teachers explained grammar well (Moussu 2016,p.124). Medgyes's (2005) respondents in Hungary favored NNESTs in teaching grammar because they could explain grammatical rules and items in students' first language as we explained before (cf. Cook, 2005), and also because "NNESTs' learned knowledge of the rules of grammar enabled them to give cogent, comprehensible explanations" (Walkinshaw & Duongti Oanh 2014, p.3).

Vocabulary

Item G.11 asks students whether they learn more vocabulary from NESTs or NNESTs. The result is in favor of NETs as (64) students thought they learned more vocabulary from their NETs and (36) thought they learned more vocabulary from their NNETs with a mean value of (1.360) ; SD (.482) and t value of (28.191) – the difference is statistically significant as shown in table (4) below :

Table (4) : students' reactions to the teaching of vocabulary by NNESTs vs. NESTs

Dimensions	Questions No.	N	Non Native		Native		Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
			Fr.	%	Fr.	%			
Vocabulary	1	100	36	36%	64	64%	1.360	0.482	35.441

This finding is consistent with Tang (1997) whose respondents believed that NESTs were superior to NNESTs in vocabulary among other areas and with Mahboob's (2003) study of 32 students in an intensive English program at a U.S. college which showed a number of ideas : "NESTs were perceived to have good oral skills, and a wide vocabulary"" and with Hadla (2004) whose respondents perceived their NESTs as models for authentic language use and idiomatic use. The findings of Reves & Medgyes (1994) also show that the most frequently mentioned areas of difficulty of NNESTs were vocabulary, speaking and fluency, and pronunciation. They also believed that NESTs are more proficient tan NNESTs especially in the areas of colloquial and idiomatic English and their appropriate uses. NESTs are also comfortable using idiomatic expressions (Maun 2002) see Hadla (2013.p.65). Our study also confirms the finding of Çakir & Demir (2013) ; Liang (2002) ; Mahboob (2004) ; Mussoue and Braine (2006) whose students had "mainly positive attitude towards the NESTs in the area of vocabulary".Cheungs (2007) students thought that NESTs were better at teaching vocabulary because they are known to have a large resvoir of vocabulary of English because it is their mother tongue and "native speakers have a sense that can often help them know if a word used by a student is right or wrong", see (Hadla 2013, p.132-33). On the other hand, Hadla's (2012) students believed that their NNESTs were a rich source of vocabulary and it can be translated into Arabic which makes it easier to understand and the results of his study show that with regard to vocabulary development,students perceptions were in favor of their Lebanese teachers, i.e. NNESTs (p.132-33). Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) study of 76 English learners at a university in the Basque Autonomous Community in Spain also found that "NNESTs were better than NESTs in more systematic aspects of the language such as lexis and grammar". Interestingly, Diaza (2015) who studied French university students' perceptions found out that students appreciated both NESTs and NNESTs to teach vocabulary, strategies and culture (p.95) which seems very interesting.

Pronunciation

Item G.12 deals with students' perception on teaching pronunciation. It asks students if their pronunciation skills would be better with a NEST or a NNEST. Their responses were in favor of NEST as (66) of them believed that their pronunciation skill would be better with a NEST than a NNEST whereas (34) of them thought it would be better with a NNETs; the mean value was (1.340); SD (.476) and t value of (28.146) – statistically significant as shown in table (5) below :

Table (5) : students' reactions to the teaching of pronunciation by NNESTs vs. NESTs

Dimensions	Questions No.	N	Non Native		Native		Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
			Fr.	%	Fr.	%			
Pronunciation	1	100	34	34%	66	66%	1.340	0.476	35.522

This result could be due to the reasons that many, as suggested by Mermelstein, (2015) that "NNESTs may actually have very little experience speaking English, and may have learned English in a more traditional classroom involving heavy bookwork and very little communicative language learning".This study is consistent with Walkinshaw & Oanh (2014) who found that their university Vietnamese and Japanese students thought that NESTs were good at " pronunciation and correct language use", with Çakir & Demir (2013) whose Turkish students preferred NETs in teaching pronunciation , with Hadla's (2012) study whose students believed that their pronunciation would improve better with NETs because they pronounce words correctly, Ma (2015) who also found that "NESTs could improve, in particular, students pronunciation and speaking skills because NESTs are native English speakers and they "lived and born in a foreign country" and Sung (2010) whose students believed that NESTs pronunciation is more accurate, Wu and Ke (2009) whose Taiwanese university students also thought of NESTs as "models of pronunciation rather than as formal educators" and Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) study whose Spanish students preferred NESTs in the area of pronunciation among other oral skills. Cook (2005) also noted that nonnative speaker teachers felt at a disadvantage in terms of their level of fluency. Mahboob (2004) also explained that nonnative speaker teachers received negative comments from their students with respect to teaching speaking, culture, and pronunciation. In the Lebanese context students favor NESTs and considered them the right model for students in pronunciation, intonation and authentic language use and idiomatic use (Hadla 2013 : 1). Our finding also supports Law (1999) who found that" students appreciated NESTs accurate pronunciation, greater varieties in teaching materials, and focus on teaching pronunciation". The findings of Reves & Medgyes (1994) show that the most frequently mentioned areas of difficulty for students taught by NNETs were vocabulary, speaking and fluency, and pronunciation. Ulate (2011) included the accent in her study of "Insights towards Native and Non-native ELT Educators" stating that the "State education officials denied any discrimination [in terms of their accent] saying they were acting in students' best interest ". She also reported according to University of Arizona professor Rosean Conzalez "studies have shown that non-native teachers actually make better educators and that the ability to pronounce the language is not the most important aspect to learning "(p.60). In the same direction, Ulate's (2011) NNETs subjects liked to teach pronunciation and culture better (p.63).

Listening

Item G.13 deals with the listening skill and it asks students whether their listening would be better with a NEST or a NNEST. The results were in favor of NESTs. Sixty four students out of (100) thought that their listening would be better with a NEST and (36) students believed that their listening would be better with a NNEST with mean value of (1.3600) ; SD (.482) and t value of (28.191) – the difference is statistically significant as shown in the table below :

Table (6) : students' reactions to the teaching of listening by NNESTs vs. NESTs

Dimensions	Questions No.	N	Non Native		Native		Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
			Fr.	%	Fr.	%			
Listening	1	100	36	36%	64	64%	1.360	0.482	35.441

This result is consistent with Hadla's (2013) whose students strongly agreed that their NESTs helped them improve their listening skills more than NNESTs (p.133), with Çakir & Demir (2013) whose Turkish students found "NESTs were better than NNESTs at teaching vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, and speaking", with Alseweed and Daif-Allah, (2012) who also found that Saudi university students preferred NESTs for language skills,i.e. listening, pronunciation and speaking and with Xiaoru (2008) who found out that his "Chinese students had a clear preference for NESTs believing that they are more fluent and accurate with a special emphasis on their good pronunciation and sound knowledge of the target language". Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) study of (76) English learners at a university in the Basque Autonomous Community in Spain revealed that students preferred NESTs in the areas of pronunciation, speaking, and listening. Mahboob (2004) found that students thought that NESTs were superior to NNNESTs at teaching oral skills, vocabulary and culture.

Reading

Item G.14 asks students whether their reading skills would be belter with a NEST or with a NNEST. Most f the students said that their reading skills would be better with a NEST as follows : (66) students preferred NESTs and (34) students preferred NNESTs with a mean value of (1.340) ; SD (.476) and t value of (28.146). the difference is statistically significant as shown in the table (7) below :

Table (7) : students' reactions to the teaching of reading by NNESTs vs. NESTs

Dimensions	Questions No.	N	Non Native		Native		Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
			Fr.	%	Fr.	%			
Reading	1	100	34	34%	66	66%	1.340	0.476	35.522

This result is consistent with Díaz (2015) studying perceptions of French students in a private university in Rennes towards NESTs and NNESTs and found that those students preferred NESTs in developing their reading skills (L1, 69%; L2, 69%; L3, 62%) (p.96), with Çakir & Demir (2013) whose Turkish students thought that their NESTs were "better than NNESTs at teaching writing" with a mean value of (3.7917) and SD of (1.04546) (p.43) and with Torres (2004) who investigated the inclinations of 102 adult students towards NESTs or NNESTs and whose respondents strongly believed that NESTs were superior to NNESTs in "teaching specific skill areas such as pronunciation and writing", see Alseweed (2013, p.45).However, it is not consistent with Hadla (2013) whose students strongly disagreed with the statement that"" : their writing becomes better with a NESTs" because as expressed by one of his respondents saying " My NEST expects a lot from me in writing. He doesn't take it step by step like my NNEST does. She is more tolerant of my errors. She guides me better and always realizes my mother tongue interference. My NEST expects me to write like a Native American very quickly and this frustrating me "(p.133). Similar result was found by Alseweed and Daif-Allah (2012) with Saudi university students who preferred NNESTs for the language skills of writing and grammar.

Speaking

Item G.15 asks students whether they would speak more fluently with NESTs or NNESTs. Sixty –six students thought they would speak more fluently with NESTs while (34) students believed they would speak more fluently with NNESTs with a mean value of (1.340); SD (.476) and t value of (28.1460) as shown in table (8) below :

Table (8) students' reactions to the teaching of speaking by NNESTs vs. NESTs

Dimensions	Questions No.	N	Non Native		Native		Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
			Fr.	%	Fr.	%			
Speaking	1	100	34	34%	66	66%	1.340	0.476	35.522

These results are very similar to the reading skill's results explained above. This result corresponds with Reves & Medgyes' (1994) findings who showed that the most frequently mentioned areas of difficulty students faced by NNESTs were vocabulary, speaking and fluency, and pronunciation. Mahboob (2003 & 2004) studies on "students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs"" revealed that NESTs were valued for their good "oral skills" whereas nonnative speaker teachers received negative comments from their students with respect to teaching speaking, culture, and pronunciation. Cook (2005) also noted that nonnative speaker teachers feel at a disadvantage in terms of their level of fluency. Our results also correspond with Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) whose subjects preferred NESTs in teaching speaking, with Çakir & Demir (2013) whose Turkish students thought that their NESTs instructors were better at teaching speaking than NNES and with Hadla (2013) whose students perceived NESTs to be better than NNESTs and at an advantage in the area of speaking as more of his student participants (57.2%) agreed that they would be more fluent speakers when they speak with NESTs than when they taught by NNESTs (p.134). Walkinshaw & Duong (2014) university students in Vietnam and Japan thought they got more benefits from NESTs than from NNESTs because they could speak English more naturally with NETS. Diaz (2015) respondents also preferred NESTs in teaching oral skills due to "ideological constructs attached to native speakers" as they were perceived to be more "fluent more reliable regarding acceptability of language forms, as well as more knowledgeable about cultural facts"(p.96).

5. CONCLUSIONS
This study has come up with the following conclusions
1. In general our students significantly preferred to have NESTs more than NNESTs. (This approves our No. (3) Hypotheses which reads (In general, Kurdish university students will show positive perceptions of NESTs over NNESTs).
2. Our students significantly preferred NNESTs to NESTs in teaching them grammar. This partly supports and approves the second part of our hypothesis No.1 which reads "The University students under this study would prefer NEST to teach speaking, pronunciation, listening. On the other hand, these students would regard NNEST as more suitable for grammar and

learning strategies".
3. Our students thought that NESTs were better in teaching them speaking, pronunciation, listening and culture. These results were statistically significant and they support the first part of our first hypothesis which reads "The University students under this study would prefer NEST to teach speaking, pronunciation, listening and culture". The above results confirm other results obtained by many other studies such as Medgyes (1992) and (1994); Árva and Medgyes (2000) ; Lasagabaster & Sierra (2002) ; Torres (2004); Madrid and Cañado (2004); Moussu (2006) ; Şahin (2005) ; Xiaoru (2008); Alseweed (2012); Ma (2012); Brown (2013); Çakir & Demir (2013) ; Hadla (2013); Arvizu (2014); Mermelstein (2015) ; Walkinshaw & Hoang (2014) and Ürkmez (2015) among other studies mentioned in the texts of this study.
In spite of the above conclusion, one should not ignore the importance of NNESTs in foreign language learning as a substantial number of students also favored them in teaching.In fact; both NEST and NNEST contribute to and have a place in foreign language learning process and what really should matter is the capability and efficiency to teach rather than being a NEST or a NNEST.

Pedagogical implications
One pedagogical implication of the current study could be that of preparing well trained and efficient teachers who can teach all language learning skills competently as expected by their students regardless of their 'nativeness'. This can be achieved by planning and implementing professional development programs that can enhance teachers in the areas of teaching /learning methodology and all language skills including culture. The results could serve as an indication for hiring English language teachers and for English language administrators.

Recommendations and suggestions
According to the findings of the study and the literature reviewed in it, we would put forward the following recommendations :
1. Cooperation between NESTs and NNESTs in different language aspect to make mutual benefits from each other.
2. The importance of developing NNESTs, especially juniors, in language development and capacity building programs to enhance and improve their language skills and language teaching methods.

3. It is so important for NNETs to spend sometimes in English – speaking counters to learn about the English culture as well as improving their oral language skills. There are also many online programs that can help NNESTs improve their pronunciation, vocabulary, listening and reading skills (Hadla, 2013, p.2015).

4. It is also important, when recruiting NESTs, to take their educational background into consideration. They have to have a degree in TEFL, TESOL or applied linguistics. It is a misconception to realize that every native speaker can teach his/her language without academic as well as teaching qualification.

5. We have also to trust and think highly of the capabilities of our experienced and competent NNESTs as there are so many of them who have proved to be very successful language teachers.

Prospects for future studies

Future studies under the domains of such studies could include nonlinguistic variables such as gender, years of study, language levels of learners and geographical locations. Other studies can include how Iraqi or Middle East teachers perceive themselves. It could also include areas of cooperation between NSTs and NNESTs.

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Appendeces

Appendix no. (1) The questionnaire

Dear student : I am an MA student carrying out an MA thesis. The purpose of this questionnaire is purely academic. Your cooperation and understanding is very much appreciated. The following are some statements about the native versus non-native teachers of English issues. Please circle what you think it is appropriate for you. Choose either one (native or non-native). There is no right or wrong answer. Please be as honest as possible.

Part One : Personal Information

Gender : Male   Female

Age :

University :

Department :

Year (stage) of Study :

Have you ever been to an English-speaking country? ___ Yes ___ No

Have you ever had a native speaker of English as a teacher? ___Yes ___No

If yes, how many were they? ----------

How long have you been studying English? (Please Circle only one)

(1-3years) (4-6 years) (7-10 years) (11-13 years)

I use English everyday   Yes --------- No -----------

Why are you learning English ?(I am a student of English), (I need it for my study),(I need for my career), (other ; specify)

My English language is perfect   very good ----------- good ------------Not good enough.

What is your first language?   (Kurdish), (Arabic), (Turkish). (Other, specify)

Please note that your teacher can be

a. A native for example (British, American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealander).

b. A non-native for example (Kurdish, Iraqi, Arabic...etc).

General

1.1 In general I would prefer a (native / non- native) speaker as a teacher.

2.I feel more comfortable in class with a (native / non-native) English teacher.

3.The (native / non- native) English teachers are very nice and very responsible.

4.If I could choose, I would prefer to have both a native and a non-native English teacher.

5.A (native/non-native) English teacher is aware of students' language needs.

6. Many (native/non-native) English teachers have difficulty understanding students' questions

7.A (native / non- native) English teacher knows the English language difficulties of their students.

8.A (native/non-native) English teacher is friendly because he provides a relaxed learning environment.

9.A (native/non-native) English teacher is experienced because he is more conscious of the students' learning styles

Grammar

10. In general (native/non-native) English teacher is better at explaining grammar

Vocabulary

11. In general I would learn more vocabulary with a (native/non-native) English teacher.

Pronunciation

12. In general my pronunciation would be better with a (native/non-native) English teacher.

Listening

13. In general my listening would be better with a (native/non-native) English teacher.

Reading

14. In general my reading skills would be better with a (native/non-native) English teacher.

Speaking

15. In general I would speak more fluently if I had a (native/non-native) English teacher.

Learning strategies

16. In general a (native/non-native) English teacher would use more strategies/ideas to help me learn better.

17. A (native / non- native) English teacher would use innovative teaching strategies to help students learn better.

18. A (native / non- native) English teacher would explain lessons to us clearly.

19. A (native / non- native) English teacher prepares us for independent learning better.

Culture and civilization

20. - I would learn more about the culture of the English speaking people with a (native / non- native) English teacher.

21. A (native/non-native) English teacher is competent because he is more aware of the students' culture.

22. A (native/non-native) English teacher motivates me to learn about English speaking people and their culture.

Attitudes

23. I   would have more positive attitudes towards English speaking countries and their speakers if I had a (native/non-native) English teacher.

24. I would have more positive attitudes towards the learning of English if I had a (native/non-native) English teacher.
Assessment
25. A (native/non-native) English teacher would assess my listening comprehension better.
26. A (native/non-native) English teacher would assess my reading comprehension better.

27. A (native/non-native) English teacher would assess my speaking better than a native speaker
28. A (native/non-native) English teacher would assess my writing better.
29. A (native/non-native) English teacher would assess my pronunciation better.
30. A (native/non-native) English teacher would assess my knowledge of grammar better.

Appendix no. (2)

Native and Nonnative statistical Analysis for questionnaire items

	Frequency		Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
	Non Native	Native				
G1	41	59	1.410	.494	28.525	.000
G2	44	56	1.440	.499	28.864	.000
G3	40	60	1.400	.492	28.434	.000
G5	37	63	1.370	.485	28.234	.000
G6	39	61	1.390	.490	28.355	.000
G7	44	56	1.440	.499	28.864	.000
G8	38	62	1.380	.488	28.288	.000
G9	47	53	1.470	.502	29.305	.000
G10	51	49	1.510	.502	30.055	.000
G11	36	64	1.360	.482	28.191	.000
G12	34	66	1.340	.476	28.146	.000
G13	36	64	1.360	.482	28.191	.000
G14	34	66	1.340	.476	28.146	.000
G15	34	66	1.340	.476	28.146	.000
G16	52	48	1.520	.502	30.272	.000
G17	47	53	1.470	.502	29.305	.000
G18	40	60	1.400	.492	28.434	.000
G19	36	64	1.360	.482	28.191	.000
G20	45	55	1.450	.500	29.000	.000
G21	42	58	1.420	.496	28.626	.000

G22	43	57	1.430	.498	28.740	.000
G23	40	60	1.400	.492	28.434	.000
G24	47	53	1.470	.502	29.305	.000
G25	33	67	1.330	.473	28.143	.000
G26	46	54	1.460	.501	29.147	.000
G27	26	74	1.260	.441	28.582	.000
G28	27	73	1.270	.446	28.463	.000
G29	36	64	1.360	.482	28.191	.000
G30	51	49	1.510	.502	30.055	.000
G4	48	52	1.520	.502	30.272	.000