



Reimagining English Competence: Round Table Discussion notes

NNES vs NES concerns

- Debunking this myth is important for professional confidence; the civil right issue of our time
- There is a need for new terminology, but unsure what that terminology should be; should move away from the “non-“ prefix; associations need to acknowledge inheritance of old terminology
- TESOL efforts need more publicity!
- This is an ethics argument (not to mention age issues, race issues, etc)
- A dichotomy b/t NNES and NES is helpful (another set of notes said: NNES and NES is not a dichotomy, it is a continuum); NES skills should not be the measure of competence for all speakers; should not be looking for homogenous speakers, we should embrace the diversity that English can bring
- Need to separate the business issue from the ethical issue
- “native-like proficiency” is a problematic construct
- NNES have more linguistic knowledge/background and have the experience of learning English
- Being an NES is not a privilege; however even without training, NES is preferred and (sometimes) paid more
- Having both NNES and NES creates diversity in teaching, something students really need
- Being a NES and being a better teacher are not exclusive
- Things may change b/c of a teacher shortage...
- NES as the “ideal speaker” lies on the presupposition that NES know “more English”
- Regardless of the research and policy statements, NESs have priority
- It is not a guarantee to get culture with an NES
- Bias demands for teachers resort to underqualified teachers
- Research: more focus on benefits of NNES added value to the learning process
- Research findings should be written in a way that is understandable to parents, students, teachers, and program administrators
- It’s hard to make changes when NNES prefer NES teachers
- Advertising gives the impression that native speakers are the best and used as selling point (private schools promoting the idea of NS)
- Hiring NNES could influence the students’ pronunciation efficiencies, improves over time
- NNES sometimes have an inferiority complex, feel inferior
- NES can be a huge problem if they cannot adapt to the culture they are in
- Preference is a matter of accent; even native speakers have accents! accent is a matter of perspective for the learning (moot point); what about competence?
- Parent and student pressure seems to drive this misconception, it needs a targeted campaign; who should help change these perceptions? How can we impact the markets demand for NES?
- Does it all just come down to the English language pronunciation?

- How do we move on...? We've been talking about this for generations.

Credentialing concerns

- A uniform list of credentials would work, a single framework; inter-global standards
- Guidelines to promote equity in hiring, requirements would be built on a dynamic model of language and include content knowledge, general proficiency
- Teacher education: should it focus on language competencies or methodologies; practicum
- Teacher education programs should follow the same set of standards regardless of context; currently focus on technical issues with a lack of esteem building (this could be helpful to NNES); the "what" and the "how" should come immediately, the "why" can come 5 years later; creating teaching portfolios that include awareness, understanding, engagement, and integration; teach what language is – link to pedagogy
- Teacher ed programs should start with L1
- Set communication standards
- Educating the public: Teachers with MA TESOL are not hired because they haven't CELTA/DELTA
- There needs to be synergy b/t universities courses and classroom needs
- The assessment of teacher credentials needs to be reevaluated
- Change policies to showcase multilingualism as a key factor for hiring
- Share TESOL short-term certificate standards with stakeholders
- Need to inform professionals that they can be informed professionals that push policy
- An easy way to professionalize native speakers is to compare them to non-native speakers
- What is being done to entice people into joining this profession?
- What would TESOL credential exams look like?
- Would national credentials help or is it best to go with a universal/all-countries-in approach?
- Should there be one accreditation body?

Language competence concerns

- Language competence or incompetence – holds for both NS and NNS
- Intelligibility standards might be defined: interpretability & comprehensibility
- A framework of competencies should exist for teaching
- No set competency framework
- Need to move away from CEFR?
- CEFR redefined to include translanguaging
- Language competence – who decides?
- Different needs for different purposes
- What is mastery?
- TESOL develops a set of universal competencies for teachers
- Is it realistic to produce a model of international intelligibility based on competencies?
- International intelligibility as a criterion
- Intelligibility standard will prove helpful
- Continuing work needed to identify different competencies in different contexts
- There is no universal understanding of what language competence is: What is competence? Which English is the benchmark? Shouldn't it be looked at as World Englishes as the benchmark?
- Should proficiency level vary based on the language level needing to be taught?
- How is English language competence different from teaching English competence?

Classroom concerns

- “what we learn is not necessarily what we need”
- If an ESP and EAL program is working, change it to meet the needs of other contexts
- You can find NNES in content classrooms, not necessarily English classrooms; co-teaching
- English is the tool to reach the content aims; shift from teaching only English to teaching content
- There must be general proficiencies (socially acceptable)
- Students should be seen as an investment that can bring the learning to global playing field
- Teaching idioms, although fun, can be distracting and can create a barrier for learnings
- Need a more flexible view of language teaching and learning
- Learning is heavily exam driven
- Differentiate between language deficiency and learning disability; unidentified
- Course books are not a one-size-fits-all; resources change according with the situation
- Should hiring coincide with level of proficiency in regards to the level of English the students need to learn?
- It’s a struggle for teachers to decide what must be taught vs what students really need to know
- How can you customize a course for each students’ individual needs?

Policy concerns

- The problem lies with policy makers not listening to the research
- Collaborate globally... it’s not just an English only issue, it’s about all language teaching
- Global society does not require good English, it requires good communication skills
- English as a lingua franca belongs to all people; one specific variety should not have priority
- Government policy has to be a leading factor in changing the ideals of society
- Are things really being reimagined or are policy makers just repeating past practices?
- Should we move away from the CEFR?
- Who decides what students need to learn? Is that restricting people’s opinions?
- How can language be redefined in practical terms?
- How much pushing for professionalization do we need?

Contextual examples

- Turkey: currently analyzing university courses for the sake of restructure; MOE still makes blanket decisions about primary/secondary level goals
- Korea: in the past, the gov’t decided everything; things are now changing to get opinions of teachers and students regarding national curriculum
- Russian: legal English courses really do not prepare students for the workplace
- Georgia: a new program where foreign teacher arrives and co-teach as a part of training
- China: research is not funded, so it’s hard to make Chinese specific claims
- UK: research is funded, but only at the university level
- USA: primary/secondary school teachers are better teachers than university professors b/c primary/secondary school teacher have better credentialing process
- Brazil: new program “language without borders” to help students learn language at university; have plenty of English teachers but not proficient in the language... trying to move teachers from B1 to C2 within 2 years
- Qatar: NES vs NNES depends on what the school wants
- Nepal: sometimes you just cannot choose b/t NES and NNES, the choice is made on availability

- Geneva: high teacher salaries are important
- Ukraine; focus on writing not speaking so this changes the issue
- Taiwan: teachers teaching thru skype to prepare students for f2f lessons
- Moldova: students do not want NES
- Indonesia: associations try to reach out and collaborate to MOE
- Israel: one high stakes exam; students do well, especially in the oral part; teachers' unions and researchers are involved with curriculum planning
- Japan: decisions made at the prefecture level; teachers consult with teachers
- USA: no set curriculum, changes on an annual basis, teachers have no control over materials
- Vietnam: do not have the resources to hire NES
- Macedonia: need specialized course for young learners
- Chile: use of volunteers as co-teachers, an organized exchange, roles are clearly defined