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Advanced English Learners' Attitudes Toward NESTs and NNESTs: Influences of Native Speakerism at an English Language Academy in Florencia, Caquetá, Colombia

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of Native Speakerism on advanced English learners' attitudes towards Native English-Speaking Teachers (NESTs) and Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) at an English language academy in Florencia, Caquetá, Colombia. Grounded in Holliday's (2006) Native Speakerism framework and theories of motivation, identity, and intercultural competence, the research addresses how this ideology shapes perceptions and learning experiences in a rural context. Employing a qualitative approach, data were collected from 21 advanced learners (aged 16–28) through Focus Groups and a Verbal-Guise Test evaluating three speakers: an American (perceived NEST), an Italian (NNEST), and a Colombian (NNEST). Findings reveal a nuanced interplay: learners admired the American speaker's fluency but critiqued his delivery, preferred the Italian speaker for pedagogical clarity, and valued the Colombian speaker's empathy for beginners, though biases limited his role. The study challenges Native Speakerism by highlighting NNESTs' pedagogical and cultural strengths, fostering inclusive attitudes among learners. In Caquetá's context of limited NEST exposure, NNESTs' accessibility is vital. This research advocates for equitable language education policies, promoting NNESTs' contributions to enhance learner engagement and cultural relevance, offering insights into rural language teaching and future studies on linguistic equity.

Key words: Native Speakerism, NESTs, NNESTs, advanced learners, English language teaching



Resumen

Este estudio examina la influencia del Native Speakerism en las actitudes de estudiantes avanzados de inglés hacia profesores nativos (NESTs) y no nativos (NNESTs) en una academia de inglés en Florencia, Caquetá, Colombia. Basado en el marco de Holliday (2006) sobre Native Speakerism y teorías de motivación, identidad y competencia intercultural, la investigación analiza cómo esta ideología moldea las percepciones y experiencias de aprendizaje en un contexto rural. Utilizando un enfoque cualitativo, se recolectaron datos de 21 aprendices avanzados (16–28 años) mediante grupos focales y una prueba Verbal-Guise que evaluó a tres hablantes: un estadounidense (percibido como NEST), un italiano (NNEST) y un colombiano (NNEST). Los hallazgos muestran una interacción compleja: los aprendices admiraron la fluidez del estadounidense, pero criticaron su entrega; prefirieron al italiano por su claridad pedagógica; y valoraron la empatía del colombiano para principiantes, aunque los sesgos limitaron su rol. El estudio desafía el Native Speakerism al resaltar las fortalezas pedagógicas y culturales de los NNESTs, promoviendo actitudes inclusivas. En el contexto de Caquetá, con limitada exposición a NESTs, los NNESTs son esenciales. Esta investigación aboga por políticas educativas equitativas, fomentando las contribuciones de los NNESTs para mejorar el compromiso y la relevancia cultural.

Palabras claves: Native Speakerism, NESTs, NNESTs, estudiantes avanzados, enseñanza del inglés.

1. Introduction

The expansion of English worldwide has made room in foreign-language teaching policies amongst non-Anglophone countries, including Colombia, where English teaching is compulsory from preschool to university (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2006). The inclusion of English into the Educational Colombian Curriculum has raised the question of who ought to teach it. To meet the demand for English teachers, the Colombian government has decided to include Native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) as “support” for national Non-Native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) through the program “Formadores Nativos Extranjeros” in Spanish and “English Teaching Fellowship Program” in English (MEN, 2017). According to MEN, by 2018, the government had employed over 1,400 NESTs (MEN, 2018) from various countries, even where English is not a native language, such as Serbia, Ghana, and the Czech Republic (Correa & Flórez, 2022). Private institutions and foreign language Academies nationwide have replicated this initiative by recruiting NESTs to “boost” their English classes. That is the case of ANS (Academia Nacional de Sistemas) in Florencia, Caquetá, where NESTs have been included since 2016 as facilitators of English learning processes.

This practice seems to align with what Holliday (2006) calls Native Speakerism, which is the belief that NESTs are the best option for teaching English simply because of their mother tongue. The idealized figure of NESTs as owners and authorities of the foreign language reinforces the widespread fallacy that NESTs are superior to NNESTs when teaching the language (Phillipson, 1992). Meanwhile, with the worldwide expansion of the English language, the number of NNESTs has far exceeded that of native NESTs, with most English interactions occurring in non-English-speaking communities (Graddol, 2006).



In English language teaching (ELT), non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) account for approximately 80% of teachers around the world, and this number continues to increase progressively (L. Wang & Fang, 2020).

Therefore, it is essential to consider the implications of these discourses and practices on English language learners' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs and their learning processes. These attitudes, influenced by society, institutions, and personal experiences, create complex dynamics that significantly affect the efficacy of English teaching and learning (Gómez & Guerrero, 2018). While some students may prefer NESTs because of their command of the spoken language and cultural knowledge, others may hold biases against NNESTs due to misconceptions about language proficiency and ownership of languages.

This complex interplay of attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs influences classroom dynamics and interacts with broader sociocultural constructs, such as identity and power dynamics (Tarazona, 2021). Furthermore, the perpetuation of Native Speakerism within foreign language academies may reinforce linguistic hierarchies, limiting students' development of language skills and understanding of different cultures (Montoya & Correa, 2024).

Based on these considerations, a pedagogical analysis of the influence of Native Speakerism over Advanced English Learners' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs within English academies in Florencia, Caquetá, is necessary. Therefore, the current research project seeks to answer the following question oriented under the *bilingualism axis* of the master's program:



1.1 Research question

How does the Native Speakerism ideology influence Advanced English Learners' attitudes towards native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) over their English learning processes at an English language academy in Florencia, Caquetá?

1.2 General objective

To investigate how Native Speakerism ideology influences Advanced English Learners' attitudes towards native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) in their English learning processes at an English language academy in Florencia, Caquetá.

1.3 Specific Objectives

- To identify Advanced English Learners' attitudes towards native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs).
- To analyze how the ideology of Native Speakerism influences the Advanced English Learners' language learning processes with NESTs and NNESTs.
- To determine the impact of the Native Speakerism ideology on Advanced English Learners' perceptions of the effectiveness and credibility of NESTs and NNESTs.

2. Theoretical Framework

The growing demand for English language education in non-English-speaking countries has sparked the debate about the roles of Native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-Native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) in foreign language teaching. The issue convolutes when considering the ideology of native speakers, which often valorizes NESTs as the ideal English language instructors. This theoretical framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between the Native Speakerism ideology, the dichotomy between NESTs and NNESTs, language attitudes, and students' attitudes toward NESTs and NNESTs within English Language Teaching (ELT).

2.1 Native-Speakerism

The term native-speakerism has been widely studied and discussed among scholars. However, Holliday (2006) was among the first authors to investigate this concept. The term refers to an ideology that positions those perceived as 'native speakers' as superior linguistically, culturally, and pedagogically in contrast to those perceived as 'non-native speakers.' This ideology remains pervasive in many educational contexts and still influences hiring practices and teacher evaluations worldwide (Samuell, 2023).

Based on the concepts and characteristics of the term that Holliday (2006) proposed, several authors have provided different perspectives regarding what native-speakerism involves, most of which come from a social-critical point of view. For instance, Kiczkowiak and Lowe (2021) consider that under this ideology, the institutes of the West and their 'native speaker' representatives are privileged in discussions surrounding how the



English language should be taught globally and who should be seen as the ideal teachers of this language.

Following Holliday's construction of the term, Houghton and Bouchard (2020) noticed the rising discussion among non-native English-speaking teachers regarding the underlying employment discrimination based on their perceived status as non-native speakers. Furthermore, Houghton and Bouchard (2020) concur that Holliday's preliminary definition of native-speakerism was intended to support the group of people categorized as 'non-native-speaker' teachers.

In general terms, there seems to be a criticism of the term as an ideology aimed at the way it creates bias about NESTs over NNESTs. Native Speakerism tends to elevate NESTs, often overlooking the skills of NNESTs, despite growing evidence that NNESTs offer unique advantages, particularly in non-native English-speaking settings where students may benefit from shared language learning experiences (Hashimoto & Rakhshandehroo, 2023).

Thus, Dewaele et al. (2021) remark on the importance of looking for commonalities rather than differences between native and non-native speakers. They suggest, concurring with Llurda (2014), that non-native speakers may be as good teachers as natives and that good language teaching requires a good command of the language, plus the right amount of training and ability to teach a language. In contrast, Harsanti and Manara (2021) point out a purist perspective from which in-service teachers define native speakers of English, ownership of English, and ELT methodology and practices, revealing traces of native-speakerism.



Nevertheless, from an intercultural perspective, there needs to be more discussion about how the teachers address native-speakerism, especially as it intertwines with local vernaculars and the concept of authenticity (Munandar, 2023). Other authors, such as Daoud and Kasztalska (2022), have found that ‘native speaker qualification’ is used to assess ELT applicants’ performance and that a native speaker-oriented ‘knower code’ tends to downplay NNESTs’ language proficiency and specialized skills, leading to inequalities between ‘native’ and ‘non-native speaker’ professionals and to discriminatory hiring practices.

The latter authors’ perspectives have led other scholars, such as Tupas (2022), to consider native-speakerism from a decolonial perspective, stating that the concept of the native speaker about ELT is associated with standard language ideologies which English colonial education perpetuated and is persistently sustained in educational policies and practices around the world today. However, other scholars, such as Hillman et al. (2020), pose an idea that aims to show that while scholars generally agree that native-speakerism and the ideologies and practices associated with ELT remain massive stumbling blocks in the legitimization of “Englishes” in the world, such agreement does not extend to the idea of ELT as a continuing colonial project. Even if scholars' viewpoints differ, addressing native-speakerism requires a shift towards valuing both NESTs and NNESTs based on their training, teaching abilities, and intercultural competencies rather than their native country and native language.



2.2 The dichotomy between Native English-Speaking Teachers (NESTs) and Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers (NNESTs)

The dichotomy between Native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and Non-Native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) has been a recurring issue in English Language Teaching (ELT) since the global spread of the language. However, defining one group against the other is not straightforward. Generally, NESTs are understood as educators who speak English as their first language, while NNESTs have learned English as a second or foreign language (Anggriyashati, 2020). Nonetheless, this classification oversimplifies the complex realities of these groups.

The concept of nativeness, central to this dichotomy, involves a range of privileges and power dynamics. Historically, being a "native" English speaker has been associated with linguistic authority, teaching superiority, and social capital. However, determining who qualifies as a native speaker is more complicated than it initially seems. While the standard definition might suggest that anyone who speaks English as their first language is a native speaker, there are various cases where this is challenged (Rahman & Yuzar, 2020). For example, some people raised speaking English are not considered "native" speakers based on ethnicity, appearance, or geographic background.

The latter can be evidenced in the treatment of speakers from countries like India, where English is widely spoken and used in professional and educational settings. Despite this, India is not typically classified as a "native English-speaking" country in the same way that the United States or the United Kingdom are (Kachru, 1986). This raises important questions about the socio-political dimensions of nativeness and how it is framed (Altaai &



Gokgoz-Kurt, 2023). What leads some people to be labeled as native speakers while others are not, even when they meet the linguistic criteria? What roles do race, ethnicity, and nationality play in determining whether someone is considered a native speaker?

Regarding language policies labeling speakers, E. Shohamy (2006) discusses how language policies assign labels to speakers based on their language proficiency, usage, and identity. These labels often reflect broader ideological goals, such as promoting national unity or suppressing linguistic diversity. Additionally, E. Shohamy (2006) adds that labels such as “native speaker,” “non-native speaker,” “fluent,” or “limited proficiency” are not neutral descriptors but are laden with social and political implications.

The notion of nativeness is further complex due to the multilingual nature of families and communities today. People move between countries more than ever before, often acquiring multiple languages throughout their lives. Does this mean that someone's identity as a native speaker remains fixed, or does it shift depending on the languages they use and the places they live? A person may have been raised speaking English in one country but later develop fluency in other languages, leading to a fluid and dynamic linguistic identity (Dirham, 2022).

Moreover, many modern families are multilingual, with parents from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Wulandari et al., 2022). In such cases, children often grow up speaking two or more languages from an early age. This raises further questions: In a multilingual family, which language is considered the "native"? Can a person be a native speaker of multiple languages, or does society still favor having one dominant



"native" language? This scenario illustrates how traditional definitions of NESTs and NNESTs fail to capture the complexity of modern linguistic identities.

The relationship between identity and power is at the core of these discussions (Al Muabdi, 2022). Being classified as a native speaker of English has historically provided certain privileges, particularly in the field of ELT, where native speakers are often preferred for teaching positions regardless of their qualifications. This privilege, however, is not distributed equally. For instance, people from Western countries, particularly those who are white, are more likely to be considered “authentic” native speakers. In contrast, others might not receive the same recognition despite their linguistic abilities. Thus, the dichotomy between NESTs and NNESTs is not just about language proficiency; it reflects broader issues of race, class, nationality, and the social hierarchies embedded in global ELT practices. Understanding and deconstructing this dichotomy is essential for creating a more inclusive and equitable approach to teaching English.

2.3 Language Attitudes

One of the main aspects of this research is to delve into the concept of language attitudes so that understanding the influence of other phenomena, such as native speakerism, can be a more straightforward process as the research develops.

Social psychologists generally agree that an attitude is an evaluative reaction to an object (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2017). Therefore, language attitudes can also be defined as *evaluative reactions to language* for this research (Dragojevic et al., 2021). Language attitudes are the beliefs, feelings, and predispositions individuals or groups hold toward



specific languages or dialects and their speakers (Artamonova, 2020). These attitudes can be positive, negative, or neutral and play a crucial role in shaping linguistic behaviors, including language choice, language learning, and language policy (Huguet & Llurda, 2021). In contrast with sociolinguistics research, in second language acquisition (SLA), language attitude has not been captured sufficiently in its own right. Instead, it has been addressed only as an integral part of motivation (Li & Wei, 2022).

Language attitudes are often conceptualized as having three main components: *cognitive, affective, and behavioral* (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The *cognitive* component refers to beliefs or stereotypes associated with a particular language. For instance, a language may be perceived as prestigious, complex, or outdated. The *affective* component involves emotional reactions toward a language, such as feelings of pride, shame, or indifference. Finally, the *behavioral* component reflects how these attitudes influence actions, such as choosing to speak, learn, or avoid a language (Garrett, 2010).

Moreover, language attitudes are closely tied to issues of social identity. Language often marks cultural, ethnic, or national identity (Pauwels, 2016). Positive attitudes toward one's language can enhance group solidarity and identity. In contrast, negative attitudes, often resulting from historical, colonial, or economic pressures, can lead to language marginalization and eventual loss (Zabrodskaia & Ehala, 2022). Language attitudes also reflect power dynamics, where languages associated with dominant groups (e.g., English) are often viewed more favorably than minority languages.

Finally, Language attitudes are particularly relevant in educational settings, where they can influence language learning success. Positive attitudes towards a second language



are often correlated with greater motivation and better learning outcomes (Ghanem & Castello, 2020). Conversely, negative attitudes towards a language or its speakers can create barriers to effective language acquisition. Teachers' attitudes toward languages and language varieties also impact classroom dynamics, affecting both language learning and students' self-esteem and cultural identity (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). Furthermore, attitudes about a specific language will inform stereotypes about speakers of that language, such that if a language is held in negative esteem in society, people who speak that language will likewise be held in negative esteem (Kircher & Zipp, 2022).

2.4 Students' attitudes toward NESTs and NNESTs

Primarily, it is necessary to understand the core concept of attitudes and then, more specifically, language attitudes. There is a considerable set of ideas and concepts regarding attitudes; however, Kircher and Zipp (2022) express that attitudes are states of readiness, dispositions, or tendencies and, therefore, have no overt substance. Other authors, such as Satraki (2019), have remarked that an attitude is an abstract notion of social psychology that has raised doubts over research in linguistics and other fields. Such problematic considerations on the issue of attitudes lie in the difficulty of their identification and, consequently, their measurement.

In the context of multilingualism, attitudes, therefore, refer to the feelings, beliefs, knowledge, and behavior individuals hold and exhibit towards language varieties and multilingual language use (Garrett, 2010), but also towards the users of these language varieties (Dragojevic et al., 2021). The latter statements lay the basis for understanding the



concept of language attitudes and how students exemplify and conjure them up towards NESTs and NNESTs.

Different studies and authors have worked thoroughly on identifying patterns in the students' attitudes when learning English as a foreign language from NESTs and NNESTs. For instance, research conducted by Boonsuk and Fang (2020) led to the statement that some students prefer the accents of Anglophone English varieties, which are considered suitable, concise, and globally recognized, while non-native varieties are deemed ineffective and unpleasant. Previously, Fang (2019) had concluded that English learners adapt to English accents because native English and the Anglophone variety of English are seen as the more authentic and legitimate model of ELT.

Alonso-Herrero and Herrarte (2019) found that students prefer NESTs for pronunciation teaching and activities related to oral skills, but NNESTs for grammar skills and teaching strategies. Moreover, other authors have researched the students' attitudes toward their English language preferences and performance. For instance, Yuwita and Ambarwati (2023) found that the students believe that their English accent might seem unfamiliar to others. Hence, they attempted to sound like native speakers for international acceptance.

From other perspectives, the students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs present specific approaches that are subject to the students' contexts and relationship with their native language. For example, Normann (2020) found that when language learners are conscious of how they use their native language and how they learn, they can also identify effective ways of learning a foreign language. In contrast, Getie (2020) concluded in his



research in Ethiopia that students have positive attitudes toward English language learning owing to its importance and status. However, they showed negative attitudes toward their local English teachers due to the lack of encouragement and suitable learning environments.

Overall, language attitudes play a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs in English language education. These attitudes are influenced by a range of factors, including the students' beliefs, cultural backgrounds, and linguistic experiences. While some students prefer native English accents for authenticity (Bing et al., 2023; Mourchid et al., 2023), others value NNESTs for their teaching strategies and shared linguistic experiences (Al Muabdi, 2022; Wulandari et al., 2022). Understanding these attitudes is essential for fostering an inclusive learning environment where both native and non-native English teachers are equally appreciated for their unique strengths and contributions.

3. Methodology

This research approached *reality* as a *phenomenon* from a *pedagogical dimension* guided by the *bilingualism axis* of the master's degree. It is entailed within the axis of bilingualism, as the general objective follows up on the problematic questions established by the research guidelines of the master's degree. Accordingly, the implication of the axis for this project revolves around the critical approach to communities immersed in contexts where bilingualism takes place, from the sociocultural and linguistic characteristics of a human group. The concept follows a perspective of the 21st century which is grounded in the recent publication *Bilingual Learning Environments: Reflections and Contributions* by



Rodríguez, Suárez, Trujillo Díaz, Araque Torres, Padilla Arias, Gallego Villamil, and Benítez (2024). The aforementioned axis advocates for a form of bilingualism that goes beyond monolingual views, promoting inclusive learning, valuing linguistic diversity as a means to broaden the understanding of reality, and encouraging a contextualized educational approach that meets communities' needs.

The present study used *qualitative research* to address the reality under investigation. It also used an *analytical-observational* research approach, which made it possible to draw logical-empirical conclusions. The results were analytical-observational because our sample's behaviors, habits, and reactions were examined. The use of qualitative research was essential to investigate how Native Speakerism ideology influences Advanced English Learners' attitudes toward NESTs and NNESTs in their English learning processes at foreign language academies since the *qualitative approach*, as a naturalistic and systematic approach, is well-suited to identifying the problem, collecting, analyzing, explaining, evaluating, and interpreting the data (Nassaji, 2020). Additionally, the choice of qualitative research lies in gathering participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavior. So, at its core, it asks open-ended questions whose answers are not easily put into numbers, such as "how" and "why" (Tenny et al., 2022).

This research followed the principles of a *case study method*, which allowed for an in-depth investigation of a particular case or a small number of cases within their natural setting. This method allows researchers to explore complex phenomena by focusing on a particular instance, whether it be an individual, organization, event, or process (Thomas, 2021). Furthermore, the case study seeks to explore a phenomenon in-depth within its real-world context (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This type of study helped identify, analyze,



categorize, and then investigate how Native Speakerism influences Advanced English Learners' attitudes toward NESTs and NNESTs in their English learning processes at an English language academy in Florencia, Caquetá since it allowed the use of data collection instruments that eased to work on this phenomenon in an authentic environment.

The decision to use a case study was particularly relevant for examining Florencia, Caquetá, a region of Colombia often overlooked by academic research and state support. The method allowed for the exploration of Native Speakerism within this unique setting, showing how this ideology influences students' attitudes in a region with specific sociolinguistic characteristics that are often underrepresented in educational research. Furthermore, *instrumental case study* is suitable for conducting research exercise since it focuses on a specific case to gain insights into a broader issue, concept, or phenomenon (Mills et al., 2010). An instrumental case study uses the case as a tool or instrument to illuminate a more significant question or issue. This in-depth analysis highlighted the unique dynamics of foreign language learning in this context, emphasizing the importance of studying marginalized regions to highlight their distinct educational challenges and sociocultural nuances.

3.1 Population and Selection Criteria

The participants were 21 Advanced English students taking English courses at ANS (Academia Nacional de Sistemas) in Florencia, Caquetá, during the academic term 2025-1. These students had received classes from both native English-speaking teachers (NEST) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNEST), making them particularly relevant for identifying attitudes toward English teachers and their language learning processes. The



term Advanced English students, used in this study, refers specifically to learners currently enrolled in the C1-level English course at ANS, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

An important criterion for their inclusion was their extended exposure to both types of teachers, as most of them had been studying at the institution for at least six months. This vast experience not only ensures a more informed and reflective perspective on their attitudes and learning experiences but also implies that they have developed a clear sense of purpose in learning English. These characteristics position the participants as *information-rich cases* that align with this research's *contextual and pedagogical objectives*. Their insights offer valuable contributions to understanding how Native Speakerism manifests in language learning environments and shapes learners' experiences over time.

The participants' ages ranged from twelve to thirty-two. One student (4.8%) was twelve, two students (9.5%) were thirteen, three students (14.3%) were fourteen, one student (4.8%) was fifteen, five students (23.8%) were sixteen, five students (23.8%) were seventeen, one student (4.8%) was eighteen, one student was twenty (4.8%), one student (4.8%) was twenty-eight. One student (4.8%) was thirty-two (See Figure 1).

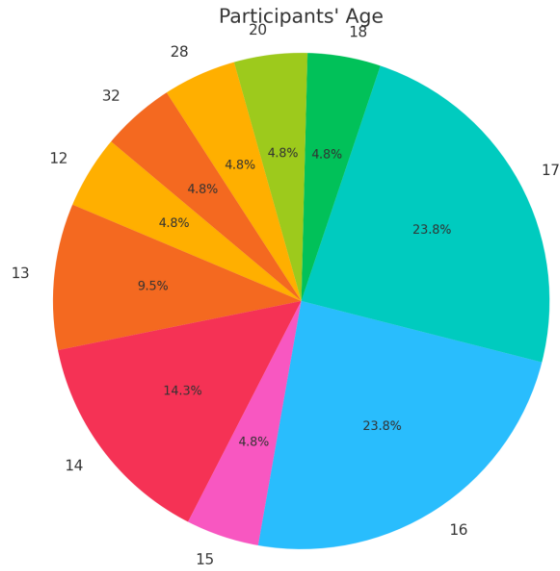


Figure 1. Participants' age

When it came to their genders, thirteen (61.9%) participants identified as male, eight (38.1%) participants as female, and none identified with other genders such as non-binary, genderqueer, or agender (See Figure 2).

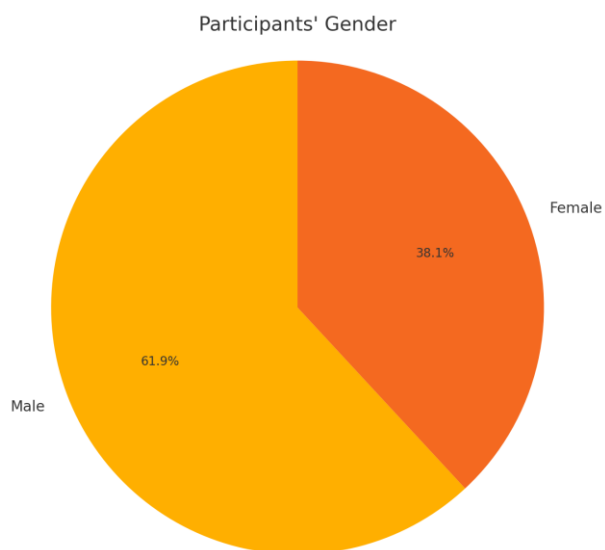


Figure 2. Participants' gender

Most participants, sixteen (76.2%), were born in Florencia; other Advanced English students' birthplaces were Neiva with two (9.5%), Sólita with one (4.8%), Puerto Leguizamo with one (4.8%) and San Vicente del Caguan with one (4.8%) (See Figure 3).

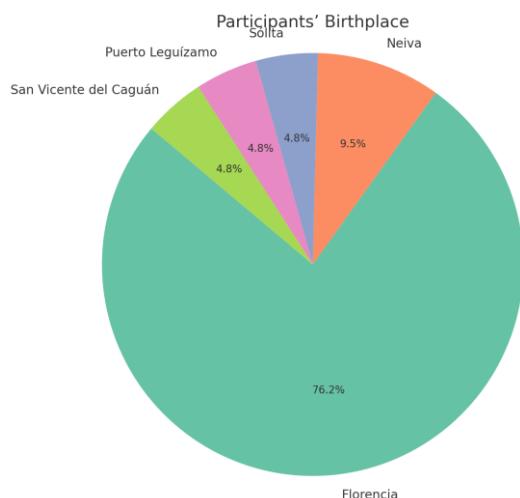


Figure 3. Participants' birthplace

In terms of their linguistic repertoire, the twenty-one Advanced English students speak Spanish and English (100%). Three (14.3%) speak French, and one (4.8%) speaks Portuguese (See Figure 4).

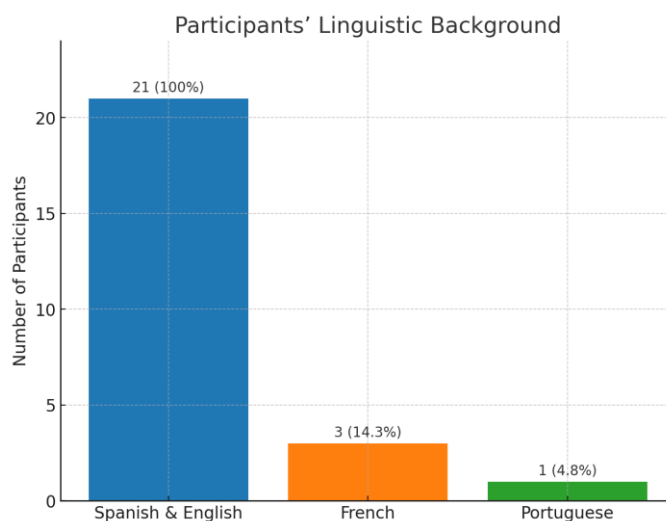


Figure 4. Participants' linguistic background

According to Colombia's residential stratification system, most of the participants—nine students (42.9%)—belong to the third stratum, three students (14.3%) to the first stratum, three (14.3%) to the second stratum, four (19%) to the fourth stratum, and two (9.5%) to the sixth stratum.

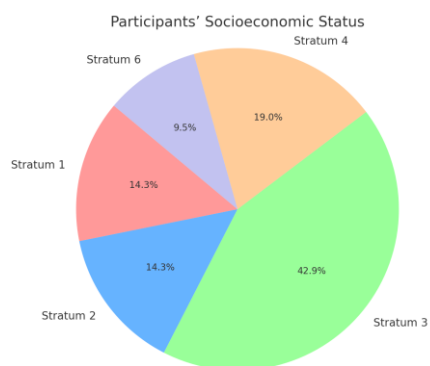


Figure 5. Participants' socioeconomic status

Non-probability samples were applied to select the above population, meaning that participants were chosen based on specific criteria rather than randomly (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 214). From the broader population of all students at ANS, only a section of them was necessary, specifically Advanced English Learners. This research used two types of non-probability samples: 1) convenience sampling because of accessibility and proximity to the sample, and 2) voluntary sampling because participants from that section of the population had the freedom to either participate or not in the investigation.

To engage the population, the following procedures were implemented: First, the institution director granted permission to conduct the research (Appendix A). Then, a formal invitation was made through classroom visits and posters at the language institutions



to invite participants who met the criteria of being Advanced English Learners. Next, parents of potential participants were provided with a consent form, which they signed to give permission for their children to participate in the research, as most of them were underage (Appendix B). Afterward, the Advanced English Learners themselves also signed a consent form to confirm their voluntary participation (Appendix B). Once both consent forms were completed, participants were ready to participate in the study.

Moreover, to promote participants' cooperation, this research ensures their anonymity by omitting their names from the raw data transcription and using pseudonyms and gender-neutral pronouns in the results. Throughout the study, the privacy and identities of the participants were safeguarded from outsiders, and all data were managed exclusively by the researchers.

3.2 Data Collection Instruments

This research employed two primary instruments to collect data: a verbal guise test (VGT) and focus groups to collect data.

3.2.1 Verbal Guise Test (VGT)

The first was a *verbal guise test* that assessed Advanced English Learners' attitudes toward various English accents, employing an indirect approach to obtain authentic insights. Briefly, a Verbal Guise Test is a research instrument where participants listen to short audio recordings of different speakers and then answer questions based on how they



perceive those voices (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022). Unlike direct surveys, this method allows researchers to gather more genuine and subconscious participant reactions.

Chan (2021) states that the Verbal Guise Test (VGT) is a modified version of a classic linguistic research tool, the Matched Guise Test (MGT). Additionally, L. Zhang (2022) highlights that Verbal Guise Tests require authentic speakers to record the audiotape. In VGT, multiple speakers are usually involved to provide the sound clips, thus allowing speakers to converse naturally in their L1s, which also expands the research scope from merely language attitudes between discrete languages to language attitudes across language varieties (Chan, 2021).

Thus, by asking eight open-ended questions (Appendix C), this instrument enabled a deeper understanding of how teenagers perceive different accents and their potential implications in their English learning processes. It is worth noting that in this research, participants were not informed that the test aimed to compare native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs); instead, they were simply asked to evaluate “different English teachers”.

The responses gathered through this test provided rich qualitative data that captured the intricacies of participant opinions and feelings regarding native and non-native English speakers. The test featured no more than three-minute micro-teachings from three distinct speakers from various backgrounds. To select participants for the recordings, the researchers considered Kachru’s (1985) Three Circle Model of English, as well as Colombian language policies, which recognize any foreign person proficient in English as a NEST, regardless of whether English is their L1 as discussed in the introduction of this



paper. Therefore, this instrument included one NEST from an English-speaking country of the inner circle (The USA), one “NEST” from a non-English-speaking country (Italy), and one NNEST from a non-English-speaking country (Colombia).

3.2.2 Focus groups

In addition to the verbal guise test, two five-question *focus groups* were organized to facilitate a collective discussion among participants (Appendix C). A focus group can be defined broadly as ‘a type of group discussion about a topic under the guidance of a trained group moderator’ (Frey, 2018). Sim and Waterfield (2019) recommend that data collection and subsequent analysis should take account of both the dialogue and the interaction that has occurred within the group and seek to capture the way in which meaning is negotiated and co-produced in the group context (Wilkinson, 1998).

The focus group technique in this research fostered an environment where students could share their thoughts and engage in dialogue about their experiences with English language instruction and the influence of nativeness. Considering that peer influence often plays a role in shaping language attitudes, this focus group helped reveal socially constructed biases around Native Speakerism, offering insights into the collective mindset of the participants. Although five primary questions were prepared to explore participants’ perceptions of key variables, the semi-structured format allowed for additional questions to be posed, ensuring a natural flow in the conversation.

All the instruments were conducted on-site by the researchers and were recorded with the consent of the participants and their parents (Appendix B). To ensure participants



felt comfortable, they were given the option to respond in either Spanish or English; thus, all instruments were provided in both languages. It is worth mentioning that, given the participants' preference for using their L1 in complex discussions, Spanish was used as the primary language for consent and during the group interview to facilitate clear communication.

3.3 Data Analysis procedures

An open coding process was employed to analyze the qualitative data (focus groups and verbal guise test) (McLeod, 2024). This included the transcription of raw data, initial reading, and memo writing, followed by systematically naming emerging ideas, grouping them into codes, identifying relationships between them, and organizing them into overarching categories and subcategories. Categories that will be covered in depth in the following section *4. Results: Analysis, Findings and Discussion*. This inductive process enabled a comprehensive understanding of students' linguistic attitudes and educational practices toward NEST and NNEST, particularly in regions like Florencia, where issues related to Native Speakerism are underexplored.

Participants' answers were produced in Spanish, as participants were given the option to use either English or Spanish, but they preferred Spanish because they felt more comfortable and fluent. As the dissertation is written entirely in English, following institutional requirements, the researchers translated all excerpts included in the document. To support this process, one spreadsheet software was used to organize the information and facilitate the visualization and identification of emerging patterns. Additionally, memos were created to track analytical reflections, and color-coding was applied to identify



recurrence and significance of themes across participants' responses (Bingham, 2023). This allowed for a deeper exploration of sociolinguistic dynamics, language ideologies, and teaching practices in Florencia, Caquetá.

4. Results: Analysis, Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis, findings and discussion derived from the specific objectives outlined in this research. Each objective is addressed individually, representing the sequential steps contributing to achieving the general objective. The data analyzed here resulted from implementing two research instruments: verbal guise tests and focus groups. It is worth mentioning that to guarantee participants' anonymity, they are referred to as S—# in the results description, for example: S-1, S-5, S-10, etcetera.

4.1 Analysis and Findings on Advanced English Learners' attitudes towards native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs)

This section discusses the results of the first specific objective *to identify Advanced English Learners' attitudes towards native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs)*. These findings were derived from participant's answers during the Verbal Guise Test (VGT). Based on the distinctive reactions elicited by each microteaching and informed by Kachru's (1985) Three Circles Model, the data was organized into three interpretive categories. These categories emerged from participants' perceptual judgments and emotional responses to each speaker's accent, fluency, and perceived teaching abilities. Each category corresponds to one of the speakers



featured in the VGT—an American (Inner Circle), an Italian (Expanding Circle), and a Colombian (Expanding Circle)—whose national and linguistic backgrounds reflect different positions within the global English-speaking landscape.

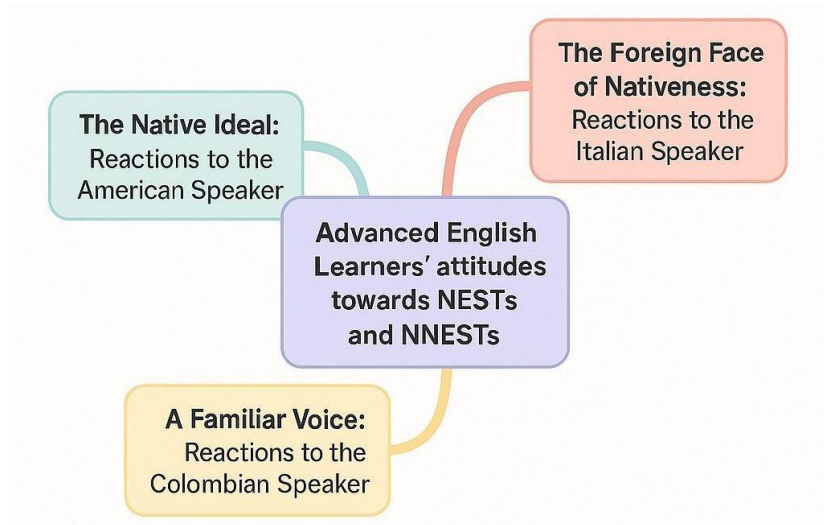


Figure 6. *Coding Rules for attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs*

Concerning the first category, *The Native Ideal: Reactions to the American Speaker*, the NEST (speaker 3) was widely admired for his fluent, native-like pronunciation and energetic delivery, which learners associated with an ideal English teacher. His clear explanations, supported by accessible vocabulary and visual aids, were deemed adequate for various proficiency levels. Participants like S-2 expressed: *"I think he would be a very good English teacher; his accent and pronunciation are perfect for that."* S-1 noted: *"his accent sounded authentically English, and I think he would help me learn about English-speaking culture"*. This perception aligns with the belief that native speakers are the "owners" of the language and that their speech represents the most legitimate or desirable form (Crystal, 2003).



Students frequently linked his accent to native teachers or advanced coursework. In comparative evaluations, several chose him as the most helpful for improving English and their preferred teacher, citing his fluency, dynamic style, and ability to challenge them. For instance, S-13 emphasized, *“The person who would help me the most to learn English is speaker 3 (American) because his fluency and pronunciation would help me improve”*. Similarly, S-18 acknowledged the cognitive demand involved: *“sometimes it is hard to understand him completely, and that forces you to make an effort to learn”*.

However, some learners noted drawbacks, such as rapid speech, an occasionally monotonous tone, and limited interactivity, which hindered engagement. S-9 remarked, *“speaker 3 delivered the information too quickly,”* pointing to a pace that some found overwhelming rather than effective. Similarly, S6 acknowledged his strong pronunciation and fluency but added that *“he could perhaps improve the way he manages the information he presents.”* This suggests that while linguistic competence was appreciated, instructional clarity and coherence remained essential.

Other comments highlighted affective and motivational concerns. S-4 observed, *“he could be more energetic when explaining, otherwise he might transmit a low-energy vibe to his students.”* The same participant added, *“His lack of motivating and energetic attitude could make him a poor teacher,”* reinforcing the idea that enthusiasm and classroom presence are integral to effective pedagogy. These findings reveal a strong preference for native-like qualities, tempered by critiques that highlight the importance of pedagogical delivery and emotional engagement. They also point to a growing awareness among students that language instruction involves more than linguistic proficiency, it requires the ability to connect, inspire, and adapt to learner needs.



Pertaining to the second category, *The Foreign Face of Nativeness: Reactions to the Italian Speaker*, the “NEST” (speaker 1) emerged as a highly regarded teacher, valued for his clear, understandable accent and structured teaching approach. Learners appreciated his use of simple language, practical examples, and coherent explanations, facilitating comprehension and building confidence. S-6 noted, “*honestly, the information he presented and the way he explained it were appropriate. The words he used were understandable, and he tried to ensure learning through his teaching method.*” S-10 added that “*Speaker 1 would be a good teacher because his way of explaining is dynamic and consistent, which makes him easy to understand. He also uses didactic material and includes moments to practice pronunciation.*”

His fluency, often perceived as native-like, enhanced his credibility, and many believed he could teach about English-speaking cultures due to his apparent cultural exposure. His voice was engaging, fostering a sense of comfort, and was associated with native teachers and early or advanced learning experiences. As S-19 expressed, “*I think he would be a good teacher because when teaching, he tells us to practice what he says. Also, he doesn't rush through explanations and takes his time to make sure we understand.*” S-20 echoed this view, stating, “*He uses basic vocabulary, but I think he does so to help us understand better without having to look up too many words.*” This perception highlights a strategic adaptation to learners’ linguistic levels, which was highly appreciated by students.

In comparative questions, he was the most frequently chosen teacher who would best help improve English, and the preferred instructor praised for his clarity, effective methodology, and emotional connection. Although some participants criticized his low volume and monotonous tone as disengaging, the overall perception emphasized his strong



pedagogical appeal. These results position him as a compelling teaching model despite his non-native status and lend support to governmental proposals advocating for the recognition of non-native teachers as “native-speakers” in functional terms, as students tend to assess teacher identity not by their country of origin, but by the way they sound.

Turning to the last category, *A Familiar Voice: Reactions to the Colombian Speaker*, the NNEST (speaker 2) was recognized as a clear and empathetic teacher, particularly suited for beginners due to his slow, deliberate speech and detailed explanations. His pronunciation was considered good but improvable, reflecting his non-native status. Some learners believed he could teach about English-speaking cultures based on his vocabulary, but doubts about his fluency and accent limited his perceived cultural authenticity. His empathetic delivery created a safe learning environment, and his voice was linked to non-native teachers, basic coursework, or peers learning English.

S-3 directly associated him with their non-native English teachers’ speech, while S-10 reflected: *"I feel like I can relate to someone who is learning English just like me and is not a native speaker"*. His style was perceived as clear and slow-paced, which some considered suitable for beginner or intermediate levels. For example, S-21 commented that he would be a good teacher *"especially for children, since he speaks in a very slow manner and uses vocabulary appropriate for a beginner level of English"*. A few students selected him as the most helpful for improving English and their preferred teacher, valuing his clarity, use of Spanish to bridge concepts, and motivational attitude, especially for novices.

However, his lack of fluency, weak accent, and unchallenging style were criticized, particularly by advanced learners who found his approach demotivating. Some students



described him as “average” or in need of improvement to teach higher-level classes. S-4 acknowledged that while he might consider him as a good teacher, he felt that “*he should improve his level of fluency if he wants to be an advanced teacher*”. These perceptions suggest that, although the Colombian speaker’s empathy and accessibility were valued, certain biases may confine him to foundational teaching roles, limiting his perceived potential to manage more advanced instruction.

4.2 Discussion on Advanced English Learners' attitudes towards native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs)

The findings in section 4.1 offer a nuanced perspective on learners’ preferences in the context of Florencia, Caquetá, which are Grounded in Holliday’s (2006) Native Speakerism framework, complemented by theories of motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021), identity (Norton, 2013), and intercultural competence (Ghanem & Castello, 2020).

The American speaker, embodying *The Native Ideal*, was highly valued for his native-like fluency and cultural authenticity, which learners associated with an ideal teacher (Phillipson, 1992). His selection as a preferred instructor by several students in comparative evaluations reflects a Native Speakerism bias, where native speech is equated with teaching excellence. However, critiques of his rapid delivery and limited interactivity highlight that native status alone does not ensure engagement, aligning with Dörnyei and Ushioda’s (2021) emphasis on motivational pedagogy. This duality reveals an attitude that admires native-like qualities but demands effective teaching, nuanced by the comparative context where students weigh all speakers.



The Italian speaker, representing *The Foreign Face of Nativeness*, challenged Native Speakerism by earning the highest preference as both the most helpful and preferred teacher. His clarity, structured methodology, and emotional connection resonated strongly, supporting Llurda's (2014) argument that NNESTs can excel when their pedagogical skills are recognized. Learners' association of his accent with native-like fluency and quality education suggests a willingness to value competence over nativeness, as advocated by Jenkins (2007). However, criticisms of his monotonous tone underscore the role of paralinguistic factors in shaping attitudes (Dragojevic et al., 2021). This attitude, favoring a non-native speaker for his teaching effectiveness, indicates a partial shift away from Native Speakerism, amplified by the comparative evaluations highlighting his balanced strengths.

The Colombian speaker, *A Familiar Voice*, was appreciated for his empathy and accessibility, particularly for beginners, reflecting Hashimoto and Rakhshandehroo's (2023) findings on NNESTs' cultural and linguistic empathy. His selection by a few students for his clarity and motivational attitude underscores his value in creating a safe learning environment. The preference for him among some learners, especially for using Spanish as a bridge, reveals an attitude that values shared linguistic backgrounds, particularly in a region with limited NEST exposure (Montoya & Correa, 2024). These strengths demonstrate that familiarity, emotional resonance, and local understanding are highly valued.

However, his limited fluency and perceived lack of challenge for advanced learners confined him to foundational roles, aligning with Kiczkowiak and Lowe's (2021) critique of Native Speakerism biases that undervalue NNESTs. Some students perceived his speaking style as "average" and not suitable for advanced-level instruction, suggesting that



while familiarity and empathy are appreciated, they still compete with ideals of fluency and "authenticity" promoted by Native Speakerism. This belief reinforces the perception that NNESTs are better suited for teaching exclusively beginners (Montoya & Correa, 2024), despite their pedagogical strengths.

Overall, the attitudes revealed through the VGT were complex and multifaceted. While the ideology of Native Speakerism clearly influenced learners' perceptions, especially in valuing the American speaker's native fluency and accent (Dewaele et al., 2021), the findings also demonstrate that advanced students evaluate teachers based on multiple factors, such as pedagogical clarity, lesson structure, pace, and motivational ability (Boonsuk & Fang, 2020). The preference for native-like fluency enhanced motivation and engagement in the case of the American speaker, reinforcing Norton's (2013) argument that linguistic identity and learner investment are closely linked. However, the Italian speaker's effective teaching approach and clarity fostered stronger engagement in many students, suggesting that pedagogical quality can mitigate the influence of Native Speakerism.

Similarly, the Colombian speaker's empathy and use of shared linguistic resources facilitated beginner learning and emotional connection. Yet, his impact was perceived as more limited at advanced levels, reflecting Native Speakerism-driven expectations of native models for higher proficiency (Boonsuk & Fang, 2020). Regarding perceived effectiveness and credibility, the American speaker's native status conferred automatic authority, but the Italian speaker's instructional strengths rivaled this perception. Meanwhile, the Colombian speaker's credibility appeared constrained by fluency-based biases, despite his pedagogical empathy.



The recognition of the Italian speaker's performance, despite being a NNEST, and the appreciation for the Colombian speaker's familiarity and emotional connection challenge the notion of NESTs' inherent superiority. These mixed preferences, depending on the students' level and learning goals, reveal a developing intercultural competence among learners, who begin to value diverse teacher contributions beyond accent or nativeness (Ghanem & Castello, 2020).

Additionally, the analysis of student attitudes toward the Italian and Colombian speakers shows how the principles of Native Speakerism continue to shape advanced learners' perceptions beyond the speakers' perceived place of origin. A strong preference for accents and pronunciation perceived as 'native-like' was evident, particularly with the Italian speaker, whom many students mistakenly believed to be a native speaker or considered to have a particularly good accent. This preference for fluency and naturalness aligns directly with Standard Language Ideology (SLI), which links certain ways of speaking, especially those associated with native speakers from inner circle countries to prestige and correctness, while relegating other accents or varieties to a lower status (Lippi-Green, 1994; Van Herk, 2012).

Although students clearly valued both teachers' pedagogical skills, highlighting clarity of explanations, strategic use of the L1 as a support tool, and overall empathy, the final inclination toward the Italian speaker (who received the highest preference despite being a NNEST) demonstrates that a "native-like" accent remains a highly influential factor. These dynamics points out the persistent perception that English still 'belongs' to countries and speakers traditionally associated with the inner circle, which is a core bias of Native Speakerism. This view, which positions native speech as the most legitimate or



desirable form of English, disregards the reality of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), a dynamic language co-owned and shaped by its diverse global users (Jenkins & Morán Panero, 2024). Ultimately, although students recognize and appreciate pedagogical strengths often associated with NNESTs, the underlying influence of Native Speakerism and SLI continues to privilege perceived native-like linguistic traits, limiting a full appreciation of English as a language whose 'owners' are all who use it, regardless of their origin or accent.

The regional context of Florencia, Caquetá, with scarce NEST access, underscores the critical role of NNESTs and the need to address Native Speakerism in local education policies. The learners' sensitivity to dynamic delivery and media-driven English standards shaped their critiques, reflecting their developmental stage (Norton, 2013). The comparative nature of later VGT questions sharpened their focus on clarity and effectiveness, revealing a nuanced attitude that balances Native Speakerism with appreciation for NNESTs' strengths. The latter advocates for inclusive teaching practices that recognize all teachers' competencies, offering a foundation for fostering equitable language education in underrepresented regions.

4.3 Analysis and Findings on the influence of the ideology of Native Speakerism on Advanced English Learners' language learning processes with NESTs and NNESTs

This section covers the results linked to the second specific objective *to analyze how the ideology of Native Speakerism influences the Advanced English Learners' language learning processes with NESTs and NNESTs*. These outcomes reflect the responses given by Advanced English Learners during the focus groups. Based on recurring patterns, the



analysis of the focus group data led to the development of the following categories and subcategories, which illustrate how learners navigate their educational interactions with both NESTs and NNESTs, and how Native Speakerism shapes their learning behaviors, involvement, and expectations across different stages of their language processes.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	SUBCATEGORIES
Linguistic Mastery: Navigating the Expertise Spectrum	Students' perceptions of the knowledge and command of the English language demonstrated by NESTs and NNESTs.	● Fluency and Naturalness ● Grammar Knowledge ● Vocabulary and Slang ● Knowledge of Accents
Safe Spaces: Developing Trust and Rapport in the Classroom	Students' emotions, attitudes, and comfort levels about NESTs and NNESTs.	● Comfort and Confidence ● Empathy and Understanding ● Motivation and Inspiration ● Frustration and Anxiety
More Than Just Speaking English: Valuing Pedagogical Skills	Teaching methods and pedagogical approaches used by NESTs and NNESTs.	● Use of Mother Tongue ● Clarity of Explanations ● Focus on Specific Skills ● Pedagogical Knowledge and Methodology ● Class Dynamics and Engagement

Table 1. Coding Rules for Language Learning Processes with NESTs and NNESTs.



The influence of the ideology of Native Speakerism on Advanced English learners exhibits complex and often nuanced perceptions regarding their learning processes with NESTs and NNESTs.

Regarding the first category, *Linguistic Mastery: Navigating the Expertise Spectrum*, students tend to recognize the fluency and naturalness of NESTs' speaking. As S-1 expressed, *“Learning with native teachers has been great because when it comes to speaking, there are no mistakes, and they use everything correctly”*. This aligns with the notion that native speakers possess an inherent command of the language (Harsanti & Manara, 2021). However, they do not necessarily perceive NESTs as superior in grammar knowledge; some suggest that NNESTs have a deeper understanding of grammatical rules because they have learned them explicitly. As S-20 noted, *“I feel that non-native teachers have learned grammar much better. And personally, I think that learning grammar first is more important, and that’s what non-native teachers know best.”*

Regarding vocabulary and slang, while NESTs are viewed as accurate and authentic users, NNESTs are appreciated for their ability to translate and explain meanings in Spanish, facilitating comprehension. S-3 commented, *“When it comes to slang, it’s often much better to have non-native teachers because they can ‘translate,’ so to speak, what it means in Spanish. So, it can be much easier for us to understand those kinds of phrases or words”*. Additionally, exposure to various NESTs’ accents is considered an advantage for training listening skills and preparing for real-life contexts. S-18 highlighted this benefit by stating, *“Native teachers force us to understand their accent and their language because they can’t speak Spanish. And if they could, it wouldn’t make sense, because we’re here to learn English, right? Also, native speakers expose us to different accents, like those from*



various U.S. cities or British ones, which is very valuable”. These perspectives illustrate how advanced English learners navigate and negotiate different kinds of linguistic expertise, recognizing strengths in both NESTs and NNESTs depending on the specific language skill in focus.

Concerning the second category, *Safe Spaces: Developing Trust and Rapport in the Classroom*, the presence of proficient and spontaneous teachers does not always translate into greater comfort or confidence with NESTs among advanced students. Some participants find NNESTs more empathetic and understanding of their difficulties as learners, which fosters greater ease and trust. As S-14 remarked, *“I think we learn much better with non-native teachers because they understand us better. They know that we don’t always understand how fast native speakers talk or the accents they use. That’s why I feel that non-native teachers are more understanding, and that’s why we like them more. They understand our mistakes and help us in a way that better fits our needs.”*

While some students feel motivated by the demands of NESTs and the experience of total immersion, highlighting the benefits of full exposure to the language. For instance, S-2 reflected, *“The native teacher pushes you to be more demanding when it comes to understanding the topics. It’s always more challenging to understand. Let’s say a big advantage is having that free-flowing communication. The native teacher gives you examples in English and makes you understand them clearly. In fact, native speakers can use all the vocabulary they want and still manage to make us understand it right away in class”*. Others experience frustration and anxiety when faced with speech they perceive as too fast, full of slang, or based on assumptions of prior knowledge. As S-14 commented,



“Native teachers sometimes assume that we should already know those things, which can be frustrating. They tend to use a lot of slang and change words quite a bit, and that sometimes makes learning more difficult”. These insights highlight how students’ emotional comfort and sense of support in the classroom can influence their learning experience. The perception of empathy, patience, and adaptability in NNESTs often fosters a more secure and encouraging environment. At the same time, the demanding nature of NNESTs can be both motivating and overwhelming, depending on personal needs and learning styles.

As for the last category, *More Than Just Speaking English: Valuing Pedagogical Skills*, nativeness does not imply an inherent pedagogical superiority of NNESTs. Advanced students value NNESTs’ ability to use Spanish as a support tool to clarify doubts and draw linguistic comparisons. As S-3 explained, *“You need to have certain comparisons in Spanish to really understand, because native speakers only speak English. But if what I’m aiming for is to be bilingual, then I want to have the comparisons in both languages. Besides, the brain never works entirely in English or completely in Spanish — it’s a mix “*.

While some students perceive NNESTs’ teaching methods as different and sometimes more dynamic, with S-12 stating, *“ I think this is super interesting and positive because not all language academies offer this kind of experience (classes with native speakers). For me, learning this way is easier, more dynamic, and enriching”*. Others find that NNESTs use more structured methodologies and show greater concern for ensuring understanding. As noted by S-1, *“The work of non-native teachers is valuable because I think they really care about us learning. That’s why they repeat and insist a lot, so that we can pass the subject, understand the topic, and truly improve”*.



For advanced learners, a focus on specific skills becomes relevant. They seek from NESTs opportunities to practice listening and speaking with authentic accents. As S-5 mentioned, *“What I value about native teachers is the fact that, since they will try to speak in their natural language—in this case, English—our listening and speaking skills improve, and in a way, they almost force the learner to use that second language”*. While recognizing the solid grammatical foundation provided by NNESTs, as highlighted by S-2, *it’s also important to value what we’ve learned with non-native teachers, especially in terms of grammar. People tend to ignore that with a non-native teacher you can also keep learning—and you can even end up with better English”*. This information demonstrates how advanced English students balance the strengths of both NESTs and NNESTs, enjoying exposure to real-world language use with NESTs, while also appreciating the strong grammatical base and personalized guidance provided by NNESTs. This emphasizes the importance of pedagogical flexibility to address the varied needs of learners, helping them thrive in their language learning journey.

4.4 Discussion on the influence of the ideology of Native Speakerism on Advanced English Learners’ language learning processes with NESTs and NNESTs

The findings in Section 4.3 revealed complex perceptions among Advanced English learners. Regarding the first category, *Linguistic Mastery: Navigating the Expertise Spectrum*, students usually perceive NESTs' speech as fluent and naturally flowing. This aligns directly with the notion, shaped by Native Speakerism, that native speakers possess an inherent and flawless command of the language (Liu, 2021). This idea is tied to one of the five fallacies identified by Phillipson (1992) in his critique of English language teaching



(ELT), namely, the native speaker fallacy. This fallacy promotes the belief that native speakers represent the ultimate linguistic model, inherently superior in both language proficiency and teaching effectiveness. However, advanced learners demonstrate a more critical perspective by not automatically considering NESTs superior in grammatical knowledge. This suggests a perception that the explicit learning of grammar by NNESTs provides them with a deeper understanding of language rules. This observation contrasts with the native speaker ideology, which often assumes an innate grammatical competence in NESTs. Scholars such as Llurda (2014) and Ghane & Razmi (2023) support this view, arguing that NNESTs may offer advantages when explicitly explaining grammatical rules.

Considering vocabulary and slang, while the authenticity of NESTs is valued, the ability of NNESTs to translate and explain meanings in Spanish facilitates comprehension for advanced learners, highlighting the role of NNESTs as linguistic bridge-builders. This finding demonstrates another of Phillipson's (1992) ELT five fallacies, specifically the Monolingual Fallacy, which suggests that language learning is more effective when conducted exclusively in the target language. As bilingual learners, advanced students recognize the value of their first language as a cognitive and pedagogical resource in the acquisition process, an idea supported by Elsherbiny (2025), who argues that NNESTs can use their knowledge of learners' L1 to support L2 development.

This perspective aligns with the concept of translanguaging, which views bilingualism not as the separation of languages but as a dynamic and integrated practice of meaning-making. In this context, learners freely draw on their linguistic repertoire to make sense of new concepts, negotiate meaning, and deepen understanding (García, 2009; García & Wei, 2014). Translanguaging legitimizes the use of L1 in the classroom and positions



NNESTs as well-equipped to guide learners through this process, offering a pedagogical advantage that transcends the native/non-native dichotomy.

Furthermore, exposure to various NESTs' accents is considered beneficial for improving listening comprehension and preparing for authentic communication situations. This perception aligns with the idea of *linguistic authenticity*, often associated with native speakers within the ideology of Native Speakerism (Munandar, 2023). Nevertheless, it is essential to note that this appreciation does not imply a dismissal of NNESTs. Some students, such as S-18, acknowledge that while NNESTs' accents may be more effortless to understand initially, exposure to the diverse accents of NESTs is essential for preparing to use English in global contexts (Charpentier, 2019).

This perspective reflects the importance of preparing for *English as a Lingua Franca* (ELF), where intelligibility among speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds is key—a notion that scholars such as Jenkins (2007) advocate. It represents a shift from the idea that only native accents are “correct” or inherently more valuable. Instead, it challenges the Standard Language Ideology (SLI) and promotes an inclusive view of English that embraces the rich diversity of accents and speakers worldwide (Ayres-Bennet & Bellamy, 2021).

This section continues the discussion, focusing on the second category: *Safe Spaces: Developing Trust and Rapport in the Classroom*. The findings revealed that having fluent and spontaneous teachers, typically associated with NESTs, does not necessarily lead to greater ease or assurance in advanced students. The perception of greater empathy and understanding from NNESTs regarding learners' struggles is fundamental since it



challenges the ideology of Native Speakerism, which often assumes an overall superiority of NESTs, including the notion that their mere status as native speakers ensures an optimal learning environment (Dey et al., 2023).

The fact that advanced students value NNESTs' ability to understand their learning difficulties aligns with the critique of Native Speakerism outlined in the theoretical framework, where it is argued that this ideology tends to devalue the unique skills of NNESTs despite growing evidence of their advantages (Hashimoto & Rakhshandehroo, 2023). The NNESTs' teaching approach is appreciated for being more relatable and effective, connected with studies such as those by Thongcharoen (2017), who argued that NNESTs may be more sensitive to learners' difficulties. This empathy may originate from the fact that NNESTs have themselves undergone the process of learning the language (Al Muabdi, 2022; Wulandari et al., 2022).

Moreover, the creation of a safe and trusting environment by NNESTs is directly linked to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that low-anxiety environments foster better language acquisition. When students feel emotionally supported and free from judgment, their affective filter is lowered, allowing them to process and internalize linguistic input more effectively. As NNESTs have undergone similar learning experiences, they help establish a more empathetic and supportive atmosphere in the classroom, where students participate actively and take risks, key elements for successful language development.

The findings highlight that creating an empathetic and ideal learning environment strongly resonates with the holistic and socio-critical perspective of Bilingual Learning



Environments (BLE) proposed by the master's framework (Rodríguez et al., 2024). This approach, which transcends monolingual views, seeks to integrate criteria for inclusive bilingual education, connect theoretical contributions with local realities, and empower both students and educators through intercultural dialogue and the active construction of knowledge that values cultural and community heritage.

On the other hand, NESTs' demanding nature and full immersion can motivate some students. This view may be influenced by the belief that constant exposure to native speakers is the most authentic and effective way to learn (Lowe & Pinner, 2016). As revealed in the focus groups, students, and their families often associate NESTs with an “authentic experience” and preparation for real-world contexts, further reinforcing this instrumental perception of native speakers. Said perception aligns with what Phillipson (1992) identified as the maximum-exposure fallacy—the assumption that maximum exposure to the target language, particularly through native speakers, automatically leads to superior language acquisition. This fallacy overlooks the complexities of language learning and the value of pedagogical approaches that integrate learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

However, the findings also reveal that such demands can lead to frustration and anxiety when students perceive NESTs' speech too quickly, use too much informal language, or expect learners to know certain things already. This challenge can be understood through Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, which proposes that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to input slightly beyond their current level of competence ($i+1$). Suppose NESTs' speech is perceived as too linguistically dense, filled



with idiomatic expressions, or delivered at an overwhelming pace. In that case, it may surpass this optimal input level, thus hindering comprehension and slowing progress.

Moreover, Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis helps explain how emotional barriers, such as anxiety and low self-confidence, can block language acquisition. This sense of not understanding or keeping up can create a perceived feeling of incompetence, which, in turn, intensifies language anxiety and further limits students' willingness to participate and take linguistic risks in the classroom. As S-1 bluntly put it "*They just get frustrated, drop the course, and say: 'I can't understand that gringo. I give up'.*" This statement encapsulates the emotional impact of poorly scaffolded immersion experiences and highlights how language anxiety, when not addressed, can become a barrier to persistence and achievement in language learning.

In contrast to the ideology of Native Speakerism, which might suggest that the mere presence of a native speaker guarantees a superior learning environment, the findings demonstrate that advanced learners value empathy, patience, and adaptability, which they often associate with NNESTs, as key to feeling safe and motivated. While the linguistic authenticity of NESTs is acknowledged and may represent a long-term goal (Bing et al., 2023), the accessibility and understanding facilitated by NNESTs are crucial for building a solid foundation and fostering classroom confidence (Llurda & Calvet-Terré, 2024). NNESTs adopt a more empathetic and pedagogically oriented approach, which resonates with studies such as those by Rahman & Yuzar (2020).

This section continues the discussion of the analysis and findings from Section 4.3, now focusing on the third category identified: *More Than Just Speaking English: Valuing*



Pedagogical Skills. The findings revealed that being a native speaker does not imply inherent pedagogical superiority by NESTs.

A key finding is the high value advanced students place on NNESTs' ability to use Spanish as a resource to address learners' questions and draw parallels between both languages. This perspective challenges another of Phillipson's (1992) five ELT fallacies, the Subtractive Fallacy, which suggests that learning can only happen in a monolingual environment, excluding L1, and views bilingualism as a hindrance. This fallacy suggests that learners must replace their native language with English, undermining the value of their previous linguistic knowledge.

Conversely, the findings from this study suggest that strategic use of L1, particularly Spanish, as a comparative and clarifying tool, enhances understanding, reduces anxiety, and supports the development of a deeper metalinguistic awareness. The ability of NNESTs to perform such linguistic transfers aligns with Cook's (2016) argument that NNESTs can draw upon their knowledge of the learners' L1 to facilitate L2 acquisition. Furthermore, NNESTs help interpret expressions based on the learners' native language. This pedagogical skill proves crucial for advanced learners seeking deep understanding and connections between their native language and English—an acknowledgment of their bilingual brain.

While some students view NESTs' teaching approaches as distinct and occasionally more engaging, others appreciate the structured strategies employed by NNESTs and their stronger focus on ensuring students fully understand the material. This supports the idea that NNESTs' approaches are valued for being more relatable and compelling, reinforcing



studies such as Ahmed & Osam, N. (2022), who argued that NNESTs may have a deeper awareness of learners' difficulties. NNESTs tend to adopt a more empathetic and pedagogical approach, which aligns with findings by Rasyid et al. (2023). In contrast, the apparent lack of such "concern" in some NESTs can be interpreted through the lens of *Native Speakerism*, which often assumes that native fluency alone is sufficient for effective teaching, disregarding the need for pedagogical adaptation to learners' needs (Copland et al., 2020).

At more advanced levels, learners prioritize the development of particular language skills. They look for chances to enhance their listening and speaking abilities through exposure to authentic pronunciation and accents provided by NESTs. This preference aligns with the perception that NESTs offer exposure to “real English” and better prepare them for authentic communication contexts (Mourchid et al., 2023). This reflects the widespread idea that native speakers are the “owners” of the language—a belief that perpetuates Native Speakerism by positioning native speech as the most legitimate or desirable form of English. However, scholars like Widdowson (1994) and Seidlhofer (2011) challenge this notion of ownership, advocating for a view of English as a global lingua franca, shaped and co-owned by its diverse users worldwide. Thus, while students value the perceived authenticity of NESTs, it is essential to reframe the ownership of English as inclusive and dynamic, rather than exclusive to native speakers (Crystal, 2004).

At the same time, learners acknowledge the solid grammatical foundations they receive from NNESTs. The emphasis on grammar by NNESTs also relates to Haque and Sharmin's (2022) argument that NNESTs may have advantages when it comes to explicit



grammar instruction. This dichotomy reflects how advanced learners aim to complement the strengths of both types of teachers for the sake of their English learning processes.

4.5 Analysis and Findings on the impact of the Native Speakerism ideology on Advanced English Learners' perceptions of the effectiveness and credibility of NESTs and NNESTs.

This section addresses the outcomes associated with the third objective, which is *to determine the impact of the Native Speakerism ideology on Advanced English Learners' perceptions of the effectiveness and credibility of NESTs and NNESTs*. These findings are based on the insights shared by Advanced English Learners during the focus groups. The analysis of the focus group discussions revealed recurring patterns in how advanced English learners perceive the effectiveness, credibility, and authority of both NESTs and NNESTs. These patterns informed the development of the following categories and subcategories, which reflect the participants' nuanced views on teacher roles at different proficiency levels, the evolving understanding of Native Speakerism, and the essential value placed on pedagogical knowledge.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	SUBCATEGORIES
Foundations First	Students' perceptions of the suitability of NESTs and NNESTs for teaching at the initial stages of language learning.	● Understanding of beginner difficulties ● Use of L1 as a support tool. ● Intelligibility
Fluency by Authenticity	Students' insights into the role of NESTs and NNESTs in developing fluency and authentic language use at advanced levels.	● Fluency and naturalness ● Exposure to diverse native accents ● Demanding



		instruction
Pedagogical Knowledge as a Non-Negotiable	Students' views on the importance of teaching competences among NESTs and NNESTs.	● Pedagogy over nativeness ● Empathy and Patience ● Engagement, motivation, and class dynamics

Table 2. Coding Rules for perceptions of the effectiveness and credibility of NESTs and NNESTs

The impact of the Native Speakerism ideology on advanced English students displays complex and often nuanced perceptions about the competence and reliability of NESTs and NNESTs. While the Native Speakerism ideology tends to privilege native speakers as linguistically, culturally, and pedagogically superior, advanced students, through their experiences, develop a more balanced perspective, recognizing the merits of both types of teachers. However, the influence of this ideology still manifests in certain beliefs and expectations that are discussed below.

The first category, *Foundation First*, explores how advanced students perceive the effectiveness and credibility of NESTs and NNESTs in the initial stages of English learning, even when they have already surpassed those phases. Despite their advanced level, they recognize the value of NNESTs in establishing a solid foundation. Advanced students often realize that NNESTs are more effective at the beginning of learning due to their ability to relate to students' difficulties and use Spanish as a support tool. S-11 mentions: *"I believe that at the beginning, to learn the basics, it is more necessary to have teachers who are not native speakers, that is, those who are from our own country and are*



more familiar with us. This way, we learn the basics more easily". S-13 also shares this view: "I feel that learning with non-native speakers is more helpful at the beginning because they can teach us in a more accessible and effective way while we are taking our first steps".

The ability of NNESTs to make comparisons between English and Spanish is perceived as a crucial advantage for initial understanding. S-4 explains: *"The point about non-native teachers is that they can make a kind of comparison, let's say between English and Spanish, and that way it becomes easier for us to understand English". S-5 adds: "In the case of non-native teachers, there is the fact that they know how to use common words to explain. For example, when explaining the topic of slang and needing to translate it into Spanish words, it makes learning them a bit easier".*

There is a perception that NESTs may be less effective with beginners due to intelligibility and the lack of a common linguistic background. S-14 states: *"Honestly, I don't think it's a good idea to have a native teacher from the very beginning, like in A1, because they hardly speak Spanish and that makes communication more complicated". S-18 agrees: "When you are at a lower level, like Wonders, like little kids, you can't really learn with a native teacher. Communication would be very difficult; you don't understand them well if you're just starting out".*

The next category, *Fluency by Authenticity*, focuses on how, at more advanced levels, students begin to appreciate the contribution of NESTs to the development of fluency and the understanding of English in real-world contexts. Advanced students recognize that NESTs provide valuable exposure to the fluency and natural use of the



language. S-15 also noted that *“native teachers seem to have perhaps slightly greater fluency compared to non-native teachers”*. Similarly, S-17 observed: *“Natives obviously have better speaking skills because they grew up learning the language and use it naturally”*. S-9 commented: *“Having native teachers is very interesting because we experience English as it truly is — perfect and authentic — not just as it could be, and that has been very valuable”*. Additionally, S-15 emphasized: *“At a C1 level, it is probably better to have a native teacher because at this point we need to speak more fluently and also improve our listening skills, understanding someone who truly speaks the language”*.

Building on this idea, exposure to different native accents is perceived as a significant advantage for improving listening skills and preparing for communication in diverse contexts. S-17 highlighted: *“A native teacher speaks with the accent of their country, right? Native teachers help us train and get used to understanding those accents”*. S-12 shared a similar view: *“I have learned about many different accents, not just American, but also Australian and British, like our current teacher’s accent. I think this is very interesting and positive”*. Likewise, S-20 emphasized the importance of this exposure at advanced stages: *“At this point, having a native teacher is probably more helpful because I, for example, need to improve my listening and speaking skills — learning to identify different accents and picking up on those details”*.

In addition to these benefits, there is a perception that interaction with NESTs is more demanding and pushes students to challenge themselves more in terms of both listening and speaking skills. S-18 emphasized: *“I feel that when they teach us, they force us to understand their accent and their language because they can't speak Spanish. That's why I feel native teachers teach us much more — they prepare us for the real world”*.



Similarly, S-2 noted: *"With a native teacher, you have to put in more effort and perhaps concentrate more to understand an explanation in English, like a grammar structure, a word concept, or a phrasal verb. We saw this clearly in a class last year that I really enjoyed. In that class, for example, phrasal verbs weren't translated; instead, we understood their meaning directly in English. That challenge made the learning much stronger"*. S-6 added that *"working with native teachers helps students become more accustomed to the language, solidify their knowledge, and step out of their comfort zones — a positive challenge that greatly enhances the learning experience"*.

Regarding the last category, *Pedagogical Knowledge as a Non-Negotiable*, it is noticeable that despite the influence of Native Speakerism in certain aspects, advanced students consistently emphasize that pedagogical competence is fundamental in any teacher, whether native or non-native. Advanced students point out that a teacher's effectiveness depends more on their pedagogy than on their origin. S-2 mentioned *"I have had very good native teachers and very bad native teachers. So, for me, it really depends a lot on whether they have pedagogical knowledge or not."* S-6 stated: *"Beyond whether they are native or non-native, it's their pedagogy and teaching style that really matter"*. S-8 also expressed: *"What matters the most to me is that they prioritize teaching and connecting with the student. Whether they are native or not, that doesn't matter"*. S-4 emphasized: *"I believe that the main aspect that defines a teacher is also a bit of the methodology they use"*.

Empathy, patience, and the ability to adapt to students' needs are highly valued pedagogical qualities, often perceived as more present in NNESTs. S-6 appreciates that non-native teachers make them feel *"comfortable and confident when learning"*. S-7 values



the patience of non-native teachers: *"Not everyone can tolerate mistakes and the personal process, but my current teachers are very patient; they like to smile, repeat things in different ways, and never make me feel like I don't know anything. That motivates me to keep trying. Also, a teacher's empathy makes me feel like they really care about my progress, not just that I learn the grammar rules and all that"*. While empathy is often associated with NNESTs, students like S-6 found native teachers to be empathetic as well: *"For example, my previous native teacher was really good, very empathetic. It was okay to make mistakes. Nothing bad happened. He also encouraged me to try and improve my errors"*.

Moreover, engagement, motivation, and classroom dynamics also play a significant role in students' perceptions of effective teaching. For them, a good teacher motivates and creates a dynamic learning environment. S-10 pointed out that teachers *"must have the ability and the approach to make students feel excited about learning in class, rather than feeling forced"*. S-1 also mentioned that *"classroom dynamics and activities, I believe engagement in general is something that non-natives do better than natives"*. In addition to these dynamics, clarity in explanations, dynamic methodologies, and concern for students' learning are also highlighted as crucial pedagogical aspects. S-6 emphasizes that non-native teachers have *"ways of making learning simpler and faster. The teacher explains things very directly, making it easier to understand the topics."* S-1 adds: *"With natives, it's very accurate and everything, but it can be boring"*.



4.6. Discussion on the impact of the Native Speakerism ideology on Advanced English Learners' perceptions of the effectiveness and credibility of NESTs and NNESTs.

The findings in section 4.5 reveal a nuanced perception from advanced English students regarding the effectiveness and credibility of native (NESTs) and non-native (NNESTs) teachers, influenced, though not entirely determined, by the ideology of Native Speakerism (Hollyday, 2006). Despite this ideology that privileges native speakers as inherently superior in linguistic and pedagogical realms, advanced students, based on their experiences, demonstrate a more complex perspective that recognizes the value of both types of teachers at different stages of their learning.

Considering the first category, *Foundations First*, advanced students, even retrospectively, perceive NNESTs as more effective in the initial stages of learning. This aligns with the idea that NNESTs may better understand the challenges faced by beginners and use additive bilingualism as a valuable pedagogical tool (Shin, 2017). Their ability to compare English and students' native language (in this case, Spanish) facilitates understanding basic concepts, bridging the gap between the new language and the students' existing linguistic knowledge. In this sense, NNESTs can draw on their own experiences as language learners, making them more empathetic and capable of recognizing and addressing the specific difficulties that beginners tackle.

Furthermore, the concept of "banking education," described by Freire (1970), where students' knowledge is treated as something to be passively deposited by the teacher, finds a counterpoint in the NNEST's ability to leverage the students' L1 actively. Rather than viewing the learner as an empty vessel, NNESTs recognize that students contribute their



own linguistic systems to the learning process, actively participating in the co-construction of knowledge. This active role in learning contrasts with the traditional “banking” model, where students’ contributions are undervalued, and instead, highlights the importance of an interactive and student-centered approach to language acquisition (Gulsanam, 2023).

Expanding on this conception, an interesting insight comes from S-19, who mentioned, *"I've heard a saying that the best teachers are, in reality, the students themselves. So, when they teach us, we also learn from them, and at the same time, we teach them something as well."* This perspective exemplifies the idea of mutual learning, where the teacher-student dynamic becomes reciprocal, enriching the learning experience for both parties. It reflects the pedagogical shift towards recognizing the value of students' experiences and contributions, reinforcing the idea that learning is a collaborative process, rather than a one-way transaction.

Continuing with the second category, *Fluency by Authenticity*, findings reveal that as students’ progress in their English proficiency, they place more value on the exposure to fluency and natural language use typically provided by NESTs. This perception is influenced by the ideology of Native Speakerism, which tends to associate native speakers with greater linguistic authenticity (Adalta & Arsyad, 2023). However, this appreciation must be contextualized within what could be termed as the Relativization of Native Speakerism, meaning they have a sequential learning preference. As S-3 noted, *“it becomes necessary to combine native and non-native teachers to consolidate the English language”*. Students do not view NESTs as universally superior across all stages of learning. Instead, they emphasize that the benefits of exposure to native-like fluency become more relevant at advanced stages once a solid linguistic base has already been established.



This sequential valuation suggests a pedagogical progression in which the role and perceived effectiveness of both NESTs and NNESTs shift depending on the learner's stage (Rasyid et al., 2023; Yeung, 2021). S-2 expressed a critical view of over-relying on NESTs, stating, *“Although at some point it is necessary to have contact with a native speaker to develop certain skills, I don't think good progress should depend exclusively on that. We shouldn't wait for a native speaker to move forward”*. This highlights a growing awareness among Advanced English Learners about the complementary roles of both types of teachers. As S-17 put it, *“Each one contributes something valuable,”* while S-15 reflected, *“I would say there are differences, but, in my opinion, each one does a good job.”* Such a view challenges the notion of an inherent superiority of NESTs and highlights the complementary value of NNESTs, particularly in foundational stages where scaffolding, contrastive analysis, and shared linguistic background offer critical support to learners.

As for the last category, *Pedagogical Knowledge as a Non-Negotiable*, findings emphasize that, beyond linguistic background, pedagogical competence is the most decisive factor in a teacher's effectiveness. Students value empathy, patience, clarity in explanations, and the ability to foster engaging classroom dynamics. They often perceive NNESTs as more attentive to learners' needs and more likely to implement structured, student-centered methodologies. As S-7 stated, *“Non-native teachers have a very didactic way of teaching us, even though they are stricter than native teachers. They tend to teach us through laughter and playfulness, and that makes me feel good”*. This appreciation for NNESTs' pedagogical skills challenges the Native Speakerism assumption that native-like fluency alone guarantees effective teaching.



Furthermore, the idea of a bilingual education that embraces sociocultural and human diversity is reflected in how NNESTs are valued for their empathy and understanding of learners' struggles, having themselves undergone similar language learning journeys. This shared experience helps create a safer and more supportive learning environment, which fosters learner confidence, an essential element for academic success. As Lucas-Oliva et al. (2022) highlight, drawing on recent findings in neuroscience, the brain learns more effectively in states of emotional safety, curiosity, and enjoyment, rather than under pressure or cognitive overload. These conditions, which are more likely fostered in empathetic and culturally responsive classrooms, further validate the pedagogical strength of NNESTs in early and intermediate stages of language learning.

5. Conclusions

This study explored how Native Speakerism influences the attitudes and learning experiences of advanced English learners toward Native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and Non-Native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) at an English language academy in Florencia, Caquetá, Colombia—driven by the research question—how this ideology shapes perceptions and learning processes in a rural context—the project aimed to investigate its impact through a general objective and three specific objectives: identifying learners' attitudes, examining effects on learning processes, and assessing perceived teacher effectiveness and credibility. Through a qualitative approach, the findings reveal a nuanced balance of biases and appreciation, disrupting traditional views and underscoring the vital role of NNESTs in fostering inclusive education in Caquetá's unique setting.



Using Focus Groups and a Verbal-Guise Test with 21 advanced learners, primarily adolescents from socioeconomic stratum 3, the study achieved its objectives by uncovering complex attitudes toward three speakers: an American perceived as a NEST, an Italian NNEST, and a Colombian NNEST. Learners valued the American speaker's fluent delivery and cultural authenticity, reflecting a bias toward native-like speech as ideal for teaching. Yet, his rapid pace and limited engagement highlighted the need for more than nativeness. The Italian speaker was often the preferred choice, praised for his clear teaching methods and ability to connect emotionally, showing that NNESTs can excel when their skills are recognized. The Colombian speaker's empathetic approach created a supportive environment for beginners, though perceptions of his non-native accent restricted his role for advanced learners. These insights address the first objective by revealing attitudes that both uphold and challenge Native Speakerism. The second objective was met by demonstrating how fluency biases boosted motivation for NESTs while NNESTs' clarity deepened engagement, shaping learning experiences. The third objective was fulfilled by showing that effective teaching, not just native status, drove perceptions of credibility, with NNESTs earning significant respect.

The findings' importance lies in their challenge to the notion that only NESTs provide superior instruction, particularly in Florencia's rural context, where access to NESTs is scarce. The strong preference for the Italian speaker's teaching approach and the Colombian speaker's empathy signals learners' growing appreciation for NNESTs, countering ingrained biases. This shift holds transformative potential for Caquetá, where NNESTs' ability to connect linguistically and culturally builds confidence, especially for beginners with similar backgrounds. For advanced learners, NNESTs' adaptability ensures



robust instruction across levels, proving their versatility. By recognizing NNESTs' contributions, the study advocates for learning environments prioritizing inclusion and cultural relevance, addressing a pressing need in rural Colombia.

The project's findings resonate with the broader role of NNESTs in challenging Native Speakerism biases not only within Caquetá's educational landscape but other similar contexts. The learners' appreciation for NNESTs' clarity and empathy underscores the value of shared cultural and linguistic identities in fostering inclusive classrooms. This perspective reinforces the importance of advocating for teaching practices celebrating NNESTs' strengths, empowering students to develop bilingual identities free from native-centric biases, particularly in underrepresented rural contexts.

To advance bilingualism and teacher training in Colombia, the study recommends policies that counter Native Speakerism biases by prioritizing NNESTs in hiring and professional development. Teacher training programs should emphasize pedagogical innovation and intercultural competence, valuing local knowledge over native-centric models. Curricula should integrate Colombia's linguistic diversity, enabling NNESTs to foster bilingualism that resonates with diverse educational communities in the country. These measures align with national bilingualism goals, promoting equitable, context-sensitive education.

The qualitative methodology, drawing on the depth of Focus Groups and the structured insights of the Verbal-Guise Test, offered rich perspectives, though the small sample limits broader applicability. Future research could investigate these dynamics in other Colombian regions or over time to track evolving attitudes, enriching discussions on



equitable education. The findings urge the adoption of language education policies in Caquetá that value NNESTs' strengths, fostering teacher training and curricula that promote fairness. This study contributes to reimagining English teaching in underrepresented areas, calling for practices that celebrate diverse teacher identities and create culturally resonant



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Appendixes

Appendix A: Endorsement format from the institution

Florencia, Caquetá – DD/MM/AAAA

Señor(a)

Director(a)

Presentamos un respetuoso saludo. Nos dirigimos a usted con el fin de solicitar su consentimiento e intencionalidad con el fin de llevar a cabo el proceso de recolección de la información del proyecto de grado titulado: **Analysis of Teenagers' Attitudes Toward NESTs and NNESTs: Influences of Native Speakerism Ideology at Foreign Language Academies from Florencia, Caquetá**. Este proyecto se realiza en el marco de la Maestría en Ambientes Bilingües de Aprendizaje de la Universidad Santo Tomás, el cual, tiene como propósito u objetivo general: **Documentar cómo la ideología del Hablante Nativo influye en las actitudes de los adolescentes hacia los profesores nativos de inglés (NEST) y los profesores no nativos de inglés (NNEST) en sus procesos de aprendizaje del inglés en academias de lenguas extranjeras en Florencia, Caquetá**.

El proyecto se realizará durante el año **2025**. Su desarrollo estará liderado por los maestrantes, **Sergio Cárdenas Aroca, Paola Andrea Silva Rojas y Juan David Rojas Orozco**. Cabe mencionar, que el maestrante, **Sergio Cárdenas Aroca** quien esté a cargo de



la recolección directa de datos in situ, mediante la realización de: **cuestionarios con preguntas abiertas, grupos focales y entrevistas con estudiantes de la institución.**

Para la participación tanto de estudiantes, se presentará el formato de consentimiento informado, según términos de confidencialidad de la información, lo que incluye, una contextualización previa del proyecto y de la información a recolectar. La diseminación del proyecto y sus resultados serán presentados al término de este, según el objetivo presentado al inicio.

Agradecemos de antemano su firma para la declaración de intencionalidad de la institución (ANS – Academia Nacional de Sistemas) en el proyecto.

Atte., Sergio Cárdenas Aroca – Maestrante de la MABA Universidad Santo Tomás

Firma de consentimiento del director(a) de la institución

Appendix B: Informed consent form (Parents-Students)

Maestría en Ambientes Bilingües de Aprendizaje
Opción de grado II (2025-2)
Docente: Gilda Mabel Delgado Soto
Consentimiento informado, según criterios del CEBIC
Instrumentos: Entrevistas, cuestionarios, grupo focal, etc.,

1. Objetivo y contextualización del proyecto:

El proyecto tiene como propósito documentar cómo la ideología del Hablante Nativo (Native Speakerism) influye en las actitudes de los adolescentes hacia los profesores nativos de inglés (NEST) y los profesores no nativos de inglés (NNEST) en sus procesos de aprendizaje del inglés en academias de lenguas extranjeras en Florencia, Caquetá.

2. Criterios de participación de agentes del proceso educativo:

Para el proceso de recolección de la información, se extiende la invitación si usted como **estudiante** está de acuerdo, para participar mediante un espacio de sesiones de observación no participante.

3. Riesgos físicos, psicológicos:

Se aclara que este proyecto NO implica riesgos para la salud física, psicológica y comunitaria. En caso de representar el proyecto algún riesgo, es necesario explicar cómo se mitigará. Por ejemplo, mediante un ejercicio de recolección de la información, a través de medios virtuales, etc.

4. Beneficios de los participantes:

- (a) El proyecto beneficiará a la comunidad educativa ya que los aportes proporcionados serán de gran importancia para el desarrollo pedagógico de las prácticas educativas en el aula por parte de docentes nativos y no nativos del inglés.
- (b) Su participación se reflejará como una contribución al fortalecimiento del conocimiento **pedagógico e investigativo** teniendo en cuenta que, los estudiantes podrán tener conciencia crítica sobre sus propias percepciones y actitudes durante su proceso de aprendizaje.
- (c) La recolección de la información permitirá tener una comprensión más profunda de las actitudes de los estudiantes, beneficiará el desarrollo de estrategias pedagógicas más efectivas.
- (d) Tendrá una contribución a la mejora educativa ya que sus aportes pueden influir en prácticas docentes y políticas educativas, lo que puede llevar a un entorno de aprendizaje más efectivo y adaptado a sus necesidades.



5. Aclaraciones:

- El desarrollo del proyecto no implica ningún gasto para la recolección de la información de los participantes. Si hay costos o gastos, es necesario especificar.

Las inquietudes o preguntas del proyecto y la participación para la recolección de la información pueden aclararse con los integrantes del grupo investigador, para lo cual, puede contactar a:

Sergio Cárdenas Aroca, a través del correo:

sergiocardenasa@usantotomas.edu.co y el teléfono **3013222854**.

Paola Andrea Silva Rojas a través del correo: paola.silva@usantotomas.edu.co y el teléfono **3144300114**.

Juan David Rojas Orozco a través del correo:

juandrojaso@usantotomas.edu.co y el teléfono **3188560390**

- Los participantes pueden optar por no brindar información o no participar en el proyecto, si así lo consideran; también, pueden retirar su participación y solicitar al grupo investigador no incluir los datos o la información compartida.
- **Sobre testigos:** Para la recolección de la información no se requiere estrictamente testigos, específicamente para el formato de recolección en forma escrita. *Si usted como participante así lo considera, se puede tener un testigo durante el proceso de recolección de la información.*
- **Previamente, se informará** sobre las características del proyecto y las preguntas que orientan la recolección de la información. Usted como participante, puede tener acceso a la información correspondiente al proyecto, así como puede solicitar aclaraciones o ampliación del mismo.

6. Aspectos de confidencialidad de la información:

- a) Se hará uso anónimo del nombre de los participantes, sus datos de contacto, a través de seudónimos y/o una codificación, al momento de analizar la información.
- b) Los resultados del proyecto serán divulgados, según el desarrollo y consolidación del proyecto. Para tal fin, se dará cumplimiento al tratamiento ético y confidencial de la información personal de los participantes, tal como se expresa en este numeral, tanto en el proyecto, sus resultados y productos derivados del mismo.
- c) La información que concierne al proyecto será divulgada según los informes y los productos derivados del mismo, toda vez que, serán susceptibles de ser presentados en eventos científicos; se proyecta generar un manuscrito que pueda

ser sometido a un Journals o revistas relacionadas con la temática y el objetivo de la investigación.

- d) En tanto que el proyecto se desarrolla en el contexto de la Universidad Santo Tomás, los resultados del proyecto estarán igualmente, visibles en el Centro de Recursos para el Aprendizaje y la Investigación, CRAI.
- e) La devolución de la información será compartida con acceso local y global, una vez el documento esté disponible en el Centro de Recursos del Aprendizaje y la Investigación -CRAI de la USTA y/o en fuentes de divulgación del proyecto, según los productos derivados del mismo. Se reitera el tratamiento confidencial de la información de los participantes.

7. Autorización para el tratamiento de datos personales de los participantes:

Yo _____ mediante este formato de consentimiento informado, autorizo como participante el tratamiento de datos personales, habiendo sido informad@ acerca del proyecto, su propósito, beneficios y aspectos de confidencialidad, así como el manejo ético de la información por parte del equipo investigador, de acuerdo con los parámetros presentados en este formato de consentimiento informado.

Firma _____

- 8. **Instrumentos para la recolección:** La información se recogerá mediante los siguientes instrumentos: **(Técnica de Pares Ocultos, también conocidos como Verbal Guise Technique o Matched-guise test; Grupos focales y Entrevistas semiestructuradas)**. Para la recolección de la información como equipo investigador se solicita su autorización para obtener los datos, según los instrumentos mencionados, mediante grabaciones en audio y/o video, celular y Google forms.
- 9. El almacenamiento de la información se realizará a través de la cuenta institucional de Microsoft, a través del maestrante, integrante del grupo que realiza el proyecto de grado, **Sergio Cárdenas Aroca, Juan David Rojas Orozco y Paola Andrea Silva Rojas**, a través del correo sergiocardenasa@usantotomas.edu.co juandrojaso@usantotomas.edu.co - paola.silva@usantotomas.edu.co



10. A continuación, presentar los instrumentos que se aplicarán para la recolección de datos:

- a. **Técnica de pares ocultos (Verbal-Guise Technique):** Se coordinará una sesión de micro clase en donde se utiliza esta técnica para estudiar las actitudes hacia diferentes lenguas, acentos o dialectos. En esta técnica, los participantes escuchan grabaciones de hablantes que utilizan diversas variedades de lenguas (como acentos o dialectos) y luego los evalúan en función de ciertos rasgos o características, como la amabilidad, la inteligencia, la confianza o la fiabilidad.
- b. **Entrevistas a grupos focales:** Se escogerá un numero diverso de grupos de estudiantes de diferentes niveles y contextos para asegurar una variedad de opiniones, los cuales deberán responder a preguntas abiertas que fomenten la discusión sobre sus actitudes hacia los docentes nativos y no nativos. Las entrevistas serán grabadas por audio.
- c. **Entrevista semiestructurada:** Por medio de un cuestionario guía de preguntas previamente establecida, pero con flexibilidad para explorar temas adicionales o profundizar en respuestas interesantes; utilizando la herramienta de grabación de audio para registro de datos, los estudiantes darán una perspectiva más profunda de sus opiniones respecto a los profesores hablantes nativos del inglés y de los profesores no nativos para así tener una mejor visión respecto a sus percepciones y actitudes.

11. Protocolo Habeas Data:

Para dar cumplimiento a lo dispuesto en la Ley 1581 de 2012, "Por el cual se dictan disposiciones generales para la protección de datos personales" y de conformidad con lo señalado en el Decreto 1377 de 2013, manifiesto que he sido informado sobre el proyecto investigativo, desde el grupo de estudio de la USTA, *Reimagining Bilingual Learning Environments*, así:

- He sido informad@ sobre la finalidad, alcance, fines y beneficios del proyecto investigativo titulado, "Estudio exploratorio en ambientes bilingües de aprendizaje -ABA: Prácticas y comprensiones de agentes educativos para el fortalecimiento pedagógico e investigativo".



- He sido informado@ acerca del proceso de recolección de la información, a través de los instrumentos (cuestionario/entrevista), cuya participación es de carácter voluntario, así como tengo libertad de retirarme si así lo considero.
- Como participante mis derechos están protegidos por la ley y la constitución, en relación con el derecho a conocer, actualizar, rectificar y suprimir información personal.
- Los derechos relacionados con la divulgación y desarrollo del proyecto podrán ser ejercidos, según los canales dispuestos por el proyecto, los productos derivados del mismo y los sistemas de difusión de la USTA.
- Los términos de tratamiento transparente y de confidencialidad de la información han sido explicitados en este formato de consentimiento informado. Mis datos personales no serán compartidos y se apelará a un seudónimo para la divulgación del proyecto.
- se hará un análisis e interpretación con selección de muestras, según información oral y/o escrita que el equipo investigador considere pertinente.
- Autorizo de manera voluntaria, previa, explícita, informada a la docente líder del proyecto, y el grupo de estudio para tratar mis datos personales en el marco de este proyecto investigativo.
- Suministro mi información de manera voluntaria y transparente.

Se firma en la ciudad de _____, a los _____ del mes de _____ del año _____.

Identificación: _____

Nombres y apellidos: _____

FIRMA:



Appendix C: Instruments

1st Instrument

VERBAL GUISE TEST

Verbal Guise Test (Link):

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdcH_17iwCZCHfs8mmcYYy1OBirQvsuHeoZhcPnO1ezX4LM1Q/viewform?usp=dialog

Date: _____

Objective: To identify teenagers' attitudes towards native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs).

Identificar las actitudes de los adolescentes hacia los profesores de inglés nativos (NEST) y los profesores de inglés no nativos (NNEST).

Students' Informed Consent

Good day. Our names are **Sergio Cárdenas Aroca**, **Paola Andrea Silva Rojas** and **Juan David Rojas Orozco**. We are students in the second semester of the master's degree in Bilingual Learning Environments at Universidad Santo Tomás (USTA). We are researching language attitudes, the dichotomy NEST (Native English-speaking teachers), NNEST (Non-Native English-speaking teachers), and native speakerism as part of our postgraduate dissertation (Trabajo de Grado).

Buenos días/tardes/noches. Nuestros nombres son Sergio Cárdenas Aroca, Paola Andrea Silva Rojas y Juan David Rojas Orozco. Somos estudiantes del segundo semestre de la Maestría en Ambientes Bilingües de Aprendizaje de la Universidad Santo Tomás (USTA). Estamos realizando una investigación sobre actitudes lingüísticas, la dicotomía NEST (Native English-speaking teachers) NNEST (Non-Native English-speaking teachers) y native speakerism como parte de nuestro Trabajo de Grado.

Our research aims to investigate how Native Speakerism ideology influences teenagers' attitudes toward native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) in their English learning processes at foreign language academies in Florencia, Caquetá.

El objetivo de nuestra investigación es documentar cómo la ideología del Native Speakerism influye en las actitudes de los adolescentes hacia los profesores de inglés nativos (NESTs) y los profesores de inglés no nativos (NNESTs) en sus procesos de aprendizaje del inglés en academias de lenguas extranjeras en Florencia, Caquetá.



All your information will be confidential, anonymous, and used strictly for academic, scientific, and pedagogical purposes.

Toda la información que proporcione será absolutamente confidencial y anónima y se utilizará estrictamente con fines académicos, científicos y pedagógicos.

If you need more information or wish to learn more about the research, you can contact us at the emails sergiocardenasa@usantotomas.edu.co juandrojaso@usantotomas.edu.co paola.silva@usantotomas.edu.co

Si necesita más información o desea saber más sobre la investigación puede ponerse en contacto con nosotros en los correos electrónicos sergiocardenasa@usantotomas.edu.co juandrojaso@usantotomas.edu.co paola.silva@usantotomas.edu.co

Using this questionnaire, we are asking you to answer a few questions and allow us to collect data on your attitudes towards different English teachers. Your participation is entirely voluntary; if you do not wish to do so, your refusal will not cause you any inconvenience.

Mediante este cuestionario le pedimos que responda a algunas preguntas y nos permita recoger datos sobre sus actitudes hacia distintos profesores de inglés. Su participación es totalmente voluntaria; si no desea hacerlo, su negativa no le causará ningún inconveniente.

I wish to participate in the questionnaire:

Deseo participar en el cuestionario:

- Yes/Si
- No/No

Signature/Firma _____

Sociodemographic Information:

Below is a series of questions requiring certain personal information to enrich our investigation. The answers to these questions will allow us to analyze the data systematically.

A continuación, encontrará una serie de preguntas en las que se solicita determinada información personal que enriquecerá nuestra investigación. Las respuestas a estas preguntas nos permitirán analizar los datos de forma más sistemática.

English Course/ Curso de inglés: _____

Gender/Género:

- Male/Hombre



- Female/*Mujer*
- Others/*Otros*: _____

Age/Edad: _____

Where were you born? (city or town)

¿Dónde nació? (ciudad o pueblo) _____

Socioeconomic Status/ *Estatus Socioeconomico*:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

What languages do you speak? ¿Qué lenguas habla?

- Spanish/ *Español*
- English/ *Inglés*
- French/ *Francés*
- Portuguese/ *Portugués*
- Others/ *Otros*: _____

Instructions

You will listen to four audio clips featuring different English teachers speaking. Each speaker presents a lesson or topic related to English language learning.

Escuchará cuatro clips de audio en los que intervienen distintos profesores de inglés. Cada profesor presenta una lección o un tema relacionado con el aprendizaje del inglés.

After each recording, answer the questions honestly based on your personal opinions and feelings. There are no right or wrong answers; we are interested in your authentic thoughts.

Después de cada grabación, responda con sinceridad a las preguntas basándose en sus opiniones y sentimientos personales. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas; nos interesan sus pensamientos auténticos.

You may answer the questions in Spanish or English, whichever feels more comfortable.

Puede responder a las preguntas en español o en inglés, según le resulte más cómodo.



Questions

After listening each speaker, answer the following questions:

Después de escuchar a cada persona, responde a las siguientes preguntas:

1. Do you think this speaker would be a good English teacher? Why or why not?

¿Crees que esta persona sería un buen profesor de inglés? ¿Por qué sí o por qué no?

2. How would you describe the speaker's level of fluency and pronunciation?

¿Cómo describiría el nivel de fluidez y pronunciación de la persona?

3. What qualities or characteristics make them a good or less effective teacher?

¿Qué cualidades o características cree que les convierten en buenos o malos profesores?

4. Do you think this speaker could teach you about English-speaking cultures? Why?

¿Crees que esta persona podría enseñarte algo sobre las culturas de los países de habla inglesa? ¿Por qué?

5. How does the speaker's voice or accent make you feel about learning English?

¿Cómo te hace sentir la voz o el acento de esta persona a la hora de aprender inglés?



6. Can you relate the speaker's voice or accent to someone you know or any experiences you've had with English classes?

¿Puedes relacionar la voz o el acento de la persona con alguien que conozcas o con alguna experiencia que hayas tenido con las clases de inglés?

After listening to all four speakers, answer the following questions.

Después de escuchar a las cuatro personas, responde a las siguientes preguntas.

7. Which speaker do you think would help you improve your English the most? Why?

¿Qué persona crees que te ayudaría más a mejorar tu inglés? ¿Por qué?

8. If you had to choose between these speakers as your English teacher, who would you choose and why?

Si tuviera que elegir entre estas personas como profesor de inglés, ¿a quién elegiría y por qué?



2nd Instrument

FOCUS GROUP

Date: _____

Objective: To analyze how the ideology of Native Speakerism influences teenagers' language learning processes with NESTs and NNESTs.

Analizar cómo influye la ideología del Native Speakerism en los procesos de aprendizaje de idiomas de los adolescentes con NESTs y NNESTs.

Questions

1. **Can you tell me about your experiences learning English with both native and non-native teachers? What was that like for you?**

¿Pueden hablarme de su experiencia aprendiendo inglés con profesores nativos y no nativos? ¿Cómo fue para ustedes?

2. **Do you have a preference for one type of teacher? Why?**

¿Tienen preferencia por algún tipo de profesor? ¿Por qué?

3. **What do you think makes someone a good English teacher?**

¿Qué creen que hace que alguien sea un buen profesor de inglés?

4. **Have you ever noticed a difference in how a NEST or a NNEST explains things in class? Which type of teacher helps you learn better, and why?**

¿Han notado alguna vez alguna diferencia en cómo explica las cosas en clase un profesor nativo y un profesor no nativo? ¿Qué tipo de profesor les ayuda a aprender mejor y por qué?

5. **Have you ever heard someone say it's important for an English teacher to be a native speaker? Do you agree with that? Why do you think people say that?**

¿Han oído alguna vez a alguien decir que es importante que un profesor de inglés sea nativo? ¿Están de acuerdo? ¿Por qué creen que la gente lo dice?