

Native-speakerism in China: An Investigation of Foreign Language Education Policy and Learners' Attitudes

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With the development of globalization, the use of English is no longer restricted to native speaker (NS) but also widely spread to non-native speaker (NNS). The importance of English learning is also acknowledged by Expanding and Outer Circle, and English as a foreign language (EFL) education plays a significant role in China's education. Admitting the fact that non-native English teachers (NNESTs) take up a large proportion of English teachers, English language teaching (ELT) is still greatly influenced by native-speakerism. This research aims to investigate language ideologies reflected in Chinese foreign language education policy (FLEP) at higher education level, and Chinese English learners' attitudes towards native-speakerism and English teachers. A mixed method of policy analysis and survey is adopted in this research. After conducting analysing two FLEPs in higher education level, it is found that linguistic instrumentalism is the prominent language ideology, although native-speakerism and standard English ideology is implicitly demonstrated. Questionnaire is used to investigate 58 Chinese English learners' attitudes, revealing that most participants do not demonstrate bias towards either NESTs or NNESTs. Instead, the strengths and weaknesses of both NEST and NNEST are identified, though participants adhere to native-speakerism in terms of English variety. Overall, English learner's attitudes are consistent with language ideologies in FLEPs. This research may provide implications for future studies on addressing native-speakerism in Chinese FLEPs, as well as relationship of students' attitudes and language policies.

Keywords: native-speakerism, Native English Speaker Teacher (NEST), Non-native English Speaker Teacher (NNEST), Foreign Language Education Policy (FLEP), language ideology, attitude

Introduction

English enjoys a dominant status among different languages globally, and it is spoken by approximately 1/4 of world population (British Council, 2013). Nowadays, the number of non-native English Speakers (NNESs) has already outnumbered native English Speakers (NESs), and English is more frequently used between NNESs to communicate with each other, instead of with NESs (Galloway & Rose, 2015). Simply, Braine (2010) defined NESs as speakers who use English as their first language, while NNESs refer to speakers who use English as a second or foreign language. NESs mainly consists of population from Inner Circle

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(Kachru, 1985). With the development of globalisation, English is increasingly used globally for various purposes. Kachru (1982) raises the Three Circle Model of English varieties, classifying the world into Inner Circle, Outer Circle and Expanding Circle, according to whether English is used as native language, second language and foreign language. Although it is an impactful classification for investigation of world English, it has been criticized for overly emphasizing geographic and historic factors, and ignoring the role of English in multi-ethnic and monolingual regions (Galloway & Rose, 2015). The role of English as a lingua franca has been increased in Expanding Circle, where English is treated as “an international or universal language” (Kachru, 1985). In recent decades, non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs) have been gradually recognized by the mainstream and their status has been improved (Braine, 2010). In China, for example, English has become the most popular foreign language, with over four million English learners in the country (Wei & Su, 2012), most of which are taught by Chinese teachers (Huang, 2018), who are NNESTs. Thus, English is mainly used by NNESTs to communicate with other NNESTs and taught by NNESTs, whereas NESs are still perceived as the norm of the language world-widely.

Numerous scholars have studied the attitudes of English learners and teachers towards NESTs and NNESTs in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Expanding Circle (Liu, 2018; Chang, 2016; Galloway, 2013; Chun, 2014; Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014). Previous research shows that relevant stakeholders tend to acknowledge both strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs, although they perceive NESTs as the standard of pronunciation and culture, while NNESTs are considered as being more linguistically competent because of their nativeness. In other words, ELT is still influenced by “native-speakerism”, which refers to the belief that NESTs are the models of “Western culture” where the language and teaching approaches come from (Holliday, 2006, p. 385). This prejudice has negative impact on NNESTs’ professional life, as they may be considered as inferior to NESTs in recruitment and even in classrooms practices (Liu & Li, 2019), as well as on development of English as a global language. Moreover, language learners are crucial stakeholders in language teaching and learning. Language users’ attitudes have decisive effect on their behaviours (Galloway & Rose, 2015). English learners’ attitudes towards different English varieties may shape their cognition of language use, and their perceptions about English teachers may influence their English learning experience and teachers’ teaching practices. Thus, it is necessary to investigate language learners’ attitudes and perceptions towards English variety, NESTs and NNESTs.

Language policy also plays a significant role in reforming people’s beliefs and attitudes towards a certain language, as well as reflecting language ideologies. One component of language policy is the linguistic beliefs and ideologies that are formulated by language practices of each speech community (Spolsky, 2012). Therefore, it is vital to study language ideologies embodied in language policies about EFL education in China and investigate whether such language ideologies may influence Chinese English learners’ attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs. Whether the actual attitudes conform to the language ideologies reflected in language policies is also worth investigating. Language attitudes are affected by various factors and can change according to the extent that language users contact the language (Galloway & Rose). Thus, language ideology that authority aims to convey may not be absolutely the same as the actual attitudes of language learners.

This research aims to complement studies on Chinese English learners' attitudes towards native-speakerism and English teachers at higher educational level, and the relationship between learners' attitudes and language policy. To achieve these goals, this essay will answer following research questions:

- (1). What kinds of language ideologies are reflected in the Chinese foreign language policy at higher education level?
- (2). What are the attitudes of Chinese students in higher education towards native-speakerism?
- (3). Do Chinese students' attitudes toward native-speakerism in ELT match the language ideologies reflected in Chinese foreign language policy?

Language Policy and Language Ideology

Language Policy

Language policy affects language practices in education, including the choice of which linguistic varieties should be taught and how they are utilized by a nation for governing purposes (Pan, 2011). The discussion of language policy may be useful for understanding language learners' attitudes towards the language and teachers.

Language policy is defined as "a mechanism that impacts the structure, function, use, or acquisition of language", including official regulations, "unofficial, covert, de facto, and implicit mechanisms", processes, and policy texts and discourses (Johnson, 2013, p. 9). Here, official regulations refer to written documents published by authority that affect the form, function, use or acquisition of language. The "unofficial, covert, de facto, and implicit mechanisms" are the language ideologies that implied in the documents and form power over language use in daily context, such as workplaces, communities and schools (Johnson, 2013, p. 9).

Johnson (2013) defines language policy as not only a product but also a dynamic process, which is driven by various language policy agents across different levels. This aspect emphasizes the multidimensional nature of language policy which can be conducted in both top-down and bottom-up process. Language policy is also influenced by language ideologies and discourses which are unique in certain context. The definition raised by Johnson (2013) is more comprehensive than previous definitions as it considers language policy as not only the product of decision-making but also process, and this action can be prompted by both higher authorities and lower communities. Moreover, it is emphasized that language policy deals with power and influence the formation of language ideologies and vice versa.

Johnson (2013, p. 10) further categorised language policy into different types according to genesis, means and goals, documentation, and "in law and in practice". The first categorisation discusses whether language policy is developed by authoritative party (top-down), such as government, or spontaneously generated by communities or individuals (bottom-up). The second type refers to in what ways language policy is expressed. The third categorisation, documentation, refers to the implicit and explicit distinction of language policy (Johnson, 2013). The final categorisation includes two types of language policy, namely the *de jure*, or policy in law, and the *de facto*, or policy in practice (Johnson, 2013). The former means policy based on law while the latter describes the actual usage of language. In this research, Johnson's (2013) definition of language policy is adopted, and the investigated policies are overt, explicit policy in law, formulated in top-down manner.

Language Ideology

Language ideology is broadly defined as the “structured and consequential ways in which we think about language” by Seargeant (2009, p. 26), who generalized the characteristics of various definitions provided by previous scholars. From this perspective, language ideology is people’s perceptions about language use that generated systematically and will bring changes to the language. Language ideology can be either countable or uncountable (Seargeant, 2009). When used countably, a language ideology is the belief with “conceptual stability” (Seargeant, 2009, p. 26). That is, the countable form of language ideology usually refers to a particular belief of language, such as standard language ideology, whereas the general use of one covers various research theories.

According to Spolsky (2012, p. 5), language ideology is the “elaborate combination” of values or beliefs shared by members of speech community that they assign to a language variety. From his viewpoint, language ideology is one components of language policy, shaped by language users in the same speech community. Simply, language ideology can be described as the appropriate or desirable language behaviours considered by speech community members (Spolsky, 2019). Spolsky (2019) further discussed the interactional impact on language ideology and language practices. It is claimed that language study depends on exposure to the language practices of the community, which in turn depends on speech members’ beliefs within that community. Language policy, and language behaviours guided by certain policy decisively affect language users’ beliefs or values towards particular language, while language ideology shared by the same community members also affect the formulation and implementation of language policy. This indicates that Chinese foreign language policy can influence Chinese English learners’ attitudes towards English use, conversely their perceptions may affect the implementation of policy in language teaching and learning practices.

Studies on Chinese Foreign Language Education Policy (FLEP)

Generally, FLEP is the outcome of top-down planning, which refers to policy produced by centralized authority (Hult, 2018). In this case, the centralized authority is usually the Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE).

Several research has investigated Chinese FLEPs in primary schools, including their formulation, language choice, curriculum design and material development (Hu, 2007; Li, 2007). It is concluded that the formulation and transformation of FLEP greatly depend on the changing socio-political situation, as well as political, economic and educational motives. However, they fail to analyze how FLEPs are influenced by English ideology perceived by the authority, and the field of FLEPs in higher education has not been covered.

Studies conducted by Pan (2011; 2015) have filled the research gap of language ideology in FLEPs at higher education level. Pan (2011) initially investigated language ideologies embedded in FLEPs and their socio-political implications by analyzing four English education policies for different age groups in China. A critical analysis of language policies (Tollefson, 2006) was adopted. Specifically, English is deemed as an important tool for communicating information based on the backdrop of informatization and globalization of social and economic activities (Pan, 2011). English’s function described in FLEPs is based on the needs of national development in political, economic and cultural communication. English ideology is also reflected by objectives of learning English, which is not only for linguistic and communicative purposes at personal level,

but also for social and economic development at international level (Pan, 2011), revealing the pragmatic ideology of English usefulness. English is regarded as a pure tool of which people can take advantage. Interestingly, it is found that FLEFs do not show apparent preference towards any English varieties, but stressing the neutrality of English (Pan, 2011). They neither follow the conventional standard ideology nor define British or American English as standard English. Instead, FLEPs try to distance themselves from any cultural models in the world or consider any English varieties as the core of their linguistic education system, endeavouring to maintain the neutral function of English.

Pan (2015) further revealed that although Chinese FLEPs makers try to emphasize the neutrality of English and do not grant privilege to any varieties, they seem to stick to native-speakerism and avoid the promotion of China English. Pan (2015) also investigated opinions and attitudes towards English, English learning and the changes that English has brought to China, finding that English and English learning are assigned great importance and its global status is acknowledged. As for objectives of learning English, the functional value of English that can promote both national and individual development is recognised. Nevertheless, it is doubted that current English education fails to provide this kind of instruction, as current English teaching method in China tends to be exam-oriented (Pan, 2015). In terms of attitudes towards standard of English, an interesting ideological conflict is identified between the official policy and participants. Although there is no clear bias towards any English varieties in FLEPs, respondents report that they prefer American English and consider it as standard English (Pan, 2015).

In short, the neutral function of English for promoting national development is emphasized in Chinese FLEPs, and there is no clear privilege given to any particular English varieties. Nevertheless, an ideological conflict is demonstrated between language policy and learners' attitudes, as the latter adheres to native-speakerism and shows preference towards American English.

Native-speakerism and Learner's Attitudes

Native Speaker (NS) and Non-native Speaker (NNS)

Native speaker has traditionally been a term invisibly setting a norm for language. Chomsky (1965, p. 1) initially describes NS as the "ideal speaker-listener" who is perfectly competent of the language, both grammatically and ungrammatically, and whose actual linguistic performance will not be influenced by any "grammatically irrelevant conditions". This notion considers NS as the idealization of the language, which places privilege on NS. Phillipson (1992a), however, criticizes this NS idealization. Phillipson (1992a) questions the assumption that a NS is inherently better qualified than NNS. NS might be perceived as being more proficient in English than NNS because of various virtues, such as fluency in language, idiomatic knowledge of the language and cultures contained in the language, although these virtues can also be acquired by NNS after training (Phillipson, 1992a). The concept of NS sets a yardstick and dominates in the field of ELT, and the competence of a teacher should not be determined by whether they are native or non-native speaker (Phillipson, 1992a).

Braine (2010) simply define NS and NNS according to how language users use the language. NS is described as the one "who speaks the language as his/her first language" while NNS is the one "who speaks the language as a second or foreign language" (Braine, 2010, p. 9). Nevertheless, he admits that the difference

between NS and NNS is far more complicated, and the term “native speaker” actually denotes some positive merits, whereas “non-native speaker” implies a prejudiced meaning, as it connotes minority, marginalization and stigmatization to NNS (Braine, 2010). Davies (2007) also doubts the narrow assumption of defining NS as language users who have been exposed to the language in their early childhood. He shares similar views with Phillipson (1992a) and agrees that second language learners who start learning the language in their later life can also obtain “native-like mastery” as the birthright NS (Davies, 2007, p. 39).

Although distinctions exist between NS and NNS, some scholars argue that there should not be NS and NNS dichotomy. Jenkins (2000) challenges the term “native speaker” from the perspective of world English, claiming that it ignores English diversity in Outer Circle where English is spoken as both official and home language, and fails to recognize the fact that English is often used by multilingual populations (Jenkins, 2000). She further criticizes classifying English teachers into NESTs and NNESTs. According to Jenkins (2000, p. 9), the “native-non-native dichotomy” will lead to negative attitudes and self-perceptions towards teachers who are defined as “non-native”. As a result, these teachers will lack confidence and suffer from a detrimental impact on their practical and theoretical activities in teaching, such as being refused to participate in EFL teacher training courses and being prohibited from publication of articles in world-famous journals (Jenkins, 2000).

Similarly, Galloway and Rose (2015) find it difficult to define NS and NNS. They point out that the distinction between these two terms is vague, and the fact that many NNS are often mistaken for NS during daily conversation and teaching increases the difficulty of defining NS and NNS. In addition to the problems of definitions, they also criticize that the use of NS and NNS empowers superiority to NESTs in ELT (Galloway & Rose, 2015). The term “non-native” imperceptibly produces the stereotype that NNESTs are lacking some capacities that their “native” counterparts have, resulting in harmful effect on NNESTs not only concerning their recruitment but also their acquisition of the language (Galloway & Rose, 2015, p. 201). Moreover, Galloway and Rose (2015, p. 201) consider differentiating “native” and “non-native” speakers as problematic since these two expressions imply homogeneity. This problem emerges because of the advancement of English varieties and the worldwide multilingual situation (Galloway & Rose, 2015). Based on such context, it is no longer reasonable to classify English speakers according to their mother tongue, and the terms NS and NNS is unrepresentative. Thus, they suggest that the native/non-native dichotomy is irrelevant and there is no need for NNS to drop their own language diversity and conform to the norm of NES (Galloway & Rose, 2015).

Native-speakerism

Native-speakerism firstly emerged when Chomsky (1965) considers NS as the idealization of the language. Phillipson (1992b) challenges it by claiming that the idea of NS being the ideal English teacher, which is described as “native speaker fallacy”, is scientifically invalid (Phillipson, 1992b, p. 195). He argues that NEST is not intrinsically better than NNEST, because none of the virtues that contribute to a qualified English teacher, such as the capacity to demonstrate fluency in language, is unlikely to be fostered by NNESTs through teacher training (Phillipson, 1992b). The untrained and unqualified NESTs, meanwhile, might also threaten ELT system (Phillipson, 1992b).

Holliday (2005) initially coins the term “native-speakerism”. According to Holliday (2005, p. 8), native-speakerism perceives NESTs as model of the language and ELT approach as they represent the

“Western culture” from which spring the ideals both language and teaching methodology. NNS is considered as insufficient in language teaching because of their non-native identity. This notion places privilege on NESTs, who are assumed to be the norm of English teaching, and conversely implies prejudice towards NNESTs. Native-speakerism derives from the educational system and cultural background of anglophone regions (Holliday, 2005).

Admitting that Holliday (2005)’s definition has been profoundly useful for studies on native-speakerism, it demonstrates certain limitations. Houghton and Rivers (2013, p. 4) claim that Holliday’s definition fails to present the multidimensional and complicated nature of native-speakerism in terms of daily teaching activities, political policies, and issues concerning “prejudice, stereotyping, and/or discrimination”. Thus, they consider native-speakerism as discrimination against foreign language teachers, which partially form the more complexed prejudices including ethnocentrism, racism, and sexism (Houghton & Rivers, 2013). This definition perceives native-speakerism beyond language teaching and further considers issues of human rights, claiming that both NS and NNS are victims of native-speakerism. NNSs undoubtedly suffer prejudice and discrimination during recruitment process, while NSs are also victims of native-speakerism after being employed and they have been positioned at the academic spotlight with the growing focus on native-speakerism in EFL (Houghton & Rivers, 2013).

Native-speakerism has detrimental and far-reaching impact on English teachers, EFL industry as well as cultures behind language. NNESTs contains stereotypical meaning towards NNESTs that they are deficient in the language and culture, and NNESTs are also demeaned as commodities in language teaching, because the industry always seeks for the idealized NESTs (Holliday, 2015). The influence of native-speakerism is multidimensional and widespread. Native-speakerism profoundly influences both NESTs and NNESTs from employment to classroom practices, even beyond the English-speaking countries (Holliday, 2015). Discrimination in English teacher recruitment, for instance, is an outstanding issue, in which NNESTs are less likely to be employed due to the “native speaker criterion” by recruiting party (Clark & Paran, 2007, p. 407). Also, the negative effect of native-speakerism emerge in classroom. It is still believed by some language teachers and learners that native speakers’ language and their culture represent the authenticity in language teaching classrooms (Holliday, 2015).

Although the problematic native-speakerism derives from education and cultures within the Western English-speaking world, it not only influences Western English-speaking countries, but also extensively affects countries outside the Inner Circle (Holliday, 2006). In Inner Circle countries, such as the UK and USA, the non-native status has become a barricade to NNESTs’ career, as they may be resisted by employers (Braine, 2010). According to a survey conducted by Clark and Paran (2007) in Britain, for example, being a NS is an important criterion for over 70% of administrators while employing English teachers, which will exclude the competent NNESTs from recruitment process. These problems also exist in the Expanding and Outer Circle. In Southeast Asian countries, discrimination against NNESTs is still obvious among ELT professionals, who hold judgemental attitudes towards NNESTs about their teaching capability (Doan, 2016). In China, English spoken by NS is considered as an idealization as well as a necessary reference by language learners and professionals (Wang, 2016), and EFL education in China is still seriously influenced by native-speakerism (Pan, 2018).

Attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs

Understanding learners' beliefs and attitudes is helpful for both students and teachers. It is suggested that attitude studies contribute to better comprehension of socio-linguistic phenomenon as investigating learners' attitudes can help language learners realize that they are dealing with more than linguistic features while learning a language and evaluate their stereotypes and prejudices (Friedrich, 2000). Investigation of learners' attitudes also enables teachers to plan lessons and implement courses in a more effective way to better meet learner's needs (Galloway & Rose, 2015).

Attitudes Studies in Inner Circle

Generally, studies on attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs in Inner Circle reveal that learners hold positive attitudes towards NESTs, while NNESTs are perceived negatively. However, it seems that the negative attitudes towards NNESTs have been alleviated as time goes by, even though some capacities of NNESTs are still considered as weaker than their native counterparts. In USA, English learners show preference towards NESTs in listening and speaking courses, particularly for their pronunciation (Kelch and Santana-Williamson, 2002). Mahboob (2004) further categorized the factors that may influence students' perceptions towards NESTs and NNESTs into linguistic factors, teaching styles and personal factors, suggesting that both positive and negative attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs exist, although some students hold prejudice against NNESTs' pronunciation and NESTs are considered as the ideal teachers for teaching oral skills. Moussu and Braine (2006) also conducted a survey in US and found that although NNESTs are perceived positively by most students, their lesser level of knowledge about American culture is considered negatively by students. Moussu (2010) further discussed learners' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs from a dynamic perspective. She investigated ESL students in USA and compared their attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs at the beginning and end of the semester, concluding that students' initial attitudes towards NESTs are more positive than that towards NNESTs, but these attitudes change over time and may be influenced by different variables such as class subjects, students' expected grades and teachers' first language.

Attitudes Studies in Expanding Circle and Outer Circle

Similar results are drawn from studies in Expanding and Outer Circle. Cheung and Braine (2007) investigated attitudes towards NNESTs of university students in Hong Kong, concluding that students generally show a favorable attitude towards NNESTs, although some shortcomings of NNESTs are identified. Students appreciate the strengths of NNESTs, such as their ability to use students' first language during teaching, effective pedagogical skills, knowledge in English, and positive personal traits (Cheung & Braine, 2007). Weaknesses of NNESTs, however, are also pointed out, including their examination-oriented teaching method, over-correcting students' work, and limited use of English (Cheung & Braine, 2007). Watson and Pojanapunya (2009) applied Implicit Association Test and questionnaires to respectively investigate the implicit and explicit attitudes of Thai university students. It is found that although students show preference for NESTs explicitly, they express no bias and hold positive attitudes towards NNESTs in fact (Watson & Pojanapunya, 2009). Additionally, students' explicit positive attitudes towards NESTs are not affected by their previous learning experience with NESTs (Watson & Pojanapunya, 2009). Galloway (2013) investigated Japanese English learners' perceptions about English varieties. She found that most participants have "Inner Circle bias" when

viewing English teachers, and NESTs are considered as more useful than NNESTs (Galloway, 2013, p. 797). She further analyzed the affecting factors on students' attitudes, including "the use of native English as a yardstick, investment in native English, motivation, familiarity, ELF experiences, stereotypes, future goal and previous experiences using the language" (Galloway, 2013, p. 795). Chun (2014) analyzed Korean university learners' beliefs about NESTs and NNESTs, finding that NESTs are judged more effectively in terms of their linguistic competence and native status, while local teachers are favored by understanding students' needs thanks to their shared first language and English learning experience. Walkinshaw and Oanh (2014) studied students' perceptions about advantages and disadvantages of learning English with NESTs and NNESTs in Vietnam and Japan. Similarly, NNESTs are recognized because of their grammatical competence and shared first language and culture with students, although their pronunciation is deemed inferior to that of NESTs (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014).

Attitudes Studies in Mainland China

Research on students' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs based in mainland China mainly focuses on recent decade. He and Li (2009) examined college students and teachers about their perspectives of the ideal pedagogical model of college English. Approximately 80% of participants show clear preference for American English (He & Li, 2009). Rao (2010) investigated NESTs' strengths and weaknesses in the view of English major students, concluding three main merits of NESTs, which are native language authenticity, cultural familiarity and new methodological insights, and three shortcomings of NESTs, namely insensitivity to students' linguistic problems, conflict in the teaching and learning styles and unfamiliarity with local culture and educational system. Liu (2018) investigated EFL stakeholders, the majority of which is undergraduate students, about how they perceive NESTs and NNESTs. It is revealed that NESTs are considered as more professionally competent than NNESTs, which is mainly affected by the traditional native-speakerism and the rooted belief that education culture in Inner Circle is superior to those in Expanding and Outer Circle (Liu, 2018). Huang (2018) utilized an interview-survey-interview process to explore non-English major college students' attitudes, finding that students generally hold a positive attitude towards both parties. NESTs are favoured mainly because of their interactive and active teaching styles, higher level of linguistic proficiency, passionate personal merits, and ability to transfer real life cultural knowledge, although their underestimation of students' English proficiency and oversimplified classes are criticized (Huang, 2018). Huang (2018) also pointed out that standard language ideology is rooted in students' mind. Meanwhile, NNESTs, are conceived positively as they can assess students' language proficiency realistically, understand students' broken English because of the shared first language with students, although their traditional way of teaching is negatively considered (Huang, 2018). Wang and Fang (2020) investigated university students' and teachers' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs as well as native-speakerism. Data collected by questionnaires and interviews reveal that participants' attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs differentiate, particularly in terms of NESTs' high level of English proficiency and NNESTs' English learning experience (Wang & Fang, 2020). Nevertheless, participants do not show strong preference for NESTs, and they recognize that the difference between NESTs and NNESTs is not depended on whether they are native or non-native language users (Wang & Fang, 2020).

In conclusion, English learners' attitudes towards NEST and NNEST are still overwhelmed by native-speakerism, although the advantages and disadvantages of both groups are acknowledged by students. Attitudinal differentiation focuses on teachers' pronunciation, teaching styles, cultural knowledge and individual personalities.

Methodology

Research Paradigm

A mixed method, including language policy analysis and online survey, is adopted. Initially, language ideologies reflected in selected FLEPs are analyzed through policy analysis. Then, questionnaire is adopted to investigate participants' attitudes towards native-speakerism, NESTs and NNESTs. Ultimately, language ideologies are compared with participants' attitudes.

Language Policy Analysis

Language policy analysis follows critical discourse analysis (CDA), which links texts to social practice in order to explain the relationship between discourse and power (Johnson, 2013). CDA is an appropriate method for language policy analysis since any particular text of language policy is created by the multi-layered discourse practices (Johnson, 2013). Critical analysis also enables researcher to investigate the potential social and political powers that influence language policies (Pan, 2015).

FLEPs analyzed in this research are *English Curriculum Requirements for University Students* (2007 version for non-English major students) and *English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors at Institutions of Higher Learning* (2000 version). The former is compiled by the Department of Higher Education of MOE in People's Republic of China (PRC), and the latter is formulated by The Teaching Steering Committee on Foreign Language Majors in Higher Education under MOE. These two policies are chosen because they are the most authoritative guidelines for Chinese higher English education which demonstrate the assumption of MOE, concerning the nature, functions and processes of language teaching and learning, as well as reflecting the government's ideologies about English language teaching (Pan, 2015).

The analysis of FLEPs follows a three-dimensional framework of CDA, including text, discourse practice, and social practice (Fairclough, 2013). Initially, the form and content of written texts, such as the structure, cohesive relationship and pragmatics, are analyzed (Fairclough, 2013). Firstly, the whole policy texts are analysed in Chinese through CDA, as this is how the original texts are produced and presented. Then particular quotes are translated into English by researcher and analysed specifically. Secondly, the analysis of discourse practice is conducted, which is about the sociocognitive production and interpretation about the policies (Fairclough, 2013). Thirdly, the analysis of social practice focuses on the relationship between social practice and discourse (Fairclough, 2013).

Online Survey

Online survey is also utilized to collect participants' attitudes which cannot be achieved through policy analysis. Online survey has been widely used in education research thanks to its advantages, such as cost-effectiveness, timesaving, higher response rate and convenience (Cohen et al., 2018). Moreover, it is convenient for participants to respond to internet-based survey as they can complete it at any time or places.

Online survey is also easily accessible for respondents as long as they have access to internet and electronic devices. Finally, the rapid speed nature of internet-based survey allows researcher to gather and process data quickly within this time-limited research.

Questionnaire is a commonly utilized tool for gathering survey data and it is straightforward to analyze data through questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2018). Considering the short-term and small-scale nature of this research, the designed questionnaire is structured with defined questions sequence, which contributes to more rapid data analysis (Cohen et al., 2018). This questionnaire consists of four parts, which respectively enquires participants about their background information, English learning experience, attitudes towards native-speakerism, and attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs.

Participants are gathered through the non-probability sampling strategy, which deliberately include or exclude some members of the wider population (Cohen et al., 2018). Based on convenience sampling, of which some criteria are locational closeness and easy accessibility (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009), participants are 58 Chinese students of TESOL programme in University of Glasgow who had both English learning experience with both NESTs and NNESTs. This small sample size, however, may fail to ensure the generalization and representativeness of the wider population, which is one of the limitations of this research.

Procedures

Initially, the questionnaire which includes background information, English learning experience, attitudes towards native-speakerism, attitudes towards English teachers as well as attitudes towards NESTs and NNESTs is delivered to participants through e-mail. Subsequently, collected data are respectively analysed according to whether they are generated from closed or open questions. First, data collected by closed questions are analysed through descriptive statistics. As for open questions, specific open questions which asks concrete factual information are simply turned into distinct categories and treated as nominal data (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). Data collected by short-answer questions are processed through content analysis, which is the process of summarizing and reporting written data (Cohen et al., 2018). Each participant's response is initially marked as different content elements, and then they are formed as wider categories to describe the content of response (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009).

Findings and Discussions

Policy Analysis of Ideologies in FLEPs

Two selected policies are formulated through top-down planning, which describes policy developed by governing or authoritative body (Johnson, 2013), referring to the MOE in PRC here. Chinese FLEP is the product of the country's beliefs of the values and functions of English, aiming to meet the needs of national development (Pan, 2015). It could be argued that FLEP is drafted under the underlying guidelines of the authoritative party to foster relevant talents and meet its development needs. In turn, how English is perceived by the government, which English variety should be used in teaching, and how English learning function to achieve certain goals, are reflected by FLEP. Chinese FLEP also belongs to acquisition planning, which typically refers to language teaching policies (Lo Bianco, 2010). Two chosen policies are significant documents on Chinese college English education, covering teaching objectives, teaching requirements, curriculum setting, teaching principles, teaching methods and assessment. The analysis of language ideology in FLEP is conducted

according to three dimensions: objectives of English learning, status of English and standard of English learning.

Objectives of English Teaching

Objectives of English education in both policies are set based on current national economic and social development of China. This is indicated at the beginning of both policies, mentioning the necessity of the formulation of these FLEPs. It is quoted in *English Curriculum Requirements for University Students* (hereinafter referred to as *Curriculum Requirements*) that:

In order to adapt to the new situation of the development of higher education in China, deepen educational reform, improve teaching quality and meet the needs of talent cultivation in the new era on national and social basis, the *English Curriculum Requirements for University Students* (hereinafter referred to as the *Curriculum Requirements*) is formulated as the main basis for colleges and universities to organize English Teaching for non-English major students. (*Curriculum Requirements*, 2007, p. 1; translated by researcher)

This quote reveals that, national and social benefits of China is the most primary reason for English education. One of the main purposes of English teaching is to train qualified personnel who can serve national development.

The more specific goals of English education of *Curriculum Requirement* are mentioned as follow:

The teaching goal of College English is to cultivate students' comprehensive capacity of practical English, especially their listening and speaking ability, so that they can communicate effectively in English in their future study, workplace and social communication. Meanwhile, their autonomous learning ability and overall cultural literacy are also improved to meet the needs of social development and international communication of China. (*Curriculum Requirements*, 2007, p. 1)

Here, the objective of English learning is provided from the perspective of students' individual development. The capacity of learning and applying practical English in real-situational communication is emphasized. Listening and speaking skills, which belongs to communicative competence, are given priority in this quote. This is different from the traditional English teaching in China, which is driven by test-orient culture and focuses more on students' ability in written English (Huang, 2018, p. 11). This change emerges due to the economic and social transformation in China, which is also mentioned in *English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors at Institutions of Higher Learning* (hereinafter referred to as *Syllabus*):

Since the socialist market economy has put forward new requirements for the training mode of English major students in colleges and universities in China, and significant changes have taken place in the field of English education in recent decade, the original two syllabus are no longer able to adapt to the new situation, it is necessary to revise them accordingly. (*Syllabus*, 2000, p. 13)

Above extract states the backdrop of revision of this policy, which is the changes brought by updated requirements of socialist market economy and reform of English education in China. Moreover, English teaching plays a significant role in cultivating the new generation, which is an essential component of successful national development. Detailed abilities and qualifications are listed as follow:

English major in Chinese colleges and universities aims to cultivate inter-disciplinary English professionals who have a solid linguistic foundation of English and extensive cultural knowledge. They can skilfully use English to engage

in translation, teaching, management and research in foreign affairs, education, economy and trade, culture, science and technology, military and other departments. (*Syllabus*, 2000, p. 2)

This excerpt points out that achieving English competency plays a fundamental rule in the objectives of English learning. Simultaneously, students are required to have a good command of cultural knowledge behind language. This is also revealed through the curriculum setting for English major students. In addition to linguistic courses, such as *Introduction to Linguistics*, they also need to be enrolled in culture-relevant courses, such as *Introduction to Western Culture*. The second sentence of the above excerpt reveals that English is considered as the subsidiary tool for language users to get access to and serve the key sectors of a nation. In other words, the ultimate goal of English education is to comprehensively contribute to national development.

Individual development is also an important purpose of English learning. The concrete requirements of English major students are listed as follow:

These talents should have solid basic English skills, broad knowledge, certain relevant professional knowledge, and high personal quality. That is, based on solid English linguistic skills and professional knowledge of English, they need to broaden their knowledge of humanity and technology, master the professional knowledge related to their future work, cultivate the ability of acquiring knowledge, independent thinking, and creativity, and improve moral, cultural and mental quality. (*Syllabus*, 2000, p. 2)

Similarly, the above paragraph emphasizes that English learning should not restrict to linguistic knowledge and communicative skills, but involve individual and national development at macro-level. Students with all mentioned qualities can not only enhance their personal employability in different fields of the society, but also can boost the development and innovation of the industries where they are engaged in.

Culture-related objectives is another focus of English education described in FLEPs. In addition to culture-related courses set for English major students, the importance of learning cultures of English-speaking countries is also indicated in *Curriculum Requirements*:

English curriculum in college is not only a basic language curriculum, but also a kind of quality-oriented education which enables students to broaden their horizons and understand world culture. College English curriculum should be both instrumental and humanistic. Therefore, when designing college English courses, we should also fully consider the cultivation of students' cultural quality and the teaching of international cultural knowledge. (*Curriculum Requirements*, 2007, p. 3)

It can be inferred from this extract that policymakers believe that language learning is not only about language itself, but also involves culture learning. The instrumental and non-instrumental ideology of language are both demonstrated. Combined with previous analysis, it is obvious that linguistic instrumentalism is a key ideology reflected in Chinese FLEPs. According to Wee (2003, p. 211), linguistic instrumentalism refers to "a view of language that justifies its existence in a community in terms of its usefulness in achieving specific utilitarian goals, such as access to economic development or social mobility". This language ideology considers language as a tool in a speech community and emphasizes the instrumental function of language in achieving certain purposes.

In FLEPs, English is perceived as a useful tool to promote individual career development and national development in economy, diplomacy, international communications, and cultural exchanges. Due to the instrumental value of English, Chinese students are encouraged to master it. Meanwhile, the non-instrumental

value of English is not ignored. English learning is not isolated from other knowledge in FLEPs, instead, it combines with culture learning of English-speaking countries, such as their literature, media report and basic information.

Status of English

The discussion of the linguistic and social status of a language is related to status planning, which describes how roles and functions of language is assigned by society through law and regulations (Lo Bianco, 2010). That is, the roles and functions of a language that are ascribed by authority through policy documents in speech community. The status of English considered by *Syllabus* is explicitly expressed in following extract:

Fundamentally speaking, foreign language is a skill and a carrier; only when a foreign language is combined with other objects can a major be formed.....At the same time, we should soberly face up to the reality that only a small number of professionals who are specialized in the combination foreign language and literature, or foreign language and linguistics, are needed to engage in the education and research on foreign literature and linguistics every year in China. Whereas there is a heavy demand for inter-disciplinary talents who combine foreign language with other relevant disciplines, such as diplomacy, economy and trade, law, journalism, etc. Cultivation of this kind of professionals not only results from the requirement raised by the socialist market economy of Chinese foreign language education, but is also the demand of the new era. (*Syllabus*, 2000, p. 26)

Again, linguistic instrumentalism is reflected through the first sentence. Language is treated as a tool which should be combined with other disciplines to realize its functions, indicating the role of steppingstones of English in national development. It is emphasized that pure functions of language, such as communicative function, is no longer able to fully meet the demands of fast-growing society under the new area. In this extract, English knowledge is perceived as human capital, and required types of capital are decided by socialist market economy. This ideology equates language to other skills or competences that rely on supply and demand (Robichaud & Schutter, 2012). Considering language as human capital provides students with the motivation of learning a foreign language in a realistic way as their English proficiency could allow them to get access to more and diverse working opportunities. The crucial functions of English in promoting individual and national development demonstrate the prominent status of English allocated by FLEPs.

Economic development is a key motivating factor that influences the instrumental function of English, as described in following excerpt:

With the expansion of international exchanges, the acceleration of China's reform and opening-up, the increasing influence of economic factors on international exchanges, and the development of our economic construction-centered national policy, it is urgent for us to add relevant contents of diplomacy, economy and trade, and finance on the basis of literature and linguistics in foreign language teaching. (*Syllabus*, 2000, p. 24)

Instrumentalism is often associated with economic rationality and market-related arguments (Robichaud & Schutter, 2012). It is suggested in this excerpt that the original way of foreign language learning and teaching, which merely focuses on literature and linguistics, should be combined with economy-related subjects to adapt to economic development both at home and abroad. Although English's function is not saliently stated, it could be speculated that the instrumental function of English, particularly its function of promoting economic construction and for national interest, is acknowledged.

Standard of English Learning

In addition to objectives of English learning and status of English, it is also necessary to explore which English variety is considered as “standard” by FLEPs. Both selected policies do not explicitly show bias to any types of English variety. Instead, vague expressions, such as “English-speaking countries” and “various English variety” are utilized in learning requirements sections of *Syllabus*:

(Students) Be able to communicate people from English-speaking countries in general social occasions, to correctly express their ideas with natural intonation and without major grammatical errors, and appropriately use the language.

Understand various English conversations in real communicating situations; understand the broadcast and telecast in English speaking countries (such as CNN), including the special report on politics, economy, culture, education, science and technology, as well as the speeches related to these topics and the Q&A sessions after the speech. (*Syllabus*, 2000, p. 7)

The above excerpts both emphasize the communicative function of English and students are not forced to follow any English variety as long as they are intelligible to other English speakers during conversations. In terms of requirements of oral English, students are only asked to acquire “correct pronunciation, natural intonation and fluent language flow” instead of imitating Received Pronunciation or American English.

Although a neutral attitude towards English variety is demonstrated while setting the standard of English in FLEP, English varieties from Inner Circle are most frequently and explicitly mentioned, for instance:

Be able to generally identify various English variety (such as American English, British English, Australian English). (*Syllabus*, 2000, p. 7)

The norm for English is not explicitly mentioned in the document, nevertheless, it could be inferred from above quote that English varieties from Inner Circle are assumed as the ideal models for students to learn. Local English variety, which is China English, is not acknowledged as a variety of English. In other words, Chinese FLEPs still adhere to native-speakerism in English teaching.

Particularly, American and British English is implicitly perceived as the standard. While specific goals are set for students to achieve through English learning, American and British English are the prominent models in FLEPs. As for listening, for instance, band 4 students are required to “understand the normal speed of VOA and the main content of BBC news” (*Syllabus*, 2000, p. 7). In terms of reading, students are required to “read general editorials and book reviews on British and American newspapers and magazines, as well as historical biographies and literary works published in English-speaking countries” (*Syllabus*, 2000, p. 8). *English Literature* and *American Literature* are two compulsory courses for English major students.

In sum, the macro-objective of English learning is to promote social and national development of China, particularly economic development worldwide. Moreover, enhancing students’ linguistic and cultural knowledge, as well as communicative skills, are also essential. Linguistic instrumentalism is the prominent language ideology reflected in FLEPs, which demonstrates the important status of English in Chinese national development. In terms of standard of English, although there is no explicit preference towards any English varieties, English varieties from Inner Circle, especially British and American English, are given tacit consent as English learning models for students. It could be concluded that Chinese FLEP is influenced by native-speakerism to certain extent.

Questionnaire Findings

Participants Overview

58 participants are involved, including 51 females and 7 males. 90% were students in English and other relevant majors, while 10% were non-English major students. The most frequently mentioned English learning objectives is to apply for jobs. To study or travel abroad is also a popular reason for learning English (see Figure 1). Learning English for study and employment purposes shows that instrumental functions of English are mostly recognised by English learners. These results conform to the individual development purpose mentioned in FLEPs as one of the English learning objectives.

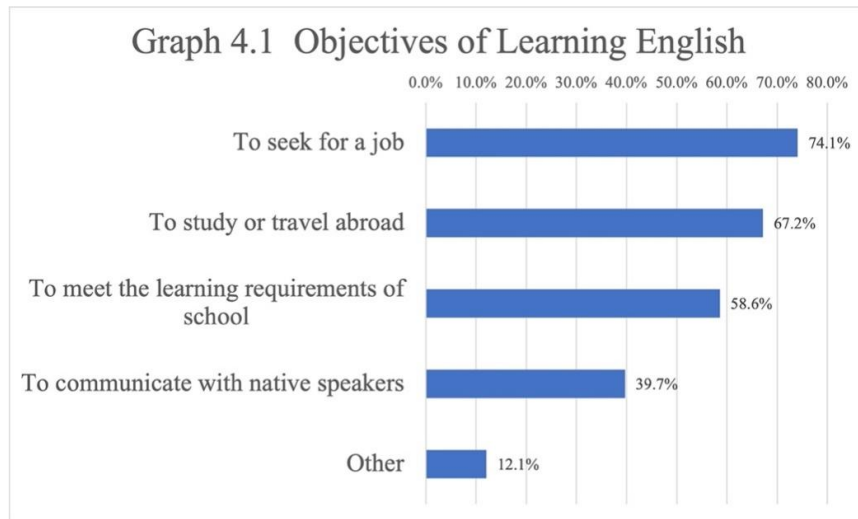


Figure 1. Objectives of Learning English.

Speaking of English learning experience, 48% participants report that they have difficulties while learning English with NESTs. NESTs' fast-speaking speed is the major cause of learning difficulties, with 28.6% claiming this problem. Communication barrier is another frequently mentioned reason leads to learning difficulties. Some students declare that they fail to express themselves clearly and it is difficult to communicate with foreign teachers. 10.7% find it difficult to learn with NESTs due to cultural differences, and same proportion of participants have difficult in understanding NESTs' instructions and explanations. Some participants have learning difficulties with NESTs because their listening is affected by NESTs' accents. 7.1% report that NESTs' teaching style, which focuses on communicative skills, cause difficulties since students are more familiar with the traditional test-oriented teaching method of local teachers. Difficulties led by students' speaking anxiety, unknown words and some NESTs' teaching insufficiency are also mentioned (see Figure 2).

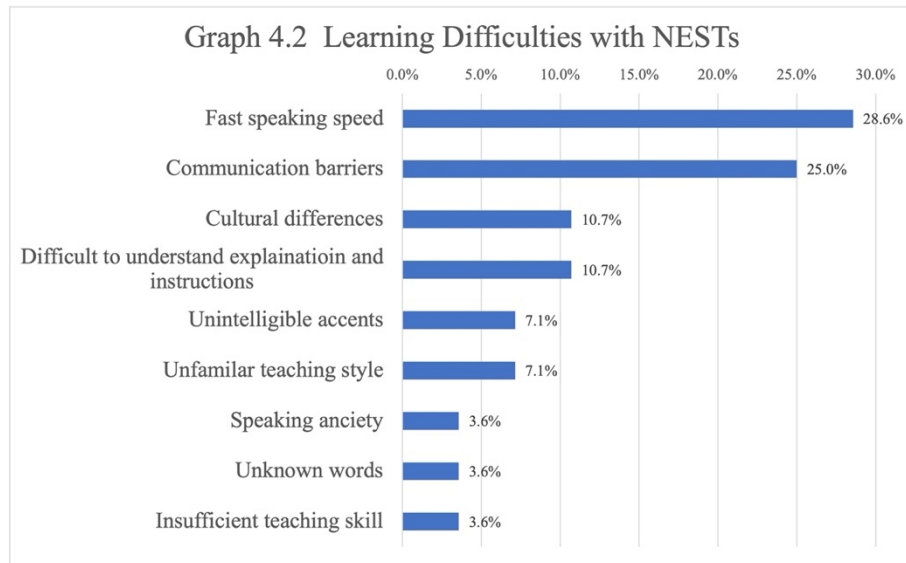


Figure 2. Learning Difficulties with NESTs.

Only 10 respondents state that they have learning difficulties with NNESTs and 8 participants justify their choices. NNESTs' problem accents and pronunciation is the major reason, which poses obstacle to students' understanding. Respondents also complain local teachers' exam-oriented teaching method, which puts emphasis on grammar and vocabulary (see Figure 3).

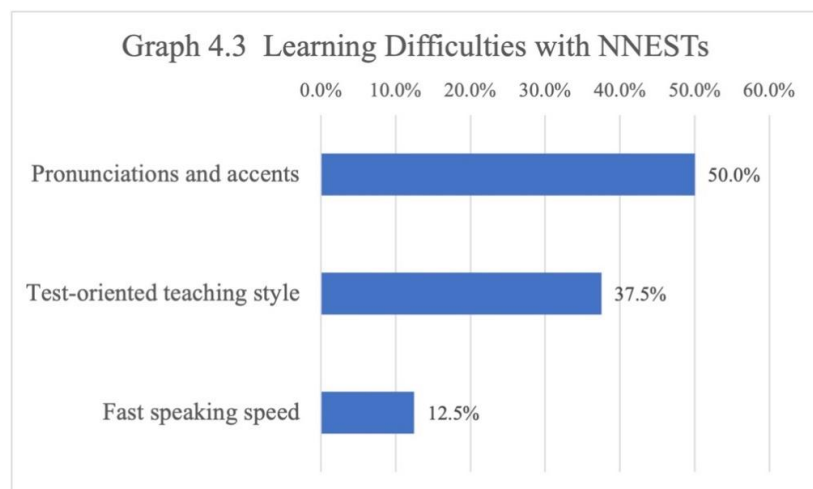


Figure 3. Learning Difficulties with NNESTs.

Although participants have learning difficulties with both NESTs and NNESTs, they show preference towards neither group. 58.6% participants demonstrate their appreciation towards both parties, and are willing to learn English with both NESTs and NNESTs (see Figure 4).

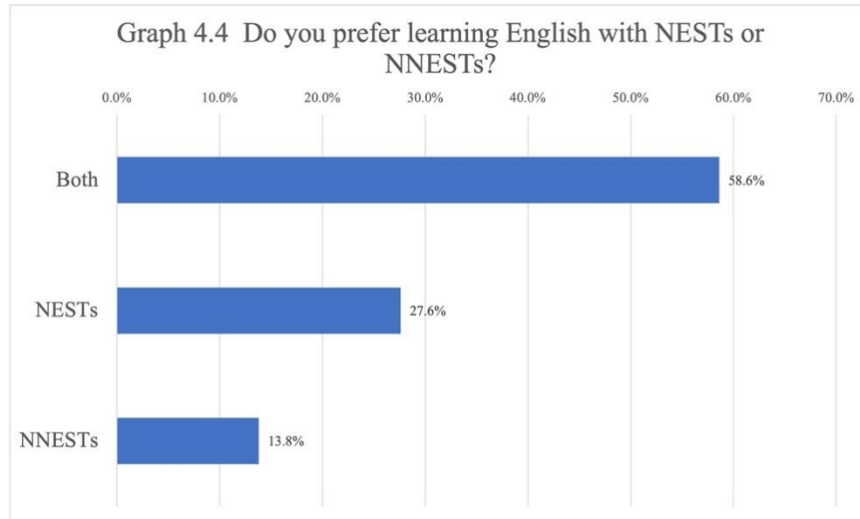


Figure 4. Preference to learning NESTs or NNESTs.

Attitudes towards English Variety

Generally, participants adhere to native-speakerism while comparing English spoken by NS and NNS. Most participants approve that English spoken by NS is more standard than English spoken by NNS, with 6.9% strongly agreeing. 55.2 % participants admit that English spoken by NS is the most standard. Similarly, 46.6% consider English spoken by NS is more intelligible than that spoken by NNS. English used by NS is also perceived as more authentic by 70.7% participants (see Figure 5).

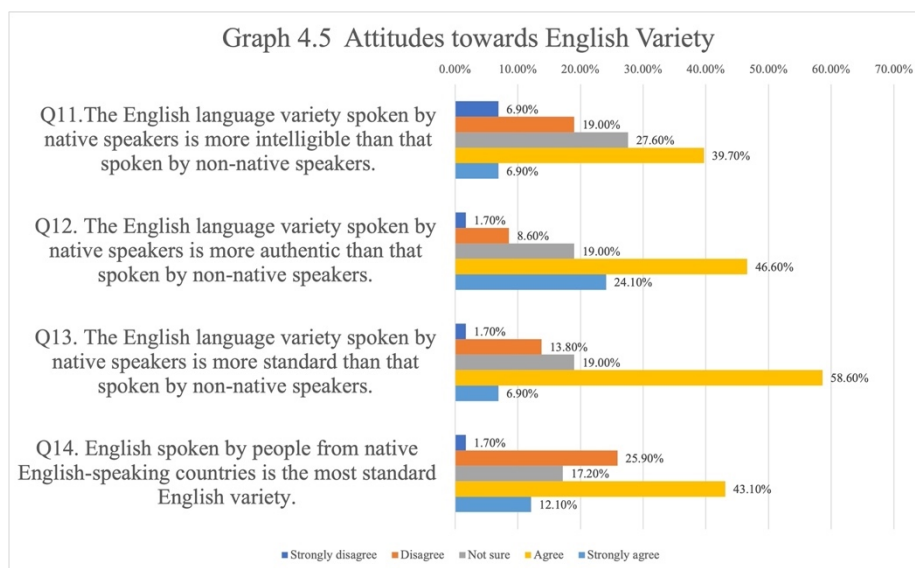


Figure 5. Attitudes towards English Variety.

These results indicate that English variety from Inner Circle is deemed as more standard, authentic and intelligible than other English varieties by most participants. Standard language ideology is rooted in participants' thoughts as they perceive English spoken by NS is ideal. This may be influenced by language ideologies of FLEPs, which sets English from Inner Circle as models for teaching listening and speaking.

However, it is interesting to find that although 46.6% regard English spoken by NS is more intelligible, communication barrier is one essential factor that leads to students' learning difficulties with NESTs.

Attitudes towards English Learning

A positive attitude towards NS is presented by most participants when they consider the criteria of learning English well. To achieve their English learning goals, an overwhelming proportion of 72.4% reckon that imitating oral expressions of NS is crucial. 55.2% think it is necessary to imitate the language norms, pronunciation and writing conventions of NS. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that 27.6% oppose that imitating language norms and writing conventions of NS are the premises of good English learning, while 17.2% are uncertain about these statements. Similarly, 25.8% perceive that it is unnecessary to imitate NS' pronunciation (see Figure 6).

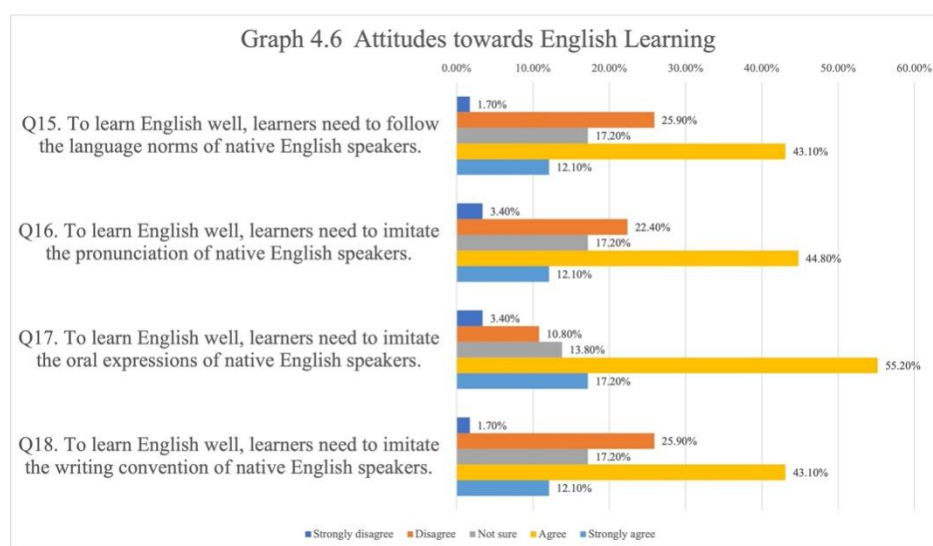


Figure 6. Attitudes towards English Learning.

These results indicate that NS's oral English skills are highly appreciated by English learners. To sound locally and authentically while using oral English is a significant target for English learners, although they do not persist in achieving native-like pronunciation. English learners tend to focus on intelligibility and pay less attention to language norms and writing conventions. It could be inferred that the communicative function of English, which is also emphasized in FLEPs, is more valued by English learners.

Attitudes towards English Teachers

A pro-nativeness tendency is demonstrated towards NESTs' linguistic competence, while NNESTs are perceived positively thanks to their diverse instructional modes and sufficient pragmatic knowledge.

Figure 7 presents English learners' attitudes when they compare the linguistic competence of NESTs and NNESTs. 55.2% participants believe that NESTs use more standard English than NNESTs, although 32.8% are not sure. Additionally, 69% demonstrate supportive attitudes towards NESTs, who are assumed to know more cultural knowledge behind the language than NNESTs do.

Oppositely, NNESTs are considered as more capable than NESTs concerning their competence of adopting diverse instructional modes by 51.7% participants. Although 44.8% claim that NNESTs know more pragmatic

rules than NESTs, 32.8% respondents fail to make a biased judgement between NESTs and NNESTs. An ambiguous attitude is also presented in the comparison of Chinese English teachers and NS teachers' capacity of stimulating students' learning enthusiasm.

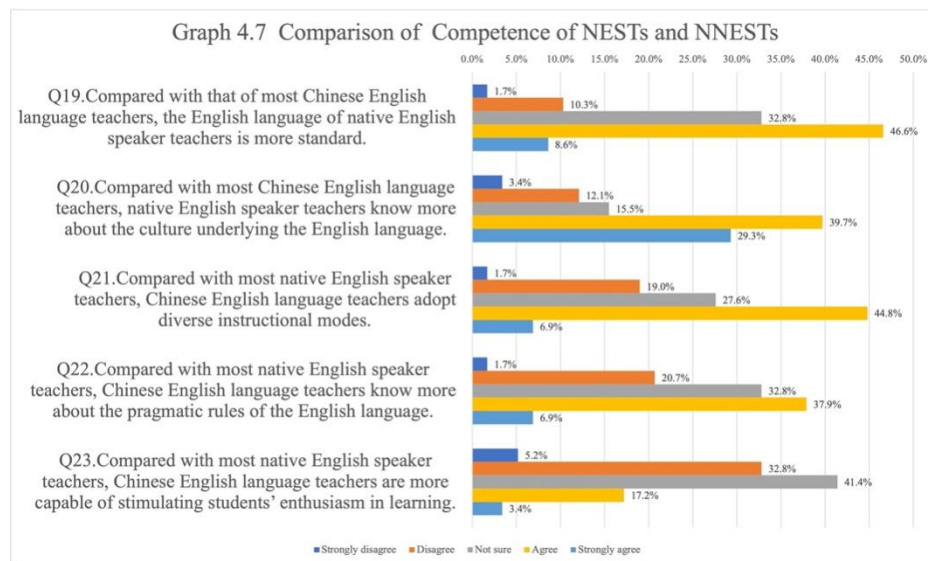


Figure 7. Comparison of Competence of NESTs and NNESTs.

Overall, English used by NESTs are perceived as more standard than NNESTs. NESTs' superiority is also identified in terms of their cultural knowledge beyond language. These results reflect standard language ideology since students believe that the standardization of English exists. Additionally, native-speakerism is also demonstrated in participants' response, as they assume that NS has better command of the culture behind language.

Nevertheless, participants do not show bias towards NESTs when discussing teachers' practical teaching skills. Instead, Chinese teachers are considered as more capable of adopting diverse instructional modes. This result is not surprising since one learning difficulties with NESTs that students report is difficulty of understanding NESTs' instructions. NNESTs are also praised because of their abundant pragmatic knowledge. This result, however, seems to be contradictory with previous responses in section 4.2.1, where participants claim that NNESTs' teaching only focuses on grammar and vocabulary and fail to teach much communication skills as NESTs do. Finally, 41.4% participants are uncertain about whether NESTs or NNESTs are more capable of motivating student to learn English.

Attitudes towards English Teachers' Teaching Abilities

This section presents participant' opinions about to what extent they consider English teachers' abilities of teaching different knowledge as important. Teachers' teaching abilities are divided into two categorizations, including abilities of teaching the language and relevant knowledge, and abilities of teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Attitudes towards English Teachers' Abilities of Teaching Linguistic Knowledge

Teachers' ability of using accurate pronunciation and fluent expressions is considered as primarily significant by Chinese English learners. This result is similar to that in section 3, where participants consider imitating NS's pronunciation is essential in English learning. NNESTs, however, are considered as using less authentic and standard oral English than NESTs in previous section. Combining these results, it could be explained why students complain pronunciation and accent-related issues as their major learning difficulties with NNESTs.

The second important teaching ability of English teachers is their ability to explain vocabulary accurately. Ability to provide cultural knowledge behind the language is the third important teaching ability considered by totally 75.8% of participants. Relatively, ability to adequately explain grammar is the least important teaching ability perceived by English learners, but there is still 72.5% regard its significance (see Figure 8).

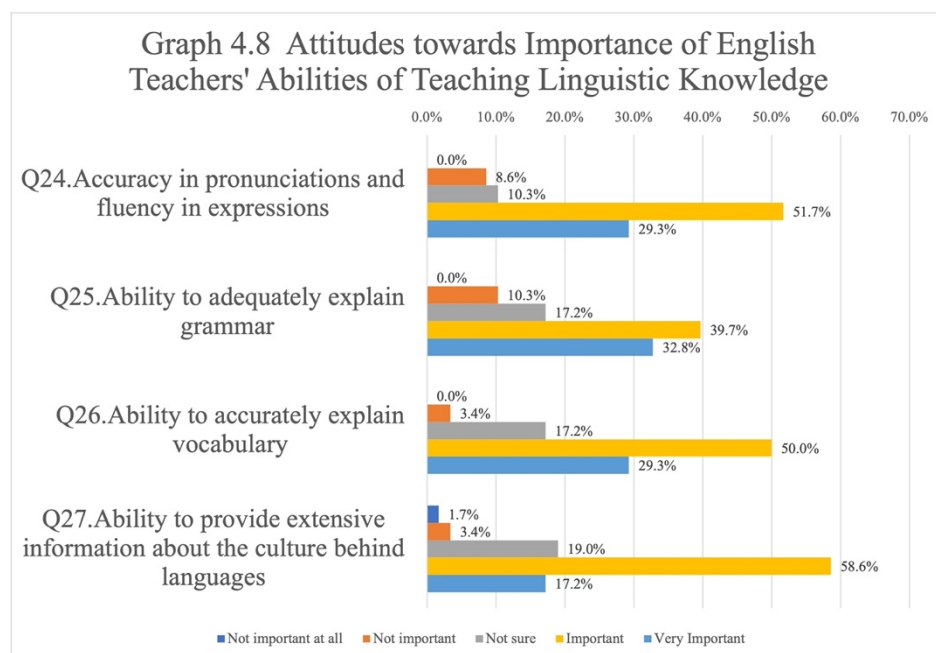


Figure 8. Attitudes towards Importance of English Teachers' Abilities of Teaching Linguistic Knowledge.

Attitudes towards English Teachers' Abilities of Teaching Four Skills

As illustrated in Figure 9, minor differences are found in participants' attitudes towards the importance of English teachers' abilities of teaching four skills. Teachers' ability of teaching writing skill is regarded as paramount by 87.9% of participants. The second important ability of teachers is whether they have appropriate teaching skills of reading, which is supported by 82.8%. Teachers' abilities of being proficient in teaching listening and speaking are perceived as crucial by a very similar proportion of respondents, which is respectively 81.1% and 81%.

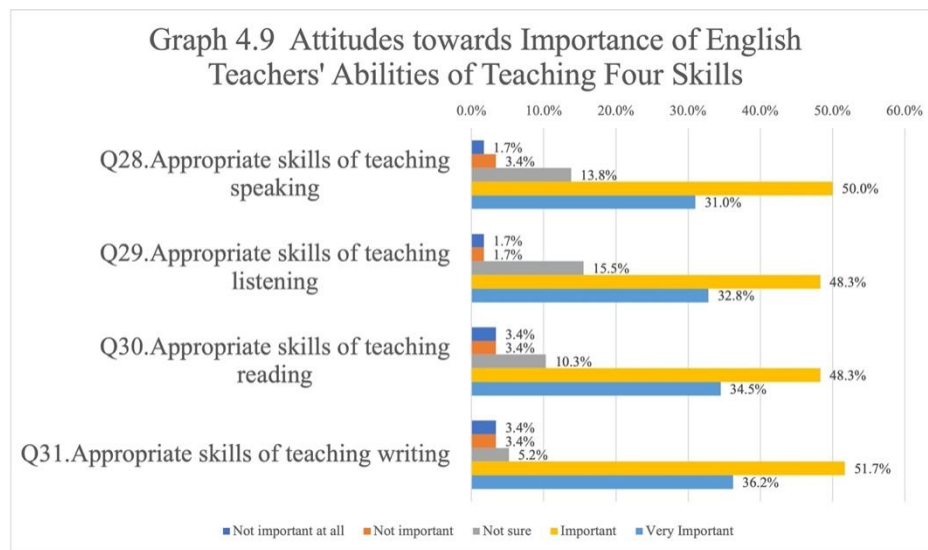


Figure 9. Attitudes towards Importance of English Teachers' Abilities of Teaching Four Skills.

Overall, English teachers' abilities of teaching four skills enjoy a significant status in English learners' perceptions. Receptive skills (writing and reading) are considered as relatively more important by Chinese English learners than productive skills (listening and speaking). As discussed before, English teaching in China is highly influenced by exam-oriented atmosphere (Huang, 2018, p. 11), and Chinese learners are more familiar with local teachers' test-oriented teaching method. This may be the reason why participants put slightly more emphasis on teachers' abilities of teaching writing and reading. Even so, the importance of productive skills is not ignored by respondents. It could be argued that the practicability of English and cultivation of learners' communicative skills emphasized in FLEPs may have impact on participants' attitudes.

Attitudes towards English Teachers' Abilities of General Teaching Skills

55.2% state that it is very important for English teachers to understand learners' learning difficulties and problems, with 27.6% considering it as important. 39.7% of participants think it is important for teacher to assess students' English proficiency according to real situation, with 41.4% regarding it as very important. It is worth to notice that the proportion of participants who select "very important" option outnumbers those in previous questions (see Figure 10). In other words, participants demonstrate a more certain attitude when they evaluate English teachers' general teaching skills, compared with teachers' linguistic knowledge and teaching abilities of four skills. It could be inferred that English teachers' teaching techniques is considered as more important than their professional knowledge of the language by English learners.

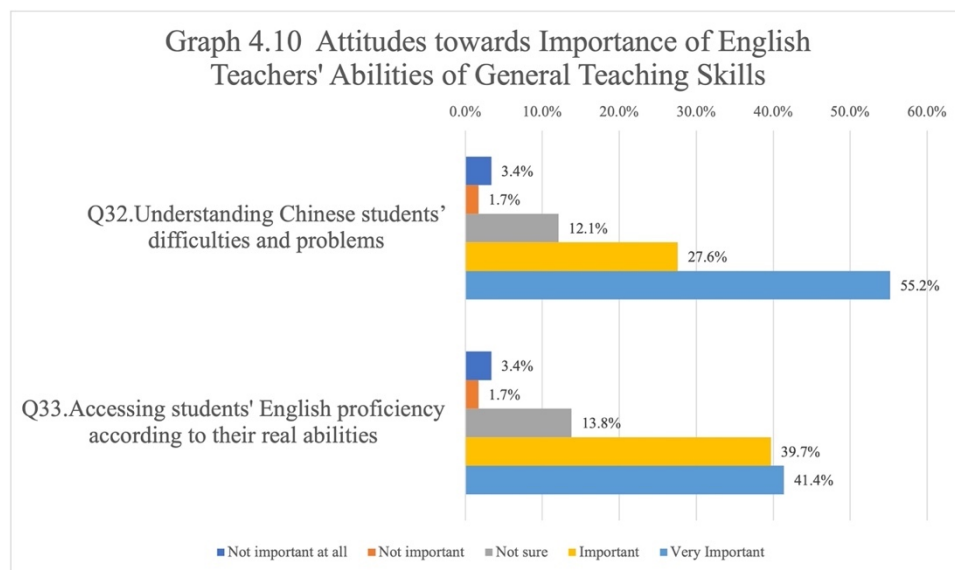


Figure 10. Attitudes towards Importance of English Teachers' Abilities of General Teaching Skills.

Attitudes towards Teaching Abilities of NESTs and NNESTs

Ultimately, participants are asked to select the teaching abilities that are more possibly to be grasped by NESTs, NNESTs or both. Overall, participants can identify the advantages of both groups of teachers. NESTs are perceived as more capable than NNESTs in terms of their English proficiency and communicative teaching method. NNESTs, whereas, are appreciated more when it comes to their abilities to understand and predict Chinese students' learning difficulties, as well as being able to compare Chinese and Western cultures.

NESTs are positively perceived because of their sufficient knowledge of idiomatic English, with 74.1% of participants agreeing that they are more capable of this ability than NNESTs. This could be related to participants' attitudes towards English variety in section 4.2.4, where they consider NESTs are more capable of using English authentically than NNESTs. 60.3% of respondents show preference towards NESTs in terms of their frequent use of English during teaching. This is not surprising as generally most NESTs are only able to communicate with local students in English. NESTs are also preferred for their teaching style which pays attention to interactions and interpersonal communication by 53.4% of participants. It should be pointed out that 41.4% of respondents reckon that in-class interaction and interpersonal communications can be grasped by both groups of teachers (see Figure 11).

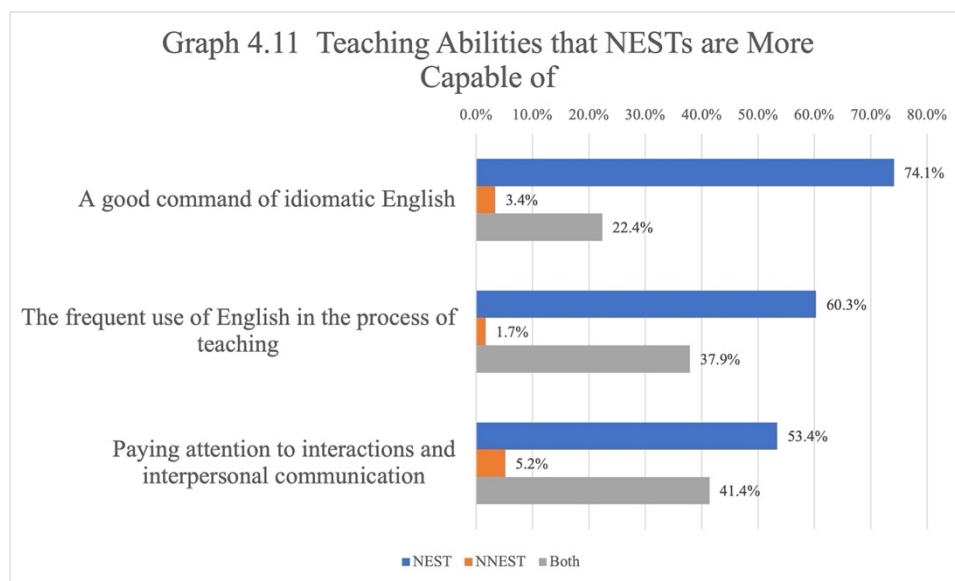


Figure 11. Teaching Abilities that NESTs are More Capable of.

Teaching abilities of NNESTs that are more capable of are shown in graph 2.6.2. NNESTs are claimed to be more capable of understanding Chinese students' English learning difficulties and problems by a preponderant proportion of 75.9%. Local teachers are also popular with Chinese English learners as they can predict the learning difficulties that students may encounter while learning English, which is supported by 55.2% of respondents. It could be argued that NNESTs are preferred by students since they share similar English learning experience with learners, which enables them to have a better understanding of students' learning difficulties that NNESTs may also have when they were language learners. In this way, NNESTs are more likely to predict their students' learning difficulties. Ultimately, NNESTs are also praised as they can compare the cultures between China and English-speaking countries. This may because NNESTs have a good command of cultural knowledge of their mother tongue and also have contact with Western cultures during their previous English learning experience. However, the same proportion of participants (39.7%) argue that both NNESTs and NEST can acquire this teaching ability (see Figure 12).

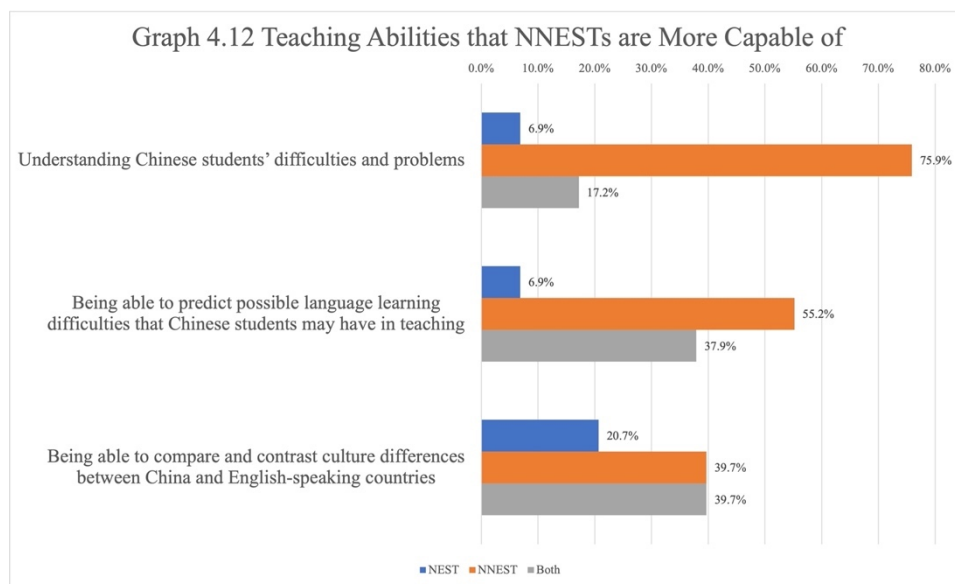


Figure 12. Teaching Abilities that NNESTs are More Capable of.

Although divergence emerges in the advantages of NESTs and NNESTs, participants report five teaching abilities that describe both groups of teachers. The same proportion (63.8%) acknowledge that both NESTs and NNESTs endeavour to consistently prepare lessons, providing students with supplementary materials and deliver lessons passionately. 50% consider that the ability of promoting students' autonomous learning belongs to both NESTs and NNESTs, while 37.7% agreeing that NESTs are more capable of it. 46.6% agree that both groups of teachers can teach English effectively and interestingly, although 44.8% perceive this characteristic as more appropriate for NESTs. The ability to assess students' English proficiency according to their real abilities is used by 41.4% to describe both NESTs and NNESTs (see Figure 13).

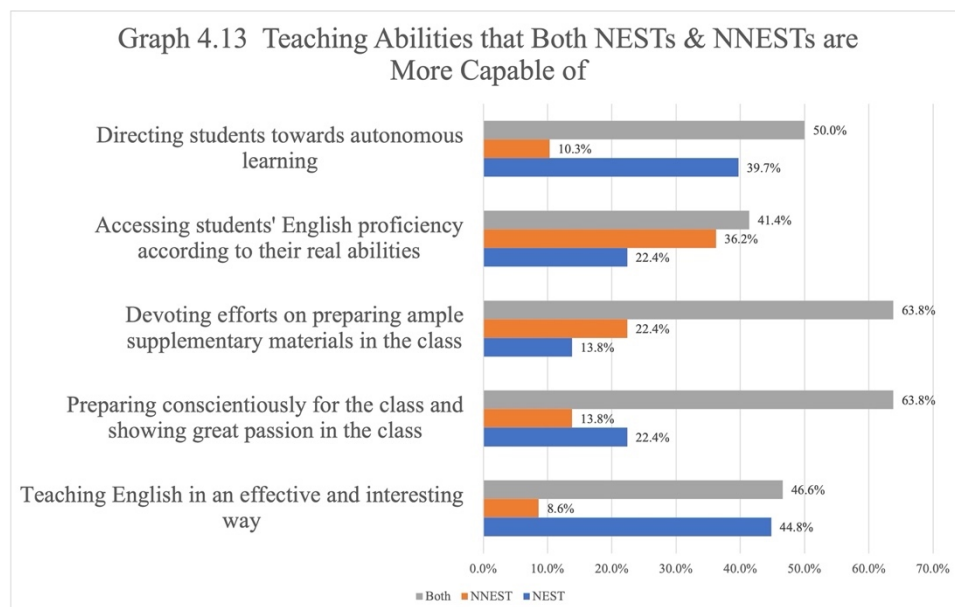


Figure 13. Teaching Abilities that Both NESTs and NNESTs are More Capable of.

Conclusion

Generally, Chinese English learners acknowledge both strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs, without demonstrating strong preference towards either group. Specifically, NESTs are praised more than NNESTs in terms of their English proficiency, such as their abundant idiomatic English knowledge and accurate pronunciation, as well as communication-focused teaching style. Participants, however, report having learning difficulties with NESTs due to their fast-speaking speed, communication barriers and so on. NNESTs are perceived more positively than NESTs concerning their abilities to understand and predict students' learning difficulties. They are perceived negatively concerning their accents and pronunciation, as well as test-oriented teaching style. These results are consistent with previous attitudes studies conducted in Expanding Circle.

Nevertheless, Chinese English learners do adhere to native-speakerism and standard language ideology when it comes to the discussion of English variety. Most participants believe that standardization of English exists, and NESTs are model of standard English. Additionally, participants find it essential to imitate oral expressions and pronunciation of NS to achieve their English learning goals. NESTs are perceived more positively because of their linguistic competency. This finding matches the native-speakerism which is implicitly reflected in FLEPs. Chinese English learners' attitudes also confirm to FLEPs in terms of the instrumentalist ideology. It is found that the English learning objectives of students focus on achieving practical purposes, such as for employment and college application.

Although participants seem to be influenced by native-speakerism, they demonstrate a critical attitude when judging English teachers. They believe those teaching abilities that considered as important for English teaching, can be acquired by both NESTs and NNESTs. Furthermore, teaching quality of English teachers should depend on their teaching qualifications and personality instead of whether they are native or non-native English speakers. Superiority should be given to neither group of teachers as NESTs and NNESTs have their own strengths and weaknesses, playing different but significant roles in English teaching.

Conclusion and Prospect

To conclude, linguistic instrumentalism is the prominent language ideology reflected in FLEPs. English is regarded as a useful tool which contributes to two main objectives of English learning, namely individual and national development. The instrumentalist function of English is emphasized to achieve national and social benefits in economy, politics, diplomacy, and cultural exchanges. Individually speaking, English is perceived as a kind of capital. Ability of applying communicative English competency and cultural knowledge behind language enables learners to get access to various job opportunities. Although FLEPs try to maintain the neutrality of English, it implicitly reveals native-speakerism and standard language ideology. There is no explicit preference to a particular English variety as standard English, nevertheless, English varieties from Inner Circle are mentioned as examples for students to learn. That is, FLEPs is still influenced by native-speakerism to certain extent. Specifically, British and American English is perceived as standard, which is reflected through learning requirements and curriculum setting.

Speaking of Chinese English learners' attitudes, they still adhere to native-speakerism. Most participants consider English used by NS is more standard, intelligible and authentic than English used by NNS. NESTs are

perceived more positively than NNESTs in terms of their English proficiency and cultural knowledge behind language. Learners consider imitating pronunciation and oral expressions of NESTs as vital in English learning.

Participants, however, do not demonstrate biased attitude towards neither NEST nor NNEST. Instead, they can critically identify strengths and weaknesses of both groups. Advantages of NESTs are their high English proficiency and communication-oriented teaching style. NESTs' quick speaking speed, communication barriers and cultural differences, however, may lead to learning difficulties for students. NNESTs are praised since they can better understand and predict Chinese students' learning problems while teaching thanks to their shared first language and similar English learning experience, although their accents and exam-oriented teaching method are criticized. Besides acknowledging the unique characteristics of NESTs and NNESTs, participants comment that teaching qualification of English teachers should depend on their professional abilities and personality, instead of whether they are NS or not.

Overall, Chinese English learners' attitudes match language ideologies in FLEPs. English is regarded as a significant tool for learners to achieve employment purpose and personal improvement. This perception reflects linguistic instrumentalism and conforms to objectives of English learning in FLEPs. Most participants consider English varieties from Inner Circle are standard English and English proficiency of NESTs are more positively perceived than NNESTs. It could be inferred that learners' attitudes may be influenced by the native-speakerism and standard language ideology demonstrated in FLEPs.

This research may provide implications for improvement on Chinese FLEPs. It is suggested that native-speakerism and standard language ideology that are implicitly reflected in FLEPs should be addressed. The models of English learning should not be restricted to English from native-English speaking countries. Instead, students should be exposed to various English varieties, including those from Expanding and Outer Circle. Future studies are encouraged to analyse the attitudes of policy makers and students at other stages of education in China, focusing more on the causal relationship between attitudes and FLEPs.

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