

A Study Of EFL Preservice Teachers' Perceptions Of Non-Native English Teachers

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the preservice teachers' perceptions of non-native English teachers and being a non-native English teacher. One-hundred and five college students participated in this study. Findings from the descriptive statistics, the One-Way ANOVA, correlations and content analysis were analyzed based on the classroom observation, questionnaire, and semi-structured interview.

The findings show that non-native English teachers have knowledge among the nine major domains for being professional foreign language teachers. The domain of Language and Learning and Classroom Management was very strongly correlated. The preservice teachers also perceived in themselves to acquire higher knowledge on the domain of Technology, Teachership and Psychology for Teachers than other domains. There was a statistically significantly different among the nine domains of knowledge. Knowledge of educational research need to be improved as it showed the lowest mean score. In addition, the domain of Educational Measurement and Evaluation and Learning and Classroom Management was very strongly correlated.

Introduction

The number of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) learner has been rapidly growing to meet the demand for English teachers in nonnative settings. In the past decade, it is likely that only native English teachers were respected as qualified English teachers. Non-native English teachers were probably regarded as second-class citizens (Ma, 2012; Rajagopalan, 2005) because of the “English speaker fallacy” (Phillipson, 1992). The belief of inequality in knowledge and performance between native and non-native English teachers leads to the discrimination in the amount of teachers in a position as a foreign language teacher (Braine, 2005).

However, many language educators believe that being a non-native English teacher has benefits in their own terms. Ling and Braine (2007) reveal that being a non-native English teacher has benefits such as sharing first language, being effective in pedagogical skills and being knowledgeable in English language. As studies show that non-native English teachers can teach English as effectively as native teachers (Medgyes, 1994; Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2005; Braine and Ling, 2007; Moussu, 2007), these teachers can be recognized as an ideal language teacher as well. In the current study, discrimination among these two types of teachers is not the only major issue for discussion. Effectiveness in teaching of an individual is also the emphasis.

Existing studies that support the importance of the quality of non-native English teachers are still rare and more studies are needed to confirm such research findings. As a result, this exploratory study aimed to investigate preservice teachers' perceptions towards non-native English teachers in several aspects. The two main objectives of this study were (1) to investigate the perceptions of preservice teachers of non-native English teachers; and (2) to explore the perceptions of preservice teachers of being a non-native English teacher.

Method

Participants

The participants were one-hundred and five preservice teachers in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program from Public University in the Northeastern part of Thailand. This program is an international program offered by the Faculty of Education to prepare students for being English instructors. Both native and non-native English teachers taught in this program.

Data collection and Analysis

This study was divided into two stages: planning and implementation.

Planning

Stage one was concerned with planning to construct survey instruments. In this stage, the questionnaire and interview questions were constructed based on the three sub-stages: (1) analyzing documents, (2) constructing the instruments and (3) developing the instruments. The relevant documents (see Table 1) were analyzed to integrate into

classroom observation methods (see Table 2) in order to find the conceptual framework of this study. The instruments were constructed based on the framework of the nine domains of knowledge for being a professional foreign language teacher in Thailand. After constructing the questionnaire, it had been validated and pilot studied to ensure its content and construct validity and reliability.

The questionnaire and interview questions were submitted to confirm the validity of the content by three experts who were professionals and had experience in the field of English teaching. It helped to ensure that the instruments were valid and correlated to the objectives of the study. The findings found that the IOC index of Parts 2 and 3 of the questionnaire were 0.59 and 0.67, respectively. A content validity index was higher than 0.50 indicates that the content of the two parts of the questionnaire were valid and acceptable (Pinyoanuntapong, 2003). The invalid items of the questionnaire were either deleted or revised. Similarly, some interview questions were also revised based on the comments and suggestions from the experts in order to improve the validity of the interview questions.

After the IOC score calculation was completed and the items of the questionnaire was revised, the questionnaire comprised of three parts: **Part 1:** Background information (Personal Data); **Part 2:** Preservice teachers' perceptions of non-native English teachers (34 items); and **Part 3:** Preservice teachers' perceptions of being a non-native English teacher (33 items) was distributed to twenty-nine preservice teachers in the program to prove reliability. The instruments were distributed to twenty-nine preservice teachers in the program who did not participate as a sample in this study. The twenty-nine preservice teachers were randomly selected from the first-to the fourth-year preservice teachers in the program. These preservice teachers had approximately ten minutes to do the questionnaire. However, it was found that some students were not able to finish doing the questionnaire in this time, so the time to complete the questionnaire needed to be expanded when conducting the main study with the sample. After collecting data from pilot study, the data was computed by applying the Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) formula in order to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. The Reliability Coefficients of part 2 and part 3 of the questionnaire were 0.87 and 0.84, respectively. It could be interpreted with results that were higher than 0.80 that the questionnaire was reliable.

Table 1

Framework of Non-native English Teachers

Frame- work	Thailand standards of teaching professional knowledge	NCATE & Technolog y	Common European Framework (CERF)	Current Studies (relating to NNETs)		
				Research	Research	Research
Type of sourc e	The regulation	Book	Book	Research	Research	Research
Sourc e	The Regulation of the Teachers	TESOL International Association	The Language	Moussu, L. (2007 &	Ling, C. Y. & Braine,	Grubbs, S. J. et al (2010)

	Council of Thailand on Professional Standards and Ethics B.E. 2548 (2005)		Policy Division, Council of Europe	2010) [Place of conduct: USA.]	G. (2007) [Place of conduct: Hong Kong]	[Place of conduct: Thailand]
Content	<p>Standard 1: Language and Technology for Teachers.</p> <p>Standard 2: Curriculum Development.</p> <p>Standard 3: Learning Management.</p> <p>Standard 4: Psychology for Teachers.</p> <p>Standard 5: Educational Measurement and Evaluation.</p> <p>Standard 6: Classroom Management.</p> <p>Standard 7: Educational Research.</p> <p>Standard 8: Educational Innovation and Information Technology.</p> <p>Standard 9: Teachership.</p>	<p>The standards from <i>NCATE</i> involve:</p> <p>Domain 1: Language</p> <p>Domain 2: Culture</p> <p>Domain 3: Planning, Implementing, and Managing Instruction</p> <p>Domain 4: Assessment</p> <p>Domain 5: Professionalism</p> <p>The <i>technology</i> standards involve:</p> <p>Goal 1: foundational knowledge and skills in technology for professional purposes</p> <p>Goal 2: integrate pedagogical knowledge and skills with technology to enhance language teaching and learning.</p>	<p>1. General competences</p> <p>1.1 <i>Declarative knowledge</i> (savoir)</p> <p>1.2 <i>Skills and know-how</i></p> <p>1.3 <i>'Existential' competence</i></p> <p>1.4 <i>Ability to learn</i></p> <p>2 Communicative language competences</p> <p>2.1 <i>Linguistic competence</i></p> <p>2.2 <i>Sociolinguistic competence</i></p> <p>2.3 <i>Pragmatic competence</i></p>	<p>NNETs should have the following qualities:</p> <p>1.Role model</p> <p>2.Liking:</p> <p>3 Learning difficulties:</p> <p>4.Accent :</p> <p>5.Grammar (grammar and knowledge of grammar)</p> <p>6.Teacher response</p> <p>7.Appearance (physical appearance)</p> <p>8.Prepare-ss</p>	<p>NNETs should have the following qualities:</p> <p>1.Ability to Use Students' Mother Tongue in Teaching</p> <p>2.Effective Pedagogical Skills</p> <p>3.Knowledge-able in English Language</p> <p>4.Positive Personality Traits</p>	<p>NNETs should have the following qualities:</p> <p>1. Classroom management</p> <p>2. Skills - English skills</p> <p>1.Grammar</p> <p>2. Vocabulary</p> <p>3. Pronunciation</p> <p>4. Reading</p> <p>5. Writing</p> <p>6. Speaking</p> <p>7. Listening</p> <p>- Teaching skills</p> <p>1 Making lessons easier</p> <p>2.Making lessons</p>

		<p>Goal 3: apply technology in record-keeping, feedback, and assessment.</p> <p>Goal 4: use technology to improve communication, collaboration, and efficiency.</p>			<p>more enjoyable</p> <p>3. Facilitating students to improve language skill</p> <p>4. Encouraging students to learn</p>
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Table 2

Descriptive Codes from the Excerpts of Observation

Classroom Observation Excerpts	Descriptive Codes
<p>English was used as the main language of instruction, but Thai was used sometime when greeting and discussing difficult concepts with students. Most teachers speak English fluently, especially a teacher from the Philippines who taught Methods of Teaching Literature in the English Classroom.</p>	Language
<p>Every teacher presented the concept of study, explained and gave examples about the content to students in the presentation step. In the Creation of English Teaching Projects class, the teacher summarized concepts of lesson plan design and presented the concepts using a PowerPoint presentation.</p>	Content

<p>Teachers made use of basic technologies such as a computer, a projector, a microphone, etc. in the presentation step of teaching. Every teacher summarized concepts of study for students to learn in a PowerPoint presentation and gave the students handouts while teaching.</p>	<p>Technology</p>
<p>Teachers designed activities that encouraged students to work both in groups and as individuals for the entire semester. In the Creation of English Teaching Projects class, students had to write a reflection piece to give feedback to the teachers after finishing each class.</p>	<p>Curriculum Development</p>
<p>Teachers started the lesson with a warm-up activity to call students' attention and finished the lesson by giving a conclusion before asking students to give feedback. The teacher, who taught Methods of Teaching Literature in the English Classroom, gave students a handout that presented an example of a short story before explaining how to teach the literature step by step using the story that he prepared. In the Creation of English Teaching Projects class, the teacher encouraged students to speak English by asking them to do a 'check-in' and 'check-out' activity.</p>	<p>Learning and Classroom Management</p>
<p>Teachers explained each concept of study slowly and asked students to repeat what the teachers said in order to check the students' understanding. Some teachers had to respond to the same questions that students asked more than three times. For example, the teacher in a Creation of English Teaching Projects class explained to students about how to design materials and rubric scores to match with the lesson plan three times in class and give examples from students' prior knowledge. Teachers also spoke Thai when students seemed not to clearly understand what he/she explains in English.</p>	<p>Psychology for Teachers</p>
<p>In the Methods of Teaching Literature in the English Classroom class, the teacher commented on the students' presentations and gave feedback. The teacher asked other students in class to give feedback and suggestions to their friends who were the presenters</p>	<p>Educational Measurement and Evaluation</p>
<p>Teachers wrote down comments during students' presentations. The teacher of a Creation of English Teaching Projects class asked students about problems and obstacles in doing their project. Then, she wrote down the students comments in her notebook. The teacher of a Creation of English Teaching Projects class assigned students to write a reflection paper to give feedback of learning and teaching in each class.</p>	<p>Educational Research</p>
<p>During class, teachers always said "listen to me" and asked "Did you hear me clearly in the back?" or "Do you understand?" to the students. Students came to talk with teachers when they had some questions to ask individually during and after class. Students always raised their hands and asked questions to teachers during classes.</p>	<p>Teachership</p>

Then, some preservice teachers who were asked to participate in the pilot study process of the questionnaire were asked to participate in the pilot test of the interview as well. In this step, only three preservice teachers were chosen randomly. They were interviewed for thirty minutes. The interviews were done on time, but it was found that some questions needed to be revised because the preservice teachers looked confused with the questions and asked the researcher to explain more details. Finally, the data from the respondents' responses that were found to have some problems were descriptively analyzed and revised.

After the questionnaire and the interview were developed based on the two main steps—*Expert validity and Pilot study*, the revised version of the two instruments was used in the main study.

Implementation

Stage two dealt with the implementation of the instruments of the main study. This stage comprised of three sub-stages: (1) conducting the main study,(2) analyzing the data and (3) reporting the findings. During the second semester of the academic year 2012, the questionnaire was distributed to one-hundred and five preservice teachers in the program who were randomly selected as a sample of this study. Then, three preservice teachers from the sample were randomly chosen to be interviewed. The quantitative data was gathered and analyzed by the descriptive statistics, the One-Way Analysis of Variance (One-Way ANOVA) and correlations. The qualitative data from the interview was transcribed and coded using content analysis method.

Findings

The findings of this study were presented into two sections: Preservice teachers’ perceptions of non-native English teachers and Preservice teachers’ perceptions of being a non-native English teacher.

Preservice teachers’ perceptions of non-native English teachers

Table 3

The mean scores and standard deviations of the perceptions of the preserviceteachersofnon-native English teacherclassified by domain.

Domain	Language	Content (3)	Technology (1)	Curriculum Development	Learning and Classroom Management	Psychology for Teachers (2)	Educational Measurement and Evaluation	Educational Research	Teachship
Results									
Mean(\bar{x})	2.86	3.01	3.06*	2.96	2.99	3.02	2.99	2.85**	2.97
S.D.	0.57	0.48	0.51	0.64	0.55	0.50	0.52	0.65	0.58
Meaning	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree

* *the highest mean score*

** *the lowest mean score*

In response to research question one, the findings show that the preservice teachers perceived non-native English teachers positively with regard to the nine domains of knowledge for being professional English teachers. Technology, Psychology for Teachers and Content gained higher mean scores than the other domains (see Table

3). However, the findings from the one-way ANOVA showed that there was not statistically different among the nine domains, $F(8, 936) = 1.526, p > .05$.

Additionally, the findings of the correlations among the nine domains found that the domain of Language and Learning and Classroom Management was very strong correlated, $r = 0.66, p = .01$ ($n = 105$).

Preservice teachers' perceptions of being a non-native English teacher

Table 5

The summary of mean score and standard deviation of the perceptions of the preservice teachers of being a non-native English teacher classified by domain

Domain	Language	Content	Technology (1)	Curriculum Development	Learning and Classroom Management	Psychology for Teachers (3)	Educational Measurement and Evaluation	Educational Research	Teachership (2)
Results									
Mean(\bar{x})	2.88	2.83	3.20*	2.96	2.99	3.02	2.99	2.66**	3.04
S.D.	0.56	0.58	0.66	0.64	0.55	0.50	0.52	0.74	0.52
Meaning	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree

* *the highest mean score*

** *the lowest mean score*

In response to research question two, the preservice teachers also perceived themselves positively with regard to the nine domains. They rated the domains of Technology, Teachership and Psychology for Teachers higher than the other domains (see Table 5). A one-way ANOVA testing for differences among the nine domains was statistically significantly different, $F(8, 936) = 6.61, p > .05$ (see Table 6). Knowledge of educational research is needed to be improved as it gained the lowest mean score in comparison to the domain of Technology, Psychology for Teachers, Educational Measurement and Evaluation, and Teachership.

Additionally, it was found that the domain of Educational Measurement and Evaluation, and Learning and Classroom Management was very strong correlated, $r = 0.64, p = .01$ ($n = 105$). On the other hand, the domain of Educational Research was not correlated with the domains of Language, Curriculum Development, Learning and Classroom Management, and Educational Measurement and Evaluation.

In conclusion, it was found that all nine domains of knowledge of non-native English teachers and the preservice teachers as being non-native English teachers were both perceived positively. The preservice teachers agreed that non-native English teachers have knowledge based on the nine domains. According to findings from the two objectives, Technology was the domain that achieved the highest mean score among

the nine domains. On the contrary, Educational Research achieved the lowest mean score.

Likewise, the findings from the semi-structured interview indicate that the preservice teachers perceived their non-native English teachers positively with regard to the nine domains of knowledge. They said that the teachers always use technologies integrated with teaching and learning in class. Most of the preservice teachers also agreed that they have good knowledge about technology. They feel comfortable using various kinds of technology in class. On the other hand, the preservice teachers revealed that they have less competence in educational research than other professional domains. They somewhat know how to conduct the educational research but they do not have much opportunity to practice.

Moreover, it was found that non-native English teachers were likely to have a problem about their native accent. The preservice teachers claimed that most non-native English teachers do not have native-like accents. However, it does not negatively affect students' learning. The preservice teachers affirmed that Thai teachers' accent is easy for them to understand. Finally, the preservice teachers stated that non-native English teachers can also be regarded as a good role model for EFL students. Non-native English teachers are good at teaching content and understanding of students' nature and needs. These are the advantages of being a non-native English teacher.

Pedagogical Implications

This study serves as one of the exploratory survey studies that investigates the preservice teachers' perceptions of non-native English teachers and being a non-native English teacher. It established a proposed framework for being a professional nonnative English teacher.

Based on the findings, it is suggested that the program should create courses that can support the preservice teachers' learning with regard to all nine domains of knowledge. The preservice teachers should have learned about language, content, technology, curriculum development, learning and classroom management, psychology for teachers, educational measurement and evaluation, educational research, and teachership when attending in the program. Also, the preservice teachers and non-native English teachers in the program need to improve the knowledge of Language, Curriculum Development, and Educational Research as they were perceived lower than the other knowledge domains. One way that may help to enhance the quality of the preservice English teachers is to prepare a course that integrates the nine domain of knowledge together. Professional Development of Skills for English Teachers course, for example, should be created in order to increase knowledge and develop essential skills for being a qualified English teacher of preservice English teachers.

In order to improve knowledge and the ability to use language, the program can support students and non-native English teachers with more opportunity to use

English. English camp or intensive English courses, for example, may help both preservice teachers and non-native English teachers in the program to improve all English skills. The more they have opportunity to use the language, the better they can acquire and use it effectively.

The knowledge about Curriculum Development and Educational research of non-native English teachers are also needed to be improved. The program should put a greater emphasis on these domains of knowledge in order to develop professional non-native English teachers for both local and global community. One way to gain this knowledge is to encourage and support the teachers in the program to participate in educational workshops, seminars or conferences. As the findings reveal that the preservice teachers lack of confident to do educational research themselves, the program should also create more courses for students to practice doing educational research. Borg (2010, 2013) recommended that 'engagement with research' by reading it and 'engagement in research' by doing it were the effective ways for language teachers to develop teaching potentials professionally.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education should pay more attention on the quality of English teachers in Thailand. Non-native English teachers should be received in the form of funds to do educational research or to participate in seminars in the country or international conferences about English Language Teaching (ELT). In addition to increasing the number of qualified English teachers, the Bureau of Teacher Education Personnel Development of Thailand should realize more on the importance of English teacher professional development by encouraging English teachers to participate in workshop trainings and seminars that helps to develop their profession.

Conclusion

The findings of this study shed light on the preservice teachers' perceptions with regards to nine domains of knowledge for being a professional teacher. The nine domains were summarized and framed based on the document analysis and the observation findings from the Thai context. According to the findings, the EFL preservice teachers agreed that non-native English teachers have quality for being a professional English teachers based on the nine domains of knowledge: Language, Content, Technology, Curriculum Development, Learning and Classroom Management, Psychology for Teachers, Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Educational Research, and Teachership. These nine domains are necessary for being a professional English teacher. It was found that Educational Research achieved the lowest mean score among the nine domains. Therefore, non-native English teachers and the preservice teachers are needed to put a greater emphasis on doing and learning about Educational Research. Non-native English teachers should be supported by providing funds to do research or participate in conferences about English Language Teaching (ELT).

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