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# Native and Non-native English Speaking ESL/EFL Teachers in Sweden: A Study on Students' Attitudes and Perceptions towards the Teaching Behavior of Native and Non- native English Speaking Teachers

"C" Essay

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**Abstract**

The aim of this study is to investigate whether upper-secondary school students, studying English as a foreign language (EFL) in Sweden, prefer to learn from Native English speaking teachers (NEST) as opposed to Non-native English speaking teachers (NNEST). Furthermore, the present study seeks to identify, from the EFL learners' perspective, why certain characteristics of both NNEST and NEST are felt to be more prestigious than others which in turn might affect the students' potential to acquire a desired identity.

**Keywords:** EFL in Sweden, affective attitudes, native vs. non-native English speaking teacher

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## 1. Introduction

Language acquisition is as much about ideals as it is about identity. In other words, students value the input they receive from their language teachers, which is an important resource for developing their individual characteristics. According to Saville-Troike, “as long as children are experiencing adequate L1 input interaction from people around them, the rate and sequence of their phonological and grammatical development does not appear to vary systematically according to its source, although children’s pronunciation is naturally influenced by the regional and social varieties or styles of the L1 which they hear” (2012, p. 34). This interaction takes the form of children mimicking ‘language samples’ provided by their parents, grandparents, older siblings, et cetera, in L1 learning while the L2 learner relies on models provided predominately by their teachers (through referral, guidance and example) and are exposed to the language via media. This then leads the discussion to debating what the ‘ideal model’ for the language learner is.

Even after years of groundbreaking studies conducted by researchers such as Medgyes (1994) and Braine (1999), it took almost ten years for new discussions to emerge from establishments such as the Non-native English Speakers' Caucus in the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organization in 2003 in favor of the Non-native English Speaker Teachers (NNEST). Authors were recognized for their colloquium on NNEST issues titled "Learning from Models of NEST/NNEST Collaboration" (Brady, et al., 2003)<sup>1</sup>, which illustrated that diversification in schools improves relationships between teachers and their students, by opening dialogues which were once isolated between NNEST and NEST groups. Eventually, these teachers began collaborating with one another more and worked off of each other’s strengths.

Additionally, after years of studies, discussions and research, it has been concluded that both groups of teachers bring certain advantages to the profession. However, in regards to the perceptions of the ideal model, the discussion shifts to the ‘perceived’ qualifications of the English language teacher (ELT). The ideal model is an individual who speaks the language at a high proficiency and the perceptions which affect the learners’ attitudes towards their own identities in the second language (L2) through foreign language learning. In addition to being a language learner, a person may have other identities based on their gender, social class, physical ability etc. and nothing expresses this identity more than the way one communicates those things that are

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.tesol.org/about-tesol/tesol-awards-grants/past-recipients-of-tesol-awards-and-grants/2003-2004-tesol-awards-and-grants-recipients>

desired by the individual. For example, opportunity and respect are two circumstances which can be advantageous to the skilled communicator. Based on the outcomes of studies similar to those mentioned, it can be argued that there is an inherent distinction between the teaching styles of the NESTs and NNESTs. However, at the same time, a number of stereotypes have been established, such as the native speakers' (NS) use of less L1 in the classroom than NNESTs', or NNESTs' tendency to be stricter in their grading assessments (Braine, 1999; Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Modiano states that, "traditional ELT [English Language Teaching] platforms for non-native speakers... promote native or near-native proficiency with students resistant to such educational goals, represent the failure of foreign-language education" (2009, p. 152). An important aspect to keep in mind is that the foreign language is being learned as an EFL or English as an international language (EIL) in Europe, not as a means of communicating with only NSs. Furthermore, studies involving ELT should be focused on the teacher's ability to instruct the language in multicultural contexts. For example, teachers can use the language in role-play activities that place the interlocutors in different countries such as Sweden or a United Nations committee meeting. Specifically, the current study takes advantage of research conducted by Benke & Medgyes which identified differences in the teaching behavior of these two groups and provides an interesting aspect to juxtapose Benke & Medgyes' study (1994). The goal of the study is not merely a verification of perception (whether those students' perceptions favor either teaching group), but also a tool which can be used by educators to positively influence their students by acknowledging diversity. In other words, teachers should acknowledge that there are differences in the varieties of the English language and these differences are acceptable depending on the situation.

### 1.1. Aim and purpose

Upper-secondary school students studying EFL in Sweden see differences in their NESTs/NNESTs. Therefore, the present study seeks to identify, from the EFLs perspective, why certain characteristics of both NNEST and NEST are felt to be more esteemed than others, which can affect the student's desire to acquire the language. Additionally, it seeks to highlight those features in an effort to aid the ELT in adopting 'best-practices' in order to improve EFL didactics. Practices such as seeing students as complex individuals with unique experiences and identities who are striving to improve their access to the world through language. The hypothesis put forward in this essay is

that the differences between NNESTs and NESTs are noticed and appreciated by their respective students.

Firstly, a literature review will underscore some prevalent schools of thought acquired over the years, as well as define some terms, regarding ELF, NESTs, NNESTs, ESL and EFL. Subsequently, a review of related research will be presented, with major focus on a study which tests the venerated reputation given to the NEST and provides a starting point for analyzing the current study (2013). Finally, as mentioned previously, the current discussion attempts to confirm or deny differences in the teaching behavior of NESTs and NNESTs by comparing current findings with those presented by Benke & Medgyes'. In doing so, it is believed that this study will support future studies aimed at making ELT more efficient by highlighting those characteristics valued by EFL students.

## 2. Background and previous research

Globalization has made English the ‘global contact’ language (lingua franca). In fact, English used as a lingua franca (ELF) is by far the most common form of English in the world today. That is why proponents such as Lundahl (2009), Wardhaugh (2010, pp. 404-407) and Modiano (2009) argue that English has become “a language of cultural importance, and in a growing number of fields, English is now considered in many quarters to be a basic requirement in the labor market” (Modiano, 2009: p.171). For this reason, it is being used all over the world and can no longer be said to ‘belong’ to countries such as England or the United States. Moreover, these countries are no longer the keepers of the “standard variety”, which refers to whatever form of the English language is accepted as a national norm in an Anglophone country, for the English language, as ‘foreign’ speakers have as much right of influence over the language as ‘native’ ones (Kachru, 2004; Modiano, 2009; Byram, 2006).

Researchers such as Modiano (2009, p.57; 2006, pp.28-30), Lundahl (2009, pp. 63; 83-85), Harmer (2007, pp. 132-133), Yule (2010, pp. 257-258), and Wardhaugh (2010, pp. 6-7) believe that the English language is the link between the emergence of new identities and social status. For example, an individual using an American variety may be regarded as a person who is “economical, regular, direct, democratic, tolerant...” (Modiano, 2009, p. 56), and in this sense, the variety of English which they speak helps define the speaker’s identity to others. “Learning foreign languages [in general] may be an experience of acquiring a new identity, although the methods of teaching [and who is teaching] may also actually prevent this” (Byram, 2006, p. 6). Byram means that with some ELT programs within Europe, there is no “classroom based” language learning influencing identities because the teachers are using a more prescriptive method which is limiting the communicative advantages of expressing oneself and using the entire breadth of the English language’s vocabulary in its proper context. For instance, teachers who focus on grammar and translations are not effectively teaching their students when certain constructions should be used. Therefore, when analyzing the acquisition of English, one must also consider the identity which the individual wishes to emulate. The issue at hand is much more complicated than this discussion can address, however, it can be argued that in most cases of L2 learning, the teacher is the primary source of comprehensible input. Nonetheless, there is a huge multi-media based influence that should be considered (music, film, TV, games, etc.), though the ELT will be the main focus of this study.

It is important to make a distinction between certain terms used in this discussion such as NS/NNSs and ESL/EFL, as these terms used in the wrong context could become confusing. Kachru's "Concentric Circles", as illustrated in Figure 1, designates inner-circle speakers of English as members of countries where L1 speakers of English are the majority, while outer-circle speakers only use the language predominately as an ELF within the country. For example, in Kenya, English is one of two official languages (Kiswahili being the other) and is used as the language of instruction in schools and

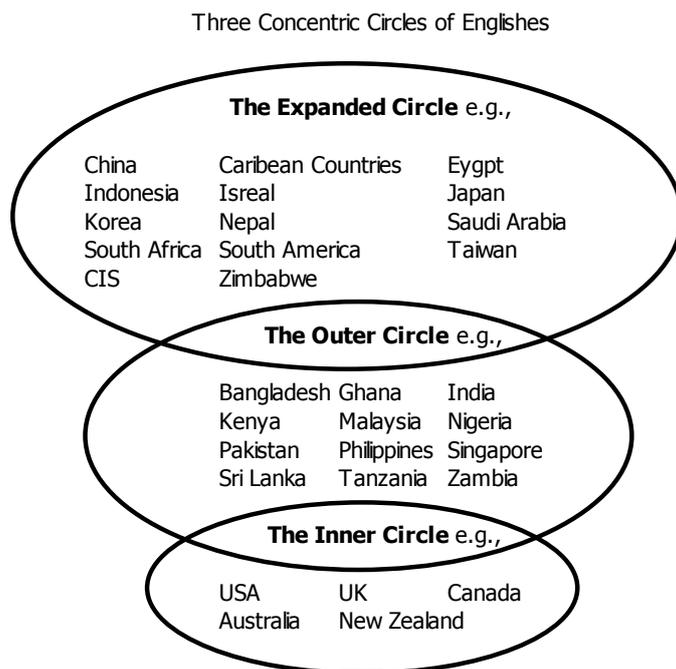


Figure 1. Braj Kachru's Concentric Circles

governmental matters. However, the majority of the country's population does not speak it as their L1. The expanding-circle is reserved for those L2 speakers using EFL primarily to communicate with individuals from other countries (outside of the parent country). Most of the challenges of defining the terms

mentioned are linked to the emergence of 'global English' and redefines Kachru's 'circles' from inner-circle prestige through language affiliations (such as countries who use English as a primary language) to inner-circle prestige acquired through speaker proficiency (Kachru, 2004). Globalization has essentially expanded the inner circle to include those individuals who speak the language proficiently regardless of what country they are from or which variety of English they speak. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

## 2.1. Defining the Native and Non-native English Speaker

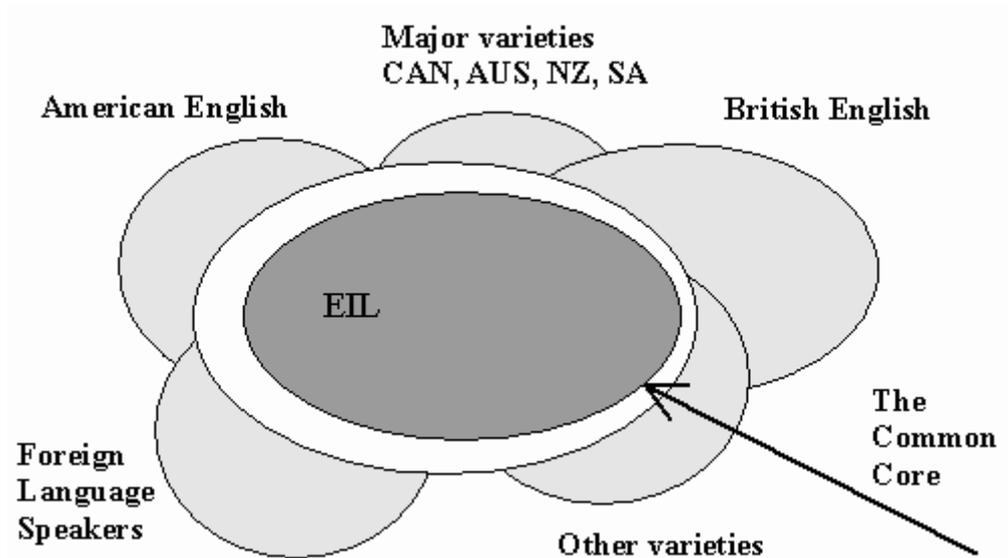
A "Native Speaker" (NS) of English in this discussion, is someone whose main or first language (L1) is English and who has learned it first as a child. It should be noted that the term NEST coincides with this description with the native speaker being a teacher of English. A "Non-native Speaker" (NNS) is someone who learned a language other than

English as a first language, and is learning/learned English as an additional language (L2). Concomitantly, NNEST coincides with this description. This definition does not, however, consider speakers of outer-circle varieties of English such as Indian or African Englishes to be NNSs. As mentioned previously, this study views English as a lingua franca regardless of which variety is spoken (or learned as an L1).

There is an innate quality to early language acquisition which researchers are not clear about. Littlewood theorizes it as “a special language- learning capacity and if this capacity declines at about the age of twelve, this is obviously significant in helping to explain why second language learning [SLL] (unlike first language learning) is often unsuccessful” (Littlewood, 1984, p. 7). Consequently, if there is no such ‘critical period’, then the cause of such failure must lie “in the nature of the learning situation” (Littlewood, 1984, p. 7), such as the skills/techniques used by educators (or lack of). There is, however, an argument supported by Moussu & Llorca, (in Paikeday, 2003) which states “that the native speaker ‘exists only as a figment of linguist’s imagination’ ...[and suggests] using the term ‘proficient user’ of a language to refer to all speakers who can successfully use it” (Moussu & Llorca, 2008, p. 315). This only supports Littlewood’s argument that it is the learning situation which makes one ‘native’ and in all actuality should be labeled ‘proficient’.

Attitudinal factors, discussed by Krashen, relate to two functions in second language acquisition: encouraged intake and openness to learn. He argues that these factors are influenced by motivational variables, which is believed to be very much induced by the students’ attitude towards their teachers. As Krashen writes, “they are simply factors that encourage acquirers to communicate with speakers of the target language, and thereby obtain the necessary input, or intake, for language acquisition” (2002, p. 21). In other words, positive attitudes towards the ELT, their personality, and their culture can enrich learning, while negative attitudes can impede it.

English as an international language (EIL) is best described using Modiano’s “Centripetal Circles of English as an International Language” as illustrated in Figure 2. In his model, the inner-circle is dominated by proficient speakers of EIL, which are those who speak English in contexts where international functionality is the main purpose. For instance, words such as “solicitor” and “barrister” are British English terms which the average NNS (or NS for that matter) would not comprehend as meaning “lawyer”, which is a much more widely used term (Modiano, 2009, p. 95).



*Figure 2.* English as an International Language (EIL) illustrated as those features of English which are common to all native and non-native varieties (from Modiano, 1999)

Lastly, McArthur's 'wheel model' (See Figure 3) gives a similar example of English language restructuring called 'World Standard English' and is suitably signified in 'written international English' (1987). This inner circle is followed by the next tier of language user which represents regional dialects and other developing localized standards. 'Standard' is defined here as that variety used by a group of people in their public discourse and is going through (or has gone through) the process of standardization, for example, when it is organized for description in dictionaries and 'coded' in such references. The outer tier of this model consists of those local varieties which are similar to the previously described tier, yet standardization has not taken place.

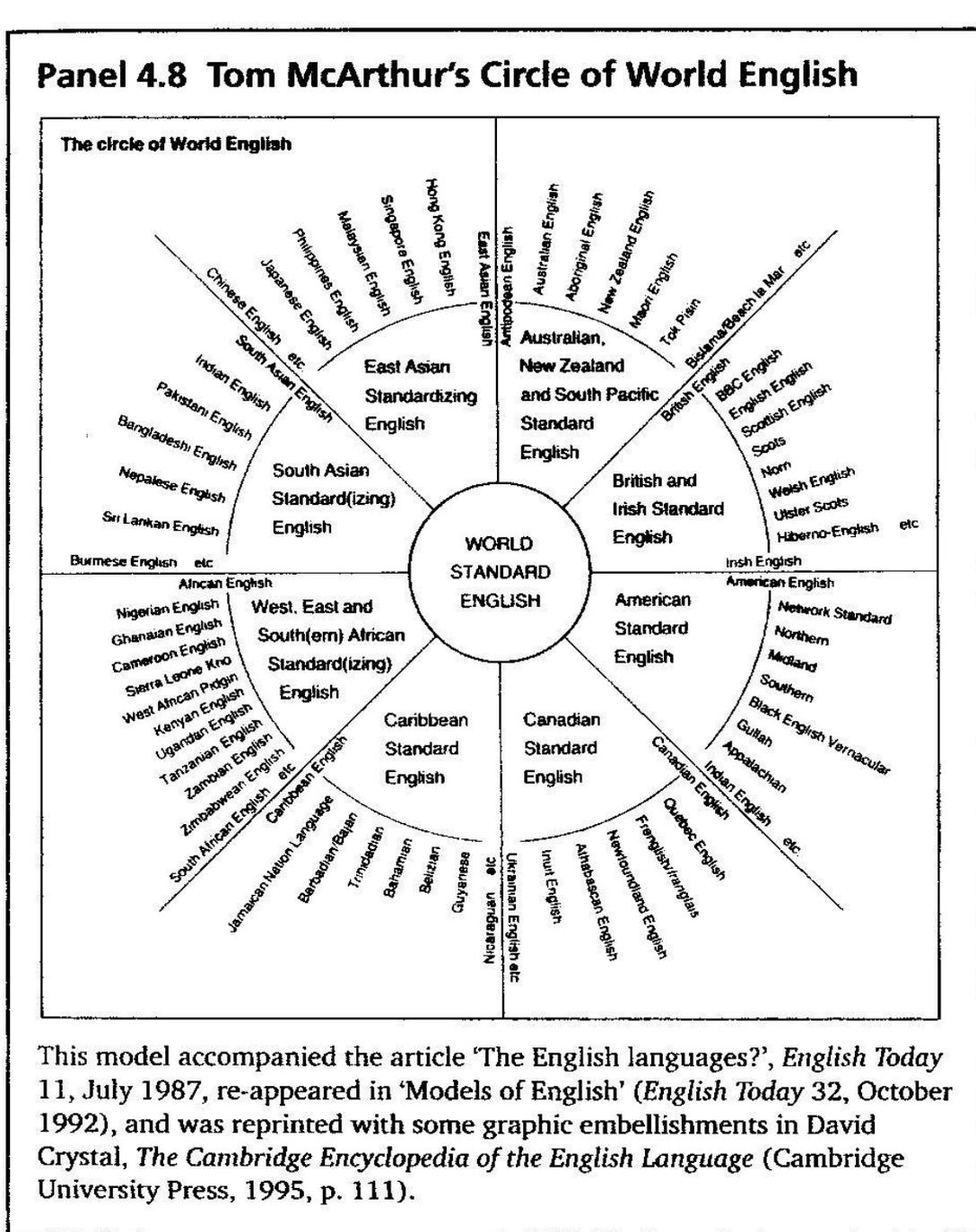


Figure 3. McArthur's Circle of World English

## 2.2 Defining English as a second/foreign language

'English as a second language' (ESL) is taught to international students or immigrants in English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada, England, Australia, or New Zealand. This definition can feel awkward when placed in context with 'outer circle' countries such as Puerto Rico, India or Kenya where English is an official language, and there are significant numbers of English speakers in these countries who use it on a daily basis for purposes other than international communication purposes.

‘English as a foreign language’ (EFL) is taught in non-English-speaking countries where English is not the official language such as Japan, China or Venezuela. However, as Modiano states, “the traditional definition of the foreign-language speaking speech community is now breaking down...because the increased use of English through globalization has made it difficult to differentiate between second language and foreign language speech communities” (2009, p. 38). Sweden is a prime example of such a ‘break down’.

ELT is in the process of transition from a prescriptive to a more communicative style of teaching where the language’s form is less important than its use in context and curriculum is more ‘student-centered’. The education system in Sweden is going through such a process of transition which respects the fact that acquiring information (language) requires a standard that allows the student to learn in their own way and be responsible for their own goals. This ‘standard’ is not to be confused with ‘standard variety’ but ‘standard methodology’. It may sound unpretentious, but when taking into account the diversity of students today, an equally diverse learning process must be incorporated. The Swedish curriculum for the compulsory education system 1994 (Lpf 94)<sup>2</sup> supports this by stating “[t]he school must let each individual find his/her unique distinctive character and thereby be able to participate in social life to give him/her the best freedom of responsibility” (Carlgren, Klette, Myrdal, Schnack, & Hannu, 2006, p. 310). The students’ identities have become a feature of social context which includes the status of not only their L1 but their L2 as well (especially in light of globalization factors).

Another aspect of identity which can affect SLA comes from the output side (or language used by the teacher) of the SLL spectrum, the language teacher’s identity. For the same reasons a learner would want to acquire EFL, the teacher is also motivated by status and is “more likely to strive for native speaking affiliation, as is evident for example in the struggle of World Englishes speakers for native speaker recognition” (Llurda, 2006, p. 268). Drawing on theory by Bourdieu (1991), the ‘linguistic marketplace’ assigns value to the types of language an individual speaks. In the progression which leads to the creation and authenticity of communication, Bourdieu comments on statements made by Georges Davy about the education system and the teacher’s merit within it:

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<sup>2</sup> (Skolverket, 1994)

...the function of the schoolmaster, a *maître à parler* (teacher of speaking) who is thereby also a *maître à penser* (teacher of thinking): ‘He [the primary school teacher], by virtue of his function, works daily on the faculty of expression of every idea and every emotion: on language. In teaching the same clear, fixed language to children who even speak various dialects or *patois*, he is already inclining them quite naturally to see and feel things in the same way; and he works to build the common consciousness...

(Bourdieu, 1991, p. 49)

Identity often becomes a central concern of teachers. By putting Davy’s statement in an up-to-date context, learning to reinforce student autonomy may not be about acquiring knowledge or even generating it, but more about transforming identity to that which is accepted by society. However, there is also a personal development focus as well. As teachers’ education (and education in general) is transitioning to autonomous learning practices, it is becoming more about seeing “teachers as individuals who develop their educational identities, as they attempt to develop their identities as autonomous learners” (Murray & Gao, 2011, p. 128). Thus, the issue of identity becomes a responsibility that all educators aspire to by becoming the most appropriate teacher for the need, instead of the most knowledgeable and capable one for the job. Therefore, it can be argued that the NEST is no more qualified to teach English on the grounds of their ‘native-ness’, since an NNEST can be more qualified on the grounds of their L1 affiliation with students. That leads the discussion to question whose identity is best suited to teach EFL.

### 2.3. Benke & Medgyes’ study on Differences between NNESTs and NESTs

Benke & Medgyes’ study (Llurda, 2006, pp. 195 - 215) is one of the first which challenges the idealized status of the NEST by “highlighting the benefits of being an NNEST” (Llurda, 2006, p. 196) and it was the principle source of secondary material used in the present study. One of the primary aims of their study was “to examine whether the differences as viewed by NS and NNS teachers respectively are in line with the learners’ perceptions” (Llurda, 2006, p. 196). These perceptions were based upon the differences in language proficiencies (NESTs are more proficient in the language), allocated roles in the language class (NNESTs are stricter on grammar) and teaching styles (NESTs are more casual) between NESTs and NNESTs. The study included 422 Hungarian students attending English classes in and around the city of Budapest. By

way of questionnaire, respondents were tasked with assessing their English teachers' characteristics by rating their own level of agreement with statements relating to their teachers' teaching style. These statements were specifically designed to elicit information about the students' perceptions of the teachers' 'classroom management' form and any perceived "advantages and disadvantages of the [NEST] or [NNEST]" (Llurda, 2006, p. 200).

Benke & Medgyes reported an "exceptionally high return rate (91%)" due to the fact that respondents were carefully selected and monitored closely in class (for immediate assistance). The main part of the questionnaire rated students' responses to perceived differences of their NNESTs and NESTs (this was done with the last set of miscellaneous statements as well). All of which was calculated for means and standard deviations on a 5-point Likert-type scale (explained in the next section).

As a result, the study revealed that "[NNESTs], on the whole, are [perceived to be] more demanding, thorough and traditional in the classroom than their [NEST] colleagues, who are more outgoing, casual and talkative...both groups of teachers were found to be...equally patient..." (Llurda, 2006, p. 204). In addition, it can be reasoned that neither group was observed to be better than the other on the grounds of their L1 or L2. In fact, the students appreciated their teachers' differences in this regard and displayed a significant desire to have both NEST and NNEST during a single term. The next section will discuss the methods used to conduct this analysis.

In summary, the literature and former study were reviewed and it was given that 'language sample' and 'ideal models' for L1/L2 acquisition are integral for language learning, however idealizes the view of NESTs (see Littlewood, 1984; Saville-Troike, 2012; Medgyes, 1994; and Braine, 1999). These ideals were challenged by theories of globalization and inner-circle prestige shifts, taking a more pluralistic stance by including members on the grounds of proficiency and not birth place (see McArthur, 1987; Kraschen, 2002; Kachru, 2004; Lundahl, 2009; and Modiano, 2009). Finally, Benke & Medgyes' study, shown in this section, also challenges the idealized status given to NESTs and highlights those features considered advantages in both NESTs and NNESTs. The next section will illustrate the method in which the current study was conducted and describe how the data was treated after its selection.

### 3. Method

As mentioned previously, the goal of this study was to identify characteristics of both NNEST and NEST which could affect the students' desires to acquire the language and highlight those features as a 'best-practices' methodology for ELT. Similar to Benke & Medgyes' study, the current study was designed to solicit responses from learners concerning their perceptions of their NNEST/NESTs. However, unlike Benke & Medgyes' analysis, this text takes the evaluation one step further by requesting responses which clarify if either group of teachers was preferred over the other and the current study's participants are exclusively Swedish high school students, whereas the latter study consists of mostly adults from Hungary. These statements will be grouped into categories which relate to the teachers' own use of the language, general attitude towards teaching and practices.

First, materials used in the study will be presented in Section 3.1, which will account for and describe the primary source used in this discussion; a questionnaire. Thereafter, in Section 3.2, the data and the procedure used for analysis will be explained. Finally, details concerning the participants of this study are presented in Section 3.3, to give a background of the individuals providing the samples for analysis, which is critical in identifying any possible influences relating to these characteristics (such as the number of NESTs experienced, grade level, etc.).

#### 3.1. Material

The primary material is a one-page (double-sided) questionnaire (See Appendix 1), (available in both Swedish and English) which begins with some brief instructions clarifying important terms used throughout the survey (for example, NEST; NNEST, etc.). The first two questions simply identify the NEST/NNEST's country of origin and their classifications as such. This information will later be used to group responses into two separate categories rating NESTs and NNESTs separately. By utilizing thirty-six statements chosen for rating learners' perceptions of their NS and NNS teachers of English, students were tasked with ranking responses to these statements using a five-point Likert-type scale. The ranking scale, 1 to 5, assess a "1" response as representing "strong agreement" and a "5" as "strong disagreement" (with a "3" depicting an "undecided" or "no" response). For example, Figure 3 illustrates a respondent's answers to Statements 1 and 2. In Statement 1, the student has agreed (but not "strongly") that their NEST/NNEST assigns a lot of homework, while they are undecided on whether or

not their teacher prepares conscientiously for the lesson, given in Statement 2. Further information will be presented in the next section about how these responses are actually analyzed.

Statement	Scale					Statement	Scale				
	A				D		A				D
1. Assigns a lot of homework	1	<del>2</del>	3	4	5	2. Prepares conscientiously for the lesson	1	2	<del>3</del>	4	5

Figure 3. Example of rated response to statements using a five-point Likert-type scale

The first twenty-six statements are focused on the teachers’ instruction style and practices, while statements twenty-seven through thirty-six solicit responses of a more aggressively positive or negative perception of their NEST/NNESTs. The last section contains information about the respondents themselves, including their ages, gender, the number of years they studied English, the number of NEST/NNESTs they had, and the current academic program they were enrolled in. This information was later used to analyze any differences in responses specific to a certain group of students sharing similar background characteristics.

As mentioned previously, Benke & Medgyes’ study was the principal secondary material used in the current study and many of the statements used in their survey were duplicated in the current survey. This was deemed an effective use of reference material, as most of the statements were relevant for this discussion and adequate validation of the questionnaire (such as pilot surveys with modifications) was already performed in their study. Moreover, some additional statements were added to the questionnaire (see Figure 4 and Tables 1 & 2) to augment clarification on some of the respondents’ views about their teachers.

Statement
10. Is the Ideal example of an English speaker
17. Explains difficult concepts well
22. Rarely makes grammar mistakes
24. Believes that translation is important
25. Uses Swedish to clarify unfamiliar terms
26. Is best suited for my learning needs

Figure 4. Statements not originally included in the B & M study

Specifically, these statements required the respondents to make more decisive judgments about their teachers which was somewhat lacking in the Benke & Medgyes study and was an attempt at making the current study a bit more decisive. It was believed that rated responses to Statements 10 would clarify Saville-Troike's theories of L1 input and the ideal model, illustrated in the introduction (2012). Statements 17 through 25 give additional opportunities to rate differences in specific teaching practices proposed by Benke & Medgyes (Llurda, 2006). Finally, Statement 26 is a clear indication of the respondents' perception of which teacher they thought was best for them, which was specifically chosen to verify the claim that differences between NNESTs and NESTs are appreciated and noticed by their respective students.

### 3.2. Procedures

As Dörnyei illustrates, this study can be considered mostly a quantitative one, because it involves data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data which is then analyzed primarily by statistical methods" (2011, p. 24). For example, it is quantitative in the sense that through the use of a 5-point Liker-type scale, students' responses are counted and converted into percentages, however a descriptive method of analysis was used and descriptive statistics are not advanced on the premise of probability theory (Dörnyei, 2011, pp. 213-215).

The survey was administered by the author of this discussion directly so that any questions about the questionnaire could be answered accurately without disrupting the integrity of the respondents' answers, as certain supervision could influence the students' responses. For example, due to the sensitive nature of some of the statements (negative responses towards their teachers), students were advised that participation in this study was voluntary and anonymous. Allowing the teachers who were being evaluated in this study to monitor its implementation would have been unethical and biased. Likewise, it was essential that the respondents understood that it was their perceptions which mattered most in their responses and empirical knowledge (verifiable fact) was not a vital requirement to make an acceptably rated answer. For example, most students would not be expected to know for sure whether their teacher "prepares conscientiously for lessons", however, most would be able say whether they 'perceived' it to be true or not.

The statements were grouped into the blocks mentioned at the beginning of this section: the teachers' own use of the language, general attitude towards teaching, and general practices. The percentages scores for NNESTs are illustrated on the left, while

NESTs are on the right for each response value (1-5). Percentages shown in **bold** text represent differences of 10% or more between responses for NNESTs and NESTs.

Grouping them in this fashion does two things; first, Benke & Medgyes' study was grouped in a similar matter and gives this study a basis in which to compare results. Again, their study measured differences between the perceptions of students and their NEST/NNESTs which this study uses to generally confirm the perceptions of EFL students in Sweden. These results can then be analyzed to identify if these traits are advantages or disadvantages for these teachers. Note that the method of combining ratings "1"/"2" as "agree" and "4"/"5" as "disagree" are used in all cases unless explicitly stated otherwise.

### 3.3. Participants

The respondents of the current survey totaled 178 students (109 respondents for NESTs and 69 respondents for NNESTs) from an upper-secondary school in Sweden. These included nine, 1<sup>st</sup> year; four, 2<sup>nd</sup> year; and two, 3<sup>rd</sup> year upper secondary school classes; totaling 15 classes in all. As illustrated in Table 1, these students had varying levels of English experience, differing levels of exposure to N/NNESTs, and were enrolled in different academic/trade programs. Originally, approximately 10% of the students (20 students total) had never been exposed to an NEST before, and for this reason, could not reliably compare them to the NNESTs they were exposed to. As a result, these samples were excluded from the study completely (the numbers presented previously exclude these 20) in order to minimize bias, as these students would not be able to compare NNESTs to NESTs.

Although there was a significantly greater percentage of female respondents than male, this was an unavoidable variation, as in Sweden, "a greater proportion of women than men complete their upper secondary education" (Swedish Institute, 2011). The study's subjects were nine English teachers in total, including five NNESTs from Sweden and four NESTs from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. With the exception of one teacher, an NEST who had less than four years teaching experience, all the others (including NNESTs) had over seven years of English teaching experience.

It should also be noted, as mentioned previously, that the survey was available in both Swedish and English, as 51 of students (mostly from other countries and attending the IB program) were more comfortable using English. This, in itself, could be viewed as a certain bias, due to the fact that all of the respondents did not speak Swedish as an

L1 and therefore may have regarded English as the more prestigious language. Additionally, these students would not have had teachers speaking Swedish to them in class. In turn, they could possibly have some prejudices against the NNEST as an ideal educator of English. However, it is more reasonable to argue that this factor made the study even more diverse and representative of the globalization phenomena happening all over the world today. Nonetheless, these group responses were accounted for separately and will be discussed further in the results section. Table 1 (on the next page) illustrates the characteristics of the respondents showing both count (frequency) and percentage (percent) of them.

		Frequency	Percent
Age of participant	15 to 19	173	97.19
	20 >	5	2.81
	Total:	178	100
Gender	Male	71	39.89
	Female	107	60.11
	Total:	178	100
Years of English studied	< 2	2	1.12
	2 to 4	18	10.11
	4 to 6	43	24.16
	7 >	115	64.61
	Total:	178	100
Approximately how many NNEST you have had:	1	15	8.43
	2 to 3	84	47.19
	4 >	79	44.38
	Total:	178	100
Approximately how many NEST you have had:	1	129	72.47
	2 to 3	38	21.35
	4 >	11	6.18
	Total:	178	100
Students who have had:	both NESTs & NNESTs	178	89.90
	only NESTs	0	0
	only NNESTs	20	10.10
Current school program	International Baccalaureate	51	28.65
	Vocational	43	24.16
	Academic-humanities	35	19.66
	Academic-sciences	22	12.36
	Academic-aesthetics	14	7.87
	Health & Technology	13	7.30
	Total:	178	100

Compared with the respondents from Benke & Medgyes' study, the major differences between the two studies were the level of language proficiency and age of

respondents, which are considerably higher in Benke & Medgyes' study. This included thirty-four percent of respondents over the age of twenty and over 60% considered to have upper intermediate levels of proficiency or higher (with 10 years or more experience) in English. The respondents in the current study providing these samples were selected for their diversity in age, gender, English language experience and academic program. Comparable to Benke & Medgyes' selection of respondents, "all of them had been exposed to more than a year of English language instruction offered by both NESTs and NNESTs... [Additionally], these students were at minimum lower intermediate level proficiency" (Llurda, 2006, p. 198). The next section will discuss the reliability and validity of this study.

### 3.4. Reliability & Validity

The concept of reliability is defined as "yielding the same or compatible results in different clinical experiments or statistical trials" (Farlex, 2013). In other words, it refers to the consistencies of data, ratings and observation in a specific study. Validity refers to "the entire experimental concept and establishes whether the results obtained meet all of the requirements of the scientific research method" (Shuttleworth, 2008) which insures that not only the right measuring tools are used, but that they are being used properly (Bailey, 1994, p. 67). However, it is the "quality of the interpretations and not of the test or the test scores" (Dörnyei, 2011, p. 50) which is important here. This discussion will focus primarily on two different validities: Internal and External. Dörnyei describes Internal Validity as the 'approximate truth' about conclusions one comes to in the causes of certain outcomes, while External Validity examines the extent to which we can generalize our findings to a larger group, to other contexts or different times (2011, p. 52). Furthermore, the results of an analysis are internally unacceptable if factors other than those expected to influence them are the cause of a particular response and externally invalid if the results only relate "to the unique sample or setting in which they were found" (Dörnyei, 2011, p. 52).

The current study has chosen a relatively diverse group of respondents and has taken care to account for those students who may produce biased responses. However, there are signs of external invalidity due to the fact that this study cannot be confirmed outside of high school students studying in Sweden, as Benke & Medgyes' study includes adults from Hungary. There are several other factors which could have influenced these results, including, personal bias towards certain teachers, individual personality clashes between student and teacher, environmental factors uncontrolled by

the teacher (for example, a lack of availability of proper learning material, et cetera), and the list goes on. These issues affect the studies internal validity because the outcomes would differ if any one of these factors were relevant. One of the methods used to address this issue was the decision to focus on the first twenty-six statements of the questionnaire, as they were less subjectively motivating and easier to qualify. To subjectively motivate means that these statements assume that respondents prefer one teacher over another, therefore soliciting a response that may or may not be relevant to the individual student's perceptions about their teacher. For example, Statement 26, "is best suited for my learning needs", in the context of this study, assumes that the student prefers their NNEST or their NEST. However, the student may prefer these teachers for reasons other than whether they speak English as a native language or not.

The fact that this study has been virtually duplicated from Benke & Medgyes' study is evidence of its external reliability, which is somewhat inconclusive since the current researcher was able to perform exactly the same survey, under similar conditions but with different results (see section 4.2). Furthermore, the Likert-type scale used in both studies is designed to measure the same 'target area' which in this study is the rated responses of each statement. "In psychometric terms this means that each [statement] on a multi-item scale (1-5 in this study) should correlate with the other [statements] (which have been grouped in the current study)...referred to as Likert's criterion of 'internal consistency'" (Dörnyei, 2011, p. 206). Internal Consistency Reliability then estimates the responses of the students in this study to estimate reliability. This study effectively judges the reliability of the questionnaire by estimating the consistency of responses of all the participants in the study where similar questions led to similar responses. The results gave a measurable unit which has been shown to be a reliable tool in the measurement of students' perceptions of their teachers' knowledge, abilities, attitudes and personality traits which was ideal for this study and a prime example of good internal validity. The next section will look more closely at these results and provide a more detailed analysis of the statements themselves.

#### 4. Results and discussion

In this section, the results of the survey will be presented along with an analysis of the data using the methods mentioned previously. Certain statements were more relevant to the goal of this study than others and are discussed in more detail. First, Section 4.1 compares the results for NNEST vs. NEST in the current study. Subsequently, the statements containing the more provocative declarations will be discussed at the end of that section. Next, Section 4.2 compares some of these results to the outcomes found in Benke & Medgyes' study. Lastly, in Section 4.3, as mentioned in the previous section, responses of students enrolled in the IB program were separated and then compared to all other students' responses in an effort to identify any biases that would prejudice this study. Table 2 illustrates the students' overall perceptions of their NNEST/NESTs. As mentioned in Section 3, these statements have been grouped into separate categories and will be analyzed in their respective blocks.

Table 2. Overall Responses for NNEST/NEST - from the students perspective

note: response percentages for NNESTs are shown on the left and NESTs on the right; differences of 10% or more are shown in **bold**

Statement	Strongly Agree		----	Strongly Disagree	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Assigns a lot of homework	12% - 6%	17% - 13%	30% - 31%	26% - 26%	<b>14% - 24%</b>
2. Prepares conscientiously for the lesson	36% - 28%	35% - 40%	20% - 25%	4% - 6%	4% - 1%
3. Corrects errors consistently	22% - 27%	22% - 26%	30% - 25%	14% - 14%	12% - 9%
4. Prepares learners well for exams	25% - 25%	36% - 47%	23% - 20%	12% - 7%	4% - 1%
5. Assesses my language knowledge realistically	20% - 28%	39% - 44%	29% - 22%	9% - 5%	3% - 2%
6. Relies heavily on course book	9% - 4%	22% - 19%	30% - 31%	23% - 24%	16% - 22%
7. Interested in learner's opinion	<b>20% - 54%</b>	33% - 31%	<b>22% - 9%</b>	17% - 14%	7% - 2%
8. Puts more emphasis on grammar rules	19% - 12%	30% - 28%	35% - 48%	12% - 9%	4% - 3%
9. Sticks more rigidly to lesson plan	<b>36% - 5%</b>	22% - 31%	30% - 39%	<b>9% - 22%</b>	3% - 3%
10. Is the Ideal example of an English speaker	<b>19% - 40%</b>	35% - 33%	<b>36% - 17%</b>	4% - 9%	6% - 1%
11. Assigns a large number of assignments	9% - 11%	28% - 31%	43% - 39%	14% - 12%	6% - 7%
12. Prefers traditional forms of teaching	9% - 5%	<b>33% - 17%</b>	41% - 39%	<b>16% - 31%</b>	1% - 9%
13. Applies pair work in class regularly	13% - 18%	26% - 23%	32% - 33%	22% - 20%	7% - 6%
14. Uses ample supplementary material	13% - 12%	25% - 30%	42% - 43%	16% - 12%	4% - 3%
15. Applies group work in class regularly	12% - 19%	<b>17% - 27%</b>	35% - 38%	<b>28% - 17%</b>	9% - 8%
16. Directs me towards autonomous learning	9% - 15%	<b>29% - 19%</b>	52% - 58%	6% - 6%	4% - 2%
17. Explains difficult concepts well	<b>32% - 45%</b>	<b>38% - 28%</b>	12% - 13%	13% - 9%	6% - 6%
18. Is happy to improvise	<b>14% - 50%</b>	33% - 26%	<b>29% - 17%</b>	13% - 5%	10% - 3%
19. Speaks most of the time during lesson	<b>22% - 38%</b>	25% - 34%	<b>38% - 19%</b>	12% - 5%	4% - 5%
20. Provides extensive information about the culture surrounding the English language	<b>16% - 38%</b>	26% - 30%	<b>36% - 21%</b>	16% - 8%	6% - 3%
21. Focuses on speaking skills	12% - 9%	<b>13% - 25%</b>	<b>52% - 42%</b>	23% - 20%	0% - 4%
22. Rarely makes grammar mistakes	<b>30% - 51%</b>	<b>36% - 26%</b>	22% - 14%	6% - 6%	6% - 4%
23. Is impatient	<b>19% - 3%</b>	<b>22% - 9%</b>	22% - 23%	<b>22% - 32%</b>	<b>16% - 33%</b>
24. Believes that translation is important	29% - 26%	35% - 31%	23% - 28%	4% - 13%	9% - 2%
25. Uses Swedish to clarify unfamiliar terms	13% - 14%	<b>17% - 30%</b>	28% - 28%	17% - 19%	<b>25% - 18%</b>
26. Is best suited for my learning needs	20% - 29%	30% - 39%	30% - 21%	10% - 9%	9% - 2%

#### 4.1. Student's attitudes towards NNEST/NESTs in the current study

The first block displays statements relating to the teachers' own use of English. In this module one gets a sense of the students' views on the ways their teachers' use the language themselves (see Table 3), which is an important aspect when considering their opinions concerning the "ideal" model and comprehensive "input" theories presented in the introduction.

*Table 3.* Statements relating to the teachers' own use of English

note: response percentages for NNESTs are shown on the left and NESTs on the right; differences of 10% or more are shown in **bold**

Statement	Strongly Agree		----	Strongly Disagree	
	1	2	3	4	5
10. Is the Ideal example of an English speaker	<b>19% - 40%</b>	35% - 33%	<b>36% - 17%</b>	4% - 9%	6% - 1%
19. Speaks most of the time during lesson	<b>22% - 38%</b>	25% - 34%	<b>38% - 19%</b>	12% - 5%	4% - 5%
22. Rarely makes grammar mistakes	<b>30% - 51%</b>	<b>36% - 26%</b>	22% - 14%	6% - 6%	6% - 4%

Although in both groups a larger percentage of students agreed that their teachers' were proficient speakers of the language compared to disagreeing, NESTs were rated much higher in percentage of "agree" responses. For instance, Statement 10 illustrates 54% of students agreed that their NNEST was the ideal example of an English speaker, while 73% agreed that their NEST was. Moreover, Statement 22 shows that 12% less students agreed that their NNEST "rarely makes grammar mistakes" than their NEST counterparts.

These findings seem to support a number of theories presented earlier in the discussion. It appears that L2 learners do have a sense of the "nature of linguistic input", as Littlewood states "the ideal input for acquiring a second language is similar to the input received by the child: comprehensible, relevant to their immediate interests, not too complex but not strictly graded either" (Littlewood, 1984, pp. 59-60). The key words here are "ideal" and "comprehensible" and although there are NNESTs whose English is proficient enough to be labeled "native-like", comprehensible input is related to more than just being a good language developer and curriculum content executor. Appropriate context is crucial and this type of contextual style of teaching is synonymous with the NEST. According to Benke & Medgyes' study, "with respect to [NESTs], learners spoke highly of their ability to teach conversation classes and to serve as perfect models for imitation" (Llurda, 2006, p. 207). However, contextual teaching is not affected by NEST status, as stated by Modiano:

In general, one can say that emphasis has shifted from a teacher-led and teacher-centered instruction aimed at assisting learners with that which will guide them in their pursuit of native-like proficiency in an idealized rendition

of native-speaker speech, to a learner-centered program which emphasizes learner autonomy, life-long learning, and the acquisition of communicative skills in multicultural contexts.

(2009, p. 172)

The next group of statements highlights those outlooks relating to the teachers' general attitude towards teaching (See Table 4). The statements give a general idea of how flexible, innovative, cautious, empathetic, and strict the students perceive their teachers to be.

*Table 4.* Statements relating to the teachers' general attitude towards teaching

note: response percentages for NNESTs are shown on the left and NESTs on the right; differences of 10% or more are shown in **bold**

Statement	Strongly Agree		----	Strongly Disagree	
	1	2	3	4	5
2. Prepares conscientiously for the lesson	36% - 28%	35% - 40%	20% - 25%	4% - 6%	4% - 1%
4. Prepares learners well for exams	25% - 25%	36% - 47%	23% - 20%	12% - 7%	4% - 1%
7. Interested in learner's opinion	<b>20% - 54%</b>	33% - 31%	<b>22% - 9%</b>	17% - 14%	7% - 2%
16. Directs me towards autonomous learning	9% - 15%	<b>29% - 19%</b>	52% - 58%	6% - 6%	4% - 2%
18. Is happy to improvise	<b>14% - 50%</b>	33% - 26%	<b>29% - 17%</b>	13% - 5%	10% - 3%
23. Is impatient	<b>19% - 3%</b>	<b>22% - 9%</b>	22% - 23%	<b>22% - 32%</b>	<b>16% - 33%</b>

One of the most interesting results in this segment are the responses to Statement 7; “interested in learner’s opinion”. Students responding with agreement concerning their NNESTs ranked at 53% (with 22% undecided). The reactions for NESTs were also in the agreement category, however with a much higher rating of 85% (with 9% undecided). NESTs were also seen as more willing to improvise and less impatient. There was not much to link these results to in the literature review. However, it does fall in the realm of ‘attitudinal factors’ discussed by Krashen (2002), as responses of agreement for the above statements could constitute positive attitudes towards one group over another. In this case, NESTs were generally seen as more casual, caring, and patient, which argued previously, has a positive overall effect on learning. The relation to identity will be discussed further in the next segment, as it relates to those statements as well.

Table 5 clarifies statements relating to the teachers’ general teaching practices, focusing on the importance they place on skills such as oral communication, grammar, and translations. It also provides insight on preferences regarding classroom activities, the use of teaching aids, L1 during lessons, assignments, and error corrections. All of these issues refer to the degree a communicative (interaction) or prescriptive (selective) styles of the teachers.

Table 5. Statements relating to the teachers' general teaching practices

note: response percentages for NNESTs are shown on the left and NESTs on the right; differences of 10% or more are shown in **bold**

Statement	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Assigns a lot of homework	12% - 6%	17% - 13%	30% - 31%	26% - 26%	<b>14% - 24%</b>
3. Corrects errors consistently	22% - 27%	22% - 26%	30% - 25%	14% - 14%	12% - 9%
4. Prepares learners well for exams	25% - 25%	36% - 47%	23% - 20%	12% - 7%	4% - 1%
5. Assesses my language knowledge realistically	20% - 28%	39% - 44%	29% - 22%	9% - 5%	3% - 2%
6. Relies heavily on course book	9% - 4%	22% - 19%	30% - 31%	23% - 24%	16% - 22%
8. Puts more emphasis on grammar rules	19% - 12%	30% - 28%	35% - 48%	12% - 9%	4% - 3%
9. Sticks more rigidly to lesson plan	<b>36% - 5%</b>	22% - 31%	30% - 39%	<b>9% - 22%</b>	3% - 3%
11. Assigns a large number of assignments	9% - 11%	28% - 31%	43% - 39%	14% - 12%	6% - 7%
12. Prefers traditional forms of teaching	9% - 5%	<b>33% - 17%</b>	41% - 39%	<b>16% - 31%</b>	1% - 9%
13. Applies pair work in class regularly	13% - 18%	26% - 23%	32% - 33%	22% - 20%	7% - 6%
14. Uses ample supplementary material	13% - 12%	25% - 30%	42% - 43%	16% - 12%	4% - 3%
15. Applies group work in class regularly	12% - 19%	<b>17% - 27%</b>	35% - 38%	<b>28% - 17%</b>	9% - 8%
17. Explains difficult concepts well	<b>32% - 45%</b>	<b>38% - 28%</b>	12% - 13%	13% - 9%	6% - 6%
21. Focuses on speaking skills	12% - 9%	<b>13% - 25%</b>	<b>52% - 42%</b>	23% - 20%	0% - 4%
24. Believes that translation is important	29% - 26%	35% - 31%	23% - 28%	4% - 13%	9% - 2%
25. Uses Swedish to clarify unfamiliar terms	13% - 14%	<b>17% - 30%</b>	28% - 28%	17% - 19%	<b>25% - 18%</b>

According to the current study, the most striking results are shown in Statement 9 which evaluates how rigidly the teacher sticks to lesson plans. Respondents agreed that 58% of NNESTs stuck with lesson plans while 36% of their NEST colleagues did the same. Also, when rating whether their teachers preferred traditional forms of teaching respondents were split, with NNESTs showing 42% agreement and NESTs showing 40% disagreement. These results show that NNESTs are perceived to be more traditional in their teaching style than NESTs. This and the proceeding segments will be discussed together after the last block has been presented.

It was quite unexpected to see that NESTs were perceived to have used the students' L1 during class more than the NNEST (See Table5; Statement 25), common sense (and the results of studies, such as Benke & Medgyes') would assume the opposite. Furthermore, not only did a majority of respondents agree with this statement, the majority disagreed that their NNEST used their L1 at all. However, this could be an indication of over-compensation by both groups. NESTs use more L1 to prove to the students that they can speak Swedish and the NNEST using L2 more often to prove that they are equally proficient in English. Nonetheless, there is a certain stigmatism for using L1 in the L2 classroom and Harmer describes the birth of the "Direct method":

The Direct method, which arrived at the end of the nineteenth century, was the product of a reform movement which was reacting to the restrictions of Grammar-translation. Translation was abandoned in favour of the teacher and the student speaking together... Crucially (because of the influence this has

had for many years since), it was considered vitally important that only the target language should be used in the classroom... a reaction against incessant translation, but allied to the increased number of monolingual native speakers who started, in the twentieth century, to travel the world teaching English...

(Harmer, 2007, pp. 63-64)

However, after several decades, it seems as though these “no-L1” practices have eased a bit. Besides the obvious reasons for using the L1 in the L2 classroom (for example, lower level competency, explaining difficult concepts, etc.), another purpose could be rooted in the “identity” theory discussed earlier. As Harmer states, “it seems highly probable that our identity is shaped to some extent by the language or languages we learn as children” (Harmer, 2007, p. 132) and ‘banning’ L1 completely would essentially be suppressing the students’ characters which may be counterproductive in such a communicatively based school subject.

The last block highlights attitudes towards teaching culture and is a social aspect of identity building which not only connects the EFL learner to a language community viewed as offering a more positive character, but also makes it easier to use the language in the proper context.

*Table 6.* Teachers' attitude towards teaching culture as it relates to the language

note: response percentages for NNESTs are shown on the left and NESTs on the right; differences of 10% or more are shown in **bold**

Statement	Strongly Agree		----	Strongly Disagree	
	1	2	3	4	5
20. Provides extensive information about the culture surrounding the English language	<b>16% - 38%</b>	26% - 30%	<b>36% - 21%</b>	16% - 8%	6% -3%

There was just one statement relating to this category and both groups were recognized as providing extensive information about the culture surrounding the English language, with NNESTs rating 42% agreement and NESTs 68%. These results come as no surprise assuming that teachers teach what they know and the typical NNEST would not be expected to have as much knowledge of a particular English speaking culture as an NEST would.

Harmer & Modiano’s “communicative approach” (H, 2007: pp.69-71; M, 2009: pp.171-176) gives a good example of how combining cultural aspects with real life communicative situations help students relate with the language they are speaking. The activities are truly communicative because the students are usually encouraged to talk about something they are interested in in real life and globalization (in this case, Americanization) is often the source of such interests. For example, styles of music,

MTV, fast-food, video games, and Internet based social networks are all products of the United States. Students might role-play and simulate their favorite TV show which represents a 'meaning-focused' communicative task. As Modiano writes, "the very goals of the instruction are based on learners' preferences and needs as opposed to the mastering of a form and structure defined by those who believe that a prescriptive standard, by default, is a superior form of language" (2009, p. 172). Likewise, it has been shown in the current study and in Benke & Medgyes' study that NESTs are perceived to use a less prescribed instruction than NNESTs (See Tables 4 & 5). Again, this unstructured and casual style has a relatively uncontrolled range of language uses and is often best handled by the NEST, as students will need a teacher who can respond to a wide variety of language problems which are based on unorthodox contexts. However, the delineation is far more difficult to explain than what is designated above, because an individual has their own partialities in everything. This includes their taste in teachers. Benke & Medgyes describe it best in their study by stating "it often occurred that a feature highly appreciated by one learner was seen as a weakness by another. In addition, learners often express their views in crude and emotional terms..." (Llurda, 2006, p. 207).

Statements twenty-seven through thirty-six contain the most suggestive declarations in the entire survey (See Table 7). However, Statement twenty-five would prove to be the deciding factor in determining whether or not students would prefer either group of teachers in English. It simply states, "I would be ready to trade a NNEST for a NEST any time". Surprisingly, 52% of all students agreed with this statement; and as the table illustrates, 27.8% were undecided (leaving a mere 20.2% to disagree). This is compelling evidence that NESTs, according to this study, are preferred over NNESTs. However, Statement 36 counterbalances this somewhat in support of a 'good' teacher in general.

*Table 7. Overall responses for more provocative statements*

Statement	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		
	1	2	3	4	5
27. A NNEST can give more help to a beginner	25,25%	22,22%	29,80%	14,14%	8,59%
28. NESTs teach speaking skills/conversation more effectively	41,92%	24,75%	22,73%	6,06%	4,55%
29. In an ideal situation both NEST and NNESTs teach you during a school term	22,22%	21,72%	38,89%	8,59%	8,59%
30. It is essential that everything should be in English in an English lesson	20,71%	34,85%	22,22%	12,12%	10,10%
31. I wish I only had NNEST of English	9,09%	8,08%	27,27%	15,66%	39,90%
32. There is no harm in the teacher using Swedish now and then	40,91%	22,73%	25,76%	7,58%	3,03%
33. It is important that we should be able to translate	51,52%	21,72%	17,68%	5,05%	4,04%
34. NESTs should teach at a more advanced level	6,57%	24,24%	42,93%	13,64%	12,63%
35. I would be ready to trade a NNEST for a NEST any time	32,32%	19,70%	27,78%	8,08%	12,12%
36. In language learning, it does not matter what the teacher's native language is, as long as they are a good teacher	52,02%	19,19%	21,72%	5,56%	1,52%

In response to the possible prejudices towards the NNESTs by non-L1 Swedish speaking students of the IB program, ratings for this group were separated from the other respondents to see if, in fact the overall percentages changed in any way. Intriguingly, four statements showed significant differences in response percentages. Table 8 (next page) illustrates those statements that were affected, with the top chart in the table displaying the original percentages, and the bottom showing percentages with the IB students' ratings omitted. Those percentages exhibiting a 10% difference or more are shown in bold italics.

*Table 8.* Variable responses between IB vs. other programs

Original percentages including IB (NNESTs' ratings are shown on the left and NESTs' on the right)

Statement	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		
	1	2	3	4	5
15. Applies group work in class regularly	12% - 19%	17% - 27%	35% - 38%	28% - 17%	9% - 8%
18. Is happy to improvise	14% - 50%	33% - 26%	29% - 17%	13% - 5%	10% - 3%
19. Speaks most of the time during lesson	22% - 38%	25% - 34%	38% - 19%	12% - 5%	4% - 5%
22. Rarely makes grammar mistakes	30% - 51%	36% - 26%	22% - 14%	6% - 6%	6% - 4%

Original percentages omitting IB

note: variations of 10% or more in ***bold italics***

Statement	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		
	1	2	3	4	5
15. Applies group work in class regularly	12% - 10%	17% - <b><i>16%</i></b>	35% - 34%	28% - <b><i>28%</i></b>	9% - 8%
18. Is happy to improvise	14% - <b><i>31%</i></b>	33% - <b><i>36%</i></b>	29% - 26%	13% - 5%	10% - 2%
19. Speaks most of the time during lesson	22% - <b><i>28%</i></b>	25% - 38%	38% - 24%	12% - 7%	4% - 3%
22. Rarely makes grammar mistakes	30% - <b><i>34%</i></b>	36% - 33%	22% - 22%	6% - 9%	6% - 2%

When responding to Statement 15, “applies group work in class regularly”, the ‘omitted’ chart illustrates that students agreed 11% less and disagreed 11% more in regards to their NESTs. Statement 18, “is happy to improvise”, saw 19% less “strongly agree” and 10% less “agree” response rating. Statement 19, “speaks most of the time during lessons” had 10% less “strongly agree” responses and Statement 22, “rarely makes grammar mistakes” revealed a 17% decrease in the “strongly agree” category. It would be extreme to say that the variations of these four statements biased the results of the entire study, however, it does show that a significantly greater number of IB program students feel that their NESTs possesses these traits than those of the other programs. A closer examination would be required to formulate a possible hypothesis for this issue, if in fact it is a phenomenon which is group specific and not individual teacher specific.

It should also be mentioned that although there were some very clear responses in favor of the NEST as being the preferred choice of over half of the respondents (67% would “trade their NNEST for an NEST”), not including IB students, there was a greater contradiction to these results. The last question of the questionnaire, Statement #36 says; “In language learning, it does not matter what the teacher's native language is, as long as they are a good teacher” and 71.2% of the respondents agreed with this statement. This result could possibly confirm one or more biases mentioned previously: As mentioned previously, personal bias towards certain teachers, individual personality clashes between student and teacher, et cetera, have nothing to do with the NEST/NNEST debate. It can be assumed that respondents were willing to trade “their” NNEST because they simply felt the teacher was not as “good” as they could be. In other words, a percentage of the respondents would have had to agree with both

statements and that would be a contradiction of perceptions; leaving only a biased response as an explanation for the differences.

#### 4.2. Comparison of Results with Benke & Medgyes' study

This next section focuses on some of the differences in results between Benke & Medgyes study and the current. Initially, there was one very significant difference observed in comparing statements in the first block. Specifically, Statement 19, "speaks most of the time during lessons", illustrated in Benke & Medgyes' study that students' responses for NESTs were inconclusive, yet in the current study 72% agreed with this statement. Furthermore, a majority of students in Benke & Medgyes study, when rating their NNESTs, disagreed by 63% while the current study showed a mere 16%. In other words, respondents in the current study felt that not only did their NESTs, but also their NNESTs speak more often during lessons than those of the BENKE & MEDGYES study. This could be an indication that the teachers of the current study were perceived as being more confident in their own English ability. It would be interesting to test this theory. However, there are a number of factors which could account for this variation, including the fact that the former study was conducted in 1994 when teachers' programs in Hungary had only recently conducted reforms which required teachers to be more proficient in English (Alderson, 2001).

The segment of statements analyzing teachers' general attitudes towards teaching also showed some noteworthy differences. Statement 4, "prepares learners well for exams", revealed that in Benke & Medgyes' study 51% disagreed that their NESTs did so, while the current study showed 72% agreed. Again, Benke & Medgyes' study was conducted in 1994 (when Hungary was not a member of the EU) and two years before the development of an "in-service course to prepare teachers for innovation in English language examinations [as a] part of a large program of reform of school-leaving examinations in Hungary (which was started by the Ministry of Education in 1996)" (Alderson, 2001). This came on a wave of reforms which witnessed a larger influx of new and possibly inexperienced NESTs into the Hungarian school system as well. Next, Statement 23, "is impatient", exposed a discrepancy in views of the NNEST, which 76% of students in the former study disagreed with. Ratings for this statement in the present study were inconclusive with 43% agreement and 38% disagreement. There was no apparent explanation for these differences and further research would be required to give an acceptable account of this discrepancy.

Finally, when comparing statements in the block of statements relating to the teachers' general teaching practices, Statements 1, 8 and 9 demonstrate significant differences as well. Responses for NNESTs in regards to the statement, "assigns a lot of homework", exhibited an overwhelming majority (77%) of students agreeing in Benke & Medgyes' study, while in the current study most indecisively disagreed (40%). Concurrently, the statement, "puts more emphasis on grammar rules" in the former study had 78% of students disagreeing that their NESTs displayed this characteristic, while in the current study, students thought that both NNESTs and NESTs (49% and 40% respectively) focused on grammar rules. Lastly, in Benke & Medgyes' study, responses to the statement, "sticks more rigidly to lesson plans", were inconclusive for NNESTs, though NESTs had 56% disagreement. In this study, it was the NESTs who had inconclusive results and 58% agreed that the NNESTs stuck more rigidly to lesson plans. Again, further research is required to justify these variations in responses. Nevertheless, one thing is evident; there are clear "perceived" differences in the teaching practices of both groups in both studies.

## 5. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to investigate perceptions of EFL/ESL students of their NEST/NNESTs. Again, the hypothesis put forward in this essay is that the differences between NNESTs and NESTs are noticed and respected by their respective students. It is believed that educators can use this information to positively influence their students by acknowledging that there are some differences in each group that can be viewed as advantages and disadvantages. This study revealed these differences in perceptions of upper-secondary school students studying ESL/EFL (specifically in Sweden).

Littlewood and Saville-Troike's "language sample" theories for L1 learning was used as a starting point to imply that learners of any language need adequate models to simulate in order to acquire the desired L1 or L2 proficiently (L, 1984; S-L, 2012). This raised the question of what model is perceived to be ideal for L2 learning, the NEST or the NNEST. Researchers such as Medgyes, Braine and Littlewood argue that both groups bring certain advantages and disadvantages to the profession (M, 1994; B, 1999; L, 1984). However, the idea continues to be challenged as globalization and individual identities come into the discussion.

Following Lundahl and Modiano (L, 2009; M, 2009), English as a lingua franca is the product of globalization and as borders between different cultures are disappearing, so are the borders that once held English to a "standard" controlled by "inner-circle" countries such as Britain and the United States (Kachru, 2004). This perspective then challenges theories such as Kachru's "inner-circle" prestige ideology and assumes a more pluralistic stance as inner-circle members are measured by proficiency, not birth place.

After defining the terms NEST, NNEST, ESL, and EFL, it became apparent that the terms themselves become major obstacles in perceptions held by English language learners. The "intranational" (Modiano, 2009) use of English across the globe in education, and business makes it difficult to define ESL and EFL (among other issues). As mentioned previously, English is the language of communication and "foreign" is no longer a suitable classification for the lingua franca. In other words, the traditional definition of foreign language is breaking down, leaving it increasingly difficult to distinguish a second language speaker from a foreign language speaker.

Benke & Medgyes' study challenged the idealized status bestowed upon the NEST and sought to highlight the advantages of both NEST and NNEST. Ultimately, their study showed that both groups are on equal terms when evaluating their total

worth. Although each group was perceived to have their own particular ‘style’, which in some categories gave one an advantage over the other, they concluded that these differences did not make one better than the other.

In an attempt to validate the former study, the present research revealed some interesting, yet contradictory results. Unlike Benke & Medgyes’ study, the current study showed some significant differences of perception in respondents for their NEST/NNESTs. The results of the current study do correspond with Benke & Medgyes’ study and confirm that students do in fact see differences between their NESTs and NNESTs. A small majority of students illustrated that even though they would “trade their NNEST for an NEST”, the vast majority felt that it did not matter if the teacher was native or non-native “as long as they were good teachers”. However, the globalization of the language is causing a shift towards a more communicative style of ELT, which the NEST is still perceived to be in the best position to accomplish. Subsequently, the hypothesis of this study has been confirmed that the differences between NNESTs and NESTs are noticed and esteemed by their respective students as advantages.

In conclusion, as Littlewood states, “we are still a long way from being able to pinpoint the precise features of intersections between learners and teachers, or between learners and native speakers, which cause learning to take place most effectively” (1984, pp. 97 - 99). This study aimed to supplement previous research by widening the scope of sampled respondents to include high school students and provide a localized version of this research in Sweden. Further studies are encouraged in order to focalize exactly where this “intersection” exists and break through the barriers of L2 learning by focusing on the true gate-keepers of the language: our teachers, the shapers of identity.

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## Appendix 1. Student Questionnaire

### Perception of My English Teacher Survey

Please answer the following questions about your teacher’s general characteristics. Just to clarify some of the terms used in this survey, Native English speaking teachers (NEST) are those whose first (native) language is English; Non-native English speaking teachers (NNEST) are those who have learned English in addition to their first language. “Autonomous learning” means students take more responsibility for what they learn, encourages and needs peer support and cooperation, and empowers students to find what techniques work for them (i.e. Uninhibited computer and internet use, classroom activities decided by the student, etc.) :

I. What country is your English teacher from?

II. Your English teacher is a...  NEST  NNEST  Not sure

For each item identified below, circle the number to the right that best fits your level of agreement of the statement in regards to your English teacher. Use the scale as a reference, with “1” representing strong agreement and “5” strongly disagreeing to the statement.

Statement	Scale					Statement	Scale				
	A g r e e	-----	D i s a g r e e	A g r e e	-----		D i s a g r e e				
3. Assigns a lot of homework	1	2	3	4	5	4. Prepares conscientiously for the lesson	1	2	3	4	5
5. Corrects errors consistently	1	2	3	4	5	6. Prepares learners well for exams	1	2	3	4	5
7. Assesses my language knowledge realistically	1	2	3	4	5	8. Relies heavily on the course book	1	2	3	4	5
9. Is interested in learners’ opinion	1	2	3	4	5	10. Puts more emphasis on grammar rules	1	2	3	4	5
11. Sticks more rigidly to lesson plan	1	2	3	4	5	12. Is the ideal example of an English speaker	1	2	3	4	5
13. Assigns a large number of assignments	1	2	3	4	5	14. Prefers traditional forms of teaching	1	2	3	4	5
15. Applies pair work regularly in class	1	2	3	4	5	16. Uses ample supplementary material	1	2	3	4	5
17. Applies group work regularly in class	1	2	3	4	5	18. Directs me towards autonomous learning	1	2	3	4	5
19. Explains difficult concepts well	1	2	3	4	5	20. Is happy to improvise	1	2	3	4	5
21. Speaks most of the time during the lesson	1	2	3	4	5	22. Provides extensive information about the culture surrounding the English language	1	2	3	4	5
23. Focuses primarily on speaking skills	1	2	3	4	5	24. Rarely makes grammar mistakes	1	2	3	4	5
25. Is impatient	1	2	3	4	5	26. Believes that translation is important	1	2	3	4	5
27. Uses Swedish to clarify unfamiliar terms	1	2	3	4	5	28. Is best suited for my learning needs	1	2	3	4	5

**(continued Appendix 1.)**

**PERCEPTION OF MY ENGLISH TEACHER SURVEY**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements :

Statement	Scale					Statement	Scale				
	A g r e e	-----	D i s a g r e e	A g r e e	-----		D i s a g r e e				
29. A NNEST can give more help to a beginner	1	2	3	4	5	30. NESTs teach speaking skills/conversation more effectively	1	2	3	4	5
31. In an ideal situation both NEST and NNESTs teach you during a school term	1	2	3	4	5	32. It is essential that everything should be in English in an English lesson	1	2	3	4	5
33. I wish I had only NNEST of English	1	2	3	4	5	34. There is no harm in the teacher using Swedish now and then	1	2	3	4	5
35. It is important that we should be able to translate	1	2	3	4	5	36. NESTs should teach at a more advanced level	1	2	3	4	5
37. I would be ready to trade a NNEST for a NEST any time	1	2	3	4	5	38. In language learning, it does not matter what the teacher's native language is, as long as they are a good teacher	1	2	3	4	5

**Choose the answer which is most appropriate for you by marking the respective box with an "X":**

III. Age of respondent:	<input type="checkbox"/> 15 -19	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 >		
IV. Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female		
V. Years of English studied:	<input type="checkbox"/> < 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 >
VI. Approximately how many NNESTs you have had:	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 >	
VII. Approximately how many NESTs you have had:	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 >	
VIII. Current upper-secondary school program:	<input type="checkbox"/> IM <input type="checkbox"/> RL <input type="checkbox"/> VO <input type="checkbox"/> FT/IN <input type="checkbox"/> IB <input type="checkbox"/> SA <input type="checkbox"/> NA <input type="checkbox"/> BF <input type="checkbox"/> BA <input type="checkbox"/> ES			

NNEST = those who have learned English in addition to their first language

NEST = those whose first (native) language is English

**Thank you for your help!**