

*“Student and Teacher Perceptions of Native and Non-native English Speaking
Teachers in the Lebanese Context”*

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To
The University of Exeter
School of Education & Lifelong Learning

For the degree of
Doctor of Education in TESOL

Submission date
January, 2013

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Ziad Hadla
Signed:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to thank the many people who made this thesis possible.

This work wouldn't have been possible without the support and encouragement of my supervisors, Dr. Li Li and Dr. Jill Cadorath. I would like to gratefully and sincerely thank them for their guidance, understanding, and most importantly patience during my graduate studies with University of Exeter. With their great efforts to explain things clearly and simply, they helped me to make this work fun for me. Throughout my thesis-writing period, they provided me with encouragement, sound advice, and lots of good ideas.

I would also like to thank Dr. Salah Troudi for his continuous guidance, invaluable contribution, dedication, remarks, and assistance.

Many thanks are also extended to the teachers of the participating universities for their cooperation, patience, and moral support. I am very indebted as well to the participating students, for this work would have never been possible without their cooperation.

I wish to thank my brothers, Tarek and Walid, my sister Rola, and my dearest fiancé Rana for motivating me to complete this work.

Lastly, and most importantly, I wish to thank my parents, Rafka Elsayed and Salim Hadla. They bore me, raised me, supported me, taught me, and loved me. To them and to all the people who love me I dedicate this thesis.

ABSTRACT

While most of the teachers of English around the world are non-native speakers, numerous cases of discrimination against non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) have been reported in the literature (Braine, 1999). The present study examines the perceptions of students, native English speaking teachers (NESTs), and non-native English speaking teachers towards NESTs and NNESTs in three Intensive English Programs (IEPs) from three universities in the Bekaa governorate of Lebanon. The study examines the similarities and differences between the perceptions of teachers and students and those of NESTs and NNESTs towards the definition of the labels NEST and NNEST, learning with NESTs and NNESTs, strengths and weaknesses of each of the two groups, and classroom behavior and responsibility. Finally, the study examines students' and teachers' perceptions regarding NESTs' and NNESTs' personal interactions with their students. The study administered Likert-scale questionnaires and semi-structured interviews for teachers and students. The findings revealed that for both groups, teachers are considered native if they grew up in a native speaking country and if they carry any of the accents of the countries of the "middle" (Kachru, 1982). The findings also showed that NESTs are better teachers of oral skills, such as pronunciation, listening, and speaking whereas NNESTs are perceived as better teachers of grammar and culture, more capable of predicting students' difficulties, and more empathetic to the needs of students. Both groups also agreed that NESTs vary their use of materials more than NNESTs do and that NNESTs communicate better with students because they share their culture and first language and because they are more empathetic with them.

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