

BEYOND FALLACIES: STRENGTHS AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR ENGLISH TEACHING PROFESSION IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: This study was motivated by historical shifts from the 'fallacies' of identifying the best teacher of English between the two groups to exploring their potential if such teachers joined in team teaching. The purpose of this study was to identify a) the top three language skills that pre-service English teachers believed would improve if taught by native English speaking teachers (NESTs) or Indonesian English teachers (IETs), as well as b) the priority list of qualifications that they should satisfy. The quantitative results of a close-ended questionnaire administered to 186 pre-service English teachers at an Indonesian university revealed that respondents consider NESTs to be good models for teaching oral-aural skills. On the contrary, Indonesian English teachers should offer greater assistance to students in teaching written skills. For the second objectives, our findings showed that our respondents shared that the English teaching profession should be treated fairly. Both NESTs and Indonesian English instructors must have appropriate educational backgrounds, and teaching experience is highly appreciated. This study emphasises the importance of education policy that focuses on practical actions, such as incorporating intercultural competence training for NESTs and improving language proficiency among non-NESTs, as well as encouraging collaborations between educational institutions and stakeholders to prepare teachers for excellence in English language education.

Keywords: *Nativespeakerism; English teaching profession; Pre-service English teachers*

INTRODUCTION

The 'outnumbering' factor of non-native English-speaking teachers (non-NESTs) and the growing accessibility of international mobilisations have challenged the quest of whether 'standard' English is still relevant in English teaching and learning, especially in Asian countries. One of the reasons many began to challenge the relevance is the exaggerated treatment of native speakers of English (Bayyurt, 2018).

Zein (2017) stated that some Asian parents often viewed 'successful' products of English

learning as achieving native-like proficiency. The parents even believed that high proficiency in English could be achieved if the children were exposed as early as possible (Hu, 2007; Zein, 2017). Another assumption, as occurred in China, is that native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) are more qualified than local English teachers (LETs) (Rao & Yuan, 2016). Wu (2021) also examined whether NESTs could bring value to EFL students' proficiency and found that NESTs could significantly help Taiwanese students

improve their listening comprehension in a standardised English listening test.

The views favouring NESTs do not blast off merely due to parents' personal preferences. Jeon and Lee (2006) stated that, in Korea, recruiting NESTs had been seen as a shortcut to excel students' language proficiency efficiently. Some respondents also argued that it is a waste of time for their children to spend years learning English without even reaching the native-like sound. In response to such parents' attitudes, many educational institutions began to respond to social needs by providing 'supply' for the 'demand' of native speakers of English to teach at their institutions (Alshammari, 2021; Daoud & Kasztalska, 2022; Inoue & Anderson, 2023; Lee & Jang, 2023; Mackenzie, 2021; Samuell, 2024)

However, upon the mushrooming practices of easily recruiting native speakers to be in the English teaching profession, many have become sceptical about taking the phenomenon for granted. Even if relevant stakeholders bring up those 'language owners,' the facts were however often neglected that children in some non-English-speaking countries do not learn in a target language setting and that those children still learn in a limited environment exposing them to active language use (Kaplan et al., 2011; Kirkpatrick, 2012).

Moreover, the phenomenon has become bigger as many scholars (Alqahtani, 2022; Braine, 2010; Harsanti & Manara, 2021; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Sihombing, 2022; Yeung, 2021) pointed out the discrimination in the job market for the English teaching profession, which they viewed as an 'unfair' judgment of the local English teachers and allowed local English teachers to find it hard to compete in the job market as educational institutions demand higher from them. In contrast, the institutions seem to loosen their attitudes toward native speakers of English.

In the Indonesian context, issues of native-speakerism have also been discussed in some prior publications (Adara, 2019; Al-Furqan & Rahman, 2019; Harsanti & Manara, 2021; Kirana & Methitham, 2022; Sarie, 2018; Silalahi, 2021; Silalahi & Widianingtyas, 2022). For example, Adara (2019) disseminated a questionnaire to sixty Indonesian junior high students and interviewed four of them to analyse the differences in their attitudes towards NESTs and non-NESTs. The study indicated that respondents put a certain proportion to NESTs for more effective speaking-related skills and cultural understanding and non-NESTs for close

relationships due to shared socio-cultural background.

Moreover, Harsanti and Manara (2021) also have attempted to offer different perspectives by involving English teachers' perspectives as non-native English-speaking teachers. Through an in-depth, individual interview, they highlighted respondents' confirmation of the existence of native-speakerism and their positive support of a native-speaker model in English classrooms, indicating the superiority and ownership of the NESTs. Another study was also conducted by Silalahi (2021) who examined the perspectives of NESTs and non-NESTs regarding the correlation of World Englishes on the practice of nativespeakerism. Respondents in the study believed that nativespeakerism flourished due to the stigma aroused in society, which promotes the position of NESTs as ideal models for English teaching.

The above studies indicate that nativespeakerism in Indonesia indeed exists surrounding the English teaching practices in Indonesia. The view, however, was shaped by the stigma that put NESTs as the ideal model of English teachers and, more importantly, from their socio-cultural background as persons born with the language and nationality (Slavkov, 2021; Todd & Pojanapunya, 2022; Waddington, 2022). Therefore, it is evident that those on the local English teachers' side believed there needed to be a fair ground to compete fairly and professionally. One reason is that local English teachers have more capacity to teach in the classroom as those teachers cannot build an empire in one night to be in the teaching profession; They need to go for a teacher education program and pass certification programs. More importantly, they need to go through all the experiences as a second/ foreign language learner to come to their call to be an English teacher (Kemaloglu-Er & Lowe, 2023; Kiczkowiak, 2022; Munandar, 2023).

As the abovementioned studies in the Indonesian context have attempted to offer perspectives from students and teachers (both NESTs and non-NESTs), this study would like to offer its contribution to the discussion by attempting to answer the following research questions: 1) What language skills do participants perceive as improving if NESTs or non-NESTs teach Indonesian students? and; 2) What are the critical requirements perceived by respondents as necessary for NESTs and Indonesian English teachers entering the English teaching profession in Indonesia?

The research questions aimed to shed light on the perceived improvements in language skills when either NESTs or non-NESTs teach Indonesian students, as well as the critical requirements deemed necessary for NESTs and Indonesian English teachers entering the English teaching profession in Indonesia. Moreover, this study also would contribute to providing perspectives from the pre-service English teachers in one of the teacher education programs in Indonesia. As they are now transitioning from students to teachers, this study considered it worth investigating their views on this issue.

The discussion of NESTs and non-NESTs has been significantly transformed from looking at the 'best' English teachers to investigating possibilities for team teaching collaboration in a classroom. To clarify, some previous relevant studies (Ahn, 2020; Bryant, 2016; Chun, 2014; Ma, 2012; Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014) have attempted to investigate students' perspectives on both types of teachers' advantages and disadvantages and strengths and weaknesses. For example, Walkinshaw and Oanh (2014) have discussed the benefits and drawbacks of having NESTs and non-NESTs in the classroom by conducting their study in two different research contexts: universities in Vietnam and Japan.

Chun (2014) has also similarly explored students' perspectives towards the two types of teachers by examining the strengths, weaknesses, and preferences on which to be the better English teacher. The above studies have attempted to fill the gaps by offering discussion from multiple contexts (in particular, in non-English-speaking contexts), yet the results tended to contest further the two teachers in the English teaching profession. Moreover, the above studies have mainly aimed to challenge the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992). Therefore, it is not unusual that the emergence of this fallacy prompts more researchers from various research contexts to challenge the relevance of the assumption to the education context.

For example, non-NESTs have undergone a language learning process that promotes them as a second or foreign language learner model for their students, which is a legitimate argument that may be used to refute the existing fallacy (Cook, 2005). Moreover, non-NESTs could relate to their past learning experiences as they better understand how to diagnose and overcome challenges in language learning (Ma, 2012; Phillipson, 1992). Unfortunately, while some scholars tried to challenge the existing myth of

NESTs, others (e.g. Selvi, 2010) were also cautious that imbalanced discussion favouring non-NESTs might also mislead to the other fallacy, namely the 'NNS fallacy' or what we called here as non-native speaker fallacy. In short, both fallacies were created to set language competency as a measure of good English teachers; Scholars challenged the native-speaker fallacy questions the possession of native-speaker variations while scholars in the non-native speaker fallacy questions the value of first-language mastery in second or foreign-language classroom.

Although having a solid command of the target language is essential in the field of second language instruction, researchers (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Medgyes, 1994) have developed a variety of alternatives that can be utilised to recruit English teachers, for instance, academic qualifications, teaching skills, enthusiasm, and teaching experiences of English teachers. This alternate viewpoint mainly highlights that finding better models becomes less significant. According to the circumstances that each classroom presents, scholars argue that both instructors have an equal chance of being successful in their language teaching (Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Medgyes, 1994) and could balance each other (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Benke & Medgyes, 2005). Supporting this, Davies (1995, in Mhd Fauzi & Hashim, 2020) stated that native speakers could perform as a model but not as a measure to define language teaching and learning goals.

Speaking of completing one another, scholars moved the discussion from what we termed the 'either/ or' debate (seeking the better teacher) to the 'both/ and' issue (looking for possible collaboration). Scholars (e.g. Selvi, 2010) suggested combining both parties in one classroom with some expectations that they would complement one another as an alternative to identifying the superior ones in theoretical and practical ways; The majority of NESTs lack a cultural knowledge of the setting in which they teach English while non-NESTs are limited in their ability to provide an authentic pronunciation model. At the same time, non-NESTs have limitations regarding providing an authentic pronunciation model. As Widdowson (1992) stated, a native-speaker teacher's considerable experience as an English user qualifies them as a dependable source of language input, but a non-native speaker teacher's L2 learning experiences qualify them to assume the position of a teacher.

In other words, possibly, NESTs know what to teach while non-NESTs know how to teach.

While the comparison of who should be the ideal English teacher has reached a single conclusion, which Medgyes (1994) considered a pointless debate, other scholars have attempted to present an alternative viewpoint. For instance, the subject of discussion has advanced from identifying the ideal English teacher to examining the advantages of collaboration between both types of teachers within the same class. How do they exactly match? Based only on interview data, two researchers from two different contexts, Japanese (Lawrence, 2016) and Korean (Heo, 2016), have investigated that NESTs and LETs (Local English Teachers) continue to encounter some difficulties in performing team teaching. In addition to linguistic, social, and cultural aspects, the problems also involved teaching experiences. Both studies concluded that, if possible, the government should provide proper training for intercultural team instructors to a) collaborate; b) develop personal, interpersonal, and professional ties; and c) maintain communication.

As a NEST at the British Council Project in Japan, Lawrence (2016) aimed to validate his team-teaching experiences with native-speakerism concepts and other NESTs' experiences during the program. He contested unusual views about native speakers as reported by some scholars (Holliday, 2005; Houghton & Rivers, 2013); While native speakers in many other countries often gained respect as the authentic model of English, those teaching in Japan received contradicting treatment.

As an inexperienced teacher, Lawrence confirmed reports from Houghton and Rivers (2013) regarding native-speakerism in Japan that NESTs "often felt isolated, discriminated, and powerless to do anything because of my [his] status in the schools" (p. 22). To clear up his uncertainty, he conducted a semi-structured interview with four NESTs involved in the same project; two had completed the program, and the other two were still involved. The author found out that the stories from other teachers were not unusual; Other NESTs stated that they frequently had different opinions from the Japanese English teachers in some circumstances. While the environment should be collaborative teaching, the respondents stated that the LETs allowed NESTs to manage the class entirely. It was reported that such a scenario might occur since LETs were knowledgeable and skilled and preferred letting novice NESTs explore the classroom

independently. The author stated that activities other than teaching practices might be useful for establishing communication and fostering both personal and interpersonal relationships between the partners.

In the Korean context, Heo (2016) proposed that the government should establish a higher standard for NESTs to participate in the English Program in Korea (EPIK) and hold in-service training where both teachers could build a relationship with one another and learn how to share responsibilities. In order to gather information regarding critical incidents that occurred during team teaching, the author conducted interviews with three teachers. These interviews aimed to investigate the interpersonal relationships that developed between teachers as they worked together. The respondents reported three significant occurrences: misunderstandings, differences in viewpoints and agreements, and various approaches to problem-solving. Then, those conflicts were examined to illustrate how professional experiences, language features, and contextual elements might impact one's strength and determination in the classroom.

Khánh and Spencer-Oatey (2016) investigated how NESTs and LETs formed working relationships while collaborating in a Vietnamese classroom. In contrast to the research described in the previous paragraphs, the present investigation was carried out as a longitudinal case study, which included interviewing, collecting diaries, and observing three pairs of team teachers working in Vietnamese tertiary institutions. Despite the differences, one thing that this research and Heo's (2016) study have in common is that they both focus on incidences that occurred during collaborations. Through the use of the following three sections: what happened, reaction and explanation, and evaluation and impact, a total of five rapport-sensitive occurrences were thoroughly recorded and explained. Most cases discussed included either prior preparation or a personal or professional gap. One of the LETs makes an unannounced visit to the house of one of the NESTs to review the lesson plan. This visit was reported to be one of the most unpleasant moments for the NEST. This occurrence was seen to be less professional in terms of recognizing personal space and boundaries.

Rao and Chen (2020) also noted substantial challenges in combining the teachers, such as inadequate opportunities and time to plan and practice team teaching, unmatched understanding, and different teaching styles. They also reported

some challenges caused by students, such as inadequacy in English speaking and listening skills, the unfamiliarity of having teachers working as a team, or simply being unwilling to participate in such team-teaching classrooms.

The previous research on intercultural team teaching demonstrates that team teaching requires more effort than solo teaching. Individual teaching allows a teacher to explore his or her classroom (Colmenero & Lasagabaster, 2024), but team-teaching needs teamwork, respect, and communication to establish a harmonious collaboration that fosters a favourable learning environment. According to Heo (2016) and Lawrence (2016), the government should develop team teacher training to equip teachers with the skills to tackle several classroom issues.

Similarly, Khánh and Spencer-Oatey (2016) stated that both teachers should be presented with situations, particularly potential conflicts, during team teacher training. They believed both parties should address these problems so that they could have “an opportunity to share their feelings and opinions about them [the conflict] and discuss” (pp. 192-193). This conflict-resolution practice is projected to boost mutual understanding and improve both parties' communication patterns (Lee & Baese-Berk, 2021). The authors further viewed team teacher training as one of the most effective ways to facilitate collaboration between parties.

In the earlier sections, we have mentioned some brief overviews of studies discussing nativespeakerism in various teaching contexts and respondents' backgrounds. Mainly we also discussed some studies taking place in the Indonesian context. The discussion presented above has also highlighted some changes in the literature, from looking for the most suitable English teachers to promoting collaboration between the two groups of teachers. Albeit, preferences in the English teaching profession could not be prevented solely because of the competition in the job market. However, letting them compete in the field should not be taken for granted, as each never wins.

However, as seen in the earlier section, most studies tended only to explore more respondents' views on the issue or to report on conflicts between NESTs and non-NESTs in classroom settings. Training for team-teacher collaboration was finally endorsed during conflict during

teaching collaboration between NESTs and non-NESTs (Heo, 2016; Khánh & Spencer-Oatey, 2016; Lawrence, 2016). Nevertheless, as most English classrooms in Indonesia were dominated by a single teacher, it seemed necessary to highlight that there should also be suggestions for English teacher education programs as providers and producers of future English teachers. By examining pre-service English teachers' views on fair requirements for the English teaching profession, this study viewed its contribution by filling the gaps in building connections between the findings and suggestions for English teacher education programs to increase their pre-service English teachers' awareness of job competition after their graduation.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design by employing an online, close-ended questionnaire to gather and analyse respondents' views. The collected data underwent descriptive statistical analysis to effectively understand, communicate, and identify patterns and relationships in the research findings (Fraenkel et al., 2021).

A thorough analysis of relevant literature was a major source of direction for developing the questionnaire as it helped uncover key issues and research areas that complemented the research objectives. The questions were carefully constructed to fully investigate participants' origins, traits, and viewpoints on language skill improvement and employment requirements within the Indonesian educational setting. The overall objectives of the study, which sought to gain perceptions into the perceived efficacy of language instruction by Native English-Speaking instructors (NESTs) in comparison to Indonesian English instructors, informed the questions that were chosen. The questionnaire also aimed at determining the order in which participants ranked the necessary job criteria for recruiting English teachers in Indonesia.

The study included a sample of 165 pre-service English teachers from the Department of English Education at an Indonesian university. The insights gained from this research hold the potential to provide valuable information on language skills enhancement and job requirements in the field of English teaching.

Table 1. *Respondents' characteristics*

Description	Frequency	Percentage
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	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	133	80.61%
	Male	32	19.39%
Taught by NESTs in formal education contexts	No experience	135	81.82%
	Having experience	30	18.18%
Taught by NESTs in non-formal education contexts	No experience	141	85.45%
	Having experience	24	14.55%

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' views on improved language skills from different teachers' category

In this section, we provided the result of our analysis regarding respondents' views on improved skills if native English-speaking

teachers and Indonesian English teachers taught Indonesian students. In each teacher's category, our respondents were required to vote on which skills would be improved (the first, second, and third skills).

Table 2. *Views of improved skills if taught by NESTs*

	First skill	Second skill	Third skill
Listening	69 (41.82%)	29 (17.58%)	28 (16.97%)
Speaking	58 (35.15%)	51 (30.90%)	34 (20.61%)
Reading	3 (1.82%)	3 (1.82%)	0 (0.00%)
Writing	0 (0.00%)	3 (1.82%)	6 (3.64%)
Grammar	2 (1.21%)	1 (0.61%)	12 (7.27%)
Pronunciation	24 (14.55%)	45 (27.27%)	48 (29.09%)
Vocabulary	9 (5.45%)	33 (20.00%)	37 (22.42%)

Table 2 describes respondents' views on improved language skills if Native English-Speaking Teachers (NESTs) taught Indonesian students. According to the table, most participants (N= 69, 41.82%) viewed listening as the first skill NESTs could improve. In contrast, participants in the second skill category highly endorsed Speaking (N= 51, 30.90%). Lastly, 48 respondents (20.09%) viewed NESTs would significantly help students' Pronunciation skills,

as seen in the Third Skill Category. On the contrary, a small number of respondents voted for Writing (0.00%), Grammar (0.61%), and Reading skills (0.00%). However, the above findings were relatively contradictive compared to respondents' views on improved language skills if Indonesian English Teachers (IETs) taught Indonesian students. The differences can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. *Views of improved skills if taught by Indonesian English teachers*

	First skill	Second skill	Third skill
Listening	20 (12.12%)	13 (7.88%)	12 (7.27%)
Speaking	13 (7.88%)	16 (9.69%)	21 (12.73%)
Reading	25 (15.15%)	31 (18.79%)	28 (16.97%)
Writing	8 (4.85%)	26 (15.76%)	43 (26.06%)
Grammar	51 (30.91%)	29 (17.58%)	24 (14.55%)
Pronunciation	5 (3.03%)	12 (7.27%)	7 (4.24%)
Vocabulary	43 (26.06%)	38 (23.03%)	30 (18.18%)

Table 3 describes respondents' views on improved language skills if Indonesian students were taught by Indonesian English teachers (IETs). As seen in the table, in the first skill category, most respondents voted Grammar (N=51, 30.90%) as their most preferred skill to improve by IETs. Moreover, Vocabulary (N= 38, 23.03%) and Writing (N=43, 26.061%) were chosen by most respondents as the second and third skills to improve, respectively. Contrary to the previous table, Pronunciation was ranked last among other skills.

From the above findings, we could summarise that the majority of respondents viewed native English-speaking teachers were considered as an excellent model to help Indonesian students improve their oral and oral skills, such as listening, pronunciation, and speaking. On the other side, Indonesian English teachers were perceived to teach best other skills relevant to written skills, such as grammar, vocabulary, and writing. This summary, once again, has extended and contributed to some early discussions from previous work (e.g. Jang & Wood, 2019; Mhd

Fauzi & Hashim, 2020; Sung, 2014; Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014), which mainly compared respondents' perspectives towards NESTs and non-NESTs in order to portray the better English teachers indirectly. Apart from better skills modelling, our study had specifically clarified which language aspects NESTs or non-NESTs should be teaching as guidance for understanding strengths and weaknesses among the teachers.

Moreover, as this study involved pre-service English teachers, we assumed that our findings might, once again, capture the existence of nativespeakerism (even in English teacher education program). Our participants, like in other studies (e.g. Kramadibrata, 2016; Yim, 2018), still viewed that NESTs deserve their legitimation on teaching specific skills due to their naturalistic model of language proficiency. The evident differences in 'improved' language skills chosen by our participants clearly describe the borders between the two teacher categories. Though having team teaching, which combined both teachers, has been reportedly challenging in different countries (Carless, 2006; Heo, 2016; Khánh & Spencer-Oatey, 2016; Lawrence, 2016; Rao & Chen, 2020; Sutherland, 2014), our current study has not yet discussed further at the conclusion if participants viewed those border could be eliminated through team teaching.

Furthermore, our study presents a significant opportunity to enhance English teacher education programs in Indonesia by effectively

strengthening the skills of pre-service English teachers. The viewpoints expressed by our participants, who regarded Native English-Speaking Teachers (NESTs) as models in Listening, Pronunciation, and Speaking, provide valuable empirical insights that shed light on potential gaps within existing English teacher education programs (See Kong & Kang, 2022).

This, in turn, invites investigation on future research endeavours to explore the nuances surrounding these perspectives, thereby discerning whether they signify a perceived sense of inferiority, acknowledgement of weaknesses, or a genuine appreciation of the expertise possessed by NESTs. Building upon these, we strongly advocate for comprehensive curriculum reviews within English teacher education programs in Indonesia and similar non-English speaking regions. Such reviews will serve to ensure that graduates emerge with the utmost confidence and competitive expertise, thoroughly equipped to thrive in the demanding job market.

Prioritised job requirements for the English teaching profession in Indonesia

In this section, we provided the result of our analysis regarding respondents' views on critical requirements to enter the English teaching profession in Indonesia. In each teacher's category, our respondents were required to vote on which criterion should be prioritised (the first, second, and third criteria).

Table 4. *Top Requirements for NESTs to teach English in Indonesia*

Requirements	First requirement	Second requirement	Third requirement
...be a learner of other language(s)	1 (0.61%)	6 (3.64%)	6 (3.64%)
...be able to speak in Bahasa to assist learning difficulties.	36 (21.82%)	22 (13.33%)	46 (27.88%)
...have English teaching experiences.	36 (21.82%)	46 (27.88%)	16 (9.70%)
...have TOEFL score (min. 550) or IELTS score (min. 7.0)	3 (1.82%)	8 (4.85%)	12 (7.27%)
...have good understanding about Indonesian cultures.	22 (13.33%)	34 (20.61%)	37 (22.42%)
...have native English accent (British, American, etc.)	4 (2.42%)	8 (4.85%)	10 (6.06%)
...have relevant academic qualification in English teaching.	49 (29.70%)	21 (12.73%)	17 (10.30%)
...have teacher certificate from Indonesian government.	14 (8.49%)	20 (12.12%)	21 (12.73%)

Table 4 describes the top three requirements that Native English-Speaking teachers (NESTs) need to possess for the English teaching profession in Indonesia. As the first requirement, our participants voted 'having relevant academic

qualifications in English teaching' (N= 49, 29.70%) as the top priority NESTs need to possess. Moreover, for the second requirement, our respondents viewed having English teaching experiences (N= 46, 27.88%) as the second

requirement. In addition, our respondents valued NESTs who could speak Bahasa to support learning difficulties (N= 46, 27.88%) as the third requirement that NESTs need to have. Besides the above findings, most respondents did not view that a native English-speaking teacher needs to be

a learner of other languages, as this criterion was voted the least among other criteria. After looking at respondents' views on the job requirements for NESTs, the following table presents our analysis of requirements for IETs to enter the English teaching profession in Indonesia.

Table 5. Top requirements for IETs to teach English in Indonesia

Requirement	First requirement	Second requirement	Third requirement
...be a learner of other language(s)	2 (1.21%)	8 (4.85%)	9 (5.46%)
...be able to speak in Bahasa to assist learning difficulties.	2 (1.21%)	10 (6.06%)	6 (3.64%)
...have English teaching experiences.	44 (26.67%)	62 (37.58%)	23 (13.94%)
...have TOEFL score (min. 550) or IELTS score (min. 7.0)	15 (9.09%)	20 (12.12%)	50 (30.30%)
...have good understanding about Indonesian cultures.	1 (0.61%)	7 (4.24%)	13 (7.88%)
...have native English accent (British, American, etc.)	4 (2.42%)	12 (7.27%)	19 (11.52%)
...have relevant academic qualification in English teaching.	86 (52.12%)	25 (15.15%)	17 (10.30%)
...have teacher certificate from Indonesian government.	11 (6.67%)	21 (12.73%)	28 (16.97%)

Table 5 describes the top three requirements that IETs need to possess for the English teaching profession in Indonesia. According to the above table, respondents tend to have consistent views on the first and second requirements that Indonesian English teachers need to possess to be English teachers in Indonesia. They highly endorsed having relevant academic qualifications in English teaching (N=86, 52.12%) and having English teaching experiences (N=62, 37.58%) as the first and second requirements, among other criteria. However, a slight difference could be seen from the third requirement, where 50 respondents (31.72%) voted for another necessary criterion for Indonesian English teachers: having a decent score in high-stakes language tests such as TOEFL and IELTS.

Most of our respondents shared similar perspectives regarding the highly important requirements to be English teachers in Indonesia. As seen in the previous section, having relevant academic qualifications (the first rank) and teaching experiences (the second rank) were ranked similarly for both NESTs and non-NESTs as the top two requirements to teach English in Indonesia.

Through our findings, we assumed that our respondents would suggest that the English teaching profession should value professional aspects and one's teaching experiences rather than linguistically privileged requirements. As Silalahi and Widianingtyas (2022) suggested, teaching involves not only culture and knowledge transfer

but also classroom delivery, which not even could native speakers acquire the skills naturally.

Through our findings, we again would like to promote the importance of the professional recruitment process. Therefore, the stigma disregarding non-NESTs' legitimacy for the English teaching profession (Duran & Saenkhum, 2022; Yazan, 2018) or their teaching experiences (Braine, 2018) would no longer occur. To be legitimate for the English teaching profession, Indonesian English teachers, like other non-NESTs, should improve their language skills while developing their teaching skills while studying in an English teacher education program. Therefore, it would seem relatively fair and even mandatory that NESTs should also undergo the similar process in teacher education program though the process might be different; NESTs may at least need to develop their teaching skills due to their 'already competent' status of English proficiency.

As another view from this finding, we, however, become intrigued to ask further about two questions, which would be directions for future research as well. We were fascinated to investigate a) if English teaching experience and relevant academic qualification are interchangeable variables if one of them is missing, and; b) to what extent the degree of acceptance if one of the highly-endorsed requirements is missing.

Besides that, we also considered it necessary to discuss the third criterion for each teacher's

category, which indicated a slight difference from the respondents' views. From this finding, our study would suggest that both NESTs and non-NESTs should be willing to solve their shortcomings. Despite their ownership of English, NESTs may sometimes be unfamiliar with students' cultures and their languages (An et al., 2021; Whitehead & Ryu, 2023). Therefore, NESTs should be equipped with intercultural competence to help students learn better. On the other hand, IETs should also improve their English competencies through globally recognised and standardised language tests, such as TOEFL and IELTS.

We also viewed the differences as an opportunity to share our thoughts to suggest the English teacher education programs in Indonesia to tailor the curriculum contents that support their students and alumni to be competitive in the job market. For example, the study program should ensure that the students are well-equipped with language test preparation prior to the completion of their study. Besides, the study program could also build students' awareness of the job competition by connecting their alumni to share some insights with the current students so that they could be more ready for their profession.

Similar to other studies (e.g. Harsanti & Manara, 2021; Sihombing, 2022), addressing the stigma around non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) in Indonesia's English teaching profession is crucial for shaping its future landscape.

By recognising the value of both English proficiency and teaching skills, regardless of native status, we can create a more inclusive and diverse educational environment (Árva & Medgyes, 2000). This benefits not only NESTs but also enriches students' learning experiences through exposure to diverse teaching styles and cultural perspectives (Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Liu et al., 2023). If the interchangeability of teaching experience and academic qualifications can be reevaluated, a more holistic approach to recruitment and training may also ensure, ensure that teachers are well-prepared for classroom challenges and fosters continuous professional growth.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have attempted to expand the discussion on nativespeakerism. To make it clear, the summary of our findings was highlighted in three key points: preferences on improved skills from different teachers, similarity

in terms of professional recruitment criteria, and some differences in recruitment criteria that English teacher education programs should accommodate. By offering perspectives from pre-service English teachers, our findings are expected to bring a closer perspective in discussing the issue of native-speakerism as it is closely related to the English teaching profession.

Despite the contribution of this study, we also have addressed some potential discussions for further researchers, such as the interchangeability of relevant academic qualifications and teaching Experiences as the criteria for the English teaching profession in Indonesia and perhaps in other non-English speaking countries.

Moreover, it seems necessary to acknowledge some limitations occurring from the nature of the study. For example, further researchers could also expand our findings by involving qualitative data collection through interviews to gain deeper insights regarding their preferences. Besides of that, it is evident that potential biases in respondents' perspectives may be evident, which could stem from their cultural preconceptions. Moreover, as part of a more extensive research, findings from this study could perform as our preliminary discussion, which other researchers could challenge.

This study emphasises the importance of education policy focusing on practical actions, such as integrating intercultural competence training for NESTs and improving language proficiency among non-NESTs, while also encouraging collaborations between academic institutions and industry stakeholders to prepare teachers for excellence in English language education.

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