Beyond the Native Speaker:
World Englishes and the NEST/NNEST Dichotomy

Kevin Kato

A speaker who is made ashamed of his own language habits suffers a basic injury as a human being: to make anyone, especially a child, feel so ashamed is as indefensible as to make him feel ashamed of the color of his skin

Halliday, 1968, p.165

1. Introduction

Discrimination of teachers' pedagogical and professional skills, solely on the basis of accent, physical appearance, and native speaker status is unfounded at best, and at worst one-dimensional and unethical. The growing number of English language learners worldwide correlates to an increasing number of nonnative English speaking teachers (NNESTs) and native English speaking teachers (NESTs). In fact, according to Canagarajah (1999), NNESTs represent around 80% of English teachers worldwide. Despite the 1991 anti-discrimination statement published by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organization and the works of scholars in the field of Applied Linguistics (e.g., Braine, 1999; Llurda, 2005; Mahboob, 2010), NEST biased hiring practices and the marginalization of NNESTs continue. Specifically, a native speaker benchmark has divided a group of teachers with a common goal of teaching English, into "two species" (Medgyes, 1994, p. 24)with a distinct set of assets.

This article aims to challenge and move beyond the *native speaker* benchmark by investigating the origins of the native speaker, the N/NEST movement, and by presenting the implications these ideas have for both teachers and scholars alike. Specifically, instead of widening a conceptual gap between theory and practice by attempting to define qualities unique to NNESTs and NESTs, we should reexamine and implement the perceived advantages and disadvantages of NESTs and NNESTs into a framework which views NNESTs and NESTs as individual people with a common goal—teaching English to speakers of other languages. By moving beyond the native speaker dichotomy and by providing students with qualified teachers, we can advance the field. Before addressing the N/NEST movement in its modern day setting, I will first present a brief history examining the origin of the native speaker benchmark.

2. Who is a Native Speaker?

2.1 Who is a Native Speaker?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a native speakerrepresents

> a person for whom a specified language is their first language or the one which theynormally and naturally speak, esp. a person who has spoken the language sinceearliest childhood, as opposed to a person who has learnt it as a second or subsequent language.

native speaker, n.d.

Works from the past and present, however, illustrate the great breadth and scope the term *native speaker* has come to comprise. For instance, modern literature fromthe field (e.g., Amin, 1997, 2004; Davies, 1991, 2003; Kramsch, 1997; Nayar, 1994) demonstrates thatthis termencompassesmore aspects than just the order in which one learns English. Amin's (1997, 2004)articles, for example, discuss how the physical appearance of teachers can influence perceptions of their nativeness. Kramsch (1997) and Davies (1991, 2003) consider the effects of extralinguistic variables such as speech communities and therole they play in excluding or including members. Earlier studies (e.g., Chomsky, 1965, 1968; Quirk, 1962, 1968, 1972; Selinker, 1969, 1972)also addressed matters beyond acquisition order, such as the linguistic differences between native speakers and nonnative speakers. While it is beyond the scope of the paper to investigate every aspect the term carries, this article will offer a brief history concerning the origin of the *native speaker* as well as examine how it relates to the N/NEST movement.

As mentioned above the term *native speaker* carries with it a long history and an equally exhaustive number of meanings. One basis of this notion takes roots in the works of the cognitivist linguistic Noam Chomsky—particularly his theory of the 'idealized native speaker'(1965, 1986a, 1986b). Selinker's (1969, 1972) initial interlanguage (IL) and fossilization models substantiated Chomsky's 'idealized native speaker,' and aided in propagating the Chomskian paradigm into other fields of research, e.g., TESOL, which also helped perpetuate the native speaker standard.

2.2 The Chomskian Paradigm

Both Chomsky's and Selinker's theories represented seminal building blocks in the early years of Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition (SLA); fields which other academic disciplines utilized (e.g., psycholinguistics). In this sense the Chomskian paradigm has influenced different fields from psychology to TESOL (e.g., see Bhatt, 2002; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Mahboob, 2005). Chomsky's cognitivist outlook on language learning informed his notion of a genetically-endowed language acquisition device (LAD) within the brain, which supposedly facilitates language acquisition and lies at the heart of his nativist theory. Chomsky applies the LAD in first language acquisition to explain children learning their mother tongue, using the analogy of growing up (Chomsky, 1997, p. 39); i.e., it does not require any actions by the child, it just happens to him/her. In contrast, Chomsky argues that second language acquisition rather than being 'acquired,' is 'learned' in the sense that one cannot just grow into it (Chomsky, 1997, p. 39). This view of language guided his division between competence and

performance—a distinction which initially distinguished native speakersas the judges of their language.

A typical notion of competence signifies the cumulative knowledge a speaker of a language possesses, while performance constitutes how the speaker use that knowledge. For Chomsky, however, the grammar of a language reflects an account of one's competence, while "performance provides evidence for the investigation of competence" (1966, p. 3). This idea of competence, performance, and Chomsky's cognitivist views helped define native speakers as the perfect models of their language, i.e., the judges of grammaticality, against which others would be measured. While this may have applicability in examining a static language in a homogenous group of monolingual speakers, it does not provide an adequate basis or account for language variation among the multilingual users and various contexts in whichEnglish is used today. Selinker's (1969, 1972) early models of interlanguage and fossilization supported Chomsky's 'idealized native speaker' prototype by utilizing a native speaker benchmark.

During the late sixties and early seventies, Selinker introduced two major ideas to the field, interlanguage and fossilization respectively. Selinker's interlanguage represented one iteration of a theory that existed under other names, such as Corder's (1967) idiosyncratic dialect. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 60) offer an intuitive definition of interlanguage describing it as a continuum between L1 and L2 which language learners traverse (see also, Figure 1). Unfortunately, the L2 side of the spectrum assumes a native speaker benchmark, and whether intended or not, establishes the native speaker as the sine qua non model of success. Moreover, it offers learners no agency regarding their preference in acquiring native (Inner Circle) proficiency (see e.g., Kachru, 1986; Rampton, 1990 for a discussion on this topic).

Fossilization denoted the second of two prominent notions introduced during this time period. Selinker (1972) introduces the term fossilization as:Fossilizable linguistic phenomena are linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular NL [native language] will tend to keep in their IL relative to a particular TL [target language], no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation or instruction he receives in the TL (p.215)

In his 1992 work, *Rediscovering Interlanguage*, Selinker adds, "[F]ossilization names the real phenomenon of the permanent non-learning of TL structures, of the cessation of IL learning (in most cases) far from expected TL norms" (p.225). Selinker's theories of interlanguage and fossilization supported Chomsky's 'idealized native speaker' by proposing a native speaker benchmark, and by suggesting that failure to produce target (native) norms equated to fossilization. As both Chomsky's and Selinker's theories served as building blocks during SLA's inception as a distinctdiscipline, the Chomskian paradigm was incorporated into many SLA research methodologies, such as error analysis (Firth & Wagner, 1997, pp. 291-292). Moreover, as other fields would later draw on these methodologies and SLA research, the Chomskian paradigm would "have a cataclysmic effect on linguistics," (Firth & Wagner, 1997, p. 287) which in turn spread to other fields such as psycholinguistics, child development and TESOL. Fortunately, as the areas of Applied Linguistics and SLA matured scholars began to critically reexamine and challenge the notion of what defines a *native speaker*.
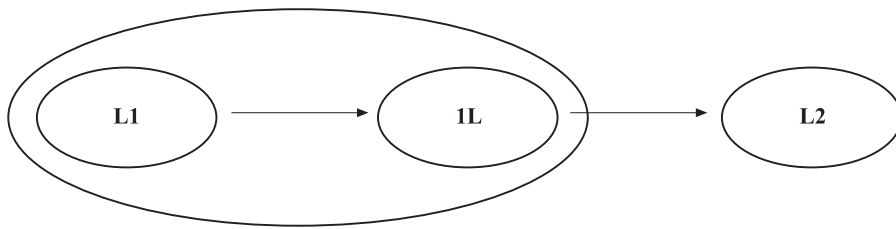
Interlanguage and Fossilization

Figure 1: Interlanguage and fossilization

2.3 Reconceptualizing the Native Speaker

Vivian Cook and Alan Davies are two prominent figures in Applied Linguistics whose works offer an interesting basis towards undertaking Seidlhofer's (2001) call for a reconceptualization of English in the field. Cook (1999) and Davies (1991, 2003) investigate different aspects of the native speaker, from Chomsky's 'idealized native speaker,' to what it means to be a native speaker. More importantly, both scholars view these issues through multiple lenses, taking into account not only purely linguistic features, but also sociolinguistic and political variables. For example, Cook presents a stimulating idea, arguing that monolingualism reflects a common assumption about the native speaker. Moreover, he offers an alternative to the native/nonnative speaker dichotomy by means of multicompetence, a model which accounts for a speaker's entire language knowledge.

Cook (1991) defines the notion of multicompetence as "the compound state of a mind with two grammars" (p.112); i.e., it accounts for the total amount of language knowledge a multilingual[1] person possesses (see Figure 2). This model also argues that multilingual users possess qualitatively different minds than those of monolingual native speakers (Cook, 1999, p. 191), and as such L1 monolingual standards cannot be applied to L2 or multilingual users and learners. Unlike Selinker's notions of interlanguage and fossilization, Cook's model emphasizes the differences between multilingual and monolingual native speakers in a positive light, contending that these differences do not equate to deficit.

Although Cook (1999) does not argue native or nonnative speakers are better than one or the other, he makes an observation concerning the native speaker writing, "someone who did not learn a language in childhood cannot be a native speaker of the language" (p.187). While it seems unlikely the label *native speaker* will disappear from peoples' minds and the lexicon of English, Cook (1999) argues it can be used as a temporary construct, like a crutch is to a person with an injured leg. In other words, native speaker standards can be implemented as a transitory yardstick (particularly when setting goals), but not as a measure of final or ultimate attainment (p.189-90).While the idea of multicompetence aims to move past the native speaker, defining the successful L2 user could be just as hard as defining the

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1 ）The term multilingual, does not assume a specific proficiency in a language(see also Noguchi & Fotos, 2001 notion of bilinguals in chapter 12)
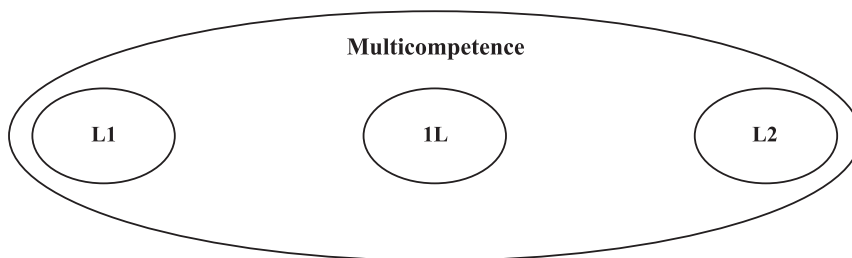
Figure 2: Multicompetence

elusive term, *native speaker*.

Davies (1991, 2003), on the other hand, deconstructs the term *native speaker*, and organizes it into two concepts, myth and reality. Davies (2003) sets forth 6 linguistic characteristics of the native speaker which takes into account age, grammatical intuitions, pragmatics, and creativity. These qualities also address some of the myths regarding the native speaker, e.g., 2 and 3 which deal with intuitions about grammar.

1. The native speaker acquires the L1 of which s/he is a native speaker in childhood.

2. The native speaker has intuitions (in terms of acceptability and productiveness) about his/her Grammar 1.

3. The native speaker has intuitions about those features of the Grammar 2 which are distinct from his/her Grammar 1.

4. The native speaker has a unique capacity to produce fluent spontaneous discourse, which exhibits pauses mainly at clause boundaries (the 'one clause at a time' facility) and which is facilitated by a huge memory stock of complete lexical items.

5. The native speaker has a unique capacity to write creatively (and this includes, of course, literature at all levels from jokes to epics, metaphor to novels).

6. The native speaker has a unique capacity to interpret and translate into the L1 of which she/ he is a native speaker. Disagreements about an individual's capacity are likely to stem from a dispute about the Standard or (standard) Language.

<div align="right">p.210</div>

According to Davies (2003) nonnative speakers can attain all characteristics expect the first, in the case of adult learners. It is the first characteristic that is not a myth (p. 213), while he argues the others are social constructs. However, he writes, "the analogy that occurs to me here is that of music where it is possible to become a concert performer after a late start but the reality is that few do" (p. 212). Although attaining 'native' speaker status in an L2 reflects a select group of people, it is not to say that those who do not are failures; in fact I think Davies is saying the opposite. His view of adult L2 learners becoming native speakers also differs from that of Cook (1999) who believes adult L2 learners (or users) cannot

become native speakers if they do not learn the target language during childhood. Davies (1991, 2003) on the other hand, argues that becoming a native speaker is more or less a case of self-ascription with the notions of confidence and identity lying at its core(cf. Rampton, 1990). These are two differing ideas of the native speaker, but both aim at moving past the dichotomy. Davies posits that despite popular belief, the native speaker (and nonnative speaker) construct, "is classically, social, just as culture is" (2003, p.214). That is, sociolinguistically, the native speaker represents a reality, through identity, confidence, and power.

Cook's and Davies' works represent contributions that support the N/NEST movement by expanding the notion of the native speaker under a world Englishes lens. Cook's (1999, 2002) proposition entails using certain qualities of native and nonnative speakers to establish a basis for ELF and beyond. He argues that ultimate attainment does not necessarily reflect a native or native-like result, i.e., difference does not equate to deficit. Davies on the other hand, presents an important analysis of the native speaker by investigating how both purely linguistic and extralinguistic variables comprise the term native speaker. Both Davies and Cook posit that learners can develop and hone qualities associated with native speakers, e.g., an awareness of what is and is not grammatically acceptable (see also Birdsong, 2004; Han, 2004). For Cook, the only aspect that prevents L2 users from being native speakers is that theydid not learn the language as a child. Moreover, Davies and Cook observe that while not impossible, one of the hardest things for L2 users to fully develop is the wide range of pragmatic and discourse control native speakers have. The scholarship of Cook and Davies constitutetwo examples of many that represent a move away from the Chomskian paradigm towards a world Englishes model.

3. The N/NEST Movement

3.1 Introduction

The study of native speakers and nonnative speakers has made monumental advances and developments since scholars first began investigating the topic during the 1960s; in fact, research concerning native and nonnative speakers of English has its own dedicated area (a TESOL Caucus) within the broad field of Applied Linguistics. However, this subsection of the field did not come into existence until roughly 30 years ago. Interestingly, the momentum to establish such a domain took roots in the late 1980s led by the scholarship of researchers (e.g., Edge, 1988; Kachru, 1982; Kresovich, 1988; Nickel, 1985)advocating for the legitimatization and recognition of varieties of English other than Inner Circle variants such as Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American English (GAE). Their pioneering works would set the stage for the publication of Medgyes'(1992, 1994) seminal works which focused specifically on the strengths and weakness of NNESTs and NESTs. This also marked the beginning of what I call the N/NEST movement. The N/NEST movement refers to the development and history of the specific area of study dealing with N/NESTs issues in TESOL.

The N/NEST movement has undergone many transformations and experienced numerous paradigm shifts(for a more in-depth discussion of this see Braine, 2010; Kato, 2011).Its history spans an impressive collection of scholarship comprised of roughly three major stages. The first stage began

in the late 1980s, during which scholars began specifically focusing on nonnative and native English speaking teachers, giving rise to what would become a bona fide area of study in the field.

The next phase of scholarship examined the notions and legitimacy surrounding the N/NEST opposition (see Braine, 1999; Kramsch, 1997; Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Paikeday, 1985). These studies helped establish the NNEST as a valid educator in the field. Subsequent research explored teacher and student perceptions of nonnative teachers (see D. Liu, 1999; Llurda & Huguet, 2003; Mahboob, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2010; Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999). Within the second stage of the N/NEST debate there were two sub stages. The initial studies of the second stage focused on teachers' self-perceptions, while later investigations, reflecting relatively new research in the field, looked at students' perceptions of NNESTs. Although the two stages of research aided in reshaping, refining, and redefining the field, like any other academic endeavors, there were gaps in the previous studies. For instance, only Mahboob (2003) and Moussu (2002, 2006) interviewed 3 groups comprised of program administrators, teachers, and students regarding their opinions and beliefs about NNESTs. For the purposes of this article, I will focus on Medgyes'(1992, 1994) publications concerning the advantages and disadvantages of N/NESTs (see Bolton, 2004; Kato, 2011; Seargeant, 2009 for a more detailed discussion of the other two movements).

3.2 Péter Medgyes

In 1992, Péter Medgyes, a Hungarian EFL teacher, published a seminal article and then a book (1994) which scrutinized the position and roles of NNESTs and NESTs in TESOL. Although his two works were the first to assert that both 'native' and 'nonnative' speakers of English could be successful teachers, these suppositions were accompanied by the observation that each group possessed a distinct set of characteristics. For instance, he writes, "so far I have stated that NESTs and non-NESTs use English differently and, therefore, teach English differently" (1992, p. 346). Moreover, in his 1994 book, he tenaciously posits that NNESTs and NESTs are "two different species" (p. 25). Medgyes (1992) continues, detailing six inimitable qualities unique to NNESTs:

1. Only non-NESTs can serve as imitable models of the successful learner of English.
2. Non-NESTs can teach learning strategies more effectively.
3. Non-NESTs can provide learners with more information about the English language.
4. Non-NESTs are more able to anticipate language difficulties.
5. Non-NESTs can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of their learners.
6. Only non-NESTs can benefit from sharing the learners' mother tongue. (pp. 346-7)

According to Medgyes NNESTs' and NESTs' "strengths and weaknesses balance each other out," (1992, p. 347) which apparently means both can be successful teachers. Despite differences between NNESTs and NESTs, his 1992 article leaves the reader with two suggestions:

1. The ideal NEST is the one who has achieved a high degree of proficiency in the learners' mother tongue.
2. The ideal non-NEST is the one who has achieved near-native proficiency in English. (p.347-8)

Although positive on the outside, further analysis into Medgyes' conclusions reveals an ironic relationship with the advancement of NNESTs during the 1990s. On one hand, his writings corroborating previous findings (see e.g., Edge, 1988; Kachru, 1976, 1982), provided support for the NNEST movement. On the other, however, Medgyes' six assets perpetuated the same stigma he sought to fight against. Despite insisting that the questions concerning the relative value of NNESTs and NESTs represent a false dichotomy which "may be conductive to forming wrong judgments about the differences" (1992, p. 347) between NNESTs and NESTs, his argument presupposes this binary contrast, and in fact rests on the advantages and disadvantages between each group. Moreover, some aspects of his theory work in some EFL settings, but are unreasonable in an ESL environment, e.g., necessitating teachers to learn the languages of their students.

Medgyes' collaboration with other scholar such as his study with Arva (2000) further solidified N/NESTs into two groups with native speakers as the sine qua non models of pronunciation and culture and nonnative speakers as grammar gurus. This separation appears to have spread as widely through N/NEST research as the Chomskian paradigm did through Applied Linguistics. Regardless of the flaws in his logic, Medgyes' six assets raise important notions that active teachers as well as teacher training programs (e.g., MA TESOL programs) should address. In EFL situations, for example, NESTs should strive to attain Medgyes'(1992)goal of developing a high level of proficiency in their students' L1. Just as Davies (1991, 2003) argues that NNESTs can acquire native speaker traits (e.g., grammar intuitions), NESTs alike can access the qualities otherwise thought to be unique to NNESTs, such as sharing their learners' native language.

While the field of TESOL and particularly the sub-study of N/NEST issues has progressed and developed immensely since its establishment in the 1980s, further research is required. Specifically, researchers and scholars need to critically reexamine the results of previous scholars regarding the alleged advantages and disadvantages of NNESTs and NESTs, their self-perceptions, as well as both teachers' and students' opinions towards each group. Moreover, the findings of Medgyes and his associates' (e.g., Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Reves & Medgyes, 1994) require a reevaluation to reveal what effects (if any) their results (e.g., NEST as ideal pronunciation models) had on subsequent studies conducted throughout the N/NEST movement. For instance, if the members of the field, from theorists to fulltime practitioners, had embraced the notions that the strengths and weaknesses of N/NESTs were more guidelines than definitions, one would expect not to see nearly decade old results being corroborated by current studiese.g., see Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005). While Braine (2010) argues Medgyes and Reves'(1994) study has stood the test of time, I take an alternative position, asserting it represents one aspect that has contributed to the perpetuation of preconceptions portraying NESTs as the arbiters of accent, culture, and pronunciation, and NNESTs as grammar gods.

4. Implications

While it seems unlikely the label *native speaker* will disappear from peoples' minds and the lexicon of English, the term itself has grown in breadth and depth from the Oxford definition concerning

the order a person acquires a language.　For instance, the term has gone beyond the purely linguistic qualities, and now accounts for other variables such associal factors, e.g., personal affiliation and association(see e.g., Davies, 1991, 2003; Rampton, 1990).　I hope that we can move beyond native speaker status and accept people based on their merit rather than the language they are born into.

　　　　The N/NEST movement should also empower NNESTs to have more confidence in themselves, and view themselves as legitimate and bona fide educators who deserve equal rights in the workforce. NNESTs, NESTs and students alike should acknowledge that local dialects of English are legitimate and are not in any way inferior to other varieties.However, one should also note that not all varieties may be useful on an international level, although local varieties are indeed acceptable for intra-national communication.

　　　　As mentioned in the previous section, I hope to see veteran and budding scholars alike critically reexamine the notions surrounding NESTs and NNESTs.　The qualities concerning each group have seemed to impede the advancement of the N/NEST movement and have appeared to push NNESTs and NESTs into a mental rut.　NNESTs should develop a stronger confidence in qualities formerly associated with NESTs, e.g., pronunciation and culture.　Likewise, NESTs should take the initiative to learn the grammar of mother tongue and learn another language to aid in empathizing with students.　The author also wishes to see support systems enacted for both NESTs in EFL environments and NNESTs in ESL situations.　Eldridge(1996), Forman (2010), Noguchi and Fotos (2001), for instance, have all written about and advocate for the use of students' L1 in learning an L2.　Something as simple as handbook of frequently used phrases for NESTs in EFL settings would be useful. Likewise a mentoring program for NNESTs new to the politics and culture of an ESL program could prove useful.I hope the future of English teaching entails a world in which teachers are judged not by native or nonnative status, but by their pedagogical and professional skills.

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