

Comments from the Editors and Reviewers:

Referee: 1

Comments to the Author

Overall a very interesting, innovative and necessary study, digging into the effect of nativeness in a yet unexplored area of ELT. However, I believe that the manuscript needs some major changes before it is suitable for publication. The gathered data are undoubtedly valuable, but the sections need to be worked upon quite extensively. I think the treatment of the data is too broad and general for a publication, I would encourage author/s to further analyze the data (see suggestions).

From my point of view, some of the claims of the author/s need to be tempered. The study is based on the author/s' assignments of NS/NNS labels and therefore, a consequent treatment of results should be offered.

I would emphasize the fact that the study is based on perceptions, including "perceived" before each reference to NSs or NNSs.

Authors' response: Thank you for this suggestion. We acknowledge in the introduction that the terms are perceived. To remind the readers of this, we use inverted commas throughout with the terms. This is also clarified in the introduction. We opted not to use the word perceive throughout in order to make the paper easier to read. We feel that saying perceived each time the terms are used can be cumbersome for the reader.

Introduction:

From my point of view the organization of this section needs to be reconsidered. The section starts by describing native speakerism and its negative effects in ELT. Then it moves to research on native speakerism, highlighting the fact that no data has been gathered from ELT conferences. After that, a "similar" paper is mentioned and summarized, including its results. At the end, the research gap is identified.

To me, the majority of this section is closer to a literature review. I personally believe that the introduction section is not the place to include numeric information of reviewed papers (15.5% of all plenary speakers... 7.5% of invited colloquial chairs) I would personally move the first three paragraphs of the literature review section to the introduction, considering that they offer information about the NS/NNS terminology and therefore should be placed here (see in text comments for the introduction section)

Authors' response: The material mentioned by the reviewer has been moved to the literature review, and a new, more general text has been composed for the introduction.

Literature review:

Acknowledging the absence of papers in the field and briefly describing studies where plenary speakers were discriminated by gender or ethnic origin looks like a good approach to me. I also found the explanations for these unequal representations very interesting and necessary. Still, the introduction of the literature review contains

information that shouldn't be placed here.

- The NS/NNS terminology: it was a very adequate decision to emphasize the subjective nature of assigning the NS/NNS label. However, I would recommend better defining both terms and clearly specifying the criteria used by the author(s) to define them and how they are judged/understood.
- Kachru's (1985) circles: Kachru's (1985) Inner Circle is mentioned when defining NSs, but there is not an actual definition of what the Inner Circle is, its' importance in comparison to the other 2 circles and its' paramount role when it comes to the assignment of the NS/NNS label. Furthermore, the reference is nowhere to be found. I suggest providing a brief and basic information on Kachru's model of concentric circles.

See Kachru, B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: the English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk and H.G. Widdowson (Eds), English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures (pp. 11 - 30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Authors' response: We have reworked the literature review. The discussion of the labels has been placed in its own section to separate it from the broader discussion of the literature, and to highlight the importance or recognising these labels as problematic as well as defining our use of them in the paper. We have included a more detailed discussion of the criteria we used in defining the terms, and added a fuller explanation of Kachru's circles and how they related to our use of the labels.

Methodology:

In my opinion, this section needs to be worked upon.

- The criteria used by the authors to apply the labels NS and NNS sound too broad and unclear to me: "academic and professional biographies of speakers were examined, as well as videos of them". Which criteria was prioritized over the other? What was the procedure when there was a plenary speaker born in a territory other than an inner circle country but with a native accent? What about a plenary speaker born in an inner circle country but with a non-native accent? How was the labelling process in these cases? This information needs to be explained.

Authors' response: We have added more detail, including more specific criteria for the use of these labels (along with disclaimers for their obvious crudeness)

I would also suggest including a table with the countries of origin of the plenary speakers, to see if they belong to an inner, outer or expanding circle country and how this affects their representation in ELT conferences. This data would provide an opportunity to go deeper in the effect of "perceived" NS/NNS in ELT conferences.

Authors' response: This is a very good suggestion. Unfortunately, when collecting the data, we did not keep a record of the countries of origin of the speakers. Therefore, it is not possible to add these now. However, we recognise this is a limitation of our study and have included this in the conclusion also as a suggestion for future research.

It would be reader-friendly to include a table with the total number of analyzed conferences (70) and

the reviewed plenary talks (416). Individual data for each conference is given in the results section, but this general numbers are not mentioned.

Authors' response: Thank you for this suggestion. We amended Table 1 accordingly.

Results:

I suggest starting the section with overall results: combining the data of all conferences and speakers in a table and then focusing individually on each conference.

Authors' response: Thank you for suggesting this. We added a new table with an overview of all conferences and speakers (Table 2) and presented it at the beginning of the results section

Tables: tables 2-8 need to be re-arranged. The arrangement of tables indicates that plenary speakers can be NSs, NNSs, white or non-white, but the reality is that NSs can be either white or non-white, and the same applies to NNSs. Therefore, tables need to be checked. I personally believe that it would be interesting and enriching for the paper to specify if NSs and NNSs were white or non-white under the following arrangement: Native speakers Non-native speakers White Non-white
White Non-white 7 3 5 2

Authors' response: Thank you for the suggestion. We followed your advice, amending the tables and the presentation of the results accordingly.

This classification would be interesting to analyze if those white/non-white prejudices apply to NSs and NNSs, "white NSs" being more frequent in ELT than non-whites. Including this information in the data analysis would enrich the paper and delve into a more detailed analysis of the effect of nativeness and being white/non-white on ELT conferences.

Authors' response: Please see our changes in discussion. We added statistics on racial representations of teachers in the UK and the US that show that non-white teachers make up around 20% of the teaching workforce. However, to the best of our knowledge, no such data exists for English teachers, whether 'native' or 'non-native'.

- See in-text comments.

Authors' response: We have addressed all in-text comments.

Discussion:

Still, I believe that further analyzing the data could offer a more specific and enriching discussion.

Authors' response: Thank you. Please see our changes in the discussion section

General comments: We would like to thank the reviewer for their detailed and useful comments on our paper. We have endeavoured to address all of the comments in the ways discussed above, and we feel the paper is stronger as a result. Many thanks again to the reviewer for helping us to improve our paper and strengthen our argument.