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Native Speaker Norms and Teaching English to Non-Natives: History and Research

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, it is an accepted fact that English is the fastest growing and the most widespread language used around the world. This common use of English as an international language entails norms and models for learning and teaching. Linguists have given special attention to the notion of 'native speaker' as the only true and reliable source of language data. However, the term is not as clear as it seems and there have been different interpretations of the term. This paper intends to present a review of literature in native speaker norms' discussions and their implications in English language learning and teaching. In doing so, in a comprehensive review of the related literature, the problems in the definitions of the term native speaker and related concepts have been studied. Following, the most significant conducted studies in the related literature are reviewed in a chronological order. Finally, the implications of the discussion in English pedagogy have been discussed.

Keywords: *Native Speaker, Norm, LFC, EIL, Pronunciation*

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1. Introduction

Today, it is an accepted fact that English is the fastest growing and the most widespread language used around the world. (e.g: Al-Kadi & Ahmed, 2018; Graddol 1999, 2006; Crystal, 2003, Crystal, 2018; Moussu & Liurda, 2008). Alatis & Straehle (1997) mention that there are more non-native speakers of English than there are native speakers. Therefore, the majority of communication in English is among non-native speakers of English. Mahboob (2005), keeping these facts in his mind concludes that the large majority of English language teachers are non-native speakers. This growth of English as an international language presents new challenges in defining native speaker, native speaker norms (NSNs), and models of language teaching and learning. Hence, in this paper, considering this focus of attention to English language, we will define NSNs and will specify it in a non-native language learning context. In doing so, the related studies in the literature will be reviewed in a chronological order.

1.1 English as an International Language (EIL)

English as an international language (EIL) has been emerged as the result of

worldwide use of English for variety of purposes. Crystal (2003) notes that nearly a quarter of the world's population has some level of fluency or competence in English and this figure is growing steadily. Prodromou (1997) mentions that up to 80 % of communication in English takes place between non-native speakers. Considering English in its global context, a variety of names have been proposed. Crystal's (2003) 'World Spoken Standard English', Leech's and Svartvik's (2006) 'World Standard English' (WSE), Jenkins's (2000) 'English lingua franca' are some of the terms. Despite the widespread use of the terms, there are limited agreements on the exact definitions. Therefore, existence of a unique standard variety of English is in question. Ur (2010) notes that "there is, indeed, no formal codification of it (a standard version) in a grammar or dictionary; but lack of codification in itself does not disprove existence: there are plenty of languages which exist without having been codified" (p.90). Matsuda (2018) states that teaching English as an international language "is something all English language teachers can and should embrace, regardless of their ideological



stance or beliefs about what English should be” (p. 24)

Traditionally, native speakers were considered as the only reliable source of linguistic data. Native speaker was the role model and ‘native speaker’ norms were the ultimate goal of language learning and teaching. Graddol (2006) mentions that in the past, native speakers of English were seen as the ultimate authorities in effective teaching. That is, all of the teaching and learning activities were based on the native speaker model. Moussu and Liurda (2008) argue that the first attempt to put (non-) nativism’ onto the center stage of linguistic inquiry by challenging current undisputed assumptions on the matter was Paikeday’s (1985) ‘*The native speaker is dead*’, in which it is argued that the native speaker ‘exists only as a figment of linguist’s imagination’. Responding to Paikeday (1985), Chomsky (1986) argues that to question the difference between native and non-native is just pointless. That means, discussing the differences between native and non-native speaker is of no purpose and is waste of time.

However, starting in the 1990s a body of literature questioned the early assumptions and shifted the focus of interest to a widespread use of English. These arguments demonstrated that being ‘native’ is not a sufficient or necessary condition for becoming a model of language teacher and language learner. This ‘paradigm shift’ to use of English as an international language is ostensible in some noticeable scholars in 1990s. Jenkins (1998), considering the English needed for international communication, states that we ought to focus on those core aspects of pronunciation that were essential to international communication. Here, international communication is the focus of English as an international language. Different models and norms have been proposed by different scholars around the world. Prodromou (2007), for example, notes that it is the time that we should recognize “the diversity among users and the multiplicity of users to which English is put worldwide and think in terms of varied processes of interaction rather than a single prescriptive model” (p.40). Ur (2009) comparing the early models with the more recent ones, argues “that the goal is to be an ‘English-Knowing bilingual’: a French or Greek or Brazilian or German

national, who can also function competently in English” (p.4).

1.2 Definitions of ‘Native Speaker’

Linguists have given special attention to the notion of ‘native speaker’ as “the only true and reliable source of language data” (Ferguson, 1983, cited in Davies, 1996, p.3). However, the term is not as clear as it seems and there have been different interpretations of the term. Rampton’s (1990) article ‘displacing the native speaker’, Davis’s (1996) paper ‘what second language learners can tell us about the native speaker’, Paikeday’s (2003) book ‘the native speaker is dead’, are just some examples of the myth of ‘native speaker’. Theoretically and historically speaking, native speaker notion has a lot of ambiguity. Kachru’s (1983) concept of ‘native speaker’ is people from certain regional area. He claims that the inner circle of English consists of the USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, while the outer and expanding circles contain other countries where English is used as a second or foreign language.

Bloomfield (1993, cited in Broda, 2009, p.1) asserts ‘the first language being learners to speak is his native language’. Nevertheless, in line with the globalization the notion of ‘native speaker’ has been changed. Medgyes (1999) remarks that the “native/non-native division is one of the most complex elusive areas in applied linguistics” (p.9). He further notes that how far some scholars have challenged the notion of the native speakers. Davis (2003), in “The Native Speaker: Myth and Reality”, concludes that a native speaker is one who can write literature at all levels from jokes to epics, metaphor to novels. Inbar-Lourie’s (2005) study suggests that many self-ascribed non-native speakers can actually pass for native speakers in certain situations.

Timmis (2003) in his Doctoral thesis summarized some criteria pertaining to the definition of native speaker that have been proposed by some scholars such as Medgyes, 1999; Crystal, 2003; and Davis (1991) in the related literature.

The native speaker is someone who:

- Was born in an English-speaking country; and/or
- Acquired English during childhood in an English-speaking family;
- Speaks English as his her first language;

- Has a native-like command of English;
- Has the capacity to produce fluent, spontaneous discourse in English;
- Use(s) English language creatively;
- Has (a) realistic intuition to distinguish right and wrong forms in English. (p.61)

Davies (1995) notes that criteria related to attainability, (i.e. having the capacity to produce fluent and spontaneous discourse in English), are achievable by some learners. Therefore, items related to this criterion cannot be reasonable measure of native speaker. Paikeday (1985) in an operative meaning of native speaker makes the proficiency as a criterion. Kachru (cited Broda, 2009, P.2) also in recent years in a reinterpretation of native speaker mentions that 'inner circle' consists of those who are highly proficient speakers of English, regardless of how they learned to use the language. However, the term proficiency by definition is problematic per se. Firstly; language proficiency of native speakers differs from one to another. It is in a continuum from zero to strong. Secondly, as Davies (1995) argues "proficiency scales are simulations, subjective, approximate and incomplete." (p.153). This is the reason that why there are several language proficiency tests such as Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System).

We can relate the problems of 'native speaker' definition to two linguistic and sociolinguistic consideration. That is, 'native-speaker' and 'non-native speaker' are socially and culturally bonded terms and therefore, they are difficult to define. Considering native speaker as much a sociolinguistic construct as a developmental one, Davis (1996) argues that "the native speaker is a necessary myth, useful as a goal or model but useless as a measure" (p.1). The reason of such short but comprehensive explanation of native speaker, as he further notes is that 'native speaker' is not describable. The elusiveness of this term and different understanding of the term make it difficult to report the results of conducted studies in the related literature.

Chomsky (1986) maintains that the difference between native and non-native is just pointless. Sometimes native speaker is defined in terms of judgments of the speaker's' accent. "If the speaker's accent

is different from the listener's, and this listener cannot recognize it as any other 'established' accent, the speaker will be placed within the non-native speaker category" (Moussu & Liura, 2008, P. 316). Anderson's (1992) discussion of the concept of nationality as an 'imagined political community' is useful in understanding the deficiency of nationality as the criterion in native speaker deficiency. Defining nation is difficult because:

It is an imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is an imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know more of their fellow- members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (Anderson, 1992, p.6)

Therefore, Anderson's (1992) concept of 'nation' like Kachru's (1983) concept of 'region' cannot be an indicative factor in defining native speaker. It should be noted that there is not right and wrong definition to 'native speaker', and different definitions to date look at to it from different perspectives. Coppieters (1987) looking from a psychological position, defines native speaker by early acquired knowledge. From a sociological view, Bartsch (1988) considers attitude and identity as important concepts in defining the term.

From terminological point of view, Rampton (1990) problematizes the term 'native speaker'. He argues that the term should be down from usage and replaced by more inclusive terms. Rampton make use of 'language expert' instead of 'native speaker'. He argues that the 'expertise', as a relative term, is learned from an 'expert'. Here the emphasis is on this point that "expertise is partial. People can be expert in several fields, but they are never omniscient" (p.99), and "to achieve expertise, one goes through processes of certification, in which one is judged by other people" (ibid). In 'language expert' view, it is possible for a 'non-native' person to "have more 'expertise' in the language than a native speaker and may or may not 'affiliate' him/herself with the language" (Mahboob, 2005, p.80). Hence, the term 'native-speaker' is useless.

1.3 Definition of Native Speaker Norms

When there have been such a different interpretation and definition of native speaker, it goes without saying that



definition of 'native speaker norms' is by itself is problematic. Bachman (1990) makes this point clear:

A standard language needs as its 'members' those who uphold its norms by taking on the responsibility of being its native speakers. Native speakers represent standard languages: it is the standard language they are native speakers of. What exceptional learners tell us is (1) that native speaker attainment is achievable in the target standard language and (2) that an alternative standard is possible when such learners accorded the status of prestige speakers of alternative standard. (p.22)

Bartsch (1988) states that "norms are the social reality of the correctness notions" (p.4). According to Davis (1996) the 'correctness notions' are those that relate to 'how to behave notion'. Nevertheless, there is distinction between social and linguistic behavior. Here, the focus is on the linguistic correctness. Davis distinguishes between 'speaking' and 'writing' norms. "Norms are established in terms of central models in speaking and writing; and those models may be individuals or more likely elite groups" (Davis, 1996, p.9). Therefore, the analogy of 'speaking norms' and 'writing norms' might be correspond to analogy of 'spoken language' and 'written language'. Hence, a notion may be an appropriate norm in 'speaking' but not an appropriate one in 'writing'. The concluding remark of this section is Davis's (1996) conclusion on the discussion:

1.4 Unattainability of Native Speaker

One of the problems in native speaker's definition is native speaker competence. "If the native speaker seems problematic as a goal, that may be because we are doubtful whether learners can ever reach that goal (the 'ultimate attainment' problem), or because we are not clear how to define native speaker (the ideal or 'snark' problem)" (Davis, 1996, P.43). Native speaker competence is on a continuum from zero to strong, therefore, it can also be problematic from this perspective. Moreover, as Davis (1996) mentions there are not typically fixed criteria in assessing native speaker competence. Achieving native speaker norms is not a realistic goal, because it fails to take into account the social and cultural aspect of English as an international language. In addition, diversification and widespread use of English in non-native countries make it

difficult to have a unique model or norm of English. Therefore, English as a lingua franca allows this diversification.

Long (1990) takes this position that 'ultimate attainment' for the non-native speaker can never be equal to native speaker competence. Generally speaking, this claim is true, although there are some sporadic cases that even outperformed native speakers. Birdsong (1992) concludes that ultimate attainment for the non-native speaker can never be equal to native speaker competence. Coppieters (1987) study with learners of French language learners and French native speakers concludes that "ultimate attainment by non-natives can coincide with that of natives" (p.739). Davis (1996), considering this exceptional cases, argues that "native speaker is as much a sociolinguistic construct as a developmental one" (P.1).

Davis (1996) further addresses the question of whether a second language learner can become a native speaker of that language. He mentions six criteria, to which he responds in terms of 1) 'childhood acquisition', 2) 'intuitions about the individual's idiolectal grammar', 3) 'intuitions about standard language grammar', 4) 'discourse and pragmatic control', 5) 'creative performance', 6) 'interpreting and translating'. In term of 'childhood acquisition', obviously, the second language learner does not acquire the target language in early childhood. If s/he does then s/he is a (bilingual) native speaker of both the first language (L1) and the target language (TL). Considering, 'intuitions about the individual's idiolectal grammar', Davis (1996) mentions that with sufficient contact and practice, it is possible for the second language learner to gain access to intuitions about his/her own idiolectal grammar of the target language. In the case of 'intuitions about standard language grammar', he further notes that, with sufficient contact and practice, the second language learner can gain access to the standard grammar of the target language. Considering 'discourse and pragmatic control', the answer is yes. Nevertheless, there may be indeed be a descriptive difference between native speaker and non-native speaker groups but it is not in any way exploratory. That is, with the satisfactory situations second language learner can become native speaker. In term of 'creative performance', there are some well-known examples (e.g.: Conrad, Becket, and Senghor) of second language learners

who become an accepted creative writer or speaker in the target language. Finally, considering 'interpreting and translating', there are international organizations that employ non-native speakers's official interpreters and translators. Davis (1996) argues that all except (1) are contingent issues, in which for answering to that question arise further questions.

1.5 Native Speaker's Norms and Models

Jenkins (1998) distinguishes between 'norm' and 'model'. She refers to a 'norm' as a target for 100% attainment whereas a 'model' is something approximate to more or less according to the demands of the situation. What Jenkins (1998) is advocating therefore, is "a universal, realistically learnable and teachable core, based on the native speaker model ('model' being singular in the sense that the designated areas are common to all native varieties) which are then fleshed out according to a wide range of acceptable, local non-native norms." (p.124). The importance of model choice is clarified in Davies's (1996) study, in which he mentions issues of acceptability, currency and intelligibility. That is, in model selection the models to be selected should be acceptable by the population to which it applied. It also need to be current, in which takes into account the recent considerations in the related filed and finally, it should have intelligibility, i.e. it should be understandable by the target language learners.

1.6 Kachru's Three Circles

The selection of a model in English pronunciation teaching and learning is dependent on many factors including sociocultural, political, and economical decisions. The first option and probably the most widely used distinction, was based on either British or American English. It has been a matter of convention, when English is learnt mainly as a foreign language, it was naturally assumed that the native speakers should be the model and this notion has even persisted to this date. As an early and well known classification of English-speaking world, Kachru's (1985) three-circle model was the main conceptualization of native and non-native speaker discussion. In this model, native speaker countries in the 'inner circle' were distinct from the 'outer' and 'expanding' circles of countries where English is learned as a second or foreign language. In this model, "the native speakers are firmly in the

center, defined as 'norm-providing', whereas the outermost; 'expanding' circles is, 'norm-dependent'." (Ur, 2010, p.82).

The three circles model cast a long shadow for both teachers and students. However, as Jenkins, 2005; Sifakis & Sougari, 2005; Timmis, 2002 argue teachers are often uncomfortable with their position as either conservators of traditional practices or heralds of new ones.

Kachru and Nelson (1996, in Pennycook, 2002, P. 34) argue that the three circle model is not only a useful way of conceptualizing the English-speaking world for the purpose of studying it, but also a model which reflects the historical development of English and the sociopolitical contexts in which it is used. From this perspective, this model is useful for study but useless for application. Therefore, considering 'the inner circle countries' as 'norm-provider', 'extended circle countries', as 'norm-developer', and 'expanding circle countries' as 'norm dependent' is nonsense and has its own criticisms. These terms overlap each other, for instance a multicultural or a multilingual country can be at the same time, 'norm-provider', 'norm-developer', and 'norm-dependent'. Hence, in this particular case the 'three circles' model may not be working.

1.7 Native Speaker Model

In nativeness principle (Levis, 2005), L2 teachers are their learners' pronunciation models. Wach (2012) notes that the application of nativeness principle in setting goals for pronunciation instruction seems well grounded. In this model, the stress is on native speaker's ability to provide ideal language input. Cook (1999), considering the use of native speaker norms in SLA states that the native speaker model have some use as 'temporary' measure but not a measure of final achievement. That is, "SLA research can justifiably use native speakers' language as one perspective on the language of L2 learners, provided it does not make native speakers' language the measure of final achievement in the L2. (P. 190).

According to Wach (2012) a majority of research in second language acquisition evaluates learners in terms of how well they have acquired 'native-speaker' norms. In these research 'native-speaker norms' often, are considered as criteria for language learning and



teaching. Competent language learners are those who become successful in acquiring target language norms. On the other hand, those who fail to acquire the target language norms display language that, according to Ellis (1994) “was markedly deviant from target language norms” (p.15). Mahboob’s (2005) study among adult ESL learners in the United States suggested that NNESTs’ pronunciation is not perfect and therefore they are not the ideal ‘language models’ for spoken language. However, the idea that the native speaker model should remain the model for production and the idea that native speaker model should be predominating, lingered due to the implications of native speaker’s discussions in applied linguistics.

In terms of pedagogical implications of ‘native speaker norms’ discussion in, some methodologies in SLA research make use of the related concepts to native speaker norms. ‘Grammaticality judgment’ and ‘error analyses’ are just some examples of this methodology. These terms “by definition, require a comparison of learner language to native speaker norms”. (Mahboob, 2005, P.70). Therefore, ‘native speaker norms’ is not just a theoretical concept but has some pedagogical implications in applied linguistics.

In line with the emphasis on the cognitive approaches, the focus on ideal-native speaker model in applied linguistics has resulted in “a skewed perspective” (Firth & Wagner, 1997, p.295). Firth and Wagner define the ‘skewed perspective’ as one “that is accompanied by an analytic mindset that conceives of the FL [foreign language] speaker as a deficient communicator struggling to overcome an underdeveloped L2 [second language] competence, striving to reach the “target” competence of an idealized NS” (p.295). Mahboob (2005) argues that this generous and approving attitude toward native speakers at the cost of nonnative speakers has negative effects on the creativity and confidence of NNESTs. This discouragement of NNSs leads to what Tollefson (1995) names as ‘imbalance in socio-linguistic power’, the result of which is a life-long apprenticeship for the L2 speaker.

1.8 Beyond the Native Speaker

The appropriateness of ‘native speaker’ model in EIL teaching has become the concern of both researchers and practitioners. Willis (1999) poses two key questions, which concerns with the validity of aspiring to native speaker norms on the grounds of both principles and pragmatism.

The first one is related to native speaker standard that is, which native speaker standard are you aiming at and can you define it. The second question which concerns the attitudes of students toward native speaker norms is that, how many of your students need to achieve this native speaker standard and how many are likely to achieve it. Cook (1999) challenges native speaker model by posing this question that why should the attested language use of a NS community be a model for learners of EIL. For Cook (1999) there are not enough reasons for following native speaker norms in learning and teaching of English. The acceptance of ‘native speaker norms’ has recently been challenged by a number of scholars (e.g: Phillipson, 1992; Cook, 1999; Jenkins, 2006; Timmis, 2002; Aleptekin, (2002); Holliday, 2005; Selidhofer, 2004; Ur, 2009). Ur (2009) argues that this is not only based on Philipson’s (1992) “linguistic imperialism” or Holliday’s (2005) “native speakerism”, but also for more pragmatic reasons, associated with teachers’ needs to provide learners with future use of English as a lingua franca.

Therefore, there are enough reasons for not always relying on ‘native speakers’ norm. According to Graddol (1999), the term native speaker has declined for several reasons: First, the number of people who speak English as their first language is declining. Second, in the future, English will be mainly spoken as a second language in multilingual context and spoken among non-native speakers. Third, there has been a debate whether ‘native speaker’ had privileged access to an understanding of the language and more reliable informants and teachers. Hence, native speaker norms are condemned from linguistics and sociolinguistic perspectives.

The rapidly growing needs for communicative focus lead to move away from NS norms. Medgyes (1986) discussing the problems with the communicative approach in an EFL setting, states “for all their goodwill, native speakers are basically unaware of the whole complexity of difficulties that non-native speakers have to tackle” (p.341). Therefore, in the case of native speaker teacher, they tend to ignore students language deficiencies or problems. Phillipson (1992) challenges the notion that native speakers are better teachers. While he concedes that native speakers might be able to make instinctively better grammatical judgment. He, further, notes that native teachers are at a disadvantageous when trying to explain specific questions about

their native language unless they have received training to do so. He refers to the importance given to native speaking models as the “native speaker fallacy” (p.194).

Rajadurai (2002) argues that there are two disadvantages if we adopt ‘native speaker’ model. Firstly, native speaker is not always realistic or desirable. Other reason is that the native speaker is not always the best representative of what is intelligible. Furthermore, as Kachru (1992) points out “what have been accepted as standard models such as RP for British English and General American for American English are based on arbitrariness without official authority, and only spoken by a minority” (p.50-51).

The native speaker model has been criticized for its lack of contextualization. Moussu & Llorca (2008) argue that “it disregards the interdependence between language teaching and the local context where it takes place” (p.317). Rampton (1990) and Brutt-Griffler & Samimy’s (2001) case studies suggests that there are some individuals who could not easily be categorized as the native speakers or non-native speakers, as they themselves had problems in stating whether they belong to one group or another. Moussu & Llorca (2008) further state that:

What these authors claimed was the existence of a continuum that accounted for all possible cases between the two extreme options, each corresponding to the two idealized notions of what traditionally was considered a native speaker and a non-native speaker. According to this view, individuals may stand on any given point along this continuum (p.318).

Therefore, there is not clear distinction between native speaker and non-native one. Hence, there is a continuum from non-nativeness to nativeness, on which an individual can be stand. Another point which is mentioned by Canagarajah (1999) is that students’ classifications of NSs and NNSs may not always correspond to the teachers’ own classification of their (non-)nativeness or even to linguists’ classifications. Where people speak more than one language and where linguistic boundaries are no longer clear, as Canagarajah (1999) argues, the term ‘native speaker’ becomes obsolete. Consider a multilingual country that the parents speak different language, regularly; the learner will be more competent in the dominant language. Therefore, in this case it is not clear whether the child is native speaker of the two languages or just one language. Hence, as Mahboob (2005)

concludes “the blind acceptance of the native speaker norm in English language teaching has come into questions” (p.82).

Native speaker model is a danger to learners’ culture. “Do we want the native speaker as our model, particularly if it means we have to take the native speaker culture too?” (Carter, 1998, p.43). This resembles Phillipson’s (1992) concept of ‘linguistic imperialism’ and ‘native speaker fallacy’ (i.e. the ideal teacher is a native speaker). Modiano (2001) summarizes this threat as “those who view the spread of English as linguistic imperialism question the English language teaching and learning enterprise because, from their point of view, it compromises the cultural integrity of the non-native speaker.” Alptekin (2002) refers the danger of culture as ‘enculturation’ in which learners are focused to ‘convey appropriate, coherent and strategically effective meaning for the native speaker’. Enculturation involves “new cultural frames of reference and a new worldview, reflecting those of the target language culture and its speakers” (Alptekin, 2002, p.58). Therefore, in the enculturation phenomenon target language culture affect learners’ culture. Holliday (2005) investigates how NNSs are categorized as the ‘Other’ by the dominant group of NSs. This ‘Otherness’ considers the other groups less important and more distant from the NSs group. This entails a phenomenon of what Holliday names as ‘Culturism’. Holliday (2005) notes that:

Culturism, and more particularly ‘native speakerism’, creates a stereotypical myth by which the ‘other’ (i.e., the NNS) is seen as ‘uncritical, static, rigid, with a fixed view of knowledge, intellectually interdependent, wishing to preserve knowledge, good at memorizing’, who also needs ‘to be trained, treated sensitively, understood, involved, given ownership, empowered’, finds ‘decision-making difficult’, and prefers ‘frontal teaching’ as she is ‘exam-oriented’ (p.21)

A rejection of the native speaker leads to a paradigm shift. Some scholars suggest that non-native speaker teacher (NNST) should take his/her place. Cook (1999) claims that learners “may prefer the fallible nonnative speaker teacher who presents a more achievable model’. However, as Ur (2010) argues “the implication that the non-native speaker is, *qua* non-native, ‘fallible’ is insulting to the large and increasing number of fully competent non-native-speaking; and in my experience neither learners nor teachers would wish to



compromise on a model that is less than optimal as regards both accuracy and fluency” (p.87). Looking at the issue from a different perspective Matsuda (1997) and Matsuda & Matsuda (2001) emphasize cooperation and mutual help between NS and NNS teachers, since both NS and NNS teachers have specific advantages and disadvantages. However, the lack of NS teachers in EFL setting and logistic problems makes it difficult for such cooperation and mutual help.

Nowadays, mostly, the preferences are beyond the distinction between native and native speaker models. One reason for this is in terms of native speaker proficiency. There is large number of non-native speakers who are competent speaker and writer of target language. Hence, as Ur (2010) states “the model for EFL teachers (and learners) should be *fully-competent EFL user* without defining whether such a speaker was or was not originally a ‘native speaker’. Therefore, here the model is not based on geographical distinction, but it is a matter of language use. The focus is on the level of proficiency and the place where they come from is not important. Paikeday (1985) and Rampton (1990) suggested using the term ‘proficient user’ of a language to refer to all speakers who can successfully use it. Nevertheless, the term successful is a problematic per se. what is claimed is the existence of a continuum from native speaker to nonnative one that accounts for all possibilities between the two extreme options. From this point of view, language learners may stand on any given point along this continuum. Pragmatically speaking, as Árvá & Medgyes (2000, cited in Moussu & Llurda, 2008, p.318) note that the term native speaker as opposed to non-native speaker is as widely used in the professional jargon of both teachers and researchers today as ever. Moussu and Llurda (2008) further argue that “this undoubtedly constitutes a paradox for many researchers who, while working towards the spread of the idea that nativeness is fairly irrelevant feature in language teaching, at the same time need to accept the division between NS and NNS in order to start constructing their supporting argumentation” (p.318). Here, therefore, there is a gap between research and practice or between researchers and practitioners. In ‘beyond native speaker discussion’, English teaching proficiency is seen as ‘plural system’ that abandon the notion of native vs. non-native discussion and as Tsui (2003) &

Canagarajah, (2005) note “adopts instead the distinction between, for example, ‘novice’ and ‘expert’ teachers”. In English as an international language (EIL), concerning pronunciation, Jenkins (2002) argues that EIL learners should not have to adapt to native speaker (NS) norms but should adjust their speech to suit an audience of primarily nonnative speakers (NNSs). Jenkins’ (2002) discussion of EIL leads to concepts like “mutual intelligibility” and “lingua franca core” in pronunciation instruction. Therefore, there is now a lot of agreement demonstrating that being ‘native’ is not sufficient or necessary condition in pronunciation instruction. Together with the need to have a ‘beyond native speaker perspective’ models and frameworks changed to more realistic perspectives.

2. Mutual Intelligibility

Intelligibility in its broadest term has been used as both “intelligible production and felicitous interpretation of English” (Nelson, 1995, p.274). However, there is no universally agreed upon definition of its constructs. Smith and Nelson (1985) distinguish *intelligibility*, *comprehensibility*, and *interpretability*. In these definitions, intelligibility refers to the ability of the listener to recognize individual words or utterances; comprehensibility is the listener’s ability to understand the meaning of the word or utterance in its given context, and interpretability is the ability of the listener to understand the speaker’s intentions behind the word or utterance. Therefore, intelligibility is the first step in understanding the speaker intentions, without which the other steps cannot be achieved. Smith and Nelson (1985) state that “intelligibility is not speaker or listener-centered but is interactional between speaker and hearer” (p.333). This is why the discussion is named as ‘mutual intelligibility’ not just intelligibility.

Jenkins (2000) argues the questions why the NS norms are assumed as the standard for intelligibility. She mentions that intelligibility is much of ‘receiver’ concept and not necessarily reciprocal notion. Pickering (2006) in a review of current research on intelligibility in English as a lingua franca, argues that native speaker models have been limited in intelligibility discussion. Setter (2008) discusses the issue of ‘intelligibility’ versus ‘native-like’ pronunciation. Considering the more recent theories in pronunciation teaching (such as LFC), he argues the influence of theory changing on material development. In the

past, the focus of pronunciation instruction materials (such as American Accent Training) was on the way native speaker uses language. Recently, in line with paradigm shift, the focus of English language materials was toward intelligibility. Discussing the appropriate pedagogical priorities in pronunciation instruction, Dewing and Munro (2005) argue that “mutual intelligibility is the primary consideration, although social ramifications of accent must also be taken into account” (p.378). Dewing and Munro (2005) further notes that ‘mutual intelligibility’ is a crucial concern in ESL contexts such as North America, Australia, Britain, and New Zealand, where English is the language of the majority. The reason for this concern is the levels of immigration in these English-speaking countries, where the potential for miscommunication has increased. Globally speaking, it is also crucial in EFL contexts, where ‘globalization’ as an international phenomenon, has its own place. Jenkins’ (2002) lingua franca core for pronunciation instruction takes into account aspects of mutual intelligibility. In a reductionist view, she notes that NNS phonological phenomena that are unlikely to cause comprehension problems for other NNSs fall outside the core. Like Jenkins, Derwing and Munro (2005) argue that ‘mutual intelligibility’ is the paramount concept for second language learners. However, “ESL learners have to make themselves understood to a wide range of interlocutors within a context where their L2 is the primary language for communication and where, in many cases, NSs are the majority” (p.380)

These arguments summarize that intelligibility is the most important concern of pronunciation instruction. This concern has been reaffirmed by some scholars (e.g: Derwing and Munro, 2005).

Intelligibility is context dependent, i.e. a speech feature can be understandable in its context but it cannot easily be interpretable out of its context. Suenobu, Kanzaki, and Yamane (1992) presented English words produced by Japanese speakers to American English listeners. The context-based intelligibility scores were higher than those of in isolation. Therefore, context can make intelligibility as an achievable goal. This is an advantage over ‘native speaker model’ in which generally speaking, unattainability is on the most important characteristics.

Some studies define intelligibility in terms of ‘accented speech’ and suggest that heavily accented speeches are completely

intelligible. Nevertheless, there are not adequate studies on the relationship between accent phenomena and interference with meaning. For instance, as Derwing and Munro (2005) argue, it is widely accepted that suprasegmentals are very important to intelligibility, but as yet few studies support this belief. Derwing and Munro, furthermore, mention three categories of studies that would help elucidate the factors that interfere most with intelligibility. First, listener tasks (e.g., grammaticality judgments, transcription, and sentence verification) can show the perceived intelligibility, comprehensibility and accentedness (e.g: Anderson-Hsieh, Janson, & Koehler, 1992; Munro & Derwing, 1995). Researchers in the first group have found that comprehensibility of L2 speech by NSs is more significantly related to prosodic variables than segmental effects. Second, before and after a treatment on a particular aspect of learners’ speech production (Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1997; Perlmutter, 1989). Jenkins (2000), as one of the best examples of this group analyzes conversational and information gap task data she collected from L2 mixed- language dyads. Following an examination of all instances of communication breakdowns, she reports that pronunciation issues comprise the biggest source of loss of comprehensibility or intelligibility, and these most commonly occurred at the segmental level. The third group of studies related to psycholinguistic experiments providing insights into the processing of accented speech (Tajima, Port, & Dalby, 1997; Wingstedt & Schulman, 1987). Therefore, more attention has been focused on the mutual intelligibility after the paradigm shift toward beyond native speaker norms.

The ‘intelligibility principle’ has some practical implications in teaching spoken English. Considering international use of language, Walker (2005) pinpoints that we reconsider traditional target models and move toward ‘pronunciation for international intelligibility’ using the Jenkins lingua franca core as a starting point. While cautioning that she is not advocating a replacement model for British or North American varieties of English Jenkins she sees a primary advantage of promoting a lingua franca core in a pronunciation syllabus as ensuring that mutual intelligibility across varieties in EIL will be maintained.

An intelligibility based model has a number of problems. Kuo (2006) argues that



such a perspective omits the phonological and grammatical redundancy, meant to protect the preciseness and completeness of the message. Moreover, as Seidlhofer (2001) adds, such views help diminish the NS model into ‘ungrammatical but unproblematic features’ such as ‘he look very sad’, and ‘a picture who gives the impression’. Jenkins (2002) discusses that the final version of such an international lingua franca will be ‘inaccurate but intelligible’ pronunciation such as ‘I think /sɪŋk/'. However, in the extreme point, it can lead to ‘inaccurate and un-intelligible’ pronunciation rather ‘inaccurate and intelligible’ pronunciation.

To preserve international intelligibility some theoretical constructs like Catford (1987) functional load, Gimson’s (2001) frequency of occurrence, and Jenkins (2000) LFC were founded.

3. English as a Lingua Franca and Lingua Franca Core (LFC)

A lingua franca is defined as a “contact language between persons who share neither a common native language nor a common culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication” (Firth, 1996, p.240). It is “a vehicular language spoken by people who do not share a native language” (Mauranen, 2003, p. 513). Seidlhofer (2004) defines it as English used in the expanding circle between L2 users. Pickering (2006) follows Seidlhofer’s definition and defines ELF as “talk comprising expanding circle speaker-listener” (p.2). Today most of English speakers are using English as a lingua franca. It is used in a variety of fields for variety of purposes including, education, politics, entertainment, business, finance, information technology, and the list goes on. Ur (2009) argues that the user of English as a lingua franca has a wide distribution. It may be either ‘native’ or ‘nonnative’, is typically bilingual or multilingual, or it is likely to be skilled in communicative and comprehension strategies. Therefore, a model is needed for this widespread use of English.

4. Implication of ELF

Ur (2009), discussing English as a lingua franca and its implications for English teachers, refers to this model as “the fully competent speaker of English as lingua franca” (p.1). Ranjadurai (2005) argues that it is useful to redefine three circles model in terms of international use of language rather than in terms of whether they live. In this model, “in the center would be the fully

competent speakers, next fairly competent, and the outside the limited” (Ur, 2009, p.1). In this model the goals are realistic and achievable and therefore the model is more appropriate than ‘native speaker model’. “Non-native fully competent speakers have the advantage of being an appropriate role model; and the language proficiency level of the non-native fully proficient speaker is, by definition is achievable” (Ur, 2009, p.5). However, ‘fully competent non-native speaker’ is problematic per se. That is who the ‘fully competent non-native speaker’ is, and what makes one ‘fully competent non-native speaker’ or ‘fairly competent’ has not been mentioned by Ur.

ELF has theoretical, pedagogical, and cultural implications. From theoretical point of view, it changed the concept of ‘English’ to “an internationally comprehensible variety of language rather than a single ‘native’ model” (Ur, 2009, p.6). It has also pedagogical implications in the sense that, as Ur (2009) notes, it changed the goal of language teaching “to produce fully competent English-knowing bilinguals rather than imitation native speakers” (p.6) and it was “a change in materials and test design, relating to both content and language” (ibid). Considering cultural implications, advent of English as a lingua franca implies “a change in the cultural background to English courses: ‘home’ and ‘international’ culture predominate” (Ur, 2009, p.6) and “a change in the image of the English teacher: ‘native-speaker-ness’ less important than linguistic competence, teaching competence, intercultural competence” (ibid).

For the widespread use of English as a lingua franca, different varieties of models have been proposed. Making use of an in-depth research methodology on conversation between NNSs as data, Jenkins (2000) proposes her controversial lingua franca core. The LFC, which is aimed at international intelligibility among NNSs, tries to keep sounds as close as possible to spelling and focuses on the mutual intelligibility among speakers of different L1s. It should be notified that Jenkins (2000) LFC “is neither a pronunciation model nor a restricted simplified core” (p.158), but “”, but instead defines the features of English pronunciation which will make speakers from a variety of first language (L1) backgrounds more intelligible to one another” (Setter, 2008, p.449). It has both segmental and supra-segmental parts.

The main purpose of LFC is to identify which features of English pronunciation make it difficult to communicate between NNSs in an international context. From pedagogical point of view, these principles have some implications in pronunciation teaching. For instance, some studies suggest that in teaching EIL, suprasegmental features (like intonation and stress) is more important than segmental features such as vowel and consonant. Therefore, in material development and teaching for pronunciation this can be taken into account. According to Ketabi and Shomoossi (2007) the discussion between supra/segmental is one of the reasons why American /r/ is preferred to standard British /r/, and British intervocalic /t/ to American intervocalic /t/, which has a tendency to become /d/, thus endangering intelligibility.

5. Criticism of LFC

LFC, in spite of its widespread implications, is not free of criticisms. Wach (2012) mentions some of these criticisms proposed by some scholars. Dauer (2005), for instance, investigating different features of LFC concludes that they do not lower the learnability burden considerably enough. Dziubalska -Koaczyk (2005) strongly criticizes the idea of LFC. He mentions the production/ perception conflict overlooked by LFC (i.e., certain sounds that are not necessary in learners production are required by learners to understand native speaker) and the problem of LFC's accommodation to targets with different L1s. Similarly, Scheuer (2005) notes that the features of LFC do not really reflect NNS intelligibility, as they are heavily biased towards the phonetic preferences of L1 speakers of English. In an argument for the importance of all of the English sounds in communication, Sobkowiak (2005) criticizes Jenkin's (2000) LFC as a reductionist view and mentions that limiting the sound system to 'core' features makes it artificial and unnatural. This reductionist view may also be a danger to English a lingua franca, in which by focusing just some 'core' sounds, the language as a whole system will be in perishing position. From Trudgill's (2005) perspective the LFC discussion is not necessary, since as NS speech is not necessarily less intelligible to NNSs. The principles of LFC can be communicative disadvantageous for language learners whom exposed to these principles. Van den Doel (2010) argues that other user of

English may stigmatize LFC users for lack of communicative competence.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, the focus was one in a comprehensive review of the theoretical frameworks and related literature. We discussed the problems in native speaker definitions and presented its interoperations in English as an international and English as lingua franca discussions. We also discussed that native speaker norms by itself is a problematic concept. Earlier, it was believed that NSNs should be the model in language instruction, however, some discussions such as 'unattainability of NSNs' lead to move beyond native speaker. In this regard, after explaining the early models in native speaker discussion, such as Kachru's Three Circles, the alternative models was investigate. In this regard some models such as LFC and mutual intelligibility was examined. We, furthermore, investigated the related studies in the area of NSNs in a chronological order. The conducted studies were reviewed in terms of self-perception of native speaker and non-native speaker teachers and learners' view of them.

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