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MENCION INGLÉS

**English teacher preference: The case of Ecuador's' English academy  
students**

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

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LOJA

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DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de fin de titulación: **English teacher preference: The case of Ecuador's' English academy Students** realizado por Coronel Golubenko Yulia Mercedes, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, agosto de 2014

f).....

## DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

“Yo, Coronel Golubenko Yulia Mercedes declaro ser autora del presente trabajo de fin de titulación English teacher preference: The case of Ecuador’s English academy students, de la Titulación de Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo Alexander Robert James Dodd director del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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f.....

Autor.....

Cédula.....

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis work is dedicated to my parents, Sergio and Olga who have always loved me unconditionally and supported me to reach this stage of my studies, whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.

I also dedicate this work to my husband, Jorge, who has been a constant source of support and encouragement during the challenges of university and life. I am truly thankful for having you in my life.

As well, this research work is also dedicated to my children who have been my greatest motivation to never give up on my studies and reach my objectives in life. I love you.

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## ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on measure the students' preferences of native or non-native speaking English in private language teaching institutions in the city of Loja After offering a brief literature review, that was conducted to obtain a deeper insight in selecting teachers by student and parents. A survey was applied to 40 participants (aged between 12 and 18) that come from 4 private language institutions and 40 parents to determine the perceptions of the quality of English teaching depending on the origin of the teacher. In addition, the results contribute to discover that factors like accent, knowledge about the culture, syntactic knowledge about the language, methods and techniques used in class influence these perceptions that favor a possible preference for a native or non-native teacher.

**KEY WORDS:** native-nonnative teachers, students' preferences, parents' preference, teacher characteristics.

## RESUMEN

El presente estudio se centra en medir la preferencia de los estudiantes hacia los profesores de inglés nativos o no nativos en las instituciones privadas de enseñanza del idioma en la ciudad de Loja. Después de ofrecer una breve revisión de la literatura que se llevó a cabo para obtener una visión más profunda en la elección de profesores por parte de los estudiantes y padres. Se aplicó una encuesta a 40 participantes (edades comprendidas entre 12 y 18 años) que pertenecen a 4 academias particulares de inglés y 40 padres de familia para determinar la percepción de la calidad de la enseñanza de Inglés en función del origen del profesor. Además, los resultados contribuyen a descubrir que factores como el acento, el conocimiento sobre la cultura, el conocimiento sintáctico sobre el lenguaje, métodos y técnicas utilizados en clase influyen en estas percepciones que favorecen a una posible preferencia por un maestro nativo o no nativo.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** profesores nativos-no nativos, preferencia de los estudiantes, preferencia de los padres de familia, características de los maestros.



## INTRODUCTION

It has been argued that only native speakers should teach English because they have the best pronunciation. According to Amin (1997), in Japan, Japanese English teachers often have very little experience speaking English so their pronunciation can sometimes be quite poor. Assistant language teachers from English speaking countries have easily found work in Japan due to the boards of education trying to improve the pronunciation of their students via speaking practice with native speakers in Japanese public schools. However, it is important to mention the variety in supply of assistant language teachers. For example a teacher from Jamaica could be replaced after a year by another teacher from Australia. This might cause a few problems due to the fact that two native English speakers may have very different pronunciation and accent due to geographical and cultural factors. Consistency is important when teaching a language, so there must be a level of precaution on the part of the school administrators when attempting to apply this approach.

On the other hand, in countries such as the Netherlands, non-native English teachers often have very good English pronunciation and therefore students do not really need a native speaker in order to achieve acceptable levels of pronunciation. After all, it is argued that good English pronunciation does not mean using a British or American accent; if a teacher is French, a French accent is perfectly acceptable as long as the words are being pronounced correctly (Amin, 1997). Accents, as opposed to pronunciation, are not an indication of poor teaching but more, of where a person is from. At any rate, audio and video clips demonstrating proper English pronunciation are readily available and should be used by every ESL or EFL teacher in order to give students a chance to hear other voices and different accents. This does not mean that recordings can replace

native English speakers or teachers with good pronunciation; it is simply another tool at the teacher's disposal within the classroom.

In relation to the study, it is sometimes found that qualified non-native English speaking teachers are not considered desirable by administrators when applying for teaching jobs. This happens because they say their policy states that the institution must have a certain percentage of native teachers and the positions of non-native teachers are filled. In some cases, students do not realize how much they can learn from non-native speaking teachers because they simply believe a native speaker is best. According to Mossu (2008), the myth of the native speaker as the ideal teacher has been deconstructed due to the lack of substantial evidence behind the concept.

Most non-native speakers are trained teachers either in their country, an English speaking country or the country they teach in which means that they often will have much more teaching experience than native speakers (Byram, 1999). It seems irrational to assume that just because someone speaks English they can teach it. They may be able to speak the language but explaining it is an entirely different thing. Without training in classroom management and lessons in English grammar, native speakers cannot be effective as ESL instructors. If a native speaker is a qualified educator, then they will have an advantage but when teaching abroad, it is also beneficial to be able to communicate with students in their native language. If a teacher from an English speaking country comes to teach English in Ecuador and he does not know the basic or does not care in learning Spanish. It will be very hard for beginner students to communicate effectively and it might cause confusion between the students. The best option for language learners is perhaps when native English speakers are mixed with local teachers; thereby students have the best of

both worlds in that they have access to native speakers as well as knowledge from the local teachers who have been through the same language learning process as their students. It is worthwhile to explore the issue from the students' perspective in order to ascertain whether students do show a preference for native English-speaking teachers over non-native counterparts.

The main objective of the study is measure the students' preferences of native or non-native speaking English teachers in private language institutions in Loja. Not only measuring students preference is important, but also measuring their parents perception of the quality of English teaching depending on the origin of the teacher because at the end parents choose where their children will go to study. In addition, it is also essential to discover the contributing factor leading to a possible preference for their native or non-native speaking teacher

## METHODOLOGY

This quantitative research was conducted in order to gather the students' and parents' attitudes towards native and non-native English-speaking teachers with a closed questionnaire that was designed by the author and distributed to 40 secondary school students as well as the students' parents in Loja.

### *Setting and Participants*

The research took place in four private language institutions in the city of Loja, Ecuador. The study was comprised of 40 participants between the ages of 12 and 18. The participants and sites were chosen by purposeful sampling, meaning that they were intentionally selected in order to learn or ascertain the perceptions of the students and parents regarding native and non-native English teachers. A single class was chosen from each institution to participate in the study. This meant that 10 students were included from Institution A, 10 students from Institution B, 10 students from Institution C and 10 students from Institution D. From each academy, the sample was made up of 5 boys and 5 girls.

The students were asked to respond to a close-ended questionnaire and then later asked to take a separate, different survey home to their parents to fill out. The 40 set of parents of the students that were part of the study are derived from the four private language academies and they gave back the survey two days after it was given. All parents responded to the survey and as such there was a 100% completion rate – as was that of the students.

### *Instrument*

Both questionnaires were written in the participant's native language (Spanish) and contained a total of seven closed-ended questions. All the questions required the students and their parents to indicate a preference for either an N-NEST or an NEST in different aspects of teaching, although

they may also indicate a neutral position in their answers. The parents' survey included 6 closed questions in which they were given the three stipulated options and 1 closed-ended, multiple-choice question. In the students' questionnaire they had to give general data like their age and gender. In addition they had 5 closed-ended questions and 1 multiple-choice question where they had to choose the aspects that they consider important in a teacher.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

From the start it is important to mention that whatever the differences, what becomes apparent in the literature is that no matter the definition or status of being a native English speaking teacher (NEST) or non-native English speaking teacher (non-NEST), both groups bring distinct and beneficial attributes as professionals in the language classroom (Cook, 1999)

A large used definition of a native speaker takes the circumstances of acquisition as the major standard for defining a native speaker; a native speaker is seen as someone who acquires a language in early childhood (Piller, 2001; Davies, 2003). Cook (1999) also sees ‘the language learnt first’ as a crucial element in defining what constitutes a native speaker. However, in the case of balanced bilinguals who acquire two or more languages simultaneously since the earliest days of language development, the term ‘native speaker’ becomes problematic.

According to Davies (1991), “no agreement exists as to what is the proper definition of a native speaker. The idea that the ‘native speaker is uniquely and permanently different from a nonnative speaker’, arguing that the notion of nativeness in language is a ‘myth’.

### *Native and non-native English speakers*

It is frequently believed that native speakers are perfect language teachers. According to Braine (1999), native speakers are believed to possess a superior command of fluency and idiomatically correct language forms. They are considered to have more knowledge about the cultural connotations of the mother tongue and as the arbiters of the acceptability of any instances of the language.

Kramersch (1997), suggest that ‘nativeness’ constitutes a socially constructed identity rather than a linguistic category. According to Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001) the native speaker

position is determined by ‘acceptance by the group that created the distinction between native and nonnative speakers’. Whether international speakers of English are considered as ‘native’ or ‘non-native speaker’ depends upon various social parameters, such as the preconceived notions of what native speakers should look like or sound like.

### *Dominance and difference approaches*

In the controversy of non-native English teachers and native English teachers in the ELT profession, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999) identify two main approaches for non native English speaking teachers based on the concept of “nativeness”, the dominance approach and the difference approach. In particular, the dominance approach is premised on the paradigm of ‘deficit linguistics’ (Medgyes, 1994; Quirk, 1990), whereby NNESTs are viewed as ‘linguistically handicapped’ (Medgyes, 1994) in relation to NESTs. The difference approach to the NNESTs, emphasizes the strengths of NNESTs. According to such an approach, both NNESTs and NESTs are similarly capable of being good language teachers, regardless of their different backgrounds. Indeed, NNESTs should not be considered inferior to NESTs, given that they possess valuable linguistic and pedagogical resources which are as important as the resources that NESTs possess. Scholars (see, for example, Braine, 1999) taking such an approach places particular importance on pluralism and collaboration in the profession. However, what is common in both approaches are the underlying assumptions and ideology of the opposed identities of professionals in the field of TESOL (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999)

### *Negative attitudes to differences*

Therefore, is unsurprising that attention has tended to focus on differences between native and non-native speaker teachers rather than any similarities which may exist. Regrettably, there

has been a somewhat divisive tone to much of this. It may take the form of over-fulsome praise (Medgyes, 1992):

"The whole gamut of expressions was used by a group of questionnaire respondents to describe the language of NS teachers: "natural, authentic, living, perfect, expert, best quality, most correct, model, proper, fresh, current, best, faultless"." (Nizegorodcew, 1994)

### *Positive attitudes to differences*

A positive approach is suggested by Bennett (1994) and explicitly by Medgyes (1992): "the ideal NEST and the ideal non-NEST arrive from different directions but eventually stand quite close to one another. In an ideal school, there should be a good balance of NESTs and non-NESTs, which complement each other in their strengths and weaknesses."

What these strengths and weaknesses are is considered below. According Medgyes (1992) "It is important to bear in mind, however, that the ideals referred to are exactly that, ideals, and that few real teachers match up to these. The qualities such ideals should include are actually very similar for both NESTs and non-NESTS: the 'ideal teacher' who is to be found at the top of our imaginary pyramid is qualified, experienced, bilingual (at least to some extent) and bicultural (again at least to some extent). Their antitheses at the bottom of the slope, on the other hand, are not so similar. On one side we have the 'poor NEST', unqualified, inexperienced, unversed in the local L1, and unfamiliar with the local culture, while on the other the 'poor non-NEST', likewise unqualified and inexperienced, is also likely to lack cultural awareness associated with the language being studied and may well have a poor grasp of this language, the so-called 'one-page-ahead-of-the-class' syndrome. The lower down the pyramid they are, the greater the need for mutual support."



### *Familiarity with learning*

Medgyes (1994), points out the following advantages enjoyed by non-NESTs, who, as learners themselves can serve as imitable models of the successful learner of English language, can teach learning strategies more effectively, can provide learners with more information about the English language, are more able to anticipate language difficulties, can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of their learners, and can benefit from sharing the learners' mother tongue.

The use of the mother tongue can be of value not only for the effective explanation of abstract notions but also class management, especially with elementary students for whom instructions may be a hurdle (Spratt, 1985), for anticipating and explaining interference, and in the realm of translation.

Although translation became something of a dirty word at the height of the "communicative revolution", it has started to reappear in published textbooks (Soars and Soars, 1986) and be accepted again (Atkinson, 1993) as a powerful teaching/learning tool in a classroom if used sensibly. The fact that translation may represent one of students' needs is one that has often been overlooked.

There is considerable evidence which demonstrates that it is advantageous to be intimate with learners' cultural background and expectations. Nizegorodcew (1994), states that "In Slovakia, for example, it may take considerable time and explanation on the part of teachers to persuade learners accustomed to more traditional, teacher-centered ways to accept pair work, group work or role play activities. At first they resent them, sometimes they comment that NESTs are not strict enough and do not do enough correction."

They expect to be taught grammar. They are not happy about ideas such as self-correction or self-assessment. It is doubtful they would appreciate the views of writers such as Krashen (1982) on error treatment. They know little about learner autonomy. Preconceptions such as these are perilous for the teacher to ignore; the non-NEST is much less likely to do so.

Bennett (1994) also argues that learners often struggle with expressing untranslatable elements of the mother culture which are important for them. While non-NESTs recognize these and focus on them, NESTs are more likely to dismiss them as "not English" and therefore not worth attention.

### *Knowledge of Institutions*

Spratt (1985), argues that an important area where non-NESTs have the upper hand is in their knowledge of institutional culture and goals. They are familiar with the administrative framework. They know what to expect from and how to deal with management, colleagues, and students. Spratt says "they understand (though they do not necessarily approve of) the system of examinations, which may be radically different from the prevailing system in NESTs' countries of origin. This awareness of norms not only enables them to analyze students' needs better but also insulates them from the kind of institutional culture shock, brought on by having to cope with a whole spectrum of issues, ranging from very different management practices to attitudes to cheating in examinations. This may well handicap NESTs' effectiveness."

This ignorance of local institutions may stimulate healthy and logical questions on the part of NESTs which their local counterparts may not dare to ask, the so-called "battering-ram" effect. Furthermore, some local respondents to our questionnaire complained that NESTs'

ignorance placed a heavy burden on already-busy colleagues who have to spend a lot of time and energy "babysitting" NESTs and helping them with a wide range of practicalities (Tang, 1997). While this is less of a problem the longer NEST remains, most of them do not stay long enough for this to desist to cause difficulties. "The situation in many former Soviet bloc countries is further exacerbated both by the lack of circulation of information that characterizes societies still emerging from totalitarianism and by constant shifting of the goalposts occasioned by the frenzied pace of change." (Nizegorodcew, 1994)

### *Cultural background*

Clearly, NESTs are steeped in cultural background knowledge and have an advantage over non-NESTs in this regard. On the other hand, the knowledge can be limited to one culture or one English-speaking country only, while curriculum demands information on several major English-speaking countries. Even though, the presence of the native speaker broadens the horizons not only of local students but also colleagues. It can have a particularly important role in destroying clichéd images which still survive, such as a Britain inhabited by gentlemen in pinstriped suits with umbrellas rather than the rather more pluralistic multiracial reality.

However, it is hard to predict which student will or will not come into direct contact and with the world developing the probability of some contact grows. It is almost inevitable, for example, that the student will encounter the problem in a film where some features specific to one culture will stand out. Non-NESTs, if confronted with questions that they cannot answer, may well feel embarrassed. The situation may be made worse as in Central Europe non-NESTs may well have had less contact with the culture of the countries whose language they teach than

their students, who now have far more chances than they ever did to spend holidays or periods of study abroad. (Brutt-Griffler and Samimy, 1999)

With the opening up of borders the issue of cross-cultural learning is bound to grow in significance. In a world where change is, increasingly, the only constant, it will no longer be sufficient to pass on bodies of facts; instead, a contrastive approach is likely to emerge as the norm. The implications for the need for NESTs and non-NESTs to work together are clear.

### *Teaching attitudes*

Both in their general attitude to teaching and at the chalkface there are several areas (for example management of classrooms and of learning, attitudes to accuracy, fluency, and errors, and use of resources) where NESTs and non-NESTs tend to differ in emphasis. A comprehensive list of these, based on research conducted in a number of countries, can be found in Medgyes (1994). These differences should be seen not as negative and contradictory but as positive and complementary. They do not merely cater to learner preconceptions but also challenge them (and vice versa) and also make it more likely that individual learning styles will be accommodated (Watson & Pojanapunya, 2009)

### *Students' and parent perceptions towards Native and non-native English speakers*

As was the case with the students in Mahboob's (2001) study, both groups saw NEST and NNEST as possessing different strengths. NESTs strengths included: high proficiency in English, ability to use English functionally and awareness of the cultures of English-speaking countries. NNEST's perceived strengths included: ability to empathize with students as fellow second language learners, shared cultural background and ability to teach grammar.

According Yau (2012), parents' perceptions of local English teachers and native English teachers, through which it reveals the unequal linguistic relationship between local variety of English and native-like English. It is found that parents have diverse views over the two groups' teaching methods, classroom management and provision of learner support. Yet, what stands out is parents' perception of what should be the most accurate and desirable linguistic model for students.

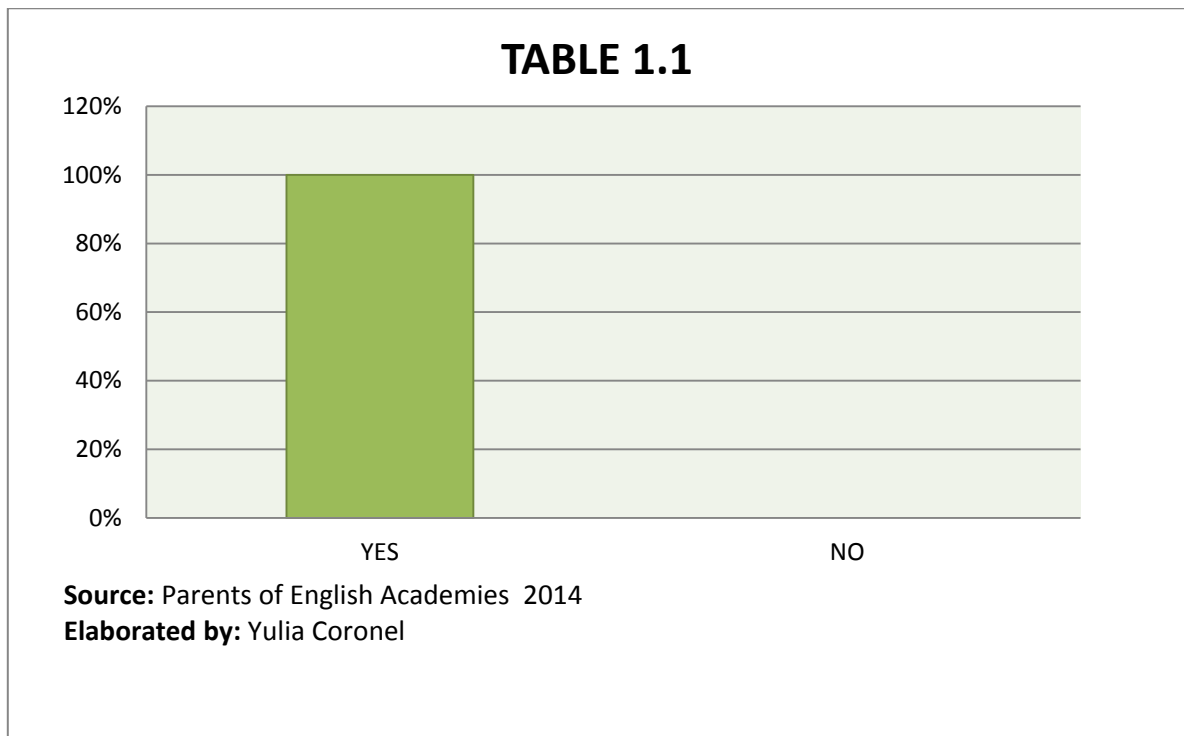
## DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data was collected and analysed to identify ESL students' and parents' preferences and perceptions towards Native English Speaking Teachers and Non Native English Speaking Teachers in private English institutions in Ecuador.

### Results and Discussion

#### *Parents Survey*

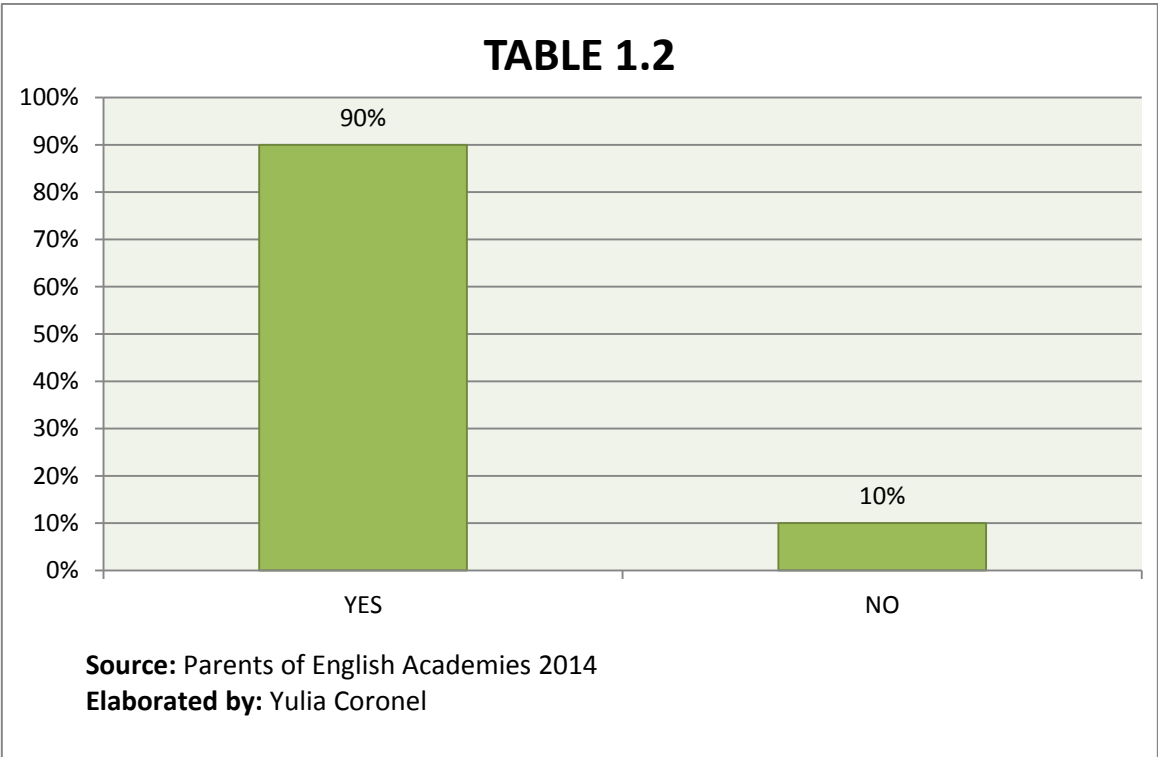
Do you consider English to be an important language for your child's school development?



The parents were asked whether they consider the English language to be important for their child's school development. The entire population of participants that took part of the survey said they do consider that English language is important. These results are perhaps not so surprising when you consider that each parent is paying for extra private English classes, therefore you

would expect them to understand the importance of language acquisition. Especially nowadays the parents are aware the importance that English language has around the world. The question was included at the beginning of the questionnaire in order to “warm up” the participants for the later, more pertinent questions.

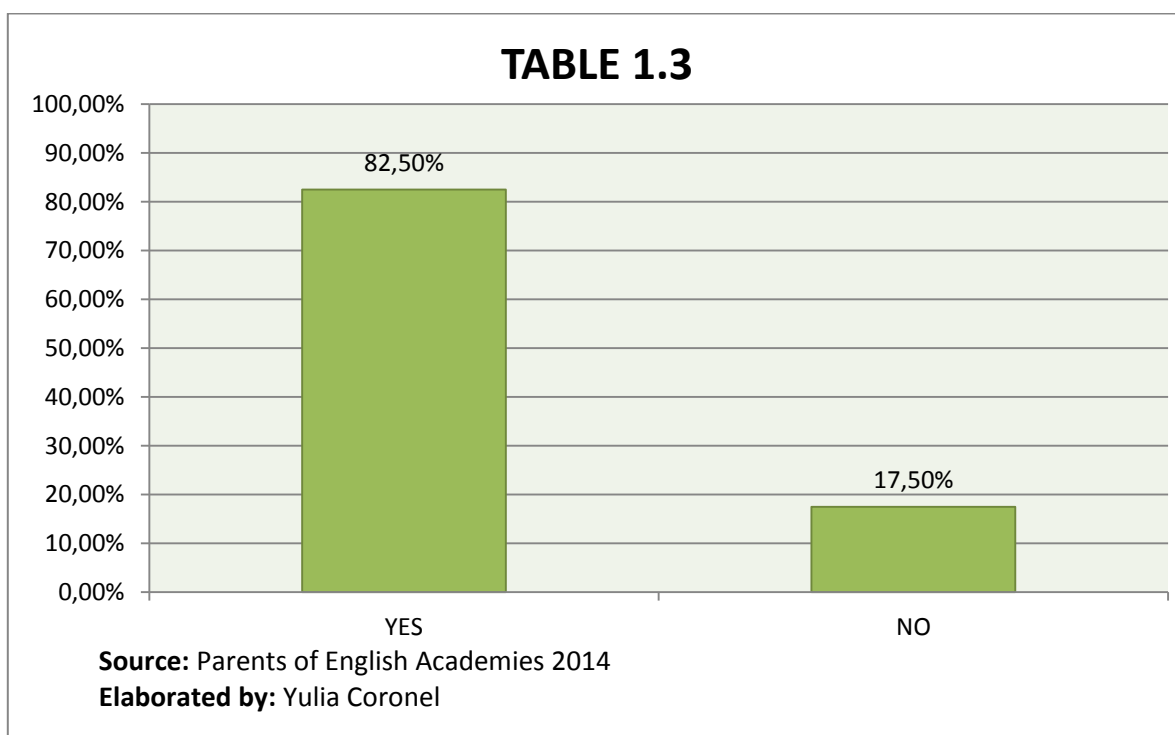
Do you feel satisfied with the quality of education provided by the institution and the teachers working in the institution?



Parents were then asked if they feel satisfied with the quality of education offered as well as the teachers working at their child’s institution. The results show that 90% of parents said they do feel satisfied, with merely 10% responding to not being satisfied with the quality of education and the teachers at their child’s institution. These results demonstrate that the parents generally

approve of the education being received by their children, as well as the teachers working in the institution for which they are paying. The reason why the 10% was not satisfied with the education and the teacher was because of the absence of the head teacher during the course and the repeated times that different replacement went to class. This is interesting as education is often seen as a sticky topic in Ecuador where parents complain about lack of quality education on offer in both private and public institutions. Could perhaps the prevalence of foreign teachers in these institutions be the reason for such results?

Do you prefer an English academy where the teachers are native speakers for the language learning development of your child?

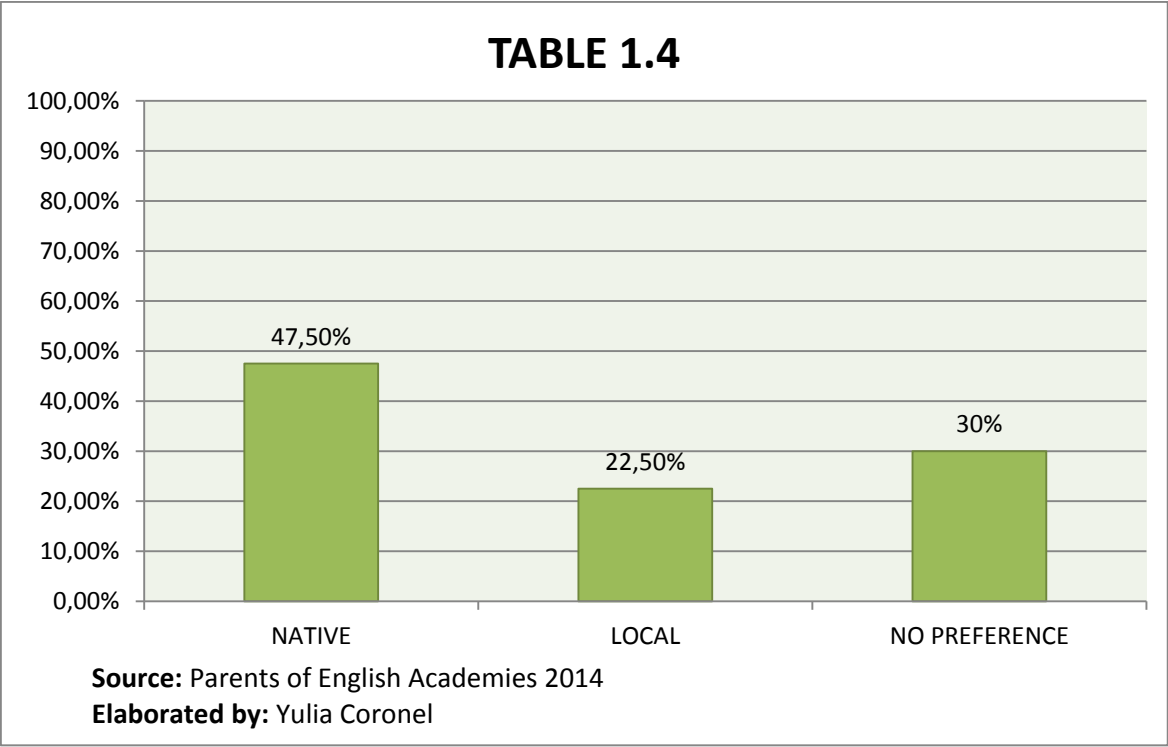


The parents were asked to provide their preference for an academy based on the native origin of the teachers working there. The majority of parents (82.5%) said they do prefer an English academy with native English speaking teachers and the rest of the participants (17.5%) said they



do not prefer or choose an English academy based on whether the teachers are native speaking or not. This demonstrates that these parents do not fall for the advertising that the institution makes but they choose the institution based on references about them. These results show that the majority of parents prefer their children receiving language classes from native speakers which could affect their decision when choosing which English academy to send their children to. Factors like accent, fluency and cultural knowledge influence in the parents' decision (Fiske& Taylor, 1991).

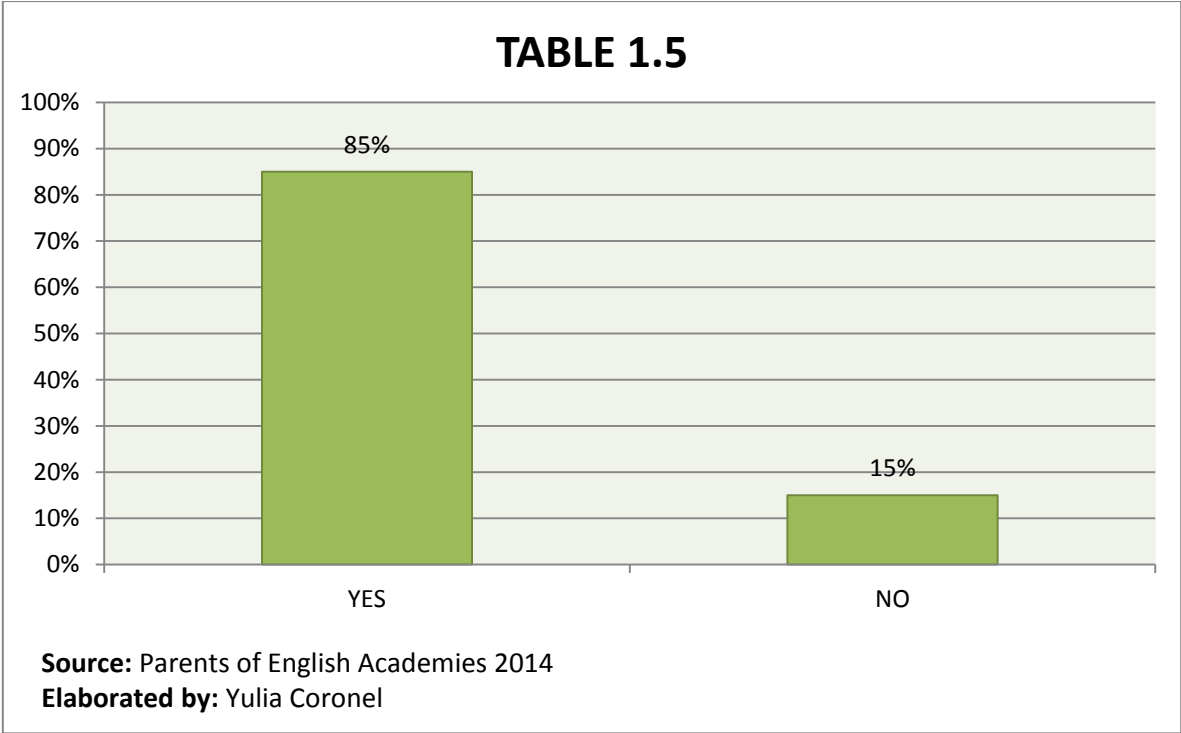
What kind of teacher do you prefer to teach English Language?



Parents were requested to stipulate what kind of teacher they prefer for their children in the teaching of the English language. They had three options: native, local or no preference. Just under half (47.5%) of the respondents claimed to prefer a native speaking English teacher for their child. The second option (local teacher) had 22.5% of the respondents in favour and the

remaining 30% of participants claimed to have no preference. These results are interesting due to the fact that in the previous question parents claimed to prefer an institution with native English speaking teachers and here the results showed that whilst the largest option (47.5%) prefer a native person as a teacher, a majority either have no preference or non-native (52.5%). The parents based their opinions about the teachers due to what their children say about the teacher's method, behaviour, if the native teacher is easy to understand or if the non-native are too strict, etc. This could be down to the vague wording of the question which could be interpreted in a variety of ways.

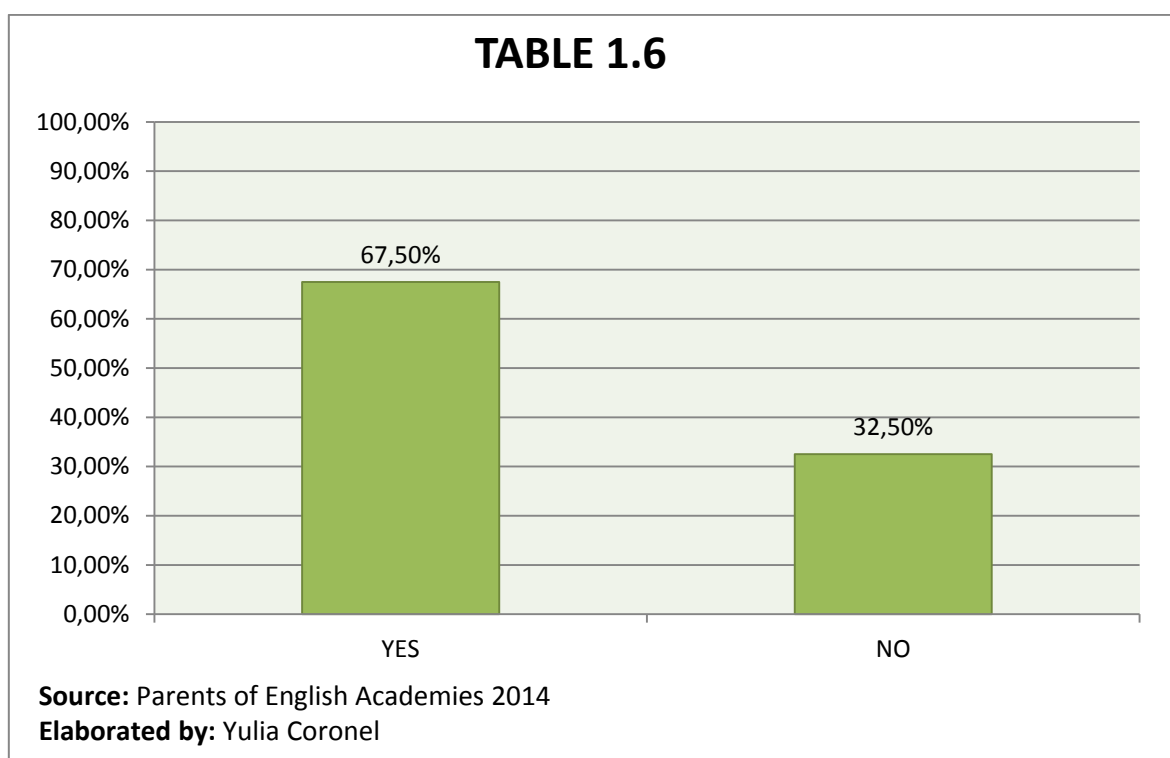
Do you think if your child is studying the English language with a native teacher, his/her fluency and pronunciation improve?



The parents were requested to answer whether access to a native speaking teacher will help their children improve their fluency and pronunciation. The results show that 85% of parents said that

a native teacher will improve these skills in their children. The rest of the parents (15%) said they do not think that studying with a native teacher will improve these skills. These results match with the answers parents gave about preferring a native or non-native teacher. The development and improvement of fluency and pronunciation are the most important factors that parents consider when learning English with a native teacher. However, parents are missing that local teachers are capable to and some non-native teachers have a good fluency and pronunciation.

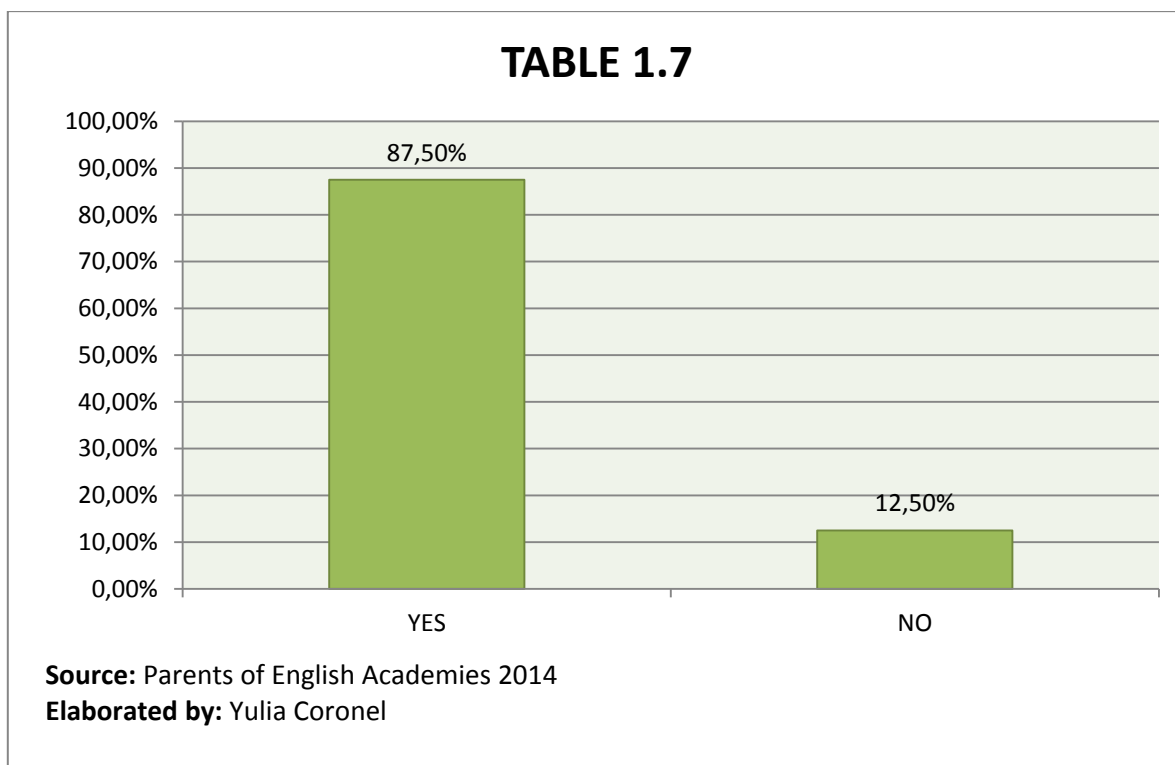
Do you think native speaking teachers are better at teaching grammar than non-native speaking teachers?



Parents were asked to respond if they think native speaking teachers teach grammar better than a non-native speaking teacher. Some parents (67.5%) mentioned that they do think that native teachers teach grammar better than a non-native teacher. The rest of parents (32.5%) said they do not think that a native teacher teaches grammar better than a non-native teacher. These results

possibly show a discrepancy between the teaching of grammar and pronunciation/ fluency. Given that there is a higher percentage of parents believing that non-native speaking teachers are better than native speakers in teaching grammar as opposed to the results we saw when asked a similar question about pronunciation teaching. As it was said before, the students are the ones that pass the information to their parents because they have experience learning English with both native and non-native. That is why they can tell who is better in teaching each skill.

Do you consider that studying with a native English teacher increases the motivation of the student?



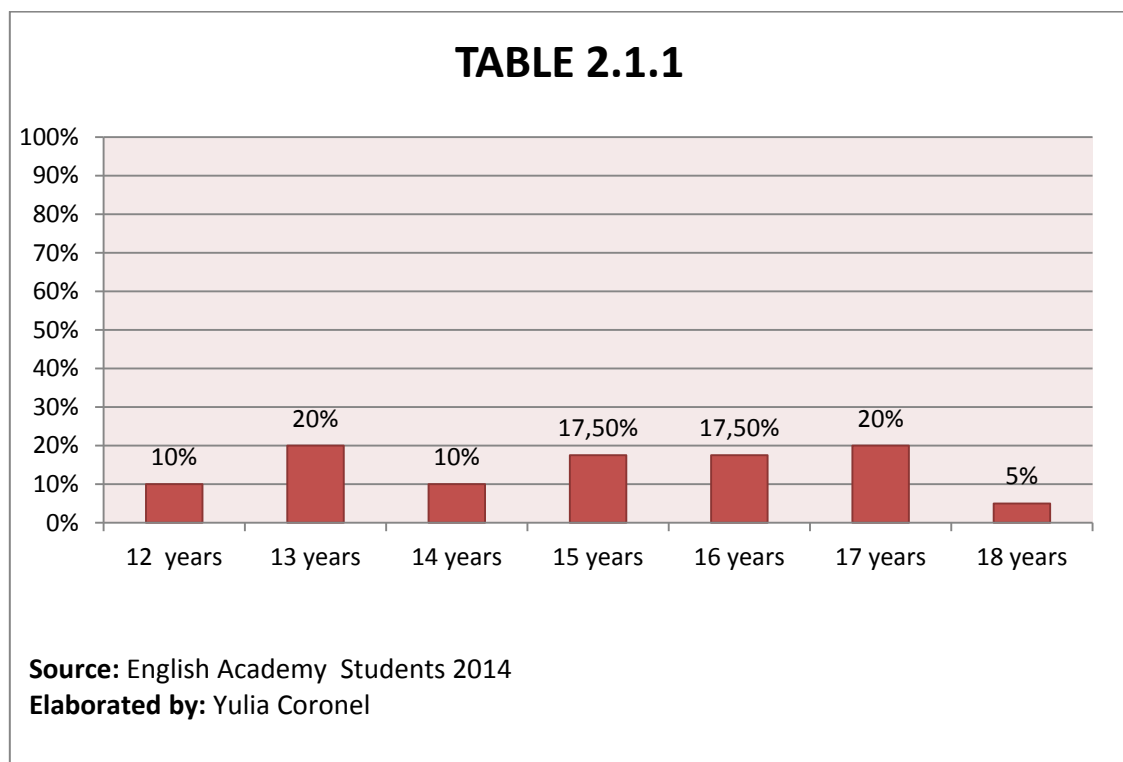
Motivation is one of the most important factors in education (Berry, 1990). As such, parents were asked to decide whether they consider that studying with a native teacher is more motivating for a

student. It can be seen that 87.5% of the respondents consider that a native teacher is able to motivate the student better. On the other hand a minority (12.5%) of parents consider that native teachers do not motivate the student more to study the English language. These results demonstrate parents' perception towards the motivation factor and how the origin of the teacher affects it. According to the results fluency, pronunciation and the importance of the English language are the most important characteristics of a native speaking teacher that parents take into account and think will motivate their children to learn English.

## Students Survey

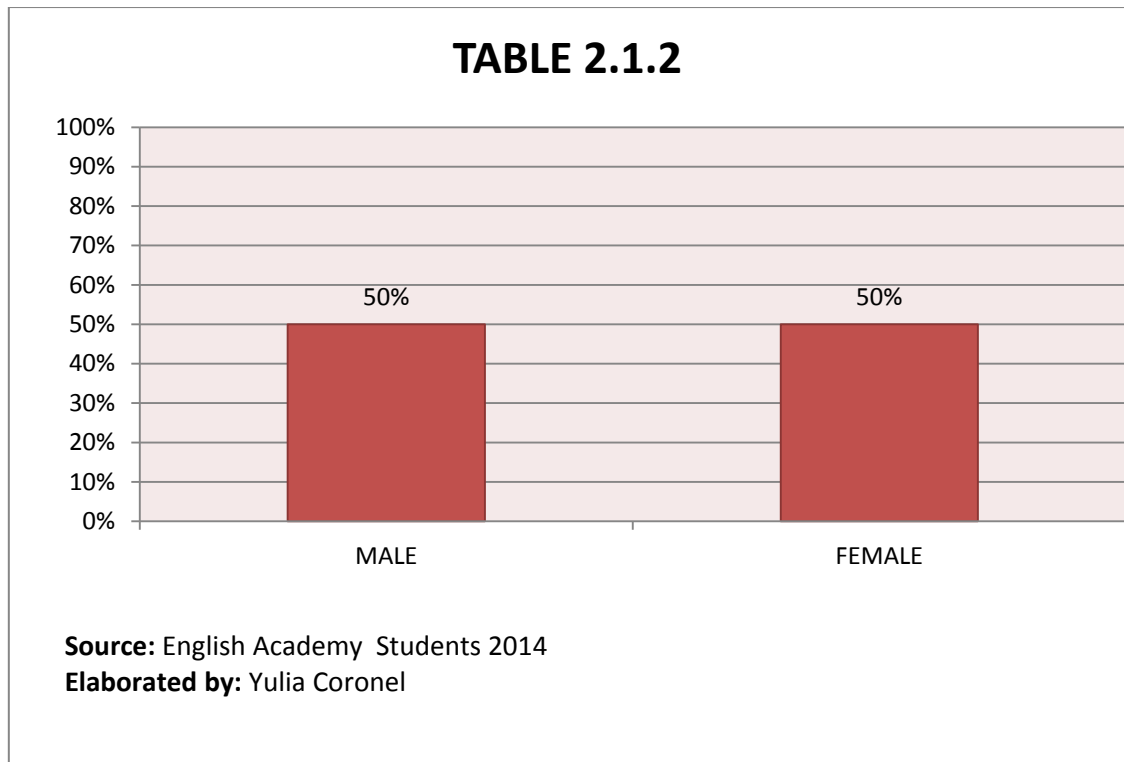
### General Data

#### Age



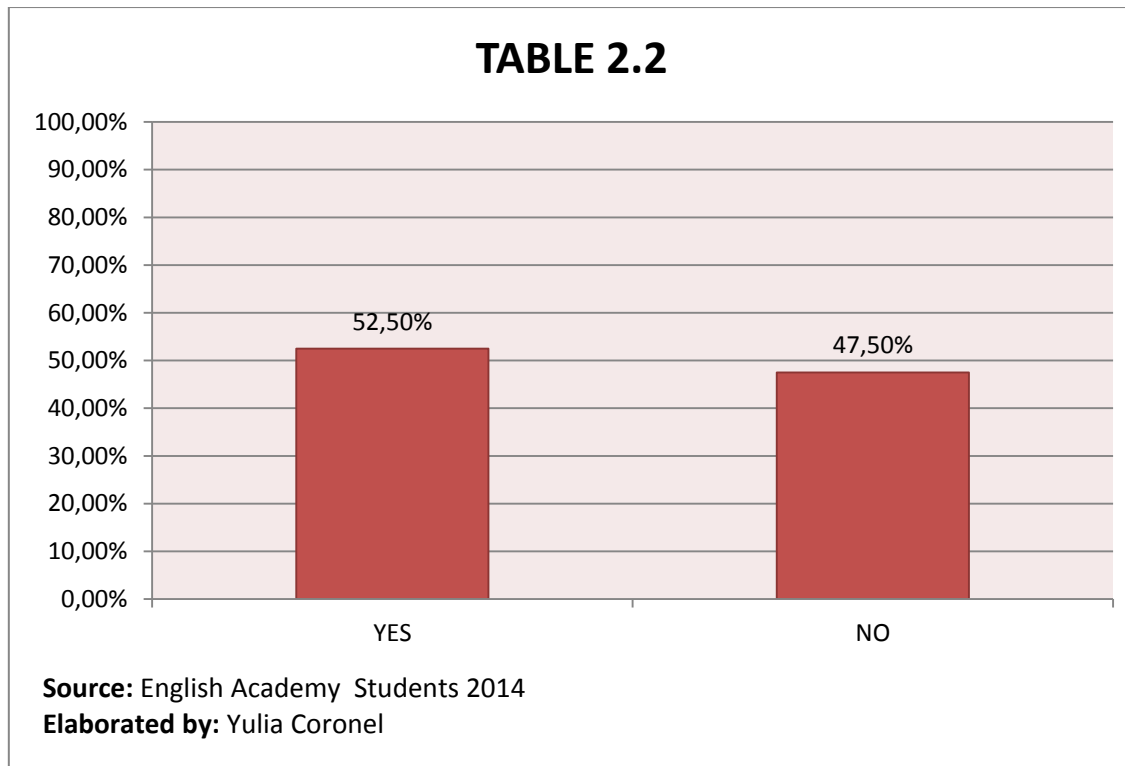
The survey was applied to 40 students from 12 to 18 years of age. This age was chosen because teenagers are the ones that can notice the difference in accent, pronunciation and fluency. Furthermore, teenage students are more aware in their decisions and can choose a native or non-native teacher. There were 4 students aged 12, 8 students aged 13, 4 students aged 14, 7 students aged 15, 7 students aged 16, 8 students aged 17 and 2 students aged 18. The percentages are shown in table 2.1.1

Gender:



The sample was comprised of 40 students (100%) who took part in this survey; 50% were male and 50% female. The reason why both genders equally formed part of the survey is that both of them have different points of view and different perceptions about teachers.

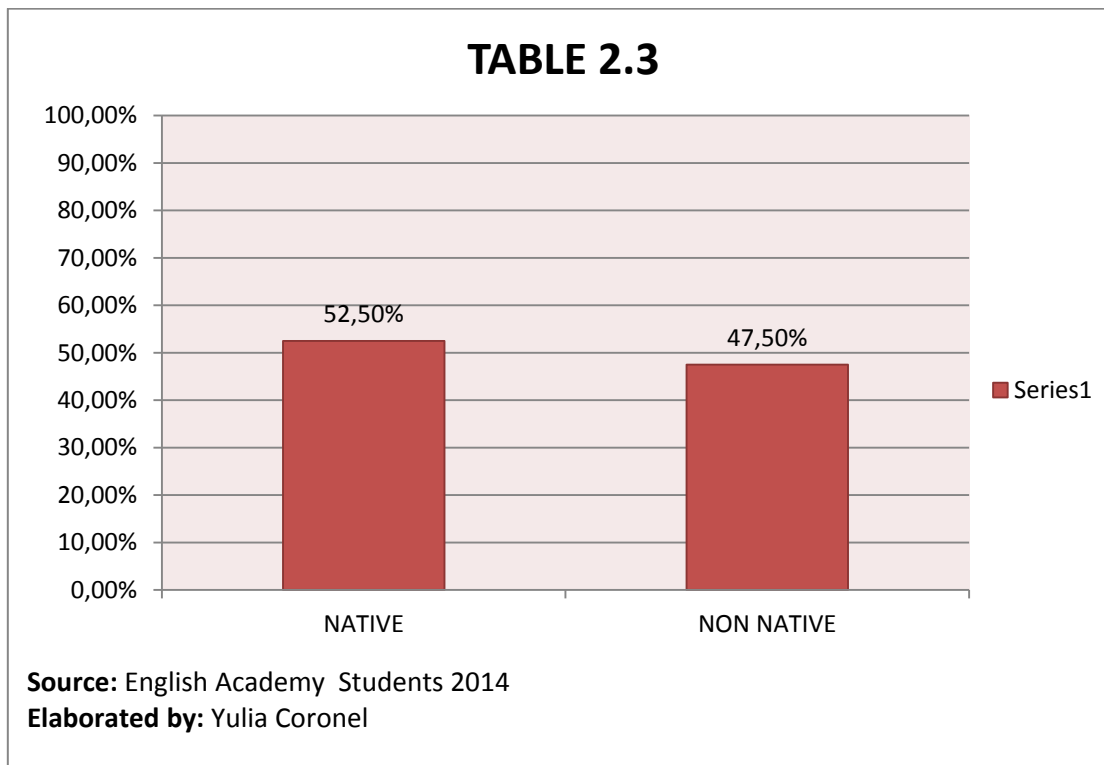
Does your current English teacher come from a native English speaking country?



Students were asked to confirm if their current teacher is from a native English speaking country. More than half of students (52.5%) said that their current teacher is native and the rest of students (47.5%) stated that their actual teacher is not from a native English speaking country. This comes from the preference that parents have when they choose where their children are going to study the English language falling or no for advertising that English academies do to promote their methods and teachers.

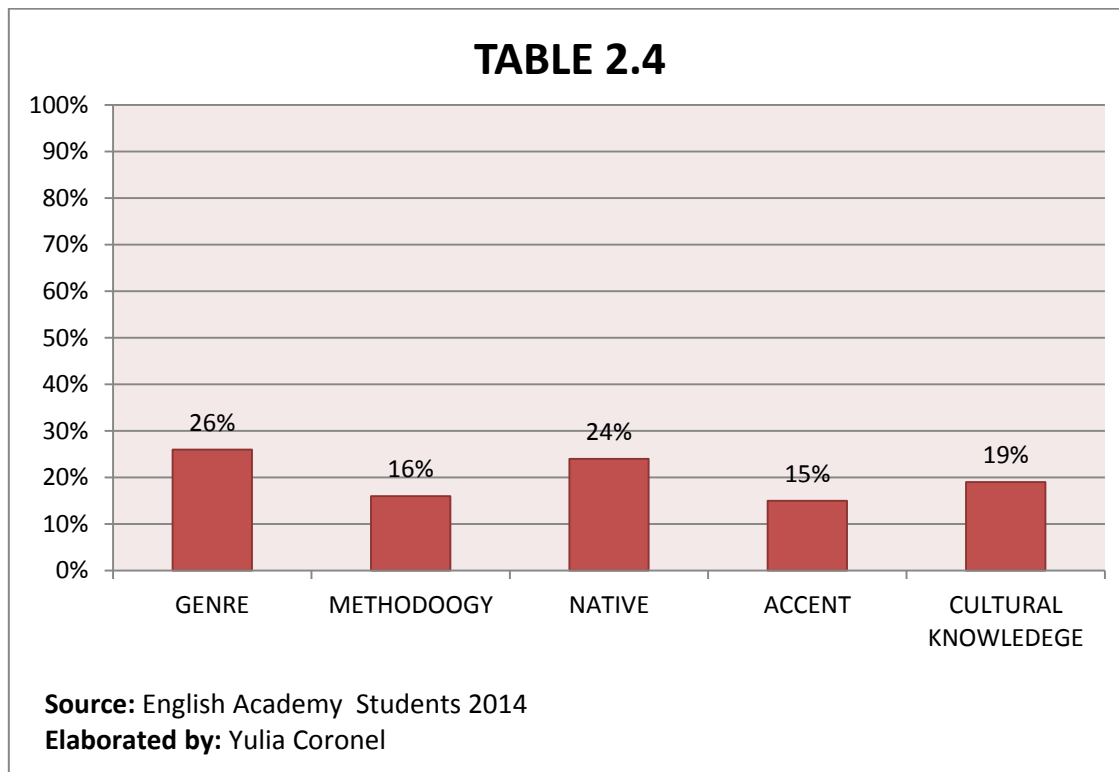


Referring to your previous experience with English language teachers: Do you feel as though native or non- native teachers empathize better with you?



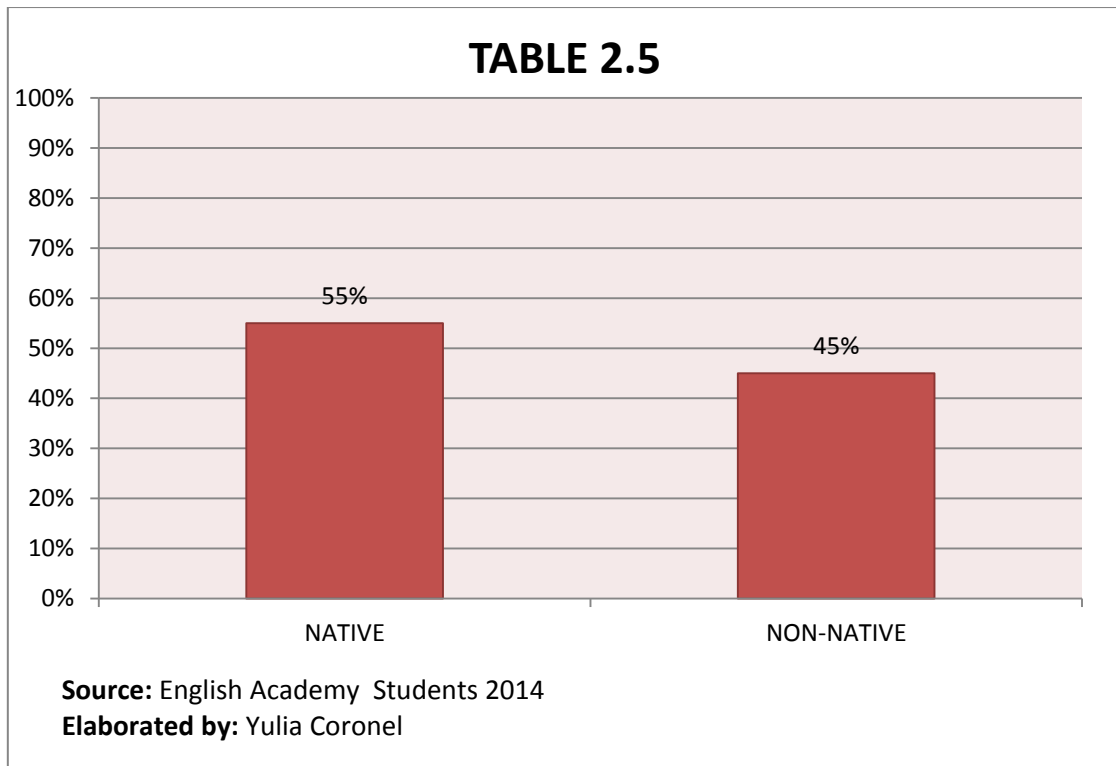
The students were requested to refer to their previous experience with English language teachers to answer if native teachers empathize better with them than a non-native teacher. Most of the students (52.5%) mentioned that native teachers empathize better with them than a non-native teacher. Other students (47.5%) said that native teachers do not empathize better with them than non-native teachers. These students have experience working with native and non-native and these results show that native teachers empathize as well as non-native teachers do with the students. There is not a pronounced preference.

Which are the aspects you think are important in an English teacher? (Gender, methodology, native, accent or knowledge of American or Australian culture)



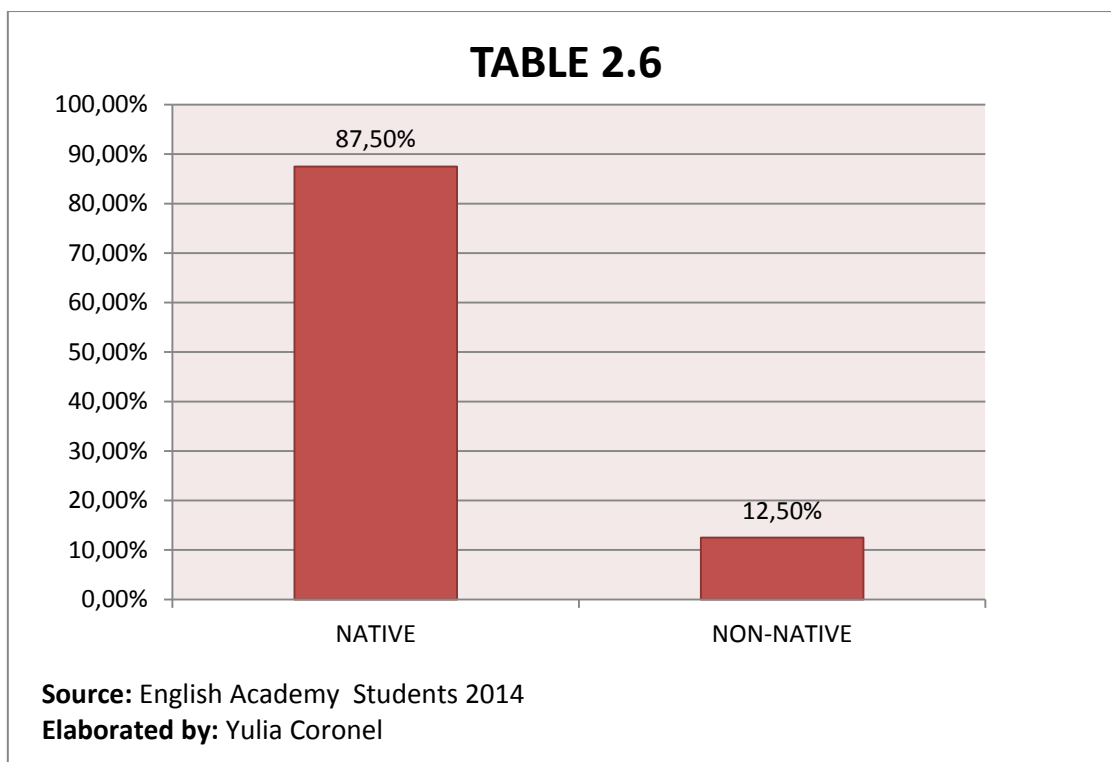
Students were asked to choose as many aspects they think are important in an English teacher. Gender was the aspect that appeared as the most important with 26%. Being a native teacher was also a very popular aspect with 24%. The knowledge about American or Australian culture was also an important aspect with 19%. The least important aspects in a language teacher for the students were their teaching methodology (16%) and accent (15%). The methodology aspect was not very important although it should be because this is what makes a good teacher. In addition, aspects like gender and being a native or no, do not influence in being a good or bad teacher.

What type of teacher facilitates learning grammar?



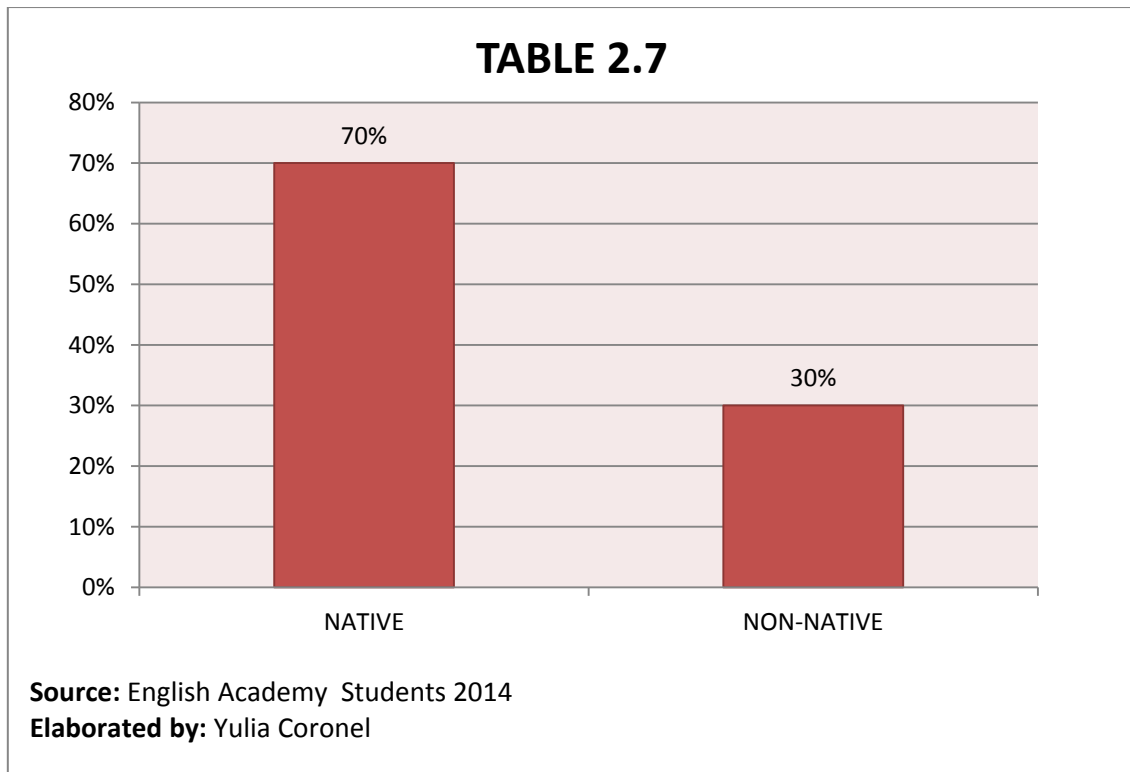
Students were requested to choose what kind of teacher if native or a non-native facilitates the process of learning grammar. The statistics show that 55% of students chose a native teacher and 45% preferred a non-native teacher. These results demonstrate almost an equal preference for native or non-native teachers to learn grammar. Although, this is one of the most difficult skill to develop even if the students have native or non-native. There is a marked preference for native teachers, in the case of learning grammar students show a small preference for non-native teacher. It is very difficult to draw conclusions from results of this nature.

What kind of teacher most facilitates learning pronunciation and fluency?



The students were asked to select what type of teacher they think most facilitates the learning of pronunciation and fluency. The results show that 87.5% of students chose native teachers and the rest of the students (12.5%) selected non-native teachers. Fluency and pronunciation are the most important skills that students perceive in a native teacher and they think a native teacher will facilitate learning and developing them. Because of the previous experience that students have with non-native teachers in their schools or academies, they feel more comfortable with a non-native teacher when it comes to this specific skill.

What teacher do you prefer to have when studying English?



The last question was focused on finding out the students' preference towards the teacher they prefer to study English. The results sustain that 70% of students prefer a native English speaking teacher whilst 30% of them claimed to prefer a non-native teacher. With these results we can infer that the preference of a native teacher comes from factors such as pronunciation, fluency, accent and the main factor that they have is teaching grammar. This is one of the most difficult skills to develop in English language. This big difference between preferring a native or non-native teacher also comes from the different opinions and comments that between friends and family say about these types of teachers.

## CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ This research demonstrates how parents choose a particular English institution for their children based on what type of teachers they have. This means, parents prefer an institution with native teachers. It is not so much the case that a native teacher will be teaching their children but that in between all the non-native teachers that work in the institution, there must be at least one native teacher there.
- ✓ This research shows what characteristics parents see in a native teacher so they will prefer them. The main aspect is fluency and pronunciation. Parents see these as a big plus for the teachers because a native teacher will help to develop those skills better than a non-native teacher. This is not the case with grammar where according to the results; we can see that non-native teachers are capable to teach it as native teachers or even better. This happens because of the facility of explaining grammar in the mother tongue.
- ✓ The collected data in this research implies that students see some specific characteristics in the teachers. The sex and the origin of the teacher are the most important qualities in the teacher. If it's a native male teacher maybe the students will see the classes more dynamic than if it's a non-native female teacher. This comes from the idea that native teacher want to learn more about the new country and culture they are living in so they try to get along with the students to exchange cultural knowledge.
- ✓ The results in this study demonstrate that students do not take into account the methodology the teacher has when teaching English. This could mean that students do not know what is methodology or either is an aspect that is not important when learning English.

- ✓ Finally, this research exposes that students prefer a native teacher rather than a non-native to learn English. The students' preference towards a native teacher comes from the assumption that a native teacher is a better teacher of pronunciation and fluency. In addition factors as gender, accent and general knowledge about American or Australian culture also influence the students' perceptions and preferences.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Before choosing an English academy parents should look up for information about the teachers that work there and not just fall for the advertising of native or non-native teachers.
- ✓ Parents do not have to believe that pronunciation and fluency can be developed only with a native teacher. A non-native teacher is just as capable to do it. Nowadays thanks to technology there is access to so many resources where non-native teachers can learn and improve their pronunciation and fluency. Some of them have lived in English speaking countries, so their pronunciation and fluency could be as good as a native teacher. The accent is not the most important factor as long as the words are being pronounced correctly.
- ✓ English institutions that hire native teachers should give them a general explanation about the new culture that they are going to start living in. In addition, the administrators should describe how students interact and behave in class. With this information native teachers will have limits with the students and interact with them in a more professional way.
- ✓ Teachers and administrators have to evaluate the students to conclude how the students learn in a better way. Also, with this information the institution will recommend the adequate methodology that teachers have to apply.
- ✓ Students must be aware that some non-native teachers have lived in English speaking countries, so their pronunciation and fluency could be as good as a native teacher.



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## ANNEXES

### AREA SOCIO-HUMANISTICA

#### TITULACION EN CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACION MECION INGLES

#### ENCUESTA

**Objetivo:** El objetivo de esta encuesta es investigar las percepciones de los estudiantes del idioma Inglés hacia los profesores nativos o no nativos de la localidad.

Señor/Señorita estudiante, sírvase leer detenidamente las preguntas y contestar las respuestas que UD. crea correcta con una (x) si en caso tiene duda preguntar al investigador.

#### 1. DATOS GENERALES

1.1 Edad: .....

1.2 Género: Masculino ( ) Femenino ( )

#### 2. ¿Su actual profesor de inglés es nativo de un país de habla inglesa?

Si ( )

No ( )

#### 3. Haciendo referencia a su previa experiencia con profesores del idioma inglés: ¿Los profesores nativos empatizan mejor con usted que un profesor no nativo?

Si ( )

No ( )

#### 4. ¿Cuáles son los aspectos que usted considera son importantes en un profesor de inglés?

género ( ) metodología ( ) nativo ( ) acento ( ) conocimiento de la cultura americana o australiana ( )

#### 5. ¿Qué profesor tiende a facilitar el aprendizaje de gramática?

Nativos ( )

No Nativos ( )

#### 6. ¿Cuál profesor facilita el aprendizaje de pronunciación y fluidez?

Nativos ( )

No Nativos ( )

#### 7. ¿Qué profesor prefiere para el aprendizaje del idioma inglés?

Nativos ( )

No Nativos ( )

**AREA SOCIO-HUMANISTICA**

**TITULACION EN CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACION MECION INGLES**

**ENCUESTA**

**Objetivo:** El objetivo de esta encuesta es investigar las percepciones de los padres de familia de estudiantes del idioma Inglés hacia los profesores nativos o no nativos de la localidad.

Señor padre de familia, sírvase leer detenidamente las preguntas y contestar las respuestas que UD. crea correcta con una (x).

1. **¿Considera usted el idioma inglés como una lengua importante para el desarrollo escolar de su hijo?**  
Si (    )  
No (    )
2. **¿Se siente a gusto con el nivel de educación y personal docente de la institución educativa?**  
Si (    )  
No (    )
3. **¿Usted prefiere una academia de inglés en donde los maestros sean de origen nativo para el desarrollo de su hijo en el idioma?**  
Si (    )  
No (    )
4. **¿Qué tipo de maestro prefiere para la enseñanza del idioma inglés?**  
Nativo (    )  
Local (    )                      Los dos(    )
5. **¿Cree usted si su hijo estudia con un maestro nativo mejoraría su fluidez y pronunciación?**  
Si (    )  
No (    )
6. **¿Cree usted que los profesores nativos enseñan mejor la gramática?**  
Si (    )  
No (    )
7. **¿Considera usted que el estudiar con un profesor nativo motiva más al estudiante?**  
Si (    )  
No (    )