

Thai Primary Students' Perceptions Towards The Effectiveness Of A Non-Native English Teacher (NNET)

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ABSTRACT

Thai students might have different perceptions of their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET). This study attempted to investigate the perceptions towards the effectiveness of Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) among Thai primary students' overview. According to the purpose, three instruments were included in this research: observation, questionnaire, and interview. A qualitative analysis based on a descriptive approach is used in this research. The researcher distributed the instruments online through Google Meet and Google Forms. The questionnaire and interview were taken from a previous study in 2009 by Shishavan and Karim. Eight statements in the questionnaire have been tested for validity and reliability using SPSS. Two central questions were asked in English and answered in Thai. The participants are 12 students in the sixth grade at Ban Loeiwangsai School, Loei Province, Thailand. The result shows that a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) could bring better effects to Thai students in sharpening and enhancing their English. Also, it can motivate them to be fluent in English.

Keywords: Perception, effective teacher, Non-Native English Teacher (NNET)

1. INTRODUCTION

English is closely tied to globalization and is profoundly affected by its associated processes (Clyne & Sharifian, 2008). (Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009) conclude on their study, English language teachers are no exception and their crucial role in effective language learning must be noticed because excellent and qualified teachers are essential for the efficient functioning of educational systems and improving learning quality. Same as the situation in Ban Loeiwangsai School in Loei Province, Thailand. Students of Ban Loeiwangsai are categorized as young learners. (Widodo, 2005) stated in his research that teaching English to young learners has several difficulties, such as a lack of motivation, confidence, discipline problems, and speaking problems. Thailand is a kind of EFL country where English is taught

chiefly by a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET). Several previous studies approved the benefits of a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET): (Medgyes, 1992) said in his research that NNET could serve as imitable models of successful English learners, teach using effective learning strategies, provide learners with more information about English, 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. (Tsou and Chen, 2017) two positive features of NNET confirmed the affective filter hypothesis, which shows that students who enter into a learning environment with high motivation and a low level of anxiety in a learning environment are expected to have more chances to be successful learners than those who do not and are involved in the ability to alternate between learners' first language and English while instructing. In contrast, observing young learners' capability to understand English, Ban Loeiwangsai School students showed low results in comprehending English vocabulary. Several previous studies concluded that teachers' effectiveness is the main contributory factor in student achievements (Sanders, 1999; Wenglinsky, 2000, as cited in Moafian et al., 2019) and the effectiveness of any language teaching instruction is heavily dependent on the role that teachers play in their classrooms (Moafian et al., 2019). This study investigated Thai Primary School students' perceptions toward Non-Native English Teachers (NNET). Specifically, a research question was addressed: What is the students' perceptions towards the effectiveness of Non-Native English Teacher (NNET)?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Students' perceptions

Perception is an individual's view about something which plays a role in our life and can be one of the determining factors for success, which also applies to students (Corbin et al., 2020). This idea is relevant to (Amir et al., 2020). Said in their previous research, perception can also be considered an individual's interpretation of something. Nasution & Ahmad (2020) said in their study that perception is a person's view of his mind about something that can affect the five senses in attitude. We can conclude that students' perceptions are overviews about something based on the students' thinking.

2.2. Effective teacher

Brown (2007) stated that a checklist of good language teacher characteristics is divided into four categories: technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills, and personal qualities. Sari (2020) explained that a successful EFL teacher claims to have a more extensive knowledge base for she/he will present a foreign language and its cross-culture proficiency, which include understanding, awareness, expertise, and skills. Effective language teachers are described as having a profound competence in the target language and a set of personal qualities like sensitivity, warmth, and tolerance (Vadillio, 1999). The characteristics of an effective English teacher are varied and good qualities of an English teacher can bring successful teaching and learning.

2.3. Non-Native English Teacher (NNET)

A Non-Native English teacher (NNET) is essential to facilitate students to develop their English mastery, particularly in this globalization era where English plays a vital role as an

international language. (Novianti, 2018) Sometimes, it is stereotyped that a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) is not as good at teaching EFL classrooms as a Native English Teacher (NET). Some qualities of effective NNET are being fair and friendly, arousing students' motivation, providing activities that engage students' interest to learn the language, providing meaningful activities, speaking English well, and being fully conversant with English grammar (Zurrahmi & Traistuti, 2022). Tsou & Chen (2017) stated in their research that the NNET was familiar with students' learning difficulties, utilized appropriate teaching materials and methods of vocabulary, and provided effective strategies suitable for learners. A non-native speaker teacher is a teacher who uses English not as his/her primary language, and it could be their second language (Al-Nawrasy, 2013). Also, Aziz et al. (2022) stated in their study that non-native English teachers were seen to be more patient, comprehensible, and understanding of the needs of their students than native teachers because they have been through the process of learning English.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

A qualitative analysis based on a descriptive approach was used to investigate the students' perceptions towards the effectiveness of their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET). The qualitative descriptive method is used in this research to understand the students' perceptions well. Qualitative descriptive research generates data that describe the "who, what, and where of phenomenon or experiences" from a subjective perspective (Kim et al., 2017). It is mainly based entirely on awareness studies to investigate vocabulary mastery taught by a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) during online learning. Qualitative descriptive research design using observation, questionnaire, and interview to conduct this research.

3.2. Research Location and Sample

The research is conducted in Ban Loeiwangsai School, Loei province, Thailand. The sample is the highest grade, namely P6, which consists of 12 students with eight boys and four girls. This research was held from August 2022 to January 2023.

3.3. Instruments

The instruments in this study were observation, questionnaire, and interview. The researcher conducted the observation to analyze the classroom's situation while being taught by Non-Native English Teacher (NNET). A close-ended questionnaire adopted from Sari & Fatimah (2020) as they adapted from Shishavan & Karim (2009) was employed to gather data on students' perceptions towards the effectiveness of their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET). The questionnaire consists of eight statements. Firstly, the researcher took ten ideas relevant to the research, but two items should be eliminated after testing the validity. The questionnaire was given online through Google Forms using five Likert scales: strongly agree, agree, no idea, disagree and strongly disagree. The responses of students were counted and translated into percentages. It is used to know students' perceptions of their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET). The interview purposely divided the students into two groups according to their English capability, known from observation, to seek variations in the students' perception, which are upper and lower students. Each group consists of 6 students. It

consists of two central questions adapted from Shishavan & Karim (2009) and translated into Thai by their teacher. This phase was conducted to help the researcher explore, sharpen, and better understand respondents' perceptions, which can make the data in the questionnaire valid. The interview was conducted through Google Meet and recorded to avoid miss information. Thus, the students were able to explain their perceptions freely. Furthermore, follow-up questions were asked to the students, when necessary, to triangulate the data with the questionnaire results.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In acquiring students' perceptions towards the effectiveness of a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET), the researcher did an observation in class meetings using Google Meet, a questionnaire, and an interview to grade six in Ban Loeiwangsai School. For the observation, the data was taken from the fourth meeting. Each meeting has 60 minutes.



Figure 1. Link of Google Meet

First, the teacher shared the link to the Line group at 11 a.m. and asked the students to join as soon as possible.

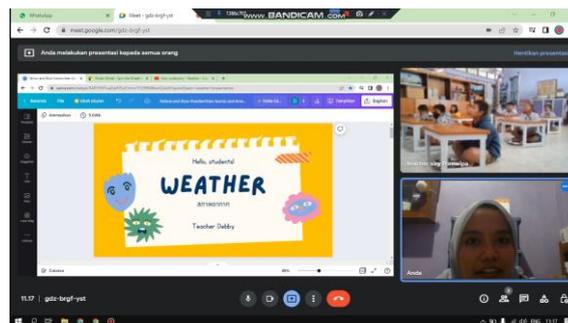


Figure 2. Opening of the class

When the meeting started, the teacher greeted students with a song and asked about their condition. As a usual greeting, "Good morning, students, how are you today?" to familiarize them with this kind of greeting.



Figure 3. A video from YouTube was played

A video from YouTube was played in the first meeting on a related topic to learn new vocabulary spoken by native first so that students may know how a native say the words. The students were asked to watch a video till the end and try to analyze some vocabulary there.

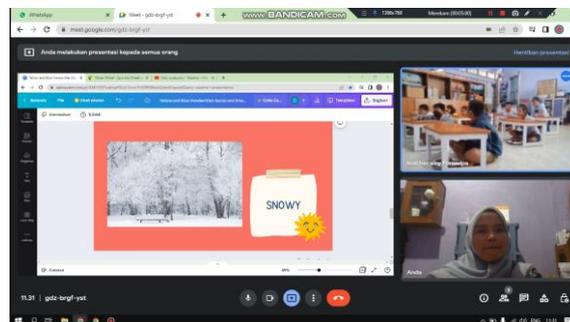
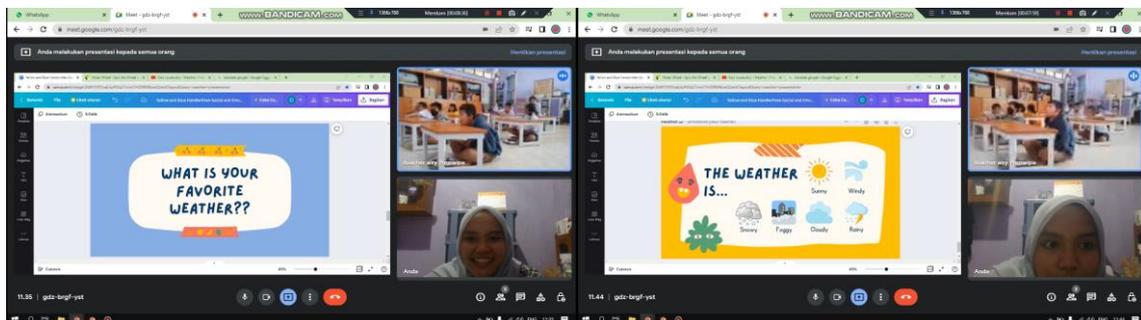


Figure 4. Some vocabulary shown to the students

The teacher showed some vocabulary that appeared on a YouTube video and the students were asked to repeat every word on the screen after the teacher said it.



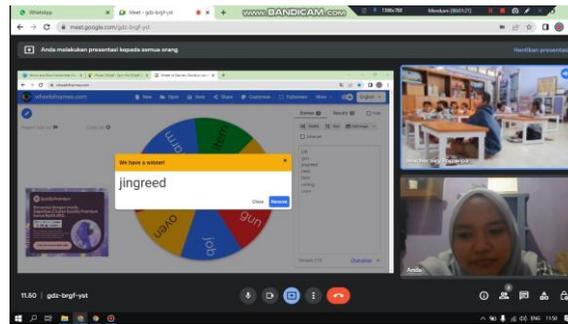


Figure 5. Question and answer section in the class

After comprehending the vocabulary, the students were asked to answer every question about a related topic one by one. The teacher would call their name randomly and use the spinning game to make it fun. This activity is purposely done to try students' oral skills.

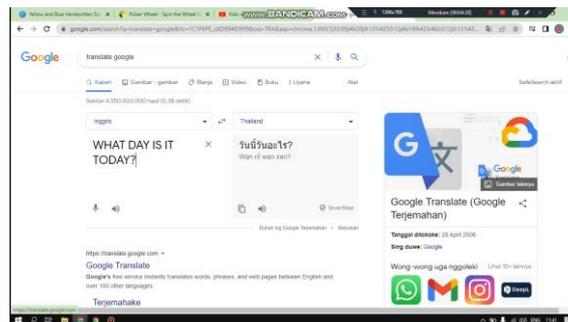


Figure 6. The use of Google Translate by the teacher

When facing difficulty, the teacher sometimes used Google Translate to enhance the students' understanding by translating English to Thai.

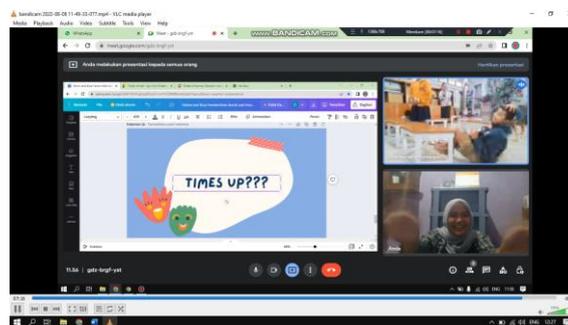


Figure 7. Ending of the class

When the class ended, the teacher and the students said goodbye to each other.

The responses from the questionnaire shared with 12 students in grade six can be described as the following results:

Statement 1

Speak and pronounce English well

12 responses

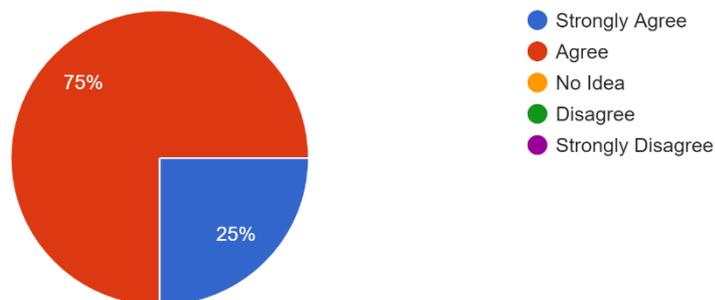


The result shows that 12 students strongly agree with this statement. They think their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) can speak and pronounce English well. The main factor is the experience of being an English student. This comment is relevant to Mauludin (2015), who said in his study that a non-native English teacher has learned English in several ways and has experienced dealing with troubles or obstacles in learning the language.

Statement 2

Teach English in fully English

12 responses

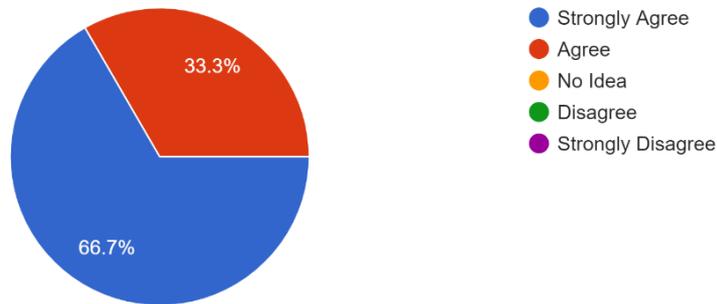


The result shows that one-third of students, which means three, strongly agree, and the rest, about nine, agree with this statement. They think their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) teaches them English in fully English. This method allows students to comprehend English gradually, a habit repeated daily.

Statement 3

Use various methods and techniques in teaching that arouse student's interest

12 responses

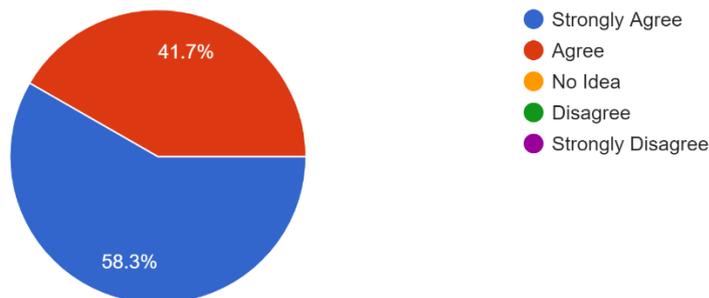


The result shows that eight students strongly agree and four agree with this statement. They think their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) uses various methods and techniques in teaching English that arouse their interest, such as online games, drilling methods, and YouTube videos. This statement is relevant to the previous study, which said an English teacher must create an attractive class that can motivate the students to be more interested, so using some modern teaching technologies may be necessary for English classes (Tianjuan, 2019).

Statement 4

Be up-to-date and able to use technology well

12 responses

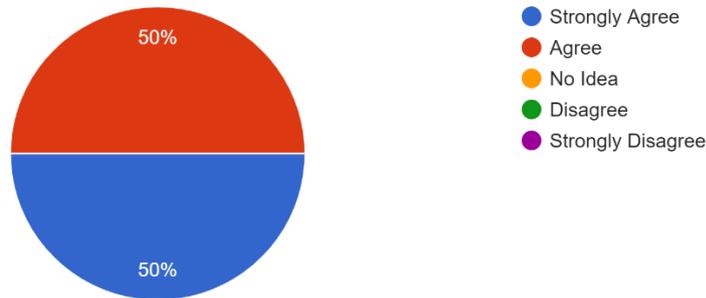


This result shows that seven students strongly agree and the rest, five, agree with this statement. They think their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) is up-to-date and can use technology well. In the actual situation, the teachers use Google Meet well and are also good at making funny PowerPoint. This statement is relevant to the study about ICT in education stated by Yermekkyzy (2022). He said in his thesis that today ICT has many benefits to education: can help students and teachers learn about their subject areas in various ways, can be a massive help in the classroom, and can become active learners by incorporating technology into their studies.

Statement 5

Alleviate students' anxiety in English class by maintaining good classroom atmosphere

12 responses

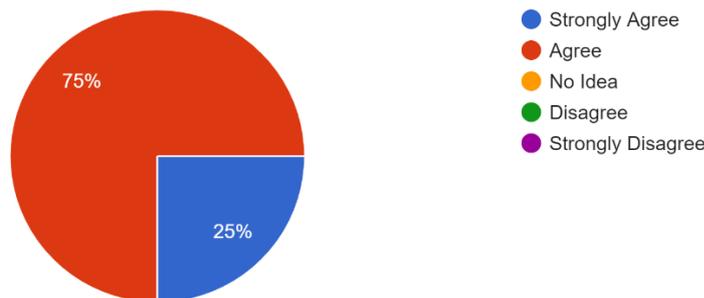


The result shows that half the students, which is 50:50, strongly agree and agree with this statement. They think their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) can alleviate their anxiety in English class by maintaining a good classroom atmosphere. It is relevant to the study by Kunt & Tum (2010), who stated that non-native English teachers used to be English foreign learners. It makes sense if non-native foreign language teachers experienced anxiety in the past. It means that the teacher and students share the same feeling.

Statement 6

Be patient and friendly to students

12 responses

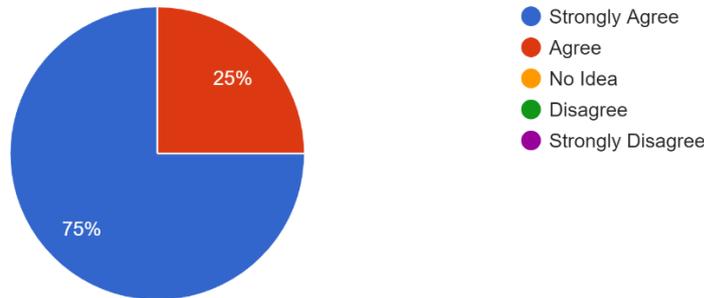


The result shows that three students strongly agree and the other nine agree with this statement. They think their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) is patient and friendly to students. It is relevant to a study from Tianjuan (2019) that teachers should try to create an environment full of trust, respect, help, solidarity and make every student love English from the teacher's love.

Statement 7

Have a good sense of humor

12 responses

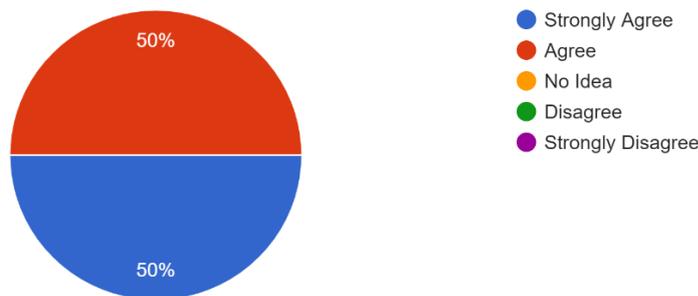


The result shows that nine students strongly agree and the other three agree with this statement. They think their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) has a good sense of humor. It is relevant to previous studies (Williams, 2018) that humor is often a learned behavior that needs to be used as a part of the teaching program, (Masdianti, 2021) stated a teacher who has a good sense of humor can make the class' atmosphere being enjoyable, (Thuy & Thao, 2021) said teacher's humor is what the teacher deliberately do to make their students laugh in purpose to enhance the teaching and learning quality.

Statement 8

Ask question or encourage students to talk

12 responses



The result shows 50:50 students in the class, meaning six students strongly agree and six others agree with this statement. They think their non-native English Teacher (NNET) always asks a question or encourages them to talk in every meeting. This situation may give students chances to try their oral skills so that they will get better at understanding and also pronouncing English. The researcher can rank the result from the statement with the highest strongly agreed option answer from the data. It will look alike: (1) speak and pronounce English well, (2) have a good sense of humor, (3) use various methods and techniques in teaching that arouse student's interest, (4) be up-to-date and able to use technology well, (5) alleviate students' anxiety in English class by maintaining good classroom atmosphere and ask a question or encourages students to talk, (6) teach English in fully English and be patient and friendly to students.

The interview was aimed to determine the students' perceptions towards the effectiveness of their Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) other than those mentioned in the questionnaire. Two questions were asked to grade six. Those were adapted from the same source as the questionnaire, Shishavan & Karim (2009): 1) Which of the following characteristics make a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) the best: knowledge of language and pedagogy or her personality and the way she behaves the students? Why? Please explain! 2) Are there any particular characteristics that you believe an effective Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) must possess (besides the characteristics that you agreed on in the questionnaire)? The students are divided into two groups, upper and lower. They answered in Thai, then interpreted by their teacher. By processing the data, it can be concluded that for question number 1, the upper group said personality and the way the teacher behaves are essential. They said building chemistry with students is good; being a patient, friendly, and humorous teacher can make them enjoy and be happy in the classroom. Always asking questions before the end of the meeting is also one of the ways to increase the sociability between the teacher and the students. The lower group said knowledge of language and pedagogy is essential. Mostly agree that a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) should speak and pronounce English well because while the teacher has it, the students will be inspired to be fluent in English. They also said if the teacher is up-to-date in technology and technique like song & clap, the class will be more enjoyable. For question number 2, both upper and lower groups said that it is vital for a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) to be able to speak using the student's native language, Thai. Since the Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) is not Thai, she only can speak very limited Thai, which is generally used to greet the students. Nevertheless, it is a good comment as a purpose to make sure students understand.

5. CONCLUSION

The study's findings reveal that a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) is a suitable medium for sixth-grade students of Ban Loeiwangsai School to learn English since it brings a good effect, making a perfect classroom atmosphere enjoyable and fun. This situation is inseparable from a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) that fulfills the criteria of an effective English teacher. Like what has been mentioned in the questionnaire, speak and pronounce English well and use various techniques to arouse students' interest. The students give compliments about the Non-Native English Teacher (NNET). They said they like to be taught by a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET). Although shy, they want to learn English and practice more with the NNET. They love the NNET. Hopefully, it can improve the student's English proficiency.

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7. APPENDIX

7.1. Questionnaire:

No.	Statements	SA	A	NI	D	SD
1	Speak and pronounce English well					
2	Teach English in fully English					
3	Use various methods and techniques in teaching that arouse student's interest					
4	Be up-to-date and able to use technology well					
5	Alleviate students' anxiety in English class by maintaining good classroom atmosphere					
6	Be patient and friendly to students					
7	Have a good sense of humor					
8	Ask question or encourage students to talk					

7.2. Interview questions:

1. Which of the following characteristics make a Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) the best: knowledge of language and pedagogy or her personality and the way she behaves with the students? Why? Please explain.
2. Are there any particular characteristics that you believe an effective Non-Native English Teacher (NNET) must possess (besides the characteristics that you agreed on in the questionnaire)?