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The impact of the linguistic backgrounds of world language teachers on secondary world language classrooms

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THE IMPACT OF THE LINGUISTIC BACKGROUNDS OF WORLD LANGUAGE
TEACHERS ON SECONDARY WORLD LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Designation
University Honors with Distinction

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1. Title

The Impact of the Linguistic Backgrounds of World Language Teachers on Secondary World Language Classrooms

2. Purpose

In the field of world language teaching, there is a multitude of research in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The problem, however, is that the research regarding world language classrooms at the U.S.

American secondary level is minimal. Improvement in the educational system is unlikely if little is actually known about it. In other words, a system cannot change and evolve unless researchers are able to identify the factors requiring change.

Furthermore, there is almost no research regarding the linguistic background of secondary teachers - whether native or non-native speakers - and the impact that they have on their classrooms and world language students as a whole. This research adds to that previously minimal research in hopes of bettering education for world language students as well as high school world language classrooms in the United States.

The study researched the impact that a world language teacher's native speaking (NS) or non-native speaking (NNS) status has on his or her high school modern language students and classroom environment. The study as a whole revealed the correlation between the teacher's linguistic background and three areas: 1) teaching benefits and drawbacks, 2) effect(s) on students and their attitudes, and 3) impact on classroom environment. In a field where the predominant focus of research has been on ESL and EFL classrooms with very little in modern language classrooms, this

research examined the impact that modern language teachers' linguistic backgrounds have on U.S. American secondary world language education.

On a personal level, the topic of the teacher's speaker status interests me for several reasons. First, my undergraduate has prepared me to become a secondary Spanish teacher, so the topic is particularly relevant as a non-native speaking teacher. Even broader scope, however, my purpose in completing this research is to add to the currently limited research regarding U.S. American world language classrooms so that the educational system as a whole can continue to improve.

My education has shown me the past struggles of world language education in the United States, and although strides are being taken to improve the situation, U.S. American schools cry for more resources, more research, and more answers. For years, students have been graduating after several years of watching Disney movies and playing games in their world language classroom, rarely even daring to speak the second language of the posters on the walls and the plaque by the door. As educators, we are disserving our students by not preparing them to communicate in real world situations with speakers of other languages. As such, we must continue to do all we can to investigate and improve world language teaching methods, helpful resources, classroom materials, and even the positioning of the teachers we already have.

Perhaps placing a native Spanish-speaking teacher in a Spanish I and II classroom and a non-native Spanish-speaking teacher at levels III and IV might improve students' education.

As a student of Spanish for seven and a half years and a future Spanish teacher, I was motivated to complete the following research. Furthermore, a personal

experience I had while in high school with one non-native and one native speaking teacher provoked interest in the topic of teachers' linguistic backgrounds and their effect on world language classrooms. I found that my motivation had been high and attitude had been positive because I clearly understood my non-native Spanish speaking teacher, who had a reduced native accent in the second language (L2). However, my motivation dropped significantly and I developed a negative attitude toward the native speaking teacher, who spoke with a strong native accent in the L2.

The experience provoked intrigue in the subject that has brought about the following research in an effort to discover what other teaching professionals believe.

3. Literature Review

The literature in the field of linguistics related to the NS/NNS status of American secondary world language teachers is minimal. Perhaps the research is lacking because of student privacy regulations and the difficulty researchers encounter in obtaining school and classroom permission to do research. The majority of research that has been completed is in the areas of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). While some of the existing research applies to this study, it also often differs in purpose, intended audience, context, culture, and targeted level of education. The following is a review of ESL and EFL research with a subsequent section overviewing contextual factors of teachers and schools, both as applicable in the context of the U.S. American secondary world language classroom.

3.1 ESL and EFL Settings

Nazari and Allahyar's article focused on the topic of grammar, specifically EFL teachers' usage of grammar. The researchers state that the recent focus of research

has been on language teaching and teaching education. They propose that the relationships between teachers' knowledge about grammar and teachers' actions are also worthy of study but that former studies have been faulty in that they were conducted by native English speakers on primarily native English speaking teachers (73). Former studies have also been faulty in their lack of attention to NNS teachers' "lack of confidence in KAL (Knowledge About Language)" and believe that "their language proficiency may be a central issue" (74). Nazari and Allahyar's study observes four Iranian NNS teachers of English and their attitudes toward grammar.

Two teachers in the study, Dave and Eric, are contrasted for their confidence in their knowledge about grammar (KAG). Along with other novice ESL teachers, "Dave's lack of confidence in his KAG led him to minimize grammar teaching and evade spontaneous grammar discussions," Nazari and Allahyar wrote (75). Meanwhile, Eric, confident in his KAG, would answer students' questions himself or do the necessary research and report back in the next meeting rather than avoiding the question or directing it to the class or avoiding grammar altogether (75, 81).

In general, the study of all four EFL teachers and their classrooms found that teachers who were more comfortable and knowledgeable in English grammar used a grammatically deductive rather than inductive approach. In deductive grammar teaching, the teacher begins with the general concept or rule and works his or her way down to specific problems for students to complete. The grammatically inductive method works from specific examples to generalizations. Nazari and Allahyar comment,

To ensure students understanding of grammar, [deductive teachers] reverted to terminologies, explained syntactic structures explicitly, used substitution drills occasionally, and did not abandon L1 in their classes. In fact, these teachers gave a wider coverage of grammar (81).

In other words, it is not uncommon for NNS teachers to struggle in their knowledge or perception of their knowledge of grammar. The successful teachers, as this study points out, are the ones who are first willing to acknowledge rather than deny their weakness. Then, these teachers defer student questions until the next class period and work together as a team to find the right answer(s).

In addition to the research on grammar are studies completed about students' attitudes toward their language teacher. Lucie Moussu states that several studies have researched the attitudes of ESL students toward their non-native English-speaking teachers but have neglected to include native English-speaking teachers (746). Her study particularly delves into the correlation between students' attitudes towards native and non-native English-speaking teachers and teacher contact time, students' first languages, English proficiency level, and expected grades through the use of student surveys at the beginning and end of a semester (746). The results of the study revealed that ESL students' attitudes were generally positive toward both types of teachers. Moussu summarizes,

[The study] seems to indicate that ESL students do not prefer NES [Native English Speaking] ESL teachers over NNES [Non-Native English Speaking] ESL teachers in all cases. Second, students taught by NNES ESL teachers seemed less prejudiced against NNES ESL teachers in general than students not taught by NNES ESL teachers" (756).

Additionally, Moussu hypothesized that ESL students' level of English proficiency would affect their attitudes toward non-native English speaking teachers, but results showed that students in upper level classes who were taught by non-native English-speaking

teachers were slightly more positive toward their teachers than beginners in the same class (756).

In relation to classroom setup and structure stands a study conducted by Tajino and Tajino draws conclusions from team-teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Japan in 2000. They observed teaching teams consisting of a NS and a NNS, finding that team-teaching situations are “most effective when it is ‘team learning,’ in which all the participants, teachers as well as students, are encouraged to learn from one another by exchanging ideas or cultural values” (3). They cite Peter Medgyes as suggesting that in EFL classrooms across the board, NNS teachers can be a role model as they have achieved competency as a language learner (3). They can “provide learners with more information about language and learning strategies, anticipate more easily the difficulties learners would encounter, and perhaps be better able to assist them through sharing their mother tongue” (3). Medgyes adds that NS and NNS teachers, working in tandem, complement each others’ strengths and weaknesses.

Another study, completed in Hong Kong in 2012 by John Trent, investigated eight NS English teachers in primary and secondary schools within the city. Trent’s research goal was to gain a better understanding of these teachers’ work experience in the Hong Kong schools, which could result in better attraction and retention rates of native English speaking teachers. Trent writes,

...a comprehensive understanding of teachers, teaching, and teacher education requires attention to both *identity-in-discourse* and *identity-in-practice*. Identity-in-discourse acknowledges that ‘identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse’ (Hall, 2000, p. 17). Poststructuralist theory argues that identity construction ‘occurs through the identification by the individual with particular subject positions within discourses’ (Weedon, 1997, p. 108) (106).

The results of the study revealed that these teachers felt that within their identity-in-discourse, their self-positioning was challenged by local English teachers and school administration, even though schools in Hong Kong typically hire a mixture of NS of English and local English speakers.

Trent defines identity-in-practice as constructing one's identity through concrete practices, such as their "role of participation with others in socially valued activities" (108). Native English-speaking teachers felt that their identity-in-practice was furthered by the ability to suggest policy changes to administrators and principals and to see those suggestions implemented (117).

In summary, Trent proposes that native English-speaking teachers' relationship with local English teachers would be benefited by the formation of an alliance in the Hong Kong schools (121). A teaching and learning policy team, consisting of school managers, native English-speaking teachers, and local English teachers, would increase collaboration between parties and allow native English-speaking teachers access to practice (122). Thus, the creation of a team enhances collaboration between parties as well as benefiting native English-speaking teachers' construction of identity and their understanding of the social, cultural, and political contexts where learning occurs (122).

In contrast to the research done in ESL and EFL classrooms, a few researchers have delved into the second and foreign language classroom contexts. The following is a review of the second language world language research applicable to the U.S. American secondary world language classroom.

Duff and Polio conducted a study sampling 13 different university foreign language classrooms during the 1988-1989 school year at the University of California, Los Angeles, including French, Chinese, three Germanic languages, and either Spanish or Portuguese. It is important to note that their samplings of classes only included teachers who were native speakers. The researchers admit that while quantity and quality of second language (L2) input are important in the foreign language classroom, quality "is beyond the scope of this study" (154). Instead, they chose to focus on the amount of L2 spoken in the classroom, claiming that students lose valuable input such as "language that is highly repetitive, contextualized, modified according to students' level, and conducive to requests from students who are responsible for the completion of assigned tasks" when teachers translate instructions or manage the classroom in the first language (L1) (154). Duff and Polio particularly considered teachers' experience, including years of teaching, English proficiency, and L2 proficiency (155).

Interestingly, the study found that over 70% of students in the classes observed perceived that they understood most or all of the L2 spoken by the teacher and that "students' perceived comprehension does not seem to vary with the amount of L2 used in the classroom" (159). Students said that they were satisfied with the amount of English used in the classroom (162). The teacher with the highest reported usage of the L2 ascribes his methods to departmental expectations and does not use English in teaching. Contrastingly, one teacher is reported as using the greatest percentage of English in the classroom among all observed classrooms, and although fluent in English, he says he must often repeat himself in English because of his accent (159).

More importantly, this case study found that “perceived (or real) proficiency in English does not seem to compel teachers to use more or less of the L2. Furthermore, no relationship seems to exist between years of FL [foreign language] teaching experience and L1/L2 usage” (161). Duff and Polio also suggest that the closer and more similar an L2 is to the students’ L1, the easier it becomes to teach without L1 usage (161).

There is a noticeable gap in the current literature regarding world language teaching at the U.S. American secondary level as a result of researchers’ focus on ESL/EFL settings. Such classrooms typically differ from world language classrooms in that the teacher may not share the students’ L1 and must teach in the students’ L2.

Yet the concepts and principles true in ESL/EFL research transfer to foreign language learning, as native speaking teachers in world language high school classes fill much the same role as a native English-speaking teacher in ESL. In the same way, research findings from second and foreign language studies are both applicable and useful in the more specific context of secondary world language teaching in U.S. American schools.

3.2 Contextual Factors

In addition to the research in ESL/EFL settings, the following are the contextual factors often considered in educational research. Collentine and Freed, in their article on Second Language Acquisition (SLA), outlined the two previous sides in the relationship between context and SLA.

On the one hand, scholars such as Long (1997) contended that it is important to provide an understanding of the acquisition process in psycholinguistic terms relatively independent of external factors (e.g., sociolinguistic variables or the particular methodology employed in a classroom). Researchers such as Firth and Wagner (1997) contended that the best predictive models of SLA consider the interaction of social activity and psycholinguistic elements (153).

In other words, contextual factors are somewhat slippery in the sense that differing researchers have perceived them differently over the years. Yet it is undeniable that researchers have historically seen social constructivism, defined as knowledge which is a social contract influenced by historic and cultural variables, playing a role in the learning process (153). One's view on social constructivism as an external factor is a litmus test as to the importance that individual places on contextual factors.

That said, Collentine and Freed, who referenced other SLA researchers such as Long, Kramsch, Swain, and Chaudron, suggested in their article that contextual factors to be considered in the classroom include the following and many more: the history of the school and/or classroom, the type of learners, the local context of language users, stereotypical versions of the target culture present or absent, authentic interactions with native speakers, the types of social interactions with other L2 speakers (154-155).

Later in the article, they suggested that planned versus unplanned speech outputs as well as the complexity of teacher speech also plays a role in the external factors of the classroom (161).

Certainly one of the most well-known articles which outlines the factors in interpersonal communication is an article by sociolinguist Dell Hymes. Collentine and Freed summarized his 1962 and 1974 articles, in which Hymes laid out the following eight factors: "setting, participants, end (or purpose), act sequence (form and content of an utterance), key (verbal and nonverbal manner), instrumentalities (choice of channel and code), norms of interaction and interpretation, and genre" (155). Overall, Collentine and Freed stated that one of the remaining challenges is to examine assumptions regarding one learning context over another.

Perhaps one of the most concise and clear cut articles in relation to contextual factors and SLA is an article by Walqui. She wrote that contextual factors can be individual, social, and societal in nature. Each of these three factors can be seen from three perspectives: the language, the learner, and the learning process. She summarized,

Issues related to language include language distance, native language proficiency, knowledge of the second language, dialect and register, language status, and language attitudes. Contextual factors related to the learner include the diverse needs of the learners, peer pressure, the absence of role models, and the level of home support. Factors related to the learning process include the following: learning styles, motivation, and classroom interaction (1).

Walqui noted that a student's knowledge of grammatical systems must also be taken into account. For example, if the student has informal English conversational skills, they may require extra instruction about English grammar (2).

Walqui also stressed differentiation in the classroom, especially taking the growing number of immigrant students entering today's schools. She stated,

Homogeneous curricula and materials are problematic enough if all learners are from a single language and cultural background, but they are indefensible given the great diversity in today's classrooms. Such diversity requires a different conception of curricula and a different approach to materials. Differentiation and individualization are not a luxury in this context: They are a necessity (3).

A teacher must consider diversity in relation to his or her students, the ethnic groups of students' families, teaching materials, etc.

In his 2012 article about beginning teachers in the field of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), Patrick Ng considered contextual influences in Japan. He wrote,

[T]he teaching practice of TESOL teachers in Japan is influenced by contextual factors such as students linguistic proficiency and learning attitudes, the institution learning culture, mentors in the out-of-classroom context, teaching philosophy and the sociolinguistic context of teaching (9).

His work added to the general body of work surrounding contextual factors, suggesting along with previous researchers that students' linguistic proficiencies in the L1 and L2 must be taken account. As he mentioned, the presence of a mentor in a teacher's professional life and the teacher's philosophy can have great impact in the classroom.

The school in mention in this case study is Cedar Falls High School (CFHS), which is in Cedar Falls, Iowa. In relation to CFHS and other schools in Iowa, the Iowa Department of Education considers the following demographics to be important: assessment performance in math, reading, and science, graduation rates, dropout rates, and other school and student demographics, such as the number and types of schools close to CFHS, student grade level, race and ethnicity percentages, and enrollment in programs like English Language Learners, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Individualized Education Programs.

Considering the wealth of contextual factors in relation to education and the classroom, factors in this particular case study centered on three subjects, being the school, teachers, and students. Contextual factors of CFHS considered include location and size of the student body. Contextual factors considered in regards to each teacher were as follows: origin, gender, native language(s), language they teach, university attended, and the approximate number of years of teaching. Factors considered relating to students included the socio economic status of the student population and the level of diversity of students.

In light of the previously mentioned research regarding the linguistic backgrounds of teachers in ESL and EFL settings as well as contextual factors in SLA settings, the present study will add to the previously minimal research in the area of U.S. American secondary world language education.

4. Research Questions to Be Answered

In the following section, three research questions used in the study will be stated, followed by anticipated results. The three questions include:

- Research Question 1) What are the benefits and drawbacks of learning from a native speaking teacher? From a non-native speaking teacher?
- Research Question 2) How does a native speaking teacher affect student learning and attitudes? A non-native speaking teacher?
- Research Question 3) How does a native speaking teacher impact the classroom environment? A non-native speaking teacher?

4.1 Research Question 1) What are the benefits and drawbacks of learning from a native speaking teacher? From a non-native speaking teacher?

I anticipated that native speaking teachers would benefit a classroom because their pronunciation is more authentic, they make fewer grammar and usage mistakes in the language being taught, and they may have a deeper cultural understanding of the countries speaking the second language. Potential drawbacks of learning from native speaking teachers could be: students might struggle to understand the teacher's accent while teachers are more lax in grading, they do not use as many word tricks or songs, and they may not have as much American cultural background knowledge as a native English speaker.

In contrast, I proposed that native English speaking teachers might benefit a classroom in that they can anticipate problems their students may have from their own experience, they are more grammatically strict, they use more word tricks in the first language (L1), songs, etc. to help their students learn, and their students may understand them better in the second language (L2). Potential drawbacks could include more errors in L2 speech production and pronunciation, and they may have little or very limited cultural understanding having grown up in the United States.

4.2 Research Question 2) How does a native speaking teacher affect student learning and attitudes? A non-native speaking teacher?

I expected that although students' attitudes can be either positively or negatively affected by a native speaking teacher, most secondary students are generally initially discouraged. Students observe the teacher's level of proficiency and lose motivation because they feel as if they will never reach the same level of competency. Also, they often struggle to understand the teacher's pronunciation, which creates a communication barrier and lack of rapport.

Conversely, I thought that students' attitudes would be primarily positively affected by native English speaking teachers who have learned Spanish as their second language. I proposed that rapport was built between the teacher and student, simply because the student knew that the teacher underwent the same language learning process and emerged with proficiency. Even though they knew that the teacher might not always have the answer for every grammatical or cultural question on the spot, the teacher's willingness to learn alongside and from their students has potential to further rapport as well.

4.3 Research Question 3) How does a native speaking teacher impact the classroom environment? A non-native speaking teacher?

I anticipated that native speaking teachers might have a negative impact on the classroom environment in introductory or lower level Spanish classes. I expected students to be intimidated as a result of their perception that the teacher is an expert, creating hesitancy to answer or participate for fear of being wrong both in front of the teacher and in front of the entire class.

Meanwhile, I assumed that the same teacher has a positive impact in a more advanced classroom. Students have chosen to stay in the Spanish program by the time they reach Spanish III and IV, and they later view the teacher's expert status as a resource to help them learn.

I thought that, in most cases, the converse is also true for non-native Spanish-speaking teachers. They can have a positive impact on elementary level classes, because their English fluency and shared background create rapport with students. The potential of shared linguistic and cultural origins can also give them an insider's perspective on what helped them to learn Spanish language fundamentals, which may result in deeper learning on the part of students.

In the same way, I assumed that in the majority of cases, a non-native speaking teacher might have more of a negative impact on an advanced class as compared to a native speaking teacher. The native English-speaking teacher does not have the same language proficiency as a native speaker, except in rare cases such as having extensively lived abroad, growing up in a bilingual home, or going to great lengths to build their fluency.

Three research questions were considered in this section. The first question was in regards to the benefits and drawbacks of learning from native and non-native speaking teachers. The second question covered how native and non-native speaking teachers affect student learning and attitudes. The last research question looked at how native and non-native speaking teachers impact the classroom environment. Each question was followed by anticipated results.

5. Methodology

This is a case study that was completed in the World Language department at Cedar Falls High School (CFHS) in Cedar Falls, IA. The spring before the study was completed, I contacted Cedar Falls School Administration, the CFHS principal and vice principal, and the CFHS World Language department head to gain their permission to conduct the study. In October 2014, I met with the current CFHS principal to discuss the goals of my research. He granted me permission to conduct the in-person individual interviews with the CFHS World Language Department within their protected learning community time. All research conducted was completed using Institutional Review Board approved protocols.

The teachers of the Department make up a learning community that meets on a weekly basis throughout the school year before the school day starts to further their professional development. I contacted the World Language Department Head, and together, we scheduled a date for me to visit. In this meeting, I presented myself and explained to the entire department the basis of my research.

The following sections outline and explain the research process undertaken, which includes two main parts: a qualitative interview process and a quantitative online survey.

5.1 Qualitative Interviews

Each teacher and the Department Head met with me individually to conduct interviews, which were recorded with each teacher's permission. These interviews served to provide qualitative information in the study.

I conducted a total of ten personal interviews with each teacher in the department. These ten teachers make up the entire World Language Department. The participants included one German teacher, two French teachers, and eight Spanish teachers. Eight of the ten teachers teach within Cedar Falls High School, which holds grades 10-12. The remaining two Spanish teachers are from Peet Junior High School and Holmes Junior High School, nearby schools for grades 7-9 in Cedar Falls that funnel their students into CFHS. Both teachers from the junior high schools are still considered a part of the CFHS World Language Department learning community, and one of these teachers is the department head.

The in-person interviews with each of the ten teachers in the CFHS World Language Department yielded the following table, Table I. Teachers' contextual factors are listed along the top. Teachers are grouped together by the languages they currently teach, starting with French and then moving to German and Spanish. It is important to note, as mentioned previously, that teachers nine and ten in Table I work at the nearby junior high schools, although they are considered to be a part of the CFHS World Language Department learning community.

Table I

Teacher #	Origin	Gender	Native Language(s)	Language Taught	University Attended	Approx. # of Years Teaching
1	Iowa	F	English	French (currently) Spanish (past)	UNI, Iowa	21
2	Iowa	F	English	French	Wartburg, Iowa	4
3	Germany	F	German English	German (currently) French (past)	Wartburg, Iowa	13
4	Argentina	F	Spanish	Spanish (currently) English (past)	UNI, Iowa	28
5	Iowa	F	English	Spanish	UNI, Iowa	17
6	Iowa	F	English	Spanish	UNI, Iowa Viturbo, Wisconsin	20
7	Minnesota	F	English	Spanish	Bethel, Minnesota Drake, Iowa	7
8	Texas	F	English Spanish	Spanish	St. Mary, Texas UNI, Iowa	23
9	Indiana (moved to Mexico from age 5-18)	M	English Spanish	Spanish	Valparaiso, Indiana UNI, Iowa	15
10	Iowa	F	English	Spanish	UNI, Iowa Viturbo, Wisconsin	13

It is interesting to note in Table I that the majority of the teachers are from Iowa. Many of them have earned degrees from local universities such as Wartburg and the University of Northern Iowa. Another important demographic is that there is only one male in the department. The average number of years of teaching among all the teachers is 16.1 years.

To begin each personal interview, the teacher was asked to state his or her name, their origin, native language, which school they attended for higher education, and how many years they had been teaching, including their years at CFHS as well as at other schools. Next, I posed each of the three research questions to each teacher. None of the participants involved had seen the questions prior to the interview, resulting in the capture of spontaneous reactions. Every question has two parts, one referring to native speaking teachers and one referring to non-native speaking teachers. I asked the first half of every question, allowed the teacher time to respond, and then moved on to the second half of the question.

5.2 Quantitative Survey

After conducting interviews, I transcribed the audio files from the interviews and examined teachers' responses for similarities. I found five similar themes, which I then used to draft an online survey consisting of ten questions using an online survey maker called Survey Monkey. The survey was sent out approximately two weeks after the interviews. The purpose of the survey was to provide quantitative data based upon the previous qualitative interviews that would more clearly show research trends. The following table shows the questions from the online survey that the ten teachers were invited to take with each question under its corresponding theme (see Table II). Only

seven of the ten teachers responded in the survey. Each question was answered according to the following scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree.

Table II

Authenticity - agree that linguistic background affects cultural knowledge

1. The native/non-native speaker status of the teacher affects the richness of cultural knowledge brought to the learners.
2. The native/non-native speaker status of the teacher affects the richness of linguistic knowledge brought to the learners.

Culture

3. The native/non-nativeness of the teacher affects his/her knowledge of the target language culture.

Accent

4. A native accent in the target language is a benefit for beginning learners.
5. A native accent in the target language is a benefit for advanced learners.
6. The teacher's accent is related to the student's attitude toward the language.

Student-teacher relatability

7. The teacher's native/non-native speaker status impacts their ability to see things from the language learner's point of view.
8. Similarity of student linguistic and cultural background to teacher linguistic and cultural background affects student learning and attitudes.

Student attraction to teacher based on speaking status

9. The teacher's native/non-native speaker status affects the student's attraction to the language.
10. The teacher's native/non-native speaker status affects their ability to create an environment where the target language and culture are as natural as possible.

It is important to note that the questions as seen by teachers in the online survey were put in a different order to prevent teachers from giving the same answers to multiple questions. Later discussion of survey questions puts them in order under the research questions to which they pertain. Additionally, each question was followed by a scale that allowed teachers to choose whether they strongly disagreed, disagreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, agreed, or strongly agreed.

The following information reveals contextual information about CFHS as a whole, including the school, teachers, and students.

The Iowa Department of Education website provided the following contextual factors of CFHS. CFHS is located on the west side of Cedar Falls and is the only public high school in Cedar Falls other than Cedar Falls Alternative. CFHS had 1,095 students enrolled during the 2012-2013 school year. Two junior highs feed into CFHS, including Peet Junior High and Holmes Junior High.

The following were CFHS student contextual factors taken into account in this study for grades 10, 11, and 12 with information taken from the Iowa Department of Education website for the 2012-2013 school year. Out of the student body, 15.8% of students were enrolled in Free or Reduced Lunch programs. In general, the Cedar Falls community is considered to be middle to upper class. In regards to diversity of students, 85.39% of the student body is Caucasian, 3.47% is Asian, 3.47% is Black, 3.47% is Hispanic, and 3.56% is multiracial.

The results of this case study in the CFHS World Language Department are laid out in the subsequent section.

5. Results

Table III shows each of the questions from the survey that was created under five categories: authenticity, culture, accent, student-teacher relatability, and student attraction to teacher based on the teacher's speaker status. These five themes were drawn from the previously completed interviews.

Table III

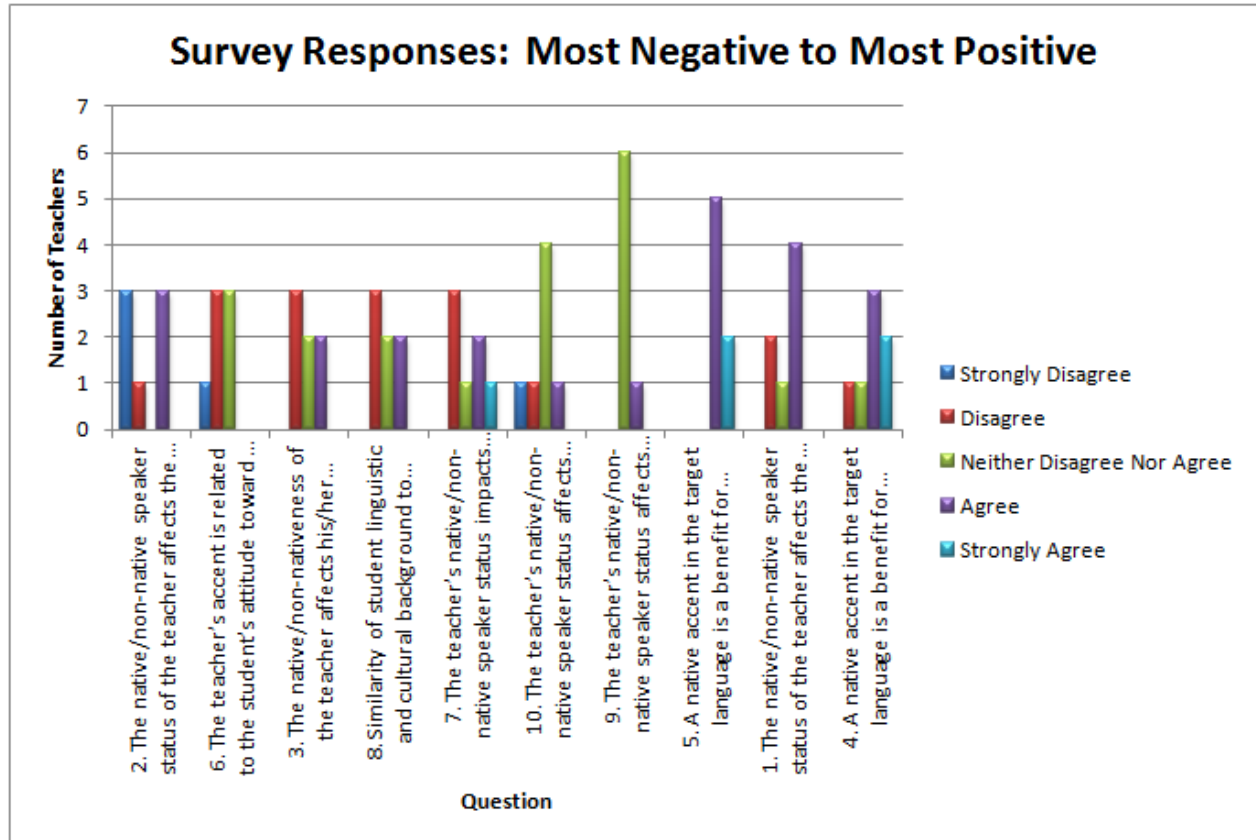
Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The native/non-native speaker status of the teacher affects the richness of cultural knowledge brought to the learners.		2	1	4	
2. The native/non-native speaker status of the teacher affects the richness of linguistic knowledge brought to the learners.	3	1		3	
3. The native/non-nativeness of the teacher affects his/her knowledge of the target language culture.		3	2	2	
4. A native accent in the target language is a benefit for beginning learners.		1	1	3	2
5. A native accent in the target language is a benefit for advanced learners.				5	2
6. The teacher's accent is related to the student's attitude toward the language.	1	3	3		

7. The teacher's native/non-native speaker status impacts their ability to see things from the student's point of view.		3	1	2	1
8. Similarity of student linguistic and cultural background to teacher linguistic and cultural background affects student learning and attitudes.		3	2	2	
9. The teacher's native/non-native speaker status affects the student's attraction to the language.			6	1	
10. The teacher's native/non-native speaker status affects their ability to create an environment where the target language and culture are as natural as possible.	1	1	4	1	

As seen in Table III above, the numbers in each box correspond to the total number of teachers who selected that answer in their survey. A total of seven teachers responded to each question. Thus, each question only has seven responses.

The graph below, Graph I, is arranged to show where the greatest number of teachers agree with each other in their responses (out of seven respondents). Data is arranged from the greatest number of teachers who strongly disagree to the greatest number of teachers who strongly agree. For example, three teachers strongly disagreed and one teacher disagreed in response to question number two.

Graph I



Questions 10 and 9 revealed the strongest impartiality across teachers, with four and six teachers respectively being united in their neutrality. Questions 5, 1, and 4 revealed the strongest pull towards agreement. Question 2 was the most negative, but even there, only three teachers strongly disagreed with the statement.

Overall, results do not reveal much of a strong pull one way or the other towards the positive or negative. Rather, general disagreement resulted, such as in questions 6, 3, 8, and 7. In other words, teachers were more united in disagreement and impartiality than polarization between strongly disagreeing and strongly agreeing.

5. Discussion of Results

Each question from the online survey is discussed in this section with its specific data. The survey questions were placed under the research questions to which they pertained. The quotes included came from the individual interviews. Multiple quotes were included under each survey question to reveal either a similarity or difference of teachers' perspectives and to give more meaning and relevance to quantitative research findings.

5.1 Research Question 1) What are the benefits and drawbacks of learning from a native speaking teacher? From a non-native speaking teacher?

5.1.1 Survey Question 4) A native accent in the target language is a benefit for beginning learners.

Overall, teachers seemed to believe that a native speaking teacher's accent was a benefit to beginning learners, with three answering that they agreed to the statement and two answering that they strongly agreed. Only one teacher was impartial, neither disagreeing or agreeing, and one teacher disagreed with the statement.

Teacher 7, as listed in the results section, stated in regards to accent: "A drawback could be that [native speakers] could be a little harder to understand sometimes. I think a non-native speaker has a better time understanding me, which allows me to stay in the target language more often. I can quickly think of cognates that they would know better." This teacher mentioned several times in her interview that native speaking teachers were difficult to understand and implied that her reduced accent as a non-native enabled her to stay in the target language more.

Teacher 3 stated in regards to native speaking teachers that a “drawbac[k] can be the accent. They can be really hard to understand sometimes, and you have to adapt to that, which is a good thing but doesn’t seem like it for [students].” She admits that a native speaker’s accent is something to get used to over time and that while it can be a positive because the accent is hard to find otherwise, students often initially see it as a drawback.

Teacher 5 continues the trend, stating that a native’s accent can sometimes be a drawback. She said, “Some difficulties, having had native Spanish speaking teachers myself, [is that they] tend to be a little more difficult to understand at times ... and maybe difficulty rewording to help the student understand.” Later in the interview, she added again that students may have difficulty comprehending the native speaker’s accent.

5.1.2 Survey Question 5) A native accent in the target language is a benefit for advanced learners.

Teachers very strongly felt that a native speaker’s accent was a benefit to students in upper world language classes, with five in agreement and two in strong agreement. Teachers’ interview comments add clarity to this topic.

Teacher 8 commented that students will get used to a hearing foreign accent and benefit from learning from a different perspective. She said, “I think that [hearing a native accent] broadens their horizon in the long term because the world is not just, you know, your little enclave where you live, so it prepares them for a broader horizon and a broader working world where they will probably - at some point or another - unless they stay in a small environment ... but even there, interact with people that are from

different cultures, that have different accents, that have different points of view.” She also stated that non-native speakers would probably have an American accent. She felt that her native accent was very important in preparing her students for the broader scope of the real world outside her classroom.

Teacher 6, also a native speaker, commented regarding accent. “Listening to accent as you speak is important. I think the students get that from the first day, and so from hearing it, I do believe ... at least for those students who are motivated, it transfers over,” she said. In other words, she assumed that students’ ears would become accustomed to hearing her native accent and that it was a benefit over time, assuming that they applied themselves in their language learning.

On the other hand, teachers 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9 mentioned a non-native accent as a drawback. Teacher 4 stated that as a non-native speaker, students “can hear you very clearly. You don’t have an accent, so you’re very easy for them to understand.

That also tends to be a drawback, because by the time they get to a native speaker, they have a harder time understanding.” A non-native accent can be a benefit early on in the language learning process, but that benefit may change into a drawback when students confront a native accent for the first time. In the same way, a beginning learner may truly struggle with the native’s accent until his or her ear adjusts, but they will not have the same struggle later on as in the previous situation.

5.1.3 Survey Question 7) The teacher’s native/non-native speaker status impacts their ability to see things from the language learner’s point of view.

The results for this question were interesting, considering they were scattered across the board without a constant such as native or non-native speaking teachers

leaning one way or another. Three teachers disagreed that a teacher's linguistic background impacted their ability to empathize with the student, one was impartial, two agreed, and one strongly agreed.

In her interview, teacher 2 stated that a drawback of being a native speaker is the inability to be empathic. "You don't understand the problems because it's your native language, although you may be sympathetic because you've learned English as a second language," she stated. Put another way, the difference between native and non-native speaking teachers is that native speakers are sympathetic, but non-native are empathetic toward their students. She later clearly stated, "The benefit of a non-native is that we've been there. A drawback for a native is that they don't understand the problems because it's their first language, although they have learned English so they can still feel for what the kids are going through ... but not in the same sense as a non-native speaker of the language they're teaching." She added that a non-native's insider knowledge benefits students through knowledge of memorization tricks and grammar rules.

Teacher 4 pointed out that native speaking teachers might struggle to see things from their students' point of view. "At times, the native speaker might potentially say, 'Well, that's just the way we say it,' and not necessarily know how to explain why it is or be able to come from that perspective of the student that this is how you might come at it as a native English speaker," she said. She later added that a great benefit for non-native speaking teachers is that they have gone through the process of learning the language and they remember the struggles they had. Again, such teachers have empathy for their students.

From a practical point of view, teacher 9 stated that a definite benefit of non-native speaking teachers is that they have a better idea of what students are experiencing in the classroom. He added, "Knowing how language is acquired or having a fresher idea of what that looks like, [non-natives] can plan their lessons to include activities that they know are effective in acquiring the language, that they are familiar with, that can be brought into a lesson." Non-natives have a better idea of how an U.S. American classroom functions and the "stepping stones" that students will need to make it through the U.S. American world language learning system. This teacher also mentioned that a drawback of a native speaking teacher is that they might not always be as aware of their audience of students as they should be, meaning that they might speak at too high of a level for students to "latch on to."

5.2 Research Question 2) How does a native speaking teacher affect student learning and attitudes? A non-native speaking teacher?

5.2.1 Survey Question 6) The teacher's accent is related to the student's attitude toward the language.

The study showed that most world language teachers at CFHS did not see a clear link between teacher accent and student attitude. Three of the teachers disagreed with the statement and three neither disagreed nor agreed, with only one strongly disagreeing to the statement.

The results of survey question six are interesting because they contradicted what several of the teachers stated in their interviews. Teacher 6 told a striking story which clearly underlined the relationship between teacher accent and student attitude. "I have seen different attitudes in students. We had a teacher years ago that was a native

speaker with a heavy - very heavy Spanish accent - and the students gave her a very difficult time. They made it very difficult for her. They would exaggerate the extent to which they couldn't understand her and use that as the reason why she wasn't effective." In short, students reacted very negatively to the native speaking teacher's strong accent and made her life miserable as a result.

On a more positive note, teacher 10 shares how excited students are to potentially have a native speaker as their teacher. She stated, "We have a native speaker on staff, and students always talk about how they're hoping to get that person ... not because that person's a better teacher, but because they're interested in the language. They think that it's really cool to hear a native speaker speaking, and it just feels so real when you're with a native speaker. It's not like we're playing or pretending the language that we're in with a real person. You know, the students that are really into the language are hoping to get her because they just want a slice of that.."

According to this teacher, students knew by the other teacher's accent that he or she was a native speaker, and they responded with pure excitement.

The same teacher shared a story about the positive attitude caused by the presence of a native speaker in her classroom. "I have recently had a native speaking university participant in the classroom, and I feel a little anxiousness and excitement in a good way from students in the classroom." She whispered, imitating her students' energy, "'There's a native speaker and we're learning this language.' There's a native speaker in the classroom right now that I hope is motivating students to step up a little bit. You know, it's this amazing opportunity, interacting with a native speaker." Again, she reiterated through this statement that students responded very positively whenever

a native speaker was present, both in attitude and in learning because the bar was raised.

The fourth teacher in the study made a very clear point about non-native speaking teachers. She said, "I don't think that anyone really looks at them and says, 'Oh, you're a non-native speaking teacher so I'm going to be interested.' Then it's based on their ability to engage the students and other skills, but that status doesn't really do anything for the students." In light of the previous quotes, the linguistic background of a native speaking teacher can be a great benefit or a terrible hindrance, while the linguistic background of a non-native speaking teacher is neutral in their relationship with students.

5.2.2 Survey Question 8) Similarity of student linguistic and cultural background to teacher linguistic and cultural background affects student learning and attitudes.

It seemed that CFHS teachers generally disagreed or did not have an opinion whether the similarity of the student's background to the teacher's background affects students. Three teachers disagreed that it has an impact, two were impartial, and two agreed.

Teacher 5 stated that when students see someone similar in front of them, it makes an impact. "I think my students think, 'She knows where I'm coming from,' whereas they might say the opposite about a native speaker. They ask me, 'Well, how did you do it?' They know I've been there, I've done it, and I want to help them do it, too." She saw the similarity between their backgrounds as non-native speakers as the factor that motivated students and made them curious.

In contrast to what was expected in the study, teacher 2 pointed out that the difference between the native speaking teacher's background and the student's background can cause a positive attitude in the student. Commenting about native speaking teachers, this teacher said, "[Students] are wowed by the fluency and the pronunciation, for sure. Again, the fact that they obviously know English, too, so looking at the reverse, 'Wow, they learned their second language well enough that they can live here and teach.'" Even though the native had a completely different origin, culture, and language background, this teacher still saw students responding in a positive way.

Teacher 7 mediated the positions of the previous two teachers, pointing out how differences and similarities between backgrounds can be a benefit in students' attitudes and learning. In regards to native speaking teachers, she said, "They can add, not motivation, but since it is their background and their culture, the students see that and get more excited about it ... It's fun for [students] to be able to speak with so many natives." There is a certain potential for fun in speaking with natives that motivates students to learn. In the same way, this non-native speaking teacher stated, "The kids see me and I did it, so they can do it. I learned on my own, I practice, I try, I put in the work, and they can do the same thing. I think it teaches them that it's not bad to not know a vocabulary word and look it up in the dictionary together. It takes away their excuses." Again, the similarity of background between teacher and student can help to foster a positive attitude and take away the excuses preventing them from learning.

5.2.3 Survey Question 9) The teacher's native/non-native speaker status affects the student's attraction to the language.

The teachers' responses to this question were by far the most impartial of all the other survey questions, leading to the conclusion that they did not necessarily see a clear link between the teacher's linguistic background and the student's attraction to the language taught.

These results are interesting, considering teachers' comments during their interviews. For example, teacher 4 said, "If there's a good connection between student and teacher, that could just make them that much more enthusiastic about the learning process and make them really want to learn more about their culture. Knowing something about the culture makes them want to know the language even more, so they'll be much more active or engaged in the learning process." She said that if students have a good relationship with a native speaking teacher, enthusiasm can be sparked, causing them to want to visit the teacher's homeland.

Teacher 5 felt very similarly, adding the word "intrigue" into the conversation. "I think [native speakers] have this ability to bring people in based on experience. That's intriguing to the kids. Hopefully, they just have this positive experience with the native speaker that makes the kid want to learn more." The difference between the student's background and what he or she knows to be familiar and the teacher's background causes the student to become curious about the language.

Finally, teacher 6 talked about how the nativeness of the teacher can be a hook to students. "I think the students do find a native speaker interesting, because you do come with a different way of looking at things. You do come with a different attitude about things. To them, it's maybe not exotic, but it draws their attention. A lot of times, it can be a hook for students," she said. Along with the previous two teachers, this

teacher felt that the difference, or “exoticness,” hooked students into learning the language.

5.3 Research Question 3) How does a native speaking teacher impact the classroom environment? A non-native speaking teacher?

5.3.1 Survey Question 1) The native/non-native speaker status of the teacher affects the richness of cultural knowledge brought to the learners.

The CFHS teachers generally agreed in the survey that the teacher’s linguistic background affects their amount of cultural knowledge that they were able to present to the class. Only two of the teachers disagreed while one was impartial and a total of four teachers agreed.

Fascinatingly enough, teacher 10 disagreed with this statement in the survey but had the following to say in her interview, indicating that she might actually agree. She said, “Even though the language piece with the accent is awesome, I actually think the most benefit could be the culture. These people ... that’s their home culture and they have authenticity and details in the culture. It’s not a ‘they’ but a ‘we.’ I think for students that would be the biggest benefit, but I think that most people would probably say their language - that their native-speaking accent, speed, language level ... but for me, I would want a native speaking teacher for their cultural perspective because I feel like they have a perspective that a non-native person - even if you’ve lived a Spanish-speaking country ... for me it’s Spanish - it’s just not the same as being from there!”

She was very clear in stating that putting herself in her students’ shoes, she would want a native speaking teacher for the cultural richness they were able to bring to the

classroom more than any other piece. She also noted, however, that she did not have any native speaking teachers until she was very advanced in her learning.

In the same way, teacher 9 stated that he believes a native speaking teacher is better able to add and recreate culture in the classroom. He said, “The potential is huge because they know the language, they know the culture. The cultural component can be added to everyday instruction and blended in because it’s second nature to the native language speaker. Students will be much more exposed to cultural things that the native speaker could share and bring into his or her lessons.” Because the native speaking teacher grew up in the culture, they are infused with it and this teacher saw it as naturally spilling over onto students.

Lastly, teacher 7 brings up the idea of cultural “embeddedness,” or that culture is so much a part of a native speaking teacher’s identity and personality that culture is naturally infused into the classroom. “It’s embedded in their teaching, so it’s less, ‘Okay, today we’re going to learn about this,’ and it shows how much they love their language, their home culture,” she said. This teacher believed that a native speaking teacher who grew up in the culture has had culture embedded into their personality. Culture emanates from everything they do.

5.3.2 Survey Question 2) The native/non-native speaker status of the teacher affects the richness of linguistic knowledge brought to the learners.

Here, opinions were split fairly evenly as to whether the teacher’s linguistic background affected their teachable linguistic knowledge. Three teachers strongly disagreed with the statement, one disagreed, and three agreed that it did have an effect.

Teacher 9, who agreed with the statement, shared his opinions regarding both kinds of teachers. Discussing the benefits of a native speaker, he stated, "Authentic language usage is something you're exposed to, so I think students benefit from hearing from an actual speaker who knows or uses it in a realistic way. A disadvantage from a non-native is, aside from accent, proper usage, or at least the students might not be exposed to the authentic way of speaking the native language. It'd probably be more classroom language being spoken." He admitted, however, that this generalization is not always true. There are non-native teachers who use rich language in the classroom, and he also noted that sometimes native speakers use too much high level language that students cannot grasp.

Teacher 5's comments suggested that her language use is more simple and based on cognates when she is explaining a concept and sees that students do not understand. "I have a tendency to slip back into English if I let myself because it's so natural. For example, at home, we're trying to teach our kids Spanish. It's a constant, a very conscious decision to speak this language to our kids. For my husband, too. It's not and never will be as natural as it will be for a native speaker," she said. Because a native speaker has grown up instantaneously responding in the language being taught, teacher 5 saw them as always resorting to more L2 use whereas she might be tempted to slip back into English, the L1.

Teacher 6 spoke specifically in relation to expressions that native speakers might use in their teaching. "The expressions that are a natural part of speech that keep it from being - not very stifled - but very simple and direct. There are expressions that we add that makes a language colorful," she said. Whereas a non-native might use more

simplistic speech or speech with more cognates in the L2, this teacher saw natives as bringing linguistic color, life, and richness to the classroom by their speech.

5.3.3. Survey Question 3) The native/non-nativeness of the teacher affects his/her knowledge of the target language culture.

Again, results were fairly even as to whether the origin of the teacher impacted their knowledge of the taught culture. Three disagreed with the statement, two neither agreed nor disagreed, and two agreed that it did have an impact.

Teacher 5, who agreed with the statement in the survey, also agreed in her interview that a teacher's linguistic background affects their knowledge of the culture taught. She said that non-native teachers might have "less authentic cultural experiences to share. Obviously, as a non-native speaker, hopefully we've done a bit of travelling and lived abroad, which I have and I would say most have. But it's different. You grow up in a family in perhaps Latin America versus your growing up here, you're going to have a lot more experiences to share than I would, obviously." Even in light of having lived abroad as a non-native speaker, she strongly felt that a native speaker would have more cultural knowledge.

It follows, then, that a non-native speaking teacher is perceived as having less cultural knowledge. Teacher 7 specifically named accent and cultural knowledge as weaker points that non-native speaking teachers might have. "I have to teach what I've learned about the culture," she commented. She later added that she could share stories about experiences she had had while living in France and studying abroad but that it just was not the same as actually being from there and having an instilled knowledge of the culture.

Teacher 3 spoke specifically about the types of cultural knowledge a native speaker would have. “Culture [is] first hand, which is nice to have ... even just about daily things, just about the family. How they run their family is really interesting and can be different.” A non-native who has lived abroad for some period of time may or may not have had experiences with the familial side of culture, not to mention the other types of knowledge that a native speaker, as an insider, would have.

5.3.4 Survey Question 10) The teacher’s native/non-native speaker status affects their ability to create an environment where the target language and culture are as natural as possible.

Results were partially scattered here but centered in impartiality whether the linguistic background of a teacher was linked to the naturalness of the linguistic and cultural environment they were able to create. One teacher strongly disagreed with the statement, one disagreed, a striking four neither agreed nor disagreed, and only one agreed. Interestingly, one of the native speaking teachers agreed with this question, while a non-native speaking teacher strongly disagreed.

Teacher 9, who agreed with the statement in the survey, also agreed in his interview that a teacher’s linguistic background affects the naturalness of the target language and culture brought to the classroom. He said about native speakers, “The potential is huge because they know the language, they know the culture. The cultural component can be added to everyday instruction and blended in so it’s second nature to the native language speaker. Students will be much more exposed to cultural things that the native speaker could share and bring into his or her lessons.” In other words, a

non-native speaker can still bring culture to the classroom, but students will almost get a taste of the culture from a native because it cannot be separated from who they are.

Teacher 6 was firm in her belief that the first and foremost factor impacting classroom atmosphere was the teacher's ability to relate to students personally and sincerely. After that, however, she believed that a native speaking teacher would have a much easier time bringing culture into the classroom. She stated, "A native speaker teacher, without having had to travel a whole lot or having had to take expensive trips and do those things already has culture already innately in there and can infuse it into the classroom. By virtue of being in the classroom, she is already infusing culture because she is a product of her culture." Again, the word "innate" because an important asset for the native speaker culturally and linguistically speaking.

Teacher 5 compares her ability as a non-native speaking teacher to create an authentic cultural feel in the classroom. "I think a native Spanish speaker can bring ... it comes back to the cultural feel of the classroom ... something I couldn't bring ... There's this understanding of a culture that's so foreign to these kids and the experiences and the authenticity that I in most cases cannot bring. It'd be less authentic for me," she said. She added that she was unsure of exactly how to put the concept into words, but that she felt she could never bring culture to her students in the same way a native speaking teacher could.

Based on the findings from this study, it seems that a non-native speaking teacher may be helpful at the beginning level because of their U.S. American accent, such as for a Spanish I or maybe even for Spanish II class. However, prolonged exposure to an U.S. American accent may make it difficult for the student's auditory

comprehension when listening to a native speaker. Overall, exposure to the native accent in the classroom is seen as preparation for the world outside classroom walls.

While exposure to a native speaking teacher at the beginning level may truly challenge students, they are not be faced with the same difficult transition later as a student would who had a non-native teacher for their beginning classes and later changed to a class with a native speaker.

Put succinctly, this case study reveals that one of three options should be implemented in an ideal world language department. The first option, which is always the most ideal, is a team taught world language classroom. As Nazari and Allahyar and Tajino and Tajino suggest in their respective articles, the strengths and weaknesses of a native speaking teacher are well balanced by the strengths and weaknesses of a non-native speaking teacher. Pairing the two together brings the greatest benefit to language learners in a U.S. American world language classroom.

Funding is often tight in schools, limiting such team-teaching situations. Thus, a second option would suggest the pairing of teachers with specific linguistic backgrounds with students at specific language levels. The results from this case study recommend placing a non-native speaking teacher with beginning learners. Here, students benefit from the non-native speaking teacher's reduced accent and increased use of cognates, among other benefits. As such, the teacher is more easily able to scaffold the student's learning. Middle level learners should be placed with a native speaking teacher, as they benefit from the native's rich base of cultural and linguistic knowledge. Advanced learners continue to benefit from a native's cultural and linguistic knowledge, but the native speaking teacher here needs to be one especially skilled in teaching L2 grammar

to native English speaking students. For example, a native speaking teacher who has taught for 15 to 20 years would be ideal. However, students can also benefit from a non-native's in-depth grammatical explanations, empathy for students learning the same language the teacher has learned, and an enhanced ability to predict and plan for students' struggles in the language learning process. At the same time, though, students' ears at an advanced level have already been accustomed to a native speaking teacher's authentic accent as middle level learners, so they are not hindered when they encounter native speakers outside classroom walls.

A final option is a blending of the first two situations. If funding is tight or for other reasons the team-taught classroom is not possible, schools can first implement the previous outline with non-native speakers teaching beginning students, native speakers teaching middle level, and either type of speaker teaching advanced students. Then, the school can pair native and non-native speaking teachers as appropriate in team-teaching situations at the appropriate level or where students seem to be struggling the most.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to add to the previously minimal research in the field of U.S. American secondary world language teaching. The previous lack of information is problematic in an educational system that calls for reform in its classrooms and that asks its teachers to continually improve their teaching, yet is doing little to no research in the world language classroom to reveal what can be changed. It is this identification process that starts a conversation across educators, which in turn causes education change and reform.

It was the present study's goal to single out one factor, the linguistic background of the teacher, to gain more insight that might lead to much needed improvements in the world language classroom. The research is significant because the results it provides can benefit students' learning, motivation, and attitudes. Perhaps something as simple as placing a native speaking teacher at a beginner level language class and a non-native speaking teacher at an advanced level might have a profound learning effect on students. In sum, this research adds to the previously minimal research in the field with the goal of bettering education for world language students as well as high school world language classrooms in the United States.

First, the results of the study for the first research question over the benefits and drawbacks of learning from a native speaking teacher versus a non-native speaking teacher show that the benefits for the first group were seen as the drawbacks for the second group. The opposite is also true. Specifically, natives were valued for their authentic accent, overall grammatical correctness in speech and linguistic authenticity, and innate knowledge of culture. Drawbacks were the time required for students' ears to adjust to their accent at any language learning level and at times the reduced capacity to explain the grammar rationale of the target language. For non-natives, the U.S. American accent was perceived as allowing the teacher to stay in target language more. Benefits were that non-natives used more cognates and were better able to explain why grammar is the way it is. Drawbacks included a lack of authentic accent, increased grammar errors, more classroom or simplistic language, and a slightly more limited knowledge of the culture.

The second research question asked about how native and non-native speaking teachers affected student learning and attitudes. I found in the survey that teachers did not see a clear link between teacher accent and student attitude, which was noteworthy because teachers' interviews reported differently. Their comments suggested that a native's accent is almost always an incredible benefit. Teachers often overheard students talking excitedly and eagerly desiring a native speaking teacher. Rarely was a native speaker's accent viewed negatively. As one specific anecdote reported, a native's accent was a drawback because students saw the teacher as too different from themselves and used her strong accent as an excuse why she was not effective. Teachers believed that a non-native speaking teacher was viewed more neutrally by students on the basis of their accent.

Furthermore, teachers believed that the similarity and difference of student to teacher background was a positive factor for students. Teachers often stated that their students appreciated non-native speaking teachers because of the similarity between them. Students were able to see that the teacher had struggled through learning the language and had achieved fluency, motivating students to do the same. As far as native speakers, teachers also believed that students saw the difference in their backgrounds positively. The difference caused potential for fun, removed excuses in learning, and perhaps most importantly, an intrigue, also described as a "hook" and "exotic."

Finally, the third research question investigated how native and non-native speaking teachers impacted the classroom environment. Based on of survey information, teachers were about evenly split whether the teacher's linguistic and

cultural background affected the overall amount of linguistic and cultural knowledge brought to the class. There was a slight lean toward the positive in survey information, suggesting that teachers believed a native might be able to add slightly more linguistic and cultural knowledge to the class. One teacher admitted she personally would want a native speaking teacher for the culture aspect. She said that even as a non-native Spanish speaker who has lived in a Spanish-speaking country, she could not bring nearly the amount of cultural knowledge to the classroom table that a native speaker could.

In general, teachers thought that natives used more authentic target language and on the whole used proper grammar, while a non-native teacher was perceived as not always having proper language usage and using more simple language.

Additionally, teachers valued the experiences and stories that native speakers might be able to share with the class about their home country, culture, and family, whereas non-natives would only have stories about travelling and short stays in countries that spoke the target language. Teachers in the survey did not think that the linguistic background of the teacher impacted their ability to create a natural and authentic target language environment or mini-culture in the classroom. However, it appeared that native speakers might have an easier job in creating this environment in the classroom because culture was more embedded and second nature in their personalities.

In summary, the findings of this study suggest the pairing of teachers with specific linguistic backgrounds with particular levels of students. Beginning learners should have a non-native speaking teacher whose reduced accent will aid students in their comprehension. Middle level learners would benefit from a native speaking

teacher who will scaffold their ear to what a native accent sounds like in the real world and will provide them with a greater understanding of culture. Finally, advanced learners would benefit either from a non-native speaking teacher who has a thorough understanding of grammar structures or with a native speaking teacher who has learned through experience how to teach L2 grammar to native English speaking students.

If possible, the most ideal situation would be to partner a non-native speaking teacher with a native speaking teacher. The resulting situation would create a team taught classroom where students would benefit from the strengths of the linguistic backgrounds of both teachers. The strengths and weaknesses in one teacher would be balanced out by the strengths and weaknesses of the second teacher. If such a situation is not possible for extenuating circumstances, both of the previously mentioned options can be blended. Native/non-native speaking teachers are placed with the corresponding level suggested by this study and additional teachers are partnered in team-teaching situations as possible based on need and capability to do so.

The three open-ended research questions guided teachers' responses, but future study would benefit from a more extensive survey and a longer interviewing process.

For example, specific questions could be asked about authenticity, the personality of native and non-native teachers, specific types of target language used in the classroom, etc. In addition, it would be interesting to research the same questions in surrounding cities or even different parts of the United States to get a better overall picture.

Because the school district is further away from big cities, the staff only had three native speaking teachers of Spanish and one native German speaking teacher.

Furthermore the school did not have as many teachers on the whole that a larger

school might have. Results of the same study might be different in different parts of Iowa, let alone across the United States.

In conclusion, teacher 5, a non-native speaking teacher herself, summed up the situation well. She stated that the goal at the end of the day is not to cause division between teachers based on who is a better teacher based on their linguistic background. Rather, regardless of their backgrounds, teachers are united for a common cause: students. She said, “You use what you have to get kids to buy in. For me, it would look different than it would for [a native speaking teacher], yet our end goal is the same: that these kids walk out ... hopefully a good portion of them loving it and learning it and wanting to embrace and use it.”

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