

**DO CULTURAL AND PEDAGOGICAL DIFFERENCES EVEN OUT?  
EXPERIENCED NES AND NNES ENGLISH TEACHERS REFLECTING ON THEIR  
ROLE PERCEPTION**

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**Abstract**

*The rise of English as a Lingua Franca brings forth many questions concerning the English language, the pedagogical theory of teaching English and the new position of native English speakers. This qualitative study focuses on two specific cases of TESOL teachers in Israel. Both have a similar career path, and both hold a PhD in this field. However, one is Israeli born and the other is an immigrant from England. Through using the principles of Grounded Theory, the study explores how their role perception and perception of language has evolved over the years and whether there are common features in that evolution. The analysis shows that as their teaching experience and level of education progressed, their perceptions became more multicultural with regards to both teaching and the use of language which took on some of the characteristics of English as a Lingua Franca.*

**Keywords:** sociolinguistics, NEST, NNEST, TESOL, Lingua Franca

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**1. Preface**

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Data for the year 2015 records English as being spoken in 110 countries, 1.5 billion people learning to speak it worldwide, it being the furthest reaching language in the world (Lucas López, 2015). NESs (Native English Speakers) amount to about twenty-five percent of internet users while around fifty percent of internet content is available in English (Internet world stats, 2017). English is also the dominant contact language for cross cultural communication worldwide. This places it as the world's Lingua Franca (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Graddol, 2006). Whereas throughout history, Lingua Francas were backed by an imperialistic political entity, that is not the case with ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Jenkins, Baker & Dewey, 2017). This raises some linguistic and pedagogical questions regarding the teaching of English as well as questions concerning the sociolinguistic state of those who speak it as their mother tongue. The following section will provide a brief review of the development and spread of English as well as theoretical models that might explain this new phenomenon.

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## 2. Literature review

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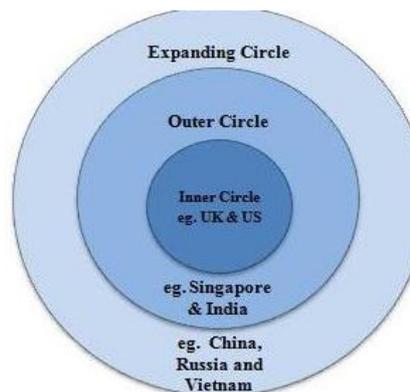
### 2.1. English, Englishes, ELF

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The early spread of English throughout the world consisted of two parallel historical paths that formed its spread (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2007). The first track was the mass immigration from Britain to North America, New Zealand and Australia from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The second track was the infiltration of English as a foreign or a second language to other countries through commerce, slavery and colonialization.

These processes resulted in the emergence of what was later referred to as: Varieties of English (Albu, 2005). English took new forms in the new countries of British immigrants. These new forms of English were the result of many different dialects interacting, communicating with the indigenous population and a new environment that required new vocabulary. These varieties were specific to their corresponding regions and countries. (Chambers & Trudgill, 1998). The term ‘new Englishes’ referred to the adoption and indigenization of English as a formal language in various non-English speaking countries and the resulting linguistic forms of English (Schneider, 2011).

**Figure 1. B. Kachru Circle Model (Crystal 1995, p. 107)**

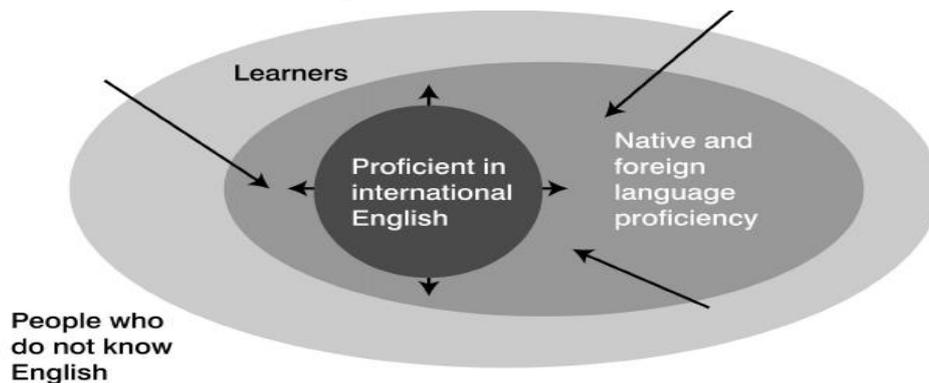


Braj Kachru (1990) in an attempt to encompass the phenomenon of English spread has created the World Englishes circle model (Figure 1). The model consists of three separate circles. The Inner Circle is composed of the English speaking nations (US, Britain, etc.). The Outer Circle includes countries in which English has become a formal language (usually ex-British colonies) and therefore is considered a second language (ESL). The Expanding Circle consists of countries in which English is taught as a foreign language for various reasons. This model has suggested an innovative linguistic approach simply by using the word ‘Englishes’, which implied that there is more than one English. That undermined traditional

linguistic concepts of one English (Kachru, 1991). This model put into the 21<sup>st</sup> century context is not flawless. It does not explain the mass migration phenomenon that as an example accounts for fifty million Spanish speaking people who live within the US, an Inner Circle country. Furthermore, it is based on a historical colonial expansion model and cannot explain today's motivation for learning English (Graddol, 2006). It also assumes a hierarchal structure of language proficiency. It is not necessarily the case that NNESs are less proficient using English (Davies, 2003; Galloway & Rose, 2015). These processes that have put Kachru's Circle Theory under critique all fall under the wider term 'Globalization'.

The term globalization relates to the influx in social, economic and political contact that the world has been experiencing in an accelerated manner for the past four decades. Along with postmodern philosophy it gave rise to an idea of a 'global citizen' who is multi- and translingual (Graddol, 2006; Aviram, Bar-On & Attias, 2010). Mass migration and improvements in communication resulted in outsourcing of services from previously dominant Inner Circle countries to other rising economic super powers. Furthermore, the mix of cultures and languages created an acute need for a global language. That need was fulfilled by English by the mere fact that it was already there as an internationally dominant language due to the tremendous worldwide influence of the United States (Crystal, 2012).

**Figure 2. (Modiano, 1999)**



The advantages of a Lingua Franca are numerous. On the one hand, it helps to create political and economic links and growth, as well as boosts research through global cooperation. On the other hand, it eradicates languages and homogenizes cultures as knowledge and content are produced globally rather than locally (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2007). ELF poses a twofold question: Can ELF be characterized linguistically and what implications does ELF have on the Inner Circle NES? A possible answer to the second question was suggested by M. Modiano (1999) in an alternative model of English in its global form (Figure 2). This model no longer assumes Inner Circle English proficiency but rather implies that using English as a Lingua Franca consists of more than just NES usage. This

concept brings us back to the first question regarding ELF, can it be characterized linguistically?

ELF is the language of choice for communication between speakers of different native languages (MacKenzie, 2014). However, trying to deconstruct it to a coherent model is impossible (Jenkins et al, 2017). The first noticeable problem is that each incident of ELF communication is unique. It depends on the context, the speakers' *simialect*<sup>2</sup> and the medium (online/mail/conversation). Each variant creates a whole different system with a completely different structure. It behaves more like a CAS (Complex Adaptive System) rather than traditional linguistic systems (Jenkins et al, 2017; Friedrich & Figueiredo, 2016). Any other characteristic that can be observed, such as the omitting of 's' in the first person singular form of the present simple, can also be observed in Inner Circle dialects (Hinkel, 2011; MacKenzie, 2014; Albu, 2005). The question that remains is: what does it take to be a proficient ELF speaker?

Proficiency in using ELF is not having classical linguistic knowledge, but rather having a linguacultural one (Proshina, 2015). ELF speakers possess mental qualities that enable them to use different listening, speaking and writing strategies while communicating. Unlike traditional Communicative Language Theory in which the reconstruction of Inner Circle English linguistic structure will transfer meaning, i.e., bridge the Information Gap (Richards, 2015), ELF communication starts by trying to find common grounds that will allow the transfer of meaning by whatever means it takes (Jenkins et al., 2017). The Information Gap in ELF consists of the speakers' native language and cultural background and varies according to it. For example, a German and a Dutch conversing in English will have to use fewer strategies than a Japanese speaking to a German (MacKenzie, 2014). Such strategies consist of (Jenkins et al., 2017):

- Repeating and rephrasing one's words
- Topic negotiation
- Avoiding obstacles in advance

These strategies require ICA (Inter Cultural Awareness) and sensitivity, as well as metalinguistic knowledge (Jenkins et al, 2017; Friedrich & Figueiredo, 2016). These qualities are part of the postmodern and multicultural image of people (Aviram et al, 2010; Graddol, 2006). Is it possible for an older generation to develop them or is it even possible to teach them? Furthermore, when relating to TESOL, what English should we teach and who should teach it, NESTs (Native English Speaking Teachers) or NNESTs (Non-Native English Speaking Teachers)?

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<sup>2</sup> A term used to describe the variation of English that is influenced by the speakers' L1 (Jenkins et al, 2017)

**2.2. NESTs – NNESTs**

The proliferation of ELT (English Language Teaching) throughout the world has resulted in larger numbers of NNESTs, to the point where their numbers surpassed those of NESTs (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). This has led to significant research concerning both groups. At first, the underlying assumption was that NESTs, due to their superior proficiency in English, will provide a better model and perform better than NNESTs (Medgyes, 1992). NESTs were and still are in many ways a preferred hiring option as teachers even when their training as teachers is less than that of NNESTs (Clark & Paran, 2007). The attitude towards NNESTs has mostly been based on cultural dispositions rather than actual performance. This was found to be quite similar across both groups (Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Medgyes, 2001). Chart 1 sums up the perceived advantages and disadvantages of both groups (Medgyes, 2001).

Braine, 2010). It is important to note that the above advantages and disadvantages are relevant when we look at English as a language that is ‘owned’ by the Inner Circle. In an international, multilingual and multicultural environment things change significantly and sometimes even turn around completely (Canagarajah, 2014; Jenkins et al, 2017). TESOL in Israel represents a unique phenomenon in respect to the issues presented so far.

**Chart 1. NEST-NNEST**

| NEST Advantages  | NEST Disadvantages  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perfect language modeling</li> <li>• Innovative</li> <li>• Tend to use the communicative approach naturally</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannot always understand problems in language acquisition and therefore leave problems unexplained.</li> <li>• They are unable to empathize with students that go through language acquisition process.</li> <li>• They have not undergone the English language learning process.</li> <li>• Unable to use L1 to their benefit.</li> </ul> |
| NNEST Advantages   | NNEST Disadvantages   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are experts in learning ESL since they master both theory and practice.</li> <li>• They are role models and therefore foster motivation.</li> <li>• They are serious, strict and demanding.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They lack confidence in their teaching.</li> <li>• They are preoccupied with formality and accuracy and hence neglect the communicative aspects.</li> <li>• Teacher with foreign accents are considered less proficient by students.</li> </ul>  |

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### *2.3 TESOL in Israel NESTs and NNESTs*

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Located in the Middle East, Israel is the nation state of the Jewish people. Its population is around eight and a half million people, 75% of which are Jews and the rest are Muslim Arabs (18%), Christian, Druze and others<sup>3</sup>. The State was formed in 1948 following British rule from 1917. That means that for a part of its history, Israel was located in the Outer Circle. Following Israel's independence, Hebrew was declared the official language and waves of Jewish immigration arrived from a multitude of countries including Inner Circle ones. Some of those immigrants became TESOL teachers. The uniqueness of this situation is in the fact that unlike NESTs that go to teach for a time and then return to their home countries, these teachers came to live and settle in Israel for ideological reasons and therefore learned another language and made an effort to assimilate into the local culture (Badrian, 2018).

Israel has a centralized educational system in which the curriculum is set by the Ministry of Education in a top-down approach (Aviram et al, 2010). The current English curriculum was first introduced in 2001 and it is a goals-and-benchmarks oriented curriculum that provides a great deal of freedom for teachers to set their own pedagogical program. However, there are several commercial publishing companies that provide textbooks based on the curriculum and hence the actual teaching is quite similar throughout the country (Braine, 2014). When considering the curriculum with regards to the ELF phenomenon, it stands out that there is a difference between the 2001 curriculum which is defined as an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and the current one which aims for EIL (English as an International Language) (Badrian, 2018; Ministry of Education, 2018). However, teaching materials have remained ENL (English as a Native Language)-oriented in accordance with similar processes worldwide (Khodadady & Shayesteh, 2016).

In many respects, the attitude towards the NEST-NNEST divide in Israel correlates with the research presented above as it shows bias in favor of NESTs as teachers (Braine, 2010). However, being immigrants in Israel undermines NESTs feeling of superiority regarding their language proficiency by having to work hard to assimilate into the local culture (Braine, 2010; Copland, Garton & Mann, 2016). Since there is no research concerning the evolution of NESTs pedagogy, role perception and language involvement during the time spent in a foreign culture (Moussu & Llurda, 2008), it would be worthwhile to research that specific population in Israel in that context.

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<sup>3</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics (2018), [http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/?MIval=cw\\_usr\\_view\\_SHTML&ID=705](http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/?MIval=cw_usr_view_SHTML&ID=705)

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### **3. Conceptual framework & research question**

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As part of another ongoing research dealing with some of the issues presented above, a group of NESTs and NNESTs were interviewed over a two-month period between May and June 2018. They were interviewed individually using a semi-structured interview. The interviews related to their role perception, perception of language, their peer relations with the other teacher group (NEST/NNEST) and their perception of language as it appears on ICT (Information and Communication Technologies). Two specific cases of teachers with more than thirty years of experience stood out primarily because they shared almost the same career development track but were from two different groups. One was a NEST that immigrated from England in her twenties and one was born in Israel. They are around the same age and both hold a PhD in a TESOL related field. Both started their career as English teachers in elementary schools. Both were teacher instructors and teacher trainers as well as lecturers in teacher education colleges and both held managing positions overseeing teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds. The similarity of the career paths, as well as their age, accompanied with their academic expertise, presented an opportunity to learn more about the evolution of both NESTs and NNESTs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Does their perceptions correlate with research presented above or does the emergence of ELF along with the globalization processes form a new unified identity that eliminates the distinction between the two groups? The questions that this research came to ask are:

What brings about NESTs /NNESTs evolution of role perception and language? And what can be learned from these teachers' perspectives and insights on the process?

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### **4. Methodology**

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The philosophical approach at the foundation of this research is a pragmatist one. Since the nature of ELF as a phenomenon is a complex adaptive one, it may appear in different ways in different instances (Jenkins et al, 2017). Pragmatism serves the purpose of understanding a complex phenomenon that is based on a historical and social construct but takes into account that results may reflect only a fraction or a moment in time rather than a unified reality (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). A case study approach was adopted since the research is focused on individuals and the way they interpret their reality (Ritchie, 2014). Furthermore it is a specific unique case that may provide a deeper understanding of a sociolinguistic phenomenon (Yin, 2018, Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The design consisted of a semi-structured interview that was composed on the basis of the literature review. A semi-structured interview allows the researcher to keep

the interviewee within the conceptual framework, but also enables a degree of freedom for unexpected themes to come up (Seidman, 2013). These interviews were later transcribed and analyzed.

The research population consisted of two TESOL teachers/lecturers that presented a unique resemblance in their career development but came from the two different groups related to this research theme (NESTs & NNESTs). Sampling was therefore a purposive sample since they were chosen on the basis of their unique traits (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

Data analysis was done using the principles of grounded theory because the research approached the case without preexisting concepts or hypotheses. There is an attempt to see where these two cases do interact and whether there are parallel features in that process and their perceptions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Using ‘Narralizer’, a computer software (Shkedi, 2014), the transcriptions were codified in an open coding method followed by axial coding in order to correlate results to the literature review (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Kuckartz, 2014). The first stage of analysis took significant segments of text relating to role perception of language and ascribed themes to them. In the second stage, these segments were cross-referenced and divided on a career timeline (beginning, current) and on a cross-case similarity scale. Another theme was ascribed to the explanations that were given as the cause of transformation in their perceptions.

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## **5. Findings<sup>4</sup>**

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Both interviewees were assigned coded names. T1 was the NNEST and T2 was the NEST. The results are displayed in charts followed by interpretation. They are divided into three categories: Role perception, perception of language use and influencing factors.

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### **5.1. Role Perception**

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| Case: What is my role as a teacher? | <b>Initial perception</b>   | <b>Current perception</b>   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| T1                                  | As a young teacher I stressed the rules of grammar. I taught Standard English. That was the most important thing. | My job is to support my students’ learning process. I see my job as bringing my students into the culture of the language, the way you think in the language. I try to make them see how the language works in relation to their own mother tongue. I believe that the more important thing is to |

<sup>4</sup> T1 quotes were translated from Hebrew by the author.

| Case: What is my role as a teacher? | Initial perception  | Current perception   |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
|                                     |   | have them deliver their message fluently and with confidence.                              |
| T2                                  | “I wanted to teach English and I wanted my learners to know English.” | “I think I put much more focus on working with learners to improve their own self-esteem.” |

We can see that initially both teachers saw their work in the pure definition of being language teachers. T1’s approach was teaching StE (Standard English) whereas T2 did not elaborate as to what English she taught. That probably has to do with her being a NES and therefore relating to the language as her own. In both cases the current perceptions are learner focused. They both emphasize the development of learners’ confidence and self-efficacy. However, T1 still maintained her focus on language, relating to different ways and goals in teaching it, while T2 did not mention language at all.

| Case: Interaction with learners and culture | Initial perception  | Current perception   |
|---|---|--|
| T1  | I was just a beginning teacher... I remember X, treating students in a condescending manner and interpreting test cheating as an ‘inferior culture’ phenomenon. It bothered me a lot. | I look at it from the teacher’s position coming to teach students and the way he tries to reach them. I think that especially with regards to language that represents culture, our job is to bridge this cultural gap. I realize that more and more. Especially with dealing with such a diverse learner population. I find myself more forgiving towards my students’ mistakes. I feel that if I will not ‘let go’ a bit. I will lose them. I have to accept some of my students’ cultural characteristics, otherwise they will not learn from me. |
| T2  | “I felt comfortable. It felt right for me. I think it's also very much the framework that you're teaching. I opted to teach in a formal framework                                     | “I have a hard time with that, but I'm trying to kind of <b>accommodate</b> it. I think, "Okay, for heaven's sake, First of all this is Israeli. Secondly, it's a different generation and I have to take that into consideration before I burst out and say, “That was a bit rude.” “It's connected, I think, in a way. Whether   |

| Case:<br>Interaction<br>with learners<br>and culture | Initial perception   | Current perception  |
|--|--|---|
|  | <p>that was quite very open compared to many schools here. I think that was probably a subconscious, or maybe even a conscious decision. I always enjoyed it.”</p> | <p>that would-- I doubted that it would happen in England. I doubted very much.”<br/>                     “Especially today. I think more so today because younger learners today, teenager students who are my kids’ ages, they’ve grown up in a different world then the one that we grew up in. I think very often, this is really one of my peeves, if I may, no doubt. That I think there’s a lot of tension in the education system between how we as teachers, how the body of teachers perceive how learners should behave, and how they perceive their role in society. I think that that tension causes a lot of the so-called discipline problems because expectations are different.”<br/>                     “I think it’s the teacher’s job to meet the other side part way and understand where they’re coming from, and not just judge what they see based on their own values and experiences as younger people.”</p> |

Relating to the interaction with the local culture, T1 being part of the local culture did not relate to her own experience but rather to her perception of NNESTs’ attitude towards it. She was aggravated by what she perceived as condescendence. T2 felt comfortable with the ‘new’ way of interaction which was less formal. Both perceive the cultural gap between themselves and the learners on two levels. One being a cultural gap related to their origin. T1 relates to that gap and its effect on language learning. T2 sees that gap as responsible for feelings of frustration on her part at times. The second gap is a generational gap. That gap is perceived by both interviewees as responsible for pedagogical failure as well as discipline problems. Both interviewees speak of making compromises on their part in accommodating and adapting to close these gaps in order to achieve their pedagogical goals.

*5.2. Perception of Language*

| Case:<br>The kind<br>of English<br>they teach | Initial perception  | Current perception   |
|---|---|--|
| T1  | I taught Standard English. That was the most important thing.         | How you do things in English as opposed to how you do them in Hebrew for example? What is the right register? I believe that the more important thing is to have them deliver their message fluently and with confidence.  |
| T2  | “I wanted to teach English and I wanted my learners to know English.” | “English as a Lingua Franca, and I firmly believe that all our young learners today need to have at least some level of ability to communicate in English for whatever reason that they-- It's in all aspects of society now..., I have a big problem with the way the emphasis the minister of education puts on learning the way it-- translates what learning is all about and measures that learning.” |

T1 speaks of teaching English as teaching English culture and register. Even though she spoke also of ‘delivering the message’ as an important part of knowing the language, she still maintains that the language-culture bond has to be kept. T2 on the other hand presents a pendulum of degrees of control depending on what end the language should serve. She criticizes the way the language is taught for that reason.

| Case:<br>The English<br>they speak | Initial perception  | Current perception  |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| T1                                 | Many years ago when I finished my teacher training college, the English inspector came and gave me an ‘A’ for my language. I used to perceive NESTs as superior in terms of language. | I feel that my language proficiency evolved. I can do a lot more with it. I know how to speak in different situations and be creative with it. I may be able to see if people understand me or not and adapt accordingly. Perhaps my ability to support their understanding might be better because I am not a NES. ICT language is one big mess. We are going backwards, we speak with icons. I think that the way we express ourselves is very superficial. |

| Case:<br>The English they speak | Initial perception   | Current perception |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| T2 <sup>5</sup>                 | <p>“I’ve noticed-you know I have very close family in England and we go to England fairly often and we have close friends in England. That’s actually a lot of contact with Britons. British people who speak British English and I noticed that our English is different. We use different terminology and there is also things [sic] that I don’t always understand. I mean understanding context.”</p> <p>“I understand other peoples’ English better than the British people do.”</p> <p>“I’ve developed some kind of sensitivity to interpret what the non-native English speaker is saying to me whether they are Hebrew speaking or you know-”</p> <p>“You can see the shift. In personal Facebook posts, we could pass on some kind of equivalent chat or, then you can see the changes. There's lots of acronyms, abbreviations, etcetera that are used in formal posts and you learn to understand those, almost become inherent in the language that you not only receive and produce, as well. I think it has and I think it's effective.”</p> |                    |

T1 speaks of reaching higher levels of language proficiency over time and with experience even though her language proficiency was considered very good to begin with. She considers herself sensitive and able to adapt her language to different situations in order to convey meaning and feels she has an advantage over NES when speaking to a NNES. T2 speaks of attrition in her NES abilities as a result of living outside England. However, she feels that her ability to understand and to be understood by NNES has increased. When relating to English as it is used in ICT (Information and Communication Technologies), both seem to see the language there as being simplified. However, T1 applies negative phrases to the phenomenon such as ‘going backwards’ and ‘superficial’, while T2 sees it as efficient and speaks of adapting to it.

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### *5.3. Influencing Factors*

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| Case: What factors influenced my evolution | Reflection  |
|--|---|
| T1   | <p>I was the head of a faculty and I had to figure out how to deal with each staff member depending on their cultural background.</p> <p>Well, after years of usage on all levels and as a faculty member and head, visiting England and acquiring my Master’s degree and PhD</p> |

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<sup>5</sup> There was no initial statement here since English was her L1 when she immigrated.

| Case: What factors influenced my evolution | Reflection   |
|--|--|
|  | <p>in England, I feel that my language changed without recognition over the years.</p> <p>I have to accept some of my students' cultural characteristics in order to be meaningful.</p> <p>I have reached this understanding as time passed. When I was a young teacher I didn't have the insights I have today.</p>   |
| T2   | <p>"I think from being a teacher but also because I continued my education and read a lot and became more aware of these things that probably contributed to my awareness of the need to do it and I'm not sure I can answer that."</p> <p>"I find myself certainly, in my work, I find myself often explaining the meaning of culturally bound phrases."</p> <p>"Which, by the way, now that I speak Hebrew fairly fluently, is something that I'm well aware of, but perhaps wasn't so much in the beginning. So that is one thing-you know-masculine feminine-all that kind of stuff. Pronunciation of the "th" you know the hard soft sound, all that kind of thing. So there are definitely things that the Hebrew speaking English teacher would be aware of presumably from her own experience if she grew up here."</p> <p>"First of all, I'm a teacher so I have to develop those skills as well. I had to mediate language to those that don't understand it."</p> <p>In the classroom we do it all the time. We simplify what we say. We ask it in another way. We repeat the question. We preach to the public and all that kind of thing and I sometimes find myself doing that in these kinds of situations.</p> |

Three major factors appear in both interviewees' interpretation of the factors influencing their change. The first is time and accumulated experience. The second factor discussed is their level and relevance of education that provided understanding and insight of sociolinguistic phenomena. The third factor is the actual teaching position which created a necessity in bridging cultural, generational and meaning gaps. Both also had the experience of acquiring another language (English / Hebrew) and through the acquisition process seem to have acquired a deeper understanding of culture and language.

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## **6. Discussion**

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This small case study dealt with two specific cases and therefore cannot represent the phenomenon it dealt with in all its complexity. However, there are a few issues that were raised that can provide some insight into it and into what might be

worthwhile to research further. We can see, given certain digressions, that the overall starting point of both interviewees aligned with the NEST-NNEST divide as presented in the literature review (Chart 1). But, as time passed both subjects evolved in all aspects of teaching, and their usage and approach toward English as a language evolved. Both became more learner-centered in their pedagogical attitude and both put an emphasis on English usage rather than on accuracy. They both perceive the cultural and generational gap as a significant factor to be dealt with when teaching. Both report of acquiring ELF competency and strategies, but, whereas T1, who is a NNEST, feels her English evolving, T2 feels a level of attrition in her NES abilities.

The factors they emphasized as influencing their evolution can be divided into two separate themes. The first is 'active' in the sense that both evolved professionally through academic studies and career changes. Both ascribe a significant part of their evolution to the meta understanding they acquired through these processes. Their ability to reflect on the processes they have gone through and their experiences contribute to their ability to change. The second theme is 'passive'. Being a language teacher has forced them to develop certain qualities out of necessity. For T1 ICA (Inter Cultural Awareness) is part of teaching a language. Her students are exposed to another culture as a result of her teaching. They acquire the understanding of another culture and metalinguistic knowledge through that. These qualities are essential for using ELF. T2 had to learn to simplify and rephrase herself, as well as explain certain culturally bound phrases to her students. These alone helped her develop ELF features. Her Hebrew learning has also contributed to her better understanding of her students' language acquisition processes as well as exposing her to another culture. In the same manner as with T1, her learners gained insight and understanding into a different culture as well as metalinguistic knowledge.

Considering the question posed in the title of this article, differences do even out. What can be learned from both teachers' experience can be divided into two areas. The first and most obvious relates to teacher education. The ability to reflect in academic terms over one's professional experience is crucial to their evolution. However, the academic terminology should be relevant to current research and perceptions of language which deal with cross-cultural awareness relevant for today's globalized world.

The second relates to the famous saying: "Necessity is the mother of invention". The very situation of teaching a foreign language to learners from various cultural backgrounds creates, by default, an ELF situation both on the teacher's part as well as the learners. However, it is imperative that teachers have both confidence and knowledge to adapt and experiment in order to achieve meaningful learning. As the interviewees here reported this took them time. Perhaps it is possible to create such opportunities in the teacher training process itself and hence provide future language teachers with better tools to deal with ELF situations and teaching.

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