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Native versus Non-native English Teachers' Influence on English Language Learning Motivation and Anxiety*

Lin Peng and Sang-Gu Kang**

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This article mainly focuses on comparing motivation and anxiety levels in native versus non-native English teacher classes based on survey results from Chinese university students majoring in English. Using a 5-point Likert Scale, the participants responded to 48 close-ended survey items regarding English language learning motivation and anxiety. The overall results indicated that they tended to have high motivation level and low anxiety level in their English classrooms, but several survey items suggested that they were significantly more motivated and less anxious in native teacher classes than non-native teacher classes, which led to higher achievement levels in native teacher classes. Although the result seems to suggest that students prefer native English teachers, this does not imply that non-native teachers are not as qualified as their counterparts, as some survey items indicate that both teachers are equally prepared for classes and accessible for assistance. Based on the survey results, this paper makes some suggestions on how English teachers can better help their students' English learning.

Keywords: native English teacher, non-native English teacher, motivation, anxiety, English learning

1 Introduction

The importance of being able to use English as a lingua franca to communicate with people with different mother tongues is seemingly increasing especially in Asian countries. The Korean government lowered the beginning age for English education from 13 to 9 in 1997 (Kang, 2012) and Japan introduced English education in the primary grades from 2008 (Honna, 2008). Furthermore, China has boasted the greatest number of EFL (English as a foreign language) speakers in the world (Peng, 2012; Wu, 2001). As long as

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** First author: **Lin Peng**, Lecturer, Department of Foreign Languages, Shanqiu Normal University
Corresponding author: **Sang-Gu Kang**, Department of English Language and Literature, Cheongju University

EFL speakers believe their English proficiency will help them enhance their financial and social status, their motivation towards learning English will remain strong.

Among the many issues regarding EFL education, the preference debate between native English teachers (NETs) and non-native English teachers (NNETs) has been a popular topic in recent years (Gurkan & Yuksel, 2012; Sun, 2014; Sutherland, 2012; Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014). Parties involved in the EFL education including students, their parents, and school administrators tend to set high standards about the learners' English proficiency, and acquiring native-speaker-like English accent tend to be a part of their high standards. Under these circumstances, the tendency to hire NETs in Asian universities is increasing in recent decades. For example, Árva and Medgyes (2000) state that administrators favor engaging native English speakers even when they lack a teaching qualification. Other researchers also report a similar trend worldwide (e.g., Clark & Paran, 2007; Mahboob, 2003). Many believe that NETs are more beneficial for EFL learners than NNETs, assuming that NETs, who are expected to use standard English, have higher authority in English teaching and better teaching skills (Widdowson, 1994). These claims are mainly focused on NETs inherent language strengths, and this supposed strength is becoming the most attractive element for parties involved in EFL education selecting NETs for English classes in China.

Since 2000, many NETs were hired to teach EFL students in China as Chinese educators and learners have well realized the importance of English as a lingua franca, which can be evidenced in the College English Curriculum Requirements (Wang, 2004) that allowed universities to manage their own English teaching and abandon a unified pedagogy across the nation. Thus, university administrators are willing to hire NETs even if they have to pay higher salaries for NETs, especially for students majoring in English. Having NETs is usually supported by students and their parents, who seem to have formed a solid trust in these NETs. However, some argue that after nearly 20 years of NETs teaching English in Chinese universities, it is difficult to find evidence for Chinese EFL students' improved English proficiency (Hu & Zhang, 2017). Still, as long as the value of English remains high in China despite its little use in daily life, Chinese EFL education stakeholders' solid belief in native speakers as ideal teachers do not seem to fade away immediately.

In order to investigate the English teacher preference of Chinese university students, this research aims to probe the students' motivation and anxiety levels in their NET and NNET classrooms. Surveys from university students majoring in English who have taken both NET and NNET classes are collected and analyzed to demonstrate that Chinese EFL students tend to have higher level of motivation and lower anxiety level that help them feel that they have achieved more in NET classes. Based on the analysis, this study also suggests some practical pedagogical tips for teachers.

2 Literature Review

Generally speaking, research trends in exploring whether NETs or NNETs are more ideal as English teachers can be classified in three ways. First, many previous studies argue that NETs have certain advantages over NNETs in EFL education; NETs' strengths include their ability to provide various teaching methods, give instructions that are easy to follow, and utilize the cultural knowledge they have as native English speakers (e.g., Liu & Zhang, 2007; Nam, 2010; Sahin, 2005; Widdowson, 1994). Secondly, other research claim that judging a professional teacher according to their identity is unscientific, oral communication ability is overly valued in English education, hiring NETs increases students' fear stemming from the unshared cultural background between NETs and EFL students, and NETs' ability do not satisfy the education standard of the host countries (e.g., Han, 2005; Kramsch, 1997; Rao, 2010). Finally, several researchers proposed that both NETs and NNETs could be ideal teachers if they have the proper personality required for a language teacher and enough teacher training to make them qualified instructors. For instance, Benke and Medgyes (2005) investigated EFL students' and teachers' points of view considering the differences between native and non-native speaker teachers. Their study demonstrated that these two groups' attitudes towards native and non-native speaker teachers are consistent. Similar findings by Park (2009) show no significant differences between these two teacher groups from the students' perspective.

However, foreign language learning can be a very personal experience. Thus, rather than introducing studies with diverse results regarding the ideal teacher debate between NETs and NNETs, the rest of this section will focus on presenting the two essential elements critical for foreign language education: students' motivation and anxiety.

2.1 Motivation in EFL learning

Motivation is considered to play a significant role in foreign language learning. Early studies on motivation such as Gardner (1985) and Ryan and Connell (1989) emphasize the role of motivation as a crucial element in improving EFL students' proficiency level. Research on motivation in English language teaching since the early 1990s has increased dramatically in exploring its importance. Oxford and Shearin (1996) state that motivation influences students to actively participate in the learning process. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) suggest that motivation leads to continuous use of second language, even after the learners' formal study has terminated. Moreover, motivation is believed to affect every stage of learning (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Ng and Ng (2015) holds that a talented learner in a suitable course with proper teaching methods will not gain long-term language learning goals without motivation.

Among the various definitions of motivation provided by previous research, a simple description of motivation presented by Ryan and Deci (2000) will be used for the purpose of this study: to be motivated means to be moved to do something. In this vein, motivation seems to be related with two primary elements: learners' goals and efforts. Various EFL learning goals may be presented, but their efforts can be mainly divided into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, based on the Self-Determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). According to the SDT description of these two types of motivation, intrinsic motivation is related to a learner's inner feelings; for example, the learner's sense of accomplishment and outward goals do not influence learners' willingness to learn a language. Extrinsic motivation is directly connected with external reasons, like rewards and punishments (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Intrinsic motivation has played a predominant role in promoting students' language learning research. Ryan and Stiller (1991) pointed out that intrinsic motivation is a positive inborn source for many students and can be easily destroyed by parents and teachers. Following studies confirmed the relationship between intrinsic motivation and learning outcomes. For instance, Eccles et al. (1993) show that a student's inner interest in learning plays a valuable role in performance. Mahadi and Jafari (2012) notes that intrinsic motivation plays a vital role in the emergence of self-consciousness and new knowledge. Furthermore, Zhou & Zhao (2016) argue that intrinsically motivated college students actually enjoy learning English and have desire to communicate with native English speakers. In summary, many researchers consider intrinsic motivation very important because they believe that learners can gain inner satisfaction and treat learning as a goal (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Although extrinsic motivation seems to be less highlighted than intrinsic motivation in this research field, some studies still proved its positive influence on people's behavior, such as high level of involvement, less withdrawal from school, better manifestation, and excellent mental health (e.g., Miserandino, 1996; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995). Furthermore, scholars have also demonstrated that a sense of belonging and respect for students, especially from their teachers, parents, and peers, play significant roles in various external drivers (Ryan et al., 1994; Ryan & Deci, 2000). At the same time, students clearly understanding learning goals, which lead to better chances of success, is a potent element in extrinsic motivation for language learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A variety of other pragmatic motivations such as finding a better job are also studied in previous research (Belmechri & Hummel, 1998; Dörnyei, 2001; Liu, 2007; Noels et al., 2000), but this study will focus on comparing motivation factors inside the NET and NNET classrooms. To sum up, these external efforts reduce certain learning barriers to some degree, and at the same time, present clearer picture of foreign language learning goals for students.

2.2 Foreign language anxiety

EFL students' language barrier comes from many aspects. Among the various disruptive elements, foreign language anxiety (FLA) is considered a significant one for EFL learning. In their pioneering research regarding this situation-specific anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986: 128) provide a vague and broader concept of FLA due to its distinctiveness; its definition is illustrated as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process." This definition includes all kinds of possible feelings, such as danger, fear, worry, and tension in the EFL classroom.

Other studies that followed concerning FLA showed a negative correlation between FLA and proficiency. The relationship between a learner's beliefs, defined as language learner's opinions through the various aspects of the learning process (Kunt, 1997), and FLA was often discussed in conjunction with the social environment (Ajzen, 1996; Tanaka, 2004). Others explored motivation, proficiency, and degrees of class difficulty as influencers of anxiety (Aida, 1994; Jin et al., 2017; Zhang, 2013).

Reasons for causing FLA are varying depending on individual differences. However, they can mainly be divided into three aspects. First, speaking anxiety goes along with unpreparedness, which is widely accepted as the most fearsome element to language learners (Ay, 2010; Young, 1990). Furthermore, Price (1991) states that one of the main reasons for this high anxiety is that students worry about making mistakes in their pronunciation.

The second aspect is coming from foreign language teachers. Teachers can arouse students' anxiety in many ways: class contents progressing too fast, class contents being too complicated, long assignments, negative evaluation, limiting or prohibiting students' use of their mother tongue, exerting high pressure, and having a strained relationship with students (Khusnia, 2017; Mak, 2011; Williams & Andrade, 2008).

Foreign language test related issues make up the final aspect of causing students' anxiety. While test anxiety can be defined as forecasting bad results (Bademcioglu et al., 2017), students' test anxiety mainly comes from poor performance on a test (Cassady & Johnson, 2002). A loss of face due to lack of competence and peer pressure accompanying test results are also major contributors to test anxiety (Bailey, 1983).

The abovementioned three contributing factors to FLA are investigated in this research largely based on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986). Since the main purpose of this research is to compare the influence of NETs and NNETs on Chinese university students' English learning, only the items in the FLCAS pertaining to the topic are selectively adopted.

3 Methods

This study surveyed English major students who had taken both NET and NNET's courses for a year at a normal university for teachers education located in Henan province, China. Students attending this university can be considered to represent the average Chinese university student level in terms of their admission scores. In China, universities at this level receive less government financial support compared to top tier universities. Therefore, this university cannot hire as many NETs as it would want, and thus, there are more NNETs than NETs in the foreign language department[1].

3.1 Participants

There were 108 university sophomore students who participated in this study, but five of them did not finish the survey appropriately. Overall, data collected from 103 participants (59 females and 44 males)[2] are analyzed. Their average age was approximately 20. They were all students in the foreign language department specializing in various subfields such as English education, translation, linguistics, and business English. Though they specialize in different subfields, they share similar requirements as English majors; they take similar amount of English classes and all have experienced similar proportion of NET and NNET classes as their class schedules are mostly fixed in similar ways.

The participants took NETs' courses such as English Pronunciation and Intonation, English Speaking, Advanced English Reading and Writing, History of Western Civilization, and English Grammar and Discourse, and NNETs' courses such as English Reading; English Public Speaking, English Debating, English-Chinese Translation, Introduction to English Linguistics, and Selected Reading in British & American Literature. Compared to NNETs, NETs tend to have more freedom in choosing their course textbooks and conducting their classes. As for NNETs, they use both English and Mandarin in their classes if necessary, and although they try to accept new technological tools that help them facilitate their class, their pedagogy still remains very traditional focusing on lectures.

[1] There were nearly 50 NNETs teaching at least 10 to 12 class hours a week while nine NETs taught at least 20 class hours a week at this university. NNETs were responsible for 75% of the English classes at this university while NETs taught the other 25%. NETs' salary was nearly twice the NNETs'.

[2] Usually, more female students than students are admitted to the foreign language department every year.

3.2 Survey and procedure

An offline survey that included both open- and close-ended items was used in this study. These items were designed to investigate the following three central elements: the participants' English education background, motivation levels in NET and NNET classes, and anxiety levels in NET and NNET classes. There were three open-ended background questions and 48 close-ended survey items regarding motivation and anxiety. A 5-point Likert Scale representing "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neither agree or disagree", "agree", "strongly agree" was used for the close-ended items.

Both instructions and questions were presented in their native language, Chinese. Three background information questions regarding students' length of English education, number of hours they spend studying English at this university, and their overseas experience were asked first. Then, the participants were asked to respond to 26 items aimed to investigate various issues regarding their motivation, such as their intrinsic motivation levels with NETs vs NNETs, EFL learning outcomes, and extrinsic motivation levels influenced by their NETs and NNETs. These items were designed mainly based on the SDT principles (Deci & Ryan, 1985) to measure intrinsic and extrinsic motivation levels in NET and NNET classrooms, with additional reference to several other sources including Tuan (2012), Vatankhah and Tanbakooei (2014), and Wang (2008). Finally, the last part included 22 items to probe the participants' anxiety levels in English learning inside NET and NNET classrooms. The items covered all three main sources of FLA anxiety discussed above: speaking, teachers, and exams. These anxiety related items were modified from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986), which originally had 33 items intended to assess three aspects of foreign language classroom anxiety: fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety.

3.3 Data analysis

Cronbach alpha coefficient was conducted to measure the internal consistency reliability: a value of $\alpha = 0.856$ suggests that this survey had acceptable internal consistency and reliability. Next, the 48 close-ended questions were analyzed as follows. This study conducted a linear mixed-effects model for statistical analysis using the lmerTest package (Kuznetsova, Brockhoff, & Christensen, 2014) in R (R Core Team, 2018). The model included participants as a fixed effect, participants' responses as a dependent variable, and age, gender, and grade as random effects. The model produced a p-value ($p<.05$) to show if there is significant difference in the participants' responses to NET and NNET classroom environments. Finally, the mean value for each item is presented.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Participants' background

The participants' background survey revealed that the participants form quite a homogenous group that followed a similar path of English learning as none of the 103 participants had lived abroad and studied English only in China for about 10 and half years on average (Table 1). At the time of the survey, they reported that they spent about 28.5 hours a week studying English outside their classrooms.

Table 1. Participants' EFL Education Background Information

Majors (No. of students)	Length of English Education	Time Spent Studying English	Overseas Life Experience
English (103)	10.56 years	28.49 hours/week	0

4.2 Motivation

Since the values of 1 to 5 in the Likert Scale used for the survey represented "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", average score of 4 or higher will be considered as implying high motivation level, average score of 3 to 4 as moderate motivation level, and average score of less than 3 as little motivation level following previous studies such as Liu and Huang (2011).

4.2.1 Intrinsic motivation

The first four close-ended items in the survey concerned the participants' intrinsic motivation. They expressed their strong desire to be good at English (mean score of 4.78 out of 5 for item 1) as found in previous studies in similar Chinese contexts (Liu, 2007; Yang & Lau, 2003), which is not surprising considering that Chinese EFL learners are increasingly being aware of the value of English in recent years. However, they reported that they did not read as much in English for pleasure (item 2) suggesting that they might not be working hard as their internal motivation level indicates. When asked about their will to learn in their NET and NNET classes (items 3 & 4), they demonstrated higher expectation from NET classes (4.32) than NNET classes (3.95) although the difference was statistically only marginally significant. Overall, their great desire to be good at English expressed in item 1 seems to coincide with their relatively high expectations about what they can learn in English classes, especially from NET classes.

Table 2. Participants' Responses to Intrinsic Motivation and Learning Outcome Items

	Items	Mean	*p*-value
Intrinsic Motivation	1. I want to be good at English.	4.78	--
	2. I read English articles for pleasure.	3.64	--
	3. I want to learn a lot from my NETs' class.	4.32	0.059
	4. I want to learn a lot from my NNETs' class.	3.95	
Learning Outcome	23. I learn a lot from my NETs' class.	4.03	0.004*
	24. I learn a lot from my NNETs' class.	3.74	
	25. I get good grades in my NETs' class.	4	1.18e-06*
	26. I get good grades in my NNETs' class.	3.49	

* $p < 0.05$

In order to infer how the participants' intrinsic motivation is related to their actural learning (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012), items 23 to 26 related to learning outcome can be referenced. Through the four test items, participants responded that they significantly learned more (items 23 & 24) and received better grades (items 25 & 26) in NET classes compared to NNET classes. When these results are compared with their expectations from NET and NNET classes (items 3 & 4), we might be able to claim that their better learning outcomes in NET classes than in NNET classes reflect their expectations about the two types of classes.

4.2.2 Extrinsic motivation

There were nine pairs (18 items) of items aimed to investigate the participants' extrinsic motivation in NET and NNET classrooms (Table 3). While participants responded that they were highly motivated (mean score of 4 or higher) in six of the nine NET items, only two of the nine NNET items showed high motivation. Comparison of the NET and NNET items demonstrated that the Chinese EMSs were significantly more intrigued (items 5 & 6), more interested in activities (items 7 & 8), and more fond of the coursebook (items 21 & 22) in NET classes than NNET classes. They also thought that they were able to receive significantly more support from NETs (items 13 & 14) and they had better relationship with NETs (items 15 & 16) than NNETS. Additionally, they seemed less afraid of making mistakes in NET classes than NNET classes (items 17 & 18). In general, they seemed more interested in NET classes and more comfortable with NETs (Matsumoto, 2017).

Table 3. Participants' Responses to Extrinsic Motivation Items

Items	NET	NNET	*p*-value
5~6. I feel curiosity during my --- class.	4.06	2.85	2.2e-16*
7~8. I like my --- class activities	4.13	3.33	1.54e-11*
9~10. My --- is well prepared for class.	4.19	4.12	0.44
11~12. I can get English help from my --- outside the classroom.	3.36	3.45	0.4

13~14. I can feel support from my --- in the class.	4.42	3.75	7.94e-09*
15~16. I have a good relationship with my ---.	3.7	3.52	0.01*
17~18. My --- would still treat me nice even if I made a mistake.	4.16	3.64	2.96e-06*
19~20. I can get good feedback from my ---.	4.15	4.03	0.23
21~22. I like the coursebook used in my --- class.	3.57	3.17	0.0001*

* $p < 0.05$

However, NNETs cannot be blamed for such results as the participants did not seem to doubt the qualifications of NNETs as there was no significant difference between NET and NNET in teacher preparedness (items 9 & 10), and giving good feedback (items 19 & 20). It should also be noted that the only pair of items (items 11 & 12) in which NNETs scored higher than NETs (although there is no statistical significant difference) concerned helping students outside the classroom. It can be speculated that NNETs are more familiar with the students' cultural background and the Chinese education system, which enables them to related more closely with the students outside the classroom (Rao, 2010). Moreover, NNETs' stronger loyalty and sense of affiliation toward their university can be another source support toward their students.

If students deem both NETs and NNETs similarly prepared and helpful, teacher qualification is probably not the reason Chinses EMSs are more interested in NET classes and feel that they are more supported by NETs than NNETs. One of the reasons may be the coursebooks used in the classrooms: while the coursebooks for NNET classes are mainly decided by the government and school administrators, the coursebooks for NET classes can be freely chosen by NETs, which could be more suitable and interesting for EMSs. If students are more pleased with the coursebooks in NET classes, they can become more curious about the contents of the lessons and more actively join the classroom activities. In addition, different (educational) backgrounds between NETs and NNETs may be contributing to the different student-teacher relationship in the classrooms. By definition, NETs received their education in English-speaking countries, and thus, their classroom management skills can be quite different from those the NNETs practice and EMSs are used to. This could have led EMSs to feel that they have a better relationship with NETs and receive more support from NETs in the classroom.

Overall, responses to the extrinsic motivation items in this research demonstrated that Chinese EMSs have higher extrinsic motivation in NET classrooms. This seems to contribute to higher chance of success and involvement in the students' EFL learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000) as they reported better results in NET classes than NNET classes (items 23 to 26 in Table 2 above). Related to the learning outcome, it should be noted that most NETs at this university conducted speaking and listening classes, and compared to the NNETs, NETs had more freedom to evaluate their students

with more flexible grading criteria in addition to the freedom to select their own coursebooks and activities.

4.3 Anxiety

There were 22 test items designed to investigate the participants' anxiety levels. Of the 22 items, 18 (9 pairs) probed anxiety levels in the students' NET and NNET classes, which will be presented first in Table 4. Then, four items were given to examine the participants' English speaking anxiety level in Table 5. As was with the motivation levels above, average score of 4 or higher will be considered as implying high anxiety level, average score of 3 to 4 as moderate anxiety level, and average score of less than 3 as little anxiety level. However, unlike higher motivation levels facilitating foreign language learning, higher anxiety score is known to predominantly debilitate foreign language learning (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986; Liu, 2006, 2007; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, 1994).

First, Table 4 lists the nine pairs of test items related to the anxiety level in NET and NNET classes, and the results. While participants responded that their anxiety level was low (mean score of less than 3) in seven of the nine NET items, five of the nine NNET items showed low anxiety level. Comparison of the NET and NNET items demonstrated that the students' anxiety level was significantly higher in NNET classes than in NET classes in seven of the nine test item pairs. They reported that in NNET classes they feel more pressure in class (items 27 & 28) and about exams (items 43 & 44), worry more about being punished (items 29 & 30) and making mistakes (items 31 & 32), cannot focus in class (items 33 & 34) and worry more about getting left behind (items 41 & 42), and even feel greater urge to skip classes (items 37 & 38). Meanwhile, they reported that they are more nervous speaking English in NET classes than NNET classes (items 35 & 36) and feel similarly nervous on their way to both types of classes (items 39 & 40).

Table 4. Participants' Responses to Class Anxiety Items

Items	NET	NNET	*p*-value
27~28. I feel a lot of pressure in my --- classes.	2.61	2.84	0.04*
29~30. I will be punished if I didn't finish my work in my --- class.	2.43	2.86	1.6e-05*
31~32. I worry about making mistakes in my --- class.	2.95	3.16	0.03*
33~34. During my --- class, I find myself thinking about things unrelated to the course.	3.04	3.4	0.0007*
35~36. I am nervous when speaking English with my ---.	3.35	3.11	0.02*
37~38. I often feel like not going to my --- class.	2.02	2.52	7.54e-07*
39~40. When I'm on my way to my --- class, I feel very nervous and upset.	2.62	2.57	0.56
41~42. My --- class moves so quickly, I worry about getting left behind.	2.87	3.01	0.05*
43~44. The --- exam made me feel very anxious.	2.39	2.98	6.33e-06*

* $p < 0.05$

However, the results do not necessarily suggest that the participants were suffering from heavy anxiety level as most items indicate low anxiety levels; reports of low anxiety level in English classrooms is not rare (e.g., Liu & Huang, 2011). The item pair with the lowest anxiety scored 2.02/2.52 (items 37 & 38), which suggests that the participants do not feel the desire to skip class especially NET classes. Considering that one of the crucial psychological effects of anxiety is avoidance (Horwitz et al. 1986: 126), which is frequently reported among students with high anxiety level (e.g., Khusnia, 2017), the anxiety level can be viewed as quite low. Then, the only two item pairs with scores higher than 3 on both NET and NNET classes are related to difficulty focusing in class (items 33 & 34) and speaking in English (items 35 & 36). As none of the items scored more than 3.4 out of 5, the Chinese university participants reported an overall medium level of anxiety in their English classes. Even their anxiety level related to exams (items 43 & 44) was not high especially in NET classes: the score of 2.39 for exam anxiety level (item 43) is the second lowest score among the anxiety item, only trailing item 37.

Table 5. Participants' Response to Speaking Anxiety Items

Items	Mean
45. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	2.99
46. It embarrasses me to volunteer to answer questions from my English teacher.	2.86
47. When I need to speak in my English class, I can get so nervous that I forget even things that I know.	3.33
48. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	3.05

As the lone item pair examining speaking anxiety level, item pair 35 & 36 deserves more attention because it is the only anxiety item pair in which students reported significantly higher anxiety in the NET class than NNET class, showing that they are more nervous speaking in front of NETs: NNETs seem more approachable than NETs when the EFL learners need to speak English to their teachers (Price,1991; Rao, 2010). Thus, further investigation into participants' speaking anxiety (regardless of the teacher type) becomes more interesting. Table 5 lists the four survey items specifically designed to examine speaking anxiety and the results demonstrate that the speaking anxiety levels are moderate to low (Liu & Jackson, 2008) with the scores ranging from 2.86 to 3.33. The survey item with the lowest speaking anxiety level was item 46, suggesting that students are rather willing to answer questions from their English teacher despite, to some degree, being worried that other students might laugh at them (item 45) and feeling self-conscious in front of fellow students (item 48). The item with the highest score (item 47) indicated that students tend to forget even things they know when they get nervous speaking

English in class, which is not uncommon among highly anxious foreign language learners (e.g., Liu & Huang, 2011).

Overall, the anxiety levels represented in Tables 4 and 5 are not particularly high, which might be partially explained by the fact that these university students had been learning English in school for more than 10 years since elementary school (Liu & Huang, 2011). Still, participants demonstrated significantly higher anxiety levels in NNET classes than NET classes. Considering that students are not overly anxious about speaking English in class (Table 5), the survey results can help teachers (both NETs and NNETs) find ways to lower the anxiety levels even more in their classrooms.

4.4 General discussion

Chinese university students reported high intrinsic motivation to be good at English: mean score of 4.78 on item 1 was higher than any other items on the survey. Thus, they expressed their high expectation to learn a lot from both NET and NNET classes, although expectation from NET classes were marginally higher. Their extrinsic motivation levels were also quite high based on the items on Table 3, and NET classes turned out to be providing significantly more motivation than NNET classes in general. Overall, the participants' internal motivation levels are similar in the two types of English classes, but several sources of extrinsic motivation such as coursebooks, classroom activities, teacher support seem to be contributing to highly motivated students in NET classes. Consequently, such high motivation seems to be resulting in students reporting that they learned more and received better grades in their NET classes than NNET classes.

It is fairly well-documented that motivation levels are negatively correlated with anxiety levels (e.g., 38, 39), which is also apparent in the current study as many motivation items show high motivation levels (especially in NET classrooms) and most anxiety items indicate only low anxiety levels. Although the overall anxiety levels are low, it is also clear that students feel more anxiety in NNET classes. Among the three sources of anxiety, speaking, teachers, and exams, participants reported more anxiety levels related to the classes (teachers) and exams in NNET classrooms, but interestingly, speaking anxiety level was higher in NET classes.

Participants in this research reported higher motivation and lower anxiety levels in NET classes than NNET classes. The analyses supported that high English learning motivation and low foreign language anxiety in NET classrooms lead to higher achievement levels in NET classes. Thus, it seems that NET classes are more effective for English learning and more preferred by the participants of this research. However, it should be emphasized that the analyses do not imply NNET's incompetence: students in this research considered both NETs and NNETs equally prepared and accessible. Rather, it seems that several factors outside NNETs' control such as coursebook choice

and evaluation criteria in their classrooms are negatively influencing the students' English learning. Although NNETs might not be able to replicate certain advantages of NETs such as possessing English-related cultural background, having some degree of freedom in their classroom like selecting the most appropriate textbook and pedagogy for students could be a starting point to increase students' motivation level and further relieve anxiety level.

5 Conclusion

Considering the constantly increasing importance of English around the world, it might be virtually impossible to return to the days of entirely local Chinese English teachers handling EFL education in China. There is probably no way to predict precisely how the future EFL education will be shaped, but the current situation of welcoming NETs due to social and economic requirements in China provided an opportunity to compare university student motivation and anxiety levels in NET and NNET classrooms.

Several conclusions related to the university students' motivation and anxiety in English learning in NET and NNET classes can be warranted. First, the overall motivation levels were high and anxiety levels were low, but both motivation and anxiety levels tended to be more facilitative in NET than NNET classes leading to higher achievement levels in NET classes. Second, although it can be argued that university students preferred NET classes over NNET classes, NETs and NNETs were considered to be fairly equally qualified as English teachers. Finally, having some degree of freedom to choose the appropriate pedagogy including textbooks and evaluate students accordingly might be the first step for NNETs to further assist their students' English learning. However, the students' NET preference reported in this study should not lead to blind worship of NETs because simply translating the contents and pedagogy of NET courses to NNET classroom will not be an ideal or acceptable way to design and manage these English courses. Rather, while certain advantages possessed by NETs should be acknowledged and utilized for the sake of Chinese EFL students, the educational system can be modified to allow NNETs better help their students.

However, some limitations of this study should be noted as well. The small number of participants in the same department assumed to be homogenous makes it challenging to claim that the findings carry universal implications. Also, other factors that can influence students' judgment towards their NETs and NNETs, such as learner autonomy and effort level, were not considered. Despite the limitations of this case study that investigated a small sample from a Chinese university, this study provides additional evidence to claim that features of teachers with different background still has an important influence on students' English learning. Further studies will hopefully

contribute more to comparing the strengths of NETs and NNETs in order to further develop ways to maximize EFL students' learning.

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Lin Peng, Lecturer
Department of Foreign Languages, Shangqiu Normal University
55 Pingyuan Street, Shangqiu, Henan Province, China,476000
E-mail: linpeng315@qq.com

Sang-Gu Kang, Assistant Professor
Department of English Language and Literature, Cheongju University
298 Daesung-ro, Cheongwon-gu, Cheongju, Chungcheongbuk-do, Korea
Email: kangsg39@hanmail.net

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