HOW TRUSTWORTHY IS SHE? : PERCEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TOWARD INTERNATIONAL PEER TUTORS IN WRITING CENTERS

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HOW TRUSTWORTHY IS SHE? : PERCEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TOWARD INTERNATIONAL PEER TUTORS IN WRITING CENTERS

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ABSTRACT

HOW TRUSTWORTHY IS SHE? : PERCEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TOWARD INTERNATIONAL PEER TUTORS IN WRITING CENTERS

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The influx of international students into universities in the United States in the past few years (Project Atlas, 2017) has had a direct impact on the number of international students visiting the writing centers (Hall, 2013; Devet et al., 1997). While studies show that a huge population of international students find writing tutors to be more approachable and helpful than many of their classroom instructors (as cited in Williams, 2002), this same population has reportedly shown resistance in working with international peer tutors in many of the writing centers across the country. Although the “native speaker fallacy” (Phillipson, 1992) is nothing new to the field of language education, the belief that the tutoring skills of the international writing tutors who speak English as their second language is any less than the domestic tutors who are native speakers of English simply defeats the purpose and goal of writing centers— which is to achieve an environment where the tutor and the tutee can engage in a healthy conversation about the writing and the writing process in general. This study sought to find out if “native speaker fallacy” is prevalent among international students in the domain of writing tutoring in writing centers. The findings of the study
indicates presence of not only one but two types of native speaker fallacies—markedly making room for categorization of native speaker fallacy. While the first fallacy discovered directly connects with Philipson’s (1992) traditional definition of native speaker fallacy, the second fallacy discovered has little correlation with the definition but is linked more to the cognition that people have about their own linguistic ability in English; the study is naming this newly found fallacy as *the outer circle discrepancy*. The data collected from this study helps to raise awareness of such biases or fallacies and assists the field of education (writing centers included) to design specialized instructional approaches and awareness-raising programs to educate international students who exhibit either of the fallacies.
Dedicated to my dad
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my gratitude toward Dr. Jennifer E. Haan, my advisor, for taking the time to provide me with expert feedback and suggestions before and during my research and equipping me with knowledge and materials needed for the completion of my project.

Gratitude is also due to my readers Dr. Bryan A. Bardine and Dr. Andrew Slade; Dr. Bardine’s comprehensive feedback has helped me in formatting my paper and to pay close to the sections of the paper that needed further explanation; Dr. Slade’s feedback has helped me analyze my sources from different perspectives. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Ms. Christina Klimo, the coordinator of University of Dayton’s writing center, who has been a constant support throughout the course of my research by helping me connect with other writing center directors crucial to my study.
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INTRODUCTION

According to Project Atlas (2017), over one million international students were enrolled in different colleges across United States between 2016 and 2017, which shows an increase of 3.4% from the calendar year 2015 to 2016. Likewise, there was an increase in enrollment by 7.1% between 2015 and 2016 from the previous calendar year 2014 to 2015. This rising percentage in the number of international student enrollment every year, to various institutions in the United States, has had a direct impact on writing centers. Two possible reasons behind this directly proportional increase in the writing center visits by the international students to the increase in international student enrollment may have something to do with the lack of communication they have with their instructors (Williams, 2002) and due to the difficulties they experience in adjusting to the academic culture in the US (Erichson & Bolliger, 2011).

Elizabeth A. Erichsen and Doris U. Bolliger’s (2011) study on international student isolation and Jessica Williams’ (2002) article on second language writers in writing center together provide an understanding on why there is such a proportional increase in enrollment and the writing center visits. Williams (2002) states that ESL writers “often come or are sent to the writing center when their instructors simply do not know what else do with them.” (p.73) She elaborates that instructors in many institutions receive very little
preparation on how to work with second language writers and as a result send them to the writing centers to get some “extra help.” (p.73). When these students finally arrive to the writing centers they receive undivided attention and perceive writing center tutors to be “immediately more helpful, more approachable, more practical and more personal than teachers” (Harris, 1997, p.223). Writing centers by nature are meant to provide individual attention to students. Moreover, writing centers are staffed by college students who work as peer tutors; this peer-collaborative setting probably reduces the international students’ anxiety in communicating their academic concerns (Williams, 2002). As a result, these students tend to make recurring visits to writing centers to seek help regarding their assignments, to find tips on how to become successful writers, and to know more about the writing practices in American classrooms.

However, this positive perception of international students about writing tutors quickly becomes critical, sometimes disapproving even, when they are asked to work with peer writing tutors who also belong to the international community; primarily the ones who speak English as their second language or who speak a variety of English that is spoken by people outside of the predominantly English-speaking countries.Instances such as this have been reported, but not yet studied formally, by some international tutors across Midwestern universities where the international students resisted in working with them just because they did not speak English as their first language. This resistance or unwillingness on the international students’ part in working with international peer tutors took the verbal manifestation of either being, “this is my thesis work, it’s very important. I would want a native speaker to take a look at it”, “I really want to improve my English. I want to work with a native speaker” or simply “Can I work with someone who speaks English as their
first language?” This dichotomy between native-nonnative speakers of English raises the question as to what extent do international students feel that international writing tutors do not have what it takes to be an effective tutor because of their nonnative status.

While the significant body of literature discusses the misconceived native-nonnative English-speaking teacher distinction within the ELL community (Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002; Canagarajah, 1999; Amin 1997), there is hardly any research that specifically addresses the issue of “native speaker fallacy” on the part of international students toward their international peer tutors in writing centers. This shortfall in literature about the perception of international students toward international peer writing tutors is what made the context of this study. This study focused on finding out if “native speaker fallacy” is prevalent among international students visiting the writing centers. Also, if this belief is found to be present through this study, then to what extent does it exist and how intense is this fallacy.
PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

The term “native speaker fallacy”, coined by Robert Phillipson (1992), is the false belief that exists in the field of language education that only native speakers of English can be ideal teachers of the language. Phillipson (1992) refutes the idea of only native speaker being the ideal teacher and notes that teachers “are made rather than born, many of them doubtless self-made, whether teachers are natives or non-natives” (p.194). Since then, much research has been done debating the issue of native speaker fallacy to prove whether or not nativism plays any part in the teaching competence of teachers. Although much research shows that language ability and language teaching or tutoring competence has no correlation with nativism (Asano, 2008; Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002), and, in fact, nonnative English-speaking teachers may have a better understanding about second language teaching due to their own language learning experiences (Crusan et al, 2016; Widdowson, 1994 ), the most recent studies such as the one conducted by Xuan Zheng (2017) show that native speaker fallacy is still a very common concept in the field of education. While it is easy to think that international students who grew up learning English as a second language would be more comfortable in working with people who have been through similar language learning journeys, this is sadly not the case. In fact, native speaker fallacy is a very strong and prominent belief in countries where English is not the first
language or among students who speak English as their second, third, or foreign language (Zheng, 2017; Canagarajah, 1999; Thomas, 1999). People in non-English-speaking countries have a misunderstanding that only native speakers of English have the capability of teaching English to others.

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this study was to find out if native speaker fallacy is a common phenomenon in the realm of writing centers, and if this bias is a prevalent one, does it make international students resist in working with international peer tutors who speak a different first language other than English. One important factor in this study was to find out how international students decide if a writing peer tutor is international or, more specifically, nonnative speaker of English: does the skin color of the tutor make the students think that the tutor is international? Does accent play a part when it comes to deciding if the tutor is a native speaker or not? Does the cultural or religious attire of the tutor play a role in making the students think that the tutor is international, or is it simply the non-Anglo American name of the tutor that lead to this misconception on the students’ part? Nuzhat Amin’s (1997) study and observations of non-Anglo American educators and language influencers like Jacinta Thomas (1999) and Roxana Ng (1995) have found and stated that students, especially English language learners, have a tendency to associate a teacher’s skin color or appearance to their nativity or foreignness; somebody who is white is by default considered to be a native speaker of English and vice versa for people of other races (Amin, 1997, p.81). Similarly, unfamiliar accent of teachers has been associated with foreignness (Jacobs & Friedman, 1988) and have in turn received comparatively bad rating during teacher evaluations by students (Zheng, 2017; Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002); the perception of good teaching on the students’ part depends
on how the teachers look and sound. Hence, this study aimed at finding out if the same is true in the writing center context as well, and if international students make a judgement about the tutors’ native or nonnativeseness based on these factors.

To fulfill the goal of this study, the following research questions were designed which served the purpose of an effective tool in keeping the focus of the study and also acted as a guideline on what type of data needed to be collected and how the information had to be interpreted to bring the research objective into fruition.

1. What is the common understanding of international students toward writing centers?
2. How helpful do international students think writing centers are?
3. Do international students think that their fellow international peers (nonnative speakers of English) are linguistically incompetent when it comes to speaking and writing in English?
4. How do international students decide if a peer tutor is international?
   - Does the non-American appearance of the tutors have an influence on their thought process?
   - Does the non-nativelike accent of the tutors make the students think that a tutor is international?
   - Do the non-American names of the tutors have an impact on their decision?
5. Do international students resist in working with international peer tutors because they believe that the tutors’ nonnative English speaker status make them incompetent writing tutors?
The research questions were designed using the scaffolding method in which the study looked to find the answers in progression and eventually come to a conclusion. The first three research questions sought to understand the international students’ perception about the language abilities of native/nonnative speakers of English and also to apprehend their thoughts on writing center services (in general). The last two aimed at finding out if the students make an association of certain manifested factors with foreignness and hence classify international peer tutors to be an ineffective source of English writing tutoring.
METHODOLOGY

Data Collection:

To find out the answers to the research questions, this study took a mixed method approach. In order to collect the quantitative data, an online survey was designed and sent out to six midwestern universities. The questionnaire consisted of Likert scales, multiple choice questions, and one-word answers. The questionnaire also consisted of comment boxes where the respondents could explain their objective choice if they wanted to. The survey was publicized through word-of-mouth, emails, and social networking platforms like Facebook and Whatsapp. In addition to the questions, the survey had an option of a voluntary follow-up interview for the qualitative part of the research. The participants had the liberty to opt out of that option. Nonetheless, the respondents who did want to volunteer were asked to leave their email address before exiting the survey. Although the survey was sent out to six different universities, only 70 students responded to the survey.

For the qualitative part of the research, a good portion of the data was recruited from the comment section of the survey where international students had reflected on their objective answers. Further qualitative data was collected via interview; the interview questions were constructed based on the data from the survey and it was done for two major reasons: for further clarification of some of the collected data and to trivialize contradictory
information. A number of respondents who volunteered for the interview were given a choice between taking a conversational-style email or phone interview; the interview was then conducted via their preferred media of communication. Besides interviewing the international students, a number of writing center officials from across the midwestern region were interviewed to increase the reliability of the data. The data collected from the officials’ interviews was compared to the data collected from the student interviews to find out if the two sets of data were in consensus.

**Data Analysis:**

To analyze the quantitative data, a descriptive statistical analysis has been used. In other words, the data has been analyzed based on the number or percentage response of the items in question. This method of analysis helped to find out if the perception of international students toward the international tutors are influenced by variables like skin-color, accent, attire, or any other manifested variable. In other words, this method informed the study if there are any statistical relationships between the variable factors and international student perception toward international peer tutors. With the statistics on these relationships, this study was able to obtain valuable information on how students associate tangible factors with nonnative English-speaker status.

To analyze the qualitative data, the grounded theory methodology has been used. Grounded theory is an inductive methodology in which a theory is constructed based on the systematic collection and analysis of data; to be more specific, it is an approach that helps to conceptualize a theory by examining the collected data (Walsh et al, 2015). In this study, the portions of the interview that stood out the most have been emphasized on and analyzed: like the recurrent themes throughout the interviews. These themes included
similarities in how international students define the traits of an international tutor, their perception toward English language skills of international students in general, and more. The portions of interviews that were most relevant and helped the study to come to a conclusion have been presented.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative

To understand if the international students are familiar with the concept of writing centers and to find out the answers to the first two research questions, students were asked three basic questions during the survey out of which two were in the form of Likert scale and one in the form of yes/no answer. The data collected from the responses to these questions shows a rather interesting result. To respond to the first of the three questions, “do you have writing centers in your home country?”, 35.71% of the participants chose “Yes”, 28.57% answered with a “No”, and the remaining 35.71% of the respondents said that they were “Not Sure.”

Table 1: Student response on the existence of writing centers in their countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses in Percentage</th>
<th>Responses in Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A conflict in data is seen in the data that has been collected; participants who shared citizenship of the same countries (collected from the demographic information section filled out by the surveyees) provided contradictory answers about the existence of writing centers in their countries. For instance, a number of students from China said that they do
have writing centers in their country, while some other Chinese students said they do not have writing centers in their country; the remaining number admitted that they were not sure if they have any. This contradictory data is not limited to only the Chinese population; students from Saudi Arabia, India, and some other countries provided equally contradictory information. This conflicting result indicates that the concept of writing centers is still a very new idea in most of the countries around the world. Also, if the writing centers do exist in some of these countries, they are not quite as popular among students yet. Hence, the students are unaware of the existence of writing centers and thus provided contradictory data.

In answering the next two survey questions, which were designed to inquire the participants’ experience of visiting a writing center in their home country prior to coming to the United States (Table 2) and their writing center experience after they had visited a writing center in the United States (Table 3), the following results were obtained.

**Table 2: Student rating on writing center visits in their home country.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you have visited writing centers in your home country, please rate your experience. If you did not visit writing centers in your home country, choose the “N/A” option.</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Okay</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Unproductive</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>5.71%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>74.29%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Student rating on writing center visits in the US.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you have visited writing centers in the US, please rate your experience. If you have not visited a writing center in the US as of yet, choose the “N/A” option.</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Okay</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Unproductive</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.71%</td>
<td>31.43%</td>
<td>11.43%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>41.43%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the respondents gave a negative rating—“poor or “unproductive”—to writing centers in either of the contexts (their home country and the US), which shows that they believe that writing centers deliver effective services. However, one interesting difference in the percentage response for the two contexts was found that gave the study an in-depth understanding of international students’ perception about writing center services. From the 70 students who took the survey, 74.29% opted for the “N/A” option that was provided as one of the choices for the participants who have not visited writing centers in their home country. However, when asked to rate their experience for peer-tutoring sessions in the US-writing centers, only 41.43% of the respondents chose the “N/A” option as they have not been to an US-writing center yet. This drastic change in percentage shows that a vast majority of students have never visited writing centers prior to coming to the US. However, a lot of them have used the services of writing centers after coming to the US. This piece of information, although may sound trivial, serves a great purpose in understanding what international students perceive writing centers to be and what their services are. This data serves as an evidence that students usually have minimal idea about the functionality and services of writing centers before coming to the US. Now,
the question that arises is that: Do international students really understand the purpose of the writing center, or are they treating writing centers like remedial centers?

Writing center advocates like Stephen North (1984), Muriel Harris (1990), Suzanne Powers (1991), and countless others have time and again talked about the misconceptions that people have toward the services that writing centers offer. Although writing centers’ goal is to provide content level help to tutees, commonly known as higher order concerns, with providing the least possible focus on form—the lower order concerns (Murphy & Law, 1995), the misconception that writing centers are editing centers still seem to persist in some way or the other depending on the audience. With the exponential growth of writing centers in the last decade or two, and more and more experts speaking out about the functionality and services of writing centers, this misconception has changed drastically in the US. The change in misconception has been observed by the number of instructors that are asking their students to seek help on higher order concerns from writing centers either by visiting one or talking to the embedded writing tutor that the teacher has recruited from the writing center (Write Place, 2017; Writing and Study Skills Center, 2017; The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, 2017).

However, the international students do not seem to share this changing view. These cohorts of students tend to visit writing centers mostly for sentence level help and occasionally refer to the writing centers as “ESL Centers” where they expect to find help regarding grammar (Hall, 2013). The reason why this information is vital to this study is that it helps to show how the international students’ misperception of the writing center services is negatively affecting the writing center field. As data and sources show, the concept of writing centers is very new to the international students, which is making them
treat these centers as remedial services. Unaware of the true purpose of writing centers, which is to achieve an environment where the tutors and the tutees can engage in a healthy conversation about their writing and the writing process in general, the students are wrongfully equating English proficiency of the tutors with English writing-tutoring competence. This fallacy at the international students’ part is most likely the reason why they opt for working with a native speaker of English and resist to work with international- nonnative English-speaking-- peer tutors. Since these students parallel English proficiency with tutoring skills, they believe native English-speaking tutors are a better fit in helping them improve their English and English writing. Although English proficiency has very little to do with academic (Commins & Miramontes, 2006) or tutoring competence, international students are inclined to think otherwise.

To find out the answer to the third research question which focuses on finding out the perception that international students hold about their fellow international peers’ (who are nonnative speakers of English) English competency, participants were prompted to answer from some Likert scale-type statements. Some of the statements within the scale were designed to function as distractors (see APPENDIX A) in order to eradicate any chances of biased answers; only the statements that were relevant to the study were analyzed. Among the statements that were relevant to the study, some blatantly addressed the terms native and nonnative speakers of English and asked the participants to state their opinion about the English language competence of each of the groups. Out of the 70 respondents, 68 responded to the statement that was designed to find out the presence of native speaker fallacy; sadly, a 16.18% of them strongly agreed and 27.94% of them agreed
that native speakers of English are more competent in the language than someone who speaks English as their second/other language (see table 4).

Table 4: Student response on native speaker competence compared with nonnative speakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native Speakers of English are more competent in the language than someone who speaks English as their second language.</td>
<td>16.18%</td>
<td>27.94%</td>
<td>30.88%</td>
<td>19.12%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hypothesis of this study begins to take the shape of a concrete theory from this point onwards. The results clearly illustrate that a significant number of international students believe that their fellow international peers are not as competent in English as their domestic peers. Almost half the number of the students surveyed, 44.12%, either agreed or strongly agreed that native speakers of English are more proficient in the language than nonnative speakers of English. The results obtained from this survey question shows a clear presence of native speaker fallacy among international students.

In responding to the rest of the Likert-scale type statements relevant to the study, two more participants chose to skip the question--bringing the number of participants down to 66; these remaining participants disclosed their preference in collaborating with members of each of the two groups during their writing center visits. 46.97% of the respondents strongly agreed and 33.33% of the respondents agreed that they would prefer to collaborate with a native speaker of English when they utilize writing center services. Nonetheless, none of the participants disagreed with the idea of collaborating with a native speaker of English during their writing center visits. However, the survey took an
interesting turn when the participants voted for their preference in collaborating with a nonnative speaker of English in writing centers; only 13.64% of the surveyed student population strongly agreed that they would like to collaborate with nonnative speakers, and a surprising 13.64% voted against such collaboration—showing their lack of interest in working with nonnative speakers of English (see Table 5).

Table 5: Students’ interest in peer-collaboration with native speaker and nonnative speaker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native speaker of English</td>
<td>46.97%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>19.70%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-native speaker of English</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>25.76%</td>
<td>46.97%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results from these survey statements further support that international students feel that their fellow international peers are linguistically incompetent in spoken and written English. Over four-fifth of the students (46.97% + 33.33%) showed interest in collaborating with a native speaker of English with 0% disagreeing to work with the natives. Meanwhile, 13.64% disagreed in working with the nonnative English-speaking group. The mere fact that not a single respondent disagreed to collaborate with a native speaker, but a good number of respondents disagreed in collaborating with a nonnative speaker shows the distinct presence of native speaker fallacy among international students where they believe nonnative speakers of English are incompetent in the language.

To answer the last two research questions, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were applied. These questions were designed to ideally come to a conclusion about international students’ perception toward the international peer tutors in writing
centers. To collect the quantitative data for these research questions, participants were once again asked to rate their preference on a five-point Likert scale in working with international peer tutors in writing centers. Three individual statements addressed the subject matter. One of the statements was formulated to find out if international students were interested in working with international peer tutors. The other two statements focused on finding out if they associate any manifested factor with the phrase “international peer tutor”, and if their decision of not working with international peer tutors have any relation with these manifested factors. In these statements, participants were asked to state their preference in working with international peer tutors who speak the same first language as they do and the tutors who are from the same ethnicity as they are.

Out of the 66 respondents of the question, 6.06%, disagreed to work with an international peer tutor. The number of participants dropped to 65 when answering if they wanted to work with someone who spoke the same first language as they did; 10.77% disagreed and 1.54% strongly disagreed in working with international peer tutors who speak the same first language as they do. A further drop in participants was seen when they were asked to state their preference in working with international peer tutors who were from the same ethnicity as they are. 64 participants responded to this question in which 9.38% disagreed and 6.25% strongly disagreed in working with international peer tutors who share the same ethnicity as them.
Table 6: Students’ interest in working with different groups of peer tutors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An international peer tutor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.70%</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
<td>42.42%</td>
<td>6.06%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An international peer tutor who speaks the same first language as you do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.23%</td>
<td>26.15%</td>
<td>32.31%</td>
<td>10.77%</td>
<td>1.54%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A tutor who is from the same ethnicity as you are</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.06%</td>
<td>26.56%</td>
<td>43.75%</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information from this quantitative portion of the study shows evidence of native speaker fallacy, but at varying levels. While the percentage of international students resisting to work with “international peer tutors” is comparatively low, the resistance increases on the basis of the tutors’ ethnicity or the first language they speak. Fewer students responded negatively when the term “international peer tutor” was used, but the number increased as soon as the term was elaborated to describe two specific variables. This finding is an informative one for this study in that it allows the study to understand the factors that international students associate with nonnattiveness.

Furthermore, it is also interesting to find that none of the students chose the “strongly disagree” option on the Likert scale when they were asked to note their preference in working with international students in general but opted for the “strongly disagree” option when the category of international students were further elaborated to “an international tutor who speaks the same first language as you do” and “an international tutor who is from the same ethnicity as you are.” This specificity in choice at the international students’ part hints toward the existence of multiple factors that students
associate with nonnatives which, as a result, lead to native speaker fallacy. To be able to understand the factors more in-depth and to increase the reliability of the finding, the study looked into the qualitative data.

Qualitative

The qualitative data were extracted from the comments-section of the survey and from the one-to-one international students’ and writing center officials’ interviews. The combined data from the quantitative and qualitative parts aid the study to determine if native speaker fallacy is the reason why international students resist in working with international peer tutors. The combined data also inform the study about any particular bias that is stimulated by manifested factors. The comments collected from the survey and the information collected from the interviews are displayed in separate tables below.

Survey

Table 7: Students’ voluntary comments displaying their (negative) views on nonnative English speakers.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“Though both native and non-native speakers would equally be good at usage of language but being an international student I would be more comfortable to work with a native speaker.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>“... there are many levels of language competency, especially when it comes to Writing Centers. For example, a native English speaker who is a writing tutor and a freshman will be less helpful than a non-native graduate student.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>“I am more willing to work with native English speakers just because I’m studying abroad in the US, so more or less, I think a Native English speaker can be more trusted in terms of improving my English skills”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>“It depends on when did the non-native tutor first learned English, the earlier, the better.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>“Native speakers are good at language, but they are poor at grammar.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While some of the comments like “I am more willing to work with native English speakers . . . Native English speaker can be more trusted . . .” and “. . . being an international student I would be more comfortable to work with a native speaker” left by the survey respondents plainly read that they would choose a domestic peer tutor over an international one because of the international tutors’ nonnative English speaker status, other comments were more obscure. Whereas the aforementioned comments clearly state that, to these students, native speakers of English are more trustworthy when it comes to assistance with language, comments like “. . . a native English speaker who is a writing tutor and a freshman will be less helpful than a non-native graduate student” at first glance look like a positive comment, but when examined closely displays the clear presence of a native speaker fallacy; this comment compares a graduate nonnative English-speaking tutor with a native English-speaking freshman. The problem with this comment is that the commenter is drawing a parallel between two tutors who are at very different educational levels--the nonnative speaker being at the higher end of the level. This comparison innately leads to the inference that a graduate native English-speaking tutor would be a better writing tutor than the graduate nonnative English-speaking tutor. Thus, the student is subtly portraying native speaker fallacy.

**Interviews**

From the student- and writing center official-interviews a set of interesting statements were noted. When the students were asked about their preference on who they would want to work with during their writing center visits, all student interviewees were in accord in saying that they would choose a native speaker of English over a nonnative one. When a similar question was asked of the writing center officials, most of them stated at
least one instance where international students denied working with an international peer tutor.

On asking the interviewed international students about how they decide if a tutor is international, they responded by stating the manifested factors like:

Table 8: Student comments on how they decide if a tutor is international.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“By how they look.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>“By their color.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>“By their accent.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>“By their appearance.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>“By their names.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To increase the reliability of the data, writing center officials were also asked a similar question. The information collected from these interviews showed consensus with the students’ answers on how international students decide if a peer tutor is international. All of the interviewed officials were in agreement with at least one of the physically manifested attributes that the students listed earlier (see Table 8). The writing center officials’ answers to “how international students decide if a peer tutor is international” are stated below:
Table 9: Writing center officials’ perspective on how international students associate manifested factors with nonnativeness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. “Accent.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. “During the greeting period of the writing session, we often hear of students questioning international status based on attire, accent, or name.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “I think they make visual judgements and also based on name... I did have a situation where a native student thought a native tutor was international because of name and I had to clarify.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students who took the interview were asked to name the factors by which they decide if a student is international, majority of them stated that they make the decision based on how the tutor looks. The remaining of the interviewees said that they decide the nationality of the tutor based on their names and/or accent. The writing center officials also stated similar tangible manifested factors such as appearance, name, accent, and attire by which students tend to decide if a tutor is international or not. Moreover, the officials have also stated that this association making of manifested factors and nationality is sometimes so acute at the international students’ part that they mistake domestic tutors as being international tutors and resist to work with them just because those tutors do not fit into the international students’ description of what a native English-speaking American looks or sounds like, or how their name reads or sounds. This finding is crucial to the study in that it helps the study to fully recognize the factors that international students link with nonnativeness of a tutor. This finding proves that international students resist working with international peer tutors not because the tutors perform poorly but because these students have a tendency to associate native English proficiency with skillful tutoring.

To see if international nonnative English-speaking peer tutors are equally effective tutors and to increase the authenticity of the subject in discussion, writing center directors were asked to answer a few additional questions. One of the questions directly addressed
the issue of effectiveness of international peer tutors: *Do international students perform at the same level as domestic students?* The answer to this question was found to be very positive. All of the interviewed officials agreed that the international peer tutors are equally skilled tutors as their native/domestic counterparts, which is apparent from the collected comments:

**Table 10:** Writing center officials’ comments on the effectiveness of international peer tutors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>From my experience, yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>“I believe they do from their writing sample, my test paper that I give in the interview, and from my observations.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>“Yes, our international students have always performed just as well as the domestic tutors, often bringing an expertise in grammar issues and language that the domestic tutors learn from.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A follow-up question that indirectly addressed native speaker fallacy was extended toward the writing center officials: *“Do you think nationality of a tutor can lead to resistance on the part of the students in working with them?”*

Some of the answers to this question included, but were not limited to:
Table 11: Writing center officials’ comments on how nationality of international peer tutors can lead to native speaker fallacy.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“Yes, because they might assume that English is not their first or stronger language and thus might overlook some issues in the paper.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>“I have not seen this in my center, although I suppose it is possible.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This piece of information proves that it is not the ineffectiveness of the international tutors due to which the international students resist in working with these tutors, it is actually because of the preconceived notion that the students have toward the nonnative speakers of English. The international students believe that anyone who is not born into an English-speaking country lacks the competence to become an English tutor, or in this case English writing tutor.

On asking the students as to why they would not consider working with international peer tutors, answers like the following were received:

Table 12: Students’ comments on why they hesitate to work with international peer tutors.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“I have worked with many nonnative speakers of English during my bachelor’s back in my home country, and I do not think any of them were as good in English as the native speakers in the US.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>“The perception of my own limited abilities [of the language] would make me avoid working with someone who is also an international student.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>“Due to ‘pride’ or ‘ego’.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>“Competition among people of same ethnicity.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the most important, yet the most unexpected, information acquired from this interview question revealed a rather unanticipated phenomenon that has been long present but has been unnoticed in the native-nonnative speaker debate. The international students who took the interview showed two discrete kinds of reactions to nonnative speakers of English as well as international peer tutors, which made them fall into two separate groups and gave native speaker fallacy two different definitions. The common understanding of the phrase “native speaker fallacy” is that of the misconception that people have about native speakers of English being the ideal teachers of the language due to it being their first language (Phillipson, 1992). While one group of international students in this study seemed to fit into the category of the people who resonated with the already established definition, the other group of international students exhibited a different yet another fallacious belief—this fallacy has little correlation with the traditional definition but is linked more to the cognition that the students have of their own linguistic ability.

This cohort of students who did not fit into the traditional definition of native speaker fallacy were the ones who mentioned that they tend to resist in working with international tutors due to their own “pride” or “ego”. When this group of interviewees were asked to elaborate on their statement and to explain what they meant by “pride or ego taking over that lead to the resistance at their end”, their answer was rather interesting. They reported that they resist in working with international tutors not because they think that the nonnative English-speaking international tutors are incompetent in English but because they believe that even though they themselves are nonnative speakers of English, they are more proficient in the language than the international nonnative English-speaking
tutors. Hence, their ego takes over when they are asked to work with a tutor for whom English is not the first language.

This unanticipated reason of why these students choose not to work with nonnative speakers of English gave the study new insight into native speaker fallacy. This information also gave the study a new understanding of the thought process that some of the international students follow through when they resist to work with international peer tutors. To find out why this group of international students held such a belief, both the qualitative and quantitative data were reviewed again—in order to discover any kind of pattern that may have formed. Upon investigation, it was found that these students who had a strong belief that they were highly proficient in English language all belonged to the countries that fell into the Outer Circle of Kachru’s (1991) Model of World Englishes (see Figure 1 for details).

![Figure 1: Kachru’s Model of World Englishes (1991). The Inner Circle consists of native English-speaking countries; the Outer Circle consists of the countries that were victim to the imperial expansion of Britain; the Expanded Circle consists of countries where English did not have any historical role but is used as a means of international communication.](image-url)
The Outer Circle of Kachru’s (1991) Model of world Englishes is occupied by the countries that were once British colonies. The role that English plays in these countries is remarkable. English is considered to be the language of prestige and students are introduced to the English language as soon as they enter school. Students are exposed to English from a very early age and are expected to become sequential bilinguals, with their native language being their first language and English mandatorily being their second language. The people of these countries believe English to be the only effective lingua franca, and thus use English as a tool to establish authority in both national and international platforms.

The international students from these countries have learned English all their lives and have acquired an unspoken pride in gaining proficiency in it. This cohort of students identify themselves as good English language users. Although they never claim to be native speakers of English, their “ego” is hurt when they have to ask for English language related help from native or nonnative speakers of English alike. For this reason, when these students walk into a writing center, they would rather ask for help from a native speaker of English who was born into the language than someone who learned the language the way they did. Their ego subconsciously fears that they would appear weak in front of another fellow nonnative English speaker if they ask for help from them. Thus, they show resistance in working with the international peer tutors. Their confidence, and almost arrogance, about their English language skills make them believe that a nonnative English-speaking international tutor would not be much of a help to them; hence, they opt for working with a domestic tutor, giving native speaker fallacy a new definition.
IMPLICATIONS

The results from this study have indicated the existence of two types of native speaker fallacies in the writing center setting. The first fallacy is congruent with Phillipson’s (1992) definition of native speaker fallacy in which people believe that only native speakers of English are ideal teachers of the language; the second fallacy, however, arises due to a certain group of people’s perceptions about their own competence in the English language. The group of language users from the Outer Circle of World Englishes (1991) who exhibit the second type of fallacy, despite being nonnative speakers of English, believe that they are very proficient in English language; yet, they would not readily trust another nonnative speaker of English to be competent in the language. Hence, this fallacy is not entirely a fallacy, but is rather originated from a discrepancy of a group of people; it is easy for this group to believe that they are good in English but when another nonnative speaker is involved, they quickly become skeptical. As this group of nonnative English language speakers belong to the Outer Circle (1991), this newly found fallacy can be termed as outer circle discrepancy.

This unexpected finding from the study opens up further research and discussion opportunities. Extensive studies can be conducted to see if this finding is true in educational settings that are outside of the writing center realm. Also, if this categorization of native speaker fallacy is found to be explicit in the field of education, it would be helpful to understand the intensity at which both the fallacies continue to exist. This finding could be
the start of understanding and seeing international students as individual and segregated groups with separate beliefs and ideologies rather than putting them under the umbrella term of international students who are thought to have similar academic and learning experiences. The new insight into the cognition of different groups of international students can also help educators and tutors in applying specialized teaching strategies and instructional approaches that can enhance the learning process for each of the groups.

Like all other studies, this study has its limitations. Since the results of this study is based on the data collected from midwestern universities, it cannot yet be definitively stated that the studied native speaker fallacy within the writing center realm is as prevalent in the other regions of the US as it is in the Midwest. To be able to generalize the theory, research on a larger scale has to be done. By acquiring a more in-depth understanding of the two fallacies in the writing center realm, experts can initiate discussions and create training programs for the tutors that would work toward preparing them on how to approach different groups of students during tutoring sessions. Also, this knowledge has the potential to generate a dialogue between writing center communities and classroom instructors on how they could work together to eliminate native speaker fallacies and make teaching, tutoring, and learning experiences better for everyone.
CONCLUSION

The study has found that international students show resistance in working with international peer tutors in writing centers. This resistance occurs due to the presence of either of the native speaker fallacies. The data also shows that the international students associate tangible factors like skin color, accent and name with nonnativesness which leads to resistance on their part in working with the international peer tutors. However, the major reason behind the presence of native speaker fallacy in the writing center setting is because of the misunderstanding that international students have about writing center services. These students wrongfully equate English proficiency with tutoring competence and that is where the misunderstanding comes in. They seem to be unaware of the true purpose of writing centers and that further feeds their fallacies.

Writing centers are not an editing service where students come to fix their grammar, but they are skills center that help students to become better thinkers and idea organizers, which in turn make them better writers. In other words, a writing center is basically the physical manifestation of the Burkean Parlor where two individuals come together to talk about ideas and writing (Lundsford, 1991). The tutors in writing centers help the writers to see their writing through the perspective of a reader by providing them with constructive feedback as the reader. This belief on the international students’ part that they need to work with native speakers of English as writing centers only provide help with lower order concerns is in itself flawed; if writing centers only provided sentence level help, domestic
students would not have used writing centers as they are native speakers of English themselves. Nonetheless, even if it comes down only to the language ability, the English used in academia—writing centers included, has nothing to do with native-nonnativeness. Standard written English is no one’s mother tongue (Elbow, 1999); everyone, domestic and international alike, are learners of standard written English. It is far different from the social English that the domestic tutors speak; then, how are the international nonnative speakers of English at a disadvantage here?

It is important that the international students are made aware of the writing center services and are educated against native speaker fallacy for their own success as students. Although it might be a time-consuming process, the only way to minimize native speaker fallacy and the misconception about writing centers is to take rigorous educational measures as soon as these students are enrolled into American institutions. Some measures that could reduce the impact of native speaker fallacy in the realm of writing centers could include: awareness programs like workshops, flyers, trainings, classroom talks, and orientation activities. These programs should be designed and conducted in a way that encompass and speak to students holding either of the native speaker fallacies. No matter which kind of native speaker fallacy they might come in with in an American institution, if the true purpose of writing centers can be communicated to the students, they would start seeing the value of peer-feedback. Once they begin to understand the value of one-on-one conferencing for content related purposes in writing centers, their bias against nonnative speakers of English would become lower and so would their resistance in working with this specific group of tutors.
REFERENCES


“The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill.” The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, writingcenter.unc.edu/.


“Write Place.” Write Place: University of Dayton, Ohio, www.udayton.edu/ltc/writeplace/.

“Writing and Study Skills Center.” University of Cincinnati, www.ucblueash.edu/students/services/labs/writing-center.html

APPENDIX A

Invitation to Participate in Research

Surveys and Interview

Please read the following page before participating.

Research Project Title: Perception of International Student Writers Toward International Student Tutors in Writing Centers

You have been invited to participate in a research project conducted by Romaisha Rahman from the Department of English, University of Dayton. If you are currently an international student studying in the US, you are requested to take following survey.

The purpose of the project is: To find out the perception of international students toward writing tutors in writing centers.

You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before proceeding with the survey.

• Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question and to stop participating at any time for any reason. Answering the questions will take about 7-10 minutes.

• You will not be given any compensation, monetary or other, for your participation.

• All the information that you provide in this survey will be kept confidential.
This online survey will not collect identifying information, but we cannot guarantee the security of the computer you use or the security of data transfer between that computer and our data collection point. We urge you to consider this carefully when responding to these questions.

• If you choose to do an optional follow-up interview, only the researcher and faculty advisor will have access to your identifying information. We will not share your name with anyone at any point of the research and will keep your information secure.

• You are ONLY eligible to participate if you are over the age of 18.

Please contact the following investigators with any questions or concerns:
Romaisha Rahman (researcher), rahmanr3@udayton.edu
Dr. Jennifer E. Haan (advisor), jhaan1@udayton.edu

If you feel you have been treated unfairly, or you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact Candise Powell, J.D., Chair of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Dayton, IRB@udayton.edu; Phone: (937) 229-3515.
APPENDIX B

Survey

1. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male
   - Non-binary

2. Which country are you from?
   

3. What is your native language?
   

4. What is your current level of education?
   

5. Do you have writing centers in your home country?
6. If you have visited writing centers in your home country, rate your experience below.
   If you did not visit writing centers in your home country, choose the "N/A" option.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Okay</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Unproductive</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Have you ever been to a writing center in the US?
   -If you have visited a writing center in the US, please rate your writing center experience below?
   -If you have not yet visited a writing center in the US, choose the option that says "N/A" and fill in the box below stating your perception about writing centers by either writing "helpful" or "unhelpful".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Okay</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Unproductive</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Do you think writing centers are "helpful" or "unhelpful"?


8. During a writing center visit, you would be more comfortable in working with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A male peer tutor</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A female peer tutor</td>
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<tr>
<td>An undergraduate peer tutor</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A graduate peer tutor</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native speaker of English</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-native speaker of English</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A domestic peer tutor</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An international peer tutor</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An international peer tutor who speaks the same first language as you do</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A tutor who is from the same ethnicity as you are</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A tutor who has a standard American accent</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A tutor who dresses like you</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Respond to the following statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native speakers of English are more competent in the language than someone who speaks English as their second language</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-native speakers of English can be equally proficient in the language as the native speakers</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native speakers of English have linguistic instinct (gut feeling) about the form (grammar, mechanics) and structure of the language</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-native speakers of English can also acquire &quot;linguistic instinct&quot; (gut feeling) over time by frequent usage of the language.</td>
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Please take a moment to explain your answers.

10. If you are interested in a follow up face-to-face, email, or phone interview, please leave your email address in the text box below. Your identity will be kept confidential.


APPENDIX C

Student Interview Questions

Students were interviewed based on their media of preference; those who preferred email interviews received a list of conversational style questions to which they responded via email; those who preferred phone interviews were called at their convenient times and interviewed in a conversation style discussion. Since the student interviews were conversational, some interviews were longer than the others. Additional questions were asked to some of the students based on the content of their response and their willingness in continuing the conversation. Some of the most important interview questions relevant to the study included, but were not limited to:

1. Who would you want to work with when visiting a writing center and why? :
   a. native speaker of English
   b. nonnative speaker of English

2. During a writing center visit, how would you decide if a tutor is an international (nonnative English-speaking) or a domestic (native English-speaking) tutor?

3. If you are given the names of a list of tutors who you can choose to work with, which tutor would you want to work with: a tutor whose name looks American, or a tutor chose name looks foreign or non-American?

4. Does the attire of a tutor influence your thought process in deciding if a tutor is international?
APPENDIX D

Interview Questions for Writing Center Officials

The writing center officials who volunteered to take the interview were either interviewed by a face-to-face discussion or via an asynchronous email conversation. The questions that were asked are listed below:

1. How often do you hire international students as tutors?

2. Do the international tutors perform at the same level as the domestic tutors?

3. Were there instances where you felt that students hesitate to work with international tutors?

4. Are you aware of any situation where an international student resisted to work with an international tutor? If so, were the student and the tutor of the same ethnicity or different?

5. Did you ever have to intervene during the scheduling of an appointment or in a session to build credibility for your international tutor in the eyes of the international writers/visitors?

6. Do you think nationality of the international tutor can lead to resistance on the part of the visitors in working with them?

7. How do you think students may find out if a student is international—color, name, accent, attire, or any other aspect?