

Discrimination Against Non-native English Speakers in the English Language Teaching Profession: Evidence from Internship Advertisements¹

Fateme Chahkandi², University of Birjand, Birjand, South Khorasan, Iran

Abstract

Despite the non-native English-speaking teachers' (NNESTs) movement, the literature documents widespread discrimination against NNESTs particularly in hiring discourse in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts. The present study aims to shed light on another aspect of this discrimination in EFL internship advertisements by investigating the ideal interns' qualifications and requirements as well as the characteristics of internship locations and fringe benefits attributed to the internship positions. To this aim, 13 international advertisements were chosen as the corpus of the study from the *Premier TEFL* website and were thematically analyzed. The results pointed to the native speaker fallacy in internship advertisements as all the programs required the candidates to be native speakers of inner-circle English-speaking countries or hold academic degrees from these locations. Additionally, a variety of selling strategies and marketing tactics such as the description of landscapes and outdoor activities along with a diversity of fringe benefits were utilized to attract native speakers. The results are discussed in the light of native speaker dominance in the profession and the ways to fight against this legacy. Finally, the paper ended with the implications the study has for various stakeholders including native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and NNESTs themselves.

Resumen

A pesar del movimiento de profesores no nativos de habla inglesa (NNEST, por sus siglas en inglés), la literatura documenta una discriminación generalizada contra los NNEST, particularmente en el discurso de contratación en contextos de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL, por sus siglas en inglés). El presente estudio tiene como objetivo arrojar luz sobre otro aspecto de esta discriminación en los anuncios de pasantías de EFL investigando las calificaciones y requisitos ideales de los pasantes, así como las características de los lugares de pasantías y los beneficios adicionales atribuidos a los puestos de pasantía. Con este objetivo, se eligieron 13 anuncios internacionales como el corpus del estudio del sitio web Premier TEFL y se analizaron temáticamente. Los resultados apuntaron a la falacia del hablante nativo en los anuncios de pasantías, ya que todos los programas exigían que los candidatos fueran hablantes nativos de países de habla inglesa del círculo íntimo o tuvieran títulos académicos de estos lugares. Además, se utilizaron una variedad de estrategias de venta y tácticas de marketing, como la descripción de paisajes y actividades al aire libre junto con una diversidad de beneficios adicionales para atraer a hablantes nativos. Los resultados se discuten a la luz del predominio de hablantes nativos en la profesión y las formas de luchar contra este legado. Finalmente, el artículo finaliza con las implicaciones que tiene el estudio para varias partes interesadas, incluidos los profesores nativos de inglés (NEST) y los propios NNEST.

Introduction

In an attempt to professionalize teaching and to help prospective teachers transform from student teachers to fully-functioning practitioners, many institutes around the globe are offering teaching internships. According to Cohen et al. (2013), the aims of such programs can be clustered under four headings: improving pre-service teachers' ability to teach and apply different teaching approaches, familiarizing pre-service teachers with the school environment, promoting their personal capabilities, and improving school and student achievement. As a result, these programs have such benefits as expanding interns' content and pedagogical skills, reflecting on their immediate career needs and professional growth, bridging theory to practice, and receiving hands-on practice in teaching demands and responsibilities (Cohen et al., 2013; Michos et al., 2022; Rupp & Becker, 2021; Selçuk & Yöntem, 2019; Ugalingan et al., 2021). Additionally, they encourage prospective teachers to develop and reshape their ongoing identities, harness their teaching and learning beliefs, and boost their enthusiasm, motivation, and self-efficacy (Klassen & Durksen, 2014; Michos et al., 2022; Nghia & Tai, 2017; Rupp & Becker, 2021; Salazar Noguera & McCluskey, 2017; Ugalingan et al., 2021).

Beside those advantages, international internships offer teacher candidates unique possibilities in that they present them with a platform to cultivate their intercultural communicative skills and work experience

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² f.chahkandi@birjand.ac.ir, 0000-0002-1015-6741

(Zhang, 2012). This is of particular significance considering that in language teaching internships, cultural understanding of the context in which the language is used is a necessary ingredient of interns' expert knowledge and professional growth (Veselova et al., 2021). Additionally, as Bryan and Sprague (1997) noted, international internships enhance opportunities for immediate job prospects after the internships and foster a favorable impression in the job interviews. They believe that emerging teachers with internship experience tend to have higher retention rates in teaching and have greater respect for student and cultural differences. Furthermore, they have greater resources and curriculum choices based on their overseas experience and can incorporate a variety of flexible and innovative strategies into their teaching.

Despite the assets that overseas internship experience offers, there is scant research documenting international Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) internships and the conditions and criteria required of interns for these internship programs. In particular, previous work has failed to address discrimination against non-native English speaking interns (NNESIs) in internship programs. A notable exception in this regard is Shin (2008) who examined the conditions of non-native English speaking teacher (NNEST) trainees who began teaching English as a second language (ESL) in Western countries. The non-native trainees in her study were perceived to be inadequate as they often lacked linguistic expertise and cultural knowledge associated with native English speaking teachers (NESTs). The rest of literature on TEFL internships has mainly focused on pre-service teachers' belief systems and identity formation (Cancino et al., 2020; Chang, 2018; Yazan, 2018; Yuan & Lee, 2016), challenges and opportunities of internship experiences (Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005; Ugalingan et al., 2021), and the role of internships in harnessing interns' language skills and cultural enrichment (Veselova et al., 2021). To the best knowledge of the researcher, this is the first study looking into discrimination against non-native candidates in internship advertisements.

The impetus behind this study is the call for new areas of investigation on the issues related to bias and discrimination against NNESTs by Moussu and Llurda (2008). This study aims to look into the advertisements for international TEFL internships and to investigate the requirements for eligible candidates and the working conditions attributed to the internship positions. It will be argued that the advertisements for interns in EFL/ESL contexts are discriminatory in that they favor NESIs over NNESIs thereby, substantiating the existence of the 'native speaker fallacy' (Phillipson, 1992) in intern recruitment discourse. Accordingly, it is important to consider the issue of discrimination in EFL/ESL internship discourse in the light of growing sentiments and realization of native speakerism and lack of professionalism in the field. It is believed that an analysis of this kind is essential in enhancing Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) stakeholders' understanding of the nature of discrimination prevalent in the field before any reactive measures can be taken to fight against this prejudice and to promote equity, justice and inclusion. As such, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What qualifications are required of the ideal interns in the internship advertisements?
2. What descriptions are provided of the internship locations?
3. What perks and fringe benefits are offered to prospective interns in the advertisements?

Review of Literature

The importance of internship

An internship is a valuable introductory position that sets the scene for induction into the profession and prepares the candidates to become fully-fledged practitioners. It provides students with rich opportunities that far exceed those offered merely through classroom teaching. Sanahuja Vélez and Ribes Giner (2015) identify the merits of internship programs as the improvement of skills and competencies, the enhancement of employment opportunities, and positive effects on career exploration. Regarding the first benefit, enhancing skills and competencies, the increased opportunities for interpersonal communication and language use help student teachers hone their language skills, learning strategies, and self-regulated learning style (Brown, 2014; He & Qin, 2017; Veselova et al., 2021; Wu, 2017). By way of illustration, language internship programs have been shown to provide a framework for students to critically reflect on their experience, take the ownership of their own learning, and make more progress (Wu, 2017). Furthermore, exposure to authentic daily experiences in the host culture helps students become familiar with the workplace culture and develop cross-cultural understanding (He & Qin, 2017; Veselova et al., 2021; Wu, 2017; Zhang, 2012).

Concerning the second benefit, the enhancement of employment opportunities, participating in internships maximizes candidates' employability and career options (He & Qin, 2017; Sanahuja Vélez & Ribes Giner,

2015; Veselova et al., 2021; Weible & McClure, 2011). Moreover, data from business and marketing field demonstrate that students who take internship programs, both in EFL settings and in other fields, can receive higher wage offers (Gault et al., 2010; Klein & Weiss, 2011; Margaryan et al., 2022; Weible & McClure, 2011) and tend to experience more job satisfaction (Knouse & Fontenot, 2008). Student teachers with internship experience have also been shown to remain in the profession for longer periods, as such, increasing teacher retention (Bryan & Sprague, 1997; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Finally, considering the effect of internships on career exploration, previous studies point out that internships allow candidates to navigate the workspace and gain more familiarity with career paths (Robinson et al., 2016; Sanahuja Vélez & Ribes Giner, 2015). Moreover, they are influential in setting realistic expectations when interns experience mismatches between the unrealistic expectations they have about the target profession and the reality they experience in the workplace (Knouse & Fontenot, 2008; Robinson et al., 2016).

The internship programs also have benefits for employers. The availability of temporary, inexpensive, and qualified staff can enhance the institute with their fresh perspectives (Divine et al., 2007; Gault et al., 2010; Swanson & Tomkovick, 2012; Wu, 2017) and recruitment costs can also be cut by hiring directly from among the interns. Viewed from this perspective, internships establish ties between academic institutions and the community or business (Divine et al., 2007; Sanahuja Vélez & Ribes Giner, 2015; Swanson & Tomkovick, 2012). There are positive outcomes for higher education institutes as well. Firstly, cumulative findings from previous research suggest that institutions can enjoy a positive reputation and increased visibility (Divine, et al., 2007; Weible & McClure, 2011) and find additional fund-raising opportunities (Gault et al., 2010; Weible & McClure, 2011). Secondly, academic institutes can use recruitment as a tool to attract students (Divine et al., 2007; Gault et al., 2010; Weible & McClure, 2011). Students who come home from an internship opportunity abroad tend to maintain the intercultural experience and skills they have acquired and apply them in their home country (Back et al., 2021) which further benefits their universities. Thirdly, a target situation analysis can also have implications for curriculum development and assessment (Divine et al., 2007).

That being said about the significance of internships, there is scant literature on the application criteria and qualifications required of intern candidates in EFL/ESL settings and the working conditions and benefits associated with those positions. In addition, the issue of discrimination in TEFL advertisements for internships has not been carried out directly by prior research.

Discrimination in TESOL

The NNEST movement was first introduced to make ELT an equitable profession by raising the status of NNESTs around the globe and enhancing the practice of professionalism, collaboration, justice, inclusion, and democracy (Braine, 2013). Its goal was to institutionalize multilingualism, multiethnicism, and multiculturalism as the core of the discourse and everyday practice of TESOL (Selvi, 2014). However, despite such initiatives and movements, ELT still suffers from native speaker hegemony and there exists widespread prejudice against NNESTs. A multitude of studies have been conducted documenting native speakerism in employment discourse in an array of different contexts. For instance, Selvi (2010) examined the criteria considered for the employment of ELT teachers in job advertisements located at the TESOL career center (<https://careers.tesol.org>) and Dave's ESL Café (<https://www.eslcafe.com>). In a similar study, Mahboob and Golden (2013) conducted a study on the job openings in East Asia and the Middle East. Ruecker and Ives (2015) analyzed the discourse and imagery of job ads posted on professional websites in Southeast Asia. Likewise, Rivers (2016) looked into employment advertisements in the Japanese higher education context. Among more recent studies, Alshammari (2021) investigated calls for English teachers as represented in Saudi Arabian advertisements. Quite similarly, Mackenzie (2021) investigated the job openings for English language teachers in Colombia.

The collective evidence from all these studies points to the fact that native speakerism is a phenomenon manifested in several aspects of ideal candidates' requirements. First, native or native-like proficiency was specified as the topmost criterion and as the primary qualification and certification for proficiency in English in most environments (Alshammari, 2021; Mackenzie, 2021; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Rivers, 2016; Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Selvi, 2010). Consequently, it can be stated that the ELT profession is under the dominance of the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992), and NESTs are considered as proficiency benchmarks, ideal language models, and superior teachers (Kiczkowiak, 2020; Selvi, 2010).

Second, in addition to native speaker standard (Alshammari, 2021), discrimination against NNESTs was practiced based on applicants' race and age, as well as the place where they lived or received their academic degrees which was assumed to be from inner-circle countries (Alshammari, 2021; Mackenzie, 2021;

Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Rivers, 2016; Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Selvi, 2010). Regarding racial discrimination, the ideal teacher candidate was associated with the default image of a young, fresh, white, and western-looking individual from the inner-circle countries³. That being so, there seems to be a shift from hiring native speakers to hiring white speakers from English-speaking countries including US, the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and South Africa in the job openings (Mahboob, 2007; Mahboob & Golden, 2013). Third, the recruiting agencies utilized a diversity of marketing strategies to attract NESTs. The strategies ranged from the description of landscapes and adventures in exotic countries to the allocation of fringe benefits like the provision of materials and curricula, and the availability of local teachers to assist NESTs to cope with the demands of teaching in a foreign country (Ruecker & Ives, 2015).

Fourth, in most settings, there was no requirement for prior teaching experience or relevant educational qualifications for NESTs; rather a bachelor's degree in any field was more acceptable than the ESL certificates (Alshammari, 2021; Mackenzie, 2021; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Rivers, 2016; Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Selvi, 2010). This situation led Ruecker and Ives (2015) to argue that the opportunities to teach language professionally were considered secondary to the opportunities to make money and have fun with adventures in the exotic cultures.

Overall, the studies highlighted above point to "an undemocratic and unethical employment landscape in the English language teaching profession" (Selvi, 2010, p. 172). The studies also reported evidence that most of the selection criteria for ideal applicants resided in factors that had no clear relevance to ELT (Mahboob & Golden, 2013). In fact, the great importance attached to the 'native speaker brand' (Holliday, 2005) in the recruitment advertisements marginalizes NNESTs despite their higher qualifications. It also serves to universalize NESTs' interests and values in the TESOL circle (Phillipson, 2016). Additionally, it contributes to keeping the profitable market for ELT materials and language 'experts' from inner circle countries considering that NESTs are viewed as proficiency benchmarks and norms for developing ELT materials as well as model teachers according to Phillipson (2016).

While there is a growing body of literature on NEST/NNEST prejudice in recruitment advertisements, the issue has not been tackled in internship programs. Therefore, the present study will probe the requirements demanded of intern candidates in TEFL internship programs.

Methodology

Corpus and data collection

The corpus was built using a series of search terms on *Google* which would be commonly utilized by individuals seeking internship openings. The key terms included *international internship*, *TEFL internship*, *EFL/ ESL intern*, and other combinations of the key terms. Our initial searches led us to one significant repository for internship advertisements namely, *Premier TEFL* (<https://premiertefl.com/internships>). *Premier TEFL* is a venue for TEFL advertisements in different areas including TEFL courses, employment openings for teaching English online, on-campus vacancies, webinars, blogs, and free resources for English teachers. In one section, the website hosts advertisements related to different internship programs in Asia, Europe, and South America.

The corpus of the present study included 13 advertisements for internship positions collected from the *Premier TEFL* website. The advertisements included in the analysis were the only ones published on the website at the time of the study and the same ads are renewed for the upcoming years. Accordingly, there was no possibility of collecting further advertisements. Additionally, in order to avoid duplicate messages, make comparisons between the countries possible, and rule out the possibility of the websites' different approaches in presenting advertisements (e.g., paid vs. unpaid advertisements) (Mahboob & Golden, 2013), it was decided to select the advertisements from a single source. The internship openings were related to a diversity of countries such as Korea, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Germany, Romania, Spain, Poland, Argentina, and Colombia. The positions were all paid and lasted from four weeks to a year. The language of the advertisements was English, which suggests that they targeted an international audience.

Each advertisement on the website contained several sections. On top of the page, some pictures were displayed depicting the interns sight-seeing in the country's beautiful landscapes and the scenes of happy teachers surrounded by cheerful children. Next, an overview of the position was provided which often consisted of a description of the landscapes and recreational activities in the internship location expressed

³ The term "inner-circle countries" has its origin with the categorization of English-speaking countries identified by Kachru (1986) and referred to in many other recent articles (Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Rivers, 2016; Ruecker & Ives, 2015).

with an encouraging tone. Then, some of the advantages of the program including the amenities and fringe benefits were presented. The next section gave an outline of the trip itinerary and the orientation program from the first to the last day of the internship. In the following part, there was a table with three columns: what's included, what's required before applying, and what do I need to organize? The first column listed the benefits of the position once again in brief, the second detailed the requirements and qualifications demanded of the intern candidates, and the third defined travel preparations and prerequisites including the health check, visa, police check, insurance, and budget. The bottom of the page also showed stories of past interns with more examples of cultural recursions including food, neighborhood, and activities. Appendix 1 presents a screenshot of the ad from South Korea.

Procedure and data analysis

The purpose of the current study was to document discrimination against NNEST prevalent in internship advertisements. In so doing, the methodological procedures developed in other studies on discrimination against NNEST in the job recruitment discourse were utilized to inform the data collection and analysis in this study (Alshammari, 2021; Mackenzie, 2021; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Selvi, 2010). As such, all the internship advertisements (N=13) published on *Premier TEFL* were collected for the purpose of this study. As stated earlier, the advertisements included in the database were selected from a single source to make comparisons possible and to prevent websites' diverse approaches in presenting the advertisements. The advertisements were from 13 countries across Europe, Asia, and South America representing a diversity of internship contexts.

All the advertisements were saved electronically and categorized based on a list of topoi (Richardson, 2004; Wodak & Meyer 2009) described as "reservoirs of generalized key ideas from which specific statements or arguments can be generated." (Richardson, 2004, p. 230). The list of topoi was adopted from the literature on EFL/ESL teacher recruitment discourse including interns' qualifications and requirements, description of the location of the internship positions, and benefits and perks related to the positions. As a result, each ad was read and analyzed for the aforementioned topoi. While analyzing the ads for the main topoi, the researcher came up with some subcategories. The subcategories for the *qualifications and requirements* were characterized as *native speaker requirement*, *age requirement*, *academic requirement*, and *teaching requirement*. The *internship location* also included the subcategories of *extracurricular activities*, and *landscapes*. Finally, the topoi of *fringe benefits and perks* was categorized to *monthly stipend* and *other benefits*. Next, the coded advertisements were put in a table with several columns representing different information to allow for the comparisons of the advertisements and the identification of the main themes. Several re-readings were done to make sure that all the data had been included in the analysis and that no data were lost. To minimize the inconsistencies in data analysis and cater to the trustworthiness of the coding, a small portion of the data was independently coded by a second researcher, and the inconsistencies were resolved through discussion and negotiation. Appendix 2 describes the advertisements included in the corpus along with the topoi as represented in the advertisements.

Results and Discussion

The results in this section will be presented based on the topoi identified in the previous section including interns' qualifications and requirements, the internship locations, and fringe benefits and perks. The description of the subcategories for each topoi will be also presented along with the discussion of the results.

Interns' qualifications and requirements

Regarding the interns' qualifications and requirements, some frequent themes were identified. First, in all advertisements, nativeness was specified as a condition for application. The 'native English speaker' criterion was listed under the 'what's required before applying?' tab in all ads. While the specific countries which were counted as native were not identified, in some ads it was stipulated that the potential candidates should possess a passport from the USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia, or New Zealand implying that the aforementioned countries were considered as the native ones. Elsewhere, in an advertisement from Romania, nativeness was defined along these lines "EU passport holders who are native English speakers (UK/Ireland)" confirming that the countries listed were intended to be the native ones.

Second, the applicants were expected to be under 45 years of age in most advertisements evidencing age discrimination in internship positions. The European countries were more demanding in this regard requiring the candidates to be under 35. However, in Asian countries, the age limit was extended to 60.

Third, considering education requirements, high school certificates were found to be the most favorable degree requested in two thirds of advertisements, with the remaining accepting a bachelor's degree in any field. Besides educational degrees, nearly all of the ads asked for a TEFL certificate which could be obtained upon the completion of a 120-hour course of training and provided by the company advertising for the position on the internship campus. Finally, all ads specified that prior teaching experience was not a condition for recruitment.

The results reported here duplicate those on EFL teacher recruitment advertisements in that native speakerism was found to be the most common and vivid form of discrimination (Alshammari, 2021; Mackenzie, 2021; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Rivers, 2016; Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Selvi, 2010). However, unlike the literature on job advertisements in which native speaker prejudice was demonstrated in a portion of the advertisements, with no exception, all internship positions demanded the applicants to be native speakers. As such, one can witness a stronger manifestation of discrimination and bias in internship advertisements. Furthermore, it is evidenced that there is a move from just native speakers to speakers from inner-circle countries in the internship openings since the ideal interns were sought from a select number of countries of residence and citizenship. This is in keeping with the job recruitment advertisements where the prospective teachers were required to conform to the image of a young, white, Western-looking individual from inner-circle countries (Kiczkowiak 2020; Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013; Mahboob, 2007; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Rivers, 2016; Ruecker & Ives, 2015). This definition of native speaker discriminates not only against speakers from outer and expanding circle countries (Kachru, 1986), but also against those non-Western looking individuals from the inner circle.

Age discrimination was also "the most common explicitly stated form of discrimination" (Ruecker & Ives, 2015, p. 12), especially in European countries. In Asian countries, the age limit was raised, which may be due to native speakers' reluctance to opt for Asia, thereby pushing employers to be more permissive in this regard. These findings indicate that the internships in TEFL were discriminatory in that they were not concerned with providing all international students with an inclusive and equal opportunity to obtain work-related experience. Moreover, dissimilar to the aim of internships in other fields, the programs offered in TEFL did not contribute to students' receiving hands-on experience on theoretical concepts and teaching approaches. The reason for this contention comes from the fact that no previous relevant education in TEFL was required as stated in the requirement sections in the ads. Even, high school graduates with diplomas had the opportunity to apply for the positions, and the candidates could begin classroom teaching with only two weeks of training. Consequently, the internship positions promoted an environment of unprofessionalism as less priority was given to knowledge and pedagogical qualifications and more to native status.

It was indicated in this study that the purpose of the internships in TEFL was to spot the right native candidates which could serve as temporary or permanent teachers and with whom the recruiters could extend the employment contract. Additionally, during the internships, the NESIs could get more confidence and preparation for the realities of the class since research shows that many of the interns had idealistic assumptions and expectations about teaching before the internship (Hong, 2010). Accordingly, the rich and dynamic environment provided during internship years helped pre-service teachers to develop resilience and transform their idealistic identity into a realistic version (Nghia & Tai, 2017). The internship was also a huge benefit for honing interns' skills with and understanding of the local culture and context of teaching. This was of paramount significance in the view of the fact that EFL students' negative views on NESTs increase as a result of their insensitivity to students' local culture and context, their lack of understanding of students' needs and interests, and their difficulties developing interpersonal relationships with them (Han, 2005). More importantly, the institutes were able to benefit from the prestige attached to the presence of NESIs in their staffs.

Description of the internship locations

All the advertisements included an overview of the location of internship positions. A diversity of discursive tools and selling strategies were employed to reach the potential candidates and attract their attention. One such tool included the description of the landscapes and natural scenery which promised NESIs a fun and exciting stay. For example, an advertisement from Spain characterized the country along these lines "With teaching placements throughout Catalonia, this placement as a teaching assistant in English in Spain is an incredible adventure unlike any other. Teachers in Catalonia—the beautiful northeast of Spain—are able to visit the spectacular beaches of the Costa Dorado, Costa Barcelona and Costa Brava, as well as the nightlife of Barcelona or Terrassa. Not to mention sampling the local cuisine (such as 'pa amb tomàquet', i.e., bread

with tomato) in some of the best restaurants in the world.” (<https://premiertefl.com/internships/spain>). The second tool was related to the outdoor activities and fun events that NESIs could engage in during their internship programs in the exotic countries. Some details on the activities in Thailand Chiang Mai were described this way: “Whether bemusing golden Buddhas, bartering at night bazaars, or befriending elephants, TEFL internships in Chiang Mai, Thailand promise an experience unlike any other” (<https://premiertefl.com/internships/thailand-chiang-mai>).

Placement and teaching at local schools could take place from as early as the third day (but often after two weeks of training) and student teachers were expected to teach up to 25 hours per week. As a result, they could spend the rest of their time sightseeing and exploring the area. “After class, you can relax by the pool, get competitive at the ping pong table, or grab an ice-cold mango smoothie at the on-site Barn House restaurant.” (Ad from Chiang Mai, Thailand, <https://premiertefl.com/internships/thailand-chiang-mai>). The videos and pictures including those related to food, neighborhood, and extracurricular activities in conjunction with the stories of the past interns all provided extra means to depict the attractions of the countries and convince the candidates to take the journey. They mainly focused on the positive aspects of the experience and overlooked the realities and challenges of teaching as an intern or living in a new environment. At the beginning of one such video, an intern traveling to Vietnam described his story this way: “Don’t be afraid to try something different if you can.” (Paul’s Story in Vietnam, <https://premiertefl.com/blog/luck-irish-vietnam-meet-paul-cunningham>). In other words, teaching was considered a change of pace for the candidates and not something which required specialized knowledge and expertise.

The third persuasive tool was associated with the significant and substantial contributions that NESIs could make to students’ learning and making a better future for them. “TEFL teachers like YOU (emphasis in original) are key to a thriving future, in a chapter filled with economic growth, opportunity, and light” (Advertisement from Cambodia, <https://premiertefl.com/internships/cambodia-phnom-penh>).

As the fourth strategy, it was attempted to defuse interns’ anxiety and help them cope with the demands by highlighting students’ willingness to learn English and by leveling the challenges they may face. “Their collective desire to learn English makes it especially great for TEFL teachers. ... Teaching English abroad in Thailand is super-sized, and the highs come by the dozen.” (Ad from Thailand, <https://premiertefl.com/internships/thailand>). In another example, teaching English was described as a fun and effortless activity. “Through games, fun excursions, mini field trips, drama, music, and any other creative techniques you devise, you’ll be delivering lessons that will be the talking point of many campfire chats” (Ad from Germany, <https://premiertefl.com/internships/germany/?ptaff=520&campaign=job-ad>).

Elsewhere in South Korea, teaching English was outlined as having the interns land “in a TEFL teacher’s paradise in no time” (Ad from South Korea, <https://premiertefl.com/internships/south-korea/?ptaff=17>). Often, such advertisements provided an exaggerated and oversimplified view of what the interns needed to become fully functioning teachers. The ad from Cambodia illustrates this claim: “You’ll be confident to face any teaching situation after completing 120 hours of certified teacher training plus your live practice teaching during orientation” (<https://premiertefl.com/internships/cambodia-phnom-penh>). Finally, “informal constructions” (Ruecker & Ives, 2015, p. 14) and stimulating you-are-special and customer-friendly discourse were utilized at the end of the ads as the last winning marketing strategy. Examples include “Whatcha waiting for? These noodles aren’t going to slurp themselves!” (Ad from Vietnam, <https://premiertefl.com/internships/vietnam-semester>), or “TEFL in Germany demands a “thinking outside the box” mentality. And you’ve got it” (<https://premiertefl.com/internships/germany>).

The selling strategies and marketing tactics employed to encourage native speakers’ enthusiasm substantiate those reported by prior research (Lengeling & Pablo, 2012; Ruecker & Ives, 2015). Ruecker and Ives (2015) believe that such a business-customer discourse is, in fact, changing ELT into a “game” (p. 15) where a multitude of strategies are utilized to win the cash value associated with nativeness. Selvi (2010) also asserts that such attempts to hire native speakers in the ELT profession resemble a business model in which the stakeholders play “the native speaker card” (p. 158). Alshammari (2021) too, characterizes such practices as the “commercialization of language education” (p. 3). Viewed from this angle, not only is teaching regarded as “a selling commodity” (Lengeling, & Pablo, 2012, p. 101), but also it promotes the vision of ‘traveler types’, ‘backpackers’ and ‘bartenders’ (Hewson, 2018, p.8) who travel from one country to the next and take teaching as a change of pace and as an opportunity to make money to help with their travel expenses through short-term stays. In Ruecker and Ives’ (2015) words, the applicant is depicted as a “traveling consumer of culture and services who is likely passing through the

country on a whim as opposed to a professional who intends to develop a career in this environment" (p. 16). Probably, this is why the opportunities to make money and have fun are more emphasized than the teaching occupation and its expectations and obligations. An ad from Romania substantiates the point this way "Bring your adventurous attitude (and your sleeping bag) and capture the essence of outdoor and active life." (<https://premierTEFL.com/internships/romania/?ptaff=520&campaign=job-ad>).

Description of fringe benefits and perks

Another section of the advertisement website describes the additional benefits the internship program brings to the interns. The programs in all countries included a 120-hour accredited TEFL course, monthly pocket money, free accommodation, one-week orientation, visa assistance, ongoing and emergency support, and three to twelve months of teaching placement. In some cases, the provisions extended to the rent-free family homestay, free meals, cultural excursions, local language lessons, and insurance. By offering such fringe benefits, employing companies further situated themselves at the service of native speakers and tried to attract the attention of prospective interns. The orientation program itself, for example, offered services such as picking up the interns from the airport, cultural excursions, an induction period, teaching preparations, and hands-on teaching with the assistance of local experienced teachers.

Similar to the ELT job vacancies, the fringe benefits considered for interns were far beyond the requirements of the positions (Ruecker & Ives, 2015). Even, the stipend offered to the interns could run to 2000 USD per month in Asia and 1300 Euros in Europe. In general, the internships were viewed as opportunities to gain future experience and to help cover the NESIs' travel expenses. Additionally, they were great means to receive guidance and support on the visa process and other travel requirements including accommodation and cultural excursions, benefits that were often offered only to the interns. Furthermore, since they were less competitive than EFL/ESL jobs abroad, they were more attainable for the applicants.

Conclusion

As the results of the thematic analysis in the current study indicated, the internship advertisements made space for the institutionalization and perpetuation of native speaker bias through the abundant use of marketing discourse and through demanding native speaker interns to come from a select number of inner circle countries. As such, it can be concluded that the discriminatory practices and native speaker hegemony prevail not only in ELT teacher employment but also in intern recruitment. Additionally, even from this limited study of advertisements, it can be concluded that despite TESOL's (2006) statement that "TESOL strongly opposes discrimination against non-native English speakers in the field of English language teaching. Rather, English language proficiency, teaching experience, and professionalism should be assessed along a continuum of professional preparation" (para. 5), native speakerism and bias against non-native speakers persist.

A diversity of action plans has been proposed to fight against the native speaker legacy. Ruecker and Ives (2015) recommend addressing the issue in TESOL programs and gatherings and providing opportunities for native and non-native speaker partnerships. Selvi (2009) argues for three "As" consisting of awareness, advocacy, and activism. In a similar vein, Mackenzie (2021), takes a classroom-based approach comprising "three 'E's'" which include engaging learners in dialogues about the prejudice, exploring and probing the issue, and exposing the issue to enhance meaningful transformation. However, it can be witnessed that the "whims" (Hewson, 2018) of supply-demand principle and the preference debate (Selvi, 2014) which favor NESTs on the assumption that students and parents are more inclined to prefer them still dominate the profession. Subsequently, one of the most influential approaches to challenging native speakerism can be the results of comprehensive studies inspecting the impact of NESTs on students' proficiency and achievement. This issue can inform future lines of research given that as Wang and Lin (2013) put it, no comprehensive studies have thus far been presented supporting the improvement of students' proficiency as a result of NESTs' teaching.

Native speakerism has also affected other dimensions of TESOL including the presence of native/non-native speakers in instructional materials, research articles, and the regimes of truth (Selvi, 2014) influencing research and theory which can be the focus of future studies. Moreover, since this study is limited to a small corpus and the advertisements from one website, future strands of research can scrutinize the issue with larger sample sizes and in different settings. Despite its limitations, the study can promise implications for various stakeholders in the field including the employing agencies as well as the native and non-native speakers themselves as it raises their awareness of and sensitivity toward the discrimination and hegemony in the profession.

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Appendix 1

A Sample of Advertisement for the Internship Position in South Korea

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Appendix 2

The Corpus of the Study and the Analyzed Topoi in the Internship Advertisements.

Ad	Country	Qualifications and Requirements				Description of Internship Locations		Fringe Benefits and Perks	
		Native speaker	Age	Academic	Teaching Requirement	Extracurricular Activities	Landscape	Monthly Stipend US\$	Other benefits
Asia									
1	Chiang Mai, Thailand	NS A passport from USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia or New Zealand	21-45	BA	None	bartering at night bazaars, befriending elephants, street food, meaningful friendships	Rose of the North, waterfalls, temples, bemusing golden Buddhas	995-1,125 US\$	Accommodation, in-country TEFL training, Visa support, Transfer assistance, local bank account
2	Myanmar	Fluent or NS	21-60	High School Diploma	None	hot air balloon ride, Burmese curry, Thadingyut festival celebration	wild, sun-soaked valleys, ancient temples, Burmese, Buddhist temples	700- 785 US\$	Accommodation guidance, TEFL Course, Visa support, Ongoing in-country support
3	Cambodia	NS	21-59	High School Diploma	None	You + sunrise + a 12th century Hindu (now Buddhist) temple = a daybreak to remember	a colorful whirlwind of ancient Wats, gorgeous scenery, unsolved mysteries, world's most preserved temple complex Floating Village and Temple Tour	800- 1800 US\$	In-house TEFL course, Accommodation assistance, Visa assistance, Ongoing & emergency support, Cultural excursions, 2-3 week holidays, Airport pick-up & transfers, Ongoing in-country support
4	Thailand	NS A passport from USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia or New Zealand	21-45	BA	None	Elephant rides, Loy Kratong, the "Festival of Lights", Banana marshmallows, strawberry milkshake, potato chips, fried chicken skin	The Land of Smiles, majestic Buddhist temples	995- 1125 US\$	Rent-free accommodation, Full arrival induction, All public holidays off, Visa assistance, Accident insurance, Ongoing in-country support, TEFL Course
5	Vietnam	NS A passport from USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa	20-50	BA	None	Celebrate Tet, Lunar New Year, Smell the yellow blossoms & oranges, marvel at the fireworks, keep the party going for 7 days	Rice paddies, metropolises, traditional villages, temples, mountains	1200- 1800 US\$	Contract completion bonus, Airport pick-up & transfers, Orientation guesthouse, Accommodation guidance, Visa and work permit support, Vietnamese language lessons, TEFL Course

6	South Korea	NS a passport from USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa	21-35	BA	None	tasty Korean BBQ, Korean bathhouse, Jjimjilbang, beauty treatments	high-tech cityscapes, cherry blossom trees and centuries-old Buddhist temples, quaint coastal fishing villages and sub-tropical islands	1600-1750 US\$	One-way flight contribution, End of contract bonus, Rent-free accommodation, TEFL Course, Korean culture course, Full arrival orientation, In-country teacher meet-ups, All public holidays off, Medical insurance, Visa assistance Ongoing in-country support
Europe									
7	Romania	EU passport holders who are native English speakers (UK / Ireland)	18-35	High School Diploma	None	Sarmale, pork-stuffed cabbage rolls are slowly cooked in clay pots, then served with polenta and sour cream	Bucharest, or "Little Paris", the world's 2nd largest building, Black Sea coast, Dracula's Castle	85 weekly US\$	Flight reimbursement, Hotel resort accommodation, Airport pick-up & transfers, Orientation online TEFL course, 3 meals a day, Free internet access, Excursions to historical sites, Ongoing in-country support, 24-hour medical care
8	Germany	NS	19-29	High School Diploma	None	tasty fischbrötchen (fish in a bun), art galleries, museums and boutiques	vistas riverfront at The Rhine in Düsseldorf, Stortebeker Elbphilharmonie, a famous water's edge restaurant in Hamburg.	80 weekly US\$	TEFL Course, Airport pick-up & transfers, Orientation week, Camp accommodation, 3 meals a day, Cultural excursions, Ongoing in-country support, 24-hour medical care
9	Poland	NS	+ 18	High school diploma	No	tasty Polish pierogi complete with generous dollops of sour cream big, delicious street food sandwiches	riverside castles and underground cathedrals, mountainous winter wonderland resorts at Zakopane, popular coastline at Gdańsk, Kraków Auschwitz Concentration Camp, the Wieliczka Salt Mines & the Wawel Royal Castle	750-1500 US\$	Accommodation assistance, Airport pick-up & transfers, arrival orientation, TEFL course, Local SIM card, bank account, and tax ID, Polish language lessons, Weekends & public holidays off, Visa assistance, Ongoing in-country support

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10	Spain	A passport from USA, Canada, South Africa, UK, Ireland, Australia or New Zealand	20-30		None	local cuisine (such as 'pa amb tomàquet', i.e., bread with tomato), art deco food market, ceramics museum and full of small bars, tapas joints and clubs	Catalonia-the beautiful northeast of Spain, spectacular beaches of the Costa Dorada, Costa Brava, Barcelona and nightlife of Barcelona or Terrassa, El Carmen, the old town	€100 completion bonus	Family homestay accommodation, TEFL certificate, Spanish Culture Course, Airport pick up and transfers, 3 meals per day, Local school orientation, Weekends & public holidays off, Ongoing in-country support
South America									
11	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Fluent English speaker	18-60	High school diploma	None	wine, dulce de leche, Fireworks, insults, fan fervor, choripán.	waterfalls (the kind worth chasing), Hip, working-class La Boca & it's multi-colored walkway, La Bombonera, the local football stadium	€575-800	TEFL Course, Welcome orientation, Free Spanish lessons, Social & cultural excursions, Weekends off, All public holidays off, Visa assistance, Ongoing in-country support
12	Argentina	NS	18-45	High school diploma	None	dulce de leche, Fireworks, insults, fan fervor, choripán.	Hip, working-class La Boca & it's multi-colored walkway, Bombonera, the local football stadium	40 US\$	Family homestay accommodation, TEFL certificate, Full arrival orientation, 3 meals per day, Free Spanish lessons, Visa assistance, Ongoing in-country support, TEFL certificate
13	Colombia	NS	20-30	High school diploma	None	tasty patacones con hogao (fried plantain with salty sauce) with new amigos, Bogotá's Usaquén Flea Market, classic Colombian dish, the ajiaco—a warm chicken soup simmered alongside potatoes, corn, avocado, and a local herb called the quascas.	mountainous peaks, lush jungles, miles of coast, and wildlife-rich rain forest	265 US\$	Rent-free accommodation, Airport pick up and transfers, Full two-week arrival orientation, TEFL certificate, Visa assistance, Ongoing in-country support