

Status, place and profile of non-native English teachers in Georgia

Lia TODUA*

Natia JOJUA**

Abstract

In recent years mostly in non-English speaking countries research concerning non-native teachers of English has reached its acme. It has resulted in a thorough analysis of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, the issue has not been exhausted. The more researchers, native and non-native instructors add their colors to the portrait of teachers of English as a foreign or second language, the better insight of the subject we have. The present article aims to understand what coincidences and discrepancies there are between the characteristics of non-native English instructors abroad and in Georgia, how specific hiring practices, employment patterns, trainings for non-native English teachers are in the country. The study has been conducted based on analyzing the theoretical background of the issue, a survey of English teachers and empirical evidence. All the procedures applied led to the following conclusions: thousands of native English speakers who teach English in Georgia disclose many aspects of the dichotomy –non-native English-speaking teachers (NNEST) vs. native English-speaking teachers (NEST). The former in Georgia demonstrate similarities, both professional and personal, with their peers abroad. Differences pinpointed as a result of the research represent the legacy of the educational system of the soviet past and of the post-soviet transition period peculiarities. Hiring practices, employment patterns in the Teaching English as a Foreign Language field are similar to foreign ones; discrepancies, though, are caused by different socio-economic factors in the country.

Keywords: non-native English-speaking teachers (NNEST), native English-speaking teachers (NEST), Methods of English Language Teaching (ELT), teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL)

Introduction

The vaster the territory English has covered, the more educational, economic and socio-cultural importance it has acquired and the more teachers of it have emerged. And as a consequence of mushrooming EFL (English as a foreign language) classrooms worldwide, the number of non-native English language teachers skyrocketed leaving in an asymmetrical position those native English language educators. When the trend reached its peak a few decades ago (Mousu and Llurda, 2008) there appeared first researches analyzing the non-native English-speaking teachers (NNEST) vs. native English-speaking teachers (NEST) phenomenon.

The first two articles (Medgyes, 1992; Medgyes, 1993) concerning the issue followed by a groundbreaking, influential, and disturbing book by Peter Medgyes (1994) which magnetized formidable attention of both native and non-native teachers and researchers. Subsequent books and a plethora of articles show no sign that the subject has been exhausted. On the contrary, they make the topic more controversial and even discriminatory.

Dilemma number one - who counts as a native in ELT (English language teaching). The solution for most is unanimous and ubiquitous: an English native speaker is someone who

- is born in an English-speaking country
- has learned English during childhood in an English-speaking environment
- speaks English as a first language
- has a native-like command of English
- is capable of producing fluent, spontaneous speech in English that is characterized by creativity,
- has the intuition to distinguish correct or wrong forms in English. (Andreou and Galantomos, 2009:202-203)

Hence, the rest of EL teachers are arbitrarily seeded into the “nest” of NNESTs. And here arise some issues - uncertain and unjust. First, how can those speaking, because of their origin, one of the varieties of English, teach its standard? Second, not having clear-cut criteria for defining who a NES is why should people with unclear linguistic ancestry be either prioritized or disregarded? Finally, why should a native but less qualified, in some cases, linguistically more deficient instructor outweigh a qualified, TEFL-skilled, language-proficient non-native one?

However inhibiting, the reality still offers ways out. Scarcely attainable, although highly feasible C2 level of the Common European Framework equals a native-like compe-

* Assoc. Prof. Dr., Faculty of Education and Humanities, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia
E-mail: ltodua@ibsu.edu.ge

** Ph.D Student, Faculty of Education and Humanities, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia
E-mail: njnatiajojua@gmail.com

tence in English. Highly-desirable among NNESTs, it represents a solace securing ELT jobs intended for native instructors. Furthermore, unlike the hardly attainable top level, non-NESTs priorities against native peers are quite tangible and agreed upon.

1) They provide a good learner model to their students; 2) They can teach language strategies very effectively; 3) They are able to provide more information about the language to their students; 4) They understand the difficulties and needs of the students; 5) They are able to anticipate and predict language difficulties; and 6) In EFL settings, they can use the students' native language to their advantage. (Moussu and Llorca, 2008:322)

Less complicated and easier to tease out are advantageous features and qualities of native EL teachers: having innate cultural knowledge of the target language, role-modeling in performance and competence of English, demonstrating a lower level of anxiety in the classroom, being communication-oriented, etc. (Anchimbe, 2006).

Obvious priorities (consisting mainly of authenticity of performance) of NESTs were so much epitomized recently that the demand on them has peaked on ELT employment chart, having exacerbated the opposing group. Disproportion of opportunities, prejudice towards non-NESTs gradually stigmatized the term itself, urging to revisit the phenomenon as a sort of glass-ceiling at a TEFL job market. To euphemize the debatable term –non-NESTs- there have been several attempts to introduce, for instance, more or less accomplished vs. proficient users, expert vs. novice speakers, etc. (Medgyes, 2001:431) Teachers cannot be labeled in this or that way as it inevitably entails arbitrary judgment unless specialized exam syndicates or authorized courses grant instructors appropriate certificates.

Recently introduced much-aspired CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults), DELTA (Diploma in English Language Teaching to Speakers of Other Languages) and similar certificates and diplomas guarantee equal opportunities for all coveting to be successful in TEFL. Such enterprises close separate gates for segregation of non-natives, introduce objective mechanisms of regulating hiring practices in the sphere. For non-NESTs high points in TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), IELTS (International English Language Testing System), plus, FCE (First Certificate in English), CAE (Cambridge English Advanced Exam), CPE (Certificate of Proficiency in English), etc. alongside globally recognized teaching certificates serve as benchmarks; the latter are equal job providers for both NESTs and NNESTs.

Medgyes (1983) acted as an eye-opener for NNESTs - the first to delve into the psychological nightmare many of them experience – leading, as he claims, either to schizophrenia or to inferiority complex. It is considered to be one of the most intriguing among his assumptions. Causes (and curses) of such grave mental and emotional conditions surfaced thanks to the researcher and the NNEST himself – an extreme complexity of English as of a language and a means of communication. Those lucky NNESTs to know his theories and ideas in detail are greatly relieved both psychologically and professionally as this is the case when awareness is a cure or prevention at least (Medgyes, 1983:2).

Research methods

The present research is at the junction of educational, namely, TEFL, sociological, and sociolinguistic studies. Thus, for implementation it relies on the equilibrium between the research methods of each of the spheres mentioned. Library research, i.e. studying theoretical aspects of the issue,

generalizing empirical evidence, surveys conducted with the intention of gathering quantitative data, narratives for obtaining qualitative material – these are essential elements typical for such researches. Factual material, data, documents retrieved from different Georgian sites greatly facilitated the study, contributed to better understanding of the issue, and amply illustrated different assumptions.

Wider-scale studies, though, necessitate introduction of more components, like classroom observation, interviews, and experiments.

Status, Place and Profile of Non-Native English Teachers in Georgia

Four years ago under the aegis of the project “Teach and Learn with Georgia” (TLG) hundreds, later, thousands of volunteer native teachers of English landed in the country with a humane intention of enhancing knowledge of and competence in the globally-acclaimed lingua franca among the young throughout Georgia. Justification of the enterprise by the authorities was the following:

The primary goal of TLG is to improve the English language skills of Georgian students, teachers and families.

As a post-Soviet country, Georgia is at a turning point in its history. For centuries, while other countries and cultures were globalizing, Georgia's borders were closed to the outside world. Now, as a sovereign state, Georgia has the opportunity to integrate with the rest of the world—linguistically and culturally. This is what makes TLG a particularly unique program. Bringing English speakers into classrooms increases English language proficiency throughout the country, which is essential to Georgia's ability to assimilate into the modern world. (Teach and Learn, 2013-2014:6)

The fact and an explicit government policy behind it sounded the alarm among the NNESTs, citizens of Georgia. The seemingly self-sufficient, idyllic, orderly chaotic TEFL Geo-world got a message that ELT practices are not fully compatible with the requirements of the modern world. On the one hand, NESTs inundating the TEFL arena of the developing country menaced to snatch ELT jobs from the local peers; on the other hand, they cast shadow on the reputation of the latter. In any case, revisiting the role, profile and status of NNESTs in Georgia became urgent.

The governmental policy under the aegis of which thousands of NESTs teach in Georgia has made all the aspects of the dichotomy – native vs. non-native speaking English instructors easy to observe and analyze.

For decades during the soviet regime and for a short period afterwards under momentum, universities and institutes in Georgia alongside all the Soviet republics due to uniformity of the curricula produced institutionally homogeneous, but individually divergent philologists- teachers of the English language and literature.

Regaining sovereignty and independence was accompanied by landmark changes in the academic area – dozens of private universities emerged overnight. These newly-fledged private universities used to copycat the traditional models of teaching plans very often incompetently with lots of flaws and faults. Moreover, lack of resources and academic staff led to deterioration of standards. Shortage of finances affected the state sector as well and the training standards started to crumble. One of the reasons behind such a decline was a high intake of students as a response

to the increased demand at the job market for specialists of English and a great popularity of the profession. Neither private nor state universities were able to cope with this unexpected and unprecedented surge of students. Those years of assembly-lined university diploma production made an EFL teacher without an adequate knowledge of the subject a reality. Meanwhile, older generations of English teachers had only rare and sporadic chances to further develop as educators.

Georgian higher education system's admission to the Bologna Process and accreditation/ authorization requirements for universities introduced by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia significantly normalized academic processes. Approximation to the new standards in case of training prospective English teachers (primarily specialists of the language) resulted in leveled (according to the European framework) teaching of English, uncoupling of theoretical aspects at a BA level and pounding practical ones. At many universities, however, reduction (rejection) of the subjects in the curricula was implemented at the expense of Methods of ELT. A handful of universities added a separate module for training EFL teachers; the rest remained loyal to the long-established schemata of teaching the course.

Various governmental and non-governmental organizations regularly offer refresher courses to NNESTs, every year many instructors of English have opportunities to travel in English-speaking countries to attend language or TEFL courses, some private and state universities constantly demonstrate their initiatives with ingenious teacher development schemes.

More than three decades ago the leading universities in the world responded to new patterns of communication in the global village and opened language centers at their institutions. Their matrix of organizing teaching FLs was imitated by many Georgian universities. It has caused drastic rearrangement of hiring practices, less so of teaching ones. As a result, the importance of scientific degrees was diminished considerably; it has altered research models and urged instructors of English at universities to reshuffle their priorities.

Some years ago university students in Georgia faced a new challenge - B1 in English became a must for getting a BA degree in any sphere; hence, English appeared in the curricula of all university schools and faculties in the country. Consequently, the number of English teachers or their workload has increased significantly, squeezing out and diminishing lecturers of other FLs.

Behind the above-mentioned governmental requirement a competent eye could discern an implicit language policy due to which the country automatically skipped onto the expanding circle of English striving to find itself in the outer one.

Paradoxical as it may seem the policy was preceded and accompanied by the gradual plummet of the number of places available at Georgian universities for those wishing to have a degree in the English language. This year out of 87 universities in the country authorized to accept students at a BA level 23 have a degree programme in English at faculties / schools of Humanities. It is impossible to calculate the exact number of vacancies as some universities present the total of places at the above-mentioned faculty/ school (Reference Book, 2014.:8).

There are universities (all of them private) which offer degree programmes in English, but not in the state Georgian language, as it is considered to be non-cost-effective. Those universities which have degree programmes in other languages alongside English announce far more vacancies for

majoring in English compared with French, German, Russian, etc., e.g., Gori State Teaching University expects 50 students of English, 10 of German, 10 of Russian.

Hiring practices, employment patterns in the TEFL field in the country greatly resemble foreign ones; discrepancies, though, are caused by different socio-economic factors. To persons with a degree in English a labor market in Georgia offers jobs as translators, interpreters, office managers, etc. The main job providers for EFL teachers in the country are private and state universities, private and state schools, language courses, private kindergartens, governmental and non-governmental educational organizations. Many with a BA in the field by means of post-graduate studies slightly or radically change the course of their career and resort to more profitable, demanded, and prestigious professions. If all the mentioned trends are taken into account, non-native English teachers in Georgia (citizens of Georgia) may become scarce in the foreseeable future.

Compared with teachers/ lecturers of other subjects, English teachers are most demanded at the job market. Vacancy announcements retrieved from the most frequently visited recruitment sites indicate that among all teacher jobs ELT jobs predominate. 14.03.2014 - www.hr.ge offers 46 teachers' jobs, 15 out of them are TEFL ones, while for teachers of French, German, Russian, Georgian, Spanish there are single announcements. www.jobs.ge -out of 40 teachers' jobs here 13 are vacancies for English instructors. However, at this site the outlook is more optimistic for teachers of other foreign languages - four jobs for French teachers, three instructors are needed for teaching Turkish, German, Spanish and only one for Russian.

Out of all the ELT jobs only one offers employment in one of the regions of the country. Two more jobs welcome native EL teachers, and there is an employer which does not overtly state which are preferred - NNESTs or NESTs, but from the announcement it can be deduced that their doors are open for both.

The requirements that employers challenge NNESTs with are also noteworthy. For them a degree in the English language is a must, experience of teaching weighs a lot, effectiveness in communication, fluency in English mean much, and as in most businesses, creativity, the sense of responsibility, punctuality, motivation, and computer skills matter as well. World trends are embraced by language courses mainly - high preference is given to CELTA, DELTA, IELTS, CAE, CPE, etc. holders.

Such requirements put many teachers in a "winner takes all" situation, e.g., NNESTs with renowned certificates and diplomas have up to 4 ELT jobs, while many without them are left at a disadvantage, even jobless. Thus, popular certificates may evolve as a discriminating element.

Employers all over the world have much milder requirements for NESTs. Similarly, in Georgia natives are expected: be native in English / have two years of post-secondary education / have flexibility, an open mind, and a willingness to make a difference (Reference Book, 2014:9). Other job announcements confirm the trend.

Employers in the regions of Georgia make considerable concessions in terms of requirements supposedly due to the lack of local English instructors.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, having the iron curtain lifted, in the post-soviet countries, FL teachers, especially EFL ones, emerged as objects of envy - most demanded, hence, better-off, busiest, and unrivalled. However, the glamorous façade often airbrushes dire reality. The shift from the soviet classroom proved to be a daunting task.

Many coped with the challenge mostly connected with the authentic performance in Modern English. They did so with zeal and determination, with timely found resources for relevant courses or with formidable time allocated for independent work. Many have been left behind, for younger generation of teachers the refreshment of the language skills seemed futile as with often meager salaries/wages such an endeavor seemed not worthy of trouble. "Survival of the fittest"- the principle works to the full here as well. Exceptional flexibility and tenacity are essential as top employers raise standards from year to year. It doubles stress and anxiety experienced at an ELF lesson. Many skillfully disguise it and resort to aggressive behavior in the classroom or outside it, the rest desperately plunge into pessimism. Both aggressiveness and pessimism, as P. Medgyes asserts, cover linguistic insecurity (Medgyes, 1983:3).

Those having invested a lot of energy, time and self in mastering English are most assertive, self-confident, even conceited, and often severely critical towards their colleagues. Other salient traits of NNESTs claimed in Georgia are: prescriptive attitude towards the language taught, though there are exceptions here as well; inability to make the EFL classroom genuinely communicative; lack of skills to use modern technologies, etc.

From the characteristic of NNESTs researchers of the issue have reached a consensus on, the following qualities (both positive and negative) are most salient for Georgian non-native instructors: use "bookish" language / use English less confidently / are more cautious / are stricter / are more committed / adopt a more guided approach / focus on: accuracy, form, grammar rules, printed word, formal registers/ teach items in isolation /use more L1 / resort to more translation / supply less cultural information, etc. (Medgyes, 2001:435)

NNESTs in Georgia demonstrate similarities, both professional and personal, with their peers abroad. Differences pinpointed as result of the research represent the legacy of the educational system of the soviet past and of the post-soviet transition period peculiarities.

To reveal more nuances for complementing the portrayal of non-NESTs in Georgia, we conducted a survey of English instructors in the country. We also aimed to uncover what coincidences and discrepancies there are between the qualities of non-native English teachers abroad and in Georgia.

We take into account that there may be some disagreement between what is said by teachers in formal surveys and what actually takes place in their classrooms, in their careers, etc. "Questionnaire-elicited self-reports reflect a teacher's stated behavior rather than his or her actual behavior; there may be a wide gap between the two" (Medgyes, 2001:434).

Hence, qualitative and quantitative evidence and data presented here may complement each other even when being contradictory.

The survey questionnaire was sent to about 200 NNESTs- all citizens of Georgia mainly via social networks. They were explained how much contribution of each meant and were requested to cooperate. Teachers both male and female, of different nationalities, of various age categories, dwellers of Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Gori, Telavi, and other towns and regions of Georgia were asked to participate. The survey was compiled in order to collect sufficient numerical and narrative data. By cross-examining the correlation between different variables (place of dwelling, academic degree, age, etc.) and the data obtained we intended to further

clarify some of the nuances of the statistics given below.

The questions concerned NNESTs' educational background, working experience, level of English skills, career development plans, psychological problems, job satisfaction, knowledge of TEFL methodology, etc. The fact that only 35 teachers agreed to assist the researchers and the rest ignored the request, lends itself to various interpretations: behind those more than 150 NNESTs there may be hidden high degree of professional and psychological anxiety, linguistic insecurity, reluctance to co-operate with peers, and lack of solidarity among NNESTs. Participants ranged from 22 up to 70-year-old teachers, two of which were male, the rest female; 26- MA holders (out of them four -PhD candidates), four -with a BA degree, four - PhDs, one - a student; twelve teachers were from various towns and regions of Georgia (seven of them from different towns and regional centers and five from villages), and the rest from Tbilisi. The survey covered 10 university lecturers, 18 secondary school teachers, four instructors of language courses, and three unemployed, more precisely, self-employed (having private pupils) EFL tutors.

It emerged that teachers started careers with more prestigious jobs, then lost them and had to move to less challenging ones - 10 cases of it were pinpointed. Seven respondents whether deliberately or accidentally shifted from two or three jobs to fewer ones. However, there were only four cases when a NNEST stepped upwards on a career ladder, e.g., from secondary schools to universities, and two more teachers lost all jobs relying on giving private lessons only.

Twenty one respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with their salary/ wages, only three were happy about payment; the Georgian metropolis - Tbilisi - provides NNESTs with better salaries/ wages than towns, regions and villages of the country. Hence, it is natural that 25 teachers opted to have private pupils to earn extra means for living. One of the teachers surveyed had four ELT jobs, seven of them - two jobs, three respondents have three jobs, two - none and the rest -22 instructors- a job each. Batumi, Telavi, and Tbilisi residents were those maximum job holders. Seventeen (about a half) of the teachers claimed they are busy teaching English from four to seven hours a day, then come six of them working 8-10 hours, the busiest - six respondents toiling for 12 hours and more, the rest have lighter workloads. English teachers from different villages and small towns enjoy more relaxed lifestyles. Most (22 persons) teachers state they have little time for family and friends, 10 of them have more than enough time for socializing and the least group - three - complain ELT leaves no time for the closest ones.

The trend of instability of TEFL jobs and NNESTs' overall dissatisfaction with salaries uncover serious drawbacks of employment patterns in the fields, unreliability and lack of responsibility of employers. On the other hand, the tendency indicates that EFL teachers in Georgia are not fully equipped with skills and competence of English and ELT at the start of their career ladders.

When graduating from their universities, 15 prospective teachers were content with their knowledge of the profession, the same percentage were happy about their English to some degree only and the minority - five were dissatisfied with it. Those surveyed were almost unanimous that they significantly improved their competence and performance of the language since the graduation, only five of them stating about slight enhancement of their knowledge. When asked how they had managed to do so, again most -20 respondents claimed they had planned and fulfilled perfecting their

English skills on their own, eight of them solely by means of courses, the rest utilized both ways.

Hence, the fact that 25 participants have had courses and thus possess certificates indicates the following - certification is not viewed as a means of boosting knowledge of English or of TEFL Methodology, but as a means of getting, maintaining or increasing the positions. Most (22 teachers) of graduates had their training in the country, the rest - both in and outside it.

In the majority are those (23 teachers) who self-confidently enter the ELT classroom as specialists of English and teachers of it, the rest falter a bit, demonstrating less self-assurance. Tied to it is the following data. Fifteen surveyed teachers seldom and six never experience anxiety at a lesson, 12 more respondents - often or sometimes, and only one confesses to be always nervous at work. According to the survey results, nervousness is mostly caused by discipline problems (16 teacher say so), other explanations are: lack of ELT skills, teachers' tiredness, lack of knowledge of English, etc.

Strikingly predominate those NNESTs who rate their English as advanced (26 respondents), five even higher - advanced+ , three teachers are more modest claiming to be at an upper-intermediate level and only one - to have an intermediate development of the language skills.

The following data rejects the assumption about NNESTs' psychological tension - most (25) teachers assert TEFL - their occupation - has a positive effect on their personal lives, for some (five teachers) no correlation between the two exists and only two teachers' lives are negatively impacted by their jobs. Answers to this question as well as to those about anxiety, their level of English, about its significant improvement after graduation and self-confidence indicate that either NNESTs in Georgia are different from their peers abroad, or the most self-confident, best of all agreed to be surveyed, which is quite possible. Two more possible explanations are - teachers skillfully conceal negative

aspects of their profession and occupation or lack awareness of psychological, professional and linguistic problems in TEFL as a career entails.

When asked about the weak points of their English (teachers could underline more than one possible answer), the most frequent concerns included listening skills (12 cases), then come writing deficiencies (six cases), pronunciation failures (five cases) and vocabulary, grammar and speaking problems share an equal number - four cases each, eight teachers claim they have no weakness at all. Inside the classroom pronunciation errors disturb NNESTs most (16 persons), then come vocabulary mistakes (six persons), grammar and speaking trouble teachers least (three and two persons respectively), and five teachers ignored the question altogether.

The following findings confirm that many Georgian universities have had and still experience limitations in terms of teaching methods of EFL. Almost half (16 persons) of the teachers assert they did not have such a course at their faculties. Moreover, only nine instructors were able to name books and authors on ELT Methodology. When cross-examining the data against the degree and experience of teachers we found out that the higher their degree and the more experience they have, the more awareness and knowledge of TEFL methodology they possess (see charts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Three more findings speak in favor of higher degrees in TEFL: MA holders are happier with their salaries/ wages, have more jobs, and have more stable and less declining careers than their BA peers; while those with a PhD or PhD candidates excel in all these aspects: salary satisfaction, career stability, and number of jobs.

Age differences mean a lot in case of career development goals NNESTs in Georgia set, e.g., the youngest surveyed (22-28-year-olds) aim to study abroad, get a PhD degree or CELTA, get better jobs, improve their English; older teachers (29-35-year-olds) like the latter covet to have a PhD, enrich both language and ELT skills; however, more

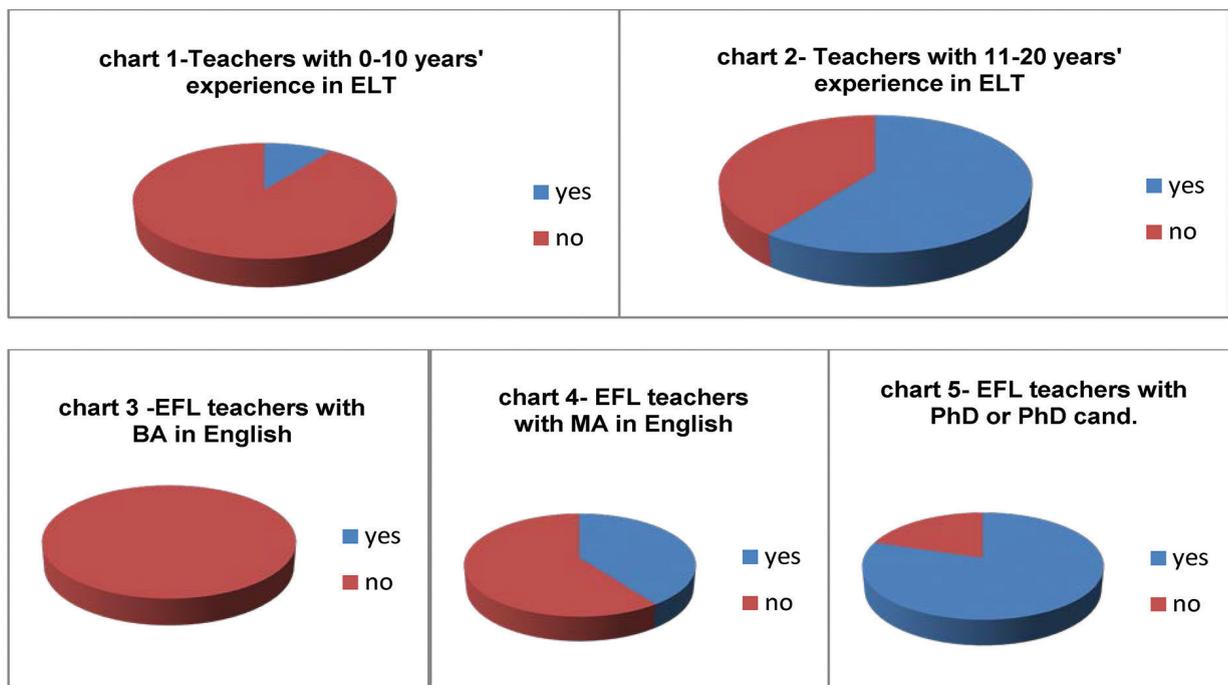


Figure 1. Did you study TEFL Methodology at university and can you name books on methods of ELT?

ambitious challenges: becoming a teacher trainer, setting up a language centre are on their agenda as well. NNESTs who are 35-41 years old are more enthusiastic to pass certification exams organized by the Ministry of Education. In this group again some plan to have a PhD, DELTA, and foreign certificates. Teachers aged 42-48 are more research-oriented, determined to become experts of ELT, express willingness to have more courses, to master information and communications technology (ICT) skills for better teaching practices. Sadly, those above 50 set no professional goals at all.

Conclusions / Suggestions

The most acute problem NNESTs in Georgia experience is insufficient knowledge of modern methods of TEFL (16 out of 35, i.e. 46% have not taken this course at university). Hence, it is important that EFL teachers should update their skills and competence in this respect. Universities in Georgia have to renew their curricula in terms of quality of ELT training, must not ignore TEFL methodology as an essential part of the course.

The research indicated that NNESTs' professional growth is mostly independent, chaotic and sporadic. Hence, it is vital that the educational authorities in Georgia make ELT resources, relevant and effective trainings more accessible to instructors both in the regions and in the capital. By means of applying fair selection criteria EFL/ ESL teachers' courses in English-speaking countries must be available to NNESTs on equal terms.

NNESTs' main employers - universities, secondary schools, and language courses have to offer their teachers opportunities for further professional development. Moreover, as it was revealed that they often set high standards for prospective employees, it is advisable that they take into account the Georgian reality – the socio-economic situation in the country, sensibly make concessions when selecting teachers not to neglect teachers with a big potential, though with fewer certificates and less experience. It will create a level playing field for all NNESTs in the country.

In addition, it is important that employers contribute to stable gradual development of NNESTs' careers as it was pinpointed that their track records either improved or deteriorated in a haphazard way. One more obligation of employers is guaranteeing salary satisfaction of EFL instructors, as most NNESTs (21 or 60%) are unhappy with their salaries. The more ELT jobs teachers feel obliged to have and do have, the less effectively they work. Thus, a salary that is commensurate with their skills and experience will significantly improve the quality of TEFL.

Many NNESTs in Georgia are fully aware of modern requirements in ELT in and outside the country; therefore, most of them regularly refresh their knowledge to comply with the existing demands in the sphere. However, to be more suitable for TEFL jobs in Georgia and abroad, more and more NNESTs in the country have to take into consideration the following recommendations.

Since the survey revealed that NNESTs are mostly content with their level of English, with its improvement dynamics, have a high degree of self-confidence, it is essential that they assess themselves more realistically, they should be more cognizant of psychological, professional, linguistic peculiarities of their jobs and profession, raise their awareness of requirements at the TEFL job market, seek for more chances to develop as specialists of English and EFL teach-

ers, gain higher university degrees in English. It is advisable that teachers do not rely solely on independent work for improving their language skills (as most NNESTs in Georgia do). Senior teachers are advised not to quit enhancing their professionalism (as it was revealed by the survey) in order to be more competitive and act as role models and counselors for their young peers.

Finally, to make the tough world of TEFL milder to survive, NNESTs need more intra-group solidarity, mutual support, sharing ideas, resources and novelties in ELT. And to withstand the rivalry of NESTs in Georgia and outside it, Georgian NNESTs have to boost their communicative competence (the survey detected listening as their weakest point) and to focus on authenticity of their English and native-like communication in the classroom.

Special thanks to all the EFL teachers who participated in the survey.

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