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“I’m sorry, my English is not very good”: The linguistic ideology  
of Native-speakerism and its influence on Chilean university  
students’ on an instrumental level from an anthropological  
perspective.

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Inglesas

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## ABSTRACT

Native-speakerism is a linguistic ideology commonly applied to the field of ELT defined as the conceived relationship between the figure of a native teacher who accurately represents their culture, language and teaching methodology. However, the present paper holds that Native-speakerism, when considered from a social perspective, can explain few occurrences related to the English language in Chile. It was found that Native-speakerism has influenced not only the self-perception of the students, but also contributed to the construction of idealized and unrealistic expectations of what a true speaker of English must be and sound like. Moreover, the Chilean English education system continues with this narrative and connects the eventual proficiency of their citizens in English with economic growth, further evidencing the reach of the Native-speakerism ideology. However, the English teaching in Chile has failed to live up to the standards they have imposed and does not offer active communication instances where the students can develop their skills, where oral tests were found to be especially deficient in the eyes of the learners. It is clear there needs to be further research regarding what teaching and learning methodologies would be beneficial for the country.

**Keywords: Native-speakerism, ideology, native speaker, English language, language skills, oral tests, language anxiety, Linguistic Anthropology.**

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Chilean situation, where English is held to high standards and is currently the only foreign language to be mandatorily taught at schools, reaching the level of a native speaker is the aspiration of many Chileans as this idea has been heavily enforced by the government, and society alike. This is relevant to the field of Linguistic Anthropology as it focuses on the linguistic uses that occur within social life (Zanini Matos, 2006), that is, the perception and opinions the students hold towards their personal use of the English language. Therefore, in the context of the idealization of an ideal speaker-listener by linguistic studies in the past century (Chomsky, 1965), where these individuals (especially the ones who came from English-speaking countries) transformed into models and represented the Western culture (Holliday, 2006) in a rapidly changing globalized world. These ideas had a great impact on many areas of our global society. Oftentimes referred to as the ‘international language’ or the ‘door-opening language’, English has become one of the most influential and studied languages in the world. However, many do not realize that these ideas are part of an ideology identified as *Native-speakerism* (Holliday, 2006); often applied to the area of ELT (English Language Teaching). Subsequently, it is the interest of the present study to discover to which extent this ideology has influenced the Chilean students in their English learning process under the scope of three categories: 1) self-definition, 2) learning process and 3) perception of their English teachers. Each one of these categories was selected in order to clarify the reach of the Native-speakerism ideology in various aspects regarding the students.

## **SECTION I: PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY**



## 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

As stated previously, the linguistic ideology of Native-speakerism is a widely discussed term in the area of ELT (English Language Teaching) and has been defined by Holliday (2006) as the belief that ‘native-speaker’ teachers represent the ‘Western’ culture and symbolize the ideals of the English teaching methodology and desired level of proficiency. The author continues on to say that Native-speakerism has had a great impact on various areas, especially on employment policies where it has resulted in an ‘othering’ of non-native teachers. Lowe (2020) also commented on the importance of the ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speaker dichotomy as even a teacher who is a fully functional bilingual (or proficient in two languages) might still be called a ‘non-native’ speaker because they might fail to fulfill the standards of a ‘native-speaker’ such as accent, tone, etc. In other words, considered deficient to their native counterparts. (Cook, 1999; Valdes, 1998) It is clear that the influence Native-speakerism has had over ELT is studied and identified, however, the effects this ideology might have on the students of English as a second language are not as easy to identify.

The present research considers that the linguistic ideology of Native-speakerism can be applied to the different experiences Chilean students face during their English education. It becomes relevant as it is not only possible to study the impact of the ideology over their learning process itself but also how the figure of a ‘native-speaker’ has influenced their own perception of their English level and skills and also their considerations and opinions over their teachers. This study is carried out due to the lack of research regarding Native-speakerism as an ideology in Chile and its influence over the students who must study the language as a

mandatory subject in schools and many universities according to the guidelines established by MINEDUC (2022). However, literature available with a critical focus on concepts such as ‘native-speaker’ or similar terms in a Chilean context is scarce (Pérez de Arce, 2016; Herrera and Meneses, 2017). It is necessary to address the importance this ideology has inside the field of English education as a whole and the influence Native-speakerism has had over the students who have coursed English.

## **1.2 OBJECTIVES**

### **1.2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

To characterize the ideology of Native-speakerism in Chilean university students on three levels from an anthropological point of view.

### **1.2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

Describe the influence of the Native-speakerism ideology on the self-definition of the English level of Chilean university students.

Identify the presence of the Native-speakerism linguistic ideology in the evaluation methods conducted on Chilean university students.

Characterize how the Native-speakerism ideology affects the way the students perceive their teachers.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How does the Native-speakerism ideology affect the self-definition of the English level of Chilean university students?
2. To what extent the learning process is influenced by the Native-speakerism ideology? Is the way the students are evaluated affected by the Native-speakerism ideology? If so, how are the students affected by this?
3. Does the Native-speakerism ideology affect the perception the Chilean university students have over their teachers?

### **1.4 METHODOLOGY SECTION**

#### **1.4.1 LEVEL OF STUDY**

In order to set the grounds for this investigation, a descriptive analysis will be adopted. Although the phenomenon of Native-speakerism has been hugely discussed in language teaching, there is little research done on how this linguistic ideology has affected the students from Chile who have only studied English under an obligatory curriculum.

#### **1.4.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The methodological approach considered for this investigation will be qualitative. We considered this would be the best approach to study the influence Native-speakerism has in Chile because qualitative design facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon inside its context

using a variety of data. This allows for a topic to be explored through multiple lenses and understand the numerous facets the issue might have. (Baxter & Jack, 2015)

### 1.4.3 TYPE OF DESIGN

The type of design this investigation will use is a cross-sectional design.

### 1.4.4 PARTICIPANTS

For this research, we considered 3 different variables for classification purposes:

- a) Gender
- b) Career/Area (Area of study)
- c) English level (Basic - Advanced)

Gender	Career/Area	English Level
Female	Scientific area	Basic
Female	Scientific area	Intermediate/Advanced
Female	Humanistic area	Basic
Female	Humanistic area	Intermediate/Advanced
Male	Scientific area	Basic

Male	Scientific area	Intermediate/Advanced
Male	Humanistic area	Basic
Male	Humanistic area	Intermediate/Advanced

Defined by a structural sampling strategy, 8 participants where each half will belong to each gender and equally distributed considering the 3 variables discussed above. However, due to difficulties during the selection process, it was challenging to find students from each area who had the needed English level to join the study. As a result, it was decided that the most important classification to follow was the English level because it was important to the present research to gather different experiences regarding the Chilean English education system. The participants were selected as it follows:

Gender	University	Declared English Level
Female	Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (PUC)	Intermediate/Advanced
Male	Instituto Nacional de Capacitación Profesional (Inacap)	Basic
Female	Universidad Central de Chile (UCEN)	Intermediate/Advanced
Male	Instituto Nacional de	Basic

	Capacitación Profesional (Inacap)	
Female	Universidad Andrés Bello (UNAB)	Basic
Male	Instituto Nacional de Capacitación Profesional (Inacap)	Intermediate/Advanced
Female	Universidad San Sebastián (USS)	Intermediate/Advanced
Male	Universidad Andrés Bello (UNAB)	Basic

#### 1.4.5 INSTRUMENTS OF DATA COLLECTION

The instruments of data collection selected for this study will be focus groups with all of the participants selected for the present study. This method of data collection is useful for the study as it allowed for selection based on pre-appointed criteria where the participants' ages and social characteristics were similar to an extent that could potentially create comfortable instances. (Rabiee, 2004) According to the same author, the social interactions that resulted from these situations were often deeper and richer than those obtained from one-on-one interviews. The main concern regarding data collection was to obtain genuine input from the

participants in order to draw relevant conclusions from the Chilean context which is why the focus group interviews were selected.

#### 1.4.6 INSTRUMENTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Objectives	Dimension	Subdimension	Questions
<p>I. Analyze the Native-speakerism ideology in the self-definition of the English level of Chilean university students.</p>	<p>Self-definition of the learner regarding their English level.</p>	<p>I. Oral expression and speaking skills in the English language.</p> <p>II. Grammatical knowledge and usage of the English language.</p> <p>III. Reading skills in the English language.</p>	<p>How confident are you in your English speaking skills? Why?</p> <p>What holds you back from speaking English more often?</p> <p>How often do you listen to music in English? Do you understand what they are singing?</p> <p>In the case you struggle with understanding the lyrics, do you look them up? How easy it is for you to understand once you read them?</p> <p>How relevant do you believe accent is when it comes to</p>

			speaking?
<p>II. Identify the presence of the Native-speakerism linguistic ideology in the evaluation method of the Chilean university students.</p>	<p>English education in Chile. Evaluation methods.</p>	<p>I. Results of the English learning process of the student.</p> <p>II. Perception of the effectiveness of the evaluation methods during the formal learning process of the students.</p>	<p>How was your experience with English when you were at school? How would you rate it?</p> <p>Would you say you learned English at school? Why? Why not?</p> <p>How are your English classes at university? Do you enjoy them? Why?</p> <p>Would you say your English level has improved from</p>



			<p>where you were at school?</p> <p>Where would you say it is the best place to learn English in our country?</p> <p>Has the internet played a part in your English learning process? Is it more effective than school?</p>
<p>Explore how the Native-speakerism ideology affects the way the students perceive their teachers.</p>	<p>English teachers in the Chilean education system. Native-speakerism ideology.</p>	<p>I. Personal perception of the student towards their English teachers during formal education.</p> <p>II. The teachers' English level according to the students.</p>	<p>How were your English teachers at school? Are they any different from the ones you have encountered at university? Why?</p> <p>What makes a good English teacher?</p> <p>How good were your teachers? Would you say they were experts at what they do?</p> <p>Would you have liked to be taught by a native English speaker?</p>

## **SECTION II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In the following chapter, several central concepts to the present research will be discussed. Firstly, it is necessary to understand the reach of the Field of Linguistic Anthropology (Duranti, 1997; Zanini Matos, 2006; Hymes, 1963; Korsbaek, 2003; Gumperz, 1974). Equally important are the notions of linguistic ideologies (Cisternas, 2017; Kroskity, 2015) that will contribute to shape the concept of Native-speakerism which was built on by several authors (Holliday, 2006; Lowe, 2020; Valdes, 1998; Chomsky, 1965). Self-perception of the students when learning foreign languages (Docherty, 2017; Mercer, 2011, Takahashi, 2009). Chilean English education (Robertson, et al. 2009; Aziza, 2020; MINEDUC, 2022; Lasekan, 2019; Barahona, 2016; Gomez, 2020). Information about teaching and evaluation methods are also crucial when speaking about the students' experiences. (Yilorm, 2016; Sheeba, 2020). Another section necessary to the research is the Perceived effectiveness of the evaluation method as it brings light into what students do. (Sheeba, 2020; Muñoz, et al. 2019). The Chilean context is built on by many authors (Gomez, 2020, Yilorm, 2016). and its teachers and professors. (Lasekan, 2019; Barahona 2016 ; MINEDUC, 2022).

## **2.1 KEY CONCEPTS**

### **2.1.1 The field of Linguistic Anthropology**

First and foremost, it is important to clarify the area of study to which this research belongs to. Duranti (1997) described Linguistic Anthropology as an interdisciplinary field dedicated to the study of language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice. A valuable insight into the field of Linguistic Anthropology is given by Zanini Matos (2006) who

explained that by focusing on the linguistic uses that occur within social life, one is able to explain the meaning that these linguistic forms can acquire according to the contexts they are used. In other words, a researcher can discover new ways in which the world is conceived depending on the use they are given in a specific society. From this perspective, linguistic anthropologists see the participants of their studies as “social actors”, that is, members of communities and at the same time, singular and complex (Zanini Matos, 2006). Moreover, Hymes (1963) explained that there was a practical need for the creation of Linguistic Anthropology and its creation is seemingly justified as both fields have the task of coordinating the knowledge about language from two different perspectives: the viewpoint of language itself and the viewpoint of man. In the author’s words, it is not possible to achieve the goal of linguistics without an anthropological perspective, that is, describing and classifying without the content of history. Korsbaek (2003) identified Linguistics’ inclination towards social sciences at the beginning of the 20th century with Sapir’s linguistic analysis of the cultural perspectives regarding American indigenous communities, which exposes that the relationship between Linguistics and Anthropology was indeed a need since the establishment of Linguistics as a field of study. Gumperz (1974) also reinforced the idea by stating that Linguistic anthropology is in the place to make great contributions as language is a store or repository of cultural knowledge and a symbol of social identity.

This interdisciplinary field is strongly characterized by fieldwork, where “Fieldworkers’ participation in the social life of the community must be recorded as systematically as possible. This is done by writing field notes and by transcribing recordings of social encounters, activities, and events. Field notes are important because they provide researchers with a chance to document important information (which is soon forgotten if not written down) and reflect on what they have just experienced” (Duranti, 1997, p. 8905). It can

be understood that the researcher's experiences and points of view are one of the most important aspects of Linguistic Anthropology.

### **2.1.2 LINGUISTIC IDEOLOGIES**

Although often complex, linguistic ideologies are used as a theoretic-conceptual tool to define the study of the ideas that speakers form about their own language or the language of others. (Cisternas, 2017). Throughout the past century, there were many attempts to define the notion of linguistic ideologies, and the only constant between them is that all the ideologies related to this concept were a product of various interactions between social position, linguistic practices, and many social variables. An interesting definition by Spolsky (as cited in Cisternas, 2017) tells that linguistic ideologies are a set of beliefs that a community holds regarding "appropriate" linguistic practices and how they assign a certain value and prestige to certain aspects of a language. This conception of linguistic ideology is especially relevant to the present work when the clear distinction between linguistic ideology and linguistic practice becomes apparent, that is, what people think is appropriate at a "linguistic" level and what is effectively performed by the speakers. Moreover, Kroskity (2015) commented that linguistic ideologies contribute to the understanding of a specific communities' models of language and discourse as it allows the researcher to perform deep sociocultural analysis. In other words, it is possible to obtain a broad and general view of a community's linguistic position and how intertwined it is with political or cultural conceptions. Kroskity gives special importance to Milroy & Milroy's Standard Language Ideology (as cited in Kroskity, 2015), an ideology that promotes a phenomenon the author defines as the 'Language subordination process', where a standard variation of language and other aspects of such culture is valorized while devaluing all others not included within the standard and its associated cultural forms. Consequently,

Native-speakerism is a linguistic ideology and cultural phenomenon that must be addressed as such.

### **2.1.3 NATIVE-SPEAKERISM**

Native-speakerism is a linguistic ideology with its roots in ELT (English Language Teaching), defined as the “belief that native-speaker teachers represent a ‘Western culture’ from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology” (Holliday, 2006, p. 385). Lowe (2020) commented that the term “native-speaker” was originally used as an objective category against which learners of a language can reliably be measured. However, many historical events related to the emergence of modern European nations and their growing global notoriety shifted the notions of this concept and gave birth to what a native speaker is today. According to Hackert (as cited in Lowe, 2020), the use of this term increased when Britain, threatened by the global spread of the English language and its American variation, sought to identify standards of their own English. Along with political incentives and ideas of linguistic nationalism, it can clearly be understood that the term native speaker was no longer as objective as intended. The creation of standards and the positioning of English-speaking countries as powerful nations led to the establishment of English as a global language. From there on, a clear path on how the modern conception of a native speaker was developed. Valdes (1998) also relates the good or bad judgment of a language or variation with the views of those in power.

Regarding the status of Native-speakerism as a linguistic ideology, Chomsky (1965) made relevant observations about the status of linguistic theory and how it was strongly related to the idea of a highly idealized native speaker:

“Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.” (p. 3)

The idealization of a native speaker and the eventual construction of Native-speakerism as an ideology came together from the concerns linguistic study had regarding language. Consequently, these idealizations disguised as linguistic theory made their way into the field of ELT.

### **2.1.3.1 NATIVE-SPEAKERISM IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN CHILE**

According to Turnbull (2016), there are two views which speakers of more than one language are considered: the monolingual and bilingual perspectives. The first one assumes the students' L2 has been added to their L1 and it is their goal to create ‘two monolinguals inside one head’ and their proficiency in such language is measured against a native speaker, whereas the bilingual perspective holds that all the languages the speaker knows are part of the totality of their linguistic system and it is accepted that it might differ from a monolingual speaker. This is relevant as ELT is often approached from a monolingual perspective and constantly expects the student to perform as a native speaker. Cook (1999) recognizes an issue within this field: “ (...) the prominence of the native speaker in language teaching has obscured the distinctive nature of the successful L2 learner and created an unattainable goal for L2 learners” (p.185). The figure of a native speaker is often defined as the speaker of their first language,

that is, the language they grew up speaking and acquired during childhood (Cook, 1999). As the author commented, it is impossible to be a native speaker of a language the student did not learn during their upbringing unless that specific individual grew up in a multilingual household. However, this goal is still expected of many L2 English learners. Another point of interest in her research (Kramsch, as cited in Cook, 1999) is the way in which traditional methodologies of teaching based on the native speaker model tend to define language learners in terms of who they are not and might not ever be.

In the Chilean context, the monolingual perspective is very much alive in the national system of English education. A helpful example is the implementation of rules such as an “English-only” classroom (Lowe, 2020), where the student is restricted from using their native language to force the student to only use their English knowledge. The teachers also attempt to resort to L1 less often in order to expose the students to the target language as much as possible. In the words of Mineduc (2014), the fact that classes are not dictated completely in English could potentially harm the listening and speaking skills of the students. However, a relevant study pointed out by Mineduc (2014), which was conducted by Education First (EF), declared that Chile has a very low proficiency in the English language when compared to the selected countries in the study, earning the position 44<sup>o</sup> in the ranking list. In other words, the native speaker figure is highly relevant in Chile.

#### **2.1.4 SELF-PERCEPTION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Docherty (2017) defines language aptitude as how well a learner *learns* a language, but one of the many factors that affect the student’s learning process is the student’s attitude towards learning. Ellis (as cited in Docherty, 2017) states that a positive attitude from the



learner can truly enhance learning. However, we believe that a learner's attitude towards language learning is strongly influenced by self-concept. Mercer (2011, p. 336) breaks down the concept as "self-description judgment that includes an evaluation of competence and the feelings of self-worth associated with the judgment in question". In fact, the findings of a study conducted by Takahashi (2009) demonstrated that the students who perceived themselves as having higher English proficiency did score higher and achieved more. An interesting observation by Takahashi is the fact that the student's perception of high ability might have facilitated the learner's performance and also the high performance positively influenced the student's self-concept. Moreover, the positive results also lead to a higher motivation to learn the language.

### **2.1.5 CHILEAN ENGLISH EDUCATION**

Firstly, it is important to highlight that learning a new language is defined as second language acquisition, which means: "the process an individual goes through as he or she learns the elements of a new language, such as vocabulary, phonological components, grammatical structures, and writing systems." (Robertson & Ford, 2019, para. 3). Therefore, English education is the way to obtain a second language, English language to be specific. "In global world the importance of English cannot be denied and ignored since English is the most common language spoken everywhere." (Aziza, 2020, p. 22). It is not easy to miss how important English has become to global industries such as movies, fashion and music. In fact, it is a language widely taught across the globe: "there are 27 countries that have English as their secondary official language." (Aziza, 2020. p. 22). Furthermore, English is usually considered useful and important by learners in countries that do not speak the language. For example, the ministry of education in Chile stated: "English is the language of trips, tourism,

commerce, diplomacy, science, and academy, and our students will need it to be more connected to the world.” (MINEDUC, 2022). It is clear that learning English is conceived as a need and a step forward in cultural development.

According to Barahona (2016, p. 17), in Chile, “English became the compulsory foreign-language subject from the 5th to 12th grades at schools in the late 1990s.”. Nevertheless, according to Lasekan (2019) English language became an obligatory subject at schools in the late 90s. Over the last few years, Chile has been spreading the learning of English as a second language among its students. Consequently “In Chile, English as a foreign language (EFL) is unique in its status as the only compulsory foreign language of the national curriculum that all schools must teach from the fifth grade.” (Gomez, 2020, para. 6). According to MINEDUC (2014), President Sebastián Piñera had set an objective to be a “*developed*” country by the end of the decade. In order to achieve this purpose, he suggests to “Foment the learning and development of the English language abilities among Chileans, to advantage our cultural and commercial insertion to a global world and improve the competitiveness of our labor and economic strength.” (MINEDUC, 2014). Therefore, college students of different areas such as science, and history, among others, are also submitted to obligatory English lessons regardless of their personal and academic interests.

#### **2.1.5.1 TEACHING AND EVALUATION METHODS.**

In the first place, teaching is a relevant aspect when it comes to acquiring a new language because teaching methods would define the student’s learning process. Moreover, this process could exclusively occur if there exists a teacher and a student who are the most important elements to initiate a teaching-learning process. Secondly, for this process to happen

in an accurate manner it should include “cultural components include objectives, content, methods, media, evaluation and organization forms.” (Yilorm, 2016, p. 105). Yilorm (2016) describes these terms by specifying that objectives are the purposes. Second, the content is described as something that has to do with the abilities, habits, and the process of the student learning new concepts. Third, those methods have to be creative, productive, and participative. Fourth, the media is related directly to the methods, and instruments you could employ to facilitate the learning. Next, evaluations are necessary to the learning-teaching process because it lets the teacher know if the objectives have been reached by the students. Finally, organization forms that include all the components of the teaching-learning process.

On top of that, evaluation methods are relevant to complement the teaching process, “The need for evaluation is to assess students’ achievement & to diagnose their learning difficulties.” (Sheeba, 2020, p. 4). As Sheeba (2020) says, testing techniques are fundamental to recognize the progress of the student, nevertheless, in order to do that, it is significant that the teacher has a complete understanding of what his instructional task is and what he is trying to accomplish by teaching English.

#### **2.1.5.2 PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EVALUATION METHOD.**

There exist different testing techniques to evaluate the progress of the student in the subject, according to Sheeba (2020) there are essays, short answers, objective tests, and oral tests. Even though the effectiveness of these types of evaluation methods has not been proven, these are the most common testing techniques when it comes to acquiring a second language. It is interesting how essential assessments are for teachers more than for students. Often the results of evaluations allow the teacher to assemble the necessary adjustments in their teaching

process to generate a more profitable result for the student's acquisition process. Therefore, teachers could do improvements in what they instruct, notice the weaknesses of the students and reinforce that area in the teaching process.

On the other hand, Muñoz, et al. (2019) talks about two types of assessment procedures, traditional and alternative evaluation. He says that the former includes testing practices in which some aspects of reality are gathered in an objective manner, while the latter is focused on a set of practices that pretend to measure reality in a less objective way. In his essay, it is mentioned; "the fact that traditional testing practices tend to cause, more often than not, high levels of anxiety in learners and in teachers alike." (Muñoz, et al. 2019, p. 100). Therefore, it could be inferred that traditional evaluations are not the best for the improvement of the student and teacher, both of them seem to be affected by the manner of evaluation in the teaching process. Meanwhile, an alternative assessment could be effective in the development of the teaching process because it is more competent to motivate the student and teacher. The innovation of creative, imaginative methods to evaluate a process transforms the procedure into a pleasant experience, instead of a stressful and intimidating situation of evaluation.

### **2.1.5.3 PROBLEMS WITHIN THE CHILEAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

English education has been promoted by the Chilean authorities during the last decades, provoking an increase in programs for English teacher preparation. Nevertheless, the initiative of these programs does not secure a proper level of education in the new language. According to Gomez, et al. (2020, para. 6) "the vast majority of these programs have mainly followed a traditional approach to language teaching, focusing on structural or grammatical curricula that concentrate on teacher-centered methodologies." It has been discussed that traditional

instruction is not the ideal education method because it can provoke anxiety in teachers and students, however, in Chile, it seems to be the preference at the moment of teaching. English programs are now focusing on traditional teaching which includes “Passive internalization of contents, mechanical reproduction, rote learning, curricular criteria that do not provide the basic needs of the development of all the students, focalization in the teaching process instead of the quality of the learning, teacher as the possessor and transmitter of knowledge, unidirectional communication, books as exclusive content sources and nonsignificant educational contents.” (Yilorm, 2016, p. 107). This manner of education is not productive because students are just learning repetition, they are not learning natural communication in the English language. Outdated teaching programs employed in Chile are leaving behind the level of English in students. The prioritization of learning grammatical figures, “limiting students to the mechanical reproduction of contents” (Yilorm, 2016, p. 104), rather than practicing real communication in the language, leaves an open gap to committing mistakes for the student when it comes to the authentic situation of English communication, it is typical that students would not know how to respond in dialogue because of the education program they were submitted.

#### **2.1.5.4 CHILEAN ENGLISH TEACHERS**

The increase of English education has led to the creation of programs for the formation of new English teachers. These programs aim to educate teachers to be proficient in the impartation of a second language. According to Lasekan (2019, para. 22). “In the Chilean pre-service English teacher program, student teachers are trained to teach students in either primary or secondary local school”. Besides, English teachers need to reach a specific level of English to practice teaching, “The minimum level of English required for qualification as an English

teacher is the CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) C1 level of English, which is equivalent to the Cambridge CAE level of English.” (Lasekan, 2019, para. 22). However, according to MINEDUC (2014) 58% of English teachers in Chile have just reached a B2 level, and only 18% have reached a C1 level, which is the ideal for a professional who imparts the language. Besides, “17% of professionals that impart English in Chile have no teacher training, and 96% have no language proficiency.” (MINEDUC, 2014, p. 16). Therefore, it can be inferred that the preparation of English teachers in Chile is not accurate according to the result of the study that MINEDUC has conducted. Furthermore, Barahona (2016, p. 20) says in her book; “that pre-service teachers use their beliefs, the curriculum and practicum as tools that enable them to gain knowledge and skills to act as teachers of English in schools.”

## **CHAPTER III: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

The following section presents the main findings of the present study along with its corresponding analysis and comments on said findings. To begin, the first objective related to the self-definition and self-perception of the participants will be analyzed and interpreted through various sections under the concepts of their real-life English use in social media and gaming and their effects on language acquisition (Khan, 2016: Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). These ideas of English language acquisition through media consumption will also be discussed critically under the considerations of Linguistic imperialism (Philipson, 2018). Furthermore, another aspect considered essential to the present research is the relationship between self-definition and English skills, and the relationship and use of those skills from the learners' point of view. (Renandy, 2022: Gazette, 2021: Cárcamo, 2017: Büyükahıska, 2020: Globify, 2022: Dong, 2018: Williams, 2012). Born from this discussion, language anxiety also became an important notion to comprehend and clarify (Aydin, 2008). Additionally, the figure of the idealized native speaker was found to be present in the discussion held with the participants regarding English proficiency tests according to the relevance such attitudes had with the research (Bhattacharyya, 2013: Jenkins & Leung, 2019) and the importance the results of such tests were considered.

### **3.1 SELF-DEFINITION OF THE LEARNERS REGARDING THEIR ENGLISH LEVEL**

In order to tackle the first objective of the present study, the discussion with the participants revealed they believed their use for the English language had a connection with their own self-definition and perceived level of proficiency. Through a critical lens, these ideas will be contemplated through the definition of Linguistic imperialism and its causal relationship with the self-definition of the students.



### 3.1.1 THE PARTICIPANTS' USES FOR ENGLISH AS A SELF-DEFINITION

The participants felt inclined to define themselves as English users by describing the way in which they used English in their daily lives in terms of what use they had for the language. Many of the answers revolved around the same topics which stated they used English during their leisure time: gaming and social media. The idea of learning a new language or L2 through social media is not new and has been said to bring many benefits to the learner; according to Khan et al. (2016, p. 591) “Social media plays a dominant role in English language learning because it provides opportunities to the English language learners to improve their writing, reading, and similarly, to read new text and phrases to improve their vocabulary” as it continuously forces the learner to acquire meaning and sense to the content that is being consumed. Moreover, the participants who mentioned gaming as an English source declared they often engage in online multi-player games where they win against other teams formed of other players, where in the words of Sylvén & Sundqvist (2012) is said to be beneficial for L2 learning “In order to be able to play these games, the L2 linguistic input must be understood and, therefore, it is not a far-fetched hypothesis that successful and frequent players of such games who do not have English as their mother tongue acquire some of their English L2 proficiency in the activity of gaming.” (p. 303) where motivation plays the main role of subconsciously allowing the players to integrate English into their vocabulary in order to be able to communicate with foreign players or inform game-specific situations.

However, it would be interesting to consider why Chilean learners only use English when it comes to content consumption. The first idea that comes to mind is the concept of Linguistic imperialism, defined by Phillipson (2018, para. 1), where he stated that “Linguistic

imperialism interlocks with a structure of imperialism in culture, education, the media, communication, the economy, politics (...) The dominance is hegemonic since it is internalized and naturalized as being “normal.” In other words, it can be interpreted that Linguistic imperialism is one of the reasons why a larger percentage of the content that is distributed throughout the world is in English. The participants expressed ideas that were in accordance with these conceptions: *“Es que no sé... por ejemplo en el lado inglés de Tiktok siempre salen las cosas virales, como trends que todos cachan. Saber inglés te da esa mano, tipo ahora es como normal responder las fotos de instagram de tus amigos con girl o so pretty o cosas así. Sí, así como los gringos // It's just, I don't know... For example, in the English part of Tiktok there are always the viral things, like trends that everybody knows. Knowing English gives you that opportunity. Now it is like normal answering Instagram photos of your friend with things like “girl” or “so pretty”, or things like that”*. Through this observation, it could be possible to conclude that the English-speaking part of the world has an active influence over the young portion of Chile where they wish to follow trends or vocabulary, they deem captivating or gives the user a supposed superior feeling to them. In fact, it was explicitly commented by a participant: *“Sipo, igual cuando cachai las palabras gringas y las puedes enseñar a otros te sentis bacán // Yes, when you know English words and you can teach it to others you feel amazing.”* which further confirms the existence of Linguistic imperialism as an ideology over the self-definition of the Chilean users of English.

### 3.1.2 ENGLISH ABILITIES OR SKILLS

As we have been discussing, English is considered important mostly because there is an existing linguistic imperialism that is related to the consumption of English in spaces of entertainment. Nevertheless, people can consume English and still not recognize themselves as

users of the language, probably caused by the self-perception of their English abilities. Language ability is defined by Cambridge Assessment English (n. d.) as “the ability to use language accurately and appropriately when interacting with learners and other teachers.”. In the spectrum of English learning, there are four skills considered to be the most important to develop the language: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The participants discussed these four skills, however, the one that brought up more debate was speaking ability.

### 3.1.2.1 SPEAKING ABILITY OR SKILL

Learning how to speak a new language has never been uncomplicated. According to Renandy et al. (2022), students “may be able to listen or read with a fair degree of comprehension and they might even be able to communicate in writing but communicating orally in the language poses a special challenge.” (para. 2) Regarding the present research, the participants expressed ideas not far from this statement, “*Si, creo que yo - yo entiendo pero no sé si pueda responder de forma inmediata sino que uno en la mente trata de hacer la traducción de español inglés y en la mente buscar las palabras para decirlo entonces yo creo que me demoraría un poco más en - pero lo entiendo // Yes, I believe that I - I understand but I don't know if I could answer immediately because I try to do the translation of spanish to english and in my mind searching for the words to say it, so I believe It would take me a while - but I understand.*”, which could be interpreted that comprehension is not related to their difficulty to speak. In fact, it is also understood from that statement that the process of attempting to translate the words from your original language to the one you are learning and vice versa hinders the communication process.

According to Khan & Ali (2010, p. 3576) “Speech is the prime means of communication and the structure of the society itself would be substantially different if we had failed to develop communication through speech” which is a clear fact as most of the activities people do in their daily life involve talking. Furthermore, the participants expressed an interesting idea regarding speaking ability: “*Yo creo que se catcha al tiro si sabes inglés si lo hablas bien, más que escribir o cualquier otra cosa - como que no te falta nada más // I believe that it can be noticed quickly if you know english if you speak it well, more than writing or anything else - like you don't need nothing else*”. Therefore, it is possible to state in this context that a polished speaking ability equals overall proficiency, meaning general knowledge and efficient use of English as a whole. This consideration makes speaking ability the most important skill to be validated as an English user.

However, it was clear during the interviews that many participants often preferred not to speak English in any given situation. The most important factors that were found that stopped the participants from exploring and improving their speaking skill is linguistic insecurity and language anxiety, which we believe to be related. Linguistic insecurity is based on the perception of a lack of correctness regarding one's speech, further, Gazette News (2021) describes this term as "a perception, a belief or a feeling that the language variety one uses or the way one speaks a particular language is not legitimate or valued in society" (para. 1), a concern that was mirrored by participants: “*La verdad, yo evito las situaciones en las que tengo que hablar inglés. Porque.. eeh... Me da como nervios, o vergüenza que no entiendan lo que digo.. oh.. se burlen por mi.. como hablo // The truth is, I avoid situations in which I have to speak English. Because... mmm... It makes me nervous, or ashamed of not being understood ... or... being mocked at because of my .. like the way I talk*”, where it could be seen that the participants felt insecure about their English as a whole because of their difficulty to effectively

communicate orally. Furthermore, the group of participants belonging to basic or intermediate levels unanimously agreed they commonly felt fear of making mistakes when using any English skill. In fact, they mentioned: *“No sé, me da miedo que no me entiendan porque sé que me corto mucho, como que doy muchas vueltas para hablar. Hablo inglés así como tarzán y el acento no me apaña tampoco // I don’t know, I’m afraid of not being understood because I know that I hesitate too much, like I get confused. I speak English like Tarzan and the accent does not help me either.”* In other words, because they struggled to utter complete sentences, language anxiety appeared, which is why oftentimes they decide not to engage in English conversations or pursue learning opportunities.

### **3.1.2.1.1 LANGUAGE ANXIETY AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE SELF-DEFINITION OF THE LEARNERS**

According to Aydin (2008), the learning process of a foreign language is unique to each student and there might be a number of variables affecting this process. Language anxiety must be considered inside these variables as it is an affective state that greatly hinders achievement in a foreign language. The author also defines language anxiety as “the apprehension experienced when a specific situation requires the use of a second language in which the individual is not fully proficient” (p. 423) where three variables are present: 1) Communication apprehension, where learners lack communication skills despite their thoughts and wishes. 2) Test anxiety where they struggle with academic evaluations, most commonly based on the fear of failure; and finally, 3) Fear of negative evaluation that occurs when learners feel they do not have the abilities to achieve the desired social impression.

As previously mentioned, basic-level students mostly experience the first and second types of fear. We believe they are connected as it is because they are aware of their difficulties and feel extremely uncomfortable when speaking English which causes anxiety. Moreover, this anxiety is exacerbated by the fear of these experiences being reflected in their academic evaluations. A participant introduced an interesting idea: *“Es estresante la verdad... como que sé que tengo que aprender y eso pero el hecho de que me fuercen a hablar me saca de onda. Es como un círculo vicioso porque al final termino las pruebas y no quiero saber nada más de inglés porque sé que me fue mal // To be honest, it's stressful.. like I know I have to learn but the fact of being forced to speak makes me uncomfortable. It's like a vicious circle because at the end I finish the tests and I don't wanna know anything else about English because I know I did it wrong.”* To consider this a vicious circle is helpful because it illustrates what exactly the students face when interacting with the language.

Surprisingly, the picture does not greatly differ when conversing with the participants with an intermediate to advanced level of English. The participants expressed they do still feel anxiety or fear but it tends to be outside the classroom: *“La verdad las pruebas no me dan miedo ni tampoco hablar con ningún profe, la verdad me da cosa hablar con gringos porque en volá no me van a entender pero si soy super honesto lo que más incomoda es que la gente alrededor tuyo te molesta caleta si sabes inglés y lo muestras // The truth is, I'm not afraid of tests neither to speak with a teacher, the truth is that I'm scared of speaking with grubos because maybe they would not understand me, but if I'm being very honest, what bothers me the most is that the people around you will mock you a lot if you know English and you show it.”* It can be understood that the most common fear they experience is the third type according to Aydin as they are pressured by social impressions. However, it is also important to address the embarrassment-driven anxiety the more advanced users of English face in Chile. It was

interesting as they mentioned they would often pretend they do not know English in order to avoid being forced to show their skills: *“Sipo, la gente te molesta caleta. Igual uno trata de afinar el acento o cosas así pero te dicen uy eres gringo o que te creís, cosas así. A veces me hago el weon y digo que no cacho porque da lo mismo si quieres enseñar o ayudar a alguien, igual te pueden molestar o decir a ver habla inglés y si no suenas full gringo se decepcionan // Yes, people bother you a lot. One tries to do the accents or things like that but they tell “you want to be like a gringo” or “who do you think you are”, things like that. Sometimes I play the fool and say that I don’t know because it doesn’t matter if you want to teach or help somebody out, they will still mock you. Moreover, if you speak English and do not sound like a American they will get disappointed”* In other words, they do not only feel anxiety over speaking English in possible scenarios such as talking to an English-speaking person but also whether they are able to fulfill the expected standard among Chileans. Many of these reasons are often why competent Chilean English users prefer not to use their skills or act, which could also be harmful to their level as they choose not to practice it.

### **3.1.2.2 LISTENING SKILL OR ABILITY**

The act of hearing is crucial for understanding the communication process. A developed listening skill helps to create a better experience while communicating with others and also eases the communication process. It is possible to affirm that the listening skill could be more developed than any other ability because this activity is easy to practice because it is present in daily life. such as the metro station, music, and TV shows which makes it accessible. In the same way, Cárcamo (2017) stated that “Although EFL learners may not have many opportunities to speak, read, or write in English, they seem to have more chances to put their listening skills to use.” (p. 50). As explained by the author, it is predictable that people use their

listening skills while learning a new language because the rest of the abilities tend to be more problematic for the students, some of the participants in our research mentioned *“Escuchar para mi es lo que mejor se me da, hablar se me dificulta más porque no tengo tanta practica // Listening is easier for me than speaking because I don’t have too much practice in speaking”*. Therefore, listening could be considered a more advanced skill in Chilean learners.

However, the participants brought to light the fact that they are only familiarized with the most consumed accents as described in the section regarding linguistic imperialism. The existence of dialectal variation might pose as a challenge for English users. According to Büyükahıska (2020, p. 1369): “Since the English language is used as a lingua franca, accent is one distinctive matter of this diversity.” but diversity did not seem to be an idea present in the participants as they would only recognize the well-established variations: *“El que más entiendo es el de los gringos porque hay mucho contenido en internet, hay mucha exposición a ese idioma // I understand more American English because there is a lot of content on internet, we are exposed to that language”*, which further confirms the hold linguistic imperialism might have on the participants.

Surely, the listening skill was the English skill the participants were most comfortable with as it had been effectively integrated into their daily lives whether it is because of their classes, leisure time activities, or transportation.

### **3.1.2.3 READING AND WRITING ABILITIES/SKILLS**

Reading is considered an important skill for students and also workers because there is a lot of content on the internet which only exists in English. “Today, English is the only language that



provides us with the latest knowledge. It is the language of business, science, etiquette and innovations.’ (Globify, 2022, para 10). It is impossible to deny that most of the updated information is in English, a fact considered by the participants’ comments discussed in the previous sections. Globify (2022) also posted the percentage of information that is in English, being “44.29% of information production is in English. Around 57% of the Internet content is in English. 22% of books are published in English worldwide.” (para. 12). Moreover, participants interpreted this as a motivation for learning the language, *“básicamente internet está como conformado, el 90% de weas es en inglés, entonces yo le digo como “wn queris tener más acceso a memes”, “más acceso a información de cualquier tipo”, aprende inglés cachai. No sé, encuentro que es provechoso // Basically, 90% of the content on the internet is in English, so I say to my friend “dude, do you want to have more access to memes” “more access to information of any type” learn English. I don’t know, I find it useful”*. Again, participants were encouraged to learn reading in English because of how useful it could be to access information or media content. Additionally, one participant stated: *“leerlo no me dificulta mucho, porque a lo mejor si no me se una palabra me saltó a la otra y conozco la idea. como por oracion // Reading is not so difficult for me because if I don’t know a word, I jump to the other and I know the idea. Like, by context.”* As revealed by this input, the participant expressed that they might not be able to understand the sentence fully at first read but it is possible for them to guess the meaning based on context. The importance of developing the reading skill is because “Reading offers students a wider range of vocabulary and grammar, it essentially supports and feeds the brain with the correct language structures.” (Dong, 2018, para. 2) which many of the participants could agree with since it effectively familiarizes them with the language coming from the fact that they are able to form meaning recognizing few words. Essentially, reading and listening are two skills that the participants of the present research were the most familiar with and had less trouble accessing information through these skills.

On the other hand, writing could be considered one of the most challenging skills to master, even for native speakers. Ideally, it is a requirement to have perfect grammar, punctuation, and spelling in written communication. Some of the participants considered writing as difficult as speaking; *“Y escribir y hablar están en el mismo nivel porque a veces escribo cosas en inglés y después las leo y encuentro un montón de errores y los voy corrigiendo, pero me pasa // Writing and speaking are on the same level because sometimes I write things in English, and then I read them and I find a lot of mistakes, and I go correcting them, but it happens.”*. It is natural to find it difficult, Zahibi (2017) commented that writing is the last language skill that L2 learners master, as even native speakers of their own language can make spelling mistakes unconsciously.

One of the most interesting aspects of writing skill in the Chilean context is that it is not deemed as important as any of the other three skills. In fact, many of the English words that are acquired during leisure time (social media and gaming) often undergo a transformation of category or are borrowed from English and adapted into Chilean Spanish. Language borrowing represents use of partially or fully adapted forms of L2 into L1. (Heath, 1984) which is the case for what the participants demonstrated: *“Sipo, uno dice que me deletaron es como que te mataron al tiro // Yes, when someone say “me deletaron” it’s like you have been instantly killed” “Cuando dai like... // When you give a like,,.”*. Those two examples evidence the use of L2 adapted into L1 as the English word “delete” is now used as “instantly killed” in a gaming context but it did not only change in meaning, but its form was also modified to fit into Spanish. In the same manner, “like” is also used as a noun instead of a verb, that is, you give a like to someone’s picture in social media rather than liking the picture itself. All of these interpretations came to the conclusion that writing as a skill is one of the last abilities Chilean students would master

as it does not hold the importance it might have for a native speaker or full-time student of the language. Moreover, the academic evaluation focused on essay writing or written body production is not common in mandatory English courses in Chile, but this factor will be discussed in depth in the following paragraphs.

### 3.1.3 ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TESTS AS SELF-DEFINITION

A percentage of the participants identified inside the intermediate to advanced levels of English introduced into the conversation the topic of English proficiency tests and the implications of said tests. Therefore, this section will analyze the impression the students produced or did not produce in relation to standardized tests such as the English proficiency tests available worldwide. In relation to this, the results of those tests were also considered for the analysis.

#### 3.1.3.1 NATIVENESS IDEALIZATION IN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TESTS

English proficiency tests have slowly made their way into Chilean society, where only in recent years it has become a factor to consider for the general population instead of English-related academic circles. However, the term general must be contemplated carefully as it is still viewed as a luxury by many Chilean people as enlightened by one of the participants: *“Sí, si sabia que existian esos tests pero una vez coticé que onda, asi cuanto costaban pero para mi son impagables. Si los fuera a dar tendría que estar trabajando y ahorrando, pero no creo que me sirvan de mucho en verdad // Yes, I knew that those tests existed, but once I saw how much it would cost and it was too expensive for me. If I take the test, I would have to be working and*

*saving, but I don't think it would be of much help taking the test*". There was also a small portion of participants who did not know such tests existed.

English proficiency tests are an example of standardized tests, which have been the focus of controversy for a long time. In other words, it is difficult to confidently state whether standardized tests are entirely beneficial or harmful to the student who decides to take on the challenge. Bhattacharyya et al. (2013) commented that the main criticism towards standardized tests comes from teachers who find themselves teaching students to pass the test instead of an all-around education. On the other hand, the author also noted standardized tests have also become an essential tool to record and determine a student's progress and also identify the existence of possible learning difficulties. Another point worth mentioning is that standardized tests must make assumptions about what every student is learning and the experience that has led to that knowledge. In other words, the knowledge they must acquire is and will be compared to the idealized figure of a native English speaker.

According to Jenkins & Leung (2019, p. 86) "The large scale internationally-marketed standardized English language tests have tended to be built on a stable portrayal of the English language" where they emphasize the fact that the market of English proficiency tests is rooted in the consideration that English is not only the global language but also the fact that it does not change in time and remains safe for every person to learn it as it will not suffer changes. In fact, it is the idea of idealization that facilitates the creation of tests that reflect the taker's performance (Jenkins & Leung, 2019). Idealization is not only applicable to test-taking and academic settings, but it is also seen socially and culturally by many learners and their peers. In relation to this, the market for English proficiency is dominated by two English-speaking countries: the United States and the United Kingdom. For objective purposes, we will not delve

into historical backgrounds and colonial wounds, but many of those events have helped those countries to establish themselves as leaders and worldwide capitals. Consequently, it is common to address those countries as “first-world nations” following the line of idealization and the prime example of what a country should be. Similarly, the idea of what an English speaker must sound like is directly related to these ideas and the notion of idealized nativeness is only reserved for the speakers of the USA and the UK. The participants of this study are unconsciously in line with these conceptions: *“Sipo, obvio... a quién no le gustaría hablar como británico? Si un chileno hablara como británico naturalmente inmediatamente destaca // Yes, of course... Who wouldn't like to speak like a British? If a Chilean spoke like a British naturally, he would immediately stand out”* where they agree with the aforementioned analysis.

### 3.1.3.2 ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TESTS RESULTS AS SELF-DEFINITION

As discussed, it is clear that English proficiency tests bring their own set of issues when considered as an idea and what they really entail. Furthermore, it was during the interviews that a group of participants classified inside the advanced level of English expressed they had taken the TOEIC tests when asked to give more information regarding their English level and skills: *“yo básicamente estoy en el B2 y tuve 700 y algo en toEIC. Intermedio alto? // I'm in B2 and I have 700 and something in the TOEIC. High intermediate?”* where they attributed their skill level to the test result. It is interesting to compare this answer to what another participant had commented: *“Yo creo que hablando sería como intermedio bajo, en letras no se como se mide. [...] y en escrito yo creo que sería más alto, es como más fácil. Y en escuchando, no se igual se me dificulta un poco. Pero entiendo más o menos la idea, si no me habla muy rápido // I think that speaking I would be like low intermediate, I don't know how it is measured.[...] and in writing I believe I would be higher, it is easier. And in listening, I don't know, it is a bit*

*difficult for me. But I understand more or less the idea, if they don't speak too fast.*" Another difference to highlight is the fact that the second participant mentioned has not taken any kind of English proficiency test.

Firstly, the participant who had taken the TOEIC exam expressed their skill level according to their test results instead of describing what they were like when facing the language. In a manner we believed to be unconscious, the participant relied on her TOEIC score not only to give the researchers an estimate of her skill level but also to define herself as an English user.

#### **3.1.4. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ACCENT REGARDING THE LEARNERS' ENGLISH LEVEL**

In accordance with the viewpoints of idealization mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the perception of the existing English accents came forward. In order to achieve this, it was necessary to report on the connection there is between accents and social stereotypes. In addition, the participants' input regarding accent as a defining factor regarding proficiency and perception was also commented on.

##### **3.1.4.1 PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH VARIETIES AND ACCENTS**

Following the presented results in the previous subsection, we come to see accents as relevant in Chilean society. It is common knowledge that there are several accents to the English language, also called dialect variation. (Tévar, 2014). Tévar gives a clear example of how accent is attached to certain mental and social stereotypes: "When a conversation through the telephone takes place, for instance, and we do not know the person at the other side of the line,

we create a mental image of him/her on the basis of his/her speech (accent, voice quality, lexis, etc.)” (p. 26), which is often times the process a person goes through when hearing a foreign accent.

Furthermore, the previous concepts we discussed regarding Nativeness Idealization naturally led us to the establishment of English as the global language. According to Juhi (2012, p. 128) “many ESL/EFL countries take native-accented English, especially General American English (GAE) or British English (Received Pronunciation: RP), as a model of their pronunciation for public school” which is exactly the case of Chilean schools and universities, but it is important to note that Chileans almost always tend to teach General American English over any other dialect. The participants of the present study are not familiar with many dialects of English: *“Yo no he tenido mucha práctica o he escuchado sobre los otros tipos como el británico o el escocés. el único que he escuchado es el americano, que es el que te enseñan, el que más se ve, que es más globalizado // I haven’t had a lot of practice or had listened about the other accents like British or Scottish. The only one I have heard is American, that is the one taught, the one we see more and the one globalized”*. This consideration correlates with the idea of prestige or native-accent idealization. It is also directly linked with the variation of English the participants consume in movies, TV shows, music, and so on. Therefore, it is possible to state that the only varieties of English that fall under the wing of ‘authenticity’ are GAE and RP.

Besides, there is a certain privilege in the RP and GAE which are considered as a standard of the English language, therefore the correct pronunciation to teach to L2 learners. And it is not only institutions that prefer teaching that pronunciation, but students also want to sound like natives of RP or GAE because “speakers’ accents and dialects are associated with listeners’ evaluation of speakers’ status, including wealth, education, competence, solidarity dimensions,

and perceived friendliness or kindness” (Juhi, 2012, p. 128). One of the participants demonstrated in part that this is true, by saying; *“Por mi parte yo creo que el británico sería como el que prefiero, porque es como más explicativo, aparte suena elegante // In my opinion, I believe that I prefer British because it’s like more explanatory, besides it sounds fancy”*. From our research, it is possible to state that Chileans tend to see RP as more attractive than any other variety of English. Coincidentally, the use of the adjective elegant to describe RP matches Juhi’s associations with the accents.

### 3.1.4.2 ACCENTS AS SELF-DEFINITION

Following the idea we just presented, Tévar (2014) gained interesting insight from the study he conducted regarding the attractiveness of RP: “RP is the accent considered “best” in the pilot study (table 5) as far as the level of studies is concerned. 100% of the participants think that the RP speaker possessed university studies, and nearly 77% thought he had either postgraduate studies or a PhD” (p. 59), which allows inferring that the preference for this accent is based on a social impression the English user wishes to fulfill when considering the perspective the present study is pushing forward

In fact, the participants also considered the accent a Chilean English speaker is able to produce as an indicator of positive traits: *“Se nota que sabe po, como que probablemente tuvo los recursos para estudiar bien // You can notice that he knows, like probably had the resources to have a good education”, “Una vez tuve un compa que era muy seco pal inglés, sonaba nativo - me dió siempre la impresión que era terrible mateo // Once, I had a classmate who was very good at English, he sounded native - it gave me the impression that he was very intellectual”*. Consequently, when the English pronunciation of a Chilean user of English



comes close to the idea of being native-like it is not only assumed the person comes from a wealthy family but is also immediately considered intelligent. In an English classroom, the accent the speaker uses is indeed a defining factor in how his/her peers perceive them. Additionally, the participants who possessed a higher level of proficiency and above-average speaking skills stated they have also been held under the same standards based on their English level.

Although the participants expressed they would have preferred to learn English and produce it as natively as possible, interesting ideas were brought forward regarding the importance of the accent when engaging with native speakers: “(...) *después de harto, uno o dos años más o menos, aprendes que el como yo pronuncio las cosas, las palabras, no es tan importante sino que importante es comunicarse y por ejemplo cuando una vez hablaba con gente de habla inglesa les decía como cortado así y me entendían y tampoco ninguno de ellos te va a decir que hablas mal el inglés o cosas así - entonces después como que el tiempo uno va aprendiendo que no es tan importante la pronunciación sino que dar el mensaje - va más por ahí. // After a long time, like one or two years, you learn that pronunciation of words is not so important, but communication is what matters, and for example once I was speaking with native speakers and I didn't talk to them fluently, but they understood me. And also, none of them would tell you that you speak English wrong or things like that- So, then with time, one starts learning that pronunciation does not matter, but giving the message does - it goes that way.*” Interestingly, a portion of the participants agreed on the fact that the accent would not pose as a greater problem when attempting to communicate as long as the message was correctly delivered. However, it must be highlighted that the participant is only referring to English-speaking people. In other words, the social impression Chilean users of English tend to be concerned

about is the one that occurs when interacting with a fellow Chilean user of English, a situation also covered in the section regarding language anxiety.

### **3.2 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

In relation to the second objective with reference to evaluation methods, three different kinds of testing commonly practiced in Chile will be analyzed: 1) Diagnostic testing, 2) Written tests, and 3) Oral tests. Each type of test is to be considered regarding its nature and the perception of the students towards them, where the degree of language anxiety each test caused played an important role.

#### **3.2.1 DIAGNOSTIC TESTING AND THE PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION**

As stated in the theoretical framework section, it is necessary to evaluate or assess the knowledge a student has acquired in order to track their progress. However, it is difficult to define what their progress actually is. Alderson (2005) states that as a learner progresses, so does their proficiency. Many Chilean schools, at the beginning of the academic year, run a diagnostic test in order to get a general picture of the English level of their students. Alderson comments that a diagnostic test “(...) seeks to identify those areas in which a student needs further help. These tests can be fairly general, and show, for example, whether a student needs particular help with one of the four main language skills; or they can be more specific, seeking perhaps to identify weaknesses in a student's use of grammar(...)” (Alderson, 1999, as cited in Alderson, 2005, p. 6). In our context, diagnostic tests are commonly based on the four language skills and not graded but it did not actually serve any purpose according to the participants: *“Siempre tuve pruebas diagnosticas de inglés en el colegio, eran casi siempre el primer dia*

*que tenias inglés en la semana pero realmente no significaban nada. Si te iba bien la clase no iba dirigida a ti, nunca te preguntaban nada, y me pasó varias veces que si contestaba al tiro me hacían uy // I'd always had diagnostic tests at school, they were always the first day of English class in the week, but they didn't mean anything. If you did it well, the class was not directed to you, they will never ask me anything and in many opportunities, if I answer fast, they will go "uyy"”. According to the participant, oftentimes diagnostic tests would not be of any benefit to the more advanced users of English as they would not only get ignored by their teachers but also not encouraged to learn more.*

However, it is important to report that the attitude of the participants towards diagnostic tests changed when they attended university. *“Sipo, en la u fue otra cosa. Nos ponían en inglés I o II dependiendo de como te iba e incluso te podías hasta eximir. // Yes, at university it was different. We could go in English I or II, depending on how you did, and even you could get exempted of the subject”* It is interesting to think that through this diagnostic system, the students did not only feel acknowledged but also could be rewarded as their English level would be too high for the classes available at university.

### **3.2.2 WRITTEN TESTS**

In the Chilean education system, written tests are the most common form of second language evaluation. The participants agreed on the fact that they tend to be around 2 to 3 pages long with questions on each side and it would normally include a listening comprehension item. These written tests were also grammar-focused and would not stray away from the instructional material reviewed during lessons. In the words of Bachman (1990) language ability is central to all language test development, but it must not only be based on skills and specific

components. The author also introduced the terms communicative language proficiency and communicative language ability that it constituted a broader view of language proficiency, a new direction into test making that would measure not only grammatical competence but also, “(...) discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competencies, but that are also ‘authentic’, in that they require test takers to interact with and process both the explicit linguistic information and the implicit illocutionary or functional meaning of the test material. “(Bachman, 1990, p. 4).

The participants had opinions similar to this view on testing: *“Las pruebas son como de memoria basicamente - si hiciste los ejercicios y te acuerdas, estai listo. Y los contenidos se repiten caleta en todas las pruebas // Tests are like memorization- If you did the exercises and remember them, you are ready. And the contents are similar in all tests”*. Therefore, it is possible to state that the participants tend to have a negative perception of writing tests, even if their results are negative or positive. The reason behind this is the fact that the participants in basic levels agreed that it is frustrating to face a test they did not have the abilities to complete, which would lead to frustration. Following the same reasoning, the students belonging to the intermediate to the advanced levels felt the tests would evaluate them on memory or fixed grammar formulas rather than their actually acquired knowledge. The previously discussed idea of ‘studying for the test’ becomes essential once again because the learners do not feel they learned anything outside of what was necessary to study for the test. There was not much literature available surrounding the perception and experiences of students regarding grammar-focused written tests. However, written tests are often seen as less stressful and less anxiety-inducing than oral testing according to a study conducted by Zeidner & Bensoussan (2014) and the participants of the present study could somehow agree: *“Igual según yo en las pruebas escritas igual puedes chamullar o tratar de achuntarle - en las pruebas orales se cacha altoque si sabes o no // In my opinion, in written tests you can invent or try to guess - in oral tests it is more obvious if you know or not”*. More specifically, Zeidner &

Bensooussan affirmed through their findings that the students viewed written exams as more valid than oral testing because a) they felt less pressure when taking written exams, b) they could express their thoughts more effectively, and c) the students could dedicate more time to thinking their answers and reviewing. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in Chile, essay producing is often not a requirement to be mindful of when taking a mandatory English course, which is where Zeidner and Bensoussan's study is pointing at. As stated previously, written tests in English from Chilean universities often expect the student to have grammar competence and listening skills, which could also be considered as another factor of anxiety.

### 3.2.3 ORAL TESTS

The format of oral testing varies across the world, where the general conception of the oral test is: "(...) speaking tests as 'particular types of speech situations. In contrast to everyday social interactions, tests are institutional interactions. Interactions governed by institutional constraints are, to varying degrees, goal-oriented and involve particular tasks, roles, and objectives of the interaction'" (Sandlund et al., 2016, p. 14). On an important note, this study is involved with the oral test format most commonly seen on English proficiency tests, which is not the case for what we are about to describe. We can agree that the oral tests performed in Chilean courses are institutionally constrained, but they also might be considered as vastly different in English mandatory courses. According to the participants, these tests would often not require direct interaction with the teacher: "(...) *Nos hacían hacer un dialogo que debíamos leer en clase frente a todos, teníamos que incluir los temas que estábamos viendo y vocabulario específico. Generalmente el profe no nos revisaba el guión antes de presentar... // We had to create a dialogue, which we had to read in class in front of everybody, we had to include the topics we were seeing and specific vocabulary. Generally, the teacher would not check our*

*dialogue before presenting.*”, instead they would encourage the students to form groups and come up with scripts related to the content they were studying. Another group of students stated they would read out loud fragments of a text the teacher had picked out beforehand, but the teacher would not offer immediate feedback. According to the participants, this is one of the less stressful evaluation instances: *“La verdad yo y mis compañeros sentíamos que era un trámite... como que en verdad no era tan serio y no nos evaluaba la pronunciación tampoco // Honestly, me and my classmates felt like it was just paperwork... like we didn’t take it too seriously, and pronunciation was not evaluated”*. Surprisingly, this is a universal experience for all the students we interviewed, from the basic to the intermediate to advanced levels.

However, the participants also stated it could hardly be considered an actual oral evaluation. Furthermore, the absence of guidance from the teacher made the students resort to automatic translation apps or ask more proficient classmates for help. According to Sandlund et al. (2016) oral proficiency is defined as the ability to converse with one or several interlocutors which are related to the concept of communicative language ability. They also state how important is for the learners to engage in meaningful communicative interactions. The tests described in the previous paragraph once again are grammar-focused and barely give the learner an opportunity to expand their vocabulary. It can be interpreted that the lack of meaningful opportunities to speak has led to the growing insecurity of many Chilean English users and the invalidation of peers as they are not normally allowed to freely explore the language in an educational setting.

### **3.3 PERCEPTION AND OPINION OF THE ENGLISH TEACHERS**

Students’ perceptions of their teachers could be relevant in their development of a certain skill or knowledge gain. Queensland Brain Institute stated that “The impact teachers have on student

learning is greater than other factors that often dominate public debate, such as class size, technology, individualized instruction, streaming by ability and changing school calendars or timetables.” (para. 3). Teachers can influence students to become better citizens and professionals, a good teacher will always be remembered by their students. Teaching English as a foreign language is probably more challenging than other subjects because teachers have to encourage the quieter ones as well as the more confident ones to practice the language. From this point of view, the participants’ perception of their teachers and academic lessons will be analyzed in accordance with the third and last objective of the present study.

### **3.3.1 PERCEPTION OF THE TEACHERS AND CLASSES IN CHILE**

In Chile, to become an English teacher it is needed to fulfill certain aspects, like having a degree in English pedagogy or having an accredited English level above B2. There are different requirements for schools and universities, for example, schools need “a career in English pedagogy. Moreover, it should be graduated as a primary or secondary education.” (Yoestudioidiomas, 2021, para. 3). In university English teachers should have “a college’s degree, master’s degree or a doctor’s degree, which must be acknowledged (...) The professional must be accredited with at least a C1 level in English.” (Yoestudioidiomas, 2021, para. 4 ). Therefore, English teachers should have advanced knowledge and management of the language, besides, a good ability to motivate students into learning the tongue.

Nevertheless, students are a significant part of the evolution of class and their growth as foreign language learners. Teachers require students' respect and motivation to accomplish progress in learning. A good affinity with students is key for teachers because they could have the best

aptitudes, though if students are not paying attention, those skills are not influential. For example, part of our participants has said; *“Por mi parte fue falta de nosotros los alumnos porque el profe te va a hablar en inglés y te va a responder en inglés casi siempre entonces si uno va más dispuesto a esa conversación fluida en inglés pero es cosa de uno practicarlo y tirarse al inglés porque uno a lo mejor por miedo no se tira a hablar en inglés // In my case, it was our fault, the students because the teacher would speak in English and answer you in English. So, as long as you were willing to have a fluent conversation in English, but it takes practice and also dare to speak English because it might be because of fear that one does not try to speak English”*. Clearly, teachers’ skills are being undervalued by the students because they are not taking part in the class. Probably, teachers were failing in maintaining a good balance between entertainment and discipline, as a participant said; *“Yo por mi parte siempre tuve profesores ingles bueno, osea. hablaban bien y todo eso.. pero no se.. siento que siempre nos enseñaban lo mismo entonces ehh.. como que perdía el interés // In my case, I always had good English teachers, they spoke well and everything.. but I don’t know.. I feel like they always taught us the same, so mm... I lost my interest”*. Therefore, part of the participation of the student goes far beyond the teachers’ abilities in the language, it also goes in the implementation of a didactic class, which should apply different sources to maintain the interest of the student in learning the language.

Even though the Ministry of Education in Chile, MINEDUC, has implemented a program called Inglés Abre Puertas (English Open Doors) (PIAP), English education is still poor in the country. Some of the participants talked about classes and they had said: *“fue casi lo mismo - siempre ha sido la misma estructura - en básica, media, la u, siempre ha sido la misma estructura así como que te enseñan lo básico pero solamente que va cambiando la velocidad de aprendizaje - lo que antes te demorabai tres meses en aprender, en la U te demorai o te lo*



*pasan en dos semanas // It was almost the same- it has always been the same structure - in preschool and highschool, university, it has always been the same structure, like they teach you the basic but changing the speed of the learning - What before took you three months to learn, it would now take two weeks at university".* The statement of the participant from his perception of classes demonstrates that there is a monotonous manner in which English is taught in institutions. Furthermore, it appears that classes are focused more in structure than in communication, not encouraging students to create conversation with their partners, as a participant explained: *"Yo en la u tuve 4 o 6 semestres seguidos de puro inglés - no osea - era más que nada gramática, palabras y estructura - conversación igual era poco pero la profe hacia toda la clase en inglés pero conversación de nosotros hacia ellos era muy poca en inglés - era toda en español pero ella de entender el inglés era fácil - ella hablaba toda la clase en inglés y daba toda la clase en inglés y en eso no habia drama pero nosotros hablar con ella no lo practicabamos pero tampoco era obligatorio // In the university I had 4 or 6 semester of just english - like - it was more grammar, words and structure - there wasn't a lot of conversation, but the teacher spoke English the entire class, but conversation from us to them in english was nonexistent, everything in spanish. However, it was easy to understand her English- She spoke in english all the class and that was no problem, but we didn't practice conversation with her, it wasn't obligatory."* In summary, English thinking seems to not be implemented inside classrooms, moreover, there is a preference for structural and repetitive classes.

## **CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

The following section is divided into two parts: the first one is the discussion section whereas the succeeding one is the conclusion of the present study. The discussion section will bring to light the key findings of the research, such as the perceived high difficulty of the speaking skill and its causal relationship with the Chilean education system. Moreover, the presence and effects of the Native-speakerism ideology will be discussed in order to answer the questions covered in the early sections of the research paper. Furthermore, the conclusion section will be built in order to give a general overview of the contents reviewed in this study. In the last section of the study, a brief comment will be made regarding the limitations of the study.

#### **4.1 DISCUSSION**

One of the very first things that were made clear early on in the research is the fact that the English language is rarely ever seen as a language or communication code. From the participants' answers, it could be understood that they would use English as a tool to achieve something else such as consuming content in English or communicating with foreign players in an online game. Considering the aforementioned considerations of Linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 2018), the social relevance of English in Chile is easily perceived as it is often used as a common ground for young Chileans to connect with their peers. However, it is necessary to question this phenomenon when the numbers reveal that 72% of the Chilean population belong to the basic levels of English proficiency, where they declared they could understand simple sentences but not build them (Santibañez, 2021). With this in mind, why would English be held to such a high degree of importance in Chilean society? Once again, the answer is related to the concept of Linguistic imperialism because the concept "(...) is the byproduct or natural outcome of social, cultural, military, economic, and political power. As a result, these

factors create a linguistic power ready to invade and dominate all the other linguistic domains in relation to the powers mentioned above” (Isik, 2008, p. 124). From our perspective, Chile is completely overpowered by the English-speaking nations previously mentioned not only in linguistic terms but also socially and politically. In fact, it is so severe that the participants expressed they felt more anxiety and fear over interacting in English with a fellow Chilean than making mistakes or speaking to a native English speaker. A great portion of the participants would prefer to hide their knowledge and avoid using their English in order to avoid uncomfortable situations. This interpretation has exhibited that there is social pressure among English learners because it is expected from them to demonstrate a standard level of the language.

These ideas are closely related to the Native-speakerism ideology which will be defined once again for a clearer picture. For objective purposes, the term ‘English native-speaker’ will be used to refer to those who learned English as their first language during their childhood as we consider it is the definition with less social prejudice regarding this concept. Previously, we commented that Native-speakerism is an ideology with its roots in ELT defined as the “belief that native-speaker teachers represent a ‘Western culture’ from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology” (Holliday, 2006, p. 385) which points to the fact that through the existence of these native teachers, not only the teaching methodology is enforced but also the culture from where it was born. We believe this theory cannot only be applied to the ELT and other teaching areas but also to a social perspective. It is also important to understand that although there are native speakers of every language in the world, it is rare to come across such an idealized language as English where all the products of their culture seem to be considered as an example for all other countries. Lowe (2020) makes an interesting comparison between Native-speakerism and systematic racism and states “Both

are systemic and foundational concepts which I believe underlie all aspects of the society they inhabit, and both influences, and are in turn influenced by, dominant social framing” where we can agree this is decidedly the case for English in Chile. Following this line of thought, Chileans have idealized English as a powerful and relevant cultural phenomenon which resulted in discrimination against local learners who do not fit inside the social requirements to be a true speaker of English. Consequently, we believe this is why many Chilean users of English prefer to suppress their English knowledge and behave accordingly.

Moreover, the fact that there are accents considered to be authentic in the English language is also a factor to consider in the concept of idealization. The participants openly associated certain accents such as the GAE or RP with positive characteristics, where the Chileans who were able to produce similar accents to the established ones were deemed as intelligent by their peers. It is possible to interpret that being a native speaker of English or being close to such a figure is advantageous and produces positive results in Chilean society. However, it was never considered that accent might not always equate to proficiency in the language as the participants’ stated accent was not as important as long as they were able to deliver a message. This fact might seem like a positive take on dialectal variety and diversity, which is also possible, but this opinion was directly referring to the lack of proficiency in the language related to accent. It is possible to infer that the notion of idealization is still present in this take as accent is still conceived as the goal in English proficiency. As a result, we can confidently state that Native-speakerism has negatively influenced the self-perception of Chilean students.

It would be natural to assume that the Chilean education system is actively seeking the achievement of these social requirements when it comes to the English language. For this reason, the Chilean government created a program titled ‘English Open Doors’ back in 2003

with large media coverage, a program still in force to this day. Glas (2008) studied the program in depth and discovered that 1) English is identified as the global language, 2) The English level of the country needs to be improved in order to guarantee economic development, and 3) The methodology needs to be updated by the use of new technologies and international aid. (p. 113). Personally, the connection made between learning English and economic development is interesting: it directly leads to the idea of English as the language of business and science we mentioned earlier. In other words, the Chilean government actively builds on the idealized narrative of English as a powerful tool that will bring the user great benefits and hence, to the country. It is undeniable that the Native-speakerism ideology is present within the foundations of the Chilean English education system.

However, it is necessary to question and consider how these policies are being practiced. As we mentioned before, close to 72% of the Chilean population stated they were not familiar with the language and could maintain conversations. It was also reported they could comprehend more than they could produce English effectively, which is similar to the situation involving the participants of the present study. Taking this information into account, it might be concluded that the goal of the program was not fulfilled. We believe the greatest issue is the way in which the language is taught. As participants told us, the classes of the language tend to be monotonous. Many of their activities and evaluations are centered around memorizing vocabulary and grammatical structures, with much of the same material being reviewed over and over each year (such as the internet jokes about the to-be verb). This has caused a robotization of the teaching process which greatly hinders the language acquisition process for a number of reasons: 1) Studying for the test, an action commonly practiced by the students as many of their evaluations involved memorization and/or recitation which eventually the student forgets because of 2) Lack of motivation due to the repetition of the material and uncomplicated

tests (as the oral tests the participants described) and 3) It does not offer real or meaningful communicative instances. As a result, the students are stopped from unwrapping their skills and effectively developing them which again relates to the reported difficulties in the speaking area and language anxiety. Further, the recreation of situations with false conversation seemed pointless because it places the student in an ideal circumstance, where the dialogue has already been practiced. On the face of it, there is a deep reinforcement of practices like mechanization and repetition of the language, effecting that students memorize content, instead of learning it. But what is the purpose of prioritizing memorization over learning? One of the reasons that occurred to us was the teaching methods were focused on imitating native speakers through reiteration, practiced conversation, and memorization.

It is widely known that motivation is one of the key factors in successfully acquiring a language. Ebata (2008) states that motivation plays a vital role in language learning, and it produces effective L2 communicators as it installs a positive self-concept and increases self-confidence. However, it is also mentioned that environmental support is a factor that builds motivation and leads to the active participation of the student. We believe the English teaching method in Chile is lacking in this aspect and does not motivate students to actively participate and get involved in their own learning process. This is also one of the reasons why the participants sought English from other sources such as social media and gaming because the participants felt motivated enough to learn by themselves and efficiently apply their acquired knowledge. Through doing this, the participants placed themselves in real communicative situations they needed to understand for one reason or another which led to successful learning. However, the Chilean education system has failed to replicate these conditions inside the classrooms. It is also important to mention that the participants did not consider their teachers to be an obstacle in their learning process, but we believe it is possible they might be reinforcing

ideas in line with the Native-speakerism ideology as told by the experiences of the participants. However, the participants did not have a negative perception of their teachers and recalled positive experiences which once again confirms the issue lays on the way the system is built.

Students are continuously taught English is a tool they must acquire in order to succeed and stand out among their peers. Native-speakerism has had a great influence on the self-perception of the students, the evaluation methods, and the teaching system. We also believe its impact is greater than we expected when considering our personal experiences. Oftentimes we have heard from former classmates, friends, and family opinions and desires related to leaving Chile in search of a better life, getting to know *rich* cultures, and also openly saying Chile is awful and that they would have been better off being born in North America; these kind of comments are endless. Following the line of social relevance English has a language and culture, we can interpret that Native-speakerism might be one of the reasons that caused the devaluation of Chile as a country, as a language speaker, and as a culture. It only might take a few searches on Twitter, for instance, to find posts from Chilean users related to these comments and ideas: Chileans do not know how to speak, there is a problem with the Chilean race, and Chilean TV is terrible. As a result, many Chileans have come to truly believe everything from outside of Chile is and always will be better than what Chile has to offer. For this reason, young people have started to idealize and set migration as a goal, especially to Europe or famous cities in the USA. This only comes to show how deeply engrained idealization is in Chilean society, not only in language production but also as a social phenomenon in the younger generations.

Truth to be told, a solution might be years or decades away. The ideas of the Native-speakerism ideology are firmly established in our culture, dating back to the colonial times when this conception of cultural superiority might have begun. In the same manner, it has taken all these



years to build these perspectives regarding English as a culture, it can be natural to expect the deconstruction of these social institutions might take an even longer time. It is necessary to find healthier and more engaging methods to actively involve the students in their learning process and diminish the social aspect of the language in Chile in order to be able to teach English for what it truly is: a language anybody can speak.

## **4.2 CONCLUSION**

This paper intended to characterize the influence of the linguistic ideology of Native-speakerism over Chilean students through three different aspects: 1) The influence of the ideology on the self-definition and self-perception of the participants, 2) The presence of the ideology in the evaluation methods conducted on the students and 3) the perception of the students regarding their teachers. Each of these aspects were the questions the present study sought to answer based on the recorded answers. Firstly, it was clear that Native-speakerism had a great influence on the way in which the participants perceived themselves as users of the language, especially when consuming content on the internet. The concept of linguistic imperialism gave a clearer picture of the social relevance English has in Chilean society. One of the most surprising aspects the research revealed is the manner in which the Chilean students experience language anxiety as it commonly occurs when interacting with fellow Chileans due to the pressure and social conception of what a true speaker of English must be, which further evidences the social phenomenon English has become and it is also directly related to the idealization of the figure of the native speaker of English.

Secondly, the evaluation methods the Chilean students experienced were not equivalent to the social pressure there is to be considered an English user in the country. It was found that many,

if not all, of the evaluation instances, were grammar and memorization focused. Although it might be considered as a positive characteristic of the Chilean education system to be concerned over grammar and correct construction of sentences, the participants expressed dissatisfaction because of the constant repetition of the material and the lack of motivation they felt over their classes and evaluation instances. The troubling aspect regarding evaluation methods is oral tests and what they entail. According to the participants, memorization of pronunciation and speech was by far the most relevant factor to the oral tests. Consequently, the system did not only fail to give the students meaningful learning opportunities but also continued to push the figure of the native speaker as the example for L2 learners. For this reason, we can state Native-speakerism has also influenced the evaluation methods and education system.

Finally, the perception of the teachers was relevant to the present research because they are the figures that represent the knowledge and in addition, the system and all its characteristics. Also, the teacher and the classes they dictate are considered as one single unit by the participants. However, it was revealed by the participants that teachers rarely posed as an issue during their academic life, and even commented they might have been at fault for failing to pay attention during class. Furthermore, there was the tendency to overlook the figure of the teacher and blame the monotonous classes and constant repetition of the material at fault for the lack of motivation existing among the students because the participants have experienced the same class setting throughout their entire life. As a result, we could not decidedly state that Native-speakerism has had an impact on the perception of English teachers in Chile, but it is surely relevant as the participants continue to criticize the education system.

To sum up, it is our intention to have shone a light on the considerations and implications Native-speakerism has over the Chilean English education system. Although the solution to these issues might seem difficult to accomplish, it is necessary to identify the problem before coming up with a solution. It was truly eye-opening for us as the researchers because there were many factors we would not have considered and truly did not expect the problem to be as deeply installed as a social construction in our country. The social relevancy English has in our country is a great obstacle to go over and surely hinders the Chilean desire to create healthy bilingual speakers who are free to unwrap themselves from social prejudice. We hope this study might be considered as a small step towards this goal and spread awareness regarding what Chilean people can do to slowly change this discriminatory mindset, and finally become the multicultural and free country Chile seeks to be.

#### **4.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

During the construction of the present body of research, we came across three major concerns. Firstly, it would have been optimal for the study to have found more participants who also belonged to the areas we had decided on during the planning process. It would have been very interesting to ensure and investigate how their connections to different careers (such as a medical student and a literature student) influenced their opinions on certain matters as the use of the language might have been different, a factor that was found to be relevant to the participants. However, due to time constraints and lack of interest by many early candidates led to the elimination of the variable. The second concern is related to the lack of perspectives and opinion about the figure of the English teacher in Chile which is probably actively undermined by the general dissatisfaction towards the English education system. It could be

beneficial to look into this phenomenon and closely analyze the considerations behind this occurrence.

Finally, the third and last concern is related to the constant search of genuine opinions and experiences from the Chilean students. We believe that, if possible, it would have been propitious for the study to additionally apply the Participant observation method and immerse in the participants' context and be able to gather information from witnessing their English classes and evaluations. Despite this, it was not possible for us to implement this method due to the difficulty to obtain permission from different universities and professors.

There are a number of papers that cover similar topics that could possibly fill in the gap uncovered by the present work. For instance, Mckay (2003) discusses the preference for native teachers in Chile and identifies a problem related to the lack of teaching cultural content related to the native English-speaking countries. The author also describes the figure of the Chilean English teacher more closely. In addition, Kormos & Kiddle (2013) studied the relationship between English learning motivations to students from different social classes in Chile, discovering important differences regarding self-regulation and learner autonomy caused by the inequality in the Chilean education system. Finally, Matear (2008) examines the initiative of the 'English Open Doors' program created in Chile within its context and its association with economic growth.

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