

# Native and Nonnative English-Speaking Teachers of English and Their Academic Literacy

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## Abstract

In the world today, the demand for English teachers is growing exponentially in wide-ranging contexts and for numerous purposes. Despite this demand, teachers who do not speak English as their first language continue to experience bias in hiring and in the workplace even when they are well-qualified. In the United States, where the immigrant population has grown and continues to grow significantly, TESOL programs are also scurrying to meet the demand for ESL teachers. The teacher learners themselves form a diverse pool of native (NES) and nonnative English (NNES) speakers with various backgrounds in language learning. This qualitative study delved into the academic writing of the NES and NNES participants, who were enrolled in a Master's in Education/TESOL program in New York. The purpose of this cross-sectional study was to investigate their literacy development and language learning to add to the growing body of research in this area, specifically to discover more about the background and needs of NESs and NNESs in teacher preparation programs.

This study explored the nature of literacy and language development among NES and NNES teacher learners through an analysis of surveys and a two-pronged textual analysis, which involved a thematic content analysis and a Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) analysis of the literacy and linguistic autobiographies that the participants wrote as part of their coursework. Specific observer perspectives offered within the SFL framework, in particular the experiential and interpersonal metafunctions, were used as tools to discover how the participants construed and negotiated their experiences of language and literacy. SysConc, an SFL concordancing tool, aided in the selection of targeted clause complexes with the pronominal "I" and words related to literacy, including *read*, *write*, *listen*, *speak*, *book*, *language*, and *learn*.

The interpretation of the data indicated that literacy learning and language development are complex, interactive, and sometimes emotionally charged processes, about which the participants often expressed themselves through non-assertive lexicogrammatical

choices. The comparison of data also revealed the people who most influenced the participants' language development, and the similarities and differences among their writings from the standpoint of grammatical intricacy. The research has implications for the development of literacy and the training of teachers of English.

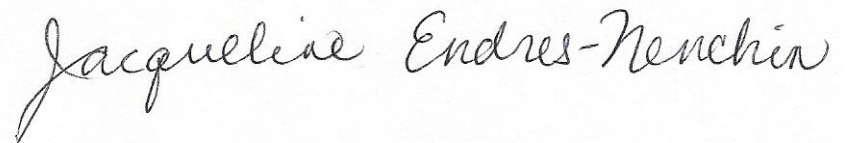


## Statement of Candidate

This thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other institution.

The research described herein was undertaken by myself alone, under the guidance of supervisors at Macquarie University, Sydney.

Approval for the research was obtained from Macquarie University Ethics Committee. The protocol number is: HE01MAY2009-D06527HS

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jacqueline Endres-Nenchin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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I would like to thank the seven postgraduate students who volunteered to be participants in my research. Their generosity of spirit and curiosity about the language learning process and their own literacy learning contributed invaluable to the research project.

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