

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKER: SELF-ASCRIBED AND NON- ELECTIVE IDENTITY IN CONFLICT

Ida Mauko, University of Helsinki, Finland

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INTRODUCTION



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NATIVE SPEAKER: WHAT MOST PEOPLE KNOW

- Mother tongue/first language (Bloomfield 1933)
- The native speaker as the authority on grammaticality (Chomsky 1957 →)



NATIVE SPEAKER “PROBLEMS”

- Bilingualism, multilingualism
 - **semilingualism?** (Edelsky 1983; Hinnenkamp 2005)
- Dominant language, home language (Davies 2003)



NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKER

- More problematic?
 - ESL and EFL countries
 - New evolving standards
- **Linguistic imperialism**
- **Language ownership**
 - Linguistic homogeneity and nation-state – image of the “pure” native speaker



IDENTITY: 3 APPROACHES

SELF-ASCRIBED IDENTITY

(Davies 2003)

- **Individual** chooses to identify as NS
- “A Singaporean, a Nigerian or an Indian might **see him/herself** as a native speaker of English but feel a lack of confidence in his/her native speakerness”

NON-ELECTIVE IDENTITY

(Brutt-Griffler & Samimy 2001; Escuredo & Sharwood Smith 2011)

- **Socially** constructed
- Relevant **language community** and **accent** is core

COMBINATION

(Han 2004)

- **Interplay**
- Individual considers themselves a NS, the society confirms their identity
- **Conflicts** (Faez 2011)

STUDY DESIGN



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INTERVIEWS

- 10 participants; diverse language backgrounds
 - Both NNES and NES
 - EFL, ESL, L1, bilingual
- Semi-structured
- Exploring **self-ascribed** identity

- 30-second extracts (survey)

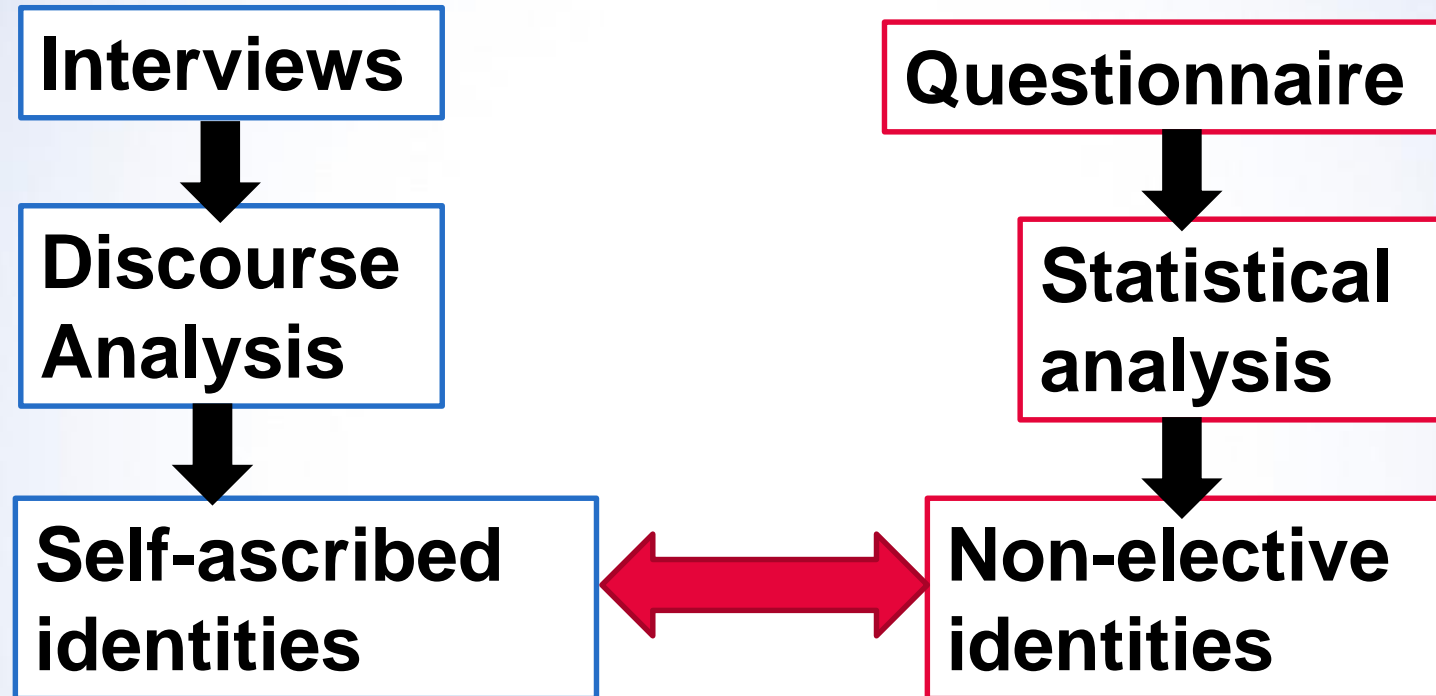


QUESTIONNAIRE

- Finnish university students
- Speech factors
- Origin
- NES/NNES classification
- Influential factors
- Exploring **non-elective** identity



METHODOLOGY



DISCREPANCIES?

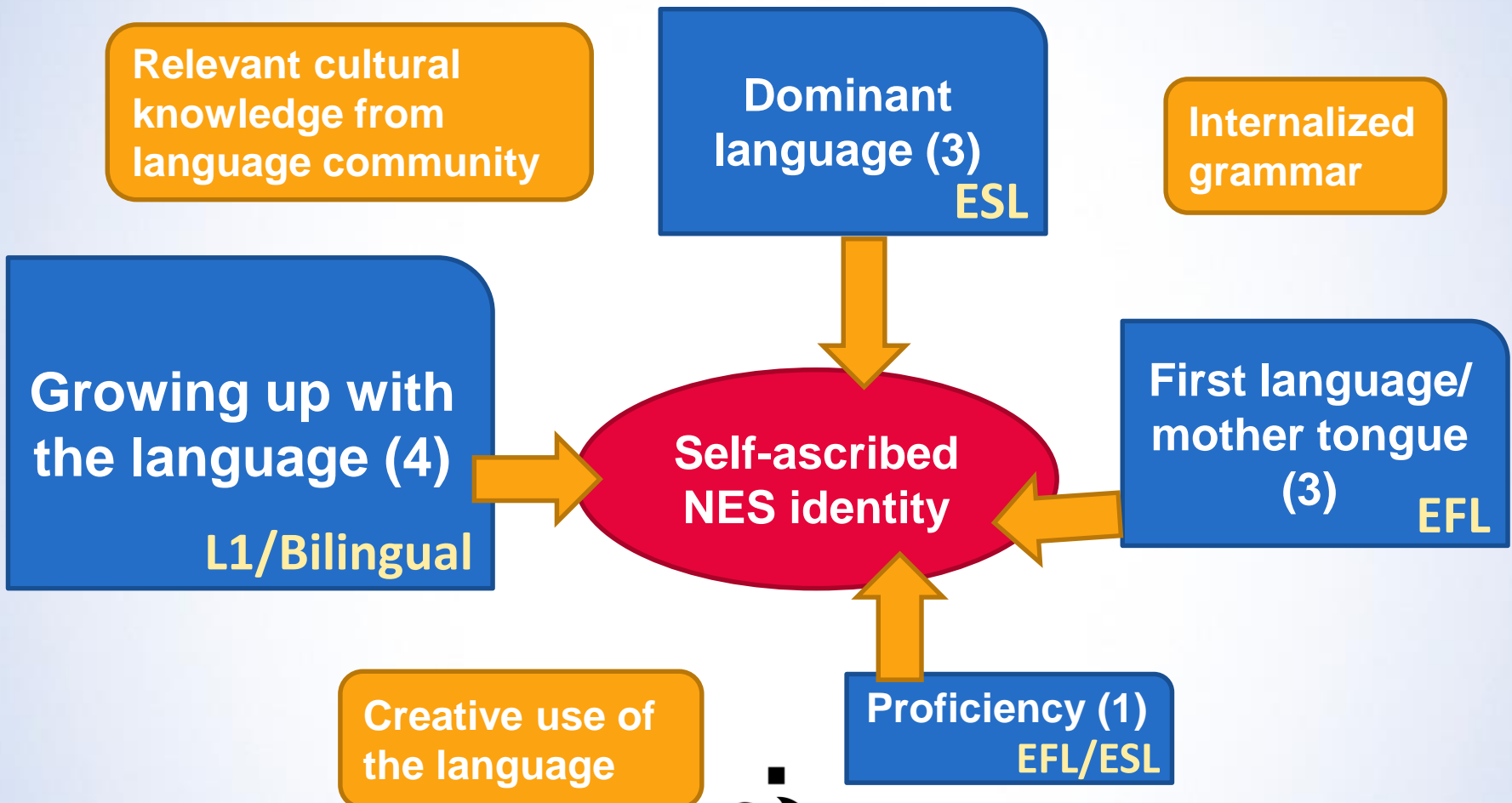


RESULTS



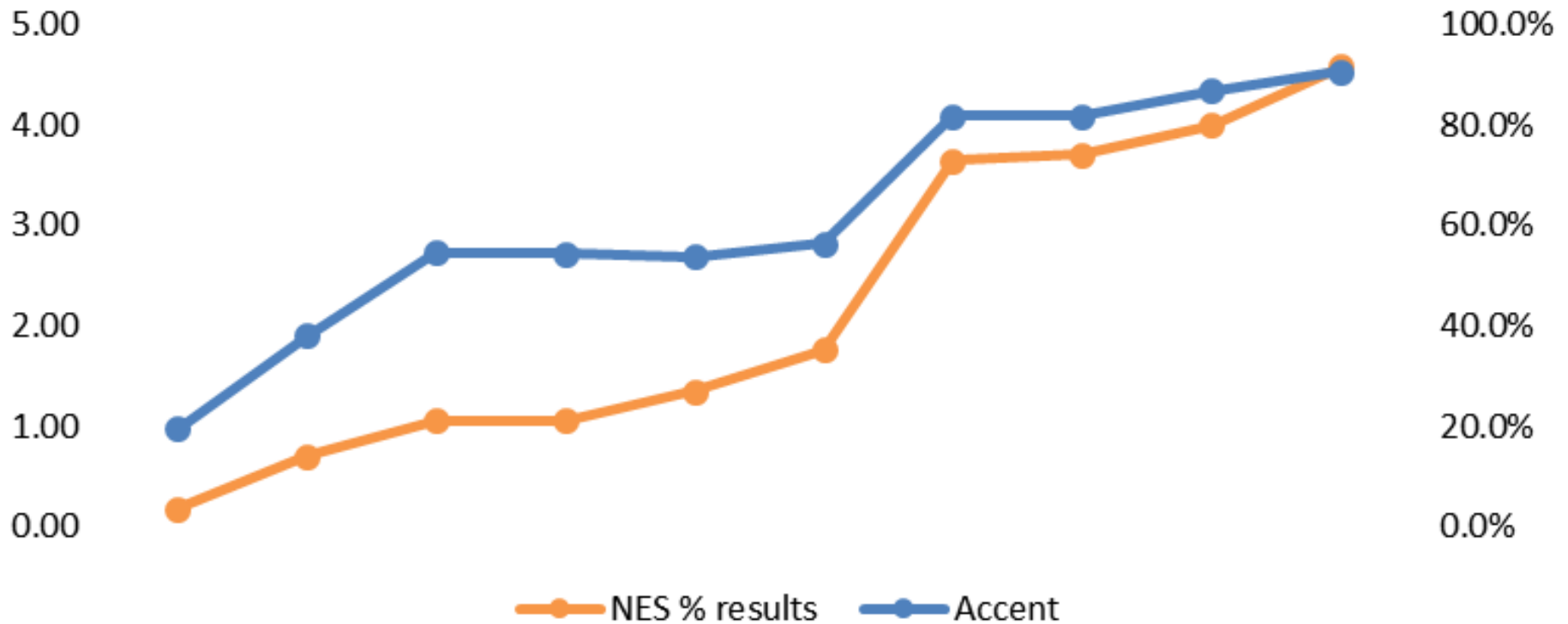
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INTERVIEWS



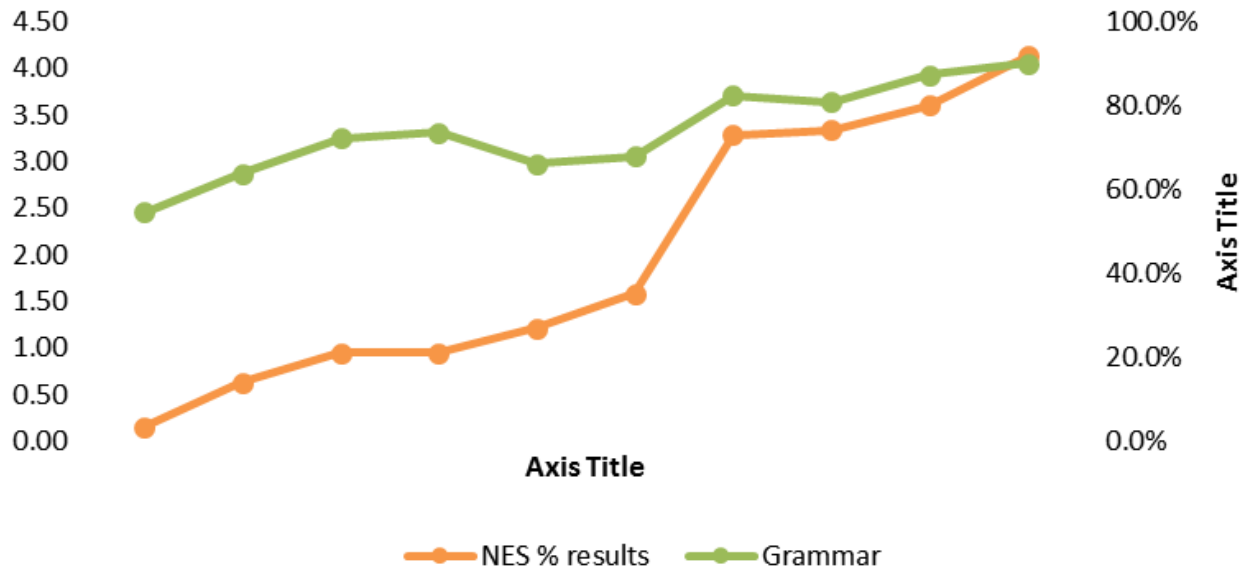
QUESTIONNAIRE

AVERAGE SCORES AND NES CLASSIFICATION

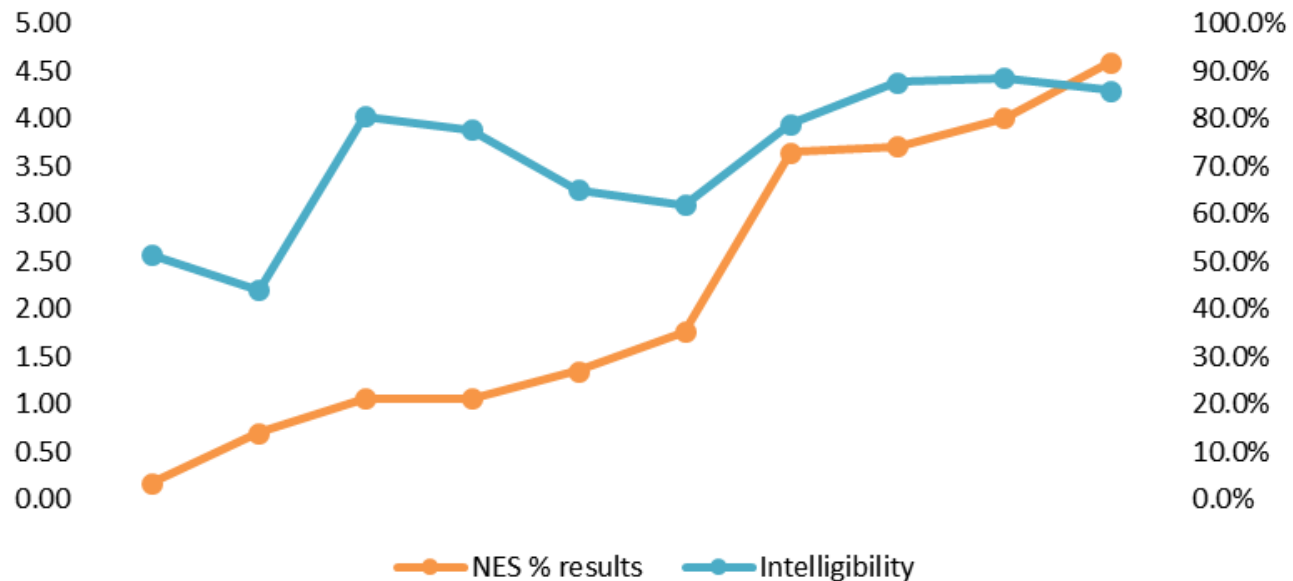


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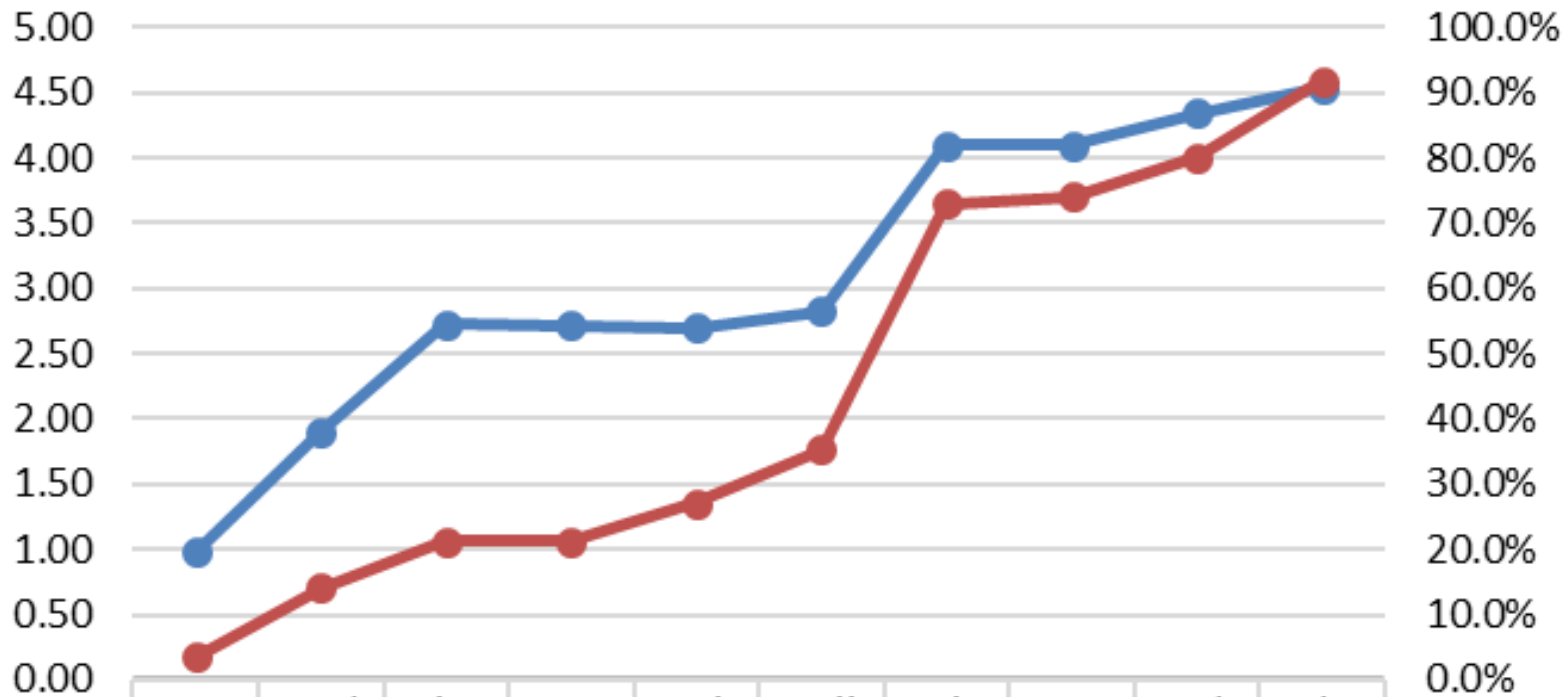
GRAMMAR AND NES CLASSIFICATION



INTELLIGIBILITY AND NES CLASSIFICATION

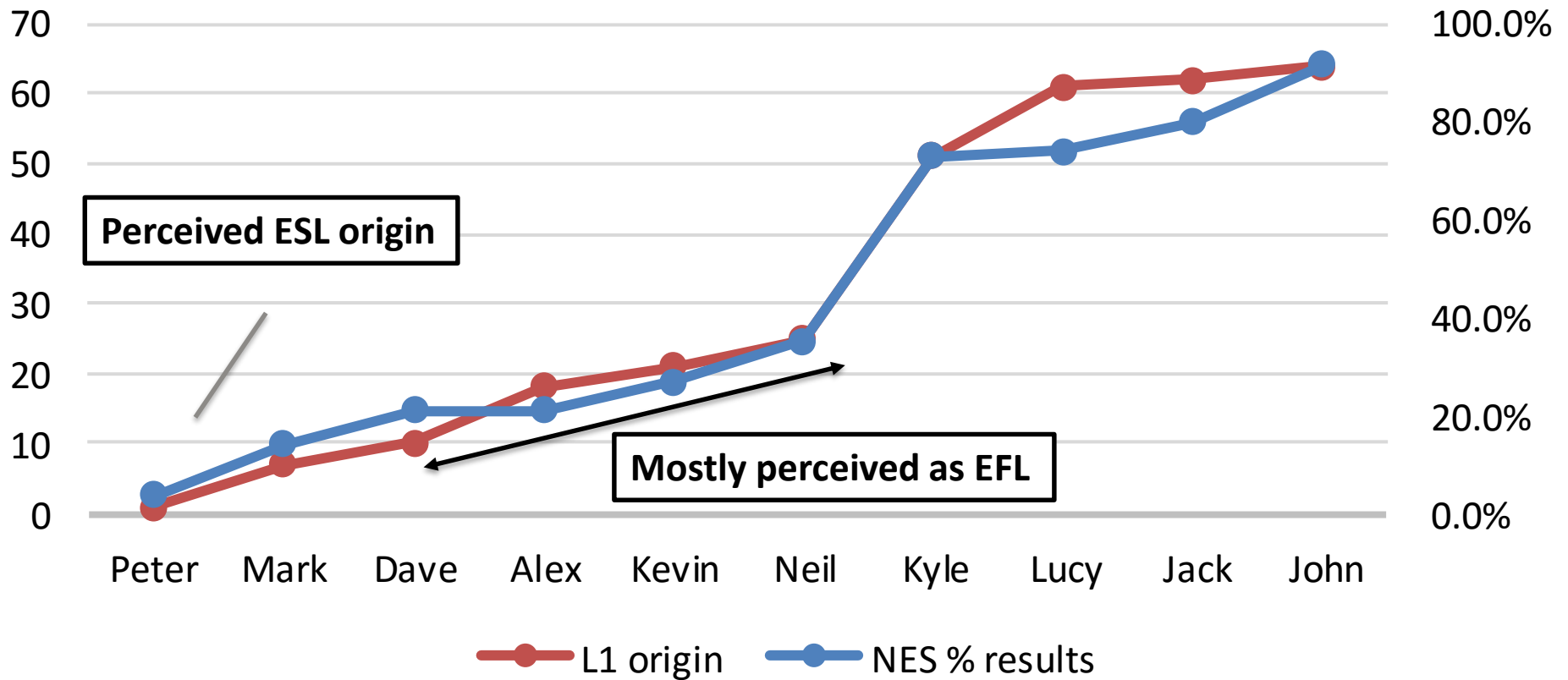


ACCENT SCORE AND NES CLASSIFICATION



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PERCEIVED ORIGIN AND NES CLASSIFICATION



DISCREPANCIES



Dave (Trinidadian, L1): *“If you go to Trinidad, and you were to suggest ... to Trinidadian people that they **are not** native speakers, I think they will **take offense** to it. ... Most people will, anyway. ... **99 percent** probably don’t speak another language. Of course, they have their own dialect, their own accent, but it’s no more grammatically incorrect than, say, American English or British English.”*

NES	NNES
21.2%	76.47%

DISCREPANCIES



Lucy

- Finnish-Swedish
- EFL
- Self-ascribed **NNES**
- Never lived in an English-speaking country

NES	NNES
74.1%	25.88%



DISCUSSION



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IDENTITY CONSTRUCTS

1. Non-elective identity:

- Accent of norm-providing L1 country
- Social constructionism (Pennycook 2007, 2010)

2. Self-ascribed identity:

- NES concept moulded to **own** needs
- Not always same as non-elective identity
=> **problem**



PROBLEMS

- “L2 vs. L1 Use of Synonymy: An Empirical Study of Synonym Use/Acquisition” (Liu and Zhong 2016)
- “The interface between grammar and pragmatics in EFL measurement and development” (Celaya and Barón 2015)
- “Nativelike expression in the speech of long-residency L2 users: A

“It is clear ... that any terminology will have to be employed with this **caution** in mind. The terms NS and NNS have, in spite of their somewhat **problematic** nature, been used in this paper, primarily on the basis that **no suitable alternatives** exist.” (2)

- “Negotiating topic changes: native and nonnative speakers of English in conversation” (Morris-Adams 2015)
- “The assessment of foreign accent and its communicative effects by naïve native judges vs. experienced non-native judges” (Puerto et.al. 2015)



PROBLEMS

“The point is not just to analyze and critique the social roots of linguistic ideologies but to analyze their efficacy, the way they **transform** the material reality they comment on. The emphasis is on ... the performative aspect of ideology under its constative guise: ideology **creates and acts** in a social worlds while it masquerades as a description of that world.” (Schieffelin et.al. 1998:11)

- **Job market:** ELT, proofreading, translation
- **Language attitudes:** sounding educated/intelligent
- **Language teaching:** entrenched monoculturalism

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