

Malaysian English Teacher Morale and the Presence of Expatriate English Teachers

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This study explored the impact of expatriate English teachers on the morale of Malaysian English teachers and attempted to identify the perceptions of Malaysian English teachers, expatriate native English-speaking teachers (NESTs), and expatriate nonnative English-speaking teachers (nonNESTs) regarding the practices that are prevalent in Malaysia in areas such as hiring, remuneration, and benefits. An initial questionnaire was completed by 10 teachers in Malaysia followed by two semi-structured interviews. Results showed a large discrepancy in wages between NESTs and nonNESTs, which contributes to the low morale of Malaysian English teachers. In addition, the presence of expatriate NESTs causes Malaysian nonNESTs to have low self-esteem as they compare themselves to their native counterparts. This study also revealed that participants felt that an emphasis on expatriate NESTs had no significant impact on improving the language proficiency of students. Participants agreed that hiring qualified English teachers (not on the basis of race or first language) is paramount in improving the language proficiency of Malaysian students. Recommendations are given for a more in-depth study of the impact of expatriate NESTs/nonNESTs on the morale of Malaysian nonNESTs and the improvement of the language proficiency of Malaysian students.