Epistemological Beliefs of Nnest's based on the Nest-Nnest Dichotomy

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand graduate and post-graduate EFL teachers' epistemological beliefs based on the standardized English language and their beliefs on the NEST/NNEST dichotomy. In order to gain a deeper understanding two different group of teachers were formed consisting of graduate and post-graduate level of education. The aim was to understand whether or not the level of education affect EFL teachers' beliefs based on the knowledge concept of standardized English and native speakerism. As a data collection methodology for this mixed methods research design, metaphors and the epistemological belief questionnaire (adapted from Hofer, 2000) were used. The results show that there was a significant difference between the two groups' epistemological beliefs. While the post-graduate group was more critical about the issue, the graduate group of teachers seemed to highly accept the standardized language concept. The analysis of the metaphorical conceptions also supported the findings of the questionnaires.

Keywords: Epistemological beliefs, Epistemological belief questionnaire, metaphors, NEST/NNEST dichotomy, mixed-method design.

Introduction

The study of individuals' epistemology, in other words, their beliefs about the nature of intelligence, knowledge, and learning, has received much attention by researchers (Mori, 1999). Epistemological beliefs are generally regarded as beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowing (Hofer, 2016). Questions such as "what is the source of knowledge? How do we justify it? Is there only one fixed type of knowledge" are examples of the beliefs we construct about knowledge. As Schommer (1994) states, the implicit beliefs about the nature of knowledge and learning, or epistemological beliefs, can affect reasoning, learning, and decision making which results in carrying great importance in educational sciences. Epistemological beliefs in teacher education is also regarded to be important since teachers implicit beliefs about knowledge can actually shape the way they view their subject area of teaching and the way they teach. When focusing on English language teachers, we come to the fact that the content knowledge, which is also their medium of instruction, is the English language itself. This has brought some controversial issues in the field such as the distinction between native and non-native English speaking teachers (NEST-NNEST dichotomy). Research has shown that these power-related issues in the field have dramatic effects on English language teachers' beliefs about their professional-selves. The fact that their necessary content knowledge represents native English speakers' ethnicity, culture and history, can create controversial issues such as language ownership and the feeling of inferiority in the profession. However, due to global spread of English, the standardization of the language is open to discussion together with the ownership of it.

1. Epistemological Belief

As Hofer and Pintrich (1997) suggest, epistemology is an area of philosophy which deals with the nature and justification of human knowledge. In other words, it is concerned about how people come to know, the theories and beliefs about knowing, and the fact that these epistemological issues are an influence on thinking and reasoning which are cognitive processing. According to Hofer (2001), the study of personal epistemologies can be divided in to two sub-sections which the first is related to the stages of psychological development of personal epistemologies and the second focuses on the study of beliefs based on the nature of knowledge and knowing. As Schommer (1994) states, epistemic literature can have varying focuses, however, in terms of cognitive research, studies generally focus on individuals beliefs about the degree of which information is true, the organization of information, the acquisition of knowledge, and the justification of knowledge. Hence, it can be claimed that epistemological beliefs are basically the beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowing (Conley et. al., 2004).

As Hofer. (2016) states, the investigation carried out by Schommer (1990) which focused on independently developing epistemic dimensions, opened a new era in epistemic cognition research. Schommer (1990) proposed 5 continuous dimensions of epistemological beliefs. These were; stability (fixed- tentative/evolving), structure (isolated-integrated), source (authority-observation and reason), speed of acquisition (fast-gradual), and control of acquisition (fixed at birth-lifelong improvement). In response to Schommer's (1990) study, Hofer and Pintrich (1997) divided personal epistemological theories into two dimensions; the nature of knowledge (how one defines knowledge) and the nature of knowing (how one comes to know). They define the nature of knowledge in two sub-dimensions which are the certainty of knowledge (the continuum goes from viewing knowledge as absolute, fixed, and unchanging to viewing knowledge as tentative and evolving) and simplicity of knowledge (the continuum goes from viewing knowledge as isolated facts to viewing knowledge as interrelated concepts). As for the beliefs about the nature of knowing, they also propose two sub-dimensions, which are; the source of knowledge (from perceiving knowledge which resides in an external authority to active construction of knowledge through social interaction) and justification of knowledge (from justifying knowledge through by observation and authority to the evaluation of different sources of evidence). Hofer and Pintrich (1997) state that the continuum in each of these reflections illustrate the beliefs which range from being naïve to more sophisticated beliefs. However, as cited in Brownlee et. al. (2017), Bromme and colleagues suggested that such relations might be context sensitive. Perry (1970), who was regarded to be one of the pioneers to attract attention to epistemological cognition (cited in Schommen, 1994), developed adult epistemological development framework in which he found that some of the most naive students who entered Harvard University with a dualistic view of the world in which they believed in black or white knowledge that is handed down by authority (cited in Schommer 1994). As students came across different viewpoints in their classes they began to gradually be aware of multiple views and by the senior year many students became more open to change in their beliefs.

As Lunn Brownlee et. al. (2017) state, recently, researchers have focused on how teachers' epistemic cognition can give insight into their professional development and their teaching practice (e.g., Lunn Brownlee, Schraw, & Berthelsen, 2011; Lunn Brownlee, Schraw, Walker, & Ryan, 2016). Buehl and Fives (2009) have found in their study that student teachers epistemic cognition can significantly affect their teaching approaches and techniques, and their expectations from their students. For instance, they found that student teachers who have a teaching knowledge as open to amendment can pay greater attention to new teaching methods and techniques. Beliefs about their source of knowledge is also stated to affect how individuals seek out information, which can be from professional journals, colleagues, one's own creativity etc. Yadav et. al. (2011) have also focused on how student teachers' epistemic beliefs was important for teacher preparation. They state that the student teachers epistemic beliefs shape the knowledge they gain from their observations of other teachers and their own teaching goals. They further indicate in their study that the teachers' epistemological beliefs reflect their own approaches to learning. Kang (2008) focused on how pre-service science teachers viewed science knowledge. While some regarded it as consisting of facts, hence, aimed in teaching the students these scientific knowledge, others viewed science knowledge as evolving in nature in which these type of teachers were more enthusiastic in having students to develop creative thinking skills. Similarly, in Braten and Fergusan (2015)'s study, which focused on the relationship between different knowledge sources of epistemic cognition and motivation of pre-service teachers, found that student teachers who trusted course books and teacher educators as resources were motivated while gaining knowledge from these sources, whereas, student teachers with sources of teaching knowledge, were more motivated when they gained new knowledge from teaching practice and other student and teachers.

2. NEST-NNEST Dichotomy

Kachru (1976) divided the English speaking world into 3 concentric cycles, which are the inner-circle English speaking countries (represents the historical and sociolinguistic bases of English in the regions where it originated such as England), the outer-circle English speaking countries (former colonies of the UK and USA such as India, Kenya, Nigeria, Singapore etc.) and expanding-circle countries (countries that gradually came under western influence and where English is spoken as a foreign language rather than a second). This distinction between the English speaking countries ignited the distinction between native and non-native teachers' of English. Being a native speaker is generally seen as a rigid category in which transition is implicitly implied to be impossible. As Llurda (2015) states, since the communicative language teaching became as the dominant theoretical framework in language teaching, it was implicitly implied that the native speakers were the one and only source of natural, spontaneous and authentic source of knowledge. It became clear that the native speakers in the field were regarded to be more prestigious. Cook (2007) mentions about how students are judged about how close they resemble native speakers in terms of their competency, proficiency and their knowledge about the language. This is

a clear indication of the belief that the native teacher was the ideal type of teacher in the field regardless of their pedagogical competences. Medges (1994) also focused in her study how this power-related status issues created the existence of generic inferiority complex among NNEST's. This was rather tragic since this type of belief had a negative impact on non-native teachers' professional self-esteems (Llurda, 2015). Medges (1992, 1994) was also the first academic to bring up the issue of native speakerism and invoked people to question who was worth more as a language teacher; the native or the non-native speaker. This was regarded to be the first spark in the field to create awareness to the issue. Cook (2005) also mentions in his study that concepts such as English as an International Language (EIL) and English as a Lingua Franca has created certain awareness in individuals regarding that a truly international language cannot be owned by any group of speakers. Similarly, Widdowson (1994) has rejections in which he states that the authority to claim right over a standard version of a global language is not a right of the native speaker since they are also diverse in themselves. He further claims that language is a dynamic system which evolves and adapts in time and in accordance with the context, hence such an existence cannot be viewed as a standard system which is legitimized to only a group of culture, especially if this is a world language. From a different point of view, Graddol (2006) mentioned in his study about the status of English in the world. He further emphasizes that English speakers of other countries far exceed the number of native speakers in the world, hence native speakers are starting to end up as a minority group of speakers. This dramatic change of the language use naturally brings different varieties of the language which has also given the generation of the "world Englishes" term (Kachru, 1992). Hence the standard English and its necessity and the view of the native English speaking teacher as the ultimate source of knowledge in the field of English language teaching has come to critical questioning and criticism. However, on the other side of the coin, research done by certain scholars such as Jenkins (2007), Sifakis and Sougari (2005), Varghese et. al. (2005), Rajagopalan (2005), Llurda and Huguet (2003) show relevant finding similar to what Llurda (2015) likens to the Stockholm Syndrome- even though non-native speakers suffer from discrimination by native speakers who are preferred in many professional situations they justified this situation as being in favor of the native speaker as the ultimate goal for their students.

3. Purpose of the Study

As Hofer (2001) states, there is a growing interest in understanding teachers' epistemological beliefs. However, Hofer and Pintrich (1997) state that further research should be carried out to understand the relationship between epistemological beliefs and its relation to other domains in specific fields. In terms of the nature and the source of knowledge, a gap in the literature has been noticed to understand the epistemological beliefs of English language teachers based on their content knowledge. A major reason for why their content knowledge was emphasized in the study is due to the reason that their nature of knowledge in their profession is a sensitive issue regarding the correct/standard form of their content knowledge; "the English language". The reason for this is based on the fact of globalization which has led to different varieties of English in the world. These new varieties has also created "native speakerism" which favors the NEST's and causes a sense of inferiority among the non-NEST's. Hence, this study aims to investigate non-native English speaking teachers' epistemological beliefs and its relationship to how they view native and non-native English language teachers. It further aims to elaborate how graduate and postgraduate level of EFL teachers' beliefs may differ on the relevant issue. For further elaboration the following research questions are aimed to be investigated.

What do the metaphors of the graduate level EFL teachers reveal about their beliefs based on NEST's-NNEST's?

What do the metaphors of the postgraduate level EFL teachers reveal about their beliefs based on NEST's-NNEST's?

What is the relationship of the epistemological beliefs of the two groups and their beliefs reflected in their metaphors?

Methodology

1. Research Design

A mixed-method design has been adopted in this research. As Cresswell (2013) states, mixed-method research aims to combine both qualitative and quantitative research techniques to broaden the understanding of the subject being investigated. While designing a mixed-method research, Cresswell (2013) states that there are four aspects to consider before deciding on a mixed method type of study. These are timing (considering the time of the qualitative and quantitative data- whether it will be sequential or concurrent), the weighting (the priority is given to qualitative and quantitative data), mixing (defining how the mixing of qualitative and quantitative data occurs- which phase of the research does it occur?) and theorizing (does a theoretical perspective guide the design?). When taking into consideration these aspects of mixed-

method design, this research adopts a concurrent triangulation strategy in which both qualitative and quantitative data are collected concurrently and later analyzed to see if there are any convergence, differences or some combinations (Cresswell, 2013).

2. Context and Participants

This study took place in Turkey which is an EFL (English as a foreign language) setting. To understand whether or not the educational level (graduate/postgraduate) of university level English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers effect their epistemological beliefs and their beliefs about NEST-NNEST dichotomy, two different group of teachers were formed. Each group comprised of 10 teachers. While the first group of teachers were chosen among EFL teachers working in private colleges with no postgraduate degrees, the other group of EFL teachers had an MA or Ph.D. degree in foreign language teaching.

3. Procedure and Analysis

As a data collection methodology, metaphors were used in the study to understand the beliefs of the teachers regarding NEST's and NNEST's. As Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) state, it is not always easy to explain personal beliefs with many words. They further state that metaphors enable difficult concepts like beliefs and identity to be examined in a vivid and insightful way which can allow the participants to be descriptive in their thoughts. However, it is also stated that not all participants can come up with a metaphor for the desired inquiry. Hence Goldstein (2005) suggests that samples can be provided for the participants to choose from. Mahlios, Massengill-Shaw and Barry (2010) have also stated in their study that apart from giving samples, the participants can also have an option of self-reporting or choosing from the given list of metaphors. In this study an example and an explanation were provided for the participants which followed the questions given below to extract the participants beliefs about NEST-NNEST dichotomy.

Question 1: "*What metaphor would you use to describe yourself as a non-native EFL instructor?*" and why?

Question 2: "*What metaphor would you use to describe the native language teacher?*" and why?

In order to make the process more comprehensible and in order for the participants to also express and to ease the intelligibility process for the researcher and explanation will be given which is adapted from Thomas and Beauchamp (2011): "A metaphor is another way of saying who you are using an object or a role to represent the way you see yourself as a teacher. For example, you could say that I am a gardener because I help children grow."

In the final stage of the study, the epistemological beliefs of the participants were further elaborated in order to understand their beliefs about the knowledge of language of their profession. In order to get an insight into this issue, rather than focusing on all the dimensions of epistemological beliefs mentioned by Schommer (1990) and Hofer (2001) such as source of knowledge, certainty of knowledge, development of knowledge and justification of knowledge; only the source and the certainty of knowledge were elaborated since the main beliefs being under study is the teachers beliefs about how they view their source of content knowledge and its representation of certainty for them. The questionnaire was adapted from Conley et. al. (2004) questionnaire items which they had adapted from Hofer (2000) and Elder (2002) in which they focused on four dimensions of epistemological beliefs that have to do with the nature of knowledge and knowing in science. The items were rated on a 5-point likert scale (1 strongly disagree; 5 strongly agree), and all questions were worded to have the teachers focus on the domain of native speakers as the source of content knowledge for non-native EFL instructors. As for the analysis of the data, a thematic analysis was conducted when analyzing the open-ended questionnaires. The process was similar to the one conducted in De Guerrero and Villamil's (2002) study in which they initially made a list of the metaphors and later created themes for relevant ones. Informed consent forms were also distributed prior to the study of ethical considerations. The adapted questionnaire items are given below.

Source

- All English Language teachers should believe what native speakers say.

- In language teaching, you have to believe what the native speaker course books teach.

- Whatever the native speaker teacher says in language classes is correct.

- If you read something in a native speaker course book, you can be sure it's true and authentic.

- Only native speakers know for sure what the correct version of the language is.

Certainty

- Language is fixed.

- The most important part of learning/teaching a language is to learn/teach the correct standard form.

- Native speakers know everything about the language. There is not much more to know.

- Native speakers always agree on a certain form of a language.

Results

1. Epistemological Beliefs

After collecting the qualitative data, which was based on the participants metaphorical representations of their views based on native and non-native language teachers, the epistemological beliefs questionnaire was given to further evaluate whether or not there was a significant difference of epistemological beliefs depending on the participants level of education.

Table 1. *The results of "epistemological beliefs" questionnaire*

Level of Education	Mean	SD	Std. Error
Graduate	3.02	.41	.13
Post-Graduate	2.09	.71	.22

As can be seen in Table 1, while the graduate students had a mean score of '3.02" (SD=.41) in their epistemological beliefs questionnaire, the post-graduate group had a mean score of "2.09" (SD=.71). These initial results indicate that the graduate group of students was more prone to accept the native speaker norms and the standardization of language.

Table 2. *The comparison between the level of education*

		t-value	df	p-value
Level of Edu.	Graduate (N=10)	3.6	18	.00
	Post-graduate (N=10)			

In order to see whether or not there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups a t-test was carried out (see Table 2). The results of the t-test suggest that there was a significant difference between the two groups epistemological beliefs based on the standardization of the English language and the certainty of the native speaker norms (t(18)=3.6, p<.05).

2. Metaphors

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the participant epistemological beliefs based on native speakerism, the teachers were asked to conceptualize their views of NEST's and non-NEST'S through metaphors.

2.1. The Post-Graduates' Metaphorical Conceptions

The participants with a post-graduate degree generally conceptualized themselves as an "educator" which carried certain qualifications of teaching. As it is also represented in Table 3, a participant has conceptualized the non-NEST as a "**guide**": "*I see myself as a guide to students assisting them learning the language*". Here, the EFL teacher's metaphor carries the actual role of what any educator should do, which is to teach them the subject. Another participant has stated him/herself as a "**customer representative**": "*I would use customer representative to describe myself as a NNEFL instructor because I feel myself responsible for giving information about the language, sharing my knowledge, helping them to solve their learning problems, answering their questions as much as I can*". It can also be understood from this explanation that this teacher does not feel any sense of inferiority in terms of being a non-NEST, on the contrary, s/he perceives the profession

of teaching as the way it should be. The authentic representations for the other metaphors conceptualizing the role of "educator" are given below.

Door: "*I would describe myself as a door because I encourage my students to knock and open it and enter a room where they learn new things. I assist them throughout the way.*"

Gardener: "*As a non-NEST, I would describe myself as a gardener since each student needs to be observed and be cared for*".

Orchestra Conductor: "*I would describe myself as an orchestra conductor because in an orchestra there are so many different types of instruments and players trying to play in harmony. The conductors job is to direct the simultaneous performance of all these players*".

Table 3. *Metaphorical conceptualizations of post-graduate EFL teachers based on non-NEST*

Conceptual categories for the non-NEST	Exemplar metaphors
1. Educator	A guide, a customer representative, a door, gardener, orchestra conductor
2. Cultural ambassador	Travel guide
3. Life-long learner	A growing pond
4. Struggler for appreciation	Surprise egg, inadequate

Another major theme apart from seeing the non-NEST as an "educator" is referring it to a "cultural ambassador". The metaphor conceptualizing this theme is referring to the non-NEST as a "**travel guide**": "*I would use travel guide as a metaphor describing myself because that's how I feel in class. Giving them information about a different culture, people and language*". In this explanation it was noticed that the focus was not on the teaching pedagogy itself but rather on the content which was conveying a different culture. As for the metaphor "**growing pond**" which is thematized as "life-long learner", the participant has stated: "*As a non-NEST, I can describe myself as a pond which gradually grows and expands because language is alive and infinite. Language is evolving and there is no end to learning it*". In this statement it can also be seen that the participant epistemologically views language as a dynamic structure rather than something being fixed, hence, s/he suggests a concept of life-long learning. The final major theme is "the struggler for appreciation". The metaphors relevant to this theme generally focus on the misconceptions that people have towards non-NEST and for this reason they state that they have to struggle extra to improve themselves and to gain awareness that being a non-NEST is not a deficiency.

Surprise egg: "*I would say that I am like a surprise egg. Because when you look from the outside all the surprise eggs are the same. Everybody would say okay she is just another non-native EFL teacher. However, they don't actually know me. Then when I start to teach and touch upon my students' life, they would see that I am not the same with other teachers. I think every non-native teacher is different. It is not fair to be judged because of this title. Unfortunately we have to struggle to show that we areunique, an extra effort is put on us to compensate for not being a native speaker of thetarget language we are teaching*"

Inadequate: "*Unfortunately the first thing that comes to my mind is 'inadequate'because this is how you are made to feel- at least at a time that you develop an awareness of how 'advantageous' being a NNEST actually is. Yet, a lot of teachers retire without this awareness. This has started to change, yet I believe we have a lot to go, though*"

Table 4. *Metaphorical conceptualizations of post-graduate EFL teachers based on NEST's*

Conceptual categories for the NEST	Exemplar metaphors
1. First choice of students	Treasure, magician
2. Life-long learner	A growing pond
3. Advantageous without deserving	Royals, backpackers (x2)
4. Provider of authentic resource	Parent
5. Provider of correct language	Tourist guides, mirrors, dictionary

As the post-graduate groups' metaphors based on the NEST's, the first theme to be realized in table 4 is "first choice of students". The first metaphor to represent this theme is "**treasure**": "*When I think about our students and their behavior to native speakers, I would use the metaphor 'treasure' because they always feel more interested and more eager when a native language teacher comes to the class*". Through this explanation it can be easily understood that the teacher has constructed a belief through own experiences that students favor NEST's and that they are more motivated in this aspect. As for the theme "**magician**": "*I would use magician as a metaphor because they have the advantage to draw students' attention in any classroom setting and students love them and have a tendency to admire and listen to them like audiences*". Another interesting theme was seeing the native language teachers as life-long learners, too, through stating the metaphor "**growing pond**": "*I would describe the native language teacher as a pond that grows day by day, too, because whether native or not, as language teachers we have to keep up with the changes regarding language use and language teaching methods*". It can be seen from this statement that the teacher does not upload any privileged qualifications on the native language teacher, rather s/he states that they, too, should always self-develop themselves. Some of the participants indicated through their metaphors that the NEST's were advantageous without really deserving it. One of the participants conceptualized this thought through stating them as the "**royals**": *I would use 'royals' maybe because everybody treats them as if they were the royals and they are seen as the privileged ones. However, as we know all of the royal people are not actually qualified to rule, but they just have the right to rule because of their birthright. It is the same for the native language teacher*". Another metaphor referring to the same theme was "**backpackers**": "*NEST's are backpackers in my opinion- at least the ones who do not hold a pedagogical degree. So many things are taken for granted when it comes to native speakers even though they do not have the pedagogical qualifications they hold important positions in educational institutions and are paid more than non-native language teachers*". It can be understood from these statements that the teachers approach the native/non-native issue critically and express how they find it irrelevant to prioritize the NEST's in the industry. The metaphor "**parent**" was conceptualized as provider of authentic resource: "*I would use 'parent' to describe the native language teacher. They give importance to communication and they use the language in a larger extent both in and out of the classroom. Therefore, they give plenty of input to the students and they do not focus on accuracy as much as we do, they enable the learners to use the language as much as possible in real context*". In the last theme, which is "provider of correct language", even though the teachers state that native language teachers can provide the correct form of language, they still have certain critics based on the issue based on pedagogical considerations rather than epistemological ones.

Tourist guides: "*I would describe the native language teachers as 'tourist guides' who show the correct paths to the people involved in the journey. However, this should not be taken for granted. They should have teaching experience*"

Mirrors: "*I would use 'mirrors of the target language' as a metaphor because they reflect and show how the language is used properly and correctly. But we need toremember that there is always more to see beyond the mirror about the teaching of language and the use of language*"

Dictionary: "*I think the native language teacher is like a dictionary. She knows mostof the language content and can be considered as an authority. However, despite knowing structures and foundations of language, she might have problems with the teaching of the language*"

2.2. The Graduates' Metaphorical Conceptions

The first theme of graduates metaphorical conceptualizations based on non-NEST's, seen in table 5, is "cultural ambassador". This theme was created in relation to the core meaning the metaphors carried. One of the teachers stated that s/he viewed the non-NEST's as "**informers**": "*I can describe the non-NEST's as 'informers' because we teach the target culture and language and this has many educational benefits for the students*". Another relevant metaphor was "**service-point**": "*We are like 'service point'. We serve another culture and language by teaching it correctly to students*". It can be seen from this explanation that the teacher also focuses on teaching the correct form of the language which epistemologically implies teaching the standardized language form. Similarly, a final metaphor for the first theme is "**bridge**": "*I think I am a bridge of the English language to the Turkish students. We serve as bridges, we connect the two societies. I try my best to teach the language and correct the students if they make mistakes*".

Table 5. *Metaphorical conceptualizations of graduate EFL teachers based on non-NEST's*

Conceptual categories for the non-NEST	Exemplar metaphors

1. Cultural ambassador	Informer, service point, bridge
2. Provider to success	Key maker
3. Life-long learner	Tree (x2)
4. Educator	Leader, host
5. Transferor to the mother tongue	Tennis racket

The metaphor "**key maker**" which conceptualizes the theme "provider to success" was explained as: "*I describe myself as a key maker, if we accept English language as a door which is opened to the whole world, we the English teachers make the keys of it. We show them the correct door, open it and teach how to step in*". It can be seen in this remark that the teacher sees the language as a means to interact with the world and to lead to success. Similar to the post-graduate group, two of the teachers regarded themselves as educators without making any distinction about being a non-native language teacher. One of the teachers used the metaphor "**leader**" referring to being the leader in the classroom: "*As a NNEST, I can describe myself as a leader because I can try to teach every kind of thing to my students. I try to direct their lifestyles, their thoughts and their feelings as a teacher*". The final theme, which is "transferor to the mother tongue" was expressed through the metaphor "**tennis racket**". While explaining the metaphor, the teacher emphasized on the disadvantages of using the students' mother tongue in the classroom due to responding to students' usage of language: "*I would use a 'tennis racket' to describe myself as a NNEST. That's because I speak English or Turkish depending on the language my students speak. I know that this shouldn't be done in language classrooms but it is difficult to not speak Turkish in certain times*".

Table 6. *Metaphorical conceptualizations of graduate EFL teachers based on NEST's*

Conceptual categories for the NEST	Exemplar metaphors
1. Provider of correct language	Mother, skeleton of the body, magician, artist, dominance
2. Equal to non-NEST's	Identity card, ordinariness
3. Lacking of pedagogical skills	Guest
4. Independent	Tennis court

The first theme with the majority of references, in terms of graduate-level EFL teachers' metaphorical conceptualizations based on NEST's, is "provider of correct language" (see table 6). This also gives a sense that the majority of the teachers assume that native speakers' language norms or standardized English is the correct form to teach.

Mother: "*The native language teacher is like a mother. They guide the students and make them acquire the correct form of language*"

Skeleton of the body: "*They are like the skeleton of a body because natives are symbols, they are the past and the generation of a language, culture, country, society, civilization etc. they have the power*"

Magician: "*A native language teacher is like a magician. You see only a cap but there will be everything necessary inside for the students to learn the language*"

Artist: "*A native teacher is like an artist. They see the right color, all the shades and tones. Because they can explain some facts that non-EFL instructors are not able to understand*"

Two of the teachers with a graduate degree expresses that they viewed both native and non-native language teachers as equal. The first metaphor used to conceptualize this theme is "**identity card**": "*I see no difference between us, but I can say they are different identity cards. Being a native doesn't mean you lead a good teaching. Natives and non-natives, we are different numbers on the same clock*". The second metaphor is "**ordinariness**": "*I see them as ordinariness. They are normal teachers. They don't have any differences to other teachers, they just speak their language very fluently but this doesn't mean they are always perfect*". The metaphors for this theme indicate that, epistemologically the two teachers do not see any difference between the native and non-native language teachers. One of the teachers have also stated that native language teachers lack pedagogical skills. S/he has conceptualized this theme with the metaphor "**guests**": "*I would use 'guest' to describe the native language teachers because despite many advantages they have such as their language knowledge, using NEST's as teachers may result in some problems. Most of them have excellent language skills but little teaching skills. They may have some problems understanding students' problems. Most of them do not adopt the job and*

have difficulty in classroom management". In the final theme, through using the metaphor "**tennis court**" the teacher implied how free the native language teachers are in speaking their language: "*I would use a 'tennis court' to describe a native teacher because he feels quite free to speak English during the class. They don't have any drawbacks because they are very fluent and correct*". Through this final metaphor it can be seen that the teacher epistemologically regards the native language teacher as the correct source of language knowledge and also a feeling of inferiority can also be noticed in his/her statement.

Discussion

Similar to De Guerrero and Villamil's (2002) study, it should initially be stated that the present study does not focus whether or not the teachers reflect their conceptualizations which they have presented through their metaphors, in their actual teaching practice. Rather, it aims to understand the conceptualizations they have constructed based on the NEST/non-NEST dichotomy and its relation to their underlying epistemological beliefs.

According to the epistemological beliefs questionnaire, which was adapted in accordance to the "native speakerism" and the standard language ideology as the core content of language teaching, a significant difference was found between the post-graduate and the graduate group of teachers. While the post-graduates were more critical in their responses, stating that they disagreed with a high frequency of the items, the graduate group of teachers was less critical in this respect. As Hofer and Pintrich (1997) suggest, epistemology is an area of philosophy which deals with the nature and justification of human knowledge. The results indicated that, in terms of epistemological beliefs, the graduates were more prone to accept the standard form of English as the correct form while the post-graduates were more critical about the issue. The results are actually quite important since as Schommer (1994) states, the implicit beliefs about the nature of knowledge and learning, or epistemological beliefs, can affect reasoning, learning, and decision making which results in carrying great importance in educational sciences and in teacher education since teachers' implicit beliefs about knowledge can actually shape the way they view their subject area of teaching and the way they teach. Similarly, as Lunn Brownlee et. al. (2017) state, recently, researchers have focused on how teachers' epistemic cognition can give insight into their professional development and their teaching practice (e.g., Lunn Brownlee, Schraw, & Berthelsen, 2011; Lunn Brownlee, Schraw, Walker, & Ryan, 2016). Buehl and Fives (2009) have found in their study that student teachers epistemic cognition can significantly affect their teaching approaches and techniques, and their expectations from their students. The fact that in the present study, certain group of EFL teachers view the English language as fixed in terms of native speaker norms (generally standard American or British English) can actually affect the way they approach the language, the way they teach, the way they approach themselves as a non-NEST and the way they see themselves as efficient EFL teachers. These aspects of beliefs are rather crucial since being a native speaker is generally seen as a rigid category in which transition is implicitly implied to be impossible. As Llurda (2015) states, since the communicative language teaching became as the dominant theoretical framework in language teaching, it was implicitly implied that the native speakers were the one and only source of natural, spontaneous and authentic source of knowledge. It became clear that the native speakers in the field were regarded to be more prestigious. Cook (2007) mentions about how students are judged about how close they resemble native speakers in terms of their competency, proficiency and their knowledge about the language. However, these issues need critical discussion since they lead to discrimination in the profession of English language teaching and a sense of inferiority among non-native English language teachers.

In order to get a deeper understanding of the two different groups of teachers' epistemological beliefs, they were asked to conceptualize their beliefs of native and non -native language teachers through metaphors. The reason for why metaphors were chosen is actually relevant to De Guerrero and Villamil's (2002) ideas in which they state that metaphors have an ability to capture the complex constructs in the field of teacher education and they also have a utility as vehicles for raising reflection and consciousness. The majority of the post-graduate level of EFL teachers generally regarded themselves as non-natives as educators. They did not reveal any sense of inferiority or they did not conceptualize any prioritizing of native speakers. As for their metaphors based on NEST's, the results seemed to be in correlation with the epistemological beliefs questionnaire results. The teachers either referred to seeing no difference between natives and non-natives and that both groups should improve themselves gradually since language is a dynamic system. This also implies that epistemologically, language was not seen as fixed, hence, standard norms of language were opposed. It was also noticed that the post-graduate group of teachers were aware of the social factors which affect native-speakerism in the field. Some of them viewed the NEST's as treasures or magicians since they can easily capture the students' motivation due to the fact that students favor native speakers as English language teachers. Differently, two of the participants from the post-graduate

group stated that NEST's were like mirrors and dictionaries. They expressed they were somehow the representative of the correct form of language, however, they criticized the issue in terms of pedagogical knowledge, stating that they do not have the necessary pedagogical knowledge. It was seen that while some teachers questioned the fact of the standardized form of the English language in a globalized world were English speakers of other countries far exceed the number of native speakers in the world (Graddol, 2006) which inescapably results in variations of the English language, others were more critical about pedagogical considerations rather than the language content itself. As mentioned earlier some of the participants also saw them as mirrors which reflect the correct form of language.

The metaphors of the graduate level of EFL teachers generally regarded themselves as non-NEST's as cultural ambassadors whose job is to teacher their students the language and the culture of another nation. They also stated through their metaphors that they aimed to teach the correct form of the language which epistemologically implies the belief based on the acceptance of the standard forms of language. These can also raise some critical issues such as the ownership of the language. Do these teachers feel like they own the language as the teachers and the users of the language itself? If not, how do they perceive their profession and how do they perceive themselves as teaching a language which they do not feel the right to claim rights? Medges (1994) focused in her study how this power-related status and ownership issues created the existence of generic inferiority complex among NNEST's. This was rather tragic since this type of belief had a negative impact on non-native teachers' professional self-esteems (Llurda, 2015). As for the graduate EFL teachers metaphors based on the native language teachers the majority saw them as the provider of the correct form of language. They expressed this belied through metaphoric conceptualizations such as mother, skeleton of the body, magician, artist and dominance. The teacher who conceptualized the NEST's as an artist explained this view through stating that native language teachers see the right color, the right shades and tones because they can explain some facts that non-EFL instructors are not able to understand. Through this statement, it can be understood that the teacher might have the feeling of inferiority in his/her teaching profession. This view is inevitably co-constructed through the social environment and the experiences this teacher must have gone through. The teacher education programs also have a role in these belief constructions which is also stated in Lortie's (1975) terminology of appreciation of observation.

Conclusion

Apart from the power-related issues regarding symbolic possession of a particular community of language, one of the fundamental points which confuses people in terms of issues regarding World Englishes, ELF, EIL, NEST & NNEST are generally the concept of "standardization", especially in terms of the teaching of English and in terms of the use of English regarding institutional and communal needs. Epistemologically, *What do we mean by standard*? *What is standard*? These kinds of questions in the field give rise to concerns regarding its necessity. But when we think about it, standardization, which in its core meaning refers to rigid norms and stability, is an extremely controversial term when we think about the dynamic nature of the language itself (especially in terms of lexis). Since English has become to be a global language used by billions of people around the world to meet their communicative and communal needs, nothing is more normal than it to be diversified. Adapting the language, making meaning of it and locally developing the language is an inevitable consequence of an international language. Hence, it seems illogical for native speakers to claim right over these localized versions of the language since they should definitely not be compared to standardized American or British English because they are unique and rich in themselves, representing their own culture and communal needs of the adopted group. Also, when you think about certain terminologies such as the multi-competence approach (Cook, 1999) and translingualism (Garcia, 2011), you can get an idea that becoming an L2 user is going beyond being a native speaker since L2 users develop a complex mental and socio-communicative system. This richness can definitely be an advantage for the non-native language teachers since they have a great sense of language awareness and they also are a product of metissage which can be a valuable source for language learners in various contexts. Constructing this epistemological belief and awareness to non-native language teachers in their teacher education programs can definitely develop their professional self-esteem in the field since the student teachers epistemological beliefs shape the knowledge they gain from their observations of other teachers and their own teaching goals which shape the approaches to teaching and learning.

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