



TURKISH TERTIARY LEVEL EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF NATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING TEACHERS AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING TEACHERS

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Abstract:

Native English-speaking teacher (NEST) and non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST) dichotomy has been around over a number of decades, and the prevailing view regarding the dichotomy has been that native speakers have been brought forth and prioritized in the field of English language teaching merely due to being a native speaker of English. The objective of this study is to explore Turkish tertiary level EFL students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs. So as to discover the perceptions of the participants, a close and open questionnaire was conducted. The findings yield that the participants preferred to be taught English by both NESTs and NNESTs according to the areas they were considered to be competent at teaching. NESTs were contemplated to be good at teaching speaking, pronunciation, and target culture, whereas NNESTs were perceived to be good at teaching grammar, reading, and writing. The results also indicate that students placed importance on teachers' teaching experience and qualifications while evaluating their performance as English language teachers.

Keywords: NESTs, NNESTs, tertiary level students' perceptions, English language learning, English language teaching

1. Introduction

Success in foreign/second language learning depends upon a myriad of factors which comprise language anxiety, language aptitude, personality, personal efforts, the amount of exposure to the language, opportunities for meaningful learning, classroom atmosphere, learning materials, realistic goal setting so on so forth. Another factor, though may not be asserted to be as influential as others, is the teacher. It has been purported that language could be learned providing teaching is done by an ideal model who is generally considered to be the native teacher. Holliday's "native speakerism" (Holliday, 2006) is related to the conception that NESTs are the right sources to teach

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English owing to their language proficiency and Western teaching methodology. For this reason, NNESTs have less employment opportunities compared to NESTs and are offered less wages as stated by Barry (2011), and they are treated as second-class citizens (Braine, 1999). Such discrimination between NESTs and NNESTs has also been made by language schools mostly without making comparisons between student learning outcomes which may originate from the teacher's nativeness or non-nativeness. What is entailed in "native speaker fallacy" is that one has got to have either native like fluency or be a native speaker so as to be a proficient English language teacher. The way NESTs and NNESTs is perceived in Turkey is the similar to the mainstream conception as language schools advertise their institutions by putting forward the number of NESTs working for them, and they provide higher wages for NESTs.

In regards to where English is spoken, Kachru (1985) puts forward three circles. The inner circle involves countries where English is the first language; that is to say, Canada, USA, Great Britain and Australia. The second circle is named as the outer circle in which countries where English is spoken as an additional language like Singapore, India, and Nigeria exist. The last circle is entitled as the expanding circle where English is taught as a foreign language. English is accepted to be the international language of the world; therefore, it is no longer the property of the countries in the inner circle. Additionally, according to Graddol (2001), by 2050 merely %5 percent of the world population will grow up speaking English as their first language, which can be elucidated by the decrease in the birth rate in English-speaking countries.

1.1 Who are natives and who are non-natives?

Before delving into students perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs, it is important to understand who are native and who are non-native. These two terms are contentious, and have not been clearly distinguished from one another (Edge, 1988; Phillipson, 1992; Medgyes, 1994; Patek, 2005). Bloomfield (1933, p. 43) claims "*The first language a human being learns to speak is his native language; he is a native speaker of this language*". Davies (2003) contends that native speakers are resorted to as the ideal models of the language, and as the people holding "insider knowledge" of the target language. Native speakers are the ones taking control over their first language with respect to its maintenance and direction. The criteria for a person to be named as a native speaker are proposed to be the following by Davies (2003):

- Acquisition of the language in childhood.
- Possessing the intuition helping make accurate grammaticality judgment, and the intuition that helps distinguish those features of L2 grammar which display variations from L1 grammar.
- Being capable of producing fluent spontaneous discourse and having communicative competence in both production and comprehension.
- Having the capacity to write creatively.

- Exhibiting the ability to interpret and translate into L1 of which he is the native speaker.

According to Medgyes (1992, p. 205), NESTs and NNESTs are two distinct species. The hypothesis put forth by Medgyes is that NESTs and NNESTs differ from each other concerning a) language proficiency b) teaching practice c) the majority of the differences in teaching practices could be expounded by differences in language proficiency d) both NESTs and NNESTs can be good teachers on their own terms. NNESTs are depicted by Medgyes (1999, p: 37) as possessing less reliable knowledge of the target language, and *“likely to have relatively scanty information about the culture, or rather cultures of English-speaking countries”*. Coulmas (1981) claims that natural pronunciation and perfect grammar is amongst the areas in which non-native speakers can experience difficulties. Liang (2003) asserts that target cultural component could pose problems for non-native teachers. Phillipson (1992) highlights that NNESTs could be considered as more qualified than NESTs due to a number of reasons such as having gone through the process of learning a foreign/second language their students are still in, and they are knowledgeable about their students’ linguistic and cultural needs. In addition, Phillipson (1992) purports NNESTs might better foresee the areas which may be problematic because of first language interference, and they have already experienced using target language. Seidlhofer (1999) explicates the significance ascribed to NESTs by drawing the attention to the superiority given to them by communicative approach. According to her, possessing a high command of the target language should not to be viewed as an equivalent of having pedagogic competence. Seidlhofer (1999) also maintains NNESTs have gone through the process of language learning their students are still in, which could be seen as an indicator of the role of facilitator to be adopted by NNESTs. Samimy & Brutt-Griffler (1999) conclude that native speakers are fluent, and NNESTs do hold a definitive advantage over NESTs by having the knowledge of students’ L1. Since the term NNEST embeds a discriminative connotation, alternative terms have been proposed in the literature, some of which are: *“proficient user of the language”* by Paikeday (1985), *“language expert”* by Rampton (1990), and multicompetent speaker by Cook (1991).

1.2 Is it possible to be a native speaker of English later in life?

The question of whether an EFL/ESL learner can be the native speaker of the target language might be answered by keeping in sight the criteria used a benchmark to be labelled as a native speaker. Given the requirement to acquire language in early childhood to be regarded as a native speaker, it does appear for learners of English having started to learn it after childhood that it is unlikely to reach ultimate attainment. Besides, Davies (2013) propounds that making accurate grammaticality judgements remains indeed problematic for non-native speakers, though they could acquire communicative competence. Contrary to the aforementioned premises, the answer to the question of concern might be ‘yes’ now that standard English ranges from the English spoken in the inner circle to English as an international language.

Consequently, the people speaking varieties of English may be attributed the label 'native speaker'. Likewise, Rajagopalan (2004) claims that native speakers are not correct models of English considering varieties of English because speakers of varieties of English need to be taken for granted as the native speakers of those varieties.

2. Literature Review

Related literature reveals that the studies exploring students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs are mostly conducted in contexts other than the local one. Two of these studies are carried out by Barrat and Kontra (2000), two in Hungary and one in China. The research in Hungary conducted with the participation of 116 respondents and 100 respondents took part in the study in China. The majority of the respondents were taught by NESTs, and they were asked to free write about the pros and cons of NESTs and NNESTs. Authentic pronunciation, wide vocabulary and knowledge about culture emerged as the pros of NESTs. The respondents from both contexts noted that NESTs had a relaxed attitude towards error correction and grades. Not focusing on grammar and the deficiency in NESTs' knowledge of the students' L1 and culture was exhibited as the cons of NESTs. The major complaint about NESTs was related to their lack of qualification in language teaching, due to which the authors of the study suggested that people should not be employed solely for the sake of being native speakers without attaching importance to teaching qualifications. The study done by Tang (1997) displays similarities in terms of results to the one carried out by Barratt and Kontra (2000) as participants opted for NESTs in the areas of speaking, pronunciation, listening, vocabulary and reading while NNESTs were thought to be good at accuracy rather than fluency. The results of the research done by Medgyes (1994), in parallel to the aforementioned studies, depict speaking, vocabulary and pronunciation as the toughest areas for NNESTs whereas teaching grammar and reading is presented to be areas at which NNESTs are at ease. NESTs were believed to use more real language and be capable of providing cultural information.

Another study aiming at finding out students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs is done by Benke & Medgyes (2005) who conducted a questionnaire among 422 learners of English. The results of the study show that the participants regarded NESTs as the correct models to imitate, and good at teaching speaking while NNESTs were considered to be good at teaching and explaining grammar. In the research carried out by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002) through administering open and close questionnaire among 76 university students of English, it was revealed that the participants had a tendency to prefer NESTs over NNESTs to learn pronunciation, speaking and target culture. However, the majority of the students wanted to have both NESTs and NNESTs as they were also aware of the advantages of being taught by NNESTs. The findings obtained in the study done by Canado & Madrid (2004) report that Spanish EFL learners identified differences in the pedagogical behaviours of NESTs and NNESTs, and preferred to have NESTs in classes as their academic level increased.

The results of a similar study carried out by Diaz (2015) with the participation of 78 French university students yield that the respondents wanted to be taught speaking by NESTs, nevertheless, they preferred to be taught grammar, vocabulary, strategies and culture by NNESTs or by either of the parties. Another significant finding of this study is that the older the student is the more inclined he is to appreciate both types of teachers. The study conducted by Guerra (2009) is a large-scale study in terms of the number of the participants in that 247 Portuguese students participated in the study. The students were asked what the best way to learn English was. Most of the subjects preferred the option "it does not matter if it's a native or non-native teacher". Nonetheless, the responses given to the open-ended questions show that the respondents preferred NESTs to acquire correct pronunciation, and to learn native culture. The advantages of NNESTs have been stated to be the ability to make explanations in Portuguese. Additionally, the respondents noted that NNESTs would be better for beginning levels while NESTs would work better for intermediate and higher level students.

Guerra (2017) conducted another research in order to reveal university students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs. The analysis of the data collected through online survey questionnaire and e-mail interviews indicates that the participants perceived NESTs as the teachers having better language proficiency and cultural knowledge, a better capacity to use classroom materials, and more confidence in using English, while the respondents regarded NNESTs as the teachers who are more committed to teaching and more aware of students' needs. Another important finding of this study is that the respondents equally appreciated NESTs and NNESTs regarding the best way to learn English.

A recent study was done by Alghofaili & Elyas (2017) in which the sample is comprised of Saudi university preparatory school students, and the objective of which is to investigate the impact of NESTs and NNESTs on the participants' proficiency level in English. The findings of the study report that teachers' nativeness and background had no significant effect on the learning process. The results indicate that teachers' experience and competence is considered as what makes them qualified. In addition, the study concludes that teachers' knowing students' L1 has a facilitative effect on EFL learning, unfamiliar accents can impede student learning as a result of incomprehensibility, and teachers' personality exercises impact on classroom interaction. NNESTs were regarded superior to NESTs with respect to their knowledge of students' L1 and learning difficulties students may encounter, and they were conceived to be better at communicating in general. Rao (2010) conducted a study with 20 Chinese EFL learners of English to reveal their thoughts about NESTs. The analysis of the data collected through open-ended questionnaire and in-depth interviews shows that the respondents viewed language authenticity, cultural familiarity, and new methodological insights as the strengths of NESTs whilst they perceived unfamiliarity with the local cultural, educational system, insensitivity to students' linguistic

problems, and inconsistency with students' learning styles as the areas in which NESTs need to improve themselves so as to be more competent teachers.

Likewise, the study done by Yun Tsou (2013) aims to investigate the perceptions of Taiwanese learners of English regarding NESTs and NNESTs who hold a degree from a country where English is the dominant language. The findings of the study reveal that the respondents had an overall preference for NESTs; however, they stated that both NESTs and NNESTs had strengths and weaknesses. NESTs were believed to be superior to NNESTs as to their language proficiency and their ability to facilitate student learning. Cheung & Braine (2007) conducted a study to find out the perceptions of Hong Kong university students about NNESTs. The results of the study show that the participants valued their NNESTs in regard to the use of students' L1 in teaching, effective pedagogical skills, knowledge in English language and positive personality traits; on the other hand, the short comings of NNETSs were stated as over-correcting students' work, limited use of English, and examination-oriented teaching approach. The participants also noted that they did not encounter problems in classes because of their teachers' non-nativeness, and they could teach as effectively as NESTs. The study conducted by Ma (2012) yields similar results to that of Cheung & Braine (2007) as the respondents valued NNESTs with regards to shared L1, being aware of learning difficulties, whereas the perceived advantages of NESTs were exhibited as good English proficiency and the ability to facilitate student learning.

Alseweed (2012) carried out a study to reveal 169 Saudi male novice university students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs. The findings indicate that the respondents preferred NESTs as their proficiency level increases. The results also indicate that participants' prior experiences had an effect on their preference for either NESTs or NNESTs because they were taught by both types of teachers. The respondents showed a tendency towards NESTs when it comes to adopting teaching strategies. However, this does not mean that the respondents did not prefer NNESTs; on the contrary, they preferred NNESTs as they could provide serious learning environments and respond students' needs. The respondents also noted that they could contribute a lot to English language teaching by virtue of their prior experiences as English language learners. Aslan & Thompson (2016) conducted a study the results of which show that the participants preferred NESTs in speaking activities, and to achieve efficient learning and easier communication, but they opted for NNESTs because learning motivation was higher in their lessons. In order to examine Thai students' explicit and implicit preferences between NESTs and NNESTs, Watson Todd and Pojanapunya (2008) conducted a study the results of which reveal that though students state explicit preference for NESTs, they feel warmer towards NNESTs, and for this reason, further research aiming to go beyond exploring explicitly stated preferences is required. In the study conducted by Butler (2007), it was found out that American-accented English or Korean-accented English did not lead to a statistically significant difference regarding participants' listening comprehension, and the participants wanted to have either

NESTs or NNESTs according to teachers' qualities as for pronunciation, confidence, empathy, and ability to explain the differences between English and Korean.

Lewis, Sonsaat, Link & Barriuso (2017) carried out research to unearth EFL and ESL students' perceptions of the pedagogical practices of NESTs and NNESTs and their effectiveness in teaching pronunciation. The results of the study show that the participants thought both NESTs and NNESTs could be good teachers, and therefore, nativeness was not considered to be a determiner of being a good teacher. Both ESL and EFL participants opted for NESTs for learning speaking and pronunciation. Nonetheless, one of the most interesting findings obtained in the study is that all the participants were noticeably unable to "distinguish accentedness or comprehensibility for the speech samples". In terms of teaching pronunciation, students' preferences between NESTs and NNESTs have been examined by another research done by Li & Zhang (2016) the results of which show that tertiary level students preferred NESTs over NNESTs as their pronunciation teachers. In the research carried out by Walksinshaw (2012), 20 Vietnamese participants noted that innate native speakerness was significant for ideal pronunciation model was native-speaker pronunciation.

Karakaş (2016) conducted a study with the students enrolled in English-medium universities, the results of which reveal that students preferred NESTs over NNESTs in EAP classes in preparatory school because of their language proficiency. In Turkish context, another study is conducted by Karakaş, Uysal, Bilgin & Bulut (2016). The purpose of the study was to explore the changes in the tertiary level students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs between their first encounter with them and within the course of time. The findings of the research reveal that there were "neutral perceptions" in the respondents' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs on their first encounter, but as time passes, some changes were observed. Participants' perceptions changed positively on the part of NESTs as for their personality. In both phases, the participants viewed NNESTs positively with regards to pedagogical dimensions but viewed NESTs positively concerning linguistic and professional dimensions. Turkish tertiary level students' perceptions of NNESTs and NESTs have not been explored in detail heretofore considering the meagre amount of research, and therefore, the results to be attained from this study could fill in this gap in the literature.

2. Methodology

2.1 Respondents

A total of 105 Turkish learners of English, all of whom were native speakers of Turkish, and enrolled in a state university preparatory school took part in this study. The level of the participants ranged from intermediate to advanced, and the number of the participants was equal in each level. In the intermediate level %54,3 of the respondents were female, and the rest, %45,7, were male. The participants in the intermediate level were in the age range of 18-22, and the mean value for the age of intermediate level participants was 19,5. Years of English language learning experience amongst

intermediate level participants differed between 8-14 years and the mean value for years of English language learning experience was 10. In the upper-intermediate level, %54,3 of the respondents were female, and the remaining %45,7 were male. Upper-level participants' age range was between 18-26, the mean value for the age in this level was 19,6. Years of English learning experience were between 8-15, and the mean value belonging to the years of English language learning experience was 10. In advanced level, respondents were in the age range of 18-22, and the mean value for age was 19,5. %60 of the respondents was female, and the remaining participants were male. Years of English language learning experience in the advanced level were between 7-13, and the mean value for this demographic information is 9,8.

As can be understood from the values, years of English language learning experience were almost equal to each other in all levels. The percentage of male and female participants was equal to each other in intermediate and upper-intermediate level, while it displayed a slight variation in the advanced level. As to the respondents' age, it is obvious that the mean values for the participants' age in all levels are virtually the same except for a very small difference in the upper-intermediate level. All the participants experienced being taught by both NESTs and NNESTs in the academic year 2017/2018.

2.1 Instruments

In this study, a close and open questionnaire was used to collect the data.

2.1.1 Close Questionnaire

The close questionnaire was adapted from the one developed by Al-Omrani (2008). There are two parts in the questionnaire, the first part is used in order for collecting background information about the participants regarding their age, years of English learning experience, proficiency level, and the teachers taught them during the academic year. The second part of the questionnaire was comprised of three sections. The first section includes 17 statements regarding language learning. Section B involving 17 statements is developed to gain insights into students' perceptions of the aspects of language teaching, that is to say, teaching vocabulary, speaking, listening, grammar, reading, writing and culture. Aside from aspects of language teaching, the second section targets learning about students' thoughts about coursebooks, teachers' fluency and accuracy of English, and collaboration between NETSs and NNESTs. The questionnaire includes a third section which aims at unearthing students' perceptions concerning language assessment. For the analysis of the data gathered through the close questionnaire SPSS 22 was used,

2.1.2 Open Questionnaire

Open questionnaire comprised of seven questions was developed by the author of this study. It was included into this study with a view to gaining deeper insights about participants' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs, because in the close questionnaire, the

respondents could only choose the degree of their agreement or disagreement with the given statements. The questions in the open-questionnaire target discovering how an ideal English language teacher is described by the participants, whether they wanted to be taught by NESTs, NNESTs or both, and the reasons for the stated preference, in which areas of language teaching NESTs and NNESTs are believed to be successful, if a change occurs in the participants' motivation level in NESTs' and NNESTs' lessons, and whether students' proficiency level needs to be taken into account while making decisions about whether NESTs or NNESTs will teach in a specific class. Content analysis was conducted in the analysis of the data obtained from the open questionnaire.

2.2 Procedure

Both questionnaires were completed in class. The close questionnaire was distributed to each level at the same time on the same day, and the respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire in 35 minutes. The following day after administering the close questionnaire, the open questionnaire was distributed to the respondents. Of 105 respondents only 49 returned the close questionnaire filled in. This study was carried out to seek answers to the question of what the perceptions of Turkish tertiary level EFL students concerning NESTs and NNESTs are.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Findings Regarding the First Section of the Close Questionnaire

Table 1 below provides percentage values which belong to the statements in the first section of the second part of the close questionnaire, and are obtained from the descriptive analysis of the collected data.

Table 1: Percentage Values for the First Section in the Close Questionnaire

Statement	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
1. I learn better from a Turkish teacher because we share the same language.	9,5	31,4	30,5	27,6	1
2. I learn better from a Turkish teacher because we share the same culture.	10,5	45,7	24,8	17,1	1,9
3. NNESTs are better because they had to learn the language themselves	12,4	35,2	31,4	15,2	5,7
4. NNESTs always understand my questions and provide clear answers.	3,8	19	25,7	41,9	9,5
5. I feel motivated when I have Turkish teachers.	4,8	16,2	37,1	31,4	10,5
6. I feel anxious when I am taught by NESTs.	19	42,9	18,1	18,1	1,9
7. Beginning English learners learn better if they are taught by teachers who share the same first language with them.	57	11,4	22,9	37,1	22,9
8. Advanced learners learn better when they are taught by NESTs.	0	4,8	13,3	39	42,9

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9. NESTs encourage frequent questions and visits to their offices.	1,9	2,9	25,7	47,6	21,9
10. I prefer to listen to native speakers of English because they are the most fluent.	0	4,8	11,4	51,4	32,4
11. I try to follow the model of my NNESTs.	5,7	35,2	35,2	18,1	5,7
12. I have sometimes sought out native speakers of English because I felt that my teacher's English was not good enough.	4,3	40	32,4	8,6	4,8
13. NNESTs are better than NESTs because they can understand my problems in learning English.	4,8	16,2	26,7	41,9	10,5
14. NNESTs encourage frequent questions and visits to their offices	2,9	2,9	25,7	47,6	21
15. I feel motivated when I have NESTs.	1	10,5	36,2	41,9	10,5
16. I feel anxious when I am taught by a Turkish teacher.	14,3	48,6	28,6	7,6	1
17. English lessons taught by NNESTs are boring.	25,7	40	26,7	5,7	1,9

As could be seen in Table 1, almost half of the respondents disagreed with the idea that they can learn English better from Turkish teachers because they share the same language, which shows that sharing the same language was not a significant factor that could influence language learning process positively for the participants. Contrary to the findings of this study, the research carried out by Alghofaili & Elyas (2017) report that teachers' sharing students' L1 has a facilitative effect on EFL learning. Other studies yielding results that are not in compliance with this study's findings are conducted by Cheung & Braine (2007), Samimy & Brutt-Griffler (1999), and Guerra (2009). In those studies, participants valued NNESTs more, for they could use students' L1 whilst teaching English. The inclination of this study's participants towards not valuing sharing the same L1 with Turkish teachers as having a facilitative effect on their learning may be explicated by the participants' proficiency level. Provided that the participants were at a lower proficiency level, their responses to this statement might be different. Similar to the results obtained for the first item, the percentage values of the second item indicate that the majority of the respondents did not consider coming from the same cultural background as a variable that can exert impact on better English language learning. The results belonging to the second item are different from the ones in the study done Barratt & Kontra (2000) and Rao (1999), in which subjects valued NESTs negatively because of not possessing knowledge of students' culture. Participants' preference can make sense by taking into consideration their proficiency level. Because they are higher level students, learning about target culture could play a more important role in their language learning than teachers' knowledge of local culture. The third item in Table 1 aims at learning about respondents' ideas regarding whether NNESTs are better as they also underwent the same process of language learning. Nearly half of the participants disagreed with this statement, and %31,4 of the

participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Contrary to these results, Alseweed (2012) conducted a study the participants of which noted that NNESTs were better because they could reflect their experiences in English language learning to teaching. The fourth item targets discovering participants' thoughts regarding whether NNESTs understand their questions and always give clear answers. Compared to the other options, most of the respondents agreed with this statement. The fifth statement is included into the questionnaire with a view to finding out if the respondents felt motivated in classes of Turkish teachers of English. The values show that most of the respondents, %41,9, felt motivated when they were taught by Turkish teachers of English. Similarly, in the study done by Aslan & Thompson (2016), the participants valued NNESTs more in terms of learning motivation.

The majority of the participants, %61,9, did not feel anxious as they were taught by NESTs, which could stem from participants' proficiency level in that low proficiency level students may feel anxious in NESTs' lessons due to the fear that most of the content will be incomprehensible because of teacher's accent. As shown in Table 1, an overwhelming number of the respondents believe that beginning level Turkish learners of English could learn better providing they are taught by Turkish teachers since they share the same language. In line with the answer given to the item 6, the majority of the respondents, %81,9, did not feel anxious when taught by NESTs. The percentage values for the following statement show whether the respondents believed that beginning level learners of English need to be taught by teachers with whom they share the same first language. %60 of the participants agreed with the idea given in the seventh statement. A substantial number of the respondents, %81,9, thought that advanced level learners of English are to be taught by NESTs in order to learn English better. In line with the findings of this study, the studies conducted by Canado & Madrid (2004), and Alseweed (2016) reveal that students opted for NNESTs at beginning level, but valued NESTs more at higher levels. The ninth item in the questionnaire targets finding out if the respondents think NESTs stimulate frequent questions and visits to their offices, and the values indicate that %69,5 of the participants agreed with the statement. The tenth statement is included into the questionnaire so as to learn about whether students prefer NESTs to listen to for they are more fluent. The total percentage value for the options 'agree' and 'strongly agree', %83,3, mean that almost all the participants agreed with the idea that since NESTs are more fluent, students opt for listening to NESTs. Language proficiency of NESTs is also put forth by Holliday (2006) and Medgyes (1992) as a factor that positively differentiate NESTs from NNESTs. The studies carried out by Guerra (2017) and Yun Tsou (2013) reveal that NESTs' language proficiency is amongst the valued traits of NESTs on the part of students.

Item 11 caters for learning about if students perceive their NNESTs as models to follow in regard to English language learning. Approximately %41 of the respondents disagreed with this statement and %35,2 of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the idea of following NNESTs as models in language learning, which shows that the respondents do not display a significant tendency to see NNESTs as

their models. Participants' proficiency level might have affected their preferences as the higher proficiency level students have the more they tend to view NESTs as a model to follow. As for the 12th statement, %54,3 of the participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement of they sought out NESTs as their teachers' English was not good enough to clarify the questions in their minds. The following statement helps to discover how many of the respondents believe that NNESTs are better than NESTs in that they can understand the language learning problems experienced by students. %52,4 of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Similarly, in the studies carried out by Alghofaili & Elyas (2017), Ma (2012), and Cheung & Braine (2007), the participants valued NNESTs more as they could understand students' learning difficulties. %68,6 of the respondents agreed with the 14th statement which asserts NNESTs encourage frequent questions and visits to their offices. %52,4 of the respondents believed that they felt motivated when they were taught by NESTs. Nearly %63 of the respondents disagreed with the statement of students feel anxious as taught by Turkish teachers. %65,7 of the participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement of they are bored in lessons taught by Turkish teachers of English. Considering the values belonging to the items 5, 6, 7, 9, 14, 15 and 16, it could be concluded that the participants felt motivated in both NESTs and NNESTs' lessons, they felt anxious in neither of the parties' lessons, and no matter what the teacher's nationality is, frequent questions and visits to teachers' offices were promoted.

3.2 Findings Regarding the Second Section of the Close Questionnaire

Table 2 below demonstrates the percentage values for the statements in the second section of the second part of the close questionnaire.

Table 2: Percentage Values Concerning the Second Section of the Close Questionnaire

Statement	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
18. In teaching oral Skills, NNESTs are better as they are easy to understand.	13,3	41,9	24,8	18,1	1,9
19. In teaching oral skills, NESTs are better because they pronounce words more accurately.	1	2,9	18,1	46,7	31,4
20. I prefer studying 40 speaking with a NESTs because this forces me not to speak Turkish.	0	4,8	14,3	41	40
21. NNESTs teach reading and writing better than NESTs.	7,6	37,1	35,2	17,1	2,9
22. NNESTs teach grammar better than NESTs.	4,8	26,7	24,8	30,5	13,3
23. I prefer taking grammar lessons from Turkish teachers because they provide Turkish examples that explain English grammar.	4,8	11,4	16,2	44,8	22,9
24. I prefer being taught vocabulary by a Turkish teacher because they can give the meaning of unknown word in Turkish.	9,5	21,9	21,9	39	7,6
25. NNESTs teach American and British culture better than NESTs	22,9	48,6	20	5,7	2,9
26. It is hard for Turkish students when their teacher is a NNEST.	6,7	36,2	35,2	18,1	3,8
27. NNESTs do not consider Class activities, games and out-of-class	21,9	38,1	25,7	10,5	3,8

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activities as sources of learning English.					
28. NNESTs are helpful outside the classroom.	11,4	17,1	21	38,1	12,4
29. NNESTs implement up-to-date techniques that suit my needs as a language learner.	1,9	4,8	26,7	51,4	15,2
30. I prefer classes where both NETSs and NNESTs work collaboratively.	8,6	13,3	28,6	28,6	21
31. While speaking, it is more important to use the language correctly than to use it fluently.	2,9	23,8	30,5	35,2	7,6
32. To be a good language teacher a person needs both experience and qualifications in teaching English.	39	3,8	2,9	1,4	42,9
33. NESTs are helpful outside the classroom.	3,8	7,6	21,9	41	25,7
34. NESTs implement up-to-date techniques that suit my needs as a language learner.	1	6,7	24,8	47,6	20

As seen in Table 2, more than half of the participants, % 55,2, disagreed with the statement of NNESTs are better at teaching oral skills because they are not difficult to understand. %78,1 of the participants agreed with the 19th statement that asserts the idea that NESTs are better than NNESTs as they pronounce words more accurately. The research done by Barratt & Kontra (2000), Butler (2007), Lewis, Sonsaat, Link & Barriuso (2017), Tang (1997), and Walksinshaw (2012) reveal that the participants in those studies also prefer NESTS over NNESTs as for teaching pronunciation. In line with the percentage values belonging to the statement 19, %81 of the participants agreed with the statement that they prefer to study speaking with a NEST as they feel obligated to speak in English in NESTs' classes. Statement 21 targets finding out if students believe NNESTs are better at teaching reading and writing. %43,7 disagreed with this statement, it is, however, worth to note that %35,2 of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Similarly, in the study done by Tang (1997), students stated reading as the skill NESTs were better at teaching. %43,8 of the respondents believed that NNESTs are better at teaching grammar than NESTs compared to %31,5 of the participants either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement. Likewise, the studies by Benke & Medgyes (2005), Barratt & Kontra (2000), and Diaz (2005) depict NNESTs successful in teaching grammar. The values for the statements 22 and 23 unearth students' thoughts about if NNESTs are better at teaching grammar because they give Turkish examples to explain English grammar, and %67,7 of the respondents agreed with this statement. The 24th statement in the questionnaire explores whether the participants wanted to be taught vocabulary by Turkish teachers in that they can provide the meanings of the unknown words in Turkish. %46,6 of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement whereas %31,4 of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. The percentage values for 'agree' and 'strongly agree' in this statement could be higher unless the participants were high proficiency level students. %71,5 of the respondents disagreed with the 25th statement which points out NNESTs are better at teaching American or British culture. In line with the findings of this study, the studies conducted by Barratt

& Kontra (2000), Guerra (2017), and Rao (2010) reveal that students view NESTs more competent at teaching target culture.

Statement 26 that asserts it is hard for students when their teacher is a NNEST is disagreed by %42,9 of the respondents. In the 27th statement, it is stated that NNESTs do not accept class activities, games, and out-of-class activities as sources of English language learning. %60 of the respondents disagreed with this statement. %50,5 of the respondents agreed with the statement of NNESTs are helpful outside the classroom. In the following statement, %66,6 of the participants agreed with the idea that NNESTs apply up-to-date techniques that suit students' needs as language learners. Considering the values for the items 26, 27, 28, and 29, it can be stated that having a NNEST was not a problem for the participants because NNESTs considered class activities, games, and out-class activities as sources contributing to student learning, were helpful outside the territory of the campus, and employed up-to-date techniques in teaching. In the 30th statement, almost half of the respondents preferred classes where NESTs and NNESTs work collaboratively, the probability and effectiveness of which needs to be investigated. %42,8 of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement claiming that it is significant to use the language correctly rather than fluently while speaking. %30,5 of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. %81,9 of the participants agreed with the idea that having both qualifications and experience is important to be a good language teacher. Similarly, in the study done by Alghofaili & Elyas (2017), students stated it was the experience that made teachers qualified. The results attained from the research carried out by Barratt & Kontra (2000) involve complaints about NESTs on the grounds that they lack teaching qualifications. In the following statement, %66,7 of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with notion that NNESTs are helpful outside the classroom. %67,6 of the participants agreed with the statement that NESTs employ up-to-date techniques to suit their students' needs. Taking into account the percentage values belonging to the statements asking for if NNESTs and NESTs employ up-to-take techniques in their teaching, it could be said that both parties apply up-to-date techniques in teaching English according to the participants.

3.3 Findings Regarding the Third Section of the Close Questionnaire

Table 3 below displays the percentage values for the statements in the third section of the second part of the close questionnaire.

Table 3: Percentage Values for the Third Section in the Questionnaire

Statement	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
35. I like English classes where there are many tests and quizzes.	16,2	27,6	22,9	26,7	6,7
36. I prefer feedback in Turkish to my assignments.	17,1	33,3	27,6	14,3	6,70
37. Students often cannot understand feedback from NESTSs.	20	33,3	27,6	15,2	3,8

38. NNESTs do not usually give enough tests and quizzes to measure their students' progress.	12,4	40	34,3	12,4	1
39. Students often do not understand feedback or corrections from NNESTs.	18,1	48,6	20	11,4	1,9

The percentage values obtained from the 35th statement show that most of the participants, in comparison to the values for the other options, did not prefer classes in which there are many tests and quizzes. As to getting feedback for their assignments from teachers, half of the sample did not want to receive feedback in Turkish, which could make sense so long as the proficiency level of the respondents is taken into consideration. Since the participants are at intermediate and higher than intermediate level, half of the respondents opted for getting feedback in English. The values for the statements 37 and 39 indicate that the participants did not face problems understanding the feedback they got either from NESTs or NNESTs. The values belonging to the statement 38 show that most of the students think NNESTs give enough tests and quizzes to measure their students' progress.

3.4. Findings Obtained from the Open Questionnaire

The open questionnaire consists of seven questions, and Table 4 below demonstrates the content analysis of the responses given to the first question which aims at discovering participants' thoughts about the features of ideal English language teachers.

Table 4: Features of an Ideal English Language Teacher

Category	N
Understanding	36
Speaking fluency	22
Energetic and highly motivated	17
Good teaching skills	15
Good pronunciation skills	11
Experience-informed attitude	6
Rich vocabulary repertoire	6
Objective	3
Using games	2
Sharing students' L1	2

As demonstrated in Table 4, 36 respondents noted that a good English language teacher needs to be understanding. One of the participants jotted down in the questionnaire:

Extract 1: The most important quality an English language teacher needs to possess is being understanding because if the teacher is not understanding she cannot have her students learn English.

Being able to speak English fluently is considered by 22 respondents to be an important trait an ideal English language teacher is to have. Another feature of ideal English language teachers is thought to be being energetic and highly motivated by 17 respondents. One respondent noted down:

Extract 2: English language teachers should be energetic and motivated because I do not want to be bored in lessons.

Good teaching skills are considered to be another significant quality an English language teacher needs to have. Extract 3 below may help understand what is meant by good teaching skills.

Extract 3: An ideal English language teacher has to be knowledgeable about up-to-date techniques in terms of teaching English and must change his/her teaching style according to students' needs.

Pronouncing words accurately is perceived by 11 of the participants to be another feature successful English language teachers need to possess. Table 4 displays that six participants jotted down good English language teachers need to orchestrate their attitudes towards students by taking into consideration their own language learning experiences, and their prior experience as English language teachers. Similarly, one of the results of the research conducted by Alseweed (2012) shows that NNESTs are valued positively in that they could use their previous language learning experiences to facilitate the language learning process for students. Six respondents viewed having rich vocabulary repertoire to be an important quality of ideal English language teachers. As shown in Table 4, three of the participants thought being objective as an essential characteristic of successful English language teachers, two of them stated using games and another 2 participants contemplated sharing students' L1 as traits ideal English language teachers need to have. Likewise, knowledge of students' L1 was put forth as one of the strengths of NNESTs by the participants in the study conducted by Alghofaili & Elyas (2017).

The findings obtained from the content analysis of the responses given to the question of if respondents wanted to learn English from NNESTs, NESTs or both are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Preference for NESTs, NNESTs or Both

Category	N
Both	30
NESTs	13
NNESTs	6

As seen in Table 5, an overwhelming number of the participants did not have a clear preference for either NESTs or NNESTs, and noted that they would like to be taught by both NNESTs and NESTs. 13 respondents preferred to be taught by NESTs and six of them opted for NNESTs. The participants who preferred NESTs stated that being taught by a NEST means having no other chance but to communicate in English, and that is what they need to learn English. Other reasons jotted down by the participants who opted for NESTs are that NESTs speak English fluently, pronounce words correctly, and English is their mother tongue. The reasons stated by the six participants who preferred NNESTs are that it is easier to understand and communicate with them, they are better at giving feedback, and they can explain anything students do not

understand in Turkish. A similar finding is reported in the study carried out by Guerra (2009). The Portuguese participants stated that they preferred NNESTs because they could make explanations in Portuguese. The majority of the respondents in this study stated that they wanted to be taught by both because while NESTs are good at teaching some skills, NNESTs are successful in others. The research carried out by Lewis, Sonsaat, Link & Barriuso (2017) shows that the participants did not have a clear preference for either NESTs or NNESTs as nativeness was not contemplated to be compulsory to be a good English language teacher. Similarly, the subject in the research conducted by Cheung & Braine (2007) did not consider nativeness a significant criterion for being a good English language teacher. The study done by Alghofaili & Elyas (2017) reveals similar results as rather than teachers' nativeness, their teaching experiences are perceived to be significant. Table 6 provides the results showing in which areas NESTs and in which areas NNESTs are good at teaching.

Table 6: The Areas NESTs and NNESTs are Good at Teaching

Skill	NESTs	NNESTs
Pronunciation	44	3
Speaking	37	6
Listening	14	14
Reading	10	19
Writing	10	27
Grammar		42

As can be seen in Table 6, 44 of the respondents viewed NESTs as good at teaching pronunciation, whereas only 3 participants perceived NNESTs talented at teaching pronunciation. The number of the respondents considering NESTs and NNESTs good at teaching speaking is different from each other, too. Whilst 37 participants considered NESTs to be good at teaching speaking, only six respondents jotted down that NNESTs are successful in teaching speaking. Table 6 displays that equal number of respondents perceived NESTs and NNESTs good at teaching listening. As for teaching reading, 10 respondents considered NESTs good at teaching reading while the number of the participants seeing NNESTs good at teaching reading approximately doubled that of NESTs. Table 6 demonstrates that the number of participants perceiving NNESTs good at teaching writing is higher than the one finding NESTs good at teaching writing, 27 and 10 respectively. The numerical data belonging to teaching grammar shows a substantial difference between the number of the respondents valuing NESTs and NNESTs as good at teaching grammar for only six participants wrote down that NESTs are good teaching grammar while 42 respondents viewed NNESTs successful in teaching grammar. The results appear to be parallel to the findings of the majority of the research conducted with the same purpose (Aslan & Thompson, 2016; Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Barratt & Kontra, 2007; Diaz, 2015; Karakaş, 2016; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Li & Zhang, 2016; Lewis, Sonsaat, Link, & Barriuso 2017; Medgyes, 1994; Tang, 1997; Walksinshaw, 2012; Yun Tsou, 2013). In those studies, the findings also

indicate that students prefer NESTs over NNESTs in learning speaking and pronunciation while they display a tendency for NNESTs in learning grammar, writing and reading.

The 5th question in the open questionnaire was added to the questionnaire to find out how motivated they feel in NESTs' and NNESTs' classes. Table 7 below presents the numerical data providing answer to this question.

Table 7: Motivation Level in NESTs' and NNESTs' Lessons

Category	Both	NESTs	NNESTs
Students' motivation level	22	21	6

As shown in Table 7, 22 respondents stated that their motivation level did change according to the nationality of the teacher, and they felt motivated both in NESTs' and NNESTs' lessons. Of 49 participants returning back the open questionnaire, 21 respondents wrote down that their motivation level is higher in NESTs' classes. Extract 4 is taken from one of the students' questionnaire feeling more motivated in NESTs' lessons.

Extract 4: I feel motivated in NESTs' lessons because they do not speak Turkish. For this reason, I force myself to express my ideas in English and this makes me happy. The number of the students feeling more motivated in NNESTs' lessons is six. In the research carried out by Aslan & Thompson (2016), the results show that the subjects felt more motivated in lessons conducted by NNESTs. Following extracts are taken from the students' questionnaires whose motivation level is higher in NNESTs' lessons.

Extract 5: I feel more motivated in Turkish teachers' lessons because we share the same first language, and they can understand and correct me easily when I make mistakes.

Extract 6: I feel motivated in Turkish teachers' lessons because I believe they are more sincere than NESTs.

The sixth question in the open questionnaire aims at discovering whether participants agreed or disagreed with the assumption that lower level students need to be taught English by NNESTs while it is better for higher level students to be taught by NESTs.

Table 8: NNESTs or NESTs According to Students' Levels

Category	N
Agree	37
Disagree	12

Table 8 displays that 37 participants agreed with the idea that students' proficiency level is to be taken into consideration as allocating NESTs and NNESTs to classes whereas 12 respondents disagreed with it. In the study done by Canado & Madrid (2004), the findings report that higher proficiency level students need to be taught by NESTs. Likewise, the results of the study conducted by Guerra (2009) indicate that

Portuguese participants believed beginning levels need to be taught by NNESTs while intermediate and higher level students should be taught by NESTs. Another study the results of which are in line with this study's finding is done by Alseweed (2012). The participants of that study also preferred to learn English from NESTs as their proficiency level increased. Extracts 7 and 8 are retrieved from the questionnaires of the students who support the assumption.

Extract 7: I think it is better to be taught English by NNESTs at lower levels because when students do not understand something, they can ask it in Turkish and the teacher can answer in Turkish, too.

Extract 8: It is better to have NESTs at higher levels as students can have more opportunities to practise speaking.

Extracts 9 and 10 are taken from the responses of the students who believe that students' proficiency level should not be taken into account while assigning NESTs and NNESTs to classes.

Extract 9: I believe it should be the opposite, I mean low proficient students need to be taught by NESTs so that they can speak in English more, and by doing so, they can learn better.

Extract 10: In lower levels if students have NESTs, they can try to do more to improve their speaking skill. Otherwise, they leave speaking skill to higher levels, which becomes more difficult then.

Question 7 is included in the open questionnaire in order to learn about which teachers, NESTs or NNESTs, are good at giving feedback. Table 9 provides the numerical data answering the question.

Table 9: Who is Better at Giving Feedback? NESTs, NNESTs, or Both?

Category	N
NNESTs	24
Both	13
NESTs	1

As shown in Table 9, 24 respondents stated that NNESTs are good at giving feedback. Extracts 11 and 12 are from the questionnaires of the students advocating that NNESTs are better at giving feedback compared to NESTs.

Extract 11: I prefer getting feedback from Turkish teachers because they give detailed feedback. They understand what I am trying to say or write when I make mistakes, and help me correct them.

Extract 12: I prefer the feedback I get from Turkish teachers because their feedback is more understandable.

Other reasons stated by the respondents who believe that NNESTs are better at giving feedback include Turkish examples that might be given by Turkish teachers, and similar mistakes that might have been done by NNESTs as they were learning English.

The participants asserting that both NESTs and NNESTs are good at giving feedback stated in their answers that they could not make a discrimination between

their NESTs and NNESTs in that being good at giving feedback was not something related to the nationality of the teacher but to their teaching qualifications. In addition, they noted that both NESTs and NNESTs having taught them during the academic year were equally good at giving feedback.

Table 9 displays that 12 participants perceived NESTs good at giving feedback. In the study done by Cheung & Braine (2007), participants did not prefer NNESTs in terms of getting feedback, as they thought that NNESTs overcorrected students' works. Extracts 13 and 14 are taken from the questionnaires of two participants who believed NESTs were better at giving feedback.

Extract 13: I prefer NESTs because they think in English while giving feedback and force us to think in English, too.

Extract 14: I prefer NESTs in getting feedback because they show and correct just important mistakes unlike Turkish teachers. NNESTs focus on grammar mistakes and try to correct them but NESTs focus on content, which is, I believe, more important.

4. Conclusion

The question of who is better at teaching English, NESTs or NNESTs, is a question in which much ink has been spilled, and most probably, incoming years will witness an increase in the amount of research seeking answers to this question. Considering the limited number of studies conducted in Turkish context, this study aims to discover the perceptions of Turkish tertiary level EFL students regarding NESTs and NNESTs. The results report that being understanding, having speaking fluency, and being energetic and highly motivated are the first three most frequently stated characteristics of ideal English language teachers. The findings also indicate that the sample show an inclination towards being taught by both NESTs and NNESTs. The respondents tend to prefer NESTs over NNESTs with regard to teaching speaking, pronunciation, and target culture whilst the participants opt for NNESTs when it comes to teaching grammar, writing and reading. Another significant finding is that the respondents of this study do not think that they could learn better from NNESTs as they share the same mother tongue and culture with NNESTs. Aside from these, most of the participants do not consider that NNESTs can perform better at teaching English since they have also undergone similar processes as learners of English. An important conclusion that could be drawn from the findings is that the respondents believe beginning learners need to be taught by NNESTs while NESTs might be better for higher proficiency level students. The findings also show that teaching experience and qualifications are considered to be highly pivotal for English language teachers to be better teachers. In the light of the findings, it could be said that both NNESTs and NESTs have strengths and weakness in the eyes of students, and Turkish tertiary level learners of English want to be taught by both parties to get benefit from their strengths. Keeping in mind multifacetedness of English language learning, it is of high significance that a teacher should not be hired merely because s/he is a native speaker of English. Further research

on students' perceptions regarding NESTs and NNESTs is required not only in Turkey but abroad to be capable of making comparisons between the perceptions of learners of English from different nationalities. Additionally, more studies are needed to elucidate the differences, if any, in low and high proficient students' perceptions concerning NESTs and NNESTs.

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