



NNEST 101:  
THE NNEST MOVEMENT

Non-Native English Speakers in TESOL  
(pronounced /ɛnˈnɛst/ or en-nest)

2015 NNEST EVO Ali Fuad Selvi, PhD



MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY  
NORTHERN CYPRUS CAMPUS

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### The Primary Motivation

Discuss the theoretical, practical and professional parameters of the NNEST movement/research

→ Understanding is a prerequisite to change, and it is a testament to the complexity of the matter but defines the directions we can pursue...

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### Agenda

- A quick look at the
  - ▣ English language
  - ▣ English Language Teaching (ELT) profession
  - ▣ English Language Teaching (ELT) professionals
- The NNEST movement
  - ▣ The foundational pillars
  - ▣ Common threads
  - ▣ NNEST Interest Section
- Discussion questions



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- “First truly global language” (Crystal, 2004)
- “A lingua franca” (Seidlehofer, 2005)
- “The last lingua franca” (Ostler, 2010)
- “A lingua franker than ever” (McArthur, 2001)
- The zeitgeist of today’s globalized world (Mauranen, 2012)

...English language has “touched the lives of so many people, in so many cultures and continents, in so many functional roles, and with so much prestige” (Kachru, 1990, p. 5).

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### The English language today



- English language → A global phenomenon with local impacts
- Diverse uses, users and contexts in which it is used for a variety of glocal purposes
  - ▣ World Englishes
  - ▣ English as a Lingua Franca
  - ▣ English as an International Language

} → New paradigms

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- Non-native speakers (NNSs) of English are estimated to outnumber their native speaker (NS) counterparts by 3:1 (Crystal, 2012)
- The ownership of English is shared by all its speakers, regardless of their ‘nativeness’ (Widdowson, 1994)
- 80% of the English language teachers worldwide are estimated to be NNESTs (Canagarajah, 2005)




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Changing times...

“The teaching and learning of an international language must be based on an entirely different set of assumptions than the teaching and learning of any other second and foreign language.”

(McKay, 2002, p. 1)

Towards a new orientation in ELT...

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However...



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- Different facets of the ELT profession (e.g. theory, research, publishing, instructional materials, assessment, teacher training and hiring practices) **have traditionally been under the decisive and destructive influence of [Native Speakerism]**



“...‘native speakers’ represent a ‘Western culture’ from which spring the ideals both of the language and of language teaching methodology”

(Holliday, 2008, p. 49)

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What does it mean for us as ELT professionals?

What are the implications for the ELT field?



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### Implications for ELT profession(als)

- positions NESTs as better teachers/idealized/absolute sources of knowledge (i.e. native speaker fallacy' – Phillipson, 1992)
- positions NNESTs as defective communicators, limited by an underdeveloped communicative competence (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Valdes, 1998)
- Damages NNESTs' teacher persona, self-esteem and in-class performance
  - Causes NNESTs suffer from the 'I-am-not-a-native-speaker' (Suarez, 2000) or 'impostor' syndromes (Bernat, 2009)
- Creates unprofessional favoritism in institutions, publishing houses and government agencies (Medgyes, 2001)
  - Results in discriminatory practices in hiring processes and at workplace (Clark & Paran, 2007; Flynn & Gulikers, 2001; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Selvi, 2010)

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Going beyond the NS as a benchmark in English language learning, teaching and teacher education



### THE NNEST MOVEMENT

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### The Pillars of the NNEST Movement

- 1** THEORETICAL – A more inclusive intellectual space defined by a shift from the traditional monolingual, monocultural, native-speakerist approach to teaching, learning and teacher education in TESOL
- 2** PRACTICAL – Brings together and supports a wide spectrum of threads from research, teaching and advocacy realms to promote and institutionalize discourses of multilingualism, multiethnicism, and multiculturalism
- 3** PROFESSIONAL – Aims to redefine the fabric of the TESOL profession characterized by qualities such as democracy, justice, collaboration, equity, and professionalism.

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**Intellectual avenues of the NNEST movement**

- **Research efforts** (books, journal articles, opinion pieces, presentations, workshops and colloquia in conferences, M.A. theses and Ph.D. dissertations)
- **Policy and advocacy** (establishment of the NNEST Caucus/ Interest Section in TESOL International, NNEST-related entities in local TESOL affiliates, white papers and position statements)
- **Teaching activities** (infusion of NNEST issues into teacher education curriculum through class discussions, activities and assignments)

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**We need to re-define our benchmarks**

- **Using a causal relationship between the titles and the associated teacher skills and competencies** reinforces the existing dichotomy between [NESTs vs. NNESTs]
  - “People do not become qualified to teach English merely because it is their mother tongue” (Maum, 2002, p. 1) → **NSism**
  - “People do not become qualified to teach English merely because it is their second language” (Selvi, 2014, p. 589) → **NNSism**
- The question of “Who’s worth more, the native or the non-native?” is pointless” (Medgyes, 1992)
  - What we need? **Experience, expertise, collaboration, equity, and professionalism/professional development**

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**Native Speakerism hurts everyone**

- Teachers
  - NSs who spend time, energy, money and other resources on teacher training
  - NNSs who are discriminated in workplace/hiring
- English Language Learners (Teaching Practices)
  - A language pedagogy conducive to present-day realities of the diversity, contexts, uses and users of the English
- The status of ELT as a profession
  - Limits the collaborative and participatory practices
  - Damages the diversity among ELT professionals

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**Discrimination still exists in ELT**

□ Sources of discrimination in ELT:

- Nativeness
- Accent
- Race
- Gender
- Religion
- Country of origin/schooling
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Physical appearance
- Even the passport you carry

OR

a combination of these constructs

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**Discrimination still exists in ELT**

□ Institutionalized Responses (Position Statements)

- A TESOL Statement on Nonnative Speakers of English and Hiring Practices (TESOL, 1992)
- Position Statement against Discrimination of Nonnative Speakers of English in the Field of TESOL (TESOL, 2006)
- Establishment of "Centers for English Language Training" by South-East Asian countries (ASEAN, 2005)
- CATESOL Position Statement opposing discrimination against Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) and teachers with "non-standard" varieties of English (CATESOL, 2013)





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### A movement for all ELT professionals

- Aim → Move away from 'either/or discourse' (i.e. NEST or NNEST) to a more encompassing 'both/and discourse' (i.e. NEST and NNEST) (Selvi, 2011)
- Benefits?
  - Co-operation, collaboration, and legitimate participation for a more participatory future of our profession
  - More educationally, contextually, and socially appropriate English language learning opportunities (Mahboob, 2010)
  - A wider sociolinguistic and intercultural repertoire for ELLs (McKay, 2002)
  - A professional milieu that 'welcome[s] ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity' (Selvi, 2009)




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## who we are

Non-Native English Speakers in TESOL – (pronounced /en/nest/ or en-nest)

### NNEST INTEREST SECTION in TESOL International Association

The Nonnative English Speakers in TESOL Interest Section (NNEST-IS) serves as a focus for the interaction of members who share a common interest in a wide variety of issues concerning nonnative-English-speaking professionals. It creates a venue for identifying and addressing NNEST-related issues and facilitating communication and networking both among IS members and those of TESOL at large. The IS aims to

- Promote, develop, and advance academic and professional awareness of the role of NNEST professionals in the field
- Stimulate scholarship, research, and professional development by sponsoring special projects, sessions at the annual TESOL convention, and publications
- Create a nondiscriminatory professional environment for all TESOL members regardless of native language, race, and place of birth
- Enhance and empower the professional growth of its members
- Serve as an advocate and resources for NNEST communities and individuals in professional matters

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### Leaders (2014 – 2015)

**Chair:** Kyung-Hee Bae – [kbae@rice.edu](mailto:kbae@rice.edu)

**Chair-Elect:** Soonhyang Kim – [soonhyang@hotmail.com](mailto:soonhyang@hotmail.com)  
(Kara MacDonald – @ as of April '15)

**Immediate Past Chair:** Ali Fuad Selvi – [selvi@metu.edu.tr](mailto:selvi@metu.edu.tr)

**Member-at-Large:** Katya Nemtchinova – [katya@spu.edu](mailto:katya@spu.edu)

**Newsletter Editors:** Bedrettin Yazan – [byazan@bamaed.ua.edu](mailto:byazan@bamaed.ua.edu) &  
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**Community Managers:** Hami Suzuki – [suzukiha@hawaii.edu](mailto:suzukiha@hawaii.edu) &  
Baburhan Uzum – [baburhanuzum@gmail.com](mailto:baburhanuzum@gmail.com)

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### Ways to join the movement:



- Visit our homepage – <http://nnest.asu.edu>
- Join the online conversation via NNEST IS listserv @ [nnest@community.tesol.org](mailto:nnest@community.tesol.org)
- Friend and like us on Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/nnest/>
- Mention and follow us on Twitter – <https://twitter.com/TESOLNNEST>
- Read interviews on the NNEST of the Month blog – <http://nnest.blog.com/>
- Join the discussions on our Blog – <http://www.nnestblog.blogspot.com.tr/>
- Submit your article to our IS newsletter – <http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/tesolnnest/issues/>

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thank you!

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### Q&A

- What are some ways that WE should consider pursuing in order to establish equity, professionalism and non-discrimination in ELT profession?
- What are some challenges in your local context and what can WE do about it?
- Do you believe that NNESTs will perpetuate their self-marginalization by their title? What is your alternative to “NNEST”?
- Any other questions?

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