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A Metaphorical Study: EFL Teachers' Concepts of "Standard", "Standards for Quality EFL and International Teacher"

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ABSTRACT

Delving into the multifaceted functions of EFL teaching, such concepts of global society as lingual and cultural diversity in the center of education manifest a big challenge for EFL. To deal with these demands on the teachers starts with setting the minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers: standards. Within this respect, this study was conducted to explore EFL teachers' metaphorical images about the concepts of "standard", "quality EFL teacher", "standards for quality EFL teacher" and "international teacher". 82 EFL teachers working in the Anatolian part of Istanbul in 2014-2015 academic year participated in the study. Data was collected through a form in which teachers were asked to produce a metaphor about each of the four mentioned concepts. Collected data was analyzed by using "content analysis technique". As a result, teachers were found to produce such metaphors about standards as a star, a scale, a book, a recipe to attract attention to the guiding nature of the standard to do the best. As result of the analysis of the metaphors in categories, teachers were also found to see quality EFL teacher as a multidimensional person, a lifelong learner, a guide and a multicultural domain. Moreover, they emphasized the facilitating impact of the standards on the quality of teaching service performed by EFL teachers. Participant teachers also stressed the cultural dimension of being an international teacher by resembling international teacher to a bridge between the local (national) and the universal cultures as a self sacrificing professional attempting to light the way for the students by keeping to be updated.

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Keywords:
EFL teacher; international teacher; metaphor; standard

Introduction

The rapid globalization process has provoked many changes in the science and technology by dragging the countries into a competition in the way of being a knowledge-based society. This tendency also naturally exerted its impact on the processes of education and, thus, learners began to be regarded as individuals and they were carried into the heart of educational processes and procedures.

In this age of individualizing education, it seems highly impossible for *English As a Foreign Language Teaching* (EFL) to isolate itself from the changes and developments in general education. Because today's conditions make it compulsory for individuals to acquire a second language or languages to various degrees after they have become competent in their first language. The most apparent reason behind this seems to be the need to be integrated into the rest of globalised world; as, in such a world, the bridge between the self and the others is necessarily believed to be built with an international language. This international language is accepted as English according to informal laws of the modern world and it serves for crucial purposes such as making people have access to information on mass media and following the pace of the world running in English. Hence, the sub-skills and the processes involved as the determinants on the success of learning EFL have been researched throughout the history (Anderson, 2003; Baker & Boonkit, 2004; Block,

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1986; Block, 1992; Brantmeirer, 2002; Brown, 2002; Chamot, 2004; Hajhashemi, Akef and Anderson, 2012; Hismanoglu, 2000; Javier, 1997; Phakiti, 2003; Razmjoo, 2008).

A highly believed conception is that the success of an educational program is generally attributed to the success of the teachers. In other words, the teachers directly affect the quality of educational processes or procedures (Yelken, 2009). As a result, education and teacher training have been regarded as the basic prerequisites for a modern knowledge-based developing country. Therefore, developing countries aim to "reconstruct their educational and training systems in all aspects to keep up with the competition" of being the most developed (Erişen, 2007). However, when it comes to EFL teaching, the impact of teachers on the outcomes of the education is much more intensive. That is why, EFL teaching is a complex issue embracing not only educational but also social and global responsibilities. It is more than teaching a language since it also creates an awareness of respect for different cultures among students (TESOL, 2010). Such concepts of global society as multilingualism, multiculturalism and diversity in the center of education manifest a big challenge for EFL. The reason behind it is that EFL students present a great deal of linguistic, cultural, and geographical diversity (Capps, Fix, Murray, Ost, Passel, & Herwantoro, 2005) triggering a paradigm shift in EFL from monolingual to multilingual (Canagarajah & Wurr, 2011). These are all loading an EFL teacher with much more responsibilities than the teachers of other subject areas. As a result, the role and identity of the EFL teacher is changing. Therefore, TESOL International Association's "*Guidelines for Developing Standards in EFL" (*Kuhlman & Knezevic, 2013) suggests that "multilingual and multicultural aspects of EFL should be integrated into teacher education programs, and should be further fostered and promoted as a value in the classrooms" (p. 3). In this respect, these programs will enable EFL teachers to reflect the diversity of their students' backgrounds and needs by individualizing the instruction.

Given all that, the ultimate success of the EFL teaching depends on how effectively teacher education programs prepare new EFL teachers to educate these culturally diverse students having various lingual backgrounds (TESOL, 2010). These multilingual and multicultural aspects of EFL load EFL teachers with a lot of responsibilities and demands. However, what kind of abilities these teachers must have remains as a tough issue. To deal with these demands on the teachers starts with setting *the minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers* (Department For Education, 2011). This necessity urges what the present study touches on: Standards. Kuhlman & Knezevic (2013) argue these standards need to "provide quality training and integrated programs that offer knowledge (theoretical and practical), understanding, values, and subject specific and generic competences (intercultural being one of them)" (p.3). These standards, in a way, seem to confirm Hymes' (1971) assertion learning a language requires not only learning linguistics labels to refer to the physical world or abstract concepts but also entails learning how to use those labels effectively and communicatively in socially and culturally different contexts.

In brief, within the changes triggered by the globalizing world, Turkey must question the quality of its language education system to integrate itself with the rest of the world. As suggested by Erisen (2007), it is mostly believed that the quality of the teachers determines the quality of education itself. Therefore, Turkey can start to compete with other countries by only renewing or reconstructing its educational staff according to some universal standards that meet the needs of a global society. In this respect, this study accepts that "a new platform of teaching a foreign language in a culturally diverse society (a society/community dimension) made up of people having plurilingual backgrounds (an individual dimension) is needed" (TESOL, 2010, p.3). Given all that, the present study is based on two following purposes;

a) to explore the metaphorical perceptions of EFL teachers about the concepts of *standards for quality EFL teacher* and *international teacher*
b) b) to make relevant academic staff aware of the international standards for EFL teachers by offering a program change in the English Language Teaching (ELT) in Turkey as to meet the needs of global society.

Standards For Quality EFL Teaching

Standards are used for various purposes in daily life. Sometimes it is used for evaluating something as a "meter" while it is sometimes used as a criterion for evaluating the merit of something more complex. Most of the dictionaries define it as "something established by authority, custom, or general consent as a model or

example" or "a level of quality". Scriven (1981) simply defines standards as "the performance level associated with a particular rating or "grade" on a given criterion or dimension of achievements" (p. 147). On the other hand, Mathison (2005) provides a more detailed definition of the term as "the levels of performance, typically expressed as a rating or grade, on a given criterion" (p. 399). However, in education, standards generally serve as a reference point to assess and evaluate how well or how much of the things that should be done are done. In other words, educational standards are usually defined in the form of benchmarks for accountability or goals attained by students or teacher (O'Malley & Valdez, 1996). The level of meeting these standards are measured through tests or comparing the actual students' or teachers' performances with relevant performance indicators developed according to those standards.

EFL Teaching Standards in the World and in Turkey

The demand for English language learning is so immense in today's world. However, the quality of English language teaching for speakers of other languages around the world is changing widely. Taking the significant roles and functions of EFL, to set the standards for a qualified foreign language teacher becomes a huge necessity. Hence, it is possible to come across with a number of efforts to create standards for qualified English teachers. TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) pioneers these efforts throughout the world. TESOL aims to advance professional expertise in English language teaching and learning for speakers of other languages worldwide (TESOL, 2010). Within this perspective, TESOL has published a range of standards including *Pre-K–12 English Language Proficiency Standards, Technology Standards, TESOL/NCATE Professional Standards for P–12 Teacher Education Programs, Standards for Adult Education ESOL Programs, Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults*, *Effective Practices in Workplace Language Training*.

In addition to TESOL, there are some other institutions attempting to set the standards for EFL teachers. EU has also *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Council of Europe, 2011). It can also be regarded as a kind of standards. They also set that Egypt and Mexico have attempted to create teacher standards. Moreover, some countries like Albania, Uruguay, and Ecuador have been reported to adapt the TESOL standards to their own settings (Kuhlman & Knezevic, 2013). American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2002) has set the standards valid for teaching not only English but also other languages as a second language in general. European Council of International Schools (ECIS) is another important source to equip teachers with the global mind necessary for successful teaching in the 21st Century through *The International Teacher Certificate (ITC)*. ECIS (2014) creates following five multicultural and multidisciplinary standards, including twenty-three sub-standards, for an internationally minded teacher to possess.

In brief, although the standards for EFL teachers vary widely, it can be put forward that there appears to be a great deal of commonality in content among these existing standards or frameworks. In the *TESOL Guidelines For Developing EFL Standards*, Kuhlman & Knezevic (2013) specify common points of all standards as topics such as language structure, culture, and language acquisition and development. Additionally, Kuhlman & Knezevic (2013) display that all of those efforts to standardize a qualified EFL teacher touch on some methodological concerns such as lesson planning, practice teaching, and assessing language growth, and most include professionalism in some form.

When it comes to Turkey, a number of studies discuss the problems of teacher training in Turkey (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003; Demirel, 1991; Işık, 2008; Kırkgöz, 2007; Yelken, 2009; Tarman, 2010; Yüksel & Adigüzel, 2011). They all indicate that training of teachers still remains an important issue in Turkey. EFL teachers seem to suffer mostly from such problems. These problems in EFL teaching make the country unable to reach the intended goals (Demirel, 1991). Işık (2008) attributes this failure to the inefficiency of teaching EFL to diverse backgrounds of EFL teachers in Turkey. Because a great deal of EFL teachers in Turkey graduated from neither teacher colleges in general nor teacher colleges for EFL teaching. Çelebi (2006) asserts that, even today, there are a great number of EFL teachers who did not graduate from an EFL teacher training college. This proves a lot of EFL teachers in Turkey lack of internationally accepted standards and therefore produce internationally unacceptable level of teaching service.

Işık (2008) elaborates two main problems of EFL teaching. He sets the first problem as *methodological mistakes.* Accordingly, she sets the tone that such mistakes are rooted in cultural habits of learning and

teaching foreign languages in the Ottoman Empire Period, which was common in the process of turning it into a western society. Therefore, a habit of applying grammar-translation methods neglecting listening and speaking emerged and developed. These methods focused on developing learners' reading ability to understand target literature and their ability to analyze a text enhancing their mental capacity. Işık (2008) indicates the second problem in EFL teaching in Turkey as *planning.* The problems of planning in his view mostly arise from political pressure. This naturally results in unscientific planning. More specifically, Higher Education Council's (HEC) tendency to direct the changes in EFL teaching from the center and the lack of coordination between HEC and Ministry of National Education (MNE) are the examples of planning problems in EFL teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In brief, Turkey seems to perceive the key role of teachers in its integration with European Union (EU) and the rest of the world. In accordance with the idea of "European Teacher" (Schratz, 2005), Turkey amended the programs for teachers' colleges in 1997 and 2006 to make them be harmony with those of others in Europe (Yüksel & Adıgüzel, 2011). However, these changes aimed to donate the teacher candidates with three dimensions based on content knowledge, pedagogy and general cultural information (Eraslan, 2008). On the other hand, HEC specified the requirements for the promotion of academic staff and those for the standards for university degrees besides other duties (Tarman, 2010). In this respect, HEC in Turkey set the standards for the qualified teacher in 1999. However, they were not put into practice (Taş, 2004). These indicate that attempts to standardize teaching in Turkey were directed by MNE and HEC with a lack of coordination. Moreover, these attempts were not subject specific. These all manifest EFL central teaching policies were directed by scientifically irrelevant perspectives and inefficient in-service training planned by unqualified academicians. TESOL's (2013) Guidelines for Developing EFL Standards clearly point out the contradictory EFL teaching practices of Turkey as specifying that the implementation must "differ according to the local context, the culture of teaching practice, and the users' specific needs and purposes" (p. 53).

This study, in this respect, promises a rich array of results that shuld be taken into account by concerned bodies to set the relevant standards for quality EFL teacher based on the perceptions of EFL teachers.

Methodology

Design

This *qualitative* research study was grounded in *ethnographic design.* The primary purpose of using this design is to gain insight into the teachers' reasoning about "standard", "standards for quality EFL and international teacher". Creswell (2012) defines this type of studies as "qualitative research procedures for describing, analyzing and interpreting a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs" and asserts that they can be conducted "when the study of a group provides understanding of a larger issue" (p. 462). In the current study, culture-sharing group was accepted as EFL teachers teaching in the Anatolian part of Istanbul and aimed to gain a detailed understanding of the perception they have on the concept of quality EFL teacher. In this respect, metaphor was employed as a means of exploring and analyzing mental images of teachers on this abstract issue. The reason behind it is that metaphors work as the representation of perception in the form of a transfer from known area to an unknown area (Tsoukas, 1991). In other words, metaphor is used to explain an intensively complex concept or phenomenon in a connection with a more concrete or familiar concept or phenomenon (Oxford et al., 1998). As a result, shaped by ethnographic design and framework of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) "cognitive theory of metaphor", the researcher attempted to shed lights on EFL teachers' mental images of a quality EFL teacher.

Research Questions

This study was conducted to reveal EFL teachers' conceptions of "standard", "standards for quality EFL and international teacher" through metaphors. This aim to reach general insight about teachers' perception on quality EFL teacher is embodied in the following research questions:

1. What metaphors do EFL teachers use to describe the concept of "standard"?
   1.1. What conceptual themes about standards can be derived from these metaphorical images?
2. What metaphors do EFL teachers use to describe the quality EFL teacher?

2.1. What conceptual themes about the quality EFL teacher can be derived from these metaphorical images?

3. What metaphors do EFL teachers use to describe the standards for a quality EFL teacher?

3.1. What conceptual themes about standards for a quality EFL teacher can be derived from these metaphorical images?

4. What metaphors do EFL teachers use to describe the international teacher?

4.1. What conceptual themes about international teacher can be derived from these metaphorical images?

Participants

The study primarily used *convenience sampling* to decide on the site of the data collection and included 82 EFL teachers (48 females, 34 males) working in the Anatolian part of Istanbul. As introduced by Creswell (2012), such a sample "can provide useful information for answering questions and hypotheses" (p. 146). In addition to the technique shaping the choice of the site the data would be collected, the research also employed snowball sampling to specify the teachers to participate in the study. It is a "form of purposeful sampling and typically proceeds after a study begins" (Creswell, 2012, p. 209). Due to the constraints of time and funding, this type of combined sampling was chosen. This made it easier to include the convenient participants into the study by asking the participants to recommend other volunteer teachers since it was not easy to reach all English teachers. In this respect, after selecting the Anatolian part of Istanbul as the location, the researcher invited some teachers to participate in the study. Through a consent form, the researcher also informed the teachers about the purpose of the study and notified them that the participation in the study was voluntary. With the help of some of the participant teachers, the researcher reached other EFL teachers and invited them to participate in the study through either face to face meeting or e-mails. As a result of all these efforts, teachers included in the study have experience in teaching ranging from 1 to 15 years. The mean age of the teachers was 28.7 years old.

Data Collection

The data of the current study was collected during 2014-2015 academic year. The participant teachers were asked to produce metaphors for *"standard"*, *"quality EFL teacher"*, *"standards for quality EFL teacher"* and *"international teacher"* respectively. Teachers' metaphorical images about these phenomenon were acquired through following prompts: *"Standard is like...because..."*;*"Quality EFL teacher is like...because..."*; *"Standards for quality EFL teacher are like...because..."* and *"International teacher is like...because..."*. These prompts were formed after scanning the related literature by a specialist in metaphor studies, a specialist in English language and a specialist in education and curriculum to provide the study with face validity.

Teachers were asked to complete each prompt by focusing on only one metaphor. Teachers were also asked to answer the questions that would provide the research with some demographic information (*age, gender and period of teaching*).

54 of the participants were given the document to produce the metaphors for the previously mentioned four concepts ("standard", "standards for quality EFL teacher and international teacher"). Thanks to the use of the snowball sampling, which is useful when it is difficult to reach the participants, 46 teachers were sent an email attached with two documents, one for the metaphors and one for the consent form. 28 of those teachers completed the forms and returned. All the participants were given one week to complete the form and sign the consent form. This seemingly long time limit was set consciously in order to let the participants express their perceptions and support them better. In this respect, as introduced by Saban, Koçbeker & Saban (2006), the participants were asked to clarify their perceptions about four phenomenons through the use of "*because*". In this way, similar to Saban, Koçbeker & Saban (2006), it was intended to elicit teachers' implicit beliefs about the central concepts of the study.

Data Analysis

There seems no set of accepted guidelines for analyzing qualitative data. However, some certain steps were aimed to be covered in this process. Therefore, this analysis comprised "developing a general sense of the data, and then coding description and themes about the central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2012, p. 237).

With that in mind, the collected data was analyzed through the "content analysis" technique (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). "This technique requires a detailed line-by-line analysis in order to generate the conceptual categories of the study (with their properties and dimensions) and to suggest relationships among them" (Saban, Koçbeker &, Saban, 2014, p. 1017). In this respect, the following four stages were followed in the analysis of the obtained data from the research:

1) Labeling and eliminating stage. At this stage, the researcher listed down all the produced metaphors by participants in the alphabetical order. While the papers which lacked of a metaphor were marked as "no metaphor", the metaphors which lacked of logic or a rationale were eliminated.

2) Sample metaphor compilation and categorization stage. At this stage, the researcher simply chose the metaphorical images that represented the participants' opinions about each of four concepts best as "sample metaphorical images." As suggested by Saban, Koçbeker & Saban (2006) this was done "to validate our analysis and interpretations of the study data and to use it as a reference point in grouping the metaphors under certain categories" (p. 513)

3) Category development phase. At this stage of the analysis, the metaphorical images produced by the participants regarding *"standard"*, *"quality EFL teacher"*, *"standard for quality EFL teacher"* and *"international teacher"* were examined according to their three features: (1*) the metaphor topic*, (2) *the metaphor vehicle* and (3) *the relationships* between them. In this way, it was intended that common features of the produced metaphors and the similarities among them would be explored. Following it, higher conceptual categories or themes were formed for each concept by bringing similar codes together.

4) **Establishing reliability and validity stage.** At this stage of the study, the researcher attempted to achieve the validity and reliability of the findings and interpretations. In this respect, the researcher described the data analysis process minutely to attain the validity of the results and included all the metaphors produced by the participants in the "findings" section (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). To ensure reliability of the results, the researcher asked an expert to match the sample metaphorical images formed by the researcher, with the conceptual categories developed by the researcher. To estimate the inter-rater reliability rate, Miles & Huberman's (1994) formula Reliability = agreement / [agreement + disagreement] X 100) was used. Miles & Huberman (1994) indicate that the final inter-coder agreement rate in qualitative data analysis should be 70% or above. As a result of comparing the expert's matching with the researcher's, the researcher found out that an agreement of 93% regarding "standard"; that of 90% regarding "quality EFL teacher"; that of 82% regarding "standards for quality EFL teacher" and that of 87% regarding "international teacher" had been achieved.

5) Analyzing the data quantitatively. In the last stage, the data was entered into the SPSS package program to calculate basic descriptive statistics for the metaphors and the categories.

Findings

In this part of the study, the results regarding the metaphors utilized by EFL teachers about the concept of *standard, quality EFL teacher and international teacher* were presented. These results were analyzed by following the aforementioned five stages. The results were displayed by the researcher as to answer each of the research questions respectively.

Metaphorical Images Reflecting Participants' Perceptions about the Concept of Standard

The participant EFL teachers were found to reflect on the concept of standard with 36 valid metaphors. Based on the common features of these metaphorical codes, two main themes were formed by the researcher. The first theme was determined to describe standard as *"a prospectus for displaying acceptable teaching behaviors"*. Most of the valid metaphors seemed to center around this category. It was explored that most of teachers (71 %), who produced valid metaphors, had positive attitudes towards the concept of standard. On the other hand, some of the teachers (29 %) were found to have negative attitudes towards this concept of standard. Out of these teachers' metaphors, the second theme was determined to define standard as *"a burden to being nature"*. The following table indicates the valid themes and the codes centered on those themes in detail.

Table 1. Metaphorical Images about the Concept of Standard

Category (theme) name	*Within the category - Participant f (%) - Metaphor f (%)*	*Metaphors (f)*
A prospectus for displaying acceptable teaching behaviors	- 48 (71) - 11 (73)	A star (6), a book (4), a scale (3), water (2), an advisor (10), a stage (5), an actor (4), a recipe (7), history (1), a stall (1), a leader (5)
A burden to being nature	- 13 (29) - 4 (27)	An obstacle (6), a thorn (3), boundary (4)

As shown in the table, 61 teachers utilized 15 valid metaphors to define standard. These metaphors and the justifications produced through "*because ... part"* indicated that the teachers generally regarded standard as something very necessary *"giving information about what to do" and "enlightening pupils and teachers about the goals."* Common point of these metaphors was that they all attracted the attention to the guiding nature of the standards. As an example one of the teachers responded to the point about the standard as follows:

"Standard is like a recipe, because it guides us to behave in an acceptable way."

In the same way, teachers used such positive metaphors as star, book, advisor, actor, history and leader.

As a negative reaction to the concept of standard, some of the participant teachers (8 %) stressed the limiting nature of it. Therefore, they resembled it to an obstacle since it prevents people from being how they want to behave. Moreover, one of the teachers utilized a dubious a metaphor and stated:

"*Standard is like a thorn because, due to it, you do not sometimes want to touch the rose."*

Metaphorical Images Reflecting Participants' Perceptions about the Concept of Quality EFL Teacher

In the second point of the form, teachers were asked to reflect on *the quality EFL teacher*. As a result of the analysis of their responses, it was explored that 67 teachers produced 21 valid metaphors regarding *the quality EFL teacher*. Among these valid metaphors, the researcher identified the common features and formed 4 themes accordingly. The first theme was formed to define quality EFL teacher as *"multidimensional"* while the second theme defined him/her as "a *lifelong learner".* Following two themes were based on the role of EFL teachers in the classroom. In this respect, the third theme defined a quality EFL teacher as *"a guide"* while the fourth one regarded him/her as a *"multicultural domain"*. The following table indicates these results in detail.

Table 2. Metaphorical Images about the Concept of Quality EFL Teacher

Category (theme)	*Within the category - Participant f (%) - Metaphor f (%)*	*Metaphors (f)*
Teacher as a multidimensional person	- 22 (32) - 9 (43)	A rainbow (6), a diamond (3), a computer (3), businessman (2), a tree (2), a tropical forest (1), a cook (2), treasure (3)
Teacher as a lifelong learner	- 12 (18) - 4 (19)	A holiday (2), an ambitious learner (4), cycler (3), a computer programme (3)
Teacher as a guide	- 24 (36) - 6 (29)	A mother (5), a compass (8), a map (4), a light (4), a farmer (2), a lift (2), carpenter (4)
Teacher as a multicultural domain	- 9 (14) - 2 (9)	An umbrella (5), an engineer (3)

As indicated in the table, 22 (32 %) of the teachers stressed the multidimensional features of a quality EFL teacher. The participant teachers reported a quality EFL teacher should not be stuck into a field to develop. In this respect, 6 of these teachers reported a quality EFL teacher to be like a rainbow consisted of a rich array of colors. As an example, one of the teachers justified himself as follows:

"Quality EFL teacher is like a rainbow because he/she possesses wide variety of knowledge giving everything the pupils need in different ways."

Moreover, quality EFL teacher is also linked to a businessman by some teachers stating *"Quality EFL teacher is like a businessman he/she has to be versatile to plan every income and outcome of education period."* Quality EFL teacher is also seen by some teachers like "*a cook who is able to prepare different types of delicious things to be eaten by various types of people"*.

As another theme formed out of 12 teachers' (18 %) metaphors, quality EFL teacher was regarded as an *ambitious learner* who never stops to learn using every chance to add to him/herself. In this respect, 4 following metaphors were used by 12 teachers: *A holiday (2), an ambitious learner (4), cycler (3), a computer programme (3).* One of the teachers reported as follows:

"*Quality EFL teacher is like a cycler, because he must always keep moving to keep balance."*

Some other teachers (3) thought that quality EFL teacher was like a computer programme "*because he/she is open to updates to be more qualified."*

In addition to seeing quality EFL teachers like a holiday when there are "*lots of opportunities to learn new things by living"*, 4 of the teachers thought quality EFL teacher to be "*like a learner because our main job as a teacher is 'learning' "*.

As the third theme, the researcher brought 24 teachers' (36 %) 6 metaphors (29 %). As a result, quality EFL teacher was categorized as a guide. 24 teachers utilized following metaphors: *mother (5), compass (8), map (4), light (4), farmer (2), lift (2) and carpenter (4).* As one of the best example for this theme, one of the teachers utilized the following metaphor:

"Quality EFL teacher is like a mother, because learning a language is a natural process which children obtain through their natural development in the observation of their mothers."

As another guiding feature of quality EFL teacher especially in the classroom, one of the teachers stated as follows:

"Quality EFL teacher is like a light because he/she brings knowledge, fun into students' lives."

Moreover, teachers stressed the quality EFL teacher as a guide through such metaphors as compass and map. One of the teachers justified herself stating *"Quality EFL teacher is like a map because you cannot know where and how to go without a map."*

Some other teachers processed such metaphors as carpenter and farmer to stress that quality EFL teacher is the one who knows what to do best with certain materials. As an example, one of the teachers stated:

"Quality EFL teacher is like a carpenter because he knows what and how to do with certain things."

As the last and fourth theme formed as a result of 9 teachers' (14 %) 2 metaphors (9 %), the researcher indicated teachers' perceptions of a quality EFL teacher as a multicultural domain. This theme was formed due to teachers focus on multicultural aspect of EFL teaching. 9 teachers developed *umbrella* and *engineer* as the metaphors to express their perceptions of this point. As examples of this focus on multicultural aspect of a quality EFL teacher, following statements were given:

"*Quality EFL teacher is like an umbrella because she/he covers both source and target culture in one view."*

"*Quality EFL teacher is like an engineer because she/he knows how to create a whole out of different world views and cultures."*

Metaphorical Images Reflecting Participants' Perceptions about the Concept of Standards For Quality EFL Teacher

In addition to asking participant EFL teachers to produce metaphors on the concepts of *"standard"* and *"quality EFL teacher"* separately, the researcher also requested them to utilize concepts for the standards for quality EFL teacher. The teachers were seen to produce metaphors similar to those for the two former concepts. Consequently, it was seen that 78 of teachers produced 29 valid metaphors to display their mental images on the related concept. It was also explored that most of the teachers (74 %) seemed to possess positive perceptions about the *standards for quality EFL teachers*. As a result of 18 (65 %) metaphors produced by these 58 teachers (74 %), *standards as facilitator for quality EFL teachers* was formed by the researcher as a theme (category). This category represented the ideas of teachers that standards were acting as a vehicle or motive for the teachers to get more professionally matured. On the other hand, 6 teachers (8 %) utilized 5 metaphors (17 %) to indicate their negative perceptions about the standards for quality EFL teachers. These teachers, not surprisingly, were those who produced similar negative attitudes towards the concept of *"standard"*. The researcher brought these metaphors together to make up the theme (category) *"standards acting as restrictor and molder for quality EFL teachers"*. Moreover, another theme was formed by the researcher by bringing the metaphors indicating how tough it was to be loyal to those standards together. This category was labeled as *"standards as a demanding process for quality EFL teachers"*. This category was represented by 14 teachers (18 %) 4 metaphors (20 %).

The following table indicates the valid themes and the codes centered around those three themes in detail.

Table 3. Metaphorical Images about the Concept of Standard

Category (theme)	*Within the category* *- Participant f (%)* *- Metaphor f (%)*	*Metaphors (f)*
standards as facilitator for quality EFL teachers	- 58 (74) - 18 (65)	A map (4), tech (2), recipe (5), chameleon (2), a guide (8), an entrance (2), national flag (2), a medicine (5), porter (2), master (4), a leader(3), sun (3), moon (3), stairs (3), key (4), captain (3), commander (2), treaty (1)
standards as restrictor and molder for quality EFL teachers	- 6 (8) - 5 (17)	A zoo (1), spider's web (1), cage (1), aquarium (1), dictator (2)
standards as a demanding process for quality EFL teachers	- 14 (18) - 6 (20)	Rafting in a river (4), climbing a hill (4), digesting a meal (2), horse in a ride (1), mountain (1), hurdle race (2)

As indicated in table 3, 58 teachers used 18 different metaphors under the category labeled as standards as facilitator for quality EFL teachers. The most apparent feature of these metaphors is that they all regard standards as a must to step on to be a quality EFL teacher. In other words, these teachers were found to accept standards as the first step of being a master in the field of EFL teaching. One of the teachers, in this respect, stated as follows:

> *"Standards for quality EFL teacher are like an entrance, because he/she uses the standards for first step to contact with students, but after that, he/she can focus individual differences and adjust himself/herself according to their needs.*

Additionally, teachers also attracted the attention to the pioneering place of standards for being a quality teacher by connecting to the national flag as follows:

> *"Standards for quality EFL teacher are like national flags because they should be always on the top".*

Moreover, some of the teachers indicated the guiding feature of the standards for quality EFL teachers as follows:

> *"Standards for quality EFL teacher are like a recipe, because the standards help him what he will use, but at the same time he can add something extra based on his own taste.*

As the last example for the first category of the standards for quality EFL teachers, the following statement will indicate the changing nature of standards unlike common stereotype:

"Standards for quality EFL teacher are like chameleons because they change according to the occasion and place."

The second category was represented by 6 (8 %) teachers and 5 (17 %) metaphors. In this category, the researcher focused on such metaphors as *zoo, spider's web, cage, aquarium and dictator.* These metaphors were used by the teachers to indicate how limiting it was to be stuck into following a list of to do to be a quality EFL teacher. These teachers, using these metaphors, explained that standards blocked their self-development and shaped them in accordance with some accepted truths and conditions. Using different metaphors they all focused the restricting impact of standards on teachers as follows:

"Standards for quality EFL teacher are like zoos because they restrict his/her skills similar to those of the animals kept there".

"Standards for quality EFL teacher are like dictators because they want him/her to do whatever they require without question..".

"Standards for quality EFL teachers are like spiders' webs because there is no choice or escape as long he/she is trapped."

As the last category formed out of teachers' responses in this part, the researcher focused on another negative dimension of the standards for quality EFL teachers as suggested by the participant teachers. The theme labeled as *"standards as a demanding process for quality EFL teachers"* was consisted of 14 teachers' (18 %) 6 different metaphors (20 %). These teachers were not totally negative to the concept of standards for quality EFL teachers. However, they stressed that being a quality EFL teacher required to follow some standards, which was itself a long and a tough process to bear. In this respect, teachers utilized metaphors such as *rafting in a river, climbing a hill, digesting a meal, horse in a ride, mountain and hurdle race.*

As an example, two of teachers being aware of difficulties that may come out during the process of attempting to follow the standards of being a master in the field of EFL teaching as follows:

"Standards for quality EFL teacher is like a hurdle race because there are many obstacles to overcome".

"Standards for quality EFL teacher is like rafting in a river because you sometimes fall down into the river but continue to go."

In addition to these examples, the following examples indicate that this category represents the perception of the teachers that it is worth trying to follow the standards although it is tiring and demanding:

"Standards for quality EFL teacher is like a mountain because it is hard to reach top but it has stunning outlook".

"Standards for quality EFL teacher is like climbing a hill because you can enjoy the whole view after paying its price."

Metaphorical Images Reflecting Participants' Perceptions about the Concept of Quality EFL Teacher

In addition to expressing their opinions about the concepts of standards, quality EFL teacher and standards for quality EFL teacher, participant teachers were also asked to utilize metaphors in order to display their images about international teacher. In a close relationship with the concept of standards in the field of education, it was seen important by the researcher to collect the metaphors on the concept of international teacher. The reason behind this was thoroughly explained in the literature by shedding lights on some standardized attempts performed by some organizations or institutions such as *ECIS, EU (CEFR), TESOL, NCATE and ACTFL* to set the tone for international teacher.

As a result of the analysis of the related metaphor produced by the participant teachers, it was seen that 74 of the teachers developed 32 valid metaphors. Out of these metaphors, the researcher, based on their common features, formed three categories. First of this categories was represented by 24 (32 %) teachers and 12 (38 %) metaphors. These teachers stressed the cultural dimension of being an international teacher. Therefore, the researcher labeled this category as *"international teacher as a cultural bridge between the local and the universal".* The second category included 10 metaphors produced by 28 teachers. This category resembled

to the former categories in the way that it focused on enlightening role of international teacher. As a result, the researcher labeled this category as *"international teacher as candle lighting the way for others"*. On the other hand, the remaining 22 (30 %) teachers produced 10 (31 %) similar valid metaphors. They were explored to reveal reformist dimension of an international teacher. As a result, the researcher simply labeled this last category as "*international teacher as a reformist"*

The following table displays the figures about the codes related to three categories in detail.

Table 4. Metaphorical Images about the Concept of International Teacher

Category (theme)	*Within the category - Participant f (%) - Metaphor f (%)*	*Metaphors (f)*
international teacher as a cultural bridge between the local and the universal	- 24 (32) - 12 (38)	An umbrella (2), a bridge (3), an ambassador (2), Olympic torch (2), a world (3), an iceberg (3), an ocean (2), rain (1), time (1), a garden (2), a map (2), a sea (1)
international teacher as a candle lighting the way for others	- 28 (38) - 10 (31)	A star (4), a sun (5), a blended lamp (2), a search engine (3), parents (2), a candle (4), a prompter (2), torch (3), lightning bug (2), co-pilot (1)
international teacher as a reformist	- 22 (30) - 10 (31)	A magician (3), tech (2), a barber (2), a learner (2) an artist (3) a child (2), the nature (2), a person having three eyes (1), a learner (3) a charger (2)

As indicated in table 4, the first category labeled as "*international teacher as a cultural bridge between the local and the universal"* included 24 (32 %) teachers and 12 metaphors (38). These teachers revealed the multicultural awareness of an international teacher. In this respect, they processed metaphors indicating that an international teacher should cover local, target and international cultures and reflect it to his:/her students. As examples, the followings can be given:

> *"International teacher is like a bridge, because he/she connects the local and universal".*
> *"International teacher is like an ocean, because he/she has a shore to a number of different cultures".*
> *"International teacher is like an ambassador, because he/she presents the others of other cultures to the students".*
> *"International teacher is like an Olympic torch, because he/she should be aware of the cultures of English speaking people."*

The second category, on the other hand, included 10 metaphors (31 %) produced by 28 (38 %) teachers. In this category, *"international teacher as candle lighting the way for others"*, teachers stressed the self sacrificing features of an international teacher. They stated that an international teacher acted like a compass for the teachers in the following ways:

> *"International teacher is like a blended lamp, because he can brighten all the students thanks to his deep knowledge".*
>
> *"International teacher is like the sun, because he/she can fulfill everybody's needs on Earth".*
>
> *"International teacher is like a search engine, because he/she can inform the students about different topics"*

As the last theme, 10 metaphors of 22 teachers were brought together. This category defined international teacher as "*reformist"*. In this way, this category indicated the common perception of 22 teachers that an international teacher should be the model for the students by not stopping to learn and not avoiding trying new and different techniques in the classroom. As an example one of the teachers stated as follows:

> *"International teacher is like a magician, because he/she gets students surprised by the things he/she does."*

As another example, one of the teachers stated that an international teacher should present something new to students as follows:

> *"International teacher is like an artist, because he/she should create a new whole out of commonly known things"*

Moreover, teachers in this category used similar metaphors to indicate how an international teacher should renew himself/herself. In addition to indicating an international teacher like a learner who *"never stops using any chance to learn"*, another example can be provided as follows:

> *"International teacher is like a charger because he/she updates himself/herself whenever needed".*

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

This study was conducted by the researcher to explore the metaphorical images EFL teachers hold about the concept of standard, a quality EFL teacher, the standards for a quality EFL teacher and international teacher. The teachers' related images gathered through metaphors were enlightened under conceptual categories or themes. As a result of ever increasing importance attached to teaching English in a similar level of efficiency all over the globalizing world and the results attained about this point out of teachers' metaphors, the research offers critical results that must be taken into account by a wide range of concerned bodies ranging from teachers and learners at the rock-bottom level to material designers, curriculum designers and policy makers at the top level. Therefore, probable results lead to develop insights into the processes that help the teachers realize their full potentials in EFL teaching by setting the relevant standards. In this respect, in this part of the study, the findings are discussed in detail in the sequence of the research questions posed by the researcher.

Metaphor is optional and represents some part not the whole of the phenomenon it describes. This indicates that the phenomena within the scope of the study cannot be explained completely with only one metaphor. This point is made clear by Saban, Koçbeken & Saban (2006). They underline that "there are numerous metaphors for understanding the concept of "teacher", each one providing a different schemata (pp. 519-520). As a result, the discussion of the findings of the present study should be evaluated bearing this limiting nature of the metaphorical studies into account.

First of all, the teachers' mental images about the "standard" were found to center around the molding dimension of the term. In other words, most of the teachers who produced valid metaphors identified standards as a vehicle to set the acceptable boundaries to perform an acceptable behavior. In this respect, they utilized metaphors such *as star, a scale, a book, a recipe* to attract attention to the guiding nature of the standard to do the best. This analysis of teachers' mental images seem to be in parallel with the following definition of educational standards: Educational standards are benchmarks for accountability or goals attained by students or teacher (O'Malley & Valdez, 1996). On the contrary to teachers who regarded standards as a *prospectus for displaying acceptable teaching behaviors,* some of the teachers put it *as a burden to being nature.* Accordingly, they processed *obstacle, boundary and thorn* as metaphors to point out the limiting nature of the term "standard". This type of perception seems to be in parallel with the the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2015) definition of the word: Something established by authority, custom, or general consent as a model or example. Since teachers regard it as a meter dictated by the authority as a must without consulting their ideas, they seem to form a negative reaction towards it.

Secondly, the issues of how participant teachers regard the quality EFL teachers were questioned. As a result, it was reveled that teachers stressed four basic features of a quality EFL teacher: Quality EFL teacher is *a multidimensional person, a lifelong learner, a guide and a multicultural domain*. This indicates that teachers focused on both teaching and learning qualities of an ideal EFL teacher. This point is supported by Saban (2011) . In her study, she analyzed prospective computer teachers' images about the concepts of ideal school and teacher. Saban (2011) in accordance with this dimension of the present study, determined that teachers used "both "teaching-centered" and "learning-centered" metaphors to reflect their ideal teachers" (p. 445). Moreover, these results of the study seem to be highly supported in the literature (Akbari, 2013; Cerit, 2008; Clarken, 1997; Çelikten, 2006; Saban, 2004; Saban, 2011) since teachers are asked to reflect on their ideal teachers, they do not normally produce negative metaphors. There, they all produce positive metaphors

which are categorized in different ways by different researchers. This variety of positive metaphors around the same point *can be based "on many factors, such as culture, gender, and personal experiences as a student"* of the participant teachers (Saban, Koçbeker & Saban, 2006, p. 520) As a result, the current study identified ideal EFL teacher as the sum of different fields ranging from teaching, learning and psychology to culture.

Thirdly, teachers' mental images about the concept of standards for quality EFL teachers were requested. Mohsen (2013) asserts that "the majority of studies on metaphor analysis in EFL contexts have focused on metaphorical reflections spelt out by learners" (p. 102). Therefore, the literature, to the researchers' knowledge, lacks of the attempts to shed lights on the standards for ideal EFL teacher. As a result, the researcher was not able to compare the related results of the study to the results of the other similar studies in the literature. The researcher explored that teachers utilized similar metaphors on this concept to those they produced for concepts of "standard" and "quality EFL teacher" separately. In other words, they emphasized the facilitating impact of the standards on the quality of teaching service performed by the teachers. On the contrary to those who stressed that standards help EFL teachers get professionally more matured, some other teachers drew attention to not only the difficulty of leading the process of applying the standards but also the restrictor and molder impact on teachers. In other words, these teachers regarded standards as the meters set by the authority to kill their creativity.

As the last point of the study, teachers were asked to reflect on the concept of international teacher. This is another point which shows the significance of the study. The literature seems to lack of metaphorical studies on the concept of international teacher. Therefore, the related results of the study lack of relevant comparisons. Yet, some metaphorical studies about ideal EFL teachers in different contexts from Iran to Malaysia and China can be given as examples of international context. As an example, Nikitina & Furuoka (2008) explored that EFL teacher was seen as an essential element in a Malaysian EFL context while Wan, Low, & Li (2011) indicated, as a result of their study, EFL teacher as a guide in a Chinese EFL setting. On the other hand, Akbari (2013), in Iranian context, revealed that EFL teachers were seen as a guide, professional and a devil. The present study indicated that the participant teachers stressed the cultural dimension of being an international teacher. They were explored to regard international teacher like a bridge between the local and the universal cultures. These results stressing the cultural dimension of being an international teacher promises important implications for a wide a range of bodies. The present study indicated the perceptions about the international teacher in three categories. As a result, in accordance with Akbari (2013) and Wan, Low, & Li (2011), international teacher was found to be regarded by teachers as a self sacrificing professional attempting to light the way for the students by keeping to be updated.

To sum up, in accordance with the literature, the researcher in this study explored that participant teachers generally utilized positive metaphors referring to the concepts of *standard*, *a quality EFL teacher* and *an international EFL teacher*. A limited number of participants stressed the restricting side of the standards by using negative metaphors. Moreover, the study also highlighted the place of culture in being an efficient EFL teacher in today's globalizing world.

Implications of the Study

This study is limited to the context in which it was conducted. This makes it impossible to generalize the results. A study with a larger amount of teachers from different cities could produce different results. In addition not to collect data from students, curriculum developers and administrators, the information collected from the participants was not triangulated by means of other instruments. However, this constraint is assumed to be controlled by making use of appropriate data analysis procedures. Furthermore, the procedures devoted to the reliability and validity of the results, ethical considerations are also assumed to exclude the other possible threats.

Bearing these limitations in mind, the analysis of the metaphors produced by teachers can shed lights on how they perceive to be efficient in EFL teaching. Accordingly, this can provide important insights for the policy makers to set the standards for being professionally more matured.

The results of the study also present implications that must be taken into account by EFL teacher educators. As suggested by Saban, Koçbeker & Saban (2014) they "should not only focus on transferring information about teaching and learning" (p. 1029). As one of the strongest part of the results of this study,

language learning was seen as the cultural transmission. Therefore, learners believed in "the pursuit of cultural and linguistic knowledge, rather than communicative language use" (Oxford et al., 1998, p. 44). As a result, "incorporation of authentic materials in the language program will answer the learners' needs and offer them a wider exposure to culture, native speakers and everyday realities of the target language country" (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2008, p. 203).

In this study, it has been explored that most of the problems in EFL imply a serious point: lack of relevant standards for EFL teachers and programs of EFL teacher training colleges. As explored by Tarman (2010) a countrywide national system of standards and accreditation of universities and of departments within universities, regardless of subject area exist in Turkey. The efforts of integrating education with EU educational standards pioneered by HEC and MNE in Turkey were limited to organizing congresses, conferences or financially supporting academic studies on the related issue. Hence, setting the standards for a qualified EFL teacher and the programs training those teachers in Turkey may solve most of the problems in EFL teaching in Turkey.

The solution of this problem lies in revolutionary shift in the minds of educational bodies from three dimensional teacher qualifications to standards set specific to each subject area in a harmony with the changes in the new world and its requirements. In this respect, it can be recommended that standards for EFL teachers in Turkey should cover basic common dimensions in all international efforts as follows: *Language, Culture, Teaching Competencies and Professionalism*

These dimensions make a change in our perceptions of an EFL teacher as well. In accordance with the nature of multilingual and multicultural aspects of EFL, teachers must be able to reflect the diversity of their students' backgrounds and needs by individualizing the instruction. This will also be an important opportunity for the teachers to raise students who respect those who are different from them. Moreover, such a perspective will donate the students with "open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, empathy, and non-chauvinism" (Tarman, 2010). In the diversity of society in Turkey, this will serve for the peace and democracy in the country in the long run.

Covering all these points from an intercultural perspective with a global awareness, standards set by international bodies should be modified to be in harmony with Turkish context. On this basis, global perspectives should be integrated into EFL teacher training. In this respect, standards for EFL teachers with their specific indicators must be set. Teacher candidates' awareness about them should be raised. Accordingly, EFL teacher education departments should be structured as to donate the internationally-minded teachers with the qualifications to meet the specified standards. As a result, the system will raise EFL teachers who can fully perform their not only educational but also social and global responsibilities and function in complex, multicultural, multilingual contexts with students from diverse backgrounds.

Implications for Further Research

It is important to consider that the results of the current and the other studies stated in literature review can only be generalized to the specific academic context in which they were conducted. Thus, replications of this kind of studies following the similar research design may indicate some results different than those found in this study. This can make us take the whole picture of the issue. In addition to conducting similar studies with more teachers from diverse backgrounds, researchers can also study the impact of such factors as age, gender or level of proficiency on teachers' metaphorical images about ideal EFL teacher. Moreover, teachers' perceptions can also be compared according to the level of the school they teach (primary, secondary and high school). Finally, the comparison of metaphors about ideal EFL teacher generated by EFL teachers and learners can produce interesting results.

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