



ELT Students' and Lecturers' Beliefs about Pronunciation Instruction: The Case of an ELT Department in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Pronunciation instruction is an integral part of language teaching/learning processes. The aim of this study was to explore ELT students' and lecturers' beliefs on the learning and teaching of English pronunciation. A questionnaire containing Likert-type items probing the participants' views on pronunciation instruction was designed and administered to 125 students and 6 lecturers at an ELT department in Turkey. Additionally, the lecturers were interviewed via a semi-structured interview so as to gain a deeper insight into the subject matter. The lecturers stated that heavy accents have a discriminating effect among ESL speakers and they also strongly agreed with the idea that there exists an age limit in the learnability of pronunciation, while the students remained unsure about these two notions. Additionally, no significant difference was found between the lecturers and students, between genders, among the educational levels of the students, and the numbers of participants' native languages with regard to lecturers' and students' beliefs on pronunciation instruction. As for the conclusion, the analysis of the data revealed that (i) lecturers and students held different attitudes towards pronunciation, (ii) their perceptions on the challenges in pronunciation differed from each other, and (iii) lecturers believed that there was a vicious circle in the process of teaching/learning pronunciation.

Keywords: Accent, reluctance, pronunciation, teaching, learning

İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümündeki Öğrenciler ile Öğretim Elemanlarının Telaffuz Öğretimi Üzerine Görüşleri: Türkiye'deki bir İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü Örneği

ÖZ

Telaffuz eğitimi, dil öğretim/öğrenim süreçlerinin ayrılmaz bir parçasıdır. Bu çalışmanın amacı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi bölümlerindeki öğrenciler ile öğretim elemanlarının İngilizcenin telaffuzu hakkındaki görüşlerini araştırmaktır. Çalışmada, katılımcıların telaffuz eğitimi hakkındaki görüşlerini sorgulayan Likert tipi maddelerden oluşan bir anket hazırlanarak Türkiye'de bir İngiliz Dili Eğitimi bölümündeki 125 öğrenci ve 6 öğretim elemanına uygulanmıştır. Buna ilaveten, öğretim elemanlarının konu hakkındaki görüşlerini daha derinden incelemek amacıyla kendileriyle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yoluyla görüşme yapılmıştır. Öğretim elemanları, ağır aksanların kullanımının İngilizceyi ikinci dil olarak kullanan konuşmacılar arasında ayrımcılık etkisi yarattığını ifade ederken telaffuz becerisinin öğretiminde bir yaş sınırı olduğu görüşüne katılmışlardır, ancak öğrenciler bu iki husus hakkında kararsız kalmışlardır. Bunlara ilaveten, öğretim elemanları ile öğrenciler arasında, cinsiyetler arasında, öğrencilerin eğitim seviyeleri arasında ve katılımcıların sahip olduğu ana dillerin sayıları arasında öğretim elemanları ile öğrencilerin görüşleri bakımından anlamlı bir fark bulunamamıştır. Sonuç olarak, yapılan analizde (i) öğretim elemanları ve öğrencilerin telaffuz konusunda farklı görüşlere sahip olduğu, (ii) telaffuzun zor yönleri konusundaki görüşlerinin birbirinden farklı olduğu ve (iii) öğretim elemanlarının telaffuz öğretimindeki/öğrenimindeki süreçlerde kısır bir döngü olduğu görüşünü savundukları görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aksan, gönülsüzlük, telaffuz, öğretim, öğrenim

1. INTRODUCTION

Foreign language proficiency is a criterion for various processes, such as advancing in an academic career, personal development, professional promotion, prestige and so on. Indeed, proficiency in English, which is regarded as the foremost second language in the world, certainly provides more opportunities for its speakers to widen their horizons in every phase of the educated world (Cook, 2003; Nunan, 2013). Accordingly, more

and more sophisticated materials are being produced to promote the quality of the process of learning English with the aim of luring as many people as possible. In turn, this process has gained worldwide popularity, creating a sense of competition in which there are not only competitors, *i.e.* learners, but also some mechanisms which obligatorily come up depending on the necessities of beneficiaries. Of these, pronunciation plays a key role in that it is the most salient skill which is promptly revealed at the very beginning of utterance production (Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, & Pincas, 2003; Lord, 2008). Nevertheless, the extensive body of literature concerning pronunciation converge on the notion that pronunciation is a challenging and mostly neglected field of linguistics (Hardison, 2010; Harmer, 2015; O'Brien, 2004).

Pronunciation instruction has often been viewed as an essential and indispensable part of language teaching/learning processes both by the authorities and educators; however, it has always been the most neglected field *inter alia* depending on several factors which are generally formulated in two-fold: factors related to (I) teachers and (II) learners. Of these, teachers are considered insufficient in pronunciation mainly because they have not received a proper training and they have been dragged into a long-lasting reluctance to engage in pronunciation-related activities due to the deep structures of segmentals and suprasegmentals (Darcy, 2018). According to O'Brien (2004), the essence of the problem lies with the fact that a proper pronunciation instruction is generally considered by lecturers to be limited to the segmentals alone. Nevertheless, such an instruction overlooks a crucial field related to pronunciation, *i.e.* Phonology, which is a linguistic field dealing with the integration of segmentals and suprasegmentals into meaningful contexts where they become subject to unique alterations and thereby help the speakers and listeners to make most of the topic being conversed. Furthermore, the reluctance of lecturers in teaching pronunciation is also due to the feeling of being insufficiently equipped with the basics of pronunciation, which in turn makes the teachers excessively anxious to embrace the burden of teaching pronunciation, fearing that they will have serious inaccuracies (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2011; Darcy, 2018). Hardison (2010) argues that this is a common problem among language lecturers and, although inaccuracies are possible in any realm, lecturers remain aloof from pronunciation instruction owing to a lack of confidence. In a similar vein, O'Brien (2004) holds that this matter stems from the lecturers' feeling "discomfort with the technical nature of the subject matter" (p. 1). Clearly then, there exists a serious problem on the lecturers' side concerning the lack of proper training, and hence a lack of confidence, which in turn leads to a pedagogical reluctance.

As for the learners' side, learners are the primary actors of this process who are overwhelmingly dependent on their teachers/lecturers. Schaezel (2009) formulated a number of factors relating to the students' affection towards the pronunciation instruction they receive. These factors include (I) accent, (II) stress, intonation, and rhythm, (iii) motivation and exposure, and (iv) intelligibility and varieties of English. The first factor, accent, is portrayed as a prominent factor in that it is a crucial element which not only makes the process of intelligibility either easier or more difficult but also defines the distinction between the learners' L1 and the accent being spoken by the lecturer. The second category involves the three basic aspects of prosodic features (*i.e.* stress, intonation, and rhythm) which are also known as suprasegmental features (pp. 1-3). According to Schaezel, in some cases it occurs that the errors induced by these features become more important than phonetic errors in terms of intelligibility, and therefore they should be principally included into the pronunciation teaching programmes. The other factor, motivation, is depicted as an indispensable requirement which could, and also should, be exerted by the teachers so as to encourage the learners towards a native-like proficiency, which, he believes, oftentimes leads to beneficial results. For the final factor, Schaezel cautions that teachers need to be aware of the fact that English has become a *lingua franca* across the world and thus the aim of pronunciation instruction should be to provide the learners with the skills that would make their speech rightfully intelligible in their conversations with both native and non-native speakers (pp. 1-3).

Despite these factors, it is a common fact that pronunciation is perceived as a formidable burden for the learners both in perception and production. Orlow (1951) maintained that when a learner hears a foreign sound,

he/she tries to establish a connection with his own sounds. Undoubtedly, this creates a problem on his side because “habitual hearing and articulation prevents to master new sounds” (p. 387). Another problem, cited by Samuel (2010), was related to the notion that students need continuous feedback in order to be able to assess their progress; otherwise, they are likely to feel successive uncertainties which may lead to a lack of motivation.

The accent of the teacher also may have various implications for the learners’ motivation. Meaningfully, the level of intelligibility is correlated with the difficulty of the intelligibility of the accent employed by the teacher. Busa (2008) coined the term ‘heavy accent’ to denote the kind of accent which is mistakenly perceived by the learners as an accent leading to low level of intelligibility. Contrarily, the author argued that a ‘heavily-accented speech’ does not usually refer to low level of intelligibility but rather may be a minor factor affecting the intelligibility as well as the students’ mistakes in L2 speech (p. 166). Likewise, O’Brien (2004) claimed that non-native pronunciations tend to be challenging both for teachers and learners since only native pronunciations, as opposed to the non-native ones, are well-adjusted and thus lead the speakers towards correct destinations. Gilakjani (2012), on the other hand, argued that the learners need to be instructed with ‘good’ accents rather than ‘perfect’ ones, to the extent that they are provided with all the aspects of pronunciation at segmental and suprasegmental levels (p. 97).

Age is also an important issue in pronunciation, which has long been a source of heated debates (Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011; Harmer, 2015; O’Brien, 2004). These debates are basically focussed on the dichotomy of whether native-like pronunciation can only be acquired in young ages or in advanced ages as well. Drawing on previous studies, O’Brien (2004) stated that the minimal age of acquiring L2 pronunciation is reported as 6 years, whereas in some studies this age is lowered to 3 years. In a similar way, Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) reported that many people learn a foreign language after school years and when they do this they fail to acquire native-like pronunciation. Additionally, Liu (2011) contributed that imposing a native-like pronunciation does not always lead to desirable conclusions particularly in old-age learners.

All considered, pronunciation, then, is portrayed as a crucial element of language teaching/learning processes which is often neglected by lecturers and refrained from by the learners and is also a source of heated debates in language teaching activities. In a related manner, a literature review spanning over the last few decades has revealed a scarcity in the number of studies specifically focussing on the underlying reasons for the negligence of pronunciation and also on the beliefs of the main actors of this process, *i.e.* lecturers and students. The present study took its virtue from this scarcity and aimed at an exhaustive scrutiny into the students’ and lecturers’ beliefs on pronunciation instruction, who are regarded as the prominent sources of information for the studies conducted in Applied Linguistics. Targeting the undergraduates and the lecturers of an ELT Department at a Turkish university and embarking on an institution-wide needs-analysis research, the present study aimed to elicit the beliefs of the students and the lecturers regarding the underlying influence of the pronunciation instruction implemented in an ELT programme in Turkey. Accordingly, the study sought to provide answers to the following questions:

RQ1. What are the beliefs of ELT students and lecturers regarding pronunciation instruction?

RQ2. What are the most challenging aspects of pronunciation for students and lecturers?

RQ3. What are the lecturers’ views regarding teaching pronunciation?

RQ4. How can pronunciation best be improved according to the students and lecturers?

2. METHODS

2.1. Research Design

Depending on the research methods classified by Creswell (2009, p. 285), a ‘mixed-method research’ was found appropriate for the present study, whereby quantitative data were collected via a questionnaire and qualitative data were gathered using a semi-structured interview.

2.2. Research sample

The participants consisted of 125 (95.4%) undergraduate students and lecturers (4.6%) studying/working at an English Language Teaching (ELT) department at a Turkish state university. The students were from all four classes, taking courses in pedagogy, English language proficiency, linguistics, and literature. As for the lecturers, they were all full-time instructors working at the same department (Table 1):

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of questionnaire participants

Variable	Category	<i>N</i>	%
Participants	Lecturers	6	4.6
	Students	125	95.4
Gender	Male	46	35.1
	Female	85	64.9
Age	20 or younger	33	25.2
	21–30	86	65.6
	31 or older	12	9.2
Lecturers	B.A. holder	2	33.3
	M.A. holder	2	33.3
	Ph.D. holder	2	33.3
Students	Class 1	30	24.0
	Class 2	31	24.8
	Class 3	28	22.4
	Class 4	36	28.8
Number of Native Languages	Monolingual	30	22.9
	Bilingual	70	53.4
	Trilingual or more	31	23.7

As seen in Table 1, 128 students and 6 lecturers filled out the questionnaire. Of these, three questionnaires that were completed improperly and thus were excluded from the analysis. As a result, the quantitative analysis was based on the questionnaires filled out by 125 students (41 males and 84 females) and 6 lecturers (5 males and 1 female). In addition, qualitative analysis was performed based on the semi-structured interviews performed with the 6 lecturers.

Most of the students (56%) had obtained pronunciation instruction only as part of a broader ELT course, called Linguistics, only during their second year, which was limited to two weeks within the one-year period (Figure 1):

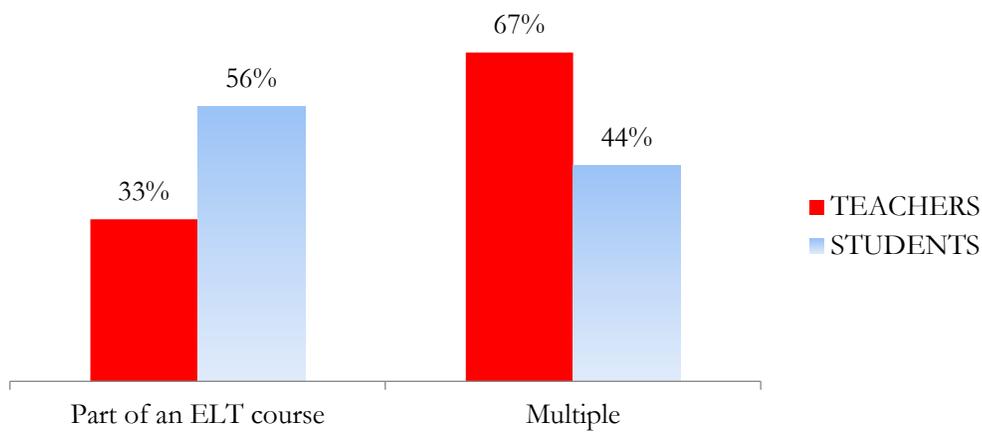


Figure 1. Previous pronunciation-specific trainings received by the participants

Moreover, two-thirds of lecturers (67%) and almost half of the students (44%) had been involved in multiple extracurricular activities such as workshops, seminars, conferences, and self-study activities to improve their competence in pronunciation.

2.3. Research Instruments and Procedure

The researcher developed an extensive questionnaire probing both students' and lecturers' views and beliefs about pronunciation instruction by adapting the questionnaire developed by Foote, Holtby, and Derwing (2011) who examined university students' beliefs about the teaching of pronunciation in adult English as a Second Language (ESL) programmes in Canada. Prior to the implementation of the questionnaire, the aims of the study were explained to the participants verbally and the participants were encouraged to participate in the survey.

Two distinct questionnaires were designed for the study—one for students and the other for lecturers. The student questionnaire commenced with personal questions probing participants' age and their educational level. This section was followed by four questions probing participants' background and preferences about pronunciation. The final section included 10 five-point Likert items questioning their beliefs about the different aspects of pronunciation.

The lecturer questionnaire, on the other hand, was almost similar to the student questionnaire, with an additional section including 5-point Likert items specifically questioning their beliefs and views regarding the teaching of pronunciation.

For both questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the intelligibility and appropriateness of both forms. The questionnaire designed for lecturers was administered to a group of 5 ELT lecturers who were enrolled in a PhD program in ELT in another Turkish state university and the questionnaire designed for students was administered to a group of 22 ELT students who were enrolled in that same university. Prior to both implementations, the participants were requested to have a critical eye on the questionnaire by paying special attention to the wording and intelligibility of the statements in the questionnaire and also to provide verbal feedback regarding the questionnaires. In line with those feedback, both versions were revised for typographical errors and ambiguous notions to improve intelligibility of the statements in the questionnaire, which in turn yielded the final versions of applicable questionnaires.

To gain more personal evaluations, the questionnaire was supported by an interview of five open-ended questions, which sought to obtain further evaluations of the ideas formulated in the questionnaire. Unlike the questionnaire, as mentioned earlier, the interview was only conducted with the lecturers (n=6). To achieve this, the lecturers were personally visited by the researcher in the offices of the lecturers and then they were re-requested to undertake the interview. The interviews were conducted in the native language of the participants (i.e. Turkish) so as to enable a comforting atmosphere for the respondents. Prior to the initiation, the

participants were asked whether they approved of voice recording during the interview and to sign a written consent to declare their approval. Subsequently, the recording was initiated and the questions in the interview form were probed sequentially. During the sessions, the researcher paid utmost attention to ensure that the participants provided eligible responses for each question. After receiving a reply for the final question in the questionnaire, the researcher thanked the participants and finalized the recording. Shortly after, the researcher voice-checked the recording and—if no problem was detected—backed up the recording file to avoid data loss. In a linear fashion, the researcher progressed to other lecturers and recorded all the ensuing interviews using the same procedure.

2.4. Data analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS 21.0 (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 21.0.). The analysis included means, standard deviation (SD), frequencies, percentages (%), and the values showing reliability. For the analysis of variables, two tests were used, whereby t-test was used for the cases with two variables and One-Way ANOVA was used for the cases with more than two variables. Nonetheless, no post hoc test was performed since no significant difference was observed between/among any variables. A p value of <0.05 was considered significant.

In the 5-point scale, the interval was assessed as 1.00 – 1.80; “Strongly Disagree”, 1.81 – 2.60; “Disagree”, 2.61 – 3.40; “Unsure”, 3.41 – 4.20; “Agree”, and 4.21 – 5.00; “Strongly Agree”. Based on these rates, the participants’ responses were entered into SPSS program and then the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed via Cronbach’s Alpha, which found the reliability of the student questionnaire as .824 and the lecturer questionnaire as .809.

Qualitative data were analysed by employing content analysis. Initially, both the written and recorded interviews were transcribed after each interview and then checked by the researcher for typographical and/or grammatical errors. The transcripts were translated into English by the researcher and were double-checked by a colleague proficient in English. Upon receiving a confirmation from the colleague, the researcher initiated the coding process which involved three stages. In the first stage, the transcripts were re-read by the researcher to make himself familiarized with the text, which is called ‘pre-coding’ by Patton (2015). Secondly, the transcripts were read analytically and recurrent codes were elicited by noting them in the ‘Comments’ section in Microsoft Word, which is called ‘first cycle coding’. An example of first-cycle coding is shown below (Figure 2):

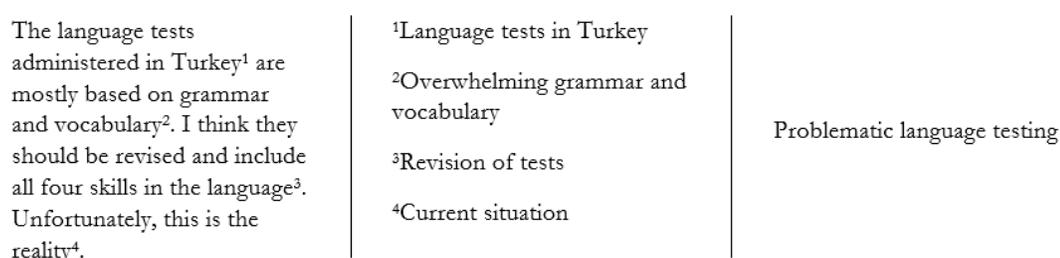


Figure 2. First-cycle coding example

The codes elicited in first-cycle coding were transferred to Microsoft Excel and then merged into overarching categories, which is termed ‘second-cycle coding’. After revisiting the categories and ensuring their appropriateness, both the codes and categories were used for qualitative data analysis.

3. RESULTS

The results of the present study were grouped depending on the four research questions along with their subcategories of comparison:

3.1. Research Question 1: What are the beliefs of ELT students and lecturers regarding pronunciation instruction?

For this question, both lecturers and students were requested to denote their beliefs regarding the teaching/learning of pronunciation instruction as well as the underlying mechanisms. The answers elicited for this question are outlined in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Descriptives for the beliefs of ELT students and lecturers regarding pronunciation instruction

	LECTURERS			STUDENTS		
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
A heavy accent is a cause of discrimination against ESL speakers.	6	4.00	.63	125	3.38	.92
Only native speakers should teach pronunciation.	6	2.67	1.21	125	2.90	1.44
There is an age-related limitation on the acquisition of native-like pronunciation.	6	4.33	.52	125	3.18	1.04
Native-like pronunciation can only be achieved in a native country.	6	2.50	1.05	125	3.12	1.27
Some individuals resist changing their pronunciation in order to maintain their L1 identity.	6	3.00	1.26	125	3.42	.91
Pronunciation teaching should help make students comfortably intelligible to their listeners.	6	4.00	.00	125	4.05	.82
Students' L1 plays a key role in the process of learning a pronunciation.	6	4.17	1.17	125	3.82	.93
Native-like pronunciation is an obligation for achieving fluency.	6	2.83	1.17	125	3.32	1.04
Pronunciation instruction is only effective for highly motivated learners.	6	3.67	1.37	125	3.17	1.08
The goal of a pronunciation programme should be to eliminate, as much as possible, foreign accents.	6	3.33	.82	125	3.53	.93

As made clear in Table 2, the lecturers and students diverged from each other in all the items, which in turn presents a tacit distinction between their insights into the realm of pronunciation instruction. On the whole, this distinction could be attributed to some corollary facts, such as experience, age, and the dichotomy of being the person who teaches vs. the one being taught.

In the first item, while the students were proven as unsure ($M=3.38$), the lecturers presented a favourable support ($M=4.00$) for the effect of heavy accents on the notion of discrimination against ESL speakers. This might be due to the students' insufficient experience in such circumstances. Accordingly, it could be asserted that if students had been engaged in an assortment of teaching activities, just like their lecturers, they might now be holding more decisive attitudes towards this notion. In the second item, however, both lecturers ($M=2.67$) and students ($M=2.90$) remained unsure about the possible effects of the pronunciation instruction to be conducted by a native lecturer. Given that neither of these two groups were taught or accompanied by native lecturers, it is wise to consider that they rightfully harbour sceptical attitudes towards such a phenomenon.

Unlike the previous two items, the third item presented an outright difference between the groups, where the students ($M=3.18$) were unsure about while the lecturers ($M=4.33$) strongly agreed with the idea that there exists an age limit in the learnability of pronunciation. This notion is a clear exemplification of why students—possibly because of their younger age—view their achievements in pronunciation as all-feasible but not as something that could be highly challenging for people with older ages. The lecturers, on the other hand, might have employed a collective generalization of the instances they had encountered throughout their learning and teaching processes. The fourth item, which confines the learnability of pronunciation solely to spending a certain amount of time in a native country, is a clear reference to the distinguishing effect of professional experience of the lecturers. Although the lecturers disagreed ($M=2.50$), the students ($M=3.12$) portrayed a sceptical stance in this notion likely because they had never had such an experience.

Another point where two groups diverged was the notion about the people who tend to retain their own pronunciation rather than acquiring the one taught, possibly due to the fear that they would lose their L1 identity. For this item, the lecturers (M=3.00) remained unsure while the students (M=3.42) presented a moderate agreement. The lecturers, who had already achieved their basic education and were then involved in teaching activities, might be having suspicions about the workability of this view, possibly having difficulty in forming a descriptive picture of what they had been through and what they were teaching. On the other hand, considering that students unavoidably have problems in English pronunciation, they might be feeling as “foreigners” or namely “others” while trying to imitate the people whose culture and identity is way beyond their own. Contrary to this item, the subsequent item presented a mutual agreement in which both lecturers (M=4.00) and students (M=4.05) agreed that the core aim of pronunciation should be to provide a comfort on the speakers’ side which would facilitate their intelligibility in the contexts they share with others.

The seventh item conveys a special reference to the fifth item in that they both focused on the effect of L1 on the learnability of pronunciation. Contrariwise, there was a two-sided agreement in this item, where both lecturers (M=4.17) and students (M=3.82) agreed that students’ L1 played a major part in this process. Clearly then, L1 is portrayed both by students and lecturers as an influential factor for pronunciation both in the teaching and learning processes. As for the eighth item, both lecturers and students (M=2.83, M=3.32, respectively) presented with a sceptical stance towards the idea that native-like pronunciation is a must for achieving fluency. Quite naturally, both lecturers and students were eligibly proficient in English, though not all of them could achieve native-like pronunciation. Even so, they might have been in the opinion that some of the non-native foreigners with whom they had been communicating up to then, probably by using English, were also quite fluent despite retaining their own pronunciation. Indeed, they might have conveyed a generalization in mind that not all native speakers of their own languages could necessarily achieve fluency.

The effect of professional experience and of the status of being the person who teaches as opposed to the one being taught was reflected in the item concerning the effect of motivation on the learnability of pronunciation. While the students (M=3.17) remained unsure about this view, the lecturers (M=3.67), as the persons who are able to observe both the motivated and unmotivated students in the same setting, provided moderate support for the effect of motivation, thus establishing an unwavering connection between motivation and the learning of pronunciation. In the final item of this section, however, the debate concerning the elimination of foreign accents by teaching native pronunciations led to another divergence between the two groups. Although the students (M=3.53) agreed that pronunciation instruction should primarily aim to eliminate foreign accents, the lecturers (M=3.33) remained unsure about this aim, likely because they might have had suspicions about the retainment of L1 identity and partly due to their suspicions about their competence in teaching native pronunciation.

In the statistical analysis, no significant difference was found between the lecturers and students, between genders, among the educational levels of the students, and among the numbers of participants’ native languages with regard to the students’ and lecturers’ beliefs regarding pronunciation instruction ($p = .480, .058, .690, \text{ and } .780$, respectively).

3.2. Research Question 2: What are the challenging aspects of pronunciation for students and lecturers?

The questionnaire also sought to find the most challenging aspects of pronunciation both for the students and the lecturers. While most participants denoted their views by choosing the options given in the questionnaire, some of them provided some additional remarks (Figure 3):

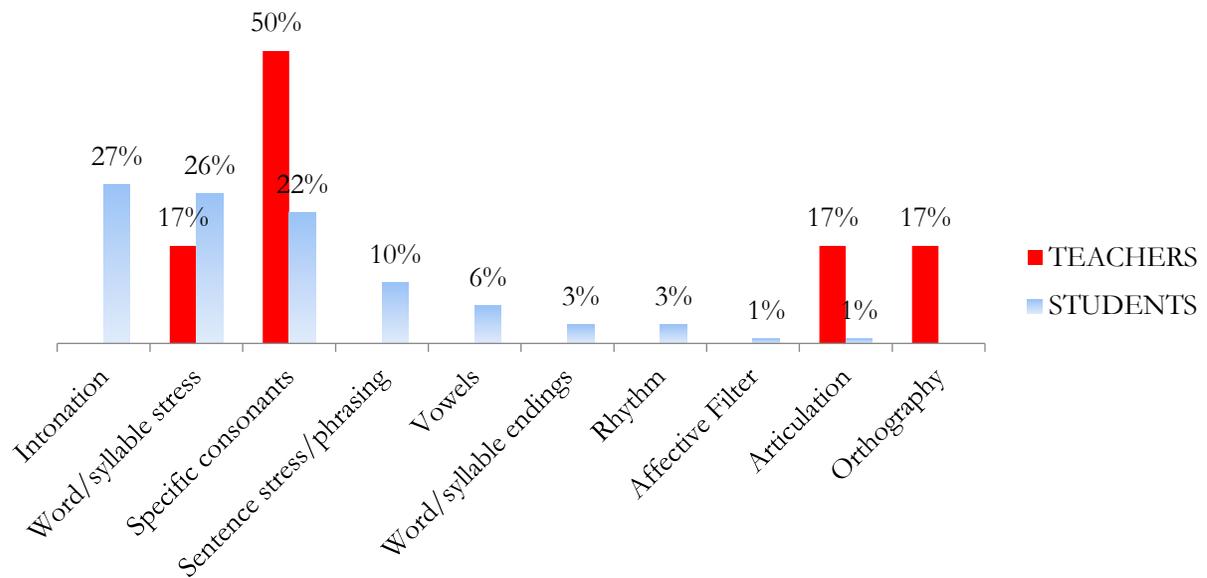


Figure 3. Most challenging aspects of pronunciation denoted by two groups

As revealed in Figure 2, specific consonants (*e.g.* θ, ʃ) indicated an outright preponderance (50%) among the challenging aspects for the lecturers. As for the students, it seems that intonation (27%) was the most challenging part of their pronunciation instruction, followed by word/syllable stress and specific consonants. However, for both groups, affective filter, articulation, and orthography were revealed as the least challenging aspects of pronunciation instruction.

3.3. Research Question 3: What are the lecturers' views regarding teaching pronunciation?

As opposed to two-way views presented both by lecturers and students, the notion of teaching pronunciation was investigated through the lecturers' insights alone:

Table 3. Descriptives for the lecturers' views regarding teaching pronunciation

	LECTURERS		
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I wish I had more training in teaching pronunciation.	6	3.50	1.05
Teaching pronunciation does not usually result in permanent changes.	6	2.83	1.33
Drilling minimal pairs is the best way to teach pronunciation.	6	2.60	.82
Communicative practice is the best way to teach pronunciation.	6	4.33	.52
Teaching pronunciation is boring.	6	2.17	.76
Pronunciation instruction is most effective in a class with the same L1.	6	3.00	.89
Pronunciation instruction is only effective in the first two to three years after arrival.	6	3.00	.89
You cannot teach pronunciation to lower levels.	6	2.50	1.64
I am completely comfortable teaching segmentals.	6	3.67	1.03
I am completely comfortable teaching all aspects of prosody (<i>e.g.</i> , stress, rhythm, intonation).	6	3.33	1.21

The results revealed that the lecturers agreed that they had insufficient training in pronunciation ($M=3.50$), which could be attributed to the fact that they had obtained pronunciation instruction only as a part of an ELT course during their B.A. education. Moreover, the replies provided by the lecturers in the interview session were also highly parallel with this result, where they stated that they had only obtained rudimentary training of segmentals which was only supported with minimal pair exercises, with no additional contextual or communicative reinforcement. All considered, the lecturers seem to reckon that the pronunciation instruction should not be limited to phonetic introduction of segmentals and should be supported with communicative contexts.

The second item functions as a complementary idea for the previous item, in that the results of both items collectively pointed towards the essentiality of a proper pronunciation instruction for the speakers of English. The lecturers, disagreeing with the idea that permanent changes cannot be obtained through pronunciation instruction ($M=2.83$), seem to present favourable support for such an instruction.

The third and fourth items indeed presented congruent agreement with the notions aforementioned. The lecturers did not only object to the dominance of instruction of minimal pairs ($M=2.60$) but also declared absolute support for the integration of communicative contexts into the wider context of pronunciation instruction ($M=4.33$).

No matter how insufficient they felt, the lecturers seemed to be quite positive in teaching pronunciation ($M=2.17$). The underlying reason might be concerned with their ambition to contribute to their own knowledge while educating their students. In this way, then, they might have been feeling quite interested in delving into the intricacies of pronunciation instead of ignoring them.

Regarding the effect of L1, the lecturers remained unsure as to whether a homogenous class solely comprising students with the same L1 would provide beneficial outcomes ($M=3.00$). Perceivably, since the lecturers had only been teaching classes with students of the same L1, they rightfully might have doubts as to whether the presence of any foreigners would make any difference. Likewise, the lecturers also remained unsure about the idea that the first two to three years after arriving at the department is the only effective period to receive pronunciation training ($M=3.00$). It is quite convincing then that they felt doubtful about this matter since they had only been instructed—and also instructing—pronunciation only as part of an ELT course which is only given for a period of two terms during the second year of education.

In accordance with their support for the effect of motivation on the learnability of pronunciation, the lecturers rejected the idea that low-level students cannot be taught pronunciation ($M=2.50$). In brief terms, they might have been considering that pronunciation can be taught even to low levels but the important thing is that they, i.e. teachers, should be equipped with a certain level of motivation to teach pronunciation.

What is made clear by the final two items is that the lecturers felt quite positive while teaching segmentals, namely the Phonetics ($M=3.67$), whereas they were unsure as to whether they were comfortable enough with teaching high-level aspects of pronunciation which are encapsulated in the realm of Phonology ($M=3.33$).

3.4. Research Question 4: How can pronunciation best be improved according to the students and lecturers?

The final notion probed by the questionnaire and the interview was concerned with lecturers' and students' suggestions regarding pronunciation improvement (Figure 4):

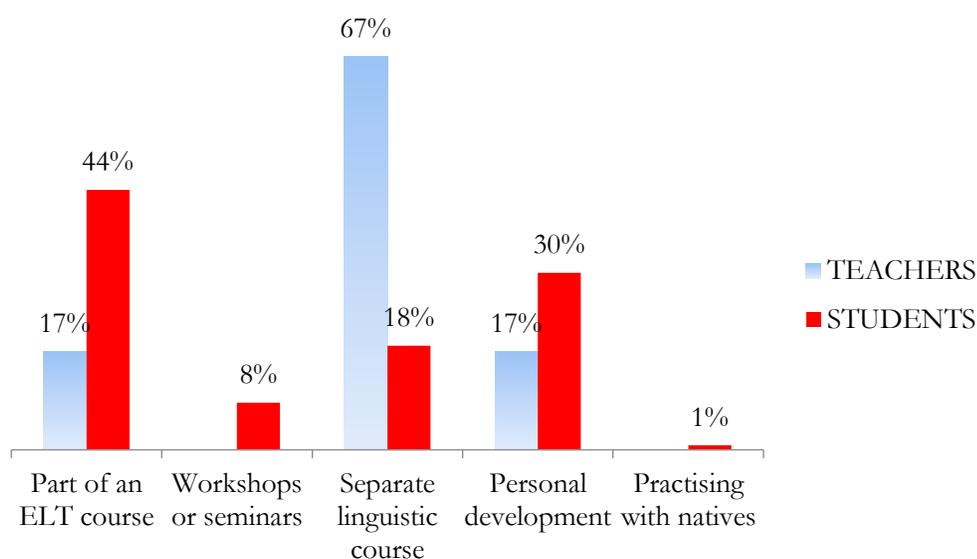
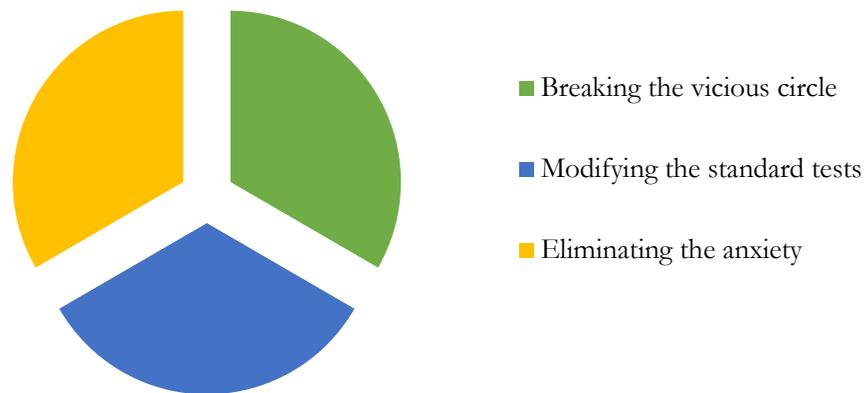


Figure 4. Participants' suggestions regarding the improvement of pronunciation

The most salient outcome was reflected as the lecturers' vociferous demand for a separate linguistic course which would provide the students with all the aspects of pronunciation in a more exhaustive fashion (67%). On the contrary, most students (44%) seemed to feel quite content with the amount of instruction provided as a part of an ELT course. Secondly, the students appeared to view self-study activities as more preferable to receiving a separate linguistic course (18%).

Lecturers' suggestions were also investigated in the open-ended items probed in the interview which was administered to lecturers alone. These items produced novel ideas most of which were not available in the questionnaire items (Figure 5):

**Figure 5.** Suggestions stated by the lecturers in the interview

The idea related to the “vicious circle” stressed the importance of amending the teaching/learning processes beginning from the very early stage of education in Turkey. Only in this way, as proposed by the lecturers, pronunciation could be properly taught to learners, who are perceived as prospective teachers or lecturers.

Another remark made by the lecturers was concerned with the alteration of the standard tests in Turkey, *i.e.* YDS. The lecturers stated that these tests should discontinue focussing only on the skills like reading, vocabulary, and grammar; rather, they should become more comprehensive to cover other skills such as listening, speaking, and writing. Accordingly, the lecturers seemed to demand a more comprehensive test which would not only focus on the perceptive skills but also on the productive skills including speaking and writing as well as the complementary skill for speaking, *i.e.* listening. Clearly then, once achieved, the new test would serve as an incentive factor for test takers to gain more authentic skills that would contribute to their pronunciation development.

It is a common idea that pronouncing a foreign language causes language anxiety, thereby leading to an affective inhibition to produce intelligible and contextual utterances. The lecturers converged on this notion, stating that this anxiety should be eliminated by the speaker if he/she wants to acquire a proper pronunciation.

As the second aspect of suggestions, both lecturers and students were asked in the questionnaire to specify the accent (if any) which they considered would best facilitate the learning of pronunciation (Figure 6):

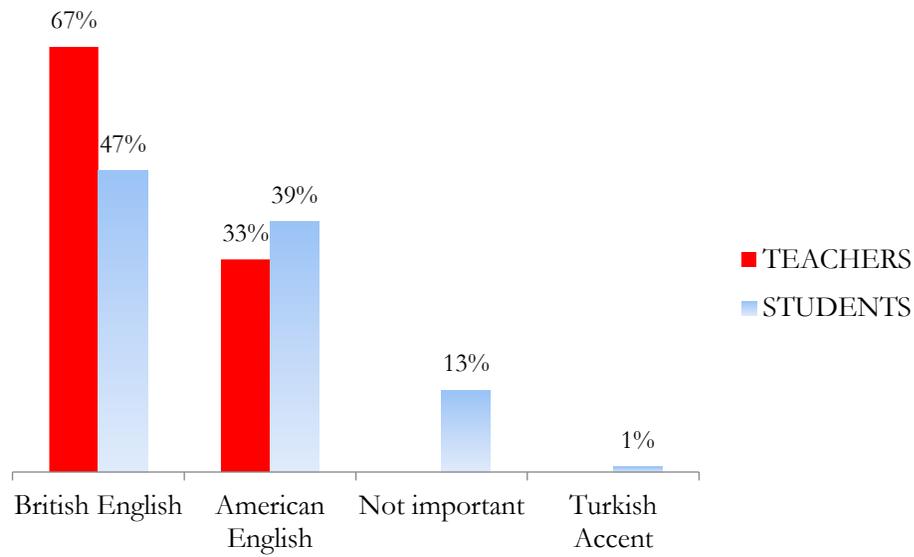


Figure 6. Students' and lecturers' preference regarding the appropriateness of an accent in pronunciation instruction

The statistics revealed that British English seemed to be the most favourable accent both for the lecturers (67%) and the students (47%), followed by American English (33% and 39%, respectively). On the other hand, 13% of the students stated that the facilitation of pronunciation instruction had nothing to do with accents.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results drawn in the present study have significant implications both for lecturers and students. As the most salient outcome, it was revealed that both lecturers and students viewed pronunciation instruction as a crucial part of ELT education. This view has also been presented in numerous studies which collectively agree that pronunciation is an indispensable part of language teaching programmes but which is also subject to a worldwide negligence. O'Brien (2004), for instance, emphasized that pronunciation is a key element for their students especially for their communications with others. In a similar vein, Gilakjani (2017) contended that pronunciation has close ties with listening, vocabulary, and grammar and thus forms a central part of ELT instruction. Lord (2008), indeed, contended that achieving the pronunciation is a must for the common world where you need to master international communications for any realm of study or work. Nevertheless, both the lecturers and the students in our study were unsure about the essentiality of native-like pronunciation. Setter and Jenkins (2005) argued that native-like pronunciation is a must for mastering a language in a proper way and O'Brien (2004) maintained that non-native pronunciations oftentimes lead to problems in terms of intelligibility. Conversely, Zoghbor (2018) contended that 'comfortable intelligibility' rather than native-like pronunciation should be the primary goal of pronunciation instruction due to the global spread of English as the world lingua franca.

The lecturers also stated that they were quite comfortable teaching all the aspects of pronunciation. On the contrary, Liu (2011), Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011), and Darcy (2018) maintained that there is a worldwide trend among language lecturers who remain reluctant in teaching pronunciation. Adopting a different stance, Lee, Plonsky, and Saito (2020) proposed that pronunciation teaching is an integral part of L2 speech instruction which is prioritized by L2 instructors and also noted that pronunciation instruction could be effectively achieved via perception- and production-based approaches. The difference between these studies could be ascribed to the difference in their publication periods and research settings.

As a second key finding, it was revealed that the lecturers' and students' beliefs diverged from each other in many points. Of particular importance, it became obvious that the lecturers' age, experience, and status were the determining factors for their attitudes towards pronunciation, whereby they insinuated that their views and beliefs were all supported by the experiences they had gained throughout their learning and teaching processes. On this notion, Busa (2008) maintained that the lecturers of pronunciation are role models for their students in

that their experience grants them the two-way freedom of observation and domination. In a confirmatory manner, Couper (2019) maintained that teachers, in line with the accumulation of their experience, beliefs, and cognition, are the primary sources of corrective feedback for their students.

The effect of motivation was also emphasized in the results of the present study and this effect was endorsed by the lecturers as an effective factor. Conceivably, motivation is a universally accepted effective factor for any learning/teaching process. In a similar manner, Schaetzel (2009) accepted motivation as a complementary element and Orlow (1951) regarded it as an indispensable element to be used for the elimination of the inaccuracies in L2 pronunciation. On similar grounds, Saville-Troike (2012) contended that motivation constitutes a major part of affective filter and a certain amount of motivation is needed for learners to ingest the target input provided through instruction.

The lecturers' and students' perceptions into the most difficult aspect of pronunciation led to a remarkable divergence between the two groups. While specific consonants seemed to be the most challenging part for the lecturers, intonation was revealed as the most challenging aspect for the students. Similarly, intonation has been cited as a challenging part in numerous studies as well (Busa, 2008; Gilakjani, 2012; Harmer, 2015). As for the consonants, Ercan (2018) evaluated the pronunciation problems experienced by Turkish EFL learners in Northern Cyprus and revealed that the learners had significant difficulty in pronouncing certain English consonants (i.e., /θ/, /ð/, /w/, /v/, /ŋ/).

The final section of the study came up with some suggestions put forth by the lecturers who emphasized that there was a need for breaking the vicious circle in the larger system of ELT in Turkey and also noted that this could only be achieved by revising the entire system, which, if achieved, would gradually produce well-trained speakers of foreign language. According to Orlow (1951), such an amendment can be achieved in the same way one would correct the learners' mother tongue by aiding learners to adopt new speech habits. In a similar way, a study conducted in Chinese context by Gan (2012) investigated the oral problems of EFL learners and also reported that the participants proposed that the curriculum should be revised to include all language skills in tandem. The other relevant suggestion proposed by the lecturers in our study was that the revision of standard tests of foreign language assessment implemented in Turkey, e.g. YDS, by allowing them to involve all four skills so as to fit the needs of the students. In this way, according to lecturers, the students from any educational level would adapt their own learning styles according to the requirements of such a test, which would ultimately contribute to their pronunciation improvement. As a matter of fact, this proposal has been documented by a large body of literature which investigated the effectiveness of foreign language tests administered in Turkey on learners' improvement in English speaking skills and pronunciation and revealed that the tests failed to foster these skills since they were overwhelmingly based on reading, vocabulary, and grammar and ignored the remaining skills and subskills (Akın, 2016; Hatipoğlu, 2016; Kılıçkaya, 2016; Külekçi, 2016).

Overall, the results made it clear that lecturers viewed the pronunciation from a different angle from that of students. Additionally, it was revealed that both the students and the lecturers had difficulties in English pronunciation, for which they did not feel the necessity of possessing native factors (native pronunciation, lecturer, and setting). Based on these findings, it is recommendable that there is need for a comprehensive and bottom-up amendment both in the teaching/learning of pronunciation as well as in the overarching mechanisms encompassing pronunciation instruction such as national educational system, ELT methodology, and teacher training schemes. Additionally, creating authentic settings in which the quintessential actors involved in pronunciation-related activities, i.e. teachers and learners, could have increased exposed to native elements of pronunciations, e.g. intonation, stress, rhythm, and thus could enhance their competence in pronunciation by merging the theoretical knowledge they gain at school with the practical observations they perform with native speakers. In doing so, both teachers and learners could feel more motivated towards the exertion of pronunciation rules in their daily life speech. Further studies are encouraged to focus on the subcategories of

pronunciation such as segmentals and suprasegmentals, in attempts to find out the problems and solutions regarding each of these subcategories.

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