

## English Pronunciation Challenges Facing Turkish Learners: A Case Study

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### Abstract

The current study was carried out to probe into both the types and potential causes of problems Turkish learners face in the pronunciation of English numbers and words. The population of this descriptive research study was the English Language Teaching (ELT) freshmen in the 2019-2020 academic year. As part of convenience sampling method, a total of 70 freshmen from the two ELT classes, including 51 females and 19 males, were included in the study.

Early in the spring semester, the students were given a list of 50 numbers and 50 words commonly used in English. They were then asked to read each number and pronounce the word following that number. They were recorded via a voice-recorder as they were articulating.

The statistical analysis of the data collected via recordings provided feedback with regard to the students' current level of mastery of English pronunciation and enabled the researcher to unearth and categorize the types of pronunciation problems facing the ELT students. The study's overall outcome is expected to spark eager and unflagging interest in both learners and teachers toward new ways and means to learn and teach English pronunciation much more effectively.

**Key Words:** English pronunciation, pronunciation challenges, pronunciation of numbers, pronunciation of words, ELT students.

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## Türk Öğrencilerin Karşılaştıkları İngilizce Sesletim Zorlukları: Bir Durum Çalışması

### Özet

Mevcut çalışma, Türk öğrencilerin İngilizce sayıların ve kelimelerin sesletiminde karşılaştıkları sorunların türlerini ve kaynaklarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Betimleyici bir araştırma olan bu çalışmanın katılımcıları 2019-2020 akademik yılında Harran Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği 1. sınıf öğrencileriydi. Kapma örnekleme yönteminin bir sonucu olarak, halihazırda İngilizce Öğretmenliği 1. sınıf seviyesindeki iki şubede bulunan, 51 kadın ve 19 erkekten oluşan, toplam 70 öğrenci çalışmaya katıldı. Bahar yarıyılı başlarında, öğrencilere 1 ile 50 arası 50 sayı ve (tamamı "İngilizce'de en sık kullanılan 3000 kelime" grubundan seçilmiş) 50 kelimeyi içeren bir liste verildi ve "Sesletim Uygulaması" olarak adlandırılan bir sesletim alıştırması kapsamında her kelimenin önündeki sayıyı okumaları ve o sayıyı takip eden kelimeyi seslendirmeleri istendi. Bu okuma/seslendirmeleri yaparlarken öğrencilerin sesleri ses kayıt cihazı ile kaydedildi. Daha sonra sayıları ve kelimeleri ne kadar iyi telaffuz edebildiklerine dair kendilerine tek tek ve sınıf olarak geri bildirimde bulunuldu. Toplanan verilerin istatistiki çözümlemesi, hem öğrencilerin İngilizce sesletim konusundaki mevcut yeterlik düzeyleri ile ilgili geri bildirim sundu ve araştırmacıya da söz konusu öğrencilerin karşılaştıkları ortak telaffuz sorunları ile kaynaklarını belirleme ve sınıflandırma imkanı verdi. Çalışmanın genel sonuçlarının İngilizce öğrencileri ile öğretmenlerinde İngilizce telaffuzu çok daha etkin öğrenmek ve öğretmek amacıyla yeni yöntem ve araçlar arayışına yönelik istekli ve tükenmez bir ilgi uyandırması beklenmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İngilizce sesletim, sesletim zorlukları, sayıların sesletimi, kelimelerin sesletimi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi öğrencileri.

### Introduction

It is evident that all learners of English, non-natives more so than natives, learn the language in expectation that they will be understood by natives as well as other speakers from all corners of the world. This is a crucial element of the process of communication, which stems from the fundamental human desire to understand and to be understood (Turgay, 2016; Turker, 2010). Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2009) and Yates and Zielinski (2011) highlight English pronunciation as a central element of oral communication skills in that language, just like in any other language. Similarly, Yates and Zielinski (2009) also refer to English pronunciation as "a perennial hot topic" as it remains an unsettled dimension of English language teaching programs.

Despite a history of well over half a century of English language teaching across the world, text book writers, researchers and English-language teachers are staggered at the level of incompetence or lack of competence on the part of non-native learners and/or speakers of English in general. Teachers of English should not feel excluded here as they also seem to struggle with proper pronunciation that is both clear and intelligible. This common view is openly expressed, inter alia, by Alghazo (2015), Demirezen (2008), Gilakjani et al (2019), Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu (2009), Isbell (2019), Yates and Zielinski (2009) that English pronunciation has not yet received and/or dealt with due attention and credit it deserves.

This is precisely why that the researcher attempted to probe into the types of difficulties Turkish learners of English face in the pronunciation of commonly-used numbers and words in English as well as possible cause(s) of the errors they make as part of their pronunciation endeavors. Strictly speaking, this study aims to “understand what learners are doing and why” (Yates and Zielinski, 2009). Being able to shed some light on pronunciation errors and their potential sources might play an instrumental role in paving the way for a more efficient and effective approach to both learning and teaching English pronunciation. To that end, this descriptive study was conducted at the beginning of the spring semester in the 2019-2020 academic year.

### **Background of the Study**

As an outcome of globalization, the world has grown smaller with English still serving as the primary means of global communication until another language becomes the new lingua franca (Turgay, 2016). No matter how big or small a country is, it is surely impacted one way or the other by the omnipresence of this international language.

Just like other countries across the globe, Turkey also enjoys its share of this ubiquitous spread of English, which is the principal foreign language taught as part of the Turkish curriculum system at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Until another language replaces English to become the new lingua franca, we will need qualified English teachers, which is a pressing need to train them well for effective and enhanced communication personally, professionally, and globally.

If we were to have better communicators in English, it would have to be through people who have attained a certain level of mastery of English in general as well as an improved speaking ability with clear and easy-to-understand articulation in particular. Pronunciation plays a pivotal role in this regard as it contributes to “improved understanding and ensures understandability by both native and non-native speakers of English” (Hewings, 2007). Similarly, Travis underlines the importance of enhanced linguistic ability as a precursor of heightened interpersonal and intercultural competency, defining a person’s ability to exploit his or her language(s) as a manifestation of that person’s overall professional and intellectual advancement.

This can only be achieved by first acquiring correct, improved English pronunciation skills which denotes increased and effective communicative competence.

Here, effective communicative competence does not necessarily suggest native-like pronunciation but one that is clear and intelligible to both native and non-

native speakers of English. It is also a praiseworthy achievement that a non-native English speaker speaks English with an accent as long as his/her pronunciation is easily comprehensible.

An apostle of World Englishes (WEs) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Jenkins (2006) claims the world has begun to move away from “the concept of a monolithic English for the entire world” in which it is unlikely for all English learners around the globe to “aim for an English that is identical in all respects” (Jenkins, 2006). Subsequently, the chances are that English speakers, for the most part, will end up interacting with non-native speakers more than native speakers, especially considering the role English plays in terms of inter-cultural and international communication. According to Hewings (2007) and Kreidler (2004) non-native speakers all across the globe outnumber native speakers as users of “English as a Lingua Franca” (or ELF) as Jenkins (2006) prefers to term it.

As for intelligible pronunciation, empiric as well as scientific facts unfortunately suggest English pronunciation skills are not yet fully or sufficiently attained by neither students nor teachers of English. In their study entitled “A Brief Comparison of the Current Approaches in Teaching Pronunciation” published in 2017, Aydın and Akyuz also arrived at parallel conclusions about English students and teachers’ pronunciation skills.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Just like in other countries, pronunciation remains to be an unrelentingly severe issue in Turkey that needs to be attended for more intelligible and effective oral communication in English. There are speech sounds in English that are particularly difficult to correctly articulate for intermediate and even advanced learners and speakers of English. Those difficulties must be analyzed further to understand what it is that these learners and/or speakers need to do or change in order to get these sounds right for improved pronunciation, which is a precursor to improved communication in English.

Lack of ability to pronounce properly will negatively impact the speaker’s competence to clearly relay his/her messages to his/her listener(s), which in return will hamper the listener’s comprehension, overshadowing the quality of their overall communication (Gilakjani et al, 2019, Isbell, 2019; Turker, 2010). Unlike most scholars, Jenkins (2000) displays a *laissez-faire* attitude toward “target pronunciation”, suggesting a type of pronunciation fit for and comprehensible in a context in which communicational interaction takes place. To ensure intelligibility and worthwhile communication exchanges with non-native speakers, she calls on native speakers and other hearers for increased tolerance and lowered expectation when they are confronted with pronunciation blemished “with a certain amount of L1 transfer” (Jenkins, 2000).

On a related note, mispronunciations on the part of Turkish speakers of English are largely attributable to the fact that the two languages differ dramatically, especially with respect to both phonological and phonetic characteristics they possess. Unlike English, Turkish is a phonetic language, which means that the letters of the Turkish alphabet correspond to the sounds in spoken Turkish. This does not hold true as far as English is concerned. To put it differently, the letters of the English alphabet do not represent the sounds of English language precisely (Gilbert, 2005; Kreidler, 2004). Since there is no direct correlation between the two; some letters will not be sounded at all as if they do not exist or will be articulated slightly, if not totally, differently. In cases where they are pronounced, they are not going to be voiced exactly the same as the letter(s) representing the sound(s) because they choose to be abstainers, practicing self-denial. Simply put, there are cases in which a single letter (and sometimes more than just one) or even a syllable in some English words will be either reduced to the schwa sound (/ə/) or remain silent (Smith, 2015). Just a few examples for such exceptional words include bury (verb); close (verb); close (adjective) colleague (noun); defamation (noun); eighth (number); entrepreneur (noun); industry (noun); know (verb); lieutenant colonel (noun); night (noun); receipt (noun); walk (noun/verb); and syncope (noun).

Another distinction, as Smith highlights (2015), is that “English is a stress-timed language,” meaning that the length of each and every syllable in English words will not be the same. Some syllables will be long when those syllables are stressed and others will be short because they are not stressed. Thus, heeding features of English pronunciation, and more importantly placing stress on the correct syllable(s), especially in the case of words with a minimum of two syllables or more is going to have a game changing potential (Chan, 1987).

In addition, learners find that there are additional aggravations in the learning process when they come to realize certain sounds of English (i.e. /θ/; /ð/; /æ/; /ŋ/) do not exist in Turkish, as also underlined by Demirezen in his 2008 article. In the event there is no straightforward equivalence, learners tend to resort to their mother tongue, substituting it with an L1 sound rather than exerting themselves to come up with the original target-language sound.

Aside from an awareness of these features of English pronunciation, what is equally important is the acquisition of a skill to produce adequately intelligible pronunciation. The latter relies heavily on what teachers and learners in general bring into the learning process. The question to ask here is to what extent teachers themselves fairly represent the kind of pronunciation skills they want or expect learners to approximate. Unfortunately, the short and simple answer is not a

particularly heartening one as teachers we in general have not served our customers well enough in our chosen profession. Inevitably, in the event what you offer is not an ideal or a sufficiently satisfying model, then what you get as a result is an unsatisfying performance.

Of course, the researcher is by no means trying to paint a pessimistic picture here but is rather asking all those concerned to confront the issue no matter how brutal the reality might be. Without such a genuine confrontation, it will be very hard, if not impossible, to fairly identify novel areas of improvement in learning and teaching pronunciation and strive for higher standards and improved quality.

### **Methods**

This study was built around a pronunciation practice to create an environment in which the participants read English numbers and sounded a selection of words in English. Accordingly, this section is designed to provide information about the participants, research questions to be answered, instrument, procedures as well as inter-rater reliability.

#### **Participants**

As part of convenience sampling method, 70 freshmen, which included all the students in the two sections studying at the English Language Teaching (ELT) department of Harran University's Faculty of Education in Sanliurfa, were included in the study. Of these participants, 19 were males and 51 females. All native speakers of Turkish, the students are part of a four-year program to become future teachers of English. Most of them had spent a whole academic year at the University's Preparatory School (School of Foreign Languages) extensively focusing on and improving the four basic language (in our case, English) skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Still, they were struggling with the correct pronunciation of very many words in English, no matter how simple or common those words were.

#### **Research Questions**

It is for this very reason that the researcher decided to undertake this study in order to seek answers to these questions:

- 1) What type(s) of pronunciation errors do the participants commonly make?
- 2) What are possible sources of these errors?
- 3) Is there any gender difference between male and female participants?

#### **Instrument**

The researcher made a list containing 50 numbers (1 through 50) and a selection of 50 words selected from the list of "3000 most common words in English". As part

of a pronunciation exercise called “Pronunciation Practice,” all of the students took part in the study, giving consent to the recording of their voices as they were pronouncing the 50 numbers and 50 words they were asked to pronounce (see Appendix 1).

### **Procedures**

The students were then given the list of 50 numbers and 50 words that are frequently used in almost any context to serve as a means of articulation. They were asked to read the number in front of each of the 50 words and then pronounce the word following that number. The researcher recorded the students’ voices as they were articulating in order to revisit at a later date to detect and diagnose common pronunciation errors they made producing numbers and words in English. In other words, the researcher attempted to identify the specific sounds in English that were posing difficulty for the Turkish learners of English.

Later, the researcher listened to the recordings, detecting and categorizing the types of pronunciation errors they made as they were articulating those numbers and words. The data collected were later turned into statistical data for detailed analysis. Simultaneously, the researcher applied to the University’s Ethics Committee for approval to carry out his research project which used human participants (see Appendix 2). The researcher processed and made available all the collected data, maintaining professional confidentiality.

Upon collecting all the data needed for his study, the researcher resorted to the audio recordings, listening very carefully as many times as needed to nose out as the problematic sounds the English language offered them—the Turkish learners of English. Each number and word articulation by each and every student was phonetically transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols in order to cross-check the recorded student articulation against the pronunciation given in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>). Then, the deviances spotted were numbered and keyed into an excel spreadsheet to obtain statistical data (mostly percentages and frequencies) needed to make some generalizations and arrive at certain conclusions with respect to the level of mastery of English in general and of English pronunciation in particular.

### **Inter-rater reliability**

Due to absence of native speakers of English at Harran University, another English-language professor at the University’s School of Foreign Languages was asked to co-analyze about 20% of the audio recordings. In advance of this analysis, he was given a half-hour briefing and provided with the list of 50 numbers and words along with their phonemic transcriptions so he knew what aspects of student articulations

he was supposed to focus on and analyze. The phonemic transcriptions included both British and North American English versions exactly the way they were presented by the Oxford dictionary.

When compared and contrasted, the two assessments seemed to concur significantly (92%) in terms of the types of deviances spotted by both the researcher and the co-assessor.

## Data Analysis and Discussion

Following a thorough scrutiny of the recordings, percentages and frequencies were calculated for statistical comparison and contrast of various indicators the collected data revealed. An analysis of the statistical data revealed that the participants, all Turkish speakers studying to become English teachers, were still having difficulty correctly pronouncing both the numbers and the words given.

### Analysis of Numbers

In this study, all the 70 participants were asked to pronounce 50 numbers in English from 1 through 50. Upon decoding of the recordings, the researcher detected eleven different types of errors in the pronunciation of the 50 numbers.

The errors included: 1) /θ/ unvoiced th sound (18%); 2) lack of awareness between /v/ and /w/ (10%); 3) stress (no stress or incorrect placement of it) (9%); 4) substitution (of the original sound with another (8%); 5) inability to differentiate between /v/ and /f/ (7%); 6) omission (of a single sound or a syllable) (3%); 7) lack of awareness with regard to /i/ vs /i/ (<3%); 8) inability to differentiate between /v/ and /u/ (<3%); 9) lack of awareness with respect to /u:/ versus /ju/ (<3%); 10) contraction (clipping the given word) (<3%); inability to discern and make a reduction (schwa sound: /ə/) (<3%).

The most-frequently-made error in the pronunciation of numbers included, inter alia, mispronunciation of /θ/ (unvoiced th sound) and/or substitution of it with another consonant such as /t/, /d/ or /z/) (18%) and substitution of /w/ with /v/ (10%).

These errors were followed by other low frequency deviances such as (no placement or misplacement of) stress (9%), substitution of the original sound with a non-existing sound (8%), and replacement of /v/ sound with /f/ sound (7%) in the given numbers. Out of the 70 students, only one (Student 8) was able to pronounce all the 50 numbers correctly, not making a single pronunciation error.

**Table 1:** Numbers: Overall Pronunciation Performance of Students

Overall Pronunciation Performance (Numbers)	Correct Pronunciation (%)	Incorrect Pronunciation (%)
70 Students	63	37

Although numerals constitute a basic category of English grammar, the students were only able to correctly pronounce 63% of the 50 numbers given. On the other hand, they failed to articulate 37 of these numbers properly.

**Table 2:** Numbers: Overall Pronunciation Performance by Gender

Gender	Correct Pronunciation (%)	Incorrect Pronunciation (%)	Most-Frequent Error (/θ/) (%)
Male (19)	62	38	18
Female (51)	63	37	16

When male and female performances were compared, there was almost no difference, with each group performing at nearly the same level of success rate, 62% and 63% respectively.

### Analysis of Words

Here, the participants were given a list of 50 words used very commonly in English to pronounce as correctly as they could. Upon listening to the recordings of student articulations, the researcher came up with the following 22 different types of pronunciation errors made the students.

They include: 1) *incorrect placement of stress*; 2) *reduction (to schwa sound: /ə/)*; 3) *substitution of the original sound with another*; 4) *L1 interference*; 5) *failure to recognize and produce a diphthong*; 6) *failure to recognize and produce a consonant sound or consonant clusters*; 7) *inability to produce unvoiced th sound (/θ/)*; 8) *confusion of /v/ with /w/*; 9) *confusion of /i/ vs /i/*; 10) *confusion of /e/ with /æ/*; 11) *confusion of /v/ with /f/*; 12) *contraction (clipping part of a word)*; 13) *omission (of a single sound or syllable)*; 14) *insertion (of a single sound or syllable)*; 15) *failure to recognize silent letters*; 16) *over generalization (applying properties of a specific instance as general concepts)*; 17) *lack of ability to distinguish word class or type*; 18) *inability to distinguish between /d/ and /t/*; 19) *inability to distinguish between /s/ and /z/*; 20) *failure to recognize and produce vowels*; 21) *production of irrelevant sound(s)*; 22) *inability to distinguish between /dʒ/ and /ʒ/*.

**Table 3:** Words: Overall Pronunciation Performance

Overall Pronunciation Performance (Words)	Correct Pronunciation (%)	Incorrect Pronunciation (%)
70 students	39	61

Out of the 70 students, only one student (Student 8) was able to pronounce all the 50 words correctly, not making a single pronunciation error. Each student made a minimum of one and half errors, averaging about 77 errors in the 50 words.

As part of their overall performance, they were less successful articulating the words, compared to their performance in the production of numbers. In other words, the rate of success in the production of numbers fell from 63% down to 39% for the correct pronunciation of words, scoring way below average.

Substitution of /e/ vs /æ/ (27%), reduction (%26), stress (24%), and vowel recognition (19%) were among the most common pronunciation errors made by the students. Other errors in the pronunciation of words included, inter alia, mispronunciation of /θ/ sound (18%) and substitution of /w/ with /v/ sound (10%). These errors were followed by other low frequency deviances such as (no placement or misplacement of) stress (9%), substitution of the original sound with a non-existing sound (8%), and replacement of /v/ sound with /f/ sound (7%) in the given numbers.

**Table 4:** Words: Overall Distribution of Pronunciation Errors by Gender

Gender	Correct Pronunciation (%)	Incorrect Pronunciation (%)	Most-Frequent Error (/θ/) (%)
Male (19)	37	63	18
Female (51)	39	61	16

Each and every male and female student made a minimum of one pronunciation error, producing parallel number of correct and incorrect articulations, 37% versus 39% respectively. The rate of incorrect pronunciations rose to 63% for males and 61% for females (from previous percentage of 38 for males and 37% for females). Pronunciation errors made by both male and female students seem to converge on stress, reduction, and replacement of /e/ with /æ/.

## Results

As for the first research question regarding the “type(s) of pronunciation errors the participants commonly make,” the deviances spotted were exactly the kinds of aberrations quite unique to Turkish learners of English as portrayed by Demirezen (2008) and Kenworthy (1988).

Those English sounds that Turkish learners mostly struggle with include:

- a) voiced and unvoiced *th* sounds (/ð/ and /θ/, respectively), for which Turkish have no exact equivalents;
- b) articulation of /v/ in lieu of /w/, which is also nonexistent in Turkish;
- c) lack of awareness with regard to /e/ vs /æ/; /ɔ/ vs /əʊ/; /ɑ:/ vs /ʌ/; /u:/ vs /ʊ/; and schwa sound (/ə/), which is a reduced form frequently used in English.

The second question was aimed to ascertain possible sources of the pronunciation errors detected as part of the research study. Thus, possible causes are attributable to the following:

- a) non-existence in Turkish of certain English sounds (e.g. /æ/, /ð/ and /θ/);
- b) tendency to substitute inexistent sounds with Turkish sounds (L1 transfer, as pointed out by Jenkins, 2006);
- c) lack of familiarity with IPA symbols;
- d) lack of awareness in respect to the fact that English is “a stress-timed language (Smith, 2015),” a feature that calls for an emphasis on the stressed syllables of multi-syllabic words;
- e) nuanced distinctions between the same or similar sounds in English;
- f) lack of “increased body and voice awareness” (Smith, 2015);
- g) general disinclination to use a monolingual dictionary;
- h) lack of proper pronunciation modeling on the part of Turkish teachers of English;
- i) no or insufficient opportunity for students to record and listen to their own voices.

Question 3 was intended to display gender differences, if any, with respect to male and female performances. The gender difference was not noteworthy as the male and female participants displayed very similar performances. Successful articulations were rated at 62% to 63% in numbers and 37% to 39% in words while unsuccessful articulations ranged between 38% to 37% in numbers and 63% to 61% in words.

Despite nearly a decade of exposure to English, the ELT students who participated in this study seem to lack the competence to correctly pronounce the given numbers (a basic category of English grammar) and the words that are most frequently used in English. The participants were able to get about 60% of the numbers right while they failed to correctly pronounce four of the ten numbers they were tasked to read. Considering the simplicity of the task at hand, this kind of poor performance fell quite

short of what was and should be unexpected. As for the pronunciation of words, their performance was unfortunately less promising as they were able to get only about 40% of the given words right.

When unsure of correct pronunciation, they tended to omit, substitute or even insert sounds regardless of whether they were relevant and/or part of the numbers or words given. In other cases, L1 had an impact, mostly negative though, on their pronunciation of certain words that had been borrowed into Turkish but have pronunciations dissimilar to their original English equivalents.

### Conclusion

Mispronunciations on the part of Turkish speakers of English are largely attributable to the fact that the two languages differ dramatically, especially with respect to both phonological and phonetic characteristics they possess. Unlike English, Turkish is a phonetic language, which means that letters and sounds in Turkish correspond. This does not hold true as far as English is concerned. To put it differently, the letters of the English alphabet do not represent the sounds of English language precisely (Smith, 2015). Since there is no direct correlation between the two, some letters have chosen to be abstainers, practicing self-denial. In other words, there are silent letters which will not be sounded at all as if they do not exist. Others will be articulated slightly, if not totally, differently from the letters that a particular word is made up of.

Simply put, there are cases in which a single letter (and sometimes more than just one) or even a syllable in some English words will be either reduced to the schwa (/ə/) or remain silent. Just a few examples for such exceptional words include *bury* (verb); *close* (verb); *close* (adjective) *colleague* (noun); *defamation* (noun); *eighth* (number); *entrepreneur* (noun); *industry* (noun); *know* (verb); *lieutenant colonel* (noun); *night* (noun); *receipt* (noun); *walk* (noun / verb); and *syncope* (noun).

Another distinction, as Smith highlights (2015), is that “English is a stress-timed language,” meaning that the length of each and every syllable in English words will not be the same. Some syllables will be long when those syllables are stressed and others will be short because they are not stressed. Thus, heeding features of English pronunciation, and more importantly placing stress on the correct syllable(s), especially in the case of words with a minimum of two syllables or more is going to have a game changing potential.

In addition, learners find that there are additional aggravations in the learning process when they come to realize certain sounds of English (i.e. /θ/; /ð/; /æ/; /ŋ/) do not exist in Turkish, as also underlined by several scholars including Demirezen and Kenworthy. In the event there is no straightforward equivalence, learners tend to resort to their mother tongue, substituting it with an L1 sound rather than exerting themselves to come up with the original target-language sound.

## **Suggestions**

The overall performance in connection with the pronunciation of the 50 words given is way below average, which clearly calls for further planning and action to learn and teach pronunciation much more effectively. Pronunciation activities must include components that will specifically focus on and address the types of pronunciation errors identified and referred to by the current study.

Aside from an awareness of these features of English pronunciation, what is equally important is the acquisition of adequately intelligible pronunciation. The latter relies heavily on what teachers and learners in general bring into the learning process.

As Hancock (2003) very rightly stressed, it is the teachers to whom the learners in a learning environment turn for help when they desperately need some sort of assessment, counselling and reflection. Teachers also play a critical role in their students' developing an improved skill to properly pronounce numbers and words in English. It is a fact that teachers can only teach what they know or have internalized. It is for this very reason that teachers need to make sure they are as good models as they can be in teaching their students to produce more intelligible articulations.

A relevant question to ask here is to what extent teachers themselves fairly represent the kind of pronunciation skills we all want or expect our learners to approximate. Unfortunately, the short, simple and honest answer is not a particularly heartening one as teachers we in general have not served Turkish learners of English well enough in their chosen profession up to now. Inevitably, in the event what you offer is not an ideal or a sufficiently satisfying model, then what you get as a result is an unsatisfying performance. Of course, the researcher is by no means trying to paint a pessimistic picture here but rather asking all those concerned to confront the issue no matter how brutal the reality might be, identify new areas of improvement and strive for higher standards and improved quality – intelligibility rather than accuracy or perfection as most scholars agree. In an effort to avoid any further aggravation, we need to act sooner than later. As noted by Gilbert (2005), "...the more you practice with the wrong rhythm, the more your errors become fixed," which will make a relatively easy-to-fix problem now much harder, if not impossible, to change or improve at a later stage.

## **Araştırma Etik Kurul İzin Bilgileri**

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## Geniş Özet

### Giriş

Ana dili İngilizce olmayanların ana dili İngilizce olanlardan daha çok olmak üzere, tüm İngilizce öğrenenlerin dünyanın her yerinden diğer konuşmacıların yanı sıra ana dili İngilizce olanlar tarafından anlaşılacağı beklentisiyle dili öğrendikleri açıktır. Bu, insanların temel anlama ve anlaşılma arzusunun sonucu ortaya çıkan iletişim sürecinin de çok önemli bir unsurudur. Hismanoğlu ve Hismanoğlu (2009) ve Yates ve Zielinski (2011), İngilizce telaffuzun, diğer dillerde olduğu gibi, o dilde sözlü iletişim becerilerinin temel bir unsuru olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Benzer şekilde, Yates ve Zielinski (2009), İngiliz dili öğretimi programlarının henüz çözüme kavuşturulmamış bir boyutu olmaya devam ettiği için İngilizce telaffuza "tekerrür eden sıcak bir konu" olarak değinmektedir.

Bu doğrultuda, mevcut çalışma, Türk öğrencilerin İngilizce sayıların ve kelimelerin sesletiminde karşılaştıkları sorunların türlerini ve kaynaklarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

### Yöntem

Bu çalışma, katılımcıların İngilizce sayıları okuduğu ve bir dizi İngilizce kelimeyi seslendirdiği bir ortam yaratmak için bir telaffuz pratiği etrafında inşa edildi. Elverişli örnekleme yöntemi kapsamında, Şanlıurfa'da Harran Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği (ELT) Bölümü'nün iki şubesindeki 70 birinci sınıf öğrencisi çalışmaya dahil edildi. Bu katılımcılardan 19'u erkek 51'i kadındı.

Anadili Türkçe olan tüm bu öğrenciler, geleceğin İngilizce öğretmeni olmak için dört yıllık bir programın parçasıdır. Çoğu, bir akademik yılı Üniversitenin Hazırlık Okulunda (Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu) dört temel dil (bizim durumumuzda İngilizce dinleme, konuşma, okuma ve yazma.) becerilerine yoğun bir şekilde odaklanarak geçirmişlerdi. Yine de, seslendirmeleri istenen kelimeler ne kadar basit veya yaygın kullanılıyor olursa olsun, İngilizce birçok kelimeyi doğru telaffuzu etmede zorlanıyorlardı. Bu sebeple, öğrencilere hemen hemen her bağlamda sıkça kullanılan 50 sayı ve 50 kelimedenden oluşan bir liste verildi. Bu 50 kelimenin her birinin önündeki rakamı okumaları ve ardından bu numarayı takip eden kelimeyi telaffuz etmeleri istendi. Araştırmacı, öğrenciler İngilizce sayıları ve kelimeleri çıkarırken yaptıkları yaygın telaffuz hatalarını tespit etmek ve tanı koymak için daha sonraki bir tarihte tekrar incelemek için onların seslerini kaydetti. Başka bir deyişle, araştırmacı, bu çalışmada İngilizce öğrenen Türkler için zorluk oluşturan belirli İngilizce sesleri belirlemeye çalıştı.

### Bulgular

Bu çalışmada 70 katılımcının hepsinden kendilerine verilen 1'den 50'ye kadar İngilizce 50 sayıyı telaffuz etmeleri istenmiştir. Ses kayıtlarının çözümlemesini yapan araştırmacı, bu 50 sayının telaffuzunda on bir farklı türde hata tespit etmiştir. Diğer hataların yanı sıra, numaraların telaffuzunda en sık yapılan hata /θ/ (sessiz th sesi) ve /veya bunun /t/, /d/veya /z/ gibi başka bir ünsüz ile değiştirilmesi (% 18) ile /w/ ile /v/ seslerinin ikamesini (% 10) içermektedir. Verilen sayıların İngilizce dilbilgisinin temel bir bölümünü oluşturmalarına rağmen, öğrenciler verilen sayıların yalnızca % 63'ünü doğru telaffuz edebildiler. Öte yandan, sayıların 37'sini doğru bir şekilde çıkaramadılar.

Katılımcılara ellerinden geldiğince doğru telaffuz etmeleri için İngilizce'de çok yaygın olarak kullanılan 50 kelimelik bir liste verildi. Öğrenci artikülasyonlarının kayıtlarını dinleyen araştırmacı, öğrencilerin 22 farklı tür telaffuz hatası ile karşılaştı. 70 öğrenciden yalnızca bir tanesi (Öğrenci 8) tek bir telaffuz hatası yapmadan 50 kelimenin tamamını doğru telaffuz edebildi.

### Sonuç, Tartışma ve Öneriler

Ana dili Türkçe olup İngilizce konuşanlar kişilerin yaptığı yanlış telaffuzlar, büyük ölçüde, iki dilin, özellikle sahip oldukları hem fonolojik hem de fonetik özellikler açısından çarpıcı biçimde farklılık göstermesine atfedilebilir. İngilizce'nin aksine, Türkçe fonetik bir dildir, yani Türkçe'deki harfler ve sesler uyumludur. İngilizce söz konusu olduğunda bu durum geçerli değildir. Başka bir deyişle, İngiliz alfabesinin harfleri İngiliz dilinin seslerini tam olarak temsil etmez (Smith, 2015). İkisi arasında doğrudan bir ilişki olmadığından, bazı harfler çekimsiz olmayı, kendini inkar etmeyi seçmiştir. Diğer bir deyişle, sanki yokmuş gibi İngilizce'de hiç çıkarılmayan sessiz harfler vardır. Bunun dışında, belirli bir kelimenin olduğu harflerden tamamen olmasa da, biraz farklı bir biçimde seslendirilecektir.

Hancock'un (2003) çok haklı bir şekilde vurguladığı gibi, bir öğrenme ortamındaki öğrencilerin umutsuzca bir çeşit değerlendirme, danışmanlık ve derinlemesine düşünmeye ihtiyaç duyduklarında yardıma başvurdukları öğretmenlerdir. Öğretmenler ayrıca, öğrencilerinin İngilizce sayıları ve kelimeleri doğru şekilde telaffuz etme konusunda gelişmiş bir beceri geliştirmelerinde kritik bir rol oynamaktadır. Öğretmenlerin ancak bildiklerini veya içselleştirdiklerini öğretebilecekleri de bir gerçekliktir. Tam da bu nedenle öğretmenlerin, öğrencilerine daha anlaşılır seslendirmeler yapabilmeyi öğretirken olabildiğince iyi modeller olduklarından emin olmaları gerekir. Aksi takdirde, Gilbert (2005) 'in belirttiği gibi, "... yanlış ritimle ne kadar çok pratik yaparsanız, hatalarınız o kadar çok kalıcı hale gelir", dediği gibi, düzeltilmesi nispeten kolay olan bir problemi daha sonraki bir aşamada değiştirmek ya da iyileştirmek tamamen imkansız değilse de çok daha zor hale getirecektir.

**APPENDIX 1****PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE: LIST OF NUMBERS AND WORDS (FOR ARTICULATION):**

1. Academic (noun / adjective)
2. Acid (noun)
3. Alice (noun)
4. American (noun)
5. Analysis (noun)
6. Ancient (adjective)
7. Asian (noun/ adjective)
8. Atmosphere (noun)
9. Attack (verb/ noun)
10. Average (noun/ adjective)
11. Balance (verb/ noun)
12. Battery (noun)
13. Biology (noun)
14. Build (verb)
15. Business (noun)
16. Camera (noun)
17. Campus (noun)
18. Canada (noun)
19. Capacity (noun)
20. Capital (noun)
21. Captain (noun)
22. Career (noun)
23. Carrier (noun)
24. Category (noun)
25. Catholic (noun/ adjective)
26. Champion (noun)
27. Character (noun)
28. Chemistry (noun)
29. Content (noun)
30. Demonstrable (adjective)
31. Doubt (noun)
32. Environment (noun)
33. Foreign (adjective)
34. Guarantee (verb/ noun)
35. Hotel (noun)
36. Israel (noun)
37. Internet (noun)
38. Knives (noun plural)
39. Lebanon (noun)
40. Magnetic (adjective)
41. Multi-cultural (adjective)
42. Opportunities (noun plural)
43. Receipt (noun)
44. Ritual (noun)
45. Service (verb/ noun)
46. Strategy (noun)
47. Suspect (verb)
48. Sweat shirt (noun)
49. Video (noun)
50. Wi Fi (noun)

SOURCE: <https://www.ef.com/ca/english-resources/english-vocabulary/top-3000-words/>