

**Keywords**

Preservice English teachers, pronunciation, teacher cognition, attitude, belief

**Anahtar Sözcükler**

Öğretmen adayları, sesletim, öğretmen bilişi, tutum, inanış

Uzun, T. (2022). Preservice English teachers' attitudes and beliefs about learning and teaching pronunciation. *Dil Dergisi*, 173 (2). 22-42.

## PRESERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

### ADAY İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN SESLETİM ÖĞRENME VE ÖĞRETMEME YÖNELİK TUTUM VE İNANIŞLARI

• Tarık UZUN 

Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu, [uzuntarik@yahoo.com](mailto:uzuntarik@yahoo.com)

**Abstract**

Language teachers' beliefs and attitudes about various aspects of teaching are shaped during teacher education. Investigating preservice English teachers' (PrETs) perspectives on certain areas can be useful in better understanding the dynamics of teacher education and taking further actions on teachers' developmental processes. This study examines PrETs' beliefs and attitudes towards learning and teaching pronunciation in Turkey. With a descriptive methodology, a 40-item questionnaire based on Sardegna and Kusey (2014) and Seyedabadi et al., (2014) was presented to PrETs (N=150) enrolled in the English Language Teaching (ELT) programs of three state universities in Turkey. The results of the study indicate that PrETs consider pronunciation an essential part of language learning; yet they need further training on how to teach pronunciation in class. PrETs commonly considered native-like pronunciation an ideal goal for themselves, which implies a tendency to associate an English teacher's pronunciation with perfection. The results also suggest a reconsideration of the content of pronunciation classes in ELT programs.

**Öz**

Dil öğretmenlerinin öğretimin çeşitli yönleriyle ilgili birçok tutum ve inanışı, öğretmen eğitimi sırasında şekillenmektedir. Bu nedenle, İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının belirli alanlardaki bakış açılarının incelendiği araştırmalar, öğretmen yetiştirme süreçlerine ait dinamiklerin daha iyi anlaşılması ve öğretmenlerin gelişimleri bakımından yararlıdır. Bu çalışma, İngilizce öğretmeni adaylarının sesletim öğrenme ve öğretmeye yönelik inanış ve tutumlarını incelemektedir. Bu kapsamda betimsel araştırma yöntemi benimsenerek, Türkiye'deki üç devlet üniversitesinin İngilizce Öğretmenliği programlarında öğrenimlerini sürdüren öğretmen adaylarına (N=150), Sardegna ve Kusey (2014) ile Seyedabadi vd. (2014) esas alınarak hazırlanmış 40 maddelik bir anket sunulmuştur. Çalışmanın sonuçları, öğretmen adaylarının sesletimi dil öğrenmenin önemli bir parçası olarak gördüklerini ancak sınıf ortamında nasıl öğretecekleri konusunda daha fazla eğitime gereksinim duyduklarını göstermektedir. İngilizce öğretmeni adaylarının yaygın olarak, anadili düzeyindeki bir sesletimi kendileri için ideal bir hedef olarak gördükleri anlaşılmaktadır. Bu sonuç, katılımcıların İngilizce öğretmenlerinin sesletimlerini mükemmellekle özdeşleştirme eğilimlerini ortaya koymaktadır. Sonuçlar ayrıca, İngilizce Öğretmenliği programlarındaki sesletim ders içeriklerinin yeniden gözden geçirilmesi gerekliliğine işaret etmektedir.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is an essential component of foreign language learning and teaching mainly due to its role in successful communication. Levis (2018) underlines that it is of utmost importance for language learners in terms of intelligibility, in other words, their ability to understand others and making their speech understood. In addition, pronunciation has strong ties with identity. According to Seidlhofer (2001), *“as individuals, we project our identity through the way we speak, and also indicate our membership of particular communities”* (p. 56).

Learners might set varied learning goals for pronunciation depending on factors including their motivations, future plans, professional orientations, and so forth. Teachers, on the other hand, might have several considerations regarding pronunciation teaching including time constraints (when and why to teach), method (how to teach: instructional considerations and methodological uncertainties), and focus (what to teach; pedagogical priorities) (Darcy, 2018). In addition, teachers' native or non-native speaker status can lead to different challenges (Levis et al., 2016). All such factors can potentially shape pedagogical decisions and teacher education programs (i.e., ELT programs) are no exceptions to above-mentioned concerns. The roles of such elements for active teachers and preservice teachers are generally investigated within language teacher cognition research, the details of which are discussed below in relation to pronunciation teaching.

### 1.1. Language Teacher Cognition Research

Enquiries into teachers' subject matter knowledge, perspectives, beliefs, and attitudes have attracted the attention of researchers and practitioners in different educational contexts. Specifically handled within the scope of language education in this present study, this area of investigation, *language teacher cognition research*, focuses on *“what teachers think, know and believe and the relationships of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the language teaching classroom”* (Borg, 2003, p. 81).

Teacher cognition research also relates to teachers' instructional procedures as well as the processes in teacher education (Borg, 2006). As underlined by Richards (2008), teacher cognition research has reflections into teacher education in terms of issues like teacher decision making, teachers' theories of teaching, and their problem-solving and improvisational skills regarding their experiences. In this regard, teacher education programs are a crucial phase in the development of future English teachers' cognitions.

## 1.2. Language Teacher Cognition and Pronunciation Teaching

Pronunciation has recently found itself a place in teacher cognition research. This is particularly valuable as it comes with several benefits including the prospect of reshaping teacher education programs with research-based conclusions and further investigate teachers' pronunciation cognitions and practices (Baker & Murphy, 2011). In this regard, several studies that explored language teachers' cognitions in relation to pronunciation teaching reported similar results which, in general, highlighted teachers' limited pedagogical practices mainly referring to the use of traditional methods (Baker, 2013; Buss, 2013; Hişmanoğlu and Hişmanoğlu, 2010; Nguyen, & Newton, 2020; Tergujeff, 2012; Yağız, 2018) and a lack of sufficient training or confidence on how to teach pronunciation (Bai & Yuan, 2019; Breitreutz et al., 2001; Burgess & Spencer, 2000; Henderson et al., 2012; Macdonald, 2002; Nguyen, & Newton, 2020).

To date, the effectiveness of phonology and pronunciation courses in teacher education programs has been explored in some studies. For instance, Burgess and Spencer (1999) looked into the comparative roles of pronunciation teaching and phonology studies in teacher education. The researchers underlined that training prospective teachers with a focus on phonology leads to a lack of instructional strategies; therefore, phonology should not be isolated from approaches to teaching pronunciation in these programs. In another study, Burri (2015) examined Australian native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) student teachers' cognition development on pronunciation. Having received a pronunciation pedagogy course as part of the study, participants experienced a shift from focusing on segmentals (i.e., vowels and consonants) in pronunciation teaching to adopting a more balanced approach equally favoring suprasegmentals (i.e., stress, rhythm, thought groups, connected speech) in teaching. With an aim to investigate PrETs' cognitions about pronunciation teaching, Buss (2017) also offered a phonology and pronunciation teaching course to control and experiment groups consisting of NS and NNS participants at a Canadian university. The findings in her study revealed that receiving such a training influenced PrETs' opinions about explicit pronunciation teaching positively by increasing their confidence in their ability to teach at the same time. In their longitudinal study, Burri and Baker (2020) also noted considerable improvements in L2 teachers' cognitions after receiving a pronunciation course. The researchers observed a gradual development in a time span of 3,5 years.

English teachers' and PrETs' beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about pronunciation have been examined in Turkish higher education context as well. For example, Hişmanoğlu and Hişmanoğlu (2010) analyzed the pronunciation teaching techniques of language teachers based in five universities in Northern Cyprus. It was found that teachers generally preferred traditional teaching techniques including dictation and reading aloud in their classes. In another study,

Yağız (2018) analyzed EFL teachers' cognitions and classroom practices regarding pronunciation. Despite a high level of self-confidence in their knowledge about English pronunciation, L2 teachers in Turkey appeared to lack sufficient pedagogical subject matter knowledge and their practices were limited to segmental instruction and transcription activities. In their qualitative study with PrETs enrolled in an ELT training program, Hişmanoğlu and Hişmanoğlu (2013) explored PrETs' awareness into the importance of pronunciation in language teaching. The researchers offered PrETs a tailored pronunciation course which they found useful in raising awareness on explicit pronunciation teaching. However, PrETs demanded the integration of information technologies into the classes. In their survey study, Varol and Bayyurt (2017) examined PrETs' perceptions of NSs and NNSs. The findings demonstrated that PrETs regarded native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) as more suitable in teaching speaking, pronunciation, and culture while non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) were considered a better alternative for grammar teaching and beginner level instruction. Overall, the main takeaway in these studies is the need for a rethinking and planning of pronunciation instruction in teacher education programs.

### 1.3. The State of Pronunciation Instruction in Turkish Teacher Education Context

Graduates of ELT programs can teach English in state and private schools at all levels in Turkey. Graduates of other language-related programs (i.e., Linguistics, English Language and Literature, American Culture and Literature, Translation and Interpretation) can also work as English teachers if they have completed a teacher training program as well. ELT students receive two pronunciation courses in the first year of their four-year curriculum<sup>1</sup> the scope and content of which has been defined by Higher Education Council (HEC)<sup>2</sup> in Turkey. Labelled as *Listening and Pronunciation I* and *II*, the tentative course contents as described by HEC do not address any topics regarding pronunciation teaching, but instead focus on topics like listening sub-skills, segmentals and suprasegmentals, transcriptions, and accents in English. Despite this suggested content, instructors delivering academic courses in higher education are allowed to design their own course contents and syllabi.

It was observed that most ELT programs followed HEC's suggested curriculum including the Listening and Pronunciation I and II courses. In the 2020-2021 academic year, HEC granted these programs the freedom to design their own curricula and courses. In other words, ELT programs did not have to strictly follow the above-mentioned curriculum any longer. Yet, as of the date

1 [https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/egitim\\_ogretim\\_dairesi/Yeni-Ogretmen-Yetistirme-Lisans-Programlari/Ingilizce\\_Ogretmenligi\\_Lisans\\_Programi.pdf](https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/egitim_ogretim_dairesi/Yeni-Ogretmen-Yetistirme-Lisans-Programlari/Ingilizce_Ogretmenligi_Lisans_Programi.pdf)

2 TR: Yükseköğretim Kurulu

when this paper was being written, there was not sufficient information about whether ELT programs chose to create new curricula or stick with the existing one offered by HEC. The three universities in which this study was conducted offer Listening and Pronunciation I and II courses to their undergrad students.

This survey study is aimed at investigating PrETs' attitudes and beliefs about learning and teaching pronunciation in Turkey. The study set out to answer the following research questions:

1. What are PrETs' beliefs and attitudes towards learning pronunciation in relation to language skills and affective dimensions?
2. What are PrETs' cognitions about teaching pronunciation in relation to approaches to teaching pronunciation, teachers, and teacher education?
3. What are PrETs' attitudes towards nativelike vs. intelligible pronunciation, native and foreign accents of English, and their self-efficacy beliefs regarding these aspects?

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1. Data Collection and Participants

This descriptive study was conducted at the ELT Programs of three state universities in Turkey (University A, B, and C from here onwards). Data were collected from students enrolled in these programs (N=150) with the help of a survey. Print forms were used in data collection and all the PrETs participated in the study on a voluntary basis. Participants first responded to demographic questions, and once complete, they continued with the questionnaire items. Each participant completed the questionnaire in 10 to 15 minutes and did not report any inconvenience regarding the individual items or the whole questionnaire itself. A brief overview of participant demographics is presented in Table 1:

**Table 1.** Participant Demographics (f) (N=150)

University	Gender		Year			Age Group		Total
	Female	Male	2	3	4	17-25	26-35	
A	32	19	15	15	21	49	2	51
B	34	16	9	24	17	49	1	50
C	36	13	13	16	20	47	2	49
<b>Total</b>								150



As Table 1 demonstrates, second, third, and fourth-year students were recruited for this study. First year students were not included in the sample as Listening and Pronunciation I and II, the only dedicated pronunciation courses in the program, were offered in the first year. Therefore, the sample consisted of PrETs who have taken these courses. None of the participants reported a long-term living experience abroad (i.e., more than six months). All the participants were the native speakers of Turkish and had learned English in Turkey as a foreign language.

## 2.2. Instrument

The five-point likert type questionnaire used in this study (5 referring to “*I strongly agree*” and 1 to “*I strongly disagree*”) was mainly adapted from two scales. In this instrument, 13 items were adapted from Sardegna and Kusey (2014), and 13 others were taken from Seyedabadi et al. (2014) with permissions from the owners. Besides these, 14 additional items were written by the researcher, taking the goals of the study into consideration. The questionnaire contained items that aimed to explore PrETs’ views about the importance of learning and teaching pronunciation, pronunciation and language skills, pronunciation and affective dimensions (i.e., self-confidence, anxiety, willingness to communicate), attitudes towards nativeness and intelligibility as well as native and foreign accents, and approaches to teaching pronunciation and teacher education.

Data were collected in Turkish. To this end, the items adapted from the two existing scales were translated into Turkish by the researcher and a second researcher experienced in the field of applied linguistics and language teaching. The two versions were then compared, and the final version was reached. The remaining 14 items were originally written in Turkish. As a result, the final form of the 40-item questionnaire was reached.

Since the results would be reported in English in this paper, the translated English items were returned to their original forms. The same translation procedure was followed this time for the items written in Turkish. Two researchers translated the items from Turkish into English separately, and the translated versions were compared to reach their final versions.

## 2.3. The Pilot Study

The questionnaire was piloted with 147 participants at a state university in Turkey (different from the ones where the actual study took place) (Uzun & Ay, 2018). The participants did not report any inconvenience about the data collection procedures or any individual items. The Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency score of the instrument was found .716, which is considered a value with a statistically acceptable level of reliability (George & Malley, 2003; Ursachi et al., 2015). Once the piloting phase was complete, the actual study was initiated.

#### **2.4. Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed with SPSS data analysis software via descriptive statistics. Based on the research questions and aims of the study, only the percentages of participants' responses were analyzed. Responses to the five-point likert type items in the questionnaire were grouped into three categories as *disagree (responses as 1 and 2 have been combined)*, *neither agree nor disagree (responses as 3)*, and *agree (responses as 4 and 5 have been combined)*.

The study did not set out to examine correlations between any variables, but instead get an overall understanding of PrETs' beliefs and attitudes into learning and teaching English pronunciation. Therefore, no other analyses were conducted within the scope of this study.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results will be reported in the following sections. The first deals with PrETs' attitudes towards learning pronunciation and the second teaching pronunciation. The third section looks into their attitudes towards nativeness and intelligibility as well as native and foreign accents in English, and their self-efficacy beliefs with regard to these aspects.

#### **3.1. Attitudes towards Learning Pronunciation**

In this section, PrETs' perspectives on pronunciation in general will be presented based on their responses to the questionnaire. Then, the ties between language skills and affective dimensions will be handled.

##### **3.1.1. PrETs' General Views about Pronunciation**

The results indicate that PrETs generally consider pronunciation an essential component for learners if not the most important (see Table 2). According to most PrETs, pronunciation is an integral part of English language learning while they are not as certain in naming it as the most important aspect (items 1 and 8). A majority of PrETs support the idea that one can improve their skills in pronunciation by studying and many of them believe that beginning levels are the most appropriate time for this (items 20 and 23). It is also evident that they tend to consider technology as a facilitating factor in learning pronunciation. This shows their awareness into the potentials of technology integration into pronunciation to a certain extent (item 37).

**Table 2.** General Views about Pronunciation

Percentages					
Item	Statements	SD*	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree
1	Pronunciation is the inseparable part of English language learning.	.667	3.3	0	96.6
8	Learning to pronounce well is the most important part of learning a language.	1.156	28.7	22.7	48.6
20	Correct pronunciation can be learned by studying.	.730	3.3	9.3	87.3
23	Pronunciation only needs to be studied in the beginning levels. It is not necessary to study pronunciation in higher levels.	.805	4	17.3	78.6
37	The developing technology made it easier to learn pronunciation.	.628	1.3	3.3	95.4

\*SD: Standard Deviation (applies to the following tables)

### 3.1.2. Pronunciation and Language Skills

In general, PrETs acknowledge the connections between pronunciation and other language skills (i.e., speaking, listening, and reading). Of these three skills, listening is in closest contact with pronunciation reaching an agreement percentage of almost 84%. PrETs also acknowledge the role of pronunciation on speaking skill and reading speed (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Pronunciation and Language Skills

Percentages					
Item	Statements	SD*	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree
3	Pronunciation influences the speaking skill directly.	.965	8.6	14.7	76.7
4	Pronunciation has a mutual effect on listening skill.	.836	6	10	84
20	Fluent pronunciation increases reading speed.	.882	6.6	16	79.3



### 3.1.3. Pronunciation and Affective Dimensions

The results obtained in three items which explore the links between pronunciation and anxiety, self-confidence, and willingness to communicate mainly show agreements among PrETs. As presented in Table 4, PrETs mostly believe that correct pronunciation reduces foreign language anxiety while increasing their self-confidence at the same time (items 6 and 9). The agreement in item 9 is particularly noteworthy as none of the participants disagreed with it, which highlights the connection between pronunciation and self-confidence. A possible relationship between a learner's poor pronunciation performance and his/her willingness to communicate, as stated in item 15, is rated somewhat lower still showing a clear agreement.

**Table 4.** Pronunciation and Affective Dimensions

Item	Statements	Percentages			
		SD	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree
6	Accurate pronunciation reduces English learner's anxiety.	.919	4	25.3	70.7
9	Accurate pronunciation raises English language learners' degree of self-confidence.	.61	0	6	94
15	An English language learner's poor pronunciation influences his/her willingness to communicate.	.817	5.4	18	76.7

### 3.2. Attitudes towards Teaching Pronunciation

PrETs' attitudes towards teaching pronunciation are handled in two broad categories within the questionnaire. The first category analyzes their views about teaching pronunciation. The second focuses on PrETs' views about English teachers' competences in teaching pronunciation and the role of a teacher's L1 backgrounds (teachers' NS or NNS status).

#### 3.2.1. General Views about Teaching Pronunciation

The findings in this category suggest that PrETs mainly consider pronunciation an important aspect in teaching (items 32 and 39) (see Table 5). This result is in line with their positive attitudes

towards learning pronunciation. However, fewer PrETs feel prepared to teach pronunciation to their future students. While 52% of all PrETs agree that they know how to teach pronunciation, 36% remain undecided and 12% disagree (item 36). This result is in line with the findings obtained in items 33 and 40 which explore PrETs' overall perspectives about teaching pronunciation as to whether it should be taught explicitly or learned implicitly without explicit instruction. Around half of the PrETs are undecided (47.3%) while many others agree with this proposition and favor explicit instruction (31,3%). In item 40, most PrETs are either unsure or disagree with the effectiveness of learning through inferencing with only 12% of the participants supporting this perspective. The results imply that PrETs generally consider pronunciation an important aspect in teaching, yet they are not as certain about how to teach it in actual classroom settings.

**Table 5.** Views about Teaching Pronunciation

Item	Statements	Percentages			
		SD	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree
32	In my opinion, pronunciation is an area that a teacher must focus on in his/her class.	.758	3.3	7.3	89.3
33	Pronunciation must be taught explicitly. Rules must be given directly.	1.03	21.3	47.3	31.3
36	I know how to teach pronunciation to my students in the future.	.88	12	36	52
39	I believe more emphasis should be given to proper pronunciation in class.	.862	6	9.3	88.7
40	It is not necessary to teach pronunciation separately; it is learned implicitly, through inferencing.	.918	49.3	38.7	12

### 3.2.2. Views about Teachers and Teacher Education

As can be seen in Table 6, PrETs strongly believe that English teachers need to have good pronunciation. In line with this finding, they also support the idea that a dedicated course to teach pronunciation should be offered in ELT programs (items 18 and 30). Around two thirds of them (74.6%) would be motivated to take an additional elective course on pronunciation

(item 38) if such a course were offered in ELT programs. These results could be considered as supporting evidence for PrETs' perceived needs for additional training on pronunciation.

On the other hand, they generally think that NESTs are better suited to teach pronunciation with 52% of them supporting this proposition (item 26). At the same time, most PrETs do not categorically refuse the idea that NNESTs are not capable of teaching pronunciation (item 34). In this regard, PrETs seem to consider pronunciation teaching an area that requires a higher-level proficiency in the target language and they tend not to have a complete confidence in doing it. This result highlights the importance of equipping PrETs with necessary methods and techniques to bring pronunciation into their future classes, which will, presumably, increase their confidence as prospective English teachers as well.

**Table 6.** Views about Pronunciation Teachers

Item	Statements	Percentages			
		SD	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree
18	People who want to teach English must have good pronunciation.	.683	2	0.7	97.3
26	English pronunciation must be taught by English native speaker teachers.	1.241	23.4	24.7	52
30	In English Language Teaching programs, there must be a course that focuses on how to teach pronunciation.	.83	3.3	6	90.6
34	I don't think that a non-native English teacher can teach English pronunciation.	.972	62.6	27.3	10
38	If there were an elective pronunciation class in addition to the compulsory ones in my department, I would take it.	1.14	10	15.3	74.6

### 3.3. PrETs' Attitudes and Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Native-like and Intelligible Pronunciation Goals, and Foreign Accents

In this final section, PrETs' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs regarding nativeness and intelligibility goals as well as foreign accents in English will be reported.

#### 3.3.1. Nativeness vs. Intelligibility

PrETs' attitudes towards nativeness and intelligibility goals in pronunciation demonstrate that most of them consider a native-like accent a suitable goal for learners. The answers are somewhat mixed when it comes to the sufficiency of an intelligible pronunciation, however (see Table 7). While 80.6% of the PrETs agree that pronunciation is learned to achieve a native-like accent, this percentage drops to 48% in their views about the adequacy of an intelligible pronunciation for language learners. Results are more balanced in item 17 as similar numbers of PrETs either agreed or disagreed with the argument that learners cannot acquire a native-like pronunciation after a certain age. These results indicate that PrETs are in need of awareness-raising activities in teacher education programs in terms of nativeness, intelligibility, and other related concepts.

**Table 7.** Attitudes towards Nativeness and Intelligibility

Item	Statements	Percentages			
		SD	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree
2	The aim of learning English pronunciation is to achieve a native-like accent.	.995	10.7	8.7	80.6
17	If one starts to learn a foreign language after a certain age, she/he cannot reach a native speaker level of pronunciation.	1.14	33.4	24	42.6
35	Intelligible pronunciation will be adequate for English language learners.	1.05	20.7	31.3	48

#### 3.3.2. Personal Goals in Pronunciation

Similar to their views of nativeness and intelligibility, PrETs tend to equate good pronunciation with a native-like proficiency in speaking and almost all of them are highly positive about the idea of having a good pronunciation and achieving a native-like accent as can be seen in Table

8 (items 12, 21, and 25). They also regard pronunciation as an important subskill which should be improved, and this is evident in their highly rated goals. Along with these, PrETs generally acknowledge the role of improving pronunciation in English for the sake of achieving a better communication (item 31).

**Table 8.** Personal Goals in Pronunciation

Item	Statements	Percentages			
		SD	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree
12	Achieving a near native-like fluency (less pausing, not monotonous) is one of my goals in language learning.	.718	2	5.3	92.6
21	I would like to be able to speak English with a native speaker's accent.	.785	3.4	6.7	90
25	I would like to have a good pronunciation.	.671	2.7	2	95.3
31	I think I will be able to communicate better if I improve my pronunciation in English.	.819	6	10	94

### 3.3.3. Self-Efficacy Beliefs

PrETs tend to believe that their speech will be intelligible when they talk (item 13); however, many of them are still not fully satisfied with their performance in pronunciation (item 22) (see Table 9). Presumably, they attach additional importance to their performance in spoken English and pronunciation due to their developing identities as future English teachers, which, apparently, leads to an uncertainty about their own skills. This inference can be verified with the increased rates of undecided participants in items 28 and 29. PrETs appear to associate the idea of being *fully understood* by others with perfection or an enhanced performance in pronunciation (item 29). Besides this, around 40% of PrETs either disagree with or remain unsure about being a good pronunciation model for students (item 28), which implies that they do not feel as confident when their developing teacher identities come to play.

**Table 9.** Self-Efficacy Beliefs of PrETs

Item	Statements	Percentages			
		SD	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree
13	I feel confident that my pronunciation will be understood when I talk.	.725	1.4	15.3	83.3
22	I am content with my pronunciation.	.875	10.7	32	57.3
28	I think I will be a good pronunciation model for my students in the future.	.805	6.7	32.7	60.7
29	I am confident that a foreigner I talk to will understand everything I say.	.864	9.4	29.3	61.3

### 3.3.4. Native and Foreign Accents

PrETs' attitudes towards native and foreign accents reveal mixed results mainly indicating that many PrETs do not have a complete understanding of native and foreign accents in English and their relevance to communication (see Table 10). Most of them agree that American or British standards, in other words native accents, are the ideal models of a beautiful pronunciation (65.3%). At the same time, almost half of the PrETs (47.3%) find all accents in English acceptable, this time with an increased rate of undecided participants (item 14) (34.7%). Considering their preferences of British or American accent, the responses are quite close to each other with British English being slightly more popular (items 10 and 11). Also, their responses to item 27 demonstrate that more than half of the PrETs know which accent they speak with (58%) while 32,7% of them cannot give a proper answer to that.

As for the role of the social aspect of foreign accents in English, PrETs are generally on the positive side without considering their accents to pose a threat for their social interactions. Their responses to item 24 reveal that 66% of them disagree with the idea that their accent will have a detrimental effect on making new friends. Also, more than half of the PrETs (56%) find communications with NNSs equally easy compared to the interactions with NSs (see item 19). Their responses to item 16, however, are mixed again as the agreement and disagreement percentages are close. Almost half of the PrETs seem to be comfortable with their foreign accent in English, yet 33,3% of them do not want their accent to be noticeable in their speech.



**Table 10.** Attitudes towards Native and Foreign Accents

Item	Statements	Percentages			
		SD	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree
7	In my opinion, a beautiful pronunciation is near to American or British standards.	1.038	14.7	20	65.3
10	Among different accents of English, I love American English the most.	1.35	38	20	42
11	Among different accents of English, I love British English the most.	1.3	26.6	19.3	54
14	In my opinion, all English accents are acceptable. For example, correct English with Indian accent.	1.04	18	34.7	47.3
16	My goal is for people not to recognize my nationality because of my accent.	1.29	33.3	18.7	48
19	For me, it is easier to communicate with a native English speaker than a nonnative speaker.	1.11	22	22	56
24	I think I would have more friends if my accent were closer to an English accent.	1.08	66	19.3	14.6
27	I am aware of which English accent I am speaking with (i. e. British, American, Australian).	.936	9.3	32.7	58

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This survey study investigated PrETs' attitudes and beliefs towards learning and teaching pronunciation in Turkish higher education context. PrETs' self-efficacy beliefs, preferences, and goals related to pronunciation were also explored. With its descriptive nature, the study presented Turkish PrETs' perspectives as both experienced language learners and future English teachers whose teacher identities were developing. The results mostly confirm the findings obtained and presented in Uzun and Ay (2018), the published pilot study of this research.

Overall, PrETs demonstrate a considerable degree of awareness into the importance of pronunciation in learning and teaching. Although they generally do not name pronunciation as the most important aspect of language learning and teaching, they acknowledge its ties with other language skills (especially listening), affective dimensions (mostly self-confidence), and a more successful communication. The results support the findings of other studies from Turkish educational context which also reported PrETs' positive attitudes towards pronunciation (Hişmanoğlu, 2012; Çakır & Baytar, 2014).

PrETs are usually confident about producing intelligible speech in English; however, their confidence in themselves considerably drops when they question whether all their words will be understood by others. They appear to hold a strong belief that language teachers need to aim for perfection in pronunciation, which is usually associated with a native-like pronunciation. Most PrETs favor native speaker standards as an ideal target for learners associating the idea of a good pronunciation with a native-like accent, which is in line with some earlier research (Coşkun, 2011; Hişmanoğlu & Hişmanoğlu, 2013; Uzun & Ay, 2018). However, PrETs' perspectives into why they hold this opinion is still open for further investigations. According to Jenkins (2005), factors like past classroom or social experiences as well as assessments of their future success might encourage teachers to pursue NS English standards. As for this particular study, it seems likely that PrETs' developing identities of English teachers and the questions in their minds regarding their future success in teaching might be encouraging them to seek perfection, which equals to NS norms in their views.

On the other hand, as also mentioned in several other studies (Levis & McCrocklin, 2018; Llurda, 2009; Tang, 1997), an expectation of native-like pronunciation might be putting pressure on PrETs since they tend to feel an inadequacy compared to NESTs in teaching pronunciation. More PrETs seem to consider NESTs more eligible for teaching pronunciation, which confirms Varol and Bayyurt's (2017) finding in their study with Turkish PrETs. This result, along with others, highlight the necessity of a perspective change in terms of PrETs' attitudes towards nativeness and intelligibility goals, which could be discussed more explicitly in teacher training programs. A similar concern was raised by Nagle et al. (2018) having seen that many teachers in their research appeared to uphold native speaker models over intelligibility. The researchers underline that teacher training and professional development programs should address research-informed pedagogical practices and successful communication instead of nativelikeness. To this end, it is important for PrETs to know that NESTs and NNESTs can teach pronunciation equally well and inspire their students as long as they are qualified to do it. (Levis et al., 2016; Levis & McCrocklin, 2018).

PrETs' attitudes towards NS and NNS accents were also investigated with several items in this study. The results indicate that less than half of the PrETs find all accents in English acceptable while preferring British English over American English with a narrow difference. However, this result is not directly comparable to the findings in other studies as several possible variables might be playing roles in such preferences in different contexts. For instance, in her study with adult ESL learners in the United States and New Zealand, Kang (2010) reported that more learners were attached to North American English as a model. In Henderson et al. (2012), teachers generally preferred to use Received Pronunciation (RP) while teachers also thought their students' preference was mostly General American (GA). In another study, Evans and Imai (2011) found that Japanese learners of English perceived British English as a more socially attractive variety while American English as the original and most correct one.

The results also highlight PrETs' needs and interests in further training on how to teach pronunciation. More PrETs favor explicit pronunciation teaching in classes rather than leaving the control of the learning to learners; however, they feel the need to learn more about pronunciation instruction, which is evident in their interests in taking must and elective pronunciation courses in ELT programs. Such courses can help shape their pedagogical knowledge and increase their confidence in pronunciation instruction. Several studies also report that carefully planned and implemented courses can prove to be useful in equipping PrETs with necessary methods and techniques to teach pronunciation in classroom settings (Burgess and Spencer, 1999; Burri, 2015; Burri and Baker, 2020; Buss, 2017).

An implication of this study could be the necessity to redesign Listening and Pronunciation courses offered in ELT programs. Offered as a single or two consecutive courses, they should be presented in a way to increase PrETs' awareness and knowledge in both learning and teaching pronunciation. To this end, the courses should initially focus on phonological features to help PrETs develop an awareness on segmental and suprasegmental speech features in English with a particular focus on their communicative values. Such courses should also include varied perception and production activities to help PrETs improve their own skills in pronunciation. With the help of such additional practice, the role of pronunciation in meaning-making processes and communication could be better realized by PrETs. The course content should also address methods, techniques, resources, and useful tips applicable in pronunciation teaching classes with learners of different age groups. PrETs could also be asked to prepare sample materials, lesson plans, and teach pronunciation features to their peers. It is important that they should be given proper feedback based on their performances. Their understanding and actual practices of teaching pronunciation could be shaped more effectively this way.

Listening and Pronunciation courses should also cover discussions on nativeness, intelligibility, as well as native and foreign accents in English to raise PrETs' awareness on the international status of English. Several researchers underline that intelligibility is a more appropriate goal than nativeness in L2 pronunciation generally for the sake of achieving a successful communication rather than aiming for native accents (e.g., Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994; Goodwin, 2013; Kenworthy, 1987; Levis, 2005, 2020; Seidlhofer, 2011). According to Levis and Sönsaat (2020), PrETs should be taught that different pronunciation models exist in English, and they should be encouraged to use their own variety as the model in instruction. As the results of this study also suggest, PrETs should be given the opportunities to observe the relevance of such native and non-native accents in communication settings. Audio and video recordings or useful internet resources and tools (e.g., Youglish, Speech Accent Archive) could particularly serve this purpose.

The limitations of the study are mainly centered around methodological decisions. This study was aimed at exploring Turkish PrETs' beliefs and attitudes towards various aspects of learning and teaching pronunciation. Therefore, it was designed as a survey study with a quantitative nature in which students enrolled in ELT programs in Turkey were invited to participate. Along with several advantages, this approach in data collection fell short addressing individual perspectives of PrETs. Also, no certain variables were taken into consideration in the analyses of the data. Based on the research questions, data were also treated descriptively without employing any other tests to explore correlations. Therefore, results should be handled cautiously by taking these limitations into consideration. Further studies might employ deeper analyses into PrETs' attitudes toward learning and teaching as well as pronunciation models in English particularly within Turkish higher education. Efforts to design courses and curricula for pronunciation classes in ELT programs should also be encouraged.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank Dr. Sıla Ay, Dr. Başak Ümit Bozkurt, Dr. Nazlı Ceren Işıklıgil, and Dilan Bayram Akçelik for their invaluable support and contributions to this study.

#### **ETHICAL DECLARATION**

The study was ethically approved by Ankara University Ethics Committee on 13.02.2017 with the decision ID 35.

## REFERENCES

- Bai, B., & Yuan, R. (2018). EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about pronunciation teaching. *ELT Journal*, 73(2), 134-143.
- Baker, A. (2013). Exploring teachers' knowledge of second language pronunciation techniques: Teacher cognitions, observed classroom practices, and student perceptions. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48(1), 136-163.
- Baker, A. A. & Murphy, J. (2011). Knowledge base of pronunciation teaching: Staking out the territory. *TESL Canada Journal*, 28(2), 29-50.
- Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching*, 36(2), 81-109.
- Borg, S. (2006). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Breitkreutz, J. A., Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. (2001). Pronunciation teaching practices in Canada. *TESL Canada Journal*, 19(1), 51-61.
- Burgess, J., Spencer, S. (2000). Phonology and pronunciation in integrated language teaching and teacher education. *System*, 28, 191-215.
- Burri, M. (2015). Student teachers' cognition about L2 pronunciation instruction: A case study. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(10), 66-87.
- Burri, M, Baker, A. (2020). "A big influence on my teaching career and my life": A longitudinal study of learning to teach English pronunciation. *TESL-EJ*, 23(4), 1-24.
- Buss, L. (2013). Pronunciation from the perspective of pre-service EFL teachers: An analysis of internship reports. In J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.). *Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference* (pp. 255-264). Iowa State University.
- Buss, L. (2017). The role of training in shaping pre-service teacher cognition related to L2 pronunciation. *Ilha Do Desterro*, 70(3), 201-226.
- Coşkun, A. (2011). Future English teachers' attitudes towards EIL pronunciation. *Journal of English as an International Language*, 6(2), 46-68.
- Çakır, İ., Baytar, B. (2014). Foreign language learners' views on the importance of learning the target language pronunciation. *Journal of Language and Linguistics Studies*, 10(1), 99-110.
- Dalton, C., & Seidlhofer, B. (1994). *Pronunciation*. Oxford University Press.
- Darcy, I. (2018). Powerful and effective pronunciation: How can we achieve it? *The CATESOL Journal* 30(1), 13-45.
- English Language Teaching Undergraduate Program, nd. *English language teaching undergraduate program of Turkish Higher Education Council* (İngilizce Öğretmenliği Lisans Programı). Retrieved from [https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/egitim\\_ogretim\\_dairesi/Yeni-Ogretmen-Yetistirme-Lisans-Programlari/Ingilizce\\_Ogretmenligi\\_Lisans\\_Programi.pdf](https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/egitim_ogretim_dairesi/Yeni-Ogretmen-Yetistirme-Lisans-Programlari/Ingilizce_Ogretmenligi_Lisans_Programi.pdf)

- Evans, B., & Imai, T. (2011). 'If we say English, that means America': Japanese students' perceptions of varieties of English. *Language Awareness, 20*(4), 315-326.
- George, D., & Mallery, P. (2003). *SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and reference. 11.0 update* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Goodwin, J. (2013). Pronunciation teaching methods and techniques. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Henderson, A., Frost, D., Tergujeff, E., Kautzsch, A., Murphy, D., Kirkova-Naskova, A., Waniek-Klimczak, E., Levey, D., Cunningham, U. & Curnick, L. (2012). The English pronunciation teaching in Europe survey: Factors inside and outside the classroom: Selected results. *Research in Language, 10*(1), 5-27.
- Hişmanoğlu, S. (2012). İngilizce öğretmeni adaylarının sesletim öğrenimine yönelik tutumları ve bireysel değişkenler ile ilişkileri. *Eğitim ve Öğretim Araştırmaları Dergisi, 1*(1), 67-76.
- Hişmanoğlu, M., & Hişmanoğlu, S. (2010). Language teachers' preferences of pronunciation teaching techniques. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2*, 983-989.
- Hişmanoğlu, M., & Hişmanoğlu, S. (2013). A qualitative report on the perceived awareness of pronunciation instruction: Increasing needs and expectations of prospective EFL teachers. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 22*(4), 507-520.
- Jenkins, J. (2005). Implementing and international approach to English pronunciation: The role of teacher attitudes and identity. *TESOL Quarterly, 39*(3), 535-543.
- Kang, O. (2010). ESL learners' attitudes toward pronunciation instruction and varieties of English. In J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 1st Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference* (pp. 105-118), Iowa State University.
- Kenworthy, J. (1987). *Teaching English pronunciation*. Longman.
- Levis, J. M. (2005). Changing contexts and shifting paradigms in pronunciation teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 39*(3), 369-377.
- Levis, J. M. (2018). *Intelligibility, oral communication, and the teaching of pronunciation*. Cambridge.
- Levis, J. M. (2020). Revisiting the intelligibility and nativeness principles. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation, 6*(3), 310-328.
- Levis, J. M., & McCrocklin, S. (2018). Reflective and effective teaching of pronunciation. In M. Zeraatpishe, A. Faravani, H. R. Kargozari, & M. Azarnoosh, M. (Eds.), *Issues in applying SLA: Theories toward reflective and effective teaching* (pp. 77-89). Brill Sense.
- Levis, J. M., & Sonsaat, S. (2020). Quality teacher education for pronunciation teaching in L2 classrooms. In Juan de Dios Martinez Agudo (Ed.) *Quality in TESOL and Teacher Education: From a Results Culture towards a Quality Culture* (pp. 213-222). Routledge.
- Levis, J. M., Sonsaat, S., Link, S., & Barriuso, T. A. (2016). Native and Nonnative teachers of L2 pronunciation: Effects on learner performance. *TESOL Quarterly, 50*(4), 894-931.



- Llurda, E. (2009). Attitudes towards English as an international language: The pervasiveness of native models among L2 users and teachers. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *English as an international language: Perspectives and pedagogical issues* (pp. 119-134). Multilingual Matters.
- Macdonald, S. (2002). Pronunciation – views and practices of reluctant teachers. *Prospect*, 17(3), 3-18.
- Nagle, C., Sachs, R., & Zarate-Sandez, G. (2018). Exploring the intersection between teachers' beliefs and research findings in pronunciation instruction. *The Modern Language Journal*, 102(3), 512-532.
- Nguyen, L. T., & Newton, J. (2020). Pronunciation teaching in Tertiary EFL classes: Vietnamese teachers' beliefs and practices. *TESL-EJ*, 24(1), 1-20.
- Richards, J. C. (2008). Second language teacher education today. *RELC Journal*, 39(2), 158-177.
- Sardegna, V. G., Lee, J., & Kusey, C. (2014). Development and validation of the learner attitudes and motivations for pronunciation (LAMP) inventory. *System*, 47, 162-175.
- Seidlhofer, B. (2001). Pronunciation. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds). *Teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 56-65). Cambridge University Press.
- Seyedabadi, S., Fatemi, A. H., & Pishghadam, R. (2014). Construction and validation of EFL learners' attitudes toward English pronunciation (LATEP): A structural equation modeling approach. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(9), 1929-1940.
- Tang, C. (1997). On the power and status of non-native ESL teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31, 577-580.
- Tergujeff, E. (2012). English pronunciation teaching: Four case studies from Finland. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 3(4), 599-607.
- Ursachi, G., Horodnic, I. A., & Zait, A. (2015). How reliable are measurement scales? External factors with indirect influence on reliability estimators. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 20, 679-686.
- Uzun, T. & Ay, S. (2018). Preservice English teachers' perspectives on pronunciation. In J. Levis (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> pronunciation in second language learning and teaching conference*, University of Utah, September, 2017 (pp. 120-128). Iowa State University.
- Yağız, O. (2018). EFL language teachers' cognitions and observed classroom practices about L2 pronunciation. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language)*, 12(2), 187-204.