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EFL Language Teachers' Cognitions and Observed Classroom Practices about L2 Pronunciation: The Context of Turkey

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Abstract: A growing number of researchers have been exploring the cognitions of second language teachers (L2) in a wide scope. The purpose of this study is to investigate English language teachers' L2 pronunciation cognitions and their classroom practices. The sample consists of 164 English teachers and academics in English language and language education. A convergent parallel mixed method design was employed in the study. The quantitative data were collected by means of a pronunciation cognition questionnaire. As for the qualitative data, one-on-one semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were conducted to obtain in-depth knowledge on L2 pronunciation cognitions and the practices of language teachers. Findings reveal that foreign language teachers are somewhat self-confident about their knowledge of English pronunciation, but they find correct pronunciation significant. However, the language educators' subject matter content knowledge of English pronunciation instruction seems to be confined to individual segments and transcription exercises. The participants also seem to need assistance to improve themselves in terms of teaching and assessment of pronunciation. Further, in classroom teaching practices, the suprasegmental features of target language were seen to be ignored considerably.

Anahtar sözcükler
İngilizce telaffuz, ikinci dilde biliş, öğretmen mesleki gelişimi

İngilizce Yabancı Dil Öğretmenlerinin Telaffuz Bilişleri ve Gözlemlenen Sınıf İçi Uygulamaları: Bir Türkiye Bağlamı

Öz: Giderek artan sayıda araştırmacı, ikinci/yabancı dil eğitimcilerinin, çeşitli konulardaki bilişsel yönlerini farklı kapsam ve ölçeklerde incelemektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı da, İngilizce dil eğitimcilerinin telaffuz konusundaki bilgi, düşünce ve yaklaşımları ile sınıf-içi uygulamalarını incelemektir. Araştırmanın örneklemini, 164 İngilizce öğretmeni ile İngiliz dili ve dil eğitimi alanındaki akademisyenler oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma deseni olarak yakınsak paralel karma yöntem kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın nicel verileri, telaffuz biliş anketi yoluyla elde edilmiş, konu ile ilgili derinlemesine fikir sahibi olmak içinse, birebir yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve sınıf içi gözlem süreçleri kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, yabancı dil eğitimcilerinin İngilizce telaffuz bilgileri konusunda kısmen kendilerine güven duyduklarını ama doğru telaffuzu önemli bulduklarını göstermektedir. Ancak, dil eğitimcilerinin İngilizce telaffuz eğitimi konusundaki alan bilgilerinin çoğunlukla parçasal (segmental) ve transkripsiyon alıştırmaları ile sınırlı olduğu görülmektedir. Katılımcıların ayrıca, telaffuz eğitimi ve telaffuz değerlendirme konularındaki farkındalıklarını artırmak için desteğe ihtiyaç duydukları gözlenmektedir. Sınıf içi uygulamalarda, parçalarüstü (suprasegmental) ses olaylarının da büyük ölçüde göz ardı edildiği dikkat çekmektedir.

1. Introduction

Proper pronunciation matters in real-world communication, and it is often seen as a parameter of language mastery in many domains. Poor pronunciation, on the other hand, may cause hard intelligibility, and it may sound unpleasant to the listener. Interaction can be impeded by this linguistic inability. From a pedagogical standpoint, improper pronunciation can disguise the rest of a learner's good language skills. Accent can even affect an individual's credibility in real life (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). Pronunciation is also considered "one of the key elements in the speaking component of major international English language proficiency tests such as IELTS, TOEFL and TOEIC" (Henderson et al., 2012, p.23). Despite its value in oral communication, foreign language education has overwhelmingly ignored the pronunciation aspect of language instruction due to the belief that pronunciation instruction would be ineffective and difficult to teach, and as a result, cause discomfort and anxiety among teachers because of teachers' inadequate knowledge on how to teach pronunciation, and the lack of teaching resources. Yet, as the ideology of intelligibility in communication began to be involved in theory and research, particularly with the influence of globalization regarding the use of English and its impacts on real life, the instruction of L2 pronunciation has begun to be a research topic.

Recent research emphasis on the need of teacher training and the development of communicative pronunciation materials and approaches enhances the importance of teacher-oriented pronunciation studies. Thus, a growing number of researchers have been exploring language teachers' beliefs, knowledge and practices in the English classroom. These researchers seek to understand the language classroom, which "serves as a meeting place where both teaching and learning take place and where teacher knowledge and beliefs intersect with student behavior" (Baker, 2014, p.137). The present study, therefore, aims to explore EFL language teacher cognitions and practices related to pronunciation. Findings will contribute to designing pre-service and in-service teacher education, creating instructional sources and provoking further questions.

2. Review of Literature

Foreign language teacher cognition can be defined as "an often tacit, personally-held practical system of mental constructs held by teachers and which are dynamic - i.e. defined and refined on the basis of educational and professional experiences throughout teachers' lives" (Borg, 2006, p.35). Teacher cognition is worth investigating since teachers decide on their instructional choices according to their knowledge, beliefs and attitudes. Despite a growing body of research into what language educators believe; what they have experienced, and how they relate their beliefs and knowledge to their instructional practices (e.g., Borg & Burns, 2008; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Graham, Santos, & Francis–Brophy, 2014; Kuzborska, 2011; Lee, 2013), empirical and observational data about L2 teachers' cognitions of pronunciation are inadequate.

However, for the last few years, more attention was attached to what teachers believe, know and implement in their classroom in terms of English L2 pronunciation (e.g., Alhgazo, 2015; Baker, 2014; Baker & Burri, 2016; Buss, 2016 Chiu, 2008; Couper, 2016; Henderson et al., 2012; Kang & Chang, 2014; Kanoksilapatham, 2014; Shah, Othman, & Senom, 2017; Szyska, 2016; Tergujeff, 2012; Thomson, 2013). Data have been obtained from several countries' language teachers to find out language teachers' cognition about English pronunciation and instruction: Buss (2016) in Brazilian context; Czajka (2014), Szypra-Kozlowska, Frankiewiez and Gonet (2002), Wrembel (2002) in Polish context; Sifakis and Sougari (2005) in Greek periphery; Thomson (2013), Foote, Holtby, and Derwing (2011) in Canadian context; Murphy (2011) in Ireland in a survey study with 36 ESL instructors; Baker and Burri (2016) in North

America focusing on ESL teacher cognition about second language pronunciation; Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2010) investigating English teachers' techniques of pronunciation teaching in North Cyprus; Burns (2006) in Australia with 143 instructors in a survey; Yunus, Salehi and Amini (2016) in Iranian context searching EFL teachers' cognitions about the techniques of pronunciation teaching, and Tergujeff (2012) in Finland investigating teacher training, teaching materials and methods, assessment of pronunciation, status of pronunciation teaching, and pronunciation model by means of the English Pronunciation Teaching in Europe Survey (EPTiES).

Recent studies (e.g., Baker, 2014, Baker & Burri, 2016; Foote, Trofimovich, Collins, & Urzúa, 2016; Thomson & Derwing, 2015) examining teacher behaviors and practices still underline the importance of the content and pedagogical understanding of the knowledge of accurate, appropriate pronunciation and providing effective instruction and feedback to language learners. In Breitkreutz, Derwing, and Rossiter's study (2001), in Canadian context, teachers showed significant interest in pronunciation teaching, but they indicated inadequate teacher training in pronunciation. It was striking that the goal of pronunciation teaching was not to reach native-like pronunciation but intelligibility in the English language. As for the pronunciation teaching across some European countries (Henderson et al., 2012), the participants in the study stated that there is an inadequacy of training in pronunciation instruction though the majority of them rated their mastery of English pronunciation favorable. Practitioners seem to display inadequate awareness or to be reluctant to teach pronunciation (Baker, 2011; Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011; Fraser, 2000; Macdonald, 2002).

Some research findings have also argued that teachers' instruction lacks suprasegmental features of the target language though they acknowledged the importance of suprasegmentals for the intelligibility of the oral communication (Baker, 2011; Burgess & Spencer, 2000; Foote et al., 2011). With the rise of research interest into oral communication in L2, encompassing pronunciation in recent years, studies have been conducted in a Turkish milieu too. However, research in Turkey, regarding pronunciation and pronunciation instruction seems to be confined to the investigation of Turkish L2 learners' problems in pronunciation (Bardakci, 2015; Bekleyen, 2011; Demircioglu, 2013, Demirezen, 2005a, 2005b; Saricoban & Kuc, 2010; Ulkersoy, 2009), teaching pronunciation and research interventions (Arslan, 2013; Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2011; Senel, 2006), and Turkish L2 learners' attitudes, perceptions and needs about pronunciation (Demirezen & Topal, 2015; Hismanoglu, 2012; Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2013; Kayaoglu & Caylak, 2013).

No study, to the best of our knowledge, has investigated Turkish language educators' cognitions about English pronunciation. This scarcity strengthens the rationale of the current study, given the extensive worldwide research into teachers' cognitions about English pronunciation and pronunciation instruction in EFL contexts. This study conducted in Turkey will provide new insights into pronunciation instruction.

3. Research questions

The study is guided by the research questions below:

1. What are the Turkish language educators' cognitions about English pronunciation and pronunciation instruction in an EFL classroom?

2. What are the actual classroom practices of these language educators regarding L2 pronunciation?

4. Method

4.1. Research Design

The study has used a convergent parallel mixed methods design, in which data are simultaneously collected and merged to understand the research problem. The rationale of this design is that the strengths of a data collection tool neutralize the weaknesses of another, and the research problem can be thoroughly understood (Creswell, 2014). Educational research findings have indicated that teacher cognition and classroom practice have "symbiotic relationships" (Foss & Kleinsasser, 1996, p. 441). Borg (2005), thus, emphasizes the importance of knowing in-class actions in language teacher cognition studies. This conceptual relationship between cognition and practice constructs the theoretical framework of the current study too.

Actually, many of the relevant studies into teacher cognition have been criticized for ignoring actual practices of teachers or being confined to questionnaire responses consisting of basically background information and narrow themes and factors (Kagan, 1990; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991). Therefore, employing multiple data sources will provide rigorous and comprehensive data about language teachers' beliefs and knowledge together with their actual classroom practices.

4.2. Participants

164 non-native EFL teachers and academics in EFL programs in a Turkish context participated in the study by means of convenience and snowball sampling. They were firstly solicited to respond to the online quantitative questionnaire of teachers' cognitions. The questionnaire also yielded some background information on the participants (see Table 1). In addition to the quantitative data collection procedure, the teachers and academics were solicited to semi-structured interviews and classroom observation sessions.

Table 1
Language teachers' background information

Gender	Teaching position	Teacher's graduation	Experience of teaching	Academic qualification
F 100	Preschool Teacher 4	English Language Teaching 114	0-4 years 37	BA 69
M 64	Primary School Teacher 2	English Language & Literature 41	5-9 years 72	MA 52
	Secondary School Teacher 28	English Linguistics 1	10-14 years 29	PhD 43
	High School Teacher 25	Translation & Interpretation 5	15-19 years 13	
	Academic 105	American Culture & Literature 1	Over 20 years 13	
		Other 3		
				Total 164

4.3. Instruments

A questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were used as data collection tools to investigate the teachers' cognitions and their practices. These three tools provided rigorous and comprehensive data about the research topic.

4.3.1 Quantitative Data

4.3.1.1. Questionnaire

Based on the relevant literature, an item pool encompassing background information, participants' reflections, values and practices in L2 pronunciation was developed and applied online for easier access to the target population. The item pool was reviewed by three academics at the English teaching department for linguistic appropriateness, and the first draft was formed. The instrument also underwent some quantitative and qualitative procedures in terms of content validity and reliability.

Content validity estimates how representative instrument items are of the content or subject matter that the instrument seeks to measure (Newman, Newman, Brown, & McNeely, 2006, p. 48). Content validation can be measured qualitatively, quantitatively, or through a combination of both methods to determine a degree of consensus among experts about the instrument in question (Newman, Lim, & Pineda 2013, p. 198). The CVR (content validity ratio) proposed by Lawshe (1975) is one of the pervasively used methods in various fields including education. It involves a panel of subject matter where experts rate each item in three labels: "essential," "useful, but not essential" or "not necessary." The items rated as "essential" by a critical number of panel members are used in the final instrument, but the items rated below the critical level are omitted.

The current instrument had consisted of 60 items under seven themes. Following Lawshe's established methodology (E – (N/2))/N/2), N = number of experts, E = number rating as essential), 5 experts apart from the author rated the instrument. According to CVR calculation, on the basis of the critical values of each item at $\alpha = .05$, the items valued below +1 were discarded, and finally 34 items were employed for the study. The items sought responses in Likert-scale form (from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree).

As for the psychometric features of the questionnaire, the item fit was also tested. As for the internal reliability of the questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha value of the measure was found to be .80. The questionnaire was found to have internal consistency. However, the item total correlation values which display the fit of individual items with the entire instrument also needed to be examined because the low values may have influenced the consistency level of the measure. In this case, the items with an item total correlation value of .20 were reexamined and discarded based on the opinions of the field experts and statisticians. As a result, the 24-item questionnaire was recalculated in terms reliability and the final reliability score was found .84.

Table 2
Measure of ELT educators' beliefs, attitudes and practices on L2 pronunciation and pronunciation teaching

	Items	n	M	S.D.
Language	1. I am satisfied with my own English pronunciation.	164	3.75	.90
	2. I am good at practicing suprasegmentals (stress, rhythm and intonation).	164	3.08	1.02
	3. I do not have enough background knowledge in English pronunciation.	164	2.16	1.06

	4. The pronunciation course I had taken at university adequately helps me guide students.	164	3.45	1.16
	5. I need training in how to teach pronunciation.	164	2.72	1.12
	6. I am good at teaching pronunciation.	164	3.43	.81
	7. I am good at reading phonemic symbols (e.g., θ, w, ð, æ).	164	3.73	1.03
	8. I need to improve my English pronunciation.	164	2.64	1.09
	9. I need training in assessing pronunciation.	164	2.69	1.05
	10. Pronunciation should be viewed as a crucial part of communication.	164	3.98	.95
	11. Communication does not require correct pronunciation.	164	2.24	1.08
	12. I believe that explicit pronunciation instruction contributes to students.	164	4,12	.89
	13. The current curriculum does not encourage me to teach pronunciation.	164	3.62	1.13
	14. I am not sure about to what extent I should tolerate my students' pronunciation mistakes.	164	2.94	1.05
	15. Monitoring students' pronunciation is necessary.	164	4.16	.67
	16. I do not know how to assess my students' pronunciation.	164	2.63	1.08
	17. My students should aim at native-like pronunciation.	164	2.99	1.14
Language Teachers' Pronunciation Practices	18. I do not devote time to teaching pronunciation.	164	2.35	1.08
	19. My students expect me to correct their pronunciation.	164	3.43	1.02
	20. I mostly devote time to rhythm, stress, and intonation in my classes.	164	2.71	1.06
	21. I mostly devote time to individual speech sounds in my classes (e.g., θ, w, ð sounds).	164	2.91	1.08
	22. I have appropriate materials and resources to teach pronunciation.	164	3.0	1.11
	23. Since the way of speaking is a part of an individual's identity, pronunciation does not need to be changed.	164	2.24	.91
	24. I ignore my students' pronunciation performance while evaluating their speaking skills.	164	3.55	1.10
	25. I am reluctant to correct my students' pronunciation mistakes.	164	3.73	1.11

Table 2 shows English language educators' cognitions and practices about pronunciation. The first part of the questionnaire attempts to portray the participants' pronunciation knowledge and beliefs. As can be seen, the participants state their satisfaction with their own pronunciation. Even though they do not seem considerably self-confident about their knowledge of pronunciation, the course they took at the university level is seen as beneficial (57%). Compared to suprasegmental features of English, they tend to practice segmental level of the language better. However, as for the language educators' beliefs about competence in teaching pronunciation, more than half of the participants (54%) consider themselves either insufficient, or they are unsure.

Despite this partial self-assurance, the participants do not feel any need for training in instruction and assessment of pronunciation. In other words, they seem to refrain from acknowledging their lack of background knowledge in the target language and its pedagogy. For this reason, the lowest scores correspond to the items regarding the need for training,

improvement or self-assessment in the teachers' knowledge of English pronunciation. As for the language educators' attitudes towards pronunciation, correctness and appropriateness are considered significant. According to the findings, the participants generally pay attention to their students' pronunciation (%85) and acknowledge the benefits of pronunciation instruction (84%). However, they indicate that the current curriculum does not support instruction in pronunciation in their language classes. Despite this attention to correct pronunciation for communication and pedagogy, they seem to be cautious about having native-like accent. They appear unsure whether the pronunciation of a learner should be preserved.

Table 2 also shows English language teachers' pronunciation practices. Compared to segmental features, the language teachers seem to be less focused on the suprasegmental aspects of language. Though they tend to include the pronunciation aspect of the target language, appropriate sources and materials for pronunciation instruction can be inadequate. According to the findings, though language teachers think that their students often expect their teachers to correct students' pronunciation, teachers hesitate to interfere with students' pronunciation mistakes (67%). Likewise, pronunciation generally does not seem to take place in the assessment phase of the L2 instruction (72%).

4.3.2. Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were sequentially collected and analyzed to obtain richer insights and use triangulation. For this purpose, one-on-one semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were used. This guided approach permitted participants "to describe detailed personal information" (Creswell, 2012, p. 218).

4.3.2.1. Interviews

Seven non-native English course teachers, three of whom were academics at an English teacher education program, participated in the observation sessions and interviews. The background information of the participants is shown in Table 2. The selection of the participants was based on participants' teaching situation diversity contributing to maximum variation sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which strengthens "document unique variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions" (p.102). Since the purpose of the study is to comprehensively investigate the complex nature of teachers' beliefs and practices by means of in-depth analysis, the researchers used a small number of participants (Shah et al., 2017).

4.3.2.2. Procedures

The official permission from the provincial directorate of national education was firstly taken for the interviews and classroom observation. Then, this official document was submitted to the schools' administrations, and teachers' consents were taken by means of written forms. Before each interview, the participant was briefed on the interview process, and any concerns or questions were answered in order to avoid confusion during the interview. The interviews differed in length of time due to personal differences and salience of the topic to the participants. The interviews were digitally recorded with the approval of the interviewees, and consent forms were signed. The interview questions were adapted from Baker (2014). This interview guide was piloted with an instructor at the English teaching department to gain some suggestions. No major revision was made for the main study. Prior to the interview, a list of questions was sent to the participants to initiate some reflections about the implementation.

To establish anonymity, the researcher used pseudonyms for each interviewee. Each interview, which lasted for 13-14 minutes, was audio-recorded and transcribed. To ensure

credibility of the study, member checking was employed (Creswell, 2012). Thus, the transcribed interviews were submitted to the participants whether they sought to make any addition or revision. However, no suggestion was offered. Multiple readings of the transcripts could yield significant themes. The findings were then descriptively explained. To achieve inter-rated reliability, another researcher examined the transcribed texts too. Significant quotes were discussed and specified, but no revision was needed.

4.3.2.3. Observation

Since what people say is not always what they do (Johnson & Christensen, 2004), observation becomes an opportunity to directly see the actual practices concerning the research problem. For this purpose, after the research site was determined, the official permission from the provincial directorate of national education and the participants were taken for observation. Yet, the actual purpose of the observation was hidden to prevent any unnatural change in the classroom. However, dehoaxing was done after the observation. The researcher's role was observer-as-participant. Before the observation, the researcher was introduced to the classroom, and he took a seat at the back of the classroom. Each participant was observed for two hours, and the classes were video recorded. An observation checklist was used, and some reflective field notes were taken. At the end of the classes, the researcher thanked the teachers and students, and then withdrew from the research site. Table 3 shows the participants' personal information:

Table 3
Participants' particulars

Pseudonyms	Participant's Teaching Position	Participant's Years of Experience	Participant's Academic Qualification	Levels of Students
Airy (f)	Academic	6	PhD	University
Harp (m)	Academic	18	PhD	University
Dear (f)	Teacher	10	BA	Secondary School
Zen (f)	Academic	12	BA	University
Best (f)	Teacher	5	BA	Primary School
Sun (f)	Teacher	10	BA	Primary School
Torch (f)	Teacher	4	MA	Secondary School

4.3.2.4. Findings

The first interview question focused on participants' own English pronunciation. All the interviewees stated that they had satisfactory pronunciation performance. Each of them attributes his/her performance to the university course for pronunciation and personal efforts. The findings display that their pronunciation awareness seems to be established during their university education. The "Phonetics" is a required course for two semesters at English teaching programs, but, in other English language departments, phonetics and phonology courses are not required. This pre-service university level of instruction seems to have influenced their knowledge of pronunciation. However, the source of the pronunciation awareness seems to be confined to the individual speech sounds. As the participants stated what was taught and emphasized in the course was largely the individual sounds:

Dear: "What I can say about pronunciation knowledge is to transcribe texts and read them."

Zen: "In the phonetics course, we learned the articulatory system, phonetic characters etc. in detail."

Torch: "We learned the characters, how to read and how to transcribe the words. We always practiced and were tested. I learned many things from this course."

Sun: "We did not used to focus on intonation and stress much in the classes. Now I would like to put pronunciation into assessment, but I cannot do this with the current curriculum."

As for the correct and appropriate pronunciation, all of the participants agreed on its significance in L2 interaction. However, the emphasis range demonstrated some discrepancies. For example, Zen stated:

"For me, fluency is over accuracy. Unless the students' pronunciation causes some misunderstanding, like "dessert" and "desert," then emphasis is needed; otherwise, I do not want to discourage my students from speaking."

However, the rest of the participants are strongly in favor of correct pronunciation, and they objected the pervasive assumption that "what matters is communication." Harp stated for instance:

"If you ignore correct pronunciation, you will be understood only in your own country. I realized what it means when I was in Britain. I was often not understood by the British people there. I lived very hard days for a long time."

In contrast to the importance they gave to correct pronunciation, the teachers indicated that they did not devote time to teach pronunciation. Moreover, they stated that unless the students make allegedly significant pronunciation errors, they did not correct their students. What attracts attention is that pronunciation instruction is confined to error correction at segmental level. Yet, the suprasegmental features of the language were stated to be largely ignored by the participants:

Best: "I try to correct their pronunciation as possible as I can, but I don't know well the intonation and stress issues."

Dear: "What I only do is to correct the errors by giving some clues. The curriculum does not include intonation, stress, rhythm, etc. I do not have enough background about them."

Airy*: "It is limited to segmental correction. I have to ignore the suprasegmental features because students do not have awareness about that."*

Zen: "I rarely mention stress and intonation."

Sun: "At the university, we were not taught much about stress and intonation unfortunately."

What Harp said about the reason for the insensitivity to correct pronunciation and its instruction was thought-provoking. He said:

"They do not care about pronunciation because they do not have adequate background knowledge. In your own country, everybody can understand you, but when you go abroad you will not be understood."

Except for Harp, the participants emphasized the importance of intelligibility rather than native-like pronunciation. It is perhaps because of his difficult experiences in Britain as a teacher due to poor pronunciation. Therefore, Harp insisted on the necessity of native-like pronunciation for sound interaction in the target language:

"I could not talk to British people on the phone to rent an apartment. Once I was on the phone, and the man on the line shut the phone since he could not understand me."

The participants indicated that even though they seek to pay extra attention to pronunciation throughout their courses, the current curriculum and materials do not provide any chance to make pronunciation a part of their instruction. For example, Dear stated:

"We do not pay attention to pronunciation because there is not such an objective in our curriculum related to pronunciation skill. Actually, the formal education today does not have such an expectation."

As the educational levels of the students increase (i.e., from primary level to university), language teachers tend to attach more importance to their students' pronunciation. According to them, since their students are reluctant to join oral performances, they prefer to sustain oral production with less correction and theoretical information. The following quotes seem to support this assumption:

Torch: "Our English teacher, at the high school, used to tell us that we would be already taught pronunciation at the university, and there was no need to focus on pronunciation. Actually, I do the same thing because they do not want to speak in English, and I do not want to discourage them by doing this."

Dear: "I am more tolerant of younger students' pronunciation, but, especially in the further classes, I often correct them because I think that younger students can be tolerated, but the older ones will graduate from secondary school, and they should pronounce correctly."

The language teachers' classroom practices were also observed. The focus of observation was on teachers' in-class L2 oral performance and pronunciation. As table 4 shows that language teachers often ignore students' pronunciation errors and do not devote time to pronunciation instruction. In these classes, the observation of the teachers' practices also showed that teachers were sometimes erroneous about segmental and suprasegmental aspects of English. Particularly, teachers' stress and intonation aspects of L2 use attracted attention. However, during the interviews and after-class conversations, they stated that they were satisfied with their own English pronunciation knowledge and appropriate utterance.

Table 4
Language teachers' classroom practices of English pronunciation

Participants	Does the teacher monitor students' pronunciation?	Does the teacher correct students' errors?	Does the teacher devote time to pronunciation?	Does the teacher pay attention to stress, rhythm and intonation?
Dear	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely	Never
Zen	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Rarely
Torch	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely	Never
Sun	Rarely	Nearly None	Nearly None	Never
Best	Sometimes	Rarely	Sometimes	Nearly None
Harp	Very often	Very Often	Very Often	Often
Airy	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Nearly None

5. Discussion

The current study attempted to investigate English language teachers' cognitions and practices regarding pronunciation of English as a foreign language. Much research in different contexts (e.g., Poland, Greece, Brazil, Finland, Germany, Canada, North America) has portrayed language teachers' cognitions about L2 pronunciation via quantitative or qualitative methods. This mixed-design study will contribute to the relevant literature of pronunciation cognition by disseminating quantitative and qualitative data from the Turkish context. The first research question sought self-reflection of the language teachers in terms of pronunciation. The survey provided evidence that they were somewhat self-confident about their knowledge. In a similar study, asking language teachers to evaluate their own pronunciation in Polish context, respondents were found to have high positive perception (Szyszka, 2016). In the current study, participants' awareness and content knowledge of pronunciation is mostly dependent upon the phonetics course at university.

According to the qualitative data, extrinsic factors such as personal efforts, interests, parental influences and educational background do not appear to contribute to their current awareness and so-called satisfactory pronunciation skills. In a similar study, investigating the cognitions of English teachers from various countries (Henderson et al., 2012), the respondents from Germany, Poland, Macedonia, Switzerland, Spain and France rated their pronunciation knowledge and teaching skills as good too. The qualitative findings of the current study indicate that teachers give priority to the pronunciation of individual segments and transcription exercises. This type of instruction is no doubt beneficial, particularly with respect to problematic sounds such as /w/, /θ/ /ð/, /w/ and /ŋ/ for Turkish speakers. In line with this, the quantitative data show that respondents consider themselves less successful with the suprasegmental aspects of the English language. Therefore, it is not surprising that teachers tend to ignore stress and intonation but emphasize phonemic individual sounds when they teach pronunciation.

Another significant finding from the questionnaire is that most of the respondents do not feel any need for training in terms of teaching and assessment of pronunciation. It may be due to the teachers' inadequate content and pedagogical knowledge about pronunciation. In line with

pronunciation cognition surveys of EFL teachers' beliefs about pronunciation and pronunciation instruction (e.g., Buss, 2016; Henderson et al., 2012; Waniek-Klimczak, Porzuczek, & Rojczyk, 2013), the findings of this study demonstrate that language teachers in a Turkish context consider correct pronunciation significant and value pronunciation instruction. However, the findings also show that this awareness does not take place in their classroom practices.

Further, while the respondents consider correct pronunciation an indispensable part of oral communication, they seem to be highly reticent about correctness, teaching and assessment of pronunciation in their classes. Similar research in diverse countries showed contradictory results. For example, in Polish context (Szyszka, 2016), while EFL teachers are reported to acknowledge the eminence of pronunciation and to be professionally competent in pronunciation and its instruction, they appear insufficient and inadequately motivated about implementing pronunciation instruction. Likewise, in Turkish contexts, as the qualitative findings show that teachers rarely devote time to pronunciation instruction in their classes. Similar to other EFL/ESL classrooms (Burns, 2006; Buss, 2016, 2013; Tergujeff, 2012) segmental focus seems to be overwhelming. This tendency can be attributed to the widely acknowledged assumption that what matters is communication, and even if the students often mispronounce in L2, they should be tolerated, and there is no need for extra time and effort to improve pronunciation. The phenomenon of intelligibility in L2 communication therefore needs to be well understood.

Another reason for teachers' low awareness of accurate pronunciation is stated to be their students' reticent approach to speaking in L2. This is considered a source of discouragement since learners already tend to avoid speaking. However, several pedagogical strategies, tactics and activities can reduce this common reticence despite the emphasis on pronunciation (see Brown & Lee, 2015).

Along with the quantitative data, teachers seem to be confused about having appropriate materials and devoting time to pronunciation. Since the national curriculum objectives and descriptors prioritize speaking and oral skills from the primary level onward, there is no doubt that language teachers are expected to include pronunciation aspects of English language for a methodologically well-tuned instruction. However, survey results, interviews and classroom observations led to contradictory comments about language teachers' actual practices.

As the observational data show, teachers still probably do not teach in accordance with the theoretical approach of the CEFR. This preference unavoidably influences students' pronunciation perceptions and performance. In the current study, the interviewees stated that in order not to discourage students, they ignored the segmental and suprasegmental aspects of English, and they did not devote time to teach correct pronunciation. During the observations, practices addressing pronunciation were infrequent. Pronunciation practice, error correction and reinforcement at university classes seem to be somewhat more frequent than at primary and lower secondary schools in English classrooms. The absence of pronunciation awareness in practice can be attributed to inadequate pre-service and in-service training, which will shape language educators' perceptions and practices. At university level English teacher education programs, a 'Listening and Pronunciation Course' is offered for two semesters (The Council of Higher Education, n.d.) in Turkish context. Nonetheless, how to teach pronunciation is limited to a topic in course of content knowledge in the syllabus.

It should be noted that students consider pronunciation important (Alghazo, 2015; Burri, 2015; Derwing & Rossiter 2003; Hismanoglu, 2006; Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2013;

Morley, 1991; Pawlak, Mystkowska-Wiertelak, & Bielak, 2015; Willing, 1988). Similarly, in the current study, as the quantitative data show, students expect language teachers to correct their pronunciation weaknesses and errors. Despite students' eagerness, teachers' reluctance to focus on pronunciation is worth questioning. However, it can be hypothesized that language teachers are not sure about the distinction between nativeness and intelligibility. Before 1960s, 'the nativeness principle' dominated pronunciation pedagogy. However, in line with the ongoing research, particularly "critical period hypothesis" led the conclusion that aiming at native-like accent is an unrealistic ideal for teachers and learners (Lewis, 2005). Thus, the other contradictory principle of *intelligibility* surpasses nativeness with the influence of communicative concerns in contemporary language learning.

There is no doubt that learners need to be understood. However, as the effect of pronunciation is argued to be determined by ideology and intuition, pronunciation attention can be said to be related to native-like pronunciation in the current context. This may have led teachers to ignore correct pronunciation. That is why they often tend to provide rare segmental corrective feedback instead of focusing on suprasegmentals. However, for years suprasegmentals have been highlighted in promoting intelligibility (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992; Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998; Field, 2005; Morley, 1991).

As in this study, survey respondents somewhat prioritize intelligibility, but they are unsure about handling suprasegmentals in their classroom practices. The interview data support the finding that language teachers do not aim at native-like pronunciation but intelligibility. In other words, if the principle of intelligibility is favored in pronunciation pedagogy, according to the teachers, there is no need to pay attention to pronunciation or to correct the errors.

6. Conclusion

This study, to our best knowledge, is the first attempt to find out EFL language educators' cognitions and practices about pronunciation in a Turkish context. Though language teachers and academics consider pronunciation important, they seem to be inadequately aware of the extent and the way to integrate pronunciation into their classes. Teachers' content knowledge on pronunciation and current skills lead them to focus on segmental features of English. Language teachers' knowledge and perceptions about the suprasegmental features of the target language, therefore, need to be improved. The improvement will most probably affect their beliefs about the phenomenon of intelligibility, as a key term in pronunciation.

Turkish language teachers seem to be less motivated to improve themselves by means of training in terms of teaching and assessing pronunciation. This reticence and discomfort can be investigated in further research. Besides, theoretical and practical in-service training programs should be considered to minimize the misconceptions and lack of knowledge about L2 pronunciation. There is no doubt that explicit pedagogical efforts assist teachers in improving themselves. However, more intrinsic motivation to enhance their personal and professional development needs to be a goal. The role and the quality of language teachers, therefore, should be well taught from the beginning of the pre-service language education.

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