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The Stance of Turkish Teacher of English on the Permissibility of L1 Accent in Foreign Language Teacher Education

Abstract

This study delves into the attitudes of Turkish teachers of English on the tolerability of L1 accent in foreign language teacher education. It ascertains the determinants that have an impact on the employment of L1 accent in teacher education. The data were gathered through a survey questionnaire completed by teachers of English with various years of experience who work in different institutions ranging from state schools to universities, and analyzed through descriptive statistics. The findings of the study demonstrated that the majority of the participants agreed that they had to adopt at least near-native-like accent as part of their professional identity. It was further shown that Turkish teachers of English believed that they could reduce or eliminate foreign accent through formal instruction and accent-breaking techniques. The study also found that a vast majority of Turkish teachers of English consider that L1 accent should not be allowed in foreign language learning and teaching. However, considering that this is a pilot study, further research is required in order to corroborate the findings and find out the chances of employing the L2 accent in foreign language teacher education.

Keywords: L1 accent; teacher education; professional identity; native-speaker accent; accent-breaking techniques

1. INTRODUCTION

With the emergence of English as an International Language (EIL), pronunciation instruction has taken a new shape. Considering that users of English are mostly non-native speakers (NNS), this shift might sound reasonable. The impact of EIL has shifted the focus in pronunciation teaching from producing accurate native-like accent to enhancing intelligibility in the communication among non-native speakers (Sifakis, 2014). However, there are still communication breakdowns between native speakers (NS) - non-native speakers (NNS) and NNS-NNS in terms of comprehensibility and intelligibility due to foreign accent.

In foreign language teacher education, where teachers represent prospective efficient role-models for their students, it is a requirement for teachers to possess at least near-native like accent in relation to work ethics and professional identity. Baker (2011) stated in her study that many learners hope to acquire native-like accents (Timmis, 2002; Derwing & Munro, 2003; Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard & Wu, 2006; Kang, 2010) despite continued efforts to legitimize English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) varieties (Jenkins, 2007) and other native models. Sifakis and Sougari (2005) concluded in their study that many non-native English language teachers also expressed a preference for native-speaker accents. This aligns with Levis' (2005) definition of the Nateness Principle, which he defined as the notion that "it is both possible and desirable for adults to achieve native-like pronunciation in a foreign language" (p.370). With these positive

attitudes both from learners and teachers, and their preferences for a native-speaker accent in education, it is suggested that the use of L1 accent not be permitted in foreign language teacher education.

This paper aims to discover the attitudes of Turkish teachers of English towards tolerance of L1 accent in foreign language learning and teaching settings. Accordingly, this paper is organized as follows. First, theoretical framework regarding the subject will be designed including related concepts and relationships between them. Then, the next chapter presents information about the participants and research design. In the fourth chapter, the findings of the study will be presented and discussed. Finally, the last section will bring a conclusion to the study.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Native vs. Nonnative Teachers of English

There is no consensus on who is or what constitutes a native speaker. Brown (2014) posited that a person's native language is the language they learn first, they speak to the highest proficiency, and the one they use most often, or for the most functions. Cook (1999) identified the native speaker as "the speaker of the language learnt first" (p.187). Whether native or nonnative, teachers have always been subjected to criticism with regard to their qualifications either being native or nonnative. However, each has his or her own distinctive characteristics or attributes concerning the teaching profession.

With regard to the preferences for native or nonnative teacher, several studies have revealed that learners of English consider native varieties of English, such as American or British English, as models, and set these models as their goals to learn pronunciation (Timmis, 2002; Derwing & Munro, 2003; Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard & Wu, 2006; Hu & Lindemann, 2009; Buckingham, 2014). In Yook and Lindemann's (2013) study, the group demonstrated that they considered the speaker of American English as their English teacher. Similarly, in Buckingham's (2014) study, participants expressed a preference for the speaker who they thought spoke British English as their teachers. In line with these studies, Rivers (2011) reported that the participants in his study claimed that the speakers they identified as native speakers of American or British English had a better teaching voice, which suggested that the participants had a preference for speakers with native accents as their teachers of English. As cited by Sung (2014), Jenkins's study with non-native EFL teachers of different nationalities revealed that these teachers were found to desire "a native-like English identity as signaled by a native-like accent, especially in their role as teachers" (Jenkins, 2007, p. 231).

In brief, the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), whose representatives are boosted to comply with austere norms of competencies, is bolstered by enhancing the growth of well-trained, committed professionals. Nevertheless, native speakers of English still hold an advantage over their non-native counterparts in the eyes of many students and administrators in that they present an impeccable model for pronunciation with a native-speaker accent. On the other hand, non-native teachers are no worse than NS in terms of teaching, sometimes even more advantageous except for the production of native-like pronunciation. However, it must be borne in mind that they can achieve a near native-like accent through exertion and accent modification techniques within the frame of professionalism.

2.2. The Relation of Identity Types to Foreign Language Teachers

Foreign language learning brings with itself the adoption of a second identity which, in some foreign language teaching contexts, leads to identity crisis (Brown, 1994). The “identity crisis” has always posed a problem in the field of foreign language teaching (Demirezen, 2007). Some nonnative teachers of English intentionally keep their L1 accent while teaching English as part of their national identity while others are more open to tolerance and develop another type of identity in terms of professionalism and work ethics. With this in mind, it is necessary to mention the types of identity and their relationship with L1 use.

Professional identity refers to the way teachers see themselves as teachers based on their interpretations of their continuing interaction with their context (Kelchtermans, 2009). Therefore, it is not stable, but a continually changing, active and ongoing process. Demirezen (2007) suggested that professional identity necessitates a specific career role requiring the acquisition of foreign language knowledge and teaching skills as well as critical thinking, interpersonal skills, conflict-solving skills, ability to use technology and alternative assessment techniques effectively. Hence, teachers adopting the professional identity are expected to make efforts to achieve at least near-native-like accent when teaching English in terms of professionalism since shaping professional identity is a developmental process of vocational behavior and maturation (Demirezen, 2007). Teacher identity, on the other hand, is obtained through the “auto description and perception of oneself according to a role that we play in our life inside a group called society and if we set it in context and we call that social group as teachers” (Dolores & Leonardo, 2015, p. 9). Therefore, it’s an ongoing process that could be developed through interactions with others. Teacher identity also needs to be practiced and developed through experience and thus it requires more than just adopting a role in the classroom. Demirezen (2007) pointed out how nonnative teachers of English build a different perspective describing foreign accented pronunciation and intonation and how this caused nonnative teachers identity problems at the time of teaching.

Another type of identity is the collective identity which was defined by Polletta and Jasper (2001) as “an individual’s cognitive, moral and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution” (p.285). Since learning a new language can be considered as learning the culture of that language, it can be asserted that nonnative teachers begin to acquire a multicultural identity. Aside from all the identities that nonnative teachers already have, acquiring these identities pave the way for another identity type, that is, collective identity which harbors teacher identity as well. Referring to a sense of a nation as whole represented by certain culture and traditions, national identity is firmly associated with the adoption of a standard national language which serves as a basis for national unity. Speakers of a foreign language in multilingual societies may be inclined to develop a strong or weak national identity while adopting a weaker one does not necessarily mean the loss of national identity.

As Eastman (1990) expressed, the way that a language is used to symbolize the views of individuals and ascribe their ethnicity as distinct from others is known as ethnic speech style. This sense of ethnic identity is inherently linked to the use of a dialect of language. Thus, language is one of the most dominating powers over foreign language learning and teaching habits as to what we understand from the ethnolinguistic identity theory (Giles & Johnson, 1987). Another type of identity is the one that foreign language learners acquire when they learn a second language. Bilingual identity is shaped in the acquisition of a second foreign language.

Changes in the identity of foreign language speakers are constricted to the interaction between the native and target cultures in traditional models; however, the native-target culture dichotomy faces some challenges in the era of postmodernism. Gao (2010) proposed certain types of

relations between various group identities with different linguistic varieties including dialects, styles, and registers. She stressed that imagined identities possess psychological reality that involves stable behavioral investment. To state it differently, cultures might exist as imagined communities in foreign language learners' subjective apprehension which affects their conducts. In this respect, bilingual or multilingual identities are considered to be dynamic processes.

To conclude the discussion on the types of identity, many nonnative teachers of English may feel that they change their personalities while adopting a near-native like accent, yet "a shift from one language to another is not actually a shift in personality but just a code shift in social roles and emotional attitudes" (Demirezen, 2007). Although accent serves as a distinctive marker of social identity (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992), and many nonnative teachers persist in using L1 accent on account of national identity issues, it must be borne in mind that teachers with such mindset do not possess fluent, accurate and intelligible English. This results in the inefficiency and incompetency on part of teachers as they struggle with adopting Standard English appropriately. Therefore, instrumental-integrative motivation can be suggested for the minimization of this identity crisis since most foreign language teaching setting involve a combination of this two types of motivation according to Brown (1994).

2.3. The Construct of Accent in English

A myriad amount of data about a person's local, societal and personal background can be obtained by means of accent. Accent can further unearth the region and the country where a person comes from. According to Moyer (2013), accent is a fluid, contextualized expression of our personal and social identity as well as our communicative stance. As cited in Barratt and Mahboob's book, Derwing et al. (2014) characterized accent as the phonological characteristics of speech.

As to what constitutes accent, Flege (1984) maintained that the recognition of foreign accent is related to acoustic differences between native and non-native speakers' segmental articulations and suprasegmental levels, which are the major constituents of accent. More specifically, it is stress, pitch and juncture that compose accent. According to Liebert (1971), "the term stress and accent are often used interchangeably, but accent is more frequently and overall term for any system obtaining emphasis on particular syllables, whereas stress is one type of accent" (p.88). Since stress adopts a diverse role in the course of articulation so that it becomes the cause of meaning shifts in words and English is a stress-timed language, unlike Turkish which is a syllable-timed language, Turkish speakers of English have difficulty in putting the stress in the appropriate places in sentences and making inferences about where different levels of stress will arise in the speech, which brings about the foreign accent on behalf of the Turkish speakers.

Low (2015) defined pitch as "the rate of vibration of our vocal folds used in producing a particular speech sound determines its F0 and what we perceive to be its pitch" (p.42). Pitch, which is individual-specific, may reveal some information about a person such as gender and age to some extent. In addition, it also brings out some information about a person's emotional state whether he is happy or angry. According to Demirezen (1986), pitch is divergent in English, which results in the inevitability of foreign-accented speech on behalf of nonnative speakers of English.

Juncture, which is another component of accent, communicates transition between the segmental phonemes of words, phrases and clauses. The absence of juncture leads to a change in the meanings of words and junctures are therefore considered as suprasegmental phonemes. Hence, as Karakaş (2012) cited in his study, it functions as a signal of primary accent since a

word sounds different depending on whether it is enunciated very carefully as a single word or uttered in the flow of speech (Gramley & Pätzold, 2003). Apart from stress, pitch and juncture, prosody which is a parameter of intonation was also proved to have an influence in the perception of foreign-accented speech (Munro & Derwing, 2001; Chang, 2002).

2.4.Factors Affecting the Degree of L1 Accent

In connection with the determinants of the degree of foreign accent, Piske et al (2001) found that the speaker's L1, the age at which the speaker began learning the L2, how long the speaker has lived in the L2 environment, the speaker's gender, formal instruction, motivation, and language learning aptitude as well as how frequently the speaker used the L1 and L2 are the factors related to accent.

With regard to age, Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) contended that the importance of critical period is somewhat downplayed today, and the claim that adults cannot achieve native-like pronunciation in a second language is not infrequently encountered with anecdotes about successful adult second-language learners who have "beaten the odds". Gender, another contributor to the degree of foreign accent, was found in previous research to provide variable outcomes in that some researchers contended the consequential influence of gender with regard to foreign accent (Asher & Garcia, 1969; Tahta et al, 1981; Flege et al, 1995) whereas others claimed the opposite (Purcell & Suter, 1980; Flege & Fletcher, 1992; Elliott, 1995). Length of residence (LOR), which specifies the amount of time spent in a community where the L2 is spoken as a native language, was found to be significant in determining the degree of foreign accent according to some scholars (Asher & Garcia, 1969; Purcell & Suter, 1980; Flege & Fletcher, 1992) while several others found it to be insignificant in terms of foreign accent (Thompson, 1991; Elliott, 1995; Moyer, 1999). Despite the divergent findings of the studies, experience in the L2 in the early phases of L2 learning might lead to less foreign-accented speech. Formal instruction, the effect of which was not found to be a salient predictor of foreign accent (Thompson, 1991; Flege et al, 1995; Elliott, 1995), has not produced promising results for language teachers. The fact that instructional variables did not yield reassuring results might stem from the fact that little attention is paid to pronunciation instruction in many foreign language classrooms. Nonetheless, some other scholars proved that training in the perception and production of L2 sounds yielded successful results (Bongaerts et al, 1997; Moyer, 1999; Missaglia, 1999). In spite of the fact that little evidence exist justify the formal instruction as to be the predictor of foreign accent, formal instruction may have substantial effect on L2 production provided that special training in the perception and production of L2 sounds are carried out in L2 classrooms. In the studies carried out to determine the influence of motivation in terms of the degree of foreign accent, in most cases, the subjects were asked to rate the significance of good pronunciation for their work (Suter, 1976; Thompson, 1991; Moyer, 1999). Several studies tried to find out if there was any relationship between the learners' language aptitude and the degree of foreign accent, yet insufficient numbers of studies did this in a controllable manner, thus plausible conclusions are hard to arrive at regarding these factors when this fact is taken into consideration. The amount of conversation in English at home or work was found to be an insignificant factor in relation to the degree of foreign accent (Suter, 1976; Suter & Purcell, 1980; Tahta et al.; 1981). On the other hand, Piske et al. (2001) stated that it seems reasonable to assume that a high level of proficiency in the L1 is much more likely to be maintained if L2 learners continue to use the L1 frequently, even after many years of residence in the L2-speaking country. These findings bring into the light the fact that the use of L2 was not a significant predictor of foreign accent whereas the use L1 was reported to influence the degree of foreign accent to some extent.

2.5. Methods for Accent Modification

In spite of the unavoidability of a discernible accent by reason of neurophysiological maturation and the establishment of cerebral lateralization for language functions (Penfield & Roberts, 1966; Lenneberg, 1967; Scovel, 1969), some scholars suggest that post-pubescent learners can moderately modify their productions in the second language (Flege, 1980; Purcell & Suter, 1980). Baratta (2014) reported that for those whose careers depend, partly at least, on speaking skills, accent modification appears to be a very relevant issue. The negative attitudes toward and discrimination as a result of foreign accents paved the way for the emergence of accent reduction programs which intend to reduce or eliminate foreign accents. According to Munro and Derwing (1995), these programs inherently suggest that an accent is, in itself, a bad thing, and is subject to treatment, intervention, or even eradication in much the same way as language pathology.

In respect to the methods for accent modification, Edwards and Strattman Method (Edwards & Strattman, 1996), is based on examination of pronunciation teaching methods across diversified disciplines which demonstrated that intonation should be the main focus of training in accent modification. Incorporating cognitive and communicative aspects of language pedagogy, the modified method is based on several criteria including the fact that accent modification methodology is supported by research, yields positive outcomes, and is teachable and self-motivating. The predominant belief behind all these criteria stems from the fact that prosodic-oriented instruction leads to greater improvements in speech than segmental-oriented instruction. With regard to the accent modification, Hişmanoğlu and Hişmanoğlu (2011) cited in their study that in automatic speech recognition system, L2 learners' pronunciation is compared against native speaker models and learners are told their errors and/or corrected accordingly. Another way to reduce foreign accent lies in the guidelines provided by Reverse Accent Mimicry Model, which is based on the notion that humans possess an innate biological capacity to hear, differentiate and mimic fundamental prosodic and phonological characteristics of any language (Hilton, 2005). The Audio articulation model (AAM) (Demirezen, 2010), whose principles involve micro-listening and speaking, macro-listening and speaking activities in terms of automatic speech recognition and production exercises, is a model for teaching, correcting and curing the problem causing core sounds in the pronunciation of non-native teachers of English. Unlike other models or techniques, the AAM was devised for professional or academic purposes to meet the immediate needs of teachers-on-the-jobs or trainees in the area of teacher training in a pronunciation-rich classroom atmosphere. It is addressed to nonnative teachers of English or novice teachers on the core sounds of the English, which lead to pronunciation difficulties in the form of articulation errors by the learners.

2.6. Is L1 accent over L2 allowable in Foreign Language Teacher Education?

Van Els and Bot (1987) declared that the degree to which a foreign accent is permissible is determined to a great extent by the aims that one has in mind learning and/or using the foreign language. As representatives of the teaching profession, nonnative teachers of English, in this sense, are not permitted to speak with a foreign accent while teaching since the degree of foreign accent might affect intelligibility on behalf of learners and create a negative impression in the eyes of learners, which is undoubtedly not desired by nonnative teachers. In addition to this, foreign accent in teaching profession might also be considered as a predictor of inefficiency on teachers' behalf in their profession and teachers might experience a sense of frustration or demoralization due to their foreign accent. Hence they may become demoralized to a greater degree (Demirezen, 2007). Nonnative teachers of English who carry a foreign accent or bad pronunciation in their profession can also experience social and professional discrimination

(Derwing et al., 2002). As is the case in Turkey, many foundation universities prefer native-speaking teachers to non-native teachers and thus paving the way for nonnative teachers to be confronted with the possibility of losing their jobs or not getting hired.

Furthermore, students are more knowledgeable about foreign languages nowadays through exposure to miscellaneous means of communication, which puts nonnative teachers of English into a position where they might feel obliged to be more prepared and knowledgeable than ever so as not to be subjected to negative reactions by students due to their bad pronunciation or foreign accent. The advancements in technology could also be beneficial to nonnative teachers as well since they might have access to diverse sources of instruction on pronunciation or accent in specific so that they could enhance their manner of articulation with regard to the core sounds that cause accented speech. In order not to receive unfavorable feedback or reactions from students and to avoid any remarks of their inefficiencies or incompetence regarding their profession, nonnative teachers of English, as part of their profession, should carry out a needs analysis so as to identify what they lack that results in mispronunciation or accented speech. Provided that nonnative teachers do their parts in relation to having at least near native-like accent pursuant to work ethics or professionalism, they will stay away from any social or professional discrimination due to their foreign accent.

In conclusion, teachers of English should definitely not permit L1 accent in foreign language teacher education because of a number of reasons. First, the use of L1 accent in foreign language learning and teaching does not accord with professional identity. Teachers of English who adopt a professional identity must expend a great deal of effort to acquire at least a near-native-like accent since professional identity requires them to be equipped with thorough subject knowledge (Demirezen, 2007). Second, prospective teachers of English must prepare equip themselves with advances in academics and technology thus become appropriate learners of the 21st century. With such learners and prospective teachers, teachers of English must act as efficient role-models for their students in order to avoid negative comments or criticism by their students in that they might label their teachers as incompetent or inefficient due to lack of subject knowledge, here the acquisition of at least near-native-like accent.

3. Method

The present study intends to reveal the attitudes of Turkish teachers of English on the permissibility of foreign accent in foreign language learning and teaching settings. In this respect, the research questions of the study were formulated as follows:

RQ (1): What are the views of Turkish teachers of English on the relationship between accent and identity by gender?

RQ (2): Do Turkish teachers of English believe that L1 accent can be ameliorated?

RQ (3): What are the general attitudes of Turkish teachers of English towards the tolerability of L1 accent in foreign language learning and teaching settings?

3.1. Participants and Sampling

The participants of this study were 13 males and 27 females from different state schools and universities as well as foundation universities. They were selected through a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. First, the researcher contacted a number of the participants and then asked them to identify some more appropriate participants that they know. Some of the participants were easy to reach by the researcher, therefore both convenience and snowballing sampling techniques were utilized in this study. All participants held BA in English language teaching, with 17 holding an MA and 3 PhD candidacy. The majority ($f=21$) had 1-5 years of teaching experience, while 11 had 6-10 years and eight of them had more than 11 years of

teaching experience in foreign language education. Most participants ($f=29$) worked in state universities, followed respectively by state schools ($f=7$) and foundation universities ($f=4$). The majority ($f=27$) stated they had no previous professional training on accent, while 13 had. In addition, all participants stated that they speak one or two foreign languages such as German, French, Spanish, Italian, Greek or Russian.

3.2. Instrumentation

A questionnaire developed by the present researcher was used to investigate the attitudes of Turkish teachers of English towards the acceptability of L1 accent in foreign language teacher education. The items were in a sequence such as “strongly disagree (1)”, “disagree (2)”, “neutral (3)”, “agree (4)”, and “strongly agree (5)”. The scale has two parts: the first part is about background information (gender, year of teaching experience, educational background, and affiliation with professional accent training and foreign languages). The second part consists of 30 statements equally divided into six main categories. The items in the questionnaire focus on six headings, which are identity, locus of control, accent modification, neighborhood effect, formal instruction and professional outlook. These headings are considered to be related to the determinants of a clear pronunciation and accent (Piske et al., 2001). The items were formed in align with the categories as well as with the help of expert opinions and a thorough literature review on the determinants of foreign accent and its tolerability in teacher education.

3.3. Procedure for Data Collection and Analysis

The headings in the survey questionnaire were selected as they are considered to be some of the primary determinants of a clear and appropriate accent (Piske et al., 2001). Upon the selection of the headings, statements about each heading were determined with the help of a thorough literature review and expert opinion. The participants were asked to complete a survey questionnaire which consists of two parts. The first part is about the participants’ background information while the second part aims to evaluate the attitudes of the participants towards L1 accent tolerability. The second part has 6 headings, each with 5 statements which in total amounts to 30 statements. The participants were asked to evaluate each statement using a Likert scale where 1 means “Strongly Disagree” and 5 “Strongly Agree”.

The questionnaire was piloted with 15 Turkish teachers of English before its administration in order to measure its content and linguistic validity. Three experts from the field of ELT were consulted about whether the items in the questionnaire are clear and the scales are appropriate. Based on the feedback received, a few modifications were performed. With regard to the reliability of the main instrument for data collection of this study, the questionnaire proved to be reliable with a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient value of 0.80. Upon the collection of data, the data were entered into SPSS and computed based on the research questions.

4. Findings and Discussion

The following data were collected through descriptive statistics in accordance with the five-point Likert scale administered to 40 Turkish teachers of English who work in different state schools or universities as well as foundation universities.

RQ (1): What are the views of Turkish teachers of English on the relationship between accent and identity by gender?

To find the answer to the first research question, the percentages of the heading about identity were illustrated in a table and then gender cross tabulations were computed.

Table 1

Percentages of participants' responses to statements concerning identity

Identity	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
1. I prefer to keep my L1 accent as I fear I might lose my national identity.	52.5%	35%	7.5%	5%	0%	100%
2. I believe teachers should speak with at least near native-like accent as part of their professional/teacher identity.	5%	15%	5%	32.5%	42.5%	100%
3. I believe I betray my L1 community if I use native speaker accent in the classroom.	75%	17.5%	2.5%	5%	0%	100%
4. Active occupational commitment is necessary to have a professional identity.	2.5%	2.5%	17.5%	55%	22.5%	100%
5. Having a professional identity for teaching a foreign language does not harm my job satisfaction.	0%	2.5%	7.5%	42.5%	47.5%	100%

As can be seen in Table 5, when “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” categories are combined, 87% of the participants claimed they do not lose their national identity if they retain their native accent. Similarly, 92.5% of them disagreed that they are disloyal to their community provided they speak with a native-speaker accent in the classroom. With regard to professional identity, 77.5% of the participants stated they should speak with at least near native-like accent pursuant to professional and teacher identities. In line with this, 90% of the participants who took the questionnaire reported that possessing a professional identity does not harm their job satisfaction. 77.5% have also informed that possessing professional identity requires active occupational commitment.

Table 2

Gender cross-tabulation regarding identity

	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
S1	15%	37.5%	15%	20%	0%	7.5%	2.5%	2.5%	0%	0%
S2	5%	0%	2.5%	12.5%	2.5%	2.5%	10%	22.5%	12.5%	30%
S3	22.5%	52.5%	7.5%	10%	0%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	0%	0%
S4	0%	2.5%	0%	2.5%	5%	12.5%	22.5%	32.5%	5%	17.5%
S5	0%	2.5%	0%	7.5%	0%	0%	17.5%	25%	15%	32.5%

When Table 1 and Table 2 are compared, it can be observed that 57.5% of the female participants of the study disagree that they keep using L1 accent for fear of losing their national identity while this percentage is 30 with the male participants. Moreover, 52.5% of the female and 22.5% male teachers of English in Turkey believe that they should speak with at least near-native-like accent as part of professional/teacher identity. In a similar vein, 62.5 % female and 30% male participants are not of the opinion that they become disloyal to their native community if they use L2 accent. Based on this finding, it can be asserted that Turkish teachers of English have no problem regarding their ethnic or cultural identity. Instead, it can be expressed that they might have adopted a collective identity where more than one identity type coincides peacefully. Additionally, half of the female and almost two thirds of the male teachers of English agree that teachers should commit themselves to their jobs actively as part of professional identity.

RQ (2): *Do Turkish teachers of English believe that L1 accent can be ameliorated?*

To answer this question, related statements in the survey were selected and then computed descriptively. The results are illustrated in the table below.

Table 3

Participants' views on accent amelioration

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
1. Pronunciation instruction could be more effective if L2 learners have a desire to sound like a native speaker.	37.5%	5%	2.5%	45%	10%	100%
2. I believe integrative motivation and concern for L2 pronunciation might help decrease the degree of foreign accent.	17.5%	12.5%	37.5%	30%	2.5%	100%
3. I believe I have the ability to change my foreign accent to be more competent in my profession.	15%	12.5%	22.5%	45%	5%	100%
10. I'm of the opinion that through instrumental motivation may emerge accent-free pronunciation.	0%	15%	40%	42.5%	2.5%	100%
11. I think foreign accents can be reduced considerably through computerized or remedial instruction.	0%	10%	37.5%	42.5%	10%	100%
15. I believe accent reduction seems possible to some extent through remedial instruction.	0%	7.5%	15%	67.5%	10%	100%
22. Receiving segmental and suprasegmental instruction of L2 can considerably reduce the degree of L2 foreign accent.	0%	2.5%	17.5%	60%	20%	100%

7 related items of 3 headings were selected and then the percentages of each item were computed. The responses of the participants can be categorized under three headings, which are locus of control, accent modification and formal instruction. When “Strongly Agree” and “Agree”, “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” are combined, it can be observed that more than 50% of the participants believe that there is a strong linear relationship between L2 learners’ desire to have a native-like accent and the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction. In other words, the majority of them believe that pronunciation instruction becomes more effective if L2 learners are enthusiastic about having a native-like accent while more than 40% of them do not think similarly. 37.5% of Turkish teachers of English have neutral views on the fact that it is integrative motivation and concern for L2 pronunciation that help decrease the degree of foreign accent in their speech. Half of the participants also believe that they have the ability to change their foreign accent to be more competent in their profession while 29.5% have lost their hope on this issue. Regarding the 8th statement in the survey which aims to evaluate the locus of control of the participants on accent tolerability, the following table can yield interesting findings.

Table 4

Participant responses

<i>I believe I have the ability to change my foreign accent to be more competent in my profession.</i>					
	SD	D	N	A	SA
25-34	12.5%	12.5%	17.5%	32.5%	5%
35-44	2.5%	0%	2.5%	10%	0%
45-54	0%	0%	2.5%	2.5%	0%

When Table 4 is examined, it can be observed that 25% of the participants who can be considered as young adults as they fall within 25-34 do not believe that they have the ability to change their foreign accent and 17.5% of the same age group is neutral on this issue. When these two percentages are combined, it amounts to 42.5%, which should not be ignored. This finding might point to a problem on part of the young English teachers. It can be speculated that they either have no self-confidence or they have had no proper pronunciation/accent training yet. From this finding, it can be suggested that young teachers of English are in need of help in terms of ameliorating their foreign accent as well as boosting their self-confidence.

If we go back to our discussion about the second research question, Table 3 gives us the data to make comments. Regarding the locus of control, it can be argued that the majority of the participants believe that they have the control over the outcomes of events, here the amelioration of foreign accent. 52.5 % of the participants also believe that foreign accent can be reduced through remedial or computerized instruction while 37.5% of them remain neutral. Similarly, 77.5% of Turkish teachers of English consider that accent reduction is possible through remedial instruction. This finding provides us a room to argue that the majority of the participants are open to professional development and as part of professional identity they can receive instruction on pronunciation and accent to eliminate the effects of foreign accent. Concerning the formal instruction, 80% of the participants believe that segmental and suprasegmental instruction can considerably reduce the degree of foreign accent. To summarize the discussion about the second research question, it can be concluded that the majority of Turkish teachers of English believe that foreign accent can be improved through locus of control, accent modification techniques, and formal instruction.

RQ (3): What are the general attitudes of Turkish teachers of English towards the tolerability of L1 accent in foreign language learning and teaching settings?

To be able to find the answer to the last research question, the total percentages of the statements in each heading will be illustrated in tables and elaborated separately. To clarify the abbreviations and the flow in the table below, it is aimed to illustrate the highest percentages for each statement in each heading with “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”, “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” combined. Hence, it is intended to come to a conclusion regarding the third research question by making inferences considering the views of the majority of the participants on this issue. The abbreviations in the first line belong to the headings in the survey and S1 means the first statement. It is aimed that A means agree, D for disagree and N for neutral next to the percentages.

Table 5

Overall percentages of all statements

	ID	LoC	AcMo	NE	FI	PO
S1	87.5%D	55%A	52.5%A	77.5%D	75%A	42.5%A
S2	75%A	37.5%N	77.5%A	82.5%D	80%A	80%D
S3	92.5%D	50%A	62.5%A	85%D	42.5%D	70%D
S4	77.5%A	50%A	52.5%N	90%D	77.5%A	90%A
S5	90%A	45%A	77.5%A	65%D	70%A	82.5%A

With regard to the participants' responses to the statements in the first heading, which is identity, it can be argued that the majority of Turkish teachers of English have no worries about the loss of their ethnic and national identities and they are very open to professional development and near-native-like accent as part of professional/teacher identity. As to the second heading, locus of control, it is observed that the majority believes in themselves in that they can achieve a near-native-like accent through instrumental/integrative motivation. Concerning the third heading, accent modification, most of the participants consider that they can eliminate or reduce foreign accent through accent modification techniques and courses to some extent. Regarding the fourth heading, neighborhood effect, a great majority of the participants disagree that they are affected negatively by their students, colleagues and administration due to their accented speech. About the fifth heading, which is formal instruction, most of the participants agree that more time should be allocated for pronunciation instruction and that both segmental and suprasegmental instruction can lead to the amelioration of foreign accent. Finally, as to the last heading, professional outlook, a vast majority of the participants believe that they should be efficient role-models for their students in terms of native-like accent and that at least near-native-like accent should be dominant in foreign language teacher education. From these findings, it can be argued that the participants of this study, who currently work in different institutions as teachers of English, believe that foreign accent can be alleviated through several methods and that at least near-native-like accent should prevail in foreign language teacher education as they are considered to be efficient role-models for their students. With this in mind, it can be inferred that Turkish teachers of English might not tolerate L1 accent in foreign language learning and teaching due to the discussion aforementioned.

5. Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions

Several studies revealed the need for pronunciation instructions for teachers of English (Breitkreutz, Derwing, and Rossiter, 2002; Burgess & Spencer, 2000; MacDonald, 2002). Both pre-service and in-service foreign language teachers should be equipped with a distinct background in phonetics and phonology which deals with both segmental and suprasegmental features, their forms and functions in discourse as well as accent instruction that will pave the way for near native-like accent for prospective teachers of English will be driven to take as efficient models. In relation to the biological basis for the inability to acquire native-like accent, it can be suggested that the age of learning a foreign language in Turkey be as early as possible as the current age of learning an L2 contradicts with what Lenneberg (1967) and Scovel (1969) claimed. However, nonnative pre-service and in-service teachers of English can still receive intensive pronunciation or accent training so as to acquire at least near native-like accent to be efficient models for their students, which does not seem impossible to achieve on condition that they have what professional identity requires and are ready to exert themselves to do their parts pursuant to professionalism. In line with the aforementioned data, the following suggestions could be made about the tolerability of L1 accent in teacher education:

1. Foreign language teacher education programs should encompass both segmental and suprasegmental features of the L2 so that prospective teachers could be aware of the ‘core sounds’ that could lead to foreign accent.
2. In-service nonnative teachers of English could undergo intensive pronunciation and accent instruction with regard to the problematic areas that cause foreign accent, which creates a bad image as far as professional identity is concerned.
3. The curriculum for English Language Teacher Education should include altered examination systems, paving the way for oral examination besides written examination since ignorance of pronunciation or oral examination could create an image in the teachers’ minds that these skills are insignificant.
4. The use of L1 is a significant determinant of the degree of foreign accent, therefore it should not be allowed in the classroom. Instead, ‘English-only’ classrooms should be encouraged so that learners are exposed to the target language as well. As for teachers, they might lose their productive skills if they continue to use L1 or speak with L1 accent while teaching.

With regard to the future of pronunciation instruction in the Turkish setting, Coşkun’s (2011) study could be of great importance as the participants are future teachers of English, which means they will pass on their preferred pronunciation model. Coşkun (2011) concluded that it would be fair to assume that native speaker norms will remain as the teaching model. In a similar sense, Sifakis and Sougari (2005) found in their study that teachers’ beliefs about their accents seemed to be associated with their authority as role models in the classroom, and as such they believed that they ought to strive toward attaining what they identify as a good English accent. Hence, it is plausible to claim that there is no obstacle in the way of having at least near native-like accent while future Turkish teachers of English are inclined to adopt native speaker norms as the teaching model and they will strive for obtaining a good accent.

6. Conclusion and Limitations

The present study aimed at exploring the stance of Turkish teachers of English, who have been working in different state schools and universities as well as foundation universities with different years of teaching experience, on the permissibility of L1 accent in teacher education. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of 30 statements and six categories which are identity, locus of control, accent modification, neighborhood effect, formal instruction, and professional outlook. With regard to identity, the majority of the participants, more than 80%, disagreed with the fact that speaking with a native speaker accent does harm their job satisfaction or their national identity or that they betray their community since they believe that they speak with near native-like accent pursuant to their professional identity.

In relation to locus of control, 55% of the Turkish teachers of English believe that teaching pronunciation might be more effective if learners have a desire to sound like a native speaker. Half of them also stated that they have the ability to change their foreign accent to be more competent in their profession. As far as accent modification is concerned, 77.5% of them think that foreign accents can be reduced considerably through computerized and remedial instruction. From this point of view, it might be reasonable to claim that Turkish teachers of English believe in themselves and think that they are able to overcome their L1 accent pursuant to their professional identity. In respect to neighborhood effect, the results showed that Turkish teachers of English do not fear administrators due to the fact that they speak with a foreign accent nor do they accept the fact that they get negative remarks from their students or colleagues owing to their accented speech.

To conclude, many researchers are fascinated by the attraction of EIL or ELF (Seidlhofer, 1999; Jenkins, 2007), which might appear reasonable seeing the fact that nonnative speakers of English outnumber native speakers. They claim that they respect for each individual nonnative accent and therefore there is no need to give hope to learners that they could achieve a native like accent. However, in the realm of foreign language teacher education, this assertion remains unreciprocated in that teacher education is a field which requires prospective teachers to possess what professional and teacher identity necessitate. Teacher education is a field where future teachers of English receive education so as to become the representatives of the teaching profession. Pursuant to this claim, nonnative teachers of English should not be permitted to teach with a foreign accent now that 90% the participants of the study expressed that L2 teachers should be efficient models for their students in terms of native-like accent and that 82.5% of them consider that at least near native-like should be dominant in foreign language teacher education. With this positive attitude from Turkish teachers of English toward the use of native-like accent and the belief in the possibility of accent modification via computerized or remedial instruction, this study concludes that L1 accent should not be tolerated in foreign language teacher education.

There are three limitations to the present study. First, the study was conducted with 40 Turkish teachers of English who work in different state schools and universities and foundation universities. In order for the participants to be more homogenous, the study might have been conducted with teachers from the same institution. Second, the study was conducted with Turkish teachers of English. It might have been carried out with teachers speaking other languages to identify the attitudes of teachers of other nationalities. Third, the data and findings could have been supported and reinforced through semi-structured interviews. It could not have been achieved in this study due to time restraints.

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