Does Pronunciation Instruction Make Any Sense? EFL Learners and Teachers' Beliefs

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Abstract

Pronunciation has been regarded as a neglected language skill and there is a lack of research on the nature of pronunciation instruction in the literature. Thus, this paper presents the findings of a survey which investigates a) EFL learners and teachers' beliefs about the significance of correct pronunciation and its relation to other language skills, b) their preferences for explicit or implicit pronunciation instruction and whether background variables such as age or language level have an effect on these stakeholders' views about pronunciation instruction. The study also examines whether beliefs about pronunciation instruction influence learners' communicative competency and performance. In order to collect data, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire consisting of 54 items about related areas was administered to EFL learners (*N*=642) and teachers (*N*=42) following its reliability analyses. The findings revealed that EFL learners and teachers have a tendency towards implicit pronunciation instruction whereas their preferences are not totally in the similar vein. The study provides further data and evidence from the perspective of English language teachers and learners for the discussion of the effective way of pronunciation instruction.

Keywords: EFL learners; language teachers; beliefs; pronunciation instruction

1. Introduction

1.1. Beliefs about pronunciation instruction

No matter how long history does pronunciation has in language teaching, it has been a neglected skill by language teachers according to some researchers (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 2005; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Hişmanoğlu, 2006). On the other hand, the high importance of intelligibility which has been defined by Derwing (2010) as "the degree to which a listener understands a speaker" (p. 29) has been highlighted by numerous researchers in the literature (eg., Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 2010; Jenkins, 1998; Morley, 1991). While intelligibility and the nature of pronunciation instruction have been prominent research areas of pronunciation instruction, the number of the studies on the

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teachers and learners' beliefs about pronunciation instruction and classroom-based research on it has been limited, which has also been proposed by Baker (2014) "… the teaching and learning of pronunciation in typical ESL or EFL classrooms has remained largely unexplored, indicating that research into current pronunciation-oriented teaching practices of L2 instructors is long overdue." (p. 139) Similarly, Baker (2014) has proposed that the number of the studies and questionnaires on language learners and teachers' views is not much. The findings of these studies have suggested that a number of teachers are not into teaching pronunciation (e.g., Macdonald, 2002). To this end, two teachers in the Baker's (2014) study have stated that pronunciation teaching might be boring due to '*overroutinization'* (Prabhu, 1992) caused by the design of the followed course books and the course itself. On the other hand, for learners, who are the main character in a movie named 'learning' set in a classroom, pronunciation is so crucial that most of the students in Derwing and Rossiter's (2002) study have stated that they are aware of their pronunciation needs and what matters in other speakers' pronunciation. Of all 100 ESL learners in the study, 77 % have stated that they focus on their own and others' pronunciation and 90 % of them have stated they would like to attend a pronunciation program if there is any. While the findings of the study demonstrate that learners are conscious of their learning needs and competencies regarding pronunciation instruction, more findings from different contexts and settings such as EFL are likely to be effective in supporting these findings.

Considering language learners' beliefs and competencies, one of the assumptions is that background factors such as age and language level may be a major factor determining them (e.g, Derwing & Munro, 2005; Gatbonton, Trofimovich & Magid, 2005; Lee, Jang & Plonsky, 2015; Polonsky & Oswald, 2014). In this sense, Derwing and Munro (2005) have concluded that pronunciation instruction has a positive effect on low level language learners while Lee et al., (2015) have revealed no confirming findings. Furthermore, age (e.g., Muñoz, 2011) and ethnic group affiliation (Gatbonton et al., 2005) have been suggested to be factors in second language pronunciation learning. Additionally, Lee et al., (2015) have proposed that the number of the studies on the effect of background on pronunciation learning be increased. Since background is suggested to be significant in pronunciation learning, it may also be related to learners' beliefs about pronunciation learning and instruction, which constitutes one of the research questions of this study.

1.2. Explicit or implicit pronunciation instruction

Another unknown issue among the studies on pronunciation instruction conducted so far is the question of how to teach pronunciation (e.g., Foote, Trofimovich, Collins & Urzúa-Soler 2016; Gordon, Darcy & Ewert, 2013). In this respect, the effect of explicit and implicit pronunciation instruction has been investigated and the studies have set

forth various findings and suggestions (e.g., Couper, 2003; Kissling, 2013; Saito, 2011; 2012, 2014). Most of these studies have supported explicit pronunciation teaching. For instance, Derwing and Munro (2005) have asserted that explicit instruction of pronunciation enables language learners to be conscious about the differences between their pronunciation and those of proficient speakers. Moreover, Saito's study (2011) that was carried out with twenty Japanese learners who learn English in an ESL setting and that examined the effect of explicit pronunciation instruction on comprehensibility and accentedness has revealed a positive effect of this instruction type on comprehensibility while it has proved no effect on eradicating foreigner accent, which is another dimension of the studies in this area (e.g., Levis, 2005). Additionally, Venkatagiri and Levis (2007) have found out that explicit instruction enables learners to develop conscious knowledge of segmentals and suprasegmentals. Couper (2003) has also revealed positive effect of explicit pronunciation instruction.

A number of studies, however, have provided evidence in favor of implicit pronunciation instruction or they have revealed no evidence for the benefit of explicit pronunciation instruction. For instance, Morley (1991) has proposed that learners can achieve intelligibility as long as it is taught as integrated into speaking classes rather than in isolated pronunciation classes. From the second perspective, in a study carried out with 95 first, second and third year Spanish language learners, Kissling (2013) has ascertained that it is likely to be nature of input, practice and feedback that facilitates pronunciation learning rather than how it is taught (explicitly or implicitly) since there was no obvious difference between the two methods in the conducted study.

Despite the discussion about the effect of explicit or implicit pronunciation instruction with variables such as what aspects and how to teach; intelligibility and accentedness, one issue neglected in the research area is how learners regard pronunciation instruction, which is supported by Derwing and Rossiter (2002) "Although researchers and teacher educators have called for more attention to the incorporation of pronunciation instruction in language classes, with an emphasis on prosodic elements, the L2 learners' responses suggest that they are either not getting instruction or, if they are, they are not benefiting from it." (p. 161) Considering this discrepancy, the aim of this study is to provide more support for learners and teachers' beliefs on the controversial issues in order to lead future research and practices by surveying 642 EFL learners and 42 teachers' views. With this regard, the following questions were addressed in the study.

1. How do EFL learners and teachers consider pronunciation in language learning?
2. Is there a tendency towards favoring explicit or implicit pronunciation instruction?

3. Are background variables such as age and teaching/learning experience effective in
    a) EFL learners and teachers' views about pronunciation and its instruction?
    b) EFL learners' communicative competency and performance?

2. Method

2.1. Setting

The study was conducted in an EFL context at School of Foreign Languages of a state university in Turkey. The institution provides one-year long intensive English teaching to the students in their first year at the university before studying in their own departments. It is compulsory to study English in the first year as 30 % of some courses are conducted in English whereas it is optional to study English in departments in which language of instruction is Turkish. Therefore, each student starting to university whose departments require to have a good command in English takes a proficiency exam which consists of multi-choice items about grammar and vocabulary knowledge and those students who obtain more than 60 points in this exam carry on their education in their departments while the ones who have failed must take a one-year long compulsory language education in classes appropriate for their language level. Considering the language level, the program starts with A1 level and ends with A2/B1 language level according to CEFR level descriptions. Learners are provided with 30 hours of integrated courses a week via daytime and evening education. An integrated course book in which all language knowledge and skills are presented in appropriate contexts is used as the main course material. In this sense, no language knowledge or skill is taught separately or no course is provided to teach these skills. As for the pronunciation teaching, it constitutes 5% of the overall proficiency and it is assessed in exams through a section for five points. Likewise, the course book attaches importance to teaching the sounds with their symbols explicitly, so involves sections which focus on teaching a different sound in each one and provides exercises in order to practice the presented sounds. Therefore, learners are supposed to recognize the sound and its symbol and discriminate it from the other sounds. In line with teaching, students are tested with similar kinds of exercises on pronunciation which is generally in the form of 'circle the different sound' in quizzes and proficiency exams. As well as noticing activities, students are also exposed to pronunciation instruction through other language knowledge and skills such as vocabulary teaching and listening. Furthermore, one of the skills related to pronunciation is speaking since a part is allocated for pronunciation/ fluency in the rubric to assess speaking skill. Now that students are exposed to pronunciation instruction in

many ways, it is likely to be easy for them to associate it with other language skills which are included in the questionnaire.

2.2. Participants

In light of the aim and the research questions of the study, 642 EFL learners with different language proficiency levels who have different backgrounds and study at the aforementioned institution and 42 teachers who teach them were selected as the participants of the study due to eligibility and convenience issues. Each participant participated in the study on voluntary basis by informing their consent by signing a form developed by the researcher. Both the students and teachers had different backgrounds.

Learners with various language abilities and levels are placed in appropriate classrooms and learn English for an academic year. Basically, there are three language levels taught: A2, A1+ and A1 (from highest to the lowest). While A2 level and A1+ are compromised of the students studying in various departments, students in the evening classes constitute A1 level. Of 880 students of the program, 642 from various proficiency levels participated in the study (See Table 1). Since a different course book which does not include a separate section for teaching pronunciation is used in English Language and Literature classes, B2 level students were not involved in the study.

Table 1. Frequencies of EFL learners

Gender (M=1.49, SD=.50)		Level (M=2.09,SD=.39)			Age (M=1.17, SD=.41)			Learning (M=2.41, SD=.80)		
Female	Male	A2	A1+	A1	17-20	21-25	25+	0-1	2-5	5+
327	313	23	539	80	540	91	9	131	116	393
			Total: 642		Missing: 2					

The instructors working at the institution have different educational background. They studied at different majors before being an instructor at the school or a number of them carried on their education by getting MA or Ph.D degree. On average, they have 3 years of teaching experience at the same school. (See Table 2)

Table 2. Frequencies of EFL teachers

Gender (M=1.26, SD=.44)		Background education (M=1.43, SD=.63)			Teaching experience (M=2.14, SD= .89)		
Female	Male	BA	MA	PhD	0-5	6-10	10+
31	11	27	12	3	11	16	15
			Total: 42				

2.3. Materials

2.3.1. Questionnaires

In order to collect data to address the research questions, two questionnaires were developed for teachers and learners by the researcher including three sub-sections and 5-point Likert-scale (1= *Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Maybe, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree*) items in total. The questionnaires started with a section which included items about the background of the participants so as to associate them with the other variables of the study. These sections involved information about gender, age, the years of learning and teaching experience. Additionally, the questionnaires consisted of beliefs about the significance of pronunciation skill (14 items); explicit or implicit pronunciation teaching (16 items) and its relation to other language skills (20 items). For instance, one of the items in the teachers' questionnaire was "*Teaching sounds explicitly is essential.*" One of the items in the students' questionnaire was "*Learning the sounds with their symbols increases my motivation for learning English.*" in terms of views about explicit and implicit pronunciation teaching. The developed items were supervised by two professionals in the field and they were administered to the students and teachers for a pilot study in order to check their reliability. During the pilot study, each comment and suggestion by the students and teachers was taken seriously in order to develop a more valid and reliable data collection material appealing to the purpose of the study. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine internal consistency of the items and the results of reliability and the factor analyses which were conducted after reversing items revealed that all items in each section were internally consistent and valid with high reliability scores. The total reliability score of students' questionnaire was $α= 922$, while it was $α= 921$ for the teachers.

Following the reliability analyses, the questionnaires were administered to the participants with their adjustments.

2.4. Data collection

With regard to research questions, a number of statistical analyses were conducted by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. To start with, descriptive statistics and normality tests were applied to all variables and the distribution of them were analyzed. Since the variables had significant values, nonparametric tests were employed to compare groups. In order to address the first research question; descriptive statistics, Mann Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests were employed to compare learners and teachers' consideration for learning pronunciation and its association to other language skills. Similarly, the same tests were conducted to compare their preferences for explicit or implicit pronunciation instruction. In order to address the last research question which investigates the relationship between the

participants' background and their beliefs about pronunciation, non-parametric Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests were conducted and the results were interpreted in light of the related literature.

3. Results

3.1. EFL learners' and teachers' beliefs about pronunciation in language learning

In order to address the first research question examining EFL learners and teachers' beliefs about pronunciation and its connection to other language skills, descriptive statistics combined with normality tests were conducted. Regarding the significance of pronunciation, the questionnaire included items such as *"I think correct pronunciation is highly important in foreign language education (M=4.41, SD=.78) "Pronunciation activities must be increased in course books"* (*M*=3.93, *SD*=1.03) *and "I would like to be corrected when I make pronunciation errors"* (*M*=4.22, *SD*=.92) in the learners' questionnaire whereas teachers' questionnaire included items such as *"Teaching pronunciation is highly important (M=3.9, SD=.75),"I think the number of pronunciation activities must be increased in course books"* (*M*=3.29, *SD*=.10) and *"My students would like to be corrected when they make pronunciation errors" (M=3.24, SD=.75)*. That the items were in a similar vein made comparing their beliefs possible. The findings of the analyses can be seen in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. EFL learners' beliefs about pronunciation

Item	Tendency Percentage	Frequency	
I believe that correct pronunciation is important (*M*=4.48, *SD*=.81)	Strongly agree	392	61.1
I think correct pronunciation is highly important in foreign language education. (*M*=4.41 *SD*= .78)	Strongly agree	341	53.1
I would like to have correct pronunciation (*M*=4.62, *SD*=.73)	Strongly agree	461	71.8
I think the number of pronunciation activities must be increased in course books (*M*=3.93, *SD*=1.03)	Agree	264	41.1
I study pronunciation through extensive activities such as listening to music, watching films. (*M*=4.06, *SD*=.96)	Agree	264	41.1
In-class pronunciation activities must be focused on. (*M*=4.13, *SD*= .88)	Agree	294	45.8
I would like to be corrected when I make pronunciation errors. (*M*=4.22, *SD*=.92)	Strongly agree	286	44.5
Learning stress and intonation is highly important for correct pronunciation. (*M*=4.06, *SD*=.93)	Strongly agree	286	44.5
Pronunciation errors hinder me from communicating with others. (*M*=3.52 , *SD*=1.18)	Agree	207	32.2
Pronunciation errors decrease my motivation for language learning. (*M*=3.02, *SD*= 1.29)	Agree	168	26.2

Table 4. EFL teachers' beliefs about pronunciation

Item	Tendency	Frequency	Percentage
I believe that correct pronunciation is important. (*M*=4.29, *SD*=.59)	Agree	24	57.1
	Agree	21	50.0
Teaching pronunciation is highly important. (*M*=3.9, *SD*=.75)	Agree	26	61.9
My students would like to have correct pronunciation (*M*=3.81, *SD*=59)	Maybe	15	35.7
I think the number of pronunciation activities must be increased in course books. (*M*=3.29, *SD*=1.04)	Maybe/Agree	14	33.3
I think my students study pronunciation better through extensive activities such as listening to music, watching films. (*M*=3.81, *SD*=1.13)	Agree/ Strongly agree	20	47.6
I think in-class pronunciation activities must be focused on. (*M*=3.6, *SD*=.79)			
My students would like to be corrected when they make pronunciation errors. (*M*=3.24, *SD*=.25)	Maybe	22	52.4
Teaching stress and intonation is highly important for correct pronunciation. (*M*=3.38, *SD*=.90)	Agree	16	38.1
Pronunciation errors hinder my students from communicating with others. (*M*=3.02, *SD*=.86)	Maybe	14	33.3
Pronunciation errors decrease my students' motivation for language learning. (*M*=3.02, *SD*=.89)	Maybe/ Agree	15	35.7

As can be seen in the Tables, learners and teachers have similar beliefs about pronunciation. However, it seems obvious that their beliefs differ to a certain extent. Specifically, it emerged that while the teachers were sure about their beliefs, they did not have many ideas about their students' beliefs considering the related items. For instance, the majority of the teachers selected "Maybe" as an answer for the hindering effect of pronunciation errors on students' communication with others whereas the learners selected "Agree" as an answer. Likewise, learners and teachers' beliefs about language skills that are mostly associated with pronunciation were also distinct from each other. To this end, while approximately 50 % of the learners associated pronunciation with reading skill (*M*=3.87, *SD*= .96), 50 % of the teachers chose speaking as the related skill (*M*=2.93, *SD*=.99), but they both preferred implicit teaching and learning for the related skill, which is another dimension of this survey. Ultimately, in order to better understand whether there is a connection between learners and teachers' beliefs about pronunciation and its relation to language skills, a Spearman rho nonparametric correlation test was conducted between the mean values of belonging to the participants since the variables did not have a normal distribution and the results suggested that there was no statistically significant relationship between learners and teachers' beliefs (*r*(648)= .394, p<.05)

3.2. *Preferences for explicit or implicit pronunciation instruction*

The second research question addressed whether there was a tendency towards favoring explicit or implicit pronunciation teaching and learning. In order to analyze the data, descriptive statistics and frequencies were carried out. The findings are illustrated in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5.EFL learners' preferences for explicit or implicit pronunciation instruction

Item	Tendency	Frequency	Percentage
I would like to learn the sounds explicitly (*M*=3.99, *SD*=.94)	Agree	296	46.1
I would like to learn the sounds implicitly through vocabulary learning or listening to music (*M*=4.02, *SD*=.94)	Agree	311	48.4
Learning the sounds with their symbols increases my motivation for learning English (*M*=3.47, *SD*=1.17)	Agree	210	32.7
Learning sounds through various activities increases my motivation (*M*=4.08, *SD*=.92)	Agree	267	41.6
I like the activities in the course books which focus on teaching pronunciation (*M*=3.46, *SD*= 1.21)	Agree	217	33.8
I prefer activities which focus on the symbols of sounds (*M*=3.59, *SD*=1.18)	Agree	228	35.5
I have problems about learning sounds with their symbols (*M*=2.97, *SD*=1.21)	Disagree	178	27.7
Indirect assessment of pronunciation should be preferred (*M*= 3.91, *SD*=.98)	Agree	277	43.1

Table 6. EFL teachers' preferences for explicit or implicit pronunciation instruction

Item	Tendency	Frequency	Percentage
My students would like to learn the sounds explicitly (*M*=3.45, *SD*=.80)	Agree	20	47.6
My students would like to learn the sounds implicitly through vocabulary learning or listening to music (*M*=3.6, *SD*=.76)	Agree	20	47.6
Learning the sounds with their symbols increases students' motivation for learning English (*M*=3.21, *SD*=.84)	Agree	17	40.5
Learning sounds through various activities increases students' motivation (*M*=3.93, *SD*=.71)	Agree	19	45.2
I like the activities in the course books which focus on teaching pronunciation. (*M*=3.55, *SD*= .77)	Agree	21	50.0
I like using activities which focus on the symbols of sounds in class. (*M*=3, 31, *SD*=.95)	Agree	18	42.9
My students have problems about learning sounds with their symbols (*M*=3.21, *SD*=1.04)	Agree	14	33.3
Indirect assessment of pronunciation should be preferred (*M*=3.36, *SD*=.79)	Maybe/Agree	17	40.5

As can be seen above, learners and teachers have similar beliefs concerning explicit or implicit pronunciation instruction except for a number of items. While they both preferred implicit pronunciation instruction integrated into other skills and knowledge; stated that pronunciation should be tested indirectly and found the course books as useful tools to teach pronunciation, there were differences between their beliefs

regarding learning sounds with their symbols. In this sense, learners indicated that they did not have any difficulty in learning these sounds and symbols whereas the teachers assumed that their students had difficulty in it. Therefore, it can be deduced that teachers were not much aware of their students' profile concerning their preferences for pronunciation learning.

3.3. The effect of background on learners and teachers' beliefs

The last research question examined the possibility of the fact that participants' background had an effect on their beliefs and learners' linguistics competence and performance. Thus, a number of comparisons were made through Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis statistics by considering variables such as participants' gender, teaching and learning experience, language level and beliefs since the variables did not have a normal distribution (e.g., gender with skewness of .044 (SE=0.97) and kurtosis of -2.004 (SE=.193) for learners; skewness of 1.124 (SE=.365) and kurtosis of -.777 (SE=.717) for teachers, background education with skewness of 1.203 (SE=.365) and kurtosis of .433 (SE=.717) for teachers and learning experience with skewness of -.875 (SE=.097) and kurtosis of -.905 (SE=. 193)). The findings are as follows:

3.3.1 Gender as an effective variable

The first examined background factor was gender as an effective variable on learners and teachers' beliefs. In this sense, their beliefs about pronunciation and the related language skill; explicit and implicit teaching have been associated with their gender. The findings revealed that there is no statistically significant relationship between the groups (learners; Mdn=1; teachers; Mdn= 1) regarding gender (beliefs; for learners {U= 355.5, p=.00, r=-1.5} and teachers {U= 167, p=.92, r=-1.3}, related language skill; for learners {U= 428, p=.00, r=-5.5} and teachers {U= 145, p=-.47, r=-1.1} explicit-implicit teaching and learning; for learners {U= 438, p=.00, r=-4.8} and teachers {U=155, p=.65, r=-6.9} indicating that gender is not an effective factor in language learners and teachers' beliefs about pronunciation teaching and learning.

3.3.2. Learning and teaching experience as an effective variable

In order to investigate whether learning and teaching experience may be effective in these stakeholders' beliefs, a number of nonparametric Kruskal Wallis tests were conducted and the results indicated no relationship between the variables by referring no effect of background variables on the participants' beliefs about the pronunciation instruction (for learning experience and beliefs; χ2(2)=8.652, p=.013, p<.05; learning and related language skill; χ2(2)= 1.739, p=.419, p<.05; learning experience and explicit-implicit pronunciation instruction; (χ2(2)=2.252, p=.324, p<.05 with a small effect size; for teaching experience and beliefs; χ2(2)= 7.824, p=.020, p<.05; teaching experience and related language skill; χ2(2)=4.425, p=.109, p<.05; teaching experience and explicit-

implicit pronunciation instruction; χ2(2)= 6.467, p=.039, p<.05 with a small effect size). Besides learning and teaching experiences as background factors, language level and age for learners and educational background for teachers prove no statistically significant relationship with the participants' beliefs in question (for language level and beliefs; χ2(2)=13.58, p=.00, p<.05; related language skill; χ2(2)=7.964, p=.019, p<.05; explicit-implicit pronunciation instruction; χ2(2)= 17.98, p=.000, p<.05; for age and beliefs; χ2(2)= 3.899, p=.142, p<.05; related language skill; χ2(2)= 3.133, p=.209, p<.05; explicit-implicit pronunciation instruction; χ2(2)= 5.413, p=.067, p<.05). Furthermore, educational background does not have a significant connection with teachers' beliefs with small effect size (for beliefs; χ2(2)=.365, p=.833, p<.05; related language skill; χ2(2)= 5.472, p=.065, p<.05; explicit-implicit pronunciation instruction; χ2(2)= 1.887, p=.389, p< .05).

Consequently, in order to look through whether learners' beliefs are related to language competency and performance, their scores from the pronunciation section in the proficiency exam and scores from the fluency/ pronunciation section in the rubric of speaking exam were correlated by conducting partial correlation by controlling the effect of beliefs and the results revealed no significant relationship between the variables (r=.114, p= .004)

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The current study addressed how EFL learners and teachers consider pronunciation in language learning and teaching and whether they prefer explicit or implicit instruction for that in light of background variables. As a whole, the findings revealed that while learners and teachers regarded pronunciation as a crucial language skill and they tended to prefer teaching/learning it implicitly, background factors such as gender, learning and teaching experience played no significant role in their beliefs and preferences. With this regard, these findings provide support for the research in the related field since researchers have stated that pronunciation studies have been neglected (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 2005; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Hişmanoğlu, 2006). That the study was carried out with a relatively great number of participants (642 learners and 42 teachers) through a survey on beliefs reveals significant results for the literature since as Baker (2014) has proposed, the number of the studies and questionnaires on language learners' and teachers' views is not much. The questionnaire used in the study included items targeting learners' awareness of their own learning and teachers' awareness of their learners' needs. In this sense, the findings revealed that learners were aware of their own learning, which is in line with the findings of previous research. For instance, the participants in Derwing and Rossiter's (2002) study stated that they were aware of their pronunciation needs and what mattered in other speakers' pronunciation. On the other hand, the findings of this study revealed that the teachers were not completely aware of their learners' needs as they stated that they were not sure about what mattered for their students as their answers were "Maybe". This finding may be associated with the

findings of Macdonald's (2002) study reporting that the teachers in that study were not much interested in teaching pronunciation probably due to its 'boring' nature caused by the '*overroutinization*' (Prabhu, 1992) of course book and course design. Therefore, it may be concluded that it is essential to revise the design of course book and pronunciation courses considering the previous research and the participants' responses in the current study in that they stated the number of the in-class activities and the activities in course books on pronunciation should be increased.

Another issue addressed in the study was preferences for explicit or implicit learning and teaching of pronunciation. In this respect, the learners and teachers both preferred learning/teaching pronunciation and testing of it as integrated into other skills. Thus, these findings do not overlap most of the findings in the literature suggesting learners prefer explicit learning for pronunciation (e.g., Couper, 2003; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Venkatagiri & Levis, 2007). For instance, Derwing and Munro (2005) have ascertained that explicit instruction of pronunciation enables language learners to notice the differences between their pronunciation and those of proficient speakers. Likewise, Saito's study (2011) has revealed a positive effect of explicit pronunciation instruction on comprehensibility and accentedness. On the other hand, implicit learning preferences of the participants are in line with other findings in the literature (Morley, 1991; Kisling, 2013). In this sense, Morley (1991) has indicated that learners benefit more in speaking classes in which pronunciation is integrated.

The last but not the least, background issues have been addressed in the current study since it has been suggested that they might be effective in leading beliefs (e.g, Derwing & Munro, 2005; Gatbonton, Trofimovich & Magid, 2005; Lee, et al, 2015; Polonsky & Oswald, 2014). To this end, no major effect of background on the stakeholders' beliefs emerged in this study while a number of studies have highlighted the effect of age (e.g., Muñoz, 2011); language level (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 2005). Conversely, Lee et al., (2015) have revealed no confirming findings, which is in accordance with the findings of this study and they have also suggested that more studies should be conducted on the effect of background on pronunciation learning, which was one of the focus of the current study.

In conclusion, the current study has focused on a number of issues on pronunciation teaching and learning such as beliefs, explicit or implicit learning/teaching from the perspective of learners and teachers and set forth evidence for the related discussion in the literature. Since the findings reflect the views of participants from a specific setting, more studies with participants in various settings with different background may support the findings and contribute to the literature to enlighten the theories and practices of pronunciation instruction that has been claimed to be a neglected issue in the literature (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 2005; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Hişmanoğlu, 2006).

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