

**BAŞKENT UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
MASTER PROGRAM OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH  
THESIS**

**INTELLIGIBILITY, ACCENTEDNESS, AND COMPREHENSIBILITY OF  
DIFFERENT ENGLISH ACCENTS IN TURKISH CONTEXT**

**PREPARED BY**

**HACER ECRE GÜNEŞ**

**MASTER THESIS**

**ANKARA 2025**

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**ADVISOR  
ASSOC. PROF. DR.  
GÜLİN DAĞDEVİREN KIRMIZI**

**ANKARA 2025**



*To myself, mom, and dad...*

**BAŞKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
**EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ**

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**BAŞKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
**EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ**  
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Hacer Ecre Güneş

Ankara, 2025

## ÖZET

HACER ECRE GÜNEŞ

### Farklı İngilizce Aksanlarının Türkçe Bağlamında Anlaşılabilirliği, Aksanlılığı ve Kavranabilirliliği

Başkent Üniversitesi

Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı

İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı

2025

Ana dili gibi aksanlar veya yabancı aksan kavramları, Türkçe bağlamında oldukça popülerdir. Bu konuşmacıların çoğu yabancı aksana sahip olma eğilimindedir, hatta yabancı aksana sahiptir ve ana dillerini ses ve tonlama aktarımı yoluyla gösterir. Ayrıca, Türkiye’de yapılan önceki çalışmalar, Türk yabancı aksanının genellikle ana dil aksanlarına kıyasla daha olumsuz algılandığını göstermektedir. Ancak, bu olumsuz algıların Türk yabancı aksanının anlaşılabilirliği, kavranabilirliği veya aksanlılığı ile ilişkili olup olmadığına dair net kanıt bulunmamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Türk yabancı aksanının anlaşılabilirliğini ve kavranabilirliğini inceleyerek, aksanlılık ile olan ilişkisini değerlendirmek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma, Ankara’daki bir vakıf üniversitesinde benzer demografik bilgilere sahip 30 Türk öğrenci ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, verilerin tutarlı ve iyi tanımlanmış bir analizini sağlamak için karma yöntem deseni kullanılmıştır. Sayısal veriler için iki görev ve katılımcıların görüşlerini daha iyi anlamak ve aksanlılığı anlamak amacıyla yarı yapılandırılmış bir mülakat uygulanmıştır. Veriler, katılımcıların üç farklı aksandan üç kayıt dinleyerek görevleri tamamlaması ve ardından bir mülakat yapılması yoluyla toplanmıştır. Anlaşılabilirlik görevi ile kavranabilirlik ölçeği arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemek için Pearson korelasyonu kullanılırken, yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat için tematik analiz yapılmıştır. Nicel çalışmalara göre, anlaşılabilirlik ile kavranabilirlik arasındaki korelasyonun, ana dili İngilizce olan aksanlara kıyasla Türk yabancı aksanında daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur. Sırasıyla, Türk yabancı aksanı Amerikan aksanından daha yüksek; İngiliz aksanı ise

hem anlaşılrlık hem de kavranabilirlik açısından en düşük seviyede yer almıştır. Ancak, sadece anlaşılrlık açısından bakıldığında, Amerikan aksanı ile Türk yabancı aksanı benzer seviyelerde bulunmuştur, Türk aksanı ise biraz daha yüksek bir düzey sergilemiştir. Ayrıca, katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğunun Türk yabancı aksanını tercih ettiğı ve anlamakta zorlanmadığı tespit edilmiştir. Türk yabancı aksanına aşinalık, katılımcılar üzerinde önemli ölçüde olumlu bir etki yaratmıştır. Sadece birkaç katılımcı, Türk yabancı aksanından rahatsız olduğunu belirtmiş olup, bu durumun nedeni anlaşılrlıktan ziyade sosyal çekicilik ve yeterlilik algısıyla ilgili bulunmuştur. Bu bulgular, telaffuz öğretiminde anlaşılrlık ve kavranabilirliğin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, telaffuz, tonlama ve vurgu konularının tüm öğrencilere daha açık bir şekilde öğretilmesi ve Türk yabancı aksanına sahip öğretmenlerin eğitim ortamında daha fazla tercih edilmesi önerilebilir. Son olarak, Türk bağlamında ana dil benzeri bir aksanın kritik bir faktör olmayabileceğı ve tüm paydaşların dünyanın farklı bölgelerinden gelen aksanlarla karşılaşmasının gerektiğı söylenebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Anlaşılrlık, aksanlılık, kavranabilirlik, Türk yabancı aksanı, aksan aşinalığı

## **ABSTRACT**

**HACER ECRE GÜNEŞ**

### **Intelligibility, Accentedness, and Comprehensibility of Different English Accents in Turkish Context**

**Başkent University**

**Institute of Educational Sciences**

**Department of Foreign Languages**

**Master Program of English Language Teaching with Thesis**

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Native-like accents or foreign accent concepts are also very popular in the Turkish context, as most of the speakers tend to have foreign accents, possess a foreign accent, and indicate their first language through a transfer of sound and intonation. Also, prior studies in Türkiye suggest that the Turkish foreign accent is generally viewed more negatively than native accents. However, there is a lack of clear evidence on whether these negative perceptions are attributed to the intelligibility, comprehensibility, or accentedness of TFA. This study investigated the intelligibility and comprehensibility of the Turkish foreign accent and explored its connection to accentedness by comparing it with native accents for Turkish EFL listeners. The study was done with 30 Turkish EFL students with similar backgrounds at a foundational university in Ankara. In accordance with the aim, this study was done using a mixed-method design to have a coherent and well-defined analysis of the collected data. There were two tasks for the numerical data and a semi-structured interview in order to have a better understanding of the participants' ideas and as well as the accentedness concept. The data was collected through participants listening to three recordings from three different accents during the tasks and having an interview afterwards. Pearson correlation was used for the correlation between the intelligibility task and a comprehensibility scale, whereas a thematic analysis was done for the semi-structured interview. According to quantitative studies, the correlation between intelligibility and comprehensibility was found to be

more on TFA compared to native accents. In order, the Turkish foreign accent was higher than the American accent, and the British accent was the least for both in intelligibility and comprehensibility. However, in terms of intelligibility, AA and TFA were found to have similar levels of intelligibility, with the TFA demonstrating a slightly higher degree. Also, it was found that most of the participants favored the TFA and did not have a problem understanding it. The familiarity with the Turkish foreign accent had a significantly positive influence on the participants. Only a few participants were disturbed by the Turkish foreign accent, and the reason for this issue was social attractiveness and competence rather than understandability of Turkish foreign accent. In that sense, pronunciation, intonation, and stress issues could be taught to all learners more explicitly, and Turkish foreign teachers could be preferred more in the educational setting since these findings highlight the importance of intelligibility and comprehensibility in pronunciation instruction. Lastly, it is possible to suggest that a native-like accent may not be a crucial point in the Turkish context and having all the stakeholders face different accents from all over the world is needed.

**Keywords:** Intelligibility, comprehensibility, accentedness, Turkish foreign accent, accent familiarity

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|      |                                              |
|------|----------------------------------------------|
| EFL  | English as a Foreign Language                |
| ELF  | English as a Lingua Franca                   |
| ELT  | English Language Teaching                    |
| L1   | First Language                               |
| L2   | Second Language                              |
| EMI  | English Medium Instruction                   |
| ISIB | Interlanguage Speech Intelligibility Benefit |
| AA   | American Accent                              |
| BA   | British Accent                               |
| TFA  | Turkish Foreign Accent                       |

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

English is now used worldwide as a second language or as Lingua Franca (ELF) and is learned by more non-native speakers each day. However, while these non-natives speak English, some differences occur between them and native speakers of English. While using English, one of the common differences generally seen is in the accents. Due to the differences in accent, apart from the technical aspects, the foreign speakers can encounter external obstacles. Since interaction plays a vital role in grasping and applying the semantic and pragmatic subtleties of phonological fluency, these setbacks can significantly affect the learning process (Moyer, 2013). Therefore, there might be judgments and counter-perspectives when showing a foreign accent while speaking in English (Levis, 2005). Having a foreign accent may reflect to the competence, social attractiveness, or even can make a person been stigmatized and discriminated against (Kozłowski, 2015). It is widely believed that the main goal of second language (L2) speech learning should be clear and understandable pronunciation, rather than aiming for a native-like accent or pronunciation (Jułkowska & Cebrian, 2015). Also, Saito et al. (2019) argue that English is now taught through real-life situations and settings and communication; therefore, there should not be only native examples or teachers anymore. These ideas are shaped in the framework of our globalized world and high accessibility to people of not only natives but also non-native speakers of English, so having a foreign accent should not be a feature for judgment.

An alternative approach suggests that negative perspectives which are stigmatizing, discriminating, or finding unattractive on foreign accents and intolerance towards them are not new concepts but started at the beginning of modern language teaching understanding (Munro & Derwing, 1995). Even though it might look like these adverse perceptions were in the past, they are still feasible in most countries and societies. Speakers may have different points of view, but some defend the native-like accent, while some claim, as Munro (2008) states, that this issue is almost or not as prevalent as before. Verbeke and Simon (2023) state that understanding only non-regional or high-status English accents is often not enough for many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to function effectively in this highly globalized and intercultural world. Smith and Nelson (2006) point out in their study that both intelligibility, comprehensibility, and

interpretability are crucial among non-native speakers and listeners. Additionally, they argue that fluency has a greater impact on one's attitude than sounding non-native (Smith & Nelson, 2006). On the other hand, there might be some issues regarding understanding and conveying the message due to accent differences. Therefore, the relationship between foreign accents, intelligibility, and comprehensibility must be considered in teaching and learning English as a second language or *lingua franca*.

The first point to consider and be clear about is pronunciation and accent differences. Even though they are possible to affect each other, there are differences between them. It should be taken into account that an accent does not mean speakers pronounce the vocabulary mistakenly; instead, they pronounce it correctly, but their accent is not native with stress, intonation, omission, insertion, vowel duration, and phonemic issues (Munro, 2008; Pease, 2016). Intelligibility refers to the level at which a listener can understand the message conveyed by a speaker. At the same time, comprehensibility encompasses the listener's ability to grasp the communication's meaning, content, and even underlying messages (Derwing & Munro, 2015). However, unlike intelligibility, comprehension is more subjective and relies on the listeners' assessment (Saito et al., 2019; Crewson, 2023). Lastly, accentedness refers to the degree to which a person's speech deviates from a perceived standard or native pronunciation of a language. This can affect the intelligibility and comprehensibility of a speaker both in a positive or negative way. In this sense, it is clear that within the shape of these concepts, a listener is affected by the speaker's accent.

EFL learners may need help understanding instructions, lectures, or discussions given by teachers or peers with non-native accents, leading to frustration and reduced learning outcomes (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Additionally, the presence of non-native accents in the classroom environment can affect students' confidence in their speaking abilities and may contribute to feelings of self-consciousness or insecurity (Levis, 2005). Saundz (2015) surveyed the perception of English learners and concluded that 85% students are more confident when they feel native-like. Therefore, having non-native accent examples might trigger learners' motivation negatively. However, at the same time, having a non-native accent teacher or peer with a familiar accent can be a variable in comprehending things positively since, with this familiarity, the students may feel more belonged or safe in a place where everything is not foreign but only the language (Adedeki, 2022). For this reason, research needs to be done to find whether this accent issue is beneficial or

a problem to be solved within the scope of understanding and processing the language spoken in the EFL context.

Türkiye is one of the EFL contexts mentioned above. As there are controversial ideas above in the related scope, observing Turkish EFL learners is also necessary since they are a massive population of EFL/ELF speakers. In Türkiye it is possible to see negative perceptions on non-native teachers (Akçay, 2020) or peers and participant's themselves (Mutlu & Bayram, 2014). Therefore, this study examines whether Turkish EFL listeners are influenced by the dissimilarity between native accents and non-native accent of Turkish EFL speakers in how they understand and grasp the language.

### **1.1. Background to the Study**

Many people worldwide prefer to speak the English language. As it is evident, these people are not all native speakers of English. People who speak English from various countries hint at their non-nativeness through their first language (L1) and nationality (Pease, 2016). Native speakers tend to be highly attuned to different accents, often interpreting them as a sign that the speaker belongs to a different social or cultural group (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). On the contrary, while learning the language as a foreign/second language, there might be prejudice against speaking with a foreign accent and understanding the language from an accented speaker. Therefore, “linguistic insecurity” (Labov, 1966) can occur due to the anxiety on speaking a foreign language. It is possible to confront with people, especially in teenagers and adulthood, who are not willing to speak or practice the language, unless they feel native-like.

When this issue has been discussed, its importance and density are higher in the educational setting. The accents of teachers, peers, and audio files in the coursebooks and materials are essential for learners' progress and exposure and which English and accent to teach. However, apart from the standard English and Received Pronunciation (RP), which is the Queen's Pronunciation, pronunciation, which is favored by the royals, BBC, and intellectuals (Holmes, 2013), is preferred in the materials for the EFL/ELF learners, there is the foreign accent of the speakers who are not native in the educational environment they see the language from. Therefore, educational settings generally try to limit English by introducing the Inner circle accent (Saito et al., 2019). In this light, some controversial ideas exist on accentedness, familiarity, and being native-like. Within these controversies, issues of intelligibility and comprehension based on accent

differences occur highly in English Language Teaching (ELT) and EFL settings. Understanding how non-native accents affect the ability of EFL learners to communicate and be understood by others effectively is essential for designing target language instruction programs in foreign countries.

In Türkiye, the English language is taught through native accents from the USA and UK; however, in the lessons, the teachers are not generally natives of English (Coşkun, 2010). In that sense, the teachers' accents are not always native-like since, at a point, the cultural background and first language affect their accent, as mentioned above. However, this issue is not only limited to teachers since students and speakers of English in Türkiye generally have a negative perception of non-native accents and a tendency to use native accents, as it can be seen in Mutlu and Bayram's (2014) research and resulted that the student participants had a negative bias on their own accented English and did not feel comfortable about it. Also, Uzun (2021) found that Turkish foreign accent (TFA) was not really comprehensible for listeners with different L1 background; nonetheless, there is still an issue of whether it is comprehensible to Turkish L1 background listeners.

For these reasons, this study aims to analyze whether Turkish EFL students are affected by the difference between native and non-native accents in terms of intelligibility and comprehensibility in their language learning process. Moreover, it hopes to analyze the TFA situation as students learn and get exposed to the language from teachers, peers, or materials. The case of eliminating one would limit the study since they hear the language from all these variables in an educational setting.

## **1.2. Statement of the Research Problem**

The issue of accent has been hotly debated in the field of English language teaching and learning. Especially among the non-native speakers in the expanding circle, as there are complexes of foreign accents. It has been prevalent among these people to try to have a native accent while speaking English. Even though they try to have this accent, unless exposed a lot or studied hard, the foreign accent or "accentedness" is seen among these people. However, as mentioned above, many of these speakers have a linguistic insecurity on have a foreign accent and have "an inferiority complex" (Tan and Castelli, 2013) on this issue regardless of intelligibility and comprehensibility of their speech.

Derwing and Munro (2009) state that there is discrimination against foreign accent and mention how they are shaped based on stereotyping, harassment, or negative perceptions of not being intelligible but considering the foreign accent as the only variable for it. This situation can be seen both by native and non-native speakers and listeners. This complex situation has become a considerable problem in Türkiye, especially discrimination among Turkish speakers, so they do not speak English or degrade themselves due to their foreign accent, so Turkish EFL speakers do not speak English or degrade themselves due to their foreign accent and unintelligible speech (Mutlu & Bayram, 2014). As Uzun (2023) stated in his article, there has been discrimination towards non-native people, generally due to misperception or bias based on accent. Uzun (2023) also claims that native-speakerism is still valid among people in Türkiye. Turkish and foreign studies also state that the same idea is generally based on negative thoughts and that a preference for native accents is superior. In addition, with the study of Mutlu and Bayram (2014), it is seen that the Turkish EFL speakers do not find their accent acceptable and would like to sound more native. Lastly, it is possible to state that there is an “artificial war” between native and non-native teacher in Türkiye and the myth of nativeness is increasing day by day (Çelik, 2006). In that sense, the general bias and prior studies captured this study's attention as the perceptions were not optimistic about the foreign accent of Turkish people.

The literature in Türkiye primarily consists of the perception of this issue from students, teachers, and different related participants' perspectives. There has been some perception/attitude research done in the Türkiye context, mostly with teachers and a limited amount with students. Nevertheless, the interest and problem of this study is to relate the negative perspectives on the intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness of TFA. On the other hand, Uzun (2022) found that TFA is more intelligible to Turkish listeners than English listeners, even though in another study (2021) he found that TFA is not intelligible to speakers of different L1 backgrounds. The interest has been developed with observations and results of prior studies. Therefore, a question that has been born in mind is that as many learners think the accent needs to be native for foreign learners, is this issue a big problem for people to understand and comprehend the language that they do not favour the foreign accent Turkish people have or is this just an issue with accentedness to have these flawed perceptions. This study aims to find answers to these perspectives and answer the questions mentioned previously and later with research questions, as examining how non-

native listeners handle various accents and can enhance their knowledge of the adaptability of non-native phonological representations (Verbeke & Simon, 2023).

### **1.3 The Importance of the Study**

All around the world, especially with the Expanding Circle, many EFL speakers face, hear, or obtain accents different from natives. These accents are generally affected by the first languages of the speakers. Therefore, some different ideas have been developed regarding having non-native accents. Research has been done based on these different ideas, specifically on the perception of speakers (students, teachers, peers) and even compared from the eyes of natives and non-natives.

In recent years, with the results of the mentioned studies and the occurrence of World English, some research has been conducted on the comprehensibility and intelligibility of several accents (Indian, Japanese, Chinese) compared with native accents. However, there has been a gap in Türkiye literature on this term which this study aims to fill. In Türkiye, the thesis or articles are in the scope of perception and attitudes and have exciting results. However, there is not enough clear evidence to determine whether these negative perceptions arise from intelligibility, comprehensibility, or degree of accentedness. For this reason, with the inspiration of the study of Crewson (2023), with slightly different aims, this study will adopt and adapt the study to the Türkiye context. Another essential item is that this study will help to justify or refute the negative attitudes about TFA that Turkish people have. Therefore, this study does not focus only on teachers; instead, it focuses on a whole perspective from Turkish EFL speakers' accent and claims to clarify intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness of it.

### **1.4. Research Purpose - Research questions - Hypotheses**

The study aims to analyze whether Turkish EFL students are affected by the difference between native accents (American and British) and non-native TFA regarding intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness. Besides, it seeks to examine whether there is a difference among these accents in terms of understanding and grasping the language.

Previous research in similar educational settings showed that while some students are better with a familiar non-native accent, others negatively judged non-native accents (Akçay, 2020; Griffiths & Soruç, 2019; Mutlu & Bayram, 2014; Çelik, 2006). For this reason, this study hypothesizes that there is no relation between intelligibility, comprehensibility, and the foreign

accent of a Turkish EFL speaker, considering the negative perceptions of the foreign accent. Therefore, the research aims to answer the following questions:

1. Does a non-native accent of a Turkish EFL speaker affect Turkish EFL students' intelligibility compared to native accents?
2. To what extent does the non-native accent of a Turkish EFL speaker affect the comprehension of Turkish EFL students compared to native accents?
3. Is there a difference in accentedness in terms of the non-native accent of a Turkish EFL speaker and native accents among Turkish EFL learners?

### **1.5. Limitations**

The most important limitation is that the study aims to generalize Türkiye; however, the participants are only from Ankara and one university. Due to the accessibility and the long time required for data collection, the study had to be limited to one university. Another significant limitation is that the participants are EFL students of a limited age group. The participants are all teenagers aged 18-21. There are no children or adult participants, which could enrich the study; nevertheless, due to the time limitation of the study and the accessibility of the participants, a specific age group has been detected. Also, even though it is possible to see English-speaking Turkish people in different fields, the participants are only from 18-21 age group who are students in English Medium Instruction (EMI) departments and studied preparatory. They are familiar with English language and used to both TFA and native accents due to their education.

Moreover, the number of participants might be higher. Having more students could enrich the study and make it deeper. However, due to limited time and seeing the prior studies have a similar number of participants, this amount was decided on in this study. Also, as the participants are from the same university and have at least completed the university's preparatory school, their English exposure might be similar; nevertheless, having different students with different exposure levels to the target accents would enrich the study. From an alternative aspect, having a similar level of English seems reasonable and more coherent for the sake of this study. Another limitation related to participants is that the target population and participants are native Turkish speakers who assess TFA. The intelligibility and comprehensibility of TFA can differ among distinct nations

and people with different first languages. On the contrary, this study aims to specify the study with Turkish people due to their negative perceptions of TFA.

Lastly, in this study, only three accents were included. Based on the information on the website the recording samples are from Washington, Devon, and TFA from a Turkish native speaker. On the other hand, participants can face more than the three target accents of the study. In other words, it is possible for students to hear or face Texas, Scottish, Slavic, Arabic accents, etc., in their daily, educational, and professional lives. However, because of the aim of this study, the accents were limited to three, which are the most common and likely to be confronted by the participants.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In this section, the differences between accent and pronunciation, the definitions of the related terms, and their link with accent is discussed. Also, in this review World Englishes and how they have been shaped in terms of countries through the paradigm of Kachru (1985) will be shortly given, with further explanation of standard and non-standard Englishes. Furthermore, it aims to review the perceptions of foreign accents and the concepts in educational settings. Lastly, the review includes prior studies done in the scope of this research and mentions the Türkiye context and related prior studies done in Türkiye, which contribute to this study.

#### **2.1. Language, Dialect, Pronunciation, and Accent**

Language, dialect, pronunciation, and accent look different but also sometimes similar. There might be some confusion on these terms while looking at them from another perspective. First of all, it is obvious that the term language is the broader term including all of the former terms in itself. For language there are several definitions made. Yule (2010) defines it as a system of human communication that includes structured gatherings of sounds whether spoken or written through bigger elements like morphemes, words, sentences. Yule (2010) has taken mostly the communicative and structural aspects into consideration. As another perspective, Chomsky (2002) have stated that language is a cognitive system within the human mind and brain that creates opportunities for individuals to produce and comprehend an unlimited number of sentences using a limited set of rules to convey messages. As obvious, unlike Yule (2010), Chomsky (2002) mostly emphasizes the generative and cognitive way of the language.

Dialect is a regional or social variety of a language that can include different vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Holmes, 2013). As Hughes et al. (2012) states that there is no difference but the grammar and vocabulary is different therefore even standard English is a dialect of English language just the others such as American English or Standard Scottish English. From a dialect based approach, compared to dialect, accent is variation in the pronunciation in these dialects.

Furthermore, pronunciation and accent are not the same as well. Pronunciation refers to articulating a word or phrase in a correct and standard form, which is rarely changed based on individual effects. In contrast, accent refers to a speech's rhythm, melody, and intonations and shows the regional variety of the same language (Rogers, 2014). To illustrate this example, while speaking English with an Indian person, the listener will understand what is said due to correct pronunciation, but because of the accent, it will be apparent that the speaker is Indian. Therefore, it is crucial to have a standard pronunciation and clear statement of the vocabulary and develop on this issue, but accent is a different concept.

From another point, pronunciation and accent can influence each other, as errors in sound production—often influenced by the speaker's first language (L1)—can shape their accent (Zhang, 2024). It cannot be clearly stated that one is more superior on influencing the other; nonetheless, it is obvious that they are interconnected. Even if the pronunciation is not problematic in term of correctness, there might be some pronunciation issues due to accent or L1 transfer, especially in some specific vowels, consonants, intonations, and stress.

There are differences in the accents of EFL/ELF speakers; however, this does not mean that their pronunciation is not standard. These two concepts sometimes need clarification, and listeners are apt to judge accented speeches as if they have pronunciation mistakes. Sometimes some sounds in English phonetics are not found in EFL speakers first language, so when the EFL speaker try to pronounce a word there might be some problems and meaning changes. Also, individual characteristics of sounds and segments, syllable structure with the order or constants and vowels, prosodic features which are stress, length, intonation, and rhythm, segment length, pitch, and tempo are some specific types of challenges that are faced by the EFL learners (Moyer, 2013). It should be borne in mind that as Kang (2010) states their features individually have an effect on the accentedness of an EFL learner (as cited in Moyer, 2013). For example, since Arabic EFL student's first language does not include /p/, /v/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ŋ/ sounds then the speaker will pronounce the vocabulary wrong which can cause some problems in understanding (Salah, 2024). Another example can be given by a study done in Lahore, Pakistan by Khaleel et al. (2024). They have found that the pronunciation of /r/ sound was a problem for the Pakistanian EFL speaker since they do not have this sound in their L1 besides /r/ sound being complicated. However, this

does not mean that there will be huge problems, it might be also a minor issue but still depending on the listener there might be some misunderstanding or judgements.

Accent, one of the most noticeable features of speech, differs based on the interlocutors and their location or region. Accents are more tied to culture, and they are harder to change. Therefore, there might be regional or communal variations of English language speakers, not just local English varieties but also all around the world from any place. In that sense, as Derwing and Munro (2009) state, there can be an effect of the first language on the second language on the accent as well.

## **2.2. Global English and the Paradigm of Kachru (1985)**

English is the most spoken language today by many native and non-native speakers. Therefore, English becomes increasingly detached from its native contexts, English is used for different purposes such as technology, diplomacy, entertainment, academia, and commerce (Jenkins, 2014). This issue results with people learning English different countries and social groups and include different cultural and educational backgrounds. In some of these countries, the English language is even used as an official language even though they are not natives; in some, it is only learned for different purposes as a foreign/second language. This phenomenon is called *Global English* or *World Englishes*. This reflects varieties of English spoken worldwide and the sociolinguistic realities in which they are implanted. It is essential to realize that these differences affect how they speak and shape the English language. The varieties and distinctions happen at many levels, but especially with most speakers, they occur in terms of pronunciation and accent.

As this research will get deeper into the accent issue in the foreign context mentioned above, it is vital to give the paradigm of how English has been spread worldwide. According to Kachru (1985), there are three circles as a template to show how different people from different backgrounds speak English. These three circles have different social or historical backgrounds. On the other hand, the most influential factor in shaping these circles is the native and non-native speakers. To elaborate on this issue, the first and the smallest and least populated circle, called the Inner Circle, consists of native speakers: the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. Another circle is the Outer Circle, which includes countries with a historical background of British colonialism and use this language as an official or governmental language, such as India, Malaysia, Singapore, Ghana, Kenya, etc. The Expanding Circle, which is the scope of this study,

is the most prominent circle due to its population. It involves countries with no historical connection but still use English as a Lingua Franca or foreign/second language. These countries can be listed as European countries, Japan, Korea, etc., and Türkiye is one of these countries. Even though the native/non-native issues and standard English were made clear by Kachru's (1985) paradigm, there is still a debate about their difference. However, the relationship between Global English and Kachru's Three Circles Model offers a valuable perspective for understanding the diverse and evolving character of contemporary English.

It is obvious that the natives of the English language are British people and the other countries in the Inner Circle (Kachru, 1985). However, Jenkins (2014) mentions that there are "linguistic varieties" even in the inner circle. Therefore, people who learn English may be confused about which English to learn as there are even non-standard Englishes, which will be mentioned in this section later. Standard English is the language variety that sets the norms and refers to the rules on grammar and vocabulary but not the accent or the pronunciation (Jenkins, 2014). In this sense, the standard English is, as Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008) claim, the English starting from the south of England and going beyond the Isles. This does not mean that any other variety of English is not welcomed or unvalued but that the origins of the language and the other dialects are derived from British English. To elaborate on the standard English concept, it is the language spoken by educated people, or even though there are accent differences, it is the English, which is *BBC English*, *Oxford English*, or *The Queen's English* (McArthur, 2002; Holmes, 2013).

As there are varieties, there are differences in pronunciation and accent. An American or Australian may have different pronunciations and accents. However, as there is standard English, there is also a standard pronunciation (social accent) called Received Pronunciation (Holmes, 2013). Received pronunciation is preferred and used by the English community's most educated and prestigious people. On the other hand, Britain and Trudgill (1999; as cited in Jenkins, 2014) gave a clear and essential explanation and items about standard English. According to him, it is crucial to remember that standard English is not a language but only one of the varieties, and it is not the only accent since, even in Britain, there are many different accents based on region and status. Also, it has a variety of styles, such as informal or formal, besides its different registers and grammatical (linguistic) rules. In addition, Holmes (2013) gave a figure from Trudgill (1983) stating that standard English and accent show distinctions with regional variations. Even in the Inner Circle, it is possible to see different accents such as American, British, and Canadian;

however, the other possibility is that even these can be divided into different accents themselves, such as Southern American accent, Scottish accent, or Newfoundland English (Canadian) (Waniek-Klimczak & Shockey, 2012). Therefore, expecting differences in the Outer and Expanding circle is inevitable.

The other differences are generally called non-standard or vernacular languages, and they are mainly seen in the Outer Circle, which was created by various countries, especially in the Outer Circle. Singlish is one of these languages, which is a combination of Singaporean and English and is used in Singapore. Moreover, Indian English is used by the Indian diaspora. In these non-standard Englishes, the variations are in the level of pronunciation (consonant and vowel sounds), grammar, vocabulary, locally coined (originated) expressions, borrowings from indigenous languages, idioms, and discourse style (Jenkins, 2014). Nevertheless, it is crucial to be careful that having various statuses does not mean any linguistic superiority or inferiority, especially with non-standard forms (Holmes, 2013; Jenkins, 2014; Britain & Trudgill, 1999).

In the Expanding Circle, the preferences are to choose a standard English, specifically British or American, and use it as a Lingua Franca (LF) or foreign/second language. Lingua Franca refers to a language where many follow a language as a common language to communicate with each other, especially those from different countries (Kasap & Gülacar, 2023; Tosuncuoğlu, 2018). There are more reasons why English is a Lingua Franca and the most spoken language worldwide. As Jenkins (2014) mentions, there are several reasons: historical engagements, political exchanges, economic situations, practical reasons, i.e., international issues, entertainment opportunities, e.g., Hollywood films, and intellectual purposes. In that sense, more non-native people learn English as a second or foreign language for different aims. As a following issue in the Expanding Circle, accent differences occur since all the countries have distinct typography, cultural backgrounds, and first languages. As mentioned above, as social group, status, etc., can be shown through language use and preferences, it is also possible for the countries in the Expanding Circle to make people realize this, especially with the accent they obtain.

### **2.3. Foreign Accents, Accentedness, and Perceptions**

As mentioned above, the regional variation of the accent statement might seem mainly in the Inner Circle; nonetheless, there are variations and differences in the Expanding Circle, referred to as a foreign accent. A foreign accent is characterized by a unique way of pronouncing words in a

language, reflecting the speaker's country, region, or social background (Moyer, 2013). Munro (2008) claims that the effect of a speaker's first language on a second language (English) is a foreign accent that is easily realized because of their pronunciation. Scovel (1988) stated that having an easily distinguished foreign accent does not actually indicate that there is a problem with the communication between the interlocutors (as cited in Derwing & Munro, 2009). On the other hand, it should be noted that even though it does not always result in miscommunication, sometimes having a foreign accent might be a problem (Derwing & Munro, 2009).

Accentedness refers to how an accent is strong or high in sounding non-native (Edwards et al., 2018). Furthermore, according to Derwing and Munro (2005; 2015), accentedness facilitates speakers' being distinguished with their non-native accents (as cited in Lorraine, 2017). Major et al. (2002) concluded that while familiarity with an accent does not always enhance comprehension, it can be helpful and aid in comprehending (as cited in Hardman, 2014). A divergent perspective is that Episcopo (2009) mentions that an accent like a native speaker is the last competence to acquire. Therefore, it is challenging to diminish the effects of the first language on it. Based on the results of Episcopo's (2009) study, listeners tend to base their attitude judgments more on how native-like a speaker sounds than on how intelligible they are. Additionally, speakers perceive their own non-native accents more negatively than they are actually rated by others.

Even though it is easy to define the concept of a foreign accent, and it seems like a natural occurrence, more profound issues must be mentioned. The perception of foreign accents is controversial and still debated among listeners and speakers of the English language. Munro (2008) mentions how foreign accents can be controversial by citing two counter arguments from Flege (1988) and Gass & Varonis (1984). Fledge (1988) claims that it can cause problems in understanding, less acceptability, and negative perception, while Gass and Varonis (1984) suggest it is beneficial in conveying input and reinforcing communication. From another perspective, Ballard (2013) believes that the familiarity of the accent positively affects the listeners. However, many people believe that having a native-like accent will provide them with better job opportunities and make them more intelligible and fashionable.

The last idea can be conceptualized with the idea of "overt prestige" which is referring to using or speak standard form of a language due to status and being more prestigious (Holmes, 2013). In other words, people tend to be like a native speaker or prefer standard language to be

more socially accepted and competent. This issue is feasible both for L1 and L2, so it is seen in foreign accented speakers as well. Also, this is related to the concept of “linguistic insecurity” which is commonly seen in the EFL context. As Daftari (2016) states, linguistic insecurity is the concept which describes the anxiety of a speaker or writer of a foreign language due to not adjusting to the standard norms of the target language. This concept is intertwined with the idea of Jenkins (2014) standard norms and includes the insecurity and the complexes that the speaker obtains as they do not speak pure and L1 affected (Francard, 1993; as cited in Daftari, 2016). In a deeper sense, linguistic insecurity shows a lower degree of confidence, and an insecurity to mother tongue. This insecurity can be affected by several reasons such as gender, economical, status, class, and speech style in a community. Furthermore, this concept can be seen as insufficient to be judged as having linguistic prestige, therefore, there might be hypercorrection, uneasiness, disbelief, and self-correction as the results (Labov, 2006). For example, in a study done in Türkiye by 300 teachers of foreign language by Saydı (2022) found that the teachers had a moderate level of linguistic insecurity. However, the results also showed that the insecurity was higher in knowledge than verbal skills, including professional, sociocultural, and communicative. Also, based on the results of Daftari (2016), it was found that regardless of the gender, teachers had different levels of linguistic insecurity in Türkiye.

A divergent idea is that, just as Holmes (2013) has stated about the covert prestige (i.e., preferring vernacular variations of a language) in choosing a language variation, Lorraine (2017) states that some people choose to be accented and show their foreign accent to show and demonstrate their identity or social gatherings. Also, speakers who reflect their accentedness tend to do this so as not to be alienated from their peers or social group. Sometimes, having a native-like accent might cause pressure on the speaker coming from the other accented speakers of the English language. For this reason, with the expansion of the English language worldwide, as Jenkins (2000) argues, international intelligibility and regional variation of accents should be seen as a norm and promoted (Lorraine, 2017).

From another perspective, based on the studies done by Callan et al. (1983) and Ryan and Carranza (1975), there are levels of intolerance for foreign accent based on the situation (as cited in Kim, 2008). The context of the communication can also affect the perception of the listeners and the speakers on the accentedness. According to the results of Ryan and Carranza (1975),

students almost do not tolerate foreign-accented speech in formal situations such as school. Therefore, the perception of the students might also be very strict and negative toward non-native teachers. A study done by Rubin and Smith (1990) showed that 40% of undergraduate students ignored the lectures given by non-native lecturers, just like how Bresnahan et al. (2002) found that there was a correlation between heavy foreign accents and anti-perspective. Based on several studies, these thoughts could be because accents are seen as influential social markers which indicate social attractiveness and aptitude (Brusa & Proverbio, 2024). In other words, it can be said that generally, standard accents are typically associated with perceptions of a high level of competence and favorable social characteristics, unlike foreign accents, which are tended to be more judged (Brusa & Proverbio, 2024). Therefore, Brusa and Proverbio (2024) have done a study to see how comprehensibility is affected when there is an accent-based stereotype influence on the listener. The results showed that there is a positive correlation between the listeners' bias and understanding as well as that they have an impact on their idea of social attractiveness and competence of the speaker. In contrast, positive attitudes have been seen to increase when listeners are more acquainted with the “intercultural sensitivity” (Bennett, 1986) and are used to the accentedness of non-native speakers (Rubin & Smith, 1990; Lindemann, 2005; as cited in Episcopo, 2009). Grasping the impact of accented speech is essential, particularly in diverse, multicultural settings.

Another research was done by Bauman (2013) in the scope of Asian accented English in the US. Based on the social evaluation, it was found that having a negative attitude towards Asian accents and that this issue was even different based on the genders. However, it is possible to state that the Asian accented speakers can face with the possibility of having obstacles caused by the negative attitudes in the US. Also, another related prior study is conducted by Nelson et al. (2016) in US with Spanish-accented people. Similarly, it was found that Spanish accented speakers are judged. In this study from the gender perspective, it was found that while female speakers receive a negative attitude, male participants more tend to have a prejudice to the accent.

There were other studies conducted in this area with different perspectives and different nationalities. One of them was made by McKenzie (2008) through six English varieties and the social factors in Japan context. It was found that the English varieties of the UK and US were more favoured in terms of ‘status’ but they also showed a unity for the Japanese foreign accent. It was

found that gender, proficiency, and exposure to variety had significant effect on attitudes. In addition, Davydova (2015) did a research on native and non-native accents with German learners. The results indicated a great favour for native accents and specifically, the British accent found to be more prestigious and high status while the American accent was found to be more socially attractive. Daydova (2015) states that these findings also correlate with “an inferiority complex” which is a term referring to negative attitudes on their own variety of accents than the natives as Tan and Castelli (2013) mention in their own study’s findings. Lastly, even though the study of Hansen et al. (2017) was not done in the English language context, it is an important research to be mentioned. This study was done in the German context, done in order to see the relationship of foreign-looking people and their native-like or non-native accents. It included appearance as German and Turkish while the accents were standard German and Turkish foreign accented German. There were two experiments done and the results were different when they were observed. Based on the results, in the first experiment, it was found that when first seen as foreign but later heard native-like, the attitudes and the evaluation got higher due to perceiving more competence; whereas, in the second experiment, it was seen that when first heard then seen, the assessment dropped.

## **2.4. Intelligibility and Comprehensibility**

Intelligibility can be defined as “the apprehension of the utterance” (Derwing & Munro, 1997, p.2) and comprehensibility as “judgments on a rating scale of how difficult or easy an utterance to understand” (Derwing & Munro, 1997, p.2). It forms the foundation of effective communication because if speech is not intelligible, the message cannot be properly conveyed to the listener and causes misunderstandings and further problematic issues. Intelligibility includes how much of the utterance is understood by the listener (Edwards et al., 2018), while comprehensibility is the ease or complexity of listeners receiving speech and understanding the entire message wanted to be given but not word by word (Lorraine, 2017). Even though some scholars like Gass and Varonis (1984) do not differentiate these two terms, Smith (1992) suggests that comprehensibility is an upper state of understanding compared to intelligibility (as cited in Derwing & Munro, 1997). High comprehensibility refers to the listener not only hearing the words clearly but also fully understanding and being capable of answering the message being

communicated. Therefore, it can be said that comprehensibility bridges the gap between utterance and understanding.

Although they are not interconnected with each other, the relation between intelligibility and comprehensibility of foreign accents is fundamental as negative perceptions exist. Also, these terms are crucial in order to judge the foreign accent of a speaker and the accentedness of it. Therefore, the link between these concepts emerges from the question of whether accent affects these concepts. As Munro (2008) claims, there might be problems, such as a lack of communication and unintelligible speech due to the foreign accent of an L2 speaker. Additionally, Buck (2001) suggests that students are likely to have difficulties in comprehension, especially when they hear a different accent for the first time. Research indicates that comprehensibility can mediate the relationship between the strength of a foreign accent and speaker evaluations, affecting how speakers are perceived in terms of status (Hendriks et al., 2023). Lastly, Saito et al. (2019) and Kraut and Wulff (2013) state that intelligibility and comprehensibility of accent, whether native or non-native, is affected by several filters, which can be listed as even proficiency, age group, gender, accent familiarity, the mother tongue of listener and speaker, experience with the target language, and even the speaking tasks and the sample speaker. Also, Kachru (1990) claims that it is also related to how a person aims to or was taught English, whether “acquisitional, socioculturally, motivationally, or functionally” and the teacher's own attitude on serving the accent (Crewson, 2023, p. 13).

An important phenomenon to be mentioned is the “interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit (ISIB).” Bent and Bradlow (2003) proposed ISIB and explained the concept as when non-native speakers and listeners can have an improvement in intelligibility due to their native language, interlanguage. In other words, there is a benefit for the speakers and listeners of the same interlanguage whose accents or speech patterns are influenced by their own native language. They also believe that there is matched ISIB, which is the term for a situation where a non-native speaker from a particular first language (L1) is equally or more intelligible to another non-native speaker from the same L1 background, while mismatched ISIB is the term for when a non-native speaker from one L1 background is equally or more intelligible to another non-native speaker from a different L1 background (Bent & Bradlow, 2003; as cited in Uzun, 2022). Interlanguage is the language that has the effects of both L1 and L2 syntactic, morphological, lexical, grammatical

choices, etc. (Yule, 2022). Therefore, it is believed that these effects have a positive effect on the intelligibility of non-native accents. Some research has supported this concept, and the most important one which has caused this to generate was done by Bent and Bradlow (2003). Their research has supported all their ideas which was done by Chinese, Korean, and English accented speech and listeners. Another research that supports the idea was done by Uzun (2022) in Türkiye. This research has supported matched ISIB through TFA as the Turkish listeners were better in understanding it compared to non-natives.

On the other hand, even though some research has supported their proposal by their research results, there are some scholars (Algethami et al., 2011; Stibbard & Lee, 2006) who believe that there might be differences in terms of speaker and listener and they can have different ISIB (as cited in Uzun, 2022). Moreover, these other scholars try to look forward to the difference between native and non-native speakers of ISIB. Still, there is a debate going on with these issues because the studies related to this topic are not all supporting the proposal with their results. For example, according to Munro et al. (2006), the findings indicate that the benefit of familiarity on intelligibility was feasible for Japanese-accented speech. Still, for others like Cantonese-accented speech, it was not that intelligible for the Cantonese listeners. Another study that could be an example is done by Algethami et al. (2011). The study was done by Saudi accent and listeners with Saudi L1 and native Australians. It has revealed that there were not many differences between the listeners, even though Saudi listeners got a little higher intelligibility.

Lastly, it is important to mention the mutual intelligibility concept of Jenkins (2000; 2002) in this section, as it is highly important in the field of World Englishes and foreign accents. Mutual intelligibility occurs when speakers of different languages or language varieties can understand each other without requiring full proficiency in the other language (Jenkins, 2000). It plays a crucial role in communication, especially in multilingual or international contexts. Mutual intelligibility in EFL/ELF context means that understanding and communication is over accent and native speakerism norms. That is, the main purpose of communication is to mutually understand and be understood; the accent does not have to conform to "native English" standards, the important thing is to convey the message. There are some aspects that affect mutual intelligibility which are linguistic distance of L1 and exposure (Wang & Jenkins, 2016). The former issue is related to how L1 similarities in phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary create mutual

intelligibility in higher terms. Additionally, latter means that exposure and contact between speakers also play a significant role, because people who frequently encounter another language through media, trade, or migration are more likely to understand the target language. Based on the results of Wang and Jenkins (2016), there were some alternative ideas on mutual intelligibility through Chinese students. Participants without experience in ELF generally viewed strict dependence to native English norms as fundamentals of mutual understanding. However, those exposed to ELF began to reconsider the connection between native-like pronunciation and intelligibility, recognizing that effective communication was possible even without conforming to native norms. Additionally, they started to accept that there are various English varieties spoken. In this context, exposure to ELF/EFL appears to be a significant factor in altering perceptions of native speaker dominance.

In the study of Wang and van Heuven (2003), which was done with 36 listeners equally from each of the three accents, was found that there was a slight or no difference between Dutch and American English. Besides, in some situations, Dutch was more intelligible. This suggests that L1 is also highly crucial as Dutch listeners were affected by it. However, they also found that Chinese accent was not found to be highly mutually intelligible as their L1 is distinct from English. Wang and Jenkins (2016) also state that despite being part of the same language family, many Chinese dialects, such as Mandarin and Cantonese, are not mutually intelligible due to significant differences in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. As another research, Lochland (2020) have done a research with Mandarin EFL listeners and found they had problems in finding Mandarin-English more intelligible than Japanese English or the other accents included to the study.

## **2.5. Educational Setting and Prior Studies**

This section focuses on the educational setting since, in the Expanding Circle, English is mainly used in educational settings and later continues in professional life. Therefore, examining and discussing the issues deeper from an educational perspective is important. Overall, the educational setting and related addresses are affected by these perspectives and concepts, and these perspectives lead to choosing teachers, employees, and peers. For instance, as cited in Hendriks et al. (2023), some studies have demonstrated that non-native lecturers may be judged negatively based on their non-native pronunciation rather than, or alongside, their academic and teaching

abilities. This issue cannot be limited to the teachers, since students can have related issues about themselves, or even can have issues by having a native or non-native teacher. As Yentürk and Dağdeviren-Kırmızı (2020) found, the EFL learners can have foreign language speaking anxiety due to having a native teacher regarding some factors; however, they were also surer, relaxed, saw this as a benefit for themselves.

There are different English-language teaching types in these foreign countries in the Expanding Circle, which can be listed as lectures, medium of instruction, for specific purposes, business, etc. Today, in all these contexts, it is discussed that they need to be included with different accents from any country or any circle due to globalization and reaching people from all around the world (Sung, 2016). However, research on the scope of intelligibility of non-native English speakers from various L1 backgrounds has shown that non-native English is generally more challenging to understand for both native and non-native listeners (Hendriks et al., 2023). Even though there are these difficulties and challenges, it is obvious that non-native accents are a fact, and in the globalized world, it is hard to eliminate their existence. Also, non-native accents can be different in terms of many aspects within the shape of comprehensibility and intelligibility; therefore, it is important to decide and scrutinize the accented speeches' first language in the studies Hendricks et al. (2023) states. This is also because, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, familiarity with an accent (preferably the same first language, non-native accent) can aid in understanding the lectures better.

As mentioned before, English is a *Lingua Franca* and is spoken worldwide. In that sense, it is important to make students realize, be aware, and appreciate different varieties of accents of English. Non-native speakers no longer need to achieve native-level proficiency to effectively communicate today, as their numbers surpass those of native speakers (Huang & Hashim, 2020; Ishaque, 2018; as cited in Crewson, 2023). This shift highlights that accented English is now the standard and something to be embraced rather than seen as a flaw (Crewson, 2023). Therefore, it is crucial to establish realistic instructional goals for learners, emphasizing comprehensibility over achieving linguistic or accented nativelikeness (Saito et al., 2017). This flexibility can generally be facilitated through coursebooks, supplementary materials, and teachers. Students and instructors should prioritize enhancing their intelligibility and comprehensibility, as effective communication holds more value than sounding like a native speaker (Lorraine, 2017). However,

it is not easy as people all around the world are used to appreciating native-like accents over foreign accents, as mentioned before.

Also, as the most critical factor in the setting, native teachers are preferred in these foreign countries, but foreign teachers are inevitably being hired, too. Despite their education, foreign teachers are degraded, and they are expected to be as native as possible. This is true since they will teach and convey this language to the students as representatives. However, non-native teachers are not favored mainly because of their foreign accents. Therefore, Ballard (2013, p. 47) suggests that “administrators should hire English language teachers based on professional credentials, and not on accent.”

Due to these reasons, much research has been done regarding the abovementioned concepts worldwide. As it is also seen as the basis of this study, the most important and relatable prior study to be mentioned is the study done by Crewson (2023). In the study, the concepts were the same as this study; however, the setting of the study was in a multilingual classroom, and it was focused on World English and, more specifically four different speakers: Vietnamese, Chilean, Chinese, and Nigerian. There were three participants in the study, and there were listening to comprehension, a questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview. The results show that unfamiliar vocabulary and accents have negative and contrastingly familiarity of accents positively affects listeners.

Another important study is a thesis by Episcopo (2009). Even though this study was conducted in the USA, the fact that it also includes a TFA makes it one of the most important studies that should be mentioned. This study included more than one nation foreign student (Turkish, Mandarin, German, Korean, and Spanish) and investigated their perspectives on 'World Englishes.' However, although this study does not coincide with the objectives of the current study, considering the perspectives on accentedness, it has some very useful findings that are relevant to the data collection part. This is because, during the data collection process, Episcopo looked at the understandability of each of the selected foreign students' foreign accents before collecting their opinions. In this case, although there were some differences between foreign accents according to the results obtained, the part that concerns this study is that the TFA was found difficult to understand, and negative perspectives emerged on it. Additionally, it should be noted that this study included Turks living in America. Finally, in the general results of this study, it is explained

that a negative perception towards World Englishes has no relation with the intelligibility of foreign accents, but that this is a general situation and that just not having a native accent is sufficient for these attitudes.

One of the most recent studies was conducted by Hendriks et al. (2023) which included both native and non-native listeners as well as speakers and focused on the non-native accent, intelligibility, and attitudes of listeners in the Netherlands context. According to the results, there was a negative attitude toward non-native lecturers by moderate non-native listeners, whereas native listeners were more positive (Hendriks et al., 2023). Ballard (2013) and Adedeji (2022) explored accent familiarity. The former was conducted at Michigan State University with non-native (Chinese and Albanian) listeners and native (American and British) listeners, while the latter was done at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, with British and Nigerian accents. The results showed in both studies that a familiar accent has an affirmative correlation with the acceptability of the teacher and determines the understanding and comprehension of a speech. Furthermore, a resembling study was done by Nazari and Younus (2019) with Arab EFL learners and accent familiarity. Within the shape of results, it is suggested that the participants were able to understand all three accents with a little effort; however, the unfamiliar one needed more effort and focus to be understood. In addition, Beinhoff (2014) carried out a study on intelligibility and accentedness with variable proficiency levels. The study focused on L1 of the participants which are German and Spanish and L2 as English, and the effects of them. It was concluded that L2 proficiency level and the L1 of the speakers have a great impact on intelligibility and comprehensibility. It was also found that while intelligibility was affected by familiarity of the accent, comprehensibility was less affected by it.

Another research study that could be mentioned is by Kraut and Wulff (2013). The case study that they did on speech perception of foreign accent concluded that familiarity with non-native speech, along with various other factors, was correlated with listeners' ratings of accentedness and comprehensibility, as well as their perception of the speaker's communicative ability. Major et al. (2002) studied and compared English spoken by Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, and American accents, finding that Spanish speakers had a better understanding and comprehension of English spoken with their own accent, while Chinese listeners had the lowest comprehensibility of their own accent. Interestingly, both native and non-native raters were not

really successful in comprehending non-native (accented) speech. Also, Chinese participants comprehended lectures read by Spanish-accented speakers better than those read by speakers with their own accents.

Munro and Derwing (1995) have facilitated a great amount of research on this issue, which needs to be mentioned here. One of the most important studies of Munro and Derwing's (1995) study was conducted on second-language learners and speakers and their speeches' accentedness, comprehensibility, and intelligibility. Despite the high level of intelligibility and comprehensibility, accent judgments fluctuated. Also, most of the listeners had a positive correlation between heavily accented and errors but no link between accentedness and intelligibility. Therefore, it resulted that a heavy non-native accent does not mean it eliminated the understanding and grasping of L2 speech. Moreover, Munro and Derwing's (1999) study was an extension of Munro and Derwing's (1995) and concluded that even a very accented speech can be well-intelligible and prosodic errors are a more curial factor affecting than phonetic ones. Another research done by Derwing and Munro (1997) includes Cantonese, Japanese, Spanish, and Polish ESL students. The research results were compared with Munro and Derwing (1995) and found that proficiency did not have an effect on the relationship of understanding the speech and its accentedness. However, the phonemic and prosodic errors were different.

Some prior studies include Asian accents. To exemplify, Zhang (2019) has conducted research on the comprehensibility of nine different English accents, including native and non-native accents from all over the world, with Chinese EFL learners. It was found that the Inner Circle accents were higher in comprehensibility compared to the Outer Circle. Also, the results stated that familiarity with the accent plays a great role in comprehensibility. A similar research was conducted by Smith and Bisazza (1982), and they concluded that while Japanese listeners were able to comprehend and understand better Japanese-accented English, Indians were more proficient in American English accent rather than Indian-accented English.

Another study conducted on World Englishes was done by Jung (2010). This study was conducted in Korea, and participants preferred the American English accent more as it reflected more social prestige. Also, Hardman (2014) conducted alike study with Mandarin-accented English on Chinese, Korean, and American listeners. Even though interlanguage was helpful for

Chinese students, it was found that the Mandarin accent had a large negative effect on intelligibility.

Another research was done by Julkowska and Cebrian (2015) which is similar to this current study. They observed the similar concepts in the native and Polish-accented English scope with Polish, Spanish and English speakers. It was concluded that intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness were independent from each other and an accented speech can be intelligible for the listeners as well. Moreover, interlanguage speech benefit was a drawback for the Spanish listeners but there was not a great evidence on that since the non-natives were not better than the natives.

One important study by Saito et al. (2019) was on L2 listeners' perception of the comprehensibility of accented utterances, specifically on Japanese foreign accent. The results indicated that lenient listeners who are more accepting and tolerant to non-native speech seemed to base their judgments equally on various linguistic aspects of speech, whereas strict listeners were highly focused on phonological accuracy. The utterances were found to be more comprehensible when they were likely to be less accented. Another research study was conducted on Canadian and Singaporean listeners' ratings of Japanese-accented English. Saito and Shintani (2016) concluded that as Singaporeans are familiar with different accents, they were more open to Japanese accent, unlike the Canadians, who are used to North American English.

## **2.6. Türkiye Context**

So far, until this part, the review has been given from all around the world, in different countries, and in different languages and relations with English. There are counterarguments on most of the concepts, and in this part specifically, the Türkiye context is discussed. In Türkiye, British and American English are favored in education as a sample of the native English language, but the teachers and peers are mostly native speakers of Turkish. The learners are used to having Turkish teachers or TFA; however, the accessibility and realization of native accents have created a negative perception of Turkish EFL speakers. Specifically, in the context of this study, in Türkiye, generally, English is taught via accents from inner circle, especially the USA and UK, but the teachers or peers are typically not native English speakers (in most circumstances, there might be exceptions) (Ulum, 2020). Consequently, the teachers' and peers' accents often do not sound native, as their cultural backgrounds and first languages influence their pronunciation and accent. Therefore, although there are well educated teachers of English language in Türkiye,

generally private schools tend to have a native teacher but not educated instead of a well-educated Turkish EFL teacher (Aslan & Thompson, 2016). In state schools the teachers are selected based on the exams the government and the Ministry of Education do so it can be stated that the accent is not a very discriminative factor for employment whereas private schools or educational settings can prefer a teacher with no experience just because being from the Inner circle (Aslan & Thompson, 2016). The reason why administrators take this kind of preference is to use it as an advantage to have more students as the parents, students, and the other stakeholders have a positive attitude to native accented teachers. Nonetheless, this issue extends beyond teachers; students, employees, and that English speakers in Türkiye generally have a negative perception of non-native accents, e.g., Indian and Japanese, and prefer native ones, as evidenced by research conducted by Ulum (2020). In the research of Ulum (2020), it was also found that the Turkish EFL speakers were contented with their TFA; however, they would like to sound more native.

Even though English is not a second language or official language of Türkiye, the speakers tend to have an expectation of obtaining a native accent in order to speak English. Moreover, the speakers degrade or judge the other Turkish EFL speakers who have accented English. In Türkiye, English learning has been an issue for a long time, and it can be said that there are great complexes in not speaking or using the language unless the speaker has a native-like accent, fluency, and accuracy. To elaborate on these issues, the study of Mutlu and Bayram (2014) states a great example of results on the biased and negative attitudes. This study was conducted with 60 Turkish EFL students from Istanbul on their English accents. The students believe that their accents are not comprehensible and intelligible for not only natives but also non-native speakers and a pessimistic opinion about it in cross-cultural communication. The participants were not satisfied with their accent and apt to have a native-like accent. As it could be seen for this study, the Turkish EFL speakers do not only believe they sound very good in their English and believe that they are not intelligible.

Sounding like a native is a preference for most of the Turkish EFL speaker (Mutlu & Bayram, 2014; Ulum, 2020). While trying to acquire a native like accent, it is possible to face challenges for Turkish EFL learners. This is an issue in TFA because some of the sounds are clearly not represented in the Turkish phonetic alphabet compared to English phonetic alphabet. In that sense, there might be some issues regarding acoustic problems and lexical stress problems (Taş & Khan,

2022), minimal pair perception and salience of phonological aspects (Uzun, 2024; 2022). The segmental and suprasegmental aspects of the utterances can affect the acoustic of the speech and intonation; therefore, the accent is affected simultaneously. To illustrate this issue based on the findings of Taş and Khan (2022), it can be said that Turkish L2 speakers of English are generally apt to have intonation and stress problems with two-or-more syllable words which is more about placing the stress on the last syllable of the word. In accordance with this finding, obviously, there might be some negative issues on the rhythm of the non-native speakers and can cause the learners to have an explicit teaching of stress, intonation, and pronunciation.

In Türkiye, generally EFL speakers tend to have some salient errors in terms of pronunciation but still not mispronunciation. To explain further, Turkish EFL speakers can pronounce the word correctly but because of the sounds and wrong stressing of the strong syllable can cause some salient errors. These noticeable and common mistakes are in /ə/ and /θ/ sounds even though they do not affect intelligibility in a severe level (Uzun, 2019; 2022). On the other hand, as mentioned previously, unlike weak syllables, the errors in the syllable stress can cause detrimental problems on the understanding of the speaker (Uzun, 2019; 2022). Moreover, it is important to state that listeners L1 has a strong relationship with the listeners' ability on discriminating the sound, mostly the minimal pairs. There is some research done on this issue in Türkiye and there are some important sounds which have been found to be really problematic for Turkish listeners. One of the studies conducted by Uzun (2024) found that, despite the presence of numerous minimal pairs and related errors, the most frequent difficulties among Turkish EFL speakers were in distinguishing the /ʌ/ and /ɑ:/ sounds, the /ŋ/ and /n/ pair, and the /m/ and /n/ sounds. Additionally, Demirezen identified fossilized pronunciation errors in Turkish EFL speakers: /æ/ and /ʌ/ (2008), /ə/ (2010), and /w/ (2005) (as cited in Uzun, 2024).

In the Türkiye context, the studies are based on EFL students' perceptions of native and non-native accents. One of the most important study that is important and related to this study is done by Gömek (2024). This study was done in the perception on different accents. The findings reveal that participants were significantly better at recognizing Turkish and British English accents, as these were the accents they were most frequently exposed to and more familiar. Additionally, they perceived British and TFA as the most pleasant, intelligible, and appropriate for international communication. Another study was done by Hamiloğlu and Mutlu (2018) on the accents of the

Turkish students. The study was done with 60 preparatory school students and it was found that they largely acknowledged having a non-native English accent, although they consider their accent understandable to both native and non-native English speakers. Participants expressed a lack of confidence in their English pronunciation and a preference to adopt a native-like accent. The participants shared negative attitudes regarding the acceptability of their accent for mutual cross-cultural communication with native English speakers. Moreover, another study was conducted by Griffiths and Soruç (2019) in which New Zealand students and Turkish EFL students were compared. Unlike New Zealand, it was found that Turkish EFL listeners had a tendency to appreciate and choose native norms.

In addition, according to a study by Akçay (2020) students have a positive attitude toward native accents (British and American) and feel better associating with native accents compared to non-native accents. Another study was conducted by Sezgin (2022) which resulted in a difference in native and non-native accented teachers. It is found that Turkish EFL students believe that it is better to learn skills from native teachers, while non-native teachers could be preferred for understanding, developing strategies, etc. Sezgin's (2022) study also concluded that the students with a higher level of English had more unprejudiced perceptions of non-native accented teachers. To look from another perspective, Çeçen and Tülüce (2019) have done a research with EFL teachers on the accents in Türkiye. It was found that even though the teachers have started to raise their awareness, still they tend to create an ownership and native-speakers norms concept in their minds and assess the speakers' intelligibility for the sake of these norms.

Another research that could be mentioned is done by Mesincigiller and Akcan (2014) on the perception of secondary school students. The study discussed that these students had positive attitudes toward both teachers; nevertheless, they preferred non-native English-speaking teachers for educational skills and grammar due to L1, while native ones were for oral and vocabulary skills. An additional study for perception, Karakaş et al., (2016) have done a research on higher education and concluded that even though based on the results of qualitative data students seemed to have neutral attitudes towards both natives and non-natives, with quantitative data it was found that they had a positive tendency for the natives. Just like other studies, this study also resulted that students preferring native teachers more for professional aspects and non-native teachers' pedagogical aspects. Also, Akdeniz (2015) concluded a study at five different universities from

Türkiye with 156 participants on perception of effectiveness of native and non-native teachers. The study concluded that the students favoured both sides; however, it claims that level, age, and gender are some factors that affect attitude. Lastly, Yentürk and Dağdeviren-Kırmızı (2020) conducted a study with 469 EFL learners on foreign language speaking anxiety in the classroom of a native or non-native instructor. Based on the results, it can be stated that although the participants had a high level of anxiety in the native teacher's classroom due to several factors (readiness, comparison with peer, forgetting the target language), they were safer, more relaxed, benefiting from more language exposure, and feeling more positive in the classroom of a native instructor.

From another perspective, Candan and Inal (2020) conducted a study on students' perceptions of different English accents and non-native teachers' English pronunciation through a case study. The study found that students believed that correct pronunciation was a highly important factor, besides the impact of the classroom environment. Through interviews, the students suggested that as long as it was intelligible, the accent was acceptable. The students also claimed that native teachers were very effective in language teaching and learning; nevertheless, non-native teachers were a huge help to them in terms of their pronunciation development. Finally, the students claimed to obtain more pronunciation-based instruction in order to reduce their accentedness.

Another important study was conducted by Büyükahıska and Uyar (2019) on 22 Turkish students from 7th grade. The study examined the comprehension of students in the comparison of native and non-native accents; however, this study did not include the TFA. The findings suggested that the students were better at understanding with more familiar accents. The findings also showed that British and Australian accents were more comprehensible to students due to their familiarity compared to other non-native accents: Argentinian, French, Italian, Irish, and Chinese. In this study, one of the other important results was that the 6 participants understood everything in British English, and five items were asked, with the mean score found to be four. For the other accents, especially the Irish accent, there were several participants who declared that they did not understand anything, unlike with the Australian and British accents.

There is some similar research conducted on perception and effectiveness; nonetheless, to the utmost accessibility of this literature review, no study is based on the accentedness of a Turkish EFL speaker, intelligibility, and comprehensibility in the Türkiye context, but one similar research on Interlanguage Speech Intelligibility Benefit (ISIB) of TFA done by Uzun (2022). According to the study by Uzun (2022) done by 33 English and 33 Turkish L1 speakers, the results indicated that Turkish students were better at understanding words in TFA. Similarly, their intelligibility was greater and more compared to English participants. As another research was done by Uzun (2019) in which he studied the pronunciation and intelligibility of Turkish EFL speakers. There were three speech samples and tasks to investigate the intelligibility of Turkish EFL speakers and their pronunciation problems. It was found that the speakers do make a myriad of pronunciation errors causing them to be less intelligible. The study was concluded with the results which show that this errors on soundings (both vowel and consonants) and stress were the most crucial pronunciation errors, so they were found to be the dominant factors for eliminating understanding. Finally, Uzun (2021) proceeded a study with 8 listeners and 16 different Turkish EFL speakers. The listeners were from different first language backgrounds. The results showed that TFA was not very comprehensible for these listeners.

## **2.7 Summary**

An accent is a very crucial aspect of spoken language and communication due to conveying the message correctly, especially while speaking in a foreign language. However, it does not only make a foreign speaker convey the message but also the nationality and show hints from the first language of the speaker. As a result, an accent can influence how listeners perceive the speaker, leading them to make assumptions about the speaker's background, education, social appearance, or competence (Brusa & Proverbio, 2024). In that sense, for L2 learners, accent is much more than just segmental accuracy. Several elements such as intonation and loudness help convey speaker intent by encoding both semantic and discursive (Moyer, 2013). Additionally, accents serve as a means of expressing personal style, so on a broader level, it also reflects social identity across different categorical dimensions. In contrast, it is argued that in a globalized world where individuals from diverse backgrounds use ELF for communication, the aim should not be to have native-speaker pronunciation and accent, but rather to focus on the ability to communicate effectively and accurately. This shift in prioritizing intelligibility and functional communication

over native norms represents a central issue in today's EFL/ELF contexts. Therefore, some people believe that the accent should be as native as possible, while some believe that it is natural to have a foreign accent. Regarding these ideas, the debate is still an existence, especially in the Outer and Expanding Circles, which is the part of the paradigm of "The Three Circles of English" that Kachru (1985) created.

As mentioned above, these perceptions are also linked with the intelligibility, accentedness, and comprehensibility of the foreign accents since there are a myriad of countries and unique first languages that affect the speakers' English accents in the Outer and Expanding Circles. These three concepts are important in terms of conveying the message and shaping the perception of the listener on the accent along with the speaker's his/herself. In accordance with the previous research, it is important to take the first language of the speakers into consideration as it could be beneficial for the listener to understand and comprehend the accent and the speech easily. On the other hand, the interference of the first language can also cause some intelligibility and comprehensibility problems as, at some point, all these unique languages have distinct alphabets, phonetics, or sounds.

As this study aims to search for TFA of the English language, the mentioned concepts are feasible since, in Türkiye, there are negative perceptions on Turkish foreign accent. However, even though, based on a study done by Uzun (2023) and Gömek (2024) on the intelligibility of TFA among Turkish listeners was positive, there are no other studies done on TFA rather than perceptions on it.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study attempts to find the correlation among intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness of the English language in the Turkish context. It seeks to understand if TFA in EFL/ELF is not preferred or favored due to understanding and grasping or accentedness within the justification of the prior studies on the perception of Turkish EFL students. Thus, the method of the current study is a mixed method research as it contains both quantitative and qualitative data. According to Creswell (2014), mixed-method research provides a deeper insight by combining numerical data with detailed contextual information, enhancing the validity of findings. Perry (2011) also emphasizes that mixed-method research allows for triangulation, which strengthens the reliability of results by cross-validating data from different sources. In that sense, mixed-method research is essential in ELT as it bridges the gap between statistical generalizability and in-depth contextual understanding, ensuring a more holistic approach to language education research (Creswell, 2014; Perry, 2011).

This study follows one of the key principles of mixed-method research design which is the sequential explanatory mixed-method design. It involves systematically collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data in a specific order. In other words, a sequential explanatory mixed-method design is a research approach that involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data to further explain or elaborate on the initial findings (Creswell & Clark, 2017). This design is widely used in research of social sciences because it helps to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem by integrating statistical data with deeper contextual insights (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, this study aimed to have numerical data for concrete evidence, and qualitative data to justify, clarify, and deepen the concepts with the words of the participants.

Regarding the quantitative phase of this study, data is collected through *a transcription study* to assess intelligibility followed by *a comprehensibility scale* to evaluate how easily participants understand the spoken content. The quantitative phase serves to provide numerical data that can help identify patterns and relationships between the key variables—intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness. Following these, qualitative data will be collected through *a semi-structured interview* related to accentedness and understanding the tasks at a deeper level by helping to answer more questions that cannot be easily understood by numerical data alone. As the purpose of the current study is to understand the relationship between intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness of the accents, the analysis will be through two parts. In the first part, *the transcription task and comprehensibility scale* will be analyzed through statistical analysis. A correlational research method was preferred since, according to Perry (2011), correlational analysis is highly effective for studying the connections between variables, as it allows researchers to quantitatively determine whether changes in one variable are associated with changes in another. The second part will be a *semi-structured interview* and the analysis will be done through thematic analysis. Creswell and Creswell (2017) emphasize that thematic analysis provides a flexible, systematic approach to organizing and interpreting textual data, making it particularly useful for understanding participants' experiences and perceptions of accented speech of the participants in this study.

### **3.2 Population and Sampling**

As Dörnyei (2007) states, the population is the people who are in the study, whereas the sample is the participants who are examined in a study. In that sense, as the study aims to focus on non-native accent intelligibility and comprehensibility in Türkiye, the population regarding the purpose of the study is Turkish adult EFL learners. Accordingly, the sampling is decided on *purposeful (non-probability) and convenience sampling* (Perry, 2011), since the researcher works in an EFL school, specifically in a preparatory school at a university in Türkiye. The purposeful (non-probability) sampling paradigm is concerned primarily with identifying samples with a variety of information and generally not chosen randomly (Perry, 2011). The reason behind choosing this type of sampling is that the research is based on convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is highly preferred in applied linguistics since the samples are readily available for

research (Perry, 2011). As Perry (2011) states, the important part is to describe participants in detail to show their suitability for the research.

### **3.3 Participants**

In the framework of convenience sampling, the participants are randomly chosen from preparatory school graduates of age between 19-21 continuing to study at the same university. There is no other information to be defined in the decision process of choosing them. The participants are expected to be 30 EFL learners at a foundation university in Ankara. The participants are the preparatory school graduates of 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic years. As it might be guessed, there are a lot of graduates of these academic years, so the participants were randomly chosen and based on their suitability and access to the researcher. In accordance with this issue, it can be stated that the students were also not preferred based on any list of achievements or any other list, but being successful at the end of their education and still studying in the same university was enough.

It is planned that the participants will be from different EMI departments of the same university, such as Nursing, Engineering, Gastronomy, Dentistry, Medicine, International Trade and Finance, International Relations and Political Science, and Psychology. There are 21 female and 9 male participants, which is only mentioned for a further clear description of participants in the analysis section of this paper. As their last English language education is foreseen as their preparatory school and being EMI students, their level of English will be assumed to be more than the B1 level since the preparatory school gives education up to the B2 level (CEFR). This school facilitates skill-based education; therefore, their proficiency exam is based on four skills. The students are supposed to be proficient in at least level B1 or above in all skills to be successful and start their departments. Therefore, even though there was a minimum set for the level the students were asked about their levels. According to the answers, there are 19 participant of B1 level, 2 of B1+, and 9 of B2 level participating in this study. With the same age group and familiar English language education and level of proficiency is purposefully chosen in order to create a more homogeneous participant population; as Saito et al. (2019) state, there is a link between accent, intelligibility, and comprehensibility based on proficiency level, attitude, motivation, age, gender, and educational background. (see table 3.1)

Table 3.1 The demographic information of the participants

|               | Number of participants |
|---------------|------------------------|
| <b>Gender</b> |                        |
| Male          | 9                      |
| Female        | 21                     |
| <b>Level</b>  |                        |
| B1            | 19                     |
| B1+           | 2                      |
| B2            | 9                      |
| <b>Age</b>    |                        |
| 19            | 12                     |
| 20            | 13                     |
| 21            | 5                      |

Therefore, this study aims to have these demographic items which are educational background, level of proficiency, similar motivation, and age to have a better understanding of the data and to have a cohesive analysis. In that sense, by considering these items, the study can identify patterns and relationships that may influence the outcomes as well as ensuring a more detailed and reliable interpretation of the results, leading to more meaningful conclusions.

### 3.4 Data collection tools

This study is a mixed-method study; therefore, there are several tools preferred to be used for collecting data. The tools for the quantitative part, which are favored for this study, are recordings of people from native and non-native accents, a transcription task, and a comprehensibility scale, whereas, for the qualitative part, a semi-structured interview.

The primary instrument of this study is the collection of audio recordings featuring American, British, and TFA speakers. For each of these accents, both short and long versions of the recordings are provided, with the longer versions containing additional utterances while still incorporating the content of the shorter versions. Although using identical speech samples across all accents might appear to facilitate a more coherent analysis, this study deliberately employs different topics for each accent. The rationale behind this decision, as will be discussed in subsequent sections, is related to the transcription task assigned to participants, in which they transcribe what they hear. It is assumed that if the same speech were repeated across all recordings, participants might rely on memory rather than actual comprehension, particularly by the final recording, thereby compromising the accuracy of the analysis. In other words, if participants consistently heard the same utterance across different accents, there would be a risk of memorization rather than genuine understanding. To mitigate this issue, each accent was presented with distinct topics while ensuring that the overall level of speech complexity remained consistent across all recordings.

To be able to have natural, real, and authentic accent recordings, the IDEA - The International Dialects of English Accents website and the database are used to find native speakers. Even though in this database it is possible to find many English accents from all over the world, for the purpose of the study, accents were preferred from The Inner Circle and, more specifically, English and American accents. Choosing several accents would be too broad than needed and time-consuming regarding the aim of this study. In that sense, there were two sample recordings for each accent from Washington and England, Devon. In addition, a Turkish female from Ankara recorded the TFA. This study preferred the Turkish foreign accent from Ankara because it is the capital of Türkiye, where education is good and the dialect is standard. Therefore, British (England-Devon), American (Washington), and Turkish foreign (Ankara) accents are preferred in the scope of the study because, in Türkiye, these three accents are generally confronted the most, even though with globalization, some other accents have become famous.

Native accents from Washington 5 and England 70 were preferred in short and long versions (see Appendix 1). For both accents, the short versions were 0.08 seconds, and the longer versions were 0.34 for the former and 0.25 for the latter. The reason to choose these two specific accents is familiarity with them, as they are the most common native English accents in Türkiye.

In the platform IDEA, there are actually several TFA samples; however, they are speakers who have lived abroad before. When listening, it is observed that their accent is affected by being abroad, and the speakers were trying to have a native-like accent, which distorted the accent. In that sense, for this study IDEA platform does not opt for TFA sample recording; rather, it is recorded by a volunteer English language speaker from the capital city of Türkiye, Ankara. This speaker has been abroad but for holidays, never lived for a long time, learned English, and is educated in Türkiye. The speaker is preferred to be female because the native ones are also chosen as female speakers in order to avoid gender issues in the recordings. For the Turkish recording to be a real-life speech, she is asked to answer questions about her job, future plans, and whether she plans to go abroad. Again, for this accent, there are both shorter and longer versions, which were 0.12 seconds for the short and 0.24 seconds for the longer version (see Appendix 2).

Before the actual task, it is important to collect some personal information from the participants in order to create a better analysis and understanding. For this issue, background information was adapted from Crewson (2023). Crewson (2023) included background information questions (see Appendix 3); however, the current study does not need all this background information. In that sense, as mentioned above, this study limits the background information to two variables (age and level) and two extra information (gender and department) (see Appendix 4).

The first tool of this study to collect the actual data is a transcription task for analyzing the intelligibility of native accents and TFA (see Appendix 5). This task basically involves writing as much of the actual utterance heard by the listener as possible. The mentioned short versions of the accents are used in this task, and the participants are expected to write what they hear as clearly as possible and as much as possible of all the accents while listening to each short version three times. The reason for listening three times is to make students be able to write it clearly because they may find it difficult to write at once regardless of accent, intelligibility, and comprehensibility.

The second tool of this study is comprehensibility scale, and as it is obvious from its name, it is utilized for comprehensibility (see Appendix 6). The comprehensibility scale will be adopted from Edwards et al. (2018) as the aim of this study correlates well with the current study. The scale shows how comprehensible these accents are (1 is 'very difficult to understand' and 9 is 'very easy to understand'). The scale is placed for each recording directly after the transcription tasks, and it

is used for all three longer recordings. After the transcription task, in sequence, the longer version plays for once, and students are expected to rate their understanding of the accent and continue with the later accents.

The last tool that is facilitated is a semi-structured interview, and the aim of using this tool is for accentedness and to see the opinion of participants much more clearly. It is obtained from Crewson (2023) and Nguyen (2017) (see Appendix 7). However, as there are normally 16 questions in Crewson (2023) and 5 questions in Nguyen (2017), most of them are not relatable to the aims of this study. Regarding this issue, they are going to be adapted and extracted rather than directly adopted into this study. Even though the questions are related to the present study, they are generally about the World Englishes. For this reason, while obtaining the most relevant questions, World Englishes was adapted as TFA and most of them were directly extracted as they were not allied. In that sense, in this study, 6 questions were designed to be asked to the participants (see Appendix 8). On the other hand, sometimes, based on the participants' answers, some additional questions are asked to have a better vision and understanding of their ideas.

### **3.5 Ethical Procedures**

This study includes several data collection tools, so the first step was to get permission from the owners of the tools. An e-mail has been written to the owners to receive permission, and they have given their consent to use the tools by giving credit, which is also feasible for the IDEA platform to use their recordings (see Appendix 9). Later, a consent form was signed by the Turkish EFL speaker to use her recordings to be evaluated (Appendix 10). As a following procedure, ethical consent was obtained from the related universities in which the researcher is studying (see Appendix 11), and the data was collected (see Appendix 12). Lastly, a letter of consent was given to the participants before the meeting which was collected online (see appendix 13).

### **3.6. Data Collection Procedure**

The initial step in this procedure involved organizing all the necessary tasks, obtaining consent from the relevant stakeholders for the use of the aforementioned tools, selecting appropriate recordings from the IDEA database—given the wide range of available options—and, finally, recording the TFA samples. Following the completion of ethical considerations and procedural approvals at the target universities, the data collection process transitioned into its

physical phase. Upon securing the required permissions, the researcher contacted the principal of the School of Foreign Languages at the foundation university, where participants had most recently received their English language education and were still enrolled. After obtaining a list of graduates from the 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 academic years, the researcher reached out to potential participants via Microsoft Teams, the platform designated by the university for communication among its stakeholders. Once contact was established with the majority of the students, those who were most accessible and best suited for the study were selected as participants.

For data collection, the meetings with the participants were held via Zoom in order to record the answers easily and to make easier time arrangements with the students. On the front page of the tasks, the participants confront a consent form in which they are asked to give their consent for the data collected from them to be analyzed and used in this research by highlighting ‘I Agree.’ Even though it is written in the consent form, the researchers also informed the students verbally about the purpose of the study and that they were the volunteers for this research. Also, the participants were informed verbally about recording the session, how it would be only used for writing down each utterance correctly without missing any important information, and that all their personal information is confidential. In this meeting, participants did the tasks first and, later, the semi-structured interview since it would be better for students to listen to some example accents to have accurate ideas in the interview. The meetings took mostly 20-25 minutes to collect data from each person. The sessions were conducted with individuals to make participants more comfortable conveying their ideas, as the topic of this research is controversial.

The consent form, background information, transcription task, and comprehensibility scale are sent to participants through the platform “Google forms” to make the data collection and analysis procedure easier. This platform is easily shared online with participants and creates a well-organized analysis of the answers directly, which is also practical for the researcher's further analysis. However, on this platform, it is not possible to upload recordings; therefore, the researcher played the recordings for participants one by one. This issue also caused a positive issue, which is that the researcher was sure that each student had heard the recordings three times, and it was a very controlled data collection procedure. There could be many problems regarding the steps of the data collection procedure as students may listen more than 3 times or may have

artificial intelligence to write transcription tasks as some students would like to achieve and to seem better at what they do.

### 3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, the data analysis procedure is conducted in two ways. A statistical and Pearson correlation analysis is preferred for quantitative analysis. There were two tasks conducted in a row in terms of quantitative study. The tasks aimed to analyze the correlation of the tasks for each accent.

After collecting the data, the Google Forms platform gives the percentages of the scales, and the answers are divided based on each participant's whole answers or gathered answers for each recording of all participants. Therefore, there was only a need for a decision on the correctness of the transcription task's answers before the actual analysis.

The decision is made through 'correct,' 'slightly correct,' and 'not correct' according to what the participants have written. To make the decision, there were some criteria and the judgment was done by both the researcher and an English teacher friend who has been working in the field for more than 5 years. The criteria were given in order to eliminate the problems. Firstly, the spelling mistakes were not taken into consideration unless they did not change the meaning or it was a slight mistake (e.g., *schol* - *school*). Nevertheless, the morphological mistakes, such as inflectional mistakes (e.g., *play* instead of *plays*; *I go* instead of *I'll go*), were seen as mistakes, as was done in Pease (2016). To make it clearer, spelling mistakes are not always due to accent but rather might be due to a lack of knowledge or writing fast. Therefore, just like the study of Verbeke and Simon (2023), in this study, the spelling mistakes were not marked as incorrect during the analysis. Another issue that arose during the analysis was related to free morphemes. Free morphemes include words in their base form, compound form, or functional words. During the analysis process, certain base-form words had a significant impact on meaning, such as *qualified* in the British accent, *pancake* in the American accent, and *abroad* in the TFA accent. These specific words were intentionally chosen to assess students' comprehension of key vocabulary. Lastly, the omission of one or two words that did not significantly impact the accuracy or overall meaning of the utterance was not considered an incorrect response. This decision was based on the understanding that minor omissions, particularly of function words or redundancies, do not necessarily indicate a lack of comprehension. Instead, the focus was placed on the accurate

transcription of key lexical items that contribute to the core meaning of the utterance, ensuring a more reliable assessment of participants' skills. In that sense, to ensure accuracy in the task analysis, the responses were evaluated based on these criteria and reviewed by two English teachers for judgment and verification.

Since the data were collected via Google Forms, the platform automatically generated both individual and aggregate results for the scale items. Accordingly, the analysis involved the application of basic descriptive statistical methods, primarily percentage calculations, to interpret the distribution of responses across different items. Moreover, the Pearson correlation formula is used to analyze the relationship between the transcription task and the Likert scale in ratio type. Perry (2011) claims Pearson correlation is used to correlate two quantitative data sets with two discrete variables. Therefore, in the analysis procedure, the correlation of the results was calculated, measuring the dispersion of the correctness and the frequency of the responses for each accent. Additionally, the analysis did not rely on the assumption that participants' responses across the two tasks were consistently related in a cumulative manner. In other words, while the overall numerical data might suggest a correlation between Task 1 and Task 2, a closer examination of individual responses revealed that this correlation was not always present. For instance, a participant who provided an incorrect response was expected to select a lower rating (between 1 and 4) on the scale. However, individual-level analysis showed inconsistencies between sentence accuracy and corresponding scale ratings for several participants. As a result, rather than assuming a direct relationship between the two tasks, the analysis focused on the variations and deviations in individual responses to provide a more accurate interpretation of the data.

Lastly, a thematic analysis was conducted on the semi-structured interviews to identify recurring patterns, key themes, and underlying meanings within participants' responses. This approach allowed for a deeper exploration of their perspectives, experiences, and interpretations, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the qualitative data. Also, it provided an understanding of the accentedness of TFA compared to native accents.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This study sought to examine negative attitudes toward the TFA by investigating on the basis of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness compared to native accents. This study is a mixed-method study and includes both quantitative and qualitative tasks to analyze thoroughly. In other words, quantitative data was used to validate the qualitative data and used qualitative to reason and understand deeper of the quantitative data.

In this chapter, the findings and the results of quantitative and qualitative data are presented sequentially. Firstly, the intelligibility task results are mentioned and are followed by the comprehensibility scales. Later, the correlation between the tasks is stated. Finally, the qualitative data is presented and concluded through a thematic analysis with tables and quotations.

#### 4.1 Analysis of Intelligibility Task and the Comprehensibility Scale

This task was basically a listen-and-write task and was analyzed based on keywords and the correctness of the sentence. When the writings were analyzed for each accent, the correct (C), slightly correct (SC), and not correct (NC) were different for all accents. The numbers for each accent are mentioned in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Task 1 - Intelligibility Results for all accents

| Accent   | Correct | Slightly Correct | Not Correct |
|----------|---------|------------------|-------------|
| British  | 0       | 5                | 25          |
| American | 15      | 11               | 4           |
| Turkish  | 16      | 12               | 2           |

According to the results of the intelligibility task, Turkish EFL listeners struggle the most in transcribing the British accent (BA) correctly, with a percentage of 0% correct answers. Compared to the BA, the American accent (AA) was transcribed better, with 50% of the answers being correct compared to the BA. Lastly, the TFA was slightly better, with 53.33% correct answers than AA and the highest correct transcribed accent among all the accents. There is a similar issue between

slightly correct and incorrect answers. BA is 16.7% with slightly correct answers, while AA is 36.67%. However, unlike correct answers, TFA has a higher percentage, with 40% slightly correct answers. On the other hand, this is highly normal since the TFA does not correct the answer by 13.33% while the TFA is 6.67%. From another perspective, BA is 83.33%, with the highest number of incorrect answers, indicating that it is less intelligible compared to AA and TFA.

The comprehensibility scale was based on a 1-9 ratio, and 1 was *very hard to comprehend*, whereas 9 was *very easy*. This scale was given for each accent, and the participants scaled the accents' comprehensibility after listening to them. According to the results, similar to the intelligibility task, there were differences when the accents were compared.

The first accent was the BA, which was the most varied among the listeners, with at least one choice for each number on the scale except number 8 (Figure 4.1).

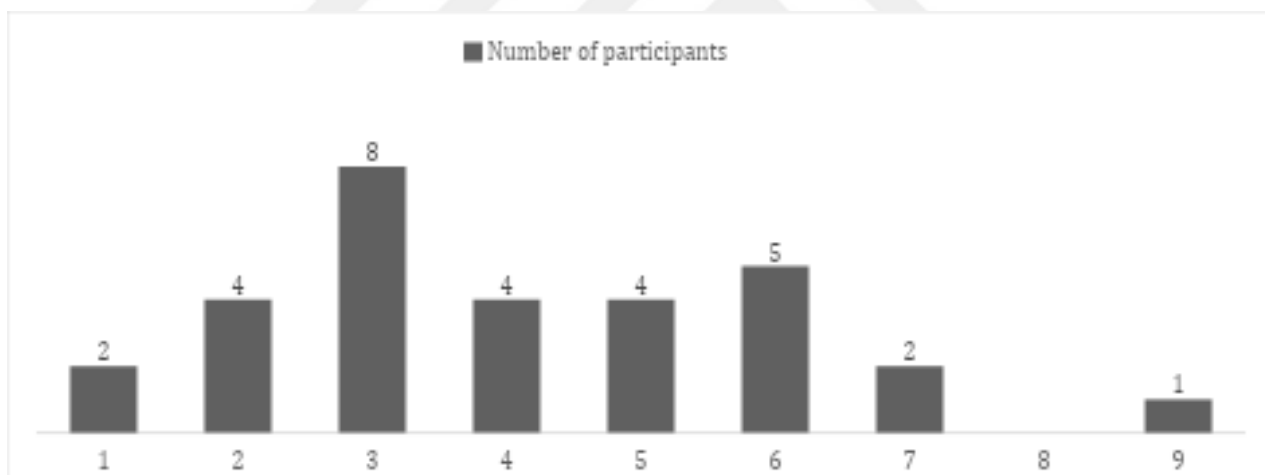


Figure 4.1 Task 2 - Participants' choices on the Comprehensibility Scale Items of British Accent

BA is highly controversial, and reaching a consensus is hard among the participants. The results show that it is hard to make a deduction whether it is comprehensible or not since a variety of answers occur and almost every number was chosen twice or more. However, due to the density of the answers between 1-6, with 89,8% in total, it is still possible to claim that BA is less or slightly intelligible to Turkish EFL listeners.

The second accent was the American accent, which was more consistent with the listeners. The scale had a higher concentration of selections for items in the middle; however, there were also varying selections for other items, except for items 1 and 2 (see Figure 4.2).

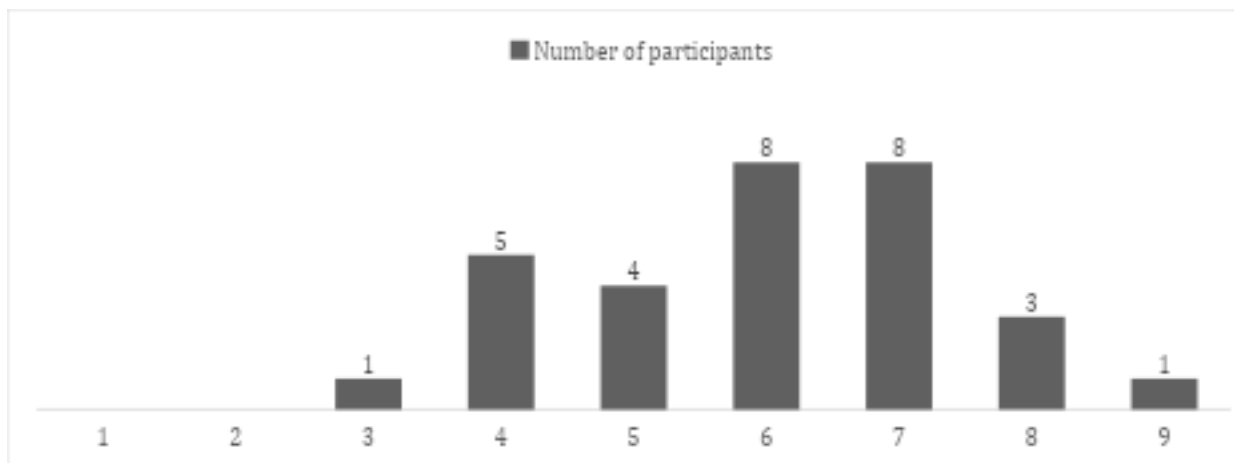


Figure 4.2 Task 2 - Participants' Choices on the Comprehensibility Scale Items of American Accent

As obvious, it is easier to state a common idea for AA since it is more consistent. However, it is still possible to see that 9 and 3 are selected for the same accent, which shows a discrepancy in the comprehensibility of AA among the participants. From another point of view, within the results, it is possible to state that with 83,4% of answers in total being between 4-7 on the scale, AA is slightly comprehensible for Turkish EFL listeners but not less comprehensible than BA.

The last accent was the Turkish foreign accent. The scale answers were accumulated only on three items of the scale as seen in Figure 4.3.



Figure 4.3 Task 2 - Participants' Choices on the Comprehensibility Scale Items of Turkish Foreign Accent

It is obvious from Figure 4.3 that TFA has a highly consistent accent for the listeners and has the highest collective opinion. TFA has been found to be highly comprehensible for Turkish EFL listeners since the lowest number to be chosen was seven.

In that sense, the results show that, in terms of comprehensibility, the British and American accents seem to be less comprehensible than TFA due to the diversity in the percentages. Moreover, it can be seen that the former accents were more varied, and the listeners had distinct ideas, unlike the latter accent, which was consistent in comprehension for the listeners. With 73.3%, TFA was chosen to be the most intelligible accent, whereas BA and AA were only 3.33% preferred as the most intelligible accent. When looked at independently, BA was found to be the most challenging and demanding accent to understand as the highest percentage was with 26,7% of the participants selecting number 3. AA is found to be more understandable and easier to understand for Turkish EFL listeners since the highest percentages were with 26.7% selecting 6 and the other 26.7% selecting 7. Lastly, TFA is the most understandable and comprehensible accent for Turkish EFL speakers as they have all selected 7, 8, or 9, and as mentioned before, 73.3% chose 9.

#### **4.2 The Correlation Between Intelligibility and Comprehensibility Scores**

The correlation between intelligibility and comprehensibility resulted from the Pearson Correlation formula. The formula was used for each accent to be individually correlated between the tasks. After each accent was correlated, a total relation was obtained among the three accents. Based on the statistical analysis, it has been found that there has been a mere relationship between intelligibility and comprehensibility for each accent.

In total, there were 25 NC and 5 SC answers for the British accent, and the scale ratio varied highly. However, as mentioned above, the participants' answers were not as correlated as assumed. The participants' intelligibility score and scale answers were not highly correlated (see Appendix 14 for individual answers); therefore, the answers were not just calculated collectively but individually.

When the calculations were all done, it was found that the intelligibility and comprehensibility of the British accent's correlation was  $r = 0.16$  for Turkish EFL listeners, which indicated a very weak positive correlation. Under the previous statement, higher intelligibility can slightly affect high comprehensibility for BA.

BA seems to be the most inconsistent accent in terms of intelligibility and comprehensibility for Turkish EFL listeners. Even though there are inconsistencies in all accents, BA has the most. One of the most discrepant results was based on participant 3, who gave a very non-correct

transcription of the speech, whereas the understanding was 9. Also, some participants, such as p20, p21, and p28, did not write the task correctly; however, they gave 6 or 7 for comprehensibility. On the other hand, there were also some participants, such as p9, who had slightly correct answers, though their scales were 2 or 3. As mentioned, the relationship between understanding and grasping is not very correlational, especially with BA.

For AA, 15 C, 11 SC, and 4 NC answers, the scale ratio varied slightly less than BA but still not enough to have a consensus. For this accent, there were fewer non-matching answers; however, there were still inconsistencies. Therefore, individual analysis was also done for AA (see Appendix 15 for the individual answers).

According to the results, the correlation between Task 1 and Task 2 was found to be  $r = 0.31$  for AA. This ensures that the relationship between understanding and grasping is not very strong, but it is possible to assume that there can be a positive relationship. Even though AA is more consistent than the British one, there are some important examples of inconsistency. To illustrate, some participants, such as p1, p3, and p4, gave incorrect answers and gave 6, 7, or 8 based on their ease of understanding. This shows that the results do not stipulate a great correlation.

For TFA, the answers were 16 C, 11 SC, and 2 NC, with a scale ratio that was highly consistent with a collective answer in the highest ranges of comprehensibility. Compared to the British and American accents, the answers were slightly more consistent with each participant's answer. Nevertheless, the deviation of each participant's answers was calculated individually (see Appendix 16 for the individual answers).

Based on the calculations, the correlation was  $r = 0.46$  for TFA. The former calculation suggests a more moderate positive relation and shows that comprehensibility can be higher when the intelligibility is higher. However, it should be borne in mind that this moderately positive perspective is considered within this study's accents and data. In other words,  $r = 0.46$  does not indicate a high correlation level; only due to the lower correlation between the previous accents is seen to be higher. Normally, this calculation also does not show a powerful relationship.

From another point of view, TFA has the most consistent accent for the participants compared to native accents. Based on the answers, even though the correctness of the transcription changes, it is highly comprehensible for all the listeners, even for the NC-answered participants. However, this issue is a problem from a correlation perspective; for example, participants 19 and

20 gave NC answers, but their scale points were 9 and 8. This is also similar to SC-answered participants; their answers also vary from 7 to 8. Besides, even though TFA is comprehensible for almost all participants, 12 of the participants gave SC answers, which is not a score to be overlooked. Therefore, there is an obvious slight lack of correlation between intelligibility and comprehensibility for TFA.

### **4.3 The Analysis of Semi-structured Interview**

In this section, the analysis of the semi-structured interview, which includes 6 questions, will be done. The questions were asked to analyze the accentedness of TFA compared to native accents. Also, the questions were asked to thoroughly understand the participants' thoughts and give reasoning on the quantitative data. The quantitative data was analyzed through a thematic analysis; therefore, in this section, every question will be analyzed individually through themes, codes, quotations of the utterances, and linking with the quantitative data.

#### **4.3.1 What problems do you have when using English to communicate with other Turkish English speakers? - Do you think accent is a problem?**

All the participants answered both questions, and it can be said that there were different perceptions on the former part; however, there was a high level of consensus on the latter part. For the first part, there were problems mainly based on English; however, others were constructed in the shape of a similar attitude.

##### ***4.3.1.1 Problems in Using English***

###### ***4.3.1.1.1 Proficiency level***

Out of 30 students, 6 students directly stated that the level of English of the Turkish EFL speaker causes problems during communication. Some of them reduced it to the capacity of vocabulary and lack of grammar knowledge. While ten students claim that the problems are due to vocabulary knowledge, nine believe grammar is the related issue. Lastly, one of the participants believes that problems occur within the transfer from L1 to L2. As can be seen in Excerpts 1 and 2:

*"...The problems generally, I think we do not have a big problem if we have we generally have a problem in grammar or vocabulary..." (p13, female, age 20)*

*“I think the problem is due to the grammar difference between our language and how people translate from their l1 to l2...” (p24, female, age 19)*

The most important communication problem was seen as the proficiency level since the language itself is problematic. Most of the participants believe that Turkish speakers have problems with proficiency levels and that possessing different levels of knowledge on language among speakers can cause issues while speaking. The inconsistency of the knowledge can create an unbalanced understanding with shifts in meaning, misunderstandings, or disruptions in fluency during communication. It can make communication harder, especially for the low-level speakers speaking with the advanced speakers.

#### **4.3.1.1.2 Production problems**

Based on this perspective, the participants were serious about pronunciation, speaking, and fluency problems. The participants claimed that production problems are the major issue in having miscommunication with Turkish EFL speakers. Nine participants believed that pronunciation was a leading factor in miscommunication, and two stated that the fluency of the speaker was the problem. As evident from Excerpts 3, 4, and 5:

*“I think it does not cause a problem. But it might be hard to understand the accent. As our language is read by how it is written, sometimes they read English differently as well. Actually, it is more like about the pronunciation and not the accent...” (p16, male, age 20)*

*“I think I understand a Turkish person easily, but because of our alphabet, Turkish people randomize pronunciation of English words so it is a problem. Apart from that, sentence structure can sometimes cause problems. Accent is not a problem.” (p28, female, age 19)*

*“I think they do not have a problem; rather, they understand each other better. If I am speaking with a Turkish person, it is not a problem to have a Turkish foreign accent. The problems are based on speaking skills. We do not have enough fluency practice.” (p8, female, age 21)*

The incorrect or different pronunciation of words can cause difficulties for the listener to comprehend what is said correctly and cause failure in communication. For example, mixing words with similar sounds or trying to guess the pronunciation of the word since English is not read as it is written can lead to shifts in meaning. Also, as the speaker's fluency may be affected by frequent pauses, difficulty in smoothly connecting words, or an inability to finish sentences in an EFL context, this can reduce the effectiveness of communication by making it difficult for the listener to follow the conversation.

On the other hand, although pronunciation was seen as a reason for problems in communication, some participants had an extra different point of view on this issue, as seen in Excerpt 6:

*“Even though they can have pronunciation problems, I can also understand even if they have this problem because I can guess what they mean as we generally have similar mistakes. I believe this is also because we pronounce and stress every word and sound, making us understand better.” (p2, female, age 19)*

Some participants believed that as the Turkish people think in the same way and have a similar background, they also understand each other regarding production problems. Because of this common mindset and background, they believe that they can easily understand production-related problems with each other. In other words, since they come from the same cultural and social context, they claim that they are able to empathize easily and understand or guess pronunciation mistakes.

#### **4.3.1.1.3 Personal issues**

There were various answers and ideas on this attitude. One of the participants believes that the problems generally arise due to people’s personal openness to communication, one of them believes that it is due to comparing ourselves, and another participant stated that the problems are due to fear of being judged. As demonstrated in Excerpts 7, 8, and 9:

*“I think it may be related to our country. We already have anxiety about speaking English in general. I think we, as Turks, look at the accent more than the meaning and understanding. I see that sometimes they comment, “You think your accent is good, but look at your accent; make it more native-like.” I think we pay a lot of attention to the accent, which creates a big problem in communication. People who think your accent is not good think their level is also bad, and they withdraw. For example, I am the same way. I pay attention like I shouldn’t speak with a Turkish foreign accent. And I think about the accent a lot and speak worse. Understanding is essential, but people seem to have passed that point.” (p11, female, age 20)*

*“I think we make a comparison between each other, like if he/she is speaking better than I am in English. Did I say it correctly? When you speak with an English person, it is okay. You say they will understand, but not with Turkish.” (p17, male, age 20)*

*“I think I am more comfortable compared to natives, but I feel insecure of people judging my mistakes. It is both accent and pronunciation. When they judge me or correct me, I feel very bad and stop talking, and this affects my communication, fluency, and pace.” (p20, female, age 20)*

As the participants claimed, they have some psychological barriers while speaking English. The participants believe that they are being judged, compared with others, and can be discriminated against or even corrected, leading to problems.

#### **4.3.1.1.4 No problem**

When it was asked, two of the participants claimed that there were no problems causing communication problems, which is evident from Excerpt 10:

*“I think I do not have any problem. Even though they can have pronunciation problems, I can also understand if they have this problem because I can guess what they mean, as we generally have similar mistakes. I am not talking about the beauty of it, but I don’t have miscommunication because of accent. Fluency is more important for me...” (p5, female, age 19)*

Having problems may not even cause problems, as can be seen above. Turkish speakers speak the same language, so no problems occur, and they understand each other well.

#### **4.3.1.2 Turkish Foreign Accented English**

##### **4.3.1.2.1 Imitation of different accents**

Only one of the participants claimed that accent is a problem in communicating, and it was due to the speaker imitating different accents. According to Excerpt 11 and Participant 17:

*“I think no, but some of them try to imitate a different accent, and it causes problems. Especially when they are new in language learning, they make a lot of mistakes in accent as well...” (p17, male, age 20)*

It is possible to understand that imitation of the accent can be a problem for the listener since they are trying to have a different way of speaking than usual, and therefore, this can cause miscommunication. The listener may not understand because of the mistakes or because there is not enough correct imitation of the accent.

##### **4.3.1.2.2 Not a problem**

11 of the participants stated that there were no problems with TFA during communication, and they were neutral about it, As indicated in Excerpts 12 and 13:

*“I think grammar problems. But I think accent is not a problem in terms of communication.” (p21 female, age 19)*

*“...Not accent but due to pronunciation. The accent is not a problem in communication.” (p2, female, age 19)*

Most of the participants believe that there are problems with English in several areas; however, accent is not one of them. They believe that their TFA does not create a lack of understanding, and they have not made any other further comments. On the other hand, there were other participants who also believed that the accent was not a problem but made further comments on TFA.

#### ***4.3.1.2.3 Not a problem, and it is easier***

Six of the participants believe that instead of creating a problem, TFA is easier than native accents to communicate with. As shown in Excerpt 14:

*“...I think it is better and easier because we are speaking one by one. But pronunciation is the problem. But accent is not a problem; instead, it is more joyful because it is more understandable.” (p25, male, age 20)*

The participants added that having a familiar accent and hearing TFA was much easier for them. It also gives them more enthusiasm to listen and learn the language since they face achieving an understanding of English.

#### ***4.3.1.2.4 Not a problem, and it is advantageous***

Nine participants stated that TFA does not cause a problem; instead, it is more advantageous and better since they are used to it and understand it better than natives, as illustrated in Excerpts 15 and 16.

*“I think accent does not cause a communication problem. I think we understand better. The vocabulary is understood better. I understand better when we have similar. I can speak with other non-natives but I am better with Turkish. It makes our communication better so it is more advantageous...” (p23, female, age 21)*

*“I think it is because of my language education. When I listened to another accent apart from the Turkish foreign accent, I struggled even if I knew the words. That is why the Turkish foreign accent is actually better for me to understand. I do not mean improvement but intelligibility.” (p6, female, age 21)*

Not confronting the familiar accent made participants feel anxious. They believe that hearing TFA is more advantageous for them in understanding the language and is more desirable than native accents.

#### ***4.3.1.2.5 Not a problem, easier, but a problem for foreign people***

Even though two participants feel that there is no problem with TFA understanding as a Turkish EFL speaker and listener, they believe it might be problematic for foreigners and cause communication problems. Excerpt 17 provides evidence of that:

*“We can understand it. There are problems between the two Turks, but they will understand anyway, such as talking carelessly. I think accent does not cause a problem between Turks. As long as the person is not too absurd, there is no problem in speaking. In fact, it makes it easier.*

*But I think it can be a problem for foreigners. The girl's English was very good, but we never understood her accent. We could not understand the girl all the time, but we spoke the same way between two Turks. But it is interesting. I think it is hard for her to understand us as well.” (p10, female, age 19)*

Some participants believe that the TFA accent is good for Turkish people because we are okay with it, but it could be a problem for other foreign people. As they are not familiar with it like Turkish people, it could be distorted or very non-native for them to understand.

#### ***4.3.1.2.6 Not a problem and is more comfortable***

One of the participants stated that she does not face any problems due to her accent, and even she is more comfortable with TFA than the natives. Excerpt 18 exemplifies it as:

*“... I hung up on accent a lot... Actually, I feel more comfortable. I say that he is from my nation and he doesn't judge me and I speak the same as him, but if he speaks differently, like from a different nation, I feel like I have to speak like him and I get nervous, I feel like I have to speak the same.” (p11, female, age 20)*

It can be stated that the participant's anxiety about the accent decreases with the familiar accent and creates a more relaxing atmosphere in which to speak English.

### **4.3.2 Did the speech samples you heard make you feel uneasy or instill a negative reaction? Why? What about the positive?**

This question was also a two-part question, and there were several answers. For the first part, the results were given based on the negativity or positivity, which can be seen in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 The participants' number and their negative or positive reactions on accents

| <b><i>Negative</i></b> | <b><i>Positive</i></b> |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| British 13             | American and Turkish 5 |
| American and British 7 | Turkish 16             |
| Turkish 2              | All 1                  |
| No negative 7          | None 2                 |

The participants had distinct ideas about the negativity or positivity of each accent they listened to. According to the results, 44,83% of the participants reacted negatively to BA, and 24,14% of them negatively to both native accents. Also, 6,90% of the participants stated that they found TFA negative, while 24.14% of them faced any accent with a negative reaction.

In contrast, TFA was found to be the most positive accent to be reacted to by the participants. According to the results, 66.67% of the participants claimed that TFA created a positive attitude for them. Also, 20,83% of the students added AA besides TFA in terms of positivity, while only 4,17% stated all accents installed a positive reaction. Lastly, 8,33% of the listeners defined none of the accents as being an accent to have a positive reaction, but rather, they were neutral about them.

From another perspective, the answers varied a lot in a collective way of individual answers, but again, there was a consensus on the answers (see Figure 4.4).

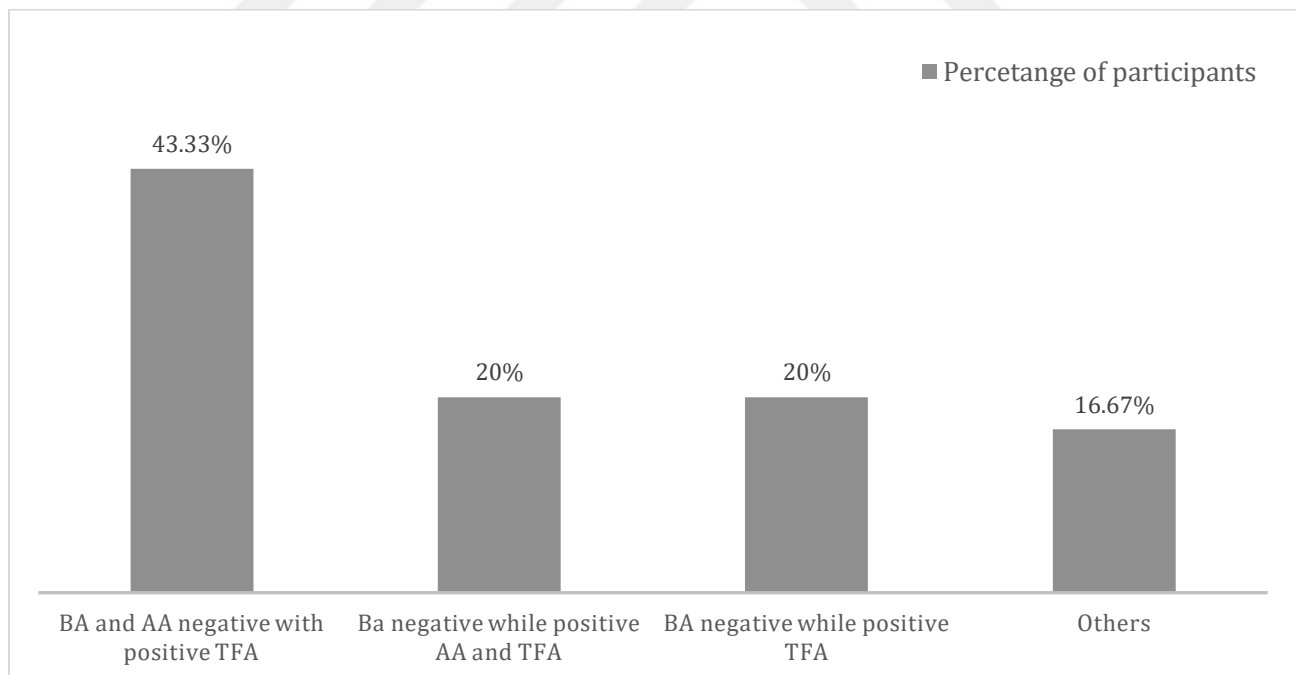


Figure 4.4 The collective answers of the participants' instilled reactions individually

In conformity with the results, 43,33% of the listeners, being the largest group, indicated negative perceptions of BA and AA with positive perceptions of TFA. The second group, with 20%, finds BA negative while positive on AA and TFA. Also, another 20% of the participants did not include

AA but argued that BA created a negative reaction while TFA was positive. Lastly, the other groups showed diversity in mixed opinions, highlighting nuanced perspectives among the participants. Within this perspective, it is possible to generalize that the positivity of TFA is feasible among the Turkish EFL listeners of these participants.

#### ***4.3.2.1 The Reasons Behind Negative and Positive Reactions***

Based on the answers of the participants, there were different reasons for the reactions installed when listening to the accents. The participants had both negative and positive reactions to the accents.

##### ***4.3.2.1.1 Negative Attitude Towards British Accent***

There were different reasons why the listeners had negative perceptions towards BA. One of the justifications for the negativities stated by two participants is that BA sounds aggressive, which has instilled a negative perception. As reflected in Excerpt 19:

*“With the first one, I had a negative reaction because the person who was speaking had some different implications for me. It was as if I was doing something bad while I was trying to understand, and they were aggressive. I think it is too much and unnecessary that they are skipping and ignoring some sounds.” (p9, male, age 20)*

The unfamiliarity of the BA and speaking really fast and the sound they do not produce causes problems to the Turkish EFL listeners. It can be stated that the participants are intimidated by the accent and find it aggressive even though they are not.

Also, nine of the participants reasoned the negativity by mentioning that BA caused hesitations and anxiety for them to understand, as evident in Excerpt 20.

*“Even though I didn't have a time constraint, my facial expression changed because I didn't understand. I felt nervous because I couldn't understand. Even though it became more familiar and familiar the more I listened to it and was exposed to it, I felt the need to listen to it many times...” (p6, female, age 21)*

From another point of view, six of the participants believe that their negativity was due to not being able to catch everything, even though they said they did not bear any negative thoughts about it. Also, one of the participants believed that the British were less intelligible than AA, as shown in Excerpt 21.

*“I was really tense when I listened to the British. I also faced this problem with my British friends. They are also different from Americans, so it was a bad one. Turkish was very understanding.” (p15, female, age 21)*

It can be claimed from this statement that AA is not as problematic as BA; therefore, BA is found to be the most intimidating native accent for the Turkish EFL listeners among the related accents.

#### ***4.3.2.1.2 Positive and Negative Attitudes Towards Turkish Accent***

According to 9 participants, they believe that Turkish installed a positive reaction due to familiarity with it. In addition, 10 of the participants stated that TFA is easier to understand, so they had a positive attitude toward it. The participants defined this issue as “It was like hugging an old friend...” (p18, male, age 19) or “I felt like I was listening to my classmates.” (p25, male, age 20) Therefore, it is possible to claim that having a familiar accent led the participants to have a positive attitude towards TFA.

As another point of view, one of the participants believed that TFA is less intelligible and hard to understand, so there has been a negative attitude towards it. The other participant who had a negative reaction to TFA was because of sounding non-native. Excerpt 22 provides the utterances of the latter participant:

*“Turkish also had its negative aspects, for example, if another foreigner heard it they might say did you just learn English, for example, I would think they would find me strange in an international place.”*

After the participant answered, another follow-up question was asked:

*“So is it because you are a foreigner or not being understood abroad?”*

The participant answered as:

*“I don't think it's not because you are not understood, they directly call you a Turk or a foreigner.” (p10, female, age 19)*

Based on these perspectives, it is possible to state that the accent does not cause a lot of communication problems but only one for one person. Also, sounding non-native was a problem for the listener to have a negative reaction to the TFA.

#### ***4.3.2.1.3 Positive and Negative Attitudes Towards American Accent***

The three participants believed that AA is intelligible, and for one participant, American English sounds good, so it establishes a positive reaction. However, as mentioned above, one of the participants believed that AA was less intelligible, which created an adverse reaction. Excerpt 23 illustrates this:

*“...the American was very easy to understand and intelligible.” (p5, female, age 19)*

Some participants believed that AA was a familiar accent compared to BA, and they found AA to be intelligible and understood it easily. However, as mentioned above, some believe that AA is not very understandable and comprehensible, as can be seen in Excerpts 24 and 25, respectively.

*“Actually, first and second accents are very beautiful, but as I couldn’t understand the accent, it was intimidating for me. But inevitably, they have accents; we just have our own. But I felt bad because I couldn’t understand...” (p13, female, age 20)*

*“But with the second and first, there has been some negativity. They were like the thing I hear in the classroom in the experiments. Because when I listen to these accents, some things are missing. I understand the utterance in general, but some words are still missing from understanding. Negativity is a problem because I miss some, and I don’t understand everything.” (p23, female, age 21)*

The participants claimed that not being able to catch everything said due to the accent made them feel hesitation and negativity about the accent.

#### **4.3.3 To what extent could you reply to what you had heard? (If not, what is the reason?) To which of the speeches you listened to would you easily give a reaction?**

Generally, the participants tended to have a ranking in their minds or justified the ranking by directly stating their ranking reasons. Most of the participants replied that the TFA was the easiest. The rankings can be seen in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 The rankings of the reactions to the accents of the participants

| <i><b>The Number of Participants</b></i> | <i><b>Rankings</b></i>                                   |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 23                                       | Turkish than American than British                       |
| 4                                        | Turkish is better, and American and British are the same |
| 1                                        | Turkish comfortably- British hard - American the easiest |
| 1                                        | British easily and American is okay                      |
| 1                                        | Best to British than American than Turkish               |

When asked, the rankings had a huge consensus; with 76,67%, the TFA was found to be better than AA and BA. However, there were still other rankings. According to the results, 13,33% of

the listeners stated that while TFA was better, the native accents were to the same degree to be replied to. In addition, 3,33% of the listeners had a different perspective and stated that TFA was comfortable, but AA was the easiest, and BA was the hardest to answer. Also, there are 2 other distinct rankings where the native accents were found to be better to reply compared to TFA. Based on the findings, 3,33% of them stated that BA is replied easily and AA is alright. Lastly, 3,33% stated the opposite of the highly agreed ranking, arguing that BA is easier than AA and then TFA to reply to their speech.

#### **4.3.3.1 Reasons**

The reason behind preferring it was the familiarity of the accent to the listeners. They all had a consensus on this issue, and as they had confronted TFA a lot, they could reply to it. Also, based on the participants' thoughts, the lack of answering British accent is due to how speakers speak fast. Also, it would be a nice explanation to give the thoughts of p 18 in Excerpt 26:

*"To first one, I would not be able to give too much answer. Then, I could give better to American and much better to Turkish one. Because it is familiar to me. I believe in general Turkish foreign accent and Turkish speakers are clear and understandable. However, British people understand themselves better as they are familiar to that accent. I have been listening to Turkish foreign accent for more than 20 years, just like a British who was born and live in the UK for whole his/her life. This is all about familiarity." (p18, male age 19)*

As can be understood from the example, the familiarity of the accent is really important for answering the utterance. Also, the clarity and speed of the native speakers are major filters that help Turkish EFL speakers answer better, as indicated in Excerpt 27:

*"I could answer the first one very easily because that person would understand me as a tourist and show me tolerance. The American accent was okay. Turkish was very easy for me because it is what I always do. I think sometimes Turkish people may not tolerate it." (p26, male age 20)*

Another participant believes that BA is easier to be answered due to being a foreigner, and not knowing English enough can be something to bear for the native speakers. However, Turkish people can be more judgmental and harsher on the Turkish EFL speaker.

Only one participant stated that he would answer in a TFA more hesitatingly and uncomfortably. The reasoning behind this was the Turkish people's judgment of his English proficiency and accent. In contrast, the native speakers would be more open, understanding, and unbiased to him as they would understand that he is a foreign speaker.

#### **4.3.4 What accent did you find the easiest to comprehend? (If the answer is Turkish) Is this related to a shared first language?**

For this question, the listeners had a common idea that the TFA was the accent that they could comprehend easily compared to other accents they listened to. The listeners had different ideas on the reason for choosing Turkish; nevertheless, the reasons were related to each other. It could be discussed that easy comprehension of TFA was due to the first language of the listeners or being familiar with the accent. A few participants also stated some reasons for the native accents and why they preferred these accents as the most comprehensible ones, which are mentioned in detail below.

##### ***4.3.4.1 Turkish Accent***

Most of the participants claimed that TFA was found to be the easiest accent to comprehend. The reasons behind this situation were generally linked to having the same first language, as can be understood from the explanations of the participants. According to the participants, choosing Turkish as the most effortless accent to understand was because of the stress of every sound, pronunciation, clarity, stops with the Turkish language, and the familiarity of the accent.

“I think Turkish. I think there is no link because all the recordings were easy but accent was superior but it is not about the accent but it is just because of familiarity.” (p18, male, age 19).

With most of the participants, the familiarity of the TFA was mainly highlighted. On the one hand, some of the participants stated that they speak as they think in Turkish, and that everyone speaks the same way, which leads to high intelligibility and makes understanding easier. As demonstrated in Excerpt 28:

*“...Even though I did not understand that the third one was Turkish, it still seemed very understandable to me. For example, when I talk to a foreigner, it is more difficult for me to understand, but when it comes to a Turkish person, the other person already knows as much as I do, so there is no problem. Since Turkish is more familiar to me, I can react and understand it more easily.” (p12, female, age 21)*

From this statement, it is also possible to understand how a familiar accent made them understand the language better, even if they were not aware of the accent being familiar to the listener.

##### ***4.3.4.2 American Accent***

Some listeners believe that AA is the easiest to comprehend because it is easier and better and that the listeners confront the accent more. According to the participants, they confront AA

more in books, films, and series, which makes them more familiar.

“I think the most comprehending one was American not Turkish. Because after my prep school I have allowance confronted American English and comment on listening with American accent and got used to it so it is the easiest one. But Turkish as we have similar first language so Turkish is also okay but American is the best one for me to comprehend.” (p2, female, age 19)

One of the participants also stated that AA was at the same pace and clarity as TFA, which makes it as understandable as the latter.

“I think the first and second one also comprehensible. But Turkish was really easy, however I can say that American and Turkish are in the same level for me.” (p14, female, age 19)

Based on the statements, it is possible to state that generally the participants found AA comprehensible due to the exposure they face with authentic materials during the learning process. In that sense, the familiarity of the accent is acceptable for AA as well in terms of intelligibility and comprehensibility.

#### ***4.3.4.3 British Accent***

Only one of the participants found BA the most comprehensible one among the other accents. The participant justified this issue by claiming that BA was very clear and understandable.

“The first one was the easiest, last one is Turkish and it is easy to understand and clear but the first one was also very clear. But I still think British accent was very easy and understandable. And I think, yes, there is a link with our first language because of Turkish, we are able to understand each other better in English too.” (p3, female, age 20)

However, when compared to the participant’s tasks, it was found that the student’s answer for the BA was totally incorrect for the transcription task. From this point of view, there can be a misjudgment or no correlation between intelligibility and comprehensibility.

#### **4.3.5 Would you prefer listening to the accent you heard? (Which one more) Why? What did you like about the accents?**

Compared to the answers to the other questions, TFA was not the dominant accent that was preferred among the participants. Again, there were different opinions on this question, and it was concluded that most participants preferred AA or BA more. 14 participants stated that AA was their favorite accent to listen to, while 6 noted that it was BA. In addition, four of the participants could not distinguish and stated that both native accents were their selection. From another point

of view, TFA was chosen by four participants. Also, one of the participants favored the BA over the TFA, while one of them stated that it would be the American or TFA, as shown in Excerpt 29.

*“I would prefer American again because I am used to American English. Yes, I do not speak like that, but in school, series, and everything, the American accent is confronted by me, so I prefer American. I am more used to it.”*

Later, as a follow-up question:

*“What about your teachers?”*

It was answered as follows:

*“It disturbs me to have a Turkish foreign accented teacher. When I hear Turkish foreign accent in the school it bothers me a lot. I think at school we should be more professional and speak native like especially the teachers. I understand even British better but Turkish really disturbs me.”* (p2, female, age 19)

Even though most of the participants believe that TFA is understandable, it is not preferred by them to listen. They believe that to understand Turkish is better but still not really sounding native or beautiful.

At the same time, some other participants believe that it is more important to understand and be able to communicate, so TFA is better unless it is just for listening and pleasure, as natives are better for the latter points. Moreover, according to Excerpt 30, another participant stated:

*“According to my understanding and liking, and to be on the easy road, I would choose Turkish foreign accent. But in order to improve myself and to learn better, I would choose AA because it would be better for me and make me more familiar with the native accent and English.”* (p29, male, age 20).

From these thoughts, it can be seen that Turkish EFL speakers decide on this issue based on their personal interests, as well as the intelligibility and comprehensibility of an accent.

There were different rationalizations of the choices participants made on this question. The first thing to mention is that they chose native accents as a facilitator to learn and improve themselves and that they are more natural and authentic. When mentioned individually, the participants who favored BA believed that BA was more native than AA. On the other hand, the participants who selected AA reasoned it by claiming that BA was too much and TFA was too little in terms of accentedness. Nevertheless, AA was in the middle regarding intelligibility, comprehensibility, and sounding native. Lastly, four of the participants did not prefer TFA because it sounded very non-native, whereas the others favored it because they wanted to

understand what they heard.

#### **4.3.6 Are you comfortable with your current accent? Are you comfortable hearing others to speak with the Turkish foreign accent?**

The participants also answered this question in several ways because some of them initially contextualized the answer. Still, in general, most of them were not disturbed by their accents and hearing TFA from others, as reflected in Excerpt 31:

*“I think a Turkish person can understand, and I believe this is nice. I am proud of it. It is nice to see how they speak and have the courage to speak English. This is also feasible for my teachers, politicians, and everybody else.” (p30, female, age 19)*

Furthermore, a participant said that non-native speakers around him are better since he is already anxious about speaking English, so a familiar-accented person would be better to talk to. However, some students also stated they were uncomfortable with their accents and wanted to develop themselves. Also, one participant claimed he was neutral about both parties. However, some participants were not decisive and had different situations in their minds when deciding on its disturbance and acceptance. Two of the students stated that it depends on where I am, as given an instance in Excerpt 32:

*“I think it depends where I am and in which position I am. If I am in the street no problem. He/she will understand me but if I am making a speech, at my job, or doing my work I would like to be more intelligible and more understanding. I think, American accent is the most okay of these there. I would like to speak as much as possible in American, I want to be intelligible to all listeners. I don't want to say it is not important but for example when I am answering the classroom of speaking with a friend then it is not very important. It depends on the formality of the situation for me. This is also feasible for the other Turkish speakers on my behalf.” (p2, female, age 19)*

From this example, it is possible to understand that being in a different context while speaking and listening can be a great factor for a listener to have a different judgment on the accent. Therefore, the place, people, and the topic being talked about can be a factor for the listener to judge the accent of a speaker.

In another answer in which the circumstances were contextualized by the participant, there was controversy because three participants said having a TFA is acceptable unless they are in an international setting. In contrast, two of the participants stated that it is not okay in an international context but acceptable in Türkiye. When a follow-up question of whether they are afraid of

showing non-nativeness or because of being less intelligible was asked, they stated that it is because of intelligibility since the people from other countries may not be familiar with TFA just like they are. Another participant added that she does not have anyone to compare herself to in Türkiye because everybody is like this. However, there is a lot to compare in an international context, and sounding non-native might be a problem.

Some of the participants have claimed that hearing a more native-like accent is essential for them to believe that the speaker is good at his/her job when they have a native-like accent, as can be shown in Excerpt 33:

*“No, I am not. I cannot speak like a native, and it is hard for me to shape my mouth to be more native, and it is not comfortable for me. It is more like intelligibility. I am scared of not being understood rather than sounding non-native.*

*I am comfortable with others because I would say yes, they will make the same mistakes as me. But if I am at a high level, then I would expect them to speak in an American accent. Because the second one is very professional, it gives comfort and security. But it is because of my level. For example, if I go abroad, I expect myself and others to speak like second because it is more professional. It is not about Turkish people but me.*

*Because then I would say they are very professional and they make me trust them. It would be like if the speaker is very good in English, then I would say they are also better at their job. Similarly, I say to my teachers to be native-like because then I say they are very good and know everything about the topic they teach. But of course, as I said, it is when I am at a very good level. And in terms of intelligibility, a Turkish foreign accent is okay for me due to my current level.” (p20, female, age 20)*

It is clear from the example that a native-like accent can be a significant determiner of competence and social status, shaping the attitudes of the listeners. In addition, another one stated that she was not satisfied with her accent, especially in academic settings, but content with others. Also, one of the listeners claimed that they are both disturbed by themselves and others. The participant's thoughts were given in Excerpt 34:

*“I am not okay with showing my foreign accent. I do not want to give the impression that I can make mistakes because I think they judge my foreign accent. It is both about intelligibility and being misunderstood by the natives. I am okay in Türkiye because we generally are like this, but not in an English-speaking country.*

*Yes, hearing from others bothers me. I even say I hope I don't speak like that. It really disturbs my ears. It is so basic and straightforward I even want to say, stop speaking. It is not about intelligibility but more like image and prestige. But sometimes, understanding is also a problem. Pronunciation is also important, and*

*there are some problems, but sometimes people's accents are bothersome.” (p21, female, age 19)*

After the participants answered, another follow-up question was asked:

*“Is it only from people of high status or friends too?”*

Answered as:

*“I do not really have a problem but it is more like I have seen some teachers who are really good so it disturbs me now even from other teachers too.” (p21, female, age 19)*

In that sense, it is clear that for some of the listeners, intelligibility can be a further problem than sounding more native-like or hearing a native-like accent. Furthermore, it was found that the participants fear showing their TFA because they think they may fall behind the other or seem less professional in their field. Generally, the negativity on TFA is due to the accentedness of it and the judgment coming from others or having judgments. Also, the participants believe that the TFA is intelligible, comprehensible, and clear enough to be spoken. There were only a few participants who believed that it is also sometimes difficult to understand TFA, but they were still great at the transcription task. Their thoughts were contradictory to their intelligibility and comprehensibility scores.

Ultimately, this study aimed to analyze whether TFA is intelligible and comprehensible compared to native accents. It explored these concepts using a combination of tasks and interviews. Based on the results, it is possible to state that the TFA is highly intelligible and comprehensible for Turkish EFL speakers compared to native accents. The results indicate that, generally, Turkish EFL listeners do not have problems understanding and grasping TFA; rather, it is a better opportunity and a comfortable accent to understand English. Some of the participants claim to prefer native accents for improving or seeing them as highly competent and attractive. However, this still does not mean that TFA is not intelligible or comprehensible to them.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

The current research aims to explore intelligibility and comprehensibility of TFA for Turkish EFL speakers compared to native accents in Türkiye context. It also seeks to understand and explain whether the negativity of Turkish people on TFA is due to its intelligibility, comprehensibility, or accentedness. Based on the results, it was found that TFA was intelligible and comprehensible to Turkish EFL listeners. In general, there are not many negative thoughts about it; however, it was found that the reasons behind the judgmental thoughts are due to social competence, attractiveness, and linguistic insecurity. Due to these findings, it is possible to state that in a world where we speak about World Englishes, having a mutual intelligibility for EFL speakers is more important than sounding native.

This section will describe the results of this study in detail and will answer this study's research questions by linking prior studies and theories. However, it should be borne in mind that in the framework of this study, there is limited research done in Türkiye; therefore, the findings cannot be scaffolded by the prior studies of Turkish context as expected.

***RQ1: Does a non-native accent of a Turkish EFL speaker affect Turkish EFL students' intelligibility compared to native accents?***

Based on the data, it is obvious that there is a difference between TFA and native accents. The differences showed that TFA was more comprehensible and intelligible than the natives. Unlike Gömek's study (2024), which found that the British and TFA were intelligible, this study found that the BA was not intelligible based on the data. However, similar to Gömek's study (2024), TFA was more preferred compared to BA. It was claimed by the participants of the current study that they were generally intimidated by BA due to being fast and omissions of the sounds. According to the research results of the current study, it is obvious that TFA is more intelligible than native accents for Turkish EFL speakers. It can be seen from both quantitative and qualitative data that the participants are better and more comfortable with TFA. The participants' thoughts and writings show that TFA is highly intelligible to Turkish EFL listeners and that they have a great consensus on it. The participants of this study have heard TFA in their daily and educational lives most of the time at any level of education. In that sense, these positive results are based on

the familiarity of the accent being more intelligible and comprehensible, which also supports the findings of studies by Crewson (2023), Nazari and Younus (2019), Ballard (2013), Kraut and Wulff (2013), and Adedeji (2022). The familiarity, language distance and exposure to the language (Wang & Jenkins, 2016) definitely facilitates the listeners with a higher intelligibility of the second language. From the AA perspective, it was found to be closely similar to TFA since in the transcription task AA was highly similar to the results of TFA. It is important not to overlook or minimize the significance of this close correspondence between AA and TFA. As reported by several participants during the interviews (see Table 4.2), AA was perceived as intelligible and elicited generally positive responses even if it was not highly stated as positive in understanding as TFA. This may be attributed to the participants' familiarity with the accent, likely stemming from frequent exposure through films and television series.

Obviously, the participants can differentiate between accent and pronunciation, as found in the prior studies mentioned in this study. Participants suggest that pronunciation can cause problems, unlike the accent. However, for TFA, as the participants claim, it is sometimes not even a problem because they think and talk in the same process and even learn in the same process. In that sense, their mistakes can be nonproblematic because they can be intelligible even with that. With this finding, the importance of mutual intelligibility in the ELF/EFL context (Jenkins, 2000; 2002) is highlighted. Thus, the intelligibility cannot be only limited to native speakerism and the mutual intelligibility should be a deeper focus for the interlocutors. Moreover, some of the participants claimed that they would prefer to listen to native accents, but for understanding, they would prefer TFA. From this thought, it can be suggested that mutual intelligibility is highly important rather than sounding native-like, as claimed by Jenkins (2000; 2002), Wang and van Heuven (2003). However, it should be borne in mind that this study is opposed to the findings of Wang and van Heuven (2003) and Lochland (2020) with the results of Chinese-accented English since TFA was found mutually intelligible for Turkish EFL listeners. Also, the participants' answers show they are better in English with TFA than with native accents. Therefore, it is obvious that the theory of ISIB (Bent & Bradlow, 2003) is highly feasible with Turkish EFL speakers and TFA, as found in Uzun (2019; 2022). Based on these perspectives, familiarity with the accent and L1 can be seen to play a great role in the listeners to achieve and have a successful understanding and grasp of an accent (Munro, 2006; Adedeji, 2022; Major et al., 2002; Ballard, 2013; Saito et al., 2019; Kraut & Wulff, 2013). As can be seen, Turkish EFL speakers often find TFA easier to

understand than native speakers due to sharing common first language (L1) influences, making their speech more predictable and intelligible to other learners. For this reason the ISIB highlights the adaptability of English in multilingual settings especially for the expanding circle countries.

In that sense, by integrating mutual intelligibility, ISIB, and World Englishes, it becomes evident that intelligibility is not solely dependent on native speaker norms but is shaped by shared linguistic experiences, adaptability, and the context of interaction. This viewpoint emphasizes the need to focus on clarity and mutual intelligibility rather than strictly following native-speaker speech patterns in international communication.

***RQ2: To what extent does the non-native accent of a Turkish EFL speaker affect the comprehension of Turkish EFL students compared to native accents?***

The non-native accent of a Turkish speaker has a highly positive impact on a Turkish EFL listener. Based on the results, the participants considered TFA as a very easy accent to comprehend, and according to their thoughts, for most of them, TFA was the most comprehensible and easy-to-reply accent. Unlike the results of transcription task and intelligibility concept, AA was not as close to TFA in comprehensibility scale. When analyzed, it was obvious that AA was not as comprehensible as TFA but higher than BA. Unlike the results of Büyükahıska and Uyar (2019), the British accent was not found to be very comprehensible for the participants of this study; rather, it was the least comprehensible accent among other accents. With these results, this study is controversial to Saito et al. (2019), in which the less accented ones were found to be more comprehensible. Given that, the importance of Global Englishes and the being able to communicate effectively in any context is much important than obtaining a native accent.

On the other hand, even though this study supports the results of Major et al. (2002) and Smith and Biazza (1982), it also refutes some of the findings. For the former research, as Spanish speakers found their own accents more intelligible and comprehensible, Turkish EFL speakers found TFA; however, this study refutes the results of the Chinese speakers of the same study. For the latter, while it supports the findings of Japanese listeners, it is distinct from the Indian speakers. When it is observed, this study's participants who have Turkish L1 did not have a problem comprehending TFA. The negative effects or thoughts are not due to the comprehensibility of TFA, but there are other concepts, such as competence, improvement, and status, which will be given in detail in the third question. On the other hand, there were pessimistic thoughts of

participants of the current study, which were related to being TFA unintelligible in an international context, which can be justified through the study of Uzun (2021), where a TFA was not found comprehensible in an international context.

Moreover, just like Munro and Derwing (2008), in this study, it was found that there was no or very little correlation between intelligibility and comprehensibility. The results may seem very correlated when observed based on the total numbers; nevertheless, the individual answers show the opposite. The results were observed from an individual perspective because the answers of the individuals did not correlate with each other as much as the total number of all participants. From another perspective, unlike Beinhoff (2014), this study shows that familiarity is more effective in comprehensibility than intelligibility since the choices of the participants were highly coherent for TFA, unlike the natives. Therefore, as Zhang (2019) states, the familiarity of the accent has a positive correlation with comprehensibility.

In light of these, as comprehensibility is distinct from intelligibility, the accuracy with which speech is understood and the ease and fluency of understanding is essential for non-native accents, particularly in a globalized world where English is spoken by people from every country. Despite the effects of non-native accent on clarity, clear articulation and appropriate stress patterns can allow non-native speakers to overcome challenges related to their accents on comprehensibility. In this way, this can foster better communication in multicultural and multilingual environments without having linguistic insecurities or not feeling like a native.

***RQ3: Is there a difference in accentedness in terms of the non-native accent of a Turkish EFL speaker and native accents among Turkish EFL learners?***

According to the qualitative data, the participants were more apt to understand and favor TFA more than the native accent but preferred natives to listen, especially AA, which correlates with the Japanese participants' ideas in the study of McKenzie (2008). From this result, it is possible to state that the preference for native accents is related to the accentedness of the accents rather than the intelligibility and comprehensibility. In addition, it is possible to state that there are still some listeners who believe that a native-like accent is important and are disturbed by the non-native accent. For this perspective, like in the study of Jung (2010), the participants stated the

wordings “prestige,” “trust,” and “more competent” to explain why they would like to have or hear a native-like accent. To have a deeper understanding of the statement above, some of the participants believed that especially people who have important jobs, are representatives, or are in an important and serious context need to have a native-like accent even though they are EFL speakers. From another point of view, in some of the answers of participants, especially the sixth question of the interview which asks whether the participants are comfortable with having and listening to TFA, linguistic inferiority and overt prestige terms are seen. The answers of the participants, which include wordings such as “disturbed,” “being nervous,” and “fear of judgment,” are in the same perspective and description as Labov (2006), Francard (1993), and Daftari (2016). Even though the prior studies were done on the teachers and teacher candidates in general, the results of this study slightly correlate with the results of the studies done by Saydı (2022) and Daftari (2016) since only a few of the participants stated these perceptions. In that respect, linguistic insecurity and overt prestige are a possibility to face in the Turkish context as participants also stated. It is possible to argue that besides being intelligible, the Turkish EFL speakers have several factors (accent, social perception, fluency and accuracy, pronunciation) affecting their utterance while speaking in English. These issues can lead them to both be disturbed by their TFA as well as listening to it. Nevertheless, this cannot be generalized in the scope of this research's findings since accentedness of TFA was a disturbance for the minority of the participants.

Besides, as in the study of Davydova (2015), the participants found BA and AA to be more native and real. They have stated that they would like to see a proper and native-like accent, and they have not linked this with intelligibility or comprehensibility; rather, it is due to their ability to show themselves better in their jobs or speaking English in general, as Bauman (2013) has concluded in her study. The idea of the participants, especially Participant 20, female, age 20 (see more in Chapter 4), claiming that native-like sounding is important for competence correlates with the study of Hansen et al. (2017), even though this study is based on German. The results also correlate with the study of Nelson et al. (2016), which also found that Spanish-accented speakers are generally judged negatively, and an occurrence of bias is high by either receiving or showing. In this regard, it is understood that social attractiveness and the competence theory (Kozłowski, 2015; Brusa and Proverbio, 2024; Davydova, 2015) are highly feasible for some Turkish EFL listeners. In other words, many people may perceive certain accents as more attractive or

trustworthy regardless of their intelligibility and comprehensibility. Moreover, some listeners may associate a strong or native-like accent with language skills. For example, even a speaker with good knowledge of grammar and a large vocabulary may be perceived as low in proficiency if he or she has a non-native accent, as seen in Davydova (2015) and Hansen et al. (2017). Additionally, some of them claimed that they are also disturbed by their own accents and need to develop themselves to be more native-like. This can be due to the pronunciation and accent interrelation as the phonetic alphabet of English and Turkish languages are different. Pronouncing sounds that speakers' L1 does not have can be a struggle for how Turkish speakers develop their English accent. At the same time, the issue above can be related to standard English norms and native speakerism, which supports that even ELF/EFL speakers should learn English as native-like as possible with all aspects, such as accent and pronunciation (Jenkins, 2014; 2007). Within the scope of these norms, this study both supports and refutes the studies of Griffiths and Soruç (2019) and Çeçen and Tülüce (2019) since a few of the participants of this study agree with the norms, while the majority of them more positive or neutral to TFA. Therefore, even though these terms were found feasible for a few participants of the study, with most of the answers, it is possible to state that the accent issue cannot be limited to this in the Turkish context. Most of the participants were content with their teachers' and others' non-native accents. As for the Turkish EFL listeners of this study, TFA was more accessible and understandable based on the quantitative data, even for the participants who had the counter ideas mentioned above.

In a more general overview, compared to prior studies, especially compared to the study of Mutlu and Bayram (2014), based on the results of the semi-structured interview, the participants of this study are less disturbed by the Turkish non-native accent and have a more positive perception of it. It is possible to come to this conclusion since the majority of the participants stated that they are not disturbed by speaking or hearing TFA. However, there are still similar answers with the prior study's participants, and they are also negative on this issue and their own accents compared to native accents, regardless of intelligibility and comprehensibility.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the intelligibility, comprehensibility and the accentedness of TFA and compare it with native accents. In short, according to the results, the intelligibility and comprehensibility of TFA was found to be higher than the AA and BA for Turkish EFL listeners. As most of the participants find TFA acceptable, the findings align with the concept of Global Englishes which rejects the idea of native speakerism and traditional English learning norms. In that sense, unlike the traditional understanding of having only native speakers in the teaching curricula, Turkish students' primary concern should be being more intelligible and comprehensible in communicating in English with other speakers of English from any country. In this perspective, students being taught to imitate native pronunciation and grammar should be altered into focusing on effective global communication strategies.

Besides, the analysis suggests that TFA significantly positively affects Turkish EFL listeners' ability to understand and grasp English due to the familiarity of the TFA. This improvement can be attributed to the learners' familiarity with the phonological and prosodic features of TFA, which facilitates their understanding and interpretation of the language. In that sense, the results show that ISIB is a valid concept for Turkish EFL students in intelligibility and comprehensibility of different accents of English. Specifically, ISIB appears to play a crucial role in enhancing both the intelligibility and comprehensibility of TFA, suggesting that exposure to familiar accentual patterns can serve effective learning process.

Although only a minority of the participants acknowledged the existence of this issue, it is obvious that the negativity of the TFA for Turkish listeners is not definitely based on intelligibility and comprehensibility but on social attractiveness, competence and linguistic insecurity, when compared to native accents. The findings show that being a non-native of a language can cause these perceptions for both speakers and listeners regardless of understanding the utterance. The social prestige of native accents and the dominance of native-speaker norms can lead to distinct expectations. These expectations can cause linguistic insecurity as fear of making mistakes and fear of judgment that is evident with the qualitative data. Conversely, acknowledging TFA as a

valid variety instead of viewing it as a flawed version of English can allow speakers to communicate more confidently in Türkiye or global contexts, as it was also found intelligible and comprehensible.

Taking another approach, it is possible to mention that Turkish EFL listeners generally do not have a consensus on the native accent and are skeptical or hesitant about the native accents. One major reason for this is the possibility of low level of exposure to native accents, especially BA. Since English is not the primary language in Turkey, learners may not have consistent interaction with a specific native accent, leading to uncertainty and mixed preferences. On the other hand, AA was not a very distinct accent for the Turkish EFL students, as generally they confront with AA more with music, films, and series, and find it clearer than BA. Both quantitative and qualitative data findings highlight that exposure to an accent is an important factor in intelligibility and comprehensibility.

In conclusion, this study has contributed to the literature on the Turkish context with providing insights on the intelligibility and comprehensibility as well as on the accentedness of TFA. Besides, it can cause a more positive attitude toward the accent of Turkish EFL speakers, teachers, and other employers. In addition, to be sure that EFL learners learn the language effectively, the stakeholders should emphasize that learning English is not just about accent and sounding more native-like, but language proficiency and correct pronunciation are the major factors. Thus, this study facilitates some implications in terms of teaching English pronunciation and accent in order to have a smooth teaching and learning process as well as creating more conscious speakers of Global Englishes and foreign accents.

## **6.1 Implications**

Türkiye is a country in the Expanding circle, and English is generally seen in schools, entertainment, and professional life. Therefore, it is really hard for Turkish people to have a situation in which they can learn English subconsciously. In that sense, the accent and pronunciation issue and its teaching have been the responsibility of schools and English teachers. By incorporating different English varieties into teaching process through including pragmatic

skills, awareness on different accents, and pronunciation practices would increase the practicality and globally relevant use of English.

Teaching all skills is important; however, teaching pronunciation is essential in English since it has a non-phonetic orthography. Also, teaching the stress in the sentences is a need for the speakers to sound and understand English better. On the other hand, an accent is a much higher level and a harder concept for the speakers to obtain. In accordance with that, some activities and teaching skills can be implied more in the EFL classrooms of Türkiye and have learners gain awareness about pronunciation and, therefore, accents. Here are some activities:

### **Minimal pairs**

Minimal pairs are the sounds generally mixed by the listener and speakers. Therefore, teaching the difference between these sounds and practicing them might be a great way to decrease problems. Some sounds, such as /ʌ/ and /ɑ:/ (Uzun, 2024), might cause a problem in understanding the utterance. In that sense, adding minimal pair and awareness-raising activities would be great and create a conscious learning atmosphere.

### **Sentence and word stress**

According to the qualitative results of the current study, the participants claim that natives had different intonation and stress levels than Turkish. They do the stress similarly to the Turkish language, so it is easier to understand. However, it is important for speakers to know the correct stress of the sentence and intonation as the natives since they are not just going to listen to Turkish speakers. In accordance with that, it is important to have students learn them consciously.

### **Not focusing on only one accent**

The primary goal of this approach is to expose learners to different accents, helping them develop better listening comprehension and adaptability. Students are generally familiar with Turkish, British, and American accents, but they should also be exposed to a wider range of accents while focusing on the same language objectives. Since learners will encounter English spoken in various accents, this exposure will help them become accustomed to different pronunciations rather than solely concentrating on comprehension.

This does not mean presenting identical speech in multiple accents but rather ensuring that language objectives—such as vocabulary and grammar—are conveyed through diverse speakers. This can be highly important since Levy and Hanulíková (2022) found that being exposed to different local and foreign accents results with successful vocabulary learning. Language learning materials should include a variety of both native and non-native accents, fostering awareness, reducing bias, and promoting inclusivity. By doing so, learners will not only improve their listening skills but also develop a more open and adaptable approach to global communication.

Moreover, some of the books and materials have a target accent, and it is really hard to encounter other examples of accents. As Johansen (2019) found that being exposed to a range of accents enhances one's ability to comprehend English spoken by individuals with diverse pronunciations. Therefore, the material developers should be more careful about the diversity and variety of the accents chosen as an example.

### **Recording and feedback**

This can be an important activity for the EFL learners since, with this activity, they can see their problems and focus on them better. Sometimes, during the learning process, the instructors might be more open to mistakes and not correct them to cause discouragement. However, there can be fossilization during this process, so this could be a great way for the learners to keep up with their problems and be more aware of them.

### **6.2 Limitations and Further Suggestions**

When this study was done, very limited and structured participants were chosen due to having a more consistent and cohesive data collection procedure. The study was meticulous in selecting and determining the participants, given the numerous variables that influence the intelligibility and comprehensibility of accents. Therefore, for further researchers, it can be recommended that this issue be considered with different age groups or different language backgrounds. Also, a comparison of genders and motivation to learn and use English can be a different variable when choosing participants. From another point of view, the participants can be a division of Turkish learners, natives of English, and other non-native learners, and a comparison of them to have a valid understanding of global English and understand whether the results would be similar in any international context.

Furthermore, this study can be replicated by a larger number of participants and on a deeper level. Besides, there can be more recordings, and the questions can be asked in a more detailed way to give a better understanding of the participants. Also, the TFA can be compared to other non-native accents that are very common to be confronted in Türkiye, such as Arabic, Persian, and Slavic foreign accents of English. People from these nationalities live and work in Türkiye as EFL instructors or work in other fields where English is spoken. In that sense, these accents can be compared to TFA or native accents' intelligibility and comprehensibility for Turkish EFL students. For example, even though it did not include this, Ulum's (2020) research is an example of natives being compared to other non-native accents. It did not include TFA, so it could be another study that compares Turkish or other non-native accents. Including TFA and other foreign accents in the research can be important for increasing the awareness of the World Englishes concept and mutual intelligibility.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: Recording Texts of Native Accents**

#### **American English (Washington) IDEA, 2018**

Washington 5

Shorter

They also loved pancakes. So we would cut up pancakes every Sunday morning and give them to them.

Longer

But luckily, they survived. Umm, they also loved pancakes. So we would cut up pancakes every Sunday morning and give them to them. We'd also put popcorn - pieces of popcorn - on our noses, and they would gently come up and just kind of take it off the tip of our nose like little circus dogs. And, um, we couldn't really train them to do anything.

#### **British English (England) IDEA, 2008**

England 70

Shorter

I've got a year and a half left to go in my studies, and hopefully I'll be qualified, and who knows where it will take me.

Longer

Well my brother got married yesterday. I am still in shock. Yeah, so that's, that's really good. I've got a year and a half left to go in my studies, and hopefully I'll be qualified, and who knows where it will take me. But hopefully, I'll be able to go elsewhere and spread my wings and venture the world and experience lots of different things and it will be cool.

## **APPENDIX 2: Turkish Foreign Accent (Ankara)**

Shorter

I've been working for more than ten years in this country as an English teacher. Well, I've been abroad before but didn't like it.

Longer

I've been working for more than ten years in this country as an English teacher. Well, I have been abroad before but didn't like it. I like my country a lot, and um I want to stay and be here all my life and be helpful to my country's students and educate them for their future.

### APPENDIX 3: Linguistic Background Questionnaire, Crewson (2023)

#### Pt I: Background Information

|                                                                                                                                 |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Gender:<br><br>1- female, 2- male, 3- nonbinary                                                                              |  |
| 2. Age:                                                                                                                         |  |
| 3. Level:                                                                                                                       |  |
| 4. Hometown (City, Country) and Native language:                                                                                |  |
| 5. Do you speak other any other languages? (Y/N) Which?                                                                         |  |
| 6. Total years spent learning English and in what context (school, tutor, etc.):                                                |  |
| 7. Are you currently living in Canada? (Y/N) If yes, how long have you lived here? If not, when will you arrive?                |  |
| 8. Do you have additional experience living abroad (6+ months) where English was the main medium of communication? (Y/N) Where? |  |
| 9. Do you plan on attending post-secondary education? (Y/N) If yes, which program(s)?                                           |  |
| 10. Have you had post-secondary education in the past, or in your first language? (Y/N) If yes, for which program(s)?           |  |
| 11. Do you engage with English outside of class time (Y/N)? In what capacity? (With friends, the internet, etc.)                |  |
| 12. What is your average time spent engaging with English outside of class time?                                                |  |

#### **APPENDIX 4: Background Information for This Study**

Fill in the background information according to yourself.

Gender: 1- female, 2- male, 3- nonbinary

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

What would you say about your English proficiency level: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 5: Intelligibility Task

Recording 1



Please listen and write what you hear.

Long answer text

---



## APPENDIX 6: Comprehensibility Scale (Edwards et al., 2018)

Please choose the best number for the longer version of the recording you hear. \*

|                         | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     | 7                     | 8                     | 9                     |                         |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| very hard to understand | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | very easy to understand |



## APPENDIX 7: Semi-Structured Interview Questions Taken from Two Studies

### **Semi-structured interview perception questions (Creswon,2023)**

1. What brought you to Canada? Do you wish to stay and work full-time when you have finished your studies?
2. How often do you use English to communicate outside of class time? What is the situation, and who are you usually with? Do you have friendships with people from other language backgrounds?
3. What is your comfort level in using your first language and English? For example, are you shy or outgoing? How often do you participate in class discussions? Do you feel nervous giving presentations in English? (Why is there a difference in comfort level between your first language and English?)
4. Are you hesitant to work with others from another country than you? What are some common speakers of English you meet, and what are your impressions of them?
5. What problems arise when you use English to communicate with other non-native English speakers? Are there any you find more difficult than others?
6. Please give some examples of when an accent led to a breakdown in your communication ability. What do you think might have caused it? What impacts do some of these difficulties have on you?
7. Are you exposed to many World English accents during class time? How do you think integrating more World English accents in listening activities would help your learning?
8. Did the speech samples you heard make you feel uneasy or instill a negative reaction? Why?
9. To what extent do you think you could reply to what you had heard? (What would you say?)
10. What language background did you find the easiest to comprehend? Is this related to a shared first language?
11. Are you comfortable with your current accent?
12. How easily were you able to recognize the accent in the listening passages? What made it easy or difficult?
13. How easily were you able to transcribe the listening passage? What made it easy or difficult?
14. Which listening passages did you have difficulty understanding? What aspects of the passage made it difficult to understand? (For instance, was it vocabulary, clarity, etc.)
15. Were there accents that you preferred listening to? Why? What did you like about the accents?
16. Which accents did you find showed a strong command of English? Why do you think so? (For example, was it the speed, intonation, word stress, etc.)

## **Interview Protocol (Nguyen, 2017)**

### Questions:

1. Please tell me how often do you use English? In which situation and with whom?
2. What are the problems that you have when using English to communicate with other nonnative English speakers?
3. What do you think might be the causes of such problems?
4. What impacts do such problems have on you?
5. What do you think of introducing World Englishes in your previous university?

## **APPENDIX 8: Semi-Structured Interview Questions for This Study**

1. What problems do you have when using English to communicate with other Turkish English speakers? - Do you think accent is a problem?
2. Did the speech samples you heard make you feel uneasy or instill a negative reaction? Why? What about positive?
3. To what extent could you reply to what you had heard? (If not, what is the reason?) To which of the speeches you listened to would you easily give a reaction?
4. What accent did you find the easiest to comprehend? (If the answer is Turkish) Is this related to a shared first language?
5. Would you prefer listening to the accent you heard? (Which one more) Why? What did you like about the accents?
6. Are you comfortable with your current accent? Are you comfortable hearing others to speak with Turkish foreign accent?

## APPENDIX 9: Permission from The Owners of The Tools

 Jette Hansen Edwards (ENG) <[REDACTED]>  
Kime:  Hacer Ecre GÜNEŞ 13.08.2024 Sal 04:52

 Bu ileti İngilizce dilinde Türkçe diline çevir İngilizce dilden hiçbir zaman çevirme

**UYARI !!!:** Bu e-[REDACTED]ındaki bir e-posta adresinden gelmiştir. Göndereni tanımadığınız ve içeriğin güvenli olduğunu bilmediğiniz sürece bağlantıları tıklamayınız veya ekleri açmayınız.

**WARNING !!!:** This e-mail came from outside [REDACTED] do not click links or open attachments unless you know the sender and the content is safe.

Yes of course. It's all explained in the article so you can just refer to that for more information.

All the best,

Jette Hansen Edwards

...

 Yanıtla  İlet

### Re: Permission for using tool



Nguyen Van Khanh göndericisinden 2024-07-17 04:52 tarihinde

 Ayrıntılar  Düz Metin

 Interview Protocol.pdf (~156 KB) ▾

Dear Hacer Ecre Güneş,

It's my pleasure knowing that you find my article helpful.

Regarding the tool, semi-structured interview was used to collect data. Attached is the interview protocol, feel free to use it.

Good luck with your master's thesis.

BR,

Nguyễn Văn Khanh, MEd.

Senior Lecturer

Sc

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

## Re: Permission for using tool



Kelsey Crewson göndericisinden 2024-07-18 18:51 tarihinde

 Ayrıntılar  Düz Metin

Hello,

Thanks for reaching out! I'm thrilled that you find my research so useful. You may most definitely use any tools you require with the appropriate credit given. It's an honour to be able to assist in your academic journey!

All the best and good luck,  
Kelsey Crewson

## RE: Permission of using recordings



Director göndericisinden 2024-07-12 16:58 tarihinde

 Ayrıntılar  Düz Metin

 IDEA LICENSING FEES 2021.pdf (~148 KB)   IDEA Permissions Agreement.docx (~30 KB) 

Dear Hacer:

Thank you for your enquiry regarding special access to IDEA sound files and/or text for your project.

While we make IDEA a completely free resource for all personal online research, to comply with copyright law, you may not use the native mp3 sound files other than by audio-streaming. (See [our copyright and credit information](#).)

If you wish to merely cite the URLs in a publication or play the sound files directly from the website (in a class or meeting), you do not need our permission as this constitutes fair use.

## **APPENDIX 10: Consent Form for Recording**

### **Consent Form**

This research was conducted by Başkent University English Language Teaching Thesis Master's Program student and School of Foreign Languages faculty member Hacer Ecre GÜNEŞ and with the supervision of her thesis advisor Assoc. Dr. Gülin DAĞDEVİREN KIRMIZI. This form has been prepared to inform you about the research conditions.

#### **What is the Purpose of the Study?**

This study aims to analyze whether Turkish students learning English as a foreign language are affected by the difference between native accents (American and British) and non-native Turkish foreign accents in terms of intelligibility and comprehensibility. In addition, it tries to examine whether there is a difference between these accents in terms of understanding and comprehending the language. Additionally, this study assumes that there is no relationship between the intelligibility and intelligibility of a person speaking Turkish as a foreign language and their foreign accent, considering the negative perceptions of non-native accents encountered as a result of previous studies.

#### **How Do We Want You to Help Us?**

The researcher will be in direct contact with you. You are expected to allocate your appropriate time and record your English conversation to answer the designated questions. It is required to have two audio recordings, one long and one short. However, you are asked to express yourself in 3-4 sentences about your job and opinion on going abroad, not too long, and to speak naturally.

#### **How Will We Use the Information We Collect From You?**

Your participation in the research must be entirely voluntary. In the research, no information identifying your identity or institution is requested. Your audio recordings will be evaluated by the participants in terms of clarity and comprehensibility. Your personal information will be kept completely confidential and will be known only to the researcher. However, when explaining who recorded the voice recordings in the thesis document, information about where you are from, your educational background, and your gender will be given, but your name will not be mentioned in any way.

**What you need to know about your participation:** Although this study is unlikely to be a direct study of your daily life, English is a part of your life and you will be exposed to these accents in many different situations. As a result of this research on this subject, you may come across positive and useful educational information in your personal and professional life. At the end of the study, any questions you may have about the study will be answered.

**If you would like to get more information about the research:** Thank you in advance for

participating in this study. To get more information about the research, contact Başkent University English Language Thesis Master's Program student and School of Foreign Languages instructor Hacer Ecre GÜNEŞ (E-mail: [REDACTED]r; 2 [REDACTED]r).

***I have read the above information, and I participate in this study completely voluntarily.***

(After completing and signing the form, return it to the practitioner).

Name Surname

Date

Signature

--/----/-----



## APPENDIX 11: Ethical Consent from The University

Sayı : 17162298.600- 243  
Konu : Tez Önerisi

31 Ekim 2024

### İlgili Makama

Üniversitemiz Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Hacer Ecre Güneş'in, Doç. Dr. Gülin Dağdeviren Kırmızı danışmanlığında yürütmeyi planladığı, "Farklı İngilizce Aksanlarının Türkçe Bağlamında Anlaşılabilirliği, Kavranırlığı" adlı tez önerisi değerlendirilmiş ve yapılmasında bir sakınca olmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımızla sunarız.

### Başkent Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler ve Sanat Alan Araştırma Kurulu

| Ad, Soyad                       | Değerlendirme              | İmza                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Prof. Dr. Gözen Güner Aktaş     | Olumlu/ <del>Olumsuz</del> |  |
| Prof. Dr. Sadegül Akbaba Altun  | Olumlu/ <del>Olumsuz</del> |  |
| Prof. Dr. Fatih Çetin           | Olumlu/ <del>Olumsuz</del> |  |
| Prof. Dr. Hasan Tahsin Fendoğlu | Olumlu/Olumsuz             |  |
| Prof. Dr. Filiz Kalelioğlu      | Olumlu/ <del>Olumsuz</del> |  |
| Prof. Dr. Hidayet Hale Künüçen  | Olumlu/ <del>Olumsuz</del> |  |
| Prof. Dr. Özcan Yağcı           | Olumlu/ <del>Olumsuz</del> |  |

## APPENDIX 12: Ethical Consent from Participants' University

### ANKARA MEDİPOL ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER GİRİŞİMSSEL OLMAYAN ARAŞTIRMALAR ETİK KURULU KARAR FORMU

|                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                            |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|------|
| BAŞVURU BİLGİLERİ                                                                        | ARAŞTIRMANIN AÇIK ADI                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Farklı İngilizce Aksanlarının Türkçe Bağlamında Anlaşılabilirliği, Kavranırlığı (Intelligibility Accentedness, and Comprehensibility of Different English Accents in Turkish Context) |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                            |      |
|                                                                                          | KOORDİNATÖR/SORUMLU ARAŞTIRMACI UNVANI/ADI/SOYADI                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Hacer Ecre GÜNEŞ                                                                                                                                                                      |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                            |      |
|                                                                                          | KOORDİNATÖR/SORUMLU ARAŞTIRMACININ UZMANLIK ALANI                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | İngilizce Öğretmenliği                                                                                                                                                                |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                            |      |
|                                                                                          | KOORDİNATÖR/SORUMLU ARAŞTIRMACININ BULUNDUĞU MERKEZ                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Ankara                                                                                                                                                                                |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                            |      |
|                                                                                          | DESTEKLEYİCİ                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Doç. Dr. Gülin DAĞDEVİREN KIRMIZI                                                                                                                                                     |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                            |      |
|                                                                                          | ARAŞTIRMAYA KATILAN MERKEZLER                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | TEK MERKEZ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                        | ÇOK MERKEZLİ <input type="checkbox"/> | ULUSAL <input type="checkbox"/>       | ULUSLARARASI <input type="checkbox"/> |                                       |                                       |                            |      |
| Karar Bilgileri                                                                          | Karar No: 26                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Tarih:10.12.2024                                                                                                                                                                      |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                            |      |
|                                                                                          | Yukarıda bilgileri verilen Sosyal Bilimler Girişimsel Olmayan Etik Kurulu başvuru dosyası ile ilgili belgeler araştırmanın gerekçe, amaç, yaklaşım ve yöntemleri dikkate alınarak incelenmiş ve araştırmanın etik ve bilimsel yönden uygun olduğuna "oy birliği" ile karar verilmiştir. |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                            |      |
| ANKARA MEDİPOL ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER GİRİŞİMSSEL OLMAYAN ARAŞTIRMALAR ETİK KURULU |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                            |      |
| BAŞKANIN UNVANI/ADI/SOYADI                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Prof. Dr. F. İlçin GÖNENÇ                                                                                                                                                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                                       |                            |      |
| Unvanı/Adı/ Soyadı                                                                       | Uzmanlık Alanı                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Kurumu                                                                                                                                                                                | Cinsiyet                              |                                       | Araştırma ile İlişki                  |                                       | Katılım                               |                            | İmza |
| Prof. Dr. F. İlçin GÖNENÇ                                                                | Hukuk                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Ankara Medipol Üniversitesi                                                                                                                                                           | E <input type="checkbox"/>            | K <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | E <input type="checkbox"/>            | H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | H <input type="checkbox"/> |      |
| Prof. Dr. Nurzahid KESKİN                                                                | Yönetim Bilişim Sistemleri                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Ankara Medipol Üniversitesi                                                                                                                                                           | E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | K <input type="checkbox"/>            | E <input type="checkbox"/>            | H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | H <input type="checkbox"/> |      |
| Doç. Dr. Cihat ÇELİK                                                                     | Psikoloji                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Ankara Medipol Üniversitesi                                                                                                                                                           | E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | K <input type="checkbox"/>            | E <input type="checkbox"/>            | H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | H <input type="checkbox"/> |      |
| Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Didem ÇATALKILIÇ                                                          | Halkla İlişkiler ve Reklamcılık                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Ankara Medipol Üniversitesi                                                                                                                                                           | E <input type="checkbox"/>            | K <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | E <input type="checkbox"/>            | H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | H <input type="checkbox"/> |      |
| Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Muhammed GÖÇGÜN                                                           | Hukuk                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Ankara Medipol Üniversitesi                                                                                                                                                           | E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | K <input type="checkbox"/>            | E <input type="checkbox"/>            | H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | H <input type="checkbox"/> |      |

## APPENDIX 13: Consent Form for Participants

### Consent Form

This research was conducted by Başkent University English Language Teaching Thesis Master's Program student and School of Foreign Languages faculty member Hacer Ecre GÜNEŞ and with the supervision of her thesis advisor Assoc. Dr. Gülin DAĞDEVİREN KIRMIZI this form has been prepared to inform you about the research conditions.

#### **What is the Purpose of the Study?**

This study aims to analyze whether Turkish students learning English as a foreign language are affected by the difference between native accents (American and British) and non-native Turkish foreign accents in terms of intelligibility and comprehensibility. In addition, it tries to examine whether there is a difference between these accents in terms of understanding and comprehending the language. Additionally, this study assumes that there is no relationship between the intelligibility and intelligibility of a person speaking Turkish as a foreign language and their foreign accent, considering the negative perceptions of non-native accents encountered as a result of previous studies.

#### **How Do We Want You to Help Us?**

The researcher will be in direct contact with you. We request that you allocate suitable time and arrange a meeting via teams or face-to-face to do the necessary work and have a small meeting. This process, which you will assist with, will not exceed half an hour on average.

#### **How Will We Use the Information We Collect From You?**

Your participation in the research must be entirely voluntary. In the research, no information identifying your identity or institution is requested. Your answers will be kept completely confidential and will be evaluated only by the researcher. The information obtained from the participants will be evaluated collectively and used in scientific publications. The data you provide will not be matched with the identification information collected in the consent form and will not be published anywhere.

**The things you need to know about your participation:** Although this study is unlikely to be a direct study in your daily life, English is a part of your life, and you will be exposed to these accents in many different situations. As a result of research on this subject, you may come across positive and useful educational information in your education and even in your future business life. At the end of the study, any questions you may have about the study will be answered.

**If you would like to get more information about the research:** Thank you in advance for participating in this study. To get more information about the research, contact Başkent University

English Language Thesis Master's Program student and School of Foreign Languages instructor  
Hacer Ecre GÜNEŞ.

(E-mail: [REDACTED])

***have read the above information, and I participate in this study completely voluntarily.***

(After completing and signing the form, return it to the practitioner).

Name Surname

Date

Signature

--/---/----



**APPENDIX 14: Individual Answers of Participants of Task 1 and Task 2 For British Accent**

| Participant | Task1 | Task 2 |
|-------------|-------|--------|
| 1           | NC    | 4      |
| 2           | SC    | 6      |
| 3           | NC    | 9      |
| 4           | SC    | 5      |
| 5           | NC    | 3      |
| 6           | NC    | 5      |
| 7           | SC    | 4      |
| 8           | NC    | 3      |
| 9           | SC    | 2      |
| 10          | NC    | 4      |
| 11          | NC    | 2      |
| 12          | NC    | 3      |
| 13          | NC    | 2      |
| 14          | NC    | 3      |
| 15          | NC    | 1      |
| 16          | NC    | 3      |
| 17          | NC    | 3      |

|    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 18 | NC | 4 |
| 19 | NC | 1 |
| 20 | NC | 6 |
| 21 | NC | 6 |
| 22 | NC | 5 |
| 23 | NC | 5 |
| 24 | NC | 3 |
| 25 | NC | 2 |
| 26 | SC | 7 |
| 27 | NC | 6 |
| 28 | NC | 7 |
| 29 | NC | 6 |
| 30 | NC | 3 |

**APPENDIX 15: Individual Answers of Participants of Task 1 and Task 2 for American Accent**

| Participant | Task1 | Task 2 |
|-------------|-------|--------|
| 1           | NC    | 7      |
| 2           | SC    | 4      |
| 3           | NC    | 7      |
| 4           | NC    | 6      |
| 5           | SC    | 8      |
| 6           | NC    | 6      |
| 7           | C     | 8      |
| 8           | NC    | 5      |
| 9           | NC    | 4      |
| 10          | C     | 7      |
| 11          | SC    | 7      |
| 12          | NC    | 5      |
| 13          | SC    | 6      |
| 14          | SC    | 5      |
| 15          | SC    | 3      |
| 16          | SC    | 7      |

|    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 17 | SC | 7 |
| 18 | SC | 6 |
| 19 | NC | 4 |
| 20 | NC | 4 |
| 21 | NC | 6 |
| 22 | C  | 6 |
| 23 | NC | 6 |
| 24 | NC | 5 |
| 25 | NC | 4 |
| 26 | SC | 9 |
| 27 | C  | 7 |
| 28 | NC | 7 |
| 29 | NC | 8 |
| 30 | SC | 6 |

**APPENDIX 16: Individual Answers of Participants of Task 1 and Task 2 For Turkish Foreign Accent**

| Participant | Task1 | Task 2 |
|-------------|-------|--------|
| 1           | SC    | 9      |
| 2           | C     | 9      |
| 3           | SC    | 9      |
| 4           | C     | 9      |
| 5           | C     | 9      |
| 6           | SC    | 7      |
| 7           | C     | 9      |
| 8           | SC    | 8      |
| 9           | C     | 9      |
| 10          | SC    | 7      |
| 11          | C     | 9      |
| 12          | SC    | 9      |
| 13          | C     | 9      |
| 14          | SC    | 8      |
| 15          | C     | 9      |
| 16          | C     | 9      |
| 17          | C     | 9      |

|    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 18 | SC | 9 |
| 19 | NC | 9 |
| 20 | NC | 8 |
| 21 | C  | 9 |
| 22 | C  | 9 |
| 23 | SC | 9 |
| 24 | SC | 9 |
| 25 | C  | 9 |
| 26 | C  | 9 |
| 27 | C  | 8 |
| 28 | SC | 8 |
| 29 | SC | 9 |
| 30 | C  | 8 |