

Promoting correct pronunciation through supported audio materials for EFL learners

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Abstract

Most of the students majoring in the English Language Teaching Departments, as in other foreign language departments, have difficulties in pronouncing the words correctly in Turkey. The National University Entrance Exam delivered annually does not test oral and aural competencies of the prospective English language teachers. As they are not expected to have these skills, students automatically do not focus on listening comprehension aspect of the target language, which leads them to lack one of the components of an effective communication. Although most of the students are familiar with the words in the target language, they are unable to pronounce them properly. In order to eradicate this problem, the current study provided the student teachers with extensive reading activities to find out whether the activities helped. It is a long process for foreign language teachers to cope with such “fossilized” words during language teaching process. Keeping this issue in mind, this paper mainly aims to seek response to the question of “How does extensive listening contribute to correct pronunciation of the prospective teachers of English?”

Keywords: Extensive listening; Authentic material; Pronunciation; Fossilization; Readers; Recordings
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1. Introduction

Mispronunciation and bad intonation are fundamental problems in the speech of the non-native teachers of English in underdeveloped countries, due to lack of materials, inadequate model teachers, and the like [1]. It should be addressed that to communicate appropriately we undeniably need to convey the message across with the help of correct pronunciation considering the fact that it has a huge impact on the understanding of the meanings of the words.

If the sound of word differs it may lead the listener to misunderstand the message. In order to keep away from such kind of misconceptions we need to provide foreign language learners with the listening activities leading to correct pronunciation. Our aim in foreign language teaching context is not, of course, to pronounce as native speakers do but to approximate them in pronouncing the words. Thus learners are expected to be capable of being understood by a variety of listeners.

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2. Importance of listening in language classes

It is a widely accepted fact that when students have difficulty in understanding the oral speech they may have frustration, which leads to poor performance in communication and loss of attention. According to Miller [2], more than forty percent of our daily communication is spent on listening, thirty-five percent on speaking, about sixteen percent on reading, and only nine percent on writing. Yet listening remains one of the least understood processes in language learning in spite of its critical role in communication and language acquisition. Nunan [3] regards listening as the Cinderella skill in second language learning. All too often it has been overlooked by its elder sister: speaking.

Rivers [4] acknowledges that teaching listening skills is one of the most difficult tasks for any English language teacher, because successful listening skills are acquired over time and with lots of practice. As Nunan [3] propounds learning cannot begin without understanding input (pitched at the right level) and “listening is thus fundamental to speaking”. What is clear is that skill in listening, like all other language skills, is something which can be taught and should be taught in a systematic and sequential manner [5].

Although there seems to be a great tendency towards understanding the processes of listening comprehension, nowadays, it is observed that listening comprehension attracted the least attention of the four skills, in terms of both the amount of research conducted on the topic and the benevolent neglect that it suffered in most foreign language programs [6-8]. Boyle [9] argued that listening can be regarded as a separate skill. Some believed that listening was considered a passive skill and from the belief that merely exposing the student to the spoken language was adequate instruction in listening comprehension. However, it is true that comprehending a language as it is being spoken is now recognized to be a complex, and it is an active skill involving many processes that have become the focus of classroom-oriented [10-13] as well as psychological studies.

Byrnes [14] characterized listening comprehension as a “highly-complex problem-solving activity” that can be broken down into a set of distinct subskills: as the recognition of component parts of the language (words, verb groups, simple phrases) and memory for these elements once they have been recognized. Through listening comprehension, students should achieve, to Chastain [15], to discriminate between the significant sound and intonation patterns of the language; to perceive an oral message; to keep the communication in mind while it is being processed; and finally to understand the contained message. Similarly, Rivers [4] attests that listening entails active cognitive processing the construction of a message from phonic material which involves three stages: to recognize in phonic substance sound patterns in bounded segments related to phrase structure; begin processing, identifying the groupings detected according to the content of our central information system; and to recycle the material learners organized through immediate memory, thus building up an auditory memory which helps to retain the segments listeners are processing.

Briefly, listening is a very active and integrative language skill, involving a grasp of phonological, lexical, grammatical, and ideological complexities as well as performance factors typical only of speech such as rate of speech, clarity of intonation and pronunciation, hesitations, pauses [5]. No doubt, listening is the most common communicative activity in daily life. According to Morley [16], “We can expect to listen twice as much as we speak, four times more than we read, and five times more than we write.” So, listening, as a skill, is assuming more and more weight in SL or FL classrooms than ever before. Rost [17] points out “listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin. Listening is thus fundamental to speaking.”

3. Listening without constraints

In foreign language teaching process, learners are mostly required to spend their times on listening to the materials outside the classes due to the limited time in the class. Thus, they do not have any constraints such as time, friends, teacher, technical problems, etc. Such kind of activities might help them feel secure and find themselves in stress-free environment. Their affective filter is lowered [18], which means that they have a positive and open attitude towards learning. When they find themselves in a low stress environment they are not afraid to make mistakes.

It is widely advised by the scholars that the improvement of students' listening abilities needs to be supported by the materials such as supported readings accompanied by the recorded materials, podcasts, online listening activities etc. Within the scope of this study, recorded listening materials are central to correct mispronunciations of the learners. In view of this, it is reasonable to assert that narrated readings such as novels, stories, dialogues are always a great help for non-native foreign language learners.

We know that most of the students have and are aware of the recent technological devices and they are busy with them in every moment of their life. In view of this, it is reasonable to assert that narrated readings such as novels, stories, dialogues are always a great help for non-native foreign language learners. In the process of accomplishment of this task out of the walls of the classroom, learners use various technological devices such as iPods, MP3 Players, mobile phones, etc. Chinnery [19] agrees that the use of mobile phones and other mobile devices for educational purposes has received increasing attention in recent years.

4. Correct pronunciation through listening

It is highly admitted that pronunciation is the key factor that native speakers notice during a conversation. So, learning words without pronunciation is in vein as it leads to communication breakdown. Furthermore, being knowledgeable on grammar and vocabulary is important as long as they are produced and pronounced correctly. However the grammatical errors the speakers do, it is possible to understand the speech with the correct pronunciation. Since the beginning of the communicative language teaching in the late 1960s the place of pronunciation in the EFL curriculum has started to change [20]. Until then, it was regarded as meaningless and non-communicative drill-and-exercise gambits [16]. However, it was realized that there should be a shift from specific linguistic competencies to broader communicative competencies as goals for both the teacher and the learner and pronunciation should be integrated in the EFL curriculum and syllabus [16].

Scarcella and Oxford [21] similarly support this view that pronunciation should be taught in all foreign language classes through a variety of activities. Harlow and Muyskens [22] note that students "worry about pronunciation a great deal because they feel insecure about how they sound to other people. Furthermore, Morley [16] emphasizes on meaningful communication claiming that 'intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence'. Teachers should include pronunciation in their courses and expect their learners to do well in them. He adds that the goal of pronunciation should be changed from the attainment of 'perfect' pronunciation to the more realistic goals of developing functional intelligibility, communicability, increased self-confidence, the development of speech monitoring abilities and speech modification strategies for use beyond the classroom [16].

According to Pennington and Richards [23], pronunciation, traditionally viewed as a component of linguistic rather than communicative competence or as an aspect of accuracy rather than conversational fluency, has come to be regarded as of limited importance in a

communicatively oriented curriculum. What is more, it is tempting to suggest that the very first English lesson should deal with pronunciation. If students do not have an opportunity to practice good pronunciation at the beginning of their learning, they may build their habits in the wrong way. For this reason, learning words without pronunciation during beginning lessons is potentially damaging to their overall success. Not learning to pronounce the words correctly at the beginning of foreign language learning leads to fossilized pronunciation which impedes correct pronunciation.

Based on the literature discussed above briefly, it is understood that listening activity is a key role in foreign language teaching in order to improve learners' communicative competence as well as linguistic and pragmatic. Wong [24] points out that even when the non-native speakers' vocabulary and grammar are excellent, if their pronunciation falls below a certain threshold level; they are unable to communicate efficiently and effectively. Therefore, foreign language learners need to be equipped with correct pronunciation. It is essential to mention that the subject group of this study is composed of the participants who are the prospective English language teachers and need to be trained adequately so that they can teach the target language appropriately when they start to work at elementary schools. This study, with the aim of enhancing correct pronunciation through extensive listening activities, is expected to contribute to the field of foreign language teaching, which has not been studied much so far. Furthermore, the results of this study and feedbacks obtained from some of the participants are thought to have a significant function in order to identify the mistakes, barriers and problems during the process and to reinforce the positive aspects. Consequently, this study aims at finding answers to the research questions below:

1. To what extent does extensive listening contribute to correct pronunciation?
2. How much are the EFL learners aware of the importance of listening skill?
3. What are the contributions of supported recorded materials to language learning?

5. Aim of the study

As most of the students at foreign language education departments are elected through the nationwide high-stakes tests administered by OSYM (Student Selection and Placement Center), they are compelled to work on the standard test which entails the questions focusing especially on reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, students majoring in the English Language Teaching Departments are mostly not able to pronounce correctly some of the commonly used words at the beginning of the year. Furthermore, they are not required to follow a language preparation, and in their previous secondary education they mostly don't have prep classes, where the whole year is completely devoted to teach a foreign language.

To Demirezen [1], mispronunciation and bad intonation are fundamental problems in the speech of the non-native teachers of English many of whom are on the job and keep on mispronouncing words and sentences. Consequently, they are understood poorly with great difficulty, but they see no point in making any effort to improve their faulty pronunciation, which gets to be harmful to the learners. As clearly seen, the pronunciation problems originated from the incorrect learning at their previous education makes this study essential. Therefore, the aim of this study is to find out the importance of extensive listening in enhancing correct pronunciation for foreign language learners.

6. Methodology

This study has been conducted as a quasi-quantitative research. The participants comprise 102 male and 23 female students majoring in an English Language Teaching Department, Faculty of Education of a state university, Erciyes University, Kayseri, in Turkey. The data

were gathered from the freshman-ELT students through the instrument investigating participants' pronunciation competencies on some certain problematic words. The research instrument (Table 2) has been conducted at the beginning of the term to figure out the problem in detail. Depending on the results obtained in the pre-test, some techniques (Table 3) have been applied to the research group for 9 weeks as in the specified in Table 2. The same instrument used as a pre-test was also used at the end of the process as a post-test to check the influence of the activities.

6. 1. Participants

This study has been conducted with 125 freshman English Language Teaching major students. The participants, composed of 23 female and 102 male, have all particularly been chosen from the students who have just enrolled and taken the course first time. The other issue that should be mentioned for this research is that the participants have not experienced listening activities and pronunciation lessons in their previous education as they were selected with the results of the standardized test conducted by Student Selection and Placement Center (OSYM) which mainly focuses on testing grammatical and reading abilities of the testees. The course they are required to follow is titled Advanced Reading and Writing. The aim of the course is to develop foreign language learner's reading comprehension and writing skill with the help of the course book and some selected readers which are specified in Table 4. As the main concern in this study is to check the contribution of extensive listening materials to correct pronunciation, the teaching materials used in this research are accompanied by the recorded audio supplements. This study specially focuses on the effects of extensive listening on leading learners to be aware of the words they pronounce wrongly even if they know the meanings of the words. The following table reveals the demographical variables of the participants.

Table 1. Demographical variables of the participants

Groups	Gender				Age		
	Male		Female		Male	Female	Average
	n	%	n	%			
1-A (Regular)	7	23	26	79			
1-B (Regular)	6	18	27	82	22	19	20.5
1-A (Evening)	4	12	27	88			
1-B (Evening)	5	19	23	81			
Total N (125)	22	18	103	82			

6. 2. Instrument

The instrument used for this study is a corpus that has been composed of the most commonly mispronounced words by non-native English language learners in Turkey. The instrument has been developed after reviewing the related literature and studies conducted by several Turkish researchers [25-29]. These studies examining phonetic problems for Turkish students in learning English as a foreign language focus on the difficulties in pronouncing some certain words which, after a while, turns out to be fossilized. While choosing the problematic words that are most frequently mispronounced for Turkish English language learners, the data gathered from the following resources have been taken into account: opinions of the experts in the field, notes taken during the same course by the researcher in the previous years, interviews with the colleagues. Drawn from an extensive study on commonly-mispronounced words the following instrument (Table 2) has been developed and used for this study.

Table 2. Commonly mispronounced words by Turkish English language learners

Commonly mispronounced words	Incorrect Pronunciation	Correct Pronunciation
achieve	eʃi:v	eʃi:v
ancestor	ænkɛstə	ænsɛstə
bear	bi:r	bɛə
bullet	bʌlət	bʊlət
blood	blʊ:d	blʌd
bury	bɜ:ri	beri
determine	dɪtɜ:mæn	dɪtɜ:mɪn
examine	ɪgzæmə ɪn	ɪgzæmən
flood	flʊ:d	flʌd
hideous	haɪdɪəs	hɪdɪəs
live (verb)	laɪv	lɪv
magnificent	mæɡnɪfɪjənt	mæɡnɪfɪsənt
notice	nəʊtɪs	nəʊtɪs
phenomenon	fənɒmɪnən	fənɒmɪnən
rough	rʌʊ	rʌf
scene	ski:n	si:n
separate (adjective)	sepəreɪt	sepəreɪt
surface	sɜ:feɪs	sɜ:fis
tomb	tɒm	tu:m
vary	veəri	veəri

6. 3. Research design and procedure

This study, which is a quasi-qualitative research, builds on research done into the effect of extensive listening activities on developing mispronounced words in foreign language teaching process. In other words, the chief aim of the study was to assess and measure the effectiveness of extensive listening. At the core of this research is a process-based research that was conducted with a group of ELT-major(ING) students from the Faculty of Education in Kayseri over a period of nine weeks. So, the participants were assigned some tasks and administered some techniques (Table 3). The objective of the research was to evaluate whether there was any differences in the usability of the activities specified in Table 3. The study also sought to measure how using extensive listening influenced the learners in developing and correcting their fossilized words pronounced incorrectly. The research design is depicted as in the following table.

Table 2. Research design

Participants	Pretest	Process	Posttest	Interview
ELT-Major freshman-students (N)125	Application of the corpus developed by the researcher	Application of the techniques specified in Table 3.	Checking the effect of the activities given in table 1.	Getting the feedbacks from the participants (N) 6

At the beginning of the research the students were given a Pre-test (Table 2) to figure out the frequency of the mispronounced words given in the list. The participants wrote the pronunciations of the words in the way they wish. That is, they were not expected to write using the phonetic symbols considering that they are not familiar with the International Phonetic Alphabet. During the research, students were required to read and elaborate the materials at hand (Table 4) within the given time. While performing the reading activities either in or out of the classroom, they are expected to focus on the pronunciations of the words and take notes of the ones they are semantically familiar but phonetically unfamiliar. In this respect, they were supposed to listen to the materials more than once, sometimes twice or more so that they can verify the pronunciation and comprehend the texts appropriately. Furthermore, in order to encourage them to listen to the materials more frequently, they were suggested to copy the soundtracks of the texts narrated by the native speakers on their MP3s, iPods, and mobile phones. Thus it would be possible for them to reach such kind of materials at any time and anywhere when they wish to. It was observed that most of the students kept

listening to the materials at school, at home, at dormitory, on the bus etc. The other requirement was to keep a vocabulary notebook for such kind of problematic words along with the newly learned ones. At the end of the research, after nine weeks, the same test used for the pre-test was administered as a post test to evaluate the process. Additionally, some of the participants were interviewed and their opinions on the process have been discussed in the Findings Section.

Table 3. Activities and materials to be utilized in this research

ACTIVITIES		MATERIAS
1	Specifying the rate and type of the pronunciation problems	Pre-test developed by the researcher
2	Reading the related materials	Course book and Graded Readers
3	Listening to the texts	Recorded materials
4	Focusing on the incorrectly pronounced words	Course book and Graded Readers
5	Copying the incorrectly pronounced words	Vocabulary notebooks
6	Recording the related texts	MP3 Players. iPhones. Mobile Phones
7	Peer correction during the lessons	Students. Dictionaries. Online Web Sites
8	Checking the process	Applying the Post-Test
9	Getting opinions of the students	Interview questionnaire

6. 4. Materials

It is undeniable that authentic materials are essential to develop foreign language learners' competences- from linguistic to pragmatic. Keeping this issue in mind, for this study the researcher focused on the use of the *authentic reading materials* accompanied with the audio supplements. What is implied by authentic material is the one that covers real language, which is the hardest to understand, because no concessions are made to foreign learners - language is unlikely to be simplified or spoken slowly. For non-native listeners, authenticity often means negative expectations, i.e. listening is bound to be too difficult [30]. It is highly recommended in foreign language teaching that the material should possess the originality that native speaker uses. Bearing this vital issue in mind, the participants used the following materials throughout the research.

Table 4. Materials used to enhance correct pronunciation through listening

MATERIALS	AUDIO MATERIALS	DURATION	AIM		
			Reading	Vocabulary	Listening
1 Reading for the Real World 2	Available	9 WEEKS (9 Units)	✓	✓	✓
2		Oxford Bookworms			
1 Oliver Twist	Available	3 WEEKS	✓	✓	✓
2 A Passage to India	Available	3 WEEKS	✓	✓	✓
3 Tess of the D'urbervilles	Available	3 WEEKS	✓	✓	✓

7. Findings

The research conducted with 125 participants at ELT Department of Faculty of Education in Kayseri ended at the end of the ninth week. After gathering the data from the post-test the results were compared to the pre-test in order to see the effect of the activities used throughout the research on the correction of the mispronounced words uttered by the participants. The following table reveals the comparison of the pretest and posttest results of this study in detail. Furthermore, some of the feedbacks of the students will also be provided.

When the results were analyzed it was seen that a great deal of the participants mispronounced the words chosen for this study at the beginning of the research. The mean score of the correct responses to the research in the pretest is 32.3%, and incorrect responses are 67.7%. These scores reveal that most of the words were pronounced incorrectly by the participants, and the study needed to be implemented. When compared the results between the pretest and post test the activities had a great influence on learners' phonetic awareness and

thus correct pronunciation. The average scores of the two tests are displayed in Table 6.

Table 5. The results of the pretest and posttest.

COMMONLY MISPRONOUNCED WORDS (N 20)	PRETEST				POSTTEST			
	Incorrect		Correct		Incorrect		Correct	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
achieve	88	70.4	37	29.6	12.0	0.96	113	90.4
ancestor	80	64.0	45	36.0	11.0	8.8	114	91.2
bear	84	67.2	41	32.8	14.0	11.2	111	88.8
bullet	78	62.4	47	37.6	13.0	10.4	112	89.6
blood	83	66.4	42	33.6	5.0	4.0	120	96.0
bury	98	78.4	27	21.6	14.0	11.2	111	88.8
determine	99	79.2	26	20.8	8.0	6.4	117	93.6
examine	96	76.8	29	23.2	7.0	5.6	118	94.4
flood	89	71.2	36	28.8	5.0	4.0	120	96.0
hideous	81	64.8	44	35.2	9.0	7.2	116	92.8
live (verb)	73	58.4	52	41.6	12.0	9.6	113	90.4
magnificent	72	57.6	53	42.4	6.0	4.8	119	94.2
notice	72	57.6	53	42.4	4.0	3.2	121	96.8
phenomenon	97	77.6	28	22.4	15.0	12.0	110	88.0
rough	73	58.4	52	41.6	13.0	10.4	112	89.6
scene	75	60.0	50	40.0	10.0	8.0	115	92.0
separate (adjective)	71	56.8	54	43.2	11.0	8.8	114	91.2
surface	79	63.2	46	36.8	4.0	3.2	121	96.8
tomb	102	81.6	23	18.4	16.0	12.8	109	87.2
vary	103	82.4	22	17.6	7.0	5.6	118	94.4

Table 6. The average of the pretest and posttest results

	PRETEST		POSTTEST	
	\bar{x}	%	\bar{x}	%
Correct	84.7	32.3	115.2	92.8
Incorrect	40.35	67.7	9.8	7.2
Total (N)	125	100	125	100

It is seen that 115.2 (\bar{x}) participants had a great progress in the process with the 92.8% correction of the mispronounced words while it was 32.3% at the beginning. The rate of the incorrect responses lowered to 7.2% from 40.35%. It is clear that stressing on the listening activities led learners to realize their deficiency in pronouncing some words. This fact is expressed by one of the participants as in the following data, which is obtained from the semi-structured interview.

At first, I couldn't spell and pronounce the words accurately. I didn't know anything about phonetics and spelling. After I started to listen to the texts, I realized that I mispronounced most of the words I know. But thanks to extensive listening, and knowledge about phonetics, I believe that I have improved my pronunciation. When one of my friends pronounces wrongly I can immediately differentiate. (Informant 1)

In foreign language teaching, it is suggested that learners be encouraged to be exposed to auditory input as much as possible. In their study McCandless and Winitz [31] found that "extensive auditory input in the beginning stages of second language learning results in improved pronunciation relative to traditional procedures of language instruction." They believe that given sufficient auditory exposure before communicating increases the likelihood of achieving native-like pronunciation. The participants majoring at ELT do not have a chance to be exposed to the target language in the class environment, which sometimes leads them to transmit the language. To Ellis [32], if the learners don't have "optimal" exposure in the target language, they can't transmit the "comprehensible input" into "intake" through "production strategies" where learners attempt to use L2 knowledge. Furthermore, Harmer [33] and McCandless and Winitz [31] also portray listening as a tool offering comprehensible input. Provided the input is comprehensible, foreign language learners will gradually acquire more words and greater schematic knowledge which will, in turn, resolve many of the language difficulties they started out with.

As most of the participants in this study did not have any phonetic instructions in their previous education it became hard for them to differentiate the correct ones from the incorrect ones. Furthermore, they mostly stated that they didn't need to learn pronunciation to pass some standardized exams designed by the state authorities. The classes are designed as 'test driven' and not 'learning driven.' The other issue, which is frequently expressed, is that their teachers pronounced the vocabularies incorrectly and they learned them in the way their teachers pronounced and taught. In this sense, Elliott [34] maintains that "teachers tend to view pronunciation as the least useful of the basic language skills and therefore they generally sacrifice teaching pronunciation in order to spend valuable class time on other areas of the language." Elliott adds that it is an overall belief that pronunciation, particularly for adult learners is "more difficult to improve than other target language skills. The importance of listening skill in foreign language teaching should not be underestimated due to the benefits it provides for learners. However, researchers maintain that increasing auditory input in the early stages of language learning leads to improved pronunciation for the adult foreign language learner. Otherwise, it turns out to be fossilized and becomes hard to correct them when they become adult or in their following education. Another participant displays this fact as follows:

My vocabulary knowledge has extended and I can speak more fluently than I could speak eight or nine weeks ago. I can speak a bit faster now. Before coming here, I wasn't doing listening activities much; we were doing only grammar exercises. So we couldn't speak well. And I couldn't understand anything from the listening that I was doing in high school but now I can almost understand all of them by listening to them carefully. Informant 2.

Some of the participants also stated that they found it hard at the beginning to comprehend the listening activities and differentiate some words. Needless to say, according to the research in foreign language teaching, learning should be challenging and a bit more difficult for language learners as supported by Krashen [35] in the view that "acquisition" takes place as a result of the learner having understood input that is a little beyond the current level of his competence that is 'the i+1 level'. Therefore, in this case, it must be taken into account that the level of listening input must be higher than the level of language production of the target learners.

Before we studied in this way, I couldn't say the words correctly. I used to make a lot of pronunciation mistakes, but when I started listening to activities extensively the percentage of making mistakes lessened. I listened to the passages a few times before coming to class. By listening to the authentic listening materials frequently, I get used to his pronunciation. Informant 3.

While performing extensive listening activities, participants were strictly required to listen to the materials recorded by the native speakers. Most of the EFL course materials on the market are accompanied by audio-visual materials full of listening activities that can be exploited outside the class as in the words uttered one of the participants below.

I don't have any chances to speak English to a native speaker. But, by listening to their videos, or dialogues on CDs I can be familiar with their pronunciation and accent. When I was at the beginning of this year, I would use English on paper. But now my reading and pronunciation has improved. I can use English widely. All these listening activities have also contributed to my speaking. I can speak English more fluently. Informant 4.

Some of the participants at the end of the process confirmed that extensive listening activities positively contributed to the development of their pronunciation. Some of the results in the research as in the table below (Table 7) prove that extensive listening of the audio materials had a great contribution to the enhancement of correct pronunciation of the participants.

The table depicting the data with the lowest and highest percentages reveals that listening to the audio materials was beneficial for the participants. Some words such as "achieve" (29.6%), "flood" (28.8%), "blood" (33.6%), "bury" (21.6%), "determine" (20.8%), "examine" (23.2%), "phenomenon" (22.4%), "tomb" (18.4%), and "vary" (17.6%) were pronounced incorrectly at the beginning of the research. At the end of the process it is seen that participants phonetically

Table 7. Comparison of some of the results at high rates

MISPRONOUNCED WORDS	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
	Correct (%)	Correct (%)
achieve	29.6	90.4
blood	33.6	96.0
bury	21.6	88.8
determine	20.8	93.6
examine	23.2	94.4
flood	28.8	96.0
phenomenon	22.4	88.0
tomb	18.4	87.2
vary	17.6	94.4

developed and to a large extent corrected their mistakes. The percentages with 90.4%, 96.0%, 88.8%, 93.6%, 94.4%, 88.0%, 87.2%, makes this study valuable for foreign language learners to evaluate their pronunciation. The more they listen to the better they become in comprehending the target language. The following participant appreciates the importance of listening skill in foreign language learning and correct pronunciation.

Listening after listening after listening I have more vocabulary knowledge as well as the most important thing is that some words that I couldn't pronounce correctly are corrected now because of the contributions of listening. What is more? I become more native like although it is very difficult to be one. I can also improve my speed in reading as I know how to pronounce there becomes no obstacle on reading, thus, reading a lot better and smoothly. Informant 5.

The words “separate” and “live”, “present” are also the ones that are mostly confused by many learners. Some students usually pronounce the adjective “separate” in the way they pronounce the verb “separate”. “Live” as a verb is also pronounced as in the noun form. Through this study, it is found that students can discriminate these differences, and are more conscious than before. One of the participants admits that he is now better in comprehending and discriminating the sounds of English.

Listening is very important for me. Because I am convinced that one can improve his pronunciation and speaking by listening and I learn new words. Before the activity assigned to us, I thought it was meaningless then. Now I have come to realize its importance. Now I advise my friends if they want to improve their speaking and pronounce the words correctly, they must listen to something. Informant 6.

The comments and results of the research make the point clear that pronunciation is crucial in an effective communication, and listening to the authentic materials in language teaching conveys a fundamental role in establishing the correct pronunciation input for foreign language learners. This study reveals that learners in the following stages won't be able to overcome the mispronounced words easily if they are not provided with correct instruction and necessary focus at the beginning.

8. Discussion and conclusion

The principle aim of this pilot study was to assess whether extensive listening contributes to the development of correct pronunciation for foreign language learners. It can justifiably be claimed at the outset that there are positive benefits associated with using the techniques suggested for this study and this claim is evident from the analysis of the research test administered as a pretest and posttest, and the feedbacks obtained from the interview at the end of the research. This pilot study produced objective evidence to support the key claims made by Gilbert [36], Celce-Murcia [37], Kavaliauskienė [38] for the importance of listening activities in the development of pronunciation. Particularly Kavaliauskienė [38] suggests that teachers arrange individual listening to online recordings either in the classroom, if facilities permit, or advise students to carry it out outside classes. As this attempt will give a novelty feeling to learners and provide a vast diversity of listening materials to choose from.

Furthermore, the study suggests that extensive listening can improve lexical competence, self confidence of learners in the use of the target language. It is also reported that students are unable to pronounce the familiar words correctly as they learned and were taught incorrectly in their previous education and they inevitably became fossilized, which takes longer time to correct compared to the newly learned ones. In this respect, Morley [39] claims

that intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence. To Otlowski [40], teachers should ideally include components of pronunciation in their courses and expect students to do well. The other issue that is indicated in this study that extensive listening offers several benefits for foreign language learners; particularly in terms of bringing the real language into the classroom with its authenticity including different accents, intonations, pitches etc.

This study demonstrates the effectiveness of using extensive listening in the pronunciation correction process and while more research is needed, there is now some objective evidence that extensive listening does work. It is now evidently understood that pronunciation should be taught early and correctly in foreign language teaching, which may develop native/native-like pronunciation, and help students to feel less anxious about speaking. Learners might be more motivated to actively take part in speaking to native speakers. Additionally, it needs to be noted that the learner's communicative competence as well as performance is dependent on his/her command of all the basic skills of the target language encompassing listening and speaking. Though pronunciation is overlooked in the syllabus, material and even classroom activities, it does have an inseparable link to communication through listening and speaking [36, 37]. Through the exploitation of the extensive listening, foreign language learners become a bit more independent who are aware of the task and able to exploit the potential learning situations in which they find themselves [41]. Furthermore, learners feel more comfortable with exposure to foreign language outside the classrooms than between the walls, and they deserve to feel in control of their independent learning experience [42].

It can be concluded that this study is new in the sense that it focuses on enhancing correct pronunciation through extensive listening activities. However, it is true to express that this study has its limitations in various aspects. First of all, the participants all come from the same university in Kayseri, Turkey and may not be representative of all the English language teaching majoring pre-service student teachers. In selecting the participants of the study, the only criterion was the freshman students irrespective of their language proficiency [43]. As no random selection was possible, student groups were intact groups. Based on the findings and limitations of this study, The ELT-major students who participated in this study seem to have their own dynamic and are willing to develop themselves in any aspect of English language teaching as long as they are guided and controlled, and a further study may explore their enthusiasm and desire to learn their problematic areas in the target language.

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