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RAISING EFL LEARNERS' AWARENESS OF  
SUPRASEGMENTAL FEATURES AS AN AID TO  
UNDERSTANDING IMPLICATURES

A MASTER'S THESIS

BY

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Raising EFL Learners' Awareness of Suprasegmental Features as an Aid to  
Understanding Implicatures

The Graduate School of Education  
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Thesis Title: Raising EFL Learners' Awareness of Suprasegmental Features as an Aid to  
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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

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**ABSTRACT****RAISING EFL LEARNERS' AWARENESS OF SUPRASEGMENTAL FEATURES  
AS AN AID TO UNDERSTANDING IMPLICATURES**

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M.A., Program of Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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This study investigated the effects of raising EFL learners' awareness of suprasegmental features as an aid to understanding implicatures. This quantitative method study was conducted with thirty-six EFL learners studying at Akdeniz University, School of Foreign Languages. Ten explicit suprasegmental treatment sessions were implemented over a course of ten weeks. The data were collected through three different instruments: a background and attitudes questionnaire, implicature recognition pre-test and post-test and evaluation forms at the end of each treatment session. The findings obtained through the analysis of the data revealed that receiving explicit training on suprasegmental features had a statistically significant effect on learners' recognition of implicatures in aural messages. On the other hand, data obtained from the evaluation forms suggest that the learners had positive attitudes towards the use of suprasegmental features to understand and interpret implicatures. Most of the learners found the treatment sessions useful in terms of improving their pronunciation perception and using pronunciation to understand discourse. Additionally, the findings obtained from the open-ended question in the evaluation forms showed that the treatment sessions were also found effective in terms of improving the learners' perceptions of their speaking skills, as well as helping them to develop confidence about their English pronunciation. Finally, the results

suggest that the learners strongly support the implementation of regular pronunciation training into the school curriculum as a way of increasing their pronunciation and discourse competence. Considering these results, this study provided further directions in the use of pronunciation to foster the recognition of implied meanings in EFL context.

**Keywords:** Pronunciation, suprasegmentals, implicatures, intended meaning.

## ÖZET

Mesajlarda İma Edilen Anlamı Anlamak İçin Suprasegmental Bilinci Yükseltmek

Şebnem Kurt

Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi

Tez Yöneticisi: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Deniz Ortactepe

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Bu çalışma, telaffuzun suprasegmentel özelliklerini doğrudan öğretmenin İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin sözlü mesajlardaki gizli anlamları anlamaları üzerine bir etkisi olup olmadığını incelemektedir. Bu nicel yöntemli çalışma, Akdeniz Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksek Okulunda okumakta olan otuz altı öğrenci ile yürütülmüştür. On haftalık süre boyunca öğrencilere on adet doğrudan suprasegmentel özellikler öğretme seansı verilmiştir. Çalışma ile ilgili veriler, üç farklı ölçme aracı ile toplanmıştır; telaffuz geçmişi ve telaffuza tutum anketi, ima edilmiş mesajları anlama ön ve son testi ve son olarak değerlendirme formları aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Anketten alınan veriler, çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerin bir telaffuz öğrenme/ pratik etme geçmişlerinin olmadığını ve telaffuza karşı da net olmayan tutumlar sergilediklerini göstermiştir. Yapılan ön ve son testler arasında istatistiksel açıdan önemli bir fark saptanması, verilen doğrudan eğitim seanslarının öğrenciler üzerinde olumlu bir etkisinin olduğuna işarettir. Değerlendirme formlarından alınan bulgular ise öğrencilerin doğrudan öğretme seanslarına karşı pozitif tutumlarının olduğunu göstermektedir. Öğrencilerin çoğu seansları ilgi çekici, merak uyandıran ve eğlenceli bulmuşlardır. Ayrıca değerlendirme formundaki açık uçlu sorudan elde edilen verilere göre öğrenciler bu seanslar sayesinde konuşma becerilerine yönelik sahip oldukları algıyı geliştirdiklerini ve İngilizce telaffuza karşı özgüvenlerinin arttığını belirtmişlerdir. Son olarak, öğrenciler hem İngilizce telaffuz, hem de söylem (discourse) farkındalıklarını

arttırmasından dolayı, çalışmada yürütülen doğrudan telaffuz öğretim seanslarına benzer eğitimlerin İngilizce Hazırlık Programında daha fazla olmasını kesinlikle istediklerini beyan etmişlerdir. Bu sonuçlar göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu çalışma telaffuzun sözlü mesajlardaki ima edilen anlamı anlamaya yardımına yeni bir bakış açısı getirmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: telaffuz, suprasegmental özellikler, ima edilen anlam, kastedilen anlam



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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Introduction**

Pronunciation teaching has been shaped and reshaped many times to fit different purposes in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts over the course of time. Changing trends and methods in the area, each and all, have left their unique effects on pronunciation and its role in the foreign language classroom. There have been times when pronunciation was ignored entirely, times when it only meant imitation, and also when only one aspect of it was worshipped and others were eliminated. Teaching pronunciation, as suggested by McDonough and Shaw (2003), involves focusing on the sounds of the language, which are called as segmental features, as well as stress, rhythm, intonation, and links, which are called as suprasegmental features. Crystal (2003) described suprasegmentals as vocal effects extending over more than one sound segment in an utterance, such as a pitch, stress or juncture pattern.

Suprasegmental features have a vital importance in spoken English, as displayed in the studies of O'Neal (2010) and Ladefoged and Johnson (2010), due to the fact that they have a direct effect on a speaker's intelligibility, which might be referred as the mutual understanding of the interlocutors. Gilbert (1987) referred to suprasegmentals as 'music of the language' and further claimed that since these musical patterns are unconsciously transferred to a new language, it is difficult for most second language learners to realize that they are speaking the new language with the music of the old language, which in fact, often results in severe loss of comprehensibility.

Misunderstanding in written messages is not something unheard of. This is largely attributed to the fact that because of a lack of face-to face conversation, some important points in the message might be overshadowed. Face-to-face interaction, in that

sense, not only enables the observation of facial expressions but also contains the intonation of the speaker, which is one of the major suprasegmental features of speech, and which helps in the appropriate distribution of the message, in addition to giving clues about the intended meanings of the speaker.

These intended meanings might be referred to as *implied meanings* or *implicatures*. Implicatures are deeply related to pragmatic comprehension, which does not usually occupy the front row in foreign language teaching. However, a strong grasp of these items indicates exquisite language skills, which makes them considerably appealing for language teachers. In this respect, there have been heated debates over whether to teach them implicitly or explicitly, as well as whether or not they should or could be taught in foreign language classrooms at all. While some studies underline the fact that teaching of pragmatic inferential skills is an under-researched area (Taguchi, 2005), some other studies indicate a positive attitude towards the explicit teaching of implicatures (Bouton, 1992; Bouton, 1994b).

According to the works of Karttunen (1976), Karttunen and Peters (1979), and Rooth (1985, 1992) on Alternative Semantics, as cited in Steedman (2002), intonation helps to signal the difference between what the speaker actually said and what s/he might be expected to say in the context at hand, therefore, serving the interpretation purposes of the discourse. This obviously demonstrates the importance of suprasegmental cues for the comprehension of implicatures and vice and versa. Therefore, this study aims to explore the effects of explicit suprasegmental instruction on Turkish EFL learners' understanding of implicatures.

### **Background of the Study**

Communication is definitely more than words being exchanged. It is like a living organism, constantly changing and evolving from the moment it starts. While words make up the concrete basis for the conversation, facial expressions, body language, and

the use of suprasegmental phonology (the use of intonation, pitch, juncture, stress) are all important figures, which give the conversation its soul: meaning. However, the story does not end here. When meaning is involved, a whole new level of perception comes to life; direct meaning or indirect meaning, literal meaning or figurative meaning? Direct and literal meanings in languages are a lot easier to comprehend compared to indirect and figurative meanings, which require a hearer or a reader to have some pragmatic knowledge in addition to some other curial variables such as, cultural background, knowledge of the world, and schemata.

The term *implicature* has been in the foreign language-teaching arena since its introduction by Grice (1975). As cited by Bottyan (n.d.), implicatures are ways to explain the perceptive difference between what is expressed literally in a sentence and what is indicated or implied. There are two types of implicatures; conventional and conversational implicatures. Conventional implicatures are independent of what is *said* (Grice, 1975), whereas conversational implicatures are what the speaker implies in a conversation rather than what s/he actually articulates. For the purposes of this study, the focus will be on conversational implicatures rather than conventional implicatures since they tend to carry intentions or rather intended meanings of the speakers.

The studies on implicatures are mostly for the purposes of pragmatics. Broersma (1994) investigated the possibilities of explicitly teaching implicatures to ESL learners, using cartoons and comic strips as well as conventional teaching materials. Kubota (1995), again from a pragmatic point of view, examined the teaching of conversational implicatures to Japanese EFL learners, using multiple choice, and sentence combining tests. In an earlier study, Bouton (1988) examined international students' use of implicatures without explicit teaching. In another one of his studies, Bouton (1992) investigated whether or not living in the United States and communicating daily in English provided students of English as a Second Language (ESL) with skills in interpreting implicature. However, not many studies looked at the relationship between



implicatures and suprasegmental features, two terms, which are naturally intertwined in a way that suprasegmental cues provide clues about the hidden meanings in oral communication.

The suprasegmental level of speech, also called as ‘prosody’, is a broad term, which includes patterns of pitch, timing (duration and pause), and loudness (Cutler, Dahan, & van Donselaar, 1997). Prosody plays a crucial role in language comprehension due to the fact that it provides important information, including grammatical boundaries, discourse functions, emotional intent of the speaker, and regulation of conversational turn-taking (Chun, 1988; Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg, 1990; Wennerstrom, 1994) at both local (utterance) and global (discourse) levels (Cutler et al., 1997; Grosz & Sidner, 1986). Awareness of this crucial role has resulted in many studies where the focus was on the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features (e. g., Derwing, Munro & Wiebe, 1997). These studies mostly highlight the importance of suprasegmentals for fluency, accentedness, and intelligibility purposes (Derwing, 2008; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Levis, 2005). Additionally, there are some studies, which deal with both, segmental and suprasegmental features, and compare these two in terms of their impact on L2 learners’ pronunciation (e.g., Anderson-Hsieh & Koehler, 1988; Cardoso, 2011; Couper, 2006; Elliott, 1997; Saito, 2011)

Identifying implicatures requires not only contextual background but also cultural knowledge as well, both of which might be difficult to handle in an EFL context due to a lack of sufficient authentic target language exposure. Awareness of suprasegmental cues might assist in identifying speaker intentions since intonation, pitch level and the use of stress could provide clues about what the speaker implies as opposed to what s/he actually says. Chun (1988) asserts that suprasegmentals contribute a great deal to the learners’ sociolinguistic competence since they assist in interpreting utterances. In his book *English Phonetics and Phonology- A practical Course*, Roach (1983) acknowledges that one function of intonation is that it enables people to express

emotions and attitudes as they speak, which adds a special kind of '*meaning*' to spoken language. He further refers to this as the attitudinal function of intonation.

In a similar vein, Spaii and Hermes (1993) assert that pitch variations are important components of suprasegmentals, both for distinguishing the speaker's intention, and for identifying non-linguistic tasks such as emotions, social status, and personalities. In her study which focused on a comparison between English and Spanish speakers in terms of their comprehension and production of intonation, Fariah (2013) emphasized that most of the time for non-native speakers of English, not being aware of the different kinds of pitch in the speech acts, can lead to misunderstandings, leading the listener to perceive spoken words in a very different way from the real intention of the speaker.

In light of these findings, it is clear that there is a strong connection between identifying implicatures and recognizing suprasegmental cues. Although some studies explored the connections between listening comprehension skills and their effects on comprehending implicatures (Alagozlu & Buyukozturk, 2009; Taguchi, 2008), there is still a need to explore how English suprasegmentals influence L2 learners' understanding implicatures.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The status of suprasegmentals has been strengthened with the latest focus on intelligibility and comprehensibility issues in foreign language teaching (Jenkins, 2008). As a result of this new popularity, the number of studies conducted on suprasegmentals has increased (e.g., Breitzkreutz, Derwing and Rossiter, 2002; Burgess & Spencer, 2000; MacDonald, 2002). However, these studies mostly focus on accentedness, fluency, and their superiority over segmentals in terms of intelligibility issues (e.g., Avery & Ehrlich, 1992; Derwing & Rossiter, 2003; Missaglia, 1999; Morley, 1991), neglecting their significance in terms of understanding and interpreting implicatures.

Studies on implicatures center on pragmatic comprehension (Bouton, 1992, 1994b; Carrell, 1981, 1984; Kasper, 1984; Koike, 1996; Taguchi, 2002; Takahashi & Roitblat, 1994; Ying, 1996, 2001), the speed rate of comprehension and a link between this rate and linguistic competence, and their teachability issues (Bouton, 1994a, 1999; Kubota, 1995). Some studies underscored the role of explicit instruction on EFL learners' interpretation of implicatures in (e.g., Bouton, 1994a, 1994b; Kasper & Rose, 2002), while others focused on the ability of ESL learners in general to comprehend implicatures (e.g., Taguchi, 2005). Furthermore, some other studies concentrated only on high proficiency level learners' interpretations of implicatures (e.g., Lee, 2002).

The focal point in English pronunciation studies in Turkey is limited to segmental phonology (e.g., Atli & Bergil, 2012; Geylanioglu & Dikilitas, 2012; Kayaoglu & Caylak, 2011; Seferoglu, 2005). The studies that focused on suprasegmentals are relatively few (e. g., Demirezen, 2015) and they intensively examined the perception and the production of suprasegmentals for the purposes of pronunciation in general (e. g., Demirezen, 2015; Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2013 ). Furthermore, the findings of these studies revealed significant problems that Turkish EFL learners have in English pronunciation, not only on segmental but also on suprasegmental level.

In terms of implicatures, there are a few studies, which examined the relation between listening skills and understanding implicatures (Alagozlu & Buyukozturk, 2009; Alagozlu, 2013). However, to the knowledge of the researcher, there are no studies that have yet looked at the effects of recognizing English suprasegmentals in the comprehension of implicatures in Turkish EFL context. Thesis Statement: This study will investigate the effects of explicit teaching of suprasegmentals to promote tertiary level Turkish EFL learners' interpretation of implicatures.

## Research Questions

1. What was the learners' background in and attitudes toward pronunciation before the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features?
2. To what extent do Turkish EFL learners recognize implicatures in aural texts *before* and *after* the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features?
3. What are the learners' perceptions about the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features?

## Significance of the Study

Considering the crucial impacts of suprasegmental features of English and how they affect the whole message by giving away what the speaker intends to say, they ought to be given the value they deserve in foreign language teaching. The association between implicatures and suprasegmentals makes it clear that teaching them together and explicitly in EFL classrooms will be immensely beneficial for learners. Although this is not a new area of topic for ESL contexts, it is still an unexplored area for many EFL contexts. The effects of explicit teaching of suprasegmentals on promoting the comprehension and interpretation of implicatures are still open for inquiry in Turkey EFL context.

Findings and results of this study might motivate EFL teachers in Turkey and elsewhere to teach implicatures together with suprasegmental features in English as a Foreign Language programs. Furthermore, they might also be inspired to go beyond what the course books cover in terms of pronunciation instruction. Additionally, there might arise a special motivation to include the explicit or implicit teaching of implicatures in EFL classrooms, which might provide the learners the benefits of more pragmatic and cultural awareness in the target language. Finally, curriculum designers might benefit from the findings of this study by designing syllabuses that contain an intertwined instruction of implicatures and suprasegmentals.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the background of the present study, the statement of the problem, the research question, and the significance of the study. The next chapter will introduce the review of the previous literature on Suprasegmentals and implicatures.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the review of the literature, relevant to the present study that investigates the effects of explicit teaching of suprasegmentals to promote tertiary level Turkish EFL learners' interpretation of implicatures. The literature review is intended to introduce English phonology, phonetics, and English pronunciation from a broad perspective, before turning the focus on Suprasegmental feature of pronunciation, and the importance of it for EFL classrooms. Pronunciation studies around the world and specifically in Turkey are also reviewed, as well as the importance of teaching pronunciation in language classrooms. Following the mentioned topics, implicatures are discussed in relation to its definition, types, and their place in EFL. Finally, in what ways improving learners' suprasegmental pronunciation will have an effect on their recognition of implicatures will be outlined.

### **English Pronunciation**

Phonology, phonetics and pronunciation are terms that could easily be confused by people who do not have familiarity with linguistics. Therefore, basic definitions of this terminology will be provided in this chapter as an easy passage to more complex terms such as suprasegmental and segmental Phonology. Starting off of a broader term, phonology has been defined as the study of sounds within the realm of linguistics (Lass, 1984; Vigário, Frota, & Freitas, 2009). To differentiate it from phonetics, Lass (1984) adds that his study is focused on the "function, behavior and the organization of sounds as linguistic items" (p. 1), whereas phonetics is concerned with the mechanic production of these sounds, making it a subcategory under the big phonology umbrella, which itself goes under the largest title of linguistics. Daniel (2011) differentiates phonetics and phonology by defining the first one as the physiological process of sound production,

while describing the latter as the study of “sound behavior in realization” (p. 2). Painting a much larger and comprehensible linguistic picture, Lodge (2009) refers to phonology as relating to the “differences of meaning signaled by sound” (p. 14). Collins and Mees (2003) provide another broad definition by stating that “the study of the selection and patterns of sounds in a single language” (p. 3) is phonology, whereas “the study of the sounds in language in general is phonetics” (p. 3).

Pronunciation has always been considered a crucial element of oral communication (Tanner, 2012; Linebaugh, & Roche, 2013; Suwartono, & Rafli, 2015). In describing what pronunciation means, Hewings (2013) emphasizes the varieties of English, voicing the fact that every single speaker might have a different pronunciation of English, even across countries where it is the native language. In her book, *the Phonology of English as an International Language*, Jenkins (2000) argues that the main linguistic difference that one can observe between the language of native speakers of English, and people who speak English as a foreign language is their pronunciation. Jenkins (2000) further asserts that pronunciation is also a crucial aspect of language that could threaten intelligibility. As stated by Field (2005), intelligibility is the main object of traditional pronunciation teaching, and thus it should be further researched since the components of what constitutes it, is still- to this date- not very well known. According to Behrman (2014), intelligibility is the correctness of a speaker’s understandability. He further adds that this understandability is judged by “the percentage of content words transcribed by the listener” (Behrman, 2014, p. 547). Similarly, Boyer and Boyer (2001) draw attention to the intelligibility factor in pronunciation, asserting that a student’s pronunciation ought to be intelligible. Their description of intelligibility centers on being understood without much hardship (Boyer & Boyer, 2001). Along the same line, Kenworthy (1987) points out that intelligibility relies immensely on the correct identification of greater number of words by a listener.

Munro and Derwing (2006) emphasize the significance of pronunciation in a second language and call the need for systematic pronunciation instruction in second language classrooms. In a similar vein, Moyer (2007) intensifies the gravity of pronunciation in learning a second language, focusing on age factor in acquiring it. By the same token, Kenworthy (1987) reiterates the importance of age to begin to learn a language in order not to have a foreign accent. However, she also asserts the fact that there is no clear evidence between age and mastering in pronunciation in a new language (Kenworthy, 1987). The main features of pronunciation can be divided into two categories: segmental and suprasegmental features (Kelly, 2000), which will now be explained in detail below.

### **Segmental Features (Phonemes)**

The broadest definition of segments (or phonemes) is “the different sounds within a language” (Kelly, 2000, p.1). Phonemes help to describe precisely the way each individual sound is produced (Kelly, 2000). On a linguistically more technical note, segmental features are described as the “vowels and consonants that form the nuclei and boundaries of syllables” (Behrman, 2014, p. 547). Segmental comes from the word *segment*, and in describing what a segment is, Kreidler (2004) commences with *discourse*, referring to it as “any act of speech which occurs in a given place and during a given period of time,” (p. 5) from discourse, he goes on to describe an *utterance*, since a discourse includes at least one utterance, next he mentions a *tone unit*, as an utterance includes at least one tone unit, after that comes the description of *syllable*, since a tone unit includes at least one syllable, and finally, he states that a syllable includes at least one *segment*. From all these connections, Kreidler (2004) concludes that speech might be viewed as a composition of separate segments following each other.



## Suprasegmental Features

Suprasegmentals are one of the two basic components of pronunciation, including features like intonation, stress, and pitch. Along with segmentals (sounds), they make up the core structure of speech. Crosby (2013) highlight the importance of suprasegmentals by indicating the common saying “*It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it*” (p. 4), thus referring to the ‘*how you say it*’ part as suprasegmentals. He notes that while segmentals are individual sound segments, suprasegmentals function above them, carrying pragmatic meaning. To clarify this, Chun (2002) asserts that suprasegmentals features such as pitch and rhythm go far beyond not only a single vowel or a consonant but also to syllables, words, and even complete sentences. She also broadens the definition of suprasegmentals by including such functions as nonlinguistic, extralinguistic, paralinguistic, and linguistic in her definition (Chun, 2002). In regards to this, Suwartono (2014) asserts that improving suprasegmentals is a way to improve communication.

With the strong influences of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approaches, the emphasis on pronunciation teaching has changed its direction from overly stressing the segmentals to valuing the suprasegmentals for more communicative, intelligible and comprehensible speech in foreign language classrooms (Derwing, 2009). Regarding this, Levis and Grant (2003) assert that by their contributions to intelligibility, suprasegmentals are also crucially important for the speaking skill due to their association with discourse meaning and connected speech.

Suprasegmentals are crucially important for L2 learning. A number of studies have looked at both perception and production of suprasegmentals by L2 learners. Trofimovich and Baker (2006) explore the production of suprasegmentals, comparing ESL learners and native speakers. The results of their study indicate a progress in participants’ use of stress. As a major finding, they noted that suprasegmentals

contribute greatly to eliminating the foreign accent. In a similar study, Xiaoyao (2010) examines how sensitive Mandarin EFL learners are to stress patterns, by asking the participants to read given English words twice; first without the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) stress marker [ˈ], and then again with the stress marker. Their scores were compared with those of native speakers. Results revealed significant differences between the two groups in terms of stress sensitiveness.

Levis (2007) examines the impacts of computer assisted pronunciation teaching (CAPT) on learners' development of suprasegmentals and found that improvements in suprasegmentals triggered a higher recognition of segmentals, as well as promoting learners' lexical memory. Keeping instruction as their focus, Kurt, Medlin, and Tessarolo (2014) look at the association between prosodically ambiguous intonation patterns and learners' degree of musical familiarity, obtaining results in the favor of explicit instruction.

In spite of their significance for oral communication, and in spite of all the recent encouragement from the findings and results of studies conducted on suprasegmentals, still much needs to be done in language classrooms to enhance their teaching and learning. Research suggests that it is relatively difficult for foreign language learners to master the suprasegmentals in English (e.g., Mennen, & de Leeuw, 2014; Chen, 2013) and that L1 interference might play a key role in this conundrum (e.g., Crosby, 2013; Ortega-Llebaria & Colantoni, 2013; Tsurutani, 2011).

Although suprasegmentals have received more attention than segmentals from researchers and teachers alike, there are cases, in which this attention does not match up with the real situation. In his study, which examined the effects of segmental and suprasegmental features on Malaysian TESL learners' pronunciation, Rajadurai (2001) finds that even though learners recognized the suprasegmental features in the training, it was harder for them to manipulate their use compared to segmental features, which the

learners found a lot easier to reproduce. This brings to light the broadness of suprasegmentals and how it takes more time and effort compared to segmentals to learn them.

**Intonation, pitch and stress in English.** Intonation, pitch and stress are all features of suprasegmental phonology. In order to express intent, emotion, and inquisitiveness (Crosby, 2013), these features are crucially important in a language. They are also assigned a more critical role in the carrying of meaning, as opposed to segmental features, which are constituted by individual sound segments.

**Intonation.** Intonation is the umbrella term, which covers stress, rhythm and pitch. It plays a vital in all communication. Kurt, Medlin, and Tessarolo (2014) underscore the importance of intonation in communication by stating the fact that in English, meaning is not only conveyed through lexical preferences but also through intonation. Similarly, Valenzuela Farias (2013) suggests that proper intonation enables the messages to be communicated more accurately. In addition, Mennen (2007) emphasizes that intonation is both helpful in conveying linguistic information and organizing discourse.

Since intonation covers components such as stress and pitch, it has varying functions while enabling a smoother communication. Roach (2010) describes four functions of intonation in his book *English Phonetics and Phonology- A Practical Course*. They are:

1. Attitudinal Function: expressing emotions and attitudes with the use of intonation.
2. Accentual Function: assigning appropriate stress to words, and syllables in a word.
3. Grammatical Function: recognition of grammar and syntactic structures in spoken language.

4. Discourse Function: signaling to the listener new and/or given information. (p. 146)

Intonation patterns can be described as either *rising* or *falling*, depending on the type of sentence (Kurt, Medlin, & Tessarolo, 2014). Kurt, Medlin, and Tessarolo (2014) note that while most questions in English are followed by rising intonation, *wh* questions are followed by falling intonation. Native speakers are naturally equipped with this kind of knowledge. However, L2 learners of English ought to be explicitly or implicitly taught this intonation pattern so that they become more intelligible speakers in the target language. Additionally, intonation also serves as an indicator of speakers' emotions, which helps to better interpret messages. In their study, Banziger and Scherer (2005) propose that a speaker's intonation is relatively affected by her/his emotional state, which might provide the listener some cues about the speakers' feelings and help to better analyze the speech.

**Pitch.** Crosby (2013) refers to intonation as the pitch pattern in spoken language. He further defines pitch as the fundamental frequency (F0), which refers to the rate of vibrations of the vocal chords (Crosby, 2013). Valenzuela Farias (2013) notes that pitch, which is an important component of intonation, helps to identify the intention of a speaker in a conversation. She further elaborates on the different intensities of pitch (low, mid, high), asserting that these provide additional hints about the different intentions of speakers (Valenzuela Farias, 2013).

As an illustration, Valenzuela Farias (2013) clarifies that a question will be indicated with a rising pitch, whereas a command will be accompanied with a lower pitch. Chun (2002) describes pitch as the changing level or height of the sounds that are produced in speech. She further notes that pitch is measured by how fundamental frequency is distinguished by listeners, ranging from high to low, represented in the form of the speech going *up* or *down*.

Tsurutani (2011) touches upon the difficulties of teaching and learning suprasegmental features, including pitch, not only because of their abstract nature but also because of the fact that most of the time they are not explicitly taught in language classrooms. In a similar vein, Kurt, Medlin, and Tessarolo (2014) argue that intonation is an under-researched area in L2 acquisition.

**Stress.** Roach (2010) expresses that stress occurs when speakers apply more muscular energy, thus producing higher subglottal pressure, on syllables than is normally used. He further added that stressed syllables tend to be more prominent than unstressed syllables, and he goes on to list the characteristics that make a syllable more prominent. They are as follows:

1. Stressed syllables are louder than unstressed.
2. The length of syllables has an important part to play in prominence.
3. A syllable will tend to be prominent if it contains a vowel that is different in quality from neighboring vowels. (Roach, 2010, p. 74)

Demirezen (1986) compares stress and accent and concludes that while accent is a general term for any system that requires emphasis on specific syllables, stress is just one type of accent. He elaborates more on the descriptions of stress, giving much weight to its nature, which relies heavily on muscular energy (Demirezen, 1986). Similar to Roach (2010), Demirezen (1986) also discusses the prominence issue, linking it to primary stress, which refers to a syllable in a word having the most prominence (Plag, Kunter, & Schramm, 2011; Braun, Lemhöfer, & Mani, 2011).

Chun (2002) broadens the topic slightly by adding that in time-stressed languages like English; the term stress is used to indicate word stress. Similar to Demirezen (1986), she also contends that stress and accent are compatible and she establishes a connection between stress and prominence in this way.

## **Pronunciation Teaching Around the World**

Throughout the history of English as a foreign and second language teaching and learning, pronunciation and its instruction have taken a long and evolving journey, starting from the “Listen and Repeat” technique to “Analyze and Understand” until today, where it has found a new and more approachable place to itself in the warm and welcoming plateau of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), in which its main focus has shifted from “correctness” and “native-likedness” to intelligibility and comprehensibility (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010).

In as much as being considered an underestimated area in foreign language education (Derwing, 2009; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Deng et al., 2009; Tanner, 2012; Olson, 2014; Suwartono, & Rafli, 2015), pronunciation teaching is popularly debated over the explicit and implicit instruction arena. Research indicates benefits to both type of instruction, leaving the instructors in a persistent limbo about what action to choose over in foreign language classrooms.

While there are studies displaying satisfactory results on the explicit teaching (Kissling, 2013; Rajadurai, 2001; Saito, 2011; 2012), there is also research questioning the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction in classrooms as a whole (Kendrick, 1997). Furthermore, there are also studies focusing on the pronunciation pedagogy in teacher education (Burgess, Spencer, 2000; Derwing, 2009). In his study, Derwing (2009) calls for the need for more pronunciation courses for English language teachers, while Burgess and Spencer (2000) advocate the need for a stronger link between pronunciation teaching and pronunciation training for educators.

From a likewise angle, Morley (1991) acknowledges that pronunciation aspect of English has come a long way from whether or not to be taught in language classrooms to the recognition of overwhelmingly increasing number of nonnative speakers all over the

world compared to the shrinking numbers of its native speakers, carrying with it the demand or the need to effectively teach English pronunciation.

In a study, examining the pronunciation perceptions' of learners, Derwing and Rossiter (2002) find out that learners consider segmental features to be the most problematic in their English pronunciation. The results of the same study also indicate a lack of bridge between pronunciation instruction, specifically suprasegmental instruction and learners' needs.

### **Pronunciation Studies in Turkey**

English pronunciation studies in Turkey accelerated during the late 1970s with the published works of Demirezen (1978) and have evolved and changed dimensions several times with the current trends in EFL context. During the course of 1980s, Demirezen (e.g., 1981; 1982; 1985; 1986) continued his works in English pronunciation, focusing on sounds of English, popularly known as segmentals. He also published two books (Demirezen, 1986; 1987) in the late 1980s on English phonetics and phonology, which constituted a concrete basis for teachers and researchers in the field.

Starting from the beginning of 2000s, mostly due to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) starting to become popular in Turkey EFL context, pronunciation teaching had its share in the change of approaches in language teaching and pronunciation studies started to accelerate. Coskun (2010) raises the question of which English to teach, referring to English becoming a worldwide language, that keeps increasing the number of its accents throughout the world. This emphasis on English accents is followed by some studies, which examined ways of how to better teach pronunciation, ranging from using traditional or modern techniques (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2010), to the use of online resources (Hismanoglu, 2010), including internet-based pronunciation teaching (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2011) to foster learners' pronunciation.

Another major focus of attention for pronunciation teaching in Turkey has been on Turkish learners' pronunciation errors. Demirezen (2005) draws attention to fossilized mistakes of Turkish learners in English pronunciation and suggested Audio Articulation Method (Demirezen, 2003; Hismanoglu, 2004) for corrections of these errors. Kayaoğlu and Çaylak (2013) similarly use Audio Articulation Method in their study to assist learners with pronunciation mistakes. Geylanioglu and Dikilitaş (2012) also deal with pronunciation errors of Turkish learners in their study and indicated that these errors mostly stem from the differences in the phonology systems of English and Turkish. In a similar vein, Varol (2012) investigates the influence of Turkish sound system on English pronunciation in her dissertation and her findings are valuable in displaying the L1 (Turkish) sound system interference on L2 (English) pronunciation.

As a further to step to these studies, Akyol (2012) analyzes pronunciation learning strategies of Turkish EFL learners in her experimental study, which compared whether taking a pronunciation course will create a difference in the progress of learners compared to learners who did not take a pronunciation course. Hismanoglu (2012) also focuses on pronunciation learning strategies of learners, using a Pronunciation Strategies questionnaire in addition to learners' final exam scores on pronunciation. According to the findings of his study, meta-cognitive strategies and self-evaluating were the two most frequently used strategies of learners. In addition to these studies, which focused on learners' strategies to pronunciation learning, there are also studies exploring the attitudes of English teachers towards teaching pronunciation (e.g., Coskun, 2011; Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2013). While Coskun (2011) handles the issue from English as an International Language (EIL) perspective, Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2013) deal with it by keeping the focus on the significance of teaching pronunciation in the education of English language teachers in Turkey.



Seferoğlu (2005) applied technology (software reduction software) to explore whether or not there will be improvements in learners' pronunciation not only at segmental but also at suprasegmental level. Her study has contributed immensely to the statement that technology is a useful tool to provide pronunciation support for the learners (Seferoğlu, 2005). Additionally, as a more specific focus on the use of technology to foster learner pronunciation, Sara, Seferoğlu, and Çağıltay (2009) investigated the implementation of multimedia messages through mobile phones to observe how they affect learners' pronunciation of words.

The first part of this research study focused on suprasegmentals from a broader aspect to the more detailed analysis of what suprasegmentals are, and in what ways they contribute to communication in ELF context. The next part of the literature review is more related to pragmatics in order to explain implicatures and in what ways they contribute to communication in ELF context. Firstly, a definition of what an implicature is will be provided. Then, types of implicatures, implicatures in ELF, and implicature studies in Turkey will be presented. Finally, fostering the comprehension of implicatures by teaching suprasegmentals explicitly will be discussed.

### **Implicatures**

The word 'implicature' made its debut in the literature with Grice's (1970) article *Logic and Conversation*. In this well known and much debated article, Grice (1970) described two types of implicatures; conventional implicatures in which the meaning is carried in what is said, and conversational implicatures in which meaning is implied rather than said, so it is up to the participants to interpret it using what Grice (1970) called the Cooperative Principle. According to this principle, there are four categories in a conversation that must be followed: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Each category has certain maxims: (pp. 45-46)

Quantity:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required

Quality:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

Relation:

1. Be relevant

Manner:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression
2. Avoid ambiguity
3. Be brief
4. Be orderly

In his book, *Irregular Negatives, Implicatures, and Idioms*, Davis (2016) defines implicatures as “a type of meaning or implying” (p. 51). In this thesis, implicatures will be used to refer to *implied meanings* in verbal messages. According to Steedman (2002), implied meaning refers to understanding that there might be differences between the literal meaning and the real intention of the utterance. In a similar vein, Taguchi (2008) notes that detecting the disparity between what is said and what is implied reflects the ability of comprehending the intention of the utterance. Matsuoka (2009) associates the comprehension of speaker intentions with a good command of understanding conversational implicatures. Gibbs (1999) further notes that this comprehension relies heavily on a mutual understanding and sharing the same common ground. He also highlights the necessity of pragmatic information as an aid to understand what the speaker actually implicates. Albright et al. (2004) refers to speech act theory in explaining intended meanings and distinguished between locutionary acts as referring to literal meanings and illocutionary acts as referring to intended meanings.

Although there is a common agreement among researchers that literal and intended meanings are or could be distinctively different from each other, Recanati (2001) argues that in order to be able to understand what has been implicated, one has to consider what is literally said, since according to him, implicatures depend much on literal meanings. Concluding this debate, Matsuoka (2009) points at a more important issue and builds a connection between understanding implicatures, specifically conversational implicatures, and understanding the spoken discourse. He further suggests an improvement in learners' communicative competence as a result of this connection.

Gibbs (1999) evaluates conversational implicatures under the broader topic of figurative language, which includes but is not limited to metaphor, metonymy, irony, and indirect speech acts and associates the comprehension of conversational implicatures with cognitive processes. Moreover, he distinguishes between conventional implicatures and conversational implicatures by arguing that the former requires semantic information while the latter requires pragmatic processes. Taguchi (2002) refers to these pragmatic processes as inferential abilities and asserted that these abilities are existent in speakers' L2 as much as they are in their L1, regardless of proficiency levels. In his comparison of conventional and conversational implicatures, Potts (2005) proclaims that conventional implicatures are dependent on linguistic features, namely grammar, in their nature; whereas conversational implicatures would cease to exist without the concept of maxims and cooperative principles, indicating that they are "inherently linguistic". In a further detailed analysis of the differences between these two, Potts (2005) verifies that conversational implicatures are context dependent, unfolding as features of connections among propositions. On the contrary, conventional implicatures are independent of context, and reveal themselves exclusively in the grammar. (Potts, 2005).

## **Implicatures in English as a Foreign Language**

To implicate is a verb, first introduced by Grice (1970). Davis (2016) cites Grice's definition of this verb by stating that it is "meaning or implying one thing by saying another" (p. 53). Haugh (2015) differentiates the two meanings of the word implicature, giving prominence not to the first connotation of the verb, which is *implying* but to second connotation, which is communicating or hinting in an indirect manner, which leads to the conclusion that implicatures are indirect ways of communicating a message. In accordance with this statement, Davis (2016) asserts "speakers can mean things without intending to communicate with or inform anyone" (p. 52). Along the same line, Steedman (2002) notes that the more conventionally a message is expressed, the easier it is for the listener to comprehend it. However, in case of a lack of these conventional features in the speech, more time and effort to decode and/or analyze the message will be required from the listener.

Background knowledge, contextual information, and familiarity with the topic are all agreed upon basics to comprehend a less conventional message. In this respect, Steedman (2002) points out that along with the aforementioned basics, the linguistic features should also be taken into account in order to deduce the hidden intentions in messages. Additionally, diverting his attention to L2 learning, he advises L2 teachers to put more emphasis on the importance of paralinguistic features (e.g. intonation, tone of voice), along with contextual features, to help their students better understand the indirect messages (Steedman, 2002)

While it may be perceived easily that L1 speakers are naturally equipped with required contextual and/or linguistic background to understand implicatures, L2 learners might just as easily lack the necessary skills. Therefore, L2 teachers might need some additional guidelines to teach implicatures to their L2 learners. In their study, Derakhshan, Mohsenzadeh, and Mohammadzadeh (2014) describe and exemplify types

of implicatures, and suggest some guidelines to teach them to L2 learners, based on the guidelines put forward by Bouton (1994a). Taguchi (2005) approaches the instruction of implicatures to L2 learners in a different angle and conducts a study on L2 learners' speed and accuracy in understanding implicatures in listening in comparison to native speakers and concluded that two components; working memory and lexical access skill play an essential role in helping learners to comprehend implicatures in listening.

The importance of implicatures in oral communication brings back the question; can they be taught? Broersma's (1994) study aims to seek out whether or not implicatures could be taught explicitly to L2 learners. He finds that in the case that the implicatures are existent in learners' L1, they are easier to learn and understand, compared to the ones that are not existent in learners' L1. Kubota (1995) also investigates the explicit teaching of implicatures to L2 learners and got results approving the benefits of the explicit instruction. Matsuoka's (2009) study stands out to be slightly different than the two previously mentioned studies, as implicature teaching is one of the three trainings. In his study, which is aimed to train participants to improve on their TOEFL listening test, implicature training is used as a way of improving participants' comprehension of speaker intentions. Although the results do not indicate a significance favor on the teaching of implicatures, Matsuoka (2009) notes that the implicature training is considered to be interesting and engaging for the participants.

Some other studies also examine whether or not learners improve their implicature interpretation skills by living in an English speaking country (Bouton, 1992), with results indicating that although there is considerable progress, there is still a significant difference between the performance of native speakers and nonnative speakers in their implicature interpretation skills.

## **Implicature Studies in Turkey**

Although there are several studies in Turkey, focusing on several aspects of Pragmatics (e.g. Ortaçtepe, 2013, 2015; Şanal, 2016), there is a scarcity (Alagözlü & Büyüköztürk, 2009; Alagözlü, 2013; Rızaoğlu & Yavuz, 2017) and thus a strong need for studies focusing on specifically implicatures.

In their study, Alagözlü and Büyüköztürk (2009) examine the relationship between the pragmatic comprehension levels and learners' oral and written performances and find out that there is a strong connection (although not statistically significant) between pragmatic competency and linguistic achievement. As a second phase in this study, Alagözlü (2013), pragmatic comprehension levels of the same participants were tested aurally to observe whether or not there is statistically significant difference between the scores over time.

Rızaoğlu and Yavuz's (2017) study investigates Turkish ELF learners' comprehension and production of implicatures, using an Implicature Comprehension Instrument (ICI), and an Implicature Production Instrument (IPI). These studies reflect the implicature exploration in Turkey EFL settings, which appears to have been centered mostly on comprehension of implicatures by the learners orally or written.

### **Fostering the Comprehension of Implicatures by Teaching Suprasegmentals**

In his book *Irregular Negatives, Implicatures, and Idioms*, Davis (2016) questions long and hard the reason(s) why speakers have a need to use implicatures in their speeches, and what goals are achieved with the use of implicatures. Along the same line, he points out that on the circumstance that a speaker has implicated, hearers are not provided with something directly (Davis, 2016). Therefore, it is the hearers' responsibility to "infer from evidence" (Davis, 2016, p. 54).

Chen, Gussenhoven, and Rietveld (2004) highlight the universality of suprasegmental features in all languages in their study, drawing attention to the fact that

they contribute immensely to the different meanings in a message. Adding further to suprasegmentals' function in different meanings in a message, Clennell (1997) asserts that EFL learners do not possess the competence and/ or confidence in English intonation because of four main reasons; unfamiliarity of English suprasegmentals, a failed attempt to describe them, the differences between L1 suprasegmental features and English, and material problems. One of the predicaments these problems might lead to has been analyzed as communication failures (Clennell, 1997).

Previous studies have strengthened the connection between intonation and meaning (e.g. Chen, Gussenhoven & Rietveld, 2004; Germani & Rivas, 2011; Verdugo, 2005; Pickering & Lützenber (2011); Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg, 1990). A good number of studies focus on the perception of suprasegmental features in language classrooms (e.g. Mirzaei & Abdollahian, 2012; Grabe, Rosner, Garcia-Albea & Zhou, 2003; Kakaouros & Rasanen, 2015; Mattys, 2000), while several others explored the teaching of them in language classrooms (e.g. Levis & Pickering, 2004; Marcellino & Rocca, 1997; Kurt, Medlin & Tassarolo, 2014; Hsieh, Dong & Wang, 2013).

In her study, which is an overview of literature on prosody and intonation of English, Mennen (2007) presents what type of errors non-native speakers of English make in intonation and where these errors originate from, concluding that problems in prosody and intonation carry with them the potential danger of communication breakdowns. Atoye (2005) specifically examines learners' perception in intonation, and meaning change with the changing of intonation, and observes that learners' scores are high in perception, but low in meaning changes connected to intonation contours. The study advocates the teaching of intonation as a way to analyze meaning in social contexts. In another overview study, Jenkins (2004) summarizes recent developments in pronunciation studies and their effect in classroom practices. Her study clearly indicates the updated role of pronunciation in discourse and sociolinguistics (Jenkins, 2004).

Another similar study emphasizes the changing and improving ways of teaching pronunciation in the world for the last quarter of a century (Morley, 1991). All in all, Morley (1991) reiterates the importance of pronunciation for communication. Finally, there is also research, which takes into consideration L1 influence on L2 suprasegmental perception and production (Braun, Galts & Kabak, 2014; Crosby, 2013; Tsurutani, 2009; Ortega-Llebaria & Colantoni, 2014)

## **Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed literature relevant to the present study, which aims to explore the effects of explicit suprasegmental training on the improvement of Turkish EFL learners' perception and interpretation of implicatures in English. The review began with general terminology such as phonology, phonetics in a way to acknowledge their significance in understanding pronunciation before going in depth with features of English Pronunciation (Segmental & Suprasegmental), and then moving on to Suprasegmental aspects: stress, pitch and intonation. The first part of the chapter was completed with a broad description of pronunciation studies around the world in general and in Turkey in specific. The second part of this chapter opens up with definitions of what implicature means. Following up is the implicature studies around the world and implicature studies in Turkey. The chapter ends with fostering the comprehension of implicatures by teaching suprasegmentals, which is the subject of the current study. The following chapter will provide information about methodology of the study.



## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This study investigated the effects of explicit teaching of suprasegmentals to promote tertiary level Turkish EFL learners' interpretation of implicatures. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What was Turkish EFL learners' pronunciation background before the beginning of the study?
2. To what extent did Turkish EFL learners recognize implicatures in aural texts *before* and *after* the explicit teaching of suprasegmentals?
3. What were Turkish EFL learners' perceptions about the treatment sessions during the intervention period?

In this chapter, the methodological procedures are outlined. Firstly, the setting and the participants of the study will be described. Then, the materials and instruments used to collect data will be explained. Finally, the data analysis procedures will be presented in detail.

### Setting

The study took place in the English Program at School of Foreign Languages at Akdeniz University, Turkey during the fall semester of the 2016-2017 academic year. This particular setting was chosen because of its eligibility and convenience. The School of Foreign Languages provides obligatory and optional foreign language education depending on the particular faculty and department. Students enroll in the English Program in September and take a proficiency test prepared by the testing unit. According to their test results, they are placed into various proficiency levels (A1 in majority, and A2 as the second biggest group and one or two classes of B1 level

students). The test includes grammar, vocabulary and reading test items. During the course of the program, students are offered 25 hours of English each week, together with the main course and the integrated skills. Two or three different instructors teach the same class during each semester. The school has a strong technology- assisted education system, in which all classrooms are equipped with computers, projectors, speakers and the Internet. Instructors also make use of I-tools and DigiBooks provided by the publishing companies. As the main course book, New Headway is used for all proficiency levels, which is accompanied by Skillful Listening & Speaking, and Reading & Writing. Additionally, supplementary storybooks are used within the curriculum throughout the full academic year. In a whole school year, students take three module tests, which consist of Grammar and Vocabulary, Reading, Writing and Speaking parts. They are expected to get a score of 60 points out of 100 in order to be considered as successful. However, they continue with the new Module even if they fail to acquire the required score. Each module includes two quizzes and two portfolios: one written portfolio and one speaking portfolio. Quizzes have a 20% effect on the students' overall grade, portfolios have a 10% effect, and finally Module exams affect the students' overall grade 30%. The combined 60% is then added to the grade students get from the final exam at the end of the school year, which has an effect of 40%. All these grades add up eventually and if they make 60 points or more, the student is considered as passing the English Program year, and continues with his/her studies in the faculty until the graduation day. However, for obligatory students, on the occasion that they fail the English Program, they still continue their studies in the faculties, on condition that they pass the English Program exam within four years of their university career until they are ready to graduate. If they cannot pass the English exam, they forfeit their right to graduate. These obligatory program students who fail the English Program exam have the right to retake the exam four times in four years. Optional Program students continue with their regular studies at university, being exempt from the English Program exam.

## **Participants**

A total of 45 students between the ages 18-20, from various faculties, and both from obligatory and optional programs took part in the training voluntarily. However, nine students had to be excluded from the study because they missed more than two sessions. The remaining 36 participants consisted of 16 female and 20 male participants. All of the participants in this study were A1 (Beginner) level students with little background in English, in the beginning of the training sessions. By the sixth session, they upgraded to A2 (Elementary) level after the Module exam. The researcher led all the training sessions herself during the designated hours as an addition to the regular school program in order not to interfere with the English Program schedule. The participants received one training session every week over a course of eight-week period, before or after the start of their regular classes according to the predetermined program between the researcher and the participants. In the first two weeks of the training program, the participants received two sessions in one week so as to build the fundamental knowledge and awareness through intense training.

## **Materials and Instruments**

Materials and instruments that were utilized to collect data in this study are as follows; pronunciation background questionnaire, pre-test before the training sessions, with listening items recorded by 2 native speakers and the researcher, treatment worksheets and Powerpoint presentations, an evaluation form at the end of each training session, consisting of a 10-item Likert Scale and an open-ended question at the end, and finally the post-test after the completion of the treatment. For test reliability and validity, every item in the pre-test, the post-test and Likert Scale was evaluated in terms of item difficulty, item discrimination, item variance, item standard deviation, item Skewness and Kurtosis index as well as mean, standard deviation and test reliability.

### **Pronunciation Background and Attitude Questionnaire (PBAQ)**

The questionnaire was designed for two main purposes: to gain insights into participants' pronunciation background, and to design the treatment sessions accordingly. It consisted of three sections, with a total of 22 items (see Appendix A). The first section required the participants to answer four general questions about their background as well as their attitudes towards it, with one question specifically focusing on pronunciation. The second section consisted of 17 Likert scale items, with an emphasis on English pronunciation and its components, and finally the last section was an open-ended question, requiring the participants to write their genuine answers about what they do to improve their English pronunciation. The questionnaire was also aimed for preparing the most effective materials to be using during the treatment. Various existing literature related to investigating the learners' pronunciation background in and attitudes towards pronunciation influenced the design of the questionnaire (e.g., de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009; Jahangiri & Sardareh, 2016; Kang, 2010). The researcher adopted the items in the questionnaire in order to fit to the purpose of the present study.

### **The Implicature Recognition Test**

The implicature recognition test (see Appendix B) was comprised of 10 implicatures, designed by the researcher, based on Grice's Theory of Implicatures (1975), which was used later on by Taguchi (2008). Two native speakers, and the researcher herself were recorded, reading 10 short dialogues with the required production of suprasegmental cues to emphasize the *intended meaning*. The participants were given the same test twice; one, before listening, and one more time after listening. They were given ample time to go over the implicatures before they started doing the test. In the first round, they were asked to read the implicatures on the test and answer the following questions with their own judgement;

1. What does the speaker think?

## 2. How can you tell?

On the second round, they listened to the recordings and were asked to answer the same two questions again, after listening. The purpose of this application was to detect whether or not there are any differences between their answers with and without hearing the oral cues.

*Sample item from Pretest:*

*Mary shows Angela her new haircut, and asks her opinion about it. Mary replies “it looks great!”*

*What does the speaker think?*

.....

How can you tell?

.....

### **Explicit Teaching of Suprasegmental Features**

After the implicature recognition test, participants received training on explicit teaching of suprasegmentals for the purposes of improving their comprehension of implicatures for *ten* class hours (50 minutes each) over the course of ten weeks. In the explicit teaching, the emphasis was on *attitudinal* and *emotional* functions of suprasegmentals in conveying the intended meanings in oral communication. Stress, pitch, and intonation were the main focus in the treatment. The sessions were supported with PPTs, selected scenes from predetermined TV shows, and everyday English dialogues from various online resources. The participants were given sufficient time and assistance not only to recognize but also to practice all suprasegmental features that were taught within the sessions. The treatment began one month after the academic year started, having given the participants some time to acquire basic knowledge in English.

**Segmental training.** In the beginning of their English Language Program at Akdeniz University, the participants were given segmental training by the researcher

within the course of their regular program at School of Foreign Languages. The purpose of this training was to introduce the participants the sound system in English and increase their general awareness of English Phonology since the course book provides limited exposure to the pronunciation feature of English language. This training included the introduction of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), with a special focus on the sounds that exist in English language but not in the participants' native language (Turkish), such as /θ/ and /ð/. There was also another focus on sounds that both languages have but are articulated differently, such as /d/ or /v/. When /d/ is at the end of a Turkish word, it is pronounced as /t/. However, when this sound is at the end of an English word, it is pronounced as /d/. There is even a much bigger difference with /v/. While the Turkish /v/ is pronounced as English /w/, English /v/ is fricative and thus pronounced using a similar articulation process as the sound /f/, which is also fricative in both languages. The segmental training was initially aimed to increase the participants' pronunciation awareness on sound level, which would then assist them to improve their suprasegmental awareness once the treatment sessions begin, and thus would serve the overall purpose of improving their pronunciation.

**Introduction of Stress, Pitch, and Intonation.** The participants were introduced with the technical terms *stress*, *pitch*, and *intonation* explicitly. First, these terms were described and examples were provided to ensure a better understanding. Then the participants were given practice time to rediscover these terms by themselves and with their partners. The sessions started on word level, in that the participants were illustrated how to say a simple *hi* to have several different meanings and interpretations. They were guided by the researcher with the assistance of PPTs to use different emotions to say the word *hi*, such as “Say hi when you are sad, happy, angry”, etc. They then elevated to sentence level in which the participants were asked to emphasize a different word in a sentence to mean different things, as in the example sentence “I didn't say that we should call him.” By putting the stress on a word each time, eight different meanings can

be inferred from this simple sentence (as many as the number of words in the sentence.)

As an example, the meaning changes when the stress is on the word *I*, implying that someone else, not *I*, said that we should call him. However, if the stress is put on the word *didn't*, then the meaning changes to “I am denying saying it.”

The participants were also introduced to rising and falling intonation. They were overtly guided which specific situations require a falling intonation, such as asking and giving information to sound more *confident* and *convincing*, and thus communicating *certainty* and *completion*, and which ones require a rising intonation, such as Tag Questions to sound *surprised* or *interested*, thus communicating *uncertainty* and *doubt*.

**TV Shows.** The main practice materials used in this study came from episodes of popular TV shows. The reason for choice lies in the fact that TV shows are available to anyone and everyone, and they also serve the purpose of fostering more authentic materials in language classrooms. American television sitcom *Friends* makes up the most used material due to two strong reasons. First, since the show is based on simple lives of six friends in New York, the language of the show is every day language, which makes it highly appealing to EFL teachers. The EFL learners watching the show would not have to deal with any jargon related to the topic of the show, as they would have in shows like *House MD*, in which they would hear all these medical terms and words or *Law and Order*, in which they would hear lots of forensic words. Second, it has been used in ELF/ ESL research previously because of the show’s daily language use, (Frumuselu, 2015; Mora 2006; Sallert, 2016).

### **Evaluation Form**

The evaluation forms consisted of 10 Likert Scale items (see Appendix D), with an ‘Other Comments’ section at the end, which enabled the participants to comment freely on how they felt about the session. The Likert Scale items were aimed at creating awareness in participants about what they have learnt in the session that day, and how

much of it they could make their own permanently. The evaluation forms were given after every session, therefore the participants completed ten evaluation forms at the end of the training. The evaluation forms were also translated into Turkish in order to receive more genuine feedback from the participants about the implementation of the materials. The items measured their perceptions and comprehension of the taught subject in that day's session.

*Sample Likert Scale Items:*

*I learned something new in today's session.* 1      2      3      4      5

*I believe the things I learned in this session will be beneficial to my pronunciation.* 1      2      3      4      5

**Implicature Recognition Post- test**

Following the end of the training sessions, a posttest (see Appendix E) was given to the participants, which included 20 implicatures, the first 10 items remaining the same as in the pre-test, and another completely new 10 items, based on Grice's Theory of Implicatures (1975). In accordance with the pretest, two native speakers, and the researcher herself were recorded, reading 20 short dialogues with the required production of suprasegmental cues to emphasize the intended meaning. The participants were asked to read the test items, listen to the recordings and answer the following questions;

1. What does the speaker think?
2. How can you tell?

Sample Posttest Item:

*John left Jenny his dog, and asks how she got along with the dog.*

*She replies "We were so happy to have her"*

*What does the speaker think? .....*

*How can you tell? .....*



There are two main differences between the implementation of the pre-test and the posttest. These are; in the pre-test, the participants were given only ten test items, while in the post-test, they were given twenty items. The reason behind this is related to the pilot study. In the pilot study, when the participants were given twenty items in the pretest, they were observed to be overwhelmed with the abundance of the items, and thus lost focus after working on ten items. As a result, in the actual study, the item numbers were arranged to keep the participants' total focus. The other big difference between the pre-test and the post-test is; in the pretest, the participants were given the same test twice and were asked to reply to the two questions "What does the speaker think? How can you tell?" before and after listening to the audio recordings. The reason for this was twofold; one to measure their comprehension and interpretation of implicatures, and two, to make an introduction to the upcoming training sessions, in which they were explicitly instructed to pay attention to oral cues in the communication.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Permission to conduct the study was granted from both The Ethics Committee at Bilkent University and Akdeniz University, and then the data collection process began. Consent forms of the participants who volunteered to take part in the study were collected after the explanation of the study in detail.

Before applying, the materials and instruments were piloted at Bilkent University, English Language and Literature students. Twenty-six students consented to participate in the piloting. They were given the background questionnaire, the implicature recognition test as the pre-test, and one session training on suprasegmentals, and the post-test. The data collected from these advanced level students were entered into SPSS to analyze whether or not the recognition of implicatures with the help of suprasegmental features of pronunciation is higher with a higher level of English proficiency. Results showed that there is a correlation between the proficiency level of

the participants and the recognition of implicatures.

The pilot study was conducted for two main reasons; first, to test the efficiency of the actual study. The second one carried a more significant role; whether or not the actual study could be conducted with the participants that took part in the pilot study. The participants of the pilot study were all English Language and Literature students at Bilkent University. They were all in their freshman year. Due to the fact that the English Language and Literature Program at Bilkent University is highly competitive, the students all had *decent* backgrounds in English, which was first reflected in their answers to the background questionnaire, and then was displayed in their scores in the pre-test. The results of the pilot study demonstrated that advanced level English learners have a better perception of suprasegmentals and their effects on the comprehension of implicatures. For this reason, the study was not carried on with the participants of the pilot study.

Based on the results acquired from the pilot study, as actual participants, Beginner level (A1) students were chosen for this study. The aim of this choice was to observe the effectiveness of the treatment sessions with learners who have little or no background in English, which is usually the case at the English Language Program at Akdeniz University. Every year, beginner level students outnumber any other level students, making these learners the largest group at hand. Furthermore, every year the achievement test results indicate that most of these learners fail to meet the requirements of the English Language Program and leave the School of Foreign Languages with poor language skills. As a result, it is of high importance to Akdeniz University School of Foreign Languages to help these learners improve their English as much as possible.

To commence the treatment, the participants were given a background questionnaire about their English pronunciation. The questionnaire took about 20-25 minutes to complete and its aim was to acquire enough data about the participants' English pronunciation background so as to prepare the forthcoming training sessions

more effectively, as well as serving the purpose of obtaining a more concrete background on the participants' previous experiences with the topic. Hence, the background questionnaire was translated into Turkish for the convenience of the participants.

Prior to the beginning of the training, the participants were given a pre-test to examine their overall recognition of suprasegmentals in identifying and interpreting implicatures. The pre-test was implemented as follows; the participants were first given time to read the ten short situations and answer two relating questions *without* listening to the audio recordings. The questions were:

1. What does the speaker think?
2. How can you tell?

Following the completion of their first answers, they listened to the recordings and answered the same two questions *after* listening. The aim of this implementation was to explore whether or not the oral cues would have an effect on their comprehension and interpretation of the situations.

During the sessions, the participants were provided with ample time and opportunity to comprehend and practice each topic of each session. Furthermore, at the end of each training session, an evaluation form, designed for the purpose of obtaining immediate feedback on the session was provided to the participants. However, unlike the pre-test, in the post-test, the participants only listened and answered the same two questions according to the recording:

1. What does the speaker think?
2. How can you tell?

Both in the pre-test and the post-test, participants were allowed to answer these questions in Turkish for the purpose of collecting more genuine answers.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis was mainly done quantitatively with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), a computer program so often used to analyze numeric data in scientific research studies. As an initial step of quantitative analysis, the participants' replies to the background questionnaire, which has 16 items, were entered into SPSS and descriptive statistics was run to analyze their attitudes and previous experiences about the English pronunciation (PBAQ). Secondly, the implicature recognition test results were entered into SPSS and again descriptive statistics was used to analyze the mean scores of their results with the purpose of analyzing the learners' overall performance on recognizing the implicatures by following the suprasegmental cues. After that, the participants' answers to 10 Likert Scale items, which were designed to analyze the learners' overall perception of the treatment sessions throughout 10 weeks, were entered into SPSS and descriptive statistics was applied. Stacked bar charts were created from the participants' replies acquired from this questionnaire, showing whether they had developed positive or negative feelings towards the treatment process. Following the completion of pre-test and post-test, the first step in data analysis was to score the participants' total scores. The data obtained from participants' pre-test and post-test results were entered into SPSS, and a normality test was run in order to see whether or not the data set is normally distributed. A Shapiro Wilk test was run because the sample size was smaller than 50. Due to the fact that the data were not normally distributed, a non-parametric test (Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test) was applied to compare the results of the pre-test and post-test. A frequency table was created from the participants' answers to the pre-test, and the post-test.

The research question "What were the learners' perceptions about the treatment sessions during the intervention period?" was answered using the 10-itemed evaluation worksheets after each session during the intervention. The stacked bar charts in Chapter 4 demonstrates the mean scores and the percentages of the learners' replies gathered

from 10 evaluation worksheets. The learners' answers to the open-ended question, "What do you think about today's session?" in the evaluation worksheets was demonstrated using content analysis. Weber (1990) notes that one of the purposes of using content analysis is to interpret open-ended questions in questionnaires. In view of research, the content provided by the participants was coded into themes and categories. There appeared some elements that occurred quite often in the learners' answers. They were considered as main themes, and less frequently occurring elements were categorized under the main themes in the case where it was fitting and they were interpreted using content analysis. The results of this analysis are presented in detail in Chapter 4.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter provided information about the methodology of the current study. The setting, the participants, data collection, and the treatment process and finally the data analysis were explained in detail. The next chapter will present the findings of the data analysis in detail.

## CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

### Introduction

This study investigated the effects of explicit teaching of English suprasegmentals in a way to assist the comprehension of implicatures by Turkish EFL learners. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What was the learners' background in and attitudes toward pronunciation before the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features?
2. To what extent do Turkish EFL learners recognize implicatures in aural texts *before* and *after* the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features?
3. What are the learners' perceptions about the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features?

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis will be presented in the order of these research questions. Data analysis procedures in this study was mainly done using the statistics software program SPSS. The first stage of the data analysis was related to the participants' responses to the Pronunciation Background and Attitudes Questionnaire (PBAQ). Descriptive statistics was applied to analyze the participants' attitudes towards English pronunciation. A frequency table has been created from their responses to PBAQ, with a summary of important points described. The next stage of the analysis involved the data related to the participants' pre-test and post-test results. Since the data was not normally distributed, a Wilcoxon signed-ranked test was used to compare participants' performance before and after the treatment sessions.

The final stage of the analysis is related to the evaluation forms collected after each treatment session for the purpose of getting insights about learners' perceptions about the sessions. Descriptive statistics was applied to 10 Likert Scale items in the first

part of the form, and mean scores obtained from responses have been demonstrated in Stacked Bar charts. Additionally, the qualitative data collected through the participants' responses to the open-ended question in the second part of the evaluation form has been categorized according to the similarity of content, and is reported in this chapter to enrich the quantitative data concerning the learners' thoughts about the sessions.

## Results

### Learners' Pronunciation Background and Attitudes

The first research question addressed in this study is "What was the learners' background in and attitudes toward pronunciation before the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features?" In order to answer this question, a frequency table was created from the responses of the participants to the Pronunciation Background and Attitudes Questionnaire (PBAQ), which had 16 items, and which was conducted prior to the intervention. A frequency distribution of data is displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1

*Frequency Distribution of Pronunciation Background and Attitudes Questionnaire (N=52)*

	Strongly disagree		Somewhat disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Somewhat agree		Strongly agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
1. Good pronunciation in English is important to me.	1	1.9	2	3.8	3	5.8	19	36.5	27	51.9
2. I would like to sound like a native English speaker when I speak English.	1	1.9	4	7.7	3	5.8	14	26.9	30	57.7
3. I consider pronunciation a key aspect for communication.	1	1.9	1	1.9	7	13.5	22	42.3	21	40.4
4. I like learning English pronunciation.	2	3.8	6	11.5	16	30.8	12	23.1	16	30.8

Table 1 *Frequency Distribution of Pronunciation Background and Attitudes Questionnaire (cont'd)*

5. I believe I can improve my pronunciation skills in English (with help or on my own).	0	0.0	2	3.8	8	15.4	15	28.8	27	51.9																				
6. I believe I will able to speak English with a good accent.	3	5.8	15	28.8	20	38.5	6	11.5	8	15.4																				
7. Pronunciation should be taught more in lessons.	1	1.9	5	9.6	11	21.2	19	36.5	16	30.8																				
8. I try to imitate native speakers of English as much as possible.	2	3.8	4	7.7	11	21.2	20	38.5	15	28.8																				
9. I am satisfied with my pronunciation in English.	4	7.7	6	11.5	14	26.9	12	23.1	16	30.8																				
10. I am satisfied with the effort I devote to improve my pronunciation.	18	34.6	13	25.0	12	23.1	7	13.5	2	3.8																				
11. I think English videos and audios can help me learn English pronunciation.	6	11.5	12	23.1	18	34.6	10	19.2	6	11.5																				
12. I think that singing songs in English can improve my pronunciation.	1	1.9	0	0.0	7	13.5	21	40.4	23	44.2																				
13. I think that repetition and imitation are helpful ways to learn pronunciation.	2	3.8	3	5.8	11	21.2	10	19.2	26	50.0																				
<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Not familiar with the term</th> <th colspan="2" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Not so important</th> <th colspan="2" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Somewhat important</th> <th colspan="2" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Important</th> <th colspan="2" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Very important</th> </tr> <tr> <th>f</th> <th>%</th> <th>f</th> <th>%</th> <th>f</th> <th>%</th> <th>f</th> <th>%</th> <th>f</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> </table>											Not familiar with the term		Not so important		Somewhat important		Important		Very important		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Not familiar with the term		Not so important		Somewhat important		Important		Very important																						
f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%																					
14. How often do you pay attention to rising and falling <b>pitch</b> in your pronunciation?	0	0.0	1	1.9	13	25.0	1	36.5	19	36.5																				
15. How often do you pay attention to word and sentence <b>stress</b> in your pronunciation?	1	23.1	2	40.4	12	23.1	6	11.5	1	1.9																				
16. How important is <b>intonation</b> for pronunciation?	7	13.5	21	40.4	20	38.5	4	7.7	0	0.0																				

The items in the background questionnaire were designed to explore Turkish EFL learners' awareness of English pronunciation. The results in Table 1 reveal several insights about their pronunciation awareness. Firstly, it is clear that having a good



pronunciation is important for the learners (27 out of 52 participants, 51.9% replied “strongly agree”). When asked if they would like to sound like a native speaker, 30 participants (57.7%) declared they strongly agree with this statement. The replies to this item display a remarkable tendency from the participants to want to sound like a native speaker.

Additionally, the participants in this study consider pronunciation an important element for communication (21 out of 52 participants, 40.4 %). However, only less than half of the participants (30.8 %) have positive attitudes towards learning pronunciation. Despite this, results demonstrate the participants’ positive beliefs about improving their pronunciation skills (51.9 %).

Furthermore, the frequencies reflect that although the participants believe they can improve their English pronunciation, they still do not believe they could speak English with a good accent. 20 participants (38.5 %) declared they neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. The results of the aforementioned item might provide reasons for the results of the next item, in which the majority of the participants state they demand more pronunciation instruction in English lessons. 19 out of 52 participants (36.5%) replied ‘somewhat agree’, while 16 participants (30.8 %) replied ‘strongly agree’ to this statement.

### **Learners’ Recognition of Implicatures in Aural Messages Before and After The Explicit Teaching of Suprasegmentals**

In order to determine whether the participants’ results in the pre-test conducted before the beginning of the study and the results in the post-test conducted after the completion of the study, were normally distributed, a normality test was done. The results of the normality test are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

*Results of Normality Test*

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.850	38	.000
Posttest	.957	38	.152

When Table 2 is examined, it can be seen that the pre-test results are not normally distributed ( $p < .05$ ). However, the post-test results are normally distributed ( $p > .05$ ). For this reason, to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant difference between the participants' overall pre-test and post-test results, Wilcoxon test, one of the non-parametric tests, was applied.

With the purpose of finding an answer for the second research question “To what extent do Turkish EFL learners recognize implicatures in aural texts *before* and *after* the explicit teaching of suprasegmentals?” the scores from the pre-test, which was conducted prior to the beginning of the study, and the scores from the post-test, which was conducted after the completion of the study were entered into SPSS. The frequency distribution of the results is displayed in Table 3 below.

Table 3

*Frequency Distribution of Pre-test and Post-test Results (n=38)*

	Pre-test				Post-test			
	False		True		False		True	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1. A wife says to her husband “I just love it when you help me in the kitchen.” <i>What does the speaker think?</i>  <i>How can you tell?</i>	34	89.5	4	10.5	25	65.8	13	34.2

Table 3 *Frequency Distribution of Pre-test and Post-test Results (cont'd)*

2. Mary shows Angela her new haircut, and asks her opinion about it. Mary replies "it looks great!" <i>What does the speaker think?</i> <i>How can you tell?</i>	33	86.8	5	13.2	17	44.7	21	55.3
3. John left Jenny his dog, and asks how she got along with the dog.  She replies "We were so happy to have her" <i>What does the speaker think?</i> <i>How can you tell?</i>	38	100.0	0	0.0	21	55.3	17	44.7
4. David and Karen are talking about David's cough, which he's had for two weeks now. She says, "The weather is getting warmer now so perhaps your cough will go away." <i>What does the speaker think?</i> <i>How can you tell?</i>	32	84.2	6	15.8	21	55.3	17	44.7
5. Amanda is always busy at work because her boss gives her lots of work. Her colleagues ask her how she feels about it. She says; it's because she likes me better than everybody else. <i>What does the speaker think?</i> <i>How can you tell?</i>	35	92.1	3	7.9	25	65.8	13	34.2
7. Sanem's child knocked over a vase and broke it.  Sanem asks Dorothy:  Sanem: Oh was that an important vase?  Dorothy: No, not at all. <i>What does Dorothy think?</i>  <i>How can you tell?</i>	25	65.8	13	34.2	10	26.3	28	73.7

Table 3 *Frequency Distribution of Pre-test and Post-test Results (cont'd)*

<p>8. Berna has just listened to an announcement at the airport. She speaks with the person sitting next to her;</p> <p>Berna: Our flight is delayed?</p> <p>Passanger: Waiting at the airport is surely a lot of fun.</p> <p><i>What does the passanger think?</i></p> <p><i>How can you tell?</i></p>	20 52.6 18 47.7	11 28.9 27 71.1
<p>9. Marta had a talk at an important international conference. Two days before the conference, she learns that her talk was cancelled. Tina asks her about it;</p> <p>Tina: Were you completely disappointed about the cancellation of your lecture?</p> <p>Marta: No, not at all. Now I can spend that time watching the conference live on web.</p> <p><i>What does Martha think?</i></p> <p><i>How can you tell?</i></p>	33 86.8 5 13.2	18 47.4 20 52.6
<p>10. A new student tells Mehtap about Tom.</p> <p>A: I met Tom a few days ago but everybody seems to know him.</p> <p>Mehtap: Yeah, he's really popular at school. <i>What does Mehtap think?</i></p> <p><i>How can you tell?</i></p>	38 100 0 0	15 39.5 23 60.5
<p>11. Sue and Judy about Karen, one of their colleagues;</p> <p>Sue: I had lunch with Jane yesterday. She talked about nothing but her problems with her husband during the entire lunch.</p> <p>Judy: She is really fun to spend time with these days.</p> <p><i>What does Judy think?</i></p> <p><i>How can you tell?</i></p>	24 63.2 14 36.8	11 28.9 27 71.1

When Table 3 is examined, it can be seen that while 34 participants (89.5%) answered wrong and only 4 participants (10.5%) answered correctly to the question “*What does the speaker think?*” for the first situation “A wife says to her husband “I just love it when you help me in the kitchen.” *What does the speaker think?*” in the pre-test, for the same situation, 25 participants (65.8%) answered wrong, and 13 participants (34.2%) answered correctly in the post-test. For the aforementioned item, it can be observed that there has been a slight increase in the participants’ success to answer this question. As a result, it can be argued that the treatment has had an effect on the participants in improving the skill assessed in this item.

Looking at the results for the second item “Mary shows Angela her new haircut, and asks her opinion about it. Mary replies “it looks great!” it can be seen that while 33 participants (86.8 %) gave a wrong answer, and 5 participants (13.2%) gave a correct answer in the pre-test, in the post-test, 17 participants (44.7%) gave a wrong answer while 21 participants (55.3%) gave a correct answer for the same item. Compared to the results of the pre-test, there seems to be a respectable increase in the number of correct answers for this item.

Examining the results for the next item “John left Jenny his dog, and asks how she got along with the dog. She replies “We were so happy to have her” none of the participants (100%) were able to give a correct answer for this situation in the pre-test, while 21 participants (55.3 %) gave a wrong answer and 17 participants (44.7 %) gave a correct for the same item in the post-test. Therefore, it can be argued that for the skills assessed in this item, the treatment has had a positive influence on the participants.

Results of the next item David and Karen are talking about David’s cough, which he’s had for two weeks now. She says, “The weather is getting warmer now so perhaps your cough will go away” indicate a positive change in the number of correct answers for this item in the posttest compared to the scores in the pre-test. In the pre-test 32 participants (84.2%) gave a wrong answer and only 6 participants (15.8%) gave a correct

answer. However, in the post-test, 21 participants (55.3 %) answered wrong while 17 participants (44.7 %) answered correctly for the same item.

The next item is “Amanda is always busy at work because her boss gives her lots of work. Her colleagues ask her how she feels about it. She says; it’s because she likes me better than everybody else.” In the pre-test, 35 participants (92.1%) answered wrong while three participants (7.9%) answered correctly. However, in the post-test, 25 participants (65.8%) gave a wrong answer while 13 participants (34.2%) gave a correct answer. There is, again a slight increase in the number of correct answers for this item after the treatment.

Item number 7 in the post-test is the next item being evaluated. For this item, “Sanem’s child knocked over a vase and broke it. Sanem asks Dorothy: Sanem: Oh was that an important vase? Dorothy: No, not at all” 25 participants (65.8%) answered wrong while 13 participants (34.2%) answered correctly in the pre-test. However, in the post-test, 10 participants (26.3%) gave a wrong answer while 28 participants (73.7%) gave a correct answer. It could be put forward that after the treatment, there has been a significant improvement in the skills that are assessed in this item.

The next item is “Berna has just listened to an announcement at the airport. She speaks with the person sitting next to her; Berna: Our flight is delayed? Passanger: Waiting at the airport is surely a lot of fun.” For this item, 20 participants (52.6%) answered wrong while 18 participants (47.7%) answered correctly in the pre-test. In the post-test, however, 11 participants (28.9%) answered wrong while 27 participants (71.1%) answered correctly. Therefore, it could be argued that there has been an important improvement for the skill tested in this item.

For the next situation “Marta had a talk at an important international conference. Two days before the conference, she learns that her talk was cancelled. Tina asks her about it; Tina: Were you completely disappointed about the cancellation of your lecture? Marta: No, not at all. Now I can spend that time watching the conference live on web”

33 participants (86.8%) answered wrong while only 5 participants (13.2%) answered correctly in the pre-test. However, in the post-test, 18 participants (47.4%) answered wrong while 20 participants (52.6%) answered correctly. As a result, a significant improvement could be observed for this item.

For the following item “A new student tells Mehtap about Tom. A: I met Tom a few days ago but everybody seems to know him. Mehtap: Yeah, he’s really popular at school” none of the participants answered correctly in the pre-test. However, in the post-test, 15 participants (39.5%) answered wrong while 23 participants (60.5%) answered correctly. Therefore, there has been a major improvement for this item after the treatment.

For the next item “Sue and Judy about Karen, one of their colleagues; Sue: I had lunch with Jane yesterday. She talked about nothing but her problems with her husband during the entire lunch. Judy: She is really fun to spend time with these days” 24 participants (63.2%) answered wrong while 14 participants (36.8%) answered correctly in the pre-test. However, in the post-test, 11 participants (28.9%) answered wrong while 27 participants (71.1%) answered correctly. Depending on this difference between the results, it could be argued that for this item there has been an improvement in the participants’ correct answers after the treatment.

Table 4

*Frequency Distribution of Second Part of Post-test (N=38)*

	False		True	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
6. Susan and Kelly are interviewing applicants for a job together. Right after one of the interviews, Susan says; so this was an interesting interview. <i>What does the speaker think?</i> <i>How can you tell?</i>	16	42.1	22	57.9

Table 4 *Frequency Distribution of Second Part of Post-test (cont'd)*

12. Maggie, who is a beginner writer, gets her article published in a magazine. Janet talks about this with a friend; Janet: Can you believe Maggie got her article published? Friend: Magazines really have quality jobs these days. <i>What does the friend think?</i> <i>How can you tell?</i>	10	26.3	28	73.7
13. Sarah loves watching animal documentaries so much. She is talking to her roommate, Emma; Sarah: I hope you don't mind watching animal documentaries. Emma: Oh no, not at all. I like watching animals on TV all the time. <i>What does Emma think?</i> <i>How can you tell?</i>	22	57.9	16	42.1
14. Cansu is hosting a dinner party for her very close friends in her house. Tiffany, who wasn't invited, shows up and says; Tiffany: Hey, I hope I am not late. Cansu: Oh no, we were just waiting for you to start the party. <i>What does Cansu think?</i> <i>How can you tell?</i>	5	13.2	33	86.8
15. Necla has been in the hospital because of a major surgery for over three weeks now. Jack sent her flowers. Zoe: Has Jack come to visit you yet? Necla: His flowers have. <i>What does Necla think?</i> <i>How can you tell?</i>	5	13.2	33	86.8
16. Joanna and Mary talk about a famous actor and his child. Joanna: The child is actually his, but he denies it. Mary: Where'd you read that? Joanna: Oh, it's all over the Internet! Mary: Well, if you read it on the Internet, it must be true! <i>What does Mary think?</i> <i>How can you tell?</i>	13	34.2	25	65.8



Table 4 *Frequency Distribution of Second Part of Post-test (cont'd)*

17. April and Rose are talking about their mutual friends.	22	57.9	16	42.1
April: You know, I think Ozan and Meltem might be seeing each other.				
Rose: Really? You're so quick!				
<i>What does Rose think?</i>				
<i>How can you tell?</i>				
18. Linda and Donna are talking about their children's homework.	18	47.4	20	52.6
Linda: Donna, do your children complain of having too much homework?				
Donna: Oh, not at all, Linda. They love it!				
<i>What does Donna think?</i>				
<i>How can you tell?</i>				
19. Lisa and Julie talk about Darren before class.	10	26.3	28	73.7
Lisa: I think Darren's gonna be late for class. Julie: Oh, that's a surprise!				
<i>What does Julie think?</i>				
<i>How can you tell?</i>				
20. Pelin is giving Carol a ride for work in the morning.	4	10.5	34	89.5
Pelin: Carol, the car won't start!				
Carol: Oh great, that's just what we need.				
<i>What does Carol think?</i>				
<i>How can you tell?</i>				

When the second part of the post-test, which has 10 more items than the pre-test, is examined, it could be observed that except items number 13 and 17, the percentage of the correct answers the participants provided for each item outnumbered the wrong answers. Compared to the pretest in which all 10 items received more incorrect responses, the performance of the participants could be remarked as an improvement after the treatment sessions have been completed. Especially, the items 14, 15, 20 in the second part of the posttest have received an overwhelming number of correct responses to identify the intended meaning of the speakers in the given situations.

After the frequency tables of the pre-test and post-test results have been created, to obtain a statistically correct comparison between these results, and to examine whether or not there is a statistically significant difference, Wilcoxon signed ranked test

was run. Below, descriptive statistics have been provided in the form a table along with the differences table.

Table 5

*Wilcoxon Test Results, Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	38	1.7895	1.63009	.00	7.00
Post-test	38	5.4211	2.80570	.00	10.00

Table 6

*Difference between Pre-test & Post-test*

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.
posttest -	Negative Ranks	2 <sup>a</sup>	6.25	12.50	4.800	.000
pretest	Positive Ranks	31 <sup>b</sup>	17.69	548.50		
	Ties	5 <sup>c</sup>				
	Total	38				

a. posttest < pretest

b. pretest > pretest

c. posttest = pretest

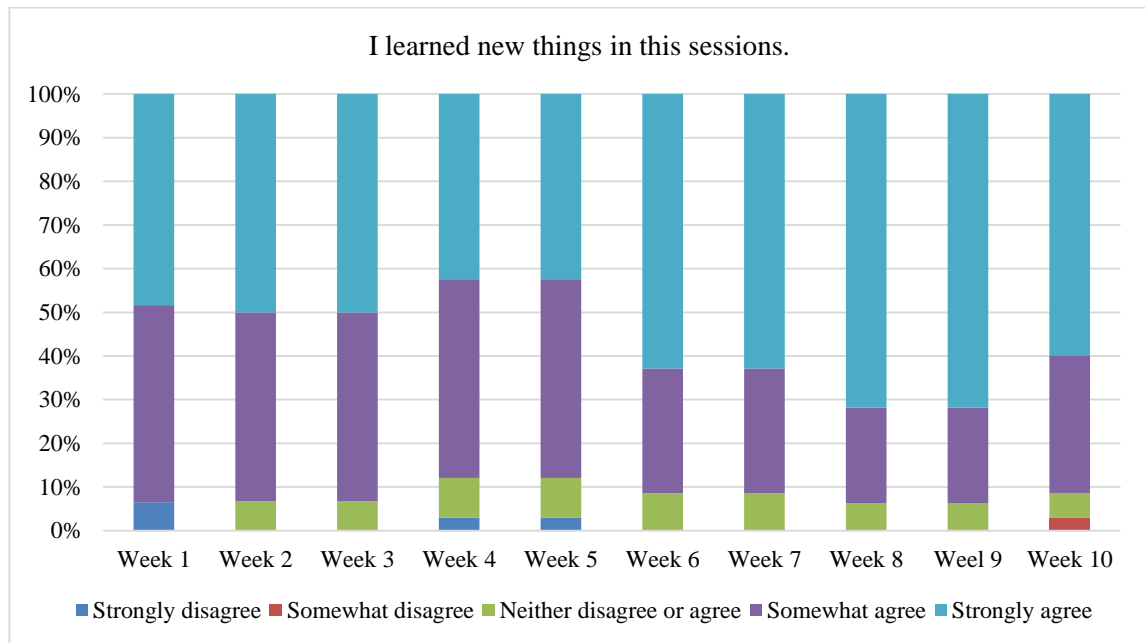
Mean scores are for the 10 same items used both in pre-test and post-test. For each item, if a learner has provided the correct answer, the data has been entered into SPSS as 1, and if the response is incorrect, 0 has been entered. The mean score for the pre-test is

1.7895, which means that the learners' overall success for the pre-test is less than 2 correct answers. However, the mean score for the post-test is 5.4211, indicating a remarkable raise in learners' overall scores after the treatment.

When Table 5 is examined, it could be seen that there is a statistically significant difference between the results of the pre-test and post-test results of the learners ( $Z=4.800$ ,  $\text{sig.}<0.01$ ). The total scores the learners got from the posttest ( $\bar{X}=5.42$ ) after they received training on the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features are significantly higher than the total scores the learners got from the pretest ( $\bar{X}=1.79$ ).

## Perceptions about the Treatment Sessions During the Intervention Period

**Likert-scale items.** The participants have completed an evaluation form after each session during the intervention period over the course of 10 weeks. The form consists of two parts; the first one is a 10 item Likert Scale while the second part consists of one open ended question to get a deeper understanding of learners' thoughts on the sessions. The data acquired from the Likert Scale items have been entered into SPSS and mean scores of each item have been calculated. Stack charts have been created with the purpose of showing overall learner perception of the treatment sessions, using the mean scores and the percentages from the Likert Scale analysis. The chart including each item throughout 10 ten weeks are displayed below in Figure 1;



*Figure 1.* Evaluation form item 1 results

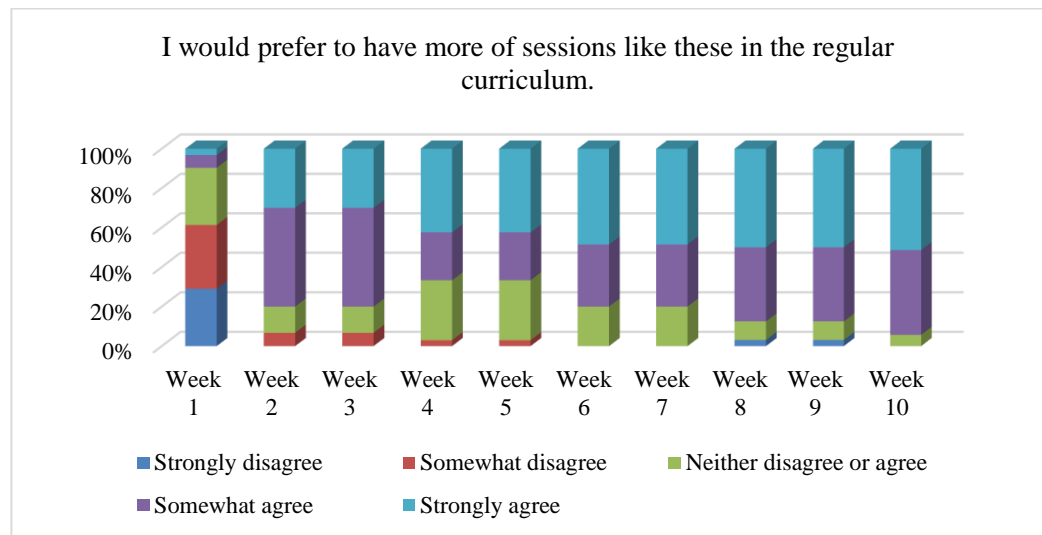


Figure 2. Evaluation form item 5 results

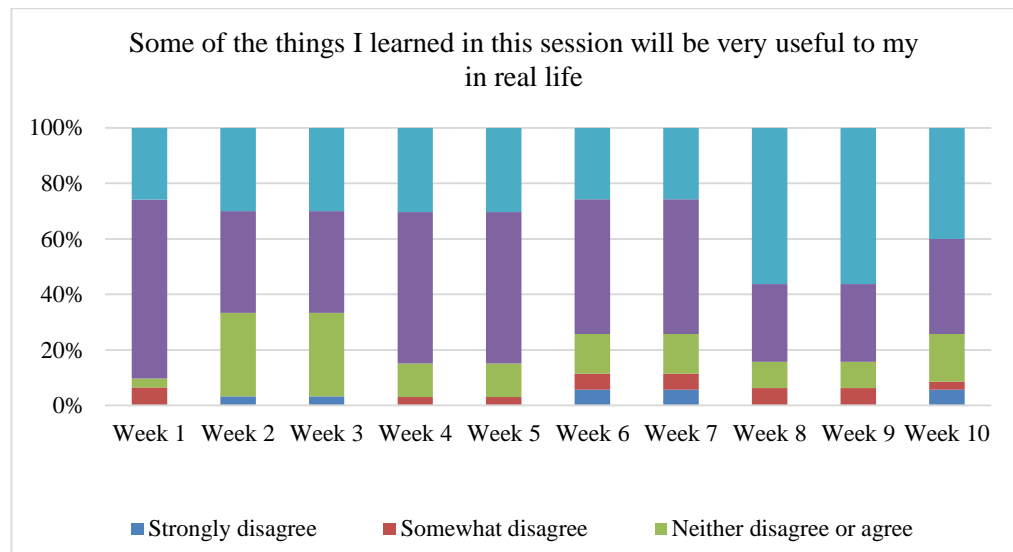
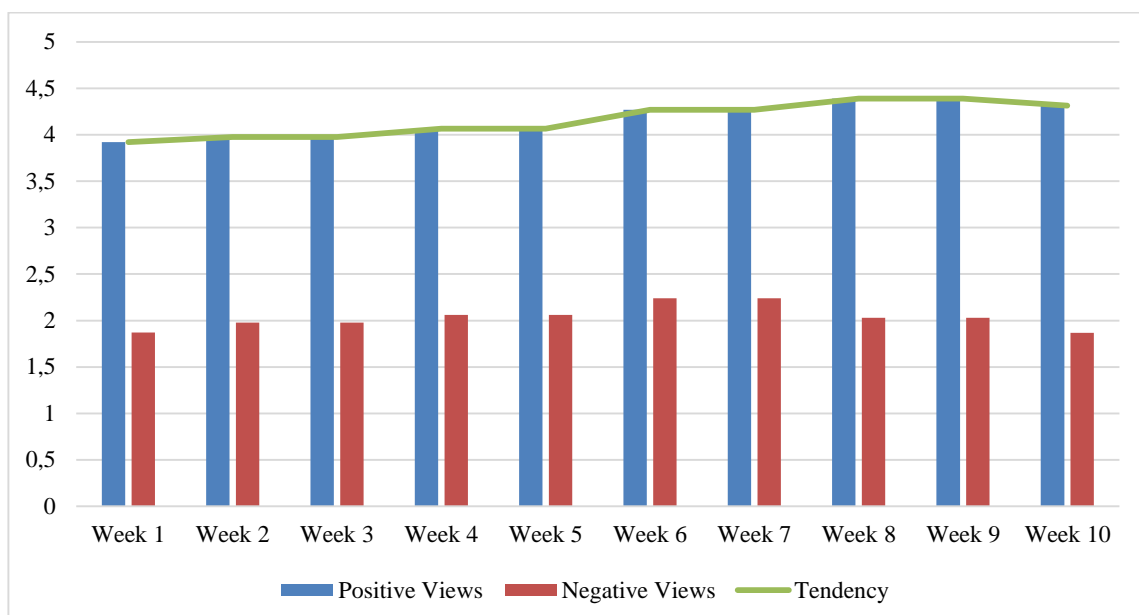


Figure 3. Evaluation form item 6 results



*Figure 4.* Overall assessment of evaluation forms

When the stacked bar charts are examined, it could be observed that the learners had benefited greatly from the treatment sessions. Overall, they stated that they learned new things from each session, which they believe helped to improve their pronunciation in general. Moreover, their replies show that they prefer to have pronunciations sessions similar to those during the intervention period a lot more in the regular curriculum. The results in the chart also show that the sessions not only helped with their pronunciation but also their general English knowledge. The mean scores for the items “the sessions contributed to my English in general” and “I believe I can use the things I learned in this session in real life” are fairly high. All in all, the results from the evaluation forms after each session reflect a respectable contribution to the participants’ English and English pronunciation.

**Open-ended question.** In terms of the qualitative data analysis, without exception, all of the learners in this study indicated that taking part in these treatment sessions has raised their awareness of suprasegmental features of pronunciation. In addition to this, a majority of them stated that these sessions helped improve not only their English pronunciation but also their general English. One of the learners noted, “I

can't believe how much my English is improving session after session!" It could be concluded from comments like these that learners have become more conscious of their language learning and have also monitored their own learning throughout the sessions.

Several learners stated that these sessions have raised their perception of pronunciation in general. The participants reported that the sessions helped them raise awareness about some technical terms such as stress, pitch, and intonation. A few of the learners wrote "I didn't realize there were things like stress, pitch and intonation in pronunciation, and how they contribute to our speaking."

Some of the learners acknowledge the fact that they have improved their conversational skills by acquiring the skills to analyze the speech of others by simply paying attention to the stress, pitch, and intonation while they speak. Moreover, almost all the participants in the study found the treatment sessions "fun, interesting, engaging, and motivating". They added that since the treatment sessions required active participation, it made their learning process more permanent, and more "effective than their regular classes."

Furthermore, the learners have pointed out the benefits of pair work and group work during the sessions and how much these contributed to their progress. They have also highlighted the improvement in their attitudes towards English since the sessions helped them to view English "more approachable". Some of the learners remarked that the sessions helped overcome their stress about learning English and that they have become "more confident learners." They also touched upon the importance of self-correction they have acquired throughout the sessions as well as teacher correction and peer correction.

All in all, the learners' comments reflect a broad understanding of pronunciation and they have gained self-motivation, and a feeling of achievement at the end of the treatment sessions. With exposure to real life language through the materials used during the sessions, they report to have an increased awareness in speaking, which they assert

to have helped improve their fluency.

### **Conclusion**

In this study, data were collected through a questionnaire, which was conducted prior to the study, with 52 Turkish ELF learners at the School of Foreign Languages at Akdeniz University. Descriptive statistics was applied to analyze the first research question, which was aimed to uncover the learners' pronunciation awareness. For the second research question, the data acquired from the results of the pretest conducted before the treatment sessions and the posttest conducted after the completion of the treatment was entered into SPSS and Wilcoxon signed ranked test was run to compare the results between both tests. To find an answer to the final research question, data collected from 38 out of 52 participants who continued the study from the beginning until the end, through evaluation forms at the end of each training section was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative part is consisted of 10 Likert Scale items, which are displayed in the form of a stacked bar chart, while for the qualitative part, content analysis was used to code learners' answers to an open-ended question about the treatment sessions. The next chapter will present an overview of the study, the findings and discussion, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, as well as suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

### Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to explore the effects of explicit teaching of English suprasegmentals in a way to assist the comprehension of implicatures by Turkish EFL learners. To this end, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What was the learners' background in and attitudes toward pronunciation before the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features?
2. To what extent do Turkish EFL learners recognize implicatures in aural texts *before* and *after* the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features?
3. What are the learners' perceptions about the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features?

This chapter consists of four main sections. In the first section, the findings and discussion related to the study are presented by taking into consideration the research questions and the related literature. In the second section, pedagogical implications are examined. In the third section, limitations are discussed, and finally in the fourth section, suggestions for further research are put forward.

### Findings and Discussion

#### **Learners' Background in and Attitudes towards Pronunciation Before the Study**

The data obtained from the pronunciation background questionnaire before the beginning of the study were analyzed with the purpose of identifying the learners' pronunciation background as well as their attitudes towards it. From the detailed analysis of the Pronunciation Background and Attitudes Questionnaire (PBAQ) in Chapter 4, it was seen that the participants of this study have very little background in English



pronunciation. None of them had previous pronunciation training, and they had rather mixed feelings and beliefs about their pronunciation skills. The variation of replies for attitudes questions demonstrates that learner beliefs and goals for pronunciation were based solely on feelings rather than on previous experience. It is also worthwhile to note here that there was a lack of consistency in learner responses for attitude questions. The results revealed that even though most of the learners considered pronunciation as a vital element of foreign language, only half of them had positive attitudes towards learning pronunciation. This might be explained with the fact that in the EFL atmosphere of Turkey, they are not provided with sufficient communication practice outside the classroom. Furthermore, it might also mean that their comprehension of the importance of pronunciation in English did not lead them to develop positive feelings towards it.

The vast majority of the learners stated that they believe they can improve their English pronunciation. However, results showed that they still did not believe they could speak English with a good accent. What's more, the findings indicated a strong desire from the learners to sound like a native speaker. The tendency to value native speaker pronunciation contradicts with the discussions in Jenkin's article, arguing to teach the learners to sound like a native speaker is no longer the norm or the model in the ELT world (1998). This finding is in line with the results of Derwing and Munro (2009), who stated that L2 speakers have been acknowledged to have a foreign accent, especially if they are adult learners. Turning to pronunciation instruction, the majority of the participants in the study have been found to favor more instruction in the lessons, corroborating the suggestion that "pronunciation is learnable" (Derwing & Munro, 2009, p. 480).

As another major finding, a large number of participants stated that they do not feel satisfied with the effort they devote on improving their pronunciation. This result might be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it could be argued that since the focused suprasegmental training learners have received during the intervention period is their

one and only experience (based on their responses in PBAQ) having explicit instruction on pronunciation, they might not deliberately focus on improving their pronunciation before. The findings of Derwing and Rossiter (2002) are in line with this explanation, arguing that “learners are either not getting instruction or if they are, they are not benefiting from it” (p. 161). This leads to the second explanation that learners do not feel confident about their English pronunciation, as put forward by Tejeda, Christina and Basurto Santos (2014), who asserted that in the case that the learners do not get sufficient pronunciation practice, their confidence in pronunciation decreases. They have also indicated that learners receiving pronunciation instruction have become more confident about their pronunciation (Tejeda et al., 2014).

Regarding the results of the preferred materials for the learners to practice and improve their pronunciation, videos and audios were listed as one item, and songs were listed as another item in the PBQ. Surprisingly, there was a great degree of variation in the responses. Slightly less than half of the participants stated they were not sure about the effectiveness of videos and audios to improve their pronunciation. About less than half of them felt videos and audios might help with their pronunciation, and the rest of the participants stated they did not think videos or audios might be helpful for their pronunciation improvement. Al Malmun (2014) asserted that both teachers and students benefit tremendously from the use of audio-visual materials for language improvement of the learners, including but not limited to pronunciation improvement. Moreover, this finding also runs counter to the results of McCroclin’s (2012) study, in which it was discovered that audios and videos support pronunciation improvement of ESL learners. Considering the findings of previous research mentioned, learners’ abstaining attitudes towards the use of videos or audios might indicate that either the learners did not resort to videos or audios to practice and improve their pronunciation before, or that even if they tried them, they did not achieve successful results, thus leading them to develop a low value of videos and audios.

As compared to videos, singing songs was overwhelmingly chosen as a much-preferred way of improving pronunciation among the participants of this study. This finding is supported by a number of studies (e.g. Millington; 2011, Rengifo; 2009). According to Rengifo (2009), singing songs help learners to “achieve their pronunciation goals” (p. 91) by creating a fun and relaxed atmosphere. Furthermore, since songs are much shorter than videos, they might be considered as a more approachable and relatively easier language practice tool on the part of the low-level learners. This finding might also mean that the learners did use songs as a way to practice their English pronunciation before.

In terms of techniques to improve pronunciation, repetition and imitation were popularly found to be helpful ways among the learners. This preference is in line with the findings of Trofimovic and Gatbonton (2006), who indicated great benefits of both on L2 speech, as well as with the findings of Adank, Hagoort and Bekkering (2010), who have highlighted the positive effects of imitation on improving learners’ spoken language comprehension. The findings might also be related to previous learning experiences of the participants in that they might have practiced pronunciation with repetition and imitation in their former English lessons. However, it should also be noted that mere repetition and imitation of words or utterances without a meaningful production might not have a permanent effect on the learners’ pronunciation skills.

Turning to pronunciation terms such as pitch, stress and intonation, it is seen from the results that a majority of the learners were not familiar with these suprasegmental features. This finding is not surprising based on the findings of Derwing and Rossiter (2002) who asserted, “awareness of suprasegmentals is limited” (p. 162), which in return causes learners to fail “to name suprasegmental factors such as rhythm and stress” (p. 163). Out of these three terms, pitch seemed to be the most familiar to learners according to the results. The tendency to recognize pitch might be related to the fact that pitch is basically about the rising and falling of intonation, which might be easily recognized by

learners by the highness and lowness of tone in speech.

Given the learners' replies apprising pitch as an important element in pronunciation, it could be argued that following patterns of rising and falling of pitch was easier for the learners rather than following patterns of syllable, word and sentence stress, which is reflected in the results that learners did not view stress as a vital element in pronunciation. As a final remark, results demonstrate that a great number of participants did not consider intonation a crucial element in pronunciation. Derwing and Rossiter (2002) have indicated the potential neglect suprasegmental features get in the foreign language classroom. This neglect might easily be the cause that weakens the importance of intonation in pronunciation in the eyes of the learners. Another explanation for undervaluing intonation might be associated with the possibility that learners do not know the definition of intonation. Therefore, they fail to comprehend what is exactly meant by the importance of intonation in pronunciation.

### **Learners' Recognition of Implicatures in Aural Messages before and after the Explicit Teaching of Suprasegmentals**

Regarding the second research question, there was a statistically significant difference between the learners' awareness of suprasegmental features as a way to understand implicatures before and after the intervention period, which might come to mean that the explicit pronunciation training was helpful for ELF learners to recognize implicatures. There are countless studies advocating the explicit teaching of pronunciation in foreign language classrooms, indicating numerous benefits of instruction. Derwing and Rossiter (2002) have examined pronunciation difficulties of learners and have found that explicit instruction is the best way to teach learners pronunciation. The findings of Tejada et al. (2014) signify an increase in pronunciation awareness after explicit pronunciation teaching in the EFL classroom. Additionally, pronunciation training has been observed to have positive pedagogical outcomes in

literature (e.g., Behrman; 2014, Couper; 2003, Derwing, Munro & Wiebe; 1998, Felps, Bortfeld & Gutierrez-Osuna; 2009). Couper (2003) initiated a pronunciation syllabus in which both segmental and suprasegmental training were provided for the participants of his study. The results of his study corroborate the results of the present study in that pronunciation could and should be taught in foreign language classrooms. Derwing et al., (1998) also support this argument by recording significant improvements in the participants of their study as a result of explicit pronunciation instruction. The improvements mentioned previously are also reflected in the findings of Chun (1988) who points out that communicative language proficiency of learners could be fostered by making them realize the key role pronunciation has “in successful and coherent communication” (p. 301). Additionally, the results of Chun’s (1988) study strongly suggest the explicit teaching of pronunciation in the foreign language classroom.

In the light of all previously mentioned research, the pre-test scores clearly illustrate that the participants had a hard time interpreting the situations in the pre-test. The analysis provided in Chapter 4 shows that the mean score for the pre-test is less than 2, which indicates that the learners could not analyze and interpret two out of ten situations in the pre-test correctly. That said, two possible explanations for the reasons behind this seem plausible. It could be argued that the learners could not interpret the situations because they did not understand what was asked of them. Or, it could be that their lack of suprasegmental knowledge prevented them from interpreting the situations in a correct way. However, in either case, it seems that the learners did not or could not associate the suprasegmentals as a way to decode implicatures.

In the analysis of scores of the post-test, it was found that the learners achieved much higher scores when compared with their pre-test scores. The mean score for the post-test is more than 5, which demonstrate that out of 10 items that existed both in the pre-test and the post-test, the learners were able to answer slightly more than half of the

questions correctly. This significant difference between the results of pre-test and the post-test could possibly be explained with the effectiveness of the explicit suprasegmental training the learners received during the intervention period. Results also confirm relevant literature that places emphasis on the importance of suprasegmental features in pronunciation. Suwartano (2014) reiterates the findings in research by suggesting that improvement in suprasegmentals results in improvement in communication. Similarly, Zarifi and Sayyadi (2015) touched upon suprasegmentals' critical role in discourse, adding further that if they are omitted or disregarded in language classrooms, communication breakdowns could occur because of the change in meaning in the utterance. Therefore, the findings that the participants' post-test scores are significantly higher than their pre-test scores in the present study could provide convincing evidence that learning suprasegmentals assisted learners in their comprehension and interpretation of oral messages, and the hidden meaning implied in those messages. Additionally, not especially for implicatures, but for discourse in general Chun (1988) states "both communicative competence and proficiency models should include the ability to use intonation as one of the tools to engage in and manage discourse." (p. 301)

In addition to the explicit suprasegmental training, a number of other factors might have contributed to the learners' progress in the post-test. During the training sessions, the learners followed a pattern of instruction, practice and feedback. After the presentation of the topic of each session, the learners were provided a chance to practice what they learned with their partners and they sometimes got involved in group practice, as well. Following the practice time, the learners were provided feedback mainly by the researcher, and sometimes even by their peers. Neri, Cucchiarini and Strik's (2008) findings support the importance of feedback during the pronunciation training. Considering input, practice and feedback were included exclusively during the explicit suprasegmental training in this study, it might be argued that combined together with the

treatment sessions, they contributed immensely to the learners' success in the post-test after the completion of the study.

### **Learners' Perceptions about the Treatment Sessions**

The findings obtained from the final research question inquiring about the learners' perception about the treatment sessions during the intervention period revealed that the learners benefitted greatly from the explicit teaching of suprasegmental features to foster the comprehension of implicatures in the 10-week intervention period. The majority of the participants reported recognizable improvements in their pronunciation, and in their recognition of implied meanings in oral messages following prosodic cues they learned during the training. This is reflected both in the Likert Scale analysis, and in the content analysis of the open-ended question in the evaluation form. The improvements the learners reported having could be broken into such categories as increased awareness of English pronunciation, suprasegmental awareness, improvement in perceptions of their speaking skills, and lastly the fun factor. In terms of increased awareness of English pronunciation, it seems that the learners became more conscious of their learning process and took responsibility to self-observe their progress as the sessions continued. This could be attributed to the explicit nature of teaching during the intervention period. It seems to have provided the learners with a solid platform on which they could identify what they did not know and what they needed to know in English pronunciation as a way to recognize and comprehend the intended meanings in speech. In terms of suprasegmental awareness, it seems that the training sessions guided the learners in understanding what stress, pitch, and intonation mean, as well as their crucial role in communication. Regarding the improvements in their perceptions of speaking skills, the learners reported, with the help of the training sessions, they acquired the ability to interpret the speech of other people by concentrating on suprasegmental features such as stress, pitch and intonation. As another major speaking

contribution, the increase in their perception of their fluency was also mentioned.

Finally, the fun factor comes from the fact the sessions were found extremely enjoyable, interesting and appealing by the learners. This could not only be construed as a legitimate indicator of the effectiveness of the training, but it could also explain why the learners believed their learning process became more permanent throughout the intervention period. It is also interesting to note here that even though the learners did not favor videos as a great source of practice and improvement for their pronunciation in the PBAQ in the beginning of the study, their evaluation of the use of videos seemed to have changed as the treatment sessions progressed. The learners' responses in the open-ended question in the evaluation form reflect the contribution of videos to their pronunciation improvement and comprehension of implicatures. Derakhshan et al. (2014) suggest that "authentic audiovisual and video enhanced materials and the role of instruction" (p. 18) are causes of improvement in learning implicatures. Furthermore, the learners also had a chance to practice the content of the videos after watching, paying particular attention to the suprasegmental feature of that day's session. All learners reported that approaching the session materials this way helped them change their ideas about videos and audios from neutral to positive, and helped them to view the authentic audio-visual materials as "less daunting". This change in the learners' attitudes resulted in their replies that English became "more approachable" for them. It is possible that due to the lack of pronunciation training in the learners' previous language learning experience (reflected in the results of PBQ), these learners could not figure out how to learn pronunciation or rather how to approach it before. That aside, even though the learners did receive pronunciation training, it is possible the training they receive might not be fully satisfying considering the fact that not only in Turkey EFL arena, but in general EFL arena worldwide, pronunciation does not come out as a popular foreign language education area (Derwing & Rossiter; 2002). Adding to that, Hsieh, Dong, and Wang (2013) refer to the challenges the existing pronunciation training techniques have



and call for a need for new and improvised techniques to enable the acquisition of pronunciation. Focused suprasegmental training through the use of authentic materials and providing practice and feedback time for learners appeared to have been helpful considering the findings in the present study. Furthermore, the learners reported developing more and more positive attitudes towards both pronunciation specifically and English in general throughout the intervention period. According to findings of Derwing and Rossiter (2002) “awareness of suprasegmentals, especially in the absence of instruction, is limited.” (p. 162) Therefore, it might not be surprising that once the learners are exposed to suprasegmentals, their awareness will increase and this might naturally lead to positive attitudes towards pronunciation.

Another factor to take into consideration is that the results suggest the learners found the pair work and the group work highly valuable and helpful during the training. This might come to mean that because the learners knew the treatment sessions were in no way associated with stressing out for getting good marks in the regular program, they might have felt less pressure and dedicated to the activities just for learning. Baran-Łuczarska's (2014) findings are in line with the previously mentioned statement. According to the results of her study, which explore the link between pronunciation anxiety and willingness to communicate in foreign language classroom, some learners view the language classroom as a place where “they are being constantly evaluated” and thus they might be scared of “losing face” (p. 464). The participants' of the current study reported feeling relaxed and having fun during the treatment sessions. This might be due to the fact that they have gone through no assessment during the treatment period. However, there was self-evaluation and self-assessment. Most learners reported they have gained the skill to monitor themselves and recorded a self-track record on their pronunciation progress. Their comments indicate that it was highly satisfying for them to observe their self-improvement as the sessions continue. The learners even stated that they have evaluated the pre-test conducted before the intervention period and the post-test

conducted after the intervention period as a way of self-assessment and reflected on their performance comparing how they felt during the pre-test and how they felt during the post-test. As suggested by Baran-Łucarz (2014), the participants of the current study seem to have reduced their “negative self-image, and fear of embarrassing themselves in front of their classmates” which causes “anxiety and a lack of L2 confidence, which, in turn, can result in a strong reluctance to speak in an FL” (p. 464). Therefore, the findings of the present study, indicating a great improvement in the learners’ speaking and communicational skills are in line with the previously mentioned results.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The findings of the current study suggest clear pedagogical implications. The study shows that explicit suprasegmental training could be considered as an effective tool in EFL learning in terms of providing learners with a solid background on pronunciation, and more opportunities to practice their communicational skills, as well as helping with their understanding and interpreting of implicatures, which are considered as difficult to learn for foreign language learners. Moreover, it was found that almost all of the EFL learners in the present study had developed positive attitudes towards pronunciation and using it to recognize oral discourse. In the light of these findings, it could be suggested that pronunciation should be included more in the EFL curriculum, not merely in the form of segmental training, which is usually the case but in the form of suprasegmental training as well. Furthermore, different aspects of pronunciation should be introduced to the learners; comprehensibility, intelligibility, and as a way to comprehend implied meanings in messages, etc. Suprasegmentals enrich oral communication. As a result, learners should be more aware of their role in communication and communication breakdowns. Awareness of suprasegmentals is as important as their instruction. In this regard, the suprasegmental training might start with the introduction of what suprasegmentals are and how they contribute to speaking in

English. Implicatures also hold an important place in foreign language since they play a crucial role in communication. Therefore, implicatures awareness should also be included in the future training programs. Another important aspect is that the training could also be used as a fun way to enrich the classroom atmosphere since the results of the current study indicate all the participants found the suprasegmental training “fun” and the content “engaging”.

While the benefits of teaching pronunciation is widely accepted and strongly supported by research today, there is a crucial issue that emerges in foreign language teaching scenes around the world, which needs addressing promptly; the qualifications (or under qualifications) of EFL/ESL teachers to teach pronunciation. According to Breikreutz, Derwing, and Rossiter (2001), “many teachers are uncomfortable dealing with pronunciation” (p. 52) as a result of not getting any training to teach pronunciation, besides having “no linguistic training in phonetics and phonology” (p. 52). Derwing and Munro (2005) noted many teachers are unwilling to teach pronunciation. Derwing and Rossiter (2002) found that 67% of the teacher participants who took part in their study reported they have had no former training in teaching pronunciation. MacDonald (2002) added to aforementioned issues by stressing “the absence of pronunciation in curricula” (p. 3) as well as a lack of appropriate teaching materials. Added to the previously mentioned problems are the question of what to include in a pronunciation course, and the debate about how it should be taught, as put forward by Suwartono (2014). Stemming from all relevant research, the present study aimed to provide an alternative pronunciation-teaching platform added to the regular curriculum of Akdeniz University School of Foreign Languages, where pronunciation is neither the focus of instruction nor acknowledged as a crucial element in foreign language education. The fact that results of the current study demonstrate a statistically significant difference between before the pronunciation training and after the training could be interpreted as meaning that the explicit teaching of suprasegmentals contributed remarkably to the participants’

comprehension of implicatures in oral messages. Levis and Pickering (2004) supports this final statement by suggesting that in the case that the teachers comprehend the gravity of intonation in discourse, they could better guide their learners to understand the role of intonation in real communication and use it for their “real communicative needs” (p. 520).

### **Limitations**

The study revealed that explicit suprasegmental training has been very effective on Turkish ELF learners’ comprehension of implicatures in aural messages. However, as a nature of studies similar to this, time still remained as a constraint in the current study. The length of the intervention period was only 10 weeks in a 58-week academic year at Akdeniz University School of Foreign Languages. The learners, without doubt, would have benefitted a lot more from a yearlong training. Consequently, the time limitation resulted in the loopholes in the acquisition of the contents in the treatment sessions. Another limitation is the absence of a delayed post-test. The intervention period took part in the fall semester before the winter break. After a three-week winter break, the students were assigned to different classrooms at Akdeniz University School of Foreign Languages, thus making the process of arranging a time that suits all participants difficult. Additionally, some learners who took part in the study dropped out of school. Therefore, they were out of reach of the researcher. Another limitation of the study that needs addressing is related to the third research question about the perception of the learners about the treatment sessions. In order to collect data for this question, a Likert Scale with 10 items has been created by the researcher, with an open ended question at the end, inquiring about the participants’ additional thoughts and comments about the treatment sessions. Although each participant completed the “other comments” section each week, with their own ideas, the data acquired were not rich enough to emerge into various themes to be coded and thus did not reveal deeper insights into the participants’

perceptions about the treatment sessions. Interviews, instead of an open-ended question, might have served better to the purpose of obtaining high-quality qualitative data.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

A number of questions have emerged from the findings that might hopefully lead to further research in the field. Firstly, the current study focused on what effect explicit teaching of suprasegmentals would have on the EFL learners' comprehension of implicatures in aural messages. Future studies could take this a step further and analyze the effects of implicit teaching of suprasegmentals on the learners' comprehension of implicatures as a comparison between the two teaching styles. In other words, research could consider whether or not explicit teaching has remarkable advantages over implicit teaching on both the acquisition of suprasegmentals, and the comprehension of implicatures or vice versa. Additionally, a longitudinal study might be planned to explore the role and effects of duration on the suprasegmental training. Therefore, the length of time still remains to be a question in the present study. Possibly, it might not affect the statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores in a negative manner. However, it might have an impact on the permanence of learning on the part of the learners. More research is also needed on the perception of both the learners and the classroom teachers about pronunciation in general, and suprasegmentals specifically, since in the current study only the learners' perceptions have been analyzed.

### **Conclusion**

The present study investigated the effects of explicit teaching of English suprasegmentals in a way to assist the comprehension of implicatures by Turkish EFL learners. With that aim, 36 learners studying at the School of Foreign Languages at Akdeniz University took part in the study. Ten explicit suprasegmental training sessions over a ten-week treatment process were conducted with a single group. According to results, there are statistically significant findings demonstrating that receiving training

on suprasegmentals contributed positively EFL learners' comprehension and interpretation of implicatures in aural messages. With the help of explicit teaching sessions, the learners in this study were able to improve their ability to identify the intended meanings in oral messages, and comprehend them remarkably better than before they received any kinds of suprasegmental training. The findings of the present study suggest that the suprasegmental features taught in the treatment process helped the learners recognize the prosodic cues in the speech of others, and use them to decode discourse.

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**APPENDIX A****English Pronunciation Background and Attitudes Questionnaire**

**Dear Student,**

**This is a questionnaire designed to assess your familiarity with English pronunciation. Some of the questions below are open-ended, which require your genuine answer and some of them are sentences, which require you to circle a number based on your feelings. Thank you for your cooperation.**

Name:

Age:

First Language:

Languages Spoken (Other than English):

Email:

Phone:

**A. General:**

1. At what age did you start learning English?

.....

2. Have you ever lived in an English speaking country before? (Please give details; which country, for how long, for what purposes, etc.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Have you had any courses focusing on pronunciation? If yes, what were they like? (What aspects of pronunciation did the course focus on? E.g. sounds, connected speech, mouth articulation, stress, intonation, etc.)

.....

.....

.....

.....



14. How often do you pay attention to rising and falling **pitch** in your pronunciation?

1. Not familiar with the term
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Quite often
5. Always

15. How often do you pay attention to word and sentence **stress** in your pronunciation?

1. Not familiar with the term
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Quite often
5. Always

16. How important is intonation for pronunciation?

1. Not familiar with the term
2. Not so important
3. Somewhat important
4. Important
5. Very important

### **C. Open-ended Question**

Please answer the question below including as many details as possible.

17. What do you do to try to improve your pronunciation?

**APPENDIX B**

IMPLICATURE RECOGNITION TEST

Name:

Student Number:

**\*Read the situations and listen to recordings. What does the speaker really think about the situation? What clues helped you understand the situations?**

**1. A wife says to her husband** “I just love it when you help me in the kitchen.”

What does the speaker think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**2. Mary shows Angela her new haircut, and asks her opinion about it. Mary replies**

“it looks great!”

What does the speaker think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**3. John left Jenny his dog, and asks how she got along with the dog.**

**She replies** “We were so happy to have her”

What does the speaker think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**4. David and Karen are talking about David's cough, which he's had for two weeks now. She says,** "The weather is getting warmer now so perhaps your cough will go away."

What does the speaker think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**5. Amanda is always busy at work because her boss gives her lots of work. Her colleagues ask her how she feels about it. She says;** it's because she likes me better than everybody else.

What does the speaker think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**6. Susan and Kelly are interviewing applicants for a job together. Right after one of the interviews, Susan says;** so this was an interesting interview.

What does the speaker think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**7. Sanem's child knocked over a vase and broke it. Sanem asks Dorothy:**

Sanem: Oh was that an important vase?

Dorothy: No, not at all.

What does Dorothy think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....



**8. Berna has just listened to an announcement at the airport. She speaks with the person sitting next to her;**

Berna: Our flight is delayed?

Passanger: Waiting at the airport is surely a lot of fun.

What does the passanger think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**9. Marta had a talk at an important international conference. Two days before the conference, she learns that her talk was cancelled. Tina asks her about it;**

Tina: Were you completely disappointed about the cancellation of your lecture?

Marta: No, not at all. Now I can spend that time watching the conference live on web.

What does Martha think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**10. A new student tells Mehtap about Tom.**

A: I met Tom a few days ago but everybody seems to know him.

Mehtap: Yeah, he's really popular at school.

What does Mehtap think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**11. Sue and Judy about Karen, one of their colleagues;**

Sue: I had lunch with Jane yesterday. She talked about nothing but her problems with her husband during the entire lunch.

Judy: She is really fun to spend time with these days.

What does Judy think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**12. Maggie, who is a beginner writer, gets her article published in a magazine.**

**Janet talks about this with a friend;**

Janet: Can you believe Maggie got her article published?

Friend: Magazines really have quality jobs these days.

What does the friend think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**13. Sarah loves watching animal documentaries so much. She is talking to her**

**roommate, Emma;**

Sarah: I hope you don't mind watching animal documentaries.

Emma: Oh no, not at all. I like watching animals on TV all the time.

What does Emma think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**14. Cansu is hosting a dinner party for her very close friends in her house. Tiffany,**

**who wasn't invited, shows up and says;**

Tiffany: Hey, I hope I am not late.

Cansu: Oh no, we were just waiting for you to start the party.

What does Cansu think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**15. Necla has been in the hospital because of a major surgery for over three weeks now. Jack sent her flowers.**

Zoe: Has Jack come to visit you yet?                      Necla: His flowers have.

What does Necla think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**16. Joanna and Mary talk about a famous actor and his child.**

Joanna: The child is actually his, but he denies it.

Mary: Where'd you read that?

Joanna: Oh, it's all over the Internet!

Mary: Well, if you read it on the Internet, it must be true!

What does Mary think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**17. April and Rose are talking about their mutual friends.**

April: You know, I think Ozan and Meltem might be seeing each other.

Rose: Really? You're so quick!

What does Rose think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**18. Linda and Donna are talking about their children's homework.**

Linda: Donna, do your children complain of having too much homework?

Donna: Oh, not at all, Linda. They love it!

What does Donna think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**19. Lisa and Julie talk about Darren before class.**

Lisa: I think Darren's gonna be late for class.          Julie: Oh, that's a surprise!

What does Julie think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**20. Pelin is giving Carol a ride for work in the morning.**

Pelin: Carol, the car won't start!

Carol: Oh great, that's just what we need.

What does Carol think?

.....

How can you tell?

.....

**APPENDIX C****Training Session 6, Practice Worksheet****Friends, Season 1, Episode 24**

**Monica:** Uh, so, uh, Rach, uh... do you wanna save this wrapping paper, I mean, it's only a little bit torn... so are you gonna go for it with Ross or should I just throw it out?

**Rachel:** I don't know. I don't know... I thought about it all the way there, and I thought about it all the way back... and, uh, oh, you guys, y'know, it's **Ross**. Y'know what I mean? I mean, it's **Ross**.

**Monica and Phoebe:** Sure.

**Rachel:** I don't know, I mean, this is just my initial gut feeling... but I'm thinking... oh, I'm thinking it'd be really great.

**Monica:** Oh my God, me too! Oh! Oh, we'd be like friends-in-law! Y'know what the best part is? The best part is that you already know everything about him! I mean, it's like starting on the fifteenth date!

**Phoebe:** Yeah, but, y'know, it's... it would be like starting on the fifteenth date.

**Monica:** Another good point.

**Phoebe:** No, I mean, I mean, when you're at the fifteenth date, y'know, you're already in a very relationshipy place. Y'know, it's... you're committed.

**Rachel:** (confused) Huh?

**Phoebe:** Well, I mean, then what happens if it doesn't work out?

**Monica:** Why isn't it working out?

**Rachel:** I don't know... sometimes it doesn't.

## APPENDIX D

### Evaluation Form

....12.2016

	1:Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	2:Katılmıyorum	3:Nötrüm.		
	4:Katılıyorum	5:Kesinlikle katılıyorum			
1.Bu seanstan yeni bir şeyler öğrendim.	1	2	3	4	5
2.Seansta öğrendiklerim telaffuzuma katkı sağladı.	1	2	3	4	5
3.Seans benim için zordu.	1	2	3	4	5
4.Bu seansta yeni hiçbir şey öğrenmedim.	1	2	3	4	5
5.Bu seans gibi seansların <b>ders programında</b> daha çok olmasını isterim.	1	2	3	4	5
6.Seansta öğrendiğim bazı şeyler gerçek hayatta çok işime yarayacak.	1	2	3	4	5
7.Seanstaki bazı şeylerin İngilizceme katkısı azdı.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Seansta yeni kelimeler öğrendim.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Seansta izlediğim videoların İngilizceme katkı sağladığını düşünüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Seansta partnerimle yaptığım çalışmanın (canlandırma) İngilizce telaffuzuma katkı sağladığını düşünüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5

Diğer yorumlar:

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