




The pronunciation of English acronyms in Turkish

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Abstract

Acronym is a very important word derivation mechanism usually applied to the new names of private or public institutions and they can be used to shorten the names of people, places, or institutions. This linguistic opportunity, which can be found in every language of the world, is quite useful in terms of its easiness and economic use of the languages. It provides the people ease of language use with reducing the length of some nouns and phrases and helping to memorize them. It functions as phonemic and graphemic shortening. In Turkish, there are a great number of domestic acronyms (e.g. ÖSYM, PTT, and TBMM) and English/international ones as well (e.g. BBC, NATO, and NASA). The purpose of this study is to reveal if the Turkish speakers (L1) will prefer the articulation of English acronyms as in English or as in Turkish. A qualitative research method was preferred with using a quantitative data collection tool. 24 sentences, in each one was embedded an acronym, were prepared and given to 24 participants who were newly registered students (at the university). This study shows that these students pronounced nearly all of the acronyms as in English rather than Turkish. This is probably because they deem English more prestigious. The other reason might be that there is no consistency (or willingness) in terms of the utilisation of English acronyms among the public agencies alongside with the mass media and official institutions in Turkey.

Keywords: acronym; abbreviation; word-formation; grammar; linguistics

1. Introduction

Acronyms are short words or meaningless letter groups constituted from the initial letters of phrases or word groups. It is a technical term for usefulness that exists in nearly every language. These letter formations are easy and economical in terms of making effort, using time effectively, articulating and memorising them simply, etc. So acronyms are very productive for word formations.

The word creation procedures mirror not only national tendencies led by the need of semantic occurrences in the linguistic areas but also contemporary trends of globalization (Kostina N., Zerkina N., Pesina S., 2015).

There are a lot of functions that the acronyms in every language fulfil. One of them is symbolization. The word symbolization can include both trademark value and the concept of retention.

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So, here, it is possible to note that one of the reasons of using the acronyms is to keep the words in mind easily thanks to their symbolization method (Erkan M., 2016: 162).

The acronyms seem to be utilised in many fields, almost all parts of private and public life. In other words, in countless private and official institutions especially in the commercial, technical and medical areas, acronyms are immensely used (Demirezen., 2006). Every day, a new acronym comes into use in such fields. Due to the need to give new names to private and state institutions like companies and organisations' names established as a result of social and economic configurations, new acronyms or meaning expansions are occurring so quickly that dictionaries are speedily out of date and the necessity of continuous updating arises (Kayla J., Alon I., Shuly W., 2008)

Even though there is no restraint on which letters of words must be used for the establishment of acronyms in English, it is usually preferred to use the initial letters of the words or phrases as in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) or NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration).

Turkish has its own acronyms like every language of the world (PTT¹, TBMM², ÖSYM³, HES⁴). An interesting acronym of Turkish, which has recently come into use with a new application in the financial system/a new payment system services by the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey (TCMB /CBRT) should be mentioned here. It is called FAST⁵ (Fonların Anlık ve Sürekli Transferi/Instant and Continuous Transfer of Funds), a Turkish acronym with an English meaning so that it's introducing in English can be easy. The acronyms are widely used in the Turkish language. However, there are some problems in using the English/international acronyms transferred in Turkish. The Turkish speakers articulate a great number of English acronyms as in English not as in Turkish. For example. The English acronym BBC is pronounced in Turkish as in English "bi:bi:'si:" not as in Turkish "'be'be'ce"; likewise, the Turkish speakers articulate GSM not with the Turkish phonetic system "'ge'se'me" rather with English phonetic system "dji:es'em". On the other side, certain English acronyms in Turkish are pronounced with a Turkish sound system rather than the English ones. For example: DNA, is an English acronym but it is pronounced as in Turkish, that is; there was nobody among the participants who articulate DNA in Turkish with the English sound system as "di:en'er" rather than Turkish sound system as "'de'ne'a". This situation can be called a contradiction or dichotomy.

More crucial, when we consider acronyms similar as actual words, the manner of pronunciation becomes even more important. In connection with this subject, pronunciation/spelling the acronyms as in English not as in Turkish sometimes disrupts the communication and makes the sentence difficult to be understood. Here is an anecdote I experienced⁶:

When I was teaching in a high school, I purposely asked the geography teacher in the teachers' room: I asked intending the English acronym CD⁷(pronounced in English as "si:'di:"):

"Mrs. N.Ç., do you have a ce:'de with you?" ('Hocam, yanınızda ce:'de var mı?, İngilizcedeki CD kısaltmasını kastederek) When she answered and mentioned that she did not understand me, I asked again: "Mrs. N.Ç, do you carry a ce:'de with you? Maybe you will need it in the classroom." ('Hocam,

¹ Posta ve Telgraf Teşkilatı (Post and Telegraph Organization)

² Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (Grand National Assembly of Turkey)

³ Öğrenci Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi (Student Selection and Placement Center)

⁴ It can be Hidroelektrik Santralleri (Hydroelectric Power Plants) or newly formed due to Corona Virus "HES kodu" i.e. from "Hayat Eve Sığar" (Life Fits into Home)

⁵ With this new system, the people will be able to carry out money transfers between their accounts in different banks within seconds, 7 days 24 hours.

⁶ At that time, I thought of a scientific study of English abbreviations. It was the year 2012

⁷ CD: Compact Disc

ce:'dê taşıyor musunuz, hani belki sınıfta lazım olur”) She did not understand me again. "You'd better have it in your bag," I said. (Onu çantanızda tanisanız iyi olur.) She did not understand me again. While thinking that she could not understand me, another teacher said: "Our teacher (i.e. me), is speaking Turkish with you, why don't you understand?" As soon as I removed “ce:'dê” from the first sentence as pronounced in Turkish and said “si:'di:” as pronounced in English and reiterated it (without the need for the repetition of other two question sentences), she understood quickly what I asked, and all teachers laughed.

The main purpose of this study is to disclose whether the Turkish speakers (L1) will prefer the articulation of English acronyms as in English or as in Turkish. In addition to the main question, the following questions are also be answered in this study:

- Will English acronyms such as Euro “jɔə.rəʊ” and TV “ti:'vi:”, whose counterparts have been created/proposed as AVRO (as currency, “av'rɔ”), TV “te've” by the Turkish Language Institution (TDK) in the last decade, be articulated by the participants according to the English sound system or Turkish sound system? In other words, will the participants prefer English acronyms or Turkish acronyms?

- Will acronyms such as OECD, BBC, USB mentioned in other researchers' works (Çakır S., 2016; Tok Z., 2019) be confirmed namely pronounced in English or Turkish?

To find out an answer to these questions a qualitative research method was carried out using a quantitative data collection tool. 24 sentences, in each one was embedded an acronym, were prepared and given to 24 participants who were newly registered at the university. After analysing the data at the end of work, the results will be exhibited.

Many English acronyms are pronounced in Turkish as in the English. This induces many problems referred above. There are some Turkish scholars who have investigated the aforementioned problems (Balyemez, 2012:42; Erkan, M., 2016:162; Balcı, U., and Balcı T., 2019; Tok, Z., 2019: 13-23; Zülfükar H., 2007). Some focused only on Turkish acronyms complaining that the grammar books/sections do not consist of acronyms as a chapter or any part of their works (Balcı, U., and Balcı T. : 2019). Again, some examined the English acronyms in Turkish in terms of certain aspects such as orthographical and translation problems (Tok, Z., 2019).

Nevertheless, very few Turkish linguists scrutinised the English acronyms in Turkish from their point of view in terms of pronunciation. There is almost no quantitative study involving pronunciation problems of English acronyms in Turkish. This study is important because of being the first to contribute to the Turkish literature written for this theme.

As we researched, we have come up with a few working hypothesis: Our first hypothesis is that it is expected that almost all of the English acronyms used in the study will be pronounced in English by the subjects because they are simple, widely used and chosen from daily language. Our second hypothesis is that the English acronyms Euro and TV, whose equivalents proposed and issued by the Turkish Language Institution (TDK) as Avro ad TV (pronounced in Turkish as “te've”) is anticipated to be pronounced as in Turkish.

In this research, acronyms in Turkish are from the short word-groups or phrases rather than only a word involved ones. The other types of acronyms in Turkish (e.g.: "vb.", "bkz.") have not been taken into consideration.

Following the introduction section, the theoretical background as the meaning and etymology of acronym, the importance and the functions of acronyms are explained. Next, the other types of word-formations that appear to be in relation with acronyms are mentioned, then the literature review, research item, methodology, data analysis, findings, result and discussion follow.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. *The Meaning and Etymology of Acronym*

It is important to look at the etymology of an acronym, before defining and explaining it. The word "acronym" is produced from the Greek cores "acr-", which means "height, summit, or tip", and "-onym, -onymon", which means "name". This kind of word-formation, that is a neoclassical derivation, seems to have come from German in the year circa 1921 (Brockhaus Handbuch des Wissens: 1921). After the coinage of this term in the German language, it took nearly two decades to utilize first time in the English language^{8 9}. The first verification of its use in English goes back to the year 1940 when the literary work with the name "Beasts of Prey", which was a novel by Lion Feuchtwanger, was translated and the word "acronym" was quoted for the first time in English (Feuchtwanger, L., 1940).

While searching the theme, we wanted to learn what acronym means and encountered different information about it. A standardisation with respect to its definition and types is not available among neither the dictionaries nor scholars. It means that different sources define the term acronym differently. Here some expression about this linguistic unit: According to the Cambridge Dictionary of English (2021) "acronym" is: "...an abbreviation consisting of the first letters of each word in the name of something, pronounced as a word; AIDS is an acronym for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome".

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary of English (2021) defines "acronym" as "a word (such as NATO, radar, or laser) formed from the initial letter or letters of each of the successive parts or major parts of a compound term (Other Words from acronym: acronymic: adjective; acronymically: adverb)"

Collins English Dictionary (2003:15) gives the definition of the acronym as "A pronounceable name made up of series of initial letters or parts of words; for example, UNESCO for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (Acronymic or Acronymous: Adjective)"

As understood from the statements above, three irregularities or problems regarding acronyms existence. The first one is about which part of the words that acronym should consist of: the first letters, the first syllables or a larger part of the words? The second one is how it should be pronounced: as a word, as first letters of each word or a combination of both? The third one is how it should be written?

The constitution of acronyms is occasionally realised through the initial letters of the names or phrases¹⁰ such as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and PIN (personal identification number) or SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). It can occasionally be formed using syllables of the words as Benelux (BELgium, NETHERlands and LUXembourg or a combination of both kinds as radar (RADio Detection And Ranging (CNN homepage). The most recent one is COVID-19 (CORona VIRus Deases-2019) and has been set up in this way.

The written form of acronyms seems to be different, too. There are various orthographic styles of them. On the one hand, it can be capitalised as a one word (NASA, UNESCO) maintaining their capital letters. On the other hand, there are a lot of acronyms, that have turned common daily words and edited as normal words (not capitalised) such as laser (Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation) and scuba (Self-contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus).

⁸ Both "acronym" and "initialism" are called "kısaltmalar" in Turkish

⁹ In the Turkish language, the first use of the acronym goes back to the time when the World Postal Union began to be organised in the year of 1874. Along with this development, some acronyms/abbreviations related to this area were utilised in Turkish (Erkan 2016). Nevertheless, a systematic use of the term was included in the work "Kamus-i Türki" written by Şemseddin Sami in the year of 1900 (Kalfa, 2005).

¹⁰ OK is also theoretically an acronym. Claiming it has been created from the phrase from a comical modification of "ALL CORRECT" (pronounced as "ɔ:l kə'rekt").

Even the articulation of acronyms is not standardised, it seems that they are pronounced in three ways. As a well-known linguist, Yule (2010: 59), pointed out that the acronyms are characteristically articulated as new individual words as in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), or UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Furthermore, Covid-19 formed recently has the same manner of this pronunciation i.e. articulated as a word, but it is not mostly capitalised. Nevertheless, from time to time they are articulated as distinct letters, but capitalised, as CD (Compact Disc), DVD (Digital Video Disc) or CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) or an articulation of combination of both are occasionally heard as JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group).

2.2. *The Importance and the Aims of Acronyms*

The acronym is a significant word derivation instrument, which is a common usage in both written and spoken language. One of the crucial targets to set up some acronyms is that it is easy to use in both realms of written and spoken language. They are also economical in terms of time management, their creation requires less effort, their simplicity is substantial for the pronunciation, and we can remember them easily because they make the simple symbolisation possible for us. Furthermore, we get free space with their formation because of some nouns or phrases are too long.

The acronyms represent a method for shortening the words and phrases, because of a need in daily life in domestic and international fields (n.b. those in politics, finance, education, justice, law, state institutions). The acronym is crucial for every language. There are countless national (ÖSYM → Student Selection and Placement Centre) and international (UN/BM → United Nations/ Birleşmiş Milletler) acronyms. Nearly every day a new acronym both in the national or international area appears and comes into use e.g. COVID-19 or a newly formed one like nomophobia¹¹.

The names of national and international institutions, in scientific branches esp. medical field usually consist of acronyms. We think the area of medicine¹² is where the acronyms are essentials, the most formed and used. For example, when we run a blood test in a hospital, we can see that almost all analysed entries in the blood test report are written/used with the acronyms.

Every day, a new acronym is created and comes into use in daily life on the ground that particularly the scientific developments in the era of the digital age-communication and telecommunication- also in economic life, as well as in medicine happen very rapidly (the language use is accelerated in this way). The possible reasons for the need of creating new acronyms can be counted such as human mobility and economic activity. They are induced by the so called consume societies.

2.3. *Other types of word-formations that appear to be in relation of the acronym*

Sometimes, the words "initialism" and "acronym" are used interchangeably. Even though both mean constituting the abbreviations from the first letter/letters of the words in a phrase a distinction in terms of reading that seems to exist between both. If the new constructed word is pronounced as a word, it is an acronym, if each letter of the new constructed word is pronounced separately it is an initialism. Nevertheless, it goes beyond the attention that both acronym and initialism are abbreviations.

There are some other processes, in which new words are created, that stay in closed relations with acronyms; clipping and blending are two of them. While clipping, which is another way of word-

¹¹ **NO MOBILE PHOne PhOBIA** is utilised to define a psychological state when people have a fear of being isolated from mobile phone connectivity.

¹² During the research of acronyms in scientific journals, I encountered even with the dictionaries or thick books made up with the acronyms in relevant fields, mostly in the English language.

formation as 'fan' (fanatic) (Yule, 2010: 56), occurs only in one word, acronym occurs in a set of words or phrases. In addition, blending (also called as a portmanteau word, blend word, and telescope word) is resulted normally by bringing together the beginning of one word and linking it to the end of the other word as 'bit' (binary/digit). Similarly, in contrast to the acronym blending is a process occurring inside of one word. However, the acronym is a process occurring in more than a word i.e. a group of words.

Regarding the mentioned confusion, some linguists (Heller, L. G. and Macris J. 1968: 201-208) tried to emphasize the distinction between these three shortening devices. At the same time, it was reported by the Baum, S. V. (1962: 48-50) that the effectiveness of technical disappearance if the meaning is not strictly delineated. He expressed his worry about the utility of the word acronym that so-called “blending” or “portmanteau” forms (as “motel” from “motor hotel”; “brunch” from “breakfast and lunch”) are about preserving the sense of acronym. At the first step, the scholars are expected to draw a boundary between the term acronym and other related ones.

Baum, S.V. (1962) seems to be right on the ground that the dissimilarity between an initialism and an acronym is nearly disappeared these days. It represents the meaning of initialism too, though used it inversely from the acronym in the past.

Because there is no agreement for the acronyms with respect to their formation, definition, and pronunciation. The term acronym is preferred in this study rather than initialism and abbreviation. No matter whether it is the formation of the first letters of words¹³ or phrases, a syllable from the back or front part of the words, or a larger section from the words (or any of the shortening), and no matter how it will be pronounced as a word or as letters it will be called an acronym.

3. Literature Review in Turkish

We must note that there is no distinction between acronym and initialism in Turkish. ‘Kısaltmalar’ (Abbreviations) is frequently used for both terms. Therefore, when used the word “acronym” in this study, it should be understood in that meaning.

The investigation of the acronym is very rare among the Turkish linguists. However, there have been some studies carried out pertaining to the subject in recent years. (Balyemez, 2012:42; Erkan, M., 2016:162; Balcı, U., and Balcı T.: 2019; Tok, Z., 2019: 13-23; Zülfükar H., 2007)

Most of the researchers have heavily figured out acronyms from the view of either their writing styles or translation problems however there have been nearly no investigation in conjunction with their pronunciations. Certain scholars complain that the acronyms are not included in the grammar books (Balcı, U., and Balcı T., 2019).

Tok, Z. (2019: 13-23)¹⁴ studied the international abbreviations regarding their spelling and pronunciation in Turkish and French from a comparative point of view, taking French as the source and Turkish as aimed languages. He came to the conclusion that if the international acronyms (esp. those formed in English) are translated into French, they are pronounced in French but not the same pattern in Turkish.

Zülfükar H. (2007) states that there is a dilemma in the pronunciation of English acronyms in Turkish, giving some examples like ABS¹⁵ (pronounced as “‘a’be’s’e” in Turkish) and GSM¹⁶

¹³ Merely one word violates the validity of the acronym. Because it must consist of two or more than a word i.e. a group of words or a phrase.

¹⁴ Certain items in this study are also have been in his focus as: **BBC**, **OECD** with the research item numbers (22) and (23)

¹⁵ Antilock Braking System

¹⁶ Global System for Mobile Communications

(pronounced as “dʒi:es'em” like in English)¹⁷. He continues and says that this dilemma causes a problem not only in education but also in social life.

Cakır S. (2016:6) carried out a study, related with the technological novelties, of loan words and five English acronyms one of which i.e. USB is also included in this empirical study with the number 13 on the list. He found out that the whole participants of the university pronounced the English acronyms as in English; they utilized them in accordance with the English sound system rather than with the Turkish one.

On the other hand, it appears that some acronyms (e.g. ABD vs. the USA) were translated into Turkish and their usage is already settled and pronounced in Turkish but some (e.g. NATO→ North Atlantic Treaty Organization) are not translated, even their shortened forms have not been recommended by Turkish Language Institution (TDK), and currently pronounced in Turkish.

The following table illustrates the English acronyms used in Turkish together with whether they are pronounced in English or the Turkish sound system.

Some acronyms in the Table 1 have been taken from the Turkish scholars’ studies (Tok, Z., 2019; Zülfükar H., 2007) and some are added by the authors of this study. We can also see if the Turkish language has its own acronyms in against of English, or not. Turkish has only 3 out of 13 (ABD, KOAH, and DSÖ) acronyms, pronounced in Turkish, while all others are English acronyms used in Turkish and pronounced with the English sound system. On the other side, we can see 7 out of 13 acronyms are articulated with English.

Generally, there seems to be that there is an inconsistency of using English (international) acronyms in Turkish with respect to their articulations and uses. It is possible to categorise them in four groups as given below. It may be far more complex than thought (an incongruence).

1. Using the same acronym in Turkish as in English; the pronunciation of the acronym is as in Turkish e.g. NATO “'natə”; VIP: “'vip”; DNA “'de'ne'a” ;

2. Using the same acronym in Turkish as in English; the pronunciation of the acronym is as in English. These can be seen as common use in many areas such as the pharmaceutical industry, e-government documents, detailed stock tracking and website, social media profile sharing; here are some examples from telecommunication and technic areas: BBC: "bi:bi:'si:”; QR: “'kju:'a:” (used in the banking system); Gmail: "dʒi:meɪl”; MS (disease): “em'es”; N95 (surgical masks): “en də'ksən beş”¹⁸ (all media organs in Turkey, esp. tv channels, use it with English pronunciation; nobody says it is wrong); CC: “si:si:” (in email or technics for car engines or in drug dose adjustment); MRI: “em.a:r'ai” (Health: Magnetic Resonance Imaging); LG: “'eldʒi:.”; HD: “'eitʃ'di:.”; HDMI: “'eitʃ'di:em'ai”; CD: “si:'di:.”; DVD: “di:vi:'di:.”; VCD: “vi:si:'di:.”; PC: “pi:'si:.” (Personel Computer); MP3: “em.pi:'θri:.”; SMS: “es.em'es”; USB: “ju:es'bi” etc.

3. Using the same acronym in Turkish as in English; the pronunciation of the acronym is in both Turkish and English e.g. IMF: “ai.em'ef” or “i:me'fe”; HIV: “hi'v” or “'eitʃ.ai'vi:.”;

4. There are translated acronyms in Turkish from the English one; the pronunciation of the acronym is in Turkish. ABD (USA): “a'be'de”

We can clearly notice in the categories that the category 2 is commonly used far more than others, and in English pronounced type of acronyms occur the most. The items utilised for the data collection are also explained in this study.

¹⁷ Some acronyms in this study are also available by chance here as: **GSM**, **BBC**, **OECD**, and **CD** with the research item number (24), (22), (23), and (8) respectively.

¹⁸ In such acronyms, the letters are pronounced in English but the numbers are pronounced in Turkish. The subjects did the same.

Table 1. Some English acronyms and in which language they are pronounced

(English) Acronym	Turkish Acronym	Existing translation/derivation in Turkish	Pronounced in Turkish	Pronounced in English
NATO → North Atlantic Treaty Organization	NATO	Kuzey Atlantik Anlaşması Örgütü	YES	-
USA → United States of America	ABD	Amerika Birleşik Devletleri	YES	-
COPD → Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	KOAH	Kronik obstrüktif akciğer hastalığı	YES	-
OECD → Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	OECD	Ekonomik İşbirliği ve Kalkınma Teşkilatı	-	YES
IMF → International Monetary Fund	IMF	Uluslararası Para Fonu	YES	YES
BBC → British Broadcasting Corporation	BBC	Britanya Yayın Kuruluşu	-	YES
UNICEF → United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund	UNICEF	Birleşmiş Milletler Çocuklara Yardım Fonu	-	YES
WHO → World Health Organisation	DSÖ	Dünyas Sağlık Örgütü	YES	-
ADSL → Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line	ADSL	Asimetrik Sayısal Abone Hattı	-	YES
ABS → Antilock Braking System	ABS	Kilitlenmez Fren Sistemi	YES	-
CD → Compact Disc	CD	Yoğun Disk	-	YES
GSM → Global System for Mobile Communications	GSM	Mobil İletişim İçin Küresel Sistem	-	YES
LPG → Liquefied Petroleum Gas	LPG	Sıvılaştırılmış Petrol Gazı	YES	-

* The relevant column, Translation/derivation In Turkish, has not been added to the table because there is a translation in Turkish for each of these acronyms.

4. Research Items

In this paper, the acronyms, read by the participants, are placed at the end of each sentence. The reason placing them not at the beginning is to not manipulate the opinion of the participants, because it is necessary to know what the acronym is about in the sentence. The sentences were not taken into consideration in terms of grammar and spelling, only the way of reading the acronyms (i.e. articulation) were evaluated¹⁹. While choosing the acronyms, we tended not to choose from difficult ones or rarely used institutions and organizations and only chose the acronyms that are frequently used in daily life i.e. very common in mass media, especially on radio and TV news²⁰.

In other words, we were careful about the selection of acronyms included in this empirical study; So, they should have been from easy ones, whose frequency of usage are high. For example, at the

¹⁹ Although there are acronyms selected from different areas, they have given scattered in the paper in order not to affect the focus of participants.

²⁰ Some acronyms (e.g. **OECD**) seem to be international institutions' names they entered in Turkish through the English language. Therefore, they will be treated as English ones.

beginning of the data collection process, the acronyms from the “Defence/Military” used and mentioned about very frequently in Turkish media (visual or written) were chosen.

The English acronyms used in the empirical study in their sequence numbers can be seen below.

1. PCR test, 2. DVD, 3. N95 mask, 4. Euro, 5. TV, 6. S-400, 7. F16, 8. CD, 9. S8 (Classroom), 10. CNN, 11. F-35, 12. GB (Telephone), 13. USB, 14. F3 (Classroom), 15. NTV (TV channel), 16. FBI, 17. 0 RH-positive (Blood Group), 18. Gmail, 19. SMS, 20. GSM, 21. CIA, 22. BBC, 23. OECD. 24. HIV-Virus.

The acronyms used in this research are classified according to the area they used as follows:

Technical/Daily Life (7): DVD, TV, CD, GB (Telephone), USB, SMS, GSM

Medicine (4): PCR test, N95 Mask, 0 RH+ (Blood Group), HIV-Virus

Finance/International (1): Euro

Defence/Military (3): S-400, F16, F35

International Institutions (5) : CNN, FBI, CAA, BBC, OECD

Daily life (4): S8 (Classroom), F3 (Classroom), NTV (TV channel), Gmail

As you see from above, some acronyms might be considered in daily life or technical categories; in both cases, they are the simple ones used by citizens in daily life. Likewise, while choosing them, it was a time when the Corona Virus was on top agenda; therefore, it was relevant to comprise some acronyms from the area of medicine.

We should note that TDK suggested ‘Avro’ and introduced this term over two decades ago but it appears that replacing it in place of the English term is difficult, because it was not suggested in earlier times when the “EU” currency founded, i.e. introduced very late. Furthermore, something must be explained about the blood types as well: Blood types such as “A”, “B” and “0” are pronounced in Turkish and the symbols (+) or (-) are pronounced as ‘Positive’ or ‘Negative’ not as in Turkish “Olumlu” or “Olumsuz”. The same case is not valid for RH; it is an English acronym, articulated as in English. What is more interesting/strange is that RH is not pronounced both in Turkish or in English; The participants pronounced “R” as “e:i” and “H” as “haɟ” but the question is that where does “e:i” sound come from? Because the letter “R” in Turkish is expected to be articulated as “re:”.

The articulation²¹ of single letters²² such “S”, “M” or “F”, probably more than these, are nearly have become articulated like in English not in Turkish. People say “Galaxy S4” as in English not as in Turkish like “ga'laksi se. dørt.”. They prefer the English one not the Turkish one. The same things can be said about “M” and “F”²³.

5. Methodology

In this study, a qualitative research method was carried out by using a quantitative data collection tool. The data of the research were collected through "voice recording" from the students as a

²¹ Even those who do not use the English articulation are considered odd in Turkey now.

²² I frequently witnessed that Turkish speakers articulate them as in English not only in the technical area but also in daily life. For instance, I was at Architecture Faculty and asked some students 'Where is the classroom 'S4'? (I said it as 'SeDört,' as in Turkish), they answered me using the English counterpart like “‘EsDört’ is in at the end of the hall”. Why not ‘Se’ but ‘Es’? Likewise, ‘F8’ ‘EfSekiz’ not ‘FeSekiz’ is preferred.

Another anecdote: As I was in the phone shop few times I called the device in my hand as Galaxy ‘Se10’ (in Turkish), the customer consultant insistently said ‘Es 10’ (in English) as if he had never heard of mine.

This is the reason I put such examples in the empirical study.

²³ We constantly observe in daily life that the Turkish letters/alphabet are under a tremendous (so called attack/) attack of the English sound system not merely due to acronyms' pronunciation. This research raises the question 'is it the end of the Turkish alphabet (!)' because so many Turkish letters not only those in acronyms but also some others esp. S, M, F, are being degenerated/destroyed these days. Will they disappear from Turkish alphabets soon (!)?

quantitative measurement tool. This technique has been applied since the research of bilingual children were carried out for the language acquisition and development of migrations. Though there is no the best method in linguistics, It can be considered to be a useful method (Verhoeven L. Segers E., 2002)

A paper consisting of 24 sentences was prepared. Each of the sentences included an English acronym in written form. The acronyms were scattered randomly in the paper, and they were placed to the end of the sentences so that the participants could know what the subject was about. Otherwise, they could not realise the relation of the acronyms to the subject. To increase the liability of the sentences, two academicians checked them in terms of grammatic and punctuation.

The research population is the Turkish speakers in Turkey. The sample group consists of 24 students newly registered at the university. The reason for choosing the group is about their age and their education level. These two factors can influence the language behaviour of individuals, because they usually are used to the foreign linguistic items.

All the 24 students were taken in a classroom one by one. They were required to read all of the sentences i.e. the 24 items on the paper. They were told that they could read as quickly as they wanted. Their voices were recorded, taking their consent. The aim was to know if they articulate these English acronyms according to the English phonetic or the Turkish one.

At the first step, the voices on “Voice Recording Application” were transcribed on paper. At the second step, to reach the results, the findings were analysed by quantitative analysis method.

5.1. Sample / Participants

The sample group of this scientific research has been selected from the students who were newly admitted to one university. The data was gathered at the time when these students registered themselves at the directorate of student affairs. A total number of 24 students as volunteers, 12 boys, and 12 girls contributed to the study. The average age of the participants is 19.79. Diagram 1 below shows the average age distribution of both sexes.

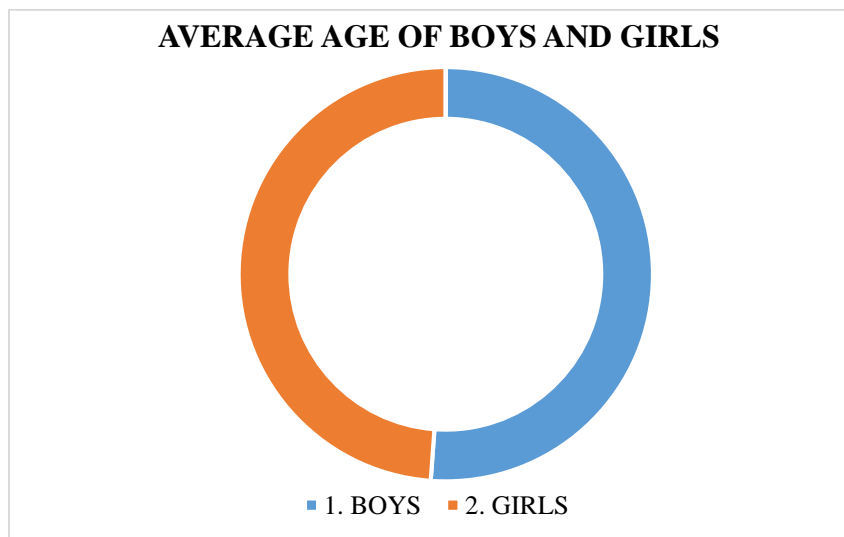


Diagram 1. Average age of the sample group

Average Age of Male Students: 20.25

Average Age of Female Students: 19.33

As it can be seen in Table 2, there is not a big difference between the average age of female students in the participant sample group and the average age of male students.

Research Limitations:

While preparing the English acronyms, it was thought that only commonly known ones should have been selected i.e. they were expected to be known by the majority of Turkish society. Because there are so many foreign acronyms particularly the English than Turkish that it was impossible to investigate all with our limited time and energy.

One of the shortcomings of the study is that different age groups with different social and economic backgrounds as well as educational levels have not been involved in. To do the investigation with a larger group would be better.

6. Findings and Data Analysis

The findings of this empirical study extracted from the recording were shown in tables and diagrams. After collecting the raw data, they have been depicted through numbers seen in the table below.

Table 2 illustrates the 24 English acronyms together with their English and Turkish meaning. The figures on the right side (the pronunciation of 24 students) show the numbers that whether they have been pronounced by the participants in English or Turkish.

Looking at the table above, apart from PCR, EURO, TV, OECD, HIV-Virus, we observe that all the English acronyms (with 100 %), are read/used with their English pronunciations. In other words, the participants preferred the English sound system while reading them in sentences. Even acronyms like PCR, EURO, TV, OECD, HIV-Virus have been articulated as in English by a great number of students. Those articulated as in Turkish are few (It is possible that some did not know about the PCR test. In fact, the Covid-19 virus was on the agenda while this research conducted). We can clearly perceive in the table that a vast majority of the sample group preferred the English sound system, not the Turkish one while reading the English acronyms. This shows an important linguistic behaviour of Turkish speakers.

Considering the total numbers of the English acronyms (24 items), those pronounced as in Turkish are quite a few; so the differences between the boys' and girls' pronunciations will not be analysed/commented on due to availability in a small amount.

Table 2. The English Acronyms Used in the Study

(English) Acronym	Turkish Acronyms (Counterparts)	Translation/derivation in Turkish exists	Number of students pronounced in Turkish	Number of students pronounced in English
1.PCR test → Polymerase Chain Reaction	PCR Testi	Polimeraz Zincirleme Reaksiyonu	4=2F+2M*	20
2.DVD → Digital Versatile Disc	DVD	Dijital Çok Yönlü Disk	-	24
3.N95 mask	N95 Maskesi	N95 Maskesi	-	24
4.Euro → European Currency	AVRO	Avrupa Para Birimi	2=M	22
5.TV → Television	TV	Televizyon	2=1M+1F	22
6.S-400 → Missile System	S-400	Füze Sistemi	-	24
7.F-16 → Military Aircraft	F-16	Savaş Uçağı	-	24
8.CD → Compact Diskplayer	CD	Yoğun Disk	-	24
9.S8 → (Classroom):	S8	S8 Sınıfı	-	24
10.CNN → Cable News Network	CNN	Kablolu Haber Ağı	-	24
11.F-35 → Military Aircraft	F-35	Savaş Uçağı	-	24
12.GB → Gigabyte	GB	Gigabayt	-	24
13.USB → Universal Serial Bus	USB	Evrensel Seri Veriyolu	-	24
14.F3 → (Classroom	F3	S3 Sınıfı	-	24
15.NTV → TV channel	NTV	NTV TV Kanalı	-	24
16.FBI → Federal Bureau of Investigation	FBI	Federal Soruşturma Bürosu	-	24
17. 0 RH+ → Blood Group	0RH+	Kan Grubu Türü	-	24
18.Gmail → Google Mail	Gmail	Google E-Postası	-	23
19.SMS → short message service	SMS	Kısa Mesaj Servisi	-	24
20. GSM → Global System for Mobile Communication	GSM	Mobil İletişim için Küresel Sistem	-	24

21.CIA → Central Intelligence Agency	CIA	Merkezi İstihbarat Teşkilatı	-	24
22.BBC →The British Broadcasting Corporation	BBC	Britanya Yayın Kuruluşu	-	24
23.OECD →Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	OECD	Ekonomik İşbirliği ve Kalkınma Teşkilatı	4=3M+1F	20
24.HIV-Virus → Human Immunodeficiency Virus	HIV-Virüsü	HİV-Virüsü İnsan bağışıklık eksikliği virüsü	5=3M+2F	19

* M: Shortened form of 'Male'; F: Shortened form of 'Female' students

It is useful to illustrate separately the five items partly pronounced as in Turkish in the following.

Table 3. Percentage rates of acronyms articulated as in Turkish

English/international Acronyms	Number Pronounced as in Turkish	Percentages
PCR Test	4 out of 24	16.66 %
Euro	2 out of 24	8.33 %
TV	2 out of 24	8.33 %
OECD	4 out of 24	16.66 %
HIV-Virus	5 out of 24	20.83
Mean/percentage:		30.59 %

In the table above, the percentages of five English acronyms, pronounced moderately as in Turkish, are given. The table depicts that merely five acronyms were read partially as in Turkish. The average percentage of these five acronyms in all acronyms is 30 %. The students pronounced 70 % of these items as in English i.e. they did not pronounce most of these five acronyms as in Turkish.

As the EU named its currency Euro in December the 16th, 1995, it was used among people in Turkish like in the English sound system. The Turkish people pronounced Euro as "ju.'ro" at the beginning. Unfortunately, Avro "av'ro" was introduced not quick enough and the Turkish speakers did not perceive it on time. It seems from the figures that the speakers have not replaced the pronounce of Avro with Euro yet. So, the same case happened for TV (in English: "ti:'vi:" and Turkish "te've"). Only a small number of participants (8.33) articulated TV as in Turkish.

For pronouncing PCR, OECD, and HIV correctly, one should have a high level of education, perhaps this is the reason they articulated them at nearly the same rate. We should notice that Hiv-Virus is not frequently used on Turkish mass media as before. It is a so-called old subject. These young participants might not be familiar with it. For the PCR test, it is necessary that individuals know the information circulating about the virus on the scientific agenda, which gives the evidence that they do not possess the related information.

It is likely that they could not know even what the full form of these acronyms are, or for what purpose they are being used.

7. Results and Discussion

Today, because of the rapid development in science, economy, medicine, technology, the English (internationally; as a result of globalisation) acronyms are widely used. A disparity exists regarding the English acronyms in Turkish. It seems that some English acronyms are articulated in Turkish as English sound systems (e.g. CD, BBC, NTV); some others with Turkish ones (e.g. DNA, NATO, and COVID-19) The target of this study was to reveal if the selected 24 acronyms (applied to 24 university students) would be articulated as in English or as in Turkish.

Before starting this work, we also hypothesized that the subjects would pronounce almost all of the English acronyms included in the study as in English, because they are simple, widely used and taken from daily language. At the same time, we expected that the English acronyms such as Euro and TV, whose equivalents proposed and introduced by the Turkish Language Institution (TDK) as Avro and TV “te've”, would be pronounced as in the Turkish language.

The hypothesis at the beginning of the research have been confirmed. So, the study shows that participants articulated a great number of English acronyms (19 out of 24) with English sound system rather than Turkish; even the other five acronyms left have been pronounced by the sample group in 83.34% as in English.

With respect to the young generation, it is noteworthy to say that English acronyms are considered more prestigious in the society. That point of view may have been effective in preference of English acronym instead of the Turkish ones, even though some of them were suggested and issued by Turkish authorities such as AVRO (EURO) and TV (te've). Of course, this not the only reason for choosing foreign elements i.e. acronyms. There are many other grounds that may influence on that such as the frequency of use in written and visual media (esp. on TV), on telecommunication devices, on the internet, as well as social media. That the Turkish equivalents, in against of English ones, have not been found/derived or suggested, e.g. there is no Turkish acronym for BBC derived/translated by the Turkish Language Institution, is other reason to be counted here.

The numbers for the Turkish acronyms (like Avro and TV) used/articulated as in Turkish by the participants are just a few leads to an explanation to be made. This situation reminds us that the items produced by Turkish authorities to replace the English elements have not been gained acceptance by the young population of Turkey, yet.

The other question was whether acronyms such as OECD, BBC, USB mentioned in other researchers' works would be confirmed, or not, that they would be pronounced as in English. The results show that all the subjects articulated BBC and USB in English; again, 20 participants out of 24 (with 83.34%) read the acronym OECD as in English.

The reason, why a few candidates pronounce the OECD as in Turkish, may be their level of knowledge or that, maybe, they did not know the meaning and function of this international institution before. It is an acronym that requires advanced education and knowledge. It occurs more in scientific texts and news sections of mass media. Shortly to say, not knowing these before might also be a reason that the participants articulate them as in Turkish.

If these acronyms are written and intonated as in English in mass media (esp. on television channels) by news providers or announcers and government officials and nobody fixes this, it can be said that it becomes more and more normal for the citizens to articulate them as in English.

Some important suggestions can be extracted from this empirical study:

- Turkish Language Institution (TDK) should not only recommend the articulation of some international acronyms, but also try to find their equivalent ones like WHO as DSÖ.

- Derivation and translation of foreign acronyms esp. the English ones for the Turkish are necessary actions to be taken by the institutions responsible.

- The authorities should legislate the essential and related regulations and exhort a control on the mass media esp. national TV channels. Besides, the authors, intellectuals, esp. artists are expected to be careful about the correct forms regulated by the Turkish authorities; the correct forms should be implemented/obeyed by Turkish speakers.

-It must be mandatory to use acronyms derived or translated by the Turkish Language Institution (TDK). Otherwise, a mere suggestion may not be sufficient. Turkish Language Institution has not created any equivalent Turkish acronyms regarding acronym/shortening forms of BBC, NATO, IMF, which expected to be done. In this case, they would be BYK, KAAÖ, and UPF in Turkish, respectively. It is necessary to act for all other acronyms coming from English/international into the Turkish language.

We constantly observe in daily life that the Turkish letters/alphabet are under a tremendous influence (or attack) from the English sound system. Due to acronyms' pronunciation n.b. so many Turkish letters not only those in acronyms but also some others esp. "S, M, F" are being degenerated/destroyed, as the example in the study have shown. It seems the Turkish speakers do not care about that and go on degenerating the other letters.

8. Conclusion

The importance of this work is that it is the premier work done in this linguistic area. Contributing to the literature in the field has been one of the objectives of the study.

This study was carried out on 24 participants. The studies that will be done in the future in conjunction with this matter should be realised by surging the number of subjects and that of English acronyms with the aim of getting a more comprehensive analysis. Furthermore, not only young people but also the different age groups with various educational levels may be involved in the next investigations.

These results are very clear and reveal a lot about the language attitude and language use of the university students. Their preferences are in the favour of using English acronyms. It is highly possible that the prestige of English is the cardinal reason for the preferences of English acronyms' pronunciation by the sample group. The Turkish letters/alphabet are under a significant influence of the English acronyms due to their articulation.

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Appendix A.

Aşağıdaki cümleler dilbilim araştırmaları için kurgulanmıştır. Sadece bilimsel amaçlı kullanılacaktır. Lütfen düşünmeden sadece okuyunuz. İstedığınız kadar hızlı okuyabilirsiniz.

(The following sentences are fictionalized for a linguistic research. They will be used for scientific purposes only. Please just read without thinking!. You can read as fast as you want.)

1. Corona Virüsü tespit etmek için kullanılan en iyi yöntem PCR testidir.
(The best method used to detect Corona Virus is PCR test.)
2. Daha önce film ve müzik gibi büyük boyutlu veriler DVD ile kaydedilirdi.
(Previously, large data such as movies and music were recorded with DVD.)
3. Corona virüsü önlemek amacıyla cerrahi maskenin yanında N95 maskesi de kullanılmaktadır.
(In addition to the surgical mask, N95 mask is also used to prevent corona virus.)
4. Döviz her gün yükseliyor. Dolar 7'yi geçerken Euro 8'e dayandı.
(Currency is rising every day. While the dollar exceeded 7, Euro reached 8.)
5. Dizi film seyretmeyi sevmem ama geçen hafta TV'de güzel bir film seyrettim.
(I don't like watching TV series, but I watched a good movie on TV last week.)
6. Türkiye'nin Rusya'dan füze savunma sistemi olan S-400'lerin satın almasına yönelik anlaşmanın imzalanması bekleniyor.
(The agreement, Turkey will do the purchase of S-400, which is a missile defence system from Russia is expected to be signed.)
7. Savaş uçağı olan F16 hem taktik hem de avcı uçağıdır.
(The F16, fighter jet, is both tactical and pursuit plane.)
8. Şimdi flaş disk çok yaygın ama eskiden CD daha yaygındı.
(Flash disk is very common nowadays, but in the past, CD was more common.)
9. Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Binasında S8 sınıfı birinci kattadır.
(At the Faculty of Science and Letters Building, Class S8 is on the first floor.)
10. Amerika'dan yayın yapan ve dünyaca tanınan CNN haber kanalının dili İngilizcedir.
(The language of the world-renowned CNN news channel, broadcasting from the USA, is English.)
11. Türkiye Amerika Birleşik Devletlerinden 100 tane F-35 savaş uçağı satın alacak.
(Turkey will buy 100 35 fighter jets from the United States.)
12. Türk Telekom abonelerine 200 GB limitsiz internet seçeneğı sunuyor.
(Turk Telekom offers 200 GB unlimited internet option to its subscribers.)
13. Kablo üzerinden veri aktarmak birkaç biçimde mümkündür. Bunlardan bir tanesi 1996 yılında çıkan USB ile veri aktarma biçimidir.
(Transferring data over the cable is possible in several ways. One of them is the form of data transfer via USB, which came out in 1996.)
14. Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesinde F3 sınıfı koridorun sonundadır.
(At the Faculty of Fine Arts, F3 class is at the end of the corridor.)
15. Televizyon seyrederken baktığım haber kanallarından bir tanesi de NTV'dir.

(While watching television, NTV is also one of the news channels that I look at.)

16. Kısaltması Federal Soruşturma Bürosu olan FBI filmlerden dolayı çok tanınır.

(The FBI, whose acronym is the Federal Bureau of Investigation, is well known due to the movies.)

17. Benim kan grubum 0 RH-pozitif iken eşimin 0 RH-negatiftir.

(While my blood type is 0 RH-positive, my wife's is 0 RH-negative.)

18. Onun bir hotmail bir de gmail hesabı var.

(He has a hotmail account and a gmail account.)

19. Ailenizle görüşmek için elektronik postanın yanı sıra SMS gönderimi de bir seçenektir.

(In addition to e-mail, SMS sending is also an option to meet with your family.)

20. Halk arasında ‘telefon numarası’ olarak bilinse de aslında ‘GSM numarası’ demek daha doğrudur; GSM ‘Cep Telefonu İletişim Protokolü’nün kısaltmasıdır.

(Although it is known as "telephone number" among the people, it is more correct to say "GSM number"; It is the abbreviation of GSM ‘Mobile Phone Communication Protocol.’)

21. Merkezi İstihbarat Teşkilatı kısacası CIA Amerika’nın dış ülkelerle ilgili bilgi toplayan kuruluşudur.

(The Central Intelligence Agency, in short, the CIA is America's organization that collects information about foreign countries.)

22. Kısaltması ‘Britanya Yayın Kuruluş’ olan BBC önce televizyon sonra radyo yayını yapmıştır.

(The BBC, whose abbreviation is "British Broadcasting Corporation", first broadcast television and then radio.)

23. Uluslararası bir ekonomi örgütü olan OECD’in genel merkezi Fransa’dadır.

(The headquarter of OECD, an international economic organization, is in France.)

24. Birçok diğer belirtilerin yanında boğaz ağrısı ve boğazda iltihaplanma HIV-Virüsün en çok görülen belirtileridir.

(Along with many other symptoms, sore throat and inflammation of the throat are the most common symptoms of the HIV-Virus).

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