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Correct pronunciation as work ethics in teacher education

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the self-perceptions of the English teachers in Turkey from the aspect of correct pronunciation as work ethics in teacher education. The vast majority of non-natives fail to achieve native speaker competence and performance in pronunciation. Considering that majority of the English teachers in Turkey are non-native speakers of English and the role models of the non-native learners of English, a necessity to analyze the pronunciation from the aspect of work ethics occurred. For this purpose, a questionnaire with 25 items including the aspects of professional requirements, relations with colleagues, international clubs and foundations and the point of students was developed. The collected data were analyzed using independent samples t-test and ANOVA. The participants were 30 Turkish teachers of English, 21 of whom were familiar with the code of ethics. The findings demonstrated that those who were familiar with the code of ethics and had higher education degree outperformed the other participants although the difference between these groups was found out not to be statistically significant. The most and least scored areas were the professional requirements and international clubs and organizations respectively. It is suggested that an institution be established in Turkey to standardize the code of ethics, familiarize the teachers with its components and guide them during the teaching process.

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Keywords: pronunciation; code of ethics; teacher education; non-native teachers of English

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1. Introduction

Teaching pronunciation has been a challenge especially for the non-native speakers of English due to being the primary aspect in which fossilization occurs. Han (2004) argues that the vast majority of the second language learners fail to achieve native speaker competence in pronunciation. Therefore, correct pronunciation requires greater interest and needs to be researched more considering the fact that most of the English teachers in Turkey are non-native speakers of English and they are the role models of the non-native learners of English. The fact that pronunciation is a problematic area for the non-native English teachers requires the pronunciation of English teachers to be analyzed in the aspect of work ethics.

1.1. Theoretical background

1.1.1. Work ethics

The term ‘work ethics’ is defined as “a belief in the moral value and importance of work” in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2009). Although work ethics have commenced being a trendy topic recently, there are still a few ambiguities regarding it. Hill and Zinsmeister (2012) argue that ethical teaching means engaging behaviors and responsibilities in ways expected by students, affiliated institution and discipline with the purpose of constructing courses and environments which foster learning, evaluating learning fairly, and treating students respectfully. However, what makes it a problem is that unless there is not a definite description of what is ethical or not, it can be problem causing for teachers to shape their teaching based on an ambiguous term. Another problem can stem from the fact that even though there are available descriptions regarding ethical teaching, if English teachers are not familiar with the content of it; it is inevitable that unethical teaching will occur.

Considering the needs of standardization to prevent the previously mentioned ethical concerns, countries or associations decide on and determine these rules to be obeyed by each and every educator in the field. To exemplify, the concerns which guided the New Zealand Teachers Council to determine the content of the code of ethics are as follows:

- “How to ensure teachers have "ownership" of any code and the degree of consultation that should be undertaken in the development of this Code.”
- “What is the balance between the aspirational and prescriptive/regulatory nature of the Code?”
- “What are the resources available for the ongoing development and management of the Code?”
- “How/who is to regulate/enforce the Code?”
- “How would a general Code translate into a working document for individual teachers, schools or centers?”
- “What is the status of the Treaty of Waitangi in relation to the Code?”
- “How to ensure ethical institutions/schools and centers as well as ethical teachers?”

(The New Zealand Teachers Council, n.d.)

In order to eliminate the ethical concerns, there are many variations of the code of ethics published or available for educators. For instance, AAE Advisory Board and the Executive Committee of AAE (n.d.) suggests a code of ethics comprising four categories: Ethical conduct towards students, ethical conduct towards practices and performance, ethical conduct towards professional colleagues and ethical conduct towards professionals and colleagues. The overall purpose underlying the code of ethics is to provide ethical and fair education which is closer to perfect and to standardize the rules that apply for the teaching profession. A statement which best summarizes the main goal of developing the code of ethics for the ideal teachers is as follows: “The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of the democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunities for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards.” (National Education Association, 1975). Although there are slight differences among the code of ethics determined by the countries and associations, there are some basic ideas applicable for all of them. These rules include treating the students fairly, not causing any discriminations or any advantages for the

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