

Teacher education, professional development and reflective practice in the teaching of English pronunciation

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The last decade has witnessed a resurgent interest in the teaching of second or additional language (L2) pronunciation (Lee, Jang and Plonsky, 2015). However, many of the methods and techniques that teachers use hail from earlier periods of interest, which largely preceded the emergence of empirical pronunciation research (Murphy and Baker, 2015). Other techniques seem to be based on teacher intuitions. This positions evidence-based pronunciation instruction as a relatively new enterprise within the larger field of L2 teaching and learning.

In this presentation, I will begin by highlighting why I believe explicit pronunciation instruction is important. I will then outline the extent to which teacher training programs prepare instructors to teach pronunciation, and underscore some risks associated with what I consider a piecemeal and largely remedial approach to professional development in this area. The consequences of inadequate teacher preparation will be demonstrated by way of a recent survey of teacher beliefs and practices (Thomson, 2013) and through analysis of widely used pronunciation teaching resources. The objective of my presentation is to raise participants' awareness of the complexities involved in teaching L2 pronunciation, and to encourage pre-service and in-service teachers to critically reflect on pronunciation teaching resources, with reference to recent research on the efficacy of pronunciation instruction (Thomson & Derwing, 2015).