DETERMINATION OF THE VOICE QUALITY PREFERENCES OF ENGLISH TEACHERS THROUGH PROSPECTIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS' OBSERVATION REPORTS

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Abstract

In this study, the observation reports prepared in 14 weeks' time in 2014-2015 education years by prospective English teachers were examined to find out the voice quality preference of English teachers in eight different high schools in Erzurum. With a case study design, observation reports were categorically aggregated suitable to the pre-existing codes constructed by Pittam (1987). English teachers' aptitude and preference to use voice quality under the pre-figured codes as breathy, whispery, creaky, nasal and tense voices were tried to be identified within the evaluations of pre-service English teachers. The research findings showed that English teachers tend to use breathy voice 5.3 percent; whispery voice 34 percent; creaky voice 0 percent; nasal voice 0 percent; tense voice 60.7 percent. The findings of this study also pointed out that tense, whispery and breathy voices were more preferable among the English teachers in general because of whether their genetic familiarity or personal choice. These findings were significant to determine the types of voice quality of teachers in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching context.

Keywords: Voice quality, prospective English teacher, observation report, voice types, English as a Foreign Language

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN SES KALİTESİ TERCİHLERİNİN ADAY İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN GÖZLEM RAPORLARINA GÖRE BELİRLENMESİ

Öz

Bu çalışmada, Erzurum ilinde sekiz farklı liseden İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ses kalitesi tercihlerini belirlemek için 2014-2015 eğitim yıllarında, aday İngilizce öğretmenlerinin hazırlamış olduğu 14 haftalık gözlem raporları incelenmiştir. Bu gözlem raporları, durum çalışması deseninde, Pittam (1987) tarafından hazırlanmış mevcut kodlara uygun olarak kategorik olarak ayrılmıştır. Aday İngilizce öğretmenlerinin değerlendirmeleri ekseninde, okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ses tonlamasındaki meyilleri ve tercihleri önceden belirlenmiş hırıltılı/soluklu, fısıltılı, çatallı, burun/geniz ve yüksek/gergin ses başlıkları altında sınıflandırarak tanımlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları İngilizce öğretmenlerinin % 5,3 'ünün hırıltılı/soluklu sesi; %34' ünün fısıltılı sesi; %0'ının çatallı sesi, % 0'ının burun/geniz sesi ve %60,7'sinin de yüksek/gergin sesi kullanmaya meyilli olduklarını göstermiştir. Bulgular hırıltılı/soluklu, fısıltılı ve yüksek/gergin sesin genetik yatkınlık veya kişisel tercih olarak İngilizce öğretmenleri tarafından daha çok tercih edilen sesler olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bulgular İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretildiği çevrede hangi ses kalitesi türünün tercih edildiğini göstermesi açısından ayrıca önem taşımaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Ses kalitesi, aday İngilizce öğretmeni, gözlem raporu, ses tipleri, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce

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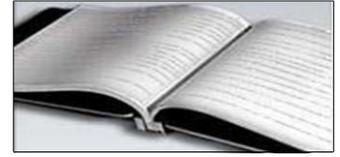
1. Introduction

The term "Voice Quality" has a variety of use areas in different types of branches as Kreiman, Gerratt, Kempster, Erman, and Berke, stated its' being fundamentally perceptual in nature (1993). These areas vary as voice over internet protocol (VoIP) (Sun & Ifeachor, 2004); pediatrics (Hartnich, 2002); packet base telephony (Jonssen, DeVlesschauwer , Büchli and Petit, 2002); music (Omori, Kacker, Caroll, Riley, and Blaugrund, 1996); social psychology (Scherer, 1978); phonetics (Catford, 1968; Esling, 1981; Nolan, 1982; Story & Titze, 2002); otolaryngology (Allegra, Lombardo, La Boria, Rotundo, Bianco, Barrera, Cuccunato, and Garozzo 2011; Delsupehe, Zink, Lejaegere and Bastian, 1999). Voice quality functions communicatively in various ways within social interaction and it refers to various types of vocal phenomena. Voice quality, at one level, refers to the characteristics of voice that are present more or less all the time when an individual is speaking (Pittam, 1987).

Laryngeal qualities affect the quality of voice in short term, medium term and long term (Biemans, 2000). Voice quality sometimes may function as linguistically, para-linguistically and extra-linguistically (Esling, 1981). Linguistic voice quality settings signal the short term features of voice quality that endorse meaning through the order of grammatical and phonological units. Para-linguistic settings that show medium term features are related to emotional state or mood of a speaker in conversational context. For instance, when a speaker is in anger loud, harsh and high voice is used (Lugger & Yang, 2007). Next, when voice quality functions extra-linguistically, it reveals the long-term speech features to identify or characterize the speakers and what sort of extra-linguistic elements they more or less permanently have in their speech. According to a study constructed by Esling (1981) the linguistic (short term) features or setting of voice quality interest English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, and may be both EFL and ESL teachers. In the same study he divided laryngeal voice quality of the voice quality settings into two types as simple phonation and compound phonation types. Whispery, creaky, breathy and harsh voices are investigated under the latter subtitle.

Moreover, Catford (1968), Pittam (1987), Biemans (2000) and Kane & Gobl (2013) have made discriminations of the compound phonation types more or less the same. Mostly accepted five different voice types are the subject of this study and they are breathy, whispery, creaky, nasal and tense voices. Firstly, in the articulation of breathy voice the vocal fold wide separated with velocity turbulent flow (Catford, 1968). It is more often studied in the context of gender and also known as "bedroom voice, a husky, relaxed, sexy way of speaking" (Biemans, 2000). Second, the air in whispery voice escape audibly through the vocal folds, but he tension in higher than breathy voice. It is known as library voice. Next, creaky voice is known to act as a marker of the end of conversional turns (Duncan & Fiske, 1977) more characteristics of male than female. It gives perceptual impression of running a stick along a fence or slowly opening a door with creaky hinges (Beimans, 2000). Forth, the nasal voice is an acoustic phenomenon arising from a supra-laryngeal event, chiefly, coupling of oral and nasal cavities (Font, 1960 cited in Zaraich, Liss, Dorman, Case, LaPointe, and Beals, (2000). The last and the fifth voice type is the tense voice is a sign of emotional stability, dominance and extraversion, it is also seen as disciplined and controlled (Pittam, 1987). According to Esling, it is associated with lower class background people (1978). Scherer and Giles also

stated that active, dominant as well as disciplined and controlled speakers tend to have tense voices (1979).

In this study, the linguistic aspect of voice quality and voice quality characteristics as a personal marker which is difficult to be defined (Scherer & Giles, 1979) are going to be discussed within the five voice type parameters determined by Pittam (1987) considering the pre-service English teachers' observation reports. This study aims to find out the voice quality preference of English teachers in eight different high schools in Erzurum by examining pre-service English teachers 14-week observation reports. In sum, according to these observation reports, the research findings are assumed to shed light upon two major questions: (1) what is the voice quality perception of English teachers in high school? and (2) the reasons why English teachers may use this type of voice quality?

2. Methodology

Participants of this study were 10 high school English teachers from different schools in Erzurum. 7 of the participants were female and 3 of them were male English teachers. They were all experienced teachers.

As for the data collection instrument, pre-service teachers' lesson observation reports were used within a case study design. Pre-service teachers, to do this, were asked to observe the participant teachers in terms of these sub-titles; motivation of teacher, equality attention, body language of teacher, movement of teacher, act of teacher and students, error correction, peer/self-correction, intonation of teacher, voice quality of teacher, observation of a student, transition to the lesson, verbal/non-verbal reinforcement and evaluation of 14 weeks. Each week they observed one of these sub-titles and transcribed them. During the observation action, participant teachers were not aware of in what terms they were being observed. Therefore they kept teaching as they used to do. For the purpose of this study we only examined intonation and voice quality of participant teachers.

The collected data were analysed by two researchers through pre-existing codes of Pittam (1987) as; tense, whispery, breathy, nasal and creaky voice to classify these codes in the collected data, we examined observation reports of pre-service teachers and moreover we reached numeric data in terms of participant teachers' use of those voice types.

3. Findings

Table 1 below shows the voice types used by participant teachers during the course of lesson. According to the table, teachers use tense voice more often with a percentage of %60.7. As can be seen, the number of tense voice used by participant teachers according to the observation reports is 34 and is far more than other voice types. Another notable result is that participant teachers use whispery voice with a percentage of %34 and use breathy voice with a percentage of %5.3.
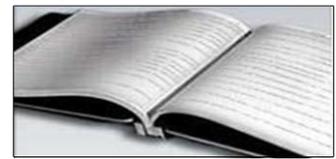
Table 1. Voice Types According to Observation Reports

Report Number	Tense		Whispery		Breathy		Nasal		Creaky	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
7	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
9	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
15	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	17	17	10	9	-	3	-	-	-	-

Table 1 also shows that the use of voice types varies according to the gender of teacher. For instance male teachers use tense voice with a percentage of %63 and whispery with %37 while female teachers use tense voice with a percentage of %58.7, whispery voice with %31 and breathy voice with %10.3. It is important to say that male teachers use tense and whispery voice, on the other hand female teachers use tense, whispery and breathy voice during the course of lesson. However, according to the observation reports none of the participant teachers use nasal and creaky voice.
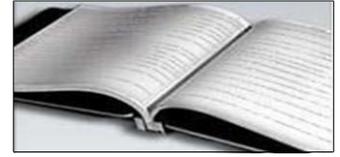
Chart 1. General Voice Types Percentages
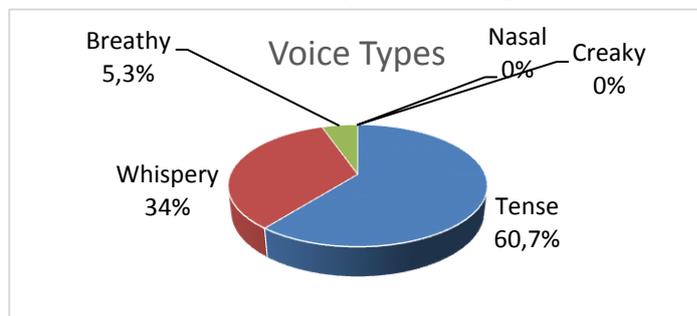
The pie chart reveals the general perceptions of teachers' voice quality more clearly and the biggest part for the tense voice, second part for whispery and the smallest part for breathy voice. The other voice types (nasal and creaky) were not used by the participant English teachers according to the 36 observation reports of pre-service English teachers.

Within the use of tense voice quality among the other three voice types recorded in observation reports: The pre-service teachers believe that English teachers used their voice to

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discipline the class and to stress importance of lesson topic. For instance, one pre-service teacher said: *"... the teacher used a normal voice but when there was a noise that was annoying, the teacher increased her voice to attract attention… the teacher corrected the pronunciation of students' vocabulary with a high voice that everybody could hear."*

The use of whispery voice in the classroom that was recorded by another pre-service teacher that: *"...teacher was teaching with a low voice and students did not understand anything, they started to talk to each other... it was like she was talking in the library."*

A third pre-service teacher said: *"...teacher was sick and her voice was very low and, no one understood what she tried to teach…"* The use of breathy voice here associated with the sickness of the teacher. Perhaps, in this case the use of this voice quality is not a perception but an obligatory for the teacher.

4. Discussion

The findings of the study showed that during the course of lessons, teachers used various voice types. They used tense, whispery and breathy voice types. According to observation reports of pre-service teachers, teachers in Erzurum use tense, whispery and breathy voice types with percentages of %60.7, %34 and %5.3 respectively.

Tense voice, the most commonly used voice type in Erzurum by English teachers, is known for its being controlled, disciplined features besides its being a sign of emotional stability, extraversion and dominance (Pittam, 1987). These definitions are suitable to the general characteristics of Turkish education system and also in English language teaching curriculum. In order to provide discipline and control in classroom and active, dominant teachers prefer using this type of voice quality (Scherer and Giles, 1979). As this voice type has relations to lower class background people (Esling, 1978), it can be estimated that a great deal of teachers in Turkey are belonging to the lower class background people. In another study done by Esling, he stated that *"Turkish and Persian are cited as examples of where articulation is performed by the tongue tip."* (1981). So, Turkish as a language prone to use of tense voice in general considering its articulation place.

The tendency to use whispery voice comes in the second row in the perception of English teachers in Erzurum. According to the observation reports English teachers preferred this voice type in order to attract attention and not to become boring during the courses. The voice is also known as library voice (Biemans, 2000). So, while students were doing the exercises teachers tend to use this voice type in order not to interrupt the classroom atmosphere.

The use of breathy voice that happen when the vocal fold wide separated with the speed turbulent flow (Catford, 1968) was scarcely seen according to the observation reports of pre-service English teachers. The records of this type of voice quality belong to the female English teachers as it is more often studied in the context of gender (Biemans, 2000). But in these reports, it is reported that the reason why teachers prefer to use breathy voice is
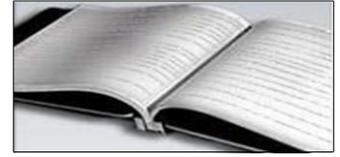
associated with teachers' being ill, and having sore throat. So, health is an important factor to determine the voice quality.

The other two types of voice quality (creaky and nasal) were not recorded in the observation reports. Creaky voice is associated with the age factor; it is widely seen over 40 years old. In this study age is not taken into consideration but this result also shows that our observed English teachers are not over 40 years old. None of the English teachers' voice gives perceptual impression of running a stick along a fence or slowly opening a door with creaky hinges (Beimans, 2000). Nasality is related to the oral and nasal cavities. It could be associated with the disorders in these cavities. This situation was not recorded in the pre-service English teachers' observation reports.

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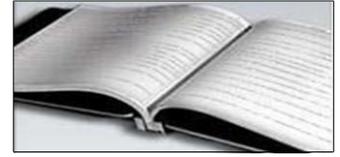
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