2024

Pronunciation pedagogy in English as a foreign language teacher education programs in Vietnam

Loc Tan Nguyen

Michael Burri

Pronunciation pedagogy in English as a foreign language teacher education programs in Vietnam

Abstract

Pronunciation has gained significant attention in the field of English language teaching, with recent studies examining pronunciation representation in textbooks, classroom practices, teachers' beliefs, and learners' perceptions. However, research into teachers learning to teach English pronunciation is only beginning to emerge. The current study extends this line of enquiry by investigating the preparation of 20 Vietnamese English teachers to teach pronunciation. The study also examined the teachers' perceptions of how Vietnamese teacher education could further assist teachers in teaching pronunciation. Qualitative data sources included academic transcripts, a questionnaire, and individual semi-structured interviews to examine the teacher-participants' pronunciation pedagogy training and their beliefs about effective pronunciation teacher preparation. The findings showed that the teachers were insufficiently trained but reported being confident in their ability to teach English pronunciation. The participants also proposed several changes to be made to Vietnamese English teacher education programs for teachers to teach pronunciation more effectively.

Pronunciation pedagogy in English as a foreign language teacher education programs in Vietnam

Abstract

Pronunciation has gained significant attention in the field of English language teaching, with recent studies examining pronunciation representation in textbooks, classroom practices, teachers' beliefs, and learners' perceptions. However, research into teachers learning to teach English pronunciation is only beginning to emerge. The current study extends this line of enquiry by investigating the preparation of 20 Vietnamese English teachers to teach pronunciation. The study also examined the teachers' perceptions of how Vietnamese teacher education could further assist teachers in teaching pronunciation. Qualitative data sources included academic transcripts, a questionnaire, and individual semi-structured interviews to examine the teacher-participants' pronunciation pedagogy training and their beliefs about effective pronunciation teacher preparation. The findings showed that the teachers were insufficiently trained but reported being confident in their ability to teach English pronunciation. The participants also proposed several changes to be made to Vietnamese English teacher education programs for teachers to teach pronunciation more effectively.

1. Introduction

Given the globally growing demand for well-prepared teachers of English as an additional language, it is not surprising that second language teacher education (SLTE) has been discussed and researched extensively in the last three decades. In their seminal piece, Freeman and Johnson (1998), for example, suggested the reconceptualization of the knowledge-base of SLTE to include both content and pedagogical knowledge to efficiently prepare language teachers. More recently, Johnson and Golombek (2020) put forward a sociocultural approach, claiming that this was the most effective approach to preparing future second language (L2) teachers. This holistic and social interactive approach is suggested to take into consideration the historical backgrounds and lived experiences of individual student teachers, and thus meeting their diverse needs and better preparing them for future teaching endeavors.

In spite of these major conceptual contributions, additional empirical insights are needed for the field to gain a more nuanced understanding of how L2 teachers can be prepared effectively (Sadeghi 2019). This is particularly true for the preparation of pronunciation instructors, because L2 teachers often perceive pronunciation to be one of the most challenging skills to teach (e.g., Couper 2017) due to a lack of training (Foote et al. 2011; Murphy 2014) and a lack of inappropriate materials (Baker and Murphy 2011; Derwing et al. 2012; Diepenbroek and Derwing 2013). The past few decades have seen a significant number of studies exploring teachers' beliefs and practices, learners' perceptions, and teacher professional development (TPD) to enhance teachers' pronunciation pedagogy. Much less research, however, has examined how well teacher education prepares L2 teachers to teach pronunciation in their English classes. This is especially true for English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts such as Vietnam, and therefore the present study

makes an important empirical contribution to the literature on SLTE by exploring Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions of pronunciation teacher preparation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Second language teacher education and pronunciation teacher preparation

Richards (1990) coined the term SLTE to conceptualize the process of L2 teacher learning 30 years ago. Since then, SLTE has grown substantially with numerous studies – conducted in different contexts and countries – contributing to the understanding of the process of preparing pre-service and in-service L2 teachers. A sign of the maturation of SLTE is journals solely designated to L2 teacher preparation and learning, such as *Second Language Teacher Education* and the *English Language Teacher Education and Development Journal*.

A relatively recent trend is the proposition of the importance of taking a sociocultural perspective on SLTE (Johnson and Golombek 2020). That is, student teachers' backgrounds, personal histories, and experiences are all positioned within a particular context and are seen as important resources that contribute to the preparation of L2 teachers. This line of work, along with studies exploring how prospective teachers learn to teach various skills, has shed light on what it takes to become a competent and knowledgeable L2 teacher. However, one area that researchers have only recently begun to investigate is the preparation of pronunciation teachers in TESOL programs. The interest in learning to teach pronunciation arose, more or less, parallel to research showing that L2 teachers often lack training and confidence in their ability to teach pronunciation (e.g., Bai and Yuan 2019; Baker 2014; Foote et al. 2011), and as a result, pronunciation instruction tends to be unsystematic (Couper 2017) with segmentals (vowels and

consonants) often being prioritized over suprasegmentals (rhythm, stress, and intonation) (Nguyen and Newton 2020; Foote et al. 2011).

Golombek and Jordan's (2005) was perhaps the first study conducted in a pronunciation teacher preparation context. Their research demonstrated the evolving identities of two student teachers from Taiwan during a graduate course on pronunciation pedagogy. The student teachers began to view themselves as legitimate pronunciation teachers as a result of taking the course. Baker (2011) then investigated pronunciation teaching provided by five experienced L2 instructors in the US and found that preparing teachers to teach pronunciation in a graduate TESOL program can have positive effects on their practices and cognitions (beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge) about English pronunciation.

These studies led Burri (2016) to conduct his doctoral research on the effectiveness of graduate students learning to teach English pronunciation at an Australian university. The research revealed that group work and accent comparisons facilitated an increase in student teachers' awareness of not only English varieties and accents, but also of the goal of pronunciation instruction being intelligibility rather than accent elimination (Burri 2015a). Additionally, student teachers began to see value in teaching suprasegmentals while non-native student teachers felt that their awareness of their own pronunciation and spoken English increased during the course, leading to an increase in their confidence to teach pronunciation in future L2 classrooms (Burri 2015b). Findings also suggested that non-native participants with prior teaching experience were able to relate to course content more so than their inexperienced native speaking peers (Burri et al. 2017a). Lastly, student teachers' identity construction was closely intertwined with the development of their cognitions, with both of these aspects playing important roles in learning to teach pronunciation (Burri et al. 2017b).

Following Burri's research, other studies have provided additional understandings of pronunciation teacher preparation. Buss (2017), for instance, showed that a course on phonology and pronunciation pedagogy taught in a Canadian undergraduate TESOL program fostered student teachers' positive views towards pronunciation instruction and, similar to Burri (2015b), facilitated participants' awareness of their own pronunciation and increased their confidence in teaching it. Kochem (early view) made an important contribution by examining the practical side of student teachers learning to teach pronunciation. As part of a graduate pronunciation pedagogy course taught in the US, his research explored the relationship between student teachers' cognitions, learning of course content, and actual pronunciation instruction during a 4-week one-on-one tutoring project. Findings from this study showed that the tutors did progress into communicative activities, but they still predominantly used controlled activities, as they were found to be easier to create and use in the tutoring context.

Notably, these studies were conducted in English-speaking countries, and only two studies have been carried out on learning to teach pronunciation in an EFL context to date. Lim's (2016) work demonstrated that Cambodian pre-service teachers were comfortable with their foreign English accent and that they believed they were capable pronunciation instructors. The teachers also believed that intelligibility should be the pedagogical goal rather than native-like pronunciation, even though native English-speaker pronunciation appeared to the preferred norm among the teachers. Additionally, participants held positive views of non-native English varieties but expressed concerns about introducing them in the classroom due to L2 learners' potentially negative reactions towards these varieties. The second study was done by Tsunemoto et al. (early view) in the Japanese EFL context. Their research demonstrated that Japanese pre-service teachers' prior

experiences shaped their beliefs and assessment of pronunciation. That is, student teachers with previous experiences, including study abroad and practice teaching, tended to be more skeptical towards the teachability of pronunciation and more critical of English accents than their less experienced counterparts. Both of the studies focused on pre-service EFL teachers, and therefore more research is needed on experienced, in-service EFL teachers' views and perceptions of pronunciation teacher preparation. As Burri and Baker's (2021) study showed, pronunciation teachers often face contextual challenges (e.g., requirements to use textbooks and collaborate with colleagues, time and curriculum constraints, and student proficiencies) that only emerge when they begin teaching. Thus, exploring in-service EFL teachers' perceptions would likely reveal important findings that could help improve the preparation of pronunciation teachers in TESOL programs.

The majority of the aforementioned studies included recommendations for preparing pronunciation teachers. For example, discussing different accents in a pronunciation pedagogy course has been suggested to facilitate student teachers' understanding of the importance of English varieties and the pedagogical target being intelligibility rather than adhering to a native English-speaking point of reference for pronunciation teaching (Nguyen and Newton 2020; Burri 2015a; Lim 2016). Student teachers speaking English as an additional language should also be given opportunities to experience an improvement in their own pronunciation, which most likely enhances their confidence and understanding English pronunciation. Collaborative elements such as peer-teaching sessions in which student teachers experiment with the use of newly learned techniques (Burri 2015b), as well as a practical component, such as tutoring sessions are seen as helping student teachers understand learner needs and develop knowledge and pedagogical skills necessary to teach L2 pronunciation (Kochem early view). Observing expert L2 instructors teaching pronunciation and teaming up experienced with less

experienced student teachers in collaborative learning tasks (Burri et al. 2017a) and opportunities to reflect on and examine their pre-existing beliefs (Tsunemoto et al. early view) are believed to be effective means to assist student teachers in processing newly learned course content and connecting it with practice. Another suggestion has also included the use of pronunciation-specific case studies to foster prospective teachers' understanding of pronunciation teaching in the L2 classroom (Pennington and Rogerson-Revell 2019; Burri and Baker 2021). While these are useful recommendations for the preparation of pronunciation instructors, how relevant and effective they are for places like Vietnam, the context in which this present study is situated, is more or less unknown. As such, our current study makes a novel contribution by shedding light on an under-researched area: the preparation of pronunciation teachers in Vietnam.

2.2. Pronunciation teacher preparation in Vietnam

Interest in pronunciation instruction in Vietnam has grown in the last few years with recent studies making valuable contributions to the understanding of pronunciation teaching practices and beliefs held by Vietnamese teachers of English (VTE). Ha and Murray's (2021a) work revealed, for example, that recasts were the most common feedback practices used by VTEs, and that some incongruity existed between the teachers' practices and beliefs about oral corrective feedback (OCF). Other research also showed VTEs' frequent use of recasts and prompts in correcting students' pronunciation errors, but also suggested that VTEs' approach to pronunciation instruction tended to be unplanned due to lack of training opportunities (Nguyen and Newton 2020). Addressing the need for more training, Nguyen and Newton (2021) designed a 3-hour pronunciation-specific workshop for six VTEs teaching in a university English program. They found that the job-embedded and collaborative nature of the workshop had a positive impact on the participants' cognitions and pronunciation teaching skills. Resembling Nguyen and

Newton's project, Ha and Murray (2021b) delivered a 4.5-hour workshop with the purpose of training 10 Vietnamese high school English teachers in the provision of OCF. Data was collected over a 14-week period and included several opportunities (e.g., journaling, classrooms observations) for participants to reflect on content learned during the workshop. Similar to Nguyen and Newton's (2021) findings, Ha and Murray's workshop facilitated a positive change in the teacher-participants' beliefs about OCF, suggesting that this type of TPD can be effective in the Vietnamese context. While these are promising findings, pronunciation teacher preparation in Vietnamese-based foreign language teacher education (FLTE) programs remains unexplored. Research is urgently needed in this area to further improve pronunciation instruction in Vietnam. The following research questions guided the present study:

1. To what extent do Vietnamese EFL teachers feel that their teacher education programs prepared them to teach English pronunciation?

2. What beliefs do the teachers hold about effective pronunciation teacher preparation?

3. Method

3.1. Research setting and participants

The study was conducted in Vietnam with the teacher-participants having received education from different universities located throughout the country. Convenience sampling was employed to select participants based on their availability and willingness to participate (Creswell and Poth 2017). In response to an invitation email sent to all teachers in Nguyen's network, 35 teachers replied and 27 agreed to take part in the research. Given the focus of the current study (i.e., Vietnamese teacher education), seven teachers earning degrees from foreign institutions (e.g., Australia or New Zealand) were excluded from the group, leaving a cohort of 20 study participants. They included both males and females,

aged from 27 to 35, and were from North Vietnam (N=5), Central Vietnam (N=6) and South Vietnam (N=9). The teacher-participants earned their BA degrees in ELT and MA degrees in TESOL or English Linguistics from 12 different Vietnamese universities. These are large universities offering EFL teacher education programs for over 20 years in three different areas of the country (three from North, three from Central, and six from South Vietnam). The teachers' teaching experience ranged from 5 to 11 years at secondary or tertiary level. To ensure their confidentiality, the teacher-participants were given the pseudonyms T1-T20 in this report.

3.2. Data collection

At the onset of the study, the teacher-participants were asked to complete a questionnaire that was attached to the invitation email and aimed to collect information about: (1) their demographic properties, (2) training in pronunciation pedagogy, and (3) confidence in teaching English pronunciation. At the end of the questionnaire, the teachers were asked if they were willing to participate in an individual semi-structured interview. Once completed, the teachers emailed Nguyen the questionnaire and a copy of their BA and MA academic transcripts, which were used to validate questionnaire and interview responses. The teacher-participants were then invited to an individual and audio recorded, 30-minute semi-structured interview with Nguyen. During the interview, the teachers were asked to reflect on their experiences in their pronunciation pedagogy training, confidence in teaching pronunciation, and how they developed their pronunciation teaching skills. The teachers were also encouraged to provide suggestions in the ways Vietnamese FLTE programs could help future teachers become more effective pronunciation instructors. The questionnaire and interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to avoid any misunderstandings.

In total, the collected data included 40 academic transcripts, 20 questionnaires, and 20 interview transcripts (i.e., 10 hours of audio recordings). The data enabled the researchers to obtain insights into the preparation of pronunciation teachers in Vietnamese FLTE programs.

3.3. Data analysis

The study adopted a thematic analysis of the qualitative data, involving an iterative, cyclical, and inductive process of identifying and refining themes and categories in the data set (Creswell and Poth 2017). Specifically, through transcribing and reading the transcripts, initial themes and categories were identified, which were then refined through an iterative process of re-reading and refining the thematic categories. All of the data was analyzed manually by the first author with handwritten codes being created during the coding process. The data analysis procedure is as follows.

First, Nguyen transcribed verbatim the interview recordings in Vietnamese. Only extracts used for illustration in this paper were translated into English, and the translation accuracy was cross checked by another proficient Vietnamese teacher of English. Second, Nguyen read the transcripts several times to understand the data and a preliminary codebook with handwritten codes was created simultaneously. Then, the data were coded according to the themes that were discovered during the reading phase. Finally, these codes were refined through an iterative process of re-reading and revising the thematic categories. To ensure the trustworthiness of the coding process, a Vietnamese EFL teacher was trained to independently code approximately one-third of the data set, and simple inter-coder agreement was over 83%, which is a satisfactory rate (Miles and Huberman 1994; Neuendorf 2002).

4. Findings

4.1. Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions of their pronunciation teacher preparation

The interview data revealed that the teacher-participants' training in pronunciation pedagogy was limited. They said that the ELT methodology course they took in their BA programs mainly focused on theories about language learning and how to teach grammar, vocabulary, and the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. T6-T11 reported attending one undergraduate lecture providing some basic pronunciation teaching theory, while T12-T15 were given a few minutes in class to demonstrate the application of theory in pronunciation teaching. Subsequently, as the following extracts illustrate, the majority of the teachers reported developing their expertise in pronunciation teaching through self-study and/or experience sharing:

> I know nothing about pronunciation pedagogy. Both my BA and MA programs had no specific course in pronunciation teaching. The ELT methodology course only focused on teaching the four major English skills, grammar, and vocabulary … Since I started my teaching job, usually I look for instructional materials and teaching approaches on the Internet and learn from my colleagues. (T4)

> Frankly, I've never taken any specific course in teaching pronunciation, but I had two periods about pronunciation teaching as part of an ELT methodology course when I studied for my BA degree. Generally, this course focused on theories about language learning and approaches to teaching listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary ... In my BA program, I remember that the teacher taught some basic theory and pronunciation teaching techniques for one period, then about

half of my class had one or two minutes each to illustrate how to apply these techniques in actual teaching. (T15)

As is evident in T4's statement above, the interview and questionnaire data also showed that the participants' graduate programs did not include any pronunciation teaching training, and a close analysis of the 40 BA and MA academic transcripts confirmed that there was no pronunciation pedagogy course included in the teacher-participants' FLTE programs. This clearly demonstrates that Vietnamese FLTE does not equip student teachers with specific content and pedagogical knowledge to teach English pronunciation in their classrooms.

Despite their insufficient training in pronunciation pedagogy, 14 of the teachers reported being *confident* (n=12) or *very confident* (n=2) in teaching English pronunciation (see Table 1). As the following excerpts show, the main reason for the teachers' confidence was that they felt good about their own pronunciation skills and that their English non-majored learners enjoyed the teachers' pronunciation instruction:

I chose very confident because I'm proud of my pronunciation skills and my students usually enjoyed the pronunciation activities that I used in class ... My students often told me they had a lot of fun when I taught them pronunciation. (T13)

I chose level 4 because I'm confident in my own pronunciation. Also, I mainly teach English non-majors, so for them my pronunciation is very good already. Many of my students have told me they're impressed with my pronunciation and they usually ask me for ways to improve theirs. (T18)

Table 1: Teachers' confidence in teaching pronunciation.

Rating	Frequency	Teachers	Reasons
Completely confident	N=0	X	X
Very confident	N=2	T12-T13	good pronunciation skills; students enjoyed classroom activities
Confident	N=12	T5-T11; T14-T15; T18-20	good pronunciation skills; English non-majored students
Unconfident	N=6	T1-T4; T16-T17	no training; no pronunciation teaching
Completely unconfident	N=0	X	X

In contrast, six of the teachers reported being *unconfident* in teaching English pronunciation. This is not surprising given their lack of formal training in pronunciation pedagogy. As T2's comment illustrates, since they were not trained in teaching pronunciation, the teachers left university without clear guidance on the use of pronunciation activities. The exceptions were error correction, minimal pairs, and tongue twisters because the participants experienced those types of pronunciation teaching activities as English language learners themselves:

> Honestly, I have no confidence in teaching pronunciation. The main reason is, as I've just said, there was nothing about pronunciation pedagogy in my BA and MA programs, and so I don't know to design activities for my students. What I usually do is correcting their errors or giving them minimal pair practice; and this is based on my own learning experience as an English language learner. (T2)

In summary, no pronunciation-specific course was included in the participants' BA and MA programs, and therefore they felt that Vietnamese FLTE did not provide them with sufficient training in pronunciation pedagogy. Six participants were not confident in their ability to teach pronunciation, whereas two thirds (14/20) reported being confident in teaching pronunciation because of their own pronunciation skills and their learners' positive reaction towards the pronunciation instruction they received.

4.2. Vietnamese EFL teachers' beliefs about effective pronunciation teacher preparation

On the question of how FLTE in Vietnam could assist teachers to teach pronunciation more effectively, the teacher-participants made several recommendations that could be implemented during three specific training stages: pre-training, while-training, and post-training. As Table 2 depicts, the teachers' suggestions included revisions to candidate selection (pre-training), focus on student teachers' own pronunciation skills and pedagogy (while-training), and teacher professional development (post-training).

Table 2: Effective pronunciation teacher preparation in Vietnam.

Stages	Recommendations	Focuses	Frequency
1. Pre-training	candidate selection	entry requirements (English proficiency)	N=17
2. While-training	pronunciation skills and pronunciation pedagogy	pronunciation training, phonetics and phonology, pronunciation pedagogy	N=20
		English native-speaker teachers	N=12
3. Post-training	professional development (i.e., TPD)	pronunciation teaching skills	N=18

According to the teachers, the first modification to improve the preparation of EFL pronunciation teachers in Vietnam should address the selection of future teacher candidates. As shown in Table 2, 17 teachers reported that entry requirements based on English proficiency should be raised for more suitable candidates to enroll in Vietnamese FLTE programs. They believed that rigorous entry requirements based on English proficiency would lift the overall quality of EFL teacher graduates. For example, T9 said:

> First, we need to change the entry requirements in EFL teacher education … if we accept students with low English proficiency, it's hard to guarantee the quality of future teachers ... I think only students who have achieved a high English proficiency level, for example who score from 7 in IELTS or over 100 in TOEFL can be accepted in training programs ... A good starting point ensures student teachers will progress during the training process. Once we're able to do this, I think we'll be more likely to have high quality teachers after they graduate from university.

The second recommendation rests on the participants' own pronunciation as well as their pedagogical skills. As recommended by all 20 participants, in order to enhance student teachers' pronunciation skills and pronunciation-specific pedagogy, FLTE in Vietnam should include three separate courses, namely pronunciation training, phonetics and phonology, and pronunciation pedagogy. From their perspective, these three courses in the while-training process were intertwined and thus would enable student teachers to become effective pronunciation instructors. They believed that a pronunciation training course was for student teachers to sharpen their own pronunciation skills, which aligns with Burri's (2015b) recommendation of improving student teachers' own pronunciation in SLTE programs. Meanwhile, as evident in a comment made by T3, courses in English phonetics and phonology and pronunciation pedagogy were thought to provide student teachers with both content and pedagogical knowledge, which, according to Baker and

Murphy (2011), is essential in establishing pronunciation instructors' knowledge-base and in improving the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction:

> For pronunciation, I think we need to teach three separate subjects in EFL teacher education in Vietnam. They're pronunciation training, phonetics and phonology, and pronunciation pedagogy. We also need to allocate more time to these subjects. The pronunciation training subject allows student teachers to practice pronunciation skills…, and phonetics and phonology provides them with more specialized knowledge about English phonology which is very useful for their future pronunciation teaching. The pronunciation pedagogy subject is even more important because it gives student teachers an opportunity to learn how to teach pronunciation … and apply this in teaching.

Although the feasibility of offering three courses in Vietnamese FLTE programs is questionable, the participants' suggestion supports Baker's (2011) proposal of offering both a pronunciation pedagogy course and a phonology-based course in SLTE programs to enhance the preparation of pronunciation instructors.

In addition to the proposition of including three courses, 12 participants believed having English native-speaker teachers teach pronunciation or speaking courses was another way to enhance Vietnamese student teachers' own pronunciation. As evident in T12's comment, the participants thought that studying with English native-speaker teachers allowed student teachers to be immersed in pronunciation of the target language, laying the foundation for pronunciation improvement:

> … if possible, I think we can invite native-speaker teachers to teach pronunciation and speaking because this gives student teachers more exposure to native pronunciation in real-life communication … For me, there's nothing better than

studying pronunciation or speaking with native-speaking teachers because we'll have more opportunities to learn, practice, and refine our pronunciation.

The third modification recommended by most teachers (18/20) included the provision of pronunciation-specific TPD after student teachers graduate from their FLTE programs (see post-training in Table 2). T19's response reflects the participants' beliefs that TPD was necessary to sustain practicing teachers' pedagogical expertise and to further refine their pronunciation teaching skills once they commence teaching:

> After students graduate and start teaching, they still need to learn because it's a lifelong process …, so TPD is important for teachers' professional growth. What teachers have learnt at university may not be suitable in their real teaching situations, so TPD courses are necessary for them to update the latest pedagogy to support student learning … I think not only me, but many teachers need a TPD course focused on pronunciation pedagogy, because I know many BA and MA programs in Vietnam don't have any subject about pronunciation teaching.

Taken together, the findings generated by the present study revealed that Vietnamese EFL teachers believed that they were insufficiently trained to teach English pronunciation. In response to their inadequate training, the teacher-participants made several recommendations for Vietnamese FLTE programs so that student teachers can be better prepared to teach pronunciation in their L2 classrooms. These modifications included an adjustment to university entry requirements (based on the English proficiency level of applicants), improvement of student teachers' own pronunciation and pedagogical skills, and the provision of pronunciation-specific TPD opportunities for practicing teachers.

5. Discussion

The study demonstrated that Vietnamese EFL teachers received limited, if any, training in teaching English pronunciation. This finding adds to a growing body of research showing that L2 instructors, irrespective in which country and contexts they teach, are often insufficiently trained to teach pronunciation in their classrooms (Bai and Yuan 2019; Couper 2017; Derwing and Munro 2005; Foote et al. 2011; Saito and van Poeteren 2012). A novel finding of the present study is that a notable number of teachers (14 out of 20) were confident in their ability to teach English pronunciation, which is inconsistent with previous research suggesting that L2 teachers often lack confidence and generally feel uncomfortable with teaching pronunciation (Bai and Yuan 2019; Baker 2011; Couper 2017). In this study, however, two thirds of the teachers – despite their lack of formal training in pronunciation pedagogy – reported a high level of confidence because they were confident in their own pronunciation skills and also because of their learners' positive reactions to being taught pronunciation in the classroom. This should be of particular interest to researchers and practitioners because most instructors in previous studies were native English speakers, yet they still felt insecure in teaching pronunciation (Burri et al. 2017a, 2017b; Couper 2017; Foote et al. 2011; Henderson et al. 2012; Saito and van Poeteren 2012). Thus, our study makes an important contribution, and, at the same time, supports Levis et al.'s (2016) work, suggesting that L2 instructors speaking English as an additional language can teach English pronunciation with confidence.

It is possible that the teachers in our study were of the conviction that 'if you can speak it, you can teach it', and therefore did not take their pronunciation-specific knowledge and skills into account when completing the questionnaire and providing responses during the interview. This, of course, would be problematic, given that effective pronunciation

instructors typically draw on both content knowledge (knowledge of phonetics and phonology) and pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of how to teach pronunciation) (Crystal 2019; Derwing and Munro 2015; Levis 2018). Further research is, therefore, required to better understand the exact source of the teacher-participants' confidence.

The study also showed that Vietnamese EFL teachers want pronunciation to play a more substantial role in FLTE in Vietnam. Specifically, the teacher-participants expressed a strong desire for Vietnamese FLTE programs to place more emphasis on improving student teachers' own pronunciation and their pedagogical skills in order to become more effective pronunciation instructors. The finding supports Burri's (2015b) proposition of fostering student teachers' own pronunciation and subsequently enhancing their pronunciation teaching skills in SLTE. In light of these findings and the fact that SLTE can have a substantial impact on teachers' knowledge and beliefs about L2 teaching and learning (Borg 2011; Busch 2010; Lee 2015; Wyatt and Borg 2011), we urge Vietnamese FLTE to include more pronunciation-specific training into their programs, including opportunities for student teachers to work on their own pronunciation, as a means to equip Vietnamese EFL teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to teach pronunciation to their L2 learners.

Finally, the teacher-participants also recommended Vietnamese FLTE to provide pronunciation-specific TPD for in-service teachers to sustain and improve their pronunciation teaching ability. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that L2 teachers want more professional learning activities focused on improving their pronunciation pedagogy (Couper 2017; Foote et al. 2016; Kochem early view; Murphy 2011). It also echoes pronunciation scholars' call for more TPD opportunities to help L2 teachers teach pronunciation more effectively (Brinton 2018; Derwing 2018; Derwing and

Munro 2015; Levis 2018). Considering this particular study findings and existing empirical evidence of the effectiveness of TPD within the Vietnamese EFL context (Nguyen and Newton 2021; Bui 2019; Ha and Murray 2021), we would like to see more pronunciation pedagogy workshops made available to practicing (i.e., in-service) Vietnamese English teachers.

6. Conclusion

This study was a first attempt to understand the pronunciation teaching preparation of Vietnamese EFL teachers. The findings showed that the teachers felt insufficiently trained, but reported being confident in teaching English pronunciation. The teachers suggested for Vietnamese FLTE to place more emphasis on student teachers' own pronunciation and pedagogical skills, as well as to offer pronunciation-specific TPD for in-service teachers. This study provides further evidence to EFL teachers' perceptions of training in L2 pronunciation by including Vietnamese teachers; yet, future research should also examine Vietnamese learners' perspectives of their teachers' English pronunciation teaching practices. Obtaining learners' perceptions would most likely provide valuable and additional insights relevant to L2 teacher educators, L2 teachers, and researchers in Vietnam and beyond.

References

Bai, Barry & Yuan Rui. 2019. EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about pronunciation teaching. *ELT Journal* 73(2). 134-143. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccy040

Baker, Amanda. 2011. *Pronunciation pedagogy: Second language teacher cognition and practice*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Georgia State University, USA.

Baker, Amanda. 2014. Exploring teachers' knowledge of L2 pronunciation techniques: Teacher cognitions, observed classroom practices and student perceptions. *TESOL Quarterly* 48(1). 136-163. doi:10.1002/tesq.99

Baker, Amanda & Murphy John. 2011. Knowledge base of pronunciation teaching: Staking out the territory. *TESL Canada Journal* 28(2). 29-50. doi:10.18806/tesl.v28i2.1071

Borg, Simon. 2011. The impact of in-service teacher education on language teachers' beliefs. *System* 39(3). 370-380. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.07.009

Bui, Trang. 2019. *The implementation of task-based language teaching in EFL primary school classrooms: A case study in Vietnam*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Burri, Michael. 2015a. "My perspective changed dramatically": A case for preparing L2 instructors to teach pronunciation. *English Australia Journal* 31(1). 19-37.

Burri, Michael. 2015b. Student teachers' cognition about L2 pronunciation instruction: A case study. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 40(10). 66-87. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n10.5

Burri, Michael. 2016. *"It's been a real eye opener": learning to teach English pronunciation from a teacher cognition perspective*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Wollongong, Australia.

Burri, Michael & Baker Amanda. 2021. "I feel … slightly out of touch": A longitudinal study of teachers learning to teach English pronunciation over a six-year period. *Applied Linguistics* 42(4). 791-809. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amab009

Burri, Michael, Baker Amanda, & Chen Honglin. 2017a. "I feel like having a nervous breakdown": Pre-service and in-service teachers' developing beliefs and knowledge

about pronunciation instruction. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation* 3(1). 109-135. https://doi.org/10.1075/jslp.3.1.05bur

Burri, Michael, Chen Honglin, & Baker Amanda. 2017b. Joint development of teacher cognition and identity through learning to teach L2 pronunciation. *The Modern Language Journal* 101(1). 128-142. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12388

Busch, Deborah. 2010. Pre-service teacher beliefs about language learning: The second language acquisition course as an agent for change. *Language Teaching Research* 14(3). 318-337. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168810365239

Buss, Larissa. 2017. The role of training in shaping pre-service teacher cognition related to L2 pronunciation. *Ilha do Desterro* 70. 201-226. https://doi.org/10.5007/2175-8026.2017v70n3p201

Brinton, Donna. 2018. Innovations in pronunciation teaching. In Okim Kang, Ron Thomson, & John Murphy (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of contemporary English pronunciation*, 449-461. Routledge.

Celce-Murcia, Marianne, Brinton Donna, & Goodwin Janet. 2010. *Teaching pronunciation: A course book and reference guide* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Couper, Graeme. 2017. Teacher cognition of pronunciation teaching: Teachers' concerns and issues. *TESOL Quarterly* 51(4). 820-843. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.354

Creswell, John & Poth Cheryl. 2017. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Crystal, David. 2019. *Sounds appealing: The passionate story of English pronunciation.* Profile Books.

Derwing, Tracey, Diepenbroek Lori & Foote, Jennifer. 2012. How well do general-skills ESL textbooks address pronunciation? *TESL Canada Journal* 30(1). 22-44. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v30i1.1124

Derwing, Tracey & Munro Murray. 2005. Second language accent and pronunciation teaching: A research-based approach. *TESOL Quarterly* 39(3). 379-397. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588486

Derwing, Tracey & Munro Murray. 2015. *Pronunciation fundamentals: Evidence-based perspectives for L2 teaching and research* (Vol. 42). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Derwing, Tracey. 2018. The efficacy of pronunciation instruction. In Okim Kang, Ron Thomson, & John Murphy (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of contemporary English pronunciation*, 320-334. Routledge.

Diepenbroek, Lori & Derwing Tracey. 2013. To what extent do popular ESL textbooks incorporate oral fluency and pragmatic development? *TESL Canada Journal* 30(7). 1-20. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v30i7.1149

Foote, Jennifer, Holtby Amy, & Derwing Tracey. 2011. Survey of the teaching of pronunciation in adult ESL programs in Canada, 2010. *TESL Canada Journal* 29(1). 1-22. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v29i1.1086

Foote, Jennifer, Trofimovich Pavel, Collins Laura, & Urzúa Fernanda. 2016. Pronunciation teaching practices in communicative second language classes. *The Language Learning Journal* 44(2). 181-196. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2013.784345

Freeman, Donald & Johnson Karen. 1998. Reconceptualizing the knowledge-base of language teacher education, *TESOL Quarterly 32*(3). 397–417. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588114

Golombek, Paula & Jordan Stefanie. 2005. Becoming "black lambs" not "parrots": A poststructuralist orientation to intelligibility and identity. *TESOL Quarterly* 39(3). 513-533. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588492

Ha, Xuan & Murray Jill. 2021a. Corrective feedback: Beliefs and practices of Vietnamese primary EFL teachers. *Language Teaching Research*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820931897

Ha, Xuan & Murray Jill. 2021b. The impact of a professional development program on EFL teachers' beliefs about corrective feedback. *System* 96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102405

Alice Henderson, Frost Dan, Tergujeff Elina, Kautzsch Alexander, Murphy Deirdre, Kirkova-Naskova Anastazija, Waniek-Klimczak Ewa, Levey David, Cunnigham Una, & Curnick Lesley. 2012. The English pronunciation teaching in Europe survey: Selected results. *Research in Language* 10(1). 5-27. https://doi.org/10.2478/v10015-011-0047-4

Johnson, Karen & Golombek Paula. 2020. Informing and transforming language teacher education pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research* 24(1). 116-127. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168818777539

Kochem, Tim. Early view. Exploring the connection between teacher training and teacher cognitions related to L2 pronunciation instruction. *TESOL Quarterly*. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3095

Lee, Icy. 2015. Student teachers' changing beliefs on a pre-service teacher education course in Hong Kong. In Tony Wright & Mike Beaumont (eds.), *Experiences of second language teacher education*, 15-39. Palgrave Macmillan.

Levis, John. 2018. *Intelligibility, oral communication, and the teaching of pronunciation*. Cambridge University Press.

Levis, John, Sonsaat Sinem, Link Stephanie, & Barriuso Taylor. 2016. Native and nonnative teachers of L2 pronunciation: Effects on learner performance. *TESOL Quarterly* 50(4). 894-931. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.272

Lim, Sovannarith. 2016. Learning to teach intelligible pronunciation for ASEAN English
as a lingua franca: A sociocultural investigation of Cambodian pre-service teacher
cognition and practice. *RELC Journal* 47(3). 313-329.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688216631176

Miles, Matthew & Huberman Michael. 1994. *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded
sourcebook*. Sage.

Murphy, Deirdre. 2011. An investigation of English pronunciation teaching in Ireland.
English Today 27(4), 10-18. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078411000484

Murphy, John. 2014. Intelligible, comprehensible, non-native models in ESL/EFL
pronunciation teaching. *System* 42. 258-269.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.12.007

Neuendorf, Kimberly. 2002. *The content analysis guidebook*. Sage.

Nguyen, Loc Tan & Newton Jonathan. (2021). Enhancing EFL teachers' pronunciation
pedagogy through professional learning: A Vietnamese case study. *RELC Journal*,
52(1), 77-93. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220952476.

Nguyen, Loc Tan & Newton Jonathan. (2020). Pronunciation teaching in tertiary EFL
classes: Vietnamese teachers' beliefs and practices. *The Electronic Journal for English
as a Second Language (TESL-EJ)*, *24*(1), 1-20.

Pennington, Martha & Rogerson-Revell Pamela. 2019. *English pronunciation teaching and
Research: Contemporary perspectives*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Richards, Jack. 1990. The dilemma of teacher education in second language teaching. In
Jack Richards & David Nunan (eds.), *Second language teacher education*, 3-15.
Cambridge University Press.

Sadeghi, Karim. 2019. An interview with Donald Freeman. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research* 7(3). 131-136. https://doi.org/10.30466/ijltr.2019.120742

Saito, Kazuya & van Poeteren Kim. 2012. Pronunciation-specific adjustment strategies for intelligibility in L2 teacher talk: Results and implications of a questionnaire study. *Language Awareness* 21(4). 369-385. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2011.643891

Tsunemoto, Aki, Trofimovich Pavel, & Kennedy Sarah. (Early view). Pre-service teachers' beliefs about second language pronunciation teaching, their experience, and speech assessments. *Language Teaching Research*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820937273

Wyatt, Mark & Borg Simon. 2011. Development in the practical knowledge of language teachers: A comparative study of three teachers designing and using communicative tasks on an in-service BA TESOL programme in the Middle East. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 5(3). 233-252. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2010.537340