

The extent to which the Vietnamese teachers' perspectives on English pronunciation education correlate with those of the Vietnamese learners

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Abstract

Despite the vast research on the Vietnamese teachers' perspectives on English pronunciation, little is known about the Vietnamese learners' perspectives on the same issue. From the mainstream of the literature, the overall image is that English pronunciation teaching and learning in Vietnam are limited by a variety of problems in the education system. Our thesis addresses the Vietnamese teachers' and learners' perspectives on the English pronunciation education in order to determine the current situations of English pronunciation teaching and learning in Vietnam. We then examine to what extent the two perspectives coincide. Consequently, we study all these aspects by means of the two questionnaires. The quantitative and qualitative data analysed from the two questionnaires make a contribution to the interpretation of our research questions. Specifically, the extent to which the teachers' perspectives on English pronunciation coincide with the learners' is identified.

I. Introduction

English has become a medium of interpersonal and international communication all over the world these days. Undeniably, globalization has fostered the domination of English in various social aspects such as education, international business and trading, travel, and communication (Crystal, 2003). The development of English has been highly remarkable in countries in which English is employed as a second language beside people's mother tongues (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2012).

In Vietnam, the status and role of English and its teaching and learning went through different historical stages (Baldauf, 2005; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007). English was paid less attention in the past, but has become dominant and indispensable in recent time (Wright, 2002; Loc, 2005). Looking back at the historical development of English education in Vietnam, the status of English was impacted by the influence of other foreign languages such as Chinese, Russian and French (Denham, 1992; Wright, 2002; Thinh, 2006; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Le, 2007; Van, 2008; Vu & Burns, 2014). English, however, has become dominant and preferred over other languages in the matter of language education as Vietnam promulgated a policy aiming at establishing and maintaining international economic relations with several nations worldwide. The need of teaching and learning English has become urgent with the participation of Vietnam in organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In the national English curriculum, more emphasis has been put on the younger generations, which makes that children nowadays can start learning English at a very young age. With the increasing expectations among stakeholders such as parents and students, the age range for learning English has been extending; primary school children can learn English as early as age 6 (Ministry of Education and Training), instead age 12 as in the past (Nunan, 2003; see also Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007). In his survey conducted in 2000, Vang (2003: 458) claimed that "98% of Vietnamese school students chose to study English as a compulsory subject" (Vang, 2003: 458). Moreover, at tertiary level, Le (2007: 167) reported that English was the primary choice of 90% of undergraduates.

It is also important to note that there is a huge number of language centers that have emerged nationwide to meet the constant growth of English demand (Nunan, 2003; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Vu & Burns, 2014). These language institutions' educational system has been defined as "in-service" and independent, being more flexible in organizing and planning an English

curriculum for various target learners. (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Mai & Yang, 2013). Contrary to the formal educational system, the English teaching and learning contents are mainly planned according to international syndicates (e.g., British Council).

However, Vietnam is a country in which people's English proficiency is not highly appreciated by a variety of problems in the education system (Van, 2010). First, concerning the curricular innovation, some scholars (Carless, 2001; Sato, 2002; Wang, 2008) indicated that there was a wide gap between what is designed for teaching practices and what is actually implemented in classrooms by teachers in the Asian context in general and in the Vietnam context in particular (Le & Barnard, 2009). Second, a majority of problems in the materials, and the qualification of teachers but also mismatches between the English curriculum and study progress were revealed (Van, 2008,2010; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Le & Barnard, 2009). In addition, Vietnamese speakers cannot use English sufficiently to communicate in a real-life context (Nhan, 2013). These previous findings spill over into public debates surrounding the question whether English pronunciation and communication learning have been accompanied by the teachers with appropriate teaching practices. Moreover, the issue whether the Vietnamese learners of English have a strong motivation and clear goal towards English acquisition has also been discussed (Nhan, 2013).

Recognizing the important role of English pronunciation teaching and learning in communicative era, our aim is to evaluate current issues concerning English pronunciation education in Vietnam. In doing so, teachers' and learners' perspectives on English pronunciation instruction and acquisition will be investigated. Furthermore, we seek to determine to what extent the two perspectives coincide, which will be the focus of this thesis.

This present thesis is organized as follows. Some historical stages of English teaching and learning in Vietnam will be described in chapter 2, followed by an outline of the current practices of English pronunciation teaching and learning. The methodology of the empirical research will be addressed in chapter 3. Our results and their implications will be presented in the subsequent chapters. We will summarize our findings in the conclusion, where we will also propose some interesting issues for future research.

II. Theoretical background

1. A brief history of Foreign Language Teaching in Vietnam

In Vietnam, English marked its social position at different historical stages. Before 1954, during the colonial period, English was not given much attention due to the various influences of other languages such as Chinese and French, which were respectively characterized as a language of feudal society and officially recognized as national language in 1878 (Wright, 2002). After 1954, at the end of colonial period, however, the French were defeated and forced to withdraw their authority. Then, English teaching gained its important educational standing (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007).

English, even French and Chinese, were then replaced by Russian in the education system after the reunion of Vietnam in 1975. Consequently, Chinese, French and English had “almost completely disappeared” at that time (Wright, 2002: 237). Russian was also the preferred foreign language in some of the big cities such as Ho Chi Minh City and Ha Noi Capital. Therefore, the number of English classes was limited in upper secondary schools and the number of students who chose English as a discipline at tertiary level decreased considerably (Van, 2008). Although English was less important than Russian at that time, a small number of Vietnamese teachers and interpreters were still sent to Britain, Australia, New Zealand and India in order to be trained in English Language Teaching (ELT) through professional programs which were, however, terminated in 1979 (Thin, 2006; Van, 2008). Fortunately, other training programs sponsored by the Australian authorities were reintroduced in 1985, lasting over a decade till the early 1990s (Van, 2008). Afterwards, Vietnamese teachers and interpreters were continuously trained and undertook graduate studies in ELT annually overseas (Thin, 2006).

Generally, English education in Vietnam was significantly encouraged and received considerable investments at all levels from 1986 onwards when the Vietnamese authorities oriented towards the Western world to attract foreign investments (Hoa & Tuan, 2005; Vu & Burns, 2014). According to Vu & Burns (2014), as a result, business and communication demands for English increased significantly, so that English became “an attribute of development” (Vu & Burns, 2014: 8), “an unquestionable asset” (Le, 2007: 172) for competitively seeking a well-paid job, an approach to assess “knowledge about the miracles of science and technology” and to achieve “a better standard of living” (Denham, 1992: 64). Obviously, in the time of economic renovation and international

integration, English became the medium of business and trade and also a prerequisite requirement for future employees of other enterprises (Van, 2008).

Nowadays, English has become the preferred foreign language, and is compulsorily taught and learned at several levels, from primary schools to universities, and foreign language centers across the country (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Van, 2008; Vang, 2003). The number of English teachers and English learners has not stopped increasing, even exceeding the number of those of other foreign languages (Van, 2008). However, it should be noted that the widespread acceptance of English is not equal to the rejection of acquiring other foreign languages. It is more reasonable to acknowledge that English has become the most important and dominant foreign language in Vietnam (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007).

According to Van (2008), the English teaching practices in the period of his study reflected an “adopt” and “adapt” approach to materials during the period of his study. Besides lexicogrammar, reading and translation skills were given a high degree of attention, being taught by means of a very structured method. Students had to drill fixed structures introduced by the teacher, and gradually students had to make their own sentences. Due to the focus on the imitation of fixed structures, teaching and learning English in this period suffered from a lack of context and practice (Van, 2008). The aim of teaching in that time was to improve language accuracy rather than language fluency (Van, 2008).

2. English language teaching and learning at general level in Vietnam context

2.1. Vietnam's public education sector

In formal education sector, the contents of English teaching and learning were imposed by the Government. Besides, an impressive number of policies and initiatives have been promulgated in order to promote the efficacy of English teaching and learning in Vietnam (Nguyen, Fehring & Warren, 2015).

From 1982 to 2002, English was compulsorily instructed in secondary schools where students started to learn English at age 16 and were electively introduced to the language in lower secondary schools at age 12 (Van, 2008; Van, 2010). In the recent formal education curriculum, however, English has become a mandatory subject at different levels of education (Vang, 2003; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Van, 2008). Afterwards, the dominant role and status of English in internationally

communicative contexts led to a growing demand of using English to communicate. In the light of this situation, since the 1990s, there has been a dominant expectation that teachers would provide creative contexts in language learning, putting the focus on the English learners and facilitating their language use in an appropriate context. Then, at the beginning of 2002, the English national curriculum was redesigned and English textbooks were reformulated by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) for all levels to meet the current language demands (Van, 2008). Nonetheless, the English textbooks included dominant grammar sections in each unit, even though reading comprehension and oral practice were also given a place (Van, 2008). Overall, the main focus at that time was still on grammar-based knowledge with the aim of mastering the rules of English.

The widespread teaching of English is reflected in the growing number of provinces and cities accepting English as a subject in the school curriculum (Truong, 2005). Until now, the government's language teaching policies have continuously been reformulated to meet the increasing English demands of parents and children. With the implementation of intensive programs, Vietnamese students of English have more opportunities to learn English with both Vietnamese English and foreign teachers to improve their English communication skills (MOET 2008). Vietnam's aims of English Language Teaching (ELT) were formulated by MOET (2008) as follows:

At the end of the upper secondary level, students will be able:

- To use English in four main skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, and to use dictionaries;
- To acknowledge the basic English phonetics and grammar, and to acquire at least 2500 words of English;
- To know English and American cultures in order to become a better overall communicator.

(Van, 2008: 5)

At the higher education, the important role of English is more perceived. All higher education students are required to study a foreign language, regardless of their major. As Le (2007) reported, 90% of tertiary students chose to study English as a foreign language besides their mother tongues. Moreover, prospective employees are required to be sufficiently competent in English if they desire to work with foreign businesses funded by international investors.

In many university-level programmes in Science, Tourism, Business, and Technology, English is a medium of instruction. Unlike in general education, the contents of English teaching and learning are not strictly controlled by the Government, but are left to be decided by each specific institution of higher education.

2.2. Vietnam's private education sector

In order to meet the demand for learning communicative English, English teaching outside the formal educational system has rapidly developed recently. Specifically, Vietnam's private sector has created an uncountable number of 'English Language Centres' (ELCs) across the country (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Van, 2008). Several private organizations such as foreign and joint venture language schools, language centers of universities and colleges have appeared nationwide, offering a multitude of English courses for learners with different objectives, leading to "English language fever" (Le, 2007: 172). The ELCs have been of crucial importance in providing sites for teaching and learning of English speaking and pronunciation. Parents appreciate early English courses in the ELCs, and regard them as an "early investment" for their children's future. This fact reflects peoples' high awareness and positive attitudes towards learning English in Vietnam (Tran, 2017; see also Hoa & Tuan & Hiep, 2010). On a national scale, these English language institutions employ both Vietnamese teachers and foreign teachers (either native or non-native English speakers). Unlike their public counterparts, the private education sites are given much more freedom in designing their curriculum and in selecting their materials (Nunan, 2003; see also Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007).

Together with the growing awareness and positive attitudes towards English of learners, a wide range of courses and various tests based on The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) have been implemented in several English institutions. These courses have been designed with the aim of fostering English proficiency and preparing their students for standardized tests such as the Cambridge International Examinations, the American TOEFL and TOEIC, IELTS (Van, 2008; Tran, 2017).

3. Current situation of English Language Teaching and Learning in Vietnam

The unexpected English development in Vietnam entailed a number of consequences (Le, 2007; London, 2006; World Bank, 2014; Wright, 2002). Initially, the nature of the English programs was

assessed as “unsystematic” (Truong, 2005). It was proved by the fact that although English education at primary level was applied since 1996, there were no clear guidelines or official policies and practices until 2003, when the first official national curriculum was introduced by MOET.

According to Tien (2013), the ELT teachers were not highly qualified during the period of his study. In addition, as Van (2008) revealed, most English teachers in primary and upper secondary schools did not meet the required standard; very few of them reached the expected level to teach English (see also Nguyen, 2015). Particularly, primary school English teachers did not have a high level of knowledge and skills of English (Moon, 2005; Nunan, 2003; Truong, 2005; see also Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007). In other words, Vietnamese primary schools did not make significant efforts to meet the professional requirements for teaching young pupils effectively (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007).

A large number of teachers who appeared to be under-qualified to teach English was revealed by a survey carried out in the period of 2011-2012 (Nguyen, 2015). Teachers were not well prepared and trained before they started to teach English (Van, 2008; see also Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007). It should also be admitted that most general English teachers were only trained and educated within Vietnam, which means they did not have a chance to be trained overseas, especially in an English-speaking country (Van, 2008; Tien 2013). Therefore, the quality of teaching English as a medium of communication was not guaranteed (Van, 2008; see also Hoa & Tuan, 2017).

In terms of teaching materials, different schools employed different English materials from various sources, and the lack of official textbooks could well be noted as one of the major problems (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007). This scenario caused a lack of homogeneity among the same educational levels and complicated curriculum design (Tien, 2013). Another problem with English materials acknowledged earlier by Xuan Thao (1991) was that most of the textbooks written by Vietnamese authors tend to interpret incorrectly the cultural context of English, not taking into account the Vietnamese learners. Meanwhile, materials developed by native speakers of English overestimated the ability of Vietnamese learners to understand English expressions and texts.

Although the current essential orientation of MOET has been the competence of practical communication, the traditional pedagogy in Vietnam which “emphasizes the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary rather than communicative competence” (Pham, 2005, p.3) still exists.

The schools and English teachers put little emphasis on oral interaction in different communicative contexts, while reading comprehension, vocabulary accumulation and grammatical structures of sentence patterns are given much more attention in order to meet the requirements of end-of-school and university entrance examinations (Van, 2008; Hoa & Tuan, 2017). As a result, the tests focus on evaluating lexicogrammatical knowledge rather than oral skills (Denham, 1992; Van, 2008; Le & Barnard, 2009; Tien, 2013). These issues revealed a mismatch between the English national curriculum and study progress, between the expectation and current situation.

4. English pronunciation teaching and learning in Vietnam

4.1. General remarks on pronunciation teaching and learning

Broadly speaking, a number of shortcomings in pronunciation education have been perceived in recent time. More specifically, pronunciation has not been well integrated due to the greater focus on other aspects of language learning (Ketabi & Saeb, 2015, see also Isaacs, 2009; Gilakjani, Ahmadi & Ahmadi, 2011; Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2013). Both teachers and learners spend little time on pronunciation practice. Moreover, several teachers of English were reported showing their reluctance to teach pronunciation to their students due to their lack of required skills, crucial background knowledge, and necessary confidence (Thomson, 2012; Wahid and Sulong, 2013). According to Kelly (2004), pronunciation teaching tends to be neglected mainly due to teachers' lack of appropriate expertise on theories of pronunciation, rather than teachers' insufficient interest in the subject.

Undeniably, however, pronunciation is regarded as a fundamental component which a foreign language learner should strive to acquire and constantly cultivate (Dhillon, 2016). Without a correct pronunciation, speakers cannot successfully communicate, even if their grammar and vocabulary are impressive (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010; see also, 2016). As argued by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin (2010), the attainment of a successful interaction is in part attributable to precise pronunciation. Consequently, both native and non-native interlocutors can understand and follow the conversation without confusion and vagueness. Further, the controversial issues related to intelligibility and nativeness, the segmental and the suprasegmental features have been brought to light (Ketabi & Saeb, 2015).

Teaching practices of English as a second language, including the area of pronunciation, have been gradually developed and improved by teachers (Morley, 1991). According to Morley (1991), and

Dhillon (2016), the general aim of employing different pronunciation teaching methods is that the most suitable pronunciation norms and models for different learners of English could be recognized. Besides, particular pronunciation-related errors could also be detected. As a result, attitudes towards different pronunciation teaching practices should be given much more attention in order to respond to learners' motivations and teachers' teaching goals. Additionally, it is necessary to improve learners' pronunciation skills and increase the effectiveness of multinational communication. When English became dominant as an international language because of globalization in recent times, the need arose to review the perspectives on pronunciation teaching and learning in specific learning contexts.

4.2. The current situation of English pronunciation teaching and learning in Vietnam

Responding to the needs of industrialization and modernization of the country (MOET 2008), the national English curriculum has put considerable emphasis on fluent communication from primary level to higher education level (MOET 2003, 2007). According to the National Foreign Language Project 2020, introduced by the Vietnam Government in 2008 (Hung, 2011), bilingual programs have been encouraged recently in the educational language policy across the country. This enables students to learn English with special programs in which foreign teachers teach alongside Vietnamese teachers (MOET 2008). Even though English pronunciation and communication teaching has been concentrated and intensified on a wider scale across Vietnam, Vietnamese people's English communication proficiency is still surrounded by controversy (Nhan, 2013).

It has further been pointed out that most Vietnamese learners find a high proficiency of pronunciation unreachable, even though they recognize the crucial role of pronunciation in language learning (Cunningham, 2010). Ha (2005) revealed in her study that "many Vietnamese speakers can speak English, but only a few have intelligible English pronunciation so that they can be understood easily in direct communication with foreigners" (Ha, 2005: 1). Some research have also suggested that whereas Vietnamese students spend "years of language study, many of them are unable to produce some native speaker targets" and they "may not be aware that their pronunciation is not intelligible" (Florez, 1998:3). A survey conducted by MOET in 2012 also indicated that many graduates failed to get a position in foreign companies located in Vietnam since they could not meet the job requirements for English skills (see also Ha, 2007; Vu & Shah, 2016).

Another pronunciation-related issue that has arisen is that Vietnamese learners of English have many pronunciation problems which can hamper their speech intelligibility in communication (Dang, 2014). Generally, most studies mentioned seem to focus on discussions of the phonological problems that Vietnamese learners are faced with when they produce English, but few take up the non-phonological issue of which are learners' and teachers' preferences and attitudes towards pronunciation. To fill this gap and better understand the context of the present research, this thesis examines Vietnamese teachers' and learners' perspectives on English pronunciation education.

5. The phonological and phonetic features of Vietnamese and English

Central to our research are the difficulties in learning pronunciation which are also caused by the differences between the phonological and phonetic characteristics of Vietnamese and English. Therefore, in the following sections, we provide phonological and phonetic comparisons between the two languages and an overview of the likely effect of transfer in L2 learning. We first outline the characteristics of Vietnamese phonology.

5.1. The characteristics of Vietnamese phonology

5.1.1. Vietnamese syllables: Structure and shape

“Vietnamese is classified as a syllabic and tonal language” (Pham & McLeod, 2016: 123). According to Hwa-Froelich et al. (2002: 265), the Vietnamese language is predominantly monosyllabic as the majority of words have one syllable. In Vietnamese, the syllable is the minimal meaningful unit (Ngo, 2006). The syllable is regarded as the smallest unit and uttered or written separately (Ngo, 2006; La, Phan, & Nguyen, 2011) La, Phan, & Nguyen, 2011).

There are two levels of Vietnamese syllable pronunciation: the first one is the suprasegmental level which includes the tone, and the second one is the segmental which excludes the tone. Generally speaking, Vietnamese syllables have five main components, which are the initial consonant singleton, the medial semivowel, the main vowel, the final phoneme (either a consonant or semivowel) and the tone (Doan, 2003; Cao, 2006; Nguyen, 2011). These five principal components are shown in Table 2 below.

Level 1 Suprasegmental	Tone			
Level 2 Segmental	Initial consonant (C ₁)	Rime		
		Medial semivowel (w)	Main vowel V	Final semivowel or consonant (w/C ₂)

Note. Obligatory components are shaded grey.

Table 2: The Vietnamese syllable structure

(Pham & McLeod, 2016:124)

The 12 Vietnamese syllable combinations without the tones (Huu & Vuong, 1980; Do & Le, 2005) are displayed in Table 3 as follows. (C₁)(w)V(C₂/w)T is known as the syllable shape of Vietnamese, in which “C₁ is the initial consonant, w is the semivowel, V is the vowel, C₂ is the final consonant and T is the tone” (Pham & McLeod, 2016:124).

		Syllable components			Syllable symbol	Syllable example
1			Vowel		V	à
2			Vowel	Final consonant	VC ₂	im
3			Vowel	Final semivowel	Vw	áo
4	Initial consonant		Vowel		C ₁ V	phở
5	Initial consonant		Vowel	Final consonant	C ₁ VC ₂	vòng
6	Initial consonant		Vowel	Final semivowel	C ₁ Vw	đậu
7		Medial semivowel	Vowel		wV	oa
8		Medial semivowel	Vowel	Final consonant	wVC ₂	uyên
9			Vowel	Final semivowel	wVw	oai
10	Initial consonant	Medial semivowel	Vowel		CwV	thúy
11	Initial consonant	Medial semivowel	Vowel	Final consonant	C ₁ wVC ₂	luật
12	Initial consonant	Medial semivowel	Vowel	Final semivowel	C ₁ wVw	quay

(Pham & McLeod, 2016:124)

Table 3: The Vietnamese syllable shapes without the tones

The mandatory components of a syllable are a nuclear vowel and a tone, whereas the remaining components are optional. (Ngo, 2006; Cao, 2004; Doan, 1999; Tang, 2007; Tang & Barlow, 2006). An absence of an initial consonant leads to a glottal stop (ʔ), while an absence of medial and final sounds is known as zero phonemes. Therefore, all five components appear in every syllable (Doan, 2003).

5.1.2. Components of a syllable

+ Consonants

In Vietnamese syllables, there are initial consonants and final consonants (Cao, 2006). There were some debates on the official number of initial consonants (Pham & McLeod, 2016). As a result, in Standard Vietnamese, the number of initial consonants can range from 21 to 24 (see Table 4). However, most scholars agreed that there are 23 official Standard Vietnamese initial consonants (Hoang, 2004; Doan & Le, 2005; Pham, 2009; La et al., 2011), The Standard Vietnamese initial consonants are presented in table 5 below.

		Bilabial	Labiodental	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Initial consonants	Plosive	p* b		t ^h t d	ʈ	c	k	ʔ*
	Nasal	m		n		ɲ	ŋ	
	Trill			r*				
	Fricative		f v	s z	ʂ ʐ		x ɣ	h
	Semivowel**	w				j		
	Lateral approximant		l					
Final consonants	Plosive	p		t			k	
	Nasal	m		n			ŋ	
	Semivowel**	w				j		

*These consonants /p, ʔ, r/ are controversial between authors.

**In Vietnamese, approximants are called semivowels.

Table 4: The Standard Vietnamese consonants and semivowels

(Pham & McLeod, 2016:125)

Grapheme(s)	Standard Vietnamese
<i>Initial consonants</i>	
p	/p/
b	/b/
th	/tʰ/
t	/t/
đ	/d/
tr	/tʃ/
ch	/c/
c	/k/
k	/k/
q	/k/
—	/ʔ/
m	/m/
n	/n/
nh	/ɲ/
ng	/ŋ/
ngh	/ŋ/
ph	/f/
v	/v/
x	/s/
s	/s/
d	/z/
gi	/z/
r	/ʒ/
kh	/x/
g	/ɣ/
gh	/ɣ/
h	/h/
l	/l/
Total	23

Table 5: The Standard Vietnamese initial consonants

(Pham & McLeod, 2016:125)

A number of six final consonants in Standard Vietnamese including three plosives /-p, -t, -k/ and three nasals /-m, -n, -ŋ/ (Doan, 2003). According to Thompson (1965) and Cheng (1991), Consonant clusters do not exist in the Vietnamese language. The table of final consonants is provided below.

Grapheme(s)	Standard Vietnamese
<i>Final consonants</i>	
-p	/-p/
-t	/-t/
-c	/-k/
-ch	/-k/
-m	/-m/
-n	/-n/
-nh	/-ŋ/
-ng	/-ŋ/
Total	6

Table 6: The Standard Vietnamese final consonants

(Pham & McLeod, 2016: 125)

+ *Semivowels*

Semivowels are called approximants in the Vietnamese language. There are two semivowels in Vietnamese syllables: /w, j/ (Doan, 2003). The semivowel /w/ may be either the medial component or the final component of the syllable, while the semivowel /j/ may only be the final component of Vietnamese syllables (Pham & McLeod, 2016: 126).

+ *Vowels*

In Vietnamese syllables, vowels are obligatory (Pham & McLeod, 2016). The Standard Vietnamese vowels are presented in the table below.

Grapheme(s)	Standard Vietnamese
i	/i/
y	/i/
ê	/e/
e	/ɛ/
ư	/u/
u	/u/
ô	/o/
o	/ɔ/
ơ	/ɜ/
a	/a/ or /ɑ/
â	/ɤ/
ã, a	/ɛ̃/
a	/ɛ̃/
o	/ɔ̃/
iê	/ie/
yê	/ie/
ia	/ie/
ya	/ie/
uô	/uo/
ua	/uo/
ươ	/uɜ/
ura	/uɜ/

Table 7: The Standard Vietnamese vowels

(Pham & McLeod, 2016:126)

+ *Tones*

Besides vowels, tones are also a compulsory component of a syllable. Tone is a remarkable feature in Vietnamese, used as a phoneme because a change in tone leads to a change in pitch level which indicates a change in meaning of a word (Doan, 2003, Cao, 2006; Tang & Barlow, 2006). Specifically, the Northern Vietnamese dialect consists of six tones: mid-level, falling, creaky, dipping-rising, rising, and constricted (Nguyen, 2001; Ngo, 2006), whereas creaky and dipping-

rising tones are not clearly distinguished in Southern dialects as in Northern dialects (Nguyen, 2001; Tang, 2007). The following example shows that a change in tone causes a change in meaning of a word:

E.g.: Ca (*mug* in English)

Cá (*fish* in English)

“Ca” and “Cá” are two distinct words with a difference in tone, middle-level and rising, respectively. This difference in tone makes these two words differ in meaning, even though the other components (i.e. the nuclear vowel and the consonant) are identical.

5.1.3. Vietnamese word stress

According to Ngo (2006), Vietnamese is a syllable-timed language in which the duration and strength of a syllable are identical, leading to the fairly even rhythm in Vietnamese sound systems (Ngo, 2006). Also, Vietnamese has no system of word stress, but a system of six types of tone as aforementioned: mid-level, falling, creaky, dipping-rising, rising, and constricted (Nguyen, 2001; Nguyen & Ingram, 2005; Ngo, 2006).

We have highlighted some characteristic of Vietnamese phonology. Let us now move on the comparisons of phonological and phonetic features in Vietnamese and English.

5.2. The phonological and phonetic comparisons between Vietnamese and English

The differences and similarities between the phonological and phonetic features of Vietnamese and English have an influence on how a Vietnamese native speaker produce English sounds and to what extent he/she can be understood by the listener (Hwa-Froelich et al., 2002).

+ Consonant and vowel sounds

A number of consonant and vowel sounds that are similar in Vietnamese and English are provided in table 8 below.

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)	Typical Graphemes in Vietnamese
/m/	<u>m</u>
/n/	<u>n</u> or <u>nh</u>
/ŋ/	<u>ng</u>
/t/	<u>th</u>
/j/	<u>y</u> , <u>d</u> , or <u>gi</u>
/w/	<u>hu</u>
/h/	<u>h</u>
/i/	<u>i</u>
/e/	<u>ê</u>
/u/	<u>u</u>
/o/	<u>ô</u>
/ɑ/	<u>a</u>
/aɪ/	<u>ai</u>
/ɑʊ/	<u>âu</u>
/ɔɪ/	<u>oi</u>
/ʌ/	<u>ơ</u>

Note. Adapted from Center for Applied Linguistics # 4, n.d., p. 3.

Table 8: Similar English and Vietnamese sounds

(Hwa-Froelich et al., 2002:266)

There are also some consonant and vowel sounds that occur in one language but not in another language. Several English sounds that are not present in the Vietnamese language are challenging for Vietnamese learners of English to produce. As a result, these sounds may be substituted by other sounds. These foreign consonant and vowel sounds are presented in the following table.

IPA	Confused with:
/θ/	/t, s/
/ð/	/d, z/
/p/	/b/
/g/	/k/
/dʒ/	/z/
/ʒ/	/z, dʒ/
/s/	/ʃ/
/tr/	/dʒ, tʃ, t/
/v/	/f/
/i/	/i/
/ɛ/	/æ/
/æ/	/ɛ, a/
/u/	/u, ʌ/

Note. Adapted from the Center for Applied Linguistics # 4, n.d., p. 3.

Table 9: English phonemes that might be confused to Vietnamese speakers of English

(Hwa-Froelich et al., 2002:267)

As displayed in table 9, the consonant sound /θ/ in English, “hard th” was substituted by the sound /t/ or /s/ by the Vietnamese speakers participated in Hwa-Froelich et al.’s study. This is due to the fact that the Vietnamese people do not put their tongue between the teeth to produce [θ] (e.g., think) as English speakers do. The sound /θ/ is seen as one of the most difficult sounds for Vietnamese learners of English to pronounce (Tang, 2007).

The Vietnamese language has vowel clusters, diphthongs and triphthongs instead of consonant clusters (Hwa-Froelich et al., 2002). As a result, Vietnamese learners of English tend to pronounce some English consonant clusters or affricates such as /Dʒ/ and /tʃ/ incorrectly because these consonant clusters are strange to them.

English is known to have a more complex vowel system than Vietnamese, which causes many difficulties in vowel pronunciation for Vietnamese learners of English (Tang, 2007; Pham & Mcleod, 2016). The Vietnamese and English vowel clusters are presented in Table 10 below.

	Vietnamese only	Shared sounds	English only
Singletons	e (ê), u (ư), ɤ (ơ) ɤ̃ (âm), ă (ã)	i (xin or see) æ(lâm or had), ɔ(chô or ought ¹) ɑ (mất ² or cọt ¹) o (trư or wood) u (tu or blue) ɛ (chết ² or egg)	ɪ (kid) ʌ (cut), ə (attack) ɾ (thunder) ʒ (urgent)
Diphthongs	ie (biên, mía, yên) uo (cuôn) urɤ (trót, trư)		ou (oh), au (how) aɪ (eye), oɪ (boy), eɪ (bake)
2-Vowel Combinations (medial vowel -u- and principal vowel)	ui (suy), oe (Huế) oɤ (thư), oɤ̃ (luật) æ (khoe), əa (hoa)		
2-Vowel Combinations (principal vowel with final semi-vowel)	ɤj (chôi), uɤj (chúi) oj (nôi), uj (lúi), aj (chài) ɔj (vôi), əj (cây), ɤj (cay) iw (xíu), ew (kêu) ew (leo), urw (lư) ɛ:w(áo, rau), ău (lâu)		
3+ vowel combinations (medial vowel -u- and principal vowel and final semi-vowel)	iew (nhiều, yêu) urɤw (hưou), ɔaj (khoai) uɤj (nuôi), urɤj (mười) uia (khuya), uej (uây)		aɪə (Diana) ieɪ, (pronunciation) iou (stereo), oueɪ (oasis)

Note: Numerous vowel differences exist among regional Vietnamese dialects (see Dinh and Nguyen, 1998, for details). This table presents Vietnamese vowels primarily from the northern dialect (Dinh & Nguyen, 1998; D. H. Nguyen, 2001). General American English vowel sounds are based on Erickson (2001) and Harris (1994). Sounds are represented by IPA symbols. Letters that correspond to the sounds are underlined in the example words in parentheses.

¹ Regional dialects of American English may not exhibit a difference between /ɔ/ and /ɑ/.

² The phoneme /a/ may serve as an allophonic variation of /ä/ in certain Vietnamese dialects. The phoneme /ɛ/ may serve as an allophonic variation of /e/ in certain Vietnamese dialects.

Table 10: Vietnamese and English vowel clusters

(Tang, 2007:10)

+ Aspirated and unaspirated sounds

As can be seen in table 9 above, the sound /p/ is confused with the sound /b/. It is because “English speakers usually produce both aspirated and unaspirated stops without conscious awareness of aspiration differences” (Hwa-Froelich, 2002: 266). For instance, /p/ in “pet” is aspirated, but /p/ in “span” is not. However, in Vietnamese, the aspiration of “p” is not highly considered in Vietnamese words, in both initial and final positions.

Moreover, in Vietnamese, the phonemes /t/ and /k/ are unaspirated or implosive stops (both in syllable-initial and syllable-final positions), whereas these phonemes are never unaspirated in

English syllable-initial position. Therefore, the aspiration of these English phonemes may not be precisely produced by Vietnamese speakers (Hwa-Froelich et al., 2002).

+ *Tones and syllable stress*

As mentioned earlier, Vietnamese is a tonal language in which a tone is included in every word (Tang, 2007; Pham & Mcleod, 2016). Additionally, the tone is associated with the meaning of a word. Meanwhile, every English phrase and sentence have intonation patterns. A change in the intonation can lead to a change in the meaning of a sentence from a directive, to a question or to a statement (Hwa-Froelich et al., 2002). Through the intonation patterns of English, a variety of emotions and meanings can be conveyed.

Syllable duration and vowel reduction are characterized as native English productions, and they are not active in Vietnamese tonal contrasts (Nguyen & Ingram, 2005).

Taken as a whole, the phonemic repertoire, lack of consonant clusters, manner of production, tone levels, and syllable stress are known as major phonological and phonetic differences between Vietnamese and English (Hwa-Froelich et al., 2002).

5.3. *Transfer in L2 learning*

Sharing a concern about pronunciation education, several researchers, both Vietnamese and foreign, have conducted a great number of studies on how Vietnamese learners apply their knowledge from Vietnamese to English when learning pronunciation. Osburne (1996) and Tam (2005) revealed three fundamental shortages in the English pronunciation of Vietnamese learners as follows:

- (1) sound omissions, which indicates the medial and final sounds that are usually omitted (e.g., k,t);
- (2) sound confusion, which points to some English sounds that are mispronounced and replaced by Vietnamese sounds (e.g t=ʃ, tr = ʃ or ð = z/d);
- (3) and sound redundancy, which refers to the ending sounds that are over pronounced (e.g., s,z).

Additionally, conducting a study with Vietnamese undergraduates who learned English in a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Tuan (2011) revealed that these participants had a tendency to substitute English sounds by Vietnamese sounds.

Furthermore, Nguyen & Ingram (2005) conducted a research with the aim of examining how stressed and unstressed syllables are recognized by Vietnamese learners of English. They reported that the Vietnamese novice students of English who participated in their study could not differentiate between stressed and unstressed syllables in English. In other words, they could not produce a syllable duration contrast and failed to reduce vowels in unstressed syllables.

Overall, there are a great number of phonological and phonetic features that are not shared in the two languages. This means that Vietnamese speakers are likely to pronounce the English sounds that are foreign to them incorrectly.

6. Perspectives on English Language Pronunciation Teaching

6.1. Teachers' perspectives on English language pronunciation teaching

Non-native English speaking teachers, including well-trained instructors, whose English pronunciation is affected by their own mother tongues could feel insecure when teaching pronunciation (Canagarajah, 2005). If a teacher has insufficient knowledge, teaching techniques and professional confidence, he or she could not be able to teach pronunciation in a satisfactory way (Brown, 1992; Claire, 1993; Fraser, 2000; Yates, 2001). Burgess and Spencer (2000) listed a number of fundamental factors which should be of great concern during the pronunciation teaching process such as the selection and combination of pronunciation features (i.e. segmental or suprasegmental), the teaching methods yielding the most effective learning outcomes, and the difference between phonology and pronunciation.

The goal of our research is to uncover to what extent pronunciation instruction is being incorporated into curricula and which teaching practices are being used by Vietnamese speaking teachers. We believe that recognizing the teachers' perspectives on their pronunciation teaching is very important. It helps educators not only to determine the pronunciation teaching practices that are employed by teachers, but also to reveal challenges that teachers are facing and current situations of pronunciation teaching in Vietnam.

Teachers' perspectives on pronunciation might be different from students', which might cause the differences in pronunciation teaching and learning targets (Cunningham, 2009). Learners' targets and perspectives on English pronunciation, therefore, should be explored and discussed in the matter of language education, to which we shall now turn our attention.

6.2. Learners' motivation and perspectives on English pronunciation

Learners may want to learn English for multiple reasons (Cunningham, 2009). Achieving a native-like accent is not the only goal nowadays, although it was seen as “a benchmark of achievement” in Timmis's (2002) survey carried out with 400 students from 14 different countries (Timmis, 2002: 242). As reported by Rindal & Piercy (2013), of importance was the learners' ambition to learn a specific variety of English. Specifically, American English was preferred over British English as an English pronunciation standard by Norwegian learners. Meanwhile, found by Tergujeff (2013), fluency and intelligibility were the target motivations towards English pronunciation learning of Finnish learners. As argued by Jenkin (1998), communicating successfully in English with both native speakers and non-native speakers from various L1 backgrounds has become one of the principal motivations of a majority of learners of English.

Part of the reason for the focus on identifying Vietnamese learners' motivation and perspectives on pronunciation teaching and learning is that the most suitable pronunciation norms and models for different learners could be considered to teach by teachers (Jenkins, 1998). Furthermore, it is important to determine Vietnamese learners' needs and attitudes towards learning English pronunciation. It may be a means to help Vietnamese teachers and educators decide which are the appropriate teaching techniques for the Vietnamese learners of English. Consequently, the teachers' difficulties could be reduced and the quality of teaching could be fortified (Chen & Goh, 2011).

7. The present thesis

In an attempt to discover the problems related to the pronunciation teaching and learning of English by Vietnamese speakers, this thesis aims to investigate the current issues of pronunciation teaching and learning, revealing the teachers' and learners' perspectives and beliefs about English pronunciation norms (e.g., preference for particular varieties). As Hinofitis and Baily (1980) reported, most of the errors non-native English learners make concern pronunciation rather than

vocabulary or grammar, which is prone to create a communication breakdown (Hinofitis and Baily, 1980: 124, 125). Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the appropriate approaches to pronunciation teaching which can promote communication and pronunciation learning (Ha, 2005). Further, to better understand the context of the present research, we also examine whether Vietnamese teachers' attitudes towards English pronunciation are correlated with Vietnamese learners' opinions. Besides, how the teachers' and learners' perspectives on English pronunciation change in the development of English will also be explored.

The pronunciation-related issues on the matter of pronunciation will be identified by focusing on the following two groups: Vietnamese teachers and Vietnamese learners of English. We hypothesize that there will be some correlations between the Vietnamese teachers' and learners' perspectives on English pronunciation teaching and learning. We will address our research questions are:

1. What are Vietnamese teachers' perspectives on and attitudes towards English pronunciation teaching and learning?
2. What are Vietnamese students' perspectives on and attitudes towards the English pronunciation and learning?
3. To what extent are teachers' views are in accordance with learners' perspectives on English pronunciation?

III. Methodology

As we have already seen, this thesis aims to determine the norms and models of English pronunciation teaching and learning that are practiced by Vietnamese teachers and to which learners are exposed. Our research therefore follows two paths. First, we will inquire into perceptions of Vietnamese teachers about English pronunciation norms and their attitudes towards pronunciation teaching. Second, to make the picture of the present teaching practices more explicit and to add to existing research, we will also ask for Vietnamese learners' beliefs and attitudes towards English pronunciation practices. In this way, we can also cross-check whether Vietnamese instructors' beliefs about English pronunciation education are consistent with the Vietnamese students' perceptions about the same matter, which could also increase the effectiveness of the learning process and hence the ultimate level of proficiency.

We will study all these aspects by means of a questionnaire, which will be completed by Vietnamese EFL teachers and students. This chapter will first describe the design and content of the questionnaires, afterwards we will provide an overview of the participants involved.

We have chosen the questionnaire as a tool for several reasons. By means of a questionnaire, the questions can be appropriately structured based on the research objectives, which enables standardization and comparability of the responses. Furthermore, it is easier for us to collect information using questionnaires rather than interviews in the light of the geographical distance (i.e. The Netherlands-Vietnam). Last but not least, it is potentially convenient for us to transmit the questionnaire to a large sample of informants (Carter & Williamson, 1996; Oppenheim, 1992). Undeniably, we take risks as the returns from questionnaires are usually not ensured and can sometimes be very low.

In order to find answers to our research questions, there will be two separate questionnaires. One of them is used to examine the Vietnamese EFL teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards English pronunciation teaching and learning, while another one is distributed among Vietnamese EFL learners to determine their perspectives and needs with respect to English pronunciation instruction and acquisition. Let us now look at the precise content of each of these questionnaires.

1. The first questionnaire for Vietnamese EFL teachers

1.1. The questionnaire

The first questionnaire will be transmitted to teachers of English in Vietnam in order to collect their views on English pronunciation teaching and learning in their country. It contains 25 questions in total that elicit information on several topics. The questionnaire seeks to determine the background information of the participants and their current teaching situation (teaching context and target learners), participants' general English proficiency and English pronunciation capacity in particular, teaching resources and activities used for pronunciation instruction, and beliefs and attitudes towards pronunciation teaching. In order to obtain all this information, with the required amount of detail, we will include different types of questions such as multiple-choice questions, yes/no questions, Likert scales, open-ended questions, and direct questions. Most of the questions are four-point Likert-type scales with the aim of avoiding the neutral answers as in Likert-type scales with an odd number of options. By means of a four-point scale, the participants have to choose either positive or negative answers. In the multiple-choice questions, the informants are going to be asked their judgement by ticking the box representing one of the options. Besides, there will be a space for the respondents to express their additional comments or details and the reasons for their choice. Finally, for the subset of questions which require more detailed answers, we will use genuine open-ended questions.

Importantly, the questionnaire will not require too much time to complete (approximately 15 minutes). The questionnaire will be piloted by an English instructor before being transmitted to the participants. At the beginning of the questionnaire, the participants will be informed about the goals of our research, as this information is unlikely to influence their responses. This questionnaire for teachers is presented in Appendix A.

1.2. Participants

The questionnaire will be administered to Vietnamese teachers instructing English at either public schools and or private institutions, or working in both organizations. The questionnaire will be distributed to participants via email and social networks (e.g., Facebook). The participants are teachers of English working in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. At the beginning of the questionnaire, all of them are asked to provide some personal information, such as age, gender, teaching and training background in the English domain.

2. The second questionnaire for Vietnamese EFL learners

In order to find answers to our research questions, it is necessary to go beyond the teachers' opinions and practices and examine also the students' needs and perspective towards pronunciation acquisition. We also want to know how Vietnamese EFL learners evaluate current teaching practice and whether there is a clash between teachers' and learners' attitudes. Importantly, the extent to which the Vietnamese learners of English recognize and valorize the role of pronunciation skills in general English learning might play a part in the effectiveness of English pronunciation acquisition.

As Baker and Murphy (2011) claimed, most recent studies seem to focus on discussions of teacher's beliefs about second language pronunciation teaching, but few take up the issue of learners' attitudes and opinions on the same matter. Therefore, if we supplement the nature and extent of English pronunciation teaching and learning in Vietnam by exploring both Vietnamese teachers' and Vietnamese learners' perspectives on English pronunciation instruction, we will be able to fill an important gap.

2.1. The questionnaire

The current research seeks to elicit the perspectives and attitudes of a group of EFL learners who have either studied in public schools or attended private language centres across Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The questionnaire contains 21 questions, including five fundamental aspects: background information of the participants, teaching curricula, language of instruction, teaching and learning style, importance of teachers' pronunciation skills, and types of feedback. Similar to the teachers' questionnaire, the survey relies on a majority of four-point Likert scale items as well as multiple-choice questions. Open-ended questions were also included in order to obtain a fuller understanding of the students' points of view.

Since the EFL participants of the survey will be gathered from several teaching contexts, with different levels of English proficiency (i.e. elementary, intermediate, advanced), the questionnaire will be formulated in Vietnamese in order to guarantee full comprehension of the content of the questionnaire for all participants. The questionnaire for EFL learners is provided in Appendix B, and its English version is included in Appendix C.

2.2. Participants

In our opinion, preschool children (3-5 years) and gradeschoolers (5-12 years) are not yet sufficiently aware of their language learning process and they may find it too difficult to reply to the questionnaire. Hence, in order not to bias the results and to obtain a data set that is as reliable as possible, the learners in those ranges of age will be excluded. We administer the questionnaire only to participants who are adolescents (12-18 years), young adults (18-21 years) and adults. To recruit participants, the teachers who participated in the first questionnaire are asked to support us for transmitting the questionnaire to their students. Participants' proficiency levels in the target language are evaluated by students through a self-evaluating scale ranging from 1 to 4 in which 1 refers to *poor*, 2 to *okay*, 3 to *good*, and 4 to *excellent*.

After having seen the design and content of our questionnaires, let us now turn to the analysis of the outcomes.

IV. Results

Because open-ended questions were employed in our questionnaires next to questions on the perceived norms of English skills, we are able to analyse our data both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data were calculated by means of Excel. Only descriptive statistical analyses were performed. Besides, the data were coded according to two categories: “TPs” for teacher participants and “LPs” for learner participants, which we will now discuss each in turn.

1. Data analysis of teacher participants (TPs)

In order to obtain a better understanding of the context of our participants, some background information questions were included for both teachers and learners. For the category of the teacher participants (TPs), we received 21 questionnaires which had been fully completed. Among those participants, female teachers are dominant (n=19). Most participants aged in the range of 21-30 (n=11), whereas the others fell in the 41-50 age range. Along with a variety of background information, teacher participants also provided an overview of their teaching experience that they have obtained. We are now moving on the next section which analyzed the participants’ English teaching experience.

Ten of our participants have a bachelor degree, and nine of them possess a master degree. Furthermore, only a small number indicated that they previously studied abroad (n=6). Besides, among those participants, none of them is working in only public schools, but working either in private institutions or in both types of organisations.

Most of our teachers are responsible for teaching more than one target group of learners (e.g., both kids and adults) and different levels of English proficiency (e.g., elementary and intermediate). For the teachers who have over 10 years of teaching experience, they either seem to instruct adults or learners who have a more advanced level. A number of teacher participants provide training to undergraduates who desire to become new teachers. Besides, some of them also do educational administration in their organization. For more details on the participants’ teaching experience, the reader is referred to Appendix D, Table 1.

+ Teacher participants’ evaluations of their English proficiency and teaching experience

It is worth mentioning that over half of the teacher participants labelled their general English proficiency as “good” (n=12), and ten of them also evaluated their English pronunciation ability as “good”. None of them rated their general English proficiency and English pronunciation skills as “weak”.

Interestingly, not all of the teacher participants completely agreed that they have an adequate expertise in teaching their current target learners. In the open responses for this question, there are two main problems are expressed by our participants for not having adequate expertise and experience in teaching their current target learners. First, teaching has not been their major in university. Second, they have not been trained sufficiently or even did not have any training course before teaching their current target learners.

+ Teacher participants’ evaluations of their English pronunciation skills

A number of ten people who participated in the study indicated that they feel very confident when teaching pronunciation, and eight of them gave the answer “fairly” for this issue, while a minority of them feel “not much” confident. Besides, all teachers agreed that pronunciation teaching could have a strong effect on the learners’ overall intelligibility in English communication, so that it is important to them to put an emphasis on pronunciation teaching.

A pronunciation-related issue that has arisen in this regard is a number of reasons why some teachers feel uncomfortable with teaching pronunciation. Their reactions are listed in the table below. The responses are copied literally, so any spelling/grammar mistakes are not corrected.

Teacher participants	Question 12: Why are you not confident with your English pronunciation when you teach pronunciation to your learners?
1	I have a problem with my tongue which prohibits me to pronounce English words well
2	I pronounce English unnaturally
3	My pronunciation is not native enough because I am a non-native speakers
4	I pronounce not correctly some specific English sounds and not with a native accent
5	I did not have many chances to get exposed to native English speakers before I become a teacher of English

6	My mother tongue affects my English intonation and enunciation, so that I find it difficult to pronounce some sounds in English
7	My accent is not natural and native as native English speakers
8	English has many complex phonological rules

Table 1: The reasons why teachers feel not confident with their English pronunciation

+ Teacher participants' perspectives on English pronunciation

It has further been pointed out by most of the teachers in our sample that the Vietnamese learners' English pronunciation skills are considered as "fair" (n=14). There were just three teachers labelled Vietnamese learners' English pronunciation skills as "good", while four people rated it as "weak". It is intriguing that when the teacher participants were asked for their own opinions towards the strengths and weaknesses of Vietnamese learners' general English capacity, most respondents mentioned communication breakdowns and pronunciation shortages as one of the most severe problems that Vietnamese learners of English are confronted with. We combined the responses for questions 14 and 16 in Table 3 which is presented in Appendix D, since the answers for these two questions overlap. The figures below are the proportions of the opinions on the strengths of Vietnamese learners' English in general and weaknesses on learners' English pronunciation in particular.

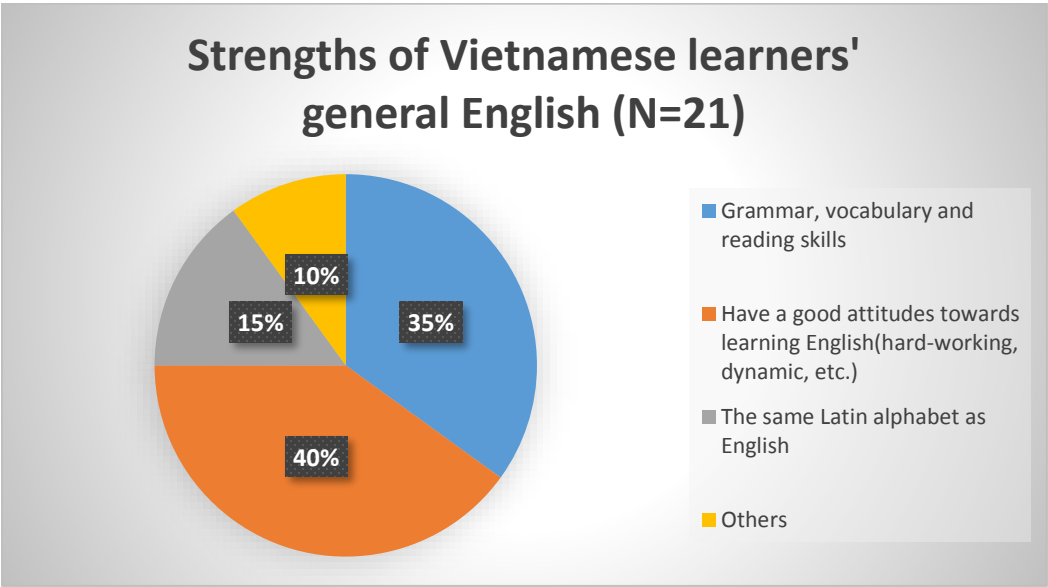


Figure 1: Proportions of principal strengths of Vietnamese learners' general English indicated by TPs

As can be seen from the Figure 1 above, several strengths of Vietnamese learners were indicated by our teacher participants. The majority of the participants commented that Vietnamese learners of English possess a good attitude towards English acquisition; they are “hard-working” and “dynamic” by 40% of the number of the participants. Not surprisingly, approximately one-third of the participants (35%) reported that Vietnamese students of English are competent in applying grammatical rules, vocabulary and reading skills. Besides, 15% of them reported that the use of the Latin alphabet in both Vietnamese and English could enable Vietnamese students to acquire English orthography relatively easily.

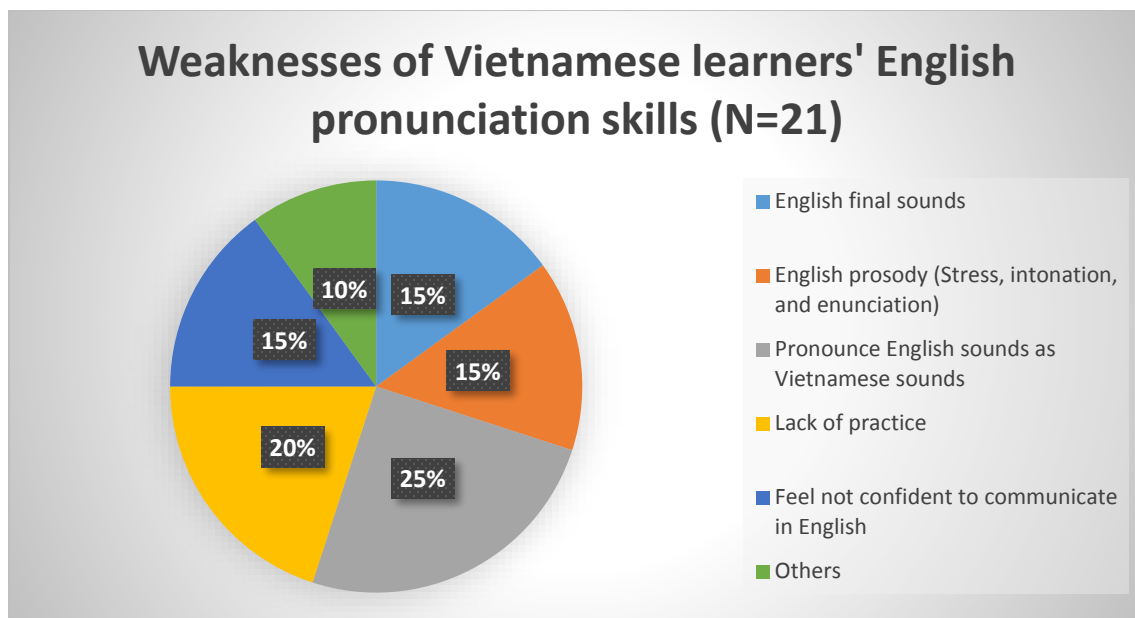


Figure 2: Proportions of principal weaknesses of Vietnamese learners' English pronunciation indicated by TPs

In terms of the Vietnamese learners' English pronunciation capacity, there does not appear to be a wide variety of answers. The most striking result that emerged from the data is that one-fourth of the participants indicated that most Vietnamese speakers of English are influenced by their mother tongue. Besides, 20% of them believed that the lack of practice is also a difficulty that Vietnamese learners of English are facing. The weaknesses on English final sounds, prosody, and the fear of English communication shared the same percentage (15%).

As mentioned earlier, all teacher participants recognized the importance of pronunciation in general English teaching. We found the following with respect to the aspects that the teachers concentrate on when teaching pronunciation:

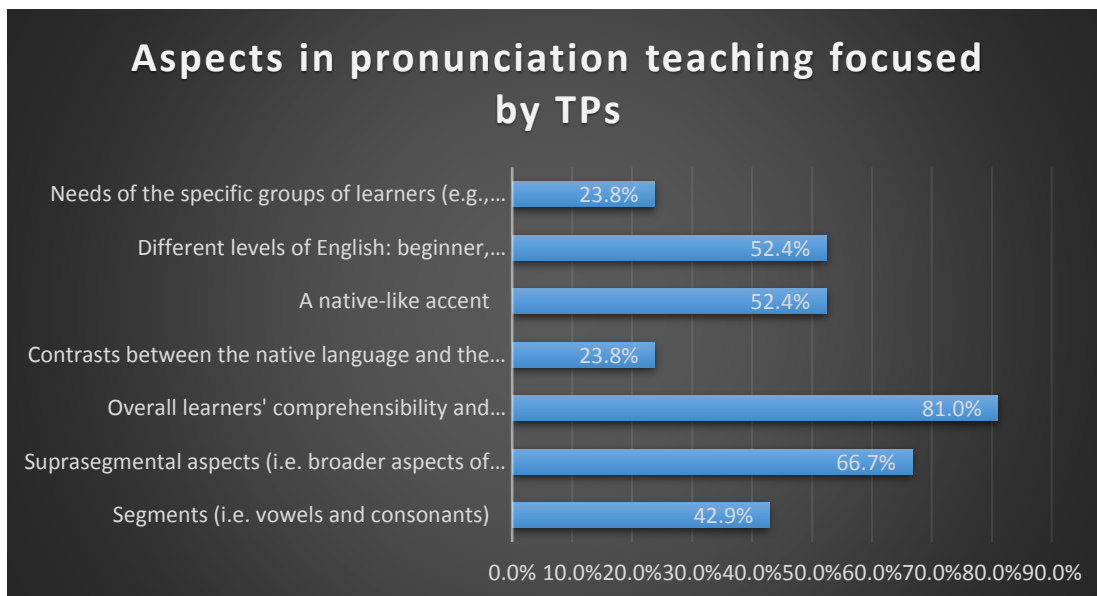


Figure 3: Proportions of concentration on some aspects in pronunciation teaching

For this question, the teacher participants were allowed to choose more than one option. As can be seen from the chart above, the majority of our teachers (81%) responded that they like to concentrate on the learners' overall comprehensibility and intelligibility in English communication. In addition, English prosody features such as stress, intonation and word rhythm are also paid fairly much attention by over two-thirds of the teachers (66.7%). Meanwhile, little interest is accorded to the instruction of the phonological contrasts between English and Vietnamese, and the learners' specific needs towards pronunciation acquisition (23.8%).

With regard to the materials that are mostly employed for teaching pronunciation, audiovisual materials and authentic speech such as songs and movies are mostly used (95%) besides other types of materials. Even though the proportion of the use of published books was not the highest, it still accounted for 65% which is not a very humble number.

More specifically, teachers stated that they regularly employ some audiovisual materials such as authentic video/speech and teaching activities such as role-plays for practicing pronunciation and communication. For more details, see Table 4 in Appendix D.

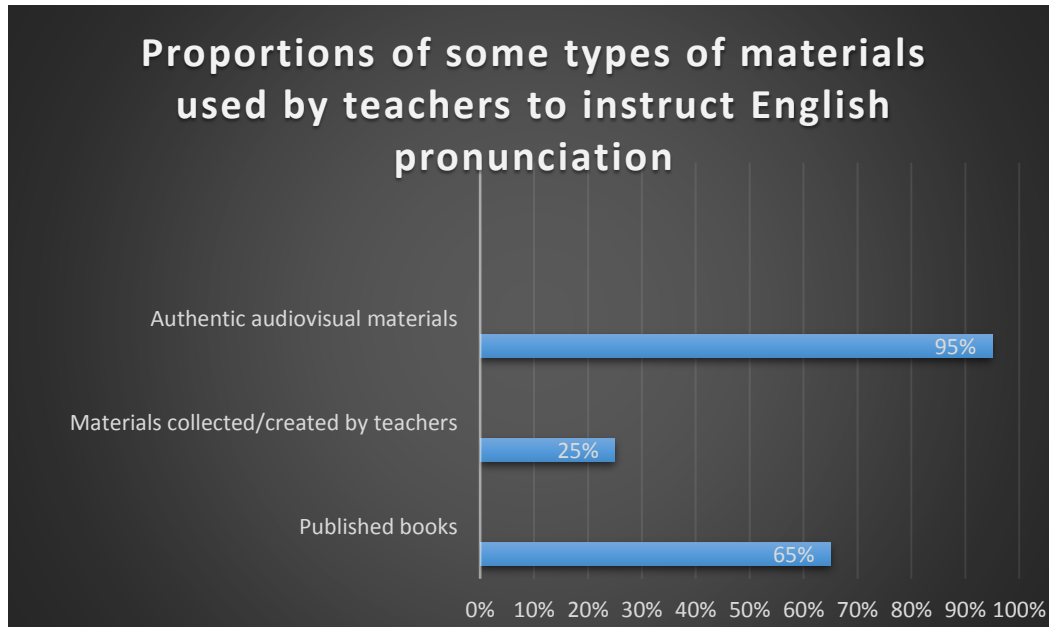


Figure 4: Proportions of some types of materials used by teachers to instruct English pronunciation

As stated by some teacher participants (n=12), the oral tests and interviews at the beginning of the English course are said to be fundamental ways to diagnose their students' English pronunciation problems. Most of them said that these methods are regularly used to discover learners' pronunciation difficulties (n= 16).

Moreover, most TPs desire to develop and improve their pronunciation teaching methods by measuring their students' pronunciation progress. This demand was seen as "very" necessary by 12 participants, while it was rated as "fair" by the rest (n=9).

At the end of an English course, the combination of using both oral tests and written tests is preferred over the use of oral tests or ordinary written tests only, according to a majority of the participants (n=13). It is also noteworthy that written tests were preferred by just a very small number (n=2). The responses are presented in Table 3 below.

Issues	Responses	Teachers' responses	Percentage of teachers' responses
		N	
How often do teacher participants make a diagnosis of the students' English pronunciation problems?	1= never	1	4.8%
	2= rarely	2	9.5%
	3= regularly	16	76.2%
	4= always	2	9.5%
How important to measure the learners' pronunciation progress during the course to improve your current English pronunciation practices?	1= not at all	0	0%
	2= not much	0	0%
	3= fairly	9	42.9%
	4= very	12	57.1%
Which tests are preferred to evaluate your learners' pronunciation competence?	Oral tests	9	42.9%
	Written tests	2	9.5%
	Combination of both types of tests	13	61.9%

Table 3: Data analysis of English pronunciation assessments carried out by teachers

With respect to the question of which factors that most contribute to the efficiency of English pronunciation teaching, participants could choose more than one answer. Specifically, the highest score was obtained for teachers' general proficiency in English (85.7%) (see Figure 5). Other factors were also often chosen, such as the teachers' English pronunciation skills (71.4%), their pronunciation teaching confidence (66.7%) and the intercultural and teaching experience (61.9%). From these results, it is clear that appropriate teaching plans and practices occupied an important place in the matter (61.9%). Another important finding in this regard is that a minority of the teachers (42.9%) considered giving a sufficient feedback on students' pronunciation to be particularly important.

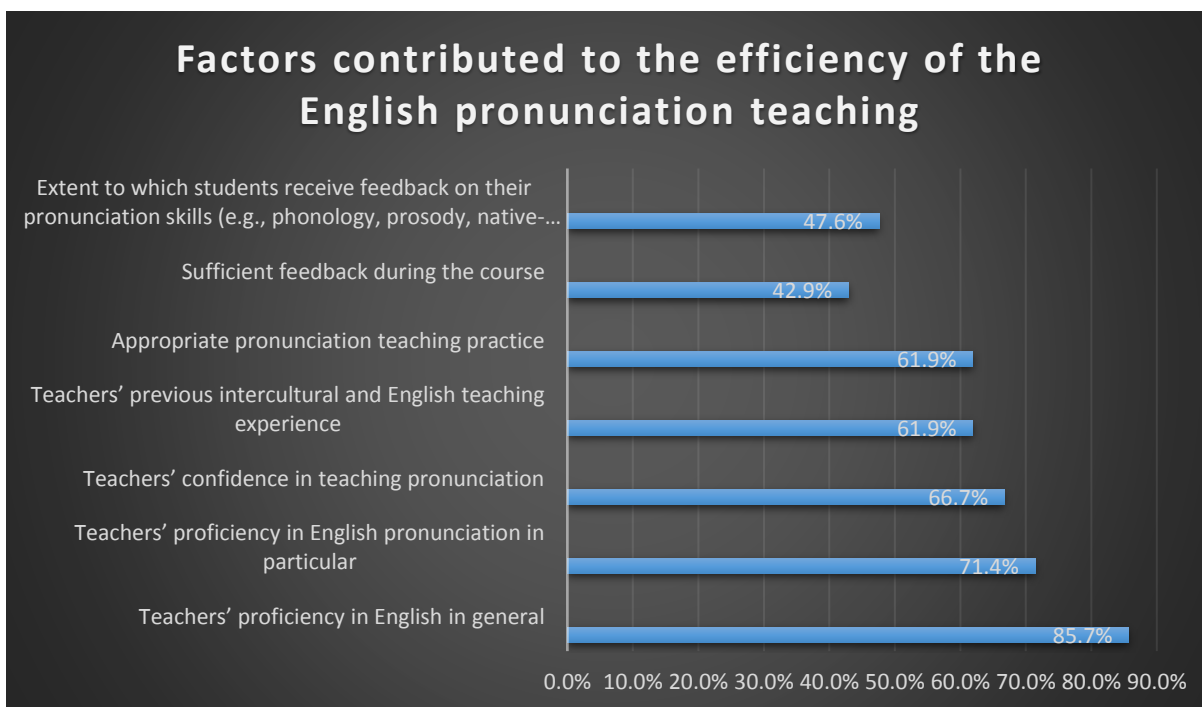


Figure 5: Proportions of factors contributed to the efficiency of the English pronunciation teaching

This section summarized the findings from the teacher participants' quantitative and qualitative data analysis. In order to put the teachers' survey into a wider perspective, the next section will provide the data analysis of the other focus group of this study, the learner participants.

2. Data analysis of learner participants (LPs)

We received a total number of 42 LP questionnaires, including 30 female and 12 male participants. However, we excluded one questionnaire which had not been fully completed by a male learner participant. As a result, 41 questionnaires, completed by 30 females and 11 males, were analysed.

In general, the participants' age ranges from 16 to over 21. The number of the participants who are students exceeded that of those who are employed, with 31 and 10, respectively. Our data demonstrated that a majority of the participants have learned English for approximately 10 years (n=34). However, most Vietnamese learners of English responded that their English proficiency could only be labelled as "okay". Our learner participants' essential background data is summarized in Appendix D, Table 2.

+ Learner participants' perspectives on general English acquisition and instruction

There was more than one factor that was labelled as important in English acquisition by the learner participants. Specifically, vocabulary was indicated by most learner participants (85.4%). Besides, over half of the learners confirmed the importance of awareness of the functioning of English prosody (stress, intonation and enunciation) and the English pronunciation of consonants and vowels as important factors, with proportions of 53.7% and 51.2%, respectively. Interestingly, the data highlight that less value was accorded to grammatical structures in comparison with other factors of English acquisition and instruction. This is a striking finding since it has been heavily highlighted and implemented in the English national curriculum across Vietnam (Van, 2008; MOET, 2008). These data are summarized in Figure 6.

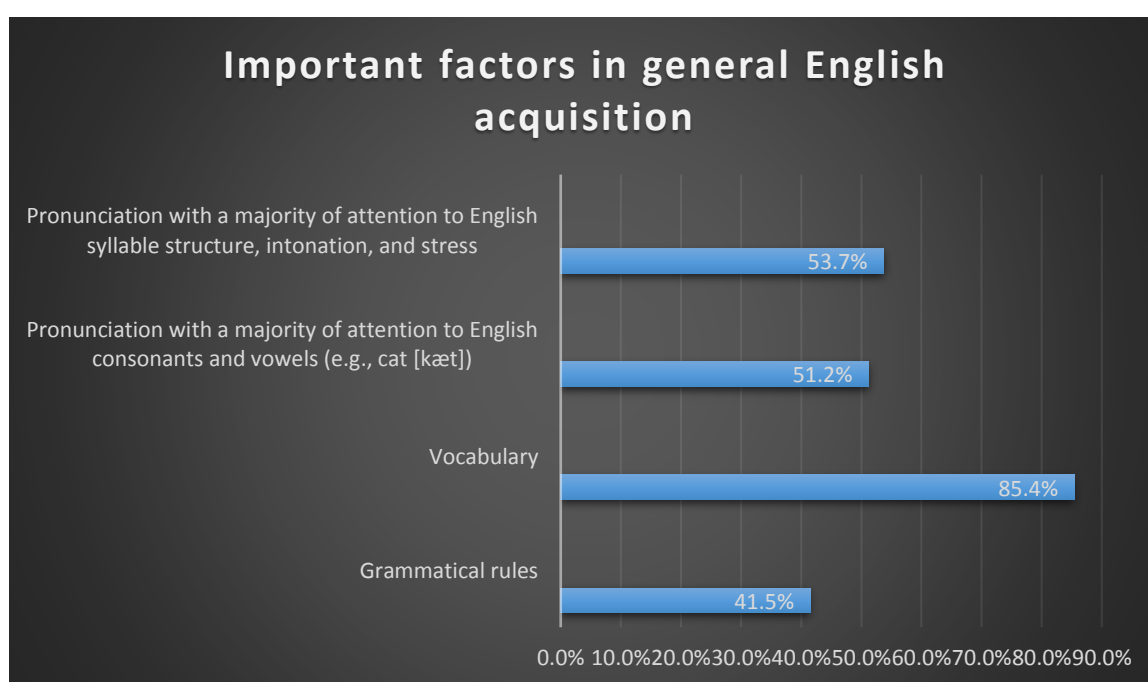


Figure 6: Proportions of important factors in general English acquisition rated by LPs

+Learner participants' perspectives on English pronunciation acquisition and instructions

Among our participants (n=41), it is worthy to note that there are 25 people who rated their English pronunciation skills as “okay”, and most of them had a strong desire to acquire and improve their current pronunciation skills (n=39). Moreover, most participants believed that a good pronunciation ability has a strong impact on English proficiency in general, which could enable them to communicate well and successfully in English with others (n=39). Table 5 presents a full overview of the answers given by the participants.

Issues	Responses	Number of learners' responses	Percentage of learners' responses
		N	
Current English pronunciation skills (self- evaluated)	1= poor	5	12.2%
	2= okay	25	61%
	3= good	9	22%
	4= excellent	2	4.9%
Desire for English pronunciation improvement	Yes	39	95.1%
	No	2	4.9%
A good pronunciation has an impact on the success of English communication	Yes	39	95.1%
	No	2	4.9%

Table 5: Data analysis of the learners' attitudes towards their English pronunciation

The overall intelligibility of a speaker in English communication was seen as the most important aspect that learner participants paid attention to in English pronunciation acquisition (90.2%). Other aspects were less selected by our participants. These findings are summarized in Figure 7 below.

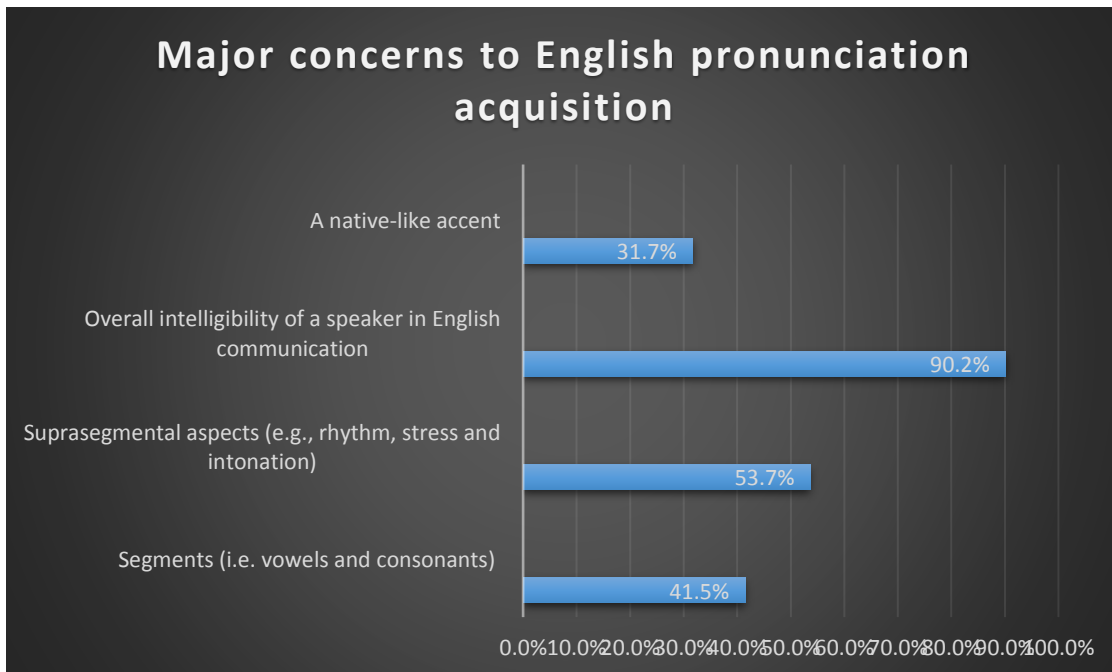


Figure 7: Proportions of major concerns to English pronunciation acquisition rated by LPs

It is also surprising that other factors such as the native-like accent (31.7%), the segments (41.5%) and the suprasegmental features (53.7%) were reported as less crucial for the overall intelligibility in English communication by our participants.

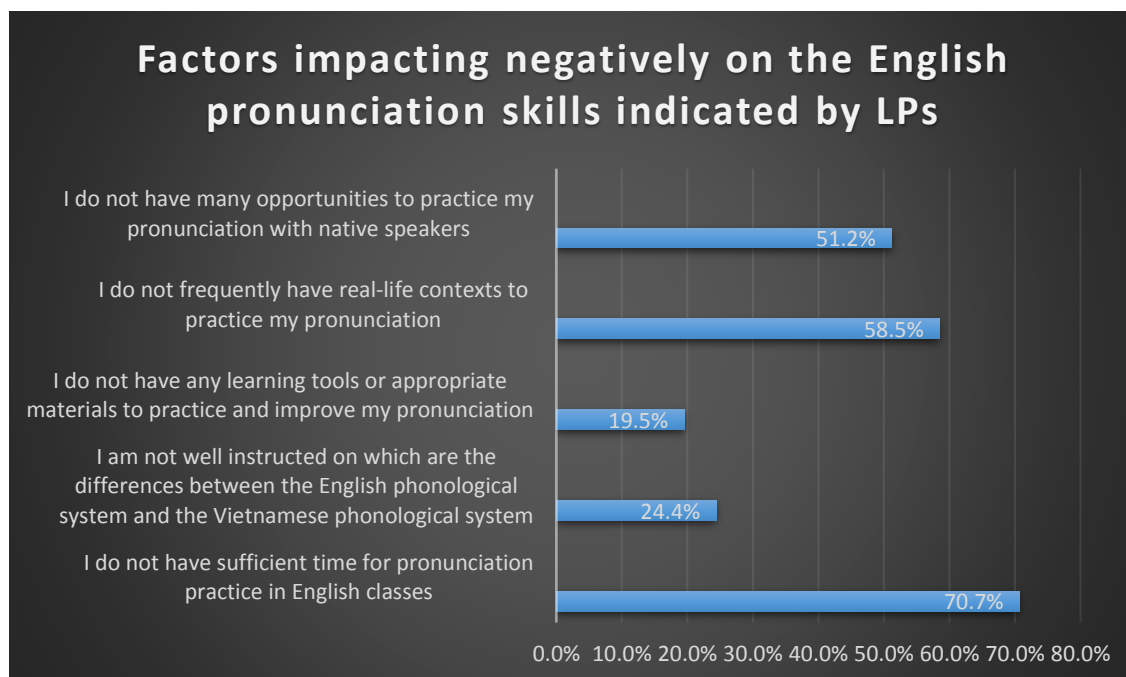


Figure 8: Proportions of factors negatively impacting on learners' English pronunciation skills

When being questioned which factors mainly hamper their pronunciation skills (see Figure 8), a majority of participants complained about the insufficient time allocated for English pronunciation practice in English classes (70.7%). Besides, a lack of authentic English pronunciation practice (e.g., in a real-life context) (indicated by 58.5% of the participants), and little pronunciation practice with English native speakers (reported by 51.2% of the participants) could cause shortages in the learners' pronunciation skills. A lower score was obtained for the importance of learning tools and the use of appropriate materials for pronunciation practice (19.5%).

According to Table 6 below, a majority of learner participants confirmed that teachers' English pronunciation competence has a profound effect on the acquisition of pronunciation skills. Specifically, 53.7% of the learners thought teachers sufficiently influence their students' pronunciation learning and 41.5% of them totally agreed with the statement that the students' pronunciation progress is highly promoted by their teachers.

Issues	Responses	Number of learners' responses	Percentage of learners' responses
		N	
Do teachers' pronunciation skills influence on learners' pronunciation achievement?	1= not at all	0	0%
	2= not much	3	7.3%
	3= fairly	22	53.7%
	4= very	16	39%

Table 6: The influence of teachers' English pronunciation skills on learners' pronunciation achievement rated by LPs

In order to promote learners' pronunciation ability, potential approaches were recommended, and the participants were asked to vote for the suggestions. Proportions of this question are calculated and shown in Figure 9 below.

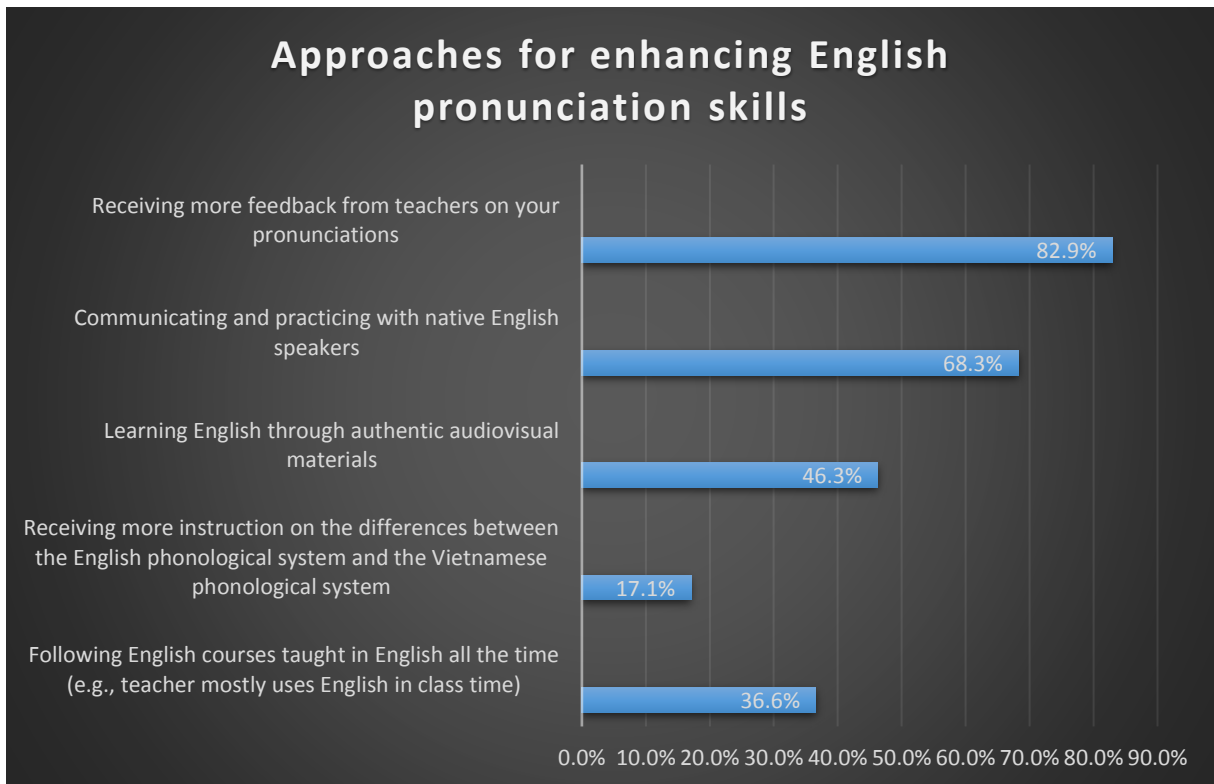


Figure 9: Proportions of approaches for enhancing English pronunciation skills rated by LPs

According to the chart, 82.9% of our learner participants would like to receive more feedback on their English pronunciation from their teachers, which does seem to improve their English pronunciation skills. Approximately two-thirds of participants (68.3%) indicated that they find it important to integrate English native speakers in English language teaching who they could communicate and practice English with. It is also noteworthy that the understanding of differences in phonological system between English and Vietnamese was not seen as the most contributing factor to English pronunciation improvement by our participants; only a small proportion of them voted for this approach (17.1%).

Issues	Responses	Number of learners' responses	Percentage of learners' responses
		N	
Which tests do you prefer to evaluate	Oral tests	15	36.6%
	Written tests	5	12.2%

your pronunciation skills?	Combination of both types of tests	28	68.3%
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Table 7: The preferred tests to pronunciation skills evaluation selected by LPs

As can be seen from Table 7, in accordance with the teacher participants’ opinions, a majority of learners (68.3%) has an interest in a combination of ordinary written tests and oral tests which is seen as a means to evaluate their pronunciation progress. Similarly, written tests were only chosen by a minority of the participants (12.2%).

In this chapter, we have described the quantitative and qualitative data that were gathered from the questionnaires completed by the Vietnamese teachers and learners of English in Vietnam. The data include the participants’ background information, their opinions on English acquisition in general and their perspectives on English pronunciation education in particular. Let us now turn to the discussion chapter where we will formulate the answers to our research questions.

V. Discussion

The main purpose of our study was to determine whether Vietnamese teachers' perspectives on English pronunciation are in line with those of the learners on the same research issue. In our thesis, therefore, we addressed two main aspects: the first is teachers' perspectives and the second is learners' attitudes towards English pronunciation. We found that the participants' background data (age and professional qualifications) do not heavily impact the outcomes.

Overall, the Vietnamese teachers who participated in our survey acknowledged the Vietnamese students' strengths in acquiring English grammatical rules, reading skills, and vocabulary. Both groups of participants, however, indicated that they have several difficulties with English pronunciation after a number of years of teaching and learning.

A number of young teacher participants, who have had 1-5 years of teaching English (n=9), responded that they have insufficient expertise on teaching English due to inadequate training before they started teaching English. This suggests that the low qualification of the teachers could cause breakdowns in English pronunciation teaching.

Moreover, while most teachers commented that they feel confident when teaching English pronunciation, they still admitted that they have problems with English pronunciation (linguistic interference). Intriguingly, the teachers who have had over 10 years of experience (n=8) and those who studied abroad (n=6) still confirmed that they have difficulties with pronunciation.

Additionally, most learner participants rated their English proficiency in general as "okay". It is assumed that Vietnamese people generally have limited English capacity. As a consequence, most of our learner participants were also not confident with their English pronunciation skills due to the lack of English pronunciation practice.

Now we come to discuss the extent to which the teacher participants' responses are correlated with the learner participants'. The evidence from our study suggests that there are some contradictions and some similarities between the teachers' and the learners' perspectives on English pronunciation issues. We now address the correlations and contradictions between the teachers' and learners' perspectives on the English pronunciation matter.

1. The correlations

+ *The major concerns in English pronunciation instruction and acquisition*

Although the teacher participants acknowledged that Vietnamese speakers of English have difficulties mainly related to phonological and phonetic aspects (the influence of Vietnamese sounds on English sounds, English prosody), they would like to focus on the intelligibility and comprehensibility of English communication when they teach English pronunciation. Broadly speaking, it seems that the teachers and learner participants tend to pay more attention to fluent English communication rather than precise pronunciation or even nativeness. The result may suggest that oral skills have obtained a special attention among Vietnamese teachers and students of English.

+ *Contributing factors to English pronunciation skills*

Teachers' English pronunciation skills are regarded as one of the factors contributing most significantly to learners' progress with English pronunciation according to the two groups of participants. These findings would seem to suggest that the "teacher-centred" nature of Vietnam's education still exists. We strongly believe that both teachers and learners value the central role of teachers in English instruction in general and English pronunciation teaching in particular.

+ *The teaching materials*

In terms of teaching materials, teachers and learners would like to expose to authentic audiovisual materials which are presented by English native speakers. A lack of pronunciation practice in which the learners can communicate intensely in English was also indicated by the two groups. This suggests that the demand for learning and practicing English pronunciation with English native speakers may not be sufficiently met.

+ *The English pronunciation assessment*

The two groups preferred test methods with an oral emphasis. More specifically, our teacher participants said that they like to use oral tests such as interviews to diagnose their students' English problems. Our learner participants also like to be verbally tested in English pronunciation examinations. To the best of our knowledge, the tests that evaluate oral skills were not sufficiently employed in the past (Hoang, 1999; Huy, 2006). It may be assumed that the method to test a specific English skill has been appropriately considered in recent time by the teachers and learners.

2. *The contrast*

According to our teacher participants, some aspects involving the role of the teachers (English proficiency in general, English pronunciation skills in particular and teachers' degree of confidence) were important factors contributing to pronunciation enhancement. Meanwhile, the feedback on English pronunciation was mostly selected by the learners.

Interestingly, the difficulties in English pronunciation acquisition that were indicated by our learner participants mostly originated from the English curriculum and teaching practices such as a lack of time for pronunciation practice with English native speakers in English classes. Meanwhile, when being asked about weaknesses in the pronunciation of Vietnamese learners of English, the influence of Vietnamese sounds on English pronunciation was indicated by most teachers. These findings may suggest that our learners are not content with current English curriculum design in Vietnam.

We have shown the extent to which the teachers' perspectives on English pronunciation teaching and learning correlate with the learners' perspectives. We now come to conclude our research. Consequently, a number of potential limitations and further research will be considered.

VI. Conclusion

English pronunciation teaching and learning in Vietnam are not a novel issue in the mainstream of research. However, our study aimed to examine not only teachers' perspectives on English pronunciation, but also learners' attitudes towards the same issue. We sought to investigate the similarities and differences between Vietnamese teachers' and learners' perspectives on English pronunciation education. Within the framework of these criteria, we strived to code and compare the answers from two main groups of respondents.

The choice for pronunciation as a research theme relied on its growing importance in English pronunciation instruction and acquisition in Vietnam. The Vietnamese learners' English pronunciation and communication have been known to be insufficiently proficient. Thus, the question of how the English language, especially English pronunciation and communication, is acknowledged by Vietnamese teachers and learners of English is certainly worth being examined by research. In this context, we collected data among Vietnamese teachers and learners of English, who are our two main focus groups of participants. We designed and conducted two different questionnaires. We addressed the Vietnamese teachers' and learners' perspectives on English pronunciation teaching and learning and examined how the two perspectives coincide by means of quantitative and qualitative data.

In summary, contrary to some findings revealed in the past, our observations have further strengthened our confidence that Vietnamese teachers and learners have positively changed their attitudes towards English pronunciation norms and practices. Furthermore, the correlations between teachers' and learners' perspectives on English pronunciation were also established. We hope that our findings which were addressed above would shed some new light on the teaching and learning of English pronunciation in Vietnam.

Limitations and future research

In our opinion, the current study enables researchers and educators to discover the issues related to teaching and learning English pronunciation in Vietnam with respect to the teachers' and learners' perspectives. The findings revealed some previously unstudied viewpoints from the participants, having an important place in boosting the collaboration between the teachers and learners in teaching and learning English pronunciation. During the research, weak points,

however, have been identified and some of them could open up several possibilities for future research.

The present study has only examined a small number of teacher participants (n=21), and an average number of learner participants (n=41). Therefore, an investigation of the issues on a larger scale is strongly recommended to collect more reliable data. Another limitation of our research is the use of a large number of multiple-choice questions. Not all open-ended questions were filled in by all participants. As the multiple-choice questions could limit the learner respondents' choices, we strongly feel that these questions did not provide them many opportunities to express their own opinions. Thus, follow-up interviews need to be done to solve the shortcomings.

It could be more beneficial to also conduct interviews with focus groups of teachers and learners to obtain more explanations for their responses. Although this qualitative method may cost much time and expense, it could provide additional valuable information. Moreover, we propose that further research should specifically investigate two different teaching contexts: public and private education sectors. Consequently, researchers and educators not only acknowledge the correlation between teachers and learners' attitudes towards English pronunciation instruction and acquisition, but also have more interesting comparisons of various educational contexts.

Appendix A

Questionnaire for Vietnamese teachers of English

Hello everyone,

My name is Ngan and I am doing my Master in Linguistics at Radboud University, the Netherlands. I am conducting a survey with the aim of examining the Vietnamese teachers' practice and attitudes towards the teaching and learning of the English pronunciation. The questionnaire below contains 25 questions and it takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Please fill in the questions and send the answered questionnaire back to me before 10th of August. I really appreciate your help.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Ngan.

Email: ngan.tnt07@gmail.com

Please answer the questions below:

I. Background questions

1. **Gender** Male Female

2. **Age** 21-30 31-40 41-50 50+

3. **Years of teaching experience** 0-1 year 1-5 years 5-10 years 10+ years

4. **Professional qualifications:**

+ *Educational background*

BA in _____

MA in _____

Other _____

+ *Teaching experience (different institutions per activity, types of schools, levels of learners)*

5. Did you study abroad, work or live overseas?

- Yes No

6. You are teaching English in public school private school both

7. Which English levels are you currently instructing? (you can choose more than one option)

- Elementary Intermediate Advanced

8. Who are your target learners in public school, if you are not teaching in public school, please move on to question 6? (you can choose more than one option)

- Primary level Secondary level High school level

9. Who are your target learners in private institutions?

- Kids Young learners Adults

- Other _____

10. Do you have adequate expertise and experience in teaching your current target learners?

- 1= not at all 2= not much 3= fairly 4= very

Why not?

11. How do you rate your own English proficiency level in general?

1= not really good 2= fair 3= good 4= excellent

II. Perceptions of current pronunciation teaching

12. How do you rate your own English pronunciation ability in particular?

1= weak 2= Fair 3= good 4= excellent

13. Are you confident with your English pronunciation when you teach pronunciation to your learners?

1= not at all 2= not much 3= fairly 4= very

Why?

14. Which are the strengths and weaknesses of the general English capacity of Vietnamese speakers?

+ Strengths:

+ Weaknesses:

Contrasts between the native language and the target language (i.e. English only or Vietnamese versus English)

A native-like accent

Different levels of English: beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels

Needs of the specific groups of learners (e.g., kids, adolescents, adults)

Other elements, i.e:

20. What are your preferred materials for teaching pronunciation? (You can choose more than one option)

Published books

Materials collected/created by yourself

Authentic audiovisual materials (e.g. authentic speech/video) for learners

Other elements, i.e:

21. Do you use any of the following to teach pronunciation?

Recordings with native English pronunciation

1= never 2= rarely 3= regularly 4= always

Authentic radios/videos in which native English speakers are present

1= never 2= rarely 3= regularly 4= always

Role-plays to practice pronunciation through real conversations

1= never 2= rarely 3= regularly 4= always

22. How often do you evaluate and diagnose English pronunciation problems that your learners are suffering from before teaching them (e.g., at the very beginning of the English course)?

1= never 2= rarely 3= regularly 4= always

23. Do you think it is important to measure the learners' pronunciation progress during the course to improve your current English pronunciation teaching methods?

1= not at all 2= not much 3= fairly 4= very

24. Do you prefer oral tests or written tests to evaluate your learners' pronunciation competence?

Oral tests

Written tests (e.g., "Choose the word with a differently pronounced vowel among the following: Said/ Laid/ Paid/ Maid")

Combination of both types of tests

25. Which are the factors contributing to an effective English pronunciation teaching, in your opinion? (You can choose more than one option)

Teachers' proficiency in English in general

Teachers' proficiency in English pronunciation in particular

Teachers' confidence in teaching pronunciation

Teachers' previous intercultural experience

Appropriate pronunciation teaching practice

Sufficient feedback during the course

Extent to which students receive feedback on their pronunciation skills (e.g., phonology, prosody, native-like accent)

Other elements, i.e:

~~~~~ THE END ~~~~~

## Appendix B

### Questionnaire for Vietnamese learners of English- Bảng khảo sát cho người học tiếng Anh tại Việt Nam

Chào mọi người,

Tôi là Ngan, hiện đang theo học chương trình Thạc sĩ chuyên ngành Ngôn Ngữ học tại Radboud University, Hà Lan. Tôi đang làm luận văn nghiên cứu với mục đích khảo sát về suy nghĩ và sự nhìn nhận chung của người học Tiếng Anh tại Việt Nam về việc dạy và học phát âm trong Tiếng Anh. Bảng khảo sát dưới đây bao gồm 21 câu hỏi. Chân thành cảm ơn sự giúp đỡ và hợp tác của mọi người.

Ngan.

Email: [ngan.tnt07@gmail.com](mailto:ngan.tnt07@gmail.com)

*Hãy trả lời các câu hỏi dưới đây bằng cách đánh dấu vào ô vuông:*

1. **Giới tính**    Nam    Nữ
  
2. **Bạn đang trong độ tuổi**    12-15    16-18    18-21    21+
  
3. **Bạn có thích học tiếng Anh không?**    Có    Không
  
4. **Bạn đã học tiếng Anh được bao lâu rồi?**  
 0-1 năm    1-5 năm    5-10 năm    Hơn 10 năm
  
5. **Bạn đang**    còn đi học    đã và đang đi làm
  
6. **Theo bạn thì khả năng tiếng Anh của bạn ở mức nào?**  
 1= yếu    2= tạm    3= giỏi    4= xuất sắc
  
7. **Bạn có đang học tiếng Anh ở trung tâm Anh ngữ không?**    Có    Không
  
8. **Chương trình tiếng Anh mà bạn đang theo học ở trung tâm Anh ngữ? (ví dụ như, Anh văn giao tiếp, tiếng Anh tổng quát, IELTS/TOEFL)**  

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**9. Yếu tố nào bạn cảm thấy quan trọng trong việc học tiếng Anh? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một sự lựa chọn)**

Ngữ pháp

Từ vựng

Cách phát âm của nguyên âm và phụ âm của từ (ví dụ, cat [kæt])

Cách nhấn nhá, ngữ điệu khi phát âm

Phát âm chuẩn với ngữ điệu như người bản xứ

Ý kiến khác, ví dụ như:

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**10. Bạn có thích học phát âm không?**  Có  Không

**11. Bạn đánh giá thế nào về kỹ năng phát âm tiếng Anh hiện tại của bạn?**

1= yếu  2= tạm  3= giỏi  4= xuất sắc

**12. Bạn có muốn cải thiện kỹ năng phát âm của bạn không?**  Có  Không

**13. Bạn có nghĩ rằng kỹ năng phát âm tốt là một yếu tố cần thiết trong việc học tiếng Anh?**  Có  Không

**14. Bạn có cảm thấy tự tin hơn trong giao tiếp với kỹ năng phát âm tiếng Anh tốt?**

Có

Không

**15. Bạn có nghĩ rằng người học tiếng Anh sẽ giao tiếp tốt và có hiệu quả nếu họ phát âm tiếng Anh đúng và chuẩn?**

Có

Không

**16. Điều gì là sự quan tâm của bạn trong việc học phát âm tiếng Anh? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một sự lựa chọn)**

Cách phát âm nguyên âm và phụ âm trong tiếng Anh (ví dụ, plant [plɑ:nt])

Trọng âm, ngữ điệu khi phát âm

Phát âm rõ, và đối tượng giao tiếp của bạn có thể hiểu bạn đang nói gì

Phát âm chuẩn với ngữ điệu hay như người bản xứ

Ý kiến khác, ví dụ như:

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**17. Theo bạn thì tại sao khả năng phát âm tiếng Anh của bạn có thể chưa tốt? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một sự lựa chọn)**

Chương trình học tiếng Anh không giành nhiều thời gian cho việc luyện phát âm

Chưa nắm rõ các điểm khác biệt giữa hệ thống phát âm của tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt

Không có/ Không biết các phương tiện cũng như giáo trình phù hợp cho việc luyện và cải thiện phát âm tiếng Anh

Không có cơ hội thường xuyên luyện tập phát âm trong các ngữ cảnh giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh

Không có nhiều cơ hội luyện phát âm tiếng Anh với người bản xứ

Ý kiến khác, ví dụ như:

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**18. Bạn có nghĩ rằng kỹ năng phát âm của bạn sẽ được cải thiện với những cách nào dưới đây? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một sự lựa chọn)**

- Được giảng dạy hoàn toàn bằng tiếng Anh
  - Nhận thức được những điểm biệt giữa hệ thống phát âm tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt
  - Học phát âm tiếng Anh thông qua các tài liệu mang tính chất nghe/nhìn (audio/video)
  - Học phát âm tiếng Anh thông qua các chương trình tiếng Anh trên tivi
  - Giao tiếp và luyện tập phát âm với người bản xứ
  - Nhận được những sự góp ý từ giáo viên khi phát âm sai
  - Ý kiến khác, ví dụ như:
- 
- 
- 

**19. Bạn có nghĩ rằng kỹ năng phát âm của giáo viên ảnh hưởng mạnh mẽ đến sự tiến bộ trong phát âm của người học tiếng Anh ?**

- 1= không hề     2= không nhiều     3= hầu như     4= hoàn toàn

**20. Theo bạn thì mức độ thường xuyên mà bạn nên nhận được góp ý và nhận xét từ giáo viên về khả năng phát âm tiếng Anh của bạn?**

- 1= không bao giờ     2= hiếm khi     3= thỉnh thoảng     4= thường xuyên

**21. Bạn muốn được đánh giá kỹ năng phát âm tiếng Anh thông qua hình thức nào?**

- Các bài kiểm tra kỹ năng phát âm chủ yếu thông qua hoạt động nói và giao tiếp

Các bài kiểm tra kỹ năng phát âm chủ yếu thông qua hoặc động viết (ví dụ như, lựa chọn từ mà nguyên âm được phát âm khác so với các từ còn lại sau đây: Said/ Laid/ Paid/ Maid)

Sự kết hợp của cả hai hình thức kiểm tra trên

~~~~~ THE END ~~~~~

Appendix C

Questionnaire for Vietnamese learners of English

Hello everyone,

My name is Ngan and I am doing my Master in Linguistics at Radboud University, the Netherlands. I am conducting a survey with the aim of examining the Vietnamese learners' perspectives and attitudes towards English pronunciation instruction and acquisition. The questionnaire below contains 21 questions and it takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Please fill in the questions and transmit the answered questionnaire back to me via email before 10th of August. I really appreciate your help.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Ngan.

Email: ngan.tnt07@gmail.com

Please answer the questions below:

I. Background questions

1. **Gender** Male Female

2. **Age** 12-15 16-18 18-21 21+

3. **Do you like learning English?** Yes No

4. **Years of learning English** 0-1 year 1-5 years 5-10 years 10+ years

5. **You are** attending school working

6. **How do you rate your general English proficiency level?**
 1= poor 2= okay 3= good 4= excellent

7. **Are you attending any English courses in language institution?**
 Yes No

8. Which course are you taking in language institutions? (e.g., Communication English, General English, IELTS/TOEFL)

II. Perceptions of pronunciation instruction and acquisition

9. Which factors are important to you when learning English? (You can choose more than one option)

Grammatical rules

Vocabulary

Pronunciation with a majority of attention to English consonants and vowels (e.g., cat [kæt])

Pronunciation with a majority of attention to English syllable structure, intonation, and stress

Native-like accent

Other elements, i.e:

10. Do you like learning English pronunciation? Yes No

11. How do you rate your English pronunciation skills?

1= poor 2= okay 3= good 4= excellent

12. Do you like to enhance your pronunciation skills? Yes No

13. Do you think it is important to have a good pronunciation skill? Yes No

14. Are you feeling more confident in communicating when you are good at English pronunciation?

Yes

No

15. Do you think it is likely to communicate successfully in English with a correct pronunciation?

Yes

No

16. What are your concerns for learning English pronunciation? (You can choose more than one option)

Segments (i.e. vowels and consonants. E.g., plant [plɑ:nt])

Suprasegmental aspects (e.g., rhythm, stress and intonation)

Overall intelligibility of a speaker in English communication

A native-like accent

Other elements, i.e:

17. Why are your pronunciation skills not sufficient? (You can choose more than one option)

I do not have sufficient time for pronunciation practice in English classes

I am not well instructed on which are the differences between the English phonological system and the Vietnamese phonological system

I do not have any learning tools or appropriate materials to practice and improve my pronunciation

I do not frequently have real-life contexts to practice my pronunciation

I do not have many opportunities to practice my pronunciation with native speakers

Other elements, i.e:

18. In which way do you think your pronunciation skills could be enhanced? (You can choose more than one option)

Following English courses taught in English all the time (e.g., teacher mostly uses English in class time)

Receiving more instruction on the differences between the English phonological system and the Vietnamese phonological system

Learning English through audiovisual materials

Learning English through authentic television/ radio speech

Communicating and practicing with native English speakers

Receiving more feedback from teachers on your pronunciations

Other elements, i.e:

19. Do you think your Vietnamese teacher's English pronunciation tremendously impacts learners' English pronunciation?

1= not at all 2= not much 3= fairly 4= very

20. What do you think about how often you should receive feedback from teacher on your pronunciation?

1= never 2= rarely 3= occasionally 4= frequently

21. Which test do you prefer your teacher to use to measure your pronunciation skills?

Oral tests

Written tests (e.g., Choose the word with a differently pronounced vowel among the following: Said/ Laid/ Paid/ Maid)

Combination of both types of tests

~~~~~ THE END ~~~~~

## Appendix D

| Issues                                         | Responses         | Teachers' responses | Percentage of teachers' responses (%) |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
|                                                |                   | N                   |                                       |
| <b>Gender</b>                                  | Male              | 2                   | 9.5%                                  |
|                                                | Female            | 19                  | 90.5%                                 |
| <b>Age</b>                                     | 21-30             | 11                  | 52.4%                                 |
|                                                | 31-40             | 2                   | 9.5%                                  |
|                                                | 41-50             | 8                   | 38.1%                                 |
|                                                | 50+               | 0                   | 0%                                    |
| <b>Years of teaching</b>                       | 0-1               | 1                   | 4.8%                                  |
|                                                | 1-5               | 9                   | 42.9%                                 |
|                                                | 5-10              | 3                   | 14.3%                                 |
|                                                | 10+               | 8                   | 38.1%                                 |
| <b>Qualifications</b>                          | BA                | 10                  | 50%                                   |
|                                                | MA                | 9                   | 9%                                    |
|                                                | Others            | 2                   | 5%                                    |
| <b>Abroad training course</b>                  | Yes               | 6                   | 28.6%                                 |
|                                                | No                | 15                  | 71.4%                                 |
| <b>Teaching environments</b>                   | Public school     | 0                   | 0%                                    |
|                                                | Private school    | 12                  | 57.1%                                 |
|                                                | Both              | 9                   | 42.9%                                 |
| <b>Target learners in public schools</b>       | Primary level     | 2                   | 40%                                   |
|                                                | Secondary level   | 3                   | 60%                                   |
|                                                | High school level | 1                   | 20%                                   |
| <b>Target learners in private institutions</b> | Kids              | 15                  | 71.4%                                 |
|                                                | Adolescents       | 14                  | 66.7%                                 |
|                                                | Adults            | 11                  | 52.4%                                 |
|                                                | Other             | 4                   | 19%                                   |

|                                                   |                    |    |       |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----|-------|
| <b>Learners' level of English</b>                 | Elementary         | 14 | 66.7% |
|                                                   | Intermediate       | 16 | 76.2% |
|                                                   | Advanced           | 10 | 47.6% |
| <b>Teachers' English proficiency</b>              | 1= not really good | 0  | 0%    |
|                                                   | 2= fair            | 6  | 28.6% |
|                                                   | 3= good            | 12 | 57.1% |
|                                                   | 4= excellent       | 3  | 14.3% |
| <b>Teachers' English pronunciation skills</b>     | 1= not really good | 0  |       |
|                                                   | 2= fair            | 5  | 23.8% |
|                                                   | 3= good            | 10 | 47.6% |
|                                                   | 4= excellent       | 6  | 28.6% |
| <b>Adequate teaching expertise and experience</b> | 1= not at all      | 0  | 0%    |
|                                                   | 2=not much         | 1  | 4.8%  |
|                                                   | 3- fairly          | 8  | 38.1% |
|                                                   | 4= very            | 12 | 57.1% |

*Table 1: More background data analysis of TPs*

| Issues                               | Responses    | Number of learners' responses | Percentage of learners' responses |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                      |              | N                             |                                   |
| Gender                               | Male         | 11                            | 26.8%                             |
|                                      | Female       | 30                            | 73.2%                             |
| Age                                  | 16-18        | 19                            | 46.3%                             |
|                                      | 18-21        | 8                             | 19.5%                             |
|                                      | 21+          | 14                            | 34.1%                             |
| Years of English acquisition         | 0-1          | 1                             | 2.4%                              |
|                                      | 1-5          | 6                             | 14.6%                             |
|                                      | 5-10         | 14                            | 34.1%                             |
|                                      | 10+          | 20                            | 48.8%                             |
| English proficiency (self-evaluated) | 1= poor      | 3                             | 7.3%                              |
|                                      | 2= okay      | 24                            | 58.6%                             |
|                                      | 3= good      | 13                            | 31.7%                             |
|                                      | 4- excellent | 1                             | 2.4%                              |

*Table 2: Data analysis for learner participants' background questions*

| Teacher participants (TPs) | Question 14 and 16: What are the strengths and weaknesses of Vietnamese learners' general English capacity and particular English pronunciation skills? |                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                            | <i>Strengths</i>                                                                                                                                        | <i>Weaknesses</i>                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>TP1</b>                 | 1. Have a good ability of sound imitation                                                                                                               | 2. Omit final sounds<br>3. Have problems with intonation and stress                                                                                         |
| <b>TP2</b>                 | 4. Be active and energetic                                                                                                                              | 5. Omit final sounds<br>6. Have problems with linking sounds, prosody such as stress and intonation                                                         |
| <b>TP3</b>                 | 7. Be diligent                                                                                                                                          | 8. Be affected by their mother tongue<br>9. Have problems with final sounds, linking sounds, stress and intonation<br>10. Be shy with English communicating |
| <b>TP4</b>                 | 11. Have a good grammar and reading skills                                                                                                              | 12. Have problems with listening, pronunciation and communication skills<br>13. Often make mistakes with final sounds                                       |
| <b>TP5</b>                 | 14. Be hard-working                                                                                                                                     | 15. Be heavily influenced by their L1 (Vietnamese)<br>16. Do not have appropriate learning methods                                                          |
| <b>TP6</b>                 | 17. Have a strong motivation for learning English                                                                                                       | 18. Be obey and passive<br>19. Have troubles with English intonation and stress                                                                             |

|             |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>TP7</b>  | 20. Vietnamese Latin alphabet enables learners to acquire English more easily than people from other Asian countries such as China, Thailand and Cambodia. | 21. Have problems with consonant clusters<br>22. Struggle with correct pronunciation                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>TP8</b>  | 23. Know a lot about grammatical structures and rules                                                                                                      | 24. Have problems with precise pronunciation<br>25. Be afraid of making mistakes when communicating with foreigners in English<br>26. Do not have English environment to practice English speaking and pronunciation |
| <b>TP9</b>  | 27. Have an ability to learn English fast                                                                                                                  | 28. Have troubles with final sounds<br>29. Do not have a native pronunciation and tone                                                                                                                               |
| <b>TP10</b> | 30. Be dynamic                                                                                                                                             | 31. Have troubles with prosody of word-rhythm, intonation and enunciation<br>32. Have a lack of general English practice                                                                                             |
| <b>TP11</b> | 33. Have a thorough knowledge of grammatical structures                                                                                                    | 34. Be not confident about their pronunciation, slang and informal language use<br>35. Have troubles with a different articulated organs between Vietnamese and English                                              |
| <b>TP12</b> | 36. Have a good vocabulary and grammar skills                                                                                                              | 37. Pronounce English as Vietnamese; have no stress or intonation which makes their English non-natural                                                                                                              |

|             |                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             |                                                                   | 38. Be unconfident with using English to communicate                                                                                                                |
| <b>TP13</b> | 39. Get exposed to a wide range of grammatical lessons            | 40. Inadequate practice leads to a low English fluency<br>41. Pronounce English as Vietnamese, so that Vietnamese learners' pronunciation is not natural and active |
| <b>TP14</b> | 42. Be familiar with Latin alphabet as English                    | 43. Do not have practice for English pronunciation and communication<br>44. Pay less attention to English intelligibility                                           |
| <b>TP15</b> | 45. Have a good reading skills and thorough grammatical knowledge | 46. Pronounce incorrectly due to the problem with their tongue                                                                                                      |
| <b>TP16</b> | 47. Be active and energetic                                       | 48. Have a lack of English pronunciation practice                                                                                                                   |
| <b>TP17</b> | 49. Be hard-working                                               | 50. Pronunciation and communication skills are not qualified                                                                                                        |
| <b>TP18</b> | 51. Have an in-depth understanding of grammatical structures      | 52. Cannot apply English to real contexts of communication                                                                                                          |
| <b>TP19</b> | - Be familiar with Latin alphabet                                 | 53. Pay much more attention to expend vocabulary and rules of English, instead of spending time on English pronunciation and communication practice                 |
| <b>TP20</b> | 54. Be industrious                                                | 55. Be passive in speaking English                                                                                                                                  |

*Table 3: Strengths and weaknesses in general English ability and pronunciation skills indicated by TPs*

| Teaching items          | Levels of the frequency | Teachers' responses | Percent of teachers' responses |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
|                         |                         | N                   |                                |
| <b>Recordings</b>       | 1= never                | 0                   | 0%                             |
|                         | 2= rarely               | 3                   | 14.3%                          |
|                         | 3= regularly            | 8                   | 38.1%                          |
|                         | 4= always               | 10                  | 47.6%                          |
| <b>Authentic videos</b> | 1= never                | 1                   | 4.8%                           |
|                         | 2= rarely               | 2                   | 9.5%                           |
|                         | 3= regularly            | 12                  | 57.1%                          |
|                         | 4= always               | 6                   | 28.6%                          |
| <b>Role-plays</b>       | 1= never                | 0                   | 0%                             |
|                         | 2= rarely               | 1                   | 4.8%                           |
|                         | 3= regularly            | 15                  | 71.4%                          |
|                         | 4= always               | 5                   | 23.8%                          |

*Table 4: The frequency of use for some types of materials in teaching English pronunciation reported by TPs*

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