Introduction

In SLA, form-focused instruction (FFI) is characterized by techniques that draw learners’ attention to the language features which, otherwise, may not be used in communication in the second/foreign language (which is henceforth commonly referred to as L2) or would go unnoticed in communication-oriented classroom input (Spada, 1997). Feedback is a proactive component of FFI, which responds to learners’ errors immediately when they are made and, thus, serves not only to inform learners about the language items they have produced incorrectly but also to provide them with the necessary guidance to produce the target language features successfully. Feedback can be either positive or negative; the latter form is also known as corrective feedback (CF). With the acknowledged position of FFI in communicative language teaching, feedback has obtained its central position in several important Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories and attracted increasing attention in language teaching research.

In the field of pronunciation pedagogy, teachers’ cognition (defined by Borg (2003) as teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions) and practices have been explored to some extent but they are not so in feedback on pronunciation (Baker & Burri, 2016; Couper, 2019). Meanwhile, feedback is not only found to be effective in enhancing learners’ L2- pronunciation performance but also serves as compensation for insufficient pronunciation teaching (Derwing, 2018; Foote, Trofimovich, et al., 2016) in the face of practical constraints such as the lack of teaching-time (Phuong, 2020), inadequate teacher training (Foote, Holtby, et al., 2011; J. Murphy, 2014; Phuong, 2020), and non-native English-speaking teachers’ low confidence in providing pronunciation models (Phuong, 2021). As such, it is critical that teachers enhance knowledge of not only how to teach pronunciation but also how to effectively give feedback on learners’ pronunciation (Baker & Burri, 2016).

It should be noted that in English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) contexts, where teachers are often less prepared than their ESL (English-as-a-second-language) counterparts in teaching pronunciation, even less is known about what teachers know, believe, and how they give feedback on pronunciation in their classrooms. Meanwhile, this belief-practice connection, as (Borg, 2006) emphasized, is so important that the failure of any educational research in revealing this connection would lead the significance of the research to being doubted. Given the critical importance of the knowledge of teachers’ cognition and practices in feedback on pronunciation...
as discussed, also given the lack of research in this field, especially in EFL contexts, the current study aims to explore Vietnamese EFL teachers’ beliefs and practices of feedback on pronunciation focusing on two research questions:

1. How do Vietnamese EFL teachers perceive the role of feedback on pronunciation?
2. How do EFL Vietnamese teachers give feedback on English pronunciation in their classes?

Literature Review

Feedback and Learners’ Language Development

In the well-established socio-cultural theory (SCT), Vygotsky (1978) explains that the development of human cognitive abilities is a highly social process that takes place via interactional/collaborative activities with experts who could be teachers, friends, or anyone who is a more capable/knowledgeable individual. In other words, to develop, learners need to be assisted. However, to be effective, assistance has to be carefully attuned to learners’ current level of performance and their future potential, responsive to learners’ needs, and prepare them to perform independently. The metaphor of scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976) has been used widely to indicate such effective assistance not only in education but also in the field of language education.

In language teaching research, feedback has attracted increasing interest as a form of assistance for language learners. The efficacy of feedback in learners’ second language (L2) development has been well justified by the findings of several meta-analysis studies (Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Lyster et al., 2013). Reviewing 800 studies on the relationship between feedback and language learners’ achievement, Hattie (2009) concludes that feedback is “one of the most powerful influences on learning” (p. 178). The effectiveness of feedback in helping students develop different aspects of English is also found to be prolonged (Li, 2010).

However, apart from the efficacy of feedback, the understanding of the comparative effectiveness of different feedback techniques and types of feedback timing to scaffold learners’ L2 development is far from sufficient (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2020). Consequently, there is yet a clear guideline for teachers regarding how to have effective feedback provision (Nassaji, 2015). In such a situation, teachers are expected to get aware of the complexity of feedback in SLA and be flexible in their practice of feedback provision to make it work in their contexts (Ellis, 2017; Nassaji & Kartchava, 2020).

Feedback on Pronunciation

In pronunciation pedagogy, research findings have strongly confirmed the acquisitional value of feedback on learners’ phonological development (Gooch et al., 2016; A. Lee & Lyster, 2017; J. Lee et al., 2014; Saito & Lyster, 2012), just to mention some. Especially, the efficacy of corrective feedback on learners’ pronunciation improvement was not only evident in test results but also in native English-speaking listeners’ perceptions (Gooch et al., 2016; Saito & Lyster, 2012). Even for recast, which is claimed to have limited effect in improving learners’ performance in other aspects of an L2, the corrective force of teachers’ recasts seems to be better perceived in pronunciation (Lyster & Saito, 2010; Saito, 2012; Sheen, 2006).

From learners’ views, teachers’ feedback has been so far evaluated as highly effective in improving their L2 pronunciation (Phuong & Phuong, 2019). Learners were also found to more warmly welcome feedback on their pronunciation than teachers expect them to (Phuong & Phuong, 2019; Roothoof & Breeze, 2016).

Beside the efficacy of feedback, our knowledge has been much enriched to the extent of what teachers can and should do to assist learners’ phonological development. Though there are guide books for teachers on how to do so, including how to give feedback on pronunciation, there is still a lack of consensus regarding when feedback should be best provided and which techniques should be most effective (Dlaska & Krekeler, 2013). As for the question of how to give feedback on pronunciation, current pronunciation pedagogy is strongly informed by the advocacy of English as a Lingual Franca (ELF) (Jenkins, 2007, 2017; J. M. Murphy, 2014) and the high agreement among scholars on intelligibility and comprehensibility as the targets of pronunciation pedagogy (Munro & Derwing, 2015; J. M. Murphy, 2014). Accordingly, the focus of pronunciation teaching and feedback is on pronunciation features that may interfere with successful communication rather than a native-like pronunciation. With the shifting focus of pedagogy, teachers and learners have the chance to get rid of the burden of conforming to every single feature of native English-speakers’ phonology. The current research draws largely on the approach of ELF as a framework with its core spirit being that different pronunciation features have different levels of importance in ensuring successful international communication in English and should deserve different levels of attention. However, there is not yet a consensus on core pronunciation features to be the focus of instruction and feedback despite the introduction of Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins, 2002). As such, teachers of English may still be poorly informed about how to assess learners’ pronunciation and identify critical errors to correct (Baker & Burri, 2016).

Teachers’ Cognition of Feedback on Pronunciation

To date, there is a handful of studies that especially look at teachers’ cognition of feedback on pronunciation. Few studies in the field to date, to my knowledge, were all conducted in the ESL contexts including Australia (Baker & Burri,
2016) and New Zealand (Couper, 2019). The studies revealed ESL teachers’ strong belief in the importance and efficacy of feedback on learners’ pronunciation. Also, teachers consistently focused on errors of features that were taught in the courses and perceived as possibly interfering with communication, or on those of frequent occurrence. Peer correction was also highlighted. The studies both revealed recast as the most popularly used technique although a range of other techniques was also in use. ESL teachers were found to have considered contextual factors (such as the availability of class time, and learners’ English proficiency) in their contexts in making decisions on how to provide feedback.

In EFL contexts, though teachers’ pronunciation teaching is reported to highly rely on feedback (Phuong & Phuong, 2019), teachers’ accounts of feedback on pronunciation are rarely taken. In one of the rare cases, some insights into teachers’ beliefs in feedback on pronunciation were gained as a by-product of Sifakis and Sougari’s (2005) study when they investigated English pronunciation-teaching practice at the high-school level in Greece. The finding indicates that Greek EFL teachers believed in the efficacy of feedback on pronunciation and tended to provide more feedback to students at lower English levels.

In order to gain a fuller picture of what teachers know, think, and do regarding feedback on pronunciation, there is a need for more research in the field, especially in EFL contexts where teachers’ cognition of feedback on pronunciation has been under-researched to date despite the significant role of feedback in pronunciation teaching. The knowledge achieved from this line of research, as claimed by Couper (2019), would be useful for multiple stakeholders including EFL teachers, teacher educators, textbook and curriculum developers, and researchers.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

The design of this study is a qualitative case study that prioritizes the capture of happenings and the interpretation of events and relations rather than measurable data (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990). This research design allows the use of different methods and enables the researcher to obtain multiple viewpoints of different participants (Adelman et al., 1976), and thus have a holistic treatment of certain phenomena drawing on different information sources (Stake, 1995).

This study involves a single case of a university in Hanoi, Vietnam with teachers’ perspectives and practices of giving feedback on pronunciation being the units of analysis. The study uses two qualitative data collection methods: interviews and classroom observations. While the former provided multilayered perspectives of participants and their experiences of classroom happenings, the latter captured slices of classroom reality. Together, the two methods helped to provide a holistic picture of the case.

**Participants**

Participants were 10 Vietnamese teachers teaching English Preparation Course (EPC) at a non-English majored university in the North of Vietnam, where I myself had worked for 5 years as a teacher of English before I moved to Australia for my Ph.D. course in teaching English for people of other languages (TESOL). At the time of data collection, there were 15 teachers teaching EPC; however, only 10 of them responded to my invitation emails. They had all gained their master’s degree in Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from a university in Vietnam (8) or Australia (2) and had at least 5-year experience in English teaching. Their ages ranged between 30 and 40 years. Participants were all asked to select a pseudonym for themselves; and, thus, the teachers’ names are anonymized in this paper.

**Data Collection**

The data collection process of the original project, from which this research is a part, was conducted within a two-month semester. This paper draws upon two data sub-sets collected from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations.

Teachers were invited to participate in two rounds of interviews, one was conducted at the beginning of the semester, prior to class observations; the other was 5 weeks later, following class observations. The second interview was mainly aimed at member-checking, more in-depth exploration into issues emerging in the first interviews, and also for teachers’ explanation for and clarification of issues in observed classes. Semi-structured interviews were selected to create a stronger sense of control for interviewees and more freedom for the interviewer to pursue issues that may emerge in the discussion. Though all teachers had an expert level in English proficiency, interviews were conducted in Vietnamese as in-depth discussion on complicated matters such as teachers’ cognition may be limited to some extent if carried out in a foreign language. The data, on which this paper draws were found to be related to the following guided questions: How do you teach pronunciation? Do you often correct students’ pronunciation mistakes? How do you correct pronunciation? How often do you give feedback on students’ pronunciation? Do you think feedback on pronunciation is useful? Those questions, however, just served as guidelines and were discussed in different orders in interviews with different teachers.

Two classes of each teacher totaling three teaching hours were observed. When attending the teachers’ classes, the author was introduced to students as a guest and someone who had worked at the university and was currently at the site to conduct a study for her Ph.D. thesis. During classroom observations, field notes were used to mark instances where feedback on pronunciation took place and the researcher’s
initial comments. With teachers’ written consent, all interviews and observed classes were audio-recorded making up more than 40 hours of recording data.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis, as in Miles and Huberman’s (1994) description, consists of three processes of reduction, display, and the drawing of conclusions which is performed via classification and transformation. In the current study, these multiple processes did not take place linearly but recursively and spirally throughout data collection and analysis. As for the first-round teacher interviews, audio recordings were transcribed in full and read several times by the author in search of themes. The search resulted in eleven themes, which later formed four thematic categories, or macro-themes, including the perceived importance of feedback on pronunciation, the perceived efficacy of teachers’ feedback, teachers’ approaches of feedback, and the delivery of feedback on pronunciation. As for observations, recordings of observed classes of each teacher were played several times in conjunction with the author’s field notes to identify and classify teachers’ behaviors into the categories identified in the analysis of first-round interview data. There was one theme, peer feedback, that was evident in-class observations but not in the data from the first-round interviews with teachers; therefore, after the analysis of observation data, a new macro-theme was added to make a total of five macro-themes. These prominent issues then were brought to the second-round interviews with teachers for discussion. It should also be noted that beside key questions to further discuss, I also sent each teacher a brief report of my analysis of her observed lessons and first-round interview for checking before the second-round interview. Those second-round interviews generated an additional total of nearly 9 hours of recorded interview data, which were then fully transcribed and read for details to explain or compare and contrast with the previously identified categories.

**Findings**

**The Perceived Importance of Feedback on Pronunciation**

A prominent theme from both interviews and class observations is that teachers all shared a strong belief in the importance of feedback in improving students’ pronunciation. Le stated that “certainly, we need to give students feedback. Otherwise, they will not know where they are and how to improve” (Interview 1). Another teacher, Thuy, claimed that feedback on pronunciation was an “essential part of my classes, especially in speaking-based activities” (Interview 1), which was not only a means to “correct” students’ mistakes but also to “encourage” them to learn. For some teachers, especially Dung and Hanh, pronunciation teaching was reported, and also observed, to rely mainly on feedback. Even Hong, who claimed little belief in the importance of pronunciation teaching, spared a special space for pronunciation feedback in her classes for the reason that “correction and feedback are essential because no feedback, no learning” (Interview 1). Hong also added that “if we don’t correct their mistakes, where else could students gain support and guidance about their pronunciation errors and correct them?” (Interview 2). However, for two teachers, Nu and Anh, feedback on pronunciation was not beneficial to learners of limited English proficiency. Classroom observation data also reveals that feedback on learners’ pronunciation mistakes was present in almost every teacher’s class, except those of Nu’s.

**The Perceived Efficacy of and Perceived Students’ Attitudes Toward Teachers’ Actual Feedback on Pronunciation**

Despite teachers’ strong belief in the importance of feedback, most of them (seven out of ten) perceived their own feedback as of little effect on their students’ pronunciation improvement. Hanh said that her students “keep making the same mistakes after many times being corrected” (Interview 2) while Le was disappointed when her high-intermediate and advanced students still made “very basic pronunciation mistakes” (Interview 1). The teachers mainly attributed the limited efficacy of feedback to students’ poor awareness of the importance of pronunciation learning in general and the correction of their own pronunciation mistakes in particular. On this matter, Le said: “I think many students don’t see any reasons to worry about their pronunciation mistakes because their teachers and friends can still understand them” (Interview 1).

Test-oriented learning was another reason for several learners’ poor attention to feedback on pronunciation as mentioned by Nu:

*Some [students] have a clear intention to further study or work overseas after university and they tend to pay more attention to their mistakes and learn from feedback. Many others just want to pass the exam and do not care very much about pronunciation. (Interview 1)*

In response to my question if this poor attitude of learners towards pronunciation learning and feedback on pronunciation discouraged teachers from feedback provision, most teachers confirmed their “disappointment” (Le, Interview 2) and “frustration” (Hong, interview 2) from time to time but reiterated the point that feedback was the main way in which they could help their students with their pronunciation. Some others such as Tu, Thuy, and Le believed giving feedback frequently “could help to raise students’ awareness of their own mistakes and so create a need within them to pronounce correctly” (Thuy, Interview 2). Tu said that though the effect...
of feedback on learners’ awareness might not be immediate, “it will advance little by little over time” (Interview 2).

**Teachers’ Approaches of Feedback on Pronunciation**

**Focus on accuracy.** The reasons underlying teachers’ selection of feedback approaches varied greatly depending on their different expectations in pronunciation teaching. Data reveals that some teachers represented by Binh and Hanh highlighted the role of accuracy in their feedback provision.

For some teachers, as long as students can make their messages through, that is fine, but for me, I am a bit uncomfortable leaving my students’ mistakes uncorrected. (Binh, Interview 1)

I try to correct as many mistakes of my students as I can to help them speak English better. It is my responsibility, you know, . . . to help them. But I do not know many ways to do so except for helping them with their own mistakes” (Hanh, Interview 2).

Though both teachers targeted fixing every single pronunciation mistake and believed in the essentiality of this practice in making students “speak English better”; they were driven by two slightly different reasons. For Hanh, feedback was compensation for her not being able to teach pronunciation frequently. In fact, feedback was observed to be the only form of pronunciation teaching that was evident in her classes. However, for Binh, the target of students achieving flawless pronunciation was emphasized.

**Focus on fluency.** A quite opposite theme that emerged in this study is that feedback on pronunciation tended to be minimized or even skipped altogether by some teachers due to their fear of hindering learners’ fluency, especially at low English levels. A representative teacher, Anh, claimed that “I don’t think students of low English proficiency benefit significantly from teachers’ feedback on their pronunciation” (Interview 2). Accordingly, she further revealed that “I tend to give more feedback to students of high English proficiency.” Nu, resonating with Anh’s view, said:

In lower-level classes, my purpose is to encourage students to speak first. If we focus too much on correcting pronunciation right from the beginning, they will be frightened of making mistakes and then not dare to speak. (Interview 1)

This view was clearly reflected in Nu’s observed classes with all students’ noticeable pronunciation mistakes being ignored.

**Focus on intelligibility.** Another approach found among half of the interviewed teachers (five out of ten) is the focus on errors that may interfere intelligibility and comprehensibility of learners’ speech in communication. One representative comment is:

. . . if any students make minor mistakes, I will ignore them, but if the mistakes are serious, I will note them down to correct . . . I mean, you know, I often emphasize the mistakes that make foreigners unable to understand them [students]. (Le, Interview 1)

Similarly, Hong claimed to prioritize pronunciation mistakes that are “popular” and “may result in difficulties in understanding what they [students] say. It helps to save time as well” (Interview 1). As such, Hong pursued a double target of intelligibility and feasibility given the limited teaching time that she had. As for Thuy, she claimed to mainly focus on word stress, intonations, and also individual sounds because “they are important to make students’ speech clear to understand” (Interview 2). As such, some teachers such as Thuy started to consider different features of both segmentals and supra-segmentals to focus on in their feedback provision. However, class observations revealed that most of the teachers, including Thuy, mainly focused on the correction of errors at word levels without a clear emphasis on word stress. In some instances, intonations and word stress were corrected in the form of recasts, which, as perceived by the observer, might have possibly gone without being recognized by students as they were too implicit without follow-up repetition or accompanied signals to draw students’ attention to the correct forms.

**The Delivery of Feedback on Pronunciation**

**Collective mistakes versus individual mistakes.** There seems to be incongruence between teachers’ stated preference and their actual practices regarding feedback on individual and collective pronunciation errors. The vast majority of the interviewed teachers claimed no preference for feedback on either of the mistake types. Hong reveals that “these two ways of feedback giving can be used interchangeably” (Interview 1). Another teacher Hanh stated that “I often correct both” and her decision-making seemed to be partially based on her observation that “my students don’t feel much difference if their individual or common mistakes are corrected” (Interview 1). Only one teacher, Anh, stated that correcting collective mistakes is better to the extent that it saves learners’ faces:

I think only common mistakes made by the majority of students in the class should be corrected . . . Students have faces, you know and they don’t want to lose them. (Anh, Interview 1).

However, four instances of corrective feedback in Anh’s three observed teaching hours were all recast of individual student’s mistakes, which was also found dominant in eight other teachers’ classes. It can be argued that the three teaching hours may not be long enough to expose all teachers’ reported practices but it seems clear that feedback on individual mistakes was more prominent.
Immediate feedback versus delayed feedback. Most teachers (eight of 10) in the context of this study reported favoring immediate feedback rather than delayed feedback. The reason quoted by most teachers is that immediate feedback serves as “a real-time response to mistakes which students have made” (Hanh, interview 2) and it is “timely and effective assistance because mistakes are still fresh in students’ minds” (Nu, Interview 2). With a similar argument, Thao raised a concern that “if feedback is delayed, students may forget their mistakes and so they just don’t pay attention thinking that teachers are talking about those of someone else” (Interview 1).

Two other teachers Le and Thuy revealed that they used both types of feedback timing. Le especially confirmed that she did not believe either way had better efficacy over the other. Seven out of eight occasions of mistake correction in her observed classes, however, were immediate feedback. There was only one occasion on which feedback was delayed to the end of the activity. In this instance, students were asked to act out a conversation between a receptionist and a customer at a beauty salon in pairs. Le was observed walking through the classroom to monitor pairs’ practice and make notes on a small notebook. Following is the class excerpt from when the delayed feedback was provided.

Le: Everyone, I would like you to look at the board. [she came to the board and write the word “massage”]. How do you pronounce this word?

Students: [pronounce the word as required]

Le: OK. In the speaking activity, some of you pronounced this word very well. Some said /ˈmæsə/. It should be /ˈmæsə(d)ʒ/. [she repeated the word emphasizing the final consonant /(d)ʒ/]. Now read after me, please! /ˈmæsə(d)ʒ/.

Students: [pronounce the word]

(Observed class No 2, pre-intermediate level)

In the later discussion about this instance, Le explained that the omission of final-word consonants is very common among Vietnamese learners, which “can make their English speech very difficult for foreigners to understand” (Interview 2), so she chose to correct the mistake at the end of the activity to draw the attention of the whole class to this critical mistake, also to save time from correcting the same error for many groups.

Among the other nine teachers, no occasion of delayed feedback was noted during observed classes. Clearly, teachers’ practices reveal the dominant use of immediate feedback though they might or might not explicitly express their preference for this feedback timing.

Peer Corrective Feedback

When the issue of peer feedback was brought to the second-round interviews, most of the teachers highlighted the importance of peer correction as a source of valuable feedback and motivation for students in pronunciation learning. Le said:

In my class, when a group or a pair comes to speak in front of the class, the rest of the class is not allowed to sit and listen passively. I often ask them to be examiners of their friends’ speaking in terms of all aspects including pronunciation. I often write on board the criteria for students’ evaluation of their peer pronunciation; otherwise, they just say something very general. It is not useful. (Le, Interview 2)

Le also claimed that “students can recognize and point out more mistakes of their friends than I can [laughing]. They kind of . . . find some fun in doing so and learn a lot from their friends’ mistakes as well” (Interview 2). Similarly, Thuy revealed to focus on enhancing learners’ active role in pronunciation learning via peer feedback:

My students are often required to record their own speaking and then exchange the recordings among different groups. I often ask them to listen to and comment on other groups’ pronunciation. My students are quite engaged in this activity. (Interview 2)

In one speaking activity in Thuy’s intermediate classes, she required her students to act out a fictional radio call between an audience and a host of a show called Money Talk for advice on money-saving. While one pair went to the front of the class to act the dialogue out, the rest of the class was required to note down and give comments on their peers’ pronunciation including intonation, rhythm, and word stress which were clearly written on the board as a guideline. Students in the class could be seen as highly engaged in the activity. It seems that providing students with chances to give feedback on their peer’s pronunciation is to empower and give them a more active role in the classroom. This activity is also significantly interaction-based and so “highly motivating” (Hong, Interview 2). Several other teachers such as Hong, Dung, and Tu also acknowledged the importance of this technique on the pronunciation development of both students who receive feedback and those who provide it.

However, the other five teachers in the interviews revealed that if students were required to get involved in giving peer feedback on a frequent basis, they seemed to “lose the interest” (Hanh, interview 2) and did not “find it fun anymore” (Binh, interview 2). Binh further added that some of her students found “peer feedback a waste of time” (Interview 2). In those cases, the teachers seem to give up efforts declaring that “forcing them to join is just not a good way. They will learn nothing if they do not intend to pay attention” (Binh, interview 2). Hanh shared the view with Binh and disclosed that she did not know how to engage her student in such cases.
Discussion and Implications

Research Question 1: How do Vietnamese EFL Teachers Perceive the Role of Feedback on Pronunciation?

The findings show that teachers in the context of this study shared the view with teachers of English in several contexts emphasizing the importance of feedback in learners’ pronunciation development (Baker & Burri, 2016; Couper, 2019; Sifakis & Sougari, 2005). More importantly, most teachers tended to consider feedback provision as their important responsibility (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015), which they perceived as a critical role in providing learners with essential support and a point of reference. However, regardless of this strong acknowledgment of the importance of feedback in learners’ pronunciation development in general, the teachers perceived their actual feedback as of limited efficacy. This finding is understandable given that Vietnamese teachers of English have been reported to be poorly trained in pronunciation teaching, including giving feedback on pronunciation (Phuong, 2020). As non-native English-speaking teachers, they also significantly lack confidence in the position of teachers and model providers of English pronunciation (Phuong, 2021). According to the data in the current study, the perceived limited efficacy of teachers’ feedback was attributed mainly to curricula and learner-related issues.

With regard to the former, the finding hereby was consistent with that of Phuong (2020) showing that pronunciation is not an assessable component of the English curriculum in Vietnam and thus often falls beyond learners’ focus of attention. As for the latter, students were reported to be poorly aware of the importance of pronunciation feedback on pronunciation, and thus unwilling to correct their own pronunciation errors. Many teachers in the current study assumed that being surrounded by interlocutors who shared students’ same first language (L1) actually eliminated the motivation for students to correct themselves as they could easily be understood regardless of pronunciation errors; unfortunately, in the context of Vietnam, students’ exposure to spoken English was mainly to that of their same-L1 teachers and classmates (Phuong, 2021). Jenkins (2002) has claimed that pronunciation deviations are often more tolerated and less concerned among same-L1 interlocutors; beside the sense of affiliation, this could be attributed to listeners’ familiarity with speakers’ accents. However, in the current period of development, the most important mission of foreign language education in Vietnam is to equip Vietnamese youth with competence in spoken English to be more competitive in the international job market as clearly indicated in the ambitious foreign-language-teaching project in Vietnam, which is titled “Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008–2020”, (Vietnamese-Government, 2008). This big socio-economic scenario of an international market in which potential interlocutors for Vietnamese speakers of English in communication in English could come from various L1 backgrounds did not seem to be well aware by students in this study.

The finding hereby suggests that to improve the efficacy of teachers’ feedback on learners’ pronunciation development, it is important that teachers find ways to raise students’ awareness of the importance of achieving intelligible pronunciation in international communication in English and, thus, of error correction and feedback. However, it should be noted that teachers’ perception of students’ poor attitude towards feedback on pronunciation hereby was different from the high demand for feedback on pronunciation reported among Vietnamese students in a recent study by Phuong and Phuong (2019). Therefore, one may argue that students’ low attention to teachers’ feedback may not be evidence of their low interest in or poor awareness of the importance of teachers’ feedback. Instead, other factors, such as methods of feedback delivery, or possibly the focus of feedback, etc., may be at play. As such, another suggestion is that surveys should be conducted before and during each English course to inform teachers about aspects of English pronunciation, for which students might need more teachers’ support than others, and also about students’ preferences of how their pronunciation errors being corrected. This could be a worthwhile effort as Schulz (1996) pointed out that learners’ preferences have some roles to play in the success of the feedback approaches teachers select.

Research Question 2: How do EFL Vietnamese Teachers Give Feedback on English Pronunciation in Their Classes?

The second research question examines the ways in which teachers provided feedback on students’ pronunciation. The findings showed that teachers’ approaches of feedback provision diverged greatly focussing on either accuracy, fluency, or intelligibility.

Derwing and Munro (2005) claimed that teachers worldwide may somewhat still be confused between what is possible and what is desirable in pronunciation teaching. In the same vein, some teachers in this study highlighted the importance of accuracy and tried to correct every single pronunciation mistake of their students. It seems that the highly-agreed target of pronunciation pedagogy which is to help learners achieve “a comfortably intelligible pronunciation” (Abercrombie, 1949, p. 120) has yet found their ways to several English classrooms in the context of this study. The finding suggests EFL teachers’ exposure to SLA literature on feedback on pronunciation be pertinent. Teachers need to get aware that not all errors are of the same importance in ensuring successful communication and, thus, should be treated with different levels of priority (see, e.g., Deterding, 2010; Jenkins, 2002; Munro & Derwing, 1995).
In contrast, another approach selected by some teachers was to skip feedback altogether or minimize it to the least, especially at low levels of English proficiency, for the fear of interfering with students’ fluency in spoken English (Nu) or causing a high level of anxiety for students (Anh). The concern of feedback as a source of students’ anxiety has also been reported as the reason for teachers’ reluctance in giving feedback elsewhere (e.g., Kartchava et al., 2020; Roothooft & Breeze, 2016). As for the accuracy-fluency trade-off, concern has been grounded in the hypothesis of learners’ limited attentional capacity (see Skehan, 1998, for an example); however, empirical research in the field of ELT, such as that by Azad et al. (2018), has revealed that feedback does not necessarily result in the reduction of fluency. Additionally, teachers’ lack of belief in the efficacy of feedback on pronunciation at lower English levels hereby was not well supported by findings of previous studies. For example, Sifakis and Sougari (2005) found that EFL teachers in Greece especially focused on pronunciation feedback at lower English levels. It has also been found that instruction, including feedback, on pronunciation is not only beneficial to Yates and Zielinski (2009) but also highly desirable among beginning language learners (Phuong, 2019; Phuong & Phuong, 2019).

The final approach which was found among most teachers in this study was to focus on intelligibility in feedback provision. Apparently being aware of the current status of English as a lingua franca, several teachers such as Le, Thuy, and Hong started paying attention to the account of international interlocutors and the issue of intelligibility in international communication in English when making their decision of what to focus on in their feedback. However, teachers seemed little informed about aspects of pronunciation which were actually critical in ensuring intelligibility of learners’ English speech; as a result, they were found to rely on their own intuition to decide which pronunciation aspects were critical and which were not. In resonance with the recommendation of Couper (2019), the finding in this study also suggests that teachers may need training in how to properly assess learners’ pronunciation and to identify critical pronunciation features to give feedback on.

As previously mentioned, pronunciation pedagogy has recently been informed by the advocacy of teaching both segmentals and supra-segmentals to ensure intelligibility and comprehensibility (Grant & Brinton, 2014). The observed practice of the teachers in this study did not seem to reflect this pedagogical approach yet with teachers mostly focusing on errors at the word level. This observation was not unexpected given that Vietnamese teachers of English have been reported to be little trained in how to teach pronunciation, if at all (Phuong, 2020, 2021); clearly, teachers in such EFL contexts as Vietnam should be updated with essential knowledge in the field of pronunciation pedagogy, such as that of a balanced focus on both supra-segmentals and segmentals. Being exposed to research articles in the field may be necessary. Furthermore, the chances to participate in regular workshops about pronunciation teaching may be useful in assisting teachers to provide more effective feedback on their students’ pronunciation.

With regards to feedback timing, the finding shows that the teachers mainly relied on immediate feedback rather than delayed feedback. In the literature in the field of language teaching, there is a lack of consensus about whether feedback should be delayed or provided immediately (Ellis & Shintani, 2013; Kaivanpanah et al., 2015). However, the finding of the current research lends its support to some previous ELT research (E. J. Lee, 2013) indicating teachers’ and learners’ preference for immediate feedback. Especially, in a study that investigates EFL learners’ views of feedback on pronunciation, Phuong and Phuong (2019) found immediate feedback was of clear favor. However, in some rare cases, some teachers such as Le opted to use delayed feedback as an optimal solution in the face of limited classroom time for pronunciation teaching and feedback, and to effectively cope with errors that were critical and of a high frequency of occurrence.

Finally, with regards to peer feedback, teachers in both ESL and EFL contexts seem to highly agree that this technique is useful in assisting learners’ development of language accuracy and fluency (e.g., Baker & Burri, 2016; Hentasmaka & Cabyono, 2021). Scholars in pronunciation pedagogy such as Derwing and Munro (2015) also encourage the inclusion of peer feedback to make feedback on pronunciation more effective. In resonance with such findings and suggestions, most teachers in the current study also highlighted the importance of this technique; unfortunately, not many of them were confident enough to deploy it. Therefore, chances of observing classes and discussing with more experienced colleagues who have been successful in using this technique would definitely benefit less-ready teachers. Also, to ensure the efficacy of peer feedback on pronunciation, it is essential that students also receive brief but systematic training in how to do so.

**Conclusion**

This study serves as an explanatory step to obtain insight into EFL teachers’ cognition of feedback provision on pronunciation and the reflection of this cognition in their classroom practices. Though there were some common beliefs among teachers regarding the role of feedback in learners’ pronunciation development, findings generally indicate teachers’ unequal knowledge and diverging perceptions of what and how to correct pronunciation errors, which consequently led to their different classroom practices. With a rich description of how experienced EFL teachers perceived and actually provided feedback on pronunciation, the study has also shed light on several obstacles facing EFL teachers in helping their students recognize and correct their pronunciation errors. Those obstacles include especially teachers’ lack of knowledge in several important aspects such as the current status of English in today’s world, and thus the shifting targets and foci of pronunciation pedagogy. No less significant is teachers’ poor
preparation in terms of methods to provide effective feedback on pronunciation. This research was conducted with the hope to contribute to the existing literature on feedback on pronunciation and also to inform teacher educators and education administrators of areas in which acts should be taken to assist teachers to enhance the efficacy of feedback on pronunciation in particular and of pronunciation teaching in general.

Despite its contributions, the main limitation of this study is that it only focused on the views and practices of experienced teachers regarding the provision of feedback on students’ pronunciation. However, it is unknown how novice teachers may know, believe, and actually give feedback on this aspect of the English language. On the one hand, teaching experience would have a role in informing those experienced teachers’ classroom practices. On the other hand, the content and foci of TESOL programs may have changed significantly in recent years regarding pronunciation pedagogy, including feedback provision on pronunciation. These changes might have subsequently impacted the recognition and classroom practices of more recently-graduated teachers. Further research is needed to investigate the extent to which novice teachers’ beliefs and practices may differ from those of experienced teachers.

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