VIETNAMESE ENGLISH-MAJOR STUDENTS' VIEWS AND PRACTICES ON ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

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Abstract

English pronunciation competence is important in learning English as a foreign language. The present study aimed to provide insights into English-major students' views and practices for this competence. To its end, the study investigated (1) relevant values of English pronunciation competence perceived by English-major students, (2) specific pronunciation errors they attend to for improvement, and (3) practices they undertake to improve this competence. For data collection, an interview survey was conducted among 16 students majoring in English from a university in Vietnam. The results reveal that all students endorsed the valued English pronunciation competence for their confidence in English communication and learning success as an English major in college. They also cited their common pronunciation errors (which stemmed from phonological discrepancies between English and Vietnamese and other relevant causes) and self-initiated practices for improvement; however, only a few students had developed effective self-improvement strategies. Accordingly, pedagogical implications are addressed and further studies are recommended to advance our understanding in this regard.

Keywords: *English pronunciation, error, practice, value.*

QUAN ĐIỂM VÀ THỰC HÀNH PHÁT ÂM TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN VIỆT NAM CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH

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Tóm tắt

Phát âm tiếng Anh đóng vai trò quan trong quá trình học ngoại ngữ tiếng Anh. Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm tìm hiểu về quan điểm và hoạt động thực hành phát âm tiếng Anh của sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh. Nghiên cứu nhằm mục tiêu tập trung ba vấn đề cụ thể là: (1) nhận thức của sinh viên về các giá trị hữu dụng của năng lực phát âm tiếng Anh, (2) các lỗi phát âm tiếng Anh cụ thể mà sinh viên chú ý khắc phục, sửa chữa, và (3) những hoạt động rèn luyện sinh viên triển khai thực hiện nhằm hoàn thiện phát âm tiếng Anh. Phương pháp thu thập dữ liệu được thực hiện thông qua phỏng vấn trực tiếp 16 sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh ở một trường đại học Việt Nam. Kết quả cho thấy sinh viên nhận thức được tầm quan trọng của năng lực phát âm tiếng Anh đối với sự tự tin trong giao tiếp tiếng Anh và thành công bậc học chuyên ngành tiếng Anh đại học. Sinh viên cũng ý thức được các lỗi phát âm tiếng Anh thường mắc phải (là do sự khác biệt về hệ thống ngữ âm giữa tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt và các yếu tố liên quan khác) và tự xây dựng các hình thức thực hành nhằm cải thiện năng lực phát âm tiếng Anh. Tuy nhiên, có rất ít sinh viên tự phát triển các cách thức thực hành rèn luyện phát âm hiệu quả. Trên cơ sở này, nghiên cứu đề xuất một số phương pháp thực hành dạy học liên quan và định hướng nghiên cứu phát triển tiếp theo về lĩnh vực này.

Từ khóa: *Giá trị, lỗi, phát âm tiếng Anh, thực hành.*

1. Introduction

English pronunciation proficiency is one pivotally foundational component in the mastery of English as a second (L2) or foreign language (EFL) (Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 1994; Lin et al., 2024; Nguyen et al., 2021). This proficiency enables learners to communicate in L2 contexts intelligibly and confidently, and thus, English pronunciation is necessarily one of the crucial goals targeted by college students majoring in EFL in general terms. However, mastering English pronunciation to function decently in reality by and large as expected is reportedly a demanding task for many L2 learners (Afrifa-Yamoah et al., 2023; Alshaibani, 2023; Elkouz & Luna, 2022; Lin et al., 2024; Nguyen et al., 2021). That is probably why L2 learners tend to make substantial pronunciation errors, deviants, or mispronunciations in phonetic aspects of both segments (vowels and consonants) and suprasegments (syllable stress, word-linking, rhythm, and intonation), especially in early learning stages, when they attempt to speak English (details will be found in the next section). The problem caused by pronunciation errors is that they negatively impact L2 comprehension (Kang et al., 2010; Kang et al., 2016; Saito et al., 2015). As a consequence, it is generally suggested that practice teachers should take into account instructing learners on the nuanced knowledge of English phonology in the classroom constructively and providing guidelines for self-learning to improve pronunciation skills outside the classroom (Cunningham,1998; Do, 2024; Lin et al., 2024).

Given the substantive significance of pronunciation proficiency in L2 communicative situations, a large majority of past research has rotated around key subject matters of L2 pronunciation errors, training techniques, corrective feedback, and principles of nativeness and speech intelligibility in L2 interactive communication (Do, 2018; Le, 2022; Lin et al., 2024; Nguyen, 2019; O'Brien, 2021; Tran & Nguyen, 2022; Zaw, 2022). Still, very few inquiries have been devoted to exploring the dimension of learner views among Vietnamese EFL college students, in self-initiating and readily activating their pronunciation practices for improvement even though "Mispronunciation in English has occurred as a big concern among Vietnamese learners of English" (Tran & Nguyen, 2022, p. 33). The present study, therefore, taps into this dimension and intently seeks pertinent answers to three guiding questions:

(1) What are the relevant values of English pronunciation competence perceived by Vietnamese English-major students?

(2) What specific pronunciation errors do they attend to for improvement?

(3) What practices do they undertake to improve English pronunciation?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theory of expectancy-value

The expectancy-value theory (Atkinson, 1957; Eccles et al., 1983) is about how a person decides to undertake, accept inherent difficulties, and persevere in a specific task based on the belief how well he/she will perform the task (i.e., figuring out the possibility of success based on all available resources) and its outcome values that person perceives on completing the task. This theory has been applied in various fields, especially in educational areas (Eccles & Harold, 1991; Flake et al., 2015; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Wang & Degol, 2013), because it explains why and how individuals opt for certain tasks and strategic actions to gain task values. For long-term goals such as pursuing a bachelor's degree at college, it will likely foster students to take up a course of relevant sequential activities of monitoring, self-regulation, self-reflections on feedback, and necessary adjustments depending on emerging situations or barriers (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022; Schienle, 2009).

Eccles et al. (1983) identified four types of value: (1) *Attainment value:* a person perceives the extent of importance of doing well on the task, (2) *Intrinsic/Interest value:* how much a person enjoys doing the task, (3) *Utility value:* how much the task affects a person's current and future career goals, (4) *Cost:* time and work effort/energy a person has to invest in performing the task. In doing so, the opportunity to get involved in other valued activities would be lost (Flake et al., 2015). It also includes the persistence and perseverance that a person has to endure, which encompasses a firm determination to resist the temptation to give up the target task in the face of roadblocks or failure. As such, cost relates to both cognitive and emotional aspects on the path of working on task achievements (Eccles et al., 1983; Flake et al., 2015).

The present study focuses on these four values inherent in the task of various practices to reach the goals of English pronunciation competence. For example, how much this competence impacts the success of English learning at college, the enjoyment of learning English, and prospective employment (as values). At the same time, cost in this case is represented by difficulties or challenges students have to handle while managing to reach their English pronunciation mastery. In this exclusive regard, the immediate cost students have to take up is to pay sufficient attention to pronunciation errors and deliberately sustain persistent practices frequently in various English-speaking environments to minimize mispronunciation or eliminate these errors (Cunningham,1998; Do, 2024; Lin et al., 2024).

2.2. Past research on English pronunciation errors

Key findings aggregated from the empirical studies (Do, 2024; Do, 2018; Le, 2022; Luu & Trinh, 2023; Nguyen, 2019; Tran & Nguyen, 2022) evinced that while speaking English, Vietnamese speakers tended to commit pronunciation errors or deviate from native-like norms, likely causing intelligible problems to English native speakers. The Vietnamese appeared to generate mispronunciations/misperceptions in both segments and suprasegments (involved in production and perception task types).

Regarding the segmental dimension of consonants/C and vowels/V, English CC clusters displayed in syllable-onsets such as /br/ in *bring*, /kr/ *crew*, /pr/ *predict*, /st/ *stick*, and CCC of /skr/ *scrane*, /spl/ *splendid*, /spr/ *spread*, /str/ *street* were pronounced by the Vietnamese without the full range of all constituent consonants; instead, the first consonant in CC and first two in CCC were somehow dropped (Do, 2024; Tran & Nguyen, 2022). In a similar manner, both single and consonant clusters serving syllable coda (i.e., syllable endings, such as /p/ in *tap* or /st/ in *dust*) like /p, t, k, d, l, f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, ʧ, ʤ, nd, ŋk, ts/ appeared to be completely/partially deleted or mispronounced (Do, 2024; Luu & Trinh, 2023; Nguyen, 2008; Tran & Nguyen, 2022). Some vowels such as /æ, i:, u:/ and diphthongs of /əʊ, eə/ were found problematic to be acquired by the Vietnamese. Supramentally speaking, misplacement of word-stress like in "event" and "even" was

prevalent alongside an inability to differentiate word/phrase and sentence prominence or apply common word-linkings (Duong, 2018; Kang et al., 2016; Nguyen & Ingram, 2004; Nguyen et al., 2008).

Also targeting pronunciation errors, Le (2022) recently conducted a questionnaire survey among 40 English-major freshmen from a university in Vietnam. The survey results showed that most participants found it hard to master both segments and suprasegments of English phonetics; thus, they wanted their teachers to provide them with more guidance in improving their pronunciation competence. However, this study provided little about what specific learning strategies participants self-initiated for pronunciation improvement and outcome values perceived on this task achievement.

2.3. Accounts for English pronunciation errors

English pronunciation errors committed by Vietnamese speakers are commonly attributed to three substantive sources. First, discrepancies exist between Vietnamese as a first language (L1) and English as an L2. This is because the former is representative of a typical tonally-based language while the latter is characterized by a lexically stress-based language (Le, 2022; O'Brien, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2008). As a result, Vietnamese learners automatically apply phonological features/rules in the Vietnamese language to English pronunciation. In so doing, they commit English pronunciation errors. In this regard, Cunningham (1998) remarked that "a learner who is a native speaker of a tonal language, such as Vietnamese, will need assistance with different pronunciation features than will a native Spanish speaker" (p. 3). As seen above, English onset/coda consonants of CC or CCC are left unheard or deviated by the Vietnamese in most observed cases. This common dropping pattern adopted by L2 learners in English speaking is also known as *negative language transfer* theory in L2 learning processes (see Lado, 1957; Richards, 1974; Selinker, 1972).

Secondly, L2 learners are still in the developing stages of assimilating L2 phonology (ibid). In other words, phonetic-spelling formats in English have yet to be fully acquired by L2 learners due to its complexity or "the mismatch between orthography and phonetic systems of the English language" (Do, 2024, p. 383). For example, the spelling "th" in

thank is pronounced /θ/, but in then, it is sounded /ð/; similarly, the vowel /æ/ is auditorily present in act, but not in art. Thirdly, learners' characteristics (e.g. motivation, attitudes, and needs) and insufficient learning conditions/environments (such as a lack of frequent practice and comprehensive input outside the classroom) also play a certain role in pushing learners to make pronunciation errors (Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 1994; Kang et al., 2016; Lin et al., 2024). Despite whatever source it is, L2 pronunciation errors are inclined to be fossilized and hard to remove (Ellis, 1994; Richards, 1974; Selinker, 1972).

Given such multiple variables involved and complexities in the success or failure of English pronunciation mastery, the present study was conducted to offer more insights from the learner's perspectives. Details are addressed in the following section.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The present study involved 16 students (11 females and 5 males) who registered in regular learning courses at the beginning of the 2023/24 academic year. The courses were held at a university in Vietnam. These native Vietnamese students were all second-year students majoring in English language teaching, aged between nineteen and twenty-one. The researcher of the present study has been working as a faculty member at this university. As such, it is convenient for him to contact prospective participants as a convenience sampling group for data collection in qualitative research suitably probing personal views, reflections, interests, needs, and intents, which are mostly invisible (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Terry & Hayfield, 2021). In other words, being an EFL teacher at the university, the researcher gained good access to secure the aims of the present study as set above.

3.2. Instrument

For data collection, individual interviews (between the researcher and each participant) were conducted for qualitative data via verbal face-to-face interactions. Given the research aims, interviewing via words or linguistic elements is believed to enable interviewees to speak out their minds, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and plans supported by concrete illustrations and explanations (Sha & Gabel, 2020; Younas et al., 2023), especially about realistic events

"the participants originally experienced" (Makyut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 17).

The interview drawn on the research aims was centered on five thematic questions as follows:

(1) Do you think good English pronunciation facilitates your learning success at university majoring in English teaching? Please give your explanations.

(2) Do you think having a good English pronunciation competence will increase your confidence in English speaking? Provide some key arguments, please.

(3) Are you confident in your English pronunciation now? Why (or why not)?

(4) What pronunciation errors do you often commit in speaking English?

(5) Do you have any specific ways of perfecting your English pronunciation on your own? What are they if any?

The 5-question set was piloted among 10 students of English major at the university. The results showed it worked well in terms of wording and comprehensibility. Thus, the interview question set was applicable.

3.3. Data collection and analysis procedure

First, upon the consent from the Foreign Languages Faculty of this university, the interview survey was distributed via social media and called for voluntary participation among English-major students currently learning at the university. A brief purpose explanation was given and an anonymous principle applied in reporting results was transparently stated as well. In addition, prospective participants were also informed that the interview survey participation was completely optional (i.e., there was no count for any course grading).

Two weeks later, only 16 students agreed to take part in the intended survey (the characteristics of these students given above). Upon their free consent, individual interviews (i.e. between one student and the researcher once) were arranged at each of the interviewee's disposal. The purpose and 5-question set were delivered to the participants beforehand via email. These in-person interviews lasted between thirty and forty minutes each and they were administered in the researcher's working office on the university campus.

At the onset of the interview, the interviewees were again informed of the purpose of the interview. Also, the researcher made clear that they could withdraw from the interview at any point in the progression and that the interviews would be audio-recorded to serve as evidence in the subsequent research report with no personal identity. All invited students agreed to join the scheduled interview. As a result, all individual interviews took place as planned. English was applied as a medium of communication during the interview, but Vietnamese was concurrently used to avoid misunderstanding. The objectivity rule in collecting qualitative data (Qoyyimah, 2023; Shkedi, 2019; Younas et al., 2023) was strictly observed by the researcher for optimal reliability; for instance, avoiding showing favors for some background characteristics over others (e.g., sex orientation), or not providing any prompts for positive or negative responses. At the end of the interview, the researcher turned on the finished recording for the interviewee to listen and confirm the recorded contents before he/she left. All confirmed the contents of the recording.

The next step was transcribing all audio recordings into written verbatim forms and checking for their content adequacy was taken by the researcher. The contents were referenced by the key themes underlying the 5-question set addressed above. Then, under the position that "It is the researcher who codes, conceptualizes, and theorizes the data" (Timonen et al., 2018, p. 8), the researcher scrutinized the data, coding, synthesizing, reflecting, and interpreting on an iterative principle, i.e., individual cases and across the board commonly applied in qualitative research (Qoyyimah, 2023; Sha & Gabel, 2020; Younas et al., 2023). The results are reported in the following section.

4. Results and Discussion

The present study was guided by three research questions as set above (i.e., English-major students' perceived values of English pronunciation competence, errors attended to, and practices for improvement). Summarized findings from the interviews are displayed in Table 1:

Table 1. Summarized results on English pronunciation competence and practices (N=16)

Student coded	Interview Questions				
	(1) Good English pronunciation impacts learning success	(2) This competence impacts confidence in English-speaking	(3) Currently possess this competence	(4) Pronunciation errors need to be attended to	(5) Having specific methods for improvement
St-1	√	√	X	√	X
St-2	√	√	X	√	X
St-3	√	√	-√	-√	√
St-4	√	√	-√	-√	-√
St-5	√	√	X	√	X
St-6	√	√	X	-√	-√
St-7	√	√	X	√	X
St-8	√	√	-√	-√	√
St-9	√	√	X	√	X
St-10	√	√	-√	-√	-√
St-11	√	√	-√	-√	-√
St-12	√	√	X	√	-√
St-13	√	√	X	√	-√
St-14	√	√	-√	√	√
St-15	√	√	X	√	X
St-16	√	√	X	√	X

Note: √= (Confirmed/Yes); X= (Declined/No); -√= Partly yes.

4.1. Values perceived by students

Table 1 displays that all 16 students (100%) confirmed the crucial role of acquiring strong pronunciation competence as it supported academic achievement (1) and confidence in English speaking (2). This is significant because upon perceiving the concrete values of pronunciation tasks, students are self-motivated and committed to practices for task values (as delineated by the expectancy-value theory discussed earlier). For example, St-5 stated that:

No matter how poor my pronunciation is, I will show confidence and speak English as much as possible when given the opportunity in and outside the classroom. I think no one laughs when I make a mistake in English pronunciation; on the contrary, they can be more enthusiastic to help me correct it, which is good for my English learning. The more I practice, the better my English pronunciation is and so, it will motivate me to proactively speak English. I am convinced this is one of the basic factors for success in English learning at this university and my future career.

Despite self-rating "poor" in her present pronunciation competence and conveying a self-perceived need for improvement (as reflected in Table 1, question 3), St-5 appeared to believe strongly that others would help her to reach the task achievement as long as she kept on practicing via frequently English-speaking activities. Emotionally, she overcame the fear of making mistakes (assumed as cost in this case) and knowingly turned it as a self-created opportunity to obtain productive assistance from others.

Similarly, apart from recognizing the importance of pronunciation in English communication and learning success, St-8 visioned his job as an English teacher and highlighted the pivotal role of pronunciation proficiency:

I will be a teacher of English in three years. So, strong English pronunciation mastery is very important because I think it will increase my confidence to speak and teach a standardized target language right in the way of pronouncing sounds. Drawing from my learning experiences, if teachers commit pronunciation errors or mispronounce English repeatedly in the classroom, these errors will be more or less transmitted to their students, which is not always desired. So, good pronunciation would be one of my key tasks to accomplish at college.

Meanwhile, trying to acquire a sufficient ability to speak good English, St-10 now has developed an interest value of listening and singing English songs as well as proactively making friends with foreigners online:

At first, I used my free time listening to English songs so that I could recognize the correct sounds of the words in the songs and learned to cultivate my pronunciation. It is really helpful because now I enjoy singing English songs so much and feel more confident in speaking English than before. Furthermore, with good English, I usually talk to and make friends from other countries via the Internet. Thereby, I have learned much more about the cultures from them. I think in the future I will save money for some foreign journeys. Thus, improving pronunciation pays the way to various benefits. So, I would recommend this way of practice to my friends as well.

Thus, increased confidence in speaking English, learning success at college, prospective career, and inherent enjoyment are perceived and experienced by students themselves (not being reported by teachers or others). These findings not only reflect the relevant theories discussed above (Atkinson, 1957; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Eccles et al., 1983; Flake et al., 2015), but also explain why it is necessary to consciously locate errors frequently committed and strategic practices for improvement as the inevitable cost for this task achievement.

4.2. Errors noticed and strategic practices captured by students

Noticeably, none of them completely confirmed that they possessed this competence as seen in (3) even though they unanimously agreed on the crucial role of English pronunciation in oral communication. Thus, they all more or less showed the current need for improvement and errors noticed to be corrected (4). For example, St-11 released her specific method of refining English pronunciation as follows:

I strongly believe that good English pronunciation is an essential requirement for speaking English and university success as an English major like me. Thus, I will continue putting a lot of my effort into making sure my English pronunciation is consistent, clear, and comprehensive in English communication. In addition, I will have to pay attention to how *to*

raise and drop my voice as well as connect sounds in specific situations, which I have not done before. I am constantly striving to improve my English pronunciation skills to make my sentences seem better and to draw in more listeners in English speaking. As such, it will make me feel more confident to take the IELTS test next year in my learning plans.

Meanwhile, partly confirming question (5), St-12 shared that *"I often listen and repeat video English on YouTube to self-correct errors and improve my English pronunciation"*. So, it appears that all students were very concerned about pronunciation errors and underlined that mastering a standard pronunciation was essential because *"I don't understand completely what others say when I mispronounce English words and this leads to my shyness in communication"* (St-15). Furthermore, St-1, St-2, St-3, and St-14 cited multiple errors committed in English speaking, especially those words containing onset and coda consonant clusters as well as misplacing stress syllables (e.g., *continue* and *interesting*) and mispronouncing/altering consonants of /f, θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ, ʧ, ʤ, ŋ/, long vowels /æ, i:, u:/ like in *hat, leave, lose*, and diphthongs of /əʊ, eə/. In the same line, St-10 stated that word-linking across boundaries, such as *"like‿it"*, *"at‿all"*, and *"find‿out"*, was one of the aspects of her improvement goals still underway because it advantaged her to catch what native speakers spoke and sound closely like them in English communication. In addition, St-1 and St-10 referred to the rising intonation used in yes-no questions and middle-sentence pauses, for example, *Do you like ↗ music? Although it rained a ↗ lot, the game went ↗ on until the end*.

Remarkably, St-16 attributed her difficulty in possessing a native-like English pronunciation to the impact of her L1 speaking background:

Since I have a northern accent in Vietnamese and am unable to pronounce distinctively several sounds, especially /n/ and /l/, so I usually mispronounce English words. Furthermore, several formats of English pronunciation are very different from those in Vietnamese. As a consequence, I have a lot of difficulties in gaining a standard English pronunciation.

Another noticeable finding is that only St-3, 8, and 14 (3 out of 16, 18.75%) provided a complete affirmation for question (5). St-8 described her

improvement practice by figuring out deliberately how to articulate the target sounds regarding the manners, movements, and contingent shapes of related pronunciation organs alongside referencing other similar or adjacent sounds. For instance, to produce /æ/, she said,

This sound falls between the ways to pronounce /a/ and /e/, but with the two lips open, the tongue low, and it is relatively prolonged. Meanwhile, /θ/ is pronounced by placing the tongue tip between the upper and lower teeth, and then blowing out the air stream somehow blocked through the teeth.

She also frequently applied the shadowing technique by listening to native speakers and repeating what they just said over again and again. These detailed practice descriptions imply that students were able to project self-practices for improvement, not just noticing errors committed while speaking English as mentioned above. On the contrary, St-1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 15, and 16 had yet to shape specific tactics or methods intentionally for improvement in this regard and still were in search of effective ones. These students also indicated that although they needed to improve this important competence, it was hard for them to spare more time practicing on their own frequently due to course workloads embedded in the curriculum throughout the year's learning. For instance, St-7 confessed that:

Having to learn multiple subjects with many assignments in English and Vietnamese concurrently under the training curriculum, like other students I did not have much time to refine English pronunciation frequently.

4.3. Implications

Generally, evidence from the interviews implicates that upon perceiving the values of English pronunciation competence, all involved students expressed the need to improve it. They were aware of committed errors, both at the segment level (vowels and consonants) and the suprasegment (stress, intonation, and word-linking). Furthermore, they recognized these errors were caused by tangible discrepancies in phonological systems between L1 and L2, which underlies *negative language transfer* (Lado, 1957; Richards, 1974; Selinker, 1972). A lack of sufficient practice due to learning workload was also cited as a source of mispronunciation.

Accordingly, these self-awarenesses by students with their experiences of years of English learning have specified what difficulties are challenging them in terms of English phonology components. Consequently, their justified needs for improvement in this regard call on teachers and coursebook designers to purposefully attend to English pronunciation deviances/errors to provide ample assistance depending on specific cases (Cunningham, 1998; Do, 2024; Lin et al., 2024; Luu & Trinh, 2023). Otherwise, an inability to confidently pronounce English would likely result in the undesired state observed by Alshaibani (2023) that "While communicating in English, many EFL students experience hesitancy and nervousness" (p.4), or perceived fears of making pronunciation errors, shame, or a feeling of failure in the target language communication (Kang et al., 2016; Saito et al., 2015).

Specifically, it is recommended that classroom teachers should pay close attention to assisting students, struggling ones in particular, and refine pronunciation competence by briefly providing clear, concrete explanations for L1-driven errors and how to correct them before they become fossilized. Since accessing global social media for self-contacting, online learning, and communicating with native English speakers is relatively affordable for almost all students (https://www.getpronounce.com, improve-your-english-pronunciation, for example), teachers should also amplify these learning sources to constructively activate student autonomy in self-development for English pronunciation competence beyond the classroom, thus shifting gradually from teacher-reliance to self-reliance. For the viable application of that pedagogical approach, St-5, 8, and 11 from the present study are exemplars.

5. Conclusion

Taken together, the present study has attained its set goals. Grounded on the obtained findings presented above, it shows that the involved students were well aware of the significance of English pronunciation competence because it robustly mediated their confidence in speaking English and college learning success as EFL majors as well as other inherent values. They also noticed it was a demanding task (which is designated as cost) to gain a native-like English pronunciation because they appeared to make pronunciation errors due to phonological discrepancies between English and Vietnamese as well as other causes related to learning conditions and learner characteristics. Their awareness of the committed errors implies that they were striving to acquire English pronunciation proficiency decently but only a limited number of these students had developed specific self-improvement practices. As a consequence, classroom teachers should attend to instructional techniques adequately guiding students to continually improve and self-refine pronunciation competence in the classroom and beyond on a long-term basis other than only a focal phonological course. Especially, this should target the autonomous approach optimally utilizing the currently available network for a desired goal in this regard. Therefore, further research can expand this topic on a larger scale with more participants seeking their specific ways of self-improving English pronunciation across L1 characteristics and diverse learning environments/settings to forward our comprehensive understanding in this field and thus devise suitable pedagogies timely for productive application in general terms.

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