



The effect of teacher versus peer corrective feedback on spoken English comprehensibility of Vietnamese military officers

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Abstract

“One of the chief goals of most second language learners is to be understood in their second language by a wide range of interlocutors in a variety of contexts” (Munro & Derwing, 1995, p. 285). One of the key factors that make this possible is accurate pronunciation. One main source of difficulty for Vietnamese learners of English, that can affect comprehensibility, is the pronunciation of word-final consonants and clusters. This study examined the effects of repetition and focus-on-forms corrective feedback on comprehensibility for two groups of Vietnamese military officers who took part in an oral task. The task consisted of a pre-test story reading task, followed by repetition of a list of the key target coda, then either teacher or peer feedback, and finally, a post-test task involving the repetition of the same story. The results of this study showed that even though overall pronunciation accuracy of coda increased, this was only after repetition of the discreet target items. Following focus-on-forms corrective feedback, there was no significant improvement for those who received feedback from a teacher and for those receiving feedback from peers, the accuracy level actually decreased. In terms of any change in comprehensibility, the study revealed that despite gains in pronunciation accuracy, the majority of raters found that there was no significant effect on the comprehensibility of the participants. Furthermore, the study sort to investigate the attitudes that the participants had to teacher and peer feedback and to the importance of accurate coda pronunciation. The research revealed that the participants had a strong preference for teacher feedback and

that pronunciation accuracy, and in particular sounding native, was important to them in respect to being understood.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The ability of a person to be understood when speaking a second language is crucial for them to be successful in communication. Good pronunciation plays a significant role in this, as a person is more likely to be understood even if they make errors in other areas. Conversely, the most grammatically perfect student who has bad pronunciation may not be understood at all (Yates, 2002). For many students, good pronunciation is one of the most difficult aspects of a language to acquire and in this respect, they need explicit help (Morley, 1994).

Compared to other skills, pronunciation instruction has never really been seen as a priority in the classroom and thus, there hasn't been any real move to prioritize what is important and beneficial for students in terms of their spoken comprehensibility.

Debates have been on going as to what is theoretically more effective, for instance, teaching segmentals or suprasegmentals, but this has lead to no real clear pedagogical instructions being given to teachers and so they are often left to theorize about what is most effective for their particular learner's needs. What teachers include in pronunciation instruction and especially what is more effective in terms of corrective feedback remains fairly unfocused.

A prominent part of pronunciation instruction is the desire to sound native and to reduce the effects of a non-native accent. This is still promoted as an achievable and beneficial path to comprehensibility despite increases in world varieties of English and therefore varieties of accents and shared regional pronunciation difficulties. Its use as

a Franca has meant that English is no longer owned by native speakers who have now become the minority users of English in a globalized world. Each part of the world has specific problems in relation to their pronunciation and this can sometimes lead to incomprehensibility particularly for those interlocutors who do not share the same difficulties. However, for those that do share similar problems, less accurate pronunciation may not have the same comprehensibility issues and thus may not need to be prioritized if they are going to use their English in a specific World English region. This is particularly relevant to this study, as there is a strong likelihood that the participants will be using most of their English within the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) region.

The aim of this study is to examine how the accurate pronunciation of word-final consonants and clusters for Vietnamese learners, who are employed in the military, effects their comprehensibility. The study also seeks to determine whether repetition of discreet items and focus-on-forms (FonFs) corrective feedback have any significant effect on accuracy and thus subsequent comprehensibility. In terms of feedback, the study investigates the effectiveness of both peer and teacher feedback across two similar participant groups. Comprehensibility is examined both for interlocutors who are native speakers and for one who is a non-native speaker. Furthermore, in order to ascertain what might be possible in terms of future effective pedagogical approaches, the study also considers the attitudes of learners to the type of feedback that they prefer and their general attitude towards pronunciation accuracy.

Over the past 25 years, studies have tended to take a suprasegmental approach to researching pronunciation, with few examining specific segmental difficulties for specific linguistic regions. Furthermore, most studies on corrective feedback, including peer and teacher comparisons, have focused on writing and not speaking. To date, I have been unable to find any studies that have focused on a particular area of segmental difficulty combined with investigating the relative effects of peer and teacher feedback following repetition. Furthermore, I have found none that have examined a specific profession, namely the military, in a particular geographical region. Thus, this study is an attempt to fill some of the gaps in the research and also to open up some new more focused debates on pronunciation instruction.

Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will firstly present various definitions of comprehensibility, followed by a brief historical overview and some methodological underpinnings of pronunciation. Then, the debate between the relative effectiveness of a segmental versus a suprasegmental focused approach to pronunciation instruction will be explored. After that, the use of repetition and focus on forms instruction as corrective feedback will be examined. Research into teacher and peer feedback will also be addressed, followed by the specific problems that Vietnamese learners have with word-final consonant segmentals. Finally, pronunciation will be looked at in relation to World Englishes.

2.2 Intelligibility and comprehensibility

Iaacs and Trofimovich (2012) acknowledged that “few L2 researchers and practitioners would disagree that intelligibility is the appropriate goal for L2 pronunciation instruction” (p.477). They maintain that this is because what is really important is an L2 speakers’ ability to be understood. Thus, it is important to firstly clarify any differences that exist between the terms intelligibility and comprehensibility. Both are usually defined in terms of the operations used to determine them. Intelligibility is often operationalised as a measure of ‘actual understanding’ of speech that is frequently assessed through transcription tasks, whereas, comprehensibility is defined as a listener’s perception of how ‘easy’ it is to

understand a non-native speaker, which is usually measured using human rater judgments, for instance, Likert or semantic differential scales (Munro & Derwing, 1999). Having said this, according to Isaacs and Trofimovich (2012) such a narrow distinction between the two constructs does not, in reality, so sharply exist. They cite the use of the term intelligibility in TOEFL and IELTS, maintaining that intelligibility is measured in terms of subjective scalar ratings, and thus they are really measuring comprehensibility.

In order to simplify the terms, Isaacs and Trofimovich (2012) suggest that a broader term for intelligibility be used, namely Levis's (2006) definition of a listener's more general ability to understand speech that "is not usually distinguished from closely related terms such as comprehensibility" (p.252). However, this definition, according to other researchers is too broad. Field (2005) refers to intelligibility as the recognition of the acoustic-phonetic content of the message and Smith and Nelson (1985) provide a tripartite definition proposing that intelligibility is concerned with word and utterance recognition and decoding, comprehensibility as the meaning behind the words and utterances, and interpretability as the understanding of the intentions behind the words and utterances. In the light of Field's and Smith and Nelson's definitions, Jenkins (2000) describes intelligibility as 'matters of form', and comprehensibility as 'matters of meaning'. This study focuses on the latter definition.

2.3 Pronunciation

“The history of pronunciation in English language teaching is a study in extremes” (Levis, 2005). Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996), cite different approaches having different emphases on the importance of pronunciation in second language teaching, for instance, the *reformed method* and *audiolingualism* emphasized the importance of pronunciation. During the 1800’s the former was a reaction against the text-based *grammar translation* method beginning with publication in 1877 of Henry Sweet’s Handbook of Phonetics, which sort to analyse specimens of different sound systems and thus opened up the possibility of teaching speech systematically (McArthur, 2005). The latter, pioneered in the 1970’s, emphasized the mastery of native-like pronunciation through imitation and minimal pair drills that especially focused on phonemic contrasts (Saito & Lyster, 2012). In contrast, Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) note that the *cognitive movement* and early *communicative language teaching* were at the other extreme, virtually ignoring the importance of pronunciation.

The methodological differences in the relative importance of pronunciation for pedagogy have to a certain degree resulted in a lack of focus on what is actually important when considering pronunciation instruction. According to Derwing and Munro (2005), there has been a marginalization of the study of pronunciation within the field of applied linguistics, resulting in teachers being left to their own intuitions as to what is important in terms of clarity and within this, they have had little specific direction. As a result, they have called for more empirical, replicable studies that define how particular pronunciation features affect intelligibility. They suggest that the current reliance on anecdotal and personal impressions, although important, “cannot

resolve many of the critical questions that face classroom instructors” (p.380). Central to this is the issue of the effect of accent on the intelligibility and comprehensibility of second language learners.

According to Levis (2005), pronunciation research and pedagogy has for a long time been influenced by two competing ideologies: the *nativeness principle* and the *intelligibility principle*. The nativeness principle refers to the achievement of a native-like accent that is seen as not only desirable but also possible. This paradigm dominated teaching before the 1960’s and continued to be a goal through the 1970’s with the popularity of audiolingualism. Early on learners were exposed to Received Pronunciation (RP), "the standard accent of English as spoken in the south of England" (Pearsall, 1999. p.14) but more recently specific references to ‘acceptable’ accents can be found within the norms of Kachru’s (1985) sociolinguistic profile of the Inner Circle (the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand). This desire for nativeness, despite evidence that argues against it, still significantly effects pronunciation instruction today and drives the accent reduction industry that promises special techniques that will eliminate a foreign accent (Levis, 2005).

The intelligibility principle, on the other hand, recognizes that different features have different effects on understanding and that instruction should be focused on the most helpful for understanding and deemphasize those that are not. Derwing and Munro (2005), advocate that instruction should not aim to eliminate errors to achieve a ‘native-like’ accent, but to focus on aspects that influence intelligibility and comprehensibility that make communication successful. They maintain that despite

the notions that “heavy accent” and “low intelligibility” are confounded, even heavily accented speech can be perfectly intelligible.

2.4 Suprasegmentals versus segmentals

Over the past 25 years the debate over what is more helpful has focused on the emphasis of teaching suprasegmentals, which include prosodic features such as intonation, tone, stress, and rhythm, over segmentals (discrete temporally ordered phonetic segments) such as, vowels and consonants (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992; Morley, 1991; Levis, 2005). The rationale for this followed studies by McNerney and Mendelson (1987, 1992) that suggested that priority should be given to suprasegmentals, because they are more likely lead to the greatest improvements in comprehensibility. Derwing and Munro (1997) went further, maintaining that when native speakers listened to non-native speakers, greater comprehensibility is more likely to occur with improvements in grammar and prosodic features rather than solely focusing on phonemic errors. In a study by Derwing, Munro and Wiebe (1998) that focused on suprasegmentals, it was found that they increased comprehensibility in both a reading task and extemporaneous speech, whereas a pedagogical focus on segmentals only showed improvements in the reading task and not the speaking task. Having found this, however, they specifically called for both segmental and suprasegmental-based instructional approaches in order to improve overall pronunciation performance. Indeed, Saito (2012) evaluated the results of 15 segmental and suprasegmental-based studies and found that both instructional approaches were

equal in their effectiveness, not only in improving aspects of L2 sounds but also for listener's judgments of comprehensibility.

Studies on the effects of segmental focused instruction and comprehensibility, particularly those focusing on consonant sounds, have to date been scarce. Riney, Takakda and Ota (2000) attempted to address the issue of segmentals by focusing on the form relationship between a discrete feature, the Japanese flap /ɾ/ and the substitution of this for the English liquids /ɹ/ and /l/, and its relationship with a global foreign accent. They studied 11 Japanese students using both spontaneous and reading tasks. Although their study was based on a small sample and thus should be interpreted with caution, they concluded that the use of the Japanese flap was a result of L1 transfer and the more the students tried to sound 'native' the fewer the substitutions. They found that this segmental feature is a major contributor to the Japanese accent when speaking English and if the goal is to reduce the Japanese accent, then this segment should be prioritized in pronunciation instruction. However, despite attempting to define comprehensible pronunciation, their study made no reference as to whether the substitution of the flap affected intelligibility or comprehensibility.

Studies that combine segmental focused instruction with repetition and corrective feedback with respect to comprehensibility are even scarcer. One such study, however, by Saito and Lyster (2012) also studied the Japanese flap /ɾ/ and researched the effects of form-focused instruction (FFI) and corrective feedback (CF) on the acquisition of the English /ɹ/. From a pedagogical perspective, they maintained that "English /ɹ/ can

be considered a top priority especially for Japanese learners of English to improve overall intelligibility of their L2 speech production” (p.8). They came to several conclusions. First, communicatively focusing on phonological form can benefit L2 pronunciation development. Second, in terms of interlanguage development, FFI can promote new metalinguistic representations and internalize the target feature both at a controlled and spontaneous speech level. Third, although it is important to draw attention to the target feature through enhanced positive evidence (proactive FFI), learners still needed CF as negative evidence in order to ascertain as to the intelligibility of their output. Saito and Lyster (2012) acknowledged that, as this was a classroom-based study, it may have its limitations, but point out that such ecological variability in research is still currently needed.

2.5 Repetition and form focused instruction (FFI)

In favour of adopting repetition as a methodology in relation to pronunciation instruction, Trofimovich and Gatbonton (2006), studied 60 L2 learners of Spanish who took part in an auditory word-priming experiment. They concluded that, not only focusing explicitly on form-related phonological properties, but also by using repetition showed measurable benefits when processing speech. Auditory word-priming usually involves listeners being exposed to a first set of spoken stimuli and then tested by repetition of a second set that includes the previously heard stimuli. In the second task listeners often demonstrate word-priming “a phenomenon of unconscious and unintentional processing facilitation, whereby they benefit from repeated (previously heard) linguistic material” (p.521). They also maintain that auditory word-priming is indicative of a listener’s sensitivity to the form-related

characteristics of the word and not its meaning. They found that by repetition, the target words were processed more rapidly and identified more accurately.

Using word repetition in pronunciation instruction has also been seen to be effective when words are repeated, following modeling by a native speaker. Elliott (1997) followed on from other studies on multimodal approaches to phonological instruction to try and pinpoint areas that were most beneficial. One of these areas was word repetition. He studied 66 undergraduate students of Spanish and found a statistically significant improvement in pronunciation accuracy when students were asked to repeat discrete words that were modeled by a native speaker. In conclusion, he suggested that explicit formal instruction in pronunciation led to significant overall improvement and that students can benefit from pronunciation instruction most when they are focused on the linguistic forms of the target language system.

In terms of form-focused instruction (FFI), Ellis (2001) defined this as “any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form” (p. 2). He states that the term “form” includes any lexical, grammatical, pragmalinguistic, and phonological aspects of language. He maintains that there are 3 types of FFI:

- I) Focus-on-forms (FonFs), which is characterized by an explicit primary focus on a preselected specific form that the learners must focus on.
- II) Focus-on-form (FonF) where the primary attention is on meaning whilst also attending to preselected forms.

III) Incidental focus-on-form, which involves primary attention to meaning but, rather than intensively focused, distributes this across a wide range of non-preselected forms.

According to Saito and Lyster (2012), most pronunciation teaching studies have depended on explicit instruction using focus-on-forms, followed by decontextualized practice, for instance, mechanical drills and repetition. They maintain that this is not surprising considering pronunciation requires both metalinguistic knowledge and physical action through the manipulation of articulatory organs to produce correct L2 sounds. Furthermore, VanPatten (1996) advocates that traditional focus-on-forms instruction can be combined with structured input, which provides plentiful examples of the targeted linguistic form that pushes the learner to pay particular attention to this feature while listening or reading. In contrast, however, Doughty (2003) noted that “as explicit focus on forms is completely decontextualized it promotes a mode of learning that is unrelated to SLA and the outcome is merely the accumulation of metalinguistic knowledge about language” (p.271). As a result, there are advocates for a more psycholinguistic approach that combines form and meaning when using focus-on-form instruction (Doughty, 2003; Ellis, 2001).

2.6 Teacher versus peer corrective feedback

This concept can really be taken back to early work on Social learning theories and in particular work by the psychologist Vygotsky (1962), who suggested that learning takes place through the interactions students have with their peers, teachers, and other experts. This socio-cultural theory purports that language learning is socially and

culturally mediated within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), defined as “the distance between the actual developmental level determined by independent problem solving, and the higher level of potential development determined through problem-solving in collaboration with more capable peers or seniors.” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86).

One aspect of social learning is the use of corrective feedback (CF) by peers or teachers. One of the theoretical underpinnings of CF is Schmidt’s (1990) *noticing hypothesis* where intake and acquisition comes from consciously noticing specific input forms. Corrective feedback gives the learner the opportunity to cognitively compare their own interlanguage and focus on input analysis, which is especially applicable to input-providing CF that models the target language using FFI (Sato & Lyster, 2012). Learners then have the opportunity to self-correct and modify their output based on Swain’s (1985) output hypothesis because the learner’s noticing is triggered and the resulting modified output becomes theoretically more precise and more accurate (Izumi & Bigelow, 2000). The vast majority of research in this field, however, has concentrated writing tasks and not oral tasks, and as a result, this study attempts to address some of the imbalance.

According to Hattie and Timperly (2007), feedback can be a powerful influence but there are complex interactions between the source and type of the feedback and its effects. Studies on the effectiveness of teacher compared to peer feedback, has not as yet, resulted in a clear consensus as to which is more effective. The affective advantage of either approach seems to be inextricably linked with the preferences of learners. Zhang (1995) study of two universities in the USA compared the affective grounds that justified peer feedback for writing English as a first language (L1) with

writing for ESL. The results showed that the affective advantage of peer feedback over teacher feedback in L1 writing did not, in fact, apply to ESL. According to him, one factor which, may have influenced this was the marked preference for teacher feedback (94% of students) and that this feedback was seen as more useful and credible. Jacobs, Braine, and Huang (1998), with their study of students in Hong Kong and Taiwan, concur with 93%. Indeed, this preference for teacher feedback and reservations about the effectiveness of peer feedback can be seen in many other studies (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Nelson & Carson, 1998; Yang, Badger, & Yu, 2006).

Most studies relating to feedback preferences, however, have focused on Asian students and, as a result, there may be some cultural issues that affect student's preferences. Students that come from China, Singapore, Korea, Japan and Vietnam are considered to come from a Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) (Phuong-Mai, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2005). In these cultures the teacher is assumed to be the fountain of knowledge and the students must attain the knowledge that is delivered by the teacher (Holliday, 1994). Pratt, Kelly, and Wong (1999), in their study of the Chinese conceptions of 'effective teaching', also found that many students accepted the traditional view that teachers are mainly responsible for content and that it is the role of the student to absorb it, thus reflecting traditional Chinese hierarchical society where "effective teachers are often characterized as having a close, protective relationship with the students, similar to that of a coach or even a parent" (p.247). Pratt et al (1999) maintain that it is this that enables society to function effectively, whereby those who are higher up in the hierarchy are responsible for the well-being and guidance of those below them, and that this must be respected.

Sadler (1998) equates the preference for teacher feedback to the fact that the teacher's background is perceived to be more accurate and sophisticated, it creates more trust, has superior knowledge and pedagogical techniques, and has more of an in-depth insight into similar tasks that have been used for a particular language focus. However, according to other studies, this preference may not necessarily lead to an increase in effectiveness. Hyland (1998) found that this affective preference might lead to learners using teacher feedback without actually understanding it and thus proceduralizing any language. Zhao (2010) studied 18 Chinese university students studying English and found that there was indeed a preference for teacher feedback but this was problematic because learners sometimes used this feedback without actually understanding its necessity. She concluded that there was a need for raising student's awareness as to understanding feedback as a prerequisite for using it in order for it to be effective in language acquisition. Indeed, a study by Lynch and MacClean (2003) found that understanding the feedback is crucial because this affected student's perceptions of the value and effect of the feedback and this actually matched improvements in speaking.

Despite the fact that most literature suggests that teacher feedback is more valued than peer feedback (Yang et al., 2006) other studies indicate that peer feedback can have noticeable beneficial effects. Tsui and Ng (2000) found that while some participants viewed peer comments with skepticism, they concluded that it helped others to identify and raise awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and contributed to learner autonomy. Indeed, other studies have found that peer feedback has beneficial effects, which "proves them to be of equal or even greater effect than teacher comments" (Gielen, Tops, Dochy, Onghena, & Smeets, 2010, p.144). Gielen et al., (2010) cite the fact that peer feedback can increase the social pressure to perform, be

more understandable and ‘on-the-level’ of the students, help clarify goals and criteria making them easier to understand, is more individualistic, and is freer from power issues, emotions and identities that are possibly sometimes associated with teacher feedback. Furthermore, Nicol (2010) adds another dimension to the possible benefits of peer feedback, that of dialogue. He argues that peer dialogue when giving feedback, enables students to more critically engage with each other and thus, is qualitatively different from teacher feedback that is usually one way. In a rare study of the effects and perceptions of trained peer feedback in L2 speaking, Rodríguez-González and Castañeda’s (2016) study of 17 intermediate Spanish learners found that, although there were no significant differences in language performance, learners reported a positive learning value from listening to their peers and providing feedback. They went on to conclude that effective types of feedback were, indeed, given by learners and that they also ventured to provide specific comments on language accuracy.

In relation to the level of the effectiveness of peer feedback, it is noteworthy that several studies cite various challenges. Firstly, the basic language competence of the learner’s L2 is a major concern when implementing peer feedback (Villamil & de Guerrero, 1998). Secondly, learners often focused on surface and not specific concerns resulting in vague comments when giving feedback (Leki, 1990). Thirdly, according to Sato and Lyster (2012), peer attention rarely focuses on linguistic form unless they are guided to do so in the task, thus reducing the quantity and quality of the interaction. Finally, Yang et al. (2006) conclude that even if peer feedback is beneficial and effective, it can only be introduced if the students receiving it find it acceptable.

2.7 Word-final consonant segmentals and Vietnamese learners

Research into interlanguage (IL) phonological development has tended to focus on three influences outlined by Tarone (1980). Firstly, reactivation in second language acquisition of L1 processes, secondly L1 transfer, and thirdly universal processes (the preference for the consonant-vowel (CV) pattern of the ‘open’ syllable. Of these three influences, L1 transfer seems to be the predominant factor that influences IL phonological development (Greenburg 1983; Sato 1984; Benson 1988). L1 transfer that effects pronunciation can be seen to centre around the structure of the syllable in a learner’s L1 compared to the L2. L1 rules governing syllable structure in Vietnamese has been seen to markedly affect pronunciation accuracy (Thuy, 2007).

Vietnamese is a monosyllabic language consisting of 6 tones, which sounds almost musically staccato due to the fact that it is syllable-timed with each syllable being short and simple. Sato (1984) reported that the following syllable types were allowed in Vietnamese: V, VC, and CVC (the latter two affording an optional glide after the initial consonant). Of the 22 consonants in Vietnamese, only 6 are permitted to be in the final position: the nasal consonants /m, n, ŋ/ and unaspirated voiceless /p, t, k/ and their allophones. In contrast, Spencer (1996) refers to English coda as a complicated animal as very few languages permit the use of so many consonants and clusters in final position. In fact, almost all English consonants can be placed word-finally and, in addition, English has a lot of unusually complex consonant clusters in coda ranging from two: *liked* (CVCC) to extremely complex combinations of four codas: *scrambled* (CCCVCCCC). Vietnamese, however, does not permit any consonant clusters in any position. In his study of 2 Vietnamese learners, Sato (1984) found that L1 transfer

resulted in significant difficulty in producing final consonants, resulting in some use of epenthesis, and a preference for consonant deletion as a strategy to deal with consonant clusters. These findings concur with Greenberg (1983) who studied 3 Turkish, Japanese, and Greek learners and concluded that the L1 rules pertaining to Greek and Japanese that do not allow syllable-final clusters resulted in both epenthesis and deletion when producing English.

According to Ngo (2005), the Vietnamese syllable consists of two mandatory components: the tone and nuclear vowel and three optional components: an initial consonant, labialization of the syllable, and the final semi-vowel or consonant. Crucially here, only the tone and nuclear vowel are compulsory and so this structure can materialize in systematic L1 interference errors when pronouncing word-final consonants, which is especially significant when the final consonant is obligatory for comprehensibility (Osburne, 1996). Osburne concluded that cluster reduction for Vietnamese learners was not random but regular and “influenced subtly by the expectations of L1 syllable structure” (p.175). Thuy’s (2007) research on consonant clusters in initial, medial and final positions clarifies the articulation of this reduction by stating that even when the syllable, which has a final consonant is pronounced (as in a closed syllable), the mouth (the lips and tongue) should remain unmoved so that “an explosion at the end of the syllable cannot be formed” (p. 54). This produces a dramatic glottal implosive stop that prohibits any form of a final voiced-stop plosive or fricative, giving the impression of deleting or simplifying the final consonant.

In addition to certain phonotactic features making the acquisition of word-final consonants particularly difficult, some consonant clusters may be more difficult to acquire than others. Eckman's (1977) Marked Differential Hypothesis (MDH) attempts to explain this phenomenon. This refers to the relative degree of difficulty a particular feature has for learners compared to its markedness. Eckman (1996) defined typological markedness as "the relative frequency or generality of a given structure across the world's languages" (p.198). Eckman (1977) claimed that those areas of the target language which differ from the native language and are more marked than the native language will be more difficult. Using the Marked Differential Hypothesis, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the English syllable structure, which permits a multitude of word-final consonants is significantly more marked compared to Vietnamese. Benson (1986) used this hypothesis to predict the relative difficulty Vietnamese learners have when pronouncing consonant clusters. He studied both syllable-initial and syllable-final consonant clusters in 70 English words. Benson (1986) concluded that the greater the markedness the greater the actual difficulty and that the predictions made by MDH was basically accurate and even more defined. These predictions were based on consonant cluster length and essentially stated that the longer the cluster (the more marked it is) the higher the relative difficulty for Vietnamese learners.

2.8 World Englishes

According to Crystal (2003), non-native speakers of English outnumber native speakers by 3:1 and furthermore New Varieties of English from the Outer Circle, for instance, India, Nigeria, and Singapore have emerged that have an excellent command

of the English language, even though their pronunciation may be substantially different from the Inner Circle norm (Deterding, 2010). Added to this is the Expanding Circle's increasing use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) for cross-cultural communication, especially in business. Deterding (2010) thus contends that both, the Outer and Expanding Circles have a right to contribute to the development of English and that reference to Inner Circle norms is no longer needed. Indeed, Jenkins (2006) sees World Englishes (WEs) as a direct challenge and resistance to the old paradigms of what she describes as "linguistic imperialism" (p.116).

Kirkpatrick (2010), in his study on English as a lingua franca in the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) region, found that many of the countries shared common pronunciation features and the regularity of not producing English word-final consonants, is common amongst all the nations in this region. This refers to both the Outer Circle former British colonized nations of Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore, the American influence in the Philippines and the Expanding Circle of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. Deterding (2010) studied several pronunciation features from the ASEAN region, Mainland China, and Hong Kong and highlighted the propensity for epenthesis of Chinese speakers and the use of consonant simplification in Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Agreeing with Cruttenden (2001), he concluded that "even when RP is the pronunciation norm, there should be a tolerance for deviation, even for speakers with a high level of attainment" (p.11). The problem, according to him, was what features actually should be part of the tolerance and which are essential for international intelligibility? In the light of this, Jenkins (2005) proposed a Lingua Franca Core (LFC), which outlined a list of supposedly more learnable and teachable targets for pronunciation based on her

experience of errors that non-native speakers (NNS) make. In terms of consonant clusters, however, the LFC states their omission can only occur according to Inner Circle rules, for instance, *facts = fax* and *bands = bans* (Dauer, 2005). Thus, this proposed solution seems to present a rather narrow understanding of the problems associated with consonant cluster acquisition and its subsequent effects on intelligibility and comprehensibility experienced by many non-native English speakers.

According to Pickering (2006), research into non-native speaker (NNS) to NNS interaction and issues of intelligibility are few and still in their infancy. The research that does exist shows that NNS-NNS interaction is qualitatively different from native speakers (NS) to NS or NS to NNS (Jenkins, 2000, 2002). In a study of mixed-language dyads in conversation Jenkins (2000) found that the biggest source of a loss in intelligibility and comprehensibility came at a segmental level with grammatical errors playing a minor role. Studies by Deterding (2005) on the comprehensibility of Estuary English and Field (2005) on lexical stress, agreed with there being a greater reliance on the phonological deciphering of form when it involves ELF interaction.

An interesting study by Bent and Bradlow (2003), investigating how native language background influenced intelligibility between NNS of the same language, found a 'matched interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit' between the speaker and the listener. Using native English, Chinese and Korean speakers, and listeners who performed a sentence recognition task, they found that the NS was the most intelligible, but also relatively high proficiency speakers from the same language background were equally as intelligible as the NS. They also found a 'mismatched

interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit' where NNS came from different language backgrounds. Despite a follow-up study by Stippard and Lee (2006) that refutes the existence of the mismatched benefit, Jenkins (2000) agreed that the matched intelligibility benefit may exist. She observed same L1 dyad conversations and concluded that they had a propensity to not try and focus on the target language but retain their transfer-based form when communicating with each other and that they found this to be intelligible.

Despite the continued idealization of Inner Circle pronunciation, this may be becoming increasingly unrealistic, as socioculturally the motivation to learn English is changing. Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model espousing the theory of integrativeness into the L2's culture as being a major influence on the motivation to learn a second language is increasingly coming under fire (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002). The international role of English today and its use outside the Inner Circle is much more profound and insightful than ever considered previously by SLA researchers (Mufwene, 2001). Accent and cultural identity are slowly being seen, not as interlanguage errors and fossilization (Selinker, 1972), but as an "essential marker of social belonging" (Levis, 2005, p. 375). Having said this, the industry is still heavily geared towards accent reduction (Levis, 2005) and, indeed, in some Expanding Circle countries the American and British accents are still held in the highest esteem and seen as a mark of socioeconomic power and status (Levis, 2005). Indeed, in a recent study by Pishghadam and Saboori (2011), qualitative analysis was conducted of ELT in language institutes in Iran and came to the conclusion that contrary to WEs key concepts and tenets, both Iranian teachers and learners held the American accent as the ultimate goal for pronunciation.

Chapter 3 Research context

Having spent 8 years exclusively teaching in Vietnam, I have had an ongoing interest in the problems faced by learners with respect to certain areas of pronunciation. I have observed that one of the major difficulties they have is the accurate pronunciation of word-final consonants and clusters. In my experience, this can have a marked effect on the comprehensibility of their speech. Pedagogically addressing this, however, has been not only problematic but also frustrating. Over the years, I have tested many methodologies but none seem to result in satisfactory long-term acquisition.

Throughout my career, there has been an almost overwhelming emphasis on the communicative approach to teaching and even though I fully acknowledge its importance, I feel that stepping back towards a more audiolinguistic approach that embraces repetition may be a route worth investigating. Furthermore, explicit focus-on-forms feedback may also be of benefit as pronunciation is essentially a mechanical auditory process. In addition, as for many teachers, my time is limited for pronunciation practice and so to maximize this, the use of peer feedback could be an invaluable resource that needs to be evaluated.

As I am currently teaching the Vietnamese military, I am also interested in how they will be understood when they interact with non-native speakers in the same strategic geographical region, namely ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations). The effects of pronunciation accuracy, with the use of English as a Lingua Franca within this region, has I believe significant implications for assessing future pedagogical priorities in pronunciation instruction.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the methodologies used in order to investigate the effects of repetition and teacher versus peer feedback on coda accuracy and the subsequent level of comprehensibility when producing spoken language. It will also discuss the instrument used to evaluate the participant's attitudes to feedback and the importance to them of accurate coda pronunciation.

4.2 Research questions (RQs)

- RQ1. Does repetition and teacher or peer feedback differ in their effectiveness with regards to comprehensibility through the pronunciation of word-final consonants and cluster segmentals?
- RQ2. What are the student's attitudes to peer and teacher feedback?
- RQ3. What are the student's attitudes towards the importance of pronouncing word-final consonants and clusters accurately?

4.3 Hypothesis

The study is based on the hypothesis that following feedback, the post-test story would be more comprehensible than the pre-test story and that this would be greater for the group receiving teacher feedback over peer feedback. Similarly, word-final consonant

pronunciation accuracy of the target words would improve after the repetition task and further improve after feedback and that a greater degree of accuracy would be found for the teacher feedback group. Furthermore, the participants would have a preference for teacher feedback and that they would consider word-final consonant pronunciation accuracy to be very important, in general, but of little importance if they were understood without it.

4.4 Participants

The participants consisted of 2 groups of 17, intermediate level, Vietnamese military officers engaged in an intensive Australian English Course (AEC): the peer group and the teacher group. Both groups consisted of males ($n = 15$) and females ($n = 2$). The peer group were aged between 25 and 41, $M = 30.59$, $SD = 4.51$, and the teacher group between 26 and 40, $M = 29.82$, $SD = 4.33$. The amount of time they had been learning English for the peer group was between 6 months and 12 years, $M = 8.15$, $SD = 4.23$, and the teacher group between 2.5 and 15, $M = 8.15$, $SD = 4.43$. Both groups had recently taken the ADFELPS (Australian Defence Force English Language Profiling System) entrance test with the peer group testing, $M = 4.5$, $SD = 1.34$, and the teacher group, $M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.33$. Thus, both groups were of the same gender balance, were of similar age ranges, had spent a similar amount of time studying English, and were of a similar English proficiency level. None of the participants had been exposed to an English-speaking community or had spent any time outside of Vietnam.

4.5 Raters

The peer raters for coda accuracy, who also provided feedback, consisted of 17 male intermediate to upper-intermediate Vietnamese military officers engaged in an intensive IELTS course. They were aged between 26 and 39, $M = 30.35$, $SD = 3.37$, and their length of time studying English was $M = 7.41$, $SD = 4.24$. Furthermore their ADFELPS scores were $M = 6$, $SD = .79$, thus positioning them slightly above the participants in terms of English ability, and I would argue within Vygotsky's (1962) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where the more capable peers were potentially able to provide a higher level of language development through feedback.

The teacher rater for coda accuracy was myself, a British male, aged 49, who has been an ESL teacher for 9 years, of which 8 years have been exclusively teaching Vietnamese nationals.

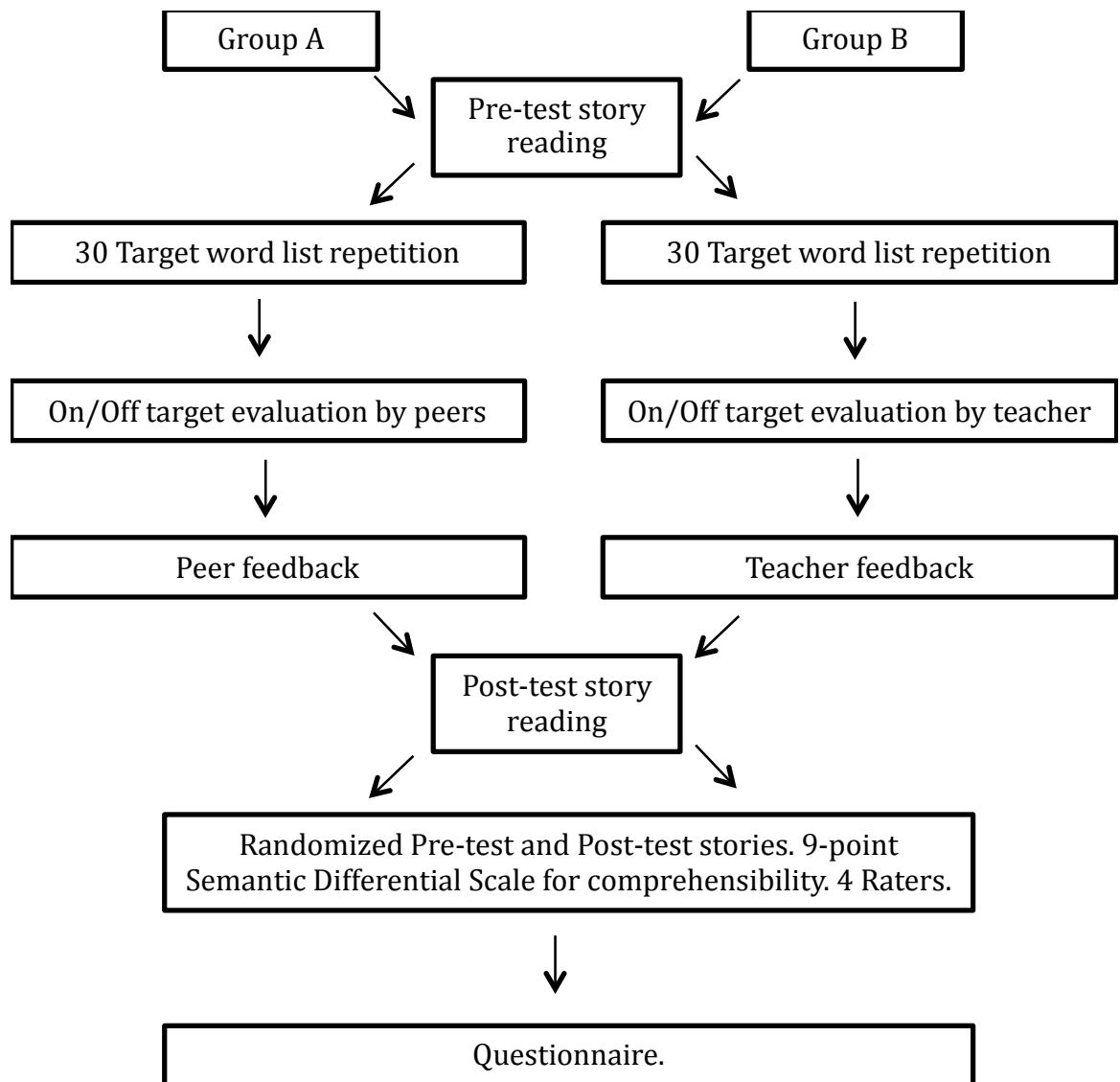
There were also 4 comprehensibility raters. Rater A was male, Australian, 67 years old who has 3 years ESL teaching experience with Burmese, Chinese and Iranian migrants. Rater B was male, from the USA, 39 years old who has been teaching ESL for 3 years, all in Vietnam. Rater C was female, Australian, 36 years old who has been an ESL teacher for 10 years, of which 9 have been in Vietnam. Rater D was female, Vietnamese, 26 years old with no ESL teaching experience. She has been studying English for 12 years and in her employment had spent 4 years under managers from Australia and the USA in a work environment that was largely English spoken by Vietnamese employees. The rationale behind the first 3 raters was to have a mixture of genders, ages, ESL experience, and varied or no exposure to Vietnamese accented English. The final rater was included in an attempt to ascertain whether they found

Vietnamese accented English more or less comprehensible compared to the other native speaker comprehensibility raters. None of these raters were aware of the focus of the research.

4.6 Procedure

The participants recorded their story tasks using Microsoft PowerPoint through standard Logitech headphone/mic combinations in an onsite Computer Assisted Language Laboratory (CALL) consisting of 20 computers. For each task, each group was divided into two, to minimize the likelihood of noise interference by each participant. They were asked to first read a story, then immediately repeat a word list containing the target items and finally to repeat the same story reading task 3 days later. They were also asked to complete a short post-task questionnaire related to the research questions. The design of the research can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1 *Research design of the study*



4.7 Materials

The materials used in this study included: an information sheet explaining the study, a consent form, instructions for raters, a peer rater lesson handout, word list and comprehensibility rater spreadsheets, a reading text, a post-task rater comprehensibility questionnaire, and a post-task participant questionnaire.

4.8 Target items

In order to assess the acquired procedural pronunciation knowledge of the participants, a pre-test reading task was set, in the form of a story (see Appendix A), consisting of 30 target words with varying lengths of codas, as can be seen in Table 1. Following Thuy's (2007) research on the Markedness Differential Hypothesis, an attempt was made to provide varied levels of difficulty, corresponding to the length of each cluster. They were also chosen to include a variety of English consonant phonemes, including combinations of nasals, stops, affricates, and fricatives.

Table 1 *Target words by word-final consonant and cluster length*

Cluster length: 4	Cluster length: 3	Cluster length: 2	Single final consonant
-ntft launched	-tft watched	-kt liked	-dʒ garage
-mblz shambles	-ksθ sixth	-nd round	-s nice
-ndʒd arranged	-ŋkt banked	-lf golf	-v have
-ŋkts instincts	-ŋks sinks	-vz gloves	-θ tooth
-nslɔ cancelled	-pθs depths	-nz fans	-l school
-ŋɡld angled	-lmd filmed	-ld world	
		-nt tournament	
		-ns bounce	
		-nd pond	
		-ldʒ bulge	
		-st mist	
		-ɡl giggle	
		-θs youths	

The story was displayed on a single slide in Microsoft PowerPoint. In order to try and reduce the possibility of familiarization with the text, both groups were instructed to start reading the story immediately they turned to the slide and record it in one go, without going back and repeating anything. No time limit was set for this.

Both groups were then required to listen to and repeat each of the 30 target words, plus 2 initial unrelated practice words (dog and teacher), in a non-timed delayed repetition task as used by Munro and Derwing (2008). These model stimuli were produced by a native speaker from England who had a Received Pronunciation accent. The words were randomized and displayed individually on slides in PowerPoint, from which the participants heard the word twice after the introduction “ The next word is ...” They were then required to record their response following the frame “Now I say ...” This instrument was similar to Munro, Derwing, and Thomson’s (2015) study but was adapted slightly in that the word was spoken twice, not once and was shown in written form on the slide which was not done in their study. The justification for this approach was that as some of the words were very likely to be unfamiliar, repetition combined with textual representation may have given participants a better chance of pronouncing them correctly. According to Katz et al (2005) in a study on the behavioral and neurological effects of printed word repetition, brain imaging data suggests that the processing of unfamiliar words is initially associated with a cognitive assembly process, for instance, “grapheme-phoneme conversion and other word-internal phonological analysis” (p. 2068) and that this only diminishes as a word becomes more familiar.

4.9 Evaluation of the target items

The teacher group target word recordings were listened to by myself and allocated, ‘on-target’ or ‘off-target’, using Munro, Derwing and Thomson’s (2015) instrument where ‘on-target’ was coded as 1 and ‘off-target’ as 0. Furthermore, their criteria for

'off-target' was replicated, that is, any instance of phonemic substitution, insertion, or partial/total deletion with respect to coda. The results for both the peer and teacher group were recorded in Microsoft Excel (see Appendix C for a pictorial example). Following this, each participant was given focus-on-forms, explicit corrective feedback, which specifically focused on word-final consonants and cluster pronunciation accuracy. This was followed by 3 days in order to practice the target items.

The peer group's word list recording was given to the peer raters. Each peer was allocated one participant, at random, and was instructed to rate the accurate pronunciation of each word with the same on/off target criteria. The rationale of having peers rate the participants was to try and replicate a classroom situation where they would be giving feedback to their classmates based on their assessment of correct pronunciation without any input from the teacher. They were also asked to give individual explicit focus-on-forms, corrective feedback to their participant. They were instructed to focus on word-final consonant cluster pronunciation accuracy only and that the students should be instructed to practice the words that they had difficulty in pronouncing. This specific instruction acknowledges Sato and Lyster's (2012) concern that unless guided to do so, peer feedback rarely focuses on linguistic form. In order for the feedback to be consistent across both groups, a 15-minute time limit was imposed for each participant.

In order for this part of the study to not be weighted in my favour, the peer raters needed to be familiar with word-final consonant clusters and so they were given a 1 hour lesson that included a definition of word-final consonant clusters, a word list

exercise to help identify them, and a task consisting of an assessment of their own and one other student's recorded speech from a previous exercise, that was completely unrelated to the study (see Appendix B). They were also privy to the same PowerPoint target word list that was given to the participants as an attempt to ensure that it was the teacher's or peer's status that made the difference and not the fact that they did not know the correct pronunciation of each target word. In addition to giving feedback, both the teacher and peer feedback groups were informed that the story reading task was to be repeated and that they should not discuss the details of their feedback with any other participant.

4.10 Story repetition and evaluation

A post-test repetition of the story was conducted by both groups following feedback. This was conducted 3 days after the feedback was received with the conditions and instruments remaining exactly the same as the pre-test.

The post-test story was then rated for target word accuracy by myself, using exactly the same instrument as the pre-test story. Both groups were evaluated by myself at this point in an attempt to replicate a classroom situation where the teacher may become involved in an assessment of accuracy after peer feedback had been given.

Both the participant's pre-test initial story and the post-test repeated story were then given to the 4 comprehensibility raters for evaluation using Harding's (2011) 9-point semantic differential scale. This scale ranged from 1 = "easy to understand" to 9 = "extremely difficult to understand". Munro and Derwing (1995) used a similar model

and according to Harding, it is “a more sensitive measure which also avoids the ceiling effect of scales with fewer intervals”(p.70). Each rater was given totally randomized recordings to ensure that they were not aware of whether they were listening to the pre-test or post-test. They were asked to rate all 68 recordings of the 34 participants, for comprehensibility and in order to minimize listener fatigue, it was suggested that they block the listening into 5 sessions of about 10 to 12-mins each over a period of a few days (for the instructions see Appendix D). Each numerical evaluation was entered into an Excel spreadsheet (see Appendix E for a pictorial sample) and emailed to me by a specific deadline.

4.11 Questionnaire

Following the research tasks, a post-task questionnaire was administered that followed a mixed approach in its design. Philosophically, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) described this as the ‘third wave’ or third research method that uses qualitative induction, quantitative deduction, and abduction to provide a fuller understanding of a target phenomenon and achieve better verification, through the triangulation of the various results.

The questionnaire included 19 questions in total, 11 of which required participants to choose from 5-point Likert scale responses. In addition, 3 qualitative questions were also asked in order to triangulate and expand on their initial scalar answers. The questionnaire was completely anonymous and transcribed in both English and Vietnamese in order to reduce the possibility of any misinterpretation of the questions. The students were informed that they had the option of answering the qualitative questions in Vietnamese if they found this easier. For the questionnaire see Appendix

F.

4.12 Statistical analysis

The data was transcribed and then analysed using SPSS. Paired samples t-tests were conducted to compare the word-final consonant pronunciation accuracy of the pre-test story and post-test story tasks, between the peer feedback group and the teacher feedback group. Furthermore, in order to compare the pre-test, post-test and, word list tasks, a repeated measures ANOVA analysis was also conducted. For the comprehensibility data, a Cronbach's Alpha analysis was used to measure inter-rater reliability, followed by a repeated measures ANOVA to ascertain any rater variances. Post hoc comparisons were then made using paired samples t-tests to compare the raters against each other. Cohen's *d* analyses were also performed where relevant to show effect size. Finally, the quantitative data from the questionnaire was analysed for frequency of responses and the qualitative answers were evaluated with respect to the research questions.

Chapter 5 Results

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results appertaining to the first research question will be presented. It will begin with comparing the pre and post-test story tasks for overall target language accuracy. This will be followed by examining the effect on coda accuracy of the inclusion of the word list repetition task. Finally, the data for comprehensibility will be examined.

5.2 Pre and post-test story tasks

A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare word-final consonant pronunciation accuracy, between the initial reading of the story (pre-test story) and the second reading (post-test story), following target word list repetition and peer or teacher feedback. It was used to examine whether the peer feedback and teacher feedback groups varied in their mean scores and whether there was any statistical significance in the variation, see Table 2.

Table 2 *Pronunciation accuracy for the pre and post-test*

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Peer					
Pre-test story	17	11	7.13	-2.26	.038
Post-test story	17	12.94	7.92		
Teacher					
Pre-test story	17	11.65	4,12	-9.75	.000
Post-test story	17	19.18	5.68		

The data indicated that there was a statistically significant improvement in the word-final pronunciation accuracy of the target items for both the peer group and the teacher group over the whole task. However, there was a significantly greater improvement for the teacher group, $t(16) = -9.75, p < .001$ compared to the peer group, $t(16) = -2.56, p = .038$. Indeed, Cohen's effect size value for the peer group ($d = .26$) suggested a low practical significance compared to a high practical significance for the teacher group ($d = 1.52$). These results initially suggested that not only was explicit focus on forms effective in producing more accurate word-final consonant pronunciation but also that the feedback administered by the teacher was significantly more effective for the participants than that given by the peer group.

5.3 Pre and post-test story tasks and word list

In order to ascertain whether there was any significant variance in word-final consonant pronunciation accuracy between all three participant tasks, a one-way repeated measures ANOVA test was conducted. This showed a significant variance between all three tasks, Wilks' Lambda = .37, $F(2,32) = 27.56$, $p < .001$. Two paired samples t-tests were then used to make post hoc comparisons between conditions. See Table 3.

Table 3 *On-target comparison between the pre and post-test stories with the word list*

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre					
Pre-test story	17	11.32	5.75		
Word List	17	16.73	5.15	-5.39	.000
Post					
Word List	17	16.73	5.15		
Post-test story	17	16.06	7.49	0.61	.548

The first paired samples t-test indicated that there was a significant difference in the scores for the pre-test story task, $M = 11.32$, $SD = 5.75$ and the word list task, $M =$

16.73, $SD = 5.15$; $t(33) = -5.39$, $p < .001$. These results suggested a significant improvement in the mean scores of the target words that were pronounced on-target, following repetition of the items. A second paired samples t-test, however, indicated no significant difference in accuracy between the word list, $M = 16.73$, $SD = 5.15$ and the post-test story task, $M = 16.06$, $SD = 7.49$; $t(33) = .607$, $p = .548$, possibly indicating that both groups continued to produce some accurate target items in the post-test story.

Again here, post hoc comparisons were done using two paired samples t-tests to compare the on-target pronunciation of the target coda of the pre-test story with that of the word list for both the peer and teacher groups, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4 *On-target accuracy comparison between the pre-test story and the word list for both groups*

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Peer					
Pre-test story	17	11.00	7.13		
Word List	17	16.53	4.94	-3.35	.004
Teacher					
Pre-test story	17	11.65	4.12		
Word List	17	16.94	5.50	-4.42	.000

The results indicate that for the peer group, there was a significant increase in the accurate pronunciation of the target word list compared to the pre-test story following

the repetition of them. The mean on-target accuracy of the pre-test story, $M = 11.00$, $SD = 7.13$, compared with the word list, $M = 16.53$, $SD = 4.94$; $t(16) = -3.35$, $p = .004$. Here, Cohen's effect size value ($d = .9$) suggested a high practical significance for the peer group. Similarly, the teacher group showed an on-target accuracy improvement following repetition comparing the pre-test story, $M = 11.65$, $SD = 4.12$ with the word list, $M = 16.94$, $SD = 5.50$; $t(16) = -4.42$, $p < .001$. Again, the teacher group showed an on-target accuracy improvement following repetition. Cohen's effect size value ($d = 1.09$) also suggested a high practical significance that was, indeed, higher than that for the peer group.

Considering that feedback only occurred after the repetition of the word list, additional post hoc comparisons were made between the word list accuracy of the peer group compared to the teacher group in relation to the post-test story. Table 5 shows these findings.

Table 5 On-target accuracy comparison between the word list and the post-test story for both groups

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Peer					
Word List	17	16.53	4.94		
Post-test story	17	12.94	7.92	2.40	.028
Teacher					
Word List	17	16.94	5.50		
Post-test story	17	19.18	5.68	-1.65	.118

The results indicated a statistically significant fall in accuracy for the peer group following their feedback. Their on-target results for the word list showed, $M = 16.53$, $SD = 4.94$, compared to the post-test story, $M = 12.94$, $SD = 7.92$; $t(16) = 2.40$, $p = .028$. These figures seem to suggest that the feedback given by the peers was either not effective, or detrimental to accurate pronunciation of the target items.

In comparison, the teacher feedback group showed marginal but not statistically significant improvement in word-final consonant cluster pronunciation between the word list and the post-test story. For this group, their on-target word list resulted in, $M = 16.94$, $SD = 5.50$, compared to the post-test story, $M = 19.18$, $SD = 5.68$; $t(16) = -1.65$, $p = .118$. This suggests that the accuracy gains made following the repetition of the word list may have been carried over to the post-test story task, but that they made no significant improvement over and above this.

5.4 Comprehensibility

The first test that was conducted was an inter-rater reliability test across all 4 raters. This indicated that reliability was, in fact, low for rating the comprehensibility of the pre-test story and the post-test story for both the peer and teacher feedback groups. A Cronbach's Alpha analysis generated .40 and .35 respectively. This showed that all the raters differed on how they rated the comprehensibility of each story.

In order to ascertain whether the differences between the raters was statistically significant, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted. The results for the pre-test

story showed that they were significantly different in their ratings for comprehensibility, Wilks' Lambda = .173, $F(3,31) = 49.33$, $p < .001$. Similar results were found for the post-test story, Wilks' Lambda = .153, $F(3,31) = 57.12$, $p < .001$. Following this post hoc comparisons were made between raters in respect to the comprehensibility of the pre compared to the post story tasks. Two paired samples t-tests were conducted comparing the raters for both the peer and the teacher groups. The results showed that only one rater (rater C) found that comprehensibility improved and that this was for the group receiving peer feedback. The other 3 raters found that there was no significant difference in the comprehensibility of the pre-test story compared with the post-test story following feedback for either the peer or teacher group. See Table 6.

Table 6 *Peer and teacher group comprehensibility rating comparisons between raters*

Rater/Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Peer					
A - Pre-story	17	5.06	2.13	-1.96	.068
A - Post-story	17	6.59	1.50		
B - Pre-story	17	4.82	1.51	1.59	.132
B - Post-story	17	4.01	1.71		
C - Pre-story	17	6.82	1.81	2.79	.013
C - Post-story	17	5.88	1.73		
D - Pre-story	17	3.12	.99	-1.00	.332
D - Post-story	17	3.53	1.18		

Teacher					
A - Pre-story	17	6.71	1.40	.38	.710
A - Post-story	17	6.47	1.70		
B - Pre-story	17	4.65	2.00	.95	.358
B - Post-story	17	4.29	1.57		
C - Pre-story	17	6.59	1.58	.88	.393
C - Post-story	17	6.23	1.20		
D - Pre-story	17	2.82	.88	-1.61	.127
D - Post-story	17	3.47	1.23		

As the purpose of including Rater D in the study was to ascertain whether a Vietnamese native speaker found the participants more or less comprehensible, a paired samples t-test was conducted comparing them to the other raters. Here, statistically significant differences were found between them and the other raters for both the peer and teacher feedback groups, across both the pre-test and post-test story tasks, with the exception of the post-test story for Rater B. Table 7 presents these findings.

Table 7 *Peer and teacher group comprehensibility rating comparison between rater D and raters A,B, and C*

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Peer Pre-test Story					
Rater D	17	3.12	0.99		
Rater A	17	5.06	2.13	4.10	.001
Rater B	17	4.82	1.51	5.32	.000
Rater C	17	6.82	1.81	7.67	.000
Peer Post-test Story					
Rater D	17	3.53	1.18		
Rater A	17	6.59	1.50	9.72	.000
Rater B	17	4.06	1.71	.99	.340
Rater C	17	5.88	1.73	4.29	.001
Teacher Pre-test Story					
Rater D	17	2.82	0.88		
Rater A	17	6.70	1.40	11.02	.000
Rater B	17	4.68	2.00	3.20	.006
Rater C	17	6.59	1.58	6.51	.000
Teacher Post-test Story					
Rater D	17	3.47	1.23		
Rater A	17	6.47	1.70	7.82	.000
Rater B	17	4.29	1.57	1.46	.163
Rater C	17	6.23	1.20	6.51	.000

For the peer group pre-test story, the results indicated that rater D found it to be significantly more comprehensible than raters A, B, and C. For the peer post-test story the data suggests that they found it easier to understand than raters A and C, but indicated no difference in its comprehensibility when compared to rater B. Similarly, for the teacher group, the findings suggest that rater D found the pre-test story more comprehensible than rater A, B, and C but also found the post-test story more comprehensible than A and C but not B.

Chapter 6 Discussion of Results

6.1 Introduction

The following chapter will present and discuss the results in relation to the 3 research questions, which this study sort to answer. It will take each one in turn, beginning with RQ1, which is first divided into discussing pronunciation accuracy and then comprehensibility. All the questions will be discussed in relation to both previous research and the hypothesis that was proposed in this paper.

6.2 RQ1. Does repetition and teacher or peer feedback differ in their effectiveness with regards to comprehensibility through the pronunciation of word-final consonants and cluster segmentals?

This study was conducted in order to provide insights into the effectiveness that feedback may have on a learner's ability to produce comprehensible speech by increasing their pronunciation accuracy of word-final consonant clusters. The hypothesis was that the second reading (post-test) of the target story would be more comprehensible than the first (pre-test) because the level of pronunciation accuracy of word-final consonants and clusters would increase following repetition. Further gains in accuracy would be made following FonFs corrective feedback, and that this would be higher for the group receiving teacher feedback compared to feedback from peers. The combined gains in accuracy would, thus, enable both groups to achieve increased levels of comprehensibility, with the teacher feedback group improving the most.

6.2.1 Accuracy

Let us first consider the problems associated with the pronunciation accuracy of the target words. It is well documented from previous studies that this is a particularly problematic linguistic feature for Vietnamese learners of English (Benson, 1986, 1988; Osborne, 1996; Ngo, 2005; Thuy, 2007), and that it can also be a feature that can significantly effect comprehensibility (Osborne, 1996). The study, indeed, indicated that the participants did have some problems with coda accuracy. Of the 30 target words in the pre-test story the peer group achieved 37%, $M = 11$, $SD = 7.13$ coda pronunciation accuracy and the teacher group 38%, $M = 11.65$, $SD = 4.12$.

Following the initial problems with pronunciation in the pre-test, the accuracy of both the teacher group ($p < .001$) and the peer group ($p = .038$) showed statistically significant improvements between the pre-story and the post-story task. This may be explained by one, or a combination of the following factors. Firstly, the participants benefitted from repeating the target words as modeled by a native speaker, which seems to concur with the findings in Elliott's (1997) study. Secondly, it could also mean that the participants engaged in word-priming, whereby they unconsciously processed the previously heard information and replicated it more accurately in the post-story (Trofimovich & Gatbonton, 2006). Thirdly, that FFI feedback in the form of focus-on-forms had a positive effect on the student's ability pronounce the target words accurately. This might have come from them becoming more aware of the target linguistic feature where the structured input (VanPatten, 1996) was noticed and produced more accurately in output for the post-story as theorized by Schmidt's (1990) noticing hypothesis. When analysing the accuracy data, simply between the

pre-test story and the post-test story, these are indeed conclusions that might be made. However, when further analyses included the word list task, different conclusions emerged.

The target word list was an important part of the research because it provided an element by which feedback effectiveness could be assessed and from this, possibly finding correlations with comprehensibility. Interestingly, both the peer and teacher group showed significant improvements in accuracy following the repetition of the word list. The peer group ($p = .004$) successfully pronounced 55%, $M = 16.53$, $SD = 4.94$, of the 30 target words and the teacher group ($p < .000$) achieved 56%, $M = 16.94$, $SD = 5.51$. However, this increase in pronunciation accuracy was in fact, only found when comparing the pre-test story with the word list.

Following corrective feedback, the teacher group made no significant improvements. The accuracy gains made by the repetition of the word list did not seem to be converted into improvements in accuracy in the second reading of the story. Thus, it could be concluded that this group did benefit from decontextualized practice by repetition, but FonFs corrective feedback may have only supported what they had previously heard and was not effective in actually improving their accuracy. In other words, FonFs may have, possibly through word priming or noticing, only supported and enabled the participants to replicate the gained accuracy from the word list in the post-test story. Thus, unlike the conclusion made by Saito & Lyster (2012) that a combination of FFI and CF actually improves pronunciation accuracy, this study indicated that it may simply act as a supporting factor.

The lack of overall improvement in accuracy between the word list and the post-test story could be due to the following factors. Firstly, the students may not have practiced the pronunciation of the target words as they were instructed, thus bringing into question factors such as motivation. Indeed, Moyer (2007) concluded that some students may simply not be motivated to improve their pronunciation. Secondly, they may have forgotten some of the advice that they were given in their feedback or not fully understood that the focus of the research was the pronunciation of the target coda, and so as a result, they were unable to improve their accuracy. This was one of the concerns raised by Lynch and MacClean (2003) and Zhao (2010). Thirdly, they may have not been cognitively ready to receive the input and successfully convert it into output. Fourthly, L1 transfer and the very real problems associated with word-final consonant clusters may have meant that they were simply not able to replicate the correct pronunciation, possibly indicating correlations with Eckman's (1977) Marked Differential Hypothesis (MDH). This may explain the pronunciation of *bulge*, for instance, which was only managed successfully by one student. The phoneme /dʒ/ according to Thuy's (2007) study is one of the most marked and the most difficult of all the consonants to pronounce in final position. Finally, issues surrounding anxiety and the pressure to perform may have been an issue. Krashen's (1985) affective filter hypothesis suggests that increased levels of anxiety could raise the filter and essentially block acquisition. This final point, however, is unlikely to be a significant influencing factor for most of the participants. In the post-task survey, participants were asked to comment on the stress that they felt when reading the post-test story following feedback. The answers were obtained using a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 = *extremely stressful*, 4 = *very stressful*, 3 = *stressful*, 2 = *a little stressful*, and 1 =

unstressful. The results showed that the participants found that reading the post-test story either *a little stressful* or *unstressful*, $M = 1.53$, $SD = .72$.

In terms of the peer group, although they showed a significant overall improvement between the pre-test story and post-test story in terms of accuracy, they showed a far greater improvement between the pre-test story and following the repetition of the word list. This would indicate that they, like the teacher group, indeed benefitted from repetition. Having said this, following feedback from peers, the results showed that this group experienced a significant fall in accuracy when they were required to repeat the story in the post-test. Such a fall suggests that the feedback was either not effective, or detrimental to their final pronunciation accuracy. There may be several reasons for this. Notwithstanding those discussed in relation to the teacher group's inability to improve their accuracy in the post-story task, one reason may be that the participants were not within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) and thus were not able to solve their pronunciation difficulties because some of the peers may not have been 'more capable' in terms of language competence and pronunciation accuracy as highlighted by Villamil and de Guerrero (1996). Also, they probably did not have the pedagogical knowledge of the teacher or may not have fully understood the phonological features targeted in this study. This could have led to surface and not specific comments being made when giving feedback as was a concern made by Leki (1990). The participants may also have had negative attitudes towards the perceived usefulness of the feedback, together with possible problems actually believing it, and problems associated with them being comfortable receiving feedback from their fellow students. Thus, agreeing with Yang et al's (2006) findings, that the

feedback may have been ineffective because the participants were not ready to find it acceptable.

6.2.2 Comprehensibility

Turning to the issue of comprehensibility, despite the overall gains in target pronunciation accuracy, the majority of raters found that there was no significant difference in comprehensibility between the pre-test story and the post-test story. This was contrary to the initial hypothesis. The results showed that the raters found that, even though both groups had made significant improvements in pronouncing word-final consonants and clusters, the participants were generally not easier to understand. This possibly opens up the debate between focusing on segmentals in pronunciation instruction or suprasegmentals. The results of this study seem to suggest that, although the Vietnamese have real problems with word-final consonants, there are other more significant factors affecting the comprehensibility of their speech. Despite being stated nearly 60 years ago, Nida (1957) may still have a very valid point:

How often we have had the experience of hearing some foreigner speak English with perfectly intelligible consonants and vowels and with standard grammatical forms; and yet we have had the greatest of difficulty in understanding because the intonational patterns were entirely unnatural and strange to us. Moreover, we may completely misinterpret a person speaking English (pp. 117–118)

Considering the fact that, as a tonal and syllable-timed language, Vietnamese is completely intonationally different to stressed-timed English, prosodic features may well have affected comprehensibility.

In addition to the majority of raters finding no significant difference in overall comprehensibility, there was a statistically significant difference between the overall levels of comprehensibility recorded by Rater D compared to the other 3 raters (with the exception of only Rater B's post-test story). Rater D generally found all the participants much easier to understand. This is interesting because they were the Vietnamese rater with no ESL experience. The fact that this speaker had worked previously in a foreign company where the Vietnamese employees spoke English, may have meant that they were more familiar with English being spoken with a Vietnamese accent and with the problems associated with word-final consonants. They may indeed have benefitted from the 'matched interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit' reported by Bent and Bradlow (2003). They may have also been more tolerant of any mistakes and possibly not over analysed their decisions as an experienced ESL teacher may have done.

Turning to the issue of inter-rater reliability, on analysis of the data, it was clear that there were significant differences in how the raters evaluated the comprehensibility of each story in terms of who they deemed to be more or less comprehensible. This resulted in the low inter-rater reliability figures and this did not seem to show any particular pattern. This lack of agreement is extremely difficult to explain as there could be a multitude of factors that contributed to it. In order to try and identify some of the reasons a short post-analysis questionnaire was sent to the raters. See Appendix

G. Firstly, this confirmed that all the raters had listened to and recorded the data in the correct way, as per instructed. Secondly, that all the raters had the same core definition of comprehensibility, that is, 'ease of understanding'. Thirdly, they were asked whether there was anything that influenced their ratings. This seemed to show some variations that may provide insights as to the possible reasons for their differences. Rater D said that nothing influenced them and that they merely assessed each story for general ease of understanding which suggests that they, indeed, did not over analyse their rating decisions. Rater A, an experienced ESL teacher said that they took intonation, articulation, and pattern of speech into account possibly making critical judgments on these as well as overall ease of understanding. Another very experienced ESL teacher and a colleague of mine, Rater C, reported that they may have been over-intolerant of pronunciation errors, and because they were familiar with the participant's abilities, may have rated them on their potential rather than their actual performance. They also commented on the fact that fatigue may have been an issue as, even though they split the task up as instructed, they did all the ratings immediately after their working day. Rater B indicated that they may have been influenced by making comprehensibility comparisons between the participants in order to rate them against each other. In other words participant 'x' was more comprehensible than 'y' but less than 'z'. Furthermore, both Rater B and Rater C reported that after listening to the same story repeatedly, they started to become familiar with it and found it more comprehensible, and thus by almost predicting the words before they were spoken may have subconsciously affected their ratings.

Another factor that may have contributed to the inter-rater variances is simply that they were asked to give purely subjective judgments on how 'easy' each story was to

understand, and that their conceptual understanding of 'easy' varied considerably. One problem associated with using human rater judgments, and in particular the 9-point semantic differential scale used in this study, was highlighted by Derwing, Munro, and Thomson (2008), who reported that using only two scalar end-points with no further definitions as to the specific meaning of the mid-points can lead to a lack of clarity between raters as to the construct that is being measured. Isaacs and Trofimovich (2012) attested that raters would benefit from clearer operationalization when it comes to using such scales and Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013) stated that even though reliability measures for these scales are necessary, they may be an insufficient condition for validity. Thus, I would argue that even though this study showed low inter-rater reliability, this does not necessarily equate with low validity in the results with regards to the fact that most raters found no difference in the comprehensibility of the participants.

In conclusion, the study indicated that repetition of discreet words may have a positive effect on pronunciation accuracy. Furthermore, the use of FonFs corrective feedback, that was specifically aimed at the pronunciation of word-final consonants and clusters, may have been effective for the teacher group in the fact that it might have supported their pronunciation. However, for the peer group, this type of feedback may not have been effective or may have been detrimental to the participants. Thus, this agrees only in part with the hypothesis in the fact that overall accuracy improved between the pre-test and the post-test story. Over and above this the study suggested that this improvement had no significant effect on the overall comprehensibility of the speech that was produced, and is thus contrary to the proposed hypothesis.

6.3 RQ2. What are the student's attitudes to peer and teacher feedback?

By assessing the participant's attitudes to peer and teacher feedback the study attempted to explain any differences that may have been found in the effectiveness of FoFs corrective feedback for the groups. For this, a quantitative and qualitative questionnaire was administered on completion of the post-test story. The hypothesis was that the participants would have a strong preference for teacher feedback.

When asked which feedback they generally thought to be more useful, from a teacher or a student, 97% of the participants reported that they considered feedback from a teacher to be more useful. This indicates a clear preference for teacher feedback that concurs with many previous studies (Zhang, 1995; Carson & Nelson, 1996; Jacobs, Braine, and Huang, 1998; Sadler 1998; Nelson & Carson, 1998; Yang, Badger, & Yu, 2006, Zhao, 2010). As the questionnaire for this study followed a mixed research methodology, the quantitative response to the question of usefulness was followed up by the qualitative question: 'why?' The responses showed a clear common theme in that half of the participants ($n = 17$), considered teacher feedback to be more *knowledgeable* and *accurate* than peer feedback, thus indicating some agreement with the research conducted by Sadler (1998).

Further to the participant's preference for teacher feedback, they also showed a more positive attitude to the feedback they received from the teacher over the peers. They were asked to evaluate the helpfulness of the teacher's feedback using a 5-point Likert scale where 5 = *extremely helpful*, 4 = *very helpful*, 3 = *helpful*, 2 = *a little helpful*, and

1 = *unhelpful*. The participants found that the feedback that they received to be either *very helpful* or *extremely helpful*, $M = 4.12$, $SD = .78$. Similarly, they were asked to comment on the accuracy of the feedback from the teacher. Again a 5-point Likert scale was used: 5 = *extremely accurate*, 4 = *very accurate*, 3 = *accurate*, 2 = *a little accurate*, and 1 = *inaccurate*. The response was again positive in that they found the feedback to be either *accurate* or *very accurate*, $M = 3.94$, $SD = .97$. Conversely, the participant's attitude to peer feedback was less positive. The results showed that the participants found the feedback either *helpful* or *very helpful*, $M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.00$. In terms of accuracy, the peer feedback group found it either *accurate* or *very accurate*, with the mean erring towards the former, $M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.09$. This would suggest a slightly lower level of feedback quality compared to the teacher group. When asked which feedback the participants found to be more comfortable in receiving, again the majority (79%) responded with a preference for teacher feedback. The reasons for this were not dissimilar to those for usefulness, as *accuracy and knowledge* seemed to also correlate with comfort ($n = 12$). Further to this, there were also references to the fact that teachers could *identify student errors* and really *wanted them to improve* ($n = 5$), and that teacher feedback was perceived to be *more believable* ($n = 3$). Again, these results seem to suggest some agreement with the findings of Sadler (1998). They also may have been influencing factor that may help explain the significant fall in pronunciation accuracy of the target words in the post-test story for the peer group.

This overwhelming preference for and more positive attitude to teacher feedback, however, is probably not surprising as the participants are from a Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) with a subsequent deference for the teacher in a traditionally hierarchical society, as outlined in 2.6. The responses could also be explained by the

possibility that the participants were influenced by *social desirability bias* which manifests in respondents 'reporting' to feel what they believe rather than what they 'actually' believe. Thus, respondents may have provided answers that they think the researcher wanted to have in order to present themselves in a good light. In this study, this may have been the case for some participants as the questionnaire was administered by myself who was their teacher. In addition, cultural background and social desirability bias may have been further compounded by the fact that all the participants were from an extremely traditional and hierarchical military background. Thus, even though it was stressed that the questionnaire was completely anonymous, not only may the responses relating to the teacher have been affected but also those concerning their fellow peers, who may well have out-ranked them.

In conclusion, the findings of the study agreed with the hypothesis that the participants would have a preference for teacher feedback and thus agreeing also with many other pieces of research that have been done on teacher and peer feedback.

6.4 RQ3. What are the student's attitudes towards the importance of pronouncing word-final consonants and clusters accurately?

As has been commented on earlier in this paper, English is increasingly being used as a Lingua Franca and the fact that many different versions of English are emerging, means that decisions about what is actually important to teach for pronunciation in relation to intelligibility and comprehensibility, are becoming increasingly necessary. By understanding learner's perceptions of what is important to them could contribute to this.

The final research question attempts to provide some indication as to what is important for learners by using a 5-point Likert scale where 5 = *extremely important*, 4 = *very important*, 3 = *important*, 2 = *a little important*, and 1 = *unimportant*. The hypothesis was that the participants would consider word-final consonant pronunciation accuracy to be very important, in general, but of little importance if they were understood without it. The participants were first asked if they thought accurate pronunciation of English was important. The results showed that the participants thought that this was either *very important* or *extremely important*, $M = 4.5$, $SD = .66$. This clearly shows that there was a high level of importance attached to pronunciation accuracy. The study also indicated that this level of importance was correlated with the production of a ‘native-like’ accent. Here the participants had a clear preference for sounding ‘native-like’, responding that they thought that a ‘native-like’ English accent to be either *important* or *very important*, $M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.07$. Moreover, this importance seemed to far outweigh the importance attached to keeping a Vietnamese accent when speaking English, 88% ($n = 30$), of the participants thought that their native accent was not important to them and when asked, ‘why?’ The results showed that 41% ($n = 14$), specifically preferred to sound ‘native’ and not Vietnamese. This preference for having a native-like accent seems to correlate with Pishghadam and Saboori (2011) study, where the ultimate goal of learners for pronunciation is to sound ‘native’. It may also indicate that there is a continued desire for accent reduction as concluded by Levis (2005) and that the ideology of the *nativeness principle* as a pedagogical approach should still be acknowledged considering the importance that learners attached to it.

Furthermore, for 41% ($n = 14$), of the participants who gave the reason for their Vietnamese accent as not being important to them, said that it would result in them not being understood. This implies that if they did not sound ‘native’ then intelligibility and comprehensibility may be negatively affected. The participants also showed a clear preference for a high level of accurate pronunciation of coda in that they found it either *very important* or *extremely important*, $M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.02$. When asked if accurate pronunciation of coda was important even if they could be understood without it, they still deemed accuracy as either *important* or *very important*, $M = 3.44$, $SD = .89$. This perception has implications for the ideology of the *intelligibility principle* where Derwing and Munro (2005) advocated that if learners can be understood then an emphasis should not be on achieving a ‘native-like’ accent, but on those errors that influence intelligibility and comprehensibility. The results of this study seem to suggest that the desire to sound ‘native’ and have accurate pronunciation is more important than simply being understood, even if the errors do not affect comprehensibility.

Thus, in conclusion, despite the increasing varieties of English that are present in today’s globalized world and a move to reduce the continued influence of ‘linguistic imperialism’ (Jenkins, 2006), the participants in this study showed a clear preference for the *nativeness principle* over the *intelligibility principle*, with a desire to sound ‘native’ as their goal in pronunciation both in general and in order to be comprehensible. Thus, this agreed with the hypothesis in terms of their attitude to word-final consonant pronunciation accuracy but was contrary to it with respect to being understood.

Chapter 7 Conclusions

To conclude, the first part of the study sort to establish whether the comprehensibility of Vietnamese accented English could be increased if their pronunciation of a key area of difficulty (word-final consonants and clusters) was focused on and produced more accurately. The study revealed that even though an overall increase in accuracy was achieved, their comprehensibility generally remained unchanged. This suggests that accurate pronunciation of coda may not be a significant factor when it comes to understanding Vietnamese accented English. Other factors, such as suprasegmentals, may have had more of an influence on comprehensibility, as some previous studies have indicated. Even though there is clear empirical evidence that shows that the Vietnamese have real problems in this area, the pedagogical implications of this is that segmental focused pronunciation instruction focusing on coda may not need to be advanced as a main priority for teachers. Having said this, however, the low inter-rater reliability found in this study, revealed a possible limitation concerning the validity of the findings of the raters, however, I would argue that this finding in itself may not completely preclude their validity. Therefore, not only should there be further research conducted into the effects of coda pronunciation on comprehensibility, but also further studies should be done into the effectiveness and validity of using semantic differential scales as an evaluation instrument.

The study did reveal an interesting finding in relation to the data provided by the Vietnamese rater. As they found the participants, generally, more comprehensible than the other raters this may have implications for a pedagogical approach that acknowledges the role of world Englishes as an acceptable form of pronunciation. If

indeed they benefitted from matched interlanguage speech intelligibility then, as many other countries in Asia share the same or similar pronunciation difficulties, the implications for language instruction, for instance, English for Special Purposes (ESP) could be significant. Furthermore, as this study specifically involved the Vietnamese military, future pronunciation instruction for those who will be primarily working in the ASEAN region, may not need to focus on high coda pronunciation accuracy if speakers can be reasonably easily understood without it. Future research needs to be conducted in this area and also into the possibility of a mismatched interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit vis-à-vis other related languages, in order ascertain what is really needed in terms of pronunciation and its effect on comprehensibility. If English is being taught to be used mostly in a specific region as a Lingua Franca, then pronunciation instruction should be prioritized according to the comprehensibility of English between those non-native speakers and not necessarily trying to achieve pronunciation akin to Inner Circle norms. Studies including raters and participants from different countries in the ASEAN region, for instance, would be particularly interesting especially in a business or, linked to this study, in a military context.

The results of this research also indicated that the overall increase in accuracy that was achieved by the participants was found to have come from repeating the target items following them being modeled by a native speaker. This would suggest that this method of pronunciation instruction is effective for discreet items and could be used more frequently by teachers, especially, as was used in this study, in a CALL environment. There was, however, no evidence that this gain was improved following the implementation of focus-on-forms corrective feedback. A reasonable conclusion that could possibly be made with respect to the teacher's feedback is that it could have

served as a supporting factor. This would suggest that FonFs may not, in decontextualized isolation, be effective in proceduralizing learner's language knowledge, and therefore other strategies may be needed, for instance integrating form together with meaning as with focus on form (FonF) instruction.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that peer feedback may have been ineffective or detrimental to the participants. Considering the time pressures on teachers, the use of peer feedback can be a useful resource, however, such feedback needs to be of a quality that promotes real improvement and thus, peers need to be linguistically ready and capable of providing it. Teachers need to be very aware of what their students can replicate, especially as pronunciation is such a complex skill to acquire. In addition, the learners receiving the feedback should, not only be ready for it, but also ready to accept it as a legitimate pedagogical method that could bring real benefits for them. In order to achieve this, however, there would need to be a fundamental shift in the attitude of learners towards peer feedback considering their overwhelming preference for teacher feedback, as seen in this study.

Derwing and Munro (2005) proposed that pronunciation instruction should not aim to achieve a native-like accent because a strong accent does not necessarily mean low intelligibility, however, the importance of wanting to sound native and its perceived link to increased comprehensibility has been indicated here. Therefore, it would be beneficial if teachers make it clear when teaching pronunciation that being understood is more important than the desire to sound native because this may well be unobtainable. Students should be made aware of the fact their accent may not be a hindrance to comprehensibility at all and, in fact, is totally acceptable in a world that is

increasingly seeing more varieties of English emerging and being used for interlinguistic communication.

In order to improve pronunciation instruction that has more realistic attainable goals, it is not only necessary to know which areas have the greatest effect on comprehensibility and prioritize those, but also teachers need to be aware of what instructional methods are most effective in obtaining procedural knowledge and acquisition. If they are teaching for a specific purpose, then those priorities may indeed change, depending on the geographical region that the English is to be used in. Furthermore, they should also be aware of the fact that students may actually want to sound native and that this may need to be addressed appropriately sensitively. Finally, teachers should be aware that the majority of students probably still expect the teacher to be the main provider of corrective feedback and the main source of knowledge in a classroom. This, however, should not preclude the use of peers as a valuable resource and in this respect, students should be made aware that this could be very beneficial to them and that they should not see it as in anyway negative.

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Appendix A

Pre-test and post-test story

It was May and Gary liked nothing more than a nice round of golf, although he didn't have many fans in that world. Today he was going to take his new gloves and bag from the garage and play in a tournament. He knew he was a bit long in the tooth, but he had cancelled his meetings and arranged to be there today, the sixth.

He launched the first ball and watched it bounce. It had angled and banked but his instincts were wrong. What a shambles! It hit the pond and in the mist, to his horror, it sinks to the very depths. He was so angry it made his neck bulge and to make things worse, he heard a giggle and he turned round to see that some youths from school were laughing. He had just been filmed.

Appendix B

Peer Rater Lesson

Word-final consonant clusters

In linguistics, a **consonant cluster** or **consonant sequence** is a group of consonants, which have no intervening vowel. In English, for example, the groups /spl/ and /ts/ are consonant clusters in the word *splits*. /ts/ is the word-final consonant cluster.

Task 1

For each word below, write the word-final consonant clusters. The first 3 are done for you.

Scripts - pts	
Robbed - bd	jobs
shambles - mblz	certain
bottle	frightened
breath	middle
couldn't	sixth
giggle	swivel

youths	castle
demolished	watched
triumph	able
bounce	arrange
months	launched
arranged	cancelled
belonged	length
banked	sinks
instincts	angled
difficult	cold
balls	bulge
helped	results
filmed	

Task 2

- Choose one of your short 6 -Minute English summaries that you recorded on VoiceThread and evaluate it for pronunciation accuracy of word-final consonants.
- Note down the words that have any errors. Errors are any examples of:

phonemic substitution – with becomes /wɪd/ instead of /wɪð/

insertion – have becomes /hævə/ instead of /hæv/

partial deletion – shambles –becomes /'ʃæmbəl/ instead /'ʃæmbəlz/

total deletion – liked becomes /laɪ/

Task 3

Listen to a summary that one other student has done and compare what you found with what they found.

Appendix D

Comprehensibility Rater Instructions

Thanks very much for taking part in this study. Please can you read the instructions very carefully so I can get reliable results.

I would very much appreciate it if you could return the ratings to me no later than Thursday 16th June 2016.

- There are 68 recordings of a very short story (between 1.5 and 2-mins long).
- Please can you listen to each recording ONCE and rate it for 'comprehensibility', by this I mean 'ease of understanding'.
- I have provided a scale onto which to numerically rate each recording.
- Please enter the 'number' you have chosen in the box provided above each given value.
- Please try not to rate each one relative to others.
- Please do not rate all the recordings in one sitting, as listener fatigue will be an issue, as will familiarity.
- I suggest 5 sessions of about 10 to 12-mins each over a few days.

If you have any questions or anything is not clear, please can you email BEFORE you start rating.

Appendix E

Pictorial sample of the Excel comprehensibility rating sheet showing the
first 2 recording scales

Rating Sheet

Your name

Please rate the speaker's comprehensibility on the following scales, placing your number above each value

Recording Number									
(Example)	Easy to understand								Extremely difficult to understand
				4					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Easy to understand								Extremely difficult to understand
				4					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	Easy to understand								Extremely difficult to understand
			3						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Appendix F

Post-test questionnaire

Task Questionnaire

Bản câu hỏi:

Thank you for taking part in this research
Cảm ơn bạn đã tham gia nghiên cứu này

Please answer the following questions as honestly as you can. This is not a test.
Hãy trả lời các câu hỏi dưới đây một cách thành thực nhất có thể. Đây không phải là bài kiểm tra.

Please enter an X for your answer.
Đánh dấu X cho mỗi câu trả lời.

There are 19 questions, please read and answer them carefully.
Có tất cả 19 câu hỏi, hãy đọc và trả lời cẩn thận.

Background

- 1 What is your gender?
Giới tính của bạn là gì?
- Male
Nam
Female
Nữ
- 2 How old are you?
Bạn bao nhiêu tuổi?
-
- 3 How long have you been studying English?
Bạn đã học tiếng anh bao lâu?
-

Your use of English

Việc sử dụng tiếng anh của bạn

4	How are you most likely to use English? Bạn sử dụng tiếng Anh như thế nào?	To communicate with people whose first language is English? Để giao tiếp với những người mà tiếng Anh là tiếng mẹ đẻ?	<input type="text"/>
		To communicate with people whose second language is English? Để giao tiếp với những người mà tiếng Anh là ngôn ngữ thứ hai	<input type="text"/>

The task

Nhiệm vụ

5	Did you find the task: Bạn cảm thấy nhiệm vụ:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
		Very difficult Quá khó	difficult Khó	OK Bình thường	easy Dễ	Very easy Rất dễ

Feedback

Phản hồi

6	For this task, did you receive feedback from the teacher or a student? Đối với nhiệm vụ này, bạn có nhận được phản hồi từ giáo viên hoặc từ học viên?	Teacher Giáo viên	<input type="text"/>	Student Học viên	<input type="text"/>

7	Generally, which do you think is more useful to you? Nhìn chung, bạn thấy điều nào có ích hơn đối với bạn	Feedback from your teacher? Phản hồi từ giáo viên của bạn?	<input type="text"/>
		Feedback from students on your course? Phản hồi từ các học viên trong khóa của bạn?	<input type="text"/>
Why?/Tại sao?			

8	Which do you feel more comfortable getting? Bạn thấy thoải mái hơn khi nhận?	Feedback from your teacher? Phản hồi từ giáo viên của bạn	<input type="text"/>
		Feedback from students on your course? Phản hồi từ các học viên trong khóa học của bạn	<input type="text"/>
Why?/Tại sao?			

9	The feedback that you got for this task was:					
	Phản hồi mà bạn nhận được cho nhiệm vụ này	Unhelpful Vô ích	A little helpful Khả có ích	Helpful Có ích	Very helpful Rất có ích	Extremely helpful Cực kỳ có ích

10	The feedback on the pronunciation of final-word consonants that you got for this task was:					
	Phản hồi về việc phát âm các phụ âm cuối mà bạn nhận được trong nhiệm vụ này:	Extremely accurate Cực kỳ chính xác	Very accurate Rất chính xác	Accurate Chính xác	A little accurate Khả chính xác	Inaccurate Không chính xác

11	After feedback, was the second reading of the story:					
	Sau phản hồi, việc đọc lại câu chuyện lần hai:	Much easier Dễ hơn nhiều	Easier Dễ hơn	No different Không thay đổi	Difficult Khó	More difficult Khó hơn

Stress
Căng thẳng

12	How stressful was reading the story the first time?					
	Việc đọc câu chuyện lần đầu tiên căng thẳng như thế nào?	Extremely Stressful Cực kỳ căng thẳng	Very Stressful Rất căng thẳng	Stressful Căng thẳng	A little stressful Khả căng thẳng	Unstressful Không căng thẳng

13	How stressful was repeating the word list?					
	Việc đọc lại danh sách từ căng thẳng như thế nào?	Unstressful Không căng thẳng	A little stressful Khả căng thẳng	Stressful Căng thẳng	Very Stressful Rất căng thẳng	Extremely Stressful Cực kỳ căng thẳng

14	How stressful was reading the story the second time?					
		Extremely Stressful	Very Stressful	Stressful	A little stressful	Unstressful

Your pronunciation accuracy

15	Do you think that accurate pronunciation in English is:					
		Unimportant	A little important	Important	Very Important	Extremely important

16	When you speak English, speaking with a native English accent is:					
		Unimportant	A little important	Important	Very Important	Extremely important

17	Do you think that pronouncing final-word consonants in English is:					
		Extremely important	Very Important	Important	A little important	Unimportant

18	If you can be understood without pronouncing final-word consonants accurately, do you think accurate pronunciation of them is:					
		Unimportant	A little important	Important	Very Important	Extremely important

19	When you speak English is keeping your Vietnamese accent important to you?	Yes		No	
	Why?/				

Appendix G

Hi Raters,

Seeing my results, there were a lot of completely unexplained differences between many scores. For example: 8 4 7 3 recorded by four raters for one recording.

I therefore have decided to ask a few questions to try and theorize why this might be the case.

1. If you received the recordings via my Google Drive in mp3 format, did you listen to them in numerical order, as they were loaded randomly (a problem with Google Drive). Recording 1 = 1 on the Excel sheet.
2. How did you approach the task?
3. Was there anything that you think affected your ratings of the students?
4. Did this change the more you did the task?
5. How would you personally define 'comprehensibility'?

Thanks again all, so much.