

Articles

“Teaching Pronunciation is Always on my Mind”: A 5-year Longitudinal Study on a Japanese English Teacher’s Developing Practices and Cognition about Pronunciation

Michael Burri

University of Wollongong

Systematic inquiry into second language teacher learning has been carried out for 3 decades, but research into learning to teach English pronunciation is just emerging. The purpose of this paper is to address this gap by examining the long-term trajectory of a Japanese teacher of English learning to teach English pronunciation. The case study examined the development of the instructor’s practices and cognition (i.e., beliefs and knowledge) about English pronunciation over a 5-year period. A 13-week pronunciation-pedagogy course, a narrative frame that elicited the instructor’s self-reported pronunciation teaching practices, and 2 classroom observations followed by a semi-structured interview were used to collect data. The findings demonstrated that the 5-year development of the teacher’s practices and cognition was a complicated and non-linear process. Several contextual factors were identified as being responsible for the uneven development of the teacher-participant’s practices, cognition, and uptake of content taught in the pronunciation pedagogy course.

第二言語教師学習についての系統的な研究は、過去30年間に於いて数多くなされてきた。一方で、英語の発音指導修得における研究は未だ萌芽的段階である。本研究は、英語

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の発音指導を修得した日本人英語教師を長期的に研究することでこのような溝を埋める試みである。本ケーススタディにおいて、五年間にわたり教師の実践と英語発音に対する認知（ピリーフや知識）の発達についての研究を行った。データ収集として13週間の発音教授法コース、教師の発音指導実践を引き出すためのナラティブフレーム、及び二度の授業観察、そしてそれに続く半構造化インタビューが用いられた。その結果、五年間にわたる彼らの教育実践と認知は複雑かつ非線形であることが確認された。被験者である教師たちの実践、認知、そして発音教授法コースを通して修得された内容の理解についての不規則な発達の背景にはいくつかの文脈的要因が存在することが示唆された。

Keywords: longitudinal research; pronunciation; second language teacher education; teacher cognition; teacher learning

The visibility of pronunciation in language teaching has increased markedly in the past two decades (Levis, 2015). Along with this attention, inquiry into the preparation of pronunciation teachers has grown in the last few years. However, to understand the nature of what teacher learning entails, Webster (2019) posits that researchers must go beyond the second language teacher education (SLTE) and follow second language (L2) instructors into their professional careers. Crandall and Christison (2016) further assert that “[t]he field of SLTE needs longitudinal research that investigates how teaching expertise emerges, [and] how teachers’ beliefs evolve” (p. 11); yet, few studies have examined the longitudinal process of L2 teacher learning. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine the long-term trajectory of an L2 teacher learning to teach English pronunciation. Drawing on the notion of teacher cognition, the study examines the development of a JTE’s (Japanese teacher of English) practices and cognition about English pronunciation over a 5-year period, offering new insights into the longitudinal process of learning to teach pronunciation in a specific context.

Literature Review

In light of this longitudinal study’s focus on a JTE’s trajectory of learning to teach pronunciation, the literature review is divided into three sections: (a) longitudinal research on L2 teacher learning; (b) L2 teacher practices and cognition about pronunciation; and (c) the specific context of Japanese teachers of English and pronunciation.

Longitudinal Research on L2 Teacher Learning

Systematic inquiry into L2 teacher learning began to emerge about three decades ago (Freeman, as cited in Sadeghi, 2019). Teacher learning—de-

defined as an active and reflective means through which instructors construct and acquire knowledge, beliefs, and skills (Richards & Farrell, 2005)—must be meaningful and relevant to teachers' classroom contexts in order for it to be stimulating and professionally enriching (Desimone, 2009). The general view is that for continuous professional learning to be effective, it needs to be teacher driven (Hayes, 2019). Despite the growing body of literature on L2 teacher learning, relatively few empirical studies have explored the longitudinal process of learning to teach English as an additional language (Webster, 2019).

Studies conducted in pre-service teacher education contexts, for example, have demonstrated that substantial time is required for student teachers' beliefs and knowledge to develop (Mattheoudakis, 2007). At the same time, some researchers have suggested that SLTE was relatively ineffective since previous L2 learning experiences can exert powerful influence on student teacher beliefs (Peacock, 2001; Urmston, 2003). However, drawing almost exclusively on questionnaire data, both Peacock and Urmston produced a restricted understanding of student teacher learning. Conversely, Tang et al. (2012), utilizing multiple data sources, including an essay, a survey, lesson plan analysis, and interviews found that curricular and institutional factors impacted and often impeded professional learning of pre-service teachers. This, in turn, could cause practitioners to resort to practices and beliefs held prior to SLTE. Macalister (2016) also identified the local context as impacting the practices of pre-service teachers in a practicum setting.

Research into the learning process of practicing L2 instructors has also shed light on what learning to teach language entails. As Kang and Chen (2014) showed, for instance, the cyclical process of L2 instructors' developing practices and cognition (beliefs and knowledge) resulted in considerable teacher growth (i.e., learning). Phipps and Borg (2009), however, found that contextual factors such as classroom management concerns and student expectations can cause tensions between a teacher's beliefs and their practices" (p. 385). Another line of research, which explored the long-term professional identity construction of L2 instructors, also demonstrated the strong impact contextual factors (e.g., institutional power relationships) have on instructor learning trajectories, including their practices and cognition (Gu, 2013; Tsui, 2007). Relevant to the focus of this present study, Webster's (2019) research revealed that novice instructors' knowledge about teaching speaking plateaued developmentally as a result of the teachers working in professional isolation.

A common and prominent finding generated by the aforementioned longitudinal studies is that context exercises considerable influence on the process of L2 teachers' professional learning. Yet, it must be noted that few of these studies extended beyond a year and therefore provided somewhat limited insights into the learning trajectories of L2 teachers. That is, the development of L2 instructors' practices, beliefs, and knowledge over a period of several years remains largely unexplored. Addressing this gap appears to be urgently needed given Kang and Chen's (2014) proposition that longitudinal research is "expected to help paint a more accurate picture of the domain of teacher learning" (p. 184). In this respect, the current study makes an important contribution by enhancing our understanding of the longitudinal process of learning to teach pronunciation through the examination of the 5-year development of a JTE's practices and cognition about English pronunciation.

L2 Teacher Practices and Cognition about Pronunciation

There are a wide variety of pronunciation-specific resources available to practitioners and researchers, reflecting a growing interest in pronunciation pedagogy (e.g., Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Derwing & Munro, 2015; Gilbert, 2012; Jones, 2016; Kang et al., 2018; Reed & Levis, 2015; Yates & Zielinski, 2009). Additionally, regular pronunciation symposia and conferences are held in the United States, Australia, Finland, and Poland, the *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation* was established a few years ago, and a growing number of classroom-based studies have provided convincing evidence of the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction (for two overviews, see Lee et al., 2015; Saito, 2012). Corresponding with these recent developments, the pedagogical view of pronunciation has advanced substantially. One of the most notable paradigm shifts is the move away from the native principle (Levis, 2005). That is, native-like pronunciation is no longer seen as the pedagogical target, with scholars proposing intelligibility (defined as clear and easy to understand speech) to be the goal for which L2 teachers should aim (Thomson, 2014). A second major proposition is that for pronunciation instruction to be effective, segmentals (consonants and vowels) *and* suprasegmentals (stress, rhythm, and intonation) must be taught in the L2 classroom (Sicola & Darcy, 2015; Thomson & Derwing, 2015). A third notion is the need and provision for automatization and repeated practice in the L2 classroom to enhance students' intelligibility and fluency (Baker, 2014; Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). Yet, despite these recent conceptual and pedagogical advancements, research has shown that L2 teachers often

lack confidence in their ability to teach pronunciation. This uncertainty has been attributed to the absence of pronunciation-specific training opportunities in SLTE programs (Bai & Yuan, 2018; Couper, 2016; Foote et al., 2011).

Research revealing a lack of instructor confidence and training has typically been underpinned by second language teacher cognition (SLTC). SLTC research “seeks, with reference to their personal, professional, social, cultural and historical contexts, to understand [L2] teachers’ minds and emotions and the role these play in the process of becoming, being and developing as a teacher” (Borg, 2019, p. 20). Thus, SLTC research has provided valuable insights into L2 teachers’ practices, beliefs, and knowledge about pronunciation teaching and learning. Responding to the concerns about instructors’ training (or lack thereof), the most recent line of SLTC-based inquiry has explored the process of student teachers learning to teach English pronunciation in SLTE programs. Studies have shown the positive impact a pronunciation pedagogy course can have on student teachers’ practices and cognition (Baker, 2011; Buss, 2017; Lim, 2016). The importance of student teachers’ linguistic backgrounds, previous teaching experiences in learning to teach pronunciation, and the mediational relationship of cognition development and identity construction in becoming a competent pronunciation instructor (Burri et al., 2017) has also been established. Moreover, program-related factors, including assessments, group work, discussion tasks, required readings, hands-on training sessions, classroom observations, and course content, all appear to play important roles in student teachers acquiring skills and knowledge necessary to teach English pronunciation (Burri et al., 2018). Less researched and understood, however, are JTEs’ practices and cognition about pronunciation, an area that is discussed in the third section of this literature review.

Japanese Teachers of English and Pronunciation

Assuming that adequate training opportunities are included in SLTE programs, the contemporary view in language teaching is that native English-speakers *and* non-native English-speakers can be effective pronunciation teachers (Levis et al., 2016). In light of this proposition, along with recent educational reforms advocating communicative English teaching, pronunciation is gaining momentum in Japan (Hanazaki et al., 2017). Not surprisingly then, studies on pronunciation practices and cognition of JTEs are beginning to emerge. While pronunciation instruction is considered to be important for Japanese learners of English to attain intelligible speech (Chujo, 2015) and JTEs’ knowledge of phonetics is seen as being more effec-

tive than using “repeat-after-me” in the instruction of segmentals (Hanazaki et al., 2017), research has demonstrated that junior high school JTEs tend to lack confidence in pronouncing larger segments of language (Uchida & Sugimoto, 2020). Also, “listen & repeat” is predominately used with large classes and suprasegmentals receive less attention in the classroom (Uchida & Sugimoto, 2018). A shortcoming of these recent studies is that findings and subsequent recommendations are derived exclusively from questionnaire data. More comprehensive data sets are needed to attain an in-depth understanding of what JTEs do, believe, and know about pronunciation. Research must also examine the longitudinal trajectory of JTEs learning to teach pronunciation. The present study addresses this need by not only bringing practices and cognition together (Kubanyiova, 2012) but also by examining their development over a period of five years to better understand teacher learning. Importantly, the goal of this study is not to judge a JTE’s pedagogical effectiveness; rather, the aim of the current study is threefold: (1) to gain an in-depth perspective on a JTE’s 5-year professional trajectory, (2) to add to our understanding of teacher learning, and (3) to make recommendations that are relevant to L2 teacher educators and L2 teachers in order to improve the preparation of pronunciation teachers and to support practicing teachers in their endeavour to pronunciation into their classrooms.

Research Questions

Having positioned the paper within the relevant literature, the study was guided by the following two research questions:

- RQ1. How do a JTE’s practices and cognition about pronunciation develop over a period of five years?
- RQ2. To what extent do the JTE’s current practices and cognition reflect content taught in a graduate course in pronunciation pedagogy?

Method

Study Design, Data Collection, and Research Context

The longitudinal research project was comprised of a case study design (Creswell, 2013) in which multiple qualitative data sources were triangulated. Collecting a substantial amount of qualitative data allowed me to attain an in-depth understanding of the development of practices and cognition of one JTE situated in a specific context. The study also reflected principles

of ethnographic inquiry by utilising several non-participatory classroom observations and interviews over a period of five years.

The five-year inquiry (2013-2018) consisted of three distinct phases: (a) a 13-week elective course in teaching pronunciation; (b) the participants' completion of a narrative frame self-reporting on actual classroom pronunciation teaching practices; and (c) classroom observations of one participant by the researcher followed by a semi-structured interview. The present study is part of a larger research project in which 15 student teachers initially participated in Phase 1. Of the 15 participants, five decided to continue into Phase 2. One teacher-participant then dropped out with four teachers remaining in Phase 3. Aoi (pseudonym), the JTE this paper focuses on, was one of four JTE participants who took part in all three phases.

At the beginning of Phase 1 (in July 2013), I obtained written consent from 15 student teachers enrolled in a postgraduate course on pronunciation pedagogy to participate in the study. This was an elective course in a MEd in TESOL program offered at an Australian university. The course was 13 weeks long with 3-hour lectures taught once a week. Every week focused on a different topic of English pronunciation. The topics aligned closely with the core text *Teaching pronunciation: A course book and reference guide* (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). The study design overview is displayed in Table 1 on the next page.

A typical lecture was divided into three parts. The first part focused on theoretical and technical aspects of English phonology. In the second section the student teachers were trained in various controlled, guided, and free activities (Baker, 2014). Among the many techniques introduced to the class, haptic pronunciation instruction (Acton et al., 2013; Acton, 2020) featured most prominently. Haptic pronunciation instruction implies a systematic combination of different kinds of movements and touch to help L2 instructors integrate pronunciation into their classrooms effectively. The third part then aimed at facilitating the student teachers' phonological awareness by having them analyse a number of L2 learner speech samples.

The students were required to complete three assignments. The first was an essay on the state of pronunciation instruction in a country of their choosing. The second assignment was a quiz, which assessed the students' newly acquired knowledge of the English sound system. For the third and last assessment task, the student teachers had to analyse an English learner's speech and recommend several teaching techniques that could be used to help improve the learner's intelligibility.

As for data sources collected in Phase 1, I administered a pre- and post-course questionnaire with the aim of capturing the students' background

information as well as their cognition about English pronunciation. Both questionnaires employed multiple-choice and open-ended items and were designed to yield insights into student teachers' cognition development (Busch, 2010; Mattheoudakis, 2007). The 15 participants were then divided into four groups that took part in three focus group interviews held in weeks 5, 9, and 12. The JTE in this study was part of the second focus group (two more JTEs and an Australian teacher were the other group members). I asked the members about any critical incidents (see Richards & Farrell, 2005) they may have experienced in the lectures or at some point during the course. A typical focus-group meeting lasted about 60 minutes. In addition to the focus group interviews, I observed and video recorded all of the 3-hour lectures, and I collected the third assessment task. The assessment was collected because it was believed to reflect participants' cognition at the end of the course. It should be noted that I was not involved in the teaching of any of the lectures or in the marking of the assignments.

For Phase 2, I emailed a narrative frame to the five teacher-participants in December of 2016. A narrative frame is a "written story template consisting of a series of incomplete sentences and blank spaces of varying lengths. Structured as a story in skeletal form, [the objective] is to produce a coherent story by filling in the spaces according to writers' experiences and reflections on these" (Barkhuizen, 2015, p.178). The narrative frame consisted of four separate sections (background, pronunciation teaching, reflecting on the pronunciation pedagogy course, and additional thoughts) with the pronunciation teaching part containing 10 incomplete sentences and therefore being slightly longer than the other three sections (see Burri & Baker, 2020, for the narrative template). The following is an example of an incomplete sentence that was included in the pronunciation teaching section: *When I teach English pronunciation to my students, I focus on teaching _____ because _____*. Given that the instructors were now teaching in a variety of contexts and locations (Wollongong, Melbourne, Tokyo, and Hong Kong) that were not easily accessible, having the teachers complete a narrative frame was considered to be an effective way to collect data on the participants' self-reported practices and cognition. The JTE on which I am focusing this paper returned the completed frame to me in February 2017.

One of the limitations of the second phase was the self-reported nature of the teachers' practices. Thus, a third phase—for which a grant was obtained from my institution—was added. Phase 3 allowed me to visit the teachers' classroom and talk with them face-to-face. Two classroom observations and

a 60-minute semi-structured interview were conducted with each teacher. Questions asked in Phase 1 (pre- and post-questionnaire, focus groups) and Phase 2 (narrative frame) as well as questions that arose from the two phases and the two observations conducted in Phase 3, plus Richard's (2011) teaching competence framework comprised of a sociocultural perspective on L2 teaching informed the creation of the interview questions. Having similar questions in all three phases allowed me to compare themes and subsequently attain insights into the study participants' trajectories.

Both of the observed classes were video recorded with the camera focusing on the teacher (the students provided written consent to be video recorded). I made sure to stand in the back of the classroom and observe the lesson as inconspicuously as possible, as Creswell (2013) recommended. The two observations and the semi-structured interview with the teacher participating in this study were done in Tokyo in November 2018.

Teacher-participant

Aoi commenced her master's program in early 2012 with five years of English teaching experience at a senior high school in Japan. After completing her graduate studies at the end of 2013, she secured a part-time position at a high school in the Tokyo area. Having completed that year, she obtained a full-time job at a different private junior and senior high school also located in Tokyo. During Phase 2 of the study, Aoi taught grade 9 students and grade 7 in Phase 3. For both grades she was responsible for teaching General English which included four 50-minute lessons per week. *New Treasure* (2015) was the main textbook used in the course. In addition to the four weekly lessons, the students attended an English conversation class once a week with a native English teacher and two grammar lessons per week taught by Japanese teacher. There were 15-23 students who were in class in both phases with their English proficiency being at a pre-intermediate level. At the time of Phase 3, Aoi was 35 years of age and had been in her full-time teaching position for four years.

Data Analysis

Initially, all the qualitative data, including the verbatim transcribed focus group interviews (Phase 1) and semi-structured interview (Phase 3) was read carefully. Once done, I wrote three profiles for Aoi—one for each phase: Phase 1) Beginning and end of graduate course; Phase 2) reported teaching context; and Phase 3) current teaching context. These three profiles

were positioned next to each other in a Word document and read, re-read, and refined numerous times. Aoi was given the opportunity to validate the profiles, and she requested a few minor changes to be made to the third profile. Analysing the three profiles concurrently allowed me to identify several themes across the three profiles, which, in turn, enabled me to attain an in-depth understanding of the 5-year development of Aoi's practices and cognition about pronunciation. I acknowledge the subjective nature of this process, but this study is part of a larger research project and therefore my co-investigator assisted with the construction of these profiles and the identification of themes, increasing the trustworthiness of the data analysis. I am confident that my analysis of Aoi's learning trajectory is based on a careful, in-depth examination.

Findings

The findings of this longitudinal case study demonstrated that the 5-year development of Aoi's practices and cognition about English pronunciation was a complicated and multifaceted process. Also, the extent to which some of her practices and cognition reflected content taught in the pronunciation pedagogy course varied markedly. The analysis of the three profiles revealed four major themes: (a) teaching of suprasegmentals; (b) delivery of pronunciation instruction; (c) kinaesthetic pronunciation teaching; and (d) native speakerism. These themes are now presented in detail below.

The first notable theme was Aoi's developing cognition about and teaching of suprasegmentals, particularly the teaching of stress and rhythm. Prior to the graduate course she had never "heard the word prosody" (AT3)¹ (suprasegmentals), but at the end of the semester she believed that "[a]cquiring English prosody [was] one of the important features for communication" (AT3). Three years later, in the narrative frame she stated that her goal was twofold: (a) to familiarize her Japanese learners with English sounds (segmentals) and word stress rules, and (b) to have them produce word and sentence stress (suprasegmentals) with sentence stress being viewed as particularly important because "I don't want my students to speak like a robot" (NF). The Phase 3 observations revealed that Aoi taught both segmentals² and suprasegmentals, and in the interview she explained that her pedagogical goal was for Japanese students to be understood when speaking English. Hence, data collected in Phases 2 and 3 suggest that Aoi used a balanced approach to pronunciation instruction (i.e., teaching both segmentals and suprasegmentals) which signifies a clear development of her practices and cognition about pronunciation. It also parallels what the

lecturer taught during the pronunciation pedagogy course. The lecturer took the position of several leading pronunciation scholars, suggesting that a balanced approach was the most effective means in helping L2 students improve their pronunciation (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 2015; Sicola & Darcy, 2015; Thomson & Derwing, 2015).

The second theme that stood out in the profile data was Aoi's delivery of pronunciation instruction. Prior to the graduate course Aoi "introduced tongue twisters" and drew pictures of a "mouth and tongue" (Q1) to teach "the difference between [l] and [r]", but other than that, "little time" (Q1) was spent on pronunciation in her classes. She "rarely gave instruction [on] how to pronounce English to her students. If any, it was very superficial advice" (AT3). At the end of the course, she included a variety of controlled, guided, and free techniques in the third assessment task, displaying a solid understanding of techniques that she could use to help Japanese learners of English improve their pronunciation. A few years later, Phases 2 and 3 revealed that Aoi did indeed teach pronunciation in her classroom, but her techniques were mostly teacher-focused in nature. That is, drills and repetitions were her most frequently used techniques. She also used face diagrams, phonics video and audio clips, and handouts, and she had her students read out loud or recite sentences and passages from the textbook (occasionally alongside music played in the background) to teach the pronunciation of new words and sentences, to facilitate her students' awareness of phonics rules and English rhythm, to improve their fluency, and to assess their fluency, intonation, and attitude, including "voice [and] eye contact" (P3I). Aoi used some guided techniques (e.g., team competition activities, pair work, Q&A tasks, info gap exercises and role-plays) and it was evident that she had developed an excellent rapport with her students and created a lively learning environment, but the majority of her techniques featured limited opportunities for communicative practice. Considering that she had rarely taught pronunciation before commencing her graduate studies, the findings demonstrated some limited development of Aoi's practices over the preceding five years. At the same time, the alignment of her current practices with content taught during the pronunciation pedagogy course was somewhat marginal. Throughout the graduate course, the lecturer advocated the need for controlled, guided, and free practice to enhance the pronunciation of L2 learners. As such, the findings—derived from all three phases—suggested that developing the ability to include controlled, guided, and free activities into one's pronunciation teaching repertoire is not a linear process. Aoi's delivery of pronunciation instruction also supports Uchida and Sugimoto's (2018) research suggesting that JTEs in junior high school con-

texts tend to use mostly controlled techniques (e.g., listen and repeat), and it corroborates Baker's (2014) proposition that L2 teachers tend to shy away from guided and free practice activities.

Kinaesthetic pronunciation teaching was a third theme that featured prominently in Aoi's profile data. During the pronunciation pedagogy course, her cognition developed from having no knowledge of kinaesthetic teaching to a view of this particular way of teaching pronunciation being interesting and potentially useful in the L2 classroom. She "never imagined teaching and learning pronunciation [was] such an interesting thing because when [she] was in Japan no one taught [her]" (FG1) how to do this systematically. Three years later, even though during the course she had questioned her ability to implement some of the newly learned kinaesthetic techniques in her classroom, Aoi used a haptic technique, the Rhythm Fight Club (RFC) (Burri et al., 2016), with her grade 9 students "a few times" in class (personal communication, July 14, 2020). In her narrative frame she remarked that the haptic technique had a positive impact on her students' production of word and sentence stress: "I think their English in terms of word or sentence [stress]... improved very much after practicing English with [the RFC]" (NF), although she expressed some uncertainty about whether their improvement was in fact the result of her pronunciation teaching. Yet, contrary to her initial concerns about students perhaps feeling hesitant to engage in haptic learning, the learners showed no reluctance to use the technique. In fact, "when [she] ask[ed] them to pronounce words with [the RFC], they [did] it without hesitation" (NF). Overall, she considered knowing about haptic teaching to be her strength. This perception continued into the third phase of the study, but she no longer used the RFC when I observed her teaching. This suggests that the development of her practices and cognition about kinaesthetic pronunciation teaching, much like the delivery of her pronunciation instruction discussed in the previous paragraph, was not a linear process. Nevertheless, Aoi's use of a haptic technique reflected pedagogical content taught during the graduate course. Throughout the semester, the lecturer promoted the idea of haptic instruction fostering pronunciation improvement (Acton et al., 2013). Aoi's sporadic application of the RFC also lends support to the notion that the uptake of novel concepts and pedagogy can be challenging (Woodward et al., 2018), which appears to be especially true in the case of innovative pronunciation practices (Burri & Baker, 2019).

The fourth major theme identified in the data was native speakerism. At the beginning of the pronunciation pedagogy course, Aoi thought that "non-native speakers [could not] teach pronunciation properly" (FG1) and that na-

tive English was the ideal pronunciation model. During the graduate course, her perception gradually shifted. She began to recognise her ability to teach pronunciation: "...now I have a little bit confidence...I know how to teach even [though] I'm non-native" (FG1), and by the end of the semester she felt more confident in her ability to teach pronunciation to Japanese learners of English. Aoi also thought that attaining native-like pronunciation was no longer needed for herself as an English teacher or for her Japanese students. In Phase 3 of the study, even though *New Treasure* (2015) featured an American English model, Aoi reasserted that "it's not necessary to speak like native speakers... as long as my students or I make...[ourselves] understood" (P3I). The data collected over the 5-year period, therefore, showed that Aoi's cognition about native speakerism developed from initially believing that she could not be an effective pronunciation teacher towards intelligible (i.e., clear) speech being the pedagogical goal rather than native-like pronunciation. Her developing cognition about nativeness in pronunciation teaching was in line with content taught in the graduate course. The lecturer regularly stated that anybody could be an effective pronunciation teacher, irrespective of their cultural and linguistic background. Frequent references were made to intelligible pronunciation being the pedagogical target, not native-like pronunciation (Thomson, 2014). Thus, her cognition reflected substantial uptake of course content in the area of nativeness. The fact that she taught English pronunciation as a nonnative English-speaking teacher (NNEST) also substantiates previous research suggesting that the preparation of NNSs to teach pronunciation can be effective (Burri et al., 2017), and it lends support to the notion that NNESTs can be effective pronunciation teachers (Levis et al., 2016).

Overall, the findings of this case study demonstrated that the development of a JTE's practices and cognition about English pronunciation is not a straightforward process. Some of Aoi's practices and cognition developed more noticeably than others. SLTC research has shown the complicated relationship between teacher cognition and classroom practices (Aslan, 2015; Kang & Cheng, 2014), and teaching English pronunciation appears to be no exception. What warrants further discussion is the variability of the extent of Aoi's uptake of course content as reflected in her current practices and cognition.

Discussion

The findings showed the varied development of Aoi's practices and cognition about English pronunciation. This begs the question as to why some of this variability in her uptake of content occurred. The data collected in

Phases 2 and 3 suggested that several contextual factors exerted powerful influence on Aoi's developing practices and cognition about pronunciation. Sharing materials and co-designing lesson plans with a Japanese colleague teaching the same grade and course was, for example, identified as having a positive influence on her selection of pronunciation teaching resources such as audio/video clips and handouts. As Aoi explained, this collaborative partnership was beneficial for her: "I'm learning from her a lot" (P3I). While this coincides with Sprott's (2019) proposition that professional relationships with colleagues can promote teacher learning, the students' responsiveness to being taught pronunciation was also a positive factor. As was observed, Aoi clearly enjoyed teaching pronunciation and her students responded positively to her practices. Furthermore, Aoi explained that participating in the longitudinal study also had a positive effect on her: "...teaching pronunciation is always on my mind to some extent, so that's why... I want to introduce some of it. I usually think about it and last year, I did some [RFC] with my students and they...enjoyed it" (P3I). Yet, the data also showed that several contextual factors negatively influenced the development of Aoi's practices and cognition. The requirement of having to use *New Treasure* (2015) as well as having to synchronize her teaching with fellow instructors teaching the same grade and course notably limited her ability to implement content learned in the graduate course, specifically haptic pronunciation teaching. Moreover, similar to Wahid and Sulong's (2013) and Bai and Yuan's (2018) studies, Aoi felt that time constraints and a busy teaching and extra-curricular schedule prevented her from incorporating more pronunciation in her classes. Although this is somewhat speculative, the challenges involved in teaching a different grade every year and the learners' relatively low English proficiency level may have also led Aoi to select and use techniques that were mostly controlled (i.e., teacher-focused) in nature.

Being situated in this particular context gradually began to cause uncertainty and affected Aoi's confidence. Research has shown the connection between a lack of training and L2 teachers' low confidence in their ability to teach pronunciation (Couper, 2017; Foote et al., 2011). In Aoi's case, as identified in the fourth major theme above, her confidence increased markedly during the graduate course, but then appeared to decrease as she commenced teaching. She began to doubt her ability to teach pronunciation in her junior high school classroom and questioned her overall pronunciation teaching skills and ability to correct errors: "I'm not [a] skilful pronunciation teacher, so [correcting my students' errors is] my challenging point" (P3I). Aoi explained that she had her students repeat after her as a means to

correct the learners' pronunciation, but she expressed concerns about not knowing how to correct her students' pronunciation errors. This is interesting given that Aoi completed a 13-week graduate course on pronunciation pedagogy yet reported doubts about teaching pronunciation to her Japanese learners. This is also concerning given the fact that error correction techniques have been shown to improve the pronunciation of L2 learners (Saito & Lyster, 2012).

Aoi was acutely aware of the influence that the context exerted on her developing practices and cognition: "Working environment in [Japan] sometimes prevent[s] teachers learning more..." (personal communication, February 13, 2019). Contextual factors impacting, contributing to, or hindering teacher learning has been established empirically (e.g., Solheim et al., 2018; Tang et al., 2012) and the pronunciation literature discusses the powerful influence of external factors on L2 teachers and their pronunciation pedagogy (Couper, 2016; Levis & Sonsaat, 2019). The findings also align with the notion that context is fundamental in understanding the relationship between practices and cognition (Borg, 2019). In Aoi's case, the influence of contextual factors may have been particularly strong as she reported having an exceptionally positive experience during the graduate course. A few years later, being in a real teaching context, her acquired cognition and practices began to be exposed to a number of contextual factors, resulting in uneven development. The argument could be made that Aoi adjusted her pedagogy and focused on, for example, phonics and used mostly controlled techniques to meet her students' needs at the expense of content learned in the graduate course. It is also possible that since pronunciation is rarely included in commercially published textbooks (Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013), practices and cognition about pronunciation are particularly prone to the influence of contextual influence. This lack of guidance, in conjunction with pronunciation being one of the most challenging aspects of a language to teach (Setter & Jenkins, 2005), may have caused Aoi to resort to previously held cognition and practices (Tang et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the present study provides compelling evidence of contextual factors strongly impacting a JTE's developing practices and cognition about English pronunciation.

While generalizing the findings of a single case study can be problematic, the present research has some important implications for L2 teacher educators and practitioners. Most importantly, pronunciation teacher preparation courses should foster student teachers' awareness of the powerful influence that context exerts on pronunciation pedagogy and teachers' cognition. At the same time, a pronunciation pedagogy course should equip student

teachers with strategies to navigate future teaching contexts. This would not only make teacher education more meaningful and relevant to international graduate students obtaining a TESOL qualification in places like Australia, but in Aoi's case it would have perhaps enabled her to incorporate more guided and free techniques, as well as to correct student errors more confidently. Another implication is the provision of pronunciation-specific professional development opportunities for JTEs. Aoi had a desire to learn more about pronunciation, but it was difficult for her to "[find] any pronunciation conference" (P31) in Japan. Thus, in light of the findings of this study, locally situated and practice-oriented in-service learning opportunities (Kang & Cheng, 2014) should be made available to JTEs to hone their pronunciation teaching skills and knowledge. That is, opportunities that are "reflective of the social and political contexts of the teachers' classrooms, schools, and community" (Crandall & Christison, 2016, p.11) would likely contribute to continuous professional learning of teachers like Aoi (Hayes, 2019). This could, for instance, be in the form of regular events sponsored by local JALT Chapters, or a pronunciation symposium/conference similar to the ones recently held in Australia, Finland, Poland, and the United States. The establishment of a pronunciation-specific special interest group in a local professional association like JALT could also provide ongoing learning opportunities for JTEs. Another possibility, as Farrell (2012) suggests, could include regular teacher-researcher contact to keep practitioners engaged in the learning process and perhaps have them participate in a research project. Aoi appreciated being part of this longitudinal study and it seemed to have had a positive effect on her cognition. To what extent this influenced her practices is not clear, but at least it kept pronunciation on her mind.

Conclusion

This study provided detailed insights into the 5-year development of a JTE's practices and cognition about English pronunciation. The findings revealed four major areas of development, including the teaching of suprasegmentals, the delivery of pronunciation instruction, kinaesthetic pronunciation teaching, and native speakerism. The findings also demonstrated that several contextual factors were responsible for the uneven development of the instructor's practices, cognition, and uptake of content taught in the pronunciation pedagogy course, upholding the notion that teacher learning is a complex and non-linear process (Feryok, 2010) and that learning to teach pronunciation is not a quick and easy thing. Aoi's willingness to engage in research has inspired me to plan a follow-up study to examine

the pronunciation practices and cognition of a larger number of JTEs. This future project is expected to provide additional insights into the contextualised learning trajectories of L2 teachers who have completed a graduate pronunciation pedagogy course and are now teaching in Japan.

Notes

1. Quotation annotation key: Q1= pre-course questionnaire; FG1 = first focus group interview; AT3 = assessment task 3; NF = narrative frame; P3I = phase 3 interview.
2. Such as the consonant sound /r/; the lengthening of the vowel sound /æ/ in *can* vs *can't*; and several murmuring vowels including “ar”, “or”, “ir”, “er”.

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Michael Burri is a Senior Lecturer in TESOL at the University of Wollongong. His interests include pronunciation teaching, L2 teacher education, educational neuroscience, and context-sensitive/innovative pedagogy.

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