A Case Study on Online Peer Feedback for Learning English Pronunciation at University Level*

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Pronunciation is considered to play a significant role in successful communication in L2. Despite its importance, there seems to be the lack of sufficient practice and interaction in online English pronunciation classes at university level. As a solution, online peer feedback on students' voice recordings is suggested, and this study aimed to explore the patterns of peer feedback in an online English pronunciation class and reflections on peer feedback for learning English pronunciation. The subjects of the study consisted of ten students enrolled in an online English pronunciation class at A university. Qualitative data sources included observations of the classroom BBS, voice recordings, reflective learning journals and interviews. The students’ produced comments were analyzed in terms of suprasegmental and segmental features of pronunciation as well as six types of corrective feedback. The data collected from reflective learning journals and interviews were analyzed and presented descriptively. The major findings of the study are as follows. First, the students produced more peer feedback on suprasegmental features than segmental features. Second, they provided more indirect feedback than other types. Last, they incorporated more peer feedback on segmental features than on suprasegmental features. Based on the findings, suggestions and implications are proposed.

**Key words** English pronunciation, voice recordings, peer feedback, online class

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I. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation has been emphasized in teaching and learning a foreign language as learners

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need to communicate fluently as well as accurately in the target language (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010). Learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) are asked to produce accurate spoken discourse with understandable speech patterns in communicative situations that they face (Levis, 2005; Yoon & Lee, 2009). The task of language teachers in teaching pronunciation is to instill awareness of the pronunciation features in the target language different from those in the mother tongue of learners, to help them distinguish these differences, and to provide repeated training so that they can produce correct pronunciation (Engwall & Bälter, 2007). However, lack of sufficient time and large class size are perceived as obstacles to teaching and learning pronunciation in a traditional classroom in EFL contexts (Lee, 2009; Yoon & Lee, 2009). These limitations have led language teachers to take on a different perspective and try to encourage learner-to-learner interaction to offer communicative situations to learners (Yoon & Lee, 2009).

The use of voice recordings and peer feedback is considered to be effective in improving students’ pronunciation, and it provides students with ample opportunities to practice and interact. Peer feedback, in particular, can help students improve their pronunciation in EFL classrooms where the time allotment for practicing pronunciation in classroom is insufficient (Patri, 2002; Song, 2008). Peer feedback helps learners develop knowledge, take responsibility for their own learning, and become active participants in the learning process (Rowntree, 1987). Moreover, the importance of peer feedback in online learning is emphasized since online peer feedback can compensate for a lack of class time and encourage learners to interact in a non-threatening environment (Ko & Rossen, 2001). Online peer feedback also enables learners to interact enough regardless of time and space. Therefore, online peer feedback can be used to improve the quality of online courses. Despite the increased interest in online peer feedback in an EFL context, there has been little research conducted on the impact of peer feedback on English pronunciation in online learning. Therefore, the purposes of the study are to explore the patterns of peer feedback on learning English pronunciation and to examine learners’ reflections on peer feedback in an online English pronunciation class. The main research questions for the purposes are as follows. First, what are the patterns of peer feedback concerning segmental and suprasegmental features in an online English pronunciation class? Second, what are the patterns of corrective peer feedback in an online English pronunciation class? Last, how do the students reflect peer feedback on their subsequent recordings in an online English pronunciation class?
II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Teaching and Learning English Pronunciation in an Online Environment

Two categories of the sound system in English need to be taken into consideration for teaching and learning English pronunciation (Goodwin, 2001). First, segmental features include consonant and vowel sounds. Second, suprasegmental features encompass more global aspects of the sound system, such as stress, intonation, reduction, pitch and other prosodic elements. Since the late 1990s, pronunciation instruction has taken a more balanced view between fluency and accuracy. Both segmental and suprasegmental features of English pronunciation are taken into consideration in English classes (Jenkins, 2002; Min & Pak, 2007).

Computer-assisted pronunciation teaching (CAPT) has become prevalent in teaching pronunciation. CAPT meets the needs of teachers and learners who seem to suffer from a lack of adequate time for pronunciation instruction in a traditional classroom and insufficient training (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011). For example, the pitch contour of learner’s own production is displayed on a computer, which is helpful for learning intonation (Chun, 2013). Also, the Internet and the Web provide access to unlimited amount of useful resources for various types of multimedia materials (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010).

Technology for teaching and learning pronunciation is provided for students online because such technology is easily incorporated on websites (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010). In addition to websites that include multimedia for pronunciation practice, teachers can utilize a course website alongside to a face-to-face course (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Engwall & Bälter, 2007; Tanner & Landon, 2009). In particular, a bulletin board system (BBS) is implemented in pronunciation as well as spoken courses for its convenience (Song, 2008; Yoon & Lee, 2009). Yoon and Lee (2009) adopted voice recordings for English pronunciation instruction online and a BBS to enhance teacher-to-student and student-to-student interaction through giving and receiving feedback. The results showed that the majority of students were interested in and satisfied with the use of resources and activities. In addition, they suggested that activities based on suprasegmental features while also containing segmental features be used as an alternative for promoting learner interest and increasing motivation in English pronunciation classes (Yoon & Lee, 2009).
2. Peer Feedback in Teaching and Learning English Pronunciation

Peer feedback has been considered to be important in teaching and learning English pronunciation (Walker, 2005; Yoon, 2013; Yoon & Lee, 2009). Dlaska and Krekeler (2013) suggested that effective feedback on pronunciation provides information on three aspects: the quality of the performance in regard to the desired goal, the quality of the performance, and how to close the gap between present and desired performance.

Some studies have compared explicit feedback to implicit feedback and emphasized the significance of explicit feedback in pronunciation class (Dlaska and Krekeler, 2013; Saito & Lyster, 2012). Dlaska and Krekeler (2013) concluded that explicit feedback was more effective than implicit feedback based on the results that improvements were found in segmental features, word stress, and other prosodic features when explicit individual corrective feedback was given to students. Saito and Lyster (2012) indicated the specific contribution of explicit feedback on pronunciation development. The results showed that Japanese students of English who received explicit feedback in form-focused pronunciation instruction outperformed students who did not receive corrective feedback. In contrast, Wachowicz and Scott (1999) recommended using implicit feedback rather than explicit and judgmental feedback to reduce frustration.

Several studies have investigated the relationship between pronunciation instruction and feedback (Carroll & Swain, 1993; Engwall & Bälter, 2007; Lyster, 1998; Saito & Lyster, 2012; Yoon & Lee, 2009). Explicit individual corrective feedback on pronunciation errors may concern individual phonemes or speech sounds, their assignment to particular words, or more global aspects like sentence rhythm. For example, Lyster (1998) indicated that recasting is the most commonly used technique for phonological aspects. These results may suggest that a simple reformulation of the mispronounced utterance immediately following the error might be sufficient to successfully correct it. Carroll and Swain (1993) claimed that feedback of any kind is beneficial to learners, and among them, explicit feedback is the most effective. Engwall and Bälter (2007) suggested types of feedback that need to be given in pronunciation class as described in Table 1. The types of corrective feedback include explicit correction, recasts, increasing feedback, comparisons to familiar phonemes, articulatory instructions, sensory feedback, contrastive feedback, metalinguistic explanations, and general recommendations.
**3. Online Peer Feedback in Teaching and Learning English Pronunciation**

There have been studies on the effectiveness of using peer feedback in pronunciation class compared to other types of feedback. Patri (2002) examined the influence of peer feedback on self- and peer-assessment of oral skills. The results demonstrated that peer feedback enabled students to evaluate their peers’ performance approximately as well as their teachers could. However, Yoon and Lee (2009) found that students’ perspectives on peer feedback and teacher feedback differed in that students had more faith in the teacher’s feedback and preferred it.

A few studies have been conducted to investigate students’ perceptions on peer feedback for teaching and learning English pronunciation and its impact on the improvement of English pronunciation in online environments (Walker, 2005; Yoon, 2013; Yoon & Lee, 2009). In particular, voice recordings and peer feedback were implemented in English pronunciation classes. First, Walker (2005) investigated the effects of using voice recordings and peer feedback on the improvement of English pronunciation. Learners were encouraged to work together while producing their recordings to develop accurate pronunciation. The learners were satisfied with using peer feedback, and they also considered peer feedback very useful.
Second, Yoon (2013) investigated the effectiveness and students’ perspectives of peer feedback in an English pronunciation class in an online environment and suggested a model for teaching English pronunciation. The control group included 58 university students in an offline English pronunciation class, and the experimental group included 50 university students in an online class. The results indicated that the experimental group showed improvement in a posttest, as did the control group. The student’s perspectives on learning pronunciation in an online environment were found to be positive in general. They considered giving peer feedback difficult but found it useful to receive peer feedback.

Except for Walker (2005) and Yoon’s (2013) study, little research is found on online peer feedback in learning English pronunciation, not to mention research on the specific patterns and impact of online peer feedback on L2 pronunciation. Therefore, this case study aims to investigate the impact of online peer feedback on learning English pronunciation.

III. METHODOLOGY

1. Participants

The participants consisted of 10 Korean university students taking in a two-credit online class for English pronunciation. They were selected out of 71 students enrolled in the course. They were taught by a Korean bilingual teacher who had a Ph.D in TESOL with over 10 years of teaching experiences. They listened to online lectures and interacted with peers and the teacher online as well. They were placed into randomly assigned groups for voice recordings and peer feedback activities. The 10 students were divided into two groups of five. They were chosen randomly as focus groups. Pseudonyms are used for all names. Information about the focus groups is described in Table 2.

Group 1 consisted of one freshman, two sophomores, one junior, and one senior. Nari, a 20 year old freshman, was high-intermediate level and took the course to study English since she considered English important for her academic career. She was highly motivated to study English and actively participated in the course. Minjeong, a sophomore, was a friendly and sociable student. Her proficiency level was intermediate, and she had prior experience using peer feedback in an English debate class. She preferred English speaking to English writing. She wanted her English pronunciation to improve through the course. Suyeon, whose pronunciation proficiency level was intermediate, was a sophomore majoring in Spanish
Interpretation and Translation. She compared most of her group members’ recordings to an audio CD or an online dictionary. Haesol was a 23 year old student studying Polish. She was a reserved student, and her proficiency was intermediate. She was very cautious when giving feedback since she did not want to hurt her peers’ feelings. Huiwon, the group leader, was an electronics engineering student who was in his senior year. He demonstrated a sense of responsibility to encourage his group members to submit homework on time. He had studied English for about a year and a half in Canada. His proficiency level was high-intermediate, and he was motivated to study English because he wanted to get a high score on TOEIC.

(Table 2) Information of Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nari</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minjeong</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>German Interpretation &amp; Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suyeon</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Spanish Interpretation &amp; Translation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Haesol</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Polish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huiwon</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Electronics Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Minjae</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Polish</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Danbi</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Spanish Interpretation &amp; Translation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunwoo</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Computer Science and Engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yeonhui</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Italian Interpretation &amp; Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nayoung</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Brazilian Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group 2 consisted of one freshman, three juniors, and one senior. Minjae was a freshman majoring in Polish. He took the course since he had not previously had an opportunity to study English pronunciation. He was low-intermediate level based on the diagnostic test. Danbi was a very outgoing and talkative student. She was intermediate level and actively participated in the group activities. She was very detailed in giving feedback in that she tended to leave comments pointing out various areas as many areas as she could. Sunwoo was a 25 year old junior. He seemed eager to study English, showing diligent participation, and he put more effort into the class than other students even though his proficiency level was low-intermediate. He was assertive and had a strong sense of responsibility as a group leader. He helped his peers to adjust to the class by giving compliments and constructive criticism when they had difficulty in catching up to the class. Yeonhui, whose proficiency level was high-intermediate, was considerate to her group members throughout the course and was very careful in giving
feedback. She showed a positive attitude toward English in that she was willing to take chances and use what she learned when giving feedback. Nayoung was very extroverted and showed a high level of participation in giving feedback. She was high-intermediate and was motivated to study English for her future job. Her goal is to get a job at the Brazilian Embassy in Korea.

2. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Qualitative data were gathered from online classes, online classroom observation through the BBS, students’ voice recordings, reflective learning journals and interviews. The online class titled “Principles of English Pronunciation and Correction” was designed to develop articulatory skills and auditory phonetic skills of English pronunciation through repeated practice and peer feedback. The textbook used was *Principles and Practices in English Pronunciation* (Yoon & Lee, 2011), and it contained various principles of pronunciation. The textbook provided an audio CD containing a recording of the book contents and samples for the practice passages. Since the class was offered online, an online community service which functions as a discussion forum was formed to encourage students to interact with their teacher and peers, compensating for the lack of interaction. As presented in Figure 1, the model for teaching and learning English pronunciation in an online environment (Yoon, 2013) was implemented in the online pronunciation class. Following the procedures of the model, students listened to the online video lectures, uploaded their voice recordings on the BBS, conducted peer feedback activity, then make reflection every week during the study. The students were required to produce a voice recording after repeated practice at least thirty times as one of the weekly assignments, and produced a total of 14 voice recordings throughout the semester.
This study was carried out over one semester from March to June in 2014 in a two-credit online class for English pronunciation in A University. For weekly voice recordings, the students were to practice with the sample recordings provided on the CD, generate an actual recording, and then upload it to the class BBS. Students had two days to listen to their group members’ recordings and give peer feedback. The students were provided with guidelines on giving peer feedback by using the tag-line reply function provided in the BBS as follows. First, give feedback on the suprasegmental and segmental features covered in the respective week’s and previous lectures in an accumulative manner. Second, give constructive advice and helpful tips, avoiding short, insincere, or negative comments which were not helpful.

In addition, the students were asked to write weekly reflective learning journal entries focusing on their experience with improving their pronunciation through peer feedback. The students wrote reflective learning journals every week after peer feedback session and submitted them in weeks 9 and 16 by e-mail.

3. Methods of Data Analysis

The qualitative data from online classroom observation through the BBS, voice recordings,
reflective learning journals and the interviews were analyzed as follows. Online peer feedback collected from online classroom observations was analyzed in terms of six types of feedback (Engwall & Bälter, 2007). Engwall and Bälter (2007) categorized L2 pronunciation feedback into nine types: explicit correction, recasts, increasing feedback, comparisons to familiar phonemes, articulatory instructions, sensory feedback, contrastive feedback, metalinguistic explanations and general recommendations. In order to investigate the patterns of peer feedback in an online environment, six of the nine types (explicit correction, comparisons to familiar phonemes, articulatory instructions, sensory feedback, metalinguistic explanations, and general recommendations) considered in this study because recast, increasing feedback, and contrastive feedback could not be provided in asynchronous online environment. Online observation data based on students’ postings and tag-line replies in the BBS were transcribed and reviewed several times for patterns, commonalities, and regularities of peer feedback.

The voice recordings from weeks 6 and 13 were used to investigate learners’ reflection on peer feedback since they recorded the same passage in weeks 6 and 13. The voice recordings were listened to repeatedly by the researchers and a native English teacher who had been teaching over five years. The voice recordings were transcribed phonetically using the International Phonetic Alphabet and presented descriptively. A total of 20 recordings were examined to show the students’ revisions after receiving peer feedback.

Data from the reflective learning journals submitted twice in week 9 and 16 were examined for experiences with and perspectives on peer feedback. The submitted journals were repeatedly reviewed by the researchers. Journal entries excerpts were classified into feedback students received, perspectives on the feedback, and self-reflection. The carefully selected journal entries in Korean were translated into English.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The data from the interviews were classified according to the interview questions, and important messages, features, or findings were highlighted. The transcriptions in Korean were translated into English and examined to investigate the students’ reflections on peer feedback for learning English pronunciation online.
IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Patterns of Peer Feedback in an Online English Pronunciation Class

In order to explore the patterns of peer feedback used in the online English pronunciation class, the students were required to give feedback on distinctive features of English pronunciation in terms of segmental and suprasegmental features. The students of the two groups produced 1,481 instances of peer feedback on the online BBS during the semester. Table 3 shows the different patterns of peer feedback used concerning the two pronunciation features in the online English pronunciation class.

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<th>Group 1</th>
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<th>Group 2</th>
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<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>57.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1481</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* S: Segmental features; SS: Suprasegmental features

The students produced 627 instances of peer feedback on segmental features and 854 on suprasegmental features. This result is congruous to previous studies showing that language learners in English language teaching contexts tend to be concerned with prosodic elements which are perceived to be more important from a communicative point of view than on segmental features (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010; Pennington, 1996). Although the students showed that they focused more on suprasegmental features, differences among the three groups can be found. Group 1 produced more feedback on suprasegmental features than segmental features. In contrast, Group 2 tended to be balanced in providing feedback. The findings for each group are illustrated as follows.

1) Patterns of Peer Feedback on English Pronunciation by Group 1

Group 1 produced the greatest amount of peer feedback on suprasegmental features as seen in Table 4. In addition, all students in Group 1 provided more feedback on suprasegmental features than segmental features.
(Table 4) Frequency of Feedback Provided and Received on English Pronunciation Features by Group 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Feedback Provided</th>
<th>Feedback Received</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>SS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nari</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minjeong</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>21.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suyeon</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haesol</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huiwon</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They tended to put emphasis on suprasegmental features in learning English pronunciation from the comments that they produced. For example, although they recorded a reading passage concerning consonants P and B, they provided more feedback on suprasegmental features rather than on the two consonants. Excerpts from comments to Haesol’s 8th recording are described below:

Minjeong: You tend to read ‘slight rise’ with pausing, but it might be better to connect the words. Also your [tʃ] of ‘front’ sounds like [p].

Suyeon: I think you are obsessed with stress, which makes your pronunciation weird... And you should put stress in ‘fif’ of ‘fifteen’ not ‘teen.’

Nari: Please put less stress in ‘expect.’

Huiwon: You put stress in ‘pect’ of ‘expect.’

Nari produced the largest amount of feedback (191 comments) in Group 1, followed by Suyeon (139 comments), Huiwon (128 comments), Minjeong (127 comments), and Haesol (109 comments). Nari considered giving and receiving peer feedback as a necessary part of the process of learning English pronunciation. Consequently, Nari’s attitude on giving and receiving peer feedback motivated her. The following is the excerpt from her interview.

*Nari: I tried to participate in the group interactions since I thought I could learn many things by giving and receiving peer feedback. Giving feedback itself made me study a lot by myself so I would not give incorrect information to my peers, and receiving peer feedback let me know what errors I was not aware of.*
In contrast, Haesol was the student who provided the lowest amount of peer feedback. She produced only 32 instances of feedback on segmental features. Haesol seemed not to be able to address comments on segmental features because of her lack of knowledge in segmental features, as she stated in the interview.

*Haesol: It was difficult for me to point out pronunciation errors on segmental features exactly since I couldn’t find it. It may be because I’m not good at catching the sounds. So I would give abstract comments like ‘your reading speed is too fast’ or ‘the pronunciation sounds awkward.’*

Minjeong received 170 comments, which accounted for the majority of feedback produced by Group 1. She received a lot of feedback on suprasegmental features. Considering her low frequency in producing feedback on suprasegmental features as indicated in Table 4, she seemed to have difficulty in learning suprasegmental features. Notably, Minjeong received many critiques on pronunciation errors related to stress and word connection at the beginning of the semester. Her peers’ repeated comments on stress and word connection seemed to help her recognize pronunciation errors and practice them, as seen in her reflective learning journals.

*Minjeong: There were comments concerning /t/ sound again despite that I practiced a lot. I think I have a phobia about connecting /t/ sounds. However, I believe that if I keep practicing, I can make improvements in the area of connecting /t/. So I decided to try to make natural pronunciation rather than giving up.*

2) Patterns of Peer Feedback on English Pronunciation by Group 2

Group 2 produced the greatest amount of feedback among the three focus groups and tried to be balanced in giving feedback on pronunciation features, producing 399 comments on segmental features and 388 on suprasegmental features as shown in Table 5.

It seemed that having an enjoyable group atmosphere increased participation and influenced the frequency of peer feedback. Danbi produced the most feedback (191 comments), followed by Yeonhui (166 comments), Sunwoo (161 comments), Nayoung (157 comments) who provided more feedback on suprasegmental features, and Minjae (112 comments).
Of the students, Danbi mainly gave feedback on segmental features and tended to give feedback by breaking one sentence into word units to point out detailed errors. Her meticulous feedback seemed to help her peers notice their pronunciation errors in detail. An example of Danbi’s feedback from the tag-line reply is described below:

Danbi: ‘red riding hood’ sounds like ‘led laiding.’ ‘Road’ sounds like ‘load.’ ‘Covered up’ sounds like ‘coballed up.’ ‘Arrived’ sounds like ‘alived.’ I think you missed /th/ sound for ‘teeth.’ (to Minjae, HW6)

Minjae produced the least amount of feedback, showing 42 on segmental features and 70 on suprasegmental features. It appeared that he was intimidated by one of his group members as he stated in the interview.

Minjae: At first, I tried to give comments as many as I could since I wanted to be a helpful person to my group members. However, one of my group members sometimes felt bad and expressed his bad feelings when I gave feedback to him. I didn’t know that my words would hurt his feeling. So I became intimidated and cautious in giving feedback.

Minjae stated that he participated in the group interaction actively at first, but one of his group members expressed bad feeling after several feedback. The result shows that a mild manner with affective comments is needed when giving peer feedback to use it effectively.

Concerning peer feedback that the students received, Sunwoo received the most feedback in Group 2. Sunwoo received almost an equal amount of peer feedback on segmental and suprasegmental features, accounting to 109 comments on segmental features and 102 on
suprasegmental features. The following are examples of the peer feedback that Sunwoo received on his sixth recording.

Minjae: I couldn’t hear ‘ed’ in ‘called.’ When you said ‘little red riding hood,’ it sounds like ‘lilelaidi hood.’ … You’d better pronounce softly and slowly like ‘lilt red raiding hood.’

Yeonhui: You need to roll your [r] sound more in ‘girl.’ … ‘Arrived’ sounds like ‘alive.’ … [ɔːl] is the correct pronunciation for ‘all’.

Nayoung: You missed ‘ed’ in ‘called’ as Minjae pointed out. You need to pronounce ‘girl called little red riding hood’ more carefully. … How about making more [v] sound in ‘visit’?

Danbi: I think I heard [l] sound in ‘arrived’ instead of [r]. … I recommend you to pronounce ‘swallowed up the girl’ more naturally. … Also you need to practice ‘wolf.’

After receiving feedback from peers on the homework, Sunwoo described his further improvements to be made. He recognized that he needed to practice /r/ and /l/ sounds more. An excerpt from his reflective learning journal is provided below.

Sunwoo: I got a lot of feedback on /r/ and /l/ sounds. The /ed/ sound was also pointed out. I thought my /r/ and /l/ sounds were fine, but through peer feedback I recognized that my pronunciation had problems. I will be careful of making /r/ and /l/ sounds when practicing.

2. Patterns of Corrective Peer Feedback in an Online English Pronunciation Class

To investigate the patterns of corrective peer feedback in the online English pronunciation class, feedback on voice recordings produced by the students was categorized into the six types of feedback. The students of the two groups used different types of feedback in the online class as presented in Table 6. The students produced the greatest amount of feedback on metalinguistic explanation (46.8%), explicit correction (36.2%), and comparisons to familiar phonemes (12.4%). This finding is congruous with the previous study that the students believed that implicit feedback is enough and not all feedback must be explicit (Engwall & Bälter, 2007). It also appeared that the students followed the teacher’s direction which asked them to give feedback in a mild manner so as not to make their peers embarrassed or ashamed.

Although Group 2 produced more metalinguistic explanation than explicit correction, Group 1 produced more explicit correction (37.2%) than metalinguistic explanation (36.2%). In addition, Group 1 produced more comparisons to familiar phonemes (23.1%) than Group 2.
other words, Group 1 generated more explicit feedback than Group 2. It seemed that the students of Group 1 considered explicit feedback beneficial to improve English pronunciation. In contrast, sensory feedback and articulatory instruction were rarely used, showing the percentage of 0.9% and 0.7% respectively. The results are consistent with the previous study that the teacher and students less preferred sensory feedback and articulatory instruction than other types. It was because students considered comparisons to familiar phonemes more effective to remember or acquire pronunciation than sensory feedback and phonetic descriptions (Engwall & Bälter, 2007).

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<th>Group 1</th>
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<td>9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1481</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* EC: Explicit correction; CP: Comparisons to familiar phonemes; SF: Sensory feedback; AI: Articulatory instructions; ME: Metalinguistic explanations; GR: General recommendations

The students of Group 2 used more sensory feedback and general recommendations than Group 1. Sunwoo, Nayoung, and Haesol provided sensory feedback to their peers, and they seemed to think it was also important to know the differences between English and Korean. The following is an excerpt from the interview.

*Sunwoo: I wanted my peers to know that knowing differences between English and Korean is as important as knowing similarities in two languages. This is because I noticed that pronunciation errors sometimes come from misunderstanding how to pronounce consonants such as /p/ and /f/ sounds. Some of my peers used to pronounce both /p/ and /f/ sounds as /p/ in Korean. But they are clearly different sounds, aren’t they?*

1) Patterns of Corrective Peer Feedback by Group 1

Group 1 produced 258 explicit corrections, 251 instances of metalinguistic feedback, 160 comparisons to familiar phonemes, 15 general recommendations, 9 articulatory instructions and
one comment on sensory feedback. According to Table 7, Nari, who provided peer feedback the most, tended to be balanced in giving explicit correction and metalinguistic explanations. She gave 46 comparisons to familiar phonemes, followed by Suyeon (43), Minjeong (28), Huiwon (22), and Haesol (21). Nari appeared to be quite knowledgeable in the differences between English and Korean, so she gave feedback on comparisons to familiar phonemes. The following are excerpts from Nari’s comments.

It would be better if you pronounced [within the] rather than [wit in the]. (to Haesol, HW1)
I recommend that you connect words softly, pronouncing [wainchu] rather than [waidonchu]. (to Huiwon, HW3)
The word ‘barely’ sounds like [baril], which is unnatural. How about pronouncing [baerli]? (to Suyeon, HW5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Table 7) Frequency of Corrective Peer Feedback Produced by Group 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
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<td>CP</td>
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<td>SF</td>
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<tr>
<td>AI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Haesol, provided 32 metalinguistic explanations, which was the least in that category compared to other students as seen in Table 7. She regarded finding errors and correcting them as important, so she tried to give feedback explicitly by providing alternatives rather than giving comments. An excerpt from the interview with Haesol is below.

Haesol: Before giving feedback, I always thought about how to give helpful feedback, and the result of much thoughtful consideration was to comment explicitly... So I chose to give comments explicitly using various examples to help my peers understand and reflect on their pronunciation.

Whereas other group members provided explicit correction the most, Minjeong and Suyeon gave more metalinguistic feedback than explicit corrections. This may be because the two
students did not want their group members to feel embarrassed, and they commented about this aspect of giving feedback in the interview:

Minjeong: What I felt was the most difficult was pointing out pronunciation errors since I was just uncomfortable in giving peer feedback. Of course, I know providing feedback is helpful to me in terms of learning English pronunciation theories and improving my pronunciation. I think, however, a timid person like me would feel uneasy pointing out some errors even though I can identify errors.

Suyeon: I tried to give comments and expressed praise a lot if my group members corrected their pronunciation in the subsequent recordings since I didn’t want them to be embarrassed. I think peer feedback is helpful... On the other hand, it could hurt my peers’ feelings, so I tried to provide feedback in an indirect way.

2) Patterns of Corrective Peer Feedback by Group 2

Group 2 provided 442 metalinguistic explanations, 279 explicit corrections, 29 general recommendations, 23 comparisons to familiar phonemes, 13 comments on sensory feedback, and one on articulatory instruction as seen in Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minjae</th>
<th>Danbi</th>
<th>Sunwoo</th>
<th>Yeonhui</th>
<th>Nayoung</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>N %</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC 47 42 %</td>
<td>46 24.1%</td>
<td>58 36%</td>
<td>54 32.5%</td>
<td>74 47.1%</td>
<td>279 35.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP 15 13.4 %</td>
<td>4 2.1%</td>
<td>1 0.6%</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>3 1.9%</td>
<td>23 2.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF 0 0 %</td>
<td>3 1.6%</td>
<td>5 3.1%</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>5 3.2%</td>
<td>13 1.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI 0 0 %</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>1 0.6%</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>1 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME 49 43.8 %</td>
<td>137 71.7%</td>
<td>89 55.3%</td>
<td>109 65.7%</td>
<td>58 36.9%</td>
<td>442 56.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR 1 0.9 %</td>
<td>1 0.5%</td>
<td>7 4.3%</td>
<td>3 1.8%</td>
<td>17 10.8%</td>
<td>29 3.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>112 100%</td>
<td>191 100%</td>
<td>161 100%</td>
<td>166 100%</td>
<td>157 100%</td>
<td>787 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students of Group 2 produced metalinguistic explanations the most, and Danbi greatly contributed to the number of metalinguistic explanations, amounting to 137 comments, followed by Yeonhui (109), Sunwoo (89), Nayoung (58), and Minjae (49). Although Danbi provided the greatest amount of feedback, she was very cautious in giving peer feedback and tended to give feedback euphemistically by using the phrase ‘sound like’ a lot.

In contrast, Nayoung provided explicit correction the most, amounting to 74 of her comments. She usually checked for wrong pronunciation then supplied pronunciation corrections or possible alternatives. Nayoung enjoyed and participated actively in the group.
interaction. In addition, she felt a strong sense of responsibility toward her peers in giving peer feedback. The following is an excerpt from her interview.

*Nayoung: Actually, I enjoyed the peer feedback activity since I could learn a lot by giving and receiving feedback. I tried to listen to my peers' recordings repeatedly to find some errors. To give correct feedback, I watched online lectures and looked things up in a dictionary because I thought I was responsible for giving enough information to my peers. I don’t think it was a waste of time but rather one way to improve myself.*

Minjae provided comparisons to familiar phonemes the most even though he provided the least amount of feedback among his group members. After he received feedback from Nayoung on the recording for week 2 and Danbi for week 5 on comparisons to familiar phonemes, he tried to use the same type of feedback starting in week 8. It seemed that he found comparisons to familiar phonemes helpful for understanding and correcting his pronunciation errors, so he tried to provide feedback in the way as well. The following excerpt from his reflective learning journal on week 6 supports the result.

*Minjae: Last week, most feedback I got was that I didn’t pause or connect words which caused my pronunciation to sound unnatural. So I practiced the points I received feedback a lot and I didn’t receive such feedback this week. I think my pronunciation errors on word connection were reduced.*

3. Influence of Peer Feedback on English Pronunciation Correction in an Online English Pronunciation Class

To explore whether the students reflected the peer feedback on their subsequent recordings, voice recordings from weeks 6 and 13 were examined. The students were taught consonants and emphasis in week 6 and other consonants and vowel schwa in week 13. They were required to record the same reading passages in weeks 6 and 13. The transcript of the excerpt from the passage for these weeks is as follows:

*Hello. Nice to meet you. My name is (name) and I am a student taking a pronunciation class. I don’t think my English is terrible, but I feel that having better pronunciation will help me to be a better speaker. I think it’s important that people understand me the way I wanted to be understood. I also know that the way I talk can say a lot about what kind of person I am. That is why I am taking my time to learn and improve English pronunciation. I am looking forward to a great learning experience.*
The students produced 42 peer feedback comments on segmental features and 93 on suprasegmental features in week 6 as shown in Table 9. In contrast, feedback comments on segmental and suprasegmental features in week 13 was decreased by 23 and 79.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Week 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, the students accepted the peer feedback that they received, which led them to reflect the feedback in their subsequent recordings. It appeared that giving peer feedback as well as receiving feedback contributed to incorporating peer feedback into the subsequent recordings because the students could consciously perceive and identify L2 pronunciation through the process. This finding is congruous with previous studies in which students who had perceptual training made improvements in production (Derwing & Munro, 2005).

It is worth noting that Group 2 showed an increase in feedback on suprasegmental features. Despite revising errors in the following recording, the reason why the students received more feedback on suprasegmental features appeared to be related to the group atmosphere. According to their comments in week 13, they received a notice from the teacher that simple complimentary comments were not sufficient for feedback, so they tried to find minor errors and give feedback, although they still found very few pronunciation errors as seen in the excerpts from the tag-line replies to Yeonhui below.

Sunwoo: I read the announcement on HW 10 which said that some comments like simple compliments were not feedback… So I should find errors somehow or other. I think you are good at reading by punctuating, so I recommend you to practice reading sentences with intonation naturally.

Danbi: Um… It’s too difficult… What can I say? Hahaha… You’re really good… I think you read sentences well without pausing.

In these excerpts of transcribed feedback from week 13, Sunwoo read the announcement from the teacher before giving peer feedback and told his peers about the announcement. As a
result, it appeared that the students in Group 2 tried to give meaningful comments by pointing out well-pronounced parts in detail even if there were no errors from their point of view.

1) Reflection of Peer Feedback in English Pronunciation Correction by Group 1

Most members of Group 1 received less feedback in week 13 as presented in Table 10. In addition, Group 1 was the group that incorporated feedback on suprasegmental features the most into the subsequent recordings among the three focus groups. In week 6, the students received a total of 14 comments on segmental features, but they received 11 on segmental features, decreasing by 12%. Concerning suprasegmental features, feedback was decreased to about 21% in week 13.

Among the students, it is worth noting that Haesol reflected feedback on suprasegmental features a lot in her recording for week 13 when comparing to week 6. In her recording for week 6, segmental and suprasegmental features in her pronunciation had several problems (Figure 2).

![Haesol's Recording on Week 6](image)

![Haesol's Recording on Week 13](image)

[Figure 2] Phonetic transcriptions of Haesol’s recordings on week 6 and 13
In general, she read every word distinctively not linking sounds. For example, she pronounced ‘the way I talk can’ [ðə wɛə tɔːk] and ‘a lot’ [ə lʌt]. Vowel insertion in ‘and I’ and consonant deletion in ‘student’ and ‘better’ can be also observed. Haesol received peer feedback on segmental and suprasegmental features in week 6. The following are examples of comments on Haesol’s recording for week 6.

Minjeong: I felt that the pitch in ‘Hello’ was low. You need to have more intonation because it’s a greeting. When you said ‘it’s important that,’ ‘that’ sounded too strong.
Suyeon: The audio CD connected ‘important that,’ but you read them without linking. You need to put more stress on the end of the word ‘pronunciation.’
Nari: It is better if you connect ‘student taking.’ I hear ‘chu’ in ‘help me to be’, so it sounds more natural if you made a weak /t/ sound. And put more stress on ‘terrible.’
Huiwon: How about connecting the two words ‘English is?’ I think you read ‘learn’ too shortly. ‘Lun’ rather than ‘run’ would be good.

After Haesol received peer feedback in week 6, she described her problems in her reflective learning journals. She commented that she was aware of her excessive /t/ sound, which caused her pronunciation to sound unnatural, and she made plans to practice by comparing her recording to the audio CD. An excerpt from her reflective learning journal is provided below.

Haesol: I thought I read the sentences quite well because there were no difficult sentences. However, my peers pointed out that my word connection of /t/ was not natural. I also received comments on stress. To improve, I plan to listen to the audio CD to compare my recording and mark the points to stress in the reading passage before recording.

Haesol revised her pronunciation in week 13 as seen in Figure 2. Although she still had errors in her intonation and pronunciation of consonants, her overall pronunciation improved, particularly in the area of suprasegmental features. Consequently, in week 13 the other four students commented that she improved a lot and her pronunciation sounded more natural than before as follows:

Huiwon: Pronunciation and stress were all good. One problem is that there is no pitch at the end of the sentences.
Minjeong: When you read ‘meet you,’ it sounds unnatural and you said ‘pronunciation’ as ‘pronanciation.’ You’d better make the sound ‘pronunci.’
Suyeon: Your recording is faultless! But ‘meet you’ sounds like ‘mechu.’ And you put stress on ‘ward’ in ‘looking forward.’ Otherwise, no problem. Good job!

Nari: It sounds much better since you corrected your errors in the comments from the last assignments. I commented that you need to connect student taking, and you improved a lot in word connection and linking. Others were good, but you read the way in a low pitch.

It seemed that peer feedback activities motivated Haesol to practice English pronunciation constantly as she stated in the interview:

Haesol: I thought I would be a little hurt if I receive peer feedback which says my pronunciation had many errors. So I practiced hard not to feel embarrassed. I used several ways to watch mirrors to see the shape of my mouth, listen and repeat to an audio CD to make similar pronunciation to the audio CD. Moreover, I tried imagery rehearsal that I read a passage fluently without errors or mistakes before I recorded.

It is also noticed that she tried her own ways to practice pronunciation more effectively. In other words, she actively used several resources around herself to improve her pronunciation.

2) Reflection of Peer Feedback in English Pronunciation Correction by Group 2

Group 2 incorporated feedback most prominently on segmental features in their recordings for week 13 as shown in Table 11. In other words, the students tried to reflect the feedback they received and revised their pronunciation errors on segmental features on week 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Week 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minjae</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danbi</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunwoo</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeonhui</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nayoung</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sunwoo was a student who showed a number of improvements in segmental features as presented in Table 11. In week 6, he received feedback on 7 segmental features and 7 suprasegmental features. Sunwoo had problems dealing with consonants T, R, and L in
segmental features and intonation, word connection, and pausing in suprasegmental features. Figure 3 shows Sunwoo’s phonetic transcription for week 6.

![Phonetic transcriptions of Sunwoo’s recordings on week 6 and 13](image)

The phonetic transcription shows that he was quite monotonous and did not show much pitch change. Vowel deletion in ‘hello’ and consonant deletion such as P, K, and D can be observed. It seemed that he cared about linking words too much and it caused him to reduce syllables. Even though he tried to link syllables, it appeared that it did not work well because he gave too much stress on the first syllable to make it sound natural and each word sounded distinctively as a result. In terms of ‘terrible,’ he seemed to make a mistake when pronouncing it. The followings are excerpts from Sunwoo’s group members.

Minjae: I heard [want be a] in ‘wanted to be understood.’ I think you omitted ‘ed’ and ‘to.’ Also you omitted ‘ward’ in ‘forward.’ Your voice was clear and strong.

Yeonhui: I recommend you to pronounce ‘terrible’ more softly. ‘Help me’ sounds like [haelmi]. ‘Learn’ sounds like [run].

Nayoung: ‘Wanted’ sounds like [want]. Do not pause when reading ‘That is why, I am taking.’ But you need to take a pause in ‘I talk.’

Danbi: ‘Student’ sounds like [student]. ‘Terrible’ sounds like [tadible]... ‘You linked ‘talk’ and ‘can,’ making [takaen]. ‘Learn’ sounds like [run].

In week 13, he showed improvements on segmental features even though he still had errors in suprasegmental features. As shown in the reading passage where Sunwoo produced the voice recording in week 13, he made considerable revisions, although similar errors on segmental and
suprasegmental features occurred. His patterns of pitch changes became clearer than week 6. In addition, his overall pronunciation was clear to understand what he says since he tried to give stress and make intonation. However, when he read ‘help me,’ he linked the two words too much so consonant P in ‘help’ was deleted, making sound [helmi]. Similarly, he reduced consonants in the words ‘think’ and ‘understand’ by pronouncing them [θɪŋ] and [ʌndərstæn] respectively. Concerning linking words, he linked each word too much in ‘what kind of,’ deleting consonant D. In addition, he did not link the words in ‘I’m taking my time to learn.’ When it comes to word stress, he often gave stress on the first sound of words. Sunwoo seemed to make improvements because he not only received peer feedback but also gave feedback to his peers as he stated in the interview:

*Sunwoo: Receiving feedback contributed to my improvements since I tried to incorporate feedback into the subsequent recordings. Also, I think giving peer feedback helped me to improve because I had to listen to my peers’ recordings repeatedly and carefully and study pronunciation features to give correct feedback. As a result, I could be reminded of the feedback that I had given to my peers while recording my pronunciation.*

**V. CONCLUSION**

This study aims to explore the patterns of peer feedback on learning English pronunciation and to examine learners’ reflections on peer feedback in an online environment. The main findings are as follows. First, the students gave more feedback on the suprasegmental features than segmental features of their peers’ recordings. The students appeared to be aware of the importance of suprasegmental features when communicating in English. Second, it was found that the frequently used types of corrective feedback were metalinguistic explanations (46.8%) and explicit correction (36.2%). By providing metalinguistic explanations, for example, the students seemed to point out their peers’ pronunciation errors euphemistically and indirectly. On the other hand, sensory feedback (0.9%) and articulatory instruction (0.7%) were rarely used among the six feedback types. The students seemed to think that it was not important to know the differences in the sound system of Korean and English and phonetic descriptions. Last, the students were found to reflect the feedback they received on their subsequent recordings. Comparing their recordings from weeks 6 and 13, it was found that the students did reflect peer feedback on their subsequent recordings.

Some pedagogical implications are provided to more effectively implement peer feedback in online English pronunciation classes based on the findings of this study. First, the students
generally tended to give more feedback on suprasegmental features than on segmental features; however, it is important to have a balance between segmental and suprasegmental features in pronunciation. Therefore, additional tasks or activities on suprasegmental features should be provided to help students strengthen their knowledge on suprasegmental features. Guiding students to give feedback on segmental features can restore balance in peer feedback.

Second, the students showed a tendency to give indirect corrective peer feedback, and it caused the students to feel they received insufficient information. Therefore, teachers need to emphasize the significance of the comments in terms of providing direct and clear information and guide considering the feelings of their peers is important due to the nature of the online environment.

Third, the use of various tasks and activities such as writing reflective learning journals and discussing feedback they have produced can be helpful. Reflective learning journals are important because it helps the students to reflect on the feedback on their English pronunciation. Since they only had online interaction, the students were limited in how they could express and share their ideas, especially when they disagreed with the feedback given. Therefore, it seems that having a discussion session on feedback, whether online or offline, would allow students to exchange ideas and opinions.

Finally, the results of this study show that students’ peer feedback and reflections using voice recordings in an online English pronunciation class can help students improve their English pronunciation. However, the study was carried out as a case study with a small number of subjects. Future research can be conducted with a large number of participants as an experiment to examine the effects of online peer feedback and students’ reflections on learning English pronunciation. Qualitative studies with participants of varied proficiency levels and majors is also recommended.

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Applicable levels: tertiary education

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