

Cooperative and Collaborative Language Learning: An action Plan

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Abstract- The spread of World Englishes has generated a need for maximizing intelligibility in speech discourse. Yet in current pedagogy teaching pronunciation is a much neglected area. In the Sri Lankan context deviations from Standard Sri Lankan English pronunciation, especially in segmental phonology, results in impairing intelligibility even amongst the local interlocutors. Utilizing the limited technology available this study constructs a short term Action Plan based on the tenets of cooperative and collaborative learning to address two selected pronunciation deviations: the nondifferentiation between /ʃ/ and /s/ and confusion of /p/ and /f/ in 20 undergraduate users of learner English. The Action Plan informs practitioners of Teaching English as a Second Language on implementing short courses which benefit learners who deviate from inner circle pronunciation.

Index Terms- intelligibility, segmental phonology, cooperative and collaborative learning, Rapid Learning Centers

I. INTRODUCTION

Dooly (2008: 21)^[1] states that ‘in the cooperative model of learning, the teacher controls most of what is going on in the class, even if the students are working in groups. Collaborative learning, on the other hand, is aimed at getting the students to take almost full responsibility for working together, building knowledge together, changing and evolving together and of course, improving together’. Combining these two modes the Action Plan of this study investigates the outcome of the combination: Cooperative and Collaborative Learning. Thus it has two composites teacher controlled group work and collaborative language learning where the responsibility for learning shifts to the student. It is an interactive team process where the main stakeholders: the teacher and the students support and rely on each other to achieve the goals set down by a course. Thus the commitment to achieve the goal is a shared responsibility demanded from each stakeholder and learning moves away from the traditional teacher centered dissemination of knowledge.

Down the ages scholars (Bejarano, 1987^[2]; Kreie et al., 2007^[3]; McGroarty, 1993^[4]; Sachs et al., 2003^[5]) have stated that student participation in group work following cooperative methods weans them from depending on a teacher as the sole source of knowledge and understanding. Furthermore it grants the teacher an opportunity to provide the weaker students with one-on-one tutoring while the stronger students involve in cognitive rehearsal. Moreover these scholars concur that both cooperative and collaborative learning facilitate second language

acquisition, improve learner retention and equal participation during group work hones individual accountability and positive interdependence.

II. RESEARCH ELABORATION

There are two main divisions in the dialectal taxonomy of Sri Lankan English (SLE) pronunciation: Standard Sri Lankan English (SSLE) and Other Varieties of SLE which are considered learner varieties. The diversity of these varieties of SLE is more robustly evidenced in the segmental more than the supra segmental. The target population undergraduates of a university in Sri Lanka fall under the latter speech community. Thus it is a dire necessity for these students, educated but a socially stigmatized group as pronunciation brands them as users of a non inner circle variety, to upgrade their pronunciation.

Furthermore pronunciation teaching has been a neglected area in our school ESL classrooms. Thus when these students enter the university, they find loud reading problematic, are hesitant and tend to proceed along a grapheme to phoneme conversion mode. They can form short sentences but non adherence to pronunciation norms in these two areas are so fossilized that very often the undergraduates do not perceive that they deviate from codified norms of SSLE.

1.1 Challenge to be resolved

Empirical investigation (Widyalkara, 2014)^[6] provides evidence that the selected two features of this study given below have a high frequency of occurrence and impact on intelligibility of pronunciation in Sinhala/learner English bilinguals in Sri Lanka.

- a) Indiscriminate use of /ʃ/ and /s/
- b) Confusing /p/ and /f/

This is due to the influence of the language specific markedness constraint ranking of their L1 Sinhala where /f/ is an alien phoneme resulting in confusion between /p/ and /f/ and/or overuse of /f/. Sinhala is a diglossic language. The grapheme for /ʃ/ in Sinhala is habitually pronounced as /s/ in speech. Furthermore free variation between /ʃ/ and /s/ is permitted in Written Sinhala resulting in further confusion of the phonemes. Thus the weak bilingual transfers the indiscriminate use of /ʃ/ and /s/ to their English pronunciation. This issue needs resolving before these students graduate as the lack of intelligibility in their pronunciation will jeopardize opportunities in employment. But the following challenges within the existing ESL environment have to be addressed to fulfill this endeavor.

- a) Lack of collaborative work

b) Archaic assessment modes

My Action Plan moves the classroom to a learner centered environment with cooperative and collaborative Learning and continuous alternative assessment and portfolio construction. Furthermore it is structured, rigorous and explicitly targets pronunciation upgrading in the selected segmental areas.

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION/SETTING

3.1 *Course Title:* Pronunciation upgrading I

3.2 *Course Goals:* The course aims to improve the intelligibility of the students' pronunciation in two identified areas and at the end of the course students will be able to differentiate /ʃ/ from /s/ and /p/ from /f/ in production and perception.

3.3 *Age/number of students:* 20 undergraduates aged 22 yrs.

3.4 *Linguistic level of students*

The students are low-intermediate level ESL learners in the first year at the university, specially selected for this course on a voluntary basis, due to their identified pronunciation deviations from SSLE which is the inner circle variety in Sri Lanka.

3.5 *Number of class hours per week and duration of course:* This course a supplementary to the 1st year course *English for Communication*. The class meets every Friday at 10.00 -12.00 hrs. for the first semester of the academic year. As one semester at our university has 15 weeks of coursework the total # of contact hrs. = 2x15 = 30 hrs.

3.6 *Set up*

Classroom: Spacious, air conditioned classroom with white board and multimedia. A desk and chair for each student which could be arranged in circles for group activities.

Rapid learning Centres: Rapid learning stations will be housed in a very large, air conditioned separate room each station with a computer and 5 desk and chair sets arranged in a semi-circle in front. Video viewing with headphones and podcasting facilities are available. The Centre will be open throughout during working hours but access will be restricted to students, facilitator and other staff members and technicians. Students could move to the adjoining language lab when required with 30 computers and a teacher's console.

IV. MATERIAL AND TECHNOLOGY

4.1 *Material*

4.1.1 *Audiovisuals*

- i. Sounds of American English- /p/ /f/, /s/, /ʃ/. Listen and watch manner and place of articulation in animated diagrams.
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/english/fra meset.htm>
- ii. English Pronunciation Lessons: How to pronounce /s/ and /ʃ/
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=5PRUa3QS178
How to pronounce /p/ and /f/ in English
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=AhdPywS1H1o
- iii. Silent Letters /p/, /s/: podcasts
<http://www.espressoenglish.net/silent-letters-in-english-from-a-to-z/>
- iv. PowerPoint for *click and pronounce* activity: One word/picture on each slide with the 4 phonemes in boxes given below. When the right phoneme is clicked a sound announces achievement. Words with target phonemes are randomly arranged.

Activity 1: 10 words + 10 pictures with one target phoneme in each

Activity 2: 10 words + 10 pictures with the phoneme in letter combinations/silent

Activity 3: 10 sets of minimal pairs words + 10 sets of pictures with minimal pairs words

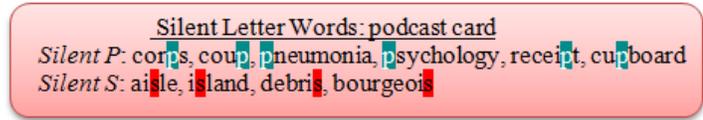
4.1.2 *Audios with transcripts*

- i. Minimal Pairs /s/ and /ʃ/
<http://www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/minimal-pairs-s-sh.htm>
Minimal Pairs /p/ and /f/
<http://www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/minimal-pairs-f-p.htm>
- ii. Practice exercises with Audio 25 sets
Phrases, Sentences, Poetry: /s/, /ʃ/, /p/, /f/
http://www.eslgold.com/pronunciation/sound_p_f.html
- iii. Tongue twisters
<http://thinks.com/words/tonguetwisters.htm>

4.1.3 *Handouts*

- i. Four articulation-cards: Each has 30 words with one sound /s/, /ʃ/, /p/, /f/ at Initial, Medial, Final positions
<http://adventuresinspeechpathology.wordpress.com/free-resources/articulation-cards/>

ii.



iii.

Figure 1: Silent Letter Words

Sound	Spelling	Examples
/s/ ə	s, c, ss, sc, st, ps, cc, se, ce, z (in SLE)	song, city, mess, scene, listen, psychology, flaccid horse, juice, citizen
/ʃ/ ɔ	sh, ti, ci, ssi, si, ss, ch, s, sci, ce, sc	shin, nation, special, mission, expansion, tissue, machine, sugar, conscience, ocean, crescendo
/f/ ɔ	f, ph, ff, gh, pph, u	fine, physical, off, laugh, sapphire, lieutenant

Figure 2: Sound to spelling correspondence card

Source: Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_orthography

4.1.4 Assessments cards 1-6: Listening Comprehension Quizzes- Listen and highlight the letter/s denoting the target phoneme and write the sound above it.

4.1.5 Authentic texts

- i. 1-4: 25 words with one target phoneme on each sheet
- ii. 4-6: 25 Minimal Pairs /s/ and /ʃ/; /p/ and /f/

- i. Ten selected short articles and five news clips with transcriptions
- ii. Aesop's Fables 10

The Boys and the Frogs

The sun was shining. It was a fine day. Some boys were playing around a pond full of flowers when they spotted a group of frogs hopping and swimming about in the shallow water. The boys began to shout and throw sharp rocks at the frogs, pushing each other.

Each fought to hit the most frogs.

They laughed off as many frogs were physically hurt. Sometimes the sharp rocks hit the frogs so hard that they shuddered and died. Finally one frog hopped upon a shiny stone.

"Please stop," he pleaded, "What may seem just fun to you is death to us."

Source: An adaptation of Aesop's Fables
<http://www.storyit.com/Classics/Stories/boysandfrogs.htm>

Figure 3: Aesop's Fables: 10, with adaptations to increase the # of words with target sounds

Phoneme count: /s/= 30; /ʃ/= 10; /p /= 13; /f/= 20.
 Calculating procedure: (# of correct phonemes articulations/phoneme count)/10

4.2 Technology:

Technology consisted of Rapid learning Centres and Language lab with 20 computers + headphones for personal use. Technical help provided. All audio/audiovisual material saved in the computers and personal copies given as take-home material.

i. Rapid Learning Centre (RLC)

The RLC activities target collaborative work where students form 4 groups of 5 and will remain in the same group. A set of Color flag cards and Cue cards which indicate the target phoneme and its Sinhala grapheme equivalent will identify the

target phoneme at each Rapid Learning Station (RLS). Initially the RLSs will be spaced out In the RLC so that no sound from one station disturbs another. Once each tier is completed the stations will be placed in a corner together and will be available for individual use outside class time. Students sign in/out times and RLSs used in a log book. If they log in 4 hours at a RLS the week after an assessment at each tier they can resit and improve their rating. This formative assessment will generate intrinsic motivation.

As I visit each station I would identify the weak students and spend a few minutes on Differentiated Instruction (DI) separately on the relevant target area (make them identify target phoneme, read the word/phrase aloud) and let them join the group again. As the students are engaged in group work at the stations it provides me with time for DI.

4.2.1. Tier I (2 hrs.): Each station will house videos/reading material/ facilities for other practice exercises. The students spend half hour at each station and rotate to the next station at a signal.

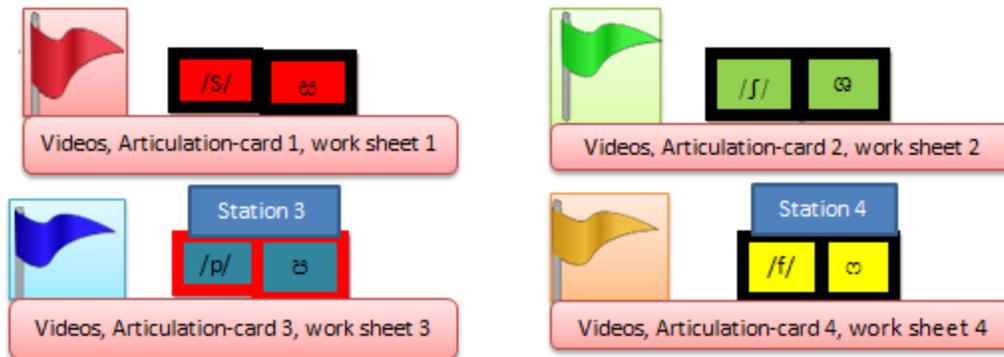
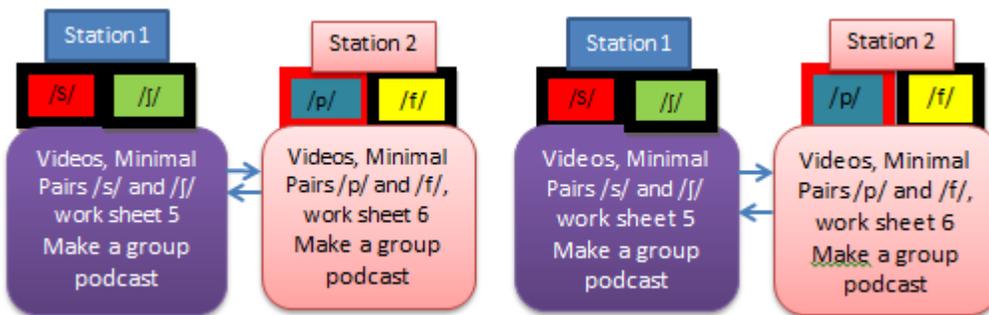


Figure 1: Tier I Rapid Learning Station

4.2.2 Tier II (2 hrs.): 2 sets of duplicate stations with podcasting facilities. The Ss spend one hour at station one and rotate to station two at a signal.



4.2.3 Tier III (4 hrs.): This station uses selected authentic texts where all four phonemes occur at random.

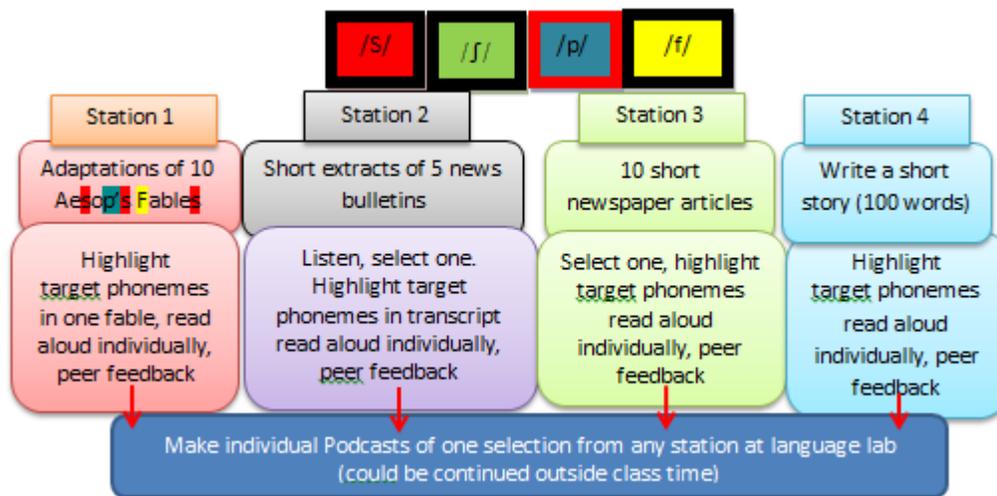


Figure 2: Tier II Rapid Learning Station

Moving away from the current summative assessment mode of this course uses a continuous and alternative assessment approach. As the course progresses a performance portfolio will accumulate 3 forms of performance information: a) Assessments 1-5; b) 3 Evaluation of Teamwork at RLSs c) 10 mentor diary cards + 5 mentor assessments on individual progress; d) and tabulation of individual hours spent on developing pronunciation efficacy at RLSs. One strategy in formative assessment is moving students forward in their learning by providing them with descriptive feedback as they learn. I intend to provide each student assessment feedback in a graphical format (other than the mentor comments) as illustrated below.

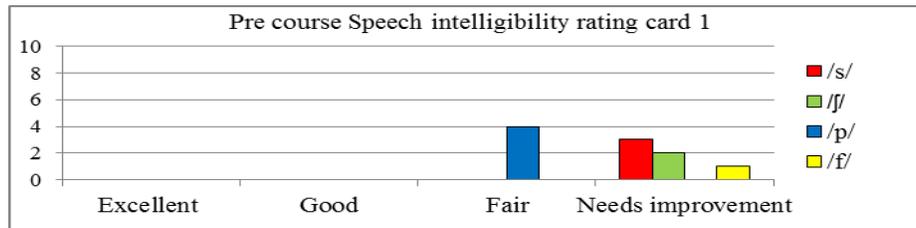


Figure 3: Pre course Speech intelligibility rating card 1

The feedback in the form of graphs intends to provide a dynamic depiction which will help individual learners to identify where their problems lie: what they are doing well and what needs improvement and stimulate them to target repair work.

V. PLAN OF ACTION

A plethora of scholars such as Derwing et al (1998)^[7]; Hahn, (2004)^[8]; Lord (2005)^[9] advocate that explicit instruction has strong, positive effects in the development of speech intelligibility in language learners. Thus my plan of action integrates explicit instruction on two targeted areas of pronunciation deviations from SSLE norms. The changes I plan to make will move the classroom from the traditional teacher centered, textbook and summative assessment based to a learner centered environment with cooperative and collaborative learning and use of authentic material + technology and DI.

5.1 The Course Procedure

5.1.1 Pre course activities

5.1.1.1 Students are informed of *Pronunciation upgrading I* through notices. Not only the teacher identified students during the Pre entry English course to the university but also the motivated can volunteer for this course.

5.1.1.2 Assessment I: Evaluating Pre course individual speech intelligibility level in target phonemes will be conducted with the Instruments Aesop's Fables: *The Boys and the Frogs* and the Rating and Reading sections in the Cumulative Evaluation Card (§10.1 Rubric 1). Time allocation: 15 mins. with 5 evaluators).

5.1.1.3 Mentor bank: I intend to introduce two types of collaborative work in this course: *In class* and *out of class*. The latter needs mentors. Thus notices will be put up to form a mentor bank of proficient SSLE user undergraduates. They will be volunteers either from university clubs who need to obtain certification on social responsibility or individuals who can put in 2 hrs. per week for 10 weeks (slots can be arranged according to Mentor- Student convenience) for pronunciation upgrading outside class hours. The mentors should use tactful pronunciation correction and make brief weekly entries (5 sentences) in a Mentor Diary card and fill a speech intelligibility rating card (Rating + Free communication section in the Cumulative Evaluation Card § 10.1 Rubric 1) every other week. Students too will give feedback on mentor collaboration/rapport through a rubric which will contribute the rank of the certification awarded/discontinuation of the mentor.

5.1.2 In-course activities

5.1.2.1 (Week 1) Introduction to the course

This will be attended by students and mentors. The students will be given a portfolio with the Pre course Speech intelligibility rating card 1 which graphically indicates each S's current speech intelligibility status in the target phonemes. I will briefly recap the goal of the course, how it functions and expectations. Then Ss will analyze and cognize assessment procedures and criteria. Clear rules on students' responsibilities during collaborative work at RLSs and mentor interaction will be discussed and agreed upon. Each student/mentor is given a Cue & Color flag card set and directed on their use: show and the flag card first to trigger pronunciation deviations and if it fails show the relevant Cue card instead of pronouncing the target phoneme during peer correction. Thus through the Introduction I intend to prepare the students mentally, physically and emotionally for collaborative work and continuous assessment.

5.1.2.2 (Week 2)

First I will demonstrate the manner and place of articulation of the target phonemes using diagrams/hand gestures/sounds (snake hissing for /s/; shushing for /ʃ/) and create associations with L1 grapheme equivalents in the Cue cards. The students watch me and repeat single phoneme articulation in groups with peer correction. Each group writes 5 words for each phoneme and first read them in groups and then each student reads four words with the four phonemes aloud with peer correction. Next they are given *Sound to spelling correspondence* and *Silent letter* cards and further collaborative articulation practice directed in these areas follows. This creates awareness that multiple letters can denote one phoneme and some letters which normally denote a sound can be silent. Both features are not found in the L1 thus drawing a contrast with English is needed. Then students do the on-screen *Click and pronounce activity 1* with peer correction which makes the students interpret and internalize Cue card & Colour flag card usage rules. This is followed by students creating/reading tongue twisters in groups. Thus prior to RLS Tier I activities the students connect colors/a grapheme in L1 with a target phoneme, practice the use of Cue & Colour flag cards developing kinesthetic/tactile connection with the phonemes.

5.1.2.3 (Week 3) RLS Tier I

At the station the students will re-create and demonstrate the manner/place of articulation of the 4 phonemes while they watch the videos. They will individually demonstrate their production to other group members. Students read *articulation cards* with peer correction. This will exhibit individual performance enabling me to identify students who need DI.

5.1.2.4 (Week 4) RLS Tier I

The students remain at the RLSs in Tier I. This week my first objective is to further enhance awareness on letter combinations and silent letters through *Click and pronounce* activity 2. Whether the students are able to execute pronunciation tasks, independent of help is examined through Assessment II: Listening Comprehension Quizzes 1- 4 at each RLS.

5.1.2.5 (Week 5): Reinforcing session

After each RLS Tier I plan to have a peer assessment/feedback/recap pronunciation Reinforcing session. During this session Assessment II will be peer evaluated using the Rating and Listening perception sections in the Cumulative Evaluation Card (§ see 10.1 Rubric 1). During Peer evaluation each member of a group will evaluate a set of 4 quizzes belonging to a student in a different group. As I am aware that this needs the collaboration of the teacher highlighted answer keys will be put on the screen to reconsider the peer marking and the set of quizzes are returned to the owner. Mentor feedback for weeks 2, 3, 4 and rating received for teamwork at RLS Tier I are given to individual students to be compiled in portfolios. Then the groups will discuss individual progress through mentor feedback + Ratings obtained for Assessment II + rating received for Evaluation of teamwork at RLS and suggest further RLS Tier I activity to members. I will identify need for DI. Students will debate on worth and relevance of mentor feedback. Reinforcing prior pronunciation *Click and pronounce* activity 1 and 2 will be repeated with Individual/group loud articulation.

5.1.2.6 (Week 6) RLS Tier II

My plan introduces minimal pairs at this stage upgrading the isolated phonemes to the main issue: confusing /p/ and /f/; /s/ and /ʃ/. Students will articulate the phoneme combinations in quick succession. *Click and pronounce* activity 3 follows. At each station students will write 10 other minimal pairs, 5 from each phoneme set, in groups. Once they have completed tasks at both stations each group member will read 2 minimal pairs, 1 from each phoneme set, while other groups do peer correction/note down innovative pairs.

5.1.2.7 (Week 7) RLS Tier II

Back at RLS Tier II the students will do Alternative Assessment III: produce group Podcasts. Each student will state name and read 5 minimal pairs from each set. Peer correction and rerecording is allowed.

5.1.2.8 (Week 8): Reinforcing session

Groups exchange of Podcasts and peer evaluation in groups. I will do my evaluation prior to the class and tally it with the peer evaluation to reach a final rating for each student. Rating and Reading intelligibility sections in the Cumulative Evaluation Card (§ see 10.1 Rubric 1) are utilized. Individual Evaluation of teamwork at RLS Tier II and mentor feedback for weeks 5, 6, 7 will be reviewed and given to students.

During reinforcing the students will discuss how rating obtained for Teamwork at RLS can be improved. Discuss individual progress at Assessment III. Listening perception rating graphical card for Assessment II is added to the portfolio.

Students will compare it with graphical card for Assessment I and perceive progress/need for further RLS activity. During reinforcing pronunciation Practice exercise v (Audio): 25 sets Phrases, Sentences and Poetry: /s/, /ʃ/, /p/, /f/ will upgrade pronunciation from word level preparing the students for reading/listening to authentic texts. A *Create a Poem and Read* session where students in groups use words with the target phonemes as far as possible follows. This is a pre activity for short story writing but I will tell the students the poetic license granted for poetry writing cannot be extended to short story writing.

5.1.2.9 (Week 9) RLS Tier III

During this session I plan to introduce selected authentic texts for reading/listening and one written activity. Each group creates a short story (word count = 100) and highlight and identify target phonemes. Peer correction is conducted during loud reading in groups/individually.

5.1.2.10 (Week 10) Language lab

Students move to the language lab and make individual Podcasts of one selection from any station in RLS Tier III.

5.1.2.11 (Week 11): Reinforcing session

During this session Graphical rating card III and IV of Assessment III/IV: Group/individual Podcasts and mentor feedback for weeks 8, 9, 10 will be given to students. Log book entries at the RLC will be given as # of hours spent on self-development at RLSs. Each student by now accumulates 4 graphical rating cards for speaking/listening, 3 rating cards for Teamwork at RLSs, 10 mentor diary cards + 5 mentor Rating cards and tabulation of individual hours spent on developing pronunciation efficacy at RLSs. Compilation of all feedback in individual portfolios will give clear evidence of motivation and progress. Students who evidence intrinsic motivation through further RLS activity and improved their rating will be commended. I will inform the students on the Cumulative assessment with Mini speeches to be held in week 13 and brain storm topics which interest them with key words in target phonemes (e.g. *Scholarship funding*). A shortlist is compiled and students draw lots to obtain their topics.

5.1.2.12 (Week 12): Students will practice Mini speeches with peer correction.

5.1.2.13 (Week 13): Cumulative assessment by same 5 assessors (pre-course assessment I)

Instrument: Cumulative Evaluation Card (§ see 10.1 Rubric 1)

Reading: The same passage given at pre-course assessment I: Aesop's Fables- *The Boys and the Frogs*.

Listening: A short news bulletin with transcript and fill in the blanks activity. Blanks indicate letter/s denoting target phonemes in transcript.

Speaking: Mini speeches

5.1.2.14 (Week 14)

Meeting with Mentors (1 hr.): Each mentor conducts a one-on-one discussion with the student mentored and gives feedback on Free Communication intelligibility through the 5 Mentor Rating cards and entries in 10 Mentor Diary cards. Analyze progress from pre to end of course (1 hr.): Students will finalize portfolios with graphical rating cards I-V, Formative assessment graphical rating cards, 5 Mentor speech intelligibility Rating cards, 10 Mentor Diary cards and 3 Cumulative assessment graphical rating cards. Comparing the pre-course with the final Speech Intelligibility rating Card in the Cumulative Evaluation where they read the same passage the students will be able to

recognize and acknowledge upgrading of Intelligibility in the target areas.

5.1.4.15 (Week 15)

This week is set aside for having fun at a *class get together*. Each mentored student will award certificates of appreciation/commitment to social responsibility to mentors. Each student will carry away their portfolios which indicate their progress over time along a collaborative continuous assessment process which differs from the summative assessment format followed at present. Furthermore there is no stress on passing/failing, what progress defines is the intrinsic motivation in each student.

VI. TIMELINE

Table 1: Timeline for the course

Week (2 hrs.)	Skill development	Activity to be trained/measured	Material
1	Listening/ speaking/ psychomotor	Recognize and Internalize Cue & Colour flag card usage	Cue cards & Colour flag cards
2	Listening/ speaking/ Reading/writing/psychomotor	Compare and contrast target phonemes. Formulate manner and place of articulation. Read/write Tongue twisters.	Sound to spelling correspondence and silent letter cards. Tongue twisters. <i>Click and pronounce</i> activity 1.
3 RLS Tier I	Listening/ speaking/ psychomotor	Develop precision in manner and place of articulation. Differentiate target sounds in uni-syllabic words. Peer correction.	Videos: /p/ and /f/; /s/ and /ʃ/ Articulation cards
4 RLS Tier I	Listening/ speaking/ psychomotor	Develop further awareness on phonemes represented by letter combinations and occurrence of Silent letters.	<i>Click and pronounce</i> activity 2. Assessment II: Listening Comprehension Quizzes 1-4.
5	Peer evaluation of Assessment II. Analyze ratings of Evaluation of teamwork at RLS Tier I and Mentor feedback for weeks 2, 3, 4. Compile individual portfolio.		
Reinforcing prior pronunciation			
6 + 7 RLS Tier II	Listening/ speaking/ writing	Differentiates Minimal Pairs during slow moving to rapid loud articulation. Write Minimal Pairs.	Audios: Minimal Pairs; Read /listen Podcasts + Handout. <i>Click and pronounce</i> activity 3.
Assessment III: Produce group Podcasts			
8	Peer + teacher evaluation of Podcasts. Analyze teamwork rating at RLS Tier II, mentor feedback for weeks 5, 6, 7 and Graphical rating card II for Assessment II. Compile individual portfolio.		
Reinforcing: Listen/read Phrases, Sentences and Poetry + <i>Create a Poem and Read</i> session			
9 RLS Tier III	Extended Reading/ listening/ Writing	Examines and differentiates multiple target phonemes randomly occurring in authentic texts. Create a short story.	Adaptations of Aesop's Fables, news bulletins, newspaper articles
10	Assessment IV: individual Podcasts		
11	Reinforcing		
12	Practice Mini speeches		
13	Cumulative assessment		
14	Meeting with Mentors + Analyze progress from pre to end of course		
15	Class gets together +award ceremony		

VII. BENEFITS

7.1 *Intrinsic motivation generation*

The main benefit gained will be the lowering of the affective filter (Krashen, 1981)^[10] which is the complex, negative emotional and motivational factors that may interfere with the reception and processing of comprehensible input. Such factors include: anxiety, self-consciousness, alienation, and so forth (Freeman and Freeman, 2011)^[11] In my course I will maintain low affective filters in the students through the following strategies:

- 7.1.1 The course requires the students to enroll on a voluntary basis.
- 7.1.2 As the group is small (n=20) I will be able to build a genuine rapport with each student. Findings of the empirical investigations by Sato (2012^[12]) indicates that effective teacher talk at a personal level including supportive feedback builds mutual trust and respect which help the teacher to overcome many classroom issues. Extending the Mentor- student rapport is judged throughout the course and mentors could be replaced if needed.
- 7.1.3 The course fosters the belief that ability to adhere to pronunciation norms is a changeable, controllable aspect of pronunciation development (Schunk et al. 2010)^[13].

7.2 *Course specific benefits*

- 7.2.1 Though the goal is pronunciation enhancement the lessons incorporate all four skills satisfying the 4 skills theory.
- 7.2.2 Most research shows clearly that in pronunciation deviation the problem is more likely to be reception - what you don't hear, you can't say. The RLS activities offer a variety of kinesthetic, visual, and aural devices and activities which allow clear practice in production and reception.
- 7.2.3 By using RLSs the students will be engaged in Collaborative and Collaborative learning with peer and teacher feedback while in groups. Group work gives students more opportunities to interact instead of a teacher-centered model which is the normal practice in the current environment. This classroom is more learner-centered and tends to take into consideration the learners' needs and interests. The aim is to secure intrinsic motivation that is needed to acquire the pronunciation norms in a more supportive and rewarding environment.
- 7.2.4 The goal of pronunciation instruction is not helping students to sound like native speakers but helping them to learn the core elements of a spoken variety so that they can be easily understood by others. Thus the students focus their attention on the development of pronunciation that is 'listener friendly'.

7.2.5 As DI is incorporated I can watch for plateaus in learning by watching the body language of the Ss and help to work past the difficult phases.

7.2.6 The continuous alternative assessments give each learner clear evidence of progress and concise feedback as to where their problems lie in target areas. This in turn will develop self-efficacy in learners and the habit of noticing problems they have.

7.2.7 Maintaining an organized, systematic individual performance portfolio will reflect a student's effort, progress, and achievement in the upgrading pronunciation in the target areas.

7.3 *Personal benefits*

Students develop a positive attitude towards pronunciation upgrading as they cognize that it is based on the strength of personal commitment and will organize and Internalize a personal value system which abandons the belief that they cannot escape from the stigmatized learner SLE user community.

7.4 *Social benefits*

Upward mobility in the pronunciation hierarchy: one step closer to SSLE.

VIII. CHALLENGES

Hindrance factors that affect teaching and learning pronunciation have not only pedagogical but also include complex socio-psychological aspects such as identity (Norton, 2000^[14], 2010^[15]), attitude and beliefs (Ushioda, 2009^[16]). This identifies multiple challenges.

- 8.1 Learners might initially feel self-conscious and negative about their weak pronunciation due to the social stigma associated with non-adherence to SSLE.
- 8.2 Pronunciation practice is limited to classroom environment. Outside the classroom students might fear to communicate with peers who belong to the prestigious SSLE user groups.
- 8.3 Tight timeline.
- 8.4 All ESL learners in Sri Lanka have a preference for traditional, teacher centered, uni-directional classrooms. They lack exposure and interest in collaborative learning.
- 8.5 In the students I expect to encounter deviation from SSLE pronunciation in areas other than the targeted phonemes. The tight timeline in my action plan does not allow addressing other areas of pronunciation which need attention.

IX. SOLUTIONS TO CHALLENGES

According to Gilbert (2008)^[17] challenges have to be turned into rewarding productive experiences during pronunciation teaching. Thus, in order to avert the above-mentioned challenges I advocate the following as solutions.

- 9.1 Firstly to effectively deal with the first challenge 8.1 will lower the affective filter by intrinsic motivation generation. Then at every possible moment I will praise noteworthy effort and concentrate less on students' ability. Teacher praise claim Hawkins & Heflin (2011)^[18] can be a powerful motivator for students. A mode: Match the Method of Praise Delivery to Student Preferences (in front of a class/work group/ in a private conversation) will be used. Secondly my continuous assessment and descriptive feedback enable learners to see progressive improvement, which is invariably a great psychological boost. My framework for teaching will not only address the cognitive and psychomotor domains but also the affective domain where self-discovery that pronunciation can be improved leads to personal development.
- 9.2 Appointed mentor/s will communicate naturally and would use tactful pronunciation correction. The rapport created might develop into a friendship which may result in internalization to SSLE user community within the university.
- 9.3 There is rigid time-management at all RLSs. Thus they are well-organized due to full advanced preparation and are well-structured with clearly set progressive objectives. Flexibility is provided by out of class time accessibility to RLSs. Out of class mentoring, which is very beneficial, does not eat into class time
- 9.4 Though theoretically group work at RLSs foster collaborative learning further motivation is generated by individual feedback given as ratings for the teamwork at RLSs. Teamwork rating cards are compiled in Student Portfolios they are tools that demonstrate that collaborative learning not only aids progress and achievement but enhances knowledge sharing and develops a team spirit. After completing the course when students meet each other may reflect upon their experiences and accomplishments.
- 9.5 This course will follow a Serialist strategy based on the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1962)^[19] and this is only Phase I. During this course I would identify students who need pronunciation upgrading in other areas and

shortlist them. Phase II will prioritize and address the next deviation from SSLE norms which has the highest frequency of occurrence.

X. PLAN FOR ASSESSING SUCCESS OF CHANGE

Plan of assessment of success of change in pronunciation upgrading will be based along the continuous progress in each student reflected by the graphical rating cards. At the commencement of the course each student will possess Speech intelligibility rating card I of a pre course reading task indicating intelligibility rating of the target phonemes. As the students progress through the assessments they receive 3 rating cards for 3 assessments after each RLS activity. At the end the cumulative rating card indicates reading intelligibility, listening perception and speech intelligibility. Comparing the pre course rating with the final reading intelligibility rating of the target phonemes (the instrument is the same passage) gives a clear indication of advancement. 5 Mentor evaluation cards will rate free communication outside class and indicate progress. Another measurement of Success of Change is through student feedback. Rubric III: the student assessment of RLS activities and self-efficacy gained and Rubric IV: Self assessed pronunciation development informs me on how the students rate the contribution of RLS activities/ the course towards pronunciation upgrading in the target areas. In the *Please explain* sections of these rubrics students are encouraged to use English but to make them fill the section I would allow weak students to use their L1.

Furthermore as most assessments are peer/mentor evaluations all rubrics are simple, short and targeted. This makes assessment not only quick but the criteria will also be understandable to the students.

10.1 Rubric 1: Speech intelligibility/ Listening perception/ Free communication index (Adapted from Morley, 1994^[20]: 76-77)

This card can be reconstructed as one card with Rating + Reading intelligibility sections to evaluate Reading, Rating + Listening perception sections to evaluate Listening, Rating + Speech intelligibility sections for mentor evaluations of free communication and assessing mini speeches.

Table 2: Rubric I- Cumulative Evaluation Card

Cumulative Evaluation Card			
Rating	Reading intelligibility	Listening perception	Speech intelligibility
Needs improvement (0-3 Points)	Cannot accurately differentiate between consonants. They are used in free variation.	Does not recognize the phonetic differences.	Inaccurate production interferes with the Intelligibility .
Fair (4-5 Points)	Shows some improvement in producing the consonant contrast accurately yet with a fair amount of errors.	Demonstrates a fair understanding of the phonetic differences.	Some amount of Intelligibility disruption due to mispronunciation.
Good (6-7 Points)	Demonstrates a great amount of accuracy in identifying the differentiation. Occasional errors.	Exhibits good perception of phonetic differences	The production of the consonant contrast causes little interference with communication.

Excellent (8-10 Points)	Production of the consonant contrast is accurate and intelligible.	Accurately differentiates between the phonemes .	The accurate pronunciation facilitates communication. Learner communicates what s/he intends to communicate.
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10.2 Rubric II: Collaboration Assessment rubric used for teacher assessment/peer feedback.

Table 3: Evaluation of teamwork at RLSs

Name				Points
Exemplary (8-10 Points)	Good (6-7 Points)	Fair (4-5 Points)	Needs improvement (0-3 Points)	
Always has a positive attitude about the task(s) and the work of others.	Usually has a positive attitude about the task(s) and the work of others.	Occasionally critical of the task(s) or the work of other members of the group.	Is often negative and critical of the task(s) or the work of other members of the group.	
Contributed equally to RLS activities .	Assisted group in the finished project.	Finished individual task but did not assist group during RLS activities.	Contributed little to the group effort during RLS activities.	
Performed all assigned duties and contributed to knowledge sharing. Always did the assigned work.	Performed nearly all duties assigned and contributed to knowledge sharing. Completed most of the assigned work.	Performed a few duties assigned and contributed a small amount of knowledge sharing. Completed some of the assigned work.	Did not perform any duties of assigned and did not contribute to knowledge sharing. Relied on others to do the work.	
Total Points				

Sources: Adapted from

<http://www2.uwstout.edu/content/profdev/rubrics/secondaryteamworkrubric.html>

<http://people.richland.edu/fbrenner/syllabus/grouprubric.html>

10.3 Rubric III: Student assessment of RLS activities and self-efficacy gained

1. What was the most important thing you learned at the RLS today?
2. What points are you still unclear about?
3. How would you rate today's RLS activities? Please tick.
 - Very dissatisfied
 - Somewhat dissatisfied
 - Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied
 - Fairly satisfied
 - Very satisfied

Please explain:

4. Do you think you have improved in the targeted area/s of pronunciation? Please tick.
 - Yes, I believe I have improved
 - I think my pronunciation has stayed the same
 - No, I don't think I have improved

Please explain:

Figure 4: Student assessment of RLS activities and self-efficacy gained

10.4 Rubric IV: Self assessed pronunciation development

How satisfied are you with your pronunciation development in the target areas? Please tick.

Very dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied
 Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied
 Fairly satisfied
 Very satisfied

Please explain:

Figure 5: Self assessed pronunciation development

In sum this action plan sets down a well-structured short module for pronunciation teaching with limited resources available in countries like Sri Lanka. It encourages teachers to move away from traditional teacher centered methods to Cooperative and Collaborative Language Learning.

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