L1 Interference on L2 Speech Sounds in an EFL Context: A Study on the English Speakers from the Southwestern Parts of Bangladesh

Md. Rakibul Islam

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University, (BSMRSTU), Bangladesh

Mohammad Akteruzzaman *

Lecturer (Adj), Department of English, Hamdard University Bangladesh, Bangladesh

Abstract

Regardless of the context, English-speaking has seen dramatic geographical and local varieties whether it is used by the native speakers or the non-native ones. As English still enjoys an EFL status in Bangladesh, it is only used in some specific insets. Although English is taught as a mandatory subject in the national curriculum for the first 12 years of study (secondary and higher-secondary), students still fail to conceptualise the factors of Received Pronunciation (RP) resulting into the distortion of some specific speech sounds and a serious impairment in the level of their intelligibility. To be more precise, there are some distinct speech sounds that seem to be the most challenging ones for them to pronounce as per the rules of RP and those have been identified through an initial survey. Brewing on this very idea, this paper has been designed drawing phonetic samples from 47 students studying at the Department of English in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU), Bangladesh. Keeping some specific discrepancies in the ways these very students pronounce English sounds at its focus, this paper attempts to find out the reasons behind the changes or modifications, which are made sometimes deliberately and sometimes with purpose. Data were collected by Focused Group Discussions and Interviews which clearly project the factors working behind their mispronunciation. Also, some recommendations have been proposed at the end of the paper.

Keywords: L1 interference, speech training, L2 pronunciation, language variety

INTRODUCTION

In any EFL context, English speaking tends to uphold more importance to the people than any other macro skills. As there are now more non-native speakers than native speakers of English (Tapia, 2010), the native language influence on the ways the non-native speakers pronounce English sounds cannot be gone unnoticed. Researchers have

---

* **Correspondence:** Mohammad Akteruzzaman, Email: shumon0413@gmail.com

shown the minute relationships between the first language (L1) and the target language (L2) and the studies on how these two are connected are often categorized in the fields of language contact, cross-linguistic influence, features of world English, L1 interference and language variation (Benson, 2002; De Bot, 1986; Cook, 2015; Ellis R., 1994; Kohn, 1986; James & Leather, 1991; Gute & Trouvain, 2007; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Cheshire, 1991; Weber, 2014; Chambers & Natalie, 2013; Siemund, 2011; Bell, 1995; Odlin, 1989; Knapp & Seidlhofer, 2009; University, 2010; Kroll, 2011). L1 interference has been referred as a "deviation from norms of either language which occurs in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language" (Weinreich, 1979, p. 1). This also produces "errors or deviant usage of various kinds" (Chesterman, 1998, p. 42).

These errors are unexpected and unpredictable as errors in this context differ from person to person depending on the prior knowledge of L1 and the local variety of the same (Diessel, 2015). This influence of L1 on L2 acquisition has been termed as Language Transfer and studies have shown that the learning of the first one essentially affects the ways one learns the second language (Gass & Selinker, 1994). Also, these transfers have been designated as Negative and Positive Transfers where a Positive Transfer results in no error in the learning of L2 and the Negative one may lead to significant errors that may include a transmission of the forms and meanings of words from L1 towards L2. (Lado, 1957). Pavlenko and Jarvis (2002) assert this to be "Bidirectional Transfer" and in their later studies in 2008 as "Forward Transfer", "Reverse Transfer", and "Lateral Transfer". Ueyama (2000) acknowledges this as the pattern of L2 learning can be characterised by the background of L1 and thus any adult speaker who would use any new language with a sound knowledge of any other language should be considered as speakers with a foreign accent. On the other hand, for any setting, academic, professional or interactional, speaking gets the utmost importance as English is the accepted language of 85% organisations in the whole world (Nazara, 2011; Crystal, 1997).

Graves (2008) puts more importance on speaking as he avows that "the thrust is to learn language to communicate, to improve one's economic prospects, to expand one's horizons both literally and/or figuratively to be a global citizen" (p. 156). It can also be assumed by the statements of some other scholars as it has been stated that "a large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking" (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 201). On the contrary, speaking entails a vivid sense of linguistic aspects of language as this is "the most complex and difficult skill to master" (Hinkel, 2005, p. 485) and the vernacular usages take it to a tougher level for the ESL/EFL learners (Thornbury & Slade, 2006). Among the micro level skills of speaking, pronunciation is thought to be of utmost value as this is an inseparable part of successful oral communication (Szpyra, 2014; Szynalski, 2016; Celce-Murcia, 1987; Gilbert, 1984). Even after having a good command over the English grammar, pronunciation can never be ignored for there is always the stages in the society when someone has to speak it out or go for the verbal process, other than writing (Gilakjani, 2012; Conti, 2015; Smith, 2015). Furthermore, a faulty pronunciation

affects their intelligibility and forces him to stay aloof from the mainstream speakers of English. In our context, mainstream refers to the majority of the speakers who can produce a decent and comprehensible form of English or at least, can utter the English speech sounds without creating much deviation from the RP (Received Pronunciation) patterns.

Kent (1992) conceives the definition of intelligibility as "an immediate principal criterion by which we judge a communicative attempt" (p. 1). It is an apprehension that even crosses the boundaries of native & non-native varieties of English and any malfunction in this quality, may disturb the comprehensibility of the orator (Nelson, 2012) and emphasis should be given on bringing the non-native speakers' pronunciation as close as possible to the native one providing the least amount of importance on the least frequent ones (Low, 2014). In this regard, our foremost concern had been on the study of the mispronunciations from an objective perspective and the RP system was considered as a sample or standard of pronunciation. The speakers were also instructed to follow the RP method to polish up their pronunciation to their level best so that their English shifts its status from an unintelligible one to an intelligible one.

However, teaching pronunciation has long been ignored in the context of Bangladesh and still there is no substantial development in the teaching systems of Bangladesh that might foster this noteworthy skill to the fullest (Maniruzzaman, 2013). Moreover, English speaking & listening skills are not assessed in the public examinations of Bangladesh which incidentally removes the importance over these skills (Hoque, 2010). Amin (2006) makes a further dissection by affirming that in Bangladesh, the students do not feel motivated to speak English in their schools and colleges as there is no exposure to English speaking. Sultana and Arif (2007) have blamed their less knowledge of the letters & sounds of a word, stresses to be used while pronouncing and phonological divisions. Also, it has been found that the Bangladeshi speakers often lean towards an accent close to their mother tongue without paying adequate attention to the sound patterns and intonation systems in English (Rahman, 1995). Following the study conducted by Prananingrum and Kwary (2007), the speakers of the southwestern parts of Bangladesh were tested for pronunciation deficiencies and it was observed that they have some serious malformations in their English accent. For example, they pronounced the sound /tʃ/ as /s/. This was not the only evidence to concentrate. It was obvious that these students had some distortions in their accent which was inherent and to some extent, conventional. This raised the first stance of the research problem that was to move their accent as closer as possible to the RP or, at least, turn it into an acceptable form which would create no hindrance in their communication in a multilingual context as a global resident. With this focus, this paper has been designed where samples were collected from the English speakers of that particular speech community to detect the patterns of their speech. The data were then analysed which revealed the final list of distorted sounds in their accent. A questionnaire and Focused Group Discussion session revealed the reasons working behind their mispronunciation which were followed by an action plan with a view to remedying these distorted sounds. At last, the learners were trained intensively through sixty sessions to try out the

probable solutions. After the completion of the sessions, a new set of data was collected to trace the improvements in their accent and the study showed a substantial development in their pronunciation. Accordingly, this paper was designed employing the following research questions in concentration.

    a. What are the most problematic sounds for this distinct speech community?

    b. What could be the working factors behind this phenomenon?

    c. How far can these issues be addressed and resolved?

THE POPULATION AND THE SETTING

The research was conducted on the speakers from the southwestern parts of Bangladesh covering the areas named Gopalganj, Narail, Magura, Jhinaidah, Jessore, Satkhira and some parts of Khulna & Bagerhat. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU) being one of the prominent public universities in this region, a good number of students enroll in this university every year from these regions to pursue their tertiary education. The participants were the students at this university. The main problem with their English pronunciation is that they tend to stick to a certain pattern while speaking English which is also identifiable in their ways of pronouncing Bangla sounds. It has been found that their speech sounds are getting distorted to a certain level and these problems have been recorded through a survey.

OBSERVATION OF THE PROBLEM

To address the problem, at first, they were under observation for 7 days and during these days all the problematic words with unusual pronunciation have been recorded which were found in their actual utterances while attending classes, delivering presentations and interacting with the teachers. The words containing distorted pronunciations are: glass, class, brush, gloves, snacks, school, spray, group, please, slip, from, tray, plastic, slap, crystal, cross, chair, cheat, pair, hair, slow, grow, note, boat, vote, van, fan, fast, zoom, zoo, sip, us, day. Each of them sounded with a notable difference from the specific counterpart in RP. The words have been transcribed and the sounds have been sorted out to determine the number of distorted sounds. It was found that they were struggling the most with the sounds exhibited in Figure 1.1.

SL#	RP Sounds	Sounds produced by the respondents
1.	/eə/	/ɪə/
2.	/əʊ/	/ɒ/
3.	/eɪ/	/e/
4.	/tʃ/	/s/
5.	/s/	/tʃ/
6.	/z/	/dʒ/
7.	Labiodental /f/	Bilabial /f/
8.	Labiodental /v/	Bilabial /v/

Figure 1. Chart of distorted sounds

Next, the sounds were analysed and categorised into two distinct sub-classes described in the next section.

Epenthesis

The first problem that was discovered was the inclination towards the addition of another vowel sound or Epenthesis while pronouncing certain words. As the speakers sometimes try to oversimplify the sounds of those very words, they form a habit of adding one more vowel in the initial or medial positions of those very words as presented in Figure 2.

a. The short vowels /ɪ/, /ɒ/, /e/ and /ʊ/ appear in the medial positions of certain words

b. Sometimes the short vowel /ɪ/ takes the initial place of certain words

SL#	Sample Words	RP transcription	Actual utterances of the respondents
1.	glass	/glɑ:s/	/gɪlɑ:s/
2.	class	/klɑ:s/	/kɪlɑ:s/
3.	brush	/brʌʃ/	/bɪrʌʃ/
4.	gloves	/glʌvz/	/gɪlʌvz/
5.	snacks	/snæks/	/ɪsnæks/
6.	school	/sku:l/	/ɪsku:l/
7.	spray	/spreɪ/	/ɪspere/
8.	group	/gru:p/	/gʊru:p/
9.	please	/pli:z/	/pɪli:z/
10.	slip	/slɪp/	/sɪlɪp/
11.	from	/frɒm/	/fɒrɒm/
12.	tray	/treɪ/	/tere/
13.	plastic	/ˈplæstɪk/	/ˈpɪlæstɪk/
14.	slap	/slæp/	/sɪlæp/
15.	crystal	/ˈkrɪstl̩/	/ˈkɪrɪstl̩/
16.	cross	/krɒs/	/kɒrɒs/

Figure 2. Examples of epenthesis (Marked in red)

Substitution

The next prominent distinctive feature could be traced as Substitution. At this point, the learners were found to be struggling with the actual use of some RP sounds, both vowels and consonants, which compelled them to adopt the techniques of substitution, knowingly or unknowingly. The elaborated conclusions are given herewith:

a. Initial Voiceless /tʃ/ is substituted by an Initial Voiceless /s/

b. Final /r/ is retained whereas the dropping of the same sound is suggested in RP

c. The Diphthong /eə/ is replaced by another Diphthong /ɪə/

d. A short vowel /ɒ/ takes the place of the Diphthong /əʊ/

e. Labiodental /f/ and /v/ give away their positions for Bilabial /f/ and /v/ which is also a common feature of Bangla speech patterns of this region

f. The voiced consonant /z/ is alternated with the voiced consonant /dʒ/

g. The voiceless consonant /s/ is replaced by voiceless consonant /tʃ/

h. The diphthong /eɪ/ becomes short vowel sound /e/

SL#	Sample Words	RP transcription	Actual utterances of the respondents
1.	chair	/tʃeə/	/sɪər/
2.	cheat	/tʃiːt/	/siːt/
3.	pair	/peə/	/pɪər/
4.	hair	/heə/	/hɪər/
5.	slow	/sləʊ/	/sɒlɒ/
6.	grow	/grəʊ/	/gɒrɒ/
7.	note	/nəʊt/	/nɒt/
8.	boat	/bəʊt/	/bɒt/
9.	vote	/vəʊt/	/vɒt/ (Bilabial /v/)
10.	van	/væn/	/væn/ (Bilabial /v/)
11.	fan	/fæn/	/fæn/ (Bilabial /f/)
12.	fast	/fɑːst/	/fɑːst/ (Bilabial /f/)
13.	zoom	/zuːm/	/dʒuːm/
14.	zoo	/zuː/	/dʒuː/
15.	sip	/sɪp/	/tʃɪp/
16.	us	/əz/	/ətʃ/
17.	day	/deɪ/	/de/

Figure 3. Examples of substitution (Marked in red)

DATA COLLECTION FOR PROBABLE EXPLANATIONS

Now, the question that has risen is the possible reasons working behind these mispronunciations. It could be identified very easily that their Bangla speech sounds are quite similar to the ways they pronounce the English counterparts. Moreover, sometimes they just follow a specific pattern as they have to go on with the speech following the peers. As the peers do the same, it can in some cases make them use these patterns out of Peer Pressure (Stewart, 1989). It was also perceived in some cases that they had been through these patterns in their real lives and the way they adopted the addition of the short vowel /ɪ/ has something to do with their previous education. It could be guessed that their education system, especially the English teachers, allowed them to use the specific style which hampered their urge for using the RP pattern. As there is an ever going race between the number of the students and the number of proficient teachers in the secondary and higher secondary levels of Bangladesh, these students fall victim to these falsifications quite effortlessly. One more reason could be the inclination towards their own Bangla dialect which has a similar sound pattern as recorded in their speech problems. As mentioned earlier, there are not enough trained teachers to facilitate English speaking for them and they just follow the way they pronounce Bangla in their areas. It has a more problematic condition in the rural areas. Most of the participants are from these rural areas which could hardly nourish their intelligible English pronunciation in the schools & colleges, let alone using the RP one. This made them simply go by the regular ways to achieve a mutually intelligible pronunciation. It takes the utmost form when practiced for twelve years and the teachers of the tertiary levels have to deal with this very problem using the highest amount of their allotted time. In this case of BSMRSTU, all the participants are the students of fundamental English courses and they have been using English for the last

twelve years as a part of their education system. The challenge arises when their speeches are auditioned in the English lab classes as well as their class presentations which brought out these discrepancies in their speeches. It is not quite possible to turn their highly distorted speech sounds into a polished and intelligible one overnight and this is the case for almost all the higher education institutes in Bangladesh. At present there are 131 universities in Bangladesh (University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, 2015) where teachers generally have large classrooms (Rahman & Hossain, 2015), it is difficult to pay intense attention to every student for a single teacher. If this is the case only in BSMRSTU, the nationwide portrait could be readily visualized. This problem gets a more prolific shape when the teacher finds the degradation in their motivation. For a fruitful outcome, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation should complement each other, however, in this case, the level of intrinsic motivation is almost null. Although some students are aware of the RP system and can conceptualize the intelligible pronunciation that adds up to their Competence (Chomsky, 1969), they cannot free themselves from the traditional ways in their Performance level even though they have been studying the basics of English Phonetics & Phonology for the last six months. To set up a valid ground for their theoretical and practical knowledge of English listening and speaking, the university offers basic English courses (3 credits), courses on presentation skills (1 credit) and English Language Lab course (1 credit). To enhance the productivity and ensure the maximum exposure to L2, all these courses are conducted in a full-fledged English Language Lab by a group of highly motivated teachers. Providing that, it can be taken that there is no deficiency where it comes to the parts of extrinsic motivation. Nevertheless, other than a trickle of instances, no such illustrations have been documented that may expedite the intrinsic motivation or smoothen their own exertions. The findings of Focused Group Discussion (FGD) clearly project that their L2 pronunciation is highly overpowered by L1 and they fail to curtail these effects even though some of them have actually attempted to do so. Peer Pressure again steps in and some of them have actually reported that their fellow mates take it trivially when they try to pronounce a sound following RP. To add to this diversity, their speech organs play a malicious role that subdues their ways of pronunciation. One significant example can be the way they apply in pronouncing the Palato-alveolar /tʃ/ which transforms into Alveolar /s/ when used in real life. It can be perceived that their speech organs are not programmed to produce that Palato-alveolar sound which is the outcome of the domination of L1 over L2. The Bangla counterpart of /tʃ/ is also pronounced in the same way. For instance, the Bangla word "চাচা" (/tʃatʃa/) is altered to "সাসা" (/sasa/). To go further, one might consider their family background where their socio-economic status is to blame. Without any valid reason, their upbringing supported the distorted patterns which motivated them to merge into that arrangement without realizing the problems that may show up in their future. All these conclusions had been attained trough a questionnaire survey (Appendices A) and FGD. The following figure (1.4) depicts the findings from the questionnaire and the transcription of FGD is provided in Appendices B.
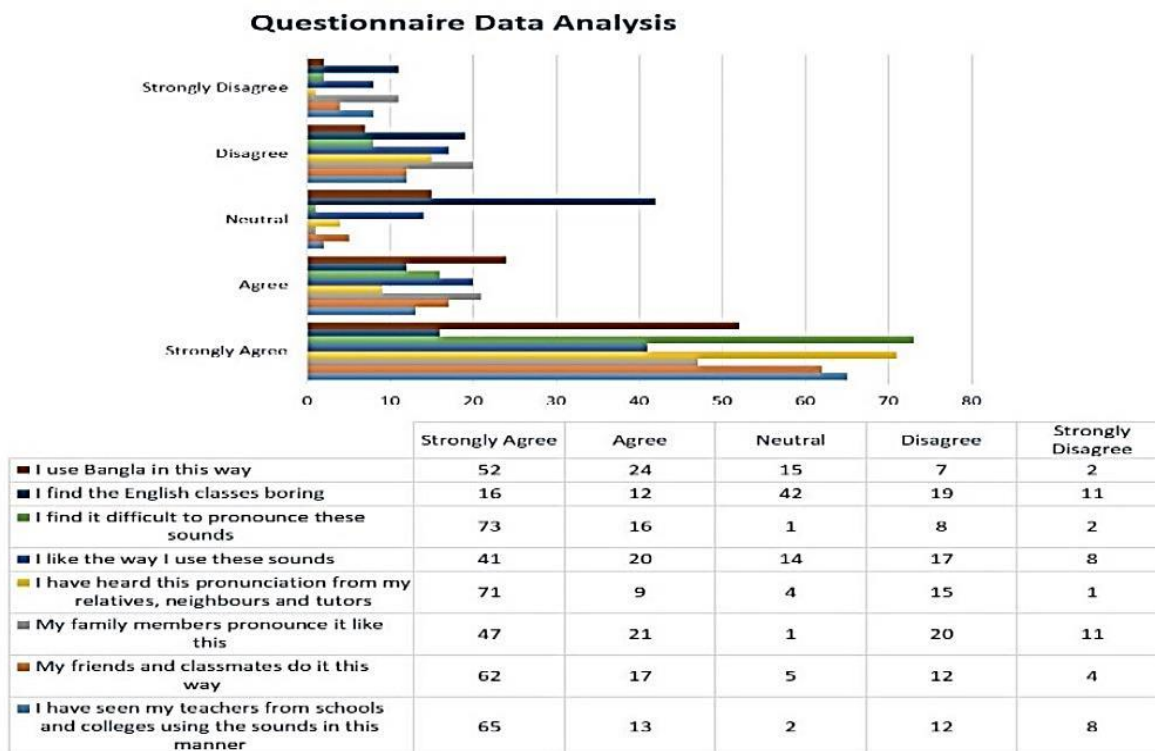
Questionnaire Data Analysis

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
■ I use Bangla in this way	52	24	15	7	2
■ I find the English classes boring	16	12	42	19	11
■ I find it difficult to pronounce these sounds	73	16	1	8	2
■ I like the way I use these sounds	41	20	14	17	8
■ I have heard this pronunciation from my relatives, neighbours and tutors	71	9	4	15	1
■ My family members pronounce it like this	47	21	1	20	11
■ My friends and classmates do it this way	62	17	5	12	4
■ I have seen my teachers from schools and colleges using the sounds in this manner	65	13	2	12	8

Figure 4. Questionnaire responses (In percentile)

PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION

After obtaining the results from the questionnaire and FGD, the next step was to lay an attempt to resolve this issue. As discussed earlier, these very speakers tend to incline towards their own ways of pronouncing these sounds, the very first dispute to address was to bring them into the realm of self-motivation so that they could be at ease to learn the RP patterns of pronunciation. However, this was not welcomed with a full heart and some of them hesitated to speak up as they thought it to be out of their comfort zone. That is why Community Language Learning (CLL) founded by Charles A. Curran (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) gained the foremost attention. CLL has been highly proclaimed by the researchers for facilitating language learning and as the teacher is placed in the role of a counselor, the learning is facilitated through repetition and drilling (Maley, 2016). Moreover, this process makes the learners feel free to communicate with the facilitator and they can personalize the way they want to learn which enhances the mutual trust between the facilitator and the learners (Rardin, Tranel, Green, & Tirone, 1988). This assists in curtailing their language anxiety and eventually the output gets a better figure (Koba, Naoyoshi, & Dennis, 2000). By constructing a completely favorable classroom environment, it helps foster language learning and for a foreign language teaching class, this turns out to be more fruitful in terms of students' engagement (Moskowitz, 1978). Mackey (2000) explains it further by implementing this method in bilingual classrooms that enables the learners to gain the knowledge of a language holistically through "Language Alternation". Besides, CLL wires learners to internalize the sound system of a language, achieve a sense of grammar and theorize the meaning by providing them with an intellectual model of a language (Forge,

1983). At last British Council, London suggests some ways of utilizing this method in the classroom which are Reflection, Recorded Conversation, Discussion, Transcription and Language Analysis (Community language learning, 2016). Bearing these potentials in mind, the counseling sessions were organized. At the beginning the learners were so taunting to hold on to their orthodox system of pronunciation, they literally expressed signs of regression in their attitudes inside the class. The situations improved to some extent after some real life pronunciation samples were displayed and they were encouraged to apply them in their cases. Moreover, the teacher had to make them comprehend the necessities of a decent level of pronunciation as well as the better choice between the two, namely standard and mutually Intelligible pronunciation through one to one sessions. At the next stage, some activities were designed to nurture their aptitudes of pronunciation following the RP speech pattern.

At the outset, the teacher prepared a short dialogue (Appendices A) between two imaginary persons mainly focusing on the problematic sounds and the students were made to repeat the same set of words after the teacher. During the process, at first, the teacher read the script slowly with various intonations where the students just sat still and followed the teacher's voice with the copy of the script in their hands. The second phase included the same listening practice without looking at the script. After that, the teacher stopped and they started repeating the sentences articulated by the teacher. In the case of any error or complication, the teacher would help them to sort that out. This drill was frequented by the teacher in every English lab session for 05 minutes and their advancements were noted down periodically. Besides, in some sessions, tongue twisters (Appendices B) were used where they had to speak out the tongue twister loudly in pairs and groups. These tongue twisters targeted the problematic sounds in their speech and the outcomes were recorded intermittently. Another type of speech training was conducted by exploiting some English songs. These songs were specially produced for the ESL learners and some of them were cautiously handpicked by the teacher to suit their purpose. At first, the students were given a copy of the lyrics and the song was played. They were instructed to follow the words in the lyrics meticulously while the song was being played as they would be singing the song afterwards. Moreover, the problematic sounds were underlined in the copy and the teacher instructed them to pay more attention to those particular sounds. This was necessary as they needed to know which sounds to focus on while singing the song. In addition, this stimulated them to be active listeners while listening to the songs and become cautious about those sounds in actual speaking. After doing the same for the second time, the song was played for the third time. This time, they sang the song in pairs or individually depending on the number of voices in the song and again their progress was logged on specific days. The songs that have been used are listed in Appendices C. As the last phase of speech training, poetry recitation was introduced. Like the previous process, they received the copies of the poems and listened to the recitation twice keeping a close eye on the underlined sounds. After that, they had to recite the poems one by one and the teacher charted their enhancement as planned. The list is provided in Appendices D.

To reach the last stage for the verification of the applied techniques, a final data collection was conducted. In total 60 sessions have been successfully carried out. The documentation was maintained to keep traces of their gradual development and data were collected for three days which are Day 01, Day 30 and day 60. The following figure will reveal the extent of their progress. (Data were collected in three terms where each day illustrates the usage of three available variations in percentile)

SL#	Sample Words	Day 1 (In percentile)			Day 30 (In percentile)			Day 60 (In percentile)		
I.	pair	/pɪər/	/peɪər/	/peə/	/pɪər/	/peɪər/	/peə/	/pɪər/	/peɪər/	/peə/
		87%	7%	6%	56%	21%	23%	4%	17%	79%
II.	zoo	/dʒuː/	/ʒuː/	/zuː/	/dʒuː/	/ʒuː/	/zuː/	/dʒuː/	/ʒuː/	/zuː/
		91%	7%	2%	47%	36%	17%	9%	23%	68%
III.	charming	/sɑːm.ɪŋ/	/ʃɑːm.ɪŋ/	/ˈtʃɑːm.ɪŋ/	/sɑːm.ɪ/	/ʃɑːm.ɪŋ/	/ˈtʃɑːm.ɪ/	/sɑːm.ɪŋ/	/ʃɑːm.ɪŋ/	/ˈtʃɑːm.ɪŋ
		83%	14%	3%	40%	48%	12%	1%	17%	82%
IV.	smart	/ɪsmʌrt/	/smʌrt/	/smɑːt/	/ɪsmʌrt/	/smʌrt/	/smɑːt/	/ɪsmʌrt/	/smʌrt/	/smɑːt/
		67%	26%	7%	48%	34%	18%	11%	16%	73%
V.	black	/bɪlʌk/	/blʌk/	/blæk/	/bɪlʌk/	/blʌk/	/blæk/	/bɪlʌk/	/blʌk/	/blæk/
		92%	7%	1%	57%	29%	14%	7%	16%	77%
VI.	decay	/diːke/	/dɪke/	/dɪˈk.eɪ/	/diːke/	/dɪke/	/dɪˈk.eɪ/	/diːke/	/dɪke/	/dɪˈk.eɪ/
		70%	27%	3%	16%	58%	26%	3%	16%	81%
VII.	snake	/ɪsnek/	/snek/	/sneɪk/	/ɪsnek/	/snek/	/sneɪk/	/ɪsnek/	/snek/	/sneɪk/
		88%	11%	1%	14%	67%	19%	6%	18%	76%
VIII.	vote	/vɒt/ [1]	/vɒt/ [2]	/vəʊt/	/vɒt/ [1]	/vɒt/ [2]	/vəʊt/	/vɒt/ [1]	/vɒt/ [2]	/vəʊt/
		96%	3%	1%	37%	49%	14%	16%	17%	67%
IX.	fellow	/felɒ/ [3]	/felɒ/ [4]	/ˈfe.ləʊ/	/felɒ/ [3]	/felɒ/ [4]	/ˈfe.ləʊ/	/felɒ/ [3]	/felɒ/ [4]	/ˈfe.ləʊ/
		93%	4%	3%	42%	35%	23%	11%	21%	68%
X.	us	/ətʃ/	/ədʒ/	/əz/	/ətʃ/	/ədʒ/	/əz/	/ətʃ/	/ədʒ/	/əz/
		46%	51%	3%	14%	71%	15%	8%	30%	62%

[1] Bilabial /v/   [2] Labiodental /v/   [3] Bilabial /f/   [4] Labiodental /f/

Figure 5. Study of gradual improvements

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above figure exposes some remarkable facts about the effects of speech training on the participants. It becomes clear that some of the sounds were really deep rooted and they would do anything but change the pattern of that specific sound. These results also decree the belief that these distortions were the results of their long-term use of that pattern and as they were put into intensive speech training, it became conceivable to bring a constructive modification in the way they articulate these sounds. On the other hand, the level of their progress is noteworthy as many of them were really enthusiastic in performing and bringing the best possible utterance out of them. The first and foremost fact to reconcile is that speech training is a highly technical process where a lot of apparatuses are obligatory and for a country like Bangladesh, these are quite difficult to manage, distribute & carry out the maintenance process.

On the other hand, studies have shown that age and accent are closely connected to each other and for maturational limitations it is more difficult for the adults to learn a new language (Krashen, 2005; Munro, 2008; Flege, MacKay & Meador, 1999; Thornburgh & Ryalls, 1998; Flege, Yeni-Komshian & Liu, 1999). The tertiary education of Bangladesh ideally takes 5 to 6 years to complete and these years often possess a threat to the learners only because of their knowledge of English. As English is an obligatory part of the secondary and higher secondary syllabi, it is anticipated that

before entering the premises of a university, they would gain sufficient foothold over the language of English. However, it is often disgraceful to find out a student with excellent grades in English at the secondary & higher secondary levels and a mediocre grade in basic English courses at the universities. In most cases, these students have satisfactory command over the writing skills, but, they struggle with the speaking and listening to the utmost level. It is argued that the schools and colleges are following Communicative Language Teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) which should be targeting all the four macro skills and before they are sent away from these institutions, they would be readied with the armour of the skills of English language. It is likely to soothe their minds and provide a feeling of the sanctuary as this will shield them from the intensive studies exclusively conducted in English and clear the pathway to the world. To an utter frustration, this is often not the case. Even the top ranked universities in Bangladesh are suffering from this problem. We already have a large portion of the tertiary level students who can hardly speak English and it becomes a dreadful circumstance when these speakers are inclined to their local varieties of Bangla while speaking English. That is why it is strongly recommended to arrange these types of speech training in the secondary and higher secondary levels so that they have a prior knowledge of all the four macro skills. On the contrary, this is not always possible in this country as there are a lot of schools and colleges that hardly have computers or trained English teachers. However, it is expected that the regulatory bodies will pay more heed to these facts and undertake proper initiatives to transform this situation into a better one day by day. They should not only pay attention to the infrastructural development of these institutions but also the professional development of the educators that goes untreated. Teacher selection and training should be given the utmost priority and the educators must be tested in such a system that will testify their proficiency in all the four macro skills. Unless they have a certain level of proficiency in the skills of English language, they can never claim themselves to be the teachers of English. Hence, these concerns should be addressed on an urgent basis for a formulated aftermath in the tertiary levels, otherwise, the learners will be stressed out by the hypes of English language courses which are only meant to augment their skills, not build them anew.

One more issue to contemplate on is the fact of installing language labs in the schools and colleges. Even if the schools and colleges have the desired amount of trained educators, they sometimes fail to materialise the goal in a true sense as the teachers are overflown by the number of students under their care. By utilising the language lab, the teachers can be benefitted as the exams and practice sessions can be conducted by the demonstrator who will be responsible for maintaining the records of the performances. Besides, these labs must be fitted with all the necessary accessories to nurture the listening and speaking skills of the learners. In the NCTB curriculum, the major focus is given to reading and writing (Curriculum, 2016), whereas, CLT does not propose any syllabus that covers only two of the macro skills. Therefore, on an urgent basis, steps should be taken to set up language labs in the schools & colleges and include English Language Lab courses as a required part of the national curriculum. Added to that, courses on presentation skills can be encompassed in the syllabi which will be very helpful for them as this will nourish their oratory power, critical thinking ability,

diplomatic skill and analytical quality. Furthermore, the language lab needs to be built keeping the socio-economic background of Bangladesh into consideration. Even if the stakeholders mandate their urge for a highly modern language lab, the regulators will not be able to implement this in all the schools and colleges. For this, some proponents have been suggested below which need to be maintained while conducting the lab sessions.

a. The labs should be soundproof and if possible, air-conditioned, well decorated with diverse pictures of renowned orators, world leaders, philosophers, writers, poets, critical theorists, linguists & researchers and their motivating speeches, suggested book covers, realia (Wagner, 2015) and such that can serve as extrinsic motivation to the learners.

b. Festoons, cross banners, posters, clay pots, wall magazines, samples of students' writings, flower vases, handouts, whiteboards and digital displays could be placed inside the language labs demarcating syntactical structures with their practical examples, picture puzzles, phonemic transcriptions, list of English phonemes with their meanings & examples, word formation processes & some unique instances of word formation, pragmatic use of different utterances, real life samples of vernacular contractions, instances of situational expressions & corrections, commonly mistaken expressions & utterances, tongue twisters, verses from widely acclaimed poems, song lyrics and remarkable dialogues from critically celebrated movies.

c. Headphones, microphones, sound systems, audio visual listening & speaking materials containing different language tasks, videos of functional language, videos of English sounds & their uses in practice, video songs & poetry recitations with onscreen lyrics, English movies with subtitles, world-famous documentaries, inspirational videos, animated movies & cartoons, weekly listening assignments and a comfortable sitting arrangement should be made available to all the students.

d. For stirring the learners, weekly activities on listening and speaking could be organised where separate marks will be allocated for participating in these activates. To add more, recognition of their efforts should be practised. If possible, records of individual performances should be preserved and at the end of each term or semester, the best speaker and the best listener could be awarded by the authority. This will not only set an example for the fellow members of the class but also reinvigorate their aspiration to achieve perfection.

e. The last things to take into account are the size of the class, environment, activity for each session and T-S interaction. It has to be strictly upheld that the class size does not go beyond 15 students so that the facilitator can handle each student minutely and monitor their progress without much exertion. The environment of the class must be congenial & supportive for the learners for a nice setting will revitalise their minds and make them feel tranquil. In addition, the facilitator has to retain a cosy and easy-going relationship between him and the learners as this will put them at ease to enhance the output. At last, the activities should be designed keeping the concept of the learner-

centered classroom (McCombs & Whisler, 1997) under consideration. Lessons should be incorporated to engage the learners in real life activities. By applying task-based approach (Ellis R., 2003) the teacher can contribute to providing practical knowledge to the learners and the learners will enjoy learning while picking up new forms of speech through these tasks.

METHODOLOGY

Action research method was applied to conduct this research (Lewin, 1946). To detect, analyse and resolve any research problem, this very method has been proved to be fruitful and a lot of studies have shown evidence of successful action research (Stringer, 2013; McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead, 2003; Costello, 2003; McNiff, 2002; Grady, 1998). Carr & Kemmis (1986) termed Action Research consisting the qualities of "participatory character, democratic impulse and simultaneous contribution to social science (knowledge) and social change (practice)" (p. 164). To add more, Winter and Munn-Giddings (2001) assert the belief that Action Research is the "study of a social situation carried out by those involved in that situation in order to improve both their practice and the quality of their understanding" (p. 8). This type of research work is very effective in solving practical complications as the researchers apply probable solutions remaining amid the complex condition and relating the philosophies of both qualitative & quantitative research in tracking & solving a research problem makes Action Research a consistent one (Waterman, Tillen, Dickson & Koning, 2001; Meyer, 2000). O'Leary's (2004) cycles of Action Research (Observe, Reflect, Plan & Act) have been accommodated before designing this paper. These steps have been productive in this case because the specific situation demands continuous reformation of the solutions and the phases of implementation have to be very much suited to the roots of the research problem. For this context, it was first observed that the students fail to intellectualise the patterns of RP and they cannot make out the potential differences between RP and their problematic accent as well as the necessity of a decent pronunciation. Keeping a close eye on this very research problem, initially, data were collected through questionnaires and FGD which brought out the explanations behind the research problem. Converging upon the need of prospective solutions, they were guided through sixty intensive speech training sessions and at the last stage, the final set of data was recorded to rectify the validity of the training. All the data sets have been analyzed by adopting Multivariate Analysis which is a prominent method for analyzing huge and various chunks of data that can incorporate the results from different 'variables' and 'units' into one (Afifi & Clark, 1984; Johnson & Wichern, 1982; Krzanowski & Marriott, 1994; Mardia, Kent, & Bibby, 1979). All the findings have been reported and published through the figures and tables.

CONCLUSION

Pronunciation, being an integral part of efficacious oral communication, has never achieved the deserved attention in the teaching systems of secondary and higher secondary levels of Bangladesh. As the students fail to avail the necessary opportunities for speech training, this projects a bigger picture for the tertiary level teachers. This

paper has drawn some aspects of the above-mentioned problem covering some areas of the southwestern part of Bangladesh. It can be noted that this is just a small locale for conducting this type of evaluation, implementation, and rectification. If this is the case only in this area, there could be more alarming conditions in the other shares of the country. Though a handful indications of research in this field are there, it is not ample for the large and diverse speech community of Bangladesh. Henceforth, it is expected that in future we would witness more works in this field which will be advantageous for the learners in our country.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

Afifi, A., & Clark, V. (1984). *Computer-aided multivariate analysis.* Belmont, Calif: Lifetime Learning Publications.

Amin, S. (2006). Learning to Speak English in Bangladesh: The Current State of Affairs. Spectrum, *Journal of the Department of English, Dhaka University*, 5.

Bell, J. S. (1995). The Relationship Between L1 and L2 Literacy: Some Complicating Factors. *TESOL Quarterly,* 29(4), 687–704.

Benson, C. (2002). Transfer/cross-linguistic influence. *ELT Journal,* 68-70.

Brutt-Griffler, J. (2002). *World English: A Study of Its Development.* Multilingual Matters.

Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research.* London: Falmer.

Celce-Murcia, M. (1987). Teaching pronunciation as communication. In J. Morley (Ed.), *Current Perspectives on Pronunciation* (pp. 1-12). Washington: TESOL.

Chambers, J. K., & Natalie, S. (2013). *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. USA: John Wiley & Sons.

Cheshire, J. (1991). *English Around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives.* Cambridge University Press.

Chesterman, A. (1998). *Contrastive Functional Analysis.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

Chomsky, N. (1969). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Community language learning. (2016). Retrieved from British Council: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/community-language-learning

Conti, A. (2015). *Is it really necessary to teach pronunciation?* Retrieved from Malta Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language: www.matefl.org/_mgxroot/page_10766.html

Cook, V. (2015). *The Relationship between First and Second Language Learning.* Revisited. Retrieved from www.ntlworld.com: http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/Writings/Papers/L1&L22008.htm

Costello, P. J. (2003). *Action Research*. A & C Black.

Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Curriculum. (2016). Retrieved from National Curriculum & Textbook Board, Bangladesh: http://www.nctb.gov.bd/index.php/curriculum-wing/

De Bot, K. (1986). The transfer of intonation and the missing database. In E. Kellerman, & M. Smith (Eds.), *Crosslinguistic Influence in Second Language* Acquisition (pp. 110-119). New York: Pearson College Division.

Diessel, H. (2015, Dec 12). Retrieved from https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct= j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&ved=0ahUKEwjKjaaguurLAhWJjJQKHe-8B-gQFghHMAU&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.personal.uni-jena.de%2F~x4diho%2FLA_Comparing%2520L1%2520and%2520L2%2520acqu isition.pdf&usg=AFQjCNHlFImvZJH54gAYqVuJxmHAirzWs

Ellis, R. (1994). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

English Tongue Twisters. (2016). Retrieved from Language Avenue: http://languageavenue.com/teaching-ideas/english-tongue-twisters/

Flege, J., MacKay, I., & Meador, D. (1999). Native Italian speakers' perception and production of English vowels. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 106(2), 2973-2987. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1121/1.428116

Flege, J., Yeni-Komshian, G., & Liu, S. (1999). Age constraints on second-language acquisition. *Journal of Phonetics,* 25, 169–186.

Forge, P. G. (1983). Counseling and Culture in Second Language Acquisition. *Language Teaching Methodology Series*. Elsevier Science & Technology.

Gass, S., & Selinker, L. (1994). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course.* Los Angeles: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gilakjani, A. P. (2012). The Significance of Pronunciation in English Language Teaching. *English Language Teaching,* 5(4).

Gilbert, J. B. (1984). *Clear Speech: Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension in American English.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Grady, M. P. (1998). *Qualitative and Action Research: A Practitioner Handbook*. Phi Delta Kappa International.

Graves, K. (2008). *The language curriculum: A social contextual perspective*. Language Teaching, 41(2), 147-181.

Gute, U., & Trouvain, G. (Eds.). (2007). *Non-native Prosody. Phonetic Description and Teaching Practice*. Berlin & New-York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Hinkel, E. (Ed.). (2005). *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning.* New Jersey: Routledge.

Hoque, M. A. (2010). The Influence of the Local Varieties on the Sound Patterns of English: A Case Study of Bangladeshi Tertiary Students. *IIUC STUDIES,* 7, 197-220.

James, A., & Leather, J. (1991). The acquisition of second language speech. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 13, 305-341.

Johnson, R., & Wichern, D. (1982). *Applied multivariate statistical analysis.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall.

Kent, R. D. (Ed.). (1992). *Intelligibility in Speech Disorders: Theory, Measurement, and Management.* Madison: John Benjamins Publishing.

Knapp, K., & Seidlhofer, B. (Eds.). (2009). *Handbook of Foreign Language Communication and Learning.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Koba, N., Naoyoshi, O., & Dennis, W. (2000). Using the Community Language Learning Approach to Cope with Language Anxiety. *The Internet TESL Journal,* VI(11). Retrieved from http://iteslj.org/Articles/Koba-CLL.html

Kohn, K. (1986). The analysis of transfer. In E. Kellerman, & M. S. Smith (Eds.), *Crosslinguistic Influence in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 21-34). New-York: Pergamon Press.

Krashen, S. (1975). The critical period for language learning acquisition and its possible bases. In *Developmental psycholinguistics and communication disorders.* New York: New York Academy of Sciences.

Kroll, M. G. (2011). *Engrish: A Study of Japanese L1 Interference in L2 English.* Issue 1 of University of North Carolina at Pembroke master's program thesis.

Krzanowski, W., & Marriott, F. (1994). *Multivariate analysis.* London: E. Arnold.

Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics Across Cultures Applied Linguistics For Language Teachers.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Lewin, K. (1946). *Action research and minority problems.* J Soc., 2(4), 34-46.

Low, E.-L. (2014). *Pronunciation for English as an International Language: From Research to Practice.* NY & London: Routledge.

Mackey, W. (2000). The Description of Bilingualism. In L. Wei, *The Bilingualism Reader.* New York: Routledge.

Maley, A. (2016). *Methodology: community language learning.* Retrieved from One Stop English by Macmillan Publishers Ltd.: http://www.onestopenglish.com/methodology/ask-the-experts/methodology-questions/methodology-community-language-learning/146410.article

Maniruzzaman, M. (2013). *Teaching EFL Pronunciation: Why, What and How?* GRIN Verlag.

Mardia, K., Kent, J., & Bibby, J. (1979). *Multivariate analysis.* London: Academic Press.

McCombs, B. L., & Whisler, J. S. (1997). *The Learner-Centered Classroom and School: Strategies for Increasing Student Motivation and Achievement.* San Francisco: The Jossey-Bass Education Series.

McNiff, J. (2002). *Action Research: Principles and Practice.* Taylor & Francis.

McNiff, J., Lomax, P., & Whitehead, J. (2003). *You and Your Action Research Project.* Psychology Press.

Meyer, J. (2000). *Using qualitative methods in health related action research.* British Medical Journal.

Moskowitz, G. (1978). *Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Class: A Sourcebook on Humanistic Techniques.* Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House.

Munro, M. (2008). Foreign accent and speech intelligibility. In G. Jette, E. Hansen, & M. L. Zampini (Eds.), *Phonology and Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 183–213). Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Nazara, S. (2011). Students' Perception on EFL Speaking Skill Development. *Journal of English Teaching,* 1(1), 28-43.

Nelson, C. L. (2012). *Intelligibility in World Englishes: Theory and Application.* NY and London: Routledge.

Odlin, T. (1989). *Language Transfer.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Leary, Z. (2004). *The essential guide to doing research.* Sage.

Pavlenko, A., & Jarvis, S. (2002). Bidirectional Transfer. *Applied Linguistics*, 23(2), 190-214.

Pavlenko, A., & Jarvis, S. (2008). *Crosslinguistic Influence in Language and Cognition*. New York: Routledge.

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Prananingrum, K. D., & Kwary, D. (2007). *L1 Influence on the Production of L2 Sounds: A Case Study at the English Diploma Program.* Indonesia: Airlangga University.

Rahman, H. A. (1995-96). Problems of Pronunciation for Bengali Learners of English. *Journal of the Institute of Modern Languages*.

Rahman, S., & Hossain, M. S. (2015, Jan). Retrieved from dspace.library.daffodilvarsity.edu.bd: http://dspace.library.daffodilvarsity.edu.bd:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/670/The%20impact%20of%20class%20size%20on%20quality.pdf?sequence=1

Rardin, J., Tranel, D., Green, B., & Tirone, P. (1988). *Education in a New Dimension*. East Dubuque: IL: Counseling-Learning Publications.

Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice.* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, S. T. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Siemund, P. (2011). *Linguistic Universals and Language Variation*. Walter de Gruyter.

Smith, J. (2015, Jan). *Why Pronunciation is Important*. Retrieved from www.treetdirectory.com: http://www.streetdirectory.com/travel_guide/106451/languages/why_pronunciation_is_important.html

Stewart, G. (1989). *Peer Pressure.* Crestwood House.

Stringer, E. T. (2013). *Action Research*. SAGE Publications.

Sultana, R., & Arif, H. (2007). Self-Correction: A Possible Answer to Misspellings in English. *Journal of the Institute of Modern Languages*, 20.

Szpyra, J. (2014). *Pronunciation in EFL Instruction*. Multilingual Matters.

Szynalski, T. P. (2016). *Why you should study English pronunciation.* Retrieved from Antimoon: http://www.antimoon.com/how/pronuncwhy.htm

Tapia, A. T. (2010). *Non-Native English Speakers Setting New Standard*. New America Media, Commentary.

Thornburgh, D., & Ryalls, J. (1998). Voice onset time in Spanish-English bilinguals: early versus late learners of English. *Journal of Communication Disorders*, 31(3), 215–229.

Thornbury, S., & Slade, D. (2006). *Conversation: From Description to Pedagogy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ueyama, M. (2000). *Prosodic Transfer: An Acoustic Study of L2 English vs. L2 Japanese*. Los Angeles: Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California.

University, A. I. (2010). *L1 Interference in the Perception and Production of English Vowels by Arabic Speakers.* San Diego: Shirley M. Hufstedler School of Education.

Wagner, D. J. (2015, Dec). *Using Realia Resources in Language Teaching & Learning.* Retrieved from http://ielanguages.com: http://ielanguages.com/blog/using-realia-resources-in-language-teaching-learning/

Waterman, H., Tillen, D., Dickson, R., & Koning, K. (2001). Action research: a systematic review and assessment for guidance. *Health Technology Assessment,* 5(23), 1-166.

Weber, T. (2014). *Principles in the emergence and evolution of linguistic features in World Englishes.* Anchor Academic Publishing.

Weinreich, U. (1979). *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*. The Hague: Walter de Gruyter.

Winter, R., & Munn-Giddings,, C. (2001). *A Handbook for Action Research in Health and Social Care*. London: Routledge.

APPENDICES

A. Questionnaire

Please read each statement carefully and select the decision that best describes your response to that statement. Do NOT write down your name or anything else on the paper. ONLY put a tick mark beside each option and select ONLY one answer for each statement.

Why do you pronounce English sounds in a different way without following the standard version?

1. I have seen my teachers from schools and colleges using the sounds in this manner.

☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Disagree   ☐   Strongly Disagree

2. My friends and classmates do it this way.

☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Disagree   ☐   Strongly Disagree

3. My family members pronounce it like this.

☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Disagree   ☐   Strongly Disagree

4. I have heard this pronunciation from my relatives, neighbors and tutors.

☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Disagree   ☐   Strongly Disagree

5. I like the way I use these sounds.

☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Disagree   ☐   Strongly Disagree

6. I find it difficult to pronounce these sounds.

☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Disagree   ☐   Strongly Disagree

7. I find the English classes boring.

☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Disagree   ☐   Strongly Disagree

8. I use Bangla in this way

☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Disagree   ☐   Strongly Disagree

Thank you for your response.

B. Transcription of FGD

Date: 12 April, 2015; Time: 3:00 pm Bangladesh Time

Place: Academic Building, Room No: 503, BSMRSTU

Audio transcription by: Mohammad Akteruzzaman

Facilitator: Md. Rakibul Islam; Session Duration: 20 minutes

T: Hello! How are you doing today?

S1: Fine sir!

S3: Sir! What will we do today?

T: Our today's session is for open discussion. I will ask you some questions and you just have to express your opinions. It is not about being correct or incorrect, rather, it is about what you think. Please feel free to share your views and ideas that you consider to be true in your case.

Ss: Okay sir.

T: I have seen you pronouncing "চাচা" (/tʃatʃa/) as "সাসা" (/sasa/) when you speak in Bangla. Why do you do so?

S2: Sir, this is the way we people speak. This is our local language.

S6: Sir! May be you are new in this area.

S5: Don't you see your people speaking "বাস" (/bʌs/) as (/bʌʃ/) "বাশ"?

S4: All the areas of Bangladesh have their specific ways of speaking.

T: You mean speech pattern?

S4: And sir, we are not the only people doing so.

T: Alright, but, why do you use the same accent in English? Like "chair" (/tʃeə/) as "siar" (/sɪər/)?

S5: No, sir! We don't do that for English.

T: I have noticed this in your presentation speech given on 03 March, 2015. Well! This is common for almost everyone. Do you have any idea why you do this?

S6: Sir! We have been watching our school teachers, our friends and everyone doing this. But, why are you asking? Is it wrong by the way?

S1: No, it is not wrong. Why would everyone be wrong?

S6: But, I have observed the speakers in English movies. They do not speak that way.

S1: See! We are not native speakers. We will follow our own way.

S6: But, is this correct? Would you like anyone to speak Bangla in an English way?

S1: Obviously not, but there are some people who try to speak like the English people and we think they are funny.

T: Wait wait! You make fun of someone who tries to use a better form of English?

S1: Yes, sir! They are very funny.

S2: I have a friend from North South University and when he speaks, it sounds like I am talking to a machine. It's boring and hard to get his points, so, I always try to avoid him when he uses English.

T: Why do you avoid speaking this way?

S2: Because sir, I prefer my ways of speaking and his way is very tough to follow. So, I just follow my friends and people around me.

T: Have you ever tried doing that?

S2: No!

T: Then what makes you sure that you are taking a better path? Don't you think you should practice using the RP or the standard British style? Also, I do agree with S6. Yes, if we have to use English, we should do it as the natives do. We call it RP or, Received Pronunciation. On the other hand, I would not be doing that if I were in the position of S1 or, S2. Speaking necessitates one to practice a lot. If your friends are trying to practice a better form of English, you should not criticize or ridicule them, rather, they should be encouraged and motivated.

S6: Thank you, sir.

S1: But, sir! It is really problematic for us to follow that RP thing.

S2: And, I cannot pronounce these though I have tried sometimes.

S3: Yes, sir, I have tried to practice IELTS speaking once and I found it too hard to pronounce the way the people speak in the audio clips.

T: But, you are studying English at a renowned public university which offers courses on Phonetics & Phonology, Introduction to Linguistics, Presentation Skills and Basic English Skills as the parts of the curriculum and you do have a well-equipped English lab accessible to any student for practicing all the four macro skills, which are Reading, Writing, Listening & Speaking. Still why do you fail to adopt the RP system?

S1: Come on sir! English classes are way boring. Who would like to listen to long tiring audio clips just to find out some answers or watch a sleep-evoking movie sitting idly for 2 long hours?

S5: Moreover, we are happy with our pronunciation and we face no problem while speaking.

S2: And you are bringing this now! Now that we have enrolled into this university, we have been watching this 'English movement', to be precise, while, nobody from our schools or colleges have told us about this. They used it like this, we use it like this. As simple as that.

T: Oh! So you have never been into this type of practice in your secondary and higher secondary levels.

S2: No, sir. Moreover, we are from the rural parts mostly. We merely have chances to get skilled teachers, let alone an English teacher with a native-like, as you told it, accent.

T: Alright! I hope we have enough for today. Thank you for your cooperation and I will see what I can do in this regard.

Ss: Thank you, sir.

N.B:

a. 'T' stands for Teacher and students are characterized by 'S' with their respective numbers

b. There were six randomly selected members from the participants mentioned above. It is to be noted that due to the constraints of opportunity, time and availability of the participants, it was not possible to conduct an FGD covering all the 47 participants in different sittings. However, this can still be taken as a sample that may support the findings from the questionnaire survey.

c. The transcription has been created from the original recording of the conversation.

d. All the names have been omitted intentionally to make it more objective.

e. All the responses are kept exactly as they have been uttered out by the respondents. However, some of the responses included grammatically inaccurate sentences which have been reconstructed plausibly.

C: Imaginary dialogue

Rana: Hello, Rahim! How are you?

Rahim: I am *fine*. How about you?

Rana: I am not *fine* as my father has *broken* his leg, I have to be very busy in my household *chores*.

Rahim: Oh that's sad! It means that today again you are not coming to the *school*. Do not worry. I will inform the *teacher* when I get to the *class*.

Rana: That is so kind of you. *Please* take this *note* of apology *from* my father. Also, inform the teacher that my father is recovering *slowly* and he has troubles in *sleeping* which keep *us* all *very* busy throughout the *day*. I might be late for a few more *days*.

Rahim: Alright, but, do not forget the *pair* work that we have to complete by this week.

Rana: What! I thought it was a *group* work.

Rahim: It's ok. I will come to your home *today* after the *classes.* One more thing! Do you know that the date for the annual picnic has been announced?

Rana: Oh really! Where are we going this year?

Rahim: To the national *zoo* at Dhaka and possibly in the first week of January if the situation remains safe after the *vote,* I mean the national election. I am really excited to know about this. I just became *thrilled* when I heard that we can go for *boat* riding inside the *zoo*.

Rana: Wow! That's interesting. But, I am afraid of water, so, I might not go for the *boat* riding.

Rahim: It would be better for me though! I have recently bought a new DSLR camera with 10x *zoom.* Please capture some shots while I ride on the boat if you are not doing it.

Rana: Of course. Okay, let's have some *snacks.* The shop over *there* prepares some delicious *fast* foods.

Rahim: Sure, let's go.

D: Tongue twisters (Adapted from www.languageavenue.com)

a. "If Charlie chews shoes, should Charlie choose the shoes he chews?"
b. "Three grey geese in a field grazing. Grey were the geese and green was the grazing."
c. "If two witches would watch two watches, which witch would watch which watch?"
d. "One smart fellow, he felt smart. Two smart fellows, they felt smart. Three smart fellows, they all felt smart."
e. "A big black bug bit a big black bear, made the big black bear bleed blood."

E: List of the songs

a. "Billy Boy, Billy Boy, Charming Billy" by Sing Out Loud Traditional Songs (Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fuJz2u7oCM)
b. "Dont Cry Joni" by Conway Twitty (Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijJkVFjmDi8)
c. "Nobody's Child" by Karen Young (Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bs9Lt1QEyLA)

F: List of the poems

a. "Ozymandias" by Percy Bysshe Shelley (Recited by Vincent Price, Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggvuY2H7gNA)
b. "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth (Courtesy to Pearls of Wisdom, Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jr035xQuWI)
c. "A narrow fellow in the grass" by Emily Dickinson (Courtesy to
Why Poetry Matters, Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uY0-l4kc4uA)