



University of Sussex

Individual goal setting for pronunciation: a classroom-based action research project with English language learners in a UK University context

Author: Lorna Clarke-Jones

University of Sussex

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Abstract

The focus of this research is in the areas of learner phonological development and learner autonomy, examining the extent to which learners are able to develop goals for their pronunciation learning. Previous research studies have highlighted the importance of 'intelligibility' and 'communicative context' in determining the relevance of 'native speaker' (NS) or 'international' pronunciation goals. Research has also emphasised the value of awareness-raising of both segmental and suprasegmental features, of learners developing 'metacognitive' reflective strategies and of individualised pronunciation instruction.

There is, however, a lack of classroom-based research examining how teachers can raise awareness and support learners in this goal-setting process. This study therefore took an action-research (AR) approach to explore this with a small group of learners in a UK University context. The AR process involved awareness-raising of a range of phonological features and contextual issues in-class and as self-study via a Computer Assisted Pronunciation Teaching programme over a 6-week period. At the end, learners produced a written action plan outlining goals for developing their pronunciation abilities. Semi-structured interviews were subsequently conducted with learners and 'critical friends' to further explore issues raised.

The findings from this research indicated that with teacher scaffolding, learners were able to reflect on their pronunciation strengths and needs, and articulate goals related to 'real-life' functions and uses. Their goals reflected the fact that they valued intelligibility in both NS and NNS contexts. While lacking at the outset, learners demonstrated a greater level of suprasegmental perceptual awareness by the end of the project. However, learner perceptions of their own productive 'deficits' appeared to persist. Teacher and learner reflections highlighted that building from receptive to productive practice was key, as was a balance of teacher 'scaffolding', individual and peer learning, and 'freer' or more 'authentic' pronunciation tasks. Recommendations for further AR research and for suprasegmental and ELF-focused pronunciation teacher training are proposed.

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Introduction

Background

Research studies have identified a number of issues pertinent to individual goal-setting for learner phonological development. Firstly, as will be explored further within the literature review, 'intelligibility' and 'communicative context', rather than 'nativeness' are widely regarded as key in supporting learners to develop realistic, user-based pronunciation goals (Yazan, 2015; Scales et al, 2006; Cook, 2016). English as a lingua franca (ELF) debates, and learner and teacher views will be examined in relation to such issues of 'global intelligibility' (Kang, 2015; Jenkins, 2005; Walker, 2010). Secondly, debates surrounding the extent to which awareness-raising of segmental or suprasegmental features benefit learner phonological development will be considered, highlighting particular benefits of suprasegmental learning to spontaneous communication (Derwing and Monro, 2005; Jones, 1997; Levis et al, 2016) and listening comprehension in an NS context (Baker, 2014; Scrivener, 2011).

The value of learner training and autonomy, in particular the development of 'metacognitive' strategies of self-reflection, planning and goal-setting (Dornyei, 2001; Hedge, 2000) and the value of Computer Assisted Pronunciation Teaching (CAPT) technologies (Thomson and Derwing, 2014; Fouz-Gonzalez, 2017) will then be reviewed. Finally, the importance of individualised pronunciation learning and goal-setting will be examined (Couper, 2016; Kenworthy, 1987; Thomson and Derwing, 2014), along with a discussion of approaches and techniques teachers can use to raise learner perceptual and productive awareness of key phonological features and wider contextual issues.

Rationale, research outline and personal interest

While research studies have highlighted the above themes, there appears to be a lack of classroom-based research examining how teachers can raise awareness of phonological features and encourage learners to set their own pronunciation goals. I was interested in exploring this through an action research project with a group of English learners in a UK University context. The project combined awareness-raising and learner training within the classroom and independent work using an online CAPT programme, Sky Pronunciation (SkySoftwareHouse.com, 2014) within the University Language Learning Centre (LLC). The pronunciation project took place over a period of six weeks, with one 90-minute session per week, alternately within the classroom and the LLC. The idea was that learners would develop their awareness of personally-relevant phonological features during the project and then devise an action plan for developing their own pronunciation abilities by the end of the project. This process was supported by learner and teacher reflection, peer learning and discussion of pronunciation issues across cultural and L1 backgrounds. Interviews with learners and 'critical friends' (teachers within my department) were subsequently conducted to further explore and reflect on issues raised.

In terms of my own interest in this research area, working as an English Language teacher for over 10 years in international and UK contexts has led me to believe in the importance of perceptual training and the need to integrate pronunciation learning with speaking and listening skills. Anecdotally, learners have often expressed a high degree of interest in or anxiety around developing their pronunciation abilities, but are often not initially aware of issues which impact upon their intelligibility. I believe that awareness-raising is necessary and should be differentiated according to individual needs, as recommended within the research literature (Couper, 2016; Foote et al, 2016). However, in classroom settings I have often found this to be a challenge due to the variability of individual strengths and needs and time and institutional constraints. The opportunity to explore this within a small group setting was therefore of great interest to my own learning and professional development.

Research questions (and sub-questions) were as follows:

1. To what extent are learners able to identify and reflect on their own strengths, needs and goals in their pronunciation learning?
 - a. What are learner attitudes to and expectations of 'nativeness' versus 'intelligibility'? To what extent does an 'NS-like' pronunciation goal preference exist for this group of learners?

2. How can teachers support learners to set individualised pronunciation goals? In particular, how can teachers raise learner awareness of segmental and suprasegmental features, and of communicative context in order to encourage individual learners to set personally-relevant goals?
 - a. What are learner preferences regarding the balance of teacher-led, peer and individual learning in this process?

Research question (RQ) 1 reflects the values of active learner involvement and autonomy in developing individual goals for pronunciation, examining learner awareness of segmental and suprasegmental features, learner views on their own intelligibility and 'metacognitive' abilities to set relevant personal goals. RQ1a aimed to explore learner attitudes to 'native' versus 'international intelligibility' pronunciation goals, reflecting key ELF debates. RQ2 aimed to examine teacher priorities and approaches in supporting learners to set their own goals, considering the balance of segmental and suprasegmental features and of teacher scaffolding and learner autonomy. RQ2a aimed to gauge learner views on teaching and learning approaches during the project.

Dissertation outline

The dissertation will begin with a literature review discussing the key research perspectives, before moving onto a methodology section outlining the relevance (and limitations) of action research (AR) methodology to this study and the way that data collection methods were used and 'triangulated'. Data analysis methods and findings will then be presented, before conclusions summarise key findings, make recommendations for teacher training and further research, and comment on my own professional learning during the research process.

Literature review

'Intelligibility' versus 'native' pronunciation goals

As Yazan (2015, p.1) stated, 'intelligibility' is a contested construct. There is, however, widespread agreement within the research community that there should be a move away from the "nativeness principle" (the idea that learners should aspire to achieve 'native-like' pronunciation) to the idea of L2 learners being intelligible in their relevant communicative contexts (Scales et al, 2006, p. 716). From an English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) perspective, the goal of "global intelligibility" for "successful communication in international contexts" (Kang, 2015, p. 59) has been influential, as the majority of non-native speakers (NNS) are only likely to routinely communicate in English with other NNS (Bowen and Marks, 2012, p. 9). In these contexts, rather than viewing ELF pronunciation as "deficient", it has been regarded as an acceptable variation of English, in which learners express their accent identities positively (Jenkins, 2005, p. 541). As such, Yazan (2015, p. 1-2) has highlighted that "accentedness" is less important than a process of "accommodation" and "mutual understanding" in supporting NNS-NNS intelligibility. Walker (2010, p. 18) similarly argues that both speaker and listener responsibility are key in developing "mutual" intelligibility through a "negotiation of meaning" in NNS interactions.

Learner expectations and preferences are important to consider regarding the issues of NS and NNS pronunciation goals. Researchers have identified discrepancies between academic and teacher or learner views on this issue. Timmis (2002, p. 242) argued that many learners still see NS pronunciation as a "benchmark of achievement". Qiong (2004, p.26) stated that in a large-scale survey of Chinese university students, the majority had never heard of "World English" or "China English", "believing the American or British English standard to be their goal". The Scales et al (2006) study of language learners in a US university context similarly revealed that the majority of participants stated their goal was to sound like a NS. More recent studies, such as Kang (2015) and McCrocklin and Link (2016) also identified preferences for 'native-like' accent identities. Kang (2015, p. 61) claimed that prestigious "status" associations are still linked with inner circle accent norms, while McCrocklin and Link identified "no fear of loss of identity" associated with achieving a 'native-like' accent in their study of ESL learners in a Canadian University context. Timmis (2002, p. 248)

concluded that academics and teachers are “moving away from NS norms faster than students”. However, as Jenkins (2005, p. 541) highlighted, preferences for NS norms can also be reflected in teacher attitudes, and should be viewed in the context of wider social and political factors, in terms of a lack of ELF-focused pronunciation materials and institutional legitimacy for ELF-focused training.

The question of which pronunciation goals should be prioritised has been one of considerable debate. The extent to which learners wishing to achieve ‘native-like’ pronunciation are considered acceptable or realistic is highly contested. Harmer (2014) and Bowen and Marks (2012) support such learner goals, claiming that “if they wish to sound exactly like a native speaker”, it would be “unfair to deny them such an objective” (Harmer, 2014, p. 278). Others, however, question the achievability of such goals. Derwing and Monro (2005, p. 384) claim that no study has identified “a link between pronunciation instruction and the elimination of a foreign accent”, arguing that it is the teacher’s responsibility to manage learner expectations and help them to set “realistic goals” on the “basis of research findings”. This view is supported by Cook (2016, p. 101) who asserts that learner goals should match “the roles they will assume when using the second language”.

This focus on learner goals relating to functional or real-world context and language use has been influential in positioning this debate. Jenkins (2002) and Walker (2010) outlined a distinction between NS and Lingua Franca Core (LFC) pronunciation goals. This proposes that for L2 learners who mainly communicate in English with NS, teachers should prioritise “native-speaker variety” pronunciation features. On the other hand, learners whose main interactions are with other NNS should aim for “international intelligibility”, with certain pronunciation features being more necessary than others (Walker, 2010, p. 32). For “international intelligibility” it is claimed that segmental features such as consonant clusters in syllable initial or middle positions are important (Walker, 2010, p. 32), while /θ/ and /ð/ distinctions and clear and dark /l/ allophones are less important as they are unlikely to cause misunderstanding (Jenkins 2007, p. 23). For suprasegmental features, primary stress is considered important in denoting meaning, whereas intonation and weakened forms may be less useful in NNS interactions (Jenkins, 2007, p. 23). Cook (2016, p. 101) also suggests that in NNS-NNS interactions the rhotic /r/ may be useful preceding consonants and silence. Overall, this suggests that learners and teachers may benefit from awareness-raising in

terms of NS and international intelligibility debates in order to set more realistic pronunciation goals based on real-world needs and contexts. Learner attitudes towards 'nativeness' and 'intelligibility' were therefore explored through RQ1a of the AR project.

Which pronunciation features benefit learners? Segmentals versus suprasegmentals

In addition to the nativeness versus intelligibility debates, discussion has centred around which aspects of pronunciation most benefit L2 learners and how learner awareness of such features can be raised through 'noticing', perceptual training and productive use. Both segmental and suprasegmental features have been considered within the research literature. Suprasegmentals can be defined as phonological features which go beyond the level of the individual phoneme (or segment), such as primary stress, rhythm, intonation and features of connected speech.

While often acknowledged that within both research literature and pedagogical practice segmentals have taken a more central role (Foote et al, 2016; Thomson and Derwing, 2014), research has highlighted the importance of suprasegmentals in increasing learner comprehensibility and intelligibility (Levis et al. 2016; Derwing and Munro, 2005; Jones, 1997; Derwing, Munro and Wiebe, 1997). 'Comprehensibility' has been defined as a listener (usually NS listener) "perception of intelligibility" (Derwing and Munro, 1997, p. 2). Hahn's (2004) study in a US university highlighted the importance of primary (or sentence) stress to intelligibility, in examining NS listener reactions to NNS primary stress in English discourse. A study by Zielinski (2007) further supported this view, indicating that listeners depend on syllable stress patterns, particularly strong segments within longer pieces of discourse to "identify the speaker's intended words" (p. 69).

Further to identifying key elements such as primary stress, support for the teaching of suprasegmentals has focused on their ability to transfer to improved learner intelligibility in more spontaneous interactions and for listening comprehension in NS contexts. Derwing and Munro (2005, p. 388) cite their (1997) research in which learners received instruction in either segmental or suprasegmental/global features (with an additional control group which received no instruction). Findings indicated that while learners in the segmental group showed improvement in "their production of individual speech sounds", those in the global group were assessed to be "significantly more comprehensible after instruction". Levis et al

(2016, p. 903) similarly emphasize the importance of suprasegmentals in “changes in comprehensibility for spontaneous speech”. Jones (1997, p. 103) also argued that suprasegmentals support “communicative function” and “spoken discourse”. In addition, raising awareness of suprasegmental features such as stress, catenation, elision and weak forms within ‘connected speech’ is viewed as important for developing listening comprehension in an NS context (Scrivener, 2011; Baker, 2014), in the case of this research study within a UK University environment. As Scrivener (2011, p. 280) pointed out, if learners are not expecting such features, they are unlikely to recognise them within the speech stream.

This identified significance has, however, been contrasted with studies which have identified a lack of learner awareness of and teacher confidence with suprasegmental features (Derwing and Rossiter, 2002; Couper, 2016; Foote et al., 2016). In a study by Derwing and Rossiter (2002) (cited in Derwing and Monro, 2005, p.389) 90% of learners identified individual segments as the basis for their own pronunciation problems. Foote et al (2016, p. 194) noted a “complete absence of suprasegmental instruction” in their observational study of 40 hours of teaching episodes in a Canadian ESL context. Lee, Jang and Plonsky (2014, p. 363) reported a lack of attention to “elision, linking and stress” in their literature review of pronunciation-focused research studies. Couper (2016, p. 2) claimed that teachers “lack the confidence to teach suprasegmentals” and that “segmentals” are still “the main focus of pronunciation teaching”. Other commentators additionally highlight the need the inclusion of suprasegmentals in teacher training and development programmes (Moyer, 1999; Foote et al, 2016; Couper, 2016; Monro, Derwing and Thomson, 2015).

The importance allotted to suprasegmental features does not, however, negate the need for segmental phonological instruction. Arguments highlighting the benefits of teaching a combination of segmental and suprasegmental features have been put forward (Derwing, Monro and Wiebe, 1998; Trofimovich and Baker, 2006; Couper, 2006; Lee, Jang and Plonsky, 2014). Larger effects were identified when pronunciation instruction “targeted both segmental and suprasegmental features” (rather than either one independently) in a meta-analysis of L2 pronunciation instruction by Lee, Jang and Plonsky (2014, p. 361). Couper (2006) highlighted the connection between segmental and suprasegmental features, in his rationale for selecting ‘epenthesis’ (the inappropriate addition of a sound) and ‘absence’

(the inappropriate deletion of a final consonant sound) for his research study on the effects of L2 pronunciation instruction. He argues that these segmental features have “major repercussions on the suprasegmental level”, due to their impact on the number of syllables, the fluency with which words are combined, and the rhythm of English (p. 51). Derwing, Monro and Wiebe (1998, p. 407) also argue that both “global and segmental concerns benefit ESL students”.

Regarding which segmental priorities should be addressed, in addition to identifying individual learner needs and considering the appropriacy of NS or LFC pronunciation features, the idea of “functional load” has been influential (Brown, 1988; Couper, 2016; Monro, Derwing and Thomson, 2015). ‘High functional load’ contrasts can be defined as frequently occurring phonemic contrasts which particular learners confuse or are harder for learners to distinguish. In their study of segmental priority setting, Monro, Derwing and Thomson (2015, p. 41) identified that consonant errors with high functional load segments (such as /r/ and /l/) caused greater difficulties with comprehensibility than low functional load errors (such as /ð/ and /d/). They conclude that high functional load distinctions are more important for intelligibility, and should therefore be a focus of pronunciation instruction. For the AR project, segmental and suprasegmental features and functional load distinctions were considered for inclusion according to specific learner needs, and as part of exploring how teachers can raise learner awareness of phonological features in RQ2.

The importance of learner autonomy and training to pronunciation learning

Learner autonomy has been conceptualised in various ways that are relevant to a focus on individualised pronunciation learning. ‘Broad’ views of autonomy have highlighted the importance of learners having agency in their learning, with Kumaravadivelu’s (2003, p. 32) goal of “learning to liberate”. Dornyei (2001, p. 105) emphasises the need for learners being given “real choices” and “genuine authority” with teachers sharing power and responsibility, claiming that there is evidence that learners who can learn independently “may gain greater proficiency”. Harmer (2014, p. 105) makes the link between autonomy and motivation, claiming that learners are “far more likely to be motivated when they feel they have agency”. Nunan (1997) argued that there are five different levels of autonomy starting from

“learner awareness” and leading to “transcendence” when learners are making links between classroom learning “and the world beyond”.

‘Narrower’ conceptions of autonomy have focused on the ways in which learners can be supported to become “active participants in their own learning” within classroom and self-study environments (Dornyei, 2001, p. 191). Learner training and learner strategies are ways of developing “metacognitive” skills (with learners planning for, monitoring, assessing and reflecting on their own learning) (Hedge, 2000, p. 77). Dornyei (2001, p. 82) highlights the importance of individual “goal-setting” as a metacognitive strategy to help learners to plan their own learning process. Increasing use of reflective activities such as learner reports and journals in teaching environments are viewed as ways of encouraging ‘metacognitive’ awareness (Hedge, 2000, p. 79). These are seen as important in supporting learners to assess their own learning and “arrive at personally-constructed decisions” (Hedge, 2000, p.82). However, as Hedge acknowledges, there are limitations to such “introspective accounts” as they can only provide an indication of ‘conscious’ as opposed to ‘unconscious’ learning strategies (p. 79).

One way that such ‘metacognitive’ strategies can be promoted within pronunciation learning (and explored as part of RQ2 of the AR project) is via use of self-access centres and Computer Assisted Pronunciation Teaching (CAPT) technologies. A number of CAPT technologies have been researched and developed in recent years, including those intended to be used by any L2 learners of English (such as Sky Pronunciation, 2014), and those relating to specific L2 backgrounds, such as a system developed for Japanese learners of English (Shudong and Higgins, 2005). Thomson and Derwing (2014, p. 336) highlight the “strong appeal” of CAPT technologies in promoting autonomy and providing individual practice. Fouz-Gonzales (2017, p. 632) similarly argues for their potential in individual instruction, noting the benefits of “access to virtually unlimited input” and “practice at the learners’ convenience”.

Limitations of such systems are acknowledged, however, as they are often criticised for being based on segmental features and NS norms, limiting their value for improving intelligibility for more communicative (or NNS-NNS relevant) interactions (Harmer, 2014; Monro, Derwing and Thomson, 2015). In addition, the lack of capacity of technology such as

Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) to provide learners with accurate feedback is highlighted by Thomson and Derwing (2014, p 330). Lee, Jang and Plonsky (2014, p. 361) similarly argue that there is a “lack of adaptability and perceptual accuracy” in current technology, concluding that despite having “great potential”, technology was “less effective than human interaction”. Monro, Derwing and Thomson (2015, p. 55) have thus claimed that the most successful approach to pronunciation instruction is to use a combination of CAPT technology and teacher expertise, a conclusion supported by learners within the AR project.

It has been argued that the concept of learner autonomy is “culturally-motivated” and not appropriate in some cultural contexts (Harmer, 2014, p. 97). Buendia-Arias (2015, p. 36) summarises such cultural comparisons, in which East Asian learners are frequently characterised as “not autonomous learners” and at a disadvantage to Western learners who have “greater levels of autonomy”. Ryan and Louie (2007, p.405) have questioned such dichotomies, warning against cultural stereotyping. In her study of Japanese learners in second language Academic communities Morita (2004, p. 598) argued that the learners were able to exercise their agency through a process of negotiation with the local context and power relations. Buenda-Arias (2015, p. 48) recommends particular approaches in encouraging Chinese learners to engage in autonomous learning strategies, for example being given more space to discuss learning aims and the impact of achieving those aims with their teacher.

In addition to the individual learner strategies outlined above, autonomy can be related to group dynamics, with group members taking “increasing levels of responsibility and control over their own functioning” (Dornyei, 2001, p. 103). Couper (2016, p. 18) outlines the value of peer interaction and feedback in pronunciation learning in “mixed L1 classes” in sharing perceptions of appropriate or inappropriate pronunciation contrasts across different cultural and L1 backgrounds. This can be related to the sociocultural perspective of SLA research, which highlights the benefits of developing meaning through collaboration within peer-to-peer and expert-to-learner interactions (Ortega, 2001, p 171). Peer learning, in addition to individual learning and teacher-fronted approaches, was therefore explored as a key part of awareness raising within the AR project (RQ2).

The value of individualised pronunciation learning

Running through the research literature focusing on the above debates on intelligibility, segmental and suprasegmental priorities and learner autonomy, a weight of evidence supports individualised pronunciation learning as a key part of the learning process (Kenworthy, 1987; Couper, 2016; Baker, 2014; Thomson and Derwing, 2014). Many authors argue that individual differences in pronunciation abilities are greater than those relating to L1 background (McDonald, Yule and Powers, 1994; Couper, 2016; Munro, Thomson and Derwing, 2014; Derwing and Thomson 2015). Despite this, Munro, Derwing and Thomson (2015, p. 40) argue that the “one-size-fits-all fallacy” is still evident, arguing against a “common curriculum for learners” (p. 39) due to the extent of learner differences that exist.

It is clear that there is a “demand for pronunciation teaching from L2 learners” (Baker, 2014, p. 138). Many authors highlight the “value learners place on pronunciation” (McDonald, Yule and Powers, 1994, p. 76). In his study of short and long term effects of pronunciation Couper (2006, p. 59) emphasised the “learners’ interest and motivation to know about pronunciation”. This can be contrasted, however, with frequent claims that teachers do not give pronunciation a high priority in the classroom, or lack confidence with teaching pronunciation (Couper, 2011, p. 161).

As Kenworthy (1987, p. 8) outlined, there are a variety of individual factors which can influence a learner’s pronunciation development. In addition to motivation, which she defines as the key variable, these can include age, amount of exposure, aptitude (“being a good or poor discriminator”), and “identity and group affiliation” (favourable or unfavourable attitudes to and associations with the TL classroom, community or language learning experience). Levis et. al. (2016, p. 917) also emphasise exposure, with use of the target language outside of the classroom seen as a key factor in phonological improvement.

The ways that teachers can facilitate such individualised pronunciation instruction and practice were therefore viewed as worthy of further exploration within the AR project. It has been argued that learners should be made more aware of their own intelligibility, with teachers facilitating and differentiating “according to the learners’ needs” (Couper, 2016, p. 18). Learner reflection and goal-setting were therefore seen within this research project as a process of achieving greater learner awareness and individual autonomy (RQ1 and 2).

Thomson and Derwing (2014, p. 336) also highlight the “vital role” teachers have in providing “individualised practice”. The benefits of “explicit” pronunciation teaching have been widely documented (Foote et al, 2016; Derwing and Monro, 2005; Thomson and Derwing; 2014, Couper, 2016). Implicit techniques such as recasts in providing feedback on learner productions are seen to have “limited effectiveness” (Foote et al, 2016, p. 194) due to learners not always perceiving differences in production (Couper, 2016, p. 3).

Encouraging learners to ‘notice’ “differences between their own productions and those of proficient speakers” (Derwing and Monro (2005, p.388) are seen as crucial to phonological awareness. This can be related more broadly to the idea of ‘consciously noticing’ within cognitive SLA research, which is viewed as necessary for L2 learning (Schmidt, 1990, cited in Atkinson, 2011, p. 13). Learner perceptual awareness is then considered to be crucial for phonological production (Baker, 2014; Derwing and Monro, 2005) and can be enhanced through the use of identification and discrimination tasks. A possible connection has also been made between perceptual awareness and learner ability to store phonological information by establishing “category boundaries of phonological concepts” (Couper, 2016, p. 18).

Ultimately, it can be concluded that teachers have an important role in guiding and motivating learners to set individualised pronunciation goals and provide individual practice. Ways of exploring learner abilities, attitudes and the teacher’s role in this process will be outlined with reference to my research in the subsequent methodology section. This will discuss methodological issues of the AR approach, specific learner backgrounds, goals and motivations, rationales for the different project components, ethical issues, limitations and how my own values as a teacher-researcher impacted upon the research process.

Methodology

Methodological issues: an action research approach

The project took an action research (AR) approach, which is by nature inductive rather than deductive, as it seeks to “derive general principles, theories or ‘truths’ from an investigation” rather than deductively test hypotheses (Nunan, 1992, p. 13). AR can be defined as small-scale “practitioner-based research”, based on problems that teachers have identified themselves (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 344). Atkins and Wallace (2012, p.127) highlight the value of three potential outcomes of AR as “improving practice; improving understanding of practice; and improving the situation in which the practice takes place”. Edwards and Burns (2015, p 6) additionally identified the longer-term benefits for teachers in terms of improved confidence, connections with students, research engagement and recognition by colleagues and managers. As Nunan (1992) points out, an AR project takes the form of an “ongoing cycle”, which involves action, reflection and returning to and revising the initial plan. There were elements of “quasi-experimental design” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 322) in terms of having a specific case study (or ‘experimental’) group for a defined period, using initial and end of project questionnaires to compare attitudes towards progress, and using teacher and learner reflection to “observe trends” over the project period (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 323).

AR, as a small-scale, qualitative approach can be viewed as problematic in terms of claims to internal and external validity. As Nunan (1992, p. 19) points out, it would be “unwise” to suggest that any changes were the result of interventions (internal validity), and that “in many cases practitioners are less concerned with generating generalizable knowledge [external validity] than with solving pressing problems” in their own workplaces. However, internal reliability (the consistency of data collection and analysis) can be increased by being “systematic” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 346) and transparent about methods and by having “method triangulation” (Atkins and Wallace, 2012, p. 138). Internal reliability can also be enhanced by being transparent about one’s own values as an ‘insider’ teacher and researcher, which will be discussed further below. However, it is firstly important to consider the particular group of learners involved in the project, in terms of their backgrounds, experiences, aims and motivations.

Learner profile: background, goals and motivations

This was a general English class in a UK University context comprised of six learners, assessed to be roughly at the B1 level of the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR). In terms of L1 background, five of the learners were Japanese speakers (3 female and 2 male) and one of the learners was a Mandarin Chinese speaker (male). The learners were aged between 19 and 21 and had all been studying English for 7 or more years. This learning had mostly taken place within high school and university settings. The course took place in the autumn term, which was the first term that the learners were studying in the UK. The Japanese L1 speakers were studying on English language degree programmes at two Japanese universities, and were on exchange programmes at the University for periods of 6 to 9 months. The Mandarin Chinese L1 speaker was studying English in order to enrol for undergraduate study in the UK the following year.

There were different goals and motivations for their English language learning, identified as part of an initial needs analysis questionnaire and discussion with the class at the beginning of term (see appendix 1). These motivations could be defined partially as “intrinsic” (Ellis, 1997, p. 75), with personal interest in learning “UK English” (as opposed to her previous studies in which she “learned US English”) cited by M. To a far greater extent, however, their motivations could be described as “instrumental”, with future work opportunities identified as key by all learners. Two of the learners (K and L) hoped to become English language teachers in their home country, while others stated that their future plans involved working in sectors that involved using English such as international business, fashion and hospitality. The majority of the learners also expressed “integrative” motivations (Ellis, 1997, p. 75), identifying communicating with NS, such as host families and NNS, such as other international students in the UK as key objectives during their UK stay (N, K, Y and R).

In terms of their English language learning priorities for the course, all of the learners identified ‘pronunciation’, ‘listening’ or ‘speaking’ as the most important skills to work on in order to improve their English. This appeared to be in contrast to previous learning contexts in which reading, writing and grammar were prioritised (as noted by N, Y, L and R). Intelligibility was highlighted as a key concern, with learners commenting on wanting to

understand others and be understood in communicative interactions with “native speakers” and other “foreigners” (N, R and K). As K commented, “I don’t understand what people say and people don’t understand what I say”. This supports claims previously noted within the research literature that pronunciation learning is a priority for language learners (Baker, 2014; McDonald, Yule and Powers, 1994; Couper, 2006). It also provides support for the idea that being able to “communicate appropriately within a particular language community”, in this case the UK University and wider community (including both NS and NNS), is an integral part of developing wider “communicative competence” (Saville-Troike, 2012, p. 106). However, Walker’s (2010) division between NS and LFC pronunciation goals could be viewed as problematic for this group of learners, as they were motivated to communicate with both NS and NNS communities while studying in the UK for considerable periods of time. As will be discussed further below, this required careful consideration of which phonological features were relevant to include in the project.

Outline of (and rationale for) different components of the action research project

“Method triangulation” (Atkins and Wallace, 2012, p. 138), viewed as key in enhancing consistency and internal reliability in the AR process, involved a number of components and stages. An initial class discussion and an individual questionnaire (appendix 2) were used to encourage learners to reflect on their experience with and awareness of different features of pronunciation and their own strengths, needs and attitudes towards their pronunciation development. This combined open questions with likert-style rating scales, adapted from Hewings (2004, p. 25), to identify learner perceptions of the importance of pronunciation and perceptions of their own abilities with different aspects of pronunciation (as per RQ1). It also included a question on ‘nativeness’ versus ‘intelligibility’ in pronunciation goals, in terms of ‘who’ learners would like to sound like (RQ1a), adapted from Timmis (2002, p. 242). These combined with a handout (Hewings, 2004, p. 26) introducing and giving brief practice in segmental features (vowels, consonants, consonant clusters, syllables and word stress) and suprasegmental features (intonation, sentence stress, elision and weak forms) aimed to provide a baseline of awareness and attitudes, which could be used to compare perceived changes against at the end of the 6-week period.

The second component in the AR process involved a number of in-class learner training activities focusing on raising awareness of and providing practice with a range of segmental and suprasegmental features (RQ 1 and 2). Segmental features were chosen on the basis of features identified as challenging in the initial questionnaire and those believed to have high “functional load” (Brown, 1988; Couper, 2016; Monro, Derwing and Thomson, 2015) for this particular group of learners, such as /r/ and /l/ contrasts, consonant clusters and word stress. There was a slightly greater focus within the project on suprasegmental features due to lack of learner awareness identified within the initial learner questionnaire and the previously-identified importance of suprasegmentals in supporting “communicative function” (Jones, 1997).

Suprasegmental features were considered for inclusion on the basis of both NS and LFC pronunciation goals. As previously noted, primary (sentence) stress has been viewed as key for intelligibility (Hahn, 2004; Zielinski, 2007) in NNS-NS and also NNS-NNS interactions within the LFC (Walker, 2010). While other features, such as catenation (linking between word boundaries), elision and weakened forms are more contested in terms of their relevance for NNS interactions, they were included due to their documented importance for listening comprehension in the NS target language environment (Baker, 2014; Scrivener, 2011), in this case the University and wider community setting in the UK. This also related to the “integrative” motivations of this group of learners in wanting to have successful communicative interactions with a range of NS and NNS.

In addition, and as a revision to the AR process based on learner awareness and interest, one of the sessions focused on a class discussion around the issues of NS versus intelligibility goals (RQ1a). As an introductory exercise, learners were asked to listen to five speakers from the Speech Accent Archive website (no date) (2 ‘native’ speakers from Scotland and Texas and 3 non-native speakers from Japan, China and India). A provocative question, “Which accent has the most ‘correct’ pronunciation of English?”, was used as a basis to engage learners in pair then whole class discussions of issues surrounding ELF pronunciation and communication in NS and international environments (appendix 3). This was to further gauge learner perceptions, but also to raise awareness of some of the key discussions regarding intelligibility in different communicative contexts.

Sessions in the Language Learning Centre (LLC) then built on in-class work (RQs 1 and 2). Some 'scaffolding' was provided in the form of handouts (see example as appendix 4) guiding learners towards particular segmental and suprasegmental sections of the Sky Pronunciation CAPT programme. Such 'scaffolding', based on ideas from Vygotsky and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is viewed as important in sociocultural perspectives, which claim that learners can achieve language outcomes with appropriate staged support (Mitchell, Myles and Marsden, 2013, p. 224). Learners were also given space during the LLC sessions to work more autonomously on aspects they considered to be relevant to their pronunciation development. This aimed to support learners with making "real choices" and having the "agency" that Dornyei (2001, p. 105) recommends. Further self-study activities, such as an out-of-class authentic listening project (detailed in the findings section) were included at a later stage to encourage greater levels of autonomy and engagement with the wider community.

A further part of 'method triangulation' involved reflection by both learners and teacher, viewed as a key part of the AR process (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2001). Each in-class and LLC session involved learners completing an individual reflection on their learning during the session (as appendix 4). These aimed to support development of metacognitive reflective learner strategies, highlighted as a key in encouraging learner autonomy (Hedge, 2000). Both learners and teacher reflected on activities, their usefulness and perceived progress or challenges faced. The project also included two one-to-one tutorials between learners and teacher to further discuss individual issues and progress. Learners were then asked to write a final reflective piece identifying their strengths, needs, progress and goals for developing their pronunciation. As the teacher, I also wrote four reflective pieces during the project, using the 6-stage Gibbs model of reflective writing (1988) (see example as appendix 5).

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were then facilitated three months post-project with four of the learners, to follow up on issues identified in the reflective writing, and to gauge learners views on their learning during and since the pronunciation project (see interview schedule as appendix 6) (RQ1). Semi-structured interviews were chosen to enable some flexibility in focusing on specific themes, while avoiding being "too tightly structured" (Kvale, 1996, p. 30). Qualitative interviews were also facilitated with two "critical friends" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2012, p. 356). These were teachers who had an interest in

pronunciation, and with whom I was able to have discussions which fed into the AR methodology and pronunciation approaches during the project. These subsequent interviews aimed to gauge perceptions from a teacher perspective on the role of the teacher in pronunciation learning, the feasibility of learners setting their own goals and the balance of segmental and suprasegmental priorities (see interview schedule as appendix 7).

Values, ethical issues and limitations

Brown and Rodgers (2002, p. 14) highlight the importance of researchers making their own “presuppositions” about research and their own roles clear. From a standpoint of an AR project such as this, my approach takes an ‘interpretivist’ rather than a ‘positivist’ perspective (Atkins and Wallace, 2012, p. 22), in which I acknowledge that subjectivity in both my own interpretations and those of participants exists and is an inevitable part of the research process. Honesty, integrity and transparency are also core values that I aimed to bring to the project. Using my own reflective pieces to reflect on concerns and perceived weaknesses of activities and methods in addition to strengths was integral in expressing these values.

It is important to acknowledge the ethical issues related to being an ‘insider’ researcher. Advantages include the ability to gain access to a group, in this case a class of language learners, and the likelihood of participants having a level of trust and willingness to participate. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 344) highlight, it is a process that “breaks the separation of the researcher and participants”. Limitations must be acknowledged, however, in terms of the influence of power relationships, specifically the role of the teacher potentially being an “inhibiting factor” to a learner speaking freely (Atkins and Wallace, 2012, p. 87). The “social desirability of answers” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 421), the idea that what the participant says is “determined in part by what the speaker thinks the listener wants to hear” (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2001, p.201) could also potentially result from such learner / teacher power dynamics.

As a part of “honouring” confidentiality (Atkins and Wallace, 2012, p. 86), it was important to consider the issue of informed consent, to ensure participants were fully aware of the purposes and implications of the research project. An informed consent form was used (see appendix 8) along with a verbal explanation of the project to the group at the outset.

Learners were also given the option to remove their consent at any point. There were challenges in anonymising a small group of only six learners, especially with regards to describing nationality, as the group comprised five Japanese students and one Chinese student. It was therefore decided not to ascribe nationality to the letters given to anonymise the students' names.

In terms of acknowledging my own teaching beliefs, my research questions reflect the fact that I view the students as active participants in their own learning. They were directly involved in identifying, setting and reflecting on pronunciation goals. The teacher acted in this context as facilitator and guide but aimed to not impose norms or goals upon the learners. This idea of active learner involvement stems from ideas within the research cited in the previous section on autonomy and learner training (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Dornyei, 2001; Benson, 2006). It can also be seen as important within the communicative language teaching approach (Harmer, 2014) and the idea of "learning as a social accomplishment" from sociocultural perspectives of SLA research (Ortega, 2011, p. 168).

Regarding limitations, there were a number of unknown variables at the project outset, including the extent to which these learners would feel engaged in the project or able to take on greater levels of ownership over their pronunciation learning. As part of the "ongoing cycle" of AR that Nunan (1992, p. 19) recommends, revisions (based on teacher and learner reflection) took place over the course of the project in terms of reducing teacher scaffolding, encouraging out of class learning and open class discussion of ELF issues, NS and NNS pronunciation goals. Modifications could therefore be viewed as a positive aspect of AR methodology in terms of flexibility in responding to learner needs during the project period.

Data analysis and findings

Analysing data from the different components of the AR pronunciation project involved processes of “segmenting” text (Brown and Rogers, 2002, p. 88) from questionnaires, reflective pieces of writing and interview transcriptions. While “inevitably interpretative”, bringing with it all of the subjectivities that have been previously acknowledged, this involved “noting patterns and themes”, similarities and differences, and then “clustering” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 427) these according to the research questions. Data analysis was not a singular event, but as Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001, p. 192) recommend, an “ongoing process”, in which earlier coding of themes from the learner reflective reports informed the content of the post-project semi-structured interview schedule. Colour coding was used to highlight emerging themes within the data. For the interview transcripts, these themes were then transferred to tabular form in order to compare similarities and differences between learner responses (see example of table of themes arising from learner interviews as appendix 9).

Findings will be presented thematically, according to the research questions (RQs) for the project. Firstly, the extent to which learners were able to identify and reflect on their strengths, needs and goals in their pronunciation learning (RQ1) will be discussed. Learner attitudes towards NS pronunciation goals versus goals of “international intelligibility” (Walker, 2010) (RQ1a) will then be examined. The ways that teachers can support learners in setting individualised pronunciation goals, via awareness-raising of segmentals, suprasegmentals and communicative context will finally be considered (RQ2), taking into account learner views on teacher-led, peer and individual approaches to pronunciation learning (RQ2a).

RQ 1: To what extent are learners able to identify and reflect on their own strengths, needs and goals in their pronunciation learning?

Firstly, learner reflections (from the initial questionnaire to the reflective pieces of writing and interviews) highlighted that intelligibility was a key priority, and one on which this group of learners were able to clearly articulate their views. Concerns were raised regarding being understood in both NS and NNS interactions. In answering question A5 in the initial questionnaire, “How important do you think pronunciation is? Why?” five of the six

learners referred to issues of intelligibility (N, L, K, R and M), with L stating that “Native speakers can’t understand what I want to say” and M referring to the “difficulties in conversation” and “not being understood” in “other countries”. N referred to her own pronunciation in highly negative terms; “because when I speak to someone, they often can’t understand my English because my pronunciation is too bad”. By the final semi-structured interviews, views on the importance of being understood were still expressed strongly, with being “understood the first time” and “not having to repeat” stated as one of Y’s main pronunciation goals. Fears around the consequences of potential misunderstandings were also expressed by R in terms of his “wrong pronunciation” “maybe cause some fighting or argument”. R’s anxiety may be related to wider social attitudes and learner fears of “discrimination due to foreign accent”, identified as prevalent in McCrocklin and Link’s (2016, p. 124-5) research study of ESL learners in a Canadian context.

Regarding these issues of intelligibility it is notable that learners focused on perceptions of their own “deficits” (Jenkins, 2005), rather than ‘strengths’ in their pronunciation abilities. Their reflections appeared to focus primarily on ‘speaker’ rather than ‘hearer’ responsibility for maintaining an interaction (as discussed by Walker, 2010). Negative self-perceptions were further highlighted in the lack of responses to question A2 in the initial questionnaire; “What do you think your strengths are with English pronunciation”. Only two learners responded to this question, with brief comments by R on being “outgoing” and trying to “chat with others” and Y stating “I always keep in my mind to pronounce clearly”. However, by the stage of the post-project interviews, three of the four learners interviewed were able to highlight progress that they felt they had made in terms of being more intelligible to others or understanding others more. N stated that she could “understand more of friend’s conversations” and was not being asked to repeat herself as much in shops and restaurants. R also claimed that he can have a conversation and is more “confident” that people will understand him. K felt “listening has got easier” and his ability to understand others had improved. As Nunan (1992) has cautioned, such perceived improvements cannot be attributed to the AR project directly (internal validity). It is likely that a number of factors were involved, such as individual motivation (Kenworthy, 1987), length of stay (six months by the time of the interviews) and exposure to the TL environment (Levis et al, 2016). It was

nevertheless encouraging that over time learners were able to express more positive views regarding intelligibility.

Related to issues of intelligibility, learners largely identified functional goals for their pronunciation learning, in terms of speaking and listening outside the classroom, and their immediate 'real-world' needs and contexts (Cook, 2016). In their final reflective reports, M and L stressed the connections between listening and speaking, with M highlighting that she hoped that listening to "linking between words" would help her to "enjoy the conversation with native speaker" while in the UK. K stated that his goal was to speak to "foreign friends", expanding in his interview that his particular focus was to "discuss strategies of football" when playing with students of a range of nationalities at the University. One of his stated strategies in achieving this goal was to listen to footballer interviews on YouTube, note rhythm and stress and mimic the footballers' pronunciation. N's main goal was to improve her listening skills in order to help her listen to and understand "TED talks and English TV dramas" that she enjoyed. This suggested that the 'integrative' desires (Ellis, 1997) of the learners were strong motivational factors to increase intelligibility in their everyday communicative contexts while in the UK.

In terms of segmental and suprasegmental awareness, it was clear that at the outset the majority of learners focused on the segmental, in particular individual phonemes with which they had difficulties perceiving or producing (again relating to 'deficit' perceptions of their pronunciation abilities). In the initial questionnaire, when asked question A3 "What do you think your weaknesses are with English pronunciation?", four of the learners (M, K, Y and L) highlighted difficulties with hearing and producing specific minimal pair phonemic contrasts, such as /l/ and /r/, /ɜ:/ and /ɑ:/, and /f/ and /v/. Suprasegmental features were mentioned by just one learner (Y), in terms of commenting on the differences between pronunciation of English and his own language (question A4), he stated that "elision" and "assimilation" do "not exist in Japanese", going on to comment that "I've studied it but it was difficult to remember it". Overall, this awareness of segmental rather than suprasegmental features is what would be expected from the research literature, which as previously-discussed has identified a lack of learner awareness and teacher confidence with suprasegmentals (Derwing and Rossiter, 2002; Couper, 2016; Foote et al., 2016). The learners were far less

likely to have been explicitly directed towards and therefore 'noticed' these features in previous learning environments.

It is interesting to note, however, that there was a marked change by the end of the project, with five of the six learners identifying both segmental and suprasegmental features in reflecting on strengths, needs and goals in their final pieces of reflective writing (see example of reflective writing in appendix 10). Four learners believed working on identifying "linking", sentence stress or weak forms would help in their goals of improving their listening abilities (L, M, K and N). Examples of learner comments included "Learning about pronunciation, stresses and linking words will almost certainly help me to develop my English" (L), "My goals can be listening to linking words" (M), who provided examples of vowel to vowel linking (intrusion), which "was new for me"; "lovely eyes = lovely yeyes, three ants = three yants". N stated that "If I can understand linking and no stress words, it become easier to listening English interactions". While being cautious about the potential influence of the "social desirability" of responses (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011), it could be surmised that awareness-raising during the project supported learners in identifying suprasegmental needs and goals and viewing them as relevant for their pronunciation development. As highlighted within the research literature, a focus on suprasegmentals is viewed as valuable in increasing learner comprehensibility in spontaneous interactions (Derwing and Monro, 2005; Levis et al., 2016) and for listening within an NS environment (Scrivener, 2011; Baker, 2014).

Despite including suprasegmental features as goals and expressing interest in their use, learners continued to find suprasegmentals challenging. Responses to question A in the final questionnaire: "How good do you now feel your English pronunciation is?" (1 = low to 5 = high) showed higher mean ratings for segmental than suprasegmental features, with "consonants" receiving a mean score of 4/5 as opposed to "sentence stress" and "linking sounds in connected speech" receiving means of 2.6/5 respectively (See appendix 11 for a table summarising learner responses to this question). In addition, learners found it more difficult to identify their individual strengths (as opposed to weaknesses) with pronunciation, and to some extent 'deficit' views persisted over the course of the project. In the final interviews, when asked about their feelings about their own pronunciation now, Y stated that 'I'm bad at pronunciation', going on to say that he finds it 'annoying' when

listeners do not understand and he has to repeat himself. Others (N and K) felt that listening has got easier but were still less confident about their speaking being understood. Such 'deficit' views will be discussed further in terms of conflicting learner views on NS and NNS pronunciation goals and the issues of "international intelligibility" (under RQ1a below) previously highlighted by Jenkins (2007) and Walker (2010).

Before moving on, it is worth briefly examining individual variability within the group. As would be expected from the research literature focusing on the significance of the individual (Kenworthy, 1987; Couper, 2016; Derwing and Thomson, 2015), learners within this group reflected on a variety of different views, needs and goals. Moyer (1999) also discussed the issue of the "outlier" or the exception to the group norm. This seems highly relevant to one student (R), who was less present during the project sessions. While submitting a final reflective piece of writing, this related more to perceptions of cultural differences between the UK and his home country, than to his pronunciation learning. While willing to participate in the final interview and able to make valid comments about intelligibility, he found it difficult to answer questions on specific learning during the project and his own pronunciation goals. This was partly, as he acknowledged in the interview, that he had become more focused on 'vocabulary, writing and grammar', as he was preparing for academic study in the UK, and due to the fact that he was experiencing considerable anxiety about his ability to achieve this goal. Overall, this is a reminder that individual motivation and participation are always likely to vary according to learner aims and circumstances.

RQ 1a: What are learner attitudes to and expectations of 'nativeness' versus 'intelligibility'?
To what extent does an 'NS-like' pronunciation goal preference exist for this group of learners?

Initial questionnaire responses and subsequent class discussion yielded some interesting data regarding learner attitudes to NS versus NNS pronunciation goals. In responding to questionnaire question C: "Who would you like to sound like when you speak English?" (adapted from Timmis, 2002, p. 242), five of the six learners (with the exception of N) selected "student B: I can pronounce English clearly now. Native speakers and non-native speakers understand me wherever I go, but I still have the accent of my country", rather than "student A: I can pronounce English just like a native speaker now. Sometimes people

think I am a native speaker” (see appendix 2 for initial questionnaire). When asked why in the subsequent question, Y stated “Because personally I think student B is normal. American people pronounce American accent. British people pronounce British accent and Singaporean pronounce Singlish. Therefore, I prefer to be like student B”. K and L also highlighted the importance of having their own “accent” (K) and being able to communicate with “a native speaker and non-native speaker” (L). N was the exception here, stating that she chose ‘student A’ because although “it is difficult for me to speak English like a native speaker” “firstly I wanna be like student B. And then I wanna be like student A”.

These views were further explored via a class discussion on accent identities, NS and NNS pronunciation goals. Following the introductory exercise previously outlined, when learners were asked to listen to a selection of (native and non-native) speakers from the Speech Accent Archive website (no date), learner views were sought on the (deliberately controversial) question, “Which accent has the most ‘correct’ pronunciation of English?”. Two of the students (N and R) argued that the most correct pronunciation was “British English”. R claimed that the London accent was the most correct because London “attract more workers” (despite the fact that a Southern British accent was not one of those presented). N believed British English must be “the most correct” because it is the “origin” of English and “The Queen’s English is the best”. However, the other four learners disagreed, claiming that “there is not one correct accent” (M), “Japanese and Chinese English is also English” and “communication is the most important” (K). Y explained the concept of ELF to R as a “World English to communicate with other non-native speakers”. This level of awareness of ELF issues was rather unexpected, and although this very small group of learners cannot be considered representative of a wider population, this appeared to go against a number of research findings which identified strong learner preferences for native-like accent identities (Timmis, 2002; Qiong, 2004; Scales et al. 2006; Kang, 2015; McCrocklin and Link, 2016). However, it was interesting that these four learners were from the same University and it emerged during discussion that they had taken classes in ‘English as a Lingua Franca’ as part of their English Language degree courses, which may have been a significant factor.

Some contradictions nevertheless emerged, in terms of the prioritising of ‘good pronunciation’ for NS interactions, the highlighting of NS ‘status’ aspirations and negative

attitudes to the pronunciation of NNS teachers. In the initial questionnaire, for question B; “When is it important for you to have good pronunciation?” with ratings of 1 (low importance) to 5 (high importance), “when you talk to native speakers of English” received the highest mean score of 4.5/5, as opposed to “when you talk to your fellow students”, which received the lowest mean of 3.3/5 (questions adapted from Hewings, 2004) (See appendix 12 for table of scores). In addition, in his final interview, while Y stated that it is “not important to sound like a native speaker” he went on to state “but if I can speak like native speaker when I work, maybe the boss choose me” because they “tend to like the person who can speak English like native speaker”. This perhaps supports the view that ‘status’ attitudes toward inner circle accent identities are still engrained and influence learners to some extent (Kang, 2016). In his final reflective piece of writing, Y also expressed a lack of confidence in NNS teachers as a pronunciation model, stating “I am sure why it is difficult for me to identify vowels because Japanese teachers who teach English also cannot pronounce them clearly and I did not know that English have a lot of vowels”. Such views have also been reflected in research highlighting NNS teacher anxieties around using their own pronunciation as a model (Couper, 2014; Levis et al, 2016; Jenkins, 2005).

These issues combined with the ‘deficit’ views of learners’ own pronunciation previously-identified suggest that NS norms are still influencing this group of learners’ views on pronunciation to some extent. However, it is notable that the learners expressed varying viewpoints on a complex issue, with some learners demonstrating an unusually high awareness of ELF issues. Overall, it is clear that the learners placed value on both NS and NNS interactions. Intelligibility in both contexts was thus viewed as key to phonological improvement. The ways that learners can be supported by teachers in making decisions as to their pronunciation priorities in different communicative contexts will be discussed further in the next section.

RQ 2: How can teachers support learners to set individualised pronunciation goals? In particular, how can teachers raise learner awareness of segmental and suprasegmental features, and of communicative context in order to encourage individual learners to set personally-relevant goals?

My own reflections as researcher/teacher for this project, along with interview responses by two teachers in my department (S and T) will be considered in answering this research question. These reflections will also be situated within wider debates in the research literature.

In discussing ways that teachers can support individual goal-setting, both T and S agreed that it is both feasible and “good practice” (S) for learners to set their own pronunciation goals, once they have made more aware of their own intelligibility (as supported by Couper, 2016). They highlighted that this may be a learner or teacher-led process. S underlined the idea of “critical incidents”, explaining that learners may not be aware of their own intelligibility until their pronunciation causes a misunderstanding, for example for when learners at the University communicate with NSs or with learners with other L1s. T highlighted the teacher’s role in “diagnosing what each student’s particular difficulties are” and “making them aware of these”. She also stated that after doing some pronunciation work in class and “realising its relevance”, learners tend to “give more importance to pronunciation”.

There was a slight disagreement between S and T as to whether segmental or suprasegmental features should be the main focus of pronunciation teaching, with T claiming that more attention should be placed on the segmental as they are “harder for students and take longer to acquire”. S, however, argued that both are important, highlighting the connection between suprasegmentals and listening in the wider TL environment, stating that she might tell learners; “connected speech – this is why it’s important for you to understand what’s going on in the background, which is why it makes it difficult for you to understand”. As previously discussed, the pronunciation project had a slightly greater emphasis on suprasegmentals due their connection with listening (in this context, within the UK University and wider community). As S observed and I would agree, “students who are here for some time” are “very keen to understand what people are

saying around them". In addition, the importance of suprasegmentals for comprehensibility and spontaneous interactions has been previously outlined (Derwing and Monro, 2005; Jones, 1997; Levis et al, 2016).

What was agreed (by T, S and myself) was that building from receptive to productive practice was an important part of raising learner awareness of segmental and suprasegmental features. Within the pronunciation project, once particular individual priorities had been ascertained via the initial questionnaire and one-to-one discussions, in-class and LLC lessons aimed to build from receptive to productive practice, reflecting the importance of perceptual awareness in supporting productive phonological abilities (Baker, 2014; Couper, 2006; Derwing and Monro, 2005). Using identification and discrimination tasks for both segmental and suprasegmental features aimed to support learners to 'notice' phonological features before moving onto individual and peer practice and feedback. Appendix 13 provides an example of an in-class worksheet with discrimination activities and peer practice of segmental minimal pair contrasts introduced in the previous session, followed by an introductory identification and discrimination suprasegmental task focused on primary stress and weak forms (adapted from Hancock, 1995 and Baker, 2006). This idea of teachers explicitly drawing learner attention to and encouraging them to 'notice' phonological features has been influential within the research literature (Couper, 2016; Foote et al, 2016; Thomson and Derwing, 2014) and SLA cognitive theories of 'consciously noticing' (Atkinson, 2011).

Considering the balance of teacher scaffolding and learner autonomy was an important part of this process. As S stated in her interview, it is about "equipping students with tools" to work on their own pronunciation, thus developing their 'metacognitive' goal-setting and reflective strategies as discussed previously (Hedge, 2000). Scaffolding took place through use of in-class techniques such as teacher presentation, use of phonemic symbols and images of articulators, drilling, moving from individual sounds to words, sentences and longer pieces of discourse. In-class techniques also included pair work, with an 'inductive' guided approach for learners to discuss, work out rules and give each other feedback. LLC sessions aimed to build on and reinforce in-class work through use of guided worksheets, but also provide space for individual choice and autonomy. Each worksheet also included a reflective section for learners to reflect on their pronunciation learning during the session

(see appendix 14 for example of LLC 'guided self-study' worksheet focussing on suprasegmental features).

Use of metalanguage was a further aspect of scaffolding learner awareness that both S and I reflected upon. As Couper (2016) has discussed, it is important for teachers and learners to work together to develop shared understanding of pronunciation terminology. S stated that she uses the term "connected speech" to cover features such as "ellipsis, elision or intrusion". Within the pronunciation project I also used the term "linking" to cover a range of suprasegmental features (such as catenation, intrusion and elision), as learners responded well to this, using the term in their own reflections.

In terms of scaffolding for suprasegmental features (catenation, primary stress, elision and weak forms), following the second LLC session, I reflected on a concern I had about the extent to which I was using myself or the Sky Pronunciation programme as a predominantly southern British English NS 'model' for pronunciation. In addition, as S highlighted in her interview, while there are benefits of CAPT technology such as Sky Pronunciation for learner "self-study", listening activities within the programme are quite "artificial", "manipulated for teaching purposes" and do not necessarily reflect authentic communication. Baker (2014, p. 156) has also criticised over-use of "imitative" and "highly manipulated techniques" in pronunciation teaching (based on "behaviourist" ideas of stimulus, response and reinforcement (Ellis, 1997, p. 31)) in terms of potentially limiting "learner autonomy and comprehensibility". This led me to add two further components to the pronunciation project to encourage a greater degree of learner autonomy, raise awareness of suprasegmental features in 'real-world' listening activities and to raise awareness of the relevance of communicative context.

The first component was the 'authentic listening project', in which learners were encouraged to listen to out of class interactions, for example with host families, at the University, within TED talks, YouTube clips or TV programmes. They were asked to note down particular phrases, marking "stress, weak forms, linking or intonation" and then reflect on their learning or raise questions about what they heard in an online journal entry (see appendix 15 for instructions given to the learners). Learner responses to this demonstrated a high level of engagement, with all learners (with the exception of R)

completing the task. K for example, noted the elision of /t/ in the phrase “it took...” within a TV programme. L noted phrases heard within her host family, identifying “linking” between words. M identified stressed (‘information-carrying’) words in a TED talk and raised a question about a phrase she was unsure if she had heard correctly (“on the road”) while on a bus. Y identified a range of features (catenation, elision and weak forms) within song lyrics. Reflections revealed a level of interest in the process, with Y stating that “It was hard but it always makes me excited” and with M reflecting that she was “surprised” and “interested” in the phrases she heard. I subsequently reflected that reducing the level of scaffolding and encouraging a greater level of learner autonomy was a successful part of raising learner awareness of suprasegmental features in listening outside of the classroom, and of the connection between pronunciation and listening skills more generally.

The second component, which involved an in-class discussion on accent identities, NS and NNS pronunciation goals (previously outlined), aimed to raise learner awareness of the importance of communicative context in determining the relevance of phonological features. In particular, the discussion led to an explicit focus on the idea that there are multiple accents of English, both for NS and NNS, and that each of these has its own (valid) pronunciation features, the most important aspect being intelligibility. In the teacher interviews, both T and S supported the idea of ‘intelligibility’ (“not accent”: T) as the primary focus of pronunciation learning, with the goal of “mutual comprehensibility on both sides” (S). The session also enabled a specific focus on how aspects of NS and LFC pronunciation goals may be determined by communicative context, highlighting, for example, that working on ‘sentence stress’ is believed to support intelligibility in both NS and NNS contexts (Walker, 2010; Harmer, 2014), while other features of connected speech (for example linking, weak forms and elision) may be particularly relevant in supporting listening comprehension (Scrivener, 2011; Baker, 2014) in an NS context, in this case in the UK University environment.

In being explicit about these distinctions, the idea was to make the assumptions of the pronunciation project transparent to the learners. While there was perhaps a tension here between the teacher and researcher role, in the sense that I did not want to unduly influence learners in their goal-setting, I believed this to be an important part in raising awareness and reducing stigma around the ‘deficit’ perceptions surrounding NNS

pronunciation previously-identified within the group. I also believed, as Brown and Rogers (2002) have discussed that being open about my own presuppositions was an important part in equipping learners with the knowledge to make “personally constructed decisions” (Hedge, 2000) about their pronunciation goals.

RQ 2a: What are learner preferences regarding the balance of teacher-led, peer and individual learning in this process?

In seeking to gauge learner preferences regarding teaching approaches during the pronunciation project, in the final questionnaire learners were asked “Which did you prefer, the in-class or self-study activities in the LLC during the project? Why?” (question B – appendix 16). Four of the six learners (Y, K, N and R) stated a preference for “in-class” activities, with a variety of reasons provided for this. Y and K focussed on the benefits of peer learning in-class, with K appreciating the “opportunity for asking friends” and Y stating “I often care about other students”. N and K also highlighted the benefits of “output” and teacher feedback, with N claiming that “I preferred the in-class because I have to output more. When I study by myself, I have no idea it is correct pronunciation or not”. R stated it was “hard to focus” in self-study sessions. The other two learners (L and M), however, provided reasons for their “self-study” preference, highlighting their individual needs and differences. L stated “I could practise saying these words at home using Sky Pronunciation” and M pointing out that “each weakpoints we have are different” and “I prefer to study my way”.

Related to these varying learner preferences, one incident in the first LLC ‘self-study’ session caused me to reflect on what I perceived as lack of productive output, which I felt could have a negative effect on the retention of phonological information (Couper, 2016). In addition to guiding learners to discrimination tasks on the Sky Pronunciation programme relating to particular segmental contrasts, I encouraged learners to repeat the individual sounds, words and sentences after listening to them with headphones. There was, however, very little evidence of such production happening. One-to-one tutorials identified some anxiety around feeling ‘on show’ in front of peers in LLC sessions. Y stated that he felt “shy” and did not want to speak because “others might hear me”. The concept of ‘face’, or “mentsu”, which highlights the importance of “one’s social image” in Japanese culture and

the idea that “Japan is a shame-sensitive society”, according to Tao (2014, p. 114) may also have been an influencing factor.

One-to-one tutorial discussions further revealed a general preference for in-class pair productive activities and feedback, where there was not such a focus on the individual by the whole group. I therefore tailored the productive activities to the in-class rather than the LLC learning environments to respond to learner preferences. This highlighted that teachers need to be aware of individual sensitivities, and adapt activities to the particular group of learners. As previously emphasized by Monro, Derwing and Thomson (2015, p. 40), there should be “no one-size-fits-all” approach to pronunciation learning.

Conclusion and recommendations

This section will firstly summarise key findings from each of the RQs. Based on these findings, recommendations for teaching practice will be made. Finally, limitations, potential future revisions to the AR pronunciation project and my own learning will be discussed.

A summary of key findings

In terms of the extent to which learners were able to identify and reflect on their own strengths, needs and goals in their pronunciation learning (RQ1), learners demonstrated clear abilities to reflect on perceptions of their intelligibility in NS and NNS interactions, articulating a range of functional goals related to 'real-life' uses and contexts. While lacking at the outset, a greater level of suprasegmental awareness was demonstrated in goal-setting by the end of the project. Despite this, perceptions of productive 'deficits' and a focus on speaker rather than hearer responsibility, appeared to persist.

While there was variation, the majority of learners did not express a preference for 'native-like' pronunciation goals (RQ1a), and demonstrated an unexpected awareness of ELF issues. Some contradictory attitudes were, however, evident with the prioritising of 'good pronunciation' for NS interactions and negative attitudes towards the pronunciation of NNS teachers. While NS pronunciation norms still influenced learner views to some extent, it is clear that learners valued both NS and NNS interactions and that intelligibility in both contexts was seen as key to pronunciation development.

In terms of how teachers can support learners to set their own pronunciation goals (RQ2), building from receptive to productive practice was viewed as crucial, as was a balance of teacher 'scaffolding', peer learning and tasks to encourage greater learner autonomy. Use of 'authentic' listening tasks in addition to more 'manipulated' teaching materials (within CAPT technology for example) was believed to support greater learner engagement and autonomy. Facilitating a discussion on accent identities and making explicit often-cited distinctions between goals for NS and international contexts, was also viewed as helpful in supporting learners to make informed choices about their pronunciation learning.

While learner responses varied, a slight preference for in-class over self-study sessions was indicated (RQ2a), particularly as learners viewed teacher and peer feedback as important

for guiding their output. However, value was also placed on individual study and the Sky Pronunciation programme, with two of the learners reflecting on the benefits of working on their own identified priorities.

Recommendations for teaching practice and teacher training

Firstly, a balance of teacher, peer and individual learning are recommended in supporting learners to set their own pronunciation goals. Moreover, CAPT technology can be useful in complementing, but not replacing, human interaction, as Monro, Derwing and Thomson (2015) and Lee, Jang and Plonsky (2014) have discussed.

Secondly, teachers could make greater use of ‘authentic’ or ‘freer’ tasks in pronunciation teaching, in order to minimise the risks of ‘behaviourist’ techniques and overly “manipulated” teaching resources having a negative impact upon learner comprehensibility and autonomy (Baker, 2014). While scaffolding and teacher feedback are vital parts of the process, learner engagement and autonomy can also be enhanced through giving learners “real choices” (Dornyei, 2001), through open discussion about NS and NNS pronunciation priorities and communicative context.

Finally, two particular recommendations regarding teacher training are considered highly pertinent. Firstly, as research has emphasized the benefits of suprasegmental learning to developing comprehensibility, communicative function (Levis et al, 2016; Jones, 1997) and listening skills (Baker, 2014; Scrivener, 2011), yet identified a lack of teacher confidence in this area (Couper, 2016), it is recommended that a greater priority should be placed on suprasegmental features in teacher training programmes. Additionally, while theoretical knowledge of ELF issues may now be more widely understood by teachers (Jenkins, 2005), applications to teaching practice in terms of the distinction between NS and LFC pronunciation goals (Walker, 2010) are less clearly developed or understood. Further clarity in initial teacher education programmes and continuing professional development activities would therefore be highly beneficial in bridging the gap between ELF theory and pronunciation teaching practice.

Limitations, revisions to a future AR project and final reflections

In acknowledging limitations, this was a small AR case-study which cannot be considered typical or representative of wider populations (Nunan, 1992). Findings are specific to this group of six adult learners, who had an awareness of ELF pronunciation issues, a willingness to participate and a motivation to engage with both NS and NNS communities. These conditions inevitably contributed to individual learning and achievement during the project. Future AR research could investigate individual goal-setting with different learner populations (perhaps in NNS contexts) to compare findings and further understanding.

While a fairly ambitious project within the six-week timeframe, there were also limitations in terms of time and scope. I was hoping to have the opportunity for a revised project cycle (as a recommended part of the AR methodology by Atkins and Wallace, 2011) in the Spring term, but due to timetabling constraints this was not possible. A revised cycle could include a specific focus on 'accommodation', in terms of developing learner confidence with strategies to check communicative success and repair communication breakdowns, viewed as a key part of ELF competence (Walker, 2010; Yazan, 2015). Broadening responsibility from speaker to hearer would aim to reduce anxiety around the perceived 'deficits' of speaker phonological productions identified within this project.

In terms of my own learning as a teacher, I was able to reflect on the value of a discrete pronunciation project, which I had not attempted to facilitate previously. While I always believed in integrating pronunciation teaching with other skills, this dedicated focus enabled an explicit exploration with learners of the connection of pronunciation to speaking, listening and wider 'communicative competence'. In addition, in relation to my concern about using myself or CAPT technology as primarily NS pronunciation models, it is possible to make a distinction between models and goals, as expressed by Cook (2016). While all teachers (NS and NNS) will use their pronunciation as (valid) models, NS pronunciation norms should not be imposed upon learners or assumed to be their goals. I therefore reflected that raising learner awareness of different communicative contexts and supporting them to set goals based on 'real-world' uses is a crucial part of the teaching role, and one which can encourage learners to take increasingly autonomous decisions about their own pronunciation learning.

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Appendix 1: example of initial needs analysis questionnaire completed by L

Intensive English: Needs Analysis

Name: Date: 26th September

How long have you been speaking / learning English?

I have been learning English for 7 years

Say a little about when and how you learnt English in the past (including any positive or negative experiences and types of learning or courses):

I didn't practice speaking English like a presentation. So I couldn't speak English in Japanese university

Current situation:

Why do you want to study English here at Sussex?

Because I wanted to know about british culture and british pronunciation in the UK, so I came to the UK since it was 2nd September. Also I want to acquire English knowledge because I would like to become a junior high school English teacher in the future

What do you hope to achieve by the end of this English course?

I want to achieve my speaking English skill because I am not good at speaking so I want to speak English more fluently

Do you have any worries or concerns about doing this English course?

There ^{are not} only Japanese people also other country people we can talk to them using English, so it is a chance to make a friend and to communicate with many people :)

What are your plans for the future?

I want to become an English teacher in Japan
But I am wavering whether I choose another job.

How do you use your English here at Sussex? (Have you got any immediate, practical needs in English? Are you struggling in any areas of English in the real world?)

Tick only two of the following which are most important for you to improve your English:

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking ✓
- Listening ✓
- Pronunciation
- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Other - please state

Say a little more about why you ticked these 2 areas (which aspects would you like to improve?)

I am poor at speaking English. I want to improve my speaking skill and listening skill. Because I want to communicate with using English.

Do you do any English work on your own at present? (If so, what things do you do?)

No

Do you have:

- an English grammar book? If so, which one?

No

- an English dictionary? If so, which one?

Electronic dictionary

- Do you use any other resources to help with your English (computer software, websites, apps, TV/radio programmes, newspapers/magazines)?

TV,

- Are you familiar with English phonetic symbols?

Also, please let me know which types of activities you enjoy doing in class by ticking any of the following (✓).

Reading

Songs ✓

Listening ✓

TV/film

Writing

Role play activities ✓

Speaking in pairs ✓

Games ✓

Speaking in groups

Internet activities

Appendix 2: example of initial pronunciation questionnaire completed by Y

Pronunciation Questionnaire

Name: [redacted]

date: Monday 12 November

A: Your experiences of pronunciation

1. How have you learnt English pronunciation so far?

I have learnt English pronunciation for 2 years ago.

2. What do you think your strengths are with English pronunciation?

I always keep it in my mind to pronounce clearly.

3. What do you think your weaknesses are with English pronunciation?

When I speak English more quickly than usual, I can't pronounce clearly sometimes. too slow.

4. What do you think are the main differences between pronunciation of English and your own language? Give some examples of these:

not exist Japanese
 ↳ Elision
 ↳ Assimilation
 ↳ f/v, th, l/r, *w, v/b
 ↳ silent words
 ↳ linking letters
 ↳ how to move the mouth (not same)
I've studied it but it was difficult to remember it. → *din a man.*

5. How important do you think pronunciation is? Why?

To imitate! → speaking

listening → To listen the radio, film, conversations and music.

*↓
 Because English is language so I must speak and listen English.*

B: When is it important for you to have good pronunciation? ¹

Circle your answer 1=low, 5= high

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. When you talk to your fellow students? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. When you talk to your teacher? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. When you talk to native speakers of English? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. When you talk to other non-native speakers of English? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

C: Who would you like to sound like when you speak English?

1. Look at the following descriptions. Would you prefer to be like *Student A* or *Student B*?¹¹

Please underline one answer:

Student A: 'I can pronounce English just like a native speaker now. Sometimes people think I am a native speaker'.

Student B: 'I can pronounce English clearly now. Native speakers and non-native speakers understand me wherever I go, but I still have the accent of my country'

2. Why did you choose student A or student B? Give reasons:

Because personally I think student B is normal. American people pronounce American accent. British people pronounce British accent and Singaporean pronounce Singlish. Therefore, I prefer to be like student B.²

D: How good do you feel your English pronunciation is?¹

1. Circle your answer 1 = low, 5 = high

Vowels	1	2	3	4	5
Consonants	1	2	3	4	5
Consonant clusters (e.g. cl-, fr-)	1	2	3	4	5
Word stress (e.g. aGO, FOLLOw)	1	2	3	4	5
Intonation (e.g. ↘Yes, ↗Yes)	1	2	3	4	5
Sentence stress and weak forms (FISH and CHIPS)	1	2	3	4	5

/ən/

ex). ə n æ

2. Note any particular problems you have with English

Vowels: When I listen English, I can't sometimes differentiate (vowel)

Consonants: When I say consonants which doesn't exist Japanese, I sometimes forget (pronunc)

Consonant clusters: When I speak English, I sometimes mistake 'r' for 'l' or 'l' for 'r'. (sentence)

Word stress: When I speak English, I often forget to stress.

Intonation: When I speak English, I sometimes confuse intonation

Sentence stress and weak forms: When I speak English, I often forget to stress.

E: Your pronunciation goals

Are there any areas of pronunciation that you would particularly like to work on and improve, during this project?

I would particularly like to work and improve all areas of pronunciation because what I study English pronunciation in England is easier than in Japan.

¹ Source: Hewings (2004, p. 26 and 27, adapted).

² Source: Timmis (2002, p. 242, adapted)

³ Source: Hewings (2004, p. 26, adapted)

Appendix 3: selected slides from class on accents and intelligibility



<http://accent.gmu.edu/index.php>

Please call Stella. Ask her to bring these things with her from the store: Six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob. We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids. She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her Wednesday at the train station.

Listen to the above text read by 5 different speakers.

- Which of the 5 speakers do you think are native speakers?
- Where do you think each of the speakers is from?

Source: The Speech Accent Archive (no date). Available at: <http://accent.gmu.edu/> (accessed on 1st November 2017)

Discussion: accent identities

How easy or difficult was it for you to tell if a speaker was native or non-native?

Could you tell where each speaker was from? How? What helped you to decide?

Which accent has the most 'correct' pronunciation of English in your opinion?

Appendix 4: Example of 'guided self-study' LLC worksheet

Pronunciation project: session 2 (LLC): English sounds in isolation, words and sentences

Guided self-study session



1. **Open the Sky Pronunciation programme.** Click on 'go to the main menu' and when it asks you if you want to sign in, click 'no'. When you navigate on screen, use the 'back to menu' button to move to another section of the programme
2. **Watch the video** introduction to Sky Pronunciation. What are the key features of the Sky Pronunciation programme? Make a few notes:

3. Go to '**The phonemic alphabet in English**' section at the top of the main menu: review any vowel or consonant sounds you feel unsure of, and try some of the exercises (**spend around 15 minutes on this**). Repeat the sounds you hear and click on show words to see a selection of words that contain these sounds.

Which sounds did you find difficult? Make a note of them:

4. In the same section: **'The phonemic alphabet in English'**, go to **'matching words'** and try the activity with /ɔ:/ /ɑ:/ /æ/ and /eɪ/. You could also try the **'grammar sounds'** activity with past tense –ed sounds (spend around 15-20 minutes on this).

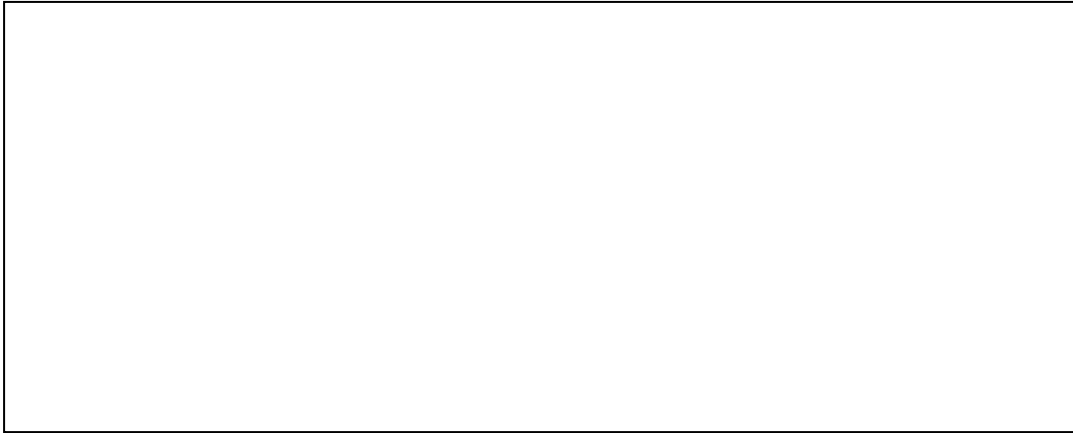
Which sounds or exercises did you find easier or more difficult? Make notes below:

5. Go to the **'similar sounds'** section on the main menu. Have a look at the vowel sounds section which presents two sounds together. You have to identify the correct sound words and then sentences. Try some of the contrasts that you find challenging firstly for vowels, then consonants. It is useful to try the activities in **words and then sentences (you can click on the buttons in this section)** (spend around 15-20 minutes on this).

Some examples that you may find useful are (but you can try any that you feel would be useful):

Vowel sounds	Consonant sounds
/ɜ:/ and /ɑ:/	/l/ and /r/
/ɔ:/ and /əʊ/	/s/, /ʃ/ and /tʃ/
Weak forms /ə/	/f/ and /v/

Which pairs of sounds did you practise? Which were easier or more challenging for you? Make notes below:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their notes on sound pairs and their difficulty levels.

Appendix 5: Teacher/researcher self-reflection (based on Gibbs model, 1998)

Pronunciation project (15th November 2017)

Reflection on session 2 (following the Gibbs Model, 1998):



Description: what happened?

Students were guided to use the Sky Pronunciation software by following the stages of a worksheet in the Language Learning Centre (LLC) for a 90-minute session. This session focused on segmental phonological features, encouraging students to focus on particular sounds they had highlighted in the previous awareness-raising session and to use discrimination activities to identify vowel and consonant sounds in isolation, words and then sentences (see worksheet 1). I highlighted particular phonemes and phonemic contrasts that were identified in the first awareness raising lesson and via the questionnaires, but also encouraged some independence in the process by suggesting that students choose activities they felt would be useful within two sections of the Sky Pronunciation programme ('The phonemic alphabet in English' and 'Similar sounds'). At the beginning of the session, we reviewed some of the phonemic contrasts from the previous week as a class and students brainstormed and I boarded and drilled words which contained the sounds. Students then worked through the sections of the worksheet at their own pace for around 50 minutes. For the final 20 minutes, students were asked to complete the reflection questions on their learning (see worksheet 1).

What were you thinking and feeling?

- 1) I was a little concerned about the balance of scaffolded support and independent self-study while the students were doing the online tasks. I was not sure to what extent students would be able to identify which tasks would be useful for them, and then to reflect meaningfully on the process.

- 2) Another concern I had during the session centred around the extent to which using an online programme, such as Sky Pronunciation could or should have a productive language target. In addition to the discrimination tasks designed to raise perceptual awareness, I encouraged students to produce the individual sounds, words and sentences as they listened to them with headphones. However, there was very little evidence of this happening, and this could have been due to a level of discomfort or feeling 'on show' on the part of the students. I worried that the lack of productive practice could have a negative effect on retention of the phonological information. Perhaps as a teacher schooled in the Western communicative approach, I also did not feel entirely comfortable without having a section of the lesson where students interact and work on producing the language they have 'noticed' and perceived.

Evaluation and analysis

- 1) In relation to my concern in point one above, I had scaffolded the exercises to quite a large extent (guiding students towards particular tasks, but also encouraging them to choose any activities within the two sections that they found useful). However, I was encouraged to read their questionnaire responses from the previous week (5 out of 6 received), which all demonstrated (to varying degrees) an awareness of English phonemes at the segmental level. Students were all able to pinpoint difficulties with individual vowel or consonant sounds. Two students were also able to reflect on suprasegmental features, with one student (K) highlighting that syllables and stress were a challenging feature that he would like to work on and Y mentioning assimilation, elision and weak forms as areas he had previously studied but found confusing and difficult to apply in conversational speaking. I was surprised and encouraged to see that there was a greater level of awareness of phonological features within the group than I had initially anticipated. On balance, I therefore considered that the level of scaffolding on the worksheet could be reduced somewhat for the next LLC session to encourage greater independence and autonomy in the learning process (Harmer, 2015; Ortega 2011).
Students all completed the reflective sections of their worksheets, although some were limited to one or two brief points per question. I had considered whether to set up an online journal via the learning platform 'Study Direct' to encourage students to respond in greater depth after the session, but I wanted to get an immediate response from the students during the session. I will consider whether to change this to try to elicit more in-

depth feedback over the next two sessions. From the feedback, it is clear that students found the exercises useful and were able to identify which sounds were more challenging (e.g. /ɜ:/ and /ɑ:/ for R and M). Three students wrote that they would practise the activities in their free time, which I considered to be a positive outcome.

- 2) In relation to my second concern about the session lacking a productive outcome, I felt that this could be developed in the next in-class session. Although some research studies have highlighted that perceptual training alone can lead to “enhanced phonetic production” (Baker 2014, p. 154), I would support the idea that production aids retention of phonological information (Harmer, 2015). I will therefore add a section to include students listening to each other to discriminate and produce key contrasts in the next session.

Conclusion and action plan

In conclusion, I will do the following for the next (in-class) session:

- Review key segmental contrasts (identified as /l/ versus /r/, /f/ versus /v/ and /ɜ:/ versus /ɑ :/) with students interacting in pairs to produce and discriminate between the sounds. This will add productive and interactive elements I considered to be lacking in this session.
- Consider having an online reflective diary that students complete in their free time to encourage a greater depth of reflection on pronunciation learning.
- Start working on suprasegmental features, as these are considered to be key for both listening skills (Baker 2014; Scrivener 2011) and spontaneous interactions in the target language community (Derwing and Monro 2005, p. 388). We will start by reviewing stress and weak forms within sentences.

For the next guided self-study session in two weeks, I will:

- Reduce the level of scaffolding and increase the opportunities for choice in activities while guiding students use the Sky Pronunciation programme (focusing on suprasegmental features). This is to encourage learner autonomy and pronunciation work outside of the teaching session.

Appendix 6: Learner semi-structured interview schedule

Student Interview schedule

A: Reflections on learning during the pronunciation project

1. What did you learn during the pronunciation project?
 - What was new for you?
 - What was interesting or helpful?
 - What was challenging or confusing?
 - Did you prefer the in-class or self-study LLC sessions? Why?
 - What did you learn through doing the authentic listening project? Was this helpful?

2. Individual reflections and goals (based on student written reflections and tutorials):
 - You mentioned.....can you say a bit more about that?
 - What did you mean by....?
 - You said that your main goal was....can you tell me about why that is important to you?
 - How easy or difficult was it for you to set your own goals for your pronunciation learning? What helped you to do this? What was challenging?

B: Reflections on learning since the pronunciation project: short-term impacts

3. Have you continued your pronunciation learning since the project?
 - In what ways? What have you done?
 - In class / out of class?
 - Listening / conversation – have you noticed any features of pronunciation in listening activities or daily interactions?
 - Have you used any specific pronunciation resources – books / online resources (e.g. Sky Pronunciation)?

4. Have your ideas about what pronunciation is changed at all? In what ways?

5. How do you feel about your own pronunciation now?

6. Would you like to ask me any questions?

Appendix 7: Teacher Semi-structured interview schedule

Teacher interview schedule

1. Explain rationale for pronunciation project and what I have done so far.
2. To what extent do you think that learners prioritise pronunciation as part of their English language learning?
3. What do you see as the role of the teacher in supporting students with their pronunciation learning?
4. Do you think it is feasible / possible for learners to set their own pronunciation goals?
 - To what extent do you believe that learners are able to identify and reflect on their own strengths and needs in their pronunciation learning?
 - Does it require a particular level of learner motivation to do this?
5. How helpful do you think CAPT technologies such as Sky Pronunciation are in supporting students to develop their pronunciation awareness and abilities?
6. Which features of pronunciation do you tend to prioritise when teaching?
 - segmental / suprasegmental?
 - What is the balance?
 - Are there areas you believe to be more important than others?
 - Are there areas you consider to be less important?
7. How helpful do you think discrete slots on pronunciation are as opposed to integrated teaching of pronunciation with other skills work?
8. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix 8: Informed consent form

CONSENT FORM FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Project Title for Master's Dissertation:

Individual goal setting for pronunciation: a classroom-based action research project with English language learners in a UK university context.

- I agree to take part in the above University research project.
- I have been informed about the research and why it is taking place
- I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:
 - Be interviewed by the researcher
 - Allow the interview to be recorded
 - Allow my writing to be used by the researcher in the study
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary
- I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time
- I understand that my data will be confidential and only used for research purposes. No names will be used in the study and all reference to participants will be anonymised.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Signature

Date

Appendix 9: Table of themes arising from learner interviews

	Y	K	N	R
Segmental features – strengths, challenges, progress	Difficulties with number of vowel sounds. Partic difficulties distinguishing between /æ/ and /ʌ/. Also the schwa sound – can notice but not produce.	Vowel sounds /æ/, /ʌ/ and /ə/ = difficult. Also /r/ and /l/ still quite challenging.	/f/ and /b/ - realized when arrived in UK that Japanese people can't pronounce – didn't notice before (idea of critical incidents necessary for learners to notice pron challenges– tutor interview - relate to)	-
Suprasegmental features – strengths, challenges, progress	Stress and weak forms complicated as “Japanese don't have weak forms – every word has same stress”. Highlighted connection between listening & speaking.	Learned connection / linking sounds / intonation – useful for listening to people's conversations (e.g. host family), but difficult in speaking (receptive / productive issue). Enjoys rhythm – interested in rap & music – listens and imitates. Feels this is good for listening and speaking – sometimes takes note of stress and linking between words.	Linking sounds and unstressed sounds = important. Couldn't hear before in movies and dramas, but can notice now and feels has helped with listening.	Finds producing stressed syllables difficult, but feels more able to identify stress within words and sentences. Felt linking sounds and being corrected by the teacher helpful during project. Easier to listen to local people on the bus although accents still a challenge.

	Y	K	N	R
Goals – expand on from written reflections	Main goal to speak “naturally” – explained as being understood “the first time” – not having to repeat (intelligibility). Also being able to produce weak forms, and having a “smooth” interaction.	Wants to speak to “foreign friends”, in particular to discuss football strategies when playing, so can understand each other (intelligibility / functional comm). Would also like to think more in English rather than translating from Japanese.	Main goal is to improve listening skills as took toefl and listening was the “worst part”. Listens to English dramas and TED talks and listens to certain parts “again and again”. Helps but takes a long time.	Initially unclear on exact goals (didn’t seem to have understood written reflective piece last term) “Actually I never thinking about this. I have no clue”. But talked of intelligibility issues – dangers of wrong pron “maybe cause some fighting or argument” (miscommunication / misunderstanding).
NS and NNS interaction - views	Not important to sound like a NS, but stated that “if I can speak like NS when I work, maybe the boss choose me”. Said not smooth interaction when foreigners try to speak Japanese – can’t always understand what they say. Wants to communicate smoothly. Asked interesting question about what is not important to study in pron at end of the interview – awareness of ELF issues, but	-	Has interactions with NS and NNS. Sometimes listening to NS is easier as in “some other countries, their English is a little bit hard”.	-

	Y	K	N	R
	also stated lack of confidence in NNS teacher's pron model in Japan.			
In class or LLC sessions preference	In-class activities. Felt shy in LLC – didn't want to speak / repeat because "others might hear me" (cultural issues – face – relate to)	In-class. Liked practicing sounds with other students – listening to each other.	In-class, because on own "I didn't realise what my fault was" (about feedback)	LLC self-study sessions, because "can know exactly what need to improve".
Continued pron learning since project?	Focus on listening. Listens to BBC radio 4 everyday / imitates / feels can identify different accents, but challenging. Hasn't used specific pron resources, eg. Sky Pron since.	In-class - found phonemic chart helpful. Out of class does regular listening activities, e.g. films (Netflix), watching footballer interviews on YouTube and conversations with host family. No specif pron resources since.	Watches English dramas and TED talks – repeated times, with subtitles – helps listening skills but takes a long time (and takes the fun out of it!). Also listens to friends' conversations – can understand more now, but finds speaking difficult – pace "moving on moving on". No specif pron resources since.	No specific pron resources, but focuses on listening in general.
Changes in ideas about pron?	No – learnt some aspects of connected speech in Japan, but wasn't	Now feels pron very important as it can cause misunderstanding (connect to N's idea and critical	Found question difficult to answer but said stress and linking sounds	Found question difficult to answer but talked about experiences of learning pron in China and mixing

	Y	K	N	R
	confident in teacher's pron there: "I couldn't trust her to pronunciation words" (NS model preference)	incident idea above). Noticed his own difficulty with perceiving / producing /p/ v. /æʊ/ distinction in 'want' / 'won't'. We discussed. I recommended practice with Sky Pron.	were new for her.	local language with English.
Feelings about own pron now?	Still feels it's "bad", because still often has to repeat himself in conversations. Finds this annoying. Not sure if it has got easier.	Still probs with /æ/ sounds (as noted above), but feels listening has got easier over 6 months. Sometimes listens to TV programmes and notes links between words.	Feels listening has improved. Can understand more of friend's conversations, but still a challenge to speak as conversation moves on so fast. Still wants to improve listening – asked question about this. Not sure if speaking has improved but stated that in shops / restaurants is not being asked to repeat so much – feels is understood more (intelligibility)	More confident about pron – can explain to others what wants to say – nowadays can have a conversation and be more confident that people will understand (intelligibility).

Appendix 10: Example of final piece of reflective writing (by K)

Pronunciation

Section 1

During this project, I have learned a lot of pronunciation techniques, rules and so on. I knew about R and L sounds are very difficult for Japanese. However, I think I got deference between those because in lessons, I did some pronunciation games. At the moment, I got about shape of mouth, how to use tongue etc. Before come England, I hated speaking English but now I keen on speaking it. If I didn' t try to challenge it I wouldn' t get confident. In addition, most of useful things is linking. People often use it and we are confused by it so after learning, I can understand what people talk.

Section 2

I think my strength is rhythm. Probably I have told you that when I was child I liked imitating English such as songs and talking. Even now I like them so I have some English rhythms. A lot of Japanese are shy and don' t keen on speaking and show what they think. However, I like speaking and if I don' t know vocabulary and grammar, I don' t use them. I use what I know and I say some words clearly and after, people may understand what I say. I think the action is the most important and strength for me. My weakness is as you know R sound. I can pronounce L sound but can' t R sound it is so hard for me. In USA English, they often use R sound even don' t have letter R so I plan while I stay The U.K. I' m going to get R sound and in the future I would like to go NY.

Section 3

My pronunciation goals are communicating with foreigner, hearing people conversations and teaching how to get them for people who learn English just like me. I guess first one is a lot of people set as them goal. Actually one of the my dreams is living foreign countries and get a job. If I do it I will study more and more. After I will achieve it I get second goal automatically. I think speaking and listening are connecting each other. Unfortunately I have a problem that I can' t understand / æ/ /ʌ/ /ə/. When I hear those words, I hear just /a/ sound so I can' t identify which sounds. I think for solving the problems I just practice hard and I hear conversations carefully. As soon as this term is going to finish. However my pronunciation study won' t finish forever so next year I' m studying and learning more and more.

Appendix 11: table summarising end-of-project questionnaire question A

Summary of mean scores to end of course questionnaire question A (adapted from Hewings, 2004)

'A: How good do you now feel your English pronunciation is?

1. Circle your answer 1 = low, 5= high

Vowels	1	2	3	4	5
Consonants	1	2	3	4	5
Consonant clusters (e.g. cl-, fr-)	1	2	3	4	5
Word stress (e.g. aGO, FOLLow)	1	2	3	4	5
Intonation (e.g. ↘Yes, ↗Yes)	1	2	3	4	5
Sentence stress and weak forms (FISH and CHIPS)	1	2	3	4	5
/ən/					
Linking sounds within connected speech (Nothing a tall)	1	2	3	4	5'

Phonological feature	Mean score (out of 5)
Vowels	3
Consonants	4
Consonant clusters	3.3
Word stress	3
Intonation	2.8
Sentence stress and weak forms	2.6
Linking sounds within connected speech	2.6

Appendix 12

Initial Questionnaire: summary of responses to question B (adapted from Hewings, 2004)

'B: When is it important for you to have good pronunciation?

Circle your answer 1=low, 5= high

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1. When you talk to your fellow students? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. When you talk to your teacher? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. When you talk to native speakers of English? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. When you talk to other non-native speakers of English? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5' |

Question	Mean score
1. When you talk to your fellow students?	3.3
2. When you talk to your teacher?	4.3
3. When you talk to native speakers of English?	4.5
4. When you talk to other non-native speakers of English?	4

Appendix 13: In-class worksheet

Pronunciation project: session 3 (in-class):

In today's session we will...

- review 'tricky' sounds in words and phrases from last week's LLC session
- look at and practise identifying stressed words and weak forms /ə/ within sentences

1. In pairs, take it in turns to say and identify pairs of words which contain /ɜ:/ and /ɑ:/ contrasts¹.

/ɑ:/	/ɜ:/
farm	firm
heart	hurt
palm	perm
barn	burn
car	cur
carton	curtain

2. Now, take it in turns to say the below sentences. Decide which of the **two words** to say, and see if your partner can identify the one you used. You can repeat them as many times as you like:
 - i. The **firm / farm** is in trouble.
 - ii. What an ugly **car / cur**!
 - iii. She has a **perm / palm**.
 - iv. That's a big **barn / burn**.
 - v. We had a **birth / bath** down below.
 - vi. It has a lot of **heart / hurt**.
 - vii. Let's open the **curtains / cartons** now.

¹ Exercise 1 and 2 adapted from Sky Pronunciation software (no date). Available from: <http://skysoftwarehouse.com/English-pronunciation-software-phonetic-sounds> (accessed on: 21/11/2017).

3. Now, change partners and do the same with the following contrasts (see handouts)²:

- /l/ and /r/
- /f/ and /v/

How did you feel about listening to and producing the sounds?

How easy or difficult did you find the above exercises?

Do you feel you have made any progress with identifying and producing these sounds?

Which did you find most helpful to your learning, the activities using Sky Pronunciation software in the LLC or activities in-class? Why?

² Activities adapted from Hancock, M. (2003), *English Pronunciation In Use*, Cambridge: CUP (pp. 24 and 34) and Baker, A. (2006), *Ship or Sheep: an intermediate pronunciation course*, Cambridge: CUP (pp.116 – 118 and 161-162).

4. Sentence stress and weak forms

Listen and write down the 10 sentences that you hear. Then, compare what you have written with a partner³.

Look at the sentences. Which words are stressed and which words have weak forms (and are unstressed)? Put them in the below table:

Stressed words	Unstressed or weak forms /ə/

What is the difference between the stressed and unstressed words? What types of words are they?

Discuss with a partner.

³ Activity adapted from Hancock, M. (1995), *Pronunciation Games*, Cambridge: CUP (pp. 78-80).

Dictation Computer Puzzle⁴

Follow the instructions on the handout to identify errors a computer has made and match sentences with their responses (see handout).

⁴ Activity from Hancock (1995, pp. 79-81).

Appendix 14: LLC guided self-study worksheet: suprasegmentals (completed by L)

Pronunciation project: session 4 (LLC):

English sounds in connected speech: sentence stress, weak forms, linking and intonation

Guided self-study session using Sky Pronunciation software

There are 4 sections to this worksheet, and then a reflection on your learning. Spend about 15 minutes per section.



the most significant words & stress (primary)
 ↓
 the loudest (secondary)
 ↓
 less loud

1. Go to the 'Stress and rhythm' section on Sky Pronunciation and then read the 'basic rules of stress' up to the section with 'primary stress' to build on learning from last week on which types of words are usually stressed within sentences and why English is called a 'stress-timed language'. **Repeat** sentences whenever possible!

people put stress (extra loudness) on the words that carry meaning in a sentence. people refer to these words as content words. & noun, verb, adjective and adverb

Make a note below of anything that was new, surprising or useful for you:

speaker can vary what to put the stress!!
 The trains arrived in London by train.
 New idea → stress

auxiliaries (has, wanted, was, going)
 modals (should, might, etc.)
 particles (the, an, in, on, etc.)

stress

The less important words are the structure words & conjunctions (and, but, because) prepositions (with, to, under)

2. Within the same section: 'Stress and rhythm', click on the button on 'weak forms' and practice exercises building on what we did in class last week with the schwa sound /ə/. Listen to and **repeat** the words and sentences you hear.

12 / twelvə
 10 / tɒ / ə / ten



Write a few of the sentences you hear and mark the weak forms /ə/ below:

o, ə

/tʃ / ʃ / tʃ / tʃ / → tʃ / (tʃ / tʃ / tʃ / tʃ /) change! (wɪ / dɪ / ə / tʃ / tʃ / tʃ /) schwa sound	all / ɔ / to / tə / from / frəm / of / ə / by / ba / and / ə /	some / sə / them / ðəm / was / wə / were / wə / can / kən / have / hə /
---	---	--

3. Within the same section: 'Stress and rhythm', click on the button on 'linking' and practice the exercises which show how words link together within sentences. Remember to repeat the phrases and sentences that you hear!

a normal, relaxed speed.

1. consonant to vowel
2. vowel to vowel



Write a few of the phrases you hear and mark the links between the words below:

Stand up - stand up	ending with a consonant sound is followed by a word that begins with a vowel sound
Great art - grey art	
an ice lolly - a nice lolly	
five apples - fi wapples	
two apples - two wapples	
blue nigel - blue nangel	When a word that ends with a vowel sound is followed by a word also beginning with a vowel sound, a weak consonant sound (w, y, or r)
three ants - three yants	

lovely eyes - lovely pyes

four Indians - four vindiants
Asia and Africa - Asia vants/ Africa

4. Within the same section: 'Stress and rhythm', click on the button on 'intonation' and practice the exercises which show how intonation affects how we can express our feelings about what we are saying. Remember to repeat the phrases and sentences that you hear and try to copy the intonation patterns!



Write a few of the phrases which show friendly / unfriendly or interested / uninterested intonation patterns and mark the differences:

Reflection on your learning in today's session

1. What was new for you in today's session on pronunciation?

People put stress on the words that carry meaning in a sentence and

English has a similar rhythm.

2. What did you find useful or interesting? Why?

I know many linking words and changing pronunciation. I thought they were useful for me because I ^{sometimes} couldn't understand what people say when they use

linking words

3. What was the most challenging thing? Why?

I think it's pronunciation. Because when I spoke to my hostfamily they sometimes couldn't know words what I wanted to say.

Also I think if I knew those linking words, I might understand what they want to say.

4. How do you think learning about connected speech might help you in your everyday interactions here in the UK?

I think it was important for me to learn about connected speech, because I want to communicate with other foreign country people who use English.

I think the most important thing is that we can understand each other so it means loud and clearly voice, but I sometimes communicate with

English people then I must know their words.

Appendix 15: Instructions for 'authentic listening' project (online journal)

For self-study this week, choose one of the following authentic listening projects:

1. Eavesdropping: listen to conversations around you: on the bus / in a cafe / in the library / on campus / in the gym. Note down any phrases in a notebook where you notice stressed words, weak forms, linking between words or particular intonation! Make a note of the phrases you noticed, and mark the stress, weak forms, linking or intonation, even if you were unsure of what you heard. We can then discuss what you think you heard in class next week!

2. Watch a short TV programme, you tube clip from a film you like or TED talk: do you notice any elements of stress, weak forms, linking or intonation patterns? Make a note of some of the phrases you listened to and note down the stress, weak forms, linking or intonation patterns you think you heard. You can also use subtitles that will help you with the wording of the phrase. Listen more than once. Make a note of any phrases you heard and mark the stress, weak forms or linking patterns. The following websites may be helpful to find a short, authentic listening exercise:

www.TED.com

[BBC Learning English](#)

[British Council listening skills](#)

Have fun!

Reflect on the process of doing this and write a journal entry here about what you learned in the process. Attempt to write 100-150 words on this. Click on the 'start my journal' button below. Only I will be able to see what you write, and I will give you some feedback on your writing next week. I look forward to reading your journal entries! Thank you 😊

Appendix 16: Example of end-of-course questionnaire (completed by K)

Pronunciation Questionnaire: end of course

Name: _____

date: Dec 14

A: How good do you now feel your English pronunciation is?

1. Circle your answer 1 = low, 5 = high

Vowels	1	2	3	4	5
Consonants	1	2	3	4	5
Consonant clusters (e.g. cl-, fr-)	1	2	3	4	5
Word stress (e.g. aGO, FOLlow)	1	2	3	4	5
Intonation (e.g. ↘Yes, ↗Yes)	1	2	3	4	5
Sentence stress and weak forms (FISH and CHIPS)	1	2	3	4	5
			/ən/		
Linking sounds within connected speech (Nothing a tall)	1	2	3	4	5

2. Which areas have you made any improvements in? Which areas are difficult?

Vowels: Difficult for /A/ sounds, they are very similarConsonants: its okConsonant clusters: OKWord stress: short words are easy but long words are sometimes difficultIntonation: I don't understand exactly but I understand feelingSentence stress and weak forms: okLinking sounds in connected speech: I find in footballer's speech and streetI can understand but I don't use them

**B: Which did you prefer, the in-class or self-study activities in the LLC during the project?
Why?**

In class
Usually I don't study by my self and I often don't understand
so I want to have opportunity for asking my friends or teacher

C: Did any of your ideas about English pronunciation change as a result of work or discussions during the project? In what ways?

After work I listen to people's conversation carefully and if I catch something which I learned before I'm happy and enjoy

D: Your pronunciation goals

Are there any areas of pronunciation that you would particularly like to work on and improve, after this project? How will you do this?

I like linking words because if I get them, I can talk with others
easy

E: Would you be willing to be interviewed by me in January or February about your pronunciation learning and experiences? This will only take 15-20 minutes

Yes / No

Thank you very much for your time and hard work during the pronunciation project! 😊

¹ Source: Hewings (2004, p. 26, adapted)