

Say It Right: Its Impact on ESL Learners' Pronunciation Accuracy and Confidence

Aleth Yvonne B. Busa

Leyte National High School, Lino Gonzaga Avenue, Downtown, Tacloban City

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.908000072>

Received: 16 July 2025; Accepted: 26 July 2025; Published: 28 August 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Say It Right: A Fun and Easy Guide to English Sounds is an innovation aimed at improving the pronunciation and oral communication skills of Grade 11 Section Asset under the Accountancy, Business and Management Strand. Aligned with the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum's goal of strengthening learners' proficiency and confidence in English communication, especially in Senior High School under the Academic Track, it addresses learners' reluctance to participate in discussions due to fear of mispronunciation. Grounded in Krashen's Input Hypothesis and supported by phonetic tools like the Vietor Triangle, the program employed engaging methods such as tongue twisters, drills, and role-plays. Implemented over five sessions with 36 students from Section Asset, it used a teacher-made pre- and post-test validated by experts. Results revealed statistically significant improvements in pronunciation and confidence ($t(35)=11.82$, $p<0.001$, $d=1.97$). The innovation eliminated the lowest proficiency level and raised 33% of learners to the proficient level. The paper recommends integrating the program into after-class Remedial, Reinforcement, and Enrichment (RRE) activities and involving parents to ensure its sustainability and broader impact.

INTRODUCTION

Context and Rationale	<p>The Say it Right innovation aligns with the Department of Education (DepEd) issuances that emphasize the development of learners' communication skills and promote effective language teaching. Specifically, it draws from the mandates of DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019, which highlights the importance of Multilingual Language Policy and strengthening English as a medium of instruction while ensuring students develop proficiency and confidence in communication.</p> <p>The implementation of the "Say it Right" guide is essential for enhancing the phonetic awareness of English sounds among learners. As English is a global lingua franca, mastering its pronunciation is crucial for effective communication, particularly in diverse linguistic contexts. Research indicates that pronunciation significantly influences listeners' perceptions of speakers' competence and credibility (Derwing & Munro, 2005). The ability to produce vowel sounds accurately is fundamental to phonetic mastery. Vowels form the nucleus of syllables, and their correct articulation affects the clarity of speech. According to a study by Baker (2011), learners often face difficulties in distinguishing and producing English vowel sounds, leading to communication breakdowns. Moreover, Gilakjani (2016) emphasizes that explicit instruction in individual English sounds, supported by visual aids, significantly helps learners improve pronunciation.</p> <p>Improving pronunciation through structured practice not only enhances individual communication skills but also fosters confidence in social interactions. Effective communication skills are linked to improved social integration and academic performance (Hurd, 2005). By utilizing tongue twisters, sentences, and engaging activities from the guide, students will practice articulation in an enjoyable and interactive manner, promoting a positive learning environment.</p>
-----------------------	---

	<p>Say it Right is grounded in theories of language acquisition, particularly the Input Hypothesis by Krashen (1982), which posits that language learning is most effective when learners are exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current proficiency level. The structured progression of sounds in the guide allows learners to gradually build their skills, reinforcing phonetic concepts through repetition and variation.</p> <p>This innovation aimed to address the issue of students' reluctance to participate in class discussions when required to speak in English due to fear of being ridiculed for their pronunciation. Many students feel self-conscious about mispronouncing words, which hinders their confidence and engagement. According to a study conducted by Busa (2023), pronunciation, along with poor grammar skills and a lack of vocabulary, were identified as key factors contributing to the speaking difficulties experienced by Grade 11 and 12 ABM students. This initiative focused on creating a supportive and non-judgmental learning environment, where pronunciation is developed through structured exercises and fun activities like tongue twisters. By improving their articulation skills in a gradual and enjoyable manner, students build confidence in their English-speaking abilities, reducing their fear of making mistakes and encouraging active participation in discussions.</p>
Objectives	<p>The general objective of the Say it Right innovation is to enhance students' oral communication skills by improving their pronunciation and enunciation, building their confidence in speaking, and fostering greater engagement through interactive and enjoyable activities.</p> <p>This innovation has the following specific objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve pronunciation and enunciation among students. 2. Increase confidence in oral communication. 3. Promote greater students' engagement through interactive and enjoyable activities.
Indicative Dates of Implementation	<p>The innovation was completed over a five-month period. The proposal was submitted in December 2024, and the schedule of approved innovation proposals was released during the first week of January 2025. The innovation was formally presented on January 16, 2025. However, due to the numerous school activities that followed, the actual implementation began in March 2025. Sessions were held once a week—every Friday if the class had morning subjects, or during the Thursday lunch break if afternoon subjects were scheduled on Friday. A total of five sessions were conducted. The post-test was administered on April 3 and 4, 2025, to assess the learners' progress and evaluate the overall impact of the intervention.</p>
Target Professional Standard with Specific Domain/s, Strand/s, and Indicator/s:	<p>Say it Right: A Fun and Easy Guide to English Sounds aligns with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) by targeting key domains that enhance effective teaching and learning. It supports Domain 2 (Learning Environment) by engaging students in interactive pronunciation activities, and Domain 3 (Diversity of Learners) by addressing varied linguistic backgrounds through differentiated instruction. It also aligns with Domain 4 (Curriculum and Planning) by providing well-sequenced, learner-centered lessons, and with Domain 5 (Assessment and Reporting) using appropriate tools to monitor pronunciation progress. Lastly, it touches on Domain 6 (Community Linkages) by potentially involving community resources and parental support in developing learners' communication skills.</p>
Participants' Profile:	<p>The participants of the innovation were the Grade 11 students from the Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) Strand, specifically Section Asset. This section was selected based on the results of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) Assessment, which revealed that it had the highest number of students performing at the frustration level. The class comprises a total of 36 students, with 11 males and 25 females, who require targeted support in oral communication, particularly in</p>

	pronunciation and confidence-building activities. Notably, out of the 36 students, 14 belong to the frustration level in oral reading, highlighting the need for focused intervention.
Innovation Overview:	<p>Say It Right: A Fun and Easy Guide to English Sounds is a phonetic-based instructional innovation designed to improve students' English pronunciation through engaging, interactive, and learner-friendly strategies. Its key features include the use of visual tools like the Vietor Triangle, clear and simple descriptions of how each sound is produced, and practical reinforcement through sample words, sentences, and tongue twisters.</p> <p>One of its key strengths is its format as a printed, pocket-sized booklet that students can conveniently carry with them every day (see Appendix A). Designed to be simple, clear, and easy to use, the guide allows learners to practice pronunciation during their free time, whether they are studying alone, working with a classmate, or engaging in fun activities with friends. With its step-by-step sound guides, sample words, sentences, and tongue twisters, the booklet supports self-paced learning and makes pronunciation practice accessible anytime, anywhere. This portability and ease of use encourage regular practice and help build confidence in speaking English beyond the classroom.</p> <p>The primary beneficiaries of the Say it Right innovation were the students who struggle with English pronunciation, particularly those who lack confidence in oral communication due to the fear of being ridiculed for mispronunciations. This initiative targeted the class who had the greatest number of frustration level in the oral reading test based on the PHIL-IRI result. Additionally, it benefited proponent teacher by providing a structured approach to address common pronunciation issues, enabling them to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment. Through engaging activities, all students—regardless of their initial language proficiency—had the opportunities to enhance their speaking skills, boosting their self-esteem and participation in both academic and social interactions.</p> <p>Parents played a vital role in monitoring their child's use of the "Say It Right" handbook. Using the Parent Weekly Report as a tracking tool, they monitored their child's progress by asking about lessons learned and checking off completed pages in the handbook. This monitoring tool was then submitted to the teacher-proponent, providing a way to verify home-based engagement and ensure that the guide was being utilized effectively outside the classroom.</p>

Implementation Plan

Planning Phase

Target Milestone	Actions / Activity	Expected Outputs	Responsible Persons	Support Needed From	Timeline
Preparation of instructional materials	Develop and finalize printed booklet with phonetic guides and activities	Ready-to-use printed Say It Right booklets	Proponent, Group Head	Languages and Communication Group Head	January 1-31, 2025
Student identification	Identify Grade 11 ABM students needing oral communication support	List of target students	Proponent/English Teachers	School Records, PHIL-IRI Results	January 1-31, 2025
Printing and distribution	Print and distribute booklets to participating students	All students receive their own copy	Proponent/School Admin Staff	School Printing Services	February 18-28, 2025

Implementation Phase

Target Milestone	Actions / Activity	Expected Outputs	Responsible Persons	Support Needed From	Timeline
Conduct Orientation Session	Introduce the program to students; explain objectives and how to use the booklet	Students oriented and motivated to participate	Proponent/ English Teachers	Class Adviser, School Admin	February 18-28,2025
Introduction of Phonetic Concepts	Teach basic phonetic concepts using the booklet and Vietor Triangle visual aids	Students understand vowel and consonant sounds	Proponent	Language Experts	March 3,2025
Guided Practice Sessions	Facilitate drills, minimal pairs, and peer practice activities	Students engage in interactive pronunciation exercises	Proponent	Classmates, Parents	March 3-14,2025
Application Activities	Conduct role-plays, tongue twisters, and pronunciation games	Students apply learned sounds in real-life speaking contexts	Proponent	Peer Support	March 17-31,2025
Monitoring and Feedback	Observe student progress; provide individual feedback and encouragement	Documented learner progress and increased confidence	Proponent	Subject Teachers	Throughout Implementation
Post-Test Administration	Conduct post-test using validated assessment tool	Measurable data on pronunciation improvement	Proponent	Languages and Communication Group Head	April 2-4,2025
Collect and Analyze Feedback	Gather student reflections and teacher observations	Feedback report for program evaluation and improvement	Proponent	Students, Teachers	April 14-18,2025

Post Implementation Phase

Target Milestone	Actions / Activity	Expected Outputs	Responsible Persons	Support Needed From	Timeline
Data Analysis	Analyze pre- and post-test results to measure improvement	Comprehensive report on student performance	Proponent	Languages and Communication Group Head	April 14-18,2025
Feedback Review	Compile and review feedback from students and teachers	Summary of strengths, challenges, and recommendations	Proponent	Students, Teachers	April 14-18,2025
Reporting and Documentation	Prepare final report detailing outcomes, impact, and insights	Complete documentation for stakeholders	Proponent	School Administration	July 2025

Presentation to Stakeholders	Share results and recommendations with school leaders and faculty	Presentation materials and stakeholder engagement	Proponent	School Administration	July 2025
Recommendations for Scaling	Develop action plan for scaling the innovation	Proposal for RRE integration and teacher training	Proponent/ School Heads	DepEd Officials, Curriculum Specialists	July 2025
Plan for Sustainability	Identify resources and partnerships to sustain the program	Sustainability plan and resource allocation	Proponent	School Administration, Parents	Ongoing

Fund Sources

Phase/Milestone	Resource Needed	Budget Estimate	Approval Needed	Source of Fund
A. Pre-Implementation Phase	Printer, Laptop, Bond paper	50,000	School Principal Asst. SHS Principal Languages and Communication Group Head	School MOOE
B. Implementation Phase	TV, laptop, printer, and bond paper	50,000	School Principal Asst. SHS Principal Languages and Communication Group Head	School MOOE
C. Post-implementation Phase	Printer, Laptop, Bond paper	10,000	School Principal Asst. SHS Principal Languages and Communication Group Head	School MOOE

Risk Management Plan

Potential Problems	Seriousness	Likely Causes	Probability	Preventive Action	Contingent Action	Who	When	Cost
Students may lose or forget their booklets	Moderate	Lack of responsibility or interest	High	Remind students regularly; assign booklet monitors	Provide photocopies of key pages or shared group copies	Proponent / Class Adviser	Weekly, before each session	None, Utilized existing school resources
Low student engagement during activities	High	Shyness, fear of mistakes, lack of confidence	Moderate	Use pair/group work and gamified activities; encourage a non-judgmental environment	Modify activities to be more interactive; provide encouragement	Proponent	Every session	None, Utilized existing school resources

Sessions may be interrupted by other school events	Moderate	Conflicts in school schedule	Moderate	Coordinate with administration in advance to avoid scheduling conflicts	Rescheduled missed sessions or conduct catch-up activities	Proponent / Class Adviser	Before implementation and weekly	None
Difficulty in monitoring all students during oral activities	Moderate	Large class size	Moderate	Assign peer monitors; use small group rotations	Use voice recordings for delayed assessment	Proponent	During implementation	None, Utilized existing school resources
Lack of support or buy-in from other teachers	Moderate	Competing priorities, lack of awareness	Low	Conduct orientation and present expected benefits	Ask for short collaboration or support tasks only	Proponent	During lunch break	None
Students may not show improvement	High	Irregular attendance or lack of practice	Moderate	Provide consistent feedback and reinforcement; track progress closely	Offer remedial sessions or peer tutoring	Proponent	After class	None, Utilized existing school resources

Monitoring and Evaluation


Level of M&E	Indicators	Methods and Tools	Data Sources	Schedule of M&E	Person/s Responsible	User of M&E Data
Impact / Goal	Improved oral communication skills among students	Comparative analysis of pre- and post-test results; qualitative reflections	Pre/post-test scores, student feedback	End of the program	Proponent	School Admin, Teachers, DepEd
Outcome	Increased confidence in speaking English	Student self-assessment checklist; teacher observations	Observation logs, student reflection forms	Weekly, during sessions	Subject Teachers	Communication and Languages Department
Output	Students complete all booklet activities and sessions	Session attendance records, activity checklists	Attendance sheets, completed booklets	Weekly, per session	Proponent, Class Adviser	Proponent
Learning	Teachers improve strategy in teaching pronunciation; students apply phonetic knowledge	Teacher reflection logs, class recordings, student outputs	Teacher journals, role-play scripts, student recordings	After each session and end of program	Proponent	Teachers, School Administration

APPENDIX A

Long /ē/ as in “see” and “beat”

Tongue: raise your tongue high and forward in your mouth
Lips: slightly spread
Jaw: jaw slightly closed

Try reading these words with /ē/ sound:



1. tree
2. need
3. see
4. green
5. feet
6. cheese
7. team
8. dream
9. beach
10. leave

*The “e” is pronounced as /ē/ in me, be, we, he.

Here are some sentences with long /ē/:

1. The tree in the green field reaches up to the clean sky.
2. She dreams of visiting a beach where the sea is deep and clear.
3. We agree that teamwork can lead to great success.
4. The children screamed with joy when they saw the treats hidden in the leaves.
5. Steve and Jan decided to meet by the stream to speak about their next adventure.
6. Sheep feed on the green meadow early in the morning.
7. The teacher asked the class to read the story about the deep sea.
8. Pete and Leah had a sweet treat after their long hike.
9. The team celebrated their victory with cheers and smiles.
10. He could see the eagle soaring over the clean peak.

Try these tongue twisters with long /ē/ sound.

1. Green grapes grow great in green gardens.
2. Eager eagles easily eat each evening.
3. Three free throws thrill the referee.
4. Bees in the trees buzz with ease.
5. She sees seashells by the sea, and she surely sells them sweetly.
6. Three sleek geese greet the green sea breeze.
7. Eager eaters easily enjoy each exquisite treat.
8. Sweet steam rises from the clean green beans.
9. Bees in the breeze seek sweet nectar with ease.
10. The green team dreams of winning each game.