CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides background knowledge involving the present study such as a view of classroom action research, English phonetic problems of Thai students, language features involving pronunciation and the importance of English pronunciation teaching. In addition, factors influencing pronunciation acquisition process and the review studies of pronunciation teaching and learning theories are also discussed here.

2.1   Classroom Research

The present study is undertaken in a classroom and to investigate whether pronunciation training can improve non-native English learners to speak English with confidence after training. This goal of study, therefore, could be achieved through action and reflected through classroom research.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) state that action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) also suggest that the elements of action research include the following steps: 1) developing a plan for improvement, 2) implementing the plan, 3) observing and documenting the effects of the plan, and 4) reflecting the effects of the plan for further planning and informing action.
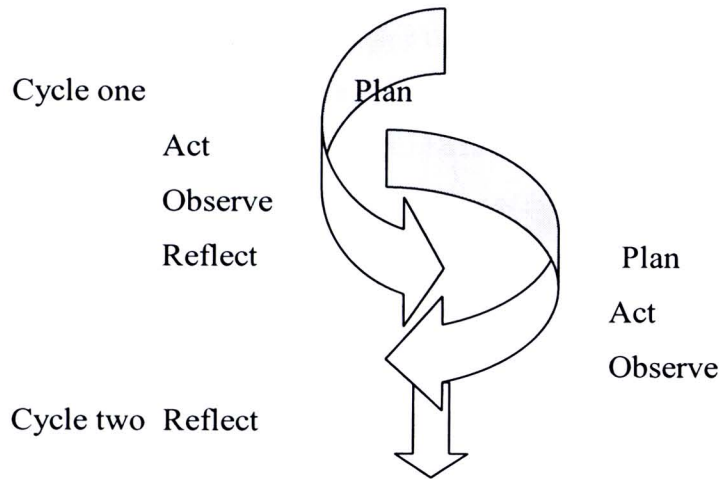
Cycle one   Plan

       Act

    Observe

     Reflect   Plan

                            Act

                          Observe

Cycle two Reflect

Figure 1   A simple model of the cyclical nature of typical action research process (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988)

In addition, Nunan (cited in Elyildirim & Ashton, 2006) claims that classroom research occurs when teachers reflect critically about the teaching, identify learning or instructional problems and methods to solve them. The basic step of research includes exploring and identifying problems in the classroom, collecting data and reflecting the problems, thinking about something that will possibly fix the problems, develop and institute a plan of intervention and reporting the final result.

Wallace (2000) claims that academic action research can be conducted by teachers. It is small scale, contextualized, localized, and aimed at discovering, developing, or monitoring changes to practice. Burns (1999) suggests that action research contribution is to teacher's professional self development rather than its potential to initiate large-scale reform. Mills (2003) further states that action research is undertaken by researchers to gather information on the solution of teaching, and how well their students learn. The information is collected with the purpose of gaining insight, developing reflective practices, effecting positive changes in the school environment and on educational practices, and improving student performances.

Brown (2005) claims that teachers will learn effectively and change behavior in circumstances where there is personal engagement in identifying a practical concern as the focus of the research, designing the study, taking action, collecting

evidence, formulating conclusion, and feeding these back to practice. This action could be an incentive for teachers to discover the literature of other research.

Soonthornroj (2006) uses action research as a tool to enhance six primary school teachers in doing classroom based research because all of them needed to analyze and solve problems in their own situations. Beveley (1993) suggests several purposes of action research for improvement such as school-based curriculum development, professional development strategies, in pre-service and graduate courses in education and system planning and policy development. Elyildirim and Ashton (2006) claim that action research can improve the current teaching in terms of boosting teachers' professional development, teacher training and presenting an institution evidence of the need of change.

The outcome of previous uses of action research in classroom has proven that the use of an appropriate method which will be useful for present research for promoting the awareness of pronunciation problems among Thai learners as well as for investigating the effect of English pronunciation training on their English speaking skill will be successful if implemented thoroughly.

2.2   Theories on Pronunciation Teaching and Learning

Three approaches to pronunciation teaching and learning are generally proposed: the intuitive-imitative approach, the analytic-linguistic approach and the integrative approach (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996). These approaches combine traditional methods and modern techniques. In the intuitive-imitative approach, learners listen and imitate the rhythms and sounds of the target language without any explicit instruction. Particular technologies are used today for this such as audiotapes, videos, computer-based programs and websites. In the analytic - linguistic approach, the learners are provided with explicit information on pronunciation such as the phonetic alphabet, articulatory descriptions and vocal chart.

In the current integrative approach, pronunciation is viewed as an integral component of communication, rather than an isolated drill and practice sub-skill. Pronunciation is practiced within meaningful task-based activities. Learners use pronunciation-focused listening activities to facilitate the learning of pronunciation. This is more focused on the suprasegmental of stress, rhythm, and intonation as

practiced in extended discourse beyond the phoneme and word levels. Pronunciation is taught to meet learner's particular needs. There is a dual-focus on oral communication program (Morley, 1994) which the micro level instruction is focused on linguistic (i.e. phonetic-phonological) competence through practice of segmental and suprasegmental features, and the macro level attends to more global elements of communicability, with the goal of developing discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence by using language for communicative purposes. In this approach the primary goals of pronunciation teaching are for the learner to develop intelligible speech and to be able to effectively communicate in the target language (Miller, 2004).

Not only previous three contemporary approaches are mentioned in pronunciation teaching, but the learning of English pronunciation has been subject of investigation for a long time. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) illustrate several pronunciation teaching approaches since the teaching of language started. More approaches are presented in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1   Pronunciation teaching approaches

Years	Approach	Definition
The late 1800s and early 1900s	Direct method	Teachers provided students with a model for native like speech. By listening and then imitating modeler, students improved their pronunciation.
(1940s-1950s)	Audio lingual method in USA, oral approach in Britain	Pronunciation was taught explicitly from the start. Learners imitated or repeated after their teacher or a recording model. Teacher used a visual transcription system or articulation chart. Technique: minimal pair drills.

Table 1   Pronunciation teaching approaches (Cont.)

Years	Approach	Definition
(1960s)	Cognitive approach	The de-emphasized pronunciation in favor of grammar and vocabulary because (a) it was assumed that native like pronunciation was an unrealistic objective and could not be achieved and (b) time would be better spent on teaching more learnable items, such as grammatical structures and words.
(1970s)	Silent way	The learning focused on sound system without having to learn a phonetic alphabet or explicit linguistic information. Attention was on the accuracy of sounds and structure of the target language from the very beginning. Tools: sound -color chart, the Fidel charts, word charts, and color rods.
	Community language learning	The pronunciation syllabus was primarily students initiated and desired. Students decided what they wanted to practice and used their teacher as resources. The approach was intuitive and imitative.
Mid-late 1970s (1980s-today)	Communicative approach	The ultimate goal was communication. Teaching pronunciation was urgent and intelligible pronunciation was seen as necessary in oral communication. The techniques used to teach pronunciation were: listening and imitating, phonetics training, minimal pair drills, contextualized minimal pairs, visual aids, tongue twister, developmental approximation drills, practice of vowel shift and stress shift by affixation , reading aloud/recitation, recordings of learners' production
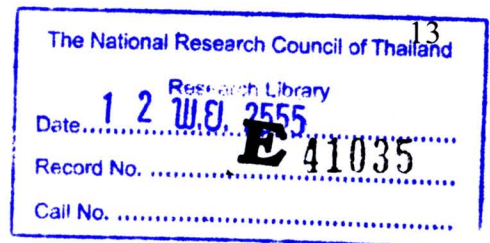
Recently, a teaching method called communicative approach is emphasized on the communication efficiency. This technique can help non-native learners learn English with fast speed at the very beginning. Meanwhile, if non-native learners want to improve their English, they have to consider phonetics; however, due to time constraint and lack of visible targets, most non-native learners ignore it.

Teaching pronunciation is still a part of the communicative approach. Teachers of English pronunciation have used the phonetic alphabet, and activities such as transcription practice, diagnostic passages, detailed description of articulatory systems, recognition/discrimination tasks, developmental approximation drills, focused production tasks (e.g. minimal pair drill, contextualized sentence practice, reading of short passages and dialogs, reading aloud/recitation), tongue twisters and games (e.g. pronunciation Bingo). Other popular methods are listening and imitating, visual aids, practice of vowel shifts and stress shifts by affixation, and recording of learner's production (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996).

The pronunciation instruction is emphasized from the initial stages of language learning. There is integration between phonetics and second language teaching, and phonetic training is provided for both teachers and learners. The implication for methodology is that pronunciation is explicitly taught with the aid of the phonetic alphabet. Audio-lingualism and the Oral Approach equally emphasize pronunciation teaching from the start. The main contribution to classroom methodology is the concept of phonemic contrasts, which are believed to contribute in improving learners' perception and production. The methodology exploits the use of minimal pair drills and the imitation of appropriate models. Besides, learners receive some form of phonetic information to help them with the acquisition of the pronunciation component. After pronunciation finds a place in the language curriculum, it practically disappeared with the development of the Cognitive Approach. Language is governed by rules, thus habit formation cannot contribute to second language acquisition without pronunciation instruction and training (Silveira, 2002).

Derwing, Munro and Wiebe (1997) found a positive outcome of instruction which focused on general speaking habits as opposed to a concentration on individual

segments. Derwing et al. (1998) also found that both instruction in segmental accuracy and instruction in general speaking habits and prosodic features, led to improved pronunciation. Morley (1994) suggests that the focus on pronunciation teaching nowadays should be on designing new-wave instructional programs. She stresses that these new instructional designs should take into account not only language forms and functions, but also issues of learner self-involvement and learner strategy training. Students who have become active partners in their own learning develop the skills to monitor and modify their speech patterns. Teachers' awareness of learning opportunities may create potential for a better understanding of language learning and language classroom interaction.

Allwright (2005) defines the learning opportunity as a more developmental unit of analysis and assesses for well planning in language learning. Increasing learner's pronunciation skills beforehand can build confidence and make them feel less reluctant to venture out to speak English. Students' personal attitude and self-esteem are major factors in improving English pronunciation. It is not merely exposure that matters, but how the students respond to the opportunities of listening to English spoken by a native speaker or of speaking themselves (Kenworthy, 1987).

At present, recognizing the importance of segments and suprasegmentals in the teaching of intelligible pronunciation is considered important. Thus, pronunciation tasks should appeal to all kinds of learners and aim at an interaction between fluency and accuracy. This can be accomplished with the use of tools of other disciplines, technology developments, the consideration of socio-psychological factors, and the learners' active participation in the curriculum selection and in the learning process as a whole.

2.3   Factors Influencing Pronunciation Acquisition Process

Researches have contributed some important data on factors that can influence the learning and teaching of pronunciation skills. Researchers acknowledge the importance of language instructors having an understanding of what learners need and want in a learning situation to enhance pronunciation improvement. Of equal importance is that language instructors must be aware of the factors that have impact on pronunciation acquisition as well. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996), Gillette (1994),

Graham (1994), Pennington (1994), and Shumin (1997) discuss several factors that influence the pronunciation process of non-native learners as follows:

2.3.1 Age

Researchers believe that age influences pronunciation acquisition in both a positive and a negative way. Florez (1998) states that non-native English learners are beyond the age of producing native-like pronunciation, thus making age a negative prevalence because adults have a difficult time distinguishing between sounds. This difficulty prevents them from ever losing their accents completely and from ever reaching intelligible pronunciation; however, Florez (1998) reiterates that having learners set realistic and attainable pronunciation goals and having them bring the experience of language into the classroom offset this limitation. The experience and awareness of language that adult learners possess and bring to the classroom are a great resource and aid the pronunciation process (Bolitho, 1998). Brown and Nation (1997), Eskenazi (1999), and Schuman (1975) also analyzed age as a factor in the pronunciation acquisition process.

2.3.2 Role of the Native Language

A learner's first language plays an influencing role in pronunciation according to researchers and linguists. Many times the mother-tongue transfer is positive and facilitates the learning for the non-native English learners, especially if a particular feature is common in the native language or appears to be similar (Wong & Esling, 1983). Florez (1998), on the other hand, believes that the native language creates a negative transfer, interfering in the pronunciation of a learner by causing problems in segmental features (the inventory of vowel and consonant sounds) and in suprasegmental features (those which transcend the level of sound production) such as intonation and the rhythm of the English language. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2000) hold the premises of both Wong & Esling (1983) and Florez (1998) that the second language (L2) filters through the learner's first language (L1) facilitating acquisition when the target pronunciation features are similar and interfering with acquisition when the features are dissimilar or non-existent.

Derwing & Munro's (1997) research which focuses on accents of non-native English learners and the link accents have an effect on intelligibility and comprehensibility of communication. Even though their study confirms that the L1 of

the non-native English learners is a significant factor affecting pronunciation accuracy, however, other factors such as native familiarity with the non-native English learner's language and correct grammar play a more significant part.

Celce-Murcia & Goodwin's (1991) writing about the role of the native language points out that the L1 of a learner is more pervasive in pronunciation than in other areas of language learning; therefore, knowing something about the sound system of the languages the learners speak is an aid for language instructors in order to anticipate pronunciation problems, understand the source of errors, and guide learners towards intelligible pronunciation. An investigation by Brown & Nation (1997) shows that being knowledgeable about the difficulties that Asian language speakers experience in pronouncing the sounds /l/ and /r/ as well as the initial and final consonant clusters would be beneficial in addressing the needs of that language group.

Gilbert (2002) also investigates the role of the native language as it influences pronunciation. The linguist examined the sound systems of other languages, as Celce-Murcia and Goodwin (1991) suggest, understanding and anticipating pronunciation problems. One problem the non-native English learners have, particularly at the beginning level, is the inability to sound out the English letters or the alphabet. This is because the sounds are not part of the learner's mental inventory of language sounds, making it impossible for the learners to produce the sounds. A second problem caused by the interference of the L1 is final consonants. Gilbert (2002) finds that many languages do not allow final consonant sounds or allow a very limited number. This is troublesome when the grammar depends on the presence of a final consonant, but causes significant intelligibility problems when final consonants or consonant clusters are eliminated in English pronunciation.

Another problem that affects pronunciation, according to Gilbert (2002), is choppy speech. The L1 of some non-native English learners separates words with silence. If the non-native English learners learned English through print, the choppy speech is exacerbated by the 'white space' between words. Gilbert (2002) considers a final problem in the investigation of L1 interference that English language learners often add or subtract syllables depending on the rules of their L1. An L1, which does not allow consonant clusters, causes learners to add a vowel to break up

the cluster (for example: gifuto shopu [gift shop]). Alternately, learners drop syllables completely (for example: gahment [government]). Intelligibility is undermined when learners add syllables or delete them.

In other related literature Dixo-Leiff and Pow (2002) and Hill & Beel (1980) examined the impact of the L1 from the perspective of the written language. For the non-native English learners, the English spelling system fails to correlate accurately the sounds they hear and have to produce with the letters they see on paper. The boundaries between spoken words when compared to those between written words tend to be obscured. In most English speech, words form a continuous stream of sound with relatively few pauses. According to Dixo-Leiff and Pow (2002) when non-native English learners start learning English, exposure to the written form precedes speaking. Students are influenced by the visual written language. As a result pronunciation is affected.

As mentioned, most researchers agree that the learner's first language influences the pronunciation of target language and is a significant factor in accounting for foreign accents. So called interference or negative transfer from the first language likely causes errors in aspiration, intonation, and rhythm in the target language (Florez, 1998).

2.3.3 Learner's Attitude and Sense of Identity

In English language programs, language instructors have no control over such factors as the age of the learners and the speech patterns of the first language that affects the L2. Instructors also have little control over the learner's attitude towards the target language, and over the learner's sense of identity. A number of studies were conducted which examined learners' attitude and sense of identity and evaluated whether these two factors enhanced or hindered the acquisition of intelligible pronunciation. Some researchers saw the factors as pulling learners in different directions. According to Bolitho (1998) learners have an emotional and intellectual relationship with the target language as well as their own making it difficult to find a satisfactory balance between the two. The balance is necessary for acquisition to be enhanced.

Kallenbach (2000) agrees that language is an integral ingredient in the learner's sense of self. The L1 is a comfortable haven for non-native English learners;

it is a part of their land; they carry it in their hearts and mind. Therefore, both linguists communicate two realities:

A. Native language is an inherent quality of our learners because it gives them an identity.

B. Language instructors need to understand the dilemma of the learners as they perform through the acculturation process.

Miller (2000) concurs that speech is closely tied to feelings of identity. Often learners who are uncomfortable trying out new speech rhythms and patterns equate their discomfort with a negative portrayal of themselves. They are, then, less likely to adopt the new language.

Schuman (1975) analyzed the impact of attitude on pronunciation several years earlier. The analysis discloses that non-native English learners often feel rejected by the speakers of the target language. This rejection transfers to the language creating a negative attitude which in turn raises a barrier to acquisition.

Schuman (1975) also analyzed the attitude of the learner's community as an influencing factor on pronunciation. Because of the added responsibility a learner needs to take to improve pronunciation, the researcher found that if the learner's community positively values the target language, the acquisition of intelligible pronunciation will be enhanced. On the other hand, if the learner's community views the target language negatively or conveys the idea that the language is impractical or undesirable, the acquisition is inhibited.

2.3.4 Motivation

If the learner's motivation to improve is strong and if the investment of time and effort is genuine, there will be perceived improvement (Celce-Murcia & Goodwin, 1991). Improving pronunciation, most often, involves change for non-native English learners. The reasons for changing or not changing speech patterns are complicated by many factors including age, the learner's first language, their sense of identity, and their motivation (Miller, 2000). These factors are beyond the control of the language instructor and in the case of age and first language also beyond the control of the learner. Motivation and concern for good pronunciation, however, can be controlled by the learner and greatly influences the potential change in speech. The change is directly affected by how much responsibility the learner takes in the

acquisition process, how much the learner practices outside of the classroom, and how ready the learner is to expend time and energy (Miller, 2000).

Lukmani (1972) claims that getting a better job and using English as a means to career advancement is the number one motivational factor. Pronunciation proficiency comes from a need to use English and as a tool to cope with everyday language demands, not as a "means of entry into a culture" (p. 271). The learners' motivation can be the strongest factor. If the learners' motivation is high, then they will be willing to improve their abilities by themselves. On the other hand, if they do not see the value or care about pronunciation, they may not be motivated to do well. In conclusion, learners' motivation is related to an individual personality and learning goals (including exposure to and use of the target language) that influence achievement of pronunciation. As a result, motivation of learners can support pronunciation skills development.

2.3.5 The Phonetic Ability

This skill is sometimes called 'phonetic coding ability' (Brown, 1992). It is a common view that some people have a 'better ear' for a foreign language than others. Although students may have had exposure to a foreign language as children and attuned to phonetic discrimination, some studies have suggested that some elements of learning are a matter of awareness of the different sounds. Pronunciation can improve with effort and concentration on those sounds.

The essence of contrastive analysis hypothesis suggests the understanding of different phonological system between L1 and L2. By knowing these differences, teachers will be able to recognize some of the problems that students always encounter, and will be able to enhance their language skills. If the teacher gives a list of English phonemes and provides students with more chances to practice their pronunciation, the students will be able to improve their performance.

Even though the age or the phonetic ability of learners cannot be controlled, however teachers can increase exposure to target language to certain extent. Motivation seems to be the main factor for successful pronunciation; therefore, teachers should promote it in their classroom. For these reasons, innovation in teaching techniques can play an important role.

2.3.6 Learners' Self Confidence

Self-confidence is one of the important factors determining the success of Second Language Acquisition. The L2 student's self-confidence, defined as his/her perception of the ease of L2 learning, is an important factor in predicting his/her willingness to experience L2 learning difficulties (Onwueguzie et al., 1999). "Self-confidence supposedly enhances one's ability to achieve goals through communication as well as the capacity to provide mutual satisfaction for interpersonal interaction" (Clark, 1989, p.237). Clark (1989) also states that "confidence allows a student to develop a desire to communicate" (p.237). In accordance with these perspectives, Onwueguzie et al. (2000) argue that L2 students with higher levels of self-confidence tend to be more active in interacting with their target L2 community members, which can enable them to achieve success in second language acquisition.

In an English speaking class, student's confidence is one of the factors to improve their learning (Kelly & Watson, 1986). In addition, explicit pronunciation teaching is an essential part of language courses among recent language class (Fraser, 1999). Firstly, confidence with pronunciation allows learners the interaction with native speakers that is so essential for all aspects of their linguistic development. Secondly, poor pronunciation degrades good language skills and condemns learners to less than their deserved social, academic and work advancement. The learners' ability to communicate is severely limited without adequate pronunciation skills.

Limited pronunciation skills can undermine learners' self confidence, restrict social interactions and negatively influence estimations of a speaker's credibility and abilities (Morley, 1998). Self confidence refers to the belief that a person has the ability to produce results, accomplish goals or perform tasks competently (Dörnyei, 2001). Gilbert (1984) believes the skills of listening comprehension and pronunciations are interdependent so that if learners cannot hear English well and cannot be understood easily, they are cut off from conversation with native speakers.

The process of learning English, as with any other language, is interconnected. Pronunciation and listening comprehension are linked together by a unified system within which individual sounds are systematically related. Students need this sense of a system in order to make sense of the separate pieces (Gilbert 1984.). If the student's English pronunciation skills are improved, clearly their

listening skills and speaking skills become more refined. Both speaking and listening require bottom-up processing: speaking requires clear articulation of phonemes or sounds, and listening requires accurate comprehension of phonemes (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Without phoneme discrimination skill, students can neither express themselves nor understand others fully. Even though the specific role of phoneme discrimination in listening and speaking is not clear, phoneme discrimination skill certainly provides students with increased confidence.

Avery and Ehrlich (1992) claim the necessity of confidence in articulation that when teaching pronunciation, we must concern ourselves with much more than simply working through a list of sounds. Even if students have learned to produce sounds, they are often so self-conscious about their pronunciation that they are too nervous to use these sounds in front of a group of people. Human muscles do not respond well to nervousness. When speakers get nervous, knees and hands shake as well as the little muscles the speakers use in articulation. With regular practice, learners would improve their performance and feel confident.

The presence of increased productivity or regular practice will lessen frustration, anxiety and thus increase confidence (Dickinson, 1987; Ellis, 1994b; Gardner & McIntyre, 1991, 1993; McNamara & Deane, 1995; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Oscarson, 1989; Rivers, 2001). Figure 2: Nerves cycle and positive cycle, shows that nerves muscles will not respond when speakers feel nervous. So listeners will not understand, and speakers will be more nervous. The positive cycle shows that confidence increased when the speakers are understood. Low anxiety and nerves, and perceptions of competence would develop self confidence (Clemont, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994; Noels & Clemont, 1996).
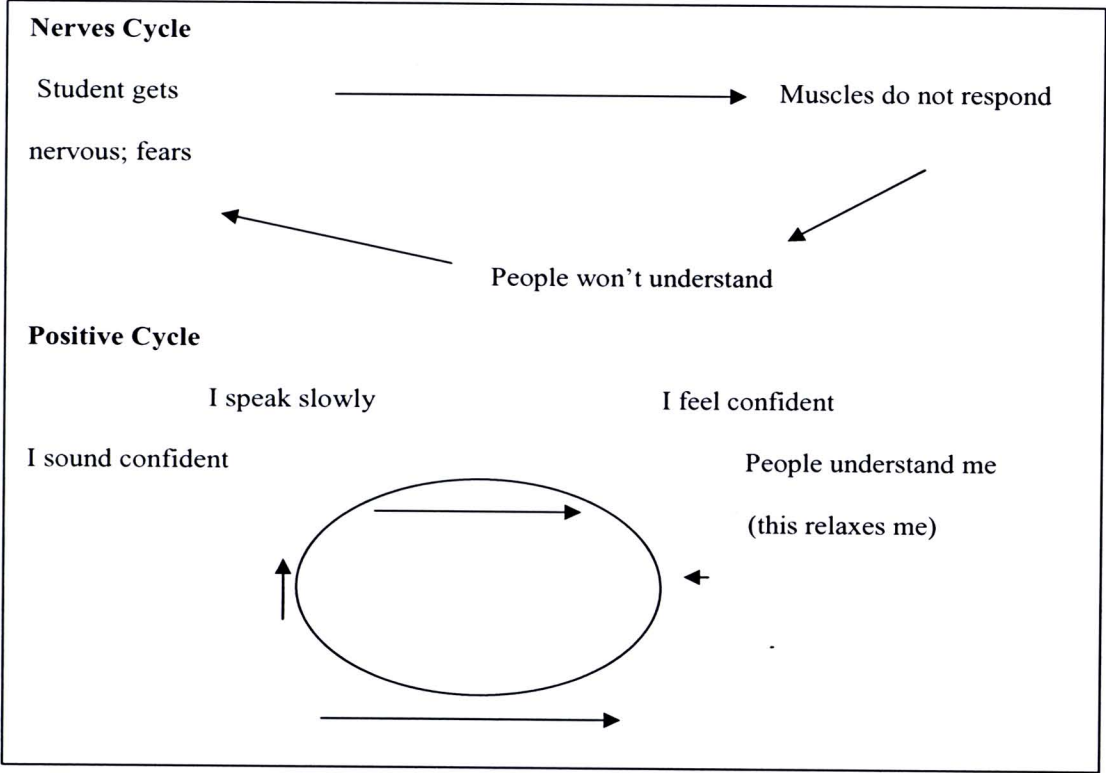
Nerves Cycle

Student gets

nervous; fears

Muscles do not respond

People won't understand

Positive Cycle

I speak slowly

I feel confident

I sound confident

People understand me

(this relaxes me)

Figure 2 Nerves cycle and positive cycle (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992)

The speaker requires clear articulation of phonemes or sounds, and the listener requires accurate comprehension of phonemes (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Avery and Ehrlich (1992) also assert that speakers of another language feel confident if they understand and are understood by the listeners. Thus, having confidence in articulation gives students room to express themselves in conversation. This applies also to listening comprehension. Students who are very familiar with phonemes or sounds should have confidence in discriminating sounds. As a result, confidence in pronunciation that learners gain from the training allows learners the interaction with native speakers that is so essential for all aspects of their linguistic development (Fraser, 1999).

Many researches cite the importance of pronunciation instruction. Likewise it gives significant evidence that multiple strategies need to be employed and some basic components need to be implemented to raise the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction. In a study conducted by MacDonald et al. (1994), the

researchers found that no one kind of intervention fixes or eliminates the pronunciation problems for all learners. Hence, instructors have to draw from many resources to effect a change.

However, caution instructors making claims that pronunciation instruction is effective because their findings do not clearly indicate that the positive effects can be achieved in a classroom setting in short period of time (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The researchers acknowledge that the acquisition of intelligible pronunciation is a viable possibility if it involves teaching both segmental and supra-segmental features. This includes the teaching of cognitive processes such as speech awareness of pronunciation problems, self-monitoring, and self- correction (Morley, 1994). Nevertheless, there are several components required in pronunciation if improvement is to be realized. The teachers must focus on two areas. Firstly, learners must be made aware of aspects of their pronunciation that result in other people being unable to understand them. Secondly, learners must be given the opportunity to practice aspects of the English sound system which are crucial for their own improvement (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992). Firth (1992) states that learners' achievement of a near perfect standard may individually vary to the degree in motivation, sensitivity to accuracy, age and education factors which are beyond a teacher's control.

In conclusion, teachers should therefore be aware of those views while developing pronunciation learning strategy and designing pronunciation instruction on the concept of improving students' confidence in speaking English through action research procedures. Kostos (2006) demonstrates that teachers can increase student's awareness towards language learning in terms of making decision in designing learning activities and provide fun enjoyment of activities. Chu (2001) states that teacher's sincerity and trustworthiness is the key to open the door to the students mind if teacher's reflective practice is to be successful.

2.4   The Differences of the Phonological Features between Thai and English

Language is a cognitive skill, which includes productive skills of writing and speaking and receptive skills of reading and listening as well as language components, namely vocabulary, structure and phonology (Wongsothorn & Pongsurapipat, 1992).

According to Jotikasthira (1999), there are a number of phonological differences between Thai and English which should be considered and identified in order to indicate the English pronunciation problems of Thai students as follows:

English sounds that do not occur in Thai: These sounds are /v/ e.g. van, every; /θ/ e.g. thin, breath; /ð/ e.g. mother, then; /z/ e.g. zero, nasal; /ʃ/ e.g. share, notion; /ʒ/ e.g casual, beige; /tʃ/ e.g. future, cherry; /dʒ/ e.g. gentle, jelly and /g/ e.g. gamble, legal. Normally Thai students cannot pronounce these sounds correctly because they do not exist in the Thai language.

English sounds that do not occur finally in Thai (They are different from Thai equivalents as to distribution, though existing in Thai). Although some English sounds exist in Thai, they do not occur at the final position in Thai and most Thai students fail to pronounce them when they appear finally in English words (Jotikasathira, 1999):

a.   /l/ is substituted by /n/.

b.   /f/ is substituted by unreleased /p/.

c.   /s/ is substituted by unreleased /t/.

d.   /s/ may be omitted when it occurs after diphthongs /aɪ, aʊ and ɔɪ/ as in nice, house and rejoice, respectively. This is because in Thai there is no consonant sound following these diphthongs.

e.   /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, and /k/ are often unreleased because these sounds are unreleased when occurring in final position in Thai words.

English sounds that are phonetically different from Thai equivalents: /r/, /ɪ/, /e/, /ʊ/, and /ɔ/; that is, their production is not the same. The English /r/ sound can be formed in many ways depending upon different speakers and dialects. This retroflex /r/ is made by moving the sides of the tongue against the back teeth. The front of the tongue is lowered but the tip is turned upward and withdrawn towards the back mouth, whereas the Thai /r/ sound is just a trilled /r/. Tense vowels such as /iː, uː, ɔː/ are slight diphthongs; that is, they are pronounced with a diphthongal quality. The degree of diphthongization is greatest when these slight diphthongs occur in a stressed

syllable. On the other hand, the Thai vowels /i:, e:, u:, and ɔ:/ do not have this diphthongal quality.

The strategies for overcoming incomprehension are simply another aspect of the total communication-language learning process. Teachers need to help learners become aware of strategies they need for effective communication, whether in making themselves understood, or in understanding what another speaker has said (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992).

As indicated, researchers acknowledge the importance of language instructors having an understanding of what non-native learners need and want in a learning situation to enhance pronunciation improvement. Of equal importance is that language instructors have an awareness of the factors that impact pronunciation teaching. When concerned to Thai student's English pronunciation, many researchers have identified several problems that influence the pronunciation acquisition of Thai learner as follows:

    1.   Pronunciation problems with consonants and vowels

According to Wei and Zhou (2002) and Ariyapitipun (2003), Thai language has twenty one consonant sounds whereas English has twenty four consonant sounds. There are nine English consonant sounds that do not exist in the Thai phonological system: /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /g/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/.

Moreover, some words with transcriptions ended with a consonant. An English rule is that all voiced consonants occurring at the end of words are generally held and voiced. Many languages do not have consonant cluster of two or even more consonant sounds without intervening a vowel. Therefore, some words like street, risked, and fifth present a pronunciation problems of non-native speakers (e.g. Chinese and Thai). There are also other common pronunciation problems of Thai learners:

        a.   words with /eɪ/, usually pronounced as /e/ (this problem exits though less seriously)

           tail   hate

        b.   words with /r/ usually pronounced as /l/

           wrong   strawberry   Jerry   grass

c. words with /θ/ or /ð/ pronounced as /s/ or /z/

think   thin   feather

d. words with /v/ pronounced as /f/

five   Steve   stove

e. words with /z/ pronounced as /s/

buzz   vase   scissors

f. words with /ʒ/ pronounce as /s/

television   vision   pleasure

2. Stress problems

Thai language is a tonal language. It does not differentiate words based on stress. Stress is one of the biggest problems of Thai students. A Thai student likes to put the stress on the last syllable (Wei and Zhou, 2002). For example,

Yesterday Tomorrow   September   Pretty   Computer

This phenomenon can lead to misunderstanding when communicating with English speakers. Three most common problems of stress are as follows:

a. Stress in words that can function as both nouns and verbs: The problems occur when they produce the noun function of the words but it sounds like the verb instead as cited in Dale and Poms (1994) as follows:

<u>Nouns</u>   <u>Verbs</u>

CONduct (one's behavior)   conDUCT (to lead or guide)

DEsert (barren region)   deSERT (to abandon)

b. Stress in the number words ending with -teen or -ty: In this case the problems happen with -ty ending mostly. When students pronounce number words ending with -ty, they stress the final syllable. Most of the time the speakers of English think that they end with - teen as cited in Narksompong (2007, p. 28).

<u>English</u>   <u>Thai pronunciation</u>

THIRty   thirTY (but sounds like 'thirteen')

FIFty   fifTY (but sounds like 'fifteen')

c. Stress in loan word: Some of the words that Thai borrow from English are usually stressed in the final syllable and that sounds rather odd to English speakers as cited in Narksompong (2007, p. 28).

English	Thai pronunciation
PRETty	pretTY
comPUter	compuTER

3. Intonation problems

According to Random House Unabridged English Dictionary, intonation is defined as "the pattern or melody of pitch changes in connected speech, esp. the pitch pattern of a sentence". In connected speech the voiced -pitch is continually rising and falling. These variations produce intonations that may be described as 'tunes' or 'pattern'. When the pitch of the voice rises we have a rising intonation; when it falls we have a falling intonation; when it remains on one note for an appreciable time, we have level intonation (Jones, 1988). Intonation is another significant feature in English. Gilbert (1994) points out that the purpose of intonation is "helping the listener to follow". It is a navigation guide for the listener. Thai language does not use intonation to differentiate questions and statements. So, it's not usual that Thai students use rising tones for both Yes-No question and Wh-questions or the tones used in the Yes-No question or statements are not different (Wei & Zhou, 2002). For example,

Yes-No questions

Are you going?	---	You are going.
Is he handsome?	---	He is handsome.
Do you like smoking?	---	You like smoking.

The intonation in a question beginning with who, what, where, why, or how many is often heard to fall at the end; however, the students will most probably make them like what a yes-no question should be (Wei and Zhou, 2002). Here are some intonations used by Thai students.

Wh-questions?

What's your name? ↗

Why did you do that? ↗

How many books do you have? ↗

To understand the problem of pronunciation and how best to help non-native learners become intelligibly competent speakers of English, a review of research and related literature is conducted. This review addresses an insight into English pronunciation problems of Thai students' issues as pertaining to pronunciation instruction. Advocates of effective pronunciation instruction believe that English language instructors need to understand what learners are like and what their problems are because these understanding on students' pronunciation difficulties are important. Also it is an implication on pronunciation instruction (Pennington, 1994).

Research studies on pronunciation features of Thai speakers of English based on the observation of Thai students during their language laboratory sessions in a pre - university English course found that interference in the form of differing phonetic representations of corresponding phoneme in English and Thai is a major source of pronunciation difficulty for Thai speakers of English (Richards, 1996).

On the differences of phonological features between Thai and English, the studies show that the problems of Thai people are caused by pronunciation problems. The three main parts that Thai people have difficulty with are some consonants, stress, and intonation. Most of the time, Thai people pronounce those English words by substituting Thai phonological features when pronouncing English words and sentences (Narksompong, 2007).

Sentence stress and intonation are other useful areas to investigate, and again these can help students to understand and to be understood. Sentence stress has historically been taught in terms of content words (usually the 'vocabulary' of the sentence) being stressed. For example, in the sentence "He works at the university", one would expect the following (stressed syllables are shown in capitals): he WORKS at the uniVERsity. In practice, many teachers find that asking students to repeat sentences in a rhythmic way can lead to a rather unnatural-sounding utterance. It is useful, however, in sensitizing students to the importance of stress in English, and how listening for stressed syllables can help them to decode the continuous flow of speech. Sentence stress is closely tied to intonation, often considered a difficult topic to broach in class.

When teaching sentences or phrases for oral production or listening comprehension teachers can ask students to find the final stressed syllable in that stretch of language. Then ask students to identify whether the voice rises, falls, or falls and then rises on that syllable. Undoubtedly, some students (and teachers, for that matter) will be better able to identify these patterns than others. For example, the voice falling at the end of a sentence is often used to indicate the end of what you are trying to say. Falling and rising often indicates to the listener that there is more to come. Rising at the end is often used to let the listener know that we are asking a question.

Working on such patterns, and showing how students behave in real speech, can be very useful for those students who will use their English in giving presentations, or participating in meetings and in avoiding interrupting or being interrupted. With regard to accents, it is useful to help students to be realistic about their targets. Very few will ever reach the level of accuracy in their pronunciation which would lead to them being mistaken for a native-speaker. Most students will reach a level (this also applies to grammar) where they themselves are happy that they can understand and be understood in the contexts within which they use their English. To summarize, it is clear that the differences of the phonological features between Thai and English affect the way Thai people speak English. It is also presented that these differences are the causes of English pronunciation problems in the two aspects which are segments (consonants and vowels) and suprasegmentals (stress and intonation) (Longman, 2007).

2.5 Language Features Involved in Pronunciation

There are two groups of features that involved in pronunciation namely segments and suprasegmentals.

2.5.1 Segments

Segments are the basic inventory of distinctive sounds and the way that they combine to form a spoken language. In the case of North American English, this inventory comprises 40 phonemes (15 vowels and 25 consonants), which are the basic sounds that serve to distinguish words from one another (Florez, 1998). Pronunciation instruction has often concentrated on the mastery of segmental through discrimination

and production of target sounds via drills consisting of minimal pairs like /bæd/-/bæt/or /sɪt / - /sɛt/.

2.5.2 Suprasegmentals

Suprasegmentals transcend the level of individual sound production. They extend across segmentals and are often produced unconsciously by native speakers. Since suprasegmental elements provide crucial context and support (they determine meaning) for segmental production, they are assuming a more prominent place in pronunciation instruction (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996; Gilbert, 1990; Morley, 1991). Suprasegmentals include the following:

2.5.2.1 Stress--a combination of length, loudness, and pitch applied to syllables in a word e.g., HAPpy /'hæpi/, FOOTball /'fʊtbɔ:l/.

2.5.2.2 Rhythm--the regular, patterned beat of stressed and unstressed syllables and pauses e.g., with weak syllables in lower case and stressed syllables in upper case: they WANT to GO Later.

2.5.2.3 Adjustments in connected speech-modifications of sounds within and between words in streams of speech e.g., "ask him," /æsk hɪm/ becomes /æsk ɪm/.

2.5.2.4 Prominence--speaker's act of highlighting words to emphasize meaning or intent e.g., Give me the BLUE one. , (not the yellow one).

2.5.2.5 Intonation--the rising and falling of voice pitch across phrases and sentences e.g., Are you REAdy?.

There are also differences in inflection, stress, and intonation among the various regional varieties of English e.g. American, Australian and UK. Internationally, English teachers refer in their teaching to the sounds, stress, and intonation of the International Phonetic Association (IPA).

Speech can be broken down into pronunciation and intonation, accuracy, and fluency which can be regarded as a form of interaction and analyses using the methods of pragmatics or discourse analysis. This means that the accurate speakers may communicate effectively (Skehan, 1998). It should also include all aspects of English pronunciation and the goal of pronunciation teaching is to foster communicative effectiveness (Wong, 1987).

Pronunciation is a central factor for non-native English learners' success in making themselves or other understood. Morley (1991) states that intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence that teachers should include in courses and expect learners to do well. Nevertheless, with careful preparation and integration, pronunciation can play an important role in supporting learner's overall communicative power (Florez, 1998).

2.6 Students' Competence on Pronunciation and English Speaking Skill

Through the years, researchers interested in pronunciation learning have examined many variables in attempting to explain successful second language pronunciation ability. Studies have not been numerous, but have been productive. Vitanova and Miller (2002) show that learners can see improvement in both segmental and suprasegmental areas of pronunciation. However, once learners have mastered the basic sounds of English and identified some of the suprasegmental differences between their L1 and English, it is time to help them learn some strategies so that they can study more effectively on their own.

There have been various supports for the effectiveness of pronunciation training on learners' achievement in communicative competence. Morley (1998) states that pronunciation plays an important role in overall communicative competence. Yong (2004) suggests that from the traditional ways of learning English, students neglected the basic knowledge of speaking such as pronunciation skill. Yong (2004) further asserts that understanding by reading or writing would no longer be sufficient for the development of the economy and that communicating face to face personally to be understood was the key. Furthermore, clear instruction was important to the effectiveness of pronunciation training as well (Pennington, 1998; Spada, 1997).

Pronunciation practice is also important for the students who plan to study abroad or are currently living abroad. Increasing their pronunciation skills beforehand can build confidence and make them feel less reluctant to venture out to speak English. Students' personal attitude and self-esteem are major factors in improving English pronunciation. It is not merely exposure that matters, but how the students

respond to the opportunities of listening to English spoken by a native speaker or of speaking themselves (Kenworthy, 1987).

Oxford (1986) explains that learning strategies are of great importance because they improve language performance, encourage learners' autonomy, are teachable, and expand the role of the teacher in significant ways. Giving the pronunciation instruction is needed in EFL class. Ellis (1994b) states that to be truly effective, learners must be able to have a clear idea of the standard and be able to accurately discriminate among the various pronunciations in order to self-correction to occur.

Accordingly, speaking skill is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information (Brown, 1995; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. Speaking requires that learners know how to produce specific points of language such as pronunciation, and that they understand in what ways to produce target language correctly. Finally, speech has its own skills, structures, and conventions different from written language (Burns & Joyce, 1997; Cohen, 1996).

Thus, increasing favorable self-conceptions of second language competence among non-native English learners is one of the main factors to promote students' confidence in language learning (Dörnyei, 2001). Students may discover that as they acquire greater skill, their confidence will grow and, as they become more confident in their ability to speak, they will take advantage of new opportunities to speak, which will enable them to gain greater skill. In conclusion, the more competence students have on pronunciation skill, the greater confidence they have on speaking skill (Wei & Zhou, 2002).

2.7   The Importance of Pronunciation

Insight into the factors that influence pronunciation of non-native speakers are variables that sometimes enhance and sometimes impede the acquisition of reasonable pronunciation in English (Celce-Murcia & Goodwin, 1991). Of equal significance is

the amount of importance and value placed on pronunciation in the English language curriculum.

In recent years, there has been a greater emphasis on teaching competent pronunciation, especially in English as a second language/English as a foreign language classrooms. This is due to the increasing realization that poor pronunciation can cause serious problems for learners, such as communication breakdowns, anxiety, stereotyping and discrimination (Morley, 1998). Yet, English pronunciation is neglected in classrooms throughout the world today, including Thailand. One of the reasons is because not many English pronunciation teaching strategies or techniques are available to teachers in the classroom (Wei, 2006).

Wei and Zhou (2002) further conclude that learners of English as a second language in Thailand have poor English pronunciation because they seem to lack knowledge of English sounds. There is not enough practice in using phonetic symbols required in the curriculum. Fraser (1999) states that English teachers do not receive much relevant professional training in the use of phonetic symbols, but uncertainty as to how best to help learners' pronunciation, is one of the most difficult areas for learners as well as teachers.

There are two opposing views on the teaching of pronunciation in the English as Foreign Language classroom (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992). One view holds that the purpose of teaching pronunciation is to eradicate all traces of a foreign accent through pronunciation drills. The other view holds that the teaching of pronunciation is futile after a certain age due to a decreasing ability among learners to develop intelligible pronunciation in a second language. Avery and Ehrlich (1992) further assert that neither of those views is completely accurate. Factors that should be considered as having an effect on the acquisition of the sound system of a second language are biology, socio-culture, personality, and linguistics. These factors may prevent learners from attaining intelligible pronunciation in a second language, so it is important that teachers set realistic goals.

Kachru (1990, 1992) and Kachru and Nelson (1996) urge English language teaching practitioners to consider contextual realities before adopting pedagogic models of global English; language education should reflect how the language is used in that specific society. Jenkins (1998) suggests that concept of a learning model is

still limited to the category of native varieties rather than embracing all different varieties of English to avoid possible confusion and inconsistency in their language learning. Fraser (1999) adds that in the quest for effective pronunciation teaching, it is worth diagnosing carefully the nature of the difficulties that may be encountered. There is a significant skill component for learners. Pronunciation is not just a cognitive 'knowing-that', it is also a physical 'knowing-how', similar to playing a sport or musical instrument. Learners need motivation and time to really practice pronunciation. It is worth spending class time discussing with learners their own ideas about what is to be involved in learning pronunciation.

Lu (2002) claims that learners suggest they should practice speaking. Learners need help in overcoming both their expectation that pronunciation is a subject which can be learned by listening to a teacher, and the psychological and social barriers that make it difficult for them to practice effectively. In addition, there is also a significant cognitive component in pronunciation learning, which is much less often acknowledged. It is useful to think of learning to pronounce a new language as involving a kind of concept formation rather than as a purely physical skill.

Furthermore, teachers should pay attention to the development of self correction techniques and self-monitoring strategies. Self-correction is the ability to correct oneself when a pronunciation error has been pointed out by teachers or peers. It is critical that the teacher helps to develop strategies which will allow the learner to self-correct and self-monitor by focusing on motivation (learners should understand why accuracy of oral production is important), explanations (description and demonstration appropriate to proficiency levels), practice (adequate opportunities to practice) and feedback (receive supportive and accurate feedback from teachers and learners in class). The role of pronunciation in schools of language teaching has varied widely from having virtually no role in the grammar-translation method to being the main focus in the audio-lingual method where emphasis is on the traditional notions of pronunciation, minimal pairs, drills and short conversations (Castillo, 1990). Situational language teaching, developed in Britain, also mirrored the audio-lingual view of the pronunciation class (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Morley (1991, p.484) states:

The pronunciation class...was one that gave primary attention to phonemes and their meaningful contrasts, environmental allophonic variations, combinatory phonotactic rules, and pronunciation of the basic formation of vowel or consonant etc., along with...attention to stress, rhythm, and intonation.

During the late 1960s and the 1970s, questions were asked about the role of pronunciation in the ESL/EFL curriculum, whether the focus of the programs and the instructional methods were effective or not. Pronunciation programs were viewed as "meaningless non communicative drill-and exercise gambits" (Morley, 1991).

In many language programs, the teaching of pronunciation was pushed aside, as many studies concluded that little relationship exists between teaching pronunciation in the classroom and attaining proficiency in pronunciation. The strongest factors found to affect pronunciation, i.e. native language and motivation, seemed to have little to do with classroom activities (Suter, 1976; Suter & Purcell, 1980). Suter (1976) and Suter & Purcell (1980) conclude that pronunciation practice in class had little effect on the learner's pronunciation skills. The attainment of accurate pronunciation in a second language is a matter substantially beyond the control of educators. They qualified their findings by stating that variables of formal training and the quality of the training in pronunciation could affect the results, as would the area of pronunciation that had been emphasised, that is 'segments' (individual sounds of language) or 'suprasegmentals' (the 'musical patterns' of English, melody, pitch patterns, rhythm, and timing patterns) (Gilbert, 1984).

Pennington (1980) states that there was "no firm basis for asserting categorically that pronunciation is not teachable or that it is not worth spending time on. Pennington (1998) questions the validity of Suter and Purcell's (1980) findings as the factors of formal pronunciation training and the quality of the teaching could affect any research results. Stern (1992) also states that "There is no convincing empirical evidence which could help us sort out the various positions on the merits of pronunciation trainings". If the above views represent a split in the teaching of pronunciation, what can the teacher do to improve their students' pronunciation if improvement can be obtained? Jones, Rusman, and Evans (1994) found that students with prior exposure to phonological rules and principles, although they do not always

produce more accurate pronunciation, seem to be better equipped to assess their own speech and to be more aware of their particular problems.

Castillo (1990) states the need for the integration of pronunciation teaching with oral communication, with more emphasis from segments to suprasegmentals, as well as more emphasis on individual learner needs, and meaningful task-based practice and introducing peer correction and group interaction. Research has shown that teaching phonemes is not enough for intelligibility in communication (Cohen, 1977). With the emphasis on meaningful communication and Morley's (1991) premise that "intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence", teachers should include pronunciation in their courses and expect students to do well in them. Without adequate pronunciation skills, the learners' ability to communicate is severely limited.

Morley (1991) believes that not attending to a student's need is an abrogation of professional responsibility. Other research gives support to Morley's belief of the need for professional responsibility when a given non-native speaker's pronunciation falls below the level at which he or she will be able to communicate orally no matter how good his or her control of English grammar and vocabulary might be (Celce-Murcia, 1987). Gilbert (1984) believes the skills of listening comprehension and pronunciations are interdependent. If speakers cannot hear English well and cannot be understood easily, they are cut off from conversation with native speakers.

Nooteboom (1983) suggests that speech production is affected by speech perception; the hearer has become an important factor in communication discourse. This illustrates the need to integrate pronunciation with communicative activities to give the students situations to develop their pronunciation by listening and speaking. The current research and the current trend reversal in the thinking of pronunciation shows there is a consensus that a learner's pronunciation in a foreign language needs to be taught in conjunction with communicative practices for the learner to be able to communicate effectively with native speakers.

Although several pronunciation instructions have been addressed by many studies, a major gap in the literature is the absence of a clear link between research objective and assumptions made by Second Language Acquisition Theories and interlanguage phonology. Thus, it is necessary to have more expressive studies in the

area of pronunciation instruction in order to come up with more effective instruction design, so the result can be more comparable. These expressive studies may help educator realized the importance of pronunciation instruction in the language curriculum (Silveira, 2002).

2.8   Relevant Research

Referring to "Insight into English Pronunciation Problems of Thai Students", Wei and Zhou (2002) investigated problems of English pronunciation among Thai Students. It was found that Thai students had pronunciation problems with consonants and vowels: words with /r/ pronounced as /l/, words with /v/ pronounced as /f/, words with /z/ pronounced as /s/and words with /eɪ/ pronounced as /e/. Stress and intonation between yes-no questions and wh-questions were also found as being problems of Thai students. The final consonant sounds are always unaspirated and unvoiced. The researcher made conclusions about possible causes of the Thai students' pronunciation problems of which the important one was some ESL teachers' Thai style of English pronunciation in language class. A language teacher's pronunciation is a model for the students who imitate teachers' pronunciation, or the teacher will correct the student's pronunciation. If the teacher's pronunciation is with a Thai accent, the students' pronunciation will be the same. Therefore, one of suggested solutions to solve English pronunciation problems of Thai students is to provide pronunciation training courses to the language teachers. The researcher also identified that Thai teachers of English do not adequately practice Standard English pronunciation which leads to the lack of confidence to be a role model. Therefore, the teachers cannot correct Students' pronunciation or demonstrate them how to produce the right sound.

Janyasupab (1982) studied "An Analysis of English Pronunciation of English Major Students at High Certificate of Education Level" from 100 subjects randomly drawn from four college teachers in the Bangkok Metropolis. The researcher concluded that errors were found in both segmental phonemes: vowels and consonants, and suprasegmental elements: stress and intonation in particular. The three causes of these errors were the influence of Thai on English pronunciation, the difficulties of English itself, and the students' failures in their learning process.

Jarusan (1997) presented in research of "Perception and Production of English Word Stress of First Year Students at Rangsit University" that the learner's experience played an important role in the perception and the production of English word stress. The English experience increased competence in relation to the time that learners were exposed to the language; as well, the listening ability needed constant practice.

Charmikorn (1988) studied "Variation in the Pronunciation of Final Alveolar Fricatives in English Loanwords: A Case Study of Thai Navy Officers". It was found that the alveolar in English Loanwords that Thai Navy Officers produced were the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ and the voiceless alveolar stop /t/.The frequency of the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ was twice as much as the voiceless alveolar stop /t/. The social variables: sex, age, and experience aboard affected the production, particularly experience aboard. Additionally, the Thai voiceless fricative /s/ which is normally in the initial position is developing to be used as a final consonant in Thai.

Nimphaibule (1996) studied "Variation of Thai Air Hostesses' Pronunciation of the Final Consonants /tʃ, dʒ, ʃ/ in English Words". The subjects were divided into two groups: speakers with more English experience and less English experience. The results showed that for the final consonants /tʃ and dʒ/ the less experienced English speakers had bias towards the Thai pronunciation especially in the Thai context (Code Mixing), and reduced in English context. In contrast, the more experienced English speakers had bias towards the English pronunciation especially in the English context, and reduced in Thai context. For the final consonants /ʃ/ both groups produced a lot of interlanguage variants.

Panseetong (1996) studied "A Development of Practice Package on the Vowels and Consonants in English Word Pronunciation Skill for Pratom Suksa Six Students", which focused on the problematic sounds of Thai students: /ij/, /ei/, /əu/, /tʃ/, /ð/, /θ-/, /-θ/, and /g/. She further reported that in teaching pronunciation, the teachers should practice these processes: (i) production: language teacher should produce the target language like native (ii) perception: language teacher should have good perception skill and (iii) correction: language teacher should be able to perceive and correct mispronunciation of their students. She further stated that Thai teachers of

English do not adequately practice standard English pronunciation which led to lack of confidence to be a role model. Therefore, teachers cannot correct students' pronunciation or demonstrate them how to produce the right sound.

In "Future Directions for Pronunciation Teaching: Intelligibility, Content and Oral Communication", Levis (1999) states that some theorists already admitted that pronunciation teaching in the future must move back towards a greater emphasis on vowels and consonants to aid intelligibility. He gave an example of his student who skillfully did everything regarding suprasegments. However, that student remains almost completely incomprehensible because of a small number of pervasive vowel and consonant errors. He also mentioned that the power of contextual clues in aiding understanding for native speakers may not always be strong enough to overcome misunderstanding caused by vowel and consonant errors.

From the mentioned research and the related literature, the areas in which Thai learners have problems in English pronunciation from youth to adolescence are some consonants, consonant clusters, vowels, stress, and intonation. However, a model in English pronunciation is poorly trained in Loei Rajabhat University. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate the effect of pronunciation training on LRU students, particularly in their top ranked problems: consonants and vowels, stress and intonation.