

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Results of the Study

The data obtained from the investigation were presented in this chapter to answer the following research questions: (i) What are the pronunciation problems of Loei Rajabhat University (LRU) students? (ii) Does the pronunciation training help promote the awareness of the Loei Rajabhat University students of their pronunciation problems? and (iii) Does the pronunciation training help improve Loei Rajabhat University students' English speaking skill?

4.1.1 Research Question 1: What are the Pronunciation Problems of Loei Rajabhat University (LRU) Students?

To answer the above question, the scores from the Pronunciation Test, part A "Word List Reading" were analyzed for statistical mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (S.D.). The results indicated that Loei Rajabhat University students had difficulty pronouncing certain English consonants, diphthongs, and stress under investigation. They are reported as follows:

4.1.1.1 Consonants

The participants were found to have difficulty pronouncing consonant sounds, including fricatives at both initial and final positions. These included the consonant sounds of /s/ as in 'kiss', 'basket'; the sound /z/ as in 'buzz', 'zoo', /θ/ as in 'think', 'baththtub', /ð/ as in 'father', 'smooth', /ʃ/ as in 'shoe', 'wish', /tʃ/ as in 'chair', 'witch', /ʒ/ as in 'rouge', 'vision', 'measure', /f/ as in 'office', /v/ as in 'save', /l/ as in 'bell', and /r/ as in 'red', 'merry' (see Appendix B.1). When they mispronounced the consonant sounds, they tended to make substitutions for those sounds they could not produce. Some typical substitutions were illustrated on as follows on the next page:

Table 2 Initial consonants

	/z/	/θ/	/ð/	/ð/	/tʃ/	/r/	/f/	/s/
English initials	<u>z</u> oo	th <u>ink</u>	fat <u>h</u> er	fat <u>h</u> er	ch <u>a</u> ir	r <u>e</u> d	off <u>ic</u> e	b <u>a</u> sk <u>e</u> t
		bat <u>h</u> tub				m <u>e</u> rry		
Participants' substitution	/s/	/t/	/t/	/tʃ/	/ʃ/	/l/	/p/	missing

Table 3 Final consonants

English	/v/	/l/	/θ/	/ð/	/tʃ/	/ʃ/	/z/	/s/	/ʒ/
Finals	sa <u>y</u> e	bell <u>l</u>	month <u>th</u>	smoo <u>th</u>	wit <u>ch</u>	wis <u>h</u>	buz <u>z</u>	kiss <u>s</u>	meas <u>ure</u>
Participants' substitution	/p/	/n/	/t/	/t/	/t/	/t/	/s/	/t/	/tʃ/
	/b/		/n/	/d/	/d/	/d/	/d/	/d/	/s/

4.1.1.2 Diphthongs

Thai language has more vowels than English. This allows LRU participants to pronounce vowel sounds more easily than those consonant sounds. However, this present study found that the difficulties among the participants are in pronouncing diphthong. For example, it was found that 60 % of the participants pronounced the word ‘ate’ as /ed/ instead of /eit/, 55 % of the participants pronounced the words ‘boat’ as /bəʊd/, instead of /bəʊt/, 47.5 % of the participants pronounced the word ‘house’ as /həʊt/, in stead of /haus/, 52.5 % of the participants pronounced the word ‘oil’ as /ɔɪ/ instead of /ɔɪl/ and 52.5 % of the participants pronounced the word ‘noise’ as in //nɔɪ/ instead of /nɔɪz/. (see Appendix B.1)

4.1.1.3 Stress

The participants were requested to identify the primary stressed syllable of each word pronounced by a native speaker of English (on specially designed word stress perception forms) to mark a tick on the stressed syllable of each word they heard (see Appendix B.2: “Listening Dictation” focusing on word stress perception). The scores from “Listening Dictation” revealed that the participants put the stress on words that can function as both verbs and nouns and

stress in loan words. Moreover, the participants put the stress on the second and on the last syllables of three or four words syllable that function as adjectives.

Since there is no stress rule in Thai words, Thai speakers tend to carry over the normal pattern typical of the Thai stress pattern in English. However, a main characteristic of the English language is the use of strong and weak stress. In English, a polysyllabic word has one (or more) syllable that is stressed more than the others. Correct use of stress is important for the proper pronunciation of words.

Every monosyllabic Thai word has even or equal weight stress unlike English word. The most common mistake of Thai speakers speaking English is to stress the final syllable of polysyllabic English words e.g. “sis ter”, “pow der”, “compu ter”, etc. Thai speakers of English obviously make mistakes with both stressed and unstressed syllables of the English words. Bowen (1975) states that the significance of English stress can never be ignored if an acceptable mastery of spoken English is a learning goal.

4.1.2 Research Question 2: Does the Pronunciation Training Help Promote the Awareness of the Loei Rajabhat University Students of Their Pronunciation Problems?

To answer the above question, the data from the Questionnaires administered before and after the pronunciation training were analyzed for statistical mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (S.D.). The results of the questionnaires are reported as follows:

4.1.2.1 The results of the questionnaire administered before the training

An overall picture of the results of the questionnaire administered before the training indicated that the participants were aware of their own pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 3.66$) (see Table 4), the methods of learning pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 3.88$) (see Table 5), the importance of learning pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 3.99$) (see Table 6), their expectation of an English teacher ($\bar{x} = 4.41$) (see Table 7), the advantages of good pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 4.26$) (see Table 8), factors that help learners have good pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 4.01$). The level of the participants' awareness in each of the six categories of the questionnaire was at a high level (see Table 9).

The details of each category of the issues focused in the questionnaire are described on the next page as follows:

4.1.2.1 (a) The participants’ self evaluation of the awareness towards their own pronunciation

The results shown in Table 4 revealed that the participants recognized the important role of the pronunciation at the high level ($\bar{x} = 3.66$) when those items grouped under the issue on the participants’ awareness towards their own pronunciation were considered. However, they did not have enough confidence in their English pronunciation when they were asked if they had good pronunciation (Item 1.1). The mean of their opinion was only at 2.75 ($\bar{x} = 2.75$) which was interpreted that they were not sure if they had good pronunciation.

Table 4 The participants’ self evaluation of the awareness towards their own pronunciation

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
1.1	You have a good pronunciation.	2.75	0.71	Moderate
1.2	You want to have a good pronunciation.	4.35	0.81	High
1.3	You have been trying to improve your pronunciation.	4.30	0.57	High
1.4	You do not want to talk to a foreigner because of your pronunciation.	2.80	1.15	Moderate
1.5	Good pronunciation makes you feel confident to communicate with a foreigner.	4.35	0.81	High
1.6	You think that having good pronunciation is more important than having good grammar	2.90	0.85	Moderate
1.7	You have had a communication difficulty because of your mispronunciation.	4.20	0.87	High
Total		3.66	0.82	High

4.1.2.1 (b) The participants’ awareness towards the methods of learning pronunciation

The results shown in Table 5 indicated that the participants recognized the methods of learning pronunciation. The total mean of this category was found to be 3.88 ($\bar{x} = 3.88$) which could be interpreted that the level of awareness of the participants was at the high level. The participants recognized that pronunciation can be learnt systematically not only from copying and repetition ($\bar{x} = 4.30$), that they can pronounce any sound by practicing moving their tongue, lips and vocal cords ($\bar{x} = 3.90$) and that phonetics course is a course for teaching-learning of pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 3.45$).

Table 5 The participants’ awareness towards the methods of learning pronunciation

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
2.1	You know that phonetics course is a course for teaching-learning of pronunciation.	3.45	0.76	High
2.2	You know that pronunciation can be learnt systematically not only from copy and repetition.	4.30	0.65	High
2.3	You know that you can pronounce any sound by practicing moving your tongue, lips and vocal cords.	3.90	0.64	High
Total		3.88	0.68	High

4.1.2.1 (c) The participants’ awareness towards the importance of pronunciation

As illustrated in Table 6 below, the total mean score of the category on the participants’ awareness towards the importance of pronunciation was 3.92 ($\bar{x} = 3.92$). This could be interpreted that the participants were

aware of the importance of pronunciation. They thought that “pronunciation is useful for learning English” (\bar{x} = 4.60) and that “the pronunciation knowledge is necessary for listening and speaking skills” (\bar{x} = 4.55). They realized that “the pronunciation should be taught in any communicative course” (\bar{x} = 4.40). They regarded that speaking with good pronunciation as close as that of the native speakers is necessary (\bar{x} = 3.95). The mean score of 2.10 from the item 3.5 confirmed the fact that the participants realized the importance of pronunciation. They expressed their view that they “want to improve their pronunciation in order to be able to communicate with foreigners”.

Table 6 The participants’ awareness towards the importance of pronunciation

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
3.1	Learning pronunciation is useful for learning English.	4.60	0.50	Very High
3.2	Pronunciation knowledge is necessary for listening and speaking skills.	4.55	0.51	Very High
3.3	Pronunciation should be taught in any communicative course.	4.40	0.75	High
3.4	It is necessary to have a native - like pronunciation.	3.95	0.39	High
3.5	You do not want to improve your pronunciation if you have no problem communicating with foreigners although you make a lot of mispronunciations.	2.10	0.96	Low
Total		3.92	0.62	High

4.1.2.1 (d) The participants’ expectation of an English teacher

When the participants were asked about their expectation of their English teacher, they expected their English teacher to “correct their pronunciation of English sounds. The level of their expectation was considered very high ($\bar{x} = 4.80$). Moreover, they expressed their view that they wanted their teacher to correct their pronunciation. This could be seen from the item 4.1. The mean scores of the items 4.1 and 4.3 were both 4.45 ($\bar{x} = 4.45$) which were considered high. They also expected they teacher to speak English more in class.

Table 7 The participants’ expectation of an English teacher

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
4.1	You want the teacher to correct your pronunciation.	4.45	0.76	High
4.2	Teachers should have correct pronunciation of English sounds.	4.80	0.41	Very High
4.3	You want the teacher to teach you the correct sounds and to practice them with you more often.	4.45	0.51	High
4.4	Teacher should speak more English in class.	3.95	0.88	High
Total		4.41	0.64	High

4.1.2.1 (e) The participants’ awareness of the advantages of good pronunciation

As illustrated in Table 8 below, the total mean score of the category on the participants’ awareness of the advantages of good pronunciation was 4.26 ($\bar{x} = 4.26$). This could be interpreted that the participants were aware of the advantages of pronunciation. They accepted that “good pronunciation will be useful for their future career” ($\bar{x} = 4.80$) and that “learning pronunciation can

help them improve their listening and speaking skills” ($\bar{x} = 4.45$). They realized that “bad pronunciation can cause communication difficulty more than wrong grasp of grammar” ($\bar{x} = 3.90$). They thought that “good pronunciation makes other people (especially native speakers) respect them more ($\bar{x} = 3.90$).

Table 8 The participants’ awareness of the advantages of good pronunciation

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
5.1	Good pronunciation will be useful for your future career.	4.80	0.41	Very High
5.2	Bad pronunciation can cause communication difficulty more than wrong grasp of grammar.	3.90	1.02	High
5.3	Learning pronunciation can help you improve your listening and speaking skills.	4.45	0.51	High
5.4	Having good pronunciation make other people (especially native speaker) respect you more.	3.90	0.78	High
Total		4.26	0.68	High

4.1.2.1 (f) The participants’ awareness towards factors that help learners have good pronunciation

When the participants were asked about their opinion on the factors that help learners have good pronunciation, they thought that such factors as imitating English sounds produced by a native speaker, watching movies and listening to songs in English, as well as studying English with a native speaker are considered important. The mean scores of these factors were 4.25, 4.15, 4.15 respectively ($\bar{x} = 4.25$, $\bar{x} = 4.15$, $\bar{x} = 4.15$). Moreover they thought that people



who have been abroad have better pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 3.95$) and that “outgoing and talkative people have better English pronunciation” ($\bar{x} = 3.55$) (see Table 9).

Table 9 The participants’ awareness towards factors that help learners have good pronunciation

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
6.1	Outgoing and talkative people have better English pronunciation.	3.55	0.94	High
6.2	People who have been abroad have better pronunciation.	3.95	0.75	High
6.3	Often watching movies and listening to songs in English help you have better pronunciation.	4.15	0.58	High
6.4	Students who study English with a native speaker will have a better pronunciation.	4.15	0.81	High
6.5	Practice imitating English sounds pronounced by a native speaker can help improve pronunciation.	4.25	0.44	High
Total		4.01	0.70	High

4.1.2.2 The results of the questionnaire administered after the training

An overall picture of the results of the questionnaire administered after the pronunciation training revealed a higher level of the participants’ awareness in each of the six categories of the questionnaire: the awareness on their own pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 4.11$) (see Table 10), the methods of learning pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 3.95$) (see Table 11), the importance of learning pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 4.43$) (see Table 12), their expectation of an English teacher ($\bar{x} = 4.41$) (see Table 13), the advantages of good

pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 4.48$) (see Table 14), and factors that help learners have good pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 4.14$). The details of each category of the issues focused in the questionnaire are described as follows:

4.1.2.2 (a) The participants' self evaluation of the awareness towards their own pronunciation

The results shown in Table 10 revealed that the total mean score of those items grouped under the issue on the participants' awareness towards their own pronunciation was 4.11 ($\bar{x} = 4.11$). This could be interpreted that the participants recognized the important role of the pronunciation at the high level. After the training, the participants expressed their opinion that "they want to have good pronunciation". This opinion was expressed at the "very high" level ($\bar{x} = 4.60$). When they were asked about their own pronunciation, they reported that their pronunciation was improved and that their pronunciation was good. The mean scores of these two opinions were at 4.25 and 4.15 respectively ($\bar{x} = 4.25$, $\bar{x} = 4.15$).

Table 10 The participants' self evaluation of the awareness towards their own pronunciation (after being trained)

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
1.1	You have a better pronunciation.	4.15	0.48	High
1.2	You still want to have a good pronunciation.	4.60	0.50	Very High
1.3	You have improved your pronunciation.	4.25	0.44	High
1.4	You now are not afraid to talk to a foreigner because of your pronunciation.	3.75	0.78	High
1.5	Pronunciation training makes you feel confident to communicate with a foreigner.	4.00	0.45	High

Table 10 The participants’ self evaluation of the awareness towards their own pronunciation (after being trained) (cont.)

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
1.6	You still think that having good pronunciation is more important than having good grammar	4.00	0.91	High
1.7	The training makes you aware that you have had a communication difficulty because of your mispronunciation.	4.05	0.60	High
Total	4.11	0.59	High	

4.1.2.2 (b) The participants’ awareness of the methods of learning pronunciation

The results shown in Table 11 below indicated that the participants recognized the methods of learning pronunciation. The total mean of this category was found to be 3.95 ($\bar{x} = 3.95$) which could be interpreted that the level of awareness of the participants was at the high level. The participants recognized that they can pronounce any sound by practicing moving their tongue, lips and vocal cords ($\bar{x} = 4.40$), that pronunciation can be learnt systematically not only from copying and repetition ($\bar{x} = 3.85$) and that phonetics course is a course for teaching-learning of pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 3.60$).

Table 11 The participants’ awareness of the methods of learning pronunciation (after being trained)

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
2.1	You now know that phonetics course is a course for teaching-learning of pronunciation.	3.60	0.75	High
2.2	You now know that pronunciation can be learnt systematically not only from copy and repetition.	3.85	0.74	High
2.3	You now know that you can pronounce any sound by practicing moving your tongue, lips and vocal cords.	4.40	0.68	High
Total		3.95	0.72	High

4.1.2.2 (c) The participants’ awareness towards the important of learning pronunciation

As illustrated in Table 12 below, the total mean of the category on the participants’ awareness towards the importance of pronunciation was 4.43 ($\bar{x} = 4.43$). This could be interpreted that the participants were well aware of the importance of pronunciation. They thought that “the pronunciation should be taught in any communicative course” ($\bar{x} = 4.55$), and that “the pronunciation knowledge is necessary for listening and speaking skills” ($\bar{x} = 4.45$). They realized that “learning pronunciation is useful for learning English” and that “speaking with good pronunciation as close as that of the native speakers is necessary”. The mean scores of these two items were both at 4.40 ($\bar{x} = 4.40$). They expressed their view that they “want to improve their pronunciation in order to solve problem on communicating”. The level of the participants’ awareness on this issue was at 4.35 ($\bar{x} = 4.35$) which was considered “high”.

Table 12 The participants’ awareness towards the importance of learning pronunciation (after being trained)

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
3.1	You now know that learning pronunciation is useful for learning English.	4.40	0.50	High
3.2	You now know that pronunciation knowledge is necessary for listening and speaking skills.	4.45	0.51	High
3.3	Pronunciation should be taught in any communicative course.	4.55	0.51	Very High
3.4	It is necessary to have a native - like pronunciation.	4.40	0.59	High
3.5	You want to improve your pronunciation in order to solve problem on communicating	4.35	0.74	High
Total		4.43	0.57	High

4.1.2.2 (d) The participants’ expectation of an English teacher

When the participants were asked about their expectation of an English teacher, they expected their English teacher to teach and give them chance to practice the correct sounds more often ($\bar{x} = 4.75$). Moreover they expected their teacher “to have correct pronunciation of English sounds” ($\bar{x} = 4.65$). The levels of these two issues which were 4.75 and 4.65 were considered “very high”. The participants also wanted their teacher to speak English more in class” ($\bar{x} = 4.25$) and that they wanted their teacher “to correct their pronunciation” ($\bar{x} = 4.00$).

Table 13 The participants’ expectation of an English teacher (after being trained)

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
4.1	You want the teacher to correct your pronunciation.	4.00	0.79	High
4.2	Teachers should have correct pronunciation of English sounds.	4.65	0.48	Very High
4.3	You want the teacher to teach you the correct sounds and to practice them with you more often.	4.75	0.44	Very High
4.4	Teacher should speak more English in class.	4.25	0.78	High
Total		4.41	0.62	High

4.1.2.2 (e) The participants’ awareness of the advantages of good pronunciation

As illustrated in Table 14 below, the total mean of the category on the participants’ awareness of the advantages of good pronunciation was 4.48 ($\bar{x} = 4.48$). This could be interpreted that the participants were aware of the advantages of pronunciation at a high level. They accepted that “good pronunciation will be useful for their future career” ($\bar{x} = 4.75$) and that “learning pronunciation can help them improve their listening and speaking skills” ($\bar{x} = 4.55$). They realized that “bad pronunciation can cause communication difficulty more than wrong grasp of grammar” ($\bar{x} = 4.35$). They thought that “good pronunciation makes other people (especially native speakers) respect them more ($\bar{x} = 4.30$).

Table 14 The participants’ awareness of the advantages of good pronunciation (after being trained)

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
5.1	You now know that good pronunciation will be useful for your future career.	4.75	0.44	Very High
5.2	You now know that bad pronunciation can cause communication difficulty more than wrong grasp of grammar.	4.35	0.48	High
5.3	Learning pronunciation can help you improve your listening and speaking skills.	4.55	0.51	Very High
5.4	Having good pronunciation make other people (especially native speaker) respect you more.	4.30	0.81	High
Total		4.48	0.56	High

4.1.2.2 (f) The participants’ awareness towards factors that help learners have good pronunciation.

When the participants were asked about their opinion on the factors that help learners have good pronunciation, they thought that such factors as imitating English sounds produced by a native speaker, studying English with a native speaker as well as watching movies and listening to songs in English are considered important. The mean of these factors were 4.35, 4.30, and 4.25 respectively ($\bar{x} = 4.35$, $\bar{x} = 4.30$, $\bar{x} = 4.25$). Moreover they thought that people who have been abroad have better pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 4.00$) and that “outgoing and talkative people have better English pronunciation” ($\bar{x} = 3.80$).

Table 15 The participants’ awareness towards factors that help learners have good pronunciation (after being trained)

Items	Statements	Level of Awareness		Level
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
6.1	Outgoing and talkative people have better English pronunciation.	3.80	0.95	High
6.2	People who have been abroad have better pronunciation.	4.00	0.85	High
6.3	Often watching movies and listening to songs in English help you have better pronunciation.	4.25	0.55	High
6.4	Students who study English with a native speaker will have a better pronunciation.	4.30	0.57	High
6.5	Practice imitating English sounds pronounced by a native speaker can help improve pronunciation.	4.35	0.48	High
Total		4.14	0.68	High

4.1.2.3 Comparisons of the results of the questionnaires administered before and after the pronunciation training

In order to see if the pronunciation training had an effect on the participants’ awareness on the role of pronunciation, the total means of the questionnaires administered before and after the training were considered. From Table 16, it was found that the total mean of the questionnaire administered after the training which was 4.25 ($\bar{x} = 4.25$) was higher than the total mean of the questionnaire administered before the training which was 3.98 ($\bar{x} = 3.98$). This gives an indication that the participants’ awareness increased because of the training they had on pronunciation. When each category of the questionnaires administered before

and after the training was considered further, the results revealed some interesting points. These are reported and discussed as follows:

4.1.2.3 (a) When each item under the category on “the participants’ self evaluation of the awareness towards their own pronunciation” was considered further (items 1.1 - 1.7), it was found that the participants thought that their pronunciation was better after the training ($\bar{x} = 4.15$) than before ($\bar{x} = 2.75$). The participants expressed their view that they wanted to be good at pronunciation. This was revealed by the mean of 4.35 ($\bar{x} = 4.35$) before they had the training, but the level of their awareness increased to 4.60 ($\bar{x} = 4.60$) after the training. They also thought that they were not afraid to speak with a foreigner because of their pronunciation. This was expressed by a higher mean of 3.75 ($\bar{x} = 3.75$) from the item 1.4 of the questionnaire conducted after the training, whereas before the training, the participants hesitated to talk to a foreigner because of their pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 2.80$). In addition, the participants realized the fact that “pronunciation is more important than having good grammar”. This was shown by the higher mean of 4.00 ($\bar{x} = 4.00$) from the item 1.6 of the questionnaire conducted after the training, when compared to the mean of 2.90 ($\bar{x} = 2.90$) of the same item of the questionnaire conducted before the training,

4.1.2.3 (b) When the questions on “the participants’ awareness of the methods of learning pronunciation” were considered (items 2.1 - 2.3), it was found that the participants knew that “pronunciation can be learnt from a phonetics course (item 2.1) and by the practice of moving their speech organs” (item 2.3). These findings revealed that the levels of their awareness changed from the mean of 3.45 ($\bar{x} = 3.45$) to that of 3.60 ($\bar{x} = 3.60$); and the mean of 3.90 ($\bar{x} = 3.90$) to that of 4.40 ($\bar{x} = 4.40$) respectively.

4.1.2.3 (c) When the questions on “the participants’ awareness towards the importance of learning pronunciation” were considered further (items 3.1-3.5), it was not surprising to find that the participants thought that “pronunciation should be taught in any communicative course”. This was expressed

by mean of 4.40 ($\bar{x} = 4.40$) when the questionnaire was conducted before the training and 4.55 ($\bar{x} = 4.55$) when the questionnaire was conducted after the training. The participants thought that they “want to improve their pronunciation in order to solve problem on communicating”. The level of awareness changed to 4.35 ($\bar{x} = 4.35$) whereas that of the awareness expressed before the training was only at 2.10 ($\bar{x} = 2.10$). This finding indicated the participants’ high level of awareness on the importance of learning pronunciation. However, when the questions from items 3.1 and 3.2 were considered, it was surprising to find that the levels of awareness on the usefulness of pronunciation on learning English ($\bar{x} = 4.60$) and on the usefulness of the knowledge of pronunciation on listening and speaking skills ($\bar{x} = 4.55$) decreased to 4.40 and 4.45 respectively when the questionnaire was conducted after the training. These findings, however, still indicated the high level of awareness.

4.1.2.3 (d) When the questions on “the participants’ expectation of an English teacher” were considered further (items 4.1 - 4.4), it was found that the expectation of their English teacher “to teach and give them chance to practice the correct sounds more often” and that “the teacher should speak English more in class” was considered higher to the level of 4.75 ($\bar{x} = 4.75$) and 4.25 ($\bar{x} = 4.25$) when compared to the level of 4.45 ($\bar{x} = 4.45$) and 3.95 ($\bar{x} = 3.95$) which were obtained earlier from the questionnaire conducted before the training. This could be interpreted that the participants saw the importance of pronunciation teaching and practicing of listening to the sounds from their teacher. However when they were asked on “the teacher correcting their pronunciation,” they expressed their view at a lower level of awareness ($\bar{x} = 4.00$) on the questionnaire conducted after the training as compared to the level of 4.45 ($\bar{x} = 4.45$) when they answered the questionnaire before the training. This could be clearly explained by the fact that the participants had an English native speaker as their pronunciation teacher for the first time during the training session. One student wrote in her reflective report that “she suffered having to study with a native English speaker”. The participants also expected less of their teacher “to produce correct English sounds”. The level of expectation on this

issue was at 4.65 which was less than the level of 4.80 obtained from the questionnaire conducted before the training. This might indicate that they preferred learning English from Thai teachers whose pronunciation is not perfectly correct. These findings however revealed their awareness on the issue at the high level.

4.1.2.3 (e) When the questions on “the participants’ awareness of the advantages of good pronunciation” were considered further (items 5.1 - 5.4), it was found that the levels of their awareness on this issue (items 5.2, 5.3, 5.4) were higher when they were asked their opinion on the pronunciation that “bad pronunciation can cause communication difficulty more than wrong grasp of grammar” ($\bar{x} = 4.35$). “learning pronunciation can help them improve their listening and speaking skills” ($\bar{x} = 4.55$) and “good pronunciation makes other people (especially native speakers) respect them more” ($\bar{x} = 4.30$). The means of the same issues which were obtained earlier before the training were 3.90 ($\bar{x} = 3.90$), 4.45 ($\bar{x} = 4.45$), and 3.90 ($\bar{x} = 3.90$) respectively.

4.1.2.3 (f) When the questions on “the participants’ awareness towards factors that help learners have good pronunciation” were considered further (items 6.1- 6.5), it was found that the levels of their awareness from all items under this category were all higher. This could be interpreted that the participants had stronger awareness on the effect of such factors on having good pronunciation. Such factors included “outgoing and talkative people” ($\bar{x} = 3.80$), “being abroad” ($\bar{x} = 4.00$), “watching movies and listening to songs in English” ($\bar{x} = 4.25$), “studying English with a native speaker” ($\bar{x} = 4.30$) as well as “imitating English sounds produced by a native speaker” ($\bar{x} = 4.35$).

Table 16 Comparisons of the results of the questionnaire administered before and after the pronunciation training

Item	Questionnaire 1 (Item 1.1-1.7)	Before		Level	Questionnaire 2 (Item 1.1-1.7)	After		Level
		\bar{X}	S.D			\bar{X}	S.D	
Total		3.66	0.82	High		4.11	0.59	High
1)	The participants' self evaluation of the awareness towards their own pronunciation				1) The participants' self evaluation of the awareness towards their own pronunciation (after being trained)			
1.1	You have a good pronunciation.	2.75	0.71	Moderate	You have a better pronunciation.	4.15	0.48	High
1.2	You want to have a good pronunciation.	4.35	0.81	High	You still want to have a good pronunciation.	4.60	0.50	Very High
1.3	You have been trying to improve your pronunciation.	4.30	0.57	High	You have improved your pronunciation.	4.25	0.44	High
1.4	You do not want to talk to a foreigner because of your pronunciation.	2.80	1.15	Moderate	You now are not afraid to talk to a foreigner because of your pronunciation.	3.75	0.78	High
1.5	Good pronunciation makes you feel confident to communicate with a foreigner.	4.35	0.81	High	Pronunciation training makes you feel confident to communicate with a foreigner.	4.00	0.45	High
1.6	You think that having good pronunciation is more important than having good grammar	2.90	0.85	Moderate	You still think that having good pronunciation is more important than having good grammar	4.00	0.91	High
1.7	You have had a communication difficulty because of your mispronunciation.	4.20	0.87	High	The training makes you aware that you have had a communication difficulty because of your mispronunciation.	4.05	0.60	High

Table 16 Comparisons of the results of the questionnaire administered before and after the pronunciation training (Cont.)

Item	Questionnaire 1 (Item 2.1- 2.3)	Before		Level	Questionnaire 2 (Item 2.1- 2.3)	After		Level
		\bar{X}	S.D			\bar{X}	S.D	
Total		3.88	0.68	High		3.95	0.72	High
2)	The participants' awareness towards the methods of learning pronunciation				2) The participants' awareness towards the methods of learning pronunciation (after being trained)			
2.1	You know that phonetics course is a course for teaching-learning of pronunciation.	3.45	0.76	High	You now know that phonetics course is a course for teaching-learning of pronunciation.	3.60	0.75	High
2.2	You know that pronunciation can be learnt systematically not only from copy and repetition.	4.30	0.65	High	You now know that pronunciation can be learnt systematically not only from copy and repetition.	3.85	0.74	High
2.3	You know that you can pronounce any sound by practicing moving your tongue, lips and vocal cords.	3.90	0.64	High	You now know that you can pronounce any sound by practicing moving your tongue, lips and vocal cords.	4.40	0.68	High

Table 16 Comparisons of the results of the questionnaire administered before and after the pronunciation training (Cont.)

Item	Questionnaire 1 (Item 3.1-3.5)	– Before		Level	Questionnaire 2 (Item 3.1-3.5)	– After		Level
		(\bar{X})	S.D			(\bar{X})	S.D	
<i>Total</i>		3.92	0.62	High		4.43	0.57	High
3)	The participants' awareness towards the importance of pronunciation				3) The participants' awareness towards the importance of pronunciation (after being trained)			
3.1	Learning pronunciation is useful for learning English.	4.60	0.50	Very High	You now know that learning pronunciation is useful for learning English.	4.40	0.50	High
3.2	Pronunciation knowledge is necessary for listening and speaking skills.	4.55	0.51	Very High	You now know that pronunciation knowledge is necessary for listening and speaking skills.	4.45	0.51	High
3.3	Pronunciation should be taught in any communicative course.	4.40	0.75	High	Pronunciation should be taught in any communicative course.	4.55	0.51	Very High
3.4	It is necessary to have a native - like pronunciation.	3.95	0.39	High	It is necessary to have a native - like pronunciation.	4.40	0.59	High
3.5	You do not want to improve your pronunciation if you have no problem communicating with foreigners although you make a lot of mispronunciations.	2.10	0.96	Low	You want to improve your pronunciation in order to solve problem on communicating	4.35	0.74	High

Item	Questionnaire 1 (Item 4.1-4.4)	–Before		Level	Questionnaire 2 (Item 4.1-4.4)	– After		Level
		(\bar{X})	S.D			(\bar{X})	S.D	
<i>Total</i>		4.41	0.64	High		4.41	0.62	High
4)	The participants' expectation of an English teacher				4) The participants' expectation of an English teacher (after being trained)			
4.1	You want the teacher to correct your pronunciation.	4.45	0.76	High	You want the teacher to correct your pronunciation.	4.00	0.79	High
4.2	Teachers should have correct pronunciation of English sounds.	4.80	0.41	Very High	Teachers should have correct pronunciation of English sounds.	4.65	0.48	Very High
4.3	You want the teacher to teach you the correct sounds and to practice them with you more often.	4.45	0.51	High	You want the teacher to teach you the correct sounds and to practice them with you more often.	4.75	0.44	Very High
4.4	Teacher should speak more English in class.	3.95	0.88	High	Teacher should speak more English in class.	4.25	0.78	High

Table 16 Comparisons of the results of the questionnaire administered before and after the pronunciation training (Cont.)

Item	Questionnaire 1 (Item 5.1-5.4)	– Before		Level	Questionnaire 2 (Item 4.1-4.4)	– After		Level
		(\bar{X})	S.D			(\bar{X})	S.D	
<i>Total</i>		<i>4.26</i>	<i>0.68</i>	<i>High</i>		<i>4.48</i>	<i>0.56</i>	<i>High</i>
5)	The participants' awareness of the advantages of good pronunciation				5) The participants' awareness of the advantages of good pronunciation (after being trained)			
5.1	Good pronunciation will be useful for your future career.	4.80	0.41	Very High	You now know that good pronunciation will be useful for your future career.	4.75	0.44	Very High
5.2	Bad pronunciation can cause communication difficulty more than wrong grasp of grammar.	3.90	1.02	High	You now know that bad pronunciation can cause communication difficulty more than wrong grasp of grammar.	4.35	0.48	Very High
5.3	Learning pronunciation can help you improve your listening and speaking skills.	4.45	0.51	High	Learning pronunciation can help you improve your listening and speaking skills.	4.55	0.51	Very High
5.4	Having good pronunciation make other people (especially native speaker) respect you more.	3.90	0.78	High	Having good pronunciation make other people (especially native speaker) respect you more.	4.30	0.81	High

Item	Questionnaire 1 (Item 6.1-6.5)	– Before		Level	Questionnaire 2 (Item 6.1-6.5)	– After		Level
		(\bar{X})	S.D			(\bar{X})	S.D	
<i>Total</i>		<i>4.01</i>	<i>0.70</i>	<i>High</i>		<i>4.14</i>	<i>0.68</i>	<i>High</i>
6)	The participants' awareness towards factors that help learners have good pronunciation.				6) The participants' awareness towards factors that help learners have good pronunciation (after being trained)			
6.1	Outgoing and talkative people have better English pronunciation.	3.55	0.94	High	Outgoing and talkative people have better English pronunciation.	3.80	0.95	High
6.2	People who have been abroad have better pronunciation.	3.95	0.75	High	People who have been abroad have better pronunciation.	4.00	0.85	High
6.3	Often watching movies and listening to songs in English help you have better pronunciation.	4.15	0.58	High	Often watching movies and listening to songs in English help you have better pronunciation.	4.25	0.55	High
6.4	Students who study English with a native speaker will have a better pronunciation.	4.15	0.81	High	Students who study English with a native speaker will have a better pronunciation.	4.30	0.57	High
6.5	Practice imitating English sounds pronounced by a native speaker can help improve pronunciation.	4.25	0.44	High	Practice imitating English sounds pronounced by a native speaker can help improve pronunciation.	4.35	0.48	High
<i>Total</i>	<i>Over All Items</i>	<i>3.98</i>	<i>0.20</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Over All Items</i>	<i>4.25</i>	<i>0.23</i>	<i>High</i>

4.1.3 Research Question 3: Does the Pronunciation Training Help Improve Loei Rajabhat University Students’ English Speaking Skill?

To answer the above question, (1) the scores from the Pronunciation Test (both part A: “Word List Reading”, and part B: “Listening dictation”) administered before and after the pronunciation training, and (2) the scores from an informal interview administered before and after the pronunciation training, were analyzed for statistical mean (\bar{x}), standard deviation (S.D.), and t-test. The results of the test and the informal interview were reported as follows:

4.1.3.1 The results of the Pronunciation Test

4.1.3.1 (a) The results of the Pronunciation Test, part A: “Word List Reading” focusing on consonants

Table 17 below showed that the mean score (\bar{x}) of the Pronunciation Test, part A: “Word List Reading” which was administered before the pronunciation training (pretest) was 0.581 and the standard deviation was 0.124 whereas the mean score of consonants on the Pronunciation Test, part A: “Word List Reading” which was administered after the pronunciation training (posttest) was 0.624 and the standard deviation was 0.130. The difference between these two means was significant at the 0.05 level. This could be interpreted that the pronunciation training helped improve the participants’ pronunciation skill on the consonant sounds.

Table 17 The results of the Pronunciation Test, part A: “Word List Reading” focusing on consonants

Pronunciation Test Consonants	Mean (\bar{x})	S.D.	t-ratio	P
Pretest	0.581	0.124	19.547	0.00
Posttest	0.624	0.130	20.471	0.00

* P<0.05

4.1.3.1 (b) The results of the Pronunciation Test, part A: “Word List Reading” focusing on diphthongs

Table 18 below showed that the mean score of diphthongs (\bar{x}) of the Pronunciation Test: “Word List Reading” which was administered before the pronunciation training (pretest) was 0.274 and the standard deviation was 0.117 whereas the mean score of the diphthongs on the Pronunciation Test, part B: “Word List Reading” which was administered after the pronunciation training (posttest) was 0.304 and the standard deviation was 0.129. The difference between these two means was significant at the 0.05 level. This could be interpreted that the pronunciation training helped improve the participants’ pronunciation skill on diphthongs.

Table 18 The results of the Pronunciation Test, part A: “Word List Reading” focusing on diphthongs

Pronunciation Test				
Diphthongs	Mean (\bar{x})	S.D.	t-ratio	P
Pretest	0.274	0.117	16.478	0.00
Posttest	0.304	0.129	17.963	0.00

* P<0.05

4.1.3.1 (c) The results of the Pronunciation Test, part A: “Listening Dictation”

Similar findings were found when the Pronunciation Test, part B: Listening Dictation was administered before and after the pronunciation training. Table 19 on the next page revealed that the mean score (\bar{x}) of the Pronunciation Test, part B: “Listening Dictation” which was administered before the pronunciation training (pretest) was 59.04 (\bar{x} = 59.04) and the standard deviation was 11.76 (\bar{x} = 11.76) whereas the mean score of the Pronunciation Test, part B: “Listening Dictation” which was administered after the pronunciation training (posttest) was 68.84 (\bar{x} = 68.84) and the standard deviation was 10.86 (\bar{x} = 10.86).

The difference between these two means was significant at the 0.05 level. This could be interpreted that the pronunciation training helped improve the participants’ knowledge of pronunciation.

Table 19 The results of the Pronunciation Test, part B: “Listening Dictation”

Listening Dictation	N	Mean (\bar{x})	S.D.	t-ratio
Pretest	20	59.04	11.76	3.72 *
Posttest	20	68.84	10.86	

*P<0.05

4.1.3.1 (d) The results of an informal interview test

To examine the effect of pronunciation training on the participants’ speaking skill, pretest and posttest scores on an interview were compared. Table 20 showed that the mean score of the posttest which was 7.40 ($\bar{x} = 7.40$) and the standard deviation of 3.39 were found higher than the pretest mean score which was 5.75 ($\bar{x} = 5.75$) and the standard deviation (S.D.= 2.02). The difference was significant at the 0.05 level (t= 2.26). This could be interpreted that the pronunciation training could help improve the participants’ speaking skill.

Table 20 The progress of the participants on an informal interview

An Interview Test	N	Mean (\bar{x})	S.D.	t-ratio
Pretest	20	5.75	2.02	2.26 *
Posttest	20	7.40	3.39	

* P<0.05

4.2 Discussions of the Study

The main concern of this present study has its root from the problem of English language learning of LRU students. It revealed that most participants have low English language proficiency (see Appendix F, ELLIS Scores). They are found to have no confidence producing English sounds (see Appendix H, an Informal

Interview Scores). Moreover, they lack the opportunity to learn and train on English pronunciation skills. One possible way to create learners' confidence in speaking is to learn to produce sounds of a foreign language correctly. Morley (1991) states that without adequate of pronunciation skills, the learner's ability to communicate is severely limited. In order to provide a pronunciation instruction to a group of LRU students (N= 20), the first research question which is, "What are the pronunciation problems of Loei Rajabhat University (LRU) students? was investigated. The findings on the problematic English sounds of LRU students reported earlier in this chapter (4.1.1) were found not different from those problematic sounds found by Wongsothorn & Pongsurapipat (1992), Jotikasthira (1999), and Wei & Zhou (2002). Wei & Zhou (2002) found that Thai students had pronunciation problems with consonants and vowels, for example word with /r/ pronounced as /l/, word with /v/ pronounced as /f/, word with /z/ pronounced as /s/ and word with /ei/ pronounced as /e/. Narksompong (2007) studied the differences of phonological features between Thai and English and identified the problematic sounds of Thai learners. It was found that Thai students were found to have difficulties with such consonants as /l/, /tʃ/, ʃ/, /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, stress, and intonation. Ariyapitipun (2003) studied consonant sounds between Thai and English languages and found that there are English consonant sounds that do not exist in the Thai phonological system. Those sounds are mostly fricatives such as /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /z/, /ʃ/, and /ʒ/. Other sounds are /g/, and /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. However, two of them sound similar to two Thai consonant sounds. Those sounds are /tʃ/ and /g/. The /tʃ/ sound is pronounced similarly to ch (for chor chang “จ-ช้าง” and /g/ sound is similar to /k/ (for gawgai “ก-ไก”). When the phonological system of Thai and English are significantly different, it is difficult for the learners to produce those sounds (Swain & Smith, 1987). The interference of the L1, especially final consonants has been found to have some influences on the speech or production on their English (Gilbert, 2002; Ohata, 2004).

Lane (1993) claims that each language has its own system of combining the sounds produced by the vocal tract and it has the difference in the sound system which gives each language its particular quality. This makes it difficult for learners of

other language to produce a comprehensible pronunciation. As a result, learners should be able to compare quality of both English and Thai, to understand where the pronunciation problems are from and to solve those problems more effectively. Pronunciation training therefore is the key element to prepare both students and teacher to be confident and effective on pronunciation. The question was then raised whether ESL teachers and Thai students were aware of their problematic sounds in the language class or not. This led to the second research question which is: “Does the pronunciation training help promote the awareness of the LRU students of their pronunciation problems?” The results obtained from the questionnaire administered to the participants before and after the pronunciation training revealed that the participants were aware of their problem in pronunciation as well as the importance of the pronunciation instruction. The level of awareness increased after they had attended the pronunciation training. This information seems to go along the same line with Kostos (2006) who demonstrates that teachers can increase students’ awareness towards language learning in terms of making decision in designing learning activities and provide fun enjoyment activities. The role of the pronunciation instruction has received attention by such language specialists as Gilbert (1984), Morley (1991), and MacDonald et al. (1994). Gilbert (1984) refers to the important role of pronunciation that if the students’ English pronunciation skills improved, clearly their listening and speaking skills become more refined. MacDonald et al. (1994) believe that poor pronunciation is a prevalent barrier to good communication with foreigners. The findings from the third research question: “Does the pronunciation training help increase the LRU student’s confidence and therefore helps improve their English speaking skill?”, confirms the above points. It was found from the findings of the present study that the pronunciation training helped improve the participants’ pronunciation.

