

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusion of the study, the recommendations, and the limitations of the study.

5.1 Conclusions of the Study

This study was conducted to investigate the pronunciation problems of LRU students, to study LRU students' awareness of their English pronunciation problems, and to investigate the effect of the pronunciation training on learner's confidence and English speaking skill. To achieve these purposes, students were administered the questionnaire, the pronunciation test, and an informal interview. The pronunciation test and the questionnaires were tried out initially with a group of first year students who were not the participants of the study in order to check the validity of the instruments. The pronunciation instruction which lasted 12 weeks of 3 hours a week was conducted through the stages of 'plan', 'act', 'observe' and 'reflect'. At the stage of planning, the researcher and other instructors with the information on the students' pronunciation problems planned lessons on the segmental and supra-segmental aspects. The content and the lesson plans were later validated by two experts in the field of English language teaching. After the training, the parallel form of the questionnaire, the pronunciation test, and an informal interview were again administered to the students in order to investigate the effect of pronunciation training on students' confidence and English speaking skill.

The results from a comparison of two sets of questionnaires; the difference between the means from the pre-test and post-test pronunciation scores; and the difference between the means from the scores obtained from the interview administered before and after the training, revealed the fact that the pronunciation instruction tended to help increase the learners' awareness of the pronunciation problems, the important role of pronunciation. The pronunciation instruction was found to help improve the learners' confidence and their English speaking skill.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Recommendations for EFL Language Teaching

The findings from this study suggest some steps in pronunciation teaching and learning as follows:

5.2.1.1 Pronunciation features need to be taught because good pronunciation doesn't just happen, therefore, pronunciation instruction needs to be ongoing in an open enrollment program.

5.2.1.2 Instructors need to be particularly knowledgeable about segmental and suprasegmental features of the English language and also the effects of the learners' first language interference on their second (English) language pronunciation. In addition, both segmental and suprasegmental features should be equally focused: students' reflections strongly emphasized the value of teaching not only suprasegmental features of the second language, but also those of specific sounds. If students do not have the phonetic and phonological awareness of English, they would not know how to monitor their speech.

5.2.1.3 Listening is an important part of pronunciation and it needs to be incorporated to the pronunciation training course.

5.2.2 Recommendations for Further Research

This study was conducted in a small setting. Therefore, based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the recommendations are made for further study.

5.2.2.1 A research study on ESL/EFL instructors' problematic English pronunciation at primary, secondary and high school levels is recommended to investigate whether the same outcome will be found.

5.2.2.2 Word stress and sentence stress are also recommended for further study. Many second language learners are used to their first language stress rules, so they find English words stress rules difficult to cope with. The notion is that the flow of communication with foreigners can be interrupted because of the omission or misplacement of the English word stress by Thai learners who do not understand the speech rules of English. As a result, stress problems may affect communicative comprehension; therefore, this requires further study.

5.3 Limitations of the study

There are two limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed in the present study. Firstly, as it was found during our training, frustration, lack of confidence and the depression are the emotions that have a profound effect on students' English speaking skill. As a result, incorporating knowledge of pronunciation skill into a 10 week study and to facilitate the improvement of pronunciation and speaking skill were quite a short time. Secondly, pronunciation training can be utilized as a tool to raise learners' awareness on pronunciation problems. However, as an instructor of English as a foreign language, we should teach learners not just how to pronounce words or just only memorize the patterns, but students should be able to analyze their strengths and weaknesses of pronunciation skill and enable them to gain the learning strategies that have transformed them into confident speakers of English.