

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze Thai English teachers' self-perception of pronunciation difficulties in English, particularly consonants and vowels. The data is collected from nine Thai English teachers of the Business English Program at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University. The research instruments used to collect the data are questionnaires for self-assessment as well as reading a short passage aloud which is then recorded onto a cassette tape and wave files. Data is analyzed based on the frequencies of the top ten ranked problematic sounds. The pronunciation is assessed by three native English teachers from Australia, England, and New Zealand and an ESL teacher from Indian. The results show the top ten problematic English sounds that Thai English teachers' have a self-perception as being difficult to pronounce are “twelfths” /twelfθs/ In the second rank, one consonant clusters: “nymph” /nymf / and two phonemes: “chip” / tʃip/, and “ship” /ʃip/ are equally considered the problematic sounds. The fifth to tenth is also equally considered in difficulty of pronunciation. They are /teach/ ti:tʃ/, rice /rais/, azure /æʒə/ /æʒjuə/ /æzjuə/ /æʒə(r)/, Gwen /gwen/, midst /mɪdst/, thirsts /θɜ:sts/ (BrE), /θɜ:rsts/ (AmE). The results of pronunciation difficulties in reading aloud assessed by three native English teachers and an ESL teacher found that firstly, the consonant sound: /l/, /tʃ/, /ʃ/, /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /ŋ/ were found difficult to pronounce. Secondly, the consonant clusters in the initial, middle, and final position were the great majority of pronunciation difficulties found. Moreover, the difficulty in pronouncing vowel sounds of “monophthongs” and “diphthongs” were found. Some final “s” and varieties of “s” sounds: ‘loves’-/lʌvz/ were not found.