

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the investigated problematic sounds of Thai English teachers, divided into three parts based on: general information, self-assessment, and reading aloud.

4.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

According to the questionnaires' responses of nine Thai English teachers of Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, it was found:

All subjects graduated Master's Degree or higher. One subject graduated with a Doctorate in Education (TESOL Policy), the rest graduated with Master's Degrees: three in teaching, four in Language and Linguistics, and two in Marketing but one is studying a TEFL program at the Master's level and the other had studied in Australia.

Five subjects had studied abroad: two in U.S.A, two in Australia, and one in six countries: U.S.A., Australia, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. Four subjects had never studied abroad. Eight subjects had studied phonetics at least one semester. Only one subject had never studied phonetics but she has studied Marketing in Australia.

All subjects are not members of English speaking clubs.

4.2 SELF-ASSESSMENT

In the self-assessment part, the questionnaire shows that there is one of the subjects who considered that she does not confront pronunciation difficulties in English. Meanwhile, eight Thai English teachers of the Business English Program at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University assessed themselves as having English pronunciation difficulties with consonants, or consonant clusters, in all positions: initial, middle, final, but having fewer problems in vowel sounds. The self-assessment questionnaire reveals 59 English phonemic sounds that Thai English teachers perceived as pronunciation difficulties. 37 of those consonants are not in the Thai sound system. They are in all syllable positions: initial, middle, and final. Only one vowel is rated as difficult. The difficulty of the 59 phonemic sounds could be ordered in a top ten

ranking from the most difficult to the easiest one. The problematic sounds ranking first in pronunciation is “**twelfths**” /twelfθs/ with **16 %**. In second rank, one consonant cluster: “**nymph**” /nympf/ and two phonemes: “**chip**” /tʃɪp/, and “**ship**” /ʃɪp/ are equally considered problematic sounds with **12 %**. The fifth to tenth are also equally considered in difficulty of pronunciation. They are **teach** /ti:tʃ/, **rice** /raɪs/, **azure** /æzə/ /æzjuə/ /æzjuə/ /æzə(r)/, **Gwen** /gwen/, **midst** /mɪdst/, **thirsts** (BrE: /θɜ:sts/), (AmE: /θɜ:rsts/) with **8 %**. There is only one teacher who considers that she has a problem while speaking the English vowel “**sure**” /sʊə/.

4.3 READING ALOUD

The words were randomly selected from the questionnaire list in order to compose the reading passage. The purpose was to crosscheck problematic sounds of Thai English teachers’ self-assessment and native and ESL teachers’ assessment based on standard pronunciation of English.

The results of pronunciation difficulties of Thai English teachers in reading aloud, as assessed by native and ESL teachers can be seen in Appendix H. It can be concluded that the omission of final ‘s’: always, holidays, ones, sounds was found. The consonants of /l/ i.e. ‘sailing’-/ser^əlɪŋ/, ‘while’-/waɪ^əl/, /tʃ/ i.e. ‘catch’-/cætʃ/, /ʃ/ i.e. ‘fish’-/fɪʃ/, ‘delicious’-/dɪlɪʃəs/, /f/ i.e. ‘face’-/feɪs/, ‘surfing’-/sɜ:fɪŋ/, /v/ i.e. ‘serve’-/sɜ:v/, /θ/ i.e. ‘third’-/θɜ:d/, ‘think’-/θɪŋk/, /ð/ i.e. ‘faher’-/fɑ:ðər/, /ŋ/ i.e. ‘singing’-/sɪŋ ŋ/ were difficult to pronounce. The consonant clusters, the great majority of pronunciation difficulties, were found: ‘twelve’-/twelv/, ‘crystal’-/krɪstəl/, ‘first’-/fɜ:st/, ‘splashes’-/splæʃ/, ‘jumps’-/dʒʌmps/. The vowel sounds of ‘monophthongs’: ‘love’-/lʌv/ and ‘diphthongs’: ‘day’-/deɪ/, ‘time’-/taɪm/, ‘going’-/gəʊ/ /goʊ/, ‘boy’-/bɔɪ/ were also found to represent pronunciation difficulties. Some final “s” and varieties of “s” sounds: ‘loves’-/lʌvz/ were not found.

The findings of the study will be summarized and discussed in the next chapter.