

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussions, (4) conclusions and, (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

5.1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to relate the findings of the differences between Thai and English to the English pronunciation problems of Thai people.

5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures

This is a library research; all data is collected from books, articles, journals, research, studies from libraries and websites by well-known theorists and teachers to answer the research questions.

The instruments applied to collect the information are research questions. The data collected is to answer the questions of what are the differences of the phonological features between Thai and English which relate to the pronunciation problems of Thai people.

The procedures include screening and selecting related data where all data is investigated and analyzed in order to explain and answer the research questions.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 The Differences of the Phonological Features Between Thai and English

Researches and studies show that the differences of the phonological features between Thai and English in terms of consonants, consonant clusters, vowels, stress and intonation are related to the English pronunciation problems of Thai people. These differences are a clear indication that the sound patterns or structure of the EFL/ESL learners' native language, which in this case is Thai, have some influence

on the speech or production of their second language, English (Ohata, 2004). In other words, the pronunciation errors are most likely the reflections of the differences of the sound inventory, rules of combining sounds, and the stress and intonation patterns between their native language and the target language (Swan & Smith, 1987).

Among the segmental aspects, there seems to be a big difference between Thai and English consonants. Although there are differences between the two languages in the initial position of the words, those differences are not as big as they are in the final position. This is because Thai has far fewer consonants which are used in the final position of the words than English.

In English's suprasegmental aspects, stress is important. Stress is put in every polysyllabic word in English to make that word comprehensible whereas Thai has no stress. Instead of using stress, Thai assigns tones in each syllable of the words. The meaning of each word is dependent on tones. Similarly to stress, intonation also has an important part in English spoken language as it has two main functions which are either to convey emotions, feelings and attitudes of the speakers (Sumon Ariyapitipun, 2003) or to express grammatical meaning (Wilkins, 1976). Thai does not have intonation as well.

5.2.2 English Pronunciation Problems of Thai People

According to Smyth (2001), the main cause of English pronunciation problems of Thai people is from the fact that they try to fit every English word into the Thai phonological system. We can categorize the problems as follows:

- Consonants: Thai people make substitutions for the sounds that do not occur in Thai with sounds that they can produce. This happens in both initial and final positions.
- Consonant clusters: With consonant clusters, the problems happen differently in the initial and final positions.
 - *Initial consonant clusters*: In this part, Thai people usually add a short vowel in between the cluster, drop the second or the third consonant of the clusters, or sometimes they do both.
 - *Final consonant clusters*: Thai often reduce the final clusters to a single final consonant, in the first-segment of the clusters.

- Stress: Thai people always assign stress at the last syllable of English polysyllabic words.
- Intonation: Thai people do not use intonation in any kinds of questions or sentences but after they are taught in school, they tend to over generalize the rule by also using the rising tones with Wh-questions.

5.3 DISCUSSIONS

From this study, 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 of Thai people. The causes of these pronunciation problems are from the differences between the two languages in both of the two main aspects of pronunciation which are segmental aspects (consonants and vowels) and suprasegmental aspects (stress and intonation).

In the segmental aspects, for Thai people, pronouncing the English consonants which do not occur in Thai is the most problematic part. In English class, manner of articulation, place of articulation and the vibration of the vocal cord of those problematic sounds should be emphasized when teaching English pronunciation. For example, teachers themselves should point out to the students that these two sounds, /s/ and /z/ are different from each other in the vibration of the vocal cord. In this case, let the students know that when they produce /z/ sound, the vocal cord is vibrated whereas with /s/, the vocal cord is not vibrated.

Stress and intonation are features in the suprasegmental aspects that have been overlooked by the teachers. Because speakers of English use stress and intonation to convey feeling, attitudes and emotions, these two features give meanings which are beyond literal meanings. As the results of this, teachers should raise awareness of the importance of stress and intonation. Students should practice putting stress in different positions and using rising intonation with Yes/No questions and falling intonation with Wh-Questions and affirmative statements.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above.

As Lane (1993) said “each language has its own system of combining the noises produced by the vocal tract and it is the difference in the sound system which gives each language its particular quality”, this language quality makes it difficult for learners of other language to produce a comprehensible pronunciation. Teachers who are teaching English should be able to compare the language qualities of both English and Thai in order to show the students where the pronunciation problems are from and to solve those problems more effectively. If Thai people are able to produce intelligible sentences, they will be able to convey both literal and non-literal meanings of the conversation correctly. This supports the thought that intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication (Morley, 1991) and intelligible pronunciation is easily understood throughout the English speaking world (Wei & Zhou, 2002),

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEACH

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research.

5.5.1 There are a lot of studies and researches of the differences between English and Thai that have been done in the segmental aspects, partly because they are easy to notice and work on. In my opinion, it would be interesting to find the causes of pronunciation problems in the suprasegmental aspects which are stress and intonation. They are considered the aspects which may have the most effect in the intelligibility of the pronunciation of some speakers.

5.5.2 Some Thai teachers who teach English pronunciations themselves are not aware of their pronunciation problems. Some even do not see the fact that they also do not pronounce English words correctly. It would also be useful to see whether these teachers have pronunciation problems or not, what causes those problems and how they can solve those problems.