

Pattira Thanomnark 2014: The Acquisition of /r/-/l/ Contrast by Northern Thai Speaking Learners. Master of Arts (English for Specific Purposes), Major Field: English for Specific Purposes, Department of Foreign Languages. Thesis Advisor: Miss Parichart Phootirat, Ph. D. 73 pages.

This study aims to investigate the production of English /r/ and /l/ contrast in word-initial singletons by northern Thai speakers. Two hypotheses were formulated: (1) northern Thai speakers do not acquire English /r/ and /l/ contrast in word-initial singletons in any tasks and (2) the acquisition of English /r/ and /l/ contrast in word-initial singletons in less formal task implies the acquisition of English /r/ and /l/ contrast in word-initial singletons in more formal task. Ten non-English major undergraduate students studying at Chiangmai University were selected and asked to perform two tasks including the passage reading and the word list reading, respectively. The effect of different speech styles was also concerned when collecting the data.

The findings reveal that the data gathered from most northern Thai speakers in this study supports both hypotheses. With respect to the first hypothesis, it is valid by the production of most participants (80%). This can be explained by the effect of L1 transfer (Lado, 1957). Regarding the second hypothesis, the data obtained from all participants partially support this hypothesis; however, they do not really exhibit the implicational generalization.

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