

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION



Background of the study

Thailand is geographically divided into four main regions: the center, the North, the South and the North-east. Despite the fact that all Thai people speak Thai which is generally called the national language, each region has its own dialect. The central Thai speak the central dialect, the northern Thai speak the northern dialect and so on.

The students who were born in each region of the country will, therefore, speak their special dialects which have different sound features from the others. But when they are in schools and learn English, the students who attend school from different parts of the country will probably have difficulty in the aural perception of the English phonemes due to their native dialect. This study will find out whether there are different levels amongst students from the different dialect area. More important, if there are some differences as mentioned, text-books of pronunciation practice should be adapted to take account of their regional differences in teaching English pronunciation.

The test of aural perception represents three main factors¹

1. It tests the student's grasp of the phonomic system of English.

¹ Lado Robert: Test of aural perception in English for Latin American Students.

2. It test the auditory perception level of the students.
3. It test specific problems the students have in hearing native speakers of English.

This study has covered these three important factors, but a special attention has been focused on the "auditory perception" of the four groups of students who have different dialect backgrounds. The students are from the central, Northern, Southern, and the North-eastern regions of Thailand, Those students may have different auditory perception problems in hearing English phonemes, and this investigation will yield diagnostic information about regional differences of each group.

Purpose of the study

General purpose: to investigate the aural perception skill of the first year students at Bansomdej Teacher Training College.

Specific purpose

1. To differentiate the aural perception levels of first year students from the four regions.
2. To grade the English phonemes in order of thier difficulty for the students.
3. To show statistically which regions have higher or lower aural perception ability in specific phonemes.

This study is an attempt to discover whether or not the regional dialects of students from the various regions of Thailand influence the students' ability to differentiate between the phonemes of English at the aural perception level. If the students' dialects do in fact influence the students' aural perception ability, then ideally these regional differences should be taken into account in the preparation of English-teaching materials

for students of different dialect backgrounds. This investigation will apply most directly to students at Bansomdej Teacher Training College where the writer has some responsibility for the teaching of English. It is the intention of the writer to devise pronunciation drills which will take into account those differences in the pronunciation amongst the students which can be traced to differences in their dialect background.

Limitation of the study

1. The subjects are the first year students at Bansomdej Teacher Training College.
2. There are 180 boys and 144 girls from four regions, the total number is 324 students.

Definition of terms.

- 1) N stands for the whole student group from the North.
- 2) NE stands for the whole student group from the North-East.
- 3) S stands for the whole student group from the South.
- 4) C stands for the whole student group from the Central.
- 5) Ng stands for the girl students from the North.
- 6) NEg stands for the girl students from the North-East.
- 7) Sg stands for the girl students from the South.
- 8) Cg stands for the girl students from the Central.
- 9) Nb stands for the boy students from the North.
- 10) NEb stands for the boy students from the North-East.
- 11) Sb stands for the boy students from the South.
- 12) Cb stands for the boy students from the Central.
- 13) // encloses phonemic transcription.

- 14) \bar{Y} stands for the Mean.
 15) Σ zigma the total sum of square.

Related literature

The study of this kind has never been yet done by anyone, except there are the discovering of some similarities made by Miss Suree Piamsuk.² The teachers of English were asked by her to rank the most problem sound in English and found that.

th	15%	of total teacher.
Y	13%	of total teacher.
Z, Sh	7%	7%
l, v	8%	8%
s	5%	
w	3%	
g, k, p, b, ed, t, f, u, ei, i,	2%	

Dr.³ Edward M. Anthony has studied 139 student teachers in the two teacher training colleges, The test covered only the vowel sound.

² Piamsuk Suree: Teaching of Reading English in the elementary certificate.

Thesis for B.Ed. 1961

³ Anthony, Edward M., A Teacher's Hand book of Thai Students' English Pronunciation Difficulties. S.Silpa Press Co, 1956

The result of the investigation indicated the percentage of the students who were not able to differentiate the minimal pairs of the aural perception test.

1.	/u/-/o/	full-foal	93%	7.	/o/-/c/	boat-bought	13%
2.	/U/-/U/	fool-full	78%	8.	/e/-/E/	bait-bet	13%
3.	/ə/-/o/	but-bought	41%	9.	/a/-/o/	bot-hut	12%
4.	/i/-/I/	beat-bit	41%	10.	/a/-/U/	luck-look	6%
5.	/I/-/e/	bit-bet	37%	11.	/I/-/b/	lick-luck	5%
6.	/e/-/ə/	bet-but	31%	12.	/a/-/o/	out-coat	5%

As for this test, Dr. Anthony concluded that the items number 1-6 have high percentage of error which is due to the fact that those vowel sounds are clearly different from the Thai vowels. The items number 7-12 have no much difficulty for Thai student.

The study of Dr. Anthony was made within the limitation of the number of students and so vowel sounds. It is true, therefore that it will not be a result of the investigation of all Thai students.