

Students' English Pronunciation skill Development through Using Additional English Pronunciation Exercises of the M.2 Students at Muang Somdet School

Nanthanat Wiangin, Sureerat Talapngoen* and Chatthapon Phromart
Kalasin University

Abstract

The purposes of this study are (1) to compare the learning outcome of the students who use additional English pronunciation exercise between the pre-test and post-test and, (2) to examine the attitudes towards English pronunciation via additional English pronunciation exercises.

The participants in this study were 30 students at Matthayom 2 who were studying in second semester of academic year 2016 at Muang Somdet School, Kalasin province. The study choose 30 participants from total 120 students by using purposive sampling method. The research instruments comprised of the study are additional English pronunciation exercises, the pronunciation of pre-test and post-test and attitudes questionnaire.

Data collection was conducted for 2 hours a week and spent time for 10 weeks in total. The pre-test was used before the experiment to obtain the base scores. During the experiment, the students were trained by additional English pronunciation exercises. After that the students were tested for the outcome by the post-test to assess the improvement. The data was analyzed by the statistic including the percentage, mean, standard deviation, and t-test.

The finding of the study revealed that the mean score of the pronunciation post-test was significantly higher than the mean score of the pre-test at $p < 0.05$. Students pronounced words more correctly. It showed that students have confidence on pronunciation and have good attitude about learning speaking through practicing with additional English exercises.

Keyword: Pronunciation, Additional Exercises, Skill Development

Introduction

English skills development are a multifaceted learning process targeting to achieve their fluency on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is confirmed that the efficiency to communicate in English has variety benefits to students in terms of studying in advance, learning culture, connection, working, and others. The good attitude for communication in English can help students achieve their knowledge and self-development in learning English better.

According to this importance of English, the researchers try to do literature review about what the problems of learning English are. It was found that the most important problem other than problem from teachers, students, or teaching technique is wrong pronunciation (Kewley and Dalby, 1999). The problem of wrong or unclear pronunciation affect to the confidence on speaking and also might cause them communicate with wrong meaning (Lord, 2005). This problem is otherwise difficult to solve when students grow up. The causes might occur from unrecognized of teaching phonetics to learners, students have bad attitude to English, not enough teaching materials, and some students have physical dysfunction (Lord, 2008).

Oral reading is necessary to emphasize on the correctly intonation, phonetic, and pronunciation. Oral reading certainly related to the understanding of audience. The reader should pronounce words clearly including understanding how to pause, stress, and express texts' meaning to the audience completely (Rasinski and Zutell, 2009). Oral reading can help learners have consciousness on pronunciation as they need linking sounds and sentence stress. The study of Chaloeisub (1988) indicated that practicing reading activities arouse learners has awareness on basic word stress. Learners would be fun with intonation, link sound, sentences stress, and other strategic of English pronunciation. As a result, learners will have more confidence on speaking English when they have got enough practicing (Drover and Stacey, 2002).

However, teaching method and students' attitude are the important key to improve students' pronunciation. Louise Spear-Swering (2009) cited that word spelling is another problem that affected to pronunciation in young learners, so it is possible that Thai teacher might adapt the approach of teaching word spelling with pronunciation. Tedtom (2008) mentioned that reading skill is related to word spelling. It was found that students who knew how to spell words are also knew how to pronounce it. The attitude of English learning can be the cause of pronunciation because students need confidence on speaking. Therefore, teachers become the important key to make a class fun and motivate students to practice reading with additional exercises (Louise Spear-Swering 2009).

All in all, the pronunciation is recognized to become the main skill to improve on students. The researchers realized that students in M 2, at Muang Somdet School need to be practiced on additional pronunciation English exercises along with giving good attitudes on learning English which is believed that this way would help them improve their English skill.

Research Objectives

- 1) To compare the learning outcome of the students who use additional English pronunciation exercise between the pre-test and post-test
- 2) To examine the attitudes towards English language learning via additional English pronunciation exercises

Research Methodology

The participants of the study were chosen by a purposive sampling technique. They were 30 students at M 2 Muang Somdet secondary school who were studying in second semester of academic year 2016.

The research instruments employed in this study are: 1) the pre-test and posttest, 2) additional English pronunciation exercises and 3) attitudes questionnaire.

The study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2016 at M2 students Muang Somdet School, Kalasin province. This study employed the experimental research. The participants did the pre-test at the first week. After that they were trained on additional English pronunciation exercises at week 2-9. At last week, participants did the post-test including the attitudes questionnaire. The procedure spent ten week collecting the data. The additional English pronunciation exercises consisted of 7 units. In each unit, it would be included warm-up activities, reading practice and the pre-test and post-test.

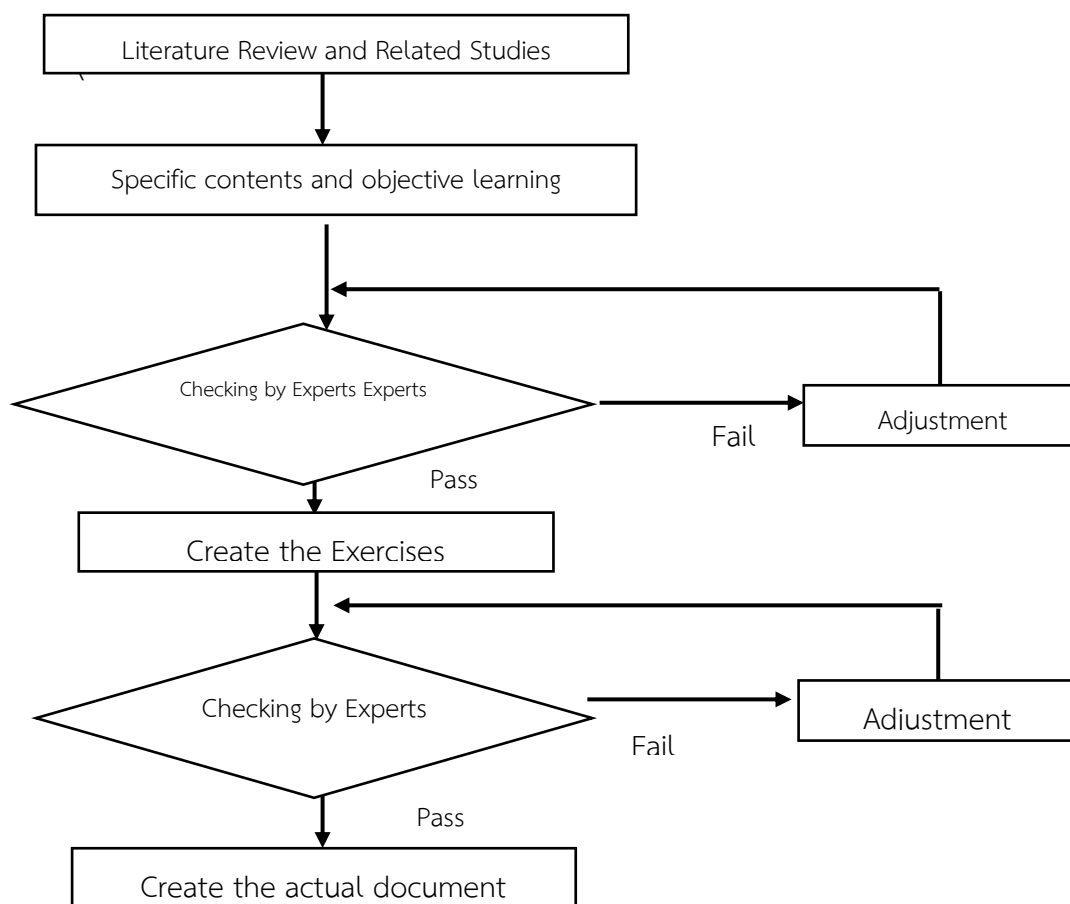
Table 1 Contents and objectives of additional English pronunciation exercises.

Unit No.	Name of Issues	Objectives Learning
1.	Consonants in English	- Students be able to determine the similarity and difference of initial consonant and final consonant by specific words
2.	Initial Consonant in English	
3.	Final Consonant in English	
4.	Short Vowels in English	- Students be able to determine the similarity and difference of vowels by specific words
5.	Long Vowels in English	
6.	Diphthongs in English	- Students be able to pronounce words correctly.
7.	Stress in English	

The contents of each unit were created appropriately for M2 students. The exercises combined variety and challenge activities for learners; for example, working in pairs, group demonstration, and role play. All students were tested for the pre-test in each unit first. Then pronunciation activities were trained to the students until they can pass the post-test of each unit. The lesson focused on pronouncing the similarity and difference of initial consonant, final consonant, short vowels, long vowels and diphthongs. All participants passed all the test of each unit so it showed that they can pronounce word correctly.

This process of teaching pronunciation, teacher needs to well prepare about activities used in class. Class environment is another important key for learners so the activities such as ice breaking before the class is very important. Otherwise, the activities used in class focus on the tasks that all students have to be fun, challenge, and feel relax to read words out loud. Teacher needs to make sure that all students can pronounce words correctly by the post-test of each unit. After all finishing seven units of training, all participants obtained a post-test again. Finally, the participants were asked to complete the attitude questionnaire to find out their feeling or attitude toward additional English pronunciation exercises. The process of creating this study however was concluded in the figure below.

Figures 1 Process of creating the research by using additional English pronunciation exercises



Finding Research and Discussion

In this section, the results show t-test for proficiency test between the pre-test and post-test and descriptive statistics of data for attitudes on using additional English pronunciation exercises.

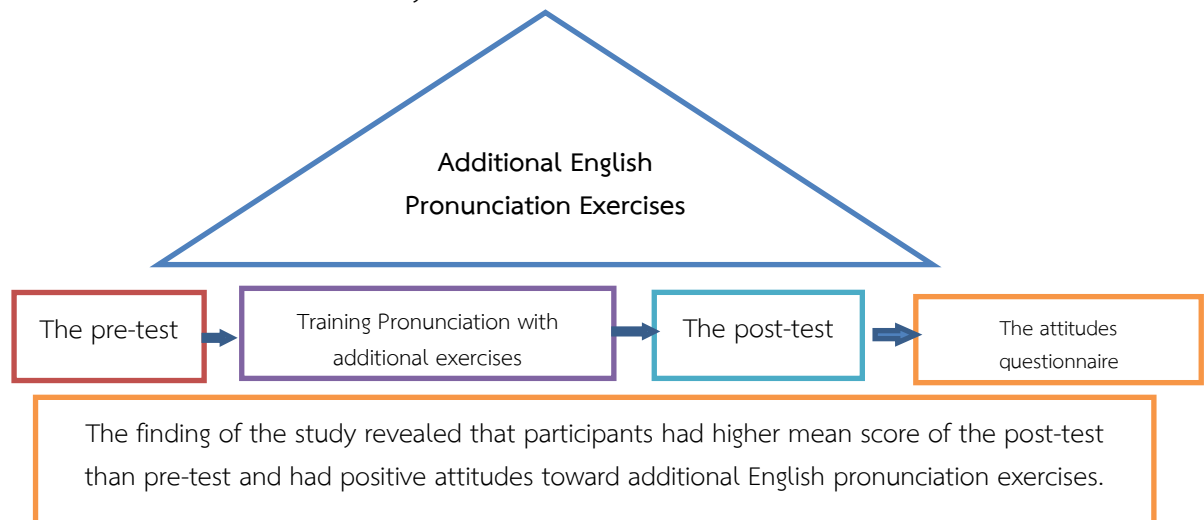
Table 2 The pre-test and post-test of additional English pronunciation exercises result

Test	n	Mean	SD	t	p
Pre-test	30	8.89	2.17	21.07	.000
Post-test	30	16.00	1.60		

Table 2 shows the mean score of the pre-test and post-test were ($M = 8.89$) and ($M = 16.00$) respectively. The mean score shows obviously that the post-test had higher mean score than the pre-test after the participants were trained by additional English pronunciation exercises. The results showed that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test at $p > .05$. This result could be implied that the participants had an improvement on better pronunciation. The participants passed the appropriate process of practicing pronunciation which cause them learn how to pronounce words correctly along each unit. The finding is congruent with the study of Chuthai (1979) indicated that creating a challenge and fun exercises for students can motivate students to improve their learning. Otherwise, the finding is also consistent with Moesri (2016)'s study which showed that additional exercises about pronunciation is able to help learners have motivation and strategic to improve their speaking.

The finding of attitudes questionnaire revealed that the experimental group expressed positive attitudes about practicing pronunciation by additional exercises ($\bar{x} = 3.40$). Most students perceive the usefulness of additional English pronunciation exercises. They agreed that this approach aroused them have fun with participating in class. The participants who passed all units could pronounce words correctly and could appreciate to learn English language. The participants felt challenge and enthusiastic to practice pronunciation. This finding related to Torai (2014)'s study which indicated that a good attitude about learning English can help learners improve their challenge of speaking. The attitude on pronunciation is an important key for learners to practice English by themselves. Therefore, this result indicated that the participants had good attitudes on pronunciation which cause them had an improvement in English test.

Figure 2 Procedure of research study results



Suggestions

- 1) This additional English pronunciation exercises can be developed in advance by focusing on the process that enable to be integrated for other standard of students such as happiness, behaviors, or talents.
- 2) There should design a different activity to improve pronunciation of the student.
- 3) The variety of teaching strategies that related with this additional English pronunciation exercises would be excellent for teacher.

References

- Chaloeisub, S. (1988). *Reading Development*. Pathumtani. (in Thai)
- Gover, J., & Stacey, S. (2002). *Oral Language and code-related precursors to reading: Evidence from a longitudinal structural model*, *Developmental Psychology*, Vol 38(6), Nov. 2002, 934-947.
- Kewley, D., & Dalby, J. (1999). *Explicit Pronunciation Training Using Automatic Speech Recognition Technology*, Vol. 16, No. 3, Special Issue: Tutors that Listen: Speech Recognition for Language Learning (1999), pp. 425-445
- Lord, G. (1999). *How Can We Teach Foreign Language Pronunciation? On the Effects of a Spanish Phonetics Course*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Sep., 2005), pp. 557-567, Published by American Association of Teacher.
- Lord, G. (2008). *Podcasting Communities and Second Language Pronunciation*. Pennsylvania State, Pennsylvania Pressed.
- Louise Spear-Swereng. (2009). *Learning Problems and Words Spelling on Secondary Students*. [Webblog]. Received from <http://www.braille-cet.in.th>.

- Rasinski, T., & Zutell, J. (2009). *Training Teachers to Attend to Their Students' Oral Reading Fluency*. Vol 30, P. 211-217, Theory Into Practice Pressed.
- Torai, S. (2014). *Development Reading English Pronunciation Skill Through Additional Exercises for M1 Students*. Hatyai: Hatyai University. (in Thai)
- Tedtom, T. (2009). *Development Reading Skill and Spelling on Basic Words for Elementary School by Using Additional exercises*. Dissertation, Mahasarakham. (in Thai)

Author

Nanthanat Wiangin

Kalasin University

13 Moo. 14 Song Plueai, Namon, Kalasin 46230

E-mail : Nanthanut9999@gmail.com

Sureerat Talapngoen

Kalasin University

13 Moo. 14 Song Plueai, Namon, Kalasin 46230

E-mail : abouttoey@hotmail.com

Chatthapon Phromart

Kalasin University

13 Moo. 14 Song Plueai, Namon, Kalasin 46230

E-mail :