

## ABSTRACT

This classroom relevant research was undertaken to determine a starting point for designing a textbook for the effective development of an instruction program in English suprasegmental features as part of the English pronunciation program for Thai learners of English as a second language at Chiang Mai University. The primary objectives were to gain knowledge and understanding regarding potential problem areas in Thai students' pronunciation of English suprasegmental features as well as to assess the value of the awareness raising instruction method as an initiative approach in teaching pronunciation.

The data for this study were obtained through the production of English suprasegmental features by 100 Thai university students using two types of materials: a list of 50 polysyllabic high-frequency English words and a 115-word passage on Bangkok's hot weather consisting of target suprasegmental items, namely primary stress in a compound noun, emphatic stress on contrasting information, the rising tone for a series of items and a yes-no question. The reading production was administered after the subjects had undergone an introductory pronunciation course (35 hours instruction and practice in segmental features and 10 hours instruction and practice in suprasegmental features in classroom lectures and lab sessions).

The results of the study show that the subjects' production of stress and intonation items in connected speech differed significantly from the pronunciation norms of native speakers. The analysis of all target problematic areas indicates the subjects' existing morphological knowledge and their insufficient knowledge of the role played by suprasegmental features in effective discourse in English help make L1 interference inevitable. It is suggested that Thai ESL learners be made aware of the primary role of pitch in distinguishing lexical meaning in Thai while signaling discourse meaning in English. Besides classroom lectures activities, other types of communicative activities to enhance learners' abilities not only in perception and auditory discrimination but also in monitoring and evaluating their own performance should be provided so that they can realize the impact that prosodic errors can have on listener comprehension.