Clear or Confusing? Investigating Pronunciation Challenges Among Young EFL Learners in Southern Thailand

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Abstract

This study investigates the pronunciation challenges faced by students at Tessaban 2 Ban Sadao School in Thailand. Utilizing qualitative research methodologies, including pronunciation evaluations and semi-structured interviews with educators, the research aims to prevalent pronunciation mistakes and analyze the instructional strategies employed by teachers. The findings reveal persistent difficulties with specific phonemes such as /r/, /v/, /ʃ/, and final consonant clusters, largely influenced by the learners' first language (L1). Additionally, improper word stress and inappropriate intonation patterns further hinder effective spoken communication. To address these issues, educators employ a range of techniques, including phonetic training through targeted articulation drills that help students practice specific tongue and lip movements, minimal pair exercises that train learners to distinguish between similar-sounding phonemes (e.g., /l/ vs. /r/ as in light vs. right, or /iː/ vs. /ɪ/ as in sheep vs. ship), and imitation practices where students listen to and replicate recordings of native speakers to improve rhythm and intonation. However, limited exposure to authentic English language environments remains a significant barrier to progress. These findings underscore the importance of incorporating more robust pronunciation components into the English language curriculum and enhancing students' access to real-world English usage. By integrating these insights into future teaching approaches, educators can develop more effective and targeted strategies that support clearer pronunciation and stronger communication skills among Thai EFL learners. The study contributes valuable implications for language education policy and pedagogy, particularly in similar EFL contexts.

Keywords: Pronunciation; Barriers; EFL; Southern Thailand.

English is widely recognized as a global medium of communication and is spoken by millions across the world. Kachru's (1992) influential framework classifies global English usage into three concentric circles Inner, Outer, and Expanding based on linguistic history, functional roles, and sociolinguistic context (Aqeel, Waqar, Majeed, & Kiran, 2023). In this model, countries in the Expanding Circle, such as Thailand, use English primarily as a foreign language. Although not embedded in daily life, English still plays a crucial role in global engagement, education, and economic advancement (Phusit & Suksiripakonchai,

2018). In response to these global demands, the Thai government has integrated English into its national education system. According to the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (2008), English is a compulsory subject from primary through secondary school and continues into higher education (Ministry of Education, 2008). The curriculum emphasizes four core language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing with the aim of improving students' communicative competence. Among these, speaking especially pronunciation has gained increased attention due to its role in effective oral communication and academic evaluation.

Pronunciation is widely regarded as a critical component of spoken language proficiency. Cook (2016) defines it as the production of accurate speech sounds through habit formation and practice. Similarly, Yates (2016) highlights that clear pronunciation ensures meaning is conveyed accurately in interaction. Mispronunciations, even by learners with strong grammar or vocabulary, can result in communication breakdowns (Jones, 2017). Furthermore, Shukurdinovna (2024) emphasizes the importance of authentic materials in pronunciation instruction to enhance learners' ability to perceive and produce accurate English sounds. These views affirm that pronunciation is not only central to communication but also essential for academic and professional success in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings.

Despite policy reforms and curricular mandates, Thai learners continue to struggle with English pronunciation. This challenge stems largely from structural differences between Thai and English phonological systems. For instance, Thai lacks final consonant clusters, making it difficult for learners to produce words like "texts" or "twelfths" (Chakma, 2014). Certain English phonemes such as $/v/$, $/\theta/$, and $/\eth/$ also do not exist in Thai, leading students to substitute them with the closest native equivalents (Preechawong, 2021). These issues are often attributed to language transfer, where learners' first language (L1) influences their production of a second language (L2) (Rasheed, 2024). Language transfer is shaped by cognitive processing, phonetic awareness, and the degree of similarity between L1 and L2 systems. Consequently, many Thai learners experience a persistent "pronunciation gap" that hinders oral fluency and intelligibility (Sukpiphat & Prapphal, 2023). These pronunciation challenges are further compounded by limited exposure to English in daily life. Tantiwich and Sinwongsuwat Kornsakt (2021) note that many Thai students—especially in rural areas—lack access to English-language media, native speakers, or authentic communication environments. Additionally, rural schools often face systemic constraints such as a shortage of qualified English teachers, insufficient teaching materials, and a lack of training in phonological instruction (Pourhossein Gilakjani, 2016). While some strategies—such as phonetic transcription, guided oral practice, and peer correction (Kuo, 2021)—have proven effective in improving pronunciation, these are seldom implemented in under-resourced rural schools due to infrastructure and capacity limitations. Although various studies (e.g., Khamkhien, 2010; Wei & Zhou, 2002; Tabula et al., 2020) have documented general pronunciation issues among Thai EFL learners, there remains a significant research gap concerning rural educational contexts. Most existing literature focuses on secondary or urban school environments, where resources and exposure are relatively better. By contrast, rural schools face compounded challenges that remain underexplored in empirical research.

To address this gap, the present study focuses on Tessaban 2 Ban Sadao School, a government-run primary school located in the rural district of Sadao, Songkhla Province, southern Thailand. This school serves a predominantly Thai-speaking population with minimal access to English media or native speaker interaction. The school typifies the challenges faced by rural institutions

in Thailand: limited teaching resources, underqualified English instructors, and the absence of targeted pronunciation instruction. These constraints significantly hinder students' oral proficiency and confidence in using English. The selection of this school was informed by the researcher's direct teaching practicum experience at the institution. Firsthand classroom observations revealed that students frequently mispronounced sounds such as /r/, /v/, /ʃ/, and final consonant clusters. In addition, students demonstrated low confidence in speaking English, often relying on rote memorization rather than developing articulatory understanding. These patterns reflect broader phonological transfer issues but are exacerbated by the school's resource limitations and lack of systematic pronunciation support. The challenges identified at Tessaban 2 Ban Sadao School have broader educational implications. Pronunciation difficulties can hinder students' oral participation, affect their performance in language assessments, and reduce their overall motivation to engage with English. In rural settings where educational disparities are already significant failure to address pronunciation gaps can widen the achievement gap and limit students' academic and career opportunities. Given this context, the present study seeks to examine pronunciation challenges among Thai primary EFL learners in a rural school setting and to explore the strategies employed by educators to address these issues. By grounding the investigation in a real-world educational environment, this research aims to contribute practical insights for improving pronunciation instruction and supporting oral English development in under-resourced Thai schools.

Pronunciation Challenges in EFL Contexts

The acquisition of pronunciation skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings is shaped by multiple linguistic, psychological, and environmental variables. According to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory, particularly the Input Hypothesis

and Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), learners require meaningful input and a low-anxiety environment to acquire accurate pronunciation. Additionally, Ellis (2008) emphasizes that the frequency and quality of phonological input, combined with learners' internal motivation and feedback mechanisms, influence phonological development in a second language. One of the major challenges in pronunciation acquisition is language transfer, particularly the influence of a learner's first language (L1). For Thai learners, phonemic contrasts that do not exist in Thai—such as /v/ vs. /w/, /ʃ/ vs. /s/, and final consonant clusters—often lead to systematic errors (Wei & Zhou, 2002; Saito, 2011). Studies specific to Thai EFL contexts, such as Kanokpermpoon (2007), confirm that Thai students consistently struggle with segmental features like /r/, /l/, and final stops, which are either absent or pronounced differently in Thai phonology. This phenomenon aligns with the concept of negative transfer in SLA theory, where learners apply L1 rules inappropriately in the L2.

Social and Environmental Factors in Thai Context

The acquisition of second language (L2) pronunciation is significantly shaped by social and environmental factors. Cultural identity and learners' attitudes toward English influence how pronunciation is learned and prioritized. Moyer (2013) notes that learners who view English as a central part of their identity are more likely to develop native-like pronunciation. Conversely, strong affiliation with one's native culture can lead to fossilized accents. Thai learners, for instance, often retain strong affiliations with their native cultural identity, which may inhibit the internalization of native-like pronunciation (Wongkhomthong & Sinwongsuwat, 2020). Furthermore, learners' perceptions of English-speaking communities can affect their motivation. Positive attitudes are linked with greater willingness to adopt accurate pronunciation patterns (Derwing & Munro, 2005). These dynamics are particularly evident in Thai EFL classrooms, where learners'

perceptions of English as an elite or foreign language often reduce confidence and hinder risk-taking in oral practice (Sukying, 2021). Gender and ethnic identity also contribute to variability in pronunciation learning. Research indicates that females tend to achieve better results in pronunciation tasks, potentially due to socialization patterns that encourage verbal expressiveness (Hansen Edwards et al., 2020). This is a trend that aligns with findings among Thai students where girls often outperform boys in English oral assessments (Rattanachai & Chusanachoti, 2019).

Socioeconomic Status and Educational Background

Socioeconomic status (SES) greatly impacts learners' access to pronunciation learning opportunities. Elanthiraiyan and Priyanath (2023) show that students from higher SES backgrounds benefit from better instructional resources, exposure to native input, and extracurricular support. In contrast, learners from lower SES backgrounds especially in rural Thailand often face insufficient access to quality language input. In Sadao District, for example, many schools face resource limitations that prevent consistent access to trained English teachers and pronunciation software. Phusit and Suksiripakonchai (2018) argue that in many rural Thai schools, language curricula emphasize grammar and reading over oral skills. Additionally, exposure to regional dialects may interfere with the acquisition of standard English pronunciation. SLA theory emphasizes that reduced access to rich language input in early stages can lead to persistent pronunciation errors, a pattern commonly observed in under-resourced Thai classrooms.

Psychological and Emotional Factors Affecting Thai Learners

Psychological factors such as anxiety and motivation are also critical in pronunciation learning. According to the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982),

high levels of anxiety can prevent learners from effectively processing and internalizing language input. Research by Liu and Huang (2011) and Xiong & Mohd Yasin (2024) supports this, showing that pronunciation anxiety reduces willingness to speak and leads to less improvement over time. Among Thai learners, fear of making mistakes in pronunciation often leads to classroom silence and avoidance of speaking tasks (Sukying, 2021). Motivation is another central component in SLA, particularly in the Socio-Affective Model of language learning. Learners with strong instrumental or integrative motivation are more likely to engage in activities that improve pronunciation. For example, Thai students who aim for international study or employment often place greater emphasis on acquiring clear and accurate speech. In contrast, learners without a clear purpose for English communication may not invest the necessary effort.

Method

This study utilized a qualitative research design to explore English pronunciation challenges and instructional strategies at Tessaban 2 Ban Sadao School. Qualitative methodology was chosen due to its capacity to capture the nuanced, context-specific experiences of both learners and educators. As Merriam and Tisdell (2015) explain, qualitative research seeks to understand how individuals interpret their experiences, making it especially suitable for examining pronunciation difficulties—an area influenced not only by linguistic factors but also by psychological, social, and contextual dynamics. In pronunciation studies, qualitative methods such as interviews and classroom-based assessments are particularly effective for revealing learners' difficulties, teachers' perceptions, and the instructional practices used to address these issues.

Data were collected through pronunciation assessments and semi-structured interviews, allowing for a

triangulated understanding of both the linguistic and pedagogical dimensions of the issue. The pronunciation assessments, adapted from Cresswell's (2012) evaluation framework, focused on vowel and consonant articulation, word stress, and sentence intonation key problem areas for Thai EFL learners. The results offered an objective overview of students' phonological abilities and revealed systematic pronunciation errors. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two experienced English teachers (referred to as R1 and R2), both of whom had several years of teaching experience at the school. These interviews explored educators' observations of student challenges and the pedagogical strategies they used in response. Following Sugiyono (2013), the semi-structured format allowed for focused yet flexible conversations, enabling the researcher to probe into specific themes relevant to the research questions while allowing respondents to elaborate on their experiences.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), to identify recurring patterns in both students' errors and teachers' perspectives. Interview transcripts were coded manually through an iterative process of reading, categorizing, and refining emerging themes. Themes were organized into categories such as "phonemic difficulties," "influence of L1," "instructional constraints," and "coping strategies." To ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis, peer debriefing and member checking were applied. Teacher participants reviewed their transcripts for accuracy, and an external colleague reviewed the coding to ensure consistency and reduce researcher bias. For the pronunciation assessment, a rubric-based scoring system was used to evaluate the clarity and accuracy of students' speech in relation to standard English pronunciation. Errors were classified based on segmental (e.g., consonant/vowel misarticulations)

and suprasegmental (e.g., stress, intonation) features. These data were then compared across students to identify common trends.

Participants

The participants included primary-level students and two English teachers at Tessaban 2 Ban Sadao School. The student participants varied in age and English proficiency, reflecting the general demographic composition of the school. While the sample was limited, it was intentionally selected to provide focused insights into learners from a rural Thai context. The small sample size allowed for in-depth, individualized assessment and analysis, which is consistent with the goals of qualitative research. The teachers (R1 and R2) were selected based on their active roles in teaching English pronunciation and their familiarity with the students' learning challenges. Their inclusion was essential for understanding instructional practices and contextual barriers specific to this school. Although the small sample limits generalizability, the data offer rich, context-specific insights relevant to rural EFL education in Thailand.

This study acknowledges certain limitations. The small sample size, while appropriate for qualitative inquiry, may not represent the full diversity of Thai EFL learners. Additionally, data were collected from a single school, which limits the transferability of the findings to other contexts. However, the purpose of this study is not generalization but rather to provide a detailed, context-driven understanding of pronunciation challenges and teaching strategies within a specific rural setting. Future research with larger and more diverse samples could expand on these findings.

Table 1. Overview of Research Participants

Partici-pant	Country	School Level	Experiece
R1	Thailand	Junior High School	12 Years
R2	Thailand	Junior High School	28 years

The study involved two English teachers at Tessaban 2 Ban Sadao School who provided key insights into the pronunciation challenges faced by their students. These participants were selected based on their direct experience in teaching English at the junior high school level and their familiarity with students' language development.

Table 1 provides an overview of the participants' professional backgrounds. Both teachers, referred to as R1 and R2, are native Thai speakers with 12 and 28 years of teaching experience respectively. Their extensive experience in the Thai EFL context made their perspectives particularly valuable for understanding how pronunciation difficulties manifest in classroom settings and how they are addressed pedagogically.

Result

Factors Affecting Students English Pronunciation Issues

The students' pronunciation was evaluated by a qualified English teacher through structured pronunciation assessments. The analysis revealed consistent patterns of mispronunciation influenced by the phonological structure of the Thai language. One significant issue is the substitution or omission of English sounds that do not exist in Thai. According to Teacher S, the Thai language lacks a distinct /r/ sound as in English. As a result, students often substitute /r/ with /l/. For instance, the word rainy is pronounced as lainy. Similarly, in Thai phonology, the letter 'ล' (lo-ling) represents /l/ and 'ร' (row-reu) approximates /r/, but the distinction is not phonetically emphasized in everyday use.

These patterns are summarized in Table 2, which illustrates the common sound changes observed among students. The /r/ phoneme was the most challenging, with 13 out of 15 students substituting it with /l/, consistent with the absence of the English /r/ sound in Thai phonology. Similarly, 11 students substituted /v/ with /w/, reflecting a common Thai mispronunciation pattern.

The data confirm that most errors stemmed from first language interference. Both R1 and R2 noted that Thai lacks several English consonants and that students frequently replace these unfamiliar sounds with the nearest Thai equivalent. For instance, fish was often pronounced as fit, indicating a substitution of /ʃ/ with /t/, and print was shortened to pin, omitting the final consonant cluster. Beyond segmental errors, both teachers reported issues with word and sentence stress. R1 shared that students frequently applied equal stress across all words, making their speech sound flat and unnatural. She gave the example of the word record, where students were unable to distinguish between the noun ('RE-cord') and the verb ('re-CORD'), affecting both pronunciation and comprehension.

R2 emphasized that limited exposure to English outside the classroom was a major factor. Students primarily spoke Thai at home and with peers, resulting in little opportunity for oral practice. This was compounded by the fact that many English teachers, including herself, were also native Thai speakers and

Table 2. Pronunciation Issues Among Thai Students for Select English Phonemes

No	Word	Correct Pronunciation	Student Pronunciation	Phoneme Affected	Number of Students(N=15)
1	Rainy	/ˈreɪni/	/leɪni/	/r/ → /l/	13 students
2	Fish	/fɪʃ/	/fɪt/	/ʃ/ → /t/	11 students
3	Seven	/ˈsɛvən/	/ˈsɛwən/	/v/ → /w/	9 student
4	Print	/prɪnt/	/pɪn/	Cluster /nt/	10 student
5	Tell	/tɛl/	/tew/	/l/ → gliding	12 student

might unintentionally reinforce incorrect pronunciation when modeling words. Both teachers highlighted that low student confidence further exacerbated these issues. Less confident students often avoided speaking or engaging in oral activities, reducing the amount of corrective feedback they received. Strategies for Addressing Challenges in English Pronunciation

To address the identified pronunciation difficulties, participating teachers R1 and R2 implemented a range of instructional strategies tailored to students' needs. These strategies focused on enhancing phonetic awareness, providing repetitive practice, and building students' confidence.

Phonetic Modeling and Repetitive Practice

Both teachers emphasized the importance of clear pronunciation modeling and consistent repetitive practice. R1 reported frequently employing repetition exercises, particularly for words containing phonemes challenging for students, such as /r/, /v/, and /ʃ/. For instance, students were asked to repeat words like "river," "very," and "ship" multiple times after listening to the teacher's pronunciation. This approach aimed to train students' articulatory muscles and familiarize them with sounds unfamiliar in their native language.

R1 explained: "I model the correct pronunciation many times, then have students repeat after me in small groups and individually. It helps them get used to the sound and try to match it."

This approach aligns with Brown's (2007) assertion that engaging with native speaker models and actively imitating their speech patterns encompassing stress, intonation, and rhythm constitutes one of the most effective methods for developing pronunciation skills. Such practices enable learners to internalize the prosodic features of English, thereby enhancing their overall communicative competence.

Use of Visual and Auditory Aids

R2 integrated multimedia resources such as pronunciation videos, phonetic applications, and visual mouth diagrams to demonstrate tongue and lip positions when articulating specific sounds. These aids assisted students in understanding the physical production of English sounds, particularly those absent in Thai.

She stated: "I show students videos and pictures of how to pronounce difficult sounds like /θ/ and /ð/. Many students said it helped them understand how to move their mouth correctly."

Stress and Intonation Practice

To tackle issues related to stress and rhythm, both teachers employed sentence-level activities emphasizing natural speech patterns. R1 introduced simple dialogues and chants to highlight stressed syllables and improve rhythm. "I use short conversations where I exaggerate stress and intonation. Students repeat the lines and try to match the rhythm," she noted.

However, both teachers acknowledged that students' difficulties in mastering stress and intonation were closely linked to their limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Since most students primarily hear and use Thai in daily life, they lack regular input of natural English rhythm and intonation. Consequently, they tend to apply Thai prosodic patterns to English, leading to monotonous speech and misplaced stress. This indicates a direct relationship between limited exposure and prosodic challenges.

Confidence-Building Activities

Recognizing the role of affective factors, R2 incorporated games, group work, and pair-speaking activities into lessons to reduce anxiety and create a safe space for experimentation. Peer feedback was also encouraged to foster collaborative learning. "Some students are too shy to speak alone, so I let them practice with partners. They feel

safer and gradually become more confident," she observed.

This lack of confidence further exacerbates pronunciation challenges, especially when students are reluctant to speak or mimic unfamiliar sounds. It limits their opportunities to practice suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation, illustrating the interconnectedness of psychological and linguistic challenges.

First Language Awareness and Contrastive Analysis

Both R1 and R2 occasionally highlighted differences between English and Thai sounds to raise phonological awareness. This contrastive approach helped students consciously recognize where substitutions occurred and understand the reasons behind them. R2 mentioned: "Sometimes I show them how Thai sounds are different from English. It makes them more aware of their mistakes." By drawing attention to L1–L2 differences, the teachers assisted students in understanding the systemic sources of their pronunciation errors, enabling more targeted correction and practice. This contrastive strategy complemented phonetic modeling, reinforcing learning from multiple perspectives.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the significant challenges Thai students face in acquiring English pronunciation, primarily due to the influence of their native language. A prominent issue is the difficulty in articulating English sounds absent in Thai, notably the /r/ sound. Students often substitute /r/ with /l/, leading to pronunciations like "lainy" for "rainy" and "sewen" for "seven." This substitution aligns with previous researches indicating that Thai learners commonly replace /r/ with /l/, supporting the interpretation of these findings (Kanokpermpoon, 2007; Sridhanyarat, 2017) due to the absence of the /r/ phoneme in Thai. Similarly, the mispronunciation of /ʃ/ as /t/ in words like "fish" reflects the phonetic disparities

between English and Thai. These phonetic challenges are consistent with prior studies highlighting that Thai learner often struggle with English consonant sounds not present in their native language, thus reinforcing the observed patterns in this study (Wei & Zhou, 2002; Chakma, 2014; Rasheed, 2024).

Beyond segmental issues, both teachers observed that students exhibit difficulties with word and sentence stress. Students tend to apply equal emphasis across all words, disrupting the natural rhythm of English speech. This is particularly evident in differentiating between noun and verb forms, such as "record," where stress placement alters meaning. These findings are consistent with established research that highlights prosodic interference as a common issue among Thai EFL learners (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Sukpiphat & Prapphal, 2023; Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2018). The tendency to generalize stress patterns may stem from the prosodic characteristics of Thai, which employs a simpler stress system compared to English. This observation echoes findings from prior studies that explore contrasts in prosodic features between Thai and English.

The challenges of stress and intonation are further compounded by limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Both R1 and R2 noted that students primarily use Thai in daily communication, resulting in minimal opportunities to practice English pronunciation in authentic contexts. This interpretation is supported by previous studies which emphasize the critical role of authentic language exposure in developing prosodic competence (Gilakjani, 2012; Tantiwich & Sinwongsuwat, 2021; Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). This lack of exposure hinders the internalization of correct stress and intonation patterns, contributing to monotonous speech and misplaced stress.

Pronunciation acquisition in a second language is influenced by various socio-linguistic factors. Age is a significant factor; younger learners often achieve more native-like pronunciation. This phenomenon has

been documented in SLA literature that links age with pronunciation attainment (Munro & Mann, 2005; Ozfidan & Burlbaw, 2019). However, instructional approaches must be tailored to suit different age groups. Another critical factor is the limited exposure to English outside the classroom. As R1 mentioned, students' primary use of Thai at home and in social settings limits their opportunities to practice English pronunciation in real-life contexts. This explanation is corroborated by studies emphasizing the importance of meaningful exposure to target language input. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of immersion in enhancing pronunciation abilities. However, research focusing on pronunciation improvements within academic immersion settings remains limited. One study examining pronunciation modifications among ESL students in an Intensive English Program found that higher proficiency learners exhibited greater improvements in fluency and prominence, while changes in segmental aspects were minimal. These findings shed light on the challenges discussed in this study and align with proficiency-based interpretations of SLA outcomes.

Student confidence plays a pivotal role in developing pronunciation skills. Both R1 and R2 observed that students with higher confidence levels are more likely to participate in speaking activities, accept corrective feedback, and improve their pronunciation. The influence of confidence has been widely acknowledged in pronunciation research as a key affective factor influencing oral performance (Moyer, 2013; Karmida et al., 2024; Liu & Huang, 2011). Pronunciation drills, particularly for challenging sounds like /θ/ and /ð/, are commonly used to practice phonemes absent in Thai. This approach is backed by phonetics research emphasizing the value of focused articulation exercises for unfamiliar phonemes.

Conversely, students with lower confidence often avoid speaking opportunities,

limiting their practice and hindering progress in pronunciation. These findings are in agreement with previous research identifying psychological barriers such as anxiety and low motivation as detrimental to speaking development (Khamkhien, 2010; Xiong & Mohd Yasin, 2024). Research indicates that factors such as insufficient practice, low motivation, limited exposure to English, and native language interference adversely affect speaking proficiency.

To address these challenges, both educators have implemented various strategies to assist students in improving their English pronunciation. Techniques such as phonetic training, listening and imitation exercises, and minimal pair drills have proven effective in helping students differentiate sounds not present in Thai. These strategies are supported by empirical studies that highlight the effectiveness of explicit phonological instruction (Felker et al., 2023; Kuo, 2021). R1 has utilized pronunciation games and video resources, while R2 has incorporated voice recordings for self-assessment, engaging students and providing immediate feedback on their progress.

Furthermore, role-playing and conversation simulations allow students to practice pronunciation in practical scenarios, making learning more applicable and meaningful. Despite these initiatives, limited exposure to English outside the classroom remains a significant challenge. To mitigate this, both teachers advocate for additional resources, such as pronunciation-focused applications or games, and increased administrative support to allocate more time for pronunciation practice within the curriculum. These recommendations are aligned with pedagogical suggestions from recent literature on improving pronunciation through technology-enhanced and interactive methods.

Conclusion

The pronunciation challenges

experienced by students at Tessaban 2 Bansadao School are multifaceted, stemming from factors such as the influence of the Thai language, limited exposure to English, difficulties with stress and intonation, and varying levels of student confidence. To address these issues, teachers have implemented targeted strategies including phonetic training, minimal pair exercises, role-playing, and the integration of technology. These approaches have been effective in enhancing students' pronunciation skills. To further improve pronunciation instruction, educators should prioritize activities that focus on suprasegmental features, such as stress and intonation patterns, which are often challenging for Thai learners due to the tonal nature of their native language. Incorporating multimedia tools, such as augmented reality (AR) applications and interactive pronunciation software, can provide students with engaging and immediate feedback, facilitating better learning outcomes. For instance, AR-based systems have shown promise in teaching English phonetics to young learners by enhancing their engagement and understanding of pronunciation through interactive 3D models and real-time feedback Future research should consider expanding the sample size to include a more diverse student population, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of pronunciation difficulties across different regions and educational contexts. Additionally, longitudinal studies examining the long-term effectiveness of specific pronunciation strategies would provide valuable insights into their sustained impact on learners' proficiency. Such studies could explore how consistent exposure to pronunciation-focused activities influences students' pronunciation development over time .

The findings of this study have significant implications for educational policy and curriculum development in Thailand. By highlighting the specific pronunciation challenges faced by Thai students, educators and policymakers can design targeted interventions and allocate resources effectively. Integrating

pronunciation-focused activities into the national English curriculum and providing ongoing professional development for teachers will be crucial steps in enhancing English language education and ensuring students achieve greater fluency and intelligibility in their spoken English. Moreover, adopting innovative technologies like AR in language instruction can modernize teaching approaches and better cater to the learning needs of students in the digital age.

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