

A STUDY OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF THAI STUDENTS
IN PRONOUNCING ENGLISH CONSONANTS

by 45

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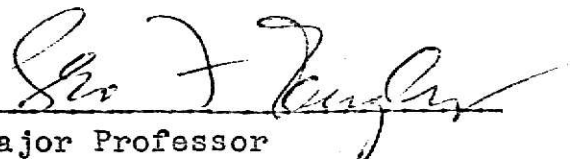
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the field of teaching foreign languages, what had been needed for centuries was a new method which would yield more effective results among language students. In the early part of the twentieth century, a new field of linguistic science called descriptive linguistics or structural linguistics began to develop, and its findings have contributed greatly to the development of a modern approach to language learning. Two of the pioneers in this area of study were Leonard Bloomfield and Charles C. Fries.¹

For teaching English to foreigners, the new approach was aimed at aural-oral mastery of the language and it was accompanied by adequate teaching materials which were prepared after a descriptive linguistic analysis.² Development in the field of testing and increased interest in laboratories for language practice has helped to further accomplish the central linguistic objectives.³

A student cannot say that he has really mastered a language unless he can control its phonological, morphological, and syntactical structures orally as well as in their written form. Students who first learn these structural systems orally seem to progress much more rapidly in the writing and reading of the language than those who attempt to learn to read and write without the benefit of learning the structures orally.⁴

When all the phonemes have been learned, and they can be arranged in order as words, and when the basic grammatical patterns have been understood, the student can say that he has learned the language if he has enough vocabulary to operate the sound and grammatical systems.⁵

Therefore analysis of the target language is an important activity for a foreign language teacher. He also must know the linguistic facts of the native tongue of his students. Through the contrastive study of the structural features of the target and the native languages the teacher will know better what the real learning problems are and can better provide for teaching them. He will gain an insight into the linguistic patterns involved that cannot be achieved otherwise.⁶ As for the student, he will be informed at the outset that he should be aware of the differences between the two languages and should try to form new language habits, keeping his own in the background, not as an interference, but as a help in learning the new language.

In teaching English to Thai speakers, consequently, there should be a complete analysis of both Thai and English to see where the similarities and discrepancies lie, if instruction in English is to be made to fit Thai, in order to bring effective results.⁷

"Foreign language teaching is always a matter of teaching a specific foreign language to students with a specific native language background."⁸

Statement of the Problem

Difficulty in learning English is complicated by the learner already having one set of pronunciation habits and having to learn