



P-ISSN 2355-2794
E-ISSN 2461-0275

Unlocking Potential: Integrating Pronunciation into Business Instruction to Inspire Students and Strengthen Content Teachers

Budsaba Kanoksilapatham^{1,2*}
Chongrug Pariwatnanont³

¹Department of Business and Language Management, Faculty of Management Science, Silpakorn University, Phetchaburi 76120, THAILAND

²Academy of Arts, Royal Society of Thailand, Bangkok 10300, THAILAND

³Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Technology, Silpakorn University, Nakhon Pathom 73000, THAILAND

Abstract

Integrating content and language instruction has gained popularity worldwide because it allows students to improve their content knowledge while concurrently honing their language skills. Although this approach seems beneficial in principle, it can be quite demanding, particularly on the content teachers' part in practice. This study aims to examine the effect of language instruction integrated into a content class at a university in Thailand. Based on a content teacher's voluntary participation, a class of business students (N=52) were exposed to 5-8 minutes of English word stress instruction in eight business lessons spanning over the entire course. A similar 40 business words for the pretest and posttest were administered at the beginning and toward the end of the course. Subsequently, a focus group discussion of six students was conducted to elicit the students' attitudes toward such integrated instruction. The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data shows that integrating pronunciation instruction with content instruction can be beneficial. Cognitively, the students' word stress placement skills have substantially improved, as determined by a high value of the t-test. Psychologically, the students had positive attitudes, greater motivation to learn English, higher engagement in the lessons, and more confidence in speaking English. Overall, the study demonstrates that pronunciation instruction minimally integrated with

* Corresponding author, email: kanoksib@hotmail.com

Citation in APA style: Kanoksilapatham, B., & Pariwatnanont, C. (2024). Unlocking potential: Integrating pronunciation into business instruction to inspire students and strengthen content teachers. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 11(2), 710-727.

Received October 16, 2023; Revised December 5, 2023; Accepted April 15, 2024; Published Online May 31, 2024

<https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v11i2.34767>

content instruction could lead to immense pronunciation success. The study has important implications for English language educators who seek to effectively integrate pronunciation instruction into their content instruction programs, benefiting both students and content teachers.

Keywords: Business words, intelligibility, language and content integrated instruction, pronunciation, word stress.

1. INTRODUCTION

Within the Thai context, proficiency in the English language is undeniably a focal point, drawing substantial attention from both the public and private sectors (Chaisuriya & Sun-Young, 2019). Proficiency in English confers advantages, manifesting in elevated academic achievements and heightened prospects for employment success and performance in the workplace. This imperative for English proficiency is evident in the proliferation of private English language schools across Thailand (Saengboon, 2019), underscoring the recognition of the multifaceted impact of English language education socially, economically, and educationally.

Diligent efforts have been exerted to enhance English education in Thailand, yet regrettably, these endeavors have yielded limited success (Boonraksa & Naisena, 2022; Tantiwich & Sinwongsuwat, 2021; Wongsu & Son, 2022). A poignant illustration of this shortfall is reflected in the recent English proficiency scores reported by EF or Education First (2023). Based on the scores of over a million test takers from 113 countries, Thailand was classified as a nation with ‘very low’ English proficiency. This disheartening ranking has persisted since 2011, with only two years, 2017 and 2018, registering as ‘low’ (Education First, 2023; Savski, 2023). Consequently, the pressing need to rectify this situation has emerged as one of the most urgent national priorities.

The ability to communicate proficiently in English has assumed paramount importance, particularly in our current globalized milieu. This proficiency holds even greater significance in the realm of business, an inherently international and competitive domain. Thus, business communication, in its various contexts, is predominantly conducted in English. When it comes to oral communication, many non-native speakers of English grapple with English pronunciation, a challenge that impedes not only their own effectiveness in communication but also the intelligibility of their interlocutors, referencing “the understanding of a spoken message” (Levis, 2018, p. 20). Elements linked to intelligibility at the word level encompass, among others, the precise production of consonant and vowel sounds and the accurate placement of word stress (Levis, 2018).

Derwing and Munro (2015) underscored the pivotal role of pronunciation in effectively conveying ideas and meanings. Moreover, an accumulating body of research evidence posits that pronunciation instruction can enhance students’ proficiency in speaking and overall language competence and communicative abilities (Levis, 2018; Rahbar et al., 2020; Saito, 2021). Contrary to the observations of the aforementioned experts, pronunciation appears to be a skill that is frequently marginalized or undervalued within the context of English teaching in Thailand. Thai students were expected to acquire such pronunciation knowledge and skills through

exposure to English teachers' linguistic input across the spectrum of four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

English pronunciation encompasses several components, including the accurate pronunciation of consonant and vowel sounds, correct placement of stress on syllables, and conveying emotions through appropriate intonation patterns. Numerous scholars have underscored the significance of stress placement in relation to intelligibility (Galante & Piccardo, 2022; Pommée et al., 2022; Yenkimaleki & van Heuven, 2021). For instance, Hahn (2004) empirically investigated American undergraduate students' reactions to three versions of an international teaching assistant's speech: one with correct stress placement, one with incorrect stress placement, and one without stress placement. The undergraduates exhibited significantly higher satisfaction and rated the speech with correct stress placement much more favorably than the other two versions. These findings attest to the potential deleterious impact of incorrect word stress placement on comprehension.

To delve further into the issue of English stress placement within the Thai context, it becomes evident that Thai English teachers encounter challenges with pronunciation. In Kanoksilapatham's (2014) research on elementary English teachers (n=147), they undertook a stress placement test featuring 50 words directly from the textbooks they employed for their classes. The teachers' limited exposure to native speakers, lack of opportunities to refine their pronunciation, and suboptimal language input from their prior English instructors were contributing factors to this uncomfortable situation and the teachers' disappointing test results. This study also raises the possibility that overreliance on Thai instructors of English as the sole source for guiding English pronunciation instruction in Thailand may carry considerable risk, as they may not serve as ideal pronunciation role models. If English teachers in Thailand grapple with such challenges, their students are bound to face similar difficulties. This conjecture, in some way, supports Golombek and Jordan's (2005) observation concerning Taiwanese English pronunciation teachers. Due to their perceived inadequacy as pronunciation role models, these teachers struggled with uncertainty regarding whether or not to prioritize pronunciation instruction.

Recent research has advocated for the integration of language instruction into content-based teaching, commonly known as content and language integrated learning or CLIL (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2016). The success of this CLIL approach has been reported across various disciplines and contexts, including Thai university students in engineering (Kanoksilapatham & Khamkhien, 2022), Greek elementary students in history (Griva & Kasvikis, 2014), and elementary students in science in Spain (Fernández-Sanjurjo et al., 2019). In essence, these studies have demonstrated that CLIL allows students to enhance their knowledge of content subjects while concurrently developing language proficiency.

Despite CLIL's success in diverse contexts, content courses, educational levels, and language skills, as outlined above, research on how to effectively integrate pronunciation remains notably limited. That is, several recent CLIL studies focus on holistic speaking skills (e.g., Gálvez Gómez, 2021; Sato & Hemmi, 2022; Yaniafari & Rihardini, 2021), and very few studies focus specifically on pronunciation. One of the recent CLIL studies that taps into a specific pronunciation aspect in English was conducted by Lacabex and Gallardo-del-Puerto (2020). The study examined how explicit phonetic instruction and implicit exposure to native material affected CLIL students' phonological awareness. Four intact CLIL groups received a perception task

immediately before and after a one-month intervention period, during which two groups received explicit instruction on the frequency of reduced versus full vowels in English multisyllabic words, and another group was exposed to native input during CLIL instruction. The intervention was specifically designed to target the English schwa in unstressed syllables of content words. As a control group, a fourth CLIL group received neither explicit instruction nor feedback from the native teacher. In the pretest or before the intervention, all four groups tended to rate both schwa and full vowels as correct, suggesting that they were not aware of this vowel reduction in unstressed syllables of English. After an intervention period of one month, the three experimental groups showed a considerable improvement in the posttest in identifying whole vowels as erroneous. The groups that received explicit training made more improvements than the group that was implicitly exposed to native input.

Given the pivotal role played by word stress and how it is associated with intelligibility loss if word stress errors occur (Ghosh & Levis, 2021), it is intriguing to ascertain whether the CLIL instructional approach could be aptly applied to the integration of pronunciation skills, particularly word stress placement. The present study, contextualized within a business content course for Thai fourth-year university students, was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the students' learning outcomes after being exposed to English pronunciation instruction integrated into content instruction?
2. What are the students' attitudes toward integrated instruction?

The findings contribute to a better understanding of how pronunciation instruction can be effectively integrated into content classes, augmenting both pronunciation skills and content knowledge. Furthermore, this study serves as a guide for teachers considering the adoption of this approach in their instruction and offers several implications for other pedagogical contexts.

2. METHODS

This study is a mixed method research in nature, consisting of a quantitative pretest and posttest and procedures followed by a focus group discussion that yields qualitative data. The following sections present the methodological details of different aspects of the study, including certain relevant justifications that determined the design of this study.

2.1 Participants and Context

This study was conducted in a medium-sized public university in central Thailand. Although the study details were shared with multiple business faculty members, only one agreed to participate. The participant, a content teacher, was a 51-year-old male business teacher holding bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from Thailand. Despite his extensive experience in English-speaking academic settings, he delivered all instructions in Thai. The language teacher, also the first author, is nationally recognized as a pronunciation expert. During the study, the content teacher taught the compulsory course, Strategic Management for Business, to 52 fourth-year students. They were between the ages of 21 to 23. The choice of more advanced business students for word stress placement instruction is based on several

considerations. These students, having prior exposure to business jargon, are somewhat familiar with core terms and their meanings. Therefore, integrating pronunciation instruction for these words is less cognitively overwhelming. Additionally, advanced students are often focused on content classes, potentially neglecting language proficiency. Pronunciation instruction offers them the chance to enhance their intelligible speaking skills, which is particularly valuable for future employment.

In various disciplines, technical jargon is widely used, especially in business, to facilitate communication and reduce miscommunication (Anamaria-Mirabela & Monica-Ariana, 2014). Thai speakers often pronounce these jargon terms with influence from their native language, particularly in stress placement—a key focus of this study. For instance, English words like ‘corporate’ and ‘economy’ are stressed on the first and second syllables, respectively, whereas Thai speakers typically stress the last syllable. Improving stress placement skills among Thai business students is crucial due to the prevalence of technical jargon in the international business arena, benefiting both academic and professional contexts.

2.2 Procedures

Teaching pronunciation alongside a content course poses challenges, with commonly cited barriers including the need for specialized training and time constraints (Darcy, 2018; Huensch, 2019). Achieving a balance between content and language development, as recommended by Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), is considered difficult. Scholars propose a systematic approach to pronunciation integration (Darcy, 2018; Levis, 2018; McGregor & Reed, 2018). Additionally, Kanoksilapatham and Khamkhien’s study (2022) underscores the success of integrated instruction through close collaboration and multiple coaching sessions between content and language teachers. Consequently, the outlined procedures emphasize this collaborative approach.

2.2.1 Instrument development

Two primary instruments were developed for instructional and evaluative purposes: a word list and a set of questions for focus group discussions. As far as the word list is concerned, the instruction, guided by consultations with the content teacher, spanned eight class sessions, dedicating 5-8 minutes at the end of each lesson for pronunciation instruction, covering five business words. Initially, the content teacher compiled a set of 40 high-frequency business words, and subsequently, the list was reviewed by the language teacher. At this stage, several words that the content teacher had chosen were removed and replaced for a variety of reasons. As an illustration, several English monosyllabic words (like ‘stock’) were mistakenly considered multisyllabic by the content teacher. Moreover, several words suggested by the content teacher are multisyllabic, ending with the suffix -ing (such as ‘controlling’ and ‘leading’), or words that have more than one stress pattern due to the English variety (e.g., ‘resource’ in British English and American English). Alternatively, it appears that a set of words on the list generated by the content teacher (e.g., ‘efficient-efficiency-effectiveness’ and ‘economy-economic’, ‘economics-economical’) share the same origin. In this instance, the content teacher was asked to

select only one from the set that he believed would be most pertinent to his lessons. Overall, in response to the language teacher's feedback, several rounds of revising the word list were conducted by the content teacher.

At this juncture, to ensure that the business word list originally generated by the content teacher and subsequently approved by the language teacher is valid and accurately represents high-frequency words in business, a content teacher's colleague who teaches business at the same university was invited. This specific colleague, who holds a doctorate in business administration from Thailand, was actually contacted earlier to take part in this research. He rejected, nevertheless, citing a number of factors, such as his hectic schedule and his insecurity over his English pronunciation. Despite having taught business courses longer than the content teacher, he never utilized the English language in the classroom. He was asked to examine the provided word list as part of this validation procedure and assess if the word list contained high-frequency words in business. The list was unquestionably approved.

The final and validated word list, focusing on core business jargon, is provided in the appendix. From this list, 40 objective test items (40 points, 1 point each) were generated and re-sequenced alphabetically. To aid word stress identification, dots separating individual syllables were inserted, and the number of syllables was provided in parentheses. For instance, the word 'analysis' (item 1) is presented as a.na.ly.sis (4). The words in the test range from 2 to 6 syllables, with no attempt made to control the number of syllables. Table 1 illustrates the tested words and their corresponding answers.

Table 1. Word stress test items (n=40).

No.	Word Tested	Answer	No.	Word Tested	Answer
1	a.na.ly.sis (4)	2	21	func.tion.al (3)	1
2	bu.si.ness (3)	1	22	ge.ne.rate (3)	1
3	ca.pa.bi.li.ty (5)	3	23	go.vern.ment (3)	1
4	com.pe.ti.tive (4)	2	24	im.ple.men.ta.tion (5)	4
5	com.mer.cial (3)	2	25	in.ter.nal (3)	2
6	com.pa.ri.son (4)	2	26	lea.der.ship (3)	1
7	con.cen.trate (3)	1	27	lo.gis.tics (3)	2
8	co.o.pe.ra.tive (5)	2	28	ma.trix (2)	1
9	cor.po.rate (3)	1	29	mea.sure.ment (4)	1
10	cus.to.mer (3)	1	30	o.pe.ra.tion (4)	3
11	de.ter.mine (3)	2	31	op.por.tu.ni.ty (5)	3
12	de.ve.lop.ment (4)	2	32	or.ga.ni.za.tion (5)	4
13	dif.fe.ren.ti.a.tion (6)	5	33	per.for.mance (3)	2
14	di.rec.tion (3)	2	34	pro.cure.ment (3)	2
15	di.ver.si.fi.ca.tion (6)	5	35	pro.duc.tion (3)	2
16	e.co.no.my (4)	2	36	si.tu.a.tion (4)	3
17	en.vi.ron.ment (4)	2	37	sum.ma.ry (3)	1
18	e.va.lu.a.tion (5)	4	38	sus.tain.a.bi.li.ty (6)	4
19	ex.ter.nal (3)	2	39	tech.no.lo.gy (4)	2
20	for.mu.la.tion (4)	3	40	tran.sfor.ma.tion (4)	3

The second instrument consists of six open-ended questions for focus group discussion, delving into the students' attitudes toward integrated instruction. The questions are as follows:

1. What do you think of the role of English in your future career or further studies, especially in the field of business?

2. What do you think of the benefits of accurate English pronunciation in the field of business?
3. What are some of the impacts of integrated instruction on you?
4. What do you think about how the class was organized in general?
5. What do you think about classroom activities focusing on pronunciation integration?
6. What suggestions do you have to make teaching more interesting in the future?

These questions were not necessarily sequenced or addressed in this order, allowing for flexibility and overlapping depending on the input provided by the focus group participants.

2.2.2 Systematic collaboration between the content and language teachers

The following procedures foster collaboration between the content and language teachers: content teacher preparation, pretest administration, integrated instruction delivery, posttest administration, focus group discussion, and data analysis.

a. Content teacher preparation

The content teacher, acknowledging the importance of English pronunciation in the business world, expressed concerns about his limited English competence, lack of experience in English lectures, and time constraints for covering course materials. To address these concerns, weekly coaching sessions on stress placement for five words were held 2 to 3 days before each class. No special preparation was required from the content teacher. The language teacher conducted sessions focusing on stress placement, providing feedback using strategies such as enhanced visual and acoustic input and corrective feedback. The content teacher was also directed to use digital tools like online dictionaries to visualize stress placement. Sessions continued until the content teacher could confidently pronounce the target words. Initially lasting about 30 minutes, sessions became more efficient over time as the content teacher gained a clearer understanding of stress placement. The content teacher was encouraged to seek assistance whenever needed.

b. Pretest administration

At the beginning of the first integrated instruction, the Google form pretest was implemented. During the test, no consultation or use of digital devices, including online dictionaries, was allowed. It took about 20 minutes for the students to complete. The following example was presented to the students, illustrating how the task was executed.

- ap.ple (2 syllables) There are thus two possible choices: either the first or the second syllable. → The stress is on the **first** syllable.

c. Integrated instruction delivery

The language teacher offered help with classroom management, but the content teacher preferred to handle the pronunciation integration himself so as not to create discomfort for the students. The content teacher was encouraged to utter the target

words with accurate stress placement during the content lecture. The last 5-8 minutes reserved for pronunciation instruction were at the content teacher's discretion regarding the pronunciation strategies implemented.

d. Posttest administration

With the completion of the eight-week integrated instruction, the same pretest/posttest was implemented. It took about 15 minutes to complete the test. One student was absent, leaving 52 students taking the posttest.

e. Focus group discussion

After the semester concluded, the content teacher randomly sampled six students ([S1] to [S6]; 2 males and 4 females) based on their availability for the focus group discussion conducted in Thai, aiming to examine their attitudes or feelings about this integrated instruction. A recording was made while the content teacher was busy delegating questions.

2.3 Data Analysis

For the first objective, pretest and posttest scores were statistically analyzed using a t-test to identify significant differences in pronunciation knowledge. The aim was to quantitatively assess the outcome of pronunciation teaching on students' scores. Additionally, Cohen's d was employed to measure the effect size and offer practical significance context by gauging the magnitude of the difference between mean scores on the two tests. For the second objective, qualitative data collected from the focus group discussion were analyzed by content analysis. That is, in response to each open-ended question addressed in the focus group discussion, the qualitative data produced were analyzed by identifying the presence of certain words or themes that repeatedly emerged. The analysis involves interpreting patterns and themes within the data to subsequently draw meaningful conclusions about the second objective.

3. RESULTS

This section presents the results generated from the administration of the tests and the focus group discussion session.

3.1 Pretest and Posttest Results

This research endeavors to meticulously investigate the ramifications of incorporating English business word pronunciation instruction within the contours of a content course. In so doing, Table 2 displays the pretest scores as opposed to the posttest scores, as well as the gain scores.

Table 2. Pretest, posttest, and gain scores ($N = 52$).

No.	Pretest Score	Posttest Score	Gain score
1	13	37	24
2	16	34	18

Table 2 continued...

3	25	27	2
4	10	11	1
5	20	29	9
6	23	28	5
7	8	10	2
8	23	37	14
9	28	37	9
10	22	23	1
11	10	28	18
12	24	37	13
13	16	37	21
14	5	36	31
15	16	22	6
16	16	25	9
17	25	25	0
18	14	36	22
19	18	33	15
20	22	35	13
21	14	26	12
22	4	27	23
23	19	19	0
24	29	32	3
25	23	31	8
26	21	24	3
27	29	29	0
28	27	32	5
29	19	31	12
30	10	29	19
31	15	26	11
32	38	39	1
33	28	35	7
34	16	16	0
35	31	38	7
36	15	22	7
37	11	31	21
38	16	25	9
39	19	20	1
40	21	30	9
41	20	36	16
42	25	34	9
43	12	38	26
44	22	38	16
45	17	18	1
46	12	18	6
47	14	26	12
48	8	26	18
49	20	23	3
50	16	24	8
51	25	38	13
52	28	30	2

The subsequent statistical analysis, facilitated through a paired-sample t-test comparing the means of the pretest and posttest, yielded a noteworthy t-value of -8.11, with degrees of freedom (df) amounting to 51 ($p < .05$). Further, Cohen's d analysis

produced a substantiated effect size of 1.36, denoting a magnitude ranging from large to very large. These statistical indices collectively underline the robust impact engendered by the integration of English business word pronunciation within the instructional framework.

The identification of statistically significant disparities in mean scores between the pretest and posttest, underscored by a p-value less than 0.05, robustly attests to the pedagogical efficacy of the integrated instructional approach. The confluence of a substantial effect size further elucidates the magnitude of improvement, affirming that the pronunciation integration has not merely impacted but significantly elevated students' proficiency in pronunciation. This confluence of statistical significance and a pronounced effect size serves as a compelling testament to the methodological prowess of the pronunciation integration strategy, thereby substantiating its pivotal role in fostering pronounced advancements in the students' linguistic acumen.

3.2 Focus Group Discussion Results

The students' attitudes towards the integrated instruction were gathered through a focus group discussion. Their responses were categorized according to emerging themes. The following is a summary of their accounts in response to each question:

3.2.1 Role of English in future career and studies

All students unanimously agreed on the crucial role of English in both academic advancement and future employment. Thus, enhancing English language skills can positively shape their future undertakings. [S3] emphasized the importance of English in communication with international clients in a sales role.

- (1) Most students in this field choose to pursue a career as salespersons upon graduation. They need to use English effectively to communicate with people in an organization and with international customers.

Based on their responses, it is clear that business students were fully aware of the importance of the English language in the dimensions of education and profession.

3.2.2 Benefits of accurate pronunciation in business

All participants acknowledged the significance of accurate pronunciation in minimizing miscommunication or unexpected boredom on an interlocutor's part. They believed that proper stress placement in English could lead to better job prospects, promotions, and even scholarships. [S1], in support of his friends' responses, referred to a video clip on a popular social media platform revealing the negative impacts of inaccurate pronunciation of English words.

- (2) I watched a clip on ... (a popular social media platform among Thai adolescents) depicting a conversation between a Thai customer ordering food with an English-speaking waiter. The customer stressed the wrong syllable of some words that are the food ingredients. The Thai person was eventually unsuccessful in ordering what he wanted.

He further added that, from this clip, he became more convinced that pronouncing English words with the right stress placement is essential. Mis-stressed words can cause problems.

3.2.3 Impacts of integrated instruction

As for the students' perceived impacts of English word pronunciation integration, [S6] appreciated the integrated instruction, allowing her to sharpen her awareness of accurate pronunciation. She felt more confident and braver in communicating with internationals. [S5] highlights the positive impact of pronunciation integration. Being exposed to the accurate stress placement throughout the lecture and at the end of the lesson, and particularly when the teacher made a particular syllable more salient visually and acoustically, she was able to remember the correct pronunciation better and faster. [S4 and S5] mentioned the word 'motivation' and 'interesting' in their responses. One confessed that the pronunciation integration motivated her to pay more attention to English pronunciation. Understanding how pronunciation can exert an impact on communication has changed her attitude toward language learning completely. [S5] was quite vocal about this point, as illustrated by the following excerpt:

- (3) I originally thought that this course was boring. But because of additional activities to practice pronunciation of English words at the end of the class, the lessons became much more interesting and kept me awake. It was even more fun when the teacher reviewed the five words at the end of the class. I will not forget how to stress the words taught.

3.2.4 Class organization

[S3] found the integration of pronunciation instruction eye-opening and engaging. She did not realize that many business words were mispronounced by her. With this awakening experience, she felt excited to be engaged in pronunciation activities. The other students, in alignment with [S3], described their pronunciation learning experience using words such as 'fun', 'challenging', 'eager', and 'meaningful'. [S4] asserted that she was impressed with the content teacher's strategy of visually highlighting stressed syllables (relatively bigger size) in his slides. Those slides are still vivid in her memory, and she believed those words with the correct stress patterns would remain with her. [S2] appreciated the use of visual aids, such as highlighting stressed syllables, making the class more interesting and valuable. He even challenged the practice of traditional teaching, which needs to be revised for the benefit of sustainable learning.

- (4) Normally, if a lecturer teaches a lecture-type course, students will feel sleepy. However, additional activities that allow students to practice or reinforce what has been studied make the teaching much more interesting and entertaining. Despite a few minutes spent on these activities, they contributed positively and substantially to the class. The knowledge gained can be applied in their real life and their future careers.

3.2.5 Classroom activities on pronunciation

[S3] was particularly intrigued by the test implementation. The tests allowed her to assess her knowledge of what was being tested. From her pretest score, she became

more aware of her strengths and weaknesses in English pronunciation, a good reason to pay more attention to the pronunciation lessons so that her performance could be more satisfactory in the posttest. [S5] appreciated the fact that additional pronunciation activities were connected to the core materials of the class. The words for each lesson are essential and inevitable vocabulary items in business. However, nobody alerted her about her inaccurate pronunciation. As shared by [S1] regarding the awkward scenario in a restaurant in which a Thai person's food ordering failed simply because of flawed pronunciation knowledge, she was excited to know what her problems were. So, the pronunciation session was beneficial. [S4] added that she never realized that such an integration of business and English would be interesting and mutually beneficial. Though deviating from the traditional style of teaching, it was quite fascinating, and she thoroughly enjoyed it. [S6]'s response is interesting, focusing on the content teacher, who performed another role in the classroom.

- (5) My teacher is a role model for daring to do something different. Although he was not good at English, he tried his best to pronounce the words correctly in the classroom so that he could share his knowledge with us.

[S2] jumped in enthusiastically, elaborating on how much appreciation he had for the content teacher.

- (6) The success of connecting the business content with English pronunciation requires the teacher's courage to try a new teaching method. Moreover, he also dares to pursue new knowledge – English pronunciation, something that he was not competent in. However, we could see how much energy, time, and effort has been put into practice. He might not realize that his efforts have provided us with long-lasting motivation that will propel us students to strive and thrive. Thank you.

This particular response was unexpected. However, it sets a precedent example that the students appreciated what the teacher had done for them. Similarly, the students aspired to improve their pronunciation, seeing their teacher as a role model.

3.2.6 Suggestions for future teaching

The students' input and suggestions for the future fall into three major areas: teaching materials, classroom activities, and teachers. As for future teaching materials, when the students become more competent and more confident in speaking English, a word list can be compiled based on the students' needs. Then, they will have a chance to reflect and select the words that they are not sure of. The list can be expanded to include prevalent business phrases or sentences.

As for classroom activities, the word list can be distributed beforehand to the students and let them explore the correct pronunciation. The teacher could also assign the students to give oral presentations, integrating the words covered in class. In so doing, what they learned about pronunciation can be put into practice or actual performance. Regarding the issue of assessment, a student suggested that pronunciation assessment should be included as part of a course. A couple of the students advocated for actual performance, integrating the knowledge gained from the pronunciation sessions. That is, the teacher should provide an opportunity for the students to speak English more in the content class, focusing on correct pronunciation. Finally, some students inspired the content teacher to use English more often in the classroom. For example, the teacher could deliver the lecture in English or ask the

students questions in English, using simple words to provide initial incentives. The activities conducted in English in a content class can wonderfully boost the student's confidence in speaking English.

In short, based on the test scores and the accounts from the focus group session, the students not only improved their pronunciation knowledge but also expressed vehemently their enhanced motivation and confidence in speaking English. Interestingly, the content teacher shared with the language teacher that, during the focus group session, a student uttered an English word covered in the integrated instruction with a Thai accent. Within seconds, she self-corrected her pronunciation, one of the effective strategies in language learning (Garcia et al., 2018), highlighting the increased sensitivity and awareness towards accurate word stress and indicating progress toward enhanced intelligibility. Overall, the responses elicited highlighted that the impact of teaching can be tremendous, cognitively and psychologically. With a little twist at the end of the class, the students can gain beneficial experience and have a positive attitude toward learning.

4. DISCUSSION

The study aims to contribute to the development of effective pedagogical practices for integrating pronunciation into content instruction. Based on both the quantitative and qualitative results, this study enhances the students' pronunciation skills and fosters a positive attitude toward such instruction. The positive impacts observed can be discussed from multiple perspectives.

Students with limited pronunciation skills are likely to face difficulties in effective English communication (Pennington, 2021; Rahbar et al., 2020; Walker et al., 2021), which can hinder their academic success across disciplines. Given that the participants in this study were fourth-year students who were about to enter the job market, the lack of pronunciation competence can have a particularly detrimental effect, potentially impeding their professional success. Understanding stress placement, which enhances intelligibility, motivates them to pay closer attention to pronunciation, enabling greater confidence in participating in the global community.

Selecting target words for instruction is crucial. The high frequency and alignment with course content in the field of business underscore the urgent need for these words. The selected words posed no difficulty for the students in terms of meaning. Therefore, integrated instruction allowed them to focus on refining their pronunciation. Citing Krashen's (1985) 'comprehensible input', Kennedy and Trofimovich (2017) argued that to accelerate English learning, teachers should provide opportunities for students to encounter comprehensible English input. In this study, comprehensible input refers to the students' pre-existing semantic knowledge of the words. To elevate their learning, the language input focuses on pronunciation.

It is noteworthy that, despite the content teacher using accurate pronunciation throughout the lessons, this input did not seem to significantly impact the students. As indicated by students during the focus group discussion, explicit pronunciation instruction was only provided toward the end of the lessons. This suggests that exposure to pronunciation input alone does not necessarily lead to improved pronunciation. In alignment with Inceoglu's study (2021), the observed improvement in pronunciation in this study is likely attributed to the content teacher's explicit

instruction. At this point, a few observations regarding integrated instruction are warranted. While combining pronunciation and business instruction may not be intuitive, merging English with business content feels natural due to the prevalence of jargon in the business field. Therefore, the business discipline provides a potential and suitable context for such integration. Conversely, if students were exposed to natural language input without preparation, they might feel overwhelmed, unsure of what to focus on, or tempted to focus on everything. Hence, explicit instruction is crucial, particularly in the context of pronunciation instruction.

The instructional strategies employed by the content teacher also merit examination. Despite various teaching strategies for integrated pronunciation instruction, the content teacher opted for a noticing strategy enhancement. He prepared a set of five slides, each featuring a target word with the stressed syllable highlighted in a different color and larger font size. This practice aligns with Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (1995), as cited by [Rahbar et al. \(2020\)](#), which posits that language learning can be facilitated by enhancing students' awareness. This visual enhancement was complemented by an acoustic enhancement, in which the content teacher carefully pronounced the target words multiple times, emphasizing the stressed syllables. The content teacher not only reinforced the prosodic input but also elicited students' pronunciation when possible, employing language tasks such as drills, imitations, and repetitions, with the content teacher serving as a model. In this scenario, both visual and acoustic enhancements worked in harmony, sustaining the students' attention, as indicated by the students in the focus group discussion session.

When presented with several pronunciation instructional strategies, the content teacher chose not to incorporate technological resources in his class. He aimed to underscore his role as an individual teacher who, after practice, demonstrated proficiency in pronunciation. Additionally, he believed that relying on technology for pronunciation instruction could disrupt the flow of his teaching. The content teacher admitted that, in his initial attempt at integrated instruction, he felt a bit awkward, and the students were somewhat puzzled. However, in subsequent classes, he became more comfortable with integrating pronunciation activities, and his enunciation of target words became more natural. Over time, the integrated pronunciation instruction in the last few minutes of the class became very manageable, enjoyable, and pleasant.

When the content teacher encountered difficulties with stress placement, the students noted his efforts to overcome them, as revealed in the focus group session. Interestingly, the students viewed him as a role model, inspiring them to exert more effort. The content teacher thus not only facilitated pronunciation instruction but also motivated the students to strive for improved pronunciation. His dedication and hard work in providing accurate pronunciation input were acknowledged by the students, fostering the belief that they could enhance their pronunciation.

This study underscores that English pronunciation can be integrated into a business classroom even with limited allocated time. The findings also signal a shift from the language teacher as the primary facilitator of English improvement to the content teacher, who has the potential to reduce students' anxiety and cultivate positive motivation by fostering an encouraging and non-threatening classroom environment. This achievement would not have been possible without the collaboration between content and language teachers in designing optimal classroom practices and resources.

Additionally, as advocated by previous scholars (e.g., [Darcy, 2018](#); [Levis, 2018](#); [McGregor & Reed, 2018](#)), pronunciation integration in content-based teaching must

be systematic. As demonstrated by this study, this integration empowers the content teacher as a co-driver of English instruction while reinforcing what was learned in a content course. Furthermore, it emboldens teachers to be more confident in delivering systematic pronunciation instruction. All of these findings imply that depending solely on English teachers to serve as a primary resource person in a classroom may not be the most effective approach. As illustrated, content teachers can act as catalysts and facilitators in enhancing language learning, provided they receive adequate coaching from language teachers.

5. CONCLUSION

This study prioritized intelligibility as an instructional goal, aiming to examine the effects of systematically integrating word stress instruction into content-based learning, as well as its overall impact on integrated learning motivation. Based on the analysis of test scores and focus group discussions, the students significantly improved their pronunciation skills, along with exhibiting more positive attitudes, higher motivation, sustained engagement, and increased confidence in English pronunciation, all without impeding content learning. Despite the instruction not being inherently intuitive and requiring systematic scaffolding through multiple coaching sessions and close collaboration, the results exceeded expectations. The content teacher played a pivotal role by contributing language skills and instilling motivation to improve English pronunciation.

A number of limitations warrant acknowledgment at this juncture. First, the study's reliance on a limited set of 40 carefully selected and verified words precludes the assumption of generalizability. A broader array of business words would be necessary to comprehensively elucidate the benefits of integrated instruction. Second, although the content teacher employed various strategies, such as visual and audio enhancements, for integrated instruction, the absence of an experimental study exploring the specific impact of each strategy hinders a clear understanding of their effectiveness. Consequently, the findings await further validation. Lastly, the study primarily focuses on the recognition of stress patterns in business words, leaving the role of integrated instruction in activating knowledge and engaging in production tasks unexplored. Assigning tasks, such as a business project presentation, and comparing stress identification test performance with presentation delivery could provide insights into improving both receptive and productive skills. The current study thus offers an incomplete picture, urging future research for a more comprehensive understanding.

Further research in the realm of integrated instruction is abundant. This model, which inspires students and empowers content teachers, has the potential to extend to other aspects of language and other content courses. Additional studies should explore whether explicit instruction in word stress pronunciation is viable with relatively more advanced students. A follow-up study on long-term memory and effectiveness is warranted to assess the enduring impact on students' performance and any difficulties encountered. Studies focused on actual production, as opposed to perception, could provide further insights.

In conclusion, this study serves as a clarion call for educators. The entrenched reliance in Thailand on English language teachers as the primary source of input necessitates reevaluation. As demonstrated here, the language teacher acted as a

mentor, sharing pronunciation knowledge with the content teacher and guiding effective integration into a content course. The content teacher, not a pronunciation expert but a fellow learner, served as an inspirer. Despite brief integrated instruction periods, significant cognitive and psychological benefits were evident.

REFERENCES

- Anamaria-Mirabela, P., & Monica-Ariana, S. (2014). Business English outside the box. Business jargon and abbreviations in business communication. *Annals of Faculty of Economics*, 1(2), 111-119.
- Boonraksa, T., & Naisena, S. (2022). A study on English collocation errors of Thai EFL students. *English Language Teaching*, 15(1), 164-177. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v15n1p164>
- Chaisuriya, A., & Sun-Young, S. (2019). Examining English test practicality among different stakeholders in Thailand. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, 16(1), 107-120. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2019.16.1.7.107>
- Darcy, I. (2018). Powerful and effective pronunciation instruction: How can we achieve it? *Catesol Journal*, 30(1), 13-45.
- Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2015). *Pronunciation fundamentals: Evidence-based perspectives for L2 teaching and research*. John Benjamins.
- Education First. (2023). *EF EPI English Proficiency Index*. <https://www.ef.com/wwen/eipi/regions/asia/thailand/>
- Fernández-Sanjurjo, J., Fernández-Costales, A., & Arias Blanco, J. M. (2019). Analysing students' content-learning in science in CLIL vs. non-CLIL programmes: Empirical evidence from Spain. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 22(6), 661-674. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2017.1294142>
- Galante, A., & Piccardo, E. (2022). Teaching pronunciation: Toward intelligibility and comprehensibility. *ELT Journal*, 76(3), 375-386. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccab060>
- Gálvez Gómez, M. D. M. (2021). The effects of CLIL on FL learning: A longitudinal study. In M. L. Pérez Cañado (Ed.), *Content and language integrated learning in monolingual settings: New insights from the Spanish context* (pp. 141-165). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68329-0_8
- Garcia, C., Kolat, M., & Morgan, T. (2018). Self-correction of second language pronunciation via online, real-time, visual feedback. In J. Levis (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 9th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference* (pp. 54-65). Iowa State University.
- Ghosh, M., & Levis, J. M. (2021). Vowel quality and direction of stress shift in a predictive model explaining the varying impact of misplaced word stress: Evidence from English. *Frontiers in Communication*, 6, 628780. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2021.628780>
- Golombek, P., & Jordan, S. R. (2005). Becoming "black lambs" not "parrots": A poststructuralist orientation to intelligibility and identity. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 513-533. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588492>
- Griva, E., & Kasvikis, K. (2014). CLIL in primary education: Possibilities and challenges for developing L2/FL skills, history understanding and cultural awareness. In N. Bakić-Mirić & D. Erkinovich Gaipov (Eds.), *Current trends*

- and issues in education: An international dialogue. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Hahn, L. D. (2004). Primary stress and intelligibility: Research to motivate the teaching of suprasegmentals. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(2), 201-223. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588378>
- Huensch, A. (2019). Pronunciation in foreign language classrooms: Instructors' training, classroom practices, and beliefs. *Language Teaching Research*, 23(6), 745-764. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168818767182>
- Inceoglu, S. (2021). Exploring the relationship between explicit instruction, pronunciation awareness, and the development of L2 French connected speech processes. *Language Awareness*, 30(4), 336-354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2021.1881527>
- Kanoksilapatham, B. (2014). Thai elementary school teachers' English pronunciation and effects of teacher variables: Professional development. *TESL-EJ*, 18(1), 1-13.
- Kanoksilapatham, B., & Khamkhien, A. (2022). CLIL implemented and scaffolded in an EFL higher education context: Engineering research methodology course, *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 11(3), 502-514. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v11i3.36913>
- Kennedy, S., & Trofimovich, P. (2017). Pronunciation acquisition. In S. Loewen & M. Sato (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of instructed second language acquisition* (pp. 260-279). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315676968-15>
- Lacabex, E. G., & Gallardo-del-Puerto, F. (2020). Explicit phonetic instruction vs. implicit attention to native exposure: Phonological awareness of English schwa in CLIL. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 58(4), 419-442. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2017-0079>
- Lasagabaster, D., & Doiz, A. (2016). CLIL students' perceptions of their language learning process: Delving into self-perceived improvement and instructional preferences. *Language Awareness*, 25(1-2), 110-126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2015.1122019>
- Levis, J. M. (2018). *Intelligibility, oral communication, and the teaching of pronunciation*. Cambridge University Press.
- McGregor, A., & Reed, M. (2018). Integrating pronunciation into the English language curriculum: A framework for teachers. *CATESOL Journal*, 30(1), 69-94.
- Pennington, M. C. (2021). Teaching pronunciation: The state of the art 2021. *RELC Journal*, 52(1), 3-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882211002283>
- Pommée, T., Balaguer, M., Mauclair, J., Pinquier, J., & Woisard, V. (2022). Intelligibility and comprehensibility: A Delphi consensus study. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 57(1), 21-41. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1460-6984.12672>
- Rahbar, S., Ahangari, S., & Saeidi, M. (2020). Raising the learners' awareness of prosodic features in pronunciation and its impact on listening comprehension: Insights from noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1995). *Journal of Foreign Language Research*, 10(2), 260-271. <https://doi.org/10.22059/JFLR.2020.287970.674>
- Saengboon, S. (2019). Shadow education in Thailand: A case study of Thai English tutors' perspectives towards the roles of private supplementary tutoring in

- improving English language skills. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 12(1), 38-54.
- Saito, K. (2021). What characterizes comprehensible and native-like pronunciation among English-as-a-second-language speakers? Meta-analyses of phonological, rater, and instructional factors. *TESOL Quarterly*, 55(3), 866-900. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3027>
- Sato, T., & Hemmi, C. (2022). Development of second language productive skills through CLIL in a Japanese university: A pre-experimental longitudinal study. *Language Learning in Higher Education*, 12(1), 309-326. <https://doi.org/10.1515/cercles-2022-2040>
- Savski, K. (2023). Negotiating hegemonies in language policy: Ideological synergies in media recontextualizations of audit culture. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 24(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2021.2006945>
- Tantiwich, K., & Sinwongsawat, K. (2021). Thai University students' problems of language use in English conversation. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 14(2), 598-626.
- Walker, R., Low, E. L., & Setter, J. (2021). *English pronunciation for a global world*. Oxford University Press.
- Wongsa, M., & Son, J. B. (2022). Enhancing Thai secondary school students' English speaking skills, attitudes and motivation with drama-based activities and Facebook. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 16(1), 41-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2020.1853134>
- Yanifari, R. P., & Rihardini, A. A. (2021). Face-to-face or online speaking practice: A comparison of students' foreign language classroom anxiety level. *JEELS (Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies)*, 8(1), 49-67. <https://doi.org/10.30762/jeels.v8i1.3058>
- Yenkimaleki, M., & van Heuven, V. J. (2021). Effects of attention to segmental vs. suprasegmental features on the speech intelligibility and comprehensibility of the EFL learners targeting the perception or production-focused practice. *System*, 100, 102557. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102557>

APPENDIX

Business word list (n=40).

Week	Focused business words
1	internal, environment, analysis, operation, capability
2	external, opportunity, technology, customer, economy
3	situation, generate, summary, matrix, formulation
4	corporate, direction, concentrate, diversification, competitive
5	business, sustainability, cooperative, leadership, differentiation
6	functional, production, development, procurement, logistics
7	transformation, implementation, commercial, government, organization
8	determine, evaluation, measurement, comparison, performance