

ASSESSING THE PRODUCTION OF SELECTED ENGLISH COMPLEX CODAS
BY THAI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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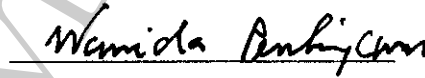
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I was deciding on graduate schools to attend in Thailand, I was intrigued by the fact that at Payap University I could study in English and supplement my TESOL studies by taking courses in linguistics, and thus hopefully learn how to integrate my interests in phonology with aspects of cognitive science included in the core TEFL curriculum. Dr. Jonathan Leather has been the best advisor and role model that a student could hope for. Not only is he an internationally recognized authority on phonological problems in Second Language Acquisition, he is an exceptionally patient teacher who consistently challenged me to rework and refine my ideas and my writing. Despite his busy schedule, he took the time to encourage me to question my assumptions—sometimes repeatedly—but never did this with a presumptuous manner, or proffered alternative solutions. His intention was always to get me to come up with them on my own, while keeping to a centripetal argument. In this I fear I may have come somewhat short of the target. Dr. Leather has the true modesty and self-discipline of a great scholar, and writing this thesis under his supervision and guidance has been a humbling, but rewarding, experience.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Phinnarat Akharawatthanakun of the Linguistics Department, who spent time on numerous occasions to go over my drafts, correct my phonological symbols, and offer many suggestions for cleaning up my tables and headings. Dr. Phinnarat is a Thai phonology specialist, who could provide qualified advice for precisely the type of issues this thesis raises. I wish to thank Aj. Terry Gibbs of the Linguistics Department for showing me how to use the SIL

software programs to analyze phonological segments. He even helped me to identify them on occasion.

I also thank my two assistants, Michael Guenza and Alan Singh, who were enrolled in the same graduate TEFL program as I, who took the time to patiently evaluate the read wordlists and narratives, and the interviews of my four informants, and whose comments sometimes challenged my own opinions of the data. Three pairs of ears were definitely better than one, and this thesis could not have been written without their assistance.

I am also grateful for having studied with Dr. Ritchie. Although our views on approaches and methods in TESOL are quite different, and have even been opposed on occasion, he helped me to define my basic position early on. Immanuel Kant said, “Without contraries there is no progression”, and this may also apply to teaching. Language teaching is most fruitful when a multitude of perspectives is reflected in its development and implementation, and tends to stagnate when teaching professionals come to rely on the received wisdom of a few ‘experts’ touting the latest teaching materials, style, or approach. Dr. Ritchie never was doctrinaire, and despite his comprehensive knowledge of the contemporary communicative-oriented TESOL literature, was always open to differing views in language teaching.

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