Phonetics and the Role to Efficient English Communicative Skills
หลักสัทศาสตร์และบทบาทในการพัฒนาทักษะสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษให้มีประสิทธิภาพ

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Abstract

This article offers an approach for English teachers to improve the learners’ communicative performance in English through an application of phonetics, particularly in developing their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. It is argued that teaching and encouraging students to silently identify and differentiate sounds and syllables every time they encounter the utterances, whether in listening, reading, or speaking, will help them form a habit of observing and differentiating linguistic features of English utterances in their language learning process. It also discusses how the phonetic approach can improve the English proficiency of students and how this approach can be implemented in a classroom.

Keywords: Phonetics, Efficient communicative skills

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนำเสนอวิธีการพัฒนาความสามารถในการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษแก่ผู้เรียนสำหรับครูโดยการประยุกต์หลักสัทศาสตร์มาใช้ในการสอนทักษะฟัง คิด ต่อ และเขียน การให้ความสำคัญต่อการศึกษาเสียงและพยางค์ในใจทุกครั้งที่ฟัง คิดและเขียน จะช่วยสร้างความเคยชินนี้แก่ผู้เรียนอันจะนำไปสู่การรู้จักสังเกตเรียนรู้ และมีผลต่อการพัฒนาความสามารถด้านภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียน นอกจากนี้บทความยังนำเสนอเทคนิคและกิจกรรมการเรียนการสอนที่เป็นการประยุกต์ใช้หลักสัทศาสตร์ในห้องเรียน

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Introduction

In the globalized world today, English is becoming more and more important as a tool for communication. By the number of native speakers, it is the third largest language after Chinese and Spanish (“Summary by language size”). In 2015, it was estimated that more than 20% of the approximately 7.5 billion of the world population, or more than 1.5 billion people were speakers of English, including both native and second and/or foreign language speakers (St. George International, n.d.). In addition to being widely spoken, English is by far the most commonly studied foreign language in the world, followed by French at a distant second (Lyons, n.d.).

In terms of international business and political organizations, English also serves as either the official/co-official or working language of many business and international organizations such as the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, the International Monetary funds, the International Lab our Organization, the International Olympic Committee, World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and the International Telecommunication Union, to cite only a few. By international treaty, English is also the official language for aeronautical and maritime communications.

Because of its widespread use, English has thus become an indispensable tool for people around the globe to communicate with one another. In Thailand English has been taught in schools for several decades, with a number of reforms on language teaching methodology and a large amount of budget allocated to improve and upgrade the quality of English language teaching and learning, the results are very disappointing and a far cry from the expected budget allocated to improve and upgrade the quality of English language teaching and learning, the results are very disappointing and a far cry from the expected goal. After 8-10 years of studying English in elementary and secondary schools, Thai students are still unable to communicate intelligibly in English, nor can they hold a sustained conversation. Their proficiency is dismally low and cannot adequately function
in the world wherever English is used. At best, they can only communicate in broken English, with incorrect grammar and sentence structures, when they speak, not to mention writing. According to English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), Thailand is ranked the 62nd out of 72 nations in English proficiency and is now the third worst country in Asia with very low proficiency EF EPI scores of 45.35 out of 120 (Fredrickson, 2015).

Why do Thai EFL learners remain poor in English even though Thailand has implemented an education reform through the National Education Act which puts in place the measures of Quality Assurance at every level and in every aspect of the English language delivery in the schools? Several factors are accountable for the failure to improve the English proficiency of Thai EFL learners. According to Samkoses (Samkoses, 2015). There are five main causes; they are: 1) unqualified teachers, 2) insufficient English classroom contact hours, 3) an English-is-not-important-to-me attitude, 4) the widespread practice, among Thai, of nitpicking of errors made by other people and 5) the use of the English language instructional methodology not suitable to Thai students.

One of the major problems for Thai students to communicate in English adequately is their inability to articulate the sounds of English linguistic elements correctly and intelligibly. Several studies have shown that Thai students have pronunciation problems both in articulating initial sounds such as /θ/, /ð/, /v/, /r/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /ʧ/, and final consonant sounds such as /ʒ/, /dʒ/, /ʃ/, /dr/, /r/, /j/, /ɡ/, and /l/. Thai students also have problems on articulation of some English vowel, including /a/, /ɔ/, /ɑ/, /ɒ/, /ɒɪ/, /ʊə/ (Tanthanit, 2012) since these sounds do not exist in the Thai phonological system. To accommodate in their articulating these sounds, Thai students resort to substituting the English sounds with the sounds in Thai with which they are familiar through the simplification process, thus causing the problem of L1 interference.
To address this problem, it is suggested that the phonetic approach be used together with other teaching methods. The phonetic approach will enable students to identify and differentiate sounds and other linguistic features of English more effectively, which in turn will help them to better develop their communicating skills. Although the ultimate aim of English language teaching is to enable learners to communicate in the language fluently and accurately, many Thai English teachers place more emphasis on accuracy in the use of the language. That is, they focus on teaching grammatical structures and rules without putting these rules in context and practical use. As a result, the learners are very well-equipped with grammatical rules but do not know how to use them in real life situations. They know only the forms of the language, but do not know the function and meaning of those forms. Many Thai English teachers are not proficient enough to conduct their class in English. Very often, they give incorrect information to the students, especially when they teach pronunciation. The students thus become misinformed, so in speaking they often mispronounce words, put the stress in the wrong place, and use inappropriate intonation. When confronted with native speakers, the learners, apart from their inability to form correct sentences for an exchange in a conversation, are often unable to convey their intended ideas across to their partners due to incorrect word stresses or inappropriate intonation. Faced with this situation, the EFL learners become frustrated and tend to develop a negative attitude toward learning English.

Learning English successfully, especially in speaking skill, a learner needs subskills in phonetics in which pronunciation skill is an essential one (Fraser, 2000, p. 7). It is wondering if teachers of English could find possible solutions for that and make changes to occur. Phonetics is definitely the key.

This article aims to point out the crucial roles of phonetic approach in English teaching and learning, and to propose techniques and tentative activities to improve students’ English proficiency.
Phonetics in teaching the English language

Phonetics is concerned with speech sounds and how they are produced. A language sound can be separated into a smaller element called phoneme which is the smallest unit of sounds in a language that distinguishes one word from another. In classroom, ‘phonetic approach’ is used to teach the relationships between the letters of the written language (graphemes) and the individual sounds (phonemes) through ‘phonics’ which focuses on the sounds that letters represent. ‘Phonology’ is also associated with the sound pattern in terms of stress, intonation, and linking. This phonetic process of teaching English is believed to be able to help students improve their English communicative skills.

The roles of phonetic approach

In reading, individual students learn each sound and syllable pattern introduced by the teacher. It is essential that they understand a word and express its meaning in English correctly. The students can match letter symbols with their appropriate sounds. For example, learners with phonetic process will say the letter ‘b’ as [b] in ‘bed’; ‘s’ as [s] in ‘son’; ‘th’ as [θ] in some words like ‘thank you’, ‘think’; and when some words are similarly spelt with the letters ‘th’, they know how to pronounce them as [ð ] such as ‘that’, they’, ‘though’. This way of learning and practicing can help create ‘phonemic/phonic awareness’ into the learners’ mind.

In writing, a phonetic approach encourages students to separate a word into phonemes in their mind before writing it down, a similar method used in reading. That is, they say the word, break its sound combination, listen to each sound, imagine the related letters, and spell out the word. Though this method may not lead to accurate spelling, the students are more inclined to spell the word correctly, or at least close enough for other people to be able to guess the exact word. This method of spelling, however, may work effectively, and it may cause confusion or even frustration when the students encounter homophones such as ‘wear’/weə(r)/ and ‘where’/weə(r)/, ‘week’
When this occurs, the teacher must make them aware of these types of words, direct them to connect the sounds and meanings within the context of the sentence and text.

Although the phonetic process doesn’t help learners understand the text totally, at least it helps them guess the meanings from the word parts such as prefixes, roots, suffixes, and inflections. Examples are words like ‘dislike’ which derives from the prefix ‘dis-not’ and the root ‘like’, so it means ‘not like’; the words ‘unbelievable’ can be broken down in 3 parts-the prefix ‘un-not’, the root ‘believe’ and the suffix ‘able’, so it means ‘cannot believe’. There are a great number of these types of words in English that the students are certain to encounter. If they can separate the sounds into phonemes and group them into syllables, they are more likely to guess the meanings of those words when reading, and simultaneously form the spellings in their mind when writing. Moreover, they can be taught to obtain the word meanings from their grammatical inflections such as ‘-ing’ and ‘-ed’. Grammatical function allows a word ending with ‘-ing’ to express action in progress while an ‘-ed’ ending word or a word ending with past participial form shows a completed activity. It is necessary that a teacher make students aware of these grammatical notions.

In speaking, phonemic instruction plays a crucial part. The more the students learn through phonics/phonetic process, the more they are familiar with breaking down words they have in mind. This method changes in the way they learn the language.

The phonetic approach/phonics helps students, not only in their reading and spelling but also in their articulation and pronunciation. It makes them more aware of their speech and the individual sound that blends to generate a certain word as well as encourages them to think about both what and how they are saying (Davis, n.d., p. 1).

Besides, this phonetic process makes students realize that words with the same spelling may have different pronunciation or words with different spelling may have similar pronunciation. Examples of words with the same spelling but with different pronunciation are: ‘tear’
[tɛə(r)]-to damage, and ‘tear’ [tɛə(r)]-a drop of liquid that come out of your eye when crying, and ‘wind’ [wɪnd]-air that move quickly as a result of natural forces, and ‘wind’ [wɪnd]-to have many bends and twists, ‘chore’ [kɔːr] and ‘chord’ [kɔːd]. Examples of words with different spellings but with the same pronunciation are: ‘sum’ and ‘some’ [sʌm], ‘stare’ and ‘stair’ [steə(r)], ‘where’ and ‘wear’ [weə(r)].

In addition, this phonetic approach helps students learn to articulate words by moving each part of speech organs correctly to make the sounds like those articulated by a native speaker so that the sounds in a word can be heard meaningfully. Furthermore, the phonetic approach helps students to deliver their speech utterance better. First, the approach forces them to recognize the final sound of a word, and articulate it repeatedly until this becomes automatic for every word. Secondly, the approach teaches them how use linking and assimilation in speaking as native speakers do. Linking and assimilation occur automatically when the speaker pronounces the consonant final sound of the preceding word which connect to the initial vowel sound of the following word (Roach, 2000, p. 140), e.g., ‘you are’ [ju:wə], ‘who is’ [hu:wɪz], ‘go on’ [gəʊən], ‘allow eating’ [əlaʊətɪŋ], ‘would you’ [wʊʧə], ‘I agree’ [aɪəɡriː] (Suwangard, 2012, p. 174).

Moreover, the phonetic approach helps students to know how to use correct stress and intonation in speaking. Stress in a word is very important in English; putting a stress in a wrong place in a word may lead to misunderstanding or confusion. Students who are familiar with a phonemic process know a syllable, understand a stressed syllable are able to pronounce the word correctly. The phonetic approach also makes students realize how to use proper intonation in an utterance to convey intention, feeling, and attitude. For example, a stressed syllable is pronounced with higher and louder sound in full vowel value, whereas an unstressed syllable is pronounced softer and may lose its vowel quality, consequently the vowel sound changes to be [ə], [i], [ʊ]’ or becomes a syllabic, e.g., ‘mountain’ [ˈmaʊtən] and [ˈmaʊtən], ‘police’ [ˈpɒlsi], ‘policy’ [ˈpɒləsɪ]. The sentence stress
also shows intention of a speaker-what he wants to communicate. A stressed word in an
utterance can be pronounced either in a rising sound or in a falling sound depending on
what the speaker wants to convey. For examples, ‘**Where** did she meet the boy?’, the word
‘where’ is pronounced at higher level than other words. The answer ‘She met the boy at
the **cinema**’, the word ‘cinema’ is at higher level to give new information. Another example
is that ‘Did you learn **Japanese**? (Extracted from Haycraft & Lee, 1982, p. 19), the word
“Japanese” at the sentence ending is raised high to show surprise or need confirmation,
while the answer gives more information, ‘I learnt **how to speak**, but not how to write.”
Here, the stressed words are pronounced at higher and louder level.

In listening, this phonetic process is helpful because when students know how
to pronounce words, they have already heard the words in mind and so understand
what other people say. They can form, in their mind, the word spelling after hearing
the word sounds and get their meaning, or mood or even feeling and attitude of
a speaker. For instance, a hearer may perceive an utterance as either a statement,
a question, or a command. He may know whether the speaker is angry, happy or sad,
if a teacher equip him with an awareness about intonation in an utterance.

**How to build phonetic awareness in our EFL students**

According to studies about why the English proficiency of Thai students is very low,
it was found that while the students; wish to be fluent in their speaking and listening, most
of them don’t expect to be competent in English because of several problems involved.
These problems include interference from Thai and/or ethnic mother tongue especially in
pronunciation, syntax, and idiomatic usage; lack of opportunity to use English in daily life;
boring and uninspiring English lessons; being passive learners; being shy and unconfident to
speak English; and lack of responsibility for their own learning (Wiriyachitra, n.d., p. 2). All
these problems aforementioned can be solved by English teachers who are qualified and
determined to perform their jobs. To be qualified teachers of English, they themselves
should be proficient in all four skills of the English language. That is, they need to be rigorously trained so that their proficiency is raised to a very high fluency level or at least to a minimum level of the standardized tests (TOEFL or IELTS) required for admission to universities in the US or those in the English speaking world. They should also be encouraged to keep abreast with new teaching methodologies and current instructional technologies and innovations.

As discussed above, the phonetic approach can be used to raise the English proficiency of the students and to improve their communicative skills. Now, let’s explore more how this approach can be implemented in a classroom setting and whether this approach is beneficial to the students.

Techniques and activities

The most important key is a teacher. Successful language teachers are those who are confident in themselves, competent in delivering the lessons and getting the ideas across to the students, and effective in classroom management. While teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing, the teachers must pay close attention to teaching English pronunciation (Fraser, 2000). The teaching of productive skills and receptive skills are the key roles (Kelly, 2000, p. 15).

The teaching of receptive skills along with productive skills

The teacher must have students learn to hear the difference between phonemes and sounds that do not occur in the Thai language. They include initial consonants, such as the sounds /θ/, /ð/, /v/, /r/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /ʧ/, and final consonants position including the sounds /ʒ/, /ʤ/, /ʃ/, /θ/, /ð/, /z/, /ɡ/, /l/, and /r/ (Extracted from Thirawat, 2012, p. 5; Suwangard, 2012, p. 4-5). It is important that whenever these sounds appear in the texts, the teacher gives the students the knowledge of how to articulate each problematic phoneme before making the word by breaking it down into
separate phonemes, reads it slowly enough so that the students can clearly hear the combination of a consonant and a vowel sound which become a syllable. This technique needs a qualified teacher who has graduated in English major or who has been trained to have linguistic mouth and ears. He himself can utter the sound correctly and be a model to his students.

**Teaching techniques**

Teaching techniques should start from listening to speaking as follows. (Adapted from Kelly, 2000, p. 16-27).

1. **Getting students to notice** contrastive pronunciation features within listening texts. At this step the students learn to hear the sounds of English that are different from their own Thai phonemes.

2. **Suggesting** the way to make each consonant and vowel phonemes. The teacher makes known the speech organs needed to use to produce those sounds.

3. **Eliciting** the word, phrase or structure they have learnt previously can help encourage students to brush up their English. Teaching aids like prompts, pictures, real objects, and mime can help the process along. The teacher’s role is giving a word, phrase, structure model for copying, related pronunciation with spelling.

4. **Drilling** the sounds into the students so that they can remember how to say them. Use either a repeat-after me drill, or examples such as word, phrase, or structure that require the students to repeat the sounds often. Drills are helpful in the development of all the four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Cultivating an awareness of each phoneme in tasks used with listening texts in particular will be effective to enhance listening and reading skills. The students can also absorb pause, rhythm, stress, and intonation at the same time. One important thing is that drills should be practiced before the written words are shown, and students should have an opportunity to practice and drill individually.
4.1 Open pair drilling allows students to drill questions and answers. One student asks a question written on a card shown by the teacher, another student answers, then each pair takes turns across the class. A typical question and answer drill may look like the following:

A: Have you ever tried squids?
B: Yes, I have
A: Have you ever tried durian?
B: No, I haven’t.

4.2 Substitution drilling is useful for practicing a structure which requires the students to substitute items of words into the target slot in a sentence, as shown in the examples below.

Teacher: I’m confident…….friendly
Student 1: I’m friendly.
Teacher: hardworking
Student 2: I’m hard working.

etc.

5. Chaining may be used for a more difficult or complex sentence such as a long one with unfamiliar words and sounds. The process includes back chain and front chain. For back chain, a sentence is separated into certain parts-based on either rhythm groups, or grammatical groups. Let’s take these two sentences as examples of back chain in 1) and front chain processes in 2).

1) ‘Do you know/ when the museum opens?’ can be divided into parts, starting from the end of the sentence, the teacher says a part and the students repeat:

........................................................ opens?
.................................................the museum opens?
.................................................when the museum opens?
Do you know when the museum opens?
2) Starting from the beginning of the sentence, the teacher says a part and the students repeat: Do you know……………………………………
Do you know when……………………………………
Do you know when the museum………………
Do you know when the museum opens?

6. **Minimal pairs** refer to a pair of words with different meanings with exactly the same pronunciation except for one sound that differs. A teacher can firstly ask students to listen for a different sound, ask them to repeat it, and identify it. The students can be asked to create their own minimal pairs to try out on their partners. The examples below show the contrast between consonant sounds in each pair of words.

*leg*-beg, *green*-clean, *spa*-star, *lead*-read, *lock*-rock, etc.

**Spelling activities**

There are some basic ideas about the relationship between pronunciation and spelling. A teacher can use *homographs* and *homophones* for practice. Homographs are words which have the same spellings, but with different pronunciations such as *there*-their, *write*-right, *fare*-fair, *might*-mite. A teacher may let students study pairs of words and ask them to come up with a rule for pronunciation of those words, such as a rule for how the final sounds of verbs in the past form change when the suffix-*ed* is added as shown below.

/d/ → learned played shared loved
/t/ → liked passed laughed helped
/td/ → ended wanted started added

Recording students’ pronunciation from time to time is another interesting activity. A teacher can record the performance of the learners’ while they are engaging in English practice activities, and then let the students, one by one, compare their own pronunciation with the models that they have copied.
Listening activities

The objectives of teaching are to enable the students to understand and use English outside the classroom, and to produce, as much as they can, utterances for daily-life communication. Authentic listening exercises, with a normal speed and natural English can play a crucial role in helping students to notice any features of pronunciation and try to imitate them for improving their own utterances.

Reading activities

Reading is a receptive activity like listening, so it can be an appropriate means of bringing English features to learners’ attention. In reading activities, a teacher first asks students to read silently for the topic and main idea as well as for specific information or detail. After that, ask them to read aloud. At this step, pronunciation can be integrated. Reading aloud allows students to notice, study, and practice the link between pronunciation and spelling, stress, intonation, the linking of sounds, and assimilation between words in connected speech. Tongue-twisters and rhymes can be a fun way of practicing the articulation of unfamiliar difficult sounds as well as extracts from songs, poems, news, TV shows and movies that teachers should provide for their students to make a funny class and reduce boredom and stress.

How to produce the problematic phonemes

Some English phonemes are difficult for Thai learners to produce as they do not exist in their mother tongue. These typical phonemes include /θ/, /ð/, /v/, /r/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /ʧ/, /ʤ/. Consonant sounds are labeled based on three distinct features: places of articulation, manners of articulation and voicing. For examples, /b/ is known as a voiced bilabial stop, /f/ is a voiceless labiodental fricative, /ʤ/ is a voiced palate-alveolar/post alveolar affricate.
Characteristics of these phonemes - /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /ʧ/, /ʤ/ - are voiced sounds and they are difficult for Thai learners to pronounce. How these sounds are articulated is described as follows:

Voicing can be made by uttering a sound with the lips completely closed and the sound is made while breathing out, e.g., when you make [s] at the time you produce voicing, then the sound becomes /z/.

To make /ʧ/ and /ʤ/ (Palato-alveolar sounds), a complete closure is made somewhere in the mouth, and the soft palate is raised. Air pressure increases behind the closure, and is then released more slowly than in plosives. The tip and the sides of the tongue touch the alveolar ridge and side teeth. The front of the tongue is raised, and when the air is released, there is audible friction. The soft palate is also raised. /ʧ/ is voiceless, /ʤ/ is voiced, /ʤ/ is voiceless at the end of a word. Examples are:

/ʧ/ church, beach, nature, leach, large, rich, chop;
/ʤ/ judge, beige, larger, ridge, large, chop, job.

To make /θ/ and /ð/ (Dental sounds), the tongue tip is brought forwards below the upper teeth to touch lightly the back of the upper teeth, and constriction between the tongue and upper teeth is made. The soft palate is raised. /θ/ is voiceless, /ð/ is voiced, /ð/ is voiceless at the end of a word. Examples are:

/θ/ think, bath, tooth, mathematics, thirsty, thumb, thought, thing;
/ð/ the, bathe, father, though, then, these, those, fourth, with, mother.

To make /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ (Palato-alveolar sounds), the tip and blade of the tongue are raised to touch the side of the palate and teeth, the soft palate is also raised. /ʃ/ is voiceless, /ʒ/ is voiced. /ʒ/ is voiceless at the end of a word. Examples are:

/ʃ/: she, fish, wash, delicious, ocean, nation, fashion, special;
/ʒ/: beige, measure, pleasure, leisure, garage.
*/g/ does not occur as an initial sound, and is rarely found as a final sound.

The lateral sound occurs when the airflow is around the sides of the tongue. Thai students have a problem with the ‘dark’ [ɬ] sound, which normally occurs after vowel sounds, (as in cool), before consonants (as in wealth), the back of the tongue is raised towards the soft palate. You can feel your tongue tip remain roll up at the end of the word.

To make /r/ (Post-alveolar sound), the tongue tip is raised towards the hard palate just behind (not touching) the alveolar ridge. The back sides of the tongue touch upper molars. The soft palate is raised. /r/ is voiced. Examples are: right, raw, correct, arrange, hurry, arrive, restrict, remember.

Thai students also have problems with mixed vowels known as diphthongs. For a diphthong vowel, the first vowel is articulated higher and louder than the second one. Their characteristics are described below.

For /ɪə/ the tongue moves from a high front position for /ɪ/, going down and back toward a mid central position for /ə/. The lips are neutral, but with a small movement from spread to open. Examples are: year, beard, fear, pierce, teardrop, here, weird, idea, nearly, atmosphere.

For /ʊə/ the tongue moves from a high back position for /ʊ/, going down and forward a mid central position for /ə/. The lips are loosely rounded, becoming neutrally spread. Examples are: sure, moor, pure, endure, during, cure, curious, tour, obscure, mature.

For /eɪ/ the tongue moves from a mid high front position for /e/, going back toward a mid central position for /ə/. The lips remain neutrally open. Examples are: where, rare, armchair, repair, store, there, declare, unfair, fare.

For /eɪ/ the tongue moves from a mid high front position for /e/, going up toward a high front position for /ɪ/. The lips are spread. Examples are: may, cake, display, weigh, say, pain, they, vein, pain, rain, remain, Spain.
For /ɔɪ/, the tongue moves from a low mid back position for /ə/, going up toward a high front position for /ɪ/. The lips move from neutral to loosely spread, and change to high. Examples are: spoil, boy, avoid, voice, enjoy, choice, noise, moist, convoy, exploit.

For /aɪ/, the tongue moves from a low front position for /a/, going up toward a high front position for /ɪ/. The lips move from neutral to loosely spread, starting high. Examples are: my, style, high, tight, buy, might, cry, eye, smile, while, light, design, apply.

For /əʊ/, the tongue moves from a mid-low position for /ə/, going up toward a mid-high back position for /ʊ/. The lips are neutral, but change to loosely rounded. Examples are: go, snow, dough, toast, home, smoke, hello, although, vote, load, post, boat. For /aʊ/, the tongue moves from a low mid position for /a/, going up toward a mid-high back position for /ʊ/. The lips start neutral with a movement to loosely round. The glide is not always completed, as the movement involved is extensive.

Examples are: house, loud, down, how, shout, spouse, around, ground, bough, proud, vowel, mouse, allow.

The suggested approach above could be successful to improve students’ English ability for communicative skills only if it is implemented by qualified teachers who can create the best environment for learning. It’s obvious that the most important key to improve EFL students’ ability is the teachers and the methods and techniques they use in classroom. The essential method is the phonetic / phonic process which should be equipped for students to use as a tool of improving their English communicative skills.

References


