

**Pidginized English Pronunciation in Thailand**

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# PIDGINIZED ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION IN THAILAND

## ABSTRACT

Thailand Pidginized English Pronunciation (TPEP) is the pronunciation of English produced with a Thai accent. Its characteristics are systematic, stable and widely used and accepted within the country. This paper describes TPEP through an analysis of 12 hours of video interviews of seven hundred high school students from 50 of Thailand's 76 provinces. The identified phonemic qualities include some vowel and consonant substitution and certain modification or loss of consonants, especially final consonants. Other characteristics include moving all stress to final syllables and endowing a certain tone to some words.

**Keywords:** Pidgin, English, Thai accent

Thailand has a long history in learning and using English language. For the convenience of learner and user, of course strongly influenced by the pronunciation system of Thai language, a Pidginized English Pronunciation system gradually formed. It is hardly to say when it started, but it can be hear all over the country. And very interesting thing is so alike among people in different age and from different part of the country.

In this paper, we try to describe Thailand Pidginized English Pronunciation (TPEP) through analysis of 12 hours of video interviews of 700 high school students from 50 of Thailand's 76 provinces. The school is Mahidol Wittayanusorn school, it has 720 students, 240 in each grade. The English lesson there combined with spoken English and written English. All the students should record their pronunciation in video format in the beginning spoken English lesson, for the purpose of evaluating the improvement of English pronunciation. 3 years video clip accumulation is the material of this research. By comparing with native speaker's pronunciation, we found TPEP has the following features

### 1. Substitution of vowel

English	TPEP	Sample
□	□	love, suck
	<	cup, supper
Σ▷	Σ	hate, lake
Π		nose, poke

2. Substitution of initial consonant

English	TPEP	Sample
√	∩	very, van
f	f	zoo, xylophone
∠	∩	three, thick
	f	think, thin
⊗	TM	that, then

3. Substitution of final consonant

English	TPEP	Sample
∩	∩	school, sample
∩	∩	wife, laugh
√	∩	five, have
f	TM	bus, pass
f	TM	quiz, maze
∠	TM	earth, path
⊗	TM	with, lathe
©	TM	fish, cash
∩©	TM	march, watch
TM∩	TM	judge, edge

The pronunciation of all [d] in this part have no keeping phase and release.

4. Modification of vowel

English	TPEP	Sample
∩	∩	ship, it
∩	∩	bike, ice
∩	∩	boy, oyster
∩∩	∩∩	tear, fear
∩	J	book, hook
∩∩	J∩	tour, pure

5. Modification of initial consonant

English	TPEP	Sample
©	J	she, ship
∅	∩∩	vision, measure
∩©	∩∩	cheap, choke
TM∅	∩∩	jump, joke

6. Modification of final consonant

English	TPEP	Sample
∩	©	map, cap
©	©	job, cab
∩	TM	cat, rate
TM	TM	speed, raid
∩	©	duck, luck
©	©	dog, lug

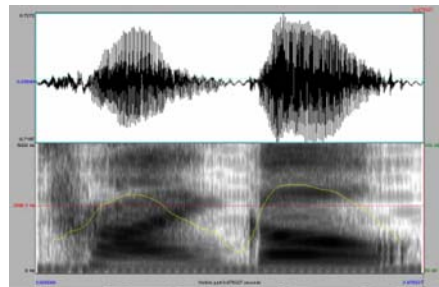
All the final plosives in TPEP have no keeping and release phases.

7. Loss of consonants from final consonant cluster

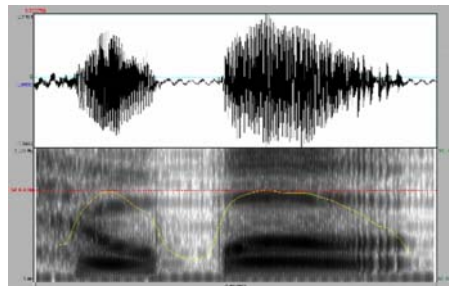
English	TPEP	Sample
ɪ ɪ	®	gasp, rasp
ɪ	TM	test, mast
ɪ		task, ask

8. Moving all stress to final syllables

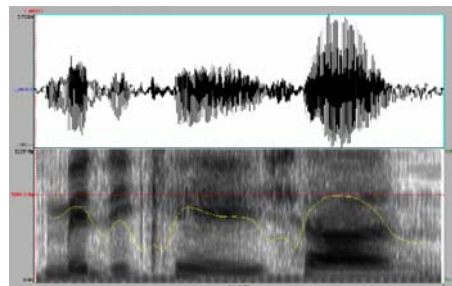
All words other than monosyllabic words have stress. In TPEP, all stresses have been moved to the final syllables with no condition. The following are some samples analyzed by Praat.



**Spectrogram 1** Pronunciation of “helper”



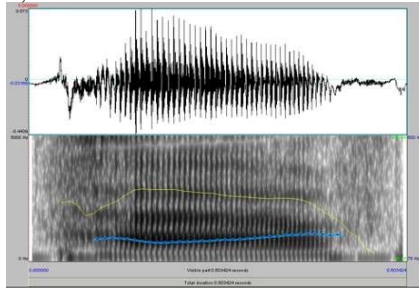
**Spectrogram 2** Pronunciation of “triangle”



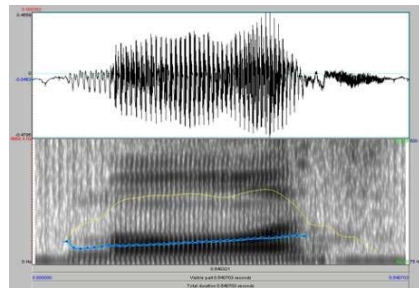
**Spectrogram 3** Pronunciation of “mediation”

9. Endowing a certain tone to some words

Many frequently used closed mono-syllabic words were given a certain tone, such as: have, has, as, most, back, much.



**Spectrogram 4** Pronunciation of “have”



**Spectrogram 5** Pronunciation of “most”

Identification of the common traits in TPEP is an important step for any ESL program interested in inculcating pronunciation closer to an international standard. Until now, this has largely been the duty of each new ESL teacher through haphazard impressions of the quality of speech. The wide availability of technologies for digitally quantifying pronunciation makes it easier for both native and foreign teachers of English to familiarize themselves with the differences between TPEP and international usage, as well as helping them to be more accurate in their analysis of students' transition between the two.

## REFERENCES

Roach, P. English Phonetics and Phonology, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1983