



Ubi-Media 2017

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Topic : Ubi-Media

		<i>page</i>
<i>Ubi-Media 35</i>	RFID-Based Intelligent Parking Management System with Indoor Positioning and Dynamic Tracking	39
<i>Ubi-Media 37</i>	Meerkat: A Framework for Developing Presence Monitoring Software based on Face Recognition	40
<i>Ubi-Media 38</i>	Distributed Power Adjustment Scheme in Ultra Dense WiFi Networks	40
<i>Ubi-Media 39</i>	DRIVER POSTURE RECOGNITION FOR 360-DEGREE HOLOGRAPHIC MEDIA BROWSING	41
<i>Ubi-Media 40</i>	Human Behavior Recognition Method Based On Conditional Neural Field	41
<i>Ubi-Media 41</i>	An Image Watermarking Method in HSL Color Model	42
<i>Ubi-Media 42</i>	Image Watermarking Against Color Blind Image Correction	42
<i>Ubi-Media 43</i>	Design and Development of Application for Crime Scene Notification System	43
<i>Ubi-Media 45</i>	Moommae: A Location-Aware Mobile Information System for Breastfeeding Mothers in Thailand (Invited Paper)	43
<i>Ubi-Media 46</i>	Action Segmentation Based on Bag-of-Visual-Words Models	44
<i>Ubi-Media 47</i>	Beyond the Tweets: Discovering Factors that Influence TV Series Preferences from Ubiquitous Social Networks	44
<i>Ubi-Media 48</i>	TargetZIKA: Epidemic Situation Detection and Risk Preparedness for ZIKA Virus	45
<i>Ubi-Media 51</i>	Supemode Transformation On Computer Clusters	45
<i>Ubi-Media 53</i>	Opinion Leaders Discovery in Dynamic Social Network	46
<i>Ubi-Media 55</i>	Geo-information platform for visualisation, analysis and optimization for aviation	46
<i>Ubi-Media 56</i>	An Investigation on Motion Periodic Series for Fire and Smoke Textures Characteristic Identification	47

Topic : AEL

		<i>page</i>
<i>AEL 06</i>	MOOCs as an Intelligent Online Learning Platform in Thailand: Past, Present, Future Challenges and Opportunities	47
<i>AEL 11</i>	The Relationship between Amusement and Quality of Learning by using Gamification Approach in Creative Youth Camp	48
<i>AEL 12</i>	Hybrid e-Learning System for Basic Vocabulary with Bulletin Board to Support the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in the Primary School	48
<i>AEL 13</i>	Investigation on the Effects of Measuring Authentic Contexts on Geometry Learning	49
<i>AEL 14</i>	Automatic Attendance System for Late Student using Speech Recognition corresponding with Google Forms and Sheets	49
<i>AEL 16</i>	Investigating applications of mobile translator for assisting English vocabulary learning	50
<i>AEL 17</i>	Are STR & CAT-generated texts useful for comprehension of lecturing content in a foreign language?	50
<i>AEL 18</i>	The Awareness of Correct English Pronunciations of Business English Major Students at Phetchabun Rajabhat University	51

translated texts for their learning. Our results showed that applying STR and CAT technologies was a useful approach; translated texts helped improve learning performance of the experimental group 2 students compared to the control condition significantly. More specifically, translated texts were beneficial both for low and high ability students in the experimental group 2, so that their scores of the tests were much better compared to those of students in the control condition. When students got used to translated texts and found their strength and limitations, they better utilized these texts for their learning. This is why learning progress of students was increasing from Lecture 1 to Lecture 2. Our results also showed that low ability students benefit from translated texts the most; their language ability was lower than that of high ability students before the experiment but after it, learning performance had no significant difference. Finally, most of the students in the experimental group 2 perceived translated texts as useful for their learning and they intended to use them in the future for learning.

(AEL 18)

The Awareness of Correct English Pronunciations of Business English Major Students at Phetchabun Rajabhat University

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Abstract: Correct English pronunciation is an essential key to ensure successful communication between speakers (Ellis, 1997). When learning to pronounce it is also important to take into account the effect the learners native language will have on the speakers ability to pronounce certain sounds within the second language. According to Kenworthy (1987) only "one or two features are enough to suggest a particular language showing through their (the speakers) spoken English". This mispronunciation no matter how small it may be can be enough to cause confusion and misunderstanding in a conversation to occur. In Thailand the current level of correct pronunciation and language proficiency is very low. As a result, there has been many lost business opportunities for Thailand and Thai people. Also when a Thai person realizes that they are pronouncing a word incorrectly they lose the confidence to speak with foreigners because "they might make a mistake". This dilemma is confounded further when speaking to people who have never studied a foreign or second language before, as they are easily irritated if they cannot quickly understand what the non-native speaker is trying to convey (Garrigues, 1999). The results showed that 2nd year students had the most correct English pronunciation when compared to the 1st year and 3rd year students. All students however had a major English pronunciation problem when it came to final sounds with /z/ and /d/ as the students were not aware of the phonological rules in English when they completed the Detect Me English words test.

The Awareness of Correct English Pronunciations of Business English Major Students at Phetchabun Rajabhat University

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Abstract— Correct English pronunciation is an essential key to ensure successful communication between speakers (Ellis, 1997). When learning to pronounce it is also important to take into account the effect the learners native language will have on the speakers ability to pronounce certain sounds within the second language. According to Kenworthy (1987) only “one or two features are enough to suggest a particular language showing through their (the speakers) spoken English”. This mispronunciation no matter how small it may be can be enough to cause confusion and misunderstanding in a conversation to occur. In Thailand the current level of correct pronunciation and language proficiency is very low. As a result, there has been many lost business opportunities for Thailand and Thai people. Also when a Thai person realizes that they are pronouncing a word incorrectly they lose the confidence to speak with foreigners because “they might make a mistake”. This dilemma is confounded further when speaking to people who have never studied a foreign or second language before, as they are easily irritated if they cannot quickly understand what the non-native speaker is trying to convey (Garrigues, 1999).

The results showed that 2nd year students had the most correct English pronunciation when compared to the 1st year and 3rd year students. All students however had a major English pronunciation problem when it came to final sounds with /z/ and /d/ as the students were not aware of the phonological rules in English when they completed the Detect Me English words test.

Keywords—English pronunciation; English awarness; English Correction Software; phonetics learning

I. INTRODUCTION

The ability of many Thai ESL students to use English for communication is still not at a level to be considered proficient. This is evident, as a majority of Thai ESL students do not have the ability to communicate in English with native speakers well. According to the Office of the Education Council only 10% of Thai people are able to speak English proficiently. Out of the four main skills fluency in speaking is one of the most difficult skills for students to develop. When learning English there are many reasons that student may confused or lose motivation to continue until they can become adept in English speaking. The whole gist of a conversation can be lost due simply to incorrect pronunciation of key

words. Henceforth if students do not know how to pronounce English sounds properly this inevitably results in the lack of intelligible conversation. If Thai students continue to be unaware of correct pronunciation methods and techniques, English fluency is not likely to improve; however it could result in a regression in Thai students ability to reach English fluency.

The study uses a sample group of students studying in Business English from Phetchabun Rajabhat University and investigates, the students' pronunciation of 20 key words through the “Detect Me English” application. The sample group included a total of 60 students. Students were told to read each word once in order to deduce the student's awareness of phonological. Percentages were then made from summaries of the scores students achieved for each word.

The hypothesis motivating the study is that the language transfer from the student's native language (L1 - Thai) to the secondary language (L2 - English), may be a contributing factor to the difficulties expressed in pronunciation. The main focus of this research being the important English stop consonants which when pronounced incorrectly created an overall difficulty in correct and fluent English pronunciation. The results of the study found that 2nd year students, who had been studying an English for phonetics course, had better pronunciation than the 1st and 3rd year students. The fact that the 2nd year students had a greater awareness of correct English pronunciation is most likely linked to the recent exposure to phonetics in their university curriculum.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Language Transfer

When learning a second language (L2) the learner's native language (L1) impacts the learners' ability to pronounce the different sounds necessary in L2. Language Transfer has been recognized as “a major factor in second language acquisition” (Ellis, 1990). The influence the learner's L1 has on the way they articulate and pronounce different words in L2 very apparent. This can be fully recognized when looking into the origins of different people who are speaking in L2, more often than not the way they speak will reveal the origin of the L1 to

a trained or even untrained ear. According to Brown (2000), one of the factors that cause difficulties in insuring clear pronunciation is the difference between the phonology of their L1 and that of the second L2. In this research this pertains to the difference between the phonology of the Thai language when compared to English. One aspect of the English language that is difficult for many ESL students is to master is the pronunciation of final sounds for example “- ed” and “- s”. Brown proposes that within Language transfer there is six factors that may hinder or facilitate learner’s pronunciation of L2 which are: L1, age, exposure to L2, innate phonetic ability, identity and language ego for L1, motivation, and finally the concern for good pronunciation ability. It is also believed that behaviorism is a underlying reason why learners tend to transfer their old habits from L1 into the new habits in their L2 (Ellis, 1987). Teachers and learners of L2 need to become aware of these factors and take them into account.

B. Interlanguage

According to Ellis (1987) there are three essential characteristics of interlanguage. This learners’ language is ‘permeable.’ The rules in interlanguage are not fixed.’ It constantly changes as learners usually revise their individual rules to accommodate with those of the target language. The language is also considered to be ‘dynamic. Finally, interlanguage is ‘systematic.’ Learners produce the language in ways that are predictable because they base their performances on the interlanguage rules they create. So the characters that the learners’ language depends on are rules that the learners create. Some of their interlanguage may be over-generalized and used in an inappropriate pronunciation, while others may be under-generalized and do not appear when they are required. In this study, the following pronunciations are gathered from the subjects’, as a speaking task data of students’ comprised in interlanguage.

C. The awareness of correct English pronunciation

Awareness of correct English pronunciation is extremely important for learners of L2. According to Dörnyei (2001) Learners need to have an awareness of phonological rules in the language they are studying. Dörnyei states, “This will help them achieve success in their second language pronunciation.” It is important that learners become aware of the similarities and differences between the two languages. If they do not learners run the risk of making the habits formed when speaking in the L1 merge in with L2. According to Ellis the similarities in L1 pronunciation would facilitate the learning of L2. Adversely, the differences between L1 and L2 can in turn interfere with L2 acquisition. According to Ellis L2 learners will rely on the knowledge of L1 and their prior experience in the language to deal with problems they face when learning L2. Unfortunately this means that L1 transfer becomes inevitable in L2 learning (Ellis, 1987), however, if students can become aware of the correct way to pronounce words the effect will be less noticeable and learners of L2 will be more apt to converse fluently.

According to Selinker (1972), Fossilization is a characteristic of inter-language. It affects the ability of the learner to achieve correct English Pronunciation. Fossilization is defined as the relatively permanent incorporation of incorrect linguistic forms and taking it into the L2. Fossilization will cause L2 learners to stop short of target-like competence for some linguistic domain (e.g. pronunciation). So, if the L1 does not have a sound found in L2 it is difficult for the speaker to pronounce because of learnt practices that have become apart of the way the speaker communicates. It has become apparent that specific Language structures are especially difficult for L2 learners to acquire, even when there is considerable input.

D. English final consonant vs. Thai final consonant system.

Upon analysis of the English and Thai Language there is considerable difference when it comes to the final consonant systems. In English there is a total of twenty- two final consonants; six stop consonants, two affricate consonants, three nasal consonants, eight fricative consonants, and three approximant consonants (Gimson, 1962). The Thai language on the other hand, has only nine final consonants; four stop consonants, three nasal and two approximant consonants (Nahasakul, 1998). These final consonants are shown correspondingly in Table 1.

TABLE I. THAI FINAL CONSONANTS VS ENGLISH FINAL CONSONANTS

Manner	Place of Articulation					
	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Thai						
Stop vl. ^a	p		t			k
Stop vd. ^b	m		n			ŋ
Approximant	w				j	
English						
Stop vl.	p		t			k
Stop vd.	b		d			g
Affricate vl.		θ			tʃ	
Affricate vd.		ð			dʒ	
Nasal vd.	m		n			ŋ
Fricative vl.	f		s	ʃ		
Fricative vd.	v		z	ʒ		
Approximant	w		l			

^a vl. = voiceless ^b vd. = voiced

In addition to there being significant differences in the amount of final consonant sounds there is also major differences between the final consonants in the way they are pronounced. Unlike English, Thai final consonants are often dropped or not released even though the mouth is positioned to make the sound. Because of this difference, it can be expected that Thai students will most likely make mistakes

when they try to pronounce English final sounds. See the following information to understand more fully what Thai students must overcome in order to correctly pronounce English Final Consonants.

1) *The pronunciation of -s*: 'S' is a sibilant sound (a sound that produced by forcing air out toward your teeth creating a hissing sound, a buzzing sound or the shhhhh sound) and is a major issue when it comes to Thai students awareness of correct pronunciation. The -s consonants which fall into the voiced category will have the final sound that is pronounced like a /z/ without creating another syllable. For example, crabs /kræbz/, rugs /rʌgz/, fans /fænz/. The voiceless consonants of -s will have a final sound pronounced like /s/. For example, cups /kʌps/, hats /hæts/, cooks /kʊks/. Finally when the last consonant sound before the -s at the end of the word is also a sibilant sound then the -s will be pronounced as a separate syllable with an /ɪz/ sound. The /ɪz/ will be an extra syllable added to the end of the word such as 'bus', bus /bʌs/ and buses/bʌsɪz/. For example, races/reɪsɪz/, pauses /pəʊzɪz/, fixes /fiksɪz/, prizes /praɪzɪz/.

2) *The pronunciation of -ed*: The nature of English pronunciation for the voiced consonants of -ed is that the final sounds will be pronounced like a /d/ without creating another syllable. For example, played /pleɪd/, closed /kloʊzd/, opened /oʊpənd/. The voiceless consonants of -ed, on the other hand, will have final sounds that are pronounced like a /t/. For example, talked /tɔkt/, kissed /kɪst/, parked /pɑrkt/, helped /helpɪt/. Finally, when the last letter of the word is spelled with d or t then the -ed will be pronounced as a separate syllable with an /ɪd/ sound. For example, wanted/wɒntɪd/, waited/weɪtɪd/, needed/niːdɪd/, folded/fɔlɪdɪd/.

E. Previous studies on English pronunciation by Thai students

Kanoksilapathem (1992), has studied the pronunciation of Thai university students in the area of pronouncing four-syllable English words among four types from parts of speech which she chose nouns, verbs, adjective and adverb for the words tested. Kanoksilapathem found out that verbs were found to be the least well pronounced, whereas the nouns with -ity ending were most correctly pronounced. These findings demonstrated Thai's incorrect placement of word stress. Where words were supposed to be stressed at the first syllable the Thai learners were stressing the final syllables. This study emphasizes the lack of awareness of the differences between the Thai and English language especially in regards to the importance of correct pronunciation of the final sound. Attapol Khamkhien (2010), looked into the possible factors affecting Thai learners pronunciation competence. Khamkhien found that gender was identified to be the most significant factor contributing to participants test scores. Khamkhien findings align with the findings in this research as females also had slightly better test results.

In another study conducted by Yalun Zhou (2013), which looked into the transfer of phonological awareness from Thai to English among grade three students in Thailand, it was found that a learner's phonological awareness in L1 greatly impacted their ability in achieving phonological awareness of

L2. Zhou's findings contradict this study in that they seem to suggest awareness of correct pronunciation in L1 aided the student's ability to read correctly in L2. The age difference of the sample groups should be taken into consideration and further investigation should be conducted to determine when fossilization of linguistic forms begins to affect a learners ability to pronounce in L2. Until this is investigated Zhou's findings cannot be said to pertain to university-aged students.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Objectives of the study

Given the importance correct pronunciation has in successful communication this research studies three main objectives were: (1) to study the awareness students studying Business English at Phetchabun Rajabhat University had in regard to correct English pronunciation. (2) to examine the students' knowledge with regard to final sound pronunciations though using the Detect Me English application; and (3) to determine possible factors affecting the ESL students' pronunciation competence.

B. Samples

The samples used were students from the Business English major at Phetchabun Rajabhat University, Phetchabun, Thailand ($N=60$). There were several reasons why these samples were chosen for this study. Such as they were all from the same major with prior knowledge of the English language hence they understood the basic English rules of past tense and plural terms also all the students mother tongue is Thai. With this in mind it is possible that the students, because of prior and ongoing English study had varying levels of English ability. Some of the students had also been studying with a native English speaker prior to testing. This being the case it was essential that the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students were randomly selected to participate in this study. This in turn reduced the likelihood of bias in the results.

C. Instruments

The instruments used for this study were; (1) The English voice detection software of the "Detect Me English" application (Android system). The application was created to help correct the pronunciation of students from Khao Koh, Phetchabun, in Thailand. In previous research, the application was successful in aiding students to achieve correct English pronunciation. Due to its success, the application was taken and modified so it could be used as a tool for this study. The "Detect Me English" application uses a processor developed by Google to eliminate the possibility of human error. In order for the application to be operational the android device needed to have connection the Internet at all times during the testing. (2) the 20 key words which were written into the program. To select the words used for testing the students' awareness of correct English pronunciations, it was important to narrow down the field matter. It was decided that this study would focus on the mispronunciation of final stop consonants (see

IV. RESULTS

In order to study the awareness students studying Business English at Phetchabun Rajabhat University had in regard to correct English pronunciation as well as their knowledge with regard to final sound pronunciations, the individual and overall data in the "Detect me English" application's external hardware were processed. Overall analysis of the recorded statistics revealed that, the university students had a total mean score of 8.72. The highest score was 12, while the lowest score was 5, and the SD value was 1.99. In this regard, it was found that Thai learners had a difficulty pronouncing /f/ + /iz/ and /f/ + /iz/ most, and /t/+id/ least. Based on these results it is obvious that the low mean score of 8.72 demonstrates that the students' awareness of correct English pronunciation is far from satisfactory.

The personal information of the students who took part in the investigation was also taken into account and recorded in order to then be used to determine possible factors affecting the ESL students' pronunciation competence. The personal information data including the number and the percentage of the samples is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: PERSONAL DATA OF THE SAMPLES

	No. of samples	Percent
Gender		
Male	17	28.33
Female	44	73.67
University year		
1 st year	20	33.33
2 nd year	20	33.33
3 rd year	20	33.33

test scores and the variables were individually recorded as follows in A and B.

A. Test results by Gender

To examine how samples' gender affect their English pronunciation competence, the data elicited through the test was analyzed and the number of mistakes was recorded. The results of the number of students who had correct pronunciation by gender are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3: TEST RESULTS BY GENDER

Gender	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
Male	5	8	6.4	1.71
Female	6	12	9.3	1.76
Total	5	12	8.72	1.99

As the table 2 illustrates, the female samples in this study had better pronunciation than their male counterparts. The results of the analysis indicate that females achieved a mean score of 9.3, where as the males only achieved a mean score of 6.4. This finding identifies that gender had a significant effect on the test results.

B. Test scores by university year

To examine how the student's year of University study affected their English pronunciation competence, the data elicited through the testing was analyzed and the number of

mistakes was recorded. The results of the different year ability to achieve correct pronunciation are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4: TEST RESULTS BY UNIVERSITY YEAR

University year	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
1 st year	5	9	6.8	1.11
2 nd year	6	12	10.1	1.54
3 rd year	7	12	8.7	1.64
Total	5	12	8.72	1.99

As the table 3 illustrates, the 2nd year student samples in this study had a higher level of correct pronunciation than the others. The results of the analysis show that the 2nd year samples had a mean score of 10.1, 3rd year student samples had a mean score of 8.7 and 1st year student samples achieved the lowest mean score at 6.9. On further investigation it was noted that the 2nd year students had been studying English phonetics during the course of the experiment most likely contributing to their significantly greater awareness of the correct method of pronunciation.

V. DISCUSSION

The methodology of this research comprised of two phases. The first phase involved interviewing specialists and conducting research to determine 20 key words that would be written into the program. Then the second phase involved testing ESL students with the program itself and analyzing the English pronunciation of the students. The study group consisted of 60 Thai students from the Business English major at Phetchabun Rajabhat University. While there has been little to no studies which utilized this methodology to determine students' knowledge with regard to English final sound pronunciations there was several studies found which support the results found in this investigation thus supporting the conclusion made in regard to possible factors affecting the Thai students' English pronunciation competence. The research results were recorded taking into account the gender and the year in which the students were studying. The year of study was identified to be the most significant factor contributing to the participants' test results. The results showed that 2nd year students had the most correct English pronunciation. It was noted that this was most likely due to the fact that they were studying a phonetics class during the course of the experiment when compared to the 3rd year samples that had attended the English Phonetics classes the year before and the 1st year students who had not yet studied English phonetics.

Overall the students had a major English pronunciation problem when it came to final sounds with /z/ and /d/. The students seemed not aware of these phonological rules in English while doing Detect Me English words test.

The study also aligned with many other studies which proved that female students tend to be more advanced in learning languages than males (Brown, 2000; Eckert, 2003 ; Pavlenko, 2001). In this study the female students ability at correct pronunciation had a mean average better than the male

students. This indicates that gender difference is a contributing factor for L2 proficiency and correct pronunciation.

Upon reflection of this study, the researcher would like to expand this research through the following proposal. Proposal for improving and building the study;

- Improve the study by testing different specific, categorized groups of students. Distinguish between GPA score abilities to further study and factor in differences between students personal skill levels. This will further conclude the effectiveness of the program.
- Record and study the progression of the students between the 3 attempts as well as pre-testing the students before the use of the program to factor in and scrutinize the efficacy of the program.
- To add in a control group to help further compare the efficacy of the program further and analyze its results. The test environment needs to be specifically maintained to insure it is the same for each student. Finally, the tests should have a structured time constraints when it comes to the time the students are given to use the program. This will create a more fair and non-biased test.

This program is showing promising results in helping instructors to see the lack of awareness of correct English pronunciation especially in the area of the final sounds of “-ed” and “-s”. Corder conducted extensive research into the positive effect of language transfer however in his research he also commented that “The greater the degree of difference/distance, the larger the learning task, or to put it another way, the longer the learning path to be traversed between L1 and L2.” (Corder 1979) It is apparent in this study that because of the effect of language transfer and the extreme differences between the Thai and English language in regards to final stop constants the students achieved poor results. It follows that the Thai students in the Business English Major at Phetchabun Rajabhat University, need to develop a greater awareness of the differences between L1 and L2 in order to achieve correct English pronunciation. Simple adjustments to can be made to English lessons firstly by informing professors of the importance pronunciation awareness is when teaching English. Curriculum’s can be adjusted to support the constant reinforcement of the phonetic rules and students encouraged by teachers to download the ‘Detect me English’ application on their smart phones so they can practice their pronunciation in their own time. Finally adopting learning strategies that

involve listening to native English speakers will automatically make students more aware of correct pronunciation.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion this study showed that overall the female students had better pronunciation than the male students. This indicates that gender difference is a contributing factor for L2 proficiency when it comes to correct pronunciation. This result is supported in other studies that show females seem to be more proficient at learning languages than males. The 2nd year samples that had been attending English Phonetics classes during the course of the study had a greater grasp of the correct method to achieve correct English pronunciation and thus had a great awareness of correct English pronunciation. This emphasizes the importance of adjusting the current practices used in teaching English to insure students become aware of the correct pronunciation of English. Expectantly, this research can be even further developed to build up Thai students’ ability in regards to correct English pronunciation of English final consonants, in turn further improving the students’ overall pronunciation, their confidence and language fluency.

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**Ubi-Media
2017****LETTER OF INVITATION**

*Jeerapan Phomprasert
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Dear Jeerapan Phomprasert,

On behalf of organizers, it is my pleasure to invite you to present at the International Conference (Ubi-Media 2017) the paper authored by Jeerapan Phomprasert : "The Awareness of Correct English Pronunciations of Business English Major Students at Phetchabun Rajabhat University" which has been accepted as full paper.

Ubi-Media 2017 (<http://www.umediam2017.net>) is an international major forum for researchers and practitioners in various disciplines to share and exchange of experiences in the emerging research area of Ubiquitous-media. Ubi-Media 2017 will be held in conjunction with the 10th IEEE International Conference on Ubi-media Computing and Workshops : Advanced E-Learning (AEL) and Multimedia and Internet of Things (MIOT) during **August 1st – 4th, 2017** in Pattaya, Thailand. Ubi-Media 2017 is organized by Kasetsart University, Sriracha Campus (Thailand) and National Central University (Taiwan) under the auspices and co-sponsorship of the IEEE Society.

Please note that you will be responsible for all costs related to attending the conference and workshop program yourself, including the registration, subsistence, transportation, accommodation fees and other travel arrangements.

We are looking forward to welcoming you at the Ubi-Media 2017. We trust that there will be substantial benefits from your participation at Ubi-Media 2017.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Umarin Sangpanich
Head of Organizing Committee
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AEL
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The 4th International Workshop on Advanced E-Learning

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This is to certify that

Jeerapan Phomprasert

has participated to the conference,
and presented a paper titled

***The Awareness of Correct English Pronunciations of Business English Major Students at
Phetchabun Rajabhat University***

on August 1st-4th 2017, Pattaya, Thailand.

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