

The English Vowel [u:]

In pronouncing the English [u:] the back of the tongue is raised high in the direction of the soft palate. The resonance chamber is considerably increased in the front part of the mouth cavity. The soft palate is raised. The tip of the tongue is retracted from the lower teeth. The sound [u:] is more retracted and close than the English [V], the distance between the jaws is narrower (fig. 2.37).

Fig. 2.37.
Tongue-position:
English [u:] —————
English [V] - - - - -



In pronouncing the English [u:] the lips are rounded but not protruded, the opening between the lips is smaller and the degree of rounding is greater than for the English [V].

Fig. 2.38.
Lip-position of English [u:]

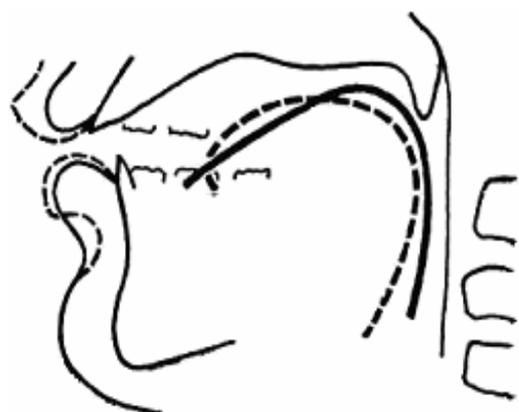


The English [u:] is a long tense labialized back close vowel phoneme of the narrow variety.

The corresponding Ukrainian back vowel is [Y] but it differs considerably from the English [u:].

1. The English [u:] is long, while the Ukrainian [Y] is short.
2. The English [u:] is more back and more close than the Ukrainian [Y] (fig. 2.39).

Fig. 2.39.
Tongue-position:
English [u:] —————
Ukrainian [Y] - - - - -



3. The English [u:], like the Ukrainian [Y], is labialized but the position of the lips is different. In pronouncing the English [u:] the flat rounded lips form a narrow oval-shaped opening. In articulating the Ukrainian [Y] the rounded lips are protruded forming a round opening (fig. 2.35, 2.38).

The correct pronunciation of the English [u:] can be acquired by starting from the Ukrainian [Y]. The tongue should be retracted and raised a little higher towards the soft palate, flat rounding of the lips should be carefully observed.

The above described articulation of the English [u:] is observed in all positions except when it is preceded by [j]. When preceded by [j] it becomes more advanced and has much in common with the quality of the Ukrainian [Y], but with flat rounding of the lips.