The phonetic status of some speech sounds presents a challenge in some African languages, especially those whose phonology has not been studied extensively using speech analyzers. Issues arise over the place or the manner of articulation of such phonemes. (r) is one of the speech sounds in Gĩkũyũ that presents a challenge in terms of determining its manner of articulation. Though the occurrence of the speech sound (r) in Gĩkũyũ is undisputed, there is no consensus on its phonetic description. The question this article sought to answer is whether the speech sound is a trill, tap or approximant. The article is based on a descriptive research that adopted a qualitative design. Data were collected from forty eight native speakers of Gĩkũyũ. The variables taken into consideration were age, gender, education and dialect. Data was collected using two research instruments: a wordlist and guided conversations. The two research instruments took care of the occurrence of (r) in word initial and word medial positions. The data were analysed using the WaveSurfer speech analyser program and native listeners acoustic cues to determine the manner of articulation. The analyses were presented using graphical representation in waveforms. The findings indicate that (r) is an alveolar approximant and not a trill or a tap. The recommendation of the authors is that there is need to revise the Gĩkũyũ phonemic inventory in order to capture the correct manner of articulation. There is also need for speech research on sounds whose phonetic status is disputed such as the prenasalized stops so as to describe them accurately too.