Pronouncing English Triphthongs in Speaking
for Workplace Communication

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Abstract. Pronunciation is one of the determiner aspects in English as it can change the meaning of the words and sentences. This research discusses the analysis of errors in the pronunciation of triphthongs in words and sentences in English. The research was aimed to know the types of triphthongs often mispronounced in the pronunciation of words and sentences in English among second semester students in class A of Speaking for workplace communication lecture at English study program of Madiun State Polytechnic. The quantitative were used after being collected from the assignments and pronunciation tests for several words and sentences containing triphthongs during the research. The research results are described in percentages. The diphthong errors that students often make are //aʊə /= 34.6%, /aɪə /= 31.8%, /ɔɪə /= 20%, /əʊə/= 9%, and /eɪə/= 4.6%. Errors that occurred in the classification of substitutions = 43.64%, insertions = 32.73%, and omissions = 23.63%. The errors occur due to the influence of inter-language and intra-language factors of the students.

Keywords Error Analysis, English Triphthongs, Pronunciation.

1. INTRODUCTION

English is divided into four skills namely; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is also one of the unique languages as the written and the spoken are not always the same. The written words cannot directly be read as they are as it can produce the different meaning when it is pronounced incorrectly. Thus, the students should learn about the pronunciation lesson which explain about producing sound of each English word.

Speaking is the most important parts of English because people who know the language are referred to as "speakers" of that language. When the students master speaking English, they are able to get more knowledge, to fulfill certain education requirements, to travel abroad, to gain access to the culture of English-speaking nations, or simply to meet more people from different countries.

Speaking is an active language action from the language users that demand the real initiation in language employing to express self orally. It is very important for the students of English Department especially for those who are on the second semester as their books are in English, and the subjects are also delivered in English.

Considering the mistakes or the errors on pronunciation should become an important focus on speaking as the mistake and error of English pronunciation cause misunderstanding in the meaning of the words. Harmer (2001) states that for all people, being made aware of pronunciation issues will be of immense benefit not only to their own pronunciation but also their understanding of spoken English. Therefore, learning English in speaking does not only

know the meaning of words and the structures but also the students have to know how to pronounce the words correctly in order to communicate fluently with others.

The second semester students of English Study Program at Madiun State Polytechnic often pronounced the words incorrectly during the class of speaking for workplace communication especially. They often found the words that made them doubtful to pronounce especially on triple vowel or commonly called triphthongs. They said they should master the theory of pronunciation so that they can predict the pronunciation of the words that they are not memorized and common yet during their communication. They also felt that there is a distance between the brain and mouth when they practice their English in the class.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Particularly in spoken language, pronunciation is crucial. It is very important for foreign language learners' communication skills because it is directly linked to how well they understand speech among interlocutors (Brinton et al., 2010; Ngo et al., 2024). It conveys the English language message to the language recipient. Mispronounced words can cause the meaning and message of a communication to shift. Misspellings could cause misunderstanding or even a breakdown in verbal communication (Ma, 2024). Brown (2001: 491) states that the different pronunciation or different sounds cause different meaning. Thus, English is completed with phonetical transcription of words derived from many classifications of English speech sounds such as consonants and vowels. Yates and Zielinski (2009: 11) state that pronunciation refers to how we produce the sounds that we use to make meaning when we speak. It includes the particular consonants and vowels of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual segments, such as stress, timing, rhythm, intonation, phrasing, (supra-segmental aspects), and how the voice is projected (voice quality). Although authors often talk about them as if they were separate, they all 12 work together in combination when we speak, so that difficulties in one area may affect another, and it is the combined result that makes someone's pronunciation easy or difficult to understand.

English vowels are divided into three that is monophthongs (pure vowels), diphthongs, and triphthongs (Rogerson-Revell, P, 2017). According to Omenogor, et.al. (2012), triphthongs are referred to as triple sounds. While pronouncing a triphthong, there is a movement or glide from the first vowel to the second and then last to the third. Moreover, Roach (2009:19) states that triphthongs are a glide from one vowel to another and then third, all produced rapidly and without interruption. A research showed that diphthongisation, monophthongisation, and syllabification are three ways in which triphthongs are usually simplified. These types of

elision (the omission of a vowel sound in a sequence of sounds) include the loss of the second element of a prevocalic triphthong or diphthong, which is then reduced to a diphthong or a monophthong, as the case may be. Those can be heard in careful pronunciation (Akinola et al., 2024). Crystal (2003:239) adds that triphthongs are vowels in which three vowel qualities can be perceived. Triphthongs are composed of five closing diphthongs (ending ɪ or ending ʊ) with schwa /ə/ vowel added on the end. They will be gotten:

1. Triphthong /eɪə/, shaped by [eɪ] + [ə].
2. Triphthong /aɪə/, shaped by [aɪ] + [ə].
3. Triphthong /ɔɪə/, shaped by [ɔɪ] + [ə].
4. Triphthong /əʊə/, shaped by [əʊ] + [ə].
5. Triphthong /aʊə/, shaped by [aʊ] + [ə].

Here is the description of the triphthongs (Cruttenden, 2008:145- 146);

1. /eɪə/, formed by [eɪ] + [ə], [eːə] smoothing in general PR, found in word player.
2. /aɪə/, formed by [aɪ] + [ə], [aːə] smoothing in general RP, found in word fire.
3. /ɔɪə/, formed by [ɔɪ] + [ə], [ɔːə] smoothing in general RP, found in word royal.
4. /əʊə/, formed by [əʊ] + [ə], [əː] or /ɜː/ smoothing in general RP, found in word lower.
5. /aʊə/, formed by [aʊ] + [ə], [aːə] smoothing in general RP, found in word tower.
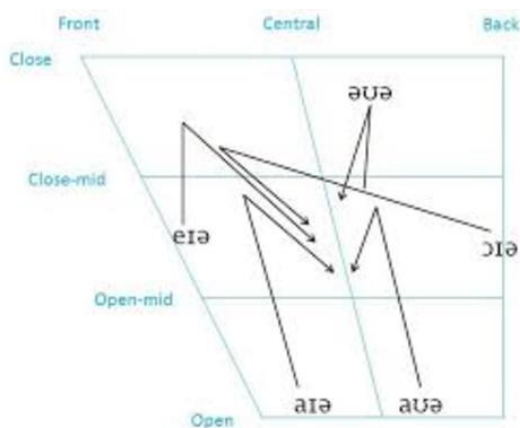
Picture (1) The position of English Triphthongs

3. METHODS

This research employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. While the quantitative approach concentrates on the kids' test results, the qualitative approach concentrates on the information gathered via observation, documentation, and interviews. Cresswell (2012: 23) states that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research are qualitative basically framed in term of using words and opened-end question. While quantitative is basically framed in term of using numbers and closed-end question.

To obtain reliable data, the researcher combined the two approaches and elaborated using the mix method. Cresswell (2012: 32) states that mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry combine two research method, qualitative and quantitative to collect data, integrate the two forms data using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. This combination provides more complete understanding.

The students' tests or exams provided the qualitative data. The following procedures were followed;

1. Participants practised the spoken test.
2. Participants read aloud the test.
3. Participants' voice were recorded.
4. The recorded were listened by the researcher.
5. The recorded were transcribed into phonetic symbols from the transcription..

In the meantime, quantitative information was gathered through observation, documentation, and interview. The actions listed below were taken;

1. The resercher observed the students during the class.
2. The researcher recorded the activities and the spoken test.
3. The researcher asked some questions to the students after they did the spoken test without turning off the recorder.
4. The researcher listened to the recorded.
5. The researcher transcribed the recorded to a written form.

Following the data collection, the researcher organized the information according to the different categories of diphthongs. The analysis proceeded through these steps;

1. The researcher analysed and categorized the students' pronunciations.
2. The researcher made the precentage of the students' pronunciations based on the diphthongs' errors.
3. The researcher searcher the common errors and the causations.
4. The researcher counted the presentage of error by the use of simple formula.
5. The researcher made the conclusions and suggestions.

At last, the researcher analysed the qualitative data taken from the observations, documentations, and interviews.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pronunciation is a crucial aspect of communicating in English. It is important because it leads to effective communication while mispronunciation brings misconception (Naveed et

al., 2024). It creates the initial impression of an individual's language proficiency during interactions, affecting both speaking and listening. Students need to accurately pronounce words to create comprehensible sentences. They must also listen attentively to prevent miscommunication. Therefore, pronunciation is essential both theoretically and practically within the English study program at Madiun State Polytechnic to maintain the language quality of the students.

The students in the second semester of the English study program at Madiun State Polytechnic frequently struggle with pronunciation during both class and tests. They particularly have difficulties pronouncing English triphthongs such as (/eɪə/,/aɪə/,/ɔɪə/,/əʊə/,/aʊə/).

Additionally, the second semester students in the English study program at Madiun State Polytechnic encounter challenges when pronouncing English triphthongs. They frequently make errors that manifest during class and assessments. Below are the categories and corresponding percentages of errors related to English triphthongs: /aʊə/= 34.6%, /aɪə/= 31.8%, /ɔɪə/= 20%, /əʊə/= 9%, and /eɪə/= 4.6%. The following data pertains to diphthong errors:

Table (1) Triphthong /aʊə/

No	Words	Errors	Correct Use	Occurrence
1	Tower	/tɔʊə(r)/	/taʊə(r)/	12 times
		/tɔəʊ(r)/		2 times
		/tu: ə (r)/		3 times
2	Flower	/flɔə(r)/	/flauə(r)/	12 times
		/flɔuə(r)/		9 times

Table (2) Triphthong /aɪə/

No	Words	Errors	Correct Use	Occurrence
1	Dryer	/dreIə(r)	/draIə(r)/	7 times
		/drI:ə(r)		5 times
3	Iron	/eIən/	/aIən/	6 times
		/aIrən/		17 times

Table (3) Triphthong /ɔɪə/

No	Words	Errors	Correct Use	Occurrence
1	Enjoyable	/enjɔibl /	/injɔiəbl /	6 times
		/ænjɔiəbl /		9 times
2	Employer	/emplɔiə(r)/	/implɔiə(r)/	5 times
		/æmplɔyə(r)/		2 times

Table (4) Triphthong /əʊə /

No	Words	Errors	Correct Use	Occurrence
1	Lower	/lɔʊə(r) /	/lɔʊə(r) /	4 times
2	Widower	/ widəwə(r)/	/ widəʊə(r)/	6 times

Table (5) Triphthong /eɪə /

No	Words	Errors	Correct Use	Occurrence
1	Player	/ pleyər /	/ pleɪər /	3 times
2	Mayor	/ meyər /	/ meɪər /	2 times

After analysing the errors of the pronunciations committed by English study program students in their second semester at Madiun State Polytechnic, the researcher categorized them. the total of 110 occurrences of common Triphthong errors made by the students were classified into five groups. Three types of Triphthong errors were identified: substitution, insertion, and omission. The percentages are presented in the table below;

Table (6) The Categories of Errors

No	Kinds of Error	Occurrence	Percentage
1	Substitution	48	43,64 %
2	Insertion	36	32,73 %
3	Omission	26	23,63 %
	Total	110	100 %

The findings from this research, obtained through observations and interviews, indicate that the difficulties in pronouncing diphthongs among second semester students in the English Study Program at Madiun State Polytechnic were attributed to two main factors: inter-lingual and intra-lingual transfer. Generally, the students were influenced by their native language, which is referred to as inter-lingual transfer. Other students experienced intra-lingual transfer, characterized by the impact of one element of the target language on another, along with differences in the spelling and pronunciation of words.

5. CONCLUSION

The second-semester students in the English Study Program at Madiun Polytechnic are learning English as a foreign language. It is like the indonesia as the native language varies by region and serves as the second language. Consequently, the students encounter numerous challenges in mastering English pronunciation, particularly with triphthongs. During their speaking for workplace communication class tests, they made various pronunciation errors with triphthongs, such as /aʊə/ = 34.6%, /aɪə/ = 31.8%, /ɔɪə/ = 20%, /əʊə/ = 9%, and /eɪə/ =

4.6%, totaling 110 occurrences. The distribution of errors reveals different categories: substitution accounts for 43.64%, insertion for 32.73%, and omission for 23.63%.

Many elements contribute to students making mistakes when pronouncing English diphthongs, as revealed by observations and interviews. Several students mentioned that they rarely practice English since their everyday communication is primarily in their local languages, Javanese or even Indonesian. In addition, they encounter challenges in distinguishing between the sound systems of Indonesian and English, particularly with triphthongs.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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