

## AN ANALYSIS OF PRONUNCIATION ON THE ENGLISH WORDS HAVING VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS AT UNIVERSITY OF MUHAMMADIYAH TANGERANG

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### Abstract

This research aims to analyze the sixth semester students' pronunciation at University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang in Academic Year 2021/ 2022 in relation to English words which having vowels and diphthongs. This research is a kind of a qualitative research which designed through several stages, they are; the process of data collection, analyzing the gaining data, and interpreting the gaining data that has been analyzed. This research has selected 30 students to take part as respondents in this research. Simple random sampling has been used to select those 30 respondents who take part in this research. The results show that, there have been several issues which may be obstacles to students' pronunciation, especially to English words which having vowels and diphthongs sounds, they are: the effect of the first language, lack of awareness in phonemic symbols, miss-hearing the pronunciation features, and neurobiology of affective. However, in accordance with the issues related to students' pronunciation, there have been found several solution which may be value to overcome those issues mentioned, they are; creating own habit in English during daily communications, increasing awareness in phonemic symbols, increasing the level of activities in relation to listening which may be value to encourage awareness in hearing various pronunciation features.

**Keywords:** *Pronunciation, Vowels, and Diphthongs*

### INTRODUCTION

It is believed that speaking becomes one of the most fundamental skills when people learn new languages. It is in line with the statement that has been stated by Bailey and Savage in Celce-Murcia (2003) that speaking can be seen as the most demanding skills among other skills in language learning context-listening, reading, and writing. The statement is reasonable since according to Celce-Murcia (2003), having the ability to speak can be value as knowing the language itself. Besides, Brown (2007) also argues that through having communicative competence may be value to ease people in expressing certain feelings, conveying messages, and delivering any information to others by means of completing successful communication. Needless to say, having the ability to perform certain or target language orally is a must since it can be value to encourage successful communication.

As having the ability to speak is considered as one of the basic means of communication, there should be a concern to feature regarding how the oral language produced. It is in line

with Celce-Murcia (2003) who argues that pronunciation should get great concern in language instructional because it takes a crucial position to bridge learners to accomplish successful oral communication. Goodwin in Celce-Murcia (2003), pronunciation can take part as a powerful tool to accomplish goals of oral communication since it can be value to motivate language learners to get into the real communicative situation. This statement is in line with Harmer (2007) who says that pronunciation is necessary to encourage speaking skill, because it build up the construction of words and phrases with individual sounds by means of conveying messages and information be understood during the communicative situation. It is to say that pronunciation becomes one of the most fundamental features which may encourage language learners to accomplish successful oral communication.

Viewing pronunciation that can be viewed as a bridge to successful oral communication, it is necessary for language learners to have good pronunciation, especially when they are performing target language they learning with the appropriate words and phrases productions, such as; individual sounds, spelling, pitch change, stress, and intonation. However, based on the preliminary observation that has been conducted by researchers at the English Department of UMT regarding students' productions on the English words having vowels and diphthongs sounds, there have been found several words that produced inappropriately which lead misunderstanding in real communicative situation, for instances; *accept, except, principal, principle, sit, seat, farther, further, father, lie, lay, sight, side*, and many more. This phenomenon leads the researchers feel interested in analyzing students' pronunciation regarding the productions of English words.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **1. Pronunciation**

#### **a. Definition of Pronunciation**

Pronunciation is completely needed in order to deliver messages and information when people are conducting oral communication. It is reasonable because with good and clear pronunciation, it is easy for listeners to get the points that delivered. Before the further discussions regarding pronunciation, it is a must that definition of pronunciation should be understood comprehensively.

According to Lynch and Anderson (2012) in Indri, Dyah FH. (2017:94), pronunciation can be defined as a production of sounds produced by people in the form of words, phrases, or sentences which used to deliver messages or information successfully to others when they are conducting oral communication. Besides, Kristina (2012:12) in Indri, Dyah FH (2017:195), says that pronunciation is the way of producing sounds of words which will be delivered to other people in the form of oral communication. Furthermore, Kelly (2014) in Indri, Dyah FH (2017:195) also argues that pronunciation is the ability to produce correct sounds of words in oral communication. Needless to say, pronunciation is the way people in producing sounds of words of language in order to convey messages and information by means of successful communication.

According to Seidlhofer in Maya, Siska Fitri (2018) says that pronunciation is a set of concepts in producing clear information through sounds produced. Furthermore, Yates (2002 as cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani (2016:2) argues that pronunciation is a set of sounds which produced by means of creating a meaning to others for successful

communication. From both definitions regarding pronunciation, it is to say that pronunciation is a set of concepts of sounds production which produced to create a meaning which conducted during the oral communication to encourage successful communication.

The above explanations regarding pronunciation, it can be seen that pronunciation takes a significant role in the process of conveying and delivering messages and information when people are conducting oral communication. Through this essence, the importance of pronunciation in language (especially English) instructional should be discussed as well.

#### **b. The Importance of Pronunciation in English Instructional**

As mentioned above on the previous discussion, pronunciation takes a fundamental position in the process of conveying and delivering messages and information when people are conducting oral communication. The oral performance which formed in oral communication will not work well if the sound spoken is not clear. There will be misunderstandings in interpreting the meaning. Besides, that the listener will not be able to respond well if the pronunciation is not pronounced clearly. It goes without saying, learning pronunciation is a must by means of leading good communication.

According to (Derwing and Munro, 2005 as quoted in Nation and Newton, 2009), in Kusuma, Yosep Wijaya (2014:18) learning pronunciation is necessary to encourage people to speak clearly that leads communication runs well. In line with that statement, Nation and Newton (2009) argue that messages and information will be well-conveyed through having good pronunciation. In addition, Bang (1999) in abu and ridhuan (2014:144) states that, in language instructional context (especially English), learning pronunciation will make the interactions in class circumstances more alive and active. Through those essences, it is to say that learning pronunciation is completely significant to design and encourage the language instructional becomes more alive and active by means of conducting good oral interaction and communication between one and another in delivering certain knowledge, messages and information.

#### **c. Pronunciation in Encouraging Oral Communicative Competence**

Communication becomes one of the activities which mostly conducted in everyday life, both written and oral communication. However, oral communication takes most of the time that conducted by people. It is to say, having good communicative competence is necessary.

Communicative competence can be achieved through many ways. One of the ways is through having good pronunciation. It is reasonable because pronunciation is closely related to oral communication. As stated by Burns (2003) in Pourhosein, Abbas Gilakjani (2012:120), who says that, in communication, it is not only necessary to know a lot of vocabulary, in addition, communication will run well supported by correct pronunciation and clear pronunciation, because Rebecca (1993:6) argues listeners will find it difficult to understand if the speaker pronounces words that are not properly pronounced, this will result in the listener misinterpreting the speaker's words or sentences. Adding by Morley (1991: 481-520) in Marcus Otlowski (1998) also thinks

that correct and clear pronunciation helps individuals themselves when interacting with others. Needless to say, pronunciation takes a fundamental role in supporting people to have oral communicative competence to avoid misunderstanding and to ease listeners in interpreting the meaning from information and messages which produced and delivered.

## 2. Vowels and Diphthongs

### a. Definition of Vowels and Diphthongs

Discussing the term of pronunciation, it cannot be avoided that it should be dealing with vowels and diphthongs. It is because vowels and diphthongs are two most fundamental things which lead people produce clear and correct pronunciation in producing language during communication which conducted.

According Fromkin, Robert, and Hyams (2011, p. 585) in Arianto, Tomi and Ambalegin the wind that is in the mouth is released freely and will produce a sound called a vowel. Besides, Vlack (2004) in Wulansari (2017:15) defines vowel is a sound that is produced from a certain part of the mouth that does not touch the tongue. Furthermore, Dardjowidjojo (2009) gives his opinion that vowels are the sound produced when the air comes out and the high and low position of the tongue and how the position/shape of the lips will affect the sound. In addition, Bussmann (1996) in Idhar (2017:10) says that a vowel sound is the meaning of a syllable in a word that is produced when the tongue vibrates. From those experts' explanations regarding definition of vowels, it can be concluded that vowel is the sound produced by air passing around the mouth with the tongue position above, the tongue position below or even in the back/inside position and the shape of the mouth. Each has a different sound and will shape the mouth.

In learning pronunciation, it is not only dealing with vowels, but, pronunciation is also related to diphthongs. According to Nurhadi (1997:35) In Suryatiningsih, Ninik (2015:4) Diphthongs are a combination of two vowel sounds. The sound is immediately launched from the first vowel to the next vowel. Roach (1998) in Ayu, Putri Dosia and Rido (2017:22) Diphthongs is the gliding of one vowel to another is called a diphthong, which means that a diphthong is a combination of two vowels. Besides, Smith (2015) in Wangi, Wulan & Amiq, Dicky Nudya (2020:100) Diphthongs in English are sounds that can be easily recognized if there are two vowels joined together, read from one vowel directly to the next.

### b. Vowels and Diphthongs in English

Vowels and diphthongs are always existed in every language. As in English, vowels and diphthongs are existed as well. According to Dardjowidjojo (2009), there are twelve vowels and eight diphthongs in English, namely [i], [ɪ], [e], [ɛ], [æ], [ə], [ʌ], [u], [ʊ], [o], [ɔ], [ɑ]. According to Crystal (2003), there are eight diphthongs in English, they are: [aɪ], [eɪ], [əʊ], [aʊ], [eə], [ɪə], [ɔɪ], [ʊə]. Through the existed various of vowels and diphthongs, it is to say that having knowledge regarding vowels and diphthongs is a necessary because it might determine words production which lead clear meaning when delivering messages and information to others in conducting oral communication.

However, the core which can be seen clearly between vowels and diphthongs is in the way in producing each of them. Without being technical, the main difference between vowels and diphthongs are in the sounds production. It is in line with Saadah and Ardi (2020) who argues that the production of diphthongs is exclusively sounds, however, vowels are also sounds but in specific letters of the alphabet from which those familiar sound combinations originate. Besides, Setyaningsih, et.al (2019) also states the difference between vowels and diphthongs. Setyaningsih, et.al say that, in term of

technical production, diphthongs are two vowel letters that are echoed to produce two sounds in one syllable, however, vowels is technically produced by a single sound while the sound produced by diphthongs is double. In addition, Visoni and Marlina (2020) comment that the sounds production of vowels usually don't need tongue movement, while these two vowels called diphthongs are connected one vowels to the next vowels and the difference of tongue movements can be seen clearly. Through this essence, it can be stated that the core idea which may distinguish between vowels and sounds in order to support clear pronunciation which produced is in sounds production.

Judging from the meaning of vowels, diphthongs are two vowel letters that are echoed to produce two sounds in one syllable. of the sound produced by vowels is a single sound while the sound produced by diphthongs is double. Usually vowels don't need tongue movement and while these two vowels called diphthongs are connected one vowels to the next vowels and you see different tongue movements.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a kind of a qualitative research. In this research, the researchers are going to observe the 6<sup>th</sup> semester of English Department students of University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang regarding their pronunciation. Besides, the researchers are going to see students' pronunciation in relation to vowel and diphthongs in English.

In this research, the researchers are going to deliver passages which consist of vowels and diphthongs that will be analyzed. In case of pandemic of COVID-19 situation, the researchers are not going to see students' performance directly. However, the researchers will ask the students to perform the given passages through reading aloud which recorded in the form of audio recording.

When participants have submitted the audio recordings, the researchers will lift to the next step, it is checking the audio recordings that have submitted by means of collecting the data regarding students' pronunciation in relation to vowels and diphthongs. After that, the researcher will analyze the data of performance regarding vowels and diphthongs pronunciation produced in the audio recordings. Then, when the process of analyzing the data has completed, the research will take notes related to its findings and draw conclusions of the research.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The researchers found 5 vowels which pronounced correctly, they are "u:", "a:", "æ", "e", "o ". Besides, the researcher has found vowel "i:" were pronounced correctly by 28 respondents. However, the other 2 respondents still made mistakes in pronouncing vowel "i:".

Regarding vowels "ɜ:", the researchers found 2 respondents who made mistakes in pronouncing vowel "ɜ:" out of 30. Besides, there have been found 2 respondents who mispronounced vowel "ɔ:" and vowels "ɒ" The other finding is vowels "ɪ", which incorrectly pronounced by two-third or 20 out of 30. Then, vowels "ʌ" were mispronounced only by 4 respondents. Related to vowel "ə", has been found 12 respondents who correctly pronounced, but the rest 18 were pronouncing vowel "ə" incorrectly. For the sound of diphthongs, the researchers found 3 diphthongs which pronounced correctly, they are "uə", "eə", "i" which were correctly pronounced by 30 respondents. However, the other 5 diphthongs were pronounced incorrectly by some respondents. The first one is diphthongs "iə" which



incorrectly pronounced by 2 out of 30 respondents. The sound of diphthongs "əʊ" have found incorrectly mispronounced by 10 respondents. Besides, diphthongs "aʊ" have correctly pronounced by 22 respondents while the rest 8 respondents made mistake in pronouncing it. Then the sound of diphthongs "ei" the researchers found 4 respondents who made mistakes in its pronunciation. At last, the sound of diphthongs "ai", the researchers only found 2 respondents who mispronounced the sound, but, the other 28 have performed correctly in pronouncing the sound of diphthongs "ai".

The results of the analysis process in relation to the third semester students' pronunciation on English vowel and diphthongs are as the following:

1. The first issue that has been found by the researchers are regarding the way in pronouncing vowel "i:". As mentioned on the research findings above, 28 out of 30 respondents have produced correct pronunciation on vowel "i:", while the rest 2 respondents made mistakes in pronouncing that vowel. Based on the interview conducted to the 2 respondents who made mistakes in pronouncing vowel "i:", this issue has come up because they have problem *in hearing pronunciation features*.

As in Bahasa Indonesia, the way in pronouncing vowel "i:" will be exactly the same as its written form. It is because, in Bahasa Indonesia, they only have one "i", such as "nasi", "pergi", "tinggi", and kaki". However, in English, they have various ways in pronouncing I, such as; "i:", "i", and "i". This leads the condition when the respondents cannot distinguish those differences, it will effect to mispronunciation, as occurred to 2 respondents in producing the sound of vowel "i:".it is in line with harmer 249 who states that some students have great difficulty hearing pronunciation features which we want them to reproduce. Researcher also interview respondents whose pronunciation is correct; they are the correct pronunciation turn out Finding partners to encourage daily practice in oral English and watching English movie.

2. The second issue that has been found by the researchers are regarding the way in pronouncing vowel "ɜ:", "ɔ:" and "ɒ". As mentioned on the research findings above, 2 out of 30 respondents have produced correct pronunciation on vowel "ɜ:", "ɔ:" and "ɒ". This issue has come up because of *the effect of the first language* and they do not realize the existence of *phonemic symbols*. The term of phonemic symbol is necessary because this may promote students' awareness to hear the difference of sounds which may value to students in producing the correct sound of words. Furthermore, in Bahasa Indonesia, the way in producing the sound of word is commonly pronounce similarly as the written form, for examples "apel", "ada", "pesawat", "permainan", those words are pronounced with clear sound of vowel "ʌ".

Based on the analysis to students' pronunciation produced by the given task previously, the result shows that 2 respondents out of 30, have produced correct pronunciation on vowel "ɜ:", "ɔ:" and "ɒ". This condition made the researcher conducted kind of in depth interview. After conducting the interview to 28 respondents, the researcher take to main points which may be the issues regarding mistakes that students made in pronouncing vowel "ɜ:", "ɔ:" and "ɒ", they are, first, it occurs because of *the effect of the first language*, and, the second, *they do not realize and aware the existence of phonemic symbols of the words*. Researcher also interview respondents whose pronunciation is correct, they are the correct pronunciation turn out Creating daily habit in listening to English podcast, songs, conversation videos and watching English movie.

3. The third issue that has been found by the researchers are regarding the way in pronouncing vowel “ʌ”. As mentioned on the research findings above, 26 out of 30 respondents have produced correct pronunciation on vowel “ʌ”. This issue has come up because of *the effect of the first language* and they do not realize the existence of *phonemic symbols*. The term of phonemic symbol is necessary because this may promote students’ awareness to hear the difference of sounds which may value to students in producing the correct sound of words. Furthermore, in Bahasa Indonesia, the way in producing the sound of word is commonly pronounce similarly as the written form, for examples, “mutu”, “batu” , “baru” , “karung” those words are pronounced with clear sound of vowel “ʌ”.  
Based on the analysis to students’ pronunciation produced by the given task previously, the result shows that 26 respondents out of 30, have produced correct pronunciation on vowel “ʌ”. This condition made the researcher conducted kind of in depth interview. After conducting the interview to 4 respondents, the researcher take to main points which may be the issues regarding mistakes that students made in pronouncing vowel “ʌ”, they are, first, it occurs because of *the effect of the first language*, and, the second, *they do not realize and aware the existence of phonemic symbols of the words*. Researcher also interview respondents whose pronunciation is correct, they are the correct pronunciation turn out Creating daily habit in listening to English podcast, songs, and conversation videos.
4. The fourth issue that has been found by the researchers are regarding to the way in pronouncing vowel “ə”. The examples of words, like; “diet”, “yogurt”, “contain” as existed in the test given, there have been found 12 out of 30 respondents have produced correct pronunciation on vowel “ə”. This issue has come up because of *the effect of the first language*. However, among the examples given regarding vowel “ə”, the researcher has found unique word which 100% correctly pronounced, it is the word “different”. This fact shows that *their neurobiology of affect because of the habit built*. It means that, the students’ habit in hearing the word sound of “different” may be value to create neurobiology of affect that may connect between affectivity and mental/ emotional processing in general as well as producing the sound of the word “different”. Researcher also interview respondents whose pronunciation is correct, they are the correct pronunciation turn out Finding partners to encourage daily practice in oral English.
5. The fifth issue that has been found by the researchers are regarding to the way in pronouncing vowel “ɪ”. The examples of word, like; “live”, as existed in the test given, there have been found 10 out of 30 respondents have produced correct pronunciation on vowel “ɪ”. This issue has come up because of *the effect of the first language* and they do not realize the existence of *phonemic symbols*. The term of phonemic symbol is necessary because this may promote students’ awareness to hear the difference of sounds which may value to students in producing the correct sound of words.  
Based on the analysis to students’ pronunciation produced by the given task previously, the result shows that 10 respondents out of 30, have produced correct pronunciation on vowel “ɪ”. This condition made the researcher conducted kind of in depth interview. After conducting the interview to 20 respondents, the researcher take to main points which may be the issues regarding mistakes that students made in pronouncing vowel “ɪ”, they are, first, it occurs because of *the effect of the first language*, and, the second, *they do not realize and aware the existence of phonemic symbols of the words*.



6. The sixth issue that has been found by the researchers are regarding to the way in pronouncing diphthong “au”. As mentioned on the research findings above, 22 out of 30 respondents have produced correct pronunciation on diphthong “au”. This issue has come up because of *the effect of the first language*.  
Based on the analysis to students’ pronunciation produced by the given task previously, the result shows that 22 respondents out of 30, have produced correct pronunciation on diphthong “au”. This condition made the researcher conducted kind of in depth interview. After conducting the interview to 8 respondents, the researcher take to main points which may be the issues regarding mistakes that students made in pronouncing diphthong “au”, they are, it occurs because of *the effect of the first language*. Researcher also interview respondents whose pronunciation is correct, they are the correct pronunciation turn out Finding partners to encourage daily practice in oral English and watching English movie.
7. The seventh issue that has been found by the researchers are regarding to the way in pronouncing diphthong “ia”. As mentioned on the research findings above, 28 out of 30 respondents have produced correct pronunciation on diphthong “ia”. This issue has come up because they do not realize the existence of *phonemic symbols*.  
Based on the analysis to students’ pronunciation produced by the given task previously, the result shows that 28 respondents out of 30, have produced correct pronunciation on diphthong “ia”. This condition made the researcher conducted kind of in depth interview. After conducting the interview to 2 respondents, the researcher take to main points which may be the issues regarding mistakes that students made in pronouncing diphthong “ia”, they are, it occurs because they do not realize the existence of *phonemic symbols*. Researcher also interview respondents whose pronunciation is correct, they are the correct pronunciation turn out finding partners to encourage daily practice in oral English.
8. The eighth issue that has been found by the researchers are regarding to the way in pronouncing diphthong “eu”. As mentioned on the research findings above, 20 out of 30 respondents have produced correct pronunciation on diphthong “eu”. This issue has come up because of *the effect of the first language*.  
Based on the analysis to students’ pronunciation produced by the given task previously, the result shows that 20 respondents out of 30, have produced correct pronunciation on diphthong “eu”. This condition made the researcher conducted kind of in depth interview. After conducting the interview to 10 respondents, the researcher take to main points which may be the issues regarding mistakes that students made in pronouncing diphthong “eu”, they are, it occurs because of *the effect of the first language*. Researcher also interview respondents whose pronunciation is correct, they are the correct pronunciation turn out finding partners to encourage daily practice in oral English.
9. The ninth issue that has been found by the researchers are regarding to the way in pronouncing diphthong “ei”. As mentioned on the research findings above, 26 out of 30 respondents have produced correct pronunciation on diphthong “ei”, while the rest 4 respondents made mistakes in pronouncing that diphthong. Based on the interview conducted to the 4 respondents who made mistakes in pronouncing diphthong “ei”, this issue has come up because they have problem *in hearing pronunciation features*. Researcher also interview respondents whose pronunciation is correct, they are the correct pronunciation turn out Creating daily habit in listening to English podcast, songs, conversation videos and watching English movie

10. The last issue that has been found by the researchers are regarding to the way in pronouncing diphthong “ai”. As mentioned on the research findings above, 28 out of 30 respondents have produced correct pronunciation on diphthong “ai”. This issue has come up because they do not realize the existence of *phonemic symbols*. Based on the analysis to students’ pronunciation produced by the given task previously, the result shows that 28 respondents out of 30, have produced correct pronunciation on diphthong “ai”. This condition made the researcher conducted kind of in depth interview. After conducting the interview to 2 respondents, the researcher take to main points which may be the issues regarding mistakes that students made in pronouncing diphthong “ai”, they are, it occurs because they do not realize the existence of *phonemic symbols*. Researchers also interview respondents whose pronunciation is correct, they are the correct pronunciation turn out Creating daily habit in listening to English podcast, songs, conversation videos, watching English movie and finding partners to encourage daily practice in oral English.

## CONCLUSION

After conducting the research in relation to the analysis of the sixth semester students’ pronunciation on vowel and diphthongs, researchers formulated the conclusions as follows:

1. The sixth semester students mostly have good pronunciation in English words which have vowels and diphthongs. However, only a few English words pronounced incorrectly by almost a half of sixth semester students of University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang, they are vowel “I”, “ə” and diphthongs “au” and “əu”.
2. There have been found several factors which may be issues regarding students’ pronunciation on vowel and diphthongs, they are:
  - a. Most students are having problems in hearing English pronunciation features.
  - b. The effect of the first language (Bahasa Indonesia)
  - c. Neurobiology of affective
  - d. Lack of awareness in English phonemic symbols.

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