# Identifying Students' Phonological Errors in Pronouncing Vowel Diphthong at MAN 1 Pekanbaru

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## Abstract

This research aimed to identify students' phonological errors in pronouncing vowel diphthongs. Furthermore, the researcher also formulated the problem in a question, what kinds of vowel diphthong sound that is most frequently found errors in students' pronunciation at tenth grade MAN 1 Pekanbaru. The subject of this research was the tenth grade of MAN 1 Pekanbaru in the academic year 2021/2022. This research used the descriptive quantitative method. The researcher randomly selected 60 samples from 395 populations. The instrument of this was a pronunciation test of the English Vowel Diphthong word containing 8 types of English Vowel Diphthong and for each type, there are 2 focus words, and a voice recorder to record the students' pronunciation. The result of the identification showed that the students made errors out of a total of 339 words. The kinds of errors on vowel diphthong sound which are most frequently found in students' pronunciation at tenth grade MAN 1 Pekanbaru are in Diphthong [ɔʊ] the focus word is "although" gets a total error of 72%. In Diphthong [ʊə] both focus words get the highest total error, which is "during" gets 65% and "obscure" get 62%. And the last Diphthong [aɪ] with the focus word is "sacrifice", which gets a total error of 61%.

*Keywords: Phonological Errors, Pronunciation, Vowel Diphthong.*

## Introduction

Pronunciation is a key aspect in the development of oral skills. Proper pronunciation is inherent to any competent speaker but this competence can (and must) be trained in any non-native speaker. It is also explained by Gilakjani (2012:96) that pronunciation is a set habit of for producing sounds. The habit of producing a sound is acquired by repeating it over and over again by being corrected when it is pronounced wrongly. As Ur (1996) concedes, the aim of pronunciation is not to achieve a perfect imitation of native accent, but to get the learner to pronounce accurately enough to be easily and comfortably comprehensible to other speakers. In fact, scholars such as Derwing and Munro (2005) or Goodwin (2001) argue that it is the teachers' role to help ESL learners to set realistic goals for pronunciation instruction and these goals do not normally target native-like accents.

As claimed by Koontz and O'Donnell (2005), communication is the exchange of information between two or more people. A conversation involves both parties. There is a communicator and a communicator's recipient. Exchange means that the communicator's thoughts, feelings, and opinions are received and responded to by the recipient. Clear pronunciation is the key to effective communication since it allows for the assessment of

how well students, teachers, and other students are communicating with one another. We always make an effort to communicate our ideas, feelings, and experiences to others. Our capacity for effective communication determines how well we accomplish our objectives. As a result, when learning occurs, communication and pronunciation are closely related.

Indonesian also does not have clusters, stress, and aspirated sounds. In pronunciation, there are sound or phonemes. Phonemes are classified as vowel and consonants. A recent study (Schumm, 2016) concluded that vowel sound is certainly an important component of learning to read and write in English due to the complexity of vowel sounds, some students may need additional support to master vowel sounds.

In English alphabet divided phonemes into 45 phonemes which are consisted of 24 consonants, 12 vowels, and 9 diphthongs in segmental features (phonemes), which have variant sound for each sound symbol. The alphabets of English and Bahasa Indonesia are the same in quantity but different in the way they are pronounced. Indonesian only has three diphthongs, they are diphthong [aɪ], [aʊ], and [ɔɪ] which has most commonly used, such as found in the words sampai, kerbau and meridhoi. The researcher interprets that the students still do inconsistency in pronouncing the diphthong sounds. The students also complain that they can not pronounce it well and stand to be consistent with the sound production. Therefore, they get stammer and thought about how to pronounce the sound.

MAN 1 Pekanbaru is one of the schools in Pekanbaru city. As an Islamic formal education institution, this school also presents the English subject to their students. MAN 1 Pekanbaru is the one school that use K13 (2013 curriculum. English is a curriculum that an implement system of teaching and learning activity that used from tenth until twelfth grade. English study in this curriculum teaching in two meetings a week and takes 45 minutes for meeting. Based on the curriculum one of the instructions is students should master in pronunciation words and can understand what sound of words (Depdiknas, 2013).

In the classroom, students need to focus about their pronunciation, with school whose curriculum has integrity, MAN 1 Pekanbaru applies learning in which every meeting requires students to be able to do speaking, reading, writing and listening because every material in teaching English presented by the teacher with 4 aspects and that is must be fulfilled so the researcher chooses MAN 1 Pekanbaru as a place of this researcher.

The errors could not be separated from students in the process of learning English. Hence, in a class not only had one race or one mother tongue. Moreover, English and Indonesian have different rules in pronouncing vowel diphthong. For example, English has rule when speaker must change feature values in segments such as "town" should be pronounced as /taʊn/ not /town. Based on researcher pre observation on the practicing teaching English at the tenth grade of MAN 1 Pekanbaru, more than 60% percent of them are wrong to pronounce vowel diphthong, some words such as in pronouncing word "eight" they pronounce it /eigh/, /eich/, /et/. It should be /eɪt/. Next word "engineer" they pronounce it /enginer/, it should be /ˌen.dʒɪˈnɪə(r)/. And then word "though" they pronounce it /taugh/, /dough/. It should be /ðəʊ/. Students said that pronunciation is very difficult to learn and to be mastering.

Some of the students find the difficulties how to differentiate the words are written and pronounced. It is because they did not learn specifically about diphthong pronunciation in class. When the teacher instructs using a mix of Indonesian and English, the teaching and

learning process that takes place in the classroom is rendered inefficient because the pupils find it difficult to comprehend the lesson. When the researcher taught the class, the students consistently requested that he or she use Indonesian, so the researcher was forced to repeat the subject in that language.

The learning objectives in class are not met because students who are learning to speak find it difficult to communicate in class, and when they are compelled to talk in English, speakers, and listeners do not comprehend. Because pronunciation has such an impact on learning, it is the primary skill required of pupils to be able to speak effectively. Teachers' ability to deliver lessons is hindered by poor student pronunciation and their inability to use English.

The tenth grade at MAN 1 Pekanbaru for the 2020/2021 academic year enters this school with separate path from the eleventh and twelfth grades. The tenth grade used a somewhat different process using the CBT exam, and the COVID-19 condition made the new student admission process less than ideal. Additionally, this overwhelms the teacher of the tenth grade while they are teaching and studying. Without clear communication, learning cannot accomplish its objectives since pronunciation has a significant impact on communication.
Some of the previous studies have found that pronunciation errors of English made by students from different language backgrounds are systematic and not accidental (Rajaduraiin Husada, 2007). In pronouncing diphthong [aɪ] students pronounced the sound with diphthong [eɪ] and vowel [e] as mostly incorrect to be inconsistent, and other sounds of vowels such [ɪ], [a], [æ], and [ə]. Inconsistent pronunciations happen when the students try to correct pronunciation clearly, but it is hard to imitate to pronounce the correct pronunciation. It can be because the elements do not exist in the native language.
For that reason, this research was investigated the students' phonological errors in pronouncing vowel diphthong at MAN 1 Pekanbaru..

**Methodology**
The study used quantitative research with a descriptive quantitative approach and the data was presented numerically. The purpose of descriptive research in this study is to describe the result and information about students' phonological errors in pronouncing vowel diphthongs. According to Creswell (2012), "descriptive quantitative research characteristics are characteristics that describe a research problem through a description". The researcher used this method because the researcher thinks using tests can ease her research and it can minimize the time. So, the technique that is used by the researcher is descriptive quantitative approach with test. The population of this research is students MAN 1 Pekanbaru in academic year 2020/2021 consist 12 classes. There are 395 students as the population. According to Arikunto (2006), if the numbers of population less than 100, it has to take 50% but if population more than 100, the sample is taken 15-25%. Because the population more than 100, so the researcher took 15%. A total number is 60 students as the sample in this research. This sample is taken by a simple random sampling technique. The data of this research were analyzed by using a Guttman Scale Interval Rate Classification for scoring phonological error in pronouncing vowel diphthongs of students.

The researcher gave text contained 8 kinds of vowel diphthong. The researcher asked permission for the respondents and then gives explained the purpose of the researcher. After that, the researcher gives a test for the respondents. The test consists of vowel diphthong sounds and then asks the respondent to read that vowel diphthong. The vowel

diphthong are /aɪ/, /eɪ/, /əʊ/,/aʊ/, /eə/, /ɪə/, /ɔɪ/, /ʊə/. Then, researcher used Guttman Scale Interval Rate Classification for scoring phonological error in pronouncing vowel diphthong of students, the researcher was calculated by using a numerical system in gathering the data and using SPSS 22 for analyzing data for the further analysis description on students' errors in pronouncing vowel diphthong.

**Results and Discussion**

The purpose of this research is to find out the kinds of errors in pronouncing Vowel Diphthong in the tenth grade of MAN 1 Pekanbaru. The data of the problem is based on error analysis in student scores on one test. To calculate the percentage of errors, the researcher tabulates the data to identify the easy and the difficult items. There are 8 kinds of vowel diphthongs that assess to find out the kinds of errors wade by students.

Pronunciation tests purposed to know the students' pronunciation, especially in English diphthongs., there were 16 diphthongs pronounced by 60 students. It can be seen from the following table:

**Table 1.** The Kind of Vowel Diphthong

| DIPHTHONG | |
|---|---|
| Diphthong [ɪə] | area |
| | idea |
| Diphthong [eə] | warehouse |
| | their |
| Diphthong [ʊə] | during |
| | obscure |
| Diphthong [eɪ] | came |
| | gave |
| Diphthong [aɪ] | fire |
| | sacrifice |
| Diphthong [ɔɪ] | avoid |
| | destroyed |
| Diphthong [ɔʊ] | go |
| | although |
| Diphthong [aʊ] | proud |
| | houses |

For analyzing data on students' errors in pronouncing vowel diphthong the researcher diphthongs the further analysis description by using SPSS 22. It can be seen from the following table:

**Table 2** The Descriptive Statistics Students' Errors in Pronouncing Vowel Diphthong

| | | | | | Mean | | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Stat. | Std. Error | Stat. | Stat. |
| Errors | 16 | 43 | 0 | 43 | 21.44 | 3.665 | 14.660 | 214.929 |

The data found that the percentage of errors in the tenth grade of MAN 1 Pekanbaru in pronouncing vowel diphthong. And having known the score to identifying of kinds of errors on vowel diphthong sound which is most frequently found in students' pronunciation in tenth grade of MAN 1 Pekanbaru by counting the frequency and percentage of the vowel diphthong words.

**Table 3.** The Result of Students' Score in Pronouncing Vowel Diphthong

| DIPHTHONG | | Final Score | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Correct | | Incorrect | |
| | | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Diphthong [ɪə] | area | 60 | 100% | 0 | 0% |
| | idea | 52 | 86% | 9 | 14% |
| Diphthong [eə] | warehouse | 51 | 85% | 9 | 15% |
| | their | 58 | 97% | 2 | 3% |
| Diphthong [ʊə] | during | 21 | 35% | 39 | 65% |
| | obscure | 23 | 38% | 37 | 62% |
| Diphthong [eɪ] | came | 34 | 56% | 27 | 44% |
| | gave | 33 | 54% | 28 | 46% |
| Diphthong [aɪ] | fire | 55 | 91% | 6 | 9% |
| | sacrifice | 24 | 39% | 37 | 61% |
| Diphthong [ɔɪ] | avoid | 55 | 92% | 5 | 8% |
| | destroyed | 25 | 41% | 36 | 59% |
| Diphthong [ɔʊ] | go | 39 | 64% | 22 | 36% |
| | although | 17 | 28% | 43 | 72% |
| Diphthong [aʊ] | proud | 43 | 71% | 18 | 29% |
| | houses | 35 | 58% | 25 | 42% |

From all data above, the researcher can conclude that the kinds of errors on vowel diphthong sound which is most frequently found in students' pronunciation at tenth grade MAN 1 Pekanbaru are in Diphthong [ɔʊ] the focus word is "although". "Although" gets a total error of 72% which indicates the highest score errors in pronouncing vowel diphthong. In Diphthong [ʊə] both focus words get the highest total error, which is "during" gets 65%, and "obscure" get 62%, which indicates high scores errors in pronouncing vowel diphthong. And the last Diphthong [aɪ] with the focus word is "sacrifice", which gets a total error of 61%, which indicates high score errors in pronouncing vowel diphthong.

The finding is that researcher accomplishment was processed through data presented previously. The data of s identifying an error were taken from the tenth grade of MAN 1 Pekanbaru. Based on the identification, it is found that most of them have same the tone and pronunciation. The errors in pronouncing English Vowel Diphthong are assumed to be affected by many factors. One of the factors is the habit of the students in pronouncing the word that contains diphthong, mispronouncing, the words pronounced are rarely heard, the same language background and the same educational background. They have difficulty in understanding how to pronounce a word because it is different between what it is written and what it is pronounced. Errors still occur because of their lack of knowledge and awareness when pronouncing vowel diphthong.

This research was done by identifying and counting the number of errors that appeared in the student answer records. As it had done in a pronunciation test consisting of 16 focus words in 8 kinds of vowel diphthongs contained in a recount text entitled "Bandung Sea of Fire".

By doing research previously, researchers found some errors in their pronunciation when they recorded their voices. From the table, it can be seen that for diphthongs tests, students are the source of data. The data found that there was no error (100%) in pronouncing the

vowel diphthong in the focus word "area," but there were many errors that students made when they pronounced another diphthong.

**Table 4.** The percentage of Total Errors in Pronouncing Vowel Diphthong

| DIPHTHONG | | Frecuency of Error | Percentage of Error |
|---|---|---|---|
| Diphthong [ɪə] | Area | 0 | 0% |
| Diphthong [eə] | Their | 2 | 3% |
| Diphthong [ɔɪ] | avoid | 5 | 8% |
| Diphthong [aɪ] | Fire | 6 | 9% |
| Diphthong [ɪə] | Idea | 9 | 14% |
| Diphthong [eə] | warehouse | 9 | 15% |
| Diphthong [aʊ] | proud | 18 | 29% |
| Diphthong [ɔʊ] | go | 22 | 36% |
| Diphthong [eɪ] | Came | 27 | 44% |
| Diphthong [eɪ] | Gave | 28 | 46% |
| Diphthong [ɔɪ] | destroyed | 36 | 59% |
| Diphthong [aɪ] | sacrifice | 37 | 61% |
| Diphthong [ʊə] | obscure | 37 | 62% |
| Diphthong [ʊə] | During | 39 | 65% |
| Diphthong [ɔʊ] | although | 43 | 72% |
| | | 339 | 565% |

The kinds of errors in vowel diphthong sound which are most frequently found in students' pronunciation at tenth grade MAN 1 Pekanbaru are in diphthong [ɔʊ] The focus word is "although." "Although" gets a total error of 72%, which indicates the highest score of errors in pronouncing vowel diphthong. In Diphthong [ʊə] both focus words get the highest total error, which is "during" gets 65%, and "obscure" gets 62%, which indicates a high score and errors in pronouncing vowels diphthong. And the last diphthong [aɪ] with the focus word is "sacrifice", which gets a total error of 61%, which indicates a high-scoring error in pronouncing vowel diphthong.

**Discussion**
Pronunciation errors commonly occur among language learners, especially EFL Learners, because they do not use English in their daily lives. However, pronunciation errors have to take into account because they will bring about a shift in meaning, and create another word, or even a new word. When the received meaning is wrong, it will immediately make the pronunciation of the word or sentence not align with the actual meaning.

Based on what has been discussed, presented and analyzed in the previous chapters, it is concluded that the errors in this research are mostly diphthong [ʊə] in a high back centering position with focus words "during and obscure". And the highest percentage of errors in pronouncing vowel diphthong in diphthong [ɔʊ] the focus word is "although", this word gets a total error of 72%. This happens because most students did not know how to pronounce the words correctly. The researcher found that students did not carefully tamper when pronouncing the words, and students did not pay more attention to the initial and final vocal pressure vowel because these two things can affect the results when pronouncing vowel diphthong..

**Conclusion**

Based on the research findings, it is concluded that the lecturers' and students; perception towards online learning which are based on two assessment categories, namely (1) perceived usefulness and (2) perceived ease-of-use fall on high category (respectively, 72,95% and 71,1%; 79.10% and 72.50%). Both the lecturers and the students had their favorite things, whereas the lecturers mostly appreciated the flexibility of online learning in term of time and place (82.86%); and the students mostly appreciated the online learning's opportunity to study English ((77,19%).

The findings are quite interesting as both the lecturers and the students were very much enjoying online learning. However, their learning preferences went to face-to-face meeting instead of online learning. The lecturers (7.96%) and students (8.29%) gave the lowest agreement score on item whether the learning process via online learning is faster than face-to-face learning which means that the online learning was thought could not surpass the face-to-face meeting as a better learning method. The results may explain for the virtues of the face-to-face meeting which cannot be afforded by the online learning, even though the online learning has interesting virtues as well.

This research is inseparable from the shortcomings, therefore some suggestions are given to future researchers, namely (1) the next researcher can recruit more participants, as the number of lecturers in this reseach is quite little compared to the students, (2) the next researcher can use different instruments to collect the data, like observation, interview and tests.

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