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Pronunciation Errors in English Diphthongs Among Kurdish EFL Students: An Academic Inquiry

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Abstract

This study seeks to ascertain the pronunciation inaccuracies of Kurdish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at the university level when articulating English diphthong phonemes. These students grapple with challenges related to the articulation of diphthong sounds in English due to their limited exposure and practice. The primary objective of this research is to identify, categorize, and quantify the total number of pronunciation errors made by Kurdish EFL students in the context of English diphthongs.

A sample of thirty undergraduate Kurdish EFL students, who are native speakers of Northern Kirmanci, participated in this descriptive qualitative study. The students were requested to pronounce 40 English words, encompassing the eight diphthong sounds prescribed by Southern Standard British English Received Pronunciation (RP). Their pronunciations were recorded using smartphones. These students, who were in their senior year of undergraduate studies, were selected for the study. The recordings of the students' pronunciations were meticulously examined to discern common mispronunciations of English diphthong sounds. Subsequently, the data were collected, organized, and ranked in order of prevalence, ultimately revealing a total of 405 errors. The prevalence of diphthong errors is presented as follows: (ʊə) at a rate of 93.3%, (ɪə) 58.8%, (əʊ) 42.2%, (eə) 37.3%, (aʊ) 28.6%, (eɪ) 14.7%, (aɪ) 8%, and (ɔɪ) 5.8%.

Kurdish native speakers frequently encounter difficulties in articulating English diphthongs, primarily due to the absence of these sounds in their native language and a dearth of English pronunciation study and practice throughout their academic journey. These diphthong pronunciation errors manifest in eight distinct patterns, contributing to a spectrum of student proficiency levels. Consequently, to enhance their linguistic competence and accurately pronounce English words containing diphthongs, students should engage in sustained diphthong practice during their academic tenure at the university.

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Introduction

Effective communication through a target language hinges on precise pronunciation. Achieving the pinnacle of flawless communication necessitates proper articulation (The secret to flawless communication via the target language is proper pronunciation). Among the paramount aspirations of second language (L2) learners is the attainment of native-like fluency in English. This linguistic proficiency, specifically, accurate pronunciation, matures organically as learners acquire various components of the language. However, akin to other language competencies, mastering the precise pronunciation of L2 sounds is imperative. Despite the challenges posed by connected speech, a speaker's ability to enunciate words clearly is the hallmark of proficient pronunciation.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students from diverse cultural backgrounds, including those who speak the Northern Kurmanji (NK) Kurdish dialect, often encounter difficulties when attempting to accurately pronounce English words containing diphthongs. This can be attributed to the scarcity of diphthongs in their native tongue, as corroborated by a contrastive analysis (cf. Findings), coupled with the idiosyncrasies of English orthography, which often diverge from phonetic renditions. For instance, words like 'code' and 'show' are typically pronounced by most KFL learners as /ku:d/ and /ʃu:/, as opposed to the correct phonetic representations of /kəʊd/ and /ʃəʊ/.

Aims of the Study

1. This study endeavors to scrutinize the prevalent pronunciation errors committed by 4th-level KFL learners within the Department of English Language at the University of Duhok during the academic year 2022-2023.
2. The primary objective is to elucidate the nuances of diphthong pronunciation.
3. To delineate and elucidate the common errors that Kurdish first-language students make in articulating English diphthongs.
4. To provide a comprehensive account of the inaccuracies in pronouncing English diphthongs among Kurdish first-language students.
5. To discern the most challenging diphthongs in terms of pronunciation for KFL students.

Significance of the Study

The key to proficient English communication lies in precise pronunciation. Vocabulary knowledge, when pronounced inaccurately, becomes less effective and even convey unintended meanings. The principal aim of this study is to shed light on the pronunciation errors made by KFL students, despite their prior exposure to the study of English phonetics and phonology during their undergraduate education.

Reasons for Choosing this Topic

Several factors underpin the selection of this research topic. This study aims to assess the proficiency of Kurdish students in articulating English diphthongs, and there are salient reasons for the prevalent mispronunciations. Language transfer, the utilization of sounds, expressions, or structures from the first language in the second language, plays a pivotal role in mispronunciations, and thus, forms a critical motivation for this investigation. The primary rationale lies in the negative transfer of English diphthong pronunciation by KFL Kurdish students, stemming from the influence of their mother tongue. Secondly, as defined by (dictionary.cambridge.org), 'fossilization' represents a phenomenon wherein students' errors become entrenched and resistant to correction. A substantial proportion of students has undergone this process, manifesting as errors in the articulation of English diphthongs.

Limitations of the Study

This study is delimited to

1. Fourth-level KFL learners in the Department of English Language at the College of Languages during the academic year 2022-2023.
2. A limited number of participants, with only 30 students included in the analysis of the wordlists. This limited sampling is designed to provide preliminary insights into the types of errors made by EKF Kurdish learners.

Background of the Study

In Kurdistan, English holds the status of the first foreign language. Language proficiency, notably, accurate pronunciation, is paramount, as mispronunciations can potentially alter meaning and lead to communication breakdowns. Kurdish

learners consider English as their target language for acquisition, yet they frequently contend with pronunciation errors. These challenges are especially pronounced in the case of diphthong sounds, due to the disparities between native and non-native languages, and the conspicuous absence of diphthongs in the Kurdish language Ali and Najmaddin (2019) Rahimpour and Dovaise (2011).

Defining Pronunciation

The ability to articulate words accurately assumes a fundamental role in the facilitation of effective communication, as it ensures that speakers can be readily comprehended by their audience. As articulated by Brown (cited in Anggraini, 2019), the primary objective of language learners is to adeptly convey their intended messages, underscoring the necessity for their words to be clearly understood. Consequently, the correct pronunciation of words stands as an indispensable element within this linguistic exchange.

Various scholars have offered definitions of 'pronunciation.' Harmer (2007, p. 1) characterizes pronunciation as encompassing the production of linguistic sounds, the strategic placement of word and sentence stress, and the nuanced use of pitch and intonation to convey emotions and meaning. Meanwhile, Dalton and Barbara (1994, p. 195) provide a comprehensive definition, wherein pronunciation is explicated as the art of producing significant sounds in two distinct manners. Firstly, these sounds are significant by virtue of their role within a specific linguistic code, and secondly, they carry significance as vehicles for conveying meaning within a given contextual framework.

In a similar vein, Novarita (2017) highlights the pivotal role of pronunciation, defining it as the means through which a language articulates specific sounds and words. This perspective reinforces the idea that pronunciation occupies a central place in language acquisition, given that deviations in pronunciation can significantly impact the conveyed meaning. Therefore, pronunciation emerges as a paramount consideration in language learning and communication, deserving close attention and deliberate practice.

Defining Error Analysis

Error analysis is a fundamental concept in second language acquisition, shedding light on the mistakes made by learners as they navigate the intricacies of language. As Corder (1971:79) suggests, errors are typically committed by

individuals who have not yet fully mastered the nuances of an established language system. According to Ellis (1997:17), errors are indicative of gaps in a learner's knowledge, emerging when the learner lacks a comprehensive understanding of what is linguistically correct.

Richard (1971) further elaborates on the origins of errors, delineating them as stemming from negative transfer, influenced by the learner's mother tongue, which is categorized as inter-language errors. Additionally, errors can occur when students have an inadequate grasp of the target language, fitting into the classification of intra-lingual errors.

Brown (1980:166) underscores the central role of error analysis by emphasizing that learners inevitably make errors, which can be meticulously observed, analyzed, and categorized. This process reveals valuable insights into the underlying system governing the learner's language acquisition journey. Error analysis, therefore, serves as a key tool for comprehending the intricate process of foreign language acquisition.

Defining Diphthongs

Diphthongs, a significant phonetic phenomenon, are characterized as sequences of two vowel sounds that blend together, a feature prevalent in many languages, including English. Carr (2012) underscores the existence of two distinct types of diphthongs within Received Pronunciation (RP).

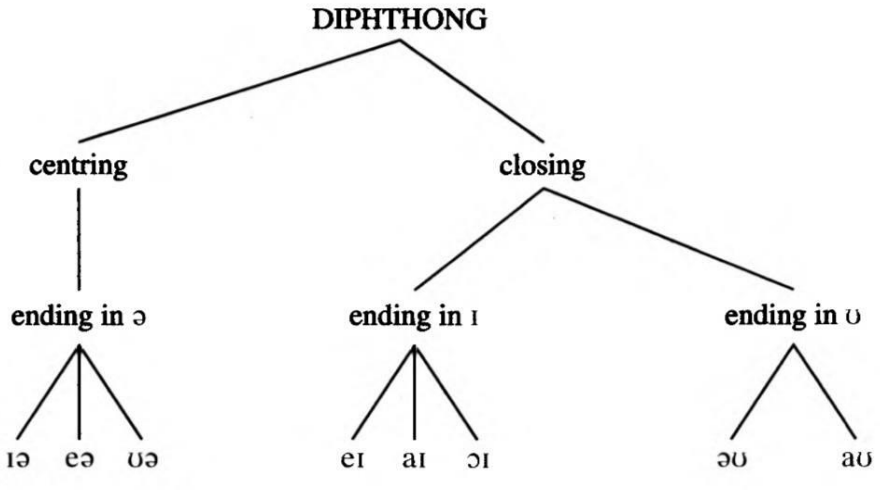
Munro and Derwing (1995) provide a precise definition of diphthongs as vowel sounds characterized by a deliberate glide from one vowel position to another within a single breath impulse. Diphthongs are aural manifestations created when two vowels coalesce within a single syllable. This auditory journey commences with one vowel and gracefully transitions to another. In alignment with Ramelan (1999:81), diphthongs are articulated within a single syllable or through a single breath exhalation. Dosia and Rido (2017) concur, highlighting the essence of diphthongs as consisting of the transition or glide from one vowel to another.

Classifying English Diphthongs

Roach (2009, p. 17, 18) elucidates that BBC pronunciation incorporates a multitude of diphthongs, defined as sounds that involve the glide or transition from one vowel to another. A noteworthy distinction is made between diphthongs

and pure vowels, with the latter characterized by a stationary vowel sound without a glide.

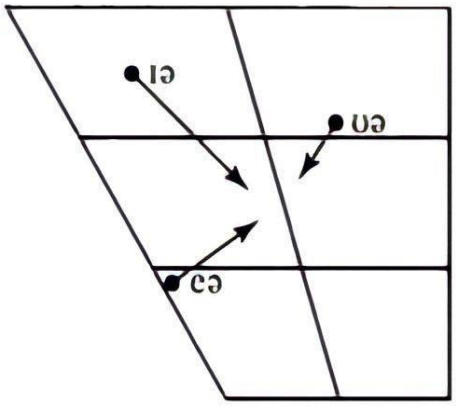
Regarding diphthong duration, it is akin to the extended vowels mentioned earlier. Notably, the initial segment of diphthongs is considerably longer and more pronounced than the final segment. For instance, in the diphthong 'ai,' as found in words such as 'eye' and 'I,' the initial /ɑ/ vowel dominates the majority of the sound, with the transition to /ɪ/ becoming perceptible only in the latter portion of the diphthong. Consequently, the final /ɪ/ phase is characterized by brevity and reduced intensity. Learners of English should heed this aspect, avoiding overemphasis on the final component of diphthongs. The total number of diphthongs in English is eight, although the occurrence of /ʊə/ is becoming increasingly rare. It is expedient to categorize them into three groups for ease of



recollection, as depicted in Figure 1.

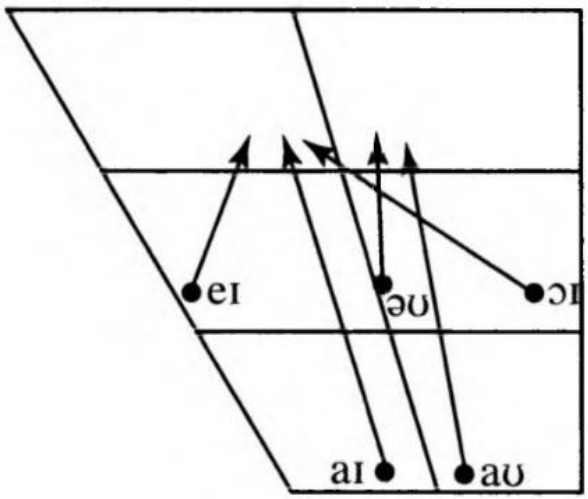
Diphthong Characteristics and Research Methodology

Diphthongs, a distinctive feature of the English language, exhibit various phonetic traits and can be classified into centering and closing diphthongs. Centering diphthongs, as illustrated in Figure 2,



the transition toward the schwa (/ə/) vowel, with examples such as /iə/ ('beard', 'weird', 'fierce') commencing slightly closer than the /i/ in 'bit' and 'bin'. Similarly, /eə/ ('aired', 'cairn', 'scarce') starts with a more open vowel than the /e/ in 'get' and 'men'. Notably, /ʊə/ ('moored', 'tour', 'lure') shares a starting point with /u/ in 'put,' although many speakers tend to articulate it as [ɔ:].

Closing diphthongs, on the other hand, conclude with a glide toward a closer vowel, even if they do not consistently reach a close position due to the second part's inherent weakness. Three of these diphthongs transition toward /ɪ/ shown in the figure 3,



/eɪ/ ('paid', 'pain', 'face'), which initiates from the same position as /e/ in 'get' and 'men'; /aɪ/ ('tide', 'time', 'nice'), characterized by an open vowel situated between the front and back positions, akin to the /ʌ/ in 'cut'; and /ɔɪ/ ('void', 'loin', 'voice'), wherein the initial phase is somewhat more open than /ɔ:/ in 'ought' and 'bought.' Two diphthongs glide toward /u/, involving both tongue and lip movements: /əʊ/ ('load', 'home', 'most') commences from the same vowel position as the schwa (/ə/) in 'about,' with noticeable lip-rounding, and /aʊ/ ('loud', 'gown', 'house') initiates with a vowel akin to /ɑɪ/, necessitating slight lip-rounding as the tongue does not quite reach the /ʊ/ position due to its open nature.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research methodology, which is designed to provide a subjective account of events or experiences, offering insights into the "who, what, and where" (Kim et al., 2017, p. 23). The research endeavors to identify and analyze pronunciation errors made by students whose first language is Kurdish. Thirty participants in their senior year, enrolled in the Department of English, College of Languages, University of Duhok, Iraq, during the academic year 2022-2023, were selected for this study, taking into consideration their diverse pronunciation skills.

The primary instrument employed for data collection involved the use of tape recordings via smartphones (i.e., iPhone and Samsung Galaxy), chosen for their high-quality audio recording capabilities. Each participant was presented with a wordlist comprising 40 diphthong-sounding words to pronounce in accordance with Southern British English (SBE) or Received Pronunciation (RP). The participants were informed that their recordings would be used for research purposes and were instructed to articulate each word distinctly and only once. Subsequently, the researcher recorded the participants' voices, transcribed the data, and analyzed it to determine overall error rates and the most frequent errors.

The Sample of the Study

A total of 30 students participated in this study, comprising 16 males and 14 females. These students were fourth-year undergraduates majoring in English at the Department of English Language, College of Languages, University of Duhok, during the academic year 2022-2023.

Instruments

The primary instrument for data analysis was student testing. The researcher provided pronunciations for 40 words featuring English diphthongs. Various diphthongs were represented by specific words: [aʊ] by 5 words, [əʊ] by 6 words, [ɔɪ] by 4 words, [aɪ] by 5 words, [eɪ] by 7 words, [eə] by 5 words, [ʊə] by 4 words, and [ɪə] by 3 words. These words were then transcribed from recordings of student voices captured using smartphones. The choice of the recording tool, in this case, hinged on the quality of sound clarity and audibility, with the researchers opting for the voice recording feature of Samsung Galaxy and iPhone smartphones to collect the data.

Data Analysis Procedures

Following the acquisition of data from the study participants, the data related to errors was processed using a formula as outlined by Sudjono (1989, p. 79). The formula employed in this context is expressed as:

P=F9/N 100

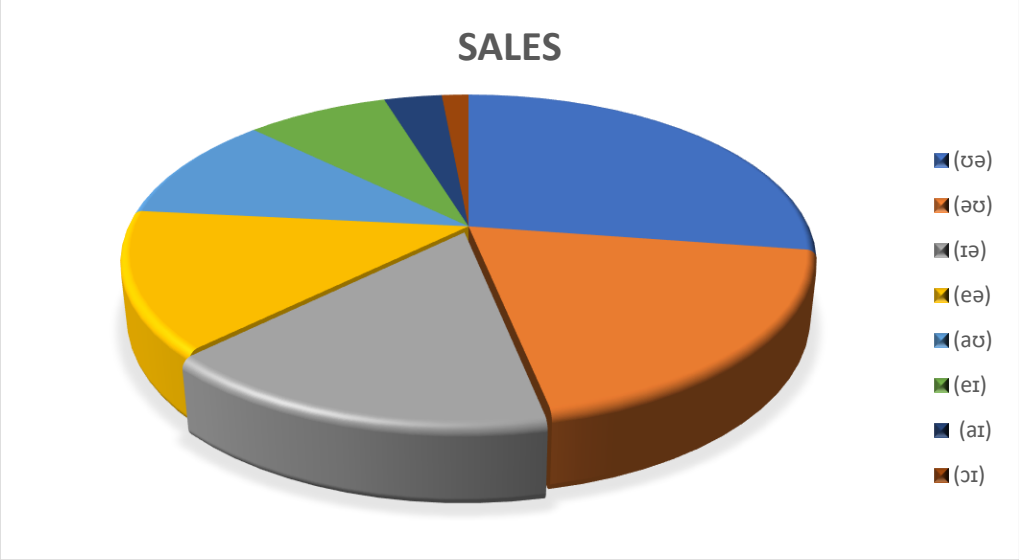
Where:

P = Percentage of participants' errors

Fq = Frequency of errors

N = Number of participants

The primary objective of this research endeavor was to discern the prevalent diphthong errors encountered in the English language among students at the University of Duhok. The ensuing charts are dedicated to the examination of the collected data, which sheds light on these errors.



Additional Information:

The methodology employed for data analysis is based on Sudjono's formula (1989), a recognized approach for computing the percentage of errors. In this context, *P* represents the proportion of participants' errors, *Fq* stands for the frequency of observed errors, and *N* signifies the total number of participants. This method facilitates a quantitative assessment of the prevalence of diphthong errors among the University of Duhok students, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of language acquisition challenges within this specific demographic.

a. Diphthong (aʊ)/28.66%

1Word	*Correct*	*Incorrect*	*Correct %*	*Incorrect %*
Loud	24	6	80%	20%
Now	27	3	90%	10%
Doubt	11	19	36.66%	63.33%
Count	25	5	83.33%	16.66%
Gown	20	10	66.66%	33.33%

b. Diphthong (əʊ)/42.22%

2Word	*Correct*	*Incorrect*	*Correct %*	*Incorrect %*

Rope	*10*	*20*	*33.33%*	*66.66%*
Load	*25*	*5*	*83.33%*	*16.66%*
code	*7*	*23*	*23.33%*	*76.66%*
show	*23*	*7*	*76.66%*	*23.33%*
most	*19*	*11*	*63.33%*	*36.66%*
home	*20*	*10*	*66.66%*	*33.33%*

c. Diphthong (ɔɪ)/5.83%

3Word	*Correct*	*Incorrect*	*Correct %*	*Incorrect %*
Avoid	*30*	*0*	*100%*	*0%*
Coin	*27*	*3*	*90%*	*10%*
Boil	*27*	*3*	*90%*	*10%*
Point	*29*	*1*	*96.66%*	*3.33%*

d. Diphthong (aɪ)/8%

4Word	*Correct*	*Incorrect*	*Correct %*	*Incorrect %*
Tide	*29*	*1*	*96.66%*	*3.33%*
Hide	*27*	*3*	*90%*	*10%*
Ride	*26*	*4*	*86.66%*	*13.33%*
Buy	*26*	*4*	*86.66%*	*13.33%*
Nice	*30*	*0*	*100%*	*0%*

e. Diphthong (eɪ)/14.76%

5Word	*Correct*	*Incorrect*	*Correct %*	*Incorrect %*
Paid	*28*	*2*	*93.33%*	*6.66%*
Mate	*29*	*1*	*96.66%*	*3.33%*
Paste	*22*	*8*	*73.33%*	*26.66%*
Gate	*29*	*1*	*96.66%*	*3.33%*
Hay	*24*	*6*	*80%*	*20%*
Bay	*23*	*7*	*76.66%*	*23.33%*
Waste	*24*	*6*	*80%*	*20%*

f. Diphthong (eə)/37.33%

6Word	*Correct*	*Incorrect*	*Correct %*	*Incorrect %*
Scare	*26*	*4*	*86.66%*	*13.33%*

Fair	*23*	*7*	*76.66%*	*23.33%*
Air	*14*	*16*	*46.66%*	*53.33%*
Pear	*10*	*20*	*33.33%*	*66.66%*
Stare	*21*	*9*	*70%*	*30%*

g. Diphthong (ʊə)/93.33%

7Word	*Correct*	*Incorrect*	*Correct %*	*Incorrect %*
Sure	*0*	*30*	*0%*	*100%*
Pure	*8*	*22*	*26.66%*	*73.33%*
Poor	*0*	*30*	*0%*	*100%*
Tour	*0*	*30*	*0%*	*100%*

h. Diphthong (ɪə)/58.88%

8Word	*Correct*	*Incorrect*	*Correct %*	*Incorrect %*
Fear	*9*	*21*	*30%*	*70%*
Steer	*7*	*23*	*23.33%*	*76.66%*
Ears	*21*	*9*	*70%*	*30%*

Analysis of Diphthong Pronunciation Errors and Thematic Considerations:

The data presented in the tables elucidate the pronunciation accuracy and errors in specific English words containing diphthongs among the University of Duhok students. This analysis unveils various themes pertaining to the pronunciation challenges and provides valuable insights into the linguistic competencies of the study participants.

Thematic Consideration 1: Diphthong (aʊ) - 28.66% Error Rate

- The diphthong (aʊ) exhibits an error rate of 28.66%, indicating a relatively high occurrence of mispronunciation.
- Notably, the word "Doubt" stands out with a significant 63.33% error rate, underscoring the complexity associated with this diphthong.

Thematic Consideration 2: Diphthong (əʊ) - 42.22% Error Rate

- The diphthong (əʊ) showcases the highest error rate, emphasizing the challenges students face when articulating this sound.
- The word "Rope" is notable for its 66.66% error rate, demonstrating the struggle in pronouncing this diphthong.

Thematic Consideration 3: Diphthong (ɔɪ) - 5.83% Error Rate

- In contrast, the diphthong (ɔɪ) displays a relatively low error rate, indicating a higher level of accuracy among participants.
- The word "code" exhibits a noteworthy 76.66% error rate, illustrating the variance in pronunciation difficulties across diphthongs.

Thematic Consideration 4: Diphthong (aɪ) - 8% Error Rate

- The diphthong (aɪ) showcases a modest error rate of 8%, indicating a relatively proficient pronunciation of this sound.
- The word "Tide" stands out with a 3.33% error rate, highlighting the participants' competence in articulating this diphthong.

Thematic Consideration 5: Diphthong (eɪ) - 14.76% Error Rate

- The diphthong (eɪ) demonstrates an intermediate error rate, suggesting a moderate level of proficiency in pronunciation.
- The word "Paste" is significant with a 26.66% error rate, showcasing a specific challenge within this diphthong.

Thematic Consideration 6: Diphthong (eə) - 37.33% Error Rate

- The diphthong (eə) reveals a relatively high error rate, signifying a notable difficulty among participants.
- The word "Scare" demonstrates a 26.66% error rate, indicating a pronounced challenge associated with this diphthong.

Thematic Consideration 7: Diphthong (ʊə) - 93.33% Error Rate

- The diphthong (ʊə) exhibits the highest error rate, signifying a significant struggle in pronunciation.
- Words like "Sure," "Pure," and "Tour" reveal a 100% error rate, indicating a pervasive challenge in articulating this diphthong.

Thematic Consideration 8: Diphthong (ɪə) - 58.88% Error Rate

- The diphthong (ɪə) demonstrates a substantial error rate, highlighting a pronounced difficulty in pronunciation.
- Words like "Fear," "Steer," and "Ears" display varying error rates, shedding light on the complexities of this diphthong.

In conclusion, the analysis of diphthong pronunciation errors among University of Duhok students underscores the intricacies of English language acquisition. The identified themes shed light on the challenges faced by these students in accurately articulating specific diphthongs. Understanding these challenges is essential for educators and learners alike to improve language proficiency and communication skills.

Results and Discussion:

Results

The results of this research reveal that among the English university students at the University of Duhok, 13 students (43%) perform at a "fair" level in terms of diphthong pronunciation, while 6 students (26.6%) are categorized as "good." Additionally, 3 students (20.0%) fall under the "poor" category, and 3 students (10%) are assessed as "very good" in their pronunciation skills. These results collectively suggest that English university students generally exhibit competence in diphthong pronunciation. The outcomes are graphically represented in Figure 4, which illustrates the distribution of students across different proficiency levels in producing diphthong sounds.

Thematic Considerations:

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes the data set in (rich) detail. However, it also often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic. (Boyatzis, 1998).

Theme 1: Proficiency Levels

- The majority of English university students, constituting 43% of the participants, fall under the "fair" category. This theme highlights the prevalent proficiency level among the student population.

- Conversely, a noteworthy 26.6% of students exhibit a "good" level of proficiency in diphthong pronunciation, indicating a substantial proportion of students with a higher competence level.

Theme 2: Pronunciation Challenges

- A considerable 20.0% of students are classified as "poor" in their pronunciation, emphasizing the existence of challenges in articulating diphthongs accurately.
- The presence of students categorized as "very good" (10%) underscores that some individuals excel in diphthong pronunciation, illustrating the potential for enhanced language skills within the student cohort.

Theme 3: Factors Affecting Pronunciation

- The discussion surrounding the diphthong words provided for participants sheds light on the linguistic factors contributing to pronunciation challenges.
- The absence of diphthongs in the Kurdish language, as mentioned by Ali and Najmaddin (2019), emerges as a significant factor influencing pronunciation errors among Kurdish students.
- The unfamiliarity and complexity of certain diphthongs pose additional obstacles for Kurdish First Language (KFL) learners, leading to mispronunciations.

Theme 4: Pronunciation Patterns

- Specific pronunciation patterns are evident among the participants. Notably, certain diphthongs, such as (ʊə) and (əʊ), lead to distinct mispronunciations, with students often substituting other vowel sounds.
- The discussion highlights examples of these patterns, revealing the substitutions made by students and their corresponding errors.

Theme 5: Complexity of Diphthongs

- The complexity of diphthongs becomes apparent, as students encounter greater challenges with diphthongs like (ʊə) and (əʊ).

- The variations in students' pronunciation errors underscore the intricate nature of these diphthongs and the need for targeted language instruction.

In summary, the results and ensuing discussion provide valuable insights into the proficiency levels and challenges encountered by English university students in diphthong pronunciation. The identified themes encompass proficiency categories, influential factors, pronunciation patterns, and the complexities of diphthongs. These findings contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of language acquisition difficulties and the need for tailored language instruction.

Conclusions, Findings, and Suggestions

Conclusions

It is evident that language learners, especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, often encounter challenges in pronunciation. The results and discussion presented above underscore the varying levels of proficiency in diphthong pronunciation among students in the English department. This highlights the critical importance of addressing pronunciation errors, as they can significantly impact the understanding and interpretation of words and sentences.

Thematic Considerations

A defining feature of thematic analysis is its ability to highlight similarities and differences across a data set. It's an unobtrusive method that allows the data to speak, ensuring that the voices and experiences of participants are central to the research findings. (*What Is Qualitative Research? | Overview, Types, Pros & Cons*, 2024)

Theme 1: Pronunciation Challenges and Meaning Alteration

- The discussion emphasizes the significance of accurate pronunciation, as errors may lead to changes in meaning or even the creation of unintended words. Examples include "loud" (/ləʊd/) being pronounced as "load" (/ləʊd/ vs. /ləʊd/) and "pure" as "poor" (/pɔ:/ vs. /puə/), which can result in misunderstanding and miscommunication.
- Mispronunciation errors can have immediate implications for comprehension and the accurate conveyance of the intended message. It is vital to address these challenges and strive for precision in pronunciation.

Theme 2: Pronunciation Difficulties with Diphthong /ʊə/

- The most problematic diphthong identified in the study is /ʊə/. The participants exhibited a notably high error rate of 93.33% when attempting to pronounce words containing this diphthong.
- Specific words like "pure," "sure," "poor," and "tour" revealed the extent of difficulty for participants, with the majority struggling to pronounce them accurately.

Suggestions for Further Studies

- In light of the findings, it is imperative that English teachers place a stronger emphasis on pronunciation skills among students. This should extend beyond dedicated speaking classes and be integrated into various subjects, acknowledging the importance of pronunciation in effective communication.
- The results indicate that the student cohort's pronunciation skills are primarily at the "Fair" level. As such, educators should implement comprehensive strategies for improving students' English sound pronunciation accuracy.
- Teachers must take a proactive approach to identify and address pronunciation errors. English lessons should be rigorous and emphasize pronunciation skills.
- Additional practice, tailored to the specific pronunciation challenges faced by students, is essential for reducing errors and enhancing language proficiency.
- The teaching strategies employed should prioritize student comfort and engagement, fostering a positive learning environment.

Additional Comparative Insights

- A significant observation from the study is that English diphthongs differ substantially from those in the Kurdish language. While English employs diphthongs consisting of vowel combinations (e.g., /eɪ/), Kurdish diphthongs are characterized by simple vowels accompanied by semivowels (/w, y/). This contrast reflects the complexity that Kurdish students may face when tackling English diphthongs.

- Notably, the absence of glide-like transitions between vowels in Kurdish contrasts with the smooth diphthong pronunciation in English. The explanation of the six types of Kurdish "diphthongs" underscores this disparity.
- English exhibits eight distinct diphthongs, highlighting the considerable variation in sound transitions, a feature not present in the Kurdish language.
- Additional references, such as "Dr. Sherzad Book," further affirm these linguistic differences, confirming the absence of English-style diphthongs in Kurdish.

The convergence of these findings and references reveals the intrinsic challenges faced by Kurdish students in mastering English diphthong pronunciation. These challenges are rooted in linguistic disparities between the two languages and require dedicated attention during the teaching process.

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Participation Consent Form

Title of Study: An Analysis of English Diphthong Pronunciation

Researcher: Dalia Dian

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a study on the pronunciation of English diphthongs. Your contribution to this research will help us better understand the challenges faced by Kurdish-speaking students in correctly pronouncing English diphthongs. Please read this consent form carefully before deciding to participate in the study.

Study Information:

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to analyze the pronunciation of English diphthongs by Kurdish-speaking students in their 4th year.

Participant Information:

- **Gender:** Please check the appropriate box:
  Male ☐ Female ☐
- **Stage:** 4th Year
- **First Language (Mother Tongue):** Please check the appropriate box:
  Kurdish ☐ Arabic ☐

Study Procedure:

You will be asked to read a list of English words containing diphthongs aloud. Each word should be pronounced only once. Your voice will be recorded by the researcher.

Word List with English Diphthongs:

Mathematic Copy code

SN	WORDS	SN	WORDS
1-	Loud	21-	Ride

2-	Home	22-	Show
3-	Avoid	23-	Gate
4-	Tide	24-	Fear
5-	Paid	25-	Steer
6-	Now	26-	Hay
7-	Scare	27-	Stare
8-	Weird	28-	Air
9-	Doubt	29-	Count
10-	Fair	30-	Waste
11-	Code	31-	Ears
12-	Mate	32-	Pear
13-	Rope	33-	Bay
14-	coin	34-	Gown
15-	Sure	35-	Buy
16-	Pure	36-	Load
17-	Boil	37-	Nice
18-	Hide	38-	Most
19-	Paste	39-	Poor
20-	point	40-	Tour

Important Note: Your voice will be recorded for research purposes.

Word Transcriptions in Received Pronunciation (RP):

For your reference, below is the transcribed form of each word according to RP pronunciation:

SN	Words	Transcribed form	SN	WORDS	Transcribed form
1-	Loud	/ l ɑʊ d /	21-	Ride	/ r ɑɪ d /
2-	Home	/ h əʊ m /	22-	Show	/ ʃ əʊ /
3-	Avoid	/ ə v ɔɪ d /	23-	Gate	/ g eɪ t /
4-	Tide	/ t ɑɪ d /	24-	Fear	/ f ɪə /
5-	Paid	/ p eɪ d/	25-	Steer	/ s t ɪə /
6-	Now	/ n ɑʊ /	26-	Hay	/ h eɪ /
7-	Scare	/ s k eə /	27-	Stare	/ s t eə /
8-	Weird	/ w ɪə d /	28-	Air	/ eə /
9-	Doubt	/ d ɑʊ t /	29-	Count	/ k ɑʊ n t /
10-	Fair	/ f eə /	30-	Waste	/ w eɪ s t /
11-	Code	/ k əʊ d /	31-	Ears	/ ɪə z /
12-	Mate	/ m eɪ t /	32-	Pear	/ p ɪə /
13-	Rope	/ r əʊ p/	33-	Bay	/ b eɪ /
14-	Coin	/ k ɔɪ n /	34-	Gown	/ g ɑʊ n /
15-	Sure	/ ʃ ʊə /	35-	Buy	/ b ɑɪ /
16-	Pure	/ p j ʊə /	36-	Load	/ l əʊ d /
17-	Boil	/ b ɔɪ l /	37-	Nice	/ n ɑɪ s /
18-	Hide	/ h ɑɪ d /	38-	Most	/ m əʊ s t /
19-	Paste	/ p eɪ st /	39-	Poor	/ p ʊə /
20-	Point	/ p ɔɪ n t /	40-	Tour	/ t ʊə /

Benefits:

Your participation in this study will contribute to our understanding of the challenges students face in pronouncing English diphthongs accurately. This research may help inform language teaching strategies to improve pronunciation.

Risks:

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this study.

Confidentiality:

Your recorded voice will be used for research purposes only and will be kept confidential. Your personal information will not be disclosed to anyone.

Participation and Withdrawal:

Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.

Questions:

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact the researcher, [Your Name], at [Your Contact Information].

Consent:

By participating in this study, you confirm that you have read and understood the information provided in this consent form and voluntarily agree to take part.

Participant's Name (Printed): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for your valuable contribution to this study. Your participation is greatly appreciated.