

ANALYSING THE COMMUNICATION PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADS IN ENGLISH DIPHTHONGS AND TRIPHTHONGS

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Abstract:

Phonetics and phonology are very important branches of English linguistics and most of the public and private sector universities in Pakistan teach this branch in their English-pertaining undergraduate academic programs, on the other hand, refined pronunciation in the English language is generally considered one of the key success aspects in the job market. Hence, the study aims to analyze the communicative performance of undergraduates with a major in English by highlight the the common mistakes of undergraduates in vowel sounds, and to underline the elements/factors responsible. The researchers involved 20 undergrads for pronunciation tests from both public and private sector universities. The findings show the common mistakes made by a large number of students in diphthongs and triphthongs are mixing monophthongs with diphthongs, disordering the phonemes in a word, omitting and adding unnecessary sounds. Based on the results of the pronunciation tests, the researchers highlight several factors accountable for mispronunciation such as insufficient knowledge of English phonology, different sound patterns, variances in orthography and phonology, lack of practice, less exposure of the target language, mother tongue interference, lack self-confidence and interest, lack of academic and social opportunities. The study suggests strategies for teachers and students to overcome the aforementioned challenges to improve pronunciation.

Keywords: communicative performance, undergrads, vowels, diphthongs, triphthongs, pronunciation

1. Introduction

Language is a powerful communication tool that enables individuals to share their ideas, thoughts, and emotions and the study of language systems is called phonology (Crystal, 2011). The need for communication explains the importance of language as it helps to develop a better understanding of the world. People can communicate through language and they can express what and how they feel about other people and things. Language is the reflection of the people of a particular society with specific cultural values. It is an essential component of culture and it represents the traditions, beliefs, and values of a particular group of people, it is a symbol of their identity. It is important to have background knowledge of the culture of a particular society along with the knowledge of language as it can lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings.

Pakistani English is a non-native variety of English due to different features especially its phonological characteristics as phonetics and phonology are of great importance in spoken language. Troubetzkoy is one of the notable phonologists and the founding father of morph-phonology who has

illustrated phonology as the study of sounds that are linked to the language system, while phonetics is about the sounds that are associated with the system of speech (Troubetzkoy, 2022).

Phonetics generally describes how sounds are produced and perceived by humans. According to Kreidler, phonology is about the demonstration of speech sounds in a system of a particular language which means that the study of phonology is related to the physical aspects of speech sounds (Kreidler, 2004). Odden says that phonology is the study of the structure of sounds of a language (Odden, 2005). Phonology is about the study of different sound units, also known as phonemes, of a language and it also describes the relationship of these sounds with one another.

2. Statement of the Problem

The study aims to analyze the communicative performance of undergraduates, with a major in English, in English diphthongs and triphthongs and to further explore that what are the possible factors that become hindrances to the production of English diphthongs and Triphthongs, if any, and which English diphthongs and triphthongs are more difficult for the undergraduates to pronounce despite being the students with major in English.

3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are to:

- Analyze the awareness level of the undergraduates of the BS English program at public and private sector universities in English Phonology with a focus on diphthongs and triphthongs.
- Highlight the common pronunciation mistakes made by undergraduates at the university level in English diphthongs and triphthongs.
- Explore the factors that may influence the communicative performance of undergraduates, in English diphthongs and triphthongs, studying at public and private sector universities.

4. Research Questions

The study intends to find out the answers to the following questions:

- How much are the undergraduates with a major in English aware of English phonology with an emphasis on diphthongs and triphthongs?
- What are the common pronunciation mistakes undergraduates with a major in English make while pronouncing English diphthongs and triphthongs?
- How do different factors influence the communicative performance of undergraduates of public and private sector universities in English diphthongs and triphthongs?

5. Research Gap

Phonetics and phonology cannot be neglected when it comes to learning a non-native language, through these areas one can speak like a native with both accuracy and fluency because there is a difference between English words and the phonemes used in them which means that the written form of the English language is different from the oral or spoken form. So, it is crucial to include English phonology in the process of learning the English language as a second or foreign language for mastering pronunciation. Therefore, it is important to analyze the communicative performance of English learners. Hence, by keeping in view the aforementioned it is important to analyze the communicative performance of English learners and this study sheds light on the production of English diphthongs and triphthongs by Pakistani undergrads whose major is English according to the existing situation.

Pronunciation has been an important topic for researchers as people face difficulty when it comes to learning pronunciation, especially in a second or foreign language. Many researchers have raised issues regarding pronunciation and many have also studied English sounds but nobody has

raised the issue of mispronouncing English diphthongs and triphthongs by undergraduates and even by graduates in Punjab Pakistan. This research intends to cover this gap by analyzing the undergraduates of various public and private sector universities in Pakistan to check their pronunciation skills regarding English diphthongs and triphthongs along with the factors that may or may not be responsible for mispronunciation.

6. Significance of the Study

Proficiency in English language skills is the ultimate goal of all undergraduates who have English as their major as it exercises central importance in today's market-oriented globalized world and this research intends to analyze the awareness and understanding level of Pakistani undergraduates, with a major in English, in English diphthongs and triphthongs. Hence, the study may be significant for the students and teachers who are engaged in learning and teaching English Phonology at the BS level because at most public and private sector universities English Phonetics and Phonology are taught in a 03 credit hours course along with some other courses which support the undergraduates to improve their English pronunciation. It is hoped that in the light of the findings of the study the concerned people, students, teachers, and academic managers, can be in a better position to address the issues that cause mispronunciation of English diphthongs and triphthongs, if any.

7. Review of Literature

In the English language, there are 26 letters and forty-four phonemes that have been divided into consonants and vowels, there are 24 consonants and 20 vowel sounds, consonants are produced with a constriction of air while the vowel sounds are produced with a free flow of air without any blockage. The 24 consonant sounds are /p/, /b/, /f/, /d/, /t/, /s/, /w/, /r/, /g/, /h/, /j/, /k/, /l/, /z/, /v/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /dʒ/, /tʃ/, /ʒ/, /ʃ/, /ð/, /θ/ and the 20 vowel sounds are divided into pure vowels or monophthongs, diphthongs, and triphthongs. There are 12 monophthongs or pure vowels which are further divided into short and long vowels, short vowel sounds are /ɪ/ /ʊ/ /ə/ /e/ /ɒ/ /ʌ/ /æ/ while the long vowel sounds are /i:/ /u:/ /ɑ:/ /ɔ:/ /ɜ:/, and remaining eight vowels are diphthongs: /aɪ/, /eɪ/, /əʊ/, /aʊ/, /eə/, /ɪə/, /ɔɪ/, /ʊə/. Moreover, there are five triphthongs in the English language and these sounds are /aʊə/, /aɪə/, /eɪə/, /əʊə/, /ɔɪə/. Diphthongs and triphthongs are considered complex vowel sounds and students especially non-native speakers find it troublesome to articulate these vowel sounds accurately.

All vowel sounds are voiced with a constriction of open approximation and these vowels can be front, back, central, rounded, unrounded, etc. Diphthongs are different from monophthongs as articulators remain constant during the production of monophthongs or pure vowels while in diphthongs there is a change in the position of articulators. Diphthongs and triphthongs contain two and three vowel sounds, respectively. Diphthongs are vowel sounds in which there is a glide from one vowel to another, there are eight diphthongs in English; on the contrary, triphthongs include the glide from one vowel to another then pass towards the third vowel and there are five in total (Roach, 1983).

In opinion with Roach, Dossia, and Rido (2017) describe that diphthong sounds consist of the glide or movement from one vowel to the other. Generally, diphthongs and triphthongs are in the form of long vowels in which the starting vowel sound is longer and stronger than the ending vowel sound. According to Carr (2012), diphthongs are a sequence of two kinds of vowel sounds with "squash" together, diphthongs present phonetic commentaries in many languages, and one of them is the English language. According to Ramelan, English diphthongs are divided into two types, English

closing diphthong [eɪ], [oʊ], [aɪ], [aʊ], and [ɪ] and English centering diphthongs of [ɪə], [eə], and [ə]. Also, the centering diphthong sounds like [ʊə], [ɛə], and [ɪə] are hard to pronounce (Ardi, 2020).

Pronunciation is a crucial part that leads to effective communication while mispronunciation leads to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. The general definition of pronunciation is “how speech sounds are articulated by the speakers” (Trask, 1996). While learning a language it is highly prioritized to master the pronunciation by learning the sounds of the target language (Chongning, 2009). Phonetics and phonology along with second language acquisition are emerging disciplines nowadays as these are playing a crucial role in the teaching and improvement of pronunciation skills of the speakers. There are some indicators of pronunciation and one should be aware of those indicators. (Djiwandono, 2008) Illustrates that there are four indicators of pronunciation. The first indicator is intelligibility which is pronounced as a whole text without misunderstanding. Secondly, it is fluency that is also pronounced as a whole fluently. The third one is the accuracy that is only partially pronounced accurately. Fourthly, it is native-like which is pronounced wholly with parts that are pronounced like native speakers.

(Hakim, 2012) argues that good pronunciation is crucial for learning the English language and the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are needed to be learned. People always face difficulty when it comes to learning pronunciation skills instead of other skills and sometimes they are not able to learn it even after spending their whole lives. Some people go with their natural accent and pronunciation influenced by their mother tongue. It is important to note that pronunciation is a sub-skill that is different from speaking and learning pronunciation is as important as other skills and sub-skills of a language. Lacking pronunciation skills can lead to misunderstandings in the process of communication and one cannot understand what a person is trying to say even apart from vocabulary and grammatical sentences.

Pronunciation skills can be improved in many ways and it should not be neglected by the students and teachers. Pronunciation should be an integral part of learning a second or foreign language as incorrect pronunciation leads to miscommunication and students will never be able to communicate in the target language properly. International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) has introduced a way to improve pronunciation skills by understanding the difference between the production of consonant and vowel sounds. Consonants can be bilabial, labiodental, dental, palatal, velar, alveolar, etc. The consonant sounds can be voiced or voiceless while vowels are produced with the change in the position of the tongue and lips and all are voiced. One needs to be familiar with this because these minor differences become the reason for mispronunciation (Haycraft, 1978).

Novarita argues that pronunciation is the way of saying certain words or sounds, pronunciation is the most important thing in learning languages including language skills, and differences in pronunciation will affect the result of meaning. Therefore pronunciation becomes an important thing to be considered during the process of learning or acquiring a language (Novarita, 2017). Usually, teachers and students do not consider pronunciation as important as other skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Fraser (2000) argues that it is easy to understand a person with good pronunciation while it is difficult to understand a person with wrong pronunciation. Pronunciation is usually associated with speaking and listening skills but there is a distinction in both pronunciation and speaking, it can be a sub-skill of speaking like its other sub-skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatics (Fraser, 2000).

Many factors can be a hindrance in making pronunciation better such as lack of motivation, age, poor teaching skills, use of wrong teaching strategies and methods, lack of exposure to the target language, lack of interest, no proper guidance and instructions, more use of mother tongue, and lack

of practice. For ESL or EFL learners and teachers, it is important to overcome these issues to make pronunciation better. It is important to start learning pronunciation from the beginning as children tend to learn more easily than adults and they should practice sounds, have proper guidance, and be exposed to the target language through English newspapers, journals, articles, movies, documentaries, etc. Teachers should use such methods and strategies in the classroom that can develop interest in students and make it conducive to learning sounds and proper pronunciation of the target language. The correct pronunciation will make students confident and they will be good speakers as well as good listeners.

According to (Riyani, 2013) a variety of different pronunciations will result in a shift in meaning or pronunciation without considering errors will interfere and cause misunderstanding in meaning. The problem that occurs in mispronunciation is caused by the speaker, that's why mastering pronunciation is the important thing, because the different pronunciation will give the result that has different meanings. ESL and EFL speakers can understand one another while in the outer world people will not be able to understand them if they do not improve their pronunciation skills. In countries where English is being taught and learned as a second or foreign language, people tend to focus on accuracy more than fluency while for better communication fluency is also important to consider.

Students should be aware of phonetics and phonology because it forms the basis for learning a language, phonological awareness means to be familiar with speech sounds. For learning English as a second or foreign language, students must know the phonology of the English language, which sounds are there in this language, and how they are pronounced. Teachers do not consider it important and tend to focus on English grammar and vocabulary by using the grammar-translation method due to which students keep on involving their native language as they are not fluent and confident. The students cannot be able to speak without relying on their mother tongue and without translating what they want to say due to fear of not speaking fluently and accurately. Phonological awareness can make students able to understand the connection between verbal expressions and written text.

Students must be familiar with English phonology, sounds in the English language, and their accurate pronunciation so that they can be able to pronounce words correctly using the right sounds for example there is a diphthong in 'late' while students think that there is a pure vowel sound in this word along with two consonants /l/ and /t/. Teachers and institutions should teach English phonology to the students along with the grammar from the start so that they have the knowledge of sounds and grammar and can speak without fear of not being fluent and accurate. This is the most important step that should be taken to overcome the issue of pronunciation. It can not only help students to be good speakers but they can be good listeners as well by knowing English phonology. A good listener and good speaker can have wonderful communication without misunderstandings and ambiguities.

Consonants are the sounds that are produced with the obstruction of air and there are twenty-four consonants in the English language. Pakistani learners mispronounce some consonant sounds such as they do not produce /p/, /t/, and /k/ with aspiration like native speakers; rather they pronounce these sounds without aspiration while the /h/ sound is not aspirated and Pakistani students pronounce it with aspiration. Native speakers of the English language do not pronounce /r/ at the end of a word if there is no vowel sound after it while Pakistanis pronounce /r/ with prominence such as gear, hear, etc. Pakistani people also find issues when it comes to pronouncing words with consonant clusters such as /film/ as /filəm/.

Vowels are produced without any obstruction of air and there are twenty vowels in the English language comprising twelve monophthongs and eight diphthongs. Pakistani learners face problems

while pronouncing some vowel sounds such as they mix vowels and mispronounce words for example (saw) /sɔ:/ as /sɑ:/ and (caught) /kɔ:t/ as /kɑ:t/. /ɜ:/ is quite a confusing vowel for Pakistani learners as they mispronounce it by combining a vowel sound with a consonant sound. They also mispronounce unstressed syllables as they do not shorten the vowel sounds in these syllables such as (comfortable) /kʌmfətəɪbəl/ instead of pronouncing it as /kʌmfətəbl/. It is also problematic to correctly pronounce words with triphthongs as these are more complex sounds in which there are three vowel sounds or one diphthong plus one monophthong and there are five triphthongs in the English language.

Pakistani undergraduates find it troublesome to pronounce complex vowels such as diphthongs and triphthongs due to the complicated nature of these vowels. Therefore, diphthongs and triphthongs require more attention to improve the pronunciation of the English language as these vowels are frequently used in many words of the English language that we use in our daily life communication. Peter Roach explains that diphthongs are like long vowels that consist of a movement or glide from one vowel to another and the first vowel is longer and stronger than the second vowel sound, while triphthongs are the most complex vowels that contain movement or glide from one vowel to another and then to the third vowel sound, triphthongs are more difficult to recognize and pronounce (Roach, 1983).

Mother tongue interference is considered a socio-linguistic phenomenon that occurs when two languages come in contact with each other. It is also called linguistics interference, the influence of the mother tongue or L1, and cross-linguistic influence. Mother tongue always has some positive and negative impacts on the learning of a second or foreign language and due to the negative effects, learners face problems in learning another language. Proficiency in a second or foreign language can be influenced by the native language including its grammar, vocabulary as well as pronunciation. Grammar plays an important role because the sentence structure in both Urdu and English language is different and that's why students make mistakes and are not able to speak English language fluently. Pronunciation mistakes are also due to the difference in sound systems and spellings in native and target languages.

Culture is another important factor when it comes to learning a second or foreign language because languages are closely associated with cultures and they both influence each other. If somebody knows the culture related to the language that person is learning, he/she will be able to learn it more effectively because there are slang, idioms, and gestures in different languages that are not considered appropriate in other languages. Many researches have confirmed that mother tongues and native languages always influence the learning of a second or foreign language. Due to the interference of the mother tongue, students make a lot of mistakes while learning another language such as grammatical mistakes, poor pronunciation, lack of vocabulary, etc. They usually face difficulty when it comes to speaking because they are not fluent as they are in their mother tongues so they tend to code-switch which means shifting from one language to another.

According to Eka (1996), the mother tongue/native language always has an influence on the learning of a second or foreign language but this is not always a negative effect, it can also be positive. Mother tongues affect negatively when students mix things that are not similar in both native and target language. Scholars emphasize that similarities in both native and target language tend to have a positive effect on the learning or acquisition of a language and students will be able to learn a language in a short period. This interference can be conscious or unconscious as they may not understand the difference between both the native and target languages (Elnaem, 2012). If we talk about the English language, different native languages will affect the learning of the English language

differently as it is learned as a second or foreign language in many countries of the world, some languages can have similarities with the English language while some can be different. (Hoffman, 1991) There are four types of interference of native language on the learning of the English language and this interference can occur at the following levels:

- Phonological
- Grammatical
- Lexical
- Semantical

Among the above types, phonological interference is of more importance because it leads to poor pronunciation and this paper focuses on how sounds can affect pronunciation and communicative performance. The influence of native languages on the learning of the English language or any other language can vary from person to person as age, surroundings, environment, peer support, and motivation can be different for everyone. Pakistani learners find it problematic when it comes to pronouncing the sounds in the English language because the pronunciation of the sounds in their native languages and the English language is quite different. As we know the effect of the mother tongue on the sounds of a second language can impact a learner's pronunciation and communication skills so it is necessary to consider the importance of learning phonetics and phonology of a language such as the English language along with the syntax and semantics.

8. Methodology and Procedure

8.1 Setting and Sample Selection

Due to time and financial constraints, the researchers have collected data from the undergraduates of two public and two private sector universities in Lahore. For analyzing the communicative performance of undergraduates in English diphthongs and triphthongs, the researchers have selected 100 undergraduates with ages ranging from 18-25 who filled out questionnaires. This research intended to collect data from undergraduates of different cultural backgrounds in Punjab Pakistan and for this purpose, the researchers chose two public and two private sector universities. All the undergraduates were from BS English Linguistics and studied Phonetics and Phonology as a 03 credit hours course and other courses to improve their pronunciation.

8.2 Participants

The researchers chose 20 undergraduates out of 100 who filled out the questionnaires for recording the sentences given to them containing words with diphthongs and triphthongs after getting their permission. These 20 students were from all four (two public and two private sector) universities mentioned above and they were comprised of an equal number of male and female students of different semesters of BS English Linguistics. They were given 15 written sentences to read aloud and the researchers recorded their voices using a smartphone.

8.3 Data Collection Instruments

Recordings was done through smartphones have been used to collect data for conducting this research study to check the communicative competence and performance of English diphthongs and triphthongs of undergraduates with a major in English. There were thirty statements and some statements were derived from different related research with modifications to know their awareness level, opinions about the importance of pronunciation, difficulty level regarding sounds in their opinion, and possible reasons that can influence their performance in correctly pronouncing sounds for findings.

9. Findings and Recommendations

According to the findings of the survey, almost all the students are aware of English phonology and have studied it as a course during their BS English program while some students have received one or two introductory lectures on English phonology and phonemes. Only 8% have chosen to agree somewhat or neutral with the first statement of the questionnaire and claimed that they have not read 'Phonetics and Phonology' as a course. This shows that 'Phonetics and Phonology' is being taught as a 03 credit hour course along with other courses in various public and private sector universities in Lahore. The findings show that undergraduates still face pronunciation problems in the English phonemes even after studying phonetics and phonology as a course at the university level.

It was found that they the subjects felt difficulty in pronouncing English diphthongs and triphthongs and that diphthongs and triphthongs are confusing vowel sounds of English which makes it difficult to master pronunciation. Many learners of the English language want to speak like the natives of this language (Derwing, 2003), and more than 50% of the participants consider it important to speak like natives. Results and findings of both the questionnaire and recordings show that more than 80% of the participants mix monophthongs with diphthongs which is a common mistake among almost all participants as they pronounce different words such as 'most', 'take', 'creates', 'aims', 'raise', 'lower', 'mower', 'higher' etc. Students use long vowel sounds and other pure vowels in such words which lead to miscommunication as they are not able to pronounce these words (containing diphthongs and triphthongs) correctly.

It is also found that they subjects pay attention to other skills whereas there is a need to pay more attention to producing diphthongs and triphthongs correctly as they lead to mispronunciation of words carrying these vowel sounds. The majority feel that all theare found, with regard to vowel sounds monophthongs, diphthongs, and triphthongs confused to pronounce them but they can pronounce consonants more easily.

Another reason is that the written form does not match with the spoken form due to which students mispronounce words with diphthongs and triphthongs. Bilingualism can be an obstacle in improving English pronunciation as mother tongues and native languages always influence the Second Language Acquisition (SLA). In the case of Pakistani students, it is difficult to learn the English language as per the requirement with both accuracy and fluency because the sound system is different in both the English language and the native language Urdu due to which students code switch from English to Urdu while speaking. In light of the results we can safely say that students face pronunciation problems in English phonemes especially in diphthongs and triphthongs mainly due to lack of support, absences of self-confidence, no practice, and lack of academic and social opportunities.

The results present that pronunciation problems regarding diphthongs, triphthongs, and other English phonemes occur due to several causes that have been mentioned above. It is inferred that the focus is on teaching the English language in the classes instead of improving the required language skills including pronunciation. According to Prashant (2018), we face pronunciation problems because we do not listen to the speakers of the target language. It is important to have exposure to the target language for which a non-native speaker can practice it by talking to oneself or with others, reading English content (books, novels, newspapers, stories, etc), and watching English news channels, movies, and documentaries which helps in improving pronunciation. He further states that listening to the wrong pronunciation in the classroom by the teachers results in mispronunciation of

the target language by the students (Prashant, 2018). Teachers should be given proper training so that they can help students in mastering pronunciation.

The researchers have a small discussion with the participants of the recordings about the reasons for mispronunciation and according to the students most of the language teachers are also not familiar with the differences between pure vowels, diphthongs, and triphthongs. Both from the questionnaires and recordings, the researchers have observed that students feel shy and confused while speaking the English language, they hesitate to speak because of lack of knowledge of English phonology and the fear of mispronunciation. Students focus merely on what is written in front of them and lack proper knowledge of English phonemes as they mix monophthongs with diphthongs and diphthongs with triphthongs. So, the researchers observed such reasons that become hindrances in making pronunciation better, and based on the results the researchers have underlined the following factors that contribute to the poor pronunciation of students concerning English diphthongs and triphthongs.

The results of the recordings show that almost all the students make similar mistakes in certain diphthongs and triphthongs for example they articulate /ɔ:/ pure vowel in place of diphthongs /oʊ/ and /əʊ/, and triphthong /əʊə/. Moreover, the findings of the recordings demonstrate that the students emphasize the consonant /r/ in every word in which it is used while native speakers do not pronounce this consonant in such words at all for example slower, mower, player, layer, higher, etc.

The researchers have also seen many mistakes of pure vowels as well in the recorded transcription for example students say /wɔɪ/ instead of /wi:/, (an) /æɪ/* in place of /ən/ and (a) /ɑ:/* instead of /ə/. In the light of the second objective, the common mistakes of English diphthongs and triphthongs according to the recordings are that students can accurately articulate closing diphthongs /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/, and make mistakes in pronouncing closing diphthongs /eɪ/ and /əʊ/ such /reɪz/ as /ræz/* and /həʊm/ as /hɔ:m/*. While students can somewhat correctly phonate centering diphthongs /ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/ while 35-45% cause inaccuracies. In the case of triphthongs, the researchers have perceived that the students can articulate triphthongs /ɔɪə/, /aɪə/ with accuracy, and triphthongs /aʊə/, /eɪə/ to some extent correct while they cannot phonate /əʊə/ triphthong.

The overall findings and outcomes display that students make mistakes in pronouncing English diphthongs and triphthongs because of mixing pure vowels with diphthongs, diphthongs with triphthongs, adding unnecessary sounds because of a lack of knowledge of English phonology and English phonemes, merely reading whatever is written on the paper or books without focusing on the sounds that are used in particular words as written form does not match with the spoken form, lack of academic and social opportunities, lack of confidence as students do not participate in speaking activities and hesitate to speak English, etc. Based on the observation of the researchers and the results of recordings it is indicated that mispronunciation in English diphthongs and triphthongs is due to the addition of some unnecessary sounds, omission of particular sounds, mixing sounds, misformation of the words, and students also disorder sounds like they use /eɪ/ as /ɪə/ and /aɪ/ as /ɪə/ etc.

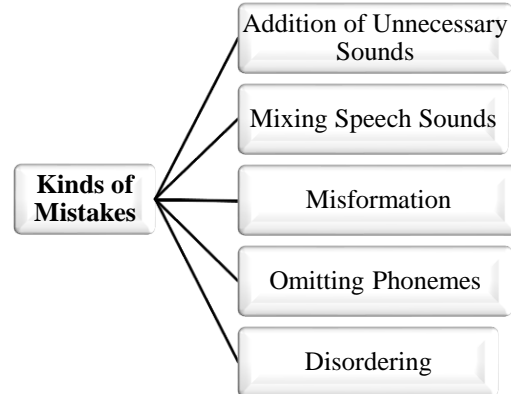


Figure. 1. Common Mistakes found in Recordings

The researchers have examined these reasons based on their behavior, communication skills, questionnaire responses, and recordings. The researchers explain that Pakistani students face difficulty in pronouncing English diphthongs and triphthongs correctly as they are not familiar with diphthongs and triphthongs containing words. Some other factors are also explained above that make it difficult to articulate these sounds appropriately. The current situation of students' performance in English diphthongs and triphthongs needs to be well thought out by the teachers and students as these vowel sounds are frequently used in many words in the English language. If students can be familiar with English phonemes and can articulate them accurately then they can master pronunciation and speak the English language without hesitation and confusion.

10. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, the researchers have concluded that Pakistani students make mistakes in some diphthongs and triphthongs while they can articulate some diphthongs and triphthongs accurately. They further have illustrated the importance of English phonology in the above sections and emphasized that learning English phonemes including diphthongs and triphthongs is crucial for accuracy and fluency in the English language as the use of these vowel sounds is very common in the English language and many words used in daily life contain diphthongs and triphthongs. Students mix diphthongs and triphthongs with pure vowels/monophthongs as they lack knowledge of English phonemes. The researchers also have highlighted the common mistakes made by the majority in diphthongs and triphthongs and explained several reasons responsible for mispronunciation based on observation, questionnaires, and recordings. In the questionnaire, the researchers mentioned several statements to know what undergraduates feel about those reasons and whether these factors are accountable for their poor tongue interference, lack of knowledge of English phonology, lack of academic and social opportunities, differences in sounds of native and the English language, differences in orthography and phonology, lack of practice, less exposure to the target language, lacking self-confidence, interest, and supportive environment. Students are afraid of speaking English and they hesitate to participate in English speaking activities and tasks.

11. Recommendations

Following are some suggestions and recommendations based on the analysis of the communicative performance of undergrads in English diphthongs and triphthongs:

- It is important to incorporate some pedagogical strategies in the curriculum for ESL and EFL learners such as including English phonology as a subject at the beginning of their academic sessions.
- Enhance the awareness and understanding level of both the teachers and students regarding English phonemes and the variations among the sounds.
- Providing proper training to the teachers to expand their knowledge regarding English phonemes to help students learn in an academic environment.
- In light of the findings of the recordings, the researchers have observed mistakes made by the students in consonants and pure vowels as well such as pronouncing /fjuəriəs/ as /fʊræʃjəs/, /ðə/ as /ðɑ:/, /wi:/ as /wɔɪ/, /ən/ as /æɪn/, /ə/ as /ɑ:/, etc so there should be more researches based on the situational analysis on such mistakes made by Pakistani learners.
- This research is limited to only four universities of Lahore that's why more research should be done on students' performance in diphthongs and triphthongs.
- Students should be engaged in spoken activities so that they can be confident and do not hesitate to speak the English language.
- Using technology to improve pronunciation such as social media, English movies, documentaries, books, novels, newspapers, etc.
- ESL and EFL learners should be motivated by their teachers and friends to overcome their shyness and hesitation.

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