

## **GLIDING DECREASE OF PRONOUNCING ENGLISH DIPHTHONG BY JAVANESE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The normal pronunciation of diphthong lies in putting the prominence or length to the nucleus vowel and gliding to the second one. However, this is not as the mostly phenomena of Javanese Learners of English (JLE)'s way of pronouncing diphthong. JLE tends to make shifts in pronouncing the quality of diphthong, one of which is a gliding decrease or omission. The data are collected by techniques of recording and demonstration. The data analysis uses techniques of comparing and contrasting between JLE's pronunciation and Received Pronunciation (RP). To amount of frequency in comparing JLE's and RP, the percentage of the highest occurrence can be indicated. The result shows that JLE's pronunciation of diphtong tends to reduce the fortis of nucleus before gliding or there is no gliding in the second vowel.*

**Key words:** *sound shift, JLE, SPE, gliding, fortis, and pronunciation quality.*

### **1. Introduction**

In the learning process of foreign language, here English, of course one will have the reference for the standard pronunciation. Usually British accent has long dominated in use especially in many courses of English. The common British English to be the standard pronunciation is called Received Pronunciation (RP). However, during the course of time, with the global progress of nations as revealed by the complex communication among peoples in the world, the use of English tends to vary depending on the country where the communities hold the interaction. So it is undeniable that there are several regional varieties of English.

Actually, speech sounds are voluntarily pronounced in which the speakers automatically produce them with appropriate points of articu-

lation within the speech organs. Moreover, besides recognizing the kinds of speech sounds, the speakers are also expected to produce them well especially in the aspects of its length, stress, and pitch (Jones, 1983: 1-8, Jones: 1956).

A bit least of attention to the aspects above may result in a typical regional pronunciation. This is as confirmed by a research which stated that Native Speakers of English (NSE) who live in different countries will speak their language with a different accent (Roach, 1994: 4-5). This is made as my research basis that different regions and speakers' attitude influence different accent.

The reason of my interest in the study of diphthong is inspired by the previous research dealing with the perception of Javanese learners of English diphthong as conducted by Prince

(1989). He stated that in the progress of learning of English, Javanese learners are actually aware of English diphthongs, but their awareness is not stable, or they still tend to be the hyper-perceived diphthong speakers. This means that there is a tendency not to put a stress to the vowel being the nucleus, instead to the gliding vowel. Besides, there is a claim that there is no obligation for English learners to pronounce English well as the NSE do or in referring to RP (Roach, 1994: 6). Based on the idea; therefore, we can infer that ones' way of pronouncing speech sounds may vary and the English learners can only be encouraged to attach to appropriate pronunciation so that they can hold the communication easily with the NSE.

Related to the assumption above and based on my research, I try to present two things in this article: (1) to identify the shift points in pronouncing English diphthongs by JLE, and (2) to explain the quality of JLE in pronouncing English diphthongs. To answer the first section, I use the theoretical bases of phonetics: impressionistic articulatory phonetics, sounds description, especially in the kinds of English vowel and diphthong together with the way those speech sounds are produced within human's speech organ (Walfram, 1981:13-33, Kantner, 1960:13-67, Kelly, 2000:1-11). I also refer to the types of diphthong: on gliding and off gliding. In the mean time, to explain the second section, I refer to the Standard Pronunciation of English (SPE). Therefore, the specific theoretical bases I mostly referred to, are about duration and glide in vocalic articulations (Clark and Collin Yallop: 1996), long or short vowels (Roach: 1991), and SPE (Katamba: 1989).

## **2. Research Method**

The respondents are the Javanese Learners of English in Surakarta, i.e. those who sit as tertiary students. The subjects are taken variously at random from the state and private universities in Surakarta, such as STBA Pignatelli, UNS, UMS, STAIN, and LIA. The

subject as the source of data are not limited or counted because it is a qualitative type of study, instead, they are chosen depending on the sufficient representatives of producing the various pronunciation of diphthong. By using technique of recording and demonstration, I get the data in the forms of speech sounds of words including diphthong. The specific impressionistic phonetics is chosen for transcribing the recorded data. The data; then, are analyzed by using comparison and contrast techniques (JLE's and RP)(Sudaryanto, 1993:21-28) and are scaled to identify the frequent in the varieties of pronouncing diphthong. For the continued validity of analysis technique, I apply the intelligibility of NSE to perceive the diphthong production (Walker, 2001. <http://www3.telus.net/linguisticissues/internationalintelligibility.html>).

## **3. Discussion and Finding**

Generally, based on the frequent various production of diphthong by JLE, the existence of shift in pronouncing diphthong is caused by factors, such as the least knowledge on phonetics, models of English during the learning course, and the lack of drills or practice in speaking English. Whereas, viewed from articulatory phonetics, the diphthong pronunciation shifts by JLE are mainly based on the unfixed movement of the oral cavity. Most JLE feel uncertain in producing the gliding in diphthong. The condition leads to the inappropriateness in the tongue height and position in forming of mouth while producing diphthongs. Thus, the knowledge on phonetics, especially about parameters of vowel production seem to be the focus of JLE shifts especially in pronouncing English diphthongs.

### **3.1. The Shift Points of JLE in Producing Diphthongs**

JLE production of diphthong can be identified from: (1) lowering or raising the height of tongue, (2) reducing fortis of the nucleus, and (3) phoneme articulation.

(1) Lowering or Raising the Height of Tongue

That is meant by the height of the tongue is one of parameters for describing the production of vowel sounds. The existence of tongue in the oral cavity while producing the vowel sounds is movable. The movement of the tongue for the sound production is only upward and downward. The condition referred to the lowering is when the tongue moving is downward while to the raising, is when moving is upward. The criteria of indicating the lowering or the raising can be seen from the up-and-down movement of one's jaw.

JLE's tendency in producing diphthong is seen from the shifts made due to the lowering or raising of the tongue height. For example:

a). the diphthong [e<sup>l</sup>], when described as gliding from the front, mid, tense vowel [e] into the front, high, lax vowel [I], will shift (sometimes being glided or not) by lowering the tongue height, i.e. becoming the front, mid, lax vowel [ɛ].

b). The diphthong [a<sup>u</sup>], which is described as gliding from the front, low, tense, and rounded vowel [a] into the back, high, tense, and rounded [ɔ], such as: *behave* [be'v] into [pe'v], *blame* [bleɪm] into [pleɪm], *cave* [keɪv] into [peɪv], *name* [neɪm] into [peɪm], *make* [meɪk] into [peɪk].

b). The diphthong [a<sup>u</sup>], when described as gliding from the front, low, tense vowel [a] into the front, high, lax vowel [I], will shift (sometimes being glided or not) by raising the tongue height, i.e. becoming the front, mid, lax vowel [ɪ].

b). The diphthong [ə<sup>u</sup>], when described as gliding from the mid, centre, tense vowel [ə] into the back, high, tense, and rounded vowel [u], will sometimes shift in pronunciation into [o] or [ɔ], such in pronouncing the words as: *nine* [naɪn] into [noɪn], *no* [noʊ] into [no], *go* [ɡoʊ] into [go], *so* [soʊ] into [so], *alone* [ə'ləʊn] into [ə'lɔn], *know* [noʊ] into [no].

(2) Reducing Fortis of Nucleus

The term fortis indicates the increased respiratory effort in the production of a segment. If

in a diphthong, there are two vowels or the so called the nucleus and gliding, in which the first is pronounced as full or lengthened vowel, the second, is pronounced as having a half quality in lengthening or being glided. Reducing fortis of nucleus means producing the vowel of the nucleus not as full vowel but as having a bit shift either in the length, in positing the tongue height, or in stressing the glided vowel. The three tendencies seem to mix altogether so that JLE's pronunciation of diphthong tends to replace with pronouncing a single vowel sound. For example:

(3) Phoneme Articulation

Phoneme as the smallest segment of sound within a word will be represented as a letter. We know, basically that letters are the result of spelling, while sounds are the result of pronouncing. That is meant by phoneme articulation in this article is the way of pronouncing the sound as it is indicated by the phoneme. For example:

a). The diphthong [a<sup>l</sup>], when described as gliding from the front, low, tense, and rounded vowel [a] into the the front, high, lax and unrounded vowel

[ɪ], will shift by omitting the nucleus or the result as in pronouncing the phoneme /i/. This can be seen as in pronouncing the words: *violence* [v a<sup>1</sup>ələnz ] into [vɪələnz ], *organization* [ɔ<sup>3</sup>gəna<sup>1</sup>sɪ |n] into [ɔ<sup>3</sup>gənɪsɪ |n].

- b). The diphtong [eə], when described as gliding from the front, mid, lax, and unrounded vowel [ɛ] into the mid, centre, tense vowel [ə], will shift by keeping in the nucleus [ɛ] without gliding. So, the resulted pronunciation is the omission of the glided vowel [ə]. This can be seen as in pronouncing the word *chair* [tʃeə] into [tʃɛ(r)], where [w eə] into [w ɛ(r)].

### 3.2 The Quality of JLE's Pronunciation of Diphtongs

The quality of JLE in pronouncing English diphtongs decreases the gliding process and/or decreases the fortis of the nucleus vowel. The result is in pronouncing English diphtongs, JLE often omits the glided vowels.

#### 1) Diphtong [a<sup>1</sup>]

Diphtong [a<sup>1</sup>] is pronounced by JLE as a closing diphtong, initiating from the low vowel in which the jaw is in the low position, into the high vowel but sometimes the initiation of producing it is from the mid vowel or as normal mid vowel [ɛ]. For example as in pronouncing the word *time*, not as [t<sup>h</sup>a<sup>1</sup>m] but as [t<sup>h</sup>ɛ m] or [t<sup>h</sup>ɛ<sup>1</sup>m], *make* not pronounced as [mɛ<sup>1</sup>k] but [mek], *cry* [kra<sup>1</sup>] pronounced as [krɛ<sup>1</sup>], *high* [h a<sup>1</sup>] pronounced as [h ɛ<sup>1</sup>], *pie* [p a<sup>1</sup>] pronounced as [p ɛ<sup>1</sup>]

#### 2) Diphtong [a<sup>u</sup>]

Diphtong [a<sup>u</sup>] is pronounced by JLE as a closing diphtong but as the normal back vowel [ɔ]. For example to pronounce the words *how* not as [ha<sup>u</sup>] but as [hɔ], *cow* [ka<sup>u</sup>] as [kɔ], *house* [ha<sup>u</sup>z] as [hɔ z], *loud* [l a<sup>u</sup>d] as [lɔd].

#### 3) Diphtong [e<sup>1</sup>]

Diphtong [e<sup>1</sup>] is pronounced by JLE as a closing diphtong with a bit gliding.. For example to pronounce the words like *ape* [e<sup>1</sup>p] as [ep], *waist* [we<sup>1</sup> st] as [west], *day* [d e<sup>1</sup>] as [de], *eight* [e<sup>1</sup> t] as [et], *great* [gr e<sup>1</sup> t] as [gret].

#### 4) Diphtong [o<sup>u</sup>]

Diphtong [o<sup>u</sup>] is pronounced by JLE as a back vowel [o]. For example, in pronouncing the words *old*, not as [o<sup>u</sup>ld] but [old], *oak* not as [o<sup>u</sup>k] but [ok], *toe* not as [to<sup>u</sup>] but [to], *though* not as [ðo<sup>u</sup>] but [ðo], *know* not as [no<sup>u</sup>] but [no].

#### 5) Diphtong [ɔ<sup>1</sup>]

Diphtong [ɔ<sup>1</sup>] is pronounced by JLE as an open diphtong, initiating from the back vowel [ɔ ] into the front one [ɪ], as in *oil* [ɔ<sup>1</sup>ɪ], *enjoy* [ɛnjɔ<sup>1</sup>ɪ], *toy* [tɔ<sup>1</sup>ɪ], or *voice* [vɔ<sup>1</sup>z].

#### 6) Diphtong [ɔ<sup>3</sup>]

Diphtong [ɔ<sup>3</sup>] is pronounced by JLE as an open diphtong, but sometimes it is pronounced without gliding into [ə]. In short it is pronounced as the long [ɔ:]. For example, it is not pronounced as [ɔ<sup>3</sup>] but [ɔ] as in *form* [fɔ<sup>3</sup>m] but as [fɔ:m], *course* [kɔ<sup>3</sup> z] as [kɔ:z], *horse* [hɔ<sup>3</sup>z] as [hɔ:z], *oar* [ɔ<sup>3</sup>(r)] as [ɔ:(r)].

#### 7) Diphtong [ɪ<sup>3</sup>]

Diphtong [ɪ<sup>3</sup>] is pronounced by JLE as a central diphtong, moving back from the front, high, lax vowel into the central position, or sometimes it is pronounced as long [i:]. For example, [ɪ<sup>3</sup>] as in *dear* [dɪ<sup>3</sup>] into [di:], *here* [hɪ<sup>3</sup>] into [hi:], *period* [pɪ<sup>3</sup> rɪ<sup>3</sup>d] into [pi:riəd].

#### 8) Diphtong [u<sup>3</sup>]

Diphtong [u<sup>3</sup>] is pronounced by JLE normally as central diphtong which is pronounced from the high, back vowel into central one. For example, [u<sup>3</sup>] as in *poor* [pu<sup>3</sup>], *sure* [su<sup>3</sup>], *pure* [pu<sup>3</sup>], *you're* [ju<sup>3</sup>].

9). Diphthong [ɛ<sup>ə</sup>]

Diphthong [ɛ<sup>ə</sup>] is pronounced by JLE not as a diphtong but as a single vowel [ɛ]. For example, the words *care* [kɛ<sup>ə</sup>] will be pronounced as [kɛ], *fair* [fɛ<sup>ə</sup>] as [fɛ], *wear* [wɛ<sup>ə</sup>] as [wɛ], *berry* [bɛ<sup>ə</sup> rɪ] will be pronounced as [bɛrɪ].

#### 4. Conclusion

In pronouncing English diphthongs, JLE represents a bit shift especially in the decrease of gliding and of fortis in the nucleus. How-

ever, using the impressionistic phonetics, particularly in referring to the parameters of sound description, firstly, I can identify the shift points in pronouncing English diphthongs such as in lowering and/ or raising the height of tongue, in reducing fortis of the nucleus, and in phoneme articulation. Secondly, the quality of JLE in pronouncing English diphthongs is characterized by shortening of the nucleus duration, so that is recognizable in hearing, lies in the decrease or omission of gliding.

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