

UTILISING VARIOUS ONLINE DICTIONARIES TO IMPROVE THE ENGLISH DIPHTHONG PRONUNCIATION ABILITY OF THE PGRI PAYANGAN VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

Ida Ayu Made Puspani, Ketut Mas Indrawati, Ni Wayan Sukarini, Novita Muliana

Faculty of Humanities, Udayana University

made_puspani@unud.ac.id, mas-indrawati@unud.ac.id, wayan_sukarini@unud.ac.id, novitamuliana@unud.ac.id

Abstract

The difference in the pronunciation system between English and Balinese, which is the mother tongue of the Balinese people, is often a problem. One of the most common types of pronunciation difficulties is the pronunciation of diphthongs in English. Pronunciation errors will certainly have an impact on misunderstandings during English communication.

Based on this phenomenon, this study is aimed at providing a solution to improve the ability to pronounce diphthongs in English, which is by utilizing various online dictionaries that are equipped with audio features. This solution is one of the options that can be done considering that currently, Balinese people are very close to technology, but some still are not able to fully utilize the dictionary in the network. The target of this study was the students of SMK PGRI Payangan Gianyar.

Keywords: diphthong, online dictionary, community service

I INTRODUCTION

Even though Balinese people have studied English since elementary education level, English knowledge of Balinese, whether obtained from formal or informal education, still requires improvement. This is based on the difference between the English language system and the Balinese language. One of the most basic differences is the difference in the pronunciation system, including the pronunciation of diphthongs. The Balinese pronunciation system often affects the way Balinese people pronounce words in English, so the English pronunciation of the Balinese, especially diphthongs, is not perfect. This was shown in Puspani and Indrawati (2021) that took a sample of 75 students and found that 7 of the 8 types of diphthongs in English from the respondents could not be pronounced correctly. This occurred due to the respondents' lack of understanding of diphthongs on one hand. On the other hand, the spelling of words in English that have not been mastered well. The result was many respondents pronounce the diphthongs in English like the pronunciation of diphthongs in their mother tongue. Errors in pronouncing words, especially English words that contain diphthongs certainly has an impact on misunderstandings in spoken English communication.

There are several ways that Balinese people can do to improve their English skills, especially word pronunciation. The solution includes taking English courses, but this method is seen as less effective for most people. English courses are often only considered suitable for students who indeed spend most of their time studying. In addition, course institutions are usually located in the city center so they are less affordable for rural communities. Therefore, people in the productive age range, often do not have free time to be able to take courses. As a result, cost constraints are also one of the factors that discourage people from taking non-formal education to improve their English skills.

On the other hand, the need to master English in international tourism destinations and the demands of the times are unavoidable. Therefore, we need a practical solution that can be done by all Balinese people to be able to improve their English skills, especially the ability to pronounce words. Based on this situation analysis, there are two problems discussed in this study: 1) students of SMK PGRI Payangan Gianyar have difficulties in pronouncing vocabulary in English, especially diphthongs, 2) the use of various dictionaries on the network able to help students of SMK PGRI Payangan Gianyar improving their pronunciation skills.

II METHODS

2.1 TEACHING ENGLISH PHONETICS AND PHONEMICS

The English Phonetics and Phonemics teaching program was the first step taken in this study. As described above, providing students with a basic understanding and knowledge of the English

pronunciation system was very important before students were introduced to several online dictionaries with audio features that could help students learn English pronunciation independently.

2.2 SOCIALIZATION OF VARIOUS ONLINE DICTIONARIES

After providing an initial understanding and knowledge of the different English phonological systems from Balinese, the next program was to introduce students to various online dictionaries that could be used to improve their English pronunciation skills.

The implementation of the two programs in this study used the lecturing method. This method was considered very suitable considering that this program emphasized improving students' English skills, especially pronunciation skills. In addition, in the implementation of the program, the provision tutorials were carried out to provide guidance to students in utilizing various online dictionaries as well as existing features, conducting discussions, and exercises.

The approach used in this study was a communicative approach which was carried out by emphasizing the element of communication in order to enhance the community towards the desired progress. In this activity, the target community was given a basic understanding and knowledge of the English pronunciation system and then introduced to various online dictionaries. By implementing these programs, it was hoped that the target community, namely the students of SMK PGRI Payangan, Gianyar had a better knowledge of the English pronunciation system and able to consult the media that could help them to improve their skills, which could be accessed anytime and anywhere.

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 THE ENGLISH DIPHTHONGS

Pronunciation is referred to as the production of the English sounds as mentioned by Cook (1996 as quoted by Pourhose in Gilakjani, 2016). Pronunciation is learned by repeating sounds and correcting them if they are pronounced incorrectly. When students start learning pronunciation, they start creating new habits and adjust the problems that come from their mother tongue. This is due to differences in the sound system of the two languages.

Roach (1983: 19) defines diphthong as a glide from one vowel to another. Vowels that do not go through a movement or glide are called pure vowels, and one of the general pronunciation problems for English learners is to replace the diphthongs by pure vowels. Roach (1983: 19) classified the English diphthongs as described in the following diagram:

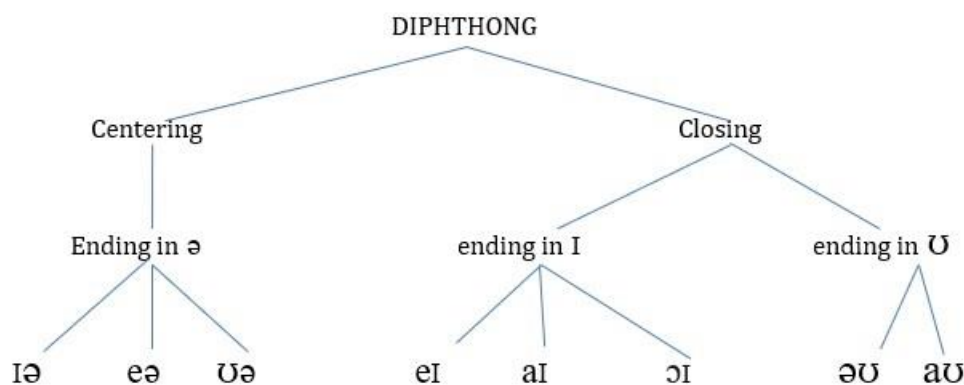


Figure 1. Diphthongs classification by Roach (1983: 190)

Kelly (2000:34) claims that a simple description of a diphthong is a mixture of vowel sounds. He also stated that there is a movement from one pure vowel to another and that the first vowel pronounces longer and louder, but not for all languages. This makes frequent mispronunciations in English learners. Similar to Roach, Kelly also mentions that English language has eight diphthongs. Kelly (2000:37) exposes that the aim of discussing sounds separately in class is to assist students pronouncing certain phonemes that have an impact on speaker communication and understanding.

3.2 THE RESULT OF THE STUDY

The result of the questionnaires distributed to the students during the study conducted at SMK PGRI Payangan are presented in the graphs below:

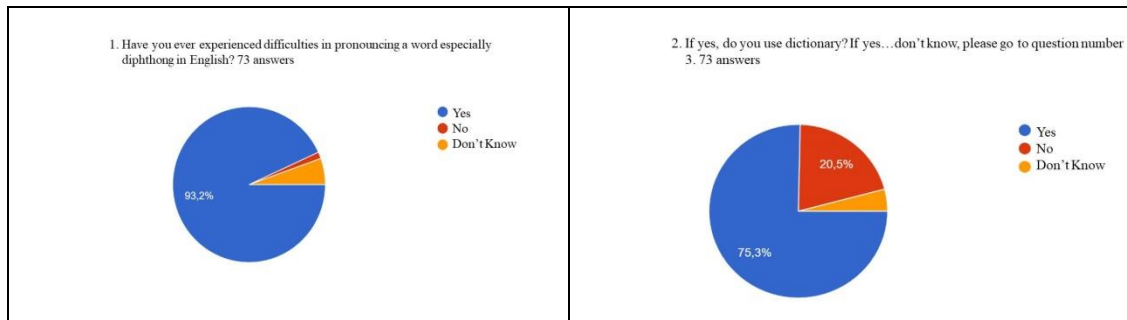


Figure 2. Graphs on the results of questions 1 and 2

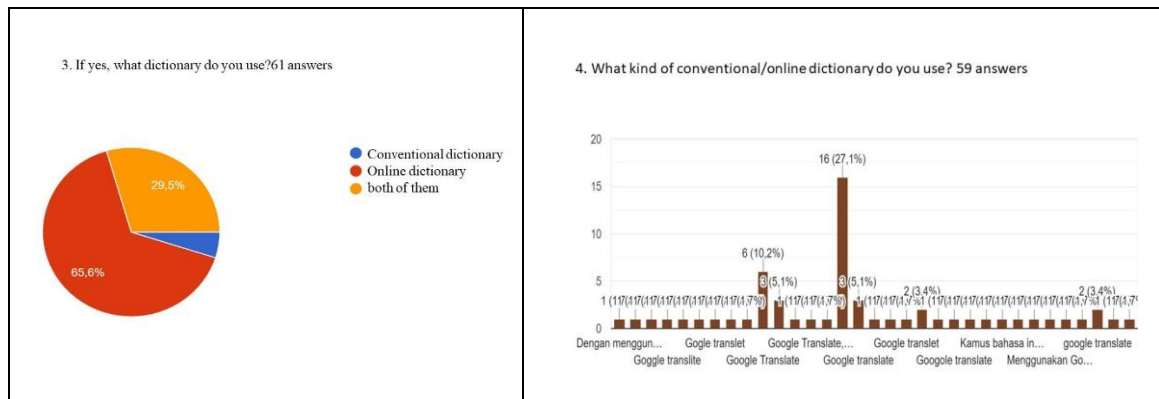


Figure 3. Graphs on the results of questions 3 and 4

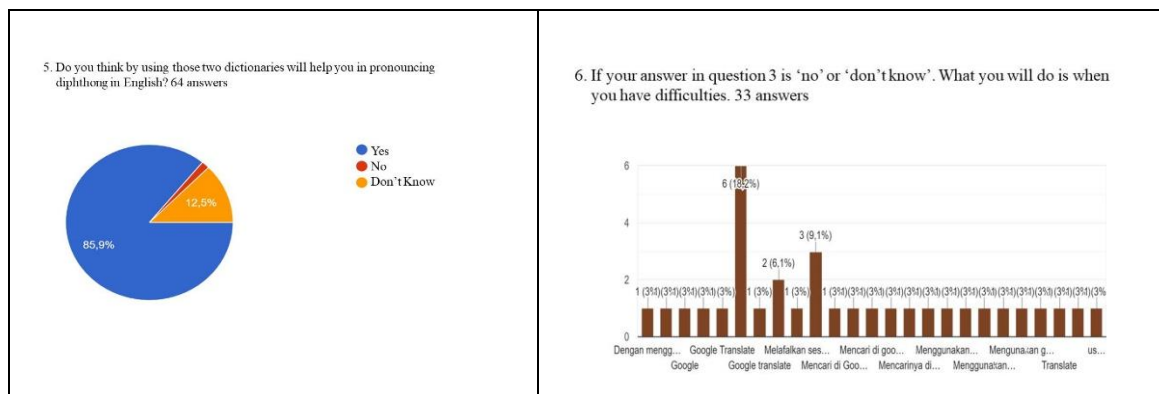


Figure 4. Graphs on the results of questions 5 and 6

Based on the responses obtained above, it can be concluded that most of the students at SMK PGRI Payangan Gianyar, namely 93.2%, still have problems in pronouncing words in English, especially in the pronunciation of diphthongs. In facing these obstacles, 65.6% of students used a dictionary to help them pronounce words in English. The figures were obtained from the result of the questionnaires being distributed to the students. The question being asked related to their experience in facing difficulties in pronouncing diphthongs as stated in the picture 2 of the graph showed 93.2% having difficulties.

Picture 3 of the graph, shows the result of the questionnaires that 65.6% of the students used dictionaries in helping them to pronounce English diphthongs. However, the only application that is known to students of SMK PGRI Payangan is google translate. These students only used google translate, despite the fact there are various other online dictionaries that can be used to improve pronunciation skills and provide more accurate results, such as the Oxford dictionary, Cambridge dictionary, or Merriam Webster dictionary, which are also available in the network.

3.3 THE SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

The result of the questionnaires on the significant of study to the students SMK PGRI Payangan are presented in the graphs below:

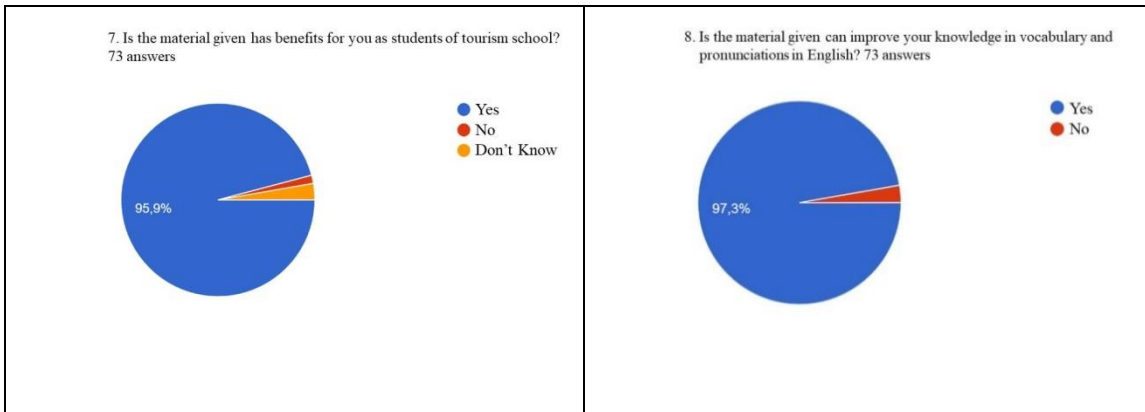


Figure 5. Graphs on the results of questions 7 and 8

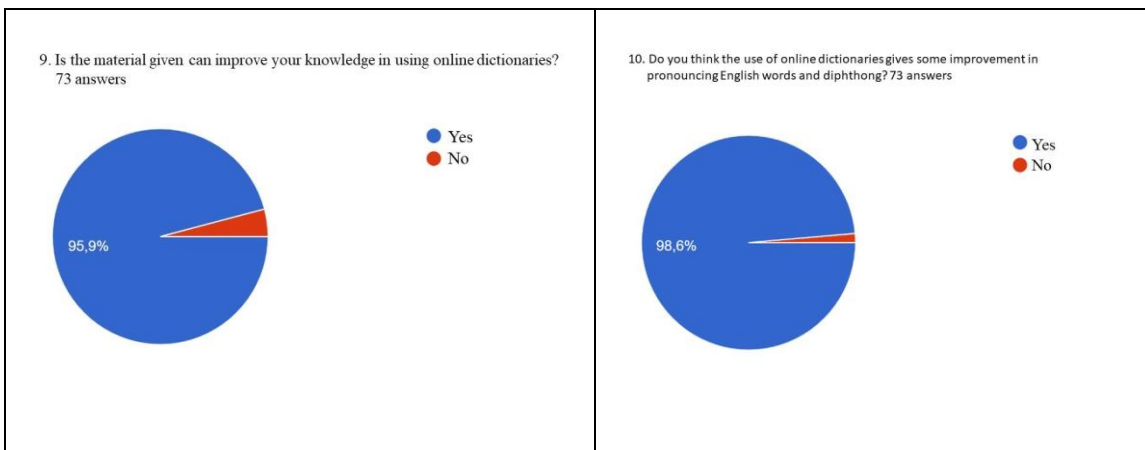


Figure 6. Graphs on the results of questions 9 and 10

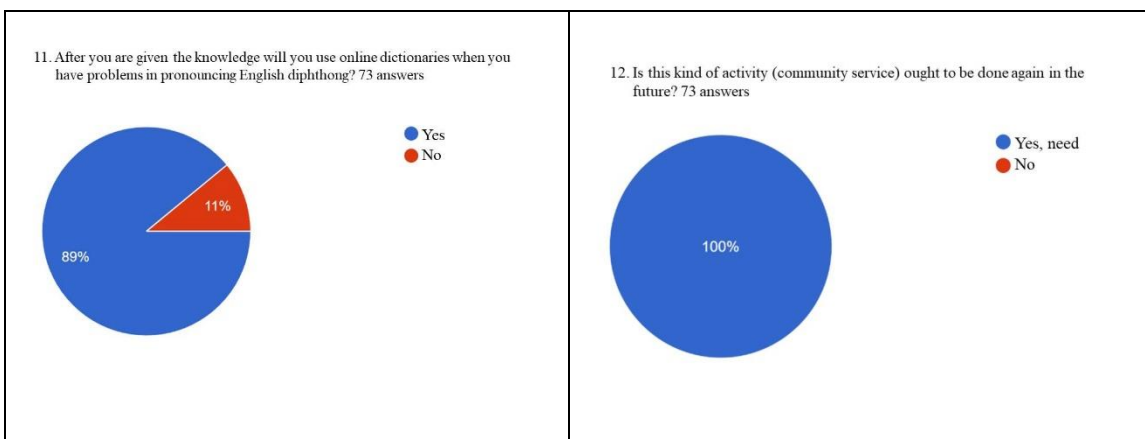


Figure 7. Graphs on the results of questions 11 and 12

This study was carried out in two activities, namely the introduction of diphthongs in English and the use of online dictionaries. The students of SMK PGRI Payangan realize that the materials presented were able to help them and provide a new understanding of how to pronounce vowels in English. It also enriches their knowledge and understanding of the use of various online dictionaries that they can use in learning to improve their pronunciation skills in English. All respondents in this activity think that similar study need to be carried out again in their SMK.

IV CONCLUSION

Based on the findings in 3.2 and 3.3, it can be concluded that the students of SMK PGRI Payangan Gianyar still have difficulties in pronouncing vocabulary in English, especially diphthongs. Therefore, we need a solution to overcome the difficulties experienced by students, namely by providing an understanding of English diphthongs and introducing various online dictionaries that can be used in the learning process to improve students' pronunciation. After the study was carried out, the students of SMK PGRI Payangan increased the understanding of pronouncing diphthongs. By utilizing various online dictionaries, they were also able to improve their pronunciation skills to be more accurate.

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