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Summary

The author of the article analyzes the term “graphon” and researches into its types in semantic, structural and functional aspects. The functions of the graphon as a means of expressing irony in postmodern fiction have been also defined in the article.

COMMON PRONUNCIATION MISTAKES IN LATINISED ENGLISH TERMS

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1. Introduction

The central objective of my research was to analyse the most frequent errors made by Slovak learners of medical and biology English. It focuses on “latinised” English terms commonly mispronounced due to the negative transfer from the Slovak language. It also suggests methodology tactics that may help teachers and students in their common effort to eliminate them.

2. Background

English pronunciation mistakes are specific to speakers of certain language. Errors happen when speaking a second language because most people are used to hearing and producing sounds which only exist in their mother tongue. Eddy states that “the most common problem of Slovak learners includes pronunciation of those consonants that do not occur in the Slovak language, and therefore a learner has no pronunciation habits created in advance. It is a case of the voiced consonants [ð] and [θ]” (2001, p.112). The English vowels are mispronounced by Slovak learners as well. In Slovak language, the short and long vowels are distinguished only by their quantity – by length of their pronunciation. Acoustic characteristics of the English vocalic phonemes is different as “every vowel is unique and the organs of speech assume a specific position for their articulation. Primarily it is a case of a qualitative difference...” (ibid, p.111). In addition to the above mentioned errors, there are some other mistakes that are typical for the pronunciation of technical latinised English. They are caused by the negative transfer of Slovak pronunciation of Latin. The mistakes can be categorized by vowels, consonants, intonation and word stress. My paper considers vowels and consonants mispronunciation.

3. Mispronounced vowel sounds

On the basis of my experience, observation and record of students’ mistakes, it is possible to state that the same error occurs in their pronunciation of English vocalic sounds – they produce them the same way as the Slovak short vowels ignoring their different quality (timbre). They pronounce them “the way they are written”. In English, however, the same letter or combination of letters can represent different distinctive vocalic phonemes. For example, the vowel letter **-a-** represents the following vocalic sounds: [æ], e.g. in the word *scapula* [skæpjulə], mispronounced as [skapjulə] or [skapjula]; [ei], e.g. *genitalia* [dʒeni'teiliə], mispronounced as [dʒeni'talia], or the prefix **a-** as in *abiotic, asexual, asocial, aplasia*, etc. that has to be uttered correctly as [ei] and not as [a]; and the schwa sound [ə], e.g. *vagina* [və'dʒainə], mispronounced as [vadʒaina]. The vowel letter **-a-** is pronounced by Slovak learners as medial vocalic sound in the English words “cut“ or “nut“.

Another common error includes vowel clusters. Learners tend to pronounce them as diphthongs or a combination of vowel + consonant + vowel even if the vowel cluster belongs to the same syllable, e.g. in the word *abiotic (a-bio-tic)*, the diphthong [io] or the vowel + consonant + vowel cluster [ijo] can be heard instead of two separately pronounced vowel letters: **-i-** should be pronounced as [ai] and **-o-** as [o], i.e. [eibai'otik]. The same pronunciation rule has to be applied some other words, such as *trachea, stria, aorta, diarrhoea*, etc. However, in some other words of Latin origin a vowel cluster is produced as a single vowel phoneme, e.g. in the prefix **auto-** that should be spoken as [o:tə]. As a result of the negative transfer, [o:] is replaced by the diphthong [au] in Slovak “type“ of pronunciation. Mispronunciation of other English vowels are included in the below index.

Index of mispronounced vowel sounds

vowel letter	pronunciation		examples and phonetic transcription
	incorrect	correct	
a	short “a” as in nut	æ	manual [mænjuəl], scapula [skæpjulə]
		eɪ	genitalia [dʒeni'teiliə], abiotic [eɪbaɪ'otɪk]
		ə	vagina [və'dʒaɪnə], bacillus [bə'sɪləs]
e	short “e” as in head	i:	gamet [gæ'mi:t], femur [fi:mə]
		ə	genetic [dʒə'netɪk], mezoderm [mezədə:m]
		ə:	dermis [də:mɪs], derma [də:ma]
i	short “i” as in rib	ai	ribosome [raɪbəsəʊm], binary baɪnəri]
o	short “o” as in dog	əʊ	decompose [di:kəm'pəʊz], porosis [pɔrəʊzɪs]
		ə	postnatal [pɔst'neɪtl], monoblast [monə'bla:st]
u	short “u” as in put	ju	unit [ju:nɪt], muscular [maskjulə]
		ju:	nucleus [nju:kliəs], uterus [ju:tərəs]
		a	guttæ [gati:], muscle [masl]
		ə	postpartum [pɔst'pɑ:təm], uterus [ju:tərəs]
y	short “i”	ai	zygotic [zai'gotɪk], gyn-[gaɪn], gynaecology

4. Mispronounced consonant sounds

English consonant sounds are often produced under the influence of the dominant local pronunciation. The consonant letter **-c-** preceding the vowels **-e-**, **-i-** or **-y-** has to be spoken as the voiceless alveolar fricative [s], e. g. in words *cell*, *cellular*, *thoracic*, *circulatory*, etc., but the Slovak soft affricate [c] (IPA symbol [ts]) can be heard instead. The word *cell* is read as [tsel]. Mispronunciation relates also to the consonant clusters involving the letter **-c-**. Two errors are frequent. The consonant cluster **-sc-** in such words as *sciatic*, *scilla*, etc. is mispronounced as [sts] - [stsiatik] instead of [sai'ætɪk], or [stsilə] instead of [silə]. The second error relates to the cluster **-ch-**. In Slovak, it is a single phoneme pronounced as voiceless velar fricative [x]. The learners produce the same sound in the latinised words, such as in *chlorophyl*, *chemistry*, *chitin*, etc. instead of the velar plosive [k] ([kemistri], [klo:rəfil], [ˈkaitɪn]). Also the consonant **-g-** is often mispronounced as the plosive [g] where it has to be spoken as the voiced affricate [dʒ], e.g. *genus*, *rigid* are spoken as [genus] and [rigid] instead of [dʒi:nəs] and [rɪdʒɪd]. Also the consonant clusters **-ps-**, **-pn-**, and **-pt-** cause problems. Unlike the Slovak pronunciation of Latin words starting with these consonant clusters, initial **-p-** is a silent consonant in English, e.g. *pseudo* [sjudəʊ] vs. [pseudo], *pneumonia* [nju:'məʊniə] vs. [pneumo:nɪə], *ptosis* [təʊsɪs] vs. [ptozɪs], etc. The same can be said about the differences in pronunciation of **-gm-** and **-gn-** in the final position. **-g-** is silent in English, but spoken in Slovak. Learners usually stumble in the middle of the word containing this cluster when they try to produce **-g-**. They find it difficult to pronounce **-g-** at the end of the word as there is no gender ending, e.g. *benign* [bi'nain] vs. [beni -

gn] ([benigni:] in Slovak). Errors occur also in words with initial letter **-x-** spoken as the voiced fricative [z] in English, e.g. *xerostomia* [ziərə'stəumiə], *xenogenic* [zenə'dʒenik], etc. It seems to be rather strange to Slovak learners who always pronounces the “x” consonant as the consonant cluster of the voiceless plosive + fricative - [ks]. The bellow index contains a survey of the mispronounced consonants in latinised English biology and medical terms.

Index of mispronounced consonant sounds

consonant letter	pronunciation		examples and phonetic transcription
	incorrect	correct	
c	c	s	cell [sel], circulation [sə:kju'leiʃn]
sc	sk	s	sciatic [sai'ætik]
sch	sch	sk	schema [ski:mə]
ch	k	ch	chemistry [kemistri], chlorophyl [klo:rəfil]
g	g	dʒ	genus [dʒi:nəs], rigid [ridʒid]
ps-	ps	s	psychology [sai'kolədʒi]
pn-	pn	n	pneumatic [nju:'mætik]
pt-	pt	t	pterosaur [terə,so:], ptosis [təusis],
rh	rh	r	diarrhoea [daiə'riə]
th	th	θ	thorax [θoræks, thymus [θaiməs]
-gn	gn	n	benign [bi'nain]
-gm	gm	m	phlegm [flem],
x-	x	z	xerostomia [ziərə'stəumiə]

5. Methodology for elimination of pronunciation errors

Students studying ESP as a part of their university curriculum have already acquired some incorrect habits during their previous study at the secondary or even primary schools. Except for the errors described by Eddy (2001), there are some others related to work with a text. Students' dislike to read aloud and unwillingness to repeat mispronounced words after the teacher can be mentioned as an example. Many teachers of English have apparently excluded this activity from their lesson plans and rely on silent reading. Reading aloud builds important foundational skills. It not only introduces a new vocabulary, provides a model of fluent reading, but helps to practise correct pronunciation. As a result, students not only mispronounce segmental elements but also make mistakes in word stress and intonation. Error elimination requires a lot of

time, patience and motivation. As far as the latinised English errors are concerned, the following strategies seem to help:

- Explaining the “basic rules” of pronunciation of latinised English at the very first seminar/lecture and giving examples of medical/biology terms to show students that latinised English relates to their future professional communication and thus to motivate them.
- Practising pronunciation drilling of individual segments in word sequences, whereby it is recommended to start (if possible) with words of English origin students already know, and continue with latinised “technical” terms. The practised segment/segmental cluster is marked to focus learners’ attention.

Example 1: practising pronunciation of the silent **-g-** in the consonant clusters **-gn-** and **-gm-**: sign, assign, design, foreign, malign, benign, pflegm, diaphragm...

Example 2: practising the consonant cluster **-ch-** pronounced as [k]: ache, headache, stomach, stomachache, toothache, tech, technic, technology, chemistry, chronic, chromosome, chlorofyl, chitin...

Example 3: practising the Latin suffix **-itis** [ˈaitis]: -itis, otitis, gastritis, hepatitis, tonsilitis, bronchitis, colitis, neuritis, sinusitis, gingivitis...

- Selective silent reading: looking for and marking latinised terms. Biology text below used as an example contains 122 words including prepositions and articles. Students have marked 37 terms. As it represents 30.32 % of all the words it can be used as a motivation element.

Example:

“The cell cycle is a repeating sequence of growth, replication of DNA, and cell division. The cell cycle, which leads to an increase in cell number, is opposed by apoptosis, which is cell death.

Cell division in unicellular organisms (bacteria, archaea, protists and some fungi, such as yeasts) produces two new individuals. This is asexual reproduction by binary fission in which a parent produces a genetically identical offspring.

In sexually reproducing organisms (multicellular eukaryotes), the type of cell division is called meiosis. In animals, meiosis produces gametes (sperm and egg cells), while in other organisms, such as fungi, it generates spores. The outcome of meiosis is four (genetically unique) haploid cells, compared with the two (genetically identical) diploid cells produced from mitosis.”

- Silent reading is followed by repeating the underlined terms after the teacher by all students and then reading aloud by individual students.
- Pair work – reading the whole text to each other and mutual correcting of mistakes.
- Learning correct pronunciation of the selected terms by means of on-line pronunciation dictionaries (suitable for homework).

Example:

In the online dictionary www.howjsay.com, look for the following words and learn them to pronounce correctly: fungi, fungal, eukaryot, eukaryotic, prokaryot, prokaryotic, heterotroph, heterotrophic... (Vocabulary has been selected from Biology English textbook, from the unit planned for the next seminar).

6. Conclusion

Most conversations in English are among people who are not native speakers. English has become a common language to communicate academic, scientific, and technological information including medicine, and biology. Unlike grammar mistakes that can be tolerated as long as they did not break the communication, pronunciation errors may cause communication to be confusing. Changing pronunciation habits is a hard work and requires time and effort from learners as well as teachers. Therefore it is important for teachers not to neglect mispronounced words, correct learners' pronunciation, and thus promote their self-confidence and increase their comfort when speaking English.

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GENDER STEREOTYPING IN BRITISH TOY COMMERCIALS

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Media figures as an inseparable constituent of the contemporary society, often described as consumer society. People meet and use the media almost continuously every day, e.g. when they watch the television, read newspapers and magazines, browse the Internet or pass a billboard. Media became the primary source of information and as a result, it plays an important role in shaping people's ideas about the real world, and it also influences the way how people live, interact or communicate. Television advertising, as part of the world of media, concentrates primarily on selling products or services. Because they have only a limited time to do so (20 maybe 30 seconds), they