

PHONETIC PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING PROFESSIONALLY-ORIENTED READING IN HIGHER MEDICAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In the article attention is focused on the basic phonetic peculiarities of teaching reading in English in the higher medical educational institution. The most common rules of pronunciation of certain letter combinations in the borrowed Greek-Latin terminological units have been singled out.

Keywords: reading, ESP, medical terms, letter combination, diphthong, digraphs.

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Фонетичні засади навчання професійно-орієнтованому читанню у вищих медичних навчальних закладах. У статті зосереджено увагу на основних фонетичних особливостях навчання читання англійською мовою у вищому медичному навчальному закладі. Виокремлено найбільш загальні правила вимови ряду літеросполучень у запозичених греко-латинських термінах.

Ключові слова: читання, мова для спеціальних цілей, медичний термін, буквосполучення, дифтонг, диграф.

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Фонетические засады обучения профессионально-ориентированному чтению в высших медицинских учебных заведениях. В статье сосредоточено внимание на основных фонетических особенностях обучения чтению на английском языке в высшем медицинском учебном заведении. Выделены наиболее общие правила произношения ряда буквенных сочетаний в заимствованных греко-латинских терминах.

Ключевые слова: чтение, язык для специальных целей, медицинский термин, буквосочетание, дифтонг, диграф.

The *aim* of the article is to determine the basic phonetic issues of teaching reading in English in higher medical educational institution.

A means of communication in the modern globalized world is, of course, a language of international intercourse, i.e. the English language. That is why the subject "Professional foreign language" or as it is traditionally called in the international methodology "English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), English for Professional Purposes (EPP), English for/in the Workplace (EWP), English for Medical Purposes (EMP) is extremely important in the process of receiving higher education by any student. For this reason the curriculum of almost all specialties necessarily includes foreign language learning.

The main objective of the teaching-learning process is to provide students with the necessary skills to effectively communicate in English both in academic and professional environment. As to the reading habits and skills the course unit content includes: understanding the structure of a text; identifying the main idea of the text; understanding thought relationships; finding the information within the text; scanning and skimming techniques; comparison and assessment of information [8, 126].

Correctness of pronunciation is an important feature identifying a high level of communicative competence of specialists, their literacy. In this paper we consider reading to be a transitional stage before text retelling, and thus, the main attention will be focused on the clue phonetic issues of teaching reading. The necessity of training of competent and literate professional stipulates the *topicality* of the research.

This article *aims at* identifying common rules of pronunciation of Greek and Latin units borrowed into

the English medical terminology and determining the basic phonetic issues of teaching reading in English in higher medical educational institution.

The *objectives* of the study are as follows: 1) to analyze vowels and consonants, found in the English medical terms borrowed from classical languages; 2) to trace the relation between some reading rules and notion of "declension" of the Latin noun; 3) to single out certain letter combinations and explain their pronunciation.

The main issues of teaching reading have been studied by many scientists. Those whose works became useful for the given research are O. Bezliudnyi, O. Kuznietsova, N. Sura. Greek-Latin terms, described in the article, have been verified by the lexicographic sources and manuals of O. Beliaieva, V. Synytsia, O. Demchenko, M. Zakaliuzhnyi.

The main task of the educational process in medical schools is to prepare students to both academic and professional communication on the specific topic. That is why the second year students are offered thematic texts in different fields of medicine (according to the curriculum): *Heart, Heart Attack, Heart Transplantation, Respiratory System, Lungs, Infections of the Respiratory Tract, Tobacco and its Effects, Nervous System, Brain, Theory of Reflexes, Endocrine System, Glands, Endocrine Pathologies, Goiter, Immune System*, etc. Mastering the skills of professional medical English anticipates absolute understanding of lexical, grammatical and stylistic features of English academic and popular science text, study of medical terms by dictionary entries and in the context, development of a professional vocabulary and vocabulary of a patient or other interlocutor, case history, abbreviations [7, 190].

Reading is undoubtedly one of

the most important aspects of foreign language mastering. O. Bezhudnyi supposes that among all the means of linguistic communication reading has a special place as the most widespread and the most available aspect. The basis for teaching reading is usually a text in a foreign language, which should be read, understood and translated [1, 54].

O. Kuznietsova believes that reading is the most frequently used aspect in teaching foreign language and explains the reasons of this: reading is the most stable and long-lasting skill, because the ability to understand a text is preserved for a long time; due to the Internet professional texts became always available and it allows to develop reading skills even after graduation; the need to read professionally-oriented texts occurs more often than the need to communicate or write in a foreign language. Professionally-oriented reading is a complicated linguistic competence, the main objective of which is the search for information in certain occupational branch [4].

In non-linguistic higher educational institution reading as a kind of verbal competence belongs to a receptive type, i.e. it is an understanding of ready linguistic signs. But despite the passive nature of this process reading requires a certain activity from both a teacher and a student [5, 123–124].

The peculiarity of foreign language in a higher medical educational institution is the abundance of Greek and Latin terms in the texts. Thus, there arise some problems of adequate pronunciation of such units, as well as there is a need to draw common rules of reading typical letter combinations, found in the medical terminological units. All the mentioned above stipulates the necessity to draw an interdisciplinary parallel with a course of Latin language, phonetics in particular.

Introduction to phonetics in

teaching English to medical students usually contains lecture commentaries with the specification of pronunciation of classical term elements, used in the borrowed terms.

Therefore, it is necessary to begin with characterizing vowels, the correct reading of which contributes to the formation of communicative competence of future doctors. The attention is paid to typical letter combinations, frequently used combinations of vowels and consonants, which the student has to determine easily, single them out among the other text units and eventually read them correctly.

The examples illustrating the given rules in this paper are taken from manuals on Latin medical terminology [2, 3].

In our opinion, one of the most logical and consistent rule of pronunciation is reading of noun inflexions, which denote medical terms, and were borrowed into the term systems in an unchangeable form, i.e. they existed in the same form in the source language centuries ago. It is necessary to mention that the following classification is directly connected with the grammatical topic "Plural of nouns": the given inflexion having special pronunciation is none other but grammatical category of number (rules are associated with the Latin noun declensions):

- noun of the 1st declension, which has inflexion -a in singular, in plural receives Latin diphthong -ae (long e), in English pronounced like [i:]: *trachea* – *tracheae* [trəˈtʃi:]; *vena* – *venae* [ˈvi:ni:]. It should also be noted, that diphthongs *æ*, *œ* in any position in the word are pronounced like long i [i:]: *amogba* [əˈmi:bi:], *foetus* [ˈfi:tʊs].

- noun of the 2nd declension, which has inflexion -us in singular (and hence belongs to masculine gender), in plural receives Latin -i, pronounced as English [ai]: *bronchus* – *bronchi* [ˈbrɔ:ʃki], *alveolus* – *alveoli* [ˈɒlviːdʊli], *vagus*

[ˈveɪɡʊs] – *vagi* [ˈveɪdʒi]. As to the last example, it should be noted, that g before a, u, o sounds like [g], but before e, i, y it's [dʒ], so the same noun in singular and plural differs in reading.

- noun of the 2nd declension, which has inflexions -um, -on in singular (those belonging to neuter gender), in plural receives Latin -a, pronounced according to the English transcription like [ə]: *atrium* – *atria* [ˈɛtriə], *tectum* – *tecta* [ˈtektə], *cerebellum* – *cerebella* [ˈsɛriˈbɛlə].

- noun of the 3rd declension is characterized by a variety of forms, so some of them borrowed both singular and plural inflexions without changes: *index* – *indices* [ˈɪndiːsi:z], *corpus* – *corpora* [ˈkɔ:p(ə)rə], *radix* – *radices* [ˈreɪdɪsi:z]; those ending with -is inflexion change it into -es pronounced like [i:z]: *analysis* – *analyses* [əˈnælɪsi:z].

- noun of the 4th declension masculine gender is not changed and coincides with singular like in Latin or just gets inflexion -es like any traditional English word: *plexus* – *plexus* = *plexuses*, *meatus* – *meatus* = *meatuses*.

- noun of the 4th declension neuter gender receives inflexion -ua [juə] in plural, that saved from Latin: *genu* – *genua* [ˈdʒɛni juə], *cornu* – *cornua* [ˈkɔ:njuə].

- noun of the 5th declension is not changed and its singular and plural forms coincide: *species* – *species*, *facies* – *facies*.

There are two more diphthongs in Latin, which came into English from Greek together with the borrowed words – au [av], eu [ev], but they assimilated to the English pronunciation rules and are now read like [ɔ:] and [ju:] respectively: *autograft* [ˈɔ:təˈgrɑ:ft], *trauma* [ˈtrɔ:mə], *neurology* [ˈnju:əˈlɔ:dʒi].

One more letter with a special reading worth mentioning is "y", usually pronounced like [ai], which as a rule denotes the words of Greek

origin: *hyper-* [ἄνω], *thyroxin* [υαῖν ἄνωξινη]. Students should differentiate between prefixes (*hyper-*, *hypo-*, *hys-*, *sym-/syn-*) and roots (*-hyp-*, *-oxy-*, *-prr-*, *-mycin-*) containing “y”, know their meaning, clearly see them in a text and read correctly.

To consolidate achievements the students are suggested a set of nouns, which they have to change into plural; the aim of such kind of task is to check the correctness of diphthongs and typical inflexions reading.

While working upon the professional medical texts, students are recommended to write out the terms, which have special pronunciation, then they have to put them into different columns, where for example, letter “a” is pronounced like [ei]: *chamber, atria, aorta, apex*; [a]: *arterial, artery*; [x]: *valve, sac, relax*; or where letter “i” is pronounced like [ai]: *mitral, tricuspid, fiber, parietal, fibrous, mediastinum, diastole, dioxide*; [i]: *ventricle, inherent, visceral, friction, respectively*. In this case the pronunciation of the word should be thoroughly checked by the dictionary.

Most consonants are not so difficult to pronounce but still, there are some peculiar features of some letter combinations that require special attention.

First, we have to specify the definition of digraph: “It is a combination of two consonants pronounced like one sound” [6, 15]. Latin linguists single out four such combinations. They are: *ch, ph, th, rh*. In English all of them have specific pronunciation. They can also be found in other words not just in medical terms, but in this paper only special units are analyzed:

- *ch* is always pronounced like [k]: *cholera, bronchus, chromosome*.
- *rh* is always pronounced like [r]: *diarrhoea, rhomboides*.
- *ph* is always pronounced like [f]: *phobia, pharynx, lymphatic*.
- *th* is always pronounced like

[θ]: *thorax, exophthalmic, isthmus*.

There are the other groups of letter combinations found in the medical terms borrowed from classical languages: *-ngu-* – pronounced like [ŋw] before a vowel: *sanguine, sublingual, linguist*; *-qu-* – pronounced like [kw]: *squatous, oblique, quadriceps*; *-sch-* – pronounced like [sk]: *ischemia, schism*.

Letter “x” in the English terminological units of Greek origin is usually pronounced like [z]: *xenograft* [zɛnɔuɔgrɑ:ft], *xyotomy* [zaiɔtɔmi].

Letter “p” in the terminological units borrowed from Greek in the position at the beginning of the word is never pronounced: *pneumonia, psychology, psychiatry*. It is usually found in combination with “n” or “s”.

In this research paper reading is regarded as a preparation to the retelling of the text, it means the consolidation of acquired communicative (phonetic and grammatical) skills in the process of mastering a foreign language. Learning the rules of pronunciation of all the mentioned above letter combinations is an integral part of teaching English in a higher medical educational institution.

The main task of the teacher in the process is to help students identify special letter combinations in the terms and read them right. Proper reading is a guarantee of correct speaking.

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