

SOUND INTERCHANGE IN MODERN COLLOQUIAL SPEECH

У роботі представлені результати дослідження розмовного стилю мови молоді Англії і України. Описані основні типи звукових явищ (асиміляція, дисиміляція, редукція). Відповідно до отриманих фактів можна стверджувати, що фонетичні явища в двох мовах, що зіставляються, носять типологічно спільний характер, хоча через особливості фонетичної і граматичної структур мов ступінь прояву даних ознак має свою специфіку в кожній з мов.

Ключові слова: *взаємовплив звуків, розмовна мова, асиміляція, редукція, вимова.*

В настоящей работе представлены результаты исследования разговорного стиля речи молодежи Англии и Украины. Описаны основные типы звуковых явлений (ассимиляция, диссимиляция, редукция). В соответствии с полученными фактами можно утверждать, что фонетические явления в двух сопоставляемых языках носят типологически общий характер, хотя из-за особенностей фонетической и грамматической структур языков степень проявления данных признаков имеет свою специфику в каждом из языков.

Ключевые слова: *взаимовлияние звуков, разговорная речь, ассимиляция, редукция, произношение.*

The colloquial style of pronunciation has been investigated in English and Ukrainian speech of the youth. The sound interchange (assimilation, dissimilation, reduction) peculiarities are presented in the article. According to the result of the investigation it can be stated that the phonetic phenomena in the two languages under investigation are of the same character though owing to the specific phonetic and grammatical structures of the two languages the sound interchange has some peculiarities in either of the languages.

Key words: *sound interchange, colloquial speech, assimilation, reduction, pronunciation.*

The different changes sounds undergo in connected speech depend upon the style of speech, i.e. different forms of speech are adapted to different aims and to different social conditions [1, 2]. In phonetics there are two

main styles — full style and colloquial style, are characterized by definite features, including phonetical ones. The difference between full and colloquial styles of pronunciation in English and Ukrainian is great.

Full style of pronunciation is characteristic of lecturing, official announcements and public speeches. The chief feature of this style is more careful and distinct articulation. The colloquial style of pronunciation is used in informal speech and conversation. The rules of colloquial style vary for each language.

It's well known that different degree of reduction and assimilation influence the pronunciation in connected speech of the youth. The analysis of the experimental material demonstrated that reduction is closely connected with the development of the phonetical structure of the language, its grammatical system and vocabulary.

Two forms of reduction: **quantitative** or **quantitative-qualitative** — depending on the character of the change, have been widely spread in English and Ukrainian speech of the youth.

Different degrees of length of English vowels depending on whether they are stressed or unstressed may illustrate the case of purely quantitative reduction. Thus, for example, the English [ɪ:] in the word *meliorate* ['mɪ:lɪəreɪt] is longer than the same vowel [ɪ:] in the word *melioration* [,mɪlɪ(ə)'reɪ(ə)n]. The same can be said about the sound [R] in the words *party* ['pɑ:tɪ], *partial* ['pɑ:f(ə)l], *partiality* [pɑ:fɪælətɪ]. Ukrainian vowels may become longer when under stress but the difference in length is too slight to be of any practical importance.

It should be mentioned that the change in the quality of the sound is generally accompanied or even caused by a change in quantity. Therefore there is no purely qualitative reduction.

Quantitative-qualitative reduction often occurs both in the English and Ukrainian languages. As a result, English unstressed vowels can be reduced (turned into neutral vowels or change their quantity and quality): compare *melodious*— *melody*; *sportsman* — *man*; *moderate* (*adj.*) — *moderate* (*v.*).

In the English spoken language quantitative-qualitative reduction often occurs in reduced forms of form-words.

Both forms **partial** or **complete** reduction are observed in the young people's speech. In the case of partial reduction, sounds change their quality or quantity to some degree. In the case of reduction to zero, a sound in an unstressed position falls out completely. For example, in the English words *pencil* ['pensl], *cotton* ['kɒtn], *open* ['əʊpn], *written* ['rɪt(ə)n], etc. the vowels in an unstressed syllable fall out completely.

Examples of complete consonantal reduction are found in the following words, where [d], [p] may fall out. *windflaw* [ˈwɪn(d)flɔː]; *prompt* [prɒm(p)t]; *prompt-box* [ˈprom(p) tɒks], etc.

Sometimes the same words may have partial or complete reduction depending on the style of speech. The sounds of some words may be reduced only partially in full style while in colloquial style the same sounds may be reduced completely. It takes place especially often in reduced forms of English form-words, e.g. from [from, frem, frm]; *can* [ken, kn].

Zero reduction is not characteristic of the Ukrainian language. According to the sounds (vowels or consonants) which undergo changes, reduction may be of two kinds — vowel reduction and consonant reduction. Vowel reduction is the most typical case of reduction in English. In Ukrainian there is both vowel and consonant reduction, though consonant reduction is more characteristic of Ukrainian than vowel reduction: *приходили* [ПРИ^еХОДИ^еЛИ] — the vowel [И] may be reduced into [Е]; *волок* [ВоЎк] — the consonant [В] is changed into the non-syllabic [У]; *источник* [ИСТОЧНИКУ] — the affricate [ДЖ] is weakened and changes its quality to some extent.

Reduction, side by side with other phonetic phenomena, is of great importance for the development of the phonetic structure of the language. Reduction is one of the phonetical means of gradual development of the grammatical structure of the language and its vocabulary.

Another phenomenon of a phonetic process in today's speech is assimilation when one sound, under the influence of a sound near it, acquires some articulation and acoustic likeness to that other sound. Assimilation is also connected with the development of the phonetical structure of the language, its grammatical system and vocabulary.

Some foreign linguists treat assimilation as a pure phonetical process without any connection with the grammatical system of the language {3. 4}. Assimilation may be treated from different points of view: its direction, degree, stability, the distance between the assimilating and assimilated sounds, etc. Assimilation can involve the position of the tongue, the position of the lips, the position of the soft palate and the vocal chords.

In pronouncing Ukrainian vowels, preceded or followed or both preceded and followed by palatalized consonants, the position of the tongue is changed. The tongue occupies a more front and close position than in pronouncing these vowels in an isolated position or between hard consonants. For example the Ukrainian [А] in the words *кукла* [К'УГЛА], *тяжело* [Т'АЖКО] becomes more close and front.

Assimilation may affect the position of the lips. This case occurs rather seldom in English. Ukrainian vowels may become slightly labialized under the influence of the neighbouring labial consonants. For example the first [A] in the Ukrainian word *мартышка* [МАВПА] and the first [И] of the word *выучить* [ВЫУЧИТЬ] become slightly labialized.

Assimilation may involve the position of the soft palate. This case is not typical of English. Ukrainian vowels may become slightly nasalized under the influence of the neighbouring nasal sonant. For example vowels become slightly nasalized in the Ukrainian word *мамо* [МАМО].

Assimilation may involve the speech organ which forms the obstruction, the manner in which a sound is produced or the place of the obstruction.

Assimilation in English, as well as in Ukrainian, affects the place of the obstruction most often. In the combinations of [t, d, n, l, s, z] with [T], [D] the dental [T, D] influence the alveolar [t, d, n, l, s, z] and the place of the obstruction is changed. Those alveolar sounds become dental. For example in the words *fifθ* [fɪɪT], *tenth* [tenθ] consonants [l], [n] become dental, and in the word combinations *and thus* [əndðʌs], *in the* [ɪnðə], *reached the* [ˈrɪ:tʃtðə] consonants [d], [n], [t] become dental too.

Examples of assimilation involving the place of the obstruction in Ukrainian are: *б'єшя* [Б'ЙЕСЬС'А], *советуєшя* [РАДИСЬС'А] (the place of the obstruction is changed and [Ш] is changed into [С'] under the influence of the following [С']).

The cases of assimilation in which the organs of speech or the manner in which a sound is produced are rather rare in English.

In Ukrainian assimilation involves the active organ and the manner of the production of noise more often. For example the Ukrainian [З] in the word *указатель* [ПОКАЖЧИК] was changed into [Ж] under the influence of the following [Ч].

Assimilation often involves the work of the vocal chords in English, though not so often as it does in Ukrainian. An example of assimilation involving the work of the vocal chords can be found in the word *gooseberry* [ˈguzbqrɪ] where [s] was changed into [z] under the influence of the following voiced [b].

In Ukrainian, voiced consonants at the beginning of a word become voiceless as a rule when followed by voiceless consonants: *сшити* [СШИТИ]; *ссыпати* [ССИПАТИ]; *розбрасувати* [РОСКИДАТИ]; *из колодца* [СКРИЕНЬЦ'І].

Voiceless consonants in the middle of the word before voiced ones become voiced, especially in quick colloquial speech. Thus, for example, in

the words *молотьба*, *вокзал* voiceless [Т'], [К] become voiced under the influence of the following voiced [Б], [З] and the words are pronounced [МОЛОД'БА́] [ВОГЗА́Л].

Complete or partial assimilation are used in connected speech of the youth. Complete assimilation seldom occurs in English. The word *horseshoe* is usually given as an example, which in colloquial speech is pronounced [ˈhɒssu:]. In Ukrainian, cases of complete assimilation occur more often. Thus, in the words *советуєшься* [РА́ДИЄС':А], *смієшься* [С'М'ІЄС':А] the sound [Ш] is changed into [С'] under the influence of the following [С']. In the word *шиють* [ШШИТИ] the sound [З] is changed into [Ш] under the influence of the following [Ш]. The Ukrainian long consonants [Т'], [Д'], [С'], [З'], [Н'], [Л'], etc. which were developed from the combinations of a soft consonant plus [Й] are also the result of complete assimilation.

Partial assimilation often occurs both in English and Ukrainian. Cases of partial assimilation can be found in the English words *filth* [fɪlθ], *tenth* [tenθ], *approached the* [əˈprəʊtʃtðə] — [l], [n], [d] are partially influenced here by the following dental [θ] or [ð] and change their articulation, they become dental.

Partial assimilation often occurs in Ukrainian when a palatalized consonant follows a non-palatalized one. The Ukrainian [Н], [С], for example, become partially palatalized under the influence of the following palatalized [Ц'], in the words *сонця* [СОН'Ц'А], *места* [М'ІС'Ц'А].

There is also a third intermediate type of assimilation, in which the articulation of a sound is changed completely but it does not coincide with the assimilating sound, e.g. *five-pence* ['faɪfɛns], *looked* [lʊkt], *newspaper* ['nju:spɛɪpə] ([v], [d], [z] are changed into [f], [t], [s] under the influence of the neighbouring [p] [k] [p]). The same intermediate type of assimilation can be found in the Ukrainian language. In the word combination *из дома* [С ХАТИ] the sound [З] is changed into [С] under the influence of the following voiceless [Х].

Progressive and regressive assimilation (according to the direction in which the influence can be spread) are widely spread in the material under analysis. For example, in the word *print* [prɪnt] [r] becomes partially devoiced under the influence of the preceding voiceless [p]; in the word *news* [nju:z] [u:] becomes more front under the influence of the preceding [j], in the word *comes* [kʌmz] [s] is changed into [z] under the influence of the preceding voiced consonants.

In Ukrainian, progressive assimilation is seldom met, e.g. in the word *мартышка* [МАВПА] [A] is slightly labialized under the influence of the preceding labial [M].

Here are some examples of **regressive assimilation**: in the words *newspaper* [ˈnju:spɛɪp] the sound [z] becomes voiceless under the influence of the following voiceless consonant.

Besides these two cases of assimilation the so-called **mutual** or **reciprocal** assimilation where the assimilated and the assimilating sounds both influence upon each other can be observed in the two languages under analysis. In English this case of assimilation occurs very seldom. In Ukrainian it occurs more often, e.g. in the word *стена* [С'Т'ІНА] [C] and [T] are changed under the influence of each other. [C] becomes soft under the influence of soft [T'], [T'] becomes sibilant under the influence of the sibilant [C].

Contact assimilation (when a sound is influenced by an adjoining sound) is quite frequent too. For example, in the English word *sixth* [sɪksθ] [s] becomes dental under the influence of the adjoining [T]. In Ukrainian, cases of contact assimilation can be found in the words: *молотьба* [МОЛОД'БА], *смієшся* [С'М'ІЄС':А].

Distant assimilation (when a sound is influenced not by an adjoining sound but by a distant one) is also used in speech. Cases of distant assimilation in English are very rare. This type of assimilation is typical neither of English nor of Ukrainian.

Dissimilation (the phenomenon opposite to assimilation in which one of two similar phonemes is changed as a result of their interaction) is exercised by the youth. Dissimilated may be a vowel or a consonant, distant or contact (more often distant than contact), regressive or progressive and always complete.

Dissimilation is of great importance for the development of the language.

The Ukrainian words *плести* [ПЛІСТИ], *мести* [МІСТИ] which were pronounced [ПІЄТТИ], [МІЄТТИ] may serve as examples of dissimilation. One of the two similar stop consonants [T] was changed into the fricative [C].

In English the phenomenon of dissimilation is not yet investigated. Students whose native language is Ukrainian often meet with difficulties in pronouncing English sounds in connected speech as the rules of assimilation in English differ from those in Ukrainian.

The following types of assimilation often occur in English and Ukrainian: consonantal, partial, regressive, contact and living. Examples of full and intermediate assimilation are met more often in Ukrainian than in English.

Progressive assimilation is not characteristic of either of the two languages, though in Ukrainian it occurs more often than in English.

Vowel and historical assimilation are met both in English and Ukrainian very seldom. Intermediate and full assimilation occur rarely in English.

Most often assimilation in English and Ukrainian involves the work of the vocal chords, but owing to the specific phonetic and grammatical structures of the two languages assimilation acts in different ways.

Thus, at the beginning of the word voiceless consonants in Ukrainian become voiced if they are before voiced consonants and vice versa voiced consonants are devoiced if they are before voiceless consonants. In the middle of the word Ukrainian voiced consonants are not devoiced when the adjoining sound is a voiceless consonant, e.g. *казка* [КАЗКА], *тропинка* [СТÉЖКА].

In English, lately, this phenomenon is also observed. English voiced consonants no longer remain voiced when followed by voiceless consonants, e.g. *good time* ['gut'taɪm].

According to the result of the investigation it can be stated that the phonetic phenomena in the two languages under investigation are of the same character though owing to the specific phonetic and grammatical structures of the two languages assimilation acts in different ways.

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