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PHONETIC INTERFERENCE OF THE LATIN LANGUAGE  
AND WAYS OF ITS PREVENTION IN TEACHING ENGLISH  
FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES TO MEDICAL STUDENTS

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**Abstract**

The paper is focused on the problem of phonetic type of language interference, which is most frequently encountered by medical students while learning English and Latin simultaneously. The author provides the reader with a definition of this linguistic phenomenon and its classification, brings examples of typical mistakes in students' pronunciation and also elucidates lingvodidactic solutions to the problem of interference suggesting a number of in-class and extra-class activities aimed at preventing phonetic interference.

**Key words:** English for Specific Purposes (ESP); Latin; inter-language interference; phonetic interference.

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ФОНЕТИЧЕСКАЯ ИНТЕРФЕРЕНЦИЯ ЛАТИНСКОГО ЯЗЫКА  
И СПОСОБЫ ЕЕ ПРОФИЛАКТИКИ В ОБЛАСТИ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ  
АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА СТУДЕНТАМ-МЕДИКАМ  
ДЛЯ СПЕЦИАЛЬНЫХ ЦЕЛЕЙ

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**Аннотация**

Работа посвящена проблеме фонетического типа языковой интерференции, который чаще всего встречается у студентов-медиков во время изучения английского языка и латыни одновременно. Автор предлагает читателю познакомиться с содержанием понятия этого языкового явления и его классификацией, приводит примеры типичных ошибок в произношении студентов, а также раскрывает пути преодоления данной проблемы, предполагающие ряд мероприятий, направленных на предотвращение фонетической интерференции.

**Ключевые слова:** английский язык для специальных целей (ESP), латинский язык, межъязыковая интерференция, фонетическая интерференция.

**Introduction.** A long-standing experience of working at South-Ural State Medical University has shown that contemporary graduates cannot work and develop successfully in conditions of the modern globalized world without knowing a foreign language. It is well known that the contemporary federal state educational standards (ФГОС ВО 3+) are based on the idea of "a competence approach", which presupposes not only gaining some knowledge in an international language by students but also

their acquisition of skills and ability to use a foreign language in their professional activity [1; p. ]. It primarily concerns English, which has become a tool that allows many specialists, including medical students, to easily adapt to the labor market and work efficiently with all sorts of information sources.

Along with English, learning Latin is an essential constituent of educational process at all medical universities. Unfortunately, while learning two languages students face the problem of inter-

linguistic interference as an inevitable phenomenon that often accompanies multilingualism.

**Main part.** First of all, let us advert to the definition of such phenomenon as "interference". "Interference (from Latin «Inter» means "with each other", "mutually" and «ferio» stands for "touch", "hit") is an interaction of language systems in bilingual/multilingual conditions, occurring either in contacts of languages or in individual acquisition of a non-native language; it is expressed in a deviation from the norms of a second language under the influence of the native one"[].

Classical literature on Linguistics suggests several classifications of interference. According to one of them, two types of interference are distinguished: cross-language and intra-language. Under cross-language interference we understand influence of the native language, i.e. Russian, and that of the first studied foreign language on the second studied one. Intra-language interference involves interfering impact of one linguistic phenomenon on another within the studied foreign language. Cross-language interference can subsequently be classified or subdivided into: 1) phonetic; 2) semantic; 3) lexical; 4) grammatical; 5) spelling; 6) stylistic; 7) socio-cultural.

In this paper we mostly set **the task** to consider phonetic interference of the cross-language type and elucidate its mechanisms and principles of avoidance or prevention.

Speaking about the main reasons why there is an emergence of various violations of the pronunciation norms by the English language learners under the influence of another simultaneously studied language (Latin, in our case), we should, first all, singularize first year students' low level of the general language command, revealed in the absence of elementary linguistic knowledge. First year medical students usually have no idea about the existence of language families and groups, dynamics of linguistic processes, ways of borrowing of foreign words.

In addition, there is another important factor that beginning to study Latin, all freshers in medical universities have equal "zero" level of knowledge, which allows them to study the subject "from a start" with the view on the Latin language as the basis of medical terminology. Continuing to learn English in a medical university, many students are already negatively motivated towards this subject comprehending it as "unnecessary" for their future careers. It has a negative effect on students' performance and results in unthorough preparation for classes.

No doubt, it is also worth mentioning that in the present conditions of contemporary academic medical education, interference errors in the process of mastering foreign languages are caused by insufficient hours in curriculum allocated for this subject. Students receive only superficial knowledge of medical terminology in English, they are deprived of the possibility to acquire and master it as a system or tool necessary for extracting and processing professionally relevant information from foreign literature and electronic or Internet resources.

We cannot but mention some problems and reasons of methodological character. The ways to prevent and overcome cross-language interference are not enough described in literature on methods of teaching several foreign languages simultaneously.

Considering phonetic type of interference caused by the Latin language and most frequently encountered by medical students at the lessons of English, it should be noted that it is primarily associated with:

- 1) errors related to the wrong putting of stress (esophagus, tincture);
- 2) mistakes in reading clusters of consonants (for example [t] instead of [θ] in th- (thorax, thoracic);
- 3) reading diphthongs like digraphs (for example, [e] instead [ei] in "great", or [i] instead of [ai] in "respiratory" or "vital");
- 4) converting voiceless consonants to voiced ones between vowels (for example, in the word "vessel");
- 5) errors related to the wrong pronunciation (Latin-like pronunciation) of vowels in certain positions (for example, lumbar – [ˈlumbə], function – [ˈfʌŋkʃn], structure – [ˈstrʌktʃə] and some other cases of mispronunciation of vowels;
- 6) errors related to the wrong pronunciation (Latin-like pronunciation) of consonants, for example [ts] instead of [s] in "cervical".

In our opinion, the solution to the problem of phonetic interference is seen from methodological point of view in traditional forms of work with phonetic materials, namely – in class and extra class work. In class, it's helpful, first of all:

1) to monitor the students' phonetic pronunciation with the correction of errors in utterances by both the student himself and by the teacher or by groupmates;

2) to organize mini-competitions with such tasks as "Who's the quickest and most correct?" (participants try to pronounce an English phrase or sentence as quickly as they can and without errors), a

winner can be selected with the aim to heighten motivation;

3) to suggest to the students phonetic exercises with such tasks as “Group the words according to a certain rule of reading or fall of stress” or “Practice reading the words” (in this type of exercise, words should be grouped according to a certain rule of reading beforehand by the teacher).

Extra-class activities aimed at preventing interference also presuppose the students’ essential practice in imitating aloud reading of home texts while preparing their home assignment and essential multiple listening of phonetic patterns.

Audio tracks with patterns of English word combinations and medical texts from the Student’s book with correct standard pronunciation can be recorded and uploaded by the teacher to the electronic platform of vk-site. A teacher can also create a special group on the site to upload essential materials for in-class and extra-class activities.

Finally, while mastering and consolidating the students’ phonetic skills, it is also efficient to arrange special phonetic contests and Olympiads in English that along with other tasks might comprise such

activities as prepared and unprepared reading of texts containing medical terminology.

In **conclusion**, we come up with the idea that the main way to overcome interference is systematic and targeted training of students. Lessons should be structured in such a way that they comprise a variety of special exercises in both listening and pronouncing based on multiple retrieval and consolidation of correct phonetic pronunciation of medical vocabulary thus overcoming interference.

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