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Bachelor Thesis

The Pronunciation of Words of French Origin in Contemporary English

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I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is completely my own work and that no other sources were used during the preparation of the thesis than those that are listed in Bibliography, nor was it used to obtain any other academic degree.

Prague, June 2011   Jana Procházková

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Anotační list

Název bakalářské práce:

Výslovnost slov francouzského původu v současné angličtině

Klíčová slova:

Anglický jazyk, francouzský jazyk, výslovnost, souhláska, samohláska, slovní přízvuk, pravopis, výpůjčka.

Abstrakt:

Bakalářská práce *Výslovnost slov francouzského původu v současné francouzštině* se zabývá slovy přejatými do angličtiny z francouzštiny, a to z hlediska jejich výslovnosti. Cílem je pojmenovat základní rozdíly a zjistit, zda je v nich existuje určitá pravidelnost nebo tendence. Teoretická část podává základní informace o historii anglického jazyka, s důrazem na slova vypůjčená z francouzštiny. Dále zkoumá fonetické systémy těchto dvou jazyků. Praktická část zkoumá metodou srovnávací analýzy výslovnost jednotlivých lexikálních jednotek, hlavně změny, kterými projdou. Výzkum ukázal, že můžeme pozorovat určité tendence, ale vždy se mohou objevit výjimky. Také se ukázalo, že výslovnost samohlásek je méně předvídatelná než výslovnost souhlásek a že změny v jednotlivých hláskách úzce souvisí s pravopisem a s přízvukem daného slova.

Annotation

Title of the bachelor thesis:

The Pronunciation of Words of French Origin in Contemporary English

Key words:

English language, French language, pronunciation, vowel, consonant, word stress, spelling, borrowing.

Abstract

The bachelor thesis *The Pronunciation of Words of French Origin in contemporary English* analyses French borrowings in the English language from the point of view of their pronunciation. Its aim is to name the basic differences and to find if there are any regularities or tendencies. The theoretical part provides general information about the history of the English language, with special attention to lexical units that it borrowed from French. It also explores the phonetic systems of the two languages. The practical part examines, through the means of comparative analysis, the pronunciation of individual lexical units, especially the changes that it undergoes. The research showed that certain tendencies can be observed, although there are always exceptions. It was proved that the pronunciation of vowels is predictable to a lesser degree than that of consonants and that the changes or modifications of individual sounds are closely connected to spelling and to word stress.

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Introduction

There are hundreds of thousands of lexemes in the English wordstock, and a large part of them are borrowings from French. These two languages have been influencing one another for a long time. The largest influx of French words into English was from the 11th to the 14th century, i.e. approximately a period in the development of the English language called Middle English. It has never been so strong since then but we can find examples of words of French origin from all historical periods of the English language.

The practical part of this work is going to explore the behaviour of French loan words in respect to their pronunciation. An important part of the thesis describes the phonetic systems of the languages. They are, of course, different, so some changes in the pronunciation of the borrowings are inevitable. During the research, the most important questions will be the following: What has changed and what remained the same? What caused these changes? Did the same thing happen in similar phonetic context or similar spelling? Can we observe a regularity in this kind of change? Two hypotheses relating to these questions will be examined in the practical part.

The method of comparative analysis is going to be used. Words from all periods of the development of the English languages will be chosen to be part of the research. However, they will be analysed in their contemporary forms. Both English and French are worldwide spoken languages, they are mother tongues for millions of people but they are also very often taught as foreign languages. In order to provide relevant results we have to choose appropriate variants of both English and French pronunciation. For English, it is the BBC pronunciation. It sets a certain standard as it is taught in most courses for non-native speakers of English and it is also used as a reference by respected authors. For French, the variant called *français standard* is usually used in schools as well as in the respected general dictionaries, so it will be adopted for the purposes of this thesis. The symbols of IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) will be used in the phonetic transcription of the two languages.

1 Theoretical part

1.1 General history of French borrowings in English

The history of the English language can be divided into several periods. In each of them, English has been accepting words from foreign languages. The French influence has always been present, certainly due to the geographical proximity of the countries, although its importance was changing in the course of time. The following chapter deals with each period separately, stressing the borrowing from French in the historical context.

1.1.1 Old English

Old English was formed from dialects of Germanic tribes that started invading England in the 5th century. The Anglo-Saxons were not one united nation. They founded seven small kingdoms, which led to further dialectal diversity. The language depended mostly on its own sources and borrowed only little (Barber, 1993). There was the influence of Vikings who came to Britain from the North, and of Christianity. Latin words were used to describe the new religious concepts (Crystal, 2005). Surprisingly, except for place-names, Celtic languages of the original inhabitants did not leave as significant a trace in the English lexicon as might be expected. Barber explains it by the fact that the Britons "were a defeated people whose language had no prestige compared with that of the conquerors" (Barber 1993, 101). Anglo-Saxon words are now considered native and those from any other language are seen as borrowings. The French influence was not very important in this period (Millward, 1989).

1.1.2 Middle English

However, the situation changed with the Norman Conquest in 1066, which marked the end of Old English and the beginning of Middle English. Actually, the highest number of French words came to English after 1066, which means in the early Middle English period. Norman French became the language of the aristocracy and the governing class. Consequently, many Middle English borrowings deal with law and administration. Of course, other domains of life were enriched too. Many new words that came from Norman French concerned quite ordinary, daily matters (Crystal, 1996). There are some examples of French loans from several thematic groups, given by Crystal: "religion : *abbey, heresy, temptation*, military: *army, battle, combat*, food and drink: *appetite, confection, cream*, fashion: *boots, chemise, lace*, leisure and the arts: *art, beauty, pavilion*, science and learning: *calendar, medicine, poison* etc" (Crystal 1996, 47).

In the 13th century, the dialect of Paris and the court was chosen to become the national language in France and in the later part of the Middle English period it gained more influence in England as well (Crystal, 1996). So actually there were two sources of French borrowings in this era. Some words were even borrowed twice, one form from Norman French and one from Central French. Such doublets have different meanings. Barber mentions the following pairs: *catch – chase, cattle – chattel, warden – guardian, wage – gage* (Barber 1993, 148).

However, as the English kings and the nobility lost most of their possessions in France and kept those in England, their connection to the French court weakened too. It was no longer absolutely necessary for them to speak French. They gradually became bilingual and later English was even their mother tongue. French lost its position of the official language in the middle of the 14th century and by the end of this century, English was spoken by almost everybody in England, either as their mother tongue or as the language learned next to French (Millward, 1989).

Nevertheless, the immense influence of French on the English lexicon during the Middle English period is undeniable. Not only were individual words successfully assimilated into the English wordstock, it was also enriched by several affixes that were highly productive in history and some of them still are. Crystal provides us with the following examples: "prefixes *con-*, *de-*, *dis-*, *en-*, *ex-*, *pre-*, *pro*, and *trans-*, and such suffixes as *–able*, *-ance/-ence*, *-ant/ent*, *-ity*, and *–tion*" (Crystal 2005, 150). These can be combined with roots of both Romanic and Germanic origin, for example: *dishonest, dislike, respectable, unthinkable* etc.

1.1.3 Early Modern English

This period in history of English lasted from the beginning of the 16th century till the end of the 18th century. English was the official language of England and it also had a standardized written form. It was a time of great changes in all areas of life. Increase in literacy resulted in higher demand for books in English. During the Renaissance arose the interest in Classical literature and rhetoric and consequently in study of the Classical languages. In the church, however, Latin was losing its dominants position. Barber comments as following: "The translation of the Bible into English, and the changeover from Latin to English in church services, raised the prestige of English" (Barber, 1993, 176).

Later on, the Industrial Revolution, which made the English the most powerful nation of the period, began and caused an incredible development of technology and science. All these events had to be reflected in the language. Most borrowings from this period came to English from Latin (Millward, 1989). The nature of the borrowings is different form the French ones in Middle English that penetrated various semantic fields. Millward says: "by and large, the Latin loans of Early Modern English tended to be fairly learned words – scientific, technical, artistic, philosophical, educational, and literary terms" (Millward 1989, 243).

French influence was not as significant as in Middle English (it has never been since then), but it was not minor either. Just like with Latin, "the majority of French loans were fairly specialized words. Typical examples are: *admire*, *barbarian*, *compute*, *density*, *effigy*, *formidable*, *gratitude*, *hospitable*, *javelin*, *liaison* etc" (Millward 1989, 245). Probably there was no more need to borrow words to name everyday things and concepts. English was already established as a language sufficient for science and literature and there was no foreign political pressure on it. There were even certain tendencies to purify if from foreign words (Crystal, 2005). Fortunately, they were not very successful and English kept its international character that makes is exceptional.

1.1.4 Modern English

Modern English is the language that has been spoken since the 19th century until today. Quick social, scientific and technical development creates new referents that need to be named. So Latin and Greek are again the languages from which English borrows most words. Technical and scientific terminology is in fact based on combinations of Latin and Greek roots and affixes (Crystal, 2005).

Of course, there are Modern English loans from French as well. France's dominance in certain domains has caused that English has borrowed primarily words concerning social life, art, fashion and cuisine. There are some examples given by Crystal: "*bouquet, canteen, cuisine, debut, espionage, etiquette, roulette, salon, baroque, beige, café, chauffeur, chef, cliché, genre, lingerie, menu, restaurant, surveillance, art deco, art nouveau, courgette, garage, limousine, nouvelle vague, questionnaire*" (Crystal 2005, 460).

English has become maybe the world's most important language. It is so widespread due to colonization and intensive trade with all continents. It is spoken by over eight hundred million people, being the mother tongue for roughly one half of them (Barber, 1993).

Contact with other languages simply cannot be avoided. French is one of them and it definitely is important as it "continues to influence the English lexicon more heavily than any other living language" (Millward 1989, 281). Provided that French is still one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, it is very probable that English will not cease to borrow French words.

1.2 English and French pronunciation

Although the French language had a huge impact on English in terms of vocabulary (the two languages now share a considerable part of the lexicon), the pronunciation is very different. One of the most significant differences is the fact that, in relation to the orthography, French is to a large degree predictable. It has many rules and only few exceptions. Of course, there are certain stylistic and regional varieties, but for the official language the rules can be applied very successfully. Basically, the pronunciation of a word or their sequence can be deduced from the written form. English, on the other hand, is rather irregular. There are certain rules or tendencies, but the number of exceptions is very high. This causes difficulties when one wants to predict the pronunciation of an unknown word.

One grapheme can be pronounced many ways and sometimes without any obvious reason. For example, the combination of letters *gh* is pronounced differently in each of the four following words: *cough* /kɒf/, *although* /ɔːlˈðəʊ/, *ghost* /geʊst/, *hiccough* /ˈhɪkʌp/. The inconsistency of English grapheme to phoneme correspondence has several reasons. Firstly, it is the diversity of other languages that influenced English throughout the history. Secondly, Barber argues that "the standard spelling-system which became established by the end of the seventeenth century was already an archaic one" (Barber 1993, 201). The pronunciation has changed since then but the spelling-system does not reflect it.

1.2.1 English vowels

The English vocalic system is very rich. All vowels in English are oral, which means that during the articulation the air escapes through the oral cavity only. In general, they can be divided into two groups, pure vowels and diphthongs and triphthongs. The quality of a pure vowel (a monophthong) remains constant during its articulation, i.e. it does not glide. Diphthongs, on the other hand, glide from one vowel position towards another within one syllable. Triphthongs glide from the first element to the second one and then to the third one, still within one syllable. They are very complex sounds and rather rare in English (Roach, 2005).

Considering the pure vowels only, there are seven short vowels: /ɪ, e, æ, ʌ, ɒ, ʊ, ə/ and five long vowels: /iː, ɜː, ɑː, ɔː, uː/. However, the length is not a distinctive feature, the contrast between vowels is made by their quality rather than quantity. Moreover, it can vary according to context. Vowels are "considerably shortened when they occur in a

syllable closed by a voiceless consonant"(Gimson 2001, 95). This phenomenon is called pre-fortis shortening.

Figure 1 is the vowel quadrilateral, a chart usually used to describe the quality of vowels. It represents the position of the tongue when we pronounce them. The horizontal line says which part of the tongue is raised during pronunciation of a certain vowel. The vertical line describes the height of the tongue and how near it is to the upper part of the oral cavity. For example, when the close front vowel /iː/ is pronounced, the front part of the tongue is raised and it quite close to the alveolar ridge and upper teeth.
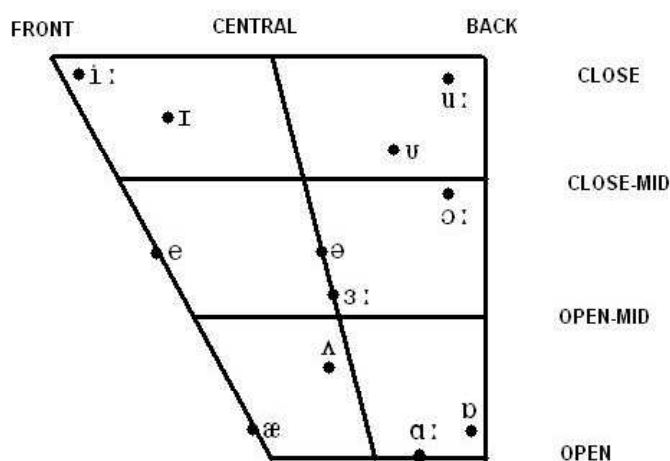
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   FRONT          CENTRAL          BACK
     •iː                         •         CLOSE
              •ɪ                 uː
                           • ʊ
                                 •         CLOSE-MID
                                 ɔː
        •e          •ə                     OPEN-MID
                        •ɜː
                    ʌ
                    •
       •æ           ɑː  •ɒ                  OPEN
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Figure 1 – English pure vowels (Roach 2005, 15-20).

All English diphthongs (glides) have one common feature: the prominence of their first part. It is pronounced longer and stronger than the second part. According to the sound towards which they glide, English diphthongs can be divided into two groups. The first one is centring diphthongs that all end in the central vowel schwa ə. They are: ɪə, eə, ʊə. Then there are closing diphthongs that end either in ɪː, eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ, or in ʊː aʊ, əʊ (Crystal, 1996).

English also has five triphthongs. Basically, they are created by adding ə to closing diphthongs, thus they are: eɪə, aɪə, ɔɪə, aʊə, əʊə. However, as Roach states, "they can be rather difficult to pronounce, and very difficult to recognise" (Roach 2005, 24). They can occur in words with the grapheme –er at the end, for example power /paʊə/, player /pleɪə/ and in comparative forms of adjectives that end with closing diphthongs, like higher /haɪə/, lower /ləʊə/.

1.2.2 French vowels

There are twelve (some works state eleven) oral vowels in French[1]. It also has four purely nasal vowels that do not exist in English. So the French vocalic system consists of sixteen (or fifteen) different vowels.

Considering the oral vowels only, seven front vowels: /i, e, ɛ, a, y, ø, œ/, four back vowels: /u, o, ɔ, ɑ/, and one central vowel /ə/ can be found in standard French pronunciation. Although some of the symbols are the same as we use in the English transcription, the quality of the vowels is slightly different. In general, more muscular effort is demanded in the articulation of all French vowels. Especially with the sounds /i, e, ɛ/ the lips are spread and very tense and the gap created between them is rather small. On the other hand, the back vowels /u, o, ɔ/ require strong rounding of lips. A very specific feature of the system is the set of strongly labialised vowels /y, ø, œ/. When we pronounce them, the position of the tongue is the same as with the respective vowels /i, e, ɛ/, but the lips are very rounded, which is the only difference between the two groups.

Figure 2 shows the vowel quadrilateral for French and the logic employed for the previous chart works for this one as well. We can observe that, although some of the symbols are the same as in English phonetics, the positions of the vowels are not absolutely identical and neither are the sounds themselves. Also, the lips are tenser in French pronunciation. However, the differences are not an obstacle to the comparison. The International Phonetic Association mentions the fact that "more than one phonetic symbol may appropriate for a phoneme." The symbols of IPA should provide the material for each language to choose from in phonetic analysis (International Phonetic Association 1999, 30). If there are two symbols next to each other in the chart, the one on the right represents a sound that requires labialisation.

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[1] The discussion is concerning the back open vowel /ɑ/ and its distinctive function. Compared to the other a sound in French, the front open /a/, it is used rather rarely and in very careful pronunciation. However, there are some minimal pairs of the two sounds, so they should be considered separate phonemes (Dohalská and Schulzová 2008, 104).
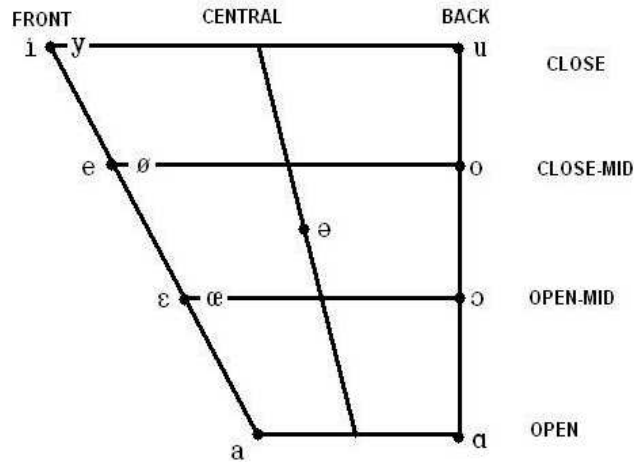
FRONT   CENTRAL   BACK

i • y ————————————————————• u   CLOSE

e • ø ————————————————————• o   CLOSE-MID

ə

ɛ • œ ————————————————————• ɔ   OPEN-MID

OPEN

a   ɑ

Figure 2 – French oral vowels (Dohalská and Schulzová 2008, 73).

Four French nasal vowels were already mentioned. They are: /ɑ̃, ɛ̃, õ, œ̃/. When we pronounce them, the tongue is at the same position as with the respective oral vowels /ɑ, ɛ, o, œ/, but the air escapes through the oral and the nasal cavity at the same time. There should not be a trace of the consonants /n, m/ because these only indicate the presence of nasal vowels in writing (Dohalská and Schulzová, 2008).

There are several important differences in English and French vocalic systems. Firstly, English lacks nasal vowels and labialised vowels. On the other hand, French does not have any diphthongs or triphthongs. English pure vowels are divided to short and long, although the duration is not a distinctive feature. Some lengthening can occur in French but it does not create any contrast (International Phonetic Association 1999, 79).

1.2.3 English consonants

In general, consonants are such sounds that, unlike vowels, are produced with certain obstruction to the airflow.[2] Such obstruction is created when "two vocal organs come so close together that we can hear the sound of the air passing between them" (Crystal 1996, 238). Consequently, the criteria to classify consonants are quite different from those for vowels. The manner of articulation is the way me make a certain sound. This way English consonants are divided into several groups: plosives, fricatives, affricates, nasals, approximants and a lateral.

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[2] The question of distinction between vowels and consonants is much more complicated. Different languages can even see similar sounds differently. Maybe the most important distinctive feature between the two groups is the distribution, which means in what contexts a sound can appear. Of course, each language has its own rules for the distribution of its sounds (Roach, 2005).

Plosives /p, b, t, d, k, g/ are characterised by three phases of articulation. Firstly, two articulators move so closely to each other that they create a total closure. In the second phase, the airflow cannot escape and is compressed. Finally, the air is released and it creates a sound, which is called plosion (Roach 2005, 32). Fricatives /s, z, θ, ð, f, v, ʃ, ʒ, h/ are produced with only a small passage for the airflow to escape through. A hissing sound is made during this process. Affricates /tʃ, dʒ/ begin as plosives and end as fricatives, so they combine some qualities of the two groups (Roach 2005, 48). The sound starts with a total obstruction of two articulators, so that the air is compressed behind them. Then the tongue moves to the position of a fricative and the air is released more slowly than in the case of a very quick plosion (Roach 2005, 48).

Nasals /m, n, ŋ/ are characterized by the fact that the air escapes through the nasal, not oral quality. This requires a lowered soft palate. When we pronounce the lateral /l/, a complete obstruction is created between the centre of the tongue and the alveolar ridge. Thus the air can escape only along the sides of the tongue (Roach 2005, 59 - 61).

There are three approximants in English (Gimson states four and includes /l/ into this group as well) /j, r, w/. It is not easy to define the term itself. It is usually used for consonants although some features are common with vowels. Gimson describes them as following: "The air stream escapes through a relatively narrow aperture in the mouth without friction but with voice " (Roach 2001, 200). Even vowels are pronounced with certain narrowing of articulators, so the criterion of distribution must be taken into account. English approximants occur in positions that are normally occupied by consonants, so they are classified into this group.

The place of articulation tells us which articulators in the oral cavity are involved in the production of a sound and where exactly the obstruction is made. The following table provides us with a definition and examples for each of eight types that can be found in English.

Bilabial	Both lips come near to each other.	p, b, m, w
Labiodental	The upper teeth approach the lower lip	f, v
Dental	The tip of the tongue is near the upper teeth	ð, θ
Alveolar	The tip or blade of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge	t, d, s, z, n, l
Palato-alveolar	The blade of the tongue approaches the hard palate just behind the alveolar ridge	ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ, r
Palatal	The front of the tongue is near the hard palate	j
Velar	The back of the tongue touches the velum	k, g, ŋ
Glottal	The vocal folds are narrowed to produce a friction noise.	h

Figure 3 - Place of articulation in English (Ladefoged 2008, 115).

Voicing plays an important role in English consonantal system, too. When we breathe out and the vocal folds are wide apart, we produce voiceless sounds like /p, t, ʃ/. When they vibrate, voicing can be heard, which is necessary for vowels and voiced consonants, such as /b, g, v./ However, its intensity can vary according to different positions that consonants take in words and their environment in general. Roach rather uses the terms fortis for voiced and lenis for voiceless consonants. These should suggest the fact that the first group is produced with more muscular effort than the second one (Roach, 2005).

Place of articulation									
		Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Manner of articulation	Plosive	p b			t d			k g	
	Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
	Affricate					tʃ dʒ			
	Nasal	m			n			ŋ	
	Lateral				l				
	Approximant	w				r	j		

Figure 4 – Chart of English consonant phonemes (Roach 2005, 65). This table shows how the main criteria meet in the description of individual English consonants. If the symbols occur in pairs, the one on the left represents a voiceless sound and the one on the right a voiced one. Each consonant can be identified as a combination of the three features, for example /z/ is a voiced (fortis) alveolar fricative. Gimson classifies the approximant /w/ as labial-velar.

1.2.4 French consonants

The French consonantal system can be classified on the bases of the same features that were introduced in the preceding part. French has an identical set of plosives /p, b, t, d, k, g/, but the group of fricatives is smaller /s, z, ʃ, ʒ, f, v, ʁ/[3].

Affricates may be questionable as they only occur in a very limited number of words of foreign origin and they do not sound natural to native speakers of French. Chiss et al. state that they are a part of the standard pronunciation system and lists these four: /ts, dz, tʃ, dʒ/ (Chiss et al. 2001, 87). However, they do not create any minimal pairs, thus do not have the distinctive function and cannot be classified as phonemes. The group of French nasals consists of three sounds (m, n, ɲ). In comparison with the English set, the velar one is missing but the palatal is included. According to Duběda's classification, there is only one approximant (j) and one lateral (l) in French.

Place of articulation		Bilabial	Labiodental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular
Manner of articulation	**Plosive**	p b		t d			k g	
	Nasal	m		n		ɲ		
	Fricative		f v	s z	ʃ ʒ			ʁ
	Approximant					j		
	Lateral			l				

Figure 5 – French consonants (Duběda 2005, 107).

1.2.5 French semi-consonants

These sounds /j, w, ɥ/ could also be called approximants but the majority of authors prefer the term semi-consonants. In the French system, they really form a certain transition

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[3] ʁ and other r-sounds in French is a complicated issue. Different authors mention various manners and places of articulation for this consonant. It is true that its pronunciation depends on the region that a speaker comes from and on the style that they use. For the purposes of this work, Duběda's classification was chosen and ʁ is considered a uvular fricative. That means that when we pronounce it, the back of the tongue touches uvula, a small piece of a muscle hanging down from the soft palate in the back part of the oral cavity.

between vowels and consonants. They combine qualities of the two groups in terms of both production and distribution, so they are usually treated separately.

Their typical feature is the fact that they glide very quickly to the following vowel within one syllable. The pronunciation of /j/ is very near to the close front /i/, /ɥ/ is similar to the close front labialised /y/ and /w/ to close back labialised /u/. Nevertheless, the semi-consonants are shorter and must be followed by a vowel that creates the centre of a syllable (Dohalská and Schulzová, 2008).

One set of English and French consonants is identical: the plosives, other groups differ in at least one sound. English has a richer inventory of fricatives. Affricates do no exist as separate phonemes in French. In both languages the voicing has a distinctive function in the final position. Approximants are in English distributed as consonants whereas in French they are closely connected to the following vowel with which they create the centre of a syllable. The French also does not know the syllabic consonants. In English, /l/, /n/ and /m/ can form the centre of an unstressed syllable if they are placed finally after certain sounds. Some consonants (most often /t/ and /s/) are not pronounced it they are final and they are not followed by a vowel in spelling.

1.2.6 Word stress

Stress[4], as well as rhythm and intonation, is a suprasegmental feature, i.e. an aspect of speech that stretches over units larger than phonemes (Roach, 2005). However, the practical part of this thesis compares the pronunciation of separate words in French and English, so stress is the only suprasegmental phenomenon that will be discussed in some depth.

A stressed syllable is perceived as more prominent than unstressed one. In English, four factors contribute to the prominence: loudness, length, pitch and quality of vowel. So stressed syllables are pronounced louder and longer and with a higher pitch that other syllables of a polysyllabic word. The vowel quality is important because vowels in neighbouring unstressed syllables tend to be reduced, most often to /i, u, ɪ, ə/. /ə/ as the centre can never be stressed. Sometimes the vowel is completely omitted and a syllabic consonant /n̩, m̩, l̩/ forms the centre of a final syllable. Two levels are usually analysed. The primary stress is the most prominent. It is marked (ˈ) in transcription. Secondary stress

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[4] Gimson uses the term *accent*.

is less prominent than primary stress but more prominent than unstressed syllables. Its mark in transcription is (ˌ) (Roach 2005, 94 - 95).

On the placement of stress in English lexical units, Gimson says: "The accentual patter of English words is fixed, in the sense that the main accent falls on a particular syllable of any given word, but fee, in the sense that the main accent is not tied to any particular point in the chain of syllables" (Gimson 2001, 221). It is a very complex issue and the actual placement is influenced by many factors.

Unlike English, French belongs to languages with fixed stress placement. It falls on the last syllable of an accentual group. The only exception are cases where the last syllable contains /ə/, the penultimate syllable is then stressed. The division of an utterance to accentual groups is probably the most interesting problem concerning French word stress (Dohalská and Schulzová, 2008). However, as the research is going to compare words in isolation, they will be treated as separate accentual groups.

The prominence of a stressed syllable is in French formed by two factors: pitch movement and length. The vowel quality is not influenced The existence of more than one level of stress is the subject of recent studies. Duběda argues that secondary stress has gained its position in contemporary French. It is placed initially and has the emphatic function (Duběda 2005). This thesis works only with the main stress in French words.

2 *Practical Part*

2.1 The aims of the research

The preceding part illustrated the influence that French had on English lexicon and how it varied in the course of time. We could also see that there are differences in both segmental and suprasegmental areas of their phonetic systems. The aim of the practical part of the work is to find the differences in the pronunciation of the words that English borrowed from French.

The research is going to explore if we may, despite the instability of the grapheme – phoneme correspondence in the English language, observe certain tendencies in the changes that the original words underwent. As the pronunciation of French lexical units can be deduced from their written form, this criterion and its relevance in English will be analysed as well.

It is probable that sounds that have an identical or a very similar counterpart in the target language (for example the plosives) remain the same or lose as little of their quality as possible. (Hypothesis 1). This assumption also draws on the fact that consonants are more stable than vowels across world languages. Special attention is paid to sounds that exist exclusively in the French language (for example nasal vowels). It is supposed that they will be modified to a larger degree than the sounds from the preceding group and that these modifications will be less predictable (Hypothesis 2).

2.2 Methodology

400 words were examined during the research (their list is to be found in the Appendix). They were chosen in order to represent mostly the centre of the wordstock. They should not be highly specialized terms, dialectal or argotic expressions. There were various sources for the sample. One part was taken from books mentioned in the Bibliography, Millward's *A Biography of the English language,* Bryant's *Modern English and its Heritage* and Crystal's *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* and *The Stories of English.* The authors provided the period during which the words were borrowed from French. Certain words were taken from one of the world's most widely used textbooks of English, *The New Headway Intermediate*. Their origin was then confirmed in *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology.*

Once the words were selected, it was necessary to verify their pronunciation. As for French, *Le Nouveau Petit Robert de la langue française 2008* was used because it is one of the most respected general dictionaries of the French language and because it uses the IPA symbols. Similar reasons led to the choice of Daniel Jones's *English Pronouncing Dictionary*, which is a great authority in this field, for English.

The research treats the selected words separately, which is a rather artificial situation. In a natural context they might undergo some modifications, especially on the suprasegmental level (for example the stress shift). However, the objective of this thesis is to find the basic changes arising from the differences of the two languages. The research looks at the sample words from the synchronic perspective. That means that we compare the forms that they have in current English and French.

The comparative analysis focuses on three or four areas: vowels, consonants, word stress and spelling. The fourth criterion was employed because English uses only twenty-six letters of Latin alphabet whereas French has some extra symbols (ç, è, é, ê, â, î, ï, ô, û). These diacritic marks disappear when a word starts to be used in English. Moreover, the two languages have been developing in all domains (phonetic, morphological, syntactical and lexical) that influence each other. Words that were identical in one point in time have different forms centuries later. For example the word that was borrowed during the Middle English period in the form of *flur* or *flour* is now *fleur* in French and *flower* in English (Onions, 1982).

2.3 Results of the research

When analysing the sound form of French and English words, we must be aware of other levels of the languages because they are related to pronunciation. Certain modifications are inevitable due to differences in morphology, e.g. word-formation. The following features proved to be relevant in the research.

Firstly, French showed a higher degree of inflexion than English. Verbs are conjugated by adding various suffixes to stems. Several of them typically indicate the infinitive (*-er, -re, -ir*). Such inflexional verbal suffixes do not exist in English and it eliminates them even in borrowings. Compare the following pairs: *quitter – quit, préférer – prefer, attirer – attire, inspirer - inspire, défendre – defend, repentir - repent*. This is reflected in the pronunciation as well. The French verbs ending in *–er* are pronounced with /e/ at the end and stress on the last syllable: /kiˈte/, /pʁefeˈʁe/, /atiˈʁe/, /ɛ̃spiˈʁe/, those ending in *–ir* also contain the final consonant: /ʁəpɑ̃ˈtiʁ/. The English counterparts are one syllable shorter but still stressed on the last one (if there are more): /kwɪt/, /prɪˈfɜː/, /əˈtaɪə/, /ɪnˈspaɪə/, rɪˈpent/. Verbs ending in *–re* are stressed on the last syllable and the final ʁ is devoiced: /deˈfɑ̃d̥/. Despite different spelling, the English verb has the same number of syllables and stress pattern: /dɪˈfend/.

Secondly, French distinguishes the gender of all nouns, animate and inanimate. Within a sentence, nouns and personal pronouns are the head of concord; adjectives in the function of attribute reflect the gender and number. Consequently, most French adjectives have distinctive feminine and masculine forms and their pronunciation can differ. Either the last consonant that would be silent in the masculine form is pronounced, or the final voiceless consonant is changed into a voiced one. An example of the first case is *parfait*(*e*). It is pronounced /paʁˈfɛ/ or /paʁˈfɛt/. The second case can be illustrated by *naïf*(*ve*) where the pronunciation is /naˈif/ or /naˈiv/. These possible modifications must be considered in the comparison with the English adjectives.

Lexical suffixes can be identical in writing (*-ion, -age, -al, - able*) or they can have a slightly changed spelling. The following table contains those that are dealt with in this thesis and some concrete examples. Their phonetic behaviour is discussed in later chapters.

French variant	Example	English variant	Example
-ie	anatomie	-y	anatomy
-é	liberté	-y	liberty
-isme	communisme	-ism	communism
-eur	createur	-or	creator
-eux	amoureux	-ous	amorous
-el	usuel	-al	usual

Figure 6 – Lexical suffixes.

2.3.1 Hypothesis 1

Sounds that are identical or very similar in French and in English remain the same or change very little.

2.3.1.1 Changes in plosives

Let us first focus on the group of consonants that is identical in the two languages: the plosives. Out of all analysed words, there were fifty changes in plosives. This number includes thirty-one cases of the final consonant /t/ and one case of final /ks/ (in *crucifix*) that are silent in French but are fully pronounced in English. A similar situation occurred in the word *second.* It is pronounced /ˈsekənd/ in English while in French it has a masculine variant where the final /d/ remains silent: /səˈgõ/, and a feminine variant where it is pronounced: /səˈgõd/.

Also certain letters in the middle position can be silent in French but not in English. We have two examples of a silent *p* in the cluster *<pt>* that is pronounced in English: in the words *baptism* and *sculpture*. A similar, though not identical phenomenon is to be found in *compute*. Its French counterpart *compter* is pronounced without the middle /p/: /koˈte/. The spelling of the English loan is slightly different but it is nearer to the original form and retains the vowel between the consonants *<put>*. The English pronunciation is /kəmˈpjuːt/.

In three words (*authority, cathedral and theology*), /t/ present in the French pronunciation of these words was in English replaced by the dental fricative /θ/ as the digraph *<th>* corresponds to dental fricatives. In French, the grapheme *<h>* does not influence the pronunciation or it is not even present (*autorité*). Four times (in *adventure, natural, questionnaire, sculpture* and *statute*) /t/ was substituted for the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate /tʃ/. It is interesting that in four of the words (except *questionnaire*) the letter *<t>* is followed by *<u>*, in the original French pronunciation the close front rounded vowel /y/.

There is one case of a very strong regressive assimilation of voicing[5] that takes place in French but not in English. The French pronunciation of *substance* is /syp'stɑ̃s/, /b/ has become /p/ under the influence of the voiceless /s/. In English it is /'sʌbstəns/. Certain degree of assimilation will probably appear even there, but not strong enough to produce /p/ instead of /b/. The word *margarine* provides the only example of /g/ turning into the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate /dʒ/. However, two variants of pronunciation are possible, the second one not including the change, so it can be /ˌmɑːdʒəˈriːn/ or /ˌmɑːgəˈriːn/.

So far, we have been discussing the words that are identical in writing or the modifications of which do not affect the plosives. The following ones derive their differences mostly from the spelling. In two words (*advocate* and *adventure*), English keeps the letter <d> that was lost in French (*avocat, aventure*) and pronounces it. The same thing happened with <t> in *repast:* the final consonant is no more present in French (*repas*).

We can observe significant changes of spelling in the last group that will be analysed within the group of plosives. Let us discuss each word individually, starting with the very common adjective *perfect.* Its French variant is *parfait.* Although French is in fact based on vulgar Latin, it is English that stays more faithful to the original Latin word *perfectus.* We can see that the French word does not contain the letter and sound <k> and the final <t> is silent if it is in the masculine form. So the pronunciation is /paʁˈfɛ/ in French and /'pɜːfekt/ in English. The same tendency to preserve the original spelling is also evident in the word *temptation* as its French counterpart is *tentation.* The consonantal graphic cluster <mpt> was in French simplified into <nt> and thus it lost the middle /p/. The spelling also plays an important role in *sugar* (in French *sucre*). This is the only example of a change within the velar pair of plosives. The voiceless /k/ turned into the voiced /g/.

The graph shows the proportion between the occurrences without any change and also between different types of change.

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[5] Assimilation is "the changing of a sound under the influence of the neighbouring one" (Barber, 1993, 44). With consonants, it can be of three kinds: the place of articulation, the manner of articulation or voicing. Regressive assimilation means that a sound changes some of its qualities according to the following one (which is the case of *substance*). In the case of progressive assimilation a sound is changed according to the preceding one (Roach 2005).
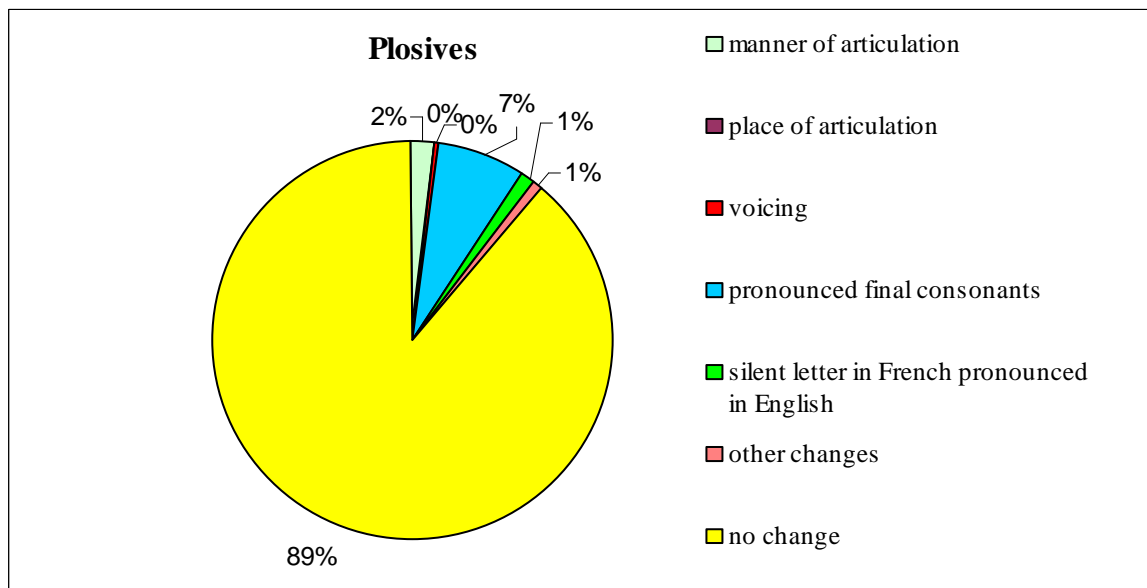
Figure 7 – Changes in plosives.

2.3.1.2 Changes in fricatives

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the changes which take place between French and English fricatives, more precisely between the sounds that are identical in the languages. It is important to remember that French does not have the dental pair. We have already seen that one of the dental sounds can occur in the pronunciation of French borrowings, but it is in the written cluster *<th>* that does not involve a fricative sound in the original. The standard French r-sound is classified in this group as well. However, it is discussed later (see Hypothesis 2) as its English counterpart is an approximant or is not pronounced at all.

In total, the research showed eighty-four differences in fricatives. The most numerous type (twenty-eight times) is a change from the fricative /ʒ/ to the affricate /dʒ/. It takes place almost every time when the letter *<j>* is followed by a vowel, or when *<g>* is followed by *<e>*, *<i>* and in English also by *<y>*. In French, such combinations must be pronounced as /ʒ/ and there are only few words that do not reflect this tendency towards /dʒ/ in English (for example *genre* /ˈʒɑːnrə/). In compound words, the suffixes *<–age>* and *<–logy>* would typically undergo this change (as in *marriage* and *theology* that are pronounced /ˈmærɪdʒ/ and /θiːˈɒlədʒi/).

A similar change is from /ʃ/ to /tʃ/. It occurred eleven times and always involved the grapheme *<ch>* plus a vowel, for example in *archer, duchess, chocolate, chancellor*.

There were only four exceptions where the original /ʃ/ is kept in English as well: *chandelier, chauffeur, chef, chemise*.

The preceding examples dealt with the change in the manner of articulation, let us now consider the words in which this feature remains the same and what changes is the place of articulation. In eleven cases the pronounced cluster /sj/ turned into /ʃ/ and it was typically in the suffix *<–ion>*: *affection, conversation, devotion, manipulation*. Its pronunciation is /sjɔ̃/ in French and /ʃən/ or /ʃn̩/ in English. The same thing occurred in some words without the suffix: *precious, physician, sociable*. Nevertheless, certain tendency can be observed even there as they all three contain the digraph *<ci>* followed by a vowel. Their French pronunciation is /pʁeˈsjø/, /fiziˈsjɛ̃/, /soˈsjabl/ and English is /ˈpreʃəs/, /fɪˈzɪʃən/, /ˈsəʊʃəbl̩/.

The last group with a change of this kind probably undergoes it under the influence of the following vowel. Once again, the spelling plays an important role. In French, when the letter *<u>* is the only vowel in a syllable, it must be pronounced as the front close rounded /y/. This sound does not exist in English and of the ways to cope with it seems to be the modification of the place of articulation from alveolar to palato-alveolar. We can see it in words *sugar, sure* and *usual*. Their original French pronunciation is /sykʁ/, /syʁ/ and /yzyˈɛl/ whereas the English is /ˈʃugə/, /ʃɔː/ and /ˈjuːʒuəl/.

The third crucial consonantal feature that was analysed is voicing. There are several types of changes of this kind. The first one involves the suffix *<–ism>*. It was present four times in the research and in all cases the voiceless /s/ was replaced by the voiced /z/ in English. Moreover, the French written form of the suffix is *<–isme>* and it is pronounced with a schwa at the end and the stress falls on the penultimate syllable: /ˈismə/. In English, it can be either /ɪzəm/ or /ɪzm̩/.

The second type of change of voicing concerns adjectives. Those that end in the suffix *<-ous>* are in English pronounced with final /s/. In French the gender decides again and the spelling is slightly different. The masculine form is written *<–eux>* and is pronounced /ø/ while the feminine form *<–euse>* is pronounced /øz/. There were three such adjectives in the research: *amorous, curious* and *precious*. A similar situation appeared with *active* and *naïve*. Their spelling in English is the same as their feminine form in French and they both end with a pronounced /v/. Their masculine forms, however, are *actif* and *naïf* and they are pronounced with the final /f/.

An interesting phenomenon arose during the development of the French language. It tends to eliminate the letter <s> in the cluster <st>. Vowels in such words have a mark ˆ above them. English kept the cluster and *s* is fully pronounced. Examples from the research are *arrest, feast, forest, honest, roast* and their French counterparts *arrêter, fête, forêt, honnête, rôti*. Of course, there are, as well as with the plosives, cases of final consonants that are silent in French but not in English.
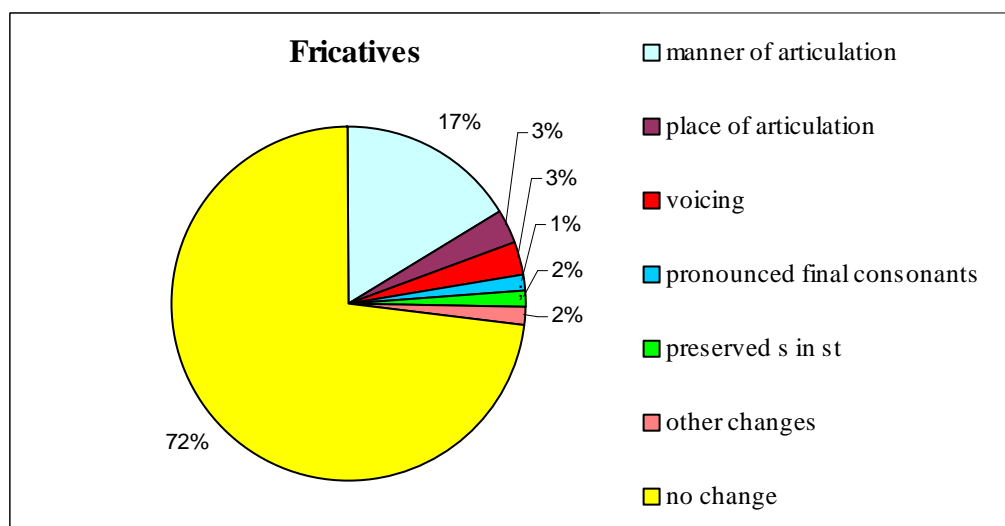

Figure 8 – Changes in fricatives.

2.3.1.3   Changes in nasals

Both languages have a group of nasals that contains three sounds: the bilabial /m/ and the alveolar /n/ are identical, but the velar /ŋ/ is only in English and the palatal /ɲ/ only in French. A total of 106 changes were discovered in the analysis. Nevertheless, the number includes 104 cases of a French nasal vowel turned into an oral vowel plus a nasal consonant in English. Three of these were adjectives that are pronounced with an oral vowel and /n/ at the end in the feminine form. This change is very well predictable. If a syllable in French ends in written <n> or <m>, the preceding vowel becomes nasal and the consonant is silent. In English, the nasal quality is suppressed and the consonant is pronounced.

An interesting issue concerning nasals is the treatment of /ɲ/ and its corresponding grapheme <gn>. In English it can be pronounced /gn/ (as in *signification*) or only /n/ (in *reign*). Quite specific is the word *vignette* as its English pronunciation /vɪˈnjet/ is very similar to French /viˈɲɛt/. It added the palatal approximant /j/ which suggests the palatal

articulation of /ɲ/. Other differences were not found in the research, so nasals seem to be the most predictable group of consonants so far.
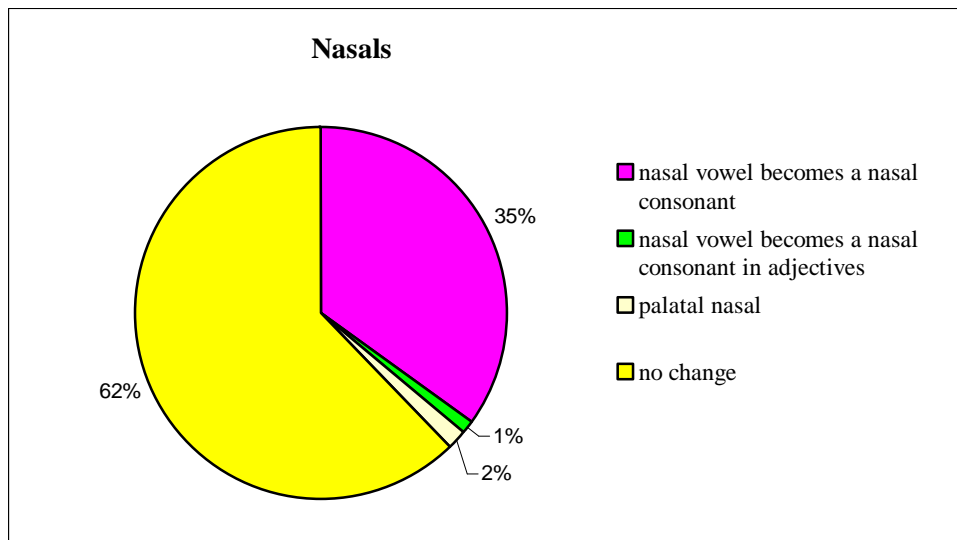

Figure 9 – Changes in nasals.

2.3.2 Hypothesis 2

Sounds that do not have a corresponding counterpart in English change considerably. Vowels are more likely to undergo significant changes than consonants.

2.3.2.1 The grapheme and sound h

In French, *<h>* exists only as a graphic sign without any corresponding sound. In English, /h/ is a glottal fricative. It can form a part of the grapheme *<ch>* which was discussed in Hypothesis 1. We have also seen that if it follows the letter *<t>*, it is pronounced as /θ/ in English. Both languages also pronounce the cluster *<ph>* as /f/, for example in *sphere* and *physician*.

The most significant difference appears when the grapheme *<h>* is initial. It is usually reflected in the pronunciation but it can also be silent. In the research, four words (*herb, heresy, horrible, hospitable)* are pronounced with /h/ at the beginning and four (*heir, honest, honour, hour*) without it. It also remained silent after consonants in *rhyme* and *silhouette.*

The graph displays all occurrences of the grapheme *<h>* in the research, except the cluster *<ch>* that is pronounced /ʃ/ in both languages or /t ʃ/ in English.

Grapheme <h>

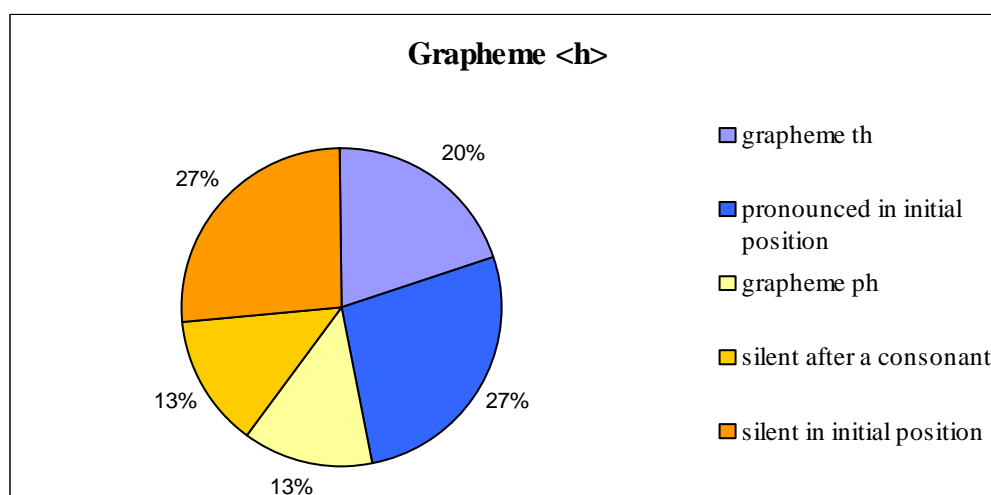|	
20%	grapheme th
27%	pronounced in initial position
27%	grapheme ph
13%	silent after a consonant
13%	silent in initial position

Figure 10 – The behaviour of <h>. The blue colours represent cases where the pronunciation of *<h>* differs; the yellow colours are for cases where the behaviour of *<h>* is the same in both languages, i.e. it is not pronounced.

2.3.2.2 Changes in r-sound

Both French and English have a r-sound but they are not identical. French /ʁ/ is a uvular fricative and English /r/ is a palato-alveolar approximant. Their distribution is also different. While French /ʁ/ can be found in all positions within a word, English /r/ is pronounced only before a vowel. This is the reason of quite a large percentage of words that have a different pronunciation in this respect.

There are two types of change. Firstly, in cases where /r/ would be final, the last pronounced sound is /ə/. We can observe it in simple words like *colour, labour, sphere, sugar*. In French, they end in /ʁ/: /kuˈlœʁ/, /laˈbuʁ/, /sfɛʁ/, /sykʁ/ but in English in /ə/: /ˈkʌlə/, /ˈleɪbə/, /sfɪə/, /ˈʃugə/. It is also typical for words with the suffixes *<–or>*, *<-our>, <-eur>* that express the agent (*executor, chancellor, saviour, chauffeur*), or with the suffix *<-ure>* (*literature*). However, the final /ʁ/ is silent even in some French words, typically in those ending in *<–ier>*. The last pronounced sound is then /e/, for example *glacier* /glaˈsje/, *papier* /paˈpje/, *chandelier* /ʃɑ̃dəˈlje/. This type of change is also reflected on the suprasegmental level. A syllable with /ə/ in its centre cannot be stressed in English, so the last syllables of such borrowings can be stressed only if /ə/ is the second part of a diphthong, as in *chandelier* /ˌʃædəˈlɪə/. In the research, there were fifty-eight words where the final r-sound is not pronounced, in seven of them it would not be pronounced in French either.

Secondly, /r/ is not pronounced even in the middle position if it is followed by a consonant. In this case, there is always a difference because in French /ʁ/ is pronounced in such environment. Forty-four words with this change appeared in the research. Some examples are *cardinal, form, park, herb* with the French pronunciation /kaʁdiˈnal/, /fɔʁm/, /paʁk/, /ɛʁb/ and the English one /ˈkɑːdɪnḷ/, /fɔːm/, /pɑːk/, /hɜːb/. They also illustrate an interesting phenomenon – the lengthening of the preceding vowel. The quality can be modified as well, then the vowel typically transforms into the central /ɜː/ as in *certain, journalist* and *person* that are pronounced /sɛʁˈtɛ̃/, /ʒuʁnaˈlist/, /pɛʁˈsɔn/ in French but /ˈsɜːtən/, /ˈdʒɜːnəlɪst/, /ˈpɜːsən/ in English. Out of the forty-four words only seven did not undergo the vowel lengthening (*comfort, conversation, government, liberty, mustard, poverty* and *surveillance*).
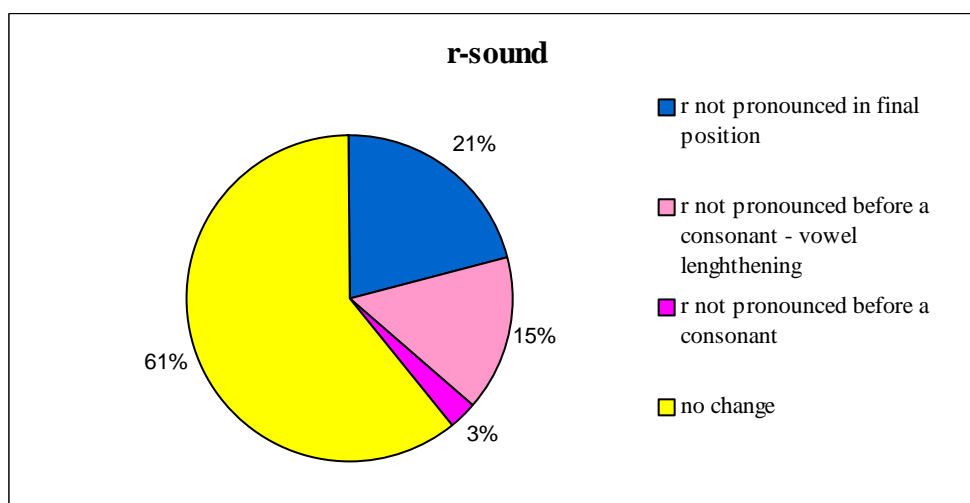

r-sound

- r not pronounced in final position — 21%
- r not pronounced before a consonant - vowel lenghthening — 15%
- r not pronounced before a consonant — 3%
- no change — 61%

Figure 11 – Changes in r-sound. The yellow field called 'no change' represents situation when a r-sound is pronounced in both languages.

2.3.2.3 Changes in oral vowels

We have already seen that both languages have very complex vocalic systems. In order to make this chapter more comprehensible, a certain system had to be adopted. French oral vowels were divided into six groups: A-sounds, E-sounds, I-sounds, O-sounds, /u/ and schwa /ə/. The word stress proved to be an important criterion concerning the change of the vowel quality. The stress pattern is usually different. In French the primary stress falls on the last syllable of a lexical word if it does not have /ə/ as its centre. Placement of primary and secondary stress in English is a much more complicated issue and it influences the quality of vowels. The results of the analysis in this field will thus be discussed separately for each of the six groups with the distinction of changes typical for stressed and

unstressed syllables in the English counterparts. It should also be mentioned that in some words the change of spelling caused that a syllable was deleted and there were no vowels to compare. Such cases are not included in the provided statistics and graphs.

French has two A-sounds, front open /a/ and back open /ɑ/. The second one is used rather rarely, which was also reflected in the research. It occurred only twice and in both cases (*age, blame*) it was modified into the diphthong /eɪ/. Both these words are monosyllabic, so the stress pattern is clear. On the other hand, /a/ occurred 138 times and it was in English transformed into six sounds. In stressed syllables, the pronunciation was most often /æ/, for example in *action, anatomy, famine, natural*. Their French pronunciation is /ak'sjõ/, /anato'mi/, /fa'min/, /naty'ʁɛl/, in English it is /'ækʃn̩/, /ə'nætəmɪ/, /'fæmɪn/, /'nætʃərəl/. The second most usual modification of /a/ in stressed syllables is connected to spelling and phonetic environment of the vowel. It is pronounced as /ɑː/ before the grapheme <*r*> plus consonant or placed finally. Sixteen words contain this type of change, for example *art, large, margarine, sardine*. In seven cases, there was also a change from /a/ to /ɑː/ but not before <*r*>: *calm, camouflage, espionage, garage, pass, passport, repast*. Except *calm* the lengthening occurs before a fricative. The French /a/ was diphthongised into /eɪ/ in fourteen words and except the third syllable of *advocate* /'ædvəkeɪt/ the change always occurred in a syllable carrying the primary stress. In four cases the word contained the suffix <*-tion*> that causes the stress to fall on the preceding syllable. Our examples, *conversation, manipulation, recreation* and *temptation,* are pronounced /kõvɛʁsa'sjõ/, /manipyla'sjõ/, /ʁekʁea'sjõ/, /tãta'slõ/ in French and /ˌkɒnvə'seɪʃn̩/, /meˌnɪpjʊ'leɪʃn̩/, /ˌrekri'eɪʃn̩/, /temp'teɪʃn̩/ in English.

In unstressed syllables, there were two types of modification of /a/. Most often, the vowel pronounced in English was /ə/. It occurred mostly when the grapheme <*a*> is initial, as in *accuse, adventure, affection, arrange, attorney*. It is also in the pronunciation of the adjectival suffix <*-able*> (for example in *probable, sociable, formidable, original*) and in <*-al*> (for example *original, final*). The second important modification was into /ɪ/. The typical grapheme for this change is <*-age*> at the end of a word, as in *visage, courage, image, marriage*. The pronunciation of this grapheme is /aʒ/ in French but /ɪdʒ/ in English.

Other changes occurred in the research as well but they either do not indicate any tendency or they took place in words with very different spelling.
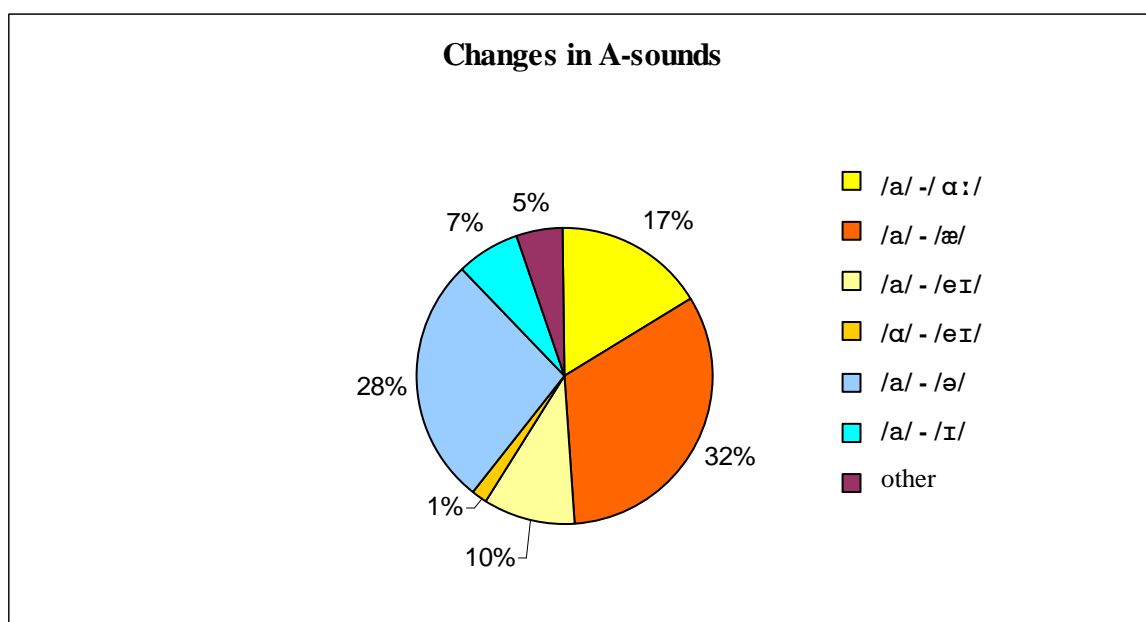
Changes in A-sounds

Legend:
- /a/ - / ɑː/
- /a/ - /æ/
- /a/ - /eɪ/
- /ɑ/ - /eɪ/
- /a/ - /ə/
- /a/ - /ɪ/
- other

17%
32%
10%
1%
28%
7%
5%

Figure 12 – Changes in A-sounds. The yellow colours represent changes in stressed syllables, the blue colours are for changes in unstressed syllables.

The French non-labialised I-sound /i/, corresponding to the grapheme *<i>*, is not very likely to undergo significant modifications. It is usually represented by similar English sounds /iː/ and /ɪ/. The influence of word stress is not as strong as with the A-sounds. In stressed syllables, three types of change can occur. The vowel can be in English pronounced as the pure vowels /ɪ/ and /iː/ or as the diphthong /aɪ/. As for the change towards /ɪ/, there were 25 cases of it appearing in syllables with primary or secondary stress and 68 cases in unstressed syllables. The long vowel /iː/ is to be found in stressed syllables of words that kept their original stress pattern (*canteen, cuisine, chemise, limousine, margarine, naïve, sardine*) as well as in words with a different one (*etiquette, lingerie, migraine*). In two cases, the weak /i/ is pronounced in an unstressed syllable at the end of a word (*enemy, courtesy*). The diphthong /aɪ/ also appears almost exclusively in stressed syllables, only two words out of fourteen have it in an unstressed one. If the letter *<i>* is in writing followed by *<r>* that is not pronounced, /ə/ is added and it creates the triphthong /aɪə/, for example in *attire, empire, inspire*. In unstressed syllables, the change is typically towards the central vowel /ə/. There were seven cases of this modification in the research.
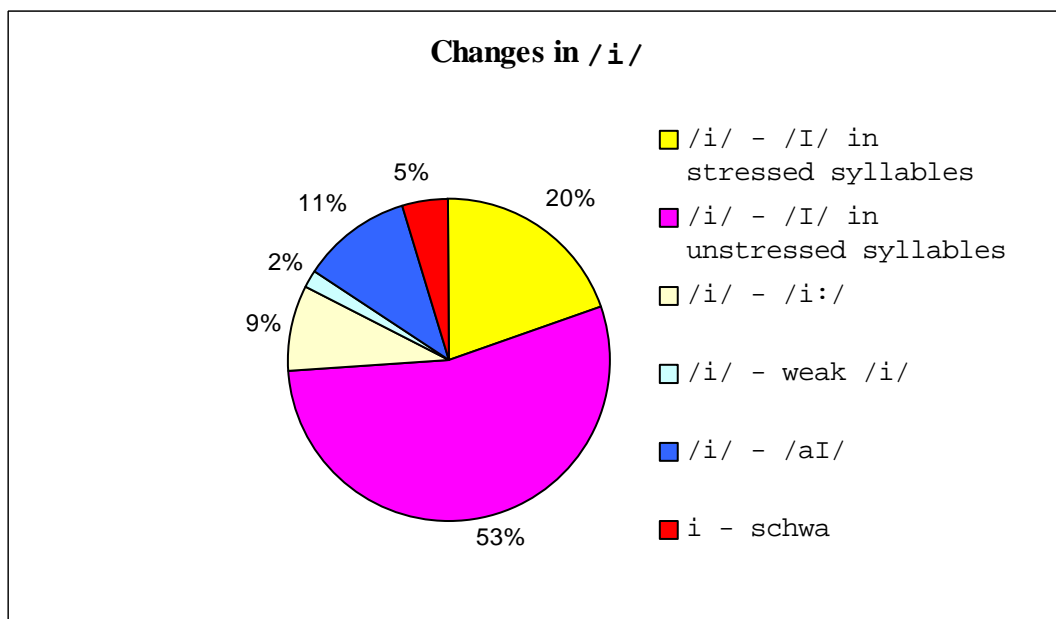
Figure 13 – Changes in /i/.

The labialised vowel /y/ is in writing represented by <*u*>. The sound has no counterpart in English and the changes are rather unpredictable. It can be pronounced as /ʌ/ in stressed syllables, for example in *adultery, duchess, justice*. Six such words occurred in the research. In unstressed syllable, the modification to /ə/ happens quite often (nine times in the research). However, the grapheme <*u*> is in English usually pronounced as /ʊ/ or /uː/ and these are also the sounds that are most often used in the place of the original /y/. If we imagine the vowel quadrilateral, the movement is on the horizontal line, from front to back. Interestingly, the approximant /j/ is frequently inserted, it was not only in four words out of 25 that underwent the change towards /ʊ/ or /uː/ (*crucifix, cruelty, luth, rude*). In these four cases, the /uː/ forms the centre of a stressed syllable. Their French pronunciation is /kʁʁysiˈfi/, /kʁyoˈte/, /lyt/, /ʁyd/. In English it is /ˈkruːsɪfɪks/, /ˈkruːəlti/, /luːt/ and /ruːd/. In the rest of twenty-one, eight words are pronounced with /juː/ or /jʊ/ in an unstressed syllable. These are: *gratitude, revenue, statute, communism, continue, debut, virtue, volume* and *manipulation*. There were also three cases of a modification into sounds that do not fit into any of these groups. It was in words *lettuce, nocturne* and *sure* pronounced in English /ˈletɪs/, /ˈnɒktɜːn/ and /ʃɔː/.
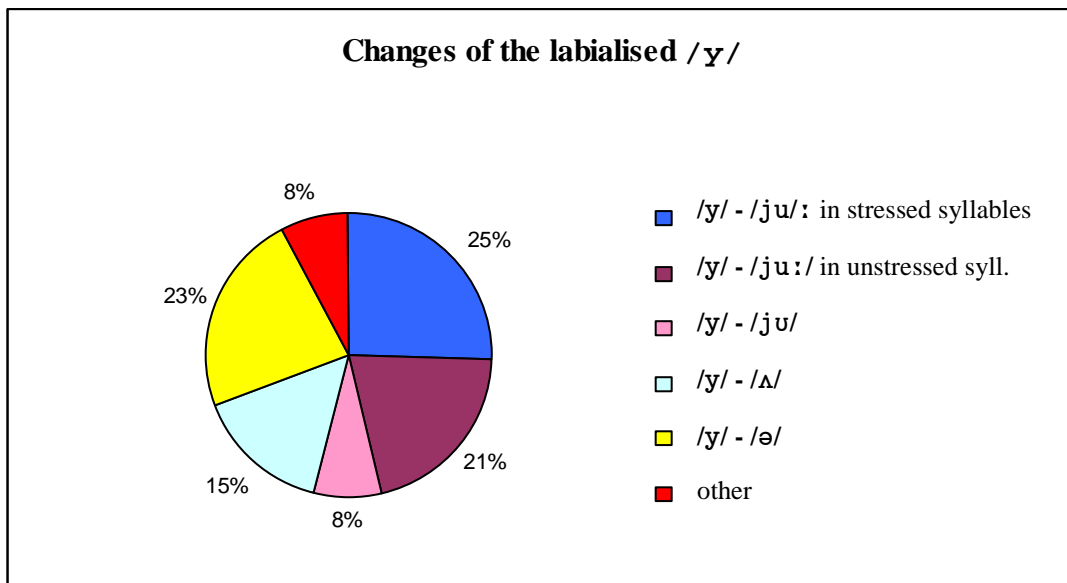
Figure 14 – Changes of the labialised vowel /y/.

There are four E-sounds in French, the non-labialised pair is the front close-mid /e/ and the front open-mid /ɛ/. For a non-native speaker, the difference between them is difficult to recognize as well as to produce. English has one E-sound /e/, in the vowel quadrilateral placed in the middle of the positions of the French vowels. For the purpose of this research, the two French non-labialised E-sounds are treated together as they behave similarly in English phonetic system.

In forty-six cases the E-sounds are in English pronounced as the vowel that is closest to them: /e/, and in forty-one cases it was in a syllable with primary or secondary stress. The corresponding grapheme is *<e>*. In fourteen words one of the E-sounds was modified into /iː/ and in two of them the syllable containing this vowel was not stressed. The French and English spelling were different in most of these cases. The French digraph *<ai>* in *paix, raison, retraite, saison* is in English *<ea>* (*peace, reason, retreat, season*). In thirteen words (for example in *prefer, serve, person*), the E-sounds modified into the long central vowel /ɜː/. The grapheme *<r>* was always present but not pronounced. All these syllables were stressed in the research.

If an E-sound occurs in a syllable that is not stressed in English, it is usually pronounced /ə/ or /ɪ/. These modifications occurred in the first or middle syllables that are not stressed in French either. In twenty-seven cases of the change towards /ə/ and twenty-six towards /ɪ/, there were only two exceptions of words that stressed the syllable with /ɪ/. The final French /e/ can also be transformed to weak /i/ when the final suffixes *<-é>* and *<-té>*

change to <-y> and <-ty> in English. For example, French words *armée, densité, cité, qualité* are pronounced /aʁˈme/, /dɑ̃siˈte/, /siˈte/, /kaliˈte/. Their English counterparts *army, density, city, quality* are pronounced /ˈɑːmi/, /ˈdensɪti/, /ˈsɪti/, /ˈkwɒləti/. The last syllable is not stressed in English.

Finally, the French E-sounds can be in English changed into the diphthong /eɪ/, irrespective of the stress. The important feature is spelling. If the grapheme <e>, sometimes even with the diacritical mark <é>, is in the final syllable, the English pronunciation is likely to be /eɪ/ at the end. Compare the pronunciation of the words *ballet, café, fiancé* in French /baˈle/, /kaˈfe/, /fjɑ̃ˈse/ and in English /ˈbæleɪ/, /ˈkæfeɪ/, /fiˈɑ̃nseɪ/. In the middle position, the diphthong can also be represented by the grapheme <e> or by the digraphs <ei>, <ai>, <ay>, for example in *beige, delay, pay, surveillance*. Seventeen words underwent this type of change in the research.
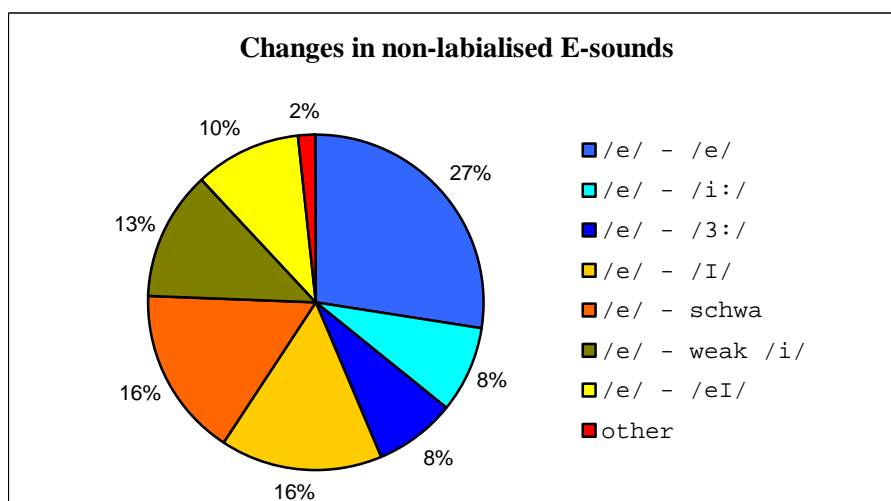

Figure 15 – Changes in non-labialised E-sounds. The blue colours represent changes that take place typically in stressed syllables, the orange colours are for changes in unstressed syllables. The green colour is for cases where word stress does not play a significant role.

The labialised pair of French E-sounds, the open-mid /œ/ and close-mid /ø/seems to be quite predictable in its behaviour in English. There were only three words with /ø/ in their original pronunciation in the research and they were all adjectives with the suffix <-ous> (*precious, curious, amorous*). The suffix is in English pronounced /əs/, so it is not stressed. The vowel /ø/ changed into /ə/ ten times and in nine words it was followed by the unpronounced final grapheme <r>. This modification took place in the suffix <-or>, its French form is <–eur>. We can see it in words *error, executor, savior, chauffer*. The word *voyeurism* /ˈvwajɜːrɪzm̩/ is the only example of the change from /œ/ to /ɜː/. Very

different spelling caused some rather unusual changes. The French words *heure* and *fleur* are in English spelled *hour* and *flower* and they are pronounced with the diphthong /aʊ/. *People* and *beef*, in French *peuple* and *bœuf*, are pronounced with /iː/.

The pair of O-sounds, the open-mid /ɔ/ and the close-mid /o/, behave similarly. In stressed syllables, they are modified into one of these sounds: /ɒ/, /ɔː/ or the diphthong /əʊ/. The lengthening to /ɔː/ took place fourteen times in the research, ten times before the unpronounced <r> (in *passport, inform, order*) and four times the grapheme was <au> (in *authority, clause*). Only in the word *authority* /ɔːˈθɒrətɪ/ the syllable with /ɔː/ is not stressed. The modifications to /ɒ/ and /əʊ/ are difficult to predict. In both cases, the corresponding grapheme is <o> and the syllables are usually stressed. There is not a typical context that would help us with the distinction. The research discovered nineteen words where the O-sound turned into the diphthong /əʊ/ (*ocean, poet, progress, sociable*) and thirty-one where the change was towards the pure vowel /ɒ/ (*baroque, copy, optic, volume*). In unstressed syllables, the O-sounds are usually modified to /ə/. This occurred fifteen times in the research.

Changes in O-sounds

- 38% O-sound - /ɒ/
- 22% O-sound - /əʊ/
- 16% O-sound - /ɔː/
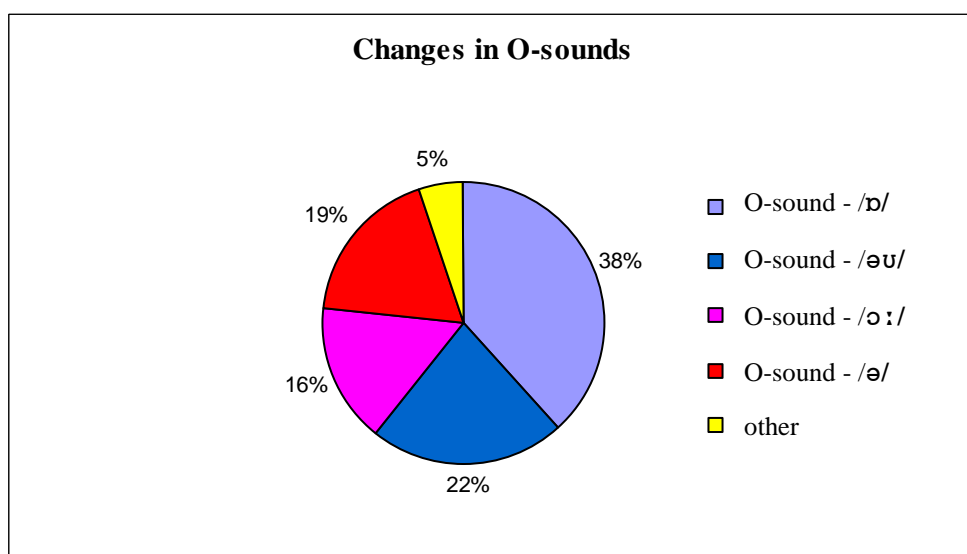- 19% O-sound - /ə/
- 5% other

Figure 16 – Changes in O-sounds.

The French close back /u/ appears to be quite unpredictable when it is brought to English. In French, it is used in words with the grapheme <*ou*> which has sometimes the form <*o*> or <*u*> in English, for example the French words *couleur, gouvernement, soudain* are in English spelled *colour, government, sudden*. In stressed syllables, the /u/ most often changed to /ʌ/. For example the words *courage* is pronounced /kuˈʁaʒ/ in French

and /ˈkʌrɪdʒ/ in English. Before the unpronounced grapheme <r> in the middle position, i.e. before a consonant, the vowel /u/ changes either to /ɔ:/ or /ɜ:/. Two other sounds occurred in stressed syllables: the pure vowel /ʊ/ (in words *bouquet, cushion, push*) and /aʊ/ (in *blouse, tower*). In unstressed position, the modification is usually towards the central /ə/. As we have seen, this happens with all vowels in English phonetic system.
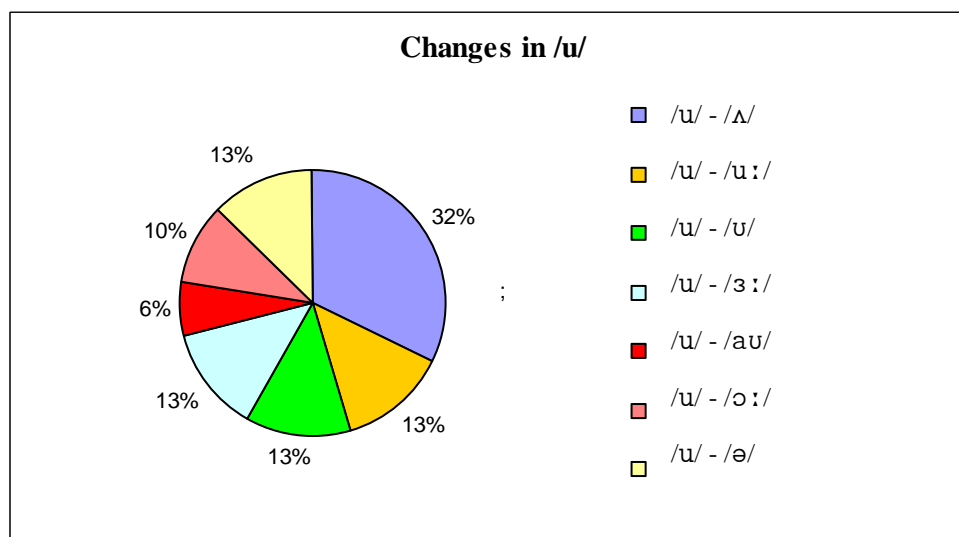
Changes in /u/

13%
10%
6%
13%
13%
13%
32%

- /u/ - /ʌ/
- /u/ - /u:/
- /u/ - /ʊ/
- /u/ - /ɜ:/
- /u/ - /aʊ/
- /u/ - /ɔ:/
- /u/ - /ə/

Figure 17 – Changes in /u/.

The last oral vowel to be analysed is the central /ə/ or schwa. It is very common in English but not so much in French. It has occurred only twenty-four times in the original French pronunciation in the research. In four words, the sound remained the same: *emerald, enemy, chemise, ornament* and *poverty*. Their French pronunciation is /emeˈʁɔd/, /eneˈmi/, /ʃəˈmiz/, /ɔʁneˈmã/ and /povʁeˈte/. The English pronunciation is /ˈemərəld/, /ˈenəmi/, /ʃəˈmi:z/, /ˈɔ:nəmənt/ and /ˈpɒvəti/. In four cases, it was not replaced by a vowel but by a syllabic consonant /m̩/ in the suffix <-*ism*>. Other modifications were towards front vowels /e/, /ɪ/ and /i:/. As for the movement towards /e/, four of six words also place the stress on the syllable that contained /ə/ in French, they are *jelly, menu, second* and *venison*. The change to /ɪ/ happened nine times and in six cases it was connected to the initial grapheme <re> (in *repast, repent, retreat, reverse, receive, religion*). The only change to the long vowel /i:/ involved the change of spelling. The French word *faisable* /fəˈzabl/ has in English the form *feasible* /fi:zəbl̩/.
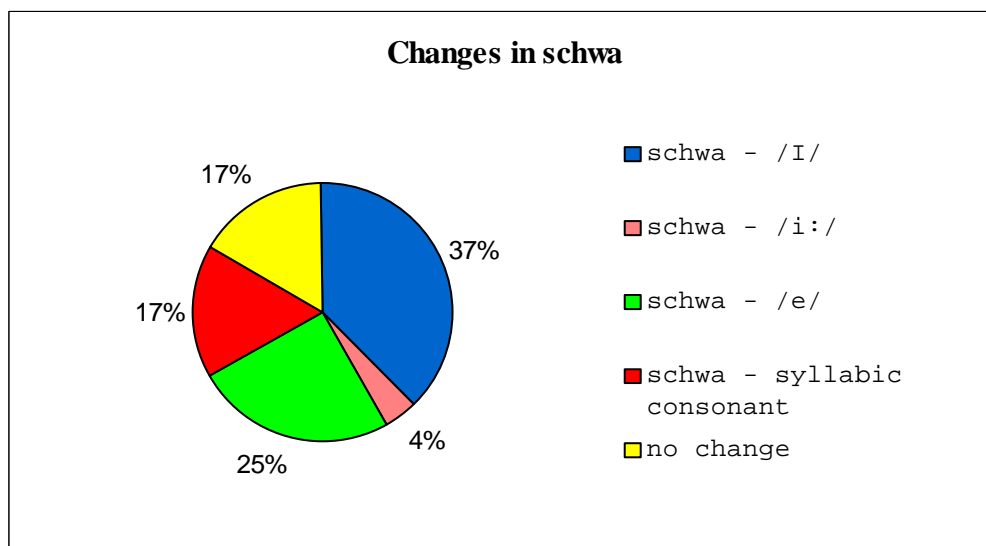
Figure 18 – Changes in schwa /ə/.

2.3.2.4 Changes in nasal vowels

Nasal vowels were already mentioned in chapter 2.3.1.3 Changes in nasal vowels. We could see that it is not difficult to predict when a syllable containing a nasal vowel in French changes it into an oral vowel plus a nasal consonant in English. In writing, such syllable ends in *<n>* or *<m>*. Let us now discuss the change in the quality of the vowels that replace the nasal ones in English.

The prevailing change of the back close-mid nasal vowel /õ/ that is in writing indicated by graphemes *<on>* or *<om>* was to /ən/. It occurred in thirty-two words, ten of them (for example *action, conversation, manipulation, religion*) were nouns formed by the suffix *<ion>* that is unstressed in English. The word stress probably does not play an important role when /õ/ is modified into /ɒn/. There were five cases of this type of modification, three times /ɒn/ was the centre of a stressed syllable (in *combat, convent, conversation*) and twice it was in an unstressed syllable (in *liaison* and *salon*). In two words the nasal vowel changed to /ʌn/ (in *constable* and *number* that is in French spelled *nombre*). Finally, it was transformed to the diphthong /aʊn/ in *mountain* and *noun*. The French spelling of these words is *montagne* and *nom*, so we can see that *<o>* has in English become *<ou>*.

The back open /ɑ̃/ is in writing most often represented by *<an>* or *<en>*. Like the preceding vowel, /ɑ̃/ changed to most often to /ən/ or /əm/. We can observe it for example in the suffix *<ment>* (in *parliament, government, ornament*). Other examples are

tyrant, ocean, convent, evidence. Only once was the nasal vowel /ɑ̃/ modified to /ɪn/. It was in the word *calendar* where the second syllable is not stressed.

The grapheme *<en>* is pronounced /en/ or /em/ usually in stressed syllables. This situation happened seven times in the research, for example in words *defend, entry, gender.* In three cases /en/ or /em/ appeared in unstressed syllables, it was in *empire, incense* and *temptation.* With one exception (*canteen* pronounced /kænˌtiːn/) the syllable with /ɑ̃/ in French was stressed when the nasal vowel changed to /ɑːn/, /eɪn/, /eɪm/, /æn/ or /æm/. All these modifications involved the grapheme *<an>* or *<am>*, so it is difficult to predict them. Let us see one example from each group: *dance* /dɑːns/, *arrange* /əˈreɪndʒ/, *chamber* /tʃeɪmbə/, *scandal* /skændl̩/, *lamp* /læmp/.

In French, the front open-mid nasal vowel /ɛ̃/ corresponds to *<in>* or *<im>* and to combinations of this grapheme and other vowel letters *<ain>*, *<ein>*, *<oin>*. The predictability of the changes in pronunciation which this sound undergoes in English is limited. Stressed syllables spelled in English with *<oin>* were in the research always pronounced /ɔɪn/ (in *join, point, poison*). The grapheme *<ain>* was pronounced /eɪn/ in *paint* and *saint* where, the words being monosyllabic, it is stressed. In *chaplain*, the pronunciation is /ɪn/ and the second syllable is unstressed /ˈtʃæplɪn/. Nine more words contained the same sound, seven of them spelled with *<in>* in the corresponding position and one with *<ein>* (*sovereign,* in French *souverain*). There were four cases of the nasal vowel /ɛ̃/ changing to /ən/: *arson, certain, physician* and *sudden.* Except the adjective *certain*, the French spelling differs. It is *arsin, physicien* and *soudain.* A very special case is the word *lingerie* that is pronounced /ˈlænʒəri/.

The fourth nasal vowel /œ̃/ ceases to be used in French, which is probably the reason why it occurred only twice in the research. Both words underwent the change of the spelling. The French form of *brown* /braʊn/ is *brun,* pronounced /bʁœ̃/ and the English adjective *common* /ˈkɒmən/ is in French *commun* /kɔˈmœ̃/.

Two words in the research do not correspond to the rule that a syllable that ends in *<n>* or *<m>* in French is in English pronounced with an oral vowel and the corresponding nasal consonant. In *fiancé* and *genre* the nasal vowel is preserved even in English, so they are pronounced /fɪˈɑnseɪ/ and /ˈʒɑ̃rə/.

2.3.2.5   Changes in semi-consonants

It was mentioned before that French semi-consonants are closely connected to the vowel with which they form the centre of a syllable. In English they are usually assimilated into vowels or they are left out because of the change of spelling. Each of the three sounds behaves differently, so they are discussed separately.

The semi-consonant /j/ occurred thirty-seven times in the research. Its influence on the preceding sounds was already analysed in connection to fricatives. The clusters /sj/, /tj/ and /zj/ are changed to /ʃ/, /tʃ/ and /ʒ/ in English. The second typical change is that of spelling. French grapheme <-ier> was in English often reduced to <-ar> or <or> (in *collar, cellar, chancellor*), so there is no more basis for the /j/ sound. If the grapheme <i> is preserved in English, the semi-consonant is most typically transformed to the vowel /ɪ/ followed by /ə/ (for example in *espionage, liaison, glacier*) or to /iː/ (in *piece, siege*).

The semi-consonant /ɥ/ occurred only four times in the research. It was in words *biscuit, cuisine, suede* and *usual*. Their pronunciation in French is /bisˈkɥi/, /kɥiˈzin/, /sɥɛd/ and /yˈzɥel/. In English it is /ˈbɪskɪt/, /kwɪˈziːn/, /sweɪd/ and /ˈjuːʒuəl/.

There were ten words containing the semi-consonant /w/. In *voyeurism* it is preserved and in *silhouette* it was changed into the vowel /ʊ/. In the words *point, poison* and *royal* the pronunciation is /ɔɪ/, which corresponds to the grapheme <oi> or <oy>. In five cases, the change of spelling caused that the grapheme <oi> that indicates the pronunciation of /w/ in French is not present in English. We can see it in *courtesy, leisure, parlour, power, receive*. The French counterparts are *courtoisie, loisir, parloir, pouvoir, recevoir.*

2.3.3 Results evaluation

Pronunciation of a language is always a complex system where individual units influence and relate to each other. Neither English nor French are exceptions. Although their phonetic systems are different, they are both Indo-European languages and we can see many similar things. The similarities were the subject of Hypothesis 1. It was proved that consonants change only little. 89 % of plosives did not undergo any change. The number is high also at fricatives – 72 %. Moreover, the changes can be mostly deduced from the spelling. Nasals are a small group of consonants and it is very stable. 62 % remained the same in English as in French. The most common modification in nasals (35 %) is from

a nasal vowel to an oral vowel plus nasal consonant, which can be predicted from the written form of a word.

Hypothesis 2 focused on vowels and on sounds that do not have similar counterparts in the two languages. The case of <h> is a very good example as it does not exist in French at all and there is not any sound that would be near to the English glottal fricative. In this research, the figures are the same for words where it is pronounced in the initial position and for words where it is not. On the other hand, the assumption is not very true for the French r-sound that has a counterpart in the palato-alveolar approximant. If we consider the usage of these two sound in the same position as a concord, then there is less cases of changed pronunciation. The most typical change considering this sound, i.e. not pronouncing the grapheme <r> in certain contexts, also enlightened an interesting phenomenon concerning the vowels: the lengthening of the preceding vowel or its movement towards the central long vowel.

The word stress appears to be a very important factor influencing the changes in vowels. This is not surprising because the tendency to affect the quality of neighboring vowels is one of the main features of English word stress. Any vowel can be reduced to schwa, as we have seen in the research. French vowels were usually able to change to six or seven sounds in English, so there is quite a wide range even within the categories of stressed or unstressed syllables. This supports the statement of Hypotheses 2. The modifications are also connected with the spelling.

3   Conclusion

French and English are two widely spoken languages that are inevitably in mutual contact, which arose to the fact that they share an important part of the wordstock. The objective of this thesis was to examine the words that English borrowed from French from the point of view of the pronunciation.

A sample of 400 words was selected and analysed. The aim was to find changes in four domains: vowels, consonants, word stress and spelling. Two hypotheses were to be approved. The research confirmed that consonants are quite stable sounds and that do not undergo many significant changes. If they do, these changes are often predictable. Vowels, on the contrary, also showed certain tendencies but they are more likely to change. The word stress plays the crucial role in these changes. The original French stress pattern is in prevailing number of words modified to fit in the English phonetic system. The new stress pattern then influences the qualities of vowels of the word.

The spelling is important as well. In some words the French and the English written form of the same word are very different, which causes unusual changes especially in vowels. However, French spelling should tell us how to pronounce a certain word. A certain degree of this regularity was transported to English. In general, the thesis discovered that certain tendencies may be observed in the pronunciation of French borrowings in English. However, there will always be exceptions.

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Appendix

List of analysed words