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**English Orthography in Relation to Common
Misspelling Tendencies**

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2015

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is completely my own work and that no other sources were used in the preparation of the thesis than those listed on the works cited page.

Prague, July 2015

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this thesis is to outline three major fields that are closely connected to language, writing and speech: 'writing systems', 'English orthography' and 'English spelling'. These parts are fully theoretical and serve as an introduction and source of basic information for the supplementary research on 'common misspelling tendencies' in the English language. The primary part of this research is composed of a comparison of individual commonly misspelled words and their further analysis in relation to the English orthography. Each major part uses linguistic terms and phrases which are briefly explained in the 'keywords' section at the end of the thesis.

KEYWORDS

writing systems, English orthography, English spelling, common misspelling tendencies

ABSTRAKT

Hlavním cílem této práce je nastínit tři významné oblasti, které jsou úzce spojeny s jazykem, psaním a řečí: 'písma', 'anglický pravopis' a 'anglické hláskování'. Tyto části jsou zcela teoretické a slouží jako úvod a zdroj základních informací k dodatečnému zkoumání 'častých tendencí v nesprávném hláskování' v anglickém jazyce. Primární část tohoto výzkumu je sestavena z porovnání jednotlivých často nesprávně hláskovaných slov a jejich hlubšího rozboru vzhledem k anglickému pravopisu. Každá z významných oblastí užívá lingvistických termínů a frází, které jsou stručně vysvětleny v části 'klíčová slova' na konci práce.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

písma, anglický pravopis, anglické hláskování, časté tendence v nesprávném hláskování

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a very important part in the everyday lives of human beings. It plays a role in sharing ideas, thoughts and is used to transfer information. Language is a formal system of signs, symbols, sounds and gestures that helps people to communicate with each other. Even animals and some plant species communicate. However, human language is learnt and not biologically inherited. Any correlative meaning relating to individual symbols is arbitrarily assigned (anthro.palomar.edu). “For instance, the English word ‘dog’ does not in any way physically resemble the animal it stands for. All symbols have a material form but the meaning cannot be discovered by mere sensory examination of their forms. They are abstractions” (anthro.palomar.edu).

The main aim of this thesis is to outline three major fields that are closely connected to language, writing and speech: ‘writing systems’, ‘English orthography’ and ‘English spelling’. These parts are fully theoretical and serve as an introduction and source of basic information for the supplementary research on ‘common misspelling tendencies’ in the English language. The primary part of this research is composed of a comparison of individual commonly misspelled words and their further analysis in relation to the English orthography. Each major part uses linguistic terms and phrases which are briefly explained in the ‘keywords’ section at the end of the thesis.

1 WRITING SYSTEMS

Writing is one of the greatest cultural achievements in the history of human beings. Humans are capable of receiving and transferring ideas, thoughts and information beyond the imminent moment. There are many definitions of what writing actually is. One definition is that writing is the usage of a graphic system to represent particular linguistic utterance – language. It is more important to emphasize that writing is not language itself (Rogers 2). “Language is a complex system residing in our brain which allows us to produce and interpret utterances” (Rogers 2).

1.1 Relation of Speech and Writing

There is a huge difference in the naturalness between spoken and written forms of language. Speech itself is older in the history of human beings and is completely universal. It needs to be learnt but does not need to be taught. Speech is considered to be more natural and inherent for humans than writing. There are only two sufficient conditions to learn spoken language: to be a part of human race and to be exposed to a language at an early age. Learning a language is a precognitive process, much like perceiving distances or analyzing the location of sound. On the other hand, writing is an intellectual achievement and it mostly needs to be taught. It is also possible that by giving the right ability and motivation humans are capable of inferring the language relations and therefore teaching themselves. This means that speech is considered to be a biological process and writing is considered to be a cultural process (Lieberman, Frost, and Katz 167-171).

There are several languages (such as Finnish) which have almost ideal one-to-one correspondences between the letters of the Roman alphabet (written symbols) and the phonemes (sounds) of the language. Languages such as Russian and Belorussian use the Cyrillic alphabet. Russian writing equals the morphophonemic level of the language,

overlooking certain phonological variations, whereas Belorussian writing explicitly specifies the type of phonemic variation. In Hebrew, the reader is expected to know the language well enough to supply missing vowels in words. There are some symbols expressing Hebrew vowels but they are used only for children and people learning the language. The relation of speech and writing is very complicated and there is no applicable rule how to determine such irregular relationship (Rogers 5).

1.2 Structure of Writing

The internal structure of writing has a linear organization – one symbol follows another. Most languages (such as English) are written in lines from left to right with the lines ordered from top to bottom. On the other hand, some exceptions exist. For example, Arabic and Hebrew are written in lines from right to left. Chinese is written in columns originally starting at the upper right corner. Mongolian is also written vertically in columns but starting at the upper left corner (Rogers 9).

Firm linearity is not a necessity in some languages. In Arabic, linearity applies only to consonants and long vowels. Short vowels are not normally written, which creates a huge exception in terms of linearity of writing (Rogers 9). “If they are written, they are written as symbols above or below the phonologically preceding consonant” (Rogers 9).

1.3 Graphemes

Graphemes are considered to be the smallest distinctive units of a writing system. Individual graphemes therefore need to contrast with other graphemes in one particular language. This means they possess uniqueness. We distinguish between segmental and non-segmental graphemes. Segmental graphemes are consonants and vowels of the alphabet and non-segmental graphemes are symbols for punctuation, spacing, numbers, etc. and are not considered to be a part of the alphabet. Individual realizations of graphemes are called allographs. Mostly these variations depend on the style of handwriting or printing. Figure 1.3 shows five different allographs of the grapheme (Rogers 10-11).

Figure 1.3 – Allographic variation of the letter ‘b’.



Graphemes may be divided further into free and bound graphemes. An occurrence of free grapheme is not dependent on any other graphemes. The word ‘dog’ consists of three free graphemes <d>, <o> and <g>. These graphemes may freely occur in other contexts. Bound graphemes tend to co-occur with other graphemes – such as diacritics. A bound grapheme <˘> in combination with a free grapheme <a> creates a complex symbol <á> (Rogers 11).

1.3.1 Non-Segmental Graphemic Elements

“Apart from segmental (consonants and vowels) or morphological information, writing often indicates certain things which are not necessarily present in speech” (Rogers 15). Most non-segmental graphemic symbols are not phonologically marked. This means that they have no direct phonological representation. The major part of these elements is represented by punctuation graphemes. In English, the punctuation is not that standardized as spelling. Therefore there are some rules how to use punctuation graphemes. In most cases one particular grapheme may be used in various ways. For example, the period (full stop) may be used to mark the end of a sentence or to mark an abbreviation (Rogers 15).

“In most alphabetic writing, we have a short blank space, the word boundary grapheme, inserted between all words” (Rogers 15). Syllable boundaries in Tibetan are marked with a raised dot which is placed between syllables. In Chinese the syllable boundaries are indicated by separation of characters (Rogers 15).

A regular English sentence typically has two important features (Rogers 15): “the first letter of the first word is capitalized, and a period, question mark, or exclamation mark is placed at the end” (Rogers 15). For example, Spanish uses doubled exclamation marks and question marks. One is placed at the beginning and one at the end of a

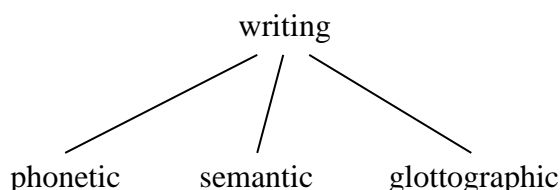
sentence. Chinese, on the other hand, traditionally, does not indicate sentences at all (Rogers 15).

It is also important to mention that writing might use different styles within one utterance. The most common occurrence within one written utterance is an italic style. Italics are used in order to emphasize or present important facts such as titles, cited works or special terms (Rogers 15).

1.4 Classification of Writing Systems

“Language is a relationship between sound and meaning, and it contacts the real world at two interfaces: phonetic and semantic. In principle, we can represent an utterance by writing at any of these three levels: phonetic, linguistic, or semantic” (Rogers 269). In terms of these correspondences we can furthermore divide all writing systems into three major groups: phonetic, semantic and glottographic writing systems (Rogers 269).

Figure 1.4a – Classification of writing systems (Rogers 271).



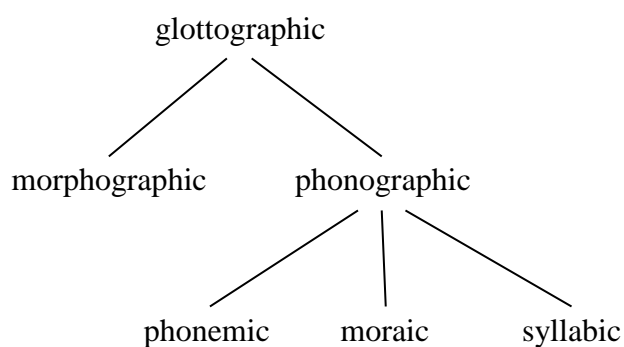
Phonetic writing systems are systems that can be transformed to sounds of any utterance expressed in any language of the world (Rogers 269). “Such a system would be similar to the International Phonetic Alphabet” (Rogers 269). The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is the most widely used set of symbols for phonetic transcription. It is important to mention that one phoneme might have various realizations (allophones) in terms of dialects or other languages. Therefore phonemes are transcribed in /.../ and transcriptions in [...] are actually produced sounds (azlifa.com). “IPA provides symbols sufficient to represent all those phonetic distinctions which are contrastive in some language somewhere” (Rogers 269). The symbols represent only sounds with no association with a particular language (Rogers 269).

Some linguists have claimed that it is impossible to define semantically based writing systems. Semantic writing systems need to meet two basic criteria (Rogers 270-271): “(a) that it is based entirely on semantically analysable units and not on pronunciation; and (b) that any linguistic utterance be translatable into a corresponding semantic representation and vice versa” (Rogers 271). The Bliss writing system might be considered as the only system belonging to this group (Rogers 271).

The remaining systems of writing apart from the IPA (as the only example of phonetic writing) and Bliss (as the only example of semantic writing) are considered to be glottographic writing systems. This group includes standard languages of the world. It is important to mention that every sound correspondence is heavily dependent on the particular language and its utterance (Rogers 271).

In relationship with language, symbols tend to represent different linguistic levels. In the Roman alphabet, letters are related to particular phonemes. On the other hand, numerals are all related to morphemes. Therefore there exist two major linguistic levels in terms of glottographic writing systems: the phonographic level and the morphographic level (Rogers 13).

Figure 1.4b – Classification of glottographic writing systems (Rogers 272).



1.4.1 Phonographic Writing Systems

Phonographic writing systems divide further into three basic writings: phonemic, moraic and syllabic writings. Graphemes of such systems are called phonograms (Rogers 13-14).

Phonemic writing systems have graphemes primarily related to phonemes (Rogers 13). “The segmental (consonant and vowel) symbols of a phonemic writing system are traditionally called letters, and the inventory of these letters is called alphabet” (Rogers 14). Therefore it is also possible to label such systems as alphabetic writing systems. The broadly used alphabets of the world are Roman, Greek and Cyrillic. Writing systems such as Arabic, Hebrew or Hindi are considered to be alphabets but structurally they differ. Interestingly, there is no direct one-to-one correspondence in terms of grapheme-to-phoneme relationship. Some languages such as Spanish or Finnish approach a one-to-one correspondence. However, this simple relationship is broken down by some irregularities. For example, in Spanish this one-to-one correspondence is disrupted by silent letters (Rogers 13-14). “English writing, on the other hand, requires a great deal of morphological information. The sequence <oo> is commonly used to write two different vowels” (Rogers 13). For example, it might represent the sound /u:/ in the words ‘food’ or ‘loop’, the sound /ʊ/ in the words ‘look’ or ‘good’ or the sound /ʌ/ in the word ‘blood’. German spelling is more predictable from the phonological point of view in comparison with English (Rogers 13-14). “We can think of phonemic writing systems arranged along a continuum, with Spanish near one end, requiring rather little morphological information, and English near the other end, requiring quite a lot. The writing system for German might be near the middle” (Rogers 14).

Moraic writing systems have graphemes primarily related to morae. One mora is a unit ranging between phoneme and syllable. Generally, syllables consist of an onset, nucleus and coda whereas a mora is represented by only one of the parts. Cherokee and Cree-Inuktituk are examples of moraic writing systems (Rogers 14).

Syllabic writing systems have graphemes primarily related to syllables. Some linguists do not distinguish between moraic and syllabic writing systems and consider them to be the same (Rogers 14).

To evaluate the differences in these three phonographic writing systems we can analyse the word ‘cut’. “In an alphabetic system, ‘cut’ would be written with three graphemes; in a moraic system, with two; and in syllabic system, with one grapheme” (Rogers 14).

1.4.2 Morphographic Writing Systems

Morphographic writing systems have graphemes primarily related to morphemes. Graphemes of such systems are called morphograms (Rogers 14). Some “authors on writing describe graphemes as related to words, rather than to morphemes, often using the term logogram” (Rogers 14). In other words it is a system of symbols representing whole morphemes. Chinese is considered to be a morphographic writing system. In English, there are also a few morphographic elements incorporated. For example, the dollar sign <\$> represents the morpheme ‘dollar’ or numerals such as <1>, <2> and <3> represent the morphemes ‘one’, ‘two’ and ‘three’ (Rogers 15).

2 ENGLISH ORTHOGRAPHY

The word ‘orthography’ dates from the fifteenth century and comes from the Greek *orthos* which means ‘correct’ and *graphein* which means ‘to write’ (etymonline.com).

Orthography itself refers to the methodology of writing in a particular language. It also includes spelling, punctuation, capitalization and other basic rules of written language. Most languages developed as oral languages and therefore a fixed writing system needed to be formed. In English, as in the alphabetic language system, this incorporates what are known as grapheme-to-phoneme (letter-to-sound) correspondences (myenglishlanguage.com).

2.1 Grapheme-to-Phoneme Representation

The graphemic system in English is a complex array of twenty-six letters – graphemes. It is important to mention that some letters might combine with other letters to create new individual and more complex distinctive units – digraphs and trigraphs (also graphemes). These graphemes are mapped into individual distinctive sounds – phonemes (Venezky 34).

With some variations dependent on individual accents, the English spoken language contains approximately forty-four distinctive phonemes. The different amount of graphemes and phonemes in English confirms that there are no direct one-to-one letter-to-sound relations and it is impossible to symbolize all the complex phonemes with single-lettered graphemes. For this reason, letters have to multi-task (myenglishlanguage.com).

Figure 2.1 sums up all forty-four English phonemes with graphemic realizations and examples in words according to Received Pronunciation. Note that the figure depicts

only two different graphemic realizations for each phoneme (if possible) even though there might exist more (myenglishlanguage.com).

Figure 2.1 – List of English phonemes (dyslexia-reading-well.com).

/ʌ/	u, oo	cup, blood	/ɑ:/	a, ar	father, part
/e/	e, ea	end, bread	/æ/	a	cat
/ɪ/	i, u	it, busy	/ɪ:/	e, ee	me, bee
/ɒ/	o, a	hot, want	/ɔ:/	oo, a	door, water
/ʊ/	u, oo	bush, look	/u:/	o, oo	who, moon
/ə/	u, ai	circumstance, certainly	/ɜ:/	er, or	certain, word
/aʊ/	ou, ough	out, plough	/əʊ/	o, oe	alone, toe
/aɪ/	i, y	spider, sky	/eɪ/	ai, ay	maid, pay
/ɔɪ/	oi, oy	join, boy	/eə/	air, ear	air, pear
/ɪə/	ear, eir	hear, weird	/ʊə/	our	tour
/p/	p, pp	pin, dippy	/b/	b, bb	bug, bubble
/t/	t, ed	tip, ripped	/d/	d, dd	dad, add
/tʃ/	ch, tch	chip, watch	/dʒ/	j, g	jam, giraffe
/k/	k, c	kit, cat	/g/	g, gg	gun, egg
/f/	f, ph	fat, phone	/v/	v, ve	vine, five
/θ/	th	thief	/ð/	th	leather
/s/	s, sc	sit, scene	/z/	z, zz	zip, buzz
/ʃ/	sh, s	shore, sure	/ʒ/	s, z	treasure, azure
/m/	m, mm	man, summer	/n/	n, nn	net, funny
/ŋ/	n, ng	pink, ring	/h/	h, wh	hot, who
/l/	l, ll	live, well	/r/	r, rr	run, carrot
/w/	w, wh	wit, why	/j/	y, j	yes, hallelujah

English letter-to-sound relations vary greatly in terms of diverse dialects so it is difficult to map all the graphemes related to one particular phoneme (myenglishlanguage.com).

In alphabetic languages, the letters and their combinations symbolize distinctive sounds. In written English, these sounds may be represented by single letters such as ‘d’ in the word ‘dog’, sequences consisting of two letters (digraphs) such as ‘sh’ in the word ‘sheep’ and ‘ch’ in the word ‘church’ or even more complex clusters incorporating three letters (trigraphs) such as ‘tch’ in the word ‘scotch’. Sometimes units consisted of four letters such as ‘tion’ in the word ‘attention’ might also correlate with common sounds (myenglishlanguage.com).

2.2 Inconsistency of Pronunciation

In English, there is a high chance of receiving different sounds indicated by the same letter or sets of letters. The digraph ‘ch’ is pronounced differently in the words ‘cheese’ and ‘character’. There is also some ambiguity in the digraph ‘ph’. Sound realizations of the grapheme ‘ph’ in the word ‘telephone’ and the grapheme ‘f’ in the word ‘golf’ are completely identical. This means that not only one particular grapheme may indicate more sounds but more graphemes might indicate one sound. It is important to mention that some graphemes might be also influenced by their surroundings. Such irregularities and more complex spelling might relate to the words that are borrowed from other languages (myenglishlanguage.com).

The pronunciation of set of letters is usually dependent on its position within the word. The digraph ‘gh’ is pronounced differently in the final position in words such as ‘laugh’ or ‘cough’ than if it is in the initial position in the word ‘ghost’. Not all words with ‘gh’ at the end have regular phonetic realization. Words such as ‘high’, ‘through’ or ‘though’ are examples of some exceptions (myenglishlanguage.com).

Most words ending with -ough have ambiguous pronunciation. The pronunciation depends mostly on the remaining letters surrounding it. Figure 2.2 shows some irregular examples according to Received Pronunciation (myenglishlanguage.com).

Figure 2.2 – Differences in pronunciation of -ough (myenglishlanguage.com).

tough	/tʌf/
though	/ðəʊ/
cough	/kɒf/
plough	/plɑʊ/
through	/θruː/
nought	/nɔːt/

In English, one letter very rarely represents multiple linked sounds. The letter ‘x’ is an exceptional case which mostly represents two standard letters ‘k’ and ‘s’ when sounded together. For example, in the word ‘extra’ (myenglishlanguage.com).

Also, words with different meaning and spelling but identical pronunciation – homophones – might be considered ambiguous while being pronounced. Words such as ‘bear’ and ‘bare’ or ‘hour’ and ‘our’ have completely different meanings but they are pronounced the same. The second pair of homophones differs only in letter the ‘h’ which also represents another ambiguous phenomenon – the silent letter (myenglishlanguage.com).

Silent letters occur in the written form of a word but do not match with any sound in the pronunciation. Probably the most known silent letter in the English language is the letter ‘k’ in words such as ‘knife’, ‘know’ or ‘knee’ (myenglishlanguage.com).

2.3 Orthographic Dialect Variation

Dialect variation is a geographical realization of a particular language. It also has some connection with social background. Dialects mainly differ in terms of phonological features. For example, the word ‘greasy’ is pronounced with the /s/ sound by some speakers while others pronounce it with the /z/ sound. In addition to that, dialects may differ in spelling or in lexical vocabulary. Probably the most known English dialect variations are American and British English (britannica.com).

“In the nineteenth century, particularly because of the spelling preferences of Noah Webster’s dictionary, two standard spelling variations arose, which we may term orthographic dialects” (Rogers 192). Most English-speaking people of the world started to follow the standard British variation and the United States followed the American variation. Canada followed British spelling but nowadays it is exposed to American media and therefore some spelling changes have occurred. Distinct expressions for identical ideas are also incorporated in each of the variations but American and British English differ mainly in terms of spelling and phonology (Rogers 192). “These differences are never significant enough to impede anyone’s reading; however, their symbolic significance is enough that popular novels are frequently re-typeset to reflect the appropriate market; film titles are also often similarly altered” (Rogers 192).

In the twentieth century, the economic and political importance of the United States increased and led to an increase of the usage of American dialect variation not only in foreign-language-speaking areas but also in Canada, New Zealand and Britain itself. Boundaries between these two dialects started to merge (Rogers 193).

3 ENGLISH SPELLING

Spelling in general is the “act or process of writing words by using the letters conventionally accepted for their formation” (thefreedictionary.com). Every language has its own specific rules of spelling.

3.1 Spelling Reform

“Because of the complex relationship of writing and language in English, there have been many proposals for spelling reform, ranging from the scientific and well-thought out to the amateurish and confused” (Rogers 195).

One of the strongest tendencies to come up with a spelling reform is to build an easier phonological system for children to learn to write and read more quickly. Spelling reforms usually embrace the ideology of simpler systems – one-to-one correspondences in terms of grapheme-to-phoneme relations. This means that one symbol would represent a particular phoneme of language. Such reforms mostly simplify or unify complex clusters of symbols and also erase silent letters (Rogers 195). “A basic way to spell English phonemically would be to remove morphemically based heterography” (Rogers 195). Pairs such as ‘blue’ and ‘blew’ or ‘scene’ and ‘seen’ would have exactly the same spelling (Rogers 195).

Spelling alteration is not an easy task. Therefore reforms do not meet with greater success. Most people in the world are considered to be conservative and do not agree with any unusual spelling that veers from the standard. From a more scientific point of view, English is a widely spoken language with many altered variations – dialects. Such dialects divide the English language into many different ways of understanding it (Rogers 196). “The dialectal variation of English means that no transcription system can be devised which would not require a large number of arbitrary rules and considerable memorization for many people, precisely the problem that spelling reform set out to

avoid” (Rogers 196). In addition to that, some irregularities and contrasts in spelling serve to facilitate reading. People tend to analyse whole words as single and coherent units and do not interpret words by their constituents – letters (Rogers 196). “Evidence suggests that we process the information slightly faster when homophonous morphemes are spelled differently” (Rogers 196). For example, the set of words: ‘pair’, ‘pear’ and ‘pare’ (Rogers 196). “On the other hand, when we see the word ‘well’, we have to spend a slightly longer time figuring out which morpheme is intended” (Rogers 196).

Spelling reforms with their crucial aim of simplifying the learning of writing and reading reach a dead end. The enormous amount of dialects, complex system with irregularities and gigantic quantity of materials in the present system make some large spelling reforms unfeasible (Rogers 196).

3.2 Spelling and Sound Changes

The English language underwent several spelling reforms throughout its history, altering spelling and therefore its phonological interpretation. On the other hand, it is important to notice that dialects and their priority in phonological changes do not necessarily alter spelling (Rogers 194). In most cases “sound changes occur without a corresponding change in the spelling” (Rogers 194). For example, the words ‘see’ /se:/ and ‘sea’ /sɜ:/ were pronounced differently in Middle English. The vowels were raised in early Modern English, during the Great English Vowel Shift reform but the words ‘see’ /sɪ:/ and ‘sea’ /se:/ were still spelled and pronounced differently. Later on the pronunciation of ‘sea’ was raised to /sɪ:/ eliminating the differing pronunciation with ‘see’ (Rogers 194). “This is an example of the later tendency of English to retain spelling differences where they distinguish morphemes” (Rogers 194).

“Old English had initial clusters of /hl/, /hn/, /hr/ spelled respectively as <hl>, <hn>, <hr>” (Rogers 194). By the time of Middle English the spelling of these consonant clusters eliminated /h/ and therefore changed pronunciation (Rogers 194). “This is an example of the earlier tendency of English to revise the spelling to reflect changes in pronunciation” (Rogers 194).

The French language is a descendant of Latin. French as well as English underwent many changes in terms of spelling and sound (Rogers 194). “The Latin words *debitum* ‘debt’ and *dubitum* ‘doubt’ had lost the /b/ and final /m/ and were written in French as *dette* and *dout*” (Rogers 194). Many words such as already mentioned *dette* and *dout* were borrowed from French into Middle English. As the importance of education arose (Rogers 194), “scholars showed off their knowledge of Latin by inserting an etymological into the spelling” (Rogers 194). This formed the words to their modern shapes ‘debt’ and ‘doubt’ where the /b/ is never pronounced. It is considered to be a silent letter in such words. Exactly the same happened to the borrowed word *faucon* which was later on enriched with the <l> to follow the Latin spelling (Rogers 194).

These examples show that English and even other languages are under constant pressure of reform strategies. Therefore languages are considered to be organic and adaptable.

3.3 Common Misspelling Tendencies

In every language there is a list of words that are commonly misspelled by its users. In most cases these words are intricate in terms of spelling. This involves words incorporating complex double letters, irregular and not so common sequences of unrelated letters, silent letters or homophonous clusters of letters that are easily interchangeable. In addition to this, foreign words tend to have difficult spelling as well. To further analyse misspelling tendencies the research needed to be carried out.

3.3.1 Commonly Misspelled Words

The main aim of the research was to compare and analyze individual commonly misspelled words in relation to the English orthography. Furthermore the research questioned whether the commonly misspelled words were misspelled in most cases; or at least in more cases than the words picked randomly. The task was to form a questionnaire with the words testing spelling.

For the first part of the questionnaire, fifteen words were gathered by intersecting examples of three individual online lists of commonly misspelled words. Each of these lists consisted of approximately one to three hundred words that are commonly misspelled. Lists were selected at random from various internet sites. By comparison with several other online lists it was discovered that most of the words tended to repeat. Therefore it was acceptable to choose only three of the lists and intersect them. It is important to note that some words have a British spelling and they might differ in American spelling.

The first list of commonly misspelled words was taken from the site grammar.yourdictionary.com and it consisted of the words: “acceptable, accidentally, accommodate, acquire, acquit, amateur, apparent, argument, atheist, believe, bellwether, calendar, category, cemetery, changeable, collectible, colonel, column, committed, conscience, conscientious, conscious, consensus, daiquiri, definitely, discipline, drunkenness, dumbbell, embarrass, equipment, exhilarate, exceed, existence, experience, fiery, foreign, gauge, grateful, guarantee, harass, height, hierarchy, humorous, ignorance, immediate, independent, indispensable, inoculate, intelligence, jewellery, judgment, kernel, leisure, liaison, library, license, maintenance, manoeuvre, medieval, memento, millennium, miniature, minuscule, mischievous, misspell, neighbour, noticeable, occasionally, occurrence, pastime, perseverance, personnel, playwright, possession, precede, principal, principle, privilege, pronunciation, publicly, questionnaire, receipt, receive, recommend, referred, reference, relevant, restaurant, rhyme, rhythm, schedule, separate, sergeant, supersede, threshold, twelfth, tyranny, until, vacuum, weather, weird”.

The second list of commonly misspelled words was taken from the site oxforddictionaries.com and it consisted of the words: ”accommodate, achieve, across, aggressive, apparently, appearance, argument, assassination, basically, beginning, believe, bizarre, business, calendar, Caribbean, cemetery, chauffeur, colleague, coming, committee, completely, conscious, curiosity, definitely, dilemma, disappear, ecstasy, embarrass, environment, existence, Fahrenheit, familiar, finally, fluorescent, foreign, foreseeable, forty, forward, friend, further, gist, glamorous, government, guard,

happened, harass, honorary, humorous, idiosyncrasy, immediately, incidentally, independent, interrupt, irresistible, knowledge, liaison, lollipop, millennium, Neanderthal, necessary, noticeable, occasion, occurred, occurrence, pavilion, persistent, pharaoh, piece, politician, Portuguese, possession, preferred, propaganda, publicly, really, receive, referred, religious, remember, resistance, sense, separate, siege, successful, supersede, surprise, tattoo, tendency, therefore, threshold, tomorrow, tongue, truly, unforeseen, unfortunately, until, weird, wherever, which”.

The third list of commonly misspelled words was taken from the site grammar.ccc.commnet.edu and it consisted of the words: “absence, accidentally, accommodate, accumulate, achievement, acquaintance, acquire, acquitted, advice, advise, amateur, among, analysis, analyze, annual, apartment, apparatus, apparent, appearance, arctic, arguing, argument, arithmetic, ascend, athletic, attendance, balance, battalion, beginning, belief, believe, beneficial, benefited, boundaries, Britain, business, calendar, candidate, category, cemetery, changeable, changing, choose, chose, coming, commission, committee, comparative, compelled, conceivable, conferred, conscience, conscientious, conscious, control, controversial, controversy, criticize, deferred, definitely, definition, describe, description, desperate, dictionary, dining, disappearance, disappoint, disastrous, discipline, dissatisfied, dormitory, effect, eighth, eligible, eliminate, embarrass, eminent, encouragement, encouraging, environment, equipped, especially, exaggerate, excellence, exhilarate, existence, existent, experience, explanation, familiar, fascinate, February, fiery, foreign, formerly, forty, fourth, frantically, generally, government, grammar, grandeur, grievous, height, heroes, hindrance, hoping, humorous, hypocrisy, hypocrite, immediately, incidentally, incredible, independence, inevitable, intellectual, intelligence, interesting, irresistible, knowledge, laboratory, laid, led, lightning, loneliness, lose, losing, maintenance, manoeuvre, manufacture, marriage, mathematics, maybe, mere, miniature, mischievous, mysterious, necessary, Negroes, ninety, noticeable, occasionally, occurred, occurrence, omitted, opinion, opportunity, optimistic, paid, parallel, paralysis, paralyze, particular, pastime, performance, permissible, perseverance, personal, personnel, perspiration, physical, picnicking, possession, possibility, possible, practically, precede, precedence, preference, preferred, prejudice, preparation, prevalent, principal, principle, privilege,

probably, procedure, proceed, profession, professor, prominent, pronunciation, pursue, quantity, quizzes, recede, receive, receiving, recommend, reference, referring, repetition, restaurant, rhyme, rhythm, ridiculous, sacrifice, sacrilegious, salary, schedule, seize, sense, separate, separation, sergeant, severely, shining, similar, sincerely, sophomore, specifically, specimen, statue, studying, succeed, succession, surprise, technique, temperamental, tendency, tragedy, transferring, tries, truly, tyranny, unanimous, undoubtedly, unnecessary, until, usually, village, villain, weather, weird, whether, woman, women, writing”.

By intersecting examples of the three individual lists the following words were chosen: accommodate, argument, believe, cemetery, conscious, definitely, embarrass, existence, foreign, humorous, noticeable, receive, separate, until, weird.

For the second part of the questionnaire, fifteen more random words were added which I considered to be intricate and that were not part of the already mentioned lists. I selected the words including double letters, irregular sequences of unrelated letters and homophonous clusters of letters. My own list consisted of words: accuracy, baggage, balloon, brilliant, conceal, dawn, flesh, handsome, meadow, measure, raccoon, ransom, refrigerator, spontaneous, strength.

After the list was complete a questionnaire was drawn up for 115 respondents. The respondents came from various countries all around Europe who had studied English for at least three years. None of them was a native English speaker. All respondents were people I was familiar with or their friends. The questionnaire was in the form of a short video including an audio pronunciation of a particular word and its translation in the Czech language. Individual audio pronunciations and translations were taken from the site translate.google.com. In some cases the original English words and the Czech translations had partly or completely identical spelling, therefore synonymous translations needed to be used. For non-Czech-speaking respondents the translations were replaced with definitions or synonymous expressions; both in English. The task was to spell the word properly. I collected results for further analysis of spelling and misspelling. Properly spelled words were unsuitable for the research so they were used only to demonstrate the amount of correctly spelled words in relation to misspelled

ones. In order to remove the additional variable of any participant's perceived pressure, I decided to issue the questionnaires with no time limit stipulations. For the research it was more important to get applicable results rather than results submitted under pressure.

3.3.2 Analysis of Misspelled Words

The research showed that 32.5% of misspellings appeared in the words extracted from the lists of common misspellings. On the other hand, 33.8% of misspellings appeared in the randomly selected words. The results are fairly similar. It displays an uncertainty and inconsistency of misspelling tendencies which might be also caused by selecting unsuitable words. Therefore the research concentrated on separate words and analyzed them individually one by one. It is possible to divide general misspellings into three different levels:

The first level of misspelling is when a letter in a word is completely omitted or extra added. For example, in the word 'ransom' the misspelling is depicted as 'ransome' with an extra 'e' letter at the end. Silent letters might affect the correct spelling in terms of leaving them out.

Another level of misspelling is when a word has its double letters simplified or vice versa. For example, in the word 'accuracy' the misspelling is depicted as 'acuracy'. The sequence of symbols 'cc' is replaced by a single 'c'. This level of misspelling might be considered to be a subpart of the first level. In most cases the double letters do not alter the pronunciation of a word and therefore this might cause problems in terms of correct spelling.

The third level of misspelling is when two or more letters are shuffled or placed in the wrong order. For example, in the word 'strength' the misspelling is depicted as 'strenght'. The spelling order of the letters 't' and 'h' is reversed. This phenomenon is mostly affected by homophonous clusters that are easily interchangeable. For example, the cluster 'ei' is easily interchangeable with 'ie' in terms of identical pronunciation. In the words such as 'receive' and 'believe' these clusters are homophonous and are

interpreted as one sound – /r/. Even clusters with partly identical pronunciation might cause difficulties.

There is the list of all the words chosen for the research and their further analysis one by one:

accommodate – 102 out of 115 results submitted, 68 results misspelled (66.7%) – In the research the word ‘accommodate’ was misspelled only in terms of double letters. The high amount of misspellings was depicted as ‘accomodate’ with only one ‘m’ which occurred in fifty-three results. It is an unusual phenomenon because of the rare presence and unnaturalness of ‘cc’ in written English in comparison with ‘mm’. There were also four results misspelled as ‘acomodate’ with no double letters included. The research showed that double letters caused a lot of difficulties in terms of correct spelling (morewords.com).

argument – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 6 results misspelled (5.2%) – This word was expected to have far more misspellings according to its part in the lists of commonly misspelled words. However, it was misspelled only six times in the research. The Latin word *argumentum* ‘evidence’ laid down foundations for various languages and therefore this might be the reason of such high amount of correctly spelled results. The only misspelled variation that occurred in the research was ‘arguement’ which might have risen from the verb form ‘argue’. It is important to note that the letter ‘e’ is omitted in the noun form of this particular case (etymonline.com).

believe – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 28 results misspelled (24.3%) – The word ‘believe’ was interpreted only in two misspelled variations: ‘belive’ and ‘beleave’. Both misspellings might have been affected by already existing words ‘live’ and ‘leave’. According to the lists of commonly misspelled words the variation ‘beleave’ is frequent. The tendency to interchange the cluster ‘ie’ with ‘ei’ and vice versa is very common. Nevertheless, the research showed no result with such misspelling (oxforddictionaries.com).

cemetery – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 52 results misspelled (45.2%) – Nearly half of the results of the word ‘cemetery’ were misspelled. The most common

misspelling was ‘cemetary’. The replacement of ‘e’ with ‘a’ might have been caused by identical pronunciation. Misspelled variation ‘cemetry’ with omitted ‘e’ was probably caused by the silent ‘e’ in the final -tery. Other common misspellings were ‘cementery’ and ‘cementary’. These misspelled variations probably rose from the word ‘cement’. Some rare and exceptional variations such as ‘cimetry’ and ‘senetry’ were also included in the research.

conscious – 111 out of 115 submitted results, 45 results misspelled (40.5%) – The word ‘conscious’ was depicted in many various misspellings. The most common one was ‘conciuous’ (twenty-one results) – misspelled only by omitting the letter ‘s’. The sound /ʃ/ was therefore not interpreted by ‘sc’ but only by ‘c’. Another related misspelling was ‘consious’ (five results) that transformed sound /ʃ/ only to the letter ‘s’. Some rare misspellings were ‘conceit’, ‘consure’ and ‘contious’.

definitely – 108 out of 115 submitted results, 18 results misspelled (16.7%) – The research surprisingly showed enormously large amount of correct spellings of the word ‘definitely’. Four various misspellings arose from the research: ‘definetly’, ‘deffinetly’, ‘definately’ and ‘definitelly’. The variation ‘definetly’ probably occurred because of the silent ‘e’ in the suffix -tely. According to oxforddictionaries.com the most common misspelling is ‘definately’. However, the research confirmed only six results of such misspelling even though the word ‘definitely’ comes from the word ‘definite’ only by adding suffix -ly. It is important to note that suffix -lly do not exist. Therefore the misspelling ‘definitelly’ might correlate with the word such as ‘abnormally’. However, the word ‘abnormal’ does end with the letter ‘l’ thus by adding -ly the word forms into ‘abnormally’ with double ‘l’.

embarrass – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 87 results misspelled (75.7%) – The word ‘embarrass’ was one of the trickiest words to spell. The most common misspelling was ‘embarass’. Respondents mostly omitted ‘rr’ but included ‘ss’ in the spelling. There was no result with such spelling error the other way around – ‘embarras’. It shows that writing ‘ss’ is more natural and inherent than ‘rr’ in the word ‘embarrass’. Some other sporadic spellings such as ‘inbarasse’, ‘embarance’, ‘enborouce’ and past forms ‘embarassed’ and ‘embarased’ appeared in the research. This curiosity to naturally spell

the word in its past form with suffix -ed showed that the respondents might not have been familiar enough with English verbs and their spelling.

existence – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 34 results misspelled (29.6%) – This word was misspelled in only one major misspelling form. Most Czech respondents spelled this word correctly but nearly all of the others spelled this word as ‘existence’. This shows a perfect example of word counterparts. Czech language has the same spelling for this word with exactly the same meaning. Czech respondents therefore spelled it identically as it is spelled in Czech language. In addition to this, one exceptional spelling arose – ‘exstence’ which might be considered as a mistype error.

foreign – 104 out of 115 submitted results, 13 results misspelled (12.5%) – Most spellings of this word were correct even though the suffix -eign is not that common in English. In addition to this, the letter ‘g’ is in this case a silent letter so it is not pronounced. Respondents probably passively knew about certain irregular ending cluster in the spelling of ‘foreign’ and therefore there were results incorporating for example ‘gh’. Misspellings such as ‘foreigh’ and ‘foreighn’ are perfect examples of this.

humorous – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 33 results misspelled (28.7%) – Even though this word might be considered as the one with difficult spelling, it was spelled correctly in most cases. The most common misspellings were ‘humurous’ and ‘humourous’. Some exceptional results included ‘humorouse’. The reason might be that the pronunciation partly corresponds. One respondent spelled the word as ‘mumores’ which might be considered as mishearing while receiving the pronounced word.

noticeable – 110 out of 115 submitted results, 65 results misspelled (59.1%) – According to oxforddictionaries.com the most common misspelling of this word is ‘noticable’. In the research forty-one results were misspelled as ‘noticable’. Respondents felt the need to shorten the ‘ea’ cluster even though ‘noticeable’ is compounded from the word ‘notice’ and the suffix ‘able’ with no other changes. Suffixes -able and -ible are very common in English language and students might have difficulties with learning them and also with interchanging them. This notion was

confirmed with nineteen results of misspelled variation ‘noticable’. One exceptional result was ‘neutassible’ which seems to be derived from a mixture of German and French spelling.

receive – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 34 results misspelled (29.6%) – The most common misspelling of this word was ‘recieve’. As it was already mentioned, confusing ‘ei’ with ‘ie’ and vice versa is a very common phenomenon in English spelling. These two digraphs are pronounced the same in most cases and therefore it causes difficulties. In addition to this, few results were misspelled as ‘received’ which shows the usage of past form of the verb as a standard as it was already introduced with the word ‘embarrass’.

separate – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 17 results misspelled (14.8%) – An unusual notion of doubling the letter ‘p’ appeared in ten results in misspellings ‘separate’ and ‘seperate’. Respondents probably had the tendency to confuse prefix se- with sep- and therefore by joining ‘parate’ they created ‘separate’. The rest of the misspellings were spelled as ‘seperate’ which is according to oxforddictionaries.com the most common variant of misspelling ‘separate’.

until – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 16 results misspelled (13.9%) – The word ‘until’ was misspelled only in two different variations. Ten results showed ‘untill’ and six results ‘untile’. The first misspelling might be influenced by the spelling of its shortened form ‘till’. The second one probably emerged from the word ‘tile’ which on the other hand is a completely different word. Based on the research, the word ‘until’ was spelled correctly in most cases.

weird – 110 out of 115 submitted results, 28 results misspelled (25.5%) – The most common misspelling of this word was ‘wierd’. It is the same phenomenon as there was with the word ‘receive’. Respondents had the tendency to confuse ‘ei’ with ‘ie’. In this particular case even misspellings such as ‘wird’, ‘weiered’ and ‘wiered’ appeared. The last two cases show the tendency to spell the word with suffix -ed which is one of the most common suffixes in the English language.

accuracy – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 17 results misspelled (14.8%) – The word ‘accuracy’ had extremely low number of misspellings. Only one type of misspelling appeared in the results – ‘acuracy’. However, there are not many words with ‘acu’ at the beginning of the word in English. Therefore this might be affected by a lack of familiarity of words starting with ‘accu’ (morewords.com).

baggage – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 13 results misspelled (11.3%) – This word was spelled correctly in most cases. In those where it was not spelled correctly a strange occurrence appeared. The word was spelled as words with similar meanings – ‘luggage’ and ‘package’. Few of the respondents therefore must have misheard the pronunciation or just simply considered these spellings to have such pronunciation. No complications with double letters in ‘baggage’ were drawn out from the research.

balloon – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 81 results misspelled (70.4%) – Most misspellings of this word were depicted as ‘baloon’. The misspelling might have been created by dividing the word pronunciation into ‘ba’ and ‘loon’ parts. However, it is important to note that the word ‘balloon’ originates from the word ‘ball’ thus the double letters need to remain. Some exceptional results showed misspellings such as ‘ballone’ and ‘balone’ with additional ‘e’ at the end.

brilliant – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 19 results misspelled (16.5%) – The word ‘brilliant’ was the word with only one type of misspelling form – ‘briliant’. Reducing double letters or doubling single letters is one of the most common tendencies in misspelling.

conceal – 91 out of 115 submitted results, 36 results misspelled (39.6%) – Based on the research, this word provided various misspellings. The ones that would have similar or identical spelling were ‘conseal’, ‘conceale’, ‘conseel’, ‘consiele’ and ‘conceil’. It shows that respondents tried to approximate the pronunciation to its spelling. Four exceptional results depicted the word ‘conceal’ as ‘council’ which is a completely different word. The low amount of submitted results indicated that some respondents were not familiar with the word ‘conceal’.

dawn – 102 out of 115 submitted results, 29 results misspelled (28.4%) – Most misspellings of this word were depicted as ‘dorn’ and ‘dorne’ which have identical pronunciation as ‘dawn’. Results such as ‘moon’ and ‘metre’ showed unusual occasions of misspelling. Respondents did not know the word and they tried to approximate the pronunciation to a word they are familiar with.

flesh – 109 out of 115 submitted results, 44 results misspelled (40.4%) – This word was misspelled only in two different variations – ‘flash’ and ‘flaish’. The identical pronunciation of the words ‘flesh’ and ‘flash’ confirms that ‘flash’ was the most common misspelling. Only the meaning differentiates them. It is also important to note that no respondent had difficulties with spelling the ending ‘sh’ part.

handsome – 107 out of 115 submitted results, 9 results misspelled (8.4%) – Not many misspellings were made in spelling of the word ‘handsome’. Results showed only misspellings ‘hendsome’ and ‘handsame’. However, this word is simply a compounding of two words – ‘hand’ and ‘some’. Thus this might be the reason why there were not many misspellings.

meadow – 92 out of 115 submitted results, 11 results misspelled (12%) – In most cases this word was either spelled correctly or was not spelled at all. According to the research, respondents spelled the word in only two various forms – ‘medaw’ and ‘medow’. All of the respondents did not have any trouble with including letter ‘w’ at the end of the word which is also very unusual. The final part of the word is pronounced with the /əʊ/ sound which is corresponding with homophonous clusters such as ‘oe’ and ‘ough’ in the words ‘toe’ and ‘though’. However, these words do not include the letter ‘w’. Most respondents therefore showed certain knowledge regarding the usage of ‘ow’ at the end of this word. Also it is important to mention that the low amount of submitted results indicated decreased level of familiarity with the word ‘meadow’.

measure – 110 out of 115 submitted results, 9 results misspelled (8.2%) – The word ‘measure’ was depicted in only one type of misspelling – ‘mesure’. All the respondents who misspelled the word as ‘mesure’ had studied French so there might have been some tendency for the omission of ‘a’ in ‘ea’ brought about by this. On the other hand, this

also might have been affected by the pronunciation. The cluster 'ea' in the word 'measure' is pronounced as the /e/ sound and therefore it might have indicated only the letter 'e' in further misspelling. Based on the research, the word 'measure' was spelled correctly in most cases.

raccoon – 93 out of 115 submitted results, 72 results misspelled (77.4%) – The word 'raccoon' was another word that was tricky to spell. It might have been caused by its uncommonness. The most common mistake was that the respondents simplified the cluster 'cc' into 'c' and therefore spelled the word as 'racooc'. This also happened with the cluster 'oo' but only in minority of the cases. It might have been caused by the /u:/ sound which is commonly represented by 'oo'. Also some exceptional results such as 'recoon' and 'recoone' appeared in the research.

ransom – 82 out of 115 submitted results, 29 results misspelled (35.4%) – This word was chosen because of its similar pronunciation but different spelling with the final part of the word 'handsome'. Surprisingly, this word was spelled correctly in terms of this final part. Only five results were depicted as 'ransome'. Some rare occasions showed the word misspelled as 'ransome' which probably corresponded with the word 'handsome' again. Another exceptional case was the misspelling 'brandsom'.

refrigerator – 95 out of 115 submitted results, 36 results misspelled (37.9%) – The word 'refrigerator' was chosen for the research for its tricky shortened form 'fridge' which includes extra letter 'd' in the spelling. Respondents were expected to include this letter 'd' in the spelling of 'refrigerator' as well. Sixteen results showed such misspelling. Misspelling 'refrigerateur' appeared in the research in eight results and it pointed out the influence of French spelling. A few results depicted the misspelling as 'refrigirator'.

spontaneous – 112 out of 115 submitted results, 71 results misspelled (63.4%) – This word has a really tricky cluster 'eous'. Most respondents altered this cluster into 'ious' and therefore misspelled the word as 'spontanious'. A minority of the respondents confused the cluster 'eous' with some other clusters such as 'ous', 'ess' and 'eaus'. It is

important to mention that all the submitted results included the correct spelling of the first part of the word – ‘spontan’.

strength – 115 out of 115 submitted results, 50 results misspelled (43.5%) – This word was chosen for the research because of its ending cluster ‘gth’. Nearly all of the Czech respondents found this tricky and misspelled the cluster as ‘ght’. It is unusual that this was the only form of misspelling of this word.

3.3.3 Conclusion

The major part of the analysis gathered a few occurrences in misspelling that tended to repeat. These various tendencies confirmed that respondents were following certain language rules as they were trying to spell the words correctly.

The research showed that there was almost no difference in the percentage of misspellings in the words drawn out from the online lists of commonly misspelled words in comparison with the percentage of randomly selected words. On the other hand, several misspelling tendencies emerged from the analysis of the individual words.

It is important to note that there were several misspellings influenced by spelling in other non-native languages that respondents study. The most evident part was the influence of the French language. For example, a few respondents misspelled the word ‘refrigerator’ as ‘refrigerateur’. However, there were not many different misspellings among respondents with various mother tongues.

Another very significant factor affecting spelling is the lack of familiarity. Few respondents did not submit particular words which might be indicating a decreased level of familiarity with these words. The research showed that some respondents tried to spell the words even in spite of an apparent lack of knowledge. Therefore it led to a higher amount of misspellings; most of them in terms of different grapheme-to-phoneme realizations. For example, the word ‘flesh’ misspelled as ‘flash’ or the word ‘believe’ misspelled as ‘beleave’.

In addition to this, it is important to claim that some results were greatly influenced by the pronunciation of individual words that the respondents received during the research. Some results were depicted as approximations to what respondents heard. In some cases the words were affected by some other factors such as knowledge of vocabulary and the amount of time dedicated by them for the research. Few words were misspelled as completely (or partly) different and simultaneously existing English words. For example, the word ‘baggage’ was misspelled as ‘package’. Some rare misspellings were depicted as past forms of current words. For example, the word ‘receive’ was misspelled as ‘received’.

Based on the research, most misspelled words were spelled correctly in terms of different grapheme-to-phoneme realizations. The English language has no strict one-to-one correspondences regarding grapheme-to-phoneme links, therefore some phonemes are represented by more graphemes and vice versa. For example, the word ‘ransom’ /rænsəm/ and its misspelled variation ‘ransome’ where the part ‘some’, when standing individually and pronounced as a weak form /səm/, might correlate with already mentioned /rænsəm/. Therefore this misspelled word can be considered to be spelled correctly in terms of different grapheme-to-phoneme (letter-to-sound) realization (myenglishlanguage.com).

KEYWORDS

alphabet – an inventory of letters

allograph – an individual realization of a grapheme

allomorph – a variant shape of a morpheme (in English: plural endings or past forms of a verb)

allophone – a sound out of possible sounds that are used to interpret a particular phoneme

bound grapheme – a grapheme that tends to co-occur with other graphemes

complex symbol – a combination of free and bound graphemes.

consonant – a sound of speech produced by partial or complete obstruction of the air stream created by any of the speech organs

dialect – a language variation dependent on region and social background

digraph – a group of two successive letters expressing one or more phonemes

free grapheme – a grapheme that is not dependent on any other graphemes

grapheme – the smallest distinctive unit of a writing system

homophones – a pair of words with identical pronunciation but different meaning and spelling

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) – the most widely used set of symbols for phonetic transcription

letter – a symbol of a phonemic (alphabetic) writing system

mora – a unit ranging between phoneme and syllable

moraic writing system – a system of writing where graphemes are primarily related to morae

morpheme – the smallest grammatical unit

morphograms – a grapheme of a morphographic writing system

morphographic writing system – a system of writing where graphemes are primarily related to morphemes

non-segmental graphemic element – elements apart from consonants and vowels

orthography – a methodology of writing in a language

phoneme – the smallest distinctive unit of speech

phonetic alphabet – an array of created symbols representing individual sounds

phonetic transcription – a representation of speech by using symbols of the standard phonetic alphabet

phonemic (alphabetic) writing system – a system of writing where graphemes are primarily related to phonemes

phonogram – a grapheme of a phonographic writing system

phonographic writing system – a phonemic, moraic or syllabic writing system

Received Pronunciation (RP) – standard British pronunciation

segmental graphemic element – consonants and vowels

silent letter – a letter that occurs in the written form of the word but does not match with any sound in the pronunciation

syllabic writing system – a system of writing where graphemes are primarily related to syllables

trigraph – a group of three successive letters expressing one or more phonemes

vowel – a sound of speech produced only by the vocal chords

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