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Pronunciation variation trends of General British English centring diphthongs across fields

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Phoneticians describe General British (GB) English diphthongs as centring and closing (Cruttenden, 2008; Collins et al. 2019, Carr, 2020) according to their glides. Centring diphthongs, the glide of which is the central vowel, are in the focus of linguists due to their gradual monophthongisation process. These in-process changes result in the inconsistent use of centring diphthongs in spoken communication. Such inconsistency can cause challenges in the acquisition and instruction of spoken English for specific purposes that strives towards intelligibility in specific field-based communicative contexts. These challenges have originated the purpose of the study that aims at exploring how far the pronunciation changes of centring diphthongs are represented in the online GB English dictionaries that are commonly used by students and how far these changes are observable in the BBC News reports covering various fields. Three dictionaries (two English monolingual and one English - Latvian) and a specialised corpus of extracts from BBC News with the participation of professional journalists were selected for the study. The comparative analysis of dictionaries revealed pronunciation variations; similarly, the variations were observed also in BBC News extracts devoted to specific thematic fields. The further analysis of the variations uncovered occasional consistency of the monophthongisation in the words that occur in the extracts devoted to different specific fields. These findings might enrich the spoken language activity design for specific purposes.

Biographical note(s) of the author(s)

Research interests include phonetics and phonology and corpus-based studies of spoken and written texts of specific fields.

Recommendation (for student section)

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