COMMON MISTAKES IN SPOKEN ENGLISH MADE BY ROMANIAN SPEAKERS

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Abstract. *The present paper aims at presenting several frequent mistakes that occur in spoken English on the grounds of either similar pronunciation of different words in the English language, or similar translation of the respective words into the Romanian language. There are also taken into account similar meanings of different words, meanings that are sometimes confused. The current paper shows their usage in different contexts and it enhances the correct usage by explaining the reasons for which the incorrect variant is not properly used. Specific emphasis is laid upon the verbs to do and to make which used in different verbal constructions are very versatile. However, a general rule can be applied to them, the author distinguishing the usages of the verbal constructions of to do from the usages of the verbal constructions of to make on the basis of this rule and giving specific examples in each case. As regards all the words or phrases debated upon, translation into the Romanian language is provided for each word or phrase in order to be properly comprehended by the Romanian speakers. Thus, the paper intents to offer a useful guideline in what regards a proper usage of English starting from easily mistaken words or phrases to more complicated ones.*

Keywords *meaning, to do, to make.*

There are several words and phrases that frequently occur in spoken English in a mistaken variant, this paper intending to take into account some of them by giving the proper translation of the respective terms into the Romanian language and providing context in which the correct terms usually occur.

There are cases when the translation of two different words in English is the same into the Romanian language, which can make the Romanian speaker confused (injured/ hurt – wounded - rănit), or when the pronunciation of two different words in English is similar but the words in English have different meanings (e.g. excited – exciting).

The methodology of this paper consists in identifying these types of different context that occur with Romanian speakers of English, providing specific examples in English with proper translations into Romanian.

1. TO DO (a face) differs from **TO MAKE** (a face)

TO DO expresses **a mental/ intellectual** activity with some exceptions: to do the dishes/ the laundry/ the bathroom/ the windows (= to wash), to do a horrible face – a se strâmba îngrozitor, to do a little walk – a se plimba puțin, to do aerobics – a face gimnastică aerobică.

TO DO

- To do one's homework – a-și face temele
- To do a translation – a face o traducere
- To do interpreting services – a presta servicii de interpretare
- To do a lesson (He, as a teacher, does lots of lessons every week) – a susține/ a face o lecție

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- To do/ take a test (He, as a students, does many tests every semester) – a susține/ a da un test
- To do a book on something – a scrie o carte despre ceva
- To do a British accent – a imita un accent englezesc
- To do business with – a face afaceri cu
- To do a certain job – a face o anumită treabă
- To do a deal with somebody – a face o afacere cu cineva
- To do a field test – a face o testare pe teren
- To do a good job – a face o treaba bună
- To do a great service – a face un mare serviciu
- To do a goodie (informal) – a face o faptă bună
- To do good deeds – a face fapte bune
- To do a hell of a job (informal) – a face o treabă grozavă
- To do the proper thing – a face ceea ce trebuie
- To do good decisions – a lua hotărâri bune
- To do a public service – a face un serviciu public
- To do a press conference – a ține o conferință de presă
- To do a quick calculation – a face un calcul rapid
- To do a stupid thing – a face o prostie
- To do an interview – a lua un interviu

TO MAKE

It expresses a **physical action** (to make a trip) or as a result something **physical, concrete, material** is obtained (cake, money, dinner), with some exceptions: to make a bad choice – a face o alegere greșită, to make a big mistake – a face o mare greșeală

- To make a cake – a face o prăjitură
- To make (much) money – a câștiga (mulți) bani
- To make the bed – a face patul
- To make dinner – a face/pregăti cina
- To make a trip – a face o excursie
- To make a good living – a câștiga bine
- To make a good offer – a face o ofertă bună. It comprises both aspects (intellectual and physical) but predominant is the physical aspect, the action itself.
- To make one's skin crawl – a i se face pielea de găină
- To make no noise – a nu face zgomot
- To make/ take notes – a lua notițe
- To make a wish – a-și pune o dorință. It does not imply an intense intellectual activity but a mere thought.
- To make a joke – a face o glumă. The result can be physically perceived, the interlocutor is going to laugh.
- To make a good impression on somebody – a face o impresie bună cuiva. Concrete results are thus obtained, the respective person may interact with you more often.
- To make a good dad/ a good husband/ a good wife – a fi/ a deveni... – concrete results are obtained in real, every day life.
- To make one's way with somebody (informal) – a-și face de cap cu cineva

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- To make one's way in life – a reuși în carieră. Concrete results are obtained in every day life.
- To make profit from – a scoate profit din
- To make remarkable progress – a progresa extraordinar de mult
- To make a promise – a face o promisiune
- To make a racket (informal) – a face gălăgie/ scandal
- To make somebody angry enough to – a enerva pe cineva îndeajuns de mult pentru a

NOTE: TO MAKE ONE'S BED, TO DO ONE'S BREAKFAST/ LUNCH/ DINNER/ A MESS = TO CREATE

2. **EQUAL** (egal) differs from **FAIR** (corect) differs from **EQUITABLE** (echitabil)

Equal teams = 5 boys, 5 girls
An *equal* number of apples and oranges
Equal opportunities for everyone
It's not *fair* to be treated like that.
They reached an *equitable* settlement of their dispute.
An *equitable* system of taxation – un sistem echitabil de impunere fiscală/ impozitare

3. **GO BACK HOME** differs from **COME BACK HOME**

GO BACK HOME from Greece, from Bulgary, etc. (long distances and long periods of time are implied, used especially for travels)
When he goes back home, he will take up some Italian lessons.(to take up - a se apuca de) (which implies that he is abroad)
COME BACK HOME from Bucharest (it implies shorter distances and thus shorter periods of time)
Where are you? I'm not very far, at the crossroads in our neighbourhood. I will come back home in 7 minutes.

4. **OTHER** differs from **<u>AN</u>OTHER** differs from **THE OTHER**

AN (the indefinite article *un, o*) **=+**1 =>**<u>AN</u>OTHER** = *încă unul, încă una*, used in the **SG.:** Get me *another* drink!
OTHER = used in the **PL.**, *alți, alte*: I'd like to buy *other* clothes.
THE OTHER – celălalt, cealaltă: I'd like to buy *the other* dress!

5. **FUN** differs from **FUNNY**

It was *fun* (informal)/ It was enjoyable (formal) = Mi-a făcut plăcere
It was *funny* = A fost amuzant

6. **~~After having gone to the concert, she returned home.~~ – incorrect**
After going to the concert, she returned home. – correct

having + V3

The form cannot be used after the preposition *after*.

7. **FANCY** (a plăcea, a-și imagina) differs from **FANTASTIC** (fantastic, extraordinar, ireal)

To fancy/ to have a fancy for = to like

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He really *fancies* her.
Fancy my humiliation when I didn't pass the exam (to pass the exam– a promova, formal)/ flunked the exam (to flunk the exam– a pica, informal)
I *fancied* myself a child again. – Mi-am imaginat că eram din nou copil.

I've spent a *fantastic* evening with her! – o seară extraordinară
The sunrise is so beautiful that it seems almost *fantastic* to me! – ireal

8. ECSTATIC (extaziat) differs from **EXCITED** (emoționat) and from **EXCITING** (foarte interesant, palpitant)
He was *ecstatic* when he heard that he was going to be a father.
He was very *excited* when he took his first exam.
This is *exciting* news. Veștile acestea sunt extrem de interesante.
It was an *exciting* trip to Africa. (palpitant)

9. PRESENTLY (în curând) differs from **AT PRESENT** (acum)
He will arrive there *presently*. (soon)
She is *at present* in Pitești. (now)

10. TO PRAISE (a lăuda) differs from **TO BOAST OF/ ABOUT** (a se lăuda cu)/ **TO BRAG OF/ ABOUT** (a se lăuda cu)
I've always *praised* her for her accomplishments.
She was always *boasting/ bragging* about her new iPhone.

11. VERY (foarte) differs from **TOO** (prea)
In Greece it is *very hot* in the summer.
In Greece it is ~~too hot~~ in the summer. The sentence is incomplete: `too hot for what?`
It is now *too hot* to play football.
It is now ~~very hot~~ to play football.

12. SO differs from **VERY**
He is not *very rich.*
~~He is not so rich.~~ This sentence implies a comparison: He is not so rich as you are.

13. HARD (tare, puternic) differs from **HARDLY** (de abia)
He was hit *hard* by that kid's ball.
The baby can *hardly* walk.
14. SCARCELY (de abia) differs from **RARELY** (rar)
He had *scarcely* arrived there when she called him./ *Scarcely* had he arrived there when she called him.
They *rarely* see each other now.

15. GRADUALLY (treptat) differs from **BY AND BY** (în curând)
It is *gradually* learning to walk.
By and by the academic year will be over.

16. LATELY (în ultima vreme) differs from **LATE** (târziu)
I've seen her quite a lot *lately*.
Last night he went to bed *late*.

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17. **MANY** differs from **MUCH**
MANY is used with plural Countable nouns: many books, many girls.
MUCH is used with singular Uncountable nouns that do not receive *-s* in the plural: much water, much bread.
In the affirmative sentences *many* and *much* are replaced by: a lot (of), plenty (of), a great deal (of), etc.

18. **SHADOW** differs from **SHADE** differs from **SHADES**
SHADOW – umbră, more active than *shade*.
His *shadow* is taller than hers.
SHADE – umbră, protection against the sun:
It's very hot now. Let's find some *shade*.
SHADES **(**informal) – sunglasses, ochelari de soare

19. **TO ASSUME** (a admite, a presupune) differs from **TO PRESUME** (a admite, a presupune)
TO ASSUME – (informal), frequently used by natives, to suppose without evidence, a presupune fără dovezi, probe.
They were *assumed* to be foreign.
Let's *assume* this is true.
He *assumed* full responsibility for all organizational work.
TO PRESUME (formal) – to suppose with evidence, a presupune cu dovezi, used in law, medicine, etc.
Two of them went missing and are *presumed* dead.
Mr. Smith, I *presume*.
Assumption (noun), assuming (adjective, îngâmfat)
Presumption (noun), presuming (adjective), presumptuous (adjective, încrezut, îngâmfat)

20. **A FEW** (câțiva, câteva) differs from **FEW** (puțini, puține)
Although the question was difficult, *a few* students were able to answer it.
Although the question was easy, *few* students were able to answer it.

21. **EACH** differs from **EVERY**
Each one of the two boys was wrong. *Each* is used for one of two or more things, taken **one by one.**
~~*Every one*~~ of the two boys was wrong.
Every is never used for two, but always for more than two things, taken **as a group**.
She read *every* book of the library.
Each is more individual and specific.

22. **FARTHER** (mai departe în spațiu) differs from **FURTHER** (suplimentar)
New York is *farther* than London.
I'll need some *furher* information.

23. **INJURED/ HURT** (rănit) differs from **WOUNDED** (rănit)
People are *injured/ hurt* as a result of an accident and *wounded* in a battle.
He was *injured* in a car accident.

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Thousands were *wounded* in the war.

24. **LESS –** mai puțin, (ă), (i), (e) differs from **FEWER –** mai puțini, mai puține
Less denotes quantity, value or degree: *less* water, *less* food, *less* money, *less* aducation, *less* than 5 pounds. It is used with Uncountable nouns.
Fewer denotes numbers: *fewer* books, *fewer* friends. It is used with Countable nouns.

25. **ROUGH – aspru (despre glas, păr, vreme)** differs from **ROUGHLY-** aproximativ
She approached him, speaking in a *rough* voice.
The meeting lasted *roughly* 45 minutes.

To conclude with, one can assert the idea that when approaching the study of a foreign language it is important to get familiar with its vocabulary, as well as with its grammar rules (which most Romanian speakers of English try to get rid of or are just too scared about) in order to avoid making the above-mentioned mistakes.
The author's point of view in this respect is that when trying to learn English one should grasp the grammar notions logically and study its vocabulary also by logically made connections between words, starting from the fact that the above-mentioned common mistakes presented above have been explained in a logically manner, easy to apprehend.

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