

## РОЗДІЛ 2. ТЕОРІЯ ТА МЕТОДИКА НАВЧАННЯ (З ГАЛУЗЕЙ ЗНАТЬ)

### TEACHING ENGLISH: PHONETICAL DIFFICULTIES

### ВИКЛАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ: ФОНЕТИЧНІ ТРУДНОЦІ

*Some problems of the formation of the language phonetic skills of Ukrainian students of non-language specialties are analyzed in the article. The issues of organizing the productive interaction of a teacher with students when learning English in a student audience are covered. The main focus of the work is on increasing the role of independent work of students at the university, on issues of organizing the student's independent activities in the context of modern development of higher education, the most relevant aspects of this type of learning activity are presented, such as goals, tasks, efficiency, control. The pronunciation of a foreign language is a difficult task that requires the teacher to know not only the phonetic language system, but also their mother tongue, because their comparison allows to predict typical errors of those who study a foreign language and more effectively overcome the difficulties that arise during the learning process. The main aim of the article is to update the importance of studying phonetic features of the sound system of Ukrainian and English languages based on the experience of the author of the article and certain theoretical conclusions. In order to investigate the problematic aspects of phonetic competence formation and phonetic training in higher education institutions and to identify ways how to improve them, a study was conducted with a group of students at a non-linguistic faculty of a higher education institution. The article gives an analysis of the main mistakes that students made. During the academic year, students had individual tasks and improved their phonetic skills. To acquire the correct pronunciation of English, a sufficient amount of authentic material is needed and, of course, many language exercises. The article reviews some of the textbooks and manuals on phonetics developed by Ukrainian teachers. The authors proposed the theoretical substantiation of information technology support to the organization of students' independent work when learning a foreign language is given. Methodical recommendations for teachers to work with computer tools for the development of educational materials and individual educational modules in the framework of information technology support for students' independent work in learning of a foreign language.*

**Key words:** *phonetics, intonation, phonetic skills, non-language specialties, phonetic competence.*

*У статті проаналізовано деякі проблеми формування мовної фонетичної майстер-*

*ності українських студентів немовних спеціальностей. Висвітлено питання організації продуктивної взаємодії вчителя зі студентами при вивченні англійської мови в студентській аудиторії. Основна спрямованість дослідження – це підвищення ролі самостійної роботи студентів в університеті, питання організації самостійної діяльності студента в контексті сучасного розвитку вищої освіти. У статті також представлено найбільш релевантні аспекти цього виду навчальної діяльності. Вимова іноземної мови є складним завданням, яке вимагає від вчителя знання не тільки фонетичної мовної системи чужої мови, а й рідної мови, оскільки їх порівняння дозволяє передбачити типові помилки тих, хто вивчає іноземну мову, та більш ефективно подолати труднощі, які виникають у процесі навчання. Основна мета статті – оновити важливість вивчення фонетичних особливостей звукової системи української та англійської мов на основі досвіду авторів статті та певних теоретичних висновків. Щоб дослідити проблемні аспекти формування фонетичної компетентності та фонетичної підготовки у вищих навчальних закладах та визначити шляхи її вдосконалення, було проведено дослідження з групою студентів на немовному факультеті вищого навчального закладу. У статті подано аналіз основних помилок, які були виявлені у студентів. Протягом навчального року студенти відпрацьовували фонетичні навички. Для отримання правильної вимови англійської мови потрібна достатня кількість автентичного матеріалу для спостереження, аналізу та наслідування і, звісно, багато різноманітних мовних вправ. У статті проведено огляд деяких підручників та посібників з фонетики, які були розроблені українськими викладачами. Дано теоретичне обґрунтування підтримки інформаційних технологій в організації самостійної роботи студентів при вивченні іноземної мови. Запропоновано методичні рекомендації вчителям щодо роботи з комп'ютерними інструментами для розробки навчальних матеріалів та окремих навчальних модулів у рамках інформаційно-технологічного забезпечення самостійної роботи студентів з вивчення іноземної мови.*

**Ключові слова:** *фонетика, інтонація, фонетичні навички, немовні спеціальності, фонетична компетентність.*

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**Biriukova D.V.,**  
Candidate of Philological Sciences,  
Associate Professor of the Department  
of Foreign Philology,  
Translation and vocational training  
University of Customs and Finance  
**Tsvietaieva O.V.,**  
Candidate of Science  
in Social Communications  
Associate Professor of the Department  
of Foreign Languages  
for Engineering and natural specialties  
Oles Honchar Dnipro National University

**Formulation of the problem.** Learning any foreign language, including English, should start with a clear statement of the question of the correct pronunciation. Without the correct pronunciation, the manifestation of the communicative function of the language is impossible. Particularly important is the initial stage of training, because in this period, students are characterized by imitation, which at the

subconscious level helps to obtain the necessary skills of articulation.

Talking about pronunciation, we usually mean the features of the articulation of sounds in each particular language, as well as intonation and rhythm. Under the correct pronunciation refers to a set of orthoetic norms, inherent in one or another kind of language [1]. The pronunciation of a foreign language

is a difficult task that requires the teacher to know not only the phonetic language system, but also their mother tongue, because their comparison allows to predict typical errors of those who study a foreign language and more effectively overcome the difficulties that arise during the learning process. Due to the fact that the number of hours allocated to studying a foreign language in non-language faculties of higher educational institutions is not sufficient for the qualitative mastery of all competences of the English language (lexical, grammatical, and speaking), the sentence of pronouncement is often overshadowed.

#### **Analysis of recent research and publications.**

In order to optimize non-native language learning based on comparative analysis of native and studied languages many works of considerable interest have been completed. In this direction, the most famous names of such researchers, such as: V.G. Gak, Yu.S. Maslov, J. Buranov, R. Lado, G. Nickel, C. Fris, L.V. Shcherba and others.

The questions studied by these scholars, have not lost their relevance to this day and have received further intensive development. In recent years, researchers have accumulated a wealth of theoretical and practical material on the comparative analysis of various aspects of Ukrainian and English.

N.F. Borisco examines the issues relating to the general characteristics of foreign language phonetic competence, the aims of its formation in primary, basic and high school students, examines the phases of the formation of phonetic competence, exercises and tasks for its formation, the means of forming phonetic competence and control the level of its formation [2].

G.I. Udyak pays attention to the formation of the phonetic competence of students while studying the intonation of speech expressions by the linguistic means of the English language and insists on the importance and necessity of providing a qualitatively new organization of teaching English phonetics in order to form intonational skills in students of philology [11].

I.R. Kharkavtsov and L.I. Petrytsya investigate the problematic aspects of forming the phonetic competence of future teachers of the English language and outline the reasons for reducing the phonetic competence at higher education institutions of higher education and determine the ways of its improvement [12].

**The purpose of the article** is to update the importance of studying phonetic features of the sound system of Ukrainian and English languages based on the experience of the author of the article and certain theoretical conclusions.

**Presenting main material.** In many countries, namely in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, English is a native language, so the logical question is: «What pronunciation should be taught in a Ukrainian educational institution?» Students are traditionally taught by the so-called «standard» pro-

nunciation, which is often called *Standard Pronunciation*, *BBC English*, *Oxford English* and so on.

Therefore, when choosing the pronunciation option, it is necessary to take into account the purpose of teaching the foreign language, the needs of students and their personal and social identity. If the goal is to enter a country's *socium* (for example, to participate in an international student exchange program or to participate in research on the basis of foreign universities), the pronunciation should be as close as possible to the standards of the native speaker, and the model should be chosen *Regional Pronunciation*. If the goal is to increase the social status, then you need to study *Advanced Pronunciation*. If a foreign language will be used as *lingua franca* (language-intermediary) for international communication, often with non-speakers of the language, it is enough to pronounce so as to be understood without difficulty for others. In Ukraine, as in many European countries, *Received Pronunciation* models are taught at universities and schools. This is due to the fact that this model is most frequent, it is easier to understand when intercultural communication. Also, most English textbooks are published in London, Oxford or Cambridge publishing houses *National Geographic*, *MM Publications*, *Cambridge*, *Collins*, *Delta Publishing* and others, where the most part of audio recordings are recorded by carriers of *Received Pronunciation*. However, sometimes audio recording with different accents, mostly with American, Italian, Arabic, etc., are offered for acquaintance.

The articulation base of a certain language is formed as a result of the historical evolution of the speech apparatus and, as a special mode of organs of pronunciation; it is not an innate property of people of this race or nationality, as evidenced by numerous observations. For example, the free, unqualified possession of bilinguals and multilingual articulate bases of two or more languages is used in linguistics as one of the proofs of non-biological, but of the social nature of the articulation base, which is a consequence of the linguistic tradition, the consequence of the transfer of speech from generation to generation [4].

The study of identical types of sounds of Ukrainian and English showed that sounds similar in acoustic characteristics in these languages are articulated in different ways, although in the structure and physiology of the pronunciation of organs from representatives of different races or nationalities there is no fundamental difference. In his work, Potapova [7] notes that the articulatory apparatus of people who speak different languages, from the anatomical point of view is fundamentally the same. This leads to the fact that in sound systems of different languages you can observe the presence of common sound types (phonemes) (for example, in all languages of the world there are different types of white balance consonants, such as [m], [b], [p]). However, this is not that

all sounds in all languages are pronounced the same way. The methods of producing speech sounds are important, the author expresses such assumptions:

- a) each language is limited to set of actions by the articulate organs – articulatory gestures;
- b) each articulatory gesture correlates with some state of the speech apparatus;
- c) the set of articulatory gestures associated with the work of various organs of speech, that leads to the formation of one or another language sound.

Due to the fact that the Ukrainian pronunciation is similar to Russian, we can agree with the statements of the linguist O. Reformatsky, that for the successful acquisition of a foreign language students need to master the unusual articulation of individual sounds (for example, the Russian learns to pronounce English interdental consonants or Arabic epiglottis, Caucasian striped-laryngeal or French and Polish nose-vowels), that is, all those sounds that are completely absent in the Russian phonetic system), as well as learn to pronounce in these or other positions unusual combinations and sound sequences. Without proper preparation to speak in a foreign language, a person involuntarily brings the usual phonetic norms of his language, which forms an accent [8].

In modern linguodidactics it is assumed that the vocal phoneme of the English language consists of 24 sounds, 6 of which are breakthrough loud (explosive): 2 affricates, 3 nasal sonatas, 9 slit noisy (fricative), 4 slit sonatas.

The sound system of the Ukrainian language has 38 sounds: 6 vowels and 32 consonants. At the place of creation (taking into account the movement of the tongue in the horizontal plane of the oral cavity), the loud sounds of the front row ([ɛ], [ɨ], [i]) and back row ([a], [o], [y]). Depending on the degree of lifting the

tongue, that is, from its motion in the vertical plane, distinguish the loud sounds of the low ([a]), medium ([ɛ], [o]), high-middle ([ɨ]) and high ([i], [y]) raising levels. With the involvement of the lips the vowels are divided into non-labialized and labialized.

So, having analyzed the phononymic rows of both languages, it is possible to classify the sounds in three groups:

- 1) sounds, acoustically and articulately similar to the sounds of the native language [m], [f], [g], [p], [z], [s];
- 2) sounds that just seem the same (in comparison with the sounds of the native language), but in reality differ in essential features [t], [r], [d], [p], [k];
- 3) sounds that do not have articulatory and acoustic analogues in their native language [h], [ŋ], [r], [θ], [ð], long vowels.

**Research methods.**

In order to determine the level of formation of spoken skills, first year students (25 persons) of the Geology and Geography Faculty held an entrance control in the first semester of 2017, Students were asked to read the text aloud, paying attention to intonation and articulation. The main method used in this search is the subjective auditory observation of students' speech work in order to detect errors as a result of phonetic interference.

On the basis of input control data, it was found that almost 100% of students admitted mistakes in pronunciation (Table 1).

As it is known, learning of foreign language is a process implemented through simulation and mechanical response to language stimuli. So when first-year students, whose native language is Ukrainian or Russian, begin to study phonetics of English, for the very first time it is necessary to pay special attention to those sounds that do not occur in their native language – that is, [w, æ, g, r, d, 0].

Table 1

**Percentage of students admitted mistakes in pronunciation**

| Type of error   | Percentage of students with the wrong pronunciation | Notes   |
|---|---|---|
| Devitalization of ringing consonants at the end of the words                      | 80%   | For example, had – hat, bag – back etc. The sonority in English has a function of sense separation. The most frequent mistake is the stun of the voiced sound [g] and the pronunciation of the clunk Ukrainian [r] instead of the rarely used [r].                      |
| Lack of opposition in longitude and shortness in the articulation of vowel sounds | 90%   | In this case, the interference is strong, since the vowels in the Ukrainian language do not have signs of longitude and brevity, and in English, the compressibility and longitude of the sounds has a sense-resolving function, for example, sit – seat, live – leave. |
| Incorrect use of one phoneme instead of another                                   | 60%   | The English sound [v] is perceived by students as a slit sonant [w], which leads to the false use of one phoneme instead of the other. The blending of English [v] and [w] is manifested in the pronunciation of such words: invent, novel, vote, vocation.             |
| Absence of aspiration in the proclamation of deaf consonant sounds [p], [t], [k]  | 80%   | Perhaps the reason for this is the presence of non-aspirational similar sounds of the Ukrainian language.   |
| Errors in the pronunciation of alveolar, interdental consonants                   | 70%   | There is a replacement of alveolar breakthrough sounds [t], [d] by dental.  |

Initially, when familiarizing with sounds, students move from familiar to less familiar and more specific and problematic sounds. For example, sounds that are present in both the Ukrainian language and English, or sounds that are not characteristic of Ukrainian phonetics, but do not cause difficulties in their formation, such as, for example, [w].

In practice, when students meet new sounds, they listen to a sample and teacher's explanations, then they speak this pattern aloud a day, trying to memorize the position of the organs of the articulation apparatus. That is, before the beginning to articulate deliberately one or another sound, the student must learn to manage his speech organs, provide them with various provisions, learn to experience changes in the position of speech organs. Such a sequence of speech therapies and receptions is confirmed by O.G. Rozova, arguing that both during the setting and during the correction of the pronunciation of the sound begin in isolation and in separate syllables. Fixing articulation occurs in words and phrases (it is in the sentences that the language materializes as a means of communication) from the most favourable, easy position to the least favourable, difficult [9].

Phonetic skills are worked out and fixed in special exercises of different character. The production of sounds occurs by repeating them after pronunciation by the teacher or pronunciation based on the text. Obviously, when working on phonetics, preliminary training is based on a comparative analysis of the language systems of the language being studied and the native language of the students. The teacher must not only possess the theoretical material, which is the basis of knowledge of the pronunciation of sounds, not only know how the sounds of the language are formed, which groups and on what grounds they share, but also have a clear idea of the phonetic system of the language of the learner's class.

After setting each sound, it is necessary to carry out special exercises, first isolated, then in the warehouses, further in words, placing them in the positions of the sound being studied: in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the word. When processing the pronunciation of sounds, the order of the reduced positions is determined by the degree of difficulty of their pronunciation by the students, depending on the nature of the interlingual relations.

In teaching the speaker we distinguish the formulation and the correction. However, as noted by O.G. Rozova, neither formulation nor correction is found in its pure form, because they are interconnected and used at all stages of studying. It is most expedient at the initial stage to lay the foundations of speech, and then to improve them [9].

To acquire the correct pronunciation of English, a sufficient amount of authentic material is needed for observation, analysis and imitation and, of course, many language exercises. Today, Ukrainian and

English scholars have already developed effective textbooks for improving the skills of English articulation, which contain audio files for each section and answers to exercises for the possibility of independent study of the material.

The manual of authors I.V. Suslina and L.T. Melnyk «Practical course of phonetics of the English language» is a normative course of phonetics of the English language. The purpose of the textbook is the formation of the skills of correct English pronunciation and professional orientation of students: the arming of students skills and abilities of using the acquired knowledge and skills in further pedagogical activities [10].

The author's tutorial by E.O. Mansi «English: Phonetics, Grammar, Texts, Dialogues, Conversational Topics from the English Language (Part I)» [6] was constructed in accordance with the requirements of the program for its study by students of non-language faculties of higher educational institutions. Its structure and content are designed to provide as much as possible the development of language skills and language culture of students on the basis of mastering and use in the language practice of various phonetic, grammatical, lexical material. The rational organization of work is facilitated by the appendices, tables, comments, typical for contemporary English language texts, exercises and tasks for the development of oral speech in the textbook.

The educational manual of authors L.A. Garashchuk and A.E. Levytsky «Enjoy Practising Phonetics!» is recommended when studying the course of practical phonetics of the English language, and the manual is suitable for the organization of independent work of students. The proposed texts for expressive reading, dialogue and poetry serve this purpose [3].

Having such a powerful methodical arsenal, the teacher chooses the most suitable for him and the audience methodology for explaining and working out phonetic complexities.

Having tested the exercises in practice, the final control was conducted in April 2018. The students were asked to read the same text. The results of the final control showed that the number of errors in stunning voiced consonants at the end of words decreased by an average of 40%. There is also a positive trend in opposition in longitude and brevity in the articulation of vowel sounds. On average, 30% fewer students began to make such mistakes. The final control showed that today, close to 30% mistakenly used one phoneme instead of another ((instead of the original 60%), errors were also reduced when uttering occlusive, interdental and alveolar consonant sounds.

**Conclusions.** Thus, when learning a foreign language we must comprehensively take into account the opportunities of students and the problems associated with their existing knowledge and skills to prevent unconscious learning, and at the same time, try to ensure that the operational side of training is worked

out quite clearly, allowing to actualize the practical aspects of language proficiency and form the student's conviction that his studies are productive.

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