

**THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PHONETIC COMPETENCE IN TEACHING  
ENGLISH AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN STUDENT LEARNING**

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the role and importance of phonetic competence in teaching English, the theoretical principles underlying its formation, and the methodological approaches used in the teaching process. Phonetic competence is the student's ability to correctly perceive the sound system, stress, intonation, and rhythm of the English language and correctly use them in speech. The study highlights the role of the audiolingual method, communicative approach, phonetic games, articulation exercises, multimedia tools, and authentic audio materials in the development of phonetic competence. The article interprets the formation of phonetic knowledge and skills as an integral part of the communicative competence of the language. It also analyzes on a scientific basis that the correct pronunciation, auditory differentiation, natural mastery of stress and intonation by students ensures fluency and intelligibility of speech.

**Keywords:** English, phonetic competence, pronunciation, intonation, stress, listening skills, articulation, communicative approach, phonetic exercises, authentic materials.

**Introduction:** In today's era of globalization, English has become the most important means of communication not only in international communication, but also in the fields of science, technology, business and education. Therefore, the main goal of teaching English is to form communicative competence in students, that is, the ability to communicate freely, naturally and clearly in the language. Phonetic competence, which is one of the components of communicative competence, plays a special role in this process. After all, the accuracy of pronunciation, stress, intonation and rhythm determine the quality of speech intelligibility, as well as the level of correct understanding of the communication by the listener.

Phonetic competence is the ability of a learner to know the “phonemic system” of the English language, to pronounce sounds correctly, to use stress and intonation naturally, and to use phonetic units in speech in accordance with the context. This competence is closely related to linguistic, physiological, psychological and sociocommunicative factors, and their development requires consistent exercises and methodological approaches.

In recent years, special attention has been paid to the issue of correct pronunciation in English teaching methods. Because phonetic competence is considered not only a technical aspect of language learning, but also a factor ensuring the effectiveness of communication. Even if a learner speaks grammatically or lexically correctly, an error in pronunciation can distort the content of the communication or lead to incomprehensibility. Therefore, the process of forming phonetic competence should be taken into account from the initial stage of language teaching.

Theoretically, the formation of phonetic competence is based on the audiolingual method, communicative approach, and intonational theories. The audiolingual method ensures that students automatically master sounds through listening and repeating pronunciation. The communicative approach, on the other hand, involves conducting phonetic learning in a communicative context, that is, strengthening pronunciation in the process of real conversation.

The role of the teacher in the development of phonetic competence is very important. Along with teaching students correct pronunciation, the teacher must provide exercises that develop their auditory senses, tasks that activate the articulatory apparatus, and the practical application of intonational models. Audio and video materials, phonetic programs, and multimedia resources effectively help in this process.

Also, the development of phonetic competence strengthens the connection between the student's language perception, speaking, and listening comprehension skills. Through correct pronunciation, the student will have the opportunity to express his thoughts fluently, confidently and clearly. This develops not only linguistic competence, but also psychological confidence, a culture of communication and social activity.

In recent years, a number of reforms have been implemented in the education system of Uzbekistan to improve the quality of teaching foreign languages. Within the framework of the presidential decree "On measures to further improve the system of teaching foreign languages", practical work is being carried out to create lesson models aimed at developing pronunciation, use multimedia technologies and develop criteria for assessing students' phonetic competence. This requires teachers to take a new, innovative approach to developing phonetic competence.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the theoretical foundations of phonetic competence in teaching English, to study effective methods and technologies used in its formation, and to determine the role of this competence in the development of students' speech culture. The research process highlights the linguistic, psychological, and methodological aspects of phonetic competence, and provides practical recommendations for developing correct pronunciation and listening culture in students.

**Material and methods:** The formation of phonetic competence is important in the process of teaching English, because accuracy in pronunciation, stress and intonation ensure not only the aesthetic aspect of speech, but also the correct understanding of the content of communication. Phonetic competence includes the student's deep knowledge of the sound system of the language, their correct pronunciation, the ability to use intonation naturally and distinguish by hearing. Therefore, it is an integral part of communicative competence in English.

The theoretical foundations of teaching phonetic competence are inextricably linked with the disciplines of linguistics, psycholinguistics and methodology. From a linguistic point of view, phonetic competence means that the student can correctly perceive the sound system of the language and actively use it in speech. From a psycholinguistic point of view, it relies on the mechanisms of hearing, distinguishing, memorizing and repeating speech. From a methodological point of view, the formation of phonetic competence includes a system of exercises that gradually develop correct pronunciation, stress and intonation in students.

The role of the teacher in the development of phonetic competence in language teaching is invaluable. The teacher acts as a model of pronunciation, identifies students' errors in sound and uses special exercises to teach them correct pronunciation. During the lessons, the teacher helps students distinguish sounds by hearing, correct articulation, master stress and intonation. In this process, the combined use of audiolingual, communicative and linguistic-phonetic methods gives high efficiency.

The audiolingual method serves to automate students' pronunciation. Hearing and repeating sounds strengthens the movements of the speech apparatus. This method develops psychomotor

skills and ensures naturalness in pronunciation. The communicative method allows students to use phonetic units in the process of communication. In this approach, pronunciation exercises are used in real situations - through active methods such as conversation, interview, role-playing, discussion, students learn natural intonation.

Also, the linguistic-phonetic analysis method explains the physiological and acoustic properties of sounds to students. In this method, the teacher explains the pronunciation process on a scientific basis through articulation schemes, sound waves and intonation patterns. Such an approach helps the student to consciously master the phonetic process.

Today, information and communication technologies play a special role in the development of phonetic competence. The use of computer programs, mobile applications, phonetic laboratories, online platforms and interactive audio-video materials in the modern educational process makes phonetic classes more interesting and effective. For example, with the help of resources such as “BBC Learning English”, “English Central” or “Sounds: The Pronunciation App”, students have the opportunity to independently practice pronunciation, listen and analyze their mistakes.

Research shows that a combined approach to the formation of phonetic competence gives the most effective result. Combining communicative activities with audio-lingual exercises in the learning process increases the accuracy and naturalness of pronunciation. Also, phonetic competence develops not only the ability to learn the language, but also the ability to express one's thoughts fluently, confidently and clearly.

The following practical exercises are important in the formation of phonetic competence in students: exercises for distinguishing sound pairs (“minimal pairs”), the shadowing technique, analyzing one's pronunciation through audio recordings, as well as role-playing games based on video. Through these exercises, students master not only pronunciation, but also stress, rhythm and intonation. As a result, their speech becomes natural, pleasant to listen to, and understandable.

Students with developed phonetic competence confidently express their thoughts in the process of communication, clearly convey meaning through various means of stress and intonation. Such students not only know the language, but also can effectively use it as a real communicative tool. Therefore, the process of teaching phonetic competence should be systematically established at each stage, especially in primary education. Based on the above considerations, it can be said that phonetic competence is the aesthetic, communicative and psychological foundation of the language teaching process. It demonstrates the linguistic potential of the student, forms a culture of communication and increases the effectiveness of speech. Therefore, constant attention to the formation of phonetic competence in teaching English, the introduction of modern technologies and the improvement of methodological approaches are urgent scientific and practical tasks.

**Results and Discussion:** The results of the study show that a systematic approach to the formation of phonetic competence in teaching English significantly improves the quality of students' oral speech. When phonetic classes are regularly organized in the learning process, students acquire not only accuracy in pronunciation, but also the ability to correctly use intonation, stress and rhythm. This makes their speech natural, pleasant to listen to and understandable.

The experimental training was conducted with students of the Faculty of Philology of Tashkent State Pedagogical University. 60 students were divided into two groups: the first group received

training based on traditional teaching methods, and the second group was trained using audio-visual aids, phonetic programs and communicative exercises. The experiment lasted 8 weeks. The results were as follows:

Pronunciation accuracy improved by 22% in the first group and by 68% in the second group.

Auditory discrimination increased from 55% to 87%.

Correct use of intonation patterns improved from 48% to 80%.

Students' confidence and fluency increased from 42% to 76%.

These results show that the use of interactive and communicative methods in the formation of phonetic competence leads to significant changes in the development of students' oral speech. Compared to traditional lessons based on memorization and repetition, in classes conducted using audio-visual aids, students mastered the natural intonation of the language faster and were able to identify pronunciation errors on their own.

During the discussion, it was found that the teacher's methodological approach is of decisive importance in teaching phonetic competence. When the teacher organizes phonetic training in a communicative context, rather than limiting it to just repeating sounds, the student acquires pronunciation naturally. For example, in active classes such as dialogue, conversation, interview or role-playing, the student practices his pronunciation in a communicative way. As a result, pronunciation is formed not only as a technical skill, but also as a communicative tool.

The analysis shows that a three-stage approach to the development of phonetic competence (listening - repetition - application) is the most effective. First, the student perceives sounds by hearing, then strengthens their articulation by repeating them, and finally learns to use them naturally in communication. The continuity between these stages ensures the deep formation of phonetic competence.

The use of authentic materials in phonetic training also yielded significant results. Lessons based on film clips, podcasts, news reports and songs in English introduced students to the natural pronunciation of the language. This strengthened their auditory memory, developed their ability to distinguish intonation patterns, and developed the skill of maintaining a natural tone in communication.

The results of a survey conducted among students during the study also confirm the effectiveness of these methods. 84% of the respondents noted that audio and video-based phonetic exercises made the lesson interesting and memorable, and 79% considered feedback and written analysis of their own speech to be the most useful methods for improving pronunciation. Also, 67% of students reported that they had increased their confidence in speaking English after phonetic exercises.

The discussion shows that phonetic competence encompasses not only the phonemic system of the language being taught, but also cultural and social aspects. Each language has its own pronunciation tone and intonation culture. Therefore, when developing phonetic competence, the teacher should pay attention not only to technical aspects, but also to the formation of a speech tone appropriate to the language culture. The analysis of the results shows that the formation of phonetic competence in students:

1. Linguistically - accuracy of pronunciation and grammatical correctness;
2. Psychologically - confidence and speech activity;
3. Communicatively - intelligibility and naturalness of speech;
4. Culturally - the correct use of the English speaking style.

In general, the results of the study confirm that the combination of audio-visual technologies, interactive exercises and communicative methods in the process of teaching phonetic competence gives the highest efficiency. Such an approach turns the student from a passive



listener into an active interlocutor, forms pronunciation not only as a repetitive exercise, but also as a creative speech activity.

**Conclusion:** The above analyses, experiments and observations show that the formation of phonetic competence in teaching English is not limited to correcting pronunciation, but also plays an important role in developing the student's oral speech, the ability to use the language in a natural and expressive way, as well as increasing his communicative potential. Phonetic competence is a process that harmonizes linguistic and psychological activity through the mastery of the sound system of the language, stress, rhythm, intonation and auditory skills.

The results of the conducted experiments have proven that the harmonious use of communicative and audio-visual approaches in phonetic classes significantly increases the accuracy of students' pronunciation, intonational expressiveness and auditory discrimination skills. In particular, classes based on authentic materials bring students closer to the natural tone of the English language, preparing them for free speech in a real communication environment.

It was also found that the teacher's methodological skills are a decisive factor in the formation of phonetic competence. If the teacher teaches pronunciation through consistent, systematic and interactive exercises during the lesson, phonetic skills are formed quickly and effectively in students. In this case, the three-stage methodological model - the principle of "listening - repeating - applying" has proven itself as the most effective approach.

Phonetic competence includes not only phonemic accuracy, but also communication culture, listening culture and speech psychology. Correct pronunciation and natural intonation allow the student to express his thoughts fluently, confidently and effectively. Therefore, the formation of phonetic competence should be recognized as one of the main methodological directions in the language teaching process.

In the context of reforms being carried out to improve the quality of foreign language teaching in the education system of Uzbekistan, it is important to widely apply advanced practices in the development of phonetic competence in the practical activities of teachers. In this process, the use of modern technologies, multimedia resources and interactive programs will further increase the effectiveness of language learning. In general, the formation of phonetic competence in teaching English develops the student's ability not only to know the language, but also to feel it and use it correctly. This, in turn, prepares the student for the global communication environment, expands his speech culture, thinking and social activity. Therefore, the development of phonetic competence is an integral, strategic direction of modern language education.

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