

**PHONETICS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS A SCIENCE,  
ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE AND ART**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this article, the obligatory aspects of teaching the phonetics of the English language to Russian students were determined. Taking into account the nature of “Russian” errors in English, when creating textbooks on phonetics, emphasis should be placed on consolidating the skills of using wide phonological transcription, articulatory and auditory practice of phonological oppositions and positional length of vowels and diphthongs. Particular attention is required: the pace of speech, phrasal and word stress, punctuation and graphic semiotics of the text and style.

**Keywords:** phonetics, teaching phonetics, intercultural communication.

Teaching the phonetics of English (and other languages as foreign languages, including Russian) in conditions of intensive international communication requires teachers of foreign languages to reconsider traditional attitudes and methods of developing oral speech skills. This is evidenced not only by real situations of intercultural communication, but also by the latest observations and theoretical and practical developments of the younger generation of higher education teachers.

As never before, the speech activity of society must be rhetorically expressive, phonetically correct and culturally normative. However, the phonetic norm should not become an end in itself and dogmatic fetters for speech activity. The English language today is multifunctional and multicultural, so the teaching of phonetics should primarily be based not on working out the quality of individual phonemes, but on developing public speech skills, understanding multi-accent English speech and correcting typical Russian national errors for better speech perception.



The phonetics of the English language as an academic discipline is represented in the modern Russian higher school by two training courses - practical phonetics of a foreign language and the corresponding section in the course of the theory of a foreign language. Such an academic distinction is traditional and is reflected in the textbooks of Russian authors. There are also examples of mixing within one edition of practical and theoretical principles of presentation of the material, and the theoretical component is often so difficult to perceive that it hinders the development of practical pronunciation skills. Recommendations such as “when pronouncing this sound, it is necessary to ensure that the tongue has a flat style with a medium degree of openness, so that the lips are stretched as if smiling, thus the resonator is shortened in front ...” or “this sound is pronounced with a wide exit hole of the lips, tongue lies lower than in the corresponding Russian sound.

We deliberately do not refer to the authors of the quoted textbooks for ethical reasons, moreover, such metalinguistic oddities can be found not only in old textbooks, but also in modern editions.

Native English speakers themselves joke about the phonetic descriptions of the articulatory features of the pronunciation of English sounds. For instance, this postcard was widely used in England

### **GET AROUND IN ENGLISH**

Lesson Seventy-two. How to Pronounce the TH sound

1. Place tip of tongue behind top teeth.
2. Breathe out.
3. Retract tongue.
4. Vibrate air behind tongue and say: The Smiths wear thin clothes throughout the winter months.
5. Consult dentist.

This comic text was undoubtedly based on factual material, on the empirical study of the phonetics of the English language. Let us recall, by the way, the anguish of Eliza Doolittle and her fear at the sight of the first samples of transcription, when Professor Higgins showed her the speech, encrypted in mysterious symbols.

With the development of phonetic science, with the improvement of terminology and the sign phonological system, teaching English pronunciation is improving



significantly, although problems in teaching oral and written speech remain. For students today, the most important task is not to pronounce individual sounds similar in quality to the sounds of native speakers, but to understand the phonological code, in other words, transcription, which, surprisingly, is often incomprehensible even for students of foreign languages departments. I know this from the experience of teaching phonetics at the departments of foreign languages. The quality of the phonetic features of students' speech changes significantly with the expansion of intercultural communication. The availability of sounding speech in English has now become almost unlimited.

All kinds of news programs, original, even smuggled, film recordings, and live broadcasts of television series and other video products have become available to all applicants and students of specialized universities. Have a good ear and the ability to imitate, and you are already a phonetically trained student of a foreign language or any specialized university.

Many modern applicants and students have experience direct contact with native English speakers through training in English-speaking countries and communication via the Internet, however, the tasks of a phonetic teacher have not become easier, and, perhaps, even more complicated. Using their abilities for onomatopoeia, some students of foreign languages faculties consider it possible to rely in their speech activity on their personal experience of intercultural communication and not learn "dry" rules. However, we can say with confidence that the demand for the subject "Phonetics" has not only not decreased, but has become for modern students a conscious desire for fundamental knowledge. In this regard, textbooks prepared by teachers of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Regional Studies are useful for the educational process.

What can phonetics as a modern science offer to our smart and already phonetically experienced students? The answer to this question can be more or less detailed depending on the amount of study time and specific pedagogical tasks, but it is necessary to take into account the fundamental features of the English language and typical mistakes made by Russian students in all situations.

The main task of a teacher in general and a phonetician in particular is to constantly monitor the phonological accuracy of articulation. It is not so much phonetic as phonological accuracy to avoid confusion of meanings (live/leave, luck/lark, fit/feet,



full/fool, shot/short, etc.). It is clear that the context most often can clarify the meaning of the statement, but not always. The fact is that English has another important feature. He is famous for the so-called phonetic processes.

Thus, in this work, the mandatory aspects of teaching English phonetics to Russian students were determined. Modern features of the development and functioning of the English language in a multicultural environment, as well as the level of language training of modern students require the creation and use of new educational materials for the development of oral speech, reading and listening skills.

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