

PHONIC COMPETENCE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Annotation: *This article researches that A key competency for language instructors is phonetic ability. Not only does it allow them to demonstrate proper pronunciation for their students, but it also gives them the means to identify and fix pronunciation mistakes efficiently. It is possible for language teachers to improve their phonetic competency and offer significant assistance to their students' pronunciation development by combining phonetic training, technology, and effective teaching techniques. Through the resolution of issues like L1 interference and insufficient exposure to native speech, educators can promote a more thorough approach to phonics in language instruction.*

Keywords: *analysis, phonetic competency, the contrastive analysis hypothesis, pronunciation errors.*

Аннотация: *В этой статье исследуется, что ключевой компетенцией преподавателя языка является фонетическая способность. Это не только позволяет им демонстрировать правильное произношение своим ученикам, но также дает им возможность эффективно выявлять и исправлять ошибки в произношении. Учителя языка могут улучшить свою фонетическую компетентность и предложить значительную помощь в развитии произношения своих учеников, сочетая фонетическое обучение, технологии и эффективные методы обучения. Благодаря решению таких проблем, как интерференция L1 и недостаточное воздействие родной речи, преподаватели могут продвигать более тщательный подход к фонетике при обучении языку.*

Ключевые слова: *анализ, фонетическая компетентность, гипотеза контрастивного анализа, ошибки произношения.*

Annotatsiya; *Ushbu maqola til o'qituvchilari uchun asosiy kompetentsiya fonetik qobiliyat ekanligini o'rganadi. Bu nafaqat talabalar uchun to'g'ri talaffuzni ko'rsatishga imkon beradi, balki ularga talaffuz xatolarini samarali aniqlash va tuzatish vositalarini ham beradi. Til o'qituvchilari o'zlarining fonetik malakalarini oshirishlari va fonetik trening, texnologiya va samarali o'qitish usullarini uyg'unlashtirish orqali o'quvchilarning talaffuzini rivojlantirishga katta yordam berishlari mumkin. L1 aralashuvi va ona nutqiga etarlicha ta'sir o'tkazmaslik kabi muammolarni hal qilish orqali o'qituvchilar tilni o'qitishda fonetikaga yanada chuqurroq yondashishni targ'ib qilishlari mumkin.*

Kalit so'zlar: *tahlil, fonetik kompetentsiya, kontrastli tahlil gipotezasi, talaffuz xatolari.*

Phonetic competence plays a fundamental role in language acquisition and teaching, as it provides learners with the necessary tools for accurate communication. This competence

involves the ability to perceive, produce, and manipulate speech sounds in a specific language. For language teachers, phonetic competence is indispensable, as they are required to act as role models for their students, demonstrating the correct pronunciation of sounds, words, and phrases. This article delves into the concept of phonic competence, examining its components, significance, and the methodologies for its development in language teaching. It also explores the challenges language teachers face in mastering phonetic competence and strategies to overcome these challenges.

Phonic competence refers to the ability to perceive, produce, and articulate the sounds of a language with accuracy. It encompasses both segmental and suprasegmental features of language.

- Segmental features are the individual consonants and vowels that make up words.
- Suprasegmental features include aspects such as stress, intonation, rhythm, and pitch, which are essential for conveying meaning beyond individual sounds.

In language teaching, it is essential that teachers not only know the theoretical aspects of phonetics but also possess practical skills to model and teach these components effectively. Phonic competence allows teachers to provide correct models for pronunciation, identify errors, and correct students' phonetic issues.

Phonetic competence plays a crucial role in second language acquisition (SLA). Research in language acquisition emphasizes that pronunciation directly impacts learners' ability to communicate effectively and understand spoken language.

- Segmental Features: If learners mispronounce sounds, it can lead to misunderstandings. For example, failing to distinguish between sounds like /θ/ (as in "think") and /s/ (as in "sink") can result in unintelligible speech.

- Suprasegmental Features: Stress, rhythm, and intonation are equally important for effective communication. A learner might pronounce words correctly but fail to use appropriate stress or intonation, which can affect comprehension and the natural flow of speech.

According to James (1988), second language learners' ability to acquire accurate pronunciation depends on their exposure to both segmental and suprasegmental features in context. Learners' phonetic development is intricately tied to their ability to process these features in real-time communication.

A solid theoretical foundation can guide teachers in fostering phonic competence in learners. Several influential theories in phonetics and SLA provide insights into how phonetic competence is acquired and how teachers can facilitate this process.

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), proposed by Lado (1957), suggests that the phonetic difficulties encountered by learners arise from differences between the sound systems of their native language (L1) and the target language (L2). By analyzing the phonological differences between L1 and L2, teachers can predict potential pronunciation problems. For example, if a learner's native language does not contain certain sounds (like the English /θ/ sound), the teacher can provide targeted practice in producing this sound.

Selinker's (1972) Interlanguage Theory infers that learners often create an interim language system as they progress from their native language to the target language. This interlanguage may contain elements of both languages and can result in phonetic errors that differ from both L1 and L2 norms. Teachers need to be aware of these interlanguage features to provide appropriate corrective feedback and guide learners toward the correct pronunciation.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), emphasized by Savignon (2002), stresses that language teaching should focus on communication and the real-world use of language. In CLT, phonetic competence is not just about articulating sounds correctly but also understanding how pronunciation affects communication. It highlights the importance of teaching pronunciation in context, using communicative tasks where learners practice speech in realistic situations.

Phonic competence involves several interconnected components that must be developed simultaneously in both teachers and learners.

Segmental competence is concerned with the accurate production and perception of individual speech sounds, including consonants and vowels. For teachers, it is important to be proficient in the phonetic symbols of the target language, particularly if there are sounds in the target language that do not exist in their native language.

- Minimal Pairs: Teachers can practice minimal pairs (e.g., "bat" vs. "pat") to distinguish between similar sounds and improve segmental competence.

- Phonetic Transcription: Teachers can use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to transcribe sounds, which helps in understanding and explaining the articulation of speech sounds.

Suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation contribute significantly to a learner's communicative competence. These features are often more challenging to master than segmental features because they involve patterns rather than isolated sounds.

- Stress: Understanding word stress (e.g., "REcord" as a noun vs. "reCORD" as a verb) and sentence stress.

- Intonation: The rise and fall of pitch during speech can change the meaning or emotion conveyed.

- Rhythm: Different languages have different rhythmic patterns (syllable-timed vs. stress-timed languages), which must be taught for natural sounding speech.

Phonological awareness involves recognizing and manipulating sound structures such as syllables, onsets, rimes, and individual sounds. Teachers should help learners develop the ability to manipulate sounds at various levels of complexity to enhance their phonic competence.

To develop phonic competence, language teachers need to adopt various teaching methodologies that incorporate both segmental and suprasegmental features.

- **Phonetic Transcription:** Teaching phonetic transcription using the IPA allows both teachers and learners to visualize the correct articulation of sounds. This tool can be used to transcribe and analyze student speech to identify specific pronunciation errors.

- **Articulatory Training:** Articulatory training involves physical exercises for producing sounds correctly. This can include visualizations, tongue positioning, and repeat-after-me drills.

Technological tools have revolutionized pronunciation teaching. Various applications and platforms, such as Google's Speech-to-Text or Forvo, provide opportunities for teachers and learners to practice pronunciation and receive feedback.

- **Speech Recognition Software:** Tools like Rosetta Stone and Duolingo use speech recognition to provide immediate feedback on pronunciation, helping learners improve their segmental competence.

- **Interactive Learning Apps:** Apps like Pronunciation Power or English Central offer interactive pronunciation exercises, enabling learners to focus on specific speech sounds.

- **Listening Activities:** Teachers should expose learners to authentic native speaker recordings to help them understand natural pronunciation patterns, stress, and intonation.

- **Pronunciation Drills:** Teachers can engage students in regular pronunciation drills using minimal pairs, sentence stress exercises, and rhythm practice.

Effective error correction is central to improving phonic competence. Teachers should employ strategies for both immediate and delayed correction.

- **Immediate Feedback:** Correcting pronunciation errors during real-time communication.

- **Delayed Feedback:** Providing feedback after a speaking activity, allowing learners to reflect on their errors and self-correct.

Despite the significance of phonic competence, several challenges can hinder its development, particularly for language teachers.

Pronunciation errors often arise due to the influence of the learner's native language. Teachers may struggle to produce sounds that do not exist in their L1, which can impede their ability to model correct pronunciation for their students.

Inadequate exposure to authentic language input, particularly native speech, can limit teachers' ability to perceive and produce accurate pronunciation.

Phonetic training is often not prioritized in teacher education programs. Time constraints may lead to insufficient training in pronunciation, leaving teachers ill-equipped to address pronunciation issues in the classroom.

Teachers can overcome the challenges in phonetic competence development by adopting specific strategies:

- **Increase Exposure to Authentic Speech:** Teachers should listen to recordings of native speakers and attend language immersion programs to increase their exposure to natural pronunciation.

- Ongoing Professional Development: Teachers should engage in continuous learning through phonetics workshops, courses, and peer feedback to refine their phonetic competence.

- Technology Integration: Using online platforms and applications designed for pronunciation practice can help both teachers and learners track their progress and receive immediate feedback.

In Conclusion, Phonetic competence is a vital skill for language teachers. It not only enables them to model accurate pronunciation for their students but also equips them with the tools to diagnose and correct pronunciation errors effectively. Through a combination of phonetic training, technological tools, and practical classroom strategies, language teachers can enhance their phonetic competence and provide valuable support for their learners' pronunciation development. By addressing challenges such as L1 interference and limited exposure to native speech, teachers can foster a more comprehensive approach to phonics in language education.

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