

# INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO LISTENING: REGIONAL ACCENTS AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING PHONETIC SKILLS

## ІННОВАЦІЙНІ ПІДХОДИ ДО АУДІЮВАННЯ: РЕГІОНАЛЬНІ АКЦЕНТИ ЯК ЗАСІБ ФОРМУВАННЯ ФОНЕТИЧНИХ НАВИЧОК

*In contemporary English as a Foreign Language education, the development of phonetic competency is increasingly acknowledged as a cornerstone of communicative proficiency. Traditionally, pronunciation instruction in Ukrainian university settings has relied heavily on Received Pronunciation as the primary normative model. While Received Pronunciation offers a consistent and well-documented system, its exclusive use does not adequately reflect the pluricentric and dynamic nature of global English. In light of the growing diversity of English accents encountered in international communication, there is a pedagogical need to revise phonetic training by integrating exposure to regional varieties of English. This article explores the role of regional accent exposure in enhancing phonetic competency among Ukrainian learners and future English teachers. Drawing on recent research, the article analyzes key components of phonetic competency, such as articulatory skills, auditory discrimination, and prosodic awareness. It identifies challenges related to accent bias, limited curricular diversity, and the insufficient methodological training of instructors. In response, the article proposes practical strategies for integrating regional accents into phonetic instruction without abandoning Received Pronunciation. These include the use of accent-rich listening banks, shadowing tasks with regional voices, reflective "accent diaries," contrastive phonetics workshops, and student-led projects on English varieties. Each method is grounded in communicative and social-emotional learning principles, aiming to enhance learners' adaptability, intercultural awareness, and phonological expertise. The article concludes that incorporating accent diversity fosters effective phonetic training, equipping learners to navigate real-world English more confidently. However, further empirical studies are needed to evaluate the long-term impact of such approaches and to develop teacher training programs that support their implementation. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions about modernizing pedagogy in Ukraine and beyond, in line with global trends in English language teaching.*

**Key words:** phonetic competency, regional accents, EFL instruction, Received Pronunciation, accent diversity.

*У сучасній методиці навчання англійської мови як іноземної розвиток фонетичної компетентності все частіше визнається однією з ключових складових здатності комунікувати іноземною мовою. Традиційно в українських університетах навчання вимови ґрунтується переважно на нормативній моделі британської літературної вимови (Received Pronunciation). Хоча стан-*

*дартизована форма вимови британської англійської мови являє собою послідовну загальновизнану систему фонетичних норм, її виключне використання не відображає плюрицентричний і динамічний характер сучасної англійської мови. З огляду на зростаюче розмаїття варіантів англійської вимови у міжнародному спілкуванні, постає нагальна потреба в оновленні підходів до фонетичної підготовки шляхом інтеграції в освітні програми регіональних варіантів англійської мови. У статті пропонуються варіанти включення регіональних акцентів у процес формування фонетичної компетентності українських здобувачів вищої освіти загалом та майбутніх учителів англійської мови зокрема. Спираючись на сучасні дослідження, проаналізовано ключові компоненти фонетичної компетентності, а саме артикуляційні навички, вміння розрізняти на слух та усвідомлення просодичних особливостей. Виокремлено проблеми, пов'язані з упередженістю щодо акцентів, недостатньою варіативністю навчальних програм та обмеженою методичною підготовкою викладачів.*

*У відповідь запропоновано низку практичних стратегій інтеграції регіональних акцентів у навчання фонетики без відмови від британської літературної вимови. До них належать: використання аудіобанків зразків акцентів, завдання на фонетичне відтворення, ведення рефлексивних «щоденників акцентів», контрастивні фонетичні воркшопи, а також студентські проекти, присвячені вивченню різноманітних англійської мови. Кожна стратегія базується на засадах комунікативного підходу та соціально-емоційного навчання, сприяючи формуванню гнучкості, міжкультурної обізнаності та фонологічної компетентності здобувачів.*

*У підсумку стверджується, що залучення різноманітних акцентів сприяє більш ефективній фонетичній підготовці, забезпечуючи здатність здобувачів впевнено орієнтуватися в реальному англомовному середовищі. Водночас підкреслюється потреба у подальших емпіричних дослідженнях ефективності таких підходів та розробці програм підвищення кваліфікації викладачів, здатних їх упроваджувати. Представлені результати можуть бути використані в процесі модернізації методики викладання англійської мови в Україні відповідно до глобальних освітніх тенденцій.*

**Ключові слова:** фонетична компетентність, регіональні акценти, викладання англійської мови як іноземної, стандартизована форма вимови британської англійської мови, розмаїття акцентів.

UDC 811.111'342.4:378.147

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6085/2025/83.1.9>

**Panchenko V.V.,**  
Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences,  
Associate Professor,  
Associate Professor at the Department  
of Foreign Philology  
Kharkiv Humanitarian Pedagogical  
Academy

**Shkola I.V.,**  
Candidate of Philological Sciences,  
Associate Professor,  
Head of the Department of Foreign  
Languages and Teaching Methods  
Berdyansk State Pedagogical University  
(Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine)

**Dubrova O.V.,**  
Candidate of Philological Sciences,  
Associate Professor,  
Associate Professor at the Department  
of Foreign Languages and Teaching  
Methods  
Berdyansk State Pedagogical University  
(Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine)

**Introduction.** In contemporary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, phonetic competency is increasingly recognized as a fundamental component of communicative competency. It encompasses the ability to perceive, produce, and interpret speech sounds accurately and intelligibly, including segmental and suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. As university instructors engaged in the training of future English language teachers, we observe that the development of phonetic competency remains a persistent challenge for many EFL learners. This challenge is often compounded by the limited phonological exposure learners receive during their formal instruction, which traditionally prioritizes a narrow range of accent models, primarily Received Pronunciation (RP).

The pedagogical dominance of RP, inherited from early twentieth-century British normative models, has long shaped the teaching of English phonetics in non-native contexts. While RP offers a stable and well-documented phonological system, its representation of only a minority of native English speakers raises concerns about its adequacy as the sole reference accent. In recent decades, globalization and the internationalization of English have brought increased attention to the sociolinguistic reality of English as a pluricentric and dynamic language. The emergence of World Englishes and the growing prevalence of regional varieties such as Indian English, Nigerian English, Singaporean English, and regional accents within the UK and the US necessitate a broader, more inclusive understanding of pronunciation norms and intelligibility standards.

Given this context, there is a pressing need to reconsider how phonetic skills are developed in EFL classrooms. Rather than focusing exclusively on norm-oriented pronunciation models, contemporary instruction must also account for the diverse phonetic input that learners are likely to encounter in real-world communicative settings. Exposure to regional accents can serve not only to enhance learners' listening comprehension and adaptability, but also to foster a more nuanced understanding of English as a global language. Furthermore, such exposure can contribute to the reduction of accent bias, the development of intercultural awareness, and the overall resilience of phonological perception skills.

**Analysis of Recent Research and Publications.** Recent research underscores the complexity of phonetic competency, encompassing both segmental and suprasegmental features. I. Moliaka emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to phonetic competency, integrating linguistic, methodological, reflective, and pragmatic components [10]. This holistic perspective aligns with the demands of modern EFL education, where learners must navigate a variety of English accents.

The phonetic characteristics of Ukrainian EFL learners have been extensively studied. O. Valigura,

V. Parashchuk, and L. Kozub identify specific prosodic features in the speech of Ukrainian EFL teachers, such as tonal range and speech rate, which distinguish their pronunciation from native speakers [14]. Similarly, V. Parashchuk analyzes phonemic and accentual deviations in Ukrainian speakers' English pronunciation, highlighting the influence of native language phonology on English speech patterns [11].

The perception of Ukrainian-accented English by non-native speakers has also been investigated. N. Petrochuk examines the degree of accentedness, comprehensibility, and intelligibility of Ukrainian English speech, concluding that a lower degree of accent correlates with higher comprehensibility [12]. These findings suggest that exposure to various English accents can enhance learners' ability to comprehend and produce intelligible speech.

Technological advancements have facilitated innovative approaches to phonetic instruction. T. Gurova and others explore the use of mobile learning technologies in developing phonetic competency among future interpreters, demonstrating the effectiveness of digital tools in enhancing pronunciation skills [6]. In times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, I. Andrushchenko highlights the importance of adaptable teaching methods to maintain phonetic training through remote learning platforms [2].

V. Kochubei delves into the roots and features of the Ukrainian English accent, attributing deviations from standard pronunciation to phonetic interference from the native language. The study emphasizes the need for targeted phonetic training to address these specific challenges [9]. A. Kalyta and L. Taranenko advocate for an integrated approach to teaching English pronunciation to Ukrainian students, combining theoretical knowledge with practical application to address common pronunciation errors [7].

**Identification of Previously Unresolved Aspects of the General Problem.** Despite these advancements, several challenges persist in integrating regional accents into phonetic instruction. There is a lack of standardized curricula that incorporate diverse English varieties, leading to inconsistent exposure among learners. Additionally, educators may lack the necessary training and resources to effectively teach pronunciation across different accents. Further research is needed to develop comprehensive pedagogical frameworks that address these gaps and promote inclusive phonetic education.

This article **aims** to investigate the role of exposure to regional English accents in enhancing phonetic competency among EFL learners. By analyzing current pedagogical practices and identifying effective strategies for integrating accent diversity into phonetic instruction, the study seeks to contribute to the development of more inclusive and effective EFL teaching methodologies.

**Main Findings.** Phonetic competency generally consists of several interrelated components: (1) articulatory skills, which involve the physical production of speech sounds; (2) auditory discrimination, referring to learners' ability to distinguish between sounds and prosodic features; (3) orthophonic awareness, especially in the early stages of learning; and (4) prosodic competency, which includes mastery of intonation, rhythm, and stress [6]. All of these components are essential for both accurate speech production and effective listening comprehension. Studies show that phonetic errors, particularly at the suprasegmental level, often have a more detrimental impact on intelligibility than grammatical or lexical inaccuracies [4].

Moreover, in alignment with the CEFR [3], which is the guiding framework for language education across many European systems, learners at the B1–C1 levels are expected to develop the ability to produce intelligible pronunciation and prosody, even if a foreign accent persists. The CEFR also underscores the importance of understanding a variety of spoken English forms, which implies exposure to different pronunciation norms beyond the so-called “standard” model. Despite this, phonetic training in many Ukrainian institutions remains predominantly oriented towards RP, with limited systemic attention to the growing diversity of Englishes encountered in global communication [9; 14].

The teaching objectives for phonetic competency, therefore, include not only the attainment of intelligibility and the reduction of mother tongue interference, but also the development of listening sensitivity to phonetic variation. As N. Petrochuk notes, fostering phonetic awareness in learners contributes to greater communicative adaptability and confidence when engaging with real-world English users, whose speech often diverges significantly from textbook RP models [12]. This sets the stage for the integration of regional accents into pronunciation instruction as a means of developing comprehensive and context-sensitive phonetic competency.

Recent Ukrainian and European studies advocate for a pedagogical shift toward a more inclusive pronunciation curriculum. Exposure to regional accents – through audio recordings, video materials, or authentic listening tasks – not only enhances learners' auditory discrimination but also fosters flexibility in speech perception and production [8; 15]. Integrating such exposure into phonetics courses may lead to improved listening comprehension, reduced anxiety when encountering unfamiliar speech patterns, and better preparation for international communication.

This evolving approach does not aim to replace RP but to supplement it. RP remains a useful reference model, especially for teaching pronunciation norms, stress patterns, and intonation rules. However, integrating selected regional varieties in listening tasks or pronunciation activities reflects the communicative

diversity of English and aligns phonetic training with the pragmatic demands of language use in globalised settings.

The inclusion of regional varieties of English in phonetic training can enhance learners' perceptual flexibility and support the development of adaptive listening and pronunciation skills. In Ukrainian university settings, where phonetics courses are typically structured around RP, educators can introduce regionally diverse materials without disrupting the core curriculum. The following approaches offer ready-made strategies for doing so within established syllabi.

#### Accent-Rich Listening Banks

One of the most effective ways to develop learners' receptive phonetic skills is through consistent exposure to different English accents. Creating an “accent-rich” listening bank using freely available resources such as the International Dialects of English Archive (IDEA), BBC Voices, YouGlish, or YouTube channels dedicated to dialectology (e.g., The Accent Tag) enables instructors to build a corpus of authentic speech samples. Short excerpts (30-60 seconds) featuring speakers from various regions (e.g., Yorkshire, Glasgow, Belfast, Liverpool, or Indian English) can be integrated into regular listening activities.

To facilitate processing, learners should complete guided tasks:

- Pre-listening: Predict regional features based on speaker location.
- While-listening: Identify specific phonetic features (e.g., vowel shifts, consonant elisions, intonation patterns).
- Post-listening: Compare and contrast with RP, noting intelligibility and stylistic implications.

This approach aligns with data from the research by O. Tarnapolsky and S. Storozhuk [13], who demonstrated improved transcription accuracy and reduced stress among Ukrainian undergraduates exposed to regional samples.

#### *Shadowing and Echo Tasks with Regional Voices*

Pronunciation practice can be enhanced by applying shadowing techniques not only with RP models but also with selected regional voices. Shadowing, where students repeat audio in real time, mimicking rhythm and intonation, encourages auditory-motor mapping and improves prosodic awareness. Echo tasks, where students repeat after a short pause, may be used as a lower-cognitive-load alternative.

Instructors can curate short recordings of regional English (e.g., Irish English storytelling or Scottish news reports) and have students:

- Shadow a sentence or phrase.
- Identify the accent's distinguishing features (e.g., rhoticity, glottal stops).
- Compare articulation strategies with RP.

This promotes active pronunciation training and awareness of phonological variation.



**Integrated Accent Diaries**

Learners can be encouraged to keep “Accent Diaries” in which they reflect on their exposure to non-standard Englishes. Each diary entry may include:

- A brief description of the speaker and region.
- Noted phonetic features (e.g., monophthongization of diphthongs in Northern English).
- Perceived intelligibility and emotional reaction.

Such diaries not only support phonetic self-regulation [5] but also integrate SEL (social-emotional learning) principles, encouraging tolerance and openness to linguistic diversity – an increasingly important aim in modern language education [1].

**Contrastive Phonetics Workshops**

Short workshop-style classes can be devoted to comparing RP with selected regional accents. These may include:

- Minimal pair discrimination tasks.
- Intonation contour analysis using spectrograms or pitch visualization software.
- Mock “accent labelling” tasks where learners listen to anonymous samples and infer likely region.

Workshops may be scaffolded with handouts detailing key regional features (e.g., “Features of Scouse” or “Northern Cities Vowel Shift”) to promote metacognitive engagement.

**Project-Based Tasks and Presentations**

Finally, students may be assigned group projects in which they research a specific regional variety (e.g., Cockney, Welsh English, or Nigerian English), compile audio samples, and present their findings to peers. Tasks can be linked to linguistic or cultural dimensions, enhancing interdisciplinary learning. Such collaborative activities foster autonomy and deepen learners’ phonetic and sociolinguistic awareness.

These pedagogical practices do not require the abandonment of RP as the core instructional model but rather extend it with exposure to a broader spectrum of authentic English. Gradually implemented, they can contribute to a more realistic and inclusive model of phonetic competence – one that prepares learners for the complex and multicultural environments in which English functions today.

**Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research**

The development of phonetic competency remains a vital component of communicative proficiency in English language education. In Ukrainian EFL classrooms, RP continues to serve as a foundational reference model, offering clarity and pedagogical consistency. However, the dynamic role of English as a global lingua franca necessitates a pedagogical reconsideration of this monolithic approach. The findings presented in this article indicate that integrating exposure to regional varieties of English into phonetics instruction offers significant benefits, including enhanced listening comprehension, improved

adaptability to authentic speech, and greater intercultural sensitivity.

Through practically oriented strategies, such as accent-rich listening banks, shadowing exercises with regional voices, reflective accent diaries, contrastive workshops, and project-based tasks, learners become more attuned to the diverse phonological landscapes of English. These approaches support the transition from prescriptive pronunciation models to more flexible, context-sensitive phonetic training. Importantly, this shift does not diminish the role of RP but reframes it as one among many valid varieties learners should understand and engage with.

Despite growing scholarly interest in World Englishes and phonetic variation, regional accents remain underrepresented in Ukrainian teacher education and EFL curricula. This underscores the need for further empirical studies on how accent diversity influences long-term phonetic development, listening strategies, and learners’ attitudes. Comparative research involving different learner age groups, proficiency levels, and institutional contexts would provide valuable insights into how regional variety exposure could be scaled and tailored across the educational spectrum.

Moreover, future investigations might explore the professional development needs of EFL instructors tasked with implementing such inclusive approaches. Designing training modules that equip teachers with the necessary linguistic and methodological tools to handle accent diversity confidently could be a vital step in modernising phonetic instruction in Ukraine.

All in all, the pedagogical integration of regional English varieties represents both a challenge and an opportunity. It invites educators to reflect critically on traditional models while enriching the learning process with authentic, real-world linguistic input. As the landscape of global communication continues to evolve, so must the methods used to prepare learners for it.

**REFERENCES:**

1. Панченко В. В. Соціально-емоційне навчання як сучасна педагогічна парадигма у вищій освіті. *Інноваційна педагогіка*, 2023. Вип. 65. Том 2. С. 91–94. <https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6085/2023/65.2.19>
2. Andrushchenko I. Development of English language student teachers’ phonetic competence in times of crisis. *Continuing professional education: theory and practice*. 2023. № 4 (77). P. 32–41.
3. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume. Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2020. URL : <https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4> (access date: 20.05.2025).
4. Derwing T. M., Munro M. J. Putting accent in its place: Rethinking obstacles to communication. *Language Teaching*. 2009. Vol. 42(4). P. 476–490. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S026144480800551X>

5. Dörnyei Z. The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2005. 282 p.
6. Gurova T., Riabukha T., Zinenko N., Hostishcheva N. Mobile learning in developing phonetic competence of future interpreters. *Advanced Education*. 2020. Vol. 7(14). P. 66–74. <https://doi.org/10.20535/2410-8286.155398>
7. Kalyta A., Taranenko L. Teaching English pronunciation to Ukrainian students: From theory to practice. *Looking Ahead: Developing Academics' and Students' Linguistic and Intercultural Competence for a Globalised World* / Eds. K. H. Matuszak, M. E. Strukowska. Poznan, 2024. P. 59–77.
8. Khrystiuk S. The Formation of Foreign Language Communicative Competence in the Context of the English Perception as a Global Lingua Franca. *International journal of philology*. 2022. Vol. 13(3). P. 112–120. [http://dx.doi.org/10.31548/philolog13\(3\).2022.011](http://dx.doi.org/10.31548/philolog13(3).2022.011)
9. Kochubei V. Ukrainian English accent: roots, reasons and basic features. *Linguistische Treffen in Wrocław*. 2019. Vol. 16. P. 271–279. <https://doi.org/10.23817/lingtreff.16-20>
10. Moliaka I. English phonetic competence as a scientific-methodological issue in education. *Science and Education*. 2023. Is. 2. P. 48–53. <https://doi.org/10.24195/2414-4665-2023-2-7>
11. Parashchuk V. Phonemic and accentual deviations in Ukrainian speakers' pronunciations of English words. *Наукові записки Центральноукраїнського державного педагогічного університету імені Володимира Винниченка. Серія : Філологічні науки*. 2019. Вип. 175. С. 253–258.
12. Petrochuk N. O. Perception of the English speech of Ukrainians by non-native speakers. *Вісник КНЛУ. Серія Філологія*. 2022. Т. 25. № 2. С. 81–93. <https://doi.org/10.32589/2311-0821.2.2022.274930>
13. Tarnapolsky O. B., Storozhuk S. D. Global English accents and non-native English teachers. *Вісник Університету імені Альфреда Нобеля. Серія «Педагогіка і психологія»*. Педагогічні науки. 2021. № 2 (22). С. 273–281. <https://doi.org/10.32342/2522-4115-2021-2-22-30>
14. Valigura O., Parashchuk V., Kozub L. Phonetic Portrait of a Ukrainian EFL Teacher: Prosodic Parameters in Academic Discourse. *Arab World English Journal: Special Issue on English in Ukrainian Context*. 2020. P. 16–25. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/elt3.2>
15. Walker R. Teaching the pronunciation of English as a lingua franca (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press, 2021. 223 p.