



DEVELOPING PHONETIC COMPETENCE IN STUDENTS WHEN TEACHING FRENCH USING ICT

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Abstract. At the initial stage of foreign language teaching in higher education institutions, the problem of developing stable phonetic skills becomes particularly acute, requiring the integration of modern methodological approaches and the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICT). Researchers note that the traditional focus on written materials in foreign language teaching has led to a decline in attention to phonetic accuracy in speech and has highlighted the need to improve students' listening and pronunciation skills. The development of phonetic competence in students learning French at the initial stage requires the introduction of accessible and modern ICT-based teaching tools, as well as the use of methods and approaches that promote the development of correct pronunciation. In this regard, there is a need to identify effective strategies for teaching phonetic competence, as well as to assess students' receptive and productive phonological skills in the context of learning French as a foreign language (FLE). The object of this study is the process of teaching phonetic competence in French. The subject of the study is the approaches, technologies and methods related to the use of ICT in teaching French, as well as their impact on the formation of students' phonetic competence. The results of the study confirm the importance of effective instruction and systematic development of phonetic skills, including accurate pronunciation and intonation through the use of ICT. The identification of typical phonetic difficulties encountered by students shows that the use of modern information technologies can significantly increase the effectiveness of learning French and contribute to a deeper understanding of phonetic rules and pronunciation features.

Keywords: phonetic competence; methodology; teaching French; modern methods; learning effectiveness; ICT; pronunciation; listening comprehension; skills.

AKT YORDAMIDA FRANSUZ TILINI O'RGATISHDA TALABALARDA FONETIK KOMPETENTLIKNI TAKOMILLASHTIRISH

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Annotatsiya. Oliy ta'lim muassasalarida chet tilini o'qitishning dastlabki bosqichida barqaror fonetik ko'nikmalarni rivojlantirish muammosi, ayniqsa, dolzarb bo'lib, zamonaviy uslubiy yondashuvlarni birlashtirish va axborot-kommunikatsiya texnologiyalaridan (AKT) samarali foydalanishni talab qiladi. Tadqiqotchilarning ta'kidlashicha, chet tillarni o'qitishda an'anaviy ravishda yozma materiallarga e'tibor qaratish nutqning fonetik aniqligiga e'tiborning pasayishiga olib keldi va o'quvchilarning tinglash va talaffuz ko'nikmalarini takomillashtirish zarurligini ko'rsatdi. Dastlabki bosqichda fransuz tilini o'rganayotgan talabalarda fonetik kompetensiyani rivojlantirish AKTga asoslangan qulay va zamonaviy o'qitish vositalarini joriy etishni, shuningdek, to'g'ri talaffuzni rivojlantirishga yordam beradigan usullar va yondashuvlardan foydalanishni talab qiladi. Shu munosabat bilan fonetik kompetensiyani o'qitishning samarali strategiyalarini aniqlash, shuningdek, fransuz tilini chet tili sifatida o'rganish (FLE) sharoitida talabalarning retseptiv va produktiv fonologik ko'nikmalarini baholash zarurati mavjud. Tadqiqotning obyekti fransuz tilida fonetik kompetensiyani o'qitish jarayoni bo'lib, tadqiqotning predmetini fransuz tilini o'qitishda AKTdan foydalanish bilan bog'liq yondashuvlar, texnologiya va metodlar hamda ularning o'quvchilar fonetik kompetensiyasini shakllantirishga ta'siri tashkil etadi. Tadqiqot natijalari AKTdan foydalangan holda fransuz tilini samarali o'qitish va fonetik ko'nikmalarni rivojlantirish, to'g'ri talaffuz va intonatsiya muhimligini tasdiqlaydi. Talabalar duch keladigan tipik fonetik qiyinchiliklarni aniqlash shuni ko'rsatadiki, zamonaviy axborot texnologiyalaridan foydalanish fransuz tilini o'rganish samaradorligini sezilarli darajada oshirishi, fonetik qoidalar va talaffuz xususiyatlarini chuqurroq tushunishga yordam berishi mumkin.

Kalit so'zlar: fonetik kompetensiya; metodika; fransuz tilini o'qitish; zamonaviy metodlar; o'rganish samaradorligi; AKT; talaffuz; tinglab tushunish; ko'nikmalar.

Introduction

The modern global education model is undergoing transformational changes driven by digitalisation, increasing demands for high-quality educational outcomes, and ensuring universal access to learning. At the heart of these changes are international educational initiatives such as the Education 2030 Framework for Action to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and the Education Transformation Summit

(2022), which emphasise the need to adapt education systems to new realities and challenges, including digital transformation [Obrazovaniye-2030 2016; Déclaration de la jeunesse 2022]. The priority is to create an inclusive educational environment that guarantees quality education for all learners, regardless of their socio-economic status.

Within the context of these changes, language education, particularly foreign language teaching, is becoming increasingly important. The study of languages such as French is an integral part of the educational process, as it contributes to the expansion of students' cultural awareness and strengthen intercultural ties. In the era of globalisation, foreign language proficiency is becoming a key competence for successful professional self-realisation and effective intercultural interaction. However, despite ongoing efforts to improve teaching methods, difficulties persist in the instruction of phonetic aspects, which has a negative impact on the quality of language acquisition among students.

Information technology, viewed as an integral part of a comprehensive educational system, not only expands access to information resources and opens up opportunities for variability and individualisation in learning activities. Moreover, it optimises interaction between all participants in the educational process, forming an educational ecosystem in which the learner acts as an active and equal participant. The introduction of innovative information technologies into the educational process contributes to the activation of learning, the implementation of the principles of developmental education, the intensification of the educational process, and an increase in the proportion of independent work by students [Abylgaziyev & Il'in 2011].

Currently, comprehensive study of methodological issues in teaching French phonetics in relation to other disciplines, areas and approaches is becoming particularly important. This study, based on in-depth analysis and empirical data, emphasises the critical role of mastering phonetic competence in the process of learning a foreign language.

Literature Review. The article examines the pedagogical potential of game-based methods as an effective means of foreign language acquisition. The key argument is that games create an immersive language environment, stimulate interaction with native speakers and develop communication skills. In addition, games encourage active use of the language in authentic situations, which facilitates memorisation and understanding of new material [Bagautdinova 2023].

Countries such as France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada have demonstrated significant achievements in the application of

digital technologies in the educational process. Research confirms that the use of virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and interactive platforms can significantly improve students' language skills, especially in terms of mastering complex phonetic aspects of the language. In particular, universities in the United States widely use specialised software that allows students to record and analyse their own pronunciation, which helps them to correct mistakes more accurately and develop their phonetic skills.

Our study highlights the work of foreign authors such as Alena Gamuda, who specialises in the application of gaming methods in foreign language teaching; Lilia Pluginina, author of publications on the use of games in language education; Elena Kozina, researcher into the effectiveness of gaming methods in foreign language teaching; Michael Hagerman, author of studies on the use of gaming technologies in language teaching; and Luis Martin, an educator and linguist who studies methods of using games in the process of teaching foreign languages.

In Uzbekistan, the digitisation of the educational environment is at an active stage of development. State programmes and presidential decrees of the Republic of Uzbekistan, issued by President Sh.M., Mirziyoyev including decree No. PP-3775 of 5 June 2018 'On additional measures to improve the quality of education in higher education institutions and ensure their active participation in the large-scale reforms being implemented in the country' and Decree No. PP-5117 of 19 May 2021 'On measures to raise the promotion of foreign language learning in the Republic of Uzbekistan to a qualitatively new level,' are aimed at creating favourable conditions for the integration of ICT into the educational process. As part of these initiatives, curricula are being modernised, educational institutions are being equipped with modern equipment, and teaching staff are undergoing professional development [PP-5117 2021]. However, in practice, there are problems related to the shortage of specialised materials and software for teaching French, which necessitates the development of methodologies and resources adapted to local conditions.

It should be emphasised that gamification promotes the development of logical thinking, creativity and teamwork skills. These competencies are critical for foreign language learning, as they enable learners to interact more effectively with language structures and express their thoughts clearly in a foreign language [Aliyeva et al. 2024].

The results of innovative research convincingly demonstrate a significant improvement in students' pronunciation skills when communication technologies are used as a teaching tool in foreign language classes. The use of modern technologies, interactive teaching methods, as well as cooperation and exchange of experience between students and teachers

emphasises the development of critical thinking and creative skills. This approach is aimed not only at transferring knowledge, but also at developing competencies that are in demand in real life and future professional activities [Bagautdinova 2024].

This article discusses various scenarios for the use of ICT in the educational process, including voice recording, karaoke, and audio and video materials. The use of ICT not only improves pronunciation but also contributes to the development of a wide range of language skills. By choosing different methodological approaches, learners can not only hone their pronunciation, but also improve their listening comprehension, develop fluency in spoken language, and deepen their cultural awareness [Côté 2023].

The proposed method is a comprehensive platform that promotes positive and effective foreign language learning. By integrating ICT into foreign language teaching programmes, teachers use authentic materials to create a thematic environment in the classroom, engaging students in a learning process that differs from the traditional format. This approach is not only an engaging and interactive teaching method, but also an effective approach to developing the competence of students studying French phonetics.

The integration of ICT into the foreign language teaching process is a significant advantage that reflects the fundamental principles of modern language teaching and, at the same time, increases student motivation.

Modern foreign language teaching methods are characterised by continuous evolution and dynamic development. Within the context of these transformations, innovative and creative approaches are becoming a necessity, especially in improving students' pronunciation skills, which constitute a crucial component of foreign language learning.

Methods. Teaching foreign language phonetics at universities represents one of the most difficult challenging components of language education, particularly for students whose native languages, Uzbek and Russian, have significantly different phonetic systems. This difference creates considerable difficulties for students in perceiving and reproducing of foreign language sounds. The use of information and communication technologies opens up vast opportunities for overcoming these language barriers, ranging from the use of audiovisual aids to specialised software and online platforms designed for pronunciation training. However, despite a significant amount of research on the use of ICT in foreign language teaching, the issue of using technology to improve phonetic competence remains understudied, which determines the relevance of this study.

The innovative use of voice recording and karaoke creates an immersive and stimulating educational environment in which students can effectively acquire the phonetic and linguistic nuances of the French language. Specially designed lessons in the phonetic laboratory are adapted to students' individual phonetic characteristics, thereby contributing to the improvement of pronunciation and overall language skills. Such technologies allow students to master not only the linguistic subtleties, but also the cultural and social aspects of the language being studied [Demirkan 2023].

Such teaching methods contribute to the establishment of quality standards in the field of foreign language learning. The introduction of such innovative approaches will make it possible to more effectively train philology specialists who will become confident and competent communicators, ready for new professional and cultural opportunities in the global community.

Language changes in teachers' discourse also indicate a growing need among students for new elements to achieve progress in foreign language learning [Coutanson, 2020]. Audiobooks and karaoke offer an original and stimulating approach to improving phonetic skills in language learning. By completing tasks that require listening to a text or song in the language being studied, students imitate and thus develop their pronunciation and intonation in an engaging way [Metz 2021]. They can also record their speech and compare it with the original text, identifying mistakes and correcting them.

Phonetic exercises conducted in this format provide students with a unique opportunity to develop their independent skills and expressive abilities, adapting their interpretation to the precise emotions displayed on audiovisual materials. Such methods allow students to gain a deeper understanding of the subtleties of pronunciation, intonation and rhythm, enriching their overall understanding of the target language. ICT methods, such as scenes from apps, blogs and educational websites such as Lingua.com, TV5monde, AuSondufLE, allofle.com, and others, stimulate interaction and collaboration among students, allowing them to immerse themselves in the role of a native speaker and share their linguistic knowledge both individually and in groups. Such social interaction facilitates learning and creates a dynamic and friendly atmosphere in the classroom.

In addition, communication technologies provide students with the opportunity to collaborate with students from around the world, promoting linguistic and cultural exchange. Thanks to video conferencing programmes (e.g. Zoom, WhatsApp, Twitter, Telegram), students can

communicate in real time with native speakers, allowing them to practise the language in an authentic context [“Des outils numériques” 2020].

By integrating ICT into traditional classrooms, teachers can transform the language learning process into an interactive and stimulating journey, increasing students' interest and motivation. Technological tools also encourage independent practice, allowing students to progress at their own pace.

The research methodology involves an in-depth and detailed comparative study of the use of ICT in teaching French phonetics. This study employs the latest advances in information and communication technology to examine the effectiveness of an innovative method for assessing similarities and differences in students' acquisition of phonetic competence.

Results and discussions. A common problem observed in foreign language instruction is that, after completing an introductory phonetics course, students often reduce their attention to pronunciation correction. This results in inaccurate pronunciation of sounds, incorrect stress, and insufficient expressiveness of intonation in both dialogical and monological speech [Shutova & Orekhova 2018]. According to Fredet & Nikou [Fredet & Nikou 2020], effective communication in a foreign language requires learners to form phonetically correct sequences by mastering the syntactic and intonational structure of utterances and taking into account the phonetic features of the language being studied. A statement, regardless of its semantic content, represents a phonetic structure in both oral and written form. During reading, an involuntary activation of the ‘inner voice’ occurs, leading to the formation of a phonetic representation. Thus, it is necessary for the learner to learn to integrate their own pronunciation skills into the general phonetic space, including pronunciation of sounds, stress distribution, linking and blending phenomena, vowel timbre stability and intonation, in order to improve their understanding of spoken language and approximate the pronunciation of native speakers.

Research shows that students who develop phonetic skills demonstrate greater effectiveness in communication, achieve language goals more successfully, and adapt better to different cultural contexts. Strong phonetic competence not only allows students to express their thoughts clearly and confidently, but also deepens their understanding and appreciation of the linguistic and cultural richness associated with the language they are learning [de Flaviis 2021; Coutanson 2023]. Dherbey Chapuis (2021) points out that phonetic representations reflect the place and manner of articulation of a sound, including phenomena such as nasalisation. The combination of phonetic representations forms a phonemic, or phonological, representation. The activation of phonetic representations

occurs automatically and systematically. Phonetic and phonological representations play a key role in communicative processes.

Table 1

The influence of phonetic competence on communication skills

| Component of phonetic competence | Impact on communication skills | Practical examples |
|---|---|--|
| Intonation | Contributes to the correct perception of questions and statements | Correct construction of intonation patterns |
| Accent | Allows key words to be distinguished in the flow of speech | Highlighting significant words in a sentence |
| Rhythm and temp | Improves the naturalness of speech | Control over speech tempo in dialogues |

A good knowledge of sounds and their correspondence to letters makes it easier to decipher words, improves text comprehension and reading skills. Developing correct pronunciation helps to avoid typical mistakes in written work, which is especially important in French, where pronunciation differs greatly from spelling, and thus contributes to mastery of spelling and increases confidence in writing skills [Ramadan Omar, 2020]. Knowledge of the phonetics of one's native language is necessary for the correct pronunciation of foreign language sounds. Comparing one's native and foreign languages allows one to identify nuances in the articulatory apparatus, avoid interference, and make the necessary corrections, which contributes to improved pronunciation.

There are significant differences between the French, Uzbek and Russian phonetic systems. French phonetics is characterised by the formation of syllables that link words in continuous speech.

When learning French, students whose native languages are Russian or Uzbek encounter phonetic difficulties due to the structural differences between these languages. The main aspects of these differences and their impact on the acquisition of French phonetics can be considered in the following areas:

1. Vowels and nasal qualities

French has 16 oral and 4 nasal vowels ([ã], [ê], [õ], [œ]), which are absent in Russian and Uzbek. Russian- and Uzbek-speaking students often replace nasal vowels with a combination of a vowel + [n], which distorts French pronunciation (for example, 'pain' is pronounced as [pæn] instead of [pɛ̃]).

Russian has 6 vowel phonemes with strong reduction in unstressed positions, which is not the case in French [Senchenkova M.V., 2019].

Uzbek is characterised by 5-6 vowels, without nasal vowels, which also makes it difficult to articulate French sounds correctly.

2. Consonants and consonantism

French [R] is a uvular trill, which differs from the Russian alveolar [p] and is absent in Uzbek. Students often replace it with a sound from their native language.

Palatalisation and softness of consonants: In Russian, there are hard/soft pairs (п/п', т/т', л/л'); in Uzbek, there is no difference in softness. In French, there are no paired soft/hard consonants. This causes interference, especially when pronouncing paired consonants before vowels.

Syllable structure and consonant clusters also differ considerably. In French, multi-sound clusters are allowed under certain conditions (liaison, enchaînement), which is not the case in Russian and Uzbek, where the syllable is usually closed after a consonant. Russian- and Uzbek-speaking students tend to break words with pauses, disrupting the French rhythm.

3. Rhythm and intonation

French is a language with phrase stress: the stress is fixed on the last syllable of the rhythmic group, and words are linked without pauses.

Russian has mobile stress with a meaning-distinguishing function.

Uzbek is predominantly phonemic stress, with less pronounced rhythmic groups.

Consequence: French phrases are often pronounced with a 'choppy' Russian or Uzbek accent — separate words with incorrectly placed stress.

4. Labialised front vowels and semivowels

The French sounds [y], [ø], [œ], [ɥ], [w], [j] have no equivalents in Russian and Uzbek, which leads to incorrect articulation: [y] is replaced by [и], [ø] by [ə], which forms a foreign accent.

5. Practical interference and correction

Russian-speaking students find it more difficult to learn [R], nasal vowels, rounded front vowels, liaison and enchaînement.

Francophones (learning Russian) experience similar difficulties with the articulation of voiced/unvoiced consonants, vowel reduction and consonant softening in Russian.

Table 2

Comparative table of phonetic problems in learning French

| Phonetic aspect of French | Problems for Russian students | Problems for Uzbek students |
|--|---|---|
| Nasal vowels | Sound + [n] instead of French [ã], [ɛ̃] | Similarly, transfer of articulation from the native language |
| Labialised front vowels [y], [ø], [œ] | Replacement with [ɯ], [ɘ] | Replacement with the closest native sound, lips are not rounded |
| [R] uvular | Replaced with Russian [p] | Replaced by native 'r', oral articulation appears |
| Liaison, enchaînement | Violation of continuity, pauses between words | Similarly, absence of lateral liaison |
| Rhythm and accent | The mobile accent of the Russian language introduces 'choppiness' | Monotonous or open rhythm, accent fixed on the last syllable of the word according to the Uzbek model |
| Semivowels [ɥ], [w], [j] | Incorrect length and articulation | Similar difficulty, especially [ɥ] and [w] |

The phonetic differences between French, Russian, and Uzbek create systemic difficulties for students from Russian- and Uzbek-speaking backgrounds when learning French. The main sources of errors are related to the absence of nasal and labial vowels, differences in rhythm and stress, and the articulatory characteristics of consonants. An effective teaching method should include: comparison of the native and target languages, articulation exercises, work on rhythm and intonation, and regular simulation of speech situations. This approach reduces interference and accelerates the acquisition of natural French pronunciation.

Effective teaching of French phonetics involves not only understanding the theoretical basics, but also actively applying the knowledge gained in practice. An important aspect is working on articulation, which requires conscious control over the position of the speech organs. The development of phonemic hearing, i.e. the ability to distinguish and identify sounds, also plays a key role in the formation of correct pronunciation. Studies show that training auditory perception contributes to more accurate reproduction of sounds and intonation patterns [Morrison, 2018].

Phonetic analysis of Uzbek, Russian and French reveals similarities and differences that are due to their phonological systems, articulatory features, prosodic characteristics and historical and cultural factors.

For a comprehensive contextual analysis, socio-demographic data on the study participants were collected, including age, level of education, and proficiency in French. These parameters were considered as potential factors influencing the effectiveness of the phonetic karaoke method in teaching French pronunciation.

The results contribute to the development of foreign language teaching methods by testing an effective approach to improving articulation. The proposed practical recommendations can be used by teachers and students to introduce innovations into the educational process and optimise pronunciation training, which will have a positive impact on intercultural communication and improve language proficiency.

To ensure the validity of the research results, a randomisation procedure was used, whereby each student was assigned an individual number and then randomly assigned to a group. In addition to the initial assessment prior to the start of classes, a final assessment was conducted to determine the dynamics of student progress in French pronunciation.

Students study practical phonetics in the first semester of their bachelor's degree. The aim of this course is to familiarise students with the phonetic structure of the French language and to develop their pronunciation and listening skills. The experiment employed classical song materials presented in a modern arrangements.

While working on phonetic aspects, students sought to improve their articulation, correct stress and intonation, which contributes to more effective communication and better interaction with native speakers. As part of the learning process, the phonetic systems of Russian and French were compared in order to identify similarities and differences, which in turn contributed to a deeper understanding of the phonetic features of French and adaptation to them.

n The positive dynamics of the students' psychological state during the learning process, which has a beneficial effect on the formation of self-confidence (Alekseyeva & Balan, 2002). Improved understanding and pronunciation of foreign language sounds contributes to increased communicative competence and active participation in dialogue, both in formal and informal settings, which in turn stimulates further practice and improvement of phonetic skills.

At the end of the course, a final assessment of the students' progress was carried out. The results were subjected to statistical analysis in order to determine the effectiveness of the phonetic karaoke method and its impact on improving the pronunciation of the language being studied.

During the classes, students were immersed in practicing the articulation of sounds that are different from their native language. Specially selected musical compositions focused on nasal vowels and phonetic combinations characteristic of the French language, which ensured deep involvement and contributed to better assimilation of the material [Mansfeldova, 2023; 32]. By repeating the words after the performer and simultaneously viewing the subtitles, the students improved their pronunciation and, following the teacher's recommendations, experimented with intonation and accents. In addition to working on phonetics, the students discovered the beauty of French poetry implicitly contained in the lyrics of the songs.

According to the students' own feedback, these kinds of exercises help them unlock their creative potential and create a favourable, relaxed learning atmosphere. The participants in the experiment showed initiative in creating their own musical adaptations using the lexical and grammatical material studied in the language lab, which undoubtedly increased their awareness and effectiveness in learning French phonetics.

Observation of the sessions revealed a number of typical difficulties that students encounter when perceiving and reproducing foreign speech (e.g., high speech rate, specific pronunciation of certain sounds, etc.). These observations will be taken into account in the further development of teaching materials.

Table 3

Advantages and disadvantages of different phonetics teaching methods

| Methodological approach | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Traditional methods | Ease of use, accessibility | Limited interactivity, lack of flexibility |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| ICT-oriented methods | High motivation, possibility of self-control | Need for technical equipment, access difficulties |
| Combined methods | Flexibility and adaptation to students' needs | Time and resources required to prepare teaching materials |

Conclusions. A comparative analysis was conducted to examine the effectiveness of using song lyrics and music videos in teaching French phonetics to students at a philological university who are studying French at the beginner level. An initial assessment of all participants' French pronunciation level, was also carried out, serving as the basis for subsequent progress assessment. The assessment was based on a number of key phonetic parameters, including articulation clarity, accentuation, intonation patterns, phonetic coherence, and overall fluency of speech (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2015).

The experimental group's classes were held in a specialised language lab equipped with modern equipment that met the requirements for information and communication support for the educational process. French songs were selected for the classes, and their lyrics were projected onto a screen, which provided visual support and made it easier to track correct pronunciation. Students were asked to sing along with the original recording, paying attention to the accurate reproduction of intonation, stress and rhythm.

Future research should focus on expanding the sample of participants and the range of languages studied, which will allow for more representative results and generalised conclusions about the effectiveness of methods for teaching phonetic competence.

Phonetic competence, being an integral part of linguistic competence, plays a crucial role in ensuring effective communication and mutual understanding. Insufficient attention to the development of phonetic skills in the early stages of learning can lead to the formation of persistent phonetic errors that are difficult to correct later on [Pennington 1996]. In the digital age, the use of ICT provides ample opportunities for improving phonetic skills, including the use of online dictionaries, phonetic trainers, and mobile applications such as Forvo and LingQ, which allow students to practise pronunciation at any convenient time [Stockwell 2001].

The effective use of interactive and dynamic approaches in teaching phonetics helps students develop accurate and fluent pronunciation. Practical exercises targeting specific aspects of the target language's,

phonetic system, together with audiovisual materials such as recordings of native speakers and video lessons, contribute to the formation of adequate perception of sounds and pronunciation [Celce-Murcia et al. 2010]. Active listening, repetition, and regular practice are important elements of effective phonetics teaching.

Despite the availability of a wide range of resources for independent work on pronunciation, many students find it difficult to use them effectively due to the lack of a systematic methodology and pedagogical support. Thus, the development and implementation of effective methods for using ICT to improve the phonetic competence of philology students remains a relevant and pressing task that requires further research and practical implementation.

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