

**PRONUNCIATION NORMS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY:
BRITISH VS AMERICAN ENGLISH IN UKRAINIAN UNIVERSITIES**

In the modern era of globalization and rapid media development, English has become an integral part of the educational process in Ukraine. In particular, there is a growing influence of the American variant of English due to the dominance of American media and technology. This gives rise to discussions about the choice between British and American English in educational institutions, especially regarding pronunciation and students' cultural identity. This study aims to compare British and American English in the context of Ukrainian universities, focusing on phonetic differences and their impact on students' cultural identity.

British and American English have several phonetic differences that affect learners' perception of the language. For example, there is a difference in the pronunciation of vowel sounds, such as /æ/ in the word "dance", which is pronounced /dɑ:ns/ in British English and /dæns/ in American English. There is also a difference in the pronunciation of consonants, in particular the sound /r/, which is often not pronounced in British English after vowels but is clearly articulated in American English [3]

A review of educational materials, such as textbooks, audio, and video, shows that British English is predominantly used in Ukrainian universities. This is due to historical traditions and cooperation with British educational institutions. However, the growing influence of American media and technology contributes to the spread of American English among students [1, p. 732]. The choice of English language option affects students' language competence. For example, students studying according to British standards may have difficulty communicating with native speakers of American English and vice versa. This

emphasizes the importance of exposing students to both varieties of English to ensure their flexibility and adaptability in an international environment.

Language is a means of communication and an important element of cultural identity. For students learning English as a foreign language, the choice between British and American pronunciation is often related to phonetics, value orientations, ideas about “correct” or “modern” English, and identification with a particular culture.

British English has long been considered the standard in the Ukrainian educational space. This is due to historical ties with the European academic tradition and the focus on British language exams (e.g., Cambridge Exams). This variant of the language is perceived as more “official”, “refined”, or even “aristocratic” [4, p. 95]. Some students deliberately choose the British pronunciation in an attempt to distance themselves from the American version, which they consider to be overly simplified or too “colloquial”.

In practice, however, the significant influence of American culture, particularly through media content such as Netflix, YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, is shaping a new wave of cultural orientation among Ukrainian youth. Many students begin to identify with American culture by consuming authentic content created in the United States [1, p. 732]. Consequently, the choice of American pronunciation sometimes occurs intuitively as a manifestation of closeness to this culture, which is associated with youth freedom, innovation, and openness to change.

Conclusion. In this way, language – and pronunciation in particular – acts as a tool and a symbol of a particular cultural position. Through the choice of language option, the student (often even unconsciously) demonstrates his attitude to a particular country’s cultural codes and forms his own identity within the global English-speaking space.

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