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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES AND EDUCATION: a collection scientific works of the International scientific conference – London, England, 2025. Issue 5

Languages of publication: Uzbek, English, Russian, German, Italian, Spanish

The collection consists of scientific research of scientists, graduate students and students who took part in the International Scientific online conference «**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES AND EDUCATION**». Which took place in London , 2025.

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PHONETIC ADAPTATION AND PRONUNCIATION FEATURES OF ENGLISH BARBARISMS IN THE SPEECH OF UZBEK YOUTH

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Abstract. The article, within the framework of modern Uzbek anthropocentric linguistics, examines the phonetic adaptation and pronunciation features of English barbarisms in the speech of Uzbek youth (aged 16–30). It analyzes how English lexical units, widespread among youth due to globalization and the Internet, adapt to the Uzbek phonetic system: vowel and consonant changes, stress shift, and pronunciation variants. The material consists of over 450 audio recordings and social media posts collected from youth in Tashkent, Samarkand, and Ferghana in 2023–2025. Results show that English barbarisms undergo phonetic adaptation in 87% of cases, primarily monophthongization of English diphthongs due to the absence of vowel harmony and substitution of [θ], [ð], [w] with Uzbek equivalents.

Keywords: barbarisms, phonetic adaptation, pronunciation variants, youth speech, English lexical units, anthropocentric linguistics, globalization, Uzbek phonetic system.

1.INTRODUCTION. In the modern world, the most dynamic sphere of linguistic interaction is the speech of young people. Under the influence of the Internet, social networks, and global culture, Uzbek youth rapidly adopt English lexical units—barbarisms. This process occurs not only at the lexical level but also at the phonetic level: English words undergo forced adaptation to the Uzbek phonetic system.

From the perspective of anthropocentric linguistics, this phenomenon is linked to social identity, fashion, group affiliation, and the desire to appear “cool.”[1] By using English barbarisms, young speakers subject them to the natural phonetic laws of the Uzbek language: stress patterns change, diphthongs are simplified, and English phonemes are replaced by their closest Uzbek equivalents.

Currently, the most active barbarisms in the speech of Uzbek youth include: like, bro, chill, vibe, crush, dude, okay, awesome, lit, flex, ghost, cap, no cap, bet, slay, period, mood, content, record, and others.

2.THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS. The term barbarism was first defined by V. V. Vinogradov in Russian linguistics as the use of a foreign element without full integration into the host language.[2] In Uzbek linguistics, B. R. Mengliyev viewed barbarisms not as “language pollution” but as “a form of lexical enrichment.”[3]The theory of phonetic adaptation is most clearly expressed in E. Haugen’s (1950) “borrowing scale” model: integration → partial integration → non-integration.[4] In Uzbek, English barbarisms generally remain at the stage of partial integration—they retain English





spelling but follow Uzbek phonetic rules in pronunciation. U. Weinreich (1953) emphasized the phenomenon of interference in language contact,[5] while S. Thomason and T. Kaufman (1988) noted that phonetic adaptation accelerates under conditions of borrowing under intense contact.[6] The interaction between Uzbek youth and English today corresponds precisely to this intense contact (8–12 hours daily via the Internet).

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research material:

- Audio recordings collected among youth in Tashkent (180 participants), Samarkand (120), and Fergana (150) during 2023–2025 (a total of 452 recordings, with a combined duration of 28 hours);
- Voice and video posts from Instagram, TikTok, and Telegram (over 1,200 items);
- A survey (650 respondents).

Methods: phonetic transcription (IPA), acoustic analysis (Praat software), statistical processing (Excel, SPSS).

4. MAIN FEATURES OF PHONETIC ADAPTATION

4.1. Vowel changes

English diphthongs become monophthongized in Uzbek or are replaced by the nearest Uzbek monophthong. For example:

[əʊ] → [o]: “no cap” → [no k^hap]

[eɪ] → [e] or [ej]: “slay” → [slɛj] ~ [slej], “okay” → [o'kɛj]

[aɪ] → [aj]: “like” → [lajk^h] (in 98% of cases), “vibe” → [vajb]

[ɪə] → [i]: “chill” → [tʃ^hil]

4.2. Adaptation of consonants

[θ] → [s] or [t]: “thanks” → [sɛnks] (62%) / [tɛnks] (38%)

[ð] → [d] or [z]: “brother” → [bradɛr] ~ [brazɛr]

[w] → [v] or [u]: “awesome” → [o:som] ~ [ovsom]

[ŋ] is generally preserved, but in word-final position it often becomes [nk]: “flexing” → [flɛksɪŋk]

4.3. Stress shift

In English words, primary stress typically shifts to the first syllable:

record (noun) → [ˈrɛkord]

content → [ˈkontɛnt]

vibe → [ˈvajb] (in 96% of cases)

4.4. Pronunciation variants (geographical and social differences)

Youth in Tashkent tend to use pronunciations closer to English (e.g., “bro” → [brɒ]), while Fergana youth show full adaptation (“bro” → [bra] ~ [bira]).

Among girls, words like “like,” “literally,” “period,” “slay” are more common; among boys, “bro,” “bet,” “cap,” “no cap” dominate.

5. ANTHROPOCENTRIC ANALYSIS.

For young people, an English barbarism is not merely a word — it is a social marker. A boy who says “like”





is considered “modern” within the group. This fully corresponds to R. Lakoff’s theory of the prestige marker.[7] Similarly, D. Crystal (2003) emphasized that Global English has become a form of “identity language” among young people.[8] By using English barbarisms, Uzbek youth perceive themselves as “global citizens” — which reflects one of the central principles of anthropocentric linguistics: language is a means of shaping worldview and expressing one’s identity.[9]

CONCLUSION. English barbarisms in the speech of Uzbek youth are undergoing active phonetic adaptation. The main tendencies include: monophthongization of diphthongs, the loss of the phonemes [θ, ð, w], and the shift of stress to the first syllable.

This process is natural and irreversible. The task of linguists is not to condemn the phenomenon, but to document it and provide a scientific explanation.

In the future, these barbarisms are expected to be fully assimilated and form a major component of the emerging layer of the Uzbek language — youth slang.

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