



MEDIA, ENGLISH, AND IDENTITY: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ENGLISH IN REFRAMING UZBEK CULTURAL PRACTICES

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Abstract

This thesis explores the dynamic relationship between English usage on social media platforms and the reshaping of Uzbek cultural identity. With the increasing global influence of English and the pervasive role of digital media, language choice has become a crucial factor in expressing identity and belonging. By examining the ways Uzbek speakers integrate English in online communication, this research seeks to uncover how linguistic hybridity reflects evolving cultural values, aspirations, and global orientations. The study combines linguistic, sociocultural, and ethnographic perspectives to demonstrate that English not only facilitates global participation but also contributes to the creation of hybrid, modern Uzbek identities.

Introduction

In the era of globalization, the English language has transcended its colonial and geographical boundaries, emerging as a dominant medium of communication across diverse societies. Uzbekistan, like many post-Soviet nations, has witnessed a growing fascination with English, particularly among the younger generation. Social media, as a key site of cultural interaction, provides fertile ground for observing how language reflects and shapes identity. Uzbek youth increasingly use English on platforms such as Instagram, Telegram, and TikTok to express individuality, creativity, and social mobility. This phenomenon has led to the emergence of new linguistic forms and cultural expressions that merge local values with global aesthetics. Consequently, English on social media is not merely a tool for communication—it is a symbol of modernity, education, and openness to global culture.



Statement of the Problem

While numerous studies have explored English language learning and policy in Uzbekistan, relatively few have examined its role in the digital sphere and its cultural implications. The increasing use of English online raises questions about how traditional Uzbek values, norms, and identity markers are negotiated in virtual spaces. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating how English-mediated communication on social media influences the ways Uzbeks perceive and perform their cultural identity.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the use of English in social media posts, captions, and interactions among Uzbek speakers.
2. To explore how English use in online discourse reflects changing cultural attitudes and identity expressions.
3. To identify the sociolinguistic motivations behind the incorporation of English into Uzbek digital communication.
4. To assess whether English contributes to cultural hybridization or challenges traditional Uzbek values.

Research Questions

1. In what ways do Uzbek social media users employ English to construct and display identity online?
2. How does the integration of English on social media reshape perceptions of Uzbek cultural authenticity?
3. What are the generational and gender-based differences in the use of English on digital platforms?

Methodology

The study will adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. Online ethnography and discourse analysis will be



employed to examine English use in selected Uzbek social media accounts. Surveys and semi-structured interviews with Uzbek youth and professionals will provide insights into their motivations, attitudes, and perceptions regarding English use. The study will focus on language choice, code-switching patterns, and identity markers observable in digital interaction.

Significance of the Study

This research contributes to understanding how global languages like English influence local cultures in the digital age. It offers a sociolinguistic perspective on identity transformation among Uzbek speakers, highlighting how social media becomes a platform for cultural negotiation. The findings will be valuable for educators, policymakers, and linguists interested in language, globalization, and identity formation in Central Asia.

Expected Outcomes

The study is expected to reveal that English serves as both a linguistic resource and a cultural symbol that redefines notions of modern Uzbek identity. It will show how English functions as a marker of prestige, cosmopolitanism, and cultural openness while also creating tensions between global aspirations and local traditions. Ultimately, the research will demonstrate that English, when used through social media, becomes a catalyst for reimagining Uzbek cultural practices in the 21st century.