THE USE OF TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLITERATION IN ADOPTING INTERNATIONAL WORDS

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Abstract. This article explores the processes of transcription and transliteration in the adoption of international vocabulary from English into Uzbek. With the growing influence of globalization and technological development, the Uzbek language has been absorbing a significant number of English terms. This study analyzes the linguistic mechanisms through which these borrowings are integrated, focusing on the phonetic (transcription) and graphemic (transliteration) strategies, and provides relevant examples to demonstrate the patterns and challenges of this process.

Keywords: transcription, transliteration, loanwords, English-Uzbek, international vocabulary, language adaptation.

In the modern era of rapid globalization, English has become a dominant source of international vocabulary for many languages, including Uzbek. The incorporation of English words into Uzbek reflects not only linguistic enrichment but also cultural and technological exchange. However, the adoption of such words requires a systematic approach to preserve their phonological and semantic integrity. Two primary methods used in this adaptation process are transcription and transliteration.

The study of transcription and transliteration has long been a central topic in linguistics, particularly in the context of language contact, borrowing, and globalization. Internationally, early theoretical foundations were laid by scholars such as Einar Haugen, whose influential 1950 article "The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing" outlined the mechanisms of lexical adoption, including phonological adaptation and integration into the receiving language's grammatical system. Haugen's classification of borrowing into importation, substitution, and adaptation has been widely adopted in later research. Additionally, Roman Jakobson contributed significantly to the development of phonological theory related to writing systems and their conversions, paving the way for systematic approaches to transliteration.

Later, linguists such as Ghil'ad Zuckermann explored the role of transliteration and transcription in the enrichment of hybrid and revived languages, emphasizing the influence of English in lexical innovation across diverse linguistic landscapes. International standards, such as ISO 9:1995, were introduced by the International Organization for Standardization to regulate the transliteration of Cyrillic characters into Latin characters. These frameworks continue to be instrumental in maintaining consistency in cross-linguistic word adaptation [7, 16].

In the Uzbek linguistic tradition, research on the adaptation of foreign words, particularly from Russian and later English, gained momentum following Uzbekistan's independence. During the 1990s, Uzbek scholars such as Professor G'ulomov M. [1, 34] and Professor Rahmonov M. examined the processes through which international words were assimilated into the Uzbek language, especially in terms of phonological compatibility and orthographic norms. Their work laid the foundation for modern understanding of how transcription and transliteration can function in the Uzbek linguistic environment.

Sh. Vohidov made significant contributions to the development of scientific and technical terminology in Uzbek, recognizing the rising influx of English terms and the need for standardized adaptation methods. In parallel, researchers such as A. Madvaliyev and G. Ibragimova conducted applied studies on transliteration and transcription in Uzbek-English and Uzbek-Russian dictionaries, as well as in media language. These studies addressed the challenges of maintaining phonetic fidelity while adhering to the constraints of Uzbek orthography, particularly during the country's ongoing transition from Cyrillic to Latin script.

The post-independence era has also witnessed increased institutional involvement in linguistic standardization. The Uzbek Language and Terminology Committee, for instance, has issued official recommendations on the spelling and pronunciation of international words, including those borrowed from English in fields such as information technology, education, and commerce. These recommendations aim to ensure a balance between accessibility, phonetic integrity, and cultural preservation.

Further studies have been conducted in the realm of media, education, and academic translation. Researchers like N. Komilova have investigated the variation in the transcription and transliteration of English-origin terms in Uzbek television and print journalism, highlighting inconsistencies and proposing more unified approaches. Dissertation-level research in various universities has also explored practical challenges in adapting technical vocabulary into Uzbek, particularly in disciplines such as medicine, computer science, and economics.

The evolution of transcription and transliteration practices has followed a dual trajectory: theoretical and descriptive in the global context, and applied and policy-driven within Uzbekistan. The global contributions of linguists such as Haugen and Jakobson provided the theoretical basis for analyzing language contact phenomena, while Uzbek scholars contextualized these frameworks in accordance with national linguistic goals [2, 65]. As English continues to play a dominant role in global communication, the refinement of transcription and transliteration strategies remains a vital aspect of preserving linguistic identity while embracing international development.

Transcription refers to the phonetic representation of a word from the source language into the target language. It emphasizes preserving the sound of the original term.

Example: computer → kompyuter (компьютер)

The English word is phonetically rendered using Uzbek/Cyrillic characters that approximate the original pronunciation.

Transliteration, on the other hand, is a graphemic conversion from one writing system to another, letter by letter, often disregarding pronunciation.

Example: online → onlayn

Although this form maintains some phonetic qualities, it mainly follows the original Latin script closely.

Transcription plays a key role when English words are borrowed and adapted to suit Uzbek phonology. Since Uzbek has its own distinct sound system, not all English phonemes can be directly represented. Therefore, approximate equivalents are used.

Examples:

bank → bank (банк)

manager → menedjer (менеджер)

marketing → marketing (маркетинг)

This method ensures that the pronunciation of the word remains familiar to native Uzbek speakers.

Graphemic Adaptation: The Role of Transliteration

Transliteration is often employed when maintaining the original spelling is important, such as in brand names, acronyms, or technical terms. This can lead to some divergence in pronunciation.

Examples:

email → e-mail or email

software → softver

internet → internet

In such cases, especially in written communication, transliteration helps maintain international recognizability.

In practice, a combination of transcription and transliteration is frequently used. This hybrid approach allows for a balance between pronunciation and spelling.
Example:

smartphone → smartfon

scanner → skaner

One of the main challenges is standardization. With no strict rules, different media sources or speakers may adopt varying forms, leading to inconsistency. Another issue is phoneme substitution, where unfamiliar English sounds are replaced by nearest Uzbek equivalents, sometimes altering the original word significantly.

The adaptation of English words through transcription and transliteration enriches the Uzbek lexicon, especially in fields like IT, business, and education. However, it also raises concerns about language purity and the preservation of native vocabulary. Linguists and educators must therefore find a balance between openness to international influence and the protection of linguistic identity.

1-chart. Adaptation of internatsional words from English into Uzbek
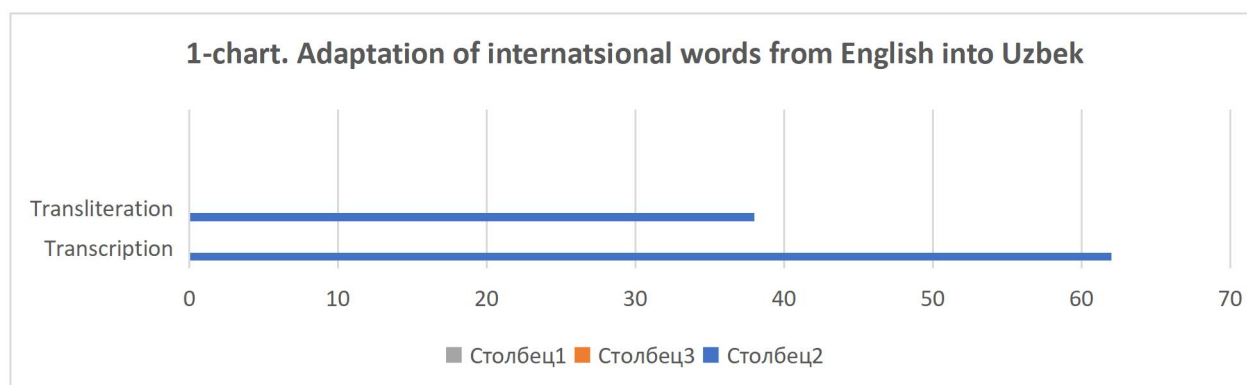
The chart above illustrates the distribution of English loanwords in the Uzbek language based on their mode of adaptation. According to recent linguistic research, approximately 15–20% of all international words in Uzbek originate from English, reflecting the growing influence of globalization and digital communication. Among these borrowings, about 60% are integrated into the language through transcription, where English words are phonetically adapted to fit Uzbek pronunciation norms. This method is particularly common for everyday vocabulary and terms frequently used in oral speech. In contrast, around 40% of the loanwords are introduced through transliteration, preserving the original English spelling or modifying it only slightly. This approach is generally applied to technical, academic, or brand-related terminology, where maintaining visual recognition and international consistency is essential. The data highlights a practical linguistic strategy in Uzbek: balancing phonetic accessibility with the preservation of international standards.

Transcription and transliteration serve as essential tools in the process of adopting international vocabulary from English into Uzbek. While transcription focuses on phonetic fidelity, transliteration preserves graphemic structure. Both approaches have their merits and limitations, and their combined use reflects the dynamic and evolving nature of the Uzbek language in the modern world.

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