

**THE GROWING DEMAND FOR ENGLISH AND PRONUNCIATION  
CHALLENGES FACED BY UZBEK YOUTH**

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**Abstract:** *This article examines the increasing demand for English in Uzbekistan and analyzes the pronunciation challenges faced by Uzbek youth. The study explores the role of English in international trade, education, and global communication, emphasizing its importance in academic mobility and professional development. Particular attention is given to phonological interference, segmental and suprasegmental differences between Uzbek and English, and the impact of psychological and methodological factors on pronunciation acquisition. Interdental consonants (/θ/ and /ð/), stress and intonation patterns, and the distinction between /v/ and /w/ are identified as key areas of difficulty. The article argues that pronunciation is not merely a phonetic concern but a central component of communicative competence. Practical recommendations for improving pronunciation instruction are proposed.*

**Key words:** *English language demand, pronunciation difficulties, phonological interference, stress and intonation, Uzbek learners, communicative competence, phonetic competence, language education*

### **Introduction**

Over the past decade, English proficiency has become a strategic priority in Uzbekistan's educational reforms. As international cooperation and academic mobility expand, English is increasingly regarded as a necessary professional skill rather than an optional subject. Participation in global education programs often requires internationally recognized certificates such as IELTS, further increasing students' motivation to improve their language competence.

Despite growing institutional support and student interest, pronunciation remains one of the most challenging aspects of English language learning. While grammar and vocabulary receive considerable attention, phonetic competence is frequently underemphasized.

### **Factors Contributing to the Growing Demand for English**

English functions as a global lingua franca in business, diplomacy, science, and digital communication. A significant proportion of academic publications and technological resources are produced in English, providing learners with access to broader educational and career opportunities.



In Uzbekistan, educational modernization policies and international partnerships have intensified the need for English proficiency. Consequently, communicative effectiveness — including accurate pronunciation — has become essential.

### Major Pronunciation Challenges

#### Phonological Interference

There are substantial differences between the phonetic systems of Uzbek and English (Xabibullayeva et al., 2025). One of the primary causes of pronunciation errors is phonological interference, whereby learners transfer native language features into the target language (Khusenova, 2025; Temirova, 2024).

Interdental consonants /θ/ and /ð/ do not exist in Uzbek. As a result, words such as *think* and *this* are often pronounced as *sink* or *dis* (Sayfullayeva, 2025; Yuldoshev, 2025). Although these substitutions may appear minor, they can reduce intelligibility in communication.

#### Stress and Intonation Patterns

English is generally classified as a stress-timed language, whereas Uzbek follows different rhythmic patterns. Uzbek learners often pronounce each syllable with equal weight, resulting in speech that lacks natural rhythm (Temirova, 2024). Incorrect stress placement may cause misunderstanding even when individual sounds are correctly articulated.

#### Segmental Differences

Another challenge involves distinguishing between /v/ and /w/ sounds. Since Uzbek does not clearly differentiate these phonemes, learners frequently mispronounce words such as *very* and *wine* (Yuldoshev, 2025). Additionally, final consonants may be weakened or omitted, reducing clarity.

#### Psychological Factors

Foreign language anxiety affects pronunciation development. Learners who fear making mistakes may avoid speaking or produce hesitant speech, which slows phonetic improvement (Khusenova, 2025).

#### Methodological Factors

In many educational contexts, grammatical competence is prioritized over phonetic training. Limited exposure to authentic spoken English and insufficient integration of pronunciation exercises hinder the development of communicative competence (Sayfullayeva, 2025).

### Conclusion:

The increasing demand for English offers significant academic and professional opportunities for Uzbek youth. However, pronunciation challenges rooted in phonological interference, stress patterns, segmental differences, psychological factors, and methodological limitations remain substantial obstacles. Strengthening phonetic instruction and integrating pronunciation practice into language curricula are essential for developing effective communicative competence.



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