

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

# LINGUISTIC WHATEVERISM – A STUDY ON AN (IN)CONSISTENCY IN LINGUISTIC BEHAVIOR BASED ON THE USAGE OF ANGLICISMS

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the phenomenon of linguistic whateverism among Bosnian high school students, focusing on the usage of English loanwords in everyday speech. A survey was conducted to assess the prevalence, frequency, and contextual factors influencing the integration of Anglicisms into Bosnian language use. The findings reveal that 71.5% of participants incorporate English words into their conversations, primarily in informal settings and often when communicating with peers who possess similar English proficiency. While many students display a relaxed attitude toward language mixing, with 72.6% expressing indifference towards the use of English in Bosnian, a significant portion (67.0%) expresses concern over the potential erosion of the Bosnian language. The analysis indicates that the influence of English is particularly strong in contexts related to technology and social media, suggesting a shift towards linguistic pragmatism among youth. Despite the high acceptance of Anglicisms, there remains a notable desire to preserve the integrity of the Bosnian language. These findings underscore the complexity of language evolution in a globalized context and highlight the need for ongoing dialogue about linguistic identity and cultural preservation among young speakers.

**Keywords:** linguistic whateverism, English loanwords, Bosnian language, language mixing, cultural preservation



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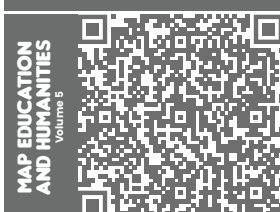
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### 1. Introduction

As in the contemporary world of rapid globalization and contacts all languages can donate to or receive from the languages they are in contact, it is accepted that only languages with global scope of usage are in a position of a donor. Speakers who have learned a second language introduce elements of it into their mother tongue, thus leading to a language borrowing. As, according to Görlach (1994), English language has been the most expansive language in the world, and thus accepted as a *lingua franca*, it is inevitable that English borrowed words are dominant loanwords. English language, especially its American variant is through political, economic and social leadership in general, recognized as a must-have skill for the modern (global) world.

However, language borrowing as a fact of modern language contacts does not have to go to the extent of inserting and using words in one's language without control, filtering, or general linguistic need. This topic is mostly dealt with by language purists (Académie Française, n.d.; Herder, 1772; Íslensk Málnefnd, n.d.). What needs to be dealt with in addition to this is the issue of linguistic consistency and linguistic behavior when there is a mixing of domestic and foreign words in speech and writing. Researchers note that speakers, especially young people, without paying attention to how to express themselves, choose and mix words from several languages.

Given that the trend of this linguistic "relaxation" has spread to a wide range of speakers, primarily young people, the term "whatever" generation has been introduced in science, and the whole phenomenon is called "linguistic whatever-ism" (Baron, 2002). Certainly, the term „whatever“ means anything's OK; let's not fight over it; whatever you do or say – including however you say or write it – is fine, and such.

Language borrowing, as a natural result of language contact, has been a constant phenomenon throughout history. In the contemporary globalized world, languages frequently exchange elements, typically through vocabulary. However, this exchange is asymmetrical: languages with greater global influence, like English, act predominantly as donors, while other languages serve as recipients (Görlach, 1994). English, particularly in its American form, has become the dominant donor due to political, economic, and cultural hegemony. As a *lingua franca*, English exerts significant pressure on other languages, resulting in the widespread incorpora-

tion of Anglicisms—English loanwords—into various languages (Görlach, 2002; Crystal, 2003).

While language borrowing is often seen as a neutral or beneficial process, language purists express concern over the uncontrolled insertion of foreign terms, fearing it undermines linguistic integrity. Institutions like the Académie Française, as well as scholars such as Johann Gottfried Herder, advocate for the filtering and adaptation of loanwords to maintain language purity (Académie Française, n.d.; Herder, 1772; Íslensk Málnefnd, n.d.). This purist stance stands in contrast to a growing trend of linguistic behavior characterized by inconsistency, nonchalance, and an increasing disregard for linguistic norms—a phenomenon referred to as "linguistic whateverism."

The concept of linguistic whateverism, first articulated by Baron (2002), describes a casual and inconsistent approach to language use. Whateverism reflects an indifference to language rules and an "anything goes" mentality in speech and writing, particularly among younger generations. It is rooted in the idea that speakers often mix languages without concern for linguistic coherence, reflecting a lack of care over the choice of words or linguistic purity.

According to Baron (2008), the rise of linguistic whateverism is largely driven by the permeation of Anglicisms in everyday speech. This phenomenon is not limited to loanwords but extends to the mixing of syntactic structures, idioms, and even pronunciation patterns from English into other languages. The term "whatever generation" refers to young people who, due to their frequent exposure to English via media, the internet, and education, have normalized this linguistic relaxation.

Linguistic whateverism stands in direct contrast to language purism, which advocates for controlled borrowing and language maintenance. While whateverism reflects a relaxed, open approach to language mixing, purism stresses the importance of language preservation and integrity (Thomas, 1991). For purists, the unchecked infiltration of Anglicisms is seen as a threat to the cultural and linguistic identity of a speech community (Schiffman, 1996).

In contrast, proponents of linguistic flexibility argue that languages evolve and adapt through borrowing, and Anglicisms can enrich rather than degrade a language. However, the key issue remains one of balance—between borrowing as a natural linguistic process and whateverism as a

careless disregard for linguistic standards (Hjarvard, 2004). Scholars like Haugen (1950) and Crystal (2003) argue that while some degree of language mixing is inevitable, the lack of consistency in language use undermines effective communication and linguistic clarity.

In conclusion, linguistic whateverism, particularly in the context of Anglicisms, represents a growing trend among younger speakers who engage in relaxed and inconsistent linguistic behavior. Factors such as uncertainty over the meaning of English terms and a general sense of linguistic nonchalance contribute to this phenomenon, which stands in contrast to language purism and efforts to maintain linguistic integrity. By examining the extent to which Bosnian youth engage in whateverism through their use of Anglicisms, this research seeks to explore the implications of such linguistic behavior for the future of the Bosnian language.

This paper deals with the research on the emergence of whateverism in the context of the use of Anglicisms among young people. The research examines whether and to what extent the Bosnian youth, high school students, use English loanwords instead of Bosnian equivalents and whether or not they care which words they use in everyday expression. In other words, it is crucial to examine, as Baron (2008) puts it, whether the choice matters.

## 2. Literature review

Linguistic whateverism has gained attention as a significant linguistic phenomenon, particularly in the context of global language interactions. The rise of linguistic whateverism has several implications for language use and cultural identity. First, it challenges traditional notions of language purity. Language purists express concerns that the indiscriminate incorporation of foreign elements, particularly Anglicisms, threatens the integrity and richness of recipient languages (Schiffman, 1996). This purist perspective emphasizes the importance of maintaining linguistic standards and preserving cultural identity in the face of globalization. Conversely, proponents of linguistic flexibility argue that whateverism can enrich language. As languages evolve and adapt through borrowing, the mixing of linguistic elements can lead to innovative expressions and a more dynamic communication style (Haugen, 1950; Crystal, 2003). This perspective posits that the fluidity of language reflects cultural exchange and adaptability, essential characteristics in a globalized world.

One of the critical discussions surrounding linguistic whateverism is its impact on communication effectiveness. Critics argue that the lack of consistency and care in language use can lead to misunderstandings and hinder effective communication (Schiffrin, 1994). While linguistic flexibility can promote creativity, it may also compromise clarity and precision, essential components of effective discourse.

On the other hand, supporters contend that whateverism does not inherently detract from communication. They argue that meaning often transcends strict grammatical rules, and the ability to convey ideas effectively can still be achieved through informal language practices (Biber & Conrad, 2009). This perspective emphasizes the adaptability of language and the importance of context in determining communication success.

One of the key drivers of linguistic whateverism is uncertainty or ignorance regarding the precise meaning or usage of English words. Young speakers may incorporate English terms into their speech without fully understanding their implications, often resulting in incorrect or imprecise usage (Baker, 2006). This phenomenon is further exacerbated by the global dominance of English in digital media and entertainment, which exposes non-native speakers to a deluge of English terms in informal settings, where correct usage is not prioritized.

Studies show that language learners and bilingual individuals often experience “semantic interference,” in which the boundaries between languages blur, leading to unintended mixing (Odlin, 2005). For example, Bosnian youth frequently substitute Anglicisms for native terms without being fully aware of the meaning of the borrowed word, a practice linked to linguistic insecurity and a desire to appear cosmopolitan or modern (Haugen, 1950).

Another significant factor contributing to linguistic whateverism is a general sense of relaxation and nonchalance in linguistic behavior. In an increasingly informal world, linguistic precision is often deemed unnecessary, particularly in digital communication contexts such as social media, texting, and online gaming (Baron, 2008). Here, speakers prioritize efficiency, brevity, and trendiness over adherence to traditional linguistic norms, leading to an increase in the use of Anglicisms even when equivalent native terms are available.

Research by Crystal (2003) highlights how linguistic nonchalance is tied to the evolution of informal language in the digital age. The internet and

global communication technologies encourage language play and experimentation, blurring the lines between languages and making loanwords a natural part of daily expression. Among Bosnian youth, this phenomenon manifests as a frequent substitution of English words in casual conversation, often without reflection on the appropriateness or necessity of the borrowed term (Filipović, 2019).

Anglicisms in the modern Bosnian language, despite their prevalence and significant impact on contemporary linguistic processes, remain largely unexamined (Ajšić, 2014; Sehović, 2009). The relatively brief 28 years of independence for post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, coupled with its challenging political landscape and resulting economic and educational struggles, have left the Bosnian language lagging in educational research that Serbian and Croatian languages have already experienced. Historically, Bosnia and its languages have been receptive to external political and linguistic influences, which have led to the erosion of native vocabulary (Klajn, 2001).

It is notable that many Anglicisms are core borrowings (Myers-Scotton, 2006) incorporated into the Bosnian language despite the existence of suitable native alternatives. For instance, the term *kompjuter* (from “computer”) has the Bosnian equivalent *računar*; *struktura* (from “structure”) corresponds to *sastav*; *tenzija* (from “tension”) has the native word *napetost*; *vizija* (from “vision”) matches with *videnje*; *kompatibilno* (from “compatible”) is represented by *s(u)kladno*; and *bukmark* (from “bookmark”) can be substituted with *bilješka*, among others. The prevalence of these loanwords, according to Perković (2016) could pose a risk to native regional languages. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the naming of many businesses in B&H, where original English terms are directly used in Bosnian (e.g., *Mevludin commerce*) despite equivalent Bosnian terms such as *preduzeće*, *trgovina*, and *poslovanje*. Additionally, some borrowed words may have their meanings narrowed when adopted into the recipient language, while others may see their meanings broadened (Bojčić & Braović-Plavša, 2012).

Skopljak and Dubravac (2019) examined the preferences of Bosnian native speakers for using borrowed terms compared to native words. With most participants having been exposed to English, they discovered that participants favored native words over foreign English terms. Furthermore, they noted that younger participants showed a greater preference for English words than older ones, and that borrowings predominantly occur through

nouns, which are “at the top of the list of borrowed words” (p. 140). Similar findings are reported by Šijerkić and Milak (2018), who state that most borrowings in the Bosnian language are also nouns.

Anglicisms in the Bosnian language originate from various aspects of life. Their functional use impacts different semantic fields, but they are primarily noted by researchers in specific areas such as technology (Barbe, 2004; Sočanac, 2009), media, sports, business, politics, law, entertainment (Tomić, 2018), fashion (Klajn, 2001; Oikonomidis, 2003), music (Kajtažović, 2012), and everyday communication. Additionally, a significant source of Anglicisms in Bosnian comes from advertisements found in the media and displayed in public spaces like streets and shopping centers, where advertising creates a demand for these terms (Sehović, 2009).

Research on Anglicisms encompasses grammatical analyses of both nominal and verbal borrowings since borrowed words can not only shift in meaning but also change their grammatical forms. For example, a borrowed noun can be transformed into a verb or adjective, and vice versa. Consequently, numerous foreign studies (Czech-Rogowska & Krawiec, 2018; Higuera Amigo, 2019) and domestic research (Sehović, 2009; Šijerkić & Milak, 2018; Tomić, 2018) have included this type of analysis in their work.

Bearing in mind the importance of these studies for the research on the utility of foreign languages in secondary schools, especially in religious schools, this study poses the following questions as its interest:

RQ1. How does the integration of English loanwords into everyday Bosnian speech affect language attitudes and perceptions of linguistic purity among Bosnian youth?

RQ2. Do high school students pay attention to the consistency in language use or they do not care and use whatever comes to their minds?

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Data collection and participants

This study employed a quantitative approach in which 179 religious secondary school students in the „Osman-ef. Redžović” madrasah were interviewed. The data in **Table 1** below provides descriptive statistics about the participants, categorized by several variables: Grade, Gender, English Language (EL) Usage, EL Self-Assessment,



and Residence. These statistics give insights into the demographic and linguistic background of the participants, which can provide context for further analysis of their educational performance, language proficiency, or any other related research objectives. Here is an interpretation and explanation of each section:

The majority of participants are from **Grade 2** (49.2%), followed by **Grade 3** (24.0%). Grades 1 and 4 have fewer participants, with **Grade 1** having the least representation at **10.6%**. This distribution shows a skew towards younger students in this sample, with a substantial proportion from the second grade. As for the gender, there are more **female** participants (60.9%) than **male** participants (39.1%), indicating a gender imbalance in this sample, with females making up nearly two-thirds of the total.

Over half of the participants (**53.1%**) report using English regularly, while **38.5%** use it only sometimes. A small proportion (**8.4%**) do not use English at all. This indicates that the majority of participants have some level of English language exposure or usage, with a notable percentage using it on an occasional basis. Besides, participants assessed their English proficiency with **41.3%** considering themselves **able to communicate**, followed by **31.8%** rating their skills as **excellent**. A smaller group (**26.8%**) self-assessed as having **basic** skills. This suggests that a significant portion of the sample is confident in their English language abilities, with only a minority feeling they have limited proficiency. A larger proportion of participants come from **rural areas** (**60.3%**), while **39.7%** are from **urban areas**, which might influence the participants' experiences, particularly in relation to language usage and exposure.

In short, the total sample size is 179 participants, with a nearly balanced distribution across various categories. The data reveals that:

- **Grade:** The participants are predominantly from **Grade 2**.
- **Gender:** There is a notable female majority.
- **EL Usage:** Most participants use English regularly, and a large number feel confident in their English skills.
- **Residence:** The majority of participants are from rural areas.

**Table 1.**  
*Participants*

		Frequency	Percent
<b>Grade</b>	1	19	10.6
	2	88	49.2
	3	43	24.0
	4	29	16.2
<b>Gender</b>	Male	70	39.1
	Female	109	60.9
<b>EL usage</b>	Yes	95	53.1
	No	15	8.4
	Sometimes	69	38.5
<b>EL self assessment</b>	Basic	48	26.8
	Able to communicate	74	41.3
	Excellent	57	31.8
<b>Residence</b>	Urban area	71	39.7
	Rural area	108	60.3
<b>Total</b>	179	100.0	100.0

### 3.2 Instrument

The research instrument utilized for this study comprised a structured questionnaire designed to gather quantitative and qualitative data on the use of English loanwords among Bosnian high school students. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections, each addressing different aspects of language use and attitudes towards Anglicisms.

#### Part One: Usage and Attitudes towards English Loanwords

The first section of the questionnaire consisted of a series of closed and open-ended questions aimed at assessing participants' habits, frequency, and contexts of English word usage in everyday speech. The questions included:

1. Do you have a habit of using English words in everyday speech?
2. How often do you use English words in everyday speech?
3. If you use English words at all, in whose company do you use them?
4. Do you notice if one of your friends uses English words when speaking in Bosnian?

5. Which of your peers uses English loanwords more?
6. When your friends use English words in the Bosnian language, how do you feel about it?
7. Can English words threaten the Bosnian language (e.g., if Bosnian youth use English words more and more instead of existing Bosnian words)?
8. Is it important for you to use Bosnian words even when English words are used in your environment?
9. Do you think that in the future some Bosnian words could be completely replaced by English?
10. If YES, would it be negative for the Bosnian language?

This section aimed to capture not only the frequency and contexts of English word usage but also participants' perceptions of the implications of this usage for the Bosnian language.

## Part Two: Preferred Expression in the Context of Anglicisms

The second section of the questionnaire focused on the participants' preferred expressions when faced with Anglicisms. Respondents were presented with three options to express how they would articulate specific terms, allowing for insights into their attitudes towards language choice:

1. Use the Anglicism (e.g., "party")
2. Use the Bosnian equivalent (e.g., "zabava")
3. Indifferent/Whatever option (indicating a lack of preference)

This part of the questionnaire was designed to further explore the participants' linguistic flexibility and their inclination toward language mixing, particularly in domains heavily influenced by English.

Overall, the questionnaire aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Bosnian youth engage with English loanwords, their attitudes towards language preservation, and the potential implications for the future of the Bosnian language.

## 3.3 Data analysis

The data were analyzed to test the study's hypotheses using descriptive statistics, specifically through the computation of percentages, means, and standard deviations. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of English loanword usage among Bosnian high school students.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Exposure to English language (EL) terms and attitudes towards them

The results, presented in Table 2 below, show a complex picture of participants' exposure to English words, their usage habits, and attitudes toward how English loanwords interact with the Bosnian language. The data reflects not only the frequency of English word use but also participants' concerns about the potential influence of English on their native language.

**Table 2.**  
*Exposure to EL-based terms and attitudes towards them*

		N	%
Do you have a habit of using English words in everyday speech	Yes	128	71.5
	No	51	28.5
How often do you use English words in everyday speech	Always	11	6.1
	Often	56	31.3
	Sometimes	100	55.9
	Never	12	6.7
If you use English words at all, in whose company do you use them	-when I am in the company of peers who are the same or better than me in English	76	42.5
	-with all peers regardless of their knowledge of the English language	44	24.6
	-I use them no matter who I'm talking to	40	22.3
	-I don't use them at all	19	10.6

Do you notice if one of your friends uses English words when speaking in Bosnian	Yes	166	92.7
	No	13	7.3
Which of your peers uses English loanwords more?	Boys	49	27.4
	Girls	130	72.6
When your friends uses English words in Bosnian language:	-it bothers me	18	10.1
	-it doesn't sound natural to me	31	17.3
	-it doesn't matter to me	130	72.6
Can English words threaten the Bosnian language (e.g. if Bosnian youth use English words more and more instead of existing Bosnian words)	Yes	120	67.0
	No	38	21.2
	it doesn't matter to me	21	11.7
Is it important for you to use Bosnian words even when English words are used in your environment?	Yes	95	53.1
	No	25	14.0
	it doesn't matter to me	59	33.0
Do you think that in the future some Bosnian words could be completely replaced by English?	Yes	113	63.1
	No	47	26.3
	it doesn't matter to me	19	10.6
If YES, would it be negative for the Bosnian language?	Yes	123	68.7
	No	16	8.9
	it doesn't matter to me	30	16.8

### Prevalence of English Word Usage in Everyday Speech

A large proportion of participants (**71.5%**) reported having a habit of incorporating English words into their everyday conversations, illustrating a significant level of bilingual interaction in informal communication. However, **28.5%** of the participants stated they do not use English words, indicating that a significant minority prefer or adhere to Bosnian-only speech patterns in daily life.

### Frequency of English Word Usage

In terms of frequency, the majority of English word users incorporate these terms only **sometimes** (**55.9%**) and **31.3%** of participants report

using English terms **often**. A small subset (**6.1%**) reported using English words **always**, while **6.7%** claimed they **never** use English words.

### Contexts in Which English Words Are Used

A significant proportion of the participants (**42.5%**) reported that they tend to use English words when they are in the company of peers who have equal or superior English proficiency. Interestingly, **24.6%** use English words regardless of their peers' English proficiency. Furthermore, **22.3%** reported using English words regardless of who they are talking to. On the other hand, **10.6%** stated they do not use English words at all.

### Awareness of Friends' Use of English Words in Bosnian Speech

A striking **92.7%** of participants said they notice when their friends use English words while speaking Bosnian. Despite the frequent use of English words by friends, most participants (**72.6%**) stated that it **does not matter to them** when their friends mix English with Bosnian. However, **17.3%** of participants indicated that hearing English words in Bosnian **does not sound natural** to them, while **10.1%** said it **bothers them**.

### Concerns About the Impact of English on the Bosnian Language

A significant portion of the participants (**67.0%**) expressed concern that the increasing use of English words could **threaten the Bosnian language**, particularly if Bosnian youth start replacing native Bosnian words with English equivalents. Nonetheless, **21.2%** did not perceive this as a threat, and **11.7%** were indifferent, showing a split in attitudes, with some participants feeling that language change is either neutral or inevitable.

### Importance of Using Bosnian Words

Over half of the participants (**53.1%**) felt it is important to maintain the use of Bosnian words even in environments where English words are frequently used. Meanwhile, **33.0%** said it **does not matter** to them. A smaller group (**14.0%**) indicated that it is **not important** to them to maintain the use of Bosnian, reflecting a more relaxed attitude towards language purity.

### Concerns About Future Language Change

Looking to the future, **63.1%** of participants believe that some Bosnian words could eventu-

ally be replaced by English terms. However, **26.3%** of participants did not believe this would happen. **10.6%** were indifferent to the possibility, suggesting some participants are not particularly concerned about the future of language change.

### *Perceived Negative Impact of English Replacing Bosnian Words*

Among those who believe English could replace Bosnian words, **68.7%** felt that such a development would be negative for the Bosnian language. Conversely, **8.9%** of participants did not view this potential change as negative, and **16.8%** were indifferent.

Based on the findings, English word usage has become prevalent among the majority of participants in informal speech, influenced by factors such as media and education. The data shows a general acceptance of English integration, but also highlights the presence of a significant group worried about language preservation.

### *4.2. Preferred way of expression*

This section presents the results of the study, focusing on respondents' preferences for using Anglicisms, native Bosnian terms, or expressing indifference when referring to various terms in everyday communication. The analysis (presented in Table 3 below) reveals patterns in language use across different contexts, including technology, social media, and personal expression.

**Table 3.**  
*Preferred way of expression*

How will you express yourself most often?			
TERM	WAY OF EXPRESSION	N	%
OK	Ok	83	46.4
	„uredu“/“razumijem“ /“dogovoreno“	64	35.8
	I don't care, whatever	32	17.9
LIKE	„Jesi li lajkao“	103	57.5
	„Svida li ti se“	48	26.8
	I don't care, whatever	28	15.6

CHAT	“Čet”	137	76.5
	“Razgovor”	25	14.0
	I don't care, whatever	17	9.5
CELEBRITY	“Selebriti”	57	31.8
	“Poznata osoba”	90	50.3
	I don't care, whatever	32	17.9
DOWNLOAD	“Daunloudovati”	76	42.5
	“Skinuti sadržaj sa interneta”	76	42.5
	I don't care, whatever	27	15.1
HAPPY	“Hepi”	49	27.4
	“Sretan”	103	57.5
	I don't care, whatever	27	15.1
PASSWORD	“Pasvord”	54	30.2
	“šifra”; “korisničko ime”	100	55.9
	I don't care, whatever	25	14.0
ONLINE	“Onlajn”	45	25.1
	“na mreži”	112	62.6
	I don't care, whatever	22	12.3
LEADER	“Lider”	45	25.1
	“vođa”	112	62.6
	I don't care, whatever	22	12.3
COMPUTER	“Kompjuter”	136	76.0
	“računar”; “kompjuter”	20	11.2
	I don't care, whatever	23	12.8
PARTY	“Parti”	67	37.4
	“zabava”	73	40.8
	I don't care, whatever	39	21.8
USERNAME	“Juzernejm”	130	72.6
	“korisničko ime”	26	14.5
	I don't care, whatever	23	12.8



	“Šoping”	106	59.2
SHOPPING	“kupovina”	40	22.3
	I don't care, whatever	33	18.4
	“Frend/frendica”	44	24.6
FRIEND	“prijatelj/prijateljica”	106	59.2
	I don't care, whatever	29	16.2
	“Folover”	119	66.5
FOLLOWER	“pratilac”	40	22.3
	I don't care, whatever	20	11.2
	“Lajv”	125	69.8
LIVE	“uživo”	30	16.8
	I don't care, whatever	24	13.4

The findings of this study reveal a nuanced and evolving linguistic landscape in Bosnia, where both Anglicisms and native Bosnian terms coexist among college-aged Bosnians, depending on the context. The strong preference for Anglicisms in technology-related terms, such as **“Čet”** (76.5%) and **“Juzernejm”** (72.6%), is indicative of the deep influence of English in the digital sphere. These terms, originally coined in English, are now so embedded in everyday speech that they are considered the norm, likely because they entered the lexicon alongside the technological innovations they describe. The frequent use of Anglicized words in these areas could also be attributed to the faster pace of change in technology, where adopting English terms is seen as more practical and reflects a trend of globalization and modernization.

Additionally, the data suggests that Anglicisms are not just passively adopted but are often viewed as more fitting for certain types of communication, especially when it comes to social media and online discourse. Terms like **“Lajv”** (live), **“Folover”** (follower), and **“Frend”** (friend) are associated with platforms and technologies that originated in English-speaking environments. These terms are more than just words—they are symbolic of a connected, globalized world where English is the default language for digital interactions. As these platforms become a core part of social life, the use of Anglicisms could signal a desire to be part of a modern, global community.

However, the preference for Bosnian translations in more culturally rooted terms, such as **“Sretan”** (57.5% for happy) and **“voda”** (62.6% for lead-

er), indicates that native language still holds significant emotional and cultural value. This preference suggests that respondents maintain a strong connection to their linguistic heritage when expressing personal or social concepts that are integral to their identity. For example, **“Sretan”** is not just a translation of “happy”; it is tied to cultural expressions of joy and contentment that are unique to the Bosnian experience. Similarly, **“voda”** conveys a sense of leadership grounded in local culture, which may feel more authentic or authoritative than the borrowed term **“Lider.”**

Another interesting finding is the balance between Anglicisms and Bosnian equivalents for some terms, such as **“Daunloudovati”** (download) and **“Skinuti sadržaj sa interneta”**, which both garnered **42.5%** of responses. This suggests that for some concepts, both linguistic options are viable, and speakers may choose based on the specific context or level of formality. In more formal settings, Bosnian terms might be preferred, while Anglicisms could dominate in casual conversations or among younger generations who are more influenced by global media.

One of the most interesting findings is the notable portion of respondents who indicated they are indifferent to whether they use the Anglicized or Bosnian term—this “whatever” option reflects a deeper trend of language fluidity and adaptability, and warrants closer examination.

Across many terms, a significant percentage of respondents selected the “I don't care, whatever” option, showing indifference to how they express particular words. For example, **17.9%** of respondents were indifferent when asked how they would say “OK,” and **15.6%** expressed no preference for the word “like.” This indifference is even more pronounced for some terms, such as **21.8%** for “party” and **18.4%** for “shopping.” This trend suggests that for many individuals, the distinction between Anglicisms and Bosnian terms is becoming less important, and they are comfortable using either form, depending on the context or conversational flow.

The prevalence of the “whatever” option suggests that linguistic pragmatism is on the rise. Respondents may not see the need to consciously choose between Bosnian and Anglicized terms, especially in informal contexts where communication is more about conveying a message quickly and efficiently rather than adhering to strict linguistic rules. This flexibility is likely influenced by exposure to multiple languages, particularly English through media, technology, and social networks. In these

spaces, Anglicisms often dominate, which may explain why respondents feel equally comfortable using them alongside Bosnian terms. For many, the meaning is clear regardless of the linguistic form, so the choice of word feels trivial.

Interestingly, the “whatever” option is most common in terms related to entertainment, technology, and social interaction—areas where English has a strong global presence. For instance, **21.8%** of respondents expressed indifference regarding how they say “party” (either “parti” or “zabava”), and **17.9%** had no preference for how they referred to a “celebrity” (either “selebriti” or “poznata osoba”). This suggests that in these domains, linguistic choices are often driven by the ease of communication and the influence of popular culture rather than a strong attachment to either Bosnian or Anglicized versions.

On the other hand, terms related to personal identity, emotions, and cultural heritage tend to have lower percentages of indifference. For example, only **12.3%** of respondents expressed indifference toward the term for “leader,” and just **12.8%** felt the same about “username.” Similarly, only **15.1%** were indifferent about how they would express the word “happy.” This suggests that in contexts where language is tied to personal or social identity, respondents are more likely to consciously choose between the Bosnian and Anglicized versions, perhaps due to a deeper emotional or cultural connection to these words. The lower levels of indifference in these categories imply that language choice is more meaningful when it touches on aspects of personal or collective identity.

### 5. Discussion and conclusion

The findings from this study provide a nuanced perspective on the role of Anglicisms in the speech of Bosnian youth, revealing both the pervasiveness of English loanwords and the complex attitudes surrounding their use. In light of the research questions, the results highlight significant trends that reflect broader themes of linguistic borrowing, identity, and the impact of globalization on language practices.

A large proportion of participants who reported having a habit of incorporating English words into their everyday conversations suggests that English has permeated the everyday speech of the majority of the participants, possibly due to the influence of media, technology, or education. In terms of frequency, while English words are present, they are not used continuously, suggesting that a

minority of participants maintain linguistic purity in their speech.

The social context plays a key role in participants’ use of English words. A significant proportion of the participants who reported that they tend to use English words when they are in the company of peers who have equal or superior English proficiency suggests more inclinations to use English words in environments where they feel their English language abilities are valued or required for mutual understanding. Still, for a non-negligible proportion of the participants, the use of English words may be habitual and independent of social context.

Furthermore, A striking **92.7%** of participants said they notice when their friends use English words while speaking Bosnian. This high percentage of the participants who notice when their friends use English words while speaking Bosnian suggests that the presence of English words in conversation is a noticeable and perhaps salient feature of peer interactions, indicating that the mixing of languages is a common and observed phenomenon among this population.

It is also indicative that a large proportion of the participants stresses a fear of language erosion or linguistic imperialism, where the native language could lose ground as English becomes more dominant in informal speech. This shows a commitment to preserving the native language and highlights an awareness of language mixing. Also, they perceive the influence of English as strong and potentially long-lasting, indicating that they feel confident in the resilience of the Bosnian language.

To conclude a RQ1, The integration of English loanwords into everyday Bosnian speech among youth is widespread, with 71.5% of participants using English words occasionally or frequently. While most are indifferent to this mixing, concerns about the potential loss of linguistic purity persist. A majority (67%) fear that English may replace Bosnian words, with 68.7% viewing this as negative. However, 53.1% still believe it’s important to maintain Bosnian vocabulary. Overall, the data reflects a balance between acceptance of English influence and a desire to preserve the Bosnian language.

A striking 71.5% of participants reported regularly incorporating English words into their conversations, underscoring the profound influence of English in contemporary Bosnian society. This prevalence is consistent with Görlach’s (1994) assertion regarding English as a dominant donor language,

particularly in regions experiencing heightened exposure to global media and cultural exchange. The data reveals that 55.9% of English word users incorporate these terms only sometimes, while 31.3% do so often, suggesting a varied but significant engagement with English that aligns with Crystal's (2003) observation about the normalization of English in informal contexts.

The strong preference for Anglicisms in technology-related discussions is particularly telling. Terms like "čet" and "južernejm," which have no direct Bosnian equivalents, reflect a linguistic adaptation that mirrors global technological trends. As noted by Filipović (2019), the rapid evolution of technology necessitates the adoption of terms that are often English by default, thus facilitating communication within a digital landscape dominated by English. This phenomenon reinforces the idea that linguistic borrowing is not merely a passive acceptance of foreign terms but rather an active adaptation to contemporary needs.

The findings indicate that social context significantly influences the use of Anglicisms. Notably, 42.5% of participants tend to use English words among peers with equal or superior English proficiency, which suggests that language use serves not only as a means of communication but also as a marker of social identity and status. This aligns with Baron's (2008) concept of linguistic accommodation, where speakers adjust their language to align with their audience, reflecting a desire for inclusivity or social belonging.

The concept of linguistic whateverism is palpably present in the data, particularly in the substantial portion of respondents exhibiting indifference towards the choice between Bosnian and English terms. The "whatever" attitude, prevalent in areas related to technology and entertainment, indicates a growing pragmatism in language use, where the primary concern shifts from strict adherence to linguistic norms to effective communication. This mirrors Baron's (2002, 2008) arguments about the casual and relaxed approach to language among younger speakers, who increasingly prioritize ease of expression over linguistic accuracy.

Studies such as those by García & Wei (2014) also explore how young speakers navigate linguistic norms, highlighting a trend towards linguistic flexibility and the blending of languages in informal contexts. García & Wei specifically exam-

ine the phenomenon in a Finnish context, revealing similar attitudes towards English loanwords among youth. They also discuss the implications of such language use in social identity formation, resonating with the findings of this study.

However, the substantial concerns voiced by 67% of participants about the potential erosion of the Bosnian language due to Anglicisms highlight a crucial tension between linguistic innovation and cultural preservation. This concern aligns with Schiffman's (1996) warnings about the dangers of linguistic imperialism, where dominant languages may overshadow and threaten the vitality of minority languages. The mixed feelings among participants—some embracing the integration of English, while others worry about cultural loss—underscore the complexity of language dynamics in a globalized world.

The data reveals a critical need for balance between embracing linguistic evolution and maintaining cultural identity. A significant 53.1% of respondents express the importance of preserving Bosnian words, indicating a robust attachment to their linguistic heritage. This sentiment reflects broader concerns about cultural identity and the role of language as a vessel for community values and traditions, as argued by Hjarvard (2004).

Moreover, the perception that 63.1% of participants believe that some Bosnian words could eventually be replaced by English terms raises essential questions about the future trajectory of the Bosnian language. While 68.7% of those anticipating such changes view them negatively, this anxiety coexists with a recognition that language is inherently dynamic and adaptive. As Haugen (1950) posited, the natural evolution of language through borrowing is both inevitable and necessary for cultural adaptation, but it must be managed carefully to avoid detrimental loss.

Thus, as related to the **RQ2**, a notable proportion of Bosnian high school students reported indifference toward their language choices, demonstrating a "whatever" approach, particularly in areas related to technology and entertainment, indicating a high level of inconsistency in language use. In conclusion, the "whatever" responses highlight a shift toward linguistic pragmatism and flexibility in Bosnia, especially in domains heavily influenced by global culture, technology, and entertainment. While there are still areas—particularly those tied to personal or cultural identity—where respondents show a clear preference for Bosnian terms, the sig-



nificant presence of indifference in other areas suggests that language use is becoming more fluid and less tied to rigid distinctions. This reflects an evolving linguistic landscape where both Bosnian and Anglicisms are seen as valid and interchangeable tools for communication, shaped by context, convenience, and the influence of global English. The growing acceptance of hybrid language use and code-switching suggests that Bosnians are increasingly navigating a bilingual or even multilingual world with ease, adapting their linguistic choices based on the situation rather than a strict adherence to one language over the other.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the evolving linguistic landscape among Bosnian youth, characterized by a marked prevalence of Anglicisms and a simultaneous commitment to preserving native language integrity. The findings underscore the need for ongoing dialogue about the implications of language mixing in a globalized context, where cultural identity and linguistic heritage face new challenges.

As Bosnian youth navigate this bilingual environment, the acceptance of Anglicisms signals not only a response to external influences but also a reshaping of local identity. Future research should consider longitudinal studies to track changes over time and examine how educational policies and community initiatives might better support the preservation of Bosnian linguistic heritage while acknowledging the realities of a multilingual world.

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