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## SHIBBOLETHS AS A MEANS OF IDENTIFYING THE NATION

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**Relevance.** Each of us has been learning a foreign language for many years, but upon arrival abroad, the native speaker will recognize the nationality of the speaking partner from the very first minutes of conversation due to the incorrect pronunciation. In some situations, this prevents understanding and communication. Thus, this problem is quite relevant in modern society, including our University, where there is a great number of international students speaking different languages

**Aim:** verification of the existence and identification of words-indicators (shibboleths) of the nationality, determining the cause of their occurrence, and comparison of the pronunciation of Arabian and Belarusian students.

**Materials and methods.** 20 Arab and Belarusian students were questioned for the words difficult to pronounce both in Russian and English. Analysis of the information available in the Internet (Belarusian and international forums, linguistic sites) was carried out.

**Results and discussion.** Our research has revealed that most of the students have problems with the pronunciation of sounds that have no analogues in their native language. Arab students have more difficulty pronouncing Russian words than English, while for Belarusian students speaking good English in terms of pronunciation is harder than for the Arabs. As a result of our survey we have found out some difficult words that serve as distinctive signs of Arabs and Belarusians. This is, for example, the phrase “very much”, which the Arabs pronounce beginning with the sound [f]. For Belarusian students, for example, the word “work”, which is pronounced with the wrong pronunciation of the combination “or”. But generally the English language is easier for Arabians than for Belarusians due to a more flexible articulation apparatus. It is explained by similar tones.

**Conclusion.** The difficulty of reproducing the sounds of foreign languages is connected with historically established differences in the structure of the speech apparatus of native speakers of different languages. In our opinion, shibboleths compose a specific group of pronunciation mistakes that could hardly be corrected.