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FUNCTIONAL COMPARISON OF LOANWORDS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH DISCOURSE

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Abstract. This research paper presents a comparative functional analysis of loanwords in Uzbek and English discourse. Borrowing is a universal linguistic phenomenon driven by globalization, technological advancement, and intercultural communication. While English has historically functioned primarily as a donor language in modern global discourse (contributing internationalisms to various languages, including Uzbek), Uzbek serves as a fascinating case of post-Soviet bilingualism and Turkic language evolution, absorbing borrowings from Arabic, Persian, Russian, and increasingly English. This study investigates the pragmatic, stylistic, and communicative functions of loanwords in both languages, utilizing corpus-based examples and discourse analysis. The findings reveal that loanwords do not merely expand the lexicon; they fulfill distinct stylistic roles, such as precision, euphemism, emotional expressiveness, and socio-cultural positioning.

Keywords: loanwords, discourse analysis, Uzbek language, English language, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, lexical borrowing.

In a globally developing world, the study of language contact and lexical borrowing have turned into predominant topics in the sphere of typological and sociolinguistic research. Language contact is an inevitable consequence of human migration, trade, political shifts, and digital connectivity. When speech communities interact, lexical items frequently cross linguistic boundaries, resulting in lexical borrowing. Although borrowing is often viewed in popular discourse merely as a means

of filling vocabulary gaps, modern discourse analysis and pragmatics reveal that speakers deploy loanwords strategically to achieve specific communicative, stylistic, and social effects.The emergence of loanwords is not only independent process in the lexicon of the language discourse, but also covers sociolinguistic, communicative and ,specifically, pragmatic functions. The primary objective of the study is to examine the similarities in communicative functions and differences in stylistic and pragmatic usage with regard to borrowings in Inglish and Uzbek discourse. Within the scope of different communicative registers, The study also analyses how lexical items of foreign languages are adapted and structured pragmatically. The significance of this comparison is to deliver a deep understanding of fundamental typological and structural differences between Uzbek and English borrowings. Moreover, Uzbek language serves as a highly agglutinative Turkic language that incorporates loanwords by attaching native derivational and inflectional morphemes to foreign roots. It is evident that Uzbek is historically enriched by ethical, religious and literary spheres of Persian and Arabic as well as Russian in terms of civic and industrial spheres.

Although English and Uzbek differ in their genetic origins—Indo-European and Turkic, respectively—as well as in their morphological structures, with English being predominantly analytic and fusional and Uzbek primarily agglutinative, both languages employ borrowed vocabulary to fulfil comparable communicative and discursive functions.

This study adopts a qualitative comparative discourse analysis methodology grounded in contact linguistics and functional pragmatics. Rather than treating loanwords as isolated dictionary entries, the analysis examines them within authentic communicative contexts to determine why a speaker or writer selects a borrowed item over a native equivalent or descriptive paraphrase.

Data for the analysis was compiled from contemporary public and semi-public discourse across three primary domains:

First, journalistic and news media discourse, represented by national outlets such

as Xalq so‘zi, Gazeta.uz, and Kun.uz for Uzbek, alongside The Guardian, BBC News, and The Economist for English.

Second, academic, legal, and institutional texts, which illustrate formal register conventions and terminological standardization.

Third, digital and social media communication, including Telegram channels, X (formerly Twitter), and lifestyle blogs, where spontaneous code-switching, youth slang, and prestige borrowings are most visible.

The analytical procedure consisted of three stages. Initially, non-native lexical items were identified and verified against standard etymological references, including Shavkat Rahmatullayev’s O‘zbek tilining etimologik lug‘ati and the Oxford English Dictionary. Second, the extracted items were categorized according to their donor language and semantic field. Finally, each token was analyzed within its surrounding discourse to map its specific functional role—such as conceptual filling, register elevation, euphemism, or identity construction—allowing for direct cross-linguistic comparison.

The examples collected from Uzbek and English media, academic texts, and social media show that loanwords perform five main functions in both languages. Even though the two languages have different histories and structures, speakers use borrowed words for very similar practical reasons.

The most common reason for borrowing words is to name new things, technologies, or ideas that do not have a single word in the native language. Using a loanword also helps speakers stay exact and clear, especially in science and business.

In Uzbek discourse, the rapid growth of technology and the internet has brought in many English words (sometimes through Russian). Words like startap (startup), frilanser (freelancer), blokcheyn (blockchain), keshbek (cashback), and kontent (content) are now very common in news and business. For example, in a news article saying, "O‘zbekistonda IT-park rezidentlari tomonidan yaratilgan startap loyihalar xalqaro bozorlarga chiqmoqda" (Startup projects created by IT-Park residents in Uzbekistan are

entering international markets), the word startap clearly describes a new, fast-growing tech business. Trying to translate it with a long Uzbek phrase like yangi boshlanayotgan kichik korxona would sound clumsy and lose its exact business meaning.

In English discourse, speakers also borrow words from other languages when a foreign word captures a very specific feeling, taste, or cultural idea in just one word. For instance, English uses schadenfreude (from German, meaning joy at someone else's failure), zeitgeist (from German, meaning the general mood of a time period), and umami (from Japanese, meaning a rich, savory taste). In political news, a sentence like "The opposition struggled to hide its schadenfreude after the minister resigned" expresses a complex emotion clearly without needing a long explanation.

In both Uzbek and English, native words are usually used in everyday, casual speech, while borrowed words make the language sound more formal, official, or academic.

In Uzbek, Arabic and Persian loanwords often create this formal tone. Having both native Turkic words and borrowed words allows speakers to adjust their style depending on the situation. For example, the native Uzbek verb so'ramoq (to ask) is everyday and simple, while the Arabic-origin iltimos qilmoq (to request) or murojaat qilmoq (to apply/address formally) sounds much more official. In a government notice like "Fuqarolar tegishli idoralarga yozma ravishda murojaat qilishlari mumkin" (Citizens may apply in writing to the relevant offices), the borrowed words fuqaro (citizen), idora (office), and murojaat (application/appeal) give the sentence an official and serious tone.

In English, a similar difference exists between native Germanic words and words borrowed from French or Latin. A well-known example is the group ask (Germanic – everyday), question (French – more formal), and interrogate (Latin – very official/legal). In business writing, saying "The board approved the acquisition of the smaller company" (using the French/Latin word acquisition) sounds much more professional and formal than saying "The bosses allowed the buying of the smaller company."

Loanwords are also used to show that a speaker is modern, educated, or part of a

certain social group.

In modern Uzbek, especially among young people and on social media, English loanwords are closely linked with modern trends and global culture. Words like trend (trend), layfxak (lifehack), chellenj (challenge), brend (brand), and vayb (vibe) are used daily. When an Uzbek blogger writes, "Bugungi kunda minimalizm nafaqat dizayn yo‘nalishi, balki zamonaviy hayot tarzining asosiy trendiga aylandi" (Today, minimalism has become not only a design style, but the main trend of a modern lifestyle), using trend instead of the native oqim or moyillik makes the text sound fresh, modern, and relatable to younger readers.

Speakers in both languages often use foreign words when talking about uncomfortable, sad, or sensitive topics like illness, death, or losing a job. Because borrowed words do not carry the strong emotional weight of native childhood words, they feel softer and more neutral.

In Uzbek, Russian and international medical terms are often used to talk about serious illnesses in a calmer, more professional way. Words like onkologiya (oncology), infarkt (heart attack), or reabilitatsiya (rehabilitation) sound less frightening than direct native descriptions. Similarly, in business and economics, words like optimizatsiya (optimization) or restrukturizatsiya (restructuring) are often used instead of blunt Uzbek phrases like ishdan bo‘shatish (firing workers) or qisqartirish (cutting jobs).

In fast-paced news headlines, advertising, and daily texting, loanwords are very useful because they pack a long idea into one short word that easily fits into the grammar of the language.

In Uzbek, English loanwords quickly take on Uzbek suffixes, allowing one short root word to create many useful forms. For example, from the English word feyk (fake), Uzbek speakers easily form feyklar (fakes) and feyk xabarlar (fake news). From blok (block), Uzbek creates the verb bloklamoq (to block), which changes easily for tense and voice, such as bloklandi (was blocked). Using bloklandi in a news headline ("Qoidani buzgan akkauntlar bloklandi" – Accounts that broke the rules were blocked) is much

shorter and punchier than writing a long native explanation like kirish imkoniyati cheklandi.

In English, borrowed nouns and verbs do the exact same job of keeping sentences short and direct. Words like boycott, sabotage, embargo, and veto express complex political or economic actions in a single word. Saying "The workers decided to boycott the company" is much faster and stronger than explaining that they agreed together to stop buying from or working with the company.

Comparing the functional profiles of loanwords in Uzbek and English highlights an important sociolinguistic paradox: while the two languages occupy opposite poles in contemporary global linguistic power dynamics—English as the hyper-central donor and Uzbek as a dynamic regional recipient—the internal pragmatic mechanics governing how speakers deploy foreign words are nearly identical.

Furthermore, structural differences in morphology influence how loanwords behave once adopted. Because Uzbek is an agglutinative language with highly regular suffixation, borrowed nouns and adjectives integrate seamlessly into native grammatical structures without disrupting syntactic harmony. A recent English loan like skrinshot (screenshot) immediately accepts plural, possessive, and case markers (skrinshotlaringizni – your screenshots [accusative]), or combines with the auxiliary verb qilmoq (skrinshot qilmoq – to take a screenshot). English, relying heavily on zero-derivation (conversion) and analytical syntax, achieves comparable flexibility by shifting borrowed nouns directly into verbs or modifiers, as seen in expressions like to veto a bill or avant-garde cinema.

A shared sociolinguistic tension also emerges in both speech communities regarding linguistic purism versus lexical openness. In Uzbekistan, ongoing public and academic debates frequently question whether the rapid influx of English and Russian terms threatens the purity of the Uzbek literary language, prompting language planners to propose native or revived Turkic alternatives (such as tayyoragoh for aeroport or ro‘znoma for gazeta, though many remain stylistic variants rather than full replacements).

In English, historical movements such as the sixteenth-century Inkhorn Controversy criticized excessive Latinate borrowings as pretentious, and modern style guides continue to advise writers against unnecessary foreign jargon. Yet in both languages, pragmatic utility consistently overrides purist prescription: loanwords survive and thrive precisely when they occupy a distinct functional, stylistic, or social niche that native vocabulary does not fill.

Loanwords in Uzbek and English discourse serve far more complex purposes than merely compensating for lexical deficiencies. Through comparative discourse analysis, this study has demonstrated that borrowed vocabulary in both languages operates as a versatile pragmatic resource across five core dimensions: ensuring terminological precision in specialized domains, stratifying formal and informal registers, signaling socio-cultural prestige and modernity, providing euphemistic distance around sensitive topics, and achieving discursive economy.

While English and Uzbek differ in their typological structures and historical trajectories—English acting today primarily as a global donor and Uzbek navigating a rich multi-layered heritage of Arabic, Persian, Russian, and English contact—speakers of both languages rely on non-native lexemes to calibrate tone, construct social identity, and communicate with precision. Recognizing loanwords as functional instruments of stylistic nuance rather than linguistic intrusions provides a clearer understanding of how living languages adapt to an increasingly interconnected world.

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