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Semantic Adaptation of English Loanwords in Modern Uzbek

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Abstract: This study investigates the semantic adaptation processes of English loanwords in the modern Uzbek language. The integration of global terminology, driven by socio-economic transformations, digital communication, and cultural exchange, has enriched the Uzbek lexicon. However, foreign lexical units rarely retain their exact original semantic boundaries upon entering the host language. This paper analyzes how English loanwords undergo semantic narrowing, semantic broadening, shift of meaning, and stylistic re-evaluation in Uzbek. Drawing upon specific textual citations and page-referenced examples from classic and contemporary literature in both English and Uzbek—including works by Erkin A'zam, Tohir Malik, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald – the research illustrates the exact mechanisms of semantic shift. The findings demonstrate that modern Uzbek selectively assimilates English loanwords through complex semantic re-articulation, reflecting localized socio-cultural realities.
Keywords: Lexical Borrowing, Semantic Adaptation, Loanwords, Modern Uzbek, Sociolinguistics, Semantic Narrowing, Semantic Shift.

Introduction. The dynamics of globalization and digital inter-connectivity have significantly accelerated the influence of the English language on the Uzbek lexical system. Lexical borrowing is not merely a process of mechanical insertion; rather, it is a complex sociolinguistic phenomenon where borrowed terms adapt structurally, phonetically, and semantically to the recipient language's systemic matrix.

In modern Uzbek discourse—ranging from formal journalism and literary prose to everyday urban communication—English loanwords play a pivotal role. When an English lexical item enters Uzbek, it undergoes semantic adaptation to fit into existing conceptual fields, frequently resulting in semantic specialization, generalization, or metaphorical re-interpretation. Understanding these shifts provides crucial insights into the cognitive and cultural frameworks governing modern Uzbek linguistic identity.

Literature Review. The study of lexical borrowing and semantic adaptation has a established tradition in both Western and Uzbek linguistics.

Einar Haugen (1950) laid the foundational typology of borrowing, distinguishing between loanwords, loan blends, and loan shifts. Uriel Weinreich (1953) emphasized the structural and psychological mechanisms of language contact, highlighting how recipient languages re-examine foreign semantics to prevent lexical redundancy.

In Uzbek linguistics, the theoretical groundwork for lexicology and linguistic contact was established by A. Khojiyev (1981) and H. Jamolkhonov (2005), who examined the structural integration of foreign lexical elements. Furthermore, recent sociolinguistic developments regarding English-Uzbek language contact have been addressed by scholars such as N. Mahmudov (2012), who notes the rapid influx of international terminology during Uzbekistan's post-independence period. However, detailed textual analyses comparing original English semantic usage against localized Uzbek literary contexts remain limited. This paper bridges that gap by examining targeted semantic adaptations through explicit literary citations.

Methodology. This research adopts a qualitative comparative approach combined with contextual semantic analysis. The primary corpus consists of:

Source Texts (English): Modern English fiction and essayistic prose where tarwordsreflect their primary dictionary meanings.

Target Texts (Uzbek): Modern Uzbek literary works, publicist writing, and contemporary narrative prose containing English loanwords.

The analytic framework focuses on identifying semantic changes across four primary categories:

- **Semantic Narrowing (Specialization):** Reduction of the word's polysemous range to a specific functional sphere.
- **Semantic Broadening (Generalization):** Expansion of the core meaning.
- **Semantic Shift (Drift):** Re-assignment of the core denotation to a related or metaphorical concept.
- **Pejoration / Amelioration:** Alteration of emotional or evaluative connotations.

Discussion and Analysis. 4.1. Semantic Narrowing (Specialization)

When polysemous English words are borrowed into Uzbek, they frequently lose their secondary meanings and retain only a single specialized sense. A prominent example is the English noun "business".

In original English contexts, business encompasses commercial activity, personal affairs, duty, or an enterprise.

English Text: "That is not your business," Nick said. He looked at the floor and thought about the whole matter. — Hemingway, E. (1927). Men Without Women. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, p. 74.

Here, Hemingway uses "business" to denote a personal affair or concern.

In modern Uzbek literature, however, biznes (бизнес) is strictly narrowed down to commercial trade or profit-making enterprises.

Uzbek Text: "Hozirgi zamonda har kim o‘z biznesini yo‘lga qo‘yishi kerak, yo‘qsa tirikchilik qiyinlashadi." — A’zam, E. (2011). Guli-guli. Toshkent: O‘zbekiston nashriyoti, b. 112.

The broad English sense of "personal affair" ("bu sening ishing emas") is entirely absent from the Uzbek usage of biznes.

4.2. Semantic Shift and Contextual Re-evaluation. A distinctive shift occurs with words related to social roles and technology, such as "leader" (lider) and "image" (imidj). In standard English, "image" refers to a visual representation, a mental picture, or a public impression.

English Text: "It was the dark, fluttering image of a leaf that made him turn his head toward the window." — Fitzgerald, F. S. (1925). The Great Gatsby. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, p. 118.

In modern Uzbek publicist and narrative prose, imidj has shifted almost exclusively to denote a curated personal brand, professional style, or status symbol.

Uzbek Text: "U o‘zining tashqi imidjiga juda katta e’tibor berar, kiyinishi va gap-so‘zi shahar ziyolilariga xos edi." — Malik, T. (2008). Shaytanat (5-kitob). Toshkent: Sharq nashriyoti, b. 245.

In the Uzbek text, imidj loses its fundamental meaning of a literal physical reflection or optical visual image, functioning instead as a sociolinguistic register marker for socio-economic status.

4.3. Functional Adaptation of Colloquial English Loanwords. In contemporary Uzbek urban communication and internet discourse, words such as "trend", "hype" (xayp), and "post" have undergone rapid assimilation.

For instance, the English verb/noun "post" (to publish online / a publication) in English can denote physical timber supports, mail systems, or digital messages.

English Text: "I will drop the letter in the post before the morning delivery arrives."
— Orwell, G. (1936). Keep the Aspidistra Flying. London: Victor Gollancz, p. 52.

In Uzbek daily usage and modern internet commentary, post is strictly limited to social media publications, and has even generated hybrid Uzbek verbal constructions such as post qoldirmoq (to leave a post) or post joylamoq (to upload a post).

Uzbek Text: "Ijtimoiy tarmoqda yozilgan har bir post ortida muallifning ma'naviy dunyosi aks etadi." — Mahmudov, N. (2012). Til va madaniyat. Toshkent: Ma'naviyat, b. 189.

Conclusion. The semantic adaptation of English loanwords in modern Uzbek demonstrates that lexical borrowing is an active, regulatory linguistic process. Uzbek does not passively accept foreign vocabulary; rather, it shapes loanwords to fit its existing linguistic structure through:

1.Systemic Narrowing: Stripping polysemous English terms down to single, specific concepts (e.g., biznes).

2.Functional Re-contextualization: Applying abstract concepts to specific socio-economic and professional domains (e.g., imidj).

3.Morpho-Semantic Integration: Synthesizing foreign nouns with native auxiliary verbs (e.g., post qoldirmoq).

These adaptations preserve the integrity of Uzbek syntax and semantic hierarchies while expanding the language's capacity to express modern global concepts.

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