



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NEOLOGISM FORMATION IN CONTEMPORARY UZBEK AND ENGLISH

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Abstract

This paper explores how contemporary Uzbek and English generate and absorb new words, highlighting the balance between traditional word-formation and borrowing. By analyzing examples from media, youth speech, and online discourse, the study shows how globalization, technological progress, and cultural policy shape lexical innovation in both languages. While both English and Uzbek display universal neological strategies, their historical contexts and attitudes toward foreign influence differ significantly.

Keywords: Neologism, word formation, borrowing, Uzbek language, English language, lexicology, globalization.

Introduction

Neologisms — newly coined words or expressions — are vital markers of how a language responds to changing social and technological realities (Crystal, 2011). As the world becomes more interconnected, languages adapt by forming or borrowing words for new concepts. English, as a global lingua franca, constantly exports and imports new terms (Durkin, 2014). Uzbek, historically shaped by Persian, Arabic, Russian, and now English, provides a compelling case for examining how smaller languages negotiate modernity and linguistic identity (Rakhimov, 2022).

2. Theoretical Framework

A neologism is defined as a new lexical item or a familiar word with a novel meaning (Matthews, 2014). Common mechanisms include derivation (adding



affixes), compounding, blending, shortening, acronyms, and borrowing (Štekauer, 2000). The vitality of these processes depends on the typological features of the language and the social conditions under which it evolves (Crystal, 2011).

3. Methodology

This paper combines: A review of scholarly works on word-formation (Bauer, 1983; Štekauer, 2000);

Authentic examples from the Uzbek press (2022–2025) and the Oxford English Dictionary’s recent entries;

Observations of neologisms circulating on social media and in youth slang (Tagliamonte, 2016).

Examples illustrate how these languages adapt lexically to modern life.

4. Neologism Formation in Contemporary English

4.1 Creative Word-Formation

English is renowned for its word-formation flexibility (Crystal, 2011). Affixation remains common: the noun selfie quickly produced selfie stick, selfie-ready, and selfie culture (Tagliamonte, 2016). Semantic extension is routine: virus, once strictly medical, now refers to digital malware.

Blending is highly productive: words like infotainment (information + entertainment) and brunch (breakfast + lunch) exemplify this playful creativity (Durkin, 2014). Verbal conversion is typical: to Google from the brand name Google, to friend and to unfriend (Plag, 2003).

4.2 Borrowing and Global Circulation

English freely adopts foreign words — karaoke (Japanese), emoji (Japanese), and sushi (Durkin, 2014). However, as a dominant global medium for science, pop culture, and technology, English more often exports its neologisms than imports them (Crystal, 2011). Words like hashtag, podcast, and binge-watch have spread into many other languages, including Uzbek (Mamatqulov, 2023).



5. Neologism Formation in Contemporary Uzbek

5.1 Indigenous Mechanisms

Uzbek, as a member of the Turkic language family, relies heavily on suffixation and compounding to coin new words and adapt existing ones to new contexts (Rakhimov, 2022). These methods remain vital despite increasing borrowing from Russian and English.

Suffixation is highly productive. The suffix -chi indicates a person associated with an action, occupation, or tool:

ish (work) → ishchi (worker)

haydov (driving) → haydovchi (driver)

o‘qit (teach) → o‘qituvchi (teacher), here -uvchi is an agentive suffix similar in function to -chi but often used with verbs.

The suffix -lik forms abstract nouns or denotes a state:

do‘st (friend) → do‘stlik (friendship)

sog‘ (healthy) → sog‘lik (health)

yosh (young) → yoshlik (youth)

The suffix -dor can create adjectives or nouns meaning “having” or “characterized by”:

ilm (knowledge) → ilmdor (knowledgeable)

umid (hope) → umiddor (hopeful)

Compounding combines two or more roots into a new concept:

qalamdon (qalam = pen, don = container) → pencil case

kitobdo‘st (kitob = book, do‘st = friend) → book lover

yurak og‘riq (yurak = heart, og‘riq = pain) → heartbreak or chest pain

In modern contexts, compounding is used creatively to name new cultural or social phenomena:

internet tezligi (internet speed)

mobil aloqa (mobile communication)

Reduplication — another traditional Turkic strategy — intensifies meaning or expresses plurality:

mayda-chuyda (small miscellaneous things)

qora-qura (insignificant, trivial)

tip-tiniq (crystal clear)

Semantic extension and calques (loan translations) are also common:



The English term brainstorming is sometimes expressed as fikr bo‘roni (literally “storm of ideas”).

So‘zlashuv ilovasi (speech app) is a literal translation for chat app.

New terms for official use often employ classical roots and suffixes to maintain a “pure” Uzbek feel:

qonunchilik (legislation, from qonun = law + -chilik)

tadbirkorlik (entrepreneurship, from tadbirkor = entrepreneur + -lik)

These examples show that despite the influx of global terms, native word-building mechanisms remain robust and adaptable, helping speakers create expressions that feel culturally authentic and linguistically harmonious (Rakhimov, 2022; Mamatqulov, 2023)

5.2 Borrowing Patterns

Uzbek remains receptive to foreign vocabulary, especially for modern technology. English loanwords like bloger (blogger), onlayn (online), and printer dominate digital discourse (Mamatqulov, 2023). Official policy encourages Uzbek equivalents: for example, hisoblash qurilmasi (“calculating device”) is promoted instead of kompyuter; however, speakers prefer the familiar international term in daily usage (Rakhimov, 2022).

Russian legacy vocabulary persists, especially in everyday urban language: poezd (train), direktor (director), magazin (shop) (Rakhimov, 2022).

6. Cross-Language Patterns: A Narrative Comparison

Both languages show that technological change is a key driver of neology. In English, digital life has spawned words like vlog (video blog) and unbox (to open and review a product on video) (Tagliamonte, 2016). Uzbek speakers frequently adopt these directly: vloger, unboxing video, often with Uzbek verb endings such as vlog qilmoq (“to vlog”) (Mamatqulov, 2023).

Youth slang pushes creative hybridization. English teenagers say YOLO or FOMO without translation (Tagliamonte, 2016). Uzbek youth use trendda (from “trend”) and like qilmoq (“to like [a post]”) — mixing English stems with Uzbek suffixes (Mamatqulov, 2023).

Unlike English, which accepts new words informally and without centralized control (Durkin, 2014), Uzbek has government-backed efforts to protect its native



lexicon and limit excessive borrowing (Rakhimov, 2022). However, practice often overrides policy, especially in media and online interaction.

7. Cultural and Social Drivers

Globalization explains the influx of internationalisms. Media, education abroad, and the internet expose Uzbek speakers to global English expressions (Mamatqulov, 2023). Meanwhile, English benefits from cultural exports through film, music, and technology (Crystal, 2011).

Identity politics also matter. Post-independence, Uzbekistan's language planning aims to strengthen national identity by coining native equivalents, yet the public often prioritizes convenience and international understanding (Rakhimov, 2022). In English, there is little institutional pushback against foreign words; rather, their adoption is seen as enriching (Durkin, 2014).

Conclusion

This comparative study confirms that while both Uzbek and English continually adapt to global realities, they do so under different historical and social conditions. English, with its global reach, freely blends, borrows, and exports neologisms. Uzbek shows resilience in its native formation but remains pragmatic in adopting international terms for modern life.

Future research should investigate the social attitudes of younger speakers toward native versus borrowed words and explore quantitative corpus studies to track usage trends (Štekauer, 2000; Tagliamonte, 2016).

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