



IDENTIFYING ENGLISH LOANWORDS IN UZBEK AND KOREAN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ETYMOLOGICAL AND CROSS-LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

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Abstract This article examines the identification of English loanwords in Uzbek and Korean through a comparative analysis of etymological and cross-linguistic evidence. Particular attention is given to the distinction between etymological source, donor language, mediating language, and recipient language. The study argues that formal similarity between an English word and a lexical item in Uzbek or Korean is insufficient to establish direct borrowing. Historical contact, documentary evidence, lexicographic sources, and comparison with possible intermediary languages must also be considered. The analysis shows that English-derived vocabulary in Uzbek has developed through both mediated and direct contact, while Korean demonstrates documented cases of direct English borrowing as well as transmission through Chinese and Japanese. The proposed approach provides a more precise basis for distinguishing genuine English loanwords from internationalisms and other externally sourced lexical items.

Keywords: English loanwords, Uzbek, Korean, etymology, donor language, mediating language, lexical borrowing, language contact, comparative linguistics.

Introduction

Lexical borrowing is a major mechanism of vocabulary expansion resulting from language contact. A lexical item may be transferred directly from one language to another or may reach the recipient language through one or more intermediary languages. Consequently, identifying the source of a borrowed word requires historical and cross-linguistic evidence rather than simple formal comparison.

Haugen's influential study of linguistic borrowing established a systematic framework for analysing borrowed linguistic material and its relationship to bilingual contact (Haugen, 1950). An important implication of this approach is that the history of a lexical item should be reconstructed separately from its present-day form.

For the identification of English loanwords, three concepts are particularly important. Etymological source refers to the language from which a word ultimately derives. Donor

language refers to the language that directly supplied the borrowed form to the recipient language. Mediating language refers to an additional language through which the item may have passed. These categories may coincide, but they do not necessarily do so.

This distinction is particularly relevant to Uzbek and Korean because both languages contain international vocabulary whose historical transmission may involve several languages. The present study therefore examines how etymological and cross-linguistic evidence can be used to identify English loanwords more reliably.

Materials and Methods

The study employs a comparative historical-linguistic and lexicographic approach. The analysis considers four principal types of evidence:

1. **etymological evidence** – information concerning the historical origin of the lexical item;
2. **cross-linguistic evidence** – comparison with corresponding forms in English and possible intermediary languages;
3. **historical evidence** – dated texts, historical dictionaries, and documented language-contact studies;
4. **lexicographic evidence** – contemporary dictionaries confirming the lexical status and meaning of the item in the recipient language.

The central methodological principle is that **English origin does not automatically mean direct English borrowing**. If a word ultimately derives from another language but entered Uzbek or Korean through English, English can be treated as the immediate donor while the other language remains the etymological source. Conversely, if an English-origin term reached the recipient language through Russian, Chinese, or Japanese, the mediating language should be explicitly recorded.

The following analytical model is therefore proposed:

Lexical unit → etymological source → donor language → mediating language → borrowing route → recipient-language form.

This model allows individual lexical items to be assessed rather than classifying all international vocabulary as English borrowing.

English Loanwords in Uzbek

English influence on Uzbek vocabulary has developed under changing historical conditions. Research on English lexical entry into Uzbek distinguishes earlier periods in which international vocabulary could reach Uzbek through Russian from the post-independence period, when direct contact with English became increasingly significant. Kuchkarov's study specifically examines English-to-Uzbek lexical entry, phonetic, morphological and semantic adaptation, and the intermediary role of Russian.

This historical distinction is essential for classification. The presence of an English-origin word in Uzbek does not by itself establish that English was the immediate donor. During periods of strong Russian influence, an English-derived international term could have entered Uzbek through Russian. In contemporary contexts, however, direct English-Uzbek contact has expanded through information technology, education, business, science, and international communication.

Modern lexicographic evidence confirms the integration of many English-derived forms into Uzbek. For example, *Izoh.uz* records **kompyuter** as an Uzbek noun referring to an electronic computing machine. It also records **internet** as the worldwide computer network. These entries establish their current lexical status in Uzbek, but they should not alone be used to determine the historical route of borrowing.

Accordingly, the Uzbek case demonstrates the necessity of combining **synchronic lexicographic evidence** with **diachronic evidence**. A dictionary can demonstrate that a word is established in contemporary Uzbek; historical sources are needed to determine how and when it entered the language.

English Loanwords in Korean

The Korean case provides particularly valuable evidence for the study of English borrowing because historical Korean-English bilingual dictionaries and scholarly studies document early contact with English.

Underwood's *A Concise Dictionary of the Korean Language*, published in 1890, was a Korean-English and English-Korean dictionary and represents an important early record of Korean-English lexicographic contact. The historical significance of such dictionaries lies not simply in their translation function but also in their documentation of vocabulary during the period of increasing contact between Korean and Western languages.

More detailed evidence is provided by Kim (2008), who examined English vocabulary borrowed into Korean during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The study identifies two broad routes: **indirect borrowing through Chinese or Japanese** and **direct borrowing from English into Korean**. It also documents problems associated with phonological differences, phonetic transcription, spelling, and variation in the representation of English forms.

The Korean evidence can therefore be represented as:

Direct route: English → Korean

Indirect route: English → Chinese/Japanese → Korean

This distinction is important because the existence of a Korean form resembling English does not automatically establish direct borrowing. Historical and cross-linguistic evidence must determine whether English itself was the donor or whether another language mediated the transfer.

Modern Korean lexicographic resources maintained by the National Institute of Korean Language provide systematic documentation of contemporary Korean vocabulary and include specialized dictionary resources for Korean-English learners and Korean lexical research.

Comparative Analysis

The comparison of Uzbek and Korean demonstrates several methodological similarities.

Criterion	Uzbek	Korean
Direct English contact	Increasingly important in contemporary vocabulary	Strongly documented in modern vocabulary
Important intermediary languages	Russian in particular historical contexts	Chinese and Japanese in earlier modern-period borrowing

Historical evidence	Written sources and linguistic studies	Historical bilingual dictionaries and linguistic studies
Contemporary lexicographic evidence	Izoh.uz	National Institute of Korean Language dictionaries
Main analytical problem	Distinguishing English source from Russian mediation	Distinguishing direct English borrowing from Chinese/Japanese mediation

The comparison shows that **cross-linguistic similarity is supporting evidence, not sufficient proof**. If *English* → *Uzbek* and *English* → *Korean* forms are similar, this may suggest a common source, but it does not by itself establish identical borrowing routes.

The distinction becomes especially important for internationalisms. A lexical item occurring in English, Russian, Uzbek, Korean, and other languages may have circulated internationally through several channels. Its classification as an English loanword should therefore depend on evidence that English functioned as the relevant donor language at the stage of entry.

A practical classification scheme can be expressed as follows:

Analytical field	Question
Lexical unit	What is the borrowed form?
Etymological source	Where does the word ultimately originate?
Donor language	Which language supplied it directly?
Mediating language	Did another language transmit it?
Historical evidence	When and where is it first documented?
Recipient form	How was it adapted in Uzbek/Korean?
Lexicographic status	Is it established in current dictionaries?

Such documentation reduces the risk of treating all internationally circulating words as direct English borrowings.

Discussion

The evidence from Uzbek and Korean confirms that the identification of English loanwords is fundamentally a historical and comparative task. A lexical item should not be classified exclusively on the basis of its modern pronunciation, spelling, or semantic similarity to English.

In Uzbek, the role of Russian as a historical intermediary must be considered, particularly for vocabulary that became established during the Soviet period. At the same time, contemporary English-Uzbek contact has created a growing number of opportunities for direct borrowing.

In Korean, the historical record provides clearer documentary evidence for multiple routes. Kim's analysis demonstrates that English vocabulary entered Korean both directly and through Chinese or Japanese. This makes Korean a particularly useful case for distinguishing donor language from etymological source.

The same principle should be applied to Uzbek. If an English-derived item entered Uzbek through Russian, it is methodologically inaccurate to describe Russian as the ultimate etymological source. At the same time, calling it a direct English borrowing would also be

inaccurate if historical evidence demonstrates Russian mediation. The most precise description is therefore a mediated English-derived borrowing, with English identified as the ultimate source and Russian as the mediating language.

Conclusion

Identifying English loanwords in Uzbek and Korean requires the integration of etymological, historical, lexicographic, and cross-linguistic evidence. The most important methodological distinction is between etymological source and donor language. A third category, mediating language, is necessary when lexical transfer occurs indirectly.

The comparison demonstrates that English-derived vocabulary has entered Uzbek and Korean through both direct and indirect routes. In Uzbek, Russian has played an important intermediary role in particular historical periods, while contemporary English contact has become increasingly direct. In Korean, historical research documents both direct English borrowing and indirect transmission through Chinese and Japanese.

Therefore, an English loanword should be identified only after considering its historical pathway rather than merely its formal resemblance to English. The proposed sequence – **lexical unit** → **etymological source** → **donor language** → **mediating language** → **borrowing route** → **recipient-language form** → **lexicographic status** – provides a consistent basis for comparative and contrastive research on English loanwords in Uzbek and Korean.

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