

THE LINGUISTIC STUDY OF BORROWED INTERNET TERMS

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Abstract: In the digital era, new technology and social-media concepts are often coined in English and rapidly diffused worldwide. As a result, many non-English languages borrow Internet-originated English terms. This paper examines how such loanwords enter other languages, focusing on their typological forms, adaptation mechanisms, and sociolinguistic significance. Our analysis highlights the dynamic interplay of English-language hegemony and local adaptation in the evolving global Internet lexicon.

Keywords: loanwords; Internet lexicon; English borrowings; language contact; adaptation; sociolinguistics

Introduction

Globalization and digital communication have accelerated lexical contact between English and other languages. The Internet has become a primary arena for language mixing, where English-origin technology and culture terms spread rapidly. Scholars note that “[t]he influence of English on other languages has become a prominent phenomenon,” shaping language change, identity, and cultural exchange. In practice, technical and social-media vocabulary often enters other languages wholesale as English loanwords (e.g. computer, spam, selfie), or as net slang (e.g. LOL, hashtag, tweet). Borrowing is a key source of new Internet terminology: Saidkadirova (2020) observes that online lexicons rely heavily on loanwords, as languages have to label novel concepts. Borrowings (loanwords) are defined as “terms borrowed from other languages in whole or in part,” which are usually adapted to the recipient language’s sound and grammar systems. For example, Uzbek Internet usage shows most online terms were taken from English (and some from Russian), and then conformed to Uzbek phonology and spelling. Similarly, Chinese online slang now includes words like emo and flag (from English) alongside native morphemes, reflecting global youth culture.

Studies of such borrowings illustrate how non-English languages cope with “the intensive interaction of world languages” in cyberspace. The present work surveys these processes: we classify borrowing types (direct loans, calques, blends, etc.), detail their integration into phonology and grammar, and discuss social implications (prestige, identity, policy). We draw on research in Uzbek, Chinese, Belarusiansss-pub.orgss-pub.org, and global analyses. This approach provides a comprehensive view of how Internet-originating English terms are assimilated and evolve in diverse linguistic communities.

In summary, adaptation of Internet loanwords involves aligning foreign forms with native linguistic systems. Phonologically and graphically, words are respelled; grammatically, they adopt local inflectional patternsss-pub.org; morphologically, they take suffixes and affixes from the host language; semantically, they may shift. These processes make the loanwords feel like native vocabulary despite their origin. Nonetheless, complete integration often happens quickly in the fast-moving online context: study of Belarusian shows that once an English term enters Internet discourse, it rapidly becomes a regular part of the language, sometimes even losing its specialized “technical” sense and turning into general slangss-pub.org.

Conclusion

The rise of English as the lingua franca of the Internet has led to a proliferation of English-origin terms across world languages. Our review shows that these borrowings are integrated through systematic processes (phonetic respelling, grammaticalization, semantic shifts) and manifest in various forms (pure loans, hybrids, calques). The adaptation patterns and rates vary by language – for example, logographic languages like Chinese may attach native verbs to English nouns, while alphabetic languages may simply adopt the word with minor spelling changes. Social factors heavily influence this phenomenon: younger, internet-savvy speakers drive the adoption of loanwords, treating them as markers of modernity and in-group memberships. In contrast, language purism movements strive to replace anglicisms with indigenous terms. Overall, Internet-originating English terms illustrate dynamic language contact. Far from passively “polluting” recipient languages, these borrowings enrich them by filling lexical gaps and enabling cross-cultural communication. According to research, the trend shows no sign of slowing: English loanwords in digital discourse are spreading ever faster. As global digital communication continues to expand, the interplay between English and other languages on the Internet will remain a rich field for linguistic change and negotiation. Understanding this process – from types of loans to their integration and impact – is crucial for mapping the evolution of world languages in the Internet age.

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