



About Semantic Transformations in Uzbek Borrowing of The Independence Period

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the semantic transformation of loanwords that have become active in the Uzbek lexicon during the period of independence. In particular, it examines the extent to which the meaning of a lexical unit in the source language is preserved, partially modified, or acquires an entirely new semantic profile in the recipient language. The semantic stratification of loanwords is interpreted by classifying them into lexemes used in their primary meaning, lexemes whose primary meaning has undergone partial modification, and lexemes that have become detached from their original meaning. The article discusses the specific features of semantic shifts through examples of lexical units that entered Uzbek during the years of independence, such as displey (display), fayl (file), bonus, imij (image), karaoke, klip (clip), trening (training), sayt (site), reglament (regulation), spiker (speaker), brifing (briefing), mayning (mining), bot, blokcheyn (blockchain), terminal, toster (toaster), and parkovka (parking).

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 20th

April, 2026

Accepted: 14th May 2026

KEYWORDS: Loanword, semantic transformation, independence period, lexical development, neologism, source language, genetic meaning, etymological meaning.

Introduction

Language is a complex system that is intrinsically connected with human thought and the development of society. One of its most important features is the constant dynamism of meaning, that is, semantic changes and transformations. Semantic transformations encompass the processes through which the meanings of linguistic units expand, narrow, shift, or undergo complete renewal. These phenomena reflect not only the internal laws of language development but also changes in human cognition, culture, and social life. Therefore, the issue of semantic transformations has consistently been studied in world linguistics as one of the most relevant scientific problems.

The main part

In world linguistics, the tradition of studying semantic transformations dates back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In particular, Ferdinand de Saussure, the founder of structuralism, provided a scientific foundation for meaning relations within the language system. He emphasized the necessity of studying language from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives and associated semantic changes with the internal laws of the linguistic system.

In the first half of the twentieth century, semantic changes were studied mainly within the framework of historical linguistics. During this period, processes such as semantic shift, generalization, specialization, metaphor, and metonymy became central objects of scholarly inquiry. For example, metaphor was interpreted as the transfer of

meaning from one object or concept to another on the basis of similarity, whereas metonymy was understood as a semantic shift based on contiguity or association.

Later, with the development of structuralism, semantic relations began to be studied systematically. In lexical semantics, the formation and transformation of meaning were analyzed through such concepts as paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations, synonymy, antonymy, and hyponymy. During this period, semantic transformations were explained through internal relations within the language system.

The emergence of cognitive linguistics in the second half of the twentieth century marked a new stage in the study of semantic transformations. Within this framework, meaning is interpreted in relation to human consciousness, cognition, and worldview. Cognitive linguists regarded metaphor not merely as a literary device but as one of the fundamental mechanisms of human thought. For instance, the theory of conceptual metaphor emphasizes that concepts in one domain are understood through concepts belonging to another domain.

Semantic transformations are also studied within pragmatics in connection with the process of speech communication. In this context, meaning is determined not only by the lexical unit itself but also by the context, the participants in communication, and communicative intentions. Thus, the same linguistic unit may express different meanings in different communicative situations.

In modern linguistics, semantic transformations are being investigated on the basis of an interdisciplinary approach. Fields such as psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, and corpus linguistics have also become important in the study of semantic change. In particular, corpus-based data make it possible to identify how word meanings are used and transformed in actual speech.

Although the lexicon of the Uzbek language has historically been enriched from various sources, the period of independence brought this process to a new stage. Fundamental changes in the political, economic, information-communicative, and cultural life of society were reflected in the language as well. In particular, borrowings related to the spheres of the market economy, information technologies, mass culture, advertising, finance, sport, and administration entered active usage within a short period of time. This process is not merely the adoption of words; rather, it is a complex phenomenon that has generated new relations within the semantic system of the language, new lexical layers, and new semantic shifts.

One of the most important factors determining the functioning of borrowed words in a language is their semantic adaptation. A lexical unit from the source language does not always enter the recipient language with exactly the same meaning. In many cases, it is borrowed due to social needs, the necessity of nomination, and the need to express new objects and phenomena in the language. Therefore, the subsequent development of each borrowed lexeme depends on the relationship between the scope of its meaning in the source language and its sphere of use in the recipient language. Some words preserve their primary meaning almost completely, some become specialized within a particular domain, while others move considerably away from their source meaning and acquire an independent semantic profile.

From this perspective, it is expedient to study loanwords of the independence period by dividing them into three groups: lexemes used in their primary meaning, lexemes whose primary meaning has undergone partial modification, and lexemes that have become detached from their original meaning. This classification makes it possible to determine the degree to which borrowed words have been integrated into the language and the extent to which their semantic connection with the source language has been preserved. Such an approach serves as an important theoretical basis, especially for including new-period neologisms in dictionaries, defining their stylistic status, and consolidating their normative forms.

Borrowings used in their primary meaning are employed in Uzbek in a sense close to their core meaning in the source language. For example, the word *display* is based on the English notion of “displaying” or “showing” and is likewise used in Uzbek to denote a screen that presents text, graphics, or other types of information. The word *fayl* was originally associated in English with the meanings of a collection of documents or a card index, whereas in Uzbek it has become established as a unit for storing data on a computer. Later, its use in the sense of an office folder has also been observed. Lexemes such as *bonus*, *imij* (image), *karaoke*, *klip* (clip), *kottej* (cottage), *dizayn*

(design), buklet (booklet), and broker also belong to the group of borrowings adopted in meanings close to their original semantic basis. In such words, semantic change is not radical; the core concept is preserved, while differences arise mainly in the sphere of use or stylistic activity.

In some loanwords used in their primary meaning, semantic specialization or narrowing can also be observed. For instance, while *trening* in English has the general meaning of instruction or training, in Uzbek it is more commonly used to denote an active method of instruction associated with the fields of education and psychology. Words such as *lizing* (leasing), *kliring* (clearing), *xolding* (holding), *bodibilding* (bodybuilding), and *kreking* (cracking) have similarly become associated with specific professional domains. The word *sayt* originally means “place” or “location” in the source language, whereas in Uzbek it has become a specialized term denoting an information space on the Internet. In the lexeme *reglament* (regulation), the sense of “order” or “rule” has been preserved, but it has become active in official and administrative discourse in the meaning of a set of rules governing a particular process or activity. These examples show that even when the primary meaning is preserved, a word may undergo functional specialization according to the needs of the recipient language.

The second group consists of lexemes whose primary meaning has undergone partial modification. In such words, the connection with the source meaning is not completely lost; however, in the new linguistic environment it is restored indirectly, sometimes through logical reinterpretation. For example, the English basis of the word *pikap* (pickup) contains the concept of “lifting” or “picking up,” while in Uzbek it denotes an open-bed vehicle intended for carrying cargo and passengers. In this case, there is a semantic bridge between the concepts of “lifting” and “transporting.” Similarly, the lexeme *multimedia* has acquired the meaning of a “multi-channel information environment,” creating a complex relationship between its etymological structure and its new technological content.

Lexemes such as *spiker* (speaker), *brifing* (briefing), *triller* (thriller), and *bluming* (blooming) are also noteworthy as examples of partially modified semantics. *Spiker* originally denotes a “speaker” or “one who speaks,” but in the present-day political and legal sphere it has become specialized in the meaning of the chairperson of a parliament or chamber. *Brifing*, deriving from the meaning of “brief information” or “instruction,” is used to denote a short meeting between officials and representatives of the mass media. *Triller*, originating from the sense of “excitement,” denotes a literary work or film characterized by a complex plot and intense dramatic tension. Thus, in borrowings of this type, the source meaning has not disappeared, but it has been reshaped within the framework of a new concept.

The third group consists of lexemes detached from their original meaning. In such units, the connection between the etymological meaning in the source language and current usage is very weak or cannot be perceived without special analysis. During the period of independence, a number of borrowings related to information technologies and the digital economy have entered precisely this category. For example, *mayning* (mining) means “mining” in English, whereas in present-day Uzbek it denotes the process of generating cryptocurrency. Here, the connection between “extracting” and “producing a digital resource” can be reconstructed only at a figurative and logical level. The word *bot* is a shortened form of the lexeme *robot*, but it is now widely used to refer to a program that automatically performs various operations. Its current pragmatic content has moved considerably away from the source concept of a general “mechanical performer.”

Blokcheyn (blockchain) also belongs to this group of words. Its etymological meaning is “a chain of blocks,” but in actual use it denotes a complex technological system designed to secure cryptocurrency and digital transactions. Although its nomination is logically transparent, in contemporary usage it has moved beyond the ordinary meaning of “chain” and has become an independent term. The relationship between the meaning of *treylar* (trailer), “to follow” or “to pull along,” and a short promotional video shown before a film is likewise not transparent for an ordinary language user. The lexeme *trend* has moved beyond the general meaning of “tendency” or “direction” and has become active in youth speech in the sense of a topic that has become widely discussed and popular on social media. In such cases, semantic transformation is strong, and the word appears to be reborn under the influence of a new cultural and communicative environment.

Lexemes such as terminal, toster (toaster), and parkovka (parking) also deserve particular attention in this regard. Etymologically, the word terminal goes back to the meaning of “final” or “last”; however, in Uzbek it expresses several new meanings, such as an external device connected to a computer or an electronic device used for making payments. Although these meanings are indirectly related to the sense of an “endpoint,” in practical usage the word has formed an independent terminological field. Similarly, although toster originates from the meaning “a device for making toast” in the source language, in Uzbek speech it has been adopted almost as the ready-made name of a household appliance. Parkovka, which entered Uzbek through Russian, is widely used in colloquial speech in the meaning of “a place for the temporary parking of vehicles.” However, its semantic and stylistic relationship with such units as stoyanka, avtoturargoh, and to‘xtash joyi has not yet been fully standardized.

These observations show that loanwords of the independence period are not merely a layer of new words, but rather a manifestation of the renewal of Uzbek linguistic cognition, nominative potential, and semantic system. Innovations in social life, digital technologies, global cultural contacts, and market relations have exerted a direct influence on the language. As a result, new lexemes have entered the language, the semantic scope of existing words has expanded, and the stylistic status of some units has changed. In particular, lexical items disseminated through social networks, such as xayp (hype), mem (meme), heshteg (hashtag), layk (like), layfhak (life hack), respekt (respect), and fleshmob (flash mob), have further accelerated the spread and popularization of loanwords.

Conclusion

In conclusion, semantic transformations are an integral part of language development and have been widely studied in world linguistics on the basis of various theoretical approaches. Historical, structuralist, cognitive, and pragmatic approaches illuminate this process from different perspectives. Today, the study of semantic change is of great importance not only for understanding the internal laws of language but also for gaining deeper insight into human cognition and culture.

In this regard, the investigation of semantic transformations through a comprehensive and multidimensional approach will contribute to the further development of linguistic science.

Semantic transformations in loanwords of the independence period constitute one of the important indicators of the development of the Uzbek language. In this process, one group of words preserves its primary meaning from the source language, a second group undergoes partial reinterpretation, while a third group becomes almost completely detached from its original meaning under the influence of a new sociocultural environment. Therefore, the study of loanwords should not be limited merely to identifying their origin; it should also encompass their function in the contemporary language system, semantic development, stylistic potential, and representation in dictionaries. In this sense, loanwords of the independence period clearly demonstrate the open, dynamic, and renewing nature of the Uzbek language.

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