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THE IMPACT OF MODERN ENGLISH ON CONTEMPORARY BULGARIAN AND TURKISH LEXICONS

Sezen Sinan Sali – Student / PhD Student / Young Scientist

Department of Technical and Natural Sciences,

University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”

Tel.: 0899079714

E-mail: sezi_sali@abv.bg

Chief Assistant Diana Bebenova-Nikolova, PhD

Department of Philological and Natural Sciences,

University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”, Silistra Branch

Phone: 0888494077

E-mail: dbebenova@uni-ruse.bg

***Abstract:** This paper discusses the impact of Modern English on two languages—Bulgarian and Turkish—distinct yet geographically neighbouring. The study focuses on three interrelated domains of vocabulary: lexical borrowing, communication practices, and socio-cultural dynamics. A corpus of 60 loanwords from Bulgarian and Turkish is analyzed for this purpose. These items have been selected based on interviews with professionals, young people and IT experts. The methodology involved identifying loanwords, calques, and standardized equivalents in both Bulgarian and Turkish, based on the Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar. The frequency and integration of these lexical items were quantified, assessed and then presented in a comparative table. The conclusions highlight both convergences and divergences in assimilation of English vocabulary, shedding light on the processes of linguistic globalization and intercultural exchange in the region.*

***Keywords:** lexical borrowing, calques, impact of English, Bulgarian and Turkish*

INTRODUCTION

English has evolved from a regional dialect into the dominant global lingua franca. This transformation is caused by a sequence of historical and geopolitical developments, which started in the 16th century, including the rise of the British Empire, the colonial expansion, the Industrial Revolution, and, subsequently, the cultural, technological, and economic dominance of the United States. Consequently, Modern English has experienced profound lexical and cultural influence on numerous languages worldwide. This paper examines the impact of Modern English on two typologically distinct but geographically neighbouring languages Bulgarian and Turkish. It focuses on English lexical and communicative interference in these two languages, with particular attention to the speech and writing of digitally engaged young professionals.

DISCUSSION

The Development and Global Spread of Modern English

Since the late 18th century English has been under constant transformations, which turned it from a language spoken on geographically isolated islands into a global lingua franca. Due to the expansion of the British Empire, by the end of the 19th century English became established on every inhabited continent through colonization, administration, missionary activity, and education (Kananaj, Karaj, 2024). The metaphor ‘the sun never sets on the British Empire’ is still remembered today.

The Industrial Revolution additionally enhanced English's usage. Due to the technological innovations and scientific publications, by the early 20th century, English had become a key medium for scholarly communication, particularly in the natural sciences.

Consequently, the geopolitical rise of the United States after World War II increased the usage of English to new levels of global influence through Hollywood cinema, popular music, television broadcasting, and later the internet. This version of English has introduced new vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and pronunciation patterns that have spread worldwide. Terms such as cool, okay, TV, and email, among others, have entered the lexicons of dozens of languages, often without translation or adaptation (Kananaj, Karaj, 2024).

Then came the rise of English as the dominant language of digital communication and global commerce. Today, English is the primary language of international aviation, science, diplomacy, and information technology. According to Crystal (2003), nearly 80% of the world's electronically stored information is in English, and most internet users access online content primarily in English.

This article focuses on Modern English's lexical and communicative interference in the Bulgarian and Turkish languages, with particular attention to the speech and writing of digitally engaged young professionals.

Observations on the Influence of English on Bulgarian

In Bulgaria, the role of English intensified significantly after the political transition in 1989 and the subsequent European Union accession process. English-derived vocabulary has entered Bulgarian predominantly through exposure to media, ICT, business discourse, and popular culture. Terms such as компютър (computer), лаптоп (laptop), ъпдейт (update), даунлоудвам (download), and уебсайт (website) exemplify fully assimilated borrowings that have undergone phonological and morphological integration.

English has similarly provided a rich source of terminology in economics, management, and marketing (Nedelcheva, S., 2024). Words like маркетинг (marketing), бранд (brand), мениджър (manager), бизнес (business), and стартап (startup) are regularly encountered in both corporate discourse and mass media. Their adoption reflects lexical enrichment and the symbolic Western models of professionalism and innovation.

Economic and managerial registers are also saturated with English-origin terminology. Lexical items such as маркетинг (marketing), бранд (brand), мениджър (manager), бизнес (business), and стартап (startup) are omnipresent in both corporate and academic discourse (Nedelcheva, 2024). These terms reflect lexical enrichment and index aspirational Western professional norms.

Among younger Bulgarians—particularly digital natives—the permeability of linguistic boundaries is especially evident. English-origin verbs have been adapted into Bulgarian morphosyntax through the addition of native suffixes, forming hybrid constructions such as лайквам (to like), шервам (to share), поствам (to post), and хейтвам (to hate). This process, often described as morphological nativization, aligns with patterns observed in other contact languages (Winford, 2003). These hybrid constructions, typically combining an English verb stem with a Bulgarian morphological ending, represent a form of "morphological nativization," a phenomenon observed in many contact languages (Winford, 2003).

In professional and academic settings, English is a source of new vocabulary and a dominant working language. In sectors such as information technology, finance, and higher education, English frequently replaces Bulgarian as the primary medium of written and oral communication. Often younger Bulgarian professionals produce technical documentation, programming languages, corporate meetings, exclusively in English (Nedelcheva, S., 2024). That's how they contribute to Bulgaria's presence in transnational knowledge economies but also challenge the status and functionality of the Bulgarian language in specialized domains.

Observations on the Influence of English on Turkish

Historically, the influence of English on Turkish began to intensify in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly during the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of Western powers. Following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the state

promoted modernization, which included adopting Western technological and scientific advancements, many of which were documented in English. The English language became prominent in academic, diplomatic, and business contexts, especially during the Cold War. At that time Turkey's strategic position enhanced interactions with NATO and the Western world. By the late 20th century, the influence of the English language became even stronger with the rise of global communication, the spread of English-language media, and the increasing importance of English for access to global markets.

After the 1980s, Turkey welcomed lots of foreign investments. Simultaneously, the rise of private universities, many of which adopted English as the medium of instruction, contributed to the proliferation of English in higher education. In the academics, English became the dominant language for professional communication. These universities offered programs to the growing middle class. They encouraged young people to learn English for academic and career advancement.

As a result, English gained prominence in education and became a key tool for upward social mobility in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

However, the impact has been met with some resistance, as efforts to preserve the integrity of Turkish and maintain its cultural identity continue to shape language policy and usage in the country.

Terminology

According to the Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar, the article uses the following terminology:

- Borrowing indicates the process of incorporation of lexical items, expressions, or even grammatical patterns from one language into another.
- A loanword is a word adopted with minimal changes from its original language.
- A calque is a word, or a phrase is employed here to describe expressions that have been translated literally, maintaining their semantic structure while utilizing native linguistic resources.
- A standardised word equivalent – linguistic items described as standard, because they are considered acceptable and correct by most educators users of it. Usually these are native or long-established terms that correspond to English concepts but are not borrowings or calques.

Methodology

To examine the impact of Modern English on Bulgarian and Turkish, we compiled a corpus of 60 English words, provided at the end of the article as Table 1. These items have been selected based on interviews with professionals, young people and IT experts. Then the usage of these words in Bulgarian and Turkish was analysed. This process included identification of loanwords, calques and standardized equivalents, based on the Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar. Finally, we calculated and compared the numbers of the lexical items in Table 2 for the Bulgarian and the Turkish words.

Table 1. Corpus of the identified words in the three languages

N	English	Bulgarian	Turkish
Computers/ Technology (10 words)			
1	Algorithm	Алгоритъм	Algoritma.
2	Computer	Компютър	Bilgisayar.
3	Data	Данни	Veri. Data.
4	Database	База данни	Veritabanı.
5	Digital	Цифров/дигитален	Dijital.
6	Download	Изтегляне/ даунлоудвам	İndir

7	Email	Електронна поща/имейл	E-posta.
8	Hardware	Хардуер	Donanım.
9	Internet	Интернет	İnternet.
10	Login	Вход/ логин	Giriş.
11	Network	Мрежа/ нетуърк	Ağ.
12	Online	Онлайн	Çevrimiçi.
13	Laptop	лаптоп	Dizüstü bilgisayar/Laptop
14	Platform	Платформа	Platform.
15	Software	Софтуер	Yazılım.
Social Media/ Communication (10 words)			
16	Cloud	Облак/ клауд	Bulut. Yeni fotoğraflarım bullut'ta.
17	Code	Код	Kod. Mors alfabesindeki kod.
18	App (Application)	Приложение/ ап	Uygulama.
19	Link	Линк	Bağlantı. Link. Bu linki
20	Stream	Поток/ стриймвам	Akış.
21	Post	Публикация/пост	Gönderi.
22	Share	Споделяне/ шервам	Paylaş.
23	website	уебсайт	Web sitesi.
24	Comment	Коментар	Yorum.
25	Update	ъпдейт	Güncelleme
Academics/Technical (10 words)			
26	Campus	Кампус	Kampüs.
27	Seminar	Семинар	Seminer.
28	Bachelor	Бакалавър	Lisans.
29	Master	Магистър	Yüksek Lisans.(Master)
30	Presentation	Презентация	Sunum.
31	Curriculum	Учебен план/ кирюкюльм	Müfredat.
32	Credit (academic)	Кредит (академичен)	Kredi (akademik).
33	Module	Модул	Modül.
34	Lecture	Лекция	Ders.
35	Tutor	Преподавател/ тютор	Öğretmen.
Youth Slang / Informal English (15 words)			
36	Cool	Готин/ кул	Havali. Bu adam çok havalı.
37	Dude	Тип/дюд	Kanka. Gezmeye gidelim mi, kanka?
38	Fresh	Отпусни се/ фреш	Sakin ol. Dostum, biraz sakın ol.
39	Influencer	Инфлуенсър	Influencer.
40	Selfie	Селфи	Selfie. Gel bir selfie yapalım.
41	Sticker	стикер	Sticker/Çıkartma.
42	Emoticons	емотикон	emotikon/ ifade.
43	Emoji	емоджи	Emoji. Gülme emoji'si attı.
44	Like	Харесвам	Beğen. Biri bu durumu beğendi.
45	Bro (from brother)	Бро (брат)	Kardeş / Bro.
46	GIF	GIF/ гиф	GIF.
47	Avatar	Аватар	Avatar/profil simgesi.
48	Vibe	Настроение/ вайб	Vibe/Hissiyat.
49	Message	Съобщение/ месидж	Mesaj.
50	Viral	Вирален/ вайръл	Viral. Yazdığı yorum TikTok'ta viral oldu.
Business/ Marketing (10 words)			
51	Marketing	Маркетинг	Pazarlama/ Marketing.
52	Brand	Бранд / марка	Marka.
53	Trend	Тренд	Trend.
54	Startup	Стартъп	Startup/Girişim.
55	Promotion	Промоция	Promosyon.
56	Manager	Мениджър	Menejer/Yönetici.
57	Business	Бизнес	İş dünyası. İş dünyası çok hızlı değişiyor.
58	Credit	Кредит	Kredi. Bankadan kredi çektim.

59	Project	Проект	Proje. Yeni projeler üzerinde çalışıyorum.
60	Show	Шоу	Gösteri. (Şov). Show.

Table 2. Comparison of the number of lexical items

Category	Count in Bulgarian	Count in Turkish
Loanwords with some changes	49	28
Calques	2	8
Standardised equivalents	19	14

(Note: Some overlap exists in usage— e.g. “download” is represented both as *изтегляне* (native) and *даун лоудвам*(loanword). In this analysis, both forms are counted, but categorised separately.)

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the comparative analysis of the 60-word corpus and the visual data for English lexical influence in Bulgarian and Turkish, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- English interference is strong and structurally similar in both languages. Both Bulgarian and Turkish show a high proportion of loan words with phonetic or morphological adaptation: Bulgarian 49, Turkish 28. This suggests that English is not only a source of new vocabulary but is actively shaping how both languages involve, especially in technology business and digital communication.

- Turkish uses slightly more calques, while Bulgarian more loan words. Turkish features more calques 8 compared to Bulgarian 2, indicating a tendency to translate and integrate concepts into native syntactic and lexical structures. Bulgarian on the other hand demonstrates a higher rate of direct borrowing often with minor adaptations, reflecting less resistance to phonological and lexical assimilation. This trend might reflect differences in language policy, linguistic purism, or cultural attitudes toward English.

- Both languages preserve a core of standardized equivalents: 19 in Bulgarian and 14 in Turkish out of the 60-word corpus. This shows that not all English terms displace native vocabulary in essential domains such as education, communication and in computing. Both languages continue to use well established native terms

- Domains of interference are paralleled in both Bulgarian and Turkish, which reflects the global dominance of English in digital culture, innovation and corporate communication.

- According to Kananaj and Karaj (Kananaj, Karaj, 2024) ‘Language purists select adaptation strategies that conceal the origin of imported words because, evidence from numerous languages demonstrates that they are more receptive to foreign words and constructions if they are camouflaged.’ However, based on the presented research, calques seem to prevail in academics and technological fields, as these words fill language gaps as some ideas do not have native terms.

In sum, the influence of English on the Bulgarian language is multifaceted and growing. It is driven by structural globalization, digital media, and Bulgaria's strategic alignment with Western institutions.

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