

A Comparative Study of Morphological Adaptation of English Loanwords in Korean And Karakalpak

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Abstract: This study explores the morphological adaptation of English loanwords in Korean and Karakalpak from a comparative perspective. In the context of globalization, English has become a major source of lexical borrowing, influencing both languages in different ways. The research is based on data from media, corpora, and dictionaries, comprising approximately 150–200 loanwords. The findings show that both languages employ affixation and hybrid formation to integrate English roots into their morphological systems. However, Korean demonstrates higher productivity and direct borrowing, while Karakalpak shows moderate adaptation often influenced by Russian. The study highlights the role of linguistic structure, cultural factors, and globalization in shaping morphological adaptation processes.

Keywords: Loanwords, morphological adaptation, Korean, Karakalpak, language contact, affixation, hybrid forms, globalization, comparative linguistics.

Introduction: In the context of globalization, the English language has established itself as a dominant medium of international communication, exerting significant influence on numerous languages worldwide. The rapid expansion of global economic, technological, and cultural exchanges has accelerated the spread of English lexical items into various linguistic systems. As a result, English has become a major donor language, contributing extensively to the vocabulary of both widely spoken and lesser-studied languages. Loanwords represent one of the most visible outcomes of language contact. They emerge as a natural consequence of interaction between speech communities and serve as a means of expressing new concepts, technologies, and cultural phenomena. In contemporary linguistics, loanwords are not only viewed as lexical borrowings but also as indicators of deeper structural and cultural integration. Their adaptation within a recipient language involves complex phonological, morphological, and semantic processes that reflect both linguistic constraints and sociocultural factors.

Among these processes, morphological adaptation plays a crucial role in integrating borrowed elements

into the grammatical system of the recipient language. It involves the modification of foreign lexical items through the addition of native affixes, the formation of hybrid structures, and their incorporation into existing word-formation patterns. Studying morphological adaptation provides valuable insights into how languages maintain structural integrity while simultaneously expanding their lexical resources.

The present study focuses on Korean and Karakalpak, two typologically and genealogically distinct languages. Korean is often classified as an isolate or part of the Koreanic language family, characterized by agglutinative morphology and extensive use of derivational and functional suffixes. Karakalpak, on the other hand, belongs to the Turkic language family and exhibits a highly agglutinative structure with rich morphological marking. Despite their differences, both languages have experienced significant influence from English, particularly in the domains of technology, media, and popular culture. This makes them suitable for a comparative investigation of morphological adaptation processes.

Although numerous studies have examined English loanwords in individual languages, there is a lack of

comprehensive comparative research addressing the morphological adaptation of English borrowings in Korean and Karakalpak simultaneously. Existing research tends to focus either on phonological adaptation or on sociolinguistic aspects, leaving morphological mechanisms comparatively underexplored, especially in cross-linguistic perspective.

This study aims to analyze the morphological adaptation of English loanwords in Korean and Karakalpak through a comparative approach. The paper focuses on identifying the main types of morphological integration, examining the formation of hybrid structures, and determining the similarities and differences in adaptation strategies between the two languages. By doing so, the study seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of language contact phenomena and the role of morphology in the integration of borrowed lexical items.

Theoretical Background

Loanwords are generally defined as lexical items that are borrowed from one language (the donor language) into another (the recipient language) as a result of language contact. They arise when speakers of different linguistic communities interact, leading to the transfer of linguistic elements across languages. According to M. Haspelmath, loanwords are not merely lexical additions but reflect broader sociolinguistic and typological processes that shape language change. Borrowing typically occurs when there is a need to name new concepts, technologies, or cultural phenomena, or when certain foreign terms carry prestige or symbolic value. Language contact, as described by S. Thomason and T. Kaufman, involves varying degrees of interaction between languages, ranging from minimal contact to intensive bilingualism. The intensity of contact determines the extent of borrowing, weak contact usually results in lexical borrowing, whereas strong contact may lead to structural changes affecting phonology, morphology, and syntax. Loanwords can be classified into several types based on their mode of integration. These include direct borrowings, where both form and meaning are transferred, calques, where the structure or meaning is translated, and hybrid forms, where elements from both the donor and recipient languages are combined. This typology highlights the complexity of borrowing as a dynamic and multi-layered linguistic process.

Morphological adaptation refers to the process by which borrowed lexical items are integrated into the morphological system of the recipient language. This involves adjusting foreign words to conform to the grammatical rules, word-formation patterns, and

morphological structures of the receiving language. Unlike phonological adaptation, which deals with sound changes, morphological adaptation focuses on how borrowed elements function within the grammatical framework. One of the primary mechanisms of morphological adaptation is affixation, whereby native affixes are attached to borrowed roots. For instance, in Korean, English loanwords frequently combine with the verbal suffix 하다 (-hada) forming verbs such as 서비스하다 (seobiseu-hada) (“to provide service”). Similarly, in Karakalpak, English roots may take Turkic suffixes, resulting in forms such as chatlasiw or blogshi. These examples illustrate how borrowed elements become productive components of the recipient language’s morphology.

Another important mechanism is the formation of hybrid structures, which combine elements from different linguistic systems. Hybridization demonstrates the flexibility of language systems in accommodating foreign elements while preserving internal structural coherence. Through such processes, loanwords are not only incorporated into the lexicon but also become part of the grammatical and derivational system. Ultimately, morphological adaptation enables borrowed words to be fully integrated into the grammatical system of the recipient language. This integration allows them to participate in inflection, derivation, and syntactic constructions, thereby ensuring their functional compatibility within the language.

Previous research on English loanwords has been conducted extensively in both Korean and Karakalpak linguistic contexts, though with different emphases. In Korean linguistics, numerous studies have examined the phenomenon of Konglish, referring to English-derived expressions adapted within Korean. Scholars have explored phonological adaptation, semantic shifts, and sociolinguistic aspects of these borrowings, particularly in relation to globalization and popular culture. The morphological integration of English loanwords, especially through the use of native suffixes such as -hada, has also been widely documented.

In contrast, research on Karakalpak has primarily focused on the historical development of loanwords and their role in the lexical system. Studies have examined borrowings from various languages, including Russian and, more recently, English. While some attention has been given to phonetic and semantic adaptation, the morphological processes involved in integrating English loanwords into Karakalpak remain relatively underexplored.

Despite the growing body of research in both languages, there is a noticeable lack of comparative

studies addressing the morphological adaptation of English loanwords in Korean and Karakalpak simultaneously. Most existing works analyze these languages independently, without considering cross-linguistic similarities and differences. Therefore, a comparative approach is necessary to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how typologically distinct languages adapt foreign lexical material.

METHODOLOGY

The present article adopts a qualitative comparative research design to investigate the morphological adaptation of English loanwords in Korean and Karakalpak. A comparative approach is employed in order to identify both similarities and differences in the mechanisms through which borrowed lexical items are integrated into the morphological systems of the two languages. This design allows for a systematic examination of language-specific and cross-linguistic patterns of adaptation. The empirical data for the study are drawn from multiple sources to ensure reliability and representativeness. These sources include contemporary media texts (such as online news articles, advertisements, and social media content), linguistic corpora, and monolingual as well as bilingual dictionaries of Korean and Karakalpak. Media materials are particularly useful for capturing real-time language use and the dynamic nature of borrowing in modern communication, while corpora and dictionaries provide standardized and verified lexical data. The dataset consists of approximately 150–200 English loanwords collected from both languages. These examples were selected based on their frequency of use, relevance to contemporary communication domains (e.g., technology, media, and popular culture), and their potential to demonstrate morphological adaptation. The selection process also ensured that the data included a variety of word classes and structural patterns.

Several analytical methods are employed in this article. First, the descriptive method is used to identify and categorize the structural features of loanwords in each language. Second, the comparative method is applied to examine similarities and differences in morphological adaptation between Korean and Karakalpak. Third, morphological analysis is conducted to investigate the processes of affixation, hybrid formation, and grammatical integration of borrowed elements. Through this methodological framework, the study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how English loanwords are morphologically adapted and integrated into two typologically distinct language systems.

The morphological adaptation of English loanwords in

Korean and Karakalpak demonstrates both shared tendencies and language-specific strategies shaped by typological and sociolinguistic factors. Despite belonging to different language families, both languages actively integrate English lexical items into their morphological systems through affixation, hybrid formation, and grammatical incorporation. One of the most prominent mechanisms of adaptation in both languages is affixation, whereby English lexical roots combine with native morphological elements. In Korean, this process is typically realized through the addition of the verbal suffix **하다** (-hada) which enables borrowed nouns to function as verbs. For example, **서비스하다** (seobiseu-hada “to provide service”) and **컨트롤하다** (keonteurol-hada, “to control”) illustrate how English roots are seamlessly integrated into the Korean verbal system. In Karakalpak, a similar process occurs through the attachment of Turkic derivational suffixes such as -law/-lew, -las/-les, -lasiw/-lesiw and -shi/-shi, producing forms like **chatlas** (“to chat”) and **blogshi** (“blogger”). In both cases, the English root retains its core semantic content, while native affixes provide grammatical functionality, enabling full participation in the recipient language’s morphological system.

Another important feature of morphological adaptation is the formation of hybrid structures, which combine elements from English and the recipient language. These hybrid forms demonstrate a high degree of morphological productivity, as they allow speakers to generate new lexical items using familiar patterns. In Korean, English loanwords frequently combine with native morphemes to form verbs, nouns, and adjectival constructions, while in Karakalpak, English roots are integrated into agglutinative structures through the addition of suffixes that mark derivation and word class. This process reflects the flexibility of both languages in incorporating foreign elements without disrupting their internal grammatical organization.

Grammatical integration further illustrates the depth of morphological adaptation. In Korean, borrowed lexical items are fully integrated into the grammatical system through the use of case markers and particles, allowing them to function syntactically as native elements. Similarly, in Karakalpak, loanwords participate in the agglutinative system by taking case endings, possessive markers, and other inflectional suffixes. This level of integration indicates that English loanwords are not merely lexical insertions but are structurally embedded within the grammatical framework of both languages. However, notable differences can be observed in the pathways and patterns of adaptation. Korean typically

adopts English loanwords through direct borrowing, followed by systematic phonological and morphological adjustment within its own linguistic system. In contrast, Karakalpak often receives English loanwords indirectly through Russian, which influences their phonetic shape and, to some extent, their morphological behavior. This intermediary role of Russian results in adaptation patterns that may differ from direct borrowing processes, reflecting historical and sociolinguistic factors specific to the region.

Overall, the comparative analysis reveals that while both Korean and Karakalpak employ affixation and

hybridization as key mechanisms of morphological adaptation, the degree of productivity, pathways of borrowing, and structural integration differ. These differences are largely typological characteristics and contact histories of the two languages, highlighting the complex interplay between linguistic structure and external influence in the process of loanword adaptation. The comparative analysis of morphological adaptation of English loanwords in Korean and Karakalpak reveals both convergent and divergent patterns shaped by typological structure and sociolinguistic factors.

Table 1.

Comparative Features of Morphological Adaptation

Feature	Korean	Karakalpak
Adaptation type	Direct borrowing	Often indirect (through Russian)
Morphology	Analytic with suffixation	Agglutinative
Productivity	High	Moderate

The data indicate that both languages actively incorporate English loanwords into their linguistic systems, however, the mechanisms and degree of integration differ. In terms of similarities, both Korean and Karakalpak employ affixation as a primary strategy for morphological adaptation. English lexical roots are combined with native suffixes, enabling them to function within the grammatical framework of the recipient language. Additionally, both languages exhibit hybrid formations, where elements from English and the native language coexist within a single lexical unit. This reflects a shared tendency toward structural accommodation while preserving semantic content. Despite these similarities, several important differences can be observed. First, Korean predominantly adopts English loanwords through direct borrowing, integrating them into its system with systematic phonological and morphological adjustments. In contrast, Karakalpak often receives English loanwords indirectly through Russian, which influences both their phonetic form and morphological behavior. Second, the morphological systems of the two languages differ typologically. Korean, while agglutinative in nature, demonstrates a more analytic tendency in the integration of loanwords, particularly through the productive use of the suffix -hada. Karakalpak, as a Turkic language, exhibits a strongly agglutinative structure, where multiple suffixes can be

attached to a single root, resulting in more complex morphological constructions. Third, the degree of productivity varies. Korean shows a higher level of productivity in generating new hybrid forms and adapting loanwords across different grammatical categories. Karakalpak, although productive, demonstrates a comparatively moderate level of morphological expansion, often limited by patterns inherited through indirect borrowing.

These differences can be explained by several factors. Typological differences between the languages play a crucial role, as the structural organization of each language determines how foreign elements are integrated. Furthermore, historical and sociolinguistic conditions, particularly the influence of Russian on Karakalpak, significantly affect borrowing pathways and adaptation patterns. Cultural factors, such as the strong impact of global media and popular culture in Korea, also contribute to the higher productivity and direct borrowing observed in Korean. Overall, the comparative analysis highlights that while both languages share common strategies of morphological adaptation, the extent and nature of these processes are shaped by their linguistic structure, contact history, and sociocultural environment.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this article provide important insights into the linguistic mechanisms underlying the

morphological adaptation of English loanwords in Korean and Karakalpak. From a linguistic perspective, the adaptation processes observed in both languages are closely related to their typological characteristics. Korean and Karakalpak both employ agglutinative strategies, however, their morphological behavior differs in terms of productivity and structural integration. Korean demonstrates a high degree of flexibility in combining English roots with native suffixes, particularly through the productive use of **하다** (-hada) while Karakalpak relies on Turkic affixation patterns that are often influenced by intermediary borrowing through Russian. The linguistic explanation of these differences lies in the interaction between internal grammatical systems and external contact influences. In Korean, direct borrowing allows for more systematic and internally motivated morphological integration. In contrast, Karakalpak adaptation patterns are partially shaped by Russian-mediated borrowing, which affects both the form and the morphological behavior of loanwords. As a result, the integration process in Karakalpak may appear less uniform compared to Korean. Cultural factors also play a significant role in shaping the adaptation of loanwords. In the Korean context, the strong influence of global pop culture, particularly K-pop, media, and digital communication, has contributed to the widespread and dynamic use of English-derived forms. Loanwords in Korean often carry connotations of modernity, prestige, and global identity, which encourages their active morphological integration and high productivity. In contrast, in the Karakalpak linguistic environment, the use of English loanwords is more closely associated with socio-economic and technological developments. Borrowings are frequently linked to domains such as business, marketing, and digital communication, where English terminology reflects modernization and access to global networks. Consequently, the adaptation of loanwords in Karakalpak is driven more by functional and communicative needs than by cultural prestige alone.

The impact of globalization serves as a unifying factor influencing both languages. The global spread of English has intensified language contact, leading to an increase in borrowing across different domains of communication. However, the way in which global influences are internalized varies depending on the linguistic structure and sociocultural context of each language. Korean demonstrates a more culturally mediated adaptation process, while Karakalpak reflects a more utilitarian and socio-economically driven integration.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined the morphological adaptation of English loanwords in Korean and Karakalpak through a comparative approach. The analysis has shown that both languages actively integrate English lexical items into their morphological systems through affixation, hybrid formation, and grammatical incorporation. At the same time, significant differences have been identified in terms of borrowing pathways, structural integration, and productivity. The key findings indicate that Korean exhibits a higher level of morphological productivity and direct borrowing, supported by strong cultural influences such as global media and pop culture. In contrast, Karakalpak demonstrates a more moderate level of adaptation, often shaped by indirect borrowing through Russian and driven by socio-economic factors. These results highlight the role of typological structure, language contact history, and cultural context in shaping morphological adaptation processes.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the field of contact linguistics by providing a comparative analysis of two typologically distinct languages. It expands current understanding of how morphological systems accommodate foreign lexical elements and demonstrates the importance of considering both linguistic and extralinguistic factors in the study of loanword adaptation. In terms of practical significance, the findings of this research may be applied in language teaching, translation studies, and lexicography. Understanding the patterns of morphological adaptation can help improve the teaching of foreign languages, facilitate more accurate translation practices, and support the development of modern dictionaries that reflect ongoing linguistic changes.

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