

SOCIOLINGUISTIC ASPECT OF ECONOMIC TERMS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH PRINT JOURNALISM

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Abstract

A reader opens a business page and immediately meets a dense cluster of terms – IPO, stakeholder, start-up, marketing, alongside Uzbekized forms such as marketing, brend, or hybrid spellings shaped by Latin–Cyrillic competition. This article examines how business terminology functions as social meaning in print journalism, comparing English-language business press conventions with Uzbek print-media practices. The central claim is that business terms in newspapers do more than “name” economic realities: they also index authority, modernity, expertise, institutional alignment, and audience boundaries. The study draws on open-access normative and scholarly sources and applies a qualitative, non-corpus methodology based on close reading, contextual interpretation, and pragmatic-sociolinguistic coding. The results describe five recurring sociolinguistic functions of business terms in print news: (1) prestige and global alignment, (2) expertise signaling and gatekeeping, (3) institutional accountability and evidential positioning, (4) standardization pressure versus market-driven variation, and (5) audience design through simplification, paraphrase, and translation choices. The discussion links these patterns to language policy and orthographic regulation in Uzbekistan, and to sociolinguistic theories of symbolic power, indexicality, and mediatized change.

Keywords: Business terminology, Uzbek print media, English business press, loanwords, language policy, audience design, indexicality.

Introduction

A small but telling moment often happens before a reader fully understands a business story: they pause at a term. In English business journalism, many pauses are anticipated and managed by newsroom conventions – acronyms are defined, numbers are contextualized, and technical terms are introduced with “reader-

friendly” constraints because the publication must protect clarity while still signaling competence. In Uzbek print media, the pause can be different: it may be triggered not only by specialization (*dividend, franchising, venture capital*) but also by linguistic form – borrowed stems, transliterations, mixed scripts, or competing equivalents that reflect an ongoing negotiation over what “counts” as the proper language of business in public. These negotiations are not merely stylistic. They are sociolinguistic, because terms circulate in a public arena where language choices become cues for status, expertise, institutional legitimacy, and ideological orientation.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, lexical choices operate inside a “linguistic market,” where some forms carry higher symbolic value and convert into authority (Bourdieu, 1991). In mediated settings, such authority is routinely produced and reproduced through repeated semiotic patterns; media language becomes a powerful site where social meanings stabilize and travel (Androutsopoulos, 2014). In that environment, loanwords are rarely neutral. Borrowing is often motivated by contact conditions (e.g., prestige, institutional dominance, technological innovation) and then consolidated through usage norms and audience uptake (Thomason, 2001). Over time, borrowed business terms may develop layered indexical meanings – signaling not only “economy” but also “global,” “modern,” “professional,” or “elite” – a process sociolinguistics describes through indexical order and social circulation (Silverstein, 2003).

Uzbekistan adds a crucial contextual layer: language policy and orthographic regulation shape how public writing looks and how linguistic legitimacy is debated. Research on Uzbekistan’s language policy notes the long-term coexistence of Latin and Cyrillic scripts, with consequences for literacy practices and public signage, including media and advertising (Narmatova & Abdurakhmanova, 2022). Legal and regulatory documents also explicitly connect official language use with terminological enrichment and standard norms, establishing a policy-level expectation that new terms should be introduced and normalized rather than left entirely to spontaneous market diffusion (Republic of Uzbekistan, 1995). Orthographic rules codified for Uzbek further create a formal baseline against which borrowings, transliterations, and hybrid spellings become visible as either “acceptable innovation” or “deviation” (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of

Uzbekistan, 1995), while newer measures re-emphasize the transition to Latin script (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2021).

Against this backdrop, the goal of this article is to explain *what business terms do* in print journalism, comparing English and Uzbek contexts. The guiding question is: How do business terms function as sociolinguistic resources in print media, and how do journalists manage the tension between global economic discourse and local linguistic legitimacy?

Methods

Design

This is a qualitative, non-corpus study based on document analysis and pragmatic-sociolinguistic interpretation. No corpus software, frequency counts, or automated extraction procedures were used. Instead, the research logic is interpretive: business terms are treated as **socially meaningful choices** that can be described through patterns of form, placement, and metalinguistic framing (e.g., definitions, glosses, quotation marks, parenthetical translations).

Data and sources

The analysis relies on open-access materials of two types:

1. Normative and policy texts relevant to Uzbek public writing and terminological governance, including the Uzbek orthography rules and official measures related to Latin-script transition (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1995, 2021), as well as an accessible translation of the Uzbek law on official language use that explicitly references term introduction and public-language requirements (Republic of Uzbekistan, 1995).

2. Research literature on language policy in Uzbekistan and on borrowing/terminology dynamics, including open-access scholarly discussions of script competition and the limited Uzbekization of public texts (Narmatova & Abdurakhmanova, 2022), plus applied studies on adopted business terms in Uzbek contexts (Hasanov, 2022) and broader discussions of English borrowings in Uzbek media discourse (Polvannazirova & Makhmudov, 2024).

For the *comparative media* dimension, newsroom and style guidance is treated as part of the “institutional ecology” that shapes English business journalism, using open-access journalism handbook material (Reuters, 2008).

Analytic Procedure

The analysis proceeded in three steps:

1. Term-form coding: borrowed vs. translated equivalents; acronym/abbreviation vs. full form; transliteration patterns; presence of hybrid spellings.

2. Pragmatic framing coding: whether the term is explained, paraphrased, “domesticated,” attributed to an external source, or presented as shared knowledge.

3. Sociolinguistic function interpretation: what social meanings the term choice plausibly activates (e.g., authority, alignment, accessibility), supported by theory on audience design (Bell, 1984) and indexicality (Silverstein, 2003).

Reliability was increased through iterative recoding: categories were revised until they were mutually distinct and could be applied consistently.

Results

The analysis identifies five recurring sociolinguistic functions of business terminology in print journalism, with systematic contrasts between English business press norms and Uzbek print-media conditions.

1) Prestige and global alignment

In both contexts, English-origin business terms frequently work as **badges of global participation**. In English-language business press, this is often backgrounded because the terminology is treated as “native” to the genre. In Uzbek print settings, the same lexical material becomes *foregrounded* as a visible sign of globalization – particularly where the borrowed form is preserved rather than translated. Studies of adopted business terms in Uzbek contexts explicitly note the spread of internationally circulating items (e.g., *marketing*, *brand*, *market*) as everyday vocabulary alongside narrower professional terms (Hasanov, 2022).

Sociolinguistically, these borrowings can function as symbolic capital: they point to competence in the global economic order and thus raise the perceived authority of the text and its implied speaker (Bourdieu, 1991).

2) Expertise signaling and gatekeeping

Business terms often draw a boundary between “insiders” and “outsiders.” English business journalism manages this boundary through genre conventions that translate expertise into digestible public communication (Reuters, 2008). In Uzbek print media, gatekeeping can intensify when borrowed terms appear without paraphrase or are introduced in clusters. Here, comprehension is not only about economic knowledge but also about linguistic familiarity with English or Russified intermediary forms. The outcome is a dual gatekeeping mechanism: economic literacy plus language-contact literacy.

3) Institutional accountability and evidential positioning

Terms do not circulate alone; they are anchored to sources. Business news frequently relies on institutional voices (ministries, banks, firms, regulators) and the text’s credibility depends on how responsibility for information is signaled. Uzbek language law, even in translation, frames official language use as a regulated sphere where norms must be observed and where the enrichment of terminology is a recognized state task (Republic of Uzbekistan, 1995).

This matters sociolinguistically because “official” terminology can be mobilized as a legitimacy strategy: choosing a sanctioned Uzbek equivalent (where available) can imply institutional alignment, while choosing a global English label can imply market alignment. The term choice becomes a subtle stance marker.

4) Standardization pressure versus market-driven variation

Uzbek print media operates under strong cross-pressures: orthographic codification on the one hand and fast-moving market vocabulary on the other. Official orthography rules define a baseline for public writing (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1995), while later measures reaffirm the shift toward Latin script (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2021). At the same time, research on language policy in Uzbekistan highlights persistent bilingual and bi-script realities and notes that many public texts, including signs and advertisements,

remain incompletely Uzbekized (Narmatova & Abdurakhmanova, 2022). In such an environment, print business terminology becomes a site of variation: competing spellings, competing equivalents, and hybrid “in-between” forms can coexist because usage is pulled by audience habits, institutional templates, and global economic discourse.

5) Audience design through explanation, paraphrase, and translation choices

Finally, business terminology is managed through audience design: writers adjust how technical a text appears depending on who is imagined as the reader. Audience design theory predicts that style shifts track recipient expectations rather than only speaker identity (Bell, 1984). In English business journalism, this often appears as controlled definition practices and careful acronym handling. In Uzbek print contexts, audience design includes additional moves: pairing a borrowing with an Uzbek gloss, inserting parenthetical translations, or using an Uzbek equivalent while retaining the English form as a prestige “shadow.” These are not only comprehension strategies; they are also social strategies that negotiate belonging – inviting broader readership while maintaining the genre’s professional aura.

Discussion

The findings support a broader sociolinguistic argument: **business terms in print journalism are indexical resources before they are merely referential labels**. They point to social worlds – global markets, professional communities, institutions of regulation, and imagined modern lifestyles. Indexicality theory helps clarify why the same lexical item can simultaneously mean “a financial instrument” and “membership in a modern expert class” (Silverstein, 2003).

In Uzbekistan, these indexical meanings are amplified by language-policy conditions. Script competition and uneven Uzbekization of public writing make the form of a term socially noticeable, not just its content (Narmatova & Abdurakhmanova, 2022). This means that a journalist’s lexical choice can function as an implicit stance toward policy, education, globalization, and professional identity, even when the article is not explicitly about language.

The tension between standardization and market-driven change is especially important. Policy texts and orthographic norms create a public expectation of regulated language, while business discourse – by its nature – innovates quickly

and borrows readily. The result is not simply “language pollution” or “language enrichment,” but a patterned ecology of mediation: newspapers become arenas where new terms are tried out, socially evaluated, and either domesticated or kept foreign. Borrowing theory predicts that such outcomes depend on contact intensity and prestige dynamics (Thomason, 2001), while globalization-oriented sociolinguistics emphasizes that linguistic resources travel unevenly and stratify access (Blommaert, 2010).

Practically, the analysis implies that improving business communication in Uzbek print media is not only a matter of compiling glossaries. It also requires editorial routines that treat terminology as audience design: systematic glossing where needed, consistent handling of script and spelling, and transparent decisions about when an Uzbek equivalent is preferable for inclusivity and when an international term is functionally unavoidable for precision and intertextual alignment. In English business press, such routines are institutionalized through style and handbook guidance (Reuters, 2008). Similar routinization – adapted to Uzbek policy and literacy realities – would reduce chaotic variation without blocking natural lexical development.

Conclusion

Business terminology in print journalism functions as a sociolinguistic “control panel”: it manages credibility, signals expertise, aligns a text with institutions or markets, and draws audience boundaries. In English business press, these functions are stabilized by strong genre conventions and editorial norms. In Uzbek print media, the same functions are intensified by language-policy pressures, script competition, and rapid economic modernization, making term choice a visibly ideological and identity-relevant act. A non-corpus qualitative approach shows that the key issue is not whether borrowing happens (it does), but **how borrowing is framed, domesticated, and socially interpreted** in public texts. Future work can extend this analysis through interviews with editors and translators and through fine-grained case studies of specific terms across time – still without relying on corpus tooling if the aim is to preserve interpretive depth.

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