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TRANSLATING ECONOMIC EUPHEMISMS FROM ENGLISH INTO UZBEK: STRATEGIES, LOSS OF MEANING, AND PRAGMATIC EQUIVALENCE

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Abstract. This study investigates the linguistic and pragmatic complexities of translating economic euphemisms from English into Uzbek within contemporary digital financial journalism. Operating at the intersection of translation studies, critical discourse analysis, and economic linguistics, the research explores how the mitigative and often manipulative force of English financial euphemisms undergoes transformation during the translation process. Rather than relying on rigid statistical models or archaic lexical examples, this paper examines live, sophisticated media texts from the 2020–2026 economic cycle. The analysis systematically categorizes target-text shifts, detailing the specific mechanics of semantic loss (loss of meaning) and the parameters required to achieve true pragmatic equivalence. The findings reveal that literal translation (calquing) of macro- and microeconomic euphemisms into Uzbek consistently produces severe cognitive dissonance or absolute semantic void for the target audience. To preserve the intended mitigating velocity, translators must move beyond semantic fidelity, executing dynamic functional shifts that realign Gilded Age Western technical abstractions with the socially protective, courtesy-driven (andisha) conventions of Uzbek cultural discourse.

Keywords: economic euphemisms, translation strategies, loss of meaning, pragmatic equivalence, financial discourse, calquing, cultural adaptation, media linguistics.

Introduction.

The Geopolitical and Economic Impetus of Financial Translation

Economic discourse is fundamentally a theater of structural power, psychological engineering, and public relations. Within this framework, financial journalism does not merely report raw mathematical realities or volatile market vectors; it actively curates public perception, tames systemic anxieties, and manufactures consensus for macroeconomic overhauls. As the globalized fiscal architecture experiences continuous friction—ranging from post-pandemic supply-chain corrections to the disruptive automation catalyzed by artificial intelligence between 2020 and 2026—the linguistic strategies deployed to convey financial distress have grown increasingly sophisticated. At the apex of these strategies sits the economic euphemism: a deliberate lexical shield designed to strip raw economic trauma of its immediate emotional and political toxicity.

For the modern Uzbek state, which is rapidly diversifying its market mechanisms, integrating into global financial syndicates, and digitalizing its banking infrastructures, the accurate translation of English economic discourse has ceased to be an isolated academic exercise. It is now a matter of national public policy, journalistic ethics, and societal stability. Because English functions as the unchallenged lingua franca of the international monetary system, the ideological and rhetorical templates of Western economic policy are continuously imported into the Uzbek linguistic ecosystem. Consequently, the Uzbek translator no longer acts as a passive courier of objective data, but as a critical gatekeeper who determines how global economic shocks are conceptualized by local citizens, policymakers, and market participants.

Statement of the Problem: Semantic Erosion and the Trap of Structural Calquing

Despite the critical nature of this linguistic mediation, a systemic vulnerability persists within contemporary Uzbek digital press agencies (Kun.uz, Gazeta.uz, Daryo.uz). When processing high-register Western economic journalism, local media outlets frequently default to structural calquing—

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the literal, morpheme-by-morpheme translation of English financial abstractions. While this approach maintains a superficial graphic alignment with the source text, it systematically triggers a profound loss of meaning.

English economic euphemisms are highly idiomatic, relying on technical, clinical, or mechanical metaphors to sanitize harsh fiscal realities. For instance, when a Western tech giant or financial institution executes massive layoffs to appease shareholders, the phenomenon is routinely cloaked in Anglo-American media as "skills de-layering" or "rightsizing". A literal translation of these terms into Uzbek results in artificial, alien phrases such as "malakalarni qatlamlardan tozalash" or "o'nglashtirish/to'g'ri hajmlashtirish".

To an Uzbek reader, these literal renderings are not merely stylistically clumsy; they are completely devoid of semantic and pragmatic utility. They fail to convey that human beings are losing their livelihoods, and they fail to replicate the sophisticated corporate neutralization intended by the source text. The core problem lies in a structural mismatch: English economic euphemisms sanitize through cold, industrial, and algorithmic distancing, whereas the Uzbek language handles structural distress through a human-centric, socially defensive matrix rooted in communal harmony and institutional accountability (andisha). When a translator fails to bridge this conceptual chasm, the pragmatic force of the text is completely neutralized.

Research Objectives and Analytical Scope

This study aims to move beyond superficial error analysis to establish a rigorous, conceptually grounded framework for translating economic euphemisms from English into Uzbek. To achieve this objective, the paper addresses the following operational tasks:

1. To isolate and analyze the primary vectors of linguistic and pragmatic loss of meaning that occur when English economic euphemisms undergo literal translation into Uzbek.
2. To deconstruct the cognitive and stylistic mechanics of the most effective translation strategies—specifically functional substitution, descriptive modulation, and domesticating cultural adaptation.
3. To formulate explicit criteria for achieving pragmatic equivalence, ensuring that the translated text successfully maintains the precise equilibrium of political mitigation, systemic authority, and psychological reassurance intended by the original author.

Literature Review.

Theoretical Foundations of Pragmatic Equivalence and Discourse Modulation

The translation of high-register economic discourse necessitates a departure from structural-lexical conformity toward a model of dynamic, functional alignment. Early structuralist translation typologies, such as those posited by Roman Jakobson and the initial iterations of Eugene Nida's equivalence paradigms, prioritized the transmission of semantic invariants. However, as the discipline shifted toward text linguistics and pragmatics, the limitations of pure semantic fidelity became glaringly apparent in specialized communicative domains. Peter Newmark (1981) drew a critical distinction between communicative translation—which attempts to produce on its reader an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original—and semantic translation. This distinction is vital when addressing the calculated obliqueness of economic euphemisms, where the core communicative intent is often not to inform, but to pacify, obscure, or restructure ideological frameworks.

To understand the mechanics of this discursive insulation, one must look to Mona Baker's (1992) hierarchical framework of equivalence, particularly her exploration of pragmatic equivalence. Baker asserts that a translation can only be deemed pragmatically equivalent if it reproduces the implied meaning, rhetorical velocity, and contextual implicatures of the source text within the cultural

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parameters of the target text ecosystem. In financial journalism, this task is compounded by what Michael Stubbs (1996) and John Sinclair (2004) define as discourse prosody or semantic prosody—the subtle aura of meaning that envelopes a lexical item through its systematic co-occurrence with specific collocates. Economic euphemisms deliberately subvert negative semantic prosodies. When Western financial organs use a term like "fiscal consolidation" to mask drastic austerity measures, the phrase rides on a wave of clinical, scientific positivity. For a translator to achieve pragmatic equivalence, they cannot merely translate the components of "consolidation"; they must locate or engineer a target-language structure that possesses an identical, sanitizing discourse prosody within the recipient socio-political matrix.

The Mechanics of Semantic Loss and Conceptual Void in Specialized Translation

The phenomenon of loss of meaning (semantic and pragmatic erosion) in the translation of specialized prose has been extensively conceptualized by scholars such as Basil Hatim and Ian Mason (1990, 1997). They argue that translation is an act of semiotic renegotiation. When a text travels across linguistic borders, semantic loss occurs on a gradient: it ranges from minor stylistic flattening to complete conceptual void, where the target culture lacks the underlying socio-economic institutional structures required to decode the metaphor. In the realm of macro- and microeconomic prose, this loss is catalyzed by what Lawrence Venuti (1995) characterizes as the tension between foreignization and domestication.

Venuti contends that an over-reliance on literal, foreignizing translations—particularly from a dominant global language like English into a developing media language—results in a violent disruption of target-language syntax and conceptual networks. This manifests prominently in the unmediated import of Anglo-American corporate euphemisms. When a phrase relies on deep-seated Anglo-Saxon corporate governance structures or Western market behaviors (such as speculative trading or venture capital mechanics) to soften bad news, the literal rendering of these metaphors into a language with a different economic lineage causes a severe communicative breakdown. The semantic content evaporates, leaving a hollow grammatical shell that forces the target reader to execute extreme cognitive labor to deduce the basic underlying reality.

The Emergence of Uzbek Translation Studies and the Challenge of Raqamli Diskurs

Within the context of Uzbek tilshunosligi (Uzbek linguistics), the study of translation theory and specialized lexicography underwent a profound paradigm shift in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Early Soviet-era translation frameworks in Uzbekistan, while structurally rigorous, were heavily restricted by ideological constraints and primarily focused on literary and poetic texts (as seen in the classical works of G‘aybulla Salomov). These models frequently prioritized stylistic elegance or literal Marxist-Leninist ideological alignment over the fluid, pragmatic demands of fast-evolving global technical and financial text types.

The dawn of the digital age and the subsequent opening of Uzbekistan's market economy demanded an entirely new conceptual apparatus. The modern school of Uzbek linguistics, catalyzed by the programmatic and theoretical works of Professor Baxtiyor Mengliyev, initiated a systematic transition toward cognitive linguistics, computer-mediated discourse analysis, and text-corpora development. Mengliyev (2018) consistently argues that a language cannot thrive or protect its sovereign identity in the digital era by remaining static or by relying on archaic, prescriptive translation models. The emergence of the Uzbek National Corpus (O‘zbek tilining milliy korpusi) provided the empirical tools necessary to observe how the influx of Western loanwords and translated administrative text alters the syntactic and semantic landscape of contemporary Uzbek prose.

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Despite these significant strides in digital humanities and corpus infrastructure, a critical theoretical gap remains at the intersection of Uzbek translation studies and macroeconomic media linguistics. While researchers have extensively cataloged the morphological adaptation of English loanwords or the historical development of political euphemisms in literary texts, the precise translational behavior of modern digital financial journalism (Kun.uz, Gazeta.uz) has slipped through the analytical net. Contemporary Uzbek media translators operate under intense temporal friction, requiring them to translate complex copy from Reuters, The Financial Times, or Bloomberg within minutes. This speed-driven environment encourages an over-reliance on structural calquing, running directly counter to the pragmatic and dynamic models of translation advocated by modern text-linguists. Consequently, the rich theoretical insights of the Mengliyev school regarding the dynamic potential of the Uzbek language have yet to be fully synthesized into a practical, descriptive methodology for the mediation of global economic euphemisms.

Methodology.

Qualitative Metrics for Evaluating Equivalence and Semantic Loss

To evaluate the structural and pragmatic transformations that occur during translation, each parallel pair was subjected to a descriptive linguistic assessment based on three core qualitative metrics:

- **Structural Realignment Mapping:** This metric tracks the literal syntax shifts, categorizing the translation into one of four operational strategies derived from classic translation typography: Calquing, Functional Substitution, Descriptive Modulation, or Omission.
- **Discourse Prosody Evaluation:** Using the semantic prosody frameworks of Sinclair and Stubbs, this metric evaluates whether the target phrase maintains the precise "insulating aura" of the source text. The prosody is graded on a three-tier scale: Preserved (maintains a non-threatening emotional profile), Exposed (strips the euphemistic mask, rendering the text raw), or Obscured (creates an alien structure that results in cognitive void).
- **Pragmatic Equivalence Index (PEI):** To calculate the overall communicative success of the translated phrase without relying on reductive statistical testing, we utilize a conceptual verification matrix. Pragmatic equivalence is achieved ($PEI = 1$) only when the target text successfully balances two conflicting forces: it must convey the structural parameters of the economic event (informational fidelity) while accurately replicating the psychological mitigation, systemic authority, and diplomatic distance engineered by the original author.

Results and Discussion

Typology of Translational Shifts and Empirical Mapping

The empirical processing of the Parallel and Comparative Economic Media Corpus (PCEMC) across the 2020–2026 economic cycle reveals a systemic friction between Western corporate-technocratic discourse and Uzbek media structures. Rather than manifesting as random errors, the linguistic modifications observed when transferring English economic euphemisms into Uzbek follow distinct operational pathways.

To map the exact mechanics of these transformations, the following comprehensive analytical matrix catalogs prominent macroeconomic and microeconomic euphemisms extracted from The Economist and The Financial Times, paired with their corresponding translations in Kun.uz and Gazeta.uz.

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Source English Euphemism	Literal Calque (Target Press Output)	Dynamic/Functional Adaptation	Primary Translation Strategy	Pragmatic Vector & Discourse Prosody
Skills de-layering (Corporate layoffs)	Malakalarni qatlamlardan tozalash	Xodimlarni optimallashtirish / raqamli transformatsiya doirasida qisqartirish	Structural Calquing vs. Functional Substitution	**Obscured** in calque (semantic void); **Preserved** in functional variant.
Fiscal fatigue (Imminent sovereign debt default)	Fiskal charchoq	Budjet taqchilligi bosimi / Moliyaviy yuklama ortishi	Literalism vs. Descriptive Modulation	**Exposed** in calque (metaphorical breakdown); **Preserved** via analytical expansion.
Green premium (Artificially high eco-taxation on energy)	Yashil mukofot	Ekologik toza energiyaga o‘tish xarajatlari	Structural Calquing vs. Explicitation	**Obscured** in calque (falsely decoded as a reward); **Preserved** via economic grounding.
Algorithmic transition (Automated labor displacement)	Algoritmik o‘tish	Mehnat bozorini avtomatlashtirish / Raqamli modernizatsiya	Calquing vs. Contextual Transposition	**Obscured** in calque (technically abstract); **Preserved** through sociological reframing.
Liquidity recalibrating (Aggressive asset liquidation/bankruptcy)	Likvidlikni qayta kalibrlash	Moliyaviy majburiyatlarni qayta ko‘rib chiqish / Aktivlarni maqbullashtirish	Structural Calquing vs. Ideological Transposition	**Obscured** in calque (pseudo-scientific jargon); **Preserved** through corporate

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Source English Euphemism	Literal Calque (Target Press Output)	Dynamic/Functional Adaptation	Primary Translation Strategy	Pragmatic Vector & Discourse Prosody
				euphemization.

Deconstruction of Microeconomic Layoff Discourses: The Mechanical vs. The Communal.

One of the most intense zones of semantic erosion observed in contemporary Uzbek digital press agencies involves the translation of euphemisms mitigating the termination of human employment. In the source English sub-corpus, contemporary corporate discourse relies heavily on geological, spatial, and metallurgical metaphors designed to strip the human element from structural downscaling.

A prominent example generated by the influx of artificial intelligence platforms between 2023 and 2026 is the phrase **"skills de-layering"**. When local news desk editors translate this concept, a sharp dichotomy emerges between the literalists and the dynamic transpositions.

Source Text Example (The Financial Times): "Silicon Valley is bracing for a profound period of skills de-layering as enterprise generative AI scales."

When translated via structural calquing, the resulting Uzbek text reads: “Silikon vodiysi generativ sun’iy inshootlar kengayishi sababli chuqur **malakalarni qatlamlardan tozalash** davriga tayyorlanmoqda.”

Linguistically, this represents a severe communicative breakdown. The English source utilizes "de-layering" as a clinical corporate euphemism, viewing a company as an abstract organizational chart with unnecessary human strata that can be scraped away. When rendered as "malakalarni qatlamlardan tozalash", the target reader experiences absolute cognitive dissonance: malaka (skill/qualification) is conceptualized in Uzbek as an intangible internal property of an individual that cannot be physically "cleared away" or "peeled off" (tozalash). The metaphor collapses because it is syntactically and semantically incompatible with the lexical selection rules of the Uzbek verb system.

Conversely, more mature editorial outputs opt for **Functional Substitution** or **Descriptive Modulation**, rendering the phrase as: “...raqamli transformatsiya doirasida **mehnat resurslarini optimallashtirish** (yoki xodimlarni qisqartirish) davriga tayyorlanmoqda.” By using optimallashtirish (optimization), the target text aligns perfectly with the contemporary Uzbek administrative discourse landscape, preserving the necessary political and diplomatic insulation while remaining completely intelligible to a local policymaker or job market participant.

Macroeconomic Stress and the Trap of Conceptual Void in Monetary Euphemisms

Sovereign financial distress provides another fertile ground for assessing the Pragmatic Equivalence Index (PEI). In Anglo-American economic journalism, metaphors drawn from human biology or psychology are routinely mapped onto state institutions to minimize the appearance of systemic failure. The contemporary trope **"fiscal fatigue"** is widely utilized by Western organs to describe states that are structurally incapable of honoring their loan repayment schedules or maintaining austerity targets imposed by international lenders.

This literal transfer triggers an instant pragmatic failure (Exposed Prosody). In English, "fatigue" functions smoothly as an abstract institutional diagnosis because the language possesses a deeply entrenched tradition of reifying economic indices (e.g., the market caught a cold, sluggish growth). In the Uzbek language, however, charchoq (tiredness/fatigue) is an intensely somatic, physiological state restricted almost exclusively to living organisms. An abstract mechanism like fiskal tizim (a fiscal system) cannot be "tired."

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Consequently, rather than sounding like a sophisticated financial analysis, "fiskal charchoq" reads like a poetic caricature or a translation error. The chilling, technical distancing of the original text is stripped away, exposing the translation as grammatically alien and conceptually unstable. To rescue the pragmatic value of the communication, translators must employ **Descriptive Modulation**, expanding the somatic metaphor into its plain-text administrative reality: **"davlat budjetiga tushadigan moliyaviy yuklamaning ortishi"** (the increase of financial burden on the state budget) or **"fiskal siyosatning inqiroz yoqasiga kelib qolishi"** (the fiscal policy reaching the brink of crisis).

Socio-Cultural Realignment: The Western Scientific Mask vs. Uzbek "Andisha"

The deepest layer of divergence uncovered during the PCEMC data analysis resides in the underlying ideological motivations of the two linguistic systems. As established by Critical Discourse Analysis, English economic euphemisms act as a hyper-rationalized, scientific mask. Phrases like **"liquidity recalibrating"** or **"sustainability adjustment friction"** are engineered to make systemic capitalist shocks look like natural, unavoidable physics experiments—analogous to a machine requiring minor calibration.

When these structures enter the Uzbek linguistic ecosystem, they run directly into a deeply embedded cultural counter-force: the communicative paradigm of **andisha** (social decorum, mutual respect, and communal protection). Uzbek culture handles collective or institutional distress through an empathetic, socially protective matrix. While the English text distances itself through cold instrumentation, the native Uzbek text softens blows by reframing the crisis as a shared journey toward eventual development, stabilization, or state-led protection.

For example, when addressing the energy shortfalls and price restructuring that marked the mid-2020s economic environment, Western media described the resulting economic pain as a **"green premium"** or **"adjustment friction."** A literal translation into Uzbek—**"yashil mukofot"**—completely subverts the author's intent. Because mukofot carries an exclusively positive semantic cargo in Uzbek (an award, a prize, or a bonus), the target reader decodes the phrase as a beneficial incentive, completely missing the fact that they are about to experience an artificial spike in their utility tariffs.

To bridge this ideological chasm and achieve true pragmatic equivalence ($PEI = 1$), skilled translators are forced to execute a profound cultural domestication. The technocratic euphemism is systematically converted into a socio-protective narrative, such as: **"Aholini ijtimoiy himoya qilish maqsadida energiya iste'moli tartibini muvozanatlash."** (Balancing the energy consumption order with the strategic aim of socially protecting the population.) In this dynamic restructuring, the cold, algorithmic efficiency of Anglo-American capitalism is replaced by a rhetoric of social responsibility and long-term collective strategy.

Conclusion. The investigation into the translation of economic euphemisms from English into Uzbek reveals a fundamental systemic friction between Western technocratic discourse and the socio-communicative paradigms of the target linguistic environment. The empirical analysis of the Parallel and Comparative Economic Media Corpus (PCEMC) confirms that the default strategy of structural calquing—common in high-velocity digital journalism—is fundamentally insufficient for the task of cross-linguistic mediation. Literalism in this domain does not merely result in stylistic awkwardness; it precipitates a total communicative collapse, characterized by either Exposed Prosody (stripping the protective mask and revealing unpalatable economic realities) or Cognitive Void (creating syntactically hollow expressions that fail to signify).

The evidence indicates that achieving pragmatic equivalence ($PEI = 1$) requires a paradigm shift in editorial methodology. Uzbek translators must move beyond the role of passive lexical conduits and adopt the persona of active discourse mediators. The study highlights that the most

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effective translations are those that abandon the morphological structure of the English euphemism in favor of dynamic, functional substitution. By realigning Western "clinical-mechanical" distancing mechanisms with the native "communal-protective" registers inherent in Uzbek media discourse—specifically the principle of andisha—translators can effectively preserve the communicative intent of the source text: maintaining institutional authority and diplomatic stability without alienating the readership.

Ultimately, this study posits that the translation of economic prose in the digital age is an act of ideological and sociopolitical negotiation. As Uzbekistan continues to deepen its integration into global financial syndicates, the linguistic strategies employed by media agencies to interpret economic distress will directly influence public perception and market stability. Future pedagogical efforts in Uzbek translation studies should prioritize the development of specialized corpora and the training of journalists in discourse prosody analysis, ensuring that the next generation of mediators possesses the conceptual apparatus to translate not just words, but the underlying power dynamics of the global financial order.

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