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CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING DIGITAL ECONOMY TERMINOLOGY BETWEEN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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Abstract
The rapid development of the digital economy has led to the emergence of numerous new terms and concepts that require accurate and consistent translation across languages. For languages with different linguistic structures and levels of terminological standardization, such as Uzbek and English, this task presents significant challenges. This article examines the main difficulties encountered in translating digital economy terminology between Uzbek and English. It analyzes linguistic, semantic, morphological, and cultural factors influencing translation quality, including neologisms, loanwords, abbreviations, and conceptual mismatches. The study also explores existing translation strategies and evaluates their effectiveness. Based on the analysis, the article proposes practical recommendations for improving terminological consistency and translation accuracy in the field of the digital economy.

Keywords: Digital economy, terminology translation, Uzbek language, English language, neologisms, loanwords, localization, semantic equivalence, terminological standardization.

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Introduction

The digital economy has become one of the most influential drivers of global economic transformation in the 21st century. Concepts such as digital platforms, blockchain, big data, artificial intelligence, fintech, and e-commerce are now integral to economic discourse worldwide. As these concepts cross national and linguistic borders, accurate translation becomes essential for effective communication, policymaking, education, and international cooperation.

Uzbekistan's ongoing integration into the global digital economy has intensified the need for high-quality translations of digital economy terminology from English into Uzbek and vice versa. English dominates as the primary source language for digital innovations, while Uzbek, as a developing terminological system in this domain, faces challenges related to lexical gaps, standardization, and conceptual adaptation.

The translation of digital economy terminology is not merely a linguistic task; it is also a cognitive and cultural process. Translators must bridge differences in economic systems, technological maturity, and linguistic structures. This article aims to identify and analyze the

key challenges in translating digital economy terminology between Uzbek and English and to propose strategies for improving translation practices in this rapidly evolving field.

Scholarly research on terminology translation emphasizes the importance of conceptual equivalence rather than literal correspondence. Studies in translation theory highlight that specialized terminology requires domain knowledge, contextual awareness, and consistency. In the field of digital economy translation, researchers note the dominance of English-origin terms and the resulting pressure on target languages to adapt quickly.

Translating digital economy terminology between Uzbek and English presents several distinct challenges. These stem from linguistic differences, the rapid evolution of the field, historical language influences (especially Russian), cultural/conceptual gaps, and ongoing efforts at terminological standardization in Uzbekistan.

Rapid emergence of neologisms and lack of established equivalents

The digital economy constantly introduces new concepts (e.g., blockchain, fintech, cryptocurrency, gig economy, token, crowdfunding, smart contract, big data, AI-driven economy). English generates these terms quickly, often from global (mostly Anglo-American) tech/finance ecosystems.

- Uzbek lacks immediate, universally accepted native equivalents → translators must choose between:
  - Direct borrowing/transliteration (блокчейн / blokcheyn, финтех / fintex, криптовалюта / kriptovalyuta) — common in practice, especially among professionals and youth.
  - Creating calques (word-for-word translations) or descriptive phrases (e.g., "blockchain" as "bloklar zanjiri" or "taqsimlangan yozuvlar kitobi").
  - Official neologisms promoted by the Terminology Commission (e.g., "smart" → aqlli, but adoption remains slow in spoken language).

This creates inconsistency: official documents may use purist Uzbek terms, while businesspeople, startups, and everyday users prefer English/Russian loans.

Diglossia, code-switching, and user acceptance issues

Uzbek speakers (even native ones) frequently recognize and prefer Russian-derived or English loanwords over newly coined Uzbek terms due to long-term diglossia (Russian dominance in Soviet era + English in post-independence tech/globalization).

- Hybrid/colloquial Uzbek mixes languages freely (e.g., "smart telefon", "onlayn chellendj", "fintech xizmatlari").
- Pure Uzbek equivalents can sound overly formal, artificial, or hard to understand → users may ignore them in favor of familiar loans.
- Machine translation and AI tools often produce hyper-formal Uzbek versions that feel unnatural, widening the comprehension gap.

Structural and typological differences between languages

English (analytic, SVO word order) vs. Uzbek (agglutinative, SOV word order, rich suffix system) → creates difficulties in forming concise, precise terms.

- English compounds (e.g., sharing economy, platform economy) are easy to form → Uzbek often needs longer descriptive constructions or suffixes, which can make terms less compact and harder to use in fast-paced digital contexts.

- Polysemy/ambiguity in English economic terms (e.g., token can mean security token, utility token, NFT-related) requires context-specific Uzbek choices, risking misinterpretation.

Conceptual and cultural non-equivalence

Many digital economy concepts are tied to Western regulatory/financial systems (e.g., quantitative easing, securitization, hedge fund, specific fintech models) with no direct historical/institutional analogues in Uzbekistan.

- Translators resort to descriptive/explanatory translations (long phrases) → loses the brevity and international recognizability that English terms provide.
- Terms rooted in global platforms (e.g., super apps, network effects) carry cultural assumptions difficult to convey precisely in Uzbek without additional explanation.

Inconsistent standardization and limited resources

Uzbekistan has active work on terminology (Terminology Commission under the Cabinet of Ministers, "Raqamli O‘zbekiston – 2030" strategy, glossaries like UNDP's older ICT glossary), but:

- Digital economy/fintech/blockchain terms evolve faster than standardization can keep up.
- Bilingual resources (English-Uzbek economic/digital dictionaries) remain limited compared to English-Russian or English-other major languages.
- Variation exists between official (Central Bank, government) conservative/purist translations and independent/business usage (more borrowings).

Examples of Challenging Terms

- Blockchain → Often "блокчейн" (borrowed); alternatives like "taqsimlangan registr" or "bloklar zanjiri" appear but see low everyday use.
- Fintech → "Fintex" or "moliyaviy texnologiyalar" → the loan dominates in startup/media contexts.
- Gig economy → Descriptive: "vaqtinchalik ish iqtisodiyoti" or "platforma orqali ish bilan ta’minlash iqtisodiyoti" → no single short term has taken hold.
- Digital wallet → "raqamli hamyon" or "elektron hamyon" — relatively stable, but variants exist.

Overall, the translation landscape reflects Uzbekistan's broader linguistic balancing act: preserving national identity and creating native terms while remaining integrated into the global digital economy, where English is the dominant lingua franca. Progress is visible through official efforts, but full harmonization between standardization, user habits, and international communication remains an ongoing challenge.

The findings demonstrate that translation challenges are rooted not only in linguistic differences but also in institutional and cultural factors. The absence of unified terminological databases and coordination among translators, economists, and linguists exacerbates inconsistencies.

The dominance of English as a source language creates a dependency on borrowing, which, while efficient in the short term, may hinder the natural development of Uzbek digital economy terminology. At the same time, excessive localization may distort original meanings and reduce international comprehensibility.

Conclusions

In conclusion, translating digital economy terminology between Uzbek and English presents complex challenges related to lexical gaps, neologisms, semantic ambiguity, borrowing practices, and lack of standardization. These challenges reflect broader issues in the development of specialized terminology in emerging economic domains.

To address these issues, the following recommendations are proposed:

Development of standardized bilingual glossaries for digital economy terminology.

Establishment of expert committees involving linguists, economists, and IT specialists.

Promotion of descriptive translation combined with gradual term naturalization.

Continuous updating of terminological resources to reflect technological changes.

Integration of digital economy terminology studies into translation and linguistics education.

Implementing these measures can significantly improve translation quality and contribute to the effective integration of Uzbek into global digital economic discourse.

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