

On the Issue of Borrowings in the Georgian Business Setting

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Abstract. In recent years, we have observed a growing trend toward the voluntary use of business terminology in, both spoken and written Georgian. Yet, little empirical research has systematically examined the motivations behind the use of these lexical items. This work explores the nature and frequency of such terminology. Moreover, the study seeks to classify lexical items structurally in the Georgian business press and among business professionals. The methodology employs a qualitative method (documenting 50 business e-articles to capture lexical items on BMG – Business Media in Georgia) and a quantitative method (using Google Forms to assess the frequency of business terminology use in spoken discourse among Georgians working in business organizations). The study aims to: (1) evaluate the quality of adaptation/accommodation of borrowings; (2) determine the correlation between respondents' age, sex, location and workplace, and the frequency of using business borrowings; (3) structurally classify the collected lexical borrowings in the Georgian business setting. The findings challenge traditional assumptions about linguistic purity and suggest that lexical borrowing is a dynamic, context-sensitive process reflecting broader social negotiations of identity and globalization, especially in the field of business. © 2026 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Keywords: borrowings, business setting, spoken Georgian, press

Introduction

The study examines traditional versus contemporary views on lexical borrowing. It discusses the main features of borrowing, with examples from various languages in the context of business English, and presents a detailed analysis of the methodology, findings, and results of both the quantitative and qualitative research.

Based on traditional definitions, several scholars (Weinreich, 1953; Haugen, 1950) have argued

that borrowed words become part of the language when their use becomes conventional within a community. Borrowing results from cultural contact and involves integration, substitution, and adaptation of foreign words into the recipient language. A loanword is a lexical item adopted from one language and used in another without translation. In traditional Georgian linguistics, lexical borrowings used in colloquial speech are regarded as *barbarisms*, meaning that borrowed words are una-

acceptable in literary or standard Georgian, but are still used in colloquial speech.

Recent scholarship (Zenner et al., 2019; Mellado & Lignos, 2022) has expanded the definition of lexical borrowing by recognizing that it may involve not only individual loanwords, but also sets of words, collocations, and patterns of usage. Furthermore, borrowings may be ongoing, frequent, and socially motivated rather than rare or purely structural. Social meaning potential refers to the idea that speakers select borrowed forms not only for communicative efficiency, but also to express identity, prestige, group affiliation, or symbolic meaning. This perspective is important because it frames lexical borrowing as a socially embedded choice rather than a neutral linguistic mechanism.

Assimilated borrowings are lexical items that enter a language without full orthographic or phonological adaptation. They are considered a meaningful subtype because they demonstrate that borrowing does not always result in full integration; some items remain foreign-looking, reflecting ongoing contact or deliberate social signalling.

Dictionary-based definitions tend to present lexical borrowing as the transfer of a word from one language into another, emphasizing established loanwords or offering static descriptions. In contrast, corpus-based and computational approaches view borrowings as frequent, dynamic, and productive, identifying emerging borrowings through large-scale language data and highlighting continuous nature of language change.

Thus, the main features of the lexical borrowings include their origin from another language, adaptation, partial or full integration, necessity or prestige, semantic shifts, frequency, retention of original features, and types of borrowing.

Borrowing *sets* of words means that languages may adapt groups of related terms, fixed expressions, or collocations, rather than single isolated items. These challenges to earlier definitions by showing that borrowing operates at a broader

lexical and usage-based level, rather than being limited to individual lexical units.

Based on these recent sources, lexical borrowing (or loanword adoption) is a process by which a recipient language incorporates one or more lexical items (words, compounds, or collocations) from a source (donor) language. These items may undergo adaptation (phonological, morphological, or semantic) or remain in a less-assimilated form. Borrowed items are chosen not only to fill lexical gaps but often carry social, cultural, or symbolic value for speakers. Over time, borrowing remains an active and productive mechanism of lexical expansion in many languages.

The given study exemplifies the English business terms that are widely used unchanged (or almost unchanged) in many other languages:

Table 1. Unchanged English business terms in global use

English term	Meaning	Notes
Marketing	Activities to promote products	Used globally as-is (e.g., in German, Spanish, Japanese)
Management	Organization and control of business	Adopted directly in most languages
Start-up	New, fast-growing company	Used unchanged, especially in tech fields
Business	Commercial activity	Often pronounced slightly differently, but the spelling is kept
Team	Group working together	Common in business and sports worldwide
Meeting	Business gathering	Used commonly in European and Asian offices
Partner	Business associate	Seen in legal and corporate language globally
Brand	Company/product identity	Widely used in marketing and advertising
Boss	Leader or manager	Informal but recognized internationally
Deadline	Final date to finish work	Adopted directly, especially in corporate settings

English business terms that are used **internationally but slightly adapted** – either in spelling, pronunciation, or grammatical form (Table 2).

Recent research classifies these forms as unassimilated borrowings; their use may be motivated by social factors such as identity, marking, prestige, in-group membership, or alignment with a particular culture or linguistic community. Computational studies argue that lexical borrowing is frequent and productive because large corpora reveal continuous introduction of new borrowed forms in everyday usage. This suggests that borrowing is an effective mechanism of language evolution, rather than a marginal or exceptional phenomenon.

Lexical borrowing can be understood as both a structural and a social process. Structural accounts explain how words enter and adapt within a language, while social perspectives emphasize speaker choice, identity expression, and symbolic meaning, showing that borrowing is shaped by social dynamics as much as by linguistic constraints.

Methodology

The theoretical background of this study implies a qualitative method: documenting 50 business e-articles to capture lexical items related to BMG – Business Media in Georgia, and a quantitative

method, using Google Forms to assess the frequency of business terminology use in spoken discourse among Georgians working in business organizations.

Therefore, this research aims: 1. To study the nature of this business terminology and the frequency of its use; 2. To classify the lexical items structurally in the Georgian business press and among Georgians working in the field of business.

Overall, we have found 156 lexical items: nouns 109; verbs 13; adjectives 16; collocations 18. They can be classified accordingly: 1. Terms ending with *-იზაცია -izatsia* “-ization” are accepted – *დოგითალიზაცია/დოჯითალიზაცია digit’alizatsia / didjit’alizatsia* “digitalization”; 2. Some words or phrases are professional jargons – *თარგეთ ოდიენსი target odiensi* “target audience”, *თიმბილდინგ შეხვედრები timbiling sexvedrebi* “team building meetings”, *ონბორდინგ შეხვედრა onboarding sexvedra* “onboarding meeting”, etc. 3. Out of 156 examples 56 words or phrases are earlier borrowings and established terms; 4. 100 terms are later borrowings but at the colloquial level and not accepted by standard and normative dictionaries.

The nature of this business terminology and the frequency of its use – Case – Nouns take nominative *-ი/-ო*, e.g. *დედლაინი/dedlain-i*, also other

Table 2. Adapted English business terms in global use

English Term	Adapted Form	Language Example	Notes
Manager	<i>Manager / le manager</i>	French, German, Italian	Pronounced with local accent; sometimes declined like native words.
Marketing	<i>Маркетинг (marketing)</i>	Russian, Ukrainian	Cyrillic spelling, English pronunciation style.
Boss	<i>Босс (boss)</i>	Russian	Spelled in Cyrillic, same meaning.
Partner	<i>Partenaire</i>	French	Slight adaptation to French morphology.
Team	<i>тим (tim)</i>	Russian, Serbian	Sound borrowed, spelled phonetically.
Deadline	<i>デッドライン (deddorain)</i>	Japanese (katakana)	English word adapted into Japanese script and sounds.
Business	<i>ビジネス (bijinesu)</i>	Japanese	Reshaped to fit Japanese phonetics.
Start-up	<i>スタートアップ (sutātoappu)</i>	Japanese	Extended with vowels to match syllable structure.
Marketing	<i>マーケティング (māketingu)</i>	Japanese	Phonetic adjustment and katakana writing.
Consulting	<i>Consultoría</i>	Spanish	Base English word, but with a Spanish suffix.

case forms are *dedlainis*, *dedlainad dedlainit*; Number – *Replai-ebi*; *deadlain-eb-i*; Some nouns, but not all, can be transformed as verbs and taken Georgian verb conjugation, person markers *bossi* – *ga-bos-da*; *da-mi-porvard-e*, *a-mi-p'in-e*.”

The objectives of quantitative and qualitative research include (1) measuring the adaptation/accommodation quality of borrowings; (2) determination of the correlation between respondents' age, gender, living and working places, and frequency of using business borrowings; (3) structural classification of the collected lexical borrowings in the Georgian business setting.

One of the criteria for measuring adaptation or accommodation is whether the English borrowed words are pronounced with voiceless aspirated consonants ([p^h], [t^h], [k^h]) or with the corresponding ejectives ([p'], [t'], [k']). According to both traditional standard transliteration rules and more recent ones (2019-2020), standard and bookish style writing and pronunciation use the ejective consonants instead of the aspirated ones, while in colloquial Georgian, the aspirated forms are favoured in words such as *თოქშოუ t'ok^hfou* ~ *ტოქშოუ t'ok'fou* “talk show”, *თაიმზი t'aimsi* ~ *ტაიმზი t'aimzi* “times”, *კეისი k'eisi* ~ *კეისი k'eisi* “case”, *კოპირაიტი k'opiraitheri* ~

კოპირაიტერი k'opirait'eri “copywriter”, *კასტინგი k'ast'ingi* ~ *კასტინგო k'ast'ingi* “casting”, and so on. In each pair, the former belongs to colloquial Georgian, while the latter corresponds to the standard, bookish style. There are some words borrowed only into colloquial Georgian (traditionally called barbarisms) that are not part of standard Georgian, such as *კენსელი k'enseli* “cancel”, etc.

The collected vocabulary items were double-checked in the following dictionary to determine their adaptability and the period of adaptation: Chabashvili, Mikheil (1989). Dictionary of Foreign Words. 3rd revised and supplemented edition. Tbilisi: Publishing House “Education” and Abashidze, Irakli (ed.) (1975-1987). Georgian Soviet Encyclopaedia. Mt. Ed. Ir. Abashidze. Tbilisi: Academy of Sciences of the Georgian SSR.

Discussion and Results

Out of 50 business e-articles, we collected business terms, which were grouped accordingly:

1. Those adopted/accommodated in the written and spoken Georgian language in the 20th century (e.g., *t'ranspormatsia* “transformation”, *sanktsia* “sanction”, etc.);
2. The rest were adopted/accommodated primarily on the spoken Georgian language (e.g., *autsorsi*

Table 3. Demographics of survey respondents

Sex: M 34; F 73	Educational spheres (degrees received)	Spheres respondents are currently working in
Age: 18-40 – 92 41-60 – 13 61 and more 2	Administration/Management 24 Education 28 Law 6 Finance/Statistics 14	Administration/Management 15 Education 35 Law 3 Finance/Statistics 9
Educational background: BA: 68 MA: 25 PhD: 14	Tourism 5 PR/Marketing 4 Sales 1 Logistics/Transport/Distribution 1	Sales 9 PR/Marketing 4 Construction/Renovation 2 IT/Programming 8
Type of settlement: Tbilisi 59 Urban 30 Rural 18	Construction/Renovation 1 Etc., 27	ETC., 25
Nationality/citizenship: Georgian 101 Armenian 5 Azeri 1 Georgia 106 and the Netherlands 1		

“outsource”, *keshbeki* “cashback”, *st'art'ap'i* “start-up”, *timi* “team”, *dedlaini* “deadline”, etc.).

3. Professional jargon that corresponds to standard terms.

Based on the quantitative research, we collected 107 responses via Google Forms. Then, we analyzed them using JASP to measure the frequency of use (Learner's scale from 1 = never to 5 = always) and its association with respondents' age, sex, current employment status, and place of residence (Table 3).

The quantitative data showed the following patterns:

1. Female respondents (74) use most of the terms more frequently than males (34), e.g., *ტენდენცია/t'endentsia* “tendency” (F (median – 4, mean – 3.699) M (median – 3, mean – 3.382); *გენერირება/generireba* “to generate” (F (median – 3, mean – 3.110) M (median – 2, mean – 2.676), *ოობო/timi timi* “team” (F (median – 4, mean – 3.740), (M (median – 4, mean – 3.324).

2. Here are the correlation results between age and the average frequency of usage of the borrowed terms: Pearson correlation: 0.159; Spearman correlation: 0.161. The age group intervals were analysed broadly: 18-40; 41-60; 61 and more; 2. There was no vivid difference between respondents aged 18-25 and 26-40 years.

Interpretation: The correlation is positive but weak in both cases. This suggests that as age increases, the frequency of these terms' use increases slightly, but the relationship is weak.

3. Respondents who spent their lifetime in Tbilisi and other urban areas use borrowed lexical items less regularly than those from rural areas, e.g., *ბოზო/bosi* “boss”, *სტარტაპო/st'art'ap'i* “start-up” (rural – median – 5, while in Tbilisi and other urban areas – median is 4). Most respondents were students from rural areas who currently live in the capital, and they use these lexical items to assimilate themselves into urban society.

4. Surprisingly, there was almost no difference in frequency regarding the respondents' working

areas; people working in business sectors use the business borrowings as frequently as those from other fields, e.g., *ტარიფო/t'aripi* “tariff”, *სტარტაპო/st'art'ap'i* “start-up” (means in business and other fields are the same – 4).

5. As for the structural classification, most lexical borrowings are nouns, while adjectives are in the minority.

Out of 50 business e-articles, we collected business terms, which were grouped accordingly:

1. Those adopted/accommodated in the written and spoken Georgian language in the 20th century (e.g., *გენერირება, t'endentsia, invest'itsia*, etc.); 2. The remainder were adopted or accommodated primarily in Georgian (e.g., *აუტორსი, qeshbeqi, startapi, timi, dedlaini*). Based on the quantitative research, we collected 107 responses using Google Forms. We then analyzed them using JASP to measure the frequency of use (Learner's scale: 1 = never to 5 = always) and to examine its association with respondents' age, sex, current employment status, and place of residence. The quantitative data shows that female (74) respondents use most of the terms more frequently than males (34), e.g., *ტენდენცია/t'endentsia* (F (median – 4, mean – 3.699) M (median – 3, mean – 3.382); *გენერირება/generireba* (F (median – 3, mean – 3.110) M (median – 2, mean – 2.676), *ოობო/timi* (F (median – 4, mean – 3.740), (M (median – 4, mean – 3.324). Moreover, the younger the respondents, the more frequently they use business borrowing. Respondents who spent their lifetime in Tbilisi and other urban areas use borrowed lexical items less regularly than those from rural areas, e.g., *ბოზო/bosi, სტარტაპო/st'art'api* (rural – median – 5, while in Tbilisi and other urban areas – median is 4). Surprisingly, there was almost no difference in frequency regarding the respondents' working areas; people working in business sectors use the business borrowings as frequently as those from other fields, e.g., *გენერირება/generireba, ტრანსპორტირება /t'ranspormireba* (means in business and other fields are the same – 3). Regarding structural

classification, most lexical borrowings are nouns, while adjectives are in the minority.

Conclusions

The analysis reveals that lexical borrowings in Georgian are not merely gap-fillers but also serve discourse-level functions, such as indexing moder-

nity and signalling professional group identity. The findings challenge traditional assumptions regarding language purity and suggest that lexical borrowing is a dynamic, context-sensitive process that reflects broader social negotiations of identity and globalization, particularly in such field as business.

ენათმეცნიერება

ქართულ ბიზნესგარემოში ნასესხობების საკითხისათვის

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(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ავთანდილ არაბულის მიერ)

ბოლო წლებში ქართულ ენაში, როგორც ზეპირ, ისე წერილობით მეტყველებაში, ბიზნეს ტერმინოლოგიის ნებაყოფლობითი გამოყენების მზარდი ტენდენცია შეიმჩნევა. მიუხედავად ამისა, ამ ლექსიკური ერთეულების გამოყენების მიღმა არსებული მოტივაციები სისტემურად და ემპირიულად ნაკლებადაა შესწავლილი. წინამდებარე კვლევის მიზანია აღნიშნული ბიზნესტერმინოლოგიის ბუნებისა და მისი გამოყენების სიხშირის შესწავლა. გარდა ამისა, ნაშრომი ისახავს მიზნად ლექსიკური ერთეულების სტრუქტურულ კლასიფიკაციას ქართულ ბიზნესპრესასა და ბიზნესის სფეროში დასაქმებულ ქართველებს შორის. კვლევის მეთოდოლოგია მოიცავს თვისებრივ (პლატფორმა BMG-ზე – „ბიზნესმედია საქართველო“ – გამოქვეყნებული 50 ელექტრონული ბიზნესსტატიის ანალიზი ლექსიკური ერთეულების გამოსავლენად) და რაოდენობრივ მეთოდს (Google Forms-ის გამოყენება ბიზნესორგანიზაციებში დასაქმებული ქართველების ზეპირ მეტყველებაში ბიზნესტერმინოლოგიის გამოყენების სიხშირის შესაფასებლად). ნაშრომის ამოცანებია: ნასესხები ერთეულების ადაპტაციის ხარისხის განსაზღვრა; რესპონდენტთა ასაკს, სქესს, საცხოვრებელ და სამუშაო ადგილებსა და ბიზნესნასესხობების გამოყენების სიხშირეს შორის კორელაციის დადგენა; ქართულ ბიზნესგარემოში შეგროვებული ლექსიკური ნასესხობების სტრუქტურული კლასიფიკაცია. კვლევის შედეგები ექვეყნებ აყენებს ტრადიციულ შეხედულებებს ენის სიწმინდის შესახებ და მიუთითებს იმაზე, რომ ლექსიკური სესხება არის დინამიკური, კონტექსტმგრძნობიარე პროცესი. იგი

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