

Functions of English loanwords in Thai political media discourse

Vladimir A. Serbin
RUDN University, Russia
Moscow State Linguistic University, Russia

Oleg I. Kalinin*
Moscow State Linguistic University, Russia

Polina V. Balakshina
Military University named after Alexander Nevsky, Russia

This article examines the functions of English loanwords in Thai political media discourse. The dataset comprises 250 English loanword occurrences selected through systematic manual screening of socio-political Facebook posts published by six major Thai media outlets (Matichon, Khaosod, The Nation, Thairath, Thai PBS, and Krungthep Thurakit) in January–December 2025. The quantitative analysis is based on occurrences of English-origin lexical items. The methodological framework combines semantic, graphic adaptation, and functional-pragmatic approaches to lexical borrowing. This study analyzes the graphic types of loanwords, their thematic distribution, and their functional potential. It advances and tests the hypothesis that English loanwords in Thai political discourse in the digital space have predominantly utilitarian functions. The findings show that transliteration is the dominant graphic type (59.2%), while Latin-script abbreviations also play a significant role (16.8%). English loanwords perform nominative, expressive, persuasive, and linguistic economy functions. Most loanwords are motivated by nominative need and linguistic economy, whereas prestige was not identified as a dominant function in the analyzed material.

Keywords: English loanwords, Thai language, political media discourse, functions of loanwords

Introduction

In the era of globalization and the rapid digitalization of public communication, English has become a dominant donor language for lexical borrowing across the world, and Southeast Asia is not an exception. Thailand, which belongs to the “Expanding Circle” according to Kachru’s (1985) classification, demonstrates a high permeability of its lexical system to English-language elements, especially in mass media, advertising, digital communication, and political rhetoric (Proshina & Nelson, 2020). It is noteworthy that a number of recent studies within the Thai linguistic community have documented a

shift in the functions of English loanwords: from markers of prestige to instruments of naming and everyday communication (Whanchit & Sukkaew, 2023).

Despite the steady growth in the number of English loanwords in the Thai media, their functioning in Thai digital political media discourse has received relatively limited attention. Most previous studies have focused on advertising, informal online communication, linguistic landscape, and public attitudes toward borrowing (Phanthaphoommee & Gu, 2026; Troyer, 2012; Whanchit & Sukkaew, 2023). The novelty of the study lies in its targeted analysis of the functions of English loanwords specifically in Thai political media discourse, using Facebook publications as empirical data. The study is based on a combination of Russian theories of borrowing, particularly the one developed by Krysin (1996, 2004, 2005, 2008), and the functional-pragmatic approach of Kameneva and Rabkina (2021) and Vinnik (2025), while considering recent studies on the status and adaptation of English loanwords in Thai by Troyer (2012), Whanchit and Sukkaew (2023), Saengin and Manying (2024), and Phanthaphoommee and Gu (2026).

The study is based on the hypothesis that, in Thai political media discourse in social media, English loanwords perform predominantly utilitarian functions, primarily nominative and compressive, whereas the prestige function traditionally associated with the use of the donor language has become less prominent. At the same time, utilitarian and non-utilitarian functions are not treated as mutually exclusive, since individual loanwords may perform several functions simultaneously.

The objective of the study is to identify and describe the functions of English loanwords in Thai political media discourse based on publications in social media and to test the proposed hypothesis. To achieve this objective and test the proposed hypothesis, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. What graphic types of English loanwords are represented in Thai political media discourse on Facebook?

RQ2. How are English loanword occurrences distributed across the main thematic domains of Thai political media discourse, namely domestic politics, foreign policy and the international agenda, and economics?

RQ3. What functions do English loanwords perform in Thai political media discourse?

RQ4. What is the relationship between utilitarian functions and prestige-related, expressive, and persuasive functions of English loanwords in the analyzed corpus?

Literature review

General theory of borrowing

In *Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary* (1998), borrowing is defined as “the recourse to the lexical resources of other languages in order to express new concepts, further differentiate existing ones, and nominate previously unknown objects” (pp. 158 – 159). Krysin, one of the leading researchers of lexical borrowings from foreign languages in Russian, defines lexical borrowing as “the transfer of words from one language to another” (2004, p. 25) and identifies main reasons for this process: the need to name a

new object or phenomenon; the need to distinguish between semantically close but different concepts; the need for conceptual specialization in a particular field; and the tendency to replace a descriptive term with a single-word designation (1996, p. 58). All these reasons are utilitarian: they are conditioned by communicative necessity rather than by a desire to enhance the speaker's status. At the same time, Krysin also points to socio-psychological factors: a foreign word that sounds unusual may be perceived as more prestigious (Krysin, 2005). It is precisely this latter factor that gives rise to the theoretical opposition between utilitarian motives and stylistic/prestige motives, which constitutes the conceptual core of the present study.

According to Krysin's (2008) semantic typology, loanwords can be divided into several groups. The first group includes words naming new realities and phenomena in the recipient language. The second group includes so-called "parallel words," which coexist with already existing lexical items in the recipient language and do not fill lexical gaps but rather supplement the lexicon semantically and stylistically. The third group includes words borrowed together with a new technology or object. The first and third groups are clearly associated with utilitarian motivation, whereas the second group, "parallel words", is of particular interest for testing the present hypothesis, since it is precisely in this group that the choice between a loanword and a native word may be motivated by stylistic or prestige-related considerations (Krysin, 2008, p. 4). Although this typology was developed on the basis of Russian, it is used in the present study not as a language-specific model mechanically transferred to Thai, but as a heuristic semantic framework for distinguishing different motivations for borrowing. Its use is supported by general contact-linguistic approaches, in which borrowing is treated as the transfer of linguistic units from a donor language into a recipient language as a result of language contact (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988), or as the entry of a lexical item into the lexicon at a particular stage of language history through copying or translation from another language (Haspelmath, 2009).

In the broader linguistic context, Haugen's (1950) typology should also be mentioned. It is based on the degree of morphemic substitution: words without morphemic substitution (*loanwords*), words with partial substitution (*loan-blends*, or partial calques), and words with complete substitution (*loanshifts* or calques). This classification is important for describing formal types of loanwords in Thai, where transliteration, hybrid types, and calques are among the main strategies for adapting foreign lexical material. In the present study, an "English loanword" is understood as a lexical unit of English origin functioning in a Thai text in one of the following forms:

- transliterated English words and phrases in Thai script (ดิจิทัลวอลเล็ต – *digital wallet*);
- English words and expressions in Latin script (*Soft Power*);
- abbreviations in Latin script derived from English terms (*GDP*, *MOU*, *SME*);
- abbreviations in Thai script reproducing English abbreviations through transliteration (e.g., จีดีพี – *GDP*, ซีอีโอ – *CEO*);
- calques or Thai expressions formed as translations of English terms (e.g., ปัญญาประดิษฐ์ – *artificial intelligence*).

Functions of loanwords in political discourse

Studies of lexical borrowing in media texts identify functions of loanwords as nominative, integrative, expressive, evaluative, emotive, persuasive, marker of cultural identity as well as linguistic economy function and linguistic fashion. Importantly, in media discourse loanwords do not function in isolation; rather, they operate within a system of pragmatic relations and enhance communicative objectives of the text, from attracting attention to shaping attitude (Garan, 2023).

With specific reference to political discourse, Kameneva and Rabkina (2021, p. 36) identify the following functions of English loanwords: nomination of current concepts of global economic and political communication, linguistic economy, construction of a modern politician image, the neutralization (euphemizing) of negative connotations, a password or in-group marker function, and an ideological function. Analyzing speech behavior of Russian politicians, these authors showed that the use of English lexical items is determined not only by communicative necessity but also by the desire to demonstrate inclusion in the global context. Vinnik (2025), studying the ideological function of English loanwords in the political discourse of Russia and Germany, argues that English loanwords “contribute to the unification of political rhetoric and the formation of a multilingual political space” (p. 3933), thus performing not only a nominative but also an ideological function.

It must be acknowledged that most Russian studies have focused on Russian and other European languages. The functions of English loanwords in the political discourse of Southeast Asian languages, including Thai, have received relatively limited attention. This provides the rationale for focusing on Thai political media discourse in the present study.

English loanwords in Thai

Research on English loanwords in Thai has addressed several interrelated issues: the status of English in Thai public communication, the formal adaptation of English lexical items, their perception by Thai speakers, and their use in specific communicative domains.

Kapper (1992), analyzing English loanwords in Thai journalistic texts, noted that the character of such loanwords reflects the economic, political, and social relations between the two languages. Troyer (2012), in his study of English word usage on Thai websites, concluded that English in the Thai “linguistic netscape” reflects cosmopolitanism, globalization, and modernity; in advertising contexts, the use of English may be regarded as an expression of the prestige function, even if the function has been transformed. Troyer (2012) also proposed a three-level classification of English loanwords in Thai, distinguishing fully adapted loanwords recorded in Thai dictionaries and no longer perceived as foreign; words still perceived as foreign but having a standard transliteration; and new loanwords whose comprehension requires knowledge of English. This classification is important for the present study because fully adapted loanwords are most likely to have lost their prestige function, whereas new loanwords may potentially retain it.

A study by Kuptanaroaj (2021), based on Thai television dramas, showed that the dominant form of English borrowing is transliteration (91.03%), followed by hybrid forms (7.6%) and calques (1.3%). The high proportion of transliteration indirectly points to utilitarian motivation: the word is borrowed together with the concept it denotes and then integrated into the phonetic system of Thai. More recent Thai-specific research confirms the importance of this tendency. For example, Saengin and Manying (2024), analyzing English loanwords in the Thai New Words Dictionary, identified three major methods of integrating English lexical items into Thai: transliteration, translation, and coinage.

Phanthaphoommee and Gu (2026), analyzing Thailand’s linguistic landscape, also showed that English is widely transliterated into Thai script and may become visually “local” while retaining global symbolic value. Their findings suggest that transliteration is not a marginal phenomenon, but a pervasive strategy through which English is embedded in contemporary Thai public space. This observation is particularly important

for political media discourse, where English-derived terms often preserve their connection with global political, technological, or economic discourse while being graphically adapted to Thai.

Of particular importance for the present study is the work of Whanchit and Sukkaew (2023), who, on the basis of a survey of 120 respondents, established that the ubiquity of English in Thai society has led to its “normalization.” Loanwords have ceased to be perceived as markers of prestige and have become instruments of everyday communication. Respondents acknowledged the necessity of English loanwords primarily for terminology and professional communication, whereas the association with prestige was minimal. This conclusion – the weakening of the prestige function in everyday communication and mass media – directly motivates our hypothesis and its further implication in political discourse.

Finally, English lexical elements have also been examined in relation to Thai political communication. Chatpunnarangsee and Osatananda (2023), analyzing code-switching between Thai and English in young Thai politicians’ speeches, demonstrate that English elements are actively used in political speech and may serve audience-oriented communicative purposes. Although their study deals primarily with code-switching rather than loanwords, it is relevant for the present research because it confirms that English-origin lexical material is not limited to advertising, entertainment, or informal digital communication, but also functions in the political domain.

Methodology

The data for this study consist of publications posted on the official Facebook accounts of six major Thai media outlets: Matichon, Khaosod, The Nation, Thairath, Thai PBS, and Krungthep Thurakit. These outlets were selected because they represent different segments of Thai political media discourse: Thai-language mass news media (Matichon, Khaosod, Thairath), public broadcasting (Thai PBS), internationally oriented reporting (The Nation), and socio-economic analytics (Krungthep Thurakit). The choice of Facebook as the source of data was determined by its prominent position in the Thai media space. According to DataReportal (Kemp, 2025), in 2025 the number of Facebook users in Thailand exceeds 50 million, and the platform remains one of the main sources of news for Thai audiences. The dataset is selective rather than exhaustive. The study examined headlines and short Facebook posts published between January and December 2025 and included only socio-political publications containing at least one English-origin lexical item. Socio-political relevance was defined by the dominant focus of the post: government institutions and political actors, public policy, elections, protests, legal and administrative decisions, inter-state relations, international organizations, or economic policy. Duplicated or reposted items were not counted twice when they repeated the same context, and proper names, including brand names, company names, and personal names, were excluded from consideration.

Through systematic manual screening, 250 loanword occurrences were identified. The unit of analysis is a loanword occurrence, i.e. a concrete use of an English-origin lexical item in a headline or short Facebook post. A loanword type refers to a unique lexical form, while a context refers to the headline or post fragment in which the occurrence appears. The quantitative analysis therefore counts occurrences rather than unique loanword types or whole posts. If several English loanwords appeared in one post, each of them was counted as a separate occurrence; if the same loanword appeared in different posts, each occurrence was also counted separately.

The analysis was conducted in four consecutive stages. At the first stage, English loanword occurrences were identified and inventoried in the corpus. At the second stage, all occurrences were classified according to their graphic representation. This stage relied on Troyer's (2012) classification of English loanword adaptation in Thai, while recent Thai-specific studies on transliteration, translation, and coinage were also taken into account (Kuptanaroaj, 2021; Phanthaphoommee & Gu, 2026; Saengin & Manying, 2024). Five graphic types were identified in the corpus: transliterated English words in Thai script, English words and expressions in Latin script, English abbreviations in Latin script, abbreviations in Thai script, and calques. A Thai expression was classified as a calque only when its internal semantic structure corresponded to an identifiable English model and when it functioned as a rendering of a stable English political, technological, or economic term. Cases in which the English source model could not be established with sufficient confidence were not included in this category.

At the third stage, loanword occurrences were distributed across three thematic domains: domestic politics, foreign policy and the international agenda, and economics. Thematic classification was based on the dominant topic of the post rather than on the semantics of the loanword itself. If a post contained elements of more than one domain, it was assigned to the domain that represented the main news focus. These domains were selected because they represent the three recurrent macro-areas of political media coverage in the corpus: internal political processes, international relations, and economic policy. At the fourth stage, the occurrences were analyzed functionally, relying on the semantic and functional typologies proposed by Krysin (2008), Kameneva and Rabkina (2021), and Vinnik (2025).

The functional coding followed operational criteria. The nominative function was assigned when a loanword named a new or specialized political, economic, technological, institutional, or media-related phenomenon; the linguistic economy function when it replaced a longer Thai expression, descriptive phrase, full institutional name, or technical term; the expressive function when it had a Thai equivalent but added a stylistic, informal, visual, emotional, or media-oriented nuance; the persuasive function when it contributed to framing, evaluation, authority, expertise, ideological positioning, or audience influence; and the prestige function only when the loanword was used primarily to signal status, elitism, modernity, or symbolic association with English without a clear nominative, compressive, expressive, or persuasive need. The study therefore distinguishes prestige as a dominant function from prestige-related associations that may accompany some English-derived forms as secondary pragmatic effects.

All identified functions were divided into utilitarian functions, including nominative and linguistic economy functions, and non-utilitarian functions, including prestige, expressive, and persuasive functions. The analysis combines a quantitative component, based on counting the frequency of functions, graphic types, and thematic domains, with a qualitative component, based on selected examples. The coding procedure allowed for functional overlap: each occurrence was first assigned all relevant functional codes, and then, for quantitative purposes, one dominant function was identified on the basis of its immediate textual environment. Ambiguous cases were discussed among the authors until agreement on the dominant function was reached. This consensus-based procedure was used to reduce the subjectivity of interpretive coding, although the study does not claim full statistical generalizability. Table 1 illustrates the coding process.

Table 1. Examples of functional coding

Sample	Form and source type	Functional codes	Dominant function	Interpretation
ดิจิทัลวอลเล็ต /digital wallet	Transliterated phrase in Thai script; political headline about a state payment scheme	nominative; linguistic economy	nominative	The loanword names a specific digital instrument of state economic policy and replaces a longer descriptive explanation of a digital payment mechanism.
ผลิตภัณฑ์มวลรวมในประเทศ /GDP	Latin-script abbreviation; economic-political post	linguistic economy; nominative	linguistic economy	The abbreviation replaces full Thai term ผลิตภัณฑ์มวลรวมในประเทศ (<i>gross domestic product</i>) and condenses a complex macroeconomic indicator into a compact internationally recognizable form. The corpus also contains its Thai-script transliteration, จีดีพี.
โชว์ /show	Transliterated verb in Thai script; headline about politicians' public gesture	expressive; persuasive	expressive	The borrowing coexists with แสดง, but adds a more visual, informal, and media-oriented nuance, presenting the political gesture as a public performance.
เฟคนิวส์ /fake news	Transliterated phrase in Thai script; post warning about digital misinformation	nominative; persuasive	persuasive	The item names a digital political phenomenon while also activating an evaluative frame of manipulation and legal risk.

Results and discussion

Graphic types of loanwords

Having analyzed the selected occurrences, we identified five graphic types of English loanwords in Thai, presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Graphic types of representation of English loanwords in Thai

Type	Number (out of 250)	Share (%)
Transliteration	148	59.2%
English abbreviation (Latin script)	42	16.8%
Latin script (words)	30	12.0%
Abbreviation in Thai script	18	7.2%
Calque (Thai script)	12	4.8%

Transliteration was found to be the dominant type, which is partly consistent with the results of previous studies. Kuptanaroaj (2021) reported 91.03% transliterations in Thai television dramas, whereas in the present study the share of transliterations is 59.2%. The predominance of transliteration in the present corpus is also consistent with recent evidence from Thailand's linguistic landscape, where English transliterated into Thai script has been described as a highly visible and pervasive phenomenon in public signage and commercial naming practices (Phanthaphoommee & Gu, 2026). The somewhat lower figure may be explained by the specifics of political discourse, where international abbreviations preserving Latin script, as well as full English words occurring in the names of programs, events, and concepts, play a significant role.

Among transliterated loanwords, there are both individual words and multi-word phrases: ไดป์ (dope), ดิจิทัลวอลเล็ต (digital wallet), เฟกนิวส์ (fake news), โซเชียล (social). Items written in Latin script were primarily English words used as part of event titles (Special Talks: Renewable) and individual lexical items incorporated into Thai sentences (Disrupt, Cell Broadcast).

A different pattern is observed with abbreviations: from the total number of abbreviations (60), the majority (42) were written in Latin script (TDRI, LTV, MOU, CPI), whereas only 18 Thai-script abbreviations were found (จีดีพี (GDP), ซีอีโอ (CEO)). Some abbreviations appeared in both graphic forms, as in the case of DSI (Department of Special Investigation) and ดีเอสไอ, which indicates that the process of graphic adaptation for these lexical items has not yet been completed. Calques constitute the smallest group (12 occurrences, 4.8%), partly because only cases with a sufficiently identifiable English source model were included: ปัญญาประดิษฐ์ (artificial intelligence), การพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืน (sustainable development).

Thematic distribution of loanwords

Thematic distribution of loanwords is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Thematic distribution of loanwords

Theme	Total	Transliteration	Latin script	Abbrev. (Latin)	Abbrev. (Thai)	Calques
Domestic politics	120	78	16	16	5	5
Foreign policy and international agenda	76	44	8	16	5	3
Economic agenda	54	26	6	10	8	4

The largest number of occurrences (120, or 48%) belongs to the domestic politics category, which may be explained by the greater visibility of domestic political issues in the selected Facebook posts. Transliteration dominates across all three groups, but its share is particularly high in publications about domestic policy matters, where common loanwords prevail: verbs such as เซ็น (to sign), โพสต์ (to post), โชว์ (to show), and สแกน (to scan), and nouns such as ไทม์ไลน์ (timeline) and โซเชียล (social media).

In foreign-policy and international-agenda publications, the proportion of abbreviations in Latin script is noticeably higher, as they help to convey international realities: GBC (General Border Committee), MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index). Economic-agenda publications contain a relatively high number of English terms both in Thai and in Latin script: LTV (Loan-to-Value), จีดีพี (GDP), SME (Small and Medium Enterprise). Most abbreviations in Thai script (8 out of 18) were found in economic publications, which may be explained by the higher frequency of economic terminology in everyday discourse and, consequently, a more advanced stage of its adaptation.

Functions of loanwords

The analysis identified four main functions of English loanwords in Thai digital political discourse. The quantitative distribution of functions was calculated on the basis of the dominant function assigned to each loanword occurrence. Secondary functions were considered in qualitative interpretation. The distribution of dominant functions is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of dominant functions of English loanwords

Function	Number of occurrences	Share (%)	Examples
Nominative function	95	38%	ดิจิทัลวอลเล็ต; เคสไซเบอร์; เว็บบ; บิ๊กเทค; ปัญญาประดิษฐ์
Linguistic economy function	60	24%	เอสเอ็มอี; GDP; SMS; เซ็น; คาวน
Expressive function	58	23.2%	โชว์; ม็อบ; เบรก; First Jobber
Persuasive function	37	14.8%	เฟคนิวส์; ใ้ป; Soft Power; Negative Outlook

The first and most prominent function is the nominative function. This function means that a loanword names a new reality or concept in Thai. This function matches Krysin's (2008) first type of borrowing – the need to name a new phenomenon. For example, in the post “สุดารัตน์ ดึงให้เงิน 10,000 #ดิจิทัลวอลเล็ต กระตุ้นสก. ต่ำกว่าคาด” (Sudarath: the distribution of 10,000 baht via the digital wallet scheme stimulates the economy less than expected), the lexeme ดิจิทัลวอลเล็ต (digital wallet) names a specific instrument of state economic policy for which there is no Thai equivalent. In the headline “เคสไซเบอร์ ความขัดแย้ง ไทย เขมร ระวังข่าวปลอม แห้วมั่วเสี่ยงติดคุก” (Cyber case: Thailand–Cambodia conflict – beware of fake news; reckless sharing may lead to imprisonment), the lexeme เคสไซเบอร์ (cyber case) names a new type of offense associated with the digital environment. This group also includes naming of technological and political realities such as บิ๊กเทค (Big Tech), Soft Power, and ปัญญาประดิษฐ์ (artificial intelligence). The nominative function covers a substantial part of the corpus and is quantitatively dominant. High frequency of nominative uses in the present study is consistent with observations from Thai academic discourse, where English is often preferred “due to its availability of technical terms” in certain fields of research (Rhekhailit & Lerdpaisalwong, 2019, p. 355).

The second function is linguistic economy (the compressive function). It means that a loanword expresses a meaning more compactly than a longer Thai equivalent or descriptive phrase. It is especially relevant in the context of social media publications, where textual space is limited and the headline must be as short as possible. Abbreviations represent the clearest cases of linguistic economy: the use of GDP instead of the full Thai term ผลิตภัณฑ์มวลรวมในประเทศ (gross domestic product) or CPI instead of a full descriptive phrase significantly saves headline space. However, linguistic economy is not limited to abbreviations alone, and abbreviations may also perform nominative or persuasive functions depending on the context. Transliterated loanwords are also often shorter than their Thai equivalents: เซ็น (3 characters) vs. ลงนาม (5 characters), โชว์ (3 characters) vs. แสดง (4 characters). As Kameneva and Rabkina (2021) note, the function of linguistic economy is especially relevant in political discourse, where complex concepts often need to be explained as concisely as possible.

The third is the expressive function. A considerable proportion of loanwords in our data belong to Krysin's (2008) category of “parallel words,” that is, they coexist with native Thai lexical units and supplement the lexicon not nominatively but semantically and stylistically. A representative example is the pair โชว์ (show) and แสดง, the native Thai verb meaning “to show”, “to demonstrate.” Both share the general meaning “to show,” but โชว์ is stylistically less formal and has a narrower semantic range, being used in the concrete, visual sense of showing. In the headline “ภูมิธรรม-อนุทิน” โชว์หวาน จูงมือลงศึกไทยคู่ฟ้า สยบข่าวปรับ ครม.” (Phumtham and Anutin sweetly demonstrated their unity by walking hand

in hand into the Thai-Khu-Fah Building, thereby dispelling rumors of a cabinet reshuffle), the verb โชว์ emphasizes the visual and demonstrative character of the politicians' gesture, whereas แสดง in this context would sound more neutral and would not convey the same nuance of public display. A similar situation is observed with the pair เซ็น (from English to sign) and ลงนาม (to sign): although a Thai verb exists, the borrowing gives the utterance a less formal tone. Broader observations show that borrowed lexemes may carry not only referential meaning but also pragmatic and discourse-related effects in communication (Andersen, 2014). The expressive function is especially significant in digital media, where competition for the reader's attention places heightened demands on the expressiveness of the text.

The fourth function is persuasive. Political discourse is often oriented toward influencing the audience, and English loanwords may become part of this pragmatic strategy. This function is performed through several mechanisms. First, the use of international terminology (SME, GDP, LTV, MOU) creates an effect of authority and expertise, signaling inclusion in the global political and economic context. As Vinnik (2025) notes, a "multilingual political space" is formed in the globalized media environment, in which English functions as the metalanguage of global politics. Second, loanwords may be used to attract attention and produce an emotional effect. In this regard, the choice of English-derived forms may be motivated not only by referential needs, but also by the positive associations such language is presumed to evoke, including modernity, prestige, and wider symbolic appeal (Vivas-Peraza, 2020). Lexemes such as เฟคนิวส์ (fake news) or โด๊ป (dope) not only denote a phenomenon but also carry an evaluative component, appealing to globally recognizable concepts. Third, some loanwords perform a function close to the ideological one by denoting phenomena marked by a particular value orientation: Soft Power as a concept of international influence, or บิ๊กเทค (Big Tech) as a designation for global technology corporations.

Overall, the findings generally confirm the initial hypothesis concerning the dominance of utilitarian functions of English loanwords in Thai political media discourse on social media. The nominative and compressive functions cover the majority of occurrences: loanwords are used to designate new realities and institutions, to introduce specialized terminology, and to serve as shorter and more compact equivalents of Thai expressions. The prestige function was not identified as a dominant function in the analyzed corpus. None of the occurrences demonstrates the use of an English loanword solely for the purpose of signaling status or elitism. Prestige-related associations may accompany some English-derived forms, especially those associated with modernity or global expertise, but they do not appear to determine loanword use in the analyzed material. This interpretation should be understood as a corpus-based finding rather than as a general claim about all uses of English in Thai political communication.

A comparison of the present findings with previous studies shows that the formal and functional parameters identified generally fit the broader picture of language contact in Thailand, where English has long served multiple social and communicative purposes and is used not only in international but also in intranational communication (Glass, 2009; Trakulkasemsuk, 2018). The present study refines this broader picture with specific reference to political media discourse. The predominance of transliteration, together with the retention of a substantial proportion of abbreviations in Latin script, is consistent with data from other spheres of communication (Kuptanaroaj, 2021; Troyer, 2012). However, while in advertising on Thai websites English has been shown to "index concepts of cosmopolitanism, globalization and modernity" (Troyer, 2012, p.93), in political texts this distribution is explained by the functional demands of specific domains – domestic

politics, foreign policy, and economics – rather than by a desire for stylistic embellishment. The high terminological density of the economic domain also correlates with the conclusion that English lexical items in professional communication are perceived by speakers as more precise and more convenient for naming complex concepts. More broadly, this interpretation is supported by findings from Thailand's linguistic landscape, where translation and transliteration are treated as important strategies for communicating with non-Thai readers and facilitating multilingual interaction (Bennui, 2023).

An important result of the analysis is the confirmation of the polyfunctional character of English loanwords. As previous studies have shown, borrowings may carry cultural and pragmatic implications in discourse and may therefore perform more than one communicative function at the same time (Fiedler, 2017), while English-derived forms in media discourse may serve different communicative purposes depending on genre and topic domain (Gazzardi & Vasquez, 2022). The same units may simultaneously perform several functions: they may name a new object or phenomenon, ensure compression of the utterance, and create an additional evaluative or expressive effect. In such cases, utilitarian motivation remains the basic one: it is this motivation that determines the inclusion of the loanword in the text, while stylistic and persuasive effects function as accompanying layers that enhance communicative impact but do not determine the very fact of Anglicism use.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the corpus is limited to Facebook publications of six major Thai media outlets; therefore, the findings represent Facebook-based political media discourse produced by selected institutional media rather than the entire spectrum of Thai political media discourse. Other platforms widely used in Thailand, such as X/Twitter, TikTok, LINE, and YouTube, may display different patterns of English loanword use due to differences in audience, genre, and platform affordances. Second, although the selected outlets represent several segments of Thai political media discourse, including Thai-language mass news media, public broadcasting, internationally oriented reporting, and economic-political journalism, they do not cover the full ideological diversity of the Thai media landscape. Third, the dataset consists of 250 loanword occurrences selected through systematic manual screening; it is suitable for exploratory functional analysis but does not allow broad statistical generalization. Fourth, the study does not include audience reception data, and functional classification inevitably involves interpretive coding. Although ambiguous cases were discussed until consensus was reached, no separate inter-coder reliability coefficient was calculated. Accordingly, future research could expand the corpus, compare several digital platforms, apply inter-coder reliability procedures, and examine audience perceptions of English loanwords in Thai political media discourse.

Conclusion

The data collected in this study reveal that the dominant graphic type of loanwords is transliteration in Thai script, which indicates a high extent of integration of English-derived lexical items into the Thai media text. At the same time, the considerable share of abbreviations in Latin script found in the data is mostly due to the international character of political and economic terminology rather than to status-related motivation. Thus, English loanwords in the analyzed corpus are represented both by graphically

adapted forms and by Latin-script items that preserve their connection with global political, economic, and institutional discourse.

The thematic distribution of the material shows that English loanwords occur across all three major domains analyzed in the study: domestic politics, foreign policy and the international agenda, and economics. The largest number of occurrences belongs to domestic politics, while foreign-policy and economic publications show a noticeable concentration of international abbreviations and specialized terminology. This suggests that the use of English loanwords is shaped not only by general language contact, but also by the communicative needs of specific areas of political media coverage.

Four principal functions of loanwords were identified: nominative, expressive, persuasive, and linguistic economy functions. The majority of selected occurrences fall into the nominative or linguistic economy categories. English loanwords are used to designate new realities and institutions, introduce specialized terminology, and serve as shorter and more compact equivalents of Thai expressions. The hypothesis concerning the predominantly utilitarian character of English loanwords in Thai digital political discourse is therefore generally confirmed.

The study recorded a significant role of expressive and persuasive functions, which indicates that the utilitarian nature of loanwords is not identical to stylistic neutrality. In political media discourse in the digital space, loanwords are not only convenient lexical items but also pragmatically active units influencing audience perception of the text. The same units may simultaneously name a new object or phenomenon, ensure compression of the utterance, and create an additional evaluative or expressive effect.

The prestige function was not identified as a dominant function in the analyzed corpus. Prestige-related associations may accompany some English-derived forms, especially those connected with modernity, global expertise, or international political and economic discourse, but they do not appear to determine loanword use in the material analyzed. This finding confirms and further develops observations made by Whanchit and Sukkaew (2023): the normalization of English in Thai public space has led to a situation in which, even in political communication, where status and authority have traditionally played a key role, English loanwords function primarily as instruments of nomination, compression, and pragmatic framing rather than as markers of prestige.

Further research could expand the corpus by including other social media platforms (X/Twitter, TikTok, LINE), applying quantitative corpus-linguistic methods to assess the frequency of individual loanwords, and conducting a comparative analysis of loanword functions in the political discourse of Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries. Of particular interest would also be the study of audience's perception of English loanwords in political media discourse.

About the authors

Vladimir A. Serbin - PhD in Linguistics, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Theory and Practice of Foreign Languages, Institute of Foreign Languages, RUDN University; Associate Professor of the Military Training Center, Moscow State Linguistic University, Russia. Research focuses on sociolinguistics, military discourse, and gendered language practices in professional communities. Research interests: media linguistics, algorithmic media linguistics, linguopragmatics of media texts, terminology, Vietnamese studies, and transmedia media narrative
Email: vietyvladimir@gmail.com

Oleg I. Kalinin - PhD in Linguistics, Professor, Chinese Language Department, Moscow State Linguistic University, Russia. Academic interests include Chinese linguoculture, discourse analysis, and metaphorical modeling in military and media texts.

Email: okalinin.lingua@gmail.com

Polina V. Balakshina – Lecturer, Department of Far Eastern Languages, Military University named after A. Nevsky, Russia. Academic interests include Thai linguoculture, discourse analysis, and political communication in digital space.

Email: poly1996bal@yandex.ru

References

- Andersen, G. (2014). Pragmatic borrowing. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 67, 17–33.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2014.03.005>
- Bennui, P. (2023). English and Other Languages in the Linguistic Landscape of Koh Lipe, Satun: Distribution, Domains, Functions, and Glocalization. *Journal of Multidisciplinary in Social Sciences*, 19(3), 32–47.
- Chatpunnarangsee, K., & Osatananda, V. (2023). Code-switching between Thai and English in young Thai politicians' speeches. *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies*, 23(2), 351–363.
<https://doi.org/10.14456/hasss.2023.32>
- Fiedler, S. (2017). Phraseological borrowing from English into German: Cultural and pragmatic implications. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 113, 89–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2017.03.002>
- Garan, E. P. (2023). Functions of English borrowings in modern Internet media. *Baltic Humanitarian Journal*, 1(42), 81–84. https://doi.org/10.57145/27129780_2023_12_01_17
- Glass, T. (2009). Why Thais write to other Thais in English. *World Englishes*, 28(4), 532–543.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2009.01610.x>
- Gazzardi, A., & Vasquez, C. (2022). A taxonomic approach to the use of English in the Italian media. *World Englishes*, 41(2), 271–284. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12524>
- Haspelmath, M. (2009). Lexical borrowing: concepts and issues. In M. Haspelmath & U. Tadmor (Eds.), *Loanwords in the World's Languages: A Comparative Handbook* (pp. 35–54). De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110218442.35>
- Haugen, E. (1950). The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing. *Language*, 26, 211–231.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/410058>
- Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary*. (1998). Bolshaya Rossiyskaya Entsiklopediya, Moscow.
- Kameneva, V. A., & Rabkina, N. V. (2021). English-language vocabulary in political discourse: A linguopersonological approach. *Political Linguistics*, 1(85), 33–40. https://doi.org/10.26170/1999-2629_2021_01_03
- Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standard, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures* (pp. 11–30). Cambridge University Press.
- Kapper, J. (1992). English borrowing in Thai as reflected in Thai journalistic texts. *Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics*, 36, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.31356/silwp.vol36.01>
- Kemp, S. (2025). *Digital 2025: Thailand*. DataReportal. Retrieved June 13, 2026, from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-thailand>
- Krysin, L. P. (1996). Foreign words in modern life. In A. D. Dulichenko (Ed.), *Russian language at the end of the twentieth century* (142–161). Nauka.
- Krysin, L. P. (2004). *Russian word, one's own and someone else's: Studies in the Russian language and sociolinguistics*. Yazyki Slavyanskoy Kultury
- Krysin, L. P. (2005). *Explanatory dictionary of foreign words*. Eksmo
- Krysin, L. P. (2008). *The word in contemporary texts and dictionaries: Essays on Russian lexis and lexicography*. Znack.
- Kuptanaroaj, N. (2021). A Study of English Loanwords in the Thai Television Series "The Diary Tootsies Season 1". *Journal of Liberal Arts*, 16(2), 42–55.
- Phanthaphoommee, N., & Gu, C. (2026). English passing off as Thai in twenty-first century Thai linguistic landscape. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 47(2), 1182–1204.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2024.2415399>
- Proshina, Z. G., & Nelson, C. L. (2020). Varieties of English and Kachru's Expanding Circle. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, 24(3), 523–550. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-2020-24-3-523-550>

- Rhekhailit, K., & Lerdpaisalwong, S. (2019). The Increasing Role of English in Thai Academic Publications. *Manusya Journal of Humanities*, 22(3), 335-357. <https://doi.org/10.1163/26659077-02203004>
- Saengin, T., & Manying, W. (2024). English loanwords in Thai new word dictionary: A reflection on society. *Journal of Language and Culture*, 43(1), 70–97.
- Thomason, S., & Kaufman, T. (1988). *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*. University of California Press.
- Trakulkasemsuk, W. (2018). English in Thailand: Looking back to the past, at the present and towards the future. *Asian Englishes*, 20(2), 96–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2017.1421602>
- Troyer, R. (2012) English in the Thai linguistic netscape. *World Englishes*, 31(1), 93–112. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2011.01742.x>
- Vinnik, R. A. (2025) The ideological function of Anglicisms in the political discourse of Russia and Germany. *Philology. Theory & Practice*, 18, 3927–3935. <https://doi.org/10.30853/phil20250538>
- Vivas-Peraza, A. C. (2020). English in the Linguistic Landscape of Thailand: A Case Study of Public Signs in Hat Yai. *Language Value*, 13(1), 23-57 <https://doi.org/10.6035/LanguageV.2020.13.2>
- Whanchit, W., & Sukkaew, N. (2023) The Language Contact Phenomenon in Thailand: English Borrowing, Comprehension, and Public Attitudes. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 2, 1041-1061. <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v10i2.26277>