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# The Evolution of Commercial Jargon in Strengthening Business Resilience in a VUCA World

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**Abstract**

*In a world increasingly described through the lens of VUCA: volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity- the language of commerce is undergoing a quiet but significant transformation. Organisations today rely on new expressions and evolving jargon to articulate unfamiliar challenges shaped by digital shifts, unstable markets, and rapidly changing consumer expectations. Terms such as resilience planning, digital agility, sustainability indicators, and data-driven strategies do more than circulate as fashionable business vocabulary; they mirror the ways in which institutions interpret disruption and imagine their futures.*

*This paper examines how such emerging commercial jargon functions not merely as technical terminology but as a cultural and communicative tool that supports organisational resilience. When businesses adopt new language, they often adopt new ways of thinking, clarifying priorities, simplifying complex problems, and fostering shared understanding across diverse teams. In moments of crisis or uncertainty, this shared vocabulary becomes particularly vital, enabling quicker coordination and more confident decision making.*

*Drawing from contemporary business communication, digital discourse, and managerial practices, the study argues that the evolution of jargon reflects the broader adaptive capacity of commerce in a VUCA environment. Ultimately, the paper suggests that resilient commerce is shaped not only by technology and strategy but also by the words through which organisations explain, negotiate, and navigate change.*

**Keywords;** VUCA, business jargon, resilience, organisational communication, adaptability.

**INTRODUCTION**

Language changes with people, and every area of human activity creates its own vocabulary. The field of commerce, driven by competition, innovation, and global connections, is no different. However, what we have seen in recent years is not just a slow change in language; it is a rapid shift in business language. Organizations now work in what scholars and practitioners often call a VUCA environment, which includes volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. In this world, change is no longer occasional; it is ongoing. Disruptions are not uncommon threats; they are part of everyday life. The future is not predicted based on familiar patterns but comes from sudden breaks, crises, and new opportunities.

In these circumstances, the vocabulary organizations use becomes much more than corporate décor or fancy boardroom rhetoric. These words become anchors, offering steady points of reference that help people interpret uncertainty, communicate strategy, and stay aligned despite the turbulence around them (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). The language of business today is a form of navigation. It helps leaders articulate challenges, frame solutions, and maintain morale in situations where clarity is elusive.

Commercial jargon is often criticised for sounding fancy or unnecessary and sometimes that is true. However, if we look closely, jargon grows naturally as workplaces change.

New tools, new challenges, and new ways of working create the need for new words. These terms help people explain difficult ideas more easily, make quick decisions, and communicate clearly with teams from different backgrounds.

This paper suggests that commercial jargon is not just a passing corporate trend. It is closely tied to how companies stay strong and adaptable. The language they use reflects how they see themselves, how they deal with problems, and how they plan. By understanding the journey of jargon, we also understand how organisations communicate, adjust, and continue to move forward in a changing world.

### ***Understanding Jargon Through a Linguistic Lens***

From a linguistic point of view, jargon refers to the special vocabulary used within a specific profession, field, or community. It exists because some ideas and processes are too detailed to explain using everyday language. When people use terms like ROI (Return on Investment), KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), synergy, or agile methods, they are referring to complex concepts through short and familiar expressions.

Like all language, jargon changes over time. It evolves through different linguistic processes. Semantic shift occurs when familiar words gain new meanings. For example, the word pivot once referred to a physical turn, but now it means changing direction in strategy. Neologism introduces completely new words, such as hyper automation. Metaphorical borrowing uses imagery-based words like ecosystem, adopted from biology into business communication. Acronymization turns long ideas into short forms like ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance), CRM (Customer Relationship Management), and OKR (Objectives and Key Results).

These changes do not happen by chance. They take place because business practices continue to grow with globalization and digital technology. In this way, commercial jargon becomes a living record of how organizations react to challenges, adjust to new conditions, and redefine what matters most (Paltridge, 2012).

### ***VUCA and the Changing Landscape of Commerce***

The acronym VUCA has become a key way to describe the conditions of today's business world. It stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, each representing a challenge faced by organizations around the world (Boin et al., 2020). Volatility refers to how quickly and unpredictably markets can change. Uncertainty highlights situations where

information is incomplete or unreliable. Complexity reflects the many interconnected systems that make simple cause-and-effect planning difficult. Ambiguity describes situations that have no clear precedent or obvious solution.

In such a challenging environment, leaders and teams need language that helps them discuss new and unfamiliar realities. Phrases like digital resilience, future readiness, disruption management, scenario planning, and strategic foresight give organizations a way to think about and prepare for situations that traditional language may not effectively capture (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014).

In this sense, language does more than describe the VUCA world, it shapes how people understand it. It influences the cognitive tools they use to make decisions and the cultural attitudes that guide how they respond.

### ***Digital Transformation and the Birth of New Jargon***

One of the strongest forces shaping modern commercial jargon is digital transformation. Twenty years ago, phrases like metaverse strategy, cloud migration, AI-readiness, SaaS integration, digital-first, or blockchain audit might have sounded distant or highly technical. Today, they are common terms in business planning and decision making.

Digital transformation requires organizations to think differently, and language adapts to support that shift. Working with artificial intelligence, data analytics, virtual collaboration tools, and automated systems naturally produces new vocabulary that explains new realities. As companies adopt new technology, they also adopt new language (Hynes and Veltsos, 2019).

The global pandemic sped up this linguistic change even more. Expressions such as remote capability, hybrid work model, virtual onboarding, and contactless delivery, which were rarely used before 2020, are now part of everyday discussions (Boin et al., 2020). These terms are not only descriptive; they reflect new cultural expectations and habits in the workplace.

In simple terms, digital-era jargon shows that language does not sit behind innovation. It moves with it and sometimes even moves ahead, giving names to ideas before they fully take shape.

### ***Commercial Jargon as a Cognitive Tool***

Another important aspect of jargon is its role in thinking and decision making. In fast-paced situations, organizations

need language that saves time. Jargon acts as a mental shortcut, where one short phrase represents a broad concept.

For example, when leaders talk about agility, they mean more than speed. They refer to flexibility, experimentation, and the ability to respond quickly and learn continuously. Similarly, scalability suggests the ability to grow without losing stability or resources (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2015).

Commercial jargon helps teams to frame problems quickly, prioritize actions, reduce confusion, stay aligned, and make faster decisions in uncertain environments. In a VUCA world, where delays can be costly, jargon functions as a tool that supports clarity of thought.

### ***Jargon as a Cultural and Social Tool***

Jargon operates not only as a tool for thinking but also as a marker of identity. The culture of an organization is built through its values, routines, and shared stories, and language lies at the heart of all these elements. When companies describe themselves as customer centric, innovation driven, or mission focused, these phrases do more than advertise goals. They reflect how the company sees itself and how it wants others to see it (Meyer et al., 2018). Shared terminology also strengthens belonging. When employees use the organization's internal vocabulary, they demonstrate alignment with its aims and values.

However, jargon can also highlight differences within the organization. Some specialized language may be familiar only to senior leadership, creating a sense of power or exclusivity, while newer or junior employees may feel distanced. In this way, insider language can shape internal identity but also reinforce hierarchy.

Commercial jargon therefore functions as a cultural tool. It builds unity, signals expertise, and helps shape how organizations understand who they are.

### ***Jargon and Business Resilience***

Resilience describes an organization's ability to withstand pressure, recover quickly, and adapt. Commercial jargon plays a key role in this process. In moments of crisis, whether financial, technological, geopolitical, or related to public health, organizations rely on terms such as damage assessment, mitigation strategy, continuity planning, risk diversification, adaptive leadership, stress testing, and redundancy design. These phrases provide structure and direction. They help turn confusion into response and uncertainty into a series of planned steps. As Lengnick Hall et al. (2011) note, resilience is also communicative. People

need shared language to recognize a threat and coordinate an effective response.

In this sense, commercial jargon supports resilience by helping organizations not only respond to challenges but also anticipate them.

### ***Commercial Jargon in Contemporary Literature and Digital Culture***

Corporate language is no longer limited to boardrooms. It appears in everyday conversations, social media, and contemporary literature. Authors such as Don DeLillo, Aravind Adiga, Joshua Ferris, and Zadie Smith use commercial vocabulary to explore themes of work pressure, social insecurity, and identity shaped by modern economies.

Different areas of literary theory interpret commercial jargon in their own ways. Discourse analysis examines how language shapes identity and power. Cultural studies explores how corporate language affects behaviour and beliefs. Marxist criticism focuses on the economic forces within capitalist vocabulary. Postmodernism highlights how fragmented and uncertain language reflects the complexity and ambiguity of modern work life.

### **QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY**

This growing presence of commercial jargon demonstrates its role as a cultural force, shaping how individuals interpret success, failure, ambition, and personal identity in the modern workplace.

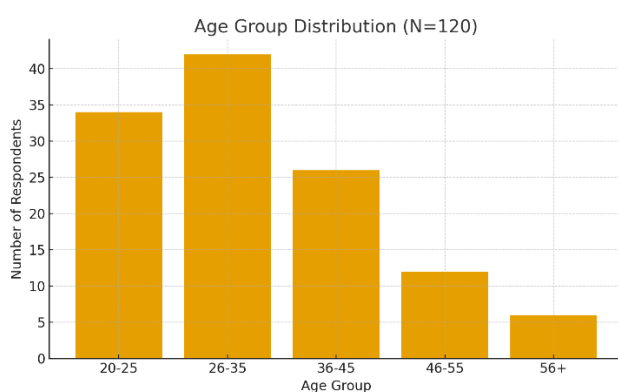
The quantitative component of the study employed a descriptive and correlational research design using a structured questionnaire administered to 120 respondents working in sectors where jargon is frequently used, including IT, Finance, Marketing, Education, and Administration. Descriptive statistics were used to identify demographic patterns, while correlational analysis examined the relationship between age, professional field, digital exposure, and familiarity with contemporary commercial terminology. The findings indicate that individuals with higher digital literacy are more likely to understand and adopt emerging jargon, particularly in innovation-led environments.

For analytical clarity, the evolving vocabulary was categorized into four groups: strategic terminology connected to goals and alignment; technological language driven by digital transformation; resilience-based expressions related to crisis response; and cultural vocabulary reflecting identity, values, and belonging. These

patterns reveal how organizations make sense of uncertainty and communicate resilience through language, demonstrating that jargon is both a linguistic tool and a strategic response to the demands of a rapidly changing world.

## DISCUSSION

- A sample size of 120 participants is sufficient for drawing reliable conclusions, allowing both numerical and narrative insights in the study.
- Individuals aged 26 to 35 make up the largest portion of respondents at 35 percent, suggesting that younger professionals who are more engaged with digital environments play a significant role in shaping how modern commercial jargon is understood.
- High levels of digital exposure, reported by 56.7 percent of respondents, are strongly linked to better understanding of technology related jargon. This shows that digital literacy has a direct impact on how easily new terminology is learned and used.
- Most responses came from the IT, Finance, and Marketing sectors, which indicates that fast moving and innovation focused industries are key drivers in creating and spreading commercial jargon.
- Overall, the demographic pattern reveals a clear connection between age, industry background, and digital familiarity, all of which work together to influence how commercial jargon develops in workplaces shaped by VUCA conditions.



The findings indicate that commercial jargon operates on several interconnected levels: linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and strategic. It enables complex ideas to be communicated more simply, strengthens collective commitment, provides structure to crisis communication, and reflects the changing priorities of the workplace. More significantly, the evolution of jargon demonstrates that organizations adapt not only

through their systems and strategies but also through their language. The words they choose offer insight into how they understand their role and how they envision their future.

As commercial jargon becomes increasingly present in literature, digital communication, and popular media, its influence on society grows more apparent. The vocabulary once limited to boardrooms now blends into everyday speech, shaping how people talk about pressure, productivity, aspiration, and resilience in their personal lives.

This study suggests that commercial jargon should not be regarded as superficial or merely fashionable. Rather, it represents an important element of how organizations and societies interpret, negotiate, and respond to continuous change.

## CONCLUSION

Commercial jargon is more than a collection of popular corporate expressions; it functions as a dynamic and evolving linguistic system shaped by the demands of an increasingly volatile and complex world. It guides thought, supports organizational culture, facilitates coordinated action, and strengthens collective resilience. As economic, technological, and social landscapes continue to transform, so too will the language that organizations rely upon revealing our persistent effort to understand, communicate, and respond to uncertainty.

Ultimately, the evolution of commercial jargon highlights a deeply human trait which is adaptability. It reflects the reality that as the world changes, language responds in turn, and in many cases, it is language that moves first, preparing us to face the future even before it fully arrives.

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