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Terminology Management and Identity Construction from the Perspective of Corporate Prestige Planning

-- A Corpus-based Analysis of NIO's 2024 ESG Report

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ABSTRACT

As Chinese new energy vehicle (NEV) enterprises transition from “product export” to “brand export,” the strategic use of language to construct a respected international identity has become crucial. Grounded in Terminology Planning and Corporate Prestige Planning, this study conducts a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis of NIO’s 2024 Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Report. The analysis reveals that NIO systematically employs terminology management strategies—such as renaming, neologism creation, and the intellectualization of technical systems—to discursively construct its unique “User Enterprise” identity. Furthermore, by engaging in global standard-setting, NIO elevates its terminology management to macro-level prestige planning, accumulating symbolic capital and enhancing its international discourse power. The study concludes that terminology serves as a strategic corporate asset, offering actionable insights for Chinese enterprises seeking to enhance their global influence through proactive language management.

KEYWORDS

Corporate Prestige Planning; Terminology Management; New Energy Vehicles (NEVs); Identity Construction.

1. INTRODUCTION

The global automotive industry is currently navigating a period of profound transition, moving from a century of internal combustion engine dominance toward a digital and electrified future. Within this transformative era, Chinese new energy vehicle (NEV) enterprises are undergoing a strategic metamorphosis from “product export” to “brand export”. As these firms accelerate their international footprint, they face a dual challenge that encompasses not only the rigors of technological competition but also the intricate process of brand reputation construction across multifaceted cultural and linguistic boundaries. Scholars note that international communication for NEVs has moved beyond the mere translation of technical documentation to the sophisticated transmission of corporate values and the deliberate crafting of a recognizable global identity. Consequently, the strategic use of language to construct a respected international identity has become a core objective for Chinese enterprises seeking to establish a lasting presence on the global stage.

Among these emerging forces, NIO stands out as a representative of China’s “new car-making forces,” having pioneered a unique business model designated as the “User Enterprise”. Unlike traditional automotive manufacturers that traditionally prioritize sales volume and manufacturing efficiency, NIO places “user operation” at its strategic core, aiming to build a community-based ecosystem characterized by shared growth and lifestyle integration. The successful transplantation of this “User Enterprise” concept into the global English-speaking market relies heavily on specific discursive

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practices. Language, specifically the systematic management and standardization of key terms, serves as the primary carrier for this complex conceptual transfer. While existing studies have extensively explored marketing strategies or localized translation techniques, few have scrutinized the linguistic construction of corporate identity through the specialized lens of Terminology Planning and Prestige Planning.

The 2024 Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) report serves as a foundational policy text for corporate disclosure, offering a comprehensive articulation of a company's strategy, values, and performance. In this document, NIO demonstrates a systematic and deliberate use of specific terminology to reshape the relationship between the corporation and its stakeholders. These linguistic choices are far from random; they represent a strategic form of management aimed at accumulating symbolic capital and enhancing international reputation. This study adopts a corpus-based approach to investigate NIO's 2024 ESG Report (English Version), addressing two central research questions: first, what specific terminology management strategies—such as renaming, neologism, and standardization—does NIO employ in its English corporate discourse? Second, how do these terminology choices serve the overarching goals of corporate identity construction and prestige planning?

The theoretical significance of this research lies in its extension of Prestige Planning theory. Traditionally applied to the macro-level enhancement of a language's status, this study applies the theory to the micro-level of corporate discourse, arguing that terminology management is a vital instrument for planning corporate prestige and securing social recognition. Practically, this study provides a benchmark for Chinese enterprises seeking to construct international discourse systems. By revealing how NIO reconstructs its identity through "de-commercialized" and "community-oriented" terminology, the research offers actionable insights for enhancing global influence through proactive language management.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Terminology Planning and Policy

Terminology Planning is recognized as a specialized branch of language planning [1], situated within the broader framework of "Communication Planning". It is essential to distinguish between terminology policy and terminology planning [2]: the former refers to the high-level principles and strategies established by a language community or organization, while the latter encompasses the concrete implementation measures designed to intervene in the development of terminology systems. In the 21st century, terminology is increasingly viewed as a strategic "language asset" [3] rather than a mere linguistic exercise. Effective management of these assets ensures communication consistency, reduces semantic ambiguity, and significantly enhances brand recognition across global markets.

In the corporate context, terminology management involves both Corpus Planning—the standardization of terms and naming principles—and Status Planning—the promotion of their usage within specific professional domains [4]. For the high-tech NEV sector, the construction of standardized terminology databases is critical for knowledge sharing and technical standardization [5]. Terminology serves as the foundation for "semantic interoperability," which is a prerequisite for efficient global operations and the accurate representation of a company's innovations. Organizations that control the definitions of key professional concepts possess a form of power [6] that translates into competitive advantages in international trade and scientific discourse.

2.2. Prestige Planning Theory

Prestige Planning was formally introduced as an independent analytical category by Haarmann [7] to address the psychological, attitudinal, and ideological dimensions of language planning that

traditional corpus and status planning often overlook. Haarmann conceptualized prestige planning as a "receptive or value function" intended to generate a favorable psychological attitude and acceptance among the target speech community. It aims to foster respect, loyalty, and linguistic acceptability based on perceived high achievement, technological superiority, or social influence.

Subsequently, Kaplan and Baldauf [8,9] integrated prestige planning into their comprehensive language planning framework, emphasizing its critical role in shaping the "image" and "value" associated with a language variety or institution. They further operationalized prestige planning into sub-components, such as the intellectualization of language and the strategic use of professional nomenclature to signal authority. However, while Haarmann, Kaplan, and Baldauf applied this framework primarily to national language policies and minority language revitalization [10], a significant theoretical gap exists regarding its application to institutional and corporate discourse.

To bridge this macro-micro theoretical divide, this study incorporates Ager's [11] concept of "Image Planning" and Lo Bianco's [12] "Discourse Planning." In a corporate context, Prestige Planning metamorphoses into a strategic discursive mechanism where linguistic symbols—specific corporate terms, neologisms, and standardized nomenclatures—are meticulously selected to construct a desirable, high-value corporate identity (e.g., "technologically advanced", "human-centric", or "ecologically responsible"). By actively managing the linguistic capital of its outward-facing texts, an enterprise systematically engineers its acceptance and authority within the international community.

Building upon this synthesis, this study proposes a four-tier analytical model for Corporate Prestige Planning:

Level 4 (Macro-Governmental Promotion): The highest tier of prestige planning, involving the corporation's active participation in setting national and international technical standards (e.g., ESG reporting frameworks, global battery-swapping protocols).

Level 3 (Meso-Institutional Promotion): The codification of prestige through official corporate governance texts, such as ESG reports, the establishment of corporate foundations, and strategic partnerships with global NGOs.

Level 2 (Micro-Community Promotion): The discursive construction of a "social ecosystem" through terminology that fosters group belonging, such as naming conventions for user clubs and volunteer networks.

Level 1 (Interpersonal Promotion): The normalization of affective terminology in everyday stakeholder interaction to generate organic word-of-mouth advocacy.

2.3. Corporate Discourse and Brand Linguistics

Methodologically, the fusion of Corpus Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) [13] has proven highly effective in revealing the hidden ideologies and identities embedded in corporate texts. Corporate discourse can be understood as a set of social practices comprised in a cohesive discourse system that acts as a symbol of membership and structures relationships between the company and its outsiders. Identity, in this sense, is not a static attribute but a process [14]—something companies "do" through discourse and communication.

Brand Linguistics emerges as an interdisciplinary field that examines how language affects consumers in brand-related settings. It focuses on how linguistic choices, such as the use of specific terms or cultural references, shape brand identity and consumer perception. For instance, shifting the register from formal and transactional to casual and affective can enhance consumer engagement by creating an illusion of personal connection. In the NEV industry, this involves managing the "self-shaped" image in official reports to ensure it resonates with the values and expectations of a global audience.

3. CONTEXTUALIZING NIO: THE "USER ENTERPRISE" AND ESG LANDSCAPE

3.1. Corporate Vision and Sustainability Journey

Founded in November 2014, NIO is a global smart electric vehicle company dedicated to shaping a sustainable future. The company's vision—To Build a User Enterprise Where Innovative Technology Meets Experience Excellence—is deeply rooted in its original aspiration of "Blue Sky Coming". NIO operates across several high-prestige domains, including the premium NIO brand, the family-oriented ONVO brand, and the high-end small car brand, firefly. As of the end of 2024, cumulative deliveries reached 671,564 vehicles, reflecting its growing global footprint across regions such as China, Norway, Germany, the United Arab Emirates, and others. The key milestones in NIO's sustainability journey are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Key Milestones in NIO's Sustainability Journey

Year	Milestone in NIO's Sustainability Journey
2014	Founded with the vision of "Blue Sky Coming."
2016	Became a member of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC).
2018	Launched the innovative battery swapping model; Released Code of Ethics.
2019	Established the NIO Users Trust.
2021	Established Nominating and ESG Committee; Launched Clean Parks global initiative.
2022	Released first ESG report; Conducted company-level "carbon ledger."
2023	Joined Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi); Debut at COP 28.
2024	Released All-Time Quality (ATQ) system; Participated in ESG industry standards.
2025	Released comprehensive sustainability strategy; Recognized in Global 100.

NIO's performance in the ESG domain has been widely recognized. In January 2025, the company was ranked 13th in Corporate Knights' list of the Global 100 Most Sustainable Companies, securing the top position in the automotive industry. Furthermore, NIO achieved an MSCI ESG rating of AA in December 2024, positioning it among the top tier of global automakers.

3.2. The Unique "User Enterprise" Business Model

The core of NIO's corporate identity is the "User Enterprise" model, which signifies a transition from the traditional sales-driven paradigm to a community-centric ecosystem. This model is structured as a closed-loop system encompassing top-level values, intermediate product positioning, and bottom-tier user connection. Unlike traditional manufacturers ("1.0 companies") that interact with consumers through third-party dealerships, or software-driven "2.0 companies" that employ direct-to-consumer models, NIO seeks to become a "3.0 enterprise" where the user and the company are a "community of shared interests".

This model utilizes "user operation" to drive growth through a "Ripple Mode", where highly satisfied and engaged users act as "walking billboards," introducing new users to the brand community through authentic word-of-mouth. The NIO App serves as the digital hub of this community, integrating social networking, content creation, and e-commerce with vehicle services. This approach prioritizes "user-ism" (用户至上), erases traditional transactional boundaries, and focuses on the entire lifecycle of the user relationship.

4. QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS: A CORPUS-ASSISTED ANALYSIS OF THE 2024 ESG REPORT

4.1. Corpus Compilation, Frequency, and Terminology Distribution

To empirically investigate NIO's micro-level terminology planning, a specialized micro-corpus was constructed, comprising the complete English text of NIO's 2024 Environmental, Social, and Governance Report [15]. The corpus consists of 154 pages, yielding a total of 48,520 tokens. To ensure methodological rigor, the quantitative analysis moved beyond raw counts to include normalized frequencies (occurrences per 10,000 words) to accurately reflect the density of terminological interventions.

Table 2 presents the highly systematic distribution of key stakeholder labels and proprietary neologisms within the corporate discourse.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Strategic Terminology in the 2024 ESG Corpus

Strategic Term / Phrase	Raw Frequency (Absolute)	Normalized Frequency (per 10,000 words)	Primary Discursive Function
User / Users	406	83.67	Affective Community Building
Customer / Customers	1	0.20	Transactional Marker (Avoided)
NIO Power	35	7.21	Infrastructural Authority
Clean Parks	24	4.94	Ecological Neologism
BaaS (Battery as a Service)	18	3.70	Technological Intellectualization
Sanjiangyuan	12	2.47	Specific Ecological Anchoring

The most striking quantitative revelation is the frequency ratio between the terms "User" and "Customer," which stands at an overwhelming 406:1. This extreme statistical asymmetry indicates a deliberate, rigorously enforced "terminology intervention." By virtually eradicating the term "Customer"—a label inherently tied to a finite, transactional buyer-seller relationship—NIO de-commercializes its corporate identity. Instead, the pervasive deployment of "User" signals active participation, ongoing utility, and structural membership within a service-oriented community.

4.2. Collocation Clusters, MI Scores, and Semantic Prosody

In corpus linguistics, the meaning and prestige of a term are largely dictated by its habitual collocates. To objectively measure the associative strength between "User" and surrounding lexical items, a collocation analysis was conducted using Mutual Information (MI) scores. An MI score greater than 3.0 indicates a statistically significant collocation, representing a deliberate discursive pattern rather than random occurrence. The top collocates of the node word "User" and their MI scores are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Top Collocates for the Node Word "User" (Span -3 to +3)

Collocate	Co-occurrence Frequency	MI Score	Semantic Category
Experience	47	8.12	Affective / Phenomenological
Community / Communities	38	7.85	Social Cohesion
Trust	22	7.54	Institutional Governance
Interaction	19	6.91	Dialogic Engagement
Satisfaction	15	6.42	Evaluative Metric

The statistical significance of these collocations uncovers a robust strategy of generating "positive affective prosody." "User" is inextricably linked with nouns that denote psychological safety, collective belonging, and institutional integration. For instance, the highly significant collocation of "User" and "Trust" (MI: 7.54) frequently manifests in institutionalized terminology such as the "NIO Users Trust," explicitly embedding the stakeholder into the company's financial and governance architecture. Similarly, the frequent co-occurrence with "Community" (MI: 7.85) discursively transforms the consumer base into a "thriving ecosystem." Through this calculable terminological management, NIO successfully projects the image of a "warm companion," linguistically erasing traditional corporate-consumer antagonisms.

5. TERMINOLOGY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

5.1. Renaming: The Paradigm Shift to the "User"

The strategy of renaming—specifically the shift from "Customer" to "User"—is the most prominent discursive feature of the report. Traditionally, "customer" is a transactional term rooted in a buyer-seller relationship that often ends once the product is delivered. In contrast, "user" implies an ongoing engagement with the product and the service ecosystem. By consistently choosing "User," NIO creates a linguistic distance from the traditional automotive industry norms and establishes a new set of expectations.

The concordance lines from the report illustrate this shift:

"With users at the center... we are committed to creating value for users across products, technology, services, and the community".

"NIO brand cumulative deliveries: 650,803 vehicles... serving users in more than 350 cities worldwide".

"Users' total mileage with Navigate on Pilot Plus (NOP+) reached 1.57 billion kilometers".

This re-designation serves to build a prestige of "affinity," suggesting that the company exists for the benefit of its community members rather than solely for profit. It transforms a commercial transaction into a social membership, reinforcing the "User Enterprise" identity.

5.2. Neologism: Creating Proprietary Service Categories

NIO employs neologisms to create unique "linguistic containers" for its innovative services and sustainability projects. These newly coined terms allow the company to define "reality" on its own terms, moving away from generic industry descriptions.

5.2.1. BaaS: Battery as a Service

One of the most strategic neologisms is "BaaS" (Battery as a Service). This term follows the morphological structure of the IT industry's "SaaS" (Software as a Service), instantly associating the vehicle's energy system with high-tech software and cloud services rather than traditional hardware leasing. BaaS allows for a "chargeable, swappable, and upgradable" power service system, effectively removing the barrier of battery attenuation and high replacement costs. Linguistically, it frames a financial lease model as a technological innovation, thereby constructing a prestige of "Technological Leadership".

5.2.2. Clean Parks and BLUE SKY LAB

The "Clean Parks" initiative is a proprietary term for NIO's global ecological co-construction program. By avoiding the more common but less distinctive "Nature Conservation Project," "Clean Parks" acts as a brand asset that highlights the company's specific expertise in clean energy and smart mobility in sensitive environments. Similarly, "BLUE SKY LAB" is a neologism for an eco-friendly

fashion brand that repurposes automotive materials. These terms function as "terminological anchors" for NIO's ESG philosophy, making its environmental contributions memorable and distinct.

5.3. Standardization and Intellectualization of technical Systems

To project an image of institutional authority and technical superiority, NIO utilizes standardized acronyms and proprietary technical terminology.

5.3.1. ATQ, NIO Full Stack, and the Intellectualization of Technology

To project an image of unassailable institutional authority and technical superiority, NIO heavily utilizes standardized acronyms, alphanumeric codes, and proprietary technical terminology—a process defined by Kaplan and Baldauf [8] as the "intellectualization" of language. The 2024 ESG Report introduces the "All-Time Quality" (ATQ) system, a comprehensive, lifecycle-oriented quality framework that standardizes the company's approach to safety and user interests across all operational domains.

Furthermore, the discourse is saturated with references to the "NIO Full Stack," a standardized umbrella terminology encompassing 12 core technology domains. This includes the deployment of "Sky·OS" (the full-domain vehicle operating system) and the "NX9031" (a proprietary 5nm chip designed specifically for intelligent driving). The strategic use of alphanumeric identifiers like NX9031 serves to intellectualize the corporate discourse, signaling a profound depth of forward engineering. This linguistic intellectualization is anchored in empirical reality; the report discloses a massive cumulative R&D investment of RMB 13.037 billion in 2024, supported by a workforce of 11,528 product and software development professionals. By codifying its R&D through proprietary technical language, NIO positions itself not merely as an assembler of parts, but as an authoritative "Technological Pioneer" dictating industry standards.

5.3.2. V2G and Smart Power

NIO promotes terms like "V2G" (Vehicle-to-Grid) and "Smart Power" to redefine the car as a distributed energy storage resource. By using "V2G" to describe how EVs can return power to the grid during peak hours, NIO aligns its proprietary technology with macro-level societal goals of grid stability and "just energy transition". This language construction positions NIO as a leader in the broader energy ecosystem, not just the automotive market.

6. PRESTIGE PLANNING AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

6.1. Building Identity through Haarmann's Levels

NIO's prestige planning is a sophisticated multi-level process that coordinates the activities of individuals, groups, and institutions to enhance the reputation of the "User Enterprise".

Level 1 (Individual): Prestige is built through "User Volunteers" and "Scientific Volunteers" who participate in field research and community events. The personal attitudes of these influencers and "Key Opinion Leaders" (KOLs) within the NIO App help to project a favorable image of the brand as authentic and approachable.

Level 2 (Group): With 2,253 active user communities and over 750 weekly community activities, NIO leverages group dynamics to create a "joyful lifestyle" prestige. These groups foster a sense of belonging that transcends the car itself.

Level 3 (Institutional): The "NIO Users Trust," established through a donation of 50 million shares by William Li, is an institutional innovation that deepens the connection between the company and its users. Strategic partnerships with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) further solidify its "Ecological Citizen" reputation.

Level 4 (Government): NIO's participation in standard-setting—such as leading the formulation of technical standards for battery swapping in Singapore (TR 25-4) and contributing to the CAAM ESG standards in China—represents the highest level of prestige planning. Moving from "taking" standards to "making" standards enhances its discourse power on the global stage.

6.2. The Construction of the "Technological Pioneer" Identity

The 2024 ESG report consistently uses language to build a "Technological Pioneer" image, which is vital for competing in the premium BEV segment. By emphasizing technical milestones—such as the production of its 1,000,000th electric drive system (the Thunder 900V EDS) and obtaining 9,815 patents—the report projects an "enterprising" and "innovative" identity. The use of terms like "proprietary chips" and "full-domain operating systems" reinforces the image of a company that controls its core technology, a key factor in building institutional reputation among investors and professional stakeholders.

6.3. The Construction of the "Global Sustainable Citizen" Identity

NIO's "Blue Sky Coming" mission is linguistically woven into its entire narrative of environmental responsibility. The report highlights concrete ecological achievements, such as its manufacturing sites consuming 97,013.15 MWh of renewable electricity (a 74.5% increase from 2023) and achieving Zero Waste to Landfill (ZWTL) group certification—the first in the industry to do so. This constructs a "responsible" identity that prioritizes the planet's well-being. By using terms like "double-materiality" and following IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards (S1 and S2), NIO demonstrates its commitment to global disclosure norms, which enhances its prestige in international capital markets.

7. RESULTS AND CASE ANALYSIS: ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL PRESTIGE

7.1. Ecological Co-building: Anchoring the "Clean Parks" Terminology in Empirical Data

To prevent prestige planning from degrading into mere "greenwashing," corporate linguistic claims must be anchored in verifiable, operational data. The "Clean Parks" neologism is robustly supported by empirical deployments documented in the 2024 ESG report. By the end of 2024, the initiative had successfully established partnerships with 17 ecological cooperation sites globally.

The terminology translates into tangible ecological capital through strategic vehicle deployments and infrastructural investments. For instance, in the Sanjiangyuan National Park, NIO explicitly deployed its own premium fleet—specifically 5 ES8 and 3 ET7 smart electric vehicles—to facilitate zero-emission wildlife observation and ecological patrols. This was complemented by the establishment of the "NIO Sanjiangyuan Ecological Village Environmental Research Base." Furthermore, the institutional prestige of "Clean Parks" is magnified through high-level strategic partnerships with global entities such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). By aligning its proprietary terminology with the infrastructural realities of the Hainan Tropical Rainforests National Park and the Giant Panda National Park, NIO grounds its linguistic innovations in unassailable corporate investment, thereby authenticating its identity as a Global Sustainable Citizen.

7.2. Social Value and Community Interaction

The report details Section 5.2, "Active Interaction With Users," which serves to build the "companion" facet of its identity. In 2024, NIO user communities organized over 350 public welfare activities, contributing 31,734 hours of volunteer service. Key metrics of the user community's social engagement in 2024 are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Metrics of NIO's User Community Social Engagement in 2024

Metric of Social Engagement	Performance in 2024
Active Communities (China)	2,253 communities with 660,000 users.
Community Coverage Rate	59.4% of total user base.
Participation in Foundation	43,000 users participated in NIO Users Foundation activities.
Households Benefited	Over 68,000 households reached through community care.

This "community-oriented" discourse emphasizes "shared growth" and "joyful lifestyle," using the terminology of a non-profit or a social organization rather than a commercial enterprise. This strategy builds institutional prestige by presenting the company as a catalyst for "sustainable social value creation".

8. DISCUSSION: SOCIOLINGUISTIC IMPLICATIONS AND THE ACCUMULATION OF SYMBOLIC CAPITAL

8.1. From Transactional to Affective Management: A CDA Perspective

The linguistic shift from "Customer" to "User" signifies a fundamental structural re-engineering of the consumer-brand relationship. Traditionally, the automotive industry has been defined by "one-off" transactions and inherent information asymmetry, often breeding consumer skepticism toward dealerships. Through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) [13], the mandatory deployment of the "User" label functions as an ideological tool that linguistically erases these transactional boundaries, reframing a capitalist exchange as "long-term lifecycle management."

This "affective management" approach utilizes linguistic styles that project "Honesty and Care." The ESG report frequently employs inclusive first-person plural pronouns ("we," "our users," "growing together") to bridge the psychological gap between the corporate entity and the individual. While this successfully fosters brand loyalty and an illusion of personal connection, CDA reveals that it also serves to obscure the underlying commercial power dynamics. The "User" is discursively elevated to an "insider" with a symbolic stake in the company, yet this affective terminology ultimately serves to secure long-term capital extraction through continuous ecosystem subscriptions (e.g., NOP+ software upgrades, BaaS leasing).

8.2. Terminology as Symbolic Capital and Semantic Interoperability

Following Bourdieu's [16] sociological framework, the systematic codification of terminology in the 2024 ESG report demonstrates that NIO weaponizes its specialized language as "symbolic capital." By actively creating and standardizing terms like "BaaS" and "Sky·OS," NIO transitions from being a passive recipient of Western automotive paradigms to an active creator of new industry standards. Defining the technical "reality" of the smart electric vehicle domain allows NIO to accumulate the symbolic capital necessary to challenge entrenched legacy premium brands in Europe and beyond.

Furthermore, managing terminology as a corporate asset ensures rigorous "semantic interoperability" across NIO's expansive operations spanning over 350 global cities. Consistency in English communication minimizes translation variances that can dilute brand positioning. For a Chinese

multinational navigating complex geopolitical landscapes, stringent terminology management is a critical infrastructural tool for projecting a credible, unified, and legally compliant international image.

8.3. Functional Prestige and Intellectualization

NIO's discursive strategy can be further interpreted as "functional prestige planning"—the promotion of its proprietary terminology in high-prestige domains like standard-setting and technical research. The "intellectualization" of its language through technical neologisms and the use of the "NIO Full Stack" label positions the company as a technological authority.

By leading the Singapore battery swapping technical standard (TR 25-4) and participating in the first set of ESG group standards for the Chinese automotive industry, NIO elevates its corporate discourse to the "Government Level" of prestige. This level of influence allows NIO to shape the international discourse system for NEVs, ensuring that its proprietary concepts and values are integrated into the global vocabulary of sustainable transport. This move is essential for Chinese enterprises to transition from being seen as manufacturers of "cheap" products to being respected as "innovators".

9. DISCUSSION: IMAGE SELF-SHAPING AND INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE POWER

9.1. Constructing the "Pragmatic and Enterprising" Image via Transitivity

The linguistic framework of NIO's ESG report constructs a distinctly "pragmatic and enterprising" corporate image, a finding supported by an analysis of verbal transitivity within the corpus. The "pragmatic" dimension is anchored by a high frequency of material action verbs aimed at concrete environmental and social outcomes. A corpus query reveals high normalized frequencies for verbs such as *reduce* (14.2 per 10k), *safeguard* (8.5 per 10k), *implement* (11.3 per 10k), and *achieve* (19.7 per 10k). These verbs are directly collocated with verifiable metrics—such as the 29% reduction in single-vehicle energy consumption at NIO F1 and the 97,013 MWh of renewable electricity consumed in 2024.

Conversely, the "enterprising" identity is forged through forward-looking, expansive verbs like *innovate* (12.4 per 10k), *develop* (16.8 per 10k), and *lead* (9.1 per 10k). By linguistically coupling these dynamic verbs with major infrastructural milestones—such as operating nearly 3,000 Power Swap Stations and launching the industry's first Automatic Emergency Steering (AES) product—NIO projects a narrative of unparalleled ambition and operational dominance.

9.2. Discourse Bridging and Level 4 Prestige Planning

To secure international legitimacy and circumvent negative "Made in China" stereotypes, the ESG report engages in strategic "discourse bridging." The text meticulously integrates globally recognized sustainability taxonomies, explicitly referencing the GRI Standards 2021, SASB Standards, and the IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards (IFRS S1 and S2). By framing its culturally specific "User Enterprise" model within universally understood regulatory vocabularies (e.g., "Scope 3 emissions," "double-materiality"), NIO translates domestic operational success into a format that is legible and authoritative to global institutional investors.

Ultimately, NIO's terminology management culminates in Level 4 Prestige Planning: Governmental and Regulatory Promotion. By actively codifying its proprietary technical architectures into official standards—such as leading the formulation of Singapore's Technical Reference for Battery Swapping (TR 25-4) and participating in the CAAM ESG disclosure guidelines—NIO elevates its corporate discourse into regulatory law. Moving from "taking" standards to "making" standards drastically

enhances NIO's discourse power, ensuring its proprietary concepts are permanently embedded into the global vocabulary of the energy transition.

9.3. Countering Stereotypes and Building Cultural Value

Terminology management also plays a role in image planning to counter negative stereotypes associated with "Made in China" brands. By using sophisticated and technical terminology, NIO overcomes the "low-end" stereotype and establishes a reputation for "premium quality" and "technical leadership". The emphasis on high-prestige achievements—such as five-star safety ratings from Euro NCAP for models like the EL8 and ET7—is discursively linked to terms like "Experience Excellence" and "All-Time Quality".

Furthermore, image planning extends to visual symbols. The NIO logo—a semicircle representing the sky and a bottom section representing the earth and action—is a visual neologism that communicates the "Blue Sky Coming" philosophy without the need for translation. This synergy between visual and linguistic symbolism builds a consistent and respected international identity.

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of NIO's 2024 ESG Report reveals a highly sophisticated and proactive terminology management strategy that is central to its corporate prestige planning and identity construction. By systematically replacing the transactional "Customer" with the affective and community-oriented "User," NIO has linguistically constructed its unique "User Enterprise" model. This paradigm shift erases transactional boundaries and frames the company's relationship with its owners as a long-term, shared journey of growth.

The use of strategic neologisms like "BaaS" and "Clean Parks" allows NIO to define its own service categories and construct a prestige of technological and ecological leadership. Furthermore, by operating at the highest levels of prestige planning—participating in both domestic and international standard-setting—NIO has effectively enhanced its discourse power and institutional reputation on the global stage.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are provided for Chinese enterprises seeking to enhance their international communication and brand reputation:

Adopt a Strategic View of Terminology: Enterprises should recognize that terminology management is not just about translation quality; it is a "language asset" and a form of symbolic capital. Corporations should proactively define and standardize terms that reflect their core values and innovative technologies.

Move Beyond Transactional Labels: Shaping stakeholder relationships through "de-commercialized" terminology—such as moving from "customer" to "user," "member," or "partner"—can help build affinity and trust in the "stock market" era.

Participate in Global Standard-Setting: To gain international discourse power, enterprises must move from "taking" standards to "making" them. Engaging with governmental and international agencies to codify proprietary concepts into industry standards is a powerful form of prestige planning.

Back Linguistic Identity with Factual Data: Effective prestige planning requires a basis of factual change. Corporate reports must support their identity claims with quantitative metrics—such as NIO's renewable energy consumption and emission reduction figures—to avoid perceptions of "greenwashing."

Leverage Neologisms for Unique Value Propositions: Creating unique, proprietary terms for innovative service models can help a brand stand out in a crowded global marketplace and define new standards of experience.

By following these strategies, Chinese corporations can transition from "product export" to a robust and influential "brand export," constructing a respected global identity that is recognized for innovation, affinity, and responsibility.

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