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BORROWING AND ADAPTATION OF ENGLISH SPORTS TERMS IN MODERN UZBEK

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Abstract. The rapid globalisation of sport and the dominance of English as the international lingua franca of athletic competition have generated a substantial influx of English sports terminology into the Uzbek lexicon. This article investigates the mechanisms and patterns of borrowing and adaptation of English sports terms in Modern Uzbek, drawing on a corpus of 312 English-origin sports terms identified in Uzbek broadcast media, sports journalism, and official federation documents. The study distinguishes two historical strata of borrowing: Soviet-era indirect borrowings mediated through Russian, and post-independence direct borrowings reflecting intensified contact with English. The analysis examines adaptation processes at three levels: phonological (transphonemisation and vowel harmonisation), morphological (suffixation, compounding, and hybrid formation), and semantic (narrowing, widening, and shift). Findings demonstrate that Uzbek displays a high degree of structural adaptability, integrating English terms through systematic phonological naturalisation while preserving semantic content. Implications for lexicographic standardisation and language planning are discussed.

Keywords: anglicism; lexical borrowing; sports terminology; Uzbek language; phonological adaptation; morphological adaptation; language contact; language policy.

Introduction. The global expansion of organised sport over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has established English as the de facto lingua franca of athletic discourse. From the codification of football's rules by the Football Association in 1863 to the governance of contemporary Olympic sport by English-language international federations, English has been the principal medium through which the vocabulary of modern sport has been created and disseminated [1]. As a consequence, virtually every language that has adopted international sporting culture has simultaneously incorporated a substantial body of English sports terminology.

The Uzbek language occupies a particularly complex position in this global process. As a Turkic language spoken by approximately 36 million people, Uzbek underwent significant lexical restructuring during the Soviet era, absorbing a large corpus of Russian-mediated international terminology — including sports terms — that partially displaced pre-existing vocabulary [2]. Following Uzbekistan's independence in 1991, the language underwent a further transformation: a state-directed programme of de-Russification and script reform intersected with increasing direct contact with English through media globalisation, the internet, and international sporting competitions [3].

The study pursues four objectives: (1) to compile and categorise a representative corpus of English-origin sports terms in Modern Uzbek; (2) to analyse phonological adaptation patterns; (3) to describe morphological integration mechanisms; and (4) to examine semantic changes accompanying borrowing.

Literature review. **Theories of Lexical Borrowing and Adaptation**. The theoretical foundation for the study of lexical borrowing was established by Haugen E. [7], who distinguished between loanwords (complete phonological adoption), loanblends (partial native substitution), and loanshifts (semantic borrowing). Weinreich U. [8] extended this framework by analysing borrowing as

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a product of bilingual interference, emphasising the role of language contact intensity. Thomason S.G. and Kaufman T. [9] provided a sociolinguistic model linking borrowing frequency and depth to the social conditions of contact.

Filipovic R.'s [10] model of adaptation levels — primary (phonological/orthographic) and secondary (morphological and semantic) — has been widely applied in European anglicism research. Prcic T. [11] further refined this for Serbian sports terminology, introducing the concept of "transshaping" to describe the adaptation of English forms to target-language norms while retaining semantic content.

English Borrowings in Uzbek: Historical Overview. The history of borrowing in Uzbek reflects successive waves of language contact. The Soviet era introduced a massive influx of Russian-mediated international terminology: terms such as chempionat (championship), trener (trainer), and stadion (stadium) entered Uzbek as Russian phonological realisations of originally English concepts [3]. Ikramova H. J. [12] documents that Soviet-era borrowings typically underwent double adaptation — first through Russian phonological norms, then through Uzbek phonological adjustment.

Post-independence borrowing has been characterised by direct English contact. Ortiqova G. et al. [2] document that sports terminology is among the most anglicised domains of the contemporary Uzbek lexicon. A corpus study published in the Western European Journal of Linguistics [14] identified over 200 English-origin sports terms in contemporary Uzbek, noting that the majority had undergone phonological adaptation.

Adaptation Mechanisms in Uzbek Sports Terminology. Phonological adaptation in Uzbek is constrained by two major features of the language's sound system: vowel harmony and the absence of several English consonant clusters [6]. Research by the ARIS Conference [1] shows that English terms are typically subjected to transphonemisation — the systematic replacement of English phonemes with their closest Uzbek equivalents.

Morphological integration has been studied by Lingvospektr [15], which documents that English sports terms in Uzbek primarily undergo nominal incorporation, with the productive agentive suffix -chi appended to borrowed roots (e.g., futbolchi "footballer", bokschi "boxer"). Xasanov Z.B. [5] documented semantic asymmetry between English and Uzbek football terminology, showing that English terms often encode individualistic competitive values.

Language Policy and Terminology Standardisation. The standardisation of sports terminology in Uzbek operates within a contested language policy environment. The State Language Law of 1995 directed state institutions to promote Uzbek-language equivalents for borrowed terms. However, broadcast media and sports journalism have largely resisted prescriptive standardisation in favour of internationally recognisable anglicisms [16].

Research methodology. Corpus Compilation. The primary data source is a corpus of 312 English-origin sports terms identified in three registers of Modern Uzbek: (1) sports broadcast commentary from UzReport TV and O'zbekiston Telekanali (2020–2025); (2) sports journalism from Sport.uz and Championat.uz; and (3) official documents of Uzbek sports federations. Terms were identified as English-origin on the basis of etymological analysis cross-referenced against Uzbek sports dictionaries [16] and the Uzbek Explanatory Dictionary [17].

Analytical Framework. Phonological adaptation was analysed using Filipovic R.'s [10] transphonemisation typology. Morphological integration was examined using Prcic T.'s [11] taxonomy, supplemented by Begmatov E.'s [18] framework for Uzbek word-formation processes. Semantic change was classified according to the triad of narrowing, broadening, and shift, as operationalised by Weinreich U. [8].

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Classification Procedure. Each corpus item was assigned to one of four borrowing type categories: (1) direct phonological borrowing; (2) phonologically adapted borrowing; (3) hybrid compound; and (4) calque or loan translation. Inter-rater reliability was established at Cohen's kappa k = 0.86 through independent double-coding of a 20% random sub-sample.

Results and discussion. **Corpus Overview and Borrowing Strata**. Of the 312 English-origin terms identified, 187 (59.9%) were classified as post-independence direct borrowings from English, while 125 (40.1%) were identified as Soviet-era indirect borrowings mediated through Russian. Football constituted the largest sport domain (41.3%), followed by basketball (14.7%), combat sports (12.5%), tennis (10.6%), and winter sports (8.0%).

Table 1. Classification of English-origin sports terms in the Uzbek corpus (N=312)

Category	Count	Percentage	Examples
Direct phonological borrowing	94	30.1%	penalti, ofsayd, korner, dribbling
Phonologically adapted borrowing	118	37.8%	chempion, stadion, trener
Hybrid compound	67	21.5%	futbolchi, bokschi, basketbolchi
Calque / loan translation	33	10.6%	darvozabon, burchak zarbasi

Phonological Adaptation. Phonological adaptation in the corpus followed three principal patterns. Complete transphonemisation — where English phonemes are replaced by their closest Uzbek equivalents — was found in 38 terms (32.5%). Compromise transphonemisation, involving partial phoneme substitution and vowel harmony adjustment, characterised 64 terms (54.2%). The English -ing suffix, present in 18 corpus terms, was retained without phonological modification in 83% of cases, suggesting a growing tolerance for non-native phonological sequences in the sports register.

Free transphonemisation was found in only 16 terms (13.5%), typically those entering Uzbek via Soviet-era Russian intermediaries that had already significantly altered the English source form. Champion -> Russian chempion -> Uzbek chempion illustrates this double-mediated adaptation pathway.

Morphological Integration. The most productive morphological mechanism was agentive suffixation with -chi, applied to 67 borrowed roots: futbol + -chi = futbolchi (footballer), boks + -chi = bokschi (boxer), basketbol + -chi = basketbolchi (basketball player). This pattern demonstrates the full integration of English roots into Uzbek derivational morphology.

Bare root borrowing — where the English term is adopted without morphological modification — was found in 94 terms (30.1%), predominantly in post-1991 borrowings. Plural formation followed standard Uzbek patterns: borrowed nouns take the Uzbek plural suffix -lar (futbolchilar "footballers"). This morphosyntactic integration indicates full grammatical incorporation of borrowed terms.

Semantic Adaptation. Semantic analysis identified 28 terms (9.0%) exhibiting notable semantic change. Semantic narrowing affected 15 terms: English captain (any leader) is used in Uzbek kapitan exclusively in the sports sense. Semantic broadening affected 8 terms: tennis in colloquial Uzbek has acquired the secondary meaning of "sports shoes", as documented by Western European Studies [14]. Semantic shift was identified in 5 terms, primarily Soviet-era borrowings.

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The findings confirm and extend previous research [1], [3], [14] by providing a systematic multi-level analysis. The predominance of phonologically adapted borrowings (37.8%) over direct unadapted borrowings (30.1%) indicates that Uzbek exercises significant structural control over English term integration, contrary to narratives of passive anglicisation.

The two-stratum structure reveals a significant linguistic discontinuity in Uzbek's relationship with English sports terminology. Soviet-era terms show deeper phonological adaptation having passed through Russian, while post-independence terms show shallower adaptation and greater formal proximity to English originals. This reflects changed conditions of language contact: Soviet-era borrowing was mediated and slow; post-independence borrowing is direct, media-driven, and rapid [9].

The semantic changes have significant implications for translation practice. Cases of semantic narrowing mean that Uzbek kapitan cannot be back-translated into English captain without context, while the secondary meaning of tennis as "trainers" could generate mistranslation in non-sports contexts. These findings reinforce the importance of semantic competence for translators working with sports discourse [5].

Conclusion. This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the borrowing and adaptation of English sports terms in Modern Uzbek, examining 312 corpus items across phonological, morphological, and semantic dimensions. The findings demonstrate that Uzbek integrates English sports terms through systematic adaptation mechanisms, most prominently phonological transphonemisation and agentive suffixation, reflecting the language's structural properties and contact history. The dual-stratum structure reveals the distinctive imprint of Soviet-era mediated borrowing and post-independence direct contact. The study contributes to the broader literature on language contact and Turkic lexicology by providing fine-grained empirical data on a systematically under-researched language pair.

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