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LEXICAL AND LINGUACULTURAL PECULIARITIES OF SPORT TERMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract. This article investigates the lexical and linguacultural peculiarities of sport-related terms in English and Uzbek. Through comparative linguistic analysis, the study examines etymological origins, word-formation patterns, and culturally embedded meanings of sport vocabulary in both languages. The research demonstrates that sport terms function not merely as technical designations but as linguacultural units encoding national identity, worldview, and communicative values. The findings contribute to comparative linguistics, linguoculturology, and translation studies.

Keywords: sport terminology, linguoculturology, English, Uzbek, lexical units, borrowing, metaphor, comparative linguistics.

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most sensitive registers of cultural life, it absorbs, reflects, and transmits the values, practices, and histories of its speech communities. Among the many specialized domains that generate distinctive lexical systems, sport occupies a uniquely prominent position. Sport terms are simultaneously functional , enabling precise communication among athletes, coaches, and commentators, and culturally charged, encoding social attitudes, historical memories, and identity narratives. The study of sport terminology from a linguacultural perspective has gained considerable scholarly attention, driven by the rapid globalization of sport and the intensification of cross-cultural linguistic exchange. Abdiev (2025) notes that because English-speaking nations dominate sport administration and media, English sport terms such as "goal," "offside," "penalty," and "tournament" have been extensively adopted across languages worldwide. Uzbek is no exception; yet its sport lexicon is shaped by a complex historical trajectory including native Turkic roots, Soviet-era Russian influence, and post-independence linguistic renewal, making an English-Uzbek comparison particularly productive.

The present study adopts linguoculturology , the discipline investigating cultural content embedded in linguistic units (Karasik, 2002; Telia, 1996) — as its theoretical framework. The objectives are: (1) to analyze word-formation processes in sport terminology of both languages; (2) to examine linguacultural connotations in selected terms; and (3) to identify key translation strategies and cross-linguistic differences.

MAIN BODY

Sport terminology in both languages can be organized into parallel semantic groups: terms for disciplines (English: football, athletics; Uzbek: futbol, yengil atletika), participant roles (striker/hujumchi, goalkeeper/darvozabon), equipment and venues (pitch/maydon, court/kort), tactical actions (pressing/pressing, offside/ofsayd), and evaluative terms (penalty/jarima zarbasi, hat-trick/het-

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trik). Eshmuradova and Samadova (2022) identify five productive groups of polysemantic sport terms based on lexicographic and reference sources, noting that context is decisive in selecting the correct Uzbek equivalent for a single English term. For instance, "score" translates as hisob in team sports, baho in judo, and ochkolar soni in athletics — a context-dependency that creates systematic translation challenges.

Word-formation processes reflect the contrasting typologies of the two languages. English favors compounding (goalkeeper, midfielder, backhand) and derivational affixation (striker, championship, dribbling). Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, generates sport terms through suffixation: the suffix -chi productively forms agent nouns (hujumchi — attacker; himoyachi — defender), while -bon creates guardian roles (darvozabon — goalkeeper, literally 'gate-guardian'). These agglutinative constructions often encode semantic motivation more transparently than English equivalents. Ayaqulov (2020) demonstrates that English is the dominant donor language for borrowed Uzbek sport terms, contributing 65 lexical units in analysed sport corpora, far exceeding Japanese (8 units), French (9 units), and German (5 units).

A central linguacultural distinction emerges in the vocabulary associated with traditional Uzbek sports, particularly kurash — the ancient national form of standing wrestling. Etymologically, kurash means "achieving the goal honestly," a semantic motivation encoding a cultural philosophy of fairness and perseverance that extends far beyond physical competition (IKA, 2022). With a documented history of approximately 3,500 years — referenced by Herodotus and in the epic Alpomish — kurash possesses a terminological system deliberately grounded in native Uzbek lexical resources. In 1990, master Komil Yusupov formalized the sport's rules and established its official terminology using 13 Uzbek words, explicitly resisting the adoption of Japanese judo terminology (kurash-ika.org, 2022). This was an act of cultural assertion encoding Uzbek identity directly into the sport's lexicon.

The metaphorical extension of sport vocabulary into general discourse is far more institutionalized in English than in Uzbek, reflecting the deeper integration of sport into Anglo-American public life. Oxford English Language (2025) documents how baseball contributes "hit a home run" (achieve outstanding success) and "throw a curveball" (introduce an unexpected difficulty); football provides "move the goalposts" (change rules unfairly); boxing gives "throw in the towel" (concede defeat); and horse racing yields "dark horse" (an unexpected competitor). These idioms appear regularly in political speeches, business communication, and everyday conversation — fully detached from their sport origins. In Uzbek, such metaphorical extensions exist but are less lexicalized, more transparent, and more context-dependent, reflecting the more recent integration of modern sport into Uzbek public discourse (Abdiev, 2025).

Translation between the two languages requires strategies beyond simple lexical substitution. Rakhimova (2020) identifies four principal methods: equivalence (where a direct Uzbek term exists), adaptation (phonological/morphological modification to fit Uzbek norms), transcription/transliteration (reproducing the English form in Uzbek script), and calque (reproducing the semantic structure with Uzbek morphological material). Culturally bound terms such as "nutmeg," "derby," and "hat-trick" , encoding sport-specific cultural meanings, necessitate descriptive translation, as Uzbek lacks single-word equivalents (Xasanov, 2025; Karimova, 2022). This terminological gap reflects not merely a

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lexical deficiency but a difference in the cultural frameworks through which the two speech communities conceptualize and evaluate sport events.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of sport terminology in English and Uzbek reveals a linguistically and culturally complex domain in which technical precision, national identity, historical memory, and global communication intersect. English sport terminology is distinguished by its dominant global position as a donor language, its deep metaphorical extension into general discourse, and its high degree of lexicalized idiomaticity. Uzbek sport terminology presents a dynamic system balancing the rapid adoption of English borrowings against the preservation of a rich traditional lexicon , exemplified by kurash whose cultural and ethical dimensions are directly encoded in its vocabulary. The agglutinative morphology of Uzbek produces semantically transparent formations that make conceptual motivations explicit in ways English compounding does not always achieve. Successful communication across these two sport discourse communities requires sensitivity not only to terminological equivalents but to the metaphorical mappings, pragmatic functions, and culturally embedded values that sport vocabulary carries in each linguistic context.

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