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ENGLISH-ORIGIN SPORTS TERMINOLOGY IN UZBEK: A STUDY OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT BORROWINGS

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Abstract: *This paper investigates English-origin sports terminology in Uzbek, distinguishing between direct borrowings from English and indirect borrowings mediated through Russian. Drawing on theories of language contact and lexical borrowing (Haugen, 1950; Weinreich, 1953; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988), as well as Uzbek scholarship on lexicology and terminology (Hojiyev, 1992; Rahmatullayev, 2006; Begmatov, 1985), the study analyses phonological, morphological, and semantic adaptation processes in selected sports terms. The findings reveal two historical layers of borrowing: Soviet-era indirect borrowings shaped by Russian influence, and post-independence direct borrowings reflecting globalisation and increased exposure to English. The study argues that sports terminology in Uzbek serves as linguistic evidence of sociopolitical transformation and demonstrates the structural adaptability of the Uzbek language.*

Keywords: *lexical borrowing, sports terminology, language contact, Uzbek language, English influence, globalization.*

1. Introduction

Sport represents one of the most globalised domains of contemporary culture. International competitions, governing institutions, sports journalism, and digital broadcasting operate predominantly in English, establishing it as the

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primary global language of sport (Crystal, 2003). As a result, English-origin terminology has spread widely across languages.

Uzbek, a Turkic language spoken in Central Asia, provides an instructive case for examining lexical borrowing in sports terminology. Historically, Uzbek has incorporated vocabulary from Persian, Arabic, and, most significantly in the twentieth century, Russian. During the Soviet period (1924–1991), Russian functioned as the dominant administrative and cultural language, mediating international terminology. Consequently, many English sports terms entered Uzbek indirectly via Russian.

Since Uzbekistan's independence in 1991, increased global integration, media access, and educational reforms have intensified direct contact with English. This historical shift provides an opportunity to distinguish between indirect and direct borrowing patterns in Uzbek sports terminology.

This study aims to:

1. Identify English-origin sports terms in Uzbek.
2. Distinguish between direct and indirect borrowings.
3. Analyse phonological, morphological, and semantic adaptation.
4. Examine the historical and sociolinguistic context of borrowing.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Lexical Borrowing and Language Contact

Lexical borrowing is a central phenomenon in language contact studies. Haugen (1950) defines borrowing as the reproduction of foreign linguistic patterns within a recipient language. He distinguishes between loanwords, loanblends, and loanshifts. Loanwords involve direct lexical transfer, while loanblends combine foreign lexical bases with native morphological elements.

Weinreich (1953) emphasises that borrowing is influenced by bilingualism and sociopolitical dominance, arguing that prestige languages often serve as lexical donors. Thomason and Kaufman (1988) further argue that the intensity and type of contact determine the extent and depth of borrowing.

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In the Uzbek context, borrowing patterns reflect both structural compatibility and shifting political alignments.

2.2 Uzbek Perspectives on Lexical Development

Uzbek linguists have long examined vocabulary expansion and terminological development. Hojiyev (1992) notes that borrowed lexemes in Uzbek undergo systematic phonological and morphological adaptation to conform to native grammatical norms. Rahmatullayev (2006) highlights the layered nature of Uzbek vocabulary, shaped by successive historical influences. Begmatov (1985) emphasises the importance of terminological standardisation in specialised domains, including science and sport.

These perspectives provide a national theoretical framework complementing broader language contact theory.

3. Historical Layers of Borrowing

3.1 Indirect Borrowing through Russian

During the Soviet era, direct contact between Uzbek and English was limited. International terminology, including sports vocabulary, entered Uzbek primarily via Russian. This resulted in indirect borrowings that reflect Russian phonological and orthographic mediation.

Examples include:

- *futbol* (English *football* → Russian *футбол* → Uzbek *futbol*)
- *basketbol* (English *basketball* → Russian *баскетбол* → Uzbek *basketbol*)
- *xokkey* (English *hockey* → Russian *хоккей* → Uzbek *xokkey*)
- *voleybol* (English *volleyball* → Russian *волейбол* → Uzbek *voleybol*)
- *penalti* (English *penalty* → Russian *пенальти* → Uzbek *penalti*)

These terms demonstrate adaptation patterns shaped by Russian pronunciation and spelling conventions.

3.2 Direct Borrowing in the Post-Independence Period

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After 1991, Uzbekistan experienced increased exposure to global media and international sports institutions. English began to function as a direct source of lexical borrowing.

Examples include:

- *fitnes* (fitness)
- *transfer*
- *branding*
- *fair play*
- *coach* (in parallel with *trener*)

Unlike earlier borrowings, these terms often preserve closer phonetic resemblance to English originals, reflecting reduced Russian mediation.

4. Linguistic Adaptation Processes

4.1 Phonological Adaptation

Borrowed terms are adjusted to conform to Uzbek phonotactic constraints.

For example:

English: *football* /ˈfʊtbɔːl/

Uzbek: *futbol* [futbol]

Adaptation features include vowel shortening, consonant simplification, and stress adjustment. Similarly, *hockey* becomes *xokkey*, reflecting Russian-influenced orthography.

These patterns confirm Hojiyev's (1992) observation that Uzbek systematically integrates borrowed forms into its phonological system.

4.2 Morphological Integration

A key indicator of lexical assimilation is morphological productivity. English-origin roots combine freely with Uzbek derivational suffixes:

- *futbol* + *-chi* → *futbolchi* (football player)
- *trener* + *-lik* → *trenerlik* (coaching profession)
- *chempion* + *-lik* → *chempionlik* (championship)

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Hybrid verbal constructions also occur:

- *gol urmoq* (to score a goal)
- *start bermoq* (to start)

These formations correspond to Haugen's (1950) concept of loanblends and demonstrate deep grammatical integration.

4.3 Semantic Adaptation

Borrowed terms may undergo semantic narrowing. For instance:

- *penalti* primarily refers to a penalty kick in football.
- *transfer* is typically restricted to sports contexts.

Semantic specialisation reflects domain-specific adaptation and communicative efficiency.

5. Sociolinguistic Implications

5.1 Prestige and Global Orientation

English functions as the global lingua franca of sports (Crystal, 2003). Its prestige encourages lexical borrowing, particularly in domains associated with modernisation and international engagement. Weinreich (1953) argues that prestige languages exert significant lexical influence, a pattern observable in contemporary Uzbekistan.

5.2 Generational and Media Influence

Younger speakers and sports journalists increasingly adopt direct English borrowings, especially in emerging fields such as fitness and e-sports. Digital platforms reduce linguistic mediation, intensifying direct lexical transfer. This aligns with Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) argument regarding contact intensity and borrowing depth.

5.3 Terminological Regulation

Begmatov (1985) stresses the importance of systematic terminology planning. However, rapid globalisation often outpaces formal standardisation, resulting in parallel usage forms such as *trener* and *coach*. This coexistence reflects ongoing lexical negotiation within Uzbek.

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6. Discussion

The analysis reveals a stratified lexical system within Uzbek sports terminology. Soviet-era borrowings display Russian mediation, while post-independence borrowings increasingly reflect direct English influence. This shift mirrors broader sociopolitical transformations in Uzbekistan.

Rahmatullayev (2006) describes Uzbek vocabulary as historically layered, shaped by successive cultural influences. The current expansion of English-origin sports terminology represents the newest layer in this historical continuum.

Structurally, Uzbek demonstrates high adaptability. Borrowed lexemes are phonologically adjusted, morphologically integrated, and semantically specialised. This confirms Hojiyev's (1992) assertion that foreign lexical material becomes fully functional within the Uzbek grammatical system.

Thus, sports terminology functions as a linguistic indicator of globalisation, identity transformation, and shifting geopolitical orientation.

7. Conclusion

English-origin sports terminology in Uzbek reflects both historical mediation through Russian and contemporary direct borrowing driven by globalisation. Linguistic analysis demonstrates systematic phonological adaptation, productive morphological integration, and semantic specialisation.

Beyond lexical change, these borrowings represent broader sociocultural processes. Sports terminology serves as a microcosm of Uzbekistan's transition from Soviet linguistic influence toward global integration. The Uzbek language, while absorbing foreign lexemes, maintains structural integrity through consistent adaptation mechanisms.

Future research may include corpus-based quantitative analysis or comparative studies with other Turkic languages to further examine regional patterns of English influence.

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