

**MORPHOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION AND LEXICAL-SEMANTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SPORTS TERMS AND LEXEMES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A CONTRASTIVE-TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS****Otaboyev Akhmadillo**Teacher, Andijan State Institute  
of Foreign Languages

**Abstract.** The rapid globalization of physical culture and competitive athletics has catalyzed the prolific expansion of sports terminology, transforming it into one of the most dynamic, porous, and highly specialized lexical sub-systems in modern linguistics. This scientific article undertakes an exhaustive contrastive-typological investigation into the morphological classification and lexical-semantic characteristics of sports terms and lexemes in two structurally divergent languages: English, an analytical Germanic language serving as the primary global donor of athletic nomenclature, and Uzbek, an agglutinative Turkic language balancing native word-formation constraints with massive waves of international lexical borrowing. By systematically interrogating the structural-morphemic architectures and semantic matrices of sports lexemes, this study demonstrates how English relies on high-velocity functional shifts (zero-derivation), extreme compound compression, and highly productive suffixation (e.g., *-er*, *-ing*) to codify kinetic reality into static lexical tokens, whereas Uzbek employs rule-governed agglutinative suffixation (e.g., *-chi*, *-ish*), syntactic possessive phrasing, and the structural re-analysis of imported Anglicisms. Furthermore, the research delves deeply into the lexical-semantic dimensions of sports discourse, mapping phenomena such as transterminologization, semantic narrowing and broadening, and the pervasive cultural metaphorization of sports vocabulary. Special attention is devoted to the semantic mutations of English borrowings in the Uzbek linguistic environment—where terms like "jogging" and "tennis" shift from denoting activities to encompassing athletic apparel and footwear—and the internationalization of culturally specific Uzbek sports concepts, such as traditional *kurash*. Ultimately, the findings reveal that while global sports media imposes a universalizing conceptual framework, the actual verbalization of sport remains deeply governed by the idiosyncratic morphological typologies and historical-cultural cognitive models inherent to each specific language system.

**Keywords:** *Sports Terminology, Contrastive Linguistics, Derivational Morphology, Lexical-Semantic Features, Agglutination, English Anglicisms, Uzbek Linguistics, Transterminologization, Semantic Shift.*

**Introduction and theoretical background**

The contemporary linguistic landscape is profoundly shaped by the sociocultural phenomenon of sport, which operates not merely as a domain of physical recreation but as a pervasive global institution generating specialized terminologies, idiomatic expressions, and metaphorical paradigms that consistently infiltrate everyday discourse. As global broadcasting networks, international athletic federations, and digital media platforms erase geographical boundaries, sports terminology has evolved into an open, highly fluid macro-system characterized by structural compression, strict semantic clarity for high-velocity communication, and cross-disciplinary borrowing from fields such as medicine, psychology, biomechanics, and military strategy (Rahmonova, 2023). Within this paradigm, investigating the derivational and semantic mechanics of sports lexemes across typologically distinct languages provides critical insights into the cognitive and structural frameworks of human communication. The English language, owing to the historical codification of modern sports like football, tennis, and boxing in the Anglophone world, functions as the undisputed international lingua franca of athletic discourse, wielding unparalleled generative power through its analytical syntax and flexible

morphology. Conversely, the Uzbek language—representing the highly structured, agglutinative Turkic family—provides a fascinating counterpoint, as it navigates the dual pressures of developing its indigenous sports nomenclature while simultaneously assimilating, adapting, and structurally normalizing a massive influx of foreign terminology (Ayakulov, 2019). This systemic friction between the analytical fluidity of English and the rule-governed agglutination of Uzbek serves as the primary theoretical engine of this study. The conceptualization of sport in linguistics must be understood through its complex verbalization, which encompasses not only the strict denotative labels applied to equipment, rules, and agents, but also the broader semantic fields and phraseological extensions that reflect a society's cultural cognition (Valiql o'g'li, 2026). In English, an individualistic, action-oriented worldview drives rapid lexical shifts where any noun can seamlessly transition into an athletic verb; in contrast, Uzbek terminology historically emphasizes community, formal structural relationships, and deeply entrenched historical practices, as evidenced by the rich, specialized lexicons surrounding indigenous sports like *kurash* and *kupkari* (Valiql o'g'li, 2026). Therefore, to comprehensively understand the architecture of sports language, it is imperative to dissect the exact morphological pathways—such as affixation, compounding, and conversion—through which new concepts are syntactically forged, alongside a rigorous lexical-semantic analysis detailing how words expand their meanings, migrate across disciplines via metaphoric transfer, and undergo semantic mutations when crossing linguistic borders.

### **Morphological classification of sports terminology in English and Uzbek**

The morphological generation of sports terminology in English is characterized by extraordinary structural economy, operational agility, and a heavy reliance on derivation, compounding, and conversion, allowing speakers to instantly compress complex kinetic sequences into singular lexical units. Affixation remains the most robust derivational engine, heavily utilizing suffixation to categorize human agents and abstract athletic processes. The nominalizing suffix *-er* acts as a primary operator in creating agentive nouns directly from action verbs (e.g., *striker*, *pitcher*, *surfer*, *goalkeeper*), establishing unambiguous professional identities from transient physical acts. Concurrently, the versatile suffix *-ing* is universally deployed to generate abstract action nominals that denote the entirety of a sporting discipline or a specific tactical process (e.g., *dribbling*, *sparring*, *weightlifting*), effectively freezing kinetic motion into a permanent conceptual state. Furthermore, compounding serves as a critical synthetic mechanism in English sports discourse, permitting the juxtaposition of distinct free morphemes into unified, highly specific structural blocks without requiring explicit morphological binders. English compounds frequently take the form of Noun + Noun (*basketball*, *baseline*, *touchline*) to restrict semantic fields, or Noun + Verb-Agent (*linebacker*, *shot-putter*) to achieve immense structural compression by embedding the direct object directly inside the agentive title. However, the true hallmark of English morphological flexibility in sports is conversion (zero-derivation), where words transition across grammatical categories without any alteration to their phonetic or morphemic surface. For example, standard nouns representing officials or objects are instantly converted into dynamic verbs (*to referee*, *to bench*, *to foul*), while specific instances of physical actions are extracted into quantifiable nouns (*a tackle*, *a serve*, *a run*). Lower productivity mechanisms, including clipping (*sub* from substitute, *pro* from professional) and blending (*triathlon*, *paralympics*), further accommodate the high-velocity demands of spoken sports commentary by truncating longer lexical chains (Rahmonova, 2023).

Conversely, the morphological formation of sports terminology in the modern Uzbek language is dictated by the strict, deterministic logic of its agglutinative architecture, where complex concepts must be built sequentially by appending dedicated, non-fusing affixes to stable roots, creating a structural transparency that fundamentally resists the category-blurring functional shifts seen in English. To generate native indigenous terminology, Uzbek relies on a select matrix of highly productive derivational suffixes. The agentive suffix *-chi* performs the functional equivalent of the English *-er*, cleanly isolating an athletic domain and establishing a

human agent profile (e.g., *kurashchi* for wrestler, *hujumchi* for attacker/striker, *himoyachi* for defender). The nominalizing process suffixes *-ish* and *-uv* are indispensable for abstracting verbal roots into technical sporting concepts, translating dynamic verbs like *yugurmoq* (to run) into the abstract discipline *yugurish* (athletics/running), or *sakramoq* (to jump) into *sakrash* (jumping). Additionally, the suffix *-lik* systematically generates abstract nouns denoting states or titles, such as *chempionlik* (championship status) or *hakamlilik* (refereeing). Because pure zero-derivation is morphologically impossible in Uzbek, functional shifts must be accomplished syntactically through descriptive verbal frames utilizing auxiliary operators like *qilmoq* (to do) or *etmoq*, rendering English verb conversions as multi-word analytic phrases (e.g., "to referee" becomes *hakamlilik qilmoq*). When constructing complex tactical compounds analogous to English, Uzbek eschews orthographic fusion in favor of strict possessive-relational syntactic juxtapositions. Terms such as *darvoza chizig'i* (goal line) or *jarima maydonchasi* (penalty area) structurally depend on the third-person possessive suffix (*-i/-si*) attached to the modifying secondary noun, expanding what English compresses into a lexical word into an explicit relational phrase. However, the modern morphosyntactic reality of Uzbek is profoundly complicated by the mass assimilation of foreign Anglicisms, which triggers unique typological re-analyses. Because English acts as the donor of globalized technologies for emerging sports like surfing and modern tennis, terms like *top spin*, *passing shot*, and *stretching* are imported entirely intact (Ayakulov, 2019). Fascinatingly, when morphologically active English markers like *-ing* (*tumbling*, *trekking*) and *-er* (*coacher*, *roller*) enter the Uzbek lexicon, the native agglutinative system strips them of their verbal fluidity, re-analyzing the entire imported sequence as an indivisible, static, monomorphemic root noun. Consequently, an Uzbek speaker will append native case and instrumental inflections externally to the English suffix, treating the entire borrowing as a fundamental lexical block, thereby demonstrating the formidable structural integrity of the target language's agglutinative matrix against foreign morphological intrusion (Ayakulov, 2019).

#### **Lexical-semantic characteristics, semantic shifts, and metaphorization**

The lexical-semantic architecture of sports terminology represents a complex web of precise denotative categorization, expansive polysemy, cross-disciplinary metaphorical transfer, and profound cultural embedding, illustrating how the physical realities of sport are cognitively mapped onto human language. At a fundamental semantic level, sports vocabulary in both English and Uzbek is meticulously subdivided into conceptual microsystems that catalog the environment of play ("pitch," "court," *maydon*), the athletes ("striker," *hujumchi*), the technical-tactical execution ("serve," "tackle," *zarba*), the regulatory apparatus ("foul," "referee," *qoida*), and the metrics of victory ("score," *hisob*, *g'alaba*). However, the semantic boundaries of these terms are highly volatile, frequently undergoing the process of transterminologization, wherein a specialized term migrates from a completely unrelated domain—such as military science, engineering, or anatomy—into sports, bringing with it a powerful associative metaphor. Because competitive sports are structurally analogous to territorial warfare, both languages heavily appropriate military lexicons; English terms like *attack*, *defense*, *bomb* (a long pass), and *captain* correspond perfectly with the semantic shifts seen in Uzbek words like *hujum* (offensive/attack) and *mudofaa* (defense), seamlessly transitioning from strategic battlefield manuals to the football pitch. Similarly, anatomical terminology is frequently metaphorized to define tactical zones, as seen in the English use of *header* or the Uzbek utilization of body-part terms like *qanot* (wing) to denote the structural flank of a team's formation. Beyond these universal cognitive metaphors, the semantic characteristics of sports discourse are heavily defined by the phenomenon of semantic divergence occurring during the cross-linguistic borrowing process. As English sports lexemes are absorbed into the Uzbek vocabulary, they frequently experience dramatic semantic broadening, narrowing, or complete mutation, creating "false friends" between the donor and target languages. According to the empirical lexical mapping established by Ayakulov (2019), the English concept of "jogging," which strictly denotes the activity of slow running, has

broadened in Uzbek semantics to simultaneously signify the specialized tracksuit or clothing worn during the activity. The word "tennis" possesses double semantics in modern colloquial Uzbek, referring both to the racket sport itself and to the athletic footwear (sneakers) associated with it. Even more striking is the semantic narrowing of the term "coaching," which in the context of specific sports like rugby in Uzbekistan has been semantically reassigned to mean the physical substitutes' bench, while the borrowed word "footing" (meaning pillar or basis in English) was inexplicably adapted to signify the recreational process of walking (Ayakulov, 2019).

Furthermore, the lexical-semantic landscape is not merely a one-way street of English borrowing; it is deeply rooted in the preservation and internationalization of culturally specific linguistic heritage. Traditional Uzbek sports serve as repositories of historical, socio-cultural semantics that reflect the nomadic traditions, ethical codes, and lifestyles of Central Asian societies. The national wrestling sport of *kurash*, for instance, relies on a highly specialized indigenous lexicon featuring terms like *halol* (a pure, decisive victory), *yonbosh* (a side-throw point), and *ta'zim* (the ritual bow of respect) (Valiql o'g'li, 2026). As *kurash* has gained recognition within the Asian Games and the global sporting arena, these deeply culturally embedded Uzbek terms have become internationally codified standard terminologies, resisting translation and forcing foreign languages (including English) to adopt Uzbek terminology as loanwords. This phenomenon highlights that sports terminology operates dynamically in both directions; while the lexical structures of extreme sports, modern football, and tennis are inundated with Western Anglicisms, the conceptual purity of traditional martial arts forces an outward linguistic export. Finally, the semantic influence of sports extends far beyond the stadium, acting as a primary generator for everyday linguistic idioms and phraseological units. In English, the pervasive cultural importance of sports is evidenced by the deep entrenchment of athletic metaphors in business, politics, and social communication; expressions such as "to get the ball rolling," "to throw in the towel," or "level the playing field" have entirely shed their literal athletic origins to become abstract communicative staples (Valiql o'g'li, 2026). This pervasive idiomization proves that the verbalization of the sport concept is not isolated to technical jargon but is an integral, evolving component of the general cognitive and semantic framework of a language, continuously enriching both English and Uzbek vocabularies through a complex interplay of native morphological derivation, conceptual adaptation, and cross-cultural semantic exchange.

**Conclusion.** The rigorous contrastive-typological analysis of the derivational features and lexical-semantic characteristics of sports terms in English and Uzbek elucidates the profound extent to which linguistic architecture dictates the codification of human athletic activity. Through its highly analytical syntax and permeable morphemic boundaries, English excels at structural compression and functional agility, employing zero-derivation, fluid compounding, and productive affixation to maintain its status as the rapid, dynamic donor language of global sports discourse. In stark contrast, the Uzbek language processes this globalizing force through an unyielding agglutinative matrix, ensuring structural clarity and semantic precision by utilizing linear suffixation chains, explicit possessive syntax, and the total morphemic re-analysis of imported Anglicisms. From a lexical-semantic perspective, the athletic vocabulary in both languages reveals a shared cognitive reliance on military and anatomical metaphORIZATION, yet deeply diverges in the socio-cultural processing of borrowed items, where English terms frequently undergo radical semantic mutation (broadening to include equipment and apparel) upon entering the Uzbek lexicon.

### References.

1. Ayakulov, N. A. O. (2019). Anglicisms in sport terminology of the Uzbek language and its difficulties in translation. *European Science Review*, 54–57. <https://doi.org/10.29013/esr-19-9.10-54-57>

2. Rahmonova, K. (2023). Classification of sport terms in lexical-semantic and word formation levels. *Web of Synergy: International Interdisciplinary Research Journal*.
3. Valiql o'g'li, K. S. (2026). Verbalization of the Sport Concept in English and Uzbek Languages. *Smartify: Journal of Smart Education and Pedagogy*, 3(3), 17–21. <https://researchvision.us/index.php/smartify/article/view/198>
4. Ahmad Kh. (2000). 'Neologisms, Nonces and Word Formation'. Int. Congress. (8-12 August 2000, Munich.). Vol II. Munich: Universitat Stuttgart. – P. 711-730.
5. Cartwright M. Ancient History Encyclopedia. Medieval Tournament. – United Kingdom, 2018. – P. 7.