

Attention to Lexical, Semantic, and Cultural Specificity in Translating English Sports Terminology Into Uzbek

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Abstract: *This article analyzes the lexical, semantic, and cultural features involved in translating English sports terminology into Uzbek. In the context of globalization, the active exchange of sports terms between different languages has led to various translation challenges, which are examined in this study together with possible solutions. The research employs comparative analysis, linguocultural approach, contextual semantics, corpus analysis, and statistical methods. The results show that equivalence, adaptation, transcription, and calque are the main strategies used in translating sports terms. The study also highlights the importance of preserving semantic accuracy and cultural compatibility in the translation process.*

Key words: *Sports Terminology, Translation, Linguoculture, Equivalence, Adaptation, English Language, Uzbek Language.*

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the acceleration of globalization processes has significantly strengthened the interaction between language, culture, and sport [1]. As English has become the primary language of international sports communication, the active use of English terms in various sports disciplines, international competitions, television broadcasts, and media materials has had a noticeable impact on the Uzbek language system [2]. Today, such terms as *corner*, *penalty*, *goalkeeper*, *match*, *fair play*, *coach*, *referee*, and *offside* are widely used in Uzbek sports journalism, the education system, and everyday speech.

From a linguistic perspective, sports terminology belongs to the category of specialized vocabulary and has clearly defined semantic boundaries. However, its translation creates various linguistic and cultural challenges. Sports terms not only describe actions or elements of a game but also reflect national culture, sports ethics, values, and traditions [3]. Therefore, when translating them into Uzbek, it is necessary to consider not only linguistic equivalence but also cultural compatibility, communicative purpose, and contextual appropriateness.

As noted by Peter Newmark (1988), translation is both a linguistic and a cultural phenomenon. This means that together with the original meaning of a word, its cultural connotations must also be conveyed. In this regard, strategies such as adaptation, transcription, calque, semantic expansion, and finding equivalents are used simultaneously in the translation of sports terminology into Uzbek. However, maintaining clarity, simplicity, and national stylistic features remains an important scientific issue in translation studies [4].

According to the Resolution No. PQ-4877 of November 3, 2020, “On Measures to Improve the System of Training Personnel in the Field of Physical Education and Sports and to Enhance Scientific Potential,” adopted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the development of the sports sector, modernization of sports education, and expansion of international cooperation are defined as priority areas [5]. This creates the necessity of standardizing sports terminology based on accurate and unified translation principles. Therefore, the issue of translating English sports terms into Uzbek should be studied not only within linguistics but also at the intersection of education, sports management, journalism, and translation studies [6].

Currently, some terms in Uzbek sports terminology are translated in different ways, while others are preserved in their original form (for example, *penalty*, *match*, *play-off*). Although this situation is part of the natural enrichment process of the language, it also shows the need for a scientifically grounded terminological approach. Thus, maintaining lexical-semantic accuracy, ensuring cultural equivalence, and creating harmonized forms in the national language are important scientific tasks of the present time [7].

In modern sports studies, understanding the essence of sport through language, expressing it correctly, and conveying it at the international level are directly connected with the translation process. Therefore, the systematic study and theoretical development of sports terminology in the Uzbek language has significant scientific and practical importance [8].

From this point of view, the present research aims to identify the linguistic, semantic, and cultural features encountered in translating English sports terms into Uzbek, to analyze translation strategies scientifically, and to develop practical recommendations [9].

The issue of translating English sports terminology into Uzbek is one of the emerging and promising research areas studied at the intersection of translation studies, lexicology, and linguocultural studies. In recent years, due to the expansion of global communication and international sports relations, issues such as lexical borrowing, equivalence, and cultural adaptation have attracted the attention of many linguists and translation scholars [10].

Among international studies in this field, the works of Peter Newmark (1988), Mona Baker (2018), Basil Hatim and Ian Mason (1997), and Eugene Nida (2003) hold a special place. According to these scholars, translation is not merely the replacement of words from one language into another, but rather a communicative bridge between language and culture [11].

In his work *A Textbook of Translation*, Newmark interprets translation as a bridge connecting language and culture. He emphasizes that when translating specialized lexical units such as sports terminology, it is necessary to follow the principles of semantic accuracy and cultural compatibility. He considers functional equivalence (*funksional ekvivalent*) to be one of the most appropriate strategies in translating specialized terms [12].

Mona Baker, in her book “*A Coursebook on Translation*” (2018) highlights the importance of identifying contextual meaning and adapting terms to the cultural code of the target language. According to her, contextual fidelity (*kontekstual sodiqlik*) and communicative clarity (*kommunikativ aniqlik*) are key criteria in ensuring translation quality, especially in specialized discourse such as sports texts.

Eugene Nida and Charles Taber (2003), in their well-known work *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, introduce the concept of dynamic equivalence. According to this approach, translation should produce the same effect on the target audience as the original text does on its readers. For example, translating the English term *fair play* as “honest play” (*halol o’yin*) or “sports ethics” (*Sport etikasi*) in Uzbek may serve as an example of dynamic equivalence, depending on the communicative context [13].

Basil Hatim and Ian Mason (1997), in *The Translator as Communicator*, examine issues of pragmatic equivalence (*pragmatic moslik*) and stylistic loyalty in translation. They argue that sports terms such as *assist*, *dribbling*, and *time-out* possess not only semantic but also emotional and stylistic features, which must be preserved in translation.

Representatives of the Uzbek school of translation studies have also achieved significant scholarly results in this field. In linguistics, sports terminology is interpreted as an open and dynamic terminological system. As O. S. Akhmedov (2024) emphasizes, sports terms in English and Uzbek actively exhibit such lexical phenomena characteristic of the general vocabulary as polysemy, synonymy, and antonymy, which complicates the process of their translation [2]. Therefore, the translation of sports terminology should not be limited to finding word-for-word equivalents; rather, it requires consideration of the term's semantic field, contextual usage, and functional role [14].

Recent scholarly research indicates that English lexical units play a significant role in the incorporation of sports terminology into the Uzbek language. According to the studies conducted by N. A. Ayakulov, this phenomenon can be explained by the global dominance of sports technologies and the professional sports system that have developed within the English-speaking context [3]. As a result, such terms as penalty, fitness, coaching, jogging, pressing, and tie-break are widely used in Uzbek sports discourse. In certain cases, these terms undergo semantic expansion in Uzbek and are employed in ways that differ from their original meanings in English.

In recent years, digital linguistics and corpus-based approaches have been increasingly applied in the translation of sports terminology. Automatic translation systems based on artificial intelligence, such as Google Translate, DeepL, and ChatGPT, are also being used in translating sports texts. However, these systems still face difficulties in ensuring full cultural equivalence, which highlights the decisive role of human translators and their cultural competence [15].

The analysis of previous research indicates that three major challenges exist in translating English sports terminology into Uzbek:

1. The problem of equivalence – the absence of a complete semantic equivalent in the target language.
2. The issue of cultural adaptation – certain terms do not have direct counterparts in Uzbek culture.
3. Linguistic integration – phonetic and morphological adaptation of borrowed terms within the Uzbek language system.

To overcome these challenges, an integrative approach combining linguistic, semantic, and cultural analysis is required.

Research Aim.

The main aim of this research is to identify the lexical-semantic, cultural, and stylistic features encountered in translating English sports terminology into Uzbek, to analyze them scientifically, and to develop effective translation strategies.

In other words, the study seeks to reveal the mechanisms of equivalence and adaptation of English sports terms in Uzbek and to create a practical scientific model that can be applied in sports translation practice.

Research Objectives.

Based on the research aim, the following specific objectives were defined:

1. To analyze the system of English sports terminology from morphological, semantic, and pragmatic perspectives.
2. To identify and classify their translation variants in Uzbek.
3. To determine the main translation strategies (equivalence, transcription, calque, adaptation) and analyze them through examples.
4. To examine cultural equivalence issues arising in the translation process.
5. To develop and scientifically justify an optimal translation model for sports terminology based on practical examples.

These objectives enable the systematic theoretical and practical study of sports terminology translation into Uzbek.

Research Methods.

The research employs modern scientific methods of translation studies and linguocultural analysis, including:

Table 1. Research Methods Used in the Study of Sports Terminology Translation.

The name of the method	Its content and application
Comparative analysis	used to compare meaning, form, and cultural compatibility between English and Uzbek sports terms.
Descriptive method	applied to describe and classify translation strategies used in sports texts.
Linguocultural approach	used to identify cultural and connotative meanings of sports terms and relate them to sports ethics and values.
Semantic analysis	applied to determine the semantic range of terms and their synonymic and antonymic relationships.
Corpus analysis (empirical method)	used to determine the frequency of sports terminology usage based on materials from BBC Sport, The Guardian, Olympic News, “Sport” newspaper, Olamsport.uz, and Sports.uz.
Statistical analysis	applied to calculate the percentage of borrowed and translated sports terms in Uzbek.

The combination of these methods ensures that the analysis is theoretically grounded, supported by empirical evidence, and oriented toward practical outcomes.

Scientific Novelty of the Research.

The scientific novelty of this research lies in the following aspects:

- A multi-stage system of translation strategies for English sports terminology into Uzbek has been developed.
- A methodological model for preserving semantic and cultural connotations in sports terminology translation has been proposed.

A theoretical basis for creating an integrative lexical database of Uzbek sports terminology has been formulated.

Research Content and Results

During the research, more than 200 English sports terms were analyzed. The terms were selected from the fields of football, basketball, handball, tennis, athletics, and gymnastics. The analysis was based on materials from BBC Sport, The Guardian, Olympic News portals, as well as Uzbek-language sources such as “Sport” newspaper, Olamsport.uz, and Sports.uz websites.

The study was conducted in three main directions:

1. **Lexical-semantic analysis** – identifying the semantic layers of the terms.
2. **Cultural (linguocultural) analysis** – determining national and cultural connotations.
3. **Analysis of translation strategies** – evaluating equivalence, transcription, calque, and adaptation methods.

1. Lexical-Semantic Analysis of Sports Terminology. From a semantic perspective, English sports terms can be classified into units expressing actions, states, results, and roles. The table below presents examples of the analysis:

Table 2. Lexical-Semantic Analysis of Selected English Sports Terms and Their Uzbek Translations.

No	English Term	Uzbek Translation	Translation Method	Explanation
1	Goalkeeper	Darvozabon	Calque (literal translation)	Correct functional equivalent based on role
2	Penalty	Penalti	Transcription	Original form preserved with phonetic adaptation
3	Fair play	Honest play / Sports ethics	Adaptation	Translated based on cultural equivalence
4	Dribbling	Carrying the ball	Descriptive translation	No direct equivalent; action explained
5	Offside	Off-play position	Neologism	Adapted to national sports terminology
6	Coach	Murabbiy	Equivalent translation	Full semantic correspondence exists
7	Time-out	Break time	Adaptation	Freely translated depending on context
8	Play-off	Pley-off	Transcription	Borrowed in original phonetic form

The table demonstrates that, alongside fully equivalent terms, many sports terms in Uzbek have been adopted through transcription and adaptation. This reflects the active integration of Uzbek into global sports discourse.

2. Cultural Equivalence and Linguocultural Analysis. In the translation process, certain terms cannot be translated literally due to cultural connotations.

For example:

- **Fair play** – In English sports culture, this concept implies not only honesty but also respect for the opponent, adherence to ethical norms, and moral behavior in competition. Translating it simply as “halol o’yin” may partially reflect its meaning, whereas “sports ethics” provides a culturally fuller equivalent.
- **Gentleman’s game** (in cricket) – Although it can be translated as “jentelmenlar o’yini” in English culture it embodies concepts of dignity, respect, fairness, and tradition. Therefore, understanding the cultural context is essential for accurate translation.

This analysis shows that preserving cultural context may be even more important than maintaining literal linguistic loyalty.

3. Analysis of Translation Strategies. The research identified four main strategies used in translating sports terminology:

Table 3. Distribution of Translation Strategies Used in English–Uzbek Sports Terminology.

Strategy Type	Percentage (%)	Advantages	Disadvantages
Transcription (Penalty → penalty)	60%	Simple, quick, internationally recognizable	Reduces semantic clarity in the national language
Equivalent translation (Coach → murabbiy)	25%	Full meaning preserved	Not available for all terms
Calque (Goalkeeper → darvozabon)	10%	Ensures lexical harmony	May not always sound natural
Adaptation / Descriptive translation (Fair play → sports ethics)	5%	Fully conveys cultural meaning	Increases length, reduces simplicity

Result:

Transcription proved to be the most frequently used strategy in translating sports terminology into Uzbek. However, adaptation and equivalence methods are more effective from a cultural perspective.

The 200 terms identified during the research were distributed as follows:

Table 4. Statistical Distribution of Translation Methods for 200 Sports Terms.

Category	Number of Terms	Percentage (%)
Borrowed through transcription	120	60%
Equivalent translation	50	25%
Calque method	20	10%
Adaptation (cultural adjustment)	10	5%

These findings indicate that English sports terms are mainly integrated into Uzbek through phonetic preservation (transcription). While this demonstrates alignment with international standards, increasing the proportion of equivalent and culturally adapted translations is necessary to preserve national linguistic identity.

Scientific and Practical Findings. The analysis led to the following conclusions:

1. The translation of English sports terminology is closely connected with both linguistic systems and sports culture.
2. Identifying contextual equivalents increases semantic precision.
3. New modern equivalents should be created in Uzbek for certain terms (e.g., assist → “goal assist pass” golli uzatma).
4. Artificial intelligence tools can be used for automatic analysis of sports terminology.
5. Based on the research, the development of a mini English–Uzbek sports glossary has been

proposed as a methodological recommendation.

Conclusion.

The process of translating English sports terminology into Uzbek has become an integral part of modern global information exchange. Sports terms are not merely lexical units; they embody cultural values, ethical principles, and conceptual elements of sportsmanship. Therefore, in the translation process, it is essential to preserve not only semantic accuracy but also cultural compatibility and communicative fidelity.

The research findings demonstrate the following:

1. 60% of the analyzed terms were borrowed through transcription, 25% through equivalent translation, 10% through calque, and 5% through adaptation.
2. The most actively borrowed terms belong to football, basketball, and tennis, reflecting the dominant position of these sports in Uzbek sports culture.
3. Terms such as *fair play*, *time-out*, *dribbling*, and *play-off* require cultural adaptation because they lack direct semantic equivalents in Uzbek.
4. Cases of interference (preserving form while distorting meaning) were observed, highlighting the necessity of establishing unified terminological interpretations.
5. The integration of English sports terminology enriches the Uzbek language but also increases the need for a standardized terminological system.

The analysis confirms that integrating linguistic, cultural, and stylistic approaches provides the most effective results in sports terminology translation. Translation conveys not only language but also the mentality of sportsmanship and international communication culture. Therefore, this field represents an important interdisciplinary area connecting philology, linguistics, and sports studies.

Practical and Scientific Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. For Linguistics and Translation Studies:

- Greater attention should be paid to preserving cultural equivalence in translating sports terminology.
- Standardized terminological dictionaries should be developed for each sport.
- Methods for creating national equivalents should be systematized, taking into account the grammatical and phonetic features of the Uzbek language.
- Semantic precision and contextual compatibility should remain fundamental translation principles.

2. For Sports Journalism and Media:

- A balance between fidelity (*sodiqlik*) and readability (*oddiylik*) should be maintained in translating sports news.
- National semantic equivalents such as “honest play” (*halol o’yin*) “sports ethics” (*sport etikasi*) and “goal assist pass” (*golli uzatma*) should be actively used to enhance linguistic naturalness.
- The creation of an online English–Uzbek sports terminology database would be beneficial for journalists and translators.

3. For Education and Academic Research:

- It is essential to introduce specialized modules aimed at teaching the linguistic features of sports language to students majoring in Philology and Translation Studies.
- It is advisable to promote academic research directions such as “sports translation,” “linguocultural approach,” and “terminological integration” within students’ scholarly activities.
- Future research is recommended to focus on the automatic translation of English sports terminology based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies.

General scientific conclusion.

The translation of English sports terminology into Uzbek is a contemporary interdisciplinary field situated at the intersection of linguistics, cultural studies, and sports sciences. The systematic integration of sports terminology into Uzbek not only enriches the language but also enhances the quality of sports communication and international interaction.

The theoretical and practical recommendations developed in this study can serve as a foundation for future research in sports translation theory, terminology policy, and language–culture integration.

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