



**THE BORROWING OF SPORTS TERMS BY THE KARAKALPAK  
LANGUAGE FROM OTHER LANGUAGES**

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**Abstract:** This study explores the borrowing of sports terminology into the Karakalpak language, focusing on linguistic, cultural, and social dimensions. It highlights the influence of Russian during the Soviet period and the growing role of English due to globalization and digital media. The paper examines phonological and morphological adaptations of borrowed terms, their integration into Karakalpak society, and ongoing debates about language purity. Comparative analysis with other Turkic languages reveals shared patterns and regional variations. Ultimately, the dynamic incorporation of sports terms illustrates the adaptability of Karakalpak in the face of global cultural flows while retaining its linguistic identity.

**Keywords:** Karakalpak language, sports terminology, borrowing, Russian influence, English influence, globalization, linguistic adaptation, Turkic languages, cultural identity, language change.

Language is not a static phenomenon; it continuously evolves and adapts to the changing needs of its speakers. One of the most potent forces in this linguistic evolution is borrowing — the process by which one language adopts words, phrases, or structures from another. This process is especially visible in domains that experience rapid internationalization, such as sports. In recent decades, the Karakalpak language, spoken primarily in the autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan in Uzbekistan, has witnessed significant lexical enrichment through the borrowing of sports terms. As global sports have penetrated local cultures, Karakalpak has absorbed numerous terms from Russian, English, and other languages. This paper aims to analyze the borrowing of sports terms into Karakalpak, examining the sources, reasons, and patterns of adaptation, while exploring the broader linguistic and cultural implications of this phenomenon.

The Karakalpak language belongs to the Kipchak branch of the Turkic language family and has historically been influenced by neighboring Turkic languages such as Kazakh and Uzbek. However, during the Soviet period, Russian became the dominant language of administration, education, and mass media in Karakalpakstan. Consequently, a significant influx of Russian loanwords entered Karakalpak, especially in technical, scientific, and cultural domains. The sphere of sports was no exception.





Sports in the Soviet Union were a highly organized and promoted activity, leading to the proliferation of Russian sports terms across its republics. Terms such as *futbol* (football), *basketbol* (basketball), and *voleybol* (volleyball) were directly borrowed into Karakalpak, often with minor phonetic adjustments to fit local pronunciation patterns. These borrowings were not merely superficial additions; they reflected a deeper cultural integration of new sports and practices into Karakalpak society.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the subsequent rise of globalization, English emerged as a dominant source of international sports terminology. This trend has further influenced the Karakalpak lexicon, particularly through exposure to international sports broadcasts, the internet, and social media. English-origin terms such as *manager*, *coach*, *penalty*, and *sponsor* have entered everyday sports discourse in Karakalpakstan. Unlike earlier Russian borrowings, which often underwent phonological adaptation and grammatical integration, English borrowings sometimes retain their original forms, reflecting the prestige associated with English as the language of global sports culture. For example, the term *penalty* is often used in Karakalpak sports commentary without alteration, alongside older Russian-derived terms like *gol* (goal).

An interesting aspect of this borrowing process is the coexistence of multiple terms from different languages within Karakalpak sports vocabulary. For instance, in football terminology, both *futbolshu* (football player, from Russian *futbolist*) and *player* (from English) are used, sometimes interchangeably. This bilingual or even trilingual sports register highlights the complex linguistic layering present in Karakalpak society, where Russian, English, and native Karakalpak elements interact dynamically. Moreover, this phenomenon reflects broader sociolinguistic trends, such as language shift, code-switching, and identity negotiation among Karakalpak youth, who are increasingly exposed to multilingual influences through global media.

The adaptation of borrowed sports terms into Karakalpak follows recognizable patterns. Phonologically, loanwords are often adjusted to conform to the syllable structure and sound inventory of Karakalpak. For example, the Russian word *basketbol* is pronounced as *basqetbol*, with the initial voiced *b* often realized as a voiceless *p* or *b* depending on regional variations. Morphologically, borrowed terms are frequently integrated into native word formation processes, such as the addition of suffixes to indicate profession or activity. Thus, *trener* (coach) becomes *trenershi* (the act of coaching or the role of a coach) through the use of the native agentive suffix *-shi*.





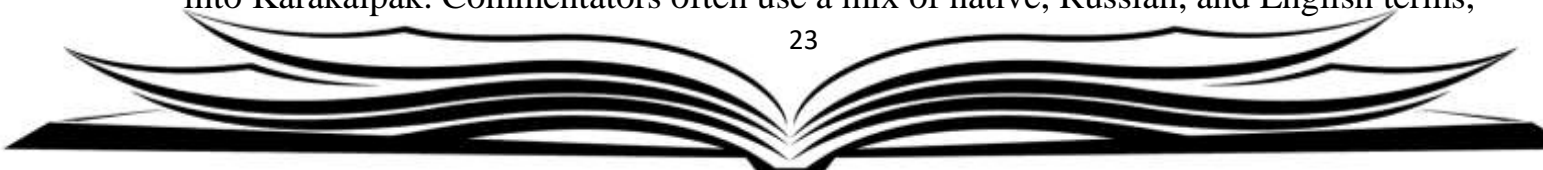
Syntactically, borrowed terms occupy the same grammatical positions as native Karakalpak words, demonstrating their deep integration into the linguistic system.

Beyond linguistic considerations, the borrowing of sports terms into Karakalpak carries significant cultural implications. Sports are not merely physical activities; they are cultural artifacts that embody values, norms, and social practices. The adoption of terms like *match*, *league*, and *champion* signals not only linguistic change but also the assimilation of global sports culture into local identities. For many young Karakalpak speakers, participating in football or basketball is as much about embracing global youth culture as it is about engaging in physical exercise. The linguistic borrowing, therefore, reflects a broader cultural globalization process, in which local traditions interact with and adapt to external influences.

At the same time, the influx of foreign sports terminology has sparked debates about language purity and cultural preservation within Karakalpak society. Language purists argue that the excessive borrowing of foreign terms, particularly from English, threatens the integrity of the Karakalpak language and undermines efforts to promote national identity. In response, some linguistic activists advocate for the revival or creation of native Karakalpak terms to replace foreign borrowings. For example, they propose using native Turkic-derived words like *oyınşı* (player) instead of *player* and *bärislis* (competition) instead of *match*. However, these efforts face challenges, as borrowed terms often carry prestige and are deeply entrenched in popular usage, especially among younger generations.

Comparative analysis with other Turkic languages, such as Kazakh, Uzbek, and Kyrgyz, reveals similar patterns of sports terminology borrowing. All these languages have absorbed Russian and English sports terms, reflecting their shared historical and geopolitical contexts. However, the degree of borrowing and the strategies of adaptation vary. For instance, Kazakh has seen a stronger movement toward language purification, with the creation of native equivalents for sports terms, while Uzbek exhibits a more liberal borrowing practice. Karakalpak occupies a middle ground, balancing between retaining Turkic roots and accommodating foreign influences. This comparative perspective underscores the importance of considering regional and sociopolitical factors in understanding language borrowing dynamics.

The role of media and education in the spread of borrowed sports terms cannot be overstated. Television broadcasts of international sports events, such as the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games, serve as primary vectors for introducing new terms into Karakalpak. Commentators often use a mix of native, Russian, and English terms,





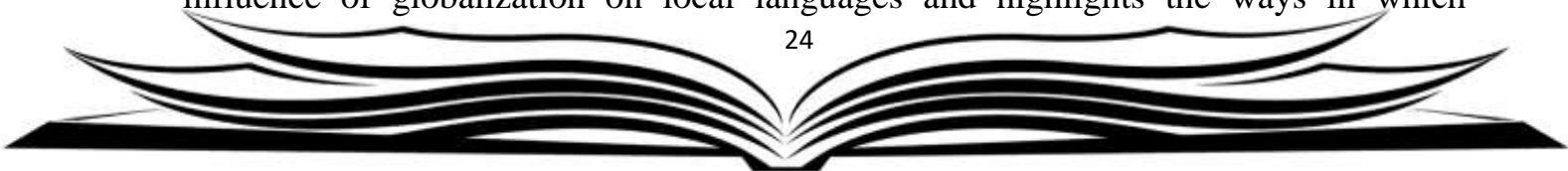
thereby normalizing their usage among listeners. Similarly, sports education programs in schools and universities incorporate borrowed terminology in their curricula, further reinforcing their presence in the language. The internet, with its vast array of sports websites, social media platforms, and streaming services, accelerates this process by providing constant exposure to global sports discourse.

In recent years, the rise of digital communication has introduced new dimensions to the borrowing of sports terms. Online fan communities in Karakalpakstan frequently use English hashtags, abbreviations, and slang in their discussions. Terms like *MVP* (Most Valuable Player), *GOAT* (Greatest of All Time), and *derby* have entered local online lexicons, often without translation. This digital borrowing reflects the immediacy and informality of internet communication, where brevity and global comprehensibility are prioritized. It also highlights the role of youth culture in driving language change, as young Karakalpak speakers adopt and adapt global sports slang to express their identities and affiliations.

Looking ahead, the future of sports terminology in Karakalpak will likely continue to be shaped by ongoing globalization, technological advancements, and sociopolitical developments. As Karakalpakstan strengthens its regional autonomy and cultural institutions, efforts to promote the Karakalpak language in all domains, including sports, are expected to intensify. Language planners may develop standardized glossaries of sports terms that balance the need for linguistic authenticity with practical usability. Moreover, collaborations with other Turkic-speaking regions may foster the creation of a shared Turkic sports lexicon, enhancing mutual intelligibility while preserving linguistic diversity.

At the same time, the resilience of borrowed sports terms suggests that they will remain an integral part of the Karakalpak linguistic landscape. The process of borrowing is not inherently detrimental; rather, it reflects the dynamic and adaptive nature of language. As Karakalpak speakers continue to engage with global sports culture, their language will evolve to accommodate new concepts, practices, and identities. This ongoing interaction between local and global, native and foreign, tradition and modernity, is at the heart of language development in Karakalpakstan and beyond.

In conclusion, the borrowing of sports terms by the Karakalpak language from other languages, particularly Russian and English, is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses linguistic, cultural, and social dimensions. It illustrates the powerful influence of globalization on local languages and highlights the ways in which





Karakalpak speakers negotiate their identities through language. While challenges related to language preservation and cultural authenticity persist, the dynamic integration of borrowed terms into Karakalpak reflects the language's vitality and adaptability. As new sports emerge and global communication continues to expand, the Karakalpak language will undoubtedly continue to enrich its lexicon through creative and context-sensitive borrowing, ensuring its relevance and vibrancy in the modern world.

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