


## Potential Differences in Game Perception of the Audience in Turkish and English Volleyball Terminology\*

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**Abstract:** The increasing influence of technology inevitably affects the ways in which translation studies engage with terminology and communication. In the sports environment, where globalization and the social media have positioned English as the primary medium of interaction, the question of whether authorities utilize borrowed or adapted terms has gained new significance. By applying Eugene Nida's functional equivalence theory, which emphasizes the need for translated terms to convey the same function and effect in the target language, this research highlights how sports terminology translation is not merely a linguistic process but also a cultural one, shaping the reception and understanding of volleyball across different linguistic communities. The study explores how variations in Turkish and English volleyball terminology may influence the game perception of the target audience. Findings indicate that while English serves as the dominant language of global volleyball terminology, Turkish adaptations and borrowings introduce nuanced distinctions that affect how the game, player roles, and strategies are perceived. These variations not only influence spectators' comprehension but also contribute to how volleyball is conceptualized and discussed in diverse linguistic contexts. Ultimately, the study reveals that translation choices extend beyond equivalence, reflecting the broader interaction between language, culture, and globalization in shaping sports communication.

**Keywords:** *volleyball terminology, game perception, functional equivalence, sports terminology, audience comprehension*

**Öz:** Teknolojinin artan etkisi, çeviribilimin terminoloji ve iletişim alanlarındaki yerini de kaçınılmaz olarak dönüştürmektedir. Küreselleşme ve sosyal media etkilerinin spor alanında İngilizceyi en önemli iletişim dillerinden biri hâline getirdiği günümüzde, yetkili kurumların ödünç alınmış ya da uyarlanmış terimleri kullanıp kullanmadığı sorusu yeni bir önem kazanmıştır. Eugene Nida'nın, çevrilen terimlerin erek dilde aynı işlevi ve etkiyi iletmesi gerektiğini vurgulayan işlevsel eşdeğerlik kuramı temel alınarak gerçekleştirilen bu çalışma, spor terminolojisi çevirisinin yalnızca dilsel değil aynı zamanda kültürel bir süreç olduğunu ortaya koyarak, voleybol terminolojisindeki anlamsal farkların, çeşitli dil topluluklarında oyunun alımlanmasındaki yerini incelemektedir. Çalışma kapsamında Türkçe ve İngilizce voleybol terminolojisi arasındaki farklılıkların hedef kitlenin oyun algısını nasıl etkileyebileceğini incelenmektedir. Bulgular, İngilizcenin küresel voleybol terminolojisinde baskın konumunu koruduğunu, buna karşın Türkçedeki uyarlamalar ve ödünçlemelerin, oyunun, oyuncu rollerinin ve stratejilerin algılanışında nüanslar oluşturduğunu göstermektedir. Bu çeşitlilik, yalnızca izleyicilerin kavrayışını etkilemekle kalmamakta, aynı zamanda voleybolun farklı dillerde nasıl kavramsallaştırıldığını ve tartışıldığını da belirlemektedir. Sonuç olarak çalışma, çeviri tercihlerinin salt eşdeğerlik arayışının ötesine geçerek dil, kültür ve küreselleşme arasındaki daha geniş etkileşimin spor iletişimini nasıl şekillendirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *voleybol terminolojisi, oyun algısı, işlevsel eşdeğerlik, spor terminolojisi, izleyici kavrayışı*

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, the audience interested in any sports is constantly bombarded with foreign information and terms. Through the expansion of international broadcasting, online sports communities, and social media platforms, people from all around the world engage with each other. Like many other sports, volleyball terminology is also shaped by English due to globalization, international sports institutions, and media effects. Federations, commentators, and fans frequently use English expressions. However, when these terms are transferred into other languages, they undergo processes of borrowing, adaptation, and naturalization that can subtly or heavily alter their meanings. Some Turkish equivalents of English volleyball terms convey the same role or function, while others may lead to alternative interpretations that reshape the audience's perception of gameplay along with player roles and responsibilities. As Nida's (1964) framework suggests, formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence represent two ends of a translation spectrum. Functional equivalence, which is built upon these notions, presents a more detailed approach that prioritizes the overall communicative purpose of translation.

This study seeks the answers to the question of how the borrowed or adapted volleyball terminology may affect the meaning of the terms and the audience's perception of volleyball through analyzing the Turkish and English volleyball terminology comparatively. By examining how equivalent or non-equivalent term choices alter the way audiences conceptualize roles and actions within volleyball, the study aims to reveal the linguistic and cultural dimensions of sports terminology. In doing so, it also aims to explore how functional equivalence can be managed to maintain clarity and consistency across languages without eliminating the global character of the sport. The research attempts to highlight how the balance between global consistency and local adaptation shapes not only volleyball's linguistic discourse but also its reception and perception by the audience.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The rapid globalization of sports and the rise of digital and social media have significantly increased the visibility of volleyball all around the world in recent years. The growing presence of the volleyball in international tournaments, broadcasting networks, and online platforms has created a big multilingual environment, in which English plays a role as the common language of communication. Globalization and social media have enhanced the engagement of fans. This has accelerated the spread of shared expressions and terminologies across linguistic borders. As a result, volleyball terminology, also sports terminology in general, has become deeply intertwined with English.

The dominance of English in sports can be traced to historical, economic, and political developments. Along with the rapid dominance of the English language throughout the world, the English language has also become one of the principal languages, if not the only one, of international sports through its cultural influence, media dominance, and economic power as it has become "the main language of books, academic journals, the media and international sports and entertainment" (Chew, 1999, p. 43) and it is widely believed that "the official languages of the Sports Games are French and English, with the undisputed predominance of English" (Branişte & Necula, 2024, p. 6). English serves as one of the most fundamental sources for terminology (See Ummatkulova, 2021), for the communication between athletes and the communication between the audience. Most international governing bodies, such as the FIVB (International Volleyball Federation), CEV (European Volleyball Confederation), and the International Olympic Committee, use English as their official language. Rules, regulations, and referee communications are primarily documented and disseminated in English, ensuring uniformity in all countries and competitions.

English also serves as the lingua franca, enabling communication between players, coaches, and fans during global tournaments and on social media. The widespread use of English in sports via broadcasting channels and streaming platforms such as BBC Sport, Eurosport, and Volleyball World TV has also been shaping the discourse and vocabulary of the game.



Serving as a bridge language, English continues to shape not only the global communication of volleyball but also its evolving terminology, strategies, and fan interactions. On one hand, the localized terminologies still exist in all languages. But the widespread use of English enables a consistency in rules and fan engagement in different linguistic environments.

Consistent with the above-mentioned dominance of English, Yazıcı (2019) underlines the effect of foreign languages in terminology formation throughout history, pointing out the extensive usage of French and English as lingua franca indifferent times and fields of expertise. Sometimes terms are borrowed from these languages, transferred into Turkish discourses as loanwords, and sometimes they remain so. In sports terminology, Kalafat (2014) observes three main groups of terminology formation in Turkish language and discourses: Turkish or Turkified terms, foreign-origin or translation-based terms, and terms transferred from the general vocabulary into a specialized subfield. Many scholars have discussed the effect of western languages, especially English as lingua franca for the formation of sports terminologies in different countries for different languages (See Bator, 2025; Wilton, 2020; Özgür, 2019; Kornbec, 2016, Milić, 2013).

On a similar note, the issue of sports language, especially sports terminology has also been discussed in Turkish academic and professional circles from different points of view. Some studies focus on the interpreting studies and the translations carried out in visual media. Bulut (2016) focuses on the politics of translation and the agency of translators in sports interpreting especially in football and basketball fields. Similarly, Dinar (2025) handles the role of interpreting and the interpreters in football context. Erkanan Çakır (2020) on the other hand, examines the role of translation in handling the challenges of multiculturalism in an athlete's life. There are also studies examining the translation of different sports texts. Özgür (2018) discusses the translations of the sports terminology utilized in the newspapers titled *Stad* and *Fanatik* in his book. He also touches upon the Turkish equivalents of the sports terminology proposed by Türk Dil Kurumu and the translation techniques in these terminology translations, discussing whether these equivalents have acquired common usages in the society. In line with this study, Tözluyurt also analyzes the football terminology in the Turkish dictionary in order to dissect the terms to determine the types of their morphological formation. Özgür and Topaloğlu (2023) carry out a phonetic and formal analysis on sports terms transferred to Turkish from French. In a broader study, Ünsal (2019) reviews the sports jargon and its translation through different aspects from text types to structural formation, cultural context and semantic evaluation. Erdoğan (2008) attempts to create a comprehensive terminology in his master's thesis providing terms related to different fields of sports. However, the study does not include any comparison between the source terms and the target terms in terms of their similarities and divergences.

The review of the existing literature reveals that there is not any research that specifically examines the volleyball terminology or carries out a comparative analysis between Turkish and another language focusing on the meaning of the terms. Likewise, the literature lacks studies addressing how the similarities and divergences of meaning in such terminology may influence the audience's game perception. Given that terminology constitutes a key component in the construction of meaning within sports discourse, differences in linguistic expressions bears the potential to affect how audiences mentally perceive and emotionally engage with the game. In this regard, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the semantic and cultural dimensions of volleyball terminology, attempting to provide an understanding of how differences and divergences in terminology contribute to the perception, interpretation, and communication of the sport in Turkish and English languages.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study draws on the functional equivalence notion of Eugene Nida (2001), stemming from his studies on Bible translation and formal/dynamic equivalence theory (1964). His aim is to make the sacred texts smoothly natural, understandable and comprehensible by the target readers from different linguistic and cultural context. He attempts to shift the focus from literal equivalence to communicative effectivity, which he explains as “reproducing in the receptor language the closest



natural equivalent of the source-language message” (Nida, 1964, p. 166). He observes there are two edges of the translation act, namely formal equivalence at one end, and dynamic equivalence at the other end. Formal equivalence refers to the translation approach that emphasizes the preservation of form and content of the source text. It prioritizes the source text and culture, often resulting in foreign-sounding translations. Nida expresses that formal equivalence translation reproduces the foreign elements through literal rendering rather than making adjustments in order to enable the reader “to perceive something of the way in which the original document employed local cultural elements to convey meanings” (Nida, 1964, p. 165). However, he does not favor this approach in translation as he believes that such perception is not always possible and bears the risk of reducing intelligibility and readability of the translated text due to the unfamiliarity of the literally transferred concepts. This approach may only be appropriate to apply in texts where stylistic or structural elements is of utmost importance though it still sacrifices meaning for the sake of form. Dynamic equivalence, on the other hand, is an attempt at managing natural expressions which is aimed to enable the reader to comprehend the text within the limits of their own cultural contexts. It allows for adaptation wherever possible for better comprehensibility rather than sticking to literal correspondence. Mao and Wang (2024), summarizes the key aspects in Nida’s dynamic equivalence as “lexical equivalence, syntactic equivalence, textual equivalence, and stylistic equivalence” all of which has to be understood and managed properly by the translators “to capture the essence of the source text” (p. 185). Thus, it is safe to assert that it does not fully reject the importance of formal equivalence but builds upon it by integrating new layers of textual elements.

Later in his academic life, Nida modifies his approach and builds upon the concept of dynamic equivalence by introducing the term functional equivalence, which highlights “the practical, communicative purpose of translation, rather than a rigid adherence to formal correspondences between the source and target texts, (...) incorporating sociocultural context and social semiotics to the translation studies (Mao and Wang, 2024, p. 186) the sociocultural context. In brief, while emphasizing the importance of naturality in translation, functional equivalence theory also underscores interrelation between translation and communication and asserts that a translated text should serve the same communicative function in the target language as the source text does in its own context. Li asserts that in order to achieve natural translation in a target culture, the main task of the translator is “to maximize the most appropriate and natural equivalence of language of the translated text and the language of the original text, so that the language can conform to the language conventions of the target language and be expressed smoothly” (Li, 2021, p. 10). However, a text consists of intertwined layers of meaning, thus it can be argued that many different aspects may affect the naturalness of translation. As the first step to overcome the possible challenges, Nida (1964) proposes “two principal areas of adaptation, namely, grammar and lexicon” to achieve natural translation (p. 167) In this approach, Nida proposes three levels of lexicon that should be taken into consideration, which can be listed as 1) the terms with counterparts in the target language, 2) the terms with culturally different but functionally similar counterparts that have nuances in usage or meaning in the target language and culture, 3) and lastly, the terms that doesn’t have a counterpart in the target language and culture. He believes that the first set of lexicons does not pose a translation challenge as they readily have parallels. The second set may cause complications in reader perception and forces translators to choose between fidelity to the formal identity of the source culture or the equivalent function for the reader understanding. The third set, on the other hand, proposes a situation in which it is almost impossible “to eliminate all traces of the foreign setting” (Nida, 1964, p. 167). This study draws on the lexicon part his approach as the main focus here is on the translation of sports terminology in the field of volleyball. In the field of terminology translation and our study focusing on sports terminology, it can be assumed that the first set of lexicon refers to the terms that have counterparts with the exact same meanings. The second category includes sports terms that refer to the same thing, but the meanings have nuances and/or may diverge in some aspects among different cultures. The third category refers to terms that do not have counterparts in different languages and cultures, which is observed relatively scarce, though not entirely absent.

Stating that “of course, there are varying degrees of such dynamic-equivalence translations,” Nida (1964/2000) accepts the possibility that there is not a final term or text that achieves natural and



functional translation suitable to all readers of the target language (p. 129). He further underlines the importance of the audience reception and perception considering “the extent to which prospective audiences differ both in decoding ability and in potential interest” (Nida, 1964/2000, p. 128). Dynamic equivalence requires the same response from the audience, but rejects the foreignness in texts. Functional equivalence, on the other hand, focuses on the communicative aspect of a text to elicit the same response from the target audience rather than being fixated on eliminating the foreign elements. In situations where the audience is familiar with the foreign, then the foreign term might serve as the functional equivalent. This perspective becomes particularly relevant in sports terminology, given the international nature of sports discourse and the role of English as a communication tool in the global arena. The widespread use of English terminology has led to a shared vocabulary across linguistic and cultural boundaries, meaning that audiences in different countries may already recognize and understand many foreign sports terms. In such cases, retaining these terms in translation can enhance clarity and authenticity, avoiding unnecessary domestication that might distort the meaning or disrupt the audience comprehension. Therefore, functional equivalence in sports translation entails a sensitive balance between accessibility and authenticity, allowing translators to preserve communicative effectiveness while maintaining the natural globalized character of sports language.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative and comparative approach to analyze the translation of volleyball terminology between English and Turkish. The data set consists of volleyball terms that either have direct Turkish equivalents but have semantic nuances compared to their English counterparts, and the terms that lack one-to-one correspondence and directly borrows the foreign term. The borrowed terms are integrated into the study to show that when a concept is directly taken from its English equivalent, it does not have any nuances and does not alter the game perception creating a global consensus. Terms that showed no semantic variation between the two languages were excluded from the analysis to achieve a focused scope. It should also be mentioned that some of the borrowed terms in Turkish are of French origin, which are mentioned in the tables. Their deviations in meaning from the English terminology, and thus the global consensus, are also discussed in the analysis. As many of these terms are borrowed from English language but they are not originally utilized as volleyball terms in French, they are accepted as local adaptations into the Turkish volleyball terminology.

For clarity in analysis, the selected terms are categorized according to their role in the field of volleyball. The study primarily concentrates on two strategies, which are borrowing and adaptation as these represent contrasting poles within Nida’s spectrum of translation equivalence. As Nida (1964) explains, “between the two poles of translating (i.e. between strict formal equivalence and complete dynamic equivalence) there are a number of intervening grades, representing various acceptable standards” (p. 160). In line with this view, borrowing and adaptation strategies are considered to represent the two extremes.

In this context, borrowing refers to the use of terms that are directly transferred from English into Turkish without modification such as *ace* and *libero*, reflecting the globalized nature of sports and the role of English as the common language in volleyball discourse. Adaptation, on the other hand, refers to the use of local or culturally more familiar equivalents that may diverge from the original meaning yet resonate more naturally with Turkish audiences such as using the Turkish equivalent *kurşun pas* for the English term *quick set*. By comparing these two strategies, the study aims to investigate how semantic variations, linguistic familiarity, and the use of locally accepted Turkish equivalents may influence the game perception of the audience.



## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The terms and their Turkish equivalents selected and categorized to be analyzed within the scope of this study is as follows:

### *Player positions*

This category consists of the five main positions designated to players in volleyball.

**Table 1. Terms for player positions in volleyball**

English term	Turkish Term	Translation Strategy
Setter	Pasör	Borrowing (French origin)
Opposite hitter	Pasör çaprazı	Adaptation
Outside hitter	Smaçör	Borrowing (French origin) as a word, adaptation as a term
Middle blocker	Orta oyuncu	Adaptation
Libero	Libero	Borrowing

The study begins the analysis with the Turkish and English terms for the player positions as it is believed to be the main category that directly affects the game perception for the audience. The term *setter* in English refers to the act of game setting. It implies a role that orchestrates the offensive plays, emphasizing the player's role and responsibility as the brain of the team. In Turkish, the equivalent *pasör* is a word derived from French language and French volleyball terminology. (derived from *pas*, meaning *pass* in Turkish). Compared to the English term, the Turkish and French terms shift the focus toward the act of passing the ball, potentially affecting the audience's perception regarding the setter's strategic importance. Interestingly, many languages like Portuguese (*passar a bola para o levantador*), Italian (*passaggio al palleggiatore*) and English (*passing the ball to the setter*) utilize the act of passing to describe the action carried out by outside hitters who receive the ball served by the opponent and *pass* it to the setter. Thus, this does not only affect the game perception, it may also cause confusions in global communication for the Turkish and the French audience.

Another example is the *opposite hitter*, whose Turkish equivalent is *pasör çaprazı*. Their title comes from being positioned opposite the setter on the court. The *hitter* part, on the other hand, emphasizes the opposite hitter's role as the main attacker of the team. In the Turkish equivalent of the term, *pasör çaprazı* literally means *setter's diagonal*, focusing more on the player's position in relation to the setter rather than the offensive nature of the role. This expression might lead to different perceptions of the player's function for the Turkish audience, potentially downplaying the attacking role in favor of positioning.

*Outside hitter* in English specifies both the position and the role as they generally play from the outer side of the net compared to the middle parts of the court, and their role is to hit the ball. It clearly defines a strategic placement on the court. In Turkish, the term *smaçör* is derived from *smaç* (meaning *hit* or *spike*), emphasizing the act of attacking rather than the player's positional placement. The term is borrowed from the French language as a word, but it can be accepted as an adaptation in Turkish volleyball terminology because the current French volleyball terminology does not use this term to refer to *outside hitter*. The accepted term is *attaquant* in French. Thus, it can be asserted that the Turkish volleyball discourse borrows the term *smaçör* from French but adapts it as a volleyball term in Turkish language.<sup>2</sup> The Turkish term *smaçör* highlights the attacking function over court positioning. Interestingly, whereas the spiking role of *smaçör* is emphasized in the term, the Turkish term for *opposite hitter* does not indicate the scoring role of the player, who is actually the main scorer in volleyball. It is possible to assume that these differences in naming might impact how Turkish audiences and players conceptualize the roles.

<sup>2</sup> In French, the word *smacheur* generally refers to “a player, usually in racket sports like tennis or badminton“ in a way that is not related to volleyball terminology (La Langue Française, n.d.)



In the case of the *middle blocker*, the English term explicitly states the player's role in block defense. It also specifies the central positioning of the player in front of the net. In its Turkish equivalent, the term *orta oyuncu* translates to *middle player*, instead of *middle blocker*, so it might be argued that it is a broader term that does not highlight the blocking responsibility for the Turkish audience. While still comprehended in context, the Turkish term might present a more general role, downplaying the emphasis on blocking as the primary function for the new audiences in the Turkish context.

Libero, as the last example of this category, is a relatively recent addition to volleyball. It has been officially in use since 1998. As the Turkish term is a direct borrowing from the English term, it does not carry any divergences or nuances in the meaning.

### ***Tactical terms***

The second category consists of the tactical terms such as defense moves, setting types, and error types.

**Table 2. Tactical terms in volleyball**

English term	Turkish Term	Translation Strategy
Quick set	Kurşun pas	Adaptation
Reception	Manşet	Adaptation
Dig	Manşet	Adaptation
Recovery	Dublaj	Borrowing (French origin) as a word, adaptation as a term
Foot fault	Üç metre çizgisi ihlali	Adaptation
Foot fault	Servis çizgisi ihlali	
Rally	Ralli	Naturalized borrowing
Pancake	Pankek	Naturalized borrowing
Ace	Ace	Borrowing

The Turkish equivalent of *quick set* is *kurşun pas* in Turkish. It is a volleyball term used to describe a fast, precise set delivered to a middle blocker in a way that allows for a quick attack, typically close to the net. The emphasis here is on speed and timing. In Turkish, this term is adapted as *kurşun pas*, where *kurşun* (meaning *bullet*) serves as a metaphor to emphasize the speed and precision of the pass, similar to how a bullet moves quickly and directly. This adaptation follows the principle of functional equivalence, meaning the term aims to evoke the same meaning and feeling for Turkish speakers as *quick set* does in English. The function is still the same, which is to describe a fast, accurate set designed for a rapid offensive play.

In English, the term *dig* refers to a defensive move, which is often a low, quick reaction to an attack, emphasizing an emergency save. *Reception* in the English context, on the other hand, is a more controlled action aimed at handling the opponent's serve, focusing on positioning and precision.

In the Turkish volleyball context, both terms are referred to as *manşet*, which refers to a pass that is made by two forearms. During gameplay, it is true that dig and reception are generally carried out through *manşet*, but not always. There are other defense moves as well, which are all included in the term *dig*, but not in *manşet*. Thus, they are generally referred to as *making defense* in Turkish, rather than utilizing another specific term for the act. This generalization might reduce the distinction between defensive reflex actions and serve reception in the mental imagery of the audience. They are similar movements by the defense players which aim to pass the ball to the setter, however, they normally require different sets of skills, which may be ignored in the game perception, as it doesn't have a different term in the Turkish language.



In volleyball, *recovery* refers to a player quickly managing to rise the ball after a block attempt by the opponent. The Turkish term *dublaj* is a borrowed word whose origin is French, that doesn't translate directly to *recovery* but is used in a way that fits the context of volleyball. It should be mentioned that the Turkish term is not directly borrowed from French. The word is borrowed from French, but the French term for this act is *couverture*. Thus, even though it is a word borrowed from the French language, it may be deemed as a locally accepted adaptation as it gains its terminological meaning in Turkish. This term is an example of functional equivalence. The term doesn't preserve the exact meaning of the English equivalent but tries to convey the same essential concept, quickly dubbing over an action. The use of *dublaj* relies on cultural and linguistic adaptation, creating a parallel concept in the Turkish volleyball community that has functional similarity to *recovery* for the Turkish audience.

Another example is *foot fault*, which has two similar equivalents in Turkish: *Üç metre çizgisi ihlali* or *servis çizgisi ihlali* based on the type of the error. In English, the term *foot fault* is used to describe any violation where a player's foot crosses the serving line during a serve, or the three meter line during an attack. This term does not specify which line was violated, it simply refers to the act of crossing the line. In contrast, Turkish terms elaborate on which specific line has been violated when describing a foot fault. Terms like *üç metre çizgisi ihlali* (meaning *violation of the three meter line*) or *servis çizgisi ihlali* (meaning *violation of the service line*) are used to precisely describe the type of violation. By specifying which line is violated, Turkish terminology provides greater clarity for both players and spectators. The Turkish terminology utilizes functional equivalence strategy to create a more precise understanding of the violation.

*Rally*, as another example of this category, refers to the continuous play between the serve and the point-winning action. The Turkish term is a naturalized borrowing from the English term. Therefore, it does not carry any divergences or nuances in meaning.

The English term *pancake* is used to describe a defensive saving technique performed by sliding the hand flat on the floor to keep the ball up. As the Turkish term is borrowed from the English *pancake*, it maintains the same meaning without semantic deviation.

Lastly, the English term *ace* denotes a serve that results directly in a point without the receiving team touching or controlling the ball. The Turkish usage of *ace* is likewise a borrowing from English, bearing no difference or nuance in its sense as well. These directly borrowed examples are believed to enable semantic consistency for the Turkish audience within the global discourse.

### **Serve types**

Third category includes different types of serves and the explanations of the viewpoints in their naming.

**Table 3. Terms for serve types in volleyball**

English term	Turkish Term	Translation Strategy
Float serve	Taktik servis	Adaptation
Jump serve	Smaç servis	Adaptation

Serve types is another category in which the Turkish and English terms have different focus points, differences in functional equivalence. There are two main serve types in volleyball, which are referred as *float serve* and *jump serve* in English. The term *float serve* emphasizes the type of ball movement during the serve. The focus is on the ball's trajectory. It describes how it floats unpredictably, maybe with almost no spin. The term highlights the action that makes this serve difficult to pass by reception because the ball doesn't follow a typical spinning curve, making it harder for receivers to judge its path. The term *float* refers not to the physical act of the player, but to the key feature of the ball's movement. Its Turkish equivalent is *taktik servis*, which means a "*strategic* or *tactical serve*. This term emphasizes the purpose or strategy behind the serve such as targeting a weak spot in the opponent's formation or serving with a certain goal in mind. Unlike the English terms *float*



or *jump* which focus on the physical aspects of the act, *taktik servis* refers to the intention and approach behind the serve, without specifying body movements or how the ball goes. In Turkish, attention is given to the serve's tactical aim.

A *jump serve* in English focuses on the physical action of the player. It refers to a serve where the player jumps to hit the ball, adding power and momentum to the serve. The term highlights the player's body movement, how they launch themselves into the air and spike the ball to create a fast and aggressive serve. In the English term, the player's body movement is presented as the central feature of the serve. *Smaç servis* in Turkish focuses on the hitting type. It refers to a serve where the ball is hit with a strong overhead motion, similar to a *smaç*, which means *spike*. The term places attention on the action of hitting the ball with force and direction, as opposed to focusing on the movement or jump of the player. All these differences may cause differences in the game perception and gameplay expectations of the Turkish-speaking spectators. Lastly, it should also be pointed out that a *jump serve* may inherently carry tactical intention, which tends to be overlooked or even misinterpreted in the opposite sense in the Turkish terminology.

### Attack types

Fourth category consists of attack types and the explanations of the viewpoints in their naming.

**Table 4. Terms for attack types in volleyball**

English term	Turkish Term	Translation Strategy
Spike/Hit	Smaç	Borrowing (French origin) as a word, adaptation as a term
Power hit	Smaç basmak	Borrowing (French origin) as a word, adaptation as a term
Dump	Plase bırakmak	Borrowing (French origin)
Power tip	Sert plase	Adaptation

In the Turkish volleyball discourse, there are generally two terms utilized to refer to the act of attacking, which are *smaç basmak* and *plase bırakmak* whereas the English discourse utilizes four general terms, which are *hitting*, *power hitting*, *power tipping*, and *dumping*. The Turkish term *smaç* focuses on the physical strength involved in hitting the ball with force. It refers to a *spike*, emphasizing the powerful, aggressive nature of the action. The phrase *smaç basmak* (or *smaç vurmak*) essentially describes a strong, direct hit on the ball, with a focus on the force used to execute the attack.

*Dumping* is a technique where generally the setter (or rarely another player) uses a quick, unexpected attack to drop the ball over the net, preferably when the opposing blockers are out of position. The focus here is on deception and control, rather than power. The term emphasizes the subtlety, relying on quick thinking and timing rather than physical strength.

*Power tipping*, on the other hand, is generally carried out by offense players, which refers to a hit less aggressive than a *spike*. It refers to a softer version of *power hitting*, where the player taps the ball with some force but not as much as in a spike. It is a hybrid action that involves a controlled, strategic tap aimed at finding gaps in the opponent's defense. The emphasis here is on precision combined with power, which is not as forceful as a spike but still carries a certain level of strength.

In Turkish *sert plase* refers to a softer, controlled action where the player doesn't hit the ball with full force but instead gently taps or drops it over the net and/or over the block players. This action is often used strategically to deceive the opponent, particularly when they expect a powerful spike. It can be carried out by the setter, or by the offense players. The term does not specify the player carrying out the act as in the English terms.



The Turkish terms focus on strength. *Smaç* emphasizes power while *plase* focuses on softness and finesse. This allows for a distinction based on the strength in the action. The English terms, on the other hand, specify whether the act is carried out by the setter or by the offense players. It can be deduced that the Turkish terminology tends to group the actions into broader categories based on strength. Turkish terms focus more on the intensity of the hit: one being a full-force attack and the other involving a controlled, light touch. There's less differentiation based on technique or strategy. In contrast, English terminology creates more subcategories to describe different hitting actions with varying levels of strength and intent, adding layers of strategy. It should also be mentioned that Turkish commentators often borrow the term *power tipping* or use the mixed term *power smaçör* in order to elaborate the hitting type. It is safe to say that in order to manage functional equivalence, the Turkish discourse utilizes borrowing or mixed translation strategies to create a better game perception for the Turkish audience.

To sum up, it is possible to assert that while the meanings of the Turkish terms focus on the intensity and the physical power of an action, the English terms are categorized based on the technique, strategic objectives and the player carrying out the action. The *smaç-plase* duality in Turkish creates a range between powerful-soft. In English, on the other hand, the subcategories like *hitting*, *power hitting*, *tipping*, *dumping* has intention-based layers for the act of scoring. This difference in terminological meanings in two language. It should also be mentioned that though the term *plase* is borrowed from French volleyball terminology, it is also adapted to the power-based Turkish understanding as the French language does not utilize power ranges in the term like *sert plase*. Thus, unrelated to the origin language, the Turkish terminology has its focus on the power of the attack.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study has examined the Turkish and English volleyball terms in the light of functional equivalence theory by Nida. It has revealed that achieving an equivalent effect in sports terminology in different languages is a complex and multifaceted task. While formal and dynamic equivalence aim to balance linguistic accuracy and communicative impact, it can be asserted that elimination of the foreign elements to use local terms does not always guarantee an equivalent response from the audience. In some cases, adaptation may alter the perception of the game and shift the audience's point of view. Certain volleyball terms, though replaced with domestic equivalents, lose part of their functional role, resulting in a change in how roles and actions are understood within the sport.

The way volleyball is discussed in media, through commentary or social media posts, can shape the audience's perception of the game and players. Differences in terminology can affect how accessible or appealing the game is to new fans or non-experts. However, not eliminating the foreign and only utilizing the English terms may also cause problems. A successful translation of commentary, informed by Nida's functional equivalence, would ensure that fans of both languages feel equally included, fostering greater audience participation and emotional investment in the game. If certain terms are too specialized, too foreign, and not adequately explained, it could negatively affect the game perception of the spectators. Functional equivalence is not just about translating words. It also ensures that the audience's understanding is aligned all around the world.

As can be seen in the various examples presented in the findings and discussion section, the differences demonstrate how functional equivalence varies in terms of Turkish and English volleyball terminology. In Turkish, some of the terms might feel more descriptive and explanatory, with some added context in some cases. The Turkish audience might thus receive a richer or alternative understanding of what those roles entail. The reverse may also occur, where the local terms lead to a narrowing rather than an enrichment of meaning. When *setter* becomes *pasör* for example, it could fail to invoke an image of responsibility, leadership, or specific strategies. While some terms are more descriptive of roles and responsibilities in English, Turkish terminology sometimes highlights different aspects, which can influence audience understanding, and even player identity within the game. In the literature, Ummatkulova (2019) demonstrates through a survey study that the English language



proficiency “contributes to a better perception of sports terminology of English origin” (p. 596). Our study, as it is not based on a survey study, does not assert a better or worse perception, but argues that differences in terminological meanings may cause different perceptions. As seen in the findings and discussion section, the Turkish terminology sometimes diverges from the English terminology in meaning and focus. As English is commonly utilized as a mediator language in social media and international broadcasting, it is safe to assume that utilizing the English terminology brings the local audience closer to the global game perception. Ünsal (2019) on the other hand, asserts that functional translation plays an important role in both providing equivalent meaning in the target culture and enhancing the effects of the original texts or terms in the target culture. Our study offers another perspective at this point. Though Nida offers that dynamic equivalence creates a better understanding for the target reader, the volleyball audience are today engaged with people from many different countries in the global arena. Thus, the utilization of the local terms may not always provide the best understanding for the audience in the cases they are more familiar with the global terminology. When there are nuances in the meanings, it is even possible to cause confusions as explained in the example of *passing the ball* and *pasör*, which belong to different positions but seems related in Turkish. Thus, it is possible to put forward that functional equivalence may sometimes be achieved by retaining the global terminology to maintain clarity and consistency across languages.

Some terms in volleyball are directly borrowed due to global volleyball usage, ensuring functional equivalence across languages. Some other terms are adapted, potentially leading to different interpretations of gameplay mechanics and player responsibilities. It is observed within the scope of this study that functional equivalence theory can enlighten the assessment whether these adaptations convey the same role, function, and significance in Turkish language. Thus, it is possible to say that it might be utilized in sports terminology to help maintain the integrity of the game across different linguistic and cultural contexts, enriching the overall experience for all involved. This study may pave the way to further research in the fields of reception or new media studies.

**Ethical Statement:** Ethics committee approval was not required for this study.

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