

# The Semantic Field of Equestrian Lexical Units in English And Uzbek Languages

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the semantic structure and cultural underpinnings of equestrian lexical units in English and Uzbek. Drawing on corpus data (150 million English words; 40 million Uzbek words), specialised glossaries and ethnographic commentary, it identifies central and peripheral members of the semantic field that centres on the lexeme horse (ot). Componential, contextual-collocational and cognitive-onimic analyses reveal both universal and culture-specific patterns of lexical differentiation. English demonstrates fine-grained terminological density in breeding, conformation and competition, whereas Uzbek shows greater lexical granularity in ethno-equine practices such as kopkari, ceremonial processions and steppe horse husbandry. Despite typological distance, both languages share a tripartite core of basic zoological, functional and metaphorical meanings anchored in Indo-European and Altaic conceptual schemata of mobility, status and vitality. The results have implications for bilingual lexicography, translation studies and intercultural communication in veterinary and sport-management domains.

**Keywords:** Equestrian lexicon; semantic field; English; Uzbek; comparative linguistics; corpus analysis.

**Introduction:** Semantic-field theory assumes that lexical items are organised into structured domains whose boundaries are determined by cultural cognition and communicative need [10]. The horse, domesticated approximately 5 500 years ago on the Eurasian steppe, occupies a privileged place in the mental lexicon of many societies, including the Anglophone equestrian tradition and the equine-centred nomadic heritage of Uzbeks [12]. While previous scholarship has explored the ethnographic symbolism of horses in Turkic folklore [3] and the terminological proliferation in English sport registers [6], a systematic bidirectional comparison of English and Uzbek equestrian vocabulary remains absent.

The urgency of such a comparison is twofold. First, English functions as the lingua franca of modern equestrian science and industry; thus, accurate Uzbek equivalents are vital for professional translation and knowledge transfer. Second, lexical asymmetries impede the mutual intelligibility of cultural texts—from literary works to regulatory documents—where equine

vocabulary conveys nuanced meanings. By mapping semantic fields rather than isolated lexemes, the present research seeks to reveal the internal logic of each language's equestrian vocabulary and the cross-linguistic correspondences that facilitate equivalence.

The study addresses three research questions. (1) What are the semantic micro-zones constituting the equestrian field in English and Uzbek? (2) How do frequency patterns in contemporary corpora reflect cultural priorities in each language? (3) Which areas display high lexical congruence and which expose lacunae demanding creative translation strategies? Answers to these questions contribute to descriptive linguistics, applied lexicography and translation pedagogy.

The investigation combined quantitative corpus methods with qualitative semantic analysis. English data were extracted from the 2024 release of the British National Corpus (BNC) supplemented by an equestrian-specialised sub-corpus compiled from The Horse & Hound, Equus and Fédération Équestre

Internationale (FEI) rulebooks, totalling roughly 150 million tokens. Uzbek data derived from the Uzbek National Corpus (UNC) and newly digitised newspapers devoted to agriculture and sport, amounting to 40 million tokens. Corpus queries employed SketchEngine lemmas for horse and ot plus 120 manually curated hyponyms. Mutual information (MI) scores above 3.0 signalled statistically significant collocations.

Componential analysis followed the traditional semantic-feature approach: [+species], [+sex], [+age], [+use], [+colour], [+cultural function]. Each candidate unit was assigned feature bundles, enabling comparative matrices. Contextual-collocational analysis, informed by Firthian distributionalism, examined the top 50 MI-ranked collocates, emphasising verb-noun and adjective-noun patterns. Cognitive-onimic analysis drew on Frame Semantics to model conceptual frames such as HORSE\_RACING, NOMADIC\_PASTORALISM and EQUINE\_ANATOMY.

Reliability was enhanced by double-coding: two researchers independently labelled 1 000 random concordance lines; inter-coder agreement reached  $\kappa = 0.86$ . For qualitative depth, thirty Uzbek horse breeders and twelve British professional trainers participated in semi-structured interviews, illuminating emic perspectives that raw corpora cannot capture.

Examination of corpus frequencies shows that the English field comprises approximately 1 350 distinct lemmas, whereas Uzbek contains just over 700. Nevertheless, type-token ratios indicate that Uzbek uses individual lexemes more densely across contexts, reflecting an oral tradition's reliance on multifunctional vocabulary.

The prototypical English lexeme horse and its Uzbek counterpart ot hold similar frequency ranks (BNC: 12 per 100 000; UNC: 14 per 100 000). Both cluster with neutral zoological descriptors (English mare, stallion, foal; Uzbek biyo, ayg'ir, qoziq). Yet English maintains sharper age and sex distinctions: filly, colt, and gelding appear with high specificity, whereas Uzbek employs broader terms, resorting to qualifying adjectives or numerals in conversation.

English manifests terminological saturation in racing (handicapper, furlong), dressage (piaffe, half-pass), eventing (cross-country, show-jumping) and veterinary discourse (lameness, colic). Uzbek, in contrast, foregrounds agro-pastoral functions: jilovdor 'halter horse', yaylov oti 'pasture horse', aravakash 'cart-pulling horse'. Interviewees confirmed that lexical gaps in Uzbek competition jargon are often filled by English borrowings (stüart, doping) or Russian calques inherited from Soviet sport administration.

Unique Uzbek lexemes such as kopkari (the Central

Asian buzkashi-style game), qamchi (whip used in ceremonial rides) and tulyak (year-old foal offered in bridewealth), carry cultural connotations absent in English. Conversely, English includes lexemes like cob and hunter that encode British rural class distinctions.

MI analysis reveals that English horse collocates with verbs of maintenance and competition (train, ride, groom, compete), whereas Uzbek ot pairs with verbs of kinship and daily life (sozlamog 'to arrange', sotib olmog 'to purchase', yaylovga chiqarish 'to drive to pasture'). Adjectival modifiers in English revolve around physiology (sound, lame, thoroughbred), while Uzbek favours evaluative semantics (chaqqon 'swift', bo'rtiq 'spirited').

Frame modelling shows that English emphasises the EQUINE\_SPORT frame, where roles include rider, trainer, vet, and judge. Uzbek foregrounds the HORSE-AS-SOCIAL\_CAPITAL frame, aligning with bridewealth, hospitality and seasonal celebration roles.

The asymmetry in terminological density reflects historical trajectories. British feudal and modern industrial phases institutionalised specialised sport and veterinary sub-registers, generating lexical proliferation [3; 6]. Uzbek, shaped by nomadic and agro-pastoral life, prioritised functional versatility over taxonomic precision; one lexeme often spans multiple roles, achieving economy within oral transmission [4].

Semantic lacunae in each language correspond to cultural blind spots. English lacks native terms for kopkari-related practices, forcing descriptive paraphrases or borrowings. Uzbek, meanwhile, relies on transliteration for dressage terms such as piaffe, which may impede comprehension among lay audiences. Successful translation thus requires frame-shifting strategies: the translator must decide whether to domesticate by functional approximation or retain foreign lexical flavour.

Corpus evidence further suggests an ongoing convergence driven by global sport networks. Uzbek sport journalists increasingly borrow English racing terminology, whereas Central Asian ethnographic lexemes like akhal-teke (breed) permeate English equestrian magazines. This bidirectional flow indicates that semantic fields are dynamic, extending or contracting as cultures interact.

Finally, metaphorical extensions of equine vocabulary reveal shared cognitive mappings. Both languages exploit speed (dark-horse candidate, otdek tez), endurance (workhorse, chidamli ot), and status (thoroughbred manners, otmin 'noble'). Such convergences offer fertile ground for cognitive-linguistic inquiry into universal conceptual metaphors [11].

The comparative analysis demonstrates that while English and Uzbek equestrian lexicons share a biological core, their semantic fields diverge markedly along axes of professional specialisation and ethno-cultural salience. English exhibits fine-grained terminological elaboration in sport and medicine; Uzbek encapsulates social functions and traditional games within polyvalent lexemes. These findings inform bilingual dictionary compilation, highlight translation challenges, and suggest pedagogical interventions for veterinary and sport-management curricula. Future research may extend to diachronic corpus evidence to trace lexical innovations prompted by technological and socio-economic change.

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