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## ENGLISH LINGUISTIC BORROWINGS AND THEIR NATIVE EQUIVALENTS IN THE POLISH POLE SPORT COMMUNITY

Pole sport is gaining popularity and is contributing to the emerging subfield of sport linguistics. This study examines the language of the Polish pole sport community, focusing on the frequency of English lexical borrowings compared to native Polish equivalents. Results show that 57.3% of respondents recognize and use English terms, while 55.5% use Polish equivalents, indicating synonymous rather than preferential use. Additionally, the community demonstrates linguistic creativity by coining multiple alternative terms. These findings highlight a lack of linguistic unification within the community, likely due to the recency of the phenomenon.

Keywords: linguistic contact, Polish-English language contacts, pole sport, lexical borrowings, native equivalents, contrastive linguistics

### 1. Introduction: The uncharted waters of pole sport linguistics

The importance of sports in the cultural context is undeniable; sports have shaped the social and political sphere since the earliest reports. Tracing back to antiquity, social position could be strongly determined by the participation in championships such as the Olympic Games (Wyskok and Bronikowska 2019). Sport also plays a huge role in academia, and especially within the field of linguistics. For example, Anwar and Anwar (2021) studied the native and non-native sports news discourse using corpus-based methodology; Pavliuk et al. (2022) researched sports terminology from a purely grammatical perspective, emphasizing the quantitative differences between structural and derivational parameters; Lazarevic et al. (2023) considered the possibilities of combining football terminology and NLP<sup>1</sup> methods using the OntoLex semi-automatized

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<sup>1</sup> Natural Language Processing

tool to generate lists of terms and football expressions specifically used in the Serbian language; Syaputri et al. (2024) focused on genderlect differences and politeness strategies in sport commentaries, providing a pragmatic-driven approach. Despite the immense versatility, there are still unfilled gaps in the sports language.

One of these gaps is the language of pole sport, which remains firmly within the uncharted waters of sport linguistics. This is particularly unfortunate since pole sport, or more broadly speaking, pole dance,<sup>2</sup> is currently experiencing an incredible surge in popularity. Because of such a dynamic development, it can be assumed that the language used by its community undergoes a number of processes.

According to Google Trends (n.d.), it can be observed that the worldwide number of searches of the term “pole dance” is quite high, as visible in Figure 2 (and most definitely higher than “pole sports”), and it has been relatively stable over the past five years. “Pole sports”, presented in Figure 1, on the other hand, has been growing in popularity since the turn of 2022 and 2023, most likely due to the increasing intensity of the debate on whether pole sports should be part of the Olympic games. The discussion, however, is much older than 2022, in fact dating back to 2017, when GAISF (Global Association of International Sports Federations) gave IPSF (International Pole Sports Federation) an “observer status”, officially labelling and validating it as an actual sport discipline (O’Neill 2017).

The popularity is not incidental, with pop-culture having a definite impact in the context of pole dancing. In 2017, an independent documentary movie “Pole Dance: Inside the World of Art as Fitness” was released while “Hustlers”, directed by Lorene Scafaria and starring Jennifer Lopez, became such a hit in 2019 that it grossed a total of over 150 million dollars worldwide (Box Office Mojo, n.d.). As a reference to her film performance, Lopez performed on

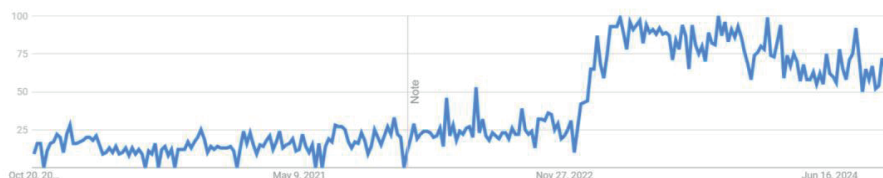


Fig. 1. Popularity of the term *pole sports* worldwide between 2019-2024.

<sup>2</sup> The two terms indicate different variants of the phenomenon. While *pole dance* is a broader term that encompasses *pole fitness*, *exotic pole dance*, *artistic pole*, and *pole sports*, *pole sports* is dedicated exclusively to athletic performances on a vertical pole.

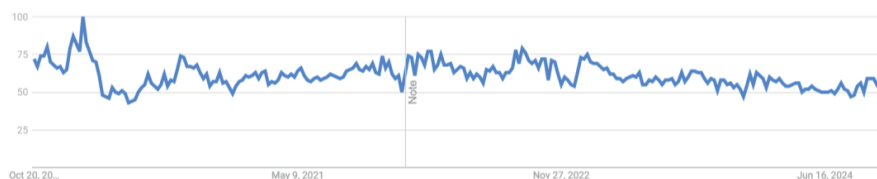


Fig.2. Popularity of the term *pole dance* worldwide between 2019-2024

a vertical pole during her Pepsi Super Bowl Halftime Show in 2020, attracting even more attention to the world of pole dance. In 2021, Netflix decided to tackle the topic by publishing a documentary movie called “Strip Down, Rise Up”, where the director Michele Ohayon provided her audience with stories of women who had taken up pole dancing as a form of empowerment in multiple dimensions, ranging from strength building and searching for a fun form of exercising to healing sexual trauma and improving one’s self-confidence. Pole dance has also been increasingly popular in the music industry and is frequently to be seen in music videos, in club-like, sensual dimensions (e.g. Rihanna’s “Pour It Up” from 2013, Ne-Yo’s “She Knows” from 2014), as well as contributing to the artistic vision (as in, e.g. Clean Bandit’s “Rockabye” from 2016, Komodo’s “I Just Died In Your Arms” from 2018 or FKA Twigs’ “Cellophane” from 2019).

It is not only the entertainment industry that has gradually been giving more recognition to the pole dance industry. When it comes to academia, in 2009, Whitehead and Kurz wrote that “much academic research has focused on the arena of professional stripping and the sex industry in general, very little research has, to date, focused directly upon pole dancing as a mainstream activity marketed to women as an exercise alternative” (2009: 225). Over the past ten to fifteen years, the situation has shifted. A number of MA theses on pole dance have been written by Jagiellonian University students from the medical, management and social communication, and cultural studies departments in the contexts of injuries (cf. Kapusta 2023; Kazibudzka 2023), pole dancers’ and pole dance image (cf. Kachnik 2022; Zielonka 2022), and women’s empowerment (cf. Krystek 2016).

As it can be seen, pole dance is gathering a lot of traction; it is a topic tackled by directors, musicians, as well as experts in scientific fields. Moreover, it is a global phenomenon, especially popular in Europe and the Americas (Google Trends, n.d.). Even though Helmobakk (2023: 18) claims that there is a clear distinction between Eastern and Western Europeans’ engagement in dance in general, and especially pole dance, such a hypothesis can be rejected. She claims that “Poland still lags compared to Western Europe[an] countries such as Germany and Sweden” and this statement is further reinforced by the religiousness of Polish

people. As far as the religious affiliation claim might be true, the number of actively working pole dance studios in countries like Poland, Ukraine, and Russia, as opposed to Germany, Austria, Sweden, and Norway shows a different sentiment. A brief, very simple search in Google Maps shows the following numbers. There are 119 pole dance studios in Poland<sup>3</sup>, 117 in Ukraine<sup>4</sup>, 22 in Belarus<sup>5</sup>, ca. 250 in Russia<sup>6</sup> (Pole4you, n.d.), 121 in Germany<sup>7</sup>, 61 in Austria<sup>8</sup>, 24 in Sweden<sup>9</sup>, and only 17 in Norway<sup>10</sup>. Of course, a margin of error has to be taken into consideration (potential errors in Google Maps, missing or temporarily closed studios that have not been removed from Google Maps). However, these numbers do not suggest any “lag” in the embracement of pole dance in Eastern (or Central) Europe. Because the number of pole dance studios in this area is impressive, it is worth looking further into the language that the community uses.

The language of sport is a broad sphere in the subfield of sociolect/professiolect, or more broadly, LSP (language for specific purposes), research area. It is especially potent in the context of major popular sports such as football (cf. Lipoński 2009; Lewandowski 2012; Zaripov et al. 2017). The language of sport might seem like a niche subfield; however, due to its versatility, the definitions within the area are non-unified. Firstly, what has to be drawn is the distinction between numerous branches of sports language. It matters whether we talk about the “coaching jargon, terminologies of training methodology, the language of sport sciences, sport medicine, and athletes’ and sport fans’ slang” (Lipoński 2009: 19), or according to Taborek’s (2012) division: the language of regulation and science, media, supporters or sportsmen, coaches, and referees. Based on these distinctions, the presented study considers athletes’ slang (Lipoński 2009) and the language of athletes, coaches, and referees (Taborek 2012). It is characterized by high degrees of dynamics observable in large numbers of abbreviations, and it can be classified as a *Fachintern*,<sup>11</sup> due to its high level of specialisation.

Linguistic borrowings, which are the focal element of the presented study, can be defined in a nutshell as “elements [...] taken over from a different language” (Pisarek in Urbańczyk and Kucała 1999 as cited in and translated by

<sup>3</sup> Population of ca. 38.5 mln (Worldometer 2024).

<sup>4</sup> Population of ca. 38 mln (ibid.).

<sup>5</sup> Population of ca. 9 mln (ibid.).

<sup>6</sup> Population of ca. 145 mln (ibid.).

<sup>7</sup> Population of ca. 85 mln (ibid.).

<sup>8</sup> Population of ca. 9 mln (ibid.).

<sup>9</sup> Population of ca. 11 mln (ibid.).

<sup>10</sup> Population of ca. 5.5 mln (ibid.).

<sup>11</sup> *Fachintern* is understood as a subtype of an LSP, a professional jargon used for internal communication, as opposed to *Fachextern*, jargon used for external communication with experts, e.g. media (Roelcke 2005, as cited in Taborek 2012).

Zabawa 2010: 221). Filipović (1988: 348-351) suggests two terms: *primary* and *secondary adaptation* (as cited in Podhajecka 2006: 296). German linguists categorize these as *Fremdwörter* (E: ‘foreign words’), which correspond to partially assimilated lexical borrowings and the process of importation, and *Lehnwörter* (E: ‘borrowings’), which correspond to assimilated lexical borrowings and the process of substitution (Witalisz 2020: 171). Additionally, another category, namely *Gaswörter* (or *foreignisms* or *exoticisms*) can be distinguished. Those are borrowings completely unassimilated, usually marked as quotations (either italicized or found between inverted commas) and they denote special knowledge and/or concepts exclusive for the lender’s culture (Podhajecka 2006). This borrowing division complies with the one provided by Mańczak-Wohlfeld (2006), based on the level of assimilation into assimilated loans (corresponding to *Lehnwörter*), partially assimilated loans (corresponding to *Fremdwörter*), and unassimilated loans/quotes (corresponding to *Gaswörter*).

## 2. Methodology

In order to discover at least some preliminary knowledge on the language of the Polish pole sport community, the following research question has been posed:

RQ1: Is there a significant difference between the frequency of use and recognition of specialist English borrowings and their native equivalents in the Polish pole sport community?

To answer this research questions, a questionnaire was constructed and sent to a large number of recipients to be completed anonymously. The study was conducted using a mixed quantitative-qualitative method, one frequently employed in the field of linguistics as it combines ordinal and descriptive data collection. To analyse the data statistically and find significant markers, the Mann–Whitney *U*-test (or Wilcoxon rank-sum test) was implemented using the *R* software. The test was chosen on the basis of its appropriateness for ordinal sequence type data sets (a Likert scale in this case), like the one presented.

The participants were asked to fill out a three-part online survey that consisted of demographic information, a Likert scale survey, and an open question. The links to the questionnaire were posted on four Facebook groups: *Pole Dance POLSKA*, *O Pole Dance w Polsce*, *Trenuję w Cocoonie*, and *Chodź na POLE dance TEAM*. The target groups were chosen based on their popularity (ca. 700 to 35.5 thousand members), and activity (posting the average of 40 posts a month or reacting to posted content, ca. 10 reactions per post). The data were collected between November 2022 and March 2023. Overall, 468 respondents took part in the survey.

The demographic information part consisted of the following sections: gender, age, area of training (*województwo*, i.e. voivodeship), years of practise

and experience (instructor/professional performer/amateur). The Likert scale, the main part of the questionnaire, consisted of 60 terms: 30 anglicisms and 30 native equivalents. The participants were to mark the frequency with which they came across and/or use each term on a scale from 0 to 5, where 0 denoted “never”, 1 – “rarely”, 2 – “sometimes”, 3 – “it depends”, 4 – “often” and 5 – “always”. If the participants used an alternative term, they could type it in an additional dedicated, non-compulsory section for that purpose. The participants were asked about terms frequently used in the field of pole sports that denote types of figures, styles, or elements. The choice of researched lexemes is reinforced by their presence in an official document uploaded by IPSF on their website ([www.polesports.org](http://www.polesports.org)): “Pole Sports Championships. Code of Points 2021–2024” (IPSF, n.d.). All of the terms (except for one: *contemporary*) can be recognised as being officially used by the community. The reason behind adding the lexeme *contemporary* to the corpus, despite it not being a part of the IPSF’s Code of Points, is its frequent use on social media by pole sport community members noted by the author.

The respondents were asked to assess the following English terms: *stretching, deadlift, split, seat/sit, shoulder mount, invert, backbend, chest stand, headstand, grip, floorwork, pose/shape/figure, bird of paradise, plank, climb, butterfly, contemporary, spin, double, genie, drop, flow, airwalk, aerial lift, flexy, pencil, inside/outside leg hang, shoulder stand, combo, front/back hook*. Simultaneously, they were asked to assess the Polish equivalent of each term, i.e.: *rozciąganie, martwy ciąg, szpagat, siedzenie, wejście z barku, figura odwrócona, gięcie, stanie na klatce, stanie na głowie, chwyt, elementy na podłodze, figura/pozycja/kształt, rajski ptak, deska, wspinaczka, motyl, współczesny, obrót, duet, żaba, spadek, płynność, chodzenie w powietrzu, wejście z góry, elastyczny, olówek, wiszenie na nodze wewnętrznej/zewnętrznej, stanie na barku, kombinacja, hak przodem/tyłem*. The terms denote the same activities/aspects; however, in some cases (as in *genie* vs. *żaba*) they do not translate literally. Moreover, some terms (such as *wejście z góry*) are phrases that are to describe an action denoted by a shorter compound (*aerial lift* in this case). This is due to the lack of direct equivalents.

The third part of the questionnaire was an open-ended question: “Do you happen to use anglicisms while practising pole sport? Why/why not?”.

### 3. Results

77 (16.4%) participants declared that they have been practicing pole sport for less than a year, 199 (42.5% and thus the largest group) 1-2 years, 142 (30.3%) 3-5 years, 39 (8.3%) 6-8 years, 10 (2.1%) 8-12 years, and 1 (0.2%) over 12 years. Most respondents, 385 (82.3%), declared that they only practise as a form of

leisure/hobby, 80 (17.1%) declared that they are instructors, and 3 (0.6%) declared that they are professional performers.

Overall, the mean of the use and recognition of the English terms across the Polish pole sport community totals 2.86 (57.3%). The median equals 2.78. The mean of the use and recognition of the native equivalents equals 2.78 (55.5%). The median equals 2.74. Standard deviation for both measurements equals ~1.

Out of 30, 16 terms are preferred in English and 14 in Polish (*p-value* is 0.682, i.e. > 0.05). The difference between the use and recognition of English terms and their native equivalents can be deemed statistically insignificant, which can be interpreted as a balanced co-existence of the two types of terms across the Polish pole sport community.

Table 1 presents the 14 preferred native equivalents across the Polish-speaking community. Out of these, *żaba* is, on average, the most preferred over the English term *genie* with a mean difference of 3 points (out of 5). Terms preferred in Polish on a lower, yet significant, level (between 2.4 and 1.1 mean difference) include: *współczesny* (E: 'contemporary'), *szpagat* (E: 'split'), *gięcie* (E: 'backbend'), *wspinaczka* (E: 'climb'), *duet* (E: 'double'), *wejście z góry* (E: 'aerial lift'), *siedzenie* (E: 'sit'), *stanie na głowie* (E: 'headstand'). Terms preferred in an insignificant percentage ( $\leq 1$  point of a mean difference) can be interpreted as being used and recognised on a similar level, and thus potentially used interchangeably. These include *figure/pose/shape/ figura/pozycja/kształt*, *hook/hak*, *pencil/ołówek*, *plank/deska*, *shoulder stand/stanie na barku*.<sup>12</sup>

Table 1. Native equivalents preferred over English terms across the Polish pole sport community.

Term	Mean <sup>12</sup>	Term	Mean <sup>4</sup>	Mean difference
<i>Żaba</i>	4.3	<i>Genie</i>	1.3	3
<i>Współczesny</i>	3.4	<i>Contemporary</i>	1.0	2.4
<i>Szpagat</i>	4.5	<i>Split</i>	2.2	2.3
<i>Gięcie</i>	3.4	<i>Backbend</i>	1.1	2.3
<i>Wspinaczka</i>	3.2	<i>Climb</i>	1.4	1.8
<i>Duet</i>	3.7	<i>Double</i>	1.9	1.8
<i>Wejście z góry</i>	3.5	<i>Aerial lift</i>	1.7	1.8
<i>Siedzenie</i>	3.5	<i>Sit/seat</i>	1.8	1.7
<i>Stanie na głowie</i>	3.8	<i>Headstand</i>	2.7	1.1
<i>Figura/pozycja/kształt</i>	3.7	<i>Figure/pose/shape</i>	2.7	1
<i>Hak</i>	3.7	<i>Hook</i>	2.7	1

<sup>12</sup> Out of 5

Table 1. cont.

Term	Mean <sup>12</sup>	Term	Mean <sup>4</sup>	Mean difference
<i>Ołówek</i>	3.4	<i>Pencil</i>	2.8	0.6
<i>Deska</i>	3.8	<i>Plank</i>	3.5	0.3
<i>Stanie na barku</i>	2.6	<i>Shoulder stand</i>	2.5	0.1

Table 2 presents the 16 terms preferred in English amongst the Polish pole sport community. Out of these, *combo* is preferred over its native equivalent *kombinacja* in the most significant range (the mean difference totals 3.8, the highest of all terms). Terms preferred with a lower intensity (from 2.4 to 1.1 mean difference) include *butterfly*, *drop*, *flow*, *shoulder mount*, *spin*, *stretching*, *invert*, *floorwork*, *deadlift*, and *flexy*. Terms preferred on an insignificant level (<1 point of the mean difference) and thus interpreted as potential synonyms include *bird of paradise/rajski ptak*, *grip/chwyt*, *airwalk/chodzenie w powietrzu*, *chest stand/stanie na klatce*, and *leg hang/wiszenie na nodze*.

Table 2. English terms preferred over their native equivalents across the Polish pole sport community.

Term	Mean <sup>4</sup>	Term	Mean <sup>4</sup>	Mean difference
<i>Combo</i>	4.8	<i>Kombinacja</i>	1.0	3.8
<i>Butterfly</i>	4.3	<i>Motyl</i>	1.9	2.4
<i>Drop</i>	3.9	<i>Spadek/upadek</i>	1.5	2.4
<i>Flow</i>	3.8	<i>Płynność</i>	1.6	2.2
<i>Shoulder mount</i>	3.9	<i>Wejście z barku/przez bark</i>	1.9	2.0
<i>Spin</i>	4.4	<i>Obrót</i>	2.7	1.7
<i>Stretching</i>	4.5	<i>Rozciąganie</i>	2.9	1.6
<i>Invert</i>	3.8	<i>Figura odwrócona</i>	2.3	1.5
<i>Floorwork</i>	3	<i>Elementy na podłodze</i>	1.7	1.3
<i>Deadlift</i>	3.1	<i>Martwy ciąg</i>	1.8	1.3
<i>Flexy</i>	3.4	<i>Elastyczny/gibki</i>	2.3	1.1
<i>Bird of paradise</i>	2.8	<i>Rajski ptak</i>	1.9	0.9
<i>Grip</i>	3.7	<i>Chwyt</i>	2.8	0.9
<i>Airwalk</i>	2.8	<i>Chodzenie w powietrzu</i>	2	0.8
<i>Chest stand</i>	2.0	<i>Stanie na klatce</i>	1.4	0.6
<i>Leg hang</i>	2.7	<i>Wiszenie na nodze</i>	2.3	0.4



What seems to be of importance is the experience of respondents. Although there is no statistical significance ( $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ) between instructors/professional performers (69% for the English terms and 53.9% for the native equivalents), as well as the amateurs (54.9% for the English terms and 55.9% for the native equivalents), there is a visible numerical preference. Out of 30 given terms, instructors prefer 20 in English and only 10 in Polish. These results are more balanced in the case of amateurs: their preference is numerically identical to the general results, with the preference of 16 English terms and 14 Polish terms.

Years of practice also play a key role, as presented in Table 3. The only group that exhibits a statistically significant ( $p\text{-value} = 0.001$ , i.e.  $< 0.05$ ) difference in the use and recognition of the terms is the group of respondents who have been practicing for less than a year. In their case, the recognition and use of the English terms totals 42.8% and the Polish equivalents 59.8% (the difference of 17 percentage points). For comparison, respondents who have been practicing for 1-2 years exhibit the recognition of 55.6% of the English terms and 55.9% of the Polish equivalents; 3-5 years: 62.9% of the English terms and 54.1% of the equivalents; 6-8 years: 69.7% of the English terms and 50.8% of the equivalents; 8 and more years: 74.6% of the English terms and 53.6% of the equivalents.

Table 3. The differences in the use and recognition of English terms and their native equivalents depending on the years of experience.

Years of experience	English terms	Polish terms	Respondents (N)
< year	42.8%	59.8%	77
1-2	55.6%	55.9%	199
3-5	62.9%	54.1%	142
6-8	68.7%	50.8%	39
>8	74.6%	53.6%	11

### 3.1. Alternative terms

For each term, the respondents had the opportunity to enter an alternative name that they often come across or use themselves. There were no additional instructions on the language the respondents should use, thus they had complete liberty in what they suggested. That section was not compulsory, and therefore each submitted token such as “no”, “x”, “-“ was excluded by the author for the sake of clarity. Later, as a part of cleaning the data, the suggestions were divided into “Polish” and “English”. The respondents suggested an overall total of 305 tokens (94 lemmas), out of which 163 tokens (35 lemmas) are English borrowings (on different levels of adaptation) and 142 tokens (59 lemmas) are Polish words. All of the provided terms are presented in Table 4 (spelling unedited).

Table 4. Alternative term suggestions submitted by the respondents of the Polish questionnaire variant.

Term	Alternative suggestions in Polish	Alternative suggestions in English
<i>Stretching</i>	<i>mobilizacja</i>	<i>mobility x2, cool down, stretch, stretching</i>
<i>Deadlift</i>	<i>ciągnięcie siłowe, martwy punkt, siłowe wejście do, wyciągnąć coś siłowo</i>	<i>deadlift, handspring</i>
<i>Split</i>	<i>szpagat, sznurek</i>	
<i>Sit</i>	<i>krzeselko x4, siad x2, siedzonko</i>	<i>martini x38, pole sit</i>
<i>Shoulder mount</i>		<i>shoulder x2, shoulder mount, shouldery, v-ka</i>
<i>Invert</i>	<i>nakrywka</i>	<i>V-ka x10, vka x9, Fałka x2, Valka, v ka, v'ka, V, invert</i>
<i>Backbend</i>	<i>mostek x38, gięcie, kreweta</i>	<i>bridge</i>
<i>Chest stand</i>	<i>krewetka x2, gięcie</i>	<i>chin stand, chest stand</i>
<i>Headstand</i>		
<i>Chwyt</i>	<i>chwyt kubeczkowy, podchwyt, nachwyt, chwyt skręcony</i>	<i>regular x2, twisted, invert</i>
<i>Floorwork</i>	<i>podłoga x2, parter</i>	
<i>Pose</i>	<i>poza</i>	<i>szejpik</i>
<i>Plank</i>		<i>tabletop, table top</i>
<i>Climb</i>	<i>wejście</i>	
<i>Contemporary</i>		<i>modern dance</i>
<i>Spin</i>		
<i>Double</i>	<i>pary, w parze</i>	
<i>Genie</i>	<i>pająk x7, żuk/żuczek x4, podwójny zaczep (kolanami) x2, baba jaga, dżin, kibel, kurczak, aniołek, krab</i>	
<i>Drop</i>	<i>kulka/kuleczka x8</i>	
<i>Flow</i>		
<i>Airwalk</i>	<i>schodki, spacer w chmurach</i>	<i>moonwalk</i>
<i>Aerial lift</i>	<i>wejście do, wejście z góry, wejście z rury</i>	
<i>Flexy</i>	<i>gięciowe, te pogięte, z gięciem, gięcia</i>	<i>bendy</i>
<i>Pencil</i>		

Table 4. cont.

Term	Alternative suggestions in Polish	Alternative suggestions in English
<i>Leg hang</i>	<i>skorpion</i> x17, <i>bliźniak</i> x10, <i>zaha-</i> <i>czenie nogi, hak</i>	<i>Gemini/gemini/dżemini</i> x39, <i>Scor-</i> <i>pio/scorpio</i> x31, <i>angel</i>
<i>Shoulder stand</i>		
<i>Combo</i>	<i>połączenie figur, połączenie kilku</i> <i>figurek, układ</i>	<i>combos</i> x2
<i>Hook</i>	<i>łabądek</i> x2, <i>kolano łapie rurę,</i> <i>diament, labędź, labądz, żabka</i>	
<b>Total number of tokens</b>	<b>= 142</b>	<b>=163</b>
<b>Total number of lemmas</b>	<b>=59</b>	<b>=35</b>

Interestingly, some suggestions of the community members, when compared to their common definitions, go through (unofficial) semantic adaptation processes: narrowing, broadening, and even shifts. It seems that these semantic alternations never leave the pole sport community. There are seven examples of semantic shift. *Cool down* (suggested as an alternative term for *stretching*) is an activity performed at the end of a practice session. *Cooldown*, as defined in Merriam-Webster, relates to “allowing physiological activity to return to normal gradually after strenuous exercise by engaging in less strenuous exercise” (Merriam-Webster n.d.). *To stretch*, on the other hand, means “to extend (one's limbs, one's body, etc.) in a reclining position” (Merriam-Webster n.d.). The same is true of the suggestion of *chin stand* as an alternative term for *chest stand*. As the name indicates, a *chin stand* is performed on one's chin and not the chest. Both positions are variations of a backbend; however, *chin stand*, also known as a hatha yoga asana *Ganda Bherundasana*, involves the body support on the chin and palms without touching the chest to the ground. *Chest stand*, the asana *Poorna Salabhasana*, requires the following contact points with the ground: chin, chest, shoulders, and palms. The suggestion of *modern (dance)* as an alternative for *contemporary (dance)* is also semantically inaccurate, as the two genres have different origins and differ stylistically. Contemporary dance “might include release technique and/or contact improvisation [...] various modern techniques”, but these terms are not synonymous (Kwan 2017: 40). While contemporary dance can still be treated as an experimental form, modern dance “established itself as a new art form during the first half of the twentieth century” (McMahan 2019: 1). In practice, modern dance is codified, which means it is unified in the sense of definition (although different styles of it must be considered), while contemporary dance “does not mean the same thing in all dance communities”

(Kwan 2017: 39). Furthermore, *mobility/mobilizacja* (exercises that strengthen the muscles and allow a wider movement range) is used for *stretching* (exercises that improve flexibility), *wejście* (E: ‘entry’) for *climb* (*climb* can be a gateway movement for entering other figures but does not have to), and *handspring* (type of movement that can be performed via deadlift but does not have to) for *deadlift*.

Five instances of narrowing the semantic field down include: *mostek/bridge* for a *backbend*, *kulka/kuleczka* (a type of controlled drop movement) for *drop*, *sznurek* (E: ‘middle split’) for *split*. Two instances of semantic broadening include *wejście* (E: ‘entry’) for *aerial lift* (entering a figure from the height); *zahaczenie nogi* (E: ‘leg hook’, movement that can be done not only while performing a *leg hang*) for *leg hang*. 18 suggestions are heavily adapted borrowings, for example: graphically adapted *dżemini*, *falka*, morphologically adapted *shouldery* (Polish plural suffixation, E: ‘shoulders’). *Combos*, as a singular noun, constitutes an instance of double plural (plural: *combosy*). *Szejpik* (diminutive from E: “shape”) is an interesting suggestion as it is a borrowing adapted on multiple levels: graphic (phonetic spelling) and morphological (common diminutive word formation via *-ik* suffixation). To emphasise the potential of diminutive word formation in the Polish language, other examples can be quoted: *krzeselko* (E: dim. ‘chair’), *żuczek* (E: dim. ‘beetle’), *aniołek* (E: dim. ‘angel’), *schodki* (E: dim. ‘stairs’), or very potent in this collection *vka/v-ka/falka/walka*. The multitude of variations of spelling of this particular lexeme emphasizes the lack of linguistic unification, i.e. no definite nor official pattern that should be followed.

### 3.2. Why does the community use anglicisms?

The respondents mentioned 559 items (individual responses), which were later divided into 27 categories (arguments) by the author, as the reasons behind their use of anglicisms while practicing pole sport.

The most prominent reason addresses the influence of an instructor: 120 comments (21.5% of all items) mention that the language they use is heavily dependent on what they have been taught in the past.

The aesthetic value is mentioned 70 times in the comments (12.5%). According to the respondents, English borrowings sound better than their native equivalents. Along the same lines, 5 comments (0.9%) mention that Polish terms sound awkward and unnatural, thus the use of English terms seems to be more appropriate. This seems to be a logical response as the official terminology is derived from the codes of points that are coined exclusively in English. This aspect is partially mentioned in two categories of the comments: the universality of the English terms (40 items, 7.1%) and direct references to the code of points (4 items, 0.7%). What relates to universality is the desire for language unification. According to 18 comments (3.2%), the Polish language of pole sport

currently lacks a unified means of communication, and therefore the use of English borrowings is necessary.

The aspect of disambiguation is mentioned in 4 comments (0.7%), and English terms as well-established are referred to 3 times (0.5%).

Another prominent category refers to the source materials, which, according to 54 comments (9.7%), are posted online mostly in English. Connecting this aspect with the first one that was mentioned, 27 respondents (4.8%) say they study from English materials (not only those which are posted online).

Many respondents focus on the comfort of the use: 5 (0.9%) respondents directly quote borrowings as “more comfortable”, 33 (5.9%) mention that English borrowings tend to be shorter than their native equivalents (language economy), and 32 (5.7%) highlight the fact that the borrowings are more popular and easier to understand. 19 respondents (3.4%) say they use English terms out of habit. 20 comments (3.6%) focus on the greater ease of remembering English words. According to 15 comments (2.7%), English terms are more comprehensible. 7 comments (1.2%) express the desire to stay in touch with a broader pole sport community, exceeding the Polish-speaking landscape, and therefore highlight the potential of using English borrowings.

On the other hand, 30 respondents (5.4%) mention that they do not use English borrowings. Interestingly enough, three users (0.5%) quoted the fact that they care for the “cleanness” of the language (an instance of linguistic purism) as their reason not to use anglicisms. The aspect of comfort of the native language appears in 11 comments (2%), in which the respondents mention that the native equivalents are easier. 27 respondents (4.8%) occupy the middle ground by saying that they use English terms and native equivalents equally as often.

Less frequent answers include the preference reasoned by the “luxuriousness”, “professionalism”, and “modern sounding” nature of the English terms. One comment from an instructor is especially interesting: the respondent mentions that they introduce more English terms to more advanced students.

Terms preferred in Polish are frequently easier to pronounce, e.g. *żaba* instead of *genie*, which might be awkward in terms of pronunciation for Polish speakers despite the English proficiency levels. The same applies to the convoluted word *contemporary*, which is heavily unfavoured by the respondents.

Lexemes such as *wspinaczka* (E: ‘climb’) or *siedzenie* (E: ‘sit’) are very descriptive. They explain the movement just by their name, and therefore they might be preferred across the Polish-speaking community, where, obviously, members are not obliged to know the general English terms. Some terms stem from other disciplines: *szpagat* (E: ‘split’) or *gięcie* (E: ‘backbend’). They are deeply rooted as lexical items in the realm of sports and have no other connotations. They are unambiguous, and that is why their native equivalents might be preferred. Lexemes such as *duet* (E: ‘double’) or *hak* (E: ‘hook’) are

shorter in Polish, and, as is commonly known, speakers strive for linguistic economy, so it may explain their native preference in these cases.

Similarly, terms preferred in English are, first of all, shorter. *Combo* is far easier to utter than *kombinacja*. What is more, the word *kombinacja* might bring about negative associations in the speakers, as it might be interpreted as emotionally marked (in the sense of ‘overcomplicating things’). Similarly, *drop*, *spin*, and *floorwork* are shorter and less awkward to pronounce than their native equivalents. *Drop* additionally has no appropriate translation. *Spadek/upadek* both indicate something that happens accidentally (and frankly negative), whereas *drop* is a movement that is fully controlled (and more neutral). Polish equivalents for terms from other sport disciplines, such as *deadlift* (from heavy weightlifting) or *flow* (from dancing), might be explained by excerpts from the comments of the respondents. One respondent mentions that they use *deadlift* exclusively for pole sport and its native equivalent for gym sessions. Opposite to *split/szpagat* or *backbend/gięcie*, the term *deadlift* in these two contexts indicates a different exercise and thus the use of the borrowing disambiguates the meaning. Similarly, another respondent comments that they use *flow* to describe a dance style and its native equivalent to describe the type of movement. Here, again, the use of the English term is disambiguating. Two lexemes taken from the world of animals, *butterfly* and *bird of paradise*, are heavily preferred in English. The symbolic character of the names [which are in no way descriptive nor helpful in understanding the movement as opposed to *wspinaczka* (E: ‘climb’) for instance] might encourage the respondents to use them in the original form as to disambiguate the meaning. Of course, what must be highlighted, especially in the context of contemporary popularity of social media, is the influence of international pole sport stars, who post for wide audience in the most widespread *lingua franca* - English. Moreover, the aforementioned official IPSF Code of Points, which might be treated as a point of reference to many community members, is written in English. Both may serve as teaching/studying materials and thus may be the reason behind the increased use of English terms.

When suggesting alternative terms, the respondents gravitate numerically more towards English terms. What is more, English terms seem to be more entrenched in the general language of the community (more tokens and fewer lemmas), while Polish terms are often instances of temporary creativity, small scale, or ephemeral use.

#### 4. Discussion

To return to the research question, RQ1 can be answered as follows: There is not enough evidence to prove a statistically significant difference in the use and recognition frequency of English and Polish terms across the Polish pole sport

community. Although a numerical difference can be observed in the slight preference towards the English terminology, there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we can assume that the community members generally use both the Polish and English terms every now and then, and they do not specifically choose to implement exclusively native words or borrowings. Taking that into consideration, it can be said that the use of English borrowings and their Polish equivalents is synonymous rather than preferential in this case, that is, the community uses them interchangeably with no clear preference towards one variant. If the English borrowings and their native equivalents are used on a par, one might suggest that these particular loanwords could be classified as *unnecessary* or *superfluous* (Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2006).

Dunaj and Mycawka (2017) would disagree with such a statement. According to them, there is always a certain reason, be it gap-filling need or prestige, to introduce a new word into the lexicon. In this interpretation, the term *unnecessary* is not applicable. Many borrowings earlier considered unnecessary have adapted on several levels, especially semantic, undergoing semantic shifts. As the presented analysis shows, English borrowings used across the Polish pole sport community are used rather as synonyms of their native equivalents. This suggests that their existence is relevant and that they do indeed fill a certain semantic gap. Referring to the comments made by the respondents, standardization of pole sport jargon could be helpful for community members, as it would make the international communication smoother and could potentially enhance the training research process through, for example, easier online tutorial searching. Realistically, however, jargon standardization would require a lengthy official procedure, and, most likely, would not be followed by all pole studios and instructors, possibly resulting in a fracture into *official* and *unofficial* pole sport registers.

The presented study contributes to the realm of sport linguistics and may be the foundation of considerations on the position of the language of pole sport and, potentially in the future, other aerial sports. Future research could be directed towards comparative studies in different pole sport communities and possibly related disciplines such as aerial hoop or aerial silks.

## 5. Limitations

There are definite limitations to the presented study. First of all, despite nearly 500 respondents, the number of participants might not be representative enough, considering the growing size of the Polish pole sport community. Secondly, although survey might not seem a reliable tool to measure the frequency of native terms and borrowings use due to its subjectivity, the only alternative would be real-time pole class observations. Such research would require recording the classes in order to construct transcriptions to later juxtapose

the use of native terms and borrowings. The majority of instructors would most likely disagree to such a procedure, which is understandable, as it might discourage students who do not wish to be recorded (even for scientific purposes) from participation in classes. Social media observations are not representative either, as the users, in order to reach audience as wide as possible, use English hashtags and strain from limiting their content to the Polish viewers.

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