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THE ETYMOLOGY OF HEADWEAR TERMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract

Headwear has played an essential role in human culture for centuries, serving not only practical purposes such as protection from weather and injury but also symbolic, social, and religious functions. The terminology associated with headwear reflects deep historical, cultural, and linguistic developments. This article explores the etymology of headwear names in the English and Uzbek languages. By analyzing the origins, historical evolution, and semantic changes of key headwear terms, the study highlights similarities and differences in how these two languages conceptualize and name headwear. The research draws on historical linguistics, cultural studies, and comparative analysis to demonstrate how language preserves cultural identity and worldview.

Keywords: Etymology, headwear, English language, Uzbek language, cultural linguistics, lexical history.

Introduction

Language and culture are inseparably connected, and vocabulary often serves as a mirror of a nation's history, traditions, and worldview. One lexical field that vividly demonstrates this connection is the terminology related to clothing, particularly headwear. Headwear occupies a special place in many societies, symbolizing social status, profession, religion, gender, and national identity.



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In both English and Uzbek cultures, headwear has been an important cultural marker. While English headwear terminology has been influenced by Latin, French, Norse, and other European languages, Uzbek headwear terms largely reflect Turkic roots, as well as Persian and Arabic influences. Studying the etymology of these terms provides valuable insights into historical contacts, cultural exchange, and semantic development.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the etymological origins of selected headwear names in English and Uzbek, compare their linguistic development, and identify cultural factors that influenced their formation and usage.

Theoretical Background: Etymology and Cultural Linguistics

Etymology is the branch of linguistics that studies the origin and historical development of words. Through etymological analysis, linguists trace how words change in form and meaning over time. Cultural linguistics, on the other hand, examines how language reflects cultural conceptualizations.

Headwear terms are especially suitable for etymological study because they often:

- originate from physical characteristics (shape, material),
- reflect social or religious functions,
- enter languages through borrowing due to cultural contact.

In this study, a comparative etymological approach is applied to English and Uzbek headwear terminology, focusing on both native and borrowed lexemes.

Etymology of Headwear Terms in English

1. Hat

The English word *hat* dates back to Old English *hæt*, which referred to a head covering. The term is believed to originate from Proto-Germanic *hattuz*. Cognates



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can be found in Old Norse (*hattr*) and German (*Hut*). Initially, *hat* referred to any head covering, but over time it became a general term for structured headwear with a brim.

The simplicity of the word reflects its early and widespread usage in Germanic societies, where head coverings were essential for protection against cold weather.

2. Cap

The word *cap* comes from Middle English *cappe*, borrowed from Old French *cape*, which in turn originates from Latin *cappa*, meaning “cloak” or “hood.” Interestingly, the original meaning was not limited to headwear but included garments covering the head and shoulders.

Over time, *cap* narrowed in meaning to refer to close-fitting, brimless headwear. This semantic narrowing is a common phenomenon in lexical evolution.

3. Bonnet

Bonnet entered English from Old French *bonnet*, meaning a type of soft hat. The word may be derived from *bon* (“good”), implying comfort or quality. Historically, bonnets were associated with women and children, particularly in Europe.

The term reflects social and gender distinctions in clothing, demonstrating how headwear terminology can encode cultural norms.

4. Helmet

The English word *helmet* comes from Middle English *helme*, derived from Old English *helm*, meaning “protective covering.” The root is Proto-Germanic *helmaz*, meaning “cover” or “conceal.”



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Unlike many other headwear terms, *helmet* has always been associated with protection and warfare, highlighting the functional motivation behind its naming.

5. Crown

The word *crown* originates from Old French *corone*, from Latin *corona*, meaning “garland” or “wreath.” Although not a practical head covering, the crown is a symbolic form of headwear representing authority and power.

The evolution of *crown* illustrates how symbolic meaning can overshadow physical function in lexical development.

6. Turban

Turban is a borrowed word from Persian *dulband*, which entered English via French and Turkish. This term reflects cultural and religious contact between Europe and the Islamic world.

The borrowing of *turban* shows how English headwear vocabulary expanded through intercultural interaction rather than native word formation.

Etymology of Headwear Terms in Uzbek

1. Do‘ppi

The Uzbek word *do‘ppi* refers to a traditional skullcap widely worn in Central Asia. Its etymology is debated, but many scholars connect it to Turkic roots related to covering or placing something on top.

The *do‘ppi* is not merely a head covering but a symbol of Uzbek national identity, often decorated with regional patterns.



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2. Qalpoq

Qalpoq is a Turkic word meaning a hat, often made of felt or fur. Cognates exist in other Turkic languages, such as Kazakh *qalpaq* and Turkish *kalpak*.

The widespread presence of this term across Turkic languages suggests a common cultural and linguistic heritage tied to nomadic life and climate conditions.

3. Telpak

The word *telpak* refers to a fur hat traditionally worn in cold regions. It is believed to derive from Turkic roots associated with animal fur.

Telpak reflects the material-based naming tradition common in Uzbek clothing terminology, where the substance of the object plays a key role in its name.

4. Salla

Salla (turban) is a borrowing from Arabic *‘imāmah*, but the Uzbek term itself likely entered through Persian or regional Islamic influence. It is associated with religious scholars and elders.

This term illustrates how religious and cultural exchange influenced Uzbek headwear vocabulary.

5. Toqi

Toqi refers to a light skullcap and is likely derived from Persian *taqiyah*. The borrowing reflects centuries of Persian cultural influence in Central Asia.



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Comparative Analysis of English and Uzbek Headwear Terms

1. Native vs. Borrowed Vocabulary

English headwear terms show significant borrowing from Latin and French, especially after the Norman Conquest. Uzbek, by contrast, retains many native Turkic terms while also incorporating Persian and Arabic borrowings.

2. Cultural Motivation

In Uzbek, headwear names often reflect:

- material (fur, felt),
- tradition,
- regional identity.

In English, terms are more often motivated by:

- function,
- social class,
- historical institutions (e.g., monarchy, military).

3. Semantic Development

English headwear terms frequently undergo semantic narrowing (*cap*, *hat*), while Uzbek terms tend to preserve their original meanings due to stable traditional usage.

The Role of Headwear in Cultural Identity

Headwear in Uzbek culture is deeply symbolic, often associated with respect, age, and tradition. Removing or mishandling headwear can be considered disrespectful.

In English-speaking cultures, headwear has gradually lost much of its symbolic weight, becoming more fashion-oriented in modern times.



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This cultural difference is reflected in language: Uzbek retains numerous specific terms, while English often uses more generalized vocabulary.

Conclusion

The etymological study of headwear terms in English and Uzbek reveals significant differences shaped by history, culture, and social structure. English headwear vocabulary reflects extensive borrowing and semantic change due to historical events such as conquest and globalization. Uzbek headwear terminology, rooted in Turkic tradition and enriched by Persian and Arabic influences, preserves strong cultural symbolism.

By comparing these two languages, we gain a deeper understanding of how material culture is encoded in language and how etymology serves as a bridge between linguistics and cultural history. Further research could expand this study by including dialectal variations or examining headwear terminology in other languages.

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