

LINGUOCULTURAL UNITS DENOTING CLOTHING IN FOLKLORE

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ABSTRACT:

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*This article analyzes the lexical and semantic features of linguocultural units denoting clothing, which are characteristic of the language of folk epics. The study also examines their classification and types.*

KEYWORDS:

*myth, legend, custom, tradition, ritual, practice, culture, nation, ethnos.*

Language develops within a particular society, reflecting all the unique national characteristics of the people who create it. As a result, languages differ not only in their structure but also in their national and social aspects. These differences are especially evident in linguistic units. At any given moment, a language representative is also a representative of a particular culture. Every culture finds expression in language, and this is inevitably reflected in phraseological units as well.

Today, linguoculturology is a social field that studies these issues in depth, examining the material and spiritual culture manifested in a national language and in language processes. Consequently, it encompasses concepts such as the creation, development, preservation, and manifestation of culture.

Linguoculturology studies the myths, legends, customs, traditions, rituals, practices, and symbols of culture. These concepts are forms of culture that are consolidated in language through everyday communicative practices. According to V. N. Telya, linguoculturology

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primarily examines the relationship between the national mentality and living communicative processes, along with the language expressions used in them. As an independent branch of linguistics, linguoculturology emerged in the 1990s and the term itself—derived from Latin *lingua* “language,” *cultus* “reverence” and Greek “knowledge, science”—was introduced in connection with the research conducted by the Moscow School of Phraseology under V. N. Telya.

N. F. Alefirenko characterizes linguoculturology as follows:

- It is closely linked to both linguistics and cultural studies and has a synthesizing nature;
- Its main focus is on cultural evidence expressed in language;
- It belongs to the domain of linguistic sciences, so its findings can be applied in teaching both native and foreign languages;
- The main directions of research include: a) the linguistic personality; b) the semiotic representation system of cultural values. The linguist regards all these phenomena as systems determining cultural values and illustrates them with examples.

V. A. Maslova divides the development of linguoculturology into three stages:

1. Creation of initial research forming the foundation of the science;
2. Formation of linguoculturology as a separate field of study;
3. Emergence of linguoculturology as a fundamental, independent science.

By the early 21st century, linguoculturology had become one of the leading directions in world linguistics. The object of study, the linguocultural unit, includes phraseological units—stable combinations of two or more words with fixed relationships, ready for use in speech and stored in the memory of language users. These include idioms, proverbs, and wise sayings.

Human lifestyle and its development have always been closely linked to clothing. Clothing is one of the primary external signs that distinguish humans from animals. Examining the formation of traditional national clothing reveals that over centuries it has acquired several important functions. Folk culture is a reality specific to a certain nation or to all ethnic groups living in a particular region.

From the perspective of clothing culture, the Uzbek people have been at the forefront globally. Thousands of years ago, ancestors wore shirts, trousers, shoes, head coverings such as caps and hats, outer coats, belts, and fastened footwear.

The multi-faceted Uzbek epic, with roots extending far into ancient times, occupies a proud place in the development of the spiritual culture of our people. Works connected with

the people—that is, works depicting the life of the people, their daily aspirations, associated events, and their unique language and style—have long been preserved among the population. Such works are rich in figurative language. As S. A. Arutyunov writes, “Universal culture is a means for humanity to adapt to the natural planetary conditions of the Earth and the social consequences arising from the expansion of human mastery over this planetary environment.” Universal culture—or universality in culture—provides the necessary conditions for human adaptation to the Earth’s natural environment. This reflects human–Earth relations, the wealth created by humans, accumulated experience, and historical traditions, which have a global character. This global character distinguishes universal culture from national culture. National culture is a socio-historical reality specific to a particular nation or ethnic group. Differences between them are relative, with dialectical connection and cooperation ensuring their ongoing development.

One such cultural wealth is found in folk epics and their language. In this section, we examine clothing terms used in the epics *Khordorkhon* and *Alpomish*, analyzing their forms in the language of the epic. These can be classified as follows:

1. General names of clothing;
2. Names of headwear;
3. Names of summer and winter clothing;
4. Names of footwear;
5. Names of clothing parts;
6. Names of ornaments;
7. Names of special clothing worn in battle.

### 1. General Names of Clothing

In the epic language under study, clothing is referred to by a variety of general terms. Examples from the epic illustrate this:

**Libos:** “...he wore two sets of men’s clothing and also dressed the forty young men’s wives in men’s attire.” *Libos* – from Arabic, meaning clothing or attire; it is still used in modern Uzbek. Notably, in the epic language, *libos* is sometimes used not only for clothing but also as a general term for household items, e.g., “The Crimean state distributed thousands of guesthouses with *libos*” (p. 36). The dual usage demonstrates the poet’s lexical richness and skill.

**Sarpo:** “G‘urughlibek dressed them in large *sarpos* and sent them off after a week saying ‘welcome.’” In dictionaries, *sarpo* (Persian origin) refers to head-to-toe clothing or garments such as coats, hats, or belts, presented during weddings or other formal ceremonies. In the

epic, combinations like toza sarpo (clean sarpo) and qimmatbaho sarpo (precious sarpo) occur frequently, enhancing the artistic and emotional expressiveness of the text and preventing monotony.

**Kiyim:** “He rode his horse, waving, dressed in red kiyim, stirring the hearts of onlookers, Ahmad Sardor boiling over” (p. 50). Kiyim refers to items worn to cover the body, usually made of fabric or leather. In the epic, it can also denote bedding or blankets, e.g., “G‘urughlibek accommodated the guests on good tents over clean kiyim” (p. 331). The usage in the epic closely matches modern literary Uzbek.

## 2. Names of Headwear

Headwear terms occupy a prominent place in the epic language. Most are archaic or dialect-specific and not used in modern literary Uzbek. Examples include:

**Lachak:** “If I do not go to Crimea, let the woman’s lachak be on my head” (p. 33). Lachak – a white cloth or head covering for elderly women, made from fine fabric or surp, no longer used in literary Uzbek, only in some rural dialects. It was actively used in classical literature: A. Navoi, Khazoyinul-Maoniy (1b.475).

**Jig’a:** A head ornament decorated with precious stones, typically worn by brides or in circumcision ceremonies. Obsolete today, rarely found even in dialects.

**Toj:** A crown decorated with precious stones, symbolizing royal authority, borrowed from Persian-Tajik. It appears only in historical texts, e.g., A. Navoi, Saddi Iskandariy, p. 255.

## 3. Summer and Winter Clothing

In addition to headwear, the epic Kholdorkhon mentions summer and winter garments:

**Silovsin ton:** “...he dressed the forty young men in silovsin ton and passed through the land, feeding the hungry” (p. 5). Silovsin – from the feline family, a rare predatory animal with valuable fur; silovsin ton is a coat made from its fur. Variants include: Kirovkadan sovut ton, Kirovkadan sovut tonning yoqasi (p. 107). Kirovka – a stiff material or metal insert worn under outer garments, archaic and dialect-specific.

**Kark teri:** “...he played underneath like a Girkok, wearing kark teri on his back, with an isfikhon at his waist” (p. 30). Kark teri – a type of battle garment made from karkidon (rhinoceros) hide, archaic, not used in modern speech or dialects.

**Ton / Chopon:** Ton – a long traditional coat, often open at the front; chopon – an upper, long Uzbek coat. In folk epics, both terms are used interchangeably, consistent with modern usage. V. V. Radlov notes ton derives from “hide” and refers generically to clothing made from animal skins. The chopon holds special cultural value, used in ceremonies like cradle

celebrations, weddings, and mourning rituals, serving all stages of life and providing protection in summer and winter. Women's chopon, made from Uzbek national fabrics (atlas, adras), is worn during Navruz, weddings, and daily life today.

#### 4. Footwear

Footwear terms are relatively rare in the epic but do not diminish its artistic richness.

Only the term **Choriq** appears:

“...tightening the belt of the choriq, pulling the laces firmly, he sprang forward swiftly” (p. 247). Choriq – stiff leather shoes, typical in mountainous regions, now obsolete.

#### 5. Names of Clothing Parts

The epic also contains terms for parts of clothing, reflecting the poet's detailed observation of everyday life:

**Yoqa:** “Afzar's collar, playfully swinging from Kulbar's shoulders” (p. 151). Yoqa – the part of clothing around the neck to which fabric is attached; widely used in modern literary Uzbek with the same meaning.

#### 6. Names of Ornaments (Taqinchoklar)

In the epic language, personal ornaments also occupy an important place. For instance:

**Munchoq:** “Why did you send Munav? The mushtipar wearing munchoq” (p. 148). Munchoq refers to beads made of glass or stone, strung on a thread and worn around the neck, primarily as women's jewelry. In the epic, the term is used not only as an object but also to emphasize a character's vulnerability or unpreparedness for battle, highlighting the contrast with the opponent's strength.

This demonstrates how material culture, such as jewelry, is embedded in the epic to reflect social, aesthetic, and symbolic meanings.

#### 7. Clothing for Combat

Epic texts rarely describe specific battle garments, but some terms exist:

**Sovut:** Armor-like clothing made of woven steel wire to protect the body from spears and arrows. For example:

- “...over the steel sovut, the horse galloped high and low” (p. 38).

Variants include oq sovut (white armor), tilla sovut (golden armor). Sovut is now an archaic term, preserved only in historical sources. Another example: “...the elder of the Turkmen people, the collar of the sovut ton” (p. 41). Like previously discussed garments, the sovut was designed for protection in combat.

The presence of such terms illustrates the importance of war in Turkic folk culture and oral epics, as well as detailed depiction of horse-riding and battle preparation.

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**Example from Alpomish epic:**

Bismillo said over the horse,  
Who had the soft saddle of Mayin.  
At that moment, he placed on the horse  
A chirgini made of gold and zarlig,  
And over the chirgini, he placed the jahaldiriq.  
Bismillo said over the horse,  
The golden karsan and the gold saddle,  
Both of them from gold,  
Shining on both sides.

...Sultonhon, hearing this, mounted his horse swiftly, adjusting the stirrup with his foot.  
(p. 36)

This passage illustrates how the epic details not only clothing but also equestrian and battle equipment, showing cultural knowledge and craftsmanship.

**Linguocultural Significance of Clothing in Epics**

- National idioms reflect the culture, traditions, customs, worldview, lifestyle, and ethical-aesthetic norms of a people.
- A.Nasirov emphasizes that material from folk epics shows national characteristics vividly through:
  - a) social and domestic life,
  - b) expression of cultural traits unique to a people,
  - c) inclusion of local toponyms, flora, and fauna,
  - d) representation of customs and ceremonies,
  - e) use in literary-artistic language.
- G. Zimanas differentiates between “national situation” and “unique traits”: the former covers the whole life of a people, while the latter refers to features distinctive to a particular nation, absent in others.
- V.Z. Panfilov notes that identifying typological features of a language requires careful comparative studies; a language’s unique traits cannot be determined without comparison to others.

**Cultural Meaning of Clothing**

Clothing represents national identity. The Uzbek people historically regarded each garment as reflecting mentality: its color, structure, stitching, seasonality, ceremonial or everyday use, decorations, ribbons, and patterns all convey information about the wearer.

Traditional clothing and associated rituals preserve pre-Islamic beliefs (fetishism, animism, magic, totemism), later harmonized with Islamic practices.

The depiction of clothing in epics also reflects social hierarchies: in times of inequality, laborers could not enjoy the fruits of their work, a reality mirrored in epic narratives.

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