

## SEMANTIC FEATURES OF CRAFTS TERMINOLOGY: A CROSS-CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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**Abstract.** *The terminology of crafts is deeply embedded in the cultural, social, and technological evolution of human societies. This article explores the semantic features of craft terminology across various linguistic and historical contexts. By analyzing distinctions in craft-related lexicons, such as the German Handwerk and Kunsthandwerk, Ossetian felt-making terms, and Greek textile vocabulary, we reveal how language encodes both practical and symbolic dimensions of craftsmanship. Furthermore, we examine metaphorical extensions, shifts in meaning over time, and the impact of digitalization on craft semantics. This study highlights how craft terminology reflects broader social structures, technological advancements, and cultural values, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary research in understanding the dynamic relationship between language and material culture.*

**Key words:** *crafts semantics, semantic nuances, artisanal value, societal shift, indigenous, loanwords, linguistic sources, linguistic stability*

**Introduction:** Craft terminology extends beyond its technical aspects, reflecting deep cultural and social values. The evolution of craft lexicons is influenced by historical shifts, industrialization, and digital transformations. This paper analyzes the semantic features of craft-related terminology through diverse linguistic and cultural case studies. By exploring the distinctions between Handwerk and Kunsthandwerk in German, the Ossetian felt-making lexicon, and metaphorical extensions in Greek textile vocabulary, we aim to demonstrate how linguistic evolution encodes material craftsmanship. Additionally, the impact of digital discourse on craft semantics reveals emerging terminologies in the contemporary craft sector.

*The Linguistic Landscape of Craft: Defining "Handwerk" and "Kunsthandwerk"*

The distinction between Handwerk (traditional craft) and Kunsthandwerk in German exemplifies the semantic nuances within craft terminology. Historically, Handwerk referred to skilled manual labor, while Kunsthandwerk encompassed decorative and applied arts.

The industrial revolution blurred these boundaries, as mass production challenged the artisanal value of handcrafted goods. In Estonia, Soviet-era policies influenced the classification of crafts, demonstrating how political forces shape craft terminology. The modern revival of Handwerk in sustainable production discourse reflects a societal shift toward ethical consumerism and an increasing appreciation for craftsmanship.

*Material Culture and Lexical Fields: The Ossetian Case Study*

Craft terminology is deeply intertwined with material culture and linguistic structures. The Ossetian language, with its rich terminology for felt-making, provides an example of how language encodes specialized knowledge .

Studies on Ossetian craft terms reveal a "primordial linguistic layer," suggesting that felt-making has been a significant craft tradition for centuries. The formant *nymt*, which denotes an object or material, and the suffix *-nymtyn*, indicating something "made of" a particular material, highlight the morphological richness of Ossetian craft lexicons .

The predominance of indigenous Ossetian terms, rather than loanwords, signals a historical continuity of felt-making traditions, minimally influenced by external linguistic sources. This linguistic stability contrasts with the evolution of craft terminology in more industrialized societies.

*Metaphor and Semantic Shift in Craft Terminology: A Greek Perspective*

Many craft-related terms extend metaphorically into other domains. In ancient Greek, the vocabulary of weaving and musical composition share significant overlaps. For example, the Greek verb *huphainein* (to weave) was often used metaphorically to describe the composition of music, particularly in playing stringed instruments. This linguistic convergence suggests that weaving and music were perceived as parallel activities, sharing rhythmic, structured, and creative elements. Additionally, shifts in textile terminology between Mycenaean and Homeric Greek reveal how language adapts to technological and cultural changes over time. These semantic shifts illustrate the fluid nature of craft terminology, influenced by both practical applications and abstract cultural associations.

*The Role of Context and Cultural Practices: Documenting Intangible Heritage*

Preserving the intangible aspects of craft traditions requires a combination of linguistic and ethnographic documentation. For instance, the *Baburnama*, a historical text from the Mughal period, encodes linguistic structures that reflect craft traditions. Analysis of sentence structures in the text reveals how artisans, materials, and production techniques were conceptualized in that era .

Language documentation projects play a crucial role in preserving endangered craft terminologies, ensuring that traditional craftsmanship is not lost amid globalization.

*Craft Terminology in Digital Contexts: Challenges and Opportunities*

The digital era has reshaped craft terminology through new platforms, production techniques, and e-commerce .

Terms such as "DIY crafting," "handmade economy," and "artisanal branding" reflect emerging consumer trends in digital craft culture. Additionally, the influence of social media and online marketplaces has led to the globalization of certain craft terms, creating hybrid linguistic expressions .

The integration of digital fabrication techniques into traditional crafts raises important questions about how new technologies redefine craft terminology, influencing both the perception and production of crafts.

**Conclusion:** Craft terminology is dynamic and evolving, shaped by cultural traditions, technological advancements, and digital transformations. The distinction between Handwerk and Kunsthandwerk, the morphological richness of Ossetian felt-making terms, and the metaphorical extensions in Greek textile vocabulary showcase how language encodes both practical and symbolic dimensions of craftsmanship. The digitalization of craft terminology introduces new challenges and opportunities, shaping contemporary discourse on craftsmanship. Future research should explore cross-linguistic comparisons, investigating how globalization influences the evolution of craft-related semantics.

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