

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Affixation in The Formation of Headwear Names in English

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Abstract

The process of word formation plays a significant role in the enrichment of vocabulary in any language. Among the various word-formation methods, affixation is one of the most productive mechanisms in English. This article examines the role of affixation in the formation of headwear names in English. The study analyzes the morphological structure of headwear-related lexical units, identifies common prefixes and suffixes used in their formation, and explores the semantic changes resulting from affixation. Examples from contemporary English are used to illustrate how affixation contributes to the development of new terms for hats, caps, helmets, and other forms of headwear. The findings demonstrate that suffixation is more productive than prefixation in the naming of headwear and that affixation often reflects function, profession, style, or cultural identity.

KEYWORDS

Affixation, word formation, morphology, headwear names, suffixation, prefixation, English vocabulary.

INTRODUCTION

Language constantly evolves to meet the communicative needs of society. One of the primary ways in which vocabulary expands is through word formation. In English, new lexical items are created through several morphological processes, including compounding, conversion, clipping, blending, and affixation. Among these, affixation remains one of the most productive and systematic methods.

Headwear has been an essential part of human culture for centuries, serving practical, social, religious, and decorative purposes. As societies developed, various forms of headwear emerged, leading to the creation of numerous lexical items describing them. Many of these terms have been formed or modified through affixation.

This article investigates the role of affixation in the formation of English headwear names. The study focuses on identifying the most common affixes, analyzing their semantic functions, and demonstrating their contribution to lexical development.

Theoretical Background of Affixation

Affixation is the process of adding a bound morpheme to a base or root word in order to create a new lexical item or modify its meaning. Affixes are generally divided into two major categories:

Prefixes – affixes attached before the root.

Suffixes – affixes attached after the root.

According to modern morphological theory, affixation can create new words, alter grammatical categories, or introduce additional semantic meanings.

Examples:

happy → unhappy

teach → teacher

nation → national

Affixation contributes significantly to vocabulary growth because it allows speakers to create new words while maintaining semantic transparency.

Headwear Vocabulary in English

Headwear refers to garments or accessories worn on the head. The English language contains a rich variety of terms for different kinds of headwear, including:

hat

cap

helmet

hood

bonnet

beret

beanie

turban

visor

headband

Many of these words have historical origins in different languages. However, modern English continues to generate new headwear-related vocabulary through word-formation processes, particularly affixation.

Suffixation in the Formation of Headwear Names

Suffixation is the most productive type of affixation found in headwear terminology.

The Suffix -er

The suffix -er often denotes a person, object, or instrument associated with a particular activity.

Examples:

Baseball Cap Wearer

wear + er = wearer

Although wearer does not name the headwear itself, it identifies the individual associated with the object.

Helmeted Rider

The derived form is related to the use of protective headwear.

The Suffix -ed

The suffix -ed creates adjectives indicating possession or use

of headwear.

Examples:

hooded jacket

helmeted soldier

capped mountain

In these examples, the derived adjective indicates that something possesses or is equipped with a certain type of head covering.

Morphological Analysis

Base Word	Suffix	Derived Word
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hood	-ed	hooded
------	-----	--------

helmet	-ed	helmeted
--------	-----	----------

cap	-ed	capped
-----	-----	--------

These forms frequently appear in descriptive and technical language.

The Suffix -less

The suffix -less expresses the absence of something.

Examples:

hatless

capless

hoodless

Semantic Function

These words describe individuals or objects lacking a specific type of headwear.

Example sentence:

The soldiers stood hatless during the ceremony.

The suffix contributes an opposite meaning while retaining the lexical identity of the original noun.

The Suffix -like

The suffix -like indicates resemblance.

Examples:

helmet-like structure

hood-like covering

cap-like design

Such formations are common in fashion, architecture, and design terminology.

The Suffix -y

The suffix -y forms adjectives that indicate a characteristic feature.

Examples:

hood → hoody/hoodie

cap → cappy (informal)

The word hoodie is one of the most widely used examples of headwear-related affixation in contemporary English.

Morphological Structure

hood + ie = hoodie

Originally referring to a hooded sweatshirt, the term developed through derivational morphology and lexical innovation.

Prefixation in Headwear Terminology

Compared with suffixation, prefixation is less productive in the formation of headwear names.

The Prefix Un-

The prefix un- creates oppositional meanings.

Examples:

unhatted

uncovered

These forms indicate the absence of head covering.

Example:

The visitors entered the building unhatted.

The Prefix Re-

The prefix re- expresses repetition or restoration.

Examples:

rehood

recap

Although rare in fashion terminology, these words can appear in technical or informal contexts.

Example:

The craftsman recapped the decorative post.

The Prefix Over-

The prefix over- indicates excess or coverage.

Examples:

overhood

oversized head-covering

Such formations are usually occasional rather than standard lexical items.

Semantic Functions of Affixation in Headwear Names

Affixation performs several semantic functions in headwear-related vocabulary.

Indicating Possession

Examples:

hooded

helmeted

capped

These words indicate that an object possesses a particular feature.

Indicating Absence

Examples:

hatless

hoodless

capless

These forms express a lack of headwear.

Indicating Similarity

Examples:

helmet-like

hood-like

cap-like

The suffix -like enables comparison and description.

Indicating Informality and Fashion Trends

Examples:

hoodie

beanie-style

Fashion vocabulary often adopts affixation to create informal

or trendy expressions.

Productivity of Affixation in Contemporary English

Modern English continues to generate new fashion and clothing terminology through affixation. Social media, popular culture, and the fashion industry contribute significantly to this process.

Examples include:

hoodie

snapback-style

beanie-inspired

hooded sportswear

helmeted cyclist

Among these forms, suffixation remains the dominant mechanism because it easily creates adjectives and nouns that describe appearance, function, and style.

Research in English morphology indicates that derivational suffixes such as -ed, -less, -like, and -ie are highly productive in fashion-related vocabulary.

Linguistic Analysis of Selected Examples

Hoodie

Morphological structure:

hood + ie

Meaning:

A sweatshirt with an attached hood.

Word class:

Noun.

Hooded

Morphological structure:

hood + ed

Meaning:

Having a hood.

Word class:

Adjective.

Hatless

Morphological structure:

hat + less

Meaning:

Without a hat.

Word class:

Adjective.

Helmet-like

Morphological structure:

helmet + like

Meaning:

Resembling a helmet.

Word class:

Adjective.

Capped

Morphological structure:

cap + ed

Meaning:

Covered with or provided with a cap.

Word class:

Adjective.

DISCUSSION

The analysis demonstrates that affixation plays an important role in expanding the vocabulary associated with headwear. While the number of core headwear nouns formed directly through affixation is relatively limited, affixation contributes extensively to the creation of descriptive and functional terms.

Suffixation is considerably more productive than prefixation because it enables speakers to express possession, absence, resemblance, and stylistic characteristics. The popularity of words such as hoodie, hooded, and hatless illustrates the flexibility of English derivational morphology.

Furthermore, affixation allows the language to adapt to changing fashion trends and technological developments. New headwear designs can be described efficiently through established morphological patterns.

CONCLUSION

Affixation is an important word-formation process in English and contributes significantly to the development of headwear-related vocabulary. The study reveals that suffixation is the most productive form of affixation in this lexical field, with suffixes such as -ed, -less, -like, and -ie frequently occurring in derived forms. Prefixation is less common but still contributes to the expression of oppositional or repetitive meanings.

The analysis confirms that affixation not only expands vocabulary but also enriches semantic expression by indicating possession, absence, resemblance, and fashion-related characteristics. As English continues to evolve, affixation will remain a productive mechanism for creating and adapting headwear terminology.

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