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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC PROPERTIES OF UZBEK AND ENGLISH ANTHROPONYMS

Jalilova Yodgora Abdirasil qizi

Samarkand state institute of foreign languages,

English faculty, 2-grade master's student

igamovd05@gmail.com

+998996746806

Scientific supervisor: ***Nazarova N.B.***

Abstract

This paper presents a detailed comparative analysis of Uzbek and English anthroponyms, focusing on their lexical and semantic properties. The study explores how linguistic, cultural, and historical factors shape personal naming traditions in both languages. By examining etymology, structure, motivation, and meaning, the article reveals how anthroponyms function as markers of identity, social values, and collective memory.

Key words

anthroponymy, etymological foundation, lexical system, naming trends, semantic transparency, lineage, semantically opaque, Alpomish and Gorogly, the Reformation period.

Introduction

Names represent more than just identifiers - they encapsulate cultural heritage, moral ideals, and linguistic evolution. Anthroponymy, the study of personal names, serves as a valuable intersection of linguistics, sociology, and anthropology. In both Uzbek and English linguistic traditions, anthroponyms reveal how societies encode values and worldviews through language. The analysis of their lexical and semantic properties allows us to understand how the cognitive and cultural identity of each nation manifests in its naming system.

Uzbek anthroponyms have a rich etymological foundation derived primarily from Turkic, Persian, and Arabic sources. These names often retain transparent meanings related to moral or emotional qualities, physical traits, or social aspirations. For instance, names like Dilshod ("happy-hearted"), Botir ("brave"), Ozoda ("pure"), and Rustam ("heroic") directly reflect desired virtues or characteristics. Many Uzbek names also have religious significance, derived from Islamic traditions - such as Vali ("saint") or Muhammad - which carry both spiritual and cultural weight. A defining lexical feature of Uzbek anthroponyms is their morphological productivity. Suffixes such as -bek, -jon, and -oy are frequently used to modify names and express affection, respect, or endearment. For example, Alisherbek conveys nobility, while Gulnora-oy expresses tenderness and familiarity. The flexibility of suffixation in Uzbek allows for continuous generation of new names, demonstrating an active and evolving lexical system.

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English anthroponyms, in contrast, largely originate from Old English, Latin, Hebrew, Greek, and Norman sources. Many names once had transparent meanings - Edward ("guardian of wealth"), Margaret ("pearl"), George ("farmer"), Lucy ("light") - but have since undergone semantic fossilization, meaning that their etymological meanings are no longer recognized by speakers. Instead, English naming practices tend to emphasize phonetic aesthetics, historical continuity, and family tradition rather than lexical transparency. The morphological composition of English anthroponyms is relatively stable, with minimal affixation or productive derivation. While diminutive forms like Johnny or Maggie exist, these are more phonological than morphological transformations. Modern English naming conventions favor stylistic variety over structural creativity [1,1441-1443].

Methods

The research employs a comparative-descriptive methodological framework, which allows for the systematic examination of anthroponyms as linguistic units embedded within broader cultural and semiotic systems.

The empirical material for the study was collected from folklore narratives, historical documents, literary texts, and contemporary naming practices in both Uzbek and English, ensuring a balanced representation of diachronic and synchronic data. Lexical analysis was conducted by classifying anthroponyms according to their etymological origin, morphological structure, and word-formation patterns, including names derived from common nouns, adjectives, abstract concepts, and borrowed lexical elements. Semantic analysis focused on identifying denotative meanings, connotative associations, evaluative components, and symbolic functions, using contextual interpretation and etymological reconstruction as primary analytical tools. The comparative method enabled the identification of similarities and differences between the two languages, while qualitative interpretation ensured that linguistic data were analyzed in close connection with cultural context rather than in isolation.

Results

The results of the analysis indicate that Uzbek and English anthroponyms differ significantly in terms of lexical transparency and semantic accessibility, although both systems fulfill the universal function of personal identification. Uzbek anthroponyms demonstrate a high degree of lexical motivation, as many names are directly derived from meaningful lexical units denoting positive human qualities, natural phenomena, religious concepts, or desired life outcomes, which allows speakers to intuitively interpret their semantic content without specialized linguistic knowledge. English anthroponyms, by contrast, are largely characterized by lexical opacity, since many personal names of Germanic, Biblical, or Latin origin have undergone extensive phonological and semantic evolution, resulting in the loss of immediate semantic connection between the name and its original lexical meaning. From a semantic perspective, Uzbek names tend to retain explicit evaluative and symbolic meanings, whereas English names function predominantly as conventionalized markers of identity, with semantic content becoming secondary or culturally implicit rather than linguistically transparent. In Uzbek, semantic motivation plays a crucial role in name formation. A name often expresses a wish, blessing, or parental aspiration. For example, Shodmon means "joyful," Baxtiyor means "fortunate," and Doniyor symbolizes wisdom. Such names serve both a linguistic and social purpose - they reflect the cultural tendency to encode positive values and expectations in

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personal identity. In English, semantic motivation is historically derived but less transparent in contemporary use. Early English names like Faith, Hope, and Grace explicitly referenced virtues, while others such as Victor and Joy continue to retain semantic meaning. However, most English names have lost direct lexical motivation due to centuries of linguistic evolution and borrowing from multiple languages. Uzbek anthroponyms often function symbolically within folklore, epics, and oral traditions. Heroes in Uzbek epics, such as Alpomish and Gorogly, bear names that embody strength, courage, and loyalty. These anthroponyms serve as linguistic representations of moral ideals and national archetypes. English anthroponyms, on the other hand, frequently convey individuality and lineage. Historical figures and literary characters influence naming trends—Elizabeth, William, Arthur, and Catherine evoke associations with royalty, faith, and heritage. The semantic focus here is less on moral virtues and more on continuity, prestige, and personal distinctiveness [2,9]. In Uzbek society, names often carry deep religious and social significance. Islamic culture plays a major role in naming conventions, with many names derived from the Quran or associated with revered figures. Parents believe that a name influences the child's destiny, reflecting a strong cultural link between language and fate. Thus, names often serve as prayers or moral imperatives. In English culture, religion historically influenced naming practices—especially during the Christianization of England and later through the Reformation period. However, in modern times, secular and aesthetic considerations have become dominant. Names are chosen for their sound, popularity, or familial connection rather than spiritual connotation [3,17].

Discussion

The observed differences between Uzbek and English anthroponyms can be explained by the distinct cultural models of naming that govern each linguistic tradition, particularly in relation to the perceived function of personal names within society. In Uzbek culture, the act of naming is traditionally understood as a meaningful and performative process, in which a personal name is expected to express parental wishes, moral ideals, or protective intentions, thereby preserving a strong semantic link between the name and its lexical source. English anthroponyms, on the other hand, reflect a historical process of semantic neutralization and conventionalization, whereby names gradually lose their transparent meanings while maintaining social continuity and cultural identity across generations. This contrast supports broader theoretical claims in onomastics that anthroponyms may shift from semantically motivated linguistic signs to socially fixed symbolic units, depending on historical depth, frequency of use, and cultural attitudes toward naming [6,23].Both Uzbek and English anthroponyms reflect gender distinctions, though in different ways. Uzbek feminine names frequently reference beauty, delicacy, and nature - Gulnora ("pomegranate flower"), Nigora ("bright eyes"), Malika ("queen") - while masculine names emphasize strength or courage, such as Jasur ("brave") or Bahodir ("valiant"). In English, gender distinction is also evident but less semantically motivated. Feminine names like Lily, Rose, and Grace evoke beauty and virtue, while masculine names such as Andrew, Charles, or Richard historically implied power, leadership, or nobility [4,3].

Aspect	Uzbek Anthroponyms	English Anthroponyms
Lexical origin	*Turkic, Persian,*	*Old English, Latin,*

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	Arabic	*Biblical*
Morphology	*Productive use of suffixes (-bek, -jon)*	*Minimal morphological productivity*
Semantic transparency	*High – meaning is often clear*	*Low – meanings are largely historical*
Motivation	*Expressive, virtue-based, religious*	*Historical, familial, aesthetic*
Cultural role	*Reflects social ideals and moral virtues*	*Reflects individuality and lineage*
Religious influence	*Strong (Islamic, spiritual wishes)*	*Moderate to weak (historical Christian)*

[5,4].

Conclusion

The comparison between Uzbek and English anthroponyms highlights distinct linguistic and cultural orientations. Uzbek names maintain a high degree of semantic transparency and morphological flexibility, serving as living expressions of cultural identity, moral values, and spiritual beliefs. English names, though semantically opaque, preserve historical continuity and individual distinction. In essence, Uzbek anthroponyms reflect a collective and symbolic worldview, where a name carries blessings and social significance. English anthroponyms reflect a more individualistic and historical orientation, emphasizing lineage, personal identity, and linguistic tradition. These systems illustrate how deeply personal naming practices are intertwined with broader linguistic, historical, and cultural frameworks.

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