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# Common Semantic Characteristics Of Uzbek And English Anthroponymy

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## ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the comparative-contrastive analysis of the semantic characteristics of Uzbek and English anthroponymy. The problem of the meaning of proper names, based on the theories of J.S. Mill, A. Gardiner, O. Jespersen, A.V. Superanskaya, E. Begmatov, and others, is extensively examined. Four primary components within the semantic structure of anthroponyms are identified: the introductory component, the descriptive component, the individualizing component, and the referential-descriptive component. The common semantic features of personal names in both languages (objectivity, gender affiliation, national-cultural identification, and connotative richness) as well as their distinctive aspects (the degree of onomastic specificity, the presence of theophoric and nature-related names, and the system of surnames) are compared. The study demonstrates that in Uzbek anthroponymy, etymological transparency and the active process of forming new derivatives are prominent, whereas in English anthroponymy, traditionalism and the prevalence of abbreviated forms hold a dominant position. It is also noted that, under the influence of globalization, a new layer of universal connotative meanings is emerging in the anthroponymy of both languages.

**Keywords:** Anthroponymy, semantics of proper names, Uzbek personal names, English personal names, comparative onomastics, semantic structure, onomization, connotation, national-cultural identification, influence of globalization.

## Introduction

Anthroponymy, a branch of onomastics that deals with personal names (first names, surnames, nicknames, and pseudonyms), is one of the most intriguing and debated fields of linguistics. The primary theoretical issue concerning proper names is their semantic content, specifically the question of whether proper names possess meaning or not. This question has been a subject of extensive discussion not only in Uzbek linguistics but also in English linguistics for several centuries. This article provides a comparative analysis of the semantic characteristics of Uzbek and English anthroponyms and elucidates their common and distinctive features.

## Primary Theoretical Approaches to the Semantics of Proper Names

From the nineteenth century onward, the English philosopher John Stuart Mill described proper names as

“meaningless marks,” asserting that they serve only a denotative function—identifying a specific entity—without any connotative meaning. According to Mill, names such as “Dante” or “Temur” do not express any general attributes but merely distinguish one individual from others. This view has been supported by scholars such as A. Gardiner, O. S. Axmanova, and Yu. Grodzinskiy. Gardiner referred to proper names as “empty shells,” while Grodzinskiy characterized them as “metasigns.”

However, numerous scholars have challenged this perspective. Otto Jespersen, Edmund Husserl, and Michel Bréal, among others, have argued that proper names are not devoid of semantic content. Jespersen, in particular, emphasized that a name such as “John” possesses its own distinct “proper name meaning.” In Russian linguistics, scholars such as D. I. Yermolovich, N. F. Alefirenko, and A. V. Superanskaya consider proper names to be “signs

endowed with referential meaning.” Alefirenko distinguishes between a linguistic-philosophical paradigm and a speech-thinking paradigm, demonstrating that within the latter, onyms are inherently linked to their denotata and referents.

In Uzbek linguistics, this issue has been extensively explored by scholars such as E. Begmatov, Sh. Yoqubov, B. Mengliyev, and I. Khudoynazarov. In his work *\*The Meaning of Uzbek Names\** (2010), E. Begmatov demonstrates that, despite their origins in Arabic, Persian-Tajik, or Turkic languages, the majority of Uzbek names have become semantically transparent within the Uzbek language. For example, names such as Gulnora (“radiant like a flower”), Javohir (“jewels”), and Nozima (“refined”) currently possess clear, discernible meanings.

### **The Semantic Structure of Anthroponyms: Common Components**

In contemporary onomastics, the semantic structure of anthroponyms is considered to comprise four primary components (based on the works of M. Ya. Bloch, F. M. Belozerova, and A. V. Superanskaya):

1. The introductory (existential) component, expressing the notion “this entity exists.” This component is common to all words denoting objects, whether common nouns or proper names.
2. The descriptive component, expressing the notion “this is a human being.” The denotatum of anthroponyms is a person.
3. The individualizing component, expressing the notion “this is a human being designated by a specific name,” such as “John,” “Ahmad,” or “Gulnora.”
4. The referential-descriptive component, which includes supplementary information pertaining to a particular individual. This is the most variable component and may be enriched in specific speech contexts.

These four components are present to an equal degree in both Uzbek and English anthroponyms. For example:

- English: William ← “Will + helm” (desire + protection); however, it now primarily functions as an individualizing name.
- Uzbek: Rustam ← “hero whose body does not grow”

(mythological meaning); in contemporary usage, it primarily serves an individualizing function.

### **Common Semantic Features of Uzbek and English Anthroponyms**

1. Objectivity and Individuality: In both languages, anthroponyms embody the meanings “this is a human” and “this is a specific human.” Both “Ali” and “David” primarily denote a person and distinguish that individual from others.

2. Gender Specification: Many names indicate gender:

- Uzbek: Masculine suffixes such as -bek, -boy, -jon; feminine suffixes such as -oy, -bibi, -niso.

- English: Masculine forms such as -son (Johnson, Wilson); feminine names such as Emma and Sophia.

3. National and Cultural Identification: Names serve to identify nationality or cultural affiliation, such as Muhammad, Ahmad, and Fatima, which are associated with the Arab-Muslim world, and John, Mary, and William, which are linked to the Anglo-Saxon Christian tradition.

4. Loss of Etymological Transparency: In both languages, many names have lost their original etymological meaning:

- English: Jennifer ← Cornish Guinevere (“white spirit”).

- Uzbek: Sardor ← Persian “sar-dor” (“leader”), though it now functions solely as a personal name.

5. Connotative Richness: Names acquire additional connotative meanings through their association with prominent individuals, such as Shakespeare, which evokes a literary genius, or Ibn Sina, which signifies the father of medicine.

### **Differences**

1. Degree of Onomastic Productivity: The process of forming new names remains active in Uzbek anthroponymy, as evidenced by names such as Gulchehra, Oychehra, and Yulduzoy. In English, the creation of entirely new names is rare; instead, shortened forms of existing names predominate (e.g., Alex ← Alexander, Sophie ← Sophia).

2. Theophoric Names: Uzbek anthroponymy frequently incorporates components derived from the ninety-nine names of Allah, such as Abdulla and Abdurahmon. In English, names are predominantly derived from Christian saints, such as Christopher, Michael, and Peter.

3. Names Derived from Nature and the Animal World: Archaic elements are preserved in Uzbek names, such as Bo'ri (wolf), Tulki (fox), Sher (lion), and Arsmon. Such names are virtually absent in English, with examples like Wolf and Fox surviving only as surnames.

4. Surname Systems: In English, surnames are typically inherited patrilineally and remain unchanged. In Uzbek, surnames were largely absent until the twentieth century and were artificially created in the 1920s and 1930s (e.g., Orinboyev, Qoshboqov). The widespread use of the suffixes -ov and -ova is a result of Russian influence.

## CONCLUSION

The semantic structure of Uzbek and English anthroponyms is based on the same fundamental components: objectivity, individuality, gender specification, and national-cultural identification. However, due to historical, religious, and social factors, their lexical composition, degree of onomastic productivity, and connotative richness exhibit significant differences. Uzbek anthroponyms demonstrate greater etymological transparency and active formation of new names, whereas English anthroponyms are characterized by greater reliance on tradition and abbreviated forms.

At the same time, in the era of globalization, a common trend has emerged in both languages: the increasing adoption of names inspired by prominent figures, literary characters, and cinematic stars, such as Neymar, Ronaldo, Elsa, and Ariana, which are encountered both in Tashkent and London. This development is forming a new, global connotative layer within the semantics of anthroponyms.

Thus, proper names have never been and will never be mere "empty signs." They represent one of the most complex and culturally richest strata of language. The comparative study of Uzbek and English anthroponyms contributes not only to linguistics but also to a deeper understanding of intercultural communication.

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