

ANTHROPONYMS AS CULTURAL CONCEPTS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH: A CORPUS-BASED COMPARATIVE LINGUOCOGNITIVE ANALYSIS.

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Abstract

This thesis presents a comparative linguocognitive and corpus-based analysis of Uzbek and English anthroponyms evaluated as key cultural concepts. Personal names operate far beyond simple referential markers; they are structural units that store dense ethnocultural, historical, and socio-cognitive data. By leveraging representative corpus data from the National Corpus of Uzbekistan and the British National Corpus, this study systematically analyzes the structural, semantic, and cognitive frameworks underlying naming conventions in both linguacultures. The analysis delineates how Uzbek anthroponyms preserve explicit, transparent semantics tied heavily to protective, religious, and aspirational cultural codes. In contrast, modern English anthroponyms exhibit extensive de-semanticization, shifting their primary cognitive function from descriptive literalism to allusive, historical, and aesthetic paradigms. The study applies a mixed-methods approach to isolate denotative, significative, and pragmatic components within the onomastic field, establishing a modern framework for anthropocentric Turkic-Germanic comparative linguistics.

Keywords: Anthroponymy, Linguocognitive Analysis, Corpus Linguistics, Cultural Concepts, National Corpus of Uzbekistan, British National Corpus, Onomastics, Semantics.

Introduction

In contemporary linguistics, the structural and functional properties of proper nouns have evolved from basic nominal classification into highly specialized anthropocentric frameworks [1, p. 272]. Anthroponyms—encompassing personal names, patronymics, surnames, nicknames, and pseudonyms—represent highly complex linguistic signs that act as repositories for a society's cognitive, spiritual, and historical experience [4, p. 701]. Rather than acting as mere labels to distinguish individuals within a social system, proper names contain an elaborate structure consisting of tightly interwoven linguistic and extralinguistic components [1, p. 273].

The transition toward cognitive and cultural onomastics has highlighted the concept of the "name as a linguistic personality" [5, p. 43]. Each naming tradition



reflects a culturally bound linguistic worldview, encoding systemic structures of cognitive categorization and communicative practices [3, p. 42]. While traditional historical onomastics concentrated heavily on the etymological origins of proper nouns, modern linguocognitive paradigms utilize large-scale corpora to observe the real-world discourse behavior, semantic stability, and conceptual networks of proper names within a given population [4, p. 702].

This thesis investigates the asymmetries and overlaps between the anthroponymic systems of the Uzbek and English languages. Despite their deep genetic and geographical differences, both systems serve as structural instruments reflecting the historical transformations, religious paradigms, and socio-cultural values of their respective communities [2, p. 303; 4, p. 701]. By applying corpus-based methodology, this research maps the semantic fields of these proper names onto specific mental schemas, clarifying how abstract cultural priorities are systematically codified within the onomastic sub-systems of Turkic and Germanic languages.

Methodology

This research utilizes a corpus-driven comparative approach to ensure empirical accuracy and eliminate fabricated data. The empirical material for the Uzbek language was gathered from the National Corpus of Uzbekistan (Uzbek National Corpus), supplemented by historical text selections from classic oral epics and folklore literature [4, p. 702]. For the English language, structural data and contextual concordance lines were extracted from the British National Corpus (BNC).

The linguocognitive framework relies on structural semantic decomposition, which isolates three primary layers within the onomastic sign:

1. **The Denotative Component:** The direct connection to the specific individual referent [1, p. 274].
2. **The Significant Component:** The conceptual meaning embedded within the name, reflecting generic and species semes that characterize potential referents [1, p. 274].
3. **The Pragmatic Component:** The socio-communicative markers, register restrictions, and regional/dialectal variations associated with the name [1, p. 274; 4, p. 701].

Corpus query techniques included targeted lemma searching, frequency distribution testing, and contextual collocation analysis. By evaluating the structural frames where proper names occur, we extracted the cognitive models that guide selection patterns. Additionally, the comparative analysis highlights



systemic "lacunae"—conceptual gaps where an onomastic structure or naming motive in one culture lacks a direct equivalent in the other [3, p. 41].

Results

The data collected from the respective corpora demonstrate clear differences in semantic transparency and morphological productivity between Uzbek and English anthroponyms.

In the Uzbek anthroponymic system, proper names display a high degree of semantic preservation. Unlike Western European names, which often obscure their lexical meanings through centuries of phonetic and morphological shifts, Uzbek names retain an open connection to active vocabulary words [2, p. 303]. The corpus reveals that naming motives in Uzbek are tightly organized around concrete semantic domains, which include:

- **Aspirational/Qualitative Motives:** Names reflecting physical or moral virtues (e.g., *Rustam* referencing mythological strength; *Gulnor* signifying beauty) [4, p. 701].
- **Theophoric and Religious Motives:** Names exhibiting strong Islamic structural components (e.g., *Abdulla*, *Fatima*), which coexist alongside ancient Turkic layers (*Alpomish*) [4, p. 701].
- **Socio-Protective/Descriptive Motives:** Suffixes and markers reflecting lineage and structural position (*o'g'li* for sons, *qizi* for daughters) [4, p. 701].

Data from the BNC show that the English anthroponymic framework operates under a distinct cognitive structure. English first names are highly de-semanticized in everyday communication [2, p. 303]. While names like *Robert* or *Catherine* possess Germanic or Greek etymological roots signifying "bright fame" or "pure," these meanings are largely absent from the modern speaker's conscious cognitive processing [5, p. 42]. Instead, English naming choices are driven primarily by phonetic aesthetics, familial traditions, and allusive historical or pop-culture precedents [1, p. 273].

Furthermore, the structure of English surnames often mirrors historical occupational or geographic labels (e.g., *Smith*, *Baker*, *Green*), creating an interesting point of overlap: while English *surnames* preserve clear historical occupations, Uzbek *first names* preserve explicit descriptive and aspirational qualities [2, p. 303].

Analysis and Discussion

The contrasting linguistic worldviews of Uzbek and English societies become highly apparent when analyzing proper names through a linguocognitive



lens. In Uzbek culture, the act of naming functions as a predictive mental model. A name is not merely a label, but a conceptual formula meant to shape the bearer's destiny, health, or social standing [1, p. 273]. For example, the incorporation of protective elements or the use of dialectal sound alternations across regions (such as the Kipchak variations *Yo'ldoshboy* vs. *Jo'ldoshboy* or *To'qqizboy* vs. *To'g'izboy*) highlights how local social practices shape regional onomastic choices [4, p. 702].

From a structural perspective, Uzbek anthroponyms utilize clear compounding patterns to expand their semantic fields. The addition of titles or lexemes like *boy* (wealthy), *bek* (noble), or *shoh* (king) embeds explicit social markers directly into the lexical unit [4, p. 702]. This creates a sharp asymmetry when compared to English. English names rely on an implicit pragmatic system where social class, age, and cultural identity are suggested through name variations or historical style preferences, rather than being explicitly written out morphologically [1, p. 273].

This divergence reveals clear cultural lacunae. In Uzbek, certain names express complex conceptual networks that lack a single-word equivalent in English [3, p. 41]. For instance, names given to children born under specific circumstances—such as *Tursun* (may he/she stay/survive) or *To'xtasin* (may it stop, given to break a cycle of child mortality)—rely on an underlying socio-protective framework [1, p. 273]. This structural approach to naming is absent from the modern English cognitive system, marking a clear conceptual gap between the two worldviews [3, p. 42].

Onomastic Attribute	Uzbek Anthroponymic System	English Anthroponymic System
Semantic Status	Highly transparent; explicitly linked to active appellative vocabulary [2, p. 303].	Heavily de-semantized; etymological meaning is typically obscured [2, p. 303].
Primary Naming Drivers	Protective formulas, religious values, explicit family lineages [4, p. 701].	Phonetic appeal, historical allusion, familial legacy [1, p. 273].
Morphological Markers	Frequent use of explicit relational markers (<i>o'g'li</i> , <i>qizi</i>) [4, p. 701].	Relies on inherited structural positions (fixed surname slots) [4, p. 701].

Onomastic Attribute	Uzbek Anthroponymic System	English Anthroponymic System
Cognitive Function	Predictive; serves as a spiritual formula to guide the individual's future [1, p. 273].	Associative; matches historical archetypes or aesthetic trends [1, p. 273; 5, p. 42].

The interaction between these two systems also highlights interesting sociolinguistic changes. Modern corpus patterns show that the Uzbek anthroponymic system has adapted to global socioeconomic shifts over the past century, absorbing Western and Russian structural models into traditional patronymic and surname formulas [4, p. 701]. However, even under these changing conditions, the core significative semes of traditional Uzbek names remain stable, showing high cultural preservation in both spoken and written registers [4, p. 702].

Conclusion

This corpus-based comparative analysis illustrates that anthroponyms serve as highly specialized cultural concepts that reflect different cognitive frameworks in the Uzbek and English linguistic worldviews. The Uzbek system is characterized by semantic transparency, using proper names to explicitly preserve religious, protective, and qualitative values. The English system relies on a more de-semantized framework where first names function primarily as aesthetic and associative markers, while historical occupations are preserved within surnames.

These structural differences reveal clear conceptual lacunae, illustrating how different societies embed their distinct historical experiences and social practices directly into the lexicon of proper names. Ultimately, this research demonstrates that proper names are not static identifiers, but dynamic linguistic signs that play an active role in preserving and conveying cultural values across generations.

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