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LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL MARKERS OF GENDER IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PERSONAL NAMES

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Abstract. Personal names are an important part of a nation's linguistic and cultural heritage. They reflect not only personal identity but also cultural values, traditions, and gender perceptions. This study examines the linguistic and cultural markers of gender in English and Uzbek personal names from a comparative perspective. The corpus consists of eighty names, including English and Uzbek male and female anthroponyms. Descriptive, comparative, semantic, and linguocultural methods were employed in the analysis. The findings show that gender in English personal names is mainly expressed through historical convention and phonological tendencies, whereas Uzbek names demonstrate clearer gender representation through lexical meaning and culturally significant semantic elements. The study reveals a higher degree of semantic transparency in Uzbek anthroponyms and highlights the role of language and culture in shaping naming practices. The research contributes to anthroponymic, comparative linguistic, and linguocultural studies.

Keywords: anthroponymy, gender markers, personal names, English names, Uzbek names, comparative linguistics, linguocultural studies.

Annotatsiya. Shaxs ismlari xalqning til va madaniy merosining muhim qismi hisoblanadi. Ular nafaqat shaxsni identifikatsiya qilish vositasi, balki madaniy qadriyatlar, an'analar va gender tasavvurlarini ham aks ettiradi. Mazkur tadqiqot ingliz va o'zbek shaxs ismlaridagi genderning lingvistik hamda madaniy ko'rsatkichlarini qiyosiy nuqtai nazardan o'rganishga bag'ishlangan. Tadqiqot korpusi ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi erkaklar va ayollar ismlaridan iborat 80 ta antroponimni o'z ichiga oladi. Tahlilda tavsifiy, qiyosiy, semantik va lingvomadaniy usullardan foydalanildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ingliz shaxs ismlarida gender asosan tarixiy an'analar va fonologik xususiyatlar orqali ifodalansa, o'zbek ismlarida gender leksik ma'no hamda madaniy jihatdan ahamiyatli semantik komponentlar orqali yanada aniqroq namoyon bo'ladi. Tadqiqot o'zbek antroponimlarida semantik shaffoflik darajasi yuqoriroq ekanligini ko'rsatadi hamda nomlash an'analarining shakllanishida til va madaniyatning muhim o'rnini yoritadi. Tadqiqot natijalari antroponimika, qiyosiy tilshunoslik va lingvomadaniyatshunoslik sohalariga muayyan hissa qo'shadi.

Kalit so'zlar: antroponimika, gender ko'rsatkichlari, shaxs ismlari, ingliz ismlari, o'zbek ismlari, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, lingvomadaniyatshunoslik.

Аннотация. Личные имена являются важной частью языкового и культурного наследия народа. Они отражают не только личную идентичность, но и культурные ценности, традиции и гендерные представления. Данное исследование посвящено изучению лингвистических и культурных маркеров гендера в английских и узбекских личных именах с сравнительной точки зрения. Корпус исследования включает 80 антропонимов, состоящих из английских и узбекских мужских и женских имен. В ходе исследования были использованы описательный, сравнительный, семантический и лингвокультурологический методы анализа. Результаты показывают, что в английских личных именах гендер преимущественно выражается через исторические традиции и фонологические особенности, тогда как в узбекских именах он более явно проявляется посредством лексического значения и культурно значимых семантических компонентов. Исследование выявило более высокий уровень семантической прозрачности узбекских антропонимов и подчеркнуло важную роль языка и культуры в формировании традиций именования. Полученные результаты вносят вклад в развитие антропонимики, сравнительного языкознания и лингвокультурологии.

Ключевые слова: антропонимика, гендерные маркеры, личные имена, английские имена, узбекские имена, сравнительное языкознание, лингвокультурология.

INTRODUCTION

Personal names are an important part of every nation's linguistic and cultural heritage. Besides identifying individuals, they reflect historical traditions, social values, religious beliefs, and cultural identity. For this reason, the study of personal names occupies a significant place in anthroponymy, a branch of onomastics concerned with human names and naming practices.

Gender is one of the social categories commonly reflected in naming systems. In many languages, personal names indicate whether an individual is male or female and often embody cultural expectations related to masculinity and femininity. These gender associations may be expressed through linguistic structure, semantic meaning, phonological features, or long-established naming traditions.

The relationship between language, culture, and gender has attracted increasing attention in contemporary linguistic research. Personal names provide valuable material for such studies because they preserve cultural information and reflect social attitudes. Naming practices are often influenced by historical, religious, and cultural factors, making them an important source for understanding the interaction between language and society.

English and Uzbek anthroponymic systems have developed in different linguistic and cultural environments. English names have been shaped by Germanic, Greek, Latin, French, and Biblical traditions, while Uzbek names reflect Turkic heritage, Islamic culture, and Arabic-Persian influences. As a result, the two naming systems demonstrate different ways of expressing gender.

Although numerous studies have investigated English and Uzbek personal names separately, comparative research focusing on gender markers remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to identify and compare the linguistic and cultural indicators of gender in English and Uzbek personal names. The research seeks to reveal how gender is represented in both naming traditions and how cultural values influence naming practices.

The findings are expected to contribute to anthroponymy, comparative linguistics, and linguocultural studies by providing a better understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and gender representation.

Literature Review

The study of personal names has long been an important area of linguistic research. Within onomastics, anthroponymy focuses on human names, their origins, meanings, structure, and social functions. Researchers have shown that personal names are more than simple labels; they reflect historical development, cultural traditions, social values, and collective identity.

Earlier studies mainly concentrated on the etymology and historical origins of names, while modern research has expanded to include sociolinguistic and cultural perspectives. According to Hough (2016), personal names provide valuable information about the history and culture of a speech community. Similarly, Algeo (2010) notes that names preserve traces of linguistic change and cultural interaction over time.

Many scholars emphasize the close relationship between language and culture in naming practices. Hanks, Hardcastle, and Hodges (2006) argue that personal names often preserve information about religious beliefs, social traditions, and historical events. In this sense, names function as cultural symbols that connect individuals with the broader community. Crystal (2019) also points out that naming traditions reveal the values and priorities of a society.

Gender has become an important topic in contemporary linguistic studies. Researchers generally agree that gender is reflected in different aspects of language, including vocabulary, communication patterns, and naming systems. Personal names are particularly useful for examining gender representation because they often indicate whether a person is male or female and may reflect cultural expectations associated with masculinity and femininity.

In English anthroponymy, gender is usually expressed through social convention rather than explicit grammatical markers. Names such as John, William, and Michael are traditionally associated with males, while Mary, Elizabeth, and Sarah are widely recognized as female names. Room (1996) notes that the

identification of gender in English names depends largely on cultural knowledge shared by members of society.

Researchers have also observed certain phonological tendencies in English naming practices. Female names often end in vowels, while male names more frequently end in consonants. Although these patterns are not strict linguistic rules, they influence how speakers perceive gender. Another important feature of contemporary English anthroponymy is the growing use of gender-neutral names such as Taylor, Jordan, Morgan, and Alex. Lieberson (2000) connects this trend with changing social attitudes toward gender and identity.

Uzbek personal names demonstrate a different pattern of gender representation. Many Uzbek names retain clear lexical meanings that remain understandable to modern speakers. As a result, semantic meaning plays a much greater role in gender identification than in English. Uzbek naming traditions have developed under the influence of Turkic culture, Islamic beliefs, and Arabic-Persian linguistic heritage.

According to Begmatov (1994), Uzbek personal names often express parents' wishes, cultural values, and moral ideals. Female names commonly contain elements such as gul ("flower"), oy ("moon"), and nur ("light"), which are associated with beauty, grace, and femininity. Examples include Gulnora, Mohinur, and Shahnoza. Male names, on the other hand, frequently contain elements connected with strength, bravery, leadership, and honor, as seen in names such as Temur, Sherzod, Bekzod, and Sardor.

The cultural significance of Uzbek names has also been highlighted by Mahmudov (2017), who argues that personal names reflect the worldview and traditions of a society. Through their meanings and symbolic associations, names preserve important cultural information and contribute to the formation of identity.

Comparative studies suggest that while many cultures associate male names with strength and authority and female names with beauty and grace, the linguistic expression of these ideas varies across languages. Despite considerable research on English and Uzbek anthroponymy, comparative studies specifically focused on gender markers remain limited. Therefore, further investigation of gender representation in the naming systems of both languages can contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and identity.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative comparative approach to examine linguistic and cultural markers of gender in English and Uzbek personal names. The research combines perspectives from anthroponymy, onomastics, sociolinguistics, and linguocultural studies.

The corpus consists of eighty personal names divided into four groups: twenty English male names, twenty English female names, twenty Uzbek male names, and twenty Uzbek female names. The selected names are widely used in their respective linguistic communities and possess clear gender associations.

The analysis is based on four complementary methods. Descriptive analysis is used to identify structural and linguistic features of the names. Semantic analysis focuses on meanings and lexical elements associated with gender representation. Comparative analysis is applied to reveal similarities and differences between English and Uzbek naming systems. Linguocultural analysis examines the relationship between naming practices and cultural values.

The study seeks to identify the main linguistic and cultural mechanisms through which gender is represented in personal names and to compare the role of these mechanisms in the two languages.

Results and Discussion

1. Gender Representation in English Personal Names

The analysis of English personal names shows that gender is mainly identified through historical convention and cultural recognition rather than explicit linguistic markers. Most male names in the corpus, including John, James, William, Michael, and David, have Biblical, Germanic, Greek, or Latin origins and maintain stable masculine associations in modern English.

A noticeable feature of male names is their tendency to end in consonant sounds. Although this pattern is not a grammatical rule, it contributes to the perception of masculinity. Female names such as Emma, Sophia, Olivia, Amelia, and Anna more frequently end in vowels, creating phonological patterns commonly associated with femininity.

Unlike Uzbek names, the meanings of many English names are not immediately recognizable to modern speakers. Therefore, gender identification depends largely on cultural knowledge and long-established naming traditions rather than lexical meaning. The findings indicate that English anthroponymy relies primarily on social convention and phonological tendencies in representing gender.

Linguistic Characteristics of English Personal Names

Feature	Male Names	Female Names
Predominantly consonant-final	High	Low
Predominantly vowel-final	Low	High
Biblical origin	High	High
Semantic transparency	Low	Low
Historical convention	Very high	Very high

The results suggest that English personal names function primarily as culturally inherited markers of gender rather than semantically transparent linguistic units.

2. Gender Representation in Uzbek Personal Names

The analysis of Uzbek personal names demonstrates a stronger connection between lexical meaning and gender. Many names contain semantic elements that clearly indicate masculine or feminine qualities.

Male names such as Jasur, Temur, Sardor, Rustam, and Bekzod are associated with bravery, strength, leadership, and authority. Components like bek often symbolize nobility and social status. Female names including Gulnora, Mohinur, Dilnoza, and Shahnoza contain elements related to beauty, grace, light, and elegance. Lexical units such as gul (“flower”), oy (“moon”), and nur (“light”) function as culturally recognized markers of femininity.

The findings suggest that Uzbek names preserve semantic transparency, allowing speakers to identify gender-related meanings more directly than in English.

Dominant Semantic Categories in Uzbek Personal Names

Semantic Category	Male Names	Female Names
Strength and bravery	High	Low
Leadership and authority	High	Low
Beauty and elegance	Low	Very high
Nature symbolism	Moderate	High
Spiritual values	High	High
Semantic transparency	Very high	Very high

The analysis indicates that Uzbek personal names preserve a close relationship between linguistic meaning and gender representation, making them highly informative linguistic and cultural markers.

3. Comparative Analysis of English and Uzbek Personal Names

The comparison reveals significant differences between the two naming systems. English names generally show low semantic transparency because their original meanings are often unfamiliar to contemporary speakers. As a result, gender is identified mainly through social convention and historical usage.

Uzbek names, in contrast, retain clear lexical meanings and cultural symbolism. Gender is expressed not only through tradition but also through semantic components that remain understandable within the language. Female names often emphasize beauty, purity, and grace, whereas male names highlight courage, strength, and leadership.

Another difference concerns gender-neutral naming practices. Modern English increasingly accepts names that can be used for both males and females, such as Taylor, Jordan, and Alex. Uzbek naming traditions remain largely gender-specific, and neutral names are comparatively uncommon.

Comparison of Gender Representation in English and Uzbek Names

Feature	English Names	Uzbek Names
Semantic Transparency	Low	Very high
Dependence on Historical Convention	Very hogh	Moderate
Cultural Symbolism	Moderate	Very high
Explicit Gender Markers	Limited	Extensive
Gender-Neutral Names	Common	Rare
Lexical Motivation	Low	High

The comparison demonstrates that English anthroponymy functions mainly through convention, while Uzbek anthroponymy relies more heavily on semantic and cultural motivation.

4. Linguistic and Cultural Markers of Gender

The study identifies several important markers of gender representation in personal names.

Phonological markers are visible in both languages. Female names often display vowel-final patterns, whereas male names more frequently end in consonants.

Semantic markers play a particularly important role in Uzbek anthroponymy. Female names are commonly linked with beauty, nature, light, and elegance, while male names emphasize strength, authority, and bravery.

Cultural markers are reflected in naming traditions shaped by social values, family expectations, and cultural ideals. Personal names therefore function not only as identifiers but also as carriers of cultural meaning.

Religious markers are present in both naming systems. English names frequently derive from Biblical traditions, while Uzbek names reflect Islamic and Arabic-Persian cultural influences.

5. Interpretation of Findings

The findings confirm that gender representation in personal names is closely connected with both language and culture. English names rely primarily on convention and historical continuity, whereas Uzbek names preserve stronger links between lexical meaning and gender identity.

The study also demonstrates that personal names serve as cultural symbols that transmit values and social expectations across generations. Through their meanings and associations, names contribute to the construction of both individual and collective identity.

Overall, the results support the view that anthroponymy provides valuable insights into the relationship between language, culture, and gender representation.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the linguistic and cultural markers of gender in English and Uzbek personal names through a comparative analysis. The findings demonstrate that gender is represented differently in the two anthroponymic systems.

English personal names mainly indicate gender through historical convention, cultural recognition, and phonological tendencies. In contrast, Uzbek personal names display greater semantic transparency, with lexical components directly reflecting culturally significant concepts related to masculinity and femininity.

The research shows that Uzbek names are more strongly connected to lexical meaning and cultural symbolism, while English names depend largely on established social usage. These differences highlight the influence of language, history, and culture on naming practices.

The study contributes to anthroponymic and linguocultural research by demonstrating how personal names function as linguistic and cultural markers of gender. Future studies may expand the corpus and explore the impact of contemporary social and cultural changes on naming traditions.

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