COGNITIVE AND CULTURAL MODELS OF NAMING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ANTHROPONYMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract: This article investigates cognitive and cultural models underlying personal naming practices in English and Uzbek. The study aims to identify how cultural values, cognitive schemas, and social expectations influence the selection and interpretation of anthroponyms. Using a comparative qualitative approach, the research analyzes naming motivations, conceptual structures, and symbolic meanings embedded in personal names. The findings demonstrate that English naming practices tend to reflect individualistic and aesthetic preferences, whereas Uzbek anthroponyms are strongly shaped by collective cultural values, traditions, and symbolic intentions. The study contributes to cognitive linguistics and onomastics by proposing a model of naming that integrates cultural and cognitive dimensions.

Keywords: anthroponyms, cognitive linguistics, cultural models, naming practices, English, Uzbek, conceptualization, identity

Introduction

Personal names, or anthroponyms, represent a significant area of linguistic and cultural study, as they encode not only individual identity but also collective cultural knowledge. In recent decades, the interdisciplinary field of cognitive linguistics has provided new insights into how language reflects human thought and conceptualization. Within this framework, naming is viewed not as a random or purely linguistic act, but as a cognitively motivated process influenced by cultural models and social norms.

The present study focuses on the comparative analysis of English and Uzbek anthroponyms from a cognitive and cultural perspective. While previous research has examined semantic and etymological aspects of names, less attention has been given to the underlying cognitive models that shape naming practices across different cultures. This gap is particularly relevant in the context of English and Uzbek, which represent distinct cultural and linguistic systems.

This study aims to explore how cognitive structures and cultural values interact in the formation of personal names. The research seeks to answer the following questions: What cognitive models underlie naming practices in English and Uzbek? How do cultural beliefs and values influence name selection? What similarities and differences can be identified between the two systems?

Methodology

The research employs a qualitative comparative approach, drawing on data from commonly used English and Uzbek personal names. The analysis is based on principles of cognitive linguistics, particularly the concepts of conceptualization, categorization, and cultural models.

The study involves three main stages. First, a selection of representative anthroponyms from both languages is examined. Second, the names are analyzed in terms of their cognitive motivation, including metaphorical and symbolic associations. Third, a comparative framework is applied to identify similarities and differences in naming models.

The methodological framework integrates cognitive-semantic analysis with cultural interpretation, allowing for a deeper understanding of how names function as carriers of meaning within specific cultural contexts.

Results and Discussion

The analysis reveals that naming practices in English and Uzbek are shaped by distinct cognitive and cultural models.

In English, personal names often reflect an individualistic model of identity. Many names are chosen based on aesthetic appeal, phonetic preference, or modern trends rather than deep symbolic meaning. For example, names may be selected for their sound, uniqueness, or association with popular culture. This reflects a cognitive model in which personal identity is constructed as flexible and individual-centered.

In contrast, Uzbek naming practices are strongly influenced by cultural and symbolic considerations. Names frequently carry explicit meanings related to positive qualities, religious beliefs, or social expectations. For instance, names may express wishes for health, beauty, strength, or moral virtue. This reflects a collectivist cognitive model, where naming is closely tied to cultural values and communal identity.

Another important difference lies in the role of tradition. Uzbek anthroponyms often follow established naming patterns and are influenced by family, historical figures, or religious heritage. This indicates a stable cognitive schema rooted in cultural continuity. In English, however, naming practices demonstrate greater variability and innovation, reflecting dynamic cultural change.

Despite these differences, both systems share certain universal features. In both English and Uzbek, names function as markers of identity and social belonging. They also serve as cognitive tools for categorizing individuals within a cultural framework. This suggests that while specific models may differ, the fundamental cognitive role of naming remains consistent.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that personal naming is a cognitively and culturally grounded process, shaped by underlying models of thought and social organization. English and Uzbek anthroponyms reflect different approaches to identity construction: individualistic and flexible in English, and collective and symbolic in Uzbek.

By integrating cognitive and cultural perspectives, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of naming practices as a complex linguistic phenomenon. The proposed model highlights the interaction between conceptual structures and cultural values in shaping anthroponyms.

Future research may expand this analysis by incorporating quantitative data or exploring additional languages and cultural contexts. Such studies would further enhance the theoretical framework of cognitive onomastics and its applications in linguistics and cultural studies.

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