THE TREND OF UNISEX NAMES IN MODERN UZBEK AND ENGLISH ANTHROPONYMY

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Abstract: This article examines the growing trend of unisex names in modern Uzbek and English anthroponymy. It explores how social, cultural, and linguistic factors influence the emergence and spread of gender-neutral naming practices. The study analyzes similarities and differences between Uzbek and English naming traditions and highlights the role of globalization, identity construction, and cultural transformation in shaping contemporary anthroponymic systems.

Keywords: anthroponymy, unisex names, gender-neutral naming, Uzbek names, English names, identity, sociolinguistics

ZAMONAVIY O‘ZBEK VA INGLIZ ANTROPONIMIYASIDA UNISEKS ISMLARIDAN FOYDALANISH TENDENTSIYALARI

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola zamonaviy o‘zbek va ingliz antroponimiyasida uniseks ismlarning tobora ko‘proq qo'llanilish tendentsiyasini o'rganadi. U ijtimoiy, madaniy va tilga oid omillar jinsiy neytral nomlash amaliyotlarining paydo bo‘lishi va tarqalishiga qanday ta'sir qilishini tahlil qiladi. Tadqiqot o‘zbek va ingliz ismlash an'analari o‘rtasidagi o‘xshashlik va farqlarni tahlil qiladi hamda globalizatsiya, shaxsiyat shakllanishi va madaniy o‘zgarishlarning zamonaviy onomastik tizimlar rivojlanishidagi rolini ta'kidlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: antroponimika, uniseks ismlar, jinsga nisbatan neytral ismlar, o'zbek ismlar, ingliz ismlar, identitet, sotsiolingvistika.

ТЕНДЕНЦИИ В ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИИ УНИВЕРСАЛЬНЫХ ИМЕН В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ УЗБЕКСКОЙ И АНГЛИЙСКОЙ АНТРОПОНИМИИ

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается растущая тенденция к использованию унисекс-имен в современной узбекской и английской антропонимике. В ней исследуется, как социальные, культурные и лингвистические факторы влияют на появление и распространение практик присвоения имен, не зависящих от пола. В исследовании анализируются сходства и различия между узбекскими и английскими традициями присвоения имен, а также подчеркивается роль глобализации, формирования идентичности и культурных преобразований в становлении современных антропонимических систем.

Ключевые слова: антропонимика, унисекс-имена, гендерно-нейтральные имена, узбекские имена, английские имена, идентичность, социолингвистика

Introduction

Personal names are an essential part of cultural identity and social structure. Traditionally, names in both Uzbek and English cultures have been strongly associated with gender distinctions, reflecting societal norms and expectations. However, in recent decades, there has been a noticeable shift toward the use of unisex names, which can be applied to individuals regardless of gender. This trend reflects broader social changes, including evolving views on gender roles, increased cultural interaction, and the influence of global media. Studying unisex names from an anthroponymic perspective provides valuable insight into how language adapts to social transformation.

Main part

The emergence of unisex names in both Uzbek and English anthroponymy is closely connected to the process of social change and gender perception. In English-speaking societies, gender-neutral names such as Taylor, Jordan, and Alex have become increasingly common. These names often originate from surnames, occupations, or shortened forms of traditional names. Their flexibility allows individuals to express identity without strict gender categorization.

In Uzbek naming traditions, the concept of unisex names has historically been less prominent due to strong cultural associations between names and gender roles. However, recent developments indicate a gradual shift. Some names are now used more flexibly, especially those with neutral meanings or modern stylistic forms. This change is influenced by urbanization, exposure to global culture, and evolving social attitudes.

A key factor driving this trend is globalization and cultural exchange. Through media, education, and digital communication, Uzbek society has become more exposed to international naming practices. English-language films, social media platforms, and global celebrities contribute to the popularity of unisex names, making them more acceptable and recognizable across cultures. Another important aspect is identity construction and individual expression. In modern societies, names are increasingly seen as a means of expressing personal identity rather than simply reflecting traditional norms. Unisex names allow for greater flexibility and individuality, especially among younger generations. Parents may choose such names to emphasize uniqueness, modernity, or neutrality.

From a linguistic perspective, unisex names often share certain structural and phonetic features. In English, many gender-neutral names are short, simple, and adaptable, often ending in neutral sounds. In Uzbek, similar tendencies can be observed in newly emerging names that avoid strongly gender-marked suffixes or meanings. This suggests that linguistic form plays a role in the perception of gender neutrality. The trend also reflects changes in sociocultural values. In English-speaking contexts, the rise of gender equality movements has encouraged the use of names that do not reinforce traditional gender roles. In Uzbek society, while traditional values remain influential, there is a growing openness to new naming practices, particularly in urban environments. However, the adoption of unisex names also raises certain challenges. In some contexts, such names may lead to ambiguity or confusion in communication, especially in formal settings where gender identification is expected. Additionally, there may be resistance from more conservative segments of society who prefer to maintain traditional naming conventions.

Despite these challenges, the increasing use of unisex names demonstrates the dynamic nature of anthroponymy. Names evolve in response to social, cultural, and linguistic changes, reflecting the shifting values of society. The comparison between Uzbek and English contexts highlights both universal trends and culture-specific developments in naming practices. The trend of unisex names in modern Uzbek and English anthroponymy can be further explored through deeper sociolinguistic, cultural, and functional dimensions. Unisex names are not merely a linguistic innovation but a reflection of shifting social ideologies, identity construction, and evolving perceptions of gender roles in contemporary society.

One of the most significant aspects of this phenomenon is the role of gender neutrality in language. In English-speaking societies, the increasing acceptance of non-binary and flexible gender identities has directly influenced naming practices. Names that were once strongly associated with a specific gender are now used more broadly, reflecting a move away from rigid

gender categorization. This shift demonstrates how language adapts to social change and supports inclusivity.In the Uzbek context, although traditional naming practices remain dominant, there is a noticeable emergence of neutral naming tendencies, particularly in urban and modernized environments. These names are often selected for their aesthetic qualities, phonetic simplicity, or symbolic meanings rather than strict gender association. This indicates a gradual transformation in how names are perceived and used within society.

Another important dimension is the influence of mass media and digital culture. Social media platforms, global entertainment, and international communication expose individuals to diverse naming systems. As a result, English unisex names gain popularity beyond their original cultural context. Uzbek parents, especially younger generations, may adopt such names due to their modern appeal and global recognition. This process contributes to the internationalization of naming practices. From a linguistic perspective, unisex names often demonstrate phonological neutrality and morphological simplicity. In English, many gender-neutral names lack traditional gender markers such as suffixes or specific endings. Similarly, in Uzbek, emerging unisex names tend to avoid culturally marked affixes that traditionally indicate gender. This structural neutrality allows names to function across gender categories without modification.

The phenomenon can also be analyzed through the lens of onomastic innovation and creativity. Modern naming practices increasingly favor originality and uniqueness. Parents may create new names or modify existing ones to produce forms that are not clearly associated with a specific gender. This creative process reflects a broader trend toward individualization in society, where personal identity is prioritized over collective norms. Another key factor is the role of social mobility and globalization. As individuals interact across cultures for education, work, and migration, there is a growing preference for names that are easily recognizable and pronounceable in different linguistic contexts. Unisex names often meet this requirement, making them practical choices in a globalized world.

From a sociocultural perspective, the use of unisex names can also be seen as a form of symbolic equality. By choosing gender-neutral names, individuals may consciously or unconsciously challenge traditional gender roles and promote more egalitarian values. This is particularly evident in English-speaking societies, where naming practices are increasingly influenced by social movements advocating equality and inclusivity. However, the adoption of unisex names is not without challenges. In both English and Uzbek contexts, cultural resistance and traditional expectations may limit their widespread acceptance. In some communities, names are closely tied to cultural heritage, family lineage, and religious identity, making deviation from established norms less acceptable. This creates a dynamic tension between tradition and modernity in anthroponymic practices.

Another important issue is pragmatic ambiguity. Unisex names may lead to uncertainty in identifying gender in certain communicative contexts, such as official documentation or initial interactions. While this ambiguity may be acceptable or even desirable in some contexts, it can also create practical challenges in others.

From a cognitive perspective, the perception of names is influenced by associative meaning and cultural knowledge. Even when a name is structurally neutral, speakers may associate it with a particular gender based on cultural experience. This demonstrates that gender perception in names is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a cognitive and cultural process.

Finally, the ongoing evolution of unisex names highlights the dynamic nature of language and its responsiveness to social change. As societies continue to evolve, naming practices will likely become even more flexible and diverse. The interaction between global influences and local traditions will shape the future of anthroponymy in both English and Uzbek contexts.

Conclusion

The trend of unisex names in modern Uzbek and English anthroponymy reflects broader processes of globalization, cultural interaction, and changing social values. While English naming practices have long embraced gender neutrality, Uzbek anthroponymy is gradually adapting to this trend. Unisex names serve as indicators of evolving identity, flexibility, and modernity in both linguistic systems. Their study provides valuable insight into the relationship between language, culture, and social change.

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