

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK ANTHROPONYMS IN  
THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL SIGNS AND SYMBOLS**

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*This study examines English and Uzbek anthroponyms as cultural signs and symbols encoding community values, religious beliefs, and social identities. Employing cultural semiotic analysis and cognitive linguistic frameworks, the research analyzes approximately 600 names from each tradition to identify universal patterns and culture-specific symbolic systems. Findings reveal that English names increasingly symbolize individualism and aesthetic preference, while Uzbek names function as potent symbols of Islamic faith and cultural heritage. The study contributes to understanding how naming practices serve as cultural symbol systems transmitting collective meanings across generations.*

**Introduction**

Personal names function as cultural symbols beyond their linguistic role as identifiers, encoding religious devotion, expressing social aspirations, and transmitting cultural

heritage<sup>23</sup>. This comparative study investigates how English and Uzbek anthroponyms operate as cultural signs and symbols within their respective cultural systems, revealing both universal symbolic patterns and culture-specific elaborations.

Cultural semiotics examines how communities create symbolic systems organizing collective meaning<sup>24</sup>. Names function as multivalent cultural symbols carrying religious, ideological, and social meanings. Unlike linguistic signs defined by arbitrary reference, cultural symbols derive meaning from culturally constructed associations and community practices.

Cultural models—shared cognitive structures organizing understanding within communities—shape anthroponymic symbolism<sup>25</sup>. Models of personhood (individualist versus collectivist), spirituality (religious versus secular), and kinship (patrilineal versus bilateral) determine what names symbolize in specific cultural contexts.

Metaphorical structures in naming (PERSON AS PLANT, PERSON AS CELESTIAL BODY) constitute culturally elaborated symbolic systems rather than universal cognitive patterns<sup>26</sup>. Cultural communities select, elaborate, and valorize different metaphorical symbols reflecting distinct aesthetic traditions and value systems.

The study analyzed approximately 600 names from each tradition using cultural-semiotic methodology. Analysis involved: (1) cultural contextualization situating names within religious traditions and social structures; (2) symbolic interpretation identifying cultural meanings; (3) cultural model reconstruction inferring underlying frameworks; (4) comparative analysis identifying universal patterns and culture-specific divergences. English data derived from onomastic literature<sup>27</sup>; Uzbek data from onomastic research<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Geertz C. The interpretation of cultures. – New York: Basic Books, 1973. – P. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Geertz C. The interpretation of cultures. – New York: Basic Books, 1973. – P. 89; Turner V. The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual. – Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967. – P. 19-47.

<sup>25</sup> D'Andrade R. The development of cognitive anthropology. 2nd ed. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. – P. 179-201; Shore B. Culture in mind: Cognition, culture, and the problem of meaning. 2nd ed. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. – P. 56-78.

<sup>26</sup> Kövecses Z. Extended conceptual metaphor theory. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. – P. 45-67; Kövecses Z. Introduction to metaphor: A theoretical overview. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. – P. 112-134.

<sup>27</sup> Hanks P., Hodges F. A dictionary of first names. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. – 452 p.; Lieberman S. A matter of taste: How names, fashions, and culture change. Revised ed. – New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014. – 328 p.

<sup>28</sup> Begmatov E. O'zbek ismlari [Uzbek names]. – Toshkent: Akademnashr, 2013. – 298 b.; Nuritdinov Q. O'zbek antroponimiyasi [Uzbek anthroponymy]. – Toshkent: Toshkent Davlat Universiteti, 2017. – 412 b.; Karimova S. Post-independence naming trends in Uzbekistan // Central Asian Studies Review. – 2024. – Vol. 12. – № 3. – P. 234-251.

Names mark ethnic boundaries and express ethnic pride. Irish (Liam, Siobhan), Hispanic (José, Maria), and African American names (Shaniqua, Tyrone) serve as cultural identity symbols, triggering stereotype-consistent associations<sup>29</sup>.

Names function as cultural capital signaling social positioning. Elite families favor traditional classical names symbolizing cultural sophistication; working-class families prefer celebrity-inspired names and creative spellings symbolizing popular culture connection<sup>30</sup>.

Names constitute primary gender identity symbols, with floral and virtue names symbolizing femininity and occupational names symbolizing masculinity. Emerging gender-neutral names (Riley, Jordan, Taylor) symbolize evolving cultural attitudes toward gender fluidity.

Contemporary naming increasingly emphasizes unique, rare, or invented names symbolizing cultural values of individual distinction and parental creativity.

Botanical names (Rose, Lily, Willow) function as feminine cultural symbols invoking associations between femininity and natural beauty, reflecting cultural ideals of delicacy and growth.

Names like Luna, Stella, Aurora symbolize transcendence and beauty, reflecting contemporary aesthetic valorizing cosmic imagery.

Virtue names (Grace, Faith, Hope) symbolize moral aspirations, though contemporary usage often reflects aesthetic preferences rather than explicit moral ideology.

Naming functions in cultural politics through multicultural name adoption symbolizing cosmopolitan identity, cultural revival names asserting ethnic distinctiveness, and feminist naming practices challenging gender hierarchies.

Islamic framework constitutes dominant cultural symbolic system in Uzbek naming. Prophetic names (Muhammad, Ibrahim, Maryam, Fotima) function as sacred cultural symbols connecting individuals to Islamic tradition and expressing devotion. The prevalence of Muhammad demonstrates how names transcend individual reference to embody Islamic identity itself<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Shokhenmayer E. Name-based discrimination in hiring practices: Evidence from a field experiment // Social Forces. – 2020. – Vol. 98. – № 4. – P. 1765-1770.

<sup>30</sup> Lieberman S. A matter of taste: How names, fashions, and culture change. Revised ed. – New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014. – P. 89-112.

<sup>9</sup> Journal of International Scientific Research. Cultural significance of Uzbek names: Symbolism and meaning // Journal of International Scientific Research. – 2025. – Vol. 8. – № 1. – P. 47-49.



Theophoric names (Abdullah, Abdurrahmon) symbolize submission to Allah. Virtue names (Sobir "patient," Shukur "thankful," Sadoqat "sincerity") embody Islamic ethical ideals, reflecting cultural belief that names shape character development.

Names referencing historical figures (Temur, Mirzo Ulugbek, Bobur) function as national identity symbols. Post-independence revival symbolizes cultural decolonization and national pride assertion<sup>32</sup>. Turkic-origin names (Arslon, Botir, Yulduz) symbolize ethnic identity and pre-Islamic heritage.

Uzbek naming demonstrates distinctive aesthetic valorizing elaborate metaphorical compounds. Floral compounds (Gulchehra "flower-faced," Gulbahor "spring flower") create layered symbolism reflecting Persian-Uzbek poetic traditions. Celestial names (Oydin "moonlit," Oyshirin "moon-sweet") carry complex feminine symbolism representing beauty, illumination, and constancy. Jewel names (Gavhar, Durr, Zumrad) symbolize preciousness and cultural refinement.

Naming ceremonies (beshik-to'yi, chilla) demonstrate that names function as potent cultural symbols requiring ritual consecration and community recognition. These ceremonies symbolize cultural incorporation, transforming biological infants into cultural persons through symbolic naming within community context<sup>33</sup>.

After independence naming demonstrates cultural politics. Decline of Soviet-era and Russian names symbolizes rejection of cultural imperialism. Increased Arabic-Islamic names symbolize religious revival. Revival of traditional Uzbek names symbolizes national identity reconstruction and cultural authenticity assertion<sup>34</sup>.

Both traditions employ names as identity symbols marking social categories, heritage transmission symbols connecting generations, aspirational symbols encoding desired qualities, and metaphorical symbols drawing on nature and cosmos. Both demonstrate social differentiation functions.

Uzbek naming remains fundamentally religious cultural practice with names primarily functioning as Islamic symbols. English naming has secularized, with names functioning as aesthetic choices or ethnic markers.

<sup>32</sup> Begmatov E. O'zbek ismlari [Uzbek names]. – Toshkent: Akademnashr, 2013. – P. 156-178; Karimova S. Post-independence naming trends in Uzbekistan // Central Asian Studies Review. – 2024. – Vol. 12. – № 3. – P. 238-242.

<sup>33</sup> Journal of International Scientific Research. Cultural significance of Uzbek names: Symbolism and meaning // Journal of International Scientific Research. – 2025. – Vol. 8. – № 1. – P. 52-54.

<sup>34</sup> Begmatov E. O'zbek ismlari [Uzbek names]. – Toshkent: Akademnashr, 2013. – P. 210-234; Karimova S. Post-independence naming trends in Uzbekistan // Central Asian Studies Review. – 2024. – Vol. 12. – № 3. – P. 245-248.

English names increasingly symbolize individual uniqueness reflecting individualist cultural values. Uzbek names symbolize family continuity, community membership, and religious affiliation reflecting collectivist orientation.

English trends toward simplicity and brevity symbolize minimalist values. Uzbek favors elaborate compounds and semantic richness symbolizing poetic artistry.

English demonstrates high innovation tolerance symbolizing cultural values around novelty. Uzbek remains conservative symbolizing heritage preservation emphasis.

Uzbek maintains elaborate naming ceremonies symbolizing sacred significance. English naming has become informal and private symbolizing individualized, secularized practice.

Divergences reflect fundamental differences in cultural models of personhood (individualist versus collectivist), spirituality (secular versus religious), temporality (innovation versus tradition), and authority (parental autonomy versus community authority).

The research demonstrates that anthroponyms constitute primary cultural symbol systems transmitting collective meanings. Names function as cultural capital deployed in identity construction, vehicles of cultural memory maintaining heritage connections, and symbolic resources in cultural politics.

Understanding names as culturally-loaded symbols requiring respectful recognition reduces miscommunication and promotes cultural competence.

Recognizing naming as cultural reproduction site supports documentation, knowledge transmission, and protection of naming rights for minoritized communities.

Onomastic content provides valuable material for teaching cultural values, developing intercultural awareness, and promoting cultural respect.

Awareness of name-based discrimination supports anonymous processes, cultural competence training, and policies protecting cultural expression.

### **Conclusion**

This comparative analysis demonstrates that anthroponyms function as powerful cultural symbols encoding religious devotion, transmitting heritage, and constructing identities. English names increasingly symbolize individualism and multicultural identity reflecting secularization and globalization. Uzbek names serve as potent symbols of Islamic faith and national heritage reflecting integrated religious-cultural identity and collectivist orientation.

The research contributes to understanding cultural symbol systems and meaning-making processes, demonstrating how everyday cultural practices encode fundamental cultural

models. Names constitute cultural capital, vehicles of cultural memory, and symbolic resources in cultural politics. Understanding names as cultural symbols illuminates intercultural communication, cultural preservation, and social justice issues.

Future research should extend comparative analysis to additional cultural traditions, investigate diaspora naming contexts, examine global cultural flows' effects on local practices, and explore emerging digital naming symbolism. Anthroponyms provide ideal data for investigating how communities construct symbolic worlds, reproduce cultural systems, and navigate cultural change.

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