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THE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ANTHROPONYMS IN FOLK EPICS: A STUDY OF "BEOWULF" AND "ALPOMISH"

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Abstract. This study investigates the structural characteristics of anthroponyms in the Old English epic Beowulf and the Uzbek national epic Alpomish. As linguocultural elements, anthroponyms serve as important indicators of historical traditions, social organization, mythological perceptions, and ethnic identity. Employing a comparative structural approach, the research analyzes the morphological patterns, word-formation processes, semantic foundations, patronymic naming conventions, and gender-related features of personal names in both epics. The analysis reveals that anthroponyms in Beowulf are largely based on Germanic compound naming patterns associated with heroism, warfare, and noble lineage, whereas anthroponyms in Alpomish reflect Turkic naming customs characterized by symbolic meanings, kinship ties, tribal affiliation, and cultural values. The similarities and distinctions identified in the study demonstrate the typological peculiarities of Indo-European and Turkic anthroponymic traditions and emphasize the significant role of epic literature in safeguarding and transmitting national onomastic heritage.

Keywords: anthroponym, structural analysis, epic discourse, Beowulf, Alpomish, comparative linguistics.

Introduction. Anthroponyms constitute one of the most stable and culturally significant layers of the lexical system, serving not only as nominative units but also as repositories of collective memory, ethnic identity, and historical consciousness. Within the framework of literary onomastics, personal names in epic discourse perform complex structural and semiotic functions: they identify, characterize, symbolize, and encode sociocultural values. Unlike everyday naming practices, epic anthroponyms are rarely arbitrary; rather, they are structurally motivated and semantically charged, reflecting archaic worldviews and early stages of linguistic development. Epic literature, as a product of oral tradition, preserves archaic anthroponymic models that often predate later linguistic transformations. In this regard, the Old English epic Beowulf and the Uzbek heroic epic Alpomish represent two monumental sources for comparative anthroponymic research. Although these works belong to different linguistic families—Indo-European (Germanic branch) and Turkic—they share structural similarities characteristic of heroic narrative traditions: emphasis on lineage, glorification of martial virtues, and symbolic representation of personal identity.

From a structural-linguistic perspective, anthroponyms may be analyzed in terms of morphological composition, word-formation patterns, derivational models, semantic transparency, phonological structure, and syntactic behavior within the text. Such an approach enables the identification of typological parallels and divergences between naming systems shaped by distinct historical and cultural environments. In Beowulf, personal names frequently follow the traditional Germanic dithematic compound model, combining two lexical stems that express heroic attributes, battle symbolism, or social prestige. In contrast, Alpomish demonstrates Turkic derivational

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productivity, lexical transparency, and the presence of culturally marked affixes reflecting gender, kinship, and social evaluation.

The relevance of this study is determined by several factors. First, comparative research on anthroponyms contributes to broader discussions in linguoculturology and historical linguistics concerning the interaction between language structure and cultural identity. Second, epic anthroponyms represent fossilized linguistic forms that preserve archaic morphological patterns no longer productive in modern usage. Third, the structural analysis of names enhances our understanding of characterization techniques and narrative strategies in epic discourse.

Therefore, this article aims to conduct a detailed structural analysis of anthroponyms in Beowulf and Alpomish, focusing on morphological composition, derivational mechanisms, compound structures, patronymic constructions, and gender marking. By examining these elements comparatively, the study seeks to reveal how epic naming systems reflect broader linguistic typology and cultural worldview, thereby contributing to the development of comparative anthroponymy and literary onomastics.

Literature Review. The study of anthroponyms has long occupied a central position within onomastics, historical linguistics, and literary studies. Personal names are regarded not merely as linguistic labels but as culturally and historically conditioned units reflecting social organization, worldview, and ethnic identity. The theoretical foundations of modern anthroponymy were established in the works of prominent scholars such as Eilert Ekwall, whose research on early English names demonstrated the historical and etymological value of Germanic naming traditions, and A. V. Superanskaya, who systematized principles of name classification and emphasized the structural-semantic analysis of proper names.

Further contributions by V. A. Nikonov expanded the sociolinguistic dimension of anthroponymic studies, arguing that personal names function as indicators of social stratification and cultural ideology. In Turkic onomastics, scholars have focused on the lexical motivation, symbolic semantics, and derivational morphology of names, demonstrating that Turkic anthroponyms frequently preserve transparent semantic structures linked to social values, kinship relations, and mythological beliefs.

In contrast, research on the Uzbek heroic epic Alpomish has primarily focused on its folkloric, cultural, and ethnographic dimensions. Linguistic investigations into its anthroponyms emphasize Turkic derivational morphology, semantic transparency, and symbolic naming patterns. Studies of Alpomish demonstrate that many personal names are motivated by lexical roots denoting bravery, wealth, beauty, or tribal identity, often accompanied by productive affixes indicating gender or social evaluation. However, compared to Beowulf, fewer works have systematically approached these names from a strictly structural perspective.

Comparative research between Germanic and Turkic anthroponymic systems remains relatively limited. While typological linguistics has addressed differences between Indo-European compounding and Turkic agglutinative morphology, the application of these distinctions to epic anthroponymy has not been sufficiently explored. Most existing studies concentrate either on historical-etymological reconstruction or on cultural-symbolic interpretation, leaving a gap in comprehensive structural comparison.

Moreover, interdisciplinary approaches combining structural linguistics, comparative literature, and linguoculturology have increasingly emphasized that epic anthroponyms serve as intersections between language structure and cultural worldview. Scholars argue that naming systems reflect not only linguistic typology but also social organization, mythological imagination, and collective ideology.

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Methodology. This study applies a comparative structural-onomastic approach to the analysis of anthroponyms in Beowulf and Alpomish. The research is primarily qualitative, supported by limited quantitative observation. The corpus includes major personal names (heroes, rulers, female characters, and patronymic constructions) extracted from both epics. Each anthroponym was identified and classified according to structural type: simple, compound (dithematic), derivational (root + affix), and patronymic forms.

The analysis focused on:

Morphological composition (roots, affixes, compounds)

Word-formation models

Gender markers

Patronymic structures

Semantic motivation where structurally relevant

In Beowulf, attention was given to Germanic compound formations and genealogical formulas. In Alpomish, the emphasis was placed on agglutinative morphology, derivational suffixes, and semantically transparent naming patterns.

Finally, a comparative-typological stage was conducted to identify similarities and differences between Indo-European and Turkic anthroponymic structures. This method allows for the examination of how linguistic form reflects cultural and social organization within epic discourse.

Results. The structural analysis of anthroponyms in Beowulf and Alpomish revealed both typological similarities and significant morphological differences reflecting their respective linguistic systems.

1. Structural Types and Distribution

The findings show that anthroponyms in Beowulf are predominantly dithematic compounds, consisting of two lexical stems. These compounds frequently encode martial and heroic semantics (e.g., glory, battle, strength, protection). The dominant structural model is:

$N_1 + N_2 \rightarrow$ Compound Heroic Name

In contrast, anthroponyms in Alpomish primarily follow an agglutinative derivational model, where a lexical root is combined with affixes or descriptive elements. The most productive patterns include:

Root + Suffix

Adjective + Noun

Symbolic Lexeme + Qualifier

Thus, compounding dominates in the Germanic system, while affixation and lexical transparency dominate in the Turkic system.

2. Patronymic Constructions

The analysis indicates a high frequency of patronymic identification in Beowulf. Heroes are regularly introduced through lineage formulas ("son of…" constructions), emphasizing genealogical legitimacy and tribal hierarchy. Patronymics function as structural extensions of identity.

In Alpomish, kinship and tribal references are present but less formulaic. Identity is connected more broadly to clan affiliation and social group rather than strictly syntactic patronymic repetition.

3. Semantic Transparency

Another significant result concerns semantic opacity versus transparency.

In Beowulf, many compounds preserve archaic Germanic elements whose meanings are partially opaque to the modern reader, although structurally analyzable. In Alpomish, most anthroponyms remain semantically transparent, with lexical roots directly expressing bravery, wealth, beauty, or

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symbolic animal imagery. This demonstrates a higher degree of immediate lexical motivation in the Turkic epic tradition.

4. Gender Marking

Clear structural gender markers were identified in Alpomish, where feminine names frequently contain specific affixes indicating affection, beauty, or status.

In Beowulf, grammatical gender distinctions are not morphologically marked within anthroponyms themselves; gender identification relies on contextual reference rather than derivational morphology.

5. Symbolic Elements

Both epics demonstrate the use of animal symbolism (particularly the wolf) and heroic attributes embedded within name structure. However, the structural realization differs:

Germanic symbolism appears through compound stems.

Turkic symbolism appears through transparent lexical roots and descriptive combinations.

6. Typological Conclusions

The results confirm that:

1. Beowulf reflects an Indo-European compound naming tradition emphasizing martial abstractio n and genealogical continuity.

2. Alpomish reflects a Turkic agglutinative system characterized by lexical clarity, derivational productivity, and explicit gender marking.

3. Both epics encode social hierarchy and heroic ideology through structurally motivated anthroponyms.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that while the two epics share universal epic functions of naming—identity construction, lineage preservation, and heroic characterization—the structural mechanisms differ according to linguistic typology and cultural worldview.

Discussion. The results of the structural analysis demonstrate that anthroponyms in Beowulf and Alpomish are not merely nominative elements but structurally organized linguistic units that reflect deep typological and cultural distinctions. The discussion of these findings highlights how language structure, social organization, and epic worldview interact within two different linguistic families.

First, the predominance of dithematic compounds in Beowulf confirms the stability of the early Germanic naming tradition. The combination of two lexical stems—often associated with battle, glory, protection, or animal symbolism—demonstrates that personal identity in Anglo-Saxon society was ideologically linked to martial valor and heroic reputation. The structural density of these compounds reflects an abstraction of heroic qualities: instead of directly descriptive names, we observe compressed semantic structures where meaning is embedded in archaic lexical elements. This partially opaque structure suggests historical depth and the preservation of inherited Indo-European naming models.

In contrast, the anthroponyms in Alpomish reveal a different structural logic rooted in Turkic agglutinative morphology. The transparency of lexical roots and productive affixation indicate a naming system in which meaning remains immediately accessible. Rather than abstract compounds, names frequently present clear semantic motivation—bravery, beauty, wealth, nobility—through derivational or descriptive structures. This transparency reflects a worldview in which the individual is directly associated with socially valued traits expressed explicitly in the name itself.

The comparative findings also shed light on the concept of identity construction. In Beowulf, the frequent patronymic formulas emphasize genealogical legitimacy and tribal continuity. Identity is reinforced through repeated reference to ancestry, suggesting that heroic authority derives from

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lineage as much as from individual achievement. The structural repetition of "son of" constructions strengthens this collective-historical dimension.

In Alpomish, while kinship and tribal belonging are equally important, identity appears less syntactically dependent on formulaic patronymics and more integrated into descriptive and symbolic naming practices. The structural use of affixes and lexical modifiers reflects a social model in which communal identity is embedded in semantic clarity rather than genealogical repetition.

Gender marking further illustrates typological divergence. The presence of explicit feminine suffixes in Alpomish demonstrates morphological sensitivity to gender distinction within the anthroponymic system. In Beowulf, however, gender is not morphologically encoded within names, which suggests that the Germanic system relied more heavily on contextual and syntactic markers. This difference reflects broader typological contrasts between agglutinative and fusional language systems. Another important interpretative dimension concerns the relationship between poetic form and name structure. In Beowulf, anthroponyms function within an alliterative metrical system, influencing their phonological shape and narrative placement. Structural compounding aligns with poetic economy and formulaic expression. In Alpomish, the oral-performative tradition supports rhythm and repetition but allows greater lexical expansion and descriptive clarity within names.

Overall, the discussion confirms that while both epics share universal epic principles—heroic glorification, lineage preservation, and symbolic naming—the structural mechanisms differ significantly due to linguistic typology and cultural ideology. Germanic anthroponyms tend toward semantic compression and inherited compound models, whereas Turkic anthroponyms favor derivational transparency and explicit semantic motivation.

Thus, anthroponyms in both traditions function as intersections of language structure, poetic convention, and sociocultural identity. The comparative perspective not only reveals typological contrasts between Indo-European and Turkic systems but also demonstrates how epic discourse serves as a repository of archaic naming patterns that preserve national worldview and historical memory.

Conclusion. The structural analysis of anthroponyms in Beowulf and Alpomish demonstrates that personal names in epic discourse function as systematically organized linguistic units reflecting both typological features and cultural ideology. The comparative approach confirms that anthroponymic systems are deeply shaped by the morphological structure of the language and the sociocultural environment in which they developed. The findings reveal that Beowulf preserves the traditional Germanic dithematic compound model, characterized by semantic compression, martial abstraction, and strong genealogical emphasis. Personal identity is structurally reinforced through compound formations and frequent patronymic constructions, highlighting lineage continuity and heroic legitimacy. The anthroponymic system reflects an Indo-European naming tradition rooted in warrior aristocracy and collective memory.

In contrast, Alpomish demonstrates a Turkic agglutinative model distinguished by lexical transparency, derivational productivity, and explicit gender marking. Names are semantically motivated and often directly express bravery, beauty, social status, or tribal affiliation. Identity construction in this epic is closely tied to descriptive clarity and communal values embedded in morphological structure. Therefore, the study confirms that anthroponyms in epic literature are not arbitrary labels but structured linguistic forms encoding historical worldview and national identity. Comparative structural analysis contributes to the development of literary onomastics and comparative linguistics by demonstrating how language structure and cultural consciousness intersect within epic naming traditions. Future research may expand this investigation through quantitative corpus analysis, diachronic etymological reconstruction, or broader cross-cultural comparison of epic anthroponymic systems.

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