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# A LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF ANTHROPONYMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

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## ABSTRACT

This article investigates the linguocultural significance of anthroponyms in English and Uzbek proverbs and sayings. Anthroponyms, or personal names, are not merely identifying labels; in proverbial discourse they function as cultural signs that condense historical memory, social evaluation, collective stereotypes, religious associations, and models of human behaviour. The study applies a comparative linguocultural method to selected English and Uzbek proverbial expressions with personal-name components. The analysis shows that English anthroponymic proverbs often generalize ordinary people, national character, practical skill, scepticism, or social anonymity, whereas Uzbek anthroponymic sayings frequently reflect interpersonal relations, community judgement, humour, respect, everyday wisdom, and culturally marked social types. The article argues that anthroponyms in proverbs should be studied as linguocultural units because their meaning is shaped by language, folklore, history, religion, and pragmatic context. The findings are relevant for comparative linguistics, paremiology, onomastics, translation studies, and the teaching of English and Uzbek as foreign languages.

**Keywords:** anthroponym, proverb, saying, linguoculture, paremiology, English, Uzbek, onomastics, cultural semantics.

## INTRODUCTION

Proverbs and sayings are among the most compact forms of cultural knowledge. They transmit collective experience, moral judgement and social norms through short, memorable and often metaphorical utterances. In this respect, proverbs are not only linguistic units but also cultural texts. As Mieder (2004) observes, proverbs summarize folk wisdom and circulate across generations because they express ideas that communities consider useful, authoritative or memorable. When a proverb includes an anthroponym, its meaning becomes even more culturally loaded, since a personal name can evoke a social role, a historical figure, a religious association, a national stereotype or a generalized human type.

Anthroponyms are proper names used to identify human beings. In ordinary communication, they individualize a person; in folklore and phraseology, however, they may lose their purely referential function and acquire symbolic, evaluative and generalized meanings. For example, in English, the expression Jack of all trades does not refer to a concrete man named Jack, but to a person who can do many things, often with the implication that he may not be a specialist. Similarly, Every Tom, Dick and Harry denotes ordinary, unspecified people. In Uzbek, combinations such as Ali desang, Vali deydi or Eshmat-Toshmat are not limited to real individuals; they operate as culturally recognizable names that represent communicative behaviour, social anonymity or ordinary members of the community.

The relevance of the present topic is determined by the growing interest in comparative linguoculturology, onomastics and paremiology. Scholars have shown that proper names can preserve

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cultural memory and national worldview (Superanskaya, 1973; Begmatov, 2007). Proverbs, in turn, function as culturally fixed units that reveal values and norms of a speech community (Taylor, 1931; Norrick, 1985). Therefore, the study of anthroponyms in English and Uzbek proverbs makes it possible to identify similarities and differences in how the two cultures conceptualize human character, social relations, reputation, wit, foolishness, courage, commonness and moral behaviour.

The aim of this article is to analyse the linguocultural features of anthroponyms in English and Uzbek proverbs and sayings. The objectives are: first, to clarify the theoretical relationship between anthroponyms, proverbs and linguoculture; second, to classify the main functions of anthroponyms in selected English and Uzbek proverbial units; third, to compare the semantic and cultural meanings of personal names in the two languages; and fourth, to discuss the implications of such analysis for translation and intercultural communication. The central thesis is that anthroponyms in proverbs are culturally motivated signs whose meanings cannot be fully understood through literal translation alone.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study is based on a qualitative comparative method combining elements of linguocultural analysis, semantic interpretation and paremiological classification. The material consists of selected English and Uzbek proverbs, sayings and phraseological expressions containing anthroponymic components. English examples include Jack of all trades, Every Tom, Dick and Harry, before you can say Jack Robinson, Doubting Thomas, Smart Aleck and John Bull. Uzbek examples include Ali desang, Vali deydi, Eshmat-Toshmat, Hasan-Husan, Xo‘ja ko‘rsinga and other name-based proverbial expressions recorded in dictionaries of Uzbek proverbs and phraseology or used in everyday speech.

The theoretical framework of the article relies on several scholarly traditions. Paremiology provides the basis for understanding proverbs as stable units of folk wisdom (Mieder, 2004; Taylor, 1931). Onomastics explains the nature of personal names and their transformation from individual identifiers into cultural symbols (Superanskaya, 1973; Begmatov, 2007). Linguoculturology interprets language as a repository of cultural meanings and values (Telia, 1996; Maslova, 2001). Pragmatics and cultural semantics are also relevant because proverbial expressions are used in concrete communicative situations to evaluate, warn, advise, criticize or generalize human behaviour (Wierzbicka, 1997; Norrick, 1985).

The procedure of analysis included four stages. First, the anthroponymic component of each proverb or saying was identified. Second, the literal and idiomatic meanings of the expression were compared. Third, the cultural associations of the name were interpreted with regard to national traditions, social stereotypes, religion, folklore and everyday communication. Fourth, English and Uzbek examples were compared according to function, semantic motivation and translation difficulty. This method is appropriate because anthroponyms in proverbs are rarely transparent to learners or translators who lack cultural background knowledge.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis demonstrates that anthroponyms in English and Uzbek proverbs and sayings perform several major linguocultural functions. The first is the function of generalization. In English, names such as Tom, Dick and Harry represent ordinary, unspecified people. The expression Every Tom, Dick and Harry is used when the speaker wants to emphasize that something is available to everyone or known by all kinds of people. The personal names are not important as individual names; they operate as conventional markers of social anonymity. A similar function can be observed in Uzbek expressions such as Eshmat-Toshmat, which may denote ordinary people without individual specification. This shows that both languages use common personal names to create a generalized human image.

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The second function is evaluative. Proverbs and sayings with anthroponyms often express approval, criticism, irony or moral judgement. In English, Smart Aleck denotes a person who behaves as if he knows everything and often speaks in an irritatingly clever manner. Doubting Thomas refers to a person who refuses to believe something without direct evidence, an expression based on the biblical story of the Apostle Thomas. These examples show that English anthroponymic sayings may originate from religious, literary or historical sources and later become common evaluative labels. Uzbek also uses names to express social evaluation. For instance, Ali desang, Vali deydi is used to describe a person who gives an irrelevant answer, misunderstands the topic or deliberately shifts the conversation. The humour of the expression depends on the phonetic and cultural familiarity of the paired names Ali and Vali.

The third function is cultural-symbolic representation. Some anthroponyms are associated with national identity or collective character. John Bull, for example, personifies England or the English people, especially in political cartoons and satirical discourse. Uncle Sam similarly personifies the United States. Although these expressions are not ordinary proverbs in the narrow sense, they are proverb-like cultural signs and are frequently used in sayings, journalistic discourse and political phraseology. In Uzbek culture, Xo‘ja in Xo‘ja ko‘rsinga carries a culturally specific meaning connected with outward display, superficiality or doing something merely for appearance. The expression suggests that an action is performed not sincerely but to be seen by others. Such examples reveal how anthroponyms and name-like titles encode social criticism.

The fourth function is mnemonic and stylistic. Personal names make proverbs easier to remember because they create rhythm, rhyme, alliteration or contrast. Jack and Jill in English nursery-rhyme culture, Hasan-Husan in Uzbek, and Ali-Vali pairs in Uzbek speech illustrate how names can create phonetic balance. Even when the expression is not a strict proverb, the paired names help the utterance become memorable and formulaic. This supports Norrick’s (1985) argument that proverbs are characterized not only by semantic content but also by formal stability and stylistic markedness.

The fifth function is historical and religious preservation. Anthroponyms may carry traces of earlier cultural periods. English expressions such as Doubting Thomas and Judas as a symbol of betrayal reflect the influence of Christian tradition on English proverbial and phraseological systems. Uzbek anthroponyms often reflect Islamic, Persian-Arabic and Turkic naming traditions. Names such as Ali, Vali, Hasan and Husan are widespread in Uzbek culture and are associated with Muslim personal-name traditions. Begmatov (2007) emphasizes that Uzbek personal names preserve historical, religious and cultural information; when such names enter proverbs or sayings, they bring these associations into the semantic structure of the expression.

A comparative view shows both universal and culture-specific tendencies. The universal tendency is that both English and Uzbek use personal names to represent general human types. Common names become symbols of ordinary people, foolish people, clever people, sceptical people or socially recognizable characters. The culture-specific tendency is that the associations of the names differ. Jack is culturally productive in English because it has historically functioned as a common male name in folk speech, fairy tales and idioms. Ali and Vali are culturally productive in Uzbek because they are familiar Muslim names and form a convenient sound pair. Therefore, literal translation often fails. Jack of all trades cannot be translated by preserving Jack as an individual name if the target audience does not understand the cultural meaning. A functional Uzbek equivalent may require a descriptive translation such as har ishga usta odam, depending on context. Conversely, Ali desang, Vali deydi cannot be translated word-for-word into English without explanation; it may be rendered as He answers beside the point or He talks at cross purposes.

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The linguocultural analysis also reveals that anthroponyms in proverbs are closely connected with stereotypes. However, stereotype should not be understood only negatively. In folklore, stereotypes function as simplified cultural models that help speakers classify behaviour quickly. Wierzbicka (1997) argues that language reflects cultural scripts, or shared assumptions about how people think, speak and behave. Anthroponymic proverbs are examples of such scripts because they encode culturally accepted interpretations of human conduct. For instance, the figure of a Doubting Thomas reflects a cultural script about evidence and belief, while Ali-Vali expressions reflect a script about relevance, misunderstanding and conversational appropriateness.

From the perspective of translation studies, anthroponymic proverbs present serious challenges. The translator must decide whether to preserve the name, replace it with a culturally equivalent name, explain the meaning, or use a non-anthroponymic equivalent. Baker (2018) notes that idioms and fixed expressions are difficult to translate because their meanings are not fully predictable from their parts. This is especially true when a personal name is culturally marked. If the anthroponym is internationally known, as in Doubting Thomas, preservation may be possible. If the name is nationally specific, as in Eshmat-Toshmat or Xo‘ja ko‘rsinga, explanatory or functional translation is usually more effective.

The pedagogical significance of the topic is also important. English learners in Uzbekistan often encounter idioms and proverbs with names but may interpret them literally. Teachers should explain that anthroponyms in such expressions often function as symbols rather than real personal names. Comparative exercises can be useful: students may compare Every Tom, Dick and Harry with Eshmat-Toshmat, or Jack of all trades with Uzbek descriptive equivalents. Such tasks develop not only vocabulary but also intercultural competence. They show learners that language stores cultural experience and that names may become carriers of social meaning.

The findings confirm the ideas of Russian linguists who regard phraseological and proverbial units as cultural signs. Telia (1996) argued that phraseological meaning is closely connected with cultural connotation, while Maslova (2001) considered linguoculturology a field that studies the interaction between language, culture and human consciousness. Uzbek linguistics has also emphasized the cultural value of names and proverbs. Safarov (2008) notes that meaning in communication should be interpreted with attention to pragmatic and cultural context. Mirzayev, Musoqulov and Sarimsoqov (2005) present Uzbek proverbs as a rich source of national worldview and moral values. Therefore, anthroponymic proverbs should be viewed as intersections of onomastics, folklore and cultural semantics.

## CONCLUSION

Anthroponyms in English and Uzbek proverbs and sayings are linguocultural units with complex semantic and pragmatic functions. They do not merely name individuals; they generalize social types, evaluate behaviour, preserve historical and religious associations, create stylistic memorability and reflect cultural norms. English examples such as Jack of all trades, Every Tom, Dick and Harry, Doubting Thomas, Smart Aleck, John Bull and Uncle Sam demonstrate how common or culturally significant names become symbolic markers. Uzbek examples such as Ali desang, Vali deydi, Eshmat-Toshmat, Hasan-Husan and Xo‘ja ko‘rsinga show similar processes within Uzbek cultural and communicative traditions.

The comparative analysis shows that English and Uzbek share the tendency to use anthroponyms for generalization and evaluation, but differ in the cultural sources and associations of the names. English examples are often connected with folk tradition, biblical narratives, national personifications and common personal names. Uzbek examples are closely related to Islamic naming traditions, everyday social interaction, humour, respect and community-based evaluation. Because of these

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differences, anthroponymic proverbs require culturally sensitive interpretation and cannot always be translated literally.

The study concludes that anthroponyms in proverbs should be investigated as part of the broader relationship between language and culture. Their analysis contributes to comparative linguistics, paremiology, onomastics, translation studies and foreign language teaching. Future research may expand the corpus of English and Uzbek anthroponymic proverbs, classify them according to gender and social role, and examine how such expressions are used in modern media, literature and everyday speech.

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