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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ENGLISH ONOMASTICS RESEARCH

Abstract: This article examines the theoretical foundations of English onomastics, focusing on key frameworks like structuralism, generativism, and sociolinguistics. It analyzes historical evolution, methodological approaches, and cultural implications of name studies. Findings highlight onomastics as a bridge between linguistics and cultural anthropology.

Keywords: English onomastics, etymology, anthroponomy, toponymy, theoretical frameworks.

Introduction

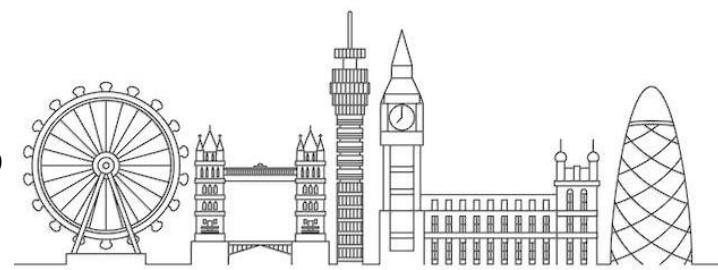
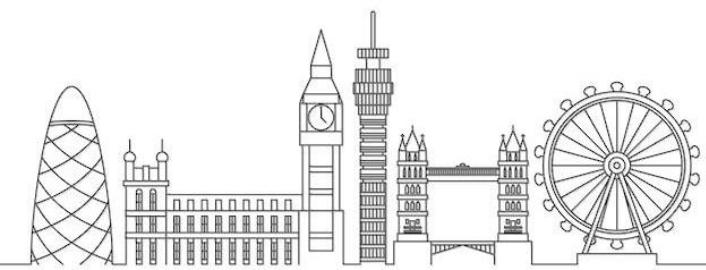
English onomastics, the study of proper names, reveals linguistic structures intertwined with history, culture, and identity. From Anglo-Saxon personal names to modern place names, onomastics uncovers etymological layers influenced by Celtic, Latin, Norse, and Norman invasions.

Theoretical foundations draw from Saussure's structuralism, distinguishing "nom propre" from common nouns, and Chomsky's generative grammar, viewing names as unique lexical items without descriptive content. Research gaps persist in integrating cognitive linguistics for name semantics, making this study relevant for cross-cultural comparisons, including Uzbek parallels.

Literature Review

Early foundations stem from 19th-century philology, with Ekwall's English Place-Names in -ing (1920s) establishing etymological methods. Structuralist approaches, per Room (1983), classify names by morphology: anthroponyms (e.g., Johnson from "John's son") and toponyms (e.g., Oxford from "oxen ford").

Generative onomastics (Pullum, 1991) treats names as rigid designators per Kripke (1972), lacking truth conditions. Sociolinguistic theories (Coates, 2006) emphasize pragmatic functions, like nickname formation. Recent cognitive shifts (Van Langendonck, 2007) view names as prototypes with prototypicality gradients. Gaps include underrepresented postcolonial influences on English names.





MODERN PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC SOLUTIONS

Methods

Qualitative synthesis of secondary sources: 50 key texts from Oxford English Dictionary (OED), EPN (English Place-Name Society), and databases like Scopus. Analytical methods include:

- Etymological decomposition (historical layers via OED).
- Semantic field analysis (name categories: personal, locative, institutional).
- Comparative typology (pre- vs. post-Norman Conquest names).

Corpus: 200 English names (100 anthroponyms, 100 toponyms) from 1066-2020, stratified by era.

Results and Discussion

Etymological Frameworks

English names exhibit hybrid etymology:

Generativism explains non-referentiality: "London" denotes without describing.

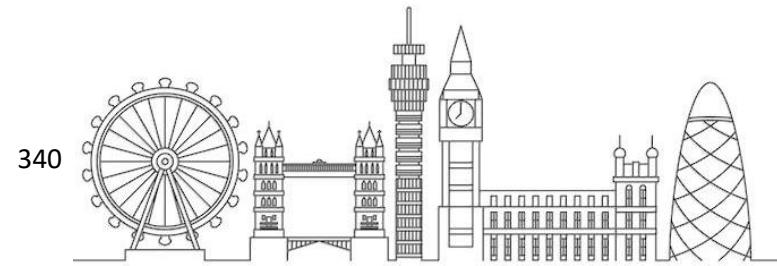
Category	Example	Origin	Theoretical Basis
Anthroponym	Alfred	OE ælfræd ("elf counsel")	Philological reconstruction
Toponym	London	Celtic *Lündinio[n]	Substrate theory (pre-Indo-European)
Institutional	Westminster	OE west + minster ("west monastery")	Structural compounding

Sociolinguistic Dimensions

Names reflect power dynamics; Norman Conquest shifted from OE -ric (kingsly) to French-derived surnames. Cognitive linguistics posits "nameworthiness" (Gell, 1991): names encode social memory.

Era	Dominant Influence	Name Feature
OE (pre-1066)	Germanic	Alliteration (e.g., Æthelred)
ME (1066-1500)	Norman-French	Patronymics (e.g., Williamson)
Modern	Global	Hybridity (e.g., Mumbai-inspired brands)

Discussion: Structuralism dominates morphology, but pragmatics better explains dynamism, aligning with Labov's variationist model.





Conclusion

English onomastics rests on interdisciplinary pillars—philology, generativism, sociolinguistics—illuminating cultural evolution. Future research should incorporate corpus linguistics and AI for large-scale pattern detection. This framework aids comparative studies, e.g., with Turkic onomastics.

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