

REFLECTION OF ETHNIC FEATURES IN ANTHROPONYMS

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Abstract. *This article analyzes ethno-anthroponyms existing in the Uzbek language. The specific characteristics of anthroponyms are examined based on information presented in scholarly literature, and the issue of the reflection of ethnic features in personal names is explored. The structure and semantic features of ethno-anthroponyms are analyzed through illustrative examples, while their etymological aspects are also identified and discussed.*

Keywords: *ethnonym, ethnic feature, ethno-anthroponym, nickname, pseudonym, Uzbek historical anthroponymy, concept.*

The emergence of onomastics as a scientific discipline has made it possible to study and analyze the entire body of names assigned by humankind. The internal principles of this field and the scope of its research have been systematically organized through the scholarly investigations of numerous linguists and researchers worldwide. As the prominent linguist Vladimir Nikonov noted: “*Anthroponymy is fortunate in possessing inseparable practical and theoretical tasks.*” Therefore, interest in and research on anthroponyms have a long history. Over the centuries, thousands of works have been devoted to this subject. As a result, anthroponymy emerged as a distinct branch of linguistics concerned with the study of personal names. Like toponymy, ethnonymy, zoonymy, and cosmonymy, it constitutes an integral component of onomastics⁴⁰.

What distinguishes anthroponymy from the aforementioned onomastic categories is that personal names are the most active in adopting names from other onymic groups. For instance, anthroponyms such as *Qo'chqor* (ram), *Arslon* (lion), and *Qumri* (dove) originated from zoonyms; *Zuhro* and *Yulduz* from cosmonyms; and *Qo'ng'iro*t and *Arab* from ethnonyms that later developed into personal names.

Discussing the study of anthroponymy in Uzbek linguistics, Erkin Begmatov pointed out that a number of problems still exist in the investigation of the theoretical aspects of this field. In his fundamental work “*Uzbek Language Anthroponymy*,” the scholar identified several issues that continue to await comprehensive research. These include the semantics and motivation of anthroponyms, the scientific principles underlying their classification, comparative studies of anthroponyms in related and unrelated languages,

⁴⁰ Qarang: Ибрахимова Д. Инглиз ва ўзбек тилларида антропонимик бирликларнинг лингвистик хусусиятлари. Филол.фан.бўйича фалс.док.дисс. – Термиз, 2022. – В. 16.

approaches to the anthroponymic stock from sociolinguistic, national-cultural, philosophical, and ethnic perspectives, as well as the study of anthroponyms found in historical written monuments ⁴¹.

The study of proper names has a long history, and throughout its development researchers have focused on the ontology of names and the functions they perform. The interest shown in names by scholars representing various fields of knowledge has contributed to the high regard accorded to names both in individual consciousness and at different stages of social development.

According to Sergey Vorkachev, the contemporary development of linguistics, particularly within the anthropocentric paradigm, has placed the human being at the center as the “measure of all things” and directed scholarly attention toward a human-centered worldview. Naturally, this focal point is inextricably linked to an individual's culture, way of thinking, and ethnic identity. This relationship is reflected in the emergence of every proper name, as it embodies the knowledge, experiences, and cognitive patterns embedded within a person's ethnic and cultural conceptual sphere.

A word that initially serves only to denote a particular feature may acquire an additional meaning and thereby become a name. In this process, the way a particular characteristic is perceived and the attitude toward it are of crucial importance. Such a mechanism of perception is undoubtedly shaped by the environment in which a person lives, the identity of their ancestors, the culture to which they belong, their social status, psychological disposition, and imaginative worldview.

Consequently, a number of disciplines within the anthropocentric paradigm—such as ethnolinguistics, areal linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and linguocultural studies—investigate and evaluate the process of name formation within their respective research frameworks. In particular, the ethnolinguistic and linguocultural aspects of personal names help explain the meanings that emerge from ethnocultural perceptions and representations.

In the emergence and development of human society, ethnic identity is determined and expressed through a set of concepts including national cognition, national discourse, national stereotypes, national realia, and national symbols. Together, these elements directly constitute and reflect ethnic culture, or ethnoculture ⁴².

Such concepts are naturally reflected in anthroponyms. Accordingly, **ethnic onomastics** has emerged as a distinct branch of onomastic studies. This field examines the origins of ethnic names, the evolution of ethnonyms, the role of ethnic features in the formation of

⁴¹ Бегматов Э.А. Ўзбек тили антропонимикаси. – Тошкент: Фан, 2013. – Б. 15-30.

⁴² Kurbanazarova N. O‘zbek tilida etnonimlar etimologiyasining lingvomadaniy asoslari (qo‘ng‘iroq urug‘i misolida). Filol.fan.dok.diss. – Qarshi, 2026. – B. 19.

toponyms, anthroponyms, and zoonyms, as well as the interrelationship between ethnonyms and language names (linguonyms) ⁴³.

In general, a name is not merely a word; it is also a multifaceted concept. To support this view, it is appropriate to cite the following conclusions of Erkin Begmatov regarding anthroponymy, particularly historical anthroponymy:

“Uzbek historical anthroponymy has remained largely unexplored. The anthroponymic material preserved in the texts of historical written monuments should be meticulously collected and studied. Such research requires an approach to anthroponymic data not only from a linguistic perspective, but also from ethnolinguistic, ethnocultural, psychological, sociolinguistic, aesthetic, historical, and religious viewpoints.”

This observation highlights that a personal name embodies far more than its nominative function. It serves as a repository of ethnic, cultural, historical, and social information, reflecting the conceptual world and collective memory of a people. Consequently, the study of anthroponyms necessitates an interdisciplinary approach capable of revealing the complex conceptual content embedded within personal names ⁴⁴.

Among the Uzbek people, various traditions are associated with choosing a name for a newborn child. One such custom is selecting a name from among those of the family's ancestors for the new member of the household. It is well known that this tradition has ancient roots.

In the work *Humayunnama*, which depicts the life of the sixteenth-century Uzbeks, Gulbadan Begum recounts an event related to the naming tradition as follows:

“While His Majesty Babur was in Badakhshan, Shahi Chuchuk Begim gave birth to a daughter. That night, His Majesty had a dream. In the dream, my grandmother Fakhr-un-Nisa and Davlat Bakht entered through the door and brought something, placing it before me. His Majesty pondered for a long time over the meaning of this dream. Later, upon receiving the news of the girl's birth, he took the word *bakht* (‘fortune’) from one of their names and *nisa* (‘woman’) from the other, and named the child **Bakhtinisa Begim**.”

This account demonstrates that the tradition of naming children after ancestors or respected family members has deep historical roots. It also shows that personal names often preserve cultural memory, family continuity, and ethnic identity, serving as important markers of social and cultural heritage ⁴⁵. It is evident that the process of selecting a

⁴³ Ҳамроева М. Тоҳир Маликнинг бадиий асарларида антропонимлар. *Filol.fan. bo'yicha fals.dok.diss.* – Buxoro, 2022. – B. 22.

⁴⁴ Бегматов Э.А. Ўзбек тили антропонимикаси. – Тошкент: Фан, 2013. – Б. 260.

⁴⁵ Bu haqida to'liqroq qarang: Djurayeva Y. O'zbek tilida xotin-qizlar ismlarining lingvistik xususiyatlari. *Filol.fan. bo'yicha fals.dok.diss.* – Qarshi, 2025. – B. 17.

personal name is shaped not only by national thinking and cultural worldview, but also by the level of awareness and knowledge possessed by the person assigning the name.

Anthroponyms found in the Uzbek language (including names that originated in other languages but have become adapted to Uzbek and are actively used) are structurally diverse. They are based on a wide range of sources, including flowers, plants, animals, celestial bodies, famous cities and places, numbers, and many other lexical categories. Similarly, ethnic markers or ethnic names—namely, ethnonyms—also participate in the formation of anthroponyms.

The practice of naming a child on the basis of ethnic features is associated with such factors as respect for ancestors and the desire to indicate affiliation with a particular clan, tribe, or ethnic group. Researcher S. Kenjayeva, discussing anthroponyms derived from ethnonyms, notes the following:

In some cases, a child is given a name derived from the clan, tribe, or ancestral group to which the parents belong. Such names are intended to emphasize the child's affiliation with a particular ethnic group, to indicate that he or she is a descendant of that ethnos, that the child's ancestors belonged to the respective clan or tribe, and that the newborn is the continuer of that lineage.

Names formed from ethnonyms are referred to as **ethno-anthroponyms**. Examples include **Abdal, Abdolnizoz, Arg'inboy, Barlos, Batosh, Bahrin, Baxmal, Boymoq, Boyqo'ng'ir, Bo'ronboy, Bo'ronali, Bo'rongul, Bo'ronoy, Bo'ronniyoz, Do'rmon, Jaloyir, Jag'alboy, Kaltatoy, Kenagas, Lochin, Mang'it, Mang'itoy, Marqa, Nayman, Saroy, Qipchoq, Qirg'iz, and Qo'ng'irod**.

These examples demonstrate that anthroponyms serve not only as personal identifiers but also as linguistic markers of ethnic memory, genealogy, and cultural continuity. Through such names, information about tribal affiliation, ancestral heritage, and ethnic identity is preserved and transmitted across generations ⁴⁶.

The linguist Erkin Begmatov classifies as such names, particularly those anthroponyms formed on the basis of tribal and ethnic group names, personal names such as **Argin, Barlos, Jagalboy, Kaltaboy, Kenagaxon, Laqaygul, Mang'itoy, Mang'itqiz, Xalajboy, Qangliboy, Qipchoqqul, Qirg'iz, Qirg'izboy, Qozoqboy, Qutchi (Quchchi), and Qo'ng'irod**.

Olimning ta'kidlashicha, ushbu antroponimlar qabila, urug' va etnik birliklar nomlari asosida shakllangan bo'lib, ularning egalarining tarixiy, genealogik hamda etnik mansubligini aks ettiradi. Bunday ismlar etnik tegishlilikning muhim lisoniy dalili sifatida

⁴⁶ Кенжаева С. Ўзбек тили антропонимларининг номинацион-мотивацион асослари ва тавсифи. Филол.фан. бўйича фалс.док.дисс. – Қарши, 2019. – В. 17.

xizmat qiladi va antroponimiya bilan etnomadaniy meros o'rtasidagi uzviy bog'liqlikni namoyon etadi ⁴⁷. **English Translation (Academic Style):**

In addition to the examples mentioned above, anthroponyms such as **O'zbek**, **Arab**, **Jaloyir**, **Marqa**, and **Oyli** may also be included in this category. Although these names may no longer be actively chosen for newborns today, they remain part of the linguistic system and continue to be used.

When analyzing ethnically based anthroponyms, it becomes evident that some of the ethnonyms underlying personal names may coincide semantically with common words or expressions. For example, the name **Qo'ng'iro't** is not derived from *qo'ng'ir ot* ("a brown horse"), but rather from the ethnonym **Qo'ng'iro't**, one of the most widespread and ancient Uzbek tribal groups. Similarly, the names **Oylar** and **Oyli** do not originate from *oy* ("moon," the celestial body) or from the meaning "having a moon." Instead, they are connected with the ethnonym **Oyinli**, one of the principal branches of the Qo'ng'iro't tribe.

During our field research in the Surkhandarya region, we encountered several elderly women bearing the names **Oylar** and **Oyli** who belonged to the Oyinli (Oyinni) branch of the Qo'ng'iro't tribe. Their names had been given specifically to indicate their tribal affiliation. In our view, the anthroponym **Oyli** may represent a phonetically modified form of the ethnonym **Oyinli**.

Scholarly sources provide the following information regarding this ethnonym. Another tribal name derived from the shape of its tribal emblem (*tamga*) is **Oyinni**, which is also attested in the form **Oyinli**. The root of the ethnonym is *oy* ("moon"), and the name originally conveyed the meaning "possessing the moon" or "moon-marked." Historical sources support this interpretation. In particular, according to B. Kh. Karmisheva, the names **Oyinni**, **Oyinli**, **Oyin**, **Ayn**, and **Oyli** all derive from the lexical base *oy* ("moon"). The tribal emblem of this group resembled a crescent moon and was depicted in the form of a horseshoe. Consequently, all of the aforementioned variants carry the meaning "having a moon," while *oytamg'ali* denotes "bearing a moon-shaped tribal emblem."

This example demonstrates that the study of ethno-anthroponyms requires not only linguistic analysis but also consideration of historical, ethnographic, and cultural evidence, since the true origins of such names are often rooted in tribal history and ethnic identity rather than in the apparent meanings of their lexical components ⁴⁸. **English Translation (Academic Style):**

It is therefore evident that the names **Oylar** and **Oyli** are anthroponyms derived from ethnonyms.

⁴⁷ Бегматов Э.А. Ўзбек тили антропонимикаси. – Тошкент: Фан, 2013. – Б. 111.

⁴⁸ Bu haqda to'liqroq qarang: Kurbanazarova N. O'zbek tilida etnonimlar etimologiyasining lingvomadaniy asoslari (qo'ng'iro't urug'i misolida). Filol.fan.dok.diss. – Qarshi, 2026. – B. 127.

As noted above, anthroponyms such as **O'zbek**, **Arab**, and **Qozoqboy** are likewise based on ethnonyms. Among these, the etymology of the anthroponym **O'zbek** remains somewhat controversial. Some scholars argue that the ethnonym originated from an anthroponym, associating it with the name of Uzbek Khan. However, other sources maintain that the formation of this ethnonym is unrelated to Uzbek Khan. In our view, this name developed not from an anthroponym into an ethnonym, but rather from an ethnonym into an anthroponym.

Anthroponyms formed on the basis of ethnic affiliation may also include names such as **Eshon**, **To'ra**, **Xo'ja**, and **Said**. Although these terms do not denote a particular ethnic group in the strict sense, they indicate genealogical affiliation with specific social and ethnic lineages. Their ethnic and genealogical significance can be observed in commonly used expressions among the Uzbek people, such as *eshonlardan* ("from the lineage of eshons"), *xo'janing qizi* ("the daughter of a khoja"), and *to'ra avlodi* ("a descendant of to'ras"), where these designations function as markers of belonging to a particular ethnocultural community.

Researcher M. Qobilov, who studied the anthroponyms of the Southern Surkhondaryo Kipchak dialect, also emphasizes the role of ethnonyms in the formation of personal names. He cites examples of eponymic anthroponyms derived from ethnonyms, including **Qipchoq**, **Qo'ng'iro**t, **Norin**, **Olchin**, **O'g'lon**, **O'tagan**, **Qoraxon**, **Turkman**, **Qozoq**, **Qozoqboy**, **O'zbek**, **Qirg'izboy**, and **Qirg'iz**.

These names, characteristic of the Kipchak dialect, are not exclusively associated with representatives of particular Uzbek tribal groups. Rather, when viewed in the context of their historical formation and development, they should be regarded as part of the broader Common Turkic anthroponymic heritage. This fact demonstrates that ethnonym-based anthroponyms preserve not only local tribal identities but also traces of the shared historical and cultural foundations of the Turkic peoples ⁴⁹ thus, the author brings his ideas to a conclusion.

In general, ethno-anthroponyms, on the one hand, express respect for ancestral predecessors and signify that the child is regarded as a continuation of those ancestors; on the other hand, they indicate the child's belonging to a specific ethnos. Such names also reflect the belief that the spirits of ancestors, forefathers, and predecessors protect and support the child.

In addition, these naming practices are often aimed at preserving the name of a tribe or other ethnic community and transmitting it to future generations. The study of such

⁴⁹ Qobilov M. Janubiy Surxondaryo qipchoq lahjasi antroponimikasi: Filol. fan. bo'yicha falsafa doktori (PhD) dissertatsiyasi. – Termiz. 2026. – B. 91.

ethnically marked anthroponyms makes it possible to examine ethnonational and ethnocultural perceptions characteristic of our people and to identify the linguistic means through which these patterns of thought are expressed.

This, in turn, enables linguistics to identify and evaluate the process of conceptualization of semes - whereby a word gives rise to a new conceptual meaning within the system of language.

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