

Affixation In English And Uzbek Anthroponyms: A Comparative Study

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Abstract: This paper examines the mechanisms of affixation in the formation of anthroponyms in English and Uzbek, highlighting their morphological, cultural, and social dimensions. Drawing on a comparative linguistic approach, the study analyzes a corpus of literary and historical examples, including works by William Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Abdulla Qodiriy, and Cho'lpon. The findings demonstrate that English anthroponyms often derive from patronymic and diminutive suffixes such as -son, -s, -kin, and Fitz-, while Uzbek names frequently employ suffixes such as -ov/-ev, -iy, -zoda, -qul, -bek, and -chi to denote lineage, social roles, or religious affiliation. The results also reveal that affixation patterns reflect broader cultural and historical processes: the patriarchal and feudal structures of English society, and the Islamic and Turkic influences in Uzbek naming traditions. Contemporary naming practices show increasing challenges of transliteration and globalization. This study contributes to the field of comparative onomastics by providing a systematic analysis of affixal anthroponymy across two typologically distinct languages.

Keywords: Anthroponyms; affixation; morphology; Uzbek; English; comparative linguistics; onomastics.

Introduction: Names are not only linguistic units but also cultural artifacts that encapsulate the history, values, and identity of a society. The study of anthroponyms—the proper names of individuals—has long attracted the attention of linguists, anthropologists, and cultural historians. Affixation, as one of the primary mechanisms of word formation, plays a crucial role in shaping personal names across languages. By attaching derivational morphemes to lexical bases, societies create names that indicate family lineage, occupation, status, or religious devotion.

In English, the development of surnames reflects genealogical and feudal traditions. Patronymic affixes such as -son (Johnson “son of John”) or possessive -s (Williams “belonging to William”) mark kinship ties, while diminutive suffixes like -kin (Watkin from Walter) indicate affection or social familiarity. Similarly, prefixes like Fitz- (Fitzgerald) trace back to Norman French influence, denoting noble descent.

In contrast, Uzbek anthroponymy reveals the intersection of Turkic and Islamic naming systems.

Suffixes such as -ov/-ev (e.g., Karimov), a legacy of Russian influence, and -iy (e.g., Termiziy “from Termez”) demonstrate the impact of historical contact. Traditional affixes like -qul (Abdulloqul “servant of God”), -zoda (Shohzoda “offspring of a shah”), -bek (Temurbek), and -chi (Temurchi “blacksmith”) reflect religious devotion, social hierarchy, and professional identity.

Although English and Uzbek belong to distinct language families, their anthroponymic systems share functional similarities: both employ affixation as a linguistic strategy to encode social, cultural, and historical information. Previous studies have examined these systems separately (Superanskaya, 1973; Hough, 2016), but comparative perspectives remain limited.

The present study aims to fill this gap by conducting a systematic comparative analysis of affixation in English and Uzbek anthroponyms. Using literary sources and corpus data, the research investigates how morphological processes interact with cultural traditions to shape personal naming practices. By doing so, it contributes to comparative onomastics and

broadens our understanding of the interplay between language, culture, and identity.

METHODS

This study employs a comparative-historical and morphological analysis of English and Uzbek anthroponyms formed through affixation. The research is grounded in descriptive linguistics, corpus-based data, and cultural-historical interpretation.

First, the morphological classification of affixation processes was established in both languages, focusing on patronymic, diminutive, and possessive formations. English anthroponyms were examined with reference to standard dictionaries and surname studies (Reaney & Wilson, 1991; Withycombe, 1977; McKinley, 1990). Uzbek data were drawn primarily from anthroponymic studies (Begmatov, 1978; Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, 2005) as well as contemporary naming practices observed in official records and literary texts.

Second, the study adopts a comparative approach, identifying typological similarities and divergences between English (an Indo-European, synthetic language) and Uzbek (a Turkic, agglutinative language). Particular attention was given to:

1. Structural features of suffixes and prefixes;
2. Sociocultural implications of affixation in naming systems;
3. Diachronic shifts, including the influence of historical events (e.g., Norman conquest in England, Soviet influence in Uzbekistan).

Finally, a corpus-based sampling method was applied. English anthroponyms were extracted from The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names (Withycombe, 1977) and A Dictionary of English Surnames (Reaney & Wilson, 1991). Uzbek names were analyzed using O'zbek tili antroponimiyasi (Begmatov, 1978) and Uzbek Names: Their Meanings and Cultural Significance (Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, 2005). In addition, examples from English literature (e.g., Austen, Dickens) and Uzbek classical texts were incorporated to illustrate stylistic functions of affixation.

This methodological design allows for both linguistic precision (morphological analysis) and cultural interpretation (sociolinguistic context).

RESULTS

The analysis of English and Uzbek anthroponyms demonstrates that while both languages employ affixation to express lineage, social status, or cultural values, their morphological mechanisms and

sociolinguistic implications differ significantly.

Patronymic Affixation

In English, patronymic surnames are predominantly formed with the suffix -son (e.g., Johnson, “son of John”) or with the Norman-French prefix Fitz- (e.g., Fitzgerald, “son of Gerald”). These elements reflect Scandinavian and Norman influences on English naming practices (Reaney & Wilson, 1991). Over time, however, these affixes have lost their original meaning and now function as fixed family names.

In Uzbek, patronymics remain productive and gender-specific. The suffixes -o'g'li (for males) and -qizi (for females) directly express descent, e.g., Olim o'g'li (“son of Olim”) and Muhammad qizi (“daughter of Muhammad”). Soviet-era influences introduced the Russian suffixes -ovich/-ovna (e.g., Olimovich), which aligned Uzbek naming traditions with Slavic models (Begmatov, 1978; Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, 2005).

Diminutive Affixation

English employs diminutive suffixes such as -y/-ie, which carry emotional and affectionate connotations. For instance, William becomes Willy or Robbie from Robert (Withycombe, 1977). Such diminutives often appear in literary discourse: Elizabeth Bennet in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is affectionately called Lizzy, signaling intimacy and informality.

In Uzbek, diminutive forms are less common in anthroponyms but are occasionally realized through phonetic reduction or religiously derived prefixes. The Arabic prefix Abd- (“servant of”) conveys spiritual humility rather than affection, e.g., Abdulla (“servant of Allah”), Abdurahmon (“servant of the Merciful”). These elements reflect Islamic cultural integration into Uzbek anthroponymy (Begmatov, 1978).

Possessive and Status Markers

English surnames also reveal possession through the suffix -s, as in Edwards (“belonging to Edward”). Similarly, Irish and Scottish surnames often include the prefix Mc-/Mac-, meaning “son of,” which has survived as an ethnic marker (McKinley, 1990).

In Uzbek, the Russian-derived suffixes -ov/-ev became widespread during the 20th century (Karimov, “descendant of Karim”), serving both as a possessive marker and a reflection of Soviet sociopolitical influence. After independence, many families began reviving traditional forms, although the Russian suffixes remain prevalent in official documents (Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, 2005).

Affixation Type	English	Uzbek	Key Differences
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Patronymic	Suffix: -son (<i>Johnson</i>); Prefix: Fitz- (<i>Fitzgerald</i>)	Suffix: -o‘g‘li (<i>Olim o‘g‘li</i>), -qizi (<i>Muhammad qizi</i>); Soviet: -ovich/- ovna (<i>Olimovich</i>)	English affixes fossilized; Uzbek affixes remain gender-specific
Diminutive	-y/-ie (<i>Willy</i> , <i>Robbie</i>); affectionate, literary use	Rare; Prefix Abd- (<i>Abdulla</i>); spiritual connotation	Emotional vs. religious function
Possessive/Status	-s (<i>Edwards</i>); Mc- /Mac- (Scottish, Irish)	-ov/-ev (<i>Karimov</i>)	English: ethnic/regional; Uzbek: Soviet influence

Literary Illustrations

- In Dickens’s *David Copperfield*, the affectionate diminutive Peggotty illustrates how suffixation adds warmth and familiarity to personal names.
- In Uzbek classical literature, names like Abdurahmon and Abdulla carry strong religious connotations, embedding spiritual values in everyday identity (Begmatov, 1978).
- Austen’s Lizzy (from Elizabeth) reflects intimacy, while Uzbek forms like Muhammad qizi reinforce patriarchal lineage in a formal register.

These results highlight that while English affixes have largely lost productivity, Uzbek anthroponymic affixation remains morphologically transparent and socioculturally significant.

DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek affixal anthroponyms reveals both universal tendencies of name-formation and language-specific features determined by historical, cultural, and grammatical contexts. The results demonstrate that affixation serves as one of the most productive mechanisms of anthroponymic derivation, but its realization differs substantially across the two languages.

In English, the development of surnames such as Johnson, Richardson, or Henderson illustrates the dominance of patronymic suffixes of Germanic and

Scandinavian origin (Reaney & Wilson, 1991). These formations reflect not only familial lineage but also the socio-historical influence of Norse and Norman traditions. By contrast, Uzbek anthroponymy preserves more explicit and semantically transparent affixal structures. Suffixes like -o‘g‘li (“son of”) and -qizi (“daughter of”) retain their original morphological meaning, providing clear information about kinship and gender (Begmatov, 1978).

Moreover, diminutive and affectionate suffixes such as -jon or -xon in Uzbek names (Dilnozaxon, Oyjon) highlight cultural attitudes towards respect and intimacy (Khodjaeva, 2002). In English, however, diminutives often developed through phonological truncation and hypocoristic forms (e.g., Will from William), rather than affixation (Hough, 2016). This contrast shows how the same semantic need—expressing endearment or familiarity—may be realized through different morphological strategies.

A further typological divergence is observed in gender marking. While Uzbek anthroponyms encode gender explicitly through suffixation, English anthroponyms rarely employ overt morphological gender markers. Instead, gender is implied lexically, as in William vs. Elizabeth (Algeo, 1992). This confirms the view that English has undergone a gradual process of morphological simplification, whereas Uzbek retains agglutinative features typical of Turkic languages.

From a stylistic perspective, the affixal patterns also

serve metaphorical and symbolic purposes in both languages. In Uzbek, the suffix -bek in names like Odilbek or Jasurbek symbolizes authority and nobility, whereas in English, the suffix -ton in toponymic surnames (e.g., Ashton, Hampton) metaphorically connects individuals to places, reflecting feudal landholding traditions (Clark, 1992). Thus, affixation in anthroponyms not only performs a grammatical function but also encodes socio-cultural identity.

These findings confirm that anthroponymic affixation must be studied not only as a morphological process but also as a reflection of cultural worldviews. English anthroponyms demonstrate a historical trajectory toward structural reduction and lexicalization, while Uzbek anthroponyms maintain productive and semantically transparent suffixes, preserving ties between form and meaning.

CONCLUSION

The comparative study of affixal anthroponyms in English and Uzbek demonstrates that while both languages employ affixation as a central mechanism of name-formation, their strategies diverge due to typological and cultural factors. English anthroponyms reveal historical layers of Germanic, Scandinavian, and Norman influences, with affixes such as -son and -ton reflecting lineage and territorial ties (Reaney & Wilson, 1991; Clark, 1992). By contrast, Uzbek anthroponyms retain morphologically transparent and semantically rich suffixes such as -o'g'li, -qizi, -jon, and -bek, which continue to function productively in indicating kinship, gender, and social status (Begmatov, 1978; Khodjaeva, 2002).

From a linguistic perspective, these differences highlight the agglutinative nature of Uzbek, where affixes preserve grammatical meaning, in contrast to English, where affixes often undergo lexicalization and semantic opacity (Algeo, 1992; Hough, 2016). From a cultural perspective, anthroponyms serve as markers of identity, heritage, and worldview. Affixal naming traditions thus provide valuable insights not only into language structure but also into broader sociolinguistic and historical contexts.

Future research may expand on this comparative framework by incorporating corpus-based quantitative methods and exploring how affixal anthroponyms function in contemporary discourse, literature, and digital communication. Such studies would further reveal the dynamic interaction between language, culture, and personal naming practices.

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