

THE LINGUISTIC STUDY OF ANTHROPNYMS IN THE UZBEK AND ENGLISH FOLK EPICS

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Abstract. This article presents a comparative study of anthroponyms (personal names) in two monumental heroic epics: the Uzbek Alpomish and the Old English Beowulf. Both texts reflect the moral codes, social structures, and linguistic artistry of their cultures. While Alpomish embodies the blend of Turkic traditions and Islamic values, Beowulf represents the shift from Germanic paganism to early Christian ideology. Using a linguocultural framework, the study examines how the names within these epics convey bravery, loyalty, and collective identity.

Keywords: Alpomish, Beowulf, anthroponymy, heroism, Turkic linguistics, Old English, national identity, etymology, semantics, oral tradition, cultural symbolism, onomastics, moral values.

Introduction. The Uzbek epic Alpomish and the Anglo-Saxon Beowulf are among the most significant heroic narratives in world literary heritage. Despite emerging from different geographical and historical contexts, both works depict universal heroic virtues such as courage, duty, justice, and the defense of one's community. In both epics, anthroponyms serve not merely as personal identifiers but as meaningful cultural signs. They reflect social rank, character traits, ethical ideals, and national worldview. Studying these names allows us to uncover how each culture conceptualized the ideal hero and articulated its moral foundations.

Literature Review. Anthroponym study in epic literature has long been a focus of linguistic, folkloric, and cultural scholarship. In Uzbekistan, researchers including Hodi Zarifov, M. Afzalov, M. Saidov, and N. Mallayev have investigated the historical origins, oral variants, and symbolic layers of the Alpomish epic. Later linguists such as O. Jurayev, R. Doniyorov, D. Yuldosheva, and M. Kodirova strengthened the understanding of Uzbek name systems, highlighting their connection to cultural identity and historical memory. Globally, anthroponymy is seen as an intersection of language, culture, and history. Superanskaya (1973) viewed personal names as "cultural codes," while V. Vorobyov and Yu. Prokhorov further developed this idea through linguoculturology, emphasizing names as carriers of societal values. In the English scholarly tradition, researchers such as J. R. R. Tolkien, R. D. Fulk, and A. Orchard have studied Beowulf as both a heroic narrative and a linguistic artifact of Old English culture. The works of Fulk (1992) and Klaeber (2008) demonstrate that the names in Beowulf often combine symbolic meaning with etymological significance rooted in Old English and Nordic traditions, reflecting the coexistence of pagan myth and Christian ethics.

Although ample research exists on Alpomish and Beowulf individually, comparative linguocultural studies of their anthroponymic systems remain limited. This research addresses that gap by examining the shared and divergent semantic and cultural patterns expressed through personal names in both epics.

Research Methodology. This study employs a comparative linguocultural method to analyze anthroponyms in Alpomish and Beowulf. The research combines descriptive, etymological, semantic, and comparative techniques to uncover the linguistic and cultural layers embedded in

personal names. Descriptive Analysis: Identification and examination of each personal name with respect to its form, lexical meaning, and narrative function.

Etymological Method: Tracing historical roots and morphological components, focusing on Turkic, Persian, and Arabic elements in Alpomish and Germanic, Norse, and Christian influences in Beowulf.

Semantic and Functional Analysis: Investigating how names contribute to character portrayal and thematic structure.

Linguocultural Approach: Interpreting names as cultural symbols that express value systems and worldviews.

Comparative Method: Identifying shared heroic motifs (e.g., “wolf,” “strength,” “wisdom”) along with culturally specific meanings.

Together, these methods provide a comprehensive view of how anthroponyms encode ethical principles, spiritual heritage, and national identity.

Results and Discussions.

Anthroponyms in Alpomish

In Alpomish, names are closely tied to ancient Turkic cosmology and nomadic traditions. The hero’s name combines Alp (“brave hero”) with Omish, denoting stability and strength, thereby portraying Alpomish as the ideal embodiment of courage and resilience.

Other names also carry symbolic weight:

Barchinoy blends barchin (“silk thread”) and oy (“moon”), symbolizing purity, grace, and feminine beauty.

Boybo’ri (“rich wolf”) fuses wealth with the wolf totem, a revered ancient Turkic symbol of leadership and protection.

Hakimbek merges Arabic hakim (“wise”) with Turkic bek (“leader”), highlighting wisdom in governance.

Qaldirg’och (“swallow”) signifies agility, loyalty, and good fortune.

Overall, Alpomish anthroponyms communicate collective values—loyalty to the tribe, defense of honor, and belief in divine justice—thus functioning as linguistic expressions of Uzbek national ethos.

Anthroponyms in Beowulf

Names in Beowulf mainly derive from Old English and Old Norse compounds emphasizing strength, fame, and moral character.

Beowulf combines beo (“bee”) and wulf (“wolf”), forming the kenning “bee-wolf,” meaning “bear,” a symbol of immense power.

Hrothgar, from hrod (“fame”) + gar (“spear”), denotes a noble and honorable warrior-king.

Hygelac suggests generosity and thoughtful leadership.

Unferth (“un-peace”) symbolizes moral instability and envy.

Wealhtheow (“foreign servant”) reflects her diplomatic and peace-weaving role.

In Beowulf, names mirror the Germanic warrior ethos, where reputation, bravery, and loyalty to one’s lord determine moral worth.

Comparative Discussion

Despite cultural differences, both epics show remarkable parallels in their naming practices:

Both rely heavily on compound names formed from meaningful morphemes.

Animal imagery—particularly the wolf—plays a significant role, though with culturally distinct interpretations.

Female names in Alpomish emphasize moral strength and loyalty, while in Beowulf, women mainly act as mediators among male warriors.

Religious worldviews shape the semantic content: Alpomish blends Islamic and Turkic beliefs, whereas Beowulf combines pagan themes with Christian moral undertones. Thus, anthroponyms in both traditions serve as tools of moral instruction, cultural memory, and national identity.

Conclusion. This comparative analysis reveals that personal names in both Alpomish and Beowulf symbolize the moral, cultural, and spiritual values of their societies. In Alpomish, anthroponyms reflect Turkic linguistic creativity and Islamic ethical principles, celebrating kinship, bravery, and communal duty. In Beowulf, they reinforce the Germanic ideals of fate, heroism, and Christian virtue. Though shaped by different worldviews, both naming systems use language as a means of preserving cultural memory and transmitting ethical ideals across generations.

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