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## Interconnection of Personal Names and Society: Gender, Age, and Cognition

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### ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the problem of interconnection of biosocial factors in process of choosing names for persons with taking into account their motivation. A survey was carried out to specify and prove the existing theory of social origin of process of choosing names for persons and defining biological aspects. Personal names are considered as linguistic units, and the process of changing their semantic structure under the influence of their social factors is studied. For multisided studying of the subject, a complex analysis was carried out, which includes such techniques as comparison, classification and evaluation. The study is important in the cognitive, linguistic and biosocial aspects, as it demonstrates an interaction between language and society and a person as a human being of choosing names for the persons. As a result, social motives of name giving process were classified that determine future development of anthroponameicon. The relevance of this work is proved by a permanent interest to personal names problems as an object of cognitive studies and sociolinguistics.

**Keywords:** choosing names for person, biosocial aspects; national motivation; name giving.

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## INTRODUCTION

«The question of what word, phrase, part of speech is capable to be a proper name is closely connected with the problem of which object (person, area, thing, idea, etc.) can be called a proper name, that is a problem of borderline of onomastic nomination and its selectivity.

The selectivity of the nomination manifests in the phenomena that not each meter of the earth, not each animal receives a proper name and, therefore, not each linguistic unit is used at the same extent for naming.

People give names to many things and phenomena in the process of acquiring knowledge about the world, however with this approach to nomination one objects and phenomena are classified that leads to their nominating with common nouns, and the others are individualized that leads to appearing of proper names. Individualization demonstrates that the named object is accepted not only as the representative of any class (though it is certainly a representative of one object class of objective reality) but also it is posed singular and unique” [Zerkina, N. N., Kisel, O. V., Mikhailov, V. V., & Lukina, O. A. (2018)].

Personal have utility significance and have enormous potential to describe the cognitive experience of the nation, cultural development of society with its moral ideals and attitude towards other cultural and linguistic societies.

They are studied in a special section of Linguistics – Onomastics, which studied the origin and evaluation peculiarities, feathers of proper names in the language. Researcher of personal names study information that is encoded in personal names such as gender role, age, relationship between the person and his family position as well as historical information about the society in which the person was born and caste.

A personal name plays a main role in the description of national and cultural identities of a person. The study of personal names is based on the assumption that personal names are connected with society in both social and biological aspects. A great number of scientists face some linguistic challenges in studying and describing the role of onomastic categories of biosocial factors influencing the motivations for choosing names for persons.

### **There are the goals of the research:**

A personal name has special feathers that are relevant individualization of an object. Since proper names perform identification function, it is worth noting that personal names are an integral component of biological and linguistic identity.

### **Problem statement: subject and aim**

The choice of the research subject is determined by the necessity of underlining the main biosocial factors influencing the choosing names for persons. The aim of the research is to give a systematic description of the choosing names for persons, analyze biosocial cognitive potential and jurisdictional importance.

### **The aim of the work is:**

- to study the name as a language sign with a definite meaning and reflecting gender;
- to determine biosocial factors influencing the choosing names for persons;
- to describe biosocial aspects of the choosing names for persons.

The name giving is a complicated linguistic and extralinguistic process that connects a person as biological being and a linguistic sign. The name giving is a social need for identification and nomination of a person, which results in the increase in the onomastic vocabulary. Social, cultural and historical factors influence this process.

Implementation of biosocial motives of the name giving and their reflection in the meaning of linguistic units is one of the main aspects of personal name semantics, which is expanded by a name giver’s preferences and his cognitive background. The choose reflects the reality and has a complex character. On one side, they

accumulate a cognitive experience of any language community, on other side, they reflect the evaluation, expressiveness and emotions of an individual to the extra linguistic reality.

The actualization of social motives in the name giving progress is directly or indirectly connected with the relation of the name giver to the extra linguistic reality. In the given case, all motives can be integrated in a connotative aspect of a personal name meaning, which reflects their functional mission – being the identifications of a person.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea of the interconnection of linguistic and biosocial aspects, both in the language and the word semantics, is not novel. In brief, this issue has been investigated by ancient researchers and philosophers, and remains a very relevant one for scientists of today.

Personal names remain a controversial subject for many researchers. The main issues under research are:

- qualitative and quantitative parts of the content of the Nominalia (Yermolovich 2002, 2005; Nikonov 1983; Rylov 2006);
- the difference between proper names and common names (Vvedenskaya 1981; Nikonov 1974);
- the process of name creation and naming (Omelchenko, Samohina (Dmytrenko), Moroz, 2006, Bach 1978);
- the existence and absence of the meaning of the name (Grzega 2011, Ullmann 1951; Pulgman 1954);
- the semantic structure of the name (Golomidova 1998; Yermolovich 2005).

In the biosocial aspect, researchers paid great attention to the problems which are linked with the issues of “language and society”, where a person is treated as a representative of a special biological species. However, the interrelationship of linguistic and extra linguistic within lexical units has not been given enough attention yet. A.M. Kuznetsov debates the status of the connotation towards the inclusion or non-inclusion of this phenomenon in the semantic structure of the word. The researcher points out that this phenomenon reflects the entire set of extralinguistic object and phenomenon characteristics in the semantics of the word, which subsequently form the “imagery of linguistic lexical meaning” together with the linguistic components of the meaning of the word. The connotation can be freely reproduced and be stable, therefore it can be included in the semantic structure of the word.

After having analyzed some theoretical works on positioning the connotation, we adhere to the viewpoint of L.V. Razumova, who distinguish the following subcomponents of the connotation: emotive, expressive, evaluative, cultural, ideological, imagery, motivation, the inner form of the word, functional and stylistic.

One of the most striking interrelationships of linguistic and extra linguistic factors can be found in the system of American anthroponames. Harry Wiver, a lecturer at the department of international relations of American university in Washington, D.C., in his paper “Mosaic of American Culture” says that despite a great variety, there has been existing a dominating culture in the USA.

Lora Wattenberg, the author of the book “The Baby Name Wizard”, highlights a very interesting tendency in the American name giving. According to the results of the latest research in this field, such rare Old Testament names as *Josh (Joshua)*, *Josiah*, *Elijah*, *Kaleb*, *Etan* obtained an unexpected popularity. Jewish names, which were considered archaic in early XX century, are in vogue now. Today they sound very unusual and new, but the most interesting fact is that these names have already lost their religious and national semantic component.

According to Stanley Liberson, a Harvard sociologist and specialist in the field of name research, fashion for names depends on the world events only to a small extent. The new is the well forgotten old, and despite the fact that the popularity of names is very changeable, this process still has some certain regularities. A great variety of publications in the field of behavioral economy dealing with modern tendencies in name giving has appeared recently. American scientist Steven Levitt with a co-author journalist Steven Dabner researched the

race segregation in the anthroponymic system of the USA. The data they obtained vividly show that various races in America prefer quite different names.

The researcher M.V. Golomidova singles out the following motives of name giving:

- after the elderly relatives;
- after a person who has played an important role in the life of one of the family members;
- after a famous and popular person;
- because of the taste preferences or positive personal evaluation of the name sound shell;
- because of the name originality.

We adhere to the opinion that the combination of factors underlying the proper names motives, is unified for the whole humanity. It comprises a famous onomastic universalia. For anthroponyms, such fundamental factors determining their motivation are the following: physical, psychic, biological, moral and intellectual characteristics of a person, his/her national, territorial belonging, and family ties.

### METHODS AND MATERIALS

As the research is based on the poly language material, it prompts and supplies the further elaboration of the subject, and emphasizes its importance as well.

The textual method involves the analysis of anthroponymic texts (calendar name address books, registers of Registry Offices, telephone books). This method made it possible to analyse the new forms of names, to highlight basic evaluative affixes, and to compose connotations. Thus, the method of stratigraphical correlations represents the diachronic analysis of personal names with due account for history information of the anthroponymic progress. The statistical method is estimation of the names types and definite components of names in some onomastic system, calculation of the percentage ratio of popular names in different speech communities enables researchers to reveal the basic tendencies of the name giving, since the name frequency defines its popularity.

All stages of the name giving progress were taken into account, since acquiring connotation for the name is a long historically marked process. Before analysing the national onomasticon, semantic fields and hierarchic relations of the dependent microfields have been carefully studied. The approach enables made it possible to take into account extralinguistic factors and national specific of the name vocabulary, since semantics of names is rather complicated. In this study, the inventory involves:

- I. Inventory of formal names (usual forms).
- II. Inventory of name derivatives (occasional forms).
- III. Names with a clearly defined connotation.

The inventory count method assumes a procedure of identification of personal names; in other words, not each capitalised word is a personal name. Quantitative and qualitative data obtained from these methods will serve as a basis for the name classification.

While studying the anthroponymic material, we classified it in accordance with the following grounds: linguistic identity of the name; gender identity; national identity. Due to the fact that linguistic and gender identities of the name are constant, the choice of the first two points can integrate the researched empiric material. The national identity is differentiating, since the national uniqueness of names arising from language singularity makes personal names unique linguistic units. The sociolinguistic survey in question is based on active questionnaires, since it is one of the safest ways of sociolinguistic information acquisition.

In our research we use an experiment, which is a kind of scientific experience representing a systematized and repeatedly reproduced observation of the object, its individual aspects and connections with other objects, which are detected in the process of strictly controlled impact of an observer on the studied object.

Our linguistic and social experiment is based on a method of questionnaire surveys, as it is one of the most reliable methods of obtaining sociolinguistic information. In our research, in the process of questionnaire surveys the following objectives have been set:

- Collection of onomastic material. Answers from questionnaire surveys, which informants fill in, may add value to our own files.
- Questionnaire surveys are used for confirming the hypothesis about interrelation of personal names connotation and name giving motives.
- By means of questionnaire surveys we obtained additional information about new semantic and morphological features of names.

The selection of informants is a key issue, as in our research it was found out that quantity and quality of personal names that are actively used depend on a social status of informants. All informants were divided into the three groups: 1) employess (prosecutors, teaching staff of Nosov Magnitogorsk State Technical University – 100 persons; 2) employers of OJSC “Repair Services” – 100 persons, 3) students of Nosov Magnitogorsk State Technical University – 100 persons. The total amount of informants constituted 300 persons.

All informants were divided into the three groups according to the age that allows to anylise the tendencies of name giving process in the historical aspect.

The first group – the age of informants 1953-1963;

The second group - the age of informants 1963- 1983;

The third group - the age of informants 1983 -1990 r.p.

For the more objective assessment and statistic data and for further forecasting of results quantitative monitoring is necessary to be conducted.

Undoubtedly, this method is appropriate for researching a pragmatic aspect of connotation of personal names, as it connects the name bearer with a linguistic unit.

Theory of nomination was studied to elaborate principles bringing out and classifying social aspects at name giving process. The empirical material was selected from about 20 onomastic, etymologic, and historical dictionaries; in addition, we used statistic lists from Magnitogorsk Registry Office (the Russian Federation). To achieve the goals and solve a number of specific problems, a complex methodology was applied (descriptive, etymological, componential analysis, textual, quantitative methods, method of classification etc.).

Complex methodological framework that is based on questionnaire was elaborated. Its main points are the following:

- Name, Middle Name, Surname
- Date, place of birth
- Gender
- Hobbies
- Occupation

1. Do you know why you have this name? (Possible answers are the following)

- hereditary name
- name from church calendar
- (euphony) harmonizing with surname

2. Do you have relatives with the same name?

3. Do you know the meaning of your name?

4. Do you know the origin of your name?

5. What names would you prefer to give to your children? and why? (Possible answers are the following)

- interfamilial name
- name giving trend
- harmonizing with surname
- belonging of the name to the Saints according to church calendar

Based on the materials of the conducted questionnaire, we determined the main social motivation of name giving process:

- national motivation for name giving,
- religious motivation for name giving,
- ideological motivation for name giving.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The features of the semantic structure of the personal name defines its specialization in the identifying function and depicts the main trends in the choosing names for persons. Meaning of the name refers to the wide scale of positive and negative associations of a person.

A significant component of the meaning of the personal name is reduced to the means of expression, which has two aspects. Its etymology expressed by a noun, which has been turned into a name and gives it the content; it is lost, rethought, and associatively reinterpreted over time to create a new content.

When analyzing the meaning of a personal name (the relationship between the name and the meaning) one should not only consider the connection of the name with a person, but establish the denotation of the name. Extralinguistic part of the meaning can be named by different terms: denotation, designatum, referent, and object.

Denotation is an individual representation of any object of reality, which is expressed by the word in a language. A denotative layer of meaning, or a denotative meaning as information about the extralinguistic reality. The researcher considers denotation as actual and virtual. Actual denotation refers to the referent. Virtual denotation is a set of objects in the world that can be named by this expression.

The connotation of name involves emotionality and extra information of a language unit. The connotation is information about culture, the worldview of a native speaker, which is embodied in the "lexical share" of the word with geographical, historical, and cultural characteristics. This statement can be applied to the connotation of personal names as well.

The so-called nationwide names - the names of public figures; theophoric names; mythological names have the connotation of this type. It is the group of names that is identically connoted both for the bearers of English, German, and Russian languages. However, there are names in the Nominalia in any language that are unique only to the bearers of a particular culture and their connotation is associated with each the national identity.

Connotation cannot be included in the semantic structure of the word; therefore, in his opinion, this co-meaning cannot be arranged with denotative and grammatical components of the semantics of the word. Obviously, evaluative, emotive, expressive, and cultural components can be included in the structure of the connotation of personal names. These four elements are not a mechanical sum but they are an interdependent unit.

Socially and culturally marked names reflect the cultural component of the connotation of personal names. Personal names are linguistic units and at the same time they are the reflection of national culture. However, the interaction between the culture and a personal name is a bilateral process since each culture creates specific types of personal names which reflect extra linguistic social reality.

The extra linguistic factor such as religion influences the cultural component of the connotation of personal names. Religion is one of the primary factors that make sense of the direction and dynamics of the naming process; its role depends on the individual and ethnic singularity of the nation, its religious denomination, as well as on the unicity of the individual and public combination in the semantic structure of name. Despite the fact that names contain a limited amount of semes, which comprise the semantic structure of names, religion plays an important role in acquiring the common heritage of humankind including information. There is no reason to disclaim the social character of personal names. Society plays an important role in choosing the motivations for the name giving. Therefore, names are the mirror of social history and social change. Nowadays names are used only to link a noun and a person. A social aspect of personal names is focused on:

- theoretical and methodological study of personal names creation and its function;
- comprehensive research of anthroponomastics as a system;
- study of personal names as a social historical category;
- social cultural factors of creation and extinction of personal names;
- functioning of personal names in the modern society.

From the social point of onomastic research view, personal names have special factors, such as the public assessment, conscious or unconscious preferences. These factors can be divided into two groups: factors of the highest value (socioeconomic formation, capital goods, science, culture, lifestyle, aesthetic and ethical views of society); factors of low value (texts, ideology, etc.).

#### ***Biosocial aspects of choosing name for persons***

A modern person does not pay attention to the fact that personal name division into masculine and feminine name did not exist for centuries. Modern society has masculine and feminine personal names and this is the first biological identity for a person that determines his/her position in the society and impose his/her role in the community.

There exists a great number of names, which can be used as male and female names. Gender characteristic is expressed by morphological means. The informational resource of linguistic information and etymological meaning is constant. Therefore, these names have a marked male and female connotation.

A problem of gender identification arises by using borrowed names during the process of the name giving. For example, names **Yasko, Yoko** borrowed from Japan do not have gender characteristic, and it was necessary to use the second name with a gender seme while name giving.

A gender motive for the name giving is constant for any lingvocultural space, and is it not changed under social conditions. The main social motives are national, ideological and religious ones.

#### ***Social aspects of choosing name for persons***

“Social character of personal onyms reveals in tradition to use the same words for name giving and also in:

*A traditional attachment of definite names* to the representatives of famous social groups. The given tendency goes back to the times of the slave-holding system. Thus, for example, in Ancient Rome a slave had a name consisting of his/her master’s name in a genitive case, and a word *puer*: **Lucipuer** – a slave of **Lucius**.

The diachronic aspect of our research shows that a social stratification of names was due to the “rich-poor” factor. Some names were associated with noble birth and nobility, while the others – with poverty and obscurity. It was characteristic for English culture that such names as *Rupert, Benjamin, Alexandra* were traditionally associated with the representatives of the middle class. A female name *Abigail*, which was traditionally interpreted as a maid’s name, has lost its social coloration, while for foundlings there existed quite definite names corresponding to their position in the society: *Helpless, Rependance, Forsaken*.

The next factor is *a social evaluation of some names*. Each language has its own collection of personal names with a striking social coloration. Thus, in Ancient Rome adopted children took the name of their adopter with a suffix *anus* (i.e. *Octavianus* – a son of Octavius, adopted by Guy Julius Caesar).

In our research we observe that the role of social factors as linguistic universalia and their realization in the language anthroponymicon is very important in the investigation of onyms connotation, and, consequently, in the name giving practice". [Zerkina, N. N., Kisel, O. V., Mikhailov, V. V., & Lukina, O. A. (2018)]

One of the underlying choosing names for persons is gender. A legal basis of this process involves the fact that a man cannot have a female name. In this case, a personal name as a linguistic sign has both identification and a gendered function, which is constant and cannot be excluded in any conditions. The preferences in the name's choice are subjective, but if a female name is chosen for a boy, it must be unofficial. This way of the name giving exists in the German speech community. Name Maria, for example, is used as the second component in male anthroponyms, thereby it does not express feminist views and shows respect for St. Mary. However, the morphology of the same names can define international names Anne, Peter. These are the names of the most esteemed Saints both for Christians and Catholics. A phonetic name form can specify the nationality of a name.

Each particular language sets up a principle of names functioning. The borrowed names having the same characteristic cannot be subjected to the laws of a language. Personal names show a national and cultural characteristic of society. However, a national singularity of names differs in other languages but remains a permanent part of connotation. These differences can be shown at the semantic, morphologic and lexical linguistic level.

These personal names as religion marked linguistic sign have been created for special purposes. If religion played an important role in the life of a name giver, he or she chose such names. Ethnocultural traditions, myths and legends also determined a special motivation for the name giving in the period of polytheism. The informational value of such names consisted of a common nouns stem. The etymological motivation for the name giving was actual at an early stage of social development.

Religion is one of the primary factors determining the dynamics of the name giving process. In this case, an ethnic cultural identity of name givers reflected the semantic structure of names. Although the semantic structure of names consists of a great number of semes, religion is still meaningful and has informational value.

When studying the names of Polytheism, it was noted that personal names perform their cumulative function, reflect the views of people from Polytheism to Monotheism in their semantics: *Meinrad* "*megin* (strength) + *rat* (counsel)", *Notker* "*not* (danger) + *ger* (spear)", *Veshnyak*, *Lubim*, *Shiryay*, *Shumilo*. Nowadays such names as *Meinrad* (*megin*-force + *rat*- advice), *Notker* (*not*- danger + *ger*- spear), *Lubim* (Love), *Shumilo* (noise) have a cumulative function, and are units of passive name vocabulary.

After conversion to Christianity, the name giving practice changed. Now a child had two names, one traditional name for religious rituals, and another - according to Pagan belief. This fact witnesses that a name giver tried to combine two beliefs - Christianity and Paganism. Nowadays Christian names are given to children in accordance with a name giver's religious beliefs and a church calendar. These names are in most instances currently associated with the parents who see Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and who believe that their offspring will follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and avoid all the evils of the world.

Ideology is extra linguistic information that influences the name vocabulary in general, and the name giving in particular. The ideologically marked names show preferences of a name giver and consist of such names as *Adolf*, *Iosif*, etc. The influence of ideology on the name vocabulary became evident in the names of political leaders and monarchs. This process follows the pattern: advocacy of ideas leads to the popularization of a person and his or her name when the name is given.

According to the statistics of Vital Records Office, in the Russian speech community, such names as *Yaroslav*, *Georgij*, *Vasilij*, *Ivan* are in vogue. These names are connected with tsars and princes. This tendency is governed by the national identity and the 'Russian idea'. Ideology as extralinguistic information enables people, on the one hand, to create new abbreviated names such as *Vilor* –V.I. Lenin, *Krarmiya* – *Krasnaya Armiya* (the

Red Army). On the other hand, new meanings have become good known names (e.g. *Gertruda – geroj truda* (hero of labour)).

In Germany ideologically marked names appeared in the age of Reformation. Catholics chose such anthroponames as *Ignatus, Vincentz, Aloys, Xaver, Seraphim* for the name giving. Protestants created names on the pattern of old Germanic names: *Christfried, Christleib, Erdmann, Gottfried, Gotthard, Gottlieb, Leberecht*. However, these names did not stand the test of time and were out of use because of their semantic structure.

New social conditions dictate the fashion of the name giving in the world. There exist bearers with the brand-names and topnames: *Dior, Armani, Chanel, Paris, London*, etc. In Russia, for example, until recently, there has been a tendency of strange name giving. The President of the Russian Federation in 2017 signed a law, which prohibits to give non-standard, unconventional, abnormal names to children. This includes using indecent words, punctuation marks and positions in the name giving. Article 58 of the Family Code of the Russian Federation will be amended in the nearest future. Consequently, such names as *Lucifer* and *Boch RW* will be out of law.

### CONCLUSION

Thus, to become a subject of scientific research, personal names have passed through centuries and attracted attention of ordinary people and scientists. One cannot deny a social character of personal names, as they exist in the society and for the society, which dictates their choice, whatsoever individual it may seem. All personal names are always social, therefore names represent a mirror of social history. Social motives of the name giving were formed at the early stages of the name list forming and progress. They resulted from the name givers' social needs rather than the individual ones.

The name giving is a process created by social motivations reflected in the meaning of name which depends on the needs of a person identification. There exists one of the most important linguistic and semantic problems that can be solved twofold: by the actualisation of the name giving motivations and by the correlation of intra- and extra linguistic factors. On the one hand, the name giving motivations integrate a social cognitive experience of society, on the other hand, they characterise extra linguistic events.

Social motivations for the name giving change the semantic structure of names, influence the name functioning, demonstrate the preferences of a name giver, and have an impact on quantitative and qualitative status of anthroponameycon.

Taking into account the actual material, it was pointed out that: personal names are associated with history of society; this feature is unstable; personal names respond to social upheaval; personal names reflect the core cultural values at the moment of their creation through a common noun basis.

The relevance of this work is proved by a permanent interest in the problems of personal names as an object of onomastics and sociolinguistics. The study of the problems of the name giving coincides with a general trend in sociological studies in linguistics. The issue of the relationship of language and extra linguistic reality plays a key role in establishing a system of the name giving.

From the social point of view, the motivations for the name giving depend on social and economic status of name givers (their social origin, life style, residence, education, profession and position, religious, family, economic status). The practical value of the research lies in the possibility to use factual material, obtained data, elaborated classifications for lecture courses on language studies, lexicology, lingvoculturology, lexicography, intercultural communication. On the basis of the given material it is possible to write textbooks, diploma and course projects.

The given work deals with the issues, which either have not attracted the anthroponames researchers' attention, or have not been thoroughly analyzed, namely: analysis and creation of the name giving motives system; investigation of the personal names connotation by means of the name giving process.

Thus, the research of the name giving process showed that it is a complex and multifaceted process, which requires the investigation of both linguistic, and extra linguistic challenges. The process itself is universal for representatives of different languages and cultures. The research opens up new perspectives of studying the

name giving process, firstly, on the basis of the material of different languages and cultures, secondly, within the virtual space.

The given approach to the research of personal names opens up new opportunities for studying toponyms, since this layer of language is also socially determined, and is influenced by ideology and religion as the main factors of the name giving changes.

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