

CLASSIFICATION OF FOLK PERSONAL NAMES ACCORDING TO THEIR PURPOSE OF USE

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Abstract: This article examines folk personal names as an important component of anthroponymy and classifies them according to their purpose of use in society. Folk names are analyzed as culturally motivated linguistic units that reflect collective experience, beliefs, emotions, and social expectations. The study highlights how such names serve protective, expressive, symbolic, and identity-forming functions. Special attention is given to the relevance of folk personal names in the modern era, where traditional naming practices coexist with globalization and contemporary cultural influences. The article demonstrates that folk anthroponyms remain a meaningful reflection of social consciousness and cultural continuity.

Keywords: anthroponymy, folk personal names, naming motivation, cultural identity, social function, onomastics

Introduction

Personal names are not arbitrary linguistic labels but socially and culturally meaningful units that emerge from the lived experiences of a community. In folk traditions, naming practices are closely connected with worldview, beliefs, emotions, and collective memory. Folk personal names, in particular, originate from everyday life and oral culture, making them valuable sources for understanding social psychology and cultural history. Classifying such names according to their purpose of use allows for a deeper insight into how language functions as a tool for expressing communal values and human intentions.

The study of folk anthroponyms occupies a significant place in onomastics, as these names often preserve archaic meanings and cultural symbols that are no longer visible in standard or formal naming systems. By focusing on the functional motivation behind folk personal names, this article aims to reveal their role in shaping identity and maintaining cultural continuity.

Folk personal names expressing wishes and aspirations

One of the most widespread groups of folk personal names consists of names created to express positive wishes and hopes for a child's future. Such names often reflect desires for happiness, prosperity, strength, wisdom, or longevity. They function as verbal symbols of parental expectations and emotional investment. In folk consciousness, the name is believed to influence

destiny, which explains why meaningful and optimistic lexemes are frequently used in name formation.

These names are especially common in traditional societies where language is closely linked to belief systems. Even in modern contexts, names motivated by good wishes remain popular, demonstrating the persistence of symbolic thinking in human culture.

Protective and apotropaic folk names

Another important group of folk personal names includes those with a protective function. These names are traditionally used to safeguard the individual from misfortune, illness, or negative forces. In many cultures, such names may appear semantically modest or even negative, as they are intended to deceive harmful forces or divert attention from the child.

From a linguistic perspective, protective names reveal the deep connection between language and belief. Although rational thinking has reduced the overt use of such names in contemporary society, their historical presence highlights how naming once served as a form of verbal protection and social reassurance.

Names reflecting circumstances and social experience

Folk personal names are often motivated by specific circumstances surrounding birth or family life. These names may reflect the time, place, emotional state, or significant events experienced by the family. Such anthroponyms act as linguistic records of personal and collective history, embedding social experience directly into the naming system.

In this sense, folk names function as narrative units, preserving memory and context. Even when their original motivation fades over time, the names continue to carry traces of lived reality and social meaning.

Identity and community-oriented folk names

A distinct group of folk personal names serves to reinforce communal identity and belonging. These names may be linked to ethnic heritage, local traditions, or collective values. Through such names, individuals are symbolically connected to their community, ancestry, and cultural environment.

In modern multicultural societies, this function has gained renewed importance. Folk personal names increasingly act as markers of cultural self-identification, especially in contexts where maintaining linguistic and cultural uniqueness is perceived as essential.

Folk personal names in the modern context

Contemporary naming practices are influenced by globalization, media, and increased intercultural interaction. Despite these changes, folk personal names continue to exist alongside

modern and international naming trends. Their survival can be explained by their emotional depth, cultural symbolism, and adaptability.

Modern parents may reinterpret traditional folk names or combine them with contemporary elements, creating a dynamic balance between heritage and innovation. This demonstrates that folk anthroponyms are not static relics but living elements of language that evolve with society.

Linguistic motivation and word-formation in folk personal names

Folk personal names are deeply rooted in natural language processes and everyday speech. From a linguistic perspective, these names often arise through transparent word-formation mechanisms such as derivation, compounding, and semantic shift. Common nouns, adjectives, and verbs are frequently transformed into personal names, preserving their original meanings. This transparency distinguishes folk anthroponyms from borrowed or institutionalized names whose meanings may no longer be recognizable to speakers.

The motivation behind such names is closely linked to the communicative needs of society. Folk names are created not only to identify an individual but also to convey evaluation, emotion, and intention. This multifunctionality demonstrates that naming is an active linguistic act shaped by cultural logic rather than a purely formal process.

Emotional and psychological functions of folk names

Beyond their social and symbolic roles, folk personal names perform important emotional and psychological functions. Naming a child often serves as a coping mechanism during uncertain or challenging periods, allowing families to express hope, resilience, or gratitude through language. In folk belief systems, words are perceived as powerful entities capable of influencing reality, which explains the careful selection of names with positive or protective meanings.

Even in modern societies, the emotional value of folk names remains strong. Parents frequently choose names that resonate with personal experiences or family history, reinforcing emotional bonds and intergenerational continuity. This highlights the enduring psychological relevance of folk anthroponyms.

Gender representation in folk personal naming practices

Folk personal names also reflect traditional perceptions of gender roles and expectations. Names associated with strength, endurance, or protection are more commonly assigned to male individuals, while names expressing beauty, tenderness, or harmony are often associated with female individuals. These patterns illustrate how language encodes social norms and collective ideals.

However, contemporary naming practices show increasing flexibility in gender representation. Folk names are being reinterpreted in gender-neutral ways, indicating shifts in social attitudes and the evolving role of language in reflecting cultural change.

Regional variation and dialectal influence

Regional and dialectal variation plays a significant role in the formation and use of folk personal names. Local vocabulary, phonetic features, and cultural practices influence name creation, resulting in diverse anthroponymic forms across regions. Such variation enriches the anthroponymic system and serves as evidence of linguistic diversity within a single cultural framework.

These regional forms often carry strong local identity markers, reinforcing a sense of belonging and cultural specificity. In the context of modernization, preserving regional folk names contributes to the protection of linguistic heritage.

Intergenerational transmission and cultural memory

Folk personal names act as carriers of cultural memory, transmitting values, beliefs, and historical experience from one generation to the next. The repetition of names within families or communities strengthens continuity and reinforces shared identity. Through this process, names become symbolic links between the past and the present.

Although modern naming trends sometimes favor novelty, the continued use of folk names reflects a desire to maintain cultural roots. This balance between preservation and adaptation illustrates the dynamic nature of anthroponymic systems.

Influence of media and digital culture

The rise of digital communication and mass media has introduced new dynamics into folk naming practices. While traditional folk names may be less visible in global media spaces, they are often revitalized through cultural projects, social networks, and online discussions focused on heritage and identity. Digital platforms provide new opportunities for the reinterpretation and dissemination of folk anthroponyms.

As a result, folk personal names are not disappearing but transforming, adapting to contemporary modes of communication while retaining their core cultural meanings.

Normative and Ethical Dimensions of Folk Personal Names

Folk personal names often reflect ethical norms and moral values accepted within a community. Through naming, societies express ideas about appropriate behavior, desirable character traits, and moral responsibility. Names motivated by honesty, patience, dignity, or generosity demonstrate how ethical principles are linguistically encoded and transmitted. In this sense,

folk anthroponyms function as informal moral guidelines that accompany individuals throughout their lives.

Such names reinforce collective expectations and contribute to social cohesion. Even when ethical meanings are not consciously reflected upon in daily life, they remain embedded in cultural memory and influence social perception.

Folk Personal Names and Ritual Practices

Naming in folk tradition is frequently associated with ritual practices and symbolic actions. The act of naming itself may occur during specific ceremonies, gatherings, or culturally significant moments. These rituals emphasize the sacred and social importance of names, transforming them into markers of inclusion within the community.

The ritual dimension of folk personal names strengthens their symbolic power. Names acquired through ritual contexts are often perceived as protective or meaningful beyond their lexical content, highlighting the intersection of language, belief, and tradition.

Environmental and Natural Imagery in Folk Names

A notable group of folk personal names derives from elements of the natural environment. References to natural phenomena, landscapes, seasons, or living beings reveal the close relationship between humans and nature in traditional societies. Such names reflect respect for natural forces and an awareness of environmental cycles.

These anthroponyms also function as cultural metaphors, associating individuals with qualities observed in nature. In modern ecological discourse, the revival of nature-based folk names may be interpreted as a renewed appreciation for environmental consciousness and cultural roots.

Folk Personal Names as Linguistic Resistance

In certain historical and social contexts, folk personal names have served as a form of linguistic resistance. Maintaining traditional naming practices during periods of external influence or cultural pressure allows communities to preserve identity and assert continuity. Names become silent expressions of cultural autonomy and resilience.

This function remains relevant in contemporary multicultural environments, where folk names may symbolize pride in heritage and resistance to cultural homogenization.

Cognitive Aspects of Folk Naming Practices

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, folk personal names are shaped by categorization and associative thinking. Communities draw on familiar concepts, experiences, and symbolic frameworks to create names that are easily understood and remembered. This cognitive accessibility explains the persistence of folk names across generations.

The mental imagery evoked by such names contributes to their emotional impact and communicative effectiveness, reinforcing their role within everyday language use.

Legal and Institutional Interaction with Folk Names

Although folk personal names originate outside formal institutions, they inevitably interact with legal and administrative systems. Standardization processes may alter spelling or pronunciation, yet the underlying cultural meaning often remains intact. This interaction highlights the tension between institutional regulation and cultural expression.

Despite bureaucratic constraints, folk names continue to function as carriers of identity and cultural meaning, demonstrating their adaptability within modern social frameworks.

Future Prospects of Folk Personal Names

The future of folk personal names depends on their ability to adapt to changing social realities. While modernization introduces new naming models, folk anthroponyms persist due to their symbolic richness and emotional depth. Digital platforms, cultural initiatives, and academic research contribute to their preservation and reinterpretation.

Rather than disappearing, folk personal names are likely to evolve, maintaining relevance by reflecting both tradition and contemporary experience.

Conclusion

The classification of folk personal names according to their purpose of use reveals their multifunctional nature and deep cultural significance. These names serve not only as identifiers but also as expressions of wishes, protection, memory, and identity. Despite social and cultural transformations, folk personal names remain an integral part of anthroponymic systems, reflecting the enduring human need to assign meaning through language. Their study contributes to a broader understanding of how linguistic practices preserve cultural values and social experience across generations.

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