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THE ROLE OF ANTHROPOCENTRIC FACTORS IN KARAKALPAK ANTHROPONYMS

Shamshetova Biybiayym
Karakalpak State University named after Berdakh

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the anthropocentric factors that shape the formation, semantics, and cultural functions of Karakalpak personal names. Drawing on descriptive, historical-comparative, lexical-semantic, structural-morphological, component, etymological, and linguocultural methods, the study analyzes anthroponymic material documented in Karakalpak onomastic scholarship and explanatory sources. The findings show that naming practices encode parental intentions, protective beliefs, religious values, family circumstances, birth events, physical characteristics, gender expectations, social status, historical memory, territorial and clan affiliation, and emotional evaluation. Wish-bearing names express hopes for health, prosperity, intelligence, courage, or social success, whereas protective names symbolically guard children against illness, loss, and harmful forces. Religious anthroponyms frame the child as a divine gift and connect naming with moral ideals. Gendered names reproduce culturally valued images of femininity and masculinity, while status components such as bek, bay, mırza, tóre, and sultan project authority, wealth, and prestige. Names associated with heroes, poets, places, clans, and significant events preserve collective memory and social identity. The study concludes that Karakalpak anthroponyms function not merely as nominative labels but as culturally embedded, human-centered codes through which personal experience, social expectations, belief systems, and ethnocultural continuity are linguistically transmitted across generations and thereby connect individual identity with the cultural history of society.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of Karakalpak personal names from an anthropocentric perspective requires each name to be interpreted not merely as a nominative unit but as a culturally meaningful phenomenon that reflects an individual's worldview, beliefs, values, psychological state, and social experience. The scholarly literature emphasizes that anthroponymy encompasses all proper names referring to people and should be studied in close connection with language, history, ethnography, sociology, and law (Sayımbetov, 2000, p. 72). In addition, the modern anthropocentric approach places the relationship among person, language, and worldview at the center of analysis and requires researchers to consider the name-giver's spiritual and creative intentions, ethnocultural experience, and mental stereotypes in the naming process (Vasil'eva & Dmitrieva, 2021, pp. 478–488). From this perspective, Karakalpak names function as linguistic units that embody the people's experiences, aspirations, beliefs, social relations, and cultural memory.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The analysis drew on the works of Sayımbetov (2000), Vasil'eva and Dmitrieva (2021), Abdinazimov and Daniyarova (2016), Aitbaeva (2024), and Jarimbetova (2023) to examine the anthropocentric factors and semantic-structural features involved in the formation and development of Karakalpak personal names.

The study employed descriptive, historical-comparative, lexical-semantic, structural-morphological, component, etymological, and linguocultural methods to investigate the topic and analyze the selected materials and examples.

RESULTS

Parental intention is a primary anthropocentric factor in Karakalpak naming. An examination of the meanings of Karakalpak names shows that the emotional and social responses associated with a child's birth are often encoded in the semantics of the name. Explanatory dictionaries interpret many names through wishes such as "we have achieved our goal," "may his wish come true," "may he be a companion to his parents," "may he become intelligent and knowledgeable," and "may he serve the people." These interpretations demonstrate that choosing a name is not accidental but constitutes a conscious nominative act through which parents project a spiritual orientation, social role, and desired future identity onto the child. Thus, in Karakalpak anthroponymy, a name can function as the linguistic expression of parental aspiration and as a semantic direction assigned to the child's future development (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

Names associated with parental intentions form a distinct semantic layer expressing wishes, aspirations, intentions, and dreams. Names such as Murat, Muratbay, Muratbek, Allamurat, and Aymurat convey the motifs of attaining a goal, fulfilling a dream, and realizing an intention. Names such as Allaniyaz, Allanazar, Ábdimurat, and Ábdiniyaz emphasize that the child was prayed for or requested from God. Such names encode the parents' spiritual needs, their joy at the birth of a long-awaited child, and their faith in divine grace. Consequently, wishes expressed through Karakalpak names constitute not only an emotional phenomenon but also an anthropocentric factor with religious, spiritual, and social dimensions (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

The protective motif constitutes a particularly prominent anthropocentric layer in Karakalpak names. Since ancient times, protective names have been given to shield children from the evil eye, malevolent spirits, and other perceived threats. Unusual names were also selected for this purpose within systems of superstition and ritual belief. Later lexical sources make this motif especially clear. Names such as Aman, Amanbay, Amanbek, Amanbiyke, Amanlyk, Amantay, Amanjan, Amankul, Amantur, and Amangul are explained through wishes such as "may he live a long life," "may he avoid hardship," "may he bring prosperity to the family," and "because the previous child died, may this child survive." In these cases, the name is directly associated with the child's survival, symbolic protection, and the family's hope that the child will live (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

Another expression of the protective motif appears in names associated with death, loss, dangerous circumstances, and a symbolic strategy of "deception." For example, some explanations of the name Almagul convey the meaning "do not take my daughter; do not touch her; let her live rather than die." This interpretation demonstrates the name's direct apotropaic, or protective, semantic function. Similarly, the use of Aman and related names in families that had previously lost children expresses the hope that the newborn will survive, bring peace to the family, and make future family life safe. In such cases, the name functions as a symbolic linguistic defense against real-life threats (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

Religion is one of the most important sources of anthropocentric meaning in Karakalpak personal names. In names such as Allabergen, Allaberdi, Allamjar, Allamurat, Allanazar, Allaniyaz, Allashúkir, Allayar, Allayarkeldi, Qudaybergen, Qudayderdi, Qudayar, Qudyar, Qudaynazar, Qudayshúkir,

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Táńirbergen, Táńirberdi, Reyimbergen, Rehimnazar, and Iyembergen, the child is interpreted as a divine gift or a manifestation of divine favor. The anthropocentric essence of religious naming lies in the parents' encoding of their deepest spiritual needs in the name: the desire to have a child, protect the child, guide the child along a righteous path, and entrust the child to divine protection. Thus, faith and human need are inseparably connected in the religious layer of Karakalpak names (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

Religious motives also appear through associations with revered religious figures and members of the Prophet Muhammad's family. Names such as Aysha, Ayshabiybi, Ayshabiyke, Ayshagúl, and Ayshaxan are interpreted as expressing the wish that a girl attain high status, in association with figures revered in Islamic tradition. The name Aknazar similarly conveys the wish that God's favorable gaze rest upon the child. These examples show that the religious anthroponymic motif functions not only as a prayer but also as the selection of a moral and social ideal. Through such a name, parents wish the child well-being and sustenance while associating the child with a sacred exemplar (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

Anthropocentric motifs related to family circumstances and life events are clearly reflected in Karakalpak names. Explanations of the name Amangeldi refer to several situations, including the safe birth of a child, a birth occurring on the day the father returned from a journey, a wish for a father or brother to return safely from military service, or a birth following the mother's safe arrival at a destination. The name Amanjol may express a mother's wish to give birth safely while travelling or a hope that the child's journey through life will be safe. Names such as Aymereke, Aytbay, Aytgul, Nawrız, Kurban, Ramazan, Sapar, and Tanjarbay connect a birth with a festival, month, season, religious observance, night, moonlight, journey, or other specific event. These names show that an individual's birth can be recorded linguistically as part of the family's biography (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

Names given to children born after a difficult or prolonged period of waiting also possess distinctive anthropocentric value. Some explanations of the name Miyasar include meanings such as "we were blessed with the happiness of having a daughter" and "Allah blessed us with this girl." In this context, the name expresses the parents' spiritual experience, gratitude, and recognition of the child as a precious gift. Names such as Aykumar and Aytileu likewise carry connotations of longing, need, and prolonged waiting for a child. Thus, Karakalpak names often conceptualize the birth of a child as an emotional and spiritual event rather than merely a biographical occurrence (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

Names based on physical traits and circumstances of birth also constitute an important anthropocentric category in Karakalpak anthroponymy. In one explanation of the name Abbaz, the child is described as being "born with a splinter." Ayzada may refer to a moon-shaped mark on the forehead; Anar, Anara, Anarbiybi, Anargul, and Anarkhan may denote a red birthmark or a ruddy complexion; Altybayan may refer to an extra finger; Oraqbay may refer to the umbilical cord being cut with a particular implement; and Oralbay may describe a child born with the umbilical cord wrapped around the body. These examples show that a distinctive physical feature, birthmark, or circumstance observed at birth can directly motivate the selection of a name. This category therefore represents an empirical, observation-based layer of anthropocentric naming (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

Gender is clearly expressed in Karakalpak personal names. In names given to girls, qualities such as beauty, tenderness, refinement, purity, radiance, sweetness, and intelligence commonly function as cultural ideals. Names such as Ajarbiyke, Ajargúl, Aygózzal, Ayjamal, Ayperi, Aysuluw, Ayman, Aqmaral, Aqılay, Aqlıyma, Aysholpan, Aqsholpan, Ayshınar, and Móldir express wishes that a girl will be beautiful, graceful, pure, intelligent, radiant, and valued. This naming system constructs the image of a girl as a model of aesthetic and moral excellence. Thus, in Karakalpak anthroponymy, gender is not merely a grammatical or formal distinction but a cultural ideal encoded in the name (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

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In boys' names, meanings associated with strength, bravery, respect, rank, leadership, and social status predominate. Names such as Azamat, Aybat, Agabek, Aytöre, Aymırza, Aypolat, Aqpolat, Aydos, Aydosbay, Aydosbiy, Mamanbiy, and Alpamıs convey courage, bravery, honor, public service, and the ability to lead. Through these names, parents imagine the child as a future social actor, leader, source of support, or person who serves the community. Male names therefore reflect a gendered ideal characterized by social agency and strength (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

A distinctive and complex expression of gendered expectations appears in girls' names that convey a desire for the next child to be a boy. Names such as Ulbosın, Ulmeken, Uljan, Ulboğan, Ulzada, Uldana, Ultuw, Dámexan, Dametken, and Dámeli express the intention that "the child born after this girl will be a boy." Some sources also associate this practice with the belief that such names could deceive demons or mislead malevolent forces. These names mark the intersection of gender expectations, family strategies, and ancient beliefs in Karakalpak society. From an anthropocentric perspective, they directly reflect the family's demographic, social, and spiritual concerns (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

Social and status-related motives also play an important role in Karakalpak personal names. Components such as bek, bay, mırza, tóre, and sultan function not merely as structural elements but also as semantic markers of social standing, authority, leadership, respect, and wealth. Agabek conveys brotherhood and respect; Sawlat denotes rank; Aytkhu suggests nobility; Elmırza evokes leadership of the people; Aqdáwlet and Aydáwlet suggest statehood or prosperity; and Aqshagúl evokes wealth and sustenance. Through such names, parents express the hope that the child will attain a respected social position and achieve material and spiritual well-being. Social ideals are therefore an active source of nomination in Karakalpak anthroponymy (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

The motif of emulating a historical figure, hero, or idealized image is also prominent in Karakalpak names. Names such as Abbas, Aydos, Allaniyaz, Allayar, Alpamıs, Koblan, Ayımxan, Gúlayım, Sárbinaz, and Zulfiya are interpreted in relation to particular historical figures, writers, statespersons, heroes, poets, or folkloric characters. This practice expresses the parents' desire for the child to resemble a respected social or spiritual ideal. The associations of Aydos with service to the people, Abbaz with poetry, Allayar Dosnazarov with a well-known figure, and Alpamys with heroism illustrate this model. In such cases, the name becomes a cultural bridge connecting historical memory with an envisioned future identity (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

Motives related to clan, tribal, geographical, and community affiliation are also important in anthropocentric interpretation. Some names indicate the clan to which a child belongs, the child's place of birth, or the maternal family's lineage. For example, Aksyngul may indicate affiliation with the Qazaqly clan, Aytbay with the Ayteke clan, Moynaqbay with birth in the Moynaq district, and Almagul or Almakhan with a connection to Alma-Ata. In these cases, the name functions as a symbol linking the individual to a community, region, or kinship network. The anthropocentric factor is therefore associated not only with individual identification but also with collective identity (Abdinazimov & Daniyarova, 2016; Sayımbetov, 2000).

Nicknames and evaluative naming constitute another anthropocentric layer of Karakalpak anthroponymy. In the literature, nicknames are treated as units that express a person's physical appearance, psychological state, character, or social attributes. Qalım pushıq refers to a small nose, Eset gúrre reflects an aspect of appearance, and Asan qayğı conveys the psychological state of grieving over the fate of the people. Nicknames such as "Erejep tentek," "Synshy biy," and "Ernazar alakóz" similarly embody the community's evaluation of an individual. Names and nicknames therefore function together as anthropocentric resources that construct a person's social image and describe that individual from the community's perspective (Aitbaeva, 2024).

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The use of affectionate forms in male and female names is another important manifestation of subjective-evaluative meaning. In female names such as Aiguljan, Biybijan, Ayımbiyke, Aybiybi, and Sárbiyke, elements such as jan, biyke, and biybi intensify meanings of affection and value. In male names, shortened and affectionate forms similarly express interpersonal closeness and familial intimacy. The principal motivations for shortening personal names are ease of pronunciation and affectionate usage (Jarimbetova, 2023, pp. 259–261). Some shortened forms may subsequently develop into independent names. This process shows that personal names also perform an emotional and expressive function in interpersonal relations.

Table 1 summarizes the results of the analysis.

No.	Anthropocentric factor	Description	Male names	Female names
1.	Parental intention	A Karakalpak personal name can encode parental wishes and project a desired future identity for the child.	Murat, Aymurat, Maqset, Dáwletyar, Kópjúrsin, Ómirzaq, Esbosın, Qabıl, Ońǵarbay	Nesiybeli, Úmitay, Dáwletbiyke, Rısgúl, Jaqsıgúl, Abadan, Abatgúl, Aydana
2.	Protective motif	Protective names are traditionally given to guard a child from the evil eye, malevolent spirits, and other perceived threats.	Amanbay, Amanlıq, Amantay, Amanjan, Amangeldi, Esen, Esengeldi	Amangúl, Ólmesxan, Tursınay, Jańılsın, Jańılxan, Jańılay, Esengúl
3.	Religious factor	In the religious layer of personal names, faith and human need are expressed as inseparable elements.	Qudiyar, Allambergen, Qudaybergen, Táńirbergen, Reyimbergen	Qatiysha, Fatiyma, Máryam, Aysha, Ayshagúl
4.	Family and life circumstances	These names record the circumstances of a child's birth as part of the family's biography.	Qırqbay, Eliwbay, Alpısbay, Jalǵasbay, Turjan, Turar	Toqtagúl, Turdıgúl, Genjegúl, Turdıxan
5.	Physical traits and birth circumstances	These names derive from a distinctive physical trait, birthmark, or circumstance observed at birth.	Qalbay, Qállibek, Oraqbay, Oralbay, Qarabay, Qosbarmaq	Qálbiyke, Anar, Meńligúl, Qarashash, Sarıgúl, Perijamal
6.	Gender factor	Gender functions not merely as a formal distinction but as a cultural ideal encoded in the name.	Azamat, Aybat, Aymırza, Batır, Bahadır, Ámir, Palwaniyaz, Quralbay, Qılıshbay	Dámexan, Dámetken, Ulmeken, Ulbosın, Ulboǵan
7.	Social and status-related motives	These names express the hope that the child will attain social standing, respect, authority, or material and spiritual well-being.	Tóremurat, Tórebay, Elmırza, Mırzabay, Mırzaǵalı, Xojabay, Sha(x)niyaz, Bekturdı	Xanzada, Xansulıw, Xanshayım, Aqshagúl, Biyke, Shaxsánem, Sha(x)zada
8.	Imitation of historical figures, heroes, and idealized images	The name creates a cultural link between historical memory and an envisioned future identity.	Aydos, Mamanbiy, Alpamıs, Qoblan, Allayar, Jánibek	Gúlayım, Sárbinaz, Tumaris, Gúlparshın
9.	Clan, tribal, geographical, and community affiliation	The name connects an individual with a clan, community, region, or kinship network.	Qıpshaqbay, Mańǵıtbay, Túrkmenbay, Tashkenbay, Qazaqbay	Few examples are attested

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No.	Anthropocentric factor	Description	Male names	Female names
10.	Nicknames and evaluative forms	Nicknames and affectionate forms express physical, psychological, characterological, or social attributes and perform emotional-evaluative functions in interpersonal relations.	Qalım pushıq, Eset gúrre, Erejep tentek, Ernazar alakóz; Ótesh, Allash, Sapash, Ernash, Jámet	Few female nicknames are attested. Biybijan, Sánemjan, Ulsha, Almash, Dámesh, Máriyash

The anthroponymic examples analyzed in this study were drawn from Abdinazimov and Daniyarova (2016), Aitbaeva (2024), Jarimbetova (2023), and Sayımbetov (2000).

DISCUSSION

Karakalpak anthroponymy has developed in close connection with the people's historical memory, customs, religious beliefs, family intentions, social experience, and national worldview. Karakalpak names encode anthropocentric meanings associated with protection, hope, attitudes toward children, gender differentiation, social evaluation, ethnocultural memory, and affective expression. Their lexical-semantic, morphological, and structural patterns also demonstrate the historical relationships of the Karakalpak people with Turkic, Arabic-Persian, Russian, and other cultural traditions. Karakalpak anthroponyms should therefore be understood not merely as units that identify individuals but as important linguocultural phenomena that reflect the complex relationships among people, language, society, and culture.

CONCLUSION

Anthropocentric factors are manifested in Karakalpak personal names in complex and multilayered forms. A name can function as a linguistic expression of the people's worldview, family strategies, religious beliefs, gender expectations, social ideals, historical memory, and everyday experience. Karakalpak anthroponymy should therefore be interpreted not only as a formal-semantic system but also as a human-centered cultural code. A name may reflect the circumstances of a child's birth, the parents' fears, hopes, and beliefs, and the community's evaluation of the individual. These characteristics make Karakalpak personal names a particularly rich source of data for anthropocentric analysis.

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