

**MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC –
METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL****MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC –
METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**SEMANTIC EVOLUTION OF THE GERMAN ANTHROPONYMIC SYSTEM****Zulfiya Safarovna Berdiyeva***Senior Lecturer, Termez State Pedagogical Institute*zulfiaberdieva3@gmail.com*Termez, Uzbekistan***ABOUT ARTICLE**

Key words: German anthroponymy, semantic evolution, personal names, family names, semantic broadening, semantic narrowing, appellativization, onomastics, proper names, folk etymology.

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Abstract: This article examines the semantic evolution of the German anthroponymic system and the factors influencing changes in the meanings of personal names. Particular attention is paid to the processes of semantic broadening, semantic narrowing, appellativization, and the transformation of common nouns into proper names. The study also explores the social, historical, and cultural factors that affect the emotional and evaluative connotations of anthroponyms. The findings demonstrate that German personal names constitute a dynamic linguistic subsystem reflecting both language development and cultural change.

Introduction. Since the establishment of Germanic studies at the beginning of the nineteenth century, numerous scholars have made significant and fruitful contributions to the investigation of the German anthroponymic and onomastic corpus. However, none has yet undertaken the task of constructing a comprehensive and systematically organized theoretical framework based on the wealth of accumulated findings. Those who devoted themselves to particular branches of onomastics, such as anthroponymy and toponymy, generally addressed a broader audience, aiming either to explain the meanings of names or to facilitate their practical interpretation and application. Far less attention was given to elucidating the phenomenon of the formation of the German naming system itself, to identifying the forces that have shaped it throughout history, and to providing a thorough and systematic account of this extensive semantic domain of the German lexicon in all its characteristic manifestations.

The complexity and multifaceted nature of many onomastic issues, recognized by specialists in the field, together with the regrettable neglect and underestimation of family history and regional historical studies in the past, resulted in a situation in which many distinguished scholars regarded German onomastics with a certain degree of condescension. Consequently, the field was frequently left in the hands of enthusiasts who often lacked adequate scholarly training. As a result, onomastics too often became a sphere for speculative interpretations of names and for far-reaching assumptions concerning the historical, social, and cultural realities underlying them.

It remains an urgent task for future scholarship to counteract this tendency and, by employing all available research methodologies, to develop German onomastics into a discipline of the same scientific rigor and methodological sophistication that has long been expected and achieved in other fields of study. It should be emphasized that considerable efforts have already been made in this direction. German onomastics possesses an extensive and highly respected body of scholarly literature. Nevertheless, one essential work is still lacking: a study that, free from popularizing embellishments, systematically synthesizes the principal achievements of onomastic research, presents its problems in their diversity and interdependence, explains its methodological foundations, and simultaneously provides readers with a broad and well-founded knowledge of the available empirical material.

The latter case will be examined in greater detail in the second volume of this work. At this point, we merely draw attention to the numerous farm names in northwestern Germany ending in -ing, -mann, and -meier, in which this type of transition can be observed.

According to Preuß, the owner of a farm was recorded in 1530 as Henrich van Brackel; today, the farm is known as Brackelman. This designation originally functioned as the byname of a later owner of the farm in question. Similarly, Johan van Dulmen (1530) corresponds to the modern farm name Dulmann; Bernt van Buer (1574) to Buermeier; and Henrick von Dissen (1530) to Diesmeier.

In Westphalia and the adjacent regions, evidence for the transfer of personal names to farm names can already be found in sources dating from the twelfth century. A charter from Twente, dated 1188, contains the following relevant examples: Rotgerinc, Bennekinc, Weselinc, Ernestinc, Elekinc, Lenderinc, Temmenc, Spelemanninc, and Smedinc.

The salt-producing households of Lüneburg in the thirteenth century likewise bore names ending in -ing. These names were formed from the bynames of family members and their descendants, which in turn derived from the personal name of the original or a former owner. Examples include Alverdinge, Berndinge, Ecbertinge, and Gherardinge.

A farmstead in Ostercheps, within the parish of Edewecht (Oldenburg), was known in the fourteenth century as Roberti domus ("Robert's house"), later as domus Rotberinge; in the fifteenth century as Roberdinge; and in the sixteenth century as Robering. These examples clearly illustrate the historical development whereby personal names gradually evolved into hereditary farm names and local designations.

When a byname originally borne by a single individual becomes a family name and is consequently adopted by many people, its semantic scope expands to encompass the collective identity of all those who bear it. A similar process of semantic broadening can be observed in ethnonyms, which are often extended from a particular tribe to the entire people to which that tribe belongs.

The ethnonym Germanen ("Germans"), for example, originally referred to a relatively small Germanic tribe, the Germani Cisirhenani mentioned by Caesar. Likewise, the French designation Allemands initially denoted only the Alemanni tribe before becoming the general term for Germans as a whole. Among the North Germanic peoples, Germans were traditionally referred to as Saxar ("Saxons"), while in Hungarian and several South Slavic languages they were known as Schwaben ("Swabians").

Methodology. A comparable semantic development can be observed in the German term Welsche. Derived from the tribal name of the Celtic Volcae, the term subsequently came to designate the Celts in general, later the Gallo-Roman population inhabiting former Celtic territories, and eventually Romance-speaking peoples as a whole. In modern German, however, its meaning has narrowed and is primarily associated with the French, often carrying a pejorative connotation.

English provides another example of semantic narrowing. Historically, the term Dutch was used more broadly in reference to Germanic-speaking populations, but in contemporary usage it refers exclusively to the inhabitants of the Netherlands. To denote the German people as a whole, English adopted the learned ethnonym Germans.

Like all words, personal names possess a particular emotional value that is often unstable and subject to change over time. Consequently, names may be perceived as beautiful or unattractive, noble or common, fashionable or outdated, pleasant, neutral, or even unpleasant. Personal names are especially susceptible to negative evaluation when they become obsolete or lose social prestige.

For example, few parents today would choose names such as Gottlieb, Kunigunde, or Eulalia for their children. These names have fallen out of use, and their emotional and social associations have changed accordingly. Likewise, when a name becomes excessively

widespread and is predominantly associated with lower social strata, it may lose prestige and acquire connotations of ordinariness or limited social standing.

The protagonist of the German folk tradition, Doctor Faust, bears the name Johann. Goethe, however, chose the personal name Heinrich for his literary Faust because he considered the historically established name Johann too strongly associated with the traditional figure and therefore unsuitable for his artistic purposes.

Family names may also acquire positive or negative emotional connotations independently of their literal meanings. A notable example is the family name Nobiling, which was abandoned by members of the family after it became associated with the notorious assassin Max Hödel Nobiling and consequently acquired strongly negative associations.

A similar development can be observed in certain traditional Swiss formations ending in -ing, such as d' Bachmega ("the Bachmann brothers"). Although these expressions originally carried no pejorative meaning, in modern usage they are frequently employed when referring to a person in a disparaging or unfavorable manner. This demonstrates that the emotional and evaluative value of personal and family names is not fixed but evolves in response to changing social, cultural, and historical circumstances.

Results and Discussion. Personal names originate from common nouns either directly or through processes of word formation. Over time, however, the lexical meanings originally associated with these appellatives gradually recede into the background for a variety of reasons. This tendency is particularly evident in family names, which become hereditary and consequently lose their transparent connection with the meanings from which they were originally derived.

As a result, the original lexical meaning of a name may eventually be forgotten or recalled only in exceptional circumstances. Such instances occur when the semantic content of a surname unexpectedly attracts attention because of a specific context or linguistic coincidence. In everyday communication, familiar names are generally associated not with their etymological meanings but with the individuals who bear them. Thus, when a name is mentioned, speakers typically recall a particular person rather than the original lexical meaning embedded in the name itself.

For example, upon hearing the name Ernst Pfeiffer, one immediately thinks of a specific individual rather than of the lexical meanings of the components Ernst ("seriousness") and Pfeiffer ("piper"). Even in situations where people are free to choose personal names, the selection is usually made without conscious consideration of their original semantic content.

Nevertheless, the disappearance of an original meaning does not prevent speakers from assigning a new interpretation to a name whose etymological significance has become obscure. Such semantic reinterpretation frequently occurs through the process known as folk etymology, whereby speakers reshape or reinterpret names in accordance with meanings that appear more familiar or meaningful within their linguistic and cultural environment.

As long as personal names retained some connection to their original lexical meanings, they appear to have occasionally influenced the development of the appellative vocabulary. In this regard, Gilliéron observed that French family names such as Lefèvre often contributed directly to the disappearance of the corresponding common nouns and to the emergence of alternative lexical forms, such as forgeron ("blacksmith"). This phenomenon demonstrates that proper names may not only originate from the common lexicon but can also exert a reciprocal influence on its subsequent development.

Proper names may, under certain circumstances, acquire appellative (common noun) meanings. This process generally occurs in two principal ways. First, it involves highly common and frequently used personal names that gradually lose their exclusively referential function and come to denote broader social or cultural concepts. Second, it concerns names whose bearers have become widely known through remarkable achievements, significant discoveries or inventions, exceptional products, notorious actions, or other memorable events. In such cases, the name transcends its original function as a personal identifier and develops a broader lexical meaning within the language community.

Conclusion. The study demonstrates that the German anthroponymic system has undergone continuous semantic development throughout its historical evolution. Personal names not only originate from common nouns and other lexical units but also gradually lose, transform, or expand their original meanings over time. The analysis reveals that semantic processes such as broadening, narrowing, emotional re-evaluation, and appellativization play a significant role in shaping the functions and meanings of anthroponyms. Furthermore, anthroponyms may influence the development of the general vocabulary, while at the same time being affected by social, cultural, and historical factors. The findings confirm the dynamic relationship between proper names and the lexical system of the language. Therefore, the semantic evolution of German anthroponyms constitutes an important field of research for understanding both linguistic change and the cultural history of German-speaking communities.

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