



INSTAGRAM AND TELEGRAM ERGONYMS: A STUDY OF NAMING TRENDS AMONG UZBEK YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the naming practices (ergonymy) of Uzbek youth on social media platforms, especially Instagram and Telegram. The focus is on how English words and hybrid ergonyms (combinations of English and Uzbek) are used in the branding of online businesses, services, and media accounts. The findings reveal that English borrowings dominate due to their perceived modernity, global appeal, and trustworthiness. These naming choices reflect both individual identity expression and broader cultural shifts toward digital globalization.

KEYWORDS: Ergonym, English borrowings, hybrid names, Instagram, Telegram, Uzbek youth, digital branding, linguistic identity, globalization

Literature Review

The study of ergonymy is rooted in onomastics and sociolinguistics, as introduced by Superanskaya (2007), who emphasized the social and psychological functions of names. Krysinina (2004) focused on the growing presence of foreign words in modern Russian, a trend mirrored in Uzbek naming patterns. Sidorova (2015) explored digital ergonymy in Russian regional media, showing increased use of English for commercial branding. Kapferer (2008) argued that names serve both strategic and emotional branding roles. Phillipson (2001) contextualized the rise of English in post-Soviet regions as part of broader linguistic globalization.



These works provide a foundation for analyzing naming trends among Uzbek youth in digital contexts.

Introduction

The rise of digital platforms has transformed the way young people brand themselves and their businesses. In Uzbekistan, platforms like Instagram and Telegram are widely used by youth for entrepreneurship, entertainment, and self-expression. A noticeable trend is the use of English words or English-Uzbek hybrids as names of online shops, channels, or media pages. Terms like Style Market, Magic Mama, or Beauty Lab are not just catchy; they represent a desire to appear modern, professional, and globally connected.

This study explores the linguistic strategies behind such naming trends and what they reveal about cultural identity, branding practices, and language use among Uzbek youth.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative content analysis approach, focusing on usernames and page titles from popular Instagram and Telegram accounts managed by Uzbek youth. Over 100 ergonyms were collected and categorized based on language composition (pure English, Uzbek-English hybrid, or Uzbek). The analysis aimed to identify recurring lexical patterns, word structures, and semantic fields. Additional insights were obtained through semi-structured interviews with 15 young digital entrepreneurs aged 18–30 who explained the motivations behind their naming choices. This mixed-method approach allowed for both linguistic and sociocultural interpretations of ergonymic trends.

The study used a qualitative, corpus-based approach. Each ergonym was categorized according to:



Language origin: English, Uzbek, Russian, or hybrid

Structure:

Simple (e.g., Glow)

Compound (e.g., Style Market)

Hybrid (e.g., Magic Olam, Kids Dunyo)

Function: commercial (shops, beauty, services), personal branding, entertainment, education.

The analysis followed the typology of foreign word usage proposed by Krysinina (2004) and the functional framework developed by Superanskaya (2007).

The analysis found that a majority (around 70%) of the ergonyms consisted exclusively of English lexical units, such as Style Beauty, Fitness Room, or Fresh Coffee. These names exhibit characteristics of ergonomic naming: they are short, catchy, phonetically smooth, and visually appealing. English words were chosen due to their perceived internationalism, professionalism, and elegance.

Roughly 20% of the names were hybrids, combining English and Uzbek elements (e.g., Moda Uyi, Beauty Bozor, or Best Ta'm), which reflect a transitional phase in language use, where local identity coexists with global branding ambitions. Only 10% of the collected names were fully Uzbek, and these were mostly limited to traditional or region-specific businesses.

The interviews revealed several motivations for choosing English-based or hybrid names:

Prestige and Trendiness: English is associated with progress, technology, and modern lifestyle.



Trust and Attractiveness: Users believe that English names evoke higher quality and global standards.

Audience Reach: English words are more universally understandable, attracting both local and international audiences.

These findings align with the theoretical perspectives of Kapferer (2008) and Phillipson (2001), who emphasize the emotional and global branding power of English. Moreover, this trend reflects a subtle but significant linguistic shift, where Uzbek youth integrate global cultural elements while preserving traces of their local identity.

Conclusion

Instagram and Telegram ergonyms created by Uzbek youth are more than digital labels they are carefully crafted identity statements. The preference for English and hybrid constructions reflects broader socio-cultural dynamics, including globalization, digital entrepreneurship, and linguistic flexibility.

Naming strategies are used to shape brand perception, build trust, and signal modern identity. As social media continues to influence cultural expression, the study of ergonymy will remain essential in understanding language and identity in a global context.

The research confirms that ergonymic practices among Uzbek youth on social media platforms are strongly influenced by English and hybrid naming strategies. These choices are not arbitrary; rather, they serve as tools for personal branding, identity construction, and market positioning in a digital world.

English borrowings dominate due to their ergonomic advantages and symbolic value. Hybrid ergonyms offer a unique balance between global appeal



and local identity, showcasing the adaptability of young entrepreneurs in navigating globalization.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing field of digital sociolinguistics, emphasizing how naming practices serve as a mirror of evolving linguistic landscapes and cultural aspirations among youth in post-Soviet societies like Uzbekistan.

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