

UDC 82-31

<https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/113/66>

CONCEPT OF “АЙ”/“MOON” IN KYRGYZ AND ENGLISH ANTHROPONYMS

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КОНЦЕПТ “АЙ”/“MOON” В КЫРГЫЗСКИХ И АНГЛИЙСКИХ АНТРОПОНИМАХ

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Abstract. This article examines the concept of “Ай”/“Moon” in Kyrgyz and English anthroponyms. The relevance of the work lies in the study of the concept of the celestial body in the comparative aspect of the mentioned languages. The proper name is derived from the complex of factors that constitute the structure of the society of the native speakers of a given language and therefore it is an excellent object within the framework of the study of the concept. In the course of the analysis, a qualitative method was applied, which revealed that the concept of the moon is more expressed in Kyrgyz anthroponyms regardless of gender and in various combinations, while in English anthroponyms the concept appears indirectly reflecting the influence of Greek and Roman mythology.

Аннотация. Рассматривается концепт “Ай”/“Moon” в кыргызских и английских антропонимах. Актуальность работы заключается в исследовании концепта небесного тела в сравнительном аспекте упомянутых языков. Имя собственное истекает из совокупности факторов составляющих устройство общества носителей данного языка и поэтому оно является отличным объектом в рамках исследования концепта. В ходе анализа был применен качественный метод который выявил, что концепт луна более выражен в кыргызских антропонимах в независимости от гендера и в различных комбинациях в то время как в английских антропонимах концепт проявляется косвенно отражая влияние греческой и римской мифологии.

Keywords: Ай, concept, Moon, anthroponym, Kyrgyz language, English language.

Ключевые слова: Ай, концепт, Moon, антропоним, кыргызский язык, английский язык.

The study of anthroponyms or personal names/surnames/patronymic names/ nicknames often intersects with various fields such as history, linguistics, semiotics, anthropology, and cultural studies, providing valuable insights into how names symbolize and convey shared values, beliefs, and perceptions. “As you name the boat, so shall it float,” says English saying. Name is a part of a person's identity, as Kyrgyz people believe there are good and bad names, “heavy” (long names, historical and religious figures' names), and “light” names, “magical” (names which project certain quality), “protective” names. Giving the right name is of great importance and considering all the factors in the naming process it is fair to state that names reflect societal trends and carry conceptual information.

According to Derbisheva “concept is the result of the cognitive activity of an individual and society, and carries complex, encyclopedic information about the reflected object or phenomenon, about the interpretation of this information by public consciousness and the attitude of public consciousness to this phenomenon or subject” [1]. A concept is all that a person knows, thinks, and imagines about objects in the outer and inner worlds [2].

Currently, the studies of concepts in comparative aspects of Kyrgyz and English languages are on the rise, however, the concept of celestial bodies has a lack of attention. In this paper, we explore the concept of “Ай”/ “Moon” in personal names of both languages. For the analysis of Kyrgyz anthroponyms, we used the names taken from “Адам аттары-эл байлыгы 3 толукталып басылышы”/ “Names as national treasure 3rd updated edition” by Kyrgyz author Zhaparov Sheraly [3], currently the only book collection of Kyrgyz names. To analyze English anthroponyms we chose “7000 Baby Names Classic and Modern” by Hilary Spence [4] and “The Baby Name Countdown 140 000 Popular and Unusual Baby Names” by Jannet Schwegel [5]. The selection of proper names was based on its semantic or cultural reference to the notion of “moon”. Further using a descriptive method, we intended to showcase how the moon is represented in personal names in Kyrgyz and English by identifying linguistic, mythological, and cultural peculiarities.

The concept of “Ай” in Kyrgyz anthroponyms. The Kyrgyz language has multiple personal names with “Ай”/“Moon” components. The reason for this may lie in common for all Turkic nations' ancient belief system Tengrism, which centers on reverence for Tengri, the eternal blue sky, as the supreme deity, and emphasizes harmony between humans, nature, and space. The Moon is a night ruler and night symbol was feared and admired at the same time [6]. Kazakh scholar Bisenbaev states that on one side, the night was associated with evil spirits, intensified illnesses, deaths, and crimes from the other side the Moon was the only brightest night light, it embodied some magic. So to “please” the Moon, to seek its blessing children were given such names. “Ай”/moon prefix is prevalent in female Kyrgyz names. It is seen in various word combinations. In all of them, “Ай” denotes beauty.

“Moon+ female”

Айкыз (moon+girl), Кызай (girl+ moon), Айбике (moon+girl), Бегимай (my moon mistress), Айзада (moon+child/offspring);

“Moon +beauty”

Айдай (beautiful like a moon), Айсулуу (Moon+beautiful), Айчүрөк (very beautiful), Аймөлмөл (the most beautiful and precious).

However, beauty is expressed through other qualities as well. For instance, apart from just “radiance” the name “Айчүрөк,” which comes from the Kyrgyz Epos Semetei, is associated with purity, loyalty, and femininity (clck.ru/3LT7ST). Purenness is part of the Kyrgyz perception of beauty. We see such words like “Ак”/white, and “пери”/angel in the next combination:

“Moon+Pureness”

Акай (white+moon), Аймончок (moon+bead), Айпери (moon+angel).

The white color in Kyrgyz is often used to describe a person, Kyrgyz female beauty standards that emphasize that a woman should be fair, snow-white, etc. [7]. The word “Ак” has positive connotations such as innocence, honesty/purity “ак жүрөк”, kindness/humanity “ак көңүл”, and many more. The next examples of the names embody the quality of the moon such as light:

“Moon+light”

Жаркынай (bright+moon), Айкын (moon+ clear/explicit), Айшоола (moonlight, ray), Чолпонай (star+moon).

By giving these names, Kyrgyz wished for a good life far from darkness or wished the child to be the light in others' lives. “Чолпон,” the brightest star in the sky or the morning star, seen as a

harbinger of dawn, marking the transition from night to day, was vital for nomads' navigation. Therefore, the name “Чолпонай” symbolizes guidance, beauty, hope, and a fresh start. To highlight rarity, delicacy, and uniqueness Kyrgyz may give the following names:

“Moon+flora”

Айгүл (moon+flower), Гүлай (flower+moon), Айдагүл (the flower under the moon).

There is an “Айгүл” flower that grows on the slopes of only one rocky mountain “Aigul-Tash” in the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan. It is rare and blooms only a couple of weeks so people who happened to witness it are said to be lucky. Such qualities as being smart, wise, and flexible in life are reflected in the below-listed names:

“Moon+wise”

Тынай (smart/independent+moon), Акинай/Акылай (wisdom/wise+moon), Айдатка (moon+wise ruler);

Since childhood, a Kyrgyz girl has been taught to be “тын”, smart/flexible and wished to grow up wise. The past life of our ancestors was tough, moving constantly from one place to another forced women of those times to adjust and acquire these qualities. “Айдатка” is a comparatively new name with “датка” (from the Arabic "daat" in the meaning of "law/justice") the title used in 17-19th century denoting a ruler, someone with significant authority, respected for their wisdom, leadership, and ability to mediate disputes. The only woman who received such a title was Kurmanjan Datka the Queen of the South Kyrgyz that lived in the 19th beginning of the 20th century (clck.ru/3LT7FE). The notion of beauty and honor is expressed in the names:

“Moon+ body parts”

Айчач (moon +hair), Айкөкүл (moon+braids).

Hair is an essential part of a Kyrgyz girl's life. To cut the hair was prohibited "Чач кеспе, ырыскыңды кесесиң" otherwise one cuts own “blessing/happiness”. A young lady would have her hair braided, and after marriage she would cover her head with eleчек (traditional Kyrgyz head cover made of layers of white material), when becoming a widow she would loosen them. Long, thick, shiny hair is a part of each Kyrgyz woman's beauty standards and honor. All names project a certain quality, wished for the child. By Турсунай (let the moon stay), one wishes longevity parallel to the moon's cyclic nature, by Айбакыт (moon+happiness) one wishes bright and happy life. Sometimes the name is given to regard the phases of the moon, and the time at which the child was born:

“Moon+ phases/period”

Айтолы/Айтолду/Толгонай (full moon), Жанай (new moon).

To emphasize a long-awaited, desired girl the name Айсана is given (counting moon/counting months). The moon is paired with the notion of nobility. As in the name Айкерим/Айгерим which has the Arabic root “kerim” which stands for “noble, honorable, generous”. Now turning to male names, the “Ай” prefix isn't rare. If in the case of female names “Ай” denotes beauty, “Ай” in male names can be interpreted as “bringer of light”:

“Moon+male”

Айбала (moon+boy), Айжигит (moon+young man), Айдос (moon+friend), Айбек (moon+lord/man), Атай (his name is the moon), Айтегин (moon prince).

“Given by Moon”

Айберген(given by the moon), Айдан (from the moon), Айданбек (a boy from the moon). Nobility is expressed in Айтегин, which consists of an old Turkic title “tegin” meaning “prince” or “noble” which used to denote royalty or high-ranking individuals within the early Turkic khaganate, emphasizing noble lineage or status. The notion of wisdom and loyalty is implied in Бакай (tree+moon, to take care of the moon), the name of the character-advisor of the main hero in Kyrgyz

National epos Manas (clck.ru/3LT7ST). The correlation between the moon's brightness and the projection of the path illuminated by light is seen in the names:

“Moon+ body parts”

Айбет (surface of the moon, moon+face), Айбеткул/ Айбетбай/Айбетбек.

Besides, “бет” may imply conscience, “бетти жоготуу” or loss of dignity/shame is highly condemned. Therefore, the name Айбет may suggest not only a bright path but a path with dignity.

Overall, the widespread use of “Ай” in names reflects the cultural importance of the moon in Kyrgyz traditions and the aesthetic value placed on such symbolism. Kyrgyz anthroponyms with the “moon” component reflect the moon’s features such as light, brightness, white colour, and cyclicity as metaphors for beauty, radiance, purity, longevity, and light life pathway. These features along with other notions such as loyalty, femininity, wisdom, nobility, and happiness, the projection of these qualities prove that in the Kyrgyz picture of the world the Moon is highly valued and respected.

The concept of “moon” in English anthroponyms. The English word “moon” is rarely used as a first name. However, names of Greek and Latin origin with the meaning of moon or related to it are widely adopted in English-speaking countries. The well-known Canadian singer Celine Dion, and American actress and singer Selena Gomez have names inspired by Greek mythology. Selene or Celene/Celia, with the root “selas” or brightness, is a Greek Goddess of the moon who crosses the sky every night in a chariot and is depicted with impeccable beauty [8].

Similarly, the Latin Luna (moon) and Lunetta (little moon) is the Roman goddess, Selene’s counterpart. The Princess of Wales, Diana held a name of Roman origin, fertility goddess, guardian/protectress in women's childbirth, and underworld Goddess often associated with the moon. Diana’s Greek equivalent is Artemis or Artemia (for girls) and Artie/Artemus (for boys) stands for the Greek goddess of hunting, wilderness, and childbirth. The ancients believed the moon was critical to hunting success, as it produced nighttime dew that helped hunting dogs detect the scent of animals [9].

Artemis/Diana’s epithets referring to their birthplace act as proper names linked to the moon:

Cynthia from Latin “Mount of Cynthus” and Delia island of “Delos” (<https://www.etymonline.com/>). Even Phoebe, Greek titaness, Artemis’ grandmother whose name stands for “bright, pure” is identified with the moon. Other anthroponyms presented in the book of names by English authors, for example, Native American (Magna/Magena “coming moon”, Tayen “new moon,” etc.), Indian (Chander “moon”, Chandresh “Lord of the moon”, Poonam “full moon,” etc.) origin are not that spread among English community. Thus, the concept of the moon in English anthroponyms is based on Greek and Roman mythology, in which the moon is associated with beauty, femininity, fertility, wilderness, and the underworld.

In the analysis, we intended to identify linguistic, mythological, and cultural peculiarities that reveal how the moon is represented in personal names in Kyrgyz and English languages. As a result, we found out that the concept of the moon is more prominent in Kyrgyz anthroponyms. Consisting of two-word combinations, they reflect the moon’s physical features metaphorically projecting the values conditioned by the ancient beliefs and traditions. The number of names containing the concept and their popularity today indicate the steady figure of the Moon in the Kyrgyz linguistic picture of the world. Although the moon component is prevalent in female names, its presence in male names suggests that the moon figure in Kyrgyz's view isn’t fully feminine. The concept of the moon in English anthroponyms is subtle. The names consisting of single words almost don't include the moon component but are related to the Greek and Roman mythology of the moon, where the moon embodies feminine features. Further, the concept of the celestial body of the moon may be analyzed in other aspects.

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*Работа поступила
в редакцию 10.02.2025 г.*

*Принята к публикации
20.02.2025 г.*

Ссылка для цитирования:

Sharshenalieva A., Naimanova Ch. Concept of “Ай”/“Moon” in Kyrgyz and English Anthroponyms // Бюллетень науки и практики. 2025. Т. 11. №4. С. 484-488. <https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/113/66>

Cite as (APA):

Sharshenalieva, A., & Naimanova, Ch. (2025). Concept of “Ай”/“Moon” in Kyrgyz and English Anthroponyms. *Bulletin of Science and Practice*, 11(4), 484-488. <https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/113/66>