Article

The Process of Pragmatic Resemantization and Pejoratization of Anthroponyms in Digital Discourse (Using The Example of The Name "Zaynab")

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Abstract: This article analyzes the process of pragmatic resemantization of anthroponyms in the digital communication environment. The name "Zaynab" was chosen as the object of the research, and its historical and cultural semantic weight and connotative shifts based on phonetic contamination in the discourse of modern youth subculture were studied. The study used discursive analysis, a pragmalinguistic approach, and the observation method. The results show that internet slang and memetic thinking also turn anthroponyms into a subcultural playground. However, the probability of complete stigmatization of names with a historical and religious semantic basis is low. The article conceptually substantiates the mechanisms of intergenerational semantic difference, phonetic contamination, and pejoratization.

1. Introduction

The digital communication environment of the 21st century affects all layers of the language system. Especially, the formation of youth slang and memetic communication in internet discourse involves traditional semantically stable units in new connotative processes. In recent years, it can be observed that not only general lexical units, but also anthroponyms are pragmatically reinterpreted. Anthroponyms, as a rule, are a stable component of cultural memory and collective identity. For example, the name "Zaynab" is associated with the name of an important person in Islamic history (Zaynab bint Muhammad) and was used in naming traditions with a positive aesthetic connotation in Uzbek literary thought (see: Abdulla Qodiriy, the hero of the work "Days Gone By")[1]. Therefore, such names are semantically highly stable. However, in the discourse of modern youth, based on phonetic similarity, it is observed that some anthroponyms are associated with a negative or funny connotation. In this article, this process, namely the pragmatic resemantization of anthroponyms (the process of processing the meaning of a word and creating a new connotation) and temporal pejoratization (the process of acquiring a negative or offensive connotation of a word with a neutral or positive meaning) are analyzed from a linguistic and discursive point of view[2].

Onomastic units, in particular anthroponyms, form a special layer of the language system. They are not simple nominative units, but semantic constructions that embody

cultural memory, collective identity, and axiological values. Anthroponyms often have a historical, religious, and aesthetic basis, therefore their semantic core is relatively stable[3]. For example, the name "Zaynab" is associated with the name of an important person in Islamic history and is interpreted as a symbol of spiritual purity, patience, and chastity in the naming traditions of Muslim peoples. E. Begmatov explains this name as follows: Arabic, plump, fat; handsome, beautiful. Zahnab was the name of the daughter of Muhammad (pbuh). In Uzbek literary and aesthetic thought, Islamic women's names also had a positive connotative load[4].

In this respect, anthroponyms are characterized as units with "high semantic inertia." That is, they do not undergo semantic shift more often than general lexical units. However, the digital communication environment makes this stability relative. The main features of digital discourse are speed, interactivity, anonymity, and subcultural segmentation. In the Internet environment, language serves not only as a means of communication, but also as an identification marker. Especially in the speech of young people, slang and memetic units act as "internal group codes." In the context of memetic semantics, the associative and connotative potential of a word is more important than its basic lexical meaning[5]. A new pragmatic load is created through such mechanisms as phonetic similarity, grammatical game, abbreviation, and parody. In this process, the transfer of meaning is often not semantic, but pragmatic. The denotative core of the word is preserved, but its social connotation changes temporarily. This phenomenon can be called pragmatic resemantization[6].

2. Materials and Methods

This study applies a qualitative, integrative methodological framework combining pragmalinguistic, discursive, and onomastic approaches. The primary objective is to identify how anthroponyms acquire new pragmatic meanings within digital communication, using the name "Zaynab" as a focal unit. The research is based on naturally occurring language data collected from social media platforms, online discussions, and youth-oriented digital content, where memetic and slang expressions are actively used.

A discursive analysis method is employed to examine how the name functions in different communicative contexts, particularly within informal and subcultural environments. This allows for the identification of contextual meaning shifts and the role of interactional dynamics in shaping connotation. In parallel, a pragmalinguistic approach is used to interpret how speakers assign temporary evaluative meanings to the anthroponym, focusing on speaker intention, social context, and implied meanings rather than its fixed lexical definition.

The study also utilizes the observation method, particularly in analyzing the reactions of younger speakers to the use of the name in mediated discourse. This provides insight into how phonetic similarity and associative thinking influence perception. Special attention is given to the mechanism of phonetic contamination, where meaning emerges through sound-based associations rather than semantic relations.

Data are interpreted through comparative analysis, contrasting traditional semantic interpretations of the name with its emerging pragmatic uses in digital discourse. This helps to distinguish between stable cultural meanings and temporary subcultural connotations. Overall, the methodology ensures a systematic examination of how digital environments reshape the pragmatic layer of anthroponyms without altering their core denotative meaning.

3. Results and Discussion

Pejoratization is the process by which a neutral or positive unit acquires a negative connotation. In the development of traditional language, this process occurs through social

stereotypes, ideological shifts, or metaphorical expansion. In digital discourse, a new mechanism of phonetic contamination is actively working. Phonetic contamination is the process of conveying meaning as a result of associative convergence of phonetically similar units. In the internet environment, the Russian vulgarism "zayebal" (slang form "zaybal") is widely used. Although this unit is used in the meaning of "it bothered me," "it bothered me," by its nature it is extremely rude and of an insulting nature[7]. Phonetically, the closeness of this word to the Uzbek form "Zaynab" can create the effect of laughter and taboo in some youth segments. However, an important aspect here is that the transfer of meaning is based not on a semantic basis, but on phonetic-associative similarity. As a result, the denotative meaning of the anthroponym does not change, but a temporary pragmatic connotation arises[8].

This process is not a sufficient basis for the formation of a persistent stigma, since:

The historical and cultural semantic weight of the anthroponym is strong;

Negative association is not supported by institutional discourse;

The process has a subcultural and segmental character.

Today, the name "Zaynab" is used instead of some rude and insulting phrases that are widespread on social networks. This phenomenon is considered a practical manifestation of memetic resemantization, arising as a result of phonetic contamination. This interpretation was especially widespread through memes popular among social media representatives, bloggers, and young people[9]. As a result, an anthroponym of historical and religious significance is perceived in the minds of young people as a temporary pejorative and humorous-connotative code. This situation clearly demonstrates the dynamic change in the speech of young people in the digital communication environment, the processes of subcultural coding and pragmatic resemantization. At the same time, the adoption of such new speech units by the younger generation has a significant impact on their semantic thinking. Therefore, it is advisable to assess this phenomenon not as a violation of language, but as a pragmatic game mechanism arising in the context of digital communication[10].

As a result of family observation, the facial expressions and speech of the children were carefully observed when the main character used the name "Zaynab" in the TV series. The children's reaction showed the following aspects:

Laughter and glancing at each other - perceiving the name as a negative or "forbidden" code.

Question and clarification - the desire to understand that a name is involved in social coding through the comment "Is this a bad word?"

Phonetic association - children, without knowing the true meaning of the word, noticed a phonetic similarity with varnat in internet slang[11].

This observation shows that the younger generation pays attention not to the semantic core, but to the socio-connotative layer. For them, the lexical meaning of the word is secondary, and the main focus is on "forbidden laughter."

The phonetic proximity of the name "Zaynab" led to the following processes:

Associative approximation - children connected the name to each other, creating a funny connotation.

The taboo effect - the feeling of embarrassment or doubt when hearing a name - is a natural manifestation of social coding.

Temporary pejorativeness - the original lexical and religious meaning of the name was preserved, but received a temporary negative load in the subcultural context[12].

It should be noted that this process, arising on the basis of phonetic contamination, does not create a stable stigma, since:

The historical and cultural semantic basis is strong;

Negative connotation is present only in the subcultural segment;

In formal and academic discourse, the name is used in a pure and positive connotation.

The process of pragmatic resemantization is manifested at the following levels:

The discursive level - in the subcultural and internet environment, a temporarily negative pragmatic load is placed on the name[13].

Personal level - children perceive the name as a code of mutual laughter and interest.

The cultural level preserves the historical-religious meaning, which protects the name from complete stigmatization.

Consequently, pragmatic resemantization changes not the denotative core of the word, but its subcultural and interactive connotation.

Analysis shows that

For the older generation (parents, philologists), "Zaynab" is a historical figure, religious chastity, a literary aesthetic value.

For the younger generation (10-15 years old), "Zaynab" is a phonetic laugh code, an association with internet slang[14].

This difference indicates a semantic shift between generations and reflects the temporary pragmatic games arising over anthroponyms in the digital subculture. At the same time, a stable semantic basis protects names from stigmatization.

This observation and analysis gives several scientific and practical conclusions:

Digital subculture has a significant impact on the semantic perception of young people, which also attracts anthroponyms to the "subcultural playground."

Temporary pejorativeness, arising on the basis of phonetic contamination, does not violate the denotative meaning of the word.

Names with historical, religious, and cultural weight (e.g., Zaynab) maintain stability against temporary subcultural negative connotations.

The pedagogical approach and parental explanation help to support the semantic thinking of the younger generation in a normative direction.

The article examines the processes of pragmatic resemantization, phonetic contamination, and temporal pejoratization of anthroponyms through the analysis of the name "Zaynab" in a digital communication and memetic subcultural environment. The study showed that:

Influence on the social nature of language: through social networks, bloggers, and youth memes, language units (including anthroponyms) quickly and dynamically create a new connotation. Contamination and memetic resemantization, arising on the basis of phonetic similarities, lead to the perception in the minds of young people of words with historical and religious values as a temporary pejorative or humorous code. This situation clearly shows the social nature of language, that is, the dynamics of words and phrases, depending not only on their lexical meaning, but also on the socio-context[15].

Consequences: temporary stigmatization of names of historical and cultural significance among young people; the emergence of new, sometimes negative pragmatic loads in the subcultural and memetic layer of speech; intensification of semantic differences between generations: the older generation perceives names in a historical and religious context, and the younger generation - as a phonetic and subcultural code.

To eliminate the possible consequences, the following approaches are proposed:

Pedagogical approach: parents, teachers, and representatives of cultural education should familiarize young people with the true meaning of the name, its historical and religious value;

Collaboration with social media and bloggers: encouraging content creators to prepare materials that instill positive and culturally rich meanings in the speech of young people;

Linguistic monitoring: observation of the semantic consequences of slang and memes in the digital environment, analysis of temporal pejorative loads of words;

Cultural and onomastic research: maintaining social and linguistic stability by studying phonetic contamination and resemantization occurring in youth speech.

4. Conclusion

The modern digital environment further reveals the social nature of language. Now words and anthroponyms can not only have a lexical meaning, but also acquire new, sometimes temporary, negative codes in the minds of young people through subcultural and memetic connotations. Therefore, the protection of words of historical and cultural significance, the implementation of pedagogical and social measures is the main way to preserve the language in a stable, rich, and socially healthy state.

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