American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research

Vol. 6 Issue 8 | **pp.** 1957-1961 | **ISSN:** 2690-9626
Available online @ https://globalresearchnetwork.us/index.php/ajshr

Article

Lexical, Terminological, and Etymological Differences and Similarities Between Ichthyonyms in English and Uzbek

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Abstract: This article analyzes the lexical, terminological, and etymological features of ichthyonyms (fish names) in English and Uzbek. The study applies comparative-linguistic methods to explore differences in naming systems, semantic load, and historical origins across the two languages. The findings show that while English ichthyonyms tend to be more standardized, Uzbek names are rich in folk and dialectal forms. The paper emphasizes the need for terminological harmonization and suggests the development of a bilingual fish name glossary.

Keywords: Ichthyonym, Lexicon, Terminology, Etymology, English Language, Uzbek Language, Fish Names

1. Introduction

Language, a product of human thought, is intrinsically linked to societal development. Each culture possesses a lexicon that reflects its unique customs, traditions, and worldview. Ichthyonyms – or fish names – are no exception, reflecting a culture's geography, relationship with nature, and economic activities. This study undertakes a comparative analysis of ichthyonyms in English and Uzbek, examining their lexical, terminological, and etymological aspects. The research is grounded in a linguistic approach, exploring the origins of fish names, their semantic characteristics, and their connections to linguistic and cultural contexts[1].

The relevance of this topic lies in its contribution to linguistic scholarship, particularly in elucidating the historical roots of lexical units and analyzing their cultural and semantic significance. Ichthyonyms serve as valuable linguistic sources for understanding national culture, historical interactions, and language evolution. In the current era of globalization, the study of interlingual terminological and etymological differences holds practical importance in language learning, translation theory, and linguistic and cultural research[2].

Regarding the existing research on this subject, while there is extensive etymological documentation of English fish names, a comparative analysis of these names with other languages, especially Uzbek, remains relatively unexplored. Uzbek linguistics has primarily focused on ichthyonyms borrowed from Russian, with limited research on those derived from or connected to English[3]. While scholars like Xodjayeva and Nesterova have analyzed certain linguistic units from terminological and lexical perspectives, a

Citation: Ravshanovna, A. K. Lexical, Terminological, and Etymological Differences and Similarities Between Ichthyonyms in English and Uzbek. American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research 2025, 6(8), 1957-1961.

Received: 30th Jun 2025
Revised: 07th Jul 2025
Accepted: 25th Jul 2025
Published: 07th Aug 2025

comparative etymological analysis of ichthyonyms across the two languages is lacking. This article aims to address this gap in the research[4].

Scholarly investigations by other researchers also serve to solidify the scientific foundation of this study. For instance, V.N. Yartseva highlighted the significance of etymology in studying language history, emphasizing the need to uncover the role of each linguistic unit in the overall language system. This approach is particularly relevant to ichthyonyms. A.A. Reformatskiy posited that the semantic development of lexical units is directly linked to national thought and culture[5]. Linguist A.K. Matveeva emphasizes the connection between ichthyonyms and both nature and economic activity, positing that their placement within the lexical system signifies national identity. These perspectives provide the essential theoretical underpinnings for studying the historical-lexical formation of ichthyonyms in English and Uzbek[6].

2. Materials and Methods

The study employs comparative-historical analysis, etymological analysis, a linguo-cultural approach, and semantic analysis. The data analysis is based on dictionaries, scientific articles, and lexical sources in both English and Uzbek[7].

3. Results and Discussion

Research by linguists has demonstrated that ichthyonyms in English and Uzbek are shaped by linguo-cultural determinants. For example, the Uzbek word “sazan” (carp) is derived from Russian, an influence often associated with the Soviet era. The English word “salmon,” on the other hand, originates from the Old Germanic word “salmo[8].” Dilafro’z Xodjayeva, in her study of the etymology of linguodidactic terms in English and Uzbek, notes significant differences in their functional application and origins. Moreover, research by Russian linguist Anna Semenovna Nesterova on fish names in the Yakut language revealed that many have Turkic roots. This finding aligns structurally and semantically with archaic ichthyonyms in Uzbek. N.A. Nikolina and Z.Yu. Petrova have studied the role of ichthyonyms in metaphorical and comparative constructions in Russian literature. These studies analyzed how fish names are used to express human behavior and inner states. For example, the word “karas” (crucian carp) can represent sluggishness, while “shchuka” (pike) can denote agility. Biologist Anatoliy Petrovich Andriyashev studied fish species in the Arctic and Antarctic regions, incorporating morphological and ecological characteristics into their nomenclature. His work is a key contribution to the scientific classification of Russian ichthyonyms. Sobolev investigated linguistic connections between Russian and Baltic-Finnic languages through ichthyonym vocabulary, analyzing the etymologies of words like “nel’ma” (nelma) and “kilet” (herring)[9]. He identified the influence of Baltic-Finnic languages in the northern Russian dialects. In English, fish names often metaphorically relate to other animals or objects, such as “dogfish,” “parrotfish,” and “cowfish,” names that draw on the fish’s appearance or behavior. Maxmudova examined the lexical composition of bird names (ornithonyms) in Uzbek and English, analyzing their polysemy and role in phraseological units. Xidirova studied the names of wild animals (zoonyms) in Uzbek, analyzing their lexical-semantic and cultural significance. She showed how animal names are used in Uzbek proverbs and idiomatic expressions. Despite the research of English, Russian, and Uzbek scholars noted above, comparative research on the lexical, terminological, and etymological differences and similarities of ichthyonyms in English and Uzbek remains limited[10].

Lexical Features: A Typological Analysis

The formation and naming systems of lexical units in linguistics, particularly within specific semantic fields, reflect a people’s historical, cultural, and social experiences. From this perspective, the ichthyonym systems (fish names) in Uzbek and English possess distinct lexical characteristics, directly connected to the languages’ origins, stages of development, and cultural contexts[11].

In Uzbek, the majority of ichthyonyms are of Turkic origin, shaped by folk oral traditions from ancient times. Names like “baliq” (fish), “sayra” (shad), and “qayroqi” (a type of carp) belong not only to the linguistic but also to the ethnolinguistic stratum. These terms often have semantic motivations related to the fish’s appearance, movement, or habitat. Specifically, “sayra” may reflect the fish’s quick movement, while “qayroqi” may relate to its shape or hardness[12].

In English, a significant number of ichthyonyms have Germanic-Romance or Latin roots, reflecting a greater reliance on written, scientific traditions. Terms such as “salmon” (Lat. salmo), “tuna” (Lat. thunnus), and “cod” (Old Eng. codd) have transitioned from scientific terminology into the broader lexicon. These names often take shorter, phonetically simplified forms, facilitating ease of pronunciation and communicative efficiency. Examples include “bass,” “eel,” and “perch.”

In contrast, the Uzbek language exhibits a well-developed system of colloquial synonyms. A single fish species may have different names in various regions: for instance, “qayroqi” (a type of carp) can also be referred to as “qayra,” “qayriq,” or “qayraqi baliq.” This variability highlights the dialectal richness of Uzbek, reflecting the naming mechanisms based on folk experience and ecological observations. Such lexical multiplicity also demonstrates cultural layering and the language’s pragmatic adaptability.

In summary, the ichthyonym systems in English and Uzbek rely on different lexical foundations: English favors concise, standardized, and scientifically-grounded names, while Uzbek emphasizes folk, figurative, and often dialectal lexical units. These differences allow for a deeper understanding of the naming conventions characteristic of each language’s lexical system and the underlying cultural and spiritual values they represent.

Terminological Features

The terminological system is a crucial component of each language, ensuring precision in scientific, technical, and official communication. Analyzing the ichthyonym-related terminology in English and Uzbek reveals the levels of development in these systems, as well as the influences from external and internal linguistic factors.

English ichthyological terminology is internationally standardized, evident in scientific literature, import-export documentation, and food industry labeling. For instance, “haddock,” “halibut,” “flounder,” “anchovy,” “mullet,” and “sardine” are used consistently to designate specific biological species. These terms frequently align with international nomenclature systems (e.g., International Nomenclature) and function as terminological units from a linguistic perspective[13].

Conversely, fish names in Uzbek are still largely based on folk and regional classifications, and a unified terminological standard is lacking. For instance, some fish species may be called “saparnay” in Karakalpakstan, “zardak” in Surkhandarya, and “qum baliq” in Fergana. These names are primarily based on the fish’s color, appearance, or habitat and do not always correspond precisely with formal biological classifications.

Furthermore, some English fish names have entered Uzbek via transliteration, primarily through the Russian language. These terms are borrowed not from their original English form but from their Russian variant, a process known as linguistic intermediation. For example:

1. “skumbria” (Eng. mackerel, Rus. скумбрия)
2. “kambala” (Eng. flounder, Rus. камбала)
3. “seledka” (Eng. herring, Rus. сельдь)
4. “ugor” (Eng. eel, Rus. угорь)
5. “mintay” (Eng. pollock, Rus. минтай)

While phonetically adapted, these terms are not yet fully standardized in Uzbek scientific and technical terminology. However, such terms are increasingly used among the general population, especially in food stores, fish markets, and mass media[14].

Therefore, aligning ichthyonym-related terms in Uzbek with biological and industrial classifications, harmonizing them with international terms, and establishing scientific equivalents for regional names are urgent tasks. This would not only strengthen language norms but also reduce terminological ambiguity in international scientific and economic cooperation.

Etymological Features

The origin of the word "baliq" (fish) traces back to ancient Turkic languages. This lexeme shares a common root in all Turkic languages, appearing in similar forms in modern Uzbek (baliq), Kazakh (balyq), Kyrgyz (balyk), Bashkir (balıq), and others. This indicates that the word is ancient and widespread within the Turkic language family. Some linguists believe the original meaning of this word conveyed the concept of "water creature" or "aquatic being," reflecting the historical importance of fishing in the lives of Turkic peoples.

The English word "salmon" is derived from the Latin salmo, which in turn comes from the verb salire. Salire means "to leap" or "to jump from one place to another." This name is directly related to the fish's biological characteristics: salmon swim upstream against the current, often returning to their spawning grounds by leaping over obstacles in the water. Therefore, Latin sources named this fish according to its distinctive mode of locomotion[15].

Many English ichthyonyms are borrowed from other languages. For example, the word "anchovy" comes from Spanish, as this fish is primarily caught in the Mediterranean Sea and has long been gastronomically valued. Another example is "piranha," which comes from the indigenous Guarani language of South America, meaning "tooth fish" or "biting fish." This name reflects the aggressive hunting habits of piranhas.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the etymology of fish names is closely linked not only to linguistic factors but also to cultural and natural-geographic influences. Behind each name lies a historical-cultural context and the ancient relationship between humanity and nature. For this reason, studying ichthyonyms holds a special place in linguistic research. The research results show that there are deep terminological and etymological differences between ichthyonyms in English and Uzbek, as well as their direct connection with national thinking and culture in both languages. The standardization of ichthyonyms, especially in translation and terminological lexicography, is of great importance. In the future, creating a bilingual dictionary of fish names, studying their semantic grouping, and cultural connotations are one of the urgent tasks.

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