

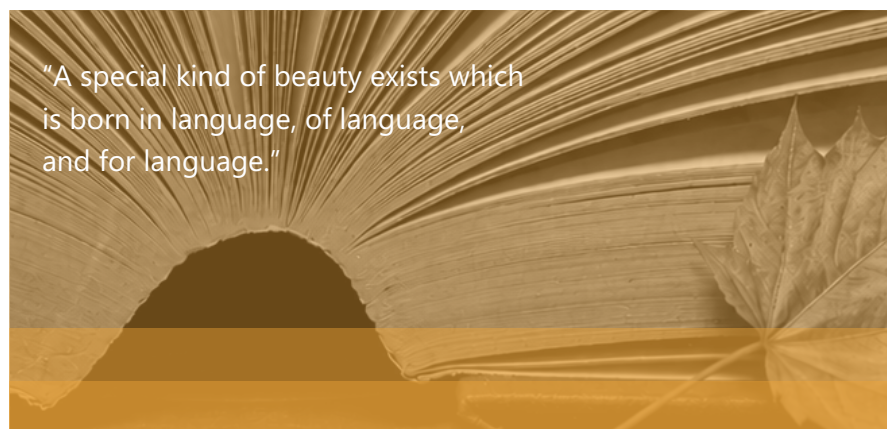


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"A special kind of beauty exists which
is born in language, of language,
and for language."



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**Beyond the proper name:
secondary person nominations as
markers of social identity in
digital media discourse****Sodiqova Sabohat Ilhomqizi**s.sodiqova@nordicuniversity.org

Senior Teacher,

Nordic International University

Mukhiddinova Dilyora Sherzodovnadilyoramuhiddinova2@gmail.com

Student,

Turin Polytechnic University in Tashkent

Annotation *The article examines secondary person nominations in digital media discourse as linguistic resources for representing and indexing social identity. The research focuses on how alternative nominative units used to refer to individuals foreground socially or communicatively salient characteristics of the referent. The analysis demonstrates that secondary nominations may foreground professional roles, social status, group affiliation, cultural positioning, or other socially significant attributes of individuals. Particular attention is given to the distinction between nomination and evaluation, since the evaluative meaning of a nominative unit cannot be determined solely by its lexical meaning and may emerge through contextual interaction. The study proposes an analytical relationship expressed as referent → salient feature → secondary nomination → social identity → contextual function, which provides a framework for examining the interaction between nomination, discourse, and identity in digital media texts. The findings contribute to the study of secondary nomination at the intersection of discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and digital media research.*

Keywords *Secondary nomination, person nomination, social identity, digital media discourse, discourse representation, evaluation*

**Raqamli media diskursida shaxs
ikkilamchi nominatsiyalari ijtimoiy
identifikatsiya markerlari sifatida****Sodiqova Sabohat Ilhomqizi**s.sodiqova@nordicuniversity.org

Katta o'qituvchi,

Xalqaro Nordik universiteti

Mukhiddinova Dilyora Sherzodovnadilyoramuhiddinova2@gmail.com

Talaba,

Toshkent shahridagi Turin Politexnika
universiteti

Annotatsiya *Mazkur maqolada raqamli media diskursida shaxsga nisbatan qo'llanuvchi ikkilamchi nominatsiyalar ijtimoiy identifikatsiyani ifodalovchi va aktualashtiruvchi lisoniy vosita sifatida tadqiq etiladi. Tadqiqotda shaxsni nomlash uchun qo'llanadigan muqobil nominativ birliklarning referentga xos ijtimoiy yoki kommunikativ jihatdan muhim belgilarni qanday aktualashtirishi tahlil qilinadi. Ikkilamchi nominatsiya, diskursiv reprezentatsiya va lisoniy identifikatsiya yondashuvlariga tayangan holda o'zbek, ingliz va rus tillaridagi raqamli media*

materiallari o'rganiladi. Tadqiqotda kontekstual, semantik, pragmatik va qiyosiy tahlil usullaridan foydalanilib, ikkilamchi nominatsiyaga asos bo'luvchi belgi, u orqali faollashadigan ijtimoiy kategoriya hamda nominativ birlikning muayyan kontekstdagi kommunikativ funksiyasi aniqlanadi. Tahlil natijalari ikkilamchi nominatsiyalar shaxsning kasbiy faoliyati, ijtimoiy maqomi, guruhiiy mansubligi, madaniy mavqeyi va boshqa ijtimoiy ahamiyatli xususiyatlarini aktuallashtirishi mumkinligini ko'rsatadi. Tadqiqotda nominatsiya va baholash munosabatini farqlashga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi, chunki nominativ birlikning baholovchi mazmuni faqat uning lug'aviy ma'nosi asosida belgilanmaydi, balki kontekst ta'sirida yuzaga kelishi mumkin. Maqolada referent → salient feature → ikkilamchi nominatsiya → ijtimoiy identifikatsiya → kontekstual funksiya munosabati asosidagi tahliliy model taklif etilib, u raqamli media matnlarida nominatsiya, diskurs va identifikatsiya o'rtasidagi aloqani tadqiq etishga xizmat qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar *Ikkilamchi nominatsiya, shaxs nominatsiyasi, ijtimoiy identifikatsiya, raqamli media diskursi, diskursiv reprezentatsiya, baholash*

Вторичные номинации лица как маркеры социальной идентичности в цифровом медиадискурсе

Содикова Сабохат Илхом кизи

s.sodiqova@nordicuniversity.org

Старший преподаватель,
Международный университет Нордик

Муриддинова Дилёра Шерзодовна

dilyoramuhiddinova2@gmail.com

Студент,
Туринский политехнический университет
в Ташкенте

Аннотация В статье исследуются вторичные номинации лица в цифровом медиадискурсе как языковые средства репрезентации и актуализации социальной идентичности. Основное внимание уделяется тому, каким образом альтернативные номинативные единицы, используемые для обозначения конкретного лица, актуализируют социально или коммуникативно значимые признаки референта. В исследовании применяются контекстуальный, семантический, прагматический и сопоставительный методы, позволяющие выявить признак, лежащий в основе вторичной номинации, социальную категорию, актуализируемую посредством данного признака, и коммуникативную функцию номинативной единицы в конкретном контексте. Результаты анализа показывают, что вторичные номинации могут актуализировать профессиональную роль, социальный статус, групповую принадлежность, культурную позицию и другие социально значимые характеристики лица. Особое внимание уделяется разграничению номинации и оценки, поскольку оценочное значение номинативной единицы не всегда определяется её лексическим значением и может формироваться под воздействием контекста. В статье предлагается аналитическая модель референт →

значимый признак → вторичная номинация → социальная идентичность → контекстуальная функция, позволяющая исследовать взаимосвязь номинации, дискурса и идентичности в цифровых медиатекстах. Полученные результаты расширяют возможности изучения вторичной номинации на пересечении дискурс-анализа, социолингвистики и современных исследований цифровых медиа.

Ключевые слова *Вторичная номинация, номинация лица, социальная идентичность, цифровой медиадискурс, дискурсивная репрезентация, оценочность*

Introduction

The rapid development of the digital communication environment is expanding the ways of naming individuals and how perceptions of them are shaped in modern media discourse. While a person's proper name serves as the primary means of identifying the referent in traditional communication, modern media texts frequently employ various nominative units to repeatedly designate the same individual. Such units do more than simply re-identify the referent; they highlight specific social, professional, cultural, or evaluative characteristics. In this regard, the phenomenon of secondary nomination can be viewed not only as a means of identifying an individual but also as a tool for discursively constructing their social image.

Theoretical framework

Nomination is a fundamental linguistic process expressing the relationship between language and reality; it concerns the capacity of linguistic units to name objects, phenomena, and individuals, as well as to distinguish them communicatively. The development of nomination theory has focused particularly on the semantic, onomasiological, and communicative aspects of the naming process. When the naming process is investigated as a crucial facet of speech activity, nomination is viewed not merely as the existence of ready-made names, but as a process involving the conceptualization and expression of reality through linguistic means (Kubryakova, 2004).

From this perspective, the process of naming an individual offers communicative possibilities that extend beyond the simple identification of a referent.

The issue of changes in the meaning and function of nominative units holds a significant place in the theory of secondary nomination. V.N. Telia links secondary nomination to the use of existing linguistic naming resources for a new naming function and explains its various forms through semantic shifts and naming mechanisms (Telia, 1977). In this approach, secondary nomination is viewed as a phenomenon involving the naming of a new referent through existing nominative means. Consequently, when analyzing secondary nomination, it is essential not only to determine how the unit names the referent but also to consider the additional semantic and connotative content that emerges through this act of naming. The functional potential of secondary nomination within text and discourse has also been examined from various perspectives in subsequent research. While V.G. Gak (1977) investigated types of nomination and the stylistic application of renaming, E.S. Kubryakova (2004) focuses on the cognitive and speech-related aspects of nominative activity. These studies demonstrate that secondary nomination can be investigated not merely as a lexical-semantic phenomenon, but as one linked to text and communicative activity.

The issue of the social content of nomination becomes increasingly significant when examining the nomination of individuals from a discourse perspective. In the discourse-historical approach developed by Reisigl and Wodak, the nomination (or referential) strategy encompasses how social actors, objects, events, and processes are named and constructed within discourse. Their model distinguishes between nomination and predication: nomination relates to naming or referentially constructing a social actor in discourse, whereas predication involves attributing specific qualities and characteristics to them. Within this approach, metaphors, metonyms, anthroponyms, units indicating group membership, and other nominative devices are viewed as tools that shape the representation of social actors in discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; 2009). These theoretical perspectives can be directly applied to the issue of how individuals are named in media discourse. This is because, in media texts, an individual is represented not only by a proper name but also by other nominative units linked to their profession, status, activities, or public image. For instance, English terms such as the billionaire, the activist, the reformer, or the outsider not only refer to a specific individual within a given context but also signal which aspect of that person is being highlighted as communicatively significant. However, the relationship between such units and social identity must be determined within each specific context; it would be incorrect to conclude that the act of naming automatically implies a specific value judgment.

The issue of identity construction through linguistic means also occupies a significant place within the field of sociocultural linguistics. Viewing identity as a social and cultural phenomenon emerging through language and other semiotic practices, M. Bucholtz and K. Hall emphasize that identity can be indexed via various linguistic resources – including labels, implicatures, stances, styles, and other linguistic units. In their model,

identity is interpreted not as a fixed, static category, but as a phenomenon that emerges during linguistic interaction and is linked to relationships and social context (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). This approach offers significant methodological potential for studying secondary nominations of individuals. Specifically, nominative labels applied to a person – such as the scientist, the entrepreneur, the activist, or others – can be viewed not merely as referential units, but as linguistic tools that activate a specific social position of the individual within the text. In doing so, the researcher must analyze the usage of this naming in a specific discourse and its relationship with other textual elements, rather than equating its lexical meaning with a pre-existing social identity.

At the same time, existing research has often examined the issues of secondary nomination, discursive nomination, and identification within separate theoretical frameworks. While studies on secondary nomination focus primarily on the semantic mechanisms of naming and the emergence of new nominative functions, sociolinguistic research on identification centers on the capacity of linguistic units to index personal and social positions. The discourse-historical approach, meanwhile, links nomination to the discursive construction of social actors. The intersection of these three approaches – specifically, the activation of a socially salient attribute of an individual within discourse through the act of naming – offers a promising avenue for more systematic study using digital media materials. Digital media is particularly significant for investigating this issue, as modern news and journalistic texts often employ a succession of different nominative units to refer to the same entity. While the choice of nomination is likely linked to the text's informative, referential, stylistic, or evaluative functions, each instance requires verification through contextual analysis. Consequently, this study treats secondary nomination not merely as a unit expressing a

“pre-existing” identity, but as a nominative tool capable of indexing a socially salient aspect of an individual within a specific communicative context.

Materials and Methods

Accordingly, the primary objective of the study is to determine the functional-semantic and discursive characteristics of secondary nominations applied to individuals within digital media discourse, specifically regarding the expression of social identity. Based on media materials in Uzbek, English, and Russian, the study analyzes which social attributes are actualized by these nominative units, the semantic means through which these attributes are expressed, and the communicative functions the nominations perform within specific contexts. The study utilizes nominative units referring to individuals drawn from digital media discourse in Uzbek, English, and Russian. The material selected includes online news, journalistic articles, interviews, and texts published by media outlets on digital platforms. The primary criterion for compiling the corpus is that the nominative unit identifies a specific individual not by their proper name, but rather based on a socially or communicatively salient characteristic – that is, a trait significant to the context. For instance, units such as the billionaire, the activist, the reformer, and the outsider were analyzed not merely in terms of their lexical meaning, but also regarding which specific individual they refer to and the specific attribute upon which that reference is based within a given text.

The study employs several methods that complement each other. Contextual analysis serves to determine the meaning a nomination generates within a specific text. This process takes into account the nominative unit's relationship with the preceding and following context, information regarding the referent, and its communicative function. Semantic analysis is used to determine the characteristic upon which a nomination is based and how that characteristic relates to the social identification of the referent. Pragmatic

analysis focuses on revealing the author's communicative intent, the orientation toward the audience, and the role of the nomination in shaping an individual's media image. Comparative analysis makes it possible to identify the commonalities and differences among nominations in Uzbek, English, and Russian. This involves comparing not only the lexical forms of the nominative units but also the social meanings they generate within various cultural and discursive contexts.

Results and Discussion

One significant area of the analysis concerns nominations that reflect an individual's professional activity and social status. In expressions such as the scientist, the entrepreneur, the activist, the coach, the billionaire, or the statesman, the individual's functional role in society is foregrounded – either replacing the referent's proper name or appearing alongside it. For example:

The billionaire announced a new investment project...

In this context, the term “the billionaire” presents the individual not merely as a simple referent, but as a social actor possessing economic status. If the subsequent text details their investment activities, business decisions, or economic initiatives, the professional or status-related function of the designation is further reinforced. However, it would be methodologically incorrect to automatically interpret the term “the billionaire” as an evaluative designation in every context. Whether the term carries a positive, negative, or neutral value depends on the surrounding context, the accompanying predicative elements, and the communicative purpose. For instance, in an article focused on economic success, “the billionaire” might serve as a neutral identifier; conversely, in a context linking wealth to social inequality, the nomination is likely to acquire additional evaluative connotations.

In this regard, research findings demonstrate the necessity of distinguishing between nomination and evaluation.

Nomination primarily serves to identify a referent through a specific attribute, whereas axiological (evaluative) meaning often emerges from the context. One of the key concepts proposed based on this analysis is the “salient feature” – that is, a characteristic of a referent that becomes prominent in a specific communicative situation. During the process of secondary nomination, a single feature, specifically, one relevant to the text is selected from among all the attributes associated with the individual. For instance, an individual might be a politician, an entrepreneur, a father, a social activist, and a public figure. However, in a business news report, this person might be described as “the entrepreneur”; in an article about a social movement, as “the activist”; and in a political piece, as “the reformer.” Thus, the representation of a single referent through various designations allows for the highlighting of different social facets of that individual, depending on the communicative context.

The obtained results can be interpreted at the intersection of three theoretical perspectives. First, the concept of secondary nomination developed by Telia provides a theoretical basis for explaining the mechanism by which an existing naming unit is employed in a new referential or naming function. Second, the views of Reisigl and Wodak regarding nomination and referential strategies enable an analysis of how nomination represents social actors within discourse. Third, the approach to identity proposed by Bucholtz and Hall allows for viewing person-referring nominative units as contextual and interactional resources for linguistic identity construction.

Based on the integration of these three approaches, this study interprets secondary nomination not merely as an “alternative name” for an individual, but as a linguistic tool that selects a specific social aspect of the referent and foregrounds it within a concrete communicative situation. This interpretation allows for the distinction of three

interconnected layers of secondary nomination:

- *the semantic layer* – the attribute upon which the nomination is based;
- *the identificational layer* – the social category through which this attribute represents the individual;
- *the pragmatic-discursive layer* – the communicative function the nomination performs within a specific media context.

Consequently, it becomes evident that the secondary nomination of an individual is a phenomenon far more complex than simple synonymic substitution. Overall, the research findings allow for the characterization of secondary nominations of individuals in digital media discourse as nominative tools that index social identity, foreground a salient attribute of the referent, and—depending on the context – may incorporate evaluative content. This approach establishes a methodological framework for linking nomination theory with discourse and identity studies, as well as for conducting a comparative analysis of the functional potential of nominative units across trilingual media materials.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one of the principal findings of the study is that the relationship between secondary nomination and social identity is fundamentally context-dependent. A nominative expression cannot necessarily be interpreted as evaluative solely on the basis of its lexical meaning. Its evaluative potential may emerge through its interaction with surrounding predicates, modifiers, contextual information, and the broader communicative purpose of the media text. This distinction makes it possible to differentiate the referential and identificational function of a nomination from its potential axiological function. A person may simultaneously possess numerous professional, social, cultural, and personal characteristics, yet a particular media context may foreground only one of them. The selected characteristic can subsequently become the basis for secondary nomination. The resulting

relationship can therefore be represented as: referent → salient feature → secondary nomination → social identity → contextual function. This model brings together insights from research on secondary nomination, discourse representation, and linguistic identity. In particular, it complements approaches that examine nomination as a means of representing social actors and approaches that conceptualize identity as constructed and indexed through linguistic interaction. At the same time, the proposed framework does not assume that every secondary nomination constitutes an

intentional identity-construction strategy. Rather, its function must be established through contextual and discourse-based analysis.

Overall, secondary person nominations should be understood not simply as alternatives to proper names, but as context-sensitive linguistic resources through which particular aspects of individuals become communicatively salient. Their study therefore provides a productive intersection between nomination theory, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and contemporary digital media research.

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