

Mythonymic Etymology Of German Borrowings In Official–Administrative Documents In The Uzbek Language And Their Semantic Features

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Abstract: In this scientific article, we discuss mythonyms, which represent one of the branches of onomastics. Mythonymics is a field of linguistics that studies the names of myths and the processes of naming within mythology. In our research, we focus on German borrowings that have entered the Uzbek language and possess mythological etymology. We analyze their usage in official–administrative documents in Uzbek, exploring the semantic aspects of such borrowings in the given textual examples. Furthermore, we investigate the additional meanings these words carry beyond the document itself, based on explanatory dictionaries in German, Russian, and Uzbek.

Keywords: Mythonym, borrowing, German language, official–administrative document, etymology, onomastics.

Introduction: Among Uzbek linguists, Abdisharibova L. M., in her work “Mythonyms and Their Role in the System of Proper Nouns”, and Gulmira N., in her article “The Use of Mythonyms in the Uzbek Language”, have briefly discussed mythonyms in Uzbek [14,15]. However, unlike them, our study addresses mythological names that originally appeared in the German language, their borrowing into Uzbek and Russian, their lexical and extended semantics, and their semantic features in official–administrative documents cited as examples. We also provide information about whether such borrowings in Uzbek have functional lexical equivalents or not.

In the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 502 dated 14.08.2024 “On Approval of Regulations Concerning State Registration of Products and Conformity Assessment Procedures”, the following excerpt is given:

“...Unprocessed magnesium; cobalt matte and other intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy; cobalt and cobalt-based products, including waste and scrap; unprocessed bismuth; waste and scrap; cadmium and cadmium-based products, including waste and scrap; titanium and titanium-based products, including waste and scrap” [1]. The chemical element cobalt is a borrowing from German. According to F. Kluge’s

Etymological Dictionary of the German Language, Kobalt is a noun denoting a metal/mineral. The word originates from Old High German kobolt, Middle Low German Kobalten. The term was given by miners to ores they considered useless. In Berlin dialect, the phrase Kobolz schießen also meant “an accident.” The word derives from Kobold, the name of a mischievous mine spirit. Cobalt ore was considered useless until the 17th century. Mathesius in 1562 attested to this belief in Sarepta. Miners believed that goblins (mine spirits) stole silver and left behind worthless ores. Hence, the element was named after the spirit Kobold. Paracelsus referred to the metal as Kobolt in 1526; the Latinized form was cobaltum. According to the Zeitschrift für deutsche Wortforschung, the word entered English around the 1650s through German miners and spread into many other languages [6]. The Duden Universal Dictionary states that kobalt / cobalt derives from Kobold, the mine goblin, believed to spoil precious ores. The metal was first thought useless, until it was recognized as a shiny, magnetic, nickel-like element, symbol Co [7]. Fasmer’s Etymological Dictionary of the Russian Language does not provide an entry on cobalt. L. P. Krysin’s explanatory dictionary, however, traces kobalt to German Kobold, the mine goblin disturbing miners’ work, describing cobalt as a reddish, silvery-

white element used in glass and pigment production [8]. The Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language (1981) states that kobalt entered Uzbek via Russian from German: (1) a chemical element, silvery-white, hard, reddish-lustrous metal; (2) a dark-blue pigment derived from this element [3]. Later editions (2006, 2023) note kobalt as a direct borrowing from German: (1) mine goblin, treasure guardian spirit; (2) chemical element in Group VIII of the Periodic Table, reddish-lustrous, silvery-white, hard metal; (3) a dark-blue pigment [4,5]. Thus, the lexeme was borrowed into both Uzbek and Russian directly from German. In modern Uzbek, beyond its chemical sense, it has extended semantics: for instance, Chevrolet Cobalt (by General Motors), where the name metaphorically refers to durability, strength, modernity, and technological qualities.

Similarly, the Order of the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan, registered on 11.06.2009, reg. no. 1966 "On Approval of Occupational Safety Rules for Secondary Raw Material Storage Warehouses, Bases, and Points" includes the passage: "...Nickel fragments, scrap and waste shall be reprocessed according to the approved regulations, in compliance with general safety rules of production and occupational safety requirements in metal smelting and casting industries. Dust released during nickel scrap processing may have toxic effects, causing nervous system disorders, low blood pressure, and allergic diseases" [2]. The chemical element nickel is also a German borrowing. According to F. Kluge's dictionary, Nickel was named by Swedish mineralogist von Cronstedt in 1751 after isolating the metal in pure form. By 1754, the name was shortened from kopparnickel (Swedish for "copper-nickel"), which itself derives from German Kupfernickel. The name was first recorded by Frisch in 1741. In Eastern Germany, Nickel was also a diminutive of the male name Nikolaus, often used pejoratively. In the Ore Mountains, miners who discovered minerals resembling copper but yielding none mockingly called them Kupfernickel, associating them with deceitful mine spirits [6]. The Duden Universal Dictionary explains nickel as from Swedish nickel < kopparnickel ("copper-nickel ore"), thought to be spoiled by goblins. It denotes a silvery, lustrous, heavy element, symbol Ni, resistant to corrosion and widely used in alloys, electroplating, and chemical industry [7]. Fasmer's etymological dictionary traces никель to German Nickel < Swedish nickel < kopparnickel, linked to kobold, "mine spirit" [9]. Krysin's explanatory dictionary likewise notes Kupfernickel from Kupfer (copper) + Nickel (mine spirit), later meaning "chemical element, silvery-white hard metal" [8]. In Uzbek, the 1981 dictionary notes

nikel as a borrowing via Russian, a chemical element, hard, lustrous, corrosion-resistant [3]. Later editions (2006, 2023) trace it to German Kupfernickel ("copper + goblin"), denoting an element in Group VIII, silvery-white, hard, durable [4,5]. Thus, nickel directly entered both Uzbek and Russian from German without significant semantic, phonetic, or graphic changes. As a chemical term, it has no lexical equivalent in Uzbek, although its German etymology is mythological.

Conclusion

The study shows that the names of certain chemical elements borrowed from German (such as cobalt and nickel) possess rich mythological origins in German linguistic tradition. While in modern Uzbek they are primarily scientific terms, they have also acquired extended semantic dimensions.

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