

STYLISTIC MEANS OF EXPRESSING PERSONAL IDENTITY IN ENGLISH INTERNET DISCOURSE

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Abstract. This thesis examines the stylistic means through which personal identity is constructed and represented in English-language internet discourse. The analysis focuses on profile names and biographical descriptions used on social media platforms. Particular attention is given to metaphorical nomination, creative nomination, unusual semantic combinations, graphic modification, and the use of titles, gender markers, and informal forms of address. The findings indicate that users frequently avoid direct self-identification and instead employ figurative, expressive, and visually distinctive forms to present their personality, emotional state, worldview, and desired online image. The study demonstrates that stylistic means enhance the expressiveness, semantic complexity, memorability, and individuality of digital self-presentation. Metaphorical and creative nomination are therefore identified as important mechanisms of personal identity construction in English internet discourse.

Keywords: personal identity, internet discourse, stylistic means, metaphorical nomination, creative nomination, profile names, online self-presentation, social media.

Аннотация. В данной работе рассматриваются стилистические средства, посредством которых личная идентичность конструируется и репрезентируется в англоязычном интернет-дискурсе. Анализ сосредоточен на именах профилей и биографических описаниях, используемых на платформах социальных сетей. Особое внимание уделяется метафорической номинации, креативной номинации, необычным семантическим сочетаниям, графической модификации, а также использованию титулов, гендерных маркеров и неофициальных форм обращения. Результаты исследования показывают, что пользователи нередко избегают прямой самоидентификации и вместо этого используют образные, экспрессивные и визуально отличительные формы для представления своей личности, эмоционального состояния, мировоззрения и желаемого онлайн-образа. Исследование демонстрирует, что стилистические средства усиливают выразительность, семантическую сложность, запоминаемость и индивидуальность цифровой самопрезентации. Таким образом, метафорическая и креативная номинации определяются как важные механизмы конструирования личной идентичности в англоязычном интернет-дискурсе.

Ключевые слова: личная идентичность, интернет-дискурс, стилистические средства, метафорическая номинация, креативная номинация, имена профилей, онлайн-самопрезентация, социальные сети.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu tezisda ingliz tilidagi internet diskursida shaxsiy identiklikni konstruksiyalash va ifodalashga xizmat qiluvchi stilistik vositalar tadqiq etiladi. Tahlil ijtimoiy tarmoq platformalarida qo'llaniladigan profil nomlari va biografik tavsiflarga qaratilgan. Metaforik nominatsiya, kreativ nominatsiya, noodatiy semantik birikmalar, grafik modifikatsiya, shuningdek, unvonlar, gender markerlari va norasmiy murojaat shakllarining qo'llanishiga alohida e'tibor beriladi. Tadqiqot natijalari foydalanuvchilar ko'pincha o'zlarini to'g'ridan-to'g'ri identifikatsiya qilishdan qochib, buning o'rniga o'z shaxsiyati, emotsional holati, dunyoqarashi va istalgan onlayn obrazini namoyon etish uchun obrazli, ekspressiv va vizual jihatdan ajralib turuvchi shakllardan foydalanishini ko'rsatadi. Tadqiqot stilistik vositalar raqamli o'zini taqdim etishning ifodaliligi, semantik murakkabligi, esda qoluvchanligi va individualligini kuchaytirishini namoyon etadi. Shu bois metaforik va kreativ nominatsiya ingliz tilidagi internet diskursida shaxsiy identiklikni konstruksiyalashning muhim mexanizmlari sifatida belgilanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: shaxsiy identiklik, internet diskursi, stilistik vositalar, metaforik nominatsiya, kreativ nominatsiya, profil nomlari, onlayn o'zini taqdim etish, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar.

The development of social media has created new opportunities for individuals to construct, modify, and publicly present their identities. In digital communication, users are not limited to direct statements about their names, professions, social roles, or personal characteristics. Identities are relationally constructed through several, often overlapping, aspects of the relationship between self and other, including similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice and authority/ delegitimacy; and (5) identity may be in part

intentional, in part habitual and less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation, in part a construct of others' perceptions and representations, and in part an outcome of larger ideological processes and structures.[2; 2005:P.406]

Instead, they may construct an online identity through linguistic choices that are expressive, symbolic, imaginative, and visually distinctive. Profile names and biographical descriptions are especially important in this process because they often represent the first linguistic elements through which an online audience encounters the profile owner. Unlike ordinary personal names, social media profile names may contain metaphorical images, unusual lexical combinations, graphic signs, numbers, titles, and emotionally marked elements. These features allow users to present themselves indirectly and creatively. A profile name may communicate strength, mystery, emotional sensitivity, independence, ambition, or uniqueness without explicitly stating any of these qualities. Consequently, stylistic means perform not only an aesthetic function but also an identity-forming function in internet discourse.

The material analysed in this study demonstrates that metaphorical nomination and creative nomination are among the most productive stylistic strategies used in English profile names. Metaphorical nomination is based on the transfer of qualities from one semantic domain to the human personality. Creative nomination, by contrast, is broader and includes unconventional combinations of lexical units, graphic modification, and the construction of visually individualized names. Although these two strategies often overlap, they can be distinguished according to their dominant linguistic function. Metaphorical nomination primarily creates figurative meaning, while creative nomination emphasizes originality and formal innovation.

The aim of this study is to analyse the principal stylistic means used to express personal identity in English internet discourse and to determine how these means contribute to online self-presentation. The analysis is based on examples of English-language profile names and biographical expressions drawn from the provided corpus.

Metaphor is one of the most active stylistic means used in the formation of English-language profile names. In metaphorical nominations, the profile owner is represented not through a direct personal name, occupation, or social status, but through an image associated with an object, natural phenomenon, mythical being, emotional concept, or symbolic space. Metaphorical meaning arises when the qualities of one semantic domain are transferred to the human personality.

Such nominations make profile names more expressive and semantically layered. They also enable users to present qualities that may be difficult to express in a short literal description. Through metaphor, a user can appear mysterious, powerful, sensitive, dangerous, unusual, or emotionally complex.

The analysis shows that metaphorical identity construction in English internet discourse is mainly organized around several recurrent semantic models. One productive model presents the profile owner through objects or complex structures, as in *Heart_hacker*, *Unsolved-puzzle*, and *harsh_pearl*. In these examples, qualities associated with technology, puzzles, and valuable objects are transferred to the individual. As a result, the user is represented as emotionally influential, difficult to understand, valuable, strong, or psychologically complex.

Another important model is based on natural phenomena and images. Profile names such as *Moonlight.soul*, *The lightning star*, and *Butterfly* associate the user with calmness, mystery, brightness, power, freedom, beauty, and transformation. These metaphors enable users to present their inner world and personality through symbolic features of nature rather than through direct self-description.

Mythical, fantastic, and supernatural images also function as a productive source of metaphorical nomination. Examples such as *Lost_angel*, *Angelface7878*, and *Mr.monster* construct identity through culturally recognizable associations with innocence, beauty, emotional vulnerability, power, fear, or extraordinariness. The combination of positive and negative meanings often creates a more complex and memorable online persona.

A further group includes poetic and semantically contrasting profile names such as *Queen of stars*, *Deathheaven*, and *Black clover*. These forms rely on elevated, symbolic, or opposing concepts and therefore create idealized, mysterious, or internally contradictory identity images. In particular, the combination of semantically distant or opposite elements increases stylistic expressiveness and semantic depth.

Overall, the corpus demonstrates that metaphorical profile names in English internet discourse are formed through the transfer of qualities from objects, natural phenomena, mythical beings, and symbolic concepts to the human personality. These models allow users to express personal qualities, emotional states, aspirations, and desired self-images indirectly. Rather than providing factual descriptions, metaphorical

nominations construct identity through association, evaluation, and imagery, making online self-presentation more expressive and memorable.

The analysed examples show that metaphorical nomination in English internet discourse is formed through several semantic models. These include the comparison of a person with an object or structure, the transfer of qualities from natural phenomena, the use of mythical or supernatural beings, and the combination of poetic or semantically contradictory concepts. In each case, metaphor transforms direct nomination into figurative self-representation.

Creative nomination is another significant stylistic mechanism used to construct personal identity in English internet discourse. It involves the formation of original profile names through unexpected lexical combinations, visual modification, graphic segmentation, and the addition of titles, numbers, or socially meaningful markers.

The main feature of creative nomination is the transformation of existing linguistic elements into a new and individualized nominative structure. In many cases, the resulting profile name is also metaphorical. However, from the perspective of creative nomination, the central feature is not only figurative meaning but also the unusual formal combination of elements. Profile names such as Deathheaven, Heart_hacker, Moonlight.soul, Softcharm87, Unsolved-puzzle, and Mr.monster illustrate the productive role of semantic incompatibility or unexpected combination. In Heart_hacker, emotional and technological vocabulary are united in a single name. In Moonlight.soul, a natural phenomenon is combined with an abstract concept related to the inner self. In Deathheaven, two opposite concepts are merged into one lexical unit. These combinations attract attention because their components do not usually occur together in ordinary language. The originality of such profile names lies in the ability of users to connect different semantic fields. Technology, emotion, nature, spirituality, danger, and beauty may be combined within one compact expression. As a result, the profile name becomes a creative linguistic product rather than a simple identifier.

The use of capitalization may also contribute to identity representation. A capitalized personal name, as in Evil_Angelica, separates the individualizing component from the evaluative adjective. The contrast between Evil and the personal name Angelica, which itself resembles the word angel, creates additional semantic tension. Thus, graphic form and lexical meaning work together to produce a more complex identity image.

Titles, age markers, and relational elements may also be incorporated into English profile names. Examples such as Mr.monster, @youngraider, and @kingskid demonstrate how social or interpersonal components can be combined with imaginative lexical units. In Mr.monster, the formal title gives the fantastic noun a personified and socially recognizable form. In @youngraider, the adjective young foregrounds age identity, while raider creates an active, adventurous, or rebellious image. In @kingskid, the relational element kid is combined with king, presenting the user through symbolic association with authority or elevated status.

These examples indicate that creative nomination is not limited to semantic originality. It also includes the visual organization of the name and the combination of conventional social markers with unconventional imagery. Through these strategies, the user constructs an online identity that is individual, recognizable, and stylistically marked.

Metaphorical and creative nomination frequently overlap in English profile names. A unit such as Heart_hacker is metaphorical because technological action is transferred to the emotional sphere. At the same time, it is creative because two semantically distant lexical units are combined in an unusual structure. Similarly, Moonlight.soul is metaphorical because the qualities of moonlight are associated with the user's inner world. It is also creatively formed through the combination of a natural image and an abstract noun, separated by a graphic marker. Deathheaven represents an oxymoronic metaphor while also functioning as a creatively constructed compound.

The analysed stylistic means perform several related functions in the expression of personal identity. First, they increase expressiveness. A metaphorical name such as Unsolved-puzzle communicates more emotional and psychological meaning than a direct name or simple descriptive label.

Second, stylistic means create semantic depth. Many profile names allow more than one interpretation. Lost_angel, for example, may suggest innocence, sadness, emotional displacement, or moral conflict. The profile name does not present a fixed explanation but invites the audience to interpret the user's identity through association. Third, creative nomination contributes to individualization. Since social media platforms contain large numbers of users, profile owners need recognizable and memorable names.

Unusual combinations such as Heart_hacker and Deathheaven distinguish the user from profiles based only on ordinary personal names.

Fourth, these stylistic devices allow indirect self-presentation. Users may avoid explicit statements such as “I am mysterious,” “I am emotionally strong,” or “I am different.” Instead, they communicate these qualities through symbolic images. This indirectness can make self-presentation more attractive and less categorical. Finally, stylistic profile names may present an idealized or desired identity rather than a fully factual description. A user selecting Queen of stars may not claim literal authority but may project confidence, uniqueness, beauty, or aspiration. Digital identity is therefore not merely reflected through language; it is actively constructed through linguistic choice.

The analysis demonstrates that stylistic means play a central role in the expression of personal identity in English internet discourse. Profile names and biographical descriptions are not merely technical labels but important spaces of linguistic self-presentation. Through metaphorical and creative nomination, users transform ordinary lexical elements into expressive identity-bearing structures.

Metaphorical nomination allows personal identity to be represented through objects, natural phenomena, mythical beings, symbolic spaces, and contrasting concepts. Profile names such as Heart_hacker, Unsolved-puzzle, Moonlight.soul, Lost_angel, Mr.monster, Queen of stars, and Deathheaven express personality, emotional state, worldview, and desired image indirectly through figurative association.

Creative nomination is realized through unexpected semantic combinations, graphic markers, numbers, capitalization, titles, and other formal innovations. Examples such as Softcharm87, Dreamy4787, Maria.lessons, Evil_Angelica, and Angelface7878 show that the visual structure of a profile name can also contribute to the construction of individuality.

The findings further indicate that metaphorical and creative nomination often operate together. A single profile name may simultaneously contain semantic transfer, structural originality, and graphic differentiation. This interaction produces compact yet semantically rich forms of self-presentation.

Overall, stylistic means enable users to project identities that are expressive, memorable, symbolic, and open to interpretation. They make it possible to present the self not only as a factual social identity but also as an imaginative and carefully constructed digital persona. Therefore, metaphorical imagery, creative lexical combination, and graphic modification should be regarded as important linguistic mechanisms of personal identity construction in English internet discourse.

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