

THE PLACE OF TOPONYMY IN ONOMASTICS

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Abstract. *This study examines the role of proper names used to designate persons, objects, phenomena, places, and other entities within the lexical system of a language as investigated in the field of onomastics. It discusses the structure of onomastics, which encompasses numerous specialized subfields, and particularly highlights the place of toponymy within the onomastic system. The study further analyzes the principal branches of toponymy, including oikonymy (place names of settlements), hydronymy (names of water bodies), oronymy (names of mountains and relief features), cosmonymy (names of celestial objects), and related disciplines.*

Keywords: *onomastics, toponymy, oikonymy, hydronymy, cosmonymy, oronymy, areal distribution, microtoponymy, macrotoponymy, onomastic conversion.*

Аннотация: *В данном небольшом исследовании рассматриваются вопросы изучения имен собственных, используемых для обозначения лиц, предметов, явлений и мест в лексической системе языка, в рамках ономастики - раздела языкознания. Освещается, как ономастика охватывает десятки "малых" подразделов, а также роль топонимики в ономастике. Анализируется состав топонимики, включающий ойконимию (названия населенных пунктов), гидронимию (названия водных объектов), оронимию (названия форм рельефа), космонимию (названия объектов космического пространства) и другие разделы.*

Ключевые слова: ономастика, топонимика, ойконимия, гидронимия, космонимия, оронимия, ареал, микротопонимия, макротопонимия, ономастическая конверсия.

Dictionary definitions of the concept of *toponymy* deserve particular attention. Toponymy is defined as a branch of onomastics that studies geographical names (toponyms), their usage, meanings, origins, structural characteristics, geographical distribution, historical development, and semantic changes over time.

It is well known that proper names used to designate persons, objects, events, places, and other entities within the lexical system of a language constitute the subject matter of onomastics. As a branch of linguistics, onomastics comprises numerous specialized subdisciplines. Toponymy itself includes such branches as oikonymy, which studies the names of settlements; hydronymy, which investigates the names of water bodies; oronymy, which deals with the names of mountains and other relief forms; cosmonymy, which concerns the names of celestial objects; and several other subdivisions.

Depending on the size and scope of the geographical objects under investigation, toponymy is commonly divided into macrotoponymy and microtoponymy. Macrotoponymy encompasses the names of large geographical features and major political-administrative units, whereas microtoponymy focuses on geographical names belonging to relatively small and localized areas.

Lexical units belonging to the noun category are generally classified into proper nouns and common nouns. Alongside proper nouns, common nouns closely associated with them are also considered objects of onomastic research. Unlike many other linguistic phenomena, toponyms

are capable of conveying extensive information about the geographical objects they designate.

Within onomastics, toponymy occupies a distinctive position as a separate category of proper names possessing specific linguistic characteristics. As noted above, it primarily investigates the proper names assigned to geographical objects.

Each geographical object possesses its own unique name, and the formation of these names follows particular linguistic principles and naming patterns. Toponyms are closely connected with appellative vocabulary, namely the common lexical units that serve as the basis for proper names. Furthermore, onomastic conversion, or the transfer of lexical units from one naming category to another, is widely observed in toponymic formation.

As in other areas of human activity, place names emerge in response to specific social and communicative needs. The process of naming a geographical object generally consists of several stages. Initially, there must be a practical need to assign a name to a particular location. Subsequently, one or more names are proposed, and once a name gains public acceptance, it becomes established as a recognized toponym. During this process, special attention is given to the distinctive characteristics of the geographical object, including its historical background, geographical features, ethnic composition of the local population, traditional way of life, occupations, customs and traditions, relief characteristics, and proximity to other geographical landmarks.

As emphasized in previous studies, the emergence, stabilization, replacement, and semantic evolution of toponyms are closely associated with the historical development of society. Any changes occurring within

the toponymic system take place in accordance with the linguistic laws operating within a given speech community.

Thus, the emergence of a place name is primarily motivated by communicative necessity. The principal factors influencing geographical naming include:

1. **Historical background of the geographical object**, for example: *Jig'achi*, *Olot*, *Qorako'l*, and *Arabxona*.
2. **Ethnic composition of the local population**, reflecting the dominant ethnic, tribal, or national groups inhabiting the area, such as: *Beklar*, *Do'rman*, *Eshonlar*, *Kesakli*, *Olot*, *Turkmanquduq*, *Chandir*, *Arabxona*, *Urganji*, *Sayot*, and *Xo'jalar*.
3. **Traditional occupations or primary economic activities** of the inhabitants, including names such as: *Dehqonlar*, *Hunarmandlar*, *Kosagarlar*, *Mirob*, *Mo'ynachi*, and *Pichoqchi*.
4. **Relief characteristics of the locality**, represented by names such as: *Toshko'cha*, *Qumqishloq*, *Uchqir*, and *Chuqursoy*.
5. **Proximity to significant geographical landmarks**, for example: *Labirol'd*, *Tayqir*, and *Qirtay*.
6. **The size or spatial extent of the geographical object**, illustrated by names such as: *Kattabayot*, *Katta Do'rman*, *Yuqori Janapar*, *Quyil Janapar*, *Yuqori Sayot*, and *Quyil Sayot*.
7. **Historical or chronological associations**, reflected in names such as: *Eskiqal'a*, *Yangiturmush*, *Yangizamon*, and *Yangiqal'a*.

It may therefore be concluded that every place name reflects the lifestyle, worldview, and national cultural values of the people who created it. Over time, both the phonetic structure and semantic content of toponyms may undergo changes.

A specifically selected geographical name serves to distinguish one location from another. As an integral component of the lexical system of a language, toponyms undergo historical processes of formation, development, and adaptation similar to those observed in other lexical units. Since toponyms are linguistic units, they naturally experience phonetic, morphological, and semantic modifications under the influence of both linguistic and extralinguistic factors.

Many geographical names within the territory of Uzbekistan possess histories extending over several centuries, reflecting the nation's historical development, cultural heritage, and spiritual values. Consequently, preserving traditional toponyms as an essential element of national cultural heritage is not only the responsibility of specialists in the field but also a significant obligation of society as a whole.

Toponymic units generally demonstrate a relatively high degree of stability. Researchers have noted that changes affecting toponyms occur comparatively infrequently, usually over long historical periods, and that even after official changes are introduced, earlier forms often continue to exist in popular usage for considerable lengths of time.

Indeed, toponyms originating from the languages of peoples, tribes, and ethnic groups that have long disappeared from history may survive for centuries. Nevertheless, as societies develop, transformations occur in every sphere of social life, and toponymy is likewise influenced by social and political change. Consequently, geographical names also undergo processes of renewal and modification.

Such changes primarily affect smaller geographical objects and rural settlements, often resulting from the merging of villages or the establishment of new settlements. In contrast, historical and major

urban centers such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, Urgench, Khiva, Shahrissabz, and Qarshi rarely experience changes in their names.

Discussing the evolution of geographical names, A. V. Superanskaya likewise observed that various historical and linguistic influences may alter the phonetic forms of many toponyms. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account that the idea that toponyms are immutable is relative.

References

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