



THE ROLE OF LIVESTOCK BREEDING RELATED TOPONYMS IN THE FORMATION OF UZBEK ONOMASTICS

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Abstract

Toponymy is considered within the scope of onomastics, the science that studies proper nouns and all their types. At the same time, it possesses distinct characteristics. Firstly, the lexical units studied in toponymy are limited exclusively to the names of geographical locations; secondly, these units differ according to their word-formation models. The naming of a place depends on the level of development of society and its productive forces. If the main occupation of the local population is animal husbandry, the place may receive one type of name; if agriculture predominates, a different type; and if industry is dominant, yet another. Thus, place names reflect not only the features of the location itself but also the characteristics of the society that named it. For example, toponyms related to livestock breeding are among such cases. In our regions, there are many such names, and when analyzing them, it is important to take into account the essential principles of toponymy.

Keywords: Onomastics, toponymy, anthroponym, personal names, place names, names of celestial bodies, names derived from legendary and divine concepts.

Introduction

Place names assigned to geographic objects not only carry historical information about specific locations but also testify, as linguistic units, to the history, culture, and spirituality of a people. Indeed, "Preserving, studying, and passing down historical heritage to future generations is among the most important priorities of



our state policy” [Mirziyoyev, 2018, p. 29]. Within linguistics, studying spiritual heritage and values, including onomastic units that form a part of customs and traditions, based on contemporary linguistic developments, remains a vital task. Therefore, when studying toponymic sources, which compose an integral part of our spiritual heritage and values, it is essential to adopt appropriate methodological frameworks.

Toponymy is the largest subfield of onomastics, the branch of linguistics that studies proper nouns such as personal names, surnames, nicknames, geographical names, and ethnonyms.

Main Body

1. Recent Developments in Uzbek Toponymic Research

Since independence, serious attention has been devoted to the study of Uzbek toponymy. The independent state developed and implemented a toponymic policy. Today, at district, regional, and republic levels, toponymic commissions and centralized toponymic services have been established. Special laws govern the processes of preserving, changing, and scientifically analyzing place names [Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2011, Article 167-I]. These laws and decrees, adopted with the aim of restoring national values and passing them on to future generations, require strict enforcement and practical implementation. However, many tasks remain in the field of linguistics. These include cataloging place names within Uzbekistan, studying the stages of naming geographic objects in comparison with post-independence changes, and interpreting the etymologies of historical names. Organizing these tasks into a system and gradually implementing them in accordance with principles set by the country’s leadership is essential.

2. Stability and Change of Toponyms

There are varying opinions concerning the stability of toponyms. B.A. Serebrennikov notes:

“Toponymic names exhibit extraordinary stability. Even if peoples and languages disappear from the Earth, toponyms can be adopted by other peoples as proper names representing geographic objects and thus preserved for millennia.”

However, A.V. Superanskaya writes:



“We know of names whose phonetic form has changed under the influence of sound alterations and local dialects. Therefore, the view that they never change is relative” [Superanskaya, 1985, p. 49].

3. Historical Naming Practices and Motivations

In ancient times, the naming of geographic objects was not a systematic process. Mutual agreements or formal decisions regarding naming were rare. Generally, place names reflected people’s natural lifestyle habits and customs. At the time of naming, the meaning and motivation behind a name were well known to the local community. However, documenting these motivations was not customary. The name was simply used by the people who coined it. Over time, the original reasons behind names were forgotten, replaced by various assumptions, legends, and myths. Eventually, clarifying etymologies becomes the researcher’s task. As the temporal gap between naming and research grows, uncovering the reasons and etymologies becomes increasingly complex. Therefore, gathering and analyzing toponymic data remains both a scientifically and culturally urgent task.

4. Toponymy as a Linguistic Field

Toponymy, a branch of onomastics and linguistic science, has recently entered a new stage of development. Pastoralism (“chorvachilik”) has been among the oldest socio-economic activities of the inhabitants of Uzbekistan and Central Asia. Consequently, pastoral lexical items represent some of the oldest and most developed word groups in the Uzbek language.

Livestock lexicon has played a vital role in the development of personal names (anthroponyms), place names (toponyms), names of celestial bodies, and names derived from legendary and divine concepts. The attributes of the named objects are numerous and diverse; one of these is chosen as the basis for naming. The selection of attributes is a social process.

4.1 Formation of Proper Names from Pastoral Lexemes

Proper names derived from pastoral lexemes fall into the following categories:

1. Anthroponyms (Personal Names):

Uzbek proper names have evolved from lexemes belonging to multiple language families, resulting in a rich and multi-layered onomastic system. Ancient names



generally have unknown origins, making it difficult to identify their linguistic roots. While many word-formation methods exist in Uzbek, not all are applicable in name formation. Common methods in onomastics include compounding, affixation, semantic extension, and name transfer.

The naming practice historically involved purposeful selection, often reflecting totemic and magical beliefs. For instance, many ancient Turkic peoples regarded certain wild and domestic animals as totemic symbols. In the Qashqadaryo region, where pastoralism was predominant, numerous names and nicknames derived from cattle-related words exist. For example:

2. Cow and Cattle Nicknames:

Lexemes with Ola (variegated) roots: Olabosh, Olavoy, Ola, Olacha, Olaqora

Lexemes with Qora (black) roots: Qoravoy, Qorabosh, Qora, Qoracha, Qoraola

Lexemes with Malla (tan) roots: Mala, Mallacha, Mallaboy, Mallavoy, Mallabosh, Mallavosh

Lexemes with Shox (horn) roots: Ayrishox, Egrishox, Iyrishox, Qo'shshox, Qo'shshashox, Molashox, Shog'dor, Shoxli, Shoxlik, Tikshox, Tikcashox, To'g'rishox

Lexemes with Emchak (udder) roots: Uchemchak, Qo'shemchak, Toshemchak, Bo'shemchak, Qizemchak, Uzunemchak, Ipemchak, Oqemchak

Lexemes with Yelin (udder edge) roots: Itelin, Otyyelin

Lexemes with Qorin (belly) roots: Otqorin, Toshqorin, Bo'shqorin, Eshqorin, Itqorin

Lexemes with Bosh (head) roots: Olabosh, Mallabosh, Qorabosh, Sariqbosh, Sarig'bosh, Kattabosh, O'zunbosh

Various other lexemes: Targ'il, Talg'ir, Gavaz, Gavvaz, Govmish, Xurmacha

Additionally, many pastoral lexemes were the basis for male names (Qo'yli, Qo'limurod, To'qlivoy, Qo'chqorbek, and others), as well as some female names derived from specific animal names (Qo'zi, Qo'zigul).

Other Types of Anthroponyms:

Certain names were formed from lexemes indicating the age of livestock (e.g., "Chori" meaning a four-year-old sheep, from Tajik 'chahor'), and others from words like 'Toyloq' and 'Bo'ta'. The process of converting pastoral lexemes into



personal names involved affixation, composition, and semantic methods, all influenced strongly by the psychological, sociological, and cultural circumstances of the community.

4.2 Toponyms (Place Names):

Problems related to Central Asian toponymy have a long history. Foundational studies and references include works by Mahmud al-Kashgari, al-Biruni, Rashid al-Din, Narshakhi, Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi, Babur, and others, as well as modern scholars such as V.V. Radlov, V.V. Bartold, and L.N. Gumilev.

Pastoral lexemes designating animal species—such as ‘qo‘y’ (sheep), ‘echki’ (goat), ‘qo‘zi’ (lamb), ‘qo‘chqor’ (ram), ‘sigir’ (cow), and others—often combine with locative units, forming microtoponyms (e.g., Qo‘yyotoq, Echkiyotoq, Sigiryotoq). However, the use of these combinations is somewhat limited in toponymy.

Some microtoponyms in various districts involve the suffix -xona (house or place), as in Molxona or Sigirxona. These formations, however, are lexicalized appellatives rather than genuine onomastic units, having transitioned fully from common noun usage.

Other toponyms formed from pastoral lexemes characteristic of Uzbek include compounds with words like qo‘ton, qo‘ra, yaylov (summer pastures), o‘rish (cutting), suvlot (animal path to water), and poyga (a path used by animals to wells). These appear widely in district toponymy (e.g., Beshqo‘ton, Toshqo‘ton, Yayloq, Molo‘rish, Suvlot).

Some pastoral toponyms exist as simple phrase-names that convey information about social or historical phenomena, such as Echkiqirildi (“the goat was slaughtered”) and Qo‘yqirildi (“the sheep was slaughtered”).

4.3 Ethnonyms: Experts emphasize the important role of ethnonyms in toponymic formation.

In the pastoral onomastic system, ethnotoponyms have left significant marks. Prof. X. Doniyorov notes that the Uzbek ethnic composition derives from three main components: Turk-Uzbek, Kipchak-Uzbek, and Oghuz-Uzbek groups, where the Kipchak-Uzbek component joined last historically but gave the unified national name “Uzbek” [Doniyorov, 1968, p. 98].



The origin of Uzbek tribal names (ethnonyms) is unique. Those derived from animal names, especially domestic animals, are among the oldest. Many appeared during the pagan period, often associated with totemic beliefs. Sacred war animals (totems) were believed to be ancestral progenitors. Ethnonyms like Jiloni (snake), Qargon (crow), Shagal (jackal), Echki (goat), and Hokiz (bull) sometimes doubled as tribal nicknames.

In Uzbekistan, settlements such as Alaquo‘yliq, Qoraqo‘yliq, and Toyloq derive their names from ethnonyms. These ethnonyms, emerging from pastoral vocabulary, reflect totemic concepts tied to the primitive culture and religious history of the people.

Conclusion

The naming of places depends on the development stage of society and its productive forces. If pastoralism is the primary occupation of local people, the place receives one type of name; if agriculture prevails, another; if industry, yet another. Therefore, place names reflect not only the characteristics of the locale but also the features of the society that named it.

Naming of animals such as dogs, horses, cattle, occasionally sheep and goats, and birds like pigeons, cranes, parrots, and hoopoes, is part of ancient Uzbek onomastic and psychological traditions. Not all animals or birds were named—only those with social significance. Named creatures appear in Uzbek folk tales, legends, epics, riddles, and anecdotes.

Toponyms serve as unique markers of national culture, revealing the mentality, character traits, psychology, and social factors of a people in a given territory. They express natural and geographic features as well as the historical and cultural specifics of the ethnic groups residing there. The emergence of zoonymic components in toponyms is not accidental but rather a product of communicative and social environments. Analyzing the Turkic toponymic system allows identifying the most frequently encountered zoo-components within various thematic groups.

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