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HEORY OF HYDROTOPONYMS AND WATER OBJECTS IN THE BUKHARA REGION

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Abstract: This article examines the theoretical foundations of hydrotoponymy and provides a scientific analysis of the formation, origin, semantic features, and historical-ethnographic significance of the names of water bodies in the Bukhara region. It is demonstrated that the names of rivers, canals, irrigation ditches, lakes, wells, and springs in the region are closely connected with its natural and geographical conditions, economic activities, ethnic composition, and historical development. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of hydrotoponyms as important sources for investigating the history, culture, and linguistic development of the region. The systematic study of the toponymy of the Bukhara region, as well as the preservation and scientific description of geographical names, is of considerable importance in contemporary scholarship.

Keywords: hydrotoponym, toponymy, onomastics, water bodies, Bukhara region, hydronym, geographical names, appellative words, linguistic analysis, historical geography, ethnotoponym, semantics, toponymic research.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF TOPONYMY AND HYDRONYMY

Every geographical object surrounding us has a name, and these names serve to distinguish one object from another. For this reason, many words in a language have developed into names, or proper nouns. Words can denote objects (book, table, chair, television), living beings (human, bird, animal, plant), abstract concepts (joy, anger, beauty, leisure), qualities and characteristics (good, large, bad, deep, hardworking), and many other phenomena. However, none of these words refers to a single specific entity; rather, they denote an entire class of similar objects. In other words, they are common nouns, or appellatives (from the Latin *appellativum*, meaning the opposite of a proper noun).

At the same time, there are words in a language that refer to only one specific object or entity and serve to distinguish it from all others. Such words or combinations of words are called proper nouns. A proper noun is a word or phrase used to identify a particular geographical object and differentiate it from other objects; examples include *Mirzacho'l*, *Tashkent*, and *Samarkand*. Geographical names, known as toponyms (from the Greek *topos* – "place, location" and *onyma* – "name"), are also proper nouns and represent one of their most developed forms.

According to H. Hasanov, every name has its own history and is connected with a particular people, tribe, natural feature, economic activity, event, or discovery. Therefore, there arises a need to understand the reasons behind the creation of toponyms, their formation, development, persistence, transformation, addressing function, informational value, and semantic content. Toponymy is the scientific discipline that studies the origin, formation, development, current state, meaning, pronunciation, and spelling of geographical names [4].

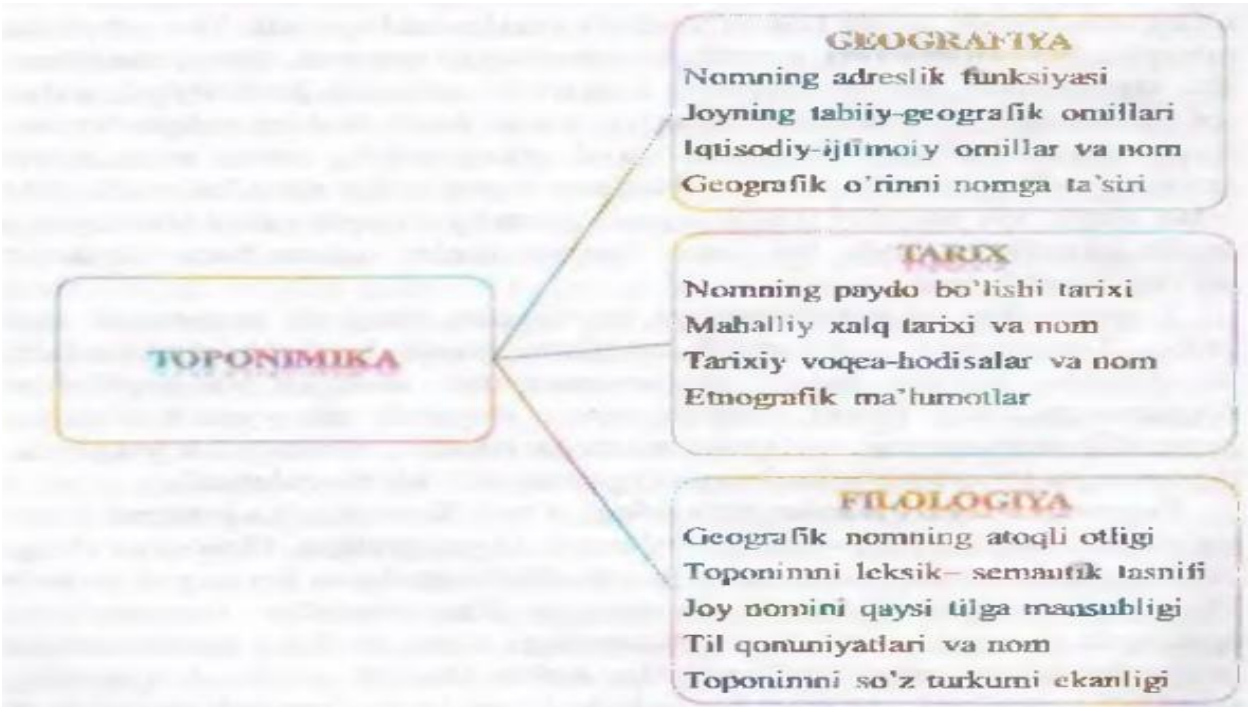
The term *toponymy* also refers to the totality of geographical names within a particular territory. It emerged at the intersection of geography, philology (linguistics), and history, integrating the interests and methodologies of these disciplines. Consequently, different views have developed regarding the position of toponymy within the system of sciences. Nevertheless, it is

clear that any substantial body of toponymic material serves as an important source of research for all three disciplines, although each specialist studies it from the perspective of their own field.

The philologist and toponymist T. Nafasov notes:

"One of the new directions that emerged within the field of ancient geography is toponymy. Since ancient times, geographers and geographical science have been engaged in the study of toponymy. Later, historians and archaeologists became interested in this field, investigating issues such as the meanings of historical names, their structure, and their linguistic affiliation. Eventually, toponymy became an object of linguistic research" [5].

Indeed, toponymy can be regarded as an interdisciplinary or "borderline" science, combining the approaches and research methods of geography, history, and linguistics. Such an integrative nature allows researchers to analyze geographical names not only as linguistic units but also as historical and cultural sources that preserve valuable information about the past and present of a region.



The Russian toponymist V.A. Nikonov clearly emphasized the importance of the addressing function of toponyms:

"Let us imagine for a moment that all geographical names on our planet have disappeared. Cities, villages, rivers, seas, mountains, countries, and streets become nameless. As a result, transportation systems would collapse; people would not know where to travel, where to deliver goods, or where emergency services should go. The global economy would fall into crisis, and humanity would face the risk of returning to a primitive stage of development—all because of the loss of geographical names" [6].

Similarly, the prominent Uzbek toponymist Professor H. Hasanov wrote:

"Let us follow V.A. Nikonov's assumption and imagine that all place names—streets, stations, and cities—have disappeared. Postal services would cease functioning, ambulances would

wander in search of addresses, people would not know which bus to take, and a parcel sent to Namangan might end up in Khorezm" [6].

Among Uzbek scholars, H. Hasanov was one of the first researchers to focus on toponymy. He authored numerous scholarly articles and books devoted to geographical names. His works, including *The Orthography of Geographical Names* (1962), *Central Asian Geographers and Travelers* (1964), *From the History of Central Asian Place Names* (1965), *The Language of the Earth* (1977), and *The Secrets of Geographical Names* (1985), provide valuable insights into the distinctive features of Central Asian, particularly Uzbek, toponymy. Known as the "Uzbek Magellan," Hasanov paid special attention to the transcription, etymology, historical development, and geographical terminology underlying place names.

Another scholar who devoted many years to the study of toponymy was S. Qorayev. A significant part of his research focused on local geographical terminology. Qorayev provided detailed explanations of more than 120 geographical terms found in place names. Examples include *aqba* ("mountain pass"), *baraz* ("mountain plateau"), *bel* ("pass"), *bo'ktar* ("mountain foothill"), *gaza* ("mountain ridge"), *depsan* ("plain in hilly terrain"), *jo'na* ("elongated hill"), *zayak* ("abandoned land"), *zov* ("steep cliff"), *sangloq* ("stony valley"), *shiber* ("marshy meadow"), *tarma* ("snow avalanche"), *chag'at* ("sunny rocky slope"), *chem* ("barrier"), *chalqa* ("flat area"), and *qo'riq* ("grassland along a river"). He was among the first scholars to introduce these folk geographical terms into the fields of geography and toponymy.

Hydronymy remains one of the relatively underexplored branches of linguistics, and its development and investigation have become increasingly important in contemporary scholarship. Hydronyms are the names of natural and artificial water bodies, including oceans, seas, rivers, lakes, springs, wells, reservoirs, and similar features. They are studied within the field of lexicology. Linguist Nosirjon Uluqov notes that the names of water objects are called *hydronyms*, while the entire system of such names is referred to as *hydronymy* [1].

Historically, human settlements, villages, and cities were primarily established along rivers, lakes, and other water sources. In many cases, artificial water facilities such as reservoirs, ponds, and wells were created to meet the needs of local populations. Some settlements were subsequently named after these water bodies.

Historian Temur Shirinov, drawing upon information from the *Avesta*, notes that Ahura Mazda created the fifteen most excellent lands, among which were territories corresponding to present-day Uzbekistan. These included *Arianam Vaejah* (the basin of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers), the "holy and purified Suguda" (the Zarafshan River basin), and "beautiful Bakhdi with its lofty mountains" (the upper basin of the Amu Darya). Since the *Avesta* dates back to the 8th–7th centuries BCE, these references indicate that some hydronyms are older than the names of the territories in which they are located [2].

Furthermore, written sources dating from the 2nd–1st centuries BCE, including the works of Strabo, Arrian, and Quintus Curtius Rufus, mention rivers such as *Oxus* or *Araxes* (Amu Darya), *Jaxartes* (Syr Darya), and *Polytimetus* (Zarafshan).

Narshakhi's *History of Bukhara* contains information about twelve canals and irrigation channels in the Bukhara oasis and explains the origins of their names. The largest of these was the Karmina Canal, followed by the Shopurkon Canal. According to legend, one of the sons of the Persian ruler Cyrus came to Bukhara after a disagreement with his father and was warmly welcomed by the local population. In Persian, the word *pur* means "son" or "heir," and the young prince was therefore called Shopur, meaning "the son of the king." Shopur was passionate about hunting and ordered the construction of a large canal in an otherwise waterless area designated for

hunting. Villages and palaces subsequently emerged around the canal. The people of Bukhara named the canal *Shopurkon*, meaning "the water of the king's son."

The hydrotoponyms of the Bukhara region possess several distinctive characteristics:

- **Rivers and Canals:** The Zarafshan River and its tributaries, which constitute a highly developed irrigation system, as well as Shahrud, an ancient canal that historically supplied water to the city of Bukhara.
- **Lakes:** Natural and artificial lakes such as Tudakul, Quyimozor, and Tuzkon.
- **Hydronymic Components:** Names formed with lexical elements such as *-rud* (river), *-suv* (water), and *-ko'l* (lake).
- **Historical Names:** Place names associated with ancient irrigation structures and water-management systems.

The theory of hydrotoponyms serves to investigate the origin, formation, and historical-linguistic development of the names of water bodies. Within this theoretical framework, the names of rivers, lakes, streams, canals, ditches, and springs are viewed not merely as geographical entities but also as important sources reflecting the historical, ethnic, and cultural development of a particular region. Hydrotoponyms often belong to the most ancient layers of the lexical system and provide valuable information about the language, lifestyle, economic activities, and natural environment of the peoples who once inhabited a given territory.

The practical significance of this theory becomes especially evident when examining the water bodies of the Bukhara region. The Zarafshan River, for instance, has historically served as the primary water source of the oasis, and its name possesses deep historical and etymological roots. Likewise, the Amu Darya, as one of the major hydronyms of Central Asia, has played a significant role not only in natural processes but also in the political and economic development of the region. Numerous ancient irrigation channels in the Bukhara oasis, including Shahrud and the Romitan Canal, reflect the region's irrigation culture, agricultural traditions, and historical evolution.

The analysis demonstrates that the hydrotoponyms of the Bukhara region were formed primarily on the basis of natural characteristics (such as the color, speed, and volume of water), geographical location, historical personalities, and economic activities. Some hydronyms preserve ancient Turkic and Persian linguistic layers, providing evidence of the region's long-standing cultural and linguistic interactions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study entitled *"Theoretical Foundations of Toponymy and Hydronymy (A Case Study of the Bukhara Region)"* provides a systematic analysis of the formation and historical evolution of regional place names through the perspectives of linguistics, history, and geography.

The findings indicate that the toponymic system of the Bukhara region represents a unique linguistic area formed through centuries of interaction and convergence between Turkic (Uzbek) and Iranian (Tajik) languages. The study reveals the semantic, structural, and etymological characteristics of regional place names and demonstrates the close connection between toponymic formants such as *-obod*, *-kent*, *-qala*, and *-rabot* and the sociolinguistic landscape of the region.

The analysis of the hydronymic layer further confirms the vital importance of water-related names in the arid and oasis environment of Bukhara. Major hydronyms such as the Amu Darya, Zarafshan, Shahrud, Kharkush, Quyi-Mozor, Tudakul, and Devkhona, as well as ancient canals and irrigation networks such as Quyimozor and Tuzkon, were examined in terms of their origins, hydrotopographical characteristics, and historical backgrounds. The study shows that these

hydronyms reflect not only water bodies themselves but also the irrigation culture and socio-economic relations of past societies.

The theory of toponymy and hydrotoponymy therefore provides an important scientific framework for investigating water objects in the Bukhara region. It reveals not only the lexical meanings of geographical names but also the historical and cultural identity of the territory. Consequently, the systematic study, preservation, and documentation of hydrotoponyms are of great scientific and cultural significance for future generations.

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