

THE ROLE OF ETHNONYMS IN THE FORMATION OF UZBEK TOPONYMS

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Abstract

This article analyzes the linguocultural and ethnolinguistic features of ethnotoponyms formed on the basis of ethnonyms in the system of Uzbek toponymy. Based on the scientific views of such scholars as T. Nafasov, S. Qorayev, Z. Do'simov, N. Mingboev, and T. Rahmatov, the classification of ethnotoponyms, the mechanisms of their formation, and their historical and cultural significance are highlighted. The article substantiates that ethnotoponyms are important linguistic units reflecting the ethnic composition and cultural memory of the Uzbek people.

Keywords: Toponymy, ethnonym, ethnotoponym, linguoculture, ethnolinguistics, clan, tribe, onomastics, cultural memory.

Introduction

To date, the issue of ethnonyms has been considered a distinct scientific problem in numerous dissertation and monographic studies devoted to Uzbek toponymy. The main reason for this is that a significant portion of place names within the Uzbek toponymic system has been formed on the basis of clan, tribe, and ethnic group names, that is, ethnonyms. Therefore, in almost all scholarly works dedicated to the lexical-semantic classification of toponyms, place names derived from ethnonyms are distinguished as a separate category and studied under the term *ethnotoponyms*. Ethnotoponyms are interpreted as complex linguocultural units reflecting the ethnic composition of a people, historical migration processes, social structure, and cultural memory.

Main Part

The study of place names formed on the basis of ethnonyms within Uzbek toponymy has been extensively discussed in the works of scholars such as T. Rahmatov, J. Latipov, S. Nayimov, N. Mingboev, T. Nafasov, S. Qorayev, Z. Do'simov, and N. Oxunov. Their research demonstrates that ethnotoponyms are not merely linguistic units but also complex systems preserving historical, ethnographic, and cultural information.

For example, T. Rahmatov, while analyzing the toponymy of Samarkand and its surrounding areas, notes that more than 200 place names were formed on the basis of clan and tribal names. He cites examples such as *Qoshtamg'ali*, *Qorqipchoq*, *Nayman*, *Barlos*, *Qavchinon*, and *Yettiuyli*, revealing their historical roots. Through these names, it is possible to draw conclusions about the historical presence of various ethnic groups in the region and their socio-geographical distribution.

J. Latipov, in his analysis of the toponymy of the Margilan region, includes names such as *Eshontopi*, *Bektopi*, *Toqali*, *Otaliq*, *Beklar*, *Qozion*, *Shig'amon*, *Xastalar*, and *Kosalar* among ethnotoponyms. An important feature of these names is that they occur not only in their original ethnonymic forms but also in expanded forms through morphological suffixes such as *-lar*, *-li*, and *-on*. For instance, *Beklar* represents the transformation of a clan name into a place name through pluralization, while *Qozion* is a variant formed through phonetic and morphological changes.

S. Nayimov records the following ethnically based place names in the toponymy of Bukhara Region: *Ming*, *Mingon*, *Nayman*, *Naymancha*, *Do'rmon*, *Do'rmontepa*, *Qirq*, *Qirqqlar*, *Saroy*, *MiyonSaroy*, *Bahrin*, *Bahrincha*, *Mesit*, and *Mirishkor*. For example, *Do'rmontepa* means "the hill of the Do'rmon tribe," while *Mingon* denotes a settlement associated with the Ming tribe. These examples clearly demonstrate the territorial traces of ethnic groups.

N. Mingboev, based on materials from Syrdarya Region, shows the widespread occurrence of ethnotoponyms and analyzes names such as *Barlos*, *Solin*, *Uyassolin*, *Qopchiq*, *Qoqonqopchi*, *Ellduvut*, and *Sirg'ali*. For example, *Barlos* is the name of a historical Turkic tribe that played a significant political role during the Timurid period. *Sirg'ali* represents a phonologically transformed variant of a tribal name.

T. Nafasov is regarded as one of the scholars who studied the problem of ethnonyms most comprehensively. He collected more than 1,500 ethnotoponyms from Southern Uzbekistan and classified them according to clan, tribe, genonym, nationality, and ethnic group names. In his work “*Why Is Your Village Called So?*”, toponyms derived from ethnonyms such as *Baliqchi*, *Qaramon*, *Bag‘ish*, and *Dukchi* are analyzed from a linguocultural perspective. In the *Explanatory Dictionary of Uzbek Toponyms*, more than 2,000 toponyms are explained, of which 725 are identified as having an ethnic basis. These figures demonstrate the significant role of ethnonyms within the toponymic system.

According to the statistical observations of S. Qorayev, 452 out of 1,250 recorded toponyms are ethnotoponyms. Among them, names derived from major tribal groups such as *Qipchoq*, *Nayman*, *Barlos*, *Qong‘irot*, *Mang‘it*, *Qatagan*, and *Kenagas* are particularly common. For instance, *Qong‘irot* is recognized in historical sources as one of the largest ethnic groups of Central Asia.

Z. Do‘simov, who introduced the term *ethnotoponym* into scholarly circulation, analyzed the toponymy of the Khorezm region and distinguished ethnotoponyms as a separate lexical-semantic category. He interpreted names such as *Qo‘ng‘irot*, *Mang‘it*, *Qipchoq*, *Nayman*, *Nukus*, and *Arabxona* as ethnically based toponyms.

N. Oxunov identified more than 250 ethnically based place names, providing their historical and etymological analyses and demonstrating their connection to the Turkic ethnic system

N. Oxunov further analyzed names such as *Qipchoq*, *Nayman*, *Qangli*, *Mang‘it*, *Kenagas*, and *Barqin* from a historical-etymological perspective, showing that they belong to a common layer within the ethnic system of Turkic peoples.

The analysis of place names formed on the basis of ethnonyms in Uzbek toponymy through modern linguistic approaches demonstrates that this phenomenon is not merely a historical naming process but is also closely connected with cognitive mapping and mechanisms of cultural identification. In other words, when naming a particular territory, people encode not only geographical characteristics but also their ethnic memory.

Recent scholarly approaches also regard ethnotoponyms as a form of “social semantic map.” In this perspective, each ethnic name indicates historical centers of territorial influence. This highlights the necessity of studying toponymy through the interconnected framework of **language, society, and history**.

Another contemporary perspective is that ethnotoponyms reflect linguocultural stereotypes. Over time, certain ethnic names may acquire positive or negative connotations. This demonstrates that toponyms are not merely neutral geographical markers but also products of social consciousness.

Furthermore, from the perspective of digital linguistics, ethnotoponyms can be mapped using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Such an approach enables researchers to visualize and analyze the territorial density, migration routes, and historical layers of ethnic names.

Conclusion

Ethnotoponyms formed on the basis of ethnonyms constitute a complex linguistic, historical, and cultural layer within the Uzbek toponymic system. They are not simply collections of geographical names but significant semiotic units that embody the ethnic composition, historical movements, social structure, and cultural memory of a people.

The analysis of scholarly sources reveals that the formation of ethnotoponyms is associated with several factors, including ethnic migration processes, tribal and clan structures, social stratification, occupational naming traditions, and mythological perceptions.

In conclusion, the study of ethnotoponyms formed on the basis of ethnonyms in Uzbek toponymy is of great scholarly importance not only for linguistics but also for history, ethnology, and cultural studies.

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