

# **THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON UZBEK TOPONYMY: MAJOR SCHOLARS AND RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

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## **Abstract**

This article examines the development of scientific research on Uzbek toponymy and highlights the major contributions of Uzbek scholars to the study of geographical names. The study analyzes the formation of toponymic research in Uzbekistan beginning in the 1960s and reviews the achievements of prominent researchers such as T. Nafasov, S. Qorayev, Z. Do'simov, T. Enazarov, N. Oxunov, and others. Special attention is paid to the linguistic, historical, etymological, and ethnolinguistic investigation of place names across different regions of Uzbekistan. The article also discusses the significance of monographs, dictionaries, dissertations, and methodological works devoted to toponymy. The findings demonstrate that toponymy is one of the most extensively studied branches of Uzbek onomastics and serves as an important source for understanding the historical, cultural, linguistic, and ethnographic heritage of the Uzbek people.

**Keywords:** Toponymy, Uzbek toponymy, geographical names, place names, onomastics, etymology, ethnolinguistics, linguistic analysis, regional toponymy, historical toponymy, oikonyms, microtoponyms, cultural heritage, Uzbekistan.

## **Introduction**

Scientific study of Uzbek toponymy began in the 1960s. During the following decades, considerable work was carried out in the field of Uzbek toponymic

research. Among these studies, the monograph *“From the History of Central Asian Place Names”* by the prominent geographer Hamid Hasanov occupies a special place. This work briefly describes the history of geographical names (toponyms), their diversity, and the principles governing their formation, while also providing an introduction to the science of toponymy.

As emphasized in the monograph, place names enable us to learn about ancient trade routes, the distribution of tribes and languages, the locations of old fortresses and settlements, the characteristics of rivers and mountain passes, the presence of mineral resources, the availability of wells in deserts, the flora, fauna, and climate of particular regions, as well as information about occupations, historical events, legends, and traditions. All of this information is of great importance for the national economy and the cultural history of our people.

The inclusion of a brief toponymic dictionary and explanations of historical-geographical names at the end of the book further increased its scientific and practical value.

Through the efforts of scholars such as To‘ra Nafasov, Saidahmad Qorayev, Zarif Do‘simov, B. O‘rinboyev, T. Rahmatov, J. Latipov, T. Enazarov, N. Oxunov, and S. Nayimov, toponyms from regions such as Xorazm, Qashqadaryo, Bukhara, Surkhandarya, Jizzakh, Tashkent, Fergana, and Samarkand were collected and analyzed. Important observations were made regarding their linguistic characteristics, historical development, and etymology.

The first linguistic monographic study devoted to Uzbek toponymy was conducted by To‘ra Nafasov. In this research, the naming principles, etymology, structural-grammatical features, and word-formation patterns of toponyms in the Qashqadaryo region were examined in detail. Later, the scholar expanded his work beyond Qashqadaryo and carried out ethnolinguistic analyses of Southern Uzbek toponyms. He also published an explanatory dictionary of Uzbek place names.

During the years of independence, Professor Nafasov continued his productive research in toponymy. His major works include *Uzbek Nomenclature* (1993), *Educational Explanatory Dictionary of Uzbek Toponyms* (2007), *Mahalla and Street Names of Qarshi City* (2008), *Village Names of Qashqadaryo* (2009), and *Chiroqchinoma* (2010).

The historical and scientific study of Uzbek place names was also significantly advanced by the research of Saidahmad Qorayev. His works provided a comparative-historical analysis of both historical and contemporary toponyms of Uzbekistan. His doctoral dissertation was devoted to the study of Uzbek oikonyms (settlement names). He also made valuable contributions through the compilation of toponymic dictionaries and the publication of numerous scholarly and popular works on naming studies.

The scientific and linguistic analysis of the toponyms of the Khorezm oasis was greatly enriched by the contributions of Zarif Do'simov. His candidate and doctoral dissertations, as well as his monographs, focused on this topic. Later, scholars such as A. Otajonova and M. Tillayeva conducted research on the lexical foundations of Khorezm ethnotoponyms and the comparison of Khorezm onomastics with the *Avesta*, respectively.

Other researchers also made significant contributions. Y. Khojamberdiyev studied the toponyms of Surkhandarya Province, while S. Nayimov focused on those of Bukhara Province. N. Oxunov investigated the toponyms of the Kokand district group.

A number of studies were devoted to the investigation of microtoponyms in individual cities and districts. Such research is especially valuable because a narrower geographical focus often allows for more precise and reliable conclusions. In this regard, the works of T. Rahmatov, J. Latipov, X. Xolmuminov, O. Oripov, A. Aslonov, and S. Boriev deserve particular attention. Research on Uzbek toponymy was further expanded through the efforts of T. Enazarov. His doctoral dissertation addressed the lexical foundations of toponyms and the problems of their etymological investigation. Considerable attention has also been devoted to the publication of monographs, methodological manuals, and educational resources in the field of toponymy.

In general, among all branches of Uzbek onomastics, place names (toponyms) have been studied most extensively. Nevertheless, further research is necessary to deepen and broaden the field. Such work will create a solid foundation for the preparation of a comprehensive map of Uzbekistan's toponyms and a multi-volume explanatory dictionary of Uzbek geographical names.

## Conclusion

The development of Uzbek toponymic studies has made significant progress since the 1960s, evolving into one of the most productive branches of Uzbek onomastics. The scholarly contributions of researchers such as Hamid Hasanov, To'ra Nafasov, Saidahmad Qorayev, Zarif Do'simov, and many others have established a strong scientific foundation for the study of geographical names in Uzbekistan. Their research has revealed the linguistic, historical, cultural, and ethnographic significance of toponyms and demonstrated their value as important sources for understanding the nation's past and cultural heritage.

The extensive collection, classification, and etymological analysis of place names across different regions of Uzbekistan have enriched both linguistic and historical scholarship. Furthermore, the publication of monographs, dictionaries, dissertations, and methodological guides has contributed to the institutional development of toponymic research and provided valuable resources for future studies.

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