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TOPONYMS AS CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT LANGUAGE UNITS

Abstract: Modern linguistics is characterized by interdisciplinary approach to the investigation of language phenomena within the framework of anthropocentric paradigm that focuses on the study of “human factor” reflected in language. Such approach caused the emergence of new linguistic trends at the junction of several disciplines such as cultural linguistics, cognitive linguistics, gender linguistics, pragmalinguistics, as well as reconsideration and changing scientific focus of many traditional disciplines, in particular toponymy.

Key words: toponym, knowledge structures, proper noun, onomastic, extralinguistic factors, religious, historical.

Language: English

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Introduction

As is known, toponymy studies the names of geographical objects. Toponym from traditional linguistics point of view is defined as a name of geographical object that serves for identification some phenomena from the others. However, from the perspective of cognitive and cultural linguistics a toponym is regarded as a means of cognition, a cognitive structure, conveying different types of knowledge structures (encyclopedic, religious, historical, mythological, etc.). Proceeding from this assumption, we consider toponym to be a multifold conceptually significant language units that represents different knowledge structures of religious, mythological, historical, cultural character.

Nowadays, the problems of interaction of language and thinking, language and culture, language and society are one of the central ones in linguistics. This is due to the development of the anthropocentric paradigm, which focuses on the study of the “human factor” reflected in the language. Modern linguistics is characterized by the fact that language is considered to be a main tool of communication and cognition, a means of storing and transmission of information and different types of knowledge structures, a cultural code of a nation that are externalized in different linguistic expressions (Ashurova, Galieva, 2018, 2019).

II.Literature review

The origins of this understanding of language goes back to the ideas of W. von Humboldt, A.A. Potebnya, E. Sapir, B.L. Whorf and others, the main conception of which can be illustrated by the following thesis: “... Language is, as it were, the external manifestation of the minds of peoples. Their language is their soul, and their soul is their language. It is impossible to conceive them ever sufficiently identical... “Man lives in the world about him principally, indeed exclusively, as language presents it to him” (Humboldt, 1988). Later, W. von Humboldt’s idea that was further promoted by many famous linguists all over the world. So, the understanding of the language as a means of that reflects, expresses and conveys the culture and cognition of a certain ethnic group led to the emergence of a number of interdisciplinary linguistic disciplines, such as cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, pragmalinguistics, gender linguistics, etc.

Onomastics, one of the branches of linguistics, is the science about proper names. It deals with the study of the problems of semantics and typology of proper names, their origin and functions, national-cultural specifics, typology of proper names, classification of names. The huge interest to this science caused the emergence of numerous works not only in the field of linguistics, but also literature, cultural studies,

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geography, etc. Many prominent scientists, such as V. Blanär, R. Fischer, A.H. Gardiner, W. Schmidt V. A. Nikonov, A. V. Superanskaya, N. I. Tolstoy, V. N. Toporov.

III. Analysis

The main unit of study of onomastics is a proper name. As is known, all names can be divided into two groups: common nouns, as generalizing, and proper, as distinguishing individual objects from a number of others. Proper names, which have their own specific characteristics, form a special category and are usually opposed to common nouns. The common name, as A. V. Superanskaya emphasizes, correlates the named object with the class, having the main connotation (the connection with the named object is carried out through the concept) and the additional one. The named object is indefinite and unlimited (except for specific speech situations). In turn, an object designated by a proper name is always defined and strictly limited [Superanskaya 1973, p. 135].

As many researchers note, the fundamental characteristics of a proper name is the identification function (Gardiner, 1954; Blaner, 1971; Ullman, 1951; Superanskaya, 1973; Benkendorf 1991). So, according to A.V. Superanskaya, a proper name represents an individual object or several objects of the same name, each of which is perceived individually and therefore it is not combined with a concept ... An object designated by a proper name is definite and specific [Superanskaya 2007, p. 113]. The name is not directly related to the concept and at the language level does not have a clear, unambiguous connotation [Superanskaya, 2007, p. 324]. A. A. Reformatsky also notes that "the transformation of a common name into a proper one means, first of all, the loss of a concept and the transformation of a word into a nickname; on the contrary, the transformation of a proper name into a common noun is associated with filling the word with a new concept with new "essential features", and this concept can be completely different from the concept associated with the original common noun "[Reformatsky 2005, p. 67 - 68].

V. Schmidt singles out anthroponymy and toponymy as the main objects of onomastics research: "... Anthroponyms include the names of people (Rufnamen) and their surnames (Familiennamen); names of settlements (Siedlungsnamen) are considered as toponyms in a narrow sense, and in a broad sense, these include the names of countries and lands (Landernamen), the names of mountains (Bergnamen), rivers (Flufnamen), forests (Waldnamen), and fields and meadows (Flurnamen) [Schmidt, 1960, p. 318]. A number of other researchers, in addition to anthroponyms and toponyms, also refer to onomastics astronoms – the names of individual astronomic bodies, zoonyms – animal names, mythonyms (names of mythical

objects), horonyms (a set of names of any territories, regions, districts), etc. [LES, 1991, p.347]. Onomastics also studies the history of the emergence of proper nouns and the motives for nomination, various transitions of onyms from one row to another, territorial and linguistic areas [Bondaletov, 1970, p. 17-23]. All proper nouns existing in a particular era in a particular people are interpreted as its onomastic space.

Among the aforementioned onomastic units, one of the most significant is toponym, which constitute a very extensive layer in onomastics. A wide range of problems devoted to the study of toponyms led to the development of toponymy as a separate direction of onomastics.

Toponymy is an interdisciplinary scientific discipline that arose at the junction of several sciences – linguistics, history and geography. The interdisciplinary essence of toponymy is due to the fact that toponymy is closely related to cultural studies, history, geography, sociology, theology, philosophy, etc., and thus turns out to be associated with a complex of linguistic and other humanities. This is due to the fact that "many facts of toponymy receive a proper explanation only when attracting a very significant and diverse material – linguistic, historical and geographical" [Popov, 1965, p. 24]. This is the complexity of toponymy, its complex interdisciplinary essence.

A toponym is understood as "the proper name of a separate geographical place (settlement, river, land, etc.)" [Ozhegov 1999, p. 803]; "the proper name of a natural object on Earth, as well as an object created by man on Earth, which is clearly recorded in this region (city, village, cultivated plot of land, territory as part of the state, communication, etc.)" [Podolskaya 1988, p. ... 127], "historically, socially and culturally determined geographical names of any natural or artificial objects created by man on the land or water territory of the Earth" (Davletkulova, 2014, p. 33). V.A. Nikonov distinguishes three functions of toponyms: 1) the addressing function (obligatory one); 2) the descriptive function (optional one); 3) the ideological function (Independence Square) [Nikonov, 1965, 62-63].

The topicality of such disciplines as cognitive linguistic and cultural linguistics aimed at the study of knowledge systems and cultural factors reflected in the language, mental processes occurring during the perception, comprehension and cognition of reality, the relationship and interaction of culture and language made a significant impact on proper noun research. Traditional problems have been revised from different positions, new concepts are introduced and existing ones are rethought. The study of proper nouns is becoming a promising direction, as evidenced by a number of works devoted to the cognitive or cultural aspects of proper nouns, in particular the research of L. M. Dmitrieva [Dmitrieva,

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2002], E. L. Berezovich [Berezovich, 1999], L. N. Davletkulova [Davletkulova, 2014], M. V. Golomidova [Golomidova, 1998], M. E. Ruth [Ruth, 2008], V. P. Neroznak [Neroznak, 1995], E. A. Sizova [Sizova, 2004], etc.

IV. Discussion

We believe that proper names, in particular toponyms, are cognitively and culturally significant linguistic units, since in their semantics they reflect different cultural factors and values, historical events, religious beliefs and mythological superstitions, national traditions and customs. A.V. Superanskaya also emphasizes that proper nouns are more influenced by extralinguistic factors [Superanskaya, 1973, p. 18]. By extralinguistic factors we suppose the factors belonging to the spheres other than language, i.e. religious, mythological, cultural, geographical, communicative, historical, social, etc., that influence semantics of language units, in particular, toponyms. It should be noted that this term is known in linguistics under various names, such as "knowledge structures", "depositories of knowledge", "encyclopaedic knowledge", "knowledge-base", "background knowledge", etc. Despite some terminological discrepancy, as D.U. Ashurova, M.R. Galieva assert, on the whole knowledge structures are understood as blocks of information and knowledge containing a system of interrelated concepts [Ashurova, Galieva, 2016]. So, knowledge structures are non-linguistic knowledge, to which linguistic units provide access. In this respect some linguistic units are of a particular interest. First and foremost is the "toponym".

Let's embark on a more detailed analysis. As our observations have shown many English, German and Uzbek toponyms can be classified from cultural point of view to the following groups: 1) toponyms, reflecting religious and mythological beliefs; 2) toponyms, reflecting historical events; 3) toponyms reflecting cultural traditions; 4) toponyms, reflecting the peculiarities of geographical landscape. Within this article we are going to discuss the toponyms of first two groups.

Geographic names, reflecting the religious life of the people carry information about religious beliefs, customs, rituals, cultural and religious institutions and structures, the status of religious servants, the designation of holy places.

Toponyms, reflecting religious beliefs mostly include toponyms named after people who considered to be saints: *Herwelink* (on behalf of Saint Heribert), *Viting* (hof) (on behalf of Saint Vitus) *Pentling* (on behalf of Saint Pantaleon), *St. Blasien*. It was believed that these saints take care of this place. It should be mentioned that sometimes not only saints but evil spirits also believed to be the owner of the place, for example *Teufelsmoor* (from German Teufel 'the devil'). Many toponyms related to the religion are connected with the churches near which they are

situated, for example, *Kaltenkirchen*, *Waldkirch*, *Wermelskirchen*. One of the famous German cities is *Mainz* that has a rich historical past. In the era of the Romans, it was a region of outstanding importance and was called *Mogontiacum* that had Celtic roots. Mogon was a Celtic god of truth worshiped in Roman Britain and Gaul.

Toponyms connected with religious beliefs also are widely represented in English. For example, the Old English element *wig* "pagan temple" occurs in *Wyfold*, where the final element *fold* is "church, bosom of the church." Other toponyms designate centers of worship for certain gods or goddesses. For example, "*Thor's stone*" refers to the monolith, which is located in the village and was considered the arrow of the Scandinavian Thor, the god of thunder and storm. The burial of the dead with household items, eapons and jewelry belongs to pagan customs. The name, which illustrates this tradition, has as its second element in the Old English word *hlaw* "mound, burial mound." In the toponyms *Cutslow* and *East / West Challow*, the names of the deceased *Cūden* and *Ceawa* are used as the initial element, from which the burial mounds take their name.

A significant place in the toponymy of England is occupied by the names referring to mythological animals, spirits. Some of the names of fields and hills reflect beliefs in supernatural beings, such as elves, goblins, giants, gnomes, dragons. The latter, according to the legends, were the keepers of treasures. Near the village of Garsington in Oxfordshire is the *Drakenhord* "dragon's hoard" field, the name of which, presumably, was given from the things found in the mound. In the adjoining administrative district of Baldon, there is another field that mentions a dragon in its name, *Drakestone* "dragon stone". Hills and mountains were considered the habitat of elves and goblins. For example, *Poppets Hill* "pit inhabited by goblins" or *Elvendon* "hill inhabited by elves". The Anglo-Saxons believed in giants who protected water bodies and gnomes who flooded valleys and forests: *Tusmore* "giant's pool"; *Thomley* "woodland clearing haunted by dwarves".

In the Uzbek language, the religious toponyms arose: a) with the spread of Islam in Central Asia; b) with reverence for various objects (burial mounds, stones, individual trees, graves of sacred persons, saints etc.), on the part of worshipers, clergymen and the local population; c) from the names of those objects that were directly intended for religious performances, for the promotion of Islamic mysticism and mythology.

The names of mosques and madrasahs store unique information about the history of the population's religious and educational activities. Their name is based on the following features: a) names of cemeteries, centers of worship of the local population. In such toponyms, the most common lexemes are *mozor*, *avliye*, *ota*, *khazrat*: *Zangiota*, *Chuponota*,

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Idrisota, Khazrati Doniyor, Mozori Khÿzha, etc. For example, *Zangiata* – mausoleum over the grave of the patron saint of cattle shepherds Zangi ata. The real name was Aykhodja (died in 1258). According to the legend, he was swarthy and was called the "black father" (zangi - black); b) belonging of the object to a specific person or the name of the founder of the object: *Rajab masjidi (mosque of Rajab), Sultonbobo masjidi (mosque of Sultonbobo)*; appearance, color and material from which the structure was built: *Oqmachit (white mosque), Toshmachit (stone mosque)* etc.

The names of cemeteries, collective burial places, tombs and various holy places associated with it turn out to be ancient and have their own history, preserved in various legends, stories and traditions, mainly of religious content.

In the composition of cemeteries which have indicators like "qabr", "qabriston", "mozor", expressing the meaning of "cemetery", "tomb": *Saidkaroshon mozori, Khonturahonshon mozori, Boboota Qabri, Chuponulla qabri, Royibota mozori*, etc. Some of the names reflect the characteristic features of the object: *Oqmozor, Devoltu mozori, Chilgazota mozori, Chakchakota mozori*.

As is known one of the religious forms of the Turkic people was animism – a belief in the animate nature of the surrounding world. Natural objects were endowed with magical properties: the ability to harm people or protect them. Since animistic views have deep roots and are the source of the emergence of religion, there is no doubt that belief in mythological images, information about beliefs and legends, the terms of demonology have left their mark on the toponymy of the region: village - *Shayton qishloq* (demon village); *Alvastisoy* - "a stream where alvasti (evil spirit) lives".

Many toponyms reflect different historical events. The modern toponymic system of Germany and Britain is the result of a long historical process. Its multi-layered nature is due to the fact that it was created at different times and by different people. Germanic languages, in particular the German and English languages have undergone successive impact of immigrants and invaders, such as Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Normans. Each invasion contributed to the history, development of the language and is reflected in its toponyms.

Toponyms have been created over millennia in different languages and have been associated with various spheres of human activity. Some linguistic forms of toponyms evolved gradually, others were created for a specific object, many were either inherited from other peoples living in this territory, or borrowed, nevertheless, some of them persist up to this day, while others disappeared.

As is known, both German and Britain territory were occupied by Romans. Certainly, this historical period is reflected in the toponyms. The names of

many Roman official cities received different names in everyday speech. Thus, the city of Konstanz (Germany) on the shores of Lake Constance in the 7th century got its name in honor of the Kaiser Constantius Chlorus. The name *Kölne* is abbreviated from the phrase *Colonia Claudia Augusta Agrippinensium* and *Colonia Agrippinensis* (in the 5th century only the word *Colonia* remained, which in the Middle High German period sounded like *Kölne*, and in Central German it became *Cöllen*). Common nouns of Latin origin, such as the military term "*castellum*" ("fortification"), were borrowed into German and gradually became toponyms. So, the toponym *Kastel* in 1162 became *Kastulo* from the Latin *Castellum Mattiacorum* ("the fortress of the German mattiakier (people friendly to the Romans)"), and later turned into the familiar *Kassel*.

In English only two toponyms which are entirely Latin have survived in: *Catterick* (North Yorkshire) and *Speen* (Berkshire) [McDonald, Gresswell 1993, 20-21]. The names of settlements located on the site of former Roman fortifications and cities stand out quite clearly due to the presence of a very specific feature in these toponyms, namely, a high percentage of the use of the *Chester /caster* component (Latin *castra*, other English *caster - camp*). Most often, this element is used with ancient identifiable components of Celtic origin. Therefore, the names of this period can be called Latinized forms of Celtic names. For example, Celtic origin (*Winchester - Venta Belgarum*); with Celtic river names (*Lancaster "Lune"*); *Alchester* (Celtic *alauna* "white water"), and also independently, as simple names (*Chester*).

The toponymy of Uzbekistan reflects the influence of the Aramaic (Nanay), Sogdian (Parkent), Turkic (Tashkent, Aksu), Chinese (Osh), Mongolian (Buka, Durmen), Arabic (Pap, Arabhona), Persian (Shash) and even hybrids composed of different languages (*Krasny Aksu, Brichmulla*).

Before the Arab conquest, the Sogdian language dominated the territory. Like most other Central Iranian languages, Sogdian used a script that dates back to the Aramaic script. The Sogdian language is a dead language (later monuments date back to the beginning of the 11th century), the language of the East Iranian group of Iranian languages, which was spoken in Sogdiana on the territory of modern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. For example, the name of the ancient city "Khorezm" comes from the following components (*hu + vara + zam*) - and means "a country with good fortifications, with fortified cities and fenced villages", here "zam" means land. Other examples are the following toponyms: *Dalverzin* (fortress, fortification on a hill); *Vardanzi* (fenced place). Not so many Sogdian toponyms are survived nowadays, but many cities contain Sogdian affixes. The most wide spread is suffix *-kent* with its variations - *kat, - kant* meaning "strong, solid". This affix served as the basis for the designation of the

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concept of "city": Kyat (Khorezm), Kat Nuket, Navkat; Zarkent, Tashkent, Pskent, Binkent, Samarkand, Paikend, etc. Thus, one of the oldest cities in the world, Samarkand, is a Sogdian toponym, consisting of two Sogdian components: asmara 'stone' and kand - a city. Another example of the Sogdian toponymic layer is the toponym "Bukhara". For the first time the name Bukhara was mentioned in a written source in 830. Academician V.V. Barthold associated this name with sanscrit "vihara" meaning "Buddhist monastery".

V. Conclusion

Thus, from the standpoint of cultural approach to the study of toponyms, the extralinguistic (encyclopedic) information is the most significant in the semantics of toponyms, Extralinguistic

information includes a set of complex knowledge structures about an object of historical, cultural, ethnographic, geographical, socio-cultural character.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that toponyms reflect extralinguistic information of cultural, religious, mythological character, since each ethnos has its own set of lexical units for the selection and designation of a geographical object, depending on the worldview of the given people. Due to their stability, geographical names acquire the ability to store and transmit linguocultural information. Toponyms are one of the main language units that reflect national world picture, since the history of the emergence and development of geographical names is determined by the peculiarities of thinking and culture of the people who created them.

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