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LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES OF KHOREZM HYDRONYMS

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ABSTRACT
This article presents a linguocultural study of the hydronyms of the Khorezm oasis, revealing the special significance of hydronyms in human lifestyle and cultural development. It also analyzes the cultural characteristics of Khorezm hydronyms within the framework of Uzbek linguogeographic dictionaries and Uzbek linguodidactics, based on linguocultural units.

KEYWORDS: *Hydronym, Linguocultural Studies, Regional Onomastics, Linguodidactics, Linguistic Geography, National Realities, Dysphemism, Stereotype, Frame.*

INTRODUCTION

As is well known, in contemporary linguistic education, integrating linguistic phenomena with reality, society, culture, and educational factors has become one of the main objectives of the field. If we consider the linguodidactic principles of any language, we can observe that linguocultural relations play a leading role in all of them. In this context, the naming of geographical objects within the territory of the language under study and their specific characteristics remain at the center of attention.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

According to Golovina, "working with regional onomastics is a unique cultural treasury and a universal means of conveying linguocultural knowledge to learners" [10:54]. Observing and studying regional onomastics from a linguocultural perspective facilitates the understanding of names for representatives of other nations and cultures.

T. Dominova notes that "the combination of regional-cultural knowledge and linguistic skills related to local studies constitutes one of the elements of communicative competence" [11:52]. Thus, the study of linguogeographic units characteristic of a particular region from a linguocultural perspective is also of great importance for intercultural communication.

V. Rojina characterizes the names of geographical objects as names embodying dual social markers and recognizes them as a field of knowledge that conveys information about the material and spiritual world under the influence of linguocultural and linguopragmatic factors [14:22].

As emphasized by S. Qorayev, "toponymists regard hydronyms as the most ancient toponyms" [5:58]. Therefore, they preserve the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the language of the people living in a particular area.

Hydronymic data play a crucial role in studying the fate of a people, their language, history, and the formation and development of civilization. This is because water bodies played a major role at the initial stages of the development of any civilization. Moreover, ethnic groups were more often settled along rivers [4:241]. Even today, water remains a unique natural element of vital importance for all spheres of socio-economic activity—from daily human needs to all sectors of the economy, including agriculture, industry, and the maintenance of ecological balance. In different regions and cultures of the world, water has long performed universal symbolic functions [1:6].

Water facilities are considered the main arteries of the oasis. In order to better understand their functional roles, it is important to have comprehensive information about their names. In naming a geographical object, the natural environment, lifestyle of the population, and historical features of the area are usually taken into account. In particular, hydronyms associated with the customs and traditions of the people tend to remain unchanged for many years.

Sh. Usmonova identifies five main directions of linguocultural studies and notes that among them, geographic dictionaries—namely linguocultural lexicography—are developing rapidly. In this direction, linguistic units expressing geographical realities, climate, flora and fauna, customs, traditions, legends, aphorisms, various holidays and rituals, and religious beliefs specific to a particular people or region are studied [6:24].

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In studies devoted to revealing the linguocultural aspects of linguistic units, the primary objective is often to identify and analyze linguocultural units within texts, mainly within the framework of comparative linguistics. Only a limited number of studies focus on onomastic units as objects of linguocultural research. It should also be noted that phenomena recognized by scholars as linguocultural concepts—such as non-equivalent vocabulary, stereotypes, and linguocultural codes—demonstrate the specific importance of proper names, particularly hydronyms, in human lifestyle and cultural development. On the basis of these and other linguocultural units, the cultural characteristics of Khorezm hydronyms can be identified.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

According to Y. G‘ulomov, the abundance of archaeological findings in Khorezm is explained by the presence of lifeless deserts that preserve evidence of past human life more effectively. In desert conditions, the preservation and discovery of monuments are relatively easier. The fact that most findings consist of primitive hunting and fishing tools indicates that these deserts were once vast watercourses and that fishing was the primary occupation of the population [13:15].

Due to Khorezm being separated from other regions of the Republic by vast sandy and desert areas, the population of the southeastern part of the country tends to perceive the Khorezm oasis as a saline land. Owing to the relatively high salinity of its water, this stereotype has persisted for centuries as a characteristic feature of Khorezm’s natural landscape. Such stereotypical markers are evident in the names of water bodies such as **Sho‘rko‘l** (Bog‘ot district), **Tuzko‘l** (Hazorasp district), **Tuzloqko‘l** (Qo‘shko‘pir district), **Ulug‘sho‘rko‘l** (Yangiariq district), and **Achchiqko‘l** (Shovot district).

In his works devoted to the anthropocentric study of proper names, D. Yo‘ldashev refers to M. Minsky’s concept of the frame, noting that “a frame is one of the ways of representing stereotypical situations, in which multidimensional information is interconnected” [7:78]. It can be observed that hydronyms conveying multiple layers of information are present in the cultural lexicon of the people.

For example, the water object **Eshonyop**, flowing through Bog‘olon village in Yangi Bazar district, is also referred to by the local population living in its northeastern part as **Qiblayop**. Since the watercourse flows from the qibla side of the settlement, it has acquired this informal name, which conveys religious meaning. Although the same canal has two different names, both reflect religious content and form a spiritual code conveying interconnected information.

Similarly, the section of **Qumyop** flowing through G‘oybu village and extending to Begobod village is also called **Ho‘kizyop** by local residents. This informal name is associated with the nickname of the well-known singer Ro‘zmat Hofiz, who lived along the canal. Due to his exceptionally powerful and deep voice, he was allegedly nicknamed “Ho‘kiz” (ox), and this association became linked to the canal. The coexistence of official and unofficial hydronyms demonstrates a frame-based expression, as unofficial names are primarily assigned by local communities.

National realities refer to objects, phenomena, and entities characteristic of a particular people’s life, culture, and socio-historical development. These are linguistic units unfamiliar or foreign to other peoples, lacking direct equivalents in their languages, and expressing national color. Among Khorezm hydronyms, many water objects reflect such non-equivalent national realities, including **Qumzakash** (Yangiariq district), **Zeyyop** (Qo‘shko‘pir district), **Irdimzonyop** (Khiva district), **Osyop** (Bog‘ot district), and **Xolliko‘shak** (Khiva district).

In Gurlan district, there exists **Yormish canal**, which was dug manually by residents to improve their living conditions, and named to signify “splitting the land to bring water.” Some locals interpret the name as reflecting the unity and strength of the people who accomplished this task together. However, dictionaries indicate that the term originally meant “a small canal” [9:534], suggesting that the alternative interpretation is a later folk etymology.

Elements of dysphemization are also evident in the linguocultural analysis of hydronyms. A dysphemism is a pragmatic phenomenon associated with a negative subjective attitude toward a denotatum [10:55]. The naming of **Vahimko‘l** (Shovot district), **Vahim Lake** (Bog‘ot district), and the canal flowing near the **Vahimchi** shrine in Gurlan district is often interpreted as a dialectal variant of the word *vahimachi* (“one who spreads panic”). In reality, during the Khiva Khanate period, lands belonging to mosques, madrasas, and shrines were referred to as *waqf* lands, and those who worked there were called *waqfchilar*, pronounced *vahmchilar* in local dialects [2:21]. This shows that the negative connotation emerged later and affected the interpretation of the hydronym.

Due to its lowland geography, Khorezm differs from other regions of the Republic in terms of soil moisture and groundwater conditions. As a result, the deceased are often buried in above-ground graves. Almost all cemeteries in the region contain artificially constructed ponds designed to absorb excess moisture. These ponds are also hydronymic objects named after cemeteries, shrines, and sacred sites, reflecting the people’s lifestyle and cultural practices. Examples include ponds named after **Otchoparbobo**, **Mavlonbobo**, **Ko‘chakbobo**, **Miskinbobo**, and **Gurganbobo** cemeteries.

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People also associate water with their beliefs through figurative and associative mechanisms. According to Islamic Sufi philosophy, the world is based on four elements: earth, water, air, and fire, each giving rise to specific qualities. Water is associated with joy, generosity, gentleness, and unity [12:36]. Therefore, people seek spiritual comfort from water, and pilgrims drink water from ponds and wells built near shrines with specific intentions. Examples include water facilities at the shrines of **Yusuf Hamadani (Ulli Pir)** in Shovot district, **Pahlavon Mahmud** in Ichan-Qala, Khiva, and **Ostona Bobo** in Yangiariq district. Such hydronyms, representing linguistic concepts and symbols, require in-depth study.

Khorezm is also home to ancient natural therapeutic lakes. **Sho‘rko‘l**, believed to have formed as a result of ancient floods in Bog‘ot district, serves as an example. Both its name and the beneficial properties of its water are closely connected with the socio-cultural life of the people. The lake is officially known as Sho‘rko‘l, while locally it is also called **Qal’ajiq Lake** due to the nearby ancient fortress.

Currently, tourism zones have been established in 20 villages across the Republic, primarily in areas with historically significant water facilities and mountainous regions. It is important to note that hydronyms also play a significant role in realizing the internal and external tourism potential of the Khorezm oasis.

Hydronyms—especially the names of large water bodies—hold great significance in the socio-political and cultural life of peoples. As practical proof of the folk saying “names give rise to names,” they have served as the basis for the creation of other types of toponyms [3:649]. Since the **Amu Darya**, the largest water body of the Khorezm oasis, has had a profound impact on the cultural lifestyle of the people, 32 geographical objects within the region and 97 across the Republic bear its name. This statistic, limited to geographical objects alone, along with the existence of hundreds of other proper names derived from *Amu Darya*, demonstrates the crucial role of hydronyms in social, cultural, spiritual, and everyday life.

CONCLUSION

In general, the study of the linguocultural features of hydronyms provides not only local residents but also foreigners and tourists with valuable socio-cultural information about water object names, facilitating adaptation to the region. Investigating the cultural characteristics of Khorezm hydronyms can make a significant contribution to the development of region-specific linguocultural lexicography.

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