

## THE SEMANTIC SCOPE OF TOPONYMIC UNITS

**Usmonova Mohinir Bahtiyorovna**

Senior Lecturer at Qarshi University of Economics and Pedagogy

E-mail: [M.M.M.U@mail.ru](mailto:M.M.M.U@mail.ru)

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**Abstract.** *This article analyzes the semantic scope of toponymic units, their lexical-semantic features, and cultural-spiritual load from a linguocultural perspective. The internal form, external appearance, and historical-spiritual content of toponyms in English and Uzbek languages are studied. The article demonstrates that toponyms are products of cultural thinking, closely related to the worldview, customs, and socio-legal relations of the people.*

**Keywords:** *Toponym, semantics, cultural semantics, linguoculturology, geographic names, lexical layer, historical motivation, ethnotoponymy.*

### INTRODUCTION

Toponymic units are directly connected with the historical memory, cultural mindset, and language of each nation. Through the semantic scope of these units, one can determine the customs, religious beliefs, and lifestyle of a people. Semantic analysis allows us to identify the deep meanings of toponyms, their naming motivations, and their place in collective memory.

### MAIN PART

The semantic scope of toponymic units is closely tied to their internal structure, historical roots, linguocultural connotations, and the imagery present in public consciousness. Each toponym is not merely a means of naming a geographical object, but also serves as an expression of historical memory, national identity, and ethnocultural heritage. In linguistic analysis, when examining the semantic aspects of such units, it is important to consider not only their dictionary meanings but also their symbolic, connotative, and associative dimensions.

The semantic analysis of toponyms begins with their structural composition. In the Uzbek language, toponyms are generally formed based on two main factors—natural-geographical and socio-cultural elements. For example, the toponym *Chust* consists of the parts *chu* (lowland) and *ust* (highland), reflecting the area's relief features. The toponym *Termiz* is said to originate from the ancient Greek *Demetria*, showing how toponyms reflect historical connections and cultural changes. English toponyms such as *Newcastle*, *Oxford*, and *Cambridge* are named based on the function or location of a geographical object—e.g., *ox* (ox) and *ford* (river crossing)—and retain relevance in the modern language system.

Toponyms can be semantically categorized as follows:

- **Descriptive toponyms** (indicating characteristics of a place): *Qizilqum*, *Greenland* (green land).
- **Memorial toponyms** (associated with historical figures or events): *Washington*, *Amir Temur Park*.
- **Ethnotoponyms** (related to ethnic groups): *Qo'ng'iro't*, *Tatarstan*.
- **Topographic toponyms** (related to terrain): *Tog'kent*, *Lake District*.

The semantic scope of toponyms is also evident in their meaning types. Semantically, toponyms can be classified into the following main groups: descriptive, memorial, transference-based, eponymic (derived from personal names), and metaphoric units. For example, the Uzbek toponym *Qo'qon* is descriptive, meaning "a place where cuckoo birds are plentiful." The

English *Stratford-upon-Avon* combines a town name with a river, giving it both descriptive and locational character.

Furthermore, through linguocultural components, toponyms reflect national culture, worldview, customs, and beliefs. In Uzbek toponyms, words such as *obod* (prosperous), *ota* (father), *bobo* (grandfather), *hazrat* (saint), and *pir* (spiritual guide) are common and tied to spiritual and moral values. Such components turn a geographical name into a source of ideological and cultural information. Similarly, English toponyms such as *Saint Albans* and *St. Andrews* are linked to religious or historical figures, indicating spiritual-cultural layers.

Toponymic units also preserve meanings associated with oral folklore, historical events, and migration processes. This makes toponyms a sociolinguistic phenomenon, allowing for an expanded semantic interpretation. For instance, the toponym *Jizzakh* derives from the ancient Persian word *Dizak* (fortress), indicating the area's historical function as a military settlement. Or *Tashkent* is a combination of *to'sh* (plain) and *kent* (city), showing a blend of geographical and urban characteristics in its semantic structure.

Renowned Uzbek linguist B. Khudoyorov has thoroughly studied the semantic and historical layers of toponymic units in his scholarly works. In articles and monographs such as "*Semantic-Historical Features of Toponymic Units*" (2011) and "*Language and Territory: Semantic Layers in Toponymic Systems*" (2017), he explores the interconnection between language and thought, and language and culture, through toponyms. According to him, toponyms are not limited to naming objects but also serve as carriers of vital information in the conceptual system of language. In Khudoyorov's works, the relationship between language and space is analyzed through an anthropocentric approach, which allows the semantic scope of toponyms to be studied in connection with national worldview, historical thought, and culture.

In modern linguoculturology, the concept of "**semantic layering**" is particularly relevant in toponym analysis. This concept refers to the coexistence of several cultural, historical, religious, or ethnic meanings under a single place name. For example, the name *Bukhara* represents not only a geographical location but also an image of Islamic culture, a center of science, and a symbol of the historic Silk Road.

English and Uzbek toponyms have both similarities and differences from a semantic perspective. Both languages widely use names related to geographical features, historical figures, and natural elements. For example, Uzbek toponyms like *Qiziltepa*, *Sho'rchi* and English toponyms like *Blackpool*, *Oxford* are physical-geographical names; *Amir Temur*, *Ulug'bek*, *Washington*, and *Lincoln* are memorial toponyms tied to historical figures. Names like *Qoratepa*, *Tog'lik*, *Riverdale*, and *Hilltown* are based on natural features. However, English toponyms often contain generic components such as *hill*, *dale*, *town*, which serve as categorizing elements, whereas descriptive elements are more commonly used in Uzbek toponyms.

The semantic scope of toponyms expands and enriches over time. Several factors influence this process. First, historical changes are reflected in toponyms—for example, with political system changes, names are updated, such as the renaming of *Leninobod* to *Khujand*. Second, globalization introduces English-based names and transliterated new toponyms such as *New City* or *Business Town*. Third, urbanization brings about the formation of new neighborhoods and districts, named with modern semantic meanings that often reflect social or economic imagery.

In summary, the semantic scope of toponymic units shows how deeply layered they are with connotative, historical, and linguocultural meanings. This necessitates their study not just as linguistic units, but as social and cultural codes.

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