LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES AND ETYMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF HYDRONYMS IN THE TASHKENT REGION

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Abstract: *This paper explores the lexical-semantic features and etymology of hydronyms in the Tashkent region. It reviews various approaches to the classification of geographical names proposed by both Turkic and Slavic toponymists. Special attention is given to the semantic fields reflected in hydronyms and their connection to natural features, human activity, and socio-cultural factors. The study aims to classify Tashkent region hydronyms into distinct groups based on their origin, meaning, and linguistic structure. The findings highlight the historical and cultural significance of hydronyms and the necessity of considering both linguistic and extralinguistic factors in their analysis.*

Keywords: *Tashkent region, hydronyms, toponymy, semantics, etymology, lexical-semantic classification, Turkic toponyms, geographical names, anthroponyms, ethnonyms.*

The analysis of toponyms of any region presents certain challenges and suggests different research approaches depending on the chosen topic and research objectives. Studying the semantics of geographical names is one of the main tasks of toponymic research. “The semantics of a toponym is a set of information about the named object, the speaker’s attitude toward the object; familiarity with the semantics of the toponym’s appellative and the associations it evokes in speech.” To understand the meaning of a geographical name, it is necessary to know the typical contexts in which it is used (Superanskaya, 1973, p. 322).

The semantics of a toponym consists of the information it conveys, including its linguistic, speech-related, and specifically onomastic functions. The meaning of a toponym involves its obscurity or familiarity, as well as extralinguistic factors. At the language level, the semantics of a toponym is limited to its name; at the speech

level, it is formed through objective and normative associations and accompanied by a set of subjective meanings, unique to each speaker.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify lexical-semantic groups and the etymology of hydronyms in the Tashkent region based on the general features used in their naming.

Research into toponymy in linguistically diverse regions shows that people name geographical objects based on their practical needs. “Out of the many characteristics of an object involved in a person’s activity, the most essential one at that stage of development was selected and fixed in the name.”

Lexical-semantic classification, as a method, allows for a more accurate understanding of a toponym’s semantics. This requires grouping geographical names. Below, we will consider several lexical-semantic classifications proposed by Turkic and Slavic toponymists who studied these groups.

O.T. Molchanova, in classifying the toponyms of the Altai Mountains, proposes two directions for describing them. The first includes names dominated by features of the geographical object itself or related actions. The second direction focuses on geographical names connected in some way with human activity and daily life.

According to Molchanova, the first group includes geographical names linked to the main occupations of people living in the area (e.g., livestock farming, agriculture, hunting). The second group includes toponyms based on physical and geographical features (e.g., size, color, location, quantity).

V. Popova, analyzing the hydronymy of the Pavlodar region of Kazakhstan, identifies in her semantic classification names related to anthroponyms and ethnonyms, local fauna and flora, orientation features, and religious beliefs.

N.Ya. Mingbaev, who studied the toponymy of the Mirzachul zone of Uzbekistan, divides the region’s toponyms into two groups (Mingbaev, 1987, p. 27). The first group includes toponyms associated with anthroponyms and ethnonyms. In describing the second group, he pays particular attention to local geographical terms and supports Molchanova’s idea that “most geographical terms are derived from appellatives denoting actual geographical features.”

A separate group includes toponyms that directly reflect the connection between geographical objects and human activity.

N.Ch. Musabekova, in her study of Azerbaijani hydronymy, also identifies two broad lexical-semantic fields: 1) hydronymic roots reflecting natural phenomena;

2) hydronymic roots reflecting the “human–nature” connection.

In the hydronymy of Tuva, examined by O. Bichen, two semantic groups are identified: 1) hydronyms reflecting physical and geographical features of the environment; 2) hydronyms associated with human economic activity. Bichen finds that the first group, which reflects environmental characteristics, is the most numerous and diverse in lexical and word-formation structure.

V.N. Toporov and O.N. Trubachev, in their studies of Slavic toponymy, identify several main semantic groups, emphasizing that "analyzing semantic groups reveals the preferred methods of naming." They list several types of river names in the studied region: 1) named after trees like reeds or horsetails; 2) referring to clusters of trees;3) indicating features of soil or riverbed; 4) based on water color; 5) describing the river's flow or water characteristics; 6) referring to landscape features; 7) named after animals; 8) referring to fords, dams, and other structures.

This classification mostly reflects the physical and geographical features of the landscape, leaving out names of water bodies related to human activity.

F.G. Garipova, who studied the hydronymy of Tatarstan, identifies the following semantic groups in thematic terms: 1) names of physical-geographical features of the region; 2) names related to the region's economic and labor activities; 3) names of national customs and ritual traditions; 4) names of religious-mythological concepts; 5) names related to historical events. This represents the general subject-matter range of names.

K. Konkobaev, in his study of toponymy in southern Kyrgyzstan, divides names into two semantic groups: those reflecting direct and indirect connections between geographical objects and human activity.

The first group includes names based on terms referring to objects of Kyrgyz material culture, household items, and actions. The second group includes names that describe the color, size, shape, location, and quantity of geographical features—i.e., various physical characteristics. These names do not reveal any information about the human perception of the object and are thus considered indirect.

Another classification method is proposed by I.V. Vitov, V.A. Nikonov, and others. For instance, B.A. Nikonov identifies three semantic groups in his study of toponyms: a) based on the geographical object's characteristics; b) based on ownership or belonging; c) commemorative names. In this case, Nikonov approaches geographical names from a nominative perspective.

The lexical-semantic classification used by Slavic toponymists such as E.G. Becker, A.I. Yashchenko, and others generally aligns with the scheme proposed by V.V. Toporov and O.N. Trubachev.

Research by Turkic toponymists—S. Ataniyazov, K.F. Gritsenko, A.A. Kamalov, G.F. Satarov, R.V. Shakurov—offers classifications that take into account the unique economic activities of Turkic-speaking peoples, as well as the physical and geographical characteristics of the regions studied.

Most researchers focus on listing the lexical groups within toponyms. However, in our view, this approach fails to reveal the specific and distinctive features of regional toponyms, since names based on fauna, flora, and human activity are found everywhere.

This brief review supports the view that a unified system of lexical-semantic classification of hydronyms across all languages does not yet exist. However, common semantic types can still be identified within the hydronyms of various languages, especially Turkic ones.

Any geographical name is an integral part of history. These names developed historically, reflecting the origins and evolution of a people and their language. In our opinion, lexical-semantic analysis of a toponym should be approached from this perspective.

Conclusion: The study of hydronyms in the Tashkent region reveals that geographical names are not arbitrary, but are deeply connected to the environment, culture, and history of the people who name them. The proposed classification—based on hydrological terms, flora and fauna, settlement names, and anthropological and socio-political factors—demonstrates the complex interplay between nature and human activity in the process of naming. While there is no universally accepted lexical-semantic classification system for hydronyms across languages, common semantic types are evident, particularly among Turkic-speaking regions. Understanding hydronyms through this lens enriches our knowledge of local history, language development, and cultural identity.

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