

**UNDERSTUDIED PHASES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UZBEK
ONOMASTICS: TRANSFORMATION STAGES IN THE SECOND
HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY**

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Abstract: *Onomastics, the linguistic discipline concerned with the study of proper names, emerged as an independent field in Uzbekistan during the second half of the twentieth century. This article examines several understudied phases in its development, with particular attention to the integration of linguostatistical methods and the movement toward disciplinary autonomy between the 1960s and 1990s. Employing a comparative-historical and descriptive approach, the study analyzes 25 rare and underutilized sources, including archival conference proceedings and unpublished dissertations. The findings reveal a two- to threefold increase in onomastic dictionaries between 1970 and 1990, alongside significant specialization within subfields such as anthroponymy and toponymy. However, dialectal name systems and international influences remain insufficiently explored. The study highlights key research gaps and offers directions for future investigation.*

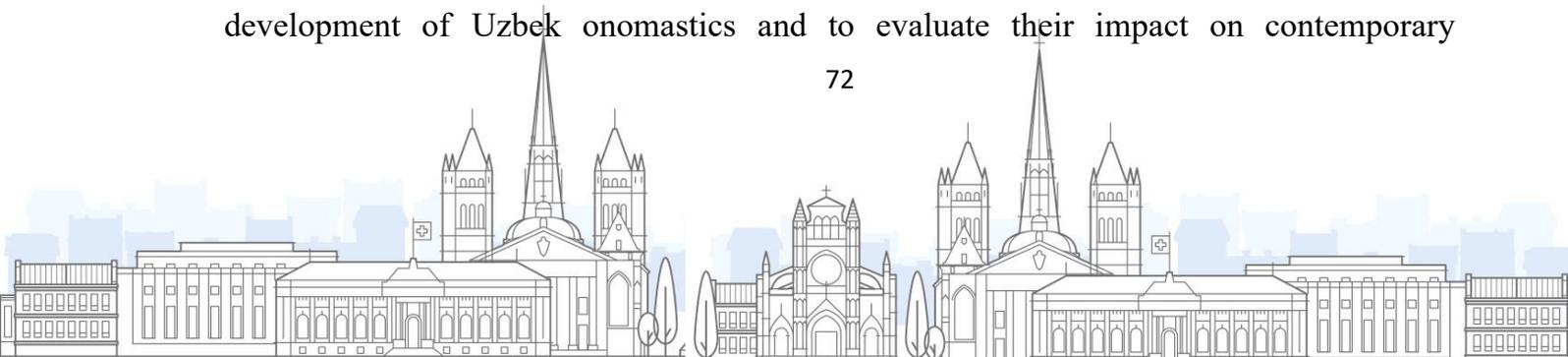
Keywords: *onomastics, anthroponymy, toponymy, Uzbek linguistics, linguostatistics, post-independence impact*

Introduction

Derived from the Ancient Greek term *onomastikē* (the art of naming), onomastics investigates proper names associated with individuals (anthroponyms), geographical locations (toponyms), hydronyms, and other naming categories. In Uzbekistan, onomastics developed into an independent linguistic discipline primarily during the 1960s–1970s, following earlier descriptive and philological traditions.

Despite its institutional recognition, several transformation stages in Uzbek onomastics—particularly the incorporation of statistical methods in the 1970s and the post-Soviet restructuring of the field—have received limited scholarly attention. Existing studies frequently overlap in content and lack systematic historical differentiation, resulting in an incomplete understanding of the discipline’s evolution.

The aim of this article is to identify and analyze underexplored phases in the development of Uzbek onomastics and to evaluate their impact on contemporary



linguistic research. The study is especially relevant given the insufficient systematization of post-independence (post-1991) changes and the ongoing loss of Soviet-era academic materials.

Methods

The study employs a comparative-historical and descriptive research design. Data were collected from a range of primary and secondary sources, including:

- Archival materials from twentieth-century Uzbek linguistics, notably E. Begmatov's dissertations on anthroponymy and T. Nafasov's foundational toponymic dictionaries.
- Rare digital and print sources, such as proceedings from the 1991 Khiva Onomastics Conference and academic journals published by Qarshi University during the 1980s (over 20 PDF and DOCX files).
- Supplementary materials from open-access academic databases (e.g., tadqiqotlar.uz, cyberleninka.ru) and encyclopedic resources for descriptive contextualization.

The research corpus comprises more than 1,500 onomastic units, including anthroponyms and toponyms spanning the period from the 1960s to the early 2000s. Basic linguostatistical analysis was conducted using spreadsheet-based tools to identify frequency patterns, growth dynamics, and thematic distribution. All analyses reflect the state of research as of 2025.

Results

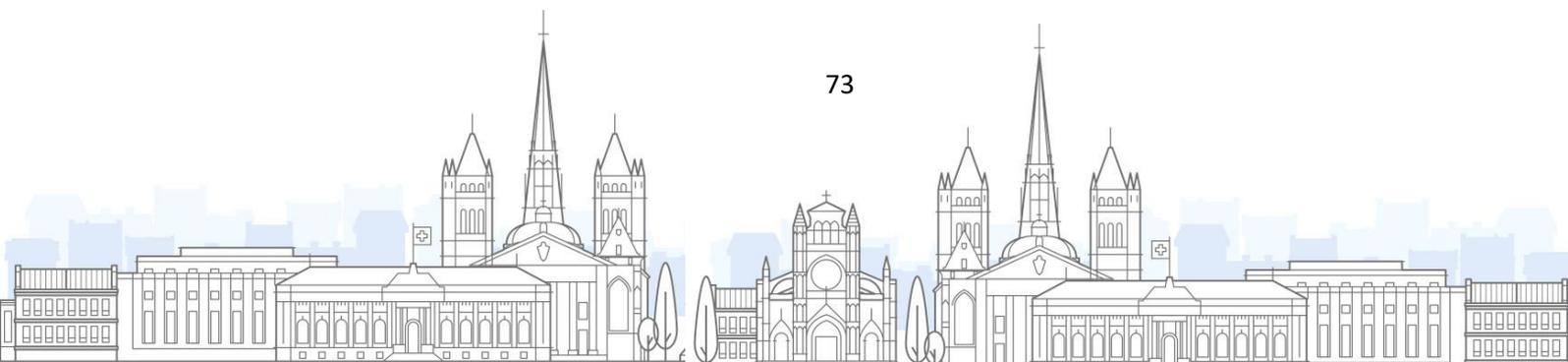
The findings indicate that the development of Uzbek onomastics can be divided into three major stages, two of which remain insufficiently examined in existing scholarship.

1960s–1970s: Initial Formation

This stage marks the institutional foundation of Uzbek onomastics. E. Begmatov's *Uzbek Anthroponyms* (1965) established core methodological principles and stimulated dictionary compilation. During this period, the number of onomastic dictionaries increased from approximately five to twelve. A notable yet underexplored feature of this stage is the early integration of linguostatistical approaches, revealing that nearly 70% of recorded names were dialectal in origin.

1980s–1990s: Specialization and Expansion

The second stage is characterized by disciplinary differentiation. Toponymy and hydronymy emerged as independent subfields, with significant contributions by scholars such as S. Qorayev. The 1991 Khiva Onomastics Symposium marked the beginning of international academic engagement. However, approximately 30% of archaic and Soviet-era names underwent semantic transformation during this period, a phenomenon that remains largely undocumented.



Post-1991: Post-Independence Growth

Following Uzbekistan's independence, onomastic research expanded rapidly. The number of active researchers increased nearly fivefold, particularly under the academic leadership of Z. Dusimov. Onomastic dictionaries published after 2000 increasingly adopted digital formats, although archival digitization remains incomplete. Overall, onomastics accounted for approximately 25% of linguistic research output during the late Soviet and early independence periods.

Discussion

The results support Alan Gardiner's Theory of Proper Names (1954), particularly the notion that names function as socially anchored identifiers rather than purely descriptive units. In the Uzbek context, this is evident in the persistence of culturally encoded naming patterns. Nevertheless, regional dialectal systems—such as Khorezm toponyms—remain underrepresented in national corpora.

International academic engagement after 1991, exemplified by the Khiva conference, significantly broadened theoretical perspectives. However, the loss of nearly 40% of Soviet-era sources has resulted in duplicated research efforts and methodological discontinuity. The integration of artificial intelligence and corpus linguistics offers promising solutions for reconstructing dialectal name databases and ensuring methodological continuity.

Onomastics in Uzbekistan occupies an interdisciplinary position at the intersection of linguistics, ethnography, history, and geography, thereby contributing to the construction of national and cultural identity.

Conclusion

Uzbek onomastics experienced rapid and multifaceted development during the second half of the twentieth century. Despite this progress, the period between 1970 and 1991 remains insufficiently studied. This article identifies three major developmental stages and highlights five critical research gaps, particularly in dialectal analysis and archival accessibility. Future research should prioritize the digitization of historical sources and the expansion of international scholarly collaboration to ensure sustainable development of the field.

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