

Toponyms of Tajikistan: Historical-Etymological and Lexical-Structural Analysis of Toponyms and Hydronyms

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Abstract—In Tajikistan, toponymic names have various forms, influenced by territorial, linguistic and other variables. This paper considers linguistic features of toponyms - names of districts and cities of Tajikistan, analyzing their lexical-semantic and lexical-structural peculiarities reflecting natural, historical and cultural features, linguistic problems. Structurally, formation of toponyms follows certain rules. Geographical names are drawn on various word building patterns, such as direct transition of nominal word into toponym; there is also influence of geographical, historical and other factors onto formation of names of cities and districts. Special attention is paid to personal names in development of geographical names in Tajikistan. However, when studying the history of toponym formation and their structure, certain regularities are considered, such as word meaning, their grammatical form, relations to certain parts of speech, morphological structure; they all shall be considered when forming new toponyms.

Keywords—Tajikistan; toponymics; anthroponym; structure; word building patterns; analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades; the question of renaming cities and districts has become relevant in Tajikistan. The issue of renaming becomes one of the aspects of the national policy of the independent state. Taking into consideration that geographical names represent historical and cultural heritage of the people that shall be kept; national history and culture play a large role in the new toponymics of the country. Soviet and Uzbek names appeared in Tajikistan after final accession of Tajikistan to the Soviet Union in 1924 – as an autonomous republic within the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic. Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic appeared later; due to efforts of Shirinsho Shotemur. During the same times; the capital Dushanbe was formed as a result of uniting three villages together. The place of Soviet and Turkic toponyms has been taken by toponyms representing prominent personalities who left a mark in the history of the nation. However; changes and addition to some legislative documents of the Republic of Tajikistan regarding the toponymics of the country has become a subject of a wide discussion. A question of necessity to develop a national strategy of renaming has come to the forefront; such a strategy shall be based not only on studies of history and geography; but also on linguistic tasks; to avoid

linguistic isolation of the newly-formed toponyms; as the questions of toponymics shall not be associated only with its applied nature.

The modern public sees the studies in toponymics with great interest. Relevance of the problem considered here is determined by an important role of the renaming strategy in implementation of linguistic policy and development of the state language.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Anthroponymics of Tajikistan

Tajik toponymics today is diverse in its word building structure. Analysis of its word building patterns allows identifying several groups united by a certain attribute. The subject of our inquiry is names of cities and districts in the Republic of Tajikistan. First thing that arrests one's attention is a large number of anthroponyms. Such toponyms are called anthroponyms.

The source of origin of anthroponyms is names of historical persons; scientists; cultural figures; artists. During the last decade there is a trend in Tajikistan to rename cities and districts using proper names without any suffixation or other transformations. The *Temurmalik* districts got its name in 2004 and was named as a tribute to Tajik national hero; Temurmalik. In the same year; *Beshkent* district was renamed to *Nosiri Khusraw* to honor the poet and Islamic philosopher of 11th century; *Nasiri Khusraw* (taj. Носири Хусрав); a native of neighboring Qabodiyon district. The *Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani* district has got its present name to honor *Ali Hamadani*; a scientist; thinker and theologian; considered the greatest personality in philosophy; poetry; culture and science in the 14th century. Previous name of the district was *Moskovsky* (Moscow). In 2012; the *Kuybyshev* district was renamed after 15th century Tajik poet and philosopher *Abdurahman Jami*.

Names of such districts as *Bobojon Ghafurov*; *Jabbor Rasulov*; *Rudaki*; *Vose'*; the city of *Tursunzoda*; Dushanbe city districts - *Ismail Samani*; *Ferdowsi*; *Sino* (Tajik name of Avicenna) immortalized the great ancestors of Tajiks.

In the ancient times; the territory of the Nou district (taj. Nov) was attacked by the army of Alexander the Great and find there a powerful resistance led by national hero *Spitamén*. The name of this army leader was immortalized in the name of the district in 2003. The Ghonchi district (in Sughd region) was renamed to *Divashtich* in 2016. Divashtich was one of the last rulers of Samarkandian Sogdiana and the ruler of Panjakent (supposed start of ruling — 708 AD).

As it is evident from the examples; the proper names without suffixation or word building transformations assumed the roles of the toponymic names of cities and districts in the Republic of Tajikistan.

Previously; there were certain rules for using proper names in geographical names. Today; these rules are largely neglected. According to Muhammadjon Shakuri; member of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan; «proper names without duly grammatic expression cannot serve as names for geographical objects»[1]. Such form of renaming is alien to Tajik toponymy; contradicting the previous practice of toponym formation. Such toponyms are linguistically isolated; they do not fit the Tajik toponymic system; it is impossible to form adjectives or demonyms from them.

We shall also pay attention to forms of these toponyms. Some of them consist of a single word; denoting a first or last name of historical person; cultural figure or artist (*Temurmaliq; Rudaki; Ayni; Vose'; Spitamen; etc.*); other consist of two or more words that represent the first name; the last name and sometimes titles of a person; whose name is reflected in the name of the geographic locality (*Bobojon Ghafurov; Jabbor Rasulov; Nosiri Khusraw; Shamsiddin Shohin; Ismoil Somoni; Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadoni; etc.*)

B. Toponyms with -obod and -kand components

Tajik toponymics traditionally includes the stem composition pattern; where the -obod (- *oʻbod*) part means *developed; arranged*. Let us take a look at the structure of russified forms of Tajik toponyms: *Muminabad; Zafarabad; Fayzabad; Nurabad; Tajikabad*; obsolete. *Shuraabad*. Stem composition in these toponyms reflects national features characteristic of the Tajik language. As we see; complex toponyms with the structure of «noun + adjective» formed by stem composition have a transparent structure: *Mumin-abad (developed by faithfuls); Zafar-abad (developed by the victory in the Great Patriotic War); Fayz-abad (developed by local abundance); Nur-abad (developed by sun rays); Tajik-abad (developed by Tajiks)*.

Lexemes -kent/-kand of Sogdian/Avestan origin were previously used to form names of separate communities: a city; a village. Names of Panjakent; Levakand (a new name of Sarband district) may serve as examples.

Name of the Levakand city; meaning *magnificent city* or *city on the hill* (leva-; according to some sources is a phonetic transformation of Soghdian and Bactrian deva-; meaning *god*; or; alternatively; *high place; hill* and Avestan -kand meaning *city*) [2;3] is more fitting for the former name of Kurgan-tube (until 2018); which is also supported by historical geography of the Republic.

If we consider the city of Kanibadam (taj. Конибодом); initially; it was an example of composition канд + ezafe + бодом (Кандибодом). With time; this ezafe structure transformed to Конибодом (*source of almond*) following the structure канд + izafat + бодом (see below).

C. Toponyms with -истон (iston) component

Tajik formant -*iston* may be traced to Indo-European root sthā- (to stand) and means *place; country* [4;5]. In the modern Tajik; the suffix -*iston* is used to for toponyms meaning geographical place of residence of various tribes; peoples; ethnic groups. This formant is used to form Tajik toponyms with the meaning place of residence; known from ancient times: *Guliston (flower city); Buston (flower bed); Istaravshan (place of light); Shahrstan (urban place)*. *Isfara* means *blessed place*. This formant is a part of many names of countries and regions; especially in the Central Asia; where historically Persian and its cognate languages have been used. For example; Tajikistan means *the country of Tajiks*. Similarly; this morpheme presents in the names of Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Uzbekistan; Turkmenistan; etc..

The oldest use of cognates to this root may be found in Sanskrit — sthāna (place). It is known; that the morpheme -*stan/istan* (including some of its phonetic variants) was used in Iranian languages starting from a very ancient past — for example; in *The Book of Kings (Shahnameh)*; a literary landmark of Tajik-Persian literature of 10-11th century; we may find mentions of such regions as Kabulistan and Zabulistan[6]. These complex toponyms have a specific word building pattern of noun + word-forming morpheme.

As we may see; there are certain word formation rules for using proper names in toponymics using the formants with the meaning of place; developed place; such as -istan/-iston; -kent/-kand; -obod/-abad.

D. Change of toponyms during the post-Soviet period

Recently; changing foreign toponyms to Tajik ones or returning historical names has become a trend. For example; Turkic toponyms; such as Kurgan-teppa; Ura-teppa; Qayraqqum; Jirgatol were gradually substituted with Bokhtar; Istaravshan; Gulistan; Lakhsh.

The name of the city of Bokhtar reflects the historical past of the region. Bokhtar is the ancient country of Bactria that was populated by direct ancestors of Tajiks and Pashtuns (Afghani).

It should be also noted that Soviet toponyms honoring the communist personalities were also substituted. The city of Leninabad (named after V. I. Lenin) was renamed to its historical name Khojent that was used officially before 1936; but in a transliterated form of Khujand (in 1991). From 1970 to 2003; the Kuktash district (Turkic toponym) had the official name of Leninsky. Today; it is Rudaki; after the founder of classical Tajik literature Abu AbdulloRudaki.

Until 1963; the Panj district (see above) was Baumanabad district; later Kirovobod. In 2004; Soviet district (since 1953) was renamed to Temurmaliq district (Temurmaliq was a historical hero of Tajik nation who lived in 13th century; statesman of Khorezm who served as a governor of Khujand

in Transoxonia). In 2016; the city of Chkalovsk was renamed to Buston; Kuybyshevsky district was renamed after Jami; a Tajik poet and philosopher of 15th century to Abdurahmon Jami district in 2012. From 1936 to 1992; the city of Vakhdat was called Ordzhonikidzebad; while the districts IsmoiliSomon (honoring the founder of the first Samanid state of Tajiks) and Sino in the city of Dushanbe were called Oktyabrsky and Frunzensky.

Another part of toponymic renaming is based upon cultural and historical events or facts: Dushange – Monday (as there was a big fair every Monday there); Istiklol - independence; Vakhdat - unity; Dusti – friendship (former Jillikul). By the way; since 1991; the city of Vakhdat was known as Kofarnihon; after its river.

E. Hydronyms as a relatively stable part of historical toponymics

Toponyms that reflect hydronymic names form a special group. Hydronyms are a source of origin of ancient toponyms.

Amu Darya; that starts as KyzylSuu (Kyrgyz *.Red river*); after confluence with Muksu gets the Tajik name Surhob (taj. *Red river*). Both of the names relate to the color of water; which is colored by washing red clays in the riverhead of KyzylSuu. Downstream the location where Obikhingow confluences with Surkhob; the river is called Vakhsh. This hydronym may be traced to Old Tajik *saxu* meaning *growing; swollen* (about water); or; according to another version *god of water*. Central Asian encyclopedic scientist al-Biruni (937-1050) noted; that Vakhsh was the name of an angel who lived in the river of Jeikhun (Amu Darya) [7]. There is also an alternative etymology; according to which the Vakhshhydronym correlates to the ancient name of Amu Darya; Vaksuh; formed from a hypothetic Iranian stem *vahsu* – *river* [8; 9; 10]. The Vakhsh district has the same name as the river.

The Qumsangir district (from the words *qum* - sand; and *sang* - rock with the suffix *-gir*) was renamed Jaikhun in March of 2016. Jaikhun is an ancient name of Amu Darya; formed from Arabic *jeikhun* - *turbulent; violent*. Paradoxically; the river of Jaikhun has no relation to that territory. The old name of Qumsangir meant that settlers from the north of the country found only rocks and sand there.

The Panj district is named after the river Panj flowing through the district. Panj comes from Persian Panj; Tajik Панҷ - a river in Asia; a left confluent of Amu Darya.

The name of the Murghob district comes from the name of Murghab principality that was a part of the Bukhara Emirate. There are two hypothesis on the origin of the word *murghab*: the first and major is that it comes from the word *murgh* (taj. *мурғ*) - *bird and ob* (taj. *об*) – *water*; which as translated from Persian; Tajik and several Pamir languages means a *waterbird*. Another version assumes that the name Murghob comes from taj. *мағ* (*pasture*) + *об* (*water*) and means «water flowing through the pastures» [11].

The Varzob district got its name from the river of the same name. The toponym Kulob is likely to have its origin in Tajik *kul* - lake and *ob* – water; that is; lake water or a bogged up place [12]. The structural model of this toponym looks like this: «noun + noun».

F. Historical and etymological analysis of some Tajik toponyms

Let us consider other ways of toponym formation. During the early Middle Ages; the city of Qabodiyon became the center of one of the Bactrian regions; today it is a district center; a city that was founded by the legendary king Key-Qabod according to Avesta. Let us pay some attention to the structure of this toponym surviving to this day. Qabod is the proper name + *-iyon*; the possessive suffix. This formant is an inflexional affix. The same structure is evident in the toponym Kushoniyon: Kushon (the dynasty of the Kushan Empire) + possessive suffix *-iyon*.

Since antiquity; the ending *-ak* has been used for formation of Tajik toponyms[13]; such as Nurak; which consists of *pomegranate* + *-ak*. (taj. *анор*; анор). However; after completion of the hydroelectric plant; the name was reconsidered as linked to Tajik *nur* - *light; shining; ray*.

The group of geographical names with the meaning of light and sun includes a number of toponyms. The name of the Khovaling district comes from Old and Middle Persian *khvarlunka*; where *khvara* is - *xyp; xyp*; that is; *light or sunny*; *lunka* or *lung* is *highlands; ground; country*. Thus; the meaning of sunny country.

Since 2004; the Kuybyshevsky district has been renamed to Khuroson district; from the name of a historical area of Sassanid Iran. During the Islamic period; the Greater Khuroson included a part of territory of modern Tajikistan. The modern toponym Khuroson is formed from Classical Persian *khurasan* and Middle Persian *khwarasan* (cf. *Khwaralunka*); where *khwaris* *sun*; and *asan* is *coming*; thus; Khuroson means; *the direction of the rising sun; sunrise; east*.

The name of the Farkhor district was used in a chronics from the period of Turanic king Afrasiab. In the old written documents; Farkhor was mentioned as Fargar or Bargar; as a prospering community (truncated *far* (*farogat*) and a word formative suffix of qualitative adjectives –*gar*).

Let us consider *ezafe* structure in the toponym Shahrinaw (*new city*). Its structure may be represented in the following way: «noun + *ezafe* + adjective». This type of toponym formation may also be considered traditional. The same *ezafe* structure is seen in the toponym Shahritus. The toponym Konibodom with the same structure we have considered previously. If both formants of the *ezafe* structure have one stress; they are written joined.

The toponym Darband literally means the obstacle in the gorge (from Tajik *dara* and *band*). The toponym Darvoz (from Tajik *dara* and *voz*); paired with Darband; means the *open gorge*; reflecting the reality of the Middle Ages; when Darvoz was; and largely is «the gate to Badakhshan and Pamir».

The toponym Rushan comes from the Aryan tribes of osaryans; that is; light Aryans.

The Ishkashim district is in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region. In VII—II century BCE; Badakhshan was populated by tribes known in the written documents of the period as Saka. According to T.N. Pakhalina; the toponym Ishkashim has Indo-Aryan origin sakā-kšam; where the first part may be interpreted as either the name of the land where the Saka tribe lived (cf. Avestansakā — name of both the country and the people); or as the name of the Saka tribe; while the second part may be correlated to Indo-Aryan kšama — «land». In this case; the word sakā-kšam as a whole; evidently; meant the land of Saka; Scythia [14].

The toponym Shughnan (taj.Шуғнон) comes from Old Persian *xwašna-* meaning *good; nice*. There is also an opinion [15; 16]; that the name Shughnan is linked to ancient Saka tribes that lived in the mountain valleys of Wakhan in the VII—II century BCE; and thus means *the land of Saka*.

Toponyms of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Republic of the Republic of Tajikistan form a special group.

III. CONCLUSION

Structurally; formation of toponyms follows certain rules. In other words; geographical names are supported by various word-building models.

First; the simplest model is direct transition of a common name to a toponym.

Second; formation of names of cities and districts of Tajikistan were significantly influenced by geographical; historical and other factors. Speakers of Iranian languages played an important role in their development.

Our analysis shows that special attention is paid to personal names in development of geographical names in Tajikistan. Anthroponyms are used in the names of geographical locations that are historically connected with activities of the personalities. However; when studying the history of toponym formation and their structure; certain regularities are considered; such as word meaning; their grammatical form; relations to certain parts of speech; morphological structure.

As we noted above; such formants as *-kand/-kent; -iston; -obod*; esafet structure with the words *shahr* and other models are initial toponymic word formation patterns. Using this structure for toponyms we may avoid orthographic; semantic and other problems. The toponyms of the Tajik layer were historically formed as complex toponyms; but today are used as grammatical nonderivatives.

As we may see; historically toponyms were formed by characteristic linguistic ways; some features of which are sparsely used nowadays. When transferring anthroponyms into the toponymic range; it should be noted that their structure was created and developed its stable form through centuries.

Third; there is a layer of toponyms that use such linguistic means as *-ak; -iyon* and other — they form a separate group. Two-word toponyms adjoin them.

Fourth; transfer of hydronyms (names of rivers and other bodies of water) to names of cities and districts forms a separate toponymic type.

Fifth; the question of influence of other languages onto formation and development of Tajik toponymics is less relevant today as such toponyms are replaced with new ones or renamed back to historical native names.

It is necessary to create such new toponyms that do not contradict the linguistic norms of their formation; the system of toponym formation that has been formed through previous centuries.

In this work; we identified several structural types of toponyms:

- 1) with zero stem; where a noun is used without any additional formal elements;
- 2) with toponym-forming formants (word building and inflective patterns);
- 3) two-word toponyms;
- 4) toponyms with esafe.

Toponyms considered in our paper were created following the word formation models characteristic of the Tajik language.

A number of geographical names may be explained using materials of the Tajik language; while explaining some names has yet been impossible; neither for their structure; nor for their form. Therefore; classification may be deemed one of the problems in studying toponyms of Tajikistan. Historical-etymological and lexical-structural analysis of names of cities and districts of Tajikistan shows that they reflect natural features and historical and cultural heritage of the people. It should be noted that in Tajikistan; toponymic names have various forms; influenced by territorial; linguistic and other variables.

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