

TOPONYMS IN FOLK TALES AS A REFLECTION OF NATIONAL
LINGUOCULTURAL WORLDVIEWS*Nazarova Nurjakhon Bahodirovna**Associate Professor of SamSIFL**E-mail: nazarovanurjahon233@gmail.com***ABSTRACT**

This article examines the role of toponyms in folk tales as a reflection of national linguocultural worldviews. Toponyms function not only as geographical markers but also as carriers of cultural memory, historical experience, and ethnic identity. Through the analysis of folk narratives, the study reveals how place names encode symbolic meanings, collective values, and culturally specific concepts. The research emphasizes that toponyms in folklore contribute to shaping the cognitive and axiological space of a nation, reflecting its worldview, traditions, and perception of reality.

Keywords: toponyms, folk tales, linguocultural worldview, national identity, folklore, cultural memory

ANNOTATSIYA

Mazkur maqolada xalq ertaklaridagi toponimlarning milliy lingvomadaniy dunyoqarashni aks ettiruvchi vosita sifatidagi o‘rni tahlil qilinadi. Toponimlar nafaqat geografik nomlar, balki xalqning tarixiy tajribasi, madaniy xotirasi va etnik o‘ziga xosligini ifodalovchi birliklar sifatida namoyon bo‘ladi. Ertaklar tahlili asosida joy nomlari ramziy ma’nolar, qadriyatlar va milliy konseptlarni qanday kodlashini ko‘rsatib beriladi. Tadqiqot toponimlarning folklorlarda millatning bilish va baholash maydonini shakllantirishdagi ahamiyatini yoritadi.

Kalit so‘zlar:

toponimlar, xalq ertaklari, lingvomadaniy dunyoqarash, milliy o‘zlik, folklor, madaniy xotira

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматривается роль топонимов в народных сказках как отражения национальной лингвокультурной картины мира. Топонимы выступают не только как географические обозначения, но и как носители культурной памяти, исторического опыта и этнической идентичности. Анализ фольклорных текстов показывает, каким образом названия мест кодируют символические смыслы, ценности и культурно-специфические концепты. Исследование подчеркивает значимость топонимов в формировании когнитивного и аксиологического пространства нации.

Ключевые слова:

топонимы, народные сказки, лингвокультурная картина мира, национальная идентичность, фольклор, культурная память

The toponymic field activated in folk tales vividly reflects the uniqueness and diversity of particular linguocultures, as well as the degree to which this field approximates the real national existence of a people. In fairy-tale discourse, the use of geographical names—especially country names—is a regular and almost indispensable phenomenon. For instance, English folk tales frequently employ such toponyms as *America*, *Spain*, *the Land of Egypt*, and *Persia*, whereas Uzbek folk tales contain names like *the Land of Sham*, *the Land of Rome*, *the Turkmen Land*, and *the Kingdom of Ilonshoh*.

What is particularly noteworthy is that such toponyms do not always denote real geographical entities. In many cases, they function as fictitious or semi-mythological units endowed with specific connotative and stylistic meanings. A telling example is the toponym *Barbary* found in the English tale “*The Cat and the Mouse*.” This name does not refer to any specific African country; rather, it is semantically connected to the concept of *barbarism*. Historically and culturally, the word *barbaric* implies savagery, cultural backwardness, and a lack of civilization. Thus, *Barbary* operates as a fictional toponym that symbolically characterizes the inhabitants of the depicted land as uncivilized or underdeveloped. In this way, toponyms in folk tales often serve as evaluative and expressive linguistic tools rather than neutral geographical references.

In Uzbek folklore, by contrast, the mention of real geographical names is a relatively common and stable tradition. Toponyms such as *China (Chin)*, *India*, *Arabia*, *Shirvan*, and *Mount Balo* are well known and widely used in folk narratives. Alongside these, the names of sacred places occupy a special position. They are frequently glorified and accompanied by expressive epithets, reflecting deep-rooted religious and cultural values. For example, references to *Mecca* and *Medina* as sacred destinations or spiritual centers emphasize the moral and ideological background of the narrative. Such toponyms do not merely localize events in space but also enrich the semantic structure of the text by means of comparison, symbolism, and emotional intensification.

A similar tendency can be observed in English folklore, where references to locations within Great Britain are quite common. Folk tales often mention different regions of the country, including counties and other territorial divisions. Macrotoponyms such as *England*, *Scotland*, *Wales*, and *Ireland* coexist with microtoponyms like *Zennor*, *Lindsey*, *Norfolk*, *Yorkshire*, and *Suffolk*. This reflects the strong territorial awareness of English speakers and their close historical connection to specific landscapes and localities.

Thus, geographical names in folk tales constitute an integral part of the ethnic layer of the linguistic worldview. The ethnic picture of the world is created through human perception of reality, which, in turn, is shaped by culturally conditioned values and collective experience. Scholars argue that national mentality emerges in the process of an ethnic group’s adaptation to its natural and social environment. In other words, mentality represents a system of ethnic, religious, and spiritual values that determine how individuals perceive and interpret the surrounding world.

In ancient times, religious beliefs were closely intertwined with mythological thinking and everyday worldviews. This syncretic perception of reality is vividly reflected in folk tales, where sacred, mythical, and real elements coexist harmoniously. Consequently, folk texts

should be interpreted from the perspective of the historical and cultural context in which they were created. As V. V. Kolesov aptly notes, medieval texts must be understood as sacred and mysterious phenomena, requiring repeated readings that approach their original meanings as closely as possible.

The system of toponyms inevitably reveals distinctive features of national mentality. While language serves as a means of conceptualizing the surrounding environment, this process is mentally, socially, and culturally conditioned. The linguistic picture of the world is formed through language units, yet these units often encode a people's worldview, historical memory, and cultural experience. Therefore, modern linguistics increasingly emphasizes the existence of multiple national worldviews rather than a single universal one, asserting that their specific features can be identified through comparative analysis of different linguocultures.

According to D. Bakhranova, before the emergence of a scientific worldview, the mysterious and mystical properties of the cosmos, the earth, and water spaces were expressed primarily in mythological and folkloric worldviews. Over centuries, these perceptions were shaped by territorial and social factors within different societies, giving rise to stable stereotypes, standards, and norms. Humanity's relationship with nature and existence is thus vividly reflected in various cultural layers, including folklore.

Geographical names—particularly hydronyms, oronyms, and oikonyms—serve as valuable sources for studying a nation's history and stages of cultural development. The information preserved in toponyms provides insight into both the material and spiritual culture of the people who created them. Analysis of English and Uzbek folk tales clearly demonstrates that both linguocultures possess distinct linguistic and cognitive values. As Wilhelm von Humboldt famously stated, different languages do not merely use different names for the same object; rather, they represent different ways of seeing and understanding the world.

Hydronyms in folk tales reveal notable cross-cultural differences. Although hydronyms universally denote water-related objects, the types of such objects emphasized in folklore vary significantly. Rivers and streams appear with roughly equal frequency in English and Uzbek tales—for example, *the River Nidd*, *the River Wear*, or *the River Wharfe* in English, and *Amudarya*, *Syrdarya*, *Oqdaryo*, and *Qoradaryo* in Uzbek. However, Uzbek folk tales rarely mention seas, straits, ports, or marshlands. Instead, they predominantly refer to springs, wells, streams, and small lakes, which reflects the geographical conditions and water culture of Central Asia.

In contrast, English folk tales occasionally mention bays, channels, and creeks, such as *Buddle Creek*, *Bamburgh Bay*, or *the Severn Channel*. Many of these hydronyms correspond to real geographical objects located in the British Isles and are recorded in specialized toponymic dictionaries. At the same time, some hydronyms possess only local or folkloric significance, while others are entirely fictional.

In Uzbek folk narratives, the majority of hydronyms are fictitious and symbolic in nature, such as *Toshquduq*, *Marjonbuloq*, or *Ko'kkol*. These names are created through toponymic derivation, often involving common nouns like *daryo* (river), *ko'l* (lake), *quduq* (well), or *buloq* (spring). A similar process can be observed in English, where elements such as *well*, *bay*, *fell*, *channel*, or *hole* participate in hydronym formation. In compound hydronyms, the second

component often acquires an additional semantic load, emphasizing specific physical or symbolic characteristics of the object.

Toponyms in folk tales also include microtoponyms, which reflect the national and cultural worldview at a more localized level. Microtoponyms emerge as subjective representations of objective reality, motivated by symbolic features and culturally significant markers. This group includes oronyms and oikonyms, which denote mountains, valleys, caves, settlements, and inhabited places.

English folk tales feature a wide range of oronyms motivated by diverse topo-bases, including hills, cliffs, forests, and coastal areas (*Castle Hill, Land's End, Batworth Park*). Uzbek folk tales, on the other hand, predominantly refer to mountains, caves, deserts, steppes, and valleys (*Qora Tog', Oq Tog', Ajal G'ori*), which corresponds to the natural landscape of the region.

In conclusion, toponyms constitute the largest group of onomastic units in folk tales and serve as linguistic markers of geographical environment, religious and mythological beliefs, social life, and national mentality. The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek folk tales reveals that while English narratives tend to favor real geographical names, Uzbek folk tales more frequently employ fictional and symbolic toponyms. Ultimately, these onomastic elements play a crucial role in shaping the folkloric picture of the world, where real and mythical dimensions coexist in a culturally meaningful unity.

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