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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY:
a collection scientific works of the International scientific conference –
Gamburg, Germany, 2024. Issue 1

Languages of publication: Uzbek, English, Russian, German, Italian,
Spanish,

The collection consists of scientific research of scientists, graduate students and students who took part in the International Scientific online conference « **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY** ». Which took place in Gamburg, 2024.

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GENDER CHARACTERISTICS OF PLACE NAMES: A CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, AND LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract. This article analyzes the gender characteristics of place names from linguistic, historical, and cultural perspectives. The study examines the semantic and etymological aspects of toponyms associated with men and women, as well as the influence of gender stereotypes and social changes on geographical naming. The findings reveal that while place names reflect patriarchal structures, they are gradually evolving to align with the principles of gender equality.

Keywords: place names, gender characteristics, toponymy, semantic analysis, patriarchal society, gender equality.

Introduction. Place names (toponyms) are significant cultural and historical sources reflecting the history, culture, and linguistic features of a people. Gender characteristics play an important role in toponymy because they express the roles, values, and perceptions of men and women in society.

In Uzbekistan, place names dedicated to male figures are more prevalent, yet names honoring women also form an integral part of the cultural heritage. This study analyzes the gender characteristics of place names in Uzbekistan from cultural, historical, and linguistic perspectives. The aim is to uncover the historical evolution, cultural significance, and linguistic meaning of gender representation in place names.

Methodology. This research employed the following methods:

Literature review: Scientific literature on Uzbek toponymy, including historical, linguistic, and cultural studies, was examined.

Empirical data collection: Selected famous place names in Uzbekistan (e.g., Bibi-Khanym Mosque, Ok Qiz village) were analyzed to explore their origins and gender associations.

Analytical method: Place names were categorized based on their gender, historical, and linguistic characteristics.

Comparative approach: Place names were compared with other cultural processes related to gender representation in Uzbekistan.

The primary focus was on gender characteristics and their linguistic and cultural interpretations.

Results. Place names in Uzbekistan reflect the cultural values and gender perceptions of the people. The prevalence of names dedicated to male figures

is a legacy of patriarchal structures, while names associated with women highlight their respected roles in society.

Bibi-Khanym Mosque (Samarkand): Dedicated to the wife of Amir Timur, this structure illustrates the significant role of women in family and society during that era. The use of the term "Bibi" demonstrates the tradition of respecting women.

Ok Qiz Village (Namangan): The name represents women as symbols of beauty and purity in local cultural values, reflecting a positive perception of femininity.

Kok Gumbaz Mosque (Shakhrisabz): This monument highlights the historical significance of male figures, particularly Amir Timur and his descendants, in cultural and religious traditions.

Some place names in Uzbek toponymy have evolved over time, shedding their gender-specific associations or acquiring broader meanings due to historical and social transformations:

Buvayda (Fergana Region): Initially linked to "bibu" or "buva," possibly representing a female figure, this name has become gender-neutral, emphasizing its historical and spiritual significance.

Zarafshan (Navoi Region): As a river name meaning "gold-dispersing," it was once viewed as a feminine symbol but now carries a gender-neutral interpretation.

Ok Machit (Surkhandarya Region): Associated with Islamic worship, this name may historically reflect women's participation in religious activities.

The absence of grammatical gender in the Uzbek language means that gender representation in place names relies on semantic meaning. Some names directly express gender, while others do so indirectly:

Qizbibi Village (Kashkadarya): The word "qiz" (girl) explicitly reflects a female image, illustrating the tradition of honoring respectable women.

Shakhrukhia (Fergana Valley): Linked to Amir Timur's son, this name represents the societal importance of male figures.

Buloqbosh (Andijan Region): As a natural source, this name often symbolizes life, which in cultural traditions may have connections to femininity.

Many nature- and geography-related place names are devoid of gender characteristics, emphasizing respect for nature and descriptive expression:

Chorvoq (Tashkent Region): Reflects the geographical features of a mountainous area, carrying no gendered meaning.

Kyzylkum (Navoi and Karakalpakstan): The name of a desert, based on color or natural phenomena, is gender-neutral.

Kuksaroy (Tashkent): This name, associated with color and a palace, also carries a gender-neutral meaning.



In Uzbek toponymy, the abundance of place names honoring male figures signifies the historical legacy of a patriarchal structure. However, names dedicated to women also reflect societal respect for them. These two aspects collectively enrich the cultural heritage.

Examples: Names like Amir Timur's Gates highlight the historical role of men.

Bibi-Khanym Mosque showcases the significant societal roles of women and their recognition even within patriarchal systems.

Discussion. The findings indicate that gender representation in Uzbek toponymy has been shaped largely by cultural and historical processes. While the traces of patriarchal structures are evident in the dominance of male-associated place names, names honoring women occupy a distinct place in cultural heritage.

Historical changes have directly influenced the gender markers and meanings of place names. Some have transformed or adopted neutral meanings over time. Additionally, gender-neutral nature- and geography-related names reflect a worldview connected to the natural environment.

From a linguistic perspective, the absence of grammatical gender in Uzbek has resulted in gender being expressed semantically, showcasing the unique linguistic and cultural characteristics of Uzbekistan.

Conclusion. Place names in Uzbekistan reveal numerous interesting aspects of gender issues in the country's historical, cultural, and linguistic development.

Place names serve as a source of cultural and historical information reflecting the roles of men and women in society.

Due to patriarchal cultural influences, male-associated names are more prevalent, but names linked to women also form an integral part of cultural heritage.

Historical changes demonstrate the adaptability of gender representation in place names.

Linguistically, gender is expressed semantically, a feature tied to the grammatical characteristics of the Uzbek language.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of Uzbekistan's cultural and linguistic heritage. Further exploration of gender characteristics in place names could shed light on their regional and global significance.

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