



REFLECTION OF THEONYMIC FEATURES IN ANTHROPONYMS

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: 26th August 2025 Accepted: 24th September 2025</p>	<p>This article is devoted to the study of theonymic anthroponyms, that is, personal names derived from religious sources. The article studies in detail the etymological, semantic and linguistic aspects of theonymic anthroponyms. The author analyzes the features of the use of theonymic anthroponyms in different cultures and reveals their linguocultural significance. The study covers the principles of formation, classification and place of theonymic anthroponyms in the modern language system. The article presents, along with the theoretical foundations of this topic, practical examples. As a result of the study, the linguistic identification of theonymic anthroponyms and the features of their use in a socio-cultural context were determined.</p>

Keywords theonym, theonymic anthroponym, onomastics, toponymy, anthroponymy, onomastic scope, onomastic unity, onomastic dictionary.

INTRODUCTION

Onomastics - derived from the Greek word *onomastike* – means "the art of naming." Currently, this term is used in two senses:

1. The set of all proper nouns used in a particular language, people.
2. The branch of linguistics that studies proper nouns, their formation and specific features.

In the 60s and 70s of the 20th century, a number of scientific directions emerged in Uzbek linguistics.

As is known, onomastics is a branch of linguistics that studies any proper nouns, the history of their emergence and change, as well as the totality of all proper nouns in a language. The science of onomastics aims to identify and study existing onomastic systems in a language.

The science of onomastics divides proper names into the following groups (sections) according to the categories of objects from which they are derived: anthroponymy – proper names of people (names, surnames, patronymics, nicknames), toponymy - proper names of geographical objects, theonymy – names of gods, goddesses, religious and mythical figures and creatures according to various religious ideas, zoonymy – (conditional) proper names, nicknames given to animals, cosmonymy - names of regions of space, galaxies, constellations, etc., common in scientific circulation and among the people, astronomy – a set of names of certain celestial bodies (planets and stars). In addition, there are several other sections (groups) of onomastics. For example, one branch of onomastics is

called realonyms (names of objects that existed in the past and now), while the opposite branch, mythonyms, refers to the names of imaginary – fabricated objects.

Due to the wide scope of research on the linguistic characteristics of proper names, the internal classification of onomastics has also been formed as complex and multifaceted. In the science of onomastics, a number of types are distinguished according to the principles of studying names, the environment of use, the degree of historicity, and their speech-functional characteristics. In particular, in scientific literature, onomastics is studied in such areas as literary and dialectal onomastics, ordinary (practical) and poetic onomastics, modern and historical onomastics, as well as theoretical and practical onomastics. These classifications allow for an in-depth analysis of the position of proper names in the language system, the mechanism of their consolidation, and their socio-linguistic functions.

Literary onomastics studies proper names that are used in general language norms and are consolidated in an official form. Dialectal onomastics studies names formed within specific dialects and regional dialects, their phonetic, morphological, and semantic characteristics. This direction sheds light on the variability of the onomastic system through the regional layers of the language.

Ordinary (practical) onomastics studies names used in everyday life, their practical communicative function. These include personal names, surnames, place names, names of objects and organizations. Poetic onomastics analyzes the system of names in

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literary texts, the aesthetic, symbolic and poetic meanings created by them. This direction is aimed at revealing the artistic load of names in literature.

The division of onomastics into modern and historical branches ensures the study of names in connection with the time factor. Modern onomastics studies the nominative system of the modern language, and historical onomastics studies the formation, development and semantic changes of names in ancient times. They are developed on the basis of historical sources, written monuments, ethnolinguistic materials.

Another of the main differences within the science is theoretical and practical onomastics. Theoretical onomastics deals with the general laws of proper names, principles of nomenclature, structural and semantic properties of them and their place in the language system. Practical onomastics performs practical tasks such as compiling toponymic dictionaries, regulating naming processes, naming geographical objects, and standardization.

Thus, the internal classification of onomastics allows us to fully illuminate the multifaceted nature of proper names, their linguistic, historical, poetic and practical aspects. Based on these classifications, it becomes possible to more deeply understand the essence of names, their structural and functional place in the language system.

Theonym (*Greek theog - god (Allah) + onoma - proper noun*) – means the proper noun of the name and attributes of Allah. "Theonymy" means a collection, sum of such proper nouns, "theonymics" means the field that studies proper nouns belonging to such an onomastic scope².

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Theonyms are very ancient lexical units in the language, the periods of their emergence are associated with the religious views of mankind in the ancient world, such as animism, totemism, taboo, euphemism. The emergence of theonyms has experienced periods of polytheism and monotheism.

The information about Turkic theonyms, especially their history in ancient times, is valuable in the works of such scientists as G.P. Sneryov, O.A. Sukhareva, N. Direnkova, M.V. Stebleva, T.D. Bayaliev, N.F. Mokshin. For example, in the article by G.P. Sneryov, the ancient gods of the Arabian tribes are al-Lat, al-Uzza, Manot; the gods of Yemen are Wadd, Suva; Thoughts are given about the ancient historical gods Ramuz, Akhram, Ahura-Mazda, as well as dragons, giants, fairies, and demons associated with mythical concepts, their genesis, and etymology³.

Although observations are made about *Allah* (God // God, God, Creator, Yazdon, god, gods and attributes related to these concepts in historical, artistic, ethnographic, folklore, mythological, and partly linguistic sciences, there are still no consistent opinions on the concept of theonym, theonymy, the specific lexical onomastic units included in its scope, their boundaries and scope. The confusions that occur in the study of this issue in the science of onomastics can be divided into four as follows: a) if it is based on the meaning of the concept and term of theonym, then only the name of Allah, the names of other ancient gods and goddesses should be included in the scope of theonyms; b) in some works, the noble name *Allah (God, Creator, God // God)*, its various attributes such as satar, wahid, hamid, jabbor, gaffar, qadir, etc. are recorded as theonyms. If they are considered proper nouns, they should be written with a capital letter according to current spelling rules; c) The doublets of the concept of Allah, absolute synonyms such as *Allah // Allah, Tangri, Khudo // Khudoy, Yazdon* and others are currently sometimes written with lowercase, sometimes with capital letters; d) in some works, the concept of theonym, theonymy, contrary to its original meaning, is understood as an onomastic unit that embodies the proper noun of any religious concepts and ideas. Accordingly, the scope of theonymy has expanded significantly, and the names of religiously significant saints, holy persons, saints, real and unreal (imaginary, mythological) subjects and figures who were objects of worship in the past are also included, and they are often referred to by the term agnomy.

In some studies, the concept of theonym and theonymy is interpreted more broadly than traditional boundaries, expanding its semantic and functional scope. While in the classical approach, theonyms are mainly limited to the names of divine persons – gods and prophets, in modern anthroponymics and ethnolinguistics studies this category is interpreted as a more complex and multi-layered phenomenon. In particular, a number of authors conditionally assess the names of sacred places where religious rituals are performed (*churches, monasteries, mosques, khanaqahs, madrasas*) as an "expanded form of the theonymic system."

The essence of this approach is that the names of religious places - necronyms – also have a semantically close content connection with the concept of divinity. For example, the name of a mosque or monastery is directly associated with religious belief, holiness, ritual and worship practices, and they are

² Бегматов Э., Улуков Н. Ўзбек ономастикаси терминларининг изоҳли луғати. – Наманган, 2006, – Б 75.

³ Снесарёв Г.П. К истории некоторых категорий теонимов у народов Средней Азии и Казахстана // Ономастика Средней Азии. – Фрунзе: Илим, 1980, 272-282-с.



formed in the human mind as a sign of a divine place. Therefore, some scholars see necronyms not as toponyms in the narrow sense, but as a microcosm of the theonymic system. This is explained by the fact that the names of religious objects are imbued with the meaning of "holiness", they are deeply embedded in the cultural memory of society. Also, when the scope of theonymy is expanded, objects of worship, religious symbols, objects recognized as sacred, and even proper names associated with them are included in this system. For example, the names of objects such as the "Ark of the Torah", "Holy Sepulchre", "Kaaba", and "Tomb of the Black Caliph" have semantic theological content and are inextricably linked to the theonymic field as religious and cultural concepts.

As a result, theonymy is interpreted as a complex onomastic layer that includes not only the system of names of divine persons, but also the process of naming religious places, ritual objects, and attributes considered sacred. Such a broad interpretation demonstrates the inextricable connection of theonymy with linguistic and cultural, ethno-values, and religious semiosphere, and significantly expands the scope of its study⁴. In our opinion, a clear delimitation of the concepts of theonym (*theonymy*), agnonym (*agnonymy*) and necronymy (*necronymy*) and a strict distinction between proper nouns falling within their scope is necessary for the theoretical accuracy of onomastics. These terms are often interpreted as close to each other due to their semantic proximity, but their linguosemantic essence, nominative function and reference area are fundamentally different. Therefore, artificially combining them within the framework of one system is neither scientifically nor logically expedient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First of all, theonyms are the proper names of divine persons, beings imagined as living beings, or spiritual images that have acquired sacredness in religious ideas. They are semantically closest to anthroponyms, since theonyms are mainly associated with the concept of a person: names such as God, Allah, Abraham, Jesus, Moses directly denote sacred persons. Names of this type are based on the system of anthropomorphic representations, religious culture, and the concept of divinity. Therefore, theonyms are a component of the anthroponymic space according to their nominative function and have a direct relationship with the anthroponymic system. Agnonyms have a completely different nominative nature, they usually denote the proper names of sacred, but inanimate objects – religious objects, symbols, ritual weapons, or signs of faith. For example, such names as "Kaaba Stone", "Holy Ark", "Pilgrimage Tree", "Holy Spring of

the Field" have an agnonymic feature. These names are used in relation to an object, not a subject, therefore their proximity to the toponymic field is strong.

Necronyms, on the other hand, constitute a more specific and limited group in terms of nominativeness. They are the proper names of sacred places, such as cemeteries, tombs, shrines, and certain religious sites. Since their referent is always a place (place), they naturally become part of the toponymic system. For example, names such as "Shahi Zinda", "Hazrati Imam Complex", "Suzuk Ota Cemetery", "Chorbagh Tomb" perform both a religious and spatial function at the same time, but are still classified as toponyms.

Therefore, the inclusion of agnonyms and necronyms in the theonymy system is not justified either from a semantic point of view or from a nominative logic point of view, since theonymy is a nominative system formed on the basis of the concept of a person, while agnonymy and necronyms are systems formed on the basis of the concepts of an object and a place. Denying these differences creates confusion in the internal classification of onomastics, violates the functional boundaries between theonyms, toponyms, and anthroponyms. At this point, it can be said that the interpretation of theonyms as nominative units close to the anthroponymic system, and agnonyms and necronyms as names of inanimate objects and places belonging to the toponymic system, is the most scientifically acceptable and accurate approach. The names of prophets – theonyms – have deeply penetrated the anthroponymic system of Turkic peoples, including Uzbeks, through the Islamic religion and its main sources. At the same time, the process of assimilation of theonyms into the lexical system should be assessed as a process strengthened not only by religious beliefs, but also by socio-cultural factors, historical connections and written sources. It is known that the names of prophets in holy books such as the "Quran", "Torah", "Psalms" and "Injil" became an integral part of the local anthroponymic layer with the widespread spread of Islam in Central Asia.

The emergence of theonyms in the anthroponymic system of the Turkic languages, in particular, the Old Turkic (Uzbek) language, is a direct result of the process of Islamization in the 7th–10th centuries. From this period, theonyms such as *Ibrahim*, *Ismail*, *Musa*, *Yahya*, *Ya'qub*, *Nuh*, *Is'haq*, *Idris* were initially used while retaining their religious and enlightening connotation, and later they became simple anthroponyms and firmly established themselves as common names. This process indicates the semantic transformation of theonyms, that is, the stage of

⁴ Бу ҳақда қаранг: Авлиёқулов Я. Теонимия тушунчаси ва теонимлар ҳақида // Ўзбек тилшунослиги XXI асрда

(Илмий-назарий анжуман материаллари). – Қарши, ҚарДУ нашри, 2008, – Б 15-18.



transformation from the name of a sacred person into a personal name. Historical sources, in particular, written sources dating back to the 9th-10th centuries, confirm the widespread use of theonymic names among rulers, citizens, and priests. The occurrence of prophetic names such as Noah, Elijah, John, Isaac, Ahmad, Jacob, and Ismail among the representatives of the Samanid dynasty that ruled Central Asia indicates that theonyms became not only a means of religious but also political legitimization. For example, the fact that the Samanid rulers had names such as Noah ibn Mansur and Ahmad ibn Asad indicates the high status of theonyms in the anthroponymy of that period. This situation, along with religious and cultural identification, also performed functions such as glorifying lineage, giving the meaning of "divine protection" and strengthening the image of rulership. Thus, the introduction and widespread spread of theonymic names into the Uzbek anthroponymic system is a multi-stage historical-linguistic process, which is strengthened by its theological, cultural, and social functions. Even today, these names continue to be actively used in Uzbek names, which clearly proves the stability of theonyms, that is, their viability in the anthroponymic system⁵.

Since the 11th century, such theonymic anthroponyms have also been used in Turkic literary works such as "*Kutadgu bilik*", "*Hibbatul haqiq*", "*Qissasi Rabguzi*", "*Baqirgan kitobi*". Alisher Navoi's work "*Tarihi anbiyo va hukamo*" is directly devoted to the analysis of such theonyms. Abulgozi Bahodirkhan's work "*Shajarayi turk*" contains a large number of theonyms. N. Khusanov created a monograph dedicated to the analysis of such theonymic anthroponyms. The main part of this work includes the analysis of the names of the prophets, their ancestors, the ancestors of Muhammad, the names of the caliphs, the names of saints and angels. The names of saints such as Khizr and Luqman and angels such as *Azrael*, *Gabriel*, *Israfil*, *Mekail*, *Munkar*, *Nakir* are also among the theonyms⁶. Also, anthroponyms such as *Azozil*, *Molik*, *Uzzo*, *Uzoyo*,

Khorut, *Morut* are the names of angels, and they are also considered theonyms.

Research conducted on the study of theonymic anthroponyms allows us to draw the following conclusions:

1. Theonymic anthroponyms are an important component of the linguistic and cultural heritage of each people, and their study helps to understand the connection between language and culture.

2. The analysis shows that theonymic anthroponyms are a reflection of religious beliefs and values in the language system, through which the cultural and spiritual views of society are manifested.

3. When studying the lexical-semantic properties of theonymic anthroponyms, it was found that in most cases they express certain religious concepts, qualities or divine powers.

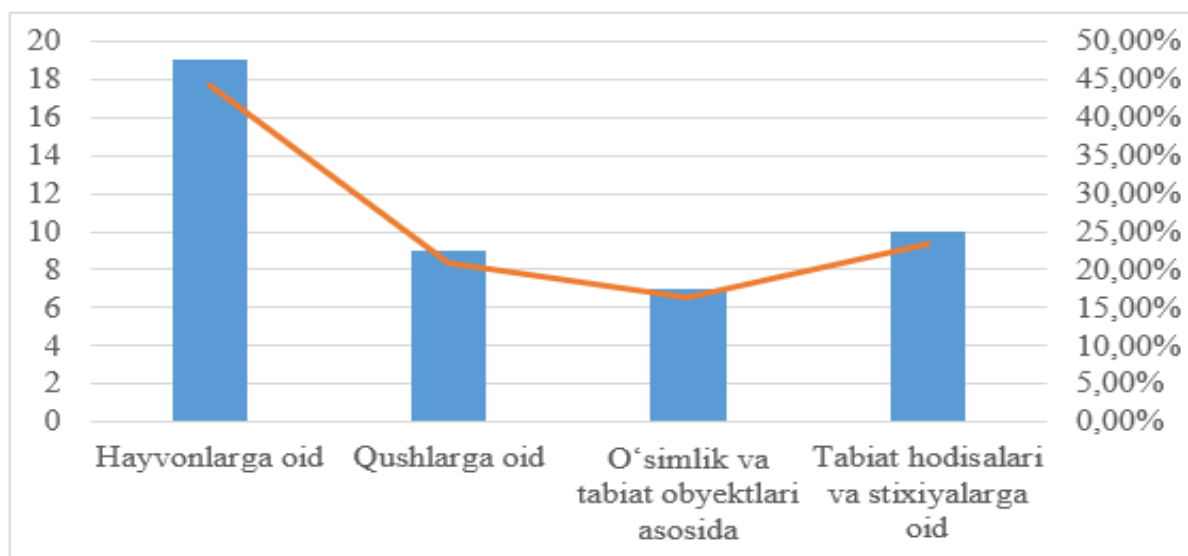
4. Etymological analysis of theonymic anthroponyms shows that their origin goes back to various religious sources and undergoes semantic changes over time.

5. In modern linguistics, the study of theonymic anthroponyms should include not only linguistic, but also historical, cultural and religious aspects.

6. As a result of the study, a new methodological approach was proposed for the classification of theonymic anthroponyms, and this approach can serve as the basis for future research. Although animistic names based on the names of natural phenomena and elements, along with names with zoonymic, ornithonymic and phytonymic components, constitute the "Nature" macroscale of the anthropomorphic scale, they essentially represent animistic semantics. Also, names based on the names of natural phenomena and elements constitute a minority compared to the remaining totemic names consisting of names with zoonymic, ornithonymic and phytonymic components, as shown in the figure below. Thus, the share of the existing groups is as follows:

⁵ Бегматов Э. Исм чиройи. – Тошкент: Фан, 1994, 4-65-бетлар; Хусанов Н. Пайғамбарлар исмининг маънолари // Сирли олам. 1994. № 4. – Б 19-20.

⁶ Нурманов Ф.И. Хизр образининг генезиси ва ўзбек фольклоридаги талқини. НДА.–Тошкент, 2007, – Б 24.



CONCLUSIONS

As a final conclusion, it can be said that the study of theonymic anthroponyms is an important direction of modern onomastics and ethnolinguistics, which is of great importance in studying the interaction of language and culture. In the future, it is advisable to study research in this direction in conjunction with other areas of linguistics, in particular, linguoculturology and cognitive linguistics.

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