

THE ROLE OF ONOMASTICS IN LINGUISTICS

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Abstract. Onomastics, the scientific study of names, occupies an important place in modern linguistics as it reflects the interaction between language, culture, history, and society. This article explores the role of onomastics within linguistic studies, focusing on its main branches, functions, and significance in understanding national identity and cultural heritage. Drawing on principles commonly discussed in Uzbek linguistic scholarship, the paper highlights how proper names serve not only as linguistic units but also as carriers of historical and social information. The study emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of onomastics and its contribution to lexicology, sociolinguistics, and cultural studies.

Keywords: onomastics, linguistics, proper names, anthroponyms, toponyms, Uzbek linguistics, language and culture, naming system.

Language is a complex system that reflects human thought, culture, and social structure. Within this system, proper names play a unique role as they identify and distinguish individuals, places, and objects. The study of such names is known as onomastics. In linguistics, onomastics is considered a specialized field that investigates the origin, structure, meaning, and use of names.

Uzbek linguistics has paid considerable attention to onomastic studies, particularly in analyzing national naming traditions, historical influences, and semantic features of names. Scholars emphasize that proper names are not random; they are deeply connected with cultural values, historical events, and social changes.

Onomastics derives from the Greek word “onomastikos,” meaning “related to naming.” In linguistic theory, it is regarded as a branch of lexicology, since it deals with a specific group of lexical units – proper nouns.

Onomastics is generally divided into several subfields: **Anthroponymy** – the study of personal names, **Toponymy** – the study of geographical names, **Ethnonymy** – the study of names of ethnic groups, **Theonymy** – the study of names of deities.

Uzbek linguists often highlight that these categories reflect both linguistic structure and extralinguistic factors such as traditions, beliefs, and historical development.

In linguistics, onomastics contributes to the study of vocabulary by analyzing the meaning and formation of proper names. Although proper names are often considered semantically “empty,” many studies show that they originally had clear meanings. For example, Uzbek personal names often reflect positive qualities, wishes, or religious beliefs.

Onomastic research provides valuable information about the historical development of a language. Place names, for instance, can preserve ancient linguistic forms that are no longer used in everyday speech. Uzbek toponyms reveal influences from Persian, Arabic, and Turkic languages, reflecting the region’s complex history.

Names serve as indicators of social identity, including gender, ethnicity, religion, and social status. In Uzbek society, naming traditions are closely tied to family values, customs, and cultural norms. Thus, onomastics helps linguists understand how language functions within a social context.

One of the most important roles of onomastics is its connection to culture. Names carry cultural memory and national identity. Uzbek linguists emphasize that preserving traditional names is essential for maintaining cultural heritage. Changes in naming patterns often reflect broader social and political transformations.

Onomastics is not limited to linguistics alone. It intersects with history, anthropology, geography, and cultural studies. This interdisciplinary nature makes it a valuable field for comprehensive research.

Uzbek linguistics has developed a strong tradition of onomastic research. Scholars have studied various aspects of Uzbek naming systems, including: The semantic structure of personal names, The origin of place names in Central Asia, The influence of Islamic culture on naming traditions, The role of folklore and oral traditions in name formation.

These studies show that Uzbek onomastics is rich and diverse, reflecting centuries of cultural and linguistic interaction.

Onomastics plays a crucial role in linguistics by providing insights into the structure, meaning, and function of proper names. It bridges the gap between language and culture, offering valuable information about history, society, and identity. In Uzbek linguistics, onomastic studies are particularly significant due to the country's rich cultural heritage and complex historical background. Therefore, further research in this field is essential for a deeper understanding of both language and culture.

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