

**LINGUOCULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL-SEMANTIC FEATURES OF
UZBEK AND ENGLISH TOPONYMS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
TERMEZ AND WINCHESTER PLACE NAMES**

Komila Shoyimova

Termez University of Economics and Service, Termez, Uzbekistan

Abstract

Toponyms function not only as geographical labels but also as linguocultural signs that preserve historical memory, collective identity, and semantic values of a speech community. This study provides a comparative analysis of Uzbek and English place names (toponyms) through the case of Termez (Uzbekistan) and Winchester (England). The research aims to identify structural-semantic patterns, etymological layers, and linguocultural meanings embedded in urban toponymic objects such as oikonyms, urbanonyms, hydronyms, and institutional names. Using descriptive, comparative, and linguocultural analytical methods, the study examines how language, culture, and history interact in the formation and functioning of toponyms. The findings reveal both universal and culture-specific tendencies: while English toponymy often exhibits morphologically transparent compound structures (e.g., *Winchester*), Uzbek toponymy reflects historical multilingual contact, metaphorical nomination, and culturally marked semantic motivation. The article argues that comparative toponymic studies offer a productive framework for understanding linguistic worldview differences and cultural conceptualizations across languages.

Keywords: toponymy, linguoculturology, comparative linguistics, Termez, Winchester, oikonym, urbanonym, semantic motivation, cultural code.

Introduction

The modern development of linguistic sciences has increasingly emphasized the importance of language as a cultural phenomenon. One of the most productive objects in this regard is toponymy, which reflects not only geographical realities but also historical transformations, ethnocultural traditions, and collective mental representations of a society. Place names encode multilayered information: they contain traces of ancient settlement patterns, migrational routes, political changes, religious beliefs, and social practices. In particular, the comparative study of Uzbek and English toponyms is valuable for several reasons. First, Uzbek toponymy is historically influenced by multiple civilizations and languages, including Persian, Arabic, Turkic, and Russian. English toponymy, by contrast, demonstrates stratification connected with Celtic, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Norman French

layers. Second, both languages represent two different linguocultural models: Uzbek culture reflects Central Asian worldview and socio-cultural codes, while English culture reflects Western European historical experience. This study focuses on two historically significant urban spaces – Termez and Winchester – as representative examples of their national toponymic systems. Termez, located on the Amu Darya river and historically connected with Buddhist, Islamic, and Silk Road cultural layers, demonstrates a rich semantic and ethnolinguistic toponymic complexity. Winchester, one of the ancient cities of England and a key historical centre in Anglo-Saxon England, presents an example of English toponymy shaped by early medieval cultural and administrative structures. The article seeks to answer the following research questions:

Literature Review

Toponymy has been studied within various paradigms: historical linguistics, onomastics, sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, and linguoculturology. In classical onomastic research, toponyms were mainly interpreted as linguistic fossils, preserving ancient linguistic forms and naming traditions. However, contemporary linguistics increasingly treats toponyms as dynamic elements of discourse, ideology, and cultural identity. Scholars have shown that place names are not neutral: they are ideologically and culturally motivated and may function as instruments of power, national identity, and cultural representation. In linguocultural studies, toponyms are considered components of cultural code, contributing to the conceptualization of space within a linguistic worldview. In Uzbek linguistics, the investigation of toponyms has developed through regional studies, etymological research, and linguistic-geographical approaches. Researchers have highlighted the role of historical events and ethnic processes in toponym formation. Studies have also explored the influence of Turkic roots and Persian-Arabic lexical layers in Uzbek toponyms. Moreover, contemporary works emphasize the metaphorical and symbolic dimension of nomination, where place names reflect values, beliefs, and social aspirations. In English toponymic scholarship, significant contributions analyze the morphological patterns of place names, including Old English settlement terms (*-ton*, *-ham*, *-bury*), Roman administrative terms (*-chester*), and Norse influences (*-by*, *-thorpe*). The transparency of English place names often enables researchers to trace settlement history and linguistic contact. Despite extensive research in both traditions, comparative toponymic studies between Uzbek and English remain limited. Therefore, this study fills an important gap by providing a parallel analysis of two urban toponymic systems and demonstrating the linguocultural meanings embedded within.

Methodology

The research applies a mixed methodological framework combining: Descriptive analysis to classify toponymic units according to type (oikonyms, urbanonyms, hydronyms, etc.); Comparative method to identify similarities and differences in structural and semantic features; Etymological analysis to trace historical linguistic layers and borrowing processes; Linguocultural interpretation to reveal cultural meanings and symbolism. The empirical material consists of selected place names and urban toponymic objects from Termez and Winchester, including district names, street names, historical sites, monuments, rivers, and institutions. The analysis is qualitative and interpretive, with focus on semantic motivation and cultural references.

Results and Discussion

Many English toponyms are structurally transparent, often consisting of two elements: a lexical root and a settlement/administrative suffix. The name *Winchester* itself is historically derived from Old English *Wintanceaster*, associated with Roman *Venta Belgarum*. The element *-chester* (< Latin *castra*, 'camp') is widely used in English place names (*Manchester*, *Colchester*, *Doncaster*) and signals Roman military-administrative influence. Uzbek toponyms, including those in Termez, show more complex historical contact. The toponym *Termez* has been connected with various etymological interpretations. Many local toponyms reveal Persian-Arabic lexical influence and Turkic roots. Semantic motivation can be categorized into several nomination strategies: physical-geographical, historical, cultural, anthropocentric, and ideological. Both Uzbek and English toponyms include names based on landscape: English: *River Itchen* (hydronymic tradition), *Downs* (hills), *ford* (river crossing); Uzbek: names reflecting rivers, deserts, directions, or irrigation-based agricultural systems. However, Uzbek toponyms often emphasize irrigation and agriculture due to historical lifestyle, while English names frequently reflect settlement organization and Roman/Anglo-Saxon administrative terminology. A notable feature of Termez toponyms is metaphorical nomination, where objects are named by associating them with symbolic meanings: names reflecting **beauty**, **strength**, **prosperity**, **religious purity**, or **historical memory**. Winchester toponyms, in contrast, are more historically administrative and less metaphorically symbolic in everyday naming, though symbolic naming exists in monuments and institution names. This indicates that Uzbek toponymy tends to be more culturally expressive and emotionally loaded, while English toponymy preserves historical stratification with structural regularity. Toponyms function as carriers of cultural memory and identity. Termez names reflect Silk Road heritage, Islamic civilization, and regional ethnic dynamics. Winchester names reflect Roman Britain, Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, and Christian heritage (Winchester Cathedral).

Conclusion

This comparative study has demonstrated that Uzbek and English toponyms represent two distinct yet comparable linguocultural systems. The analysis of Termez and Winchester place names reveals that: English toponyms are often structurally transparent and morphologically regular, reflecting Roman and Anglo-Saxon administrative models. Uzbek toponyms display multilayered etymology influenced by Turkic roots, Persian-Arabic borrowings, and historical multilingual contact. Semantic motivation in Uzbek toponyms is more metaphorical and culturally expressive, whereas English place names more strongly preserve settlement-based and administrative terminology. Both systems function as cultural memory devices, encoding historical and identity values in linguistic form. The findings confirm that comparative toponymy contributes to understanding language-culture interaction and reveals differences in spatial conceptualization between Uzbek and English linguocultures.

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