

Comparative Analysis of German and Uzbek Toponymic Systems

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Abstract. This article provides a comparative analysis of the toponymic systems of Germany and Uzbekistan, focusing on their historical, morphological, and cultural features. German toponyms, often formed through compound structures and productive suffixes such as *-bach*, *-dorf*, *-burg*, *-heim*, and *-feld*, reflect geographical and social realities of prehistoric and medieval periods. Similarly, Uzbek toponyms, shaped by multi-dialectal variation, phonetic evolution, and historical influences, represent collective folk creativity and tribal identities. Particular attention is paid to the processes of suffixation, prefixation, semantic shift, and phonetic adaptation that characterize both languages. The study highlights distortions introduced during Russian cartographic practices in Central Asia and contrasts them with the systematic codification of German place names through toponymic dictionaries and linguistic corpora. The analysis demonstrates how geographical names function not only as spatial markers but also as cultural symbols that preserve historical memory, identity, and stylistic nuances. The findings underscore the value of cross-linguistic toponymic studies in understanding national heritage and the interaction between language, geography, and culture.

Key words: Toponymy, German place names, Uzbek place names, suffixation, prefixation, dialectal variation, phonetic shift, semantic shift, historical cartography.

Introduction

The ratio of toponymic types in different parts of Germany is diverse, which is explained by the abundance of administrative subjects of the Federation (16 Federal States) and the presence of their own historical and cultural traditions in each of the individual subjects. This fact, in turn, can be explained from a historical point of view. Geographical names of Uzbek cities and villages, mahallas, streets and squares, channels, rivers and other objects are a collective work of folk genius. They serve as landmarks in time and space, creating the historical and cultural image of the country.

Germanic names have their own toponymic types. They are clearly shown in the names of settlements. Most often, these names are formed by word structure. Many toponyms consist of two word roots, with the first part serving as a definition for the second part, which plays the role of a service word or common name.

German names from prehistoric and medieval times

Suffixes:

-ach, ("river"). Examples: Echternach, Salzach.

-au (from Slavic suffix *-ov*, *-ów*). Examples: village and town names' suffixes on former Polabian Slavs territories: Lübbenau, Plau.au,

-aue (related to rivers or water), see German words *Au* or *Aue*. This meaning of *-au* (earlier spelling *ow*, *owe*, *ouwe*) describes settlements by streams and rivers. Example: Passau, the town *Aue*, rivers named *Aue*.

-bach or Low German *-bek* ("stream"; cf. English *beck*, *bach*, *batch*). Examples: Amorbach, Ansbach Reinbek, Wandsbek.

-berg, *-bergen* ("mountain"). Examples: Bamberg, Heidelberg, Nürnberg (Nuremberg), Königsberg ("king's mountain", now Kaliningrad), Landesbergen. Also reduced *-burg*, e.g. in

Bromberg ← Brahenburg.

-brücken or -brück ("bridge"). Examples: Saarbrücken, Osnabrück, Innsbruck.

-bühl, or -bühel ("hill"). Examples: Dinkelsbühl, Kitzbühel.

-burg ("keep"; cf. English bury, borough, burgh). Examples: Hamburg, Augsburg, Luxembourg, Regensburg (on the river Regen), Salzburg ("Salt City", a Medieval name), Straßburg (Strasbourg).

-dorf or -torf, Low German dorp/torp ("village") cf. English "Thorpe". Example: Düsseldorf, Reinickendorf, Kleinblittersdorf.

-ey ("island"; cf. English ey, ea, Low German oog). Example: Norderney, Hacheney.

-feld or -felde ("field"). Examples: Bielefeld, Mansfeld, Saalfeld.

-furt ("ford"). Examples: Erfurt, Frankfurt, Klagenfurt.

-hagen ("hedged field or wood"). Example: Hanshagen.

-halde oder -halden ("hillside", "slope"; cf. Norwegian Halden). Examples: Haldensee, Osshalden near Crailsheim.

-hausen ("houses"). Examples: Mülhausen (Mulhouse), Mühlhausen, Recklinghausen, Schaffhausen.

-haven, or -hafen ("haven", "harbor", "port"). Examples: Wilhelmshaven, Bremerhaven, Friedrichshafen.

-heim (South and Central Germany, Switzerland, Alsace), -ham or -am (Bavaria and Austria), -hem or -em (West), -um (North Germany) ("home", "settlement"; cf. English ham and Hamlet (place)). Examples: Alkersum, Bochum, Borkum, Pforzheim, Kirchham, Schiltigheim, Mannheim, Mülheim, Hildesheim, Bad Windsheim.

What about Uzbek language, we may consider this language as multi-dialect – it has more than 30 dialects that differ both lexically and phonetically from each other: for example, the literary "tog`" - in the Jack dialects "tov", how to be – the element "tov" (tau) is considered illegal and everywhere written as " tog`" (tag). Or is the term "rabot" "fortification" "caravanserai" pronounced differently in different places "rabot", "rabod", "rabat", "ravot", etc., all this cut under one comb or keep local differences? After all, "Muhammadjon", "Mamajon", "Matjon" (even "Matchon») and others, all of them go back to the name of the prophet "Muhammad". But each of these names is personally assigned to a certain person. Or "Nurmat" and "Nurmuhammad" are the same, but the names of different people. In short, the same terms or names and other words are pronounced differently "Duob", "Duoba" "Duvova" "Dugoba" "Juy", "river, Aryk" - "Ju" "Je" "Ji", etc. Especially different ethnonyms, i.e. the names of Uzbek tribal divisions that occur in the form of geographical names "Mitan", "Meton", "Metan", "Muytan", "Miyten", - "Chanchiqli" "Sanchiqli" "sanchiq'l" "Chanchiqil" are just a few examples of the numerous voices of Uzbek toponomy.

Materials and methods. Prefixes can be used to indicate the nearby populated localities with the same names. They can be attached or stand alone. Both localities that need to be distinguished may have opposite prefixes (e.g. Niederschönhausen and Hohenschönhausen), but it is also common to attach the prefix only to one of them (e.g. Stettin and Neustettin).

Alt-, Alten- or Low German Olden- ("old"). Examples: Alt Eberstein, Altenberg, Oldenburg. Groß- or Großen- ("greater"). Example: Groß Kiesow, Großenhain.

Hoh-, Hohen-, Höch- or Hoch- ("high(er)", "upper"). Examples: Hohenschönhausen, Hohkönigsburg, Höchstadt.

Klein- or Low German Lütten- ("little"). Example: Klein Kiesow. Neu-, Neuen- or Low German Nien- ("new").

Example: Neuburg am Inn, Neuenkirchen, Nienburg. Nieder- ("lower"; cf. English nether).

Example: Niederschönhausen.

Ober- ("upper", "higher"), or Oberst- ("uppermost", "highest"). Example: Oberhausen, Oberwesel, Oberstdorf.

Wendisch-, Windisch- (Slovene) ("Wendish") . Example: Wendisch Baggendorf, Windischgarsten. This sometimes refers (particularly in present and former Austrian territories) to the original language of the inhabitants. Other examples: Böhmisch Krummau (Česky Krumlov), Unter-Deutschau (Nemška Loka).

Unter- ("lower"; literally "under"). Example: Unterliederbach.

Prefixes can also have a descriptive character. Examples are Lichten- or Lichter-

("open range", e.g. Lichtenhagen), Schön- or Schöne- ("nice", e.g. Schönwalde), Grün- or Grüne- ("green", e.g. Grunwald).

Prefixes can also be used to indicate an (earlier) possession of the site. Examples are Kirch- ("ecclesial possession", e.g. Kirch Jesar), Bischofs- ("a bishop's possession", e.g. Bischofswerda), Grafen- ("a count's possession", e.g. Grafenwöhr), Königs- ("the king's",

e.g. Königs Wusterhausen, Königsberg), Kron- (possession of the crown, e.g. Kronstadt, Rügenwalde (once belonging to the princes of Rügen).

The prefix Bad ("bath") indicates the place is an officially acknowledged spa. See Bad Kissingen, Bad Pyrmont, etc. Some places, like Aachen, do not use it although they could.

Owner name semantics: this type comes from the former real estate of noble or ecclesiastical landowners. Like many others, this group of toponyms for individual words has been shortened by the passage of time (reduction) and adapted to the appropriate pronunciation (assimilation), so that the original meaning, composition and pronunciation of these words can only be identified by comparison with the original names, for example, Gräfenhainechen from Gravinalbrechtishayn; (e.g. Oettingen, the founder was Otto; Gerolfingen, the founder was Gerolf, Rappoltsweiler, the founder was Ratbald or Ratbert). Mostly, in the former Ostsiedlung area, the locator's name was sometimes included as the first part of the name (e.g. Hanshagen, the locator was Hans).

As to Uzbek language, the geographical names of Uzbekistan were established by Russian topographers. However, names that are known among the local population were often ignored or adapted to the Russian language. As a result, geographical names that were alien to the local population were put on maps and in other publications, and thus became widely used.

Gross distortions in Russian gear, even in the Uzbek spelling is not always the fault of the topographic map. In many cases, this is the cost of toponymic illiteracy of people or the phonetic evolution of toponyms. Fergana village Kirgili (apparently the genus name) turned into a poetic Qirguli "steppe flower", Andijan village Sulduz (the genus name meaning "wolves") – Suvyulduz "water star", Tashkent Sergeli district (name of tribe) – Sirg'ali "with the earring" Kamchik pass "notch", "saddle" near Tashkent in the Uzbek writing has become "Qamchiq", Khiva Qishliqqishloq village "village kind qishliq" why it was Qishloqqishloq, the name of the village Sharqiya in Akhangaran Raion distorted echo of the name the city of Shahruhiya, built by Amir Temur and named after his son Shahrugh (XV century).

Ferghana Chimion and Tashkent Chimgan (village, mountains) namesakes: Russian Russian translation from Tajik pronunciation, Chimgan-Russian translation from Uzbek pronunciation of the same toponym Chimyon.

Phonetic, grammatical evolution, and semantic shift of toponyms are not predictable. The toponym Dizak (Sogdian diz "fortress", dizak "small fortress") is repeated more than once on the map of Turkestan. In Uzbekistan, in the last 70-80 years, Dizak has become Jizzax, while the Russian form of writing the name of the city as Djizak is closer to the original.

Toponymic Dictionaries. A dictionary of German toponyms (place names) was first constructed so that their linguistic features could be systematically described, i.e. their morphology and syntactic behaviour. The dictionary's format is compatible with DELA (Courtois 2004), hence, it can be used with Unitex and Intex (see Prolintex for a French equivalent). This software is used to implement local grammars which describe NPs and PPs containing toponyms and classifiers such as:

rund 1500 Kilometer südsüdwestlich von Honolulu

„about 1500 kilometers south-southwest of Honolulu“ in der englischen Grafschaft Suffolk

in the English shire Suffolk

„in Suffolk County, England“

The dictionary was constructed using toponyms extracted from freely available resources. Because the list contains many errors and impurities such as spelling errors and common nouns denoting geographic features, e.g. harbour, the list was only used as input for a classifier based on local grammars which describe typical syntactic patterns a toponym may appear in. From a 35 GB corpus, a frequency list of occurrences of these patterns was extracted.

With help of these patterns a preliminary classification of the toponyms was created, based on their gender and associated determiner (see below). E.g., if the context of the toponym was found to contain “in der X” („in the fem X“) a counter was incremented signalling X is feminine and must be used with the definite article. The pre-classified entries were then manually corrected whereby

ambiguities and overlap with homographic common nouns were resolved and inflectional information was added. Actually all toponyms in the corpus with a frequency of 100 or over have been entered in the dictionary.

Relational adjectives and the names of the inhabitants of cities and regions are added for approximately 1000 toponyms. This work had to be done manually with the aid of frequency lists and examples taken from the results of internet search engines.

Morphology. The inflectional morphology of German proper nouns is relatively simple compared to that of common nouns. No vowel gradation („Umlaut“) is observed at all. In $\frac{2}{3}$ of the dictionary entries, only the genitive form differs from the base form where an –s is appended to the word (Berlin → Berlins). Some toponyms, especially those consisting of two or more tokens, show more complex inflectional patterns. The „Gulf of Persia“ has eight different forms: Persischer Golf, der Persische Golf, des Persischen Golfes/Golfs, Persischem Golf/e, dem Persischen Golf/e.

Inflectional classes are described using the CISLEX standard (Maier-Meyer 1995) with some classes and extensions added to handle variants and multi-word entries. Altogether 70 different inflectional classes were found.

Two other phenomena are also covered in the inflectional module: (1) Abbreviations of toponym parts (Frankfurt am Main → Frankfurt a. M. or Frankfurt/ Main) and (2) deletion of diacritics (Orléans is used more frequent than Orléans in German texts).

As expected, the derivational morphology of toponyms shows even more variation than inflectional morphology. The most frequent suffix used to form relational adjectives and names of inhabitants is an –er appended to the toponym, e.g. Berlin → Berliner. The finale or en in the toponym is often ellipsed before application of the suffix, e.g. München → Münchner, Bremen → Bremer, but Essen → Essener. The bulk of suffixes occur only once (e.g. Monaco → Monegasse). In total over 300 derivational suffixes were found: 110 to derive the adjective and 200 to derive the name of male and female inhabitants. Because the derivational endings were so idiosyncratic, no attempt was made to systematize them (similar to inflectional codes). Instead, each derivation was given the status of a lemma and was linked to the toponym it was derived from.

Syntactic Features. As in other European languages such as English, French and Italian, German proper nouns are not normally used with a determiner (definite article). This, however, is not the general rule for toponyms. The use of a determiner is, in fact, lexicalized and hence part of the wording of a toponym. The presence of the definite article must therefore be explicitly coded in each toponyms entry: in Frankreich „in France“ (+DetZ) in der Türkei „in Turkey“ (+Det) The determiner der in (4) is compulsory. It can only be omitted in texts written in a telegraphic style, e.g. in headlines:

Vier Tote bei Terroranschlag in Türkei „four dead in terrorist attack in Turkey“

The use of the definite article differs depending on the type of toponym. Approximately 40% of geographic regions (e.g. states, islands etc.) are used with the definite article. However, only a small number of towns, villages and cities (0.005%) require the definite article. In contrast, the majority of names of mountains and mountain ranges and all names of bodies of water are used with the definite article. Hence, except for the last class (see below), no rule describing the use of determiners with German geographic names could be established.

Conclusion. Geographical names arose primarily as a result of observing natural facts that were related to the location or behavior of rivers. But also the supposed features of local residents manifest themselves in the name of the locality (etymological meaning). Toponyms, like any lexical unit, can use stylistic marked language units. It should be noted that German and Uzbek toponyms, like other toponyms, are subject to stylistic actualization only when they are used in fiction. In this case, stylistic marking of toponyms is possible due to their ability to undergo metonymic and metaphorical transfer.

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