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COMPARATIVE TOPONYMY AS A RESOURCE FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: THE CASE OF ANDIJAN REGION AND THE COUNTY OF NORFOLK

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Annotatsiya: Maqolada ingliz tilini o'rganayotgan oliy ta'lim talabalarida madaniyatlararo kompetensiyani rivojlantirishda qiyosiy toponimikaning pedagogik imkoniyatlari tadqiq etilgan. Andijon viloyati va Norfolk grafligi (Buyuk Britaniya) joy nomlarining lingvistik tahliliga tayangan holda toponimlar jamiyatning landshafti, tarixi, ijtimoiy tuzilishi va qadriyatlari haqidagi ma'lumotni saqlovchi ixcham madaniy matnlar ekani asoslangan. Auditoriyada qiyoslash uchun nomlanish motivlarining tipologiyasi (gidronimik, topografik, antroponimik va etnonimik, ijtimoiy-tarixiy, baholovchi) taklif etilgan. Ikki hududning semantik jihatdan parallel toponimlarini qiyoslash talabalarni o'z madaniyatini anglashdan boshqa madaniyatni tushunishga va madaniyatlararo muloqotga olib borishi ko'rsatilgan. Etimologik izlanish, qiyosiy xaritalash, qadriyatlar bo'yicha refleksiya va ingliz tilida taqdimotdan iborat topshiriqlar ketma-ketligi taklif qilingan. Qiyosiy toponimika milliy o'zlikni shakllantirish bilan umuminsoniy qadriyatlarga ochiqlikni uyg'unlashtiruvchi samarali lingvokulturologik manba bo'la olishi xulosa qilingan.

Kalit so'zlar: toponimika, joy nomlari, madaniyatlararo kompetensiya, lingvokulturologiya, milliy qadriyatlar, Andijon viloyati, Norfolk, ingliz tilini o'qitish.

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Abstract: The article examines the pedagogical potential of comparative toponymy for developing intercultural competence in university students who study English. Drawing on linguistic analysis of place names in Andijan region (Uzbekistan) and the county of Norfolk

(United Kingdom), the study argues that toponyms are compact cultural texts that preserve information about landscape, history, social structure and values of a community. A typology of motivational models of naming (hydronymic, topographic, anthroponymic and ethnonymic, socio-historical, evaluative) is proposed as a basis for classroom comparison. The article shows how comparing semantically parallel toponyms of the two regions helps students move from awareness of their own culture to understanding of another culture and, further, to intercultural dialogue. A sequence of learning tasks is offered: etymological inquiry, comparative mapping, value reflection and presentation in English. It is concluded that comparative toponymy can serve as an effective linguocultural resource that integrates the formation of national identity with openness to universal values.

Keywords: toponymy, place names, intercultural competence, linguoculturology, national values, Andijan region, Norfolk, English language teaching.

Introduction. Place names belong to the oldest layers of any language. Long after the people who coined them have gone, toponyms continue to tell where water was found, which hill was fortified, who ruled a settlement or what a community considered beautiful and valuable. For this reason linguists have long treated toponyms as “signposts to the past” (Gelling, 1978) and as an archive of a people’s historical memory (Superanskaya, 1985; Qorayev, 2006). In recent decades the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names have explicitly recognised geographical names as part of the cultural heritage of nations (United Nations, 2002, 2007, 2012), while UNESCO (2003) has stressed the role of education in transmitting intangible heritage to new generations.

At the same time, intercultural competence has become one of the key outcomes of higher education. International frameworks describe it as an integrated set of knowledge, attitudes, skills and values that allow a person to interact appropriately and effectively with people of other cultures (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Council of Europe, 2018; OECD, 2018). In English language teaching, however, cultural content is often limited to information about the target culture, while students’ own culture remains in the background. As Kramsch (1993) argues, real intercultural learning happens in a “third place” where learners reflect on both cultures.

This article proposes that comparative toponymy can create such a third place. The aim of the study is to show, on the material of Andijan region and the county of Norfolk, how a comparison of English and Uzbek place names can be transformed into a pedagogical resource for developing university students’ intercultural competence together with their awareness of national and universal values. The material draws on the author’s earlier comparative study of recreational toponyms of the two regions (Boltaboeva, n.d.) and on standard toponymic dictionaries (Ekwall,

1960; Mills, 2003; Nafasov, 1988).

Literature review. Toponymic research has developed in two main directions. The first, historical-etymological, reconstructs the origin of names and the languages that produced them. English place-name studies have a strong tradition here: Ekwall (1960) and Mills (2003) systematically traced English toponyms to Old English, Old Norse, Celtic and Norman French elements, and Gelling (1978) showed how these layers reflect the settlement history of England. In Uzbekistan similar work was carried out by Hasanov (1985), Nafasov (1988) and Qorayev (2006), who described the Turkic, Sogdian, Persian and Arabic layers of local toponymy. Russian scholarship (Murzaev, 1974; Pospelov, 1971; Superanskaya, 1985) contributed theoretical frameworks for the classification of geographical names.

The second direction is sociocultural. Researchers increasingly view place names as markers of identity and as tools for interpreting cultural landscapes. Helleland (2012) shows that place names function as identity markers for individuals and communities, and Alderman (2008) analyses naming as a social practice through which communities express memory and values. Tent and Blair (2011) developed a typology of naming motivations that describes why a place received its name (for example, description, association, commemoration, evaluation). Such typologies are especially useful for comparison because they focus on the motive behind the name rather than on its linguistic form.

In intercultural education, Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence distinguishes knowledge, attitudes of curiosity and openness, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. Deardorff (2006) presents intercultural competence as a process in which attitudes (respect, openness, curiosity) lead to knowledge and skills, then to internal outcomes (empathy, adaptability) and external outcomes (effective and appropriate communication). Bennett (1993) describes the development of intercultural sensitivity from ethnocentric to ethnorelative stages. Uzbek methodologists (Jalolov, 2012; Hoshimov & Yoqubov, 2003) emphasise the need to teach language together with culture. However, the potential of students' local toponymic heritage as a starting point for intercultural learning has not been examined systematically. This gap defines the novelty of the present study.

Methods. The study uses comparative linguocultural analysis. The corpus includes place names of recreational and settlement areas of Andijan region and the county of Norfolk collected in the author's previous research. Etymologies of English names are given according to Mills (2003) and Ekwall (1960); Uzbek names are interpreted according to Nafasov (1988) and Qorayev (2006). The names were grouped by motivation following the logic of Tent and Blair (2011), adapted to the material. Then semantically parallel pairs were selected, that is, English and Uzbek names that are based on similar naming motives. Finally, the pedagogical potential of each group was analysed using the components of intercultural competence

described by Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006).

Results. The analysis shows that, despite the distance between the two regions and the difference between the languages, the naming motives of Andijan and Norfolk toponyms largely coincide. Table 1 presents examples of semantically parallel names.

Table 1. Semantically parallel toponyms of Andijan region and the county of Norfolk

Naming motive	Andijan region	County of Norfolk	Value or cultural idea
Water (hydronymic)	Buloqboshi – “head of the spring”; Oltinko‘l – “golden lake”	Wells-next-the-Sea – OE wella “springs”; Cromer – “crows’ lake”	Water as the source of life and settlement
Relief and landscape (topographic)	Qo‘rg‘ontepa – “fortress hill”	Holkham – “homestead in a hollow”; Blakeney – “dark island”	Adaptation to nature, protection
People and lineage (anthroponymic, ethnonymic)	Xo‘jaobod – “settlement of khojas”	Swaffham – “homestead of the Swabians”; Sheringham – “homestead of Scīra’s people”	Kinship, community, collective memory
Power and history (socio-historical)	Shahrixon – “khan’s city”; Xonobod – “khan’s settlement”	King’s Lynn – royal status added to Celtic lindo “pool”	Historical memory, statehood
Evaluation and wish (evaluative)	Marhamat – “mercy, grace”; Bo‘ston – “garden”	Thetford – “people’s (public) ford”	Kindness, prosperity, common good

Several observations follow from the table. First, water-based names dominate in both regions, which reflects the universal dependence of human settlement on water. For students from the Fergana Valley, where irrigation culture is part of everyday life, the parallel between *Buloqboshi* and *Wells-next-the-Sea* is easy to grasp, and it opens a discussion of how different communities express the same basic value.

Second, names based on people and lineage show the importance of community and kinship. Old English names in *-ham* and *-ingham* (Swaffham, Sheringham) refer to homesteads of particular groups, just as Uzbek names with *-obod* (Xo‘jaobod) refer to settlements founded by certain communities. Comparing them helps students see that respect for ancestors and belonging to a community are not unique to their own culture.

Third, socio-historical names preserve memory of statehood. *Shahrixon* and *Xonobod* remind students of the Kokand Khanate period, while *King’s Lynn* reflects the history of English monarchy. Here students learn that history is inscribed in the landscape of every nation and that the respectful treatment of historical names is part of cultural responsibility, a principle also stated in the national legislation on geographical names.

Fourth, evaluative names such as *Marhamat* (mercy) and *Bo‘ston* (garden)

express moral and aesthetic ideals directly. They are particularly valuable for values education because they allow students to discuss mercy, care for nature and beauty as both national and universal values.

Discussion. The results suggest that comparative toponymy can support each component of intercultural competence. At the level of *knowledge*, students learn facts about the history, languages and landscape of both regions. At the level of *attitudes*, the discovery that distant communities named their places for similar reasons develops curiosity, respect and a sense of common humanity, which corresponds to the shift from ethnocentric to ethnorelative stages described by Bennett (1993). At the level of *skills of interpreting and relating* (Byram, 1997), students explain the meaning of a foreign name by relating it to a familiar one in their own culture. Finally, *critical cultural awareness* develops when students discuss why some names are changed, forgotten or preserved, and what this means for the identity of a community (Alderman, 2008; Helleland, 2012).

On this basis, the following sequence of learning tasks is proposed for English classes at university level:

- **Etymological inquiry.** Students research the origin of a place name in their home district using dictionaries and interviews with older residents, and prepare a short report in English.
- **Comparative mapping.** Students find an English (Norfolk) toponym with a similar naming motive, place both names on a map and describe the landscape and history behind them.
- **Value reflection.** Students write a reflective paragraph on the value expressed by the pair of names (for example, water as life, community, mercy) and compare it with their own experience.
- **Presentation and dialogue.** Students present their pair of names in English as a “virtual toponymic tour”, answer questions from peers and, where possible, exchange their work with partner students abroad.

This sequence follows the logic “from one’s own culture to another culture and to dialogue”. It also corresponds to the national policy of educating young people in the spirit of national and universal values while expanding their foreign language proficiency. It should be noted that the article presents a conceptual and linguistic basis; the effectiveness of the proposed tasks needs to be tested in a pedagogical experiment with control and experimental groups, which is planned as the next stage of the research.

The proposed approach also has methodological advantages for the English classroom. Toponymic material is short, concrete and easy to visualise on a map, so it can be used at different proficiency levels: at B1 level students may focus on describing places and explaining simple meanings, while at B2–C1 levels they can analyse word-formation elements (Old English *-ham*, *-ton*, *-ford*, *-wic*; Uzbek *-obod*, *-tepa*, *-ko‘l*, *-soy*), compare dictionary interpretations and discuss contested etymologies. Working with authentic reference sources such as Mills (2003) and

Nafasov (1988) develops academic reading skills and teaches students to treat etymological information critically, distinguishing established facts from folk explanations. Moreover, the material of the students' own region increases motivation, because learners become the "experts" who explain their culture to others, which corresponds to the role of the intercultural speaker described by Byram (1997).

At the same time, several limitations should be taken into account. Some toponyms have several competing etymologies, and teachers should present them as hypotheses rather than as final truths. The comparison of names should not lead to oversimplified conclusions that two cultures are "the same"; rather, it should show that similar human needs and values are expressed in different linguistic and historical forms. Finally, the selection of names should be balanced so that students see both similarities and differences, since recognising difference is as important for intercultural competence as finding common ground (Bennett, 1993; Deardorff, 2006).

Conclusion. Place names of Andijan region and the county of Norfolk, despite belonging to different languages and cultures, share common motives of naming: water, landscape, people, history and moral evaluation. This commonality makes comparative toponymy a promising resource for intercultural education. When students compare semantically parallel toponyms, they deepen their knowledge of their own heritage, discover another culture through a familiar lens and develop attitudes of respect and openness. Comparative toponymy therefore helps to integrate the formation of national identity with the development of intercultural competence. Further research will focus on the design of a full pedagogical model and its experimental verification in higher education.

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