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Features of toponyms forming of Alakol basin of Kazakhstan

*Stanislav Yerdavletov, Abdreeva Sholpan, Aizholova Gulzhan**

1. Research subject and methodology

Toponymic material makes it possible to trace processes of mutual influence and enriching of languages, to define a nature of contacts between people during their migration in past. History events of particular period, names of outstanding personalities, heroes, cultural and spiritual values of nations are reflected in geography names.

Scientists have paid their attention at names long ago. Nations are dying, but names continue their life, although, names in changing: through the time sounding, writing form, sometimes, meaning of geography names change. New generation use geography names without knowledge of language of name and its meaning (Abdrejeva and Aizholova, 2012).

Attention at region of authors is connected with intensive development within the Kazakhstan system program, which considers integral study its recreational and natural possibilities, to form attractive image. In this regard, particular attention is paid to the cultural and historical heritage, including geography names. At a part of the Great Silk Road, which was chosen as a research object, various tribes and nations lived from ancient times, and historical migration is bright and vividly reflected in the toponyms of the area.

The main purpose of the work is to identify features of toponyms formation of Alakol basin, which located on the Kazakhstan territory. And this work is the attempt to achieve this purpose through the follow objectives:

- to justify principles of the distribution toponyms by class;
- to identify the features of toponyms formation;
- to identify the basic categories of toponyms by the areas of the researched territory.

Purpose and objectives of this work require a comprehensive study of toponymic material, that causes application of different methods and techniques of research: historical, comparative and comparative, descriptive, etymological, statistical and mapping.

As the information data works of eminent scientists from the CIS and other countries, materials of Statistics Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan, state Catalogue of Geographical Names of Kazakhstan were used.

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2. Geography features of Alakol basin

2.1. Geography localization of Alakol lakes system

Alakol lake system includes follow lakes: lake Alakol is the biggest salty close lake, Sasykkol, Uyaly, Zhalanashkol, which are on the border of Almaty and East Kazakhstan regions, in the east part of Balkhash and Alakol hollow in the East-Southern Kazakhstan. The basin area is 55 thousand km² (Fig. 1).

To the south-east of the lake the Dzungarian gates pass is situated.

Mountain pass between the ridge of Barlyk and Dzhungar Alatau called as “Dzhungarian gates”, connects the Alakol hollow with Lake Ebi-Nur in China (Erdavletov, 2012).

History of researched area goes back many centuries. Transit routes passing in the meridional and latitudinal direction, linked the region with other areas not only within the country but also outside it.

It is known that many years ago by water “bowls”, entitled as Alakol famous the Silk Road is passed. Even in those days the caravanners noticed that salty waves of the lake miraculously regain strength and improve health. Modern medical studies confirm the therapeutic quality of the lake water.



Fig. 1 – The Alakol lakes system, 2013. *Source:* Kazakhstan Geography institute.

2.2. History researches of Alakol basin

Italian traveler and researcher John of Plano Carpini the first time described the lake of Alakol in European publications as follows: «a certain sea is not very big, the name of which, as we have not asked about it, we do not know» (Minaev, 1997). He also reports that there is not huge mountain at a coast of the lake, where from strong winds blew in a winter time. It e first mention about a gale-force eastern wind “ebi“, which rages time to time in Dzhungairan gates. It seems that Carpini mythologized this phenomenon:

the wind, of course, came not from the mountain caves of the Chinese Lake Ebinur. He is also the first reported of small forests along the rivers flowing into the lake – it's Togai or riparian forests.

William of Rubruck the first informed about water quality of Alakol. He noted that water of the lake was salty, but, at an acute need it was still possible to drink. This information provides about water desalination in Alakol at that time. Possible, it was connected with opinion that Sasykkol, Uyaly and Alakol were wan total lake.

Rubruck shows that between the mountains a valley stretches to the southeast, through which almost constantly very strong wind blowing. Consequently, the news about the hurricane "ebi" wind of Carpini confirmed. Another big lake in the valley is mentioned by traveler, which is connected to the first river. It was the first European report on Chinese lake Ebinure (Del Plano Carpini, 1997).

Name of the lake of Alakol is meaning "a motley lake" from Kazakh language. In period of XII and XIX centuries this lake had other names as Turge-Nor (from Mongolian language it is meaning "the bridge lake"), Alaktagol, Alateniz, Alakta.

The eastern coast of the lake of Alakol is situated in Urjar zone of East Kazakhstan region. In ancient time caravan roads passed through the Urjar, which directed to the cities of Tashkent and Semey. In 1867-1879 years the Chinese trade representation located there, and in 1905-1915 years Resettlement governance took place in Urjar. The meaning of Urjar is "cliff on rise" (from Kazakh language) (Zhanuzakov, 2005, p. 55).

History of that places is saving a memory of the hero of Kabanbay, who was born in Zharbulak, in his honor a name to the village was owned in 1998.

To 18 km from Alakol Barlyk mineral waters are located. In Mongolian and Chinese languages a word of Barlyk is using to show a richness and value of each thing and materia (for example in Chinese 巴尔鲁克山: Bā'ěrǔkè Shān – a reach cliff). To the east of Djungarian Alatau the ridge of Barlyk is situated in China. This mountain stretches to 120 km, and the highest points is 2923 m. (Katunshan). Existence of mineral water springs on the right bank of Arasan mentioned by travelers in the middle of the XVIII century. On the walls of being nearby shrine had inscriptions indicating that local residents have long been used for the treatment hot keys. Name of "Arasan" is connected with mineral waters, it is meaning "treating water" (State list of geography names of Kazakhstan Republic, 2005, p. 56).

The southern west part of the Lake is located at the territory of Almaty region. Administrative center of that part is a town of Usharal, which was erected in 1881 by Russians settlers, and called as Stepanovka. But in 1929 it was recalled as Ucharal, it was connected with making an area center. In 1984 Ucharal owned an status of a town. That territory of Alakol was habitat from ancient time, for example, a village of Koptuma. In IX-XI centuries a center of Damur region, where kymaks lived was located there. In 1957 the

place of settlement was researched by Zhetysu archeology expedition. New settlement was formed in 1906 by Russian settlers. The word of Koktuma is formed by fusion of two root words “көк” (kok – blue) and “тұма” (tuma), that mean “a blue downward spring” (State list of geography names of Kazakhstan Republic, 2005, pp.338).

Geography location, history of development and settling of the territory reflected at geography objects of the Alakol basin.

3. *Historical evolution of geography names of Alakol basin*

Geography names formed in period, when people, who made these toponyms, hadn't any writing. The earliest writing memorials Turkic peoples belong to the VII century, the Slavs – the beginning of X century, the Mongols – the XIII century, the Manchu-Tungus – the XVI century.

In geography names of Kazakhstan, correspondingly, of researched area, there are Iranian, Arabian, Turkish, Mongol and Slav substrates (Abisheva, Abdreyeva, 2006).

The most ancient of toponymic strata is Iranian. On researched area formation of Iranian strata toponyms is connected with such names of geography objects as, a river of Keruen, which earlier called as Kerven', from Persian language it translated as Caravan. The river of Keruen is closed river of the west mountain pass of Zhetysu. Through that territory the Great Silk Road passed, and it is could be considered, that a settlement for travelers were located there.

Arabian toponyms are connected with Islam formation at that territory. Actually Arabic elements in the toponyms are insignificant and it could be founded mainly in the south of Kazakhstan. Arabian influence to formation of toponyms in the Central Asia is not so big. The Arabs came at a time when there coherent system of geographical names was already in Turkestan.

Turkic toponyms could be founded everywhere, beginning since the VII century, and in the X century Turkic toponyms developed through the vast territory of Kazakhstan. For example, “Alakol – colorful lake”, “Kyzylkum – the red sands”, “Muztau – a freeze mountain”, “Zhalanashkol – a bare lake”, “Sasykkol – foetid lake”, a name of the last lake connected with the such nature processes, as a – releasing of hydrogen sulfide gas (Erdavletov, 2012).

Much of Turkic geography terms implemented in to science literature found of Kazakhstan (takyr, syrt, shor, tugay, and etc.).

Mongolian toponyms formed after Mongolian invasion in the XIII century. Kazakh researcher A. Abdrakhmanov separated Mongolian strata, which entered in Kazakh toponimia, in to two groups: a) names, which were formed during the joining of Turkic and Mongolian languages; b) names, which included into Turkic language, which developed across the whole territory of Kazakhstan, after XIII century, as well as in to language of small neighbor

tribes (Samoyed, Paleo-Asiatic, Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, etc.). Only after the campaigns of Chingizkhan the opposite process began, and the Mongolian language began to have impact on the Turkic. It is also known that Mongols, who merged with vast edge of Turan, was not able to change the language or the faith of the Turkic peoples. Mongols toponyms mainly reflect in names of rivers and lakes. For example, the river of Emel, which flows in the south-west direction, crossing borders of China and Kazakhstan, from Mongolian language it translated as Barkhans river. When it confluences in to lake of Alakol, it forms a small delta. Another example is a Karakol river, which formed from Mongolian word gol meaning "a lake" (State list of geography names of Kazakhstan Republic, 2005).

At the same time, no one could deny existence of a common vocabulary for the Mongolian and Turkic languages. Perhaps that is why to this day Mongolian place names preserved, because the Mongolian language belongs to related Altai type languages. For example, a name of the river of Kokan, which begins from the lake of Ebinur (China). According to folk etymology Hukand is a city of a 'boar' from the hook a 'wild boar', and kand is a city, that is associated with forest vegetation, which once surrounded the city. Such form is explained as town on a kill. But it is more possible, that toponym was formed after tribe name, which was known as Kokan of Uzbeks tribes.

Toponyms, which were formed after adoption of Russian allegiance by Kazakhstan are have interest. Geography names of new types, such as Slav names, appeared. Mainly it were antroponyms and oyonyms. New settlements were called in honor of the first settlers openers of the region. The first researcher, who gave us a short description and a scheme map of Alakol lakes was Russian officer N. Unkovskiy in 1722. The next time Alakol hollow was a part of research routes of such well known scientists and travelers as Karelin G. (1840), Shrenk A., (1840), Vlangali A., (1849), Semenov Tyan-Shanskiy P. (1857), Tatarinov A. (1864), Golubev A. (1867), Finsh O., Brem A. (1876), Romanovskiy G. (1878), Polyakov I. (1877), Obruchev V. (1905, 1906, 1909) and others. Each of them left his memory in geography names of the region. Karelins research results were published in X issue of "Imperator Russia geography Society". Lists of Altay and Dzhungaria plants are most important of his works. In honor of Karelin sort of plants is named as Karelinia (Karelinia LESS.). One of other Russia researchers was Shrenk. In 1840, 1841 and 1843. in the studying region on behalf of the St. Petersburg Botanical Garden A. Schrenk traveled. His studies were not limited to botanical charges, he also performed geographical observations with a military topographer Timothy Nifantev. Result of their three-year work was a map of studied area, which was composed by Nifantev. Schrenk found that recently the Lake Balkhash, Alakol and Sasykkol were together. In other words, he first came to a correct conclusion about existence of a large Alakol and Balkhash basin. In honor of Schrenk named such plants as tulip of Schrenk and endemic of Dzhungar briar of Schrenk.

After gaining independence a number of Slavic place names in the region have received prior historical names. For example, a village of Antonovka was renamed as Koylyk. In VIII-XIV centuries it was the biggest trade and cultural center in the north-west of Zhetysay, a settle of Karlyk Zhabgu. Rubruk wrote about Koylyk as follow “there is a small town which calls as Kailak, where market was situated, all of merchants visited the market”. In the Uzbek a word of Koya, on Balkar Kaya, Yakut Haya mean “break”.

4. Conclusions

Based on an analysis of names of Alakol Basin of Kazakhstan the basic physical and geographical aspects of the formation of names established: oronyms, hydronyms, oiconyms, necronyms. Most of oiconyms – names of settle points and cities are names of the new period, which connected with industrialization of Kazakhstan. For example, a station of Dostyk. Dostyk means friendship. This station was erected to provide transportation from China to Kazakhstan. In general, most of geographical objects of the region belong to the later strata, they are of Turkic and Mongol name (Tarbagatay, from mongols word “marmat”).

At the present stage toponymics takes not only scientific and practical, historical and cultural, but also social and political importance. No human community, no country in the process of its development did not do without its own set of antroponyms and toponyms. Kazakhstan has its own onomastic system, which formed in deep ancient period.

These research were made within the research project “Integral researches of Recreational potential of Alakol basin to develop of recreation and tourism”.

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Riassunto - Particolarità della formazione dei toponimi del bacino del lago Alakol del Kazakistan

Nell'articolo sono riportati i risultati di ricerca delle particolarità di formazione dei toponimi del bacino del lago Alakol, regione al sud-est del Kazakistan. Per raggiungere l'obiettivo della ricerca, è stato necessario risolvere i seguenti problemi:

- giustificare i principi di distribuzione dei toponimi in classi;
- individuare le particolarità di formazione dei toponimi;
- definire territorialmente le principali denominazioni dei toponimi in quartieri.

Lo sviluppo intensivo del turismo della regione nell'ambito di un piano sistematico per sviluppare il turismo in Kazakistan prevede uno studio completo del suo turismo ed opportunità ricreative, nonché la formazione di un'immagine turistica attraente. In questa chiave una particolare attenzione è rivolta al patrimonio culturale e storico, inclusi i toponimi. Sul sito della Grande Via della Seta, scelto come oggetto di ricerca, dai tempi antichi hanno abitato diverse tribù e popoli, e la migrazione storica in modo luminoso e colorato è riflessa nella toponomastica della zona.

La sistematizzazione di circa 1700 toponimi ha permesso di individuare i luoghi di abitazione dei primi popoli che rappresentavano un interesse sia per gli scienziati che per i turisti.

In qualità di base informativa sono state utilizzate le opere di scienziati famosi dei Paesi della Comunità di Stati Indipendenti e Paesi esteri lontani, nonché dei ricercatori kazaki dei toponimi; i dati delle statistiche ufficiali, gli elenchi pubblici dei nomi di luogo della Repubblica del Kazakistan.

Résumé - Caractéristiques de la formation des toponymes de la piscine du lac Alakol qui se trouve dans le sud-est du Kazakhstan

L'article présente les résultats de la recherche des caractéristiques de la formation des toponymes de la piscine du lac Alakol qui se trouve dans le sud-est du Kazakhstan. La réalisation de l'objectif de la recherche a nécessité d'accomplir les tâches suivantes:

- justifier les principes de la répartition des toponymes de classes;
- identifier les caractéristiques de la formation de noms de lieux;
- identifier les principales nominations des toponymes selon des régions.

La maîtrise touristique intensive de la région dans le cadre de plan de développement du tourisme au Kazakhstan prévoit une étude de ses possibilités touristiques et de loisirs, la formation de l'image séduisante touristique. À cet égard, une attention particulière est accordée à son patrimoine, y compris, aux noms de lieux. Sur le tronçon de la Grande route

de la soie, choisie comme objet de la recherche, de l'antiquité vivaient les différentes tribus et les peuples, et la migration historique est reflétée vivement dans la toponymie de cette région.

La systématisation d'environ 1700 noms de lieux a permis d'identifier les habitats des premiers peuples d'intérêt pour les scientifiques et pour les touristes.

En tant que base d'information ont utilisés des travaux des savants de pays de la CEI et de l'étranger, ainsi que des chercheurs de noms de lieux du Kazakhstan, les données de la statistique officielle, des répertoires de noms géographiques de la République du Kazakhstan.