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**TOPONYMS IN LEXICOGRAPHY  
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF SOME AMERICAN TOPONYMS)**

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**Abstract**

Place names help to revive the historical past of each nation, its features, to determine the boundaries of its location, to describe the areas of past distribution of languages, cultural and economic centers. It is no exaggeration to say that place names are the spiritual heritage of every nation. Toponyms can represent one or more toponymical layers too. As a language unit, they are studied in Linguistics, as well as in Lexicology and Lexicography. In this article the analyses of some American toponyms and their importance in Lexicography can be faced. Furthermore, the importance of Lexicography is mentioned. The issues of using place names in toponymical dictionaries are explained and clarified with examples. Some toponyms used in the past as well as those that still exist today are also considered in the article. Their current existence and reflection in a dictionary of place names were reviewed and compared with the place names given in an online dictionary.

**Keywords:** toponyms, toponymemes, lexicography, toponymical dictionaries, etymology, toponymical layer.

**抽象的**

地名有助于恢复每个国家的历史过去、其特征，确定其位置的边界，描述过去语言、文化和经济中心的分布区域。可以毫不夸张地说，地名是每个民族的精神遗产。地名也可以代表一个或多个地名层。作为一个语言单元，它们在语言学以及词汇学和词典编纂中进行研究。本文将对一些美国地名及其在词典编纂中的重要性进行分析。此外，还提到了词典编纂的重要性。举例说明和阐明地名词典中使用地名的问题。文章中还考虑了过去使用的一些地名以及今天仍然存在的地名。审查了它们目前在地名词典中的存在和反映，并与在线词典中给出的地名进行了比较。

**关键词：**地名、地名、词典编纂、地名词典、词源、地名层。

**Introduction**

Vocabulary of our language is rich in proper names. A significant part of them is place names, in scientific terms, toponyms.[5]

Toponymy is a science of geographical names, which actively formed and expanded over time. Toponyms - place names, have existed since ancient times and have attracted the attention of

not only scholars but also ordinary people. Toponyms are also a significant resource for every nation.

Everywhere in our life we connect with destination, so it means that toponyms are necessary for living. Languages are the subjects of the science called linguistics. Therefore, anyone handling geographical names needs to

have some basic linguistic knowledge, both in general terms and specifically pertaining to the language situation of the area of survey. Learning them or studying is need. People from different professional backgrounds may be allured to some kind of study of geographical names. To linguists specializing either in the historical or genealogical aspects of specific languages, or in the taxonomy of languages in general, toponyms contain a treasure of ancient language elements which allows them to under build their theories or test their hypotheses. Likewise, historians may use toponym research to reveal ancient movements of peoples, or get a hint of cultural exchange patterns in forgotten ages.

The question naturally arises as to why place names are so important in people's lives. The reason is that if we do not name a place, we face all sorts of confusions, misunderstandings, and even problems like losing our way, our destination. Therefore, the phrase "toponym", which is not considered very large, is actually of great value.

## **Materials And Methods**

As Russian scientist V.A. Nikonorov said, "Let's imagine for a moment that all geographical names – cities, villages, rivers, seas, mountains, countries, streets – have disappeared from our planet. All the work of the post immediately stopped. Transport is paralyzed: no one knows where he is going, where to change, and where to get off; goods instead of Marseille go to Honolulu. This will not happen: it is impossible to "remove" the names; they are inseparable from the whole life of modern society. They can be replaced by putting others in their place, but you cannot do without names. We use them at every step so habitually

that we don't even notice them until there is some kind of hitch" [7,8]

Place names help to revive the historical past of each nation, its features, to determine the boundaries of its location, to describe the areas of past distribution of languages, cultural and economic centers. It is no exaggeration to say that place names are the spiritual heritage of every nation. Toponyms can represent one or more toponymical layers too.

Toponyms are one of the study objects of geography. But as a language unit, they are studied in linguistics, as well as in lexicology and lexicography.

Scientists from all over the world have done a lot of research on the formation of toponyms in the form of a dictionary, the structure of the toponymical dictionary, and it is still being done. In particular, the scientific research works and toponymical dictionaries created by Uzbek scientists N.Okhunov, S.Koraev, T.Nafasov, English scientist D. Mills, American scientists G.R.Stuart, A.Drey, Russian scientist E.M.Pospelov have an important role in the formation and preservation of toponyms.

For example, N. Okhunov's book "Interpretation of place names" (Joy nomlari ta'biri) is included in the list of toponymic dictionaries. And in this dictionary, place-names of Uzbekistan are given in alphabetical order, and each toponymic unit is explained separately.[5]

Russian scientist E.M. Pospelov's textbook "Toponymic dictionary" is intended for students, which includes toponyms of Russia and foreign countries, and consists of 1,500 toponyms, as well as exercises on place names at the end of this book. And a list of changed or renamed place names.[6]

Drey takes a unique approach to creating a toponymic dictionary, that is, he creates his rhyming dictionary, the Rhyming Dictionary of USA Place Names. According to it, the names of fifty states of the United States are given in alphabetical order, and each place name contains a few rhyming words.[1]

'A Dictionary of British Place-Names' by British scientist David Mills was first published in 1991 and reprinted in 1998 and 2003. On the first page of the dictionary we can get brief information about the author. This dictionary consists of about 17,000 words, as mentioned in the introduction. The dictionary covers the names of all the major British islands: England, Scotland and the Scottish Islands, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The dictionary is mainly intended for the general public, the last edition of which was revised and amended in 2011.[4]

Another book by David Mills is called 'A Dictionary of London Place-Names'. The dictionary contains more than 1,700 place names related to places, streets, stations, and areas in London. The book consists of two main parts:

- The introductory part (a discussion of the chronological and structural names of places that represent the period of development of the city from the Celtic period to the present);
- Alphabetical listing of place names, date of their first writing, origin, and associations (combinations);

The dictionary also includes nine maps of London, a useful glossary of elements of place names in London, a list of selected publications, and recommended websites. Currently, this dictionary is being updated and reworked. An important aspect of the dictionary is that it can be used as a guide not only by Londoners but by all people who visit the city.[3]

## Results And Discussion

In this work, we have paid attention to the role and importance of some toponyms in lexicography too. The reflection of toponyms in toponymic dictionaries is also briefly described in our work. The significance of such dictionaries is also given and illustrated with examples. As a basis of our research we have chosen a toponymic dictionary named 'American Place Names a concise and selective dictionary for the continental United states of America' by George R .Stewart, the American toponomist and scientist. That is the aim of our investigation.

Historical, lingo cognitive, contextual and oppositional methods were used in this research work.

Before analyzing toponyms given in toponymical dictionaries, we decided to give some emphasis to lexicography.

Lexicography is a branch of linguistics that deals with the work of compiling a dictionary and studying the issues related to it, the types of dictionaries. A dictionary is a collection of words and phrases collected, arranged, in a book, or some other form for a specific purpose. There are so many types that it is hard to say. One type of dictionaries is called onomastic dictionaries. Onomastic units such as toponyms, hydronyms, anthroponyms, oronyms, ethnonyms, are listed in alphabetical order. And their meaning is explained, spelling norm noted.

As for toponymical dictionaries, place names, geographical names, names of partial water structures (hydronyms) explained in such dictionaries. Their literary and orthographic normative forms mentioned too.

The difference between a toponymical dictionary and a simple dictionary is that in an ordinary dictionary, we may not get the information we want about toponyms. But in

toponymic dictionaries, we can also observe cases related to the name of the desired place, its origin, etymology.

As we mentioned before, specifically we investigate some toponyms given in ‘American Place Names a concise and selective dictionary for the continental United states of America’ by George R. Stewart.

This dictionary is for the continental United States of America. As for size and number of toponyms it contains some more 12 000 entry-headings which elucidate the names of many more thousands of places. The author provides the linguistic meaning and derivation of each name.

Careful content is given to the names of notable places including:

**1) Chief rivers and mountains.** Besides, **the states and cities that have historical significance** are also paid attention. For instance,

- **Mississippi-Algonquian**, from one of the languages of the Great Lakes region, recorded in a French context in 1966 as Mississippi, “big river”, French explorers, descending the river, carried this name along, and applied it to the stream clear to its mouth. The name thus superseded other names that had been applied to it by Spanish explorers. In 1798 Congress applied this Algonquian name, from the river, to a territory which was organized in Muskogee land; from the territory the name passed to the state.[2, 299];

Here we would like to give some brief explanation to the word ‘Algonquian’.

Algonquian is a) a family of American Indian languages spoken by peoples from Labrador to Carolina and westward into the Great Plains.

b) the dialect of Ojibwa spoken by these people [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Algonquian>]

- **Mount Rainier-WA** For Peter Rainier, British admiral, named for him on May 8,1792, by his friend the explorer Vancouver, who saw the peak from his ship.[ 2, 398];

At first glance, this place- Mount Rainier seems to be associated with the word "rain," which is a natural phenomenon. But if we pay attention to its original meaning, we will see that it is actually named after a person. This is considered as a result of the author’s research. Also, special information about the abbreviation "WA" given before the description of this toponym is attached in the Abbreviations section in the introductory part of the dictionary. According to the information in this section, WA means Washington. So this place is located in the area of Washington State.

- **Philadelphia** – Greek “brotherly love”. William Pen, when naming his new settlement in 1681/2, knew of the city mentioned in the New Testament. The name was selected, even before the settlement was made, as an expression of the ideal for which the colony was to strive. A half dozen other places have taken the name.[2,370] New Testament- 14th century, the second part of the Christian Bible comprising the canonical Gospels and Epistles and also the book of Acts and book of Revelation [ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Algonquian>]

**2) Frequently repeated place names** are included in this dictionary too, which mainly reflect nature, ancient customs, and dialects:

- **Beaver** – found all over the country in proper locations, of economic importance for its fur, conspicuous because of its dams, the beaver has given rise to, at a rough estimate, the names of 1000 natural features. These are most commonly smaller streams(brooks, runs, creeks) such as the animal inhabited, and streams so named might occur so close to be scarcely distinguishable. The

following toponyms related to the name Beaver are also included in the dictionary: Beaver Creek, Beaver Brook, and Beaver Lick. Moreover, Beaver has spread to about 50 Habitation-names. For example, Beaverdam, Beaver Tree Canyon and so on.[2, 40]

• **Medicine, Medical** – the name may indicate a place with water supposed to have therapeutic value. e.g. Medical springs OR.(OR means Oregon).

It may also record an incident, e.g. Medicine Creek OR.

Some amateur doctors here mixed up a potion for their patient which had dire results. Most commonly the name springs from the usage of ‘medicine’ to mean anything that the Indians conceived to be unnatural or supernatural. e.g. Medicine Creek NB (Nebraska).

Since this usage of the word did not arise until 1800, nearly all the names are western. Many of them are translations of Indian terms. Indian personal names are sometimes involved, e.g. Medicine Owl Creek. Except above mentioned place names associated the word ‘medicine’, there can be faced some more other toponyms came with this word, for instance, Medicine Lake- related to a mysterious event, Medicine Wood – a single large beech tree, Medicine Bow River –the name cluster probably originated from the river. Medicine Lodge – from the river. [2, 288]

So, from the explanations above, it can be said that it is not always possible to mention quite so what the toponyms mean from their appearance. It is necessary to use toponymic dictionaries to get accurate information about the name of this or that place. This is once again a clear proof of the importance of the place and role of toponymic dictionaries in lexicography.

• **Oak** – Many hundreds of places bear the name of this widely distributed and conspicuous tree, of numerous species. The names indicate the presence of trees or of a single notable example. The oak also suggests permanence, beauty, strength, etc. and has therefore been widely used for commendatory names of towns, streets, subdivisions and so on. Almost all combinations thus appear with ‘-grow’ and ‘-vile’ being especially numerous, along with such double commendatory as Oak Park and Oakdale.

Other associations with the word Oak can also be faced in this dictionary and they express several meanings according to the situation. In such place names we can include: Big Oak Flat, White Oak Creek, Oakland, Oakhurst, Oakley, Oakham, Oaks Lake, Oak Cane Branch etc. [2, 336]

Furthermore, the author focuses on the following place names:

**3) Names of strange and unusual places that attract people’s natural curiosity.** He includes non-English names in this category, mostly names of Indian origin. He cites the following as examples of such names:

• **Katahdin, Mount** ME– Algonquian ‘big’ (principal)-mountain. From the list of abbreviations of the introductory part of this dictionary the abbreviation ME means that this mountain is situated in Maine [2, 234]

• **Kokomo** – IN (Indiana) From the personal name of a local Indian.[2, 243]

• **Kokodjo Mountain** – ME (Maine) Algonquian ‘kettle- mountain’, from the Indian story that the giant Glooscap, pursuing a moose calf, here threw his kettle upside down.[2, 243]

**4) To the next type the author includes ‘Mistake’ names:**

• **Nome** –On a chart prepared for a survey conducted by the British ship Herald the

notation? name was placed near a certain cape in AK (Alaska); this was taken by a second draughtsman to be the name itself, and he put it as Cape Name; the a being indistinct, the final copy came out as Cape Name. This is a wholly authenticated instance of an origin by mistake. In TX (Texas) and ND (North Dakota) the name is derived from that in AK (Alaska) [2, 331]

- **Tolo** –OR (Oregon) **Yolo** CA(California), but the T was substituted by mistake.[2, 487]

- **Plaska-** TX (Texas) An earlier settler submitted Pulaski, the name of his former home in TN (Tennessee), but the name came back from the Post Office Dept., as Plaska[2, 376]

#### **5) Provocative place names such as:**

- **Bloody** – The regular term to indicate a place where bloodshed has occurred. Many of the stories are well authenticated. Others are vaguely reminiscent of Indian troubles. A few commemorate murders.CA (California), apparently the most sanguinary state, has 20 examples. Though bloody is not used, as in England, as an obscene term, its unpleasant associations have kept it from being a habitation-name. Bloody Lake MN (Minnesota) – for the victims of the Sioux massacre in 1862. Bloody Thanks AZ (Arizona) from a massacre of Apaches by Americans in 1864. Bloody Run OR (Oregon): in a region noted for Indian troubles, probably for the killing of a man and wife on Oct.1, 1844.

Besides, there can be faced these place names associated with the word ‘Bloody’: Bloody Island, Bloody Pond, Bloody Point, Bloody Creek, Bloody Gulch, Bloody Dick Creek, Bloody Run, Bloody Branch, Bloody Lake, Bloody Run. [2, 50]

- **Goodnight** – TX (Texas) For Charles Goodnight, ranch owner. In a few instances the usage may be called merely descriptive.[2, 183]

At first glance, the name of this place may seem to be derived from the word 'Good night', but if we look into its original meaning given in the toponymical dictionary, it is clear that the name of this place is named after a person.

- **Christmas** – Generally for an association with Dec.25. Christmas creek OR (Oregon): some sheepman took their flock here on Christmas Day, 1888. Christmas Lake OR: Fremont reached a lake on Dec.24, 1843, and named it for the season; it is now Hart Lake, but another lake, probably by false association, is now known by the name. Christmas AZ (Arizona) a miner, on Christmas Day, 1902, discovered that his claim had been confirmed. In MN (Minnesota) the lake is named from W.Christmas, a surveyor. We can also see Christmas Branch, Christmas FL(Florida) and so on.[2, 97]

#### **6) Coined place names:**

- **Sniktaw** – CA (California) Probably for W.F.Watkins, journalist of the 1850's who used a reverse spelling of his name as a pseudonym [2, 450]

- **Birome** – TX (Texas) named by R.L.Cartwright, early settler, for his sons, Bickham and Jerome.[2, 47]

- **Texarkana** – a coined name for a town lying in Texas and Arizona, and close to Louisiana [2, 480]

In the next step of our research we accorded our attention to the comparison of above mentioned toponyms given in the toponymical dictionary with the same toponyms mentioned (if they were mentioned) in online dictionaries. As comparing the toponyms' existence in other dictionarie we have chosen online dictionary, which is easy to use and common for all users. Toponyms given in this dictionary are explained as geographical names:

- **Mississippi – state in the southern U.S. bordering on the Gulf of Mexico and having the Mississippi River forming all of its border with Arkansas and part of its border with Louisiana; capital Jackson.**
- **Mount Rainier** - mountain 14,410 feet (4392 meters) high in Mount Rainier National Park, west central Washington; highest mountain in the Cascade Range and in Washington.
- **Philadelphia** - city and port on the Delaware River in southeastern Pennsylvania. NOTE: Philadelphia is the most populous city in Pennsylvania.
- **Beaver** – **1)** river 280 miles (451 kilometers) long in northwestern Oklahoma forming the upper course of the North Canadian River  
**2)** river 305 miles (491 kilometers) long Canada in Alberta and Saskatchewan flowing east into the Churchill River
- **Medicine- not found**
- **Oak Creek** - city in southeastern Wisconsin on Lake Michigan south-southeast of Milwaukee.
- **Katahdin, Mount ME** - mountain 5268 feet (1606 meters) high in north central Maine NOTE: Mount Katahdin contains the highest point in Maine and is the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail.
- **Kokomo** - city north of Indianapolis in north central Indiana
- **Kokodjo Mountain – not found**
- **Nome** - city facing Norton Sound on the southern side of Seward Peninsula in western Alaska population 3598  
NOTE: Nome was founded as a camp for gold miners circa 1898 and was a center of the great Alaskan gold rush in 1899–1903. The name is thought to be a mistaken interpretation of "?

Name" written on an early navigational chart. Today, Nome is notable for the finish line of the annual Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

- **Tolo – not found**
- **Plaska – not found**
- **Bloody – not found**
- **Goodnight – not found**
- **Christmas –not found as a toponym**
- **Sniktaw – not found**
- **Birome – not found**
- **Texarkana –1)** city in southwestern Arkansas adjacent to Texarkana, Texas. **2)** city in northeastern Texas adjacent to Texarkana, Arkansas

So as we see, from place names given in the target toponymical dictionary only 50 % of toponyms are mentioned in online dictionary. We have researched only one online dictionary. But from this little research we can say that not all the toponyms will be given with their etymology or origin in the ordinary or online dictionaries. Only general information of this or that place is mentioned in such dictionaries. For the researchers who are working with toponyms it is better to use toponymical dictionaries. Toponymical dictionaries are more effective and useful for finding and being aware of any place name, its origin and etymology. This kind of dictionaries can serve as an instruction for the tourists too.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of our study, we can make the following conclusions:

- toponyms (toponymemes) are cultural, geographical, linguistic, historical and psychological sources of peoples based on their culture, customs, way of life and place, language and history (toponymemes can be referred as cultural, geographical, linguistic, historical and

psychological sources). As they can show people's culture and traditions, their inhabitants, language and history);

- toponyms can represent one or more toponymical layers. It means that at first glance, the name of any place may seem to be derived from one word , but if we look into its original meaning given in the toponymical dictionary, it is clear that the name of this place is named after another word;

- toponyms and lexicography are relevant to each other.

- in an ordinary dictionary we may not get the information we want about toponyms. But in toponymical dictionaries, we can also observe cases related to the name of the desired place, its origin, etymology

- toponymical dictionaries are necessary for every nation: such kind of dictionaries are radically different not only from ordinary dictionary types, but also reflect the life, past, present, culture, development, and interaction of the people living in a particular area.

### **Conflict Of Interests And Contribution Of Authors**

The authors declare the absence of obvious and potential conflicts of interest related to the publication of this article and report on the contribution of each author.

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