

**HYDRONYMS IN THE NOVEL "TEMUR MALIK": A LEXICAL- SEMANTIC AND
HISTORICAL-ETYMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20544351>

Abstract: This article analyzes the hydronyms utilized in Mirmukhsin's historical novel "Temur Malik", with a particular focus on prominent water bodies including the Khazar (Caspian) Sea, Amu Darya, Syr Darya, and Zerafshan. Through a systematic lexical-semantic and historical-etymological framework, the paper investigates how these proper names function within the literary text and uncovers their underlying linguistic origins. The research illustrates that artistic historical narratives serve as rich repositories for ancient toponymic strata, reflecting the ethno-cultural landscape, socioeconomic structures, and geographic realities of the Central Asian region. By tracing these hydronyms back to ancient Turkic, Iranian, and Greek sources, the study illuminates the complex processes of language contact and naming evolution in Uzbek lexicography.

Keywords: "Temur Malik" novel, toponym, toponymy, hydronyms, hydronymy, Khazar (Caspian) Sea, Amu Darya, Syr Darya, Zerafshan, Kohak, Narshakhi, Babur, lexical-semantic, historical-etymological.

1. INTRODUCTION

The linguistic exploration of literary texts provides a profound window into understanding an author's overarching ideological goals and the historical milieu they aim to reconstruct. Within the structural fabric of historical fiction, proper nouns—specifically toponyms and their distinct subcategory, hydronyms (names of water bodies)—hold substantial communicative, aesthetic, and historical weight. In historical novels, these elements do not merely establish a geographical setting; they encapsulate the rich past of a nation, the complex processes of ethnic formation, and the preservation of linguistic heritages across centuries. Studying these names within the framework of Uzbek prose allows scholars to bridge the gap between pure philology, historical geography, and cultural anthropology.

Water has always been the cradle of civilization in Central Asia's arid climates. Consequently, hydronyms are frequently recognized as some of the most stable and ancient components of an indigenous onomastic system, often outliving political settlements and shifting borders. In Mirmukhsin's prominent novel "Temur Malik", which portrays the dramatic defense against Mongol invasions, the inclusion of regional waterways is central to the realism and geopolitical structure of the narrative. Analyzing these hydronyms offers dual benefits: it enhances the linguistic evaluation of modern Uzbek historical fiction and clarifies the structural evolution of names that have defined the region for millennia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the broader discipline of onomastics, the study of hydronyms represents an essential field of inquiry, given that names of rivers and seas are typically more resilient to swift linguistic assimilation than other toponymic types. This resilience occurs primarily because early human communities naturally settled near water basins, making nomadic stabilization and the development of agriculture heavily reliant on reliable water supplies. Despite the critical importance of these naming systems, the systematic linguistic analysis of hydronyms specifically contained within Uzbek historical novels remains an understudied niche.

Significant groundwork in the regional mapping of water-related terminology has been conducted by a number of notable scholars. General patterns of regional toponymy and localized onomastic units have been thoroughly examined in the dissertations and foundational studies of N. Begaliyev, T. Nafasov, Sh. Nafasov, N. Uluqov, and A. Muhammadjonov. However, the vast majority of these researchers have limited their scope to broad regional toponymic groupings, categorizing hydronyms simply as secondary sub-layers of geographical registries within a specific administrative zone. Dedicated linguistic evaluations detailing the lexical-semantic transformations and historical-etymological trajectories of ancient water names as active elements of literary discourse have been largely neglected. Thus, this study uses the linguistic material from "Temur Malik" to fill this scholarly void by performing a dedicated multi-layered analysis of historical river and sea names.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a multi-faceted qualitative and historical-comparative linguistic methodology to analyze the hydronymic system present in Mirmukhsin's "Temur Malik". The primary research material was extracted directly from the text of the novel, identifying every lexical instance referencing macro-hydronyms (major seas and rivers).

The empirical assessment of the selected data is executed through three primary methodologies:

1. **Lexical-Semantic Analysis:** Investigating the semantic components, underlying roots, and morphemic structures of the names to determine how geographical descriptions transition into proper nouns.

2. **Historical-Etymological Analysis:** Tracing the evolution of the names across historical periods by evaluating ancient Turkic runic texts, medieval Arabic and Persian geographical treatises, and Classical Greek or Chinese chronicles.

3. **Comparative Onomastics:** Cross-referencing the text's data with established onomastic dictionaries and theoretical models posited by Turkic and Central Asian philologists (such as V.V. Barthold, H. Hasanov, and T. Januzakov) to decipher complex linguistic layering and polyonymy.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. General Concept of Hydronyms in Turkic Philology

Morphologically, the term hydronym is derived from the Classical Greek roots hydro (water) and onoma (proper name), signifying any designated body of water. The historical register of Uzbekistan is exceptionally rich in these forms, incorporating intricate linguistic layers involving rivers (daryo, say, jilgha), canals (ariq, kanal), lakes (ko'l), and natural springs (buloq, chashma). In traditional Turkic structures, the simple noun for water—variously recorded as su, suu, suv, sub, or suy in foundational texts like Mahmud al-Kashgari's Diwan Lughat al-Turk, the medieval Tafsir, and Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur's Baburnoma—frequently shifts from a common noun to a core onomastic component. When fused with descriptive qualifiers, it generates highly stable hydronymic constructions like Qorasuv (Black/Underground water), Oqsuv (White/Glacial water), and Kattasuv (Great water).

Similarly, the lexical component ko'l (lake) maintains a widespread, highly stable presence across almost all documented Turkic languages, producing globally recognized markers such as Issiqko'l (Warm lake), To'dako'l (Bukhara region), Ayg'irko'l (Jizzakh), and Aydarko'l. To illustrate the sheer density of these naming systems within the geographic consciousness of Turkic peoples, Kazakh linguist T. Januzakov documented that across the Kazakh territory alone, there exist over 85,000 rivers (with 8,000 stretching beyond ten kilometers) and approximately 50,000 distinct lakes, each bearing structured onomastic titles rooted in historic environmental descriptions.

4.2. Etymological and Semantic Analysis of Specific Macro-Hydronyms

The Khazar (Caspian) Sea: The Caspian Sea stands out as an exceptional geographical feature that has accumulated an immense collection of alternative designations throughout human history. Scholar P.V. Jilo observed that no other marine body on Earth has gathered even half as many titles, documenting at least seventy independent historical names for this single landlocked sea. Central Asian geographer H. Hasanov expanded on this research, discovering an additional ten historical titles. Hasanov demonstrated that the names given to the sea systematically reflected the changing provinces surrounding it, prominent coastal trading cities, major rivers emptying into its basin, or the ethnonyms of nomadic and sedentary tribes dwelling along its shores.

Regarding its primary linguistic etymology, the explanation validated by T. Januzakov and supported by Turkmen scholar S. Ataniyazov offers the most logically coherent morphosemantic breakdown. The term Caspian is a composite structure formed of two distinct components: the initial segment Kas represents the ethnonym of an ancient historical tribe that populated the coastal boundaries, while the terminal phonetic variant pi (with regional variants bi, bu, ba) functions as an ancient lexical root signifying a lake, river, or localized water source. Hence, the name translates transparently to "The Lake of the Kas People". Conversely, the alternative literary title Khazar, heavily utilized in medieval Islamic scholarship and featured prominently within the novel's timeline, directly tracks the political and migratory influence of the Turkic Khazar Khaganate, which dominated the northern and western coastal reaches of the sea during the early Middle Ages.

The Amu Darya: The historical documentation of the Amu Darya—the largest river system in Central Asia—is extensively preserved across ancient Classical Greek, Imperial Chinese, and early medieval Turkic runic records. In Classical Western texts, the river appears as the Oxus or Oksos. As archaeologist Ya. G'ulomov noted, this Europeanized variant emerged as a phonetic adaptation of the indigenous Sak-Massaget lexical term o'kuz, which translated literally as "river" or "flowing stream". This ancient term survived within regional dialects well into the late medieval era.

Following the Arab conquests, Islamic geographers introduced the title Jayxun. Academician V.V. Barthold traced this name directly to the Arabic transformation of the Biblical river Gihon (found in Torah descriptions of Paradise). The modern designation Amu Darya is directly tied to the historical urban center of Amuya (the medieval precursor to the modern city of Chardzhou/Turkmenabat). This historical development is confirmed by H. Hasanov, who noted that while separate sections of the river were known locally by titles like the Balx river, Termiz river, or

Xorazm river, its central crossing point near the city of Omul/Amuya led to the condensed name Omuy river, eventually standardizing into the modern compound Amu Darya.

The Syr Darya: The northern counterpart to the Amu Darya, the Syr Darya, shows a similarly complex history of renaming (polyonymy). During the Hellenistic era, Greek chronicles designated the river as the Jaxartes (or Yaksarta), derived from local eastern Iranian configurations. Roman naturalist Pliny recorded that contemporary Scythian tribes referred to the waterway as the Silis. The root component Sir is identified by historical geographers as an ancient Sak tribal ethnonym. Originally, the name Sir applied strictly to the lower deltas of the river, while the upper and middle segments retained the title Jaxartes.

Alternative etymological hypotheses exist. Some scholars suggest the name stems from the Indo-European base sal (meaning salt), pointing to the white, saline crusts left along its lower basins during dry seasons, implying a semantic meaning of "the salty river". H. Hasanov analyzed popular folk etymologies that attempted to explain the name via the modern Uzbek homonym sir (secret/mysterious) as the "secret river", but dismissed this as unscientific. Instead, he

highlighted semantic links to roots signifying a bright color or yellow mud (reflecting its highly turbid, silt-laden waters), while maintaining that the tribal association with the ancient Sir clan remains the most historically sound theory. By the time of the Timurid dynasty, as noted in the memoirs of Babur, the river was broadly referred to as the Sayhun or the River of Khujand (Xo'jand suyi).

The Zerafshan: The Zerafshan River is central to the agrarian life of Samarkand and Bukhara. In medieval historical geographies, such as Abu Tahir Khoja's Samariya, the river is regularly called the Kohak (or Kuhaq) river, drawing its name from the high hills situated near Samarkand where the river bends. The text notes that the river originates in eastern mountain chains, fed by Lake Iskandar (Iskandar ko'li) and the melting glaciers of the Mastchoh range, before flowing downward to sustain the oases of Bukhara and Qorako'l.

Linguistically, the modern name Zerafshan is a classic Persian compound. It is formed by joining the noun zar (gold) with the active verbal participle afshan (shattering, pouring, or spreading). Semantically, the name translates to "The Scatterer of Gold". This poetic yet functional title describes the gold-bearing sands historically washed down from the high Pamir-Alay mountain veins into the lower valleys, highlighting the vital socioeconomic role the river played in funding the ancient economies of Sogdiana.

5. CONCLUSION

The systematic lexical-semantic and historical-etymological evaluation of macro-hydronyms within Mirmukhsin's novel "Temur Malik" demonstrates that names of water bodies function as vital linguistic monuments. Rivers like the Amu Darya, Syr Darya, Zerafshan, and the landlocked Khazar Sea did not simply provide vital water for irrigation, travel, and agriculture across Central Asia; they also shaped the historical consciousness, tribal identities, and political boundaries of the region. The high frequency of alternative names (polyonymy) for these waters highlights their long-standing importance to diverse coexisting populations. Investigating these hydronyms clarifies the etymological roots of these terms and demonstrates how historical fiction preserves authentic linguistic layers. Ultimately, this lexical analysis shows that proper nouns in historical literature serve as an invaluable foundation for studying the evolving language, culture, and enduring heritage of the Uzbek nation.

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