

The Patriarch of Uzbek Onomastics

Özbek Onomastiğinin Babası

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Özet

Makale; Özbek onomastiğinin kurucusu, Filoloji Doktoru, Profesör Begmatov Ernst Azimovich'in antroponimi ve toponimi alanlarındaki bilimsel ve pratik faaliyetlerini ele almaktadır. Çalışmada, onun monografilerinin ve sözlüklerinin içeriğinin yanı sıra özel isimler (onimler), antroponimlerin oluşumu, antroponimik göstergeler ile ad, soyadı, baba adı, lakap ve mahlas gibi antroponimik birimlere ilişkin mikro/makro onomastik formülasyonlarına (prostranstva) özel bir vurgu yapılarak bilimsel görüşleri ve yorumları incelenmektedir. Çalışma, Azimovich'in isimlerin yazımı konusundaki görüşlerini ele alarak antroponimik birimlerin işlevlerini de analiz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Onomastik, özel isim, onomastik alan (prostranstva), onim, antroponimi, antroponim, antroponimik gösterge, toponim, antroponimlerin oluşumu*

Abstract

The article discusses the scientific and practical activities of the founder of Uzbek onomastics, Doctor of Philology, Professor Begmatov Ernst Azimovich in the fields of anthroponymy and toponymy. It examines the content of his monographs and dictionaries, as well as his scientific views and interpretations with a special focus on his micro/macro-onomastic formulations (prostranstva) regarding proper nouns (onyms), the formation of anthroponyms, anthroponymic indicators and anthroponymic units such as names, surnames, patronyms, nicknames and pseudonyms. By dealing with Azimovich's views on the spelling of names, the study also analyzes the function of the anthroponymic units.

Keywords: *Onomastics, Proper Noun, Onomastic Space (Prostranstva), Onym, Anthroponymy, Anthroponym, Anthroponymic Indicator, Toponym, Formation of Anthroponyms*

The formation, development, and scientific advancement of the field of onomastics in Uzbek linguistics are closely associated with the name of Doctor of Philological Sciences and Professor Ernst Azimovich Begmatov. Had he been alive today, he would have turned 90 this year.

Ernst Begmatov was born on June 7, 1936, in the Turakurgan district of Namangan region, into a family of intellectuals. His father, Azimkhan, worked during those years as a history teacher, school principal, and the head of district public education departments in various districts of Tashkent province such as Qovunchi, Yangiyul, Fergana, and Namangan regions. His mother, Tojiniso, also taught the native language in schools. After the outbreak of the war, the Begmatov family moved in 1941 to the village of Karnok, located in the Turkistan district of Chimkent region, their ancestral homeland. Ernst Begmatov spent his youth in this village. Soon afterward, his father was conscripted into the army and was killed near the city

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of Kharkiv in 1944. Having lost his father, E. Begmatov personally experienced all the hardships, deprivation, humiliation, and sorrow of wartime orphanhood.

In 1955, E. Begmatov graduated with excellent marks from the Uzbek secondary school in the Karnok village. From 1955 to 1959, he studied at the Faculty of Philology of the Uzbek State University (now Samarkand State University).

In 1959, E. Begmatov graduated from the university with honors and initially taught Uzbek language and literature at School No. 53 in the Payarik district of Samarkand region. A year later, he moved to Tashkent and worked at the “Secondary and Higher School” publishing house (now “O’qituvchi”). In 1961, he was appointed junior researcher in the Department of Modern Uzbek Language at the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan (now the Institute of Uzbek Language, Literature and Folklore). Until the end of his life, he worked at this institute in various positions: junior researcher (1961–1967), senior researcher (1967–1974), head of department (1975–1986), leading researcher (1986–1989), chief researcher (1990–1991), deputy director for scientific affairs (1991–1996), and again head of department (1996–2014). The scholar published nearly 300 works in total, including 17 monographs, 8 collective scientific volumes, and 18 pamphlets devoted to orthography, stylistics, speech culture, lexicography, lexicology, and especially onomastics and toponymy.

Under the scientific supervision of the distinguished Uzbek linguist Fakhri Kamol, E. Begmatov intensively studied the problems of Uzbek anthroponymy between 1962 and 1965. He carefully collected extensive materials on Uzbek personal names, nicknames, pen names, surnames, and patronymics, became acquainted with numerous linguistic, historical, and ethnographic sources, and examined the historical, lexical-semantic, and grammatical characteristics of Uzbek anthroponyms. In 1965, he defended his dissertation entitled “*Anthroponymy of the Uzbek Language*” (Begmatov, 1965b).

The dissertation provided an in-depth analysis of the history of Uzbek names, their ethnographic foundations and motivations, issues related to name meanings, the specific linguistic features of names, nicknames, pseudonyms, and surnames, their nominative and functional distinctions, the relationship between words and anthroponyms, anthroponymic derivations, and original models of the anthroponymic system. The study scientifically substantiated the field of Uzbek onomastics and demonstrated theoretical approaches and methods for investigating systems of proper names. For this reason, E. Begmatov is rightfully recognized as the scientific founder of Uzbek onomastics.

E. Begmatov’s earliest articles on the linguistic characteristics of Uzbek anthroponyms are devoted to the theoretical problems of anthroponymy. He disagreed with the widespread linguistic opinion that “proper names have no meaning and are merely conventional signs.” He attempted to prove that proper names also possess meaning (Begmatov, 1962). He also substantiated the existence of specific lexical units within the anthroponymic system

(Begmatov, 1965a), calling them “anthroponymic lexemes,” and demonstrated that they generate distinctive forms of onomastic word formation.

In all of E. Begmatov’s later articles devoted to the study of proper names, one can observe that he addressed controversial scholarly issues and sought their scientific solutions. His articles such as *“Lexical-Semantic Features of Uzbek Anthroponymy”* (1965), *“Issues Related to the Study of Proper Names”* (1966), *“Verb Anthroponyms”* (1984), *“On the Classification of Toponyms”* (1985), *“Uzbek Ethnoanthroponyms”* (1986), and *“Uzbek Anthroponymy: State and Problems”* (1987) clearly illustrate this point. The attempt to identify the specific derivational models of anthroponyms and other distinctive onomastic units can also be observed in some of his later works (Begmatov, 1998c).

E. Begmatov has continuously worked on collecting materials related to Uzbek personal names and toponyms, as well as other types of proper nouns. The special card index compiled by the scholar contained more than 20,000 recorded names. This constitute an enormous treasure of Uzbek onomastics and enabled the author to address highly complex and controversial issues concerning the ethnographic foundations, motivations, and correct spelling of Uzbek names and surnames. Correctly interpreting the meanings and etymologies of names and determining their authentic forms require, to a great extent, knowledge of the motives underlying the emergence, selection, and assignment of names. Over many years, E. Begmatov has analyzed extensive material related to the ethnographic, social, philosophical, and religious motivations of Uzbek names (Begmatov, 1965c), and eventually summarized these findings in a special monograph (Begmatov, 1966).

In the orthographic rules of the Uzbek language, as well as in spelling dictionaries and manuals, the spelling of proper nouns in general, and personal names in particular, had long been neglected. This situation caused numerous spelling mistakes in the writing of Uzbek names, surnames, patronymics, nicknames, and pseudonyms, because in official documents citizens’ names were mainly written in Russian forms. E. Begmatov recognized in due time the necessity of scientifically resolving the orthography of anthroponyms. Therefore, he began creating manuals aimed at solving this complex scientific and practical problem. In his book *“The Orthography of Personal Names,”* he extensively analyzes the mistakes occurring in the spelling of Uzbek names and surnames, their objective and subjective causes, the factors negatively influencing name orthography, and attitudes toward dialectal and shortened forms of names. For the first time in Uzbek linguistics, he developed *“Orthographic Rules for Personal Names”* consisting of 45 articles (Begmatov, 1970, s. 15–46), and presented them in *“A Concise Orthographic Dictionary of Uzbek Names”* (Begmatov, 1970, s. 49–100). In this work, he also thoroughly analyzes the history of the emergence of Uzbek surnames and patronymics, the means forming them, and the linguistic units previously used instead of surnames and patronymics, such as nicknames, ranks and titles, Arabic kunyah forms, and the functions of the words *o’g’li* (“son of”) and *qizi* (“daughter of”), among others (Begmatov, 1970, s. 101–115). As a scholar specializing in names, he continuously and meticulously collected rich

materials on Uzbek anthroponyms and published a dictionary of names that constitutes a rich linguistic and cultural-spiritual heritage of the Uzbek people.

According to the scholar, there are no “bad” or “ugly” names in a language. Dividing names into categories such as good and bad, old and modern, ugly and beautiful reflects a one-sided and shortsighted, hence unscientific, approach. Such an attitude leads to the unjustified disappearance from usage of the body of names inherited from our ancient ancestors, resulting in the reduction in the richness of the Uzbek stock of names and an increase in repetitive and uniform names in naming practices. This, in turn, complicates the differentiation of individuals from one another and causes the impoverishment and trivialization of names. Disrespect toward names inherited from antiquity contributes to the forgetting of the totemistic, animistic, and mythological beliefs practiced by our ancestors, traditions connected with taboos and euphemisms, religious and philosophical views associated with naming, and the linguistic, ethical, and aesthetic reflections of ancient people concerning the relationship between an object (or person) and its name. Therefore, E. Begmatov strongly opposes evaluating Uzbek names according to criteria such as modern versus old names, beautiful versus ugly names, or literary versus non-literary (dialectal) names, and wrote: “The system of Uzbek personal names is distinguished by its extraordinary richness. The quantitative abundance of names demonstrates the strong capacity of this language to differentiate and distinctly identify individuals” (Begmatov, 1970, s. 190).

Between 1965 and 1968, E. Begmatov published a series of articles which explore the meanings, stylistics, and history of names (Jo’raev & Begmatov 1966; 1967; 1968).

In his studies of Uzbek anthroponymy, E. Begmatov has focused on providing deeper theoretical substantiation for the subject under investigation. This is clearly reflected in his interpretation of anthroponyms in connection with folk customs and spiritual heritage (Begmatov, 2007), as well as in his search for distinctive methods (Begmatov, 2011b) and models (Begmatov, 2013) of name formation in the Uzbek language. In one of his articles, the scholar also clarifies the sociolinguistic method of studying names (Begmatov, 2011a).

E. Begmatov has comprehensively summarized his many years of scientific observations in Uzbek onomastics in the monograph *“Uzbek Anthroponymy”*. This fundamental study consists of four chapters and scientifically addresses a number of theoretical problems in the field of anthroponymy. Particularly noteworthy are the scholar’s deeply reasoned views on the units of Uzbek onomastics, especially on the anthroponymic units, the lexical-semantic characteristics of anthroponyms, their lexical foundations, methods and models of formation, all supported by convincing linguistic evidence. Without doubt, this monographic study is an original and valuable scholarly work on the Turkic onomastics (Begmatov & Uluqov, 2008).

A number of Uzbek linguists have described Professor Ernst Begmatov as “the founder of Uzbek onomastics,” and there is substantial truth in this assessment. First, before E. Begmatov, no one had conducted a fundamental study of Uzbek onomastics, namely Uzbek anthroponymy. He is the first to undertake such work and the first to defend a dissertation in

this field. He devoted his entire life to the problems of Uzbek onomastics and has produced major monographic studies. Therefore, professors R. Rasulov (2005), A. Nurmonov (2012), B. Yuldoshev (2012), and others rightfully recognized E. Begmatov as “the founder of Uzbek onomastics.”

Through his scholarly and practical activities, Ernst Begmatov has also made a significant contribution to the scientific development of the branch of onomastics known as toponymy. His engagement with the problems of Uzbek toponymy mainly began in 1967. That year, in connection with the celebration of the 525th anniversary of the birth of our great ancestor, the founder of Uzbek literary language and outstanding thinker Alisher Navoi, he wrote several articles on the stylistic and artistic functions of anthroponyms and toponyms in Navoi’s works. Two of these articles were devoted specifically to the stylistics and artistic functions of toponyms.

In the first article, he demonstrated that the toponyms in Navoi’s works constitute valuable sources reflecting ancient history (Begmatov, 1967a), while in the second he showed how masterfully the poet used place names in creating artistic devices (Begmatov, 1967b).

In 1989, the declaration of the Uzbek language as the state language of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the adoption of a special law on this matter became an unprecedented historical achievement for Uzbek culture and language. In this law, national names and toponyms are recognized as the spiritual and linguistic property of the people. Consequently, efforts to preserve toponymy and restore its national-linguistic character intensified throughout the republic. Scientific conferences devoted to this issue were held in various regions, and articles began to be published. As a specialist in onomastics, E. Begmatov became an active participant in this movement, and his article entitled “*The Golden Key to the Motherland*” was published. In it, he compared toponyms to a golden key unlocking valuable information about the history and past of our people (Begmatov, 1990). In all of his articles devoted to toponyms, the scholar described them as a “great heritage,” “historical heritage,” “a mirror of spirituality,” and “a messenger of our ancient history.” These ideas are reflected even in the titles of his articles.

During the years of independence, attitudes toward place names became one of the most urgent and, at the same time, delicate issues of Uzbekistan’s state language policy. Important tasks included freeing the Uzbek toponymic system from names expressing the ideology of the former regime, restoring the natural, historical, and national spirit of toponymy, developing scientific principles for naming places after individuals and for renaming places, and cultivating in people a conscious and respectful attitude toward place names. Special resolutions and recommendations on these issues were adopted by the government and the Oliy Majlis. On the basis of these measures and practical actions, a new toponymic policy of the Uzbek state was formed. E. Begmatov has written a series of scholarly (Begmatov, 1997b; 1997c; 2003; 2004) and popular-scientific (Begmatov, 1996a; 1996b;

1996c; 1996d; 1997a) articles aimed at researching and explaining the essence, requirements, and principles of this policy.

The scholar's scientific views on standardizing place naming are comprehensively summarized in his pamphlet *"Place Names as a Mirror of Spirituality."* In this work, he thoroughly and insightfully explains that place names are a unique and invaluable heritage of the people's history, language, and spirituality; the scientific principles and criteria for evaluating place names; the units constituting the toponymic system; the scientific foundations for naming and renaming places; the conditions and criteria that names must satisfy; the principles and rules to be considered when naming places after individuals; methods and measures for preserving and protecting place names; and issues related to toponymic orthography (Begmatov, 1998a). In this respect, these ideas remain highly significant not only theoretically but also practically for the field.

Although linguists, historians, geographers, ethnographers, and folklorists have conducted numerous studies on place names (toponyms), the range and boundaries of the linguistic units included within this concept have not yet been clearly and consistently defined. In many cases, when speaking of place names or toponyms, only the names of regions, districts, cities, villages, neighborhoods, streets, and squares are understood. In reality, the content of toponyms is far broader and more multifaceted. In the aforementioned popular-scientific pamphlet, the scholar fully and comprehensively identified the principal groups and types of proper nouns included within the sphere of toponymy (Begmatov, 1998a, s. 22–24).

According to E. Begmatov, place names created on the basis of an individual's will, special decisions, or directives are official (artificial) toponyms. Most official names, as a rule, do not express the natural characteristics of the place or object they denote; rather, they resemble labels artificially attached to them (Begmatov, 1998a, s. 12).

On October 21, 1989, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the State Language was adopted. For the first time in the history of Uzbek people and culture, it emphasized that "all historical names and place names are considered the national property of the people and are protected by the state" (Begmatov, 1998b, s. 10).

In 1998, at the initiative of the Navoi city administration, a major scientific conference devoted to place names was held. E. Begmatov actively participated in organizing this conference and delivered a report entitled *"The Great Heritage of the People's Language and Spirituality"* (Begmatov, 1998b, s. 6–11). He also compiled two questionnaires related to place names (Begmatov & Soliev 1997a; 1997b).

During this period, E. Begmatov published articles devoted to the toponymic policy pursued by the Uzbek state (Begmatov, 1997c(4)), the tasks arising from the Law "On the State Language," and methods of renaming and regulating place names. Among these articles are *"What Did Name-Worship Mean?"*, *"Let Us Not Be Mistaken Again,"* *"A Rare Treasure Chest,"* *"Can Places Be Named After Living People?"*, *"The Law and Toponymy,"* *"The Law on the State*

Language, the Opportunities It Created, and Its Results,” “Independence and Toponymy,” and “Under the Pressure of the Totalitarian Regime.”

E. Begmatov has become interested in identifying the different forms of proper nouns existing in the Uzbek language and realized the great importance of clarifying this issue. Although the concept of the “onomastic scope,” that is to say, the extent and boundaries of the spread of proper nouns within a language, had long existed in linguistics, there were no large-scale studies on the matter. Together with his student Y. Avloqulov, E. Begmatov first wrote articles reflecting on this issue and on the existing types in the Uzbek language (Begmatov & Avloqulov, 2007a; 2007b; 2008). These studies later became the basis for Y. Avloqulov’s scientific research on onomastic units (Avloqulov, 2012). E. Begmatov and Y. Avloqulov have identified the macro- and micro-scopes of onomastics, clarified the level of their study, and determined future tasks. In his toponymic research, the scholar has investigated the general theoretical problems of the field, methods of studying toponyms, and issues related to identifying toponymic units. This undoubtedly provided a scientific foundation for contemporary specialized studies.

During his scientific career, E. Begmatov has skillfully directed research activities as head of department and deputy director for scientific affairs. The scholar was also an initiator and talented organizer of numerous scientific conferences. Through his direct initiative and organizational efforts, scientific-practical conferences devoted to the problems of Uzbek onomastics were held in Jizzakh (1985), Gulistan (1987), Qarshi (1989), Urgench (1991), Navoi (1993), and Tashkent (1992). To date, he has participated in and presented reports at 106 international and national scientific conferences, congresses, and symposia.

The scholar has also made a fruitful contribution to the training of qualified specialists in linguistics. As a member, chairman, and deputy chairman of the Specialized Council for the defense of doctoral dissertations at the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, and as a member of a similar council at the Uzbekistan State World Languages University, he has worked effectively in preparing highly qualified personnel for the republic and made a significant contribution to the training of distinguished specialists in onomastics. Under his scientific supervision and consultation, dissertations have been defended by S.N. Naimov on *“Oikonyms of Bukhara Region”* (Tashkent, 1984), H. Kholmuminov on *“Microtoponymy of Baysun District and Its Surroundings”* (Tashkent, 1993), Sh. Yoqubov on *“Onomastics of Alisher Navoi’s Works”* (Tashkent, 1994), U. Oripov on *“Linguistic Study of the Macro- and Microtoponymy of the Nurota Region”* (Tashkent, 2003), A.S. Arslonov on *“Linguistic Analysis of the Microtoponymy of Shofirkon District”* (Tashkent, 2005), and N.M. Uluqov on *“Historical-Linguistic Study of Uzbek Hydronyms”* (Tashkent, 2010), along with a total of 32 dissertations in philological sciences.

These studies thoroughly examine the linguistic, linguogeographical, and sociolinguistic characteristics of Uzbekistan’s toponymy, while also addressing and resolving controversial issues such as toponymic vocabulary, toponymic indicators (determinatives), the concepts and

delimitation methods of microtoponymy and macrotoponymy, the concepts of onomastic units and onomastic scope, the types of proper nouns included in the toponymic scope, problems of onomastic terminology, and the classification of toponymic materials.

Professor Ernst Azimovich Begmatov has served as an official jury member for nearly 50 candidate and doctoral dissertations in the field of onomastics. These include the doctoral dissertations of Z. Dosimov, *“Historical-Linguistic Analysis of the Toponymy of Khorezm”* (Tashkent, 1989); A. Abdurakhmanov, *“Historical-Etymological Study of the Toponyms of Kazakhstan”* (Almaty, 1991); and T. J. Enazarov, *“Lexical Foundations of Uzbek Toponyms and Methods of Their Etymological Study”* (Tashkent, 2006).

He has also officially reviewed dissertations such as S. Qorayev’s *“Experience in Studying the Toponymy of Uzbekistan”* (Tashkent, 1969); Z. Dosimov’s *“Toponyms of Northern Khorezm”* (Tashkent, 1970); Sh. M. Qodirova’s *“Microtoponyms of Tashkent”* (Tashkent, 1970); N. Okhunov’s *“Toponymy of the Kokand Group of Districts”* (Tashkent, 1978); A. J. Otajonova’s *“Ethnotoponyms of Khorezm and Their Lexical Foundations”* (Tashkent, 1996); U. Kh. Rajabov’s *“Functional-Semantic Features of Toponymic Indicators”* (Tashkent, 2009); and A. A. Ergashev’s *“Areal-Onomastic Study of the Ethnotoponyms of Andijan Region”* (Tashkent, 2012). Through these reviews, he has contributed significantly to the training of qualified scientific personnel for Uzbekistan and neighboring republics.

The scholar has maintained close professional relationships and collaborations with leading onomastic scholars such as the Moscow-based researchers N. A. Nikonov, A. B. Superanskaya, R. Sh. Zharilgashinova, and S. N. Ivanov; Azerbaijani scholars O. M. Qurbanov, M. Odilov, N. Khudiyev, Sh. Sadiev, and A. Pashayev; Kazakh scholars A. Kaidarov, T. Zhanuzakov, K. Khusanov, A. Abdurakhmanov, and N. M. Minboyev; Turkmen scholars B. Choriyev, S. Otaniyazov, and T. Tojmuradov; Kyrgyz scholars B. Oruzbayeva, Sh. Japarov, and Q. Qonqabayev; Tatarstan scholars G. F. Sattorov; Bashkir scholars O. Shaykhulov and T. Kusimova; Georgian scholar M. N. Chobonov; and Moldavian scholar M. Kosnichanu, all of whom are eminent authorities in the field of onomastics. In addition to being a meticulous and hardworking scholar, E. Begmatov is also a modest, humble, and caring mentor.

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