

**FEMALE NAMES ON THE GEOGRAPHICAL MAP OF THE SAKHA REPUBLIC
(YAKUTIA)**

**NOMES DE MULHERES NO MAPA GEOGRÁFICO DA REPÚBLICA SAKHA
(YAKUTIA)**

**NOMBRES FEMENINOS EN EL MAPA GEOGRÁFICO DE LA REPÚBLICA SAKHA
(YAKUTIA)**

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ABSTRACT: Oikonyms derived from female names make the subject of the research. The issue has not been studied earlier since female names are rare in the names of settlements in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). The small amount of such oikonyms is due to the social inequality of women compared to men in the past. The linguoculturological analysis of geographical names showed that a special status of women in the North was manifested in the fact that she was perceived not only as a home keeper and some sort of national customs' translator but also as a strong personality, capable of overcoming any difficulties and being equal to a man. The toponymic system is one of the most significant in the language of each nation, since it encodes the information about a person's perception of the surrounding space and society, which are the most important components of the worldview.

KEYWORDS: Oikonyms. Toponymics. Female names. Anthroponym. Linguoculturology. Onomastics.

RESUMO: *Oecônimos derivados de nomes femininos constituem o objeto da pesquisa. A questão não foi estudada antes, uma vez que nomes femininos são raros nos nomes de assentamentos na República Sakha (Yakutia). A pequena quantidade desses oecônimos se deve à desigualdade social das mulheres em relação aos homens no passado. A análise linguoculturoológica dos nomes geográficos mostrou que um status especial da mulher no Norte se manifestava no fato de ela ser percebida não apenas como dona da casa e uma espécie de tradutora dos costumes nacionais, mas também como uma forte personalidade capaz de superar qualquer dificuldades e ser igual a um homem. O sistema toponímico é um dos mais significativos da língua de cada nação, pois codifica as informações sobre a percepção de uma pessoa sobre o espaço e a sociedade ao seu redor, que são os componentes mais importantes da cosmovisão.*

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Oecônimos. Toponímica. Nomes femininos. Antropônimo. Linguoculturologia. Onomástica.*

RESUMEN: *Los oikónimos derivados de nombres femeninos constituyen el tema de la investigación. El tema no se ha estudiado antes ya que los nombres femeninos son raros en los nombres de los asentamientos en la República de Sakha (Yakutia). La pequeña cantidad de tales oikónimos se debe a la desigualdad social de las mujeres en comparación con los hombres en el pasado. El análisis lingüoculturoológico de los nombres geográficos mostró que una condición especial de la mujer en el Norte se manifestaba en el hecho de que se la percibía no solo como una ama de casa y una especie de traductora de costumbres nacionales, sino también como una fuerte personalidad capaz de superar cualquier situación. dificultades y ser igual a un hombre. El sistema toponímico es uno de los más significativos en el idioma de cada nación, ya que codifica la información sobre la percepción que tiene una persona del espacio y la sociedad circundante, que son los componentes más importantes de la cosmovisión.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Oikónimos. Toponímicos. Nombres femeninos. Antropónimo. Linguoculturología. Onomástica.*

Introduction

Geographical names of anthroponomic origin can be encountered on the map of any region. In the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), such toponyms are also quite common. In many names of districts, cities, villages, and settlements, the constitutive part of an oikonym derives from names, nicknames or surnames of the first settlers, founders, land owners and the most significant personalities, remembered by the people living in this place.

Each oikonym contains very valuable ethnolinguistic and historical information about the material and spiritual culture of the people who invented it. "Toponyms are a unique code representing the cultural-historical and culture-specific features of a particular people, they serve as landmarks in time and space, create the historical and cultural image of each region, and also transmit cultural memory from generation to generation" (NIKAEVA; TARABUKINA, 2019, p. 345).

If oikonyms are analyzed in terms of gender, it can be revealed that a share of male names and surnames in such place names prevails over the female ones (Aleko-Kyuel (Өлөөкө-Күөл), Vasily Alasa (Баһылай алааһа), Andryushkino, Antonovka, Vladimirovka, Vorontsovo, Dygdal, Elechey (from Elisy, Өлөчөй), Zyryanka, Kirova, Mikhailovka, Chkalov, Chernyshevsky, and so on. But toponyms formed from female names on the geographical map of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) deserve special attention as they not only allow to specify etymological and extralinguistic information about them but also describe ethnic and cultural

memory of the people. Indeed, in the North a woman has always been treated in a special way. According to N.K. Danilova,

[...] in Yakut families, female labor played a major role, [...] a family's life literally depended on a woman's ability to smartly manage the household. Before making any household management decision, a husband would always consult with his wife. It was quite common among Yakut women to lead a family and smartly manage a household; such women were respectfully called "bas jiahtar" (a head woman) (DANILOVA, 2019).

Yakut proverbs say the same: "*Холоонноох хотун ойбум, тэннээх тэгэл сэгэрим*" (My decent home keeper - wife, equal to me by beloved friend); "*Дьуэ - ыал ийэтинэн*" (A house is judged by mother, i.e., a home keeper). In Even and Evenk families, women also had a special role: they were home keepers, took care of all family members, cooked, processed skins and made clothes for men and children; besides, they assembled and disassembled a movable housing and took care of reindeer. A woman's special status is proven by Evenk proverbs: "*Кэргэнми санмими тогос сивдян*" (If you lose your wife, fire will die out); "*Бэевэ ахи иргивки*" (A woman raises a human).

It is important to note that most oikonyms of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) have proper substantiation and parallels with hydronyms, and information about the origin of geographical names derived from female names can most often be found in folk legends. They allow to recreate the historical and cultural memory of the people, to find out the traditional attitude towards women among the peoples of the Russian north-east.

Problem Statement

The study of oikonyms in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) continues to be one of the most important tasks of modern regional toponymy. According to N.G. Samsonov, "geographical names are precious monuments of the past and present, they are inseparable from the native country, its nature, its landscape..." (SAMSONOV, 1989, p. 48). However, oikonyms derived from female names have not been studied in-depth before. The analysis of female anthropooikonyms will reveal the main naming tendencies and model a sort of linguocultural code, as the most important part of the linguistic worldview of the peoples living in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia).

Research Questions

The object of this study is a fragment of the toponymic system of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), expressed by oikonyms - geographical names of settlements.

The subject of this research is oikonyms containing female names or kinship concepts (for example, from Yakut *ebe* - "grandmother", from Evenk *asii* - "wife", "woman").

Place names and stories of their origin available from the scientific works of the republic's toponymy researchers, as well as those obtained at interviewing the residents of the analyzed cities, settlements and villages, were selected as the examples for the research.

Purpose of the Study

Purpose of the study: using linguoculturological analysis, identify the trends in geographical names using female anthroponyms, as well as define their role in the formation of the national mentality of the people, the origins of its national character, beliefs, and traditions.

Research Methods

The research used the following methods: etymological, lexical-semantic, lexicographical, and linguoculturological. Field surveys were undertaken, residents of the surveyed settlements were interviewed.

Findings

The peculiarities of Northern peoples' way of life in the harsh climate were such that a family spent most of the time on their sites or lands. The specifics of difficult living conditions determined the position of each member in the family, their relationships, and responsibilities. Women not only did the necessary housework and raised children but also helped raise livestock. Despite patriarchal structure, a husband respected his wife, who sustained life, and appreciated her skills and craftsmanship.

Not all regions of Russia have oikonyms with a meaning "woman" in their toponymic system. There are such names on the geographical map of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). One of these oikonyms is a name of Yakut village *Asyma* (Yakut *Ahyma*) in Gorny District. According to the famous toponymist Ivanov - Bagdaryn Syulbe, *Asyma* is translated from Evenk language *asii*, *ahii* as "woman", "wife", "female animal" (BAGDARYN SYULBE,

2001: 25). It has an Evenk toponymic suffix *-ma*, which usually forms adjectives with the meaning of color and material from nominal stems. Therefore, perhaps this refers to the word "female".

There is another modern version of the village's name origin: *Asima* derives from a Yakut word "aahyma", which means "do not pass by". According to the old-timers, the village was small, but very hospitable people lived in it. Many travelers stopped there every day to rest. Once a great Yakut writer Semyon Danilov visited the village and named it "Aahyma" ("do not pass by"). At present, Vilyui federal highway passes through the village, and to this day many people stop there to rest (Informant: Anatoly Vladislavovich Antonov - student of Ammosov NEFU).

Oikonyms formed from kinship words for woman play a special role in the toponymic system of Yakutia. Geographical names are quite common among them, which include the words "grandmother", "old woman" (Yakut *ebe*).

Place names that include the word *ebe*, in some cases *ebya*, are viewed as a certain linguocultural code that reconstructs the concept of Yakut traditional spiritual culture. Settling in a new area, the Yakuts tried not to give names to the new lands, they believed that the spirits would not like such a bold treatment. This is the source of the sacred attitude to Earth and water, which is expressed in certain taboos. Thus, it is still improper to say the name of a reservoir or an area aloud nearby, so as not to invoke trouble or wrath of the spirits of water or earth. N.G. Samsonov writes: "The Yakuts respectfully call large bodies of water *ebe*, because in the past they attributed soul to water, sky, sun, and Earth, and considered them sacred" (SAMSONOV, 1989, p. 33). In toponymics, the concept of *ebya* - grandmother - is perceived as the beginning of a clan, a keeper of family values and traditions, a storyteller, a supporter. Indeed, a Sakha person would respectfully call a river or a lake *ebe* instead of a traditional Lena, Vilyui, etc. Religious views of the local population are also manifested in oikonyms. There are at least 6 geographical names containing the word *Ebya* and its derivatives on the map of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia): *Ebya* villages in Vilyuisk and Gorny Districts, *Tit-Ebya* village in Khangalass District, *Ulakhan-Ebya* village in Churapcha District, *Ebyakh* Village in Srednekolymsk District, *Ebelyakh* village in Anabar National (Dolgan-Evenk) District. Geographically, these villages are located near a river or a lake, which gives the names.

A semantic connection with "ebya" concept can be traced in other settlements' names. The name of a village in Nyurba District – *Akana* – can serve as an example. According to the old residents, the village was named after a woman who settled in this place with her sons (NIKOLAEV, 2018, p. 12). During a conversation with the local residents of Nyurba District,

we managed to learn the details of this legend: “In hungry times, the old Akaana performed a real feat for the local residents: she slaughtered her cows and arranged Ysekh, thereby supporting the starving people in difficult times, and gave thanks to the light deities of Aiyy and the patron spirits of nature. The village was named ‘Akana’ in honor of the old supporter” (Informant: Dayana Nikiforova, resident of Akana village, Nyurba District).

Human life is closely connected with various places, which are indicated by geographical names. But often a toponym becomes understandable in speech only when the interlocutors know exactly what object it refers to.

The village of Daya Amgata (Yakut Daya Ammata) is a village in Tatta District of Yakutia; it is literally translated as Darya’s Amga. It is believed to be named after an old Daya. The old-timers’ legend tells that once upon a time in Amga area at the footprints of the “Distancing mountain” there lived an old Daya; she loved Amga River very much and ordered the people to call this place after her when she dies. There is also a legend of the mentioned mountain: local people believe that a shaman woman is buried there, who can possibly be this old Daya.

Unlike common nouns, making up a large part of each language’s toponymic fund, proper names, in particular, female geographical names, are few. But in most cases, each of these names has its own special background. And although, according to N.G. Samsonov, the legends about the origin of oikonyms should be taken critically, they still “can encourage testing of etymological hypotheses and research” (SAMSONOV, 1989: 57).

One of these legends tells about the origin of the name of Zharkhan village in Nyurba District. It is believed that this village got its name in honor of a girl Dzharkhan (Yakut Jyarkhan), who lived on the shores of Nyurba Lake. She is known as the ancestor of Nyurba and Suntar Yakuts. According to the legend described by G.V. Ksenofontov in his book “Uraangkhai-Sakhalar: Essays on the ancient history of the Yakuts”, Jyarkhan (Jyardakh), who lived in Suntar District, was not Yakut, but came from a different tribe. The tribe to which Dzharkhan belonged was destroyed by the warlike Tumats. A girl with a bow took part in battles on par with men, later she fled in a birch bark boat and took refuge in Tuymaada valley. She found shelter with Munnyan Darkhan - Tygyn's father, married him, and gave birth to three sons. When Munnyan Darkhan died, she couldn’t put up with the mistreatment of warlike Tygyn and together with her sons returned to their native Vilyui lands. Having defeated their mother’s enemies, the brothers founded the ancient clans of the Khochin, Suntar and Markha Districts. Therefore, Vilyui Yakuts have their ancestry, originating from Tygyn brothers related to a Tumat or Nyurba (Tungus clan of Nyurmagan) woman Jyardakh.

Other settlements are also named after women. In his book “Our Names”, N.G. Samsonov retells several legends about female names. They were collected during fieldtrips to different districts of the republic. According to the legends of the old-timers, Nyurba Lake was named in honor of a Yakut girl Nyurbakan. For her native tribe to survive, she dried up the lake, and people built the village of Nyurba on its site. The lake was famous for its beauty and rich catch. Every year, sacred birds - white and black swans - flew there from warm countries. But Nyurbakan, despite the fact that the people expelled her because of her love for a person of another tribe, decided to help her native tribe, having learned about their famine. For nine years she was destroying the mountain that separated the lake from the river. In the tenth spring, the lake began to gradually disappear into the river. When her relatives, mad with hunger, killed the swans, Nyurbakan, saying goodbye to the earth and the sky, threw herself from the high bank into the waters of the river. At the place where the lowland was formed, people built yurts and named their settlement Nyurba. In the scientific information sources, there is another explanation for the village’s name. The oikonym attributes to Evenk language, where the word “nyurbeke” is translated as “a hurst”, but the legend is still alive.

N.G. Samsonov writes the following about the name of Toybokhoy village of Suntar District: “The famous Toybokhoy plot of land bears the name of a Tungus shaman woman. She was rich and had numerous reindeer. They say, many smoky fires were set around because of these herds, exposing many lands and turning them into glades”. According to the legends, the name of the administrative center of Suntar District also derives from the name of the Tungus shaman woman. In the evenings, the residents of the village are careful not to pronounce her name aloud, since her spirit still dwells in the area.

While interviewing the residents of Gorny District, the authors of this article were able to learn the background of the name of Keptin village. The village was named in honor of a drowned girl named Keptin. Local residents tell a legend: a girl and a young man fell in love with each other, but lived on different shores of the lake. Once Keptin decided to swim across the lake to see her lover, but because of the strong wind, the raft fell apart and the girl drowned. After this incident, the lake and the village were named Keptin (Informant: Varvara Ivanovna Nogovitsyna, born in 1945).

Conclusion

Thus, the conducted analysis of the toponyms allows us to draw the following conclusions:

The main trends in geographical naming with the help of female names can be summarized as follows: settlements were named after women who played a significant role in a village's life or a settlement's life (Akana, Nyurbakan); showed their strength, fearlessness or courage on a par with men (Dzharkhan, Keptin); were famous and revered shamans (Daya-Amgata, Toybohoy, Suntar).

Interestingly, a woman's beauty was not cultivated in the researched legends; the evaluation of a woman's actions, her courage, sacrifice, endurance, desire, and ability to work were more important.

Feminine anthropomorphic features can be found in Yakut oikonyms; for example, the word ebe "grandmother" was included in their composition. As a rule, the geographical names of settlements with this lexeme were located near water bodies. In the traditional culture of Yakuts, the word "ebe" is customary to call water bodies to demonstrate a sacred attitude to water as a supporter.

The group of oikonyms under research contains a specific linguocultural code that allows to reveal a special attitude towards a woman, not only as a home keeper and some sort of national customs' translator but also as a strong personality capable of overcoming any difficulties and being equal to a man, in the linguistic worldview of the peoples living the Sakha Republic (Yakutia).

Thus, the toponyms encode the information about a person's perception of the surrounding space, society, which are the most important components of the world outlook.

N.G. Samsonov fairly states that "the whole world needs to fight for the preservation of traditional toponymic systems as monuments of history and spiritual culture" (SAMSONOV, 1989, p. 49). They provide knowledge about the origin of certain geographical names, allow to reveal the peculiarities of the people's national mentality, character, beliefs, and traditions.

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