

A Linguistic Analysis of Onomastic Units in
T. Kayipbergenov's *Karakalpak Dastany*
Trilogy: Semantic, Pragmatic, and
Linguocultural Functions

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the functions of onomastic units in T. Kayipbergenov's Karakalpak Dastany trilogy, with particular attention to anthroponyms, nicknames, toponyms, and ethnonyms. The study is based on the onomastic material identified in the trilogy and approaches proper names not as neutral labels but as structural and semantic elements of literary discourse. The analysis considers how personal names organize characterization, how nicknames encode social roles and physical or professional attributes, how place names reconstruct historical geography, and how ethnonyms represent collective identity. The research combines textual, descriptive, contextual, and linguocultural methods. The corpus-based description indicates that the trilogy contains more than 300 anthroponyms, over 100 toponyms, and more than 70 ethnonyms. The findings show that these units simultaneously perform nominative, referential, characterizing, historical-documentary, spatial, symbolic, and cultural functions. The paper argues that the onomastic system of the trilogy is integral to the author's historical narrative strategy and provides a linguistic mechanism for connecting fictional representation with collective memory and Karakalpak cultural identity.

Keywords: literary onomastics, anthroponyms, nicknames, toponyms, ethnonyms, Karakalpak literature, linguoculture, T. Kayipbergenov

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of proper names in literary texts has become an important field of modern linguistics because names can contribute simultaneously to reference, characterization, composition, intertextuality, and cultural representation. Literary onomastics therefore differs from a purely referential study of names: the same unit may identify a person or place and, at the same time, activate historical knowledge, social stereotypes, symbolic associations, or an author's evaluative position [4; 6; 7]. In historical fiction, this complexity becomes especially visible because the writer reconstructs social space through a dense network of personal, geographical, and ethnic names.

T. Kayipbergenov's *Karakalpak Dastany* trilogy is a particularly valuable object for such analysis. The attached research material describes the trilogy as historically, geographically, ethnographically, and philologically rich, and identifies more than 300 anthroponyms, over 100 toponyms, and more than 70 ethnonyms [1]. Contemporary scholarship also confirms the lasting importance of the trilogy for linguistic studies of Karakalpak literary language [2; 3].

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A central problem in literary onomastics is to determine what changes when a proper name enters a literary text. In everyday communication, the primary task of a personal name is identification, while in fiction a name becomes part of a designed system. It may be repeated, contrasted with another name, accompanied by a title or nickname, placed in a historically specific setting, or made meaningful by the character's actions. Thus, literary naming is both referential and functional. Van Langendonck emphasizes the special status of proper names as linguistic expressions whose reference is established through acts of naming, while Ainiala et al. stress that names also carry social and cultural information within naming communities [8; 9].

For literary analysis, the distinction between referential and poetic functions is particularly productive. Fonyakova &

Kalinkin demonstrate that a name in a literary text can participate in the construction of image, style, emotional evaluation, and semantic layering [6; 7]. Magazanik's concept of onomapoetics likewise directs attention to "speaking" names and to the interaction between naming and artistic intention [5]. These approaches support the present study, but the analysis also requires a specifically historical and linguocultural perspective because Kayipbergenov's trilogy is built around historical events, communities, migrations, political formations, and cultural memory.

The present research therefore treats the trilogy's onomastic inventory as a structured field comprising four interrelated groups: anthroponyms, including personal names, family names, patronymics and nicknames; toponyms, including state and region names, cities, villages and hydronyms; ethnonyms, including names of tribes, clans, peoples and ethnic groups; and auxiliary titles or social designations attached to names. The supplied research material classifies these units into three broad lexical-nominative types – anthroponyms, toponyms, and ethnonyms – while emphasizing that titles, ranks, and nicknames frequently occur alongside personal names [1].

This classification is methodologically useful because it preserves the internal organization of the source material while allowing the study to move from inventory to function. The principal research question is therefore not simply which names occur in the trilogy, but how the naming system participates in the production of historical meaning, character identity, spatial orientation, and cultural memory.

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the article is to identify and interpret the major literary, historical, and linguocultural functions of onomastic units in *Karakalpak Dastany*. The objectives are to classify the main onomastic groups, examine their distribution and textual functions, analyze the interaction of names with titles and nicknames, and determine how the onomastic system contributes to the representation of Karakalpak historical consciousness.

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary material is the section of the research manuscript devoted to onomastics in T. Kayipbergenov's *Karakalpak Dastany* trilogy. The manuscript identifies an extensive corpus of names and organizes them lexically and nominatively. According to this material, the trilogy contains more than 300 anthroponyms, more than 100 toponyms, and more than 70 ethnonyms [1]. The examples include personal names such as Abylqaiyr, Aydos, Amandyq, Berdak, Maman, Orazan, Tenge, and many others; family names such as Mikhailov, Nakhimov, Nikiphorov, Timofeev, and others; and numerous geographical and ethnonymic names.

The study uses four complementary methods. First, descriptive classification is applied to identify structural groups within the corpus. Second, contextual analysis is used to determine the function of a name in the immediate sentence, paragraph, or narrative episode. Third, linguocultural interpretation is employed to relate naming practices to historical, social, and cultural information. Fourth, functional-literary analysis is used to establish how onomastic units contribute to characterization, composition, setting, and symbolic meaning. These methods are consistent with established approaches in literary onomastics and stylistics [5: 9], while remaining grounded in the specific evidence of the supplied corpus.

The study also follows a corpus-sensitive principle. Frequency figures reported here are not presented as a newly generated electronic corpus count; they reproduce the quantitative information established in the source manuscript. The present article therefore interprets those figures rather than replacing them with an independently reconstructed dataset. This distinction is important for scholarly transparency.

5. RESULTS

5.1. *Anthroponyms as the core of the literary onomasticon*

Anthroponyms form the largest and most functionally diverse class in the trilogy. The source material identifies more than 300

personal names and notes that many of them belong to historically real individuals, political leaders, military figures, religious authorities, and community representatives [1]. Such density is not accidental. Because the narrative reconstructs large historical processes, the characters must be differentiated not only individually but also socially, genealogically, politically, and territorially. Proper names provide the basic linguistic mechanism for that differentiation.

Personal names also help encode naming culture. Examples such as Aydos, Bektamir, Qutlyqoja, Sultanqeldi, and Hudaýbergen contain elements whose semantic or cultural histories belong to broader Turkic and Islamic naming traditions. The text thus preserves layers of cultural vocabulary within its anthroponymic system. In this sense, the name is not simply a label for a fictional individual; it can function as a compressed cultural sign.

5.2. Characterization through names and naming contexts

One of the most important findings is that personal names are frequently embedded in contexts that reveal why a person was named or how the community relates to that person. The manuscript explicitly notes scenes in which the author explains the motivations of naming. For example, the birth and naming of Begisare connected to a verbal wish, while the name Töreqol is associated with the desire to create a name that echoes an ancestor and expresses status [1]. Such passages turn naming into narrative action. The reader does not merely learn the name; the reader learns the cultural logic that produced it.

This technique is especially significant in historical fiction. A name becomes a bridge between biography and collective tradition. The narrative can therefore explain kinship, inheritance, social aspirations, religious expectations, or community beliefs through a single naming episode. The function is partly anthropological: naming customs become evidence about historical social life. It is also stylistic because a naming episode slows the narrative and foregrounds cultural interpretation.

The trilogy further expands characterization by combining personal names with titles and social roles. Forms such as “Murat

shaykh,” “Orazanbatyr,” “Yrysqul khan,” “Jandos bay,” “Bektemirusta,” and “Qudiyarseyis” are especially revealing. The attached material interprets these combinations as important instruments for portraying characters and signaling their distinctive traits, social positions, or occupations [1]. The title or occupational designation narrows the semantic field around the personal name: “shaykh” activates religious authority, “batyr” evokes heroic or military status, “usta” indicates craft or skill, and “seyis” connects the person with horse management.

From a literary perspective, these combinations function as compressed character portraits. Leech and Short’s account of stylistic choices supports the idea that repeated lexical patterns can become meaningful components of characterization and narrative voice [10]. In the trilogy, the name-plus-title construction performs a similar task: it saves descriptive space while retaining socially recognizable information.

5.3. *Nicknames and social identity*

Nicknames occupy a particularly expressive position. The source material lists numerous examples such as “Sabyrsypañ,” “Aitmuradqızılbet,” “Esenqeldi sarı,” “Abadan aqbaltır,” “Atebekpalwan,” and “Yusupjanshabandoz” [1]. These units specify physical appearance, behavior, profession, skill, or public reputation. Their semantic contribution is therefore more transparent than that of many conventional personal names.

5.4. *The semiotics of nicknames*

The nickname is particularly important because it transforms an individual trait into a socially shared identity. A nickname can arise from a visible feature, repeated behavior, occupation, ethnic affiliation, or a socially recognized accomplishment. In literary discourse, this produces an economy of description: one compact expression may identify the person and simultaneously provide an evaluative characterization. This observation is consistent with the broader tradition of anthroponymic research in Turkic languages, where nicknames are often analyzed according to semantic, functional, and social criteria [11: 12].

The examples in the trilogy show that nicknames can operate on several semantic levels. “Qızılbet” foregrounds a physical trait; “shabandoz” identifies a skill and occupational sphere; “palwan” evokes physical strength and heroic identity; “kerey,” “müyten,” “keneges,” and “qıtay” can point toward tribal or group affiliation. In this way, the nickname becomes a multi-layered social index. It marks not only who the individual is but also how the surrounding community classifies the individual.

The literary effect is strengthened through repetition. When the same nickname recurs, it gradually becomes a stable element of the character’s textual identity. The reader may eventually remember the nickname more strongly than the personal name. This process creates what may be termed a secondary textual naming system: the character is simultaneously identified by the official name and by a socially meaningful secondary designation. Such dual identification is especially effective in historical narratives because it mirrors the coexistence of formal and informal naming practices in real communities.

Nicknames also help the author avoid anonymous historical distance. Instead of presenting a sequence of officials, soldiers, craftsmen, or religious figures as abstract historical actors, the narrative attaches socially meaningful descriptors to them. The result is a more concrete historical world. The character appears as someone seen and evaluated by other members of the community.

5.5. Toponyms as historical geography

Toponyms constitute the second major layer of the trilogy’s onomastic system. The supplied material identifies more than 100 geographical names and explains that they include names of states and regions, cities, villages, and hydronyms [1]. Such abundance is characteristic of historical prose in which movement through space is part of the plot. The narrative refers to Central Asia, Russia, China, Khorezm, India, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran, the Caucasus, the Crimea, Turkestan, and other territories.

The role of these names is more complex than simple localization. They establish a historical-geographical frame,

connect individual events with international political processes, and organize the movement of characters. The author even employs variant forms of some state names, reflecting different linguistic or historical naming traditions [1]. Consequently, toponymy becomes a mechanism for representing historical time through spatial vocabulary.

5.6. Toponymy, memory, and narrative space

In literary texts, a place name can evoke an entire field of cultural knowledge. A toponym such as Khorezm or Turkestan is not semantically neutral for readers familiar with Central Asian history. It may activate political, religious, ethnic, and cultural associations. Literary space is therefore constructed not only through description but through the strategic selection of names. Lotman's theory of artistic text is helpful here because spatial distinctions in narrative often organize oppositions between regions, cultures, centers, and peripheries [13].

The trilogy's toponyms also have documentary potential. The research material notes that geographical names provide information about the historical geography, language, and ethnography of the regions represented in the work [1]. This does not mean that literary usage should automatically be treated as a factual historical register. Rather, the value of the toponymic material lies in the way literary representation preserves historical naming practices, variants, and associations. Such evidence can be compared with specialized toponymic research in Karakalpakstan, where ethnonyms and place names often intersect [14; 15].

A further function is narrative movement. When a character travels from one region to another, the succession of place names creates a spatial trajectory. In a historical trilogy with migration, conflict, diplomacy, and trade as major background processes, this trajectory becomes a structural principle. Toponyms therefore connect episodes that might otherwise appear geographically disconnected. They also help the reader reconstruct the scale of the narrative world.

5.7. *Ethnonyms and the representation of collective identity*

The third broad group consists of ethnonyms. The source material identifies more than 70 ethnonyms and includes names of clans, tribes, and peoples [1]. Ethnonyms are particularly important because they shift the focus from individual identity to collective affiliation. In a historical narrative centered on the experience of a people, such units can mark alliances, differences, conflicts, migrations, and cultural proximity.

Ethnonyms function pragmatically as social classifiers. When attached to a character or a place, they can imply origin, group membership, political belonging, or cultural difference. In the trilogy, the interaction between ethnonyms and personal names is especially meaningful. A character may possess an individual name while simultaneously being identified through a clan or ethnic designation. This layered identity corresponds to traditional social structures in which individual personhood is embedded in kinship and community.

5.8. *The Interaction of anthroponyms, toponyms, and ethnonyms*

A major result of the analysis is that the three principal onomastic classes do not function independently. They form an integrated network. A character's personal name may be accompanied by a nickname; the nickname may refer to an occupation, tribe, physical trait, or territory; the character may participate in an event located in a specific toponym; and the event itself may involve members of different ethnic or tribal groups. The literary meaning emerges from the intersection of these name types.

For example, a construction such as "Atebekpalwan" combines anthroponym and social characterization, while a designation such as "Sedetkerey" combines personal identification with collective affiliation. Similarly, "Qaraqumiysan" connects an individual with a geographical environment and a religious title. These combinations illustrate how proper names form syntagmatic clusters. Their meanings are distributed across the cluster rather than confined to one lexical element.

This observation is important for the study of literary onomastic fields. If names are extracted from context and listed separately, much of their artistic function disappears. The

meaningful unit is frequently the whole naming expression: personal name + title; personal name + nickname; personal name + ethnonymic designation; or personal name + place-linked identifier. The trilogy therefore demonstrates that literary onomastics should be studied not only as a taxonomy of names but as a system of contextual relations.

5.9. *Onomastics as a carrier of cultural memory*

The trilogy's onomastic system performs a strong memory function. Historical names preserve references to rulers, military figures, religious leaders, regional actors, and ordinary members of communities. Place names preserve geographical memory; ethnonyms preserve social memory; nicknames preserve community perception. Together they create a network through which the past becomes linguistically visible.

This function aligns with wider research showing that onomastic units can preserve historical and cultural information beyond their immediate denotative meaning [4; 8; 9]. In Karakalpak studies, the same tendency is visible in research on anthroponyms in folk *aitys* and in studies of toponymic material. Nasirova, for instance, demonstrates that anthroponyms in Karakalpak folk *aitys* can provide textualization, intertextuality, expressive evaluation, and emotional force [15]. The present analysis shows a related but historically oriented pattern in Kayipbergenov's prose.

Cultural memory is especially visible where the author explains why a name was chosen. Such passages encode beliefs about ancestry, luck, aspiration, identity, and social continuity. Naming becomes a communicative act across generations: the name remembers an ancestor, expresses a wish for a child, or marks a historical circumstance. In this sense, the onomastic material does not merely describe culture; it participates in the narrative reproduction of culture.

6. DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the onomastic system of *Karakalpak Dastany* should be interpreted as an integral part of the novel's

narrative architecture. The large number of names is not simply a consequence of the scale of the historical plot. The author repeatedly turns names into organizing devices for character, space, social structure, and historical memory. The findings therefore support the broader proposition of literary onomastics that proper names in fiction possess functions that exceed ordinary identification [5; 6; 7; 8; 9].

From the perspective of characterization, personal names provide identity, while nicknames and titles provide social interpretation. From the perspective of setting, toponyms provide geographical coordinates but also activate historical associations. From the perspective of social representation, ethnonyms classify collective identities and reveal patterns of affiliation. These functions overlap and reinforce one another. The result is a dense onomastic texture in which the reader can infer historical relationships from the naming patterns themselves.

An important theoretical implication concerns the boundary between linguistic and literary analysis. Traditional onomastics may focus on etymology, structure, or classification, while literary criticism may focus on symbolism and characterization. The trilogy demonstrates that these dimensions cannot be completely separated. The etymological or structural form of a name can become meaningful precisely because the narrative places it in a specific context. Conversely, a literary interpretation of a name becomes stronger when it is supported by linguistic and historical evidence.

The discussion also suggests that the study of historical literary texts benefits from an integrated linguocultural approach. Names can preserve old forms, social titles, occupational designations, tribal markers, and place-name variants that may otherwise disappear from everyday language. The trilogy therefore represents a valuable linguistic archive, although literary evidence should be interpreted in relation to other documentary sources rather than treated as an autonomous historical record.

7. LIMITATIONS

The present study has several limitations. First, the quantitative figures are taken from the supplied research manuscript and are not based on a newly built digital corpus. Second, the article concentrates on anthroponyms, nicknames, toponyms, and ethnonyms and does not attempt a full semantic analysis of every name in the trilogy. Third, the interpretation is primarily functional and linguocultural; a separate diachronic etymological study could produce additional results. Finally, some name forms appear in different linguistic or historical variants, and their full analysis would require comparison with specialized historical dictionaries and archival sources.

8. CONCLUSION

The analysis demonstrates that onomastic units are one of the fundamental structural resources of T. Kayipbergenov's *Karakalpak Dastany* trilogy. The source corpus records more than 300 anthroponyms, more than 100 toponyms, and more than 70 ethnonyms, confirming the extraordinary density of the trilogy's onomastic layer [1]. However, the significance of this inventory lies not only in its size but in its multifunctionality.

Anthroponyms organize personal identity and help reproduce historical naming culture. Nicknames and name-plus-title constructions compress physical, professional, social, religious, and evaluative information into highly economical textual forms. Toponyms construct historical geography, organize narrative movement, and preserve spatial memory. Ethnonyms represent collective identity, kinship, tribal affiliation, and relations among peoples. When these units interact in context, they produce a multi-layered literary system in which individual, community, and territory become mutually interpretable.

The trilogy also demonstrates the importance of naming episodes and contextual naming formulas. When the author explains why a character received a particular name, naming becomes part of the plot and a source of ethnographic information. When a nickname is repeated, it becomes a

secondary identity marker. When a place name is varied or historically marked, it contributes to temporal and geographical reconstruction. Such patterns show that literary onomastics is not an auxiliary field but a productive approach to the study of narrative language.

The study further confirms the linguocultural significance of the onomastic material. Proper names in the trilogy preserve elements of Karakalpak social memory and connect literary representation with historical consciousness. They allow the author to portray history not only through events and characters but through the linguistic traces of communities, places, titles, and naming practices. This makes the onomastic system of *Karakalpak Dastany* valuable for linguistics, literary studies, cultural history, and the study of Karakalpak identity.

Future research may develop a digital corpus of the trilogy and quantitatively map the distribution of names across characters, chapters, locations, and narrative events. Such a corpus would make it possible to compare frequency, co-occurrence, semantic classes, and naming patterns across the three books and to investigate how the onomastic system changes as the historical narrative develops.

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