ETHNOS WITH TURKISH ANCESTRY IN THE TOPONYMIC BACKGROUND OF THE TERRITORY OF AZERBAIJAN

Natig Gubad Babayev ¹
Zaur Tahir Imrani ²
Aynur Ramazan Zakirova ³

ABSTRACT

Objective: Research shows that parallel toponyms exist in different types of toponymy, including oikonymy, oronymy, and hydronymy. Comparative analysis of parallel toponyms reveals that the people's ethnic origin, household, economic activity, and other areas are reflected here. Agriculture, cattle breeding, primarily sheep and horse breeding, crafts, and other fields had a special place in the life of the Turkic peoples. The mentioned economic fields are also of some importance in the toponomy of Azerbaijan. The large number of toponymic parallels of Azerbaijan and other Turkic-speaking countries once again proves the settlement of Turkic-speaking peoples in these areas since ancient times.

Method: Every event or object can be studied from a certain point of view, which reflects the ultimate task of cognition. In the research process, certain concepts were clarified by using analysis and synthesis methods.

Results: Examining the dictionary of geographical names of Turkic-speaking countries, information books, maps, and other materials shows that the toponyms of the countries of the Turkic world correspond to each other according to their linguistic affiliation, origin, and meaning. It is known that each of the Turkic peoples has its own ethnic name and language.

Conclusions: Examining the residing areas of Turkic-speaking peoples elucidates that unlike peoples of Indo-European origin who settled in different continents, Turks live in the areas where they historically lived. These areas mainly cover a large extent, including some parts of the Asian continent, southeastern Europe, the northern part of the Caucasus, the South Caucasus, and South Azerbaijan. The units involved in the processes of the generation of names in the Azerbaijani system of toponyms are different, and this difference is clearly manifested. Toponyms are created gradually and in a consistent manner. When giving a geographic name to any object, all aspects of the language to which the name belongs are carefully contemplated. In this case, when conducting research on the origin of a toponym, it becomes easier and more reliable to find out to which language the object belongs. Research conducted for many years shows that most toponyms in the region, as well as paleotoponyms, are of ancient Turkish-Azerbaijani origin. These geographical names occupy a vital place in the toponymic stratification of Azerbaijan.

Keywords: Turks, Kemers, Toponymic Background, Caspian Turks, Turkic-Speaking Nations.

ETNOS COM ASCENDÊNCIA TURCA NO FUNDO TOPONÍMICO DO TERRITÓRIO DO AZERBAIJÃO

RESUMO

Objetivo: A pesquisa mostra que topônimos paralelos existem em diferentes tipos de toponímia, incluindo oikonomia, oronomia e hidronomia. A análise comparativa de topônimos paralelos revela que a origem étnica das
pessoas, o lar, a atividade econômica e outras áreas estão refletidas aqui. A agricultura, a criação de gado, principalmente a criação de ovelhas e cavalos, artesanato e outros campos tinham um lugar especial na vida dos povos turcos. Os campos econômicos mencionados também são de alguma importância na toponímia do Azerbaijão. O grande número de paralelos toponímicos entre o Azerbaijão e outros países de língua turcomana prova mais uma vez o assentamento de povos de língua turcomana nessas áreas desde os tempos antigos.

Método: Cada evento ou objeto pode ser estudado de um certo ponto de vista, que reflete a tarefa final da cognição. No processo de pesquisa, certos conceitos foram esclarecidos com o uso de métodos de análise e síntese.

Resultados: Examinando o dicionário de nomes geográficos de países de língua turcomana, livros de informação, mapas e outros materiais mostra que os topônimos dos países do mundo turcomano correspondem uns aos outros de acordo com sua filiação linguística, origem e significado. Sabe-se que cada um dos povos turcos tem seu próprio nome étnico e língua.

Conclusões: Examinando as áreas de residência dos povos de língua turca esclarece que, ao contrário dos povos de origem indo-europeia que se estabeleceram em continentes diferentes, os turcos vivem nas áreas onde historicamente viveram. Estas áreas cobrem principalmente uma grande extensão, incluindo algumas partes do continente asiático, sudeste da Europa, a parte norte do Cáucaso, o Sul do Cáucaso e o Sul do Azerbaijão. As unidades envolvidas nos processos de geração de nomes no sistema azeri de topônimos são diferentes, e esta diferença é claramente manifestada. Os topônimos são criados gradualmente e de forma consistente. Quando se dá um nome geográfico a qualquer objeto, todos os aspectos da linguagem a que o nome pertence são cuidadosamente contemplados. Nesse caso, ao pesquisar a origem de um topônimo, fica mais fácil e confiável saber a que língua o objeto pertence. Pesquisas realizadas por muitos anos mostram que a maioria dos topônimos na região, bem como paleotopônimos, são de origem turca-azerbaijana antiga. Estes nomes geográficos ocupam um lugar vital na estratificação toponímica do Azerbaijão.

Palavras-chave: Turcos, Kemers, Fundo Toponímico, Turcos Cáspios, Nações de Língua Turca.

RGSA adota a Licença de Atribuição CC BY do Creative Commons (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1 INTRODUCTION

The study of toponyms in the territories inhabited by Turkic peoples is of great scientific importance. A comparative analysis of Turkish toponyms reveals that several toponyms in Turkey, the northern provinces of Iran, Iraq (especially Kirkuk), China (Uyghur region), Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Siberia, Altai, Yakutia, Tuva, Bulgaria, Hungary, and other countries are similar in origin and meaning to geographical names (toponyms) in Azerbaijan. However, in some countries, especially in European countries, specific parts of toponyms of Turkish origin have been translated, distorted, and lost their original spelling and pronunciation. The reason for this includes the settlement of peoples who speak the same language in different countries, their households, social situation, internal and external migration, speaking different dialects, and naming the habitat places based on their dialects.

2 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In addition to the “Turkish” ethnons, who have their own ethnic names (Sarmag, Skut, Saka, Kemer, Hun, Massaget, Usun, Pecheneg, Kipchak, Khazar, Abar, etc.), there are ethnic groups who belong to the Altai-language family and whose ancestry is Turkish (“Turkish-speaking”). The purpose of the conducted research is to reveal the sources that confirm that the history of the arrival of these ethnic groups in Azerbaijan dates back to B.C.
The main area of interest of the researchers is the study of toponyms that existed before written literature was created in Azerbaijan. Such names currently exist in our toponymic background. Among these names, there are also those of common Turkic origin. Our geographic names (Bolgarchay, Gargar River, Garvand, Kemerli, Kangarli, Mughan, etc.) are the magical keys to the mysterious doors of our distant past. One of the main tasks is to master the secrets immediately.

3 METHODOLOGY

The geographical name toponymic complex can be considered from different directions. These include: 1) the geographical name refers to reality (mountain, valley, river, city, village, etc.); 2) the historical time and condition of the origin of the geographical name; 3) geographic name belonging to a certain language; 4) the content and etymology of the geographical name, 5) the morphology of the geographical name and its compliance with the norms of the language; 6) correct spelling of the geographical name; 7) distribution areas of the geographical name.

The creation of a geographical name was often associated with a general concept. However, we must not forget that the first reason for the creation of a toponym is its necessity. Because even in a relatively small area of any space, it is difficult to do without special purpose of any object. In this regard, toponymization is usually associated with a specific address as a primary general concept.

Research conducted by many researchers in the direction of studying the ancient history of the Turks shed light on the rich history of our people even today. The services of some Russian historians (S.P. Tolstov, V.V. Bartold, V.A. Gordlevskiy, A.Y. Yakubovski, B.N. Zakhoderin) in this field are noticeable. In particular, S.P. Tolstov has remarkable ideas about the history of the Turks. The researcher mainly studied the homelands of the Turks who settled in the Aral region before the Oghuz tribes. It should be noted that S.G. Aghajanov’s research work in this direction is also worthy of appreciation (Nejef, E. et al., 2003).

4 DATA ANALYSIS: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Given an ongoing need for research on how to support transformative processes in management and education towards sustainability, it is intended to encourage the discussion (Trevisan, L.V. et al., 2022). The analysis and discussion of the work include scientific reports of the Institutes of Geography, History, Literature, Archaeology, and Ethnography of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, fund materials of the National Archives of the Republic of Azerbaijan, scientific works of scientists who have conducted research in this field, methodological demonstrations, literature, as well as the results of the author’s scientific research works.

The requirement that a set of indicators contains the relevant information obtained as a result of surveys on the final results achieved is significant as it ensures communication between the organizers of a national project and the consumers of its results. The question might arise about the formation of additional indicators for assessing the use of the final results of national projects and the effects of their mutual influence through expert assessments and surveys (Fedchenko, E. et al., 2023). It should be noted that various Turkish ethnic groups are of Turkish heritage living in Azerbaijan. Researchers accept them (“Turkic” ethnic groups) in modern literature mainly in two senses: “first, a general name for ethnos belonging to the Turkic branch of the Altaic-language family (which can be attributed to the ancient period); second, the specific name of an ethnic group that was one of the ancient Turkic ethnic groups and created an empire called the Turkic Khanate in a massive area from Altai to Southeast Europe in the 5th century” (Budagov, B.A. et al., 1998).
In historical resources, the name Turk first appeared in Sumerian and Akkadian writings in the 2nd millennium BC in the form of turukku (Imrani, Z.T., 2021). They lived in the territory of today’s Western Azerbaijan. Western Azerbaijan refers to the eastern part of the territory of present-day Turkey and the territory of Armenia, as well as Mesopotamia; that is, they lived in the same region in the north of the Republic of Iraq. The word Turukki is the first of Turkish variant. We encounter the name Turk in the early Middle Ages and even in ancient times. The Greek author Pilini II also notes that Turkish ethnonyms are found in the present-day North Caucasus and Volga region. Another Greek historian Ponponi Mela also mentions that Turks lived in those areas. In the later stages, i.e. in the middle of the 7th century, the Gokturk Khaganate was created.

Each nation has a specific region to reside in (Jafarov, S., 2022). They both immigrated to these regions and sometimes returned (Jafarov, S. et al., 2022). Such return is also felt in the Turkic peoples. If to pay attention, it would be seen that the Turkic peoples lived mainly in the temperate zone. By the temperate zone, we mean a region stretching from the Bering Strait to the interior of Europe. Some researchers say that Turkic peoples are nomads. In fact, these arguments are not valid. Turkic peoples have a form of farming called pastoralism. This does not mean nomadism at all. In fact, it is a form, which belongs to the same field of occupation as agriculture and cattle breeding. If to pay attention, it could be noticed that the Turks historically had a system such as family, village, hamlet, and nation. That is, there were generations, a union of several generations, nations covering a large area. The facts that confirm this opinion attract attention in “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud”. Separately, there are bey, then khan, and later the khan of the khans (Bayandur), and the bey of beys (Salur Kazan). This structure historically existed among the Turks.

Especially after the invasion of Siberia by Russia, some Turks (Yakuts, Dolgans) moved to the north, and some (Tubals) were even oppressed to regions with more difficult climate conditions and others (Qashgais) to deserts and semi-deserts. Today, Qashgais (Turks) reside in more than half of the territory of the Persian province of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to researchers, these ethnos lived in Eastern Asia, as well as in the northern steppes of the Black Sea in the 7th century B.C. They came to the Kura-Araz lowland, as well as to the current territory of Armenia (in the 7th century B.C.) from the regions around the Black Sea. Researches confirm that the Kemers could not stand for a long time in the territory of Armenia. As a result of the pressure of the Saks, they turned to Asia Minor and the areas where Manna existed (652 B.C.).

It is known from many sources that along with the Scythian and Saks tribes, there was a massive influx of Kemers (Cimmerians) from the north to the territory of Azerbaijan at the beginning of the 7th century B.C. It is mentioned that Kemers lived in the North Caucasus as early as in the 8th century B.C. The reason for their moving to these lands is their military conflict with the Scythians. Even the researchers report that the Scythians did not give up chasing the Kemers and followed them to the end. Consequently, it can be concluded that at the beginning of the 7th century B.C., the Cimmerian (Kemer)-Scythian-Saks tribes passed through the Daryal and Darband passes and settled in Azerbaijan. Researchers mention that the western regions of those areas (North Caucasus) are their original homeland. However, it is also known that belted Kemers people existed on the northern shores of the Black Sea from Kerch to Crimea. A strong authority they created in a large area, around the Araz River, existed in Eastern Asia for nearly 30 years (Najafli, T. et al., 2013).
Traces of Cimmerians (Kemers) who settled in Azerbaijan for many years still live in our geographical names. The presence of the toponyms as Gimir, Gimirli (near Zagatala), Kemerli, Kemergaya, Gamarli (in the Gazakh-Borchali area), Komar, Kemer, and Kemerdaran (in South Azerbaijan) shows that the Kimmer-Kemers ethnos has an essential role in the formation of the Azerbaijani people.

Throughout history, some biased researchers have tried to confirm that this tribe is not of Turkic origin with unnecessary evidence. Researchers (Homer, V.A. Livshits, I.M. Dyakonov), who considered the Cimmerians to be Iranian-speaking, are provided with solid evidence about the ancient Turkic origin of this tribe, and all the facts underline these misconceptions. Looking at the traces of Cimmerians - Kemers, we could see that they exist in Turkey (a region between Sivash and Caesarea is still called Kamerek) and in Iran (Kemers belonging to the Gashgay tribe). The names of the villages belonging to the Gamar (Kimmerian) tribe in Azerbaijan, South Azerbaijan, Eastern Turkey, Georgia, and the territory of present-day Armenia are a visual confirmation of their (Kemers) Turkic origin. In some Turkic tribes, the first component of the toponym – kem and –gam means the origin of the name of this tribe, while er (ar) means –a man, -brave, - a warrior in the ethnonym of Kemers (Gamar).

In our republic, toponyms related to ancient Bulgarian tribal names are still alive today. There were many groups of Bulgarians. Even today, we see that the spread area of Bulgarians in Azerbaijan is wide. Bulgan, Vanand, Vanatli, Vanadi (in Babek, Ordubad, Zangilan, and Lerik districts), Garvand (in Fuzuli, Aghdam, and Goranboy districts), as well as other villages (Yaghlavand, Papravand, Khojavand, Bozavand, Burvand, Zuvandly, etc.) have preserved the name of the Bulgarian tribe, who is of Turkish heritage, until present days.

Historian Suleyman Aliyarli notes that the inhabitants of this ancient tribe settled in large areas in the Mughan region. The existence of toponyms such as Bolgarkand, Bulgargoytepe, Bolgarchay, Oghurkand, and Oghurbulag clearly proves this statement (Aliyarli, S., 2009).

While researching the genealogy of the Iberians, the researcher and scientist İlhami Jafarsoy mentions that the name of one of their (Iberians) tsars is Asparukh, noting that the founder of the Dunay Bulgar state was Asparukh Khan (Jafarsoy, I., 2015).

Based on sources from the early Middle Ages, G. Geybullayev states that the Bulgarians consisted of many tribes (Kazan, Chakar, Kol (Kul), Kuvyar, and Basil). Both the Bunturks and the Khazar Turks were considered branches of the great Bulgarian people. The currently existing Chakhirli villages bear the name of the Chakar tribe belonging to the Bulgarians.

While writing about oikonyms in the territory of Nakhchivan in his work, A.N. Bagirov mentions that the settlement names Bulgan, Gazanchi, Gazanchili, Gullar, and Vanand have preserved traces of the ancient Bulgarian tribe to this day (Baghirov, A.N., 2008).

Researchers also associate the origin of the word Vanand with the Bulgarians. That is, this tribe, living in Azerbaijan since the second millennium B.C., settled in the current territories (initially in the territory of present-day Armenia) under the leadership of Bulgarian Vand. This fact is found in the works of Armenian historian Movses Khorenas. M. Khorenasi writes that due to certain misunderstandings, the Bulgarians came from the slopes of the Caucasus Mountains to the territory of present Armenia B.C. and settled in the most fertile lands here. With this article, we not only get the fact that the Bulgarians settled near Yerevan, but at the same time, with the knowledge of the Armenian historian, we see that they (Bulgarians) were the ancient inhabitants of the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains (Seyidov, M., 2018).

The research conducted by toponymical scientists of different countries of the world (Georgian, Armenian, Greek, Arab, etc.) in ancient times once again proves that these nations, peoples, and tribes with Turkish ancestry have been inhabitants of the Caucasus, as well as Azerbaijan, since ancient times.
Historian Suleyman Aliyarli writes that the Khazar Turks are also of Bulgarian origin. They (Khazars) were also tribes belonging to the Azerbaijani Oghuz. Researchers conducting research on this tribe conclude that the Khazars played a vital role in the ethno-genesis of our people, as well as in the formation of the Azerbaijani language. Khazars living in the territories of the North Caucasus regularly attacked the territories of Albania from the north from the first period of their existence (starting from the first centuries of the era) (Geybullayev, G., 1994). In the 8th-9th centuries, most of the battles of the Khazars (who formed an independent state) with the Arabs took place in the lands of Albania. Researchers attribute the massive arrival of this tribal group to the territory of Albania, mainly in 623 (Ahmedov, T.M., 1934). The sources mention that the Khazar tribe had a significant influence in Albania before the powerful Seljuk Oghuz. In general, researchers consider the Khazars to be a local tribe of South-Eastern Europe and the North Caucasus before the Huns. The sources attribute the arrival of the Khazar tribe to the South Caucasus in 193-213 AD. They came here from the North Caucasus.

Researchers mention that the Khazars have lived in the Caucasus, Azerbaijan, as well as neighboring countries since ancient times. Musa Gaghangatli writes that they came to those areas in the 350s. In particular, the Khazars mixed with several Turkic tribes (Gashgays, Sags, Arsags, Basil, Varsags, Shirags, Bulghars, and Bunturks) in Azerbaijan. These tribal associations played an important role in the formation of the Azerbaijani people in the later historical stages.

Many geographical names keep traces of Khazars in different regions of our republic (Khazardagh in Fuzuli district, Khazaryurd in Ordubad district, and Khazar-Yaylag in Lerik district). Tarnavit, Ulashli, Kabirli, Karachorlu, and other settlement names are such ethnonyms. Researchers write that the homelands to which those geographical names belong are the territories inhabited by the Tarna, Kulas, Kabar, and Karachor tribes of the Khazars.

Ethnotoponyms known as the Kabarli (Kabirli) tribe in Azerbaijan are also among the tribes of the Khazars, and they mainly settled in the Karabakh region. The Gavartu hydronym in the Tartar region has preserved the name of the Kabarli tribe to this day (Samadova, K.I., 2008).

It should be noted that according to research, the Khazars created the Khazar Khaganate. They are a branch of the Front Asian Kazakhs of Kam descent. Thus, the Khazars are one of the oldest ethnoses of East Asia. It is said that Khazaria and Ghazaria, which exist in Iberia, belong to entirely different districts. In this case, to clarify this issue, it could be said that Ghazaria settled in Iberia before Khazaria and made it their home. One issue should not be forgotten that apart from the Khazars, many Turkic ethnic groups were ruling in Iberia (Jafarsoy, I., 2015).

The Kangar people are also the successors of the ancient Bulgars. Their history dates back to the 2nd-3rd millennium B.C. The sources write that (historian Paparli Ghazar) in 482 AD, wounded and tired Iberians returning from the rebellion against the Sassanid state came to the Kangar province on the borders of Iberia and Albania. This is valuable evidence confirming the existence of the Kangar state at that time.

Caucasian Albania, i.e., one of the prominent provinces in Northern Azerbaijan, belongs to the Kangar people. Interestingly, this province was located on the borders of Georgia and Azerbaijan. It is also indicated in some historical sources that Kangar people live in the foothills of Mount Ahgry and in the valley of the Araz River. In other words, Kangarli originally existed in two regions. It should also be said that all Turkic ethnoses, like the ancient Turkic ethnic groups, the Kangar people lived not only in the South Caucasus, Azerbaijan, but also in Central Asia.

Syrian sources also provide information about this tribe. They mention about their (Kangars) battle with the Persians on the Armenian and Georgian borders in 542. Armenian
geographers also acknowledge the antiquity of this tribe (7th century) and write that the Kangars lived on the Albanian-Iberian borders.

Historian scientist G. Geybullayev provides information that the name of this tribe has been known since the 5th century. The researcher writes that Kangarli toponyms are named after the Kangarli tribe of Kazachs, I. Shopen states that they (kangars) consist of 33 tribes: “Yurchi, Gizili, Sarbanlar, Khalkhali, Pirhasanli, Salahi, Aghabayli, Hamayi, Garabaylar, Jagatay, Garakhan, Hajilar, Jamshidli, Billiji, Gizilgishlaq, Tutlar, Garadolog, Shabanli, Kalfir, Arabesakli, Garajali, Garahasarli, Panahli, Elkanli (Alkanli), Sofulu, Begdili, Alakbarli, Didavarli, Bolgarli, Kurdamahudli, Allyanli, Ziyadli, and Barghushadli” (Aliyarli, S., 2009).

In his book “Oghuzname”, Fazlullah Rashiduddin mentions many Turkic tribes and writes about Kangarli (Kangli). He notes that they are a brave and warlike tribe, and they get a lot of booty during the battle along with other tribes. To transport this booty, they made carts (kangli) for the first time, and the Oghuz gave them the name Kangli (“carters, those with a cart”) because of their skills (Rashidaddin, 1992).

We encounter the name of Kangarli on the Orkhon-Yenisey scripts and Gultakin monuments in 711-712. In the 6th-7th-8th centuries, the name of the Kangar people is mentioned as Kangyuy in Chinese sources and as Kangli in Iranian sources. In fact, the words kangli, kangar, and kenger have the same meaning. Kangar means warriors who reside or live on the river Kang. Kangli means the population living here. That is, the words kangar and kangli have the same meaning. In “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud” book, this word has been preserved to our days like Kangli (Gaybullayev, G., 1994).

Researchers write that the history of Hun Turks (Kipchags), coming to Azerbaijan from the North and colonising these lands, belongs to the end of the first millennium AD and the beginning of the second millennium AD. They also mention that the history of the settlement of the Oghuzs in the territory of Azerbaijan belongs to the beginning of the second millennium AD. It should also be noted that the integration between the Kipchags and the Oghuz people during this migration positively resulted in the subsequent historical processes. These issues certainly did not happen in a short period of time. If to take into account that the Hun-Kipchags have moved to these lands for a thousand years and the Oghuzs for five hundred years, we will witness the ancient and rich history of at least 1500 years of these ethnos, which played a role in the process of the formation of the Azerbaijani people. It is also known that during that period, whether they were Hun-Kipchags or Oghuz, they were not completely whole. Together with them, the Turkish ethnos, who were close and native, also played a role in the formation of the Azerbaijani people. In this way, Professor Nizami Khudiyev notes that “the ethnic history of the Azerbaijani people is older than the formation of the Azerbaijani people” (Khudiyev, N., 2015).

In general, the most widespread toponymical area in the toponymy of Azerbaijan is the Turkish (Azerbaijani) area. Research confirms that these toponyms date back to B.C. A prominent research scientist Mirali Seyidov repeatedly emphasizes in his work that the path the Azerbaijani people took has been interesting and rich. Therefore, one should be careful when studying the ancestry of these people. Obviously, there are main reasons why different ethnic groups living in these areas have merged into Turkic-speaking ethnic groups. The most important thing was that those (Turkic-speaking) tribes and clans occupied the principal place in the ancestry of the Azerbaijani people: “Turkic-speaking tribes and clans were the foundation in terms of quantity and quality. In other words, Qashgay, Sag, Arsag, Sirag-Shirag, Hun, Basil, Bulgar, Khazar, Varsag, Oghuz, Savir, Onogur, and other tribes were a numerical majority in the formation of Azerbaijanis as a nation. They also occupied a prominent place in their spiritual world” (Seyidov, M., 2018).

The process of socialising and intermingling among tribes with Turkish ancestry has continued for centuries (Imrani, Z.T. et al. 2022). Although the weak and small ones gradually
disappeared, the stronger ones gradually increased their influence and had a say in the formation of history. The role of all Turkic tribes participating in the formation of the Azerbaijani people was important. Even today, researchers use various sources to obtain valuable evidence while investigating the roots of the Azerbaijani people. When acquiring this information through several sources (Greek, Albanian, Aran, Arab, Georgian, etc.), it becomes clear once again that tribal associations with mainly Turkish ancestry lived in Azerbaijan.

It is galling to note that the study of the role of the Turks in history was considered unnecessary for hundreds of years. Because searching for their (Turks’) traces in ancient sources did not benefit either the empire or the ungrateful people of that nature. As a result, research on this topic was superficial until the 1980s. Most of those who wanted to conduct a thorough investigation using the country’s rich toponymy faced severe pressure. Taking advantage of this opportunity, some unprofessional research scientists (Armenians - Yeremyan, Mnasakanyan Akopyan, Russians - A.P. Hovoseltsev, Georgians - G.A. Melikishvili, etc.) have biasedly and unhesitatingly used false evidence to deny that the population living south of Kura River is of Turkic descent and have defamed historical facts.

It should not be forgotten that Azerbaijan is a multi-ethnic country. There is an ancient and tumultuous history of the Udins, Lezgis, Avars, Tats, Talish, and other nations of Turkish origin living together with our people in these areas (Imrani, Z.T. et al. 2021). Historian scientist Suleyman Aliyarli writes that even researchers who wanted to conduct research on the similarity of the Sumerian-Turkish language were banned during the Soviet Union: “The current state of the study of the Sumerians, Scythians, and other communities who lived in ancient Asia in ancient times is also indirectly shows its influence on the history of Azerbaijan. The similarity of Sumerian history with the great past of the Turks in terms of ethno-cultural and ethno-linguistics was openly acknowledged in European science until recently. The well-known Czech orientalist B. Hrozny wrote in 1940: “It seems... the Sumerians lived somewhere in Turkestan or Kazakhstan (Kyrgyzstan) and from here to East Asian regions in the very distant past, in the 6th millennium BC and earlier...” (Aliyarli, S., 2009).

Toponyms are names of geographical objects. The services of geography, history, and linguistics are invaluable in studying these names. Despite all this, toponyms are primarily the research object of toponymics. That is, being an independent scientific discipline, toponymy has its own principles. Unfortunately, our research scientists did not benefit from these possibilities of toponymy until the 80s. In the following years, our researchers, who did not benefit from the scientific research conducted in different countries of the world in the direction of the formation and formation of their peoples, tried to get rid of Soviet psychology, albeit with difficulty.

It should be noted that there are reasons why Azerbaijani Turks, as a sub-ethnic group, are outnumbered and have different names (Afshar, Gajar, Zulghadar, Alpoud, Saatli, Chakhirli, Hajili, etc.). One of the main reasons is the wide distribution area. The main point is that each of the tribes separated from the initial ethnos realises that they are originally Turks. Therefore, they give their native Turkish names to the places where they settled.

Researches show that the toponyms of Turkic origin recorded in the territories of Azerbaijan, as well as in Karabakh, Sheki-Zagatala, Eastern Zangazur, Gazakh-Tovuz, and other regions, belong to the previous periods of our era. The wide distribution area of the Soyudlu oikonym (Bala Soyudlu and Boyuk Soyudlu) in the Oghuz region (Soyudlu strip-Aghjabadi district, Soyud village-Kurdamir, and Gadabay districts) and the results of the researches show that they (Soyudlu) belong to the Oghuz-Turkic group of Uyghurs. The Mughanly toponym in the Zagatala region is also an ethnonym, and there are geographical names that preserve the traces of this ancient tribe in different regions of Azerbaijan (Mughanly village - Aghjabadi, Aghdam, Aghstafa, Barda, Khojavand, Kudamir, Zangilan, etc.).
There is also a fact that all ancient Turkic peoples participated in the ethno-genesis of the Azerbaijani people. If to pay attention, it can be seen that while the Uzbeks are more dominated by Jogatay and Kipchaks in the formation of this nation, the Suvars, Bulgars, Khazars, Kipchaks, and Oghuzs also took part in the formation of the Azerbaijani Turks. Looking at ancient times, it becomes clear that the role of the Scythians, Cimmerians, Saks, and later the Huns was invaluable. Of course, all of them have passed and been occasionally polished through the filter of history. One of the main reasons for the richness of Azerbaijani Turkish is related to these historical facts.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Historically, man has tried to give names to the places where he lives and to the natural objects around him. On the territory of Azerbaijan, geographical names belonging to the class of personal names have appeared on the toponymic background, such as Turkish etnos. From the earliest times, the role of geographical names is played by common nouns and definite expressions, which become more stable over time. However, since the number of expressions suitable for defining geographic names is limited, these expressions are isolated in the class of unique names. It is from this point of view that the study of toponymic words, phrases and sentences is critical. Our research in this direction proves that the geographical names in the territory of Azerbaijan are Turkish ethnos.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Researchers conducting research on the origin of Azerbaijani paleo-toponyms write that the toponyms in these areas are thousands of years old. Numerous studies prove that the Turkish-speaking ethnos lived in these lands before the Common Era. It is known that in all periods of our ancient history, our native names in those lands dominated by ethnic groups with Turkish ancestry have preserved these truths to this day.

Each region of Azerbaijan has its own vibrant history. One of the factors that keep this history alive is the irreplaceable and unforgettable toponyms of our people. It is the people who keep the toponyms alive and protect that area from foreigners. The people preserve their native names so that these names can hold a mirror of their history. In this case, the competent and correct research conducted by the researchers also gives a positive result.

REFERENCES


