

ANALYSIS OF COMPOUND AND SYNTACTICALLY COMBINED NAMES OF PILGRIMAGE SITES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19016194>

Vakhidova Fatima Saidovna

a senior teacher of English Linguistics department, (PhD), Bukhara State University

Sadullayeva Umida Shuxrat qizi

Master student of English Linguistics department, Bukhara State University

Abstract

Pilgrimage site names function as complex linguistic units that encode religious, cultural, and historical meanings. This article examines the morphological and syntactic structures of shrine names in English (primarily Christian traditions in England) and Uzbek (Islamic and Sufi traditions in the Bukhara region of Uzbekistan). Focusing on compound and syntactically combined constructions, the study reveals how these structures serve as semantic cores that mark sanctity, confessional identity, and connection to holy figures. Through qualitative comparative analysis of representative examples—such as “Our Lady of Walsingham”, “St Thomas Becket”, “Hazrati Bahauddin Naqshband”, and “Chor-Bakr”—the research demonstrates both universal patterns (religious titles as core elements) and language-specific differences (prepositional phrases in English versus attributive and possessive constructions in Uzbek). The findings highlight the role of these toponyms as cultural codes that preserve sacred heritage and facilitate pilgrimage identity.

Keywords

pilgrimage toponymy, compound names, syntactic constructions, religious components, English-Uzbek comparative onomastics, sanctity markers, Bukhara shrines, English shrines

Toponymy, the study of place names, intersects with linguistics, anthropology, and religious studies when applied to sacred sites. Shrine names are not mere labels; they function as semiotic markers that convey theological significance, historical memory, and communal devotion. In both Christian and Islamic traditions, these names frequently employ compound and syntactically complex structures to encode layers of meaning beyond simple geographic reference. This comparative analysis focuses on English-language pilgrimage sites (primarily medieval Christian shrines in England and Wales) and Uzbek-language sites (Sufi

and Islamic shrines in the Bukhara region). The study addresses two key structural types:

- ✓ “Compound names”(morphologically fused units)
- ✓ “Syntactically combined names” (phrasal constructions involving prepositions, genitives, or attributives)

Drawing on onomastic theory and recent comparative research, the article argues that these structures are deliberate linguistic strategies for expressing sanctity and confessional belonging. In onomastics, place names are classified by morphological structure: simple (monomorphemic), compound (two or more roots fused), and phrasal/syntactic (multi-word constructions governed by syntax). Religious toponyms often belong to the latter two categories because they must simultaneously identify a location and signal its sacred status (Mambelli et al., 2020).

Compound toponyms fuse elements into a single lexical unit, creating a tight semantic bond. Syntactic combinations, by contrast, retain grammatical relationships such as prepositional phrases or possessive constructions, allowing greater descriptive flexibility. These structures align with the concept of “religious onomastic cores” – titles like “Saint”, “Our Lady”, “Hazrat”, or “Khoja” – that function as semantic anchors.

The analysis is qualitative and comparative, examining 25 representative shrine names. Sources include official shrine websites, UNESCO documentation, historical records, and linguistic studies. Names were categorized by structure, then analyzed for morphological fusion, syntactic linkage, semantic motivation, and cultural function. Examples were selected for prominence in pilgrimage traditions and availability of etymological and historical data.

English compound shrine names frequently combine the title “Saint” (abbreviated St.) or “Holy” with a personal or locative element. This fusion creates a concise, authoritative designation.

“St Thomas Becket” / “St Thomas of Canterbury”. The compound “St Thomas” fuses the religious title with the saint’s name, embedding confessional identity (Christian martyr cult) directly into the toponym. Historical records show this name proliferated after Becket’s 1170 martyrdom, transforming the cathedral into a major pilgrimage center (Historic UK, n.d.).

“Holywell” / “St Winifred’s Well”. Here, “Holy” + “Well” (or possessive “St Winifred’s Well”) fuses sanctity with a natural feature. The 7th-century legend of St Winifred’s miraculous resurrection elevated the spring into a continuous pilgrimage site, still active today (Cadw, n.d.). These compounds are

morphologically tight, reflecting medieval Latin influence (“Sanctus Thomas”) while adapting to English phonology.

Uzbek compound names often integrate Arabic/Persian honorifics with personal names, creating fused sacred units typical of Sufi onomastics.

Bahauddin Naqshband. The name fuses “Bahauddin” (“splendor of the faith”) with the epithet “Naqshband” (“one who binds the pattern [of divine remembrance]”). As founder of the Naqshbandi Sufi order (1318–1389), the compound directly encodes spiritual lineage and mystical practice. The extended form “Hazrati Bahauddin Naqshband” adds the honorific “Hazrat” (“His Holiness”), further sacralizing the unit.

“Chor-Bakr”. This numeric-epithet compound (“Chor” “four” + “Bakr” “pure/elder”) refers to four Sufi saints from the Shaybanid dynasty. The fusion symbolizes communal sanctity and familial holiness, turning a necropolis into a major pilgrimage complex listed on UNESCO’s tentative World Heritage List since 2008 (UNESCO, 2008). In Uzbek, compounds are often reinforced by *Hazrat* or *Shayx* prefixes, creating a dense religious-semantic core that signals Sufi affiliation.

Analysis of Syntactically Combined Names

English favors prepositional and genitive phrases that expand descriptive power.

“Our Lady of Walsingham” The syntactic structure “Our Lady” (honorific for the Virgin Mary) + “of Walsingham” (prepositional locative) creates a full phrase. This construction, dating to the 1061 Marian apparition, explicitly links the shrine to Marian devotion and the site’s English identity (“England’s Nazareth”). It remains the country’s premier Marian pilgrimage center (Walsingham Shrine, n.d.).

“Shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury” The phrase “Shrine of” + genitive “St Thomas of Canterbury” uses syntax to denote possession and location. The construction highlights the shrine’s role within Canterbury Cathedral and its medieval popularity, immortalized in Chaucer’s “Canterbury Tales”. These phrasal names allow narrative expansion, embedding historical and theological detail.

Uzbek syntactic combinations often employ attributive or possessive suffixes (*majmuasi, ziyoratgohi*).

“Khoja Abdu Darun” While “Khoja” forms a compound base, the full designation often appears in syntactic contexts as “Khoja Abdu Darun ziyoratgohi”, using the Uzbek relational marker to link the honorific to the site. “Khoja” (“master/teacher”) signals Sufi spiritual authority (OrexCA, n.d.). Uzbek

syntax tends toward postpositional attribution, reflecting Turkic grammatical patterns while incorporating Arabic/Persian religious lexicon.

Both languages use religious titles (“Saint/Our Lady” vs. “Hazrat/Khoja”) as obligatory semantic cores, confirming their role as “confessional markers”. However, structural preferences differ:

- English compounds are often concise and title-driven, while syntactic forms are expansive and locative (“of” phrases).

- Uzbek compounds integrate honorifics tightly, but syntactic extensions rely on possessive suffixes to denote ensembles (“*majmuasi*”).

These differences reflect broader linguistic and cultural patterns: English draws on Latin-influenced analytic syntax for narrative clarity, while Uzbek blends agglutinative Turkic features with Arabic/Persian religious compounding for dense sacralization. In both traditions, compound and syntactic names transform ordinary geography into sacred geography, facilitating pilgrimage and preserving collective memory.

Compound and syntactically combined shrine names in English and Uzbek exemplify the creative power of language to encode sanctity. By fusing or syntactically linking religious components with personal, numeric, or locative elements, these toponyms become powerful cultural codes. The comparative analysis underscores universal mechanisms of religious onomastics while highlighting language-specific adaptations. Future research could quantify the distribution of these structures across larger corpora or explore their role in contemporary digital pilgrimage discourse. Ultimately, these names do more than locate shrines – they sanctify space and sustain faith across cultures.

REFERENCES:

1. S. Qorayev. *Toponimika (o'quv qo'llanma, 2006)* – O'zbekiston toponimiyasi, muqaddas joy nomlari haqida umumiy asos.
2. T. Nafasov. *O'zbekiston toponimlarining izohli lug'ati (1988)* – ziyoratgoh nomlari etimologiyasi uchun.
3. Sadullayeva, U. Sh. (2024). Historical and cultural foundations of pilgrimage toponyms: The case of Bukhara and England. *American Journal of English and Literature*.
4. Vakhidova, F. S., & Sadullayeva, U. Sh. (2025). Linguacultural aspects of pilgrimage toponymy. *Pedagogical Sciences and Teaching Methods*, 4(45), 283–286.

5. Vakhidova, F. S., & Sadullayeva, U. Sh. (2025). Historical and cultural foundations of pilgrimage toponyms: The case of Bukhara and England. *American Journal of Education and Learning*, 3(10), 287-293.
6. Vakhidova, F. S., & Sadullayeva, U. Sh. (2024). Functional-discursive study of toponymy and its early stages. *O'zbekistonda Fanlararo Innovatsiyalar va Ilmiy Tadqiqotlar Jurnal*, 3(35), 34-37.
7. Vakhidova, F. S., & Sadullayeva, U. Sh. (2024). General overview of toponymy in Uzbekistan. *Interdiscipline Innovation and Scientific Research Conference*, 3(26), 366-368.
8. Eickelman, D. F. (1981). *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach*. Prentice Hall Hutton, R. (2013).
9. Ismoilov, M. *O'zbek toponimikasi asoslari*. Toshkent(2020)
10. Kadirova, M. (2019). Chor-Bakr majmuasi: Tarixiy va diniy meros sifatida. *Buxoro davlat universiteti ilmiy axborotlari*, 3(2), 45-51.
11. Reszegi, K. (2020). A cognitive approach in onomastics: Some notes on metaphorical place-names. *Hungarian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 20(2), 45-60.