

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF PHALERONYMIC TERMS IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

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Abstract. This article examines the linguistic features of phaleronymic terms — names of medals, orders, and other honorary decorations — as they appear in the Uzbek language. Phaleronyms occupy a special place at the intersection of onomastics, lexicology, and sociolinguistics. Focusing on their morpho-phonological shape, lexical-semantic structure, formation strategies, and pragmatic functions in Uzbek, the paper shows how typological properties of Uzbek (agglutinative morphology, productive suffixation, and specific phonotactics) interact with onomastic conventions to produce a characteristic class of lexical items. The study draws on recent onomastic literature and descriptive sources on Uzbek language structure to outline descriptive generalisations and propose directions for further empirical research.

Keywords. phaleronym, phaleronymic terms, onomastics, Uzbek, morphology, lexical semantics, honorific names

Phaleronyms (from the -onym family: names referring to decorations such as medals and orders) are a recognized subcategory within onomastics and name-terminology: they are the proper names assigned to honours and decorations. As onomastic units they carry referential, symbolic and evaluative value, and they frequently encode historical, ideological, and institutional information.

In Uzbekistan — where state and institutional awards play an important role in official culture — phaleronymic terms form a salient, semi-closed class of names whose internal structure and formation patterns reflect both global onomastic practice and specific properties of the Uzbek language. Recent studies in onomastic terminology and regional linguistic literature have begun to document phaleronymic units and their typology, but a focused linguistic description of their distinctive features in Uzbek remains limited. This article provides a descriptive account and outlines analytic questions for further research.

Uzbek is a Turkic, mostly agglutinative language that exhibits productive suffixation and a tendency toward concatenative morphology. These typological features shape how complex proper names (including phaleronyms) are formed, adapted, and inflected in discourse. While some standard varieties show reduced vowel harmony, Uzbek's overall morphological profile (suffixing, nominal compounding and derivation) importantly constrains name formation strategies.

Phaleronymic terms function primarily as **proper names** (they refer to unique institutional artefacts) but also behave like complex lexical phrases, since many are transparently composed (e.g., ELEMENT + CATEGORY: “Independence Order”). Pragmatically, such names do ideological work — they encode values (e.g., “glory”, “service”, “independence”), index institutional authority, and often serve as metalinguistic markers in ceremonial and media discourse. As onomastic items they are lexically stable (receiving less semantic shift than common nouns) but undergo conventionalization processes and may enter collocational patterns (title + recipient; conferment + verb).

Compositional semantics vs. lexicalization. Many phaleronyms are compositional (a noun or abstract noun + category marker), e.g. “Order of X” structures, whereas others are lexicalized unitary names (acronyms, historic eponyms). Compositional names maintain transparent meaning and are productive; lexicalized names may carry historical/associative senses and set idiomatic collocations.

1. **Evaluative lexis.** Lexical items used in phaleronyms typically belong to the evaluative/virtue semantic field: glory, merit, service, independence, courage, labour, friendship, etc. These lexical choices reveal ideological priorities of awarding bodies and are therefore sociolinguistically informative.

Given Uzbek’s suffixing, agglutinative morphology, phaleronymic terms show characteristic formation patterns:

- **Headed compounding / noun phrases:** Uzbek phaleronyms commonly follow Head-of-Phrase + category pattern when calqued from internationally common forms (e.g., “X Order”, “X Medal”), often realized as an NP with a genitive relation or a postnominal classifier. The structure can be literal Uzbek (using genitive or postpositions) or a borrow-influenced phrase (see borrowing below).

- **Productive derivation and suffix adaptation:** When common nouns are converted into derived honorific terms, Uzbek derivational suffixes may be applied to make agentive or abstract nouns that become components of phaleronyms; however, the core label (Order, Medal) is often an established lexeme borrowed or calqued.

- **Phonological adaptation of borrowings:** Foreign or international designations (e.g., titles influenced by Russian or international diplomatic terminology) are phonologically adapted to Uzbek phonotactics (consonant simplification, vowel adjustments) and orthography, including use of Uzbek suffixation rules when a borrowed base takes an Uzbek grammatical ending.

- **Orthographic variability:** Depending on register and script (Latin/Cyrillic historically), orthographic representation of phaleronyms can vary; institutional practice tends to stabilize a canonical orthography for official names.

- **Derivation from abstract evaluative nouns** (e.g., “service” → “Order of Service”).

- **Eponymy** (medals named after historical figures or leaders), which creates proper names that encode biography and historiography.
- **Toponymy or institutional names** (names containing place or institution names).
- **Calquing/translation from international templates** (e.g., direct equivalents of “Order”, “Medal”, “Cross”, often modelled on Russian/European practice).
- **Acronymization** for long institutional awards (less common but possible in modern bureaucratic contexts).

Scholarly treatments of phaleronym typology highlight these strategies and their chronological development in various languages; regional studies indicate similar patterns are present in Central Asian onomastic practice.

Although phaleronyms are proper names, they often take morphological marking required by Uzbek syntax (case endings, possessive constructions when referring to a recipient). For instance, a phaleronym in object position may receive accusative marking like other proper nouns, and post-nominal modifiers follow the language’s standard ordering. This blend of proper-name stability and morphosyntactic integration is typical of named institutional artefacts in agglutinative languages.

Phaleronyms index prestige and institutional authority: choice of vocabulary (e.g., “glory” vs “merit”) signals ideological stances; eponymic names may reflect historical revisionism or commemoration politics. In public discourse, abbreviated or colloquial forms may arise (nickname forms), but such colloquialisms often carry different connotations and are subject to standardization pressures from official registers. Regional and dialectal variation in pronunciation and suffixation can produce micro-variants. Recent onomastic research from the region stresses the need to document these sociolinguistic dynamics.

Translating phaleronyms into other languages presents choices: literal translation (preserving compositional meaning), transliteration (preserving form), or explanatory paraphrase (giving cultural/historical background). Each strategy carries trade-offs for semantic fidelity and pragmatic equivalence. Institutional practice (e.g., state websites, legal documents) usually prescribes canonical translations for international use.

To move beyond descriptive generalisation, targeted empirical work is required:

1. **Corpus study:** compile a corpus of Uzbek phaleronyms from legal texts, decrees, official websites and media to quantify formation patterns, collocational behaviour and frequency.
2. **Diachronic analysis:** trace historical changes in naming (Soviet period vs. post-independence practices), including shifts in evaluative lexicon.
3. **Sociolinguistic surveys:** examine public recognition, colloquial variants, and perceived prestige of different phaleronyms.

4. **Phonological and orthographic documentation:** map regional pronunciation and script variants.

Existing regional onomastic papers call for such data-driven approaches; they provide groundwork but leave many descriptive gaps.

Phaleronymic terms in Uzbek represent a linguistically rich, socially meaningful class of proper names. Their formation and use reflect the interaction of Uzbek morphosyntactic properties (agglutination, suffixation, compounding) with onomastic conventions and sociopolitical practice. Careful corpus and field research will deepen understanding of how these names encode value, history, and institutional identity in the Uzbek linguistic landscape.

THE LIST OF USED LITERATURE

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