

## PROPER NAME FORMULA AMONG MUSLIMS IN MACEDONIAN LANGUAGE

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**Abstract.** The Republic of North Macedonia is a country located in the heart of the Balkan Peninsula in Southeast Europe. It is relatively young country, which gained independence in 1991-th. It's population is mixed, and of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. For the purposes of this paper, we are interested in the religious structure of the population, of which 65% are Orthodox Christians, 33% are Muslims, and the remaining 2% are of other religious affiliations. From the presented demographic structure of this country, it can be concluded that one third of its population is made up of Muslims (Albanians, Turks, Macedonian-Muslims, Bosniaks and an insignificant number of Muslim Roma). Both, Macedonians and Muslims have their own characteristics in naming people. These features are directly related of their religion and different from the characteristic of the naming among Orthodox Macedonians. This means that my paper will cover the anthroponyms (personal names, surnames and nicknames) of the population of Muslims in the Republic of North Macedonia. These anthroponymic categories will be represented by an anthropological and sociological point of view, and also by applying a comparative onomastic method.

**Keywords:** linguistics, onomastics, anthroponymy, Muslim anthroponyms.

## ФОРМУЛА НА ЛИЧНИТЕ ИМИЊА КАЈ МУСЛИМАНИТЕ ВО МАКЕДОНСКИОТ ЈАЗИК

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**Апстракт.** Република Северна Македонија е држава сместена во срцето на Балканскиот Полуостров во Југоисточна Европа. Таа е релативно млада држава која ја стекна својата независност во 1991 година. Нејзиното население е етнички и религиски мешано. За потребите на овој труд, од особена важност е религиската структура на населението, од која 65% се православни христијани, 33% се муслимани, а преостанатите 2% припаѓаат на други религиски заедници. Од прикажаната демографска структура може да се заклучи дека една третина од населението ја сочинуваат муслимани (Албанци, Турци, Македонци-муслимани, Бошњаци и многу мал број муслимански Роми). И Македонците и муслиманското население имаат свои специфики во начинот на именување. Овие особености се директно поврзани со религијата и се разликуваат од карактеристиките на именувањето кај православните Македонци. Тоа значи дека трудот ги опфаќа антропонимите (лични имиња, презимиња и прекари) на муслиманското население во Република Северна Македонија. Овие антропонимски категории ќе бидат разгледани од антрополошка и социолошка перспектива, како и преку применување на компаративна ономастичка метода.

**Клучни зборови:** лингвистика, ономастика, антропонимија, муслимански антропоними.

The ethnonym *Muslim* means a member of the Islamic, i.e., Muhammadan faith. This means that *Muslims* are people of the same religion and different ethnicity. In the Republic of Macedonia, they belong to the following ethnic groups: Albanians, Turks, Sandžak people and Macedonian Muslims, who live mainly in the western part of our country.

Diachronically, Muslims have been present in this region for more than five centuries. Some of them are immigrants from Albania, who together with Vlachs fled from the oppression of Ali Pasha of Ioannina from Moscopole. Others settled here as a result of their migrations from the Bosnia and Herzegovina's Sandžak, and still others were those who submitted to the Turkish government and converted to Islam, that is, accepted the Muslim faith instead of their former Christian Orthodox faith. In fact, they have become a separate ethnic entity. Certainly, Turks, who as an entity already present after the collapse of the Turkish Empire, continued to live in our region, must not be left out.

As a separate religious and ethnic element in this area, Muslims possess not only their typical national culture and tradition, but also their own anthroponymic system, which in many ways differs from the Macedonian one, and from the Slavic one in general. This primarily refers to the fact that many of them, by converting to Islam, were forced to submit to the Muslim naming system. The ideological leader of Islam, Muhammad, ordered the use of new given names of Oriental origin as a formal sign of belonging to the new religion. Existing Slavic first names had to be forcibly translated into Turkish, or one of the given names of Oriental origin had to be chosen. Thus, Macedonian Muslims were forced to change their nominal tradition.

To research this topic, it is necessary to distinguish between the terms "Muslim proper names" and "Proper names of Muslims". The term "Muslim proper names" includes all given names that by their phonetic structure have an oriental origin (coming from Arabic, Persian, Turkish or Ancient Hebrew) and which are the result of Islamization as understood in general terms. "Proper names of Muslims" is a more broadly understood term. In addition to Muslim proper names of oriental origin, it also includes given names of a different type, with different etymologies, different origins and different meanings. This includes all given names that Muslims in the R Macedonia have today, regardless of their phonetic structure, etymology, meaning or motives behind their formation.

Proper names of Muslims in the RM originate from the following non-Slavic languages: Arabic and Old Hebrew (Semitic language family), Persian (Indic language family) and Turkish (Ural-Altaic language family). So, they originate from languages that are different from the Macedonian language in their internal structure and therefore, get the status of a foreign language element which should be adjusted to the linguistic laws of the recipient language (being the Macedonian language in this case).

Such adjustment is made at two levels:

**At the phonetic and phonological level**, which implies:

- **Phonetic adjustment** performed such that the sounds lacking in the Macedonian language are replaced by the most adequate (closest in their sound composition) sounds from the Macedonian language, or rejected;
- **Stress adjustment** made in favor of the Macedonian accentuation model, i.e., given names of Muslims receive the Macedonian fixed third syllable stress type;

**At the word-formation level**, which implies **morphological adaptation** of these proper names to the rules for shortening and derivation of given names in the Macedonian language.

In this context, I would mention the following more frequent proper names:

**Male proper names:** Abib, Avnia, Ali, Aliya, Amet, Adzi, Bekir, Demir, Enver, Ibraim, Izet, Ismet, Yakup, Kadri, Kenan, Memed, Menan, Murat, Mustafa, Mufit, Nazif, Nuri, Orhan, Osman, Ramadan, Redzep, Ruzhdi, Sabri, Sadri, Sali, Samet, Safet, Skender, Suleiman, Turan, Kjemal, Kjerim, Ferit, Džabir, Dželadin, Džemal, Shevki, Shukri.

**Female proper names:** Abibe, Advie, Aisha, Gula, Gjuza, Emine, Esma, Zekia, Zenet, Zuhra, Kadrie, Ljutrija, Mazes, Medime, Merita, Nadira, Naile, Nadžmija, Nebija, Nimet, Rabia, Sabie, Sania, Safie, Sengjula, Fajria, Fatime, Fedie, Dževria, Džemile, Shevka, Shekerezada, Sherife, Shefike.

From an etymological aspect, proper names of Muslims are divided into five groups:

1. Proper names of Arabic origin (the most numerous group)
2. Proper names of Persian origin
3. Proper names of Turkish origin
4. Proper names of Ancient Hebrew origin
5. Proper names of combined origin (including compound names or syntagm names).

Muslim proper names can also be classified under the motives behind their origin, i.e., their semantic classification, where the following groups can be distinguished:

**1. Proper names that in their meaning indicate a beautiful human trait** (the motive behind them is the wish for the newborn to be like the meaning of his/her given name; they are adjectival formations):

**Male names:** *Abib* = dear, engaging; *Ali/Alija* = high, elevated; *Amet* = praised; *Asan* = beautiful, good; *Berdžo* = very shiny; *Enver* = shiniest, brightest; *Kenan* = hidden; *Memed* = praised; *Menan* = satisfied; *Murat* = wanted, desired; *Mustafa* = chosen; *Mufit* = useful; *Nazif* = pure; *Ruzhdi* = wise; *Sabri* = durable, persistent; *Sali* = honorable, good; *Sead* = lucky; *Suleman* = peaceful; *Kjerim* = generous, noble;

**Female names:** *Advie* = quick, sly; *Azbie* = solid; *Alide* = eternal, lasting; *Ganimet* = successful, helpful; *Gjuza* = beautiful, good; *Esma* = high, sublime; *Zekija* = pure, innocent; *Kadrie* = fateful; *Ljutrija* = gentle; *Mamude* = praised; *Menduha* = praised; *Merita* = cheerful, lively; *Nadira* = rare; *Haile* = generous; *Naifa* = helpful; *Nurtena* = beloved, desired; *Sabrije* = durable, persistent; *Sanija* = beautiful; *Fajrija* = proud, famous; *Fedie* = extraordinary; *Fikrija* = wise; *Džemile* = beautiful; *Sherife* = honest, generous.

## **2. Proper names denoting a function, social status or title:**

**Male names:** *Avnija* = assistant; *Miftar* = village mayor; *Orsan* = fortress ruler; *Samet* = leader and *Turan* = nobleman;

**Female names:** *Mirem* = mistress of the world.

## **3. Proper names with religious motivation:**

**Male names:** *Vebi* = gifted by God; *Zijahudin* = light of the faith; *Ibraim* = father of the people; *Jakup* = a person from the Qur'an; *Huradin* = light of the religion; *Sebadin* = illuminator of faith; and *Dželadin* = greatness of faith;

**Female names:** *Mida* = she who glorifies God.

**4. Proper names denoting gemstone names:**

**Male names:** *Jakut* = ruby;

**Female names:** *Mazes* = diamond and *Dževrija* = gem.

**5. Proper names denoting flower names:**

**Female names:** *Gula/Gulka* = flower, rose; *Gjulten* = flower, rose and *Sengjula* = you are a flower.

**6. Proper names denoting the names of celestial bodies:**

**Female names:** *Zena/Zenet* = zenith; and *Zuhra* = Venus.

**7. Proper names motivated by the time of birth:**

**Male names:** *Bekir/Bekjir* = firstborn child; *Edish* = child born seventh in order, *Ramadan* = name for the ninth month in the Islamic calendar and *Redžep* = name for the seventh month in the Islamic calendar;

**Female names:** *Rabija* = fourth.

**8. Protective (prophylactic) proper names:**

**Male names:** *Medin* = lion and *Osman* = young serpent;

**Female names:** *Ajsha* = alive; given to a child before whom a number of children have died and *Medime* = lion(ess).

From the above, it can be concluded that the adaptation of Muslims proper names in Macedonia was made in the most radical way. Namely, the derivation of hypocoristic proper names is following the Macedonian model, by shortening the full forms or by the Macedonian type syllabic derivation, as well as by suffix derivation through adding suffixes that are most often borrowed from the Macedonian language. Thus, there is a phenomenon of linguistic interference on an anthroponymy level.

On the one hand, the surname system of Muslims in the RM shows genetic differences compared to the Macedonian surname system, while on the other, it shows typological similarities with it. Genetic differences are most pronounced in the surname basis, which, among Muslims, may originate from Arabic, Ancient Hebrew, Persian or Turkish; that is to say, genetic differences at the lexical level. Typological similarities, on the other hand, are expressed in the structural model of surnames, which consists of a base (it can be either a given name or a nickname) and a surname suffix. In surnames where the basis is a given name, a similar situation is noticed as in the Macedonian language, i.e., the proper name can appear in its full, but also in its derived or hypocoristic form. Hypocoristic names used in surnames among Muslims are often derived by adding Macedonian word-formation suffixes. The typological similarities occurring at the identification level in the two ethnicities mentioned,

are certainly a result of linguistic borrowing which is inevitably a consequential phenomenon for any multiethnic environment.

From a structural and semantic aspect, Muslim surnames are divided into:

## 1. SURNAMES FORMED FROM GIVEN NAMES

As stated earlier in the text, these surnames are based on given names of non-Slavic origin. Depending on whether they are in their full or derived form, they are divided into two subgroups:

**1.1 Surnames formed from given names' full form:** *Abazi, Abduli, Ademi, Ajruli, Amedi, Arslani, Bilali, Veli, Bekiri, Ziberi, Ibraimi, Jakupi, Memedi, Latifi, Jusufi, Redžepi, Hasan, Jashar, Shaban, Sherifi, Sulejman.*

**1.2 Surnames formed from given names' short (derived) form:** *Ajroska/Ajroski, Alinoska, Asamanovikj/Asamanoska, Bavtiroski, Isoska/Isoski, Merimovikj, Musoska/Musoski, Rushoska, Redžoski, Rushanoska/rushanoski, Sejдинoski, Takovski, Fejzovski, Fejzuloska, Fetoska/Fetoski.*

## 2. SURNAMES FORMED FROM NICKNAMES

Nicknames in the basis of surnames can have different semantics. Accordingly, the following varieties are distinguished:

**2.1. Surnames formed from nicknames expressing people's character traits:** *Batali* < nickname *Batal* (< tur. *battal* 'spoiled at heart'), *Bedži* < nickname *Bedži* (< arab. *wāğīhā* 'he who has a face'), *Elezi* < nickname *Elez* (< arab. *ālādđ* 'most pleasant'), *Mazari* < nickname *Mazar* (< tur. *mahzar* 'dignified').

**2.2. Surnames formed from nicknames originating from people's occupations or professions:** *Bajraktar* < nickn. *Bajraktar* (< tur. *bayraktar* 'flag bearer, champion'), *Odža* < nickn. *Odža* (< tur. *hoca* 'a Muslim priest'), *Terzi* < nickn. *Terzia* (< tur. *terzi* 'seamster, tailor').

**2.3. Surnames formed from nicknames containing information on people's social status:** *Alimi* < nickn. *Alim* (< arab. *ālīm* 'learned, educated man'), *Zendeli* < nickn. *Zendel* (< tur. *zinde* 'brisk, strong, solid man'), *Miftar* < nickn. *Miftar* (< tur. *muhtar* 'village mayor'), *Nasufi* < nickn. *Nasuf* (< arab. *nāşif* 'servant'), *Nebioska* < nickn. *Nabi* (< arab. *nābi* (yy) 'high, prominent') + suf. *-oska*.

From the conducted analysis and systematization of surnames among Muslims in the Republic Macedonia the following can be concluded:

➤ Similar to Macedonians' surnames, surnames formed from a given name are more frequent, with the difference that, among Muslims, the group of derivations from given names' full form is more numerous (whereas the situation among Macedonians is reversed, i.e., surnames formed from abbreviated and derived forms of given names are far more numerous). This is an indication that the proper name system of Muslims is not characterized by rich word-formation derivation.

➤ The surname system of Muslims has long been ruled by the folk code, hence the current use of surnames such as: Muslim surname basis + Macedonian surname suffix

(e.g.: *Bavtiroski, Musoski, Rushanoski, Shabanovski* etc.). Even today, this type of surnames is most common among Macedonian Muslims who express their ethnogenesis in this way.

➤ More recently, notably since the beginning of this century, Muslims have expressed their need for better religious and ethnic identification in a multiethnic community. This phenomenon is explicitly proven in the structure of surnames in the Muslim population, i.e., they have been moving from hybrid to genetically homogeneous structures. More precisely, they reject the surname suffixes imposed on them by foreign state administrations (for example: Serbian in the period between the two world wars, Bulgarian during the Second World War and Macedonian in the post-war period). For these reasons, Muslims reject the Slavic surname suffixes *-(ov)ikj, -ov/-ova, -o(v)ski/-o(v)ska* and opt for a typical surname model with a genetic connotation, first in the linguistic code, and then in the proper name notation. In that context, Muslims in my country also paid attention to the language economy, so they opted for surnames derived from anthroponyms, usually by adding the Albanian family suffix *-i*, which denotes that the named person has a genesis, i.e., a family to which he/she belongs. Unsuffixed surname forms are also common, which I think are a result not only of tradition, but also of the need for better identification.

➤ Linguistic interference is also observed on a broader level, i.e., within the noun formula of a given name and surname. Namely, although sporadically, there are examples when a Muslim has a noun formula of a given name of Macedonian or Slavic origin, to which a Muslim surname is added (e.g.: *Menka Bajrami* or *Veselin Jusufi*, who declared themselves as Albanians).

### Conclusion

The *proper name formula of Muslims* in the RNM is dominated by given names of Oriental origin, i.e., of Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Old Hebrew origins. Their proper name system differs from that of Orthodox Macedonians. However, it must be noted that the Macedonian language has influenced the naming system of Muslims such that many hypocoristic proper names appear on a Muslim basis, but are formed according to the Macedonian word-formation model and with the addition of Macedonian anthroponymic formants.

In conclusion, I would say that people of the Balkans are interrelated in many respects: historical, societal, social, anthropological, communicative, economic, but above all, they are interconnected by the need for mutual national respect.

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