

UZBEK LANGUAGE TERMINOLOGY IN THE FIELD OF KNIFE-MAKING: THE KNIFE AND ITS PARTS' NAMES

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Abstract

The article contains professional vocabulary, terms of the knife-making sphere in the Uzbek language: opinions on the names of knives and their parts.

Keywords: Language and culture, national language, literary language, professional vocabulary, knife-making, knife-making - knife, razor, dagger, early Paleolithic, cutting weapons, Bronze Age, copper, iron and brass.

Introduction

Knifemaking is the craft of making knives, razors, daggers, and other cutting tools, one of the oldest forms of craftsmanship. It dates back to the early Paleolithic period. Initially, cutting tools were made from stone. During the Bronze Age, knives began to be crafted from copper and bronze. The discovery of iron marked a significant turning point in the development of knifemaking. In Eastern countries, particularly Central Asia, knifemaking has been highly developed since ancient times. Later, it also flourished in European countries.

Information about iron knives appears in the works of ancient Greek epic poets Homer and Hesiod. In the 14th century, Germany, England, Austria, and France banned knifemaking as a profession, restricting knives to kitchen use. Archaeological excavations in Uzbekistan (Afrasiab, Bolaliktepa, Varakhsha, and other sites) uncovered knife samples dating back to the second millennium BCE. Wall paintings indicate that knives were used not only for household and hunting purposes but also for military purposes.

Between the 6th and 12th centuries, knifemaking advanced, with changes in decoration techniques. In the 15th to 17th centuries, portable knives worn on the side appeared, as depicted in miniatures in the works of Navoi and Babur. Subsequently, distinct schools of knifemaking emerged. In the Fergana Valley, Samarkand, Tashkent, Bukhara, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, and Khorezm regions, there were about twenty knifemaking centers, each distinguished by their crafting techniques, shapes, compactness, and decorations. These centers include Chust, Shahrixon, Qorasuv, Kokand, Khiva, Tashkent, and others.

In Central Asia, knives were essential working tools and decorative items for men. Uzbek knifemakers elevated the craft to an art form. In ancient times, craftsmen lived together in

neighborhoods named after their trade. For example, a knifemaking neighborhood still exists in Tashkent.

Among Uzbek knives, Chust knives are perhaps the most famous. Many Chust knifemakers belong to dynasties of craftsmen. Near Chust city in Namangan province, at a place called Bibiona, knives have been crafted since the 8th century BCE. Until the 15th century, Chust was the only place in the Fergana Valley specializing in knifemaking, making Chust knives world-renowned.

Chust Knife is a type of knife made by master craftsmen in Chust, one of the oldest cities in the Fergana Valley, Namangan province. Chust knives are not only beautiful but also capable of performing extraordinary tasks, such as easily cutting hair. When properly sharpened, they can serve for many years. In Uzbekistan, the term “Chust knife” is synonymous with “high-quality knife.”

History: In Central Asia, locals in Bibiona engaged in knifemaking as early as the 8th century BCE. From that time until the 15th century, Chust exclusively produced knives, earning worldwide fame. Today, types such as “yorma,” “bodomcha,” “chamandasta,” “chumchuq,” and “etik sopli” knives are produced and exported abroad.

Distinctiveness: Chust national knives are ancient and handcrafted, making them highly sought after worldwide. A genuine Chust knife stands out for its aesthetic beauty. Typically, its blade is straight, 3–4 cm wide, and 10–20 cm long. The handle is made from ivory, antelope, or deer bone, adorned with pearls, silver, or colored stones, and the metal part features engraved patterns, earning them the nickname “Guldor knife” (flower-patterned knife).

Types of Chust Knives: Chust knives are categorized based on shape and width, including the “Tolbargi knife” (resembling a willow leaf with a curved blade), “straight knife” (with a flat back), “Hisori knife” and “Qozoqi knife” (with slightly curved blades), “Bodomcha knife,” “Soylik knife” (with a groove on the upper blade), and “Kamalak knife” or “Qo‘shsoylik knife” (with a double groove along the upper edge). Numerous traditional knife types exist in Chust, each designed for specific purposes, such as kitchen use, meat cutting, vegetable peeling, fruit peeling, hunting, or tree cutting.

Structure of Chust Knife: Like other national knives, a Chust knife consists of three parts: the blade, handle, and sheath. The blade is the cutting part above the guard, traditionally sharpened and polished with great care, decorated with patterns like bigiz, qalam, naqsh, or naycha qalam. Handles are crafted in various styles, including suqma, yorma, and naqshinkor. The sheath, or qin, is a separate craft in Uzbek knifemaking, often made with silver or gold bases and adorned with precious stones, a tradition that continues today.

Chust knifemaking involves numerous professional terms used daily by craftsmen and enthusiasts, integral to their work and professional lives.

In the Middle Ages, special knives made in Central Asia were highly valued for their quality by rulers, merchants, spies, and soldiers. Knives from Khojand and Badakhshan were prized for their pure steel and precious stone inlays, those from Axsikent for spies and

scouts, and those from Guzor, Samarkand, and Khiva for their strength and toothed handles. In recent history, knifemaking schools existed in Kokand, Chust, Guzor, Khonqa, Qorasuv, Shahrixon, and Poytug, with each dynasty's tamga (mark) indicating the craftsman.

Located in Namangan province, Chust is one of the Fergana Valley's oldest cities, famous for its unique knives and traditional do'ppi (skullcaps). Chust knives are considered among the best in the country. As one of Central Asia's oldest metalworking cities, Chust's center hosts a blacksmiths' district, where traditional knifemakers handcraft Uzbek knives in small workshops. Each knife serves a specific purpose, with extremely sharp and beautiful blades that retain their edge for a long time.

Chust is also renowned for its do'ppi, which complement other types of skullcaps with their unique patterns and decorations, hand-stitched by artisans.

Six Facts About Chust Knives:

1. A knife consists of three parts: blade (cutting part), handle (suqma, yorma, or naqshinkor), and sheath (a holder for knives, swords, or daggers). Types include "ro'zg'ori" (household), "oshpichoq" (kitchen), "chopqipichoq" (chopping), "sallohi" (butcher's), "mardona" (men's belt knife), "shamshirak" (smaller than a sword), "xarbo'zi" (melon-cutting), and "chol pichoq" (bone-cleaning).
2. Knives are classified by material: "damashqiy" (Damascus steel), "isfahoniy" (Isfahan steel), "farangiy" (European steel), "o'rusiy" (Russian steel), "turkona" (local steel).
3. Based on shape and blade: "yakkadam" (single-edged), "dudama" (double-edged), "qo'shpichoq" (folding), "o'roqi" (curved with inner blade). Knives are made in straight, boat, or almond styles.
4. Handle decoration: "chalabuzar" (foldable handle), "mardona" (for embroiderers), "sodda" (household), "guldor" (patterned handle), "chilmixi gulli" (with chilmix studs), "rufta" (polished blade surface).
5. Tools used in knifemaking include iron, zoq gulband, piston, whetstone, bozg'ardon, chilmih parma, and sadaf arra. Tig'ombir holds the blade, bozg'ardon is a foot-long iron tool, bozg'on is a heavy hammer, sandon is a steel base, and sadaf arra is a small saw.
6. Sheath-making is a distinct craft in Uzbek knifemaking, with bases traditionally made from silver or gold and decorated with precious stones, a practice that continues today.

Conclusion: Professional terminology (professionalisms) comprises words and concepts specific to certain crafts or professions. Borrowing from other languages, dialect-specific words, and words with altered meanings in common usage are key sources for forming professional terminology, enriching the lexical composition of literary language and dialects.

The Uzbek people have long engaged in various crafts, leading to the development of craft industries in every region and district of Uzbekistan. For example, in Chust knifemaking, specialized terms created by the people during labor processes form a rich layer in the

lexicon of the common language. As diverse products made by craftsmen enter public use across societal strata, their specific terms become widely used, acquiring figurative meanings, serving as the basis for comparisons, and appearing in proverbs, sayings, and idiomatic expressions, further enriching the lexicon.

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