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The Russian Language in Modern Scientific and Educational Environment
THE ONOMASTIC PERIPHRASES IN THE NATIONAL
CONCEPTOSPHERE

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Abstract

“The Dictionary of the Famous Personalities of the Pacific Alliance” co-authored by Chesnokova, Radović, and Talavera Ibarra, published in Russian, presents biographical data and linguacultural information on 240 protagonists (60 for each country) of the four founding nations of the Latin American trade bloc: Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru. The logic of elaborating the content of the dictionary entries required the reflection of the variative nominations (pseudonyms, nicknames, abbreviated names, onomastic periphrases) that the protagonists are famous for in their corresponding linguacultures, as well as the representation of their intercultural adaptations by means of Russian language, which allows the Russian-speaking students of Spanish obtain diverse linguacultural competencies while consulting the given Dictionary. Besides that, the Dictionary itself complies with the intention to represent a guide for expanding the linguacultural knowledge regarding the countries of the Pacific Alliance, while the Russian language serves as a mediating language between the Spanish-speaking and the Russian-speaking linguacultures and as a metalanguage of the lexicographic description. The authors reiterate the need for further elaboration of dictionaries of such kind, for the students of foreign languages to immerse into the undoubtedly diverse Spanish tropology in the early stages of their linguistics and translation studies.

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1. Introduction

The development of social sciences has led to formation of the linguistic cognitive studies of memory, the so-called memory studies, where the memory is considered as a socio-cultural phenomenon; as a cultural and historical phenomenon; as a psychocognitive phenomenon; and as a linguistic phenomenon (Tivyayeva, 2018). If the conceptsphere is taken into consideration as an area of knowledge consisting of concepts as its only possible units, a structured set of concepts of a given people, an informational basis of cognition (Popova & Sternin, 2007, p. 25), or as the potentials the lexicon a certain person or an entire language possesses (Likhachev, 1993, p. 153), then referring to the conceptspheres of different cultures confirms that the personal nouns have a special place in the national conceptsphere and in the formation of linguacultural competencies of the people studying a foreign language. “The Dictionary of the Famous Personalities of the Pacific Alliance” (Chesnokova et al., 2020), published in Russian, presents biographical data and linguacultural information on 240 protagonists (60 for each country) of the four founding nations of the Latin American trade bloc: Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru.

2. Problem Statement

Proper names of persons, or anthroponyms are nowadays in the center of intercultural studies (Dolzich & Dmitrichenkova, 2020; Fernández Juncal, 2018; **Knoblock, 2019**; Mensah & Rowan, 2019). New perspectives have been opening in the language teaching aspect (Chesnokova et al., 2019) and in a rather new trend in linguistics - the memory studies. The authors consider the onomastic periphrases as connotatively marked denominations of a person or invented character, inherent to a specific linguaculture. The onomastic periphrases have a special place within the parameters of the national identity. They are undoubtedly present in the collective linguistic experience of the native speakers. In order to understand the onomastic periphrases correctly, there is a need for the representatives of other linguacultures to obtain extralinguistic knowledge, which is reflected in the „Dictionary of Famous Personalities of the Pacific Alliance“.

3. Research Questions

The national onomastic periphrases are formed under the influence of the philosophical factors and national rhetorical traditions. The well-known Russian cognitive scientist Kubryakova (2012) rightly pointed out that choosing one or another proposition, as well as choosing an original component (basis) for the predicative position does not depend on a linguistic system, but is randomly done by the speaker. In other words, it constitutes the ideological or philosophical aspect of speech.

The usage of onomastic periphrases has a considerable influence on the quality of public speech, by making it bright, emotional and expressive. There is a significant amount of classical Russian periphrases with an absolute recognizability among the native speakers, such as “*The Father of Russian Aviation*“ (*Отец русской авиации*) for Nikolay Zhukovsky, “*The Columbus of the Universe*“ (*Колумб*

Вселенной) for Yury Gagarin or “*The Perestroika Architect*” (*Архитектор перестройки*) used to denote Mikhail Gorbachev (Ramazanova, 2015, p. 24).

The logic of elaborating the content of the dictionary entries required the reflection of the variative nominations (pseudonyms, nicknames, abbreviated names, onomastic periphrases) that the protagonists are famous for in their corresponding linguacultures, as well as the representation of their intercultural adaptations by means of Russian language, which allows the Russian-speaking students of Spanish obtain diverse linguacultural competencies while consulting the given Dictionary.

4. Purpose of the Study

The Dictionary itself complies with the intention of „a guide meant to form the knowledge and skills in extracting the necessary information and <...> a piece that develops a taste in acquiring knowledge of a subject that gets in touch with it“ (Denisov, 2011, p. 25), while the Russian language serves as a mediating language between the Spanish-speaking and the Russian-speaking linguacultures and as a metalanguage of the lexicographic description. The authors wish to point out the problems encountered by the translators and students of Spanish while adapting Spanish onomastic periphrases to Russian tropes.

5. Research Methods

The descriptive onomastic method has been used as the primary research method, while applying such techniques as observation, comparison, interpretation and generalization. The methodological basis of the research includes onomastic theory, discourse theory, the theory of precedence, achievements of memory studies.

6. Findings

6.1. Adaptation of the Spanish stylistic norms when translating onomastic periphrases into Russian

As Iovenko correctly notes, “the stylistic norms of Spanish inherently possess certain categorical judgements, „strong“ words, redundant pathos and elevated style“ (Iovenko, 2013, p. 308). Translating such stilted constructions requires modulations, as well as preference of domestic rather than foreign devices.

For instance, after googling the proper name *Ruben Darío*, we encountered the following result:

Rubén Darío, «el padre del Modernismo», homenajeado en Google
Darío es el máximo exponente del modernismo por su obra «Azul...», considerada el punto de partida de este movimiento. En sus poemas se perciben fuertes influencias de escritores franceses.

Fue también representante de su país en el exterior ostentando distintos cargos, haciéndose evidente su compromiso sociopolítico en algunas de sus obras como «A Colón»¹.

Google Pays Tribute to Ruben Darío, “the Father of Modernism” (el padre del Modernismo)

Darío is the highest example of modernism for its poetic work “Azul...” that is considered as starting point of this movement. His work manifests strong influence of the French writers. He also represented his country abroad by holding different positions, while exposing his socio-political engagement in some of its books, such as “To Columbus (A Colón).

The literal translation of the stylistically elevated Spanish periphrasis “*The Father of Modernism*” (*el padre del Modernismo*) into Russian as “отец модернизма” is unlikely to sound acceptable stylistically. It is far more likely that the form “основатель модернизма” (*The Founder of Modernism*) will be treated as a preferable one, as proven by the results of our survey in a group of informants consisting of 20 Russian third-year students of Linguistics.

6.2. The classification of the onomastic periphrases of “The Dictionary of the Famous Personalities of the Pacific Alliance”

The emotional categorization of the contribution made by the prominent figures of the national liberation movements in Latin America to the independence of their countries motivated the onomastic periphrasis „*The Father of the Homeland*“ (*El Padre de la Patria*) that possesses diverse attribution. The Chileans consider José Miguel Carrera and Bernardo O’Higgins as “*The Father(s) of the Homeland*”, while for the Colombians it is Simón Bolívar, and the Mexicans – Miguel Hidalgo.

The geographical allusions of the onomastic periphrases contain amplifying and generalizing connotations. This can be illustrated by the example of the denomination used for the first Mexican President of Indigenous origin Benito Juárez, known as “*The Emeritus of the American continent*” (*Benemérito de las Américas*), demonstrating the aesthetics of the glorification of America as an entire continent; or the example of the Peruvian poet José Santos Chocano, so-called “*The Poet of America*” (*El Cantor de América*). The allusion to the Andes is visible in the denomination “*St. Theresa of the Andes*” (*Santa Teresa de los Andes*) used for the Chilean saint Juana Fernández y Solar, as well as in “*The Andean Lily*” (*Azucena de los Andes*) for the Peruvian writer Clorinda Matto de Turner.

The onomastic periphrases stemming from the protagonist’s area of activity regularly reveal the following motivation mechanisms:

The precedent name or the assessment of his/her global cultural heritage, as in the next examples:

„*The Tenth Muse*“ (*La Décima Musa*), referring to the distinguished Mexican poetess of the XVII century, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

¹ Delano, L.E. (2019, December 1). *El padre de la novela chilena* (Diario: Santiago, Chile, August 28, 1968). Biblioteca Nacional Digital de Chile. Retrieved from <http://www.bibliotecanacionaldigital.gob.cl/bnd/628/w3-article-217317.html>

After browsing the periphrasis „*The Tenth Muse*“ (*La Décima Musa*) we randomly chose to analyze the following result:

Aniversario luctuoso de la "Décima Musa Mexicana", Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

A 324 años de su muerte recordamos a Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz como una de las grandes mujeres que han contribuido a la transformación de nuestro México.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz nació en 12 de noviembre de 1651 en San Miguel de Nepantla, Estado de México, fue una de las más destacadas figuras de las letras de nuestro país. También conocida como "la Décima Musa Mexicana" o "el Fénix de América", fue autora de obras dramáticas barrocas como "Amor es más laberinto" y "Los empeños de una casa"².

Death anniversary of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, "The Tenth Mexican Muse"

324 years after her death, we remember Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz as one of the great women who have contributed to the transformation of our Mexico.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was born on November 12, 1651 in San Miguel de Nepantla, State of Mexico. She was one of the most prominent literary figures in our country. Also known as "The Tenth Mexican Muse" or "The Phoenix of America", she was the author of such Baroque theatre works as "Love is More of a Labyrinth" ("Amor es más laberinto") and "The Endeavours of a House" ("Los empeños de una casa").

Other examples include „*The Apostle of the Revolution*“ (*Apóstol de la Revolución*) used for the Mexican politician, the revolutioner Francisco Ignacio Madero, as well as “*The Centaurus of the North*” (*Centauro del Norte*) that refers to the leader of the Mexican Revolution Pancho Villa.

One of the most productive principles of formation of the onomastic periphrases is the keyword used as a symbol alluding to the activity of the denominated person, for example, *law* in the case of Francisco José de Paula Santander y Omaña in the periphrasis “*The Man of Law*” (*El Hombre de las Leyes*); the self-qualification *servant* as a symbol of loyalty and service to the homeland regarding José María Morelos, the national hero of Mexico; *tropical* as the reflection of the main motif in the paintings of the Colombian painter of German origin Guillermo Wiedemann – “*The Tropical Expressionist*” (*El expresionista del trópico*); *partisan* as in “*The Partisan Priest*” (*Cura guerrillero*), a reflection of the civil position of the Colombian priest Camilo Torres Restrepo. The Colombian writer Fernando Vallejo who fought for the purity of Spanish language is known in the Colombian linguaculture as “*The Last Grammarian*” (*El último gramático*). High achievements and fame in a certain area seem to be regularly motivating such periphrases with the kinship term *father* (*padre*). The Colombian biochemist Manuel Elkin Patarroyo, inventor of the malaria vaccine, bears the periphrasis “*The Vaccine Creator* (literally *Father*)” (*El padre de las vacunas*). Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, Mexican writer and journalist who

² Gobierno de México. (2020, September 10). *Aniversario luctuoso de la Décima Musa Mexicana, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (Instituto Nacional para el Federalismo y Desarrollo Municipal, April 17, 2019). Retrieved from <https://www.gob.mx/inafed/articulos/aniversario-luctuoso-de-la-decima-musa-mexicana-sor-juana-ines-de-la-cruz>

authored the novel “Clemencia” considered the first contemporary Mexican novel is called “*The Father of the Mexican Literature*” (*Padre de las Letras Mexicanas*).

The reconstruction of the motivation of separate onomastic periphrases demonstrates the names of the famous representatives of the same or metonymically similar line of work. The former Chilean leader Carlos Ibáñez del Campo received the periphrasis “*The Mussolini of the New World*” (*El Mussolini del Nuevo Mundo*) for its dictator methods of ruling, while the Mexican comedian Gómez Bolaños became famous as *Chespirito* (“*The Little Shakespeare*”), and the prominent Peruvian scientist Federico Villarreal as “*The Peruvian Newton*” (*El Newton del Perú*). In an interview for the Chilean newspaper “*Diario*” in 1988 Isabel Allende expressed that she felt proud when called “*García Márquez in a skirt*” (*la García Márquez con faldas*)³.

The onomastic periphrases may represent an expanded nickname. Carlos Valderrama, successful Colombian football player is known as *El Pibe* both in Colombia and abroad, which in South American Spanish means “*Kid*”, the defense player Mario Alberto Yepes Díaz as “*The Marshall*” (*El Mariscal*) and the baseball player Edgar Rentería as a root vegetable “*Arracacha*” (*Arracacha*) which can be translated as “*simpleton*”.

The self-periphrases are especially worth mentioning: the Mexican politician Plutarco Elías Calles paid himself tribute through the periphrase „*The Main Chief of Revolution*“ (*Jefe Máximo de la Revolución*). The pioneer of realism in Latin American literature, Chilean writer and diplomat Alberto Blest Gana is not only known as „*The Founder (Father) of the Chilean novel*“ (*El padre de la novela chilena*)⁴, but also as „*The Chilean Balzac*“ (*El Balzac de Chile*). According to Torres Rioseco (1951), he was inspired by the work of Balzac to such extent that he pretended to become like him (p. 207).

7. Conclusion

The onomastic periphrases show the ways the society emotionally reflects on the role of its iconic personalities, so the symbolism and the connotation of their names serve as the means of “knowledge transfer” (Demyankov, 2016). The data compilation, typologization and the elaboration of the intercultural adaptation instruments for the onomastic periphrases are significant for further consideration of the national identity, idioethnic rhetorical devices, linguistic didactics and translation.

The onomastic periphrases are always figurative linguistic devices, they represent national rhetorical tradition and traits of the national worldview. Yury Lotman (2016) wrote that the tropes represent the essence of the creative cognition, stating that they function even outside the scopes of art, as they belong to creativity as a whole (p. 56). We utterly agree with Goncharenko (1973), extraordinary Russian translator, translation theorist and expert in Romance studies, who claimed that the translator needed to adopt the “tropology” of languages while approaching the translation of figurative devices (p. 68).

³ Allende, I. (2019, November 27). *Es un orgullo que me digan la García Márquez con faldas* (*Diario*: Santiago, Chile, December 20, 1988). Biblioteca Nacional Digital de Chile. Retrieved from <http://www.bibliotecanacionaldigital.gob.cl/bnd/643/w3-article-280776.html>

⁴ ABC. (2020, September 18). *Ruben Darío “el padre del Modernismo”, homenajeado en Google*. Retrieved from <https://www.abc.es/medios-redes/20130118/abci-ruben-dario-aniversario-google-201301180034.html?ref=https://www.google.com>

It is evident that the translation of the onomastic periphrases may correspond to the main possible types of transformation in the process of translating the metaphorical devices:

- Conservation of figure;
- Appropriate figure substitution;
- De-periphrasing of the periphrasis;
- Metaphorization of a non-figurative expression;
- Different grammatical expression of the tropes in two languages;
- Different formal parameters of the tropes within the compared languages;
- Translation of a type of trope through another type (for instance, translating a periphrasis with a metaphor or viceversa);
- Intensification or reduction of the emotional load of the trope (Alekseeva, 2002, p. 74).

The authors of “The Dictionary of the Famous Personalities of the Pacific Alliance“ are certain that it is needless to reiterate the need for further elaboration of dictionaries of the kind, in order for the students of foreign languages to immerse into the undoubtedly diverse Spanish tropology in the early stages of their linguistics and translation studies. To summarize, the subject of onomastic periphrasis is never complete. The interpretation of Spanish onomastic periphrasis in teaching Spanish as a foreign language to Russian university students provides the development of the important principles of dialogue among languages and cultures on the personal, social, and professional levels, along with communicative strategies (Chesnokova, 2017) and metaphoric competence skills among students.

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