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ANTHROPONYMS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SPACE OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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Abstract

Urgent linguodidactic problems of Russian as a foreign language are identified in the article in the aspect of introducing students to Russian anthroponymy in the light of the most modern competence approach in educational practice. The following conclusions are made: 1) there is no correlation between the register of the frequency of using proper names in textbooks and the register of the real frequency of using personal names; 2) as a consequence of the belittling of the role of nicknames in society this type of anthroponyms is not presented in didactic materials for Russian as a foreign language; 3) anthroponyms used by the authors of textbooks are not quite relevant to modern linguistic, linguistic-cultural and sociocultural situation; 4) the discrepancy is the result of underestimating the significance of proper names in the process of teaching foreigners; 5) due to the current situation in the educational process, there are obstacles to the formation and development of the necessary competencies of foreign students, to the formation of ideas about the real specifics of interaction in the Russian-speaking environment. It is necessary to adjust the didactic materials in which Russian anthroponymy is using, in order to overcome the "separation from reality". This applies to the principles of forming an onomastic lexical minimum and the principles of selecting anthroponyms for educational developments.

1. Introduction

In the light of recent trends in education and the approval of a competence-based approach, from our point of view the field of onomastics is insufficiently developed in the sphere of teaching Russian as a foreign language (RFL). In our opinion, the system of proper names, which, like any language phenomenon, reflects the current historical, socio- and linguistic-cultural situation, deserves more attention while various competencies of students are developing. In particular, in toponyms (geographical names) the authors of RFL developments can update cultural and pragmatic components: for example, they can update cultural and historical connotations in connection with the research / creation of a geographical object, or they can update emotive and evaluative connotations in connection with the perception of a particular object by native speakers. But importance of anthroponyms (names of people) is usually ignored, they are used only when necessary, background knowledge is often transmitted through them only indirectly. "Often, onyms are an accompanying material when studying, for example, grammatical constructions or any communicative topic. In such cases, the cultural and historical information about the names remains "closed" to a foreigner, and it complicates the formation of their communicative and socio-cultural competencies" (Golovina, 2012, p. 6; Golovina, 2016, p. 157). It is hardly possible to talk about the effectiveness of communication if the interlocutors are able to perceive only a superficial, literal layer of information in statements, operate with the knowledge gained in the learning process, which is focused on educational, rather than live, immediate communication.

2. Problem Statement

Currently, in relation to the didactic principles of teaching RFL it is necessary to state that "...the term onomastic vocabulary is not introduced into the educational program, the idea of the main types of onomastic units is not given, it is not intended to explore the history of the Russian anthroponymicon, its Christianization, it is not told about dictionaries of this type", there are no relevant methodological developments (Sergeeva, 2009, p. 147).

The use of the competence approach adopted by educators in recent years raises new questions for teachers of RFL related to the anthroponymic component of Russian-language communication, including:

- Formation of adequate ideas about the Russian onomastic space, in particular about its anthroponymic fragment.
- Familiarizing students of different levels of training with various types of anthroponyms that are typical not only for official communication, but also for unofficial communication situations.
- Development of students' skills in working with different types of language units, including anthroponyms, which contribute to the effectiveness of communication in different cultural environments and communication situations.Please replace this text with context of your paper.

In other words, it is a question of forming lingual, linguistic, cultural, and communicative competencies among foreigners through the proper names.

3. Research Questions

According to the problem statement the author focuses on two issues.

- Are the anthroponyms presented to students adequate to the current state of the Russian anthroponymic system?
- Do the anthroponyms presented to students correspond to the linguistic and linguistic-cultural situation in the modern Russian-speaking society?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to identify the urgent problems of modern linguodidactics of Russian as a foreign language in the aspect of familiarizing students with Russian anthroponymy.

The main tasks are as follows:

- To correlate the anthroponymicon (a set of the names of people) in the Russian language textbooks with the current Russian anthroponymicon in terms of the frequency of using of proper names.
- To justify the expediency of familiarizing advanced-level students with unofficial names of people (nicknames).

5. Research Methods

The main research methods are comparative, relative, and descriptive. Modern RFL textbooks are compared in terms of anthroponymy. The anthroponymic materials are compared with official data on the most common personal names of Russians in recent years. We described in the article some typological features of modern Russian nicknames.

5.1. Official personal names of people

It should be noted that usually people's names are used in methodological developments only in the aspect of communication, primarily in connection with the issues of etiquette use of components of the Russian three-term formula "first name – patronymic – last name". In classes, the following competencies are developed: sociocultural (students get acquainted with the phenomenon of hierarchy and subordination in Russian society), communicative (speech norms of etiquette are developed), and partially linguistic (students learn the concepts of "personal name", "patronymic", "surname"). However, this component of didactic materials (first of all, personal naming), in our opinion, needs to be improved.

Bondaletov (2016, p. 271) rightly notes that a teacher of RFL should have a clear idea of the degree of use of proper names at the present time and take into account historical changes in the Russian anthroponymicon. However, we are faced with the fact that the modern lexical minimum (Andryushina & Kozlova, 2015, p. 72) continues to follow the previous years' guidelines, developed on the basis of classical works of the second half of the XX century, which reflected the state of the Russian anthroponymic system, which was thirty or fifty years ago, for example (Suslova & Superanskaya, 1991). The register of recommended proper names has not been updated for decades.

Our observations pushed us to disappointing generalizations, the actual justification of which we found in the works of Golovina (2012). For example, the analysis of the textbooks of Russian for foreigners has shown that "the most frequent and characteristic of Russian culture names are used in texts that are recommended by the lexical minimum (19 male and 23 female anthroponyms) and those, that were chosen at their own discretion (27 male and 22 female anthroponyms)" (Golovina, 2012, p. 83–84). It should be noted that most of the proper names in RFL textbooks are irrelevant to the modern linguistic situation (generalizations are based on the conclusions of Golovina (2012, p. 79-83):

1) a small number of high-frequency names in textbooks (*Alexander, Andrey, Anna, Ekaterina, Maria*) are among the traditionally popular names among Russians;

2) some common names in textbooks (*Natalia, Irina, Olga, Elena, Sergey, Anton, Nikolai*) were very popular, but 30–50 years ago (see, for example, (Suslova & Superanskaya, 1991). Such names are more logical to use in relation to middle-aged characters than young people;

3) some anthroponyms (*Peter, Oleg, Yuriy*) have historical and cultural associations with figures of the past, but at present they are also practically not in demand. Such nominations are more appropriate for mature and elderly characters;

4) in some cases, names are found in textbooks quite often (*Fyodor, Vera, Inna, Pavel, Roman*), but they were never included in the number of frequency;

5) at the same time, it is extremely rare that textbook authors are attracted, and more often they are not attracted at all to the really frequent names in recent decades: *Sofia, Daria, Anastasia, Elizaveta, Polina, Artem, Nikita, Danil / Danila / Daniil*, etc.

The next facts concerning the derivatives of personal names pay attention:

1) the number of names represented not only in full, but also in secondary form is relatively small. It is quite expected that these are diminutives (diminutive derivatives) and hypocoristics (evaluative derivatives) of Russian names of men and women (*Alexander, Alexey, Dmitry, Ivan, Nikolai, Pavel, Yuri; Anna, Galina, Ekaterina, Maria, Natalia, Olga, Tatiana*) (Golovina, 2012, p. 84);

2) often there is no correlation between diminutive forms and corresponding full forms, although "for a foreigner who is just beginning to learn the language, they can seem like different names, especially in cases where the basis forms almost do not coincide in form (*Alexey – Lyosha*, *Vladimir – Vova*, etc.)" and sometimes "the foreign recipient will meet with the spoken versions of names, mechanisms of formation of which from full form sometimes is difficult to "read" even for the Russian people: *Anna – Nyusha*, *Alexander – Shura*, etc." (Golovina, 2012, p. 84);

3) the number of diminutive forms is minimal, despite the fact that the number of them even for one name can reach several dozen, for example, look at the forms of the name Maria in the dictionary by Superanskaya (2017).

It is probably necessary to conclude that the anthroponymicon of the RFL textbooks largely reflects not the actual state of the system of proper names of Russians, but the idea of the compilers of didactic materials about it. And this is the view of middle-aged and elder people.

We believe that in this case, the perception of Russian onomastics by foreigners is distorted. The selection of linguistic facts that is not quite relevant to reality leads to natural mistakes in the formation of students' linguistic and socio-cultural competencies. In particular, there are cases when foreign students

do not take into account the stylistic coloring of various forms of the name in their written address to teachers (cf.: "Hello, Julia!"). At the same time, we should not forget that a number of names are of great interest for the development of cultural competence, although these possibilities of proper names are often underestimated. Cf., for example, a name with an unstable frequency of use *Vladimir*, which is of great interest from a historical and etymological point of view in their relationship (Tolstaya, 2020). A very significant question is about the preferred place of a proper name in a three-term formula (initial or central position: "first name – patronymic – last name" or "last name – first name – patronymic") when naming a person in an formal or informal communicative situation (Bayburin, 2019), the role of a proper name as "self-presentation" of young people (Lipatova, 2019).

5.2. Unofficial personal names of people

In our opinion, a significant omission is ignoring the fact that in the Russian-speaking environment, not only official names of people are used. And this does not correspond to the real socio-cultural situation. We consider it possible and (at an advanced level of education) even necessary to introduce students to such types of anthroponyms as nicknames. Moreover, this phenomenon is not unique to Russian culture and it is possible to use parallels in the speech practice of different people.

It is known that nicknames are used by many ethnic groups. Among the Eastern Slavs, initially it was mandatory, the only component of naming, which not only named a specific person, but also reflected their physical and intellectual abilities, behavioral characteristics, occupation, etc., and thus helped to distinguish a person from the general mass. Over time, these onyms moved from the center to the periphery of the Russian onomastic system, took a marginal position in it, but there was not even a short period when nicknames were not used at all.

An important part of the "biography" of nicknames and evidence of their high usage is their use even in relation to officials, political and historical figures. As in Western European culture, nicknames were often given to rulers, sf.: *Yaroslav the Wise, Vasily the Dark, Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Catherine the Great, Alexander the Peacemaker*, etc. Each such onym somehow characterizes its bearer, "works for the image" of a historical figure. And this is only a special case, since such anthroponyms were given (and are given) not only to politicians.

Some of these nicknames become known to students who study Russian as a foreign language while studying historical topics. But only outside the classroom students can learn that nicknames are currently actively used by all native Russian speakers in informal communication. And this phenomenon is so alive and widespread in almost every book, in almost every movie, we encounter with. And this is no accident.

The functions of modern nicknames are diverse, although it would be more accurate to talk about their polyfunctionality. So, with anthroponyms of other categories, that is, with personal names, patronymics and surnames, nicknames have in common the ability to serve as a means of naming, establishing the identity of subjects, distinguishing people (nominative, identifying, differentiating functions). The uniqueness of nicknames is provided by their ability to characterize people, distinguish between "friends" and "strangers", indicate that an individual belongs to a certain group of people, and convey an attitude to named persons (qualitative, marking, classifying, emotive, pejorative, and other

functions). In addition, nicknames perform conspiratorial, socializing, axiological, cultural, entertainment, gaming, and other functions.

The multifunctionality of nicknames is explained by the fact that this phenomenon is primarily socio-cultural and individual-psychological, and only secondly – linguistic. Now unofficial names are used in almost all social groups (ethnic, professional, age, by interests, etc.), especially in youth, informal, and marginal microgroups. And this is despite the extremely negative attitude towards nicknames that is being exaggerated in society.

However, there is already an authoritative source of specific theoretical and practical information – the works of Walter and Mokienko (2005, 2007). In addition, there are developments that demonstrate the ethnolinguistic specifics of Russian nicknames (Bobrova, 2018; Makarova & Popova, 2020; Osipova, 2017). We believe that lessons can be based on Russian art (books and films).

We have to say that at the moment, teachers of RFL are forced to overcome the shortcomings of the current system of teaching foreigners independently, by adjusting the available materials and attracting additional sources.

6. Findings

The following conclusions follow from the above:

- There is no dependence of the register of frequency proper names in RFL textbooks on the register of real frequency proper names.
- There is a contradiction between the negative attitude to nicknames that established in society and their real position in the Russian anthroponymic system; due to the belittling of the role of nicknames in society, this type of anthroponyms is not represented in the didactic materials about RFL.
- The anthroponyms used by the authors of RFL textbooks are not quite relevant to the current lingual, linguistic and socio-cultural situation.
- The detected inconsistencies are the result of underestimating the importance of the proper names.
- As a result of the current situation in the educational process, there are obstacles to the formation and development of the necessary competencies of foreign students, to the formation of their ideas about the real specifics of interaction in the Russian-speaking environment.

7. Conclusion

It is necessary to adjust the didactic materials in which Russian anthroponymy is using, in order to overcome the "separation from reality". This applies to the principles of forming an onomastic lexical minimum and the principles of selecting anthroponyms for educational developments. It is advisable to include unofficial onomastic types of vocabulary in didactic materials.

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