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REGIONAL URBAN STUDIES AS A PROMISING TREND IN KAZAKHSTAN LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT: The discipline of Modern Russian Studies in Kazakhstan develops in line with global linguistic trends, including the use of urbonymic systems from the point of view of their communicative existence. Urbonymes, their typology, linguistic analysis of functioning of systems of Kazakhstan cities-related onomastic terms are promising issues of Kazakhstan's Russian studies. The authors emphasize the close relation of onomastic processes to the society life. The formation of onomastic space of independent Kazakhstan and the definition of its national expression are considered by the researchers as one of the most important problems of the modern Kazakhstan linguistics. Language planning and language policy should become an integral part of a general policy aimed at improving the social, economic and cultural situation in the city. This provision is significant for the nomination process in Pavlodar, the onomastic system of which, like of a similar system of any Kazakhstan city, reflects the socio-cultural changes taking and having already taken place. The article specifically shows promising new approaches to the study of the city, in particular, from the standpoint of study of general cultural landscape of the city.

The phenomenon of the city has long been in the focus of attention of scholars in various areas of knowledge. Presently, of considerable scientific value are the linguistic, social, economic, environmental, demographic, philosophical, political, historical and cultural aspects of the city.

Urban phenomenon is a very relevant issue to study, as the cities have always been social and cultural centers with their unique administrative practices, organization of social life and specific composition of the population and, consequently, distinctive linguistic processes.

Alongside modernization processes seen Kazakhstan over the past years there has been a significant growth of cities and the share of the urban population, with three quarters of the country's population living in the cities nowadays. The cities experience rapid ongoing concentration and integration of new economic activities, high-tech industry, financial, commercial and educational services, material, cultural and spiritual values, as well as the foreign trade infrastructure. New types of cities and varying classifications thereof have emerged. At the same time, very few studies on purely linguistic and communicative city-related issues, the description

of external and internal linguistic factors influencing the linguistic image of the city are available in the scope of the modern Kazakhstan linguistics. Scattered scientific papers available in the national science today fail to provide a systematic and complete glimpse of the modern linguo-cultural issues of the city.

The city as an object of research is attracting increasing attention of experts of various areas of scientific knowledge: philologists, historians, sociologists, political scientists, philosophers, economists, geographers etc.

One of the most important aspects of studying the history of cities are everyday life surveys. The history of everyday life is both an independent scientific value and an important tool used in the context of a more general agenda: drawing up of regional models of the culture and language of the city, studying the specificity and mechanism of their functioning on various social and intellectual levels. Daily life spans the entire human-inhabited environment, the environment of direct consumption, satisfaction of material and spiritual requirements, the associated customs, rituals, behaviors, ideas, habits. The related analysis of the reflection of such processes in the language is highly promising.

It is from this perspective that the philological study of cities, enabling a more comprehensive characterization of the whole phenomenon of the city and city life, is a productive trend in the world and domestic urban studies.

If we consider the emergence of the global urban studies, it should be pointed out that in a linguistic way the agenda of this subject area was initially formed based on the sociological approach. This particular approach to the analysis of the spatial structure of the city, the system of social relations and relations therein was paid attention to in the works of R. Park and E. Birgess (Birgess 1925), the prominent representatives of the Chicago school.

Urban studies also sourced fruitful ideas from the French school known to spread knowledge of new urban history and English school of comprehensive local studies.

However, in general, the problem of the city language has not been studied to a sufficient extent, and there are considerable spatial “gaps” related to the study of specific cities. The discipline of Urban Studies is relatively young subject area in the modern Kazakhstan linguistics. Relevant studies available today relate mainly to the problem of formation of the linguistic landscape of the city. Here we can single out the work by T. T. Kotlyarova (2008) dedicated to certain issues of formation of onomastic space of Astana, the issues of semantics of onymes are considered in article by V. I. Suprun (2012).

The study of general cultural landscape of the city as an existential and scientific phenomenon is among new trends in Kazakhstan urban studies.

N. Zh. Shaimerdenova at the international congress noted:

Russian Studies is presented by national schools in Kazakhstan as an area of philology studying the Russian Language, Russian Literature and folklore. Of primary importance

for the Russian Studies experts in Kazakhstan is the study of ancient Turkic-Slavic contacts, comparative description of the Russian and Kazakh, Russian and Tatar, Russian and English and other languages, studying of cultural-ethnographic and sociolinguistic features of the Russian language functioning etc. Fundamental works in the field of linguistic hermeneutics, linguistic source study should be considered the great achievement of Kazakhstan's Russian Studies along with the history of the Russian language, comparative-historical linguistics, the Russian language in a foreign nationality audience and many other disciplines (Shaimerdenova 2007, 235).

This substantial list lacks Linguistic Urban Studies, probably for the simple reason that it was not paid due attention to in Kazakhstan science during the period in question.

It is necessary to make it clear that traditional Linguistic Urban Studies in Kazakhstan is included in onomastics and, in our colleagues' opinion, should not be considered as a standalone subject area. In particular, this was discussed at the presentation of a new Kazakhstan textbook on linguistics theory for undergraduates, when in response to my comment on the absence of references to linguo-urbanistic studies in the country one of the most respected authors – A. K. Zhumabekova said that it is inappropriate to consider Linguistic Urban Studies as a separate subject area of linguistics but rather leave it as a part of onomastics.

Indeed, the city-related onymes are traditionally referred to microtoponyms, which, in turn, are part of an extensive list of proper names comprising, as is known, the object of onomastic research. At that, proper names are considered from different points of view: history of emergence of names and nomination drivers, typology of proper names, their establishment and continued functioning in a class of onymes, issues of proper names classification, territorial and linguistic distribution thereof, functioning of onymes in speech etc. In addition to these issues onomastics examines the phonetic, morphological, word-formation, semantic, etymological and other aspects of proper names. This explains the wide aspectology of onomastics.

Onomastic processes and phenomena are closely linked to the historical and cultural life of society. You could even say that no area of the language functioning features such direct and immediate links to the social life as onomastics and its unit, proper name (onyme). Back in 2008, Russian researcher A. K. Matveyev, analyzing trends and practices in the Russian Onomastics and, in particular, in the Linguistic Urban Studies, concluded that “the consequences of voluntarism in urbonomination have been difficult for the country to cope with” (Matveyev 2008, 102). He stresses the need to respect the proper name, because it “is or will be a monument to our history and culture” (Matveyev 2008, 103).

The urbonymic phenomena specificity is primarily regional in nature, as the selection of urbanonyms is virtually the same for any city, the difference being in their combination, layout density, features of nomination. All these features are studied in Regional Onomastics and Urban Studies as a part of it.

Regional Onomastics aims to identify onomastic systems, which combine the names of certain territories. The system in a known manner affects both the perception of names already existing, and the creation of new ones. In each historical period, the system has an internal balance and interdependent 'value' of its constituent components. At the same time, the system undergoes constant changing and conversion. These processes are enhanced to a greater extent as affected by changes in the ethnic and linguistic composition of the territory's population, changes in the ideological and political influence, etc. (Madiyeva 2013, 135). This provision is fully applicable to the functioning of urbynymic systems, in our case those of the city of Pavlodar.

The proper name is always in the scientists' focus of attention, although considered to be vocabulary periphery. The intensity of processes the proper name is involved in generates certain tendencies in the area of its functioning, i.e. in onomasticon, including in the city onomasticon.

T. V. Shmelyova (1997, 146–147), a known onomastics expert, specifies the following trends in the modern city onomasticon:

1. expansion of the range of onym-based named urban facilities (banks, insurance companies, legal organizations, various businesses, schools, pharmacies, medical institutions, etc.);

2. sequential ("house-to-house") onym-based nomination of urban facilities already covered by onomastic approach of naming (particularly as refers to the names of various types of commercial establishments);

3. extension of the scope and update of lexemic composition, discovery of new ways of involving appellatives in the city onomasticon, active inclusion therein of everyday life and archaic vocabulary;

4. restoration, manifested in more or less massive return of old pre-Soviet period names, the coexistence of which in the speech of citizens (residents/inhabitants) with still relevant former names in various cities develops differently and requires special attention of linguists;

5. a return to the city area of anthroponyms which pre-revolutionary cities were rich with, other forms of existence of anthroponyms in the modern city – home name, "home-made" acronyms, etc.;

6. rehabilitation (admission to be used on signboards) of informal proper names that existed previously in oral speech only;

7. overcoming of barriers of the Russian lexicon, including of foreign language units in onomasticon (from the "international fund", the English and even oriental languages); in which case onyms of foreign origin prefer "natural" written form, which opens the way for the Latin alphabet and hieroglyphs to the Russian-speaking urban environment.

We can witness similar phenomena and processes in onomastic processes in Kazakhstan. Scientists report "the dramatic changes in the life of modern Kazakhstan

induced by social processes” that “have also influenced the content of onomastic environment” (Shmelyova 1997, 147).

According to scientists, “cases of renaming are related to the intention of nominators due to the desire for reflection. This desire reflects the need to recognize the cultural and historical context and express it in proper names” (Madiyeva 2013, 134).

Thus, linguo-urbanistic processes in the modern city are complex in nature, a deep scientific insight into which involves addressing a broad range of socio-cultural factors.

It is noteworthy to single out the connection of onomastic processes with city the language planning among the above factors. In the opinion of researcher B. Ya. Sharifullin, which we admit to share, the issues of onomastic development of the city are directly related to the language policy in matters of naming and renaming of both the cities and facilities located therein. The researcher writes: “The issue of nomination, renomination and counter-nomination, is indeed considered one of the most urgent problems of the Russian onomastics (the whole lexicology in a wider context) of the twentieth century, especially its ending” (Sharifullin 2000, 172).

Analyzing trends in this area, the researcher identifies innovations in the Russian urban onomasticon, some of which are related to the legal issues of language, language policy and language planning:

1. 1. Personalization and intimization of urban names. Many of them are restoring (and possibly for tactical reasons) the types of names traditional for Russian businesses and merchants, i.e. containing the owner’s name.

In this sense, the nomination process is directly linked to the internal form of the word. As A. Kiklewicz rightfully noted,

the motivation of a linguistic sign is always socially and culturally conditioned: each individual nomination is connected with the situation in the course of human activity, with practical and intellectual experience of language subjects, with specific tasks that need to be resolved with the use of sign-oriented means (Kiklewicz 2013, 208).

The Soviet time-tested type of naming by personal name is also used, but “unlike the former involving purely “taste-based” motivation (“Ruslan” store, “Lyudmila” store, “Svetlana” atelier), the new names are primarily based on the name of the owner or his/her nearest relations” (Sharifullin 2000, 174).

The above trends are typical for the urbonymic system of Pavlodar, with the anthroponymical principle of nominating new sites adhered to in the first instance. For example, we have registered the names of 153 cafes of Pavlodar, of which 20 nominations (12%) are as follows: *Adil, Alia, Gulsum-ai, Natalie, Lusine, Amir* et al.

The process of personalization and intimization is to a greater extent reflected in the names of Pavlodar shops. By now a total of 528 names of commercial establishments of various types and sizes have been recorded, from mega shopping

malls to the smallest built-in shops. Of these, 149 nominations are anthroponymic names (35%). Name intimization can be seen in such names of our stores as *Botam* (literally, My Little Camel), *Dan'ka* (diminutive-hypocoristic of Danila) *Lyubasha*, *MirasiK* (also a word play), *Sudarushka*, *Sudar'*, and many others.

2. The author refers to another interesting trend in the onomasticon of cities in Russia: legalization of informal (everyday-colloquial, slang, underground) names of stores, social support facilities etc., established back in the Soviet time. According to the author, most often such names reflect “healthy” onomastic reflection of citizens, their rejection of faceless and indirect titles, especially if the “numbers” were used as “names” (Sharifullin 2000, 174-175). In Pavlodar onomasticon we found no such phenomena.

3. “Retrospection” of onomasticon, restoration of and return to the old types and ways of naming, as well as names themselves. This phenomenon is also observed in Pavlodar urbonyms: *Kupets*, *Uspenskaya store* (containing a lexical item-historicism), *Pishcheprom* (a model of the Soviet trade nomination), (shops), *Traktir* (cafe). However, it should be noted that the tendency to retrospection is not generally inherent in Pavlodar urbonyms, with a rather poor influence thereof and clear predominance of the tendency to increase the number of foreign-language nominations, especially in the area of use of emporonyms.

4. “Pigeonization” and “barbarization” (“westernization”) of city names. The author believes that this phenomenon is “a reflection in the new names of westernization and barbarization of the linguistic consciousness of their authors” (Sharifullin 2000, 176).

This phenomenon is widely spread in ergonomics of Pavlodar in general and, in particular, in the area of use of emporonyms (*Best Body* (lingerie shop), *Monarch* (European clothing store), *Second Hand Planet*, *Happy Mother* et al.).

Sharifullin links all of the above-mentioned phenomenon with the general principle of spontaneity of onomastic nomination, in contrast to the formality and regulation of similar processes in the Soviet period. He believes that the nominator’s intention “to stand out” against the background of similar titles is quite evident as well as a desire to rely on own (“private”) aesthetic tastes, needs, own linguistic intuition (ibidem, 177).

It is hard to disagree with the scientist’s opinion “that spontaneity of onomastic nomination and its results are undesirable for the communicative environment of the city, although reflecting, in general, natural language and speech processes” (ibidem). In this regard, the author speaks about the necessity in optimum language planning and conducting of “smart” language policy, and proposes to introduce the concept of “legal-linguistic, i.e. taking into account both the interests of the language (linguistic identity), and the needs of law” policy in the field of urban Onomastics (ibidem).

For Linguistic Urban Study of Kazakhstan issues of language policy development in the city are very relevant, scientifically and socially significant. G. B. Madiyeva, noting some results achieved in Onomastics in Kazakhstan, states as follows:

[...] It can be concluded that the current state of Onomastics in Kazakhstan is characterized by a lack of general coordination of research on both general theoretical and single problems of Onomastics, predominance of historical and linguistic, etymological, structural and semantic research of proper names, especially place-names (Madiyeva 2013, 132).

The analysis of theses on Onomastics published in Kazakhstan during the last 10–15 years shows its general theoretical framework strengthening, the scientists' aspiration to analyze the onomastic phenomena in line with new scientific principles of linguistics, using modern methodology and terminology. The current generation of Onomastics experts of Kazakhstan address in their works cognitive, linguistic-cultural, pragmatic, communicative and other aspects of the functioning of the Kazakh Onomastics.

The huge list of objects of Onomastics also contains nominations of inner-city facilities. According to the researchers, both the Russian and Kazakhstan Onomastics today have a deeper insight in such types of onymes as place names and anthroponymes. The nominations of urban facilities have become a target of research relatively recently, the intensification of such studies can be traced back by 15–20 years in the past, that for any science is, of course, a short period.

Are there any factors counting in favor of Linguistic Urban Studies as, at least, a distinct field of Onomastics, let alone an independent branch of linguistics?

First, in the country there is an intensive process of urbanization, with city dwellers currently accounting for a total of 60% of Kazakhstan's population. This provides linguists with an access to many promising areas of science. For example, a study of the urban environment texts – nominations of urban facilities, commercial signage, billboards, advertising texts, advertisements, graffiti, etc. Today scientists speak of the semiotics of the urban area, represented by such aspects as: 1) stylistic diversity of the city in synchrony and diachrony, 2) dialogue of the city and the city dweller, the city as a space of communication, 3) socio-cultural study of urban epigraphy.

Secondly, the language of the city has always been and will continue to be a target of special scientific study by linguists and – separately – sociolinguists (language of the city, urban speech, language and sociology of the city, etc.). In other words, Linguistic Urban Studies has an access to a well-developed theoretical basis of purely linguistic nature;

Third, the city onomasticon (especially that of large cities) is constantly expanding due to the appearance of new objects of the urban environment, process of nomination of which that will require linguistic research

The active development of Linguistic Urban Studies is evidenced by the appearance of new approaches to the analysis of urbanonymic systems. In particular, today scientists write about the necessity in scientific development of urbanonymic design, at the same time trying to find answers to a number of major scientific questions:

To what extent they consistently embody the nature and function of the city? How clearly they convey the meaning of the city's historical perspective and features of socio-cultural uniqueness, value and importance of diverse experiences in the life of the country and the region, vectors of the dynamics and prospects of development? (Golomidova 2015, 189).

What this means is a reach to another "scale" level, implying, as M. V. Golomidova notes, "another, broader view of urbanonymes" (2015, 190). The researcher writes about the necessity in "establishing and conveying properties of urban identity in the course of the urbanonyms study program" (ibidem, 189).

Golomidova writes about large-format approach to urbanonymia under which urban studies should be included in a large-scale, strategic process described by the term "strategic development program", "positioning", "city image" and "branding". Without it (and we tend to agree with the author) "it is impossible to build a comprehensive nominative concept for future use without understanding the overall positioning and location development strategy" (ibidem, 187). Golomidova identifies and interprets the most important principles of work with the city toponymicon: balance and proportionality, functionality and guiding ability, shaped harmony and clarity.

The balance is understood by the author to mean the harmonious combination of various models of signification and the absence of significant imbalances in favor of one of them. As an example of violation of this principle, the scientist provides memorial nominations, which had very high productivity in the Soviet time and have preserved it up to now. Here we can recall the data from our study of Pavlodar place names, 82% of which have been created based on this principle.

The use of the principle of proportionality is necessitated by the need to assess the social and functional status of the object of nomination. This, in turn, determines the need to take into account its location, which, as Golomidova writes, influence specific communication prospects of functioning of the place name.

The following principles of functionality and guiding ability, named by Golomidova, are related to the important function of urban place names, which

like other members of the class of names serve to, above all, provide orientation in space. This is their main and specific symbolic load, implemented regardless of clarity or darkness of motivational content (Golomidova 2015, 191).

The author places a specific accent upon the principles of descriptive harmony and clarity, as “image-bearing connoted names are capable of conveying a unique color of the place” (Golomidova 2015, 191). Not doubting the attraction of connotations in the content of the urban nominations, the author raises a number of questions related to this problem, namely:

[...] How extensive can be the imagery presented in the city names? What images are appropriate in toponymic versions, to what extent they are embedded in ideas about the specifics of urban culture and modern urban life with its speed, rhythm and dynamics of change? (Golomidova 2015, 189).

Our special interest in this question was aroused by Golomidova’s considerations about the contradiction between the growing need for new names and objective constraints of urbanonymic models. In support of the above the scientist shows the situation with ergonymes, the functioning of which uncovers various ambiguous phenomenon. This position is confirmed by our practical development of some types of Pavlodar urbonymes, the first experiment of the analysis is shown in this study. Here, Golomidova’s quote seems to be very suitable:

In urbanonymia innovations take root with a greater effort: the state-dictated “antique” cannot get the support of speech practice, and at the same time the desire for nominative extravagance and radical changes is at risk of social disapproval and deserved reproaches in aesthetic and/or logical inconsistencies (2015, 188).

Quite important for further research are Golomidova’s considerations with respect to the feasibility of using, in the course of new place names development, the practice of

naming, which involves not only the study of the linguistic and extralinguistic factors of a nominative situation, but also testing of new names using sociological and psychological methods at the stages of designing notation options, selection and final testing thereof (ibidem, 186–187).

It is actually about the direction of research work in the course of conduct of proper language policy in the field of urban names of various types, as discussed above.

The close relationship between onomastic processes and the life of society should be emphasized. Scholars consider “the formation of onomastic space of independent Kazakhstan and defining of its national expression” as one of the most

important issues of modern Kazakhstan linguistics (Abduali 2015, 7). That being said, they consider it necessary to work on the modern state onomastics “on the basis of regulatory documentation”, which should be improved together with the development of society (Abduali 2015, 4–5). The point at issue is about “a proper toponymic policy, and to achieve this, the country should not only strengthen its material resources, but also grow spiritually” (Kamzabekuly 2012, 129).

Language planning and language policy should become an integral part of a general policy aimed at improving the social, economic and cultural situation in the city. This provision is significant for the nomination processes in Pavlodar, the onomastic system of which, similar to systems of any Kazakhstan city, reflects the socio-cultural changes having taken place previously and occurring now.

Today, Kazakhstan’s scientists say about the need to link research in onomastics to important socio-political processes in the country. Onomastics for Kazakhstan is a spiritual means to overcome the consequences of the past. It is necessary for the independent Kazakhstan not as an instrument of violence, coercion, but for establishing historical justice.

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