Figurative Potential of Russian Hydronymes in the Poetry of 19th – 20th Centuries

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Abstract

The article studies the peculiarities of *Dnieper*, *Don*, *Volga* and *Neva* hydronyms use as aesthetically significant elements of an artistic text. The urgency of the work is that the development of language and speech aesthetics issues are among the promising trends of linguistic studies. However, the aesthetic resources of most onomastic units, including toponyms, are still poorly studied. The purpose of this study is to analyze the figurative possibilities of these hydronyms, functioning in the poetic works of Russian authors. The following methods were used as the main ones in the work: modeling, distributive, semantic-stylistic and quantitative analysis. The material for the study was represented by the poetic works of the 19-20th centuries, extracted from the "National Corpus of the Russian Language". The novelty of the work was made up of selected figurative paradigms, in which the considered hydronyms are used as the subject of comparison. During the performed study five most voluminous figurative paradigms were revealed, in which the position of the right member is replaced by lexical units related to the concepts of "being", "water", "substance", "tissue" and "terrestrial space". The criteria of intentional rapprochement of hydronyms with other subject lexemes were determined in order to develop the imagery of a poetic text. The findings can be used to study the onomastic space of Russian language, as well as for the further development of artistic speech theory.

Keywords: Poetic text, The aesthetics of linguistic units, Figurative potential of hydronyms Dnieper, Don, Volga, Neva, Figurative paradigms, Types of paradigms.

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Introduction

The names of rivers, representing an important source of information, both of linguistic and cultural-historical nature, attracted the attention of representatives from various fields of linguistics repeatedly. A number of publications (Berger 1993; Fossat 2012; Greule 2014; Brozović, Virč 2015) contains the etymological analysis of hydronomic names. Many works (Vanagas 1970; Garipova 1991; Yurkiv 2002) are devoted to the problem of hydronym development in a certain region. The results of hydronym study in connection with the interpretation of the problem concerning the ancestral home of the Slavs are presented in the work by J. Udolph (1979). The analysis of onomastic unit data in the aspect of word formation is reflected in one of the works by N.V. Podolskaya (1983). At the same time, it should be noted that the hydronymic names have not been studied yet as aesthetically significant elements of a work of art language.

The purpose of our work, carried out within the framework of one of the study areas concerning the aesthetics of linguistic units, is the analysis and the description of the figurative potential of *Dnieper*, *Don*, *Volga* and *Neva* lexemes. The choice of these hydronyms is caused by such factors as the frequency of use in poetic discourse, their participation in the creation of the ideological and the thematic basis of a work, as well as in the reflection of an author's inner world.

Materials and methods

During the research the following methods were used as the main ones: modeling, distribution analysis, semantic-stylistic and quantitative analysis. The material for the study of onomastic units was represented by the texts of different genre works of Russian poets, inclining toward different literary trends. More than nine hundred text examples extracted from the "National Corpus of the Russian Language" were analyzed (http://ruscorpora.ru/search-poetic.html).

Results and discussion

The study of hydronym functioning in poetic works was carried out in the context of linguistic unit aesthetics problem, which is not universally accepted until now. According to our opinion, those language tools have aesthetic resources that are capable to have an aesthetic impact on a person as a target of speech. The essence of linguistic means aesthetic impact, which are elements of a literary work language, is that a reader receives spiritual pleasure in the process of getting acquainted with a work of verbal art, i.e. experiences a

sensually rational experience, the basis of which is aesthetic pleasure, a sense of joy and the fullness of being.

The aesthetic properties of linguistic units, including proper names, can be studied in a number of ways. Among them, the language tools can be considered as the most actively developed in terms of their imaginative possibility realization. The analysis of the scientific literature shows that the problem of linguistic element figurativeness was considered in the writings of many scholars (see, for example: Bochina, Starostina 2016; Mukhamadiarova, Ayupova 2016; Sadrieva, Erofeeva 2016). The generalization of philological studies concerning the study of word figurativeness allows us to single out several traditions of its description. The study of the figurative potential of the hydronyms *Dnieper*, *Don*, *Volga* and *Neva* was carried out by us in the course of a prototype search tradition, which is distinguished from others by the development of invariance idea, or paradigmatics, an image. The invariant of an image, according to N.V. Pavlovich, is a complex meaning arising from the comparison of concepts that are in relation of contradiction. The set of images in which an invariant is realized is proposed to be called as the paradigm of images (1995: 24-28, 48). Each figurative paradigm (or a model) determines two basic elements: X (the left member of the paradigm, the subject of comparison) and Y (the right member of the paradigm, the image of comparison). Those fragments of poetic texts were analyzed in the designated aspect in which the toponyms under consideration act in the position of comparison subject. The result of linguistic material study revealed the following types of paradigms common to all hydronyms.

1. A significant part of the empirical material is represented by textual examples in which hydronyms, which are inanimate nouns, come close to the names of creatures (in the quantitative sense this part of the card file makes about 41%). Among the names of living objects, the personal substantives of the male and female gender are dominant, which allows us to speak of personification mean use. It is worth noting that the character of an image is determined not only by an author's worldview, but also by the peculiarities of the Russian language formal structure – the belonging of a hydronym to the grammatical class of certain nouns (male or female one). Masculinization or feminization of hydronyms is ensured by the use of personal nouns as the right member of the paradigm with the denotative element of gender grammatical meaning (*brother*, *breadwinner*, *mother*, *beauty*, etc.), for example: As a glorified *brother* / The rivers know the quiet *Don* ... (A. Pushkin "Don"); In the expanse, along the wide steppes / *Dnieper-the breadwinner* gave a swell to its waters (E. Grebenka) "Quiet morning caught fire over the ground ..."); Already the spring warmth / blowed, / *Volga-mother* / enraged. (S. Drozhzhin "The Treasure"); Wrapped up in the morning with

some muddy haze / Huge houses, gardens and islands, / Granite palaces over a quiet river / and *Neva-beauty* in the icy armor ... (A. Korinfsky "In the fog").

When *Don* hydronyms are used, the cases of its combination with the patronymic *Ivanovich* are noted; At the same time, two naming models are realized: a) hydronym + patronymic and b) hydronym + the term of kinship + patronymic. Here is an illustrative material: a) How are you, / what are you, brother, / *Don Ivanovich*, do you / eat and drink properly? (A. Prokofyev "Song"); b) Ah, Don, you are our *Don, Son Ivanovich*, Don! (N. Shcherbina "Father and children"). It is obvious that the use of the anthroponimic unit enhances the figurative perception of a geographic object.

In a lesser part of the examples related to this model, the image of comparison is represented by the names of animals (*horse*, *eagle*, *wolf*, *snake*, etc.), and the motivation of an image (from the gender point of view) is not so indicative by the hydronym attribution to male or female substitutes, as with the use of personal names. Here are the fragments of the texts: And the quiet *Don* rose / Like the silvery *serpent*, / Along the green meadows / Flowed by river; / Flew far by / a grey-winged eagle ... (N. Shcherbina "Father and children"); It was like this: *Volga*, like mother, / Sometimes, like a wild *she-wolf* / bristling hair, / When death approached / To the beds of children – / Now she devours children cowardly ... (V. Khlebnikov. "Volga! Volga ..."); *Neva! Neva*! Along the slippery granite / Rising, falling, ringing, / Grab, like a *dog*, cast-iron hoofs / and hammer in the misty light of the day! (Vs. Rozhdestvensky "Neva, Neva, along the slippery granite...").

The complex characterization of the model also requires an answer to the following question: what is the basis for the convergence of the considered hydronyms and the names of living objects? We believe that the criteria for such a rapprochement may be the desire of our consciousness to revitalize and spiritualize surrounding objects and natural phenomena, to endow them with the invaluable gift of life for a man.

2. Less voluminous group (approximately 14% of linguistic material) are those cases of hydronym use, in which they are combined with words related (according to N.V. Pavlovich theory) to the concept of "water". Without excluding such an approach, we believe that the character of interaction concerning the considered onym with other subject lexemes reflects the inclusion of the latter in the concept of "large water space" more clearly. Let's give the following examples: Every Razin Stepan / is drunk fiercely in heart, / *Volga* – blue *ocean*, / Everyone is Ataman (V. Kamensky, "Every Razin Stepan ..."); ... that / king Dodon, / the Great *Don*, / that / is more blue than a *sea* / had / three sons (S. Kirsanov "Led by a strange force, I entered the goose-house ..."); *Neva*, expanded by darkness, / became a huge *sea* (M. Moravskaya "White Night"). The basis for such a compatibility of analyzed words with the

names of large water spaces is the objective properties of denotata: for example, the length of the Dnieper is 2201 km; the length of the Volga river bed, which is the largest river in Europe, makes 3530 km. Sometimes proper names – the names of real or fictitious rivers act the right member of the paradigm: ... The *Volga* echoes their calls / Songs of joyful swimmers, / and as the *Nile-benefactor* / the field pours wealth ... (N. Yazykov. "Foreign land"); Head was spinning / from this Love / And *Neva* seemed to be / black *Lethe* (A. Ladinsky "Lead bees ...").

3. Another paradigm (11% of the examples) form such cases of hydronym use when they are close with the words denoting a substance. In a significant part of the linguistic material, such names are represented by the names of metals: the *Dnieper* sparkles under the mountain / with shining *silver* (A. Chomyakov "Kiev: High before me ..."); The basket is full of prickly cups, / And there through a network of branches / the *Volga* flashes with a shining *tin* – / At first it is quieter, then it is more alive. (Vs Rozhdestvensky "The Autumn Expanses"); I had a dream: window grilles, granite walls, the *Neva lead* ... (A. Prismanova "Sunset"). The imaginative use of hydronyms in combination with the names of metals can be explained by the similarity of visual sensations: the surface of the river is often of silvery white or gray color and, under certain illumination, it acquires a peculiar "metallic" luster. There are also the cases when a smooth, transparent surface of the river is compared with glass, for example: The wind bent the elastic *glass* / of *Dnieper*, without awakening a sound in waves (A. Fet "On the Dnieper during flood").

4. During the analysis of the text material, a group of examples (10% of uses) was also found in which the position of the right member of the model is occupied by the words related to the concept of "tissue". This lexical series is represented by such substitutes as *a ribbon*, *a belt*, *a trouser stripe*, etc. For example: Like a precious *ribbon* of turquoise, / is girded by *Volga* / and it looks like a harmonious picture, / A lively miracle ... (N. Nekrasov "Melody"); I see a fortress and a spire between bridges, / And the *Neva*, like a *ribbon* of a medal ... (E. Polonskaya "Hello, city, loved forever..."); Like a charming maiden azure eyes, / Ukrainian heaven look; / As a blue *belt*, to the south from midnight / beauty is woven by *Dnieper* (E. Grebenka "Recognition"); But the heart answered the *Don*: / "Shut up, blue *trouser stripe*! (S. Lipkin "In the Night Rostov"). The criteria for the convergence of lexical units replacing X and Y positions in this model is the similarity of their denotata in form: it is not an accident that the semantic feature "a long, narrow part of a space, namely, fabric, material" acts as the common seme in the meanings of the following words: *a ribbon*, *a trouser stripe* and *a belt* (Ozhegov & Shvedova 2007: 319, 323, 576).

5. The relations between the elements of the following model can be represented in the form of the following formula "water → terrestrial space" (8% of examples). At that, the words *road*, *path*, *homeland* and others are used as the lexical units replacing the position Y: ... again the *Volga* flows like a *road*, / all rocking under the mountain (B. Kornilov "In Nizhny Novgorod from the slope ..."); *Dnieper* is Perun's bloody tomb, / Our *way* to the Greeks! (V. Benediktov "Hello, Dnieper, a wondrous source of water ..."); Hello, old *Don*, hello, dull Don! / As my *homeland*, you became holy and sweet to me... (N. Kukolnik "To the Don"). The similarity of denotata in form can be considered obviously as the reason for the convergence of the selected lexemes (cf.: *Road* – 1. A narrow strip of land intended for movement, *Path* – 1. Same as the road 2. A place, a line in a space with some traffic. *Waterways* (Ozhegov & Shvedova 2007: 176, 634)), as well as the associative relations by contiguity.

In addition to general models, paradigms were also revealed, reflecting the uniqueness of an individual hydronym speech behavior. Thus, the lexeme *Volga* in a number of poetic works approaches the words like life that make the part of "existential" concept, which undoubtedly distinguishes the object designated by it from the point of view of the Russian language speaker axiological orientation: The *Volga* is long, and *life* is short (V. Kamensky "Stenka Razin is the heart of the people"). It should be noted that such an interpretation of the hydronym *Volga* imagery can be presented in a weaker, implicit form: the relations between the members of the paradigm are expressed through the general meaning of the utterance, the nature of its syntactic organization: at that the lexical unit replacing the position of the reference image is omitted. For example: Among the ripe bread, / among the snow white / My *Volga* flows, / And I'm already thirty years old (L. Oshanin "The Volga flows"). The convergence of lexical units related to the concepts of "water" and "existential" is determined by a number of properties of their denotata, the most important of which is the ability to move in some specific direction. It is no accident that the verb "flow" in its first meaning "to move with a stream, a flow (about a fluid)" is combined with the words river, stream, and in the third meaning "to go, pass (about time)" – with lexemes *life*, *time*, etc. (Ozhegov & Shvedova, 2007: 797). The proximity of the semantic spheres under consideration is also evidenced by archaic ideas about the world: the river in mythology is one of time passing symbols (Toporkov, 1995: 333).

Conclusion

Thus, the lexemes *Dnieper*, *Don*, *Volga* and *Neva* are used as the subject of comparison in the following most general and vast paradigms: "water → creature", "water → water", "water → substance", "water → cloth", "water → Earthly space". The most frequent type of hydronym

convergence with other words during the realization of their figurative possibilities is represented by the names of living objects, among which the activity of the terms of kinship (*brother*, *mother*, *sister*), and also the names of persons by action (*a feeder*, *a nurse*, etc.) is high. In the process of hydronym personification, the means of morphology also participate due to the actualization of the aesthetic potential within the category of noun gender.

Summarizing the results of the study concerning the hydronyms Dnieper, Don, Volga and Neva as aesthetically significant language elements of poetic works of the 19th-20th centuries, we can make the following generalizations. The analysis of place names was carried out within the framework of a broad approach concerning the aesthetics of linguistic unit interpretation, based on the concept of an aesthetic element. The description of lexeme figurative possibilities as one of the trends concerning the study of linguistic unit aesthetics was conducted with the orientation toward the paradigmatic concept of an image. The analyzed toponymical units have a significant figurative potential, as evidenced by their combination in a poetic text with the elements of lexical series belonging to a wide range of semantic zones. The criteria of intentional rapprochement of hydronyms with other subject lexemes are also of scientific interest. The obtained conclusions can be applied in the study of the Russian language onomastic space, as well as during the further development of artistic speech theory.

Acknowledgements

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