

Metaphorization of Regionalisms as Regional Identity Realization

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to study metaphorical regionalism of Chelyabinsk region as an important marker of the local picture of the world and regional identity manifestation. The authors argue that regionalisms formed by metaphorical transformations of the word meaning reflect unique characteristics of regional lexicon. The integral approach to research regionalisms is justified as it includes cognitive, sociolinguistic, language and cultural methods of analyzing empirical material retrieved by continuous sampling and the survey of the 250 residents of Chelyabinsk region. The reasons of regionalisms appearance and the main types of metaphorical regionalisms have been outlined. Regionalisms under study include official and unofficial place names and minor place names as well as official commercial names. This relevant research is a part of the work of Chelyabinsk and Magnitogorsk linguists targeted at compiling Russian-English dictionary of regional words and word combinations.


1 INTRODUCTION


The present paper is targeted at studying metaphorical regionalisms of Chelyabinsk region as markers of regional identity. Regional identity is understood as a part of collective identity (Paxman, 1999; Storry & Childs, 2001; Fox, 2005). M. Storry and P. Childs argue that «identities are the names we give to the different ways we all are placed by, and place ourselves within, our culture» (Storry & Childs, 2001). We agree with A. E. Murzin (Murzin, 2016) that regional identity forms and reflects the attitude of the residents to themselves and reality. It is revealed in the existing regional type of people, values, mentality. We should add that the formation and functioning of regiolect should be viewed as a special type of the national language possessing important markers of regional identity and providing unique material for studying national and cultural peculiarities of a certain territory as it clearly manifests the difference of one regiolect from another. Regiolect is realized on all language levels,

lexicon being the most evident illustration of its specific characteristics. Regional lexemes are marked as colloquial or local words or not included in dictionaries. The authors of this paper use the term 'regionalism' after T. Yu. Zagryazkina (Zagryazkina, 1995) and I. S. Zvarykina (Zvarykina, 2013) because we suppose that it reflects unique words and word combinations of a certain region. However, representatives of Perm sociolinguistic school and some other linguists prefer to use the term 'localism' (Erofeeva, 2020; Popov, 2019), etc. We shall mention only a few of the numerous works analyzing regionalisms. Local words of Perm region are analyzed in the work by T. I. Erofeeva and S. V. Shustova (Erofeeva & Shustova, 2020). Unofficial names of Yekaterinburg are researched by E. N. Klimenko and T. V. Popova (Klimenko & Popova, 2012). Urban localisms in regional speech of Severodvinsk are viewed by R. V. Popov (Popov, 2019). Productive models of urban unofficial place names and colloquial micro-urban place names are viewed by I. N. Potanakhina (Potanakhina, 2008).

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Works by M. V. Golomidova (Golomidova, 2012), I. V. Kryukova (Kryukova, 2017), O. S. Issers (Issers, 2017) are aimed at the analysis of local naming. M. A. Borodina differentiates between narrow and broad regionalisms. If narrow regionalisms are used only on the concrete territory, broad regional words and word combinations can be found in several regions (Borodina, 1982).

There are still many aspects of regional words study that are open to discussion. One of such constituents of regiolect is connected with metaphorical regionalisms which we consider a bright marker of national identity.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is aimed at studying metaphorical regionalisms as a part of Chelyabinsk region regiolect. The tasks of the research include:

1. Study of historical and cultural reasons of regionalisms formation in general and metaphorical regionalisms in particular.
2. Classification of metaphorical regionalisms.
3. Analysis of the universal and specific characteristics of metaphorical regionalisms.

Metaphorical regionalisms as a constituent of regiolect are analyzed in the paper from the point of view of cognitive, sociolinguistic and language and cultural methods which form an integral approach to their study. Cognitive method is used to reveal cognitive mechanisms of transnimization and metaphorization, it helps reveal regionalism understanding on the level of consciousness of the region residents. Sociolinguistic approach clarifies the distribution of the studied regionalisms among various social groups taking into account age and occupational parameters, while language and cultural method actualizes national and cultural peculiarities of the regional picture of the world on the example of Chelyabinsk region. About 350 metaphorical regionalisms have been analyzed in the paper. Material has been retrieved from official websites of Chelyabinsk region official and unofficial place names and minor place names by the method of continuous sampling and 250 answers to a survey conducted in May 2022.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The hypothesis that metaphorical regionalisms are unique markers of regional identity is to be confirmed

in this paper. The reasons of regionalisms appearance in regiolect include:

1. Multicultural environment of the region with the population of 3,442,810 (URL: <http://www.statdata.ru/naselenie/chelyabinsk-j-oblasti>). The region is represented by about 40 ethnic groups (Figure 1), the largest being Russians (82.31%), Tatars (5.69%), Bashkirs (4.62%), Ukrainians (2.14%) (URL: <http://worldgeo.ru/russia/lists/?id=33&code=74>).
2. Dialectal and sociolectal influence on regionalisms.
3. Areal contacts and interaction due to the favorable geographical position on the territory of the two continents, Europe and Asia.
4. Migration processes from other Russian regions, post-Soviet space and Asian countries targeted at job search, family reunion, etc.

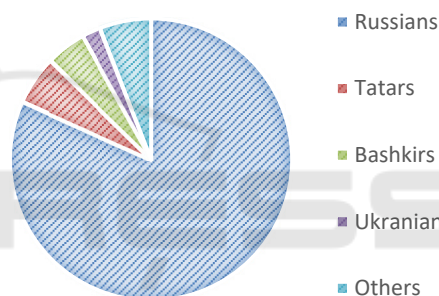


Figure 1: Ethnic groups of Chelyabinsk region.

Metaphorical regionalisms are characterized, on the one hand, by universal tendencies of metaphorization based upon the image character of metaphor in general. On the other hand, metaphorical regionalisms are unique, creative, recognized mainly by the local residents, subjective, ambivalent in perception and duration (they can be short or long lived, can sometimes transfer from unofficial to official), reflect the principle of language economy.

The analysis of empirical material has shown that metaphorical regionalisms are most productive in official minor place names, unofficial place names and minor place names.

Unofficial metaphorical place names include numerous associative nominations of Chelyabinsk: *Chicago*, *Chicaginsk* to indicate the high level of crime in the city on the analogy with the American city. Metaphors *Che*, city *Che* are ambiguous because they denote both initial abbreviation and danger (compare with the precedent word combination *chas*

che – time of concentration before danger). Another negatively colored metaphorical folk name of Chelyabinsk is *Cherdachinsk* formed from the noun attic plus place naming suffix –sk. The only positively connoted unofficial metaphorical name of the city is *Tankograd* – city of tanks that was created to stress the importance of the city in producing tanks for the army during the Great Patriotic War. Unfortunately, the survey results show that only 34.8 % of the region residents know the meaning of this metaphor. It should be mentioned that the name *Tankograd* is known mainly to the respondents of the age group of 36-45 years old (24.3%) and 46-60 years old (9.5%). This commemorative metaphor is mentioned only by 10% of students. Personified metaphorical name *Surovy* is mentioned by over 50 % of respondents.

The second position in the number of metaphorical unofficial place names is occupied by Snezhinsk, one of the closed towns of the region. Such towns were called *shokoladniki* – associated with chocolate consumption as a symbol of prosperity due to the better level of life and better supplies. The official name of the place is also metaphorical and rather poetic specifying the severe climate of the Ural winter. Derivational metaphors from this official place name are less positively connoted: *Sneg* – snow, *Sugrobinsk* – snowdrift plus place naming suffix –sk. Unofficial metaphorical place names with negative connotations include *Miaso* – meat for Miass and *Kapetsk*, *Kapets* – finish, failure used as vernacular names of Kopeisk. Kopeisk is rich in unofficial metaphorical names including an ironical association with Copenhagen – *Kopeiskgagen*. Metaphorical meaning is preserved in the abbreviated place name *Kamysh* – reed instead of Starokamyshinsk. *Zlat* – golden is a positively connoted unofficial place name of Zlatoust. We failed to find the explanation of the metaphorical folk name *Grachi*, *Grachiha* – rooks, rook for Kasli, although the Bashkir name of the town is also metaphorical denoting ‘goose lake’, not ‘rook lake’. Official place names of Turkic origin are often metaphorical, being associated with features of landscape, animals, birds, but the majority of region residents are not aware of their etymology.

Clearly motivated official metaphorical godonyms started to appear on the region map not long time ago introducing fresh and creative minor place names into the repetitive and ideological lists of godonyms. There are metaphorical godonyms with names of trees, bushes, fruit, berries that are typical of the region, but some regional godonyms are seldom or never found in the area: *Elochnaja* – fir, *Berezovaja* – birch, *Malinovaja* – raspberry, *Akatsij* – acacia, *Vishnevaja* – cherry, *Lugovaja* – meadow and

very exotic *Palmovaja* – palm, *Abrikosovaja* – apricot, *Vinogradnyj* – grape lane. There are numerous metaphorical godonyms with names of minerals found in the Urals or unusual for the area minerals and precious stones: *Khrustalnaja* – crystal, *Mramornyj* – marble lane, *Zhemchuzhnaja* – pearl, *Boksitovaja* – bauxite, *Korundovaja* – corundum; *Izumrudnaya* – emerald, etc.

Minor place names of the region also contribute to metaphorical naming. City or town parts bear unofficial emotionally marked metaphorical names: *Topory* – axes, *Muhomory* – fly agaric, *Muraveinik* – ant hill, *Kirsaraj* – brick barn are negatively connoted, although *Kirsaraj* is the place that got its name from the main occupation of the people who lived near the river and made bricks. Precedent metaphorical name *Tri topolia* – 3 poplars is associated with the three blocks of flats on the outskirts of Chelyabinsk, *Topolinka* is named after the former poplar valley, regionalism *Teply* – warm is used instead of Thermotechnical institute, the place and city traffic stop *Grezy* – sweet dreams got its name from the former shop.

Local space is often metaphorically named and renamed taking into account the type, form, material and number of the buildings. In Snezhinsk, there is a place *Tri porosenka* – 3 piglets named after the three lonely buildings. When the big solitary construction was built opposite these three houses, it was immediately named *Seryj Volk* – grey wolf on the analogy with the well-known fairytale heroes. Color associations can also be a source of metaphorical naming of buildings: *Morkovkin raj* – carrot's paradise, *Chernyj kogot'* – black claw. The form of the building is another type of metaphorical renaming: *Shkatulka* – casket is used for the Theater of young spectators, *Bashnia* – tower is used to denote the building, district and shop, *Pentagon* is a folk name of a huge pentagonal block of flats, *Kitaiskaja stena* – the Great Wall of China is the name of the row of buildings in Snezhinsk. *Stekliashka* is a frequent substitution of the shop and even a study room in Chelyabinsk State University. *Kishka* – intestine is the folk metaphor to denote a shop.

Official minor place names are often metaphorical and creative. Fruits and vegetables, jewelry, precedent names and expressions are used in ergonyms: *Apelsin* –orange, *Perchik* – pepper, *Almaz* – diamond. Zoomorphous metaphors form another type of ergonyms: *Sytyj Kabanchik* – well fed little boar, *Belaja loshad'* – white horse, *Slon* – elephant are a few of the dozens of such names.

The nicknames of regional sport teams are also often metaphorical. Tractor hockey team has several

nicknames: at the beginning it was *Traktoristy* – tractor drivers, then the emblem was changed by the unknown Swiss designer for the team to take part in prestigious tournaments abroad and became *Medved'* – bear, a savage bear with the stains of blood and a broken hockey stick in the mouth. After some time the emblem was specified and at present the team is named *Belye medvedi* – polar bears. Associations are strange as there are no polar bears in the region. *Tankisty* is a less frequently used nickname of the team. However, all three metaphorical names are widely used and well known. Chelyabinsk women hockey team has analogous nickname *Belye medveditsy*. Magnitogorsk hockey club Metallurg has an unprepossessing nickname *Selo* which is rarely used. More positively connoted regional names of the team are *Lisy* – foxes, *Zheleziaki* – chunks of steel, *Stalevary* – smelters, *Magnitka*. The last three metaphorical names are connected with the city and are the markers of regional identity.

Metaphorization of regionalisms is conditioned by external and internal reasons, the former are realized in the regionalisms which appeared as the result of language contacts providing the mixed character of regional toponymic lists, preserving Turkic metaphorical place names in the regiolect. Other tendencies of metaphorization include the tendency to create original official, unofficial place names and minor place names. Limited functioning of many creative unofficial metaphorical names makes them markers of regional identity, specifying and differentiating regional lexicon from other regiolects. Language economy principle is reflected in metaphorical shortening of the analyzed place names and minor place names. There appear a vast number of metaphorical regionalisms representing various types of metaphors. Metaphorical regionalisms are always expressive reflecting the subjective perception of the local space.

The results of the research open a number of questions to be further studied and solved in the aspect of creation and functioning of metaphorical regionalisms, namely in the perspective study of metaphorical commercial nomination.

4 CONCLUSIONS

It has been established that metaphorical regionalisms form several groups, including official and unofficial words and word combinations. There is a tendency to form more metaphorical unofficial names of the large cities than of the towns of Chelyabinsk region. However, some towns, such as Snezhinsk and

Kopeisk, have several metaphorical nominations, while many towns have no metaphorical folk names. Unofficial metaphorical names can be either long-lived or short-lived depending on the creativity of the name and its popularity among the residents (compare a half a century old *Severok* – little North to denote a large North-Western district of Chelyabinsk forming two official Kalinin and Kurchatov districts with rarely used *Topory* or nearly forgotten *Kirsaraj*).

Metaphorization of regionalisms is a constant process, realizing uniqueness of regional identity, providing a rich source of illustrative material for the planned English-Russian, Russian-English dictionary of Chelyabinsk region regionalisms. We suppose that metaphorical regionalisms are to be discussed and analyzed in many age and occupational groups, especially in schools and higher educational establishments as a part of regional identity formation and perception, preservation of historical heritage.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

S. Pitina and A. Taskaeva performed the research; E. Kharchenko contributed to the analysis of the results; S. Pesina designed and directed the project. All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

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