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ENGLISH LITERARY NAMES IN A LINGUOCULTUROLOGICAL DICTIONARY

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Abstract

The article reports on the conception of compiling “A Linguoculturological Dictionary of English Literary Names”. Unlike the approach consisting in country-through-language studies, addressed mainly to description of semantic characteristics of culturally marked vocabulary and provision for encyclopedic information about it, a linguoculturological analysis is also intended to demonstrate some specific features of functioning the given vocabulary in language and speech, these features being determined by the content of vocabulary units. These names are enriched with such a content which brings them to the level of culturally significant names, i.e., the anthroponyms “filled” with linguocultural information, becoming part of the English language speakers’ background knowledge. They are involved in the processes of metaphorization, used in proverbs and sayings, serve as a basis for the formation of different types of onomastic vocabulary and, finally, become symbolic names isolated from their characters and used beyond a literary work, acquiring additional cultural, historical and pragmatic values. The linguoculturological dictionary in question aims to reveal the content of culturally significant English literary names, demonstrate their functioning beyond a literary work in a new round of usage as well as familiarize English learners with them and help to understand their meanings. The structuring of the dictionary entries offered with a lot of illustrations allows to broaden the traditional lexicographical description of the above vocabulary.

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Keywords: Culturally significant name, linguoculturological dictionary, literary name, literary work, name content, symbolic name



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1. Introduction

Lexicographic description of culturally marked onomastic vocabulary originates from country-through-language studies related mainly to Vereschagin and Kostomarov (2005) who point out that proper names have clear national and cultural semantics because their group and individual meanings derive directly from history and culture of a nation – a native speaker. The dictionaries and reference books describing cultural realia and such names in the context of country-through-language studies began to appear.

When a new multidisciplinary science within linguistics-linguoculturology had emerged, some linguoculturological dictionaries were written. Linguoculturology studies the interaction of language and culture, links our knowledge of language to our knowledge of man – a native speaker and the specific features of reflection of culturally significant phenomena in his/her consciousness and linguistic competence (Komova, 2003). Unlike the approach of country-through-language studies, addressed mainly at description of semantic characteristics of culturally marked vocabulary and provision for encyclopedic information about it, a linguoculturological analysis is also intended to demonstrate some specific features of functioning the given vocabulary in language and speech, these features being determined by the content of vocabulary units. The authors of the first linguoculturological dictionary “Russian Cultural Space” note that the conceptions of country-through-language studies are more oriented towards a historical plane of background knowledge than towards a synchronic-functional embodiment of cultural “part of meaning” in language entity. A linguoculturological analysis consists in extraction of true cultural values from an image (Brileva et al., 2004).

2. Problem Statement

The dictionary of English literary names in question is based on the principles of linguoculturology. Literary names defined as characters’ names in works of literature (novels, plays, etc.) serve as one of the most important means of creating a figurative texture of a literary work and conveying an author’s message. These names contain a considerable volume of information, the decoding of which is very important for revealing and understanding the main ideas and aesthetic content of a literary work, various associative bonds, motivations and hidden meanings. The personal names taken as a whole create an anthroponymic space and a specific semiotic system of a literary text. Their elements interact not only with each other, but with some other language material as well, which offers an opportunity to bring to light the relationships and bonds among the characters of a literary work, the system, functioning and dynamics of certain literary images, etc. A specific arrangement of characters’ names is traced in a work of literature, and, in addition to functions of nomination, identification and distinction, they also perform certain artistic and stylistic ones. Names play a particular part, helping an author express his/her creative individuality and manner, principles and beliefs as well as the attitude to the realities of life. If a writer chooses a name for a character appropriately and it matches some specific features of national anthroponymicon, such a name acquires certain semantic and stylistic significance and makes a deep emotional and artistic impression on both a given character’s image and a literary work as a whole. According to Kukhareno (1988), a proper name “entering” a literary text is semantically deficient, but

when “leaving” it, a proper name becomes semantically enriched and acts as a signal arousing a wide set of certain associative meanings.

3. Research Questions

The dictionary in question contains English literary names which developed additional meanings and are regularly used in the function of secondary nomination. These names are enriched with such content which brings them to the level of culturally significant names, i.e., the anthroponyms “filled” with linguocultural information, becoming part of the English language speakers’ background knowledge. They are involved in the processes of metaphorization, used in proverbs and sayings, serve as a basis for the formation of different types of onomastic vocabulary and, finally, become symbolic names isolated from their characters and used beyond a literary work, acquiring additional cultural, historical and pragmatic values. Culturally significant names representing the English language cultural space fit directly into speech communication and become discourse elements, obtaining new meanings and associations.

4. Purpose of the Study

The present linguoculturological dictionary aims to reveal the content of culturally significant literary names being used as encoded linguocultural texts, describe the specific features of the functioning of such names in the English language discourse as well as familiarize English learners with them and help to understand their meanings. This content includes, in the broad sense, the whole set of language, cultural, historical, social, pragmatic and other connotations (Garagulya, 2018).

5. Research Methods

The literary name data come from British and American works of fiction, onomastic and encyclopedic dictionaries as well as reference books. Hand searches of the names under study that were available at the time of writing this article were conducted. Each literary name was analysed in terms of its structure, etymology, content, meaning, cultural significance and associations. The descriptive, comparative, semiotic, linguoculturological and stylistic methods of research were applied.

6. Findings

The dictionary contains 160 characters’ names. The following factors were taken into account in full to include the literary names in the dictionary corpus:

- a) widespread occurrence of a name among British and American linguoculture bearers;
- b) emergence of a metaphorical meaning or an associative one in a name;
- c) use of a name in the process of categorizing derivation;
- d) involvement of a name in the process of transonymization – the transfer of a proper name from one class of name to another;
- e) regular use of a name.

At its fullest, the dictionary entry consists of six items: 1. Headword. 2. Functional and etymological characteristics of the literary name. 3. Literary names having a figurative meaning. 4. Fixed phrases. 5. Derivative names. 6. Transonymized names.

Headword. The English literary name is the entry headword given in the alphabetical order and set in boldface type. Its British pronunciation is shown in the International Phonetic Alphabet. The name is followed directly by its corresponding traditional Russian form. The name variants are enclosed in parenthesis. The examples of the headwords are as follows:

HAMLET ['hæmlit] Гамлет

FAGIN ['feigin] Фейгин (Феджин)

Functional and etymological characteristics of the literary name. This part of the entry begins with the name of the author and his/her work in which the literary name in question is used. Then a brief description of the literary name bearer is provided. The choice or devising a literary name is a purposeful process and an author's modality is manifested in it. In the context of a literary work a name carries the information on its bearer, such as family and social status, the level of intimacy and distance in relationships, the degree of respect and disrespect, aristocratic or common descent, etc. However, such information on a literary name bearer is not always understandable from the context of a literary work. It is made clear if this problem is specifically studied. What is required in this case is background knowledge (a speaker and listener's mutual knowledge of realia being the basis for speech communication (Akhmanova, 2004) and knowledge of a vertical context (a philological problem which is how and why a writer assumes that readers of his/her books have the ability to comprehend the historical and philological "information" given objectively in his/her literary work (Gubbenet, 1981). They are obtained and used additionally in order to understand and give a possible interpretation of the name system created by the author. Such an analysis including an etymological study as well allows to reveal hidden meanings realized in a name. These meanings predetermine a form of a character's speech behaviour and provide for his/her social roles acquiring verbalized expression. The "enlivening" of the meaning of an appellative from which a name was formed can serve as one of the means of implementation of artistic and esthetic conception of a literary work and help to reveal its main topic. Literary name usage in "direct" (denotative) meaning is illustrated by the examples drawn from works of literature. For example, the name Desdemona:

Desdemona the female character in the tragedy "Othello" (1604) by the English playwright and poet William Shakespeare (1564–1616). Desdemona is the daughter of a Venetian senator Brabantio, she is the Moorish general Othello's faithful and sincerely loving young wife. She becomes an innocent victim of intrigues carried on by the villainous and treacherous ensign Iago and her jealous husband. Iago hints to Othello that his friend Cassio was and remains Desdemona's lover. Othello being tangled in lies and consumed by jealousy strangles Desdemona in her bed, but when he belatedly realises that his wife is innocent, he commits suicide. The symbolic meaning of the name Desdemona is actualized in the tragedy: it probably represents a Latinized form of the Greek word *dusdaimōn* "ill-fated, ill-starred" and becomes appropriate to the character's destiny. Othello says about Desdemona: "O ill-starr'd wench!" "From the possession of this heavenly sight! / Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur! / Wash me in steep-

down gulfs of liquid fire! – / O Desdemona! Desdemona! Dead? / Dead? O! O! O!” (Shakespeare, 1988, p. 131).

Literary names having a figurative meaning. Names having figurative meanings cease to serve as a means of designating one referent: the transfer from a sole individual name to its bearer of generalized character occurs, and in this case it acquires the new grammatical features – the use in the plural or with an article. The content of such a name expands considerably, and, accordingly, it is assigned much more additional features than an individual name has (a typical person, the way a person looks, character, qualities, life style, behaviour, clothes, etc.). These features determine the degree of depth of psychological name perception in the society and reflect national character and national mentality of British and American linguoculture bearers. Names having a figurative meaning are used as specific signs of culture (Garagulya, 2017). The meanings of a metaphorized literary name are arranged with due regard for their usage and they are given a number in boldface type. A name and its different meanings are provided with style labels showing the situations a name is used in. At the end of the entry part some illustrative example contexts in italic type come to show typical usage of a name. They are drawn from works of fiction, newspapers, magazines and journals. For example, the name Ophelia:

Ophelia 1. A trusting woman with a tragic fate. “Ruth, one of millions of Europe’s Ophelias after the Second World War, fainted in my motorcar. I took her to a twenty-bed hospital in the Kaiserburg, the imperial castle, which wasn’t even officially operating yet” (Vonnegut, 1992, p. 22). **2.** An insane woman, a madwoman.

While among us, she amused herself with a number of supposed fits, hallucinations, caperings, warblings and the like, nothing being lacking to the impersonation but Ophelia’s wild flowers entwined in her hair; but she did well enough without them, as she managed to deceive, not only the worthy Mrs. Moodie...; but also several of my colleagues... (Atwood, 1997, p. 71).

3. A drowned woman. “She went on, unconscious of his nearness. He followed her, horror-stricken. Emmy, a new Ophelia, was about to seek a watery grave for herself and her love sorrow” (Locke, 1931, p. 115).

Fixed phrases. Literary names are widely used in fixed phrases. The important specific feature of such names consists in the fact that most of them have not undergone complete appellativization (deonymization): the preservation of their initial capital letter is indicative of this process, for example, Benedick and Beatrice *a loving couple who verbally spar with each other*, the Admirable Crichton *a perfect servant (butler)*, Jane Eyre and Mr. Rochester *staunch lovers*. Fixed phrases can be phraseological units (idioms) in general use as well terminological collocations. If a phraseological unit has a few meanings, they are numbered in boldface type and provided with style labels if necessary. To completely reveal the content of some fixed phrases their verbal translation into Russian is given. Double oblique strokes // are followed by linguoculturological comments. Then the usage of phraseological units is exemplified by illustrative examples contexts. For example, the phrase “lead on, Macduff”:

lead on, Macduff *humour* Lead the way (a call for beginning an action); lead smb. to a certain place. // This phrase is based on a slightly incorrect quotation from William Shakespeare’s tragedy “Macbeth” (1606) in which the actual words are “Lay on, Macduff” – the words said by Macbeth to open the fight with his enemy Macduff at the end of the play. “Are ye prepared to enter the Place of Death,

white men?” asked Gagool, evidently with a view to making us feel uncomfortable. “Lead on, Macduff,” said Good solemnly, trying to look as though he was not at all alarmed” (Haggard, 2006, p. 162).

Derivative names. Potential derivation is made possible for most of the names, but it is confined to their actual functioning in speech, demonstrating how a name is perceived in the society and in the context of the whole nation. This process presents a possible source for expanding the English language lexicon. The derivative names formed from literary names single out some of their specific features as categorizing ones: behaviour, political and religious beliefs, etc. A categorizing name is a symbolic name – a name of the epoch, style, fashion and its social perception of both the positive and the negative. Categorizing derivation resulting in the transfer from the category of a literary name with a certain volume of content to the category of a categorizing name demonstrates a high degree of cultural and social significance of the latter. The meanings of a derivative name are shown by numbers in boldface type. Grammatical homonyms have a raised number. Linguoculturological comments are given after the double oblique strokes //. Derivative names are provided with the example contexts illustrating their usage. For example, the derivative name Pickwickian:

Pickwickian¹ *adj* **1.** Of, or relating to the Pickwick Club. “There’s a sort of superior Pickwickian atmosphere surrounding you that disarms suspicion.” “You leave me out of it,” growled Peter” (Jerome, 2010, p. 92). **2.** Of, or characteristic of Mr. Pickwick. “Learning had once come near making him mad, but from this sad fate he was happily saved by a somewhat Pickwickian blunder” (Webb, 1872, p. 37). **3.** *humour* Odd, unusual, isoteric, special; simple, generous, kind. “When, as in the case of the lamb, the failure is brought about by the fulfilment of something else, then indeed God can be said in a Pickwickian way to have brought about the failure, but only because he brought about the fulfilment of the lion” (McCabe, 2005, p. 36).

Pickwickian² *n* A member of the Pickwick Club. “Winkle, one of the Pickwickians, is a mild and foolish boaster, who pretends that he can do things he cannot. He pretends to be able to shoot and succeeds only in hitting one of his friends” (Marshall, 2008, par. 4, p. 256).

The following categories of derivative name forms have been singled out:

a) **adjectives:** *Ahabian* *obsessed with an idea, pursuing an objective*; *Gradgrindish* *having a soulless devotion to facts and figures*; *Hamletic* *hesitating, uncertain what to do, undecided*; *Tom Sawyeresque* *resembling or characteristic of Tom Sawyer*; *Scrooge-like* *mean, greedy*; etc.;

b) **nouns:** *Babbitry* *narrow minded materialism, behaviour characteristic of a self-satisfied middle-class person*; *Bumbledom* *officious and pompous behaviour of inefficient officials*; *Grundyist, Grundyite* *a person exhibiting narrow and unintelligent conventionalism*; *Paul Pryism* *impertinent inquisitiveness*; *Podsnappery* *an attitude toward life marked by insular complacency, blinkered self-satisfaction and a lack of interest in the affairs of others*; *Sherlockiana* *literary works about Sherlock Holmes written by A.C. Doyle and other writers, souvenir products related to Sherlock Holmes*; *Rambomania* *enthusiasm for Rambo or the films about him*; *Uriah Heepishness* *hypocrisy, sanctimony, baseness*; etc.;

c) **adverbs:** *Uriah Heepishly* *hypocritically, sanctimoniously, insincerely*; etc.;

d) **verbs:** *Hamletise, Hamletize* *to hesitate, to prefer not to act, to soliloquize, to prefer not to act*; *Ramboize, ramboize* *to kill smb, to cause a large amount of destruction*; etc.

Transonymized names. Literary names are used for the formation of other categories of onymic vocabulary. Toponyms, astrononyms, zoononyms and phytonyms labelled accordingly have been singled out. The double oblique strokes // are followed by the etymological comments supplemented with some additional information on the name origin. For example:

Bob Acres *toponym* A populated place in the state of Louisiana, the United States of America. // It was originally established as a railway station by one of the most famous actors of his time Joseph Jefferson (1829–1905). He named it Bob Acres after R.B. Sheridan’s character in the comedy “The Rivals” in which the actor played.

Caliban *astronym* A satellite of Uranus. // It was discovered by the Canadian and American astronomers Brett James Gladman (b. 1966), Philip D. Nicholson (b. 1951), Joseph Burns (b. 1941) and John J. Kavelaars (b. 1966) in 1997. Philip D. Nicholson named it after W. Shakespeare’s character in the play ‘the Tempest’ in 1998.

At the back of the dictionary there is a list of name entries and an index enabling readers to discover the information required. The dictionary is also supplemented with the lists of scientific, lexicographical, reference and illustrative sources.

7. Conclusion

In closing, we would like to emphasize that the structuring of the dictionary entries offered with a lot of illustrations allows one to reveal the content of culturally significant literary names, demonstrate their functioning beyond a literary work in a new round of real usage and broaden the traditional lexicographical description of the above vocabulary. The work on publication of “A Linguoculturological Dictionary of English Literary Names”, addressed at philology undergraduate, postgraduate and research students, university and college teachers as well as a wide readership interested in the English language and onomastic problems, is nearing the stage of completion.

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