

MSC 2020**International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.
COMMUNICATION»****THE AESTHETIC FUNCTION OF THE WORD IN URBAN
COMMUNICATION SPACE (COFFEE NAMING)**

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Abstract

The article discusses such objects of the field of urban commercial naming as coffee houses – special establishments intended for coffee drinking. They play an important role in the communicative urban space, constitute an important part of the urban onomasticon, especially in capital cities or cities with a special cultural and historical tradition (Moscow and St. Petersburg). In addition to their creative, expressive and attractive functions, coffee-related names also perform an aesthetic function due to the coffee drinking traditions in Russia, the history of the Russian equivalents of the lexemes *coffee* and *coffee house*, the possibilities of their metaphorical understanding, and to the features of Russian word formation. The latter ensures the creation of derived words, the originality of which can be combined with euphony and imagery. It should be noted that as a rule, the aesthetics of the non-verbal graphic component in this multimodal urban name is secondary to its verbal aesthetics. The interaction of pragmatics and aesthetics within such a name, which often represents not just a lexeme, but also a word combination or a sentence, is partly due to the namer's choice: generally, a shift to aesthetics occurs beyond the scope of network marketing and indicates a tendency to individualize names on the basis of poetic metaphors and images.

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1. Introduction

The names of coffee houses belong to the sphere of commercial naming, which, according to the definition by Sjöblom, is a type of naming that has commercial value. The commercial names themselves can belong to different categories (company names, product names, brand names, trade names, etc.) and have different costs (Sjöblom, 2014). Commercial urbanonyms (names of coffee houses, cafes, restaurants, shops, beauty salons, clinics, entertainment centers, etc.) are an important part of modern media discourse, which is characterized by a creative synthesis of verbal and non-verbal means, a variety of creative techniques, and a wide use of precedent phenomena (Hristovsky et al., 2018). At the same time, commercial urbanonyms are elements of a common urban media design (Sokolova, 2018) and, as noted by Hakala et al. (2015), they realize two important functions of commercial names, that is, bearing identity and producing a good image.

We consider the sphere of urban commercial naming as an integral part of the general communicative urban space, including the city's onomasticon (Shmeleva, 2019), outdoor advertising, functional and technical urban space (road signs, signposts, street signs and building numbers, traffic schemes, etc.).

The choice of the coffee house as the object of naming is associated with the special status of such places in modern urban space. According to the 2GIS international cartographic company (RBC Marketing Research. Rossiyskiy rynek kofeyen 2019, 2019), in 2019, the number of coffee houses exceeded the number of bars in Russian cities with a population of over one million for the first time. A study by The NPD (National Purchase Diary) Group showed that coffee is consumed more often in Russia than in Italy or France. It is customary to start the day with coffee, this drink often ends the meal. According to the NPD expert M. Lapenkova, coffee has largely replaced the cigarette break (Romanova, 2019), and although experts note an increase in the sales of coffee (as a drink) in fast food chains, the aesthetics of coffee consumption during a friendly conversation or a romantic date is associated with special institutions - coffee houses.

The material (about 1000 titles) was collected by the authors in Moscow and St. Petersburg through the method of field observations, as well as from information and advertising sites. The material analyzed will be presented in the article as follows: the original spelling of Russian names in Cyrillic characters will be transliterated and translated, e.g. *Utro* 'morning'; English and other foreign names will be spelled in their original way, as they appear on the signboard, e.g. Wake Up, Coffeeshop Company, Starbucks, Le petit Appetite. Some of the names are Russian names transliterated in the Latin alphabet, e.g. Doza, or featuring combined forms of spelling, e.g. Yapokofe.

2. Problem Statement

The combination of means of different semiotic systems leads to the creation of multimodal semiotic complexes. In urban naming, they ensure the realization of the attractive, the informative, the expressive, and less often the aesthetic functions, since aesthetics in commerce are clearly inferior to pragmatics. This reveals the general pattern of modern communication, which, as Kress (2010) rightly noted, pays more attention to pragmatics, while the "sensory, affective and aesthetic dimension is too often ignored and

treated as ancillary” (p. 78). However, this article is primarily focused on the verbal means of the polycode name. The capabilities of the multimodal complex, which are due to the aesthetics of non-verbal means, should be considered separately, because graphics, for example, often play the leading role here (Sokolova, 2017).

The creative function of commercial naming is formed in close interaction with the expressive function (aimed the sender and related to his or her feelings), and, above all, with the influence function, and much less often with the aesthetic one.

3. Research Questions

The relevant research questions with regard to the names of coffee houses in two megacities can be formulated as follows:

3.1. How does the aesthetic function in the naming of coffee houses correlate with the above-mentioned influence and expressive functions, as well as the attractive one?

3.2. How do the creativity and aesthetics of names correlate specifically at the level of such places as coffee houses?

This question is due to the fact that the aesthetic function of not only the non-verbal, but also the verbal component of the polycode name appears more salient here than in the area of other urban names.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is due to the questions posed and consists in showing that in the field of urban naming, the aesthetic function of the polycode name is often realized in the word in the first place, and the aesthetic design solution is subordinated not only to semantics, but also to the aesthetic potential of the word sign on the signboard.

5. Research Methods

The article uses the models of the linguistic urban landscape description proposed by Bugheşiu (2017), Kostanski and Puzey (2016), Vuolteenaho et al. (2019).

Methods for describing the onomasticon as a combination of substantive and conceptual codes proposed by Golomidova (2015), Razumov and Goryaev (2019) seem to be productive in identifying cultural codes in the urban naming. In addition, methods of lexical-semantic, grammatical, word-formation and pragmatic analysis were used to identify models of coffee house naming.

6. Findings

6.1. History of the term coffee house in the Russian language and Russian culture of consumption

The word *Kofeinya* ‘coffee house’ itself appeared in the Russian language at the beginning of the 19th century to refer to “places serving coffee and various drinks and snacks” (*Kofeinya. Slovar'...*, 1814). In a later period, coffee houses in Russia existed along with cafes. However, it was already in the Explanatory Dictionary by Ushakov that the word *kofeinya* was labeled as “obsolete”: “A place where visitors drink coffee. E.g. *Turetskaya kofeinya* ‘Turkish coffee house’.” (Ushakov, 1935). This testifies to the fact that coffee houses were displaced from urban space as early as in the 1920s – 1930s.

The “obsolete” label is absent from dictionaries of modern Russian language, e.g., according to the Big Explanatory Dictionary by Kuznetsov, *kofeinya* ‘coffee house’ is “a small cafe where coffee is prepared and served.” (Kuznetsov, 2000, p. 464).

Therefore, dictionaries have recorded the return of the Russian word *kofeinya* ‘coffee house’ to the active vocabulary of native speakers of the modern Russian language, which also reflects the reappearance of this word on urban signs. In addition, the very word *kofeinya* ‘coffee house’ contains a cultural code of a coffee drinking ritual with a positive connotation.

In modern urban space, coffee houses have occupied a prominent place (e.g. Moscow has more than 2,500 of them). The fact that a coffee house is a “place for meetings and communication,” and not just a “gastronomic establishment”, was recorded in the collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia (*Kofeinya*, n.d.). 1). The virtual project *Kofeinaya karta Moskvy* ‘Moscow Coffee Map’ (<https://coffeemap.ru/>) not only provides information on the location of coffee houses in the city, but also implements the aesthetics of coffee drinking. The latter is connected not only with the quality of coffee beans or with the method of brewing, but also with the philosophy of coffee consumption, e.g. in Hygge style (*Rozetka i kofe* ‘Outlet and Coffee’ – “Here you can recharge with fresh coffee and charge your phone”), as part of a library (*Gramotnyi kofe* ‘Literate coffee’ in the building of the Chekhov library), inside a bookstore (*Knigikofeknigi* ‘Bookscoffeebooks’), with an ecological focus (*Mokh i kofe* ‘Moss and Coffee’), with a California spirit (*Forty Niners Coffee*), etc. Following Smith (2018), we can refer to this phenomenon as contextual associations; it also seems promising to consider coffee naming from the cross-cultural perspective (Kostina et al., 2015).

The aesthetic function is a priori realized in the very Russian word for ‘coffee house’. Thus, on the urban sign, the aesthetic function of the simplest name of place, the name *kofeinya* ‘Coffee house’, is also supported by non-verbal components: the creolization of the letter *i* (an elegant cup with a trickle of steam above it), the creolization of the letter *f* (an elegant coffee pot with curly handles), and the creolization of the letter *O* (a coffee bean).

6.2. Latin and Cyrillic alphabets in coffee naming

Since the culture of coffee consumption is a borrowing for the Russian society, as well as for other nations, e.g., for the Japanese (Rapaille, 2006), the Latin alphabet is very widespread in the segment of

coffee house naming (*Coffee, Starbucks, Wake Up, Coffeeshop Company*). Thus, the *Kofeinaya karta moskvy* ‘Moscow Coffee Map’ website (<https://coffeemap.ru/>) features 90 names in Cyrillic characters, 84 names in Latin characters and 38 names combining Cyrillic and Latin graphemes, out of the total of 212 items.

The Russian entertainment and lifestyle website Afisha (<https://www.afisha.ru/>) offers, amongst other things, a page representing a guide to coffee houses in St. Petersburg. This page contains 392 names, of which 173 are in Cyrillic, 214 are in Latin, and 5 are hybrid. The signboards of St. Petersburg feature more Russian names in Latin transliteration (*Dnevnik* ‘Agenda, Diary’, *Fabrika* ‘Factory’, etc.), including slang expressions (*Doza* ‘hit’, *Na Kofeine* ‘On Caffeine’ – similar to the idiom “On drugs” both in Russian and in English).

When introducing a new product in a “foreign” country, certain strategies are used: it is necessary to create an attractive image of the product and associate it with either a cultural code (Rapaille, 2006) or a marketing strategy (Barden, 2013). In Russia, one of such implementation methods is the graphic hybridization strategy – a combination of Cyrillic and Latin letters, which allows for a language game: see, e.g., *Yapokofe* is a blended word combining the first half of the geographic name Yaponiya ‘Japan’ in Russian and the Russian word for *coffee* – *kofe* – partially transliterated in Latin characters). However, the names created by means of this strategy are not always clear to non-native speakers. E.g., on the one hand, the name *kofe ON* ‘Coffee ON’, foregrounds the masculine gender of the Russian word for *coffee* (the Russian pronoun *on* stands for *he, him*). On the other hand, *ON* in Latin characters refers to “functioning, in working condition”, which emphasizes the constant availability of the drink, from the pragmatic point of view.

6.3. The aesthetics of the *coffe* lexeme and its derivatives in coffee naming

In the communicative urban space, the word *kofe* ‘coffee’ realizes the potential of widespread lexical and grammatical compatibility: *Kofe p'yu* ‘I drink coffee’, *Kofe u kamina* ‘Coffee by the fireplace’, *Lyublyu kofe* ‘I love coffee’, etc. In addition, in the Russian speech culture, the word *kofe* ‘coffee’ also has an aesthetic connotation. However, in neologisms derived from it, the aesthetic component can either be strengthened, or weakened, or completely lost. E.g., in derived complex words, it is preserved in if the other components are also aesthetically “attractive”. At the same time, it is important that the laws of harmony not be violated in the derived word as a whole: e.g., the name *Kofetsvet* is a combination of the Russian words *kofe* ‘coffee’ and *tsvet* ‘color’ or ‘blossom’.

However, if within a compound word, the stem *kofe* is combined with the stem *provod*, which is frequently used in the formation of compound words with industrial and “unaesthetic” semantics (*benzoprovod* ‘gas pipe’, *musoroprovod* ‘garbage pipe’, etc.), e.g. *kofeprovod* ‘Coffee pipe’, the aesthetic function of the first part of the word, referring to *coffee*, is not realized. Such names can be considered in the context of speech acts with a negative prognosis (Issers, 2020).

The violation of the laws of harmony (the predominance of consonants) hampers the realization of the aesthetic function of the word *coffee* in neologisms, both in the Latin and the Cyrillic alphabets: *Cofix* (coffee + fix – everything is 60 rubles), *Kofest*, *Koffit*, etc.

6.4. Aesthetics and pragmatics: the choice of the namer

The realization of the pragmatic function of naming is directly related to the interaction of another two functions, the attractive one and the evaluative one. Oftentimes, the namer “neglects” the aesthetics of naming for pragmatic purposes. This may happen in the context of network marketing, which explains the victory of the Latin alphabet over the Cyrillic alphabet on Russian territory. Coffee house chains are widespread, easily recognizable and aimed at the mass buyer. In this type of naming, it is the information about an affordable and fixed price that prevails: *Cofix*, *One price coffee*, *One bucks coffee*.

Network marketing of this market segment in Russian “tries” to make the name more attractive due to the linguistic means of expressing appreciation and harmony. Thus, in the coffee house names *moi kofe* ‘My coffee’ and *Kofe on moi* ‘Coffee, he is mine’, the masculine possessive pronoun /moi/ ‘my, mine’ expresses not only the meanings of possessiveness and denotativeness, but also evaluative meanings: *my coffee*, that is, special, chosen by me and beloved by me.

In all these cases, the linguistic-creative nature of naming is evident, while the aesthetic function is peripheral. When creating a linguistic-creative name, it is often the effect of anti-aesthetism that is achieved by the namer. The coffee house name *Kofe s yaitsami* is shocking, because the Russian word *yaitsa* meaning eggs is also a slang word for *testicles* (similarly to the English *balls*). The sexual subtext is obvious, but if the coffee has “balls”, there is no doubt about its masculinity, which means that it is strong, genuine, and it won’t let you down.

The unambiguous victory of aesthetics over pragmatics is associated with such an expressive language tool as a metaphor, especially if this metaphor is of a salient poetic nature. The condition of pragmatic success can also be observed. Of course, the coffee house names that foreground the positive semantics of the morning, the beginning of the day are successful (e.g. *Utro* ‘Morning’, *Bodryi den* ‘Cheerful day’), but they are rather neutral. The names of coffee houses which contain the poetic metaphor of an early bird, heralding the beginning of a new day (a spring or a summer day, a joyful day) are quite successful pragmatically and at the same time artistically expressive, e.g., the metaphorical and generalizing name *Rannie ptashki* ‘Early birds’, the sonorous and elegant name *Shchegol* ‘Goldfinch’ and others. In the name of the coffee house *Zhavoronok* ‘Lark’, the bird name is used in two secondary, metaphorical meanings: the attractive, poeticized image of a songbird, as well as the image of a person “whose period of activity falls on the morning hours” (Kuznetsov, 2000, p. 298).

The rhythm and sound pattern of the name contribute to the realization of its aesthetic function: *Eklernaya Kler* ‘Claire's eclair place’, *Le petit Appetite*, *usy lisy* ‘Fox's mustache’, *bodryi barista* ‘Cheerful barista’. The predominance of sonorants, sound repetitions, the charm of French words (eclair / Claire) or phrases (le petit appetite) – all this creates the aesthetic appearance of the name.

The aesthetics of precedent names is associated with the aesthetics of the very precedent texts or multimedia products. Not everyone has seen the famous film *Breakfast at Tiffany's* with the extremely ladylike Audrey Hepburn, a lot more people have heard about the jewelry by Tiffany's. Not everyone will associate the romantic name *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* with the famous cult film starring the pretty Catherine Deneuve, but many will nevertheless feel the European “flavor”. It is important to note that in such cases, the aesthetic nature of the precedent name associated with the cultural significance of the object

itself (a film, a painting, a literary work, a surname) suppresses the informative function of the urban name, which does not prevent it from being quite successful.

7. Conclusion

Coffee houses in modern Russia have become an important part of the urban space, an important multifunctional place for citizens. This is where people start their typical day, but they also function as venues for romantic and business meetings. The multifunctional nature of the establishments themselves determines the “heterogeneity” of their names. Here one can observe a structural-syntactic (from the word level to the sentence level) and a lexical-stylistic diversity (bookish, colloquial and vernacular vocabulary), a rating scale that is rich in tones. The linguistic creativity of coffee house names based on aesthetics can be considered one of the leading principles of naming. This is due to external factors: Moscow and St. Petersburg as the “old” and the “new” capitals, the concentration of the educated population, cultural background, tourism, the history of coffee in Russia and the culture of its consumption, etc.).

The internal properly linguistic factors include lexical, grammatical and stylistic features of the Russian lexemes *kofe* ‘coffee’ and *kofeinya* ‘coffee house’, as well as their “loadedness” with additional aesthetic meanings. Coffee house names often feature a successful interaction of pragmatics and aesthetics, which causes their aesthetic appeal. Such names are aimed at the consumer's good linguistic taste. Of particular interest are cases of the “victory” of aesthetics over pragmatics in the realization of metaphors, cases of the use of periphrasis as an expressive means, and those of the involvement of sublime, bookish vocabulary, directly or indirectly associated with coffee drinking. Aesthetically valid coffee names adorn the urban environment, testifying to the namer's responsibility for his or her non-random choice. Therefore, in terms of naming, the aesthetic function is associated with aesthetic culture as the ability to decipher aesthetic experience on the basis of a developed aesthetic taste.

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