

**LATIP 2021****International Conference on Language and Technology in the Interdisciplinary Paradigm****URBANONYMS AS MARKERS OF MULTICULTURAL URBAN SPACE**

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**Abstract**

The paper is devoted to the study of toponyms in the context of the dialogue of cultures, with a particular focus on the characteristics of Russian urbanonyms used in France as a special linguistic phenomenon. The relevance of the issue is due to the need to establish and evaluate the influence of Russian culture and history on the toponymic system of France. The study explores the concept of urbanonyms as a private component of toponymy as well as identifies and systematizes Russian geographical names used in France. The urbanonyms were classified in accord with the type of designated geographical objects, territorial characteristic and semantic significance. The study showed that the use of Russian urbanonyms indicates quite a deep and steady penetration of Russian concepts into French culture. It was found that Russian urbanonyms are used to nominate a variety of French urban objects (streets, bridges, restaurants, squares, museums, monuments, churches) and are recorded in eight regions of France, with 70% of them located in the Ile-de-France region, which indicates the closest contacts of the metropolitan region with Russian culture. Russian names carry a distinct cultural component associated with the indication of 1) names of famous personalities: tsars, artists, sculptors, composers, writers, choreographers; 2) churches and monasteries; 3) socio-economic activity; 4) names of existing geographical objects; 5) ethnicity. In conclusion, the urbanonyms have not only a special semantic meaning but also become markers of one culture and its integration into another culture.

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## 1. Introduction

Today, scientists pay special attention to toponymic research, which allows people to remember and get back to their roots, their history as well as to identify themselves in today's world seeking complete unification. A special place in this issue is given to urbanonyms (urban toponyms) serving as key signs that demonstrate the verbal perception of urban space. According to linguists, urbanonyms carry a large amount of linguocultural information, they are cognitively and emotionally significant in a particular society and serve as an attractive object for research at the junction of onomastics, linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics (Kryukova, 2012). The paper studies the urbanonyms expressed by proper names that are perceived as foreign in relation to the urban culture in which they are used.

## 2. Problem Statement

Urban onomasticon has been explored in sufficient detail in various aspects: definition of its field structure consisting of nuclear, near-nuclear and peripheral elements (Madieva & Suprun, 2017); description of polysemiotic onomastic complexes (Golomidova, 2019); identification of motivation by a toponym in order to determine traces of culture and mentality (Alpatov, 2012); determination of the code and multicode nature of urbanonym (Mezenko, 2012; Shmeleva 2019); description of the didactic use of toponyms (Polyanskaya, 2019); identification of types of names of toponyms (Kalugina & Suleymanova, 2020); description of dynamic processes in urbanonymic name (Razumov, 2016), etc. As for the term *urbanonym* used to name an intra-urban object and performing an address function, it was first proposed by Podolskaya (1974, 1988).

The paper aims at the study of Russian urbanonyms expressed by proper names used within the framework of French urban space. This is a special group of urbanonyms serving as a marker of the intercultural dialogue between the two countries. A foreign-language urbanonym is a symbol, a vivid and unambiguous embodiment of both linguistic and intercultural interaction, which is the bearer of a cultural code and may serve as a key to understanding someone else's culture. Crossing national borders, they "are enshrined in national languages, and it seems that in this way they perform the function of an inter-language, intercultural bridge" (Fefelov, 2017, p. 14). Foreign-speaking urbanonyms are witnesses and guardians of the historical context of the interaction of countries, points of intersection, integration of cultural values of one nation into the culture of another. A foreign-language urbanonym is a lexical unit extremely rich in its meanings, which, according to Vezhbitskaya (2001), needs to be decrypted and analyzed. Thus, we have all the grounds to admit the problem of establishing and assessing the influence of the Russian language and culture on the toponymic system of France.

## 3. Research Questions

The material for the study was selected by using a continuous sampling method, and included 120 names of Russian objects nominating urban space in France. The empirical material references included toponymic dictionaries, reference manuals, maps, atlases, guides, Internet resources, specialized publications.

The object of this study is Russian names of urbanonyms used in the territory of France. The subject of analysis includes the properties of Russian urbanonyms functioning in France as markers of the cultural interaction of Russian and French cultures. These units are studied in terms of their place in the onomasticon system; cultural meanings, which they broadcast into another culture; ability to identify certain types of urban objects; territorial prevalence by French region; semantic meanings.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of research is to describe the cultural and semantic properties of Russian names used for nominating urban space objects in France. This aim embraces the following objectives: 1) to present the main principles of onomastics as a section of linguistic science, toponyms and urbanonyms as a private component of toponymy; 2) to identify Russian names used for urban space objects in France and classify their cultural and semantic properties.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The study is based on the following research methods: descriptive method using systematization, classification; elements of contextual analysis and linguo-statistical analysis.

Many Russian and foreign scientists were engaged in the development of a classification of toponyms building based on various principles: historical (Murzaev, 2001), etymological (Zhuchkevich, 1980), non-toponymic and intra-toponymic opposition (Shcherbak & Asanov, 2015), according to the type of designated objects (Superanskaya, 1973), according to lexical-semantic structure (Selishchev 1968), geographical area (Basik, 2008), etc. But today the diversity of onomastic phenomena, their semantic diversity and heterogeneity of forms leads to the absence of a single system of toponyms. Nevertheless, the existing classifications are largely consistent and allow for the necessary analysis of toponymic material. The hierarchical ordering of Russian geographical names in France in order to establish and explain their properties took into account the accumulated experience and the specifics of the studied urbanonymic units. During the study, we systematized the studied urbanonyms according to the following grounds: by the type of designated geographical objects, by territorial characteristic and by semantic meaning.

##### **5.1. Classification by type of designated objects**

Among the analyzed examples, we identified 8 types of urbanonyms, including:

*Agoronyms* (10) – names of squares and open spaces in the city; Place de la Bataille-de-Stalingrad, Place Diaghilev, Jardin Rachmaninov;

*Godonyms* (23) – names of streets: Rue de Moscou, Rue de Traktir, rue Tchaïkovski;

*Ecclesionisms* (25) – names of religious structures: Cathédrale Saint Alexandre Nevsky, Eglise Saint Séraphin de Sarov et de la Protection de la Mère de Dieu;

*Oikodomonyms* (17) – names of certain buildings: names of museums: Musée Européen Ivan-Tourgueniev; names of cultural centers: La Maison russe; names of roofed facilities: passage d'Eupatoria;

*Ergourbanonyms* (28) – names of commercial enterprises (catering): restaurants: A La Ville de Pétrograd, Aux Trois Violons-Matouchka, Babouchka Bistro;

*Anoikonoms* (6) – names of uninhabited objects created by man: names of monuments: Le Monument du Corps expéditionnaire russe; names of bridges: Pont Alexandre III; names of fountains: Fontaine Stravinski;

*Geonyms* (10) – names of urban planning facilities providing transport and pedestrian connections between residential areas: names of avenues: Avenue Rimsky-Korsakov; names of alleys: Allée Marc Chagall; names of boulevards: Boulevard de Sébastopol;

*Polysonyms* (1) – names of cities: la ville Malakoff.

## 5.2. Classification by territory

Russian toponymic units were found in eight regions of France: Ile-de-France, Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur, Nouvelle-Aquitaine, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Grand-Est, Occitanie.

The statistical analysis showed that the majority of Russian urbanonyms are found in the Ile-de-France region (85/70%), while the smallest is located in the Grand-Est (1) et Occitanie (1) regions. Regarding the frequency of use, the most common are ergourbanonyms, they are represented by 31 lexical units and are found in all 8 identified regions. The least influence of Russian culture was on the emergence of anoikonoms represented by 5 units in the central region of Ile-de-France.

## 5.3. Classification by semantic meaning

This classification includes five classes of names:

– patronymic urbanonyms subdivided by the type of activity of people in whose honor a particular inner-urban object was named: historical people: *Pont Alexandre III, avenue Nicholas II, Boulevard du Tzarewitch, Cathédrale Saint Alexandre Nevsky*; artists/sculptors: *Musée Zadkine, Allée Marc Chagall, Musée Marc Chagall, rue Marie Bashkirtseva, Galerie de Paris de Anna Filimonova*; composers/musicians: *La place Stravinski, Fontaine Stravinski, rue Moussorgsky, rue Tchaïkovski, Avenue Rimsky-Korsakov, Jardin Rachmaninov, rue Prokofiev, Conservatoire russe de Paris Serge Rachmaninoff, Le Conservatoire Russe Alexandre Scriabine*; writers: *Square Tolstoï, Musée Européen Ivan-Tourgueniev, rue Ivan Tourgueniev, Bibliothèque russe Tourguénev, Musée Ivan Tourgueniev, rue Ivan Tourgueniev (Bougival), la place Anton Tchekhov (Biarritz)*; choreographers: *Allée Nezhinsky, rue Balanchine; la place Diaghilev*; generic names: *Restaurant Svetlana, Restaurant Alionouchka, Le Bistrot de L'Artot, Restaurant Dimitry*.

- names of cult and religious significance: Cathédrale Saint Alexandre Nevsky, Eglise Saint Séraphin de Sarov et de la Protection de la Mère de Dieu, Eglise de Tous les Saints de la Terre Russe, Eglise Saint Serge and others.
- names based on social and economic phenomena: Place de la Bataille-de-Stalingrad, Rue de Traktir, allée des Refuzniks, La Maison russe, Le Monument du Corps expéditionnaire russe, Restaurant russe *Palmyre du Nord, Restaurant Le Transsiberien*.

- translated names that originally designated one geographical object, but eventually were used for another object after adoption by another culture: rue de Neva, rue du Volga, Boulevard de Sébastopol, rue d'Eupatoria, rue de Crimée, rue de Moscou, rue de Saint-Pétersbourg, rue Peterhof, rue de Cronstadt, Place de Kronstadt, rue d'Odessa.
- names reflecting ethnicity: avenue Franco-russe, Restaurant Caveau Caucasiens, *Restaurant Le Relais Russe*, *La Cantine Russe*, *Musée des Cosaques*, rue de Russie

## 6. Findings

The study provides the following conclusions. A foreign-language urbanonym is an unambiguous marker, an indicator of the dialogue between two cultures, a point of intersection and integration of Russian and French cultures. Urbanonyms serve as a guide to Russian France, where each name is related to some episode. The use of Russian urbanonyms indicates quite a deep and steady penetration of the concepts of Russian culture into French culture.

Russian urbanonyms are used to nominate a variety of French city objects (streets, bridges, restaurants, squares, museum, etc.). At the same time, about 20% is accounted for the names of streets, religious structures, commercial enterprises and individual structures.

The studied urbanonyms were recorded in eight regions of France, with 70% of them located in the Ile-de-France region, which indicates the closest contacts of the capital region with Russian culture. Russian names carry a distinct cultural component associated with the indication of the 1) names of famous personalities: tsars, artists, sculptors, composers, writers, choreographers; 2) churches and monasteries; 3) socio-economic activity; 4) names of existing geographical objects; 5) ethnicity.

Due to the fact that intra-urban objects and therefore their names are numerous and diverse, there is a need to streamline and classify them. Thus, for a more effective understanding of this phenomenon and further research, we introduce the concept of “verbal landscape of urban narrative”, which is a set of interconnected elements open to modifications and development, which is structured in accordance with verbal locations corresponding to various areas of urban space (history, sports, culture, industry, communication, etc.).

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the research clearly demonstrates that Russian toponyms form a separate segment in the verbal landscape of the French urban narrative, reflecting the diversity, depth and history of the Franco-Russian dialogue. It delivers implications for further research as it will enable us to establish the vectors of already existing successful cooperation and, on their basis, to determine the prospects for future interaction.

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