

NAMING EXPERTISE OF MOSCOW URBANONYMS

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Abstract: The paper aims to analyze practical activities in the field of name-giving in Moscow and to consider some examples of the expertise on the names of Moscow metro stations. We focus our attention on the work of the Municipal inter-departmental committee on Moscow territorial units, streets and metro stations on naming and renaming Moscow metro stations. The paper discusses the possibility of using special onomastic knowledge in naming expertise, as well as a complex method of expert investigation of the names of Moscow metro stations, which functions in contemporary public space. Our expertise is based on the historical approach; it is stressed that the name of every metro station should be individualized and reflect the historical and cultural identity of the city. Besides, the naming of city facilities should not depend on the political situation. We claim that naming expertise can prevent social conflicts arising from unfortunate names.

Keywords: naming expertise, onomastics, urbanonym, name-giving.

Introduction

Naming expertise is only taking shape at the interface between onomastics and jurisprudence in Russia. In the 21st century in the context of the Russian economic development the role of forensic linguistic analysis in settling issues connected with intellectual property is constantly increasing. The analysis of judicial practice shows a steady increase in the number of cases for the protection of trademark rights, commercial designations and other forms of intellectual property. Giving names to urban objects requires the opinion of a qualified linguistic expert too. Therefore, we can talk about the naming expertise formation not only as a form of forensic linguistic expertise, but also as a pretrial examination of a disputed name. Naming examination of high quality may be carried out only by an onomastician who has knowledge both in the area of forensic analysis theory and the legal relationship in the sphere of naming (Sokolova 2011: 29).

Naming expertise is the analysis of a name as a unit of language and conversational speech (at all levels – lexical, semantic, morphemic, word-formative, phonetic, grammatical), as a part of a specific onomastic system (subsystem), and at the same time as a means of identifying an object in terms of legal aspect. Naming expertise uses both general linguistic methods (semantic analysis, structural analysis, analysis of word-formation, etc.) and socio-linguistic, culturological ones.

The subject of our study is urbanonyms. In particular, the names of Moscow metro stations represent an urban subsystem which functions in a common onomastic area of the city. The names of the metro stations are the result of secondary nomination, as opposed to names of aboveground objects (such as streets, squares, railway stations, parks, etc.). Most of the names of metro stations are based on metonymy. The theoretical issues related to metonymy, identity of conditions and characteristics of this process, in particular, as well as the variety of models of metonymy and the analysis of related processes (apocope, affixation, etc.) have been considered in previous studies (Sokolova 1993, Sokolova 2005).

The purpose of this article is to analyze practical activities in the field of name-giving in Moscow and to consider some examples of the expertise on the names of Moscow metro stations.

Historical approach in naming expertise

In the capital of Russia the names of urban objects are approved by the Government of Moscow, and the members of the Municipal inter-departmental committee on Moscow territorial units, streets and metro stations naming (hereafter referred to as the Committee) carry out the naming expertise.

There are a lot of proposals of revision of some old names of Moscow metro stations. However, it was the Committee that established the existing system of such names. Should it be revised? To clarify the position of the members of the Committee on this issue, it is necessary to turn to the history of naming Moscow metro stations.

The Moscow Metro was opened in 1935 (one line, 13 stations). As of 2013, it has 12 lines and 188 stations. The system of the names started to develop in the 1930s. The names of the first metro stations were associated with the specific object of urban land: *Arbatskaya* (*Arbat* is one of the oldest streets in Moscow and has been known since 1493), *Smolenskaya* (*Smolenskaya square* appeared in the 19th century), *Sokolniki* (park), *Biblioteka imeni Lenina* ('Library named after Lenin'), and the ideological function was often combined with an oriental function. However, under the totalitarian regime, the names were given by means of a "strong-willed" decision and, usually, they were not fixed in the standard acts. Moreover, a name could be changed at the last moment.

Expertise of the name Park Kultury

Initially, while under construction, the station was to be named *Krymskaya Ploshchad* ('Crimean Square') (For the quality of metro 1935: A1.). However, Lazar Moiseyevich Kaganovich (a Soviet politician, administrator and one of the main associates of Joseph Stalin), who was responsible for the construction of the Moscow metro, decided that the name of the first station must be more ideological. As a result the station was opened under the name of *Centralny Park Kultury I Otdykha imeni Gorkogo* ('Central Gorky Park of Culture and Rest'). The inappropriate name of the metro station, consisting of seven words, is the result of artificial naming. The theoretical issues related to artificial naming have been considered by M.V. Golomidova (Golomidova 1998). Though both entrance halls of this station are separated from the park by the Moskva River and the Crimean Bridge, the name was supposed to underline the advances of the Soviet power – in 1928

there was opened the first park of culture and leisure for workmen in the world – an “enterprise of culture” (Maxim Gorky – the Famous Soviet writer). Thus, the problem of renaming appeared even before the first station was opened. Of course, the long name of the metro station varied and was inevitably reduced to the present one which is *Park Kultury* (Sokolova 1993: 55–57).

But the name of another terminal station of the first metro line reflects the process of natural nomination, i.e. when the name appears in conversational speech and is used by native speakers of several generations and then is officially assigned (Golomidova 1998: 31–47). Such criteria correspond to *Sokolniki* name.

Expertise of the name Sokolniki

Sokolniki, the first underground railway station in Moscow, was opened on the 15th of May 1935, and was named after the park and historical district *Sokolniki* – the place of tsarist falcon hunting in the 17th century (*Sokol* means ‘falcon’). The station is an icon of architecture, the project of the station won the Grand Prize at the International exhibition in Paris in 1937 (Ageeva et al. 2007: 483). Plural forms in names are typical of old Russian toponyms. This model became productive in naming urban districts and later, on the basis of metonymy, it was used in the designation of metro stations in these areas.

Expertise of the name Komsomolskaya

Komsomolskaya circle line metro station was opened in 1952, and was named after the *Komsomolskaya Square*, which received this ideological name in 1933 in honor of the 15th anniversary of the Young Communist League foundation (Ageeva et al. 2007: 228).

The Committee received a proposal to eliminate the ideological name (the name *Komsomolskaya* is found in almost every city, this is an ideological mark of the Soviet era). This implied that the metro station had to be renamed *Tri vokzala* (‘Three railway stations’), as people informally call the *Komsomolskaya Square*, which has three railway stations – Leningradsky, Yaroslavsky and Kazansky. The naming examination was performed, which revealed that the name *Komsomolskaya* is not purely ideological, it performs an orientation function – it is directly related to the aboveground object, the *Komsomolskaya Square*. The name was formed historically (since 1952) and was included not only in the history of Russia, but also in the world history of architecture. The model of *Komsomolskaya* metro station is the Grand Prize winner at the International Exhibition in Brussels in 1958. *Komsomolskaya* metro station was designed by two men renowned in Soviet Art, the architect A. Shchusev and the artist P. Korin. The colorful decoration and eight large mosaics of the hall reflect the Russian people’s struggle for independence. There are beautiful mosaic portraits of the Russian military heroes of the past: Dmitry Donskoy, Aleksander Suvorov and others (Ageeva et al. 2007: 228).

The name corresponds to the linguistic criteria, at a phonetic and grammatical level (one-word structures, in the form of an adjective with a typical adjective suffix and inflexion for metro station names, – *skaya*) (Sokolova 1985: 79; Sokolova 2005: 141).

Restoration and saving of historical names of metro stations

This paper offers the example of the restoration of the historical station name *Krasnye Vorota* ('Red Gates'). In 1922, *Krasnye Vorota* ('Red Gates'), a monument of the architecture of the 18th century, was demolished, and in 1935 the architect I.A. Fomin in the design of the platform hall of the metro station recreated some of the features of a vanished triumphal arch. *Krasnye Vorota* ('Red Gates') station appeared, facing *Red Gates Square*, but in 1941 the area was renamed *Lermontovskaya* (in honor of the Russian poet Lermontov) and in 1962 the metro station got the name *Lermontovskaya*. In 1965 a monument to the poet was erected, but in 1986, by the decision of the Moscow Government based on the results of the examination carried out by the Committee, the station got its historical name, and in 1992 a part of the *Lermontovskaya square* became known as the *Krasnye Vorota* ('Red Gates').

The Committee's position is as follows: **historical names should be maintained**. Thus, there appeared a proposal to rename the *Kropotkinskaya* station. The history of this station and its name is closely connected with the history of metro construction and the history of the country in general. This is one of the first stations of the first metro line. It was opened in 1935 as *Dvorets Sovetov* ('Palace of the Soviets') – it got the name of the projected grand 'Palace of the Soviets', which was planned to be erected on the site of the demolished Cathedral of Christ the Savior. The height of the building was to be 420 meters; a huge statue of Lenin was to be erected on top. The Palace of the Soviets was conceived as a ninth Stalin's skyscraper, which would surpass all skyscrapers in the world. This draft would be a symbol of the Soviet Union. The underground metro hall was carried out as a part of the Palace. The columns with sockets, illuminated from within, the petals of the columns form a pattern in the shape of five-pointed stars on the arch.

The project was not destined to become reality. At the site of the demolished Cathedral of Christ the Savior the foundation of a Stalin's skyscraper was being laid and a metal structure was being prepared, but the architects' plans were foiled by the war. Already in 1941, the building was dismantled for anti-tank hedgehogs and materials to rebuild the railways (World Art Museum 2005: 52). After the war, on the site of the Palace of the Soviets, in the pit, the world's largest open-air swimming pool was built in 1957, and the metro station was renamed *Kropotkinskaya*, after the existing *Kropotkin Gates* area and *Kropotkinskaya Street* over which its entrance looked out. It should be noted that this was not actually renaming, but rather a return to the original project name (Sokolova 1993: 56). The swimming pool was closed in the last decade of the 19th century. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior was restored in its place in 2000, a copy of the holy place destroyed by Bolsheviks.

The Committee received proposals to rename *Kropotkinskaya* station as *Cathedral of Christ the Savior*. However, the Committee rejected these proposals: the name *Kropotkinskaya*, after more than a half a century of its existence, has become a part of the system and is known as an architectural monument – the model of the station received the Grand Prize at the international exhibition in Brussels (1958) (Ageeva et al. 2007: 253). The name corresponds to the linguistic criteria, at a phonetic and grammatical level (one-word structures, in the form of an adjective with a typical adjective suffix and inflexion for names of metro stations, – *skaya*). Besides, an underground metro hall with five-pointed stars on the ceiling cannot be designated with the name of an Orthodox church.

Elimination of ideological names

It should be noted that some ideological names of the Stalin era were replaced during the historical renaming campaigns, when the political situation in the country was changing (denouncement of Stalin's cult of personality, change of political leaders, breakdown of the Soviet Empire etc.).

The first wave was in 1956–1966: *Stalynskaya* (1944) became *Semyonovskaya* (1961) – after the historical name of the square, known since the 18th century. Built in 1943, *Zavod imeni Stalina* station ('Plant named after Stalin') became, in 1956, *Plant after Likhachev* (in honor of the director of the plant), and then, in 1957, *Avtozavodskaya* ('Car plant') (Ageeva et al. 2007: 18). It should be noted that the final name was given in compliance with the above-mentioned productive word model of one-word constructions ending in *-skaya*.

The second wave was in the 1990s during perestroika: *Dzherjinskaya* station, named in 1935 after *Dzherjinskaya Square* and in honor of Felix Dzerzhinsky, a chairman of the secret police of the Soviet Union, in 1990 became *Lubyanka* – after the historical name *Lubyanskaya Square*, known since 1716 (but the name *Lubyanka* is notorious as a symbol of the KGB); *Ploshchad Sverdlova* station, named in 1938 after the square and in honor of Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov, a Soviet politician, became *Teatralnaya* after the square known since the 19th century. It should be noted that the station was designed by architect I.A. Fomin as *Teatralnaya*: the arch of the metro hall is decorated with the figures of dancing and singing people, made of gold-plated porcelain (Ageeva et al. 2007: 519).

Some stations were renamed more than once during both campaigns. Opened in 1958 after the World Festival of Youth and Students, *Mir* ('Peace') station became, in 1966, *Scherbakovskaya* (in honor of the Soviet party leader), and then, in 1990 – *Alekseyevskaya* (restored historical name from the project), after the village *Alekseevskoe* known since 1574 (Ageeva et al. 2007: 28). One of the first stations (1935), the name of which existed in three variants *Ulitsa Komintern*, *Imeni Komintern* or *Komintern* ('Comintern Street') became, in 1946, *Kalininskaya* due to the renaming of *Komintern Street* into *Kalinin Street* after M.I. Kalinin, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and in 1990 the station was given the name *Alexandrovsky Sad* ('Alexandrovsky Garden'), after *Alexandrovsky Garden*, the monument of landscape art of the early 19th century (Ageeva et al. 2007: 27–28). The station of the first metro line (1935) changed its name four times: *Okhotny Ryad* ('Hunting Row') → *Imeni Kaganovicha* (1955) → *Okhotny Ryad* ('Hunting Row') (1958) → *Prospekt Marksa* ('Marx Avenue') (1961) → *Okhotny Ryad* ('Hunting Row') (1990) – the historical name, known since 1737, was restored.

Thus, the secondary system was supposed to reflect the changes in the system of the primary names.

Unsystematic renaming

During the second wave of renaming, *Gorkovskaya* station became *Tverskaya*, after the historical name of *Tverskaya Street*, which was named after Maxim Gorky between 1932 and 1990. The name of the writer Gorky got on the "black list" of Soviet politicians, which, in our opinion, is erroneous. The station was built (in 1979) as *Gorkovskaya*; in the station hall a sculptural composition was erected, its design reflecting the motives of the

writer's works. Besides, the name was a part of a series of names related to transfer stations: *Pushkinskaya* (named in honor of the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, which is reflected in the design of the station) – *Chekhovskaya* (named in honor of the great Russian writer Anton Chekhov, which is reflected in the design of the station) – *Gorkovskaya* (now *Tverskaya*).

Furthermore, it must be said that the broad renaming campaign which concerned Moscow urban objects resulted in new discrepancies, such as the difference in the names of an underground station and an aboveground object: *Mayakovskaya* station is located under *Triumphalnaya Ploshchad* ('Triumphal Square'). The Committee received a proposal to rename *Mayakovskaya* metro station as *Triumphalnaya Ploshchad* ('Triumphal Square'). However, the proposal was rejected. The naming examination showed that the name *Mayakovskaya* meets the requirements, is historically fixed, and has a partially orientation function, as the aboveground hall of the station faces the Mayakovsky monument, a favorite place for meetings among Muscovites. The design of the station includes quotations and images from Mayakovsky's poetry. The name corresponds to the linguistic criteria: phonetic and grammatical (one-word structures, in the form of an adjective with a typical adjective suffix and inflexion for metro station names, – *skaya*).

Name-giving and law

Since 1997 the name-giving practice is governed by the City of Moscow law "On naming territorial units, streets and metro stations of Moscow", issued by the Moscow Duma. Though the law prohibits renaming, this has not stopped. The station *Izmaylovksy Park* was renamed, in 2005, *Partizanskaya* ('Partisans'), at the partisan war veterans' request. But *Partizanskaya Street* is in a completely different area of the city, so the name is perceived as ideological and commemorative.

Brateevo vs Alma-Atinskaya

In the current situation, we can see that renaming may cause conflicts between the citizens and the city authorities. For example, a station under construction was to be called *Brateevo* (2007), but it was renamed *Alma-Atinskaya* according to the order of the Moscow Administration in honor of the traditional friendship between the people of Kazakhstan and Russia. This decision made both locals and onomasticians indignant.

The members of the Committee carried out the expertise on the names of the metro stations *Brateevo* and *Alma-Atinskaya*. According to the Law, the name of every metro station should be individualized and reflect the historical and cultural identity of the city. The name *Brateevo* (from *Brat*, meaning 'brother') is unique, because it is not repeated anywhere else in Russia. *Brateevo* is the name of a former village, known from documents since 1628, which became part of Moscow in 1960. The names of such settlements should remain as historical, linguistic and cultural monuments on the map of Moscow, not only in the names of districts, but also in the names of metro stations. This model is productive in naming; there are the metro stations *Medvedkovo*, *Sviblovo*, *Mitino*, *Vykhino*, *Annino*, *Marino*, the engineered station *Zhulebino*, and many others. The fixing of these names is one of the principles of formation of the toponymic system of Moscow. The expertise also highlighted

the inappropriate spelling and pronunciation of the name *Alma-Atinskaya* (a hyphenated name, the second part of which begins with a capital letter, is disputable). Besides, the Russian-established name of the city of *Alma-Ata* reflects a misunderstood meaning of the name, i.e. 'father of apples', while the Kazakh name the city of *Almaty* means 'apple'. The members of the Committee reiterated that the naming of city facilities should not depend on the political situation.

Nevertheless, the Government of Moscow failed to take into account this expert opinion and (under the order issued on November 29, 2011) renamed *Brateevo* metro station as *Alma-Atinskaya*. The decision made by the Government of Moscow has been widely discussed in the media and on the Internet. The citizens are protesting against the renaming of *Brateevo*. In the Moscow area of *Brateevo* a movement of the residents was formed, acting to preserve the names of the metro station *Brateevo*. After collecting more than 3,500 signatures, on January 30, 2012, the residents sent a letter addressed to the mayor, S.S. Sobyenin. The Kazakhstan TV aired a program: Muscovites against the renaming of the metro station *Brateevo*, as a result of which Kazakhs felt deeply offended. The problem of naming turned into a political one, and an opportunistic decision caused a conflict between the residents and *Brateevo* authorities, and also contributed to the incitement of ethnic hatred. The online forums and social networks reported:

The government played off common people against each other with its actions.
Let the Kazakhs understand that we have nothing personal against them.
We are against the authorities who violate the law.
The Kazakh brothers, support Brateevtsev! (www.liveinternet.ru/journal)

All actions of the *Brateevo* residents failed, so they filed suit. During the open session of the Tverskoy district court in Moscow on December 4, 2012 the applicants gave explanations for the arguments and the grounds set out in the statement and written additions to it. In particular, the applicants stated that, by the impugned Act, their rights and interests in the social and cultural sphere were violated: the name *Alma-Atinskaya* did not meet the standards of the Russian language and did not reflect the local historical and cultural values, the cultural identity of the city, or the toponymy of the area; the impugned Moscow Government Executive Order violated their right to a healthy environment in its anthropogenic segment, i.e. the right guaranteed by Article 42 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, as well as the right to a pleasant stay in a toponymic and linguistic environment.

The Tverskoy District Court of Moscow, by the decision dated December 4, 2012, dismissed the above-mentioned statements of the citizens, the examination was not appointed, and the judgment, in particular, developed the following statement:

According to the court, the name of the metro station "Alma-Atinskaya" is not less euphonic than "Brateevo" and the place-name for the local transport facility chosen by the Government of Moscow meets the linguistic requirements imposed by the City Charter from October 8, 1997 № 40–70.

(Without the onomastic examination with the use of specialized knowledge such a statement cannot be considered significant.)

We emphasize that the decision fixed the misspelling of the Kazakh city of *Almaty*, as the court agreed with the following arguments (from the respondents' submitted written objections to the suit),

the geographical name "Alma-Ata" was widely used and is used now in most national dictionaries and reference books, the spelling of the name, its compliance to the official sources, the rules of the Russian spelling, as well as the requirements of the regulations on the transfer of Russian geographical names is not disputed by most philologists and linguists. Furthermore, the spelling of the word as "Alma-Ata" is more familiar to the Russian-speaking population, including those in the Republic of Kazakhstan (The decision of the Tverskoy district court in Moscow on December 4, 2012).

It should be noted that the arguments outlined by the representatives of the concerned body of the Moscow Government are neither supported by any specific data in dictionaries and reference books, nor by any specific opinion of "philologists and linguists", indicating their names and links to their scientific works (the very combination of the words "philologists and linguists" shows the incompetence of the authors of such pseudo-linguistic arguments, as linguistics is a part of philology). Speaking of defense on the merits, with the use of special language skills, the spelling of *Alma-Ata* (without the quotation marks, as in spelling of geographical names in accordance with the rules of the Russian spelling quotation marks are not used) contradicts Article 1 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 01.07.1998, "On the special status of Almaty". The decision also contradicts the international processes of name unification: in official documents, documents of the Foreign Ministry, diplomatic correspondence, documents of international organizations (UNESCO, UNICEF, etc.), telecommunication and enterprise information systems, the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names in the United Nations, etc., the name *Almaty* in English transliteration is used with the form *Almaty*.

The activists of the movement for the return of the historical name Brateevo were not satisfied with the court's decision – they again went picketing the metro station, which had already been opened on December 24, 2012. In the reports from the scene of the event, most of the media showed the dissatisfaction of the Muscovites with the name *Alma-Atinskaya*, and the readiness of the initiative group of Brateevtsev to appeal to Presidents Putin and Nazarbayev, and Authorized Ambassador of Russia to Kazakhstan. Moreover, the activists are going to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

We should emphasize that, considering the opinion of experts in onomastics, the authors of scientific papers on the theory of proper names and toponymic dictionaries of Moscow, who conducted the naming examination in 2011, could have prevented this conflict, which is still at least as sharp as it was two years ago when it began.

Conclusion

Thus, to sum it up, it must be said that not only the names of streets and metro stations require a qualified expert assessment, but also the names of other urban objects, so the issue of expanding the functions and powers of the City inter-departmental committee on naming the territorial units, streets and metro stations in Moscow is currently being discussed. Thousands of names on signs and billboards – names of shops, restaurants, cafes,

pharmacies, studios, advertising and travel agencies, law firms, laundry shops, hairdressers, businesses that provide maintenance services for household appliances and other enterprises in the sphere of everyday life, as well as residential complexes – often include in the written form violations of literary language norms and rules of transliteration, barbarisms and pseudo-foreign names: *Sorry Babushka* (Babushka – disparaging old girl), *OXYGEN* (when reading the Latin alphabet as Cyrillic it turns into an obscene word), *Avinu* (wrong spelling of *avenue*). There are a lot of conversational and rude colloquial words and idioms in the city signage: *Svalka* (substandard language: scrap-heap and shindy), *Eshkin cat* (euphemism, used instead of the well-known Russian obscene expression that starts with the same letter), *ZONA* ('zone', in Russian substandard language means 'a place of confinement'), *Buhni* (in Russian substandard language, rude 'get bombed'), *Puzyr* ('blister', in Russian substandard language meaning 'a bottle of cheap alcohol').

The citizens' appeals to authorities, indignant with such attitude towards the Russian language, violation of ethical standards to the municipal government, the Federal Antimonopoly Service and in the media indicate the need for naming examination of urban objects.

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