THE USE OF KAZAKH TOPONYMS IN THE MEDIA

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Abstract

The subject of this study is Kazakh toponyms (place names) which are actively used in the Russian language.

There are a lot of Kazakh place names in the Russian toponymic system which are subject to the phonetic, morphological and word forming assimilation by the Russian language; it proves the interaction of two differently structured toponymic systems functioning in the same region.

The adapting of a foreign toponym by the Russian language also covers grammatical characteristics at the level of morphology. Place names are the first sign of sovereignty and statehood.

Key words: *toponyim, Kazakh, suffix, adaptation, system*

Résumé

L'article traite des toponymes de Kazakhstan, qui circulent aussi en langue russe. Ils sont assimilés au systèm phonétique et morphologique de celle-ci.

On constate une interaction entre le système toponymique de Kazakhstan et celui de Russie. Les toponymes formés à l'aide du suffixe *-ty* sont fréquents. A signaler la contribution des médias à la promotion des formes toponymiques autochtones et étrangères.

Mots-clés: *toponyme, casaque, suffixe, adaptation, systèm*

Language is a means of human communication and a tool of artistic creativity. Our speech culture is judged according to our ability of exploting the inexhaustible wealth of our language.

In this sense mass media is extremely popular. It goes without saying that mass media have become an integral part of any modern society. The press, the radio and television play a very important role in people's lives. For many of us it is the main source of information. News readers and TV presenters should be a kind of role-models because they are responsible for

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the cultural level of people to a greater or lesser degree. The language used should be of a high quality, aiming at educating the public not only in terms of news content but also in terms of language use. Nevertheless, they often distort words.

The subject of this study is Kazakh toponyms (place names) which are actively used in the Russian language. Place name study is an important source of studying the language history (the history of lexicology, dialectology, etymology, etc.). Toponymy is included in the domains of three separate disciplines. It is a branch of geography because the names it collects and studies are attached to concrete geographical objects. It is a part of linguistics because toponyms, like all proper names, are words and word components pertaining to the lexical fund of a language. And it is an auxiliary tool of history because it helps to reconstruct the ethnic, political, cultural, and religious changes that occurred in a given country in the course of centuries and millennia. The specificity of toponyms from a lexical and semantic point of view, as a rule, is an untranslatable part of vocabulary (A.V. Superanskaya, T. Dzhanuzak, G.B. Madieva, etc.). Their form should be preserved as undistorted as possible.

Unrelated languages such as Kazakh and Russian inhere in a big difference in sounds. The Kazakh Cyrillic alphabet was compiled by S. Amanzholov in 1940, and includes 42 characters: 33 characters of the Russian alphabet and 9 characters for specific Kazakh sounds. In Russian all foreign words including Kazakh are spoken and written in accordance with the Russian language norms. (http://ru.wikipedia.org)

There are a lot of Kazakh place names in the Russian toponymic system which are subject to the phonetic, morphological and word forming assimilation by the Russian language; it proves the interaction of two differently structured toponymic systems functioning in the same region. For example, in spoken Russian and in mass media *ch* is often used instead of Kazakh unvoiced consonant *sh*:, although the letter *ch* is not used in genuine Kazakh words, i.e. Shamalgan-Chemolgan, Shu-Chu, Ushtobe-Uchtobe, Usharal-Ucharal, Shardara-Chardara, Uzunagash-Uzunagach, Kurshym-Kurchum, Shelek-Chilik, for example На этом отрезке

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археологи нашли развалины небольших городков Иссык, Тургень, Лавар и крупного города Чилик. (http://www.5ka.ru)

According to Art. 19 of the Law on the RK of 11.07.1997 “On the languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan” traditional, historically formed Kazakh names of inhabited localities, streets, squares, as well as of other physical and geographical objects should be reproduced in other languages in compliance with transliteration rules.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of Art. 9 of the Law on RK “On administrative and territorial system of the Republic of Kazakhstan” since the collapse of the USSR and the independence of former constituent republics, all place names in Kazakstan have reverted to the Turkic spelling in their newly modified alphabet, including the above mentioned names as Shymkent instead of Chimkent, Shu instead of Chu, etc. (http://ru.wikisource.org)

It is important to note that it was considered that Almaty is the Kazakh place name as for Alma-Ata, a Russified variant of the Kazakh name, though the compound components of the place name Alma-Ata belong to the Kazakh language.

During 1941-1993 the Kazakh place name Almaty was used in parallel with the Russian variant Alma-Ata. This fact contributed to the appearance of a stereotype image that Almaty is the “Kazakh” name and Alma-Ata is the “Russian” name of the same city. Now Almaty is the official name of the city both in Russian and Kazakh. Nevertheless, the stereotypical usage of names still leads to the functioning of this name in two variants. Outside Kazakhstan, particularly in Russia, the Russian forms in use remain Alma-Ata, which was applied in the Soviet Era. В 2006 году “Социалистическое сопротивление Казахстана” провело конференцию в Бишкеке (Кыргызстан), на которой присутствовали члены СоцСопра из Алма-Аты, Актобе, Караганды, Тараза, Уральска. (http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php)

However, the press tries to use the name of Almaty in Russian. In this respect there is a grammatical problem with the spelling of this place name: the form of the name corresponds to a pluralia tantum and the name in Russian declines as words in the plural do. As a result, two variants are

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functioning, one declinable and the ather indeclinable. The question arises as to whether both variants correspond to the norm.

In modern Russian literary language place names are used in combination with generic words like city, republic, river etc. to avoid the declension. It helps preserving the accuracy in transferring foreign-onyms in Russian. The less place names are known, the more likely would be the use of place names in the original form, e.g.: in Almaty city. According to the rules of declension, Russian onyms ending in *-s* have a tendency to declinability, for example, in Thebes, Tatry, Cannes, Cheboksary, etc. (www.gramota.ru)

The standard form of the Kazakh place names invariably ends in *-ty* which is a formative suffix of an adjective with the meaning of "possession", "presence", "abundance", which is widely used in the formation of the Kazakh (Turkic) onyms. The map of Kazakhstan abounds in geographical names with the ending *-ty*, e.g. rivers *Kairakty*, *Bulanty*; the *Bakty* and *Burkitty* Mountains; Lake *Balykty*, inhabited localities Aktasty, Kamysty, regions Shiderty, Kokpekty. Among these toponymical names, we can find the name of *Almaty*, our south capital. *Almaty* is the historical name of a place where a modern city stands. The name *Almaty* derives from the Kazakh word for *apple* (*Alma*) and it was given in the honor of the apples that have grown in this area since ancient times.

The toponym *Alma-Ata* (former name) can be declined in the Russian language and belonged to the paradigm of declension of nouns ending in *-a*. As it was noted before, the codified name Almaty is used in the Russian language though it causes some difficulties in use. Internet, television and other mass-media still use the name name (Alma-Ata) and contribute to its inappropriately spreading among native speakers, such examples are widely represented in the language, in oral and written texts. For example, according to our observations, a declined variant peculiar to online-texts is: Автосалоны и дилеры Пежо в АлматАХ. (www.peugeotportal.ru; Doska.Gde.ru) – это доска объявлений Алматов (http://doska.gde.ru/almaty) Тематический рейтинг печатных СМИ в АлматАХ www.reklama-online.ru Расценки на рекламу в АлматАХ: печатные издания, телеканалы и радиостанции (www.reklama-

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online.ru); Прогноз погоды в АлматАХ (http://weather.infobot.ru) The noun *Almaty* as well as other Kazakh place names as *Kamysty*, *Atyrau*, *Aktau*, *Kok-Tobe*, *Medeu*, etc. does not decline in Russian, although media still uses the declinable variant both in oral and in written language, e.g. В Алмате проходит неформальная встреча глав СНГ. (http://news.am/ru/news43.html) Moreover, on August 17, 1995, the Russian Federation President issued the mentioned regulation 1495 "On writing the names of states of the former Soviet republics and their capitals" where such place names were re-spelled as *Tallinn* to *Tallin*, *Ashkhabad* to *Ashgabat* and *Alma-Ata* to *Almaty*. The same thing happens with *Kokpekty* village, in an example such as: В Семее будут возведены БСМП, детская больница и войдет в эксплуатацию новый радиологический центр. Вступят в строй действующих и две районные больницы в КокпекТАХ и Катон-Карагае. (http://www.kazpravda.kz) Но главным вкладом в развитие КокпекТОВ останется стабильная работа предприятий и хозяйств региона. (http://kaztrk.kz/rus/news)

The adapting of a foreign toponym by the Russian language also covers grammatical characteristics at the level of morphology. The latter becomes particularly topical when differently structured languages are in contact, when the Russian language adapts a foreign unit this leads to including it in the category of gender. The Kazakh language doesn't have the category of gender. Therefore the same adjective, pronoun, or ordinal number depending on the meaning of the sentence may be translated into Russian as a masculine, feminine or neuter gender word. Мой любимый Алматы! Красивая Алматы. (http://www.lyakhov.kz)

Examples taken from the Internet sources show that the toponym *Almaty* is used both as a feminine and a masculine gender noun. The name of the skating-rink *Medeu* is used in Russian as *Medeo* where the final *-o* is a marker of the influence of the Russian language. *Medeu* is Almaty's playground in the foothills of the Zailiysky Alatau, 1700 meters high about 15 km southeast of central Almaty. *Medeu*, meaning "support", was called after a man who was actively involved in the construction of Verny city. He did his best to gardening and improvement the city and its suburbs. Many orchards and groves were planted on his initiative: there are birch woods

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along the tract Medeu and in many other places. (http://medey.kz/ru/history.php)

This toponym is also used in two ways: *Medeu* and *Medeo*, for example: Стоимость входа на высокогорный каток “Медео” с 16 декабря составит 1600 тенге. (http://www.indratour.net/medeo) “Медеу” – спортивный комплекс, построенный в горном урочище Медео на высоте 1691 метр над уровнем моря, вблизи южной столицы Казахстана города Алматы. (http://medey.kz)

The Russian language has a rule that in an unstressed position, *o* should be pronounced like *a*: for example *Orenburg* is pronounced as *Arenburg*, *Rostov-na-Donu* as *Rastov-na Danu*, etc. This rule does not remember consciously, but often comes as an axiom at the subconscious level.

In official statements, business communication, everyday speech incorrect stress is often observed, for example the Kazakh town *Otar* is often pronounced as *Atar* which leads to a distortion of its meaning and expression. But the rule of the Kazakh language is different, when *o* is written it is always pronounced.

We can conclude by sayimg that place names are the first sign of sovereignty and statehood. In 1991, before gaining its emblem, flag and anthem as an independent state, the Kazakh SSR was renamed the Republic of Kazakhstan. Names of places are as a legacy of ancestors. It is very unpleasant when the distorted place names become “traditional” and are spread on the pages of world maps and atlases, in official international documents. The developed mapping rules and regulations for the names should be used by all departments of the country, and especially by the media.

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