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THE FUNCTIONING OF FICTIONAL ANTHROPONYMS IN R.B. SHERIDAN'S PLAYS «THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL» AND «THE RIVALS»

This article highlights the impactful role of anthroponyms in a literary work. All anthroponyms are used by writers deliberately, but it is not always possible for readers to understand the purpose of their use immediately. To do this, it is so important to study anthroponyms not in isolation, but as part of one whole anthroponymic space of a literary work. In order to percept the anthroponymic intention of an author, it is necessary to study the anthroponymic tools used by this author, as well as the specific genre features of this author's literary work. The objective of this article is to analyze the peculiarities of fictional anthroponyms in the plays of the English playwright R. B. Sheridan «The School for Scandal» and «The Rivals». The author's anthroponymic arsenal is represented by different types of fictional anthroponyms, among which the leading place is occupied by the so-called «speaking to varying degrees» anthroponyms (descriptive, parodic and associative names). The most common structural model for the anthroponymic nomination of all the types is the one-component model represented by a surname. The extensive use of surnames is predetermined not only by the preferences of the author, but also by the laws of drama as a literary form, which is characterized by the absence of characters' descriptions and the focus on depicting their actions and states. It is concluded that the use of a large number of «speaking» surnames in a limited space of the drama work allows the author to make up for the lack of characters' descriptions and to create unforgettable images by using creative anthroponymic nomination.

Key words: *fictional anthroponyms, descriptive anthroponyms, parodic anthroponyms, associative anthroponyms, drama.*

Problem statement

The text of a literary work is the product of a writer's creativity which reflects his impactful vocabulary and, as a result, his individual style. There is no doubt that a proper name in a literary text refers to this impactful vocabulary in the language of a writer. The most striking and expressive onomastic elements in a writer's vocabulary are anthroponyms. All anthroponyms form the «anthroponymic space»[1] of a literary text which is divided into several fields depending on the specifics of the denotative meaning of anthroponyms, their relationship with the national onomastic tradition, the method of their form transformation and other factors. Each anthroponym is used by the author for a specific purpose, but it is not always possible to understand this immediately. Often this use is hidden and reveals itself only in a certain context. Therefore, it is so important to study anthroponyms not in isolation, but as part of one whole anthroponymic space of a literary work.

Recent research

The study of the anthroponymic space of a work of art has a strong tradition in literary onomastics. Such outstanding scientists as L. B. Belaya, K. B. Zaitseva, V. N. Mikhailov, V. A. Nikonov, O. I. Fonyakova, L. M. Shchetinin and others made a significant contribution to the development of literary anthroponymy. The interest of researchers in the functioning of anthroponyms in various major literary forms, genres and genre varieties has been constantly

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[1] Борисова Т.Г., Кузнецова Т.Б. Традиции и новации в построении антропонимического пространства рассказов Т.Н. Толстой. *Актуальные проблемы филологии и педагогической лингвистики.* 2019. № 4. С. 113-119.

growing, for example, in poetry (L.M.Bushtyan, M.P. Melnik), in historical prose (T. B. Gritsenko, V. I. Rogozina), in fairy tales (S. A. Krasnozhen, O. O. Porpulit).

Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this research is to study the functioning of anthroponyms in drama works, namely, in the plays of the English playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan «The School for Scandal» and «The Rivals». The article is focused mainly on different types of fictional anthroponyms. It is supposed that the form and function of fictional anthroponyms depend on the individual style of the author, as well as the peculiarities of drama as a major literary form.

Main text

Considering the anthroponyms in the comedies by R. B. Sheridan from the point of view of the use of real and fictional names, it should be noted that real anthroponyms, not invented by the author, but taken from the reality of the time described make up only 5%. These include the names of the author's friends and acquaintances, which are used only in the prologue or the epilogue. Also, the author uses the names of the characters of famous literary works of other authors. The anthroponyms of this kind often function as common nouns, creating such a stylistic device as antonomasia, for example:

Fling *«Peregrine Pickle»* under the toilet – throw *«Roderick Random»* into the closet *[...]*[2].

The aforementioned example illustrates the use of metonymic antonomasia based on the logical association between the literary character and the book itself, which makes the statement more expressive and emotional.

Fictional anthroponyms account for 95%, respectively. These are the anthroponyms created by the imagination of the writer. According to the classification of L.M. Shchetinin, the names of literary characters can be divided into four groups according to their stylistic role in the literary work: neutral, descriptive, parodic and associative anthroponyms. Neutral anthroponyms account for 31% of the number of all fictional names of the plays analyzed. «The meaning of the word stem and the phonetic form of such names in no way reflect the peculiarities of the disposition and behavior of a literary character»[3]. Neutral anthroponyms are used to simply name the characters. That is why this group includes all personal names, which account for 41% of the number of all neutral anthroponyms. The traditional names such as *Maria, David, Thomas, Moses*, dating back to the Bible and the Gospel, are used as personal names. There are diminutive personal names that convey a friendly and good-natured relationship between the characters, for example, *little Dick* (Dick → Richard), *Noll* (Oliver), *Fighting Bob* (Bob → Robert). Two-component character naming models (personal name and surname) account for 13% of the number of neutral anthroponyms. The largest number of neutral anthroponyms is represented by surnames (46%). Among the surnames there are the anthroponyms of various etymological types, for example, professional surnames (*Master Butler*) or descriptive surnames (*Mrs. Green*), but their etymology is not reinforced contextually. Mostly neutral anthroponyms are used by the author to name positive characters.

Descriptive anthroponyms make up the largest percentage (43%) of the number of all fictional names. Descriptive names are like masks, by which it is easy to determine the nature of a character, since they «give a direct or indirect characterization of their bearers»[4]. 74% of all the descriptive names are surnames used by the author to identify his characters. The etymology of surnames is different. These are often the surnames that emphasize the peculiar features of a character's appearance, for example, *Mrs. Pursy* (pursy → obese), *Miss Sallow* (sallow → yellowish, painful), *Lady Slattern* (slattern → a sloppy person), *Miss Simper* (simper → to smile in a stupid way), *Mr. De-la-grace* (grace → elegance). The latter name indicates not only the connection between the appearance and the profession of the character (a dance teacher), but also his nationality (French). Contrasting pairs of anthroponyms are often used, the etymology of

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[2] Sheridan R.B. The Rivals [play]. London. 1898. P. 87.

[3] Щетинин Л.М. Слова, имена, вещи. Ростов на Дону. 1966. С. 126.

[4] Так само. С. 127.

which enhances the comicality of the situation, as in the description below of the appearance of two ladies, one of whom skillfully hides the traces of time on her face (*Mrs. Evergreen* → evergreen → always young), and the other one does not pay attention to her appearance at all (*widow Ocher* → ocher → a pale brownish yellow color):

Well, well, if <u>Mrs. Evergreen</u> does take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which <u>the widow Ochre</u> caulks her wrinkles[5].

In the following example, the comicality is achieved through the onomastic play on words that is actualized through the use of certain surnames in the same context:

Did you circulate the report of <u>Lady Brittle's</u> intrigue with <u>Captain Boastall</u>[6]?

The element *boast* in the anthroponym *Boastall* could be interpreted as *bragging*. But in this context, where the schoolchildren of «the school for scandal» discuss the latest gossip, its homonym is realized with the meaning of *roughly cutting a stone*, which, in combination with the anthroponym *Brittle* meaning *fragile, delicate,* creates a comic effect, delicately hinting the reader at the nature of the relationship between the characters. The alliteration of consonants *b, t, l* in this anthroponymic pair (**B**ri**ttl**e – **B**oas**tall**), which connects these surnames and gives them expressiveness, also emphasizes the necessity to consider these anthroponyms together as a contextually bound anthroponymic unity.

There are many descriptive surnames that are indicative of the main traits of the characters and their behavior or disposition, which is confirmed contextually, for example:

'Lord!'   cries   my   Lady   <u>Wormwood</u>   (who   loves   tattle, And puts much salt and pepper in her prattle)[7];

Lady Wormwood → wormwood → bitterness, the source of bitterness.

In the common course of things, I think, it must reach <u>Mrs Clackitt's</u> ears within four-and-twenty hours; and then, you know, the business is as good as done [8].

Mrs Clackitt → to clack → to rattle, to talk loudly.

26% is the number of such descriptive anthroponyms which are two-component nominative models, represented by a combination of a personal name and a surname. The specific feature of this group of anthroponyms is the initial alliteration, that is, the repetition of the first letters of the personal name and the surname, which creates an additional semantic load and makes this two-component anthroponym more expressive. For example, the author names the scandalmonger and slanderer as *Benjamin Backbite*. His true nature is indicated not only by the «speaking» surname (to backbite → to stab in the back), but also by the «anaphoric repetition»[9] of the plosive consonant sound [b], the harsh articulation of which creates unpleasant associations with gossip and slander. The repetition of the lateral sound [l] in such an anthroponymic unity as *Lydia Languish* emphasizes the dreaminess and sentimentality of the girl soaring in the clouds and languishing in anticipation of a fairytale love. The same characteristic feature is presented in the semantics of her surname (languish → languor, a languid look). The sound [f] in the anthroponymic combination *Sir Filagree Flirt* is associated with the frivolity and frivolous behavior of the character, reinforcing the semantics of the verb *to flirt,* which means *to dally, to gallant.*

Parodic anthroponyms make up only 2% of the number of fictional names. These are the names that are created by the characters of a literary work in the process of their speech[10]. This is no longer a mask, but only a hint indicating the type of relationship between the characters in the work. As a result of the study, only one type of parodic names was identified, these are substitute

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[5] Sheridan R.B. The School for Scandal [play]. London. 1898. P. 26.
[6] Ibid. P. 13.
[7] Ibid. P.12.
[8] Ibid. P.13.
[9] Kemertelidze N., Manjavidze T. Stylistic Repetition, its Peculiarities and Types in Modern English. 2013. P.4
[10] Щетинин Л.М. Слова, имена, вещи. Ростов на Дону. 1966. С. 128.

names. They only conventionally denote the various persons mentioned in the speech of the characters of the work, but are designed in the form of family names:

Last night <u>Lord L.</u> [Sips] was caught with <u>Lady D.</u> [11].

This use of anthroponyms indicates not only the reluctance to name specific persons involved in a scandalous story, but also the stereotypy of such piquant situations that inevitably become the reason of rumors and gossip. It should be noted that the abovementioned example is taken from the prologue, where R. B. Sheridan prepares the reader for the perception of his play «The School for Scandal». Therefore, this sentence can be considered as one of the formulas for backbiting and gossip, where the variable unit is an anthroponym. To get the result, it is enough to write names instead of letters in such conventional anthroponymic designations as *Lord L.* and *Lady D.* which is what visitors of this «school for scandal» do, gossiping about their friends and relatives.

Associative anthroponyms make up 24% of the number of fictional names. These names evoke certain associations in the reader with their sound or visual form[12]. This is the last element in the movement of «speaking names» from the particular to the general. Like descriptive anthroponyms, associative anthroponyms are represented by only two models of character nomination: a surname (65%) and the combination of a personal name with a surname (35%). Such anthroponyms are very often given to episodic characters who are mentioned in the drama work only once in connection with some specific situation. They are comical and make an impression on the reader just as much as descriptive names. For example, in such an anthroponymic unity as *Lady Betty Curricle*, attention is drawn to the component *curricle,* which denotes *a two-wheeled carriage* in which this lady was driving around Hyde Park. She, like a child, enjoyed the rides in her toy phaeton and even wished to write poems in honor of her pony. It is clear that the surname *Curricle*, with its transparent semantics, does not describe the character in any way, but it simply makes the reader smile.

The surname *Brush* (brush → shrub) evokes unpleasant associations, since it belongs to an unreliable person, whose word one cannot rely upon, because his soul is a «brush», «a dark forest»; you can never know what to expect from him: he says one thing and does another. There are some other interesting surnames such as *Mrs. Quadrille* (quadrille → a dance) and *Mrs. Piano* (piano → a musical instrument), which belong to the hostesses of fashionable salons, where you can have fun. But at the parties of *Mrs. Drowsy*, obviously, there is no fun, for the hostess herself seems to be taking a nap, since her surname is associated with the word *drowsy* which means *sleepy.*

There are also rhymed pairs of anthroponyms, for example:

[...] no more, probably, than for the story circulated last month, of <u>Mrs. Festino's</u> affair with <u>Colonel Cassino</u> [13].

The anthroponyms *Mrs. Festino* and *Colonel Cassino* are united not only by rhyme, but also by their etymology. The surname *Festino* is associated with the word *festival,* which speaks of the party lifestyle of this person, the same can be said about *Colonel Cassino*, whose surname is associated with the word *casino.*

To emphasize the wide-sweeping depauperation of the nobility, the author uses a number of anthroponyms, the semantics of which is associated with the concept of «deterioration, destruction»:

[...] everybody almost is in the same way: <u>Lord Spindle</u>, <u>Sir Thomas Splint</u>, <u>Captain Quinze</u> and <u>Mr. Nickit</u> [14].

The etymological analysis of the above surnames proves their contextual relationship. This connection between the anthroponyms is necessary for the author to draw the reader's attention to the deplorable financial condition of the forecited characters: *Lord Spindle → to spindle* (to be

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[11] Sheridan R.B. The School for Scandal [play]. London. 1898. P. 12.
[12] Щетинин Л.М. Слова, имена, вещи. Ростов на Дону. 1966. С. 131.
[13] Sheridan, R.B. The School for Scandal [play]. London. 1898. P. 17.
[14] Ibid. P. 18.

stretched, to be made long and thin), *Sir Thomas Splint → splint* (a shard, a wood chip), *Captain* Quinze → quinzee (a shelter made from a pile of loose snow), *Mr. Nickit → nick* (a crack, a split). Each surname separately does not evoke unpleasant associations, but their use together in one context creates the impression that these characters are in a difficult life situation.

The following example is also interesting:

Today, Mrs. Clackitt assured me, <u>Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon</u> were at last become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance [...][15].

The family name *Honeymoon*, successfully selected by the author, allows him to avoid unnecessary clarification of the situation: at first, it was a loving married couple, as evidenced by the etymology of the family name (*Honeymoon → honeymoon → a holiday taken by newlyweds immediately after their wedding*), but now they are just a husband and a wife, who scandal like everyone else.

Associative anthroponyms, as well as descriptive ones, are often characterized by an initial alliteration of two-component character names, for example:

Well, here's my great uncle, <u>Sir Richard Ravelin,</u> a marvelous good general in his day, I assure you[16].

Using the anthroponymic nominative model *Richard Ravelin* with the anaphoric repetition of the post-alveolar sonorant [r] in the name and surname to name a general, the author creates an image of a smart, disciplined and brave warrior, reinforcing the etymology of his kinglike name (*Richard →*strong in rule) and his warlike surname (*Ravelin → ravelin →* a fortification or a kind of rampart on a mediaeval fortress, which makes those inside secure, safe, and defensible).

Conclusions

Thus, the fictional anthroponyms in the comedies of R. B. Sheridan significantly outnumber the real anthroponyms taken by the author from the reality of the time described. Among them, the leading place is occupied by the so-called «speaking to varying degrees» anthroponyms (descriptive, parodic and associative anthroponyms). The most common model for anthroponymic nomination of all types is the one-component model represented by a surname. The wide use of surnames is due to the preferences of the author, as well as the laws of drama as a literary form, which is characterized by the absence of descriptions of the characters and the concentration of the reader's attention on depicting their actions and states. The use of a large number of «speaking» surnames in a limited space of the drama work allows the author to make up for the lack of characters' descriptions and to create an unforgettable anthroponymic atmosphere in his comedies. The prospects for further research include the investigation of the functioning of other types of literary onyms in the comedies of R. B. Sheridan.

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Слободяк С. Функціонування вигаданих імен в п'єсах Р.Б. Шерідана «Школа лихослів'я» та «Суперники».

Текст літературного твору є продуктом творчості письменника, який відображає його дієвий словник та індивідуальний стиль. Безсумнівно, що власні назви в художньому тексті відносяться до цього актуального дієвого словника письменника. Найяскравішими та найвиразнішими ономастичними компонентами словника письменника є, зазвичай, антропоніми. Сукупність всіх антропонімів утворює антропонімічний простір художнього тексту, який ділиться на кілька полів в залежності від специфіки денотативного значення антропонімів, їх відношення до національного іменника епохи, способу видозміни форми імені та інших ознак. Кожен антропонім вживається автором з певною метою, але не завжди читач може все зрозуміти відразу. Часто антропонімічна інтенція автора має прихований характер і виявляє себе тільки в контексті. Тому так важливо вивчати антропоніми не ізольовано, а в сукупності з усіма компонентами єдиного антропонімічного простору художнього твору. В рамках даної статті розглядаються особливості вживання вигаданих літературних антропонімів у п'єсах англійського драматурга Р. Б. Шерідана «Школа лихослів'я» та «Суперники». Антропонімічній арсенал автора представлений різними типами вигаданих літературних антропонімів, серед яких провідне місце займають антропоніми з певним функціонально-семантичним навантаженням, які по-різному «говорять» читачеві про задум автора (описові, пародійні та асоціативні антропоніми). Найпоширенішою моделлю антропонімічної номінації персонажів виявилася однокомпонентна модель, представлена прізвищем. Переважне використання прізвищ замість традиційної двокомпонентної моделі іменування англійців (особисте ім'я та прізвище) зумовлене не тільки уподобаннями автора, але й закономірностями драми як літературного роду, для якого характерна відсутність зображення зовнішності і характеру персонажів та акцент на зображенні їх вчинків і душевних станів. Використанням великої кількості прізвищ, що «говорять», в обмеженому просторі драматичного твору автор компенсував відсутність опису персонажів і створив незабутній антропонімічний колорит в своїх комедіях.

Ключові слова: *вигадані літературні антропоніми, описові антропоніми, пародійні антропоніми, асоціативні антропоніми, драма.*