

# Feature Films Nomination in Russian and English: Linguocultural Aspect<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The history of cinema in comparison with the thousand-year history of music, painting or theater is short. Cinema is one of the youngest and at the same time one of the most popular arts. Naturally, it attracted the attention of sociologists, aesthetics, art historians, cultural theorists, linguists – everyone who is interested in the problems of artistic creativity and its perception, the dynamics of public attitudes, etc. Drawing up the title of the movie is a very complex and multi-tasking process. It is necessary to create a competent heading structure for a film of a particular genre affiliation and select, if necessary, stylistic figures. It is important to create an attractive, concise title that will attract the attention of the viewer. In addition, the title should be translated keeping the link with the content. This study is devoted to the particular qualities of the nomination of feature films of world cinema of the 20th and early 21st centuries, as a reflection of socially significant cultural concepts. In order to achieve the goals, we achieved the following tasks: to present the classification of the titles of movies; define the functions of movie titles and identify the basic techniques and strategies of composition.

**Keywords:** Russian Language; Nomination; Cultural Linguistics; Feature Film.

## 1. Introduction

The understanding that language as a human creativeness "cannot be understood and explained without its connection with the Creator and the user" (Kravchenko, 1996), stimulated in linguistics the process of changing the system-structural paradigm to the anthropocentric one. In this regard, all the fruits of human activity are becoming popular and in demand. At the moment, cinema is one of the most sought-after incarnations of our lives. Of course, modern cinema acts as a unique cultural phenomenon due to its rapid scale distribution, successful promotion in the growing market of film production and, as a result, a huge impact on the

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audience on a global scale. Given this fact, it seems appropriate to analyze the linguistic characteristics of various in its structure and semantics of feature films in Russian and foreign cinema.

Nowadays onomastics is the most actively studied area of linguistics, which is motivated by the unconditional entertaining potential of this science. There are more and more works focusing on the linguistic-cultural and anthropological aspects, which “seems quite natural, since the most socially significant and stable quanta” of linguistic and ethno-cultural information are coded in onomastic (Berezovich, 2001). One of the most significant and “attractive” onomastic objects today can be considered the names of films (film names), the stock of which is replenished almost daily. Their study is often a consideration of a special category of homonyms, along with, for example, titles such as the naming of works of art and the headlines of newspaper / magazine articles. The analysis in this paper is based on identifying the characteristic features of movie titles (Tejeda & Dominguez, 2019).

It is worth noting that nominative complexes that serve as the names of various products of human activity (works of art, films, newspapers, magazines) consistently arouse the interest of linguistic researchers (Podymova, 2006), however, film names still remain in the shadow of scientific research.

The aim of the study is to determine the dynamics and frequency of use of features of the linguistic characteristics of the names of feature films of the mid-XX and early XXI centuries.

The goal requires a consistent solution of the following tasks:

- consider the principles of describing the title as a special type of text and present different approaches to the classification of headings;
- to classify the conceptual basis of the choice of the name of the text;
- identify the main conceptual trends characteristic for the choice of the name of feature films;
- analyze the dynamic processes occurring in the system of titles of feature films.

The relevance of the topic is due to the fact that the name of the film can be considered a reliable guideline among the vast stream of products of the modern film industry, being, on the one hand, the quintessence of the author's intention, and, on the other, the names of the films objectively play the role of the intersection of various pragmatic attitudes responds to the demands of modern society (Marandi et al., 2018).

## **2. Methods**

Methodological and theoretical basis of research were works of domestic and foreign scientists in the field of the theory of frames and scenarios, cultural linguistics, cognitive linguistics, sociolinguistics. Issues of cultural linguistics are

actively discussed in the researches of the Kazan scientists. Naming is certainly culturally significant, and forms a cultural phenomenon. The study was based on the works of scholars from Kazan Federal University devoted to cultural linguistics (Mubarakshina et al., 2016; Kalegina et al., 2015; Khasanova, 2018; Anastasiya et al., 2018; Shamsutdinova et al., 2017), etc.

To solve the tasks, the following research methods were used:

- Theoretical: Generalization and analysis of scientific data on the research problem (in terms of onomasiology, the theory of nomination, psycholinguistics, linguoculturology, etc.);
- Empirical: Method of continuous selection of film titles (among the films reviewed in this work, there are both films that have long since become classical, as well as films that have just recently been released worldwide), semantic analysis, classification, generalization.

When analyzing the names of domestic and foreign paintings selected by us by the method of continuous sampling, we relied on the methodology proposed by Lamzina (1997). The classification of a linguist is based on the ratio of the title and the traditionally singled out component of the work, such as: thematic composition and problems, plot, character system, detail, time and place of action or description (the chronotope). In all this type of titles can meet design with a little complicated semantics: It can be quoted, symbolic, proverbial, metaphorical, idiomatic titles.

### 3. Results

The popularity of a film is often largely determined by its title, as a spectacular title makes it much easier to attract the viewer's attention than by characterizing the content of a film or a list of actors. Psychological research demonstrates evidence that approximately eighty percent of readers of magazines, newspapers and blogs focus exclusively on titles. A similar situation is observed with motion pictures. The viewer determines by the name of his potential relation to the film, determines whether to watch it.

According to Petrova (2009), the name is a kind of guarantee of success, and its effective perception immediately affects the box office. The authors try to choose capacious and catchy titles for their works, since the title is intended to attract the maximum amount of public. In addition, the title of the film should at least approximately reflect the content of the picture, which it summarizes, and be easily recorded in the mind of the viewer.

“Although the term *filmonim* has not yet become widespread in linguistic science (it is found in the work of EV Knish, 1992), it may well take its full place in the system of onomastic terminology, since it has a kind of word-building structure, including typical formants, where the first one names an object, and the second

component, onim, means “proper name” (cf. anthroponym, zoonym, toponym, mofonim, teonym, phytonim, ergonym, etc.) (Podymova, 2006).

The title performs the function of the first hint of what is happening, expresses in a concise, concentrated form an important idea or theme of the work. The concept of "title is much uncomplicated. For example, Ozhegov (1984) defines the title as “the name of a work or its individual parts”.

However, with all its apparent simplicity, this phenomenon has a complex structure and performs an important function in creating and translating the unity of a literary or artistic work.

According to Turaeva (1986), the title occupies a so-called strong position, which attracts the attention of the reader due to its opposition to the very content of the work. The title particularly clearly illustrates the multiplicity of interpretations, the inclusion of additional meanings in the semantic structure of the word that are not included in the main semantic core.

In linguistic terms, the title is the name of the text, in semiotic terms – the first character of the text. The title comes close to its proper name in its iconic status. This sign takes a position that is rightly considered a strong one. The position “above the text”, including the “film text”, represents certain autonomy for titles, as a result of which titles can be considered as autonomous language units. But, on the other hand, the title is a full-fledged component of the text, incorporating its content, ideological or genre features. In other words, the title is the unrevealed content of the text, which figuratively can be represented as a “twisted spring, revealing its possibilities in the process of unfolding” (Gal'perin, 1981).

#### 4. Discussion

Following Lamzina (1997) we distinguish the following typology of the titles we have selected:

1. The titles that convey the leading themes and issues that are displayed by the author in the work. The interpretation of the theme stated in the title of the work tends to expand significantly in the process of unfolding the artistic text itself, and the title itself to acquire symbolic overtones (for example, *Clockwork Orange*, *Ovsyanka*, *Chocolate*, *Eyes*, *Tulip* (Shamsutdinova, 2017).

2. Titles that define the vector of plot perspectives of the work. Such conditionally can be classified into two groups: those representing the whole storyline (fabled) and highlighting the most important moment from the point of view of the development of the action (culminating) (for example, *Ivan Vasilyevich changes profession*, *I Killed My Lesbian Wife*, *Hung Her on I am a Three-Picture Deal at Disney*, *The Day after Tomorrow*, *Geographer drank a globe* (Petrova, 2009).

3. Personal titles, much of which are anthroponyms. They usually report the nationality, social, material status or gender of the protagonist (for example, *Alien*, *Liar, liar*, *Admiral*, *Italian* (Podymova, 2006).

In a special group of anthroponyms, names with a “transparent” internal form can be distinguished. Such headings project the author's assessment even in advance, before reading or viewing the work, they form potential ideas about the acting or depicted character (for example, *Legend No. 17*, *Vysotsky. Thanks for being alive*, *Gandhi*, *Passion of the Christ* (Berezovich, 2001). Often such names can be found in historical films.

4. Titles denoting space and time (the chronotope). In addition to the names of the days of the week, time of day, months, time of action, may be indicated by a date correlated with a historical event (for example, *Good weather on Deribasovskaya or rains again on Brighton Beach*, *In August of 44th*, *Peter FM*, *Children of Monday*, *Twilight*, 2012. The action may be indicated in the title with varying degrees' concrete, real (*Brest Fortress*, *Babel*, *New York minutes*: and an assumed place-name (*Country of the Deaf*, *Silent Hill*, or defined in the most general terms. The choice toponym author is usually caused by the general plan of the product (Lamzina, 1997).

Babenko L.G. offers a completely different classification. It distributes titles according to the cognitive-thematic principle characteristic for the compilation of dictionaries - thesauri: for example, headings are categorized as “person”: *Nastya*, *Brother*, *Gandhi*, *1612*, *Saturday*, *The day after Tomorrow*, “space”: *I walk through Moscow*, *An American Haunting*, “event”: *Return*, *The War of the Worlds*, “objects”: *Tulip*, *12 chairs*, *Chocolate*. The categories “person”, “space” and “time” are presented in the described classification as a universal triad underlying any artistic text, including header. And in the categories “event” and “objects” an action is built in the work, therefore they are also distinguished as the leading grounds for classification (Mubarakshina, 2016).

## 5. Summary

Summing up the results of consideration of the names of feature films in Russian and English, we can draw the following conclusions:

- 1) we have selected more than 500 titles of domestic and foreign feature films for the thematic classification of titles; among the films were well-known and recently released works;
- 2) In this paper, domestic and foreign feature films are taken as a basis and it is examined which keywords are most present in the game cinema. In the course of the analysis, it was revealed that in the game cinema the most commonly used are films with the keywords “love” – 2437 films, (compared with “hatred” – 93), “life” – 2536,

(compared with “death” – 1363) , “night” – 1671, (compared with “day” – 1289), “world” – 1370 (compared with “war” – 96), “house” – 1530, “adventure” – 1154, “game” – 1128, “family” – 1048, etc.

- 3) Words with a positive connotation are more common than words with a negative rating. Regardless of culture and ethnos, to which a person belongs, in the foreground are universal, philosophical, general cultural components and words. In our opinion, words with positive connotation.

## 6. Conclusions

The linguocultural aspect of the consideration of many phenomena of language and speech is one of the leading directions of modern linguistic research. Language is closely related to culture. It represents the main form of expression and the existence of culture; thus, the “language system” apart from the cultural background is nothing more than a theoretical abstraction. Language does not exist without a culture into which it is rooted with all its roots.

Currently, onomastics is one of the most actively studied areas of linguistics. One of such significant objects onomastics are the names of films (film names). Studying them is a special category of homonyms, along with titles such as the titles of literary works and the titles of newspaper/magazine texts, in order to identify the characteristic features of movie titles. If the names of works of art are sufficiently studied and many scientific works are devoted to them, then the names of the films remain in the shadow of scientific research.

The main function that filmonyms perform is primarily nominative. Proper name appears as the name, the designation of the film. Filmonyms also act as a communicative function, which is a link between the film itself and the audience. Among other things, movie titles have an informative function that includes several integrated component categories. The informative function performs a dual role: on the one hand, the title informs the viewer about the content of the film, and on the other, it encourages the viewer to watch the film – this is the specificity of any title. Thus, “the informative function includes the function of attracting attention (or advertising function) and the function of influence (or pragmatic)” (Podymova, 2006).

Of course, the name of the film is directly related to its genre. Depending on the genre and, possibly, the plot is chosen the name of the film. Therefore, this study is not complete and fully studied. As a result, many questions will have further consideration.

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