

# Contextual Equivalents of Proper Names in the Media<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The article discusses the ways of media personality nominations. It has been established that the typical linguistic forms of personality representation in newspaper texts are the proper name (anthroponym) and its contextual equivalents, which are secondary nominations. The modifications of proper name, lexeme identifiers and periphrases can act as the contextual equivalents of official anthroponyms. The latter can be either evaluative or evaluative neutral. Evaluation periphrases create a publication character image, form the public perception of a media personality necessary for a message sender. Periphrases neutral in terms of evaluation, help the reader to identify the media personality in terms of professional activity, social status, age, the place of residence and other parameters. A special group of contextual equivalents of the name are the periphrases that have become case-law and / or are correlated with the case-law situation, which is actively discussed in the media. The systematization of periphrases by the degree of correlation with a particular referent made it possible to distinguish the following types of them: a) the periphrases correlated with the referent in context exclusively; b) the periphrases assigned to the referent in a limited time period; c) the periphrases assigned to the referent regardless of time and context; d) stable periphrases of a metaphorical nature that do not have a clear assignment to the referent and appear in the text as evaluative elements. The study allows us to argue that contextual equivalents are the means of text coherence provision, avoiding repetition, additional information provision about the media personality, the creation of certain image of him and a powerful means of public opinion development.

**Keywords:** The Media Language; Anthroponym, Nomination; Secondary Nomination; Periphrase.

## 1. Introduction

If we consider the information space created by the media as a kind of structure with a nuclear-peripheral structure, then, of course, a person will occupy its

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core. The focus of modern media is usually media personalities, i.e., the people significant for this society, constantly in the spotlight of journalists. It is important to note that the “significance” of an individual is largely the result of the media focused work. Among all linguistic means and methods of turning a person into a media personality, nomination procedures are the leading ones.

Typical linguistic forms of media personality representation in journalistic texts are the following ones: 1) proper name (anthroponym); 2) contextual equivalents of the anthroponym. The latter are of particular interest for research, because they are able not only to add additional information about the character of the publication to the text, but also have an effect on the reader, forming the image of the given person necessary for the sender of information.

The research material was selected from the texts of Russian periodicals (Gazeta.Ru, RIA Novosti, RBC, Vesti.Ru, Interfax, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Kommersant, Novaya Gazeta, Izvestia, “Arguments and Facts”, "Russia Today", etc.) for 2017-2019.

## **2. Methods**

The processes of human naming have always been the focus of attention of linguists (Nikonov 1974; Bondaletov 1983; Vasilieva, 2009; Kuznetsova, 2012; Feoktistova, 2016; De Ponte, 2018; Corazza, 2018; Bashirova et al., 2018, etc.). The problem of journalistic article character nomination (in modern Russian media, as a rule, media personalities) is not raised so often in philological works. To some extent, this issue is considered in the monograph by M.I. Stuflyayeva (Stuflyayeva 1989). Among modern special studies on this topic one should name the dissertation on the specifics of anthroponym functioning in the media (Zaripova, 2012; Hasibuan et al., 2019). However, it is worth emphasizing the following: the secondary nominations of proper names in media texts were not the subject of special studies, despite the fact that the solution of this issue is directly related to the theory of language variability, also among proper names (Shumarina, 1985; Volodina, 2011; Fatkhutdinova, 2014; Shkurko, 2018) and with pragmalinguistics (O’Keeffe et al., 2011; Zheltukhina et al., 2016; Matveeva & Fatkhutdinova, 2016; Arsentyeva & Arsentyeva, 2017) and the theory of influence and manipulation in the field of mass media and political communication (Schuklina, 2016; Danilova, 2011; Anikin et al., 2015; Shkurko et al., 2018; Bakanov et al., 2018; Eisvandi, et al., (2015).

## **3. Results**

In the course of the study, as they already noted, it was found that the representatives of media personalities in modern Russian periodicals can be proper names (anthroponyms), as well as their contextual equivalents. The last group is formed by various modifications of a personal name, lexemes-identifiers and

periphrases. The study also indicates certain legitimate strategies of anthroponym and secondary nomination use in media texts.

## 4. Discussion

### *4.1. Anthroponyms on the Pages of Russian Newspapers*

When a new media personality is entered into the information field and there is a need for an accurate identification of the subject by the addressee of some event recreated by the media publication, the anthroponym (usually at the very beginning of the newspaper text) is complicated by the description, which usually indicates the position or social status of the referent (the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, the deputy of the State Duma Vitaly Milonov, the businessman Oleg Deripaska, etc.). Subsequently, the text uses either the official anthroponym (name, surname or patronymic of the publication character), or its contextual equivalent, which can be represented by a proper name modification, an identifier lexeme, or a periphrase.

The official anthroponym in Russian-language media texts can be represented as a whole complex consisting of a surname, name and patronymic. A certain “gold standard” for media texts is the nomination of a character by name and surname (Donald Trump, Petro Poroshenko, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Emanuel Macron, etc.). This model is the most frequent for journalistic discourse and is recognized as international (Suprun, 2000). Along with this model, a “family nomination” is used, for example: The Poroshenko family sings a hymn, and Zelensky sends air kisses to the audience and kisses his wife [Kommersant, 04.19.19]; Inflation can grow in the country, and the Federal Reserve, contrary to Trump’s desire, can raise the rate [Gazeta.Ru, 05.22.19.19]. Nominations by name, as well as by name and patronymic are much less common, mainly in the genre of interviews or when journalists quote other people's opinions, for example: Be things different, the relationship between Vladimir Nikolaevich and Boris Nikolaevich (Vladimir Shevchenko and Boris Yeltsin. - Auth.) could have turned out differently [Vesti.Ru, 02/09/19] or "In her statement, Alisa (Alisa Arshavina - Author) repeated information about pressure from the ex-Zenit player, and also described in detail the incident with the car being taken away" [Newspaper.Ru, 02/28/19]. The three-term model of nomination (last name + first name + middle name), typical of Russian culture, is presented in Russian-language newspaper texts quite limitedly, mainly in the context of a curriculum vitae included in journalistic material.

### *4.2. Contextual Equivalents of Proper Names on the Pages of Russian Newspapers*

The contextual equivalents of proper names in a work are the language units (words or phrases) that are synonymous with anthroponyms, which perform the same functions as anthroponyms, and are able to replace them within the framework of this text.

The modifications of the proper name, for example, hypocoristic names, can serve as contextual equivalents: Further, according to the explanatory, Valya took a sleeping bag and spent the night at the forest border [Vesti.Ru, 02.28.19]; Qualitative names: Our hopes on Trampushka crashed [Gazeta.Ru, 10.12.18], etc., but much more often identifiers-lexemes and periphrases are used.

Identifier-lexemes (qualifiers, determinatives, categorical nouns, see: [Vasilyeva 2009]) give an idea of the referee, pointing to various aspects of a person's life: occupation, social status, nationality, place of residence, etc., for example: Returning to the Brexit problem, the Chancellor (Sebastian Kurtz - Auth.) called it "terrible" [Vesti.Ru, 02.24.19.19]; By the age of 24, the saber fencer (Yana Egoryan. - Auth.) became a five-time European champion and multiple winner of world championships [Gazeta.Ru, 12.12.18]; The parliamentarian (Aleksey Kondratyev - Author) refers to the experience of European countries [Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 02.19.19.19]; However, the Irishman (Conor McGregor. - Auth.) does not recognize the girl Claude as his child [Gazeta.Ru, 3.02.19].

The term "periphrase" is used in the work to denote a secondary ambiguous descriptive nomination. Note that in this case, imagery is not a constitutive feature for a periphrase. Among the contextual equivalents of anthroponyms representing periphrases, we distinguished: 1) evaluative neutral periphrases and 2) evaluative periphrases.

Evaluative neutral periphrases characterize a media personality in terms of his professional and other activities, social status, age, party affiliation, etc.: Moreover, the leader of the presidential race (Vladimir Zelensky. - Author) noted that he really has contact with the Kolomoisky TV channel "1 + 1", but this is where their relationship ends [Gazeta.Ru, 04/27/19]; He emphasized that an elderly human rights activist (Lev Ponamarev. - Auth.) was placed in a cell with seven more non-smokers [Vesti.Ru, 12.12.18]; According to a member of the Human Rights Council (Alexander Verkhovsky. - Auth.), this is probably done by analogy with the fact that you can't swear in a public place [Interfax, 12.12.18], etc. As a rule, such constructions actualize their significance only within the framework of the text and they become uninformative out of context.

Newspaper texts provide more independent periphrases correlated with a specific media character. Such nominations can be transferred from text to text and will always be identified by the target audience as the equivalent of a certain anthroponym, for example: The founder of WikiLeaks (Julian Assange. - Auth.) has not left the territory of the Ecuadorian Embassy in London since 2012 <...> [Interfax, 4.12.18]; The exact death causes of Spider-Man's creator and many other cult characters (Stan Lee - Auth.) are not named yet [Gazeta.Ru, 12.11.18]; However, as the creator of Telegram (Pavel Durov. - Avt.) said, Russia has never been a priority market for his messenger [Gazeta.Ru, 01/10/19], etc.

The meaning of some periphrases can be interpreted correctly only in a certain context, which has a direct correlation with the time of the text publication. So, in an example ... "the US President considers the use of his powers to receive \$ 5.7 billion for the construction of the wall ..." [RBC, 01/27/19] the contextual equivalent of the US president will be easily correlated by the reader of the newspaper with the name of Donald Trump, and in the example "(he) reminded the owner of the Champs Elysees what fatal mistake he made promoting the Paris Agreement ..." [Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 12/9/18] the paraphrase "the owner of the Champs Elysees" is referred to the name of the French president Emanuel Macron.

According to M.N. Volodina: "The choice of language tools in the media discourse, as a rule, is associated with the assessment aimed at the addressee influencing, with the value orientation system, when conceptual, figurative and emotional characteristics come to the forefront" (Volodina, 2008). In this regard, evaluative periphrases are of particular interest. Evaluation helps the readers to interpret reality from a position favorable to the author of the text, to create an image of a media character corresponding to the author's intention.

The evaluative nature of the periphrases often predetermines the evaluative noun, which is the part of the secondary descriptive nomination, as, for example, in the following cases: Being in panic, the president of "moneybags" (Emanuel Macron. - Author) makes a bunch of statements and increases the number of trips around the country (...) [Inosmi.Ru, 11.11.18]; After that, publications appeared on dozens of unknown sites and blogs where the author of the investigation was called the traitor of the Motherland (Denis Korotkov. - Auth.) [Novaya Gazeta, 11.11.17].

However, in most cases, appraisal forms a reclamation or pejorative definition included in the periphrase, for example: The annotation to the interview said that it was the result of a long correspondence between the disgraced oligarch (Mikhail Khodorkovsky. - Auth.) and the writer [Gazeta.Ru, 12.07.17]; In recent years, the cult writer (Stan Lee - Auth.) had serious health problems [Gazeta.Ru, 12.11.18].

No less active is the evaluation layer of the periphrase value determined by its imagery (metaphor), for example: The Dagestan Eagle (Khabib Nurmagametov), the stone in the boot (Julian Assange), the Russian brain (Konstantin Klimnik), the mad dog (James Mattis), the venerable hawk (John Bolton) etc.

In addition to periphrases that are related to a specific media personality, it is often possible to find stable peripheral constructions in the media that do not have a firm hold on a particular referent and are used everywhere, for example: political heavyweight, lame duck, the guarantor of the Constitution, etc.

A special group of contextual equivalents are the periphrases that have become case-law and/or correlated with the case-law, for example, the Kremlin chef (Evgeny Prigozhin), the Kerch shooter (Vladislav Roslyakov), the Skripale poisoners or the Solberets tourists (Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov), etc. A distinctive

feature of such media precedents is their fragility. In addition, the references to modern precedent images created by the media themselves are possible only if their referents are relevant to the mass audience. Therefore, the participants of resonant events that are widely discussed in the media often become the sources for allusions. So, in the example "Because these are the "majors" without limits, not "idols", but actually two Mary Baghdasaryan in boots" [Gazeta.Ru, 10/15/18]" Russian football players Alexander Kokorin and Pavel Mamaev are compared with the infamous Mara Baghdasaryan (the representative the so-called "golden youth", the participant in the case of racing on the "Gelendvagen" in the center of Moscow in May 2016). In the following context, the source of the allusion is the name of the song of the ABBA group "Dancing Queen": Now the "dancing queen" (Teresa May. - V.G.) came out to the microphone while the ABBA song played to make a serious speech about the future of her country, but after a spectacular appearance words were superfluous, frankly speaking [Super.Ru, 3.10.18].

## 5. Conclusions

Nomination of a media personality in the media can occur in many ways. It can be a form of an official (full) name of a person, various modifications of a proper name or its contextual equivalents. The full name is often complicated by various kinds of descriptions, which allows an author of a media text to convey the necessary information of a rational nature or to influence the reader by indicating the high social status of the person mentioned in the text. Contextual equivalents (including the modifications of the proper name, identifiers and periphrases) are the means of text coherence provision, avoiding repetition, additional information provision about the media personality, a certain image creation and public opinion development.

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