



KEY ISSUES OF RUSSIAN LANGUAGE RESEARCH

АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ
ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ РУССКОГО ЯЗЫКА

DOI 10.22363/2618-8163-2022-20-3-269-283

Research article

**Variability of Russian phraseological units
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Abstract. The paper deals with variability of phraseological units (idioms, restricted collocations, sayings, etc.) with anthroponym constituents, discerning types and characteristics of variability. Distinction is made between the concepts of variability, variation, transformation, and modification. Evidence is provided for the ideas on the crucial role of the anthroponym constituent in the semantics and structure of phraseological units. Analysing a wide array of phraseological units in Russian and a number of other languages (Serbian and Croatian, Macedonian, English, and Irish), the paper covers the following types of variability of the anthroponym constituent: formal variation (personal name or its forms), lexical variation (personal name to personal name, personal name to appellative, zero lexical variation), and syntactic variability. The first type is represented by variations in phonetics, morphology, word formation, and structure. Lexical variation tends to appear as substitution of similar names, which may involve gender inversion. Culturally laden names tend not to vary, and units with such constituents should be regarded autonomous and unique. Syntactical variation is connected to the changes of word order and the number of personal names as constituents, which tend to affect both the structure and the figurative meanings of the phraseological units, modifying and deforming them. Such units are somewhat similar to phraseoschemata in Dmitry Shmelev's terms. The analysis of anthroponym constituents and the way they affect the figurative meaning of the phraseological units may show if they are distinct and autonomous entities or variants of one unit. The paper demonstrates that anthroponyms bear significance for describing phraseological variability. The types of variation revealed may be used for cross-linguistic classifications of variability in units with personal names as constituents.

Keywords: Russian phraseology, variability, synonymy, anthroponyms, personal names, appellatives, autonomous units, culturally laden names

Article history: received 12.12.2021; accepted 18.03.2022.



For citation: Kovshova, M.L., & Dronov, P.S. (2022). Variability of Russian phraseological units with personal names. *Russian Language Studies*, 20(3), 269–283. <http://doi.org/10.22363/2618-8163-2022-20-3-269-283>

Introduction

According to Andreas Langlotz, “it has long become a phraseological truism to say that idioms are often varied in discourse” (Langlotz, 2006: 173). At the same time, description of phraseological variability against the backdrop of their other characteristics (such as stability, reproducibility, etc.), classification of changes, usual and occasional, the study of semantic transformations and modifications, constitutes the relevant field of research in contemporary linguistics. Theoretical and methodological principles of variability are developed in parallel with the issues reflecting the variation in dictionaries; the classifications reflect the diversity of variation types. “Most classifications distinguish variation at different tiers of the language system: in the field of phonetics and/or orthography, in the field of morphology, syntax, and vocabulary. Morphological variability involves certain changes such as variation in number, case, aspect, sometimes genus, etc.” (Baranov, Dobrovolskij, 2013: 18).

Variability is characteristic of figurative units both as multi-word units of language and as structural units of speech, reproduced in a large context, which determines their use and leads to the multiplicity of changes. This does not contravene stability of figurative units (which may be used with no alterations), since variants, as a rule, are not associated with changes of meaning and do not deviate from the structural type but allow internal linguistic changes. However, transformations of figurative units occurring in speech can affect their semantics. Transformations are subdivided into semantic and structural-semantic ones. The first type includes any changes in the meaning of a set expression and its figurative base and/or internal form; the second type refers to “semantic transformations associated with changes in lexical composition and/or grammatical form of a phrase” (Melerovich, Mokienko, 2001: 23). Structural and semantic transformations and variability of syntactic structure are somewhat akin to the concept of transformation in generative grammar, viz. rules that allow forming new syntactic (external) structures on the basis of those structures (deep) for forming the rules of the basic component (Chomsky, 2002). Bruce Fraser (1970) notes that phraseological units are anomalies from the standpoint of transformational grammar; cf. also the syntactic theories of generativists (Kuiper, 2007: 54).

In works on variability of figurative units, one may find similar but not identical concepts, namely variation, variability, transformation, modification. Apparently, variability is the most general concept denoting variation as an inherent and essential characteristic of figurative units. Variability underlies different phenomena such as variation transformation (modification), and synonymy. Following Vlas Zhukov,¹ the present authors construe variation as formal and substantive changes that occur within a single figurative unit; units retaining semantic

¹ Zhukov, V.P. (1986). *Russian phraseology: A textbook for universities and colleges*. Moscow: Vysshaya Shkola Publ. (In Russ.)

identity through all changes are named variants. The term “modification” is interpreted in different ways. In English-language sources (Schenk, 1993; Wasow et al., 1983), modification is understood as the introduction of a modifier into the structure of a figurative unit. However, Benjamin Bruening and Marija Omazić (Bruening, 2020; Omazić, 2008) admit that a modifier may be present within the structure of an idiom, thus incorporating lexical substitutions into modifications. D. Dobrovolskij uses the term “modification” in a somewhat different sense, as an occasional variant (“Ich gebrauche hier den Terminus Modifikation also in einem etwas anderen Sinn als okkasionelle Variante” (Dobrovolskij, 2013: 479)). This standpoint on modification is quite compatible with the view of the present authors (see: Dronov, 2021). “In the available classifications of variability, the formal technique of transformation and the resulting semantic effect are usually confused. <...> It is important to distinguish between variability within a single unit and modifications resulting in new expressions” (Baranov, Dobrovolskij, 2013: 20).

Formal variability is not believed to violate the semantic identity of a figurative unit; it is usually lexical substitutions that lead to meaningful changes. This is especially true of noun substitution that leads “to such a significant change in the meaning of the entire phrase combination that it is more natural to consider the expressions <...> different idioms” (Baranov, Dobrovolskij, 2013: 17).

One has to briefly define the functions of the anthroponymic constituents within figurative units. The semantics of figurative units is based on the idea of anthropomorphism, which is explicitly manifested in units with anthroponymic constituents (personal names). However, in accordance with the linguistic specificity of figurative units, their anthroponymic constituents within in them partially or completely loses their independence and are not able to fulfill the inherent purpose of personal names, i.e. to identify, distinguish and name a person or character. Anthroponymic constituents (anthroponyms, culturally laden names, artificial names, or quasi-onyms) always attract attention, adding to expressiveness and vividness. Quite often an anthroponym makes up the entire phraseological unit; cf: *Ivan Susanin* ‘a person with whom one may easily get lost’. Proper names, including quasi-nouns with the self-descriptive inner form, motivate the semantics of the phraseological unit; cf.: *poznakomit’sâ* <*znat’sâ*> *s Zavališinyim i Poleževym* ‘to stay in bed long and idly; to be lazy,’ with the names sounding intentionally similar to the words meaning ‘stay in bed’ and ‘lie down.’ To a greater extent, the semantics is motivated by culturally laden names, which constitute the figurative and semantic center of the unit. Cf. Russian *Ahillesova pâta* and its English counterpart *Achilles’ heel* ‘unprotected, vulnerable point; smb.’s weakest side.’ It comes from the Greek myth, in which Achilles’ mother dipped the infant by the heel into the Styx, wishing to make her son invulnerable; it was the unprotected heel that was hit by an arrow during the siege of Troy, mortally wounding Achilles. In some cases, anthroponyms are selected on the basis of their phonetic characteristics to ensure rhythm, metre, and rhyme; cf. Russian *têtâ Motâ, vrode Volodi, Ivanov, Petrov, Sidorov* ‘the common man.’ The phonetic characteristics of onyms (personal names) are effectively used in tabooing sensitive topics, e.g. *Borû zvat’* ‘referring to a bout of vomiting’ (literally “to call Borya”). Whether

they are used “technically” or meaningfully, anthroponymic constituents (including culturally laden names and quasi-onyms) assume a special, cultural-semiotic, purpose: to create an anthropomorphic description of what is happening; to collect and generalize this or that social type of people; to name a class of situations, phenomena, events. Cf.: *Romeo i Džul’etta* ‘young lovers’ (literally “Romeo and Juliet”); *Dun’ka s myl’nogo zavoda* ‘stupid uneducated woman’ (literally “Dun’ka from the soap factory”); *potëmkinskie* <*Potëmkinskie*> *derevni* and its English counterpart *Potemkin village* ‘ostensible well-being, sham demonstration of the successful completion of some enterprise, deed’, etc.; see more in (Kovshova, 2021b).

It is necessary to focus attention on different types of changes in the anthroponymic constituent and to determine the impact of these changes on the semantic identity of the phraseological unit. The semantics of idioms includes the conceptual-denotative plan (a typical representation of an object) and the conceptual-logical plan (relations, connections or dependencies between things and phenomena that underlie the object description); the most intense is the figuratively motivated semantics of idioms with their pragmatic potential and cultural connotations (Teliya, 2005). The first goal is to classify the types of variation among anthroponymic constituents. The second one is to determine the influence of certain types of variation on the semantic identity. Related to this is the third goal: to qualify figurative units as variants of one unit or as autonomous ones.

The aim of the study is to analyze the phenomenon of phraseological variation on the material of phraseological units with anthroponymic components, to identify the types of variation of anthroponyms within a phraseological unit, to describe the usual and occasional nature of changes and determine the boundaries between variants and autonomous units.

Methods and materials

While analysing the phraseological material, the present authors were implementing a number of methods and techniques, namely: the analytical-descriptive (observation, interpretation and generalization) method; the method of discovering cause-effect relations and intentions; semantic analysis of definitions in phraseological dictionaries edited by Aleksandr Molotkov, Nikolai Shansky, Alina Melevich, Valeriy Mokienko, Veronika Teliya, Anatoly Baranov, Dmitrij Dobrovolskij, etc.; contextual analysis combined with the corpus-based approach, as applied in works on Russian phraseology and phraseography. Elements of linguacultural analysis and comparative analysis were used when describing foreign-language material. The methodological basis of the study was the method of semantic application, which allows, through a sequential comparison of the semantic components of the phraseological units, to determine the degree of their semantic proximity and, on this basis, to consider them as variants or autonomous units. According to Vlas Zhukov, variation implies formal and substantive variation within a single unit; interchangeability of the components is allowed, provided the semantic identity of the variants is preserved.² The ideographic principle was applied in collecting the material.

² Zhukov, V.P. (1986). *Russian phraseology: A textbook for universities and colleges* (pp. 36–37). Moscow: Vysshaya Shkola Publ. (In Russ.)

Due to the variety of changes caused by the specific type of variation in the phraseological unit, the types of variation should involve a specific case study. The case in question comprises figurative units with an anthroponymic constituent (idioms, collocations, periphrastic expressions, quotation and sayings, culturally laden phrases, etc.). The study includes Russian phraseological expressions compiled in the dictionary³ whose definitions and lexicographical descriptions are used extensively in this paper. The paper also covers similar processes of variation of phraseological expressions in other Slavic (Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian), Germanic (English) and Celtic (Irish) languages.

The main hypothesis of the study is that the features of variation of the anthroponymic constituent in figurative units are an important factor for determining semantic identity. Besides, types of variation of anthroponymic constituents in Russian figurative units correlate with the phraseology of other languages.

Results

The study of the material allows to distinguish different types of variation and classify the material into the following groups: 1) variation in forms (onym/personal name forms); 2) lexical variation (onym/onym; onym/appellative; no lexical variation of an onym); 3) syntactic variation.

The analysis of the impact of certain changes on the semantic identity of phraseological units allows to determine their status as variants or autonomous units. In general, the study shows that anthroponyms in phraseological units of different types are representative for describing the phenomenon of phraseological variation. The identified types of variation of the anthroponymic constituent may form the basis for classifying types of variation of figurative units with anthroponymic constituents in different languages.

Variation in form is expressed in phonetic, word-formation, morphological, structural variation of personal name, as well as in the mechanical substitution of personal name/appellative personal name, often associated with the customary replacement of the personal name form in the genitive case with the possessive form. The variation of personal name forms (anthroponyms, culturally laden names and quasi-onyms) within phraseological expressions does not violate semantic identity, all changes in this group are qualified as variants. Lexical variation implies substitutions onym/onym; onym/appellative. The first scenario means substitution of phonetically and rhythmically similar personal names; besides, lexical variation of personal names includes rare cases of lexico-morphological variation, when the difference between a male and a female name is neutralized when they are replaced. In rare cases of replacing an onym (personal name) with an appellative, the semantic identity of a figurative unit is not violated if the structural-semantic, figurative and referential unity is preserved. More often than not, replacing a personal name with an appellative means breaking the semantic identity, which results not in variants but rather in autonomous figurative units. The absence of lexical variation occurs among culturally laden names, which add overtones of cultural significance to their meanings. Therefore, figurative units with

³ Kovshova, M.L. (2019). *Dictionary of proper names in Russian riddles, proverbs, sayings and idioms*. Moscow: LENAND Publ. (In Russ.)

culturally laden names should be recognized as autonomous units. There is also no lexical variation in the units whose inner form is motivated by the etymology of the self-descriptive (or “telling”) personal names, including the facetious ones. Syntactic variation is associated with changes in the order of personal names, links between them, and quantitative changes. The latter is reflected in the images and structure, violates semantic identity and warps the phraseological unit. There is a tendency to expand the phraseological unit by adding equistructural links and simultaneously replacing the anthroponymic constituents with a relevant ad hoc name. In this case, phraseological units begin to converge with phraseological schemes: the idiom is placed in a context, where one of its constituents is replaced by a filler that can contain a contextually conditioned name.

Discussion

Formal variation

Onym/forms of the onym. Phonetic variation of the personal name reflects the peculiarities of borrowed personal names, which affects their pronunciation and spelling but does not break the semantic identity. This is typical for bookish figurative units, cf.: *kak Krěz* <*Krez*> *bogat, byt' bogatym, razbogatet'* ‘to be or become fabulously rich’ (literally “to be as rich as Croesus”). Phonetic variation of the personal name is also found in regional and substandard figurative units, which are characterized by dialectal and folk forms of personal names. Cf.: *Nikolaevskaja (Mikolaevskaja) devka* <*devuška, deva*> ‘unmarried old woman; an old maid’.

Variation of word formation does not break the semantic identity of the figurative unit but may add expressiveness by means of affixes; cf: *Matrëna* <*Matrëha*> *okorâchila* ‘no desire to work, to move or to do anything.’ Basically, this type of personal name variation is characteristic of regional, substandard, and obsolete units, such as *čitat'* <*zadavat'*> *Hrapnickogo* <*Hrapovickogo*> ‘to sleep soundly’ (based on the similarity with *hrapet'* ‘to snore’), <*kak*> *Gog i Magog* <*Goga i Magoga*> ‘wild terrifying men; brigands, criminals.’ Cf.: “ – Stal'nye gunny! – My polčiša Goga i Magoga! – skazal Atamanov i v ârosti prošeptal: – Ot nas nigde spasen'â net” (“The Huns of steel!” “We are the hordes of Gog and Magog!”), Atamanov said and then whispered in fury, “There is no salvation from us anywhere”) (Vasily Aksenov. *Mysterious Passion*. 2007).

The variation of the onym/its appellative form does not violate the semantic identity of the phraseological form. The appellativization of the personal name signifies typification and generalization of persons or circumstances that took place. Cf.: (*kak*) *Ivan* <*ivan*>, *ne pomnâsij rodstva* <*rodstva ne pomnâsij*> (literally “the Ivan who does not remember his kinship”); Russian *lukullof* <*Lukullov*> *pir* and English *Lucullan* <*Lucullean*> *feast*; Russian *pirrova* <*Pirrova*> *pobeda* (the counterpart of *Pyrrhic victory*); *potëmkinskie* <*Potëmkinskie*> *derevni* (ditto, *Potemkin villages*); *koleso Fortuny* <*fortuny*> (ditto, *wheel of fortune*); (*kak*) *Košej Bessmertnyj* <*kašej; košej bessmertnyj*> ‘1. (to behave) fiercely and avariciously; 2. a malignant reactionary; 3. a stingy person; 4. a gaunt or emaciated person, almost skeletal’ (literally “like Koschei the Deathless”, after the archetypal undead antagonist in Russian folklore), etc.

Changes in the structure of the name also do not break the semantic identity of the phraseological expressions. This type of variation is expressed in the replacement of a one-member structure (personal name) with a two-member one (personal name + patronymic) or a three-member one (personal name + patronymic + surname), as well as in the variation of forms of compound names with identifiers written separately or with a hyphen. Cf.: *kondraška* <*Kondraška, Kondrat, Kondratij, kondratij, Kondratij Ivanovič*> *hvatil/hvatit* ‘to die suddenly, to pass away’ (literally “Kondratij [the folk rendition of the name of St. Quadratus] grabbed smb.”); *Akakij Akakievič (Bašmačkin)* ‘a petty servant; a humble wretch’ (after the protagonist of *The Overcoat* by Nikolai Gogol); *Maša-rasterāša* <*Maša rasterāša*> ‘a person who constantly loses something.’ As a rule, the structural variation of the personal name is accompanied by the variation of the personal name with its appellative form. Cf.: *Tētâ Motâ* <*tētâ-motâ*> ‘1. a foolish self-confident woman, who may be impertinent, insolent; 2. an unremarkable woman of middle age and older’ (literally “Auntie Motya”). Consider several examples from the Russian National Corpus (RNC): a. *Každyâ “tētâ Motâ” blûla avtoritet svoego zavedeniâ... Inogda daže kazalos’, čto nikakoe učreždenie nemyslimo bez fanernyh peregorodok i kur'erš, i tol'ko pri naličii kur'erš i fanery učreždenie rascvetaet, kipit klûčom, i rabota ego podvergaetsâ vsestoronnemu ob-suaždeniû... (Every “Auntie Motya” cherished the authority of her establishment... Sometimes it would even seem that there was no institution without plywood screens and women couriers, and with the couriers and plywood around would an institution blossom and thrive and its work be subjected to comprehensive discussion...)* (Konstantin Paustovsky. *A Tale of Life. Time of Great Expectations*. 1958). b. *Odnaždy načal'stvo iz Irkutska priehalo, i naši tēti-moti rešili v grâz' licom ne udarit'* (One day the big bosses came from Irkutsk, and our auntie-motyas decided they could not lose face) (Yevgeny Yevtushenko. *Good Spots for Gathering Berries*. 1982).

Note that appellativization more often occurs when the constituents are euphonic and aligned by metre and rhyme; cf.: *pri care Kosare* <*pri care kosare*> ‘a long time ago, no one knows when’ (literally “under Czar Haymaker”); *âdrēna Matrēna* <*âdrēna-matrēna, âdrēna matrēna*>! ‘a euphemism for an expletive used in indignation’, etc. (see also: Mokienko, 2018).

The morphological variation manifests itself in the use of the plural form of the name; the replacement of the number forms does not violate the semantic identity, but shows the prevalence of such behavior, makes it a social phenomenon. Cf.: (*kak*) *Ivan* <*ivan*>, *ne pomnâšij rodstva* <*rodstva ne pomnâšij*> ‘1. Obsolete. A vagabond, a wanderer, who has lost touch with the past, who has forgotten his native home, his loved ones; 2. Elevated or ironical. An ungrateful person having no respect for their family, unaware of their people’s traditions; 3. Elevated or ironical. A person of no principles, without commitment or a sense of duty.’ The unit arose from an old legal term used to record in documents the names of fugitive convicts, serfs. Consider the plural variants found in the RNC: a. *A u nas, pohože, celaâ generaciâ opredelilas' – genetičeskie “Ivany, ne pomnâšie rodstva”* (And we, it seems, have a whole generation of genetic “Ivans who do not remember their kinship”) (Aleksandr Rozenbaum. *Bull Terrier*. 1987–1998). b. *Nikto ničego ne znaet – komu prinadležali eti zemli, kto čego stroil, delal. Živut Ivany, ne pom-*

nâšie rodstva (Nobody knows a thing: who owned these lands, who built what, who made it. There live the Ivans who do not remember their kinship) (Daniil Granin. Bison. 1987).

In rare cases, there is such a kind of morphological variation of personal names as the use in different case constructions in varying direct and indirect forms of comparison; cf.: *kak Diogen (v bočke) <Diogenom v bočke> čuvstvovat' sebâ; žit', sidet'* 'to feel, live, or sit 1. cramped, uncomfortable; 2. detached from everyday life, everyday worries' (literally "to feel/live/sit like Diogenes in his barrel"). The most common type of morphological variation of personal names in figurative units is the replacement of the genitive form of the personal name in the genitive case with the possessive form. Cf.: *nit' Ariadny <Ariadnina; ariadnina nit'> (Ariadne's thread); poceluj Iudy <iudin poceluj> 'ostentatious friendliness concealing treachery' (the Kiss of Judas)*. In restricted collocations, the possessive form can change gender. This change depends directly on the genus of the accompanying word, essentially a bound variation; cf.: *gerkulesova rabota <gerkulesov trud> (literally "Hercules' work"); Mafusailov vek <Mafusailovy; mafusailovy leta> (literally "Methuselah's age/years")*, etc.

Variation of personal name forms does not break the semantic identity of phraseological units, and all formal changes of figurative units should be qualified as variants.

Lexical variation

Onym/onym. As for lexical variation, the anthroponymic substitute does not violate the semantic identity if the variants follow the same structural pattern and the choice of the personal name is determined by its phonetic characteristics; a personal name is easily inserted into a figurative unit, preserving its metre and rhythm. This kind of onym variation is characteristic of proverbs (Kovshova, 2021a), having a strong connection to regional and substandard phraseology. Cf.: *Mit'koj <Kut'koj, Min'koj, Fil'koj> zvali* 'smb. suddenly disappeared, disappeared' (literally "was called Mit'ka <Kut'ka, Min'ka, Fil'ka>"); *Maška <Dun'ka> s trudodnâmi* 'an industrious woman actively trying to get a good income' (literally "Mashka <Dun'ka> with workdays"). The onym/onym lexical substitution serves the purpose of this component in phraseological expressions, which is to create a generalized type, to typify circumstances. Cf. English *every Tom, Dick and <or> Harry <Harriet> 'ordinary people who do not have any special skills or qualities;*⁴ Macedonian *Slezi Kurto da se kači Murto* 'seedno e koj ke bide, dvajcata se isti, ke ne promena' (Veljanovska, Mirčevska-Boševa, 2021: 125) ('no matter who is: both the same, nothing will change,' literally "Get down, Kurto, so that Murto may sit down"); Irish *Mar a thioctas na mná abhaile thioctaidh Nuala* 'about a woman coming late,' literally. "As women come home, so will Nuala."

The lexico-morphological variants, or substitutions of masculine and feminine onyms, also represent the typical function of personal names. Cf. *Tûha, Matûha i Kolupaj <kolupaj> s bratom* 'random, insignificant people, rabble' (literally "Tyukha, Matyukha and Go-Peeling with his brother"); *Van'ka s Man'koj da kolupaj s bratom* 'insignificant and disrespected people' ("Van'ka with Man'ka and

⁴ HarperCollins Publishers. (1997). *Collins COBUILD Dictionary of Idioms* (p. 394). London.

go-peeling with his brother”). These substitutions cannot be recognized as essential in the conceptual-denotative and in the conceptual-logical sense, since the limit of variation is considered to be the opposition of the signs that distinguish the meanings. The masculine/feminine characteristics of personal names do not appear distinguishing, since the semantic structure of phraseological units involves denotation for common features, the routine course of human life, etc.⁵ Euphemistic figurative units should also be regarded as lexical-morphological variants, cf.: *Galina Borisovna*. Jargon. Euphemistic ‘the KGB’; *Grigorij Borisovič*. Jargon. Euphemistic ‘the KGB.’ The variability is expressed in the personal names themselves (*Galina* and *Grigorij*) and in the morphemic indicators of the patronymic names. A controversial case is the interpretation of idioms with gender-inverted names: they can be interpreted both as variants and as synonyms. In Macedonian, for instance, women who are believed to masculine appearance and/or behaviour are called *maška Mara / Maškamara* ‘male Mara’, *maška Petra* ‘male Petra’ (usually about girls), whereas an effeminate man is called *ženski Petko* ‘feminine Petko.’ Such idioms are identical structurally and semantically, and in the case of *Petra* and *Petko* also etymologically.

Onym/appellative. Replacing the personal name with the appellative does not break the semantic identity of the figurative unit. If the conceptual and logical plane is retained, the resulting underlying metaphor stays the same; cf. *Vot tebe Hristos <bog>!* ‘I swear, I assure’ (literally “Here is Christ <God> to you!”); Irish *A fhad is a bheidh Dia ina Dhia agus Peadar ina chathaoir / Chùns a bheidh Dia thuas agus Peadar i gcathaoir* ‘forever’ (literally “As long as God is God and Peter is in his chair;” “As long as God is upstairs and Peter is in the chair”);⁶ Serbian *dospeti kao Pilat u Vjeruja <Veruvanje> / naći se kao Pilat u Vjeruja* and Croatian *dospjeti <upasti> u što kao Pilat u Vjerovanje <Kredo> / naći kao Pilat u Vjerovanju <Kredu>* ‘get somewhere, to find oneself somewhere by chance, without any effort, without merit, or through no fault of one’s own; to get smth. unexpectedly, unanticipatedly’ (literally “to get like Pilate in the Creed; to be like Pilate in the Creed”) (Kuznetsova, 2016: 163–164). Nevertheless, dictionaries prefer to describe phrases like *Vot tebe Hristos <bog>!* in separate dictionary entries as autonomous,⁷ and there are reasons for this: personal name or appellative accentuate certain semantic features, create expressiveness by different means.

Absence of lexical variation of the onym. Culturally laden personal names do not vary, as each of them is associated with its own history. They have inherent cultural meanings, which formed the basis of motivation of phraseological units and are actualized in semantics in the form of cultural connotations. One cannot replace personal names in the units like *obrašat'sâ iz Savla v Pavla* (literally “to turn from Saul into Paul”); *pet' Lazarâ <lazarâ>* (“to sing [the canticle about] Lazarus”); *vesy Femidy* (“Themis’ scales”); *kak Otello revnivyj* (“as jealous as Othello”); *Montekki i Kapuletti* (“the Montagues and the Capulets”); *ten' otca*

⁵ Mokienko, V.M., & Nikitina, T.G. (2008). *The unabridged dictionary of Russian sayings*. Moscow: OLMA Publ. P. 388. (In Russ.)

⁶ Ó Máille, T.S. (2010). *Seanfhocla Chonnacht* (p. 304). Dublin: Cois Life.

⁷ Mokienko, V.M., & Nikitina, T.G. (2008). *The unabridged dictionary of Russian sayings*. Moscow: OLMA Publ. (In Russ.)

Gamleta (“the Ghost of Hamlet’s father”); *kak papa Karlo rabotat* (“to work like Papa Carlo [an impoverished woodcarver similar to Gepetto, a character from *The Golden Key, or the Adventures of Buratino* by Alexey Tolstoy”); *bal'zakovskij vozrast* (“Balzac’s age”), etc. Cf. idioms in other languages: English “*Hamlet*” without the prince / without Hamlet ‘a performance or event taking place without the principal actor’;⁸ Macedonian and Serbian *Majka Teresa* (“Mother Theresa”), *Monteki i Kapuleti*, etc. Each precedent personal name represents a concentrated cultural text linked to a myth, a literary plot, a historical event. The culturally laden name condenses the semantics of a figurative unit with its cultural meanings and predetermines its stylistic register. If figurative units are structurally and semantically similar but contain different culturally laden names with different etymology, they cannot be considered variants of one unit. For example, the phrase *beden kak Ir* (literally “as poor as Arnaeus/Irus”) is based on a character in Homer’s *Odyssey*, whereas the similar figurative unit *beden kak Iov* (“as poor as Job”) is biblical in its origin, going back to the Book of Job in the Old Testament. Both phraseological units describe abject poverty. Both are obsolete and are labeled “bookish” in dictionaries. Yet, the culturally laden names create different images and accentuate different connotations as they come from different cultural strata. Figurative units whose etymology differs while going back to Greek and Roman mythology should not be considered variants either; cf. *strela* <*strely*> *Kupidona* ‘love’ (“Cupid’s arrow/arrows”) and *strela* <*strely*> *Amura* ‘love’ (“Amor’s arrow/arrows”). Possible substitutions of such units in speech are due not to the variability of personal names, but to the synonymy of phraseological units. Phrases that invoke different biblical images should also be considered autonomous and regarded as synonyms; cf. English <*as*> *old as Methuselah* and <*as*> *old as Adam*. According to the biblical tradition, Adam lived 930 years, a little less than Methuselah.

Figurative units with culturally laden and substandard constituents are also autonomous. As a rule, they differ in usus/occasionality; cf.: *Malan'iny sbory* and *Afrosin'iny sbory* ‘long and hectic preparations’ (“Melania’s preparations” and “Euphrosyne’s preparations” respectively). *Kak na Malan'inu* <*malan'inu*> *svad'bu sobirat'sâ* ‘to have lengthy and unnecessary fussy preparations for smth.’ (“gather as if for Malanya’s <malanya’s> wedding”). In the old days, on the night of December, 25 (before the Russian calendar reform of 1918), from St. Melania’s Day to St. Basil’s Day, a large amount of food was prepared; the revelry was called *Malan'ina svad'ba* ‘Malanya’s wedding.’ Another example is *Foma neveruûšij* <*nevernyj*; *Nevernyj*> ‘a person who is difficult to convince; who stubbornly refuses to see the obvious’ (literally “Thomas the Unbeliever <unfaithful; Unfaithful>”, cf. *doubting Thomas*). The expression goes back to the New Testament, where Thomas was not with other apostles when Jesus appeared to them, and was unwilling to believe in the resurrection of Christ. In the vicinity of Pskov, there exists a similar regional figurative unit: “*Antrop neveruûšij*. Psk. ‘o nedobrom, nečestnom ili nedoverčivom čeloveke’ ”⁹ (*Antrop (Anthropos) the unbeliever*.

⁸ Farlex. (2015). *Farlex dictionary of idioms*. Available December 10, 2021, from <https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/Hamlet+without+the+prince>

⁹ Mokienco, V.M., & Nikitina, T.G. (2008). *The unabridged dictionary of Russian sayings* (p. 18.). Moscow: OLMA Publ. (In Russ.)

Pskov. Referring to an unkind, dishonest or mistrusting person’). The phrase has a different and generic meaning, motivated by the etymology of the personal name *Anthropos* ‘man, person, human.’ Thus, the entire phrase literally means “an unbelieving person.” Despite semantic and structural similarities, these figurative units are autonomous. Both the culturally laden name and the substandard vernacular name encode a generalized type, but in different ways, and their mechanical replacement is impossible; cf. *Maša* vs *Mariâ*: one can say *kak umnaâ Maša* ‘in a smart way’ (“like a smart Masha”) but not **umnaâ Mariâ* ‘a smart Mary.’ Consider the dichotomy of *Mara* and *Marija* in Southern Slavic languages: Macedonian *bušava Mara* ‘a disheveled woman,’ *let Mara* ‘frivolous woman’ and *se pravi sveta Deva Marija* ‘pretends innocence.’ Cf. Irish *Muire* ‘Virgin Mary’ and *Máire*: *Dia is Muire dhuit* ‘a reply to a greeting’ (literally “God and the Virgin Mary be with you”) vs. *Inis do Mháire i gcogair é is inseoidh Máire don phobal é* ‘tell it to Máire in whisper, and Máire will tell it to the people.’ However, a folk blessing from Connacht (West Ireland) has the Virgin Mary referred to as *Máire*: *Bail agus beannacht ort, agus Máire ag breathnú ort*, literally “Welfare and blessing are upon the, and Mary looks upon thee.”¹⁰

Anthroponyms (primarily quasi-onyms) do not vary if the figurative unit’s inner form is motivated by their etymology, which may be based on a pun. Such figurative units are numerous (see: *The Unabridged Dictionary of Russian Sayings* by Valeriy Mokienko & Tatiana Nikitina and Maria Kovshova’s *Dictionary of Proper Names in Russian Riddles, Proverbs, Sayings, and Idioms*. However, most of them are occasional in nature, e.g. *Ivaško Hmelnitskij* ‘wine, inebriation’ (based on the similarity of the last name *Khmelnitsky* and *hmel* ‘hops’); *Galâ prišla* ‘to start having hallucinations’ (literally “Galya has come,” with the personal name being similar to the word *gallûcinaciâ* ‘hallucination’), etc.

Syntactic variation

Syntactic variation comprises changes of the word order within a figurative unit, different forms of conjunction between anthroponyms, and a quantitative change in personal names.

Cf. the change of the word order in the idiom *pet’/ zapet’ Lazarâ* <*lazarâ*> ‘to complain, desperately ask for help’ as found in the RNC: a. – Ty mne, Čerepanov, *lazarâ ne poj!* – kričal v nervnoj vzvinčennosti Deev (“Don’t you ‘sing Lazarus’ to me, Cherepanov,” cried Deyev in nervous agitation) (Yuri Bondarev. *Hot Snow*. 1969). b. Vot zastavât tebâ čistit’ nužniki, *zapoeš’ togda Lazarâ!* (They’ll make you clean outhouses, “then you’ll sing Lazarus”) (Kim Balkov. *Balalaika*. 2013).

Along with the change in the word order there is a variation of connectors between the constituents; cf.: *Lisa Alisa i kot Bazilio* <*kot Bazilio i Lisa Alisa; lisa Alisa s kotom Bazilio*> ‘hitrye mošenniki’ (‘cunning crooks’)¹¹ (literally “Fox Alice and Cat Basilio <the cat Basilio and the fox Alice; Fox Alice with Cat Basilio>,” based on the characters from Alexey Tolstoy’s *The Golden Key*).

¹⁰ Ó Máille, T.S. (2010). *Seanfhocla Chonnacht* (p. 240). Dublin: Cois Life.

¹¹ Kovshova, M.L. (2019). *Dictionary of proper names in Russian riddles, proverbs, sayings, and idioms* (p. 268). Moscow: LENAND Publ. (In Russ.)

Quantitative changes lead to the expansion or contraction of the figurative unit, influencing its imagery and structure.

Expansion occurs through the addition of equal structural links; the added components are enclosed in brackets or parentheses; cf.: *vrode Volodi (, napodobie <(i) na maner> Kuz'my) (, a zovut Akul'koj)* ‘an ironic and mocking response to the interlocutor’s uncertain assumptions’ (literally “kind of like Volodya and in the manner of Kuzma, but named Akulka”). Quantitative change of personal names is typical for highly informal and substandard phraseology, but is also noted in common and neutral units; cf. *s <ot> Adama (i Evy) načat'sâ* (“to begin with Adam (and Eve)”); *ot Adama (i Evy) proizojti* (“to come from Adam (and Eve)”); *deti Adama (i Evy)* (“children of Adam (and Eve)”); *v kostûme Adama (i Evy)* (“in Adam’s / Adam and Eve’s suit”).

Reduction and/or deformation of a figurative unit can be caused by the impromptu replacement of a culturally laden name with a relevant personal name. Such changes usually concern phraseological units formed on the basis of popular quotations such as *a Vas, Štirlic, â poprošu ostat'sâ!* ‘a request not to leave’ (literally “now, as for you, Stierlitz, I would ask you to stay,” a catchphrase from “The Seventeen Moments of Spring,” the Soviet TV series directed by Tatiana Lioznova). Consider the examples found in the RNC: a. No kogda vse vyhodili iz priemnoj, Czân Czèmin' neožidanno vzâl menâ za lokot' i skazal po-russki: “*A vas, Štirlic, â poprošu ostat'sâ!*” (But when everyone was leaving the reception room, Jiang Zemin suddenly took me by the elbow and said in Russian: “Now, as for you, Stierlitz, I would ask you to stay!”) (Vsevolod Ovchinnikov. *Reflections of a Wanderer*. 2012). b. Rektor obvēl vzglâdom svoih zamestitelej. – Idite rabotajte. *A vas, – on vdrug široko ulybnulsâ, vspomniv frazu iz “Semnadcati mgnovenij vesny,” – a vas, Aleksandr Antonovič, â poprošu ostat'sâ* (The rector looked around at his deputies. “Go to work. Now, as for you,” he suddenly smiled widely, remembering the line from “The Seventeen Moments of Spring,” “As for you, Alexander Antonovich, I would ask you to stay”) (Andrei Zhitkov. *The Academic Chair*. 2000).

Due to the substitution of the personal name and the actualization of the statement, usually in media texts, there is a partial deformation of the phraseological unit. Consider the idiom *vsë smešalos' v dome Oblonskih* ‘total confusion, chaos’ (literally “Everything was in confusion in the Oblonskys’ house,” the first line of Leo Tolstoy’s “Anna Karenina”) and a few examples of its usage in the RNC: a. O, sūžet! *Vsë smešalos' v dome makedonskih!* No vernëmsâ k našim baranam (What a plot! Everything was in confusion in the Macedonians’ house. But let’s return to our mutttons) (Komsomol'skaâ Pravda. 2012.11.22). b. Koroče, *vsë smešalos' v dome G-20* (In short, everything was in confusion in the G-20’s house) (Izvestiâ. 2010.06.21).

The replacement of the components and the extension of the unit also involves impromptu and ad hoc anthroponyms; cf. the RNC examples of the use of the idiom *Ivanov, Petrov, Sidorov <Ivanov-Petrov-Sidorov>* ‘anybody, anyone and everyone’: a. I tut pri lûbom ministre oborony – *Serdûkov li èto, Ivanov, Petrov ili Šojgu, – â uveren, čto vse èti napravleniâ ostanutsâ prioritetnymi i dal'se* (I believe that these trends will stay prioritized under any defence minister,

be it Serdyukov, Ivanov, Petrov, or Shoigu) (Komsomol'skaâ Pravda. 2013.03.05). b. *Ivanov, Petrov, Sidorov, Pokobat'ko* prihodât i uvol'nâûtsâ, smenââ drug druga, no ostaëtsâ funkciâ, kotoruû oni vypolnâli!.. (Ivanov, Petrov, Sidorov, and Pokobatko come and resign succeeding each other, but the function they were performing still remains) (Vladimir Korner. *The Mole of History, or Revolution in the S = F Republic*. 1979). c. *Pavlov, Rudnik, Ivanov-Petrov-Sidorov – lûboj iz nih, esli on âvlâetsâ abonentom, moţet naţat' knopku* (Pavlov, Rudnik, Ivanov-Petrov-Sidorov – any of them, if they are a subscriber, can push the button) (Aleksandra Marinina. *A Confluence of Circumstances*. 1992).

A figurative unit deformed in this manner becomes quite close to a phraseo-schema as defined by Dmitry Shmelev (Shmelev, 1977: 327–330). Cf. Wolfgang Mieder's observation: "...certain fundamental proverb structures exist that have been the basis for dozens of proverbs, as, for example, 'Where there's X, there's Y,' 'No X without Y,' 'Like X, like Y,' 'One X does not make a Y,' and so on" (Mieder, 1993: 9).

Conclusion

The research has shown that in figurative units of different types the anthroponym is a representative component for studying the phraseological variability. A change of the anthroponymic constituent, which is usually the key to the figurative meaning of a figurative unit, as well as the anchor in their structure, has to be factored in while determining the variation of phraseological units. Analysing Russian language units and examples from other languages, the following types of anthroponym variation were identified: formal variation, lexical variation, and syntactic variation.

As a result, the classification of anthroponymic variation in figurative units as a result enables to determine their status as variants or autonomous units and can serve as a basis for the classification of types of variation of phraseological units with anthroponymic components in different languages and to identify common and specific in variation of figurative units with anthroponymic constituents.

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Вариативность русских фразеологизмов с компонентами-антропонимами

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Аннотация. Тема вариативности – одна из самых востребованных в области фразеологии, поскольку соотношение вариативности и устойчивости – существенная характеристика фразеологизмов как воспроизводимых языковых выражений. Актуальность исследования обусловлена необходимостью изучать тенденции изменений фразеологизмов, в том числе с учетом новых подходов в систематизации этих изменений, для чего нужно разрабатывать методы и приемы анализа различных видов вариативности. Цель – на материале фразеологизмов с компонентами-антропонимами проанализировать феномен фразеологической вариативности, выделить виды вариативности антропонимов в составе фразеологизма, описать узуальный и окказиональный характер изменений, определить границы между вариантами и автономными единицами. При помощи аналитико-описательного и корпусного методов, семантического анализа словарных дефиниций и контекстуального анализа обосновывается положение о роли антропонимического компонента в семантике и структуре фразеологизмов и значимости варьирования данного компонента для изменения фразеологизма и его определения как варианта или автономной единицы. Отмечается узуальный и окказиональный характер варьирования. Выявлены и подробно рассмотрены следующие виды вариативности компонента-антропонима: вариативность форм (оним или его формы); лексическая вариативность (оним/оним; оним/апеллятив; отсутствие лексической вариативности онима); синтаксическая вариативность. Первый вид представлен фонетической, словообразовательной, морфологической, структурной вариативностью онима. Лексическая вариативность проявляется, как правило, в субституции созвучных имен, в том числе имен с гендерной инверсией. Синтаксическая вариативность, связанная с количественным изменением онимов, приводит к образным и структурно-семантическим изменениям, модификации фразеологизма, его сближению с фразеосхемами. Анализ воздействия тех или иных изменений компонента-антропонима на семантическое тождество фразеологизма позволяет определить статус фразеологизмов как вариантов или автономных единиц. Показано, что антропоним в составе фразеологизмов разных типов является репрезентативным компонентом в описании феномена фразеологического варьирования. В перспективе выявленные виды вариативности компонента-антропонима могут лечь в основу классификации видов вариативности русских фразеологизмов, а также послужить основой для выявления специфики варьирования фразеологизмов в других языках.

Ключевые слова: русские фразеологизмы, варьирование, синонимия, антропонимы, имена собственные, апеллятивы, автономные единицы, прецедентные имена

История статьи: поступила в редакцию 12.12.2021; принята к печати 18.03.2022.

Для цитирования: Ковшова М.Л., Дронов П.С. Вариативность русских фразеологизмов с компонентами-антропонимами // Русистика. 2022. Т. 20. № 3. С. 269–283. <http://doi.org/10.22363/2618-8163-2022-20-3-269-283>