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Problems of Commercialisation and Commercial Nomination of the Urbanonymic Landscape of Almaty

Kyzdarkhan K. Rysbergen[1] [ID], **Dana M. Pashan[1]** [ID], **Didar A. Sadyk[2]** [ID] ✉

[1]Baitursynuly Institute of Linguistics of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, *Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan*
[2]Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, *Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan*
✉ didarsadyk2@gmail.com

Abstract. The authors conduct a critical analysis of the process of commercialization and commercial nomination in the linguistic landscape of Almaty, the largest megalopolis in Kazakhstan. Two sets of current toponymic problems of the linguistic urban landscape are considered: critical analysis of geospace commercialisation process, megalopolis toponymic policy, where toponym acts as a "commodity"; and sociolinguistic features of ergonym formation, linguocreative approach to the nomination process as a part of modern naming of the megalopolis linguistic landscape. These two main aspects of the study are aimed at revealing the polylingual, socio-cultural image of the city, at matching the linguistic picture of the world of the citizens, at defining the image strategy in the organisation of urbanonymic space of the metropolis. The issue of urbanonymic terminology also remains relevant, in this regard the study deals with the problem of correspondence/ non-conformity of English and Russian terminology in this area, with some caution it is proposed to adapt the international terminological space in the field of onomastics. The analysis of the linguistic identity of oikodomonyms (name of residential complexes) and ergonyms (brand-name) confirms the hypothesis of a growing trend of the urban landscape westernisation, which is of concern in view of the increasing globalisation processes that minimise the national-cultural identity of urbanonyms. As a result of the study the problem areas in the toponymic policy of the metropolis were revealed, the prospects for improving the regulatory aspects of the activities, naming technologies and branding of commercial organisations, companies were identified, alternative solutions were proposed, which can be further applied as guidelines in the toponymic activities in other regions of Kazakhstan.

Keywords: linguistic landscape, toponymic policy, urbanonym, oikodomonym, ergonym, commercial nomination, naming, humanitarian geography

Проблемы коммерциализации и коммерческой номинации урбанонимического ландшафта города Алматы

К.К. Рысберген[1] 🄳, **Д.М. Пашан**[1] 🄳, **Д.А. Садык**[2] 🄳 ✉

¹Институт лингвистики им. А. Байтурсынулы, *Алматы, Республика Казахстан*
²Казахский национальный университет имени аль-Фараби, *Алматы, Республика Казахстан*
✉ didarsadyk2@gmail.com

Аннотация. Авторы проводят критический анализ процесса коммерциализации и коммерческой номинации в лингвистическом ландшафте Алматы, крупнейшего мегаполиса Казахстана. Рассматриваются два актуальных топонимических аспекта лингвистического городского ландшафта: коммерциализация геопространства в аспекте топонимической политики мегаполиса, где топоним выступает в качестве «товара»; особенности образования эргонимов при лингвокреативном подходе к процессу номинации как части современного нейминга лингвистического ландшафта мегаполиса, рассмотренные в рамках социолингвистического анализа. Исследование направлено на выявление полиязычного, социокультурного образа города, на соответствие новых названий языковой картине мира горожан, на определение имиджевой стратегии в организации урбанонимического пространства мегаполиса. Вопрос урбанонимической терминологии также остается актуальным, в связи с этим в исследовании рассматривается вопрос соответствия/несоответствия английской и русской терминологии рассматриваемой предметной области, с некоторой осторожностью предлагается принять международную терминологическую систему. Анализ языковой идентичности ойкодомонимов (название жилых комплексов) и эргонимов (название бренда) подтверждает гипотезу о усиливающейся тенденции вестернизации городского ландшафта, что вызывает озабоченность в связи с усиливающимися процессами глобализации, которые сводят к минимуму национально-культурную идентичность урбанонимов. В результате исследования были выявлены проблемные области в топонимической политике мегаполиса, определены перспективы совершенствования нормативных аспектов деятельности, технологий присвоения имен и брендинга коммерческих организаций, компаний, предложены альтернативные решения, которые в дальнейшем могут быть применены в качестве руководящих принципов в топонимической деятельности в других регионах Казахстана и странах.

Ключевые слова: лингвистический ландшафт, топонимическая политика, урбаноним, ойкодомоним, эргоним, коммерческая номинация, нейминг, гуманитарная география

Introduction

The linguistic landscape, the toponymic environment of a city is one of the main indicators and powerful factors influencing the formation of the linguistic culture, the linguistic identity of the population. Due to the deepening processes of geo-globalisation and increasing urbanisation, the toponymy of urban space, urbanonyms are becoming the object of stable interest of commercial structures and are becoming the object of intensive commercialisation. "Being a special class of toponyms and performing, like other toponyms, targeting and orienting functions, urbanonyms are closely connected with urban culture, with the appearance and arrangement of urban settlements, with peculiarities of socio-cultural values and norms that specify human interaction and ways of life in urban communities" [1]. In recent decades, the process of urbanisation has intensified in the post-Soviet space, and new political-economic, geo-globalisation realities are generating completely new types of nominations in the linguistic landscape of cities, structuring and transforming urban space in a new way.

The onomastic space of a modern city has a rather complex infrastructure and is not limited to names of streets, squares, parks, i.e. geographical objects having a linear, territorial extent, in onomastic terminology is called *hodonyms*, and the names of commercial objects are designated as *ergonyms*. The toponymic space of the city is filled with socially significant objects: cultural, educational, commercial, leisure and entertainment facilities, sports, various services, etc. All of them have spatial correlation, can be linked to certain urban topological landmarks, have a codified address, and are inscribed in the system of urban spatial coordinates [2–3].

One of the rapidly developing areas of Almaty's urban space is the construction of a large number of residential complexes, new cottage towns and townhouses, which are involved in the process of commercialisation. Intensive development of small and medium-sized business, capitalisation processes in the market economy of the city, have caused the emergence of a huge number of commercial enterprises of trade, various types of services, industries of entertainment, sports, education, etc., diversifying the cultural and linguistic repertoire, information and communication space of the linguistic landscape of Almaty.

Consequently, the formation and transformation of the modern urbanonymic system of a metropolis includes new image technologies, which involve changing patterns and stereotypes, the emergence of new cultural, social and economic realities, and the deepening of market relations require new approaches to the

organisation of urban space, its naming policy. Due to the active commercialisation of urban space in recent years, the problem of preserving the socio-cultural, linguistic, topographical, geolocation identity of inner-city sites has become acutely relevant. The relevance of the study lies in the need for toponymic systematisation, sociolinguistic description, and existing problems in the urbanonymic space of Almaty in a synchronic condition.

Materials and Methods

The material for the study included the names of residential complexes and ergonyms (names of objects represented in the urban space by the names of various firms, restaurant service enterprises, service industries (beauty salons, spas, leisure centres, saunas, etc.), names of shops, trade centres and shopping and entertainment complexes, cinemas, leisure and recreational facilities, etc.). Names of theatres, museums and exhibitions have also been collected, some of which are state-owned and not for commercial purposes, do not represent a massive list and are therefore not dealt with in the study. In order to write this study, among the whole body of material, the authors focused on the names of exclusively residential complexes and the names of the catering segment, restaurants, cafés and pubs, as they prevail over the other names in quantitative terms and make it possible to get a general idea, summarise the results and draw preliminary conclusions.

The basic empirical material was taken from the websites of the city of Almaty, namely the real estate website krisha.kz and the online search engine 2gis.ru, the list of "Companies of Almaty on the map, firms and organisations in Almaty" located at https://almaty.dmaps.ru and the catalogue of ergonyms collected on the basis of personal observations carried out by the authors of the study. On the basis of the empirical material collected, a database was created to develop a dictionary of urbanonyms of Almaty in the future.

In the process of the study the following methods were used: descriptive, involving the analysis of linguistic facts, as well as techniques of inventory, cataloguing, classification and systematisation, linguistic observation, interpretation and statistical method, which allowed to determine the linguistic composition, the quantitative ratio of urbanonyms (In Kazakh, English, Russian). Interpretive analysis has revealed the implicit pragmatics, the ambiguity in the semantics of some ergonyms.

Results

In the course of the study, the basic empirical material of about 2 thousand oikodomonyms, ergonyms, including the names of residential complexes (RC) — 467, 1424 ergonymic units, including 38 names of banks, 108 names of credit companies, 243 names of shopping malls, business centres, 75 exchange offices, 460 names of restaurants and 516 names of pre-school educational institutions were collected and analysed. The study does not take into account many names of hotels,

fitness centres and other sports clubs, etc., but they will also be included in the Dictionary of Urban Names of Almaty that is to be developed in the future.

Out of 2267 names of streets, squares and alleys in Almaty 1036 names belong to memorial, i.e. names of famous historical personalities, figures of world and domestic culture, literature and science, that is 45 % of megalopolis hodonymic corpus. The tendency to over-personalise urban toponymy was also characteristic in Soviet times for all the republics that were part of the Soviet Union, mainly after the leaders of the proletariat, the Bolsheviks. This trend is repeated, but already in the case of national heroes and famous personalities. Renomination, the assignment of new names to streets takes place in agreement with the Onomastic commission under the city administration. Consequently, this area of urban toponymy does not show serious irregularities in language policy and does not conflict with the image planning of the metropolis. Therefore, within the framework of this study hodonyms have not been considered, as they are the object of a separate study.

A linguistic analysis of the nature of the commercial property names of metropolis brand names by thematic groups was carried out, which made it possible to find out the percentage ratio for each segment of ergonomy. The chart below provides a statistical characteristic of the linguistic affiliation of the restaurant names in the city (Figure 1).

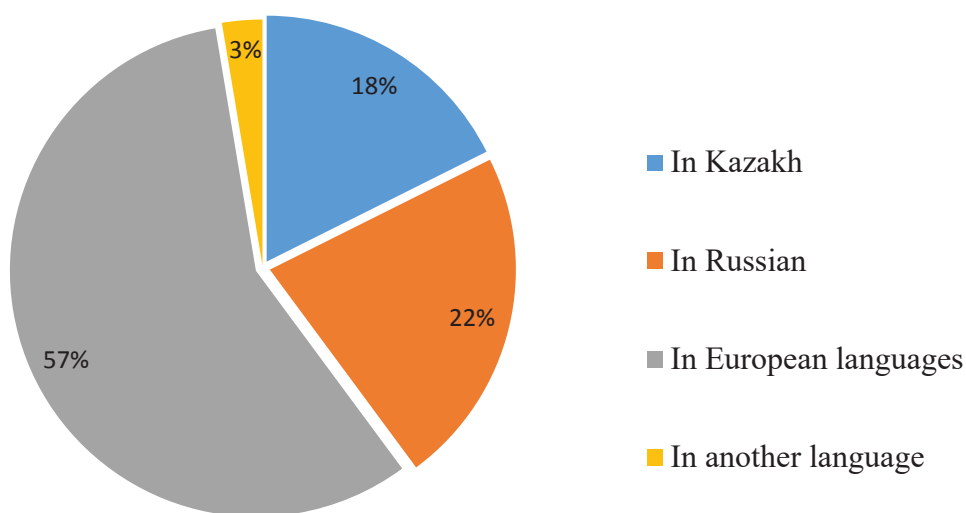## Language statistics for restaurant names in Almaty

Fig. 1. Language ratio statistics of the restaurant names of Almaty
Source: author's study.

The analysis of semantics, visual and graphic characteristics of oikodomonyms and ergonyms confirms the hypothesis about the necessity of naming expertise and improvement of the legal framework in the sphere of onomastic names

functioning in the linguistic landscape of the metropolis. The problems mentioned are substantiated in the discussion of the material, in the coverage of the naming problem and in the conclusion.

There are some differences and inconsistencies in the terminological apparatus of the English- and Russian-speaking segments of onomastic science. A well-established term of *urbanonym* in Russian-language onomastic literature, in the onomastics of the post-Soviet space denotes the names of inner-city objects. This term is a generic hyperonym with further detailing into *hodonyms* (names of streets, squares, i.e. objects with extension), *ergonyms* (names of commercial facilities, companies, institutions, trade objects, service facilities, etc.), *oikodomonyms* (names of detached buildings, constructions), etc.

"In English-speaking onomastics, it is customary to designate a particular class of proper names by a word combination: *personal name* (*anthroponym*), *company name* (*ergonym* in our tradition), etc." [2]. Indeed, in English there are no common generic concepts for both *urbanonyms* and *ergonyms*, but they can be conveyed by separate term combinations: *linguistic landscapes, street graphics, office name signs, office signs, building names, building signs, house names, door signs, shop/store names, shop/store signs,* etc.

It should be noted that the terms *urbanonym* and *ergonym*, denoting the names of inner-city objects, are also missing from the lists (Liste des mots-clefs en Onomastique) ICOS (International Council of Onomastic Sciences)[1]. However, the American Name Society (ANS) website in the section About Onomastics contains a definition of the term *Brand-name*, which also refers to an *ergonym*: "*Brand-name*: proper name for product, brand, or trademark. Sub-areas include the study of names for medicines, automobiles, foods and beverages, computer hardware and software, corporations, sports teams, etc. A brand name may also be called an "ergonym"[2]. Russian author N. Podolskaya gives the following definition: "Ergonyms are a category of onyms, the proper names of business associations of people, including unions, organizations, institutions, corporations, enterprises, societies, establishments"[3].

It should be noted that Kazakh onomastic terminology, as well as other national onomastics of the CIS countries, is generally oriented to the conceptual and terminological apparatus of Russian onomastics, based on the Greek-Latin vocabulary. There are undoubtedly positive aspects to this for research procedures, coordinating scientific information within such a wide area. National onomastics have their local equivalents for certain terms, but they are often of a descriptive,

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[1] *Liste des mots-clefs en Onomastique*. 2019. URL: https://icosweb.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ICOS-Terms-fr.pdf .

[2] About Onomastics. In: Site of The American Name Society URL: https://www.americannamesociety.org/names/ (accessed: 25.01.2023).

[3] Podolskaya, N.V. (1988). *Dictionary of Russian onomastic terminology*. Moscow: Nauka. (In Russ.).

expansive nature, so it is more comfortable for linguists to work with unified onomastic terms.

In addition to ergonyms, the urban space of the city also includes *hodonyms* — names of streets, squares, alleys, etc.; in English language sources, there is another term for this notion called *odonyms*. Since one of the main objects of this study is the names of residential complexes in Almaty, the term *oikodomonym* is used, in compliance with the Russian researchers: "The proper name of a building <…> *Origin*: Greek *οἴχοδομή* "building, structure" + onym" [4].

Although using this term to denote residential complexes, apartment blocks is somewhat controversial, as detached buildings also fall under oikodomonyms, for example, *Almaty International Airport, Republic Palace, Kasteyev Art Museum, Drama Theatre named after M. Auezov, Zenkov's Cathedral*. But the *Mega Almaty and Silk Way City* shopping centres, although they are free-standing buildings as commercial facilities, belong to ergonyms. However, the residential complexes from the developer, being commercial projects, have their own names, which are difficult to refer to as ergonyms denoting commercial associations, names of firms, companies in the service and trade sectors. Still, ergonyms are functionally closer to advertising, business and signage, and are more mobile and more likely to change.

Russian authors R. Razumov and S. Goryaev in their study dedicated to the terminology of inner-city toponymy consider the problem of a certain lack of correspondence, lack of adaptation of Russian and English onomastic terminology in this sphere. They refer to the fundamental publication of their Western European colleagues "The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming", which contains a separate chapter "The Names of Settlements", and one of the main editors of the book, C. Hough considers the names of settlements to be prototypical for toponymy, but not objects within them; in the chapter "Street Names" its author B. Neethling regards the term *odonym* as a complete synonym for *street name,* and in the section "Other Types of Names", in the chapter "House Names", the author A. Koopman considers only such names of dwellings which were given by their occupants [2] without reference to any term.

It seems a little strange that there is no specific term for house names in English and Western European onomastics, despite the fact that in the UK, in English linguistic culture, there is still a lovely historical tradition of giving names to one's house. And this phenomenon can be simply called *"house names", "dwelling names"*.

This study, based on the nature of the research material, uses the generalising term *urbanonym* and its intraspecific terms *hodonym*, *oikodonym,* and, in parallel with the term *ergonym*, the term combinations *commercial names*, *commercial naming*, which is close and understandable in the academic English-speaking

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[4] Podolskaya, N.V. (1988). *Dictionary of Russian onomastic terminology*. Moscow: Nauka. (In Russ.).

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environment, are also used. "Names — proper names and the product of naming — have received various terms in onomastics: *advertising names, commercial names.* The term *commercial names* seem more persuasive because it outlines the dominant sphere of naming application, namely the sphere of commercial nomination" [6], says the Russian scholar M.V. Golomidova.

The study uses, by necessity, the terminology of critical toponymy or humanitarian geography, a popular trend in English-speaking academic circles. For example, *commodification* is the systematic process of incorporating the intangible spheres of life into the sphere of capital. The author of "radical geography", the Anglo-American geographer D. Harvey argues for the "commodification of everything", believing that "everything can basically be seen as a commodity" [4]. This also applies to the commodification of language — the process of turning language into a commodity and its functioning in a globalised market [5].

Discussion
Characteristics of Commercialisation of the City's Toponymic Space

The urbanonymic landscape of Almaty, the largest metropolis in Kazakhstan and Central Asia, includes names of urban toponyms (hodonyms) and ergonyms that represent objects of commercial nomination. Almaty (682 km^2) is Kazakhstan's leading administrative, financial, economic and cultural centre, with a strong image, positioned in the tourist environment as "A Garden City" immersed in the green. Almaty was the capital of Kazakhstan until 1998 and is translated as "apple"; previously, the Russian version Alma-Ata was used in parallel. The city is unique both because of its European and Asian cultural symbiosis and because of its geographical location in the foothills of Trans-Ili Alatau, its mild climate and abundance of snow in the mountains during the winter, while well-developed winter sports and tourism have made it famous as a "second Switzerland".

Almaty's inner-city topographical structure can be divided into space-forming iconic places for residents and visitors of the "southern capital", which are also actively involved in the process of commercialisation and commodification.

According to the topographical zoning of the city in relation to the location of the mountains, the top-bottom, south-north directions can be distinguished, i.e. there is an upper part starting from the mountains themselves and a lower part with a relatively flat landscape. Meanwhile, the historic centre of the city is known to the public as the "golden square" because of its expensive and elitist residential and non-residential commercial stock. In recent decades, the upper part of the city has been actively developed with private estates, luxury cottage towns and country townhouses, and this part of the city has a respectable and sprawling character.

It is possible to highlight the following image characteristics and competitive advantages of Almaty in the country and in the Central Asian region:
• the best city to live and work in;

- a leading centre of education, science, culture and business;
- uniqueness of the natural landscape;
- attractiveness for investment and tourists.

The world's famous metropolises have a unique aura, a unique magnetism, a vivid cultural association, often linked to the names of iconic objects of universal value. The majestic mountains of Trans-Ili Alatau are the city's iconic landmark and pride. The space-forming symbolic objects of the city include the high-mountainous skating rink *Medeu*, the *Shymbulak* ski resort, the *Green Bazaar* market, the 19th century masterpiece of wooden architecture — *Zenkov's Cathedral*, the *Baluansholak Central Stadium*, the park complex with the *Koktobe* funicular, the pedestrian zone, the *Arbat*, a favourite place of citizens, the *Big Almaty Lake*, which is located high in the mountains, and many other attractive places for locals and tourists.

It is primarily the municipal authorities and big business that are involved in organising the urban space and its infrastructure. Medium and small businesses are also actively involved in the creation of the city's socio-cultural, linguistic image, represented in large numbers by ergonyms. Streets, parks, residential areas, numerous shopping malls, shopping markets, hotels, restaurants, even small cafés, bistros and outlets, with multilingual signs create a global linguistic image, an urbanonymic landscape of the city.

In recent years, the study of urban toponymy has been intensified by the emergence of a "critical toponymy" approach as part of humanitarian (humanistic geography), which focuses on the cultural politics of toponymy and the decisions associated with the naming of the urban landscape. In modern cities, however, toponyms play not only a political role but also an economic one, defining urban toponyms as commodities. Material signage identifying street names can also be used as part of branding and promotion strategies.

The problem of the urban space toponymy commercialisation has been well covered in the studies of Russian scholars, and the last two decades have seen a rapid development of urbanonymic themes. The development of onomastic space, the urbanonymic landscape of the city, is mainly carried out in the linguistic, sociolinguistic and linguocultural aspects. A new perspective on the problems of toponymic policy and naming, the "image of place" is found in the studies of Russian scholars M.V. Golomidova [1], R.V. Razumov, S.O. Goryaev[5] and others. In terms of the branches of ergonymy in Russian onomastics, the ergonyms of a number of large cities have been studied in the works of A.M. Emelyanova [6; 7], F.F. Alistanova, who identifies the main trends characteristic of modern ergonymic nomination, namely: the use of obsolete spelling and vocabulary; the use of non-literal (reduced) vocabulary; the use of language games; the use of loanwords [8].

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[5] Liste des mots-clefs en Onomastique (2019). URL: https://icosweb.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ICOS-Terms-fr.pdf (accessed:.15.02.2023).

The author N.V. Nosenko, analyses the nomination mechanisms of foreign language ergonyms in Novosibirsk. Yu.V. Vairakh gives a lexical-semantic, word-formative and linguocultural characteristics of Irkutsk's ergo-urbanonyms [9; 10].

Urbanonymic themes in Kazakhstan are at an early stage of development. So far, individual studies by several Kazakh authors are known. Ergonyms of former Astana, modern Nur-Sultan are covered in the studies of Sh.K. Zharkynbekova, and the history and linguistic composition of public catering institutions are examined by S.K. Imanberdiyeva, M. Kakimova, G.B. Madiyeva [11].

In English-speaking onomastics in recent years (2011, 2013, 2015) a new series of onomastic conferences "Name and Naming" with a centre in Romania (Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, North University Centre of Baia Mare) has stood out, led by Oliviu Felecan. For the first time in the world science the naming issues started to be considered within onomastics, but mainly on the material of toponyms and anthroponyms (urbanonyms are still classified as either "Toponyms" (street names) or "Other names" (others)).

In foreign onomastics, urbanonyms are studied more from a sociolinguistic and cultural perspective, without focusing on the very linguistic essence of commercial names. Thus, for instance, in the proceedings of the International symposium "Names in the Economy" much attention is given to the commercial characteristics of urbanonyms. For example, the 2015 symposium considered the names of dental clinics, banks, national cuisine restaurants, travel agencies in Romania (A. Stoichitoiu I chim), business organisations in Finland (V. Syrjälä), as well as commercial ergonyms in the Baltic states (S. Pošeiko).

The issue of naming is considered in the study of the English researcher D. Postles [12]. The problems of urbanonymic landscape are presented in the studies of Barrie Cox on the material of the names of restaurants and taverns in the Great Britain [13], the dictionary of pub names in Wadsworth (England) is developed by the researchers L. Dunkling, G. Wright [14]. A book on the multicultural aspect of naming has recently been published [15].

The section "Commercial Names" written by Paula Sjöblom of the aforementioned study examines the source languages for modern ergonymy, where the dominance of the main Western European languages (and mainly, of course, English) is expectedly acknowledged [16]. This statement seems to be confirmed by the results of the study of the ergonymic corpus of Almaty, i.e. there is indeed a predominance of the English-language nomination, and this trend is increasing rather than decreasing.

Onomastic science, particularly toponymy, is multidisciplinary in nature and is considered in close connection with a number of other scientific fields, including by geographers and geo-urbanists. As previously noted, the issue of urban toponymy in the aspect of critical toponymy as part of humanitarian geography began to be actively developed in the late 20th century in the English-

speaking academic environment, where mainly socio-political and political-economic aspects were focused.

"The use of geographical names and toponymic practices as tools to raise the value of space and struggle for resources and property involves in the process of toponymic commodification two key groups of stakeholders: *official public authorities* technically regulating the naming and renaming of geographical objects, and the *business sector* represented by travel agencies, developers, multinational corporations and other entities" [17]. Toponym, as an element of the territory's image and the verbal expression of the cultural and geographical segment of the territorial system, is also subject to transformation processes associated with commercialisation.

The way in which the commercialisation of naming rights is transforming the cultural landscape of the Almaty metropolis is demonstrated by clear examples of the transfer into private hands of new territories in the park zone for the purpose of active development of residential towns and villas for sale. In Almaty, the city is being intensively built up with high-rise buildings in order to solve the social and housing problems of its inhabitants. However, this often happens at the expense of reducing parkland, sometimes unjustifiably redrawing the topographical space, leading to changes in the natural geographical landscape, damaging the city's ecology, generating discomfort for the residents. The development area is expanding year by year, moving to the protected, resort areas with unique nature, while businesses are developing new territories in the foothill terraces with untouched nature, cutting down relict forests and destroying alpine meadows. Conservationists, "green activists" and ecologists are constantly raising the alarm and fighting against it, unfortunately often to no avail. And this is where the problem of commodification, the over-commercialisation of the city's toponymic space, comes into play with the permission of the city authorities.

In 2021, Almaty plans to demolish dilapidated houses, the so-called "Khrushchev-era houses", and to build new high-rise buildings instead, which environmentalists have called a "humanhill" metaphorically similar to an anthill. The developer had to concede to the protest by residents and will build 37 houses of 9 storeys each instead of the planned 57 houses of 20 storeys. Such a housing renovation programme can be found both abroad and in neighbouring Russia, which raises an acute problem of new nominations, a naming problem. It is well known that businessmen, owners of construction companies, are the initiators, the authors of naming. This category of nominators, as can be seen, does not have equally high linguistic competence, ethical taste, knowledge of the linguistic picture of the citizens, at least in general terms, which is proved by the models of oikodonyms, names of housing estates discussed in the study. In this case the problem of language regulation and language policy arises again.

L.K. Graudina, regarding Russian cities, highlights this problem as follows: "In image projects, the "linguistic" component in the choice of style, the onomastics of the city is completely absent. Meanwhile, it is important to define a system

of "values" in language policy. The system of recommendations by linguists should be based not only on the rules of word usage, but also on national etiquette, good taste, a system of ethical norms — the whole stock of traditional domestic culture, which is perceived by society as exemplary" [18].

Indeed, one of the important nomination principles for new urban facilities is to match the historical, cultural and natural landscape features of the surrounding geographical environment, the territorial orientation of the facility, i.e. there should be a general concept of development, in which the preservation of cultural, linguistic values of the population, taking into account topographical features should be a priority in the new acts of nomination. However, in practice it can be seen that this principle is not always respected in the city of Almaty. The analysis of the oikodonymic nomination types can be considered in two main groups: the orientation principle; the advertising principle, based on a marketing technique addressed to the target consumer.

It is accepted that: "The principle of orientation works most obviously on the perception of the object's territoriality. If there is already a natural or significant cultural / social object within the locality (or its construction is in the development plans), the principle of orientation can be implemented in a direct or associatively linked nominative indication" [19].

A number of names of residential complexes in Almaty retains this principle. For example, the complete ensemble of facilities *Esentai Park*, linked to the name of the *Esentai River* flowing through the city, includes the *Esentai Mall* shopping and entertainment centre, *Esentai Apartments*, *Central Esentai Residence, Esentai River Townhouse* and, finally, the entire township (city within a city), positioned as an area of cosiness and European standard *Esentai City* (premium-class flats and villas). In the language of the residents, the Russian name of the Esentai River, *Vesnovka*, also stands for the name of the *Vesnovka* housing estate. And there are many such positive examples where the names are in harmony with the names of a nearby natural object. Housing estate *Navoi* is named after the street of the same name (Navoi was a Sufi poet of the Middle Ages), and next to it is housing estate *Shahristan*, i.e. there is a thematic involvement in Eastern culture.

Another striking brand of Almaty is the *Koktobe* recreation area (with a funicular railway), "Green Hill". All of the commercial properties built around the *Koktobe* park complex actively use this name in naming. This is because *Koktobe* has a prominent location and has a strong positive image among the population. The residential complex built in the neighbourhood is called *the Koktobe City*. A marketing ploy was used here, with a spatial-thematic, locational connection being observed in the nomination of objects. "Thus, the creation of urbanonymic blocks (the names of juxtaposed objects, correlated in their internal and external form) can be regarded as part of the city's historical "code" and an organic component of the general image characteristics" [19].

The introductory post of the *Koktobe City* housing estate describes the new building as "Modern German architecture — smart and comfortable low houses, underground parking, car-free courtyards and small playgrounds, rhythmic facades without fussy elements. The best of Munich, Berlin and Düsseldorf's new neighbourhoods have been collected here" [20], i.e. this advertising text is a marketing ploy by the Singapore property developer KustoGroup. This appeal is precisely thought-out and relevant in a metropolis with dense construction and high-rise buildings. The developer also appeals to the European quality of the buildings, based on the persistent stereotypical thinking of the local consumer "everything produced in Europe, especially German, is of high quality", which forms a positive image of the project at the initial stage of construction. The project's exclusive nature is due to its location in an upmarket area of the city, on a green hill with beautiful natural landscape.

In Almaty, there are housing estates and complexes for both the economy class and the affluent part of the population. Stable interest, the demand of affluent city dwellers for premium housing, for so-called English, French, Italian neighbourhoods remains high.

"As a result of associations with exclusivity, elitism or corporate business, a toponym can serve as a highly lucrative brand element for an area, not only to attract tourists and entrepreneurs, but also to raise the value of urban space (e.g. Champs-Elysées in Paris, Wall Street in New York)" [17].

The advertising type of naming residential complexes, villas, cottage towns comes from the enhancement of status based on already world-famous urban toponyms or simply a loud sounding English, French or Italian name. For example, *RC Lancashire, RC Lafayette, RC Belgravia Villas, RC Palladium, RC Beverly Hills, RC Parmigiano Country Club, RC Sorrento, RC Dolce Vita Residence* (an association with the Fellini film), *RC Hyde Park, RC Woodland Village Townhouse.* This type of names, while creating the illusion of respectability, indicates the linguistic, ethical preferences of the nominator, which do not always coincide with the linguistic picture of city dwellers.

Here is an illustrative example where the taste and language preferences of a housing development nominator are frowned upon and opposed by the public and local residents. In 2011, the president of a Kazakhstani construction company, visiting New York, was inspired by the idea of building his own "Manhattan" in Almaty, and conceived an ambitious, large-scale "city within a city" project on 228 hectares of land on the shores of Lake Sairan, similar to the Borough *Manhattan*. But eventually, due to the global crisis, the company went bankrupt in 2008, and a smaller construction project was completed by another construction company after government intervention. The public protested against the name as it does not fit the linguistic concept of the city, there is no cultural and historical connection, and the cultural and linguistic values of the local population are not taken into account. As a result, *Manhattan* was changed to the name *Mega Sairan*, retaining

the natural-topographical principle, which made orientation easier. However, the exotic name once heard "caught on" in the informal communication of citizens as an additional locational factor.

Just like ordinary brand names, geographical names can be used, modified or completely replaced according to marketing objectives (improving the image of a locality or region, increasing investment in the tourism sector, etc.), which represents a specific type of toponymic branding. Thus, for example, according to representatives of English critical toponymy, "The case of the new names of the Dumbo and Vinegar Hill neighbourhoods in New York, created specifically for the privileged social categories who will live in expensive condominiums, is an example of the symbolic "stigmatisation" of the urban landscape through toponymy [3].

A toponym as a highly liquid symbolic capital for developers, investors, official authorities can represent an element of "symbolic violence" for local residents, various community activists and other interested groups of the population [17]. Indeed, some new names are literally "imposed" on the local population, without taking into account their opinions.

One of the illustrative forms of nominating Almaty's urban landscape is the generation of a new type of social naming for the city. Many tourists die in the mountains every year all over the world. To save them, specially equipped rescue huts are built. Almaty has also planned the installation of rescue hunting huts in the mountains because of the increasing number of accidents. Its design is based on the experience of European countries like Italy, France, Switzerland and Austria. E. Hasenov, the head of the "Almaty Mountain Cluster" project office, says: "We offer entrepreneurs this option: they can design a sketch themselves, even brand it with their name, so to say, to immortalise their name. We have a popular place in the Almaty region — the swing. And many tourists know that Boris Sokolov installed them there. It's the same here. People will know who built the hut and they will be grateful to that person. This is a social project. There will be no profit for the businessman from this"[6].

Changes in the city's infrastructure and the construction of residential complexes, which in their social arrangements represent a "city within a city", bring to life nominations related to the new concept of the name: filling it with ethnic content; maintaining the principles of tolerance in the linguistic situation of Kazakhstan (creating names in the languages of different nationalities of Kazakhstan); internationalisation of the name (through foreign language borrowings). Thus, in Almaty, there were micro-districts with number plates; now there are residential complexes being built with national names: *Shanyrak, Terrenkur, Al-Farabi, Duman, Ulzhan, Aigerim, Tomiris*, etc.

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[6] Residential complex Koktobe City — The city of blooming life. 2021. URL: https://koktobecity.kz/zhk-koktobe-sity-gorod-tsvetushchey-zhizni (accessed: 25.01.2023). (In Russ.).

Brand name is an element of a firm's "foreign policy". In order to attract a customer's money, one must first get their attention, surprise them and show them something new. However, there is one important rule: it is desirable to surprise, but not to shock, otherwise the message (appeal) of the nominator (i.e. company name, ergonym) will be perceived inadequately. A successful name boosts sales and profits and creates a favourable company image, while an unsuccessful name may be negatively perceived by the target audience, reduce demand and lead to a deterioration of the firm's position in the market.

Unsuccessful brands can evoke negative associations in people's minds, as, for example, the name of the housing estate *Titanic* is associated with the image of a sunken ship. The name *Valkyrie* nail studio and firm *Valkyrie*, which is engaged in the transport of oversized goods, may evoke negative associations, for those who are familiar with the meaning of the word. The Valkyrie is the heroine of Scandinavian myths (valkyrija "picking up the dead") of a warrior maiden who roars on a winged horse over the battlefield, picking up warriors and drinking the blood from their wounds; the name may sound intimidating.

Some of the nominations of new sites, especially housing estates that organise the urban landscape, are often artificial, contrived, alien, and incomprehensible to the population, which naturally provokes public disapproval. Despite the presence of national Kazakh, Russian names in the linguistic landscape of Almaty, it is disheartening to note that there are many names in English and other European languages, which is the result of nominative creativity, the linguistic preference of construction company owners. In other words, here one can observe a process of aggressive westernisation, a barbarisation of the urbanonymic landscape of the city, which negatively affects the quantity and quality of the national component of oikodomonyms. And this significantly affects the content of the linguistic landscape of the Kazakh metropolis.

The American scholar, a representative of humanitarian geography R. Rose-Redwood argues that the commercialisation of urban place-naming in modern neoliberal contexts is one of the most significant transformations that will affect the toponymic landscape in the 21st century [21].

Lack of public consultation, artificial creation and imposition of a geographical name, scepticism about its commemorative and cultural value, and other factors have been known to cause local acceptance or non-acceptance of a toponym by residents [16].

Linguistic Creativity Factor in the Nomination of Commercial Properties in the City

In today's world, competition between businesses is intense, with owners competing for every customer, and brand name has a key role to play. In order to communicate successfully with the consumer, the nominator should come up with a good-sounding brand name that will help to create a flawless image of the company,

successfully distinguish the object from other businesses, attract attention, arouse interest and trust among potential consumers, while unknowingly influencing their choice in favour of this particular enterprise. Ergonyms are the result of a secondary nomination that aims to create a memorable name that can perform a pragmatic function and serve as a kind of coiled message from the nominator (company owner) to the addressee (potential client), sometimes prompting the nominator to be "overly creative" in their choice of commercial names.

E.N. Remchukova believes that "…pragmatically determined desire of all mass media varieties to fully use the mechanisms of linguocreativity to optimise speech impact (the sphere of professional competence), and the verbal freedom that prevails on the Internet (it generates both mass and individual-author "creativity")[7]. These "reasons" are also responsible for creative trends in the field of urban nomination.

In the linguistic landscape of the metropolis there are various types of commercial nomination. The goal of this study is not to provide a complete description, a comprehensive analysis of the entire corpus of commercial names, but only those that seem most intriguing, most "creative", and, to a certain extent, most problematic [22; 23].

There are certainly many ergonyms in the linguistic landscape of the city with the high, positive semantics of wishing well-being, happiness, prosperity and wealth, which are universal in nature and inherent in many world linguistic cultures. To create a few of these commercial names: *Bailyk-Development* "wealth, abundance", *Magnit* "attracting (prosperity)", *Bereket "agreement", Jenis* "victory, success", *Sultan Sarai,* "palace of the ruler", *Khan Sarai* "palace of the king", *Keremet* "miracle", *Mereke* "celebration", *Trillionaire, Domillion*, *Sultan-beibarys* historical anthroponym, the name of a prominent person from Kazakh steppes, ruler of Egypt in the Middle Ages*;* it is a commemorative name with benevolent semantics; *Han Sultan* is an anthroponymic brand name "be great like a king or sultan"*; Dana Bala* "a gifted child"*; Danyshpan* "genius"*; Happy Land, Happy Ville,* etc. These names of trading houses, restaurants, business centres, kindergartens and other commercial facilities, share the common semantics of wishing "happiness, goodness, wealth, festivity". These good wishes, spiritual values are not unique to Kazakh ethnic culture, but are of high priority in the scale of universal values, as, for instance, with the name of the world-famous online platform Alibaba. In an interview, company founder Jack Ma revealed that the treasures to be uncovered were ritualised and named after the main character with the key line "Open Sesame!", implying a path to untold riches, abundance.

There are many unusual and creative commercial names among the ergonyms of the city of Almaty. In modern society, unusual names are increasingly in demand, causing first a visual and graphic, then a semantic shock from the commercial names,

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[7] How huts for tourists in the mountains of Almaty will look like. (2021). URL: https://tengritravel.kz/ (accessed: 25.01.2023). (In Russ.).

i.e. the trivial informative nature of the name is insufficient for the nominator. To attract the consumer's attention, they strive to choose original creative names that are unlike others in order to set the object apart from other objects of this type. However, along with the meaning of the name, the way it is transmitted also plays a role. Various graphic techniques are used to visualise the name. One of them is the creation of a graphic pun [24].

The principle of graphic pun (play) is used to build such names as Zharim-Varim, Syto Piano, Myasoteka, Tez tamak "fast food", Myasnaya Laffka, Sytnoff, Myasoedoff, *ShashlykoFF Grill & Bar, Pivovaroff,* labelled with two different charts. In the last example, there is a deliberate grammatical distortion in the spelling of the determinative "lavka" (a shop), where the double letter "ff" is written instead of the Cyrillic letter "v", although their meaning is clear to the target consumer. The advertising effect is achieved in an unconventional way through a violation of the spelling norm, and the other cases can be called hybrid names. Based on the examples presented, it can be concluded that the advertising function of ergonyms is clearly seen in its graphic presentation.

In the pursuit of advertising effect, some nominators and naming companies violate the norms of public morality and common ethics. One striking example is the brand name *Yobidoyobi* sushi and rolls delivery in Almaty, translated from Japanese as "day of the week, Saturday", but this expression in the Russian language has blatantly obscene semantics, which is unacceptable in public places. The association with obscene language is supported by the slogan in the company's offices and packaging materials "We don't swear and we cook deliciously". Interestingly enough, the brand is franchised and popular in Moscow and many Russian cities. The authors of the study consider undesirable commercial names such as Café *Syto Piano,* which contain a poorly concealed appeal to "eat well and drink hard", perceived as propaganda for alcoholic beverages.

Easy-to-remember acronyms, wordplay: *ARTiShOK* Theatre, *Blue FunToMass* Club, *Pegasus* Beer Bar, Fat Jimmy Cafes and Restaurants, La Boule, Gorynych Kabach, Darling, I haven't been drinking, Here and There, Lariss Ivannu Hachu, Love and Doves, GASTREAT, Uch Lagan, Bir jer, Ristaurant, Food by the Cat, Zhu Zhu, Odessa rEstaurant, Chito Grito, Butakoffka, SELËDKA, Lost Angels, QR.

The name of the beer restaurant Khmelnaya Prazhechka seems like a good playful name, implying the presence of hops as part of the Czech beer. However, the name allows for ambiguity, i.e. it can be interpreted as "slightly intoxicated resident of Prague". Inna Lebedeva, director of corporate and marketing communications at the international agency PBN Hill+Knowlton, agrees that interesting names and names of establishments, companies and products have been appearing lately in Kazakhstan. But she believes that "this trend is more an intuitive desire on the part of owners to make a company or product stand out in the marketplace than a deliberate strategic effort to create a name, "a name that can define a company's history and future success. To understand the naming situation, it is enough to go out

on the street and count the number of companies, establishments, products around called "Nadezhda", "Aika", "Saule", etc. And, of course, Kazakhstan was not left out of the "OFF-trend" (OgurtsOFF, IvanOFF, etc.)". The specialist believes that the development of naming in Kazakhstan is still at an early stage [25; 26].

An analysis of the names of 460 restaurants in Almaty in Kazakh, Russian, English and other languages revealed a variety of motivations, types of nominations of a neutral informational nature, Abstract-metaphorical, indicating the nationality of the cuisine, and so forth. For example, in the Kazakh language (mixed script): Tarih Restaurant, Sunkar, Qaimaq, BASTAU, Darkhan, Ak Orda, Tamasha, Khan Saray, Shah, TAU-Dastarkhan, Turan, Alasha, Qazybek, Zhailau, Duman, Atameken, Tilek Tas, BAQYT, Altyn Adam, Otrar, Abay, etc. In the Russian language (Cyrillic script): Peking Duck, Tyubeteika (Uzbek headdress), Khoja Nasreddin, Mimino, Darejani, Tanuki (Japanese cuisine), Camelot (English), La Boule (French), Mint, Publicist, V Shatras, Pugasov, Tavern on Coals, White Whale, BOCHONOK, Bumblebee, U Afanasicha, Versailles, Princess, White Elephant, and others. In English and other European languages: Victory Mexican and Wild, *Korea Sikdang. Buona Sera*, *KAMISHY Eco Resort*, *Qingdao*, *Frau Irma*, *Pattaya FOOD*, *Texas BBQ*, *Cosa Nostra*, *Salamuri Georgian Restaurant by PG*, Alfresco, Openair, LamBo, Tirol, Satori, Molte Denaro, Laureate, *Maharaja* Ladurée, Gambrinus PUB, Delpapa, The Old Street Pub, *The Albion club*, *Harvey`s pub & grill*, *Pershika Iranian Restaurant* and more.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the catering service, which is also part of the naming object, has been dramatically boosted and expanded: *Glovo, Wolt Kazakhstan,* Bakerson, *OKAMI, KAIYO, Chocofood.kz, Crystal Catering*. This is also where the predominantly English-language brand names are observed.

It should be noted that ergonymic models in the city's urban landscape are characterised by an interesting variety of modes of formation, a set of motivations and grammatical forms, a description of the details would take up a considerable amount of space. There is another important point to note: Latin names predominate in the city's urban naming space, and this trend continues to intensify every year. According to the authors of this study, this is due to a number of reasons:

1. The decision of the Government to adopt the Latin script for the Kazakh language;
2. The increasing expansion of the English language due to globalisation processes in the world;
3. Gradual reduction, devaluation of both Russian and Kazakh Cyrillic script in the names of commercial facilities, especially new residential complexes;
4. Linguistic, graphic reorientation in the field of commercial nomination, naming to Western standards.

However, the obvious disadvantage of this trend lies in the fact that it exacerbates, minimises the national identity, the linguo-cultural component of the semantics of urban toponymy.

Currently, the urban landscape of Almaty is undergoing a rapid formation process, except for the hodonyms (street names), which are regulated by the Onomastic Commission under the administration of the metropolis. The commercial nomination process, according to the observations carried out, occurs spontaneously, sometimes in violation of the general concept of the city's image policy development. Academic specialists are so far compelled to take the position of an outside observer who only traces, analyses the general trend of the development of commercialisation, commercial nomination. There are no special normative documents and laws, no bodies regulating and coordinating the process of developing commercial nomination in a legal field, with respect for linguistic, social norms.

The commercial nomination activity is handled by the nominators themselves, the owners of the branding or the naming companies. Article 18 of Entrepreneur's Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan (29 October 2015) protects the rights and prevents interference by the state in the activities of an entrepreneur, a businessman. There are no sections on naming in the Code. Consequently, there is no naming expertise in the republic, as there is in Russia, where an appropriate regulatory framework has already been formed. Licensing organisations formally conduct or do not conduct naming expertise on commercial names and issue approvals to operate in the market.

The Republican Onomastic Commission, the local Onomastic Commissions and the existing legislative acts in the field of toponymy consider only the issues of renaming, assigning new names to the objects belonging to the local administrative bodies: "…airports, ports, railway stations, bus and motorway stations, metro stations, physical-geographical and other public property, the renaming, clarification, as well as the change of transcription of their names and the assignment of proper names to public legal entities, legal persons with state participation". The lack of legislative regulations in the field of commercial nomination is primarily due to the fact that this branch of onomastics is just emerging in Kazakh science. The situation observed in urbanonymic space is therefore the result of the sometimes "free" word-creation, the "creativity" of the nominators of commercial names.

Freedom of expression, or as the eminent Russian culturologist Yuri Lotman put it: "Freedom is not only the absence of external prohibitions. The absence of external prohibitions must be compensated for by internal cultural prohibitions".

The need for conducting naming expertise is confirmed by the ergonyms or commercial names mentioned above in the study, which violate not only literary, stylistic norms, but also the norms of public morality, as "compromising" ergonyms are found on visual and graphic signboards, advertisements on buildings, in social networks, and have a negative impact on the formation of language competence, cultural and linguistic values, national and universal values not only of adults, but most importantly, of school children and teenagers.

It is therefore advisable to optimise the naming activity of the urbanonymic landscape as a whole. Before Kazakhstan's independence, the main language of communication in all spheres of public life was the Russian language, which united all the national republics of the USSR. The national language of the Kazakhs was undergoing a major crisis; it was threatened with gradual extinction, as the majority of the indigenous population, especially in the cities and regions bordering on Russia spoke only Russian or had a poor knowledge of their native language. This is one of the threats to strengthening the national, state identity. Toponyms, their linguistic quantitative relation, are one of the main factors in asserting a linguistic, national identity.

Once again, Yuri Lotman was profoundly right when he argued that: "The organic assimilation of a national culture is not a simple borrowing of its elements, but a recoding that involves changing them and adapting them to a different national cultural context. Only in doing so they become innovations that enrich culture and factors in its internal dynamics, resulting in the adaptation of cultural phenomena". The concern about the gradual loss of national and cultural specificity of inner-city toponymy and the absorption of a different culture is accurately reflected in the following statement: "Before our eyes, everyday life, which A. Schopenhauer called "the supreme reality", is transformed by alien elements into a virtual, speculative, hypothetical reality. The national culture seems to be dissolving or losing its clear contours under the impact of various influences and borrowings".

Conclusions

The results of the analysis of the inner-city toponymic space, the quantitative and qualitative composition of the commercial names, brand names of Almaty cause concern at this stage because of the expansion of the English language, rather than the Russian language, which accounts for more than half of the corpus of oikodomonyms (the names of residential complexes) and ergonyms (the names of banks, credit institutions, hotels, restaurants, cafes, bars, etc.), except for the names of pre-school institutions.

In order to improve naming activities in the linguistic landscape of the city, the following developmental perspectives are suggested:
- to develop a comprehensive plan for the improvement of toponymic policy in the field of naming activities due to its complete absence;
- to develop scientific and regulatory documents on the regulation of naming activities, which would contribute to the improvement in this area throughout the country;
- as an alternative, linguists are encouraged to develop guidelines for advertising companies, agencies involved in naming activities to improve the quality of the brand name created;
- to recommend to nominators, licensing agencies to carry out a naming expertise of the brand at the pre-decision and pre-permitting stage of building the housing estates, before the creation of the commercial names.

With regard to streamlining and adapting onomastic terms in the international scientific space, especially in the field of studying the urbanonymic landscape, it is advisable to coordinate with Russian colleagues, who have gained good experience, and with international onomastic organisations of the English-language segment.

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Сведения об авторах:

Рысберген Кыздархан Курмашкызы, доктор филологических наук, профессор, заведующая отделом ономастики, Институт языкознания им. А. Байтурсынулы (050000, Республика Казахстан, г. Алматы, ул. Шевченко, 28); *сфера научных интересов*: ономастика, социолингвистика, лингвокриминалистика, дискурсивная лингвистика, лингвокультурология, когнитивная лингвистика; *e-mail*: ms.rysbergen@mail.ru
ORCID: 0000-0002-4205-9655.

Пашан Дана Мусабеккызы, кандидат филологических наук, старший научный сотрудник отдела ономастики, Институт языкознания им. А. Байтурсынулы (050000, Республика Казахстан, г. Алматы, ул. Шевченко, 28); *сфера научных интересов*: ономастика, социолингвистика, этимология, лингвокультурология, когнитивная лингвистика; *e-mail*: pashan_dan@mail.ru
ORCID: 0000-0002-5930-3247.

Садык Дидар Айдарович, докторант Казахского национального университета имени аль-Фараби (050038, Республика Казахстан, г. Алматы, ул. аль-Фараби, 71); *сфера научных*

интересов: ономастика, социолингвистика, компьютерная лингвистика, компьютерная ономография, лингвокультурология, когнитивная лингвистика*; e-mail*: didarsadyk2@ gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-8271-7165.

Information about the authors:

Rysbergen K. Kyzdarkhan, Dr.Sc. in Philology (Advanced Doctorate), Professor, Department of Onomastics**,** A. Baitursynuly Institute of Linguistics of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (28, Shevchenko Str., Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, 050000); *Research interests*: onomastics, sociolinguistics, linguocriminalism, discursive linguistics, cultural linguistics, cognitive linguistics; *e-mail*: ms.rysbergen@mail.ru
ORCID: 0000-0002-4205-9655.

Dana M. Pashan, Ph.D., Senior Researcher of the Department of Onomastics**,** A. Baitursynuly Institute of Linguistics of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (28, Shevchenko Str., Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, 050000); *Research interests*: onomastics, sociolinguistics, etymology, cultural linguistics, cognitive linguistics; *e-mail*: pashan_dan@ mail.ru
ORCID: 0000-0002-5930-3247.

Didar A. Sadyk, PhD student of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (71 , al-Farabi str., Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, 050038); *Research interests*: onomastics, sociolinguistics, computational linguistics, computer onomography, cultural linguistics, cognitive linguistics; *e-mail*: didarsadyk2@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-8271-7165.