

Bell Names in the History of the Russian Language (Linguistic and Cultural Aspect)

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Abstract. The paper considers principles of naming the bells and the main features, according to which the bell could get either name. Scientists believe that to a greater extent the structure of such onym units characterizes the specifics of how the bells were treated in Kievan Rus and the overall attitude of the Russians to them. The study was based on the analysis of the unique catalogue containing linguistic units and reflecting the history of bells, bell ringing and bell casting. The main sources of the study included compiled chronicles, archive materials, register of monastic and temple property, inscriptions on bells, and church charters. The study was conducted through comparative-historical, linguistic and cultural analysis, as well as field analysis within the cognitive stylistics. As a result, 51 bell names and their historical background were analyzed. The authors conclude that the study of linguistic units related to the history of bells and bell ringing in Russia alongside with their casting features will make it possible to bridge the historical knowledge gap and to draw some conclusions on the way the Russians perceive the linguistic worldview of this unique element of the Russian culture.

Any nation is always appealing to sources of linguistic, cultural and historical heritage. Various historical facts and the entire historical and cultural background of people may provoke the interest in the study [1-3]. For Russian people a bell was not a mere attribute of Christian religion. The bell ringing symbolized the voice of the motherland, reminded of independence and the Novgorod freedom, and this sound embracing the diversity of the Russian music was heard throughout the geographical vastness of the Orthodox Christian territory. It is quite difficult for the modern generation to imagine what place did the bells and bell ringing take in life of the Russian people. The authors believe that the study of linguistic units bound to the history of bells and bell ringing in Russia with their casting features will allow to close the gap of historical knowledge and to draw some conclusions on the way the Russians perceive the linguistic worldview of this unique element of the Russian culture.

The analysis of language material caused the need to select and systematize the gathered information. The modern linguistics considers linguistic units integrated in different groups according to their features within the theory of semantic field. Yu.N. Karaulov identified such 'the most common' field properties as: "1) correlation of elements, 2) order, 3) definition, 4) independence, 5) integrity, 6) separability, 7) specificity in different languages" [4]. P.N. Denisov also indicates "extensiveness, completeness, randomness and non-specificity of boundaries, continuity" [5]. Summarizing the opinions of modern linguists, there is a need to highlight another uniform field characteristic, i.e.

hierarchically-organized structure clearly opposing the center (core) and the periphery.

At first sight, all linguistic units (presented as separate lexemes or set phrases), reflecting the existence of bells and bell ringing in Russia alongside with the history of bell casting, are quite accurately arranged (the authors managed to identify several blocks within the entire 'bell' phenomenon) and clearly pronounced within the national identity of the Russian language. It was rather difficult to define the boundaries of the studied linguistic layer. At first, the initial definition of the field core representing the notion of a *bell* seemed obvious.

Nevertheless, further analysis showed that the collected material cannot be described only from a field theory perspective. The study was also based on other approaches (comparative-historical, cognitive, linguistic and cultural), which are traditionally used to study semantic fields, but it seems reasonable to describe the analyzed linguistic units as elements of the lexical set.

The lexical set traditionally represents the group of linguistic units (lexemes and set phrases) connected with each other on the basis of extra linguistic community of denotations and reflecting the real reference of objects and phenomena to a single standard situation. The lexical set may be characterized by the following features: extralinguistic determinacy of units; vague structure; optionality of denotative sense; non-uniformity of relations or lack of correlation between units; combination of units of different parts of speech, as well as different lexical and grammatical types of set phrases.

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Thus, it may be concluded that the study shall focus on several approaches. Based on the theory of semantic field it is reasonable to analyze subgroups integrating bell names and types, subgroup of linguistic units related to bell casting process. Within the context of the specified subgroups the linguistic units are integrated not only on the basis of extra linguistic community, they are infused with denotative seme (in some cases with several semes at once), the center (core) and the periphery are clearly opposed, elements within subgroups are arranged through a particular structure and may be described as hierarchy. However, the appeal to the history of subgroups related to bell names showed no evidence of the specified semantic features and led to the conclusion on the existence of extralinguistic inter-element coupling of this subgroup, its vague structure and heterogeneity of units in its composition.

Due to heterogeneity of the collected material the authors decided to use the working term 'lexical set' for the analysis of linguistic units. All units compiled from various sources eventually related to the history of bells, bell ringing and bell casting were united into two lexical sets: 'bell – bell ringing' and 'bell casting'. The study of the history of these lexical sets was based on the method of component analysis, the method of ideographic description of linguistic units and the method of field study.

Let us enlarge upon one part of a lexical set 'bell – bell ringing' being the subgroup of *certain bell names*. The authors believe that the composition of this subgroup largely characterizes the way bells are perceived in Russia and the attitude of the Russians to bells.

Provided the bells were first mentioned in Russia in the Novgorod First Chronicle of 1066, then the first 'bell' name dates back to the Chronicles of Ustyug: "The Duke Dmitry Borisovich sent the bishop Tarasiy from Rostov to Veliky Ustyug to bless the Cathedral of the Assumption and sent the tyurik bell with him" – dated 1290 [6]. Most likely, the name *Tyurik* is attributed to a special way of bell ringing: people were swinging either a bell clapper (clapper sound) or a bell body (sweeping sound). The V.I. Dahl's dictionary states: "Tyurik is a bobbin, a jug on axis which is quickly turned with a palm thus winding a yarn from bobbin reels" [7]. It is believed that this name is based on the metaphor related to similarity of action.

In 1689 the patriarch Joachim gave a special instruction to the sacristans of the Assumption Cathedral "On bell family" – how to report on bell ringing and "on bell names". The document stipulates that those bell names, which were given by the Church Charter and could change if new bells appear did not always correspond to names and nicknames given to them by bell ringers. Thus, the instruction of the patriarch Joachim specified the following: "New big bell shall be called the Bell of Assumption, and the old Uspensky – the Resurrection Bell, and Reut – the Polyelei Bell, and the one regularly ringing shall be called the Vesper Bell" [8]. Hence, the bell had a double name: the common name bound to its place on a bell gable or a bell tower, or reflecting its function in church service (*big, festive, Resurrection, Polyelei, vesper*, etc.) and the proper name or nickname invented by bell ringers (*Lebed, Reut, Medved*, etc.).

The decree of the patriarch Joachim represents a unique document. In this case the patriarch may be called the author

of several 'bell' names. Yet, it is difficult to answer a question of authorship regarding the majority of bell names. The main sources of the study may include the register of monastic and temple property, archive materials, service books describing the church service, as well as personal conversations with bell ringers reviving the campanology in modern Russia.

Names could be given to bells in different ways. The most outstanding bell names appeared as a result of metaphoric shift based on similarity of bell ringing, specifically its 'voice', with another object mainly referring to animal sounds (*Kozel, Baran, Medved, Lebed, Sokol, Reut*) or appeared as a result of metonymic shift (*Golodar, Sysoy, Godunov*).

The researcher of the Russian bells and bell ringing V.V. Kavelmakher notes: "The ringing of bells, mainly heavy bells, with regard to their tone color, resembles sounds of the organic world (animal voices), which at all times contributed to language creativity thus leading to the search of comparisons. All heavy bells of big bell towers located at Russian hierarchal houses and monasteries were given the same names, mainly animal-related: *Kozel (stands for goat)*, *Baran (stands for ship)*, *Medved (stands for bear)*, *Reut/Revun (stands for howler)* and *Lebed (stands for swan)*. All of them carried over the natural disharmony of heavy bells, and their sounds resembled roar, howl, shout, bleating and swan cry" [9].

For example, *Lebed* – a bell with quite strong and sharp sound. The *Baran* bell combined with any other bell of a bell tower made 9 tremblings thus creating an unusual effect and resembling bleating. The *Kozel* bell (produced A-flat sound) extremely discorded when simultaneously rang together with three bells of the Rostov bell tower and produced the C-major chord.

The analysis of bell names shows that the name was given to a bell not due to some ringing features but due to particular ringing defects. This is evidenced by such bell names as the *Glukhoy (deaf)* (a bell with inexpressive muffled sound) and the *Reut/Revun* ('roaring' bell).

The bell name *Golodar* appeared as a result of metonymic shift. According to the legend, *Golodar*, was first cast after the Great Hunger and Plague, which affected people in days of crop failures and epidemics. The *Golodar* bell only tolled during the Lenten season.

Often, a bell was named as a tribute to a person, which donated funds for its casting, or a person in memory of whom it was cast. Thus, the *Sysoy* bell was named by the founder of the Rostov belfry metropolitan Jonah Sysoyevich who commemorated his father – schemonk Sysoy. The inscription on the *Godunov* bell says that it was cast by the decree of Boris Godunov through donations of the tsar. The names representing nominalized adjectives are somehow connected with names of people engaged in bell casting: *Tsatitsyn, Patriarshiy, Godunovsky, Tsareborisov, Nikonovsky, Makaryevsky, Pimenovsky, Osipovsky*.

The bell could receive its name due to its appearance. For example, in Uglich the former veche bell was named *Kornoukhy* after the latter one was cut his ear. Similar names include the *Shiroky (wide)*, *Bolshoy (big)*, *Podbolshoy (the 2nd after the big one)*. It should be mentioned that such names are mentioned in various sources more often than others. When a new bell with bigger weight

appeared on a bell tower, the name was transferred from old *Bolshoy* to a new one. In most cases the monastic registers and service books were giving neutral names to bells depending on size and simply to differentiate one bell from another (*Bolshoy* (*big*), *Velikiy* (*great*), *Srednyi* (*average*), *Malyi* (*small*)).

In some cases the bell name reflected its weight. For example, the *Semisotny* (*seven-hundred*) bell weighed 798 poods. The Tobolsk branch of Tyumen region archive stores “The case of a thousand-year old bell in the Saint Sophia Cathedral” (March 15, 1822 – April 29, 1822). In the materials of this document – “Petition from Tobolsk Ecclesiastical Consistory to the governor of Tobolsk, the Councilor of State and the Cavalier Krivonogov” – one may read: “The wind twitched the blinds in the great hall of Tobolsk Cathedral, and the Tsyachny bell placed on a bell tower was moved from its place when the clapper was swinging” [10]. The authors believe that the name *Tsyachny* reflects the weight of this bell, which was too heavy for provincial Tobolsk. The additional argument to confirm the specified aspect may be the words from the same case: “Due to order of Your Honor concerning reasons that caused the displacement of a big 1000-pood bell located on a bell tower at our Cathedral of Saint Sophia” [10].

A fairly large number of bell names points to the addressee or the customer of a bell (this could cover entire cities, and individual monasteries, temples or cathedrals) where the bell should ring. For example, according to the inscription on the *Novgorod* bell it was “cast for the Novgorod monastery”, *Maryinsky* was “cast ... for the St. Mary of Egypt Orthodox Church”, *Simonovsky* was “made for the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary”.

Some bell names refer to church services: *Polyelei*, *Molebny*, *Panikhidny*, *Slavoslovny*, *Velikopostny*, *Postny*.

All bells on a bell tower or a belfry were called a *bell family* (decree of patriarch Joachim of 1689 “On bell family”). It is known that people perceived bells as living creatures having a ‘tongue’, ‘ears’, and a ‘body’ (parts of a bell were called this way when casting) and even had ‘ancestral’ relationship to them. Most likely, this may be explained by the fact that the bells of the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius were called *four brothers* or *bratyeniki* [6].

One more bell deserves a special attention – the *Tsar Bell*. The “Cosmography Book” contains a record which dates back the 18th century: “And on a bell tower the great Tsar Bell having a weight of 6770 poods, size of 11 fathoms around its circle, 3 fathoms across and 3 fathoms in height, 2 people can envelop the core of that bell” [11].

The name *Tsar Bell* was for the first time given to the Big Blagovest bell of the Moscow Kremlin cast during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. The bell cast in 1550 had a horrendous size not typical for those times. Its production was directly linked to the grand prince getting the title of tsar in 1547 accompanied with the transformation of Moscow, which, according to a new concept, should be perceived by the Christian world as the ‘Third Rome’. In this regard V.V. Kavelmakher notes: “Horrendous size and inscription with the tsar title provoking the imagination gave the right to Moscow people to call a new bell with unusual name ‘Tsar’” [12].

Nevertheless, the name *Tsar Bell* itself was recorded in written monuments only at the end of the 17th – beginning of 18th century, and by the indicated date the Big Blagovest Bells of Ivan IV was cast twice, every time getting more majestic proportions. It should be noted that the name *Tsar Bell* does not appear in any official document. Thus, the service books of the Moscow Assumption Cathedral record this bell as the *Great Uspensky* or simply *Great*. “In pastoral terms such name should sound profane” [12]. So, this is the name that was given as a result of metaphoric shift mainly based on associations caused by its tremendous size, which as a whole leads to the understanding of its special place not only among other bells but also in the cultural history of Russia in general.

The analysis of the written sources showed that the subgroup ‘certain bell names’ included 51 bell names. All elements of this subgroup represent proper names and are grouped not only according to their belonging to ‘bell’ subject matter but also according to denotative semes of ‘*a sound produced under the blow*’ and ‘*an object used to extract a sound*’. The subgroup of bell names historically developed as part of a lexical set ‘bell – bell ringing’ through 15-19th centuries due to Russian-specific linguistic resources (with only one exception – *Polyelei bell*).

It should be noted that the subgroup ‘certain bell names’ was developed in parallel with the subgroup of ‘names of bell types’, which included the definition of bells according to their function, ringing time, ringing features (*blagovest, blessed messengers, festive, regular; alarm, siege and war; watch, veche, eternal bells*, etc.). As a rule, names of bell types appear in registers of monastic property, bell ringing charters of temples and monasteries having sets of bells thus various types of bells were used during a certain part of a service to produce a special harmony of sounds. Proper names were given to either single bells on any bell tower or to differentiate one bell from another when new bells appeared.

Unfortunately, at present it is quite difficult to present a complete picture of all proper ‘bell names’ of the ancient Russia. There were by far more names in the history but the current study covered only available records of written monuments and inscriptions on bells whereas many bell names were passed down verbally through generations and were never recorded in documents.

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