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Semantics of Wainamoinen's Proper Names in Kalevala

Semántica de los nombres propios de Wainamoinen en Kalevala

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ABSTRACT:

The article presents semantic analysis of proper names of Wainamoinen, one of the major characters of the Finnish epos Kalevala. The comparative analysis revealed the following layers of information in Wainamoinen's proper names: a transparent inner form of names (Väinämäinen / Wainamoinen, Väinö / Waino, Suvantolainen / Suwantolainen, Uvantolaynen, Osmoynen, Kalevainen, Kalevalainen) of Finnish origin, language and lack of transparency of Wainamoinen's names in English, an additional connotation formed by the morphological structures of the names and a social status, dependent on the relationship of the addresser and the addressee.

KEYWORDS: Comparison, Kalevala, proper names, semantics, Wainamoinen..

RESUMEN:

El artículo presenta un análisis semántico de los nombres propios de Wainamoinen, uno de los personajes principales del epos finlandés Kalevala. El análisis comparativo reveló las siguientes capas de información en los nombres propios de Wainamoinen: una forma interna transparente de los nombres (Väinämäinen / Wainamoinen, Väinö / Waino, Suvantolainen / Suwantolainen, Uvantolaynen, Osmoynen, Kalevainen, Kalevalainen) de origen finlandés, lenguaje y falta de transparencia de los nombres de Wainamoinen en inglés, una connotación adicional formada por las estructuras morfológicas de los nombres y un estatus social, dependiente de la relación del remitente y destinatario.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Comparación, Kalevala, nombres propios, semántica, Wainamoinen.

INTRODUCTION

The article is aimed at two research questions: 1) what information is embedded in personal names of Wainamoinen for the English-speaking readers; 2) what are the specific features of the world view in Wainamoinen's names of Finnish language origin. The research is conducted in three stages revealing three levels of information intrinsic to a proper noun: semantic, syntactic and pragmatic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A short history of translations of Kalevala into English

Kalevala, the national epic of Finns, consists of 50 runes (songs) collected and refined by E. Lönnrot in the middle of the XIX century. As an epos, Kalevala contains descriptions of people, narrates of social and religious life in the earliest period of history. It is traditionally defined as the work of literature based on folklore (Rahkonen: 1992; Красавица: 2020). Pentikainen argues that “The Kalevala is, on the one hand, the product of Lönnrot’s aesthetic and scholarly work and, on the other, the social mandate of the Romantic Period, a national epic” (Branch: 1985; Rahkonen: 1992).

Kalevala was translated into many languages, including English and predominantly presented to the audience as part-translations, adapted retellings or prose translation (Lönnrot & Magoun: 1963). The complete translations were released in the late XIX: the first translation into English from German was made by J.M. Crawford in 1889, the second full translation was made by W. Kirby in 1907 from Finnish.

The main character in Kalevala, Wainamoinen, is an old singer of the epic land of Kalevala, able to perform various magic things with his singing, thus affecting the nature and people around. He is known as a creator of the first musical instrument Kantele, as a singer, a magician, and a national hero.

Wainamoinen as a singer

Wainamoinen as a singer in Finnish folklore has been a focus of a number of research. A fundamental research dedicated to Wainamoinen was conducted by M. Haavio in 1952 where the author concludes that there are several Wainamoins: the Wainamoinen of Kalevala, the Wainamoinen of folk poetry, of old runes of the Finnish people and the image of Wainamoinen created by M. Haavio himself (Haavio: 1952). Wainamoinen as a cultural hero was studied in (Meletinsky: 2008), semantic characteristics of Wainamoinen’s singing are presented in (Bulina et al.: 2019).

The modern paradigm does not view proper nouns as linguistic units lacking meaning, but signs possessing special semantics (Langedonck: 2007). In literature proper names have a special status and are referred to as culture-loaded words (Zabeeh: 1968) used in epics and as symbols for people, thus reflecting their world view, history, culture, traditions. The main hero of an epic reflects ideals of an ethnos (Пронин: 1958; Zhirmunsky: 2004). The way a proper noun is transliterated in any translation of the original text remains very important for the translator, because adequate transliteration influences the perception and comprehension of the name in a text.

Previous studies of proper names in Kalevala

Though, Kalevala has been translated many times, names are traditionally not translated, “even though understanding their meanings often adds substantially to appreciation of the text” (Luthy: 1981). Due to the cultural background reflected in a personal name of a cultural hero in the source language, it is difficult to reach accuracy in rendering a personal name in the target language (Zabeeh: 1968; Urenskaya: 2010; Ainiala & Saarikivi: 2017). Therefore, some kind of understanding is reachable in the target language with the help of special lists of meanings of personal names in an epic. Such lists of personal names of the major characters in Kalevala are presented in “The Meanings of Names in the Finnish Kalevala Epic” (Luthy: 1981). A complete glossary of personal names in Kalevala is provided in Magoun’s translation of Kalevala into English (Lönnrot & Magoun: 1963; Lönnrot: 2017; Demeo: 2019).

The corpus contains two types of transliteration of the name of the major character: ‘Vainamoinen’ and ‘Wainamoinen’. In this research we use the form ‘Wainamoinen’ for all the nominations except those from Kirby’s translation where, following the tradition, we use ‘Vainamoinen’.

In Kirby’s translation of Kalevala Wainamoinen is referred to as Väinämöinen, Väinö (10), Suvantolainen (8), Uvantolainen (6), Kalevalainen (4), Kalevainen (1) and Osmoinen (1). In Crawford’s translation Wainamoinen is also addressed as Osmoinen (3), Waino (1), Suwantolainen (1). The variations of the names are predominantly caused by the source texts, i.e. German and Finnish as well as the translator’s wish to keep the metrics of the verse. E.g.: “<...> And was eager to betake him, / Unto Vainola’s far dwellings, / That he might contend with Vaino” (Kirby, Rune III: 40) and in the same context of Crawford “Hie him southward

hasten, / To the dwellings of Wainola, / To the cabins of the Northland, / There as bard to vie in battle, / With the famous Wainamoinen” (Crawford, Rune III).

METHODS

The material of the research are two parallel translations of Kalevala into English performed by the British translator W. Kirby (Kirby: 1907 and by an American translator J. M. Crawford (Crawford: 1889). The method applied are predominantly semantic, morphological and pragmatic analyses used within a broader contrastive approach aimed at revealing differences in comprehending Wainamoinen by Finnish and an English reader.

RESULTS

The information layers of personal names of Wainamoinen are summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Information layers of Wainamoinen’s names in Kalevala

Name	Etymology	Syntactic level	Pragmatic level
Wainamoinen	'water', 'a wide mouth of a river'	-mo (a living being) -inen (diminutive suffix)	The name Wainamoinen emphasizes 1) the official generic status of an ancestor 2) connection with water 3) is used by every nominator in Kalevala
Waino			The shortened version is used in some contexts to follow the metrics of the verse
Kalevainen	Kaleva – mythic ancestor, probably from proto-Baltic 'blacksmith'	-inen (diminutive suffix)	
Kalevalainen	Mythic ancestor	-la (place suffix) -inen (diminutive suffix)	nominators: Joukahainen (Wainamoinen's rival in singing) and his mother
Osmoinen	mythical first-generation ancestor with the name of which the first proseses of sowing the barley is connected	-inen (diminutive suffix)	nominators: Aino (Joukahainen's sister)
Suvantolinen	'slack water'	-inen (diminutive suffix)	nominators: Louhi, the hostess of Pohyola (Pohyola, antagonistic, hostile to Kalevala locus)

DISCUSSION

Etymology of Wainamoinen’s personal names

All personal names of Wainamoinen in Kalevala have a special status, since they all have a transparent internal form in the source language. Therefore, we started the research with the etymology of Wainamoinen’s personal names. The word 'waina' ('vaina') in Wainamoinen means 'water', 'a wide mouth of a river' (Haavio: 1952). 'a wide, and extensive water, a broad river or straits <...> a currentless, stagnant or slowly flowing river (Haavio: 1952).

The process of assigning a name to a character is clearly visible in situations where the name becomes a kind of reminder of some past or future events in the life of the hero. Throughout the epic, Wainamoinen is connected with water. E.g. in Rune VI Joukahainen, Wainamoinen’s rival in singing, prophesies to him: "May you toss for six years running, / Seven long summers ever drifting, / Tossed about for over eight years, / On the wide expanse of water, / On the surface of the billows, / Drift for six years like a pine-tree, / And for seven years like a fir-tree, / And for eight years like a tree-stump!" (Kirby, Rune VI: 200). In Rune II Wainamoinen contemplates close to the surface of the water: "Wainamoinen, old and trusty, / Goes away and well considers, / By the borders of the waters, / On the ocean’s sandy margin” (Crawford, Rune II).

Wainamoinen’s birth is also connected with water and is depicted in Rune I as follows:

Headlong in the water falling, / With his hands the waves repelling, / Thus the man remained in ocean, / And the hero on the billows. / In the sea five years he sojourned, / Waited five years, waited six years, / Seven years also, even eight years, / On the surface of the ocean / <... > / Thus was ancient Vainamoinen, / He, the ever famous minstrel / Born of the divine Creatrix, / Born of Ilmatar, his mother. (Kirby, Rune 1: 330 – 340).

Ilmatar, Wainamoinen's mother, is an air spirit, but "once she gets down into the primordial sea she becomes "the mother of the water" (Lonnrot & Magoun: 1963).

Proper names are known to evolve into common names when they "absorb some properties of their bearers in virtue of their association" (Zabeeh: 1968). Such transformation into a common noun is intrinsic to culture-loaded names. In Finnish the name *Wäinämäinen* is used in a number of phrases denoting natural phenomena, e.g. a glittering line on the surface of water is called the Wake of Wainamoinen's Boat, the constellation of Orionis called *Väinämäinen's sword*, etc. (Kiuru: 2020).

The name *Kalevalainen* is mentioned only in Kirby's translation in Rune VI and *Kalevainen* in Rune IV. The name *Kalevainen* comprises the name *Kaleva*, meaning "a giant, a huge man (creature), powerful, hardened, deep-rooted" (Kiuru: 2020), "functional ancestor or "father" of several personalities" (Lonnrot & Magoun: 1963).

The name *Osmoinen* is registered in Kirby's translation in Rune IV, and Crawford's translation in Runes IV, XXI, XLV. It is a diminutive form of 'Osmo' which means a mythical being (Lonnrot & Magoun: 1963), a mythical first-generation ancestor with the name of which the first proeses of sowing the barley is connected (Kiuru: 2020).

The name *Suivantolainen* or *Uvantolainen* is "a near-synonym of *suvanto* 'slack water'" (Lonnrot & Magoun: 1963). "calm flow in the river, river flood under the waterfall" (Kiuru: 2020). The name *Suivantolinen* is registered in Kirby's translation in Runes VI, XIX, XVIII, XLIX and *Uvantolinen* in Runes VII, XVIII, XLII. In Crawford's translation the name *Suwantolinen* is also used in Rune XLIX.

Thus, variations of Wainamoinen's names are based on words associated with water and a reference to a certain place in Kalevala or mythical ancestor.

Grammatical constituents of Wainamoinen's names

Grammatical forms of a personal name constitute the so-called language information which is not usually evident for a reader but obtained by means of a scrupulous analysis of the language. Grammatical constituents of a personal name can reveal the information about the time of its creation, the geographical area of its usage, etc. (Superanskaya: 1970). All personal names of Wainamoinen contain such information. E.g. the name *Vainamoinen* contains the word 'vaina', a near-synonym of *suvanto*, which means 'slack water', the suffix -mo, which is used to form the names of living beings and the diminutive ending -inen (Lonnrot & Magoun: 1963). The same ending is found in *Kalevainen*, *Osmoinen*, *Suivantolainen*. The name *Suivantolainen* contains the root 'suvanto' ('slack water'), productive habitative suffix -la, used to designate a site, often a farm (Lonnrot & Magoun: 1963), and the diminutive ending -inen. The same place-suffix -lais found in the name *Kalevalainen*, where 'Kaleva' is the name of the mythical ancestor, -la means 'the place' and -inen is a diminutive suffix. *Waino* is a common form of a man's name that is used in modern Finnish. The form *Wainamoinen* is more official and in the XIXth century names with the suffix -nen started to be perceived as generic, i.e. as surnames (Kiuru: 2020).

Thus, Wainamoinen's personal names emphasize his origin connected with water, his status of the descendant of mythical ancestors *Kaleva* (in Kirby's translation he is also referred to as 'Kaleva's famous offspring') and *Osmo*, and assign him the status of a primogeniture, i.e. the forefather of people of Kalevala.

Pragmatic level of Wainamoinen's names

The pragmatic function of a personal name realizes in a discourse (context) in cases when the addresser and addressee are characterized through their names (Superanskaya: 1970). Wainamoinen's nominators in Kalevala are common people, heroes (*Joukahainen*, *Ilmarinen*) and creatures of divine nature. The name *Wainamoinen* / *Vainamoinen* is the most widely used by all nominators throughout the text. The name

Kalevalainen was used by Joukahainen and by his mother in their dialogue in Rune VI, when Joukahainen intended to kill Wainamoinen in a contest: "But his mother straight forbade him, / And dissuaded him from shooting. / "Do not shoot at Vainamoinen, / Do not Kalevalainen slaughter <...> "If you shoot at Vainamoinen, / And should Kalevalainen slaughter, / Gladness from the world will vanish <...>" and her son answered: "I have shot at Vainamoinen, / And have o'erthrown Kalevalainen, / Sent him swimming in the water <...>" and again his mother says: "Very evil hast thou acted, / Thus to shoot at Vainamoinen / And to o'erthrow Kalevalainen. / Of Suvantola the hero, / Kalevala's most famous hero" (Kirby, Rune VI). The name Osmoinen was addressed to Wainamoinen by Aino, Joukahainen's sister, and the name Uvantolainen by Louhi, the hostess of Pohyola, a hostile antagonistic to Kalevala land).

In set nominations with epithets like 'Vainamoinen, old and steadfast', 'the aged Vainamoinen' in Kirby's translation, and 'Wainamoinen, old and trusty', 'Wainamoinen, wise and ancient', 'Wainamoinen, old and truthful, etc. in Crawford's translation, only the form Wainamoinen / Vainamoinen is used throughout the text.

Thus, the use of proper names in a culture-loaded texts can reveal the attitude of an addresser to the addressee.

CONCLUSION

Personal names of Wainamoinen, the major character of Kalevala, accumulate hidden senses in lexical and grammatical forms that impart a special social status and additional information to the names. The name Wainamoinen / Väinämäinen forms a chain of most frequent nominations in Kalevala emphasizing the origin and status of a forefather. The name Vaino / Waino as a standard form of a male name in the Finnish culture was used by translators to follow the metrics of the verse as the context shows.

The layers of information include the following: 1) all proper names of Wainamoinen (Väinämäinen / Wainamoinen, Väinö / Waino, Suvantolainen / Suwantolainen, Uvantolainen, Osmoinen, Kalevainen, Kalevalainen) have a transparent inner form in the source language; 2) the suffix -inen imparts the name Wainamoinen a more formal sound a generic status; 3) in context personal names acquire a special status, assigned to the relationship of an addresser to the addressee.

It is known that proper names are not translatable, but they can be transliterated and in contexts where proper names are significant, e.g. in poems where the translator should follow the rhyme of the original, they should be translated or explained (Zabeeh: 1968). Every ethnic community possesses its background knowledge defining the cultural heritage that should be revealed to representatives of other cultures with the help of accurate translation (Gafiyatova & Pomortseva: 2016). Proper names of cultural heroes possess such kind of information that constitutes background knowledge. The analysis revealed the range of Wainamoinen's personal names, indicating ethnic characteristics of the world view of ancient people living in Finland. After the semantic analysis it became obvious that the names of Finnish mythic ancestors (Kaleva, Osmo) are in the root of Wainamoinen's personal names Kalevainen and Osmoinen, that indicates the status of Wainamoinen as the descendant of these two ancestors. The suffix -inen, which was first a diminutive suffix, in the XIX century started to have generic functions, thus making Wainamoinen himself the ancestor, the forefather of people of Kalevala. The names Wainamoinen, Suwantolainen reveal the origin of the hero connected with water that indicates the importance of water in life of ancient people. For the English-speaking reader, such analysis of Wainamoinen's personal names can help to bridge the gap of culture differences.

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