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## Russian Nationally-biased Units in the Sphere of Transportation in German Travel Notes of the XIX Century

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### Abstract

The article considers words reflecting nationally-biased units in the sphere of transportation (in Russia in XIX c.) basing on German travel notes: means of transportation, people connected with the organization of cabbings, travel documents, etc. Methods to introduce these Russian words into German texts and their functions are investigated.

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*Keywords:* Nationally-biased units, exotic lexical units, travel notes

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### 1. Introduction

In the XIX century Russia had an immense territory stretching from the Baltic sea in the West to the Pacific ocean in the East. A travel through the whole Russian Empire took months. Besides huge distances, other difficulties for a traveler in Russia were: the severe climate, geographical peculiarities, the need to be on a way for a long time (which includes travelling not only at a day-time, but also at night), a probability to be attacked by robbers in nooks, etc. Russian distances were particularly perceptible for foreigners who came from Western Europe. They got into an absolutely different world. The world deprived of the comfort they got used to and filled with everyday difficulties and, sometimes, dangers. But, along with this, this world is interesting in its own way, and it gives an unforgettable life experience of a longtime travelling.

During the XIX century foreigners actively visited Russia. Opinions and evaluations of these people are definitively subjective. Nevertheless, a foreign look on Russia is critically important in order to be fully aware of our

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roads, means of transportation and communication tools at this period. Thus, a historian V.Y. Kurbatov, who wrote an introductory article to the book of J. de Maistre «Religion and manners of Russians», pointed out: «A foreigner in Russia is a separate issue that often is painful for a national identity. His heart raises its hackles and rushes to contradict because of any criticism of original foundations. Meanwhile, sometimes you can see yourself in real through the eyes of others» (Kurbatov, 2010, page 5).

Many phenomena and processes that took place in Russia in the beginning of XIX c. were embodied in travel notes of west-european travelers who have visited Russia. Among those who visited Russia were the British, the Germans, the French, the Austrians, the Swiss and others. These people had a possibility to have their eyes on peculiarities of communication tools and means of transportation, as well as conditions of travelling on Russian roads, and evaluate them, and compare everything with what they had at their motherlands. In particular, there is a large amount of travel notes written in German among those materials that were not translated into Russian, and they are practically unknown in our country.

## 2. Research design

The focus of our attention in travel notes written in German of the given period are Russian words that reflect nationally-biased units of such a sphere as “the sphere of transportation”. Primarily, it is the case of an exotic vocabulary. It includes foreign words dealing with life peculiarities of the given people which call phenomena, objects and notions that describe its life, manners and culture in different historical epochs (Zelenin, 1992, page 1). Exoticisms are fairly close to such a notion of linguistics and cultural studies and the theory of translation as nationally-biased units which compose culture-specific vocabulary. However, according to S. Vlachov and S. Florin, the notion of nationally-biased unit is broader than exotism, as it includes not only names of foreign phenomena and objects, but also specific expressions like for example addresses, greetings, interjections, etc. (Vlachov, Florin, 2009, page 55). Thus, exoticisms are one of the types of nationally-biased units (in this article these are denotations of means of transportation and travel documents). It is important that these are units with a national and cultural markedness.

As concerns the genre of travel notes, to have a foreign word is its characteristic, especially when a travel of a foreign author is described. But an appearance of such a word in a text may be different depending on several factors (a social status of an author, a degree of his education, the author’s social status, career interests, language skills, etc.). The data for our study are travel notes of 9 different authors of XIX c. (with the total volume of about 2700 pages of a printed text). They describe travels to the wide variety of parts in Russia, from Saint-Petersburg to Kyakhta at the boundary of China. Since travels, particularly in Russia, were always associated with considerable distances, German authors could not stay away from this sphere of transportation: all the authors to a greater or lesser degree obligatory used nationally-biased units that reflect this sphere. We have selected 11 nationally-biased units which in turn could be divided into following groups:

- 1) names of means of transportation (6 items): *Droschke, Telege, Tarantase, Britschke, Kibitke, Troika*;
- 2) names of persons connected with the organization of cabbng (2 items): *Jamschtschik, Iswoschtschik*;
- 3) name of a travel document (1 item): *Podoroschna*;
- 4) expressions imitation a direct speech of a passenger and a cabman (2 items): *paschol, padi*.

The general amount of contexts where these words were used is 133 items.

It should be mentioned that not all of the selected nationally-biased units have Russian origins. For example, *brichka* is supposed to originate from the Polish language (Chernykh, 1999, V. I, page 112); *kibitka* – from Turkic languages (Ibid., page 394); *yamshchik* – from the Turkic as well (Ibid., V. II, page 470). But we abstract away from etymological criterion because these words had been already assimilated in the Russian language in the XIX c. as well. That is why words of first two categories can be referred to Russisms, since nationally-biased units they denote in a consciousness of a west-european were associated exactly with the Russian world.

## 3. Methods to introduce Russian nationally-biased units into German text

In general, the phonetic image of the considered Russian words is rendered in German texts pretty exactly, though graphic variants and even corruptions (sometimes even within the text of one and the same book) are observed. Compare the fixed variants: *Telege – Telega, Telegge; Tarantase – Tarantasse, Karandasse; Britschke – Britschka, Pritschke; Jamschtschik – Jamschik, Jämschtschik; Iswoschtschik – Izwoschtschik, Istwoschtschik, Iswoschik, Isworschik, Iswerschik; Podoroschna – Podaroschna, Podroschnia, Paradoschna; paschol – Pascholl*. There could be several reasons for such fluctuations. Probably, due to non-acquaintance or lack of skills in the Russian language, authors-travelers could mishear a word, and, as a result, they could put it down incorrectly. A possible influence of one of German dialects, whose native speaker was the author, should be taken into account. Thus, in the case of *Pritschke* ‘brichka’, a phonetic interference could take place. As it is known, a half-sonorous pronunciation of sonants or even their complete devoicing is a characteristic of many German dialects. On the other hand, a substitution of a foreign word with a native word, that was similar in its pronunciation, could happen, i.e. Russian “polka, nary” with German *Pritsche*. It should be also noted, that we did not find any case of emerging of a nationally-biased unit as an impregnation in Russian graphics. All the words were rendered by means of transliteration or transcription, i.e. by means of the Latin alphabet.

There is no consistency in grammatical composition of Russian words as well. Thus, if the Russian word *telega* is presented in several variants in travel texts, then, correspondingly, their plural forms are different: *Telegen, Telegas* (the last is composed after the manner of foreign words); compare also *Droschken, Droschka’s; Britschken, Britschka’s* and other. Fluctuations may be observed in a gender of a word. Further, we will not dwell on issues of phonetic, morphologic, or word-formation adaptation of Russian exoticisms in German texts, for this is a separate issue. We will look at how the authors introduce the nationally-biased units we are interested in.

Here two main methods can be emphasized: a foreign word is introduced in a German text with its explanation by the author or without such an explanation (see also (Nikandrova, 2014) to find out more about methods of introducing Russian exoticisms into a German historical text).

1) Introducing of a Russian nationally-biased unit in a text with an explanation (25 contexts).

In general, this method is applied primarily to foreign words, which are less known and less assimilated in the given language. When first met in a text, these words are followed by their translation, i.e. the author finds a close lexical equivalent in the German language. Usually, in such cases a Russian word is followed by its translation. Compare:

(1) *Das Nationalgespann für Telega und Kibitke ist die Troika, oder das Dreigespann*. (Blasius, 1844, page 28)

(2) *Mitchie’s Jamschik oder Kutscher war ein Burjäte...* (Andree, 1867, page 65)

(3) *Jedem in Rußland Reisenden begegnet zuerst der Istwoschtschik, der Kutscher*. (Witte, 1899, page 17)

(4) *... und war... unter der sichernden Aegide eines Officiers vom Generalstab und seines Podoroschna (Postpasszettels) fortgereiset*. (Meyer, 1829, page 387)

(5) *...rief dann meinem Kutscher ein Pascholl (Marsch) zu...* (Sydow, 1872, page 337)

If there is no analogue in the culture of an author-traveler (the first group of words) or he deems it necessary to explain to a reader the meaning of a Russian word or draw his attention to some details, then we see, as a rule, more or less detailed intratextual commentary next to this word. This commentary may be formed in different ways: a parenthetical construction, an appendix, an attributive clause, and others on the level of a sentence. In the following examples, compare indications on a layout and an origin of means of transportation:

(6) *... in einen solchen Abgrund wagen wollte, durch welchen kaum die leichten Postkarren (Telegen), durchschwimmen*. (Neigebaur, 1854, page 25)

(7) *Auf großen Wegen bedient man sich in Rußland eines Fuhrwerks, das von den Tataren entlehnt sein soll, und mit dem Namen Tarantase oder Karandasse belegt wird*. (Blasius, 1844, page 26)

A cumbersome commentary of an author can be given in a footnote. Compare in the following example an author’s commentary that resembles an article of a reference book:

(8) *...mit einer Podaroschna \*) versehen... \*) Dies ist eine vom Gouverneur an die Postämter ausgestellte Ordre, dem Reisenden ohne Verzug die bestimmte Zahl von Pferden für den festgesetzten Preis... verabfolgen zu lassen, die zugleich als Reisepaß dient. Man zahlt beim Empfange derselben nach der Entfernung eine verhältnismäßige Abgabe an die Kronscasse*. (Erdmann, 1825, page 1)

However, such fragments, which document a narration, are rare in the considered travel notes.

A tendency to a graphical emphasizing of a Russicism during its introducing to a German text with an aim to point out a new exotic word for a reader is observed. This can be an italics or a tracking that are used in a text of a whole book and only once and for the first time.

2) Including a Russian nationally-biased unit in a text without any explanation of a meaning (108 contexts).

Those Russian nationally-biased units, which apparently were already familiar to an educated German reader (by means of reference books for travelers in Russia, by means of Russian literature, publicistic writings, conversations with those who had already visited our country, etc. ) do not need any explanations. Thus, a word *Droschke* ‘droshky’ of the first group, which is met in texts of 8 out of 9 authors of travel notes, is introduced by all of them without explanations, what testifies the assimilation of this word in the German language of the considered epoch. This is confirmed by the data of a dictionary of the German language of the XIX c. as well, including also foreign words: as concerns our nationally-biased units, it includes only two words – *Droschke* (Kaltschmidt, 1854, page 181) and *Kibitke* (Ibid., page 477). The word *Droschke* was not marked anyhow even graphically, when it was first introduced in a text.

Furthermore, without explanations, Russian nationally-biased units are used in all other cases after their first appearance in a text, i.e. when a reader is familiar with its meaning. Then it becomes clear a noticeably bigger amount of such contexts (in comparison with a first method of introducing Russicisms): here they are used predominantly in a nominative function only.

#### 4. Functioning of nationally-biased units in travel notes

The considered Russicisms have several functions in German travel notes. First of all, this is a nominative function (denomination of the means of transportation themselves) and a function of creating of a local, national identity, what is typical for exoticisms in general, especially in the genre of travelling: undoubtedly, these words, which sometimes were indeed exotic for a European, gave a description and effect of authenticity. Therewith, an author could demonstrate a reader his awareness of peculiarities of transportation in Russia, an ability to perceive words of a non-mother tongue (the function of the author’s self-presentation).

If a Russian word was accompanied with commentaries of an author-traveler, and typically they were of evaluation purposes, then it may be said about an affecting function (establishment of a definite worldview of a German reader). Thus, in texts of practically every author describing means of transportation in Russia whether it be droshky, telega or troika, we can find a description (and not without an admiration) of their speed, which was incredible for a German, and with that speed they overcame such long distances. J.H. Blasius, who devoted a separate chapter to how people drive in Russia, writes the following: “These roads, on which a German would not rode in the end of the previous century without making a will in advance, or, at least, without saying goodbye to all his kin to the third and fourth generation, are passed by a strong and cheerful Russian in just several hours with songs and whistle without thinking of anything” (Blasius, 1844, page 23-24). That is why words from the first group are often accompanied with attributes: *schnell, rasch, dahineilend, dahinfliegend* и т.п.

But Russian carriages can trigger other associations, negative associations among some of the authors. For example, in travel notes droshky is associated with an inconvenience of transportation in them. E. Heyking, when he has reached Tbilisi and seen there quite European carriages, compares a transportation in Russian droshky with an agony:

(9) *Die Marterdroschken des Iswoschtschiks sind hier durch bequeme, sogar recht elegante Kaleschen ersetzt...* (Heyking, 1878, page 65)

And during the travel in Siberia of A. Mici, what was described by another author, droshky is accompanied with ironic context: a bedraggled peasant is presented as a solemnly sitting teamster (an elevated vocabulary is used). A traveler has to “rumble” in Kyakhta on droshky, sacrificing his bones for an “honour” (it was indecent for important persons to go on foot in this city):

(10) ... *miethete Michie eine Droschke... Es war ein schäbiger alter Kasten in schwankenden Federn, aus dessen Kutschbocke ein ungekämmtter Bauer als Rosselenker thronte... So ratterte Michie durch die staubigen Straßen von Kiachta und opferte seine Knochen der „Ehre“.* (Andree, 1867, page 60)

Two Russian words of the last group are used for the purpose of imitation of the Russian speech ethics in the sphere of transportation. In the following examples the authors fix accustomed words of a passenger and a cabman

in a direct speech (with a translation in a parenthetical construction in within the brackets), with a required intoning:

(11) *Manche dieser abgetriebenen Rosse, sind doch und bleiben ohnmächtig, und da hilft kein Ruf: „paschol! paschol!“ (vorwärts!) (Meyer, 1844, page 28)*

(12) *Oft nach seinem Meister auf hohem Bock umblickend, durchpfeift sein warnender Ruf: „padi! – padi!! – padi – i – i!!!“ (weg da! gebt acht!) kreischend die Luft... (Meyer, 1844, page 25)*

Probably, all the mentioned functions are realized here. These are bright examples of nationally-biased units of Russian live speech in themselves, which make a German text more “colorful”. But this is also a demonstration of the author of his Russian language skills, though F.J.L. Meyer had not ever been to Russia before, had not lived here before having published his notes as some other authors. Of course, a reader has a definite impression from what he has read.

## 5. Conclusion

One way or another, the Russian vocabulary which reflects nationally-biased units in the sphere of transportation takes place in travel notes of all German authors who has visited Russia. They pay particular attention to this sphere in their descriptions (and sometimes they devote whole chapters). Everything that is connected with transport and communication in Russia attracted their attention, and, apparently, it seemed them deserving attention of their compatriots, for whom they had published these notes.

All the nationally-biased units, with an exception of Droschke, when first met in text, are at most introduced with a translation, and less often with an explanation in the form of a comment. This testifies that nationally-biased units of Russian life in the sphere of transportation still remains little-known to German native speakers, and the corresponding Russicisms were still non-assimilated in the German language. And as it was already mentioned, if the dictionary of the German language of 1854 fixes only 2 words out of 11, then in the last dictionary of foreign words of the German language there are already 5 of them: these are Droschke, Kibitke, Tarantas, Troika и pascholl (Duden, 2010). Therewith, for example, Troika expands its semantic structure in the modern German language, and thus it already means not just a team of three horses. It appears that a definite contribution to an assimilation of these lexical units in the German language throughout the XIX c. was made by authors-travelers as well.

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