



## Onyms in Teaching Aids for 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade and Child's World Perception

### Summary

#### Introduction

*Onomasticon is one of most relevant nominal systems of language. The system reflects ways and methods for individual naming of objects, realias meaningful for an ethnos. For studying a nation's language world, anthroponyms and toponyms are especially important because a word is an object for studying an ethnos' conscious reality, a nation's world perception. A child acquires the concept of functional nuances of a proper name in a family; however it is important that pupils' attention during the learning process be drawn both to situational conditionality of use of proper names, and the principles of its choice and traditions in the native and other cultures. Likewise the pupil should acquire knowledge of norms of choosing the word's official or unofficial variants and skills of using them in communication. A pupil should also form the concept that choice of a variant, which does not correspond to the situational standard may cause communication difficulties. This in turn means that the mentioned aspects should be taken into account at developing contents of teaching aids.*

#### Aim of the study

*The aim of the research was to examine the role of onyms in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teaching aids, what proper nouns get the child's attention, how the origin and ethnic-cultural connotation is revealed because especially at this stage, pupils should form a concept of proper nouns under the standard of basic education of the Latvian language.*

#### Materials and methods

*The empirical material was taken from sets of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teaching aids and analysed by using the linguo-cultural approach and analyses of word's semantic structure, and the descriptive method.*

#### Results and conclusions

*The research brought forward that a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade pupil is given the possibility to get acquainted with several groups of onyms: persons' names, place-names, names of celestial bodies, names of institutions, enterprises, names of product varieties and others.*

*Analysing the empirical material, it was concluded that:*

- *taking into account the fact that the Latvian language is both a subject of studies and means of studying other subjects, it is important that during the learning process both in the background and in the direct contents Latvian world perception would be actualised consistently and purposefully, including also information from cultural history included in system of onyms. Special attention should be drawn to it during primary school, when the pupil, on the one hand, has his nearest world most important – the family, home, school, surroundings and, on the other hand, the pupil forms bases for scientific understanding of the world and the interest in values of his nation's culture is either created, fixed, or vice versa smothered;*
- *although the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teaching aids include wide, functionally, semantically, in the sense of origin and cultural marking a varied range of onyms, these however have not become the object of purposefully driven research activity and component of formation of pupils' scientific and language world perception;*
- *authors of teaching aids have not found possibilities to offer tasks oriented at culture where not only the pupils' language knowledge would improve but also the cultural view would expand; therefore a teacher needs to supplement the learning contents by definite tasks and linguistic-culturological information in order to ensure worth-full acquisition of the Latvian language.*

**Kew words:** onym, persons' name, child's language, world perception, school

A child enters the world of language and culture starting from its first moments of life. At first he meets the environment existing in the direct proximal family. This can be both a linguistically monolith environment and an environment of two or several languages and thus the environment of their culture. For most Latvian children, this is the environment of vernacular or even dialects and standard language, for a part - the so called third languages spoken by their parents (not any more a vernacular, nor still a quality standard language), for others – an environment of various languages. Variety of languages and thereby variety of their cultures enter the life of almost every child soon enough by TV or radio. Unfortunately, mostly these are images and words, which are strange to and uncharacteristic of Latvian culture, Proper nouns in this the so called screen environment function quite often in speech behaviour models as signs of aggressiveness or other negations, which are not acceptable to an individual. Then comes the verbally-visual world of books with their images and words, including onyms which form a relevant part of child's culture world and language because proper nouns are not only linguistically but also historically unique and culturally marked language unit.

Each language has a wide system of onyms or onomasticon which reflects the individual nomination of objects, realia relevant to the nation (Bušs 2003<sup>2</sup>, 75-77; Hirša 2004, 409-421; Вежбицкая 1997, 47-50). Within ethno-linguistic and cultural aspect, a special attention is drawn to texts and those nominative units which are relevant for learning the ethnos' world perception (Бартминский 2005), anthroponyms (name, surname, nickname, hypocoristic and others), toponyms, zoonyms (Вежбицкая 1997, 89-200). The study of place-names and personal names – given names and family names – reveals regularities of language development and history curves, as well as influence from other nations and languages (Bušs, Hirša 2006, 130-136; Balodis 2008, 3). Of course, special titles of other realia are meaningful enough to study them; however onyms of the aforementioned groups are very important for learning a nation's world perception because a word is not only a denomination of an object or phenomenon characteristic of an individual's living-space. It is also the object of learning the ethnos' conscious reality, a nation's world perception (Humbolts 1985; Freidenfelds 1992; Вежбицкая 1992). Furthermore, personal names usually have various functional variants whereof the official and the unofficial variant are most significant. In speech they respectively show the presence of social distance or the lack of it and indicate that the communication partners have similar or different social status or age, friendly, official, hostile relations and the like. Children acquire the concept on various nuances for using persons' names already in the family learning norms of speech behaviour or etiquette; however it is important during the learning process that pupils' attention would be drawn to situational conditions of personal name usage and to conditions for its choice, and traditions of its granting in the native and other cultures. Likewise pupils should acquire knowledge on norms for choosing official or unofficial variant of a person's name and skill to use them in communication, as well as the concept should be formed that choice of variants, which do not correspond to the situational standard, may cause communication difficulties.

Therefore these aspects should be taken into account when preparing contents of teaching aids. Acquiring various subjects pupils expand knowledge on the nation's real world perception and also acquire the definite scientific, cultureal and language world in direct or contextual manner. Onym can operate at least on two levels in teaching aids: indirectly – as a component of various texts, and in an activated manner – as object of learning. Thus the proper noun becomes a means and a component for child's cultural view and formation of linguistic knowledge.

Taking into account the fact that the Latvian language is both a subject of study and means of studying other subjects (Laiveniece 2000, 46; Gavriļina, Vulāne 2001, 6; Gavriļina, Vulāne 2008, 9-13), it is important that during the learning process both in the background and in direct contents, Latvian world perception would be actualised consistently and purposefully, including information from cultural history included in system of onyms. Special attention should be drawn to it during primary school, when the pupil, on the one hand, has his nearest world most important – the family, home, school, surroundings and, on the other hand, the pupil forms bases for scientific understanding of the world and the interest in values of his nation's culture is either created, fixed, or vice versa smothered.

In order to find out what role is granted to onyms in teaching aids at primary schools, what proper nouns come into child's view, how their origin and ethnic-cultural connotation is revealed, sets of

teaching aids for the 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of primary school were reviewed. Taking into account that origin of proper nouns under the standard of the Latvian language (Pamatizglītības standarts latviešu valodā 2004) begins to be talked about in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, the article will offer an insight into onym system used in teaching aids of this grade.

In total, sets of teaching aids developed by various authors and authors' groups and intended for acquisition of the Latvian language (Anspoka 2000; Anspoka 2005<sup>1</sup>; Anspoka 2005<sup>2</sup>; Anspoka 2005<sup>3</sup>; Filatova 2006; Irbe 2005<sup>1</sup>; Irbe 2005<sup>2</sup>; Rune 2005<sup>1</sup>; Rune 2005<sup>2</sup>), social science (Irbe 2005<sup>1</sup>; Irbe 2005<sup>2</sup>; Rune 2005<sup>1</sup>; Rune 2005<sup>2</sup>), math (Mencis 1999), nature science (Arājs 2004) provide the possibility to a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade pupil to get acquainted with various onym groups: given names, family names, hypocoristics, nicknames, pseudonyms, animal names, place-names (names of parts of the world, states, populated areas, waters, various nature objects, house names), names of celestial bodies, institutions, enterprises, product varieties and other names. In this article I will draw attention only to two groups of onyms – persons' names and place-names.

At first, the varied range of personal names should be mentioned including the official variant (Christian name and surname) and the unofficial variant (hypocoristic). This includes words which are used in various communication situations and reflect roles or the social status of the communication partners. These persons' names signal whether the communication partners are: 1) socially distanced, 2) equal in the social sense, 3) they have businesslike, official or friendly, unofficial relations, 4) of different age or the same age.

Onyms play a significant role in oral folklore and fiction. Teaching aids of the Latvian language in primary schools richly use works of various genres – tales, legends, poems, passages from stories, plays by Latvian and foreign authors. As Sandra Rumaka indicates, "Correlative relation between onomastic vocabulary and poetry perform special functions in the process of text creation and perception because on the one hand proper nouns with their expressiveness of reality enriches the expression of a poem and other images, but on the other hand the lyric form provides the onym with a special functional load, changes its meaning, so that sometimes the proper noun acquires specific additional semantics. In contradiction to prose, the poetic expression itself causes the author to search and the reader to perceive the nuances and accents of meanings" (Rumaka 1998, 19). These words can to a certain extent be referred also to prose text – onym becomes sometimes the sign of time, environment which creates specific textual, historical, cultural, spatial and other associations (for example, the Latvian *Daugaviņa mellupīte*, *Burtnieks*, *Inesis*, *Alauksts*, *Rāzna*, *Gaiziņš*, *Lāčplēsis*, *Kangars*, *Boņuks*, *Annele*, *Gaismas pils* and foreign *Ādams* (Adam), *Ieva* (Eve), *Emīls* (Emil), *Alfons Trīcvaidziņš* (Alfons Zitterbacke), *Pepija Garzeķe* (*Peppy Long-Stockings*), *Bābele* (Babel), *Hirosima* (Hiroshima)). In turn non-specific proper noun (*Jānis*, *Saulcerīte*, *Laimdota*, *Antiņš*) can be used also as national symbol; it may have the function of expression of the poet's position. Nonce persons' names created by writers are also meaningful; these names perform not only the nominative but also the characterisation function of characters and become a peculiar element for figurative expression, on the one hand, and means for unleashing child's creative abilities, fantasy.

The anthroponym's structure in Latvian is formed by the given and the inherited name, that is, first name, acquired by an individual during the first days of life at christening and it may be related or unrelated to family traditions, and surname – inherited name of the family, father (more seldom – mother), it always ties the child to the nation of the father or the mother. In the etiquette of Latvian speech, the first name within the functional system of anthroponyms is usually more active, variable because it is used by everyday communication; moreover in unofficial communication situations, various hypocoristics of the first name are dominating quite often, for example, *Liene*, *Lienīt*, *Lieņuk*, and the like. Surnames in turn are related to more official communication and are used either together with the first name – *Vilni Kalniņ!*, or together with appellative – *skolotāj Graudiņ!* (Teacher Graudiņa), *Siliņas kundze!* (Mrs Siliņa!), *Zeltiņakungs!* (Mr Zeltiņš!). In parallel to this system, a secondary nominative system functions in a sporadic or long-term and constant manner – pseudonyms, nicknames, for example, *Aspazija*, *Rainis*, *Sausiņš*, *pika*, *evs*, *nevermind*, *smieklīņš*, *tontone*.

Undeniably, use of these words within various communication situations indirectly creates a concept for pupils regarding the situational labelling of the word, speech etiquette; at the same time if the

language material is not purposefully activated, it fails to become a part of pupils' linguistically conscious scientific and language world perception, neither from the point of view of culture, nor from the aspect of relevance or irrelevance. Choice of persons' names is related to definite situational meaning, for example, neutrality of relations, coolness, respect, warmth, kindness, friendliness, antipathy, etc. Simultaneously the word includes wider cultural information related to the word's origin and the person's ethnic belonging, significance in the definite culture and the like. People have granted special meaning to the word, considered it as magic sign. During his time, E. Blese has turned attention to the word's power: "As we address an individual and calling him by his name, we turn attention from us and order him to do this or that, so we seem that by mentioning the individual's name without him hearing it, we however tie him and can impose our will on him. [...] Gods also listened if called by the correct name. Thus everything what we do with the name of a known individual or deity, actually is done with the individual or deity itself" (Blese 1929, 4). A reflection of this view is observed in modern people thinking because choice of a child's name sometimes is related to transferring of the family's, ancestry value system, power, some wish to the following generation. Therefore it is important that in contents of the Latvian language teaching, personal names would function not only as textual or grammar unit, but also as culture-historical value which unfortunately has not adequately been implemented in the didactic material of the Latvian language.

Study books offer 3rd grade pupils a wide collection of anthroponyms of fiction authors – writers', poets' name and surname, pseudonym. Primary school pupils have the opportunity to get acquainted at the level of a name with almost whole set of authors writing for children, basically without acquiring (if speaking only of teaching aids) any information about the authors themselves – neither cultural belonging, time of life, nor literary activity. This is left to the teachers' discretion. Thus the pupil actually forms an indifferent attitude towards authorship, towards the author's name – it functions as cluster of sounds, combination of letters which should be memorised until the following lesson without becoming a sign of personality and culture-information which would be related to values of Latvian (or other) culture. Actually it does not matter for pupils who is *Anna Brigadere*, *Ojārs Vācietis*, *Māra Cielēna*, *Astrīda Lindgrēne*, *Hanss Kristians Andersens* etc., because teaching material for the 3rd grade, no information is offered about these personalities (except the set "Zīle" where short annotation about writers is sometimes provided). Thus no ties are formed with the time, when the work was prepared, historical circumstances, and the author and the literary work exists somewhat outside time and space. Furthermore, pupils do not acquire understanding of the link between the author, the literary work and the national culture, the fact that the study book includes works by not only Latvian but also other nationality writers, poets and playwrights. This in turn to a certain extent trains pupils for further learning stages when literature lessons turn attention to facts of the writer's biography and works, to carelessly treat personality as a cultural value of the definite nation.

The other group of onyms is formed by personal names which are used in various texts. They are persons' names of Latvian origin with a brighter or not so bright ethnic labelling, for example, *Ziedīte*, *Rasiņa*, *Vilnis*, *Baltais Laimiņš*, found in various works and enter the pupils' view by using the one or the other teaching aid of the Latvian language, or loanwords. In total, this is valuable empirical material which the teachers can use both for pupils to acquire the language and the cultural knowledge and skills, by supplementing the teaching aid both with corresponding linguistic information and with relevant cognition tasks.

The teaching aid *Ar gudru ziņu*, tries sometimes to turn pupils' attention to the system of Latvian surnames, their origins, as well as semantics of other proper nouns. Subject "Stories of My Family" (Rune 2005<sup>1</sup> 18-19) includes conversation on what is family, how the surname *Osis* (Ash-Tree) has originated, and offers pupils to create their own story on origins of surnames *Arājs*, *Bagāts*, *Cauna*, *Āķis*, *Koklītis*. Such task is quite stimulating but its completion in good quality needs adequate theoretical basis – linguistic and historic background information (text "Smējāni Family Tree" for this reason cannot be used because it lacks the necessary facts). Fantasising about subjects, which should be based on scientifically accurate material, pupils form unscientific concept on various historic and language facts which should not be allowed from the point of view of didactics. In order to avoid unwanted consequences the teacher may adapt passages from researches by E. Blese (Blese 1929), O. Bušs (Bušs 2003<sup>1</sup>), P. Balodis (Balodis 2004;



Balodis 2005<sup>1</sup>; Balodis 2005<sup>2</sup>; Balodis 2006; Balodis 2008) and other linguists for the needs of studies and offer pupils to get acquainted with information which is scientifically substantiated. The teacher may successfully relate the aforementioned material about persons' names of Smējāni family also with section „Relatives” which uses range of persons' names *Krišjānis Celms, Dāvis Upesleja, Toms Dūmiņš, Linda Biezā, Aleksandrs Rudihs, Rasa Bitīte, Raivo Loits, Emīls Ostrovskis, Anna Kalēja, Madara Pļaviņa, Ilga Nakts* and others, offering conversation also about persons' names of other ethnoses and developing dialogue about facts of not only one's own but also other cultures (Vulāne, Gavriļina 2002). Thus the stimulating material prepared by authors of the teaching aid would be fully used and the formation of pupils' scientific and language world perception would be facilitated. Pupils could benefit if the teaching aids would offer wider range of information on the meaning of not only Latvian personal names but also loaned personal names because „Persons' names of foreign language origin form the larger part of Latvian names; it would probably not be wrong to say even that the foundation of Latvian modern anthroponymic system is built from them, leaving the words of truly Latvian origin almost the only decorative function. We have „assimilated” a multitude of words coming from classical languages – Classic Greek and Latin, German, Scandinavian languages long ago and we acknowledge them as Latvian persons' names irrespective of the linguistic origin of these words” (Bušs 2003<sup>2</sup>, 75).

One of spheres where personal names have an active function is dialogue which in turn is related to knowing norms of speech behaviour; therefore it is important that the teaching contents for pupils would implement formulae for speech etiquette. Contents of the analysed teaching aids is formed so that pupils have little possibilities when working with the textbook to get to know in various ways and thus to acquire the speech etiquette characteristic of the Latvian culture, to compare with speech etiquette of other nations, which they contact and which are remote. Basically it is possible to contact etiquette formulae by reading passages from fiction, in separate cases – dialogues prepared by authors. Texts use forms of address by name, by hypocoristic – little, by address constructions *surname + Mrs/Mr – less*) (*Kimberlaina kundze, Emijtante*), several nicknames. Pupils are not much encouraged to form address constructions using person's names indicated in the task. Thus they are denied the possibility to form a scientifically correct view of the fact that children in unofficial and official communication are addressed differently from adults, their relatives – differently from strangers, adults, who belong and do not belong to the family or range of friends, are addressed differently, adults address each other differently at work, public and home. Primary school is the stage when basic formulae of speech etiquette acquired at home and everyday experience should become a conscious component of pupil's speech behaviour, not only some information which is acquired empirically; furthermore it should be tied with the characteristics of the specific culture and language. Likewise it should be taken into account that sometimes a grade included pupils whose native language is not Latvian.

Since the teaching aids use works by Latvian authors and authors of other nations, then speech behaviour models of various cultures blend together in pupils' perception, if teachers fail to draw attention to the differences. Authors of foreign language teaching aids offer pupils of primary school addressing constructions which are typical of the respective language (but without using possibilities of intercultural dialogue), without relating the constructions to the cultural information on the characteristics of the respective nation, without forming concept on origin, culture-aureola of ethnic-labelled name, surname, place-name.

A peculiar tradition could be the one that teaching aids of the Latvian language – both in primary schools and during later stages, the culture variety characteristic of Latvia is constantly ignored, including also in the onomasticon. Of course, proper nouns of other languages function in separate texts by Latvian authors and translated texts, but neither textbooks, nor exercise books offer appropriate tasks oriented at culture study. Within the scope of social sciences, chapter „Nationalities” offers text *Rasa Bitīte's letter to her friend* (Rune 2005<sup>2</sup>, 110-111), which tries to relate ethnic belonging and name:

*Today we spoke about nations during the class. We all know that our classmate Raivo is Estonian, Aleksandrs is Russian, Jūlija is Belarusian, but Gintare is Lithuanian. Sofija is in 3.b grade, she recently came to Latvia from Poland, and the Gypsy Rolands. [...] It turns out that two basic nationalities live in Latvia – Latvians and Livs. Isn't it interesting?*

The fact that the presence of basic nationalities in Latvia is regarded as a phenomenon worth of surprise seems quite peculiar; how should then otherwise the readers perceive the last two sentences? Working with the offered material the pupil himself or together with the teacher must decide whether there are any connections between the person's name and individual's ethnic belonging because naming proper nouns in relation to a nationality is not enough to form at least a notion for pupils regarding national specifics of onyms. Even less for forming understanding. Furthermore personal names *Jūlija, Sofija, Rolands* in no way are the most typical Belarusian, Polish, Gypsy names. Onyms which are characteristic of Livs and our own inhabitants of Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Latgale, historic Zemgale, Sēlija, in turn are not even mentioned.

Pupils' world perception is entered by verbal facts not only from Latvian, but also from English, Czech, French, Swedish, Chinese and other languages – persons' names in fiction, author's name, surname, persons' names used for certain occasion and their translation. In relation to translated works, I wish to turn teachers' attention to the fact that by offering to read translated fiction it is important to indicate that works by various authors include personal names, place-names and other proper nouns which are the signs of a specific culture, and also names which are translated and reflect only the author's creative approach to revelation of the character's nature. For example, when reading passages from story on Alfons Zitterbacke by German writer G. Holz-Baumert (Anspoka 2000, 104-107), on Hörbe (*Herbe*) by O. Preußler (Rune 2005<sup>2</sup>, 32-33) or tale by Hungarian writer E. Lazar (Rune 2005<sup>2</sup>, 42-43) pupils can acquire incorrect concept on ethnic belonging of the character if the teacher fails to initiate conversation on translation peculiarities, namely, names of characters and place-names tend to be reproduced or translated into the target language (*Trīcvaidziņš, Kaktiņās jaunkundze, Drāndaris, Saknītis, Klibītis; Jautribas parks, Četrstūrainais Apaļmežs* and others).

All teaching aids use fiction with onyms used for the special occasion. They reflect the possibilities of using methods and means for creating words of the Latvian language and they are useful for stimulating pupils' fantasy, for learning the internal image of the word. However, the issue whether attention should be drawn to these words, how to do that is consistently left at the teacher's discretion.

Interesting elements of language background are found in *Math* books developed by mathematicians Menči (Mencis 1999) using wide set of anthroponyms, some toponyms, as well as separate names of various other objects (institutions, enterprises). The authors use elements of word game, rhyming form time to time, for example, *Maira, Vaira, Naira, Maija, Aija, Vija, Tija, Rita, Gita*. Architects' surnames *Kārklis, Krūms* are associatively motivating. Thus during lessons of the Latvian language the teacher has the possibility to involve this material in the teaching contents, supplementing and extending it by corresponding tasks of studying, learning.

We meet wide set of place-names in textbooks for the Latvian language, social sciences, maths and, of course, nature science. These are names of continents, states, waters, mountains, populated areas, houses and others, for example, *Africa, Australia, South America, North America, the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian ocean, the Arctic Ocean, the World ocean, Eurasia*, the world's highest mountain Everest, the world's largest desert Sahara is in Africa, the longest river Nile and the like. Reading teaching aids for nature sciences (Arājs 2004), a quite chaotic actual (geographic) and scientific world perception is formed which is alienated to perception of the world of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade pupil because he thinks sometimes that some more distant place in Latvia is a territory of a different country; he cannot understand what is Eurasia (if he has not understood what Europe is and what Asia is), Antarctic, Australia, the World ocean and the like. The offered material resembles advertisements flashing across the eyes; in no way do they facilitate perception of the world as a whole, or the formation of stable and lasting knowledge. Likewise the Latvian onomasticon in the teaching aid for natural sciences (Arājs 2004) is offered in a quite chaotic manner. Latvian place-names alternate with words from other countries, and geographic placement of the respective places appears in front of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade pupil's eyes as crazy merry-go-round without creating an overview. If we take these words out of context, the pupil may for the following geographic world perception: *the Ventas rumba, waterfall Victoria, the Zambezi in the African continent, Latvian rivers: the Venta, Lielupe; Russia, Dole Island, Zaķusala, Lucavsala, Kundziņsala, Daugava the river of fate* (but – why? - reply is not provided), *Gauja, Jelgava, Kurzeme, Lietuva, Riga Bay (!), Ventspils; lakes: Lubāns, Rāzna,*

*Engure, Burtnieks, Liepāja Lake, Drīdzis* (the deepest in Latvia), *Alauksts, Inesis, Alūksne Lake, Ežezers, Rušona, Rēzekne Lake*. I think that such offer is not acceptable either from the point of view of science, or from didactic requirements.

Of course, place-name material--maps--can be used by teachers during lessons of the Latvian language, to gradually form a concept on what a place-name can tell, how our ancestors gave names to various places, offering information for the story how our nearest and furthest neighbours have done that.

The fact that pupils sometimes (Anspoka 2005<sup>2</sup>) at least by mediation are motivated to think about origins of onyms, should be evaluated positively, namely, there are tasks to write out place-names, proper nouns, to write a creative work *My House*, to tell about some town, by description of travel, pupils are encouraged to draw attention to Latvian farm house names, for example *Ozoliņi, Liepas, Kalni, Lejas, Mālnieki, Vilkauši* and others. Several tasks are dedicated to work with place-names and proper nouns in teaching aids of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, but unfortunately none of them reveals their origin, cultural value because we cannot regard material of legends as scientifically sufficient. Of course, if the teaching aid includes material of proper nouns, if it has legends, then the teacher can prepare the necessary linguistic and cultural information.

Sometimes, one can also meet scientifically not quite correct suggestions. For example, the teaching aid "Zile" sketches information on house-names. Thus, working with passage from Jānis Baltvilks' story *One Day in Dundurciems (Viena diena Dundurciemā)*, (Filatova 2006, 35) we read the task:

*The writer has named several interesting house-names. Write them out. What peculiar farm house-names do you know? Do you know how house-names have originated?*

Unfortunately, in the text the inhabitants of the house, that is, the surname of the family is mentioned. This misleads pupils in believing that the following model of thinking is actually offered: since the words coined for special occasion *Mežspindele, Usmušas, Lejasblusas, Kazdundurs* and others are surnames, the pupil has grounds to conclude that: 1) house-names are usually coined from the owner's surname; 2) house-names are mostly compounds; 3) house-name origin is determined by feeling – as it seems to me, so it should be (if the teacher fails to offer a correct interpretation); 4) house-names are all over in Latvia, although in Latgale, they are not typical phenomena.

The teaching aid *Ar gudru ziņu* (Irbe 20051, 9) offers a legend which is attributed to Rēzekne. Unfortunately no source is indicated, where the legend is quoted, but judging by the language formulation, this is not an original legend because in Rēzekne, people do not say *tur, ģipatykušos, myurmeisteris, sazynōtūs, ōmurs*, etc. Second, the sisters' names *Luķe, Rase* and *Dine* are not believable in this region neither phonetically, nor lexically. Thus the task to write „from which sister name the name of each town has originated” (*Ludza, Rēzenke, Daugavpils*) is not practicable if we do not wish to acquire an incorrect result. Even if some material has this legend fixed, authors of teaching aids should still observe the principle of scientific character and choose the folklore material, which corresponds to peculiarities of the respective dialect and vernacular, instead of an artificial formation. Such tasks fixes pupils' conclusions that the mentioned toponyms have originated in this way and that legends are scientifically correct material for discovering place-names origins (and other linguistically historic information). Such superficiality is not permissible in teaching aids because they cause wrong concepts in pupils' scientific world perception. The fact that the aforementioned way of perception is not the author's imagination is proven by students findings during learning process which allowed to conclude that if the science principle is ignored during learning process and tendencies of mythologisation and quasi-science, then pupils fail to acquire basis for scientific thinking and skills for learning and scientific work.

Poem by J. Kunoss "How many hills are in Riga?" used in textbook (Anspoka 2000, 66) is linguistically and creatively stimulating added by a task to name the proper nouns mentioned in the poem, which the teacher can supplement by popular-scientific explanation of place-names *Āgenskalns, Torņakalns, Baložkalns, Dzegužkalns, Čiekurkalns, Sarkankalns, Bastejkalns, Ziepniekkalns, Katlakalns, Grīziņkalns*, which would relate to the game of association of words and etymology offered by the author, as well as facilitate pupils learning to separate the artistic interpretation of proper noun origin from scientifically appropriate explanation.

- In one article it is impossible to fully characterise the whole didactic material, which includes personal names or place-names; however, generally we can conclude that:
- primary school teaching aids include wide, functionally, semantically, in the sense of origin and cultural marking varied range of onyms, which mostly serve as a part of a text and have not become the object of purposefully driven research activity and component of formation of pupils' scientific and language world perception;
- contents of Latvian language teaching should be formed in a manner that offers pupils accurate linguistic and historic information, avoiding mistakes and imperfections in explanations of language facts;
- since teaching aids of the Latvian language have few tasks oriented at linguistics and culture, the teacher's creativity, linguistic education and pedagogical professionalism are the determinants for pupils to draw attention during reading various literary works to semantic and functional features of onyms; the teachers needs to supplement the learning contents with specific tasks and linguistic and cultural information in order to use the rich language material and ensure thoughtful acquisition of the Latvian language.

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