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Innovations in teaching linguistic disciplines

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Abstract

Onomastics as a branch of linguistics and academic discipline is concerned with a wide range of problems connected with proper names constituting the onomastic space of language. The new tendencies characterizing the development of onomastics indicate that the research in this area has broadened its scope and various categories of names that were not previously studied at present are in the focus of attention of scholars. It refers to commercial nomination orientated to obtaining profit and regarded as linguistic naming of institutions, enterprises and products. The present study deals with characteristics of verbal trademarks representing commercial nomination and considers methods used in linguistics to determine the degree of identity or difference of trademarks similar in sound form and graphics. The methodology of linguistic expertise is described on the example of the verbal trademarks *ACCY* (Cyrillic script letters) and *A'SU* (Latin script letters) used to name beverages produced in Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Onomastics; linguistic expertise; commercial nomination; distinctiveness.

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1. Introduction

Socio-political and socio-economic changes taking place in the Republic of Kazakhstan created conditions for reforming and improving the competitiveness of its higher education system. These prerequisites greatly contributed to the integration of our country into the world educational space. Joining the Bologna Process has led to a structural modernization of the national model of education. In the effort to meet the modern requirements, the Kazakhstani system of education uses a wealth of its experience, and it is also orientated to the world positive experience in this area, which give rise to the necessity to improve educational standards and to search for new approaches and technologies for effectively teaching various disciplines.

Progressive trends in higher education found their direct reflection in the teaching process of new linguistic disciplines, notably such special courses as *Onomastics: Theory and Practice*, *Orthological Basics of Onomastics*, *Proper Name in Intercultural Communication*, *Jurislinguistics*, which are included in the curricula of graduates and doctoral students enrolled in the educational programs “Language Theory”, “Foreign Philology” and “Linguistics”.

2. Problem statement

2.1. Brief outline of the problem

Onomastics as a branch of linguistics and academic discipline in higher education institutions studies a wide range of issues that attract attention of scholars in the field of linguistics and linguodidactics. The study of proper names, collectively representing a fragment of the language picture of the world, enables to present the facts reflecting the universality of human consciousness and the uniqueness of each ethnic group.

It is known that proper names are one of the most significant layers of the vocabulary of any language. The view of names is of interest from the linguistic perspective, on the one hand, and from the perspective of the interdisciplinary connections of onomastics, on the other hand. Onomastic knowledge is especially relevant to a contemporary man, because he lives in a vast range of names, he can not manage without them, and he is directly involved in the creation of names, in the naming process and further development of onomastic space.

In recent years, the focus of research in the field of onomastics has been shifted towards the peripheral categories of names (e.g., proper names in literary texts, titles of periodicals, names of objects of human activity - names of companies, verbal trademarks, proper names of unique cultural artifacts) which were not previously studied extensively (Madieva & Suprun, 2011). All of these peripheral categories of onomastic space (first of all, it concerns verbal trademarks) constitute the subject matter of teaching the above mentioned linguistic disciplines.

2.2. Verbal trademarks as a special category of the peripheral zone of onomastic space

A trademark is usually understood as a verbal or some other designation of a type of product or household service of a particular company, enterprise or manufacturer protected by law. The verbal trademark is formed from one or more words or combination of letters, which may be taken as one word. It must be pronounceable and must have a distinguishing ability (The virtual patent office, 1998). Scholars note that verbal trademarks can be equally applied to every piece or unit of the brand product in a particular series of goods as well as to the entire series as a whole (Podolskaya, 1988).

The informative potential of verbal trademarks (often called pragmatonyms) is considerable. They represent commercial nomination which is focused on obtaining commercial profit. Mordvinova (2008) states that scholars characterize verbal trademarks as words and word-combinations with the original sounding, with deliberately broken graphemics; they are figuratively described with the help of such epithets as *graceful, elegant, sometimes loud, exaggerating, sometimes laudatory, flattering, witty, funny, affirming or denying, calling, with a humorous or lyrical shade*. They are all united by meeting common requirements: verbal trademarks should be appealing, attractive, memorable and drawing attention (<http://www.dissercat.com/content/slovesnye-tovarnye-znaki-alkogolnykh-napitkov-na-materiale-russkogo-chuvashskogo-frantsuzsko>).

Researchers note that verbal trademarks occupy the intermediate space between proper nouns and common nouns (Superanskaya, 2007). However, according to Madieva and Suprun (2011), they are the object of study of onomastics, because they have all characteristic features of proper names which include their strong connection with a particular product, the ability to be distinguished among similar products and to identify the designated object (p. 121-122).

Verbal trademarks are grouped into the following major categories:

- Names of car marks (*Mercedes, Audi, Lada*)
- Names of different kinds of confectionery and bakery products (candy *Rahat*, pasta *Sultan, Makfa*)
- Names of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (wine *Azhar*, mineral water *Asemay*)
- Names of household products (soaps *Dove, Palmolive*, detergents *Tide, Ariel*)
- Names of electrical appliances (TV *Samsung*, refrigerators *Electrolux, Bosh*, vacuum cleaner *Buran*)
- Plant species names (roses *Alba, Youth, Arctic Rose*, lilacs *William Robinson, Anabel*)
- Names of fruit (apples *Golden Excellent, Kandil, Aport*, grapes *Karakoz, Terbash*), etc.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Methods of onomastic research

It is well known that any scientific discipline consists of two main sections: information on the qualitative specifics of the object of knowledge and information on the principles and methods of its research (Karlinsky, 2003). This statement is true for onomastics as well. Modern onomastic science widely uses methods of linguistic analysis: descriptive, comparative, contrastive, typological, semiotic, linguopsychological, statistical and some other research techniques. In onomastic studies scholars commonly use several methods (e.g., descriptive and statistical, descriptive and contrastive, comparative and statistical approaches). The combination and choice of particular methods depend on the purpose of the research and specificity of the onomastic material.

In connection with contemporary trends in the philological education and new requirements to the quality of professional training reflecting the achievements of linguodidactics of recent years, it is very important for teaching onomastics in higher institutions to study modern experience of applying the latest research technologies. Thus, one of the ways to optimize the teaching process of special courses on onomastics is the study of methods of linguistic expertise used for determining the degree of identity and difference of verbal trademarks similar in sound shape and graphics, which are of interest in cases of likelihood of confusion of two marks (Butters, 2008).

In our study, the methodology of linguistic expertise is described with the help of a particular example of comparing and differentiating verbal trademarks ACCY (written in Cyrillic letters) and A'SU (written in Latin alphabet) naming water beverages produced in Kazakhstan. With the aim of identifying the trademarks, the computer program PRAAT developed by Paul Boersma and David Weenink and questionnaires on the basis of sociolinguistic interview have been used. This methodology is effective for determining the degree of distinctiveness of the given verbal trademarks.

It should be noted that our experience is only a fragment of research constituting the educational material for teaching philological disciplines related to onomastics to graduates and doctoral students.

3.2. The study of external graphic form similarities of verbal trademarks ACCY and A'SU

The verbal trademark *ACCY*, as it has been already mentioned, is composed of the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet which is one of the Slavic alphabets originating back to the Byzantine script (Suleimenova, Shaimerdenova, Smagulova, & Akhanova, 2008). The trademark *ACCY* consists of upper-case (capital) letters and represents the abbreviation which in writing is perceived as a conventional abbreviation of the word or a simple sign.

The verbal trademark *A'SU* is formed by the letters of the Latin alphabet used by the Ancient Romans, which became the basis of many written languages of the world (*Latinus* - Latin), and the apostrophe applied in some languages as an orthographic sign in the form of the diacritical comma. The mark *A'SU* consists of uniformly written capital letters also representing the abbreviation, but as a conventional sign it is specifically characterized through the use of the apostrophe, as compared with a conventional abbreviation of letters in writing.

3.3. The study of sound similarity of verbal trademarks ACCY and A'SU

When pronouncing the verbal trademark *ACCY* the double [S] sound is characterized by its length. The characteristic features of this sound are as follows: it is a voiceless, fricative, dental consonant. When it is articulated, the tip of the tongue is close to the lower teeth. When the trademark *ACCY* is pronounced, the double [S] sound affects the sound [A]. Its articulation due to receiving some additional combinatorial shade is short and hard.

When pronouncing the trademark *A'SU*, the sound [S] is said quickly and it is not characterized by its length.

The characteristic properties of the sound [S] in the trademark are as follows: [S] is a hard consonant, it is dental and fricative. When articulating the sound [S], the tip of the tongue is opposite the alveoli and it does not touch the lower teeth. The articulation of the sound [A] in the trademark *A'SU* is influenced by the adjacent sound [S] and it obtains a peculiar combinatorial tone. The sound [A] is perceived softer, while the apostrophe affects the articulation of the sound and it tends to lengthen.

A detailed analysis of the two trademarks *ACCY* and *A'SU* which shows their clear distinctiveness is presented in graphic spectrograms (see Figures 1, 2) obtained through the use of the computer software package PRAAT.

The intonation and sound spectrograms of the verbal trademarks *ACCY* and *A'SU* obtained with the help of the computer program PRAAT lead to the following conclusions:

- when the verbal trademark *ACCY* is pronounced, its initial syllable ac in contrast to the initial syllable a of the verbal trademark *A'SU* is articulated with a higher accent, while the initial syllable a in the verbal trademark *A'SU* is characterized by a lower accent.
- the second syllable cy in *ACCY* compared with the second syllable su in *A'SU* is articulated briefly.

The intonation pattern of the verbal trademark *ACCY* is distinct from the intonation pattern of the verbal trademark *A'SU*. When the word *ACCY* is pronounced, its intonation rises at the beginning moving in the direction from the bottom up, and in the next syllable the tone is reduced. When the word *A'SU* is pronounced, at the beginning its tone is steady or static, while in the next syllable a slight

rise in the tone followed by the subsequent decrease or fall can be observed. Thus, all modifications in the tone of the word *A'SU* are connected with its second syllable.

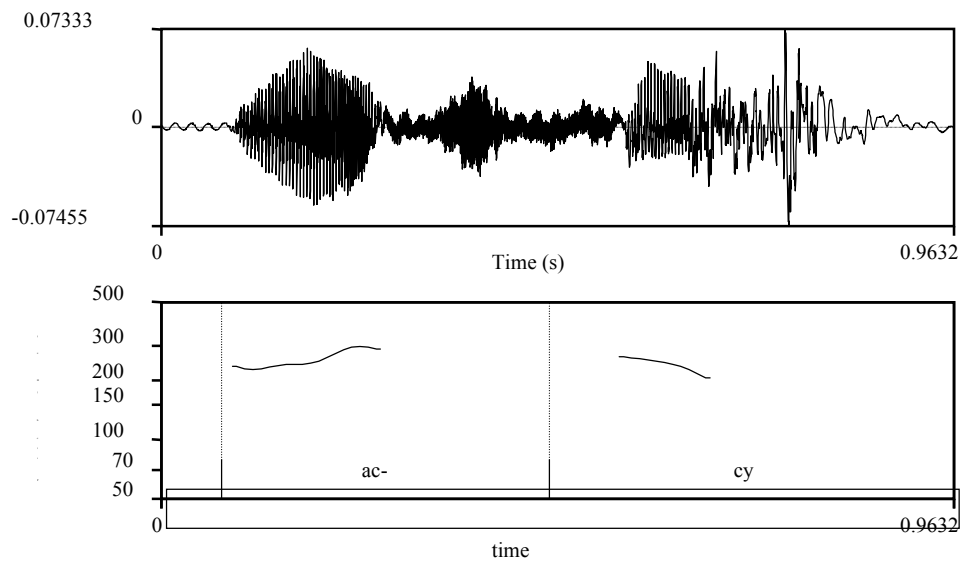


Figure 1. The graphic oscillogram and intonogram of the verbal trademark *ACCY*

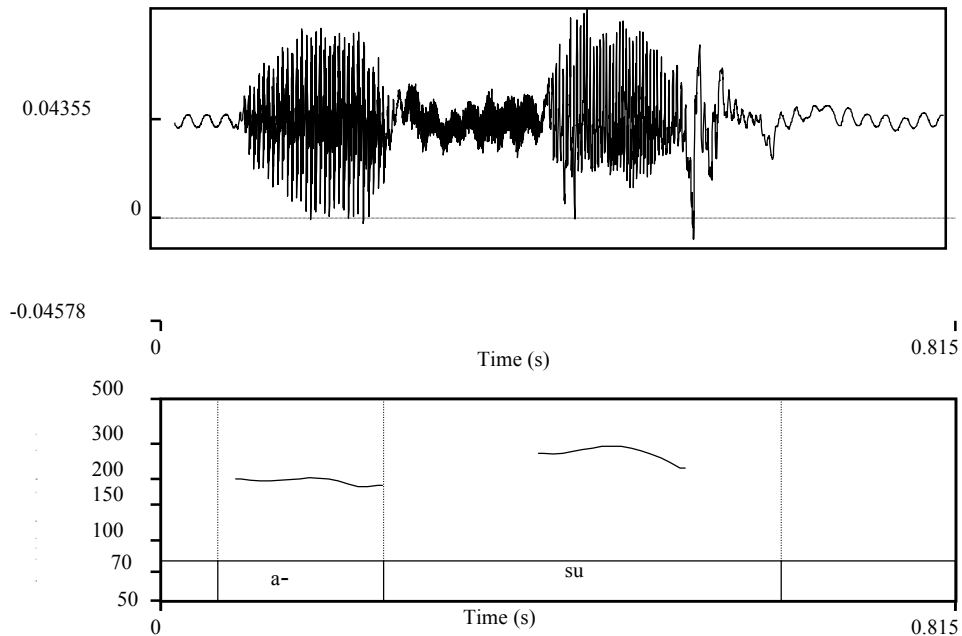


Figure 2. The graphic oscillogram and intonogram of the trademark *A'SU*

3.4. Questionnaires and sociological survey

3.4.1. The analysis of questionnaires of the Kazakh and Russian speaking respondents

As a proof of the distinctiveness of the verbal trademarks ACCY and A'SU we carried out the analysis of the Kazakh and Russian speaking respondents' answers to the questionnaire conducted with the use of the method of sociological survey. Fifteen Kazakh speaking and nine Russian speaking respondents participated in the interview. They were given the following questions related to the likelihood of the trademarks ACCY and A'SU: *Are there any similarities between the words ACCY and A'SU? Are these words perceived as one word when pronounced?*

The results of the analysis can be stated as follows: thirteen Kazakh respondents out of fifteen participating in the questionnaire noted that there was no resemblance between the words ACCY and A'SU, and the respondents did not perceive them as one and the same word. Two respondents pointed out to the similarities of the words ACCY and A'SU. They answered that when pronounced these words were perceived as a single word. Seven Russian-speaking participants out of nine responding to the questionnaire said that they did not see any resemblance between the words ACCY and A'SU and they considered them as two different words. Only two respondents out of their total number found the similarity in these verbal trademarks perceived by them as one and the same word.

Thus, 20 respondents out of twenty-four state that there is no resemblance between the trademarks ACCY and A'SU, and they are not perceived as one word. Only four respondents note that there is similarity between ACCY and A'SU, and they are perceived as one word when sounded. The quantitative results of the questionnaire survey are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The results of the survey on the likelihood of the words ACCY and A'SU

Response	The words ACCY and A'SU have similarities, when pronounced they are perceived as one word	The words ACCY and A'SU are not similar, when pronounced they are not perceived as one word
Kazakh speaking respondents	2	13
Russian speaking respondents	2	7
Total	4	20

3.4.2 The associative experiment connected with the use of the verbal trademarks ACCY and A'SU

In the course of the experiment a 10-volume Dictionary of the Kazakh language was analyzed (Kazakh tilinin tusyndirme sozdigi, 1974-1986). It is interesting to state that the lexical meaning of the verbal trademarks ACCY and A'SU is not registered there.

On the basis of pronunciation (not spelling) the trademark ACCY is regarded to be a combination of the Kazakh words "as" and "su" (Kazakh: *ac* and *cy*) denoting 'water, product intended for food'. In the phraseological dictionary of the Kazakh language, ACCY (*ac-cy*) as a compound word is defined in terms of words denoting kitchen utensils ('the whole set of household utensils necessary for cooking'):

"Үй шаруасына, ac-cy ұстауға шебер атанған Бибіш апай ..." ("Yu sharuasyна, as-su ustauga sheber atangan Bibish apai ..." translated as "The aunt Bibish was recognized as a good hand at managing household and keeping her eyes on the kitchen utensils") (Phraseological Dictionary, 2007).

The verbal mark A'SU does not possess a particular meaning, but its sounding is very similar to the word *asu* (Kazakh: *acy*) which means 'high-pass, high gorge'.

The analysis of the responses obtained with the help of the sociological survey allows to point out the following associations given by the respondents when they hear the word ACCY: *zharamdy su* (water suitable for drinking); *auyz su* (drinking water); *zhana onim Atau* (a new product); *su* (water); *as zhane su sezderinin kosyndysy* (combination of words *as* and *su*); *tagamga qoldanatyn suy* (water used

in food); *kasiporynnyn atau* (the name of an industrial enterprise), *mineraldy su* (mineral water); *ashana sui* (natural mineral water); *living water*; *drinking water*; *clean water*; *abbreviation*.

The associations to the word *A'SU* are the following: *bolesten otu* (to go over the hill), *asu* (to pass); *biik shynnan otu* (to cross the high pass); *shetel kompaniyasy* (a foreign company); *kasiporyn atauy* (the name of an enterprise); *moldir su* (clear water); *taza su* (pure water); *su markasi* (water brand); *et asu* (to cook a meat dish), "*Assa*" as the abbreviation of *Almaty University of Civil Engineering*.

The associations connected with the pronunciation of the verbal trademarks *ACCY* and *A'SU* enable to determine that along with the similarity, there are numerous differences between *ACCY* and *A'SU*. For example, in many cases *ACCY* generates associations with such concepts as 'water used in food', the so called '*столовая вода / ashana sui*' (natural mineral water); while the word *A'SU* does not give such associations. It is also interesting that the Kazakh speaking respondents have such associations, as a *high-pass*, *high valley*, *the mountain pass*.

In some questionnaires the words *ACCY* and *A'SU* are regarded as names of industrial enterprises. However, it does not indicate that respondents perceive them as the name of one enterprise.

The quantitative results of the survey are presented in the following tables (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2. The results of the survey on the associations connected with the word *ACCY*

Response	The word <i>ACCY</i> arises associations and it has some meaning	The word <i>ACCY</i> does not arise any associations and it does not have any meaning
Kazakh speaking respondents	12	3
Russian speaking respondents	3	6
Total	15	9

Table 3. The results of the survey on the associations connected with the word *A'SU*

Response	The word <i>A'SU</i> arises associations and it has some meaning	The word <i>A'SU</i> does not arise any associations and it does not have any meaning
Kazakh speaking respondents	13	2
Russian speaking respondents	5	4
Total	18	6

The results of the comparative analysis of the tables illustrating the respondents' answers to the questions "*What associations do you have when you hear the word ACCY?*" and "*Does it have any meaning or sense?*" are represented in the following way:

Fifteen Kazakh speaking respondents gave the following answers about the word *ACCY*:

- "it arises associations and it has some meanings" (12 respondents);
- "it does not arise any associations and it does not have any meaning" (3 respondents).

Nine Russian speaking respondents gave the following answers about the word *ACCY*:

- "it arises associations and it has some meanings" (3 respondents);
- "it does not arise any associations and it does not have any meaning" (6 respondents).

According to the results of the similar survey on the associations connected with the word *A'SU* the answers of fifteen Kazakh speaking respondents are as follows:

- "it arises associations and it has some meanings" (13 respondents);
- "it does not arise any associations and it does not have any meaning" (2 respondents).

Nine Russian speaking respondents participating in the survey gave the following answers about the word *A'SU*:

- "it arises associations and it has some meanings" (5 respondents);

- “it does not arise any associations and it does not have any meaning” (4 respondents).

3.4.3. Sociological survey

The analysis of answers to the above-mentioned questions shows that the graphics and spelling, sounding and meaning of the verbal trademarks marks ACCY and A'SU are not the same, they are distinct. However, a special sociological survey was conducted for greater persuasiveness and credibility of the experiment. The respondents were asked the following question: “If you see the products with verbal trademarks ACCY and A'SU, will you consider them as products of one and the same company or as products belonging to different companies?”

The results of the sociological survey are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The results of the survey connected with the distinctiveness of trademarks ACCY and A'SU

Response	ACCY and A'SU are products of one company	ACCY and A'SU are products of different companies
Kazakh speaking respondents	2	13
Russian speaking respondents	1	8
Total	3	21

The results of the analysis of Table 4 illustrating the respondents' answers to the question “If you see the products with verbal trademarks ACCY and A'SU will you consider them as products of one and the same company or as products belonging to different companies?” are the following: 21 respondents out of twenty-four respondents participating in the survey consider the verbal trademarks ACCY and A'SU as products of different companies. Only 3 respondents out of twenty-four regard these trademarks as products of one and the same company.

3.5. The results of the linguistic expertise

1. The verbal trademarks ACCY and A'SU are not similar in their external, i.e. graphic form: a) the mark ACCY is composed of the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet, while the mark A'SU consists of the letters of the Latin alphabet and the extra sign – the apostrophe; b) the mark ACCY is fully characterized as the abbreviation, while the mark A'SU due to the fact that it also contains the apostrophe is mostly characterized as a conventional sign.

2. The verbal trademarks ACCY and A'SU have no similarity in their sound form with respect to the following reasons: a) when the mark ACCY is pronounced, the characteristic property of the double sound [C] (“S”) is its long pronunciation, whereas the pronunciation of the sound [S] in the verbal mark A'SU is short; b) the articulation of the sound [C] (“S”) in the word ACCY is different from its articulation in the word A'SU; when the first word is pronounced, the tip of the tongue is close to the lower teeth, in the second word the tip of the tongue is opposite the alveoli and it does not touch the lower teeth; c) in the trademark ACCY the double [C] (“S”) sound affects the articulation of the sound [A], which receives additional combinatorial shade, its articulation is brief and hard; when the mark A'SU is uttered, the articulation of the sound [A] is influenced by the neighboring sound [S] and the apostrophe, as a result it lengthens and sounds softer; d) a clear distinction of verbal trademarks ACCY and A'SU is proved by the intonation and sound spectrogram on the basis of the program PRAAT.

3. The lexical meaning of the trademarks is not represented in lexicographic sources. Taking into consideration the auditory characteristics of the words ACCY and A'SU, Kazakh speaking respondents have semantically different associations to these marks: a) the verbal trademark ACCY is a compound word combining two Kazakh words (*as* and *su*), i.e. it evokes in memory the word *as-su* which denotes ‘water, product intended for food’, ‘a kind of kitchen utensils’. When the mark A'SU is uttered there appears the association with the word *asu* meaning ‘high pass, high valley’. The survey shows that

associations that have arisen as a reaction to the trademarks ACCY and A'SU enable us to determine that there are more differences than similarities between them. Russian-speaking respondents have such associations as *abbreviation, clean water*, or the marks do not cause any associations for them.

4. The products with the trademarks ACCY and A'SU do not evoke associations as the products of one company. There are several reasons: firstly, the graphic writing of these marks is not the same; secondly, as evidenced by the answers to the given questions, their sounding and auditory perception is different. Their meanings are not the same. The results of the survey also indicate that they are different trademarks: it is proved by the fact that 21 respondents out of their total number (twenty-four) believe that the products with trademarks ACCY and A'SU are products of different companies.

Thus, the study provides a solid ground to state that trademarks ACCY and A'SU differ in all respects and they should be regarded as distinct verbal trademarks.

4. Conclusion

It should be noted that in teaching special courses dedicated to the problems of onomastics to graduates and doctoral students it is important to acquaint them with all of the basic methods and techniques that can be applied to the whole complex of the language name-stock and the specificity of their use in the study of proper names. It is necessary to present the material taking into consideration practical cases of linguistic expertise applied for identifying verbal trademarks similar in sound form and graphics. Thus, the students of philological majors form and develop onomastic knowledge that contributes to its competent application in their professional activity. It helps correctly use and even make up new denominations, present and explain their peculiarities to students and to a wide range of the population. In addition, graduate and doctoral students, who acquired knowledge in the field of onomastics, may be professionally engaged in compiling various monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, references of proper names, which are in demand in our practice, as well as in conducting linguistic expertise in the likelihood-of-confusion cases (Butters, 2008).

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