

SOURCES, FUNCTIONS AND CLASSES OF PROPER NAMES

Kuleshova M. S.

School №2, Chausy, Belarus

The study of names has made a lot of controversy associated with the status of proper names. The subject of study is relevant as names and naming are one continuing aspect of the controversies over the meaning of names and of the continuing debate on the theory of names. Naming and the use of names can serve various functions, and this may be reflected in our knowledge concerning a particular name-referent. The aim of the study is to specify sources, functions and classes of proper names. All of these aspects in particular are taken into account in this work.

At various periods in the history of name-giving has had a very special significance by virtue of the «meanings» of names. Name-givers may wish to attribute qualities to the names by their choice of name (modesty, patience, felicity, etc.).

Naming traditions clearly originate in processes of naming based on common nouns or other categories, though often any such origin may be obscure.

The class of product names based on other names (Ariel) or on common words (Tide), including loans. Such names have been overtaken, product names from electronics, particularly computer systems. But perhaps most productive are names, or «titles», of works of art, in often being based on description of particulars.

The development of surnames illustrates that an individual may have more than one name, depending on the context: the same person may be John, or the «compounded» John Smith, or the titled Mr. (John) Smith, or the simple Smith. Surnames and titles illustrate that a name may contain a sense-bearing element. And the title part of a «full» name (Sir, Mr., etc.) indicates gender.

Bynames provide an identifier more powerful than the personal name alone; and it may develop into an alternative to the institutionalized personal name, or even replace it.

The real name of the little man was Harris, but it had gradually merged into the less euphonious one of Trotters, which, with prefatory adjective, Short, had been conferred upon him by reason of the small size of his legs. Short trotters, however, being a compound name, inconvenient of use in friendly dialogue, the gentleman on whom it had been bestowed was known among his intimates either as «Short», or «Trotters», and was seldom accosted at full length as Short Trotters, except in formal conversations and on occasions of ceremony [1, p. 94].

Perhaps one extreme of namer-focused naming is reached by the traditional practice whereby a family which has produced uniquely female children can resort to names like «having enough daughters» and «girl return back» if another girl is born, but deploy «we have found» or «let him live» if it is a boy.

These sources of names reflect different functions of naming:

1. identification – this can reduce variety of naming. The purpose is to transform individuals into persons, e.g.:

- Basil is him.
- Basil is that guy over there.
- Basil is the one who married Clotilde.

This recalls the Latin tag *sine nomine persona non est*.

2. differentiation – the family name allows for differentiation based on classification by family, widely used for differentiation are other additional genealogical, or kin-based subsystems, such as the additional system of patronymics (Russian: Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky) or the sole-surname patronymics of Icelandic (Paul John's-son).

3. nomination – honorific terms and other titles, nicknames (names may be changed, as in other cultures, in order to elude some affliction).

4. asocial function – typically hypocoristic, affection-expressing (ironic or not). It's important to understand the social role of names: «there is a tendency for

philosophical treatments of proper names to underestimate the ritual, and even magical, significance of names in many cultures».

5. the primary function of names is vocative, e.g.: Basil! I read that, Basil [1, p. 220].

I want here to begin to have a look at the characterization of name classification:

- Personal vs. place names

This prototypicality is based principally on an animacy hierarchy, and it is reflected in the typical relative simplicity of the lexical entries for such names. A name that is used for persons need not be so marked in the lexicon or onomasticon: its humanity is redundant. At most, it need be attributed the sense of feminine vs. masculine; and some names in many languages are hermaphroditic.

Place names are marked in the lexicon as a place, as types of place name, based on a description, a common word or phrase. Notice too, for further illustration, that place names can be geographical nouns and can have locational indicator. Many place names are transparently based on common words. And, even with names based on a name element, further subcategorization among place names is often marked overtly by the incorporation of a common noun, a «classifier», e.g. (Lake) Windermere, the (River) Thames, the Baltic (Sea), the Atlantic (Ocean).

- Family and ethnic names

Similar are the looser «family» names usually labelled «ethnic names» (the Scots). These ethnic names differ from the family name in having a specified «extended family» sense (the English).

- Corporate and generic names

Institutional names based on personal names involve loss of individualization, referring to an organization that comprises individual humans and the relationships among them. They are derived corporate names, reflected in concord, for instance, as in Ford has/have decided...

- Generic names

Generic names represent a further departure from the prototypical along the individualization parameter, and this is reflected in an increased capacity for attributivization, as noted in Man/Woman, as in again remains human: Man/Woman is a dangerous animal. There are some generic names that are not based on common words. These include some product names (Omo), game names (skat, tennis), and names of learned disciplines.

- Numeral-based names

It is the subclass of number names that is not based on lexical words:

- The third man.
- Three is her favourite number
- Two and one make three.

- Temporal names

E.g. He arrives on Friday. We could substitute for on Friday any of on the ninth, at dusk, at five, in May, without recourse to an overt deictic (this month).

- Names based on phrases

Particularly place names (in English) can be based on phrases. Phrasal names formed from a name and a descriptive noun indicating its category. Phrasal names can vary in internal structure (Glasgow University / the University of Glasgow etc.). I studied in Glasgow, where the name refers to the town. Or «namehead», where the «namehead» may substitute for the name as a whole: recall names of beers (Heineken (beer)) and hotels (the Ritz (hotel)).

As we have seen, everything can be given a name: ships, planes, cars and others. The pseudonym, the alias, the cryptonym, the lall name touch on a vast territory, involving the social, personal, and magical functions of names. So «theoretical» subset of recent onomastic contributions is vast and varied.

References

1. Anderson, John M. The Grammar of Names / John M. Anderson. – Oxford: University Press Inc., New York. – 2007. – 375 p.