

Formal markers of depropriation of proper names in Polish

In certain syntactic contexts, proper names in Polish begin to function in a special way, breaking away from their basic proper name function (i.e. individual denotation and purely identifying function; cf. Pulgram 1954; Nystrom 2016). These are the contexts in which the proper name is preceded by an element such as *drugi* (“another”), *jakiś* (“some”), for example, *drugi Hitler* (“another Hitler”), *jakiś Oxford* (“some Oxford”). Another type of syntactic depropriation is the construction “X (of) something”, e.g. *Goebbels stanu wojennego* (“Goebbels of the Martial Law”), *Wenecja północy* (“Venice of the North”), *polskie Carcassone* (“Polish Carcassone”), common in Polish. In this type of structure, the name loses its unitary denotation and begins to denote a general concept. The meaning of the concept is based on extra-linguistic knowledge about the primary referent of the proper name. Here we can speak of the connotations of the proper name, which are understood as additional and conventional associations invoked by the name. In depropriation structures, these connotations form a sphere of meaning that is relevant for the interpretation/understanding/reception of the name. For such metaphorical uses of the name to be effective, the connotations must belong to the level of general knowledge (encyclopedic: what is Venice, who was Hitler). If the recipients do not have this kind of knowledge, they cannot decode the whole structure correctly.

The paper will show which syntactic constructions are indicators of this use of proper names (Camacho 2019). It will also present examples that illustrate the extent of this phenomenon in the language and raise questions about the productivity of this phenomenon, its systemic limitations and its impact on the lexical resources of the language. Can we say that in this case a new linguistic unit has been established? It appears to be a textual phenomenon, although if we refer to some approaches from metaphor theory one can postulate an interpretation in the direction of “establishing a new conceptual unit” (Wee 2006). The established, well-known knowledge of the primary referent of the name is the semantic basis of metaphorization, while the formal indicators of the process are elements like: *jakiś* ‘some’, *drugi* ‘second’, *nowy* ‘new’, *kolejny* ‘next’ ‘another’. These formal indicators can be put into a class of terms that suggest secondary character, similarity or imitation, where the comparison-based characteristics are the basis of the shift.

In addition, there are lexemes in Polish which do not require the use of the indicators in question. In such cases, the proper name loses its unitary identifying function due to commonization. These are the words such as *adidas* (“sports shoe”, from Adidas, a company name) or *pampers* (“disposable diapers made of absorbent materials”, from the brand name Pampers, a product of the Procter&Gamble company). They instantiate the universal phenomenon of generalization of proper names, common in other languages as well (Clankie 2002). However, it is important to distinguish between systemic phenomena on the one hand and textual and discourse phenomena on the other. It seems that the difference between the two is indicated precisely by the need for certain syntactic indicators to occur in context. The necessity of an additional context-term “transferring” the name to a secondary object may be by an intuitive marker of whether a given use belongs to the system or text level.

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