

ONOMASTIC METAPHORS AS MEANS OF REFLECTING THE ECONOMIC REALITY

E.Yu. Voyakina

Department of Foreign Languages, TSTU; lenakusa2005@mail.ru

Represented by a Member of the Editorial Board Professor V.I. Kononov

Key words and phrases: antroponym; anthropocentrism; conceptualization; economic lexicon; mythonym; national-cultural component; onomastic metaphor; onomastic explosion; pragmatic power; toponym.

Abstract: The article deals with the phenomenon of onomastic metaphor serving as a means of reflecting the economic reality from the point of cognitive linguistics and anthropocentric paradigm. It analyses the way people realize socio-economic changes through onomastic metaphors. The main sources of onomastic metaphors in the economic lexicon that come from different spheres of knowledge are studied. Specific cultural and universal features of onomastic metaphors are emphasized.

Recent changes in social, economic and political life in our country and in the world on the whole brought considerable changes into the language, with the help of which we perceive and cognize the reality. Trying to explain the changes of the world many economists, experts, analytics, journalists and other public men use different figurative means that describe all happening in the world in a bright, laconic and comprehensible manner. One of such means is metaphor, the aim of which is to brighten up information, to involve the recipient into the topic and to influence him by gaining his trust and sympathy.

Since the ancient times and up to now metaphor has been the subject of different investigations: from understanding metaphor as one of the ways of decorating the speech (Aristotle and other ancient philosophers) to realizing it as a means of cognition of the reality (N.D. Arutyunova, A.N. Baranov, A.P. Chudinov, S.S. Gusev, R. Jackendoff, M. Johnson, I.M. Kobozeva, E.S. Kubryakova, G. Lakoff, A. Musolff, J. Zinken, etc.). According to G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, "metaphor is persuasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980: 3].

Today the mainstream in linguistics belongs to the cognitive approach and anthropocentrism through which metaphor is viewed. According to *the cognitive point of view* metaphor is not only a way of nomination and elocution, but one of the basic means of the world conceptualization, as people's knowledge of the reality is always fixed in metaphors.

Due to *anthropocentrism* the main role in analyzing the language belongs to the man, because everything is viewed through the human's mind. Metaphor as a part of the language system possesses the properties of anthropocentrism, i.e. drawing analogies between the objects existing in the real world and the objects in the human's mind, his associations. Onomastic metaphors as the subject of our investigation, in our opinion,

most of all show the characteristics of anthropocentrism since proper names as the part of such metaphors belong to any person and are included in his individual space.

The goal of this article is to show the main peculiarities of onomastic metaphor as one of the means of reflecting the economic reality and to define the areas of knowledge that serve as sources of onomastic metaphors in the economic lexicon.

Onomastic metaphor (OM) is one of the types of metaphors based on the “shifted”, connotative meaning of proper names. This type of metaphors means that the interpretation of different economic objects and phenomena goes through the meaning of proper names which project their qualities on the respective economic phenomena. Discovering distinguishing features of well-known proper names gives us an opportunity to transfer these proper names to the sphere of economics for specification and defining complex economic phenomena arising during important economic changes.

Addressing to the area of economics we should note that metaphors are frequently used out in this conceptual area. It is connected with the status of economic sphere in human’s life. Metaphors used in the economic lexicon can be generated and assimilated by almost any member of the society because among communicators there may be both specialists in economics (economists, scientists, analytics, experts and different public figures) and average men for whom economic problems become vital today.

Metaphor is a very important source of widening of the economic lexicon that is connected with not only linguistic but also extra-linguistic factors. Present-day reality is characterized as the loss of old forms of the economic activity and the rise of new economic models together with the formation of the new economic culture, new objects, relations and occupations. All these innovations in the sphere of economics result in active enlargement of the economic vocabulary that often occurs together with the increase of new metaphors. Socio-economic changes in Russia during the last 20 years, market transformations with considerable Anglo-American influence, Russia’s attempts to stand in the way of European development, global financial crises – all this leads to the changes of the economic reality and therefore economic language.

The language of the modern economics is full of OM. It is explained by the fact that proper names play a very important role in people’s life and communication, as this kind of names are available for any person. Some proper names obtain not only direct denotative meaning but also indirect connotative meaning reflecting social peculiarities and national features of the economic reality. As a result, proper names become one of the ways of making secondary nominations enriching the language with new lexical units. In most cases these proper names serve as means of expressivity and often help to show people’s attitude towards the described events in a desired manner.

In the speech of famous public figures there are two opposite tendencies: on the one hand, they want to show their individuality by using such metaphors, but on the other hand, they turn to famous names, expressions which the recipient can easily correlate with his previous knowledge and life experience. The spread of OM roots in the fame and significance of the information which is laid in the original semantics of proper names. Describing important economic events and processes a person refers to some analogies trying to find similarity in objects, places, names that belong to entirely different areas of knowledge. For example, an exhaustible source of profit we call *Klondike*, an extreme disorder in economics – *the Augun Stables*, an attractive place for making business – *Mecca*, and an influential company or businessman – *Zeus*. Prototypes of these OM and OM themselves have some similar features that give a person an opportunity to draw analogies and make proper names serve as metaphors.

An important moment in defining the role of OM in the sphere of economics is the consideration of the modern state of economy as historically developing phenomenon. As long as OM plays a significant role in the conceptualization of the reality, considerable changes in political, economic, cultural life of some country regularly lead to the renewal of the metaphorical system. Thus together with the changes in the

direction of scientific investigations towards studying nanotechnologies and nanostructures, with the emerge of terms “innovative economy”, “high-tech civilization”, “information society” takes place an overturn of the scientific worldview that is impossible without the change of the mass consciousness. These changes in the society and in human’s minds generate new OM which characterize all the happening. So to show Russia’s involvement in the development in high-tech industry people compare new Russian high-tech projects with American Silicon Valley: *Silicon Valley in Russian way, Siberia – next Silicon Valley, Skolkovo is new Silicon Valley*, etc.

The economic system is not stable but developing phenomenon. Dynamic economic processes set in motion metaphorical system itself. The interaction of the economic and metaphorical systems may be viewed diachronically. First of all a great number of economic terms and definitions appeared in the process of metaphorization and belong to either “live” or “dead” metaphors: *Veuve de Carpenteras* – a small provincial stockholder, *Dow Jones* – an industrial average index at stock exchange, *Fannie Mae* and *Freddie Mac* – famous American mortgage associations, *Loonie* – Canadian dollar, *old lady of Thredneedle Street* – Bank of England. These OM present specific knowledge of the world that is expressed through the transformation of the meaning from another conceptual area.

Secondly every significant event in the world of economics has its metaphorical understanding. But as soon as the event goes out and loses its former significance and actuality, OM is no longer in use. New economic programmes, reforms, crises can’t pass a man over and often produce a splash of new metaphors through which the man expresses his attitude towards the happening events. Every historical period brings a new system of metaphors. The time of “metaphorical storms” changes into “metaphorical calm” after which comes a new “explosion” of metaphors. And this process is time-continuous as our world doesn’t stay still, static.

Nowadays the economic lexicon experiences the so-called “onomastic explosion”, when the number of onomastic units participating in the process of metaphorization is rising sharply. OM closely connected with material and spiritual values of the culture become highly demanded. In such periods of time new OM appear and the old ones that have already turned into clichés revive in the economic lexicon.

For example, the recent “onomastic explosion” in the economic lexicon is connected with metaphorization of the concept “financial crisis” which is of current importance up to now. At the beginning of the twenty-first century (2008–2010) the world community confronted with the financial crisis phenomenon that put the global economic system at risk. Such a tendency gave rise to the discontent in the society, negative attitudes towards the authorities and the sphere of business that control the economic situation in the country and in the world on the whole. The financial crisis intensified the critical economic situation making influence on most of people. Modern Russian, British and American printed and electronic issues more often interpreted the concept “financial crisis” through the same OM: *financial or economic Apocalypse, waiting for the financial Armageddon, crisis bedlam, global financial Frankenstein, American bankers unleashed the World war II, economic Cerberus, the Titanic of the American economy, the 11th of September in economy, the revival of the Great Depression, Pandora’s box of the global economy*, etc. From this list of metaphorical representations of the economic crisis we can make a conclusion that OM may be called a marker of the state of crisis in economy and in the society on the whole.

In the process of interpretation of the economic reality a person uses the closest and the most comprehensible concepts that are well-known for us from the childhood. They may be extracted from different areas of knowledge and life experience. The most wide-spread spheres-sources of OM in the economic lexicon are proper names of the following types:

- *anthroponyms* – proper names of people;
- *toponyms* – proper names of places;

- *mythonyms* – proper names of mythological personages and relies.

These proper names are usually brought into the economic lexicon from the social sphere (politics, medicine, war, crime, sports), the sphere of art (literature, mythology, folklore), science (history, geography), religion, etc. We take into consideration the most popular of them.

- *Literature*. For characteristics of economic phenomena it is often used images of well-known literary personages: *Cinderella of domestic power economy* (about atomic energy), *Sleeping Beauty* (an object that is meant to be swallowed by other companies), *Lady Macbeth Strategy* (a strategy in which a third party poses as a “white knight” in a takeover bid but then joins forces with an unfriendly bidder), *Superman saving the global economy* (economic summit G-20), *Jekyll and Hyde* (controversial reforms or laws), *Frankenstein* (something terrible, e.g. financial crisis), etc.

- *Politics*. It is well-known that politics and economics are closely connected with each other. Thus political figures and organizations feel the pressure from the economic community and on the contrary political trends influence on the economic state of the society. Very often changes in economy go hand by hand with political changes. This interaction is reflected in the metaphorical worldview. In one of the articles of the Russian economist M. Khazin the author describes Aubrey McClendon, an American millionaire and a top-manager of the large gas and oil company Chesapeake Energy. The economist compares Aubrey McClendon with the ex-president of the USA George Bush and in such a way he shows that both personages in case of emergency have some influential “profitable connections”: *Aubrey McClendon is a sort of George Bush but in Oklahoma* [www.worldcrisis.ru]. By the way G. Bush often becomes a source of metaphorization: *Bush's notes* (about dollars), *Bush's economic Iraq* (about financial crisis).

- *War*. Frequently various economic phenomena are interpreted in terms of the war: economic events are metaphorically compared with battles or military operations and public figures – with commanders. The manifestation of the war sphere is connected with some crisis shocks in economics. This sphere is a good way of structuring of the economic relations, as there are always financial, tariff or price wars in economy where we can find winners and losers, attacks and retreats. In the economic reports it is found such OM as *Hitler*, *Napoleon* for describing the market penetration by a businessman or a company, *the Berlin Wall* for separation, disintegration or opposition in economy, *the Brest's peace* for describing the transfer to the market economy.

- *Crime*. Subjects of economic activity are often presented as criminals. For instance, in the economic texts it is often raised the topic of financial fraud during and after the times of the financial crisis. In Russian economic texts OM *Mavrodi* and “*MMM*” (a famous Russian criminal who has made a financial pyramid “*MMM*”) revive: *new Mavrodis*, *Mavrodi of our times*, *modern “MMM”*, etc. The field of crime is also found in the Anglo-American economic lexicon. An American journalist Mark Ames even called one of his articles “*Fraud: America's New Watchword*” [www.consotiumnews.com]. But here we meet their national prototypes: *Bernard Madoff*, *Goldman Sachs*, *Paul Gunter*.

- *Sports*. The economic activity may also be metaphorically viewed as sports or competitions. We can easily find statements where economic figures and businessmen compete in something: *Schumacher* (about a Russian bank), *Bobby Fisher in economics* (a famous investor Warren Buffet), *Beckham's attack* (China's economic breakthrough).

Studying OM we should say that in different cultures there are specific OM the sources of which are some events typical of this or that country and important for native speakers, for example, OM referring to some wartime: in Poland it is *Osvencum*, in modern Russia – *Chechnya*, in Serbia – *Kosovo*, in the USA – *Iraq* or *Pearl Harbour*.

Most of these toponyms transfer into the field of economics through metaphorization for indication the difficult times in economy (*Russia in economic Osvencum, Iraq in the American economy*). Often in economic reports one can discover international parallels when the reality of one country becomes the source for describing the reality of another country: *Russian Switzerland, Russian Davos, Northern Hongkong* – all about St. Petersburg holding the economic summit.

Every culture has its own prototypes that native speakers put in OM. The difference in the choice of prototypes is vividly seen in the following example. To describe frugality and meanness the Americans will use OM *Hetty Green* (originally – a rich American businesswoman remarkable for her frugality and that's why called "the Witch of Wall Street") while Russians will refer to OM *Plushkin* (the original meaning – a literary personage known for his greediness). This happens because American and Russian native speakers think differently and choose the closest national prototypes for describing different phenomena.

However despite the difference in the choice of sources of OM we can find such metaphors that have international roots and are mostly used in every language. These OM include mythonyms that belong to any culture and form the so-called "common knowledge". They have also the same value status in most of the cultures. For instance, OM *Chimera* in any culture is realized as a negative mythological personage (in the economic lexicon it is used to describe the inflation or unemployment) while *Eden* is viewed as an attractive paradise garden (e.g. *finding Eden in an economic downturn*). Mythonyms include people's knowledge about the world that in its turn makes up the system of cultural values. This sort of knowledge is kept in human's minds passing from one generation to another.

The sources of metaphorical expansion, in our opinion, are often presented through some archetypes that absorb the experience of many generations. These archetypes have been kept in our minds for thousands of years but at the same time they are in constant renewal to adapt to the new reality. An American linguist M. Osborne notes that in spite of time, culture and geographical location of communicators there are always archetypal metaphors in our mind and language (Osborn, 1967).

In the economic lexicon it is often used such archetypal mythological images as *Armageddon, Olympus, Zeus, Titan, Trojan horse, Cerberus, Gordian's knot, Sisyphus stone, Ulysses*, etc. For example, the next statement includes OM *the Achilles heel* based on the archetypal mythological image:

The resistance is striking back at the empire's Achilles heel and its having a dramatic affect on the US economy [www.forum.arbuz.com]. Here OM *Achilles heel* represents America's need for massive amounts of cheap oil. Hearing this OM a recipient refers its meaning (a weak point of smth.) with existing in his mind information and associations about the economic reality – the burning question of oil price. Mentioning the lexical unit *Achilles heel* human's mind forms a concept expressing the concrete state of economy. The content of the concept usually includes not only knowledge about the original meaning of the phrase and its connotative meaning but its value, cultural and pragmatic components, as using OM a person aims at attracting the recipient's attention to the topic and persuading him in something that is advantageous for the producer of OM.

The current tendency shows that metaphorical worldviews of different cultures are becoming closely tied together that leads to the international, universal character of many OM (not only mythological ones) in the economic lexicon. This tendency is a result of the processes of globalization of economy, language and human's mind as a whole. In the process of globalization specific national features presented in OM often become international in order to be understood by all the members of the world community. In most of the languages nowadays we can meet such OM as *Titanic* (any crisis situation in economy), *Chinese Wall* (a complete isolation from the outside economic world), *El Dorado* (a profitable place for making business) that act in the

context of economics. In such OM we discover the similarity in metaphorical images reflecting the world culture. This fact emphasizes one more time that metaphor arises not only in the language but mostly in the mind of a person that aims at cognition and explanation of the reality, expressing attitude to it and influencing on recipients of the information.

Comparing the two above mentioned tendencies (national specificity and universal character of OM) we can make a conclusion that OM in the economic lexicon on the one hand reflect national culture but on the other hand they have international character depicting the modern state of the economy and society.

Thus OM is an effective way of reflecting the economic world and an inexhaustible source of enriching the economic lexicon. OM realizes the transfer of knowledge from one conceptual field to another and includes various spheres that serve as sources of OM. Among them the most wide-spread are anthroponyms, toponyms and mythonyms that come from different conceptual areas and become universal means of realizing and valuation of modern economic reality – from small private companies and its owners to the global economic system. The use of OM in the economic lexicon supposes not only easy and comprehensible way of presenting information but adds emotions and imagery to this presentation in order to attract the recipient's attention towards some economic facts and events and to influence him with the help of attitudes and evaluations implied in OM.

References

1. Аристотель. Сочинения в 4-х т. ; пер. с древнегреч. / общ. ред. А.И. Доватура. – М. : Мысль, 1983. – Т. 4. – 830 с.
2. Арутюнова, Н.Д. Метафора и дискурс / Н.Д. Арутюнова // Теория метафоры : сб. – М., 1990. – С. 5–32.
3. Баранов, А.Н. Очерк когнитивной теории метафоры / А.Н. Баранов, Ю.Н. Караулов // Рус. полит. метафора. Материалы к словарю. – М., 1991. – С. 184–193.
4. Баранов А.Н. Словарь русских политических метафор / А.Н. Баранов, Ю.Н. Караулов. – М. : Помовский и партнеры, 1994. – 351 с.
5. Гусев, С.С. Наука и метафора / С.С. Гусев. – СПб. : Изд-во СПб. гос. ун-та, 2004. – 152 с.
6. Jackendoff, R. Semantics and Cognition / R. Jackendoff. – Cambridge : The MIT Press, 1984. – XIV. – 284 p.
7. Джонсон, М.А. Философские взгляды на проблемы метафоры / Р. Хонек, Р. Хофман // Познание и метафор. язык. – 1980. – С. 47–87.
8. Кобозева, И.М. К формальной репрезентации метафор в рамках когнитивного подхода / И.М. Кобозева // Тр. междунар. семинара Диалог'2002 «Компьютерная лингвистика и интеллектуальные технологии». – М., 2002. – С. 188–194.
9. Кубрякова, Е.С. Проблемы представления знаний в современной науке и роль лингвистики в решении этих проблем / Е.С. Кубрякова, Ф.М. Березин // Язык и структуры представления знаний. – М., 1992. – С. 4–38.
10. Lakoff, G. Metaphors We Live By / G. Lakoff, M. Johnson. – Chicago, L. : The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980. – 328 p.
11. Musolff, A. Metaphor Scenarios in Public Discourse / A. Musolff // Metaphor and Symbol. – 2006. – Vol. 21, No. 1. – P. 23–38.
12. Осборн, М. Архетипические метафоры в риторике / М. Осборн // Квартал. журн. речи. – 1967. – Т. 53. – С. 115–126.
13. Чудинов, А.П. Россия в метафорическом зеркале. Когнитивное исследование политической метафоры (1991–2000) : монография / А.П. Чудинов. – Екатеринбург : Изд-во Урал. гос. пед. ун-та, 2001. – 238 с.

14. Zinken, J. Metaphors, Stereotypes, and the Linguistic Picture of the World: Impulses from the Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin / J. Zinken // *Metaphorik.de*. – 2004. – No. 7. – P. 115–136.

Ономастические метафоры как средства отображения экономической реальности

Е.Ю. Воякина

Кафедра иностранных языков, ГОУ ВПО «ТГТУ»; lenakusa2005@mail.ru

Ключевые слова и фразы: антропоним; антропоцентризм; концептуализация; мифоним; национально-культурный компонент; ономастический взрыв; ономастическая метафора; прагматическое воздействие; топоним; экономический лексикон.

Аннотация: С позиций когнитивной лингвистики и антропоцентризма рассматривается явление ономастической метафоры, служащее средством осмысления экономической действительности, а именно, то, как люди осмысливают социально-экономические перемены с помощью ономастических метафор. Анализируются основные источники ономастических метафор в экономическом лексиконе, поступающие из различных областей знания. Выделяются культурно-специфичные и универсальные черты ономастических метафор.

Onomastische Metaphoren als Mittel der Reflexierung der ökonomischen Realität

Zusammenfassung: Im Artikel wird von den Positionen der kognitiven Linguistik des Anthropozentrismus die Erscheinung des onomastischen Metaphores, die als Mittel des Verständnisses der ökonomischen Realität dient, und zwar, wie die Leute die sozial-ökonomischen Veränderungen mit Hilfe der onomastischen Metaphoren verstehen, betrachtet. Es werden die Hauptquellen der onomastischen Metaphoren im ökonomischen Lexikon analysiert. Es werden kulturell-spezifische und universelle Charakteristiken der onomastischen Metaphoren ausgezeichnet.

Métaphores onomastiques comme moyen de la représentation de la réalité économique

Résumé: Dans l'article des positions de la linguistique cognitive et de l'anthropocentrisme est examiné le phénomène de la métaphore onomastique servant du moyen de la représentation de la réalité économique ainsi que de l'estimation des changements économiques à l'aide des métaphores onomastiques. Sont analysées les essentielles sources des métaphores onomastiques entrant dans le vocabulaire économique à partir de différents domaines de la connaissance humaine. Sont déduits les traits spécifiques et universels des métaphores onomastiques.

Автор: *Воякина Елена Юрьевна* – аспирант кафедры «Иностранные языки», ГОУ ВПО «ТГТУ».

Рецензент: *Макеева Марина Николаевна* – доктор филологических наук, профессор, заведующая кафедрой «Иностранные языки», ГОУ ВПО «ТГТУ».
