CONSTRUCTING GENDER IDENTITIES THROUGH COMMERCIAL NAMES IN THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF THE CITY IF NAL'CHIK

(Construyendo identidades de género a través de nombres comerciales en el paisaje lingüístico de la ciudad de Nalchik)

Olga A. Prokudina
Universidad Kabardino Balkaria, Nalchik (Rusia)

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the study of an open and constantly enriched sub-system of the Names Proper – commercial names, which are intentionally created lexical units, imposing an artificial link between the target audience and the positioned image. Commercial names are regarded here as complex antroposemiotic configurations with special emphasis on their communicative function, which provides a possibility of specific way of circulation of information resulting in consumption of cultural phenomena and constructing gender identities.

An attempt is made to demonstrate how the boarder-lines of the core of the concepts "man" and "woman" reflecting archetypical gender images are extended due to the positioning of female and male images through commercial names.

Keywords: proper name, commercial name, ergonym, sign, linguistic landscape, gender identity, archetypical image, concept structure.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Статья посвящена изучению коммерческих имен, которые представляют собой открытую и постоянно пополняемую под-систему имен собственных. Будучи целенаправленно созданными лексическими единицами, коммерческие имена, в соответствии с законами риторики, устанавливают искусственную связь между целевой аудиторией и позиционируемым образом. Коммерческие имена рассматриваются здесь как сложные антропосемиотические конфигурации, при этом акцент делается на их коммуникативной функции, которая обеспечивает специфический способ циркуляции информации, приводящий к потребление иных культурных ценностей и конструированию гендерной идентичности.

Предпринимается попытка показать, как через позиционирование гендерных образов в коммерческих именах расширяются границы концептов «мужчина» и «женщина», отражающие архетипические гендерные образы.

Ключевые слова: имя собственное, коммерческое имя, эргоним, знак, лингвистический ландшафт, гендерная идентичность, архетипический образ, структура концепта.

The term commercial names is related here to the class of microtoponyms in the urban environment and is viewed as a complex antroposemiotic configuration of culture, society and world interpretation. Commercial names are not a homogeneous group, we shall focus on ergonyms (from Greek ´εργο– work, action, activity) which, as the name suggests, are created to designate places and institutions of social activities connected with trade and commerce, entertainment, fitness, health and beauty care. As soon as modern linguistics focuses on functional and communicative aspects of the language, a study of ergonyms makes another step in this direction. Considerable

attention in Russia is given to ergonymic systems of different cities. Here we shall confine ourselves to the linguistic landscape of Nal'chik as a polyethnic and multicultural city and focus only on a certain group of ergonyms, those accompanied by an explanatory supplementary part identifying the target audience. Relevant markers in our case were: "for men", "for ladies", "*мужская, -ой, -ие*", "*женская, -ий, -ие*". We shall deal only with those ergonyms which appear in the urban environment and which are exposed for the daily visual contact.

Alongside with fundamental and widely discussed in onomastics problems of systematization of the Names Proper and drawing a demarcation line between the Names Proper and Common Nouns, there is a growing interest to such lexical units as commercial name, advertizing name, ergonym (Супрун 2004, Крюкова 2004). "Onomastic boom" or "nominational explosion" which arose much interest among the linguists was caused by the social changes in Russia in the end of the XX-th and the beginning of the XXI-st centuries. New trends in economic development gave an impulse to private initiative and brought to existence numerous enterprises and commercial, cultural, sport and leisure institutions each of which required a name of its' own. This class of names is a continuously enriched open system and in Russian onomatology it is related to the peripheria of the onomastic space, while the nucleus of the space is represented by antroponyms and toponyms.

The place of the Names Proper among other lexical units is to a great extent determined by their referential meaning. Traditional distinction between fully semantically charged and demonstrative lexical units is expressed in Russian linguistics in the following oppositions of terms: meaningful / auxiliary words (Виноградов 1953), informators / distinctors (Маслов 1957), nominative / non-nominative linguistic signs (Уфимцева 1977), words-nominators / words-demonstrators (Кацнельсон 1965). From this point of view the Names Proper in a system of lexis are placed between words-nominators and words-demonstrators, thus their value beyond the situation "here and now" is recognized. Decoding of information they convey depends on the thesaurus of the audience. The idea dates back to the works of A.A. Potebnya, where he compared every word utterance with a newly lit candle (Потебня 1913).

Prototypical and non-prototypical character of onyms is discussed in terms of proper name and proprial lemme (Langendonck 2007). The ideas of prototypical and non-prototypical classes of names were also discussed in Russian onomastics and studies in the field of terminology. Ergonym from this point of view belongs to the non-prototypical class of names, the act of its' coinage is motivated extralinguistically and guide by commercial interests of the nominator.

Ergonym performs all the functions of the Name Proper plus a number of specific additional functions, such as: nominative-identificational, informative, advertising, aesthetic, commemorative. Being an artificially created lexical unit in the linguistic context of the city, it follows the postulates of rhetoric, which presupposes manipulations over the thought/speech activity of the audience.

Diversity of the performed functions reflects complex intentional and creative activities of the nominator which makes projection of desired images on the target audience possible. Target audience, which is a group of possible clients or customers, possesses a number of attributes, actual or desirable, such as gender (for example, shops of clothing and hair stylists for men *Первый мужской, Мужской сезон, Бубновый туз*, and for women *Lady X, Donna, Бубновая дама)*; attribution to a certain religious or

ethnic group (for example, *Исламские товары, Минарет, Сунна, Адыге Унэ*); social position or age (for example, *Ветеран, Кроха, Винни-Пух*).

Considering men and women as the target audience, ergonyms are coined to meet their expectations and to appeal to them, thus imposing an artificial link between the positioned images and the audience.

For the basic verbal representations of the concepts "man" and "woman" in mental lexicons of the Russian monoliguals, the Russian/Kabardian-Circassian bilinguals we referred to the data of the associative experiments (Кумыкова 2004).

Мужчина (rus.) man
monolinguals in Russian: *женщина* woman, *сильный* strong, *сила* strength, *папа* dad, *красивый* handsome;
bilinguals in Russian: *сила* strength, *женщина* woman, *красивый* handsome, *сильный* strong, *мужество* fearlessness, *высокий* tall, *опора* support, *муж* husband, *любовь* love, *солидный* imposing, *папа* dad, *лысый* bald;

ЦIыхухъу (kab.-circassian) man
bilinguals in Kabardian-Circassian: *цIыхубз* woman, *адэ* father, *дахэ* handsome, *лIыгъэ* fearlessness, *щIалэ* lad, *къару* strong, *пыIэ* hat, *щхьэгъусэ* spouse, *лъагъуныгъэ* love, *бзаджэ* artful, canny, sharp, tricky, *ин* big, *лъагэ* tall

Женщина (rus.) woman
monolinguals in Russian: *мать* mother, *красота* beauty, *мама* mummy, *красивая* beautiful, *мужчина* man, *хранительница очага* hearth keeper, *Ева* Eve;
bilinguals in Russian: *мать* mother, *красивая* beautiful, *мужчина* man, *мама* mummy, *сестра* sister, *красота* beauty, *приятная* pleasant, *длинные волосы* long hair, *ребенок* child, *жена* wife, *жизнь* life;

ЦIыхубз (kab.- circassian) woman
bilinguals in Kabardian-Circassian:
дахэ beautiful, *анэ* mother, *унагъуэ* family, *цIыхухъу* man, *дахагъэ* beauty, *хъыджэбз* girl, maiden, *фыз* wife, *сабий* child, *IэкIуэлъакIуэ* skillful, *щэныфIэ* well-bred, modest, good-tempered, *къекIу* imposing, presenting, eye-catching, *мамэ* mummy, *гъащIэ* life

Obviously this data refers to the core of the concepts "man" and "woman" and reflects archetypical gender images. As soon as cognitive linguistics studies deal not only with the core of the concept but also with its' interpretational field it appears interesting to observe how its' boarder-lines are extended due to positioning of female and male images through commercial names.

Positioning and projection of the basic cultural stereotypes on the target audience is possible only when the audience is ready to consume them, when commercial name offers virtual opportunity to join the certain social group (for example, *Diplomat, VIP, Rich*), life-style (for example, *Стиль, Free, Paradise*) or when it creates an illusion of self-identification with subconsciously rooted ideals (for example, *Boss, Frant, Casanova*). There are special studies of unconscious in advertising (Haineault, Roy 2001).

As soon as we regard ergonym as a complex antroposemiotic configuration of culture, society and world interpretation with special emphasis on its' communicative function,

we can speak if a specific way of circulation of information which means not only consumption of cultural phenomena but also access to a certain tradition and introduction to different culture. Culture is understood as a system of storage and transmission of the social experience expressed in stereotypes of social behaviour, systems and notions of norms and values. In this sense to study ergonyms specially created for a) men; b) women allows to regard commercial naming as one of the factors of constructing their gender identities through the consumption of cultural phenomena.

All collected ergonyms were classed according to the source of its' origin: 1) ergonyms derived from other onyms and 2) ergonyms derived from appeallatives. The first group is enriched from the bulk of other Proper Names, the second – from the bulk of Common Nouns.

Ergonymes derived from other onyms_are most often created on the basis of antroponyms both in official and colloquial forms, for example beauty saloons *Мадина, Людмила, Светлана, Сана, Елена, Султана, Ника, Dolores, Fati, Tina etc*. In this case ergonyms perform commemorative function as they are related with the name of the founder or the owner. Compare ergonyms derived from antroponyms designating shops of men's wear: *Энрико, Леонардо, Джорджо, Карло, Albano, Angello, Antonello, Silvio etc*. There function is more aesthetic than nominative. Evidently, the image of Italian man has positive associations with style and elegance. However in the linguistic context estranged from the language and culture of the country of its' origin and placed in the context of the Russian language the perception of the ending - *o* is unfavourable, for in Russian it is conventionally perceived as grammatical indication of the neutral gender. Thus alongside with positive aesthetic associations the image of some kind of metrosexual is being positioned.

In many cases different classes of toponyms can serve as a lexical basis of ergonyms, such as names of the cities (for example, beauty saloons *Барселона, Марсель, Олимпия, Венеция, В Париже*) which are perceived here as geo-brands conveying the idea of fascination, style, luxury; odonyms (Via Vispucci, Via Veneto); floronyms (for example, beauty saloons *Ландыш, Лилия, Лаванда, Орхидея, Азалия*) where metaphorical transmission of meaning based on popular associations with these flowers conveys the idea of modest charm, innocence, beauty, refinement. Quite often ergonyms are created on the basis of the names of the legendary historical, art or literary characters (for example, *Cesar, G.Casanova, Gioconda, Нефертити, Клеопатра*); precedental names (for example, hair dressers' salon for men *Фигаро*, where allusion is made to Rossini's The Barber of Seville); artionyms (for example, beauty salon *Дикая орхидея* with obvious allusion to a Zalman King film Wild Orchid); the names of the movie characters (for example, beauty salon *Скарлетт*, which refers to Scarlett O'Hara, an unforgettable personage from Gone With the Wind based on the novel by M. Mitchell); teonyms (ladies' accessories shop *Clio*); the titles of the popular TV programs and radio stations (for example, *Фабрика звезд, Настальжи*, orphography of the nominator is retained).

Ergonyms derived from appeallatives are represented by a non-homogeneous group of common nouns which differ in their functions. First, direct nominative function should be distinguished: *Дом обуви, Дом Белорусской обуви,, Центр обуви, Центр обувь, Бутик стильной и модной одежды, Одежда Обувь бутик №57* (there's no symbolism in the numbers, they are just ordinal numerals locating the shop in the market row) etc. These group is of minor interest for us. Second, informative and aesthetic

function should be distinguished. This group is comprised of emotively charged nouns often based on metaphorical transition of meaning. Most of the ergonyms of this group originated from English, French and Italian and retain their original script in the linguistic context of Nal'chik, for example *Egoist, Rich, White House, Eden Rose, Kiss, Amnesia, Jeunesse, Perspective, Lady Boss, Savage, Epatage, Quattro Seasons etc*; some of those are transliterated into Russian, such as *Бона Фортуна, Сити Центр, Парадиз etc*. Russian nouns on the basis of which ergonyms were derived also etymologically belong to English, French and Italian: *Идеал, Имидж, Стиль, Вояж, Променад, Эксклюзив, Триумф, Модель, Подиум, Каприз, Бенефис, Маэстро etc*.

Semantics and associative fields of the common nouns which served as a basis of ergonym reveal some common features: they all convey and are to various extents related to such key notions as style, attractiveness, easy way of life and search for pleasure. These notions are not inherent to the archetypical gender images and are equally attributed to both categories of the target audience – men and women. Focusing on ergonyms targeted on men, the stem nouns are related to such notions as individualism, success, dynamics, relaxation, carelessness. Similarly, the target audience of women is attributed by beauty, innocence, refinement, modest charm, rarely – independence and initiative.

Thus, the line of the traditional representations of the basic parts of the concepts "man" and "woman" which reflects their archetypical gender images can be appended by the verbal representations of the cognitive layers of these concepts and their interpretational fields. Concept markers, generated by its' interpretational field, show the diffusive character of the peripherial cognitive layers of the concept which brings another evidence to the dynamic role of the concept in human cognition.

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