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**ONOMASTIC BOOM
IN MODERN SOCIO-POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

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Abstract: The article deals with the situation of a sharp rise in onomastic metaphor usage in modern socio-political discourse. The reasons for this linguistic situation are described.

One cannot deny that vital activity of any individual depends on the existing socio-political and economic situation in a specific country and in the world on the whole. Recently there have been significant changes in our society, and it has been acknowledged that all that happens in the world is projected into the language through which people conceptualize the reality and express their attitude to what is going on.

Nowadays it is relevant to represent ideas of socio-political concern in various newspapers, magazines, journals, websites the aim of which is to bring some specific knowledge and information to the audience of different age, education and abilities to understand the presented information. That's why the authors of these texts choose compact, expressive and available for public forms of information transfer. Actualization of the most important trends of socio-political development is achieved by using different language means including *Onomastic Metaphors* (hereinafter referred to as OM), i.e. proper names of secondary nomination.

The primary objective of the present article is to describe the onomastic situation in modern socio-political discourse on the basis of the analysis of OM functioning in texts of socio-political issue.

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Since G. Lakoff and M. Johnson [1], founders of conceptual metaphor theory, who pointed out that metaphor is not just a way of naming and imagery but also a way of thinking, most of linguists admit that human's mind is metaphorical in its nature as metaphors come to our daily life and shape not just our communication but also our thoughts and actions (N.D. Arutyunova, M. Johnson, Z. Kovecses, G. Lakoff, A. Musolff, V.N. Teliya).

As language reflects people's worldview, OM as an important part of the language and a part of culture also expresses people's attitude to the reality. Human thought processes are largely metaphorical, and the human conceptual system is structured and defined in a metaphorical way. We understand the world through metaphors unconsciously. Most of the time we think metaphorically even without realizing it. Thus, following conceptual metaphor theory, metaphor has a tight relationship with thought and the human conceptual system. Metaphor is not only "a matter of words", but also "a matter of thought" [1]. Considering conventional models, they are stocked in our minds and shared with members in the same community. For example, bowing is an important custom in Japan. Sticking to this point of view OM plays a significant role in people's everyday language using and thinking.

The worldview as it is made up by individuals is known to be anthropocentric: people conceptualize the reality relying on their own vision of "individual-world" correlation while in the centre of this world stands the man himself.

OM including proper names come very close to any person and undoubtedly hold the entity of anthropocentrism and fit to the modern anthropocentric paradigm of knowledge, i.e. the worldview that describes and assesses the reality from the perspective that humans are central and most significant beings in the world.

Proper names contain a lot of information of historical, religious, cultural, social character as they are open for various semantic transformations. Being important points in communication proper names fulfill the function of accumulation, storage and transfer of knowledge from one generation to another. Besides one can stress the ability of proper names to produce extra meanings, connotations, accumulate associative and imaginative characteristics under the influence of the whole complex of linguistic and extra linguistic factors. This causes high demand of OM that is rooted in the popularity of the information from the original semantics of proper names, and gives OM an opportunity to perform different functions in socio-political discourse taking part in its semantic organization. Studies of OM in the mentioned type of discourse allow to expand people's vision of different political situations in their own country and in the world on the whole and to complete the value worldview of native speakers guiding their actions and choices.

OM appear in the process of actualization of some individuals in the social consciousness related to well-known political, economic, social and other issues. Famous people, places, fictional personages become the prototypes of the described categories while their names become terms of comparison, e.g. *today's Roosevelts* (young American politicians), *Russian Switzerland*

(St. Petersburg holding economic summit G-20), *Superman from Eurozone* (N. Sarkozy), *Batman and Robin* or *Chip and Dale* (V. Putin and D. Medvedev), etc.

Among OM used in the speech of politicians, journalists, analytics there are OM of common usage, e.g. *political Olympus*, *oil Klondike*, *political apocalypse* or *bedlam*, and speech or author's OM such as *political Moulin Rouge* (political chaos), *Russian Vatican* (the situation in the country when all financial and political difficulties are veiled by religion drawing people's attention from the real problems) and others.

OM of common usage are mostly "dead" (conventional or traditional) metaphors. They are unconsciously used by the producer of the text for stereotypical description of some notions and do not leave much pragmatic effect on the recipient. Speech metaphors, on the contrary, are creative and produced by the speaker intentionally and that's why they have more pragmatic power.

In our opinion interesting cases may be presented not only by speech OM but also common OM because sometimes "dead" metaphors can return to life at some period of social development (for example, during crisis). Though "live" metaphors have much more effect on the recipient than "dead" ones, behind traditional metaphors some important cultural presentations of the reality used by people in understanding of difficult situations are concealed. According to A.N. Baranov, the difference between "dead" and "creative" metaphors lies not in the plane "live vs. dead" but in the plane "conscious vs. unconscious" [2].

And on the contrary bright speech OM can turn into "dead" ones or come out of the active usage. For instance, in the period of the Soviet Union power there were a lot of OM the sources of which were proper names describing the Soviet reality (*Lenin, Stalingrad, the Iron Curtain, Cold War*, etc.), but when there was a power shift the following metaphors disappeared from the language.

The processes of "dying" and "revival" of OM prove the mobility and variability of onomastic and metaphorical worldview. In order to follow these changes both "dead" and "live" metaphors should be taken into consideration as we can't say when exactly a "dead" metaphor will revive and become actual means of realizing the socio-political reality.

Today we can observe the tendency to revival of old metaphors. Since one of the major functions of proper names is the function of accumulation, OM absorbs the scope of knowledge stored by many generations. To understand the new information correctly as it was meant by the producer the recipient should be erudite and know national, local and world literature (*For the sake of stability the Euro-wonderland MUST stop now!* [3]), mythology (*Hedge-Fund Titans Got Inside Political Tips* [4]), bible (*Troubled Ireland and Europe's Leviathan: The End of the Affair?* [5]), etc.

The process of metaphorization is active only when the described events and people are significant and acute to the producer and the recipient of the text. When the event is no longer in limelight, OM comes out of the active lexicon reflecting instability of the socio-political worldview.

Nowadays we can observe the revival and development of such OM as *Babylon* (marketing *Babylon* – about Bagdad, *Babylon-on-Hudson* – New York, *yellow Babylon* – Shanghai), *Davos* (*Russian Davos*, *energetic mini-Davos*, *London Davos*), *Titanic* (*total wreck of the Greek political Titanic*, *the Titanic of the American economy*). Actualization of OM depends on the socio-political and economic situation in the country and in the world.

The development of onomastic worldview reflects the most important moments of the modern situation in the socio-political life. So, for example, when such notions as “innovative politics”, “modernization”, “reloading”, “venture technologies”, “hi-tech society” appeared people started thinking differently as their mind and worldview changed due to the changes of the world itself. The following changes in the society and people’s thoughts gave rise to new metaphors describing the reality, e.g. *reloading the weapons of monetary policy*.

Thus, any changes provoke rise of new OM or “revival” of already existing ones. Periods of metaphorical explosions turn into quiet conditions which again change into new metaphorical “splashes” [6]. This tendency leads to the continuous renewal of the language.

During the last ten years we can trace the so-called onomastic boom in socio-political discourse which is characterized by a sharp rise of onomastic material involved in the process of metaphorization. OM, closely connected with the values of native speakers and their culture, become highly demanded at sharp periods of social changes and reforms. The most popular metaphorical targets in socio-political discourse are the following:

- elections: *New York Times* “*hopes*” *Obama is new Roosevelt* [7]; *Barack Obama’s Titanic presidency is sailing towards a November disaster* [8];
- political and economic crises: *The ailing euro is part of a wider crisis apocalypse. Our capitalist system is near meltdown* [9];
- reforms in various spheres: *Pensions’ post-crash reforms: calling of Sirens?* [10]; *Renaissance plan for Europe is not viable* [11];
- external policy: *Ukraine as a keystone for transforming Russia into a “Eurasian Nigeria”* [12]; etc.

Sources of OM come from various conceptual areas which are often far from the sphere of politics but this draws even much more attention to the text and makes it more persuasive:

- literature: *Raffi Hovannisian, with his idealistic approach and reluctance to resort to dirty political tricks, will have to solve a complicated political puzzle. As for now, his struggle resembles Don Quixote’s attack on windmills* [13];
- mythology: *Greek debt’s Gordian knot remains tied* [14];
- legends: *The Robin Hood tax – and evidence-free policy-making* [15];
- bible: *Dreaming of Eden: American religion and politics in a wired world* [16];
- war: *We should heed President Medvedev’s words from the UN General Assembly several weeks ago: that “irresponsible political regimes” should not be allowed to provoke divisions in Europe and make a new Berlin Wall* [17]; etc.

Sometimes the sources of OM are so unexpected that one needs to consult the dictionary to learn its meaning, e.g. OM **Gucci socialist** which is an American political epithet similar to **Champagne socialist**, **Chardonnay socialist** or **Limousine liberal** that is used to describe people who claim to support left-of-centre policy or theory, including various forms of soft socialism and liberalism, but have an undeniably capitalist, bourgeoisie lifestyle. Gucci refers to the haute couture created at the Italian fashion house which bears the name. This term is used largely pejoratively. Phil Allt, a New Democratic Party of Canada member extended the use of the Gucci prefix in conjunction with another ideology when he accused the Green Party of Canada of including the so-called **Gucci environmentalists**.

Onomastic boom in socio-political discourse is related to the fact that OM often contain the value aspect. In our opinion OM become the means of perception, presentation and assessment of the socio-political reality through which a person conceptualizes his own perception of the world by the means of language. Besides people describe different phenomena using notions that are the closest and available for any person. At the same time for taking the real picture of the world and making the right decision on political, social, economic problems expressed by OM it is necessary to correlate OM with extralinguistic reality.

Onomastic Metaphors is often used for describing the relationships between different countries: *Most of the negative coverage focused on tensions between Russian **Zeus** and the U.S. about missile shields in Europe and Russian pressure on NATO not to admit Ukraine and Georgia. Apparently, Spain is taking a pro-U.S. stance* [18, p. 82].

The level of social development as a source of metaphorical expansion influences the evaluation of the described socio-political situation by the recipient. For example, in the western press as well as in Ukraine the questions on the Russian economy, gas and energy policy, political relations, military policy, relationships with other countries are often discussed. The attitude of Europe and the USA towards Russian policy is expressed in the following way: *The Russians send their gas **Trojan horse** to Europe again* [19]; *Dirty Russian Politics: Opening **Pandora's Cash Box*** [20]; *Russian gas and oil **Frankenstein*** [21].

In such messages designing of the negative and ironic axiological context is vividly shown. As we can see the attitude to Russian gas monopoly in the world political space is unfavourable.

Thus, the author of the text pursues specific goals of communication making the message efficient and influencing the recipient by imposing his own point of view on the audience and forming the needed perception of the world in the recipient's mind. The most pragmatic power has indirect or implicit assessment rooted in OM as it implies some personal significance for the addressee. According to E.V. Budaev, the persuasive effect of metaphor is connected with actualization of some conceptual structures in the human's mind and structures themselves are organized in the process of the linguistic personality formation in the cultural space [22].

Another reason of the wide spread of OM in socio-political discourse is explained by the fact that OM fulfilling the nominative function become an important source of broadening of the lexicon. This results in rising of neologisms provided by such means of word building as:

1) compounding, e.g. **Grexit** (abbreviated from Greece exit, about Greek exit from the Eurozone): *Europe prepares for a 'Grexit'* [23];

2) suffixation. e.g. **ukrainization** (the ethnic policy of the Ukraine government): *Unfinished Ukrainization: the roots of a historical drama* [24].

Another interesting example is OM **Watergate**. The original meaning of this proper name was the name of the hotel in Washington, the USA, where the Democratic National Committee headquarters were situated and where the famous political scandal occurred. The scandal eventually led to the resignation of Richard Nixon, the President of the United States. Since that time this proper name has been frequently used. Its meaning becomes wider and it describes espionage or political scandal of any kind, e.g. *U.S. attorneys and voting rights: The New Watergate* [25]; *China's Watergate: political and economic conflict in China* [26]; *gas Watergate, economic Watergate, etc.*

Later on similar to Watergate the adoption of – *gate* suffix to suggest the existence of a scandal is promoted and this becomes the reason of appearance of a large number of OM which makes this suffix connotative for describing various political scandals and frauds. There have been coined numerous – *gate* terms of neological nature where the source of metaphorization can be:

– the name of a politician or any other famous figure in politics: **Billygate** or **Cartergate** (the U.S. President Jimmy Carter's brother, Billy Carter, who was registered as a foreign agent of the Libyan government and received a \$220,000 loan); **Camillagate** (the tape of a telephone conversation between Charles, Prince of Wales, and Camilla Parker Bowles); **Monicagate** (named after Monica Lewinsky who had an “inappropriate relationship” with the ex- U.S. President Bill Clinton);

– the name of a place or a country: **Irangate** (a scandal occurring during the Reagan administration in which members of the executive branch sold weapons to Iran and illegally used the profits to continue funding an army of rebels in Nicaragua); **Iraqgate** (a scandal involving the use of weapons of mass destruction); **Kazakhgate** (a scandal surrounding James Giffen, an American businessman and a former advisor of the President of Kazakhstan, who paid a bribe to high-level Kazakhstani officials to secure the oil contracts for Western companies); **Koreagate** (a scandal involving South Korean influence peddling in the U.S. Congress);

– the name of a sportsman: **Henrygate** (a controversy surrounding a handball by the French captain Thierry Henry, playing against the Republic of Ireland during the playoff for the 2010 FIFA World Cup), etc.

The mentioned examples show that metaphorization of proper names is one of the universal means of enrichment and renewal of the language that is made up in the process of the secondary nomination.

Thus, OM using as the sources real and unreal individuals and places become a productive and efficient way of reflecting the socio-political reality.

Well-known names of people and geographical objects, personages from mythology and literature serve as an impulse for creating new metaphors leaving much influence on the recipient who perceives the new information. Using the closest concepts from various conceptual areas that have originally more vivid structure in human's mind for describing the socio-political situation, the author makes the information more attractive and persuasive for the addressee. Speaking about the onomastic boom in modern socio-political discourse we can admit that the increase of OM causing onomastic "explosions" at sharp crisis periods of social development is linked first of all with democratization of the society that leads to the renewal of the language itself. Secondly, OM aim at a "new" recipient who will assess and criticize socio-political changes and innovations due to the development of abilities to make associations based on the knowledge of folklore, world and national literature, myths and so on. These processes coincide with the national worldview, i.e. those events and situations that take place in some country and in the world at the moment.

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Ономастический бум в современном общественно-политическом дискурсе

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Аннотация: Описана ситуация резкого подъема употребления ономастических метафор в современном общественно-политическом дискурсе. Рассмотрены причины возникновения данной языковой ситуации.

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