

THE ROLE OF EPONYMS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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The word "eponym", as a linguistic term, belongs to the linguistic groups of "antonyms", "synonyms", "homonyms", "paronyms" and "toponyms", and has been analysed in the works of such scientists as M. Blau, A. Azimov, S. Shelov, V. Leychik, E. Kakzanova, V. Starichonok and others. The term "eponym" appeared in the middle of the 19th century from the Greek word "eponymos" which means "given as a name, giving one's name to something". At the same time, the linguistic term "eponimuya" means "the formation of new words based on proper names". [1, c. 716]

The history of the origin of certain words in the world languages is always interesting and entertaining. There are words whose origin is associated with real historical figures, writers, scientists and celebrities who invented something or traveled a lot. In other words, those people who did not leave the society indifferent, but their names became common nouns later.

So, an eponym is an ordinary common noun derived from a proper noun, the name of a person or a place. Called eponyms, many words can tell interesting tales about their origins. Wittingly or unwittingly, few people and places have left their names for posterity through words that were named after them. These words are derived from the names of real, fictional, mythical or spurious people, places or characters, although many of these eponyms come from the persons' surnames. The famous soviet writer and journalist Y. Fedosyuk called these eponyms "the linguistic memorials to the outstanding scientists, inventors, doctors, whose names are imprinted in their creations". [3, c. 154]

Eponyms make an extremely large group of words in modern English thanks to the tradition of giving the names of scientists, researchers or medical men to their inventions and discoveries. For example, names of diseases, syndromes of diseases and human anatomical parts are very often eponyms in modern medicine.

Having learned a great variety of eponyms, we came to the conclusion that eponyms could be divided into several groups according to their meaning, such as:

- Scientific units (hertz, joule, ohm)
- Political entities (Nashville, Pittsburgh, Seattle)
- Companies (Adidas, Boeing)
- Comic and cartoon characters (Yogi Bear, Snoopy)
- Food and drinks (Avocado, curry, marmalade)
- Fashion (Mackintosh, French, cardigan)
- Transport (Audi, Ferrari, Harley-Davidson, Chevrolet, Citroen)
- Human characteristic – (Hooligan, love) [4]
- Other eponyms (Whatman, boycott). [4]

But many lists contain phrases and words that are common phrases or ordinary derivations. While the term “eponym” is often extended to such constructions, their interpretation is usually more a matter of history than etymology, which is our focus. This list is not competing to be the longest list of eponyms but the most accurate in the strictest sense of the word. Beware those lists that include words created by means that apply to any noun, that refer exclusively to the eponymous person, or words that simply name one unique object. Pseudo-eponyms include the following:

- possessive nouns used in phrases like Occam's Razor or Newton's Law;
- proper nouns used in phrases without possessives, such as Fosbury Flop, Heimlich Maneuver, Falkland Islands, unless they no longer refer specifically to the person whose name is used (and especially if the capitalization may be dropped);
- normal derivations created by adding productive suffixes like -ism, -ist, -esque, -ian since these suffixes may be added to any name and simply mean "like X's philosophy" or "in X's style" in words like Marxism, Rubinesque;
- botanical and zoological names like Hoffmania, Einsteinium and Sanchezia that are not used outside the scientific world, especially if the new term is a proper noun itself;
- simple commonizations: converting a proper noun into a common one as occurred in the cases of “escalator” and “aspirin”, originally brand names. [2, с. 196-197]

We have interviewed our students of the first course and asked them about eponyms. The results of the interview showed that only 5% of them know what the “eponym” is. However, when we explained to them the meaning of the word, it was found out that all students use eponyms in their everyday life, and all of them can give a lot of examples of using eponyms in their life.

Has the process of giving people’s names to different things and phenomena stopped? Not in the least! Just come to the nearest traffic lights and watch those cars and motorbikes going along the roads. They all carry the names of their inventors or the companies producing them which, in their turn, got the names of their owners (Audi, Ferrari, Harley-Davidson, Chevrolet, Citroen and so on and so forth). We guess that these eponyms are the youngest ones in the family. But we are absolutely sure that there will be more and more eponyms because our humanity is rich in scientists, researchers and inventors.

So, the problem of “eponyms” has been analyzed in this article in order to systematize the information about the main cases of using eponyms and to define their role and place in the English language. Our research has shown that these words aren’t dead, they are commonly used. The eponyms play a big role in the enrichment and development of the language and the number of papers devoted to the eponyms is constantly growing.

References

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