

## THE PROPER NOUNS IN THE THEORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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A proper noun is a noun that identifies a single entity and is used to refer to that entity, such as Africa, Jupiter, Sarah, or Microsoft, as distinguished from a common noun, which is a noun that refers to a class of entities (continent, planet, person, corporation) and may be used when referring to instances of a specific class. Some proper nouns occur in plural form and then they refer to groups of entities considered as unique. Proper nouns can also occur in secondary applications, for example modifying nouns, or in the role of common nouns. The detailed definition of the term is problematic and, to an extent, governed by convention.

Kuldoshev A. states<sup>1</sup> that Proper Nouns (PNs) constitute a system organized according to criteria varying across cultures, and provide an interpretation of the society of which they are the expression. They are linguistic items fulfilling a referential function, they refer to single entities existing in the real world. Like deictic, they are not dependent on the immediate situational context.

Proper nouns are the words which name specific people, organizations or places. They always start with a capital letter.

- Each part of a person's name is a proper noun – Lynne Hand, Elizabeth Helen, Ruth Jones.
- The names of companies, organizations or trade marks: - Microsoft, Rolls Royce, the Round Table, www.

<sup>1</sup> A. Kuldoshev, SEMANTIC FEATURES OF PROPER NAMES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK. International scientific journal. Theoretical and applied science. 2020.



- The names of cities and countries and words derived from those proper nouns – Paris, London, New York, England.
- English Geographical and Celestial Names – The Red Sea, Alpha Centauri, Mars.
- Monuments, buildings, meeting rooms – The Taj Mahal, The Eiffel Tower, Historical events, documents, law, and periods – The Civil War, the Industrial Revolution, World War
- Religions, deities, scriptures – God, Christ, Jehovah, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, the Bible, the Torah, the Koran.
- Awards, vehicles, vehicle models and names – The Nobel Peace Prize, the Scout Movement, Ford Focus, the Bismarck, Hoover. The main linguistic features of PNs in English. The first feature is the initial – capitalization in writing, whose function is to distinguish a PN from a common noun, e.g. Rosemary, rosemary. They are subject to some words formation process; for example, hypocorisms can be formed full first names, employing various mechanisms, as illustrated in .

- |              |             |               |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1) Full from | Hypocorisms |               |
| Thomas       | Tom/Tommy   | (suffixation) |
| Charles      | Chuck/Chaz  | (shortening)  |

With regard to grammar, names raise various issues. One issue concerns the internal structure of nouns, they can be mono – or polylexemic, sometimes incorporating the article (e.g. London, John Smith, The Red Sea); personal names can be preceded by a title (e.g. Mr. Smith, Aunt Mary), whose status is rather controversial. A major issue is represented by the different uses of nouns. Considering the semantics of PNs, an issue much discussed from Mill onwards. They are diachronically motivated, and a meaningful etymon is found in most cases: e.g. family names derive from elements of common vocabulary referring to parentage (son of Richard > Richardson) or, occupation (miller > Miller). But they are synchronically opaque: as stated by Lyons “it is widely, though not universally, accepted that proper nouns do not have sense”. Provided that they are elements fulfilling a referential function how the relation between PN and referent is established can be explained pragmatically. A PN is assigned to a given referent by some social



convention, and encyclopedic information is associated with it in long – term memory. In particular, personal names may be attributed to more than one referent, yet, in discourse the encoder refers to a specific referent, situated in a given time and space. In order to understand which referent the encoder is referring to, the decoder must possess a competence of the name system as well as the chunks of encyclopedic knowledge associated with a name to establish a link between PN and referent. Only when the decoder retrieves associated information from his / her knowledge, the “virtual” referent is actualized, and the PN becomes a “rigid designator” The decoder recognizes Philip as a PN, but does not possess the necessary to pair PN and referent. In short, PNs constitute a class of linguistic items sharing features with both noun and deictics. Formally, PNs share some grammatical features with common nouns, but differ from them in various respects. In interpreting the PN, the decoder first has to recognize whether its use is referential or figurative, relying on the linguistic context, then she or he will activate encyclopedic knowledge or recur to her or his lexical competence, if the item is lexicalized. Another use of names is central to understand the phenomenon under discussion. PNs, in particular personal nouns, more rarely place names, are used figuratively as metaphors, similes, hyperboles and antonomasias, either in a creative way (e.g. He is a new Hemingway) or as lexicalized items They function as nouns, taking on both a denotational and a connotational meaning originated in a selection of salient bits of information extracted from encyclopedic knowledge about a referent. Grammatically, proper nouns behave very much in the same way in the sentence as common nouns. There are, however, well-known co-occurrence restrictions that distinguish them from common nouns. The most important among them are: 1. Proper nouns (PN) do not accept demonstrative pronouns as determiner. One would not normally say This John just bought a car. However, supposing there are several Johns out a particular one, you are already using John as a common noun meaning “any person called John”. 2. PNs do not accept restrictive adjectives or restrictive relative clauses. In the sentence the Old Shakespeare felt the closeness of his



death one is implicitly comparing one of several manifestations in time of the person called Shakespeare with the rest. The same applies to sentences such as she is no longer the Eve she used to be. One may deny this only at the price of more or less explanations about the character of the noun in question. Another way of putting this would be to say that we have to do with two homonymous words John or Shakespeare respectively, one of which is a proper noun, the other a common noun. When in a given speech situation we have a unique reference, we are dealing with a proper noun, otherwise with a common noun. 3. Opposition between definite and indefinite is neutralized in PNs (a given PN either invariably takes zero article as in John, London. Or in the Strands the Haymarket. The Queen Elizabeth). A seeming counter – example such as that is not the John I was talking about, is an instance of John being used as a common noun or proper is ultimately determined by situational factors. If in a given situation, there is a possibility of what looks like a proper noun having multiple referents (this John, two Johns) we have to do with a common noun homonymous with a proper noun.

### **Literature review**

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