

NAMES IN THE ECONOMY

Cultural Prospects



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Edited by

Paula Sjöblom, Terhi Ainiala and Ulla Hakala

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P U B L I S H I N G

Names in the Economy: Cultural Prospects,
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This book first published 2013

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-4945-6, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-4945-6

Names in the Economy

PREFACE

Names are a pervasive part of human culture. We are continuously reminded of their existence by our surrounding environment. Names always come about and are used in interaction between people and in a language community. We give names to referents worth naming, that is, to objects that are meaningful or valuable to us. Moreover, organisations – companies in particular but also public organisations – are increasingly aware of the importance of naming; brands and their names are powerful tools in today's commercial environment.

The approval of names for common use requires a community with a fairly similar vision of the surrounding world, a shared culture. Cultures, in this context, can be conceived as the surrounding environments – international or national – where companies operate, or they can be seen as cultures of the organisations themselves. Culture produces names and names produce culture. Commercial names forge cultures, on the one hand, and changes in cultures may affect commercial names on the other. The world of economy and business has created its own culture, the perspectives of which must be taken into account when constructing commercial names.

The economy has a powerful role in the contemporary global world. Scholars of many fields have had to take this into consideration and search for new angles in scientific studies. There has also been a growing interest among onomasticians towards names that reflect the new commercial culture. Brand names, product names and company names play an important role in business and in the economy, but commercial culture also affects many other names, such as names of rock bands, names of race horses, and even traditional name types such as place and personal names.

The present volume, *Names in the Economy: Cultural Prospects*, contains articles that are based on contributions made to the fourth Names in the Economy symposium (NITE 4) that took place in Turku, Finland in June 2012. The financial support for this conference by the Foundation for Economic Education, the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies and the Turku University Foundation, indirectly promoted the publication of this book. The series of NITE symposia began in 2006 in Antwerp and continued a year later in Vienna. The third one was held in Amsterdam in

2009. All these symposia have led to publications (see Kremer and Ronneberger-Sibold 2007; Wochele, Kuhn and Stegu 2012; Boerrigter and Nijboer 2012). The goal of all four publications has been more or less multidisciplinary: they contemplate names that appear in the economic world, especially from the viewpoints of linguistics and onomastics as well as marketing and branding research.

The 20 articles in this volume have been developed from a collection of papers presented in NITE 4. They have been double-blind reviewed. The theoretical background of the articles is varied: there are traditional onomastic standpoints as well as newer linguistic theories, sociological and communicational views, multimodality theory, brand research etc. The range is also geographically vast: the authors come from ten different countries and from three continents.

All the articles more or less deal with names in the changing environment. The change has, in many cases, been utmost rapid, and the change is global; there is hardly any corner of the world that has not been reached by international culture. We have divided the book into four thematic sections: (1) global trends and the westernisation of names, (2) local separation and cultural identity, (3) names in the era of the Internet and (4) changing name use and naming processes in the changing world.

The first section casts a glance into the impact of globalism. As PAULA SJÖBLOM notes in her article, globalisation can be seen as a process of a world-wide cultural and economic homogenisation. As a counterpoint, the phenomenon may cause a rise of local culture and local identity. Sjöblom contemplates how both global and local goals may be taken into account in commercial naming. The theme continues with the article by KANAVILLIL RAJAGOPALAN who searches for answers to the question of how to make brand names appealing to world-wide and increasingly fragmented audiences whose tastes and trends are still culture-bound. These dilemmas are concretely approached in the article by NITHAT BOONPAISARNSATIT and JIRANTHARA SRIOUTAI. These researchers examine food brands exported from Thailand. They have noticed that many Thai exporters still export their products without brand names or under foreign-owned brands. The authors remark that a good brand name is essential in the introduction of a new product, and show properties of preferable brand names.

Global trends often refer to trends adopted from the Western world – in the economy, mainly from the English-speaking parts of the world. KYOKO TAKASHI WILKERSON and DOUGLAS WILKERSON provide us a view to names and prestige for physical spaces which can be bought: condominiums, assisted-living condominiums and burial sites in Japan. They demonstrate that the names of these commercial spaces employ non-

Japanese words, especially Western loanwords and pseudo-Western neologisms. However, westernisation concerns also commercial naming in Eastern Europe. The articles by ALINA BUGHEȘIU and ADRIANA STOICHÎTOIU ICHIM shed light on commercial naming in Romania from two different angles: Bugheșiu approaches brand names as cultural mediators both before and after the Revolution of 1989, and Stoichițoiu Ichim analyses restaurant names of Bucharest in contemporary, post-communist society and shows both similarities and peculiarities in comparison to West European naming cultures.

The second section consists of articles that focus on commercial naming in local cultures. Names are important bearers of local identities and they consist of many features that evidently are targeted on local consumers. PAOLA COTTICELLI-KURRAS and ENZO CAFFARELLI describe company names in Italian advertising slogans and create an argument for a linguistic analysis of the names that most slogans are created for the local people. IRMA SORVALI takes a multimodal approach to Finnish bread packages and the bread names found on them. She also compares her data to smaller corpuses collected from Estonia, Sweden and Belgium. The relationship between a place and a brand, on the one hand, and between name and identity, on the other, is the theme of ULLA HAKALA and PAULA SJÖBLOM's article on place branding in municipality merging situations and of TERHI AINIALA's article about the commercial use of slang variants of the name *Helsinki*.

The third section applies to the question of the e-era. The Internet has probably been the most important instigator of the rapid change of cultures in the entire world. FABIAN FAHLBUSCH argues that the development of German company names towards simpler and shorter forms has especially been driven by their use on the Internet. Furthermore, social media has altered our habits: it has given new opportunities for ordinary people to take part in, not only in political issues but also in business. In his article, NICHOLAS IND discusses a new, consumer-oriented and participative approach to brand creation. Consumers and other stakeholders have, via social media, opportunities to influence brands through their active involvement. The Internet and social media have also created quite new types of names. New environments with a commercial aspect have emerged, as well. LASSE HÄMÄLÄINEN analyses user names found in one particular online gaming community. This study concerns one fairly new name type that has not extensively been studied before.

The last section focuses on articles that touch upon questions concerning the use of commercial names, the creation of names and naming processes in the changing world. The subject of the article by

ELKE RONNEBERGER-SIBOLD and SABINE WAHL concerns German brand names and their sound shapes. They compare new brand names with a large corpus of historical brand names and state that there are certain tendencies in the diachronic development of the names. The syntactic structure of commercial names is discussed in MARIA CHIARA JANNER's article. She presents a corpus-based morpho-syntactic analysis of commercial names in Italian and theoretically ponders whether the names are proper or common nouns. ANTJE ZILG approaches brand names from a communicative perspective. She argues that in the contemporary environment, one important function of a brand name is to generate a tie between the product and the consumer, and shows how this relationship is linguistically established.

SABINA BUCHNER describes in her article a special range of business, sugar beet harvesting technology, and searches for an answer to the question on how the names in this industry may reflect the culture of competition. Technology is, in a way, also the subject of MARCIENNE MARTIN, who ponders how the nicknames of two famous car brands have developed a legend. DINA HEEGEN presents in her article a typology of the structure of product names. She compares yoghurt names in German and Swedish markets, and finds naming tendencies motivated by e.g. the respective culture. Last but not least, ANGELIKA BERGIEN illuminates the concept of *paragon* which, in cognitive linguistics, refers to an individual member of a category representing an ideal or its opposite. She analyses two paragon names in business discourse: *Lady Gaga* and *Lehman*. Bergien shows that the paragon primarily indicates the writer's attitude towards the referent rather than helping the receiver to identify complex economic issues. A shared socio-cultural background is especially important in the comprehension of paragons.

The 20 articles in this volume represent the manifold world of names, cultures and economics. At best, they capture the spirit of commercial and other names at the beginning of the 21st century. The interdisciplinary perspectives comprising the theme of this book may lead us to new insights on names in the economy.

Finally, we would like to give acknowledgements to the persons and organisations that have made this book possible. First of all, we thank the authors of this collection and the anonymous reviewers for their prompt collaboration on this project. The Department of Marketing and International Business and the Department of Finnish and Finno-Ugric Languages at the University of Turku have supported our work in many ways. We are most grateful to MA Leonard Pearl, a translator and onomastician, for language consulting and for his many valuable

improvement proposals. Special thanks are directed to our editorial secretary Louna Karjalainen, a Finnish language graduate student, who proved to be a thorough, flexible and skilful assistant in the transformation of variegated article manuscripts into a consistent book. Thanks to Cambridge Scholars Publishing for approving our book in its publications and to Ms Carol Koulikourdi for her support.

Paula Sjöblom, Terhi Ainiala and Ulla Hakala

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PART I:

GLOBAL TRENDS

AND THE WESTERNISATION OF NAMES

LUMIA BY NOKIA, IPHONE BY APPLE: GLOBAL OR LOCAL FEATURES IN COMMERCIAL NAMES?

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Abstract

Globalisation is often seen as a process of world-wide cultural and economic homogenisation, as well as a change from national identities to more diverse identities. Localism, on the other hand, emphasises local production and consumption, local culture and identity. However, local and global are not antipodes but rather different perspectives to interpret different socio-cultural phenomena. The term *glocal* describes the co-presence of both universalising and differentiating processes.

This paper will focus on global and local features of language in commercial names: what is it in language that particularly makes us consider a name global or local? Linguistically, global features are such structural and semantic features of language that promote and maintain the economic and cultural process of globalisation, whereas local features of language are perceived and interpreted only by a local language community and by a local culture.

The question will be approached with help of some examples. Finally, a proposal is made on how to combine local and global goals for commercial naming as well as two important functions of commercial names, i.e. bearing identity, on the one hand, and producing a good image, on the other.

Introduction

When Nokia in October 2011 presented its new Windows phone models, Lumia 800 and Lumia 710, chief executive officer Stephen Elop stated: "Lumia is light; it is the new dawn for Nokia" (Reuters, 26 October 2011). While stressing the importance of the new model for Nokia, Elop,

in a way, interpreted the name of this product as well. *Lumia* is reminiscent of the Latin word *lumen* 'light' – and it probably is associated the same way all over the Western world, regardless of language.

Right after the phone was released, information about the "right" meaning of the name started to spread in social media. The tabloids in Finland screamed: "The new Nokia phone is actually a hooker!" (Mäkinen 2011, my translation). Someone had found that some online Spanish dictionaries had the word *lumia* as having the meaning 'prostitute'. Apparently, it is not a very familiar word, because none of the Spanish people interviewed by the newspaper knew it. Nevertheless, when they were told this meaning, they believed that they would not like to buy a phone with a name like this – and so said even the one who had said that the name reminds him of lightness. A negative association was easily attached to the name.

Lumia is a typical name in the contemporary global market: it is made of a quasi-word which is not meant to be any language. It is not informative – it does not describe the product – but the phonetic form has been carefully thought of by linguistic experts: the word form must not mean anything negative or cause pronunciation difficulties in any language, but instead awake similar kinds of images in the consumers' minds (Volpe 2011). These linguistic features make the name global, i.e. easy to use everywhere in the world.

However, at the same time, a global name like *Lumia* will be interpreted locally. Presumably, most Spanish-speaking people do not think about the uncommon Spanish word. Instead, Finnish consumers are likely to think of the Finnish word *lumi* 'snow' as well and its plural partitive form *lumia*. As for snow, it is reminiscent of purity, lightness and whiteness. And these images fit well into the more universal way of interpreting the name.

In this paper, I will discuss and clarify which linguistic features, if any, make us consider commercial names as global or local. The question is mainly theoretically approached, and illustrated with case examples. The purpose is to stimulate ideas and to provoke some interdisciplinary dialogue about the multifaceted phenomenon of globalism in commercial naming.

Complex Concept of Globalisation

Global, globalism and globalisation can be understood in many ways (see a broader discussion in Garret 2010). The terms *globalism* and *globalisation* can be ideologically charged: they have the meaning of a

process of cultural and economic homogenisation, and *globalisation* is often combined with the “Americanisation” of consumption, mass media and culture. Sometimes *globalism* is a counterpoint to regionalism as well. (E.g. Söder 2010: iv.) Globalisation can also be seen as a historical economic change characterised by, for instance, increasing complexity of global supply chains and internationalisation of finance, and it can be seen as a change from national or social class identities to more diverse identities based on ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, hobbies or occupational interest (Hess 2009: 3–4). *Localism*, on the other hand, emphasises local production and consumption, local culture and identity. *Local* can be used as an equivalent for *domestic* or *national*, but also, on a smaller scale, it can be used to refer to a neighbourhood in a larger region (Hess 2009: 11). According to Robertson (1995: 31), local is a relative concept: a village community is local relative to region, as well as a society is local relative to a civilisational area.

Actually, local and global are not antipodes but rather different perspectives to interpret socio-cultural phenomena, two sides of the same coin. The term *glocal* in some way captures the complex local–global relationship (Hess 2009: 4). Global does not necessarily mean only the homogenisation of cultures but also heterogenisation. *Glocalisation* means that global and local features reach their meaning and identity only in relation to each other. Local is not a counterpoint to the concept of global but rather an aspect of globalisation, and globalisation is a kind of hybridisation process. (Robertson 1995: 30, 40–41; see also Nederveen Pieterse 1995.)

There are three dimensions to globalisation: economic, political and cultural. They all have an influence on each other. Technological development, political and economic interdependence between different countries and interaction across large distances may give us the impression of living in a global village where our activity is first and foremost local. Global is not experienced uniformly, nor universally. It is a phenomenon of difference as well as uniformity emerging in relation to each other. (See Garret 2010: 448–449; Coupland 2010: 5.)

Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2010: 81) argue that linguistic glocalisation has to be conversed in a framework that reckons with political and economic issues and the global and local power relations of languages. Without going any deeper into their arguments concerning language politics in general, I accept the wide contextual view as a starting point for the examination of linguistic features in the world of global economy. Many researchers see language as a resource and a commodity in the economy (see e.g. Heller 2010: 352), and taking advantage of this

economic value of language demands an understanding of the relations of languages in local and global contexts.

In this paper, I will focus on special features of language in commercial names: what is it in language that especially makes us consider a name global or local? Linguistically, I see global as such structural and semantic features of language that promote and maintain the economic and cultural process of globalisation, whereas local features of language are perceived and interpreted only by a local language community and by a local culture – the speakers of one dialect or a language. I will approach the question with help of some examples.

Does Language Choice Make a Name Global or Local?

It is common knowledge that English has become the universal language of business. International trading is basically managed in English and companies recruit new staff members more and more with job advertisements written in English – even if the recruitment process focuses on a non-English-speaking country. Regardless of the local clientele, TV and press advertisements contain English. In many countries, English is quite commonly regarded as a universal language that everybody understands, although this insight in reality does not hold true (Gerritsen et al. 2000: 18). It has been argued that English is not a *lingua franca* in all contexts and for all users (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 2010: 81).

As David Crystal (2002: 70) puts it, “the world has never had so many people in it, globalization processes have never been so marked; communication and transport technologies have never been so omnipresent; there has never been so much language contact; and no language has ever exercised so much international influence as English.” According to him, the position of English as the language of business has been confirmed not least by the dominance of the United States in the world of marketing and advertising (Crystal 1998: 53, 86).

Thus, it is reasonable to claim that English is a global language, and choosing it as the language of a commercial name is a statement for the international and multilingual use of the name. However, the question is not as simple as it may seem to be. English as the language of a name has different motives of choice and different interpretations depending on the surrounding culture and language situation. Similarly, it is oversimplified to claim that other languages would bring a local feature or an association of some special country to the name.

One should remember that English is also a local language to millions of people. A bus driver in Nottingham or an insurance agent in Canberra