

Appellativization as a linguistic phenomenon

In this review, I glance at the appellativization of proper names both from theoretical point of view in general, and in the Finnish language in particular. I also outline how the theoretical approaches can be used when analysing the appellativization of Finnish proper names. Appellativization is a phenomenon in which a proper name becomes an appellative, i. e. appellativizes. For example, the Finnish expression *urpo* ‘stupid’ originates from a male name *Urpo*.

Several terms are used about the phenomenon, at least *appellativisation* ~ *appellativization*, *deproprialisation* ~ *deproprialization*, *deonymisation* ~ *deonymisation*, and *antonomasia*. In this review, the term *appellativization* is used, as it is a compact term, which describes adequately the phenomenon in which a proper name becomes an appellative.

In the beginning of the review, Finnish studies about appellativization are introduced. After that, theoretical approaches to appellativization in general are discussed. Finally, it is shown how the theoretical approaches may be utilized when discussing the appellativization of Finnish proper names.

The first article focusing on the appellativization of Finnish proper names was published in the 1950s. After that, for half a century the phenomenon was not discussed in the Finnish linguistics, before the first master’s thesis addressing it was published. Recently, some articles comparing the Finnish and Hungarian appellativized compounds have been published.

When approaching the appellativization from the theoretical point of view, proprialization has been seen as a counterpart to appellativization. Proprialization is the phenomenon in which an appellative becomes a proper name. However, appellativization and proprialization can also be seen as very different phenomena with no direct link to each other.

The origin of an appellativized expression may be an eponym. When examining eponyms as a motivation of appellativization, the language in which the appellativization process has happened should be kept in mind. The motivation of the appellativization can also be metaphor, metonymy, or connotation. A usage of the word *Einstein* meaning ‘clever’ is based on a metaphorical conceptualization. Examples of metonymy are toponyms used instead of institutional names, for example *Washington* in the meaning of ‘the government of the USA’. It is more difficult to say reliably when a con-

notation is the motivation of appellativization, as the connotations are highly subjective.

Also, a cognitive approach can be used when discussing the appellativization. The context and the mental models play a crucial role when forming novel expressions. If a novel expression is used repeatedly, it stabilizes in the lexicon and becomes a linguistic unit.

Naturally, also in the Finnish lexicon novel appellativized expressions can be found. Some of them are only used for a short period of time or even once, but some of them become a part of the lexicon. When discussing the appellativization of the Finnish proper names, the sound structure should not be forgotten. Especially when focusing on the appellativized compounds, the sound structure plays a crucial role. For example, in the compound *sentraali-santra* ‘switchboard operator’, ‘gossiper’ (lit. ‘central’ + female name *Santra*) there is alliteration and consonance in parts of it.

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