

EPONYMY BASED ON NAMES OF COMPANIES

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Abstract:

As is generally defined, eponymy, one of the word-formation processes refers to the derivation of a name of a city, country, era, institution, or other place or thing from that of a person such as *sandwich*, *wellington*, *mackintosh* or *cardigan*. Eponymy can be classified in several ways, some refer to foods (Pizza Margarita), diseases (*Alzheimer disease*), places (*Washington*), scientific laws (*Archimedes's principle*) and sport terms (*Axel jump*), whereas others indicate trademarks, brand names (*aspirin*), prizes, awards (*Nobel Prize*), inventions (*Rubic's Cube*), ideologies (*Darwinism*), colleges, universities (*Stanford University*) and companies (*Ford*). The present paper discusses eponyms which denote companies based on the name of their founder(s) (e.g. *Porsche*, *Siemens*, *Gucci*, *Campari*, *Cadbury*, *McDonald's* and *Walt Disney*, etc.) by revealing what kind of a metonymic relationship is manifested in them. Cognitive linguists, such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Radden and Kövecses (1999) and Kövecses (2002) state that metonymy is essentially a conceptual phenomenon, in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model. In fact, metonymy is part of our everyday way of thinking, and is grounded in experience. Common metonymies include PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT (Pass me the *Shakespeare* on the top shelf.), PLACE FOR EVENT (*Iraq* nearly cost Tony Blair the premiership), PLACE FOR INSTITUTION (*Downing Street* refused comment.), PART FOR THE WHOLE (She's not just a *pretty face*.), WHOLE FOR THE PART (*England* beat *Australia* in the 2003 Rugby World Cup final.) and EFFECT FOR CAUSE (He has a *long face*). Following the cognitive approach to metonyms, I tentatively suggest that the metonymy PRODUCER FOR THE PRODUCT can be observed in the case of car makes, products of famous fashion houses, cosmetics and drinks as is illustrated by examples like He's bought a *Ferrari*. I ate a *McDonald* or We watched *Walt Disney* all day. I also point out that the producer and the product belong to the idealized cognitive model of PRODUCTION, in which the vehicle is the company producing the product and the target is the product produced by it.

Keywords: eponymy; word-formation; company names; metonymy; cognitive linguistics

1. Introduction

The English language is notoriously fast in adapting to the changing world, and therefore it is constantly changing. New words come into English in many different ways: a majority of the words used in English today are borrowed from other languages; others are formed by various word formation processes, such as derivation, compounding, clipping, functional shift, back-formation and blending

(Jackson and Amwela 2007). Many of them are created newly as neologisms whereas some come from proper names. The process by which a proper name, such as a surname, becomes generalized as a word—noun, verb, adjective, adverb—is technically known as eponymy, and an eponym is a word or name derived from a proper noun. Eponymy is generally defined as the derivation of a name of a city, country, era, institution, or other place or thing from that of a person. The word “eponymy” comes from the Greek “epōnymía” meaning “surname or derived name.”

Eponyms can be classified into different categories depending on what they denote: foods (Dobos torta, Gundel palacsinta, Pizza Mageritha, Napoleon Brandy, Sachertorte and Sandwich, etc.), diseases (Alzheimer disease, Parkinson’s disease and Asperger syndrome, etc.), places (Washington D. C., Dallas, Baltimore, Houston (US), St. Andrews, St Davids and St. Albans (Great Britain), etc.), scientific laws (Archimedes’s principle, Einstein’s general theory of relativity and Newton’s law of motion, etc.), sport terms (figure skating: Axel jump, Salchow jump, artistic gymnastics: Magyar spindle, Yurchenko (vault), Tsukahara (vault), etc.), trademarks and brand names (aspirin, escalator, thermos, walkman and xerox, etc.), prizes, awards and medals (Davis Cup, Nobel Prize, Pulitzer Prize, etc.), inventions (Biro, Bunsen burner, Diesel engine, Cardigan, Rubic’s Cube, Wellington boot, etc.), ideologies (Leninism, McCarthyism, Buddhism, Calvinism, Darwinism and Freudianism, etc.), colleges and universities (King’s College London, Stanford University, Harvard University and Yale University, etc.) and companies (Ford, Armani, Cadbury, IKEA, and Macy’s, etc.) The main source of the examples used in the analysis is Eponym – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, [Online], Available: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eponym>.

The primary aim of this paper is to explore the type of eponyms which refer to companies named after their founders, focussing on the metonymic relationship between the product and the producer in them.

2. Eponyms denoting companies

2.1. *Car manufacturing companies named after their founders:*

The names of a great majority of manufacturers of automobiles, motor vehicles, motor cycles, commercial vehicles, power equipment, airplanes and trains are derived from the name of their founder(s).

Name of the company	Founder(s)
Bentley Motors Limited	W. O. Bentley
Honda Motor Co., Ltd.	Soichiro Honda
Citroën	André-Gustave Citroën
Ford Motor Company	Henry Ford
Porsche AG	Ferdinand Porsche
Toyota Motor Corporation	Kiichiro Toyota
Ferrari S.p.A.	Enzo Ferrari
Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A.	Ferruccio Lamborghini”
Yamaha Corporation	Torakusu Yamaha
Suzuki Motor Corporation	Michio Suzuki
Rolls-Royce Holdings plc	Henry Royce and Charles Rolls
Groupe Renault	Louis Renault and his brothers

	Marcel and Fernand
The Boeing Company	William Edward Boeing
Harley-Davidson Inc.	William S. Harley and Arthur Davidson
Bombardier Inc	Joseph-Armand Bombardier
Buick	David Dunbar Buick
Chevrolet	Louis Chevrolet
Chrysler	Walter Percy Chrysler
Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Limited	Kawasaki Shōzō
Peugeot	Armand Peugeot

Interestingly enough, Mazda Motor Corporation is not named after its founder, but its name is derived from Ahura Mazda, a god of wisdom, intelligence and harmony of the earliest civilizations in West Asia (Persia). The company name of Audi is based on the Latin translation of the surname of the founder, August Horch. "Horch", meaning "listen" in German, becomes "audi" in Latin. The luxury-vehicle manufacturer Cadillac was named not after its founder but after French explorer Antoine Laumet de La Mothe, sieur de Cadillac, who founded Detroit in 1701.

2.2. Companies manufacturing automotive components, tools named after the founders

There are also some manufacturers of auto and truck parts, automotive components; power tools and accessories, hardware and home improvement products; communication systems, medical diagnostics equipment; and chainsaws the name of which is based on their founder.

Name of the company	Founder
Pirelli & C. SpA	Giovanni Battista Pirelli,
Black & Decker Corporation	S. Duncan Black and Alonzo G. Decker
Robert Bosch GmbH	Robert Bosch
Siemens AG	Werner von Siemens
Andreas Stihl AG & Company	Andreas Stihl

However, it is worth mentioning here that The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company is not named after its founder but American Charles Goodyear, inventor of vulcanized rubber.

2.3. Fashion and style houses, luxury goods and jewellery companies named after their founders

The names of most fashion houses and luxury goods, accessories and jewellery companies are based on the name of the person who founded them. Examples are:

Name of the fashion house	Founder
Giorgio Armani S.p.A.	Giorgio Armani
Calvin Klein Inc.	Calvin Klein
Gucci	Guccio Gucci
Benetton Group S.p.A.	the Benetton family
Christian Dior S.A.	Christian Dior

Yves Saint Laurent YSL	Yves Saint Laurent and his partner, Pierre Bergé
The Estée Lauder Companies Inc.	Estée Lauder and her husband Joseph Lauder
Gianni Versace S.p.A.	Gianni Versace
Givenchy	Hubert de Givenchy
Hugo Boss AG	Hugo Boss
Lacoste	René Lacoste
Levi Strauss & Co.	Levi Strauss
Swarovski AG	Daniel Swarovski
Chanel S.A.	Gabrielle Chanel.
Bulgari	Sotirios Bulgaris
Valentino SpA.	Valentino Garavani

The name of *Max Factor* comes from its founder's name Maksymilian Faktorowicz, was a Polish-Jewish businessman. *Adidas* was established by Adolf Dassler, the name of the company is based on his nickname. (**Adi Dassler**).

2.4. Companies producing drinks and beverages named after their founders

Some eponyms are derived from the names of companies producing various kinds of drinks and beverages, spirits, whiskies, wines, beers and soft drinks which were named after their inventors. Consider the following examples:

Name of the company	Founder
Daive Campari-Milano S.p.A.,	Gaspere Campari
Guinness	Arthur Guinness
Bacardi Limited	Facundo Bacardí Massó
Heineken International	Gerard Adriaan Heineken
Johnnie Walker	John (Johnnie) Walker
Beck's Brewery	Lüder Rutenberg, Heinrich Beck and Thomas May
Jas Hennessy & Co.,	Richard Hennessy
Courvoisier	Emmanuel Courvoisier
Rémy Martin	Rémy Martin
Martini & Rossi	Alessandro Martini, Luigi Rossi, Teofilo Sola
Moët & Chandon	Claude Moët

Dom Pérignon is a brand of vintage Champagne produced by the Champagne house Moët & Chandon, and serves as that house's prestige champagne. It is named after Dom Pérignon, a Benedictine monk who was an important quality pioneer for Champagne wine but who (contrary to popular myths) did not discover the champagne method for making sparkling wines. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dom_Perignon_\(wine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dom_Perignon_(wine)))

2.5. Companies producing food named after their founders

There are also some food and confectionary companies which bear the name of their founders, who were confectioners and small-time pastry makers or businessmen, as illustrated by:

Name of the company	Founder
Ferrero SpA	Pietro Ferrero
Nestlé S.A	Henri Nestlé
Barilla S.p.A	Pietro Barilla
Cadbury	John Cadbury
H.J. Heinz Company	Henry Heinz

Danone is a multinational food-products corporation founded in 1919 by Isaac Carasso. The brand was named Danone after Danon, the nickname of his son Daniel Carasso.

2.6. Department stores, supermarkets, retailers, fast food restaurants named after their founders

The name of quite many department stores, supermarkets, retailers, fast food restaurants is also linked to the name of their founder(s), such as

Name of the company	Founder
Macy's	Rowland Hussey Macy
Marks and Spencer plc	Michael Marks and Thomas Spencer
Sainsbury's	John James Sainsbury
McDonald's Corporation	Richard and Maurice McDonald
Woolworths Group PLC	Frank Woolworth
Selfridges	Harry Gordon Selfridge.
Harrods	Charles Henry Harrod

C&A is an international Dutch chain of fashion retail clothing stores, founded by brothers Clemens and August Brenninkmeijer, and it is named after the initials of the founders' first names. *Tesco PLC* was founded in 1919 by Jack Cohen. The *Tesco* name first appeared in 1924, after Cohen purchased a shipment of tea from *T. E. Stockwell* and combined those initials with the first two letters of his surname. *Lidl Stiftung & Co. KG* was founded in the 1940s by a member of the Schwarz family. The name *Lidl* is the surname of a former business partner of Josef Schwarz's, Ludwig Lidl, a retired schoolteacher, and Josef's son Dieter Schwarz bought the rights to the name from him for 1,000 German Marks, as he could not use the name Schwarz Markt; *Schwarzmarkt* means "black market". *Aldi*, (the shortening of **A**lbrecht **D**iscount), the discount supermarket chain founded by the brothers Theo Albrecht and Karl Albrecht got its name from the two letters of their surname.

2.7. Mass media, entertainment, film and television production companies named after their founders

Some American mass media, entertainment, film and television production companies also bear the names of their founders including:

Name of the company	Founder
The Walt Disney Company	Walt Disney and Roy O. Disney
Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.	Warner brothers Harry, Albert, Sam and Jack
Hanna-Barbara Productions, Inc.	William Hanna and Joseph Barbara
Lucasfilm Ltd., LLC	George Lucas

2.8. Companies manufacturing various goods named after their founders

Companies manufacturing various goods such as furniture, consumer goods, toys, luggage, watches and pianos, etc. named after their founders frequently bear the name of their creators, as in:

Name of the company	Founder
Procter & Gamble Co.,	William Procter, James Gamble,
Fisher-Price	Herman Fisher, Irving Price, Margaret Evans Price, and Helen Schelle
Casio Computer Company, Limited	Kashio Tadao
Steinway & Sons	Heinrich Engelhard Steinway

Samsonite, a global luggage manufacturer and retailer, with products ranging from suitcases to backpacks and travel accessories was founded by Jesse Shwayder in 1919, who named one of his initial cases Samson, after the Biblical strongman, and began using the trademark *Samsonite* in 1941. *Casio* was established in April 1946 by Kashio Tadao, an engineer specializing in fabrication technology, the name of whom has been modified a little. *IKEA*, a multinational group of companies that designs and sells ready-to-assemble furniture (such as beds, chairs and desks), appliances, small motor vehicles and home accessories was founded by Ingvar Kamprad, the company's name is an acronym that consists of the initials of Ingvar **K**amprad, **E**lmtaryd (the farm where he grew up), and **A**gunnaryd (his hometown in Småland, south Sweden).

2.9. Technology, information technology companies named after their founders

Technology and information technology companies are also mostly be named after the person who established them such as: Hewlett-Packard Company after Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard or Koninklijke Philips N.V after Gerard Philips and his father Frederik.

2.10. Publishing companies named after their founders

The publishing company *Longman* was founded by Thomas Longman, *Merriam-Webster, Inc.* was established by Noah Webster, after whose death George and Charles Merriam continued the business.

2.11. Hotels, airlines named after their founders

Hotels and airlines are also sometimes named after their founders, such as Hilton Hotels & Resorts after Conrad Hilton, Marriott Corporation after one of its founders J. Willard Marriott. *Ryanair Ltd.* an Irish low-cost airline was created in 1985 by Christopher Ryan, Liam Lonergan and Irish businessman Tony Ryan (after whom the company is named).

3. Metonymic relationship between the company and its product

In literary or figurative language metonymy is mainly seen as a figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated (Merriam-Webster dictionary). In other words, metonymy operates on names of things, involves the substitution of the

name of one thing for that of another thing and assumes that the two things are somehow associated.

However, cognitive linguists, such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Radden and Kövecses (1999: 18) claim that metonymy is not just a matter of names of things, but essentially a conceptual phenomenon, which is part of our everyday way of thinking, and is grounded in experience. Lakoff and Johnson's example of the metonymy in *She's just a pretty face* illustrates the general conceptual nature of metonymy. We derive the basic information about a person from the person's face. The conceptual metonymy for it is THE FACE FOR THE PERSON, which is part of our everyday way of thinking about people.

As stated by Radden and Kövecses (1999: 19), metonymy is also a cognitive process, in which we mentally access one conceptual entity via another entity. In other words, two entities are associated so that one entity (face) stands for the other (person). As this example demonstrates, metonymy is referential in nature. As Langacker (1993: 30) put it, metonymy is a reference point phenomenon in which one conceptual entity, the reference-point, offers mental access to another conceptual entity, the desired target. Radden and Kövecses (1999:19) refer to the reference point as the vehicle and the desired target simply as the target. In the example of *She's just a pretty face*, the 'pretty face' serves as the vehicle for accessing the 'person' as the target.

Furthermore, Radden and Kövecses (1999: 20) point out that metonymy operates in an idealized cognitive model, which is meant to include not only people's encyclopaedic knowledge of a particular domain but also the cultural models they are part of. Thus, on the basis of the above mentioned three cognitive properties of metonymy, metonymy is defined by Radden and Kövecses (1999: 21) as follows:

Metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model.

Some of the most frequently listed types of metonymies are provided by Evans (2007: 142-3) in the following classification:

PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT

- I've just bought a new *Citroën*.
- Pass me the *Shakespeare* on the top shelf.
- She likes eating *Burger King*.

PLACE FOR EVENT

- Iraq* nearly cost Tony Blair the premiership.
- American public opinion fears another *Vietnam*.
- Let's hope that *Beijing* will be as successful an Olympics as *Athens*.

PLACE FOR INSTITUTION

- Downing Street* refused comment.
- Paris* and *Washington* are having a spat.
- Europe* has upped the stakes in the trade war with the United States.

PART FOR THE WHOLE

- My *wheels* are parked out the back.
- Lend me a *hand*.
- She's not just a *pretty face*.

WHOLE FOR THE PART

- England* beat *Australia* in the 2003 Rugby World Cup final.
- The European Union* has just passed new human rights legislation.

My car has developed a mechanical fault.

EFFECT FOR CAUSE

He has a long face.

He has a spring in his step today.

Her face is beaming.

Metonymy is based on congruity, i.e. the vehicle and the target entity are closely related to each other in the same conceptual domain. The producer is closely related to the product, the place is closely related to the event, the place is closely related to the institution which is in that place, the whole is closely related to its parts, the parts are closely related to the whole and the effect is closely related to the cause which triggered it. In the case of metonymy there is always one idealized cognitive model (production, causation, action, etc.). Each can be interpreted in one single idealised cognitive model, in which one entity stands for another. (Kövecses 2002: 251).

We use eponyms frequently in our everyday life, in which we can observe a kind of metonymic relationship between the company that produced a certain product and the product itself. Such metonymic relationships can often be found in the case of car makes, products of famous fashion houses, cosmetics and drinks.

A good example of this is provided by the red carpet events of the Oscar Awards, or the Metropolitan Museum's charity Met Gala in New York, where pop stars, actresses and singers show off lavish evening dresses designed by famous fashion houses. The text under the photos clearly shows that the name of fashion house tends to stand for the dress designed by it (<http://oscar.go.com/red-carpet>, <http://www.vogue.com/866286/best-dressed-2014-met-gala/>):

Actress Emma Stone wearing *Elie Saab* as she attends the 87th Annual Academy Awards at Hollywood & Highland Center on February 22, 2015 in Hollywood, California.

Actress Jennifer Aniston in *Atelier Versace*.

Actress Chloe Grace Moretz wears *Miu Miu*.

Alexa Chung in *Nina Ricci*.

Diana Kruger in *Hugo Boss*.

Rihanna in *Stella McCartney*.

Chloe Moretz in *Chanel*.

Marion Cotillard in *Christian Dior*.

Frank Ocean in *Givenchy*.

Ryan Reynolds in *Gucci*.

Rachel McAdams in *Ralph Lauren*, Victoria Beckham in *Victoria Beckham* and Anne Hathway in *Calvin Klein*.

Rihanna toting her new brown *Giorgio Armani*.

It will come as no surprise that she is wearing *Christian Dior*.

Consider some other examples of metonymic relationship between the producer and its product:

He's bought a Porsche/Ferrari/Suzuki.

I ate a MacDonald/Burger King.

Let's drink a Johnny Walker/ a Beck's/a Heineken/ a Campari.

Ferrero Rocher's are enjoyed around the world by millions of people.

I had the Pirellis but they wore quickly 25K miles.

He used to smell like Hugo Boss when I first met him.

He bought a brand new Steinway.

We watched *Walt Disney* all day yesterday.
Look it up in the *Webster-Merriam*.
This is a genuine *Swarowski*.

If we have a closer look at the above examples, we can say that one entity, the PRODUCER (e.g. Burger King) stands for another entity, the PRODUCT of the producer (e.g. one kind of sandwiches of Burger King). Furthermore, both the producer and the product belong to the idealized cognitive model of PRODUCTION, in which there can be several entities, the producer, the product, place of the production, etc. The vehicle is the company producing the product and the target is the product produced by it. A basic characteristic of metonymically related entities is that they are situated close to each other in the same conceptual domain. The producer and the product are close to each other as the product is produced by the producer. The vehicle provides mental access to the target as the two entities are in the same conceptual domain. In other words, metonymy is based on contiguity and they are closely related within the same conceptual domain. These entities form a complete whole, and are associated in our experience about the world as they usually emerge together. As they are closely related in our experience, they are used to substitute certain entities for other entities in the same idealized cognitive model (Kövecses: 2002: 149).

4. Conclusion

Eponymy, which refers to the derivation of a general name (a city, country, era, institution, or other place or thing) from that of a famous person, is one of the word formation processes in English. Eponyms have a lot of different types ranging from the ones denoting foods, diseases, scientific laws, sport terms, trademarks and brand names, through prizes, awards, inventions, ideologies, to colleges, universities and companies. Analysing the eponyms derived from the names of companies, I pointed out their metonymic nature. In the view of cognitive linguists, such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Radden and Kövecses (1999) and Kövecses (2002) metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model. Accordingly, in my analysis I have tentatively suggested that many of the eponyms based on the names of companies can be interpreted in the PRODUCTION idealized cognitive model, and there is a metonymic relationship between the name of the producer and the product, the former being the vehicle and the latter the intended target. Following cognitive linguists, I have also pointed out that metonymy is not just a matter of names of things, but essentially a conceptual phenomenon, which is part of our everyday way of thinking, and is grounded in experience.

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