



UDC 821.111.0(092)(73)(02)

THE ROLE OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR OF NAME IN MODERN DISCOURSE

Yalovenko O.

PhD in Philology, Associate professor

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8787-7339 PhD in Philology

Pavlo Tychnyna Uman State Pedagogical University,

Uman, Sadova, 2, 20308

Abstract. The article deals with the analysis of *daknam* and *bhalonam* as names and conceptual metaphors in modern discourse. The article's **aim** is to explore the peculiarities and new interpretation of *daknam* and *bhalonam* in the context of the transculture paradigm in fiction, mainly in Jhumpa Lahiri's writing (her debut novel "The Namesake" is the research object). It is indicated that in "The Namesake" naming has been undertaken under the emotional matrix of affection; it touches the theoretical framework of diaspora and serves as a powerful metaphor. Name acquires new meaning and interpretation in Lahiri's poetics. The name appears in the title ("The Namesake") and becomes a locus of cultures "meeting".

Key words: conceptual metaphor, name, transculture, identity, immigrant, Indian culture.

Introduction.

Our reality is being structured by concepts that are metaphorical in nature. There is a need to speak about new categories of conceptual (individual) metaphors which appear in Jhumpa Lahiri's poetics (an American writer of Bengali origin). Metaphors, we find in almost every Lahiri's story, are symbolic "links" between everyday and coherent metaphorical systems that characterize Indian culture (there is a need to mention that metaphors are different for each culture and vary from culture to culture).

Speaking about Indian culture we have to mention about *metaphor of spatialization* which is rooted in immigrants' cultural experience. This metaphor provides many possible bases and it is essential for immigrants who are still foreign in America. They feel isolated and locked in large but symbolically "cold" American apartments. It is difficult for them to imagine any alternative way for loneliness. Almost all of them have their "metaphorical truth" which is based on complete understanding through cultural background and experience.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

Despite the presence of scientific works of foreign critics (T. Bhalla (2012), K. Chatterjee (2016), S. Dasgupta (2011), N. Friedman (2008), R. Heinze (2007), F. Kral (2007), S. Lutzoni (2017), A. Rizzo (2012) and others), Lahiri's writing is not fully investigated, which determines further theoretical studies both in the context of transculture and in metaphor exploring.

Main text.

We have to understand that there is a difference between everyday speech and fiction language. The **aim** of the article is an attempt to explore conceptual metaphor of name involving double identity in Lahiri's fiction and in terms of transculture, and how the metaphor is extended by variations on core metaphors (and mega metaphors).



A crucial metaphor is found in “The Namesake” (2003), Lahiri’s debut novel, where naming has been undertaken under the emotional matrix of affection. Naming touches the theoretical framework of diaspora and serves as a powerful metaphor. We may speak about author’s distinctive metaphor, as naming procedure is still foreign to everyone in America (while reading the novel we understand that each person in India has two names: home and official).

A lot of things in Lahiri’s writing have their double nature and name is one of them. In the article we are trying to consider the role of name metaphor along with the use of a *web of metaphors* in modern discourse (mainly in fiction). It is important to interpret and analyse metaphors in extra-language context when such additional item as culture is important.

Name acquires new meaning and interpretation in Lahiri’s poetics. The author’s *daknam* and *bhalonam*¹ serve both names and conceptual metaphors. In “The Namesake” the name appears in the title and becomes a locus of cultures “meeting”. Names are foregrounding in the novel: characters’ names; names of books, famous authors, singers and musical albums; names of food; acronyms like ABCD²; things of everyday use; names of towns and cities, bridges and terminals – all these items make up a single “power” of conceptual name metaphor.

While analyzing the novel we understand that there are special signs, for example, “food is not just a cultural code, not a pursuit of food, not a means of satiety, but a real art” [10, p. 132]. Along with gastronomic images which are used as a cultural phenomenon, name metaphor is no less important. Lahiri’s incredible collection of names (proper and not) has also generated a wide range of symbols which require special interpretation.

It should be mentioned that Lahiri’s poetics tends to be transcultural as the author successfully combines three cultural crisscrosses. It is under the dynamic diaspora framework that combines several cultures. The whole novel can be analyzed through a close examination of conceptual metaphors: names and interesting Indian tradition of naming, dresses and food, travel and nature, time and location, etc. All these make Lahiri’s unique way of writing as these common words serve as crucial metaphors and have a significant function in finding external layers of both the author’s narrative strategies and the variety of perspectives at diasporic situation.

Conceptual metaphor of name has a symbolic role in the novel, and in order to understand its meaning fully, one must explore the deep structures and patterns of diasporic self, identity, exile and consciousness in terms of transculture. The novel proves that names operate at different levels as semantically rich signs; the connotative meanings of them provides with new look at relationships. We notice that in Lahiri’s interpretation names being powerful metaphors open the dynamics of real and symbolic, proper narrative and thematic level they foreground.

¹ Daknam is pet (home) name meaning, literally, the name by which one is called, by friends, family, and other intimates, at home and in other private, unguarded moments; Bhalonam is a good (official) name for identification in the outside world. Consequently, good names appear on envelopes, on diplomas, in telephone directories, and in all other public places.

² ABCD (American Born Confused Deshi) – a man of mixed identity; born in America confused Hindu.



Being concentrated around dual Indo-American diasporic experience the novel has a secret and hidden dimension of Slavic culture that adds new meaning and mood through signs inherited in names. *Daknam/bhalonam* binary reveals cultural tension the protagonist underwent being a teenager and which he is reconciled with only after his father's death. This double cultural nuance is presented in name itself in the following quote: "Pet names are a persistent remnant of childhood, a reminder that life is not always serious, so formal, so complicated. They are a reminder, too, that one is not all things to all people. Every pet name is paired with a good name, a *bhalonam*, for identification in the outside world" [7, p. 26].

Using such unique words as *daknam* and *bhalonam*, Lahiri contributes to philology with new lexemes. She mentioned: "I wanted to write about the pet name/good name distinction for a long time and I knew I needed the space of a novel to explore the idea. It's almost too perfect a metaphor for the experience of growing up as the child of immigrants having a divided identity, divided loyalties, etc" (like most of her border characters she has two names: good and pet one).

In Lahiri's poetics naming appears both to be an Indian unique tradition and narrative plot (and sometimes parody). We find an interesting connotation with significance of "other name" as "Jhumpa" itself is a pet name, literally means "nothing" in Bengali. The same we notice with protagonist's new name Nikhil that has Latin roots and a sense of "nothing, zero". Having a double identity the author completely understands Nikhil's inner state as also does not accept her name. For Lahiri being bestowed with two formal names always remains at the sideline and it is her pet name which became a functional crux of her double identity. There are many coincidences with her character; the circumstances under which she has lost her good name are similar to the fact that protagonist's parents cannot write the name of their firstborn chosen by their grandmother due to Indian tradition.

Lahiri's cute blending of *daknam/bhalonam* with names and naming creates the process of dynamic and flexible metaphoric shades. Ashoke's vision at the hospital that takes him back to India is coloured by powerful flashes of his past life episodes and is also culminated in feeling a "dark, grainy, blurry presence" [7, p. 24] of him while looking at his just born son. The couple does not worry as "names can wait" [7, p. 25]. That is why they decide to wait for the letter as there are pet names to "tide over".

The author provides with a detailed explanation of *daknam* as a conceptual metaphor: "In Bengali the word for pet name is *daknam*, meaning, literally the same by which one is called, by friends, family and other intimates, at home and in other private, unguarded moments. Pet names are a persistent reminder that life is not always so serious, so formal, so complicated. They are a reminder, too, that one is not all things to all people. They all have pet names. Ashima's pet name is Monu, Ashoke's Mithu, and even as adults, these are the names by which they are known in their respective families, the names by which one is adored and scolded and missed and loved" [7, p. 26].

Daknams exist in the space of intimacy, informality, friends and family care and related to warmth. The couple realizes that in Boston there is no one to call them by their *daknams*. By virtue of their border existence it is also one important aspect of



their life which is still unheard, unused, and associated with a sense of loss. While reading the novel we notice that as opposed to a *daknam* comes its “other” kind – *bhalonam*, which also serves as a conceptual metaphor.

Along with word definition the author provides with interpretation of characters’ names, and in this context it is more like reading a reference book than fiction: “Every pet name is paired with a good name, a *bhalonam*, for identification in the outside world. Consequently, good names appear on envelopes, on diplomas, in telephone directories, and in all other public places. (For this reason, letters from Ashima’s mother say “Ashima” on the outside, “Monu” on the inside). Good names tend to represent dignified and enlightened qualities. Ashima means “she who is limitless without borders”. Ashoke, the name of an emperor, means “he who transcends grief”. Pet names have no such aspirations. Pet names are never recorded officially, only uttered and remembered. Unlike good names, pet names are frequently meaningless, deliberately silly, ironic, even onomatopoeic. Often in one’s infancy, one answers unwittingly to dozens of pet names until one eventually sticks” [7, p. 26].

We find multiplicity of *daknams* which means a special attachment when the family’s friend Mr. Nandi calls yet-to-be named Ashoke’s son “Buro” which in Bengali means “old man” [7, p. 26]. The word-collocation becomes confused as Patty, a nurse, considers it to be baby’s name, and does not understand how “old man” refers to a baby? Again it metaphorically brings both the plurality and duality (inside or outside) associated with *daknams*.

Summary and conclusions.

Conceptual metaphors *daknam/bhalonam* contain a variety of dichotomies transcultural in nature, such as inside/outside, literal/ironic, recorded/unrecorded, etc. Looking from the perspective of metaphorical concepts we can select a series of conceptual metaphors which relate to name and naming (which is crucial for Bengalis) and which new meanings can be generated through.

Name appears to be the main problem in the novel (even Ashoke’s and Ashima’s names are provided with short interpretation), but in other stories (for example in “Only Goodness”) we also find name topos although name is paid little attention as characters’ names replaced with pronouns “he” and “she” accordingly.

In Lahiri’s poetics metaphor of name acquires a special meaning, primarily in cultural paradigm, and is correctly interpreted by Asian immigrants only. Critical studies on Jhumpa Lahiri’s poetics focus mainly on diasporic experience but there is a need to move scientific directions towards metaphor exploring.

References:

1. Bhalla T. Being (and Feeling) Gogol: Reading and Recognition in Jhumpa Lahiri’s “The Namesake”. *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S.* 2012. № 37 (1). P. 105-129.
2. Chatterjee K. Negotiating Homelessness through Culinary Imagination: the Metaphor of Food in Jhumpa Lahiri’s “Interpreter of Maladies”. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities.* 2016. № 8 (3). P. 197-205.
3. Dasgupta S. Jhumpa Lahiri’s “Namesake”: Reviewing the Russian



Connection. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*. 2011. № 3 (4). P. 530-544.

4. Friedman N. From Hybrids to Tourists: Children of Immigrants in Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake". *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 2008. № 50 (1). P. 111-128.

5. Heinze R. A Diasporic overcoat? Naming and Affection in Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake". *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. 2007. № 43 (2). P. 191-202.

6. Kral F. Shaky Ground and New Territorialities in *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali and *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. 2007. № 43 (1). P. 65-76.

7. Lahiri J. *The Namesake*. A Mariner Book, Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston, New York. 2003. 195 p.

8. Lutzoni S. Jhumpa Lahiri and the Grammar of a Multi-Layered Identity. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*. 2017. № 38 (1). P. 108-118.

9. Rizzo A. Translation and Bilingualism in Monica Ali's and Jhumpa Lahiri's Marginalized Identities. *Text Matter*. 2012. № 2 (2). P. 264-275.

10. Yalovenko, Olha. Poetics of Gastronomic Images in Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake". *Bulletin of Alfred Nobel University. Series "Philology"*. № 2(24). 2022. P. 131-141.