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## Once More about the Need to Harmonize Onomastic Terminology

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Jeszcze o potrzebie ujednoczenia terminologii onomastycznej

Every science has a set of vocabulary for logical structuring of knowledge, i.e. terminology. The same is also true about onomastics, including Polish onomastics.

The care for the proper selection of terms and their unambiguous definition can be seen throughout the history of our field, for example, in Witold Taszycki's article devoted to the beginnings of Polish onomastic terminology (Taszycki, 1955, pp. 185–191). He proposes, among other things, introduction of the term *nazewnictwo* (name-giving) instead of *onomastyka* (onomastics), since the latter means “science concerning proper names”. Following the terminological recommendations, the author considers the native neologism *nazewnictwo* (name-giving) as legible and allowing to create derivative words, e.g. descriptive *nazewnictwo geograficzne* (geographical name-giving), *nazewnictwo plemienne* (tribal name-giving), *nazewniczy* (name-giving [adj.]) and even *nazewnik* (scientist of name-giving), i.e. “researcher of proper names”. Next to these terms, there were: *onomastyka* (onomastics) and *toponomastyka* (toponomastics) (as complementary: the study of personal names versus the study of geographical names), *onomastyczny* (onomastic) and *onomasta* (onomastician). Time has shown that the terms based on the Greek root have become the established forms, probably also under the influence of other languages, but with a change of meaning: the term *onomastyka* (onomastics) began to mean (as a superordinate term) the science of proper names, while the terms proposed by Taszycki have become obsolete.

The discussion concerning onomastic terminology was opened by a project conducted by Jan Svoboda (1961) – *K Slovánské onomastické terminologie* – which addressed terminology relating to onomastics. Onomasticians from all Slavic countries and Germany worked together by providing equivalents for Czech terms in the respective national languages. Additionally, it is worth recalling that such a proposal was presented by Mieczysław Karaś (1968, pp. 352–360), who suggested that Polish terms should be based mostly on native sources of phrases, but equivalent terms cannot be disregarded. For example: next to a *personal* proper name, the term *antroponym* is provided, in contrast to the lack of *toponym* for a *geographical* proper name or *zoonym* for a *zoological* proper name.

Slavic terminology was the topic of the international conference of the Onomastic Commission of the International Slavist Committee in Kraków in 1971. The onomastic society learned about the course of work and discussion on the dictionary of Slavic onomastic terminology from “Onomastica”. During this conference, not only the specific terms, but also the theoretical assumptions of the dictionary, were discussed. It is worth recalling the key proposals: 1. To give priority to existing, traditional terminology; 2. To distinguish between terms denoting naming processes and their products (as well as between “name science” and a set of names); 3. To make attempts at providing antonyms for particular terms; 4. To provide terms in a singular form, illustrating them with typical examples; 5. For the new terms, to use the Greek and Latin bases to ensure that the terms are adapted and understood in different languages; 6. To avoid descriptive terms; 7. Not to include terms from linguistic studies in the dictionary; 7. Not to create artificial terms where there is no equivalent in any language. Many of these postulates are in line with the basic principles of terminology as a science of concepts. I would add that at this conference Svoboda resigned from managing the project and Božidar Vidoeski was appointed as coordinator and editor. This resulted in the publication (1983) of a multilingual census, or to be more clear, a dictionary of Slavic onomastic terminology (*Основен систем и терминологија на словенската ономастика / Основная система и терминология славянской ономастики / Grundsystem und Terminologie der slawischen Onomastik*). However, this terminology has not been universally accepted in the Slavic region, which is undoubtedly due to differences in onomastic schools in different countries.

The seriousness of the problem was addressed on an ongoing basis. The lack of clarity and the ambiguity of definitions of various onomastic terms, both in general dictionaries of the Polish language and in material works of onomasticians and works in related fields, gradual extension of the scope of research to new names (e.g. *chrematonyms*, *medionyms*) reveals the need to unify and organize terminology and to prepare an appropriate dictionary. So far, there has been no such study in Poland, and there are only few of them in Slavic countries altogether.

I will come back for a moment to the ambiguity of the definition of concepts. In the works of onomasticians, the term *toponym* means *geographical name* and is superordinate to: *local name (oikonym)*, *field name (anoikonym)*, *water name (hydronym)*, *mountain name (oronym)*. Representatives of other sciences, especially geographers and cartographers, use the term *local name* to describe a geographical object, which for a linguist-onomastician is an inappropriate use. Geographer and cartographer Andrzej Czerny, points this out in his work *Teoria nazw geograficznych* (2011). Onomasticians-linguists are also not without guilt, often (as indicated by the contexts) treating the term *toponym* as a synonym of *local name*. The semantic blurring of the terms *nazwisko* (surname), *przezwiśko* (nickname) and *przydomek* (by-name) led to the interchangeability of their use in both general and specialist dictionaries, which drew attention of Zofia Abramowicz and Leonarda Dacewicz (1995) in the article *Założenia słownika polskiej terminologii onomastycznej*. Presenting these assumptions, the authors choose a semasiological method and alphabetical order of headwords. In their opinion, the following elements should be included in a headword entry: the term, the name of the branch of onomastics or linguistics, all meanings (in the case of ambiguous terms), illustrations with examples, variants or synonyms of the term, the origin of the term, foreign equivalents of the term, the use of the term in dictionaries and subject literature. Concurrently, they propose that the terms and their explanations should be based exclusively on Polish scientific treatises. Both scientists are aware of the difficulties of such a task and of the need to consult with the entire onomastic environment. Unfortunately, the project has not been implemented.

The answer to the urgent problem of systematizing onomastic terminology was Professor Robert Mrózek's submission of several grant applications for the development of Polish onomastic terminology based on Slavic background. Applications were submitted to the Scientific Research Committee, the National Science Centre and the National Programme for the Development of Humanities. Unfortunately, the project was not financed, although the author(s) saw and justified the need for a modern terminology, taking into account not only international achievements, but also Polish scientific contribution.

The Polish theoretical-onomastic literature is abundant in lists of terms, but they have a recording character, as Ewa Wolnicz-Pawłowska noted in her summary article *Terminologia onomastyczna w teorii badawczej i praktyce normalizacyjnej*. Such lists can be found in the flagship publications, such as *Polskie nazwy własne. Encyklopedia*, and *Encyklopedia onomastyki słowiańskiej*. They contain separate terminology chapters and term indexes, referring to problem articles. However, the experiences and habits of the authors of dictionary headwords, who do not consult one another on the use of terms, result in the occurrence of synonymous and ambiguous

terms. Wolnicz-Pawłowska cites various co-occurring terms from the field of hydronyms: *apelatyw hydronimiczny* (hydronymic appellative) – *termin hydrograficzny* (hydrographic term); *nazwy wodne* (water names) – (hydronyms); *nazwy wodne archaiczne* (archaic water names) – *nazwy rzek przedślaviańskie* (pre-Slavic names of rivers) – *nazwy staroeuropejskie* (old European names) – old European hydronyms. Such a list already shows how important it is to organize and unify the terminology we use. The fact that the number of terms increases and will continue to do so, and the occurrence of synonymous terms, is obvious and not completely wrong. However, it is important that they are applied consistently and in accordance with their meaning. Wolnicz-Pawłowska draws attention to one more important issue. The need for an onomastic terminological dictionary is important in the expert work of many onomasticians in naming committees: The Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographical Objects and the Commission on Standardisation of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland. Terminology, including onomastic normative terminology, is important in the work of both commissions, as can be seen in terms such as: *nazwa oficjalna* (official name), *nazwa gwarowa* (dialect name), *nazwa mniejszościowa* (minority name), *nazwa urzędowa* (official name), *nazwa standaryzowana* (standardized name).

It is also worth recalling the work entitled *Słownik etymologiczny nazw miejscowych Polski* annexed to the publication of Professor Maria Malec, which is useful for non-specialists as a dictionary of onomastic terms, but which has the character of an explanatory dictionary.

Attempts have been made to at least compile a list of onomastic terms, together with their definitions. An example of such activity is the publication of the list of basic onomastic terminology headwords in Polish (*Lista podstawowych haseł terminologii onomastycznej w języku polskim*) on the website of the University of Łódź. This is a result of the cooperation between Professor Artur Gałkowski and the terminology section of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS). This terminological group developed and compiled basic onomastic terms (about 100) in English, German and French (published on the ICOS website). Further work is planned in order to include counterparts in other languages. The list presented by Gałkowski has been consulted in onomastic environment and is being updated.

Wojciech Włoskowicz (2018) recently drew attention to the need to create a dictionary of onomastic terminology. In the final part of the text, he included a number of postulates (some of them, especially the ones following the principles of terminology, were raised by Wolnicz-Pawłowska). These include: 1. Striving for the preservation of the distinction between terms ascribed to separate conceptual fields or conceptual series, e.g. avoiding associating the term *nazwa terenowa* (field name) with *mikrotoponim* (microtoponym); 2. Reserving terms based on

the root *-onim* for the concepts (types) of single proper names, terms based on the root *-onimia* for the concepts of sets of names, and terms based on the root *-onomastyka* for the concepts of onomastic subdisciplines. This regularity extends also to the derived adjectives *-onimiczny* and *-onomastyczny*; 3. Clear definition of the terms introduced in the works and explanation of the meanings applied by the terms (postulate of Urszula Bijak submitted during the 20<sup>th</sup> Slovak Onomastic Conference); 4. The application of the onomasiological approach to organizing terminology, which must precede the (re)construction of the onomastics system or systems and the scope of this (re)construction; 5. Preservation of the principle of pluralism of theory and pluralism of conceptual systems.

This review shows that the objective of the terminology project remains valid. This objective consists in the establishment of a verified and updated list of Polish onomastic terminology with definitions of particular terms taken from historical and contemporary synthetic and analytical works, both from onomastics and from the fields in which proper names are used. It falls within the work on onomastic terminology undertaken by international organisations: a special international terminology group at the international onomastic organisation ICOS and the Terminology Committee of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN).

Since attempts to obtain financing for such a task were unsuccessful in the past, the Onomastic Section of the Committee on Linguistics of the Polish Academy of Sciences decided to try to implement it with the help of all onomastic centres in Poland. A preliminary work plan and rules for such a dictionary have been established. The various postulates previously referred to should be taken into account, as well as the achievements to date: the list of *Osnowen system* and the principles of developing the dictionary presented by Abramowicz and Dacewicz. The development of research results will take the form of a full electronic database of Polish onomastic terminology and a theoretical monograph containing a description of the problems described above. This will allow for constant updating, introduction of new terms, presentation of semantic transformations, and a certain degree of normativization.

Firstly, it requires the detailed excerption of terms used in Polish onomastic and related literature (including their contexts), to determine the definitions of particular terms. The above must be preceded by the development of detailed rules for the excerption of terminological material from onomastic literature and related fields, e.g. anthroponymy, toponymy (including microtoponymy, urbanonymy, oronymy, hydronymy), zoonymy, cosmonymy, chrematonymy, medionymy and the establishment of rules for defining particular terms. The following items are going to be subjected to the excerption: over 62 years of the “Onomastica”

magazine, 20 volumes of papers of the Polish National Onomastic Conferences (OKO), over a dozen volumes of onomastic presentations from university conferences, 5 onomastic encyclopaedic and textbook publications, over a dozen selected onomastic monographs and monographs from related disciplines, existing Slavic lists of onomastic terminology – approximately 100 volumes in total. The expected measurable effect will be the development, for the purpose of which the selection of headword components of the material corpus will be made (according to the adopted elimination principles), and the completion and unification of headword articles. Additionally, the introduction will be carried out.

In our research, we will use mainly methods developed by historical linguistics, onomastics or corpus linguistics, and also general methodologies used in scientific studies (philological method in collecting material, and frequential methods, sorting techniques in analysing the material, methods of creating definitions), as well as terminology principles. Perhaps this will allow for a combined, onomasiological and semasiological, approach. We decided to keep the division into classic onomastics subdisciplines and present the terms related to them in a hierarchical order.

The analysis will consist in presenting:

- individual terms and their definitions (meaning, scope, application),
- variant forms of terms and variant definitions,
- the origin of the term,
- examples of use,
- semantic transformations of the terms,
- usage, frequency and correctness recommendations (preferred, acceptable, and unrecommended term),
- additional aspects, e.g. incorrect spelling of the term (such as *oikonim* vs. *oikonym*, *drimonim* vs. *drymonim*), translation of foreign forms, assignment of incorrect definitions, misuse, cultural aspect, functioning in the consciousness of language users, etc.).

It is recommended that terminology problems are frequently discussed at conferences and in published hearings. This will allow us to think over and verify the assumptions of the project and the ideas for its implementation.

*Translated into English by Marek Robak-Sobolewski*

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to propose the preparation of a list of Polish onomastics terms, which will be published online. Reference is made here to many works that draw attention to the need to organize and unify Polish onomastic terminology. It presents current ideas for solving this important issue, e.g. the assumptions of the dictionary of onomastic terminology by Zofia Abramowicz and Leonarda Dacewicz. Based on the existing lists of onomastic terminology (Polish, Slavic, European), the Onomastic Section of the Committee on Linguistics of the Polish Academy of Sciences decided to join (on the basis of grant applications submitted first to KBN and then to NCN, according to the idea of Prof. Robert Mrózek) in the preparation of a well-structured (and if possible unified) list of terms used in the science of personal names. The starting point is the development of a set of maximum terms within individual onomastic subdisciplines, from which the entries to the list will be extracted and then defined, with quotations from onomastic studies certifying their use and maybe recommendations for use or not. The ideal would be to organize them in such a way that they form a coherent image: from the most general to the most detailed terms. Such action, also in cooperation with representatives of fields using onomastic terminology (historians, geographers, cartographers), will in effect contribute to the ordering of Polish, Slavic and international terminology.

**Keywords:** onomastics, terminology, list of terms



## ABSTRAKT

Celem artykułu jest propozycja przygotowania wykazu terminów polskiej onomastyki, który opublikowany będzie on-line. Nawiązuje się tu do wielu prac zwracających uwagę na konieczność uporządkowania i ujednolicenia polskiej terminologii onomastycznej. Przedstawia się dotychczasowe pomysły rozwiązania tej ważnej kwestii, np. założenia słownika terminologii onomastycznej Zofii Abramowicz i Leonardy Dacewicz. Opierając się na istniejących wykazach terminologii onomastycznej (polskiej, słowiańskiej, europejskiej), Sekcja Onomastyczna Komitetu Językoznawstwa PAN postanowiła przystąpić (na bazie składanych najpierw do KBN a potem NCN wniosków grantowych wedle pomysłu prof. Roberta Mrózka) do przygotowania uporządkowanego (i w miarę możliwości ujednoliconego) wykazu terminów używanych w nauce o nazwach własnych. Punktem wyjścia jest opracowanie zbioru maksimum terminów w obrębie poszczególnych subdyscyplin onomastyki, z którego wyodrębnione zostaną hasła do wykazu, a następnie zdefiniowane, opatrzone cytatami z opracowań onomastycznych poświadczającymi ich użycie oraz może zaleceniami użycia bądź nie. Idealem byłoby uporządkowanie ich tak, by tworzyły spójny obraz: od terminów najogólniejszych ku szczegółowym. Takie działanie, również we współpracy z przedstawicielami dziedzin posługujących się terminologią onomastyczną (historykami, geografami, kartografami), przyczyni się w efekcie do uporządkowania polskiej, słowiańskiej i międzynarodowej terminologii.

**Słowa kluczowe:** onomastyka, terminologia, wykaz terminów

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