



Onomastics in Different Perspectives: Research Results

A Onomástica em diferentes perspectivas: resultados de pesquisas

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Onomastics is an integral part of Lexicology, characterized as a language discipline containing two fields of study: Anthroponymy and Toponymy. Both use proper names as the focus of study: the first, Anthroponymy, treats people's names – the proper names of individuals, the parental or last names, and the nicknames. By contrast, the second, Toponymy, is the area of Onomastics that investigates the toponymic lexicon, through the study of motivation and origin of the proper names of places.

Onomastic studies harken back to our past, to our origins, and thus always awaken curiosity, not only of scholars, but also of people in general. Surpassing the mere function of nomenclature, the names of people and places are products of a system of denomination that reflect the way of life of a given culture and how this represents their values. Although they may appear to us as familiar, because we know them and routinely make use of them, when we stop to contemplate the nature of the proper names of people and places, we almost always realize that these stem from incomprehensible meanings that are strange to us, even when they refer known people and places.

This occurs because, in Onomastics, the referential function, be it geared toward the name of the person or the name of the place, is what stands out, “whereas its meaning cannot always be found stored in the mind of the listener, nor in that of the speaker, especially if it is a very old toponym, which has been maintained in the language, transcending generations.” (SEABRA, 2006, p. 1956). As this research deals with studies that involve the referential or denotative function of language, one cannot speak of Onomastics – Toponymy and Anthroponymy – without first bumping into the primary function of these linguistic signs, which is the reference, nor without studying the symbolic or representative function that they sustain. In other words, link of the meaning of one name to a specific person or location necessarily implies the questions surrounding what it symbolizes, what it represents, or what it denominates.

As Onomastics brings valuable information that can be used in many fields of human knowledge, we stress the fact that this linguistic discipline has an interdisciplinary characteristic, interesting not only to linguistic science, but also to other sciences, of which History, Geography, Archeology, Genealogy, Social History, and Cartography stand out, as they use information provided by anthroponymic and toponymic studies, which is, in itself, a sufficient show of the wealth and importance of this field.

Regarding the definitions of the terms Toponymy and Anthroponymy, in 1928, Leite de Vasconcelos established concepts and classifications regarding the science of proper names in her Portuguese Anthroponymy manual, in which Portuguese anthroponyms since the Middle Ages can be found. Regarding the term “Anthroponymy”, the author had already proposed and employed this term in 1887, in *Revista Lusitana*. In her 1928 manual, we can see:

We have, as you can see, many types of “proper names”. The section of Glotology that treats these (origin, reason for employment, form, evolution, etc.) led philosophers to designate it through “onomatology”, which, according to some types, should break down into three secondary disciplines: 1) the study of local names, or “Toponymy”, in which the liquid elements (rivers, lakes, etc.) are equally included, and other products from nature, such as trees and rocks that frequently give names to small farms (the “Toponymy” is, therefore, a geographic Onomatology); 2) Study of the names of people, or “Anthroponymy”, expression

that the author first proposed and employed in 1887, in “Revista Lusitana”, I, 45; 3). The study of various other proper names, that is, from stars, winds, animals, supernatural beings, ships, things: “Pantheonismy” (from “pantheons”, which means “of all species”, “varied”). In the study of names of supernatural beings, nothing hinders us from naming “Theonymia” the reference to the names of Gods. (LEITE DE VASCONCELOS, 1928, p. 2)

But these are the definitions given in 1951 by Dauzat (who viewed Anthroponymy and Toponymy as Science), which have guided many current studies on the question of names. According to this linguist, “Anthroponymy is the science of people’s names (anthroponym, a person’s name); Toponymy, the science of the names of places (toponym, the name of a place); and Onomastics, the union of these two sciences (term employed, sometimes incorrectly, as a synonym for Anthroponymy).”

In 2011, a list of important onomastic terms was created, recommended by the International Congress of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS 2011): Toponomastics and Anthroponomastics (HOUGH, 2016, p. 3) – the two areas of Onomastics, terms that today can already be found in many studies throughout Brazil and abroad, interacting with the traditional terms of Toponymy and Anthroponymy.

In the early years of the twentieth century, onomastic studies in Brazil were on the rise, especially in studies linked to various Post-graduate programs. Before this, such research was concentrated at the University of São Paulo, integrated within linguistic studies from the College of Philosophy, Letters, and Human Sciences (FFLCH), focusing on toponymic studies, giving preference to indigenous names. These studies began with Professor Carlos Drumond, when, in 1965, he published his habilitation thesis, entitled “*Contribuição do Bororo à Toponímia Brasileira*” (“Contribution of Bororo to Brazilian Toponymy”). According to this scholar, in Brazil, “most toponymic research was done at an amateur level, without the strictness of an appropriate methodology.” (DICK, 1990, p. 11). Not ignoring this scenario, Professor Maria Vicentina de Paula do Amaral Dick (FFLCH/USP) was encouraged and advised to study and research the Toponymy of Brazil, resulting in her Doctoral Thesis, a scientific work that bequeathed to toponymic studies the “theoretical principals and taxonomic models” for the study of names of places in Brazil.

Dick encouraged many researchers to work with her model in Brazil. Thus, in each university, with Dick's support, but with regional variations, toponymic research began to grow in various Brazilian regions, especially in the Southeast and Midwest. Regarding anthroponymic research, there are no such unified research groups in Brazil, only some niches in embryonic stages.

1. On the articles of this edition's theme, entitled Onomastics.

This volume brings 11 articles that discuss the results of research developed by linguists from different Brazilian, Portuguese, and German universities, who dedicated themselves to investigations surrounding questions on Onomastics, in the realm of Toponymy/Toponomastics and Anthroponymy/Anthroponomastics.

1.1 A Toponymy/Toponomastics

As described above, Toponymy/Toponomastics is an interdisciplinary field, which became evident in the articles published in this thematic edition of the journal RELIN. Beginning this publication, the article written by Rodrigo Vieira do Nascimento, Karylleila dos Santos Andrade, and Carolina Machado Rocha Busch Pereira, all from the Federal University of Tocantins, Palmas campus (Palmas, Tocantins, Brazil), discusses points of interlocution between Toponymy and Cultural Geography, in the realm of interdisciplinarity, using an approach of qualitative and bibliographic methodological analysis.

Next, Leticia Santos Rodrigues, from the University of São Paulo (São Paulo São Paulo, Brazil) presents an etymologic study of Latin American toponyms, more specifically, of the toponyms referent to the names of the countries of Latin America, through the methodological lens of Etymology. For this, this author was guided by her queries in different etymologic dictionaries, in addition to other supporting materials. One can see that the reasons behind her choices of what toponyms to be analyzed were diverse, such as physical/geographic and/or cultural aspects, historical figures, religion, and, at times, even unknown motivations.

The third article, entitled *Linguistic stratigraphy of mainland Portugal's hydrotoponymy*, written by Carlos Rocha, from the College

of Letters of the University of Lisbon (Lisbon, Portugal) inserts itself in the history of Portuguese Onomastics, with the following goals: (1) define the limits of the linguistic query in the etymologic analysis of mainland Portugal's hydrotoponyms; (2) to frame, within the discussion of linguistic stratigraphy, the national and regional characterization of hydrotoponyms. Aimed at contributing critically to the recovery of Etymology as a more active subject in the context of the domains of Language History and Historical Linguistics, the author resumes a line of investigation that goes back to works developed not only by classical Portuguese authors, but also by contemporary researchers. The conclusion of his study demonstrates that mainland Portugal's hydrotoponymy has a preponderant origin in lexical items that are common in *latinoromance*, although they do conserve an important pre-Latin heritage, as they also rely on lexical, morphological, and phonological interference from Arabic.

Studying the hydrotoponymy of Brazil, Ana Claudia Castiglioni, from the Federal University of Tocantins, Araguaína campus (Araguáina, Tocantins, Brazil), beginning with a repertoire of toponyms, taken from the databank of the Toponymic Atlas Project of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul (ATEMS), which denominate geographic elements referent to different types of water currents, such as *água, arroio, baía, cabeceira, cabo, cachoeira, canal, catarata, corixão, corixo, córrego, foz, lago, lagoa, nascente, represa, riacho, ribeira, ribeirão, rio, riozinho, salto, sanga, vazante e volta* (In English, these terms can be roughly translated as: *water, stream, bay, river head, cape, small waterfall, canal, large waterfall, large and small channels, creek, river mouth, lake, lagoon, spring, reservoir, brook, small stream, large stream, river, small river, falls, run-off, ebb, and flow*), proposes microstructure models for toponymic entries, using the presuppositions of Toponymy and Terminology as her supporting theory.

The religious toponymy in the names of towns in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, is the theme of the article written by Ana Paula Mendes Alves de Carvalho, Professor at the Federal Institute of Minas Gerais –Ouro Branco Campus, who sought to present results from a toponymic study of the names of the 853 municipalities of Minas Gerais. After a synchronic and diachronic analysis, the researcher presents cases of variations, changes, and retentions in the religious toponymic lexicon.

The sixth article in this publication, entitled, *Tradition and memory: an anthroponymal study of the names of the town of Ponte Nova, Minas Gerais*, written by Glauciane da Conceição dos Santos Faria, from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, (Belo Horizonte, Brazil), contributes to toponymic studies, suggesting a new proposal of classification for the list of anthropotonyms, using as a corpus 410 anthropotonyms that name the urban spaces of the town of Ponte Nova, Minas Gerais.

The articles published in this first group of studies show different research perspectives of toponymy, in that they explore data that are representative of the macrotoponymy (names of Latin American countries and names of towns in Minas Gerais), of the rural microtoponymy (hydrotoponymy of mainland Portugal and toponyms that name water current in Mato Grosso do Sul), and the urban microtoponymy (names of public spaces of the town of Ponte Nova, Minas Gerais), in addition to a transdisciplinary approach to toponymic studies (the toponymy of Tocantins).

1.2 A Anthroponymy/Anthroponomastics

This journal's edition also brings five articles that seek to expand and further knowledge on Anthroponymy.

To begin, the article written by Tereza Tayná Coutinho Lopes and Marília de Nazaré de Oliveira Ferreira, both from the Federal University of Pará (Belém, Pará, Brazil), entitled *Parkatêjê Onomastics: Semantic Aspects of People's Proper Names*, discusses specific semantic phenomema present in the formation of anthroponyms in the Parkatêjê language, which reflect cultural knowledge, values, and notions of this ethnicity.

Between Languages and Cultures: an Exploratory Comparative Study of Usage of Lithuanian is the second article that sets up a debate on anthroponymic studies among those published in this thematic edition of RELIN, written by Márcia Sipavicius Seide, from the Western University of Paraná (Marechal Cândido Rondon/Cascavel, Paraná, Brazil) and Lolita Petrulionė, from Šiauliai University (Šiauliai, Lithuania). This study analyzes the uses of male first names in Lithuania and in Brazil through a comparative exploratory study, based on available statistical data in the institutional sites of each country. The results of this study

confirmed the existence of equivalent names in both countries. These are Christian names whose use was influenced by Catholicism, the predominant religion in both countries.

Next, the article *Galecian as a nickname in the Portuguese of Santa Catarina: findings from ALERS* returns to the figure of Galecians in Luso-Brazilian folklore upon describing the use of the nickname “Galecian” in spoken Portuguese in the state of Santa Catarina (SC), in the southern regions of Brazil. This article was written by four authors: Fernando Hélio Tavares de Barros, from the University of Christian-Albrechts de Kiel (CAU - Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany); Lucas Löff Machado, from the Catholic University of Eichstätt and Ingolstadt (KU – Eichstätt, Baviera, Germany); Grasiela Veloso dos Santos Heidmann, from the Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT – Cuiabá, Mato Grosso, Brazil), and Neusa Inês Philippsen, from the State University of Mato Grosso (UNEMAT/Campus Sinop - Sinop, Mato Grosso, Brazil & the University of São Paulo (USP) - São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil).

The fourth article, written by Kleber Eckert and Maiquel Röhrig, both linked to the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Rio Grande do Sul, Bento Gonçalves Campus (Bento Gonçalves, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil), treats the *Literary Onomastics in Graciliano Ramos: the names of characters of Vidas Secas and São Bernardo*. The core aim of the text is to make an etymologic and symbolic analysis of the names of the main characters in the novels *Vidas Secas* and *São Bernardo*, in an attempt to verify if there is in fact a relationship between the meaning of the name and the behavior or the physical characteristics of the characters of these novels.

This journal’s thematic edition ends with the article written by Natival Almeida Simões Neto, from the State University of Feira de Santana (Feira de Santana, Bahia, Brasil) and Juliana Soledade, from the Federal University of Bahia (Salvador, Bahia, Brazil) and the University of Brasília (Brasília, DF, Brazil), who propose an analysis of the male names that end in *-son*, based on the list of candidates who were approved in the 2016 and 2017 college boards at the State University of Bahia. The article, entitled *Male Names in X-Son in Brazilian Anthroponymy: a Morphological, Historical, and Constructional Approach*, analyzes the trajectory of the formation of *-son* in the creation of anthroponyms in Brazil.

As in the example of the group of texts that debate toponymy, those focused on anthroponymy also focus on a distinct array of approaches, such as the study of *anthroponyms* in the Parkatêjê language, the uses of male first names in Lithuania and Brazil, the nickname *Galecian* in the Portuguese spoken in the State of Santa Catarina, the etymologic and symbolic analysis of the *names* of the main *characters* from the novels *Vidas Secas* and *São Bernardo* and the trajectory of the formation of *-son* in the creation of *anthroponyms* in Brazil.

As the reader can see, the articles presented here seek to expand and further knowledge concerning toponymic and anthroponymic studies, confirming, through empirical studies, that Onomastics is a field that involves not only linguistic aspects, but also seeks to relate the names of places and people to sociocultural, historical, and ideological factors. Therefore, the expectation is that this thematic edition of the journal RELIN will move beyond the mere presentation of study results geared toward the theoretical constructs of the subjects of Toponymy/Toponomastics and Anthroponymy/Anthroponomastics, and foster new research in the field.

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