Proper names in cognitive onomastics:
Meaning and categorization of proper names

Katalin Reszegi
reszegikatalin@mnytud.arts.unideb.hu
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4443-3284
University of Debrecen

Abstract: This theoretical paper gives an overview about how proper names and different name types exist in the mental system, also showing new solutions provided by the cognitive perspective in connection with old questions of name theory. Cognitive onomastics is a relatively new approach to the study of proper names based on a cognitive approach to language. In this framework, names as linguistic elements are parts of the cognitive system, thus mental representation and usage of proper names can be described by general cognitive processes. The overview of topics and directions of cognitive onomastic research shows that studying names and naming in a cognitive framework has great potential. Providing further evidence of the advantages of the cognitive approach, the paper discusses two controversial issues of name theory. First, the meaning of proper names is addressed from a cognitive perspective, pointing out the complex meaning matrix of this word class; then the categorization of proper names is discussed, i.e., how the networks and subnetworks of names emerge within the mental lexicon.

Keywords: cognitive onomastics, semantics of proper names, categorization of proper names, mental lexicon, onomasticon.

Resumo: Este artigo teórico fornece uma visão geral sobre como nomes próprios e diferentes tipos de nomes existem no sistema mental, além de propor novas soluções baseadas na perspectiva cognitiva em conexão com antigas questões da teoria do nome. A onomástica cognitiva está baseada numa abordagem cognitiva da linguagem é uma abordagem relativamente nova para o estudo de nomes próprios. Nesse contexto, os nomes como elementos linguísticos fazem parte do sistema cognitivo, motivo pelo qual a representação mental e o uso de nomes próprios podem ser descritos por processos cognitivos gerais. A visão geral dos tópicos e direções da pesquisa onomástica cognitiva mostra o potencial do estudo dos nomes próprio e da nomeação considerando sua estrutura cognitiva. Além de fornecer mais evidências das vantagens da abordagem cognitiva, o artigo também discute duas questões controversas da teoria do nome. Primeiramente, o significado dos nomes próprios é abordado a partir de uma perspectiva cognitiva mediante descrição da complexa matriz de significados dessa classe de palavras; em seguida, discute-se a categorização dos nomes próprios, ou seja, como as redes e subredes de nomes se elevam dentro do léxico mental.

Palavras-chave: Onomástica Cognitiva, semântica dos nomes próprios, categorização dos nomes próprios, léxico mental, onomínia mental.

Introduction

Cognitive onomastics is a relatively new approach to the study of proper names based on a cognitive approach to language, using the framework of cognitive linguistics and other cognitive sciences. The main feature that differentiates cognitive onomastics from onomastics is the focus on the cognitive aspects. Names as linguistic elements are parts of the cognitive system, thus mental representation and usage of proper names need to be described by general cognitive processes (KARPENKO, 2006; RESZEGI, 2022c).

This paper gives an overview about how proper names and different name types exist in the mental system, showing new solutions provided by the cognitive perspective in connection with old questions of name theory. The study consists of three sections. First, a very brief overview of cognitive approach in onomastics is provided (section 1), demonstrating the importance and the possibilities of cognitive onomastics. The second section gives a detailed discussion on the meaning of proper names in a cognitive framework, basically relying on Ronald Langacker's cognitive grammar, pointing out the complex meaning matrix of this word class. Section 3 outlines how categorization works with regard to proper names, that is, how the dynamic multidimensional networks and subnetworks of name types emerging within the mental lexicon can be described.

1. Cognitive Approach in Onomastics

1.1. In humanities, the theoretical framework applied is crucial, it determines the boundaries within which researchers can think about their research subject, what fundamental characteristics they attribute to it and what they consider important to investigate. In the first half of the twentieth century, linguistics and psychology were dominated by structuralism and behaviorism, respectively. These theories described language and behavior in isolation from the biological and social context of human being. In the 1960s, the cognitive turn in psychology brought about fundamental changes in this respect by focusing attention on the cognitive processes. Aspects of human behavior have begun to be interpreted and studied as manifestations of different cognitive functions, and cognition was conceived as the construction and processing of models that represent the world. This approach has been adopted in many disciplines (philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, biology, neuroscience, mathematics, etc.) and has triggered interdisciplinary research on the nature of knowledge and the functioning of different cognitive functions (GARDNER, 1992: 17, 19; MILLER, 2003).

Cognitive linguistics started in the late 1970s and early 1980s (cf. Ronald Langacker's cognitive grammar, George Lakoff's cognitive metaphor theory, Charles Fillmore's frame semantics, and Leonard Talmy's cognitive semantics). And even today, the term *cognitive linguistics* denotes different, competing but complementary models, which share common principles. They consider language as one of the sides of knowledge emerging from usage and experience that reflects "social, cultural, psychological, communicative and functional aspects and it can only be understood in the context of a realistic view of its acquisition, cognitive development and mental processes" (TAYLOR, 2002). Language is not an independent module, a static, abstract system of rules that operates on a set of elements, that can be described by its own operating principles. Instead, cognitive linguists emphasize the organic relationship between language and other cognitive functions, language is one of the cognitive functions that plays a key role in processing of experience and information about the world, in categorization. Hence, they describe language by general cognitive mechanisms, such as pattern matching, analogy, categorization, schemas, statistical learning, intention-reading, and so forth. Consequently, the linguistic properties and cognitive features like prototypical categorization, the dynamism of semantics, the probabilistic nature of linguistic processes, etc.—that were previously considered mainly as secondary or incidental factors in language—are essential integral characters of language.

1.2. Name research has always been open to the approaches and results of other fields of linguistics and other disciplines and has always tried to consider extra-linguistic factors in the explanation of linguistic elements. The basic principles of the cognitive approach—focusing on the mental aspects; the usage-based, functionalist approach of language—have never been far from onomasticians. For example, in Hungarian name research, the psychological perspective can be traced back to the research of Lajos Lőrincze, who tried to reconstruct the differences in the psychological situation related to the creation and change of names (1947). The continuum-

like nature of name categories was also known in the 20th century in onomastics (SOLTÉSZ, 1979). Furthermore, one of the essential points of the different name typologies (HOFFMANN, 2007; KIVINIEMI, 1975; AINIALA, SAARELMA & SJÖBLOM 2016: 72-75) and the analyses based on them is to explore the extra-linguistic factors of name-giving. In their explanations, researchers try to consider not only social aspects but also the features of human thinking. Although, in some cases the supposed knowledge of the name users is mixed up with the researcher's point of view, and mostly there is no comprehensive model about the cognitive system and cognitive processes behind these explanations, but commonsense psychology.

Cognitive onomastics, however, means dealing with names and name-usage as knowledge in the mental system, identifying the cognitive matrices of processing of proper names, using a comprehensive cognitive linguistic framework. These frameworks appeared practically in the 2000s in onomastic studies. In cognitive onomastics, the most influential theories of cognitive linguistics are used to reinterpret questions of name theory and name-usage, most frequently Ronald Langacker's cognitive grammar (1987; 1991) and George Lakoff's conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy theories (LAKOFF & JOHNSON, 1980), besides, other models of cognitive linguistics also appear in certain name studies, such as Joan Bybee's usage-based network model (1998; 2006; 2010), William Croft's radical constructivist grammar (2001), or Sándor Szilágyi N.'s theory of the linguistic world model (1996). Interestingly, although the first significant models of cognitive linguistics were developed by American linguists and later joined by European linguists, there is no similar advantage in the field of name research for American researchers, and until today, mostly European onomasticians have undertaken this task: initially Western European, as well as Russian and Ukrainian researchers, soon joined by Central European onomasticians. In the last few years, researchers from other parts of the world also realized the advantages of the cognitive approach.

Reinterpreting name-giving and name-usage in the cognitive framework, focusing on the mental aspects of these processes, does not simply mean changing the terminology, but opens up new possibilities for understanding onomastic phenomena. Contrary to the short period of time, cognitive onomastics achieved remarkable results. Olena Karpenko (2006) studied the representation, functioning, and transformation of names in the mental lexicon (see also ALEKSIEIEVA, 2021), the semantics of proper names has also been addressed from a cognitive perspective by several researchers (SJÖBLOM, 2006; VAN LANGENDONCK, 2007; TOLCSVAI NAGY, 2008; RESZEGI 2018a). There are efforts to reinterpret place-naming mechanisms in cognitive framework since naming is a cognitive act (HOFFMANN, 2007: 40). In this way, typological contradictions can be resolved, for example, in relation to metonymic and metaphoric name-giving (BROZOVIĆ RONČEVIĆ & ŽIC FUCHS, 2005; DOBRIĆ, 2010; RESZEGI, 2022a; 2022b). Our knowledge of the formal features of names and name formants[1] develop gradually as part of language acquisition and function in an analogical way. Based on this knowledge, we can also create new names. The cognitive mechanisms of this process can be described using the term *construction* and *composite structure* (LEINO, 2006; 2007; RESZEGI, 2019). Cognitive framework was also successfully applied in reinterpreting, among others, the emergence of Hungarian family name system (SLÍZ, 2008a; 2008b; LÁNCZ, 2011), the creation of Ukrainian nick names (SHULSKA, HROMYK & YAVORSKYI, 2018), the metaphor in Ekegusii onomastics, an African Bantu language (ONCHOKE, 2018), and the creation and reception of literary proper names (RACHUT, 2021).

Besides, applying the cognitive view open up new directions of research for scholars working with names, such aspects of name-giving and name-usage may be analyzed that have not appeared in onomastic research before. According to the holistic model of the cognitive

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[1] In a lot of cases, proper names are recognized in their function as names based on certain formal features, these linguistic elements characteristic of the different types of proper names are called name formants. For example, in Hungarian, suffixation is considered a significant way of place name giving, but geographical common nouns can also be used as (lexical) topoformants.

system, there are organic relationship between our spatial representations, the cognitive map and the place-name representations. This relationship provides the basis for any study that tries to infer the spatial experience of name-givers by examining place names. This topic raises several new questions and possible directions of research, such as the role of place names in spatial conceptualization (HEINRICH, 2000; RESZEGI, 2020), the acquisition of spatial knowledge and toponyms (RESZEGI, 2016), or the study of the spatial perception of people in earlier time via investigating the use of names in old texts (RESZEGI & KENYHERCZ, 2023). There were also attempts to incorporate psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic experimental results on the mental and neural representation of names into the cognitive description of proper names (RESZEGI, 2018b; NOVIKOVA, 2018; ALEKSIEIEVA, 2021), this way, the different levels of naming and name-usage (neural, mental and community levels) can be examined in relation to each other.

The overview of topics and directions of research shows that studying names and name-usage in a cognitive framework has great potential. The next two sections deal with two essential aspects of names that were addressed by several cognitive onomasticians, the semantics of names and the categorization of proper names, providing further evidence of the advantages of the cognitive approach while also pointing out the deficiency of the theory.

2. The meaning of proper names

2.1. One of the most controversial issues of name theory is the meaning of names, that is, whether names have a meaning and, if so, what kind of meaning might it be. One extreme view is that proper names are labels without meaning (MILL, 1872; KRIPKE, 1972);[2] in contrast, there are theories of the meaningfulness of names, some of which interpret the meaning of

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[2] Logical-philosophical analyses and formal semantics do not approach names from the perspective of natural language use, but the truth value of propositions, hence, they focus on the referential property of proper nouns.

names as referring to the denotatum (JESPERSEN, 1924/1992: 65-66),[3] while others describe the complex semantic structure of names (SOLTÉSZ, 1979; VAN LANGENDONCK, 2007).

It is easy to understand that if names were meaningless, there would be essentially nothing to distinguish them from meaningless sound sequences (non-words and pseudo-words, as they are referred to in psycholinguistics; cf. VAN LANGENDONCK, 2013: 107). The creation and use of names cannot be explained only by their identifying function. For example, the use of different name variants, informal or slang names, the creation of name pairs in different languages and the different ways of relating to them cannot be justified this way. The purpose of creating a name can be much more than identification, it might be to express an impression, an attitude, to strengthen group identity, and so forth. Therefore, name researchers have been talking for a long time about the complex meaning of names, differentiating various meaning components, e.g. denotative, categorical, cultural, etymological, and associative meanings (SOLTÉSZ, 1979); or as parts of presuppositional meaning: categorical, associative, emotive, and grammatical meanings (VAN LANGENDONCK, 2007). This approach is very close to that of cognitive linguistics and seems to be supported by the results of experimental studies on the extensive mental and neural representation of names (RESZEGI, 2018b).

2.2. Of course, the answer to this question depends on how meaning is defined. Cognitive linguistics has a real advantage over other approaches, because while it focuses mainly on the mental aspects of language, it also tries to understand language in its complexity, that is, how language is used in real life communication, what kind of mental organization makes it possible.

In cognitive linguistics, to answer the question of meaning of proper names, we need to start from the assumption that language is one of the cognitive functions that plays an important role in cognition, in categorizing the world. The essential function of linguistic communication is to make some meaningful content accessible, therefore every linguistic expression conveys

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[3] According to Jespersen, as the extension of names is small (only one referent), their intension, their meaning is large (1924/1992: 66).

meaning, and, of course words, morphemes, expressions do have meaning, as do names (LANGACKER, 1987; TOLCSVAI NAGY, 2008: 39; RESZEGI, 2022c). Due to the organic link between mind and language, meaning is conceptual in nature, that is, it is based on conceptual representations. These conceptual representations are generated based on perceptual inputs perceived by the perceptual system in such a way that, in the process of cognition, the mind selects the important and repetitive elements of perceptions and organizes them into schemas, at the same time their connections with other concepts are also mapped. In other words, the cognitive system organizes these abstracted knowledge elements into conceptual domains. Some of the knowledge elements are more salient, while others are less prominent, or not prominent at all. Conceptual representations are dynamic and shaped by experience (YEE, 2017).[4]

Usually, these schematic conceptual representations function as meaning (semantic pole) in an organic relationship with a phonological structure, the phonological pole (LANGACKER, 1987: 11-12). The two poles make up a symbolic unit that is both motivated and conventionalized, i.e., cognitively entrenched through usage (GŁAZ, 2017). Therefore, there is no narrow linguistic meaning that is distinct from conceptual representation.

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[4] As experimental studies show concepts and semantic memory is fluid. This kind of malleability exists not only in infancy but also in the mature semantic system. It suggests that "the same architecture that, in infancy, permits the semantic system to develop through interactions with the world, also allows the mature semantic system to be sensitive to, and change as a consequence of, the ever-richer contexts in which we, as humans, continue to develop" (YEE, 2017: 251-252).

Figure 1 *Langacker's model of a symbolic unit (cf. Głaz, 2017).*
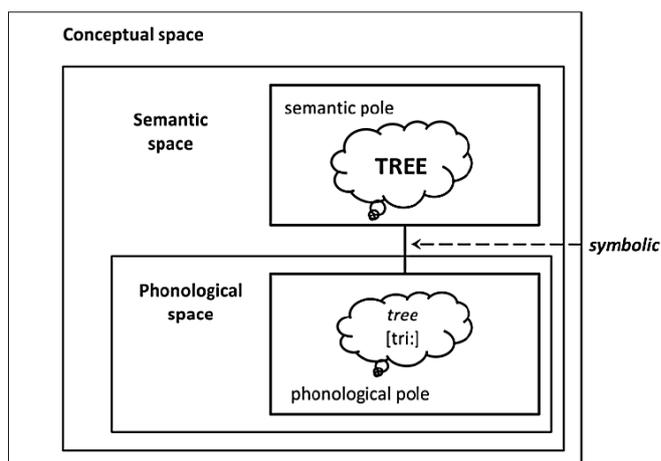
It is also important to emphasize that "meaning is not a static phenomenon but a process" (SJÖBLOM, 2006: 67), emerging during the actual language use. Semantic content is highly context dependent, that is, it changes as a consequence of the context that each individual brings with them (e.g., via current goals, recent experience, long-term experience, etc.) (YEE, 2017).

2.3. Names make some meaningful content accessible in communication, so they also have a conceptual meaning, a complex semantic matrix (LANGACKER, 2008: 316). Basically, the conceptual representation of the referent of the name functions as meaning connected to the phonological form of the name in an organic way.

Figure 2 *Symbolic unit of proper names*
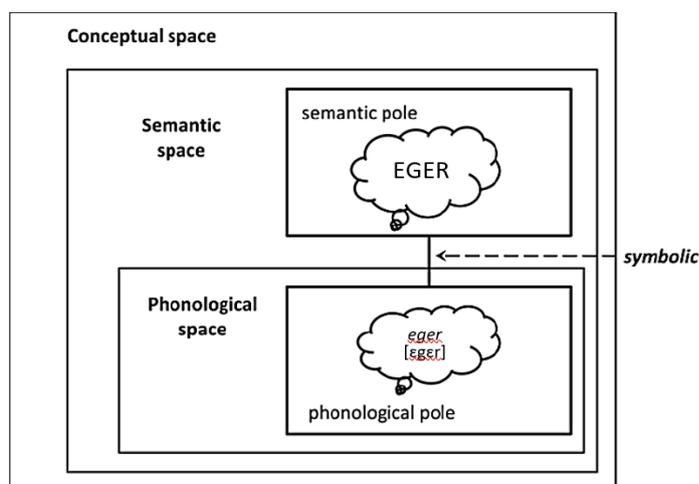
The most defining feature of the meaning of proper names is that they refer to a single entity, that is, the knowledge elements about a single piece of reality form the basis of the

conceptual meaning of the name.[5] Thus, proper names can fulfill their communicative identifying function even without context, i.e., they are inherently grounded. Although, of course, they are not used without context, but as part of utterances, like any other linguistic element, and in the cases of proper name homonymy, we need the context to ground the name (see point 3.4.). The inherently grounded nature of names can be understood compered to common nouns. While a proper name makes a being unique, common nouns focus the attention on similarities of things. Common nouns designate a group of things, a category, and they can be used "for general reference or referring to particular individual beings" (SJÖBLOM, 2006: 67-68), however, to do so, a common noun need to be grounded in a certain context, using other linguistic elements (LANGACKER, 2008: 264-269).

Depending on the type of the referent, the meaning structure of proper names may include different types of knowledge elements. In case of a person, for example, his or her appearance, looks, sex, voice, temperament, intelligence are all mapped and organized into conceptual domains as personal characteristics, but we may also have knowledge of his or her status in the family, at work, etc. Similarly, place names also have a complex conceptual representation that includes both the image of the place (streets, buildings, etc.), our knowledge of its location, its relation to other places, events related to the place, our knowledge of the inhabitants, cultural kind of knowledge, etc. The representation of a name also includes knowledge elements about the name form and name-usage, as well as associations triggered by the referent and the name form. A name form activates these relations as a channel to a complex and extensive network of meaning (SJÖBLOM, 2006: 69). This meaning matrix emerge from experience and can be characterized by both subjectivity and conventionality.

The meaning of names can be either completely schematic or completely extended, with many intermediate variations, depending on our experience and knowledge. For instance, the

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[5] Quoting Olena Karpenko, names are part of language use, which exist in our mental system as onymic concepts (2006).

name *Ernő Dohnányi* can obviously be interpreted as a proper name, a personal name, for all native Hungarian speakers. However, for many native Hungarian speakers, only this schematic meaning is activated by the name, while for classical music lovers the name may have a much more elaborate meaning: Dohnányi was a composer and pianist, the representation of certain melodies may be part of the network, etc. (TOLCSVAI NAGY, 2008: 33-35).

For Hungarian speakers, the name *Eger* activates the image of the town, the streets, the castle of Eger, the minaret, the concept of Eger wine, the taste of Eger wine, but also historical knowledge such as the siege of Eger castle by the Turks in the 16th century, which is well-known throughout all of Hungarian society, or memories of the novel "Eclipse of the Crescent Moon". Figure 3 illustrates how this name might be represented in the mind of the writer of this paper. It consists of quite a lot of conventional knowledge elements (it is a city; its location: in northern Hungary; cultural knowledge about the history of the town; the well-known buildings) and also subjective memories (about journeys and emotions). While it also includes information about the form of the name, how it is used in different grammatical structures, phonotactical similarities to other words, and so forth.[6]

Figure 3 *The subjective mental representation of the settlement name* Eger[7]

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[6] Combined mind maps might help us to imagine how these knowledge elements are represented in the mind.

[7] The sources of the images: https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eger_ostroma_%281552%29#/media/Fájl:Vízkelety_Béla_Eger_vár_ostroma_1552-ben.jpg; https://www.sumidamagazin.com/2022/09/01/tortenelmi-borvidekeink-egri-borvidek/; https:// csodalatosmagyarorszag.hu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/eger-var-kiallitas-dobo-istvan-muzeum-kirandulas9-csodalatosmagyarorszag-1536x863.jpg; https://hu.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fájl:Geza_Gardonyi_cca_1900.jpg; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eger_montage.JPG; https://www.facebook.com/ujsagmuzeum/photos/sinkovits-imre-avagy-a-várvédő-dobó-istván/527991524389673/?paipv=0&eav=AfaI4vaNfdgQ7BUlvRBY2vdup8TpsYEvlhsD7v9cjTghjCYMQgaLGjI0OqztOkvQgvM&_rdr.
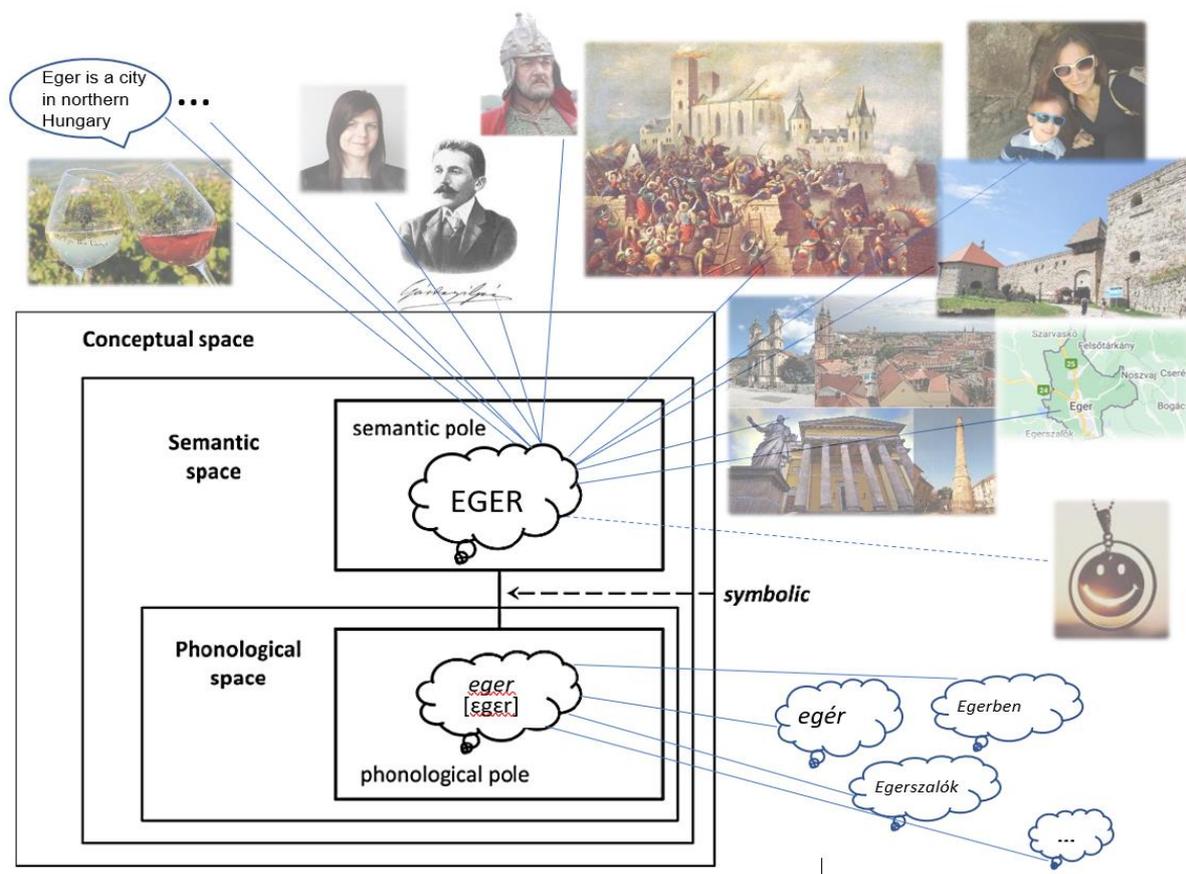
2.4. This matrix of proper name meaning is compatible with the denotative, categorical, cultural, etymological, and associative meanings used in onomastics. The different components of the semantic matrix, the different knowledge elements of the conceptual representation, can be described this way as well.

However, there is a controversy regarding categorical or basic level meaning, that is, while common nouns primarily denote a group of things, proper names do not, quoting Sándor Szilágyi N.: there are many people who are called *Mariska*, but they are called each one of them separately, and not as members of the category 'Mariska' [Mary] (2006). Although we can obviously not expect the same kind of categorization of proper names as in the case of common nouns,[8] which is often referred to as lexical meaning, there is a similar type-reference

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[8] In the process of acquiring proper names, the conceptual content of names is formed through similar classifying and categorizing processes as the conceptual basis of common nouns. In the case of proper names, however, these processes result in the creation of single-element category, but these single-element categories are part of larger networks (HANSACK, 2004).

(categorial meaning) in the case of proper names. From our previous experience of names, we know that certain forms of names are typically used to denote persons, members of certain groups, or places, certain types of places, etc. As Richard Coates puts it: these are "expectations governed by real-world experiences" or "the fruit of repeated observations" (2012: 125). According to cognitive linguistics, this kind of abstracted (schematized) usage-based knowledge is part of meaning, that can be referred to as categorical meaning.

Based on this knowledge, when we hear a proper name, a very schematic primary conceptual representation of the name emerges as a result of type specification, that is, we infer that it is a proper name and that it is the name of a person or a place, etc. It is well illustrated by the cases when we hear an utterance that contains a new name for us. Quoting the example of Langacker (1991: 59), when encountering the *Stan Smith* name, our first reaction is to establish that we are dealing with a name, and that it is the name of a person. Then, based on the name, relying on our former knowledge of names, patterns of names, we can infer with a high degree of probability the nationality, gender, etc. of the person bearing that name; this may activate our knowledge of the group in question, in this case American men. This is supported by the experiments that pointed out that certain types of personal names evoke prejudices or expectations towards the unknown name-bearers (ALDRIN, 2016: 390-391).[9] This primary representation is later extended based on additional occurrences or specific experience (e.g. Stan Smith was an American tennis champion, shoes were named after him, etc.), but this is not necessary.

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[9] In an experiment, participants were shown photos of women unknown to them, and asked to characterize them with regards to their amiability, ambition, intelligence, character, and beauty. Two months later, the participants were asked to characterize the women again, this time, however, they were first made aware of the women's typical Irish, Italian, Jewish, Anglo-Saxon names. Depending on the components of meaning attached to the names and indicative of nationality or religion, as well as how common each name was, traits associated to the photos by the participants on the second occasion were completely different from those associated the first time. The participants formed their opinion clearly based on their knowledge of the names and type meaning (RAZNAN, as quoted by FORGÁCS, 1999: 85 for further examples see ALDRIN, 2016: 390-391 and RESZEGI, 2018c: 36-38).

Of course, we can use a name for another type of reference as well that is different from its categorical meaning represented in the cognitive system, if it has a model, a tradition in our language. Nevertheless, there are name classes that do not have such remarkable features, for example horse names (any linguistic material can serve as a horse name, e.g. *Deborah Ann* anthroponym and horse name, *Pearl Lake* hydronym and horse name, *Cincinatti* oikonym and horse name, COATES, 2012: 128) or the postmodern names of clubs and pubs, that go against traditional name-giving (like the Hungarian club name *Tilos az Á* 'Á is forbidden' from the Hungarian translation of Winnie the Pooh). But it is again based on our schemes about names in general.

All in all, names are represented in the mind as a network of abstracted knowledge-elements organized in conceptual domains, and some of them are salient, more prominent while others are not. Moreover, names simultaneously include references to the type and the individual. But what happens when they are used in communication?

2.5. The actual, contextual meaning of proper names as part of utterances, forms based on this conceptual semantic matrix and due to their referring function, the contextual meaning of personal names is most often the PERSON meaning component, and in the case of place names the PLACE meaning component functions as the meaning, that is, most often the knowledge elements representing the image of the person or place are activated in a certain context—and not the whole matrix. Names are also often useful for addressing someone and introducing someone or introducing ourselves, which is also related to this meaning component that is traditionally called denotative meaning.

Other meaning components may also come to the focus of attention in certain contexts, however, which explains the use of proper names in a non-prototypical, non-identifying function. In the terms of cognitive linguistics this is profiling or zone activation (LANGACKER, 2008: 66-70, 331-334). Linguistic expressions function in a way similar to

perception. During perception we interpret an object in relation to its environment (this is the figure-background principle borrowed from gestalt psychology), and in different situations the same object can be interpreted and conceptualized differently, because in different contexts, their different aspects may come to the focus of attention. Similarly, linguistic expressions evoke and activate a more general conceptual framework (background or base), and within this, they highlight a part (profile). The same is true of the different meaning components of word meanings. For example, in sentences, like *You know what Lili is like* the proper name can refer to a variety of different features of the girl in different situations, depending on the earlier knowledge of the speaker and listener, but in a certain communicative situation a currently relevant characteristic receives priority over other features.

Other cases of name-usage can be described by more general metonymical schemes. For example, in sentences, like *Faültetési lázban égett Sándorfalva a hétvégén.* 'Sándorfalva had a tree-planting fever over the weekend', *America doesn't want another Pearl Harbor.* or *Paris introduced longer skirts this season.* it is not the most salient PLACE meaning component of the toponyms that is activated, but in the first example the RESIDENTS meaning component, in the case of *Pearl Harbor* it is the EVENT knowledge component associated with the place, and in the last example Paris can be interpreted as the fashion capital of the world (KÖVECSES, 2018). This is profiling, focusing on specific knowledge elements of the semantic matrix of the name that are the most relevant in the given context. This kind of non-prototypical, metonymical usage of place names is quite usual at least in certain types of texts as corpus analyses pointed out (MARKERT & NISSIM, 2006).[10]

If this kind of name-usage becomes frequent or dominant in social interactions, it can have an impact on the mental representation of the name, reorganizing its structure, its meaning

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[10] The metonymic use of proper names is rather frequent. According to some corpus studies, toponyms appear in such a role in 17% of all mentions (country names in 20% of mentions) in the English-language texts examined (MARKERT & NISSIM, 2006).

as every usage event, every production and processing of utterances modifies the dynamic linguistic network, the linguistic representations in some way, even if they are entrenched and conventionalized. New meanings can emerge out of old ones, because "in each usage event speaker and hearer engage in the negotiation of (new) meanings. The varying contexts of usage events invite the [communicative partners] to make inferences that interpret, enrich and modify the conventional meaning of utterances" and its components. Through repetition, these context-dependent and cancellable meanings may become part of the conventional meaning of an expression (VON MENGDEN & COUSSÉ, 2014: 3). This explains the new meanings that have emerged through the process of appellativization, e.g. the conventionalized use of *Einstein, Don Juan, Casanova, Romeo*, etc. as a common noun, referring to a particular feature.

2.6. However, name-usage and language use in general, have several further properties that have so far received little attention in cognitive descriptions, although they can be explained by a functional cognitive approach, and may even be described as meaning components. The social embeddedness of names and the resulting social meanings of the different name variants cannot be ignored. The use of one of the different name variants, besides activating the related conceptual representation, also informs us about the social position of the speakers and their status within the group, that is, using a certain name variant may express belonging to a group, community, certain social groups, regions, and so forth, while also referring to relations within the group (SÁNDOR, 1999: 147; ACTON, 2014: 24-27), such as relations between communicative partners or to the object of speech (just as we do with our choice between variants of any other linguistic element). For example, the *Hajdúszoboszló* settlement name in Eastern Hungary has numerous variants (e.g. *Hajdúszoboszló, Szoboszló, Szobi, Sznoboszló, Szoposzló, Szop city, Soap city, Soap, Szappan, Szappanváros, Gajdultszoboszló*); besides the official name-form, the locals usually prefer one of the informal variants when talking to each other: *Szoboszló, Szobi, Szob*. In addition, there are many other name variants in use within

certain groups. For example, the *Sznoboszló* 'snob' name, is known and used within youth subculture. The name variant expresses a negative attitude because the city did not support the request for building a sports ground for extreme sports, thus the town and the town administration came to be called snobbish as represented in the name itself. So, the use of this name variant expresses a sense of belonging to the youth group using this name (GYŐRFFY, 2018: 129-130). Such a social function of proper names is also present in everyday situations. For example, by calling someone, say, a *Péter Kovács* we have just met, *Mr. Kovács* rather than *Péter* we express our relationship and our own identity differently.

Cognitive linguistics only partly covers this type of identity-indicating function of words and names with the concept of perspective, which indicates that the meaning of words can inherently convey a point of view. But social meaning is something different.

I suggest that all these knowledge elements can be incorporated into the meaning matrix and word representation of cognitive linguistics. The new communication-centered usage-based perspective and the new cognitive sociolinguistic research provide good possibilities, also for interpreting further social aspects of naming in a cognitive framework.

3. Categorization of proper names

3.1. The relationship between proper names and common nouns is also disputed, leading to some quite extreme conclusions in the linguistic literature, for example, questioning whether the proper name category belongs to the linguistic system (BARABÁS, KÁLMÁN C. & NÁDASDY, 1977; cf. also the international literature cited by MARKEY 1982), which might sound non-sense, but it is an existing opinion.

3.2. According to the cognitive approach (LANGACKER, 1991; TOLCSVAI NAGY, 2008; SLÍZ, 2012; RESZEGI, 2021; 2022c), in our mental system, the words are organized into networks of word categories based on their conceptual similarities and their recognized similarities in form, usage, etc. These are not a priori categories but emerge from the first year

as the child constructs language based on cognitive abilities, existing conceptual knowledge and processing of language usage (cf. LIEVEN, 2016). Young children develop a more general concept of THING based on their experiences with physical objects, and the names of these objects become the first elements of the noun category (LANGACKER, 2008: 103-104, TOLCSVAI NAGY, 2008: 31). The construction and expansion of word categories will then be significantly influenced by grammatical information conveyed by early item-based pivot schemas[11] and more abstract schemas later (TOMASELLO, 2009). Children build up a network of constructions in which, during development, form–meaning mappings, the word representations become gradually more inter-connected along several dimensions based on pragmatic, conceptual or semantic, form-based, sound-based features, and so different kinds of networks emerge, one aspect is word classes.

3.3. Proper names, since they have many of the same properties as common nouns, can be considered elements of a larger category, the category of nouns because proper names also denote things, usually discrete physical objects; and names can be used in the same linguistic structures as common nouns. But names have specific features as well compared to common nouns, because they are linguistic elements in which there is both a reference to the type and at the same time, a reference to the individual (LANGACKER, 2008: 316-318). Names form special network within the noun category based on their specific identifying function, their specific conceptual meaning and grammatical features. On this basis, we can talk about two networks of the linguistic elements within the mental system: besides the common noun network, which has a lexical meaning, we can also identify a proprial network, the onomasticon (NYSTRÖM, 2016: 41).

However, the two networks within the noun category are not independent of each other, they are in relation by the recognizable common noun elements that make up the names, and

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[11] In language acquisition, pivot schemas are early item-based schemas, that contain a relatively stable element with a slot that can be filled in, e.g. *More ...! I wanna ...!* (TOMASELLO, 2009).

names are also linked to other word classes (e.g. adjectives). This relationship is clearly supported by priming experiments on surnames (VALENTINE, BRENNEN & BRÉDART, 1996: 72).[12] Thus, when we hear or read a name, i.e., when we process a series of sounds or letters as a name, this immediately activates our knowledge of the person, place, etc., to which it refers, at the same time the lexical meaning of the common noun elements recognized in the name is also activated, even if not very strongly. Through the transparent noun elements, the onomasticon is in organic connection with the common noun elements of the mental lexicon (NYSTRÖM, 2016: 42), there is an organic and dynamic relationship between the two in both directions.[13] The two networks are further linked by grammatical schemas whose scope includes both common nouns and proper names.

The onomasticon itself can be described as an internally structured, multidimensional network, within which further subcategories emerge along different aspects, primarily according to the type of reference based on conceptual-semantic categories, because, again, language is a way of expressing cognitive categories. That is how we can talk about personal names, place names, names of animals, brand names and so forth. And these categories may have specific grammatical features in each language or language variety (this also varies over time within the same language; regarding German proper nouns see NÜBLING, 2017).

3.4. An essential characteristic of this model is that the whole cognitive system and within that the whole network of the onomasticon is organized prototypically, which exerts an influence both at the level of categories and at the level of the elements within categories. The features of the prototypical name in Western culture have been collected by Mariann Slíz; based on her results, the most name-like name is a single word, it is used as a noun in the sentence, it

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[12] These experiments show that words introduced as a family name (e.g. *Baker*) automatically also trigger the semantics of the corresponding appellatives as evidenced by the fact that after the introduction of the family name, semantic decisions on words related to the corresponding appellative are made faster (cf. VALENTINE, BRENNEN & BRÉDART, 1996: 72).

[13] We can use an appellative as a proper name crossing "the proper name threshold" (cf. FABRE, 1980), but proper names can be used in an appellative function as well.

is not transparent, it is very frequently used, it is singular, and the thing it denotes is itself typical, we often meet it (2012: 283-285). Within the onomasticon, there are prototypical name categories and without any doubt personal names and place names are among them. Distinguishing and denoting groupmates is a fundamental human behavioral trait, and spatiality associated with passive objects, is also a fundamental category of human thinking, according to ethology (MIKLÓSI, 2005: 53). Hence, the two basic classes of proper names, personal names and place names are presumably linguistic and anthropological universals.

The concept of typicality within the category of proper names is not a new idea in the field of onomastics. Willy Van Langendonck has distinguished two large groups of names: personal names, place names, animal names, names of hurricanes, names of astronomic objects, names of buildings and ships, and names of organizations and associations are prototypical names; while temporal names, names of works of art, books, journals, films, names of institutions connected with buildings, trade names and brand names, names of currencies, numbers, letters, names of languages, colors, and diseases are non-prototypical (2007: 184-246). Instead of a bipolar system, Mariann Slíz suggests a continuum to describe the typicality of the different types of names, with typical proper names at one end and typical common nouns at the other, with a transition between the two. Names of institutions, ethnicities, titles, brand names (also names of hurricanes for Hungarian speakers) can be in this transition zone. The organization of the continuum of the different name types is not universal (2012: 284-285), and the socio-cultural environment mainly affects the categories in the middle of the continuum. Kerstin Jonasson has presented the idea of a radial proper names category configuration represented by the most prototypical members (1994: 22-24).

It is even better to model the mental lexicon as a multidimensional network, within which mental representations of names are organized into subnetworks of name types. In this, names acquired earliest play a central role, the network starts to emerge around them. Frequently used

names and name structures are very strongly embedded in the onomasticon, they are strongly connected and become the typical names for a particular name type. The overall frequency of a category (type frequency) also increases the typicality of that category. These names and name types represent the entire proper noun category. The categories of personal names and place names, and within them, the frequent, conventionalized names are prototypical names in all cultures; they are the first names that come to mind and take the least time to process. In the European cultural context, these are typically non-transparent names; it depends, however, on the spatial-temporal parameters.

The less typical or even peripheral status of names and name types may simply result from their less frequent or even rare use, with less strong links to the network of proper names (such as the names of hurricanes in the case of Hungarian speakers). Other names have stronger links to common nouns (due to their formal and usage features) and form an overlapping part between the networks of common nouns and the onomasticon, these are considered less typical names in the European cultural context. For example, Hungarian speakers have difficulty in assessing the proper name status of designations identical with geographical common nouns, such as *Hegy* 'mountain' or *Domb* 'hill'. According to Paula Sjöblom, "categorization on the boundary depends ultimately on the context in which the word occurs and on the individual speaker" (2006: 73), but the status of an element could be ambiguous even in context, in some cases speakers can use linguistic elements without deciding on the status of them (DE STEFANI, 2016: 57-65). Besides semantic features, cultural traditions and even orthography may influence the position of names.

As psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic experimental results indicate, brand names are represented on the boundaries between the common noun and proper name networks. Such names denote a product and categorize it into a class, or from the other perspective, they denote the class and each sample of this class, which means that in the representation of brand names

the type meaning component could be considered more prevalent, and it makes them similar to common nouns. On the other hand, because of the singleness and naming procedure of the naming act they are also close to proper names (BERGER, 1976; RESZEGI, 2021). But even within this category, there are differences between transparent and non-transparent names in this respect (HILLENBRAND et al., 2013).

The boundaries of the different proper name types are also fuzzy (cf. e.g. the networks of place names and names of institutions are overlapping). Besides, a name form may be part of several name types and several subcategories, e.g. *Gyula* is a personal name and a place name, *Szolnok* is a settlement name and a county name, *Sárospatak* is the name of a settlement and a stream in Hungary. Of course, there might be a difference between them considering their typicality in the different subnetworks, and if the context does not give a precise indication of the nature of the denotation, they are interpreted according to the more typical usage (SLÍZ, 2012: 401).

Name categories emerge from language use, from the elements, based on common features. For instance, based on recognized common characteristics, settlement names are closely represented in the mental lexicon creating a network, and similarly that of mountain names, water names, street names, etc. The elements of a subcategory also share characteristics with elements of other subcategories (they generally denote a place, identify it, have grammatical features in common, etc.), these shared features organize the place-name category. Place names share identifying function with personal names, animal names, etc., together they form the proper noun category. The different names have similar syntactic function to common nouns, they can get similar endings or prefixes and they denote things, so they can be considered as elements of a common category, the noun category. This kind of internal structure is the result of a long development, the foundations of which are laid in early childhood, and this early network is gradually extended by the addition of new names and name types and the knowledge

of them. The onomasticon remains dynamic even after the most intensive period of language acquisition, so we are able to learn new names, new types of names throughout our lives.

3.5. This dynamic network processes the proper names of utterances. And for the operation of the onomasticon, both the represented names and the more general schemas that are generalized based on names, become relevant. To designate this knowledge, the term *name model* is used in the Hungarian cognitive onomastic literature.[14] The name model that determines every aspect of name-giving and name-usage at various levels, also affects our attitude towards names, how we process names, and what kind of expectations we have towards names. The name model is our general knowledge about names, which includes all names and the schemas. However, it is not only the knowledge of names that is important in functioning of the name model, because in our minds, names are not stored as a list, but in a network where some of them are more important perhaps because of their frequency or because they or their referents have strong emotional attachments. This is represented at the level of the mind by the number and the strength of relationships between the knowledge elements that represent the name. And, of course, these names also have a stronger model effect. But here we also need to consider the different effects of token frequency and type frequency, which explains the differences and variations in the productivity of the different types of names.

3.6. The mental representation of names and their specific functionality can also be well described by the concept of linguistic unit in cognitive linguistics. Names are normally used as a unit in utterances, they do not require analytical processing; but at the level of representations, there exists some kind of analogy-based analysis, representation of relations along the lines of recognized elements and this becomes the basis for another kind of categorization of proper names. As Joan Bybee argues, actual tokens are used in memory but the internal structure is

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[14] Other terms are also used to describe different aspects of this phenomenon: cf. onymic frame (KARPENKO, 2006), for place names see toponymic norm, name awareness, name competence, place-name competence (NICOLAISEN, 1978: 46; HOFFMANN, 2007: 34-35; BRINK, 2016: 159; GYŐRFFY, 2018: 108-127).

derivable from sets of connections made between words (names) that have related parts or recognized similarities (1998). Hungarian speakers, for example, can recognize similar endings in the settlement names *Surány, Radvány, Bucsány, Ladány,* and might consider the *-ány* ending as a kind of designation of being toponyms, a formant. The emergent generalizations or schemes can also be used to produce new combinations.

Figure 4 *The emergent generalization of schemas in the onomasticon*
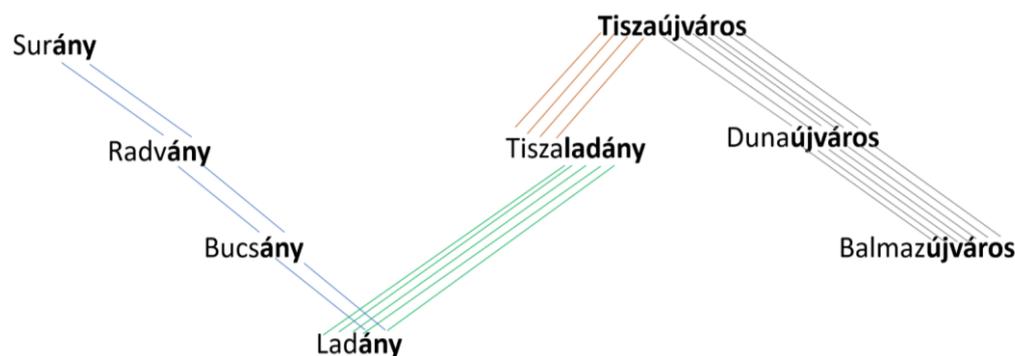
Concluding remarks

The overview demonstrates not only the fact that the cognitive approach can be used effectively in several areas of onomastics, but that this type of relationship, reinterpreting the knowledge revealed about names in a cognitive framework, also enriches cognitive linguistics with new aspects.

However, the description of the mental representation and meaning of proper names also reveals the deficiencies of the cognitive framework due to its focus on the cognitive system, for example, the concept of social meaning and the social aspects of language use in general have only recently come to the fore. Similarly, historical linguistic data have received little attention in cognitive linguistics, although the process of language change is particularly well described in this framework. This is why recent developments in cognitive linguistics are so significant and can further strengthen the link between cognitive linguistics and onomastics and provide new opportunities for cognitive onomastics. The first steps have been taken to seek links with

sociolinguistics (PÜTZ, ROBINSON & REIF, 2014). Similarly, cognitive linguists strive to find the link with historical linguistics, i.e., to reinterpret linguistic changes—changes in meaning, frequency and productivity, grammaticalization—as usage-based cognitive mechanisms (HILPERT, 2015). This expansion of cognitive linguistics promises a cognitive linguistic framework that can incorporate the results of research on historical onomastics, etymology, as well as socio-onomastics. By doing so, we will be able to understand the different aspects of naming as part of the cognitive system and at the level of social groups, all within a single linguistic framework.

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