

WORD-FORMATION ASPECTS OF PROPER NAMES – WORD-FORMATION OR NAME-FORMATION?

MILAN HARVALÍK

The Institute for the Czech Language of the ASCR, v. v. i., Czech Republic

Abstract: This paper examines the theoretical background of proprial word-formation and displays the endeavour to formally distinguish proper names from common nouns. The distinction leads to the differentiation between the formation of common nouns and proper names, both being a direct result of the opposition between the appellative and proprial language spheres.

A special attention is devoted to the so-called parasystemic formation of proper names. The substance of this phenomenon lies in the fact that proper names have become separate from the basic system of notional appellatives and have constituted themselves into special peripheral systems and subsystems, i.e. parasystems. Their common feature is using peripheral word-formation means and processes.

Keywords: proper names, common nouns, word-formation, name-formation, parasystemic formation.

Already at first glance, the system of proper names of any language clearly shows that the formation of proper names utilises the same word-formation means and processes as the formation of common nouns. A more detailed linguistic examination and analysis of proper names, however, indicates that the word-formation processes used when creating common nouns and proper names together with their specific linguistic representation as well as the productivity and frequency of such processes are significantly different in the appellative and proprial language spheres (cf. Harvalík 2000b).

The differences in the formation of common nouns and toponyms in Czech has already been pointed out by V. Šmilauer in his *Úvod do toponomastiky* ('Introduction to toponomastics') in the section on the word-formation of geographical names, stating that "daných možností slovtvorných využívá každý národ svým zvláštním způsobem a tento způsob se v průběhu doby mění"¹ and that "zásadně platí, že tvoření zeměpisných jmen není zcela shodné s tvořením jmen obecných; přípony zeměpisných jmen nemají týž význam a odlišují se i vnějšně..."² (Šmilauer 1966: 86–87).

¹ [Each nation utilises its means of word-formation in a specific way that changes over time].

² [In general, the formation of geographical names is not wholly identical with the formation of common nouns; the suffixes of geographical names do not have the same meaning and there are also external differences].

When analysing and describing the word-formation of proper names and confronting it with the word-formation of common nouns, we encounter a theoretical and methodological issue, the resolving of which brings us to the fundamental questions of the nature of a proper name, its functions, the boundary between common nouns and proper names and the relationships between the appellative and proprial language spheres.

While we do not want to reduce the discussion of the word-formation of proper names to a simple description of similarities and differences between the two language spheres, the analysis of word-formation of proper names must inevitably be based on a comparison with the word-formation of common nouns, as the opposition between their properties and functions can be determined among other methods through investigation and analysis of the distinctive features of both groups. Even though proper names represent a specific, second layer of language, their roots are anchored in the bedrock of common nouns from which they grow; the word-formation means and processes used for proper names are based on those encountered in the formation of common nouns and are to a great extent identical – even though, as mentioned above, their distribution, frequency and productivity may be substantially different. While mainly in the beginning of the formation of particular onymic systems the means and processes used are strongly based on the formation of common nouns, this process eventually transforms to analogous formation following already existing proper names and finally becomes a specific systemic proprial formation.

A particularly rich and heterogeneous subgroup of proper names in terms of the used word-formation means and processes are anoikonyms, which in the Slavic onomastic terminology are proper names of inanimate natural objects and phenomena on Earth and of those man-made objects on Earth that are not intended for habitation and have a permanent position in the landscape (Svoboda et al. 1973: 62), i.e. the names of water bodies, landscape features, land plots and roads.

It was this word-formation heterogeneity and diversity of anoikonyms what caused Czech onomastics (before J. Pleskalová applied R. Šrámek's model theory to anoikonyms from Moravia and Silesia) to prefer classification on a lexical and semantic basis. According to V. Šmilauer (1966: 113), "u pomístních jmen ustupují zřetelě formální (slovotvorné); jména buď nemají dost typických slovotvorných způsobů (např. jména traťová), nebo není mezi příponami zjevných rozdílů (říční jména na *-ava* a *-ice*)"³. A typology of anoikonyms derived from proper names using suffixes was presented by L. Olivová-Nezbedová (1995), using Šmilauer's small type methodology applied to extensively researched anoikonymic material from Bohemia. Her analysis of individual names allowed her to form conclusions about the mutual links between used suffixes, proprial bases and types of objects to which the names are applied.

³ [In the case of anoikonyms, the formal (word-formation) aspects are less relevant; there is a lack of characteristic word-formation means in the name system (e.g. the names of land plots) or no apparent differences between individual suffixes (river names ending in *-ava* and *-ice*)].

The mentioned variety of anoikonymic word-formation types and in particular the affixes documented in anoikonyms stand out particularly strongly when compared with settlement names. The variability of prefixes and suffixes is also evidenced by the anoikonymic material analysed by J. Pleskalová in her work on the formation of anoikonyms in Moravia and Silesia (1992). R. Šrámek (1999: 39–40) mentions the richer repertoire of affixes used in anoikonymy compared to oikonymy in his overview of the basic network of relationship models in Czech oikonymy.

Even more marked differences can be seen in the following example illustrating the difference in frequency and use of certain derivation processes with common nouns and proper names, specifically toponyms (cf. Harvalík 2000a). In the Czech language, the relatively sparsely represented derivatives from proper names using prefixes originating in prepositions (such as *předsíň* ‘entrance hall’, *odpoledne* ‘afternoon’) are considered to be an imported phenomenon based on patterns from other languages, typically German. However, the large number of anoikonyms and oikonyms of this type that are present in Czech and in other Slavic languages (*Podgóra, Zalas* – Karaš 1955) and are often considerably old, makes the foreign language influence theory highly dubious. The cause of the development of this type of formation particularly in toponyms is due to an effort to differentiate the two language spheres. A language (in this case Czech) has certain dispositions towards forming words in this manner, present as a latent potential; these dispositions are more strongly manifested only in the proprial sphere and are used to a greater extent with common nouns only after an external impulse from other languages. This functional differentiation reveals one of the primary functions of proper names – to identify unique objects. The attempts to achieve such differentiation also include a functional revaluation and the subsequent formal differentiation of a specific affix depending on whether it is used in the formation of proper names or common nouns. In Czech, this happened in the case of the originally possessive Old Czech suffixes *-óv* (Modern Czech *-ův*) and *-in*, which as topoformants turned into *-ov* and *-ín*.

Common nouns of the *předsíň* type and toponyms such as *Podhora* etc. may be used as good examples of the so-called parasystemic formation, described by D. Šlosar (1994) in Old Czech composites and applied by J. Pleskalová (1998) to Old Czech anthroponyms.

In word-formation theory, parasystems are secondary systems created on the basis of the core system of appellatives and fulfilling specific functions in communication – proper names, terminology and expressive common nouns. The parasystem is manifested strongly in word-formation, i.e. in the creation of specific expressions, which is why the specific word-formation of parasystem units is often termed parasystemic formation (Pleskalová 2000, 2002).

A characteristic aspect of parasystemic formation through derivation is using various shortened bases and formants that are peripheral, unknown outside the parasystem or unproductive (e.g. in Czech *Mach* (surname) < *Ma-těj* (first name) + *-ch*, *brach* ‘bro’ < *bra-tr* ‘brother’ + *-ch*; the Old Czech anthroponym *Miloň*, modern Czech literary

name *Drsoň*, surname *Štědroň*, expressive *hlupoň* ‘fool, dunce, blockhead’ and term *rychloň* ‘species of beetle’; specifically, the anthroponymic suffix *-eš* in anthroponyms like *Bareš* and *Tomeš*). There also occurs the simple shortening of words without any change in their morphological characteristics, known as parasystemic word shortening (*Běta* (hypocoristic) < *Alžběta* (first name), slang *uča* < *učitelka* ‘female teacher’ etc.), and the creation of acronyms such as *Čedok*, i.e. *Česká dopravní kancelář* (‘Czech travel agency’).

The parasystemic creation of composites is based on a less restricted combination of two autosemantic bases that, unlike in true composition of common nouns and related proper names (Old Czech *dobrohost* ‘good guest, hero’ – anthroponym *Dobrohost*), does not take into account the semantic value of the result. It is used primarily with proper names, because as they are intended to perform onymic functions (particularly identification and individualisation), they are not limited by the original (appellative) meaning of the resulting formation – examples include the Old Czech personal name *Lutomír* < *lútý* (in Modern Czech *lítý*) ‘fierce, ferocious, savage, wild’ + *mír* ‘world’ (in Old Slavic), ‘peace’ (in Modern Czech), as well as some Czech anthroponyms from the National Revival era (the 19th century) and some names of literary characters.

This formation has its specific manifestation in each partial parasystem. For example, in the parasystem of anthroponyms the less restricted combination of two bases or a base and a formant is governed by rules aiming to preserve the word-formation structure of Czech nouns.

Parasystemic formation through composition does not create formations whose structure would be in conflict with the structures of Czech composites, such as composite anthroponyms with a pronoun or an adverb as the second element (**Budimoj*, **Slavodoma*), as this word-formation type does not exist in Czech. Pronouns and adverbs can only be used as bases in the first position of a word (common nouns like *domased* and *samolet* or Old Czech anthroponyms like *Domabor* and *Samoděl*).

In parasystemic creation through derivation, formants are linked to full or shortened anthroponymic bases regardless of their original meaning and word class, but – just as appellative formants – they respect the rules of phonemic distribution (Šlosar 1986: 253–295).

The analysis of anoikonymic material from Bohemia and the description of parasystemic formation of proper names correspond with the conclusions of R. Šrámek, who notes that “vazba mezi základem a derivačními prostředky je u proprií volnější, takže onymický systém má v určitých situacích možnost větší volby v užití jistého slovtvorného postupu”⁴ (Šrámek 1999: 149) and that “propriální slovtvorba ... využívá sufixálního tvoření slov v míře nejvyšší, daleko přesahující zvyklosti obvyklé u apelativ...”⁵ (Šrámek 1997: 105).

⁴ [The relationship between the base and derivation elements is looser with proper names, giving the onymic system more choice in selecting a specific word-formation process in specific situations].

⁵ [Word-formation of proper names ... utilises suffix-based formation far more often than is usual with common nouns].

This high rate of utilising suffix-based derivation together with the aforementioned effort to achieve functional differentiation between common nouns and proper names is the reason why the formation of proper names relies to a large extent on means and processes that are only marginal in language as such. It should be noted that, besides anikononyms, hypocoristics display the greatest variety in used suffixes by far (in addition to the usual suffixes found in Czech forms such as *Lukášek* < *Lukáš*, *Toniček* < *Antonín*, *Marcelka* < *Marcela*, *Janička* < *Jana*, word bases are also expanded with less common suffixes, e.g. *Petouš* < *Petr*, *Otín* < *Ota*, *Lukín* < *Lukáš*, *Zdenál* < *Zdeněk*, *Klárinda* < *Klára*, *Jarunda* < *Jaroslava*, *Lucoška* < *Lucie*, *Gabišonek* < *Gabriela*, *Leňourek* < *Lenka*, *Leňulík* < *Lenka*, *Lenouch* < *Lenka*, *Evucha* < *Eva*). Both of these groups share a lack of standardisation, a significant variability and links to regional dialects (and with it to dialectal word-formation). With hypocoristics, this is complemented with a great degree of expressiveness (cf. Pastyřík 1996), combining the proprial parasystem (specifically the anthroponymic or hypocoristic parasystem) with the expressive parasystem.

The issue of proprial derivatives also raises methodological questions. One of them refers to the extent to which these proper names can indicate the presence of (otherwise undocumented) formally identical common nouns that have undergone onymisation. While it is an indisputable fact that onymisation is an important process used in the creation of many proper names and that proper names are often “trilobites” preserving in themselves extinct common nouns, it is not possible to reconstruct common nouns only from proper names with absolute certainty.

Such method would be risky, as can be seen thorough the comparison of several common nouns and proper names originating in the same lexical basis (cf. Šrámek 1991, 1994, 1997). If we were to follow the idea of an appellative origin of onymic derivatives *ad absurdum*, we would have to deny the existence of onymic word-formation as such and consider all proper names to be onymized common nouns.

However, this hypothesis is refuted by current onomastic theory, based on a comprehensive analysis of collected data, on the one hand, and theoretical and methodological frameworks emphasising the functional aspect and systemic approach to proper names as an internally richly structured whole, on the other. It can be seen that onymic word-formation is an existing phenomenon with many typical features, including the already mentioned specific, variable and relatively free combination of affixes with bases or of two components, and the related use of peripheral word-formation means and processes without a necessary support in formally identical common nouns, but always within the intentions of the language or dialect. It is also clear that the existence of onymic word-formation can be explained as a direct consequence of the opposition between the appellative and proprial language spheres and that the analysis of any onymic system is not an end in itself, but a means bringing us to the “higher levels of onomastics” – methodology and general theory.

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