

ONOMASTIC TERMINOLOGY: BETWEEN SYSTEMIC RIGOUR AND UNRESTRAINED PROLIFERATION

Onomastinė terminologija: tarp sisteminio griežtumo ir nevaržomo plitimo

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ABSTRACT

This article examines contemporary onomastic terminology, focusing on the coexistence of systematic coherence and increasing terminological proliferation. It analyses the linguistic strategies underlying the formation of traditional and emerging (meta)onomastic terms, distinguishing between monorhematic neologisms and descriptive syntagmatic formations. Particular attention is paid to the circulation of terms across onomastics, other linguistic subdisciplines, and applied domains through the mechanism of interdisciplinary transfer. Drawing on selected examples from recent terminological practice, including proposals documented in contemporary onomastic dictionaries and scholarly publications, the study critically examines the proliferation of neological terms, many of which are characterised by formal inconsistency, weak pragmatic motivation, and limited communicative transparency. It is argued that excessive and insufficiently justified neologisation, including the fragmentation of terminology applied to highly individualised categories of named objects, may result in conceptual ambiguity, terminological inflation, and reduced methodological reliability. By contrast, descriptive and structurally transparent terms are shown to provide greater clarity, interpretability, and functional adequacy. The article therefore seeks to delineate the boundaries of terminological creativity in onomastics, emphasising the importance of conceptual discipline, cross-linguistic consistency, and alignment with internationally recognised standards of scientific terminology.

KEYWORDS: onomastic terminology, metaonomastic terms, terminological proliferation, interdisciplinary transfer, neologisation, terminological standardisation, linguistic strategies.

ANOTACIJA

Šiame straipsnyje aptariama dabartinė onomastikos terminologija, daugiausia dėmesio skiriamas sisteminės darnos ir vis didėjančios terminologinės gausos koegzistavimui. Jame analizuojamos lingvistinės strategijos, lemiančios tradicinių ir naujų (meta)onomastikos terminų formavimąsi, atskiriant monoreminius neologizmus nuo aprašomųjų sintagminių struktūrų. Ypatingas dėmesys skiriamas terminų sklaidai onomastikoje, kitose kalbos mokslų ir taikomosiose srityse pasitelkiant tarpšritinio perdavimo mechanizmą. Remiantis pasirinktais naujausios terminologinės praktikos pavyzdžiais, užfiksuotais dabartiniuose onomastikos žodynuose ir mokslinėse publikacijose, šiame tyrime kritiškai aptariamas neologizmų plitimas, kurių daugumai būdingas formalus nenuoseklumas, silpna pragmatinė motyvacija ir ribotas komunikacinis skaidrumas. Teigiama, kad pernelyg dažnas ir nepakankamai pagrįstas naujų kūrinių kūrimas, įskaitant terminijos, taikomos ypač individualizuotoms įvardytų objektų kategorijoms, gali sukelti sąvokų dviprasmiškumą, terminologijos išplėtimą ir sumažinti metodologinį patikimumą. Priešingai, įrodyta, kad aprašomieji ir struktūriškai aiškūs

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terminai užtikrina didesnę aiškumą, suprantamumą ir funkcinį tinkamumą. Todėl šiame straipsnyje siekiama apibrėžti terminologinio kūrybiškumo ribas onomastikoje, pabrėžiant sąvokų nuoseklumo, tarpkalbinio suderinamumo ir tarptautiniu mastu pripažintų mokslinės terminijos standartų atitikties svarbą.

ESMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: onomastinė terminologija, metaonomastiniai terminai, terminijos proliferacija, tarpsritisinis perkėlimas, neologizavimas, terminijos standartizavimas, lingvistinės strategijos.

INTRODUCTION

Onomastic terminology currently develops in a state of tension between the need for systemic coherence and the increasing tendency towards the uncontrolled proliferation of new terms. Although the creation of new terms reflects the dynamic growth of onomastic research and its interdisciplinary dimension, it also raises essential questions regarding conceptual clarity, methodological consistency, and the communicative transparency of onomastic terminology in individual, cross-linguistic, and multicultural contexts (see Zgusta 1995; Šrámek 2003; Wolnicz-Pawłowska 2016; Odaloš 2018; 2022; Bijak 2019; Gałkowski 2024; 2025).

The main objective of this article is to examine the mechanisms of term formation in contemporary onomastics and to assess the functional adequacy, rational motivation, and scientific legitimacy of onomastic terminology. It is argued that, although terminological innovation constitutes an inherent and necessary aspect of the development of onomastic studies, its excessive or insufficiently grounded proliferation may lead to conceptual ambiguity, terminological fragmentation, and a weakening of methodological rigour.

The findings are based on a corpus of onomastic terms that were collected based on their word formation patterns, the domains in which they are used, and the extent to which their introduction addresses an identifiable scientific need¹. The research approach combines lexicological analysis with a semantic and pragmatic perspective that considers the internal structure of terms and their role in onomastic and broader scholarly communication (cf. Harvalík, Valentová 2018: 55–56). Particular attention is paid to the distinction between monorhematic neologisms and descriptive syntagmatic formations, as well as the influence of classical and non-classical linguistic resources on the creation of terms.

The study contributes to defining the boundaries of terminological creativity in onomastics, particularly when neologisation is unnecessary, poorly justified or conceptually unstable. The study also addresses the need to restrain the overly fragmented terminologisation of dubious sets of names referring to highly specific categories of objects, for example different types of zoonyms assigned to certain animal and insect species, or highly speculative ideonyms referring to various artistic and media products. By doing so, the study aims to promote a more balanced, critical approach to the development and evaluation of onomastic terminology.

1. ONOMASTIC TERMINOLOGY AS PART OF LINGUISTIC AND COGNITIVE INQUIRY

Once established and adapted to evolving theories and methods in the study of proper names and naming processes, onomastic terminology constitutes a relatively autonomous scientific field, while remaining an integral part of linguistic terminology in principle (cf. Wolnicz-Pawłowska 2016: 38). Consequently, it can be examined within the framework of linguistics and its primary analytical branches, as well as, to a certain extent,

¹ The study draws on selected onomastic and quasi-onomastic glossaries and dictionaries, including *Grundbe-griffe der Namenkunde* (GDN 1964), *Lexique des termes utiles à l'étude des noms de lieux* (LTUENL 1975), *Słownik terminów używanych przy standaryzacji nazw geograficznych* (STSNG 2014), *Terminologia Onomastica* (TON 2018), *English-Romanian Dictionary of Name-related Terms* (ERDNRT 2020), *An Alphabetical Guide To The Language of Names Studies* (GLNS 1996), *A Dictionary of Ukrainian Onomastic Terminology* (DUOT 2024), *Slovenská onomastická terminológia* (SOT 2024), *List of Key Onomastic Terms* (LKOT), and other recent terminological sources.

its theoretical domains. Like any other term, an onomastic term is a lexical unit, ranging from a single word to a multiword expression or syntagmatic structure, realised in language use.

Therefore, it falls within the scope of linguistic enquiry and its subdisciplines, including lexicology, semantics, pragmatics, and cognitive linguistics. A given onomastic term, such as *gephyronym* (< Gr. γεφύρα *gephýra* ‘bridge’), used to denote the proper names of bridges, can encode and convey knowledge about the world. It can indicate the existence of a particular type of onymic object identified by proper names (Šrámek 2003). From onomastic, linguistic, and cultural perspectives, such objects may warrant the introduction of distinct (meta)onomastic terms (Gałkowski 2021). However, other perspectives exist, including the view that “types of proper names should be defined primarily on the basis of the properties of the names themselves, rather than of the objects they denote” (Włoskowitz 2018: 94²).

2. INTERDISCIPLINARY TRANSFERS AND THE EXPANSION OF ONOMASTIC TERMINOLOGY

The approach adopted here rests on the assumption that proper names constitute a relevant object of inquiry across virtually all traditional and contemporary branches of linguistics. This spans core analytical domains, extending to more applied areas of linguistic research, such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, glottodidactics, translation studies, and corpus linguistics. The latter notably highlights the broader scope, potential, and research requirements of onomastics. When examined within specific discursive, textual, or cultural contexts, proper names require analytical frameworks and methodological strategies that are inherently interdisciplinary and correspondingly more complex. Their scope transcends beyond the humanities to encompass other scientific disciplines and fields of application.

Onomastic terminology lends itself to comparison with the terminology of more object-oriented sciences, such as those that describe geographical features, which are designated by generic and proper names. The common noun *river*, for example, when considered as a physiographic designation, can be examined alongside proper names such as *Neris* or *Vilija*, which operate within the Lithuanian hydronymy as *potonyms* (< Gr. ποταμός *potamós* ‘river’), specifically in the field of hydronymy (cf. Hladký 2022: 322–323). Similarly, the species term *oak*, attested across languages and represented by various forms in botanical terminology, finds its onomastic counterpart in the proper name *Bartek*, which designates a specific oak tree recognised as a natural monument in the Świętokrzyskie Region of Poland. From an onomastic perspective, this name exemplifies deanthroponymic transonymisation³ and belongs to the class of *dendronyms* (< Gr. δένδρον *déndron* ‘tree’), i.e. proper names assigned to individual trees in the natural landscape (cf. Bijak 2020: 75).

In terms of topography and, more broadly, cultural domains, one might consider the numerous terms derived from the geographical and geological approach developed by Henri Dorion and Jean Poirier in their French glossary of useful terms for place names (LTUENL 1975). This work can be seen as an early and influential point of reference for new onomastic terminology, as reflected in subsequent lexicographic compendia in East and South Slavic countries (see, e.g., EBO 2010; SUOT 2012; cf. STSNG 2014).

An analysis of sources, documents, and thematic glossaries suggests that incorporating non-onomastic terms into onomastics in the strict sense, followed by their scientific validation, is not uncommon. Conversely, numerous recognised onomastic terms have been, and continue to be, adopted by other disciplines and non-scientific domains.

² Translated from Polish by the author.

³ Deanthroponymic transonymisation refers to the process whereby a personal name, one of its variants, or one of its main components is transferred to another onomastic category and subsequently designates a different type of named object.

These processes are spontaneous and natural. In fact, onomastics does not have an exclusive mandate to regulate naming issues. In non-scientific domains, any such claim would largely be incomprehensible, particularly in contexts where “para-onomastic” terminology⁴ is routinely used to name or code various industrial products, or in pseudoscientific practices such as “onomancy”, which attributes putative origins and subjective psychological values to personal names.

2.1. Commercial naming and applied onomastics: a case of reciprocal influence

The interdisciplinary nature of commercial names (word trademarks) has attracted the attention of onomasticians, linguists and other specialists for several decades (see Sjöblom 2014). While this area seems somewhat distant from onomastics in the core sense, it remains a subject of ongoing interest to onomastics and, by extension, to marketing, particularly regarding the administrative regulation of naming processes.

In onomastics, or precisely, in chrematonomastics, commercial names assigned to products, producers or business entities are considered either *pragmonyms* or *pragmatonyms* (< Gr. πρᾶγμα *pragma* ‘thing, object, activity’) or *ergonyms* (< Gr. ἔργον *ergon* ‘work’), and, at a more general level, as *marketing chrematonyms* or *markonyms* (< Germ. *mark* ‘mark’), referring to brands⁵. A brand is understood as a distinctive mark associated with a particular economic entity and its owner. It is therefore protected as a substantial and intellectual asset, incorporating linguistic, graphic and sometimes multisensory elements.

2.2. Dual nature of onomastic terminology: strict and non-strict domains

The basic classification of both traditional and emerging onomastic terminology is shaped by the linguistic strategies employed in its formation and is grounded in its dual character. On the one hand, there is a strict terminology specific to onomastic research and its objects of study. On the other hand, non-strict terminology is interdisciplinary in nature and influenced by other disciplines, as well as by cultural and natural phenomena. It serves both to describe diverse domains of knowledge and to function as a cognitive instrument in the conceptualisation and interpretation of natural and cultural phenomena.

Even the most strictly defined onomastic term and its underlying concept can be assumed to have non-strict, interdisciplinary applications, and vice versa. For instance, the term *hodonym* (< Gr. ὁδός *hodós* ‘path’) is used not only in onomastics, but also in certain infrastructural contexts. Similarly, the term *poetonym* (< Gr. ποιητός *poiētos* ‘created, produced’) originated in literary studies and was subsequently adopted by literary onomastics and, in parallel, by other branches of onomastics in which the creative potential of names is applied. Such developments have led to the emergence of more specialised categories of literary proper names within specific cultural domains, including formations such as *anthropoetonyms*, *topopoetonyms*, *mythopoetonyms*, *theoetonyms* and *zoopoetonyms* (cf. Graf 2020: 125).

⁴ Para-onomastic terminology comprises concepts and terms situated on the periphery of onomastic inquiry. It encompasses interdisciplinary notions relevant to the study of names, as well as speculative, non-standard, or scientifically unfounded constructs that imitate onomastic conceptualisation while remaining detached from established theoretical and methodological foundations.

⁵ For more on the term *markonym* and its equivalents or variants (e.g. *firmonyms* or *logonyms*), see A. Gałkowski (2022).

3. LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES OF METAONOMASTIC TERM FORMATION: MONORHEMATIC NEOLOGISMS AND DESCRIPTIVE MODELS

Three principal groups of formative techniques can be distinguished among the linguistic strategies underlying both strict and non-strict onomastic terminology, with special regard to metaonomastic formations. These are those that enable the terminological identification of “names of names”, “names of collections of names”, and “names of subdivisions of onomastic studies”.

Group |1| → The formation of conventional monorhematic (synthetic) terms in accordance with established principles of onomastic term formation (e.g. *limnonym*, *limnonymy*, *limnonomastics*; *limnonymic* and *limnonomastic* < Gr. λίμνη *límne* ‘lake’).

Group |2| → The formation of descriptive terms within a nominal polyrhematic (analytic) model (in English, typically: class of onymic objects + *name/denomination*, or *name/denomination* + *of* + class of onymic objects). This pattern has analogous realisations in different languages. Examples include Eng. *lake names* or *names of lakes* = Pol. *nazwy jezior* = Lith. *ežerų pavadinimai*, etc. A related pattern is represented by constructions consisting of a key term, such as *onymy*, *anthroponymy*, *toponymy*, *urbanonymy*, etc., followed by a complement, for example, Eng. *urbanonymy of Vilnius* = Pol. *urbanonimia Wilna* = Lith. *Vilniaus urbanonimija*.

Group |3| → The formation of descriptive terms within an adjectival syntagmatic model (key term: *onym*, *onymy* or *onomastics* + relational adjective). The adjective may denote a class of onymic objects or indicate a spatial, temporal, historical, cultural, linguistic or discursive reference. Examples include *Lithuanian names*, *Lithuanian onymy*, and *Lithuanian onomastics*.

Group |1| represents a type of single-word neologism based on compounding, typically involving two lexical components or formants, and more rarely three. For example, the two-element compound *hagionym* (< Gr. ἅγιος *hágios* ‘saint’) can be analysed as *hagio* + *onym*, whereas the three-element compound *hagiotoponym* consists of *hagio* + *topo* + *onym*. In the latter case, it is also possible to interpret the structure as a two-element compound: *hagio* + *toponym*.

The initial component usually functions as a prefix with a semantically determinative and distinctive role. However, the second component cannot be classified as a suffix in the traditional sense, despite displaying certain suffix-like properties. When creating neological metaonomastic terms, the constituent formants have a complex morphological status, combining affixal and thematic components — in other words, they function as both bound elements and stems.

The numerous terms identified in Group |1| constitute a substantial reservoir of specialised technical formations. Nevertheless, the issue is not only their quantity, but also their quality, as evidenced by the presence of doublets and triplets based on Latin, Greek, and occasionally other linguistic sources. This variation hinders terminological unification at both the national and international levels.

These formations provide noteworthy examples of lexical innovation, often arising from individual attempts to coin new terms. Once introduced into scholarly discourse, they tend to persist and circulate beyond the immediate boundaries of onomastic research. Such phenomena are illustrated by doublets in the Polish onomastic terminology, for example *speleonim* (< Gr. σπήλαιον *spélaion* ‘cave, cavern’) and **kawonim* [sic!] (< Lat. *cavus*, *cava* ‘cave’), which both refer to cave names. Another Polish example is the pair *hodonim* and **wianim*, which denote names of routes in both urban and rural spaces. The term **wianim* (< Lat. *via* ‘road’ or ‘street’) tends to be associated with extra-urban areas, such as mountain

paths⁶. Triplets can also be observed in international terminology. For instance, the designation of village names includes *comonym* (< Gr. κώμη *kómē* ‘village’), *viconym* (< Lat. *vicus* ‘village’) and *ruronym* (< Lat. *rus* ‘vilage’, *ruralis* ‘rural’).

Groups |2| and |3|, in turn, comprise multiword phraseological formations consisting of two or more elements. Typically, one of these functions as a key onomastic term, i.e. a pivot element also present in the compounds of Group |1|, including *name*, *denomination*, *onym*, *onymy*, or *onomastics*. The remaining elements act as semantic modifiers, defining the scope of relevant terminological and conceptual categories, for example, *names of Lithuanian cities* or *Baltoslavic hydronymy*.

4. THE BOUNDARIES OF ONOMASTIC TERMINOLOGY AND ITS FUNCTIONAL AND SEMANTIC DIMENSIONS

One potential objection relates to terms that specify particular reference domains, such as territory, temporal scope, the characteristics of individuals or social communities, and formal linguistic features. In the case of Groups |2| and |3|, descriptive terms tend to have a more limited scope. This raises the question of whether their terminological status is weaker than that of more general descriptive expressions, or of the generalising single-word forms characteristic of Group |1|, simply because they contain attributive elements that specify their reference.

This rhetorical question could prompt broader reflections on the scope of onomastic and scientific terminology (cf. Włoskowicz 2018). While the structural forms of a set of terms are relatively easy to identify, defining their boundaries and conceptual content is considerably more difficult. A transitional or borderline zone can be recognized, which may include names of urban or extra-urban infrastructure, such as bridges or tunnels. Although often classified as *hodonyms*, they remain terminologically unstable. The corresponding categories are not always consistently distinguished within onomastic systems, placing them at the interface between established classifications and their modified variants.

It is worth emphasising that this kind of terminological categorisation, which depends on the natural or cultural typology of referents, reflects the boundary or intermediate zone of onomastic terminology, and simultaneously reveals essential features of proper names. While the *proprial* status of a given name may sometimes be debatable, the existence of the corresponding *onymic* object is beyond question. In principle, any tangible or intangible entity, including imaginary ones, may be designated by a proper name. Consequently, these entities’ names become objects of onomastic interest, motivating the search for appropriate categorising solutions within onomastic terminology.

The range of established and emerging onomastic terms constitutes the vocabulary of what may be called the “onomastic language”: the terminological network specific to the various branches of onomastic discourse. This discourse has a significant capacity for growth and absorption of terminology, which directly affects the clarity and effectiveness of onomastic and non-onomastic texts. While terminological elaboration can improve descriptive accuracy, excessive proliferation can reduce transparency and impede broader comprehension.

5. READABILITY, SCIENTIFIC PRESTIGE, AND THE ILLUSION OF TERMINOLOGICAL SOPHISTICATION

Terms formed according to the models in Groups |2| and |3| generally have a higher degree of readability and clarity than neological formations in Group |1|. The

⁶ Both the terms, **kawonim* and **wianim*, are unusual (attested in Mazurski 2015). The latter, in particular, is an insufficiently justified hybrid formation that retains only the segment *-nim* (= *-nym*) from the element *onim* (= *onym*), which is appended to the Latin base *via*.

latter often create the impression of scientific sophistication and, by extension, enhance the perceived importance of the objects subjected to naming or other onomastic processes.

5.1. Pseudo-onomastic proliferation: excessive neologisation and problematic categorisation

The issue of excessive and uncontrolled neologisation in contemporary onomastic terminology is particularly evident in zoonomastics, where terminological inventories often expand faster than they can be empirically and functionally justified. This tendency appears in lexicographic attempts to categorise animal-related proper names with increasing precision.

A recent glossary of Ukrainian onomastic terminology by Olena Karpenko and Valeriia Neklesova (DUOT 2024) enters a wide range of zoonomastic terms, many of which are of questionable usefulness and discursive value. At the same time, some of these terms build on previous attempts to introduce zoonomastic terminology into Ukrainian and Slavic onomastics (see SUOT 2012) and correspond to recognised categories within the discipline, for example *tauronym* ‘name of a bull’, and *hipponym* ‘name of a horse’, both of which are widely accepted and functionally justified⁷.

Other formations, including **vacronym* ‘name of a cow’ and **capronym* or **caponym* [sic!] ‘name of a goat’, extend this model with varying degrees of consistency. This tendency also concerns concepts such as **vulponym* ‘name of a fox’, **tigronym* ‘name of a tiger’, **psittacronym* ‘name of a bird’ or *testudonym* ‘name of a turtle’ (DUOT 2024: s.v.). They raise questions regarding their scope and functional justification. Some of these terms are likely to have been created to denote sets of names assigned to animals kept in domestic or controlled environments.

In other instances, as with **termitonym* ‘name of a termite or ant’, **muskonym* [sic!] ‘name of a fly’ or **arachnonym* ‘name of a spider’ (DUOT 2024: s.v.), the empirical basis and real applicability remain insufficiently substantiated. More precisely, this discussion does not address taxonomic species names. These are usually included in broader lexical categories. Examples of naming insects (cf. **insectonym*), among them termites, ants, flies and spiders appear to be rare and context-dependent, occurring chiefly in media productions and literary texts.

Although phenomena of this kind may at times be viewed as marginal or anecdotal, their representation in DUOT (2024) points to a systematic tendency rather than isolated occurrences. Many of the proposed terms result from insufficiently controlled processes of lexical formation, particularly in cases involving the use and adaptation of Greek or Latin formants, which are not always applied coherently or in a linguistically well-motivated manner.

The proliferation of this type of pseudo-onomastic terminology may have negative consequences for onomastics, linguistics, and the wider domain of scientific discourse. It introduces inconsistencies and undermines terminological transparency. These issues also extend to other lexicographical works. For example, numerous terms invented by Adrian Room in GLNS (1996) raise similar doubts concerning their conceptual grounding and scholarly legitimacy⁸.

5.2. Conceptual and semantic risks in terminological innovation

The central concern in this type of terminological work and in the introduction of individual terms to address specific research problems lies not in their formal structure, but in their rational and conceptual grounding. The introduction of new terms often entails the

⁷ The term *tauronym* has a synonym: **boonym* (cf. It. *boonimo*, TON 2018: s.v.).

⁸ For a discussion of the questionable scientific value of GLNS (1996), see L. Zgusta (1998) and A. Gałkowski (2021).

establishment of categories whose validity may be considered problematic within onomastics or related disciplines.

An illustrative example is **erotonym*, which is defined as “a name or term of address used casually or regularly by a lover to a loved one or by a close friend to another” (GLNS 1996: 37–38). Here, the semantic scope of the Greek word ἔρως *eros* ‘love’ is broadened to include additional cultural associations. From an onomastic perspective, however, the designated phenomenon may be more accurately described using established categories, such as personal names of an affectionate or intimate nature, i.e. hypocoristic, metaphorical, or metonymic forms.

This pattern is evident in a number of newly proposed terms in DUOT (2024), including **vitonym* (< Lat. *vita* ‘life’), which is defined as “a proper name of a living creature”. This coinage effectively duplicates a traditional distinction in international onomastics: the Greek-based term *bionym*, opposed to *abionym*, has been in use for several decades⁹. Similarly, the term *tovaronym*, derived from a lexical base found in different Slavic languages (e.g. Ukr. *товар*, Pol. *towar*, meaning ‘product’ or ‘merchandise’), is defined as “a subtype of pragmatonym, chrematonym, a proper name of a trademark” (DUOT 2024: 86). In this interpretation, both the etymological motivation and the conceptual positioning of the term depart from traditional patterns of international onomastic terminology.

5.3. Beyond the classical code: hybridisation and terminological instability

As noted in Group |1|, newly coined metaonomastic terms are typically formed around a guiding component, i.e. a thematic head referring to the named object and derived primarily from the classical linguistic heritage, most often Greek and, less frequently, Latin. Occasionally, these formations also incorporate elements drawn from modern languages such as French or English. For example, **perfumonym* ‘perfum name’ (Sk. **perfumonymum* < Eng. *perfum* or **parfumonymum* < Fr. *parfum*; see Molnárová 2021; Kolenčíková 2023; cf. Odaloš 2022: 373) or **skionym* ‘name of a ski resort’ (Sk. *skionymum* < Eng. *ski*; see Wachtarczyková 2012), as well as other non-classical bases, as illustrated by **tovaronym* (cf. supra).

Within this framework, the acceptability of forms like **brendonym* [sic!] (DUOT 2024: 24), which has been used as a synonym for the widely established and internationally recognised term *brand name*, is highly contestable. The term **brendonym* (recte *brandonym*?) is derived from a phonetic adaptation of the Ukrainian *брендове ім'я / брендoнiм* ‘brand name’, yet its transfer into English disregards established orthographic conventions. In this form, the term is unlikely to be accepted in scholarly usage. Constructions of this type are difficult to reconcile with the conventions of onomastic terminology, where terminological innovation is typically based on Greco-Latin models and theoretically grounded onomastic motivation. Their use may nevertheless be justified in interdisciplinary or branding-related settings, where different naming frameworks and communicative priorities apply.

Another example is the term **schoolonym*, which is theoretically derived from the Gr. *σχολή* *scholē* ‘school’, yet displays a hybrid orthography combining classical and English elements (DUOT 2024: 79). The definition of this term is conceptually troublesome as it assigns two distinct and incompatible interpretations: on the one hand, **schoolonym* is explained as “a subtype of architecturonym, urbanonym [sic!], microtoponym, a proper

⁹ In OSTSO (1983), the two terms occupy the highest level of the terminological system. They constitute its two principal branches and serve as overarching hyperonyms for all subordinate concepts: *bionyms* are proper names designating living beings and biological entities, whereas *abionyms* are proper names designating non-living natural objects, artefacts, and phenomena.

name of of an educational institution”, and on the other, as “a subtype of ergonym, a group of people who work there” (ibid.). This definitional ambiguity undermines the coherence and consistency of the underlying categorisation.

6. THE LIMITS OF UNRESTRAINED TERMINOLOGICAL CREATIVITY

There are inherent limits to terminological creativity. This is most evident when newly coined terms not only compromise the internal coherence of a given linguistic tradition but also hinder their transferability across languages through translation or adaptation.

As the contemporary *lingua franca* of scientific communication, the English language is particularly susceptible to this type of activity, which relies on meanings constructed at random. However, this does not mean that English can accept all models of terminological innovation unconditionally, even when the lexical material used in terminological formations draws on classical and international sources. Coinages introduced uncritically into international circulation, mainly by non-native speakers seeking to universalise locally grounded models, often prove conceptually and structurally unconvincing, even when they address phenomena open to legitimate scholarly enquiry.

Recent publications by younger scholars often rely on loosely developed conceptualisations, resulting in *ad hoc* proliferation of pseudo-onomastic terms. For example, in a study by Tetiana Khadzhylii (2024), *ideonym* functions as a superordinate category of names of creative human works (cfr. SOT 2024: 145), but is further subdivided into increasingly individualised classes and subclasses. In this classification, **artionym* is subsumed as a more specific class of names referring to works of art. In turn, **imageonym* (cf. **imagonym* [sic!] in DUOT 2024: s.v.) is treated as a further subcategory covering names associated with visual representations. This domain is additionally subdivided into a range of more narrowly defined concepts, designated by terms drawing on English or international lexical bases (cf. **pictonyms*, **graphiconyms*, **engravionyms*, **sculpturonyms*, **icononyms*, **photoonyms*, **bouquetonyms*, **filmonyms*, **scenonyms*, or **hemronyms*, Khadzhylii 2024: 29–30). Such an expansion of the terminological inventory amounts to an abuse of the principle of terminological economy and a disregard for the necessary methodological restraint in onomastics, resulting in an overabundant and insufficiently justified proliferation of (meta)onomastic terms.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite the conceptual and methodological concerns discussed above, innovative terminological solutions may contribute to the consolidation of concepts relating to newly identified onomastic phenomena and to the refinement of existing analytical frameworks. The present analysis should therefore not be interpreted as a rejection of terminological innovation per se. Rather, it underscores the need for greater caution in the creation of (meta)onomastic terms, whenever established descriptive designations already provide an adequate, transparent and functionally effective alternative.

The excessive and uncontrolled proliferation of new terms, often formally inconsistent or lacking sufficient rational motivation, constitutes a significant source of terminological and methodological instability. Especially susceptible to this tendency are formations based on elements drawn from modern languages, which weaken systemic coherence and diminish conceptual transparency while increasing terminological opacity and fostering the unchecked expansion of term–concept constructs tailored to particular aims.

Consequently, such developments may lead to conceptual instability in onomastic research, exposing the discipline to criticism from related fields concerned with standardised, internationally coordinated terminological frameworks. Therefore, a balanced approach to

terminological innovation is essential to preserve the credibility and scientific integrity of onomastic discourse.

ABBREVIATIONS

Eng. – English; Fr. – French; Germ. – Germanic; Gr. – Greek; Lat. – Latin; Lith. – Lithuanian; Pol. – Polish; Sk. – Slovak; Ukr. – Ukrainian

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