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THE TOPONYMIC COMPETENCE: A CASE STUDY IN THE HUNGARIAN SETTLEMENT TÉPE*

The paper outlines the previous studies on toponymic competence in the Hungarian literature. After a brief introduction, the author analyses toponymic competence of four age groups (under 20 years, 21 to 40 years, 41 to 60 years and over 61 years) and the possible reasons (e.g. age, occupation, gender, personal interest) for differences between age groups and individuals. The investigation considers the toponymy of the small Hungarian settlement Tépe. Interviews with the inhabitants gave insights into how many place names are known by them, which names are stable and which ones are vanishing. The analysis finds that younger generations (people under 20 and between 21 and 40), on average, tend to forget place names, and that there are differences between the toponymic competence of the individuals in all age groups. The paper focuses on the methodological issues as well, such as what we exactly analyse when we study the toponymic competence, or the problem of the individually used names and the scope of the analyses.

Key words: Hungarian language, toponymy, toponymic (micro)system, toponymic competence, socio-onomastics.

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1. Socio-onomastic studies in Hungary

In the international perspective socio-onomastic studies have been carried out since the 1970s. The pioneering works in this field belong to Finnish scholars. In the focus of their interest since the 1970s was the *toponymic competence*. Slotte, Ziliacus and Harling [1973] analysed the toponymic competence of the inhabitants of three villages, while Kepsu [1990] studied the same competence of three different generations of one family. Pitkänen [1996] went even further, she analysed the nomenclature of a farmer and a fisher. Others combined analysis of the toponymic competence with the question of social variables [Ainiala, Komppa, Mallat, Pitkänen, 2000]. The scholars touched upon the change in the place names as well [see: Ainiala, 1997; 2000]. A new perspective came forth at the beginning of the 2000s, that is the study of the urban nomenclature [see e.g.: Ainiala, 2003; 2005]. A very special and for long not observed part of the urban nomenclature was studied as well, that is the usage of slang toponyms [e.g.: Ainiala, 2006]. In connection with this interest a new part of socio-onomastics, folk etymology gained strength. In the studies of Aalto [2002] or Yli-Kojola [2005] one can read on the users' attitude to the toponymicon.

In Hungarian onomastic literature the interest to the problems of socio-onomastics can be traced back to the second half of the 20th century. The most thoroughly studied subject of this field is the toponymic competence, which appears in works related to the problem of the continuity, transformation and disappearance of place names [see e.g.: Hajdú, 1973; Kováts, 1981; Szathmáry, 1985]. Most scholars, though, added their comments on the topic more or less incidentally, the latter being a sort of “by-products” of their collection of currently used place names. Besides statistical data, some emphasis was laid on the elucidation of factors influencing the toponymic competence. It was stated that the toponymic competence is essentially influenced by the following factors. Putting the place itself in the centre, what carries importance is: 1) the distance from the centre; 2) ownership relations; 3) the character of cultivation and utilisation; 4) frequentation [Sebestyén, 1960].

Furthermore, the toponymic competence may depend on the name user's occupation, age, gender, provenance (whether the person is one of the locals or not), and personal inclinations [Inczefi, 1967, 52–55].¹

In the study of the toponymic competence, the greatest advancement was achieved by József Zsolnai [1967], when he placed the question of toponymic competence into the very centre of his research interest. As part of his research, he interviewed 81 inhabitants (1,2 % of a total population of 6,542) of the settlement called *Ásotthalom*. His study of their toponymic competence led him to distinguish between three categories: 1) active toponymicon, i.e. the language user is aware of the name and can also

¹ Another list of factors that may influence the toponymic competence was proposed by Slotte [1976]. It comprises ownership, usage, event, location and the form of the name.

localise it; 2) passive toponymicon, i.e. the language user cannot localise the place name; 3) the language user is not aware or has not heard of the name.

Furthermore, based on the order of frequency of place names, he was able to establish the basic and peripheral elements of the entire toponymicon.

In addition, he highlighted that the toponymic competence also depends on the name users' age and gender. However, a rather striking deficiency of his sampling is that it focused on persons belonging to the age groups 10 to 15, 40 to 60 and 60 to 80 years, that is to say, it completely ignored the probably most numerous and most active part of the population between 15 and 40 years. Through a simultaneous study of the named object, the name itself and the name user, he also examined what influences the toponymic competence.

The study of different types of objects shows that it is not so much the distance that is decisive, but the character of the place: the most well-known names usually belong to schools, vineyards, and factory farms. Furthermore, the tone of the name may influence its popularity (e.g. *Kurva-domb* <Whores' Hill>). It is worth noting that the study also emphasises the popularity of parallel toponyms by contrasting the knowledge of old and new names of a same object.

László Tóth [1974; 1976] applied Zsolnai's method when studying the toponymic competence in the settlement of Székely, with the only remarkable difference being that the 90 inhabitants he interviewed constituted 14,27 % of the population, thus rendering a more reliable picture of the actual situation. Among the criteria influencing the awareness of toponyms, Tóth particularly points out the necessity of usage. In his study, at the end of the frequency list of toponyms, we find names whose motivation seems to be unclear to present language users, as well as newly emerged names. However, these two types of names mark two opposite tendencies within the toponymicon: while the old names are about to vanish, the new names are becoming more and more active. With respect to the relation between the peripheral and basic toponymicon, Tóth states that there is constant migration between the two sections: each name emerges as a peripheral element before becoming part of the basic toponymicon, and finally, becoming less clear and less known to language users, it shifts back to the section of peripheral names. It should be noted that according to Tóth those elements of the toponymicon are considered peripheral which are known to less than one third of the interviewees.

The study of toponymic competence and socio-onomastic studies disappeared from the Hungarian onomastic research scene for almost three decades. Therefore, in this paper, using the results of the predecessors, I try to reform the methodology of the study of the toponymic competence. As a side-notion I have to mention the *mental or cognitive map*. I believe that socio-onomastics can profit a lot from using mental maps during the research. In this paper I cannot go into details on this notion, but as I use it sometimes in my explanations I should give a brief outline of it.

The cognitive map as the central notion of spatial cognition comes from cognitive psychology. The term was coined by Tolman [1948], but Kevin Lynch [1960]

was the first to give a detailed description of the elements of what he called *mental image*. In his view, an individual's mental map consists of five different elements and their relationship to one another: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. The general cognitive map of the external environment emerges from immediate perception and the memories of past experiences. The map is the result of an interactive bilateral process taking place between the environment and the observer. This implies that mental images vary from individual to individual, yet Lynch also postulates the existence of a collective image (or map) which is formed on the basis of consensus. Individuals can be seen to form groups that are homogeneous in respect to gender, age, occupation, temperament and confidentiality.

The cognitive maps refer to representations of space which — according to the network-based connectionist approach — are also linked with different types of knowledge. Visual, auditive, tactile, etc. experiences are stored just like emotional elements or spatial language. The cognitive map refers to the mental representation of space and differs from the mental map, which is the actual manifestation of the cognitive map usually in the form of a drawing. While cognitive mapping is an implicit process, mental mapping is the explicit realisation of the same process.

2. The settlement Tépe

My research was carried out in Tépe in August 2013. Tépe is situated in Hajdú-Bihar County, next to Road 47 and the brook of Kék-Kálló, in the area called Sárret. The village neighbours the settlements of Derecske, Konyár, Gáborján, Szentpéterszeg and Berettyóújfalu. The urban area of Tépe covers 96 hectares, and is surrounded by 2 224 hectares of extra-urban area.

During the 20th century agricultural activity was uninterrupted in the extra-urban areas. Also the inhabitants of the village owned some lands, which they cultivated themselves. Later, these pieces of privately owned land were nationalised. Since the fall of the communist regime, the village has undergone substantial change. More than half of the extra-urban area (farmlands) has been in the possession of a single family (they either own or lease the parcels of farmland), who continue to cultivate the land, yet due to the modernisation of equipment, nowadays this sector needs less and less of manpower. This also means that the active connection between the locals and the extra-urban area has been fading. Certainly, this has also substantially affected the features of the locals' mental map and the related toponymic competence. The settlement has 1 150 inhabitants, 80 (7 %) of whom were involved in this study.

3. Methodology

The study of the toponymic competence was preceded by a traditional gathering of toponyms during the collection the toponymicon containing the currently used names.

For this purpose, members of the older generation (mostly men over 60 years) were contacted who, due to their earlier occupation (as field guards, agricultural workers, shepherds, etc.), were familiar with the lands. This phase of the collection was carried out by means of a free interview (for definition see [Thériault, 2012, 270]. The informants were asked to speak about the places and their names without a map or any other help. They were mostly allowed to “wander freely across their imaginary landscape”, i.e. they were not asked to follow a certain direction, for instance from West to East, or from the centre towards the borders when speaking about the settlement. If they stumbled, the recollections were prompted by questions related to the types of places (e.g.: “Enumerate all the watercourses / forests / roads / bridges of the settlement”).

The collected material that covers the place names of Tépe in current use contains 278 toponyms. Most of the named places are located in the extra-urban area.

Eighty inhabitants were involved in the study. They were redistributed into four age groups: 1) below 20 years, 2) 21 to 40 years, 3) 41 to 60 years, and 4) over 60 years. In the selection of the interviewees the intention was to represent each and every decade as well as both genders proportionately. Table 1 shows the numerical distribution of interviewees.

Table 1. Age and gender distribution of the sample

№	Age Group	Total	Gender			
			Female		Male	
1	Under 20	20	0–10:	2	0–10:	1
			11–20:	9	11–20:	8
2	Age between 21–40	20	21–30:	6	21–30:	3
			31–40:	4	31–40:	7
3	Age between 41–60	20	41–50:	3	41–50:	4
			51–60:	9	51–60:	4
4	Over 61	20	61–70:	4	61–70:	7
			71–80:	4	71–80:	5
Total		80			41	39

The knowledge of the collected material was tested with the help of semi-closed questionnaires (on closed and free questionnaires see [Thériault, 2012, 270]); a list of the collected place names was used, but notes were made of all the other names mentioned by the informants during the interview. For each individual name, interviewees were asked to state whether: 1) they knew the name and where the place was; 2) they knew the name but could not localise the place; 3) they had not heard of the name at all.

Responses were accepted on trust, therefore, interviewees were only rarely asked to actually locate the place (which was usually the case with children). However, it should be noted that if we want to highlight an individual's mental map, beyond the toponymic competence, we will be faced with the fact that some of these mental maps may contain "incorrectly" localised places. Nevertheless, in the case of names that the interviewee could merely recognise, no control could be applied.

4. Methodological questions emerging during the research

In the course of the study, several questions arose, both of a theoretical and practical nature, which are highly significant from a methodological point of view.

The first and most important question is: what is actually studied when we research the toponymic competence of a settlement's inhabitants? If it is accepted that the heart or central part of a proper name's meaning is the denotative meaning, then it follows that one knows a toponym if he or she knows the place itself [see: Soltész, 1979]. This approach would be appropriate in the case of ideal language users. However, one may know a place without knowing its name or being unable to remember it. Moreover, there are place names that cannot be exactly localised, sometimes not even roughly. Localisation constitutes a sensitive problem since it is not clear how localisation must actually be defined. Does it mean that the person should be able to lead us to the place, or explain how to get there, or at least tell in broad lines where the place is located? Should the question be approached from the aspect of the cognitive map? If so, the problem arises as to what this map is actually like: is it map-like, or image-like at all? It seems reasonable to argue that some details of the map may be more precise than others, while other spots can be fuzzy or lack exact localisation. Approaching the issue from a linguistic perspective, it can be shown that some places cannot be named because their names are unfamiliar, or because they have not yet been named, or because they can easily be referred to in some other way, e.g. with a structure containing common words (cf.: *a föld, amit Józsi bácsiéktől vettünk* "the land we bought from Uncle Józsi"). One may tend to suppose an immediate correspondence between pieces of topographic and linguistic (in this case toponymic) information, yet this does not necessarily reflect the real situation. This is the reason why three categories were set up: one for the case when the respondent knows the name and the place as well, one for the case when only name is known, and the third for the cases when neither the name nor the place is known.

Another potential problem is the delimitation of the studied area. Since the object of the study is the urban and extra-urban areas of the settlement of Tépe, it should be admitted that the administrative boundaries of the territory in question do not necessarily correspond to those on the locals' mental map. As Thériault stated, "the researcher can distinguish ethnolinguistic reality from administrative reality" [Thériault, 2012, 267]. The study of personal mental maps shows variations due both to individual features

(for instance, if somebody associates a remote place, and thus also the related toponym, to Tépe or other surrounding settlements — Szentpéterszeg, Derecske or Konyár) and historical changes of the village boundaries.

When presenting the toponymy of a certain settlement, the researcher also faces problems concerning the place names that are used by only one person or several persons, e.g. family, co-workers. It is not unusual that families apply their own names when speaking about particular places. For example, they may name a piece of land after the person they bought it from, referring to it as “Uncle Zoli’s land” (*Zoli bácsi féle föld*). We may even contest the proprial character of such kind of items which sound more like a casual coinage or a description. Nevertheless, while collecting data, names were also discovered that had a typical form of proper names, e.g. *Tyúkmonyos domb* ‘Chicken Egg Hill’, *Gatyaszár-lapos* ‘Leg-of-Pants Flat’. Later, these names acquired special status because they were unknown to other locals. Being unable to exclude the existence of individual names either theoretically or practically, we need, however, to eliminate such individual names from the analysis, if our research focuses on the collective mental map.

5. The general picture of interviewees’ toponymic competence

By comparing the four groups in terms of their toponymic competence, we can see that the toponymicon grows richer in direct proportion with age, and thus with other forms of knowledge, social relations, the breadth of one’s living environment, etc. (see Table 2). To the youngest respondents, only about 20 % of the names rang a bell; whereas name users aged between 21 and 40 knew half of the collected corpus. By and large, those in the third age group were able to locate roughly two-thirds of all the names. Finally, the oldest age group was able to pinpoint, on average, the names of as many as 80 % of the places concerned.² The scores of individuals may vary, though. This will be discussed in more detail below.

Table 2. The toponymic competence of the interviewees on average

№	Age Group	Names known (%)	Names heard (%)
1	Under 20	18	6
2	Age between 21–40	50	5
3	Age between 41–60	63	7
4	Over 61	81	2

² These results seem to be universal, in Finland, for instance, the analysis showed a similar distribution [see e.g.: Slotte, Zilliacus, Harling, 1973].

6. The toponymic competence of Age Group 1

As seen in other studies, the youngest generation is the least familiar with place names; however, their age group is also the one characterised by the most considerable individual variability (see Table 3).

Table 3. The toponymic competence of Age Group 1

Sex of respondent	Chronological ages of respondent in years	Names known (%)	Names heard (%)
Female	7	4,8	7,4
	9	4,4	2,0
	11	30,0	3,3
	11	7,4	6,6
	13	13,7	6,0
	13	20,0	10,0
	13	19,7	7,4
	15	13,3	2,0
	15	16,0	3,0
	17	16,3	10,0
Male	17	18,2	5,2
	7	2,0	3,7
	11	33,0	10,0
	12	11,5	7,8
	14	30,0	6,3
	14	52,0	1,8
	15	19,0	7,4
	15	31,0	21,0
	15	12,6	1,8
17	12,6	6,6	

Consider the two extremes: in contrast to the 7 year old boy, who knew only 2 % of the names, there was a 14 year old respondent versed in 50 % of Tépé toponyms. Not surprisingly, children under 10 years have the least toponymic competence — most of the place names they are aware of are those of streets within the urban area. It is of interest, however, to see that the two girls' toponymicons are richer. Above the age of 10, the interviewees were familiar with a substantially larger number of toponyms. They can be divided into two clearly defined subgroups. Those belonging to the first,

knew relatively few place names (20 %), while members of the other (most of them boys) were familiar with at least 30 % of the list. What could have caused this difference?

The system of spatial concepts emerges from the spatial analysis of perceptual input, and the same applies to the place names constituting a part of this system. Therefore, those who frequently visit the outskirts of the village with their parents or grandparents must have a better knowledge of place names. Presumably, their mental maps will also have much more information (such as the exact picture of the landscape, the quality of the soil, certain events or emotions, etc.) linked to particular places. Nevertheless, toponymic competence can be shaped just as much by pieces of information received from others during conversations. For instance, an interviewed boy familiar with a large number of place names confessed to spending lots of time with his grandfather who liked to tell stories about his youth and old times. These stories contained countless toponyms, which were then incorporated into and become part of the boy's mental map.³

In the age group below 20, there are merely three toponyms that each person knows or is aware of. These include two street names (*Dózsa György utca*, *Felszabadulás utca*) and the place name *Halom-domb*. The latter is well-known and easy to localise for everyone, because this is where children go sledging in wintertime. Further well-known toponyms (known by 15 to 19 respondents of this age group) are the names of streets, the name of the largest water of the settlement (the brook *Kálló*), the piece of land called *Békás* and a farmland called *Deák-tanya*. Moderately well-known (known by 7 to 14 respondents of this age group) are the remaining street names and toponyms such as *Horgas*, *Kálló-köz*, *Dögtemető*, *László-tanya*, *Kis-erdő*, *Makkos-erdő*, *Mérges*, *Péterszegi út*. All the places are relatively close to the urban areas.

7. The toponymic competence of Age Group 2

The responses indicate that, as compared to those below 20 years, respondents aged between 21 and 40 were aware of a significantly larger number of names (see Table 2). On average, their mental map featured 50 % of the collected corpus which is presumably due to the factors such as their age, a broader living environment and so forth. However, the respondents in this group also varied to a great degree as regards to the number of place names they knew, which most likely stems from differences in lifestyle and occupation (see Table 4). Those least versed in toponyms hardly ever wander out into the countryside; whereas for respondents scoring above 75 %, including the farmer of the village with the largest farm,⁴ the land represents their very livelihood, and thus their toponymic competence corresponds to the very active toponymicon of the community.

³ Ainiala, Mallat and Pitkänen [2000] also pointed out that toponymic competence can be explained in many case by individuals' pastimes and not only by their age and gender.

⁴ On the effect of the profession on toponymic competence see also [Pitkänen, 1996].

Table 4. The toponymic competence of Age Group 2

Sex of respondent	Chronological ages of respondent in years	Names known (%)	Names heard (%)
Female	22	21,5	11,8
	22	47,0	< 1,0
	22	48,0	7,8
	26	29,0	21,0
	27	43,0	22,6
	29	16,4	1,0
	34	60,0	4,4
	35	69,0	< 1,0
	36	55,7	1,0
	37	44,6	< 1,0
Male	23	61,0	< 1,0
	23	31,5	14,0
	24	27,0	4,0
	31	61,7	15,6
	32	75,4	1,0
	34	54,0	4,8
	38	44,6	4,8
	38	39,7	3,0
	38	75,8	—
	39	72,8	—

Special mention should be made here of the village pastor, who fully meets the average. While previous studies and onomastic research have focussed on locals deeply rooted in the community [e.g.: Thériault, 2012, 269–270], this study revealed deviations from this trend in several cases. Despite having only been serving in the village since 2004, the pastor of Tépé seems to have already acquired a rather extensive toponymic competence — his toponymicon is virtually identical to those of other respondents. When asked about how he had learnt all these new names, he explained that the local elderly residents shared countless stories about the life and history of the village, and that he was also keen to thumb through old records, look at maps of the area and so forth. This can be seen as a clear-cut confirmation of what has already been mentioned in connection with the younger generations, that is, besides being actively involved at a local level, other sources, too, can deepen one's toponymic competence. Names had also been brought up during everyday conversations with locals. This example

illustrates the many factors influencing toponymic competence, each being able to become dominant depending on the situation at hand.

While, on average, interviewees were familiar with a relatively large number of names, it is somewhat surprising to see that less than 10 % (8,5 %) of the names were known to everyone — a category that includes the current names of streets, the name of the watercourse crossing the village and the main road running through it, as well as the names of some of the major bridges. There are even fewer toponyms that are known to many (known by 15 to 19 respondents of this age group) — only one in every 20 names (5,5 %) belongs to this category of place names. Any attempt at charting some kind of a pattern linking the better known names based on their location would be in vain. A little over half of the respondents knew 7,4 % of the names, and 20 % sounded familiar to half of them at best. Looking at the category of names unknown to everyone is equally revealing. We find among these the names of bridges, wells and levees, long-forgotten street names and those of a rather large number of lands.

8. The toponymic competence of Age Group 3

Respondents in the third age group were also familiar with many names (63 %), being able to localise roughly 13 % more than their counterparts in age group 2 (50 %) (see Table 2). The scores some of them achieved showed remarkable deviation (from 25 % to 35 %) from this average, the underlying cause of which should be explored wherever possible (see Table 5).

Respondents scoring below 40 % do not know much about the area, perhaps due to their occupation (i.e. they have no connection with the extra-urban areas); some of them were teachers or social workers, others worked as maintenance technicians at the municipality, and a cook at the nursing home. The local florist also belongs to this category. Hers is yet another example of why being local should not be used as an exclusive criterion for onomastic research. This woman neither hails from nor lives in Tépe, yet she has been working in the village for 28 years and, according to my observations, seems to be highly engaged with the locals, which has given her the opportunity to learn quite a few toponyms.

However, there are also examples of why occupation is of little relevance to place name competence: despite her line of work, the local librarian is familiar with a large number of names, thanks to the fact that her family used to own farmlands which she would often visit to help out.

As a striking detail in this group, there are a lot of names that the respondents have only heard of. This most likely comprises names that have, over time, been rendered irrelevant and are thus disappearing from everyday use (e.g. names of wells, dams and levees, as well as names for places which do not exist anymore, such as piggeries or turkey farms).

Table 5. The toponymic competence of Age Group 3

Sex of respondent	Chronological ages of respondent in years	Names known (%)	Names heard (%)
Female	42	35,6	17,4
	45	30,8	14,4
	47	47,5	12,0
	51	45,0	6,7
	52	31,5	10,7
	52	65,0	4,4
	53	72,4	2,0
	55	36,8	7,8
	58	44,0	11,8
	58	85,0	< 1,0
Male	42	75,0	2,0
	42	69,0	2,6
	45	32,0	10,0
	46	72,4	6,6
	49	63,0	10,0
	49	74,0	3,7
	52	71,7	3,0
	54	61,0	15,0
	56	86,0	< 1,0
	56	83,6	1,0

As opposed to the previous two age groups, here we see an increase not only in the toponymic competence in general, but also in the number of names that are known to everyone, for 18,5 % of these could be placed on every respondent's toponymic map. In addition to the names mentioned above, new items such as the names of farms and areas nearby the village boundaries, as well as those of lands stretching along the roads were included here. Comparing the toponyms of this group with names of the same status (i.e. known to everyone) from the previous age group, we can see that respondents between 40 and 60 years of age were familiar with all but two names.

Somewhat more than one-third (37 %) of the toponyms were being used by a large proportion of respondents, with 75 % of them claiming to have used these place names (15 to 19 respondents of this age group). An identical share of the toponymy (37 %) is known to approximately 50 % to 66 % of name users (10 to 14 respondents of this age group). The more obscure or unknown toponyms included a number of bridge and a levee names, as well as the names of some lands named after former proprietors.

9. The toponymic competence of Age Group 4

As seen in earlier studies [e.g.: Ainiala, Komppa, Mallat, Pitkänen, 2000], respondents representing the oldest generation know the most names; on average, they are familiar with 81 % of the entire toponymicon (see Table 2). In terms of their competence, what sets them apart from the previous three age groups is their familiarity with names no longer associated with any object, as well as with denotata that have already been renamed. Of course, that is not to say that the elderly possess a full knowledge of Tépe's toponymy, often respondents in this age group were already unaware of the newer names of streets (see Table 6). In everyday communication, this seldom leads to major difficulties, though, as younger generations usually know the previous naming of streets.

Table 6. The toponymic competence of Age Group 4

Sex of respondent	Chronological ages of respondent in years	Names known (%)	Names heard (%)
Female	61	67,0	4,4
	61	88,0	—
	63	75,0	3,0
	66	78,0	2,0
	72	84,7	3,7
	76	84,7	2,0
	78	84,0	3,0
	80	87,7	—
Male	63	77,0	1,0
	63	83,6	2,6
	65	67,0	1,4
	66	81,0	3,7
	68	80,0	1,8
	69	82,0	1,8
	69	87,0	—
	69	68,0	1,0
	73	86,0	—
	75	89,0	< 1,0
	76	83,6	1,8
	80	87,3	1,4

A more thorough analysis shows that almost every other toponym (48 %) was familiar to every respondent in this age group. Moreover, 37 % of the entire toponymicon was known to a large share of respondents: these were featured on the toponymic map of 15 to 19 respondents of this age group. Another 10 % of all toponyms were known to and could be localised by 8 to 14 respondents of this age group, and there were also a handful of names familiar to a few people only.

Comparing these data with the toponymic competence of younger generations, one may conclude that, while others only knew the names of certain slopes as separate entities, the elderly also knew the names of the different sections of these fields. These names were used to provide an even more accurate identification of places and had originally emerged through differentiation, e.g.: *AC* and *Külső-AC* <Outer AC>; *Vonal*, *Külső-Vonal* <Outer Vonal> and *Belső-Vonal* <Inner Vonal>; *Tóhát*, *Alsó-Tóhát* <Lower Tóhát> and *Felső-Tóhát* <Upper Tóhát>.

Members of the oldest age group knew 78 % of the place names that were familiar to everyone in the previous age group.

10. The toponymic competence in age and gender distribution

Earlier studies [e.g.: Ainiala, Komppa, Mallat, Pitkänen, 2000] stated that men typically know more names than women. Table 7, summarising the findings from Tépe, seems to underscore this assertion, as women in the first three age groups knew 8 to 19 % fewer names than men. It should be noted that the difference between genders is most apparent between 41 and 60 years of age and essentially vanishes among the elderly. Most likely, this has to do with the locals' earlier lifestyle, because the lands and plots around Tépe used to play a central role in their lives.

Table 7. Toponymic competence by age and gender distribution

№	Age Group	Female		Male	
		Names known (%)	Names heard (%)	Names known (%)	Names heard (%)
1	Under 20	14,8	5,0	22,0	7,4
2	Age between 21–40	46,4	7,0	54,0	4,8
3	Age between 41–60	49,4	8,5	68,7	5,5
4	Over 61	81,0	2,0	81,0	1,8

11. Discussion and Conclusion

My research on the toponymic competence in Tépe shows the striking tendency of losing microtoponyms from respondents' toponymicons. This opens up new possibilities for further research. One of the most interesting areas is the cognitive map of children. Does the sparsity of place names in their responses mean that their cognitive map is blank, or is it well detailed but the denotata have no proper names and is only inhabited by common words?

Having explored the area's toponymy and levels of familiarity with toponyms, the question also emerges as to whether an onomastic map of the community could be set up. To answer this, it is necessary to recall the concept of *onomastic community*. According to Hoffmann [1993/2007, 39], who considers the village to be the natural basic unit of toponymic research, the term "onomastic community" refers to the inhabitants of a relatively smaller village or town. In an earlier paper I wrote that "an onomastic community represents a virtual group whose members share more or less the same toponymicon, with similar mental projections associated with and usage rules applying to individual place names" [Györffy, 2011, 40]. Pásztor [2013, 136] summarised her findings from field work as follows: "in localities with larger stretches of land nearby, those involved with a particular pasture or segment of land can be considered members of a same onomastic community, given their shared knowledge of place names". By contrast, she called the complete toponymicon of a locality a "cumulative toponymic competence" [Ibid., 137].

I hold to Ladányi and Tolcsvai's definition of onomastic community as "a separate onomastic community (a society or nation speaking the same language) representing a network of numerous verbal communities" [Ladányi, Tolcsvai, 2008, 27]. I am also of the view that an onomastic community is formed as a network of smaller name-user communities whatever is the size, structure or type of the locality. By "name-user community" I mean groups of people whose members actually interact with one another. I believe that actual interaction is important, because a mere toponymic competence of an area does not qualify one as a member of the local onomastic community, there needs to be frequent interaction with and within that community to qualify.

Groups constituting an onomastic community can vary greatly in respect of the number of members. While aspects such as age, occupation, family relations and places of residence can be used to accurately describe them, members do not necessarily form a homogeneous group. We must also bear in mind that an individual can belong to several different name-user communities at the same time.

The density of one's social network also depends on the size of the locality: the smaller the village, the more likely its residents live in a close-knit community, whose (adult) members will therefore share a similar toponymic competence. By contrast, the larger the locality, the fewer people one proportionally keeps contact with; therefore, an average name-user will be familiar with a smaller number of names outside their

immediate living environment. Naturally, this does not apply to the “name masters” (e.g. field workers, shepherds, postmen, ambulance and taxi drivers, policemen, etc.) who, by virtue of their profession, possess an excellent command of toponyms.

We can assume that Tépe, the Hajdúhát ridge and, of course, Hungary itself each represent separate onomastic communities. Hoffmann [2012, 15] interprets the Hungarian onomastic community as a network of onomastic communities of various sizes with more or less tight relations. If we accept Pásztor’s definition [2013, 136], we can establish that it is through the amalgamation of individual toponymicons that the Hungarian onomastic community comes into being. Nevertheless, I cannot completely agree with it. The toponymic competence cannot be detached from one’s mental map; however, their correlation is so individual that, as far as a community is concerned, belonging to the Hungarian onomastic community implies the possession of the corresponding toponymic competence.⁵ If we wanted to draw up a certain collective knowledge map of place names, I do not think we would find many overlapping common elements in the toponymicons of individuals.

This kind of knowledge manifested itself many times throughout the field research. During the interviews respondents would often try to interpret the meaning of toponyms and indicate their location in relation to other names, as if they were analysing the internal structure of names and placing them on their mental map based on prior experiences of usage. As a result, many of those familiar with the toponyms *Bika-legelő* <Bull’s Pasture>, *Bika-kút* <Bull’s Well> and *Bika-erdő* <Bull’s Forest> would instinctively put *Bika-zug* <Bull’s Rook> nearby, for they believed this, too, had to do with the cattle kept in the same area and, thus, could not be situated elsewhere. In reality, though, *Bika-zug* lies someplace else. To the respondents, this toponymic competence was of little help, yet — as many researchers have pointed out — it does work when it comes to giving names to places or recognising names as such.

While this study focuses on place names and their knowledge, it must be stressed that toponymic systems and their mental projections should not be treated as a separate module. On the contrary, they ought to be investigated together with other elements of spatial language and representation.

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⁵ Here I use the term “toponymic competence” in a wider sense: it means not only the knowledge of the toponymicon but also the significance of recognising, coining and using toponyms.

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**ТОПОНИМИЧЕСКАЯ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЯ:
СЛУЧАЙ ВЕНГЕРСКОГО ПОСЕЛЕНИЯ ТЕПЕ**

В статье дается обзор венгерских исследований, посвященных изучению «топонимической компетенции» (toponymic competence), а также анализ топонимической компетенции жителей небольшого венгерского поселения Тепе, разделенных на четыре возрастных группы (до 20 лет, от 21 до 40 лет, от 41 до 60 лет и старше 61 года). Обсуждаются причины, обуславливающие как индивидуальные, так и межгрупповые различия (например, возраст, род занятий, пол, личный опыт и пр.). Интервью с жителями Тепе позволили выявить количество известных им местных названий, выделить общеизвестные и забытые топонимы. Исследование показывает, что представители младших возрастных групп (моложе 20 лет и от 21 до 40 лет) в среднем знают меньше местных географических названий, кроме того, в каждой группе имеются индивидуальные отличия. В статье также обсуждаются методологические проблемы, в частности — эпистемологическая сущность топонимической компетенции, проблема идиолектных топонимов, методологические ограничения и возможности подобного социономастического исследования.

К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а: венгерский язык, топонимия, топонимическая (микро)система, языковая личность, социономастика.

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