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# СООБЩЕНИЯ

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## **A COGNITIVE APPROACH IN ONOMASTICS: SOME NOTES ON METAPHORICAL PLACE-NAMES**

In the framework of cognitive linguistics, metaphor is considered as a general cognitive mechanism that plays a fundamental role in human thinking and understanding, in the creation of our social, cultural, and psychological reality, while also impacting our language use. One of its special types, the image metaphor, also appears in name-giving and serves as the basis of a specific toponym type. With reference primarily to Hungarian toponymic corpus and, sporadically, to other languages, this paper provides a brief description of the mechanism of image metaphor and an overview of typical target concepts and source domains of metaphorical toponyms and of the features of the geographical objects that constitute the basis for metaphorical mappings. It is shown that metaphorical naming may be based on transonymization and involve enantiosemy that helps create irony. The fact that metaphorical place-names are most frequently documented when collecting unofficial toponymy has a significant impact on their status in onomastic research. Being most often microtoponyms, metaphorical place-names display clear quantitative variation from one area to another, which can be explained by the weight the metaphorical naming patterns have among the speakers living in different regions, which, in turn, may influence their readiness to use those or similar patterns for naming new objects. The author also suggests that despite their numerical scarcity in historical sources, metaphorical toponyms constitute a long-standing ancient class of names, and outlines some perspectives for the further study.

**Keywords:** toponym; metaphorical name-giving; image metaphor; target concept; source domain; mapping; cognitive linguistics

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## 1. Introduction

Cognitive metaphor research represents one of the emblematic fields within cognitive linguistics. Studies in this area, however, have almost exclusively focused on common noun expressions. Names, and more specifically toponyms, have been examined relatively rarely within this framework. Even if they have, cognitive linguistics was primarily interested in the metaphorical use of names, e.g., *Az első meccs ugyan egy gyors dán góllal indult, de a magyar Zidane (Kriston Attila) egyenlített* ‘The first match started with a fast Danish goal but the Hungarian Zidane (Kriston Attila) equalized.’ In such cases, the conceptual domain related to the proper name provides the source domain of the metaphor [cf. Wee, 2006]. Within this theoretical framework, proper names have a complex structure of meaning and a salient characteristic may serve as the basis for metaphorical name usage [Tolcsvai, 2008].

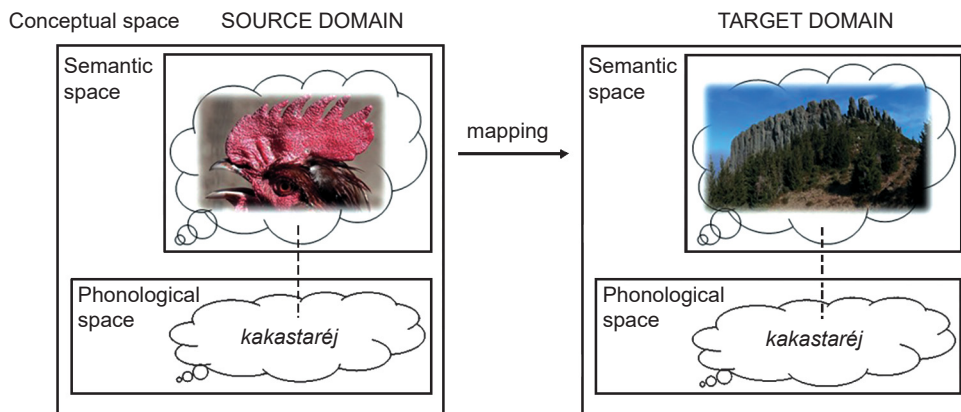
In this paper, I am going to address the cognitive mechanism involved in the creation of *toponyms*, which also gives us an opportunity to reinterpret the results of onomastic research related to this form of name-giving. For my analysis, I will use county-level toponym collections and previous analytical works mainly with reference to the Hungarian toponymic corpus [Végh & Ördög, 1964; Kálnási, 1984; Jakab & Kálnási, 1987; Balogh & Ördög, 1982; 1987; Ördög, 2000; Bába, 2015; Hoffmann, 2007; Inczeffi, 1971]. However, in order to be able to draw more general conclusions, I will also consider findings related to other languages relying on name registers and previous publications [cf. Ainiala, 2016; Balode, 2012; Goótsóvá et al., 2014; Hunn, 1996; Krško, 2006; Nyström, 2013; Særheim, 2018].

## 2. Metaphorical name-giving

According to cognitive linguistics, metaphors involve a general cognitive mechanism that plays a fundamental role in human thinking and understanding, in the creation of our social, cultural, and psychological reality, while it also intertwines our language use [cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2005].

One of its special types is the image metaphor in which — unlike in common conceptual metaphors — a source domain image is mapped onto a target image [cf. Lakoff, 1987]. The mechanism of image metaphor also appears in name-giving and serves as the basis of a not too numerous but nevertheless significant name type. In the process of metaphorical place name-giving, a detailed mental image (the representation of a specific place) is mapped onto another detailed mental image based on one of their prominent characteristics that is perceived to be similar. Thus, the target concept is the mental representation of a relatively well-defined and perceptible spatial object. The mental representation of this referent to be named includes a variety of characteristic features (size, shape, relationship to other objects, etc.) and one of these becomes prominent in the context of name-giving.

If this feature is linguistically expressed by mapping this image onto another concept having a similar trait, we get metaphorical names, as in the example of the Hungarian *Kakastaréj* ‘rooster’s comb,’ name of a mountain in Romania (see Figure).



The mental process of metaphorical name-giving

In Hungarian onomastics, the category of metaphorical name-giving traditionally applies only to those cases in which metaphorical onymization takes place without any formal change whatsoever [cf. Hoffmann, 2007, 127]. This limited inclusion can partly be explained by the focus on name structure and the assumption that these typologies presuppose a mutually exclusive relationship between the types of name formation. If there are several name formation mechanisms involved, this approach assumes that they occur one after another and considers only the last one. This also means that only single-component names can be part of the category of metaphorical names (e.g. *Teknő* ‘trough’ [Végh & Ördög, 1964, 557]) and that the inner form of the appellative expression does not influence the categorization of the name (for instance, the Hungarian toponym *Tótkalap* < *tót kalap* ‘Slovakian hat’ would be considered as a single-component metaphorical name). The names created in combination with a morphological or lexical formant, despite being metaphorically motivated (e.g., *Teknő-völgy* ‘Trough valley’), are generally not included in the category of metaphorical names [Balogh & Ördög, 1987, 77, 153].

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, it seems more justified to treat associative mechanisms separately from their formal manifestations. In the cognitive linguistics framework, linguistic elements are described as units of conceptual meaning and linguistic form [cf. Langacker, 2013, 15], and name-giving processes can affect both poles. In a name-giving situation the mechanism of metaphor prevails the same way in both single-component and two-component names, i.e. in the *Teknő* ‘Trough’ and *Teknő-völgy* ‘Trough valley’ types respectively. Therefore, all metaphorically

motivated names require a more in-depth look into how the mechanism of metaphor manifests itself in name-giving.<sup>1</sup>

Extending the same logic to the names with a different structure is also justified by the fact that metaphorical names are not the result of official name-giving. Very often the single and two-component name versions are not considered by speakers to be separate names or even morphological variants [cf. e.g. Szilágyi-Varga, 2017, 82–83].

Based on this approach, the following section provides an analysis of metaphorical toponyms using the frame of cognitive metaphor research.

### 3. Target concepts and source domains

#### 3.1. Target domain

An analysis of the Hungarian onomastic corpus indicates that the target concept of metaphorical name-giving could refer to any kind of place depending on the natural and artificial geographical features of the area, but most frequently the target concepts are topographical objects, roads, lands, and also sometimes lakes, rivers, and buildings, e.g. *Ördögágya* ‘Devil’s bed’ (rock) [Balogh & Ördög, 1982, 210], *Németkalap* ‘German hat’ (hill) [Inczefi, 1971, 192], *Csótányháza* ‘House of cockroach’ (rock) [Balogh & Ördög, 1982, 139], *Kalapos-domb* ‘Hill with a hat’ (hill) [Ibid., 56], *Asztal-völgy* ‘Table valley’ (valley) [Balogh & Ördög, 1987, 248], *Csöbör* ‘Bucket’ (round-shaped cove) [Inczefi, 1960, 23], *Patkó* ‘Horseshoe’ (cultivated land) [Balogh & Ördög, 1982, 39], *Patkó-föld* ‘Horseshoe land’ [Jakab & Kálnási, 1987, 150], *Gatyaszár utca* ‘Pantleg street’ [Inczefi, 1971, 192], *Zsinór-út* ‘String street’ [Kálnási, 1984, 301], *Patkó-tó* ‘Horseshoe lake’ [Papp & Végh, 1974, 447], *Teknő-tó* ‘Trough lake’ [Ördög, 2000, 437], *Patkó-kút* ‘Horseshoe spring’ [Balogh & Ördög, 1982, 107]. Metaphorical name-giving manifests itself similarly in the onomastic corpus of other languages, cf. Swedish *Broken* ‘Pants’ (marsh), *Gula mårren* ‘Yellow mare’ (island) [Nyström, 2013, 358, 360], Latvian *Āķis* ‘Hook’ (winding river) [Balode, 2012, 11], Slovakian *Závojevý vodopád* ‘Veil fall’ (waterfall) [Goótssová et al., 2014, 487], Slovakian *Dukátka* ‘Coin’ (round-shaped meadow) [Krško, 2006, 65], Sahaptin<sup>2</sup> *Sk'in* ‘Cradle’ (rock) [Hunn, 1996, 16].

The analysis of metaphorical names in different languages shows that this way of name-giving is not characteristic for settlement names, which can be explained by both the special sociocultural status of these names and the features of settlements as geographical objects (see below).

<sup>1</sup> Terhi Ainiala uses a similar approach when describing the Finnish toponym system [Ainiala, 2016, 77–78].

<sup>2</sup> Sahaptian branch of the Plateau Penutian language family, North America.

### 3.2. The basis of image mapping

Most frequently, places get their metaphorical name based on their form. For example, in Hungarian, a curved piece of land is called *Patkó* ‘Horseshoe,’ a round pond is *Fillérke* ‘Little penny’ [Balogh & Ördög, 1982, 149], a Y-shaped rock-climbing route is *Ypszilon* ‘Y’ etc., while in Swedish *Tröjärmen* ‘Sweater’s sleeve’ is a small and narrow bay [Nyström, 2013, 362], in Sahaptin *Ayk<sup>w</sup>s* ‘Cottontail’ denotes rapids, where the surface of the river forms whitecaps that looked like a bunch of cottontail rabbits scurrying away [Hunn, 1996, 15].

In a great number of cases, the use of a metaphor is the only way of describing the given form. In some instances, metaphorical name-giving can be explained by the name giver striving for a special emotional and imaginative impact.

In certain cases, one may also encounter more complex image mapping that involves several features. For example, according to name users, *Citera-rét* ‘Zither meadow’ “has the same shape as a zither. The trenches are the strings, the bushes are the holes and the crickets play the music all the time” [Végh & Ördög, 1964, 391].

In the Hungarian onomastic corpus, there are relatively few metaphorical toponyms deriving from a common noun in which the basis of the underlying image mapping is not the shape of the object. These names do not represent a homogeneous category. For example, in several settlements, there are places called *Dzsungel* ‘Jungle’ named after their quarrelsome, restless residents or their neglected conditions [Balogh & Ördög, 1982, 169; Jakab & Kálnási, 1987, 262; Végh & Ördög, 1964, 415]; a remote, barren land is called the *Préri* ‘Prairie’ [Balogh & Ördög, 1987, 43]; while a mill is called *Cserebogár* ‘Cockchafer,’ named so after its sound [Bába, 2015, 310].

The feature that serves as the basis of metaphorical correspondence is often determined by the nature of the referent. For example, there are several cases among Slovakian hydronyms where the metaphorical name expresses the nature of the flow of the watercourse, cf. Slovakian *Fujak* ‘Snowdrift’ and *Lejak* ‘Heavy rain’ refer to rapidly flowing brooks [Goótsková et al., 2014, 135, 245].

### 3.3. Source domain

Most frequently, everyday objects serve as the source domain: household items, furniture, pieces of clothing, etc., e.g., Hungarian *Pántlika* ‘Ribbon’ [Papp & Végh, 1974, 298], *Divány-domb* ‘Sofa hill’ [Balogh & Ördög, 1982, 99], *Kosár-hegy* ‘Basket hill’ [Ibid., 163], *Sodrófa utca* ‘Rolling pin street’ [Ibid., 177]; Swedish *Kokgrytan* ‘Pot, cauldron,’ *Nåldynan* ‘Pincushion,’ *Blompottan* ‘Flower-pot,’ *Sadeln* ‘Saddle’ [Nyström, 2013], Latvian *Panna* ‘Pan’ [Balode, 2012, 14], Slovakian *Bubienok* ‘Little drum,’ *Nohavičková* ‘Pants’ (valley), *Nohavice* ‘Trousers’ (forest), *Štanga* ‘Stick’ (long valley) [Krško, 2006, 65], *Malý klobouk* ‘Small hat,’ *Veľký klobouk* ‘Large hat’ [Ibid., 66]. The basis of mapping is almost exclusively the similar shape of the two objects.

Quite frequently, animals also appear as the source domain. However, considering the Hungarian toponym corpus, it is not often easy to decide whether the name deriving

from a zoonym was created by metaphorical transfer, cf. *Cserebogár* ‘Cockchafer’ [Bába, 2015, 310], *Csiga* ‘Snail’ [Inczefi, 1971, 190], *Medve-szikla* ‘Bear rock.’ In the Swedish place-name corpus, such names constitute the second largest group among metaphorical toponyms, with names of domesticated animals being used most frequently, e.g. *Hästen* ‘Horse,’ *Kycklingen* ‘Chicken,’ *Tuppen* ‘Rooster’ [Nyström, 2013, 363]. Names of animals also feature in Norwegian metaphorical toponyms, when naming sunken rocks, e.g. *Hesten* ‘Horse,’ *Galten* ‘Pig,’ *Sugga* ‘Pig,’ *Havren* ‘Goat,’ *Hunden* ‘Dog’ [Særheim, 2018, 83–84]. The above examples denote such places where animal husbandry was not characteristic, thus they could not be created by means of metonymic name-giving.

References to people are uncharacteristic of Hungarian metaphorical toponyms, e.g. *Barát* ‘Monk,’ *Apáca* ‘Nun’ [Baráz, 2007], while in the Swedish onomastic corpus, more precisely in the Stockholm archipelago their proportion is somewhat higher, e.g., *Flickan* ‘Girl,’ *Käringen* ‘Old lady,’ *Länsman* ‘County sheriff,’ *Soldaten* ‘Soldier’ [Nyström, 2013, 361]. In the case of these names, it is truly difficult (if not impossible) to identify the basis of metaphorical mapping serving as the basis of name-giving.

The concepts of buildings also appear in metaphorical toponyms: the Swedish names *Domkyrkan* ‘Cathedral,’ *Brogen* ‘Stronghold,’ *Muren* ‘wall’ denote places where there were no such buildings [Nyström, 2013, 361–362].

In some cases, the source domain can be represented by more specific concepts, for instance, Hungarian *Napóleonkalapja* ‘Napoleon’s hat’ [Balogh & Ördög, 1982, 153], *Hegedűnyak* ‘The neck of the violin’ [Kiss, 1961, 185].

As the examples show, metaphorical names mostly involve concepts characteristic of the daily life. This is a universal feature of the cognitive mechanism of metaphor, and thus similar mappings can be found in names created in different regions (for example, in the Hungarian language area, there are several places called *Teknő* ‘Trough,’ *Patkó* ‘Horseshoe,’ *Pántlika* ‘Ribbon,’ *Németkalap* ‘German hat,’ *Gatyaszár utca* ‘Pantleg street,’ etc.) and in different languages (e.g., Hungarian *Fátyol-vízesés* ‘Veil fall’ — Slovakian *Závojevý vodopád* ‘Veil fall,’ Latvian *Panna* ‘Pan’ — Swedish *Stekpannan* ‘Frying pan,’ Swedish *Bredyxan* ‘Axe, broadaxe’ — Slovakian *Sekyra* ‘Axe,’ etc.).

A special group of metaphorical toponyms is created by transonymization, when an already existing toponym is used to denote another place based on a feature that is perceived to be shared by the two places. For example, there are places in the Hungarian language area called *Csikágó* ‘Chicago’ [Szabó T., 1934, 170], *Jerikó* ‘Jericho’ [Ibid., 169], *Szibéria* ‘Siberia’ [Papp & Végh, 1974, 792; Balogh & Ördög, 1987, 214]. This type of name-giving is also present in other languages, e.g., in Finnish *Amerikka*, *Betlehem*, *Kaanaa*, *Siperia*, *Bronx*, *Harlem*, *Monaco* [Ainiala, 2016, 77–78].

This form of name-giving can be explained with the complex semantic structure of names. The representation of the place used as a source domain and the conventional conceptual meaning of the toponym include such historical, geographical, cultural, and social information (often as stereotypical features) that can also be applied to other places. For example, in the meaning of the name *Szibéria* the concept of COLDNESS is

a salient component, and the name can be practically interpreted as the symbol, synonym of coldness; while the semantic structure of *Kánaán* ‘Canaan’ features the conceptual content of ABUNDANCE as a salient semantic component in Judeo-Christian culture.

As the semantic content of names is not fixed and they may also have multiple salient conceptual features, it is not surprising either that a particular toponym may also be used to express multiple features: in the Hungarian language area, the name *Amerika* ‘America’ may be and is used to denote a ‘distant (border area)’ as well as ‘a (village section) inhabited by rich people.’

It also happens that the same feature can be expressed by several toponyms: in Hungarian, the conceptual content of a FAR-AWAY PLACE may equally be expressed by the names of *Abesszínia* ‘Abyssinia,’ *Doberdó* and *Sanghaj* ‘Shanghai’ [Hoffmann, 2007, 130], while in Slovakian *Argentina*, *Austrálie*, *Balkán*, *Chorvátsko* ‘Croatia,’ *Kamčatka*, *Kanada*, *Nový svět* ‘New World,’ *Mexiko*, *Peking*, *Sarajevo* also have the same function [Krško, 2006, 63].

It is also due to the unique semantic structure of names that the toponym serving as source domain can also be used to denote a conceptual feature that goes contrary to the salient attribute. For example, in the Hungarian town of Makó the poorest district is called *Bécs* ‘Vienna’ and in the town of Salgótarján, the poorest district is called *Amerika*. Besides the mechanism of metaphorical transfer, when creating (and interpreting) these names, strategies of negative irony are also at play.

#### 4. Some aspects of the study of metaphorical names

Several scholars have referred to the peripheral status of metaphorical names in the Hungarian onomastic corpus specifically and in connection with other languages. The reason for this is that the creation of such metaphorical name, instead of direct description and metonymic name-giving based on conventionalized schemes, requires linguistic creativity from speakers. What is more, the majority of names included in this group (at least in the Hungarian onomastic corpus) are microtoponyms, which means that they are used by a limited number of people. Due to the stylistic specificity of metaphorical placenames, they are not necessarily considered to be “good” names by the speakers, thus, in formal communicative situations, the speakers may avoid their use. This, in turn, maintains the low productivity of this form of name-giving.

It seems, however, that we can identify some regional differences with regard to the frequency of the name type. With reference to Swedish, Staffan Nyström [2013] has shown that the number of metaphorical names is significantly higher in the Stockholm archipelago than in the mountain areas or in the cultivated lands of the plains. This is not the result of differences in creativity of speakers or their differing worldview, but is rather due to regional differences in the “toponym dialects.” The speakers create new names based on their existing name awareness and their name patterns built on this awareness. If for any reason (due to frequent name usage, the significance of the denoted



object or due to a higher number of examples) metaphorical names become a significant part of the local toponymicon, they may provide strong naming patterns that will incite speakers to create new names based on those metaphorical patterns.

The diversity of the landscape may also contribute to the creation of metaphorical names. In topographically diverse areas there may be a greater chance that speakers will name certain parts of the landscape with metaphorical names.

It is also to be pointed out that we have examples for metaphorical names mostly from contemporary language collections. The time of their creation is typically hard to define due to the absence of written records from previous times. Occasionally, of course, metaphorical names can be found in the historical onomastic corpus, but even these are rather uncertain, e.g., in Hungarian *kengelu* ‘stirrup’ (hydronym, 1075/+1124/+1217) [Kiss, 1988, 714], *Nerges berch* ‘Saddle mountain’ (oronym, 1227) [Györffy, 4, 249], *Tekenus* ‘With trough’ (valley, 1272–1290) [Györffy, 1, 434]; in Norwegian, *Golta* ‘Pig’ (rock, 1519) [Særheim, 2018, 86].

The lack of early metaphorical toponym data can partly be explained by the difficulties of documentation and etymology. However, the linguistic norm of speakers may be an even more important factor. As the experience of toponym collection indicates, the use of these toponyms is avoided by speakers in formal situations. This might also have been a practice in older times: when preparing documents in the past, either the name users themselves or those who created the documents did not consider such names to be serious and official enough to be recorded.

And still, it is clear that this is an old, ancient name type. Metaphorical name-giving is based on such a general cognitive mechanism that it is probably the same age as humanity. This supposition is supported by the fact that metaphorical name-giving is also present within traditional societies [Hunn, 1996, 15, 16; Piper, 2014, 164, 165, 171; Nash, 2014, 314, 320].

Further efforts should be aimed at inventorying the mappings referring to various types of places that receive metaphorical names, in both regional (microtoponymic) and wider cross-cultural, cross-linguistic aspects. This would lead to establishing universal and culturally (regionally, topographically) specific metaphorical patterns and, as a consequence of that, to building a typological basis for the study of ancient toponymy in cases where presumable metaphorical patterns may be significant for the etymology or geographical attribution of a name.

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#### **КОГНИТИВНЫЙ ПОДХОД В ОНОМАСТИКЕ: К ПРОБЛЕМЕ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ МЕТАФОРИЧЕСКИХ ТОПОНИМОВ**

В рамках когнитивной лингвистики метафора рассматривается как универсальный когнитивный механизм, играющий ключевую роль в процессах мышления и понимания, в создании социальной, культурной, психологической реальности. Одна из разновидностей метафоры — образная метафора — проявляется в практике именовании географических объектов. С опорой преимущественно на данные венгерского языка (спорадически с привлечением данных иных языков) в статье дается краткое описание механизма образной метафоры, обзор семантических зон, чаще всего служащих областью источника и областью мишени в метафорических топонимах, а также характеристики географических объектов, лежащие в основе концептуальной проекции в процессе метафорического переноса. Показано, что метафорическое именование географических объектов может происходить посредством трансонимизации и вовлекать механизм энантиосемии для создания иронической оценки. Тот факт, что метафорические топонимы чаще всего встречаются среди неофициальных географических названий, оказал существенное влияние на статус этих названий в ономастических исследованиях. Как правило, метафорические топонимы относятся к области микротопонимии, при этом их частотность варьирует в разных регионах и ареалах, что может быть объяснено различным «весом» готовых метафорических моделей номинации в языковом сознании жителей разных областей, а это, в свою очередь, может влиять на их готовность использовать метафоры при номинировании новых объектов. Автор подчеркивает, что вопреки невысокой частотности их употребления в исторических источниках, метафорические топонимы представляют собой древний тип географических названий, и очерчивает основные направления дальнейшего их изучения.

**К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а:** топонимия; метафорическое именование; образная метафора; область источника; область мишени; концептуальная проекция; когнитивная лингвистика

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