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## THE PLACE OF SLANG TOPONYMS IN THE TOPONYMIC SYSTEM<sup>1)</sup>

### MÍSTO SLANGOVÝCH TOPONYM V TOPONYMICKÉM SYSTÉMU

Díky srovnání slangových toponym s ostatními toponymy můžeme konstatovat, že zastávají v toponymickém systému zvláštní roli: jejich význam můžeme pozorovat jak v pragmatickém, tak v jazykovém způsobu pojmenování. Článek dokazuje tato tvrzení prostřednictvím analýzy (hovorových a) slangových variant jména maďarské osady *Hajdúszoboszló*. Jedním z nejpodstatnějších znaků je, že denotát své jméno již má a motivací pro slangové pojmenování je dát toponymu jiný název, než již existující. Široká škála komplexních jevů při vytváření a fungování těchto toponym je rovněž charakteristická: jsou podporovány svým vztahem k toponymii v mateřském a cizím jazyce, stejně tak jako ke slovní zásobě v mateřském a cizím jazyce.

### Keywords

onomastics, toponyms, toponymic system

1. For decades, international onomastic literature has been offering writings which approach toponymy from a socioonomastic aspect, in other words, study names from the point of view of their embeddedness in the social environment. The followers of this approach attempt to analyse the following: the use and change of names, name variants, the individual name users' knowledge of names, the relationship between frequency and name types and location and name variants. A special research field of socioonomastics is the study of toponym use in multilingual areas. Urban toponyms and, in close relationship to them, slang toponyms became the focus of this scientific discipline, which embraces a wide variety of topics.

With regard to the above name type, what is usually emphasised is their social identity denoting role and their use in justifying the layered character of the linguistic use of toponyms. At this point I wish to note that I will not approach slang toponyms from the point of view of linguistic use, but would rather like to shed light on their place in the language in general and, more specifically, in the toponymic system. This can primarily be achieved by analysing the circumstances of coining slang toponyms, i.e. (namely) the act of name giving.

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It is already a commonplace in onomastic literature that toponyms constitute a system and the newly coined toponyms assimilate to the already existing toponymic system. Rudolf Šrámek's model claims there are two determining elements of the name giving model (Benennungsmodell): the basic model (Ausgangsstellungsmodell) and the word formation model (Wortbildungsmodell).<sup>2)</sup> While the basic models involve the non-language specific motivation of name giving, word formation models refer to the set of elements and connection rules playing a role in forming toponyms in a certain period of a given language. István Hoffmann rethought Šrámek's model and created his own, with the following components: semantic basis, lexical basis, name forming rules, name changing rules, he also speaks about the pragmatic conditions of name genesis and its further life, as well as the loan names, that constantly broaden the toponymic system.<sup>3)</sup>

Using name giving models in the research is typical, mainly in cases when a large number of elements is analysed, but their application cannot be said to be widely spread. In my opinion, however, these models allow us to compare individual onymic systems: a description of toponyms from this type of approach allows us to discover similar and different attributes of certain toponyms, as well as to characterise the toponymic systems of interacting languages or those in no relation to one another. Consequently, I will follow István Hoffmann's approach and use the set of notions developed in his toponym analysis model.

**2.** In my presentation, the hypothesis based on the name giving norm is that slang toponyms can also be regarded special as regards name giving: they are characterised by a unique name giving model. Their unique situation may primarily be explained by the general attributes of slang. Playing with words is such an attribute: according to Jespersen, slang is the result of humans' love of games.<sup>4)</sup> We also have to note the strong emotional relation expressed in slang. It is worth mentioning that slang expresses the relation to others' (dominant) values, but not only in a pejorative way and the group very often scoffs their own values and attitudes. Consequently, besides positive emotional attitude there is often opposing attitude towards these linguistic elements. Regarding the word formation methods of slang we may consider abbreviation and word-shortening a general rule, although lengthy compound words, multiword expressions may also appear. The use of foreign linguistic elements (mainly

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<sup>2)</sup> R. Šrámek, Zum Begriff „Modell“ und „System“ in der Toponomastik, *Onoma* 17, 1972–1973, p. 55–75.

<sup>3)</sup> I. Hoffmann, A helynevek rendszerének nyelvi leírásához, *Magyar Nyelvjárások* 37, 1999, p. 207–216.

English words) is also typical for this language use form. Figures of speech are also characteristic of slang, namely, the use of metaphor, metonymy and irony.<sup>5)</sup> Researchers often emphasise the importance of awareness: the slang user consciously builds not only the content of the slang, but also its form.<sup>6)</sup>

**3.** I wish to justify my assumptions regarding the unique name giving model of slang toponyms by analysing a Hungarian settlement's currently used names. Hajdúszoboszló is a spa resort in the eastern region of Hungary. The name of the settlement was first mentioned in an 11<sup>th</sup> century charter as *Szoboszlóvásár*: 1075/+1124/+1217: *Zubuzlou wasar*. The toponym is a compound from an Old Hungarian anthroponym, *Szoboszló*, and a common word, *vásár* 'market'. The name refers to a settlement where a person named *Szoboszló* had the right to organise a market. However, the name appears only as *Szoboszló* in a 13<sup>th</sup> century record: 1214/1550: *Zobozlo*. This name variant was formed so that the second constituent of a two-componential name was omitted. This process is called ellipsis from the name changing point of view. In the early, so-called unsystematic phase of the official name giving period in Hungary, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the settlement received the *hajdú* distinctive first constituent: 1841: *Hajdú Szoboszló*. The meaning of the name formed like this is 'a place named *Szoboszló* inhabited by hajdús/bearing hajdú privileges'. The official name currently used is therefore *Hajdúszoboszló*, in informal situations however many other names, so-called mention names are used. They belong to different language user groups, and thus we may find colloquial and slang names, as well.

In Hungarian toponym use, in informal communication, it may seem natural to use a toponym without the distinctive first constituent, i.e. to use the historically primary *Szoboszló* formant. However, taking a modern user's aspect (language aptitude and knowledge of history of toponyms) into account, this should rather be considered a form created by ellipsis: in other words, the name user senses a form shortened only for one name constituent.

Among mention names I firstly discuss names *Szob* and *Szobi*. The former is derived from the name *Szoboszló*. In the change of Hungarian toponyms we can find similar phenomena, namely, the shortening of names. In those cases, usually a name

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<sup>4)</sup> O. Jespersen, A szleng. In: A. Fenyvesi – T. Kis – J. S. Várnai (eds.), *Mi a szleng? Tanulmányok a szleng fogalmáról*, Debrecen 1999, p. 203.

<sup>5)</sup> Cf. C. Eble, Szleng. In: A. Fenyvesi – T. Kis – J. S. Várnai (eds.), *Mi a szleng? Tanulmányok a szleng fogalmáról*, Debrecen 1999, p. 231.

<sup>6)</sup> L.-G. Andersson – P. Trudgill, A szleng. In: A. Fenyvesi – T. Kis – J. S. Várnai (eds.), *Mi a szleng? Tanulmányok a szleng fogalmáról*, Debrecen 1999, p. 258.

element (*Kömlőd* > *Kömlő*) or a name constituent (*Péterlaka* > *Laka*) is omitted, so the new name formant is created by reduction or ellipsis. However, this is not the case, since the name is not shortened for a bound morpheme or lexeme; it is rather an example of shortening characteristic of common names, we may therefore refer to it by a general onomastic term as name shortening. The *Szobi* variant was formed by adding the suffix *-i*, i.e. by augmentation. Theoretically we may assume that the form *Szobi* was generated before the form *Szob*, so the latter form developed by reduction, by omitting the suffix *-i*, often present in settlement names. The precedence of the form *Szobi* may be justified by the presence of names *Debi* (for *Debrecen*), *Böszö* (for *Hajdúböszörmény*), which did not have a variant without the suffix *-i*. The pattern for this was offered by the rather frequent old, but etymologically still transparent toponyms created by suffix *-i*, which are used even today (*Kovácsi*, *Apáti*).

The slang variant of the name *Szoboszló* is *Sznoboszló*, whose etymology is similar to the eggcorn phenomenon found in common words. It is actually playing with words, created by infixing a sound in the body of the word: the result is the word *sznob* ‘snobbish’ acting as a sort of first constituent. According to name givers, the name was formed when the city did not support the request of the youth to build a stadium for extreme sports: they referred to the city, i.e. its government as snobs.

The same name forming mode was also used in the name *Szoposzló*. The eggcorn in this case was realised by substituting the sounds *b-p*, resulting in the verb *szop* in the name. The meaning of the word in common slang is ‘annoyed, to be in an unpleasant situation’, or ‘it sucks’. Young people using this name call the city this because “living here sucks”, since there are hardly any jobs or opportunities for having fun in the city.

The name *Szop city* is probably in relation with the name *Szoposzló*: the already mentioned *szop* slang word is added the English common word *city*, so this is an example of shortening and borrowing at the same time. The latter, i.e. the appearance of the lexeme *city* is by all means reference to toponyms like *New York City*, *Salt Lake City*, *Mexico City*. Foreign language elements, especially English words, appear frequently in slang created by young people. Within slang toponyms we may find other examples for this phenomenon: *Balmazújváros* > *Balmaz New York*.

The homophony between the Hungarian *szop* and the English *soap* when pronounced with a Hungarian accent probably motivated the creation of *Soap city*, another example of eggcorn. After ellipsis the monocomponential *Soap* was formed. The Hungarian toponym use also affected this name genesis: namely, it may occur that a geographical common name as a second constituent (e.g. *falu*, *ház*, *szállás*) is omitted from the structure of the name: *Kisújszállás* > *Kisúj*, *Balmazújváros* > *Balmaz*.

The name *Szappanváros* was formed by translating *Soap city*, also strengthened by the existence of similar Hungarian toponyms with the second constituent *város*: *Balmazújváros*, *Terézváros*. Apart from this, the city is usually referred to as a spa resort,

in Hungarian *fürdőváros* literally translated ‘bath-city’, which can also be semantically related to the word *soap*. From this, the monocomponential *Szappan* could have been formed in two ways: by omitting the second constituent *város* or by translating the form *Soap* introduced earlier.

The name *Gajdultszoboszló* also appears in the name using community: this is also an example of eggcorn. The vowels remain the same, and the distinctive first constituent *hajdú* is replaced by the lexeme *(meg)gajdult* ‘gone crazy’. The name variant formed like this has the same negative attitude presented in the other name forms (cf. *Sznoboszló*, *Szoposzló*).

4. The picture we get from the analysis of the variants of the name *Hajdúszoboszló* is not unique: we may also come across these name forming modes in other toponyms. For example, names *Tirpákia*, *Tírország*, *Tirland* frequent in military slang are used to refer to Szabolcs-Szatmár county. The basis for all three words is the slang lexeme *tirpák* ‘one coming from Szabolcs-Szatmár county’. From this, using the pattern present in official country names (cf. *Portugália*, *Anglia*), the name *Tirpákia* was formed, by shortening and adding the second constituent *ország* ‘land’ the name *Tírország* was formed, and foreign language impact may be detected in *Tirland*, in which the English *land* second constituent was attached to the first constituent. We may find quite a few examples for eggcorn, for example several names used in military slang for the Szabadszállás settlement: *Szivat szállás*, *Szívó szállás*, *Szopatszállás*, *Szutyok szállás*. The official name in this case is a compound of common names *szabad* ‘free’ and *szállás*, ‘place of residence for Kun or Jász ethnic groups’, referring to the fact that the inhabitants were exempt from paying certain services, tax. In slang the second constituent of the name was kept while the first constituent was replaced by a pejorative word, keeping the number of syllables: *szivat* and *szopat* ‘to make somebody find themselves in an unpleasant, humiliating or maybe even long-lasting disadvantageous situation’, *szívó* ‘making others find themselves in an unpleasant situation’, *szutyok* ‘dirt’. This negative attitude may be explained by the fact that in the settlement once there was a barrack, and the soldiers spending their obligatory military time used these name variants in their slang.

5. At the end of my presentation I will summarise my conclusions drawn from the above phenomena. Comparing slang toponyms to other toponyms we may note that they have a special role in the toponymic system of a language: their status is observable both in pragmatic and linguistic conditions of name giving.

All names – slang or not slang – were formed under similar pragmatic basic relations, as a result of a conscious or instinctive name giving act. The basic functions of names are also similar, since they exclusively identify a geographical object. However, while traditional name giving is usually used for naming, slang is usually used for renaming. During traditional name giving, the place becomes somebody’s possession

by being given a name, while during slang name giving the denotatum already has a name and the motivation is to give a different name from the already existing one.

Pragmatic conditions in non-slang name giving are name–object–human. In this situation the object predominantly determines the name, i.e. the name somehow mirrors the place itself. In other words, the majority of names are a motivated toponym. As opposed to this, during slang name giving the object is pushed in the background and among the three elements the human element is emphasised. Naturally the individual is in a relationship with the place, consequently, this connection also affects name giving, however, in the case of slang names it is more visible that the relation of the individual to the already existing name is what provides motivation for name giving. So while in the case of traditional toponyms there is a real connection between the denotatum and the name – the name reveals an attribute experienced by the name giver, slang toponyms mirror subjective impressions, emotions of the name giver with regard to the place. In certain cases the name may be completely disconnected from the denotatum, and for an outsider may seem as an unmotivated name. (Based on this characteristic, slang name giving may be juxtaposed with post-modern name giving.)

In connection with the above, it is also worth analysing the linguistic conditions of name giving, namely, different name giving situations are realised with different linguistic conditions. From this perspective we may again find similarities between the two name giving types: it may generally be said that the existing toponymic model affects the choice and structure of the elements used in all cases. We should also note the phenomenon among slang and non-slang toponyms that the names created show connection not only to the members of the given language's toponymic system, but may also be strongly affected by the (lexical-morphological, or even functional-semantic) structure of other languages' toponyms.

Linguistic creativity and playfulness are the strongest here within the toponymic system: the slang toponym may be a plain pun, through which any realistic connection between the name and the place ceases. I consider it important to emphasise the associative nature of slang toponyms: a slang toponym is frequently formed as a chain of associations, which further loosens the visible connection between the name and the object. As a consequence, the name seems unmotivated when approached from the aspect of reality, but the majority of slang names is actually linguistically motivated.

Phenomena presented here shed light on the fact that slang name giving is a cognitively complex process. The large scale of complexity in generating and functioning of these toponyms is largely supported by their relationship to the stock of toponyms in the mother tongue and in the foreign language, as well as to the stock of common words in the mother tongue and in the foreign language, and to the subjective mental mapping of the place.

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