

THE VOCABULARY OF FRENCH TOPONYMY: PECULIARITIES OF FORMATION, SEMANTICS AND FUNCTIONING

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The toponymic names that define the individual characteristics of the environment form an integral part in the functioning of the language system. Toponyms play an important role in people's lifestyle as people are authors and native speakers at the same time. Such a category of words primarily reflects needs of objective and subjective identification. The science interest towards the common pattern of onymic classes is related to the names of geographic items.

Toponyms are the unique units to which formation lots of factors were added, such as linguistic, historical, geographical, and ethnic. They contain the essential information about the land development, landscape, people's culture and traditions.

The analysis of linguistic and lexicographic sources forms the basis to consider how a great interest in toponyms has been revived among scientists. Jubenville's approach is based on the comparative analysis of the old linguistic data and modern investigation, A. Dauzat, S. Rostaing and E. Negre focus their attention on the evolution or decline of some particular toponymic models, their structural peculiarities and versions; A. Lognon in his works depicts the idea of toponymic identification in old texts and its interrelation with geographic data.

The particular attention of linguists is drawn to the etymology of toponyms (E. Negre, A. Dauzat, A. Lognon, S. Rostaing, J. Coste) structural-word-formational (A. Dauzat, S. Rostaing, A. Lognon, A. Jubenville, V. Nikonov, V. Gorpynych, L. Kovshova, O. Syperanska, V. Bielienskaya, A. Smith, N. Shteinberg, R. Itenberg, O. Vensan, P. Lebel, P. Glez) and lexico-semantic characteristics of their formation (E. Vial, A. Lognon, J. Coste, O. Cherniahivska, O. Superanska, I. Murzaiev).

Recent linguistic investigations deal with the problems of onomastic terminology, methods and ways in its complex investigation (M.-T. Morle, M. Mulion, V. Gorpynych), the idea of the formation of derivatives of proper names (antroponyms and toponyms) (L. Kovshova), problems of toponymic onomastics, defining the concept of appropriative and appellative lexical units and their classification (O. Skliarenko).

The actuality of our investigation is determined by the necessity of making new approaches in the field of lexico-semantic characteristics of toponyms,

morphological structure and peculiarities of toponym functioning. We focus our attention on the variety of etymological bases that are the motivators of toponymic names.

The objective of our investigation is to draw etymological and lexico-semantic references on the formational basis of toponyms, define main formational types of the toponyms. In order to achieve the objective we have to solve the following tasks:

- depict the history of linguistic approaches of the French toponyms and outline the concept “toponym”;
- classify French toponyms according to their etymological characteristics;
- distinguish the toponyms and define their main thematic groups;
- analyze the peculiarities of formation of toponyms deriving from onyms.

The object of our investigation are the toponyms of the French language.

The subject of our investigation is the etymological basis of toponyms, structural characteristics and word-formational types of toponyms deriving from appellatives and onyms.

The material of our investigation includes 2500 French toponyms that are chosen through a continuous sampling process from the etymological dictionaries of proper names (Dauzat Albert et Charles Rostaing “Dictionnaire étymologique des noms de lieux en France”, 1989; Jean Coste “Dictionnaire des noms propres: Toponymes et patronymes de France”, 2006; Pierre-Henri Billy “Dictionnaire des noms de lieux de la France”, 2011; Marie-Thérèse Morlet “Dictionnaire étymologique des nom de famille”, 1997; and works of French linguists such as A. Lognon “Les noms de lieu de la France: leur origine, leur signification” (1973), A. Dauzat “Les noms de lieux: origine et évolution” (1926), Éric Vial “Les Noms de villes et de villages” (1983).

The scientific novelty of research is that it is one of the first complex researches devoted to the issue of French toponyms in Ukrainian Romance philology. Unexplored toponymic material is used to define the pre-toponymic meaning of the etymological base, as well as the structural and lexico-semantic changes of toponyms.

The history of nomination of geographical objects is as long as the process of settlement. Names were transmitted from one generation to another in oral form, and later were fixed in a written leaflet with the data of the places. Being a witness of the social life of that period, geographical names contained valuable information for linguistic and historical purposes.

The toponymy of each nation is the product of its history and culture in the broad meaning. Since old times, people needed to define some natural objects in order to orientate in different places; in other words people make toponyms by

themselves. This big group of words is an important part in the onomastic world, and, as a result, scientists pay a great deal of attention to it.

According to A. Dauzat's statement, the stability of toponymy is related to the feudal period of the 10th-13th century, P. Lebel dates the middle aged formations to 987 – 1500 years, P. Fabre considers the period of the 14th century. As the most productive, J. Taverde proves that the most important period in toponymy development is the beginning of the second millennium.

Toponymic studies became popular among scientists in the 2nd half of the 19th century: toponymic as an adjective (toponymique) – 1853, toponymy as a noun (toponymie) – 1869, toponym (toponyme) – 1876.

French linguists defined four chronological periods of toponymy development:

1) from the end of 17th century till 1860 – the pre-scientific period (préscientifique);

2) from 1864 till 1920 – the period of the formation of toponymy as a science;

3) the publications of Dauzat's work "Name of places" (Noms de lieux) in 1926, where two branches of studies were combined: toponymy and linguistics and became the beginning of the heuristic changes that continues till 1960.

4) the publication of work "Etymological dictionary" (Dictionnaire étymologique) of A. Dauzat, S. Rostaing in 1963. Last period started in 60s of XX century and till now.

We distinguish the following main etymological sources:

1) Greek: *Nice* (*Nikaia* = victorieuse – victorious), *Marseille* (Massalia), *Antibes* (*Antipolis* = la ville d'en face – town that is opposite, face à Nice);

2) Celtic: in the names of mountains: *Ardennes* (-élevé), rivers *Isère* (isarsacré), cities: *Bourges* (Bituriges), *Paris* (Parisii). Celtic original geographical names mostly refer to the name of cities and establishments that were named after the tribes that settled (*Paris*, *Reims*, *Beauvais*) and after the names of the owners of those places (*Savignac*, *Aurillac*). According to the factual material, Celtic elements that were mostly used in the name of cities have almost lost now their original forms (Dauzat 1963);

3) Latin (or Gallo-romance) in different toponyms remains within Gaulish suffixes that mean "denotation". Latin names came to French because of the Rome conquerors, first Christians and the holies;

4) Germanic in the 5th-8th centuries known for the influence of German conquerors (mostly Franks) on the territory of France. Most Germanic common names are connected with relief, flora and settlement and are mostly used in the north of France;

5) Norman: Norman common names reveal the peculiarities of nature or even primitive accommodation, are included in the name of towns, villages, farmsteads and microtoponyms;

6) Breton: the terms are used for marking agglomerations, and are accompanied by a name of a saint;

7) Basque: toponyms consist of two elements: a common name basis that denotes to the flora or is topographic term, and an attribute.

According to the semantic character of the generating words we can classify the following motivated-semantic groups: toponyms that come from geographic terms (derivatives from relief, hydrographic, phito- and zoographic names); toponyms that are formed on the common name basis in order to mark cultural-historical reality (derivatives from the name of farming, livestock farming, trades, buildings and constructions, religious terms, etc.)

The formation of the theoretical basis of our scientific research is based on the usage of the common methodological principle of onomastics of the ambivalence of the concept and the systematic principle that provide the recovering of the most important theoretical data based on the particular problem or facts. The project of methodological principle of ambivalence gives a chance to consider that each proper name has its homonymic and common name properties that form the principal ability to be transformed into the proper name.

Owing to the etymological method, toponyms are classified according to the period of the language development and economic-cultural characteristics.

The analysis of the works of different time periods shows that, being under the influence of different facts (the amount and completeness of intralingual criteria (diachrony, stratigraphy and morphology), the development or degradation of some particular toponymic models, varieties of forms, etc. can be traced.

In lexical-semantic relations, toponyms can be investigated according to their pre-onomastic meaning, or the post-onomastic meaning that they have got during the process of their functioning. The initiating of the lexical-semantic meaning of the toponyms is the phased period that is in the graduated analysis of one meaning by another. Such analysis can be performed under the method of "lexico-semantic pyramid".

Owing to the extra-linguistic categories that influence the appearance, the toponymic names were defined by the use of social-antropological methodological principle. The inductive method provided us with a chance to store and systematize the linguistic material. As a result, the basis of toponyms (5977 items) was formed, and, based on the deductive method, the scheme of the semantic characteristics was built.

The structural analysis detailed the mechanism of the derivational potential of toponymic lexis. The quantitative analysis was used for defining the percentage of the correlation: the most common structural models of toponyms were distinguished, and the percentage correlation between names was defined.

In the field of toponymy in France, appellatives take an important place. Names of flora, aerographical and hydrographical terms are included. As a result, the investigated toponyms can be divided into two groups:

- 1) derivatives from the geographical terms;
- 2) formed from the appellatives in order to mark the historical-cultural reality.

The huge amount of geographical terminology leads to the fact that appellatives in toponymy are usually used as a toponym in different phonetic versions: *vernos*, aulne (alder) – *Vern*, *Lavernoy*, *Vernois*, *Vernet*, *Le Vernet* (Vial 1983).

We distinguish the following main subsystems of toponyms, derived from the geographical notions:

- toponyms that mark the peculiarities of flora (*Chesnay*, *Quesnoy*);
- toponyms for marking relief (*Peyre*, *La Piarre*);
- hydronimic toponyms (*Fontains*, *Fontan*);
- toponyms for marking fauna (*Loubière*).

The point is that toponyms that are derived from the names of flora always show that the quantity of such items is very high in a particular place. Sometimes, rare, unique things cause the appearance of the particular name.

The word *bois* is widely represented in the toponymy of France: *Bois*, *Les Bois*, part of them in compound names such as *Bois-Arnault* (38 names) (Dauzat 1963: 91). Dialectal variants of the word *bois* are related to the toponymic realization. For example, the dialectal word *bosc* (from lat. *Boscus*) is the basis for the list of toponyms: *Le Bosc*, *Bosc* and compound, composite and derivative names (27 names) and 25 deminative names – *Bosquet*, *Le Bosquet*, *Les Bosquets* (Dauzat 1963: 100).

Old forms are important for forming toponyms, e.g, Celtic *dervos* (chêne – oak): *Drevant* < *Derventum*. Lots of names are formed from the Gallic notion *cassanos* > *chaisne* > *chesne* > *chêne* (oak) in the combination with different suffixes: *Cassagne*, *Chassagne*, *Chesnay*, *Quesnoy*, *Le Chesne*, *Chânes* (Vial 1983).

The alternation of some names and the phonetic changes that caused etymological misunderstandings allow us to consider that some formations date back to the beginning of the 5th century, for example *nucetum* (endroit planté de noyers – place full of nuts), *Noisiel*, *Noisy*. The traditional etymology can be explained with the help of Latin equivalent *nucetum* < lat. *nux* / *nucis*, *noix*.

The names of herbals consist mostly of Latin roots. Common names are used for marking wild plants that are represented by a list of proper names: fougère – fern (*Feucherolles*, *Feuguerolles*).

We have fixed 216 toponyms that denote the peculiarities of flora where the basis of toponymy is formed from the Latin original names, although there are some solitary names which have been borrowed from Celtic (*Cassagne*, *Chassagne*). In the investigated category of names, the most widely used are the names with the suffixes *-oy*, *-ois*, *-ais*, *-ière* (Dauzat 1963).

According to the landscape model of the territory, we consider the names of rising landscape and the names of plain and negative landscape (lowlands, cutting, valley and cavity).

Oronymic synecdoche – is a means for the usage of landscaping and relief notions for forming oronymic toponyms, that are some of the oldest formations (*Alp* (mont.) (*Alpis* 1379), *Alp-Chauvin* (*Aplum Chauvin* 1334) (Dauzat 1971: 105).

The examples of oronymic metonymy are the names of settlements that were formed because of the onymisation of appellative names of the nearest mountains (*Mons*, (*Le*) *Mont*, *Monte* < *-mont* < лат. *mons*).

Toponyms that are used for marking lowlands, cutting, valleys and cavities are usually complex names and with suffixation derivation. Among the proper names of this type the compound one-word names with complete components that formed by the scheme are privileged: *object+object*, *object+attribute*, and vice versa *verb+object*. There are hundreds of simple and compound one-word toponyms with the component *mons*.

The basic geographical terms, the semantics of which shows the peculiarity of the grounds, are not commonly used (almost 30 toponyms). Having analysed the derivative forms according to the quality, type, peculiarities of ground, the level of fertility (prelat. *artica*, *friche* (virgin soil) > *Artige(s)*, *Artigues*, germ. *horwi* / *horwa* (= marécage, marsh) > *Le Horps*, *Les Horbes*) (Dauzat 1926: 30).

The most important element is a potamonic synecdoche – proper geographic names that are formed as a result of onymisation the appellative marks in particularly the rivers (*Rhin* gall. *renos*, *rhenus* – water that is flowing down; the name of the river *Baigne* is formed as a verbal substantive of the verb *baigner* – water, soak).

The significant principle of appropriative nomination is the toponymic metonymy (the name of settlement was derived from hydro-appellative): *Fons* (Ardèche, Gard, Lot), *Lafond*, *Lafont* (agglutination of the article) < lat. *fons*, *fontaine* – *fontain*) (Dauzat 1963). The hydrographic term *fontana* is one of the most productive in French toponymy – we have counted 130 names, among which there are 30 simple and 100 compound words).

The group of onyms that are connected with the *name of animals* has a clear semantics that is related to the wideness of the particular species of animals in different regions. It is used in Gallic settlements for marking wild animals (gall. *artos*, ours (bear) > *Artaix*, *Arthaz*; gall. *beber*, castor (beaver) > *Bièvres*, *Beuvry*. As a result of onymisation, notions of fauna combine with the verb *chante* or *cante* with ironical meaning (*Canteloup* and *Chantelouve* < fr. *chante* (picard. *cante*) + lat. *lupus*).

Toponyms with *qualitative characteristics of the object* are mostly compound and composite constructions (lat. *grandis*, grand in the construction “*grand mont*” (the big hill) > *Gramont*, *Grand-sur-Creuse*.

Toponyms with metaphoric origin are seldom represented (*Bécherel / Becquerel, Miraumont, Mireval*). We can connect the origin of almost 35% of toponymic names derived from geographic names with appellative vocabulary. Most onyms in their basis have Gallic, Latin, rarely German origin.

Within the group of toponyms, motivated with appellatives for marking *historical-cultural reality* we can define some subgroups:

- toponyms that are related to farming and livestock farming;
- toponyms that are derived from the names of trade;
- toponyms that are related to the settlement and building;
- toponyms that are derived from religious terms.

Toponyms that are connected with the *agrarian vocabulary* date back to the 10th-13th centuries. The folk and literal forms of toponyms (etymological doublets) and their structural forms are represented in this subgroup – *Campcella / Chancelade* (> *cancellata*, close d'un treillage (closed railing fence) (Vial 1983: 158).

A numerous group is the group of names with fauna basis which differ by suffixes depending on the region (*chevr + -olière, -otaine, -oux* etc.).

The information about *the trade development* in the particular periods, especially about the extraction of natural resources, has been fixed in terms of naming: *Ferrals* (*ferrum* > *fer*), *Moulins, Fours* (*fornus* > *four*) (Vial 1983).

The development of farriery motivated the formation of toponym doublets: *Fabrègues, Fervaques / Fargues, Forges* (Gorpinich 2008: 155). Such formations are mostly represented in the south and northern-western part of the country. The total number of such toponyms is 75 units.

In the feudal period, the constructing of strong castles and building the important agglomerations started being popularized (the 11th century) *The appellative marking of fortification* firstly was denoted to faronyms and later – to oikonoms (gall. *bona* (fortress) > *Boulogne*; *duron* > *durum* (= forteresse) – proper name *Nanterre* (*Nemetodurum* < *nemeto* (sanctuaire) + *durum*); germ. *werki* (francique) (= fortification, fortification): *La Guerche, Garches* (50 microtoponyms in the west of the country).

It is defined that an important role in formation of toponyms is played by the name of founders (or owners) of the constructions and attributes that expresses qualitative characteristics. The term *château* (castle) (< *castellum* < *castrum*) in different periods was used in the toponymic formulations since Rome Empire. Some compound and composite names with the privilege of folk forms are *Chatel-St-Germain, Château-du-Loir, Châtelneuf, Châteauneuf* (Dauzat 1963: 180).

We can also see oikonymy-synechdoche, e.g. *Cité* (cité – town, city), *Hameau* (small village), *Bourg* (town, settlement), *Strasbourg* (germ. *straza*, route + *burg*), diminutives *Le Bourget, Le Bourguet*.

Among the derivative lexemes it is necessary to mention the terms *-villa* and *-court*. Toponyms with the component *-villa* were formed in the 7th century, and

later they were replaced with the form *-court*, but only in 10th -11th centuries the term *-villa* was especially popularized (*Acqueville, Huberville*).

The notion *-court* can be realized in the composite names according to the scheme: *denominative + object*, meaning *-court + antroponym* (*Cortébert, Courtelary, Courfavon*) (Dauzat 1926). According to E. Vial, in the period of Germanic intervention, both elements *cortis* and *villa* were used according to the same scheme: “*domaine*” (Vial 1983).

Religious lexical components in French toponymy appeared too early as some of the settlements of that time were named after the gods which were worshipped by Gauls. Christianity had a great impact on the toponymy in France since the 4th-13th centuries. Cult sculptures played an important role in the Middle Ages. The lexeme *oratoire* < lat. *oratorium* – lieu de prière (the place for praying) gave the impulse to the formation of the considerable amount of toponyms.

The state of modern French onomastics and factors that influence on French antroponymy system has been analyzed for defining the peculiarities of the formation of onymic toponyms.

Antroponymic toponyms are motivated by the name of the landlords, eponyms (the name of divinity), the names of saints (hagiotoponymes), the names of tribes and names of the nations.

Roman antroponymy is represented by *the names of well-known landlords and monarchs*. Such kinds of names were mostly represented by the compound Gaelic Latin names, most of which later disappeared. Lots of names were formed in two ways:

– being *derived from Latin personal names*, which were mostly used by the Gauls (toponym *Allauch* derived from the name *Alaudius* (< *alauda, alouette*) (Dauzat 1926: 11);

– being *derived from Gaelic name+Latin suffix*. The suffix that is the most widely used is *-acum* or *-iacum* that is presented in 5% of all French toponyms with different phonetic equivalents depending on the region (*Andeliacum* > *Les Andelys*) (Dauzat 1926: 17). The domination of Latin forms results in the declination of Gaelic antroponyms: suffix *-acum* > *-ac* (in the south) > *-at, -as* – in the north and in other regions, *-ay, -é* (in the west) etc. Regions that were later germanized changed the ending *-acum* > *-ac*, e.g.: *Dornac* < from gaelic name *Luturnos* (Dauzat 1963: 251).

Heathen was reflected in eponyms that were formed in the 1st-4th centuries. The most common was the name of the God Mercury. (lat. *Mercurius*), known as *Mercōriu(m), Mercōre* > *Mercoeur, Mercus, Mercuer* (Dauzat 1963: 434).

The cult of *the saints* dates back to the Caroline period (8th – 10th centuries – 751-987). The first marking started with the element *dominus* > *domnus* > *dom, don, dam*. It is related to germanized regions, particularly in the east. Such elements as *dom, don, dam* were connected with such names as Pierre, Martin or

Marie: *Dampierre, Dommartin, Dannemarie*. In the feudal period that system of marks was widely spread.

In the 11th-13th centuries, in the east of France, toponyms with the element *Saint* were devoted to places according to the name of the saint defender of the church. At first the component *saint* symbolized church, later – its land and parish. Fixed phonetic omonyms (omophones) are *Saint-Mars / Cinq-Mars* (Dauzat 1963: 613).

An important role in toponymy is played by *substitution* – replacement of one name by another one (*Saint-Germain* (earlier *Lida, Ledia* in Latin) – 1124; *Saint-Cloud* (earlier *Nogent*) – 1222).

The most efficient characteristics of toponyms with the component *saint* are:
– different geographic placements where we can find the names of the saints on the whole territory of France (*Saint-Martin, Saint-Jean, Saint-Pierre, Saint-Germain*);

– the variety of dialectal forms with the usage of the particular name of the Saint shows the progress of cult of Saints in the feudal period (*Saint-Sornin, Saint-Sorlin, Saint-Sernin*).

The reflexion of the names of tribes and the nations in toponymy is of great interest for linguists. The transformation of Gaelic ethnonyms known as civitates into modern cities such as *Paris, Metz, Nantes, Rodez*, e.g. *civitas Parisiorum* > *civitas de Parisiis* was eventuated. The meaning of the word *civitas* was transformed by metonymy from the appellative cité – city, la “cité des Parisiens” > la “ville de Paris”.

Conclusions

Ukrainian approaches in the field of French word-formation (V. Horpynych) and in the comparative investigations of onomastic sphere of lexis (O. Skliarenko) were of great importance.

The beginning of the French toponymy in the second part of the 19th century was proved with the appearance of new linguistic terms: “toponymic” (toponymique) (1853), “toponymy” (toponymie) (1869) and “toponym” (toponyme) – nom de lieu (name of place) (1876). French toponyms denote a huge group of proper names that are known for their wide range of geographic objects and high quantity of regional linguistic peculiarities.

The formation and development of toponymic names is connected with social and linguistic factors: among which – the economic settling of the place, the development of trade, activity and influence of ethnic groups, political-military and religious facts; on the other hand – the usage in the process of formation the toponyms besides the nouns and adjectives, the process of substantiating and adjectivising including different ways of word-formation.

Toponyms were formed and extended according to the historical periods of language development. The pre-onomastic meaning of toponyms are clearly visible because of the definition of the inner form from the prospective of motivation of the semantic of toponym basis.

Toponymic vocabulary was formed by means of transposition of appellative lexis into toponymic, and changes in the appropriative components in the formation of morphemes in order to make subclasses of toponyms – topobases and topoformations that make possible to represent the appearance of semantic characteristics for marking the geographic names that help to formulate the thematic subgroups of toponyms.

There are differences between appellatives and onymic toponyms because of their formulation, structure, semantics and functioning. Appellative toponyms can be divided into the derivatives from geographic notions and which are derived from appellatives with cultural-historical facts. Onymic names appeared according to the settlement and the most numerous are those derived from the names of the first landlords and the ethnonyms, and they mostly function as components of compound toponymic names with spontaneous substitution: there is replacement of old names into the names of the saints that are widely spread on the whole territory of France.

Collected and systemized material can be used in future researches of French toponymy, in lexicographical practice, ethnography and history investigation of the French nation and by the representatives of other fields of science (historians, geographers and regional ethnographers). The results of the investigation will be useful for solving some etymological problems.

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ABSTRACT

The article presents the peculiarities of the etymology, semantics and functionality of French toponyms. The history of linguistic research on French toponyms has been clarified. French toponyms have been classified according to etymological marks. The toponyms have been characterized on the basis of lexical-graphical references, most of which consist of appellative vocabulary, and their main lexical-thematic groups have been separated according to lexical and semantic criteria.

Key words: French toponyms, etymology, semantics

REZUMAT

Articolul prezintă particularitățile etimologice, semantice și funcționale ale toponimelor franceze. Istoria cercetărilor lingvistice privind toponimele franceze a fost clarificată. Toponimele franceze au fost clasificate în funcție de mărci etimologice. Toponimele au fost caracterizate pe baza referințelor lexicografice, majoritatea acestora fiind constituite din cuvinte apelative, iar principalele grupuri lexico-tematice au fost diferențiate în funcție de criterii lexicale și semantice.

Cuvinte-cheie: toponime franceze, etimologie, semantică