

## **Proposal of interdisciplinary definition of proper name Proposta de definição interdisciplinar de nome próprio**

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**Abstract:** This article makes a proposal of interdisciplinary definition of the concept of proper name based on Cognitive Onomastics (SJÖBLOM, 2010), Theory of Relevance (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001 [1995], (SEIDE & SCHULTZ, 2014), Neurolinguistics (VAN LANGENDONCK, 2007) and the onomastic knowledge of the ideal speaker (SEIDE, 2021). In the first section of this article, the object of study of Onomastics and the characteristics of the onomastic subarea in which the research is included are described. In the second, considerations about proper name made by Sperber and Wilson (2001 [1995]) are integrated to the definition of proper names as a conceptual address. In the third section, the neurolinguistic discoveries and the description of the onomastic knowledge of the ideal speaker are presented and integrated and the proper name redefinition is described. In the fourth and final section of the article, some implications of this redefinition for onomastics studies are described.

**Keywords:** Proper name, Cognitive Onomastics, Relevance Theory, Neurolinguistics, Onomastic Knowledge of Ideal Speaker.

**Resumo:** Este artigo apresenta uma proposta de definição interdisciplinar do conceito de nome próprio elaborada com base na Onomástica Cognitiva (SJÖBLOM, 2010), na Teoria da Relevância (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001 [1995], SEIDE & SCHULTZ, 2014), na Neurolinguística (VAN LANGENDONCK, 2007), e no conhecimento onomástico do falante ideal (SEIDE, 2021). Na primeira seção deste artigo, descrevem-se o objeto de estudo da Onomástica e as características da subárea da Onomástica em que se insere a pesquisa. Na segunda, são retomadas considerações a respeito dos nomes próprios feitas para sua definição como endereço conceitual. Na terceira seção, apresentam-se as descobertas neurolinguísticas e a descrição do conhecimento onomástico do falante ideal, as quais são integradas resultando na redefinição de nome próprio descrita ao final da terceira seção. Na quarta e última seção do artigo, são descritas algumas implicações dessa redefinição para os estudos onomásticos.

**Palavras-chave:** Nome próprio, Onomástica Cognitiva, Teoria da Relevância, Neurolinguística, Conhecimento Onomástico do Falante Ideal.

### **Introduction**

In June 2021, a thematic issue on Onomastics was published in the journal *Domínios da Lingu@gem*. In the presentation of the issue, the editors commented that they had the desideratum of bringing together interdisciplinary research in the area, but they were unable to turn their wish

into reality, considering that only a few articles among those received and approved for publication were really interdisciplinary. The scarcity of works of this nature is explained by them as follows:

Effectively, interdisciplinarity is a challenge pursued, but not always achieved. As we will postulate later, this occurs for several reasons. Whether due to real misunderstanding of what interdisciplinarity is – the ambiguity between this concept and related concepts such as pluri or transdisciplinarity – or due to obstacles related to the current situation of research in Brazil, interdisciplinarity is much more a demand than a factuality. (CARVALINHOS and SANTOS, 2020 p.265)

Notwithstanding the correctness and accuracy of the diagnosis of the state of the art of onomastic studies in Brazil carried out by Carvalinhos and Santos, the cause for the absence of interdisciplinary studies may be related to the lack of an interdisciplinary definition of the object of study in this area of knowledge: the proper name. Based on this assumption, this article presents an interdisciplinary redefinition of proper names that can support studies that seek to reconnect linguistic, cultural, social and historical knowledge about what they are, how they are used and the reasons why proper names are chosen and used. Another contribution of the redefinition proposed herein, as explained in the last section of the article, is its epistemological application, as when a more complex and comprehensive notion of proper name is considered, it is possible to identify exactly what, concerning the proper name, is the focus of attention of onomastic researchers in their researches.

Also in this introduction, it is necessary to publicly express my gratitude to the reviewers of my article, whose attentive and careful reading was essential for the improvement of the text. Failures and inaccuracies that may exist are my responsibility. I also need to express the direct or indirect contribution of all my advisees and students of Onomastics whose curiosity and research problems inspire me to advance in this field.

## **1. Onomastics and Cognitive Onomastics**

Onomastics is an area of study that is characterized by its object of study: proper names. Although the interest in proper names is old, the creation of an area dedicated to them is more recent and followed the development of philological studies and the advent of Comparative Linguistics in the beginning of the 19th century (AMARAL & SEIDE 2020: 35). Throughout the 20th century, the area gained strength in various parts of the world, including Brazil. In Brazil, while research on the proper names of places (toponyms) were boosted by the initiatives of Prof. dr. Maria Vicentina de Paula Amaral Dick from the University of São Paulo, the first studies concerning the proper names of people (anthroponyms) were developed by prof. Dr Farânio Mansur Guérios from the Federal University of Paraná (SEIDE & SAPARAS 2020). Currently, the area is characterized by its breadth and diversity since it brings together researchers from various areas of knowledge and different methodologies and theoretical foundations.

Given this constitutive heterogeneity, the proper name would function as a common denominator in onomastic studies. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the concept of proper name has not changed over the last and beginning of this century in normative and descriptive grammars of the Portuguese language. Six prescriptive grammars published throughout the 20th century (ALMEIDA, 1961, CEGALA, 1964, CUNHA & CINTRA, 1985, 2008, FARACO, 1990; PEREIRA JUNIOR 1924 and REUNIÃO DE PROFESSORES, 1937) and three descriptive grammars published in the first decades of this century were consulted. (BECHARA, 2015, CASTILHO 2010, NEVES, 2000). In all of them, the same definition of proper name was used, namely: the proper name as a lexical item characterized by its univocity, that is, by the fact that this noun is used to refer to a being seen or characterized as the only one (SEIDE, accepted for

publication). This finding confirms what was pointed out by Amaral and Seide (2020: 57) and meets the definition postulated by them for the proper name:

They enable the direct identification of a single referent in a universe of knowledge shared by sender and receiver. They have the ability to refer, regardless of the presence of a determinant. They do not have semantic features of class identifiers. They are written with an initial capital letter (AMARAL & SEIDE: 58)

Also, according to Amaral and Seide, the definition of proper name and the distinction between proper noun and common noun have always been present in grammars from the Greeks until today, and definitions and examples are convergent in Portuguese language grammars (descriptive or normative). This consensus about what characterizes the proper name as to its most prototypical use does not exist with regard to its semantic characteristics. There are theories that postulate that there is no meaning in proper nouns, such as in Mill (1984) and those that defend the antipodean thesis: that proper nouns are more significant than common names, as defended by Bréal (1992 [1904]). Linked to this issue is another: the distinction between the universal and the particular.

If there is a consensus between grammarians and onomastic researchers regarding the particular nature of proper names, which implies that common names are universal in nature, the same is not true of philosophers. The philosophical discussion about these concepts helps to understand how proper names are used and why they are necessary and essential to all languages, including those that were not created spontaneously, such as Esperanto, for example. One of the questions posed by philosophers was precisely about the possibility of conceiving an ideal language, in which there would be no single defined term. According to Tunhas (2001), in the 1960s, Quine had proposed that this would be possible by replacing it with paraphrases. This

proposal was rejected by Strawson, whose counterargument is described as follow by the Portuguese philosopher:

Strawson shows (...) that Quine oscillates between two theses, a strong thesis and a weak thesis: the strong thesis asserts that the terms are superfluous, that is, non-existent, the weak thesis asserts that they can be dispensed by paraphrase. Only the strong thesis conceives the effective possibility of a language without singular terms, the weak thesis is limited to proposing a language in which singular terms exist, but that they can be systematically paraphrased so as to be artificially replaced by sentences that do not contain them. And certainly the strong thesis is not derivable from the weak one, the understanding of the paraphrase requires the assumption of the singular terms that are paraphrased (TUNHAS, 2001:336).

For the purposes of this article, the idea that a proper name can be replaced by a paraphrase, which can be linguistically expressed in sentences, is of interest, considering that it was from this possibility that Strawson concluded that the meaning of proper names is equivalent to the set of defined descriptions that can be associated or attributed to it (AMARAL & SEIDE, 2020: 143). On this assumption of the so-called Descriptivist Theory of proper names, Costa (2009:186) clarifies that “the fluctuations in meaning cannot be so great as to impede communication. If two people associate totally different descriptions of a proper name, the unity of meaning is lost”.

Also according to the same philosopher, these fluctuations in meaning result from the fact that each person assigns to the referent of a given proper name, different sets of defined descriptions, so it is necessary that there is at least one description in common to the interlocutors for it to be guaranteed shared understanding of who or what is being talked about. Furthermore, it should be clarified that, depending on the communicative context, not all descriptions attributed to the referent will be activated, but only those that are pertinent, given the circumstances of the dialogue. It is important to emphasize that this pragmatic univocity, that is, the fact that a proper name is used in a communicative situation to refer to a singular entity, is currently explained from a cognitive point of view:

[...] the complete sense of a proper name is constituted by a set of cognitive values (senses) usually expressible through descriptions; each speaker usually has access to a subset of this set of cognitive values; but this access needs to have at least enough in common so that speakers can know they are talking about the same thing. It is necessary that the two sets of descriptions at least intersect (COSTA, 2010:187)

This cognitive aspect, in addition to having influenced philosophical studies, also brought about changes in Linguistics with the emergence of Cognitive Linguistics, defined as follow:

The cognitive study of language is (...) a tendency to see language as a part of general human cognition. The cognitive approach takes into consideration culture and interaction as well: language is seen not only as a mental, but also as a cultural phenomenon. There is no sharp boundary between language system and language use, and language is a dynamic and always changing system. The purpose of the research method is to produce language related explanation that apply to meaning and motives typical to the user. (SJÖBLOM, 2010: 66-67)

Inspired by Cognitive Linguistics, onomastic studies based on this theory emerged, mainly on the initiative of Finnish researchers, giving rise to a new subarea of onomastic studies, Cognitive Onomastics that also assumes that proper names are significant, but considers that referring to a being conceived as singular, individual and singular is not the only function of proper names given that:

The argument behind the idea that names have no meaning is that the only function of a proper noun is individualization. In recent times this argument has been questioned, with regards to unofficial city names, for example, it has been found that people use names for other purposes, than just individualizing. If a place already has a proper name, individualization cannot even be the primary function, but a name is used to express images relating to the place (...) The same phenomenon applies, for example, to unofficial personal names. The prerequisite for intentionally ridiculing someone by using an abusive name is above all that this name contains certain meanings that can be interpreted in a certain way. (SJÖBLOM, 2010:65)

As can be seen, the definition of the functions to which proper names can be given is broader than that defended by the grammarians cited in this article and by Amaral and Seide (2020) as they cover connotations and uses that go beyond the pragmatic function of prototypical proper names and point to the need to propose an interdisciplinary redefinition of the proper name. In addition, the different types of proper names mentioned by the Finnish researcher exemplify the

diversity of this class of words whose list even varies from author to author and can also be more or less comprehensive from one language to another (AMARAL & SEIDE, 2020, p. 59 – 63). From a theoretical point of view, the proposal to redefine the proper name is based on the cognitive aspect of onomastic studies presented here, on the Theory of Relevance, on neuro-linguistic findings and on the onomastic knowledge of the ideal speaker. The following section deals with the first theory mentioned.

## **2. The proper name as a conceptual address**

As it is not possible to deal with proper nouns without mentioning, even for the sake of contrast, common nouns and other items that make up the lexicon of a natural language, it is necessary to bring the statements of the creators of the Theory of Relevance (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001 [1995]) on the meaning of words to this section. First, Sperber and Wilson caution that they take an eclectic view in lexical semantics. (SPEBER & WILSON, 2001 [1995]). Considering the publication date of the first edition of the aforementioned work and the way in which Linguistics disciplines were organized in the English-speaking world, it is understood that the authors did not agree with all approaches made to Lexical Semantics then, or did they partially disagree with them, or they could have adopted some principles of one approach and others of another.

Considering Cruse's (2000: 96-102) description of the approaches within what was covered under the rubric of “lexical semantics”, the assertion that the adopted view is eclectic is justified because Sperber and Wilson defend that the meaning of a word corresponds to one or more concepts, which suggests that they share a unit-level approach and conceptual type approach. In other words, they assume that, for each lexical item, there is one or more associated concepts and

that there is no tight separation between the semantic level on the one hand and the extralinguistic level on the other. In fact, this approach does not start from a dichotomy between a semantic level and an encyclopedic level and instead of there being a discontinuity between grammar and lexical/encyclopedic meaning there, is a continuum, a point of view defended by most cognitive linguists (CRUSE, 2000: 97).

The convergence found in the fact that theories define meaning at the lexical level in a similar way, as both adopt a conceptual approach, confirms the contribution of Cognitive Linguistics to the Relevance Theory. "Conceptual approaches (at least as the term is used here) are single-level approaches and identify the meaning of a word (or at least a major part of them) with the concept it gives access to in the cognitive system" (CRUSE, 2000:100-101) and, according to the Relevance Theory perspective, it is assumed "(...) that the <<meaning>> of a word is provided by the concept associated with it (or by the concepts are associated with it in case it is an ambiguous word)" (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001 [1995]:149). Mentions to proper names are made by the creators of the Theory of Relevance when they state:

Most theories of lexical semantics assume that all words, with the possible exception of proper names, have meanings of the same format. They thus differ according to the model of this universal format. We recognize the possibility that different words can have meanings in different formats. (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001 [1995]:149)

Paragraphs ahead they return to the classical theory that proper names are meaningless and inform how the RT would deal with words: "If so, if there are words that have a reference, but that do not have any logical conditions attached to them (sic), again our theory can easily handle them by associating them with concepts that have an empty logic entries". (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001 [1995]:150).

With this possibility, the authors consider the causal theory of reference and the prototype theory and claim that these theories are not able to fully describe the semantic and logical



components of meaning, nor how these components are related to each other, but the researchers do not a clear stance on the issue:

Our theory allows for empty logic entries, logic entries that amount to a proper definition of the concept, and logic entries that fall anywhere between these two ends: that is, they provide some logical specification of the concept without fully defining it. (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001 [1995]: 152).

The entire explanation that follows turns to the analysis of common nouns, with no other explicit consideration of proper names, from which one concludes that, although there are some mentions of proper names, they are not emphasized in the initial proposal of the RT, gap that the initial trial proposed by Seide in 2014 tried to remedy.

On that occasion, the following dialogue created and analyzed by Sperber and Wilson was resumed:

Maria: What I'd like to eat tonight was an "ossobuco" (beef shanks).  
Pedro: I had a grueling day. I am tired.  
Maria: If you're tired, I'll cook dinner (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001: 225)

Maria's response indicates that she concluded that Pedro was in no condition to prepare an "ossobuco" for dinner. But how did she reach this conclusion? How did she understand that exhaustion would make it impossible for him to cook dinner? The interpretation of how he was feeling goes beyond the linguistically encoded as they depend on additional information to be made accessible to Maria via expansion of the initial cognitive context. This expanded context encompasses what Maria knows about Pedro: that he is a dentist, that he had a coronary implant that day and that, as the procedure is very tiring, on the days when he has the implant, he cannot do anything else. Based on this information, she comes to the conclusion about the impossibility of Pedro cooking, which leads her to decide to make dinner herself.

In the case of this dialogue, several pieces of information were activated by Maria. Among those described by the researchers, the following were highlighted by Seide:

Portion 1. Encyclopedic information about Pedro, including the assumption: Pedro is a surgeon [...] Portion 6. Encyclopedic information about surgery [...] Portion 9. The encyclopedic information about a coronary implant, including the assumption: Making a coronary implant is exhausting' (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001, p.226, apud SEIDE, 2014:158.)

Based on this expansion, Pedro's speech is interpreted by Maria, who replies “Maria: If you're tired, I'll make dinner” (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001: 226). Her response evidences that she assessed that Pedro was unable to prepare dinner.

According to the analytical example taken up here, the expansion of the initial context is a crucial step in the explanation of interpretive action proposed by the RT. This step is based on the activation of certain information that is part of what Sperber and Wilson call a concept thus defined: “a title on which various types of information can be stored and retrieved” (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001 :144). The concept, in turn, is formed by 3 components: lexical input or entry, logical entry and encyclopedic entry (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001:153). In the first, grammatical and lexical information about the words is stored, in the second, in the second the rules of deduction and inference, and in the last, the third, those that relate to the "extension and/or denotation of the concept, that is, about objects, events and/ or properties that represent them” (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001:144). The set formed by the entries forms an abstract psychological object (the concept) that resides at a conceptual address in the mind. The authors clarify that

[...] there may be concepts that have encyclopedic and logical entries and that play a role in cognitive processes, but that are not lexicalized and therefore have an empty lexical entry. For example: it seems reasonable to assume that, corresponding to a general lexicalized concept of “the military” or “the armed forces”, we have a special concept of a soldier/mariner/airperson, which lacks a lexical entry (SPERBER & WILSON, 2001 :153).

Reevaluating Sperber and Wilson's analysis, it is clear that they proposed the activation of concepts expressed by common nouns, such as surgery and surgeon, and concepts related to actions, such as making a coronary implant. There is also the activation of the concept related to Pedro, which includes information about the surgeon. In the expansion of the RT proposed by Seide (2014), the importance of making it clear that the proper name Pedro is a concept that includes everything Maria knows about him will be included, encompassing his experiences and discursive practices, as the ones in which he interacts with her as well as those in which Peter is the subject of conversation. To exemplify this amplification of Sperber and Wilson's initial proposal, Seide created and analyzed an elocution that would be the initial part of a dialogue in which Maria narrates what happened to Joana, saying to her: "Maria: I would like Pedro to cook dinner, but he told me he was tired so I did it myself". The interpretation on the part of Joana requires that she has, in her mind, a concept of Peter that is convergent with that of Joan in which there is sharing of some of the definite descriptions attributable to Peter:

For Joana to be able to interpret her friend's account, she must activate encyclopedic information similar to that that Maria activated about Pedro: if Joana knows that Pedro is a surgeon and that his work exhausts him, she can deduce that Pedro would not cook dinner. Both Joana's processing of Maria's utterance and Maria's processing of Pedro's utterance are supported by socially shared knowledge about Pedro (SEIDE, 2014:159).

From the point of view adopted in this article, the activation of socially shared knowledge about Pedro occurs from the first name Pedro conceived as a conceptual address and not just as a linguistic code by which Pedro would be merely and exclusively a proper noun.

Activating the conceptual address Pedro by its use in context, there is, in the minds of the interlocutors Joana and Maria, an activation that everything they know about the proper name Pedro and about the bearer of that name. This pairing between linguistic knowledge and knowledge

of the world is further evidence of the need to redefine the proper name and is supported by neurolinguistic findings, as explained further in the next section of this article.

### **3 Neurolinguistic findings and onomastic knowledge of the ideal speaker**

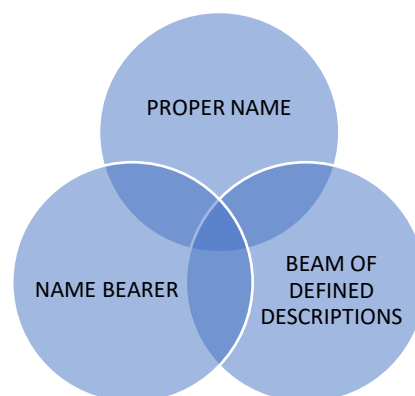
This section revisits the findings of Neurolinguistics reported by Van Langendonck (2007) and re-analyzed by Seide (2014:153-155). For the purposes of this article the findings resulting from a case study of an Italian patient designated by the acronym PC cited by Van Langendonck will be considered. This patient was affected by a type of aphasia that totally compromised the process of recovering proper nouns from his memory while maintaining access to information related to common nouns, which explains the fact that the patient is able to retrieve synchronously derived proper nouns of common nouns.

It is known there are common nouns that can be used as proper names, as is the case, for example, with the feminine names Rosa and Margarida, in which everyone understands that they come from common nouns that designate flower names. In equivalent cases in the Italian language, PC was shown to be able to retrieve the common noun from memory when the examiner gave him clues about the meaning of the common noun. A test was carried out for the surname Verdi, homonymous to the name of the green color, in the Italian language. Asked who had been the composer of the operas Aida and La Traviata, he could not remember the composer's first name. However, in the sequence, the following information was provided: "The composer's surname resembles a color, the first letter of his surname begins with a V". Armed with this information, he was able to retrieve the common noun "verti". In another test, he was presented with images of famous people, politicians and celebrities from Italy and other countries and asked who they were and what their names were. Despite having managed to make the associations of characteristics

peculiar to each person with answers such as “Prime Minister, he was the first socialist to occupy this position in our country” and “Very famous poet, considered the father of our literature” he was unable to remember the proper names of these people. Throughout the experiment, he even forgot the examiner's name and asked his name, which happened ten times during the experiment. The only proper names he did not forget were his own name and the name of his country, Italy. (LANGENDONCK, 2007:109).

This case was interpreted as evidence of the existence of “two distinct processes: (1) correlation of proper names and their bearers and (2) association between the defined descriptions that linguistically describe the peculiar characteristics of the bearers of the proper names and the proper name, each process forming an information module”. (SEIDE 2014:155). While in the case of the Italian patient, his aphasia dissociated the modules, in normal people they are interconnected as shown in the figure below.

Figure 1. Module interconnection



Source: Seide

Interpreting these neuro-linguistic findings in the light of the Relevance Theory, they can be analyzed as follows:

“PC” has in mind the conceptual addresses corresponding to common names and proper names, however, in relation to the latter, the lexical entries were lost, but not the encyclopedic ones. The preservation of encyclopedic entries explains the successes obtained in the correlation of characteristics to name bearers of. The repeated failures to retrieve proper names from memory, in turn, are explained by the fact that there are no lexical entries through which this type of name can be accessed. Finally, the successful recovery of homonym proper names is due to the fact that, in this case, the lexical entry of the common name is activated (SEIDE, 2014:157).

From another point of view, the findings can be seen as indirect evidence of what constitutes the name knowledge of the ideal speaker (SEIDE, 2021). The existence of this type of knowledge assumes that the category of proper names is part of what a native speaker knows about his mother tongue (and may also have knowledge of one or more foreign languages and have more than one mother tongue), a portion of knowledge designated as onomastic competence or onomastic knowledge (COSERIU, 1985; ORTEGA OJEDA, 1994, LÓPEZ FRANCO, 2014).

The onomastic knowledge of the ideal speaker (hereinafter OK) is described by Seide as follows:

It is part of the speaker's onomastic knowledge, knowledge about the linguistic characteristics of proper names in his mother tongue and how they are used in the linguistic community of which he is a part. It should be noted this knowledge may or may not include to those related to the study of the etymological meaning of proper names, but it certainly includes the speaker's beliefs and attitudes about these names (...). While beliefs concern how each one conceives the way names should or can be and include subjective criteria responsible for evaluating (positive, neutral or negative) proper names, attitudes indicate whether proper names are seen as being semantically opaque or transparent, that is, if they have some meaning or merely have a referential function (2021: 60).

Based on this definition, a description of this concept was proposed, designed to cover knowledge related to the first name, which was adapted to allow it to be applied to all types of proper names. Table 1 shows the expanded version of the proposal by Seide:

Table 1. Onomastic Knowledge of the Ideal Speaker - OK

1. procedural denominative meaning in everyday language (how proper names are used)
2. relationship between name and referent known or mentioned in everyday life (what names do people and places have, for example)
3. repertoire (set and types of known proper names; may include names in other languages)
4. pronunciation of known names and supposed rules for pronouncing unknown names (how names are pronounced)
5. spelling according to the orthographic rules of the language (may include knowledge of the spelling of names in other languages).
6. grammatical information (such as gender and number of proper names) <sup>1</sup>
7. constitution (number of names may be in a first name or in a toponym for example)
8. associative meaning (it is formed according to the speaker's experiences, with the referents of the names)
9. emotional meaning (present, for example, in hypocoristics in which there is an affective connotation in the names)
10. sociolinguistic factors (presumption about social class and gender of people's names, for example)
11. Ethnosociocultural imaginaries (as a presumption about qualities attributed to names such as those names of people in the English language that have more prestige than names in the Portuguese language)
12. name giving process: who give the name and when (may include legal aspects of official nomination)
13. motivation for naming (knowledge about the history of name choice, why a particular name was chosen)
14. Uses and values of first names in the fictional world (literature, cinema, mini-series, soap operas, games, etc.)
15. etymological and/or historical meaning

Source: Adapted from Seide, 2021: 67

Considering that the proper name is a conceptual address that leads to logical, lexical, grammatical and encyclopedic entries, the components of the speaker's knowledge or competence, described herein, cover the first two: while competences 2 to 7 correspond to the grammatical entry of the names themselves, other information accounts for the encyclopedic entry.

It should be noted, among the components of the encyclopedic entry, component number 8, which is related to the interpretation of the dialogues analyzed in this article, and items 13, 14 and 15, which are scholarly aspects of onomastic knowledge, and are therefore very variable from

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<sup>1</sup> The grammatical information depends on the language in question, in the case of declining languages, such as Lithuanian, there is also information about the cases and their declensions.

one person to. In fact, onomastic knowledge, far from being homogeneous, presents many gradations according to the speakers' interests:

However, it seems logical to assume that, mainly because of their profession or predilection, certain individuals will have a greater onomastic competence: taxi drivers, messengers, postmen, couriers, home collectors, sport fans or commentators on certain sports, musica critics, etc<sup>2</sup>. (ORTEGA OJEDA, 1994:303) (my translation)

By combining the proposals of proper name as a conceptual address and as part of the linguistic knowledge of the ideal speaker, it is possible to redefine the concept of proper name highlighted in table 2 below.

Table 2. Redefining the concept of proper name

A proper name is a singular name, an abstract object stored in a conceptual address in the speaker's mind composed of a logical component, a lexical component and an encyclopedic component. While the first responds for the necessary processing of information to arrive at the understanding of utterances in which proper names are used, the last two integrate the linguistic and world knowledge related proper names, correspond to the onomastic knowledge of the ideal speaker and can range from knowledge of how in a certain language and culture names are used and their grammatical characteristics to scholarly knowledge about the etymology and origin of names.
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Source: Seide

The proper name is an abstract object stored in a conceptual address in the speaker's mind, composed of a logical, a lexical, and an encyclopedic component. While the first responds for the necessary processing of information to reach the understanding of utterances in which proper names are used, the last two integrate the linguistic and world knowledge related to the proper name and correspond to the onomastic knowledge of the ideal speaker and can range from knowledge as the way the names are used and their grammatical characteristics in a certain language and culture to scholarly knowledge about the etymology and origin of names.

## 5. Some implications of the redefinition of proper name for onomastic studies

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<sup>2</sup> Sin embargo, parece lógico suponer que, sobre todo por razón del oficio o de la afición que practican, serán determinados individuos los que posean una mayor competencia onomástica: taxistas, mensajeros, carteros, repartidores, cobradores a domicilio, aficionados o comentaristas de ciertos deportes, críticos musicales, etc.



What is proposed in table 2, as far as we know at the time this article was produced, is an unprecedented redefinition in the literature of onomastic studies that transcends what is found in Brazilian grammars. It is a new definition in which the linguistic and world knowledge of the ideal speaker converge and the logical, lexical and encyclopedic entries that form the abstract psychological object inscribed in the mind, as a conceptual address, are taken into account.

There are advantages to using this new proper name definition. One of them is that its use can provide a comprehensive and precise understanding of the research that has been carried out in the area of onomastics<sup>3</sup>, when considering the knowledge produced by researchers is part of the researchers' own onomastic knowledge, among other words, the investigated objects of study are seen as part of the researchers' onomastic knowledge (OK).

Table 3, below, gathers and characterizes the object of study of some researches published in the third issue of the journal *Onomástica desde America Latina*, in the first half of 2021, to show how this enriched definition of proper names can be used for the epistemological organization of the area.

Table 3 Characterization of recent onomastic research

Article	Entry(ies)	OK component
Ragauskaitė (2021)	lexical	6, 7 e 15
Vescovi (2021)	lexical and enciclopedic	1, 3 e 10
Reyes Contreras (2021)	lexical and enciclopedic	1, 3, 6 e 8
Fray (2021)	lexical and enciclopedic	1, 3, 12 e 13
Cruz; Amaral (2021)	lexical and enciclopedic	1,2, 3 e 7
Taibi-Maghraoui (2021)	lexical	1, 3 e 15
Ruppenthal (2021)	lexical and enciclopedic	1, 2, 3, e 13

<sup>3</sup> In this regard, see the literature review of recent studies in the area in the national and international scope made by Amaral and Seide (2020).

Junges (2021)	lexical and enciclopedic	1,2,3 e 13
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The reading of table 3, in addition to allowing to visualize the differences and similarities among the investigations, makes it possible to know the type of research developed. The articles by Ragauskaitė and Taibi-Maghraoui, for example, are the only ones in the list that do not deal with the information that is part of the encyclopedic entry and analyze component 15 of the OK that refers to the historical and/or etymological meaning of proper names. In fact, both works fall into the same sub-area of Historical Onomastics, and their analyses do not require contributions from other disciplines or areas of knowledge: the first article analyzes a set of names of people registered in the oldest parish in Lithuania from 1599 to 1621; in a morphological and etymological point of view. In the second, the frequency of names with historical and religious etymological significance is compared in two samples of names of people registered in a registry office in an Algerian city, one covering the period from 1875 to 1885 and the other covering the period from 1962 to 2010.

By reading the table 3, it is also possible to identify when two different researches are epistemologically equivalent. This is the case of research by Ruppenthal (2021) and Junges (2021) that analyze names of schools in two cities in West Paraná: the first in Marechal Cândido Rondon and the second in Missal. Both analyses contain the names based on documentary research in the schools' Pedagogical Political Projects and relate the history of cities and schools to the history of the chosen names.

Another important consideration about what Table 3 shows concerns the type of research undertaken: whether disciplinary or interdisciplinary, considering that all research dealing with encyclopedic input transcends the limits of linguistic studies. Vescovi (2021) and Frai (2021) relate

changes in the repertoire of first names of people born in the locations they studied, respectively, Palotina and Marechal Cândido Rondon, to the history of these cities in West Paraná. Cruz and Amaral (2021), in turn, analyze first names present in calls to professional soccer games, based on the rules of tournaments and the characteristics of this sport, and Reyes Contreras (2021) analyzes a sample of Heavy Metal band names for what you needed to consider not only the history and evolution of this style of music, but also the relationship between band names and brand names.

In the case of the aforementioned investigations, researchers were considered as those whose name knowledge demonstrated by the investigations undertaken was analyzed. When people in general are considered as those whose competence is the object of study, many research perspectives arise. In the article in which OK was first described, one of the objectives of Seide's research (2021) was to analyze, according to the results of a sample of a questionnaire completed by undergraduate students at a public university in western Paraná, the knowledge of religious names by the bearers of these names. Many other researches can be designed and developed in this direction.

### **Final considerations**

This article aimed to propose an interdisciplinary definition of proper names that would add world knowledge and linguistic knowledge, both necessary for the uses of proper names in society and for their scientific study by onomasticists. Initially, definitions of proper names were retrieved from normative and descriptive grammars, which converged in pointing out their function of referring to a unique being in the world. At this point, the philosophical question regarding the general and the particular was resumed, considering that common nouns correspond to first and proper names to second, and the discussion about whether it would be possible to have a language in which there were no particular names. The answer to this question brought up the

possibility of replacing proper names with defined phrases and descriptions that describe the referent or bearer of the name. Considering that the set of phrases and descriptions that can be attributed to the referent refer to an encyclopedic knowledge, the hypothesis of pairing between linguistic knowledge and encyclopedic knowledge about proper names and their bearers arises.

It was then shown that the raised hypothesis is based on the Theory of Relevance, which proposes that a lexical item is stored in memory in a conceptual address in which a logical component, an encyclopedic component and a lexical component join, a proposal that is supported by neuro-linguistics findings in experiments performed on aphasic patients who despite knowing the referents of proper names and the features that define and characterize them, cannot associate proper names that name them. Research results show that in normal people knowledge about the proper name and its bearer are accessible and related to each other.

The approximation of world knowledge and linguistic knowledge is also defended by Cognitive Linguistics, which is based on the Theory of Relevance and Cognitive Onomastics which takes into account the encyclopedic knowledge when noting that a proper name is not always used merely for its function of making a univocal reference, what is perceived, for example, in the creation and use of nicknames and names of unofficial places in which certain characteristics of the referent are expressed and emphasized.

By integrating these two orders of knowledge in the description of the ideal speaker's onomastic knowledge, the proposal for redefinition presented in this article arises. It is expected that this theoretical construct will be useful to researchers who wish to carry out interdisciplinary research in onomastics, starting from an interdisciplinary definition of proper name as a conceptual address, all information that can be attributed to these types of names and their bearers, including

the most erudite aspects of knowledge such as the history of the motivation of the proper name, its historical causes and its etymological meaning.

Finally, it should be noted that the more detailed description of the onomastic knowledge of the ideal speaker that is made in this article can be used as an epistemological tool that allows us to visualize which components are considered and which are ignored in a specific onomastic research, allowing us to analyze whether an investigation is exclusively linguistic or if it is interdisciplinary.

Recebido em 10/06/2020

Aceito em 28/06/2021

Publicado em em 25/08/2021

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