

© Andrey N. BELYAYEV

anbelajew@mail.ru

UDC 81'373

AUTOPOIESIS: SYSTEM ORGANISATION OF PROPER NAMES

SUMMARY. This article describes proper nouns as a system. The starting point of the research is the notion of autopoietic system. The autopoietic system is defined as the system property to integrate without violation of its internal structure. The system's unity and integrity make relational properties of its elements. Special emphasis is placed on external relations of the system. The environment of proper nouns is the language system. Qualitative changes in the environment have an effect on proper nouns. If there is a change on any level of the language system, it is reflected in the system of proper nouns. The proper nouns system is related to the language system, they are interconnected structurally.

The system of proper nouns is interlinked with the extralinguistic environment as well. This relation is determined by the nature of a proper noun.

Proper nouns systems are realized in different subsystems: anthroponomy, toponomy, etc. A subsystem is set up when its elements belong to proper nouns.

Relying on the notion of the autopoietic system the author comes to the conclusion that the impact of the environment on the proper nouns system cannot be a determining factor in structural changes of the system.

KEY WORDS. Autopoiesis, system, proper names, onymic space.

Among a variety of problems in linguistic, those belonging to the sphere of systematic organization of proper nouns are considered important [1-4]. The intensive need to study this issue was expressed by E. Eichler in the middle of the last century. Eichler's systematic approach that was considering onymic space as a systemically dissected integrity proved the effectiveness of its usage and subsequently led to convincing results.

At the present time, the question of systematic organization of proper nouns still ranks as one of the widely debated questions of onomastics. It has become a trivality to claim that there are many different points of view, none of which are generally accepted, and that the problem is far from being resolved. We have already touched upon different approaches to the systematic study of geographical names [5]; in this article we would like to draw readers' attention to the issue from a different perspective — from the viewpoint of the so-called autopoietic system.

The purpose of the present article is to examine self-organization as a common property embedded in the very 'structure' of the onomasticon of the language, and as a way of existence and functioning of all units of onomasticon that manifests its specific features on different levels of the language system.

All attempts to identify specific characteristics of onymic systems still do not give a positive result, as researchers try to combine overly diverse phenomena in one class. They are unable to see, while grasping formal and yet only intuitively understood characteristics of the whole and its constituent elements, the more significant and profound distinctions that actually determine the nature and the life of the “system”. The complexity of the issue, which arose as a result of the systematic approach to the onomasticon of the language, is caused by defining onymic composition as the interaction of proper nouns between each other, and their interaction with the phenomena of the external world. Proper nouns, like the majority of words in the language, perform the nominative function or, in other words, serve as symbols of objects of reality. This creates a pronounced extralinguistic conditionality of the onymicon, its anthropocentrism [6], when people with various kinds of activities create a vocabulary center, which is, from this point of view, a mold of extralinguistic reality in the context of how it is seen by people with their needs, deeds and desires. Thus intralingual conditionality recedes into the background. One may get the impression that onyms, their changes, their patterns of development are regulated exclusively by social and historical factors, that the subject-logical approach to their study can lead to exhaustive results. The anthropocentrism of the onymicon, its focus on individual and communication needs, explains many factors of creating onyms and the process of nomination, but these features of the onymicon cannot explicate the intralingual interaction of onyms, i.e. the identification of these features does not answer the question whether the composition of proper nouns is a system or not. Compare the definition of a toponymic system given in the multi-author monograph “Theory and methods of onomastic research”: “A toponymic system is defined as a known unity of constructing toponyms in a given territory, determined by the psychological affinity of the local speech community, the peculiarity of their thinking, the common perception of reality, which, in particular, is confirmed by the presence of its toponymic models and a certain range of repetitive toponymic bases” [3, 51]. In this understanding, the systematization of toponyms is based on the principle of anthropocentrism, in which the extralinguistic component clearly prevails over the linguistic component, which is understandable, because toponyms are closely related to physiographical environment and their origin is often determined by social relations of members of the community.

Perhaps it would be correct to say that the onymicon as a complex of all the proper nouns of a given language is not a distinct system. However, onyms are a part of the system of the language and therefore the features of language systemacity inhere to proper nouns as well. At the same time, the onymicon of the language, whose social conditionality is highly prominent and distinctive, bears the imprints laid by the extralinguistic, socio-historical conditions of its functioning. That is why onyms can be studied as parts of vocabulary in terms of their relations with the phenomena of reality, in their nominative function, as means of nomination of individual extralinguistic objects, and onyms can be studied as units of the language system in terms of their

mutual connections, in terms of the linguistic conditions of their functioning in speech, i.e. from the standpoint of linguistics.

Let us now consider in detail a number of questions mentioned above and at the same time attempt to study the problem of the onomastic system in general.

The study of the onymicon in terms of interrelations of its elements presupposes as its starting point the most general definition of the term “system”, given in the general theory of systems (GTS), to show how this general understanding of system will facilitate disclosure of the internal organization of onymic systems. Herein, following G. Wilke, system is defined as “a set of interrelated and interconnected elements that form a certain integrity; the elements of the system are more closely connected to one another than to the elements of other sets. This qualitative and quantitative difference in the relations between elements of the set forms the system borderline that separates the system from the environment” [2; 49]. The presence and retention in the process of the system functioning through its internal relations states the problem of studying autopoietic, i.e. reproduction properties of the system, aimed at self-creation.

The term “autopoiesis” was first used in the early 1970s by Chilean scientists H. Maturana and F. Varela to denote self-construction, self-creation of living-beings, including humans, who differ in the fact that their organization generates itself as a product with no distinction of the producer and the product. The autopoietic system “drags itself out by the hair”, so to say, creating its own components.

A. Rapoport and N. Luhmann efficiently used the concept of the autopoietic system to study social systems and the human mind [7]; cf. philosophical term *poietische Philosophie*. The autopoietic system is seen as the self-creation ability of the system with no disturbance in its internal organization, which is sufficient for its identity [7, 115]. In this case, this refers to what in the system remains the same; the point is not the numeric variables, but the relational properties of the elements that make up the system.

According to V. Kohlheim, this does not mean that an autopoietic system has no relations with its environment. However, these relations concern not the reproduction level itself, but it is referred to exact connections concerning certain aspects between the system and the environment, which H. Maturana calls “coupling” [2; 50].

The concept of “autopoietic organization” was applied by the German scientist V. Kohlheim to onymic systems. Consideration of any system raises the question of delimitating the system from its environment, and for a certain specified system the environment is “the set of all objects” (“die Menge aller Objekte”), which, when altering their characteristics, influence the system and the objects, whose properties are modified by the system. V. Kohlheim notes that in this sense the environment for the onymic system is, above all, the common language system. The fact that the first portion of the given definition most closely corresponds to the relation ‘onymic system — language system’ than the second one indicates that onymic system is in fact perceived as a subsystem of the common language system; they are structurally coupled (“strukturell gekoppelt”) [2; 51]. If, for example, there are changes on the

phonological level of the linguistic system, they are also reflected in the onymic sphere. A “permanent productive tension between the appellative and onymic areas” is pointed out by E. Eichler [8; 299]. Onymic systems are particularly closely connected to the extralinguistic environment. It is caused by the highly prominent socially motivated function of identification inherent in proper nouns. Ultimately, onymic systems are a product of mental activity, the so-called “world of three phenomena” (K.R. Popper, J.C. Eccles). While having a certain degree of autonomy from the common language system (cf. the attempt of some linguists to consider onomastics as an independent field of knowledge), they can be reorganized each time in one way or another because of the altered conditions of social development.

According to V. Kohlheim, the distinctive feature of the onymic system is the fact that it is realized in various specific systems. The whole range of proper nouns is represented by the class of toponyms, anthroponyms, zoonyms, etc. The organizing principle of all specific onymic systems is the property of their elements of “being a proper noun (PN)”. This property is more accurately defined by R. Šrámek as an ability to single out an object from an array of objects (phenomena) of one and the same class with the purpose of identification of this object as a singular one or its localization in a particular place [9, 164]. Developing the idea further, the units with the property of “being a PN” should be understood to mean the units whose main function is the function of reference, not characterization. In this case, the value of the invariant of the onymic sign comes down to representing a general possibility of reference, but not at all to a detailed unambiguous determination of its conditions [10; 62].

Certain specific onymic systems are constituted on the grounds of diversity of their referential areas. Specific onymic systems (anthroponymic, toponymic) can further be regarded as systems of systems, for instance, the German anthroponymic system comprises a subsystem of personal names and surnames, elements of which are interconnected in a certain way. Specific toponymic systems are more complex than anthropomorphic ones. This can be attributed to a significant amount of types of geographical features: settlements, basins, mountains, natural boundaries, etc., which, depending on the purpose of the study, can be further structured. Despite their common principle of organization, individual specific onymic systems are loosely bound to each other. Close relations between onymic systems are established in cases when some individual elements of the system line up with the elements of other systems, without fully or partially changing their shapes. Diachronically this phenomenon will be considered as transonymization (oyc. *Hamburg* → fam. *Hamburger*; hydr. *Fulda* → oyc. *Fulda*), synchronically the homonymy of nouns will take place, which will result in ambiguity in speech actualization. Eliminating ambiguity in expressions such as “Altenburg kenne ich schon lange”, “Grünberg interessiert mich nicht” will signify that onymic elements were assigned to specific systems of family nouns or toponyms. Such examples show the great importance of defining the borders of the systems.

Considering the internal organization of individual onymic (sub)systems, V. Kohlheim points out that all elements of the system have the system organizing

property, and this constitutive property in his opinion should be considered in close connection with the functional parameters of the system. But what makes such different linguistic signs as *Heinrich, Karl, Klaus, Anna, Maria* or *Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, Frankfurt, Leipzig* elements of corresponding systems? Clearly, within the system they are interconnected by paradigmatic relations. This makes the function of identification possible. The ability of the elements to enter into oppositional relations within a determined paradigmatic system, thus fulfilling the onymic function of identification, is seen as the main system constituting characteristic (system-konstituierendes Merkmal) of the onymic system. Besides, the characteristics that are significant to individual specific onymic systems are further characteristics which, however, are not system constitutive. V. Kohlheim calls them system-architectural (systemprägende), denoting them as the semantic features typical for the system which carry additional information that is perceived by members of the speech community. V. Blanar calls them informative functions. He distinguishes four such functions in the system of personal nouns: 1) the function of designating family relationships; 2) the socio-legal function; 3) The function of characterization; 4) the function of designating social status. He also stresses that informative functions (cf. Christoph's onymic semes) do not reside on the level occupied by the main function of identification [11]. In a number of papers in onomastics, one can find personal nouns also possessing the function of linguistic ethnicity that carries the information of ethnical and linguistic identity of the onym [12]. Essentially, one can agree that a proper noun has the ethnic characteristic embedded both in the fundamental principle and the word-building formants. However, there are many examples where the "shell" of a noun is contrary to the ethnicity of its carrier.

In contrast to the constitutive feature of identification, the presence of which is obligatory for elements of the onymic system, the system-architectural semantic features can be filled with different amounts of content in the process of historical development of the system. For instance, a reference to the carrier's gender has been and remains an important system-building feature of the German anthroponymic system. Nevertheless, R. Calabrese's study of personal names that were written in Brixen parish shows that some female vocative names of Germanic and Latin origin were given to boys: *Ambrosia, Brunihilt, Gerdrut, Gotta, Razila, Vizicha, Wizila*. The possibility of giving boys female names is not excluded today, but it only applies to the second name: *Karl Maria von Weber, Erich Maria Remarque* [2; 53].

Along with their constitutive feature and semantic characteristics, the consistency of proper nouns is evident in the field of morphology. System connections on the morphology level can be clearly demonstrated in the toponymic system on the territory of German-Slavic language contacts. Such consistent features are characteristic of toponyms of a certain area, cf. suffixes *-itzsch / -itsch, -gast*, that emerged as a result of Germanizing the Slavic topoformants, and german topoelements *-au, -dorf, -hausen, -leben, -stedt*, etc. The row organization of toponyms that is composed of names with a determined topoelement enables, when it is not distinguished, to attribute it to the corresponding toponymic class. Word-formation toponymic models like *A-hagen*,

B-hausen, *C-reuth*, *D-stedt* are easily perceived as toponyms (or secondary personal names) [13; 185]. The property of “being a PN” can only be manifested when the proper noun as an element of the system is opposed to the rest of the nouns of the system. In this context, let us refer to the associative relations of F. Saussure: “associative groups that emerge in our consciousness are not limited to rapprochement of the members of the relationship who have something in common, — the mind also grasps the character of every relation between them and thus creates as many associative arrays, as there are different relations. [...] Any word can call up everything that is capable of being associated with it” [14; 156]. The following example is given to demonstrate the row organization in anthroponymy: in medieval Regensburg in the process of integration of Latin agionyms in the German anthroponymic system of personal nouns, a new anthroponymic suffix ‘-an’ is constituted. Agreeing with V. Kohlheim, let us note that the consistent row organization serves to intensify the relations within the corresponding subsystem, and thus to stabilize the borders of the system.

Thus, in V. Kohlheim’s conception, the organizing aspect of the onymic system is the property of “being a PN”. Autopoietic organization is defined as the property of onymicon to self-construction in such a way that its internal organization is preserved. The impact of the environment on the onymic system is ultimately not a determining factor of changes in the structural organization of the system. Virtually, the history of the development of the German onymic system proves that autopoietic organization can serve as a criterion that determines its essential features.

REFERENCES

1. Murzaev, Je.M. *Toponimika i geografija* [Toponymy and Geography]. Moscow: Nauka publ., 1995. 304 p. (in Russian).
2. Kohlheim, V. Der onymische Bereich als autopoietisches System. *Wort und Name im deutsch-slavischen Sprachkontakt: Ernst Eichler von seinen Schülern und Freunden / hrsg. von Karlhein Hengst...* Köln: Böhlau Verlag GmbH & Cie, 1997. S. 49-57.
3. Superanskaja, A.V., Stalmane, V.Je., Podol'skaja, N.V., Sultanov, A.H. *Teorija i metodika onomasticheskikh issledovanij* [Theory and Methods of Onomastic Studies] Editor-in-chief A.P. Nepodkupny. Moscow: LIBROKOM publ., 2009. 256 p. (in Russian).
4. Matveev, A.K. *Onomatologija* [Onomatology]. Moscow: Nauka publ., 2006. 292 p. (in Russian).
5. Beljaev, A.N. Different approaches to systematic study of place names. *Vestnik Cheljabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta — Chelyabinsk State University Bulletin*. Philology. Art studies. 21 issue. 2008. No. 16 (117). Pp. 21–26 (in Russian).
6. Dmitrieva, L.M. *Ontologicheskoe i mental'noe bytie toponimicheskoy sistemy (Na materiale russkoj toponimii Altaja)* Dokt. Diss. [Ontological and Mental Existence of Toponymic System (Based on Russian Toponyms in Altai) Doct. Diss]. Barnaul, 2002. 367 p. (in Russian).
7. Luhmann, N. *Moderne Systemtheorien als Form gesamtgesellschaftlicher Analyse. Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie — Was leistet die Systemforschung?* Frankfurt am Main, 1971. S. 7-24.

8. Eichler, E. Über Namenssysteme. *Proc. Of the 17th Int. Congr. Of Onomastic Sciences*. Vol. 1. Helsinki, 1991. S. 292-299.

9. Šrámek, R. Die Kategorie des Allgemeinen in der Namenforschung. *Der Eigennamen in Sprache und Gesellschaft I*. Hrsg. von E. Eichler, E. Saß, H. Walter. Leipzig, 1985. S. 152-167.

10. Rudenko, D.I. Proper names in the context of modern referential theories. *Voprosy jazykoznanija — Linguistic Issues*. 1988. No. 3. P. 55-68 (in Russian).

11. Blonar, V. Distribution of anthroponimic models. *Perspektivy razvitija slavjanskoj onomastiki — Perspectives of Slavic onomastics development*. Editors-in-chief: Superanskaya A.V., Podolskaya N.V., Moscow: Nauka publ., 1980. Pp. 13-21 (in Russian).

12. Antyshev, A.N. *Imena. Nemeckie antroponimy* [Names. German anthroponyms]. Ufa: Bashkir Agrarian State University, 2001. 239 p. (in Russian).

13. Fleischer, W. Wortbildung der deutschen Gegenwartssprache. Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1976. 243 S.

14. Saussure, F. de. *Trudy po jazykoznaniju* [Linguistic studies]. Translated from French. Edited by A.A. Kholodovich. Moscow: Progress publ., 1977. 695 p. (in Russian).