

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.23.3.15>**К ВОПРОСУ О ТЕРМИНЕ «КОГНИТИВНАЯ ТОПОНИМИКА»**

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

Статья посвящена рассмотрению топонимов сквозь призму когнитивно-лингвистических традиций. Автор задается вопросом о целесообразности введения терминов «когнитивная топонимика» и «когнитивный топоним» и, проведя комплексный анализ отечественной и зарубежной научной литературы по теме, показывает, что, в целом, исследователи с осторожностью обращаются с терминологией в когнитивно-топонимическом контексте, предпочитая заменять словосочетания «когнитивная топонимика» и «когнитивный топоним» описательными конструкциями. В статье обосновывается вывод об их необходимости в ономастической терминосистеме и выдвигаются предложения по формулировке определения указанных терминов. Автор делает предположения о целях и задачах когнитивной топонимики как науки. Тесная связь научно-когнитивного подхода и топонимики подкрепляется примерами.

**Ключевые слова:** топонимика, когнитивный подход, ономастика, концепт, термин.

**ON THE TERM 'COGNITIVE TOPONYMY'**

Research article

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**Abstract**

The article is devoted to the theoretical base of consideration of toponyms through the prism of cognitive and linguistic traditions. The author studies the advisability of introducing the terms "cognitive toponymy" and "cognitive toponym" and, after conducting a comprehensive analysis of domestic and foreign scientific literature on the topic, shows that, in general, researchers are careful with terminology in a cognitive toponymic context, preferring to replace the collocations "cognitive toponymy" and "cognitive toponym" by descriptive constructions. The article substantiates the conclusion about their necessity in an onomastic terminology system and puts forward proposals for the formulation of the definition of these terms. The author makes assumptions about the goals and objectives of cognitive toponymy as a science. The close connection between the scientific and cognitive approach and toponymy is supported by examples.

**Keywords:** toponymy, cognitive approach, onomastics, concept, term.

**1. Introduction**

In the 21st century, toponymic research methods are characterized by the rapid development of Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies, updating of the term system, the emergence of new trends in scientific onomastic study. Any modern scientific research requires the use of new approaches in the consideration of geographical nominations and their comprehensive study using new methods.

Recent studies in the field of cognitive linguistics have given impetus to the development of toponymy research in this aspect. "At present, cognitive linguistics is one of the most actively developing and relatively young areas of modern linguistics" [11, P. 85].

In recent years, the term "cognitive toponymy" has become more widely used in the works of Russian and foreign scientists. Our task is to understand the rightfulness, expediency and validity of the appearance of this relatively new term.

**2. Cognitive approach to toponymy**

Toponymy, being one of the areas of linguistic study, has long been firmly connected with such concepts as 'world view', 'concept', 'conceptual model', and 'cognitive approach'. The cognitive approach to a particular regional toponymy in the past two and a half decades has been closely realized by specialists within and outside of Russia.

Holistic toponymic models are considered especially important in this aspect. Due to the fact that language is an integral part of the cognitive system, it is necessary to take cognitive function into account when studying toponymy as a separate layer of the language. The cognitive approach describes language through cognitive processes such as categorization, conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy. Toponyms as language elements are «fruits» of the human mind produced by people living in certain communities. Therefore, the cognitive aspect is relevant in a comprehensive study of the toponymy of a region.

The theory of a toponymic system, which is an important acquisition of structural linguistics, shows a high degree of compatibility in the aspect of cognitive goals. One of the central problems of the cognitive approach to language is the study of the structure of knowledge representation, therefore, the study of the toponymic picture of the world with its functional-temporal and functional-spatial parameterization logically fits into this paradigm [7, P. 14].

The cognitive approach to toponymy makes it possible to find out what place the naming structure occupies in human life, how toponomization is involved in human mental activity, how toponyms interact with other components of the language

system, what the cognitive foundations of onomastic categories are, what the person's ability is to comprehend, to interpret the objective world perceived by him with all the interconnections between objects and subjects and their signs [16, P. 27].

Thus, it should be assumed that the cognitive approach can be effectively used in several areas of toponymic study, and it can offer a solution to some questions of onomastics that cannot be solved by traditional approach (for example, the problem of the status of toponymic derivatives).

The study of the toponymy in a cognitive aspect reveals a toponymic picture of the world of one or more ethnic groups living or residing in the region. The value of this approach lies in the fact that it is in this way that the national-cultural features of the mentality of the people that left their toponymic mark in the region at different times are most clearly manifested.

### 3. Trends in cognitive approach to toponymic studies

The names of geographical objects, despite the denotative nature, until recently, were not the subject of close attention of cognitive scientists. In our opinion, for the first time an attempt to describe a location concept was made only in 1998 by M. Golomidova in her dissertation "Artificial nomination in Russian onomastics" [6].

Mass cognitive trends in the study of toponymy appeared only in the 2000s. Scientists around the world have come to understand cognition as a combination of types of cognitive activity (perception, images, representation, meaning formation, word-making) in the context of cartographic research. Toponymic units began to be considered as means for the objectification of concepts formed as a result of the cognition process.

As N. Golev and L. Dmitrieva write, "a different reference point arises in the cognitive analysis of place names: it is the linguistic consciousness of native speakers in which these place names function" [5, P. 9].

I. Balandina notes: "Despite the fact that in the dichotomy "language-speech" toponyms clearly gravitate toward the pole "language", nevertheless, we believe that this phenomenon occupies a special place in discourse. So, the toponymic system of language arises as an attempt to comprehend the surrounding reality by the ethnos, an attempt to link together the real world and the mental world, isolating the most relevant and recognizable signs in extralinguistic reality. From this point of view, the toponym approaches the speech and can serve as an object of discourse analysis. A feature of the toponymic system of language is its dualism: the toponym appears in the speech of the ethnos, then is fixed in the language, and after that it again penetrates into the speech, where it can undergo repeated interpretation (for example, cases of "folk" toponymy or adaptation of the toponym of one ethnos in the language of another ethnos through attempts to find similar names)" [1, P. 55].

Applying methods and techniques of cognitive analysis, A. Kaksin identifies cognitive models on the basis of the hydronyms of the Altai Mountains [8]. Thus, the author resorts to the consideration of linguistic units that arose as a result of the desire to represent a certain picture of the world.

The monograph of A. Scherbak is devoted to the cognitive foundations of regional onomastics [16]. As part of the study, the author analyzes toponymic knowledge and its representation in the language. The basis of the toponymic picture of the world are anthroponyms. Toponyms, according to the conclusions made, are a means of representing religious knowledge, knowledge about the region's vegetation, natural landscape knowledge, and numbering and gradual parameters in human consciousness. Memorial place names A. Scherbak considers as a means of representing onomastic knowledge in general. In the article "Study of urban anonymous units in the framework of a cognitive approach" [17] the author and her colleagues prove the feasibility of studying urbanonyms from the perspective of a cognitive approach, they analyze the logic of urbanonymic categorization, which makes it possible to form a holistic view of the urbanonymic picture of the world and its uniqueness.

I. Kryukova writes about the conceptualization of a toponym in Russian linguistic consciousness in connection with the increasing influence of Western culture (*Hollywood*), the formation of new phenomena in the way of life in a certain territory of Russia (*Rublevka*), the tragic events that occurred in a certain territory (*Chernobyl, Beslan*) [10].

K. Svitina in her article among the young branches of onomastics distinguishes cognitive onomastics [14]. The fact that toponymy is part of onomastics, makes us consider the appearance of the term "cognitive toponymy" to be logical.

R. Razumov and S. Goryaev consider reflecting the mental map of the city in the onomastic space of the names of residential complexes. According to the authors, oikodomonyms, being microtoponyms, are markers of the mental space of the city [12].

The toponymic concept is examined by A. Belyaev and V. Bykanova. A. Belyaev forms an idea of a toponymic concept in the form of a structure of semantic relations between the general categorial and individual meaning of language forms (onyms) as certain structures of knowledge [2]. V. Bykanova, performing research on the material of English toponyms, interprets the model of the toponymic concept as a multilayer structure [4].

The phenomenon of a toponymic concept as a complex structure, and sometimes the foundations of a toponymic metaphor, is also considered by Yu. Bliznichenko and V. Bilichenko, I. Khokholova, L. Zamorshchikova, V. Filippova, O. Rubleva, E. Kalinina, T. Khvesko, V. Roboustova and others.

E. Kovlakas analyzed the lexical and semantic aspect of the representation of toponymic concepts in the aspect of a toponymic picture of the world based on the material of Adyge toponymic units. The author believes that "the ethnolinguistic information embedded in toponyms allows us to consider not only the ontological being of a toponymic system, but also the mental one, realized in toponyms as cognitive categories" [9, P. 81].

In the dissertation of D. Tuzhikova "Oikonyms in the Spanish language picture of the world" one of the chapters is devoted to toponyms as part of the linguistic picture of the world [15]. The author explores Spanish place names as a way of representing information about geographical space.

The topic of the toponymic picture of the world as a result of the interaction of cultures of different ethnic groups is also being developed by R. Tuxaitova and G. Omarova, V. Korneva and others.

V. Bykanova in the article "On Some Prospects for the Development of Cognitive Linguistics" [3] uses the term "cognitive toponymy". N. Golev and L. Dmitrieva also recognize this term, noting: "The starting point of cognitive analysis is

the analysis of how toponyms exist in the heads of people, the study of the regulations of this or that consciousness. It is this thesis that goes through the concept of “cognitive toponymy” [5, P. 7].

Nevertheless, a comprehensive analysis of the Russian scientific literature on the topic shows that, in general, researchers are careful with terminology in a cognitive toponymic context, preferring to replace the phrase “cognitive toponymy” with descriptive constructions.

This trend generally characterizes also Western scientific traditions. It is confirmed with the analysis of recent works on the topic under study [18], [19], [20], [21], [22], [23], [24].

In general, the cognitive approach to toponymy has its own specific results: for instance, in the several Hungarian onomastic studies mentioned above, the question of the relationship between the mental map and toponyms, which is still open, is highlighted.

In 2004 Japanese researches attempted to assign cognitive significance to each geographical name in the GIS based on regional documents collected from the Internet and compared various criteria for cognitive significance [24]. The assigned values, according to their research, can be used in GIS applications, including the search for regional information, search for paths and car navigation systems.

However, the current situation in the world of onomastics shows the gradual integration of the concept under study into the linguistic terminological system.

Thus, we consider the creation of the project “Cognitive Toponymy” [25] very indicative. It was sponsored by the Royal Society of Edinburgh and was created to study how people conceptualize place names in Western Europe. The project was a collaboration between the universities of Glasgow, Copenhagen and St. Andrews, and experts from a number of academic disciplines took part in it. For two and a half years (from January 2014 to June 2016), three one-day symposia were held, as well as a series of round table talks on the exchange of onomastic knowledge in different parts of Scotland and Denmark. Regular online events were possible due to the availability of the appropriate Facebook and Twitter accounts, which was also used to publish reports on the activities of the project.

Today, more and more programs of onomastics conferences all over the world contain the names of reports that include the collocation ‘cognitive toponymy’ (for example, the message by B. Leysen-Ross (Scotland) “Cognitive toponymy: Establishing a sense of place in the Central Otago goldfields” on annual conference of the American Onomastic Community January 3, 2020 [26]).

So, is the introduction of the term ‘*cognitive toponymy*’ appropriate? Does cognitive toponymy exist as a separate scientific sphere?

In our opinion, these questions should be answered affirmatively. If we take into account that the hierarchical chain of *linguistics* — *onomastics* — *toponymy* is well known and approved, then, as we presume, the paradigm *cognitive linguistics* — *cognitive onomastics* — *cognitive toponymy* is quite logical as well.

The term “cognitive toponymy” clearly and briefly indicates the cognitive aspect of the study of geographical names. As *cognitive toponymy*, we propose to understand the section of onomastics, which studies the ways of representing, storing and transmitting comprehension / knowledge in geographical names.

Thus, a *cognitive toponym* is the proper name of a geographical object that preserves people’s ideas about its concept and the ways of transmitting this information.

Following V. Roboustova, discussing cognitive onomastics in general, we believe that toponyms are special units of the language that, on the one hand, are designed to individualize objects of reality, and on the other, can be successfully used as classifying characters. They have a high level of connotation, the degree of actualization of the connotative potential of which depends on the experience of the linguistic sign and the communicants who use it to nominate certain objects of reality [13, P. 42].

And, if “cognitive onomastics sets the following tasks: to identify and study models for building onyms, the specifics of information consolidation in them, the expansion of this information, its specification, the peculiarities of the embodiment of information (meaning) in a proper name, the advantages of using onomastic vocabulary over other forms of actualization information (meanings)” [ibid.], then cognitive toponymy, respectively, is engaged in identifying and studying the model for constructing toponyms, the specifics of securing information in them, etc.

In a mental system characterized by the holistic thinking, toponymic representations that are part of the mental lexicon are interconnected with spatial representations. To confirm this here we give some examples of a clear embodiment of concepts in toponymic units typical for the Russian mentality: *beauty* (Paris), *hard battle* (Stalingrad), *devastation* (Kandahar), *game* (Las Vegas), *rest* – Canaries, Bahamas, Seychelles, Maldives, *carnival* (Brazil), *heat* – Africa, Tashkent, *far destination point* (Australia), *cold* – Alaska, Siberia, *secret* (Madrid), *elegance* (Monaco, Monte Carlo), *top* (Everest).

## 5. Conclusion

As a result, we consider it necessary to note the widespread pressure under which onomastic studies are currently being conducted in the cognitive aspect. **In our opinion the terms ‘cognitive toponymy’ and ‘cognitive place name’ should be widely used.** In general, the future lies with a comprehensive method of studying toponymic units by means of a cognitive-matrix analysis in combination with statistical analysis, historical and geographical reconstruction, a descriptive method and a GIS mapping method.

### Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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