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🔗 <https://doi.org/10.4467/K7478.47/22.23.17731>

# **New Onomastic Terms: Textual Criterion of Necessity**

## Abstract

The article discusses a method for evaluating new onomastic terms, which includes two stages: the pre-textual stage and the textual one. The problem of textual criterion for assessing the need for new terms in onomastics is posed for the first time. To deal with it, the author turns to text linguistics and the theory of terminology and to the texts in which the term appears for the first time (the so-called terminology-generating texts) and offers the following parameters for evaluation: a) the distribution of terminology units in the text structure (in separate parts or *passim*); b) the presence of an explicative context for the term (definitions, etymon); c) the role of a new terminological unit in text cohesion (the presence of derivatives, hyper-hyponymic structures, recurrent chains). From these positions, specific terminological cases (*viconym*, *hortensionym*, *trapezonym*, *restaurnonym*, *trophonym*) are analyzed in texts written by onomasticians from Belarus and Russia. It is concluded that the compliance of the term with the textual evaluation criteria implies its transition from the status of a new term to the status of a commonly used one and, therefore, provides conditions for its terminographic fixation. At the same time, the aesthetic factor is still considered when evaluating a new term.

## Keywords

onomastic terminology, evaluation of new terms, pre-textual & textual criteria

## 1. Preliminary remarks

Today it is obvious that a lot of new terms are being introduced in onomastics and these terms are of diverse quality. Do we onomasticians really need them? In this paper I propose a new criterion for assessing the need for new terms, which could be called the textual one. I will discuss the problem in the following order.

First, I will focus on the characteristic features of onomastic terminology that reflect the cognitive foundations of onomastics as a science and make it possible to create an unlimited number of new terms. Then I will turn to some aspects of Text Linguistics which relate to the typology of scientific texts and to the ways of representing new knowledge by means of terminology. In the remaining section of the paper, I will focus on three separate terminological cases involving the analysis of terms in texts. Finally, I will summarize my observations as a two-stage method for evaluation of a new term using textual parameters.

## 2. Terminological system as a representation of the epistemological basis of onomastics

“Every science has a set of vocabulary for logical structuring of knowledge, i.e. terminology. The same is also true about onomastics” (Czopek-Kopciuch, 2019, p. 83). Onomastics, as it is well known, has developed its meta-linguistic apparatus in a taxonomic way; the systematic character of its terminology is manifested in the subordinate hierarchy of terms. Thus, the introduction to the “Dictionary of Russian Onomastic Terminology” presents classifications of names of various types of spaces (terrestrial, cosmic, etc) as schemes, clearly demonstrating the hyper-hyponymic relations (Podol’skaya, 1988, pp. 14–16). Therefore, the appearance of new objects in any of the spaces requires a new term, at least in order for this object to obtain its due position in the already existing hierarchy. In recent decades, there has been an increase in the number

of objects/referents that attract the attention of onomasticians and require terminological fixing. This phenomenon, which is characteristic of 21st century onomastics, could be called the **denotative diversification of onyms** (Vasil'yeva, 2015, p. 61). Such an expansion of the objects of nomination and, therefore, of the terms fixing them, raises a reasonable question about the **level of terminologization**, or, according to Richard Coates (2014), “to what extent is it appropriate to say that a name is an entity that can be categorized, a *somethingonym*?” (p. 8).<sup>1</sup>

This is a rather significant issue for onomastic terminography, since the answer to this question determines the term list of a terminological dictionary. For example, is the basic-level term *zonym* sufficient, or should we move down to the subordinate level and fix the terms for the proper names of each animal species (*\*gatonym* for cats, *\*porconym* for pigs)? Are separate terms necessary for the names of bridges (*\*gefyronym*), city gates (*\*pylonym*) and public transport stops (*\*porejurbanonym*) to represent the urban onymic space, or is the term *urbanonym* sufficient? Common sense dictates that the term of the previous hierarchical level is often sufficient, and further detailing – without the loss of meaning – is possible in a descriptive way. Nevertheless, new terms “for minor objects of onomastic analysis” (Suprun, 2011, p. 135) appear constantly. I think one more reason for the currently observed terminological boom is rooted in the deceptive simplicity of the coining of new onomastic terms. The point is that the terminological model *N + onym*, which is the basic one for designating the category of onyms (cf. *toponyms*, *anthroponyms*, *hydronyms*, etc.), enables one to create an unlimited number of terms with just one step, namely: filling in the empty first cell *N* with a desired term element. Moreover, the term created according to such a model also implies a cluster of terms. It was Natalija Podol'skaya (1978/1988) who presented such terminological clusters, or **family of terms**, in the first edition of the “Dictionary of Russian Onomastic Terminology”. An onomastic term family is represented

<sup>1</sup> Cf. some concern about the “deepening” of the level of onomastic objects with respect to the level of terminologization, which does not contribute to our new knowledge about proper names, expressed by the Smolensk researcher Nina Maksimchuk (2017): “В противном случае исследование таких разрядов онимов (например, названия сортов мороженого, конфет, студенческих аудиторий, ветеринарных клиник и т.д.) можно рассматривать в плане экстенсивного развития ономастики, что, безусловно, интересно и может быть полезно в практическом отношении, однако не должно становиться преобладающим” (p. 163).

by a set of standard morphemes, each of them forming a specific categorial meaning (Podol'skaya, 1978/1988, pp. 9–10). For example:

- *-ия* ‘collection of names’: *гидронимия*;
- *-ика* ‘science section’: *гидронимика*;
- *-ист* ‘researcher’: *гидронимист*;
- *-икон* ‘list or dictionary’: *гидронимикон*;
- *-ация, -изация* ‘process’: *гидронимизация*;
- *де- + -изация* or *-ация* (for the reverse process): *дегидронимизация*;
- *-ический* ‘derived adjective’: *гидронимический* (from *гидронимика*);
- *-ный* ‘derived adjective’: *гидронимный* (from *гидроним*).

Thus, every new term coined using the *N + онум* terminological model, whether its inventor so wants it or not, potentially embodies an entire family of terms.<sup>2</sup> The universality of the *N + онум* model has passed the test of time, and it is this terminological model that is the “face of onomastics”, which we onomasticians need to keep at all costs. And therefore, we have to pay close attention to terminological innovations, for assessing the necessity of which I would like to propose an additional **textual criterion**.

The text criterion is intended to supplement the conventional evaluation of new terms by specialists from the point of view of a) the **euphonic factor** (euphonia; avoidance of inappropriate associations) and/or b) the **semantic factor** – semantic correspondence of the Greek or Latin element (etymon) to the meaning of the new term formed with its help.<sup>3</sup> I will give examples from Russian linguistic terminology which illustrate the relevance of the euphonic factor. Thus, of the two variants of international terms *балтистика* and *балтология* (‘baltistics’ & ‘baltology’) in Russian, only the first is acceptable, since the term *\*балтология*, due to the peculiarity of Russian phonetics (namely: reduction of vowels in pretonic syllables) gets an unwanted homonymy with the word *болтать* ‘chatter’. From the point of view of euphonia, the length of a term, an irrelevant marker for written text, becomes relevant when a term is pronounced. Cf. the term *ресторонимикон* ‘restauronymicon’.

<sup>2</sup> The term family for the term *артионим* ‘proper name for a work of art’ is demonstrated by Suprun (2011): *артионимика, артионимия, артионимизация, топоартионим*, etc. (pp. 137–138).

<sup>3</sup> On different approaches to the selection and semantization of etymons from the point of view of terminology coordination, see Vasil'yeva (2014a, pp. 375–376).

If there are two or more synonymous terms, the phonetically simpler term usually prevails. For example, in German onomastics in the late 1990s there appeared two etymologically justified, but phonetically “heavy” terms for a proper name for any “event” (reform, war, natural disaster, etc.): *Symbantonym* (< Greek *symban*, *symbantos* ‘event’ + *-onym*) and *Phänomenonym* (< Greek *phainomenon* ‘phenomenon’ + *-onym*) (Brendler & Brendler, 2004, p. 624). As a result, the preference was given to the more harmonious Latin-Greek term *eventonym* (< Latin *eventum* ‘event’ + *-onym*), coined by Pavel Donec (2002). There can be no doubt that the adequacy of semantics and the aestheticity of the term play an important role in the metalanguage of science. However, the term should not only be a beautiful label of a concept but also a fully functioning unit of a special language that contributes to the processes of text formation and textuality features.

### 3. Terminology and term within the framework of special text linguistics (Fachtextlinguistik)

In Europe, the study of special texts became a defining feature of text linguistics in the 1980s and 1990s. I will not dwell on this in detail. I will only remark that at that time the typology of scientific/special texts was developed in very detailed way, i.e. different types (genres, classes) of texts and their structural, functional and cognitive characteristics were identified and thus a general theory of a special text with respect to textual communication was elaborated (cf. the very characteristic title of the monograph by Klaus Dieter Baumann (1992) “Integrative Fachtextlinguistik”). Within the given framework I will focus on a brief article by Vladimir Leychik (1996) that became important for the task of textual evaluation of new terms posed in this article.

It is remarkable that in the title of the paper, “Term and text”, “term” appears first. The author concentrates on the *term* as a unit of special text and develops an additional classification that is “specific to the terminological theory of text” (Leychik, 1996, p. 41). According to this classification, texts are divided into three groups/classes: **terminology-using**, **terminology-fixing**

and **terminology-generating** texts.<sup>4</sup> Various dictionaries, encyclopedias and reference books form the class of terminology-fixing texts according to Leychik's concept. This is the sphere of onomastic terminography, which I will not analyze in this article. The two other groups of texts, terminology-generating and -fixing, are of interest as the source from which a terminologist can derive new terms.

In a terminology-generating text, a new term gains the right to life by attributing a definition of the concept, denoted by the term, as well as, in the case of the *N + onym* model, the so-called **etymological definition**, explaining the meaning of the Greek or Latin element (etymon). As a rule, this happens at the very beginning of the text, in the so-called strong position of the text (*сильная позиция текста*), and very often in the title of the article. This is a proven way to stake out a new topic. The further use of the term in the body text represents its potential not only as a cognitive but also as a communicative unit.

A **hypothesis** for assessing the need for a new term can be formulated as follows. If a new term is presented only at the top and the end of the article and is replaced by non-terminological descriptions in the body text of the article, such a term does not seem to be very necessary. A term is evaluated as more necessary if the body text contains derivative terms and/or hyperonyms and hyponyms, i.e. this term fits into the genus-species hierarchy of terms and is supported by terms of the same term family (cluster). For example, for the term *urbanonym*, the derivative is the adjective *urbanonymic*, family terms *urbanonymy*, *urbanonymics*, *urbanonymicon*; a generic term is a *toponym*, a specific term is a *hodonym*, an *agoronym*, etc.

The role of the special text in the accumulation and transmission of scientific knowledge can hardly be overestimated. Despite the emergence of digital media and movement towards a paperless society, written text still remains the medium in which new knowledge is generated and then stored and transmitted. Therefore, the following is proposed as the first textual criterion for evaluating a new term: **is there a text that generates a term?** If such a text exists, its structure will be analyzed by using textual parameters.

At first sight, it goes without saying that the author usually explains the term in a text. However, the way in which the author introduces the term into

<sup>4</sup> In Russian: *терминоиспользующие, терминофиксирующие и терминопорождающие тексты*.

the text – and thus into the cognitive thesaurus of his/her colleagues – is indicative for assessing the cognitive potential of the new term. Thus, the second criterion for evaluating a new term in the terminology-generating text is the presence of an **explanatory context**, or **explanatory convoy** that accompanies the term at the moment of its birth and supports it semantically. I refer to all kinds of definitions, parallels between the term in question and some other term, etc. Further, the term's role in text cohesion is evaluated: frequency of the term and its distribution across text fragments is analyzed, as well as the types of **recurrence** associated with the term: partial (e.g., repetition of a morpheme) and full (repetition and/or substitution of a whole term).<sup>5</sup> Thus, the text-building potential of the new term can be established.

As a further step, I will consider individual **terminological cases** as three mini-case studies, using the provisions set out above. For my research I used articles written in Russian by onomasticians from Belarus and Russia, including, among others, Anna M. Mezenko, Marina L. Dorofeyenko, Roman V. Razumov and Tatjana V. Shmeleva.

#### 4. Mini-case study #1: The term *viconym*

Currently, the term *виконим* (*viconym*, *vikonym*) is recognized within the framework of Slavic onomastic terminology. There are a number of papers by various authors in which this term is used. This makes it possible to evaluate its textual potential with respect to the necessity/justification of its existence as an onomastic/toponymic term.

*Viconym* (< Latin *vicus* 'village') is defined as "the proper name of any intra-village topographic object" (Mezenko, 2007, p. 379). It is known that the birthplace of this term was the XV All-Polish Onomastic Conference (Krakow, 2006), where it was presented in two papers – by Anna Mezenko (Belarus)

<sup>5</sup> For the concept of recurrence as one of the cohesive devices, along with paraphrase and pro-forms, see the classical monography on text linguistics (de Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981, pp. 103ff.).

and by Beata Afeltowicz (Poland) (cf. their contributions in the proceedings of the conference, Afeltowicz, 2007; Mezenko, 2007, as well as the conference chronicle, Afel'tovich, 2007, p. 118). I will not discuss the “birthright” in term creation here. For the purposes of this paper, I needed a terminology-generating text (Mezenko, 2007) and other text discussing viconyms (Razumov, 2012, 2013; Dorofeyenko, 2014, 2018; Mezenko, 2014; 2017).

Mezenko (2007) insisted on the usefulness of this term at the stage of its introduction; its importance was also emphasized by onomasticians later (Dorofeyenko, 2014, p. 178). The term *viconym* appeared as a result of filling, firstly, a conceptual and secondly, a nominative gap in the system of toponymic terms: the term *urbanonym* had already existed in this system for the names of objects in urban space, but there was nothing for similar objects in rural space. There was an empty cell, which was successfully filled by the term *viconym*.<sup>6</sup>

*Viconym* had a high derivational potential as a basic term in the term family from the start. Its first appearance in a terminology-generating text was not alone, but accompanied by several derivatives: *виконимия*, *виконимика*, *виконимический* (Mezenko, 2007). Thus, the term *viconym* started its functioning in the text as a member of a **terminological cluster** (a family of terms with the same term-element). Further, the terminological potential of the *viconym* was also realized in the coining of species and related terms of different structure that represent *in toto* its **terminological field**. Cf. *эрговиконим*, *микровиконим*, *виконимы-характеристики*, *виконимы-посвящения*, *эвсемантические виконимы*, *номерные виконимы* (Razumov, 2013). The paper by Roman Razumov, in which all these terms appear, aims to propose a set of *viconym*-species or specifications of the term *viconym*.<sup>7</sup> So the term is treated as a generic one (genus term in genus-species

<sup>6</sup> This example serves as a good illustration of the operation of the terminological principle formulated in the 1930s by the linguist-orientalist Nikolaj Vladimirovič Jušmanov (1896–1946) and subsequently supported by the linguist Aleksandr Aleksandrovič Reformatskij (1900–1978). This principle sounds like this: “Knowing the place in the system, you know the term; knowing the term, you know the place in the system”. The Jušmanov-Reformatskij principle is a *conditio sine qua non* when coordinating terminology, since it allows one to compare not only single terms, but also terminological systems as a whole, and thereby detect and eliminate terminological gaps (Vasil'yeva, 2014b, pp. 123–124).

<sup>7</sup> These species-terms are now used by other onomasticians, cf. Sharifullina & Khayrutdinov, 2018.

classification). The status of *generic term* manifested an important milestone in the process of establishing *viconym* as a necessary onomastic notion with respect to term.

By 2017, when *viconym* was criticized on the pages of the journal “Voprosy Onomastiki” (Problems of Onomastics) (Madiyeva & Suprun, 2017), this term had already been used for a whole decade in scientific texts by Belarusian and Russian onomasticians and had already accumulated different paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. The critical assessment by Madiyeva and Suprun of the term *viconym* is based exclusively on the semantics and form of the Latin etymon as a first component of the term. The authors were disappointed that the semantic and linguocultural opposition of *urbanus* ‘urban’ vs. *rusticus* ‘rustic, rural’ was not taken into account when coining the term. Therefore, they suggested replacing *виконим* (*viconym*) with a *рустиконим* (*rusticonym*), or at least with a *виканоним* (*vicanonym*), in which the first component is formed from the stem of adjective (< lat. *vicānus*), as in the correlative term *урбаноним* (*urbanonym*) (< lat. *urbanus*). In addition, according to these onomasticians, the Latin word *vīcus* is polysemic, and ‘village, settlement’ is only one of its meanings (Madiyeva & Suprun, 2017, p. 118). Being very fond of classical philology, I certainly agree with the opinion of the authors that when creating onomastic terms, it is desirable to take into account the “derivational characteristics of classical languages”. However, in the case of the term *viconym*, we observe the victorious march of a term that is etymologically not entirely accurate, but a very convenient term from the point of view of textual, derivational and apperceptual characteristics. I think that seeing the term *viconym* and derivatives from its terminological family even five times on the same page will not irritate the reader.

## 5. Mini-case study #2: The term *hortensionym*

This term derived from lat. *hortensius* ‘horticultural’ + *onym* has a well-traced history in texts. It was introduced by Mezenko (2014, p. 75) as the proper name of any topographic object within the agricultural (horticultural) partnership

(садоводческое товарищество).<sup>8</sup> First, I will evaluate the necessity of the term *hortensionym* via **pre-textual** criteria of term evaluation. From a cognitive point of view, the concept denoted by this term fills a conceptual gap in the series *urbanonyms* – *viconyms* –?, since an agricultural partnership is a special type of settlement, different from urban and rural, and the names of topographic objects within such a settlement also demonstrate their own characteristics. The etymon chosen for the first component of the term, the Latin adjective *hortensius* < *hortus* ‘garden’, is semantically valid. When apperceiving the term, there are no undesirable associations (information noise), since the author used the Cyrillic letters *х*, not *з* in transliteration of the initial Latin *h*, and the letter *с* in the middle of the word, therefore there is no confusion of the newborn onomastic term with the well-known name of the flowering plant *Hortensia* (*гортензия* in Russian).<sup>9</sup> From the point of view of phonetics, only the length of the term can cause criticism in my opinion; this is especially evident in the derivative terms *хортенсионимия* ‘hortensionymy’ and *хортенсионимикон* ‘hortensionymicon’. Apparently, it seems preferable for the latter to be used in a written text. The **textual** criterion of evaluation of this term will be based on the occurrence of the terms *хортенсионим* and *хортенсионимия* in the text and their distribution in the text structure. So, there are 29 occurrences (100%), and the distribution in text can be characterized as follows: the avant-text complex (title, abstract and keywords) – 20.7%, introduction – 27.6%, the body of the text – 44.8%, and conclusion – 6.9%. It is the body of the text which has the highest occurrence of the terms (44.8%) and this is a good sign for *хортенсионим* to join the terminological system of onomastics, because it is used in narrative mode, and the narrative mode means – in contrast to introductive and explicative ones – that it is used as something familiar.

The terms under consideration, as it was demonstrated, are quite consistent with the textual criteria of evaluation, and we can foresee the transition of the terms *хортенсионим* and *хортенсионимия* from the category of author’s terms to commonly used ones: it depends only on increasing the quantity of users of these terms besides its author.

<sup>8</sup> Agricultural partnerships (садоводческие товарищества) in Belarus and Russia are small villages located outside the city and consisting of summer cottages, united for the purpose of cultivating land and gardening.

<sup>9</sup> In Russian, the term *хортикультура* is noted as a borrowing from the English *horticulture* (Latin *horticultura*) meaning ‘small-area gardening’, cf. <https://method-estate.com/archives/413>

## 6. Mini-case study #3: Names of food establishments

Using the texts of two research articles as an example, I will consider three terms that denote proper names of food establishments. In recent decades, especially in the urban space, a real onymic boom has emerged in the segment of ergonymy/chrematonymy relating to restaurants, cafés etc., and there is an obvious need for a qualifying term. There are three candidate terms (with respect to competitors) for this position in Russian onomastics: *рестороним*, *трофоним*, *трапезоним* (*restauronym*, *trophonym*, *trapezonym*). The first two are presented in Starikova and Khoang (2017); the term *трапезоним* was presented in Shmeleva (2018). It is interesting how these terms are presented by the authors in the texts. The *trophonym* (from the Greek *trophe* ‘food’) and *restauronym* (from the word *restaurant*) are introduced in the text in a pair like synonyms (variants), and the authors suggested that the scientific community discuss these terms in a “democratic discussion” (Starikova & Khoang, 2017, p. 73). In addition to the avant-text complex (titles, annotations, keywords) (7 occurrences each), the terms *рестороним* and *трофоним* occurred twice in the body of this large article containing a detailed analysis of 5000 names of Moscow caterings establishments and then both terms reappear in the concluding part of the article. Thus, the quantitative evaluation of the terms’ distribution in the text parts has demonstrated an interesting experience of text writing: it is a research text within a terminological frame and the discussed terms occur in the introduction and conclusion, so that the volume text body is free from them. This raises the question as to whether these terms are necessary and if the discussion of the problem could be managed without them.

A different way of representing terms in text structure is demonstrated by Shmeleva (2018). In the paper, the names of food establishments as elements of the urban onomasticon are discussed from the point of view of their attractiveness, and the term *трапезоним* is proposed. It is rather interesting how the author arranges the explicative context for the term. Usually when a new term is coined based on international term elements, it is sufficient to point to the Greek or Latin word as etymon of the first component. Shmeleva takes the etymon (Greek *trapezaria* ‘a place to eat, a canteen’), but also “supports” the inner form of the term with the Russian words *трапеза*, *трапезная* (‘a repast, a refectory’) known from the monastic life and with

a colloquial verb *трапезничать* ('to repast') (Shmeleva, 2018, p. 118). This is a good example of how old lexical borrowings can contribute to explaining the inner form of a new term, though they do not belong to a specific scientific functional style. In contrast to the article discussed above, which contained newly coined terms only in its initial and final parts, the term *трапезоним* in Shmeleva (2019) actively participates in text building (76.2% occurrences in the text body, 14.3% in avant-text, 9.5% in the conclusion) and thus, according to the textual criterion of evaluation, can be said to be the leader out of the discussed triplet of terms *трапезоним*, *трофоним*, *рестороним*.

## 7. Conclusion

As a conclusion, I would like to propose a method for complex evaluation of a new term, which should consist of two stages: **pre-textual** and **textual**.

At the **pre-textual** stage, the term as a unit of scientific knowledge is assessed from the following points of view:

- (a) From the cognitive point of view: assessment of the need for nominative filling of a conceptual gap;
- (b) From the semantic point of view: assessment of the semantic adequacy of the chosen etymon (word and/or morphemes of the classical – and now not only classical – languages);
- (c) From the informational point of view: assessment of the presence/absence of information noise (= unwanted associations);
- (d) From the aesthetic point of view: assessment of euphoniousness, ease of pronunciation and conformity to linguistic taste.

The pre-textual evaluation of a term is significant in itself; however, even a term that is ideal from the above-listed points of view will never reach full acceptance if the second stage of evaluation, the textual one, is not passed.

At the **textual** stage, the term is evaluated as a unit of special text from the following points of view:

- (a) Its quantitative presence in the text structure (avant-text, initial and final parts, the text body, passim);
- (b) Its being maintained by explicative context ("explicative convoy");

- (c) Its role in text cohesion (the presence of derivational variability and recurrent chains).

The examples considered in this paper demonstrate that compliance with all the above-mentioned evaluation criteria implies the transition of a term from the status of a “new” one to the status of a commonly used one. In this case, the criticism ceases. An additional condition is that the term enters into a set of texts belonging to different authors. The phenomenon of the “one text term” (cf. *restauronym*) provides this term with the status of a potential one. In the history of onomastic terminology, examples are known when a potential term, the so-called “futuraonym” (футуроним), over time changed its status and became a unit of full terminological rank. Whatever the terminological situation, onomasticians always have an apophatic approach in stock: sometimes it is better to say “no” to a new term and use already existing terminology and/or descriptive phrases.

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