Some Remarks on the So-Called Onymic Motivation

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Key words
lexicology, proper names, lexical motivation, onymic motivation, paradigmatic motivation, word-formation motivation, onymic meaning

Abstract
The present paper aims at providing an introductory analysis of the concept of onymic motivation (OM). The concept was first and in a very brief form introduced by J. Furdík in Teória motivácie v lexikálnej zásobe [Theory of Motivation in a Lexicon] (2008). The paper includes concise comments on the following three questions: 1) What is the nature of OM? – OM means that a given lexeme individualizes, identifies and differentiates a unique referent. 2) What is the co-operation of OM with other motivation types? – Only relations of OM – paradigmatic motivation and OM – word-formation motivation are outlined. The former can be viewed upon as a) the place of a proper name within the onymic system (cf. paradigms of first names, family names, oikonyms, anoikonyms, etc.); b) the existence of specific microstructural relations (e.g. onymic homonymy and synonymy). The latter (OM – word-formation motivation) operates through two fundamental aspects: a) proper name as a motivating unit; b) word-formation as a feature of a proper name. 3) What is the dynamism of OM? – The dynamism of OM is manifested through the processes of proprialization, transonymization (onymic transmotivation) and appellativization (onymic demotivation).

An outstanding Slovak linguist Juraj Furdík (1935–2002) introduced one of several possible treatments / approaches in the field of lexicology. His approach is based, contrary to the Saussurean concept of arbitrariness, on the concept of motivation, hence named a theory of lexical motivation. Unfortunately, Furdík’s remarks had remained unfinished because of his premature death in 2002. The final version of the theory can be found in a posthumously published monograph Teória motivácie v lexikálnej zásobe [Theory of Motivation in a Lexicon] (Furdík 2008); further comments on some aspects of the theory were also given in papers by Ološtiak (e.g. 2004; 2007a; 2007c).

Onymic motivation (OM), in Furdík’s view, represents one of seventeen types of lexical motivation. In Furdík’s work, unlike word-formation or paradigmatic motivation, OM was not deeply analyzed. The author provides only short remarks including the following theorems: proper names are onymically motivated; proper names denote referents as individual entities (exemplified by means of difference

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between the God and a god, cf. the First Commandment: “I am the Lord your God, You shall have no other gods before Me”); moreover, one problematic issue is proposed, namely the relation between OM and paradigmatic motivation (Furdík 2008: 56–57).

In this paper I will try to give a brief comment on the following issues:

1. What is the nature of OM?
2. What is the co-operation between OM and other motivation types?
3. What is the dynamism of OM?

1. What is the nature of OM? In other words, what does it mean if a lexeme is “onymically motivated”?

Unlike, for instance, word-formation motivation (WFM), OM does not represent the way how a lexeme is coined. WFM reflects the fact that words are formed from respective words by means of a morphemic change, e.g. záhada ‘mystery’ → záhadný ‘mysterious’. Thus the process of a “physical” coinage of a proper name is not a matter of OM. However, OM answers the question Why a proper name is a proper name in the following way: a lexeme is the proper name because it reflects the communication need of a respective speech community, namely to denote a given object of an extra-linguistic reality as a unique, one and only entity. Consequently, OM explains the function of a lexeme. The function of a proper name is to individualize, identify and differentiate a unique referent (Blanár 1996; Šrámek 1999).

General motivation scheme is based on the theorems concerning the principle of word-formation motivation (Furdík 1993). With regard to coining words, the motivation functions as a process, it establishes a relation between the motivating (A) and the motivated (B) word and it becomes a feature of the motivated word. The scheme of the principle can be illustrated as follows:

![Figure 1. General scheme for the principle of lexical motivation](image)

It comprises the motivating element A which underlies the existence of the motivated element B. In my opinion, the general scheme can be applied to all motivation types. In this respect it is natural to pose the following question: How can the general scheme be specified with respect to OM? The motivated element B is a proper name, e.g. Malý Dunaj, the motivating element A can be defined as
the need to denote a concrete object (the river) as a unique entity. Naturally, the linguistic demand of a speech community is of an extra-linguistic provenience. This fact, however, does not provide an answer to the question how a given proper noun comes into existence. There is something missing yet, namely the actual way of coining a proper name. The coining, the concrete form of a proper name, e.g. whether it is a one-word unit (London, Kentucky; Bratislava, Váh), or a multiple-word unit (New York, Stratford-upon-Avon; Banská Bystrica, Vysoké Tatry), can be carried out by one of a variety of nomination processes (lexical selection, word-formation, semantic change /transonymization/, abbreviation, combination of words, etc.). These processes are determined by the demand of a speech community on one hand, and the capacity of a language on the other hand. Both factors are supervised by onymic norms. Onymic norms, in Blanár’s view (Blanár 1996: 187–188), can be characterized as: 1) a generally and homogenously operating set of tendencies, rules and patterns according to which a given onymic class/subclass is structured, e.g. family names are inherited, first names are chosen from the existing repertoire and nick names are given (sensu stricto there is no restriction in nickname-giving processes); 2) functioning of onymic classes/subclasses in communication.

![Figure 2. Model of onymic motivation](image-url)
2. What is the co-operation of OM with other motivation types?
Each motivation type co-operates with other types and it is necessary to consider the manner in which the co-operation is realized and which motivation types co-operate. The following commentary is related only to the two selected issues including OM co-operation with paradigmatic and word-formation motivation.

2.1 OM and paradigmatic motivation (PM)
It has been mentioned that Furdík only sketched the issue of relation between PM and OM. Let us treat the problem in more detail. PM reflects paradigmatic relations among lexemes, such as synonymy, antonymy, paronymy, homonymy, hyperonymy/hyponymy, etc. Each lexical unit is interconnected with other units by a number of paradigmatic relations. Thus a lexical unit can be a member of several lexical paradigms simultaneously. In this sense a lexicon of each natural language can be defined as: a) a huge net (“hypernet”) of lexical units; b) a set of miscellaneously structured lexical paradigms.

Lexical paradigmatics relates to proper names, too. However, it should be noted that paradigmatic relations of proper names are different from those concerning appellatives. Nevertheless, two aspects of co-operation between OM and PM can be analyzed: a) “vertical” paradigmatics (2.1.1) and b) “horizontal” paradigmatics (2.1.2).

2.1.1 “Vertical” paradigmatics. Blanár (1996) maintains that the place of a given proper name within the onymic system (e.g. paradigms of first names, family names, oikonyms, etc.) is reflected by onymic semantics. For instance, in the Slovak language the paradigm of family names is characterized by the following semantic/onymic features: [+determination by the usage in the sphere of administration and law] (Slov. ustálenosť administratívno-právnym úzom), [+heredity] (Slov. dedičnosť), [+expression of a kinship] (Slov. príbuzenský vztah k rodine ako celku), [+male] (Slov. mužský nositeľ); female family names are usually derived from male family names primarily by means of suffixation: Kováč (male) → Kováč-ová (female). The paradigm of first names is assigned to the following features: [–heredity], [–expression of a kinship], [+a person as such] (Slov. osoba ako taká). Blanár (1996) claims that these features constitute (along with some other semantic features) the so-called designation of a proper name.

2.1.2 “Horizontal” paradigmatics. Proper names constitute several microstructural, “horizontal” relations, notably homonymy, polysemy, antonymy and synonymy. Let us provide the definition of homonymy and synonymy (the delimitation of antonymy and polysemy is much more arguable). Out of many considerations relating to this issue we prefer the following: 1) onymic homonymy is the existence of two formally identical proper names having a
different designation, e.g. Washington¹ (anthroponym) – Washington² (toponym). Onymic synonymy (the term polyonymy is more appropriate, cf. Krško 2003: 15) means that several proper names denote the same onymic object (e.g. Bratislava – Blava, Dzurinda – Bicyklista, Jozef Golonka – Žiletka).

2.2 OM and word-formation motivation (WFM)

There are at least two fundamental aspects of the relation between OM and WFM: proper name as a motivating unit (2.2.1); word-formation as a feature of a proper name (2.2.2).

2.2.1 A proper name can function as a motivating element, a basis for coining new lexical units, both proper names and appellatives: e.g. Peter → Petra, Bečka → Bečková (masculine → feminine); Jozef → Jozefov, Mikuláš → mikulášsky, Prešov → prešovský, Vltava → vltavský (coining of adjectives).

A number and typology of derivatives coined from a word X is termed the derivative capacity. This concept was developed and satisfactorily explained only on the material of deverbal word-formation by Buzássyová (1974). Buzássyová’s fundamental theorem can be stated as follows: the derivative capacity of a verbal lexical unit is determined by the intention of the verbal action. Thus the verbal intention can be conceived as the principle organizing deverbal word-formation.

How does this issue relate to proper names? Regarding the proper names the following question is interesting: Does an analogical principle affecting the onymic word-formation exist? In my opinion the answer is positive. The principle organizing deonymic word-formation is the onymic semantics (in Blanár’s terminology, the designation of proper names). The designation specifies the place of a given name within the onymic system (stressing the fact that proper names always function as members of particular onymic classes and subclasses, see 2.1.1); e.g. anthroponyms (class) → first names, family names, nicknames (subclasses); toponyms (class) → oikonyms, anoikonyms (subclasses). The fact of “being an anthroponym/first name/family name etc.” predetermines the set of basic derivatives and the structure of the word-formation paradigm of a respective proper noun being a motivating unit. (Word-formation paradigm is understood as a set of lexical units coined from one particular lexeme.) However, onymic semantics (designation) regulates only the coining of basic derivatives, whereas the reference determines a number of other (non-basic) derivatives. Thus the terms basic word-formation paradigm (BWFP) and basic word-formation nest (BWFN) are introduced (see Ološtiak 2007b). Examples:

- BWFP and BWFN of anthroponyms – family names: feminine name, possessive adjective, the name for the whole family, e.g. Kováč → Kováčová “female Kováč”, Kováčov/Kováč’s [Kováčova dcéra – Kováč’s daughter], Kováčovci / the Kováčs.
• anthroponymic BWFP and BWFN – first names: possessive adjective, e.g. Michal/Michael → Michalov/Michael’s [Michalova priateľka – Michael’s girlfriend].
• toponymic (oikonymic) BWFP and BWFN: ethnonym/inhabitant name, feminine inhabitant name, relational adjective, e.g. Londýn/London → londýnsky / London (adj.) / London’s, Londýnčan/Londoner → Londýnčanka/She-Londoner.
• toponymic (anoikonymic) BWFP and BWFN: relational adjective, e.g. Temža / The Thames → temžský / of the Thames / Thames (adj.).

The formation of subsequent lexical units depends on the reference, or, according to V. Blanár, informational and encyclopedic component of the onymic meaning, i.e. a set of knowledge that each person has with regard to a particular onymic object. The more important the onymic object (O) denominated by an onymic sign (S) for a speech community is, the more extensive the reference of S is, the more derivatives are coined from the respective onymic sign, e.g. the names of politicians such as Mečiar, Dzurinda, Fico in Slovakia, or Klaus, Havel, Zeman in the Czech Republic, and its derivatives: mečiarovský, mečiarizmus, mečiarovec, protimečiarovský; dzurindovec, protidzurindovský; ficovec, Ficko, protificovský, ficománia; klausista, klausovka, klausizmus (see also Martincová 2003) and many more.

2.2.2 Word-formation as a feature of a proper name. Let us take into consideration the class of family names. Many family names were coined by means of derivation (from respective first names), e.g. Jakub → Jakub-ec, Jakub-ech, Jakub-eje (diachronically, morphemes -ech and -eje are possessive suffixes). Synchronically, there is no semantic relation between the motivating and motivated word: Jakub and Jakubec, it is a matter of a unilateral morphemic structure, only the form of the name is relevant. Therefore, Jakub → Jakubec does not correspond to the word-formation proper operating in the field of common names: both formal and semantic relation between the motivating and motivated word can be found: dub – ‘oak’ → dubček ‘small oak’ (diminutive). From this point of view each family name should be synchronically considered as non-motivated.

The formation of hypocoristics (endearing names) is closer to that of appellatives, notably diminutives. However, it is possible to specify the onomasiological category of “hypocoristics” (e.g. Katarína → Katka, Catherine → Cathy). The formation of feminine family names falls into the category of feminative nouns. In addition, word-formative meaning of feminine proper names differs from that of appellatives (see the following table):
### Appellatives Proper names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Word-form meaning</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Word-form meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>diabol</em> → <em>diablica</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>“devil” “she-devil”</td>
<td>N anim masc mot + female</td>
<td>[motivating noun is masculine animal]</td>
<td><em>Kováč</em> → <em>Kováčová</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>wife of N masc fam mot</td>
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#### 3. What is the dynamism of OM?

Each motivation type is subject to changes. The dynamism is manifested in various ways such as acquisition, duration, change, weakening and disappearance of a given motivation type (terms *remotivation, transmotivation* and *demotivation* are postulated). A motivation type comes into existence due to the fact that a corresponding lexeme is formed. In the case of OM it is the “creation” of a proper name: appellative → proper name (in Slovak linguistics this process is denoted as *proprializácia, onymizácia, proprialization, onymization*). The process of transonymization (i.e. proper name → proper name; see Šrámek 1999: 56) can be understood as *the onymic transmotivation*. The process of appellativization (deonymization) (i.e. proper name → appellative) can be treated as *the onymic demotivation*.

### Conclusions

I believe Furdík’s concept of lexical motivation could give an impetus to further research in the field of lexicology as well as onomastics. The present paper “telegraphically” presents only some fundamental issues including the nature, co-operation and dynamism of onymic motivation. Apart from the enhanced discussion on the above-mentioned questions, there are still a lot of other issues to be clarified, e.g. the status of onymic motivation within the typology of lexical motivation, onymic motivation in relation to syntactic, interlingual, temporal etc. motivation, onymic motivation and communication, onymic semantics and many more.

### References

Summary

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