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Functions of toponyms in novels

Funkcje toponimów w powieści

Abstract

This article is devoted to the functions of toponyms in the novel. The study was undertaken in order to fill a gap in the field of literary onomastics, in which more attention has so far been paid to characters' names than to place names, and within the research on toponyms no universal method has yet been proposed that could be used to study the functions of these names in any novel. The proposal of such a universal method would enable the further development of research within this topic and the comparison of analyses carried out based on this method. In the long run, it might also have implications for research in the field of translating toponyms in the novel. The starting point for this study is the theory of two acts (which uses the act of naming and the act of using a name). The functions of toponyms in the novel are divided into two groups: permanent and momentary. In the course of the analysis, the anti-didactic function, which has not been identified in any previous studies based on the theory of two acts, was recognised.

Keywords: literary onomastics, toponyms, functions of toponyms in novels, naming act, act of using a name

Abstrakt

Artykuł poświęcony jest funkcjom toponimów w powieści. Badanie podjęto, aby uzupełnić lukę w dziedzinie onomastyki literackiej, w której do tej pory większą uwagę poświęcono nazwom postaci niż nazwom miejscowym, a w obrębie badań dotyczących toponimów nie zaproponowano jeszcze uniwersalnej metody, którą można byłoby stosować do badania funkcji tych nazw w dowolnej powieści. Zaproponowanie takiej uniwersalnej metody umożliwi dalszy rozwój badań w obrębie tego tematu oraz porównywanie analiz przeprowadzonych w oparciu o tę metodę. W dalszej perspektywie może to mieć również wpływ na badania z zakresu tłumaczeń toponimów w powieści. Punktem wyjścia dla rozważań jest teoria dwóch aktów (wykorzystująca akt nazewniczy i akt użycia nazwy). Funkcje toponimów w powieści zostają podzielone na dwie grupy: stałe i chwilowe. W trakcie analiz wyróżniona zostaje funkcja antydydaktyczna, która nie została zidentyfikowana w żadnych wcześniejszych badaniach opartych na teorii dwóch aktów.

Słowa kluczowe: onomastyka literacka, toponimy, funkcje toponimów w powieści, akt nazewniczy, akt użycia nazwy

1. Introductory remarks

International Council of Onomastic Sciences defines toponomastics as a "branch of onomastics studying toponyms in a scholarly way" and the toponym as a "proper name of a place, both inhabited and uninhabited"[1]. Toponomastics dates back to the 19th century. Place names have been of interest to a great number of scholars, and copious toponymic research has been published. Most of it, however, concentrates on place names in the real world, and comparatively few discuss toponyms in literature. These publications address the issues of, for instance, toponyms in individual novels (e.g. Nicolaisen 2011), the tasks of place names in literature (e.g. Kohlheim 2013), the form of place names in literature (Gliwa 2014), and the reception of place names by foreign readers (Ameel, Ainiala 2018). None so far have tackled the task of providing a universal approach and tools for studying functions of place names in novels. The development of such a method and instruments is the objective of this study. On the other hand, characters' proper names in literature have been studied more extensively than toponyms (cf. Kohlheim 2013: 364). The theory of two acts proposed by Gibka (2019) divides the functions of characteronyms in novels into two groups: the permanent and the momentary. The first are identified on the basis of the naming act and the latter on the basis of the act of using a name. The same will be done to functions of place names in novels.

2. The act of naming a place in the novel

As in the theory of two acts, so too here, the moment of naming is considered to be the first of the key moments. It is at this point that the toponym begins to perform its first function – a permanent function which it performs independently of its particular uses.

Outside literary onomastics, the first naming act was proposed by Lutterer and included three elements: "the name-giver", "the name given", and "the object named", which were defined as the "initiator of the naming act and author of its final produce", the "result of the naming process", and "a distinct geographical entity" respectively (Lutterer 1982: 63–64). This act was later developed in a microtoponymic study devoted to the names of climbing routes and rock formations in Poland (Rutkowski 2001). In this

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[1] <https://icosweb.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ICOS-Terms-en.pdf>, accessed: 22.10.2022.

study, Lutterer's model was supplemented with two elements: the situational context and the user. The situational context was understood as "the set of all circumstances accompanying the identification of an onymic object and naming it" and the user as "the social group within which the name functions" (Rutkowski 2001: 42).

Using these two acts and the model of the act of naming a character in a novel (Gibka 2019: 50), the model of the act of naming a place in the novel presented in Diagram 1 has been created. It incorporates eight elements, five of which belong to the fictional world of the novel and three to the real world. The five elements in the fictional universe have their predecessors in other toponymic models. Lutterer's name-giver is here called the namer, his name-given is simply the name, and his object named becomes the denoted place. Rutkowski's user retains its term but refers to fictional characters in the novel, and, as the majority of them are usually not present at the moment of naming, the user is connected to the name by a broken line. Rutkowski's situational context has to become more specific and is called the situational context of the namer. It is understood as physical and social circumstances surrounding the act of giving the name in the fictional world[2].
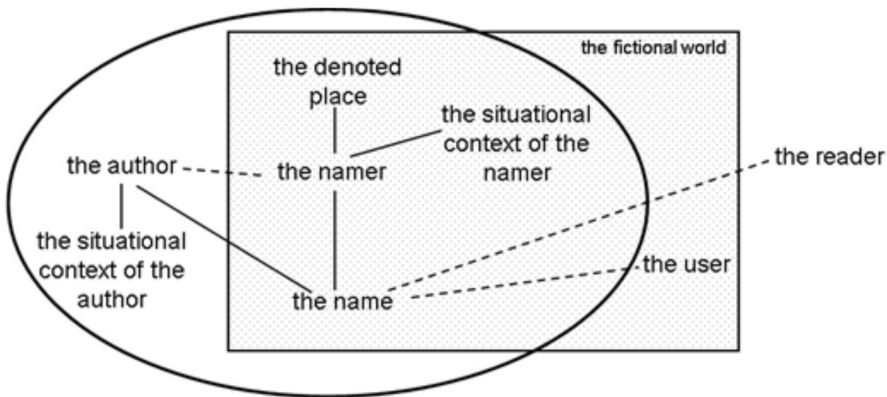

Diagram 1. The model of the act of naming a place in the novel

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[2] The definition is derived from Ducrot and Todorov's definition of speech situation: "The set of circumstances surrounding the occurrence of an act of enunciation […]. By this we mean at once the physical and social setting in which the act takes place, the identity of the interlocutors, their image of the act of enunciation, their views of each other (including the idea each has of what the other thinks of him), the events that have preceded the act of enunciation (especially the previous relations between the interlocutors and in particular the verbal exchange in the course of which the enunciative act in question takes place)" (1979: 333).

The remaining three elements are equivalents of the real-world components of the act of naming a character in the novel and are understood in the following way: the author is the person who wrote the novel; their situational context refers to the circumstances which have surrounded the process of creating places, choosing or inventing names for them, naming them, and writing the book in general; and the reader are "all people who will read the novel" (Gibka 2019: 51). The reader is connected to the name by a broken line, for they are absent at the moment of naming.

The naming of a place in the novel occurs when a place which does not have a name receives its first one or when a place which already has a name receives another one. When a toponym is given to a nameless place, the act of naming occurs as follows: (1) the author recognizes that due to its significance to the plot a fictional place they created needs to have a proper name; (2) the author identifies (distinguishes) motivational features (originating from the place, the situational context, or the name itself); (3) the features noticed become an inspiration to give the place its own name, and the author names the place. After the place is named, characters in the fictional world use the toponym, and, eventually, when the novel is released, the reader encounters the onym. When a named place receives another onym, the naming act occurs similarly. (1) The author decides that due to a reason a named place needs to receive another name; (2) the author recognizes motivational qualities (here, they can also come from the place's previous name(s)); (3) the discerned traits inspire the author to name the place, which they do. Then, the user uses the onym, and later the reader learns it. In all naming acts, the author uses the namer as their 'puppet' (hence the broken line between the namer and the author), and the user thinks the places were named by the namers. The two types of naming differ in that only the first one results in increasing the number of named places, and it is in the second one that the namer and motivational traits are more often revealed[3].

It needs to be noted that not all places created in the fictional universe of the novel receive names. Therefore, there might be fewer naming acts than places but as many as toponyms.

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[3] If compared to the acts of naming characters in a novel, here the namer will be less often known (people are usually named by their parents). Another difference is that the denoted place will not be able to use or perceive its own name.

3. Permanent functions

Functions of characters' names identified at the moment of naming were called permanent (Gibka 2019: 49). It is because they are served permanently from the moment the entity is named regardless of the circumstances of the name's use. The same applies to place names.

The permanent function of a toponym in the novel is here understood as the role that the place name serves in relation to a given element of the act of naming a place in the novel (cf. Gibka 2019: 52). There is one permanent function served by all toponyms in novels, namely the identifying-differential function. It is performed in relation to the denoted place as the onym identifies a place and differentiates it from other places, thereby allowing it to be referred to. Because it is served by all toponyms, it is called the primary function, and all other functions, which are performed by only some place names, are called secondary. The secondary permanent functions of toponyms in novels are listed in Table 1. The preparation of this list of functions involved three processes: analysing the tables presented in Gibka 2019 and her subsequent articles, answering the question "What functions can a place name perform in a novel?", and collecting the functions performed by toponyms in the novels read by the author of this work. Nevertheless, this list of functions might be incomplete and may be supplemented as long as the new functions are defined in the manner presented in this article.

Table 1. The secondary permanent functions of toponyms in the novel[a]

	The relation	The worlds which the relation involves	The functions
1.	name : denoted place	fictional	semantic, localizing
2.	name : namer	fictional	expressive, desirous, revealing
3.	name : situational context of the namer	fictional	allusive, commemorative, localizing
4.	name : name	fictional	poetic
5.	name : user	fictional	humorous, conative[b], didactic-educative, camouflaging
6.	name : author	fictional and real	expressive
7.	name : situational context of the author	fictional and real	localizing, allusive, commemorative
8.	name : reader	fictional and real	humorous, conative, camouflaging, didactic-educative, anti-didactic

[a] This table differs from the one listing secondary permanent functions of characteronyms in the novel presented in Gibka 2019 and supplemented in her later articles. The reason for this is the different nature of the entities denoted by the studied names.

[b] The term for this function has been adopted after Jakobson, who identified the conative function to be among the functions of language, cf. e.g. Furniss and Bath (1996).

The name can perform functions in eight relations because the act of naming a place in the novel comprises eight elements. Five of these relations involve only the fictional world, and three involve the fictional and the real world. This influences the degree to which the functions served in given relations can be analysed, for to access the fictional world, a scholar needs only the novel itself, and the elements of the real world cannot be accessed as easily and thoroughly. On the other hand, only the part of the fictional world presented in the pages of the novel can be accessed at all, and all parts of this world not revealed in the novel will never be accessible to the scholar.

First, in relation to the denoted place, two secondary permanent functions can be served. The semantic function occurs when the place is characterized by the name according to its metaphoric or literal meaning (cf. Wilkoń 1970: 83). Then, the localizing function emerges when the name locates the denoted place in space or time (cf. Wilkoń 1970: 83).

Second, in relation to the namer, the expressive, desirous, and revealing functions can be performed. The first appears when the name voices the namer's emotions towards the denoted place or the name. The emotions may be either positive or negative. Then, the desirous function occurs when the name indicates what properties the namer would like the denoted place to have, and the revealing role is served by a name which discloses some information about the namer, e.g. their level of education.

Third, there are three functions which can emerge in relation to the situational context of the namer. The allusive role is performed by the name which is an allusion to another place in the same fictional world (cf. Gibka 2019: 55), and the commemorative function appears when the name commemorates an entity from the fictional world (the namer's world). Then, the localizing role occurs when the name sets the plot in a specified place within the fictional world.

Fourth, the poetic function is the only one which can be served by the name in relation to itself. This role emerges when the name does not refer to other elements of the naming act but keeps the user's or the reader's attention on its structure (cf. Rutkowski 2001: 100). Defined as such, the function is performed by "names whose internal organisation is of an exceptional kind, which attracts attention to the name's linguistic form in the first instance" (Rutkowski 2001: 100–101).

Fifth, in relation to the user, the humorous, conative, didactic-educative, and camouflaging functions can be served. The first appears when the name makes the user laugh and the second when it arouses feelings or emotions in the user or causes them to perform some action. Then, the didactic-educative role occurs when the name enriches or preserves the user's knowledge

(cf. Kęsikowa 1988: 81) and the camouflaging one when the name hides the identity of its denoted place from some or all fictional figures.

The remaining relations to be discussed all involve two worlds: the fictional and the real. The relation to the author contributes one secondary function to the analysis. The expressive role is served by names which voice the author's feelings or emotions towards the denoted place or the name.

Then, three functions can emerge in relation to the situational context of the author. The localizing role is performed by the name which sets the plot in a specified time or place with regard to the real world (cf. Wilkoń 1970: 83). This happens when the fictional world is supposed to imitate or resemble the real one. The allusive function appears when the name is an allusion to a real place (cf. Wilkoń 1970: 83), and the commemorative role occurs when the name commemorates an entity from the real world.

Finally, in relation to the reader, five secondary functions can be served. Four of them will be understood here in the same way as in the theory of two acts (cf. Gibka 2019). If the scholar could have access to the reader's reactions, the humorous function would be said to emerge when the reader laughs at the name. As that is not possible, it has been established that this function is fulfilled when the name contains a humorous element and

> five groups of humorous literary proper names have been identified: names with the meaningless-meaningful incongruity (nomina propria that sound identically to appellatives), names with the meaningless-meaningful incongruity + a «catalyst» (Lew 2000: 131) (names appearing in contexts that reinforce the probability of their humorous reception), names with the neutral-not neutral incongruity (nomina propria that can be classified as colloquial, vulgar or that belong to certain semantic fields such as sexuality, physiology or scatology), names that depreciate the characters they denote, and «(mis)matched» anthroponymic [here toponymic] clusters" (Gibka 2019: 96–97).

Similarly, the conative role should be served by the name when the reader reacts to it (other than by laughing) or acts because of it; nevertheless, again this is impossible to be conclusively determined, so the analysis of this function can be performed only to a limited extent. Next, the camouflaging role appears when the name hides the identity of the denoted place from the reader. Then, the didactic-educative function emerges when the name enriches or preserves the reader's knowledge. This happens when the reader encounters toponyms denoting places which are counterparts of places called by the same names in the real world. Such names may be simply introduced in informative contexts or together with some information about their denotations. Lastly, a new function, a function that was not mentioned in the theory of two acts, has been identified. It is the opposite of the didactic--educative function, and it has received the name of the anti-didactic function.

It is performed by the name which teaches the reader false knowledge, false from the perspective of the real world. This happens when the reader meets toponyms sounding like place names from the real world and denoting places which seem to be their real-world counterparts. However, the information accompanying these names must be false with regard to the facts about the places in the real world. The anti-didactic function can be served only in relation to the reader and cannot be served in relation to the user as the user exists only in the fictional world and does not have access to the real world or any information about it.

4. The act of using a place name in the novel

The act of using a place name in the novel occurs when a character utters (or thinks of) a toponym. The theory of two acts identifies the moment of using a name as the second important moment alongside the moment of naming in terms of the functions a name can perform. It is when it is used that the name can perform a function which it does not perform from the moment it was bestowed upon an entity. These functions are called momentary (Gibka 2019: 64).

Before the momentary functions can be discussed, the act of using a toponym in the novel needs to be examined. The model of this act shown in Diagram 2 is based on the model of the act of using a character's name in the novel (cf. Gibka 2019: 65).
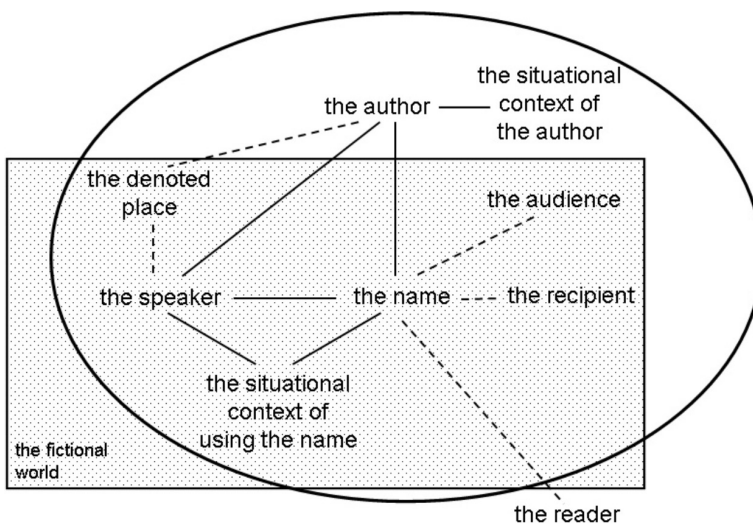

Diagram 2. The model of the act of using a place name in the novel

The three elements that belong to the real world (the author, their situational context, and the reader) can be defined precisely as their analogues in the model of the naming act. Then, the name refers to the toponym spoken (or thought), the speaker to the fictional figure who utters (thinks) the name, and the situational context of using the name to the physical and social circumstances surrounding the act. These elements (without the reader) are the elements necessary for the act to occur in a novel. They are therefore connected in the model by solid lines. The reader is connected to the name by a broken line because they are not present at the moment of using the name; they read about it later. The other broken lines are not solid as they lead to elements which are unnecessary for the act to happen. These elements are however often present. The denoted place is the fictional place whose name is uttered; the recipient refers to characters (or one character) who are the direct addressees of the act and the audience to fictional figures who are witnesses to the act.

An act of using a place name in the novel takes places as follows: (1) the author decides that a character will use a toponym; (2) (dis)regarding the circumstances, the author chooses which variant of the onym will be used; (3) the character utters or thinks of the place name and, if spoken, the name is heard by the recipient and by the audience if any are present. Later, when the novel is being read, the reader encounters the act (cf. Gibka 2019: 66).

5. Momentary functions

The momentary function of a toponym in the novel can be defined as the role the onym performs in relation to a given element of the act of using a place name in the novel (cf. Gibka 2019: 66). The momentary secondary functions of toponyms in novels are listed in Table 2. Some restrictions are imposed on this list. Momentary functions complement permanent functions; their purpose is not to duplicate functions already identified. This means that even though a function served permanently is also served every time the toponym is used, it must not be included in the analysis twice. The momentary functions have been identified so that the roles performed by names only in individual uses (and not continuously from the moment of naming) are not omitted from the analysis. This in turn also means that the only primary function of toponyms is not recognised here and all momentary functions are secondary. The process of preparing the list of momentary functions was analogous to that of preparing the list of permanent roles. As with the list in Table 1, the list in Table 2 does not need to be exhaustive.

Table 2. The secondary momentary functions of toponyms in the novel

	The relation	The worlds which the relation involves	The functions
1.	name : speaker	fictional	sociological, expressive, conative, humorous, camouflaging, revealing
2.	name : name	fictional	poetic
3.	name : situational context of using the name	fictional	conative
4.	name : denoted place	fictional	semantic
5.	name : recipient	fictional	humorous, conative, camouflaging, revealing
6.	name : audience	fictional	humorous, conative, camouflaging, revealing
7.	name : author	fictional and real	expressive, revealing
8.	name : situational context of the author	fictional and real	–
9.	name : reader	fictional and real	humorous, conative, camouflaging

Momentary functions can be performed by toponyms in nine relations. This is because the act of using a place name has nine elements. However, as can be seen in Table 2, momentary functions have been identified not in all relations but in eight. So far, no functions have been recognised that a toponym could perform in relation to the situational context of the author only momentarily without performing them continuously from the moment of naming at the same time. Nevertheless, this does not mean that such functions cannot be identified in the future.

Of the eight elements in relation to which momentary functions of toponyms have been identified, six belong to the fictional world and two to the real world. The impact this has on the possibility of analysing the functions in each relation is exactly the same as in the case of permanent functions.

First, there are six functions which can emerge in relation to the speaker. The sociological role is performed by a place name whose use shows the speaker's social superiority or inferiority or their social, group, or national affiliation (cf. Wilkoń 1970: 83). The expressive function appears when the speaker uses a name to express their emotions or feelings and the conative role when a name provokes a reaction in the speaker or causes them to do something. Next, the humorous role occurs when a toponym makes the speaker laugh, excluding names which do that from the moment they were

bestowed upon the places they denote. Then, the camouflaging function is performed by names which conceal the identity of the denoted places from the speaker, and the revealing function is served by names which reveal some information about the speaker (e.g. a speech impediment or a state of alcohol intoxication).

Second, in relation to the name, the poetic function can appear when a toponym attracts attention to its structure at the moment of its use. The reason for this may, for instance, be the circumstances surrounding the act of using the name.

Third, the conative function can occur in relation to the situational context of using the name. This happens when a place name "is used to create or reinforce a certain atmosphere, even when it is happening without the intention of the speaker" (Gibka 2019: 69–70).

Fourth, in relation to the denoted place, the semantic function can be served. It emerges when in one of its uses, a toponym refers to a feature of its denoted place.

Next, the relations to the remaining two elements from the fictional world – the recipient and the audience – will be discussed together as functions performed in them are analogous. There are four roles which can emerge in both relations: the humorous, conative, camouflaging, and revealing. The first two of these appear when the recipient or the audience laughs or reacts to the name respectively. The camouflaging function occurs when a toponym conceals from the recipient or the audience the identity of the denoted place or of the speaker (also some facts about them). Then, the revealing role is served by names which disclose some information about the recipient or the audience (for instance their lack of humour).

Finally, the elements from the real world need to be discussed. In relation to the author, the expressive and revealing functions can emerge. The first of these is performed by toponyms which express the author's feelings and the second by names which reveal some information about the writer. Next, in relation to the reader, the humorous, conative, and camouflaging roles can appear. The first is served by place names which amuse the reader in one of the acts of their use. The second is performed by toponyms which cause the reader to react and the third by names which conceal the identity of the denoted place from the reader.

6. Closing remarks

The theory of two acts devised to analyse the functions of characters' proper names in the novel (Gibka: 2019) is proving to be an effective method for analysing the functions of another type of names, namely toponyms. To make this possible, the difference in the type of the named entity has been accounted for in both the model of the naming act and the model of the act of using the name. However, the changes in these models are not substantial as the names studied also belong to the fictional world of the novel, and it is the structure of this universe that has the greatest influence on the shape of the models.

Exactly as with the proper names of characters, the functions of toponyms belong to two groups: permanent and momentary. On the basis of the model of the naming act, which contains eight elements, permanent functions have been identified. These can be performed in eight relations and thus in relation to every element of the model. The permanent functions include one primary function and thirteen secondary functions, the latter of which can be performed in twenty-two variants. On the other hand, the model of the act of using a name, which contains nine elements, has been used to identify momentary functions. These functions have been recognized in eight relations as no functions have been recognised that toponyms could perform momentarily in relation to the situational context of the author. The momentary functions include eight secondary roles which can be served in twenty-two variants. In the course of the analyses that resulted in this article, one function has been identified that had not previously been identified within the theory of two acts and the research based on it. It is the anti-didactic function, which is a permanent role performed in relation to the reader.

The creation of tools designed to analyse the functions of toponyms in novels means that it is now possible to study individual toponyms and novels as well as series of novels, works by selected authors, works belonging to selected literary genres, and translations of novels. Furthermore, conducting research using the same method makes it possible to compare the results of this research. This is quite unlike previous studies in the field of literary onomastics, which lacked a common method.

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