

Summary

Polish and Bulgarian firmonyms from the visual communication perspective

Chrematonomastic research has become one of the most dynamically developing trends in onomastics in Poland in the 21st century. I am interested in firmonyms placed on signboards in Polish and Bulgarian cities. The choice of Polish and Bulgarian naming is based equally on my competences (Polish and Bulgarian education), interests, and research conducted so far. I extracted the names for analysis *in situ* in 2016–2019 in the capitals of both countries, i.e. in Warsaw and Sofia, as well as in Poznań and Plovdiv. Some of the firmonyms discussed come from Burgas, Varna, Nessebar, Ruse, Sliven, Slupsk, Szczecin, Ustka, and occasionally also from other places.

The aim of this monograph is to describe the functioning of firmonyms on visual media bearing information and advertising, such as signboards. In analysing particular signboards and how they function in Polish and Bulgarian city space, the focus will be both on the firmonym itself and the signboard design. This results from the conviction that the name and the medium on which it is presented condition and complement each other. Another significant feature in the case of Polish and Bulgarian names is the difference between the alphabets used in both countries, which, as will be shown, affects the reception of the content of the firmonym. In Bulgaria there is an additional phenomenon of choosing one of the alphabets, i.e. either the dominant native Cyrillic or Latin, which is associated with Western culture, and therefore attractive in its own way. At the same time, since the reception of signs is important from a business (marketing) point of view, some space will also be devoted to their impact on the customer, and their informational and aesthetic qualities.

The reason for my interest in signboards is that contemporary academic research is devoting ever greater attention to the objects around us. Signboards are such objects, in which we are dealing with the entanglement of names in

commodification. In recent years, a trend known as the “turn to materiality” has emerged in social sciences and humanities. It is referred to in literary studies, philosophy, and sociology, as well as in cultural studies. This monograph will constitute an attempt to implement the methodology of the turn to materiality in linguistics. Thus, an interdisciplinary approach to the matter under investigation will be applied. In this way, without rejecting traditional linguistic methods of analysis, I will also refer to research concepts adopted in other fields of humanities (for example, I will utilise some terms from literary studies, such as *emblem*, *lemma*, *imago* and *subscription*).

An additional aim of the book is to show the differences and similarities in creating and designing signboards, i.e. indicating certain tendencies in Poland and Bulgaria, and in their perception by the target audience. For this purpose, the research tools of social sciences, i.e. questionnaires were used.

I am particularly interested in signs with the names of restaurants and bars, because they are not only numerous but are also a diverse and eye-catching element of the cityscape. One might even get the impression that the creators of firmonyms (the names of establishments) attach more importance to names than other entrepreneurs. In an attempt to make them attractive, they use interesting naming patterns, and the finished product is placed on intriguing and appealing kinds of media.

The book consists of five chapters and the necessary technical part in the form of an index of names, bibliography and list of abbreviations. The first chapter presents problems connected with establishing uniform chrematonomastic terminology and contains a review of the most important literature in this field. On this basis, the classifications and the structure of firmonyms functioning in the academic literature are presented. Due to the fact that the vast majority of the discussions in this book are based on the analysis of signboards present in the urban space, the second and third chapters are devoted in turn to visual information, the history of signboards and their design. The next part of the analysis concerns firmonyms as seen from the perspective of the contexts in which they occur in the processes of communication. As my methodology is based on a turn towards materiality, which involves considering the physical aspect of signboards, in this chapter I propose to take the design context into account, which has not yet featured in the literature. The extended research methodology finds its practical application in Chapter Five, where fifty Polish and fifty Bulgarian signs representing catering establishments in both countries are analysed in detail.