

The Grammar of Names

Convenors:

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Research on proper names has thus far mainly been concerned with diachronic changes, thereby focusing on etymological problems and the history of names. In linguistics and the philosophy of language there has also been abundant research on the semantics of proper names and the distinction between proper names and common nouns. In contrast, questions about the grammar of proper names have received comparatively little attention in the literature. However, in recent years there has been a number of studies that deal with the grammar of names. Those studies have indicated grammatical differences between proper names and common nouns with respect to all linguistic levels, cf. Kolde (1995), Gallmann (1997), Anderson (2004, 2007), Longobardi (2005), Nübling (2005), Van Langendonck (2007), Nübling et al. (2015), Stolz et al. (2014), Van Langendonck & Van de Velde (2016), among others.

Although there are a few aspects that have been discussed in some detail recently such as, for instance, the diachronic development of inflectional marking, in general many questions remain open or have not even been posed yet. One explanation for this is that proper names do not form a homogeneous class with respect to their grammatical status but, rather, there are quite a number of different simplex and complex morphological and syntactic constructions being subsumed under this category. Among other things, it has been shown that

- (Particular subclasses of) proper names have deviant phonotactic and prosodic properties. For instance, German toponyms are often stressed on a non-initial syllable (*Liebenáú, Ludwigsháfen*).
- In inflection-rich languages such as German proper names form an inflectional class of their own which has undergone deflection and is characterized by the absence of almost all inflectional markers and allomorphy.
- Proper names may exhibit particular syntactic properties, such as the position of the genitive or the use in close apposition constructions.
- Proper names often take (sometimes also special) articles (as e.g. in many Austronesian languages) showing a deviant functional and syntactic behaviour.
- Proper names are reported to combine with adpositions which differ from those of common nouns although identical grammatical relations are to be expressed.
- With regard to gender, proper names seem to follow special gender assignment principles; during proprialization they often leave their former common noun gender and adopt a different gender, depending on the object they refer to.
- In word-formation, they may make use of specific onymic patterns, e.g. specific onymic derivational affixes that can be used for the formation of names exclusively as well as deonymic affixes that take only proper names as their basis. Other word formation patterns such as clipping and blending have been associated with particular onymic classes, e.g. personal names or brand names.
- In Latin toponyms are renowned for their retention of the erstwhile locative which has disappeared from the paradigms of common nouns.
- A cross-linguistically frequently attested phenomenon is zero-marking of spatial relations (especially those of Place and/or Goal) with toponyms whereas common nouns more often than not encode the very same categories overtly.

Furthermore, proper names often differ from common nouns with respect to their graphemic properties, such as, in German, the use of the hyphen and apostrophe to mark morphological boundaries. In general, proper names are less standardized with respect to their orthographic properties.

Research on the grammar of names does not only necessarily include a diachronic but also a diatopic perspective. For instance, German personal names show a special article behaviour dependent on region and full personal names in German dialects pattern between compound structures (*der Müller Hans*) and genitive phrases (*s' Müllers Hans*).

The central question of the workshop is in which way and to which extent proper names deviate from non-proprial expressions and whether it is legitimate – or even necessary – to posit a specific grammar of proper names. To this end, we invite both language-specific and cross-linguistic contributions, including dialectal studies, both from a synchronic and a diachronic perspective. We especially encourage new insights driven by large corpus-oriented data from theoretical linguistics, historical linguistics, language typology, and variational linguistics.

Topics to be explored include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- What is the morphosyntactic status of (different kinds) of complex proper names? What are the implications for grammatical theory?
- Are there specific patterns of phonological deviance in proper names in a given language?
- Are there differences between different classes of proper names (such as place names vs person names) with regard to their morphosyntactic and/or phonological properties?
- How does the morphosyntactic marking of proper names differ cross-linguistically?
- How does deonymic word formation differ from word formation with the same (or: homonymic) derivational affixes?
- Which patterns of onymic word formation can be observed, both language-specifically and cross-linguistically?
- Are there competing patterns of morphological and syntactic constructions with proper names?
- Are there specific patterns of onymic inflection or tendencies that can be observed cross-linguistically?

We invite submissions of abstracts for 20+10 min presentations at the email address below, which should also include contact details (name, affiliation, and email address). If approved, the workshop will form part of the 50th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europea (SLE) in Zürich, 10-13 September 2017. For the first phase, please submit an abstract of max 300 words (excluding references) to be evaluated for consideration in our workshop proposal. The initial submissions that have been decided to be most appropriate for the workshop will be included in the workshop proposal submitted to the SLE organizers. If the workshop is accepted, we will require a full abstract submission (deadline 15 January 2017), which will undergo the general SLE reviewing process.

Important Dates:

1 November 2016: Deadline for submission of 300-word abstracts to the workshop organizers (submission address: Dr. Nataliya Levkovich, levkov@uni-bremen.de)

25 November 2016: Notification of initial acceptance by the workshop organizers and submission of the workshop proposal to SLE

25 December 2016: Notification of acceptance of workshop proposals from SLE organizers to workshop organizers

15 January 2017: Submission of full abstracts

31 March 2017: Notification of paper acceptance

10-13 September 2017: SLE conference

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