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# Literary-Artistic and Folklore Onomastics: Common and Distinctive Features

## **Abstract**

The expansion of studies in literary onomastics and the accumulation of a considerable number of articles and monographs in the field proved the need to generalize the theoretical material. It also led to the extension and deepening of the subject of studies.

It was not only the shift in linguistics priorities that contributed to the pursuit of new research objectives, but also the intensification of research, appearance of new extraordinary scholars and the inhomogeneity of appellative context including a variety of literary texts in which proper names have to function. Subsequently, the expansion of the scope of the analysed onyms in literary texts of different genres fostered the process of division into sub-fields of studies in literary onomastics.

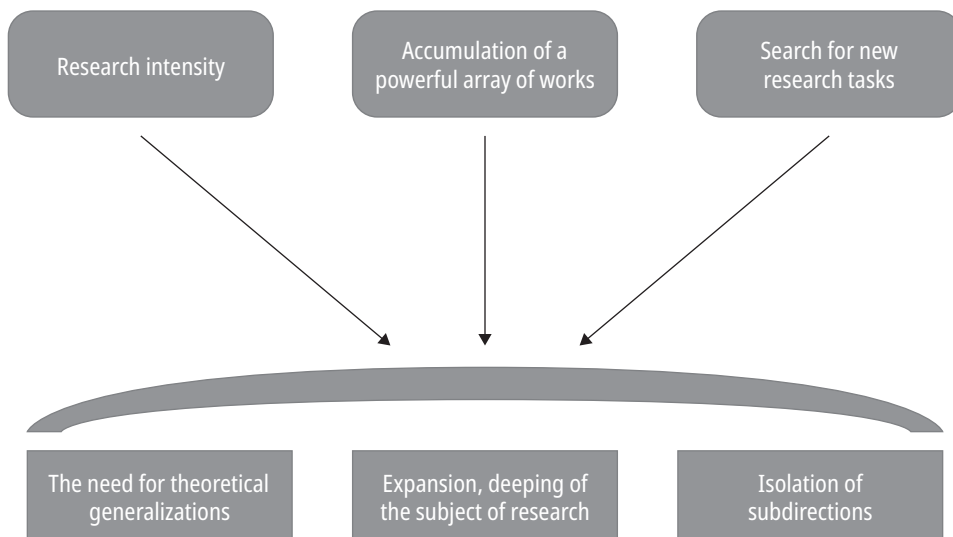
Today we can treat literary onomastics as a complex discipline that has already incorporated several sub-fields, including fiction, folklore, mythological and biblical onomastics. There are some interesting monographs on mythonyms and folklore onyms, as well as onyms in fiction and the Bible in Ukrainian onomastics.

The purpose of the paper is to analyse the peculiarities of onyms used in fiction and folklore, as well as to describe the features and regularities that give reason to create a corpus of onymic data. The next step is to identify the specific features of literary onyms, to stress their special character, and to propose a suitable methodology.

### **Keywords**

literary onomastics, folklore onomastics

Literary onomastics belongs to those areas of onomastic research that, despite being relatively new (in most European linguistics its institutionalization is believed to have only occurred in the second half of the 20th century), has been rapidly developing over the past decades. The intensity of research and accumulation of a powerful array of works caused theoretical generalization, as well as the expansion and deepening of studies of the subject (Figure 1). The search for new study objectives was urged not only by the shift in linguistic priorities, the intensification of scientific research or the appearance of outstanding scholars, but also by the inhomogeneity of the analysed context in which proper names have to function – in particular, by the diversity of literary texts.



**Figure 1. Reasons of intensive development of literary onomastics the end of 20th century and the first decades of 21st century**

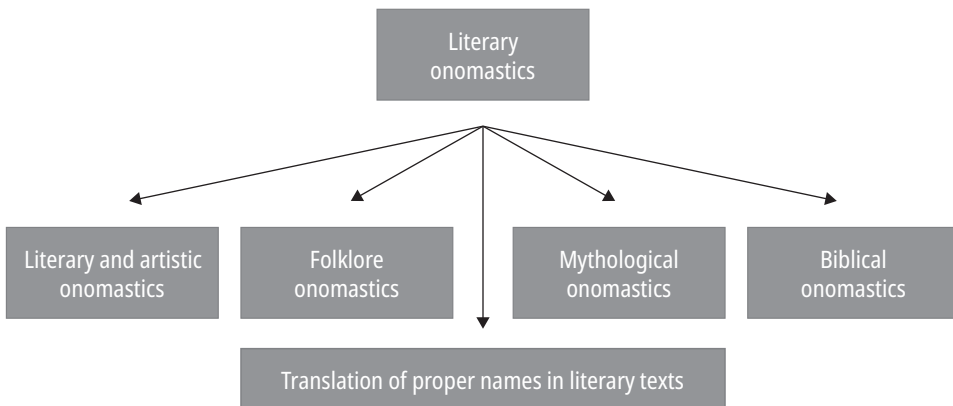
Source: authors' own work.

Consequently, the diversification of the study of onyms that appear in literary texts brought on further subdivisions in the field. This has led to the appearance of new areas of study.

Today we can interpret literary onomastics (some onomasticians tend to use the term stylistic onomastics) as a complex discipline that has already

combined several sub-branches, in particular literary and artistic onomastics (onomastics of the fiction literature), folklore, mythological, and biblical onomastics and proper name translation in literary texts, among others (see Figure 2).

An indicator of the fact that this tendency becomes commonly Slavic is the 22nd chapter of the encyclopedia “Słowiańska onomastyka” (2002–2003) that was dedicated to the issue of “Proper names in literature”, as it included the sections 22.4. “Proper names in translation” and 22.5. “Proper names in folklore”. In Ukrainian onomastics nowadays there are interesting monographic works not only on literary and artistic but also on folklore onyms, mythological proper names and biblical onyms, as well as on the issues of the translation of proper names in literary texts<sup>1</sup> (Beley, 2002; Byyak, 2004; Karpenko & Melnyk, 2004; Tymoshyk, 2010; Khudash, 2012; Kolesnyk, 2017).



**Figure 2. Fields of research of literary onomastics**

Source: authors' own work.

<sup>1</sup> We cannot forget to mention a number of interesting studies on the problem of literary onomastics that have recently appeared in other Slavic linguistics, in particular the monograph of the Czech onomastician Žaneta Dvořáková (2017) “Literární onomastika. Antroponyma”, one of the latest works in Polish linguistics “Literary Onomastics: A Theory” by Martyna Gibka (2019), as well as the fact that the 40th issue of the journal *Onoma* (2005) was entirely devoted to its problems, with articles from almost 20 authors around the world.

The aim of suggested research is: to determine the background for selecting literary-artistic and folklore onyms into separate blocks of proper names material; to precisely define the characteristics of the object for both sub-disciplines (literary-artistic and folklore onomastics respectively); to find out the special features of proper names functioning in literary-artistic and folklore texts.

Let us begin with the reasons for selecting those literary-artistic and folklore onomastics into separate blocks of onymic material, focusing on folklore onomastics as opposed to literary-artistic onomastics. The phylogenetic connection between folklore and literary-artistic onomastics is undeniable. It has resulted by interdependence between the fiction and folklore texts texts; it's generally accepted in folklore and literature that the former is a source or pre-history to the latter. However, in terms of ontogeny, they are not identical in terms of the timing of, and the conditions and the reasons for, their formation and development, and that specifies the uniqueness of these two types of art. The origin of European folklore is connected to the archaic stages of development of the European community, while the origin of literature is related to the first millennium BC (the time of the oldest European literary tradition, i.e. antiquity). Folklore is closely associated with mythic consciousness, and it originated as an organic part of rites determining its magical role. Literature grew from folklore and mythology at their later stages of development. Folklore and literature share the innate features of the artistic and aesthetic representation of reality, using imagery and metaphor from it. While the development of their conditions and background are strikingly different, the genre and style system of these two types of art are similar. Despite that, the basis of the ancient folklore tradition is composed of ritual songs that have no equivalent in literature. Why is it essential? It is the ritual songs with their primeval magical and sacred purpose (commonly accepted point about the distinct connection between religion and folklore in pre-Christian times). So the ritual songs are considered to be the primary source of folklore as a system of magical cults. In fact, all other genres, as some folklorists believe, were formed under the influence of ritual texts as a peculiar canon.

Peculiarities that indicate folklore proper names, literary and artistic onyms hold different positions in common national onomasticon: this issue was under the scrutiny of Kolesnyk (2011, 2012, 2013, 2017). Here's a brief overview: onomastics has a generally known first stage of division of all-national onymic system based on the principle *real denotation – unreal denotation*.

For instance, Karpenko (2006) analyzed the structure of the national onymic system in terms of cognitive linguistics. Three components are defined: real, virtual and sacred (pp. 100–102). Referring to Karpenko and Superanska, who were the first to mention it across the former USSR, Kolesnyk believes that opposing to the literary-artistic onyms that fully belongs to the virtual subspace of all-national onyms, folklore onyms, has a similar structure with all-national onymic system. Therefore, folklore onyms can be divided into real and unreal, and the latter, in its turn, can have sacred and virtual components. It was formed under special conditions that were caused by folklore development itself.<sup>2</sup> That is why it has certain features of development, as well as peculiar content, structure and degree of reliability (Kolesnyk, 2017). In this triad, sacred and real parts of folklore onyms can be viewed as primeval. Their foundation was laid in ancient times, in particular, when folklore itself occurred. Almost all folklore scholars are unanimous that primitive pagan rites and rituals were the first base and source of folklore formation. All the rituals, according to folklorists, had a binary foundation: sacred and profane. During a ritual, the performed songs were included in a global act of communication between a community and divine powers (gods, spirits) and between a priest and a community (Ivanyts'kyi, 2012, p. 9). Naturally, in national songs and charms, sacred and real onyms were used from the very beginning. Nowadays scholars are unanimous in viewing folklore as a global communicative process, in treating folklore text as a speech act. We'd like to put a strong emphasis on the fact that proper names were a natural constituent of this communicative process.

The sacred group of folklore onyms is composed of names of different expressions of the divine that are sought for help, safety, support, and approval for one's thoughts and deeds. Considering the characteristics of oral existence of folklore texts, this group of onyms formed, developed and changed for millenniums. Today it is a mixture of onyms of different timing. As to the content of this group, it is composed of the onyms of pagan times, as well as Christian onyms. Therefore, the group is constituted of mythonyms, theonyms, agionyms, angelonyms. They are the proper names of different

<sup>2</sup> Folklorists tend to associate this way of folklore development with the evolution of figurative thinking through millennia: from cosmo-scared (mythic and ritual) to folklore and artistic itself (Shumada & Yevsyeyev, 1998, pp. 34–35).

expressions of divinity, and also eclecticonyms (the proper names for holy days), heortonoms (the proper names of ritual places or places of worship of any religion; the proper name of a church, chapel, cathedral, kirk, monastery), iconyms (the proper names of icons), biblionyms (the proper names of religious works), bibliotonyms and biblioanthronyms (the names of real toponymic objects and the proper names of the characters mentioned in Holy Writ and other texts connected to Christianity as religious doctrine). It is worth noting that the difference between Christian onyms and mythonyms is relative and arguable. Folklorists claim that already at the beginning of the 20th century there were no exclusively ritual folk songs, which wouldn't have had a combination of religious ideology and cultural and historic evolution that started in the pre-cultural age (Sosenko, 1994, p. 123). However, this diversity of the sacred group of folklore onyms does not diminish its significance. Formed in pre-Christian times, during Christianity this group was reshaped, and it not only soaked up, but also modified and reconsidered the Christian onyms. It was done without interruption to the national religious tradition and, moreover, preserved its fundamental spiritual and aesthetic values.

During magic rituals, real participants had to communicate with one another that stipulated the active usage of real onyms, in particular, anthronyms (this is clearly illustrated in the following genres: Christmas carols, *vesnianky*, primitive texts of humorous folk songs and *kolomyiky*, etc.). Ukrainian scholars consider active usage of anthronyms in different communicative situations as one of the distinctive features of the national analysed sphere (Skab, 2003, p. 37), and that is vividly demonstrated by folklore texts as one of the feature of national communication. This part of folklore onyms is not only ancient but also truly represents the vernacular system of naming of when and where the text was written down.

Proper names within sacred and real parts of folkloronyms serve, first and foremost, their fundamental function: being a part of a global communicative process, they identify and differentiate (Kolesnyk, 2017, p. 112). Some of them later become an embodiment of certain traditional ethnic meanings.

As we firmly believe, the tendencies to the development of these very parts became determinative to all the system of national folkloronyms because, as Genon (2002) observed, in terms of tradition, it is the beginning that matters. Everything else is just its further revealing, and not contributing to something "new" (p. 56).

Folklore eventually lost its exclusively magic and ritual function. Pagan decay and the shift of the ideological and aesthetic paradigm led to the appearance of folklore genres (lyric and epic), where text became an artistic work in the first place, without viewing it as an element of a rite action, ritual communication with higher forces and other participants of the ritual. And despite the fact that proper names, considering their nature, continue to serve their essential nominative function in these texts, their poetic and text-formation functions are put forward as dominant functions of oral art.<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, any national folkloronym is a multi-layered and multi-levelled formation with its peculiar principle of organization of different in time and territory blocks of folkloronyms. There is a complex scheme of interconnections and intersections, contacts and transitions between them. There are sacred, real and virtual parts that co-exist within folkloronyms. Each part has its means of organization, forms of manifestation, mechanisms of action and interaction both within the sub-system itself and in a wider meaning. Each part was formed and established at a certain stage of social development and is connected to a certain type of cultural modus; they underwent distinguishing transformations throughout the long existence of national folklore and have different ways of regulating the correlation of *specific / general meaning* that is essential for the semantics of the folkloronyms used in each of the above-mentioned parts (Kolesnyk, 2017, p. 129).

Conversely, literary-artistic onyms are always fictionyms, virtual onyms, specific transformations of a proper name, created by the imagination of a certain author or group of authors with further reproduction in readers' consciousness.

The comprehension of the peculiarities of the object under study manifests that the system of initial principles of scientific research and methods of analyzing folklore proper names and literary-artistic ones don't coincide, hence it justifies the need for their separate analysis.

<sup>3</sup> K. Rymut, a supporter of the functional approach to singling out onomastics among linguistic disciplines (having written that in vocabulary, proper names are distinguished by their function; Rymut, 1993, p. 15), once claimed that onyms function in a linguistic text that can be very versatile; depending on the type of linguistic text the usage of proper names can be different, and, therefore, the function of proper names is different in those texts. In a literary text, according to the scholar, a proper name is an element of artistic speech, hence literary onyms need to be analyzed as an integral element of this language, and the researcher of literary onomastics must inevitably take that into account (Rymut, 1993, pp. 16–19).



The scholars of literary-artistic onyms, in an attempt to emphasize the field's features, identify the differences between the onymic sphere of a literary text and all-national onyms (Kalinkin, 2003). Referring to their conclusions, we will make an attempt to distinguish the features of folkloronyms compared to literary-artistic ones, outlining the relation of the former to the national onymic system.

To begin with, the emphasis has been put on the fact that the onymic sphere of a language is a specific semiotic language system while literary-artistic onyms is the secondary semiotic system that shapes a fragment of onymic spaces of a language (Kalinkin, 2003, p. 25). That is undeniable. However, folklore onyms in its primitive part (first and foremost, the sacred one) is a fragment of the all-national onymic system, when a virtual segment already represents the secondary semiotic system by itself.

Secondly, researchers in onomastics point out that the onymic system of a certain literary-artistic work is a closed system in contrast to the proper names sphere of a language. In comparison, folkloronyms similarly to the all-national system of onyms is an open system: its changes are stipulated by both natural, social and historical changes in society, as well as its inner laws that are inherent in folklore. Folklorists claim:

Traditional is the whole system of rules according to which (folklore – N. K.) texts and their components are created and exist... Tradition stipulates the live circulation and functioning under relative conditions. Its peculiarity, however, lies in the fact that it not only exists, is kept in memory, self-reproduces, and eternally repeats, but also moves and changes becoming a background, a source and an arsenal for all the new works in folklore (Putilov, 1994, p. 40).

For instance, many written ritual folklore pieces (*koliadky*, wedding songs, charms) have no evidence for mentioning any personal name. There are spaces for it in repeated formulas: *на йм'я пан...; за господиню, на йм'я...; гречная жона на ймя...; гречний молодець на ймня пан...; вельможна панна на йм'я...; гречна панна, на ймня...; гордое дитя на йм'я...*

*А за сим словом в дзвоночки дзвоним,  
В дзвоночки дзвоним, тобі ся клоним,  
Тобі ся клоним, славний господарь,  
Славний господарь, на ймя пан... (Fed'kovych, 1968, p. 30);*

*...На райських дверях сам Господь стоїть,  
Сам Господь стоїть, три служби служить  
В своїй святині за господиню, за господиню, на ім'я... (Fed'kovych, 1968, p. 36);*

*Коло престола святий Миколай  
Господа славить, три служби править,  
За вітця, матку, за всю челядку,  
Ще й просить Бога за молодого,  
За молодого на ім'я... (Fed'kovych, 1968, p. 41);*

*А ще краща вельможна панна,  
Вельможна панна, на ім'я... (Fed'kovych, 1968, p. 45);*

*Пишна кедрина вгору ся вила,  
Вгору ся вила, сино зацвила,  
А на вершочку та й колисочка,  
А в тій колисці гордое дитя,  
Гордое дитя на ім'я... (Fed'kovych, 1968, p. 52).*

The fact that the name of a specific person addressed during a rite is omitted indicates that at the moment in time when the text was written down its ritual function was still topical. Therefore, every time the text was used during a rite one was supposed to use the personal name of a specific person. Slovak scholar Sokolova, having examined the proper names recorded in 1,500 Slovak folk songs in her work of 1992 suggests dividing folklore onyms into fixed and variable. The latter serve, in fact, their fundamental onomastic function, i.e. identificational (Sokolova, 1992, p. 138).

However, not only variable folklore onyms but also fixed folklore proper names can undergo changes. As mentioned above, with conversion to Christianity a part of former ritual pagan texts began to change the proper names of ancient Slavic gods into Christian onyms. Karpenko (2008) once pointed out: "Ukrainian folklore is much older than Ukrainian Christianity. Meanwhile, the names of folklore characters are mostly calendar, Christian ones. It means that folklore, in particular its ancient forms and genres, underwent a change of pagan onyms into Christian ones" (p. 130). Let us add something: sometimes that change was not complete as some variants included pagan proper names while the others included Christian ones.

For example, many researchers noted that the folkloristic image of St. Yur-yi reveals some mythological features of a pre-Christian deity. We discovered the texts that record pagan and Christian names as synonymic: *Ярило по світу ходив, людям дітей родив; Юрію, де ж ти ходиш? / Я по полі ходжу, жито-пшеницю роджу* (Ivanys'kyu, 2012, p. 280). In some ritual texts biblical *Йордан* is used instead of the former proper name *Дунай*. In many variants the introduction *Ой на річці, на Йордані* is different: *Що на Дунаєчку та на бережечку; Вой на островочку, да й на Дунаєчку; Ой на Дунаю та й на острозі* (Koval', 2006, pp. 132, 135, 137); *В гаю-Дунаю чом на камені* (Hnatyuk, 1914, p. 227) In one of the Bukovinian *koliadky* recorded at the end of the 19th century there is a character named *Василь А правов ручков д'сонцю си хрестить* (Yaroshyns'ka, 1972, pp. 206–207). In the text of *koliadka* with a similar plot recorded in 1907 in Halychyna there is a theonym *Бог* instead of an astral body *Сонце*: *Правов ся ручков до Бога молить* (Dey, 1965, p. 420). The variants of a folklore text recorded in different areas from different performers can have different onyms. For example, the ballad “About Bondarivna”, which is widespread across all Ukrainian regions, has a record of the following names of the main characters: *Бондарівна* and пан *Каньовський*, while in some variants from Zakarpattia they are named by either common names *дівка (maiden)* – пан *капітан (captain)* or other anthroponyms: *Марієчка* – пан *Ділянський*.<sup>4</sup>

According to Kalinkin (2003) a literary text is not able to lose onyms (p. 25), as opposed to all-national onyms, where the disappearance of a denotative can lead to the disappearance of its name. In folklore onyms, the mechanisms of the disappearance of names are somewhat different, yet still systematic. They are primarily stipulated by the fact that the object of nomination ceases to be viewed by society as a singular one because the referent is already unfamiliar to society. This happened to some pre-Christian sacred onyms: the beliefs connected to these onyms passed into oblivion, and the proper names shifted

<sup>4</sup> A literary work can have several editions where proper names may not be identical. However, various editions of a literary text and the variants of a folklore piece cannot correlate with each other. Only the final version of a literary text fully exists for society, whereas all the versions of a folklore piece co-exist. Therefore, if the onyms stated in folklore invariants are valuable parts of folklore communication and folklore onomasticon, the onyms in different editions of a literary text are only an indicator of onymic creative work of a particular author and available for a limited number of researchers of that author's work.

towards the layer of common names, and some even transformed into function words. For instance, the pagan onym *Лада / Лад* in Ukrainian ritual poetry transformed into the chorus „*Ой, Дід, Лад!*”. In some Russian folk songs, the name of the river *Дунай* is changed to the extent of being difficult to recognize: *вздунай* or even *вздумай*. Probably, between a circle of performers and their audience in the remote Russian countryside, the connection between the name of the river and its referent was not obvious. Also, the name itself did not evoke any associations, hence the proper name symbol transitioned into a folklore word obscure to the average performer/listener.

Furthermore, the national folkloronym system is not as exhaustive as the onymic system of a language. However, it is not as fragmentary as the system of onyms of a literary text (Kalinkin, 2003, p. 25). In every specific moment of its existence, the national folkloronym system quite fully represents the names of a nation's most essential realia. Its functioning is closely associated with being part of a whole nation, not just separate individuals.

Additionally, for the poetonymic sphere of a literary text it is typical to have the denotatives of only one type, i.e. virtual (Kalinkin, 2003, p. 25). As it was stated above, folkloronyms have not only virtual proper names for artistic fiction but sacred proper names and onyms for real denotatives as well. Fully supporting the opinion of Ben-Amos (as cited in Putilov, 1994), we believe that one of the most important conditions of folklore communication is that it takes place when people face each other and directly address each other (p. 37).

Moreover, according to scholars, the system of proper names of a literary text can be fully comprehensible and willingly learned by any of its readers (Kalinkin, 2003, p. 25). However, all-national folkloronyms, as well as the national onymic system of a language, is impossible to be conceivable by any individual taken separately. Every one of us can master only a part of folkloristic material, first and foremost, due to a mentally limited basis of a native speaker. As Jan Baudouin de Courtenay noted: “What one or another Pole has in mind from a mother tongues is just a part of the whole” (Boduen de Kurtene, 1963, p. 212).

As well as that, by both the purpose of nomination and the functioning terms folklore onyms are not always aimed at serving the aesthetic function as a leading one. That is typical for literary-artistic onyms. Different genres are different projections of reality and serve different purposes, especially utilitarian, which regulate both the purpose and the terms on denotatives nomination, and their main function as well. It's fully acknowledged in folkloristics

that every genre has its own spheres of existence, its social functions and its possibilities (Putilov, 1994, p. 53).

Therefore, the conducted analysis enables one to differentiate literary-artistic onomastics and folklore by both the specific object under study and the peculiarities of the subject, aspects and methodology of the research. Onomasts working within the frame of discussed study analyze the object that varies in their place in a national system of nomination and their intrinsic features as well: structure, semantics (the type of relation to denotative), functions served.<sup>5</sup> In fact, this peculiarity of the object under study stipulates the differences in purpose and the set of aspects of the research. Since the object shapes the main objective of the research, it cannot coincide within the mentioned above fields. This, in its turn, influences the tools, the system of regulations and approaches, procedures of scientific research and achieving results. In other words, it influences the whole methodology of the research, and hence its methods.

On the one hand, literary and artistic onomastics studies secondary, close, fixed, invariable and fragmentary onymic system, which is aimed at serving primarily aesthetic and text-formation functions and is fully accessible for the reader. On the other hand, folklore onomastics deals with an open, constantly renewable system, unavailable to be fully comprehended by any individual system of onyms which comprises a complex three-component unity (sacred, real and virtual). Every component of this unity has its own peculiarities of formation, stages of formation, development, the relation of all-national onyms and functioning.

<sup>5</sup> E. Rzetelska-Feleszko analyzes the prospects of a literary onomastics research views (supporting A. Wilkoń) a study of onyms in literature as stylistic research, the prospects of which are closely connected to the studies of poetic literary works (Rzetelska-Feleszko, 2003, p. 23). However, the scholar believes that within literary onomastics an absolutely specific field of study is biblical names, as well as legend and myth onyms as the purpose of their analysis is different: it is not about observing stylistic means, but rather examining the origin and etymology of names, their relation to the named objects, connections and relations that are present during borrowing onyms from one language into another, studying the names in biblical translations, etc. As to the studies of proper names in folklore (based on song, proverbs, jokes and funny stories, legends and ballads, and phraseological units) then she views their prospects as quite attractive, and, according to her, the functions of folklore proper names are absolutely new and different than in literature (Rzetelska-Feleszko, 2003, pp. 24–25).

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