

**Tradução****Comparative Anthroponomastics<sup>1</sup>**  
**Antroponomástica Comparada***Márcia Sipavicius SEIDE \**

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**ABSTRACT:** The emergence of onomastic studies in Europe dates back to the 19th century when language studies were made according to the approaches of Philology and Comparative Grammar. However, the interest in comparing anthroponymies of different languages and/or cultures, is recent and even more recent is the perception that studies of this nature form a specific subarea that I call Comparative Anthroponomastics. In this work, I elucidate how this subarea is configured from theoretical, pragmatic epistemological and applied points of view. To this purpose, I present results of bibliographic research based on 16 papers published in International Congresses of Onomastics from 2011 to 2018 and, 06 researchers conducted by me and/or, colleagues in this area totaling 22 studies.

**RESUMO:** O surgimento dos estudos onomásticos na Europa remonta ao século XIX, quando os estudos das línguas privilegiavam as abordagens oriundas da Filologia e da Gramática Comparada. O interesse pela comparação de antroponímias de línguas e/ou culturas diferentes, contudo, é mais recente e ainda mais a percepção de que estudos desta natureza formam uma subárea específica a que chamo de Antroponomástica Comparada. Neste trabalho, elucidado como esta subárea se configura tanto do ponto de vista teórico e epistemológico, quanto do ponto de vista pragmático e aplicado. Para tanto, apresento resultados de pesquisa bibliográfica baseada em 16 trabalhos completos publicados em congressos internacionais de Onomástica de 2011 a 2018 e 06 pesquisas realizadas por mim e/ou colegas nessa área totalizando 22 estudos.

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<sup>1</sup> Este texto é tradução de artigo já publicado na revista Onomástica desde América Latina, v. 1, n. 2 (2020), disponível no link <http://e-revista.unioeste.br/index.php/onomastica/article/view/25488>. A tradução foi feita por Nelza Mara Pallu e pela autora do artigo. Acesso em: 9 ago. 2021. A tradução foi autorizada pelas editoras da revista ODAL.

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<b>KEYWORDS:</b>	Onomastics.	<b>PALAVRAS-CHAVE:</b>	Onomástica.
Anthroponomastics.	Comparative	Antroponomástica.	Antroponomástica
Anthroponomastics.		Comparada.	

I noticed the existence of the subfield of Comparative Anthropomastics when I did a literature review based on a sample of articles published in the 24th. International Congress of Onomastics Sciences (ICOS) held in Barcelona in 2011 (SEIDE, 2016). At that time, I analyzed a sample of 33 published articles. In this sample, I identified the following researchers with a comparative bias: Mutsukawa (2014), Gudurić (2014) and López-Franco (2014).

The study of Gudurić (2014) was about how French first names were adapt to Servian language from morphological and phonetical points of view in translated written texts. As translation requires knowledge of both languages, that is the departure language and the target language, the comparison of anthroponimic systems is necessary to the translation practice, which is one of the applied fields of Comparative Anthroponomastics.

Another application of this type of study is related to the teaching of foreign languages. Mutsukawa (2014) conducted a comparative study motivated by the pedagogical purpose of teaching English to Japanese students and Japanese language to native English speakers. In his article, the Japanese researcher describes the phonological and semantic characteristics of the male and female first names in the languages involved. After that, the researcher compared the names seeking to understand the grammatical gender indication in first names, that is if, given a first name how a non-native speakers should know if the name bear is a female or a male person.

Also making comparison of anthroponimic systems by a linguistic bias, López-Franco (2014) developed a comparative study of the most frequent first names in two cities: Montpellier in France and Tlalnepantla de Baz in Mexico. Her research was

based on samples of birth certificates of citizens who were born in 1970 and in 1975 and aimed at verifying how many lexical items the first name had.

In this first approach to the area of Comparative Anthroponomastics, I realized that there are practical reasons related to the translation and teaching of foreign languages that can motivate comparisons of different anthroponimic systems. There are also more theoretical interests aiming at obtaining

results not only about the origin and development of languages, but also about their features which might be seen either as universal or as peculiar to each language and culture. In a similar manner, contrasting different social norms concerning people's first names can lead to a better comprehension of common and distinct features of names and their usage across languages and cultures. (SEIDE; PETRULIONĖ, 2018, p.1203)

The consideration of the research already done in the tradition of Comparative Linguistics and Dialectology let us think that a linguistic comparison might involve nearby or far away languages and cultures. In addition, the languages involved may or may not be in contact. In the first case, this linguistic contact may result from geographical proximity (border countries or countries that are close to each other) or be the result of migratory processes. In addition, a comparison can be made in a diachronic, synchronous or panchronic way. Data analysis, in turn, can be done from a strictly linguistic point of view, or can involve other disciplines such as History, Anthropology, Law, among others.

I emphasize that the theoretical and methodological characteristics of the project presented by Bramwell (2016) closely follows the paradigm I call as being one with the Comparative Anthroponomastics with anthropological bias. The researcher conducted 60 semi-structured interviews in five different communities in Scotland: three are formed by indigenous, traditional and bilingual populations (there are speakers of Scottish Gaelic and English languages, and, speakers of Doric and English

dialects), while one is formed by of Pakistani migrants and their descendants who have lived in the country for generations and the other is made up of recent immigrants who have sought asylum in the country as political refugees.

The comparative and anthropological nature of the research is evidenced by the following excerpt from the article in which the author states that:

The methodological orientation of the project is influenced by the sociolinguist/linguistic anthropologist Dell Hymes and his interest both in the intricacies of language and in cross cultural comparison. The central concern of Hymes's approach to studying language has always been to view it in its contextual and cultural framework. Hymes (1968) believes that using qualitative methods does not have to mean a rejection of comparative study, and that qualitative analysis even "insists on refining the empirical basis of comparative study, by providing more surely valid descriptions of the individual systems on which comparative study must depend (BRAMWELL, 2016, p. 713).

The objectives of Bramwell's research project also highlight the comparative, cultural and anthropological bias of his research. The general objectives are "To produce a model of empirical anthroponymic research by investigating several personal naming systems in a comprehensive way and developing a cross-cultural study of personal naming" and "investigate possible links between naming systems, social structure and cultural contact" (BRAMWELL, 2016, p. 713).

Her research questions also clarify the contribution of anthroponymic research to cultural studies on migration, a phenomenon that join people, languages and cultures side by side. This is what Bramwell's following questions indicate:

What happens when one set of naming traditions faces competition from another? How do people coming together from many naming traditions use names? Can naming systems give an indication of the level of assimilation of immigrant communities? (BRAMWELL, 2016, p. 713).

In search of more anthroponimic research of comparative bias, I sought the Proceedings related to congresses held by ICOS in 2016 and 2018 and also the Proceedings related to another international event in the area, the Second International Conference in Onomastics held in Romania in 2013.

An example of comparative research relating language, history and culture is the one developed by Shokhenmayer (2016). He did a comparative analysis of the hundred most frequent Russian, French, Germanic and British surnames. The quantitative results of his research are analyzed linguistically, from the etymological meaning of surnames, and, historically, by means of correlations between the features of medieval history of each region of Europe and the more common types of surnames. German surnames, for example, are those with a greater percentage of names that refer to professions, a fact that is correlated by the researcher to the influence of the Hanseatic League created in Germany in the 12th century. Some of the similarities found among surname systems are related to linguistic universals: “Almost everywhere nicknames reflect external characteristics (colour, height) and inner properties (character, livelihoods)”. Others are due to the characteristics common to medieval European history: “(...) family names mostly denote the metalworking (*Кузнецов, Ковалёв, Lefèvre, Schmied, Smith*) bread making (*Мельников, Baker, Fournier, Bäcker*), horse serving (*Коновалов, Chevalier, Marshall, Roßmann*) and religion (*Понов, Пономарёв, Lemoine, Bell, Palmer, Kirchner*) as pillars of the medieval society” (SHOKHENMAYER, 2016, p. 231).

The bibliographic research I undertook also showed the existence of research related to the investigation of the impact of recent migratory processes in European countries. Those researches encompass names, languages and cultures that were joined together due to these movements. The following searches are in this category.

Szabó (2018) investigated, through interviews, the choice of names by first and second generations of Hungarian migrants residing in France, based on data generated

in the years 2007 and 2010. The interviews made by her focused on the choice of first names of children born in two periods: from 1980 to 1995 and from 1995 to 2010. His research was based on the study of a sample of 110 first names whose choice, by the parents, was investigated through interviews with Hungarian parents of children born in France. Both because it is supported by field research, and it assumes that the choice of names is part of the process by which parents signal the identity desired for the child, the investigation can be included as belonging to the Socionomastics paradigm. Although it is a research about anthroponimic choice in bilingual migratory contexts, there is not deepening analysis of differences and similarities of the anthroponimic systems in contact.

Walkoviak (2018a), in turn, presented an overview of the challenges faced in European countries regarded to the right to have a name and to register it by both linguistic minorities residing in the member countries of the European Union, and by non-European migrants living in the region. Her research includes a description of how some countries in Europe have been able to deal with these challenges by implementing increasingly liberal anthroponomastics language policies. According to the analysis presented, the challenges are greater when different alphabets are at stake (as in the case of Greek, Arabic and Cyrillic alphabets), there are anthroponymic norms of a language without equivalents in other languages (e.g. civil names consisting of first name and two surnames in the Portuguese language and in the Spanish language and the use of patronymic in the civil name of the Russians) or there are exclusive norms to a particular set of languages, as it is the case of the languages of the Baltic branch (namely Latvian and Lithuanian), the use of female surnames forms as indicators of marital status (for example a single daughter bears the surname Sipavičiute, while a married woman whose husband is a Sipavičius, is called Sipavičienė).

If, in one hand, the researcher observes a trend towards the standardization of civil names in Europe, with extinction of characteristics peculiar to one language, on the other hand, the possibility of the existing relations between language, history and nationalism functioning as a counterweight to this tendency. Whatever it is, her research illustrates, exemplarily, the importance and application of Comparative Anthroponomastics in Europe today. Her research shows that, having in mind that migratory flows are becoming more frequent, several anthroponimic norms are confronted with each other, situation that rises a need for comparative study and research on these norms so that solutions to conflicting norms or uses peculiar to only one nation or a linguistic minority of a country might be found.

Another research of this type was proposed by Frändén (2016) who presents a research project focused on the Immigrants' surnames that became part of the Swedish Anthroponomical system. The project provides documentary research and interviews with people who have such surnames and literacy people (university professors) of the languages involved. In previous research, she had found that the most frequent immigrant surnames come from the following languages: Arabic, Finnish, Croatian or Bosnian Serb, Turkish, Spanish, Chinese, Persian, Albanian, Vietnamese, Hungarian and Polish. Unlike other studies involving migratory processes, the researcher's concern is about how surnames are incorporated into Sweden's repertoire of surnames.

The researcher clarifies that she considers immigrant surnames those who were not present in a census conducted in the country in 1920 and that are used by at least 100 people. Her interest is on investigating whether and how surnames have undergone a process on the process of "swedification" of those surnames in pronunciation and or spelling, and if the holders of these names are keen on the modified form of their surnames, and whether there are parallel forms of the name in

use according to context, that is, whether the original form of the surname is used in family contexts and the modified form in non-family contexts.

There are also other investigations that focus on migratory processes but are not limited to those that occur in the present time. To investigate how prenames and surnames of Polish origin are registered in Lithuania, Walkowiak (2016) takes into account issues that focus on ideology, linguistic ideology, linguistic policy and linguistic practice itself from a panchronic bias. In her research, she recovers previous linguistic policies adopted in the country from the union of Lithuanian and Polish nobilities in the Middle Ages to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s; presents the rules of lithuanization of foreign names currently in force, compares current records of names to the forms currently prescribed, and points out divergences between the prescription and the records of Polish names.

In later research, Walkowiak (2018b) focuses on the adaptation of Lithuanian surnames to the Polish language regarding to spelling and morphology of surnames and brings important reflections on the presence of surnames of Lithuanian origin in Poland, whose presence is justified for historical reasons from the Middle Ages to the present day. Based on deep linguistic analyses of written documents, her study is an example of how comparative research can be developed in which the languages in contact are analyzed in equal depth.

Jordà, Pujadas Mora and Cabré (2016), in turn, investigate the impact of migratory movements on the anthroponymy from a historical point of view. These researchers present a statistical and linguistic analysis of data from marriage certificates archived in the Cathedral of Barcelona dating from 1451 to 1905. In their research, etymological, linguistic and statistical analysis of surnames is correlated to the migratory waves that have changed the population profile of the city. In this investigation, names written in the Castilian, French, Occitan, Catalan and Galician



languages are compared. Because it is a comparison between similar languages, there are many cases of homonymic surnames, spelling adaptation or translation.

It is possible to note that the question of how surnames should be recorded in the past is not much different from those faced by European nations when they create language policies that seek to meet the challenges posed by the recent migratory waves that reach the continent. The authors explain that

(...) in the absence of a standardized onomastics a Catalan scribe could choose one of three options at the time of registering a surname that was foreign to him: he could preserve the original spelling, if he knew how to write it; he could adapt it to the forms of the host language, which was the most common solution; or he could translate the surname from the original language into Catalan (Peytaví: 2010, p. 353-354). (JORDÀ; PUJADAS-MORA; CABRÉ, 2016, p. 136).

I emphasize that this Spanish research is quantitative in nature and presents a comparative anthroponimic study related to past migratory movements. Currently, while comparative research motivated by the interest of investigating the impacts of migratory processes on anthroponymy also investigates the influence of linguistic policy adopted in each country, as shown by Walkowiak investigations (2016, 2018b). Other studies are specifically concerned to the issue of how foreign names should be or are incorporated into the official languages of each nation. It should be remembered that loanword can occur due either to situations of linguistic contact provided by migratory movements, or by the influence of hegemonic languages and cultures.

Havlík's research (2016) is an example of how the comparative study of anthroponimic systems has practical application regarding to national linguistics policies. Havlík empirically investigated how Polish proper names are pronounced by people from the Czech Republic and by the television media of that country.

the results showed that the respondents read the Polish names mainly as they were spelled, while in the Czech media they were pronounced

according to the original Polish pronunciation. These conflicting results beg the question whether the spelling of Polish anthroponyms and toponyms should be adjusted according to Czech orthography. The possibility of adjusting pronunciation according to the original spelling is blocked, however, by differences in orthography between the two languages. In cases when the spelling of a Polish name differed considerably from Czech orthography respondents had no idea how to read the name (HAVLÍK, 2016, p. 41).

This comparative research is of a more linguistic and less as interdisciplinary nature. It is interesting because it involves nearby languages, countries and cultures. In addition to being neighboring countries, these are languages originating from the same linguistic group: the Slavic.

Similar research was conducted by Jilková (2016) on how Czech citizens read Hungarian first names that are well known in the country and names that have some spelling difficulties. This research showed that, although there is a prescriptive recommendation that foreign names should be pronounced according to the original language, in practice, when it comes to names with more difficult sounds to pronounce or less known names, the tendency is to follow the spelling according to the phoneme-grapheme relationship of the Czech language. In this case, since the countries are about five hundred kilometers from each other distance, these are countries of the same geographical region, but without direct contact. Besides that, from a linguistic point of view, these are languages of different families: while the Hungarian language is part of the Uralic languages, the Czech language is a Slavic language.

Štěpánová's (2016) research was also carried out in the Czech Republic, but it is broader than the previous, one as it is part of a national project that aims at investigating and describe how loanwords, including foreign proper names, are pronounced by native speakers, in addition to providing prescriptive guidance on how they should be pronounced. The analyses come from two databases: one from transcription of speeches transmitted on television media and another from a linguistic advisory center that people can consult when they have doubt about the pronunciation

of some name. The set of first names of the centre database is comprehensive and includes names from various sources, including names from the Portuguese and Spanish language, each corresponded to 2% of the corpus (ŠTĚPÁNOVÁ, 2016, p. 182). This linguistic contact with proper names of various and varied sources is explained as follows by the researcher: “Due to globalization we encounter immense heterogeneity of proper names coming from foreign languages, which are – from our point of view – sometimes regarded as ‘exotic’” (2016, ŠTĚPÁNOVÁ, p. 186).

I also found research that aims at the description of cultural universals. Sitkei (2018) maps the use of apotropaic names (names with derogatory meanings attributed to protect their bearers from evil spirits) at different times and cultures. The oldest records date back to the Egyptian Empire, from where the practice expanded to the Greeks and the Romans. There are also indications of this practice among Hungarians, the ancient peoples of Siberia, Mongolia, China, Japan, Korea, Pakistan and in some regions of India and Africa. All reported practices are justified by the belief in the magical power of the name and are related to the desire of the name-givers to avoid infant mortality. The research involves the comparison among many languages, epochs and cultures, due to that it tends to describe cultural universals that underlie the naming practices.

Another research of cultural bias is by Tsepkova (2013). This research relates Russian culture and language to two different cultures that share the language, the English language. She compares how nicknames are in Britain and in the United States. The database consists of just over 6,000 nicknames collected in dictionaries, websites, chats of internet and blogs in which there were discussions on the subject and in the application of questionnaires to 117 Russians and 60 British and American. In her research, nicknames were conceived as a cultural *realia*, that is, an object of an extralinguistic reality which is specific to a particular culture and as the lexeme that names this object. Its cultural and anthropological bias are revealed by its research

questions: "1) How do nicknames reflect culture? 2) what aspects of culture do they reflect?" (TSEPKOVA, 2013, p. 831). In line with the perspective adopted, the surnames are defined as "*a linguistic realia naming extralinguistic realia of the material and mental types*" (TSEPKOVA, 2013, p. 831).

Among the results achieved, I emphasize two for highlighting the relationship between naming, language and culture and clarifying that, interviews with Russians were made because the Russian language and culture have the function of serving as a parameter of comparison. Sometimes the same nickname was recorded in all samples, i.e., it was used by The British, The United States and Russians interviewed, but with different meanings. This is the case of the nickname *Mop* in English and *Svabra* in Russian. Although the common nouns refer to a type of "broom to wash the floor", the objects are visually different by design differences. While, in the English language, a person nicknamed *Mop*, due to the person hair, in Russian, the nickname indicates that the person is very thin. (TSEPKOVA, 2013, p. 834). Another example is the nickname *Chicken*: while in the cultures of English native speakers the animal is used to describe cowardly people, in the Russian language, the same animal is used to describe small people, who speak in a low voice and are evaluated as being shy and helpless (TSEPKOVA, 2013, p. 835).

As shown by the briefly described research, in the Comparative Anthroponomastics subarea, there are several possibilities of investigation. Under an applied bias, there are investigations motivated by the need of translating texts, teach foreign languages or to solve linguistic issues arising as a result of migratory movements. There are also investigations on issues about the choice of first names in migratory and other contexts in which the comparison is of less practical purposes and are rather focused on the relationship among language, culture and representation of the world. This kind of research pursued what can be considered as specific to a language or culture and what can be considered as universal practices and values.

In this context, researches I have conducted follow some of these possibilities of study. In the context of the comparative studies motivated by migratory movements, I conducted an exploratory study on the linguistic constitution of names of Lithuanian descendants in Brazil with data collected from closed Facebook *groups* (SEIDE, 2018). A similar study involving female anthroponymy was also conducted (SEIDE, 2020). Petrulionė and I made a comparative study of the repertoire of male names most popular in Brazil and Lithuania, based on statistical data available on institutional sites of both countries, in a proposal to compare distinct anthroponimic systems that are not related to each other from a linguistic and geographical point of view (SEIDE; PETRULIONĖ, 2018).

With a similar purpose, I conducted with the same researcher an exploratory study on the uses of hypocoristic forms as a forename in both countries, based on institutional statistical data available online (SEIDE; PETRULIONĖ, 2020). Another research conducted involving these countries was conducted with Amaral (2018). We conducted an exploratory study more focused on anthropological and cultural issues in which the semantic fields of first names derived from common nouns in Lithuanian and Brazilian Portuguese were compared with a database generated via Facebook poll (SEIDE; AMARAL, 2018). Another exploratory study was conducted comparing closer languages and cultures. I developed with Frai (2019) a comparative study of nearby languages and cultures in which we compared the use of a list of first name in Spain and Brazil based on official statistical data from both countries (SEIDE; FRAI, 2019). The results of this research showed that, for male anthroponymy, there are more convergent results than those achieved by comparing Brazilian and Lithuanian anthroponymies.

Considering the 23 studies cited in this article, of which 17 are complete papers presented in Proceedings and 6 studies published in research article or presented in a

scientific event, it is possible to delimit and characterize the area of Comparative Anthroponomastics according to its objects of study.

Starting at the most general and abstract level, there are the most anthropological and universal researches that aims at the apprehension of what can be considered as common characteristics of different naming practices involving two or more languages and cultures (TSEPKOVA, 2013; SITKEI, 2018; SEIDE; AMARAL 2018). Other research focuses on the anthroponimic consequences of linguistic and cultural contact (WALKOWIAK, 2018b).

Most studies, however, are related to linguistic contact resulting from migratory movements, including those that make comparative studies aimed at the creation and/or evaluation of national linguistic policies. There are also those studies motivated by the need to translate first names from one language to another and to teach grammatical aspects of the first names in foreign language, and those that compare repertoires of first names in different languages and countries without taking into account any linguistic contacts. Such research may involve closer languages such as Mexican Spanish and French and European Spanish and Portuguese of Brazil or more distant as Portuguese of Brazil and Lithuanian.

The epistemological evaluation of the studies mentioned in this literature review resulted in the identification of seven subareas within the Comparative Anthroponomastics. The following table describes them, correlating the researches described throughout this article to the subareas of Anthroponomastics.

Table 1 – Subareas of Comparative Anthroponomastics.

Subareas	Research
1) Studies applied to translation	Gudurić (2014)
2) Studies applied to the teaching of foreign language	Mutsukawa (2014)
3) Research comparing anthroponimic repertoires	López-Franco (2014), Seide & Petrulioné (2018), Seide & Frai (2019)
4) Research relating language, History and culture	Shokhenmayer (2016), Walkowiak (2016), Walkowiak (2018b), Jordà, Pujadas-Mora & Cabré (2016)

5) Research on inclusion or presence of anthroponimic loanwords in a national anthroponimic repertoire	Frändén (2016), Havlík (2016), Jilková (2016), Štěpánová (2016)
6) Comparison of languages and cultures not related to each other (anthroponimic universals)	Sitkei (2018), Tsepikova (2013), Seide & Amaral (2018), Seide & Petrulionė (2020)
7) Research motivated by migratory processes or by the presence of minority languages at national level	Bramwell (2016), Szabó (2018), Walkoviak (2018a), Seide (2018a, 2020).

Source: author.

The areas of study described in Table 1 show the richness of comparative studies on Anthroponomastics resulting from the diversity of motivations for which researchers choose to dedicate themselves to this type of investigations. Often, comparative bias arises from a practical need such as the multilingual and complex situations in which societies, their languages and cultures are put face to face as a consequence of migratory movements; one has to translate a text from one language to another, which includes proper names of people; or there is the teaching of a foreign language and its anthroponomies. There are also studies comparing independent anthroponimic systems with the purpose of peering into similarities, differences and anthroponimic possibilities and comparing languages and cultures. Although this study has covered a considerable number of articles, the description of the state of the art of The Comparative Anthroponomastics described in this article does not exhaust the possibilities of study, only presents some research perspectives.

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Translation received in: 08.10.2021

Translation approved in: 10.29.2021