

Onomastics Online
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The lexical load of proper names for second language readers of English

Abstract: It is widely assumed by vocabulary researchers of English as a second language (L2) that proper names do not present a burden to L2 readers: the initial capital letter and the sentential context will indicate to the reader that the item is a proper name. This assumption that L2 readers can easily recognise and understand proper names in context has led to the standard practices of either categorising proper names as 'known' vocabulary, or eliminating them altogether from lexical analyses. However, empirical research is limited as to how L2 users respond to proper names. This presentation begins with a few examples of the difficulties that L2 readers, in particular those whose first language has a different orthography than English, can have with proper names. Then, some perspectives from linguistics and lexicography are presented to explore the extent to which proper names might be treated as part of the L2 reader's lexical knowledge, as opposed to encyclopaedic knowledge. Finally, research is presented which looks at how L2 users respond to proper names, and how cultural familiarity affects reading comprehension.

Link to the Zoom Meeting:

<https://tuni.zoom.us/j/69401912363?pwd=WGxDT0pJNm44Uy9sQ3cwTVlPekVjZz09>

Meeting ID: 694 0191 2363

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