# LINGUISTIC RESEARCH OF TOPONYMS OF CAPE VERDE'S ISLANDS

**Natalia V. Perfilieva, Da Silva F.**

RUDN University
*10/2, Miklukho-Maklaya st., Moscow, Russia, 117198*

**Abstract.** The article deals with the place names of the West African state of Cape Verde. It is known that the nomination of geographical features, continents, cities, natural features is closely linked to the history and culture of the peoples living in the area. In this connection it is of interest to explore the cultural component reflected in the place names of Cape Verde. The article also analyzes the toponyms in the etymological and structural aspects.

Etymological analysis of toponyms involves their consideration in the aspect of the Luso-not-Portogallo of origin, focusing on etymological analysis that is due to this region. The paper proposes a classification according to the semantic criterion: the toponym is of anthropological origin.

Structural analysis involves identifying groups of toponyms in the number of components, describes the following types of toponymic units: one word, a different compound, word types, a phrase and an idiom.

The research centers on toponyms of Cape-Verde selected by the method of continuous sampling. However this article presents the examples of oikonym, oronym, hagionym, choronym as bearing the universal or national-specific information about the nomination. Some conclusions about the General and specific terms of toponymy of Cape Verde are given.

**Key words:** toponymy, toponym, classification, the Portuguese language, the Creole language

## INTRODUCTION

The importance of learning toponyms is particularly important in the research of the toponymy of the region. The linguistic and cultural portrait of ethnicity provides information about the stereotypes of human's comprehension mastering these territories and the historical past of the people who lived here before.

The main aspect of toponyms is establishing the true etymology of geographical names and would be possible only under certain circumstances such as:

1) the time and circumstances of the nomination;
2) the language or dialect of the nomination;
3) the geography of the nomination object;
4) the history of the region.

Linguistic and extralinguistic factors are consided as the specific names in the system of the region's toponyms. This article studies the toponyms, oikonym, choronyms, hagionym of the Islands of Cape Verde. 50 lexical units were selected by the method of continuous sampling. This article analyses the names of geographical objects in the etymological and structural aspects.

ТЕРМИНОЛОГИЯ И ТОПОНИМИКА

## 1. THE OBJECT OF THE DESCRIPTION
## ARE CAPE VERDE'S TOPONYMS

Cape-Verde is a country in West Africa located on the Cape Verde Islands in the Atlantic ocean. The archipelago consists of 10 large and 8 small Islands. For several centuries the territory of the archipelago was part of the colonial Empire of Portugal. The history of the country began in 1456, when the archipelago was discovered by the Portuguese. Immediately after the discovery of the archipelago portuguese colonialists began the settle there. Later the settlement of Spanish, French, Venetians and the Genoese were established on that territory.

It should be noted that at the beginning of colonization the Islands were uninhabited. Then that territory became the basis for the African slave trade, and by 1572 most of the population were descendants of African slaves from different regions of Africa.

A multi-ethnic population of the Islands of the archipelago left traces in the culture, including toponyms of Cape-Verde that is of interest to the linguistic typological studies.

It is known that Cape-Verde is a country with a strong Catholic tradition of the Roman version, which inherited from the Portuguese colonialist. 90 percent of the population professes Catholicism at present. The official language is Portuguese, Caboverdiano is used as a regional language.

## 2. ETYMOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION
## OF TOPONYMS IN CAPE VERDE

In oder to consider toponyms of the region, you need to focus on the names of the archipelago Islands. The names of the archipelago Islands of the Cape Verde are mostly of the Portuguese origin. Geographically, the archipelago is divided into two parts: the leeward group of Islands, called the Portuguese sotavento [Sotavento] 'leeward' and 'windward' group of Islands located in the North of the archipelago named in Portuguese barlavento [barlavento] 'windward'.

Below is a brief review of major Islands of Cape Verde with the linguistic comment:

*Santiago* (São Tiago) [santiago] 'Saint Iago (James)' is the largest island of Cape Verde, which is the state capital of Praia. The island has a typical name for Portuguese, Spanish and Italian new lands in the name of the Catholic Saint James, the son of Zebedee, the eldest of the twelve apostles of Jesus, the patron of wandering. Probably, the name of the island comes from the area of Marialva in Portugal, which is particularly revered James, the son of Zebedee, from where, perhaps, was a ship of the pioneers of this island or directly with the name of the Saint.

*Fogo* [fogo] 'fire, flame' — the island received its nomination because it is located on the active volcano of Fogo. Originally the island was named like most of the islands of the archipelago *São Filipe* [Sao Filipe], but after a series of devastating volcanic eruptions 1675 and 1680 years it received the name of Fogo and San Filipe remains the largest city of the island.

*Santo Antão* [santo antão] 'Saint Anthony' — the second largest inhabited island of the archipelago of Cape Verde.It was discovered by the Portuguese Navigator Diogo Afonso, which got its name according to date of discovery: January 17 — feast day of St. Anthony the Great, early Christian hermit, the founder of hermit monks.

*São Vicente* [san vicente] 'St. Vincent' is one of the most populated islands of the archipelago, discovered by the Portuguese navigator Diogo Gomes. It recieved the nomination from the discovery date: January 22 — St. Vincent (of Vincent) of Zaragoza.

*São Nicolau* [são nicolau] 'Saint Nicholas' — one of the most inhabited islands in the Northern part of the archipelago, considered to be the literary capital of the country. The island has interesting relief that includes mountains, plains and attraction — rock with undecrypted ancient writings — has its own name Rotcha Scribida [rotch scribida] (Creole) the 'rock of inscriptions'.

The name, unlike the Islands of Santo Antao and Sao Vicente, is not associated with the date of discovery, is associated with the patron of sailors St. Nicholas.

*Santa Luzia* [santa luzia] 'Saint Lucia' is one of the uninhabited islands of the archipelago, despite a rather large area. One of the possible explanations of the origin of its name is the fact that the Lucy of Syracuse, an early Christian Saint, is the patron of Saint of Venice, from were the first settlers came along with the Portuguese.

*Sal* [sal] 'salt' is the flat in relief and the most ancient of the Islands, now densely populated, although for a long time was used for cattle farming since the island had no fresh water sources. Originally it had a Portuguese name Liana [Lana] 'flat', which was changed to the Portuguese Sal 'salt' after 1833, when they discovered deposits of salt in the crater of an extinct volcano.

## A quick review of names and the linguistic commentary of some cities of Cape Verde

*Espargos* [aspargus] 'asparagus' — the main town of the island of Sal, the island's capital located in its center. The city was named after the wild-growing asparagus. The lexical unit is used in the plural.

*Santa Maria* [santa maria] 'Holy Mary' is the third largest city of Cape Verde, located on the South of the island of Sal. The name is associated with the Catholic tradition.

*Cidade Velha* [cidade velha] 'old town' — a town located on the island of Santo Antão, near the capital of Cape Verde. One of the objects protected by UNESCO as the first colonial fortress of Europe in the tropics. We assume that this name replaced the older one as the part included hagionym lexical unit Velha 'old', but we know from history that the first settlements of the Islands of the archipelago of the Cape Verde Islands are associated with the Portuguese colonists. The second hypothesis suggests that the site of this city was a settlement of the colonists, therefore the city subsequently has got this name. It is possible that the lexeme Velha 'old' is connected with the transfer of the state capital to Praia after the destruction of the city in 1770 by French pirates.

*Ribeira Grande* [ribeira grande] 'big river' — a city on the island of Santo Antão, which was founded in 1462 by one of the discoverers of the archipelago of Cape Verde Antonio Noli. The nomination of Bay of the river Ribeira Grande where the ships of the colonists could be to moored. It is known that the vessels of Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama entered there.

*Tarrafal* [tarrafal] 'the adjective from the word chimney' — a village on the island of Santiago, located on the Northern shore of the island less than 100 km from the state capital. Actionem has got this nomination of the severe climate, because this part of the

island is exposed to constant winds. Since 1936 the Portuguese colonial government used severe climate as a means of influence on political criminals of all African colonies of Portugal. Currently, the former prison is a training center of the armed forces of Cape Verde.

*Assomanda* [asomanda] The Spanish noun from the verb asomar 'stick out', i.e. 'the city which is visible'. It's located in the centre of the island of Santiago on a hill that defines the nomination of this hagionym.

### The linguistic review of some names
### of Cape Verde's mountains

*Monte Vermelho* [monte vermelho] 'the red hill' — the hill in Sal island has a height of about 400 meters. The category involves lexemes *Monte* 'hill, mountain' with such a small height associated with the relief features: this is the most flat, smooth island of the archipelago.

*Monte Grande* [monte grande] 'the big mountain' — the highest mountain of the island, which is not as high as other mountains of Cape Verde.

*Caixa* [caixa] 'a box' — a high archipelago mountain, over 500 meters above the sea level. It's located in the southern part of the island of São Vicente and is of a volcanic origin. The nomination is caused by the shape of the mountain which resembles a square.

*Crioulo* [creole] 'Creole' — a small elevation on the island of Santa Luzia. We presume that the nomination is motivated by the group name of the island's population living there — the descendants of the slaves who were trafficked across the island and sold in the period of the slave traffic.

In this way, the motivating Portuguese basses of Cape Verde names are represented in table 1.

*Table 1*

**The name type of toponyms of the largest Islands of Cape Verde**

| The place name in the original language | Translation | Type of toponym | Type of nomination |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Rotcha** *Scribida* [rotch scribed] the island of São Nicolau | 'rock of inscriptions' (Creole) | oronym | the nomination with nominal-geographic source name, in this case, the lexis Rotcha 'the rock' |
| **Monte** *Verde* [Monte Verde] the island of São Vicente | 'green mountain' | oronym | the nomination synonymous with geographic source in the names of Monte 'mountain' |
| **Monte** *Grande* [Monte Grande] the island of Fogo | 'the big mountain' | oronym | the nomination synonymous with geographic source in the names of Monte 'mountain' |
| *Santa Maria* [Santa Maria] the town of the island of Sal | 'Holy Mary' | hagionym | the toponym is of anthropological origin, the city is named after a Catholic Saint |
| *Santo Antão* [Santo antão], the city | 'Saint Anthony' | choronym | this toponym is of anthropological origin, the city is named after a Catholic Saint, the day of remembrance when was discovered the island |
| *Crioulo* [Creole] the island *Santa Luzia* | 'Creole' | oronym | the toponym is of anthropological origin in the name of the main population |
| *Sal* [сал] | 'solt' | choronym | the secondary nomination of the describing type. The island received this name after the discovery of salt deposits of salt, which is the base of the island's economy |

*End of the table 1*

| The place name in the original language | Translation | Type of toponym | Type of nomination |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Espargos* the capital of the island of Sal | 'asparagus (pl.h.)' | hagionym | the nomination of a describing type the *flora and fauna* |
| *Caixa* [Kaisha] the mountain island *São Vicente* | 'box' | oronym | the toponym is named for the shape of the mountain, which is close to the square |
| *Nova-Sintra* [Nova Sintra] the small village on the island of Sal | 'Nova Sintra' | oikonym | the transferred toponymy |

## 3. STRUCTURAL CLASSIFICATION OF CAPE VERDE TOPONYMS

In terms of composition the toponyms of Cape Verde may be:

♦ single word *Espargos*;
♦ two-words *Nova-Sintra*;
♦ word combinations *Rotcha Scribida,*

which in our opinion reflects the Portuguese beginning in the nomination of the geographical objects.

## Conclusion

The research allowed to draw the following conclusions:

1) the basic toponyms of Cape Verde are of Portuguese origin, there are certain geographical names, motivated by lexemes of the French and Italian languages.

2) the national-cultural peculiarities of the language picture of the world of the first colonists of Cape Verde were preserved in the toponymy. The prevalence of such groups of the toponymic vocabulary are as follows describing the landscape, describing flora and fauna types, the Saint names' nomination.

## REFERENCES

1. Senna, Manuel Roiz Lucas de. (1987). Dissertação sobre as ilhas de Cabo Verde (1818). *Anotações e comentários de António Carreira*. Lisboa: Ediçãode António Carreira.
2. Ohotin, N.V. ed. (1975). *The language situation in Africa*. Moscow: Nauka. (in Russ).
3. Trubachov, O.N. (2012). Preface In: V.L. Vasiliev. *Slavic place names of the Novgorod land of antiquity*. Moscow: Handwritten monuments of Ancient Rus. (in Russ).
4. *Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary*, ed. V.N. Yartseva. (1990). Moscow: "Soviet Encyclopedia". (in Russ).
5. Appiah, Kwame Anthony (1997). *Na casa de meu pai: a África na filosofia da cultura*. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto.
6. Stepanov, Ju.S. (1975). *Methods and principles of modern linguistic*. Moscow: Nauka. (in Russ).
7. Zhuchkevich V.A. (1980). *General toponyms*. Minsk: Vysheishaya shkola.
8. Gak, V.G. (1963) *Comparative Typology of French and Russian languages*. Moscow: Prosveshchenie. (in Russ).
9. Bolekia Boleká, J. (2010). Las identidades minorizadas y la desconfiguraciôn del Estado / J. Bolekia Boleká. *La palabra y la memoria: Guinea Ecuatorial 25 años después*; L.-W. Miampika (ed.). Madrid: Editorial Verbum.

# ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ НАИМЕНОВАНИЙ ОСТРОВОВ КАБО-ВЕРДЕ

## Н.В. Перфильева, Франческа Да Сильва

RUDN University

*10/2, Miklukho-Maklaya st., Moscow, Russia, 117198*

В представленной статье рассматриваются топонимы западно-африканского государства Кабо-Верде. Известно, что номинация географических объектов, таких как, например, города, названия островов, гор, рек, тесно связана с историей и культурой народов, живущих на данной территории. Новизной данного исследования является анализ отражения культурного компонента в топонимической номинации Кабо-Верде. В статье также рассматриваются топонимы в этимологическом структурном аспектах. Структурный анализ заключается в классификации групп топонимов по числу компонентов; описываются следующие виды топонимических единиц: слово, словосочетание, два слова.

**Ключевые слова:** топонимы, номинация, португальский язык, креольскй язык

## БИБЛИГРАФИЧЕСКИЙ СПИСОК

1. *Senna, Manuel Roiz Lucas de.* Dissertação sobre as ilhas de Cabo Verde (1818) // Anotações e comentários de António Carreira. Lisboa: Ediçãode António Carreira, 1987.
2. Языковая ситуация в странах Африки под ред. *Н.В. Охотиной.* Москва: Наука, 1975.
3. *Трубачев О.Н.* Предисловие // в кн.: Васильев В.Л. Славянские топонимические древности Новгородской земли. Москва: Рукописные памятники Древней Руси, 2012.
4. Лингвистический энциклопедический словарь под ред. *В.Н. Ярцевой.* Москва: Советская энциклопедия, 1990.
5. *Appiah, K.A.* Na casa de meu pai: a África na filosofia da cultura. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto, 1997.
6. *Степанов Ю.С.* Методы и принципы современной лингвистики. Москва: Наука, 1975.
7. *Жучкевич В.А.* Общая топонимика. Минск: Вышэйшая школа, 1980.
8. *Гак В.Г.* Сравнительная типология французского и русского языков. Москва: Просвещение, 1963.
9. *Bolekia Boleká, J.* Las identidades minorizadas y la desconfiguraciôn del Estado / J. Bolekia Boleká // La palabra y la memoria: Guinea Ecuatorial 25 años después; L.-W. Miampika (ed.). Madrid: Editorial Verbum, 2010.

**Сведения об авторах:**

***Перфильева Наталия Владимировна***, кандидат филологических наук, доцент; доцент кафедры общего и русского языкознания филологического факультета Российского университета дружбы народов; *научные интересы:* теория и практика славянских, германских и романских языков, типология, семантика; *e-mail:* nperfilieva@yandex.ru;

***Франческа Да Сильва***, соискатель ученой степени кандидата филологических наук на кафедре общего и русского языкознания филологического факультета Российского университета дружбы народов; *научные интересы:* теория и практика межкультурной коммуникации, топонимика; *e-mail:* dasilvafran66@yahoo.com

**Bio Note:**

***Perfilyeva Nataliya Vladimirovna***, Ph.D. in Philology; Associate Professor at Department of the General and Russian Linguistics at RUDN University. *Research Interests:* Theory and Practice of Slavic, Germanic and Romance Languages, Typology, Comparativistics, Semantics; *e-mail:* nperfilieva@yandex.ru;

***Francesca Da Silva***, the applicant of an academic degree of Ph.D. in Philology at Department of the General and Russian Linguistics at RUDN University. *Research Interests:* theory and practice of crosscultural communication; Toponymics; *e-mail:* dasilvafran66@yahoo.com