

divisions, the communes, we find the language areas very sharply differentiated, particularly in the countryside, whereas mixing has often gone further in the towns and industrial areas.

Although the cantons are free to solve these problems as they see fit, it is found that two principles are generally applied. First, the choice of language for a place name rests entirely with the commune. Secondly, the language adopted for the name of a commune in a transitional zone is the mother tongue of the majority of the population, as recorded in the latest federal census; nevertheless, if there is a sizable linguistic minority in a commune, it is accorded special rights, which may take any of the following forms:

Under a federal decree of 31 May 1963, a minority of more than 30 per cent may request that the name of the commune should be displayed in both languages on the road signs at the entrance to the commune: for example Fribourg/Freiburg; however, such an arrangement does not necessarily correspond to official practice in naming the commune;

Quite a number of communes have chosen to retain both forms for historical reasons (e.g. "Breil"/"Brigels" and "Biel"/"Bienne"), for touristic reasons (e.g. "Schuls"/"Scuol" and "Segl"/"Sils"), or for other reasons;

The two-name system is also applied, for example, to mountains which are known by different names on different sides (e.g. "Piz Sardona"/"Surenenstock" and "Sex des Molettes"/"Wetzsteinhorn"); such compromise arrangements doubtless cause some minor inconvenience in practice, but they keep the linguistic peace;

As to names of places within a commune, names that are known only in one or other of the two languages are often kept in their original form; for example, the Italian dialect name for a *mayen* situated in the territory of an exclusively Romansch-speaking commune has been preserved because the *mayen* is inhabited for only part

of the year and only by people from an Italian-speaking commune. Every effort is made, in close consultation with local users, to find a form acceptable to all.

Generally speaking, minority groups in the transitional zone enjoy more favourable treatment than similar groups speaking the principal language, i.e. German. After years of naming places on a commune-by-commune basis, it may be said that the boundaries between language areas have remained very stable.

Annex

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON GLOSSARIES PUBLISHED²

GLOSSARIES

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² The original text of this note, submitted in French, appeared as document E/CONF.53/L.78.

NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

Paper presented by France*

Among the problems of place names that must be dealt with by the National Geographic Institute (IGN) in the publication of maps, the first one to be considered will be that affecting the commune names which, as a rule, have an official written form that has been adopted for use in the documents published by the Ministry of the Interior.

These documents consist of the population census results and are published after each census in the form of large volumes comprising a list of all the communes and the number of their inhabitants. The IGN has adopted as its basic document the population census of 1946, which, since that year, has been kept carefully up to date.

An accurate check of the 1962 census results with those of 1946 (as brought up to date), which was carried out by the Michelin mapping service and IGN, working in close co-operation, brought to light a fairly large number of discrepancies: approximately 700 for the 37,962 communes which now exist. The information resulting from this check has just been submitted to the Ministry of the Interior,

* The original text of this paper appeared as document E/CONF.53/L.62.

and it is expected that after these discrepancies have been reconciled it will be possible to revise the latest census results, which will then serve as the basis for future work.

That does not mean, however, that there will not be any more problems with the names of communes. For example, the census results refer to "Rochefort" whereas the official local usage as well as the name used by the P.T.T. is "Rochefort-sur-Mer". There are, incidentally, twelve communes in France with the name of "Rochefort", and ten of these have been given a second element which makes it possible for them to be differentiated.

To cite another example, there is a commune in Gers which is designated as "Saint-Loube-Amades" by the municipal authorities on the basis of a Royal Ordinance of 1823, but this does not prevent the Ministry of the Interior from calling it simply "Loube". Also in Gers, we were informed by the Prefect that the spelling "Mongauzy" should be used for the name of a commune which has been recorded as "Mongausy" in the last three censuses. There are dozens of similar cases which could be cited.

The second problem concerning place names is somewhat different because here, apart from exceptional cases,

there is no official spelling. The IGN thus bears the sole responsibility for conducting the research which must be carried out before these names are entered on the map.

The conditions which must be met by a place name which is to appear on a map are as follows:

1. It must be currently used by the inhabitants of the area—a condition which is not easy to fulfil as is apparent from the many cases in which names in the land register are unfamiliar to the local inhabitants, who use other names to designate the same places;
2. It must so far as possible be written in the proper form;
3. It must be written in such a way that a stranger to the area can make himself properly understood by the local inhabitants both in speech and in writing.

The difficulties begin with the last two conditions and are often such that no satisfactory solution can readily be found. A thorough field survey is absolutely necessary in order to determine the written forms in use in older and current documents and the form or forms used in speech. It may, in fact, be discovered that the form used in speech—on condition that informants native to the area are found—is an extremely stable toponymic element, whereas the same cannot be said of the written form, which is apt to vary according to the particular notary, land-register clerk and so on.

In the great majority of cases, the place names do not have a single written form. In quickly leafing through the sheets of old land registers (1810-1840), one can easily find such variant spellings of the same name as the following:

“Laserre”, “La Serre”—“Laborde”, “La Borde”: same letters but different division;

“La Récégaire”, “La Rességaire”, “Larrességaire”: basically identical pronunciation but variant spellings;

“Hount frède”, “Hont frède”: variant spellings causing the pronunciation to differ considerably from one name to the other.

What is the solution to the problem of selecting from among these forms, all in use at the same time, those which are the most satisfactory? Such a selection can only be made with at least some knowledge of the local dialects. If, for example, one knows that a “*serre*” has in some regions the meaning of an elongated hill, that “*rességaire*” means a pit-sawyer or that “*hont*”, in the Gascon dialect, means fountain—as also does “*hount*”, a form which has undergone an initial adaptation to French—then it will be possible to select which form of the place name should be used on the map.

It is thus necessary to have available all the glossaries and local linguistic studies which it is possible to find.

Since 1950, the Place Names Commission of IGN has been making up a file of local terms actually found or likely to be found in place names. By 1961, this file contained about 25,000 terms and was taken as the basis for compiling a handy glossary for the use of topographers. This operation was completed in 1963. The glossary contains about 19,000 different terms and includes several maps which, in addition to other information, show the boundaries of the former provinces and those of the main dialects or patois.

There are many dialects and patois which are still very much alive in France. It is none the less true that the concentration of population in urban areas, radio and especially television, and the schools are causing classical

French to gain more and more ground, although it may be noted in passing that the regional services of the French Office of Radio Broadcasting and Television (ORTF) sometimes devote a few minutes of their programme time to productions in the regional dialect. Because place names follow this trend only with considerable delay, it is possible to find, in the more conservative regions, names which follow the French system of spelling, those which have been more or less adapted to French and others again which are completely dialectal, all of this being closely dependent on how widely known the names are.

The dialects, just as French itself, have a long tradition of the written form behind them, which does not always concord with that of the national language. For example, the French form “-ill” corresponds in the Gascon dialect to “-lh”, in Corsican to “gli” and in Catalan to “-ll”. The letter combination “ch” is most often represented in French by the sound “š”, but in Corsican it is pronounced “k”, and in Brittany—if an apostrophe is inserted between the “c” and the “h”—it must be pronounced “X”. Other examples:

In Béarn	Labaiç, Labat	is pronounced	“labatš”
	Coig	„ „	“kòtš”
	Casteig	„ „	“kastètš”
	Napaïtx	„ „	“napatš”
In Cerdagne	Puig	„ „	“putš”

These words cannot be written as they are pronounced because tradition weighs too heavily against doing so; on the other hand, the ordinary reader has no idea of how they should be pronounced. He must know, for example, that in Flemish, the “ae” of “*straet*” stands for “ä” and the “oe” of “*broeck*” or of “*koek*” stands for “u”, and that in Basque, “z” is pronounced “s”.

To enlighten the reader a phonetic key could be inserted in the margin of the maps, but as the names reproduced above are somewhat rare, the reader might be misled into applying the key to other terms. Thus, the Basques indicate certain types of aspiration after the letters “l” and “p” by inserting the letter “h” after them, with the almost certain result that “ph” will be pronounced “f” and that, for the reader familiar with the “lh” of the Gascon dialect—a linguistic area adjacent to but very different from Basque—the “lh” will be pronounced like “-ill”.

In both of the above cases, it is difficult to prevent the spelling from affecting the pronunciation and thus leading to the phonetic distortion of the names, something which the specialists bitterly regret.

An excellent solution would seem to be the inclusion of a list of the names appearing on the map, since the correct pronunciation of the more difficult place names could be given in this list by means of an appropriate phonetic notation.

Regardless of the solution adopted for aiding the map user, a basic requirement in the preliminary research on place names is to determine the exact pronunciation that is used locally. In the final analysis, this is the only means of making a choice between several written forms of the name that are in current use in an area. This pronunciation must be fully and uniformly recorded with the aid of a phonetic notation affording the highest possible degree of precision.

National standardization must for practical purposes be carried out at the regional level or, more precisely, by linguistic (or dialectal) area. This is a fact that cannot be lightly disregarded.