

Panel discussion: “UN resolutions on the reduction of exonym use: Witnesses of the past or guidelines still observed?”

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- * Endonym / Exonym Dichotomy? There can be a third category: e.g. Sea names
- * Continents and other global features - whose toponym?
- * Synosphere (Chinese script characters)

Views presented here are of my own as a "geographical names expert", not representing a position of any country

Process of large seas naming



Process of large seas naming



which one is endonym and which is exonym?

Sea Names

- * Major difference between land toponym and large sea names (+uninhabitable land)
 - absence of local population in the latter
- * With no local population, there is no endonym. Names for large seas were developed by seafarers, name precedents were formed from those, which were then imported into languages worldwide.

Pacific Ocean, 太平洋 etc. = endonym (recommended)

Pazifischer Ozean etc.= exonym (discouraged) !?

**** Names for large seas cannot fit into the endonym / exonym dichotomy. Concept of a third category will probably be useful***

Continents

According to the definition, *America del Sur* is an endonym, *South America* is an exonym. Should they be given different status?

Is "*America*" or "*Asia*" really an endonym? (originally exonym - named by westerners -, later became endonym-ised)

Continents are to be considered as feature of this planet (global entity). All well established names of continents in every language should be treated equal.

Names of countries and more local features

Country name is a part of national identity, but very often used outside the country and in international settings.

Many country name exonyms are well embedded in the "recipient" language (in use for a long time, and used often). They could be treated similarly to precedent names in each language for large seas and continents.

(exonyms are equally fine as endonyms)

Deutschland (endonym)

Germany, Allemagne, Tyskland, Saksa, Niemcy, Vokietija, ドイツ, 德国 (exonyms)

More local names

Many exonyms for provinces and cities are also well embedded in respective languages.

Some of the cities are **global entities** that could appear in very small scale maps.

Some city names may have significance in exonym language vocabulary even they might not appear in small scale maps *Wien Vienna* ウィーン (not only as city name but also in names of coffee, sausage, philharmonic etc)

Mention of names in well-known literary works: e.g. "Merchant of *Venice*"

It is difficult to discourage use of already established exonyms.

Place names belong to the language in which it is used

* The language community that uses the exonym has the say on how a country / city etc. should be called (it is part of the vocabulary of the language).

Sinosphere issues

In the Sinosphere (region under influence of the Chinese writing system) should standardisation be in writing or reading? (same ideogram is read differently depending on language)

Szechuan is written 四川 (four rivers) shall it in Japan be written 四川 and read as "*shisen*", or ignore the etymology and be written スーチヨワン (*sūchowān*)?

日本 *Nihon (Nippon) / Riběn (Jitpún) / Ilbon / Nhật Bản*
東京 *Tōkyō / Tongjing / Donggyeong*

Again: What is an endonym and what is an exonym?

Conclusion: What should be done with the UN resolutions on the reduction of exonym use?

- * Not all names fit in the endonym / exonym dichotomy
- * Discouragement of use should be limited only to certain types of exonyms
(resolution should not apply to all exonyms)

Minority language names - Heritage and cultural diversity

Existence of variant names needs to be acknowledged. Different groups use different names. Richness of toponyms (including exonyms) is a valuable cultural asset.

Standardisation should not lead to denial of variants and/or diversity.