MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON TOPONYMIC TERMINOLOGY

Remarks on UNGEGN Dictionary of Toponymic Terminology

Paper submitted by Hungary*

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REMARKS ON UNGEN
DICTIONARY OF TOponymic TERMINOLOGY
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The new Dictionary (including its first version) with more systematic definitions and structure has shown a real development in the work of international standardization. A great number of items reflect successfully the tedious work of the editor and the working group, while some other terms and definitions need revision. My remarks are intended not to lessen the results but to help in improving the Dictionary.

Notes (page 1): it should be mentioned that not only phonemic, but phonetic examples are in IPA notation, as well.

005 allonym: We had a term variant name in the UN Glossary 1987, an extremely useful term indicating the non-official allonyms of a standardized name. We are continuously advised by UN recommendations to give non-official variants in gazetteers and databases. Why should the term variant name disappear? Instead, we have now the standardized allonym, but of no use. Reading the definition of term 231 standardized name and that of 342 standardized toponym, an allonym can be found sitting behind both, expressed by the word "preferred". In other word: there is an unnecessary term while the necessary one is missing.

006 allonym, standardized: See remarks on 005 allonym.

007 allophone: Toponyms and nouns given as examples are not written in the IPA alphabet, therefore square brackets have to be changed for ordinary brackets.

008 alphabet: According to the definition given here, the IPA alphabet is't an alphabet as it has no connection to any specific language. Either this definition should be extended, or the definition for IPA should contain a remark, that it is't an alphabet in this sense. Practically it can be considered as a transcription alphabet.

009 alphabet, conversion: the term names conversion mentioned in the definition is missing from the glossary. The word names should be deleted.

011 alphabet, transcription: According to the definition for transcription, no specific alphabet is used but the alphabet of the language involved. Therefore, it may happen, that the term transcription alphabet is a synonym for target script (if no diacritics or markers are used), and not an independent term.

015 alphabetic sequence rules: The correct reference should be sequence rules, without the word alphabetic.

019 article: No example is given for the mentioned indefinite article. There is no need for it if there is statement, according to which in toponymy only the definite article has importance as the indefinite status is shown in most cases by a zero morpheme with the exception of Albanian: Tirana (definite), Tiranë (indefinite).

026 character: As it is stated several times that graphic signs used as units in alphabetic or syllabic scripts are also characters, examples of these types should also be given.
Another problem: the unit of a writing system can be a script, but not a character in the context of this glossary. A possible improvement in the definition:

a) Graphic symbol used as a unit in a script. Examples.

b) Graphic symbol used as a unit in scripts belonging to non-alphabetical writing systems. Examples.

See also remark on 171 letter.

030 character, vowel: In the absence of alphabetic examples it seems that a vowel character occurs only in the syllabic script, and a vowel letter only in an alphabet. Words alphabetic or should be deleted from this definition. Otherwise 174 vowel letter and this term are synonyms, and then there is no need for two definitions.

032 class, feature: The word item should be changed for feature, as there is a term, topographic feature in this glossary, while the expression topographic item has no meaning in the context of this glossary. The word item is again used in the next definition (033) but without the adjective toponymic. The origin of all the troubles in connection with feature class is that the term designation has been degraded to a synonym for descriptive term, and the items that make up a feature class do not exist in the present glossary. All the cartographers who deal with geographic names need that term. Remembering UN standardization documents, I think that the term type of feature or kind of feature should be the solution, the first one appearing in the definition of term 118 toponymic gazetteer! — Another problem: the definition starts with “Grouping” and gives a correct definition for the process. The term itself, on the other hand, seems to refer to the result of that process.

033 coded representation: Also feature classes have coded forms, moreover, they usually appear in coded form in toponymic databases or gazetteers (cf BGN Gazetteers where they are called coded designations). Either the term coded feature class should be added, or this one should be extended in that sense. Another problem: anything could have a coded representation, therefore, you cannot use this term in the practice. Let's try to imagine a database where the name of a data field giving designations for the type of feature (or kind of feature as used in Resolution 4, Recommendation E of the first UN Conference) should now be labelled as coded representation!

047 conversion table: The inverted form of compound terms should be avoided in the text of definitions, They should be used in references only, therefore, transcription key, transcription key and not key, transcription, key, transcription is the right form.

049 conversion, script: Reference to conversion, names is wrong, names should be deleted.

059 data dictionary: Digital data base should be mentioned instead of data base.

061 data element: Computer record should be written instead of computer file, as files consist of records, and records consist of fields.

065 data portability: Computer program should be written instead of program.

069 designation: According to the reference to descriptive term it seems that the term designation is a synonym for descriptive term. However, in the Glossary 1987, designation was defined in the same meaning as the present feature class. BGN Gazetteers use the term designation without differentiating whether it refers to a feature class or
to a single feature. Let's try to imagine an innocent poor cartographer or linguist studying UN materials, and using the present glossary. The very same refers to term 196 multilingual map.

078 digraph: See remark on 171 letter. There are two types of digraphs. The English sh represents a single phoneme but it is not considered in the alphabet as a unit (cf. alphabetic sequence in the English). The Czech and Slovak ch is also a digraph, but it is considered as a unit in the respective alphabets. The same situation appears in the Hungarian alphabet. A possible solution could be a definition which states that a digraph etc. used as a unit in the alphabet of a language should be considered as one letter or character.

084 element, generic: The reference false generic element should be generic element, false. — Another problem: the generic element (if it does) does not usually indicate the feature class! The generic element gives the type or kind of feature in these cases! In Hungary we have about ten different generic elements indicating small water courses: árok, csorgó, fők, folyás, patak, viz, vizfolyás, etc. They all belong to the same feature class, but they are different generic elements!

086 endonym: As explained in the remarks to 091 exonym, the very same toponym may be both an endonym and an exonym. If this is true, the definition should contain the statement that "Where the language of the name used, or the name used itself, has no official status, an endonym may be an exonym at the same time." Example of this kind should also be added: Dunaszérdahely endonym in Slovakia and Hungarian exonym for Dunajská Streda.

091 exonym: There was a discussion on this term at the September meeting of the East Central and South-East Europe Division. According to one opinion the introduction of the term endonym instead of "name used in the official language or languages" (Glossary 1987) in the definition caused a radical change as an endonym is not necessarily in the official language(s). This might mean that the Hungarian Dunaszérdahely would not be an exonym for the Slovak Dunajská Streda as Hungarian is spoken by the majority of the population in that city. According to another interpretation, in consequence of the statement "outside the area where that language has official status" in the present glossary the endonym Dunaszérdahely is to be regarded as an exonym as well. It seems that this second interpretation is the right one. This situation has already been explained in my previous remarks without any visible result. By result I mean: a statement that two types of exonyms exist: 1. exonym used locally (the one being an exonym and endonym at the same time), 2. exonym not used locally. The very same situation has been described in Glossar zur kartographischen Namenkunde by Otto Back and Josef Breu as 1. exonym in general ("exonym, allgemein"), 2. exonym in cartography ("exonym im Sinne der Kartographie"). See some other remarks on term 086 endonym.

092 exonymization: As I already mentioned, this definition is'nt quite clear. Where does happen this substitution? This question must be answered in the definition. According to the examples one has the impression that the substitution is to be meant in a language. Does substitution mean anything in this case to map lettering? Nothing at all. Everything depends on the choice of the cartographer or geolinguist (as Prof. Ormeling would say it). Just take the example of a situation where both the endonym (1st place) and the exonym (2nd place) are given, while the 2nd one is an endonym as well (cf. remarks on 086 endonym). If there is really a process coined here as exonymization, distinction must be made between exonyms without an endonym, and exonyms which are also endonyms. A sub-group of exonyms without an endonym, and exonyms which are also endonyms. A sub-group of
exonyms has already been separated in this glossary (traditional name), why not another one, the endoexonyms?

101 feature, hydrographic: In Glossary 1987 there were two "hydro" terms: hydrographic and hydrological. Now there is only one, and it is not clearly stated that it covers both. Several UN documents refer to undersea and marine features as they both belong to areas beyond a single sovereignty. Where are these features? At least examples should be given.

109 firmware: I wonder if the term eprom = erasable, programmable read only memory is the right one for this definition. Hungarian characters are sometimes added to printers through epsms.

118 gazetteer, toponymic: The term type of feature should be feature class, in the context of this dictionary. At the same time it's a mistake that supports my remarks on term 032, and 033.

118 index, place names: In many countries gazetteers appear containing exclusively populated places. They give official standardized names with a number of additional data. They are different to toponymic indexes not only because of the number of additional data, but also because no data is given about location (if location means some types of coordinates or at least map sheet reference; at this point a need arises for a definition of location). I always had doubts in translating the title of our gazetteer of this kind into English. Therefore, I think there is a need for a term place names gazetteer to be included in this glossary.

148 indigenous language: This should be only a reference to 159 language, indigenous, and not a term with definition.

149 indigenous name: This should be only a reference to 222 name, indigenous, and not a term with definition.

150 interactive: Program should be computer program, data base should be digital data base.

154 key, romanization: Letters of a Roman alphabet should be letters, digraphs etc. of a Roman alphabet. See also remarks 155 key, transliteration.

155 key, transliteration: See remarks on 026 character and 171 letter. In case of a transliteration key for Hungarian into Hebrew you cannot take graphic characters of the Hungarian alphabet, you can take only the units of that alphabet consisting of letters described in connection with letter (individual letters, digraphs, trigraphs and tetragraphs). In other words: you can take characters, digraphs, trigraphs and tetragraphs. This definition is wrong for all alphabets having digraphs etc. See possible solutions either at 171 letter, or at 078 digraph.

159 language, indigenous: See remark on 148 indigenous language.

171 letter: The big problem with this definition: the existence of digraphs, trigraphs and tetragraphs. In most of the alphabets (not like the English) digraphs etc. are serving as units, while consisting of two or more characters. In the Czech and Slovak language in the alphabetic sequence the digraph ch comes after h. From this respect the present definition
is true only if the term *letter* includes digraphs, trigraphs and tetragraphs as well. See also the remarks on 078 digraph and 155 key, transliteration.

In Hungarian linguistic terminology the problem is solved the following way: The term *betű* ('letter') in a broad sense means both one unit in the alphabet (i.e. a, d, b, c, cs, d, dz, e, e, f, g, gy etc.) as well as a constituent part (if there is) of these units (e.g. y in the digraphs gy, ny, ty). But in the narrow sense, in linguistics, *betű* means only the units in the alphabet, while parts of a digraph etc. are called *írásjegek* or *jegek* ('character'). This also means, that in a strict sense, there is no *y letter* in the Hungarian alphabet, as it occurs only in digraphs or trigraphs (it occurs exceptionally in family names as foreign letter), but there is a *y character*. This narrow meaning is taught in schools from the very beginning.

173 letter, consonant: A consonant is a sound in itself, therefore, the expression *consonant sound* is a repetition of words. See definition of 298 segment.

174 letter, vowel: Again the problem of the digraphs etc. In the Finnish alphabet two vowel characters represent long vowels: aa, ää, ee etc. Are they considered as a letter or a digraph? — Another item: a vowel is a sound in itself, therefore, the expression *vowel sound* is a repetition of words (cf. definition of 298 segment). — See also the remark on 030 character, vowel.

176 lettering, multilingual: the reference is wrong, it should be perhaps *map*, *multilingual*

177 lettering, multiscriptual: the reference is wrong, it should be perhaps *map*, *multiscriptual*

182 ligature: An example would be useful from the very frequent devanagari ligatures, showing that ligatures occur also in scripts other than Roman.

196 map, multilingual: I am completely aware of the fact that the use of words and terms depends on agreement, and the original meaning of the constituent elements is in many cases of minor importance. However, in this term the word *multilingual* is strongly misleading. Most of the maps are *multilingual* because of the different countries and different languages represented. The situation described in this definition does not cover the complete field of maps using different languages. Besides, the previous UN definition for *multilingual lettering* had just the opposite meaning: it referred to rendering geographical names on a map according to UN recommendations, i.e. without exonyms, and using UN recommended conversion systems. Is it right that we recommend to use the very same English word (*multilingual*) in a 10 year period to represent two completely opposite terms? I think: no! Not to speak about the fact that the present glossary lacks any term on the type of map or atlas described previously as *multilingual lettering*. This glossary has no term for describing the solutions on the International Map 1:1 million, in the international atlases of Bertelsmann or Touring Club, etc. (I draw the attention again to reference 176 multilingual lettering to the missing *multilingual script*, already missing from the previous edition.)

201 marker, vowel: According to the definition of term 288 defect: *ve alphabetic script* Thai is a defective alphabetic script. Consequently, this term and 372 *vowel point* are synonyms, and only one definition is needed.
217 name, composite: Definition isn't quite clear, and the examples aren't illustrative enough. A possible improvement:

Toponym consisting of a generic and of a specific element where usually the specific but also the generic element may consist of several words. In the absence of one of these elements, two or more words of the other element make also a composite name. Examples: Mount Cook, Newport, La Coruna; Newfoundland, Sierra Nevada Oriental; Gobi Desert; Rostov-na-Donu, Stoke-on-Trent. Complementary term: name, simplex.

I didn't mentioned free morphemes as they could be regarded as words.

222 name, indigenous: See remark on 149 indigenous name.

227 name, place: It's not clear what was the the intention with part b) in this definition. The fact is that we need the term populated place name or place name. Can we say that place name is a defined term in this glossary? In translating this glossary I considered place name as a term in the meaning of populated place name of the Glossary 1987. Or populated place name is the preferred one? But it is only mentioned in the text of the definition, and not given as a term. Why?

231 name, standardized: If the definition b) of 214 name is correct, this term and term 342 toponym, standardized, are synonyms, and only one definition is needed, even if there is a reference to this fact. It is a question of principle: does this glossary consider terms differing from the one given in the glossary, and occurring in other contexts (e.g. UN resolutions) as synonyms, or not. From other examples I have concluded the result that they are sometimes even not mentioned, or given only as "invisible synonyms" by hiding them in the text of some definitions, like type of feature in 118 gazetter, toponymic.

236 names conversion: Reference is wrong, names should be deleted.

238 names survey: Reference is wrong, survey, toponymic is the right one.

263 pictogram: In the definition an object should be an object.

281 romanization: UNGEGN-approved should be approved by a UN Conference.

287 script, conversion: Reference is wrong, names should be deleted.

288 script, defective alphabetic: A consonant is a sound in itself, therefore the expression consonant sound is a repetition of words. See definition of term 298 segment.

298 segment: Phonetics has been defined in term 186 linguistics as part of it, therefore it is misleading to mention it in this form.

301 sequence rules: The example toponyms in a gazetter should be toponyms in a toponymic gazetteer, as there is no term gazetteer in this glossary.

305 software: The term programs should be computer programs.

330 term, descriptive: The most frequent word used as a descriptive term is an individual generic term. It should be mentioned in the definition.

351 term, generic: Reference should be. See also generic element, base.
342 toponym, standardized: See remarks to 231 name, standardized.

345 transcription: The remark (i.e. the sounds) should be (i.e. the phonemes). A more simple solution: ... in which the phonemes of a source language... — Another problem: Am I right in saying that in case of the pinyin or other systems, a romanization of the Chinese is a transcription? In other words: conversion of logograms is effected by transcription?

The definition of term 048 conversion gives no other possibility. This should be somehow reflected in this definition. The trouble is, that the source language and the target language, are the same! I think there is a possibility to put it in a way that it fulfills the requirements of pinyin as well as the IPA, which is also a non-language bound transcription.

347 transcription key: Reference is wrong, and I wonder why this term is missing from the glossary (while transliteration key is given)?

351 transliteration: This is the only definition where digraphs etc. are considered. But why only on the target side? Source alphabets also have digraphs etc.

372 vowel point: See remark on term 201 marker, vowel.