Divergence and Convergence
within Standardizing Danish Place-Names

UNGEGN, Brussels 2018-10-12

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Orthographical correctness from the Danish Place-Name Committee's point of view

- "Dictionary of Danish Orthography"

- Contemporary orthography

- Standardization both linguistic, historical and practical matter

- From the very beginning (first half of the 20th century) – resistance

- A number of linguistically ideal suggestions from first draft lists were changed

- Deviation create precedent

- The committee has repeatedly accepted antiquated forms (av>au, ks>x, t>th, s>z)

- And recently new names with foreign orthography/commercial elements as Victoria Street Station, Musicon

- The norms are repetitively challenged

Orthographical correctness from local communities' point of view

- **Unawareness**
  - The overall purpose of standardisation and the historical background
  - The existence of legislation (and limitations within naming places)
  - Danish place-names - Danish forms (not foreign)
  - Orthography of contemporary words and place-names should be adequate
  - Lack of adequateness within authorised forms are exceptions – not standard

Logic thinking

- Spelling of place-names is as liberal as spelling of personal names
- A place-name is a personal/local communities' matter
- Correct spelling of an old place-name is an antiquated/historical spelling
  (Typical 18th and 19th century forms from nation-wide maps)
- English language is high status – A (pseudo) English name is a great new Danish place-name (and great branding)!

Insufficient information?

- Earlier lists published as book
- Information about orthographic principles
- Distributed to municipalities
- Website
  - General information about the committee (also historically)
  - General recommendations
  - Information about purpose and legislation
  - About language and orthography
  - About UNGEGN resolutions
  - Links to lists of authorised place-names
  - Most relevant information can be found
  - No information about how to apply technically
  - Contact information – the secretary can be asked any time – and we are!

Balancing divergence into convergence

The process of guidance (or damage control)

- Dialogue and advice!
- Beforehand valuation of an individual name
- Is authorisation necessary?
- Is authorisation likely to achieve?
- Information about rules and principles including background
- Information about how to apply including advice about documentation needed
- Problem: The name is already formed and locally agreed on when local communities decide to formally apply

Balancing divergence into convergence

The process of authorising
- The secretary do research in advance
- The case is presented to the committee
- The case is discussed
- In case of
- rejection - the applicant receive a reasoned refusal in writing
- acceptance – the applicant is informed that the place-name is nominated for authorisation in the ministry

Convergence in disputes

- The many exceptions - historical as resent - from the orthographic rules makes it difficult to argue and maintain consistency

- A complaint can reach the Ministry of Culture

- The use of double **aa** instead of the correct letter **å** became a public matter

- Give the people what they want – and they are still not satisfied!