Editorial issues involving geographical names

in the production of atlases for the educational and general market

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School world atlases have

- Maps of foreign countries
- Maps of foreign continents
- World maps
- 5000-25 000 foreign names

Only limited number of editorial teams exist that have the expertise to handle all names correctly

Others just copy the names from other school atlases, with all the dangers that brings with it

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Number of geographical names involved in world atlases:

- General reference atlases: 100,000
- Senior school atlases: 20,000
- Intermediate school atlases: 10,000
- Junior school atlases: 8,000
- Basic school atlases: 2,000

- Electronic reference atlas: 1,000,000

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Constraints in the handling of names

- Economic: as it would be too expensive to take 100,000 or even 5,000 individual decisions, global toponymic guidelines are indispensable.

- Consumer-oriented: the educational market has its specific demands towards the spelling (transliteration/transcription) of foreign names.

Customers' demands toward names conflict with the publisher's interests

- Use of exonyms (geography teachers are conservative)

- Language-specific transliteration/ transcription of names from non-Roman alphabets are preferred by teachers.

- Addition of generic terms in foreign-language co-editions would make them more costly to produce

Resistance to change

- Name changes are accepted as long as they reflect well-publicized real-world changes.

- From a user's point of view, name changes are not desirable: in the class-room, different atlas editions may be used simultaneously.

- Systematic changes – of language or transliteration system – must be well-timed.

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GLOBAL AVAILABILITY OF TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES (as of 1-1-2000)

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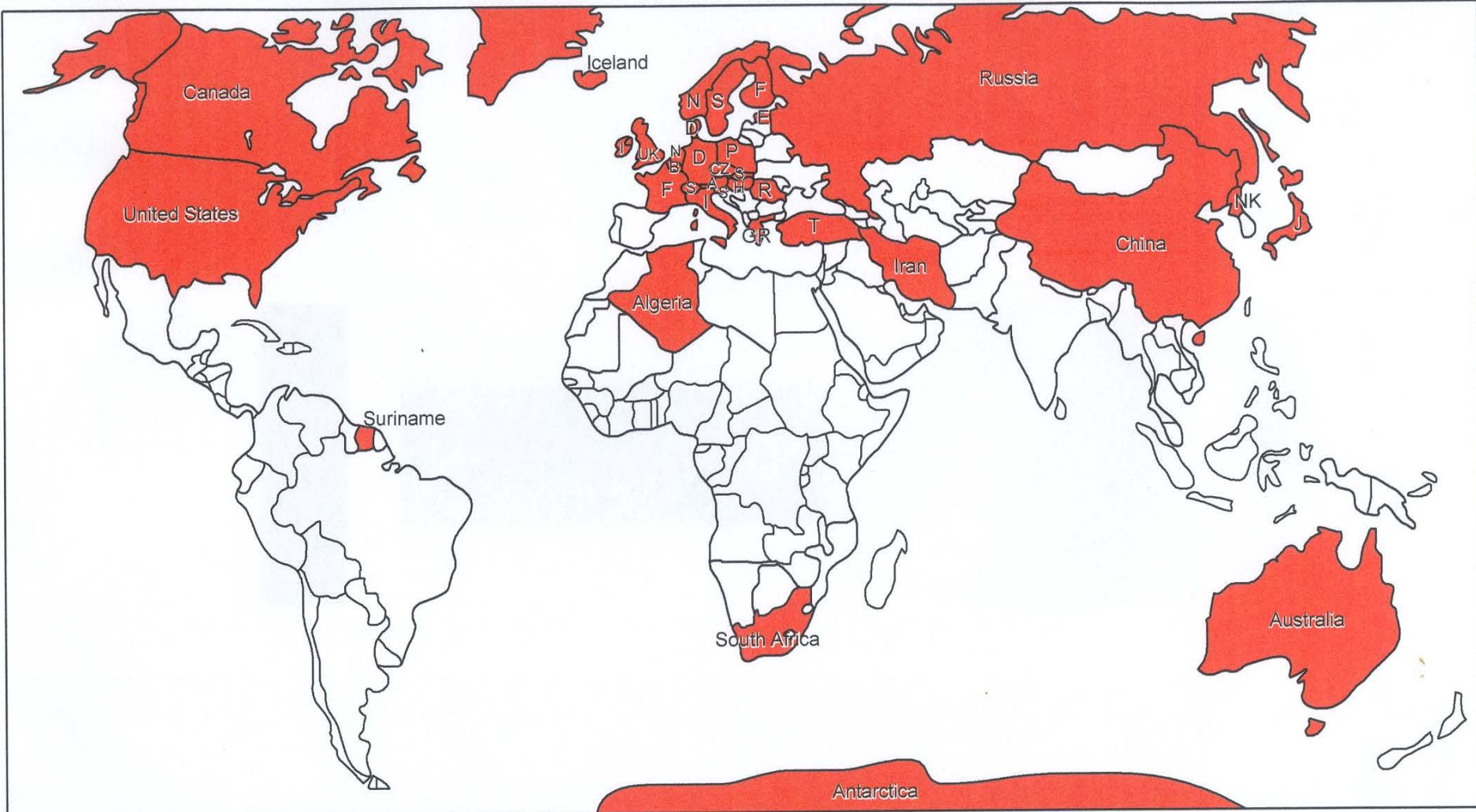
exonyms

Exonyms are names used in a specific language for geographical features situated outside the area where that language has official status and differing in form from the official name used in the country where that feature is situated. The latter we call an endonym

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Use of exonyms

- Use them or not?
- If used, in parenthesis or in front?
- What should be their source?

generics

- Bay of Bengal

  specific

  generic

- East African Rift Valley

  valley

  specific

Translation of generics

البحر الأحمر

- Red Sea
- Ahmar Sea
- Bahr al 'Ahmar
- Al Bahr al'Ahmar

Αιγαίο Πέλαγος

- Aegean Sea
- Aigaio Sea
- Aigaio Pelagos

Translation?

- Mont Blanc or White Mountain?
- Golfo de Valencia or
  Gulf of Valencia?
- Costa del Sol or Coast of the Sun?

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Incorporation of generics?

- Red or Red River?

- Mississippi or Mississippi River?

- Vancouver or Vancouver Island?

- Long or Long Island?

Conversion: transliteration or transcription?

- Transliteration: conversion system in which each character in the source script is rendered by one character or group of character in the target script

(in theory reversable) بغداد >Baġdād > بغداد

- Transcription: conversion system in which sounds from a source language are recorded in terms of a target language

  (in theory non-reversable) Bordeaux>Бордо> Bordo

Variant names

Secondary names (in parentheses):

- Replaced names: St.Petersburg (Leningrad)

- Exonyms: Firenze (Florence)

Alternative names (with slash)

- Helsinki/Helsingfors

Use of articles

- Al-Madinah or Madinah?
- Älv (river) or Älven (the river)

- But: A Coruña, Le Havre

(where the article is officially part of the name)

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"Global toponymic guidelines for school atlas editors" (in Europe)

- Within Europe, endonyms will be given priority, current exonyms being added in parentheses.

- If endonyms use the Roman alphabet, all diacritics will be included (with some exceptions). Non-Roman letters will be transliterated.

- Non-Roman alphabets will be systematically transliterated in a way acceptable to the school market.

- Outside Europe, conventional names will be used for well-known objects [ex.: Bangkok].

- Names of open water features (outside territorial waters) are rendered in the atlas publisher's language.

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- Where a generic element is written separately from a specific element, it may be translated.

- For each language guidelines should be developed which elements will be translated.

- Names consisting of a generic element and an adjective specifier, are either left in local language [ex.: *Red River, Mont Blanc*] or fully translated [ex.: *Tuz Gölü = Salt Lake*].

- Names of objects crossing language boundaries are rendered in the atlas publisher's language.

- In case of international rivers having no name in the atlas publisher's language, we may apply different language versions along their course.

- The number of secondary names (added between brackets to the primary name) should be kept as low as possible, Secondary names may be:
    - Exonyms: names belonging to the atlas publisher's language 'cultural-linguistic heritage'.
    - Previous names: in the map only in the 1st edition after their substitution.

- Any redundant generic elements will be omitted [ex.: *Columbia* instead of *Columbia River*; *Ouessant* instead of *Île d'Ouessant*].

- If a generic element is omitted, the remaining specific element must be in nominative form [e.g. *Uudenmaan Lääni* becomes *Uusimaa*].

- Duplication of generics should be at any time avoided [ex: *Ysyk-Köl*, *Aladağlar*, *Mississippi*].

- Articles should as much as possible be omitted [ex: *Setesdal* instead of *Setesdalen, Hufuf* instead of *Al-Hufuf,* but: *El Paso*].

- Wherever available, toponymic guidelines published by UN should be followed.

- Where official guidelines are not (yet) available, and choices must be made between a definite and indefinite/neutral form, the neutral form should be chosen (ex.: Albanian, Romanian).

- etc

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