toponymy course: Editorial issues involving geographical names in the production of atlases for the educational and general market

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Wolters-Noordhoff Atlas Productions produces:

- School atlases for:
  - the Netherlands (Dutch)
  - Belgium Dutch)
  - Belgium (French)
  - France (French)
  - Sweden (Swedish)
  - Denmark (Danish)
  - Switzerland (French)
  - Canada (French)
  - Dem. Rep. of the Congo (French)
Number of geographical names involved:

- Senior school atlases: 20 000
- Intermediate school atlases: 10 000
- Junior school atlases: 8 000
- Basic school atlases: 2 000
Constraints in the handling of names of school atlases

- Economic: as it would be too expensive to take 20,000 individual decisions, internal 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 conflicting with the publisher’s interests

- Use of exonyms
- Language-specific transliteration/transcription of names from non-Roman alphabets.
- Addition of generic terms in foreign-language co-editions
Resistance to change

- Name changes are accepted as long as they reflect real-world changes receiving publicity.
- From a user’s point of view, name changes are not preferable: in the classroom, different atlas editions may be used simultaneously.
- Systematic changes – of language or transliteration – must be well-timed.
General rules for rendering names in school atlases

- Within Europe, local names will be given priority, current exonyms being added between brackets.
- If local names use 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 are rendered in Dutch.
- Where a generic element is written separately from a specific element, it may be translated. For each language we have guidelines which elements will be translated. Cap Bon > Kaap Bon
- 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 Dutch (Rijn, Donau).

- In case of international rivers having no Dutch name, 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 Dutch ‘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*, *Alaköl*, *Mississippi*].

Articles should as much as possible be omitted [ex: *Setesdal* instead of *Setesdalen*, *Hufuf* instead of *Al-Hufuf*].
Wherever available, toponymic guidelines published by UN should be followed. Sometimes this requires knowledge of the language.

Toponymic guidelines may for internal use be augmented by analyzing existing naming practices (ex.: Turkish).

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).
Rules for making the index

- If a name starts with a ‘loose’ generic element or an article, the name will be inverted. (**Cape Canaveral**>**Canaveral, Cape**)

Problems:
- The generics/articles must be recognized.
- Take care of ‘false’ generics and articles (**Rio de Janeiro**, **Los Angeles**, **Cape York**).

- In case of homonymms, generic and/or locational attributes are added (**Chalons**>**Chalons en Champagne**).
Index-related issues

- Alphabetisation is language-dependent.
- Cross-references should be included:
  - Alternative names/spellings, including exonyms not used in the map.
  - Old names (up to 10 years after their substitution).
- Every name-object combination should only occur once.
Geographical names database

- WN currently uses a Geographic Information System to produce its general (=non-thematic) maps.
- The GIS is shared with companies in the US and Italy.
- The GIS contains tables to store all geographical names.
- Joint maintenance of the names database became a major editorial issue.
Attributes of the names records

- The names database contains a number of product-oriented attributes.

- *Language* refers to a set of names.

- *Generic class* sometimes causes complications:
  - Administrative areas of different orders
  - Capitals of different orders
  - Historic area vs. administrative area

- *Scale importance*: important editorial decision
Diacritics and the names database

- The WN indexing system: two ASCII-sets have been defined to represent the necessary diacritic.
- The GIS defines diacritics using a two-cypher code.
- Different software applications use their own codes:
  - The ASCII character set is standard only for strictly alpha-numerical characters.
  - Graphic applications (Freehand, MicroStation) use their own codes.
Examples of diacritics coding

10e = é  Montr10eal
10n = ñ  Pozna10n
10a = á  M10alaga
11e = è  Gen11eve
12a = ä  G12avle
12u = ü  M12unchen
13i = î  N13imes
14c = ç  Besan14con
14s = ş  Eski14sehir
14S = Ş 14Sanl15iurfa
15i = İ  D16iyarbak15ir
16I = İ  16Istanbul

17s = ş  Ni17s
18L = Ł  18L10od10z
19a = ä  S19ao Paulo
20a = a  Elbl20ag
21i = ĭ  R21iga
22e = è  Klaip22eda
23ae = æ  L23aes24o
24o = ø  R24om24o
25oe = œ  Bar25oeul
26a = å  Lule26a
27Th = Þ  27Thorshamn
28dh = ŏ  Sey28dhi
Issues specific to international productions

- For each language, one set of names should be used.

- In different countries within the same language community, different standards (or personal tastes? ...) may prevail. Examples:
  - Capitalization of French adjectives
  - Hyphenation of Dutch province names

- There may exist different political points of view (ex.: Yougoslavia, Cyprus, Israel).
Key to the pronunciation

- As (combinations of) letters represent sounds, in an atlas they deserve a ‘legend’ just like other map symbols.

- The key to the pronunciation should remain simple, not to overshoot its target. Example: how to pronounce Srebrenica, Cwmbran, Szczecin, Łódź, Civitavecchia?.

- Accentuation (word stress) may be mentioned where it is regular (Czech, Finnish).
The viewpoint of the world atlas editor

- Standardization is in the blood of atlas editors. Their task is to present the variation that colours our world in a comparable way.

- The needs of an atlas or world map editor exceed the scope of separate national names authorities.

- For the sake of homogeneity, the compiler of an atlas would want to apply similar rules to all names, regardless of the language they belong to.