

## TERMINOLOGY AND THE UNGEGN WEBCOURSE

Our principle source is the *Glossary of terms for the standardization of geographical names*, published by UNGEGN and downloadable from the UNGEGN website. The definitions of the terms are given in all six UN languages, so also in English and Spanish. We will look at the terms for geographical features, language, grammar, pronunciation, writing systems, toponyms, maps and toponymy. After all, for toponyms, we want to match specific topographical objects with specific names, from a specific language, written in a specific writing system on maps.

### Geography:

We name objects or features on the Earth and extra-terrestrial ones, which we want to locate and classify:

- Coordinates* are the system of parallels and meridians with which we can indicate the location of points on the Earth
- Geographical features/objects* - Topographic feature on the surface of Earth.
- Topographical features/objects* - A portion of the surface of Earth or of any other planet or satellite that has recognizable identity.
- Natural features/objects* - Topographic feature not made or significantly modified by man
- Cultural features/objects* - Topographic feature made, or significantly modified, by man.
- Physical features/objects* / invisible features - Any topographic feature that can be observed visually.
- Maritime features/objects* - Hydrographic features associated with the sea
- Undersea features* - A portion of that part of Earth that lies beneath the surface of an ocean or a sea and that has recognizable identity
- Feature class* - Grouping of topographic features with similar characteristics, to facilitate classification, search and retrieval. Example: river, creek, brook, wadi etc., all classed under "stream".

### Language

When we name features, we use our language, so we need some linguistic definitions:

- language* - means of verbal communication used by a large community, including the words, their pronunciation and the methods of combining them.
  - Official language* - language that has legal status in a country or part of it, and that serves as an admin. Language.
  - Dialect* - Regionally or socially distinctive variety of a language, characterized and identified by a particular set of words, grammatical structures and pronunciation.
  - Minority language* - language that is different from the official state language and that is spoken by a national minority. It may or may not have official status.
  - Indigenous language* - Language native to a given region.
  - Phoneme* - The smallest unit of sound in a language that changes meaning,
- Language is made up of words, ordered according to a grammar but, of all the words, we are only interested in the toponyms, which are a specific form of nouns. Nouns (substantivo in Portuguese) are words designating a particular kind of being, place or thing, and proper nouns (substantivos propios) are nouns identifying an individual person, place or thing. Antroponyms are nouns identifying individual persons, and toponyms are nouns identifying individual places or topographical features.

### Pronunciation

These toponyms are not only for reading but also for verbal communication, so we should be able to pronounce them correctly. So, we need to know what phonemes or sounds they are made up from: to convey that information we use audio tapes or the *international phonetic alphabet* – an internationally recognized set of symbols for phonetic transcription

### Writing systems

We need to write down the names in our gazetteers and maps, so we have to use writing systems and know about their characteristics:

- Alphabet* - Set of all letters of a language with alphabetic script, ordered in a specific sequence and provided with names for each letter.
- Characters* - Graphic symbol used as a unit in writing
- Vowels/consonants* - speech sounds in the articulation of which the breath channel is not blocked /speech sounds, produced by a constriction or closure at one or more points in the breath channel.
- Grapheme* - Graphic representation of a phoneme in a particular language.

- Diacritical signs* - A sign, usually small, placed above, below or across a letter in order to change the phonemic value of the original letter
- Capitals, lower case, hyphens, accents* need no definition
- Digraphs or ligatures* - A graphic stylized combination of two letters indicating that successive sounds are to be pronounced as one.

### Toponyms

- As said, for toponyms we match specific topographical objects with specific names, from a specific language, written in a specific writing system. Toponyms may be *simplex or composite*, that is existing of different, separated parts
- Specific part* - The part of a toponym that does not constitute a generic term and that distinguishes it from others of the same feature class.
  - Generic part* - The part of a toponym that consists of a generic term (Port-au-Prince; Sierra Nevada; Newport.)
  - Allonym* = variant name - Each of two or more toponyms employed in reference to a single topographic feature.
  - Homonym* - Each of two or more identical toponyms denoting different topographic features.
  - Exonym* - Name used in a specific language for a geographical feature situated outside the area where that language has official status, and differing in its form from the name used in the official language or languages of the area where the geographical feature is situated.
  - Endonym* - Name of a geographical feature in one of the languages occurring where the feature is situated
  - Historical name* - Toponym found in historical document(s) and being no longer in current use.
  - Local name* - Toponym applied by a geographically limited sector of a linguistic community to a feature in its area
  - Official name* - Toponym sanctioned by a national names authority and applied within its jurisdiction.
  - Short/long form of a name* - In toponymy, the abbreviated or short version of a name / Complete form of a toponym (in particular the name of a country), including all components
  - Different categories of Toponyms bear different names: *oronyms, odonyms, choronyms, toponyms proper, hydronyms, anoikonims or microtoponyms, hagionyms.*

### Maps

Maps are one of the forms in which toponyms are rendered. On maps we see that Generic terms can also be used individually as *descriptive terms* (in designations like cemetery, ferry, sports field or factory) and that *abbreviated individually used generic terms* occur as well (like FM for Farm, PH for Public House or Pub). Apart from those there are also *letters or characters with a symbol function* (like S for school, P for Post Office)

Apart from toponyms we discern the following concepts:

- Lettering* – the way in which the names are rendered on the map
- Fonts/typeface* – A font is a typeface of a specified type, style and size. A typeface is the style or design of a set of all print characters of an alphabet, regardless of size.
- Descriptive terms* or free generic terms- A word printed in a map, that designates a topographic feature by its properties, but that does not name it, so it does not constitute a toponym.
- Multilingual maps* - Map that, for a particular topographic feature, shows allonyms in different languages,
- Multiscriptual maps* - Map that presents toponyms in different types of script or writing systems.

### Toponymy

Within the field of toponymy we also have some names for specific products of our activities:

- Glossary* - Specialized list of terms relating to a particular field of study or interest, which may contain explanatory or descriptive information on the items listed.
- Gazetteer* - List of toponyms arranged in alphabetic or other sequential order, with an indication of their location and preferably including variant names, type of topographic feature and other defining or descriptive information.
- Place name index* - Ordered list of toponyms, including data about location but little or no additional information.
- Toponym Standardization* - The establishment, by an appropriate authority, of a specific set of standards or norms for the uniform rendering of toponyms.
- Official name* - Toponym sanctioned by a legally constituted names authority and applied within its jurisdiction.
- Toponymical guidelines* - Set of rules governing the standardization of a country's toponyms and their presentation in maps and gazetteers.
- Names authority* - A board or commission, assigned advisory function and/or power of decision in matters of toponymy by the state.