Nouns and Noun Phrases as Modifiers in Complex Toponyms: Structure, Function and Use in German, English and Swedish

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Abstract

Modifiers in complex toponyms in German, English and Swedish show a great variety of forms and functions, and play a significant role in the use of toponyms in daily life. Beside adjectives, the modifier may be a simple noun – either a common or proper one - *Sandberg, Karlstadt*, (Ge.), *Sandhurst, Charlestown* (Eng.), *Sandhamn, Karlstad (*Sw.). They can also be noun phrases of different complexity with variations in frequency and use according to the language : simple noun in appositions (*Wüste Gobi* (Ge.)*, River Thames* (Eng.), no example in Swedish), preposed noun with case marker (*Land's End* (Eng.), *Dals Ed (*Sw.), no example in German, prepositional phrases (*Wyk auf Föhr* (Ge.), *Hay-on-Wye* (Eng.), few occurrences in Swedish). Our objectives are to point out the specificities of nouns and noun phrases as modifiers in German, English and Swedish and to make a contrastive analysis of the three Germanic languages based on these features. This approach might give useful insights into the use of "names in daily life" in a globalized world.

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Introduction

This study deals with a particular aspect of the grammar of toponyms. It will, in a synchronic perspective, examine the nouns and noun phrases as modifier in complex toponyms and compare their structure, function and use in three Germanic languages, German, English and Swedish indicated as (Ger), (Eng) and (Swe) in this paper.

Focussing in a grammatical study on the internal structure of toponyms nearly always involves transparent complex toponyms, for simple ones like *Kassel* (Ger), *Dallas* (Eng) and *Lund (*Sw.) are not analysable and therefore without any interest for our study. Transparent complex toponyms have a structure which can be easily analysed by a native speaker like (*Sandberg, Karlstadt*, (Ger), *Sandhurst, Charlestown* (Eng), *Sandhamn, Karlstad (*Sw.)) or in so-called 'multiword syntactic constructions' like *Kap der guten Hoffnung* (Ger), *Cape of Good Hope* (Eng) and *Godahoppsudden* (Swe). This type of toponym can be examined through a traditional morphological analysis which classifies the elements of complex word structures into heads and modifiers. In these examples for instance the heads would be *'berg* (Ger., mountain)*, hurst, hamn* (Swe, harbour)*'*, and the modifier *'sand'* in the three languages*.

1. Functional analyses

Complex transparent toponyms can also be analysed according to a functional analysis based on a double dichotomy classifying its elements in appellative or proprial elements on the one hand, and in specific and generic elements on the other hand [Stani-Fertl 2001]. This double dichotomy allows to assign to each element, one of the four following characteristics: an appellative as a generic term in the toponym **Ag** (i.e. *town, castle, mount, lake, sea* as in *Red Sea*), an appellative noun as a specific term **As** (i.e.*sand, rose, salt*, as in *Salt Lake*), a proper name (or proprial element) as a specific term **Ps** (i.e. anthroponyms like *Bering, Charles, Mary* as in *Maryland*, toponyms like *Niagara, London, Cam* as in *Cambridge*), a proper name as a generic term **Pg** (i.e.*Guyana, America, Timor* as in *East Timor*).

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This method takes better into account the different status of the elements as a proper or as a common noun like in our example, avoiding to involve word classes and neutralizing the opposition between close compounds, hyphenated compounds, open compounds and prepositional syntagms.:

Sandberg		*Karlstadt*
Sandhurst (**As** + **Ag**)	*versus*	*Charlestown* (**Ps** + **Ag**)
Sandhamn		*Karlstad*

It enables to study complex toponyms on a more abstract level than through a classic structural morphosyntactical analysis, and facilitates the comparisons between different languages.

Without taking into account the presence of prepositions, casual markers and coordination markers, the following eight combinations are potentually possible (where the last four combinations are prepositional structures) :

As + **Ag**	*Hirschberg* (Ger), *Deerhurst*(Eng), *Hjorthagen* (Swe)
As + **Pg**	*Neuötting* (Ger), *New Romney* (Eng), *Nyköping* (Swe)
Ps + **Pg**	*Französisch Guyana* (Ger), *French Guiana* (Eng), *Franska Guyana* (Swe)
Ps + **Ag**	*Marienburg* (Ger), *Maryland* (Eng), *Mariestad* (Swe)
Pg + **Ps**	*Frankfurt am Main* (Ger), *Stratford-upon-Avon* (Eng)
	Too Low frequency in Swedish
Pg + **As**	*Reit im Winkel* (Ger), *Houghton on the Hill* (Eng), *Dals Ed* (Swe)
Ag + **As**	*Bergen am See* (Ger), *Isle of Man* (Eng)
	Too Low frequency in Swedish
Ag + **Ps**	*Volksrepublik China* (Ger), *Federal Republic of Germany* (Eng), *Kungariket Sverige* (Swe)

As Germanic languages are predetermined, the specific element precedes the generic one in compounds like *Hirschberg, Maryland, Nyköping* and noun phrases with adjective modifiers as in *French Guiana*. In complex toponyms the generic term can be followed by the specific one, only in structures with a right positioned noun modifier like prepostional phrases, genitive attributes and appositions:

Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Ger), *Federal Republic of Germany* (Eng), *Förbundsrepubliken Tyskland* (Swe)
Königreich Schweden (Ger), *Kingdom of Sweden* (Eng), *Kungariket Sverige* (Swe)
Volksrepublik China (Ger), *People's Republic of China* (Eng), *Folksrepubliken Kina* (Swe)

Toponyms with postpositioned modifiers represent the usual structure in Roman languages i.e. *Guyane Française* (Fre), *Sierra Nevada* (Spa), *Lago Maggiore* (Ita), but usually the eight combinations will not appear in similair structures in the same language.

Let us have a closer look now at nouns and noun phrases which occur as modifiers in complex toponyms:

2. Compounds

A first differenciation can be made considering the position of noun modifiers. Two main classes can be distinguished, i.e. the prepositioned and the postpositioned modifier.

Prepositioned nouns occur mainly in compounds, be they solid, open or hyphenated, and as saxon genitive attributes. Postpositioned modifiers can be observed in prepositional phrases, coordinations and appositions.

2.1. Solid Compounds

I will first discuss solid compounds, the most frequent type of complex toponyms in the Germanic languages, the. Compounds combine a specific element with a generic element, a proprial or an appellative one. According to their functional structure, two combinations will be presented and classified depending on their semantic value, the combination of two appellative elements **As + Ag** and the combination of a proprial element with an appellative element **Ps + Ag,** respectively. Numerous appellative elements can be found as a specific element in compounds, like minerals, animals, landscapes, geographic directions, numbers and so on: proper names determinating an appellative element are mostly anthroponyms, toponyms or demonyms:

Here is the semantic classification of modifiers in **As + Ag** combinations :

	German	**English**	**Swedish**
Animal :	*Hirschberg*	*Deerhurst*	*Hjorthagen*
Function :	*Bischofshofen*	*Bishopsworth*	*Biskopsgården*
Geo. Direct. :	*Ostbevern*	*Eastbury*	*Östersjön*
Landscape :	*Waldstetten*	*Woodstock*	*Skogtorp*
Mineral :	*Silbersee*	*Silverlake*	*Silversjö*
Number :	*Dreieich*	*Sevenoaks*	*Treriksröset*
Vegetation :	*Birkenau*	*Birchtown*	*Björkliden*

Here is the semantic classification of modifiers in **Ps + Ag** combinations :

	German	**English**	**Swedish**
Toponym :	*Saarbrücken*	*Cambridge*	*Vänersborg*
Anthroponym :	*Marienburg*	*Maryland*	*Mariestad*
Demonym :	*Sachsenhausen*	*Saxondale*	*Gotland*

The structure and frequency concerning solid compounds in the three languages are quite similar even if in Swedish the solid composition is more productive and more frequent than in English or German, as we could see in the example of Cape of Good Hope where the Swedish equivalent *Godahoppsudden* is a solid compound, or as in the different structures for the three languages of the name designating an Atlantic group of islands *Kanarische Inseln* (Ger), *Canaries* (Eng) *Kanarieöarna* (Swe) : in German the toponym is a nominal phrase, in English an elliptic form of a nominal phrase with elision of the generic term and in Swedish a compound.

2.2. Hyphenated Compounds

In the case of hyphenated and open compounds the differences between the three languages are more significant than for solid ones:

German shows quite a lot of hypenated forms like *Wanne-Eickel*, a town, *Sachsen-Anhalt*, a '*Land*' (like a lot of other states ('*Länder'*) of the Federal Republic). They are less frequent in English and very rare in Swedish. *Minneapolis-St Paul* (Eng)*, Skanör-Falsterbo* (Swe). But

the use of hyphenated forms in toponyms for recently named administrative units seems t to be increasing in three Germanic languages.

2.3. Open compounds

This type of compound can easily be found in English, as in *Sioux Falls, Needham Market, Sutton Trinity* with the **Ps + Ag** functional structure, but does not exist in German or Swedish.

In spite of those differences, the compound structure is still productive in the three languages as shows the recently founded state of *East Timor*, which is an open compound in English, but a solid compound German *Osttimor* (Ger) and Swedish *Östtimor* (Swe).

For linguistic research it is very interesting to point out that compounds in toponymy often show specific stress patterns that differ from stress pattern in compounds in common nouns as described in Schnabel-Le Corre & Löfström (in Di Stefani & Pepin 2010), which allows to identify these compounds as proper names in oral use.

In written texts, the differences between solid, hyphenated and open forms of compounds are based on spelling criteria, which allows to classify them according to their written form, but limits somehow their interest for morphological and syntactical analyses of complex toponyms.

3. Noun and Noun Phrases as Modifiers

Beside these spelling criteria, we can distinguish four main cases in the structure of toponyms having a noun or a noun phrase as modifier:

The first is the prepositional phrase like *Reit im Winkel* (Pg + As)*, Spittal an der Drau* (Pg + Ps) (Ger), *Stratford-upon-Avon* (Pg + Ps)*, Spittal-in-the-Street* (Pg + As) (Eng), occurrences which clearly show the great similarity of structure in prepositional phrases between these two German languages, whereas in Swedish there is heardly any example except a few recent ones such as *Lidköping vid Vänern* (Swe).

The second case concerns correlated noun phrases. Coordinations without coordinator are quite frequent in German and show the same form as hyphenated toponyms, for example *'Rheinland-Pfalz'* (Ger). Actually hyphenated toponyms in German are often coordinations (which means that the elements are combined in a paratactic relation and not in a hypotactic one) Whereas in English the hyphen occurs in toponyms mostly in prepositional phrases like in *Newcastle-under-Lyme, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea* (Eng). However in English, we often find complex forms with the coordination marker '*and*' and '*with*': examples *Barnacre-with-Bons, Shaw and Compton* (Eng).

Toponyms with the coordiantor *'und',* or *'och',* in German and Swedish exist only in exonyms like *Trinidad und Tobago*(Ger), *Trinidad och Tobago* (Ger) *Trinidad and Tobago* (Eng), toponyms with the coordinating preposition with *'mit'* (Ger) *'med'* (Swe) do not exist at all.

Finally I will present as the third case the appositions in complex toponyms. I will try to catogorize the different forms of this type of toponyms in order to distinguish between cases like *Insel Hiddensee, See Genezareth* (Ger), *River Thames, Lake Victoria* (Eng), on the one hand and *Königreich Schweden, Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Ger), *Kingdom of Sweden*

Federal Republic of Germany (Eng), *Förbundsrepubliken Tyskland, Kungariket Sverige* (Swe) on the other hand, which seem not to be identical cases.

The fourth case (which is only mentioned in this paper but not developed) is the marked noun phrase in form of a Saxon genitive in English and Swedish like *King's Norton* (Eng), and *Amerikas Förenta Stater* (Swe), a form that does not exist in German. Only exceptionally a genitive may occur as postpositioned noun phrase as in '*Kap der Guten* Hoffnung' (where the genitive form is determined by the '-er' marker of the definite article). But case-marked noun modifiers (in English and Swedish only the Saxon genitive) will not be discussed in this paper, a comparison with other languages having case-marked attributes such as Icelandic and also Finnish, Hungarian, Polish or Russian.

3.1. Prepositional Structure

We have already seen that there are few endonyms involving a prepositional structure in the Swedish language and just some exonyms *Öarna under vinden* Ag + As (Swe), which is in English an open compound *Leeward Islands* As + Ag (Eng) and in German a generic with a prepositional modifier *Inseln unter dem Wind* Ag + As (Ger). In German and English, on the contrary, a lot of endonyms with a proprial generic followed by a prepositional phrase Pg + As can be found for both languages. This special case of generic proper names has already been discussed and a special term as a so-called "proprial lemma" has been proposed (Van Langendonck 2005:320).

A great variety of prepositions can be observed like *an, auf, bei, in, ob*, *unter* in German and *at, by, in, le, near, on, under, upon, with* in English just to name some of the most frequent, but this list is not exhaustive. The prepositional phrase can lead even to very complex forms like *Unsere Liebe Frau im Wald* (Ger), *Brobury with Monnington on Wye* (Eng).

Just to give some examples and to show the analogy of the structure between both languages I would like to mention :

German	**English**
· *Frankfurt*	· *Newbiggin*
am Main	*-by-the-Sea*
an der Oder	*-in-Teesdale*
· Neustadt	· *Houghton*
am Rübeberg	*le Side*
an der Weinstraße	*on the Hill*
bei Cottbus	*le Spring*

These toponyms all have in common, that they are not systematically used in their full form. In non-ambiguous contexts or in conversation within or nearby the locations designated by the toponym the modifier will be omitted. For example, being at ten miles from *Frankfurt am Main* (Ger) you will say "*Ich nehme morgen den Zug nach Frankfurt*". If you take the train to *Frankfurt an der Oder* on the other side of Germany, then and only then will you precisely say, "*Ich nehme morgen den Zug nach Frankfurt an der Oder*". That is also true for very complex forms in Britain. People near *Brobury with Monnington on Wye*, just would say on the phone when they are late, "*Sorry, I'm still in Brobury*" or "*Look, I'm still in Monnington*" rather than "*Sorry, honey, I'm still in Brobury with Monnington on Wye*".

The complex form of the latter leads us to another problem which is coordination.

3.2. Coordinated Structure

Coordinated toponyms with or without a coordinator or preposition are a special case, because they do not combine a head with a modifier but two heads to form a functional structure (Ps + Ps). Public administrative reforms often make necessary the fusion of two administrative units, and instead of inventing completely new toponyms it is quite common to combine the name of the two places into a single one (written either as one word, or two words with a hyphen, a coordiator or a preposition).

This explains of course the presence of two heads, which moreover are currently two proper names. A very significant case is the creation of the '*Länder'* in Germany, where six from sixteen states have such a name (*Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Rheinland-Pfalz, Baden-Württemberg).* This is also the case for German, British and Swedish townships and specially in Great Britain for parishes. But while in German the amalgamated toponym has nearly always the form of a hyphenated composition of two heads without any adjunction *Marl-Hüls, Wanne-Eickel* (Ger) as well as in the rare examples in Swedish, i.e. *Malung-Sälen, Skanör-Falsterbo* (Swe), in English the two (or more) heads are combined with the coordinator '*and'* or the prepostion '*with'*, where the latter semantically expresses the same relation between the two heads, namely an amalgam, like in *Embsay with Eastby, Kettlewell with Starbotton,* compared to *Glusburn and Cross Hills, Tyne and Wear.*

Some of these combinations may not be transparent for foreigners like in the Hungarian capital 'Budapest' or the German town of *Braunsbreda.* Normally each constituent of the toponym can exist by itself. Inhabitants of *Wanne-Eickel* would insist on the fact they live either in *Wanne* or in *Eickel,* being in the *Baden* part of *Baden-Württemberg* you can easily say *"Ich fahre nach Württemberg rüber".* Being, working or living in Budapest or surroundings, you can explain: '*I'm working in Buda, but living in Pest*'. But for all of these examples you probably would not be understood, if you pronounced the same sentence in London, Berlin or Stockholm. It seems as if the closer situated you are to these locations, the easier is the use of just one of the constituents.

And finally concerning exonyms, offers can be found on the Internet proposing *"*flights from São Tomé to Príncipe and Príncipe to São Tomé " (http://www.birdingafrica.com) or "information on inter-island air services between Trinidad and Tobago" (http://www.mytobago.info/airtravel05.php), even if for a lot of people the name of the isle of '*Principe'*or '*Tobago'* respectively is not very familiar. These different uses of coordinated toponyms of respectively full forms or just a part of them could also be explained by what Van Langendonck calls the *anthropocentric* choice of toponyms in general (Van Langendonck 2007). More studies should be dedicated to this special case of coordination in toponyms.

3.3. Appositions in Toponyms

In toponomy appositions are nearly always simple noun modifiers (common nouns or proper names) placed after the head in a close apposition relation and they do not agree in case with it. Close appositions like *Basel Stadt*, *Kap Horn (Ger)*, *River Thames* or *Hotel California* (Eng) are more closely connected to the noun they qualify than loose appositions (i.e. *Berlin, die Hauptstadt der Bundesrebublik* (Ger)*, Washington, the Capital of the United States* (Eng)). In written language, they are not separated by commas.

A functional and semantical analysis reveals that these forms, very similar at first glance, are actually quite different:

The combination of a generic appellative with a specific proper name is quite frequent in English but shows great differences between British English and American English for endo- and exonyms as for example *River Thames, Lake Victoria* (endonyms, Brit. Eng), *Mississippi River*, *Waterton Lake* (endonyms, Am. Eng))*, and *River Danube* (Brit. Eng) versus *Danube River* (Am. Eng) for exonyms.

In German this combination is rare (mainly in names for Capes, Islands, Deserts and Monasteries), in Swedish it occurs only in exonyms (as in Capes) and even there it is nearly non-existant.

German	**English**	**Swedish**
Kap Sunion	*Cape Kennedy*	*Kap Sunion*
Insel Hiddensee	*Lake Victoria*	
Berg Sinai	*Mount Sinai/*	
Kloster Ettal	*(*or *Sinai Mountain)*	
Wüste Gobi		
*(*or *Gobiwüste)*		

But the generic element cannot stand alone – in contrast with the case of toponyms containing a prepositional phrase – and even for the specific one it is quite unusual, which is the common characteristic of this combination. *Sinaï* without the generic appellative is a peninsula, *Victoria* would rather be a woman and *Hiddensee* a lake. But when the specific proprial element is non-ambiguous, there is a tendency to form either compounds (*Gobiwüste* (Ger), *Sinai Mountain* (Eng) or, in this case, to keep just the specific element as simple toponym *the Gobi* (Eng)).

The combination of a generic proper name with a specific appellative (Pg + As) seems not to be so frequent, but there is an international phenomenon concerning the use of the adjunction '*City'* not only in English but also in other languages, *New York City, Mexico City, Guatemala City*. Similar structures can be found in German perhaps by analogy, *Basel Stadt* versus *Basel Land*.

The combination of two proper names (Pg + Ps) is frequent for designating airports not only in the three Germanic languages like the airports of *Berlin Tegel, London Heathrow, Stockholm Arlanda,* but all over the world: *Barcelona El Prat, Madrid-Barajas*, in Spain, *Moscow Domodedovo* in Russia. Furthermore, in German townships the urban quarters have names showing this particular structure, *Hamburg Altona, Berlin Tiergarten, München Schwabing, Frankfurt Sachsenhausen, Wien Grinzing*, just to cite the most famous.

Finally I would like to discuss a special case of the use of apposition especially in country names and other administrative units: proper names which are preceded by a specific appellative which assigns them to a special category. Georgeta Cislaru explained in her paper that "country names actualize geographical and institutional domains conjointly or alternatively" (Cislarou 2006:43). The following examples illustrate her point that "country names are between two denotational poles: place and institution":

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German	**English**	**Swedish**
- *Bundesrepublik Deutschland*	- *Federal Republic of Germany*	- *Förbundsrepubliken Tyskland*
- *Königreich Schweden*	- *Kingdom of Sweden*	- *Kungariket Sverige*
- *Volksrepublik China*	- *People's Republic of China*	- *Folksrepubliken Kina*

These examples show another particularity in the structure of appositions. For the three Germanic languages the use of the definite article (in Swedish postponed to the stem *staden* and obligatory even in out of context occurences) becomes normative when the generic appellative precedes the proper name. In English we observe the appearance of the preposition '*of*' in this type of toponyms (Embleton & Härmä 1993). English grammars generally state that appositions in English can be introduced by 'of'. Nevertheless this form of appositions seems to be different from the appositions in the examples without '*of*' mentioned above: *Cape Kennedy, Lake Victoria* or *Washington State.* Both particularities as well as the use of a genitive form in Swedish (*Londons City*) contribute to indicate the limit between proper names and common nouns.

German	**English**	**Swedish**
die Stadt Hamburg	*the City **of** Hamburg*	*staden Hamburg*
die City of London / von London	*the City **of** London ≠ London City*	*Londons City*
das Bundesland Bremen ≠ Bad Honnef	*the State **of** Georgia the Parish **of** Chester*	*staten Georgia*

In my opinion this is not the only difference. In examples such as *Basel Stadt* (Ger) *New York City* (Eng) on the one hand and *Bad Honnef* (Ger), *River Thames* (Eng) on the other hand the appellative is a sort of tag which, in some contexts, seems to be part of the toponym, but does not occur systematically. The specificities of appositions can be summarized as follows and still raise a lot of questions:

⇒ Polysemantic use of complex country names, place / institution
⇒ Use in context with the definite article but not systematically
⇒ Use of the preposition *'of'* in English and the saxon genitive in Swedish
⇒ Semantic status for the apposition? Is the apposition really a modifier or a head, a generic or a specific element? Is the distinction in German between '*Appositiv'* or '*Apposition'* justified for all Germanic languages?

The close study of the particularities of the use of close appositions in toponymy will be the issue of my further researches and the comparison between languages of the same family and between families of languages will bring more insight into the function and use of appositions in toponyms.

Conclusion

This study in toponymy concerning nouns and noun modifiers in three Germanic languages (German, English and Swedish) shows a lot of similarities between the languages, first of all in compounds - be they close, hyphenated or open compounds. In German and Swedish the formation of close compounds is still very productive, while in English the open compound seems to be more frequent in name creations. But in this structure the differences are mostly

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due to spelling criteria and not really to structural ones. In more complex toponyms, i.e. prepositional phrases, coordination and apposition, the analyses reveal a lot of differences between the three languages. The very frequent form of a prepositional phrase in German and English does hardly exist in Swedish neither in endonyms nor in exonyms. The coordination exists in German and Swedish in a hyphenated amalgamed form, but in English it is formed by the coordinators *'and'* and *'with'*. A prepositioned noun modifier in form af a saxon genitive exists only in English and Swedish, but not in German. Postpositioned so-called close appositions show the greatest variety not only between the languages but within each language. The occurrence of appellatives and proper names as appositions, the appearance of the preposition 'of' in English, the use of the definite article and the status of some of those toponyms between two denotational poles still raise a lot of questions (i.e. "Is the apposition always the modifier on a semantic level?") and seem to quire a further investigation.

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