Up to What Point is a Place Name a "Name from Within"?
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Abstract

Apart from all institutional definitions of the endonym and the exonym as, e.g., the latest definitions given by the UNGEGN Glossary of Toponymic Terms in 2007, the endonym/exonym divide is basically and most generally speaking a divide between names applied by a social group for geographical features conceived to be part of the area where this group lives and to which it feels to be emotionally attached and names applied by other social groups for this same area. Much depends therefore on to which extent social groups feel to be emotionally attached to larger geographical features such as mountain ranges, streams and seas, regard them as a part of their living sphere and not as attached to nobody or another group. In other words, it is the question, whether or inhowfar a social group refers to a feature as part of its "place" in the meaning of Yi-Fu Tuan (1977). Where is it, e.g., that a line is drawn between "one's own" and "the other" on seas? Is the high sea - far beyond the horizon from the coast - still conceived to be part of the "place" of a coastal dweller community? Is it even a coastal water at the opposite side of the sea? Is a mountain range like the Alps or the Rocky Mountains more than a spatial construct? Do people inhabiting the one end of the range feel emotionally attached to all parts of it, even to very remote places at the other end - just because it is conceived to be the same feature and has a common name in geographical literature? And how is it with countries? Obviously, citizens feel to be attached to the whole country as a concept. But refers this feeling really to a country in the sense of "place" and isn't it rather on a very symbolic level?

The paper will try to respond to these questions based on geographical theory in this field, to personal experiences and to regional geographies and their view on this problem.

The findings will especially affect an ongoing discussion among members of the United Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) focused on the spatial range of the term *endonym*. Does it always apply to the entirety of a geographical feature or must it be confined to those parts of a feature, where the social group using this name lives and feels to be attached?

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1. Introduction

Apart from all the institutional definitions of endonyms and exonyms as, for example, the latest definitions given by the UNGEGN Glossary of Toponymic Terms in 2007,[1] the endonym/exonym divide is basically and most generally speaking a divide between names applied by a social group for geographical features conceived to be part of the area where this group lives and to which it feels to be emotionally attached (= endonyms) and names applied by other social groups for features in this same area and differing in their form from the respective endonym(s) (= exonyms). Endonyms are (in the word's proper meaning) names from within, i.e. names given by a social group to features on its own territory. Exonyms are names used by a group, but received from other social groups for features on their territory. They are sometimes adapted to the receiver language by translation or morphological or phonetic adaptation. Sometimes (rather frequently) they correspond simply to a historical

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[1] **Endonym:** Name of a geographical feature in an official or well-established language occurring in that area where the feature is situated. Examples: Vārānasī (not Benares); Aachen (not Aix-la-Chapelle); Krung Thep (not Bangkok); Al-Uqşur (not Luxor).
Exonym: Name used in a specific language for a geographical feature situated outside the area where that language is widely spoken, and differing in its form from the respective endonym(s) in the area where the geographical feature is situated. Examples: Warsaw is the English exonym for Warszawa (Polish); Mailand is German for Milano; Londres is French for London; Kūlūniyā is Arabic for Köln. The officially romanized endonym Moskva for Москва is not an exonym, nor is the Pinyin form Beijing, while Peking is an exonym. The United Nations recommends minimizing the use of exonyms in international usage (KADMON, 2007*a*, p. 2).

endonym. In other words: for the endonym/exonym divide it is essential whether or to what extent a social group refers to a feature as part of its "place" in the meaning of Yi-Fu Tuan (TUAN, 1977).

This divide is particularly delicate with transboundary features in the sense of geographical features extending across community and linguistic boundaries or into areas beyond any sovereignty. Where is, for example, the line drawn between "one's own" and "the other" on seas? Do people living on one side or in a part of a higher and larger mountain range feel emotionally attached to the whole feature? This is just to mention a selection out of many cases. And what exactly are the consequences for the endonym/exonym divide in all these cases? Up to what point does a place name have the status of an endonym? From which line on does the same name switch to exonym status?

This paper will try to find answers to these questions. Before doing this it will highlight briefly the functions of place names in relating man to territory departing from Yi-Fu Tuan's *Topophilia* and his later works as well as from Carl Sauer's earlier considerations (SAUER, 1941).

2. Functions of place names in relating man to territory

Place names have three main functions in relating man to territory (or social groups to geographical space) (see fig. 1):
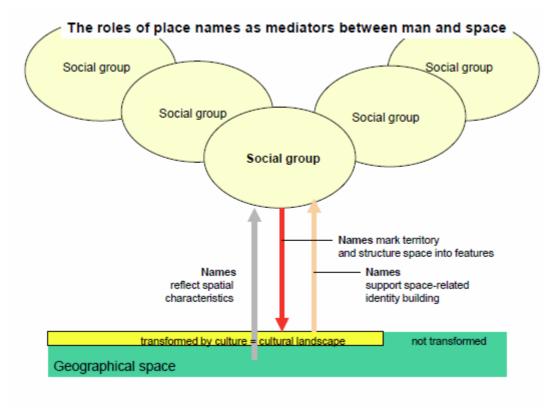

Fig. 1. The roles of place names as mediators between man and space.

- **They often reflect characteristics of space.** They often describe location, morphology, waters, vegetation, soils of a certain place, or functions of a place within geographical space: bridge function, port function, pass function. They highlight in this way characteristics that seemed important to the people who named the place. These characteristics may not have

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the same importance for us nowadays. The meaning might also have lost its transparency in the meantime.

- **They mark the territory of a social group.** Place names in a group's own language (= endonyms) are (among other means) markers of this territory and of ownership, since names are also symbols for appropriation. Who owns a feature usually has the right to name it. Who has the power to attribute the name usually also has the power over this feature or at least responsibility for it. So names in general, but place names in particular, have always and inevitably a political dimension. Under normal circumstances a social group would never claim the right to attribute the primary name to features outside its own territory. It does so only when it is aggressive and expansive. Marking features by place names means at the same time shaping geographical space mentally, structuring it into subunits. Sometimes (especially with cultural regions) place names are the only identifiers of a space-related concept.

- **They support emotional ties between man and place and promote in this way space-related identity building.** If somebody acquainted with a place reads, mentions or memorizes a place name, this recalls to him/her all the contents of a space-related concept and lets "the feel of a place" arise as Yi-Fu Tuan calls it. Therefore it is, for example, important to render minority place names on signposts. They give these communities the feeling of belonging, of being at home there (see fig. 2). How important place names are for identity and emotional ties can also be seen from emigrants (to overseas), who frequently take the name of their home place with them as a last tie to their former home or to make the new place more familiar (see fig. 3).

Fig. 2. Signpost of a village in Maramureş, Romania. The second name of the place in Ukrainian is even written in original Cyrillic script to enable full identification of Ukrainian-speaking inhabitants with "their" place.
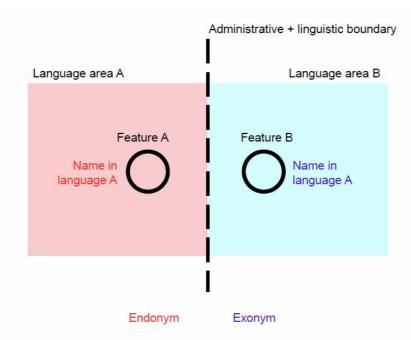
Fig. 3. The signpost of Breslau, a village in Ontario, Canada. The emigrants from former German Breslau, nowadays Wrocław in Poland, carried the place name of their former home with them.

3. Where exactly is the line between "one's own" and "the other's", between the endonym and the exonym?
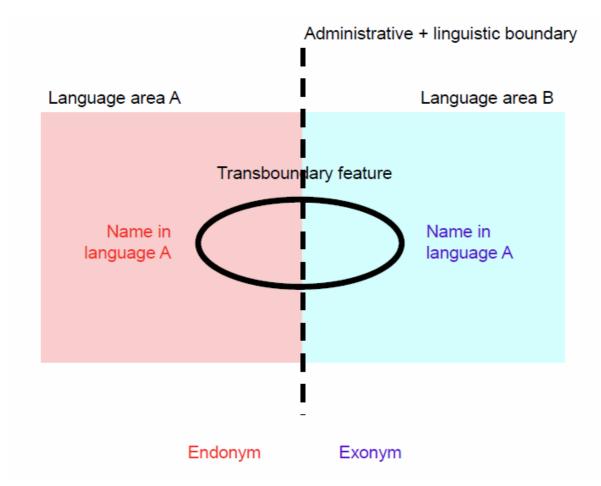
Let us now turn to answering the research questions. Where is the line drawn between "one's own" and "the other's"? What are the consequences for the endonym/exonym divide?

The answer is quite easy and clear-cut, when administrative and linguistic boundaries in a continuously settled area coincide and only features occur that can clearly be attributed to one of the territories (see fig. 4):

Fig. 4. Administrative and linguistic boundaries in a continuously settled area coincide. Features can clearly be attributed to one of the territories.

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The administrative boundary on land (e.g. a country border) draws the line between "one's own" and "the other's" clearly enough. Names in the (group's) own language for features located exclusively on its own territory are endonyms, names in its own language for features located exclusively outside are exonyms.

Fig. 5. Administrative and linguistic boundaries in a continuously settled area coincide. Transboundary features occur.

If transboundary features are affected, a name is valid for the whole feature, but has endonym status only up to the boundary and assumes exonym status on the other side.

The problem is much more complex with seas: it is rather difficult to say where exactly a social group's attitude of feeling responsible and emotionally attached ends.

From his long-term personal scientific interest in the Adriatic space, the author knows that coastal dwellers have a profound emotional relation to their coastal waters – coastal waters not conceived in the juridical sense, but in the sense of waters between the islands and in visible distance from the coast, where fisher boats and tourist vessels are cruising. They are as much part of their living space as land is. They are resources of food, areas for transportation and function also as a tourist attraction. In Opatija, on the Croatian coast, for example, there is a tradition that at the holiday of the Body of Christ, the priest blesses from a fisher boat, surrounded by a whole procession of vessels, the sea "and all that lives in it".

It is certainly justified to say that the coastal dweller community regards its coastal waters as their own. But it is certainly different with the high sea – the sea beyond the horizon from the coast. Here it is necessary to differentiate between the cognitive and the emotional level.

Emotionally the high sea is conceived as endless – even with a narrow sea like the Adriatic, where it is possible to look from coast to coast from a mountain top when skies are clear. This is, for example, expressed by folk and also pop songs, which frequently use *sea* as a metaphor for the unlimited, the indefinite, and the unconceivable. An example is Gianna Nannini with her song "Alla fine":

> *Davanti a me si perde il mare*
> *io sto con te senza lacrime*
> *tu come fai a darti pace*
> *in questa immensità in questa solitudine.*
>
> *In front of me the sea gets lost*
> *I stay with you without tears*
> *How can peace be added*
> *To this immensity, to this solitude?*

In Dalmatia [Dalmacija] they have a tradition of small choirs [klapa, klape], mostly male, sometimes also mixed, who present traditional folk songs a capella. Many of them deal with the sea, such as:

> **Moje si more**
> *Moje si more*
> *još pamtim nebo u očima*
> *moje si more*
> *more bez kraja i obala*
> *more bistro ka dan*
> *i jedino njim plovit znam*
> *Zauvik moje si more*
> *još pamtim nebo u očima*
> *moje si more*
> *duša ti svitli pod zvizdama*
> *ispod tvog miseca*
> *jedino plovit znam*
> *Moje si more*
>
> **You are my sea**
> *You are my sea*
> *Still do I have heaven in my eyes*
> *You are my sea*
> *The sea without end and coast*
> *The sea clear like the day*
> *And I am the only one who knows how to sail on you.*
> *You are my sea forever*
> *Still do I have heaven in my eyes*

You are my sea
Gently you shine under the stars
Under your moon
And I am the only one who knows how to sail on you.
You are my sea

The difference in conceiving the high sea as opposed to coastal waters is also expressed, for example, by special words for the high sea. In Croatian, for instance, the term for high sea is not *more*, but *pučina*, which means something like *wilderness*, *where the winds blow*, etc.
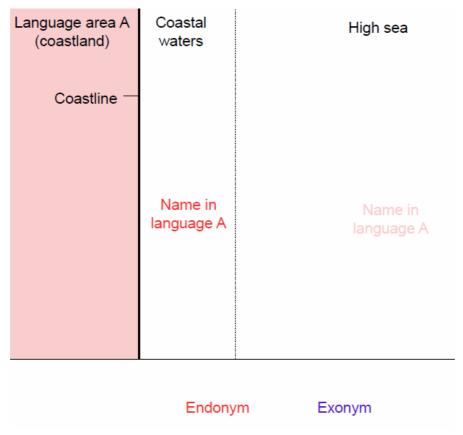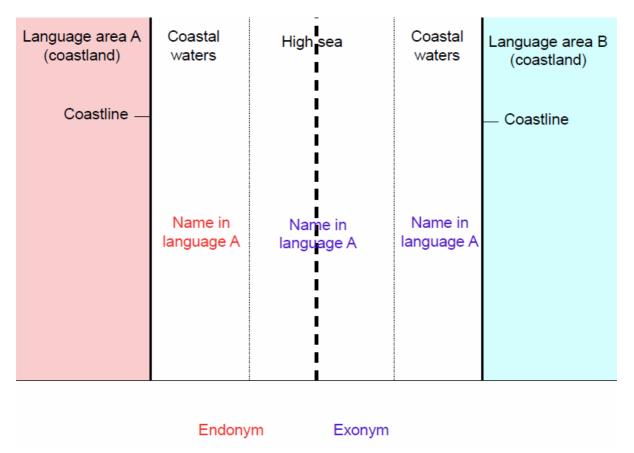

Fig. 6. Seas at the emotional level: the fading away of endonym status with distance from the coast.

It can be concluded from this attitude that emotionally coastal dwellers recognize no opposite coast, no counterpart beyond the horizon; they would consequently also not draw a strict line between "one's own" and "the other's" somewhere out in the sea; would also not feel the necessity to confine the endonym status of their own name to some part of the sea; would possibly extend it to the sea in its entirety (because they feel that this status is not contested by anybody else) (see fig. 6).

But it can at the same time be assumed that the intensity of this feeling fades away more or less as a function of distance and that the feeling of being the owner of the sea is relative insofar as it is combined with the other feeling that the sea is endless and unconceivable. (It is in the nature of the endless and the unconceivable that it can never be completely owned, that it is impossible to achieve full command of it.)

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At the cognitive level coastal dwellers are anyway aware of the fact that the sea ends somewhere; that there is an opposite coast, inhabited by other people, who speak a different language and have another name for the same feature. They have learned this in schools, from maps and charts and from the media.

Fig. 7. Seas at the cognitive level: reality and regulations are accepted.

Based on this knowledge they would, however, usually (with the only exception of a politically aggressive and expansive attitude) be ready to acknowledge and accept that their own name loses its endonym status somewhere in between this opposite coast and their own coast. They would also have no problem with accepting regulations ruling that there is some "artificial" line between where their name has endonym status and where the name of the others is valid as an endonym (see fig. 7). They will usually – as in many other fields of social interaction – accept that their right ends where the right of others begins, if this avoids dispute and conflict.

But there are also difficult cases on land, for example, within a country with a dominant language and inhabited by a spatially concentrated linguistic minority.
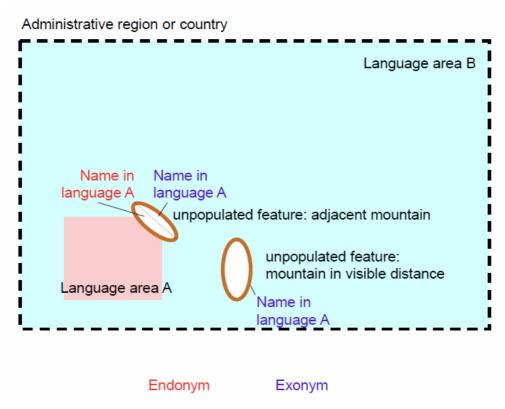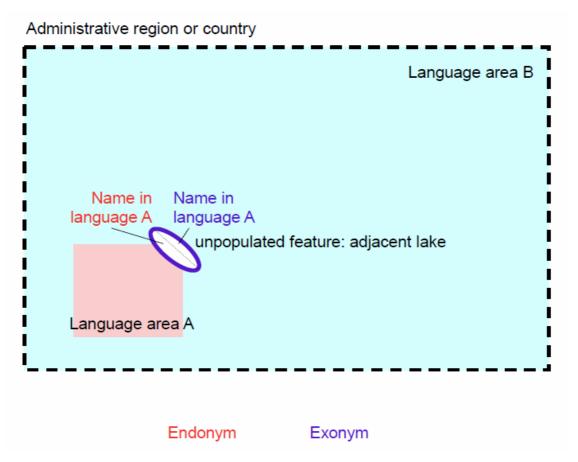
Fig. 8. Unpopulated mountain ranges near to and outside a minority region.

There may, for example, be an unpopulated mountain (range) located adjacent to the minority region (see fig. 8). It is not inhabited by the minority group. It is also not administratively incorporated into their territory, i.e. it is not officially attributed to them. But they see it every day; it is perhaps an area of recreation for them; it is perhaps also an economic resource for them; and they have developed emotional ties to it, so it is part of their place (in the sense of Tuan). All of this is also true for the majority community at the other side of the mountain. It must be added that mountains and mountain ranges mostly look different from both sides: dwellers on this side would sometimes not even recognize it from the other side.

This all makes it reasonable to say that the mountain is a property divided between the two communities; the minority can regard it as a part of its own territory only on its own side; the minority's name for it enjoys endonym status only on its own side (but is valid for the whole feature, of course) and becomes an exonym on the other.

An unpopulated mountain (range) outside the minority region, but still in visible distance, is a different case: the minority community can perhaps see it every day and also has emotional ties to it, but it does not exploit it economically and (what is the salient point) no matter how strong the relations of the minority community to this feature may ever be, the other community is closer to the feature and has (very likely) also the stronger relations to it. This makes it reasonable that the name of the minority community for this feature is only the exonym there.

Fig. 9. Lake near a minority region.

But what happens if the feature on the boundary between the two communities is a lake (see fig. 9)? A lake has all the characteristics relevant for the local community as mentioned earlier with the mountain, except that its surface is flat and that it is mostly possible to see the opposite bank. So the lake is much less divisible in ownership and emotional terms than a mountain. Would it not be appropriate to say that it is owned by both groups likewise and the name of both groups for the lake has endonym status at every spot of the lake – even at the opposite bank?

The answer is "no", since at the opposite bank the other group is nearer to the spot in question. So in a competitive situation between two claims, the primary name has the stronger title on attributing the endonym. This is just in accordance with many other juridical issues. So an imaginary line has to be drawn on the lake dividing it into the endonym areas of the two groups.
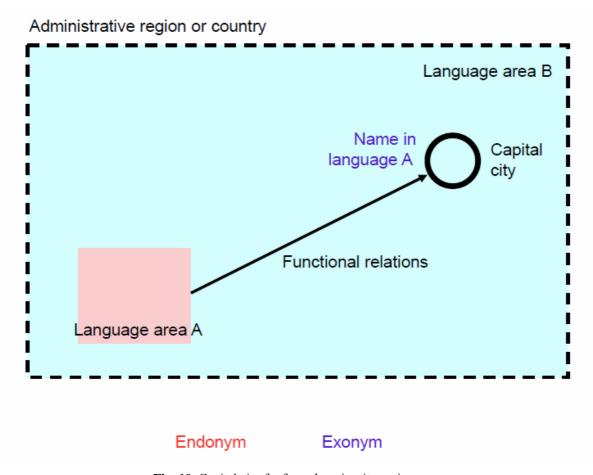
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Fig. 10. Capital city far from the minority region.

As the last of many other cases, the situation of a capital city far from the minority region, but administratively responsible for it, may be mentioned. There is a functional relation between the minority and this city, perhaps also an emotional one: "This is our capital", "Events there also affect us", "The landmarks of this city also have a symbolic meaning for us". Nevertheless, if the minority is not part of the autochthonous population there, the same argument as before applies also in this case: there is another group in place (or closer to this place) and only the name of this other group has endonym status.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion it may just be underlined that for the endonym/exonym divide the difference between "our own" and "theirs" with all its sociological, political and juridical implications is essential and that the social group closer to the feature always has the right to the endonym.

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