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**Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology**

**When exonyms and endonyms turn into *international names***  
**An additional function in need of a term**

**Submitted by Austria\***

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# When exonyms and endonyms turn into *international names*

## An additional function in need of a term

### Summary

This paper addresses a category of place names that has not been identified and regarded as distinct so far – neither by UNGEGN, nor by any other institution or author in the field of toponomastics. It is a category, which emerges, when place names are regarded under a pragmatic aspect, under the aspect of use and function. Names composing this category are at the same time endonyms or/and exonyms, but assume the status of *international names* or *koinonyms*, when they comply to the following criteria:

- They are used and recommended for use by an international authority acting on behalf of its international membership.
- They are used in a distinct field of application, i.e. for a distinct purpose.
- They are not conceived for use in a specific (linguistic) community like endonyms and exonyms, but for international use across language and community boundaries.
- They are at the same time endonyms or (much more frequently) exonyms in a global trade language.

A case in point is the name *Pacific Ocean*, when it is defined by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) as the name for the entire water body between the Americas and Asia as well as Australia and used on charts published by IHO for the purpose of international navigation.

### The argument

The concept field around the endonym/exonym divide is currently covered in the UNGEGN Glossary (UNGEGN 2002, 2007) by the following terms:

**Conventional name:** See exonym (UNGEGN 2002, p. 7)

**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). (UNGEGN 2007, p. 2)

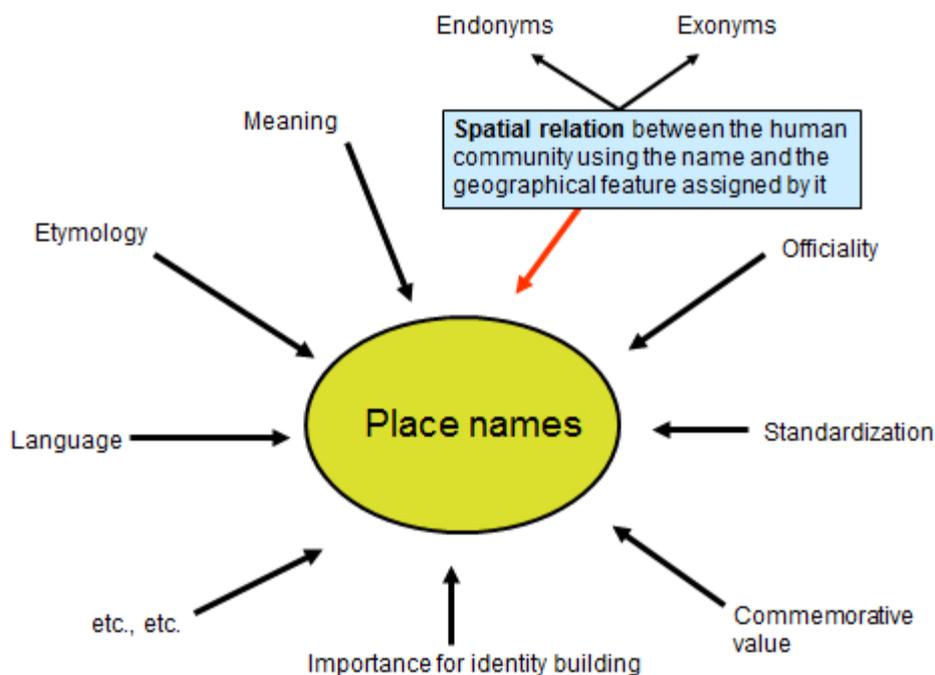
**Exonym:** Name used in a specific language for a geographical feature situated outside the area where that language is widely spoken, and differing in its form from the respective endonym(s) in the area where the geographical feature is situated. *Examples:* Warsaw is the English exonym for Warszawa (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. See also →name, traditional. (UNGEGN 2007, p. 2)

**Endonym, standardized:** Endonym sanctioned by a names authority. Example: among the allonyms Hull and Kingston upon Hull (England), the latter is the standardized form. (UNGEGN 2002, p. 10)

**Name, traditional:** An exonym in relatively widespread use by a particular linguistic community and usually found in its tradition and literature. Examples: Alexandrie (French) for al-Iskandarīyah (Arabic); Jerusalen (Spanish) for Yerushalayim (Hebrew); Peking (English) for Beijing (Chinese). (UNGEGN 2002, p. 19)

It is important to mention that *endonym* and *exonym* are just status categories of names, and that they are relational concepts. The endonym/exonym divide results from regarding place names under the aspect of the spatial relation between name user and feature (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Aspects under which place names can be regarded. One of these aspects results in the endonym/exonym divide

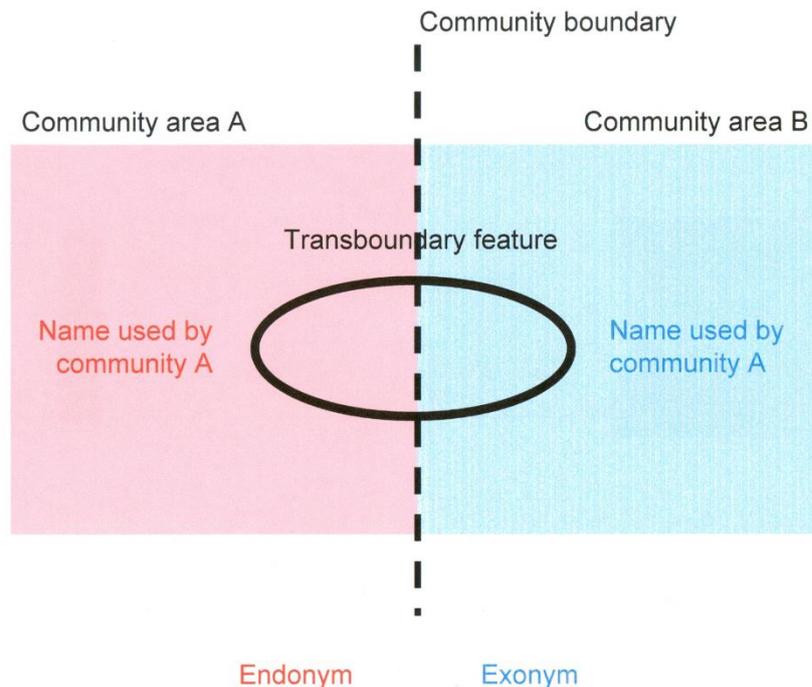


It is the community residing in or closest to the feature that uses the endonym. And it is an external community that uses an exonym, if this name differs from the endonym (see JORDAN 2015). Thus, the same name can be an endonym and an exonym, dependent on the spatial relation between feature and name user (see JORDAN 2015).

The German name *Donau* for the river Danube, e.g., has endonym status in Germany and Austria, where it corresponds to the official and well-established language, while in Slovakia, Hungary and the countries along the lower run of the Danube it assumes exonym status.

Applied to another type of transboundary feature like a mountain range (Fig. 2) this means that the name of Community A for the feature assumes exonym status in the area of Community B, if Community B has another name for it.

Fig. 2: The endonym/exonym divide with transboundary features on land



Thus, the endonym/exonym divide emerges, when place names are regarded under a specific pragmatic aspect, under the aspect of the spatial relation between feature and name user.

Endonyms are in respects relevant for this paper characterised by the following criteria:

- They are conceived for use by the community residing in or closest to the feature assigned by the name.
- They correspond to the official and/or well-established language of the community residing in or closest to the feature assigned by the name.
- They are conceived to be used by this community in all contexts, for all purposes.

Exonyms are in respects relevant for this paper characterised by the following criteria:

- They are used by a community residing outside or not closest to the feature assigned by the name.
- They do not correspond to the official and/or well-established language of the community residing in or closest to the feature assigned by the name.
- They “belong” to the cultural heritage of a certain (linguistic) community and are conceived for communication within this community.
- They are conceived to be used by this community in all contexts, for all purposes.

Place names can, however, assume a function not corresponding to all the characteristics of endonyms and exonyms mentioned before. It is a function of place names that has not been identified and regarded as distinct so far – neither by UNGEGN, nor by any other institution or author in the field of toponomastics. Most frequently place names assuming this function are regarded as exonyms. And it is true that names assuming this function are very frequently at the same time exonyms, in some cases also endonyms.

This other function could be termed *international names* or *koinonyms* – *koinonym* derived from the Greek word *koinós* ‘common’ and indicating that it is a name for common use, for use not just within a certain community, but across community boundaries.<sup>1</sup>

Place names correspond to this function or status category and assume this quality, when they comply to the following criteria:

- They are used and recommended for use by an international authority acting on behalf of its international membership.
- They are used in a distinct field of application, i.e. for a distinct purpose.
- They are not conceived for use in a specific (linguistic) community like endonyms and exonyms, but for international use across language and community boundaries.
- They are at the same time endonyms or (much more frequently) exonyms in a global trade language.

A case in point is the name *Pacific Ocean*, when it is defined by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) as the name for the entire water body between the Americas and Asia as well as Australia and used on charts published by IHO for the purpose of international navigation.

This name – in this function – qualifies for being termed *international name* or *koinonym*, because

- IHO is an international authority that acts on behalf of its member states, i.e. the riparian countries of the world, which have delegated certain competences to this authority, a.o. the competence of defining names of seas and oceans for international charts and for use in international navigation.
- IHO applies this name on its charts for the purpose of international navigation.
- This name is not to serve only for communication within the English-speaking community, but for international use across language and community boundaries.
- This name is at the same time an endonym and an exonym in the global trade language English. According to Naftali KADMON (2007) the by language English name *Pacific Ocean* is an endonym in the coastal waters of English-speaking riparian countries around this ocean, e.g. of the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and an exonym in the coastal waters of non-English-speaking countries like Japan or Chile, while according to Paul WOODMAN (2008) it has endonym status all over the Ocean. A synthesis proposed by myself conceives coastal waters as endonymic portions of seas or oceans, whereas for international waters every name acquires the status of an exonym (JORDAN 2010).

Other cases in point are names defined by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for the purpose of international air transportation, i.e. the English names of airports and their abbreviations, and of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) for features on Antarctica, on which some countries have claims, but which is according to the Antarctic Treaty of 1961 under international control. They all lack the typical characteristics of endonyms and exonyms to be used for communication only within their own linguistic community.

## **Just another status of a name**

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<sup>1</sup> The author feels very obliged to the Salzburg linguist Thomas LINDNER for this proposal.

It may be argued that a place name cannot belong to more than one category at the same time, i.e. that an endonym or exonym cannot be at the same time an international name. But already *endonym* and *exonym* are just status categories of a name.

Thus, attributing a place name the status of an *international name* and introducing this term, means just recognizing a specific function of a name different from the usual functions of endonym and exonym under a pragmatic aspect. This has the benefit of making communication about place names more precise – the ultimate goal of an elaborated and sophisticated terminology.

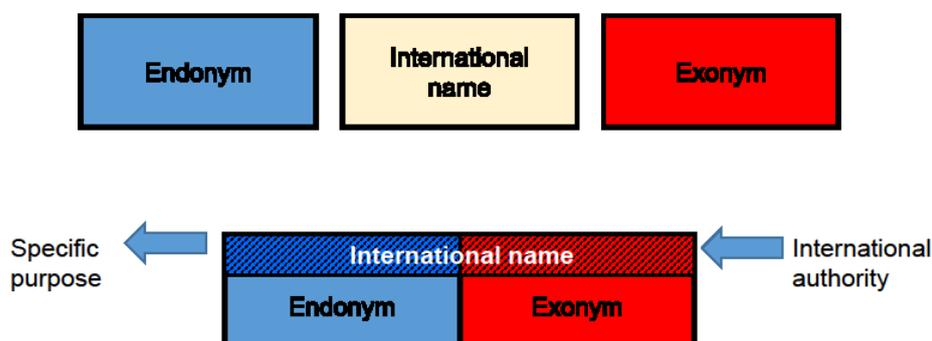
### Not a third category besides endonym and exonym

International names are not a third status category besides endonym and exonym, but just an additional function an exonym or an endonyms can assume (Fig. 3). Every international name is at the same time either an exonym or an endonym or both. It would not qualify for international name status, if it had not the standing of a (well-known) exonym and/or a standardized and well-established endonym. It is like with achieving the status of a global trade language: just well-established languages with a strong driving force behind them will acquire this quality and status.

When the name *Pacific Ocean*, e.g., is used by IHO in its charts for the purpose of international navigation, it is by this very fact elevated to the rank of an international name. But it remains an endonym used by the coastal dwellers along the North American coast for the coastal waters and an exonym used by the English-speaking community for the ocean in its entirety.

Endonym and exonym are mutually exclusive, but together all-comprehensive status categories of place names, when the spatial relation between the human community using the name and the geographical feature assigned by it is relevant (see JORDAN 2015).

Fig. 3: International names are not a third category besides endonyms and exonyms (as shown by the upper sequence of boxes), but an additional function assumed by endonyms and/or exonyms (see the lower scheme)



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