

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 class-room, 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 homonyms, 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 = ń 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 = ı D16iyarbak15ir

16I = İ 16Istanbul

17s = š Ni17s

18L = Ł 18L10od10z

19a = ã S19ao Paulo

20a = ą Elbl20ag

21i = ī R21iga

22e = ě Klaip22eda

23ae = æ L23aes24o

24o = ø R24om24o

25oe = œ Bar25oeul

26a = å Lule26a

27Th = Þ 27Thorshamn

28dh = ð 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.