

**Thesis for the degree of doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.)**

# **TOPONYM FORMATION IN HUNGARIAN**

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## 1. Previous research and objectives

There are several approaches to toponym research in Hungarian onomatology. Researchers tend to focus on the toponym stock of a particular region, however, the analysis of a specific toponym type has long traditions as well. This thesis draws on the latter approach. My research focuses on a specific toponym type, i.e. suffixed toponyms. This is considered relevant because a large number of toponyms was created via word formation processes, however, no comprehensive research has been conducted to date on this subject. Furthermore, an important place is accorded to toponyms created via word formation in every toponym typology. Looking at the different linguistic periods, the early old Hungarian era played an important role in the creation of this toponym type. According to estimates, they account for 12% of all toponyms created at that time.

The analysis of a large amount of data revealed the following research question. Do the suffixes in the toponyms have the same function as the suffixes of the same form in common nouns? The two functions do not seem to be necessarily compatible in many toponyms, because they appear to have a specific function, denoting the status of proper names.

These characteristics have been discussed by several researchers. This is also indicated by the following terms, e.g. toponym suffix, geographical name suffix, etc. A toponym suffix can be defined as a morpheme which is attached to a root morpheme to form a toponym. In the early literature on onomatology, the following suffixes were considered important in the formation of toponyms: *-d(i)*, *-t(i)*, *-gy*, *-i*, *-s* (see BÁRCZI 1958: 149). In the recent literature (see SZEGFÜ 1991: 253, 1992: 320) the suffixes *-d*, *-gy*, *-s*, and *-i* are regarded as suffixes which have the function of forming toponyms. LORÁND BENKŐ (2004: 416) added some other suffixes and suffix clusters to the above list: *-s*, *-gy*, *-d*, *-i*, *-j*, *(-aj/ej)*, *-n (-m)*, *-sd*, *-nd*, *-ka/ke*.

In the analysis of the above suffixes, researcher tend make a distinction between the toponym formation function and the other meanings of the given suffix (proper name suffix, *-s* collective noun suffix, *-s*, *-d*, suffixes with the meaning to “provide”). In many cases, this distinction is only theoretical. However, researchers agree that the toponym formation

function of these suffixes is always secondary. The primary role of -d was a personal name suffix, while it is hypothesized that the toponym formation function of -s may have developed from the function of the collective noun suffix and from its meaning to “provide”, usually found in common nouns, as words formed this way were particularly suitable for denoting toponyms. With regard to -i, it is agreed that this suffix was a variant of the possession affix -é. Later, from this, after a parallel split of form and meaning, it developed a toponym formation function.

A toponym formation function is usually hypothesized in three cases: most typically, it occurred when the suffix played a specific role in the creation of the toponym. In other words, when the suffix had the function of turning standard words or other lexemes into proper names (toponyms), emphasizing its toponym status. For example, it is clear that the suffix had a role in the formation of the toponym *Agárd*. This category also includes a large number of names when the suffix was analogically attached to an already existing toponym, influenced by toponym models. In the third case, researchers hypothesize the occurrence of a special toponym formation function when several different suffixes alternate on the same root. It makes no difference whether the actual referents of the names coincide or not, e.g. *Almás*, *Almád*. In the course of alternation, posterior constituents typical of settlement names can be found in the position of the suffix (*falva*, *telke*). It is often argued that the meaning and function of suffixes and the above mentioned posterior constituents are the same as the names are synonymous. Furthermore, this meaning is different from the usual meaning of common nouns (e.g. *Kasza* – *Kaszád* in Bihar county, which was known as *Kaszafalva* or *Kaszatelek* in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.)

## **2. Research and methods**

The dissertation consists of two major parts. In the first part after the introduction, I discuss the theoretical problems and general questions of toponym suffixes and toponym formation, e.g. the concept and characteristics of toponym formation in the system of suffixes, the problem of productivity, etc. In the literature review, I summarize the results of previous research on toponym formation in Hungary with some insight into the international findings. A general overview is given on the problem of toponym variants and the role of toponym suffixes both in fictitious names and official place naming, which is followed by the analysis

of specific suffixes. In the second part, a piecemeal analysis is given of the suffixes having a role in the formation of toponyms. In other words, the toponym formation function, the history, the creation, and the functional and chronological features of specific suffixes are discussed. The suffixes are analysed based on their historical occurrence and internal relationship. The investigation focuses on the early Old Hungarian period, as most toponyms with the relevant suffixes were created at that time. Furthermore, I also discuss the later occurrence of the suffixes in cases when data is available only from the late Old Hungarian period or when it is made necessary by change research or by the determination of the time of productivity.

The analysis of the toponym stock was done on the basis of ISTVÁN HOFFMANN'S model (1993). However, the functional-semantic and the lexico-morphologic characteristics of names are treated together. The objective is to show the usage of a given suffix in terms of functional categories and toponym types.

### **3. Results**

In the following, I shall present the results of the research following the structure of the dissertation.

#### **3. 1. Previous research**

Previous research shows that Hungarian researchers often used the concepts “toponym formation”, “toponym suffix”, “geographical name suffix” without defining them, which gave rise to different interpretations. However, in early research, i.e. in the analyses of individual names, this was not perceived as a theoretical issue. The problem of toponym suffixes was often discussed in relation to toponym etymologies and types. Based on the research of KNIEZSA (1943/2001) and BÁRCZI (1958), it was suggested that toponyms with the suffixes *-i* and *-d* were specific to a given period. Proper and common noun suffixes were not separated in the early investigations. The first important theoretical findings relevant to my research can be found in an article by LORÁND BENKŐ entitled *Geographical Names of Nyárádmente* (1947). He found affixes/suffixes which had a functional value in terms of geographical name formation. They are different from the suffixes of the same form found in standard words. The word from which the toponym is created may have suffixes, however, these have a common

noun function. According to BENKŐ, morphological analysis should not be concerned with them. Therefore, he discusses them only if the suffix has a function of geographical name formation. This approach was adopted in *The Historical Grammar of the Hungarian Language*. This book has a chapter on proper nouns created via word formation processes. Within this category, the authors discuss proper names and toponyms, thus clearly separating the function of the relevant suffixes in the formation of proper names from other (common noun) functions, typical of the given period.

The literature review also includes an overview of toponym formation in foreign languages, emphasizing the fact that there are typical suffixes in other languages as well, frequently occurring in toponyms. Attention is drawn to the question whether there are suffixes in other languages used exclusively for toponym formation, how certain lexemes developed into toponym suffixes and how suffixes of foreign origin turned into toponym suffixes of a given language in multilingual regions.

### **3. 2. Theoretical problems of toponym formation**

The latest multi-level toponym typologies usually make a distinction between toponyms formed on a morphological basis and those whose formation should be considered on a historical basis. ISTVÁN HOFFMANN draws attention to the importance of separating the two approaches, emphasizing that the two concepts do not always coincide as suffixed proper nouns can be created not only via toponym formation, but via ellipsis, extension, split, etc. As traditional one-level typologies do not separate semantic and morphological considerations, it proves to be problematic to use them for the categorization of suffixed toponyms. Toponyms such as *Németi*, *Horváti* can be categorized as created from the name of a population as well as suffixed toponyms.

In this chapter, I also touch upon the role of toponym models and patterns in official place naming. This analysis is based on the fact that a large number of proper names is recognized on the basis of their morphological characteristics. This is true from the perspective of name creation as well. The analogy of the existing proper names is always an important factor in the formation of toponyms. In other words, name creation involves adjustments to the existing toponym systems.

### **3. 3. Old Hungarian toponym suffixes and their variants**

The question whether a suffix is a variant or an independent suffix has been discussed in the literature in respect of almost all Hungarian toponym suffixes. For example, *-gy* is sometimes treated as a variant created via the palatalization of *-d* (*Nyárád* – *Nyárágy*). The suffix *-t* occurs as the unvoiced variant of *-d*, while the creation of *-j* is sometimes explained by its position after the vowel (*Halmi, Halmaj; Kapi, Kapuj*). Other researchers regard these pairs as suffixes independent of each other. This is a recurring problem in the analysis of toponyms, however, no satisfactory solution has been offered so far. This points to the problematic nature of the question. There are four arguments to show that the two suffixes are in fact cohesive alternating units. It is important to prove the common origin beyond a similar function, which is clear from the definition. Another argument is the similar morphological behaviour or, if it is the case, alternation on the same root. On the basis of this, the independent toponym formation function of *-d*, *-gy* and *-i*, *-j* has been confirmed, as well as alternation in the case of *-d/-t*. Furthermore, besides *-s*, it seems that *-cs* has to be taken into account as an independent toponym suffix.

### **3. 4. Toponym suffixes in fictitious names**

In this chapter, in relation to the subject of productivity, I discuss toponym formation as a means of naming places. The objective of the analysis is to confirm the hypothesis that fictitious toponyms (whose primary source is literary works) have the same characteristic suffixes as the actual ones, i.e. those with an actual referent. This provides further indirect evidence to prove the primary function of these suffixes was of toponym formation. Most importantly, fictitious toponyms must be recognizable despite the fact that the reader never came across them before. Fictitious toponyms can fulfill their primary stylistic function only if they meet this requirement.

### **3. 5. The role of toponym suffixes in naming places officially**

Similarly to fictitious names, the process of naming places officially seems to be a promising starting point to investigate what suffixes have been used to create toponyms to date. Although the periods of naming places unsystematically and systematically are usually separated (the period of systematically naming places started in 1898 when the “name bill” was passed), in fact there are no differences in the suffixes used for toponym formation. The procedure of official place naming produced a large number of toponyms, therefore it is well worth analyzing them from this perspective.

### **3. 6. Toponym suffixes in the Hungarian language**

The suffix *-d* is the most typical and widely used toponym suffix in Hungarian. It occurs not only in settlement names, but in hydronyms, in the names of mountains and other micro-toponyms as well. This seems to be the most characteristic toponym suffix in Hungarian, as this function was recognized early in the literature despite the fact that in the case of certain toponyms the functions of the suffix cannot be always separated. This was also used as a suffix in toponyms of foreign origin, pointing to its wide range of productivity earlier. Its productivity was sustained after the most active early Old Hungarian period. It occurs as a characteristic marker of toponyms as well as an ending in newly formed toponyms in some cases, despite the fact that this period saw the dominance of compound names. The formation of fictitious names proves that it still acts as a toponym marker in language use today.

The occurrence of the suffix *-gy* in early toponyms was recognized early in the literature, but its status is still uncertain. This suffix frequently occurs in the toponym and personal name data of the Old Hungarian linguistic records in identical function with the nominal suffix *-d*. Regarding its origin, the question is whether it is an independent suffix or only a variant created via the palatalization of *-d*. Based on the arguments discussed in the chapter on theoretical background, it is clear that the suffix *-gy* used to be independent of the suffix *-d*. The two suffixes are of different origin and show different phonetic behaviour, despite occurring in similar semantic types. Their temporal usage was also different, which also points to the independent status of the two suffixes. In summary, it is concluded that the suffix *-gy* is independent of the suffix *-d*: it is a characteristic feature of toponym formation, occurring much earlier.

The suffix *-i* was also frequent in the Old Hungarian period, primarily used in the formation of settlement names. The analysis of this settlement formation suffix presents several problems. First, it is important to separate names with the actual suffix *-i* from other cases which are similar in form. The early data (up to the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. until the full disappearance of root final vocals) poses difficulties in the analysis of *-i* as it needs to be separated from the root final sounds. Another problem is the homonymy of the toponym suffix *-i* with the adjectival suffix denoting the descend and the belonging of a person. Furthermore, in the case of names translated into Latin, grammatical homonymy is observed with the Latin genitive inflectional suffix. This poses a problem when the Hungarian form of the toponyms is modified in Latin documents. They may be translated partially or completely, so later in the absence of data, it might be impossible to precisely recover the original toponym. Less problematic is the distinct category of possessive attributive compounds where the possessive suffix takes the form of *-i*.

From a functional-semantic point of view, names with the suffix *-i* can be divided into two major groups. The first group comprises toponyms denoting the possessors. The second group consists of those toponyms in which the possession affix function of *-i* does not arise, therefore the naming of the place must have occurred on the basis of different principles. The presence of the toponym suffix *-i* is certain in the second large semantic group, and most likely in the first group as well in some cases. However, it is difficult to say when the shift in function occurred because we are unable to determine chronological difference between the two groups on the basis of the data. Toponyms which received the suffix *-i* secondarily (through extension) must be treated in this category.

My analysis of the toponym suffix *-j* is based on the question whether its independent status of the suffix *-i* can be accounted for in Hungarian morphology, and if so, what characteristics it has. In summary, it is concluded that the two suffixes might be each other's variants only from a functional point of view. However, the independent suffix *-j* needs to be accounted for because it differs from *-i* in terms of its morphological behaviour and productivity. The conclusion is that *-j* was active until the end of the early Old Hungarian period at the most. After this period, no toponyms have been created with this suffix. The spread of this suffix may have been facilitated in the early days by the frequent occurrence of this name-ending in personal names (e.g. personal names of Hungarian and Slavic origin with *-j*, *-aj*, *-ej* endings). In this regard, another difference must also be mentioned related to the later history of the two



suffixes whether they are capable of complementing existing toponyms analogically. While in the case of the suffix *-i*, it is common that it was attached to existing toponyms only later, this cannot be observed in the case of *-j*.

The suffix *-s* had a lot of different functions not only in Old Hungarian, but today as well (diminutive suffix, hypocoristic suffix, suffix with the meaning to “provide”, suffix for different occupations). The toponym suffix function may have developed from the suffixes with the meaning to “provide” and the collective noun suffix function, but the morphological congruence of toponyms with personal names and standard words makes it extremely difficult to clearly separate the functions. Furthermore, some toponyms can be analyzed differently, which may have an influence on how the meaning of the suffix is interpreted. It must also be taken into account that the above toponyms can be looked upon as suffixed toponyms from a structural-synchronic perspective. In other words, they show morphological congruence, but with regard to their origin, it is possible that they were not created by attaching a toponym suffix to them. Suffixed toponyms, as mentioned above, may be created in different ways, e.g. via extension, ellipsis and split. It is important to separate them at least theoretically, even if this distinction is not always possible to make in practice. In this chapter, I also discuss the problem of suffix clusters, namely the *-sd* cluster created by joining the suffixes *-s* and *-d*. (The cluster *-nd* was created in a historically similar way.)

The suffix *-n/-ny* is not always discussed as toponym suffixes in the literature. The suffix primarily had a role in common nouns (*vadon*, *gyertyán*, *gyümölcsény*), in personal names (*Abony*, *Apony*, *Etény*), in expressions based on foreign common nouns (*Berzseny*, *Dubovány*, *Bucsány*) or denoting a specific population unit (*Varsány*, *Tokány*, *Ladány*, *Tárkány*), and they appear quite early in toponym data as well (*Harsány*, *Aranyán*, *Hangony*).

In most of the above listed examples *-ny* is not a suffix, just a randomly recurring ending, which originally did not belong to the word. As a result of its frequent occurrence, it came to be used as a suffix for toponym formation (e.g. *hárs* > *Harsány*).

The toponym suffix function of *-ó/-ő* is not discussed in the previous literature reviews, although it is clear that in some toponyms they function as noun suffixes and not as participles. In this chapter, I discuss those toponym types where the appearance of the suffix can be accounted for, concluding that *-ó/-ő* still seems to be an active suffix in toponyms.

On the basis of the previous literature, the use of the *-ka/-ke* as a toponym suffix seemed to be different in many ways from the toponym suffixes discussed above. They appeared later than other toponym suffixes (usage dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century), and primarily occur in the north-east part of the language area. Due to geographical constraints, they were long treated as loan suffixes (of Slavic origin). Based on the analysis of the data, it seems that it was common not only in the north-east region and its function was not restricted to the formation of settlement names. It is possible that the diminutive suffix of the same form was a likely source of the toponym suffix, and in certain regions the Slavic suffix may have influenced its spread.

The suffix *-ság/-ség* occurs exclusively in the names of regions, which is a special toponym type (*Jászság, Nyírség, Szepesség*). DEZSŐ JUHÁSZ, in his discussion of the structure of names of regions, draws attention to the suffix *-ság/-ség*, which plays an important role in the formation of names of regions (1988: 30). He labeled them as “region name suffixes” drawing on their typical occurrence in the names of regions. The high frequency of the suffix *-ság/-ség*, typical of the turn of the 15–16<sup>th</sup> centuries until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, can be related to the attempts made at markedness. It appeared in compound names as well as in traditional, fully-developed names (*Cserehátság, Erdélység*), although the base of these was also a well-known name of a region, so in principle it was not necessary to attach another region name suffix to them.

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