Theses of Doctoral (Ph.D.) Dissertation

Toponym Studies in the Hungarian–Romanian–Ukrainian Border Region

Éva Hankusz

Supervisor: Dr. István Hoffmann

UNIVERSITY OF DEBRECEN

Doctoral School of Linguistics

Debrecen 2023

1. The objective of the dissertation, overview

The issue of the regional differentiation of toponym systems has been neglected in the field of onomastics for a long time. Although the authors of works written about the characteristics of toponym systems of particular regions have usually drawn attention to the need of comparing them with the name corpus of other regions (cf. HOFFMANN 1993b: 266), such comprehensive studies have only recently been carried out.

Recently, several researchers have undertaken comparative studies of the microtoponym systems of different settlements and larger areas (e.g., HOFFMANN 2015, DITRÓI 2017). Such studies have attempted to reveal differences in the name patterns of various areas by comparing the functional-semantic and lexical-morphological features of the toponym systems. These differences may be due to a number of factors, of which previous studies have mainly emphasized the impact of geographical context, internal migration and the foreign-language environment (see DITRÓI 2017).

Adding to the series of toponym geographical studies, my dissertation deals with the comparative onomatosystematical analysis of the toponymic data of settlements in the border area between Hungary, Romania and Ukraine. In addition to my personal involvement (I live in the region, in Kökényesd, Romania), the choice of this area was motivated by the fact that it also provides an opportunity to examine the impact of the borders drawn based on the Treaty of Trianon a hundred years ago on the toponym systems of neighboring settlements separated by a political border. It can be assumed that, as in language in

general, the long-lasting division reinforced separation in the toponym systems as well. The central question of my dissertation is therefore how the role of the national border in facilitating linguistic separation is manifested in toponym systems.

In the course of my research, I examined the toponym corpus of 57 settlements in the former Szatmár and Ugocsa counties. The place names of the settlements in Hungary and Ukraine were examined on the basis of published toponym registries, while in Romania I collected the toponymic data of 17 settlements myself, also using previous works. Since this part of the source material is not available in published form, the glossary of place names for each settlement is included in my dissertation. As part of my onomatosystematical analysis, I have examined in detail the density of names in the settlements, the structural characteristics of the name corpuses, and the prevalent regional variations.

My studies may also contribute to the clarification of the question repeatedly raised in onomatosystematic publications, whether so-called toponym dialectal areas can be specified based on the boundaries of phenomena reflecting the regional distribution of different toponym structures. Although my analysis is limited to a small part of the Hungarian language area, extending the studies to a larger area and comparing the results with similar studies of other regions may bring us closer to the delineation of Hungarian toponym dialect areas.

2. Outline of the methods used

The database containing the corpus of names of the settlements provided the basis of my onomatosystematic research. During the development of this database, I recorded the place names and all the information related to them using the field structure of the Hungarian National Toponym Registry.

Based on the name corpus, in Chapter II of my dissertation I examined the name density of the settlements and introduced the factors determining such name density. As the collection of place names in the regions under study was carried out by different collectors, using different approaches and methods, and as there are also significant differences in official naming practices, natural conditions, and land use patterns between countries, I compared and analyzed the name density values with other parameters of the settlements (area size, population density) separately for each country.

In the third chapter of my dissertation, I dealt with a comparative analysis of the patterns of place naming in the three regions I studied. The theoretical framework for my analysis of toponyms was provided by the toponym analysis model developed by ISTVÁN HOFFMANN (1993a) considering multiple criteria. Of the levels of analysis he distinguished, I undertook a functional-semantic and lexical-morphological description of names, i.e., I examined the motivations, semantic features that underlie name giving and the linguistic devices expressing them.

Instead of the toponym systems as a whole, my research focused on the two most important groups of names, river names and boundary names. I considered the analysis by

name type to be useful because when analyzing the whole name corpus, the results may mostly reflect differences in the distribution of object types rather than in the name formation norm. In the analysis of both the river names and boundary names, I focused primarily on comparing the name patterns of the areas separated by a national border and on capturing the differences and similarities between them. In the case of boundary names, however, I was also able to examine the regional distribution of the name structures by settlement, thanks to the very high proportion of the name type within the name system. By visualizing the frequency of the different structural types on a map, I obtained a much more nuanced picture of the regional distribution of the different name patterns.

In the fourth chapter of my dissertation, I examined boundary names in the region from the pre-Trianon period. The most important source of the name corpus was represented by FRIGYES PESTY'S collection of place names from 1864, which offers an authoritative source of the toponym corpus of the time. I supplemented this with the names taken from the maps of the second and third military surveys, which also date from the second half of the 19th century. To create the name corpus to be examined, I also used cadastral maps from the period between 1850 and 1920, i.e., the period before the Trianon borders were drawn.

During the analysis of the historical name corpus, I also used the analytical framework developed by ISTVÁN HOFFMANN, which provided an excellent opportunity to compare the name patterns of the pre-Trianon era with the naming customs of the areas today.

3. List of results

3.1. Factors determining toponym density

An analysis of the density of names in settlements has shown that the number of names involved in the construction of a toponym system is influenced by a number of factors. The frequency of synonymous place names, the size of the settlement, its population density, its ethnic composition, and the geographical and economic character of the area all influence the name density of a settlement.

3.1.1. Toponym synonymy

The name density value for all toponym systems is, by definition, higher than the number of landmarks per square kilometer, i.e., we have to take synonymy into account, which is a very important factor in the evolution of name density. In terms of the frequency of synonymous place names, I have observed significant variations in the areas studied. Synonymous name pairs occur in the highest proportion in the Hungarian name systems, while in Romania and especially in Ukraine the frequency is much lower. The differences may be due, among others, to differences in object density. My studies have revealed that in regions with a higher-than-average object density, the degree of synonymity of place names is also higher, which naturally leads to an increase in the absolute density of names.

The high frequency of the synonyms in the Hungarian region is also related to the official naming practice in the

region. In addition to street names, the naming activities of official bodies also included boundary names and names of rivers (especially artificial water bodies created by water regulation). The resulting official names, which in many cases differed from the patterns of vernacular names, became part of everyday usage, thus increasing the proportion of synonymous name pairs.

3.1.2.   Area size

My studies on name density have shown that the size of its area determines the toponym density of a settlement more than any other factor. The name density values of settlements with relatively small areas are generally much higher than those of villages with extensive boundary areas, due to the high degree of utilization and intensive inland cultivation of the area. This inverse correlation between the size of the area and the number of names seems to be a universal one, as it is confirmed by studies carried out in other regions.

The inverse correlation between name density and area size was most clearly seen in the study of the Hungarian name corpus. However, in the case of villages in Romania, which are more heterogeneous in many respects, the correlation between these indicators is less clear. Although minor deviations from the trend were also found for Hungarian villages, they are mostly well explained by differences in population density. In the Romanian region, however, it is clear that the deviations from the trend are due to other factors determining the density of names.

3.1.3. Population density and ethnic composition

The extent of a settlement's toponym corpus is also influenced by the size and ethnic composition of its population. My studies have shown a direct correlation between place-name density and population density in several cases. It is a common phenomenon that the name density of settlements with similar spatial and geographic characteristics differs more significantly if the underlying population density conditions are different.

In addition, the linguistic-ethnic composition of the population also plays a significant role in the evolution of name density values. In my research, this aspect has become particularly important in the case of settlements with mixed ethnicity in Romania, where the density of Hungarian place names is also related to the proportion of Hungarians in the settlement. The smaller or larger degree of Romanization of settlements does not favor the creation and survival of Hungarian place names, which may result in lower toponym density.

When examining the relationship between population density and toponym density, it should also be borne in mind that high population densities are sometimes the result of increasing suburbanization. In this case, a large part of the population chooses to live in a suburban area because of the quick and easy accessibility of jobs in the city. However, this stratum is usually less familiar with the village boundaries and therefore less involved in the use and creation of place names. This process may therefore lead to a decrease in the density of names, despite the increase in population density.

3.1.4.   Nature of farming

In addition to territory, population density and ethnic circumstances, the density of settlements is significantly influenced by the type of agricultural activity carried out and, in line with this, the lifestyle of the population. In settlements where a significant part of the population is still engaged in agriculture, the need to differentiate places by place names persists, i.e., a high density of names can be expected. In contrast, in villages where the majority of the boundary area is owned by a few owners, the names of small plots lose their function, as cultivation takes place in large, unified fields. The disappearance of small family farms and the advancement of large-scale agriculture therefore lead to the loss of place names that designate smaller parcels of only a few hectares, or even larger areas.

I have observed the decline of the traditional farming way of life and, in this context, a marked decrease in the toponym corpus, mainly in settlements near cities as a consequence of the suburbanization processes mentioned above. The processes that have taken place there are likely to spread to the whole area in the future.

3.2.   Regional variations in toponym systems

The analysis of the onomatosystematic structure of river names and boundary names confirmed my preliminary assumption that the division that has existed for more than a century due to the changing national border resulted in the separate development of different toponym systems. A comparative analysis of the name

samples of the separated areas revealed significant differences in the frequency of use of single- and two-component structures, the expression of ownership, and structures denoting a local condition, among others.

3.2.1.   *Frequency of single and two-component toponyms*

From a structural point of view, among Hungarian place names we can distinguish between single- and two-component toponyms according to whether they express one or two pieces of information about the referent they denote. Studies carried out so far show that in toponym systems, two-component structures are generally much more common than single-component ones, although the distribution of the two types of names may vary considerably from one region to another.

The average values of the regions I examined also show a predominance of two-component structures both among water names and boundary names, but there are also significant regional differences in this respect. My research has shown that the proportion of single-component name structures is higher in the eastern, cross-border areas of the region I have studied. This tendency was found to be true for both types of names, but the most striking evidence of this correlation was found in the case of boundary names: while in the Hungarian toponym systems single-component names account for only about a quarter of the total number of names, in the regions beyond the border this proportion is around 40%. Looking at the

proportion of single- and two-component names by settlement, we also find striking values: in several Romanian and Ukrainian settlements, single-component names account for more than half, and in some cases three quarters, of the boundary names.

The more frequent use of single-component structures in the eastern parts of the language area has been confirmed by previous research in areas hundreds of kilometers away (see DITRÓI 2017), but the name corpus I have examined shows that this can also be the case on a smaller scale, presumably not unrelated to the presence of a hundred-year-old border that limits the spread of name patterns.

The study of settlement names has also shown that in the Hungarian place-name system, single-component names may represent an earlier type than two-component names (HOFFMANN-RÁCZ-TÓTH 2018: 263, 377).

3.2.2. *Regional differences in place names referring to the owner*

Possession is primarily a semantic category specific to boundary names. This type of name occurs in large numbers in both single- and two-component boundary names. Although the designation of the owner of a place is typically done with two-component place name structures, in the Romanian region single-component possessive names are very common, accounting for almost 10% of boundary names. In contrast, in the Hungarian and Ukrainian areas, the use of single-component structures to indicate possession is much less frequent. In these areas,

this type of name accounts for 4 and 2% of border names respectively.

There are also differences in the linguistic formation of the names included here. While in the Hungarian and Ukrainian areas the designation of the owner is provided with single-component names with a personal name or a common noun indicating a person without a topoformant (*Fóris, Balogh),* in the Romanian area the structure with the possessive -é is preferred *(Csajláé, Tobáké).*

The designation of the owner of the place is also common in the case of names with two components. The linguistic formation of the name type also shows considerable regional variation. Although in all three areas there is a predominance of unmarked possessive structures *(Bartha-rekesz, Lengyel-tag),* in the areas beyond the Hungarian border a quarter of the names belonging to this category are marked structures *(Kotró sűrűje, Kisasszonyok tagja).* Their proportion in the Hungarian area is much lower at only 15%.

In view of the above results, it is perhaps not unreasonable to conclude that markedness is the dominant feature of the eastern language area, while in the western areas it is rather unmarked. In the light of the above, we can consider this toponym model to be a more recent pattern.

3.2.3. *Regional differences in names indicating a local condition*

Indication of local conditions is very common in both hydronyms and boundary names, and is typically done using two-component names. At the level of their lexical-

morphological structure, however, the two types of place names show different characteristics.

The analysis of river names in the Romanian region showed the dominance of marked structures: more than half of the names belonging to this category have the possessive personal suffix on the base (*Csillag-domb ergéje),* but there is also a significant occurrence of the *-i* form of suffix *(Kertaljai-patak).* Although the latter structure is also found in a similar proportion among the hydronyms in the Hungarian region, the unmarked structure *(Tag-árok)* is the largest group.

The linguistic structure of boundary names indicating a local condition is different from the above. In all three regions studied, the unmarked structures form the largest group. There is, however, a more significant difference in the proportion of *-i* suffix structures, which in the Hungarian area is about two and a half times higher than in Romania and Ukraine.

3.3.   *Changes in name patterns over time*

The analysis of the historical boundary names of the Szatmár region and their comparison with the present-day status of the names yielded useful results in revealing the changes in the name patterns in the region over time and in exploring the background of these changes. In the following, I present some of the changes in toponym structure that best illustrate the separating role of the national border on toponym systems.

A comparison of the proportion of the two main structural types of historical and contemporary toponym systems, i.e. single- and two-component names, shows

that the higher frequency of single-component names in the 19th century was only characteristic of the Ukrainian region. Later, the values in the Romanian area also shifted towards those typical in the Ukrainian region. Thus the trend that emerges from the study of modern place names (water names and boundary names), according to which the greater frequency of single-component names is characteristic in the eastern part of the language area, is less pronounced in the case of the historical name corpus (although the fact that much of the historical data I have analyzed is from maps may also play a role in this).

There has also been a significant change in the case of place names expressing possession. While in today's toponym systems ownership appears in a very high proportion of the boundary names, and (as I have shown above) it also shows lexical-morphological diversity, in the historical name corpus this semantic category appears in only a small proportion of the names, and their linguistic structure is much more uniform than in the case of today's corpus. The increase in the proportion of this type of name is probably due to the land reforms following the First and Second World Wars, the termination of the large land system, and the reorganization of property relations. The boundary names thus created did not always follow the patterns of the past. Whereas in the past, the expression of possession in single-component names took place exclusively with the use of a personal name without a toponym formant or a common noun denoting a person, in today's toponym corpus, especially in the Romanian territory, the name form with the possessive *-é* form has a significant role.

However, in the case of two-component names referring to the owner, the comparison of the time periods under study reveals the constancy of the patterns of names used to express possession. Although the proportion of this type of name in the name system has increased considerably, the lexical-morphological structure of the names shows only a slight shift.

Overall, in term of the structures used to express possession, the Romanian toponym systems have moved towards markedness, while the Hungarian naming systems towards unmarkedness.

There have also been significant changes in the names used to express local conditions. Unmarked structures account for more than half of the names studied in the historical name corpus of all three regions *(Sáros-ér-hát, Temető-sor).* Of the marked structures, in the Ukrainian area the structures with a possessive personal suffix on the base *(Erdő alja, Batár köze)* are more frequent, in the Hungarian area the *-i* suffix structures *(Pap-réti-dűlő, Bürgezdi-kaszáló)* are more numerous, while in the Romanian area there is an almost equal proportion of the two types. A comparison with the proportions of contemporary toponym systems shows that the regions under study have undergone changes in different directions. In the Hungarian and Ukrainian areas the proportion of unmarked structures has decreased, while the number of *-i* suffix structures has increased. In Romania, in contrast, the proportion of unmarked structures has increased. It is interesting to note that while in the case of names referring to the owner the Romanian toponym system has shifted towards marked structures,

the opposite trend is observed in the case of names referring to the local conditions.

4.   Summary

The comparison of the timelines clearly shows the separate development of the toponym systems of the regions that have been separated for over a century. However, it is also clear that the regional differences between the toponym systems of the areas under study cannot be explained only by the role of political borders facilitating separation. In many cases, traces of the regional differences in modern toponym systems can also be found in the place-name systems of the 19th century, but it is also clear that the introduction of the Trianon borders not only intensified these differences, but also led to other divergences of a different direction in the separated regions.

Works cited

DITRÓI, ESZTER 2017. *Helynévrendszerek modellalapú vizsgálata. (A helynévminták összevető analízise statisztikai megközelítésben).* A Magyar Névarchívum Kiadványai 40. Debrecen, Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó

HOFFMANN, ISTVÁN 1993a. *Helynevek nyelvi elemzése.* A Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem Magyar Nyelvtudományi Intézetének Kiadványai 61. Debrecen.

HOFFMANN, ISTVÁN 1993b. A helynevek szerkezeti változása. *Hungarológia 3:* 266– 278.

HOFFMANN, ISTVÁN 2015. Nagykörű és Tapolcafő. Összehasonlító helynévrendszertani vizsgálat. In: BÁRTH M. JÁNOS–BODÓ CSANÁD–KOCSIS ZSUZSANNA szerk., *A nyelv dimenziói. Tanulmányok Juhász Dezső tiszteletére.* Budapest, ELTE BTK. 376–387.

HOFFMANN, ISTVÁN – RÁCZ ANITA – TÓTH VALÉRIA 2018. *Régi magyar helynévadás. A korai ómagyar kor helynevei mint a magyar nyelvtörténet forrásai.* Budapest. Gondolat Kiadó.

Registry number:	DEENK/394/2023.PL
Subject:	PhD Publication List

Candidate: Éva Hankusz
Doctoral School: Doctoral School of Linguistics
MTMT ID: 10055505

List of publications related to the dissertation

Hungarian scientific articles in Hungarian journals (6)

1. **Hankusz, É.**: Történeti helynévvizsgálatok a szatmári térségben.
   Helynévtört. tanulm. közlésre elfogadva, 1-15, 2022. ISSN: 1789-0128.

2. **Hankusz, É.**: Névsűrűségi vizsgálatok a szatmári térségben.
   Magy. nyelvjár. 59, 67-81, 2021. ISSN: 0541-9298.
   DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.30790/mnyj/2021/05

3. **Hankusz, É.**: Határnevek összevető vizsgálata a szatmári térségben.
   Helynévtört. tanulm. 16, 107-128, 2020. ISSN: 1789-0128.
   DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.35528/Helynevtort/16/05

4. **Hankusz, É.**: Határnevek összevető vizsgálata.
   Helynévtört. tanulm. 15, 149-161, 2019. ISSN: 1789-0128.
   DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.35528/Helynevtort/15/08

5. **Hankusz, É.**: Víznévrendszerek összevető vizsgálata.
   Magy. nyelvjár. 57, 51-64, 2019. ISSN: 0541-9298.
   DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.30790/mnyj/2019/03

6. **Hankusz, É.**: Névsűrűségi vizsgálatok a Csengeri járásban.
   Magy. nyelvjár. 55, 111-120, 2017. ISSN: 0541-9298.

UNIVERSITY *of*
DEBRECEN

List of other publications

Hungarian scientific articles in Hungarian journals (2)

7. **Hankusz, É.**: Kocán Béla, Helynévtörténeti vizsgálatok a régi Ugocsa megyében.
   Névt. ért. 40, 240-243, 2018. ISSN: 0139-2190.

8. **Hankusz, É.**: Összevető helynévvizsgálatok Szatmár megye területéről.
   Magy. nyelvjár. 53, 63-76, 2015. ISSN: 0541-9298.

Hungarian conference proceedings (1)

9. **Hankusz, É.**: Összevető helynévvizsgálatok Szatmár megye területéről.
   In: Anyanyelvünk évszázadai 3.: Az ELTE Benkő Loránd Nyelvtörténeti Hallgatói Műhelye
   által szervezett 2016. június 10-i nyelvtörténeti konferencia előadásaiból készült
   tanulmánykötet. Szerk.: P. Kocsis Réka, Bagyinszki Szilvia, Szabó Gergely, ELTE BTK
   Magyar Nyelvtörténeti, Szociolingvisztikai, Dialektológiai Tanszék, Budapest, 57-66, 2018.

The Candidate's publication data submitted to the iDEa Tudóstér have been validated by DEENK on the basis of the Journal Citation Report (Impact Factor) database.

28 August, 2023

18