

**TILTM 2020****Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication****HISTORICAL ASPECT OF CANADIAN REGIONAL TOPONYMIC NOMINATIONS**

Anna Yu. Ilyina (a), Milana E. Kupriyanova (b)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) RUDN University, 117198, 6, Miklukho-Maklaya St., Moscow, Russia, ilyina\_ayu@pfur.ru

(b) RUDN University, 117198, 6, Miklukho-Maklaya St., Moscow, Russia, kupriyanova\_me@pfur.ru

*Abstract*

The article is devoted to the study of the regional identity of Canada's place names in terms of sources of origin. The purpose of the work is to identify the morphological and cultural characteristics of the toponyms of the four regions of Canada, taking into account the evolution of the toponymic vocabulary of England. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were performed: 1) three main toponymic layers were identified: Amerindian, French, and English, 2) names with toponym-forming formants characteristic of these strata were identified on a geographical map of Canada. The following methods were chosen as the main research methods: continuing sampling, classification and structural-semantic analysis, as well as system-descriptive and word definitions analysis. The analysis made it possible to conclude that linguistic and extralinguistic factors are the basis of the distinguishing features of toponominations typical of different regions of Canada. The results of the study can be used in the preparation of theoretical and practical courses in lexicology, linguistic studies and intercultural communication.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

**Keywords:** Canadian place names, toponymic layers, topoformants.

## **1. Introduction**

Since the names of geographical objects take centuries to form, on the map of any state there are inevitably toponyms (place names) created in different eras, in different languages, and associated with a wide variety of spheres of human activity. Among them there are toponyms, whose linguistic forms gradually developed or were created specifically for the name of this object, as well as borrowed from other languages or inherited from the people who lived in this territory in the past (Sudar, 2007). All of these types of toponyms are reflected on the geographical map of Canada, where names of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon origin are adjacent to Spanish, Portuguese, Basque, French, Native American names, which were formed at different historical stages.

## **2. Problem Statement**

To identify the cultural, as well as morphological nature of Canadian place names, it is necessary to refer not only to the history of Canada, but also to take into account the history of the origin and evolution of the place names of England, as they are reflected in the modern form of names and determine the general appearance of the toponymic map of Canada.

Geographic names exported from Europe to the territories where the English language spread, and those arising on the spot, enter into new relations and form a new special population or system of names (Belenkaya, 1977).

The toponymy of English-speaking Canada, evolving over four centuries, is a single English-language naming system. This unity does not exclude regional originality inherent in individual geographical areas, which arises under the influence of various factors.

## **3. Research Questions**

The regional division of Canada can be represented as follows: Central region - the provinces of Ontario and Quebec; the Maritimes (Atlantic Provinces) - Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island; Prairie - provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan; Pacific - British Columbia Northwest Territories and the Yukon (Cherkasov, 2008).

The problem of regional features of Canadian toponymy should be solved on the basis of identifying historically established differences in individual areas. In a vast, geographically heterogeneous territory at different historical periods, there appear multilingual toponyms that enter into a kind of interaction with each other and with local Native American names.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

In the process of historical development, the subsequent toponymic wave covers the previous one, which leads to the formation of historical layers of toponymy. The toponymic layer refers to the totality of geographical names that appeared during a certain historical period (Barandeyev, 2019; Ilyina, 2013; Nash & Joshua, 2015). The purpose of the study is to research toponymic layers through territorial and historical aspects.

## 5. Research Methods

Taking into account the historical events spanning the 16th-18th centuries, and based on the above definition, it can be argued that there are three toponymic layers in Canada that influenced the formation of the country's toponymic corps:

- Amerindian layer;
- French layer;
- English layer.

The article discusses these layers using the following comprehensive methods: continuing sampling, classification and structural-semantic analysis, as well as system-descriptive and word definitions analysis (Belenov, 2019; Martynenko, 2019).

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. Amerindian layer

A review of the modern map of Canada shows an abundance of names that differ sharply in form from European ones. These are toponyms that have arisen on the basis of numerous indigenous languages of the Indian tribes of Canada such as Cree, Algonquin, Iroquois: Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Ontario, Athabasca, Yukon, Quebec, Ottawa, Niagara, Erie.

In Canada, the Native American layer is represented by the following groups of toponyms: a) Native American names preserved in their original form; b) Native American names assimilated by French and English; c) Native American names represented in the translation into English and French;

Let us consider these groups:

a) Aboriginal names that have survived to the present day in the least distorted form and have not been assimilated by European languages are recorded on a geographical map throughout Canada: Comox, Cowichan, Esquimalt, Kelowna (BC); Attawapiskat, Chippawa, Ekwan (ON), Arthabaska, Causcapsal, Escuminac (NS); Escuminac, Nackawic, Pokemoucher (NB), Kamsack, Moosomin (SK).

In the Maritime provinces, toponyms have retained the geographical terms of Indian origin: bogan, padou - in the Mikmaq language and the Malaysite "strait adjacent to the river". In the north of New Brunswick, these terms are found 30 times and are recorded in many names: Fanton Bogan, Mersereau Bogan, Pickards Padou, Sugar Island Padou.

During the settlement of the territory of modern Canada, the Indians preferred the prairies and mixed forests, including the lands near the Great Lakes and partly the Atlantic coast. In the Pacific Southwest and in the Prairie provinces, names are not only preserved for natural objects, but also refer to provinces and large settlements: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Okanagan (BC), Manitou (MB), Wawanesa (MB), Saskatoon (SK).

b) Native American names subjected to English and French assimilation

The first colonists faced the difficulty of transmitting by means of their mother tongue the phonetic features of Native American names. These phonetic difficulties lead to a distortion of the original sound

form of place names, which in turn affects the instability of their French and English spelling. The modern spelling of Native American names is also affected by the fact that many of them come to English through French. Constantly communicating with the Indians, the French adopted many names that currently bear traces of French assimilation:

Using the toponymic suffix *que*: oikonym Petekook from the language of the Indians of the tribe Mikmak was transformed into Bedeque (PE); Lameque (NB) is the result of the assimilation by the French language, and accordingly the simplification of the pronunciation of the toponym Elmugwadasik.

The top-forming formant *che* is present in many toponyms pronounced in a French manner: Bouctouche (NB) from Native American *Chebuktoosk*, Restigouche (NB) from Native American *Lustagooch*, Tatamagouche (NS) from Native American *Takumegooch*.

From the above examples it follows that the presence of Native American names with a French reading prevails in the areas in which the French-Canadian population has survived - these are the Maritime provinces, in particular the territory of the former Acadia - New Brunswick, also Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

Indian names that have been simplified and assimilated by the English language are recorded in the Prairie provinces: Michichi (AB), Minnewanka (AB), in the Maritime provinces: Merigomish (NS). In the English version, topobases and topoformants contain common and familiar combinations of letters: *sh*, *ch* at the end of the words.

A large group is represented by c) Native American names translated into English and French. The reason for this was phonetic difficulties. The attempts of Europeans to make out and reproduce the names inevitably led to their distortion. In cases where the meaning of the Native American name could be ascertained, it was usually translated into English or French. So, there are names like: Beaver Crossing (AB), Cold Lake (AB), Crowsnest (AB), Manyberries (AB), Thunder Bay (ON), Portage River (PE), Swift Current (SK), Carrot River (SK).

Native American names translated into French are found both in the Prairie provinces, where French-speaking Métis Catholics migrated from the northwestern territories, and in the Pacific province of British Columbia and the Maritime provinces: Canard (NS) "duck", Souris (MB) "mouse", Pouce Coup (BC) "cut off finger", Portage La Prairie (BC) "canoe transfer along the prairie to the river", Castor (AB) "beaver", Babine Lake (BC) "sagging lip", Lac Du Bonnet (MB) "lake shaped like a cap".

## 6.2. French layer

On the modern map of Canada, the French influence is traced in the toponymy of the territory where France dominated in the colonial period.

In the Prairie provinces, the presence of French names is explained by the migration of French-speaking mestizos from central and northeastern Canada in connection with the development of the south and west of Canada.

Examples are Castor, Grande Cache (AB), Grande Prairie Gros Morne, Port de Grave (NF), Barachois (NS), Crapaud (PE), Bienfait, La Ronge (SK).

Of the early French names, the most preserved are the names of natural objects (rivers, lakes, islands), which in many cases retain their original form to date: Lac la Biche (AB), Lac la Hache (BC), Pelee Island (ON). The French oikonyms in the English-speaking environment are developing in a different

way. The French oikonyms are closer than other names to the everyday practice of native speakers and therefore undergo major changes. One of the forms of their perception is phonetic assimilation, in which these names, associated with consonant English words, are rethought, which leads to a change in their sound form: Hant's Harbor (NF) originally looked like the French name *L'Anse Arbe* or *Anse Arbre*. The modern spelling is the result of the Anglification of the French version. In addition, the tendency toward simplification inherent in colloquial speech, which can also lead to a significant change in the initial form of names, is constantly manifesting itself: Amet Island (NS) goes back to *l'armet* ("helmet"), referring to the shape of the island. The modern form is the result of the simplification of the French name *île l'Armet* inherent in colloquial speech.

Thus, the French oikonyms underwent significant phonetic adaptation. Also, the change in the initial form is manifested in the combination of the French descriptive element with the English appellative, which facilitates the pronunciation: Chaleur Bay (NB), Cache Bay (PE), Fourchu Harbor (NS). Currently, the French sound is preserved only in the French-speaking environment.

Toponyms with the *belle* component "beautiful" are quite common in combination with both English and French words, in continuous or separate spelling: Belledune (NB), Belleisle (NB), Belle Marche (NS), Belle River (PE), Belle Bay (NF).

### 6.3. English layer

The English layer of toponymic vocabulary is the most extensive, its formation can be traced back to the 17th century, with the appearance of the first permanent English settlements in eastern Canada and with the further advance of the colonists to the west in the 18th - 19th centuries (Parkin & Harry, 2015).

The map indicates the presence of topographic objects of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon origin in Canada.

The most preserved toponymic-forming components with Celtic roots, which we can observe as part of Canadian toponyms, are formants from the Gaelic language, which belongs to the Celtic group of languages:

- more "large",
- loch "lake",
- glen "narrow valley",
- brae "hillock",
- barra "hilly island",
- strath "wide valley".

Geographic names with similar components are widespread in modern Scotland and Ireland. Examination of Canada map data reveals a certain pattern of distribution of toponyms with such formants in the areas of settlement of Scottish highlanders and immigrants from the west of England - in Nova Scotia, where the largest number of immigrants arrived. Thus, topoformants are markers or indicators of the settlement of ethnic groups, by which you can trace the stages of formation of toponymic vocabulary, contacts of languages and cultures.

Examples are Creemore (ON), Blairmore (AB); Glencoe, Glencorradale, Glenfinnan (PE), Barra Glen, Barra Head, Barra Mens Cove (NS), Glenholme (NS), Glenboro (MB), Glen Kerr (SK); Gairloch, Lochaber, Loch Ban (NS); Strathroy (ON), Strathlorne (NS). In Celtic languages, the basis of the toponym

(appellative, geographical term) occupies an initial position. This method of “isolating regularly repeating components allows one to establish those that are modern indicators of the Celtic origin of names” (Belenkaya, 1977). Components *-loch*, *-glen*, *-barra*, *-brae* characterize elevated terrain landscape with lakes and wide valleys typical of the provinces of Nova Scotia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island.

Anglo-Saxon or Old English components are evenly distributed throughout the country and are represented by the following most stable topoformants:

- ton "fenced place, farm, village",
- borough, -boro, -burg "fortified place",
- ham "homestead",
- vale "valley",
- hurst "forest hill".

Names that include these suffixes or created with their help are understandable to all native English speakers, that is, they are perceived precisely as oikonyms (Belenkaya, 1977).

Searston, Roddickton, Winterton (NF), Emyvale, Clementsvale (PE), Lornevale (NS), Kingsburg (NS), Gravelbourg (SK), Peterborough (ON), Tottenham (ON), Waterborough (NB), Kingshurst (NB). The first component in such oikonyms can be expressed in a proper name - Peterborough; last name - Tottenham, Searston, Roddickton, Clementsvale, Lornevale, Gravelbourg; household name - Waterborough, Kingsburg, Kingshurst.

The map indicates that the most productive suffixes are *-ton*, *-borough*, *-burg*, the regions of distribution of which are the provinces of Ontario, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, where immigrants from the Anglo-Saxon settlements of the southeast and west of England live. Suffixes *-vale*, *-hurst* are found in the toponyms of the Maritime provinces that characterize the local landscape.

One of the most stable topoformants used by settlers from the British Isles in Canada to designate new objects are components of Scandinavian origin. The most stable topoformants of Scandinavian origin in the territory of the English-speaking provinces are:

- ford "fjord", "ford",
- holm "plateau island",
- dale "valley",
- thorp "a small farm."

Campbellford, Thamesford (ON), Claresholm (AB), Coaldale (AB), Karsdale (NS), Louisdale (NS), Wiltendale (NF), Mayerthorpe (AB). Suffixes of Scandinavian origin are widespread in the provinces of Ontario and Alberta, as well as in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Suffixes of Scandinavian origin as the final component of the name are found mainly with proper names: Campbellford, Claresholm, Mayerthorpe, Wiltendale.

When toponymic suffixes are included in the toponym, they lose their original meaning, i.e. there is a process of their de-semanticization. Suffixes *-ford*, *-thorp*, *-dale*, *-holm* denote any land area and are perceived as a toponymic formant. They do not have the importance that they had during the formation of the toponymy of England.

## 7. Conclusion

The toponymy of English-speaking Canada, evolving over four centuries, is a single English-language naming system. This unity does not exclude regional originality inherent in individual geographical areas, which arises under the influence of various factors.

On a vast, geographically heterogeneous territory at different historical periods, there appear multilingual toponyms that enter into a kind of interaction with each other and with local Native American names.

## References

- Barandeyev, A. V. (2019). Aktual'nye problemi orfografii toponimov [Topical problems of toponymic spelling]. *Russkiy yazik v shkole* [Russian language at school], 80(6), 85-90. <https://doi.org/10.30515/0131-6141-2019-80-6-85-90>
- Belenkaya, V. D. (1977). Ocherki angloayzichnoy toponimiki [Essays on English-language toponymy]. Vysshaya shkola. <https://www.booksite.ru/fulltext/belenkaya/index.htm>
- Belenov, N. V. (2019). Printsipi i metodi toponimicheskikh issledovaniy [Principles and methods of toponymic research]. *Filologicheskiye nauki. Voprosi teorii i praktiki* [Philological sciences. Issues of theory and practice], 4, 224-228. <https://doi.org/10.30853/filnauki.2019.4.46>
- Cherkasov, A. I. (2008). Shest' regionov Kanady: ocherki regionalnoy geographii. USA and Canada – economica, politika [Six regions of Canada: essays on regional geography. USA and Canada – Economy and Policy]. *Kultura*, 1, 81-94. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/regionalnaya-spetsifika-toponimicheskikh-nominatsiy-kanady-v-svete-istochnikov-proishozhdeniya>
- Ilyina, A. Y. (2013). Heterogeneity of toponymic nomination of English-speaking Canadian provinces as reflection of worldview of Canadians (Doctoral Dissertation). Moscow. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/regionalnaya-spetsifika-toponimicheskikh-nominatsiy-kanady-v-svete-istochnikov-proishozhdeniya>
- Martynenko, I. A. (2019). Hispanic Toponymy Of Belize: Linguopragmatic Analysis. *World of linguistics and communication: electronic scientific journal*, 3, 155–169. [www.tverlingua.ru](http://www.tverlingua.ru)
- Nash, J. (2015). Is toponymy necessary? Studies in Language. *International Journal sponsored by the Foundation "Foundations of Language"*, 39(1), 230-235. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sl.39.1.08nas>
- Parkin, H. (2015). English regional dialect lexis in the names and occupations of the Gloucestershire Cotswolds: A reassessment of the relationship between names and dialects. *Dialectologia et Geolinguistica*, 23(1), 41-52. from <https://doi.org/10.1515/dialect-2015-0002>
- Sudar, G. S. (2007). *Ispanskaya toponymia: Ucheb. posobie* [Spanish toponymy: a tutorial]. RosNou. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/regionalnaya-spetsifika-toponimicheskikh-nominatsiy-kanady-v-svete-istochnikov-proishozhdeniya>