



Towards the Standardization of Geographical Names in Croatian

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Abstract

The standardization of names in Croatian is still an issue. This research focuses on some aspects of it. The dialectal heterogeneity of Croatian requires particular attention is paid to names with dialectal characteristics and how they are adapted to the norm. A comparison of different types of names indicates that most questions arise regarding the standardization of geographical names.

In the introduction, a review of previous approaches to the standardization of toponyms is presented (especially purist practices, which have resulted in modifications of names which do not reflect the real state of affairs). Unlike official geographical names (which are already standard, with the only question being their accentuation), unofficial geographical names are much more problematic (confusion occurs in terms of graphics, accentuation and morphology, i.e. paradigms). In the central part of this paper we look at unofficial geographical names from different perspectives; standard, onomastic, dialectological, lexicographical and pragmatic.

Practical standardization solutions can be offered only when a full inventory of the corpus (in dialect and with a complete paradigm) has been made and described. It is proposed that the standardization of toponyms should be carried out in several phases.

The first phase is officialization – officialized names should be written using the graphemes of standard Croatian, without accents, to resemble official names. Some principles of officialization are proposed (e.g. substituting dialectological graphemes with standard graphemes, etymological principles, etc.). Through the systematic application of the principles of officialization, doubts that may arise when recording dialectal place names, errors, a lack of a systematic approach, etc. would be eliminated, while most dialectal characteristics would be preserved. The official name would meet the needs of many users – the local population, cartographers, officials in administration, etc. Finally, officialization would form the basis for the second phase – standardization. Since standardization involves incorporating the name into the standard language at various levels (phonological, morphological and syntactic), it will require discussion and consensus by linguists.

Keywords: Croatian, standardization of geographical names, geographical names with dialectal characteristics, officialization, officialization principles