Barbara B á b a (Debrecen)

LEXICAL TOPOFORMANTS IN TOPONYMS

LEXIKÁLNÍ TOPOFORMANTY V TOPONYMECH

Některé typy vlastních jmen mají své vlastní jmenné formanty, které jsou pro ně specifické. Tyto elementy se u toponym obecně nazývají topoformanty. Původně apelativní prvky toponym (generické prvky) mohou být považovány za primárně lexikální topoformanty v případě, že generický prvek plní svou úlohu tím způsobem, že se jeho funkce shoduje se slovníkovým významem geografického termínu. V tomto případě je úloha obecného jména zcela totožná s úlohou generického prvku v toponymu; překrývají se, např. *Nagy-völgy* ‚velké údolí', *Újfalu* ‚nová ves', *Eastwood* ‚východní les', *Netherton* ‚dolní ves', *Düsseldorf* ‚ves v blízkosti řeky Düssel'. Naopak sekundární topoformant je generický prvek, který svoji původní roli neplní, ale vzhledem k častému užívání nabývá této funkce jako součást jmenného typu. Tato funkce však nijak neovlivňuje slovníkový význam formantu.

Například lexémy *egyház* ‚kostel', *monostor* ‚klášter', *híd* ‚most' nebo *vár* ‚hrad' jsou v maďarštině sekundárními topoformanty místních jmen. Kupříkladu jména se zadním komponentem *egyház* ‚kostel' byla z počátku tvořena metonymicky po kostele daného sídla (např. *Kerekegyház* ‚okrouhlý kostel'). Stávající jména nicméně posloužila jako model pro další tvoření jmen, takže v maďarštině byla pro vesnice, kde stály kostely, charakteristická jména se zadním komponentem *egyház* ‚kostel', např. *Őregyház* ‚ves s kostelem jménem Őr', *Vidaegyház* ‚ves s kostelem jménem Vida'. Přiklonění se ke jmenným modelům může být přirozeně charakteristickým prvkem i v jiných jazycích.

Keywords

name formant, topoformant, appellative, primary lexical topoformant, secondary lexical topoformant

1. Name formants are elements characteristic of the different types of proper names: they are antecedents or posterior constituents, suffixes and functionless endings which enable us to create new toponyms on the basis of existing ones and to have them accepted as real names by the language community.[1)] The patterns of existing toponyms always have an impact on the creation of new ones, thus, name giving is based on alignment with the toponymic systems.[2)] However, name patterns – which may be either semantic or morphological in nature – play an important part not only in name giving but in the changes of toponyms as well. Naturally, toponym models themselves change over time, which affects not only the structure of newly emerging toponyms but also existing toponyms.[3)] For instance, with regard to

[1)] K. J. Soltész, A tulajdonnév funkciója és jelentése, Budapest 1979, p. 19.
[2)] G. Bárczi, A magyar szókincs eredete. Second, enlarged edition, Budapest 1958, p. 146.
[3)] V. Tóth, Településnevek változástipológiája, Debrecen 2008, p. 44.

Hungarian place naming, it is well-known that suffixation had been a particularly common way of name giving in the earliest period documented by data; however, in later centuries, the genesis of names by the creation of compounds became increasingly prevalent.

Toponyms and anthroponyms are recognised in their function as proper names on the basis of certain formal characteristics: the different types of names frequently contain lexical and morphological elements which are specific to them. Such elements of toponyms are called topoformants. Systemic topoformants consist primarily of common words referring to places, that is, geographical common names. In Hungarian, geographical common names such as *hegy* 'mountain' (e.g. *Nagy-hegy* 'big mountain'), *falu* 'village' (e.g. *Újfalu* 'new village'), *utca* 'street' (e.g. *Iskola utca* 'school street') belong to this group. In German, lexical topoformants are geographical common names such as *-heim* 'home, lodge' (e.g. *Mannheim*), *-dorf* 'village' (e.g. *Düsseldorf*), *-stadt* 'city' (e.g. *Darmstadt*), *-wald* 'forest' (e.g. *Schwarzwald*). In English, the elements such as *-church* (e. g. *Whitchurch* 'White church'), *-wood* (e.g. *Eastwood* 'Eastern wood'), *-hill* (e.g. *Goathill* 'Goat hill', *Cornhill* 'Corn hill'), *-brook* (e.g. *Shirebrook* 'Bright stream'), *-bridge* (e.g. *Woodbridge* 'Wooden bridge'), *-church* (e.g. *Whitchurch* 'White church') constitute examples of lexical topoformants.[4)] Suffixes functioning as topoformants are, for instance, *-sk/-tsk* (e.g. *Omsk, Izhevsk*, *Novokuznetsk*), *-ovo* (e.g. *Balakovo*, *Odjintsovo*) and *-ino* (e.g. *Pushkino*) in Russian,[5)] as well as *-d ~ -gy*, *-s*, *-i*, *-ka/-ke* (e.g. *fürj* 'quail' > *Füred*, *alma* 'apple' > *Almágy*, *berkenye* 'rowan berry' > *Berkenyés*, *haraszt* 'oak, oak forest' > *Haraszti*, *cserjés* 'thicket' > *Cserjéske*) in Hungarian. Certain clusters of suffixes (for instance, *-sd*, *-nd*, resulting in *nád* 'cane' > *Nádasd*, *ölyv* 'buzzard' > *Ölyvend* in Hungarian) may have the same function.[6)] On the basis of the above, two variants of name formants may be distinguished, primarily in morphological, and, to some extent, in functional terms as well: lexical name formants and affixal name formants. Henceforth in my presentation, I am going to discuss lexical topoformants and their historical background. As the time frame for my study, I chose a specific period of language history, the early old Hungarian era (the period between the 11th century and the mid--14th century).

2. Geographical common names may function as lexical topoformants in microtoponyms (e.g. ***Hegy*** 'mountain', *Nagy-**hegy*** 'big mountain') and oikonyms (e.g. *Új**falu*** 'new village'), while they may have other functions (other than being

[4)] Cf. E. Ekwall, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names. Fourth edition, Oxford 1960.
[5)] K. J. Soltész, o. c. in note 1, p. 20.
[6)] Á. Bényei, Helynévképzés a magyarban, Debrecen 2012, p. 7, 107.

name formants) as well. The reason for this is that geographical common names may occur in toponyms not only as name constituents but also as name elements. Each segment of the phonetic string of the toponym expressing any semantic content related to the referent within the context of the genesis of the name is regarded as a name constituent. At the same time, name constituents may be constituted by name elements, i.e. lexemes and suffix morphemes building up the word.[7)] For instance, the *patak* 'creek' element of the name *Diós-patak-tő* 'the estuary of the *Diós-patak*' is only a name element in this name structure, and therefore, it does not function as a name formant; however, it is a name constituent, and thus, a name formant in its hydronym basis, the *Diós-patak* name form. Hence, geographical common names may be found in different positions (and have different functions) in toponyms, among which the geographical common names occurring as single-constituent names (*Hegy* 'mountain') and the ones being the posterior constituents of two-constituent names have an entirely different role than the geographical common names which are antecedents or parts of those (*Nagy-hegy alja* 'the piedmont of the big mountain').

Lexical topoformants may be described in terms of their roles in toponyms, and the words used to indicate the type of place within the name belong to this category. Hence, lexical topoformants are a relative concept which may only be considered to be such constituent of the toponym on the basis of its role fulfilled within the name, and can only be interpreted on a synchronic level. Therefore, for instance, the word *halom* 'heap' functions as a name formant in the name of the hill *Hegyes-halom* 'spiky heap' since it indicates the type of the name's referent; however, it lacks this role in the oikonym *Hegyeshalom* (which may be described semantically as 'being next to the heap named *Hegyeshalom*, viz. a settlement'); therefore, in this case, it cannot be considered a name formant.

Hence, it is clear that although the meaning of the geographical common name makes these words suitable for being topoformants, whether this role is fulfilled in the toponymic application of a given geographical common name depends on the structure of the toponym. On the other hand, upon analysing toponyms, it is apparent as well that they may also contain formants which indicate the type of the denoted place, even though the common word does not have such a meaning as an element of the stock of geographical common names. These are, for instance, the frequent oikonyms with the posterior constituent *-háza* 'house', which occurs in several names of this type, and thus, their posterior constituent functions as a topoformant: the users of these names are aware that they refer to a settlement, and they use the name constituent *-háza* to

[7)] I. Hoffmann, Helynevek nyelvi elemzése. DEMNyIK 61., Debrecen 1993, p. 43–44.

create new oikonyms. However, this does not mean that the word *ház* – as a common word – used to have the meaning ‘village, settlement’ in the given period.

Due to this twofold nature of lexical topoformants, it is necessary to demonstrate this pool of linguistic elements not as a homogeneous category but a specifically differentiated one: as a result, we can distinguish between primary and secondary lexical topoformants.

3. Primary lexical topoformants are the geographical common names which fulfil their function as type indicators in a way that it coincides with the lexical (common-word) meaning of the given geographical common name. Hence, in this case, the function of being a common word and that of being a toponym are identical and entirely overlapping. Geographical common names in the microtoponyms may be primary topoformants independently, without any other formants or additional constituents: e.g. *Ér* ‘streamlet’ (1229/1550: *Er*, vallem),[8] *Morotva* ‘backwater’ (1212/1397/1405: *Mortua*, stag.[9] *Sár* ‘mud’ ([1230]/1231: *Sar*, rip.[10]). However, geographical common names primarily occur as the posterior constituent in two-constituent microtoponyms; this is their most characteristic function as topoformants for instance, *Nagy-völgy* ‘big valley’ ([1291]/1291: *Nogwelg*, vall.[11]), *Fekete-erdő* ‘black forest’ (1344: *Feketeu Erdeu*, s.[12]), *Hosszú-hegy* ‘long mountain’ (1270/272: *Huzevheg*, mo.[13]).

Geographical common names attached to existing, two-constituent toponyms as topoformants may create new toponyms, such as *tő* ‘estuary’ in the toponym *Diós--patak-tő* (1262: *Gyospotokteu*[14]), and *szád* ‘the beginning or mouth of something’ in the toponym *Nagy-patak száda* (1298: *Nagpotokzada*[15]).

The lexical topoformants of oikonyms may also stand alone, such as *Lak* ‘lodge’ (1296: *Loc ~ Lok*, v.[16]), or *Város* ‘city’ (1198 P./PR.: *Varos*, v.[17]).[18] Geographical common names as the posterior constituent of two-constituent oikonyms are also real

---

[8] G. Györffy, Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza I–IV, Budapest 1963–1998, III, p. 367.
[9] G. Györffy I, o. c. in note 8, p. 328.
[10] G. Györffy I, o. c. in note 8, p. 237.
[11] G. Györffy III, o. c. in note 8, p. 389, 442.
[12] G. Györffy II, o. c. in note 8, p. 564, 637.
[13] G. Györffy I, o. c. in note 8, p. 82.
[14] G. Györffy III, o. c. in note 8, p. 191.
[15] G. Györffy III, o. c. in note 8, p. 271.
[16] G. Györffy I, o. c. in note 8, p. 334.
[17] G. Györffy I, o. c. in note 8, p. 732.
[18] Cf. A. Bényei – G. Pethő, Az Árpád-kori Győr vármegye településneveinek nyelvészeti elemzése, Debrecen 1998, p. 95–96.

(and primary) settlement name formants, i.e. they indicate the type of place in, for instance, the following denominations: *Abafalva* ‘the village of a person called Aba’ (1339: *Abafalwa*[19)]), and *Ipoltlaka* ‘the village of a person called Ipolt’ (1223>1338: *Ipolthloka*, p.[20)]).

4. Secondary topoformants are common words used in toponyms which due to their frequent use as part of names acquire the function of type indicators, even though originally they do not have a meaning referring to this name type. However, this function does not affect the common-word meaning of the linguistic element used as a name formant. Secondary lexical topoformants can be found both in microtoponyms as well as oikonyms.

4.1. Originally, the elements belonging to one group of settlement name formants used to have a different meaning and acquired this function secondarily – in most cases, with a specific meaning: for instance, the word *egyház* ‘church’ acquired the meaning ‘a village with a church’ in toponyms due to this change. As a result of this change of meaning, the lexeme *egyház* could be secondarily attached to existing oikonyms as well, such as *Mák* > *Mákegyháza*, *Szentpéter* > *Szentpéteregyháza*. Thus, the semantic content of the oikonyms changed to be ‘a village with a church called Mák’ and ‘a village with a church called Szentpéter’.[21)] Later, from among the common words primarily referring to a building or a construction, geographical common names *monostor(a)* ‘monastery’, *vár(a)* ‘castle’ and *hid(a)* ‘bridge’ also became settlement name formants.

Other lexemes referring primarily to people with the meaning ‘a group of people obliged to serve’, such as *nép*, e.g. *Újnép* ‘a newly established village’ (1352: *Wynep*)[22)] and *sok(a)*, e.g. *Semjánsoka* ‘a settlement called Semján’ ([1237–1240]: *Semyansuka*, pr.[23)]), as well as the lexeme *alja* ‘a place at the bottom’ expressing the relative location to another place: *Egeralja* ‘a village established at the bottom of an alder forest’[24)] became suitable for denoting settlements as well. Even more specifically, the lexeme *vásár(a)* ‘fair’ may be regarded as a formant of settlement names referring to holding fairs, e.g. *Balogvására* (1324: *Boluguasara*, v.[25)]).[26)]

[19)] G. Györffy II, o. c. in note 8, p. 480.
[20)] G. Györffy I, o. c. in note 8, p. 302.
[21)] V. Tóth, o. c. in note 3, p. 85–87.
[22)] D. Csánki, Magyarország történelmi földrajza a Hunyadiak korában I–III.; V, Budapest, 1890–1913, II, p. 654., cf. L. Kiss, Földrajzi nevek etimológiai szótára I–II. 4th edition, Budapest 1988, p. 419. (FNESz.)
[23)] G. Györffy II, o. c. in note 8, p. 623.
[24)] L. Kiss, FNESz I, o. c. in note 22, p. 408.
[25)] G. Györffy II, o. c. in note 8, p. 483.
[26)] V. Tóth, o. c. in note 3, p. 186.

Most probably, the first oikonyms containing the lexemes *egyház(a)* ‘church’, *hid(a)* ‘bridge’, etc., had been transformed from microtoponyms with an identical structure by way of metonymic name giving. Hence, for instance, for the *name Kerekegyház* (‘round church’), a church of that shape, for the *name Úrhida* (‘the lord’s bridge’), an estate owned by a duke, while for the Romanian *Bonchida* (‘Bonc’s bridge’), a bridge crossing the estate owned by a person called *Bonc* provided the basis for transonymization. In the beginning, the oikonyms containing the posterior constituent *monostor(a)* ‘monastery’ had also been named metonymically, after the monastery of the settlement, e.g. *Koppánymonostora* ‘a settlement near the Koppány’s monastery’ (1394: *Koppanmonostora*[27)]), just as the oikonyms with the posterior constituent *vár(a)* had originally been created by metonymic name giving, such as *Hédervára* ‘a settlement near the castle of a person called Héder’ (1330/1356: *Hedruhuara*, pt.[28)]).

However, later name forms were already created on the basis of the existing patterns; thus, villages with churches were denoted by names with the posterior constituent *egyház(a)* ‘church’: for instance, *Őregyház* ‘a village with a church called *Őr*’ and *Vidaegyház* ‘a village with a church called *Vida*’.[29)]

4.2. A rather specific word group consisting of numerous elements can be found among the secondary topoformants of microtoponyms, the tree names also referring to ‘forests’, which may function as topoformants as well: for instance, in the name of the forest *Szurkos-cser* ‘tarry turkey oak’, *cser* does not refer to the ‘turkey oak tree’ but to a ‘turkey oak forest’ (1075/+124/ +217: silvam Huntiensem que Hungarice *Surchuscher* vocatur[30)]). Therefore, in the case of oikonyms containing tree names, these elements function as topoformants in certain positions. The words *cser* ‘turkey oak tree, turkey oak forest’, *haraszt* ‘oak tree, oak forest’ and *bükk* ‘beech tree, beech forest’ are also common as oikonyms made from single tree names, such as *Cser* (1330/1477: montes Gerechygh et *Cher*[31)]), *Haraszt* (1257: silva *horost*[32)]), and *Bükk* (1243/1335: silva *Byk*[33)]) as well as the posterior constituent of two-constituent toponyms, such as *Apát harasztja* ‘the abbot’s oak forest’ (1326: *Apathharazta*, s.[34)]), *Csicsó harasztja* ‘the oak forest of a person called Csicsó’ ([1291]/1291: *Chychoha-*

[27)] G. Györffy III, o. c. in note 8, p. 434; cf. L. Kiss, o. c. in note 22.
[28)] G. Györffy II, o. c. in note 8, p. 601; cf. A. Bényei – G. Pethő, o. c. in note 18, p. 54.
[29)] V. Tóth, o. c. in note 3, p. 186–187; L. Kiss FNESz I, o. c. in note 22, p. 235.
[30)] G. Györffy III, o. c. in note 8, p. 150, 200.
[31)] G. Györffy I, o. c. in note 8, p. 247.
[32)] G. Györffy I, o. c. in note 8, p. 375.
[33)] G. Györffy II, o. c. in note 8, p. 460, 553.
[34)] G. Györffy III, o. c. in note 8, p. 380.

razta[35]), *Madad bükke* ‘the beech forest of a person called Madad’ (1228/1378: *Madadbiki*, s. fagi[36]), *Apát bükke* ‘the abbot’s beech forest’ ([1266]/1266/1274: *Apat Byky*[37]), in which cases these words function as topoformants.

5. With regard to lexical topoformants, it is important to point out that these categories are dynamic systems; that is, shifts and rearrangements occur within them. For instance, a certain change of type may occur due to the movement of some elements between different categories. Originally, some geographical common names such as *föld(e)* ‘land’ and *telek ~ telke* ‘a parcel of land’ had the meaning of ‘land or an estate belonging to somebody’ (for instance, 1279: t-m Diuitis Andree … *Diues Andreas feldy* vocatam[38]), and functioned as primary topoformants in the microtoponyms denoting such types of places. However, this meaning was close to the function ‘somebody’s village’; thus, over time, the toponyms containing these posterior constituents could also function as natural oikonym structures (for instance, 1294: *Gothafelde*[39]).[40] Used in a large number of oikonyms, the posterior constituents *telke* and *földe* established a pattern of directly creating settlement names with these elements: hence, these name constituents became topoformants; without, however, the semantic content ‘settlement’ integrating into the meaning of the relevant common words as geographical common names. As a result, the lexemes *föld* and *telek* are secondary topoformants in these names.

Furthermore, a shift between types of places can also be observed with regard to the topoformant *fő* ‘source’, which had originally functioned as a hydrographic common name but later became a geographical common name meaning ‘a settlement of special position’ in toponyms. The names with the structure of the river’s name + *fő* are generally considered to have been named after the headwaters referred to in the antecedent by way of metonymic name giving. For instance, *Tapolcafő* was, indeed, established at the headwaters of the *Tapolca* creek, therefore, in this case, the metonymy *Tapolca-fő* ’the source of the Tapolca creek‘ > *Tapolcafő* ‘the settlement established at the source of the Tapolca’ occurred.

However, the names with this semantic structure later induced name formation with the posterior constituent *fő* ‘source’ in the denotations of settlements established next to water bodies. This happened regardless of whether the settlement lay at the source of the water or further away. Thus, the settlements *Szalafő*, *Pinkafő* and

---

[35] G. Györffy III, o. c. in note 8, p. 442.
[36] G. Györffy III, o. c. in note 8, p. 326, 373.
[37] G. Györffy III, o. c. in note 8, p. 150, 210, 254.
[38] G. Györffy I, o. c. in note 8, p. 221.
[39] G. Györffy I, o. c. in note 8, p. 85.
[40] V. Tóth, o. c. in note 3, p. 185–186.

Szuhafő can be found at a distance from the headwaters of the *Zala*, the *Pinka* and the *Szuha* streams, which means that they could not have been created metonymically from the name of the source. The posterior constituent *fő* in these names can already be considered a settlement name formant and expresses the meaning 'the settlement next to the water' in the name. In terms of the onymic system, it means that while the toponym *Tapolcafő* is a single-constituent toponym created metonymically, the *Szalafő*-type can be considered two-constituent name forms. The extent to which the lexeme *fő* had become a secondary settlement name formant is demonstrated well by the fact that it was used in this role later, during the Hungarisation of names as well, resulting in the oikonyms *Gyöngyösfő* 'the settlement next to the river Gyöngyös' in Austria or *Hernádfő* 'the settlement next to the river Hornád' in Slovakia.[41)] These examples demonstrate that the toponyms containing a name formant may have various sources and are the result of different historical processes; however, this differentiation does not affect the classification of the given lexeme as a topoformant since this is determined by a functional, not a historical approach.

6. Naturally, the alignment with name models may also be characteristic of other languages; therefore, in this respect, it is worth paying attention to the toponyms with the posterior constituent *-kirchen/-church* in German and English as well (e.g. the German *Altenkirchen*; English *Hornchurch*); however, it may be assumed that the English lexemes *-bridge* (e.g. *Woodbridge*, *Corbridge*), *-wood* (e.g. *Everwood*), *-hill* (e.g. *Ampthill*, *Notting Hill*), etc., may also become secondary settlement name formants. Nevertheless, the complexity of the problem is demonstrated by the fact that in the case of toponyms containing these posterior constituents – as it has been described above regarding Hungarian toponyms – the decision as to whether these toponyms were created metonymically or by the use of secondary topoformants, requires intensive philological research.

bbarb83@gmail.com
Magyar Nyelvtudományi Tanszék
Egyetem tér 1.
4010 Debrecen
HUNGARY

41) V. Tóth, o. c. in note 3, p. 182–187; L. Kiss, o. c. in note 22; A. Mező, Adatok a magyar hivatalos helységnévadáshoz, Nyíregyháza 1999, p. 415.