Thesis abstract

Insular toponymies: pristine place-naming on Norfolk Island, South Pacific and Dudley Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, South Australia

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Documenting patterns of pristine toponymy, or toponymic knowledge in locations where people remember the locations and histories of people and events associated with extant placenames, is a worthwhile endeavour in linguistically pristine island environments, i.e. isolated, small island situations that have witnessed recent human habitation and that were uninhabited prior to colonisation. This study used the toponymy of Norfolk Island, South Pacific, an external territory of Australia as a main study and compared it to the toponymy of Dudley Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, South Australia. The principal research question for the study sought to establish whether the difference between official and unofficial toponyms and processes of toponymy in the two island environments was a consequence of the degree of linguistic, cultural and ecological embeddedness of these toponyms and toponymic processes.

The linguistic situation on Norfolk is diglossic: English and Norf'k, the language of the descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers, are spoken. Norfolk is a political and cultural anomaly in Australia and its anomalous nature is depicted in the unclear boundaries not only of its human history but also in the blurring of boundaries in its toponymic history. This is a result of distinct and changing patterns of land use and differing linguistic and toponymic perceptions of the same geographical space.

Dudley Peninsula is less remote and less politically and culturally anomalous than Norfolk and was selected as an island comparative study to contrast principles of unofficial toponymy with unofficial Norfolk Island toponymy. Employing a comparative method also made it possible to ascertain the extent to which a nexus and theory of pristine toponyms, transparent versus opaque toponymic histories and the official versus unofficial status of toponyms is practical across two island toponymic case studies.

Primary Norfolk data were coupled with secondary archival data (n = 1068), analysed and compared to the unofficial Dudley Peninsula data (n = 253). The results of this study reveal that the differences between official and unofficial toponyms can be accounted for by the establishment of typology involving four toponym categories:
 i. common colonial forms;
 ii. official and unofficial descriptive toponyms;
 iii. unofficial names commemorating local people; and

iv. unofficial and esoteric names commemorating local events and people.

This thesis puts forward a claim delineating a broad continuum within and between 'conscious toponymic wisdom' and 'unconscious toponymic wisdom', which is realised differently in the two locations. There is a tendency for more 'conscious toponymic wisdom' within Norfolk Island's toponymic ethos as compared to Dudley Peninsula's more 'unconscious toponymic wisdom'. Engaging in ecolinguistic fieldwork is a productive means to foreground the significance of local, unofficial and esoteric toponymic knowledge by working intimately with informants.

In conclusion, this thesis argues that the concept of *insular toponymies*, i.e., undertaking an analysis of toponyms based predominantly in the documentation and analysis of primary toponymic field data, was appropriate to describe the nature of toponymy in isolated and insular island societies. This study puts forward the term *toponymic ethnography* as a worthwhile concept within the parameters of linguistic and cultural research in toponymy

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