

## Deriving demonyms from toponyms – a cross-linguistic account

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A demonym, i.e. “[a] name that refers to the groups of people connected with a particular place” (Perono Cacciafoco & Cavallaro 2023: 267) is usually connected to the respective toponym. The grammatical means languages have to derive demonyms vary cross-linguistically. While some languages have morphemes that can only be used in combination with toponyms, other languages make use of morphemes that fulfill other functions in combination with different nouns, but have a specialized meaning in combination with toponyms. The co-occurrence of a proper name (=toponym) and an additional morpheme thus forms a different proprial base (=demonym), which the bare toponym cannot denote. So far, there has been no cross-linguistic account of the means by which demonyms are derived from toponyms and only limited studies on individual languages seem to exist (but see, e.g. Chesnokova et. al 2021 on Spanish South American and Brazilian demonyms).

Studying the morphological makeup of demonyms from a cross-linguistic perspective reveals different types of morphemes involved in the derivation. In the Oceanic language Neverver, for example, there is a morpheme that is used (almost) exclusively with toponyms:

The sub-class of proper place names is characterized by the ability of member items to occur in a construction of the form *nemakh* ‘denizen’ + proper place name. No other noun, local or otherwise, may modify *nemakh* in this way. The locational interrogative *abi* ‘where’ may be used to question where a particular person or group of people is from [...]. (Barbour 2012: 92)

This description is supported by the following three examples:

(1) Neverver [Austronesian, Oceanic] (Barbour 2012: 92)

<i>nemakh Marin</i>	‘the people of Marin’
<i>nemakh Malbit</i>	‘the people of Malbit’
<i>nemakh abi?</i>	‘the people of where?’; ‘Where are they from?’

Neverver thus employs a morpheme that can occur only with toponyms (and the interrogative pronoun *abi* ‘where’) for the expression of people living at a specific place. Something similar is found in the Australian language Gooniyandi [Bunaban]. In this case, however, there are two morphemes that occur exclusively with toponyms and are traditionally more specific than *nemakh* in Neverver described above:

Place names are formally distinguishable by the fact that they may occur with both of the suffixes *-wanggoo* ‘a person who is associated with the place’ and *-waddawadda* ‘everyone associated with the place’. These two suffixes do not occur in any other context. Ideally, the association between the person(s) and the place is that it is his/her/their dreaming or conception site [...]. However, in actual usage the association may be less stringent. It may be an affiliation through residence, [...]. Alternatively, it may be an affiliation through birth, or through the patriline (less regularly through the matriline). (McGregor 1990: 150)

Apart from morphemes that are used specifically for the derivation of demonyms, some languages make use of morphemes that fulfill different functions depending on the type of noun they combine with. This is, for example, the case in Kwaza:

The morpheme *-nahere* produces a collective noun. When applied to personal names, it refers to the people who are associated with that person in some way: family, tribe, neighbours etc. When applied to place names it refers to the inhabitants of the place. When applied to words for animals, it refers to the members of the species, order or kingdom. When applied to common nouns it is in a way a plural marker. (van der Voort 2004: 479)

The examples in (2) demonstrate how the collective plural suffix *-nahere* evokes different readings when used with a toponym (2a), an anthroponym (2b), and a common noun (2c).

(2) Kwaza [unclassified] (van der Voort 2004: 479)

a. *sjuping'waja-nahere*

Chupinguaia-COL

'the inhabitants of Chupinguaia'

b. *tete'ru-nahere*

Teteru-COL

'family of Teteru, those who live where Teteru lives, etc.'

c. *dai='bwa-da-ki koreja=tyu'hüi-nahere*

grab=finish-1S-DEC knife=small-COL

'I took all the knives.'

Case markers are also available options for the formation of demonyms in some languages. In the Sino-Tibetan language Bunan, for example, genitive case in its most salient function expresses possessive relationships, but more generally, it has the "function of establishing a modifying semantic relationship between a dependent noun and a head noun" (Widmer 2017: 229). Apart from that, the genitive may also be "attached to a place name in order to derive a noun referring to a resident of that place" (Widmer 2007: 230), as exemplified in (3).

(3) Bunan [Sino-Tibetan, Bodic] (Widmer 2017: 230)

*kudzu=ki=ci=re*

*gjar-k-hak*

*t<sup>h</sup>e=tok*

*narsiṅ=tok*

Kullu\_Valley=GEN=PL=ADD

be\_afraid-INTR-PRS.ALLO.PL

this=DAT

narsiṅha=DAT

'The people from Kullu Valley are also afraid of this (creature), the *narsiṅha*.'

The examples have demonstrated that various types of morphemes may be involved in the expression of a demonym. In this paper, I investigate the different morphological strategies languages employ to derive a demonym from a toponym in a sample of 50 genealogically and areally diverse languages from a functional-typological perspective. It will be shown that all kinds of morphemes – whether free or bound, lexical or functional, exclusive to toponyms or more broadly used – may combine with toponyms for this purpose, and how they are distributed over the world map.

## Abbreviations

1 = first person, ADD = additive, ALLO = allophoric, COL = collective, DAT = dative, DEC = declarative, GEN = genitive, INTR = intransitive, PL = plural, PRS = present tense, S = speaker

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