TYPOLOGICAL PATTERNS IN THE TOPONYMY OF THE BORŞA AREA, MARAMUREŞ COUNTY

Adelina Emilia MIHALI (PhD candidate)
West University of Timişoara

Abstract

When submitted to analysis, the structure of site names points out, at first, the use of some obsolete grammatical forms. Secondly, it reveals the most frequent grammatical phenomena. The present study focuses on illustrating the typological patterns we are able to identify in the toponyms of Borşa, Maramureş County (within the localities Borşa and Moisei). We have grouped the compound toponyms in seven distinct categories, according to the morphological and syntactical structures underlying them. The interpretation we provide aims to delimit and to discuss in a parallel the synthetic and analytical forms. On the other hand, we point out which grammatical cases are emphasized by these toponymic forms. The analysis on these toponyms has demonstrated that, in the creation of site names, the language structures are used as well, but, as a significant remark, toponyms are much more stable than appellatives (which may disappear from that language or, in time, lose their initial meanings). However, toponyms are also able to preserve, by their existence, linguistic structures which have been eliminated from the current standard language.

Key words: *toponymy, structure, typological patterns, parallelism, region*

Résumé

L'analyse de la structure des noms de lieux met en évidence d'une part l'utilisation de certaines formes grammaticales obsolètes, et d'autre part les processus grammaticaux le plus fréquents. La présente étude se concentre sur l'illustration des modes typologiques rencontrées dans la toponymie de la région de Borşa, Maramureş (dans les localités Borşa et Moisei). Les noms topiques composés sont regroupés en sept catégories, en fonction des structures syntaxiques et morphologiques qui sont à leur origine. L'interprétation se propose de délimiter à la fois un parallélisme entre les formes synthétiques et analytiques et les cas syntaxiques valorifiés. L'analyse toponymique montre que les structures de la langue sont également utilisées dans la création des noms de lieux, mais on remarque que les toponymes sont plus stables que les appellatifs (qui peuvent sortir de la langue ou perdre leur sens au fil du temps), tout en conservant des structures disparues de la langue standard.

Mots-clés: *toponymie, structure, modèle typologique, parallélisme, région*

Toponymy – all the names of places within a certain area – mirrors the relationship between people and the environment. People name places according to what they know, and in doing so they mirror aspects of the social and cultural life of their original community, and the names thus reflect particular linguistic elements.

This paper deals with the structure of toponyms encountered in the superior valley of the Vişeu River, in the north-east of Maramureş County. The surveyed area

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consists of Borşa and Moisei, villages located on the foot of Maramureş Mountains and Rodnei Mountains. Borşa was attested documentarily in 1353, and at that time it was mentioned as belonging to the Cuhea estate. Moisei was first attested on the 2nd of February 1365, when the territory was taken away from Bogdan – who had a falling out with the king after he had left for Moldavia – and given, together with the other estates, to Balc and his brothers, with the observation that it was a much older settlement.

This study focuses on compound toponyms by means of juxtaposition, as composition is the most commonly encountered word-building process in the toponymy of the Borşa area. This category includes names of places, consisting of two or more elements that "express a new notion, different from the ones conveyed individually by the component elements"[1]. These have a unitary meaning and a common naming function. The component elements lose their functional independence and they individualise only when referred to as a unitary phrase.

Compound toponyms are more explicit than the simple ones because the great number of combinations can lead to a more accurate characterisation of the environment, thus becoming more visual and easier to remember by individuals.

"It is known that as far as microtoponyms are concerned, the more realistically they portray the characteristics of the objects they name, the clearer they become for the speakers, and they are therefore easy to identify and locate, thus gaining the ability to fully subscribe to the general toponymic system"[2].

The most common process is composition, as it has the advantage of offering a minute description and important information as to geographical location, landscape, shape, size, aspect, age, affiliation, vegetation, fauna, and human intervention[3]. Moreover, this means of word-building is also frequently used in everyday speech, and therefore, the toponyms created in this manner can be used in any verbal context, without any alterations[4].

The classification of compound toponyms can be done according to the semantic, morphological or syntactic criteria. However, the most popular taxonomy follows the morphological criterion, to which the semantics and syntax are subordinated. At the same time, the formal classification is also called the morphosyntactic classification[5]. The corpus was grouped into seven structural types, combining the patterns given by Vasile Frăţilă[6], Ştefan Vişovan and Marius Oros[7]:

1. noun in the nominative case + noun in the nominative case

The number of nouns formed according to this pattern is small, but some names have been recorded.

a) noun in the nominative case + common noun in the nominative case: *Pârâul Fântâna*, *Pârâul Frăsinel*, *Pârâul Netedul din Dos*, *Piatra Ou*, *Valea*

[1] Frăţilă, 2011, p. 177.
[2] Frăţilă, 2011, p. 178.
[3] Vişovan, 2008, p. 304.
[4] Frăţilă, 2011, p. 178.
[5] *Ibidem*.
[6] Frăţilă, 2002, p. 193.
[7] Oros, 1996, p. 131.

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Arşicioara, Valea Brusturi, Valea Fântânele, Valea Păroşii, Valea Tisia, Vârful Grohot, Vârful Pietriceaua, Vârful Piciorul Mare;

b)noun in the nominative case + proper noun in the nominative case, usually another toponym: *Jgheabul Deluț, Dealul Stepan, Izvorul Dragoş, Măgura Gâlu, Pârâul Frăsinel, Piciorul Lespezi, Piciorul Turnu Roşu, Şaua Ştiol, Tăurile Negoiescu, Toroiaga Borşa, Valea Negoiescu, Piatra Negoiescu.*

The names from the second subcategory were created under the influence of a toponymic nucleus, joining the ones from subcategory a) that came to be due to the official administrative system, taken from touristic maps or from the official registers belonging to the *Ocol Silvic* (*Forestry Department*)[8]. The names practically refer to a creek called *Fântâna,* a rock in the shape of an egg, the groove next to the place called *Deluț*, etc.

The presence of the enclitic definite article attached to the second element becomes evident, even if this component is a noun (*Valea Fântânele*, *Valea Tisia, Piciorul Turnu Roşu*) or a nominalised adjective (*Pârâul Netedul din Dos*).

2. noun in the nominative case + noun in the genitive case

This pattern is the most frequent one in the toponymy of the superior valley of the Vişeu River, at same time being often used in the toponymy of other areas as well. Most of the time, it indicates possession, affiliation to an estate, region, area. One can notice the existence of some subclasses according to the meaning of the two component elements, the presence or absence of an article, the preservation of old syntactic structures. Therefore, one can identify three subcategories: **a)** ***noun in the nominative case, usually entopic + anthroponym in the genitive case*****; b)** ***noun in the nominative case + toponym in the genitive case*****; c)** ***noun in the nominative case + common name in the genitive case***.

a) noun in the nominative case, usually entopic + anthroponym in the genitive case

This subclass includes toponyms that have in their structure **anthroponyms** (first names, surnames, nicknames) in the genitive case, either synthetic or analytic.

a[1]) *synthetic genitive with either masculine or feminine articles* (*anthroponyms ending in -e or -ea*): *Calea Mezii, Corha Ghiulii, Dealul Bădesii, Dealul Jurchii, Dealul Rădesii, Fântâna Sferdii, Fântâna Stanchii, Pârâul Gagii, Pârâul Ilei, Pârâul Nicorcii, Preluca Andrelii, Preluca Cochii, Valea Hojdii, Valea Ivăşcoaiei, Valea Rădesii, Valea Uncoaiei, Zăpodia Barnii*;

a[2]) *synthetic genitive with masculine articles*: *Dealul Silicuțului, Pârâul Chiciului, Pârâul Iancului, Piatra Buhaiului, Podul Ştirbanului, Preluca Boicului, Stâna Sasului, Stânele Sasului, Tarnița Bârsanului, Valea Fătului, Vârful Ştirbului, Vârful Anculu*i;

a[3]) *with analytic genitive*: *Corha lui Frişcău, Dealul lui Şimon, Dosul lui Bălan, Drumul lui Mantz, Fântâna lui Rătâfoi, Gruiul lui Dan, Gura lui Sulaib, Izvorul lui Dragoş, Livada lui Horincă, Măguricea lui Lazăr, Pârâu lui Gârdan, Piciorul lui Hrițt, Piscul lui Surdu, Podul lui Ciuban, Preluca lui Bâtă, Preluca lui Ionel, Stâna lui Vârtic, Uliția lui Şurubuc, Valea lui Ciuban, Valea lui Negoiescu*;

a[4]) *nouns in the plural in the genitive case*: *Dealul Polenilor, Valea Cuşătenilor, Valea Polenilor, Uliția Pintenilor, Uliția Bârcotenilor, Uliția*

[8] Oros, 1996, p. 179.

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Brandisănilor.

b) noun in the nominative case (locative appellative) + toponym in the genitive case

This subcategory includes names of places whose creation was influenced by other toponyms. These can be:

b[1]) *simple*: *Cascada Cailor*, *Cheile Bistricioarei*, *Ciunga Bălăsânii*, *Ciungii Bălăsânii*, *Dealul Moiseiului*, *Dealul Moțuiului*, *Dealul Săcelului*, *Fața Muncelului*, *Fața Pietrosului*, *Fruntea Birțului*, *Fundul Luncii*, *Izvorul Cailor*, *Izvorul Nedeii*, *Jgheabul Arşiței*, *Lacul Măgurii*, *Muntele Cailor*, *Obârşia Țâşlei*, *Pârâul Birțului*, *Pârâul Prelucilor*, *Piatra Arşiței*, *Piatra Băiții*, *Preluca Izî*, *Preluca Măgurii*, *Runcu Știolului*, *Şaua Galațiului*, *Şaua Laptelui*, *Tarnița Bălăsânii*, *Valea Purcărețului*, *Valea Secăturii*, *Valea Vişeului*, *Vârful Deluțului*, *Vârful Feții*;

b[2]) *compound*: *Dosul Văii Ivăşcoaiei*, *Fundul Văii Ivăşcoaiei*, *Gura Văii Păroşii*, *Jgheabul Văii Păroşii*, *Podul Văii Rele*.

c) noun in the nominative case + common name in the genitive case

In this subcategory there are many toponyms whose second element refers to fauna, flora, geographic features that cannot be identified as toponyms as such, animals, individuals identified by their nationalities, jobs in the surveyed area: *Buza Dealului*, *Capul Muntelui*, *Coasta Plaiului*, *Culmea Jneapănului*, *Dealul Văcarului*, *Dealul Boului*, *Dealul Cireşului*, *Dealul Rogozului*, *Gura Băii*, *Izvorul Fagilor*, *Izvorul Fântânii*, *Izvorul Păcurii*, *Izvorul Stânii*, *Jgheabul Tătarilor*, *Pârâul Hoitului*, *Pârâul Morii*, *Pârâul Ponorului*, *Pârâul Popasului*, *Pârâul Sforacelor*, *Preluca Cerbului*, *Ulița Moşului*, *Valea Babii*, *Valea Borcutului*, *Valea Boului*, *Valea Caselor*, *Valea Colibilor*, *Valea Florilor*, *Valea Furului*, *Valea Morii*, *Valea Pecijnei*, *Valea Țarcurilor*, *Vârful Zimbrului*.

Vasile Frățilă[9] draws attention to the fact that this last category is difficult to separate from the class of toponyms that consists of an appellative and a toponym in the genitive case. The last category definitely includes toponyms based on oikonyms or hydronyms, but it is difficult to establish to which of the two types belong the toponyms with the second element deriving from a locative appellative (*Buza Dealului*). Moreover, there are names that can either be based on appellatives, usually animals in the mountain regions, or on anthroponyms encountered in the area: *Izvorul Ursului*, *Pârâul Ursului*.

There are situations in which the form in the genitive case is used as the same time as the structure *noun in the nominative case + noun in the nominative case* for the same geographic feature: *Izvorul Dragoş/ Izvorul lui Dragoş*; *Valea Tisia/ Valea Tisei*, *Valea Tisii*; *Valea Negoiescu/Valea lui Negoiescu*. There are cases when the toponym formed following the pattern illustrated in the ***a***[3]) subclass is also used with the structure *anthroponym in the nominative case with an article*: *Dealul lui Ioasă/ Ioasa*.

The first elements of compound toponyms in the genitive case are usually common nouns. However, there are structures where proper names (*Buhăiescu Pietrosului*) or other nominalised parts of speech (adjectives or adverbs): *Dosul Muncelului*, *Stânga Birțului* are the first elements.

The use of synthetic genitive both with feminine and masculine anthroponyms,

[9] Oros, 1996, 182.

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not only for masculine names of persons ending in *-a*, or *-ea* (*Pârâul Gagii*, *Valea Hojdii*), in parallel with the analytic forms for the masculine (*Gruiul lui Dan*) is noticed. Therefore, the article *lui*, usually proclitic, is attached to the anthroponymic theme: *Dealul Silicuțului*, *Podul Ştirbanului*, *Tarnița Bârsanului*, *Pârâul Chiciului*, etc.

Gh. Bolocan[10] considers that the anthroponymic forms of the enclitic article attached to a Christian name or surname (*Boicului*, *Iancului*) can be viewed as archaic. However, the names that are based on professions or nicknames that refer to physical defects (*Ştirbului*), due to the fact that they are based on appellatives which are presumed to have accompanied anthroponyms at an earlier time, are not considered archaic.

The large number of toponyms that follow the pattern *noun in the nominative case + noun in the genitive case* is explained by the fact that locative names are connected to people, places, regions, and by using the genitive case, certain relations are established. In the case of toponyms that have as second elements anthroponyms, the genitive case indicates possession, illustrating the relationships between people, and the environment. Most of the times, anthroponyms extend and denote geographic features, areas, places that belong to estates. Ioan Mihalyi de Apșa, in a footnote for *Diplome maramureşene* (footnote 6 for the paper from 1451), mentions that "mountains are often named after the estates to which they pertain, such as: *Apşănescu*, *Bărsănescu*, *Vădănescu*, *Brebănescu*, etc; after owners: *Budescu*, *Jurcescu*, *Mihaescu*, *Groapa Giulii*, *Burlaia*"[11]. When the second elements are toponyms, it becomes a question of subordination relations, of "encompassing", where the first element is in fact a component of the second[12].

Therefore, the genitive case indicates: ***possession***: *Dealul Jurchii*, *Livada lui Horincă*, *Piatra Buhaiului*, *Preluca lui Ionel*; ***geographical location***: *Capul Muntelui*, *Fruntea Birțului*, *Fața Muncelului*, *Gura Văii Păroşii*; ***features, constitutive elements***: *Obârşia Tâşlei*, *Pârâul Fagilor*, *Pârâul Hoitului*, *Valea Borcutului*; ***destination***: *Dealul Văcarului*, *Jgheabul Văraticilor*, *Preluca Cerbului*, *Valea Boului*.

3. noun in the nominative case + preposition + noun

In the toponymy of the superior valley of the Vişeu River, the structure *noun in the nominative case + preposition + noun* is not frequent. Here are the registered examples: *Izvorul cu fagii* (used concomitantly with the structure in the genitive case, *Izvorul fagilor*), *Tarnița la Cruce*, *Ulița de Piatră* and a toponym used with a compound preposition, *Preluca de sub Piatră* (which is also used with the simple preposition *sub/under*, *Preluca sub Piatră*). Therefore, the preposition *cu/with* indicates, in the first example, a feature of the object or place, also a characteristic of the preposition *de/of*, as in the example *Ulița de piatră*. The simple prepositions *la/at* and *sub/under*, together with the compound preposition *de sub/from under*, express geographic positions, offering clues for spatial orientation.

4. noun + adjective

This is an important category because the determiners offer valuable information as to the characteristics of the geographic features they name or the

[10] *DTRO*, 1993, p. 59.
[11] Mihalyi de Apșa, 2009, p. 507.
[12] Vişovan, 2008, p. 309.

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geographic environment where they are situated. The examples I have recorded contain adjectives without articles: *Bistrița Aurie*, *Dealul Frumos*, *Gruiu Lung*, *Izvorul Mare*, *Izvorul Negru*, *Izvorul Rău*, *Măgura Mare*, *Pârâul Mic*, *Pârâul Rece*, *Pârâul Roşu*, *Piatra Albă*, *Piatra Neagră*, *Piatra Rea*, *Piatra Roşie*, *Piatra Scrisă*, *Preluca Lungă*, *Preluca Roşie*, *Sforacu Mare*, *Tău Muced*, *Turnu Roşu*, *Țâşlişoara Mare*, *Țâşlişoara Mică*, *Valea Rea*, *Vârful Piciorul Mare*.

Because of the existence in the same area of two geographic features whose names are part of the same semantic group, the determiner (expressed by an adjective) differentiates them according to size, age, quality, important aspects of community life: *Buhăiescu Mare*, *Buhăiescu Mic*, *Negoiasa Mare*, *Negoiasa Mică*, *Tomnaticul Mare*, *Tomnaticul Mic*, *Zănoaga Mare*, *Zănoaga Mică*.

There are also structures that contain adjectives and toponyms: *Izvorul Albastru al Izei*, *Piscul Mic al Cercănelului*. Both adjectives refer to a quality of the place. In the first example, the reference is made to the point of origin of the *Iza* River, considered a natural reserve, and hints at the blue-green shade of the karst spring, one of the tributaries of the *Iza* River. In the second example, the adjective adds a reference to the size/height of the object denoted.

The determiner takes over the function of individualisation. "The class of adjectives has as an essential distinct characteristic the subordination to nouns, whose semantic expansion is limited by the act of bringing specific information to the nominal group formed for naming purposes, information that is meant to decisively individualise and that was taken from the geographic or socio-economic reality of the community"[13]. The adjectives identified in the structure of toponyms from the surveyed area are originally primary, underived adjectives (*aurie/golden*, *mare/big*, *mic/small*, *frumos/beautiful*, *negru/clack*, *alb/white*, *roşu/red*, *verde/green*, *rău/bad*), adverbs (*repede*) or that come from participles (*scrisă/written*).

5. noun + preposition + adverb

In the toponymy of the superior valley of the Vişeu River, this category is not provided with many examples. Here are the five recorded toponyms that follow this pattern: *Colbu din Dos*, *Colbu din Față*, *Lunca de Sus*, *Lunca din Jos*, *Pârâul Netedu din Dos*. The adverbs accompanied by prepositions, performing the syntactic function of modifier, indicates the spatial location of the denoted object in relation to altitude (*din jos/from down*, *de sus/from up*) or cardinal points (*din dos/from behind*, *din față/from the front*). The preposition *din jos/from down* refers to the part of the village downstream, and *din sus/from up*, upstream. Concerning the compound prepositions *din dos/from the back*, *din față/from the front*, Iordan states:

"...the appearance of these locative determiners is due to a geographical fact, namely the position of most of the Romanian mountains and hills in respect to the cardinal points. Because *față/front* refers to the part that faces the sun, therefore *dos/back* refers to the opposite side"[14].

The two terms can be found in the toponymy of the villages of Borşa and Moisei, especially as nouns with articles (*Dosul/the Back*, *Fața/the Front*),

[13] Vişovan, 2008, p. 315.
[14] Iordan, 1963, p. 138.

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accompanied by a determiner or as an independent toponym. The examples are, therefore, antithetic structures.

In the surveyed area, the identified structures are explained by the geographic nature of the region: the settlements are located on river valleys, surrounded by mountains.

6. common noun + numeral

These structures are quite rarely found in toponymy. There were only two examples in the surveyed area: *Troaca Întâi*, *Troaca a Doua*. In this case, the numerals have the syntactic function of modifier.

7. preposition + noun

This pattern is often encountered in the creation of toponyms, because prepositions can mislead: "a series of semantic nuances which refer directly to the spatial location of different geographic features or which are a result of man's intervention in the natural environment"[15].

These constructions require the existence of determiners, which function as modifiers. The structures following the pattern *preposition + noun* were developed as a result of the elimination of determiner(s)[16].

Three patterns can be identified in the structure of compound toponyms: ***a) preposition + common name; b) preposition + anthroponym; c) preposition + toponym***.

a) common noun preceded by a preposition

The use of the following prepositions can be noticed:

- *în/in*, which indicates the spatial location of an object: *În Cleje*, *În Gară*, *În Gârle*, *În Zăpodie*. The toponym *În Gară* refers to the inhabited area from around the former train station, the element best known by the members of the community.
- **Între/between**, which indicates the location of an element between two other close elements: *Între Măguri*, *Între Râuri*, *Între Vaduri*; *la/at*, which refers to the place where an object is marked in such a manner so as to make its reference understood by all the members of the community: *La Cioroi*, *La Cireş*, *La Colibi*, *La Comoară*, *La Cuptor*, *La Fântâni*, *La Groşi*, *La Jgheab*, *La Păr*, *La Podine*, *La Pomi*, *La Râpă*, *La Sanatoriu*, *La Tău*, *La Vărării*; *lângă/next to* indicates the closeness to an object known in the community: *Lângă Apă*; *pe/on*, refers to the location of an object on a surface: *Pe Coastă*, *Pe Jgheab*, *Pe Mociră*, *Pe Moină*, *Pe Pod*, *Pe Prund*, *Pe Stanişte*, *Pe Şes*, *Pe Tarniță*; *peste/over*, refers to the location in close proximity of another known object: *Peste Apă*, *Peste Drum*, *Peste Linie*.

b) anthroponyms preceded by prepositions

The toponyms created following this pattern are not very numerous in the surveyed area. The preposition *la/at*, in this context, indicates the owner or the land. Most of the times, the anthroponyms are nicknames or group names, thus indicating the inheritance of that land and of the nickname, if the anthroponym is still used nowadays in the community: *La Başcă*, *La Bâscă*, *La Chitaş*, *La Hâge*, *La Râpă*, *La Pinteni*, *La Bârcoteni*, *La Petrea Băchii*;

c) toponyms accompanied by prepositions

Locative names formed following the pattern *preposition + toponym* give the

[15] Vișovan, 2008, p. 310.
[16] Frățilă, 2011, p. 187.

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spatial location of the denoted object in relation to another that is known to the members of the community. Structures that use these prepositions have been identified: *după/behind*: *După Măgurice*; *în/in*: *În Cotroape, În Iza, În Văi, În Znidă*; *la/at*: *La Roşu, La Zănoagă*; *pe/on*: *Pe Faţă, Pe Vinişoru*; *sub/under*: *Sub Măgură, Sub Râpa din Jos, Sub Râpa din Sus, Sub Troian, Sub Troienaş*.

The preposition *după/behind*, in the same manner as the preposition *sub/under*, indicates the act of relating to a better known object, following the criterion of closeness and that of altitude. All the mentioned structures are in the accusative case.

In *Introducere* in the DTRO[17], Gh. Bolocan mentions that toponyms based on anthroponyms accompanied by the prepositions *în/in* and *pe/on* can also be used without prepositions – their meaning remains unchanged – hence prepositions are considered a component of names. Therefore, this implies simple toponyms. The linguist believes that the toponyms that follow the pattern *preposition + word or groups of words* are not structurally independent because some of them can be replaced with a word that is not accompanied by a preposition. Thus, Bolocan includes them in a separate category, calling them *repere toponimice/ toponymic points of reference.*

As it has been shown, among the three fields – lexical, anthroponymic, toponymic – from which toponyms originate, there is an interdependence relationship because appellatives are the basis for toponyms, and these can generate group names or can contain anthroponyms or other toponyms in their structure. The main resource of the toponymic and anthroponymic system is the lexis of a language, be it a high variety or a dialect.

In the toponymy of the superior valley of the Vişeu River, most of the toponyms come from appellatives. As it is a mountain area, locative appellatives are frequent. For example, the word *deal/ hill* is encountered thirty times, *vârf/ peak* is found twenty-three times, *măgură/ hill* is in encountered in ten names, *prelucă/meadow* is found in twenty-five names.

Appellatives emphasize the characteristics of a traditional folk mentality, of man's relationship with the environment. Common names that have become toponyms cannot fall under only one grammatical category, as they have elements that pertain to the grammatical categories of nouns, adjectives, numerals and adverbs. Prepositions have the role of indicating possession, affiliation or position.

When it comes to toponyms, it is necessary to point out the grammatical cases that are used: *the nominative*, especially for primary toponyms, but also for the ones created following this pattern: *noun in the nominative case + noun in the nominative case*, *noun + adjective*, *noun + numeral*; ***the accusative***, for locative names created following this pattern: *preposition + noun*, *noun + preposition + noun* as determiner, *noun + preposition + adverb*; ***the genitive,*** for anthroponymic or toponymic determiners or common nouns in the structure *noun in the nominative case + noun in the genitive place*.

The high frequency of anthroponyms illustrates the traditional naming system based on social relations and ownership. It has to be mentioned that many of the encountered anthroponyms in the toponymy of the surveyed area are also used today, some of them as last names (*Hojda*, *Pintea*, *Şimon*), others as nicknames (*Bârcotă*,

[17] DTRO, 1993, p. 15-16.

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Brandis, *Chiciu*, *Ştirbu*). Moreover, Borşa keeps alive a traditional naming system by means of nicknames. A reason for this is the high frequency of certain last names (*Mihali*, *Timiş*, *Roman*, *Ştefco*, *Danci*), and therefore the identification function is performed by the nicknames (usually describing a physical defect or a negative trait) which have lost their negative aspect. Many anthroponyms are old, mentioned in historical documents as names of estate owners. Also, based on the examples given, it is safe to infer that the toponymy of Borşa and Moisei has a great derivative and compositional variety. Grammatical conversion is frequent in the creation of toponyms because of the nominalised adjectives.

The toponymy of the surveyed area emphasizes the fact that the internal processes and structures of a language are valued when new place names are created, however it still has great stability, preserving structures that have disappeared from the standard language.

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