

### 17.3.2. Morphology special to toponyms

Placenames may have special morphological properties. These can consist of derivational affixes which are found only on placenames but they can also relate to allomorphy. For example, in the Australian language Pintupi the augment allomorph *--nga* occurs just on C-final proper name stems, such as in *Narrkalnga* or *Purlpurlnga* (Myers 1991: 132). Other examples include possibilities such as requiring locative case to express static locations on all location nouns except placenames (Harvey 1999; McConvell 2009). The researcher needs to be alert to forms derived from placenames, adjectival or gentilic ('inhabitant of') forms; these may well exhibit irregularities, as in English *Novocastrian*, *Mancunian*, *Michigander*, *Sydney-sider*.

### p. 400 17.3.3 Syntactic properties of placenames

An important syntactic property of placenames is their interaction with definiteness. Any proper name is inherently definite; in a language where definiteness is a grammatical category, placenames can be expected to count as definite, even if not explicitly marked as such. To illustrate: in English, a small fraction of placenames begin with 'The...' (such as *The Briars*, or names of rivers, *the Danube*, the Thames), but rarely if ever begin with the indefinite article *A...*; and note that derived placenames drop the article (*Thames Head*, *Thames Ditton*).

A second important syntactic property is how placenames behave with respect to the expression of locational relation. Is a placename inherently locational, or must it receive some marking for locational relations such as static location (*at, in, on*) or direction (*to, from*)? In some Australian languages, some placenames are unmarked for static location, but marked for direction (McConvell 2009). In some languages special locational prepositions are used for placenames and nominals viewed as locations, distinct from other nominals (so a difference between *in London* and *in a canoe*) (Cablitz 2008).

### 17.3.4 Sample dictionary (or gazetteer) entry

Here is an example from central Australia of a placename as it might appear set out as an entry in a dictionary of one of the local languages, Warumungu:

**Warupunju.** ['waru,pun<sup>y</sup>t<sup>y</sup>u] Area of Murchison Range, 20°S 13°20' E. Fire Dreaming spread from focal site. Alyawarr equivalent Rweepenty (*Rubuntja*) analysable as *rwe* 'fire', *-penty* 'toponymic suffix'. The name is not analysable in Warumungu. See the Aboriginal Land Commission (1991) report.

The Marshallese–English online dictionary (Abo et al. 2009) lists more than 3,000 placenames, both alphabetically and geographically. Kari (2008) has compiled an exemplary gazetteer of over 2,000 placenames in a part of Alaska. One of the most detailed published gazetteers of an Australian language is the companion to the Bardi dictionary (Aklif 1999).