

Toponymy in Annaba: A Sociolinguistic Analysis

الأسماء الجغرافية في عنابة: تحليل سوسيو-لغوي

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Abstract:

Algeria's rich multicultural heritage, shaped by various civilizations, makes it a unique setting for toponymic studies. Focusing on Annaba, this research uses sociolinguistic methods to link place names to cultural and historical data, revealing how toponymy reflects identity, memory, and power. Annaba's toponymy is notably diverse, drawing from Maghreb, Arab, French, Spanish, and other global influences, highlighting its plural urban identity. A strong presence of anthroponyms—especially the names of martyrs—underscores the city's revolutionary history. Yet, paradoxically, some streets honor both martyrs and their executioners. The study also finds that colonial-era names persist in common usage despite official changes and that post-independence naming often overlooks other rich historical eras. These findings demonstrate the complex interplay between language, memory, and identity in postcolonial urban spaces.

Keywords: Toponymy, sociolinguistics, Identity and Language, municipality of Annaba, Algeria.

الملخص: تُعد الجزائر، بتراتها الثقافية المتعدد الناتج عن تعاقب الحضارات، موقعًا فريدًا لدراسة الأسماء الجغرافية. وتركز هذه الدراسة على مدينة عنابة، حيث تم استخدام مناهج سوسiolسانية لربط أسماء الأماكن بالمعطيات الثقافية والتاريخية، مما يكشف كيف تعكس التوبونيميا الهوية والذاكرة والسلطة. وتُظهر نتائج البحث تنوعًا كبيرًا في أسماء الأماكن بعنابة، حيث تستمد جذورها من المشرق والمغرب العربي، والفرنسيين، والإسبان، وغيرهم من التأثيرات العالمية، مما يعكس هوية حضرية منفتحة ومتعددة. وتبرز أسماء الأشخاص، خاصة الشهداء، بقوة في التسمية، ما يدل على البعد الثوري للمدينة. ومع ذلك، فإن بعض الأسماء تكرم الشهداء وجلاديهم في الوقت نفسه، في مفارقة واضحة. كما تبين الدراسة استمرار استخدام الأسماء الاستعمارية في الخطاب اليومي، وتهميش فترات تاريخية أخرى غنية، ما يكشف عن تعقيد العلاقة بين اللغة والذاكرة والهوية في الفضاء الحضري بعد الاستعمار.

كلمات مفتاحية: الأسماء الجغرافية، اللغويات الاجتماعية، الهوية واللغة، بلدية عنابة، الجزائر.

1. INTRODUCTION

Algeria, a crossroads of civilizations, has been the site of passage and settlement for various peoples throughout its history, each leaving a profound impact on the country's cultural, linguistic, and geographical environment. This historical and cultural diversity makes Algeria an ideal place for the study of toponyms, which not only mark the occupation of the land but also reflect the different cultures that have taken root there. Thus, toponyms serve as essential elements of identity while also acting as a strategic tool in the context of linguistic and identity policies, enabling a society to assert and legitimize itself.

This research is part of this approach and aims to analyze the official toponymy of the municipality of Annaba from a sociolinguistic perspective, meaning by correlating the linguistic and social data underlying these names. More specifically, the study focuses on the semantic and referential aspects of the toponyms and seeks to explain their motivation through geographic, historical, sociocultural, and political data. We will attempt to answer three key questions:

1°) What are the specific toponymic characteristics used in the municipality of Annaba?

2°) What or whom do these toponyms refer to?

3°) What connections exist between these toponyms and the social data?

To answer these questions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1°) The toponyms would reflect the political history of Annaba, notably the French colonization, the war of independence, and the reaffirmation of Algerian national identity post-independence. Place names commemorate historical figures, particularly martyrs of the independence war.

2°) The toponymy of Annaba would incorporate multiple cultural influences (Berber, Arab, French, Mediterranean), illustrating the city's historical diversity and the coexistence of different cultures and languages.

3°) The toponyms would be influenced by the social and demographic dynamics of Annaba, reflecting migrations, urbanization, and social developments over time.

To conduct this analysis, our work is structured into three parts. The first, theoretical, provides an overview of the key concepts necessary for this study.

2. literature review

2.1. Toponymy: An Attempt at Definition

The term "toponymy" is derived from two Greek words: "topos," meaning "place," and "onoma," meaning "name" (Pegorier, 2006, p. 8). This discipline is concerned with the meaning, etymology, and evolution of place names (Dubois, 1975, p. 326). It is part of onomastics, the science of proper names, which itself falls under lexicology, the study of the vocabulary of a language. Thus,

toponymy is a sub-discipline of linguistics, which can be approached both synchronically and diachronically. However, we believe these two approaches are always complementary and inseparable when it comes to studying toponymy in all its richness and complexity.

2.2. Categories of Toponyms

Like all other proper names, a toponym consists of lexical elements, mainly common nouns and adjectives. Initially descriptive or qualitative, it is the language that confers upon it the status of a proper name, assigning it a specific function: that of designating places (Attoui, 1998, p. 3). A toponym can take different forms, including:

- a. Hagionym: Derived from the Greek "agios," meaning "sacred," a hagionym refers to a toponym with a religious or sacred character, such as the names of saints or marabouts, like Sidi Salem or Saint Augustine.
- b. Hydronym: Refers to names given to bodies of water, such as rivers, streams, lakes, bays, springs, ponds, gulfs, etc.
- c. Odonym: Refers to the names of communication routes, such as streets, boulevards, and avenues.
- d. Oronym: Refers to names of geographical features like mountains, hills, peaks, capes, points, valleys, plateaus, or plains.
- e. Zootoponym: Refers to place names derived from animal names. This category often provides information about the fauna of a region at a given time (Pellegrin, 1949, p. 77)
- f. Anthroponym: Refers to a toponym based on a person's name, such as that of a founder or notable figure.
- g. Ethnonym: Refers to names of peoples or communities. According to Pellegrin (1949), this category is particularly common in African toponymy.
- h. Homonymous Toponym: Refers to places named after other places, such as the street "El Kods" in Annaba, which refers to Jerusalem.
- i. Toponym related to Professions: This type of toponym is related to the occupations or professions of the inhabitants. Fabre and Baylon distinguish between toponyms related to urban occupations and those associated with rural occupations. (Fabre et Baylon, 1981, p. 81)
- j. Chrononym: Refers to a place name linked to a specific date, often in reference to a major historical event.
- k. Phytotoponym: Refers to places named after plants, often linked to the vegetation present in the region.

Each category of toponym thus reflects a particular aspect of the history, culture, and environment of a place, contributing to the richness and diversity of toponymic heritage.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Area

Our toponymic corpus concerns the municipality of Annaba, the capital of the eponymous province. Annaba is the fourth-largest city in Algeria, after Algiers, Oran, and Constantine. It is a coastal metropolis with a population of 609,499 inhabitants in 2008, according to the National Office of Statistics. Located 600 km east of the capital, it covers an area of 1,439 km², about 0.06% of the national territory. Geographically, Annaba is bordered by the Mediterranean to the north, the province of Guelma to the south, the province of El-Tarf to the east, and the province of Skikda to the west.

One of the oldest cities in Algeria, Annaba was founded in the 13th century BCE. Due to its strategic location, it has been coveted and occupied by various kingdoms and empires, including the Numidians, Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Ottomans, and French.

Under the Roman Empire, the city, known as Hippo-Regius, became a major center of Christianity in the 5th century. Roman occupation of Hippone ended with the Vandal conquest in 431. Twenty years later, Byzantium regained control of the city from the Vandals and kept it under Byzantine rule for nearly two centuries. The arrival of the Arab conquerors, followed by the settlement of Andalusians fleeing Spain, marked a turning point in the city's history, and it adopted the name "Bouna."

Under Ottoman rule, the city was renamed Annaba or Bled El Annab (literally "the city the jujube tree"). During the French colonial period, it was known as Bone, until its independence in 1962, when it finally reclaimed its historic name, "Annaba."

3.2 Analytical Framework

For the analysis of toponyms, several analytical frameworks have been proposed, including, among others:

a. Jean-Paul Demoule's Framework (1993):

Demoule proposes an approach that combines linguistic, geographical, and historical aspects. He emphasizes the historical dimension of toponyms, considering them as witnesses to the past and socio-political changes, while also incorporating topography and cultural influences.

b. Ethnonymic Framework (Georges Dumézil, 1973):

This framework focuses on the relationships between toponyms and ethnonyms, particularly in ancient societies. It allows for the analysis of the links between ethnic or tribal groups and the places they occupy.

c. Pierre-Yves Lambert's Framework (1981):

Lambert highlights the dynamics of power and colonization, analyzing how

place names can be instruments of domination, particularly in post-colonial contexts.

d. Cultural Geography Framework (David Lowenthal, 1985):

Lowenthal explores how toponyms carry the memory and collective identity of communities, emphasizing the relationship between space and culture, as well as the impact of social perceptions on place names.

e. Socio-Historical Framework of Toponymy (Marcel Jamin, 1994):

Jamin analyzes the evolution of toponyms within their socio-historical context, considering the political, social, and economic changes that influence place names over time.

f. Thériault's Framework (2007):

Thériault offers a multidimensional approach that integrates linguistic, cultural, historical, and political aspects. This framework allows for the analysis of toponyms as living elements that shape and reflect social identities, power relations, and cultural dynamics.

In this study, beyond the simple description of name categories, an interpretation of toponyms as instruments of identity affirmation is proposed. This interpretation draws on the analysis of power and memory dynamics expressed through toponyms. Thériault's (2007) framework was specifically chosen for its recent and multidimensional approach, which integrates linguistic, historical, cultural, and political aspects. for its recent and multidimensional approach, which integrates linguistic, historical, cultural, and political aspects. This relatively recent framework allows for a comprehensive analysis of toponyms as dynamic elements that shape and reflect social identities, power relations, and cultural dynamics.

Thériault's approach is particularly relevant in the context of Algeria, a country with a complex colonial history and significant linguistic and cultural diversity. By examining how toponyms are influenced by the coexistence of Arabic, Berber, and French, the aim is to demonstrate that the toponyms of Annaba serve as living witnesses to the identity, political, and linguistic tensions that shape this region. Thériault's framework, with its capacity to analyze toponyms from multiple dimensions, provides deeper insights than approaches that focus solely on linguistic or geographical aspects. It offers an organized structure for understanding the origins, meanings, and social significance of place names, linking them to local characteristics, historical events, cultural traits, and collective memory. Thériault's Framework (2007) includes this analysis grid:

Table N° 1: Analysis grid

Toponym	Type	Meaning	Reference	Rate

This grid provides an organized structure for analyzing toponyms, allowing researchers to systematically study place names and extract relevant information about their nature, origin, and usage. It should be noted that "meaning" refers to toponyms derived from common nouns. In this case, they carry a sense that may be contingent (related to local characteristics, such as natural or social phenomena) or linked to historical or geographical elements (reliefs, significant events, etc.), or even cultural and social traits (religious affiliations, beliefs, occupations, etc.). In contrast, "reference" refers to toponyms derived from proper names, such as those representing historical figures or other geographical places.

4. Analysis

The corpus is drawn from two official documents: the tourist map of Annaba, created by the Communal Office of Culture and Tourism, and the city's overall urban planning map, developed by the local government. It includes a total of 402 current toponyms, covering names of boulevards, streets, neighborhoods, squares, avenues, beaches, etc., all transcribed in French. Through a lexicosemantic analysis,¹¹ toponymic categories were identified, as illustrated in the following table:

Table N° 2: Classification of the toponyms of the municipality of Annaba

Toponymic Class	Corresponding Toponyms
Anthroponyms	-Abd El Hamid Ben Badis (Boulevard) -Abada Ahmed (street) - Abbes Tahar (Street) -Abdelkader Amara (street) -Abdelmalek Ramdane -Abraoui Mouloud -Aggoun Saidi Boutaieb -Ahcen Chaouch -Med Kamel -Ahmed Chaouch (Street) -Aissaoui Med - Aissat Idir (Street) -Allali Ahmed -Amar Korba -Amara Abdelbaki -Aouadi Abderahmane -Ernesto cheguevara (Boulevard) -Asla Hocine -Attia Ahmed -Badji Mokhtar - Belaid Belgacem (City) - Belham Zaoui (Place) -Belkahla Abdelkader -Belouizded (Place) - Ben BarkaRabah (Place) - Ben Boulaid Mustapha (Avenue) -Ben Mahmoud (Street) -Ben Mhidi (City) -Benacer Amar (Street) - BenaichTahar (Street) - Benouhiba Mohammed (Street) -Benzaim Abdelaziz (Street) - Bichat Youcef (Street) -Birari Khemissi (Street) -Biskri Ali (Street) -Bleriot (Street) -Bouaziz Abdelkrim

(Street) -Bouchaib (Street) - Boudjinah (Street)-Bougandoura -
 Miloud (Street) -Boughazi Said (boulevard) -Bougherid Mohamed
 (Street) -Boukhmis Rachid (Street) -Boukhtouta Hocine (Street) -
 Boumeras Said (Street) - Bourabah Tahar (Street) -Bouragaa
 (Street) -Bourougha Mohamed (place) -Bousquet Jean Louis
 (Street) -Boutefnouchet Abdelaziz (Street) -Boutlah Salah (Street)
 -Bouzbid Ahmed (Place) -Bouzerad Hocine (Boulevard) -Bouzitoun
 Allaoua (Street) -Cesarine (Street) -Cheikh Larbi Tebessi (Street) -
 Chenafi Mohamed (Street) -Chenati Azouz (Street) -Chetab
 Abdelkader (Street) -Chettah Mohamed (Street) -Chihani Brahim
 (Street) - Chiheb Ahmed (Street) -Cheikh Tahar Rachid (Street) -
 Condorcet (Street)-Dakhli Mokhtar (Street)-Dali Ali (Street) -De
 Foy -Demis Salah -Didouche Mourad (city+place) -Djafel
 Belkacem - Djemila (Street) -Driss Amar-Eiffel-Faure (street) -
 Fellah Rachid (Beach) (Former Saint-Cloud) -Fergani Abdelkader
 (street) -Ferhani Mohamed (street) -Ferhat (street)-Feroukhi
 Mostapha (street) - Ferradji Mohamed (street)-Frederic Mistral
 (Place) -Boucherit (Street of brothers) -Djatout (Street of brothers)
 -Amdour (street of brothers) -Benacer (street of brothers) -
 Lousafna (street of brothers) - Saadane (street of brothers) -Frikh
 Mohamed Salah -Gassiot (City) -George Isaac (place) -Gharid
 Leila (street) -Gherici Zeina Bent Ahmed (Street) -Ghimouze
 Abdelhalim (Street) -Ghodbane-Messaoud (Street) -Gouasmi
 Amar (Street) -Gouta Sebti (Street) - Guroud Mohamed Nacer
 (Street)-Habbache Cherif (Street)- Hadidane Saddek (Street) -
 Hafsi Daoudi (Street) -Haider (Street) - Halevy (Street) -Hamdi
 Ahmed (Street) -Hamitouche Abdelghani (Street) (Former saint
 Nicolas) -Hamouche Mohamed (Street) -Hamza Mohamed (Street)
 -Hannachi Mabrouk (Street) -Harbi Ahmed (Street) -Hassani
 Boudjemaa (Street) -Hassi Beida (Street) -Hlimi Mohamed (Street)
 -Ibn Khaldoun (Street) -Ibn Mahmoud (Place) -Jean Jaures
 (Street) -Joséphine (Street) -Jugurtha (Street)-Jules Verne (Street)-
 Kabar Adra (Street) -Kaidi Larbi (Street) -Kedda Bachir (Street)-
 Kelaia Said (Street)-Kenouni Sebti (Street) - Kerbaoui Mohamed
 (Street) -Khaldi Khodja (Street) -Khaled Ibn Walid (Street)-
 Khalfa Ali (Street) -Khamissa (Street) -Khassiret Hocine (Street) -
 Khaya Med Tahar (Street) -Khelfaoui (Street) - Khemisti
 Mohamed (Street) -Kichane Larbi (Street) -Kissoum Hameida -
 Krim Madani -L'Abbé Le Roy (way) - L'Elysa (City) -La colonne

	Randon -La Menadia (way) -La Menadia & les frênes (Street) -Lacombe (Street) -Lamari Amar (Street) -Latham (Street) -Lavoisier (Street) -Layachi Salah (Street) -Léon Herman (Street) -Louise Marie -M'Hadad Lakhdar (Street) -Mabrouk Ali (Street) Mabroukali Ferhat (Street) -Madani Souahi (Street) -Mahdar Baghdadi (Street) -Mahdi Houmama (Street) -Maurice Barres (Street) -Mazghiche Ali (Street) -Mealem Hammou (Place) -Mekous Hocine (Street) -Melouane Med (Street) -Mendjel Hocine (Street) -Merairia Mohamed (Street) - Merouani Mekki (Street) -Mohamed Cherif -Mokhtari Brahim (Street) -Naghira Med (Street) -Naghra ma hmoud (Street) -Naidja Abdelhamid (Street) -NecibArifa (Street) -Nedj Keblouti (Street) - Nedjari Aissa (Street) -Negra Mohamed (Street) -Okba Ibn Nafaa -Pasteur Meyer (Former Alexi Lamber) -Patrice Lumumba (City) - Prosper Dubourg -Rabelais (Street) -Rachedi Ali (Street) -Rachedi Mostapha (Street) -Rachi (Street) -Refés Zahouane (Place) (Former Toche) -Rezgui Rachdi (boulevard) -Riadh Solh -Rizzi Amor (Former Chapuis) (Beach) -Saker Mohamed Said (Street) -Sakhri Abdelhamid (Street) -Salah Djahel (Street) -Salvador Abella -Sayoud Achour (Street) -Seddik Benyahia (Boulevard) -Sedrati Abdelhamid (Street) -Stal Messouad -Stambouli Mohamed (Place) -Souidani Boudjemaa (Boulevard) - Tacherkaski Abdelahamid (street)-Thomas Garcia -Tidjani Elhadi -Touaref Hamitouche (Street) -Touaref Nouar (Street) - Tarek Ibn Ziad (Place) -Trezel (Street) -Trima Mohamed Tahar -Uzer (Street) -Victor Hugo (boulevard) -Voirol -Waldeck Rousseau -Watteau -Wright (street) -Zaafour Nacer (Street) - Zaidi Salah (Street) -Zaidi Youcef (Street) -Zemmour Ahmed (Street) Zemmouri Ouanassa (Street) -Zemouli Abdelbaki (Street) -Zenine Larbi (Street) -Zeribi Abdelaziz (Street) -Lamoricière (Street) -Saint Augustin (street) -Saint Pierre (Street) -Sidi Achour - Sidi Aissa -Sidi Bouhadid -Sidi Brahim (City) -Sidi Ferruch - Sidi Harb -Si Asffeur Mohamed Cherif -Emir Abdelkader (Street) -Rais Salah (Street) -Chikh Tahar Rachid -Capitaine Khaled -Colonel Lotfi
Homonymous Toponyms	- Abattoirs (way) -Afrique (Boulevard) -Afrique Du Sud -Alger (street) -Alsace (street) -Angola -Auzas (City) -Beauséjour (city) -Cameroun (Street) -Carthage (Place+ street) -Casbah (Place) -Cirta (De)-Congo (Street) -Côte d'Ivoire (street) -Egypte (street) -Dahomey (street) - Gambie (street) -Ghana (street) -Guinée (street)

	-Gare (street) -Grenouillère (street) -Guyane (street) -Kenya (Du street) -Mauritanie (street) -Malte (street) -Des Chasseurs (street) - Douane (street) –Elkods -Ethiopie (street) -Française (Street) - Joinville (Street) -Lambèse (street) - Liberia (Street) -Libye (Street)-Madagascar (Street) -Madon - Maroc (street) -Mont-plaisant (City) -Murtas (Street) – Paulhan -Rhodésie du Nord (street) –Rovigo -Soudan (Street) -Tabarka (street) -Togo (Street) - Tunis (street) - Sénégal (Street)-Hippone (Street+ site historique) - Thagaste (Street & City) -Timgad (Street)- Nigeria (street)
Zoonyms	Lion (street)- Chevreux (Street) -El ghazala (street)- El Rym (city)
Phytotoponyms	-Pins (city) -Safsaf (city) -Caroubiers (way) (Street) -Frênes (city) -L'orangerie -Lilas (street) -Mimosas (Street) -Oliviers (city) - Orangers (city) -Rosiers (city) -Violettes (city) -Zaafraania (city) - Jasmins (street) -La Caroube (Beach)
Hagionyms	-Saint Augustin (street) -Saint Pierre (Street) -Sidi Achour -Sidi Aissa -Sidi Bouhadid -Sidi Brahim (City) -Sidi Ferruch -Sidi Harb -Si Asffeur -Santons
Hydronyms	-Seybouse (City) -Ain achir -Oued Eddheb (Street) -Oued Forcha (City) -Oued kouba (Street)
Ethnonyms	-Numides (Place) -Beni Mhateur
Occupational Names	Fakharine 1-2-3 -Police (City)
History	-Abada Ahmed -Abd El Hamid Ben Badis -Abbes Tahar - Abdelkader Amara -Abdelmalek Ramdane -Abraoui Mouloud - Aggoun Saidi Boutaieb -Ahcen Chaouch -Med Kamel - Ahmed Chaouch -Aissaoui Med -Aissat Idir -Allali Ahmed - Amar Korba -Amara Abdelbaki -Aouadi Abderahmane – Asla Hocine -Attia Ahmed -Badji Mokhtar -Belaid Belgacem - Belham Zaoui - Belkahla Abdelkader –Belouizded -Ben Barka Rabah -Ben Boulaid Mustapha -Ben Mahmoud -Ben Mhidi - Benacer Amar - Benaich Tahar -Benouhiba Mohammed - Benzaim Abdelaziz - Bichat Youcef -Birari Khemissi -Biskri Ali -Bouaziz Abdelkrim – Bouchaib –Boudjinah -Bougandoura Miloud -Boughazi Said - Bougherid Mohamed -Boukhmis Rachid -Boukhtouta Hocine - Boumeras Said -Bourabah Tahar –Bouragaa -Bourougha Mohamed -Boutefnouchet Abdelaziz -Boutlah Salah -Bouzbid Ahmed -Bouzerad Hocine - Bouzitoun Allaoua -Chenafi Mohamed -Chenati Azouz - Chetab Abdelkader -Chettah

Mohamed -Chihani Brahim - Chiheb Ahmed -Dakhli Mokhtar - Dali Ali -Demis Salah - Didouche Mourad -Djafel Belkacem - Driss Amar -Fellah Rachid -Fergani Abdelkader -Ferhani Mohamed -Ferhat - Feroukhi Mostapha -Ferradji Mohamed – Boucherit Djatout (Street of brothers) -Amdour (street of brothers) -Benacer (street of brothers) Lousafna (street of brothers) -Saadane (street of brothers) - Frikh Mohamed Salah –Ghimouze Abdelhalim Ghodbane Messaoud -Gouasmi Amar -Gouta Sebti - Guroud Mohamed Nacer-Habbache Cherif-Hadidane Saddek - Hafsi Daoudi - Hamdi Ahmed -Hamitouche Abdelghani-Hamouche Mohamed -Hamza Mohamed -Hannachi Mabrouk - Harbi Ahmed -Hassani Boudjemaa -Hassi Beida -Hlimi Mohamed -Ibn Mahmoud (Place) -Kabar Adra -Kaidi Larbi -Kedda Bachir - Kelaia Said -Kenouni Sebti -Kerbaoui Mohamed - Khaldi Khodja - Khalfa Ali -Khassiret Hocine -Khaya Med Tahar –Khelfaoui - Khemisti Mohamed -Kichane Larbi - Kissoum Hameida -Krim Madani -Lamari Amar -Layachi Salah -M’Hadar Lakhdar - Mabrouk Ali -Mabroukali Ferhat -Madani Souahi -Mahdar Baghdadadi -Mahdi Houmama - Mazghiche Ali -Mealem Hammou (Place) -Mekous Hocine - Melouane Med -Mendjel Hocine - Merairia Mohamed - Merouani Mekki -Mokhtari Brahim -Naghira Med -Naidja Abdelhamid -Necib Arifa -Nedj Keblouti - Nedjari Aissa -Negra Mohamed -Rachedi Ali -Rachedi Mostapha -Rachi - Refés Zahouane (Place) -Rezgui Rachdi -Rizzi Amor -Saker Mohamed Said -Sakhri Abdelhamid - Salah Djahel-Sayoud Achour-Seddik Benyahia -Sedrati Abdelhamid -Stal Messouad - Stambouli Mohamed -Souidani Boudjemaa -Tacherkaski Abdelahamid -Tidjani Elhadi - Touare Hamitouche -Touaref Nouar -Trima Mohamed Tahar - Zaafour Nacer -Zaidi Salah -Zaidi Youcef -Zemmour Ahmed -Zemmouri Ouanassa -Zemouli Abdelbaki -Zenine Larbi - Zeribi Abdelaziz -Emir Abdelkader - Capitaine Khaled - Colonel Lotfi –Haider –Djemila –Khamissa - Gharid Leila - Gherici Zeina Bent Ahmed -24-février-56 -11 décembre 1960 (Former city cimetièrè juif) -13 mai (City) -17 octobre 1961 (Avenues) -19 Aout 1956 (Place) -19 Mai 1956 (City) -1er mai (City) -28 janvier 1957 (Boulevard) -5 juillet 1962 (City) (Former city Hongrois) -8 Mai 1945 (City) -8 Mars (City) - Novembre 01/1954 -Novembre 26/1974 -Alsace (street) - Auzas (City) -Casbah (Place) -Cirta -Lambèse (street) - Hippone (Street+

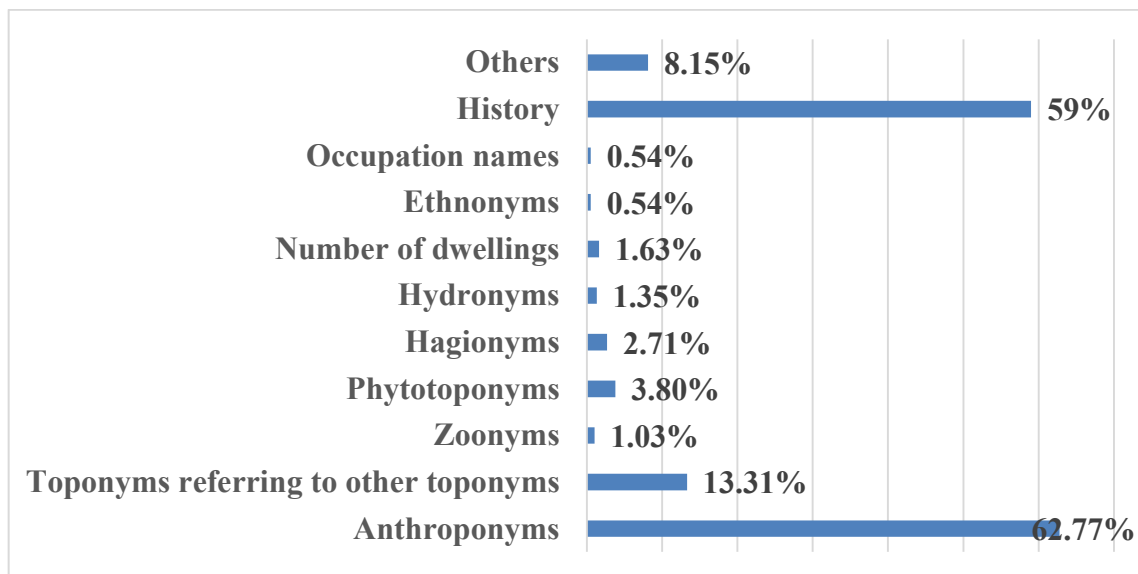
	historical site) -Thagaste (Street and City) - Timgad (Street) - F.L.N (City and place) -A.L.N. (Avenue) - C.N.R.A (Street)- Okba Ibn naffaa -Tarek ibn ziad- Khaled Ibn Walid -Raïs Salah -Ibn Khaldoun-Menad Ben ziri- Jugurtha
Number of Residences	-1000 Logements (city) -1276 logements (city) -200 Logements (city) -400 Logements (City) -500 Logements (City) -6 logements (Former city Allemands)
Others	An Nasr (City) -Belle vue (Street +City) -El Hana (City) -El Manar (Former le phare) -El fida (Street) -El houria (Place) -El moukaouama (City) -Félicite (Street) -Front De Mer -Kouba (Street and citys 1-2) -L'avant-port (street) -La liberté (street) - La paix (street) -La place d'armes (Former la vieille ville) -La surprise (street) -El Abtal (City) -Le gazomètre (street) -Lever de l'aurore (street) -Le Majestic (street) -Le marché au blé (street) -Belvédère (City) -Libération (Boulevard) -Nedjma (City) -Plaisance (City) - Plaine Ouest (Street)-Pont Blanc (City du)-Port Said (City) - Pyramides (street) -Victoire (street) -Volontaires (street)

Source: The overall urban planning of the city Annaba & the tourist map of Annaba

So, as can be seen through this corpus, toponyms are not merely geographical designations; they are markers of identity, imbued with cultural, historical, and political meanings. Through the analysis of the toponyms of Annaba, it is possible to observe that certain place names carry the memory of the city's inhabitants, cultural practices, and identity struggles. For example, historical toponyms, or place names based on anthroponyms, can symbolize both continuity or rupture with the colonial past, as well as otherness and openness to the outside world.

The figure below shows the rate of each toponymic class:

Figure N°1: Rate of toponymic classes



a. Toponyms Based on Anthroponyms

Places named after personalities make up the largest portion of toponyms in the city Annaba, accounting for 59.57% of the studied corpus. This predominance can be attributed to the authorities' desire to preserve the memory of those who have shaped national and international history in various ways: nationalist activists during the Algerian War (75.11%), religious figures (ulamas and marabouts) (4.98%), Berber personalities (1.80%), Islamic figures such as military leaders (2.26%), Muslim scholars (1.35%), and foreign personalities (14.5%).

The foreign personalities incorporated into the toponymy of the commune of Annaba are primarily "friends of the Revolution," defenders of peace, or emblematic figures of the global liberation movement. These figures come from seven nationalities, with the most represented being the French nationality, at a rate of 78.94%. Examples include Jean Louis Bousquet and Louis Blériot. Other nationalities represented include Lebanese (street Riad Solh), American (street Wright), Congolese (street Patrice Lumumba), Argentine (street Che Guevara), Belgian (street De Foy), and Spanish (street Thomas Garcia).

The foreign figures who gave their names to various places in the commune of Annaba are classified as follows: politicians (30.76%), military figures (15.38%), artists and writers (28.20%), inventors and scientists (12.82%), and Christian religious figures (12.82%). It should be noted that the analysis excluded three specific anthroponyms referring to foreign figures whose

nationality and identity remain unknown or uncertain, namely George Isaac, Salvador Abella, and Elysa.

b. Toponyms of Occupations

In the toponymy of the commune of Annaba, it has been observed that places are named after two types of activities. The first is related to crafts, such as "Fakharine", meaning 'the potters.' The second is associated with professions linked to security, notably the police.

c. Zoonyms

The commune of Annaba also contains places named after wild animals such as lions and gazelles, as well as domesticated animals like goats. This presence can be explained by the fact that the Annaba region, like other areas in Algeria, was once home to these species, some of which, such as the Barbary lion, are now extinct in the wild.

d. Phytotoponyms

Plant names hold a significant place in the toponymy of the commune of Annaba. Notably, tree names such as Safsaf (willow), Caroubiers (carob), Frênes (ash trees), Pines, Olive trees, Oranges, and plants such as Lilac, Mimosa, Roses, Zaafrania (saffron), Violets, and Jasmines are used. The use of these plant names, just like animal names, reflects the close relationship between humans and nature. Sometimes, it is the abundance of a particular plant species that determines the naming of a place, while in other cases, it is the remarkable presence of a solitary tree in the landscape that inspires the name (Pellegrin, 1984, p. 365).

. Additionally, the city Annaba, also known as Bled El Annab, takes its name from the jujube fruit, due to its abundance in the region.

e. Hydronyms

Water has always been a major concern for populations due to its vital importance. This has led people to settle near rivers and springs, naming them for distinction. Often, settlements form near these sources and rivers, from which they take their names. Toponyms based on hydronyms are usually preceded by terms such as "Ain" (spring) and "Oued" (river) (e.g., Ain Achir, Oued Eddheb, Oued Forcha, Oued Kouba), or they are translations of ancient Berber terms, such as "Seybouse," derived from the Berber "sûf" or "asuf," meaning "stream," "river," or "river."

f. Hagionyms

This category of toponyms plays a major role in the naming of places in Annaba, as it refers to names with religious or mystical connotations, both Muslim and Christian. Toponyms based on religious references can be divided

into three categories: names of saints, names of places of worship, and names of ritual practices.

Hagionyms have been identified in the corpus based on the term “Sidi” or its abbreviated form “Si”, both derived from the Arabic word “Sayyid”, meaning “master” or “mister”. This honorific term is used to pay homage to the Tolbas and Marabouts, whose tombs or zawiyas protect the neighboring settlements. This reflects the influence of Maraboutism in the Maghreb. Among the hagionyms identified are: Sidi Ferruch, Sidi Harb, Sidi Achour, Sidi Aissa, Sidi Bouhadid, Sidi Brahim, and Si Asffeur. Additionally, some hagionyms refer to Christianity, such as Saint Augustine and Saint Peter, as the city was a major center of Christianity under the episcopacy of Saint Augustine, who was bishop of the city from 396 until his death in 430.

g. Ethnonyms

In the corpus, ethnonyms are divided into two categories: those beginning with “Beni”, meaning "sons" in Arabic, and those beginning with "Oulad," meaning "children," followed by the name of the eponymous ancestor. Toponyms such as “Beni Mhateur” were identified, referring to a tribe, and others denoting the Berber people of the Numidians, derived from the Greek adjective “nomados”, meaning “nomads”. This class of toponyms acts as territorial markers, symbolizing attachment to the tribe, which is seen as a protector against external threats.

Ethnonyms represent a small proportion of the corpus, accounting for only 0.54% of the toponyms studied. This phenomenon can be explained by the otherness that has always characterized Annaba and its inhabitants, unlike rural or less urbanized areas where recurring ethnonyms might signal a more pronounced ethnocentrism.

h. Homonymous Toponyms

it has been noticed that many places in the commune of Annaba bear the names of present-day countries and cities, both Arab, African, French, and European, such as Tunis, Ghana, South Africa, Tabarka, Elkods, Algiers, etc., as well as ancient cities like Lambèse, Timgad, Thagaste, and Hippo. The toponyms were classified according to their references, and the frequency of each reference type was then calculated. It appears that the African reference predominates, followed by the French reference, as illustrated in the table below:

Table N° 4: Distribution and Frequency of Toponymic References in the Municipality of Annaba

Reference	Rate
African	42.18%
French	21.87%
Arab	14.06%
Ancient	7.81%
Other references	4.68%

The toponymic choices are not random; they reflect a toponymic policy that is part of a broader ideological and geostrategic vision. For example, the adoption of African and Arab toponyms by the authorities aims to emphasize the Arab and African roots of the city. The use of ancient toponyms, on the other hand, highlights Annaba's historical antiquity. The toponyms inherited from the colonial era, borrowed from France and certain European cities, bear witness to the enduring influence of the French language and culture, even more than half a century after independence, despite the Arabization policy that has been implemented since then. This also reflects the appropriation of this language by Algerians and underscores a complex dimension of national identity, where various cultural and historical influences intersect.

The predominance of anthroponyms, especially those of martyrs, reflects the desire to preserve national memory. However, it is interesting to note the absence of Berber toponyms in the corpus, except for those referring to ancient cities such as Timgad, an ancient city located in the Batna province in the Aurès region, whose name means "peak" or "summit" (Haddadou, 2012, p. 529), and Thagaste, an ancient Numidian city located in the present-day Souk Ahras province. This absence may be explained by the historical tensions related to Berber identity, although the toponymy of the city Annaba highlights a cultural and linguistic blend.

i. Historical Toponyms

A transversal category of historical toponyms was identified, representing 59% of the corpus (224 toponyms). This category includes Algerian anthroponyms, important historical dates, names related to revolutionary history, such as F.L.N (National Liberation Front) and A.L.N (National Liberation Army), as well as names of Islamic military leaders like Okba Ibn Nafaa, Tarek Ibn Ziad, etc., and toponyms from ancient cities such as Timgad, Lambese, and Hippone.

Thus, the city Annaba exhibits a predominance of historically significant toponyms. However, it is striking to note that 81.57% of these toponyms are

directly related to the National Liberation Revolution (1954-1962), representing 47.70% of the total corpus. This underscores the importance given to the memory of the war of independence in the city's toponymy. However, it is essential to recall that the history of Annaba, formerly Hippone, is much older and stretches back to prehistory, marked by a rich history that deserves further representation in the city's toponyms.

5. Discussion

This study presents certain limitations, which also open up avenues for future research. Firstly, the analysis focused exclusively on the official toponyms of the municipality of Annaba, as they appear in administrative and cartographic documents. This focus prevented the inclusion of vernacular toponyms, meaning the spontaneous and popular names used by the residents themselves. These parallel usages could have provided additional insight into the local identity and memory dynamics. Also, it would be interesting to question why, even after their de-naming and renaming, some places continue to be called by their former French names.

Secondly, Although the sociolinguistic dimension of toponyms was examined through their semantics and historical or cultural references, the study did not consider the social reception of these names: how do the residents perceive, interpret, or even contest the current toponyms? A qualitative approach, based on interviews or field surveys, would have enriched the understanding of the relationship between toponymy and society.

Moreover, the analysis is limited in time: it relies on relatively recent documents but does not trace the historical evolution of place names over several decades. A more in-depth diachronic approach would have allowed for a better understanding of the processes of naming, political renaming, and collective memory.

Finally, the analytical framework used, although effective for a methodical classification of toponyms, shows its limits when it comes to exploring the ambivalence of certain names, particularly those that overlap contradictory references (such as the association in the official toponymy between the figures of martyrs and those of their former executioners).

6. CONCLUSION

This research examined the official toponymy of the commune of Annaba, situating the work within the field of (socio)linguistics. The approach involved analyzing the toponymic corpus in terms of both the meaning and reference of the toponyms and then explaining their motivation through geographical and

sociohistorical data. The study revealed the fundamental role of toponymy as an identity reflection and a link between people and the space they inhabit, as well as between the past and the present. Several conclusions have been drawn to refine our initial problem.

From a referential perspective, Annaba is distinguished by a great diversity of geographic, historical, cultural, linguistic, and religious references. The city's place names draw from a vast range of personalities and locations (Maghreb, Arab, French, Spanish, American, Belgian, African, Latin American, etc.), highlighting an urbanity that is open and plural, characteristic of major world cities. It was also observed that the proportion of ethnonyms in Annaba's toponymy is relatively low, which can be attributed to the 'otherness' that has always characterized this city and its inhabitants, in contrast to rural or less urbanized regions, where recurring ethnonyms may reflect a certain ethnocentrism.

Thematically, the toponymy of Annaba constitutes a mosaic, including hagnionymes, ethnonyms, hydronyms, zootoponyms, plant names, but most notably, anthroponyms. Among the latter, the names of martyrs occupy a prominent place, underscoring the revolutionary aspect of the city. However, paradoxically, the official toponymy of Annaba associates the names of martyrs with those of their executioners and murderers. The analysis also highlighted the predominance of the theme of the history of the Revolution in the city's toponymy, to the detriment of other historical periods rich in notable characters and events.

However, this study has several limitations that open avenues for future research. First, it focused solely on the official toponyms of Annaba, excluding vernacular toponyms used by residents. These informal names could have provided additional insights into local identity and memory dynamics. Furthermore, the study did not address how residents perceive or contest these names, which could be explored through qualitative methods such as interviews or field surveys. Additionally, the study is limited by its reliance on recent documents, without examining the historical evolution of place names. A diachronic approach could offer a deeper understanding of naming processes, political renaming, and collective memory. Finally, while the analytical framework was useful for categorizing toponyms, it falls short in addressing the ambivalence of names that overlap contradictory references, such as those linking martyrs to their former executioners.

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