

Vibeke Dalberg

NAME AND PLACE

**Ten essays on the dynamics
of place-names**

*Edited and translated by
Gillian Fellows-Jensen, Peder Gammeltoft,
Bent Jørgensen and Berit Sandnes on the occasion of
Vibeke Dalberg's 70th birthday, August 22nd 2008*

Department of Scandinavian Research
Name Research Section
Copenhagen 2008

Fotografisk, mekanisk eller anden gengivelse af denne bog eller dele heraf er ikke tilladt ifølge gældende dansk lov om ophavsret.

© Afdeling for Navneforskning,
Nordisk Forskningsinstitut
Det Humanistiske Fakultet
Københavns Universitet

Photo by Rob Rentenaar

Freely available internet publication,
the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen
Copenhagen 2008

ISBN 978-87-992447-1-3

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names*

The word folk-etymology has often been considered to be an imprecise and inadequate linguistic term. Many authors in the course of time have felt obliged to place the word between inverted commas (“folk-etymological”) when using it or have had to resort to the formulation “so-called folk-etymology” in order to indicate an unspecified reservation towards this term – as can be seen, for example in the title of the present article.

The terminological uncertainty and the conceptual opacity which is in part a result of this depend firstly on the fact that the word folk-etymology, since it was first introduced into linguistics by Ernst Förstemann more than a century and a half ago, has been used of several different phenomena (Förstemann 1852). Secondly, an explanation can be sought in the fact that the semantic content of the word itself is often hardly adequate for the phenomena described, in some cases directly misleading, a matter to which more attention will be paid below.

First and foremost the word folk-etymology is used in connection with a particular type of word-reshaping and word-reinterpretation which, as far as appellatives are concerned, can be illustrated by familiar examples in Danish such as *undervisitet* (from *universitet*), *manuskript* (from *manuscript*), *indballere* (from *emballere*), *løvstikke* and *agermåne* (from the Latin plant terms *levisticum* and *agrimonia*), *avindskjold* from older Danish *awigh skiold* ‘backward-turned shield’, reshaped to *avind-* ‘envy, hate’.¹

* A revised version of: “Såkaldt folkeetymologisk omdannelse af stednavne”. In Dalberg, Vibeke et al., (eds), 1980: *Sprogvidenskabelig udnyttelse af stednavnematerialet. NORNA-Rapporter* 18. Uppsala, pp. 165–82. Translation based on chapter I.1. in Dalberg 1991: 15–25.

¹ In *undervisitet*, the original element *univers* has been replaced by Dan *undervise* ‘to teach’; in *manuskript*, original *skript* by Dan *skrift* ‘writing’; in *indballere*, initial *em-* has become Dan *ind* ‘in’. In the plant-designations *løvstikke*

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

It has often been emphasised that place-names display a particularly large number of reshapings that have been referred to as folk-etymologies, and that these present a body of material that is of importance for the understanding of the character of the phenomenon (e.g. Sandfeld 1923: 34, Koch 1963: 162). This observation has not, however, led to any extensive exploitation of concrete place-name examples with more general descriptions of the phenomenon. The literature about folk-etymology is sparse in the Scandinavian linguistic area; there is a particular lack of treatments of newer date. In continental Germanic research, the subject has traditionally held a central position. Among more recent treatments special attention should be paid to Willy Sanders' theoretical-linguistic oriented works (Sanders 1971, 1972, 1975).

The folk-etymological reshaping – which for the lack of a better term is also described in this way in the present study – has been characterised as an irregularly occurring phenomenon that belongs among analogical formations. With Hjelmslev's terminology, it can be described as a counter-case against the theory of the function of elements. It is thus the reshaping of a symbol resulting from a speaker's feeling for language. It is claimed that it affects foreign loanwords and proper nouns in particular. A common feature for these categories of words is that they consist of, or may consist of, word stock that cannot be identified with familiar entities. Foreign words are thus by definition foreign when seen in relation to native word material. With respect to the proper nouns, the following discussion will be limited to place-names. For these it is firstly the case that they often contain words which have since passed out of use in the appellative vocabulary. Secondly, the development of the form in well-known words (for example owing to their unstressed position) can differ from the corresponding appellative.²

and *agermâne*, the Latin forms *levisticum* and *agrimonia* have been conceived to contain the Danish words *løv* 'leaf' + *stikke* 'stick, pin' and *ager* 'field' + *mâne* 'moon', respectively.

² When the reshaping exceptionally affects appellatives such as *awigh skiold*, the background for this is similar.

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

It has been claimed that users of language sometimes make unidentifiable linguistic entities identifiable by reshaping them to acoustically similar words that already exist. It is thus a matter of a process with both a formal and a semantic side. On the expression plane this results in a reshaping of the word, on the contents level it causes a re-interpretation of the word. Whether re-interpretation of the word is a precondition for the reshaping of the word or vice versa is difficult to assess. Perhaps it should be understood in such a way that the two factors work together in a form of interaction in the process (cf. Sanders 1972: 10).

When choosing the word to be reshaped and reinterpreted, conceptual association can clearly play a role (for example in Danish from *karrusel* to *køre selv*, *champignoner* to *svampignoner*),³ but it is characteristic that reshaping does not result in meaningful words in the normal sense, even if the replacement word has a living semantic content. In fact, it is often only parts of a word that are affected, while the rest of the word retains its original form (for example in *manuskript* and *indballere*). Sometimes the replacement word also seems to be without any semantic link with the object that is to be denoted (e.g. *kamelblomst* from *kamilleblomst*),⁴ so that it is only the similarity of sound that links it with the basis for the remodelling.

The words that are subjected to reshaping are almost always compounds, or can be perceived as such. In this situation there is another concealed element that encourages the reshaping, because the language user expects compound words to be made up of words that already exist in the language. The result of reshaping therefore often looks like a compound.

The folk-etymological reshaping, however, is only partly described by the above-mentioned characterisation of its external, observable sides. There remains the difficult question as to what psychological forces are at work. In the word folk-etymology there is an implicit assumption that some kind of etymological activity is

³ The reinterpreted word *køre selv* means 'self-propelling', whereas *svamp-* of *svampignon* is the Danish word for 'mushroom'.

⁴ I.e. from Dan *kamille* 'camomile' to Dan *kamel* 'camel'.

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

at work. It has often been perceived that the language users by these reshapings were trying to recreate the words in a meaningful and in their opinion etymologically more correct form.⁵ It has been presumed that a form of reflexion has been taking place in the mind of the language-users about the origin of the word and its historical context.

The phenomenon finds a more reasonable explanation, however, if one looks upon it as a functional improvement instead of as an etymological improvement. Every language user has a tendency when communicating to decipher the sound sequences that are heard on the basis of the structures that are found in his own linguistic norm and the usage that he masters. It is not only a matter of the phonetic plane but also of the morphological and semantic planes. If what is heard does not correspond to recognisable entities, there will also be a tendency to make it agree with the norm and usage by applying familiar patterns to it. For the language-users reshaping is not associated with any motive that goes further than the actual adaptation. The case is rather that as a language-user one repeats what *one thinks one hears*, so that one is not conscious that what has been repeated is not identical with what was pronounced. It is thus not a matter of any linguistic reflection on the part of the language user but only that the language-users by means of the reshaping process adapt items to fit the linguistic norm. The aim behind the reshaping is of a functional nature. From such a point of view the phenomenon in the course of time has also been categorised as, among other things, a speech technical or mnemonic aid and as a linguistic economical improvement (Leenen 1949: 56, Koch 1963: 166, Sanders 1972: 15).

Seen against the background of this description of the phenomenon, the word folk-etymology is an inappropriate term. However, alternative terms such as those earlier employed in foreign specialist literature “lautlich-begriffliche Wortassimilation” and “Unconscious

⁵ Cf., for example, W. F. H. Nicolaisen’s definition “the fanciful reconstruction of the origins of obscure lexical items, in order to give or restore meaning to the meaningless” (Nicolaisen 1977: 24).

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

Sound- and Sense-Assimilation” have never really been accepted (Kjederqvist 1902, Houtzager 1935).

Karl Gustav Ljunggren has proposed “etymologising correction” as a collective term for both the folk-etymological reshapings and the “erroneous tidying up” of place-names that can be ascribed to the scribes of the land-register, surveyors, cartographers, priests and others (Ljunggren 1958: 21–22).⁶ The author himself notes that the terminology was inspired by Jöran Sahlgren (1947). The choice of the term is based on the view that the motive in both cases is “to give the name a supposedly more correct form” (Ljunggren 1958: 22). As it is described above, however, the folk-etymological reshaping does not rest on any linguistic considerations on the part of the language-user – neither with respect to the *correctness* of the word etymologically nor in any other way. With respect to the corrected forms that sometimes occur in place-name sources, they must, if they have an etymologising aim, be considered to be on a par with the “learned folk-etymologies” discussed below, and are therefore of subordinate interest in the present context.

The term “folk-etymological reshaping” has unfortunately yet to find its correct terminological replacement.

The terminological problem is further complicated by the fact that the word folk-etymology has also been used of other phenomena than the above-mentioned reshapings – including some which have a special relationship with place-name material.⁷ It has, for example, been taken to be a reflection of “mythopoeic folk-etymology”, when, on the basis of a linguistically incorrect understanding of the etymology of place-names, myths have been created about the origin of the names (e.g. Nyrop 1882: 101, Bach 1953–54: II 539). As an example can be cited the naming myth that has arisen because the name *Ringkøbing* (a compound of the village-name *Rindum* +

⁶ The word ‘correction’ has achieved a certain degree of currency in Nordic name research (e.g. Benson 1976: 47).

⁷ Occasionally one or more of these phenomena are treated together, both with and without a clear delimitation from folk-etymological reshapings (e.g. Johansen 1952).

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

købing ‘market town’) has been assumed to contain the adj. *ringe* ‘inferior’: When King Christian III was unable to find lodgings in the town, he exclaimed “that was a poor market town” and this was how the town got its name. The phenomenon, which is more usually referred to as “a name-explanatory legend”, is widely known and really belongs under the concept of etymology. Mythogenesis of this type rarely results in a change in the form of the place-name. “Learned folk-etymologies” is the term employed for the scientifically untenable interpretations of place-names produced by medieval scholars, and particularly by learned men in the 17th and 18th centuries (e.g. Bach 1953–54: II,2 538). A well-known Danish example in which an interpretation of this kind has led to a permanent change in the form of the place-name is *Herthadalen* near Roskilde. Its original name *Ærtedalen* ‘the pea valley’ was explained by the philologist Ole Worm and others in the 17th century as a compound containing the name of the goddess *Hertha*.

A “jocose (Ger. “scherzhaft”) folk-etymology” has been considered to be found both in the form for homonym juxtaposition that lies behind an expression such as “gå til *Slumstrup*” with the meaning ‘lie down and slumber, sleep’ (corresponding examples are Ger. “Aus *Greifswald* sein” ‘be thievish’, Dutch “in *Hongarije* wonen” ‘be hungry’), and in some slang name-variants such as *Nykøbing på Flasker* ‘bottled Nykøbing’ for *Nykøbing* (in) *Falster* (Bach 1953–54: II,2 536–37, 538).

With respect to the suitability of the term as a designation for these phenomena, it is firstly debatable whether unscholarly etymologising can be separated from a particular popular breach of grammar. There is hardly more than a difference of degree between the false etymologies produced by “the people” and “the learned”, and the untenable suggestions sometimes proposed by professional name-scholars. As far as the “jocose” folk-etymology is concerned, it is hardly possible to include this phenomenon here, even with the broadest conceivable definition of the concept etymology.

An attempt will be made below to test various aspects of the general definition of folk-etymological reshaping described above on some place-name examples.

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

The reshapings that occur in the place-name material are for obvious reasons known to us almost exclusively through the place-name forms that have been transmitted in writing. Extra-linguistic information as to the circumstances under which the reshaping took place is extremely rare. This means that it can be difficult to determine whether a case under discussion is actually of a folk-etymological nature. Other types of place-name changes can also result in a name form that appears to contain a new and, in respect to the original form, acoustically similar word. Only the most important of these will be named here.⁸ These include the regular sound developments which result in place-name elements of different origin acquiring the same orthographic expression. The loss of a fricative thus gives the words ODan *both*(æ) ‘booth’ and *roth* ‘clearing’ in, for example, *Nøddebo* (p., Holbo h.) and *Abildro* (Skovby p. and h.) an orthographic form that is identical with the words *bo* ‘domicile’ and *ro* ‘rest’, which can also occur as place-name generics (cf. DS II: 47–48, DS XIV: 181). With loss of *w*, names whose first element ends in a consonant + *s* in combination with ODan *thwēt* ‘clearing’ develop a form which is represented orthographically in the same way as the generic *-sted* ‘place’, e.g. *Børsted* (Tureby p., Fakse herred) and *Gelsted* (Herlufmagle p., Tybjerg h.) (cf. Kousgård Sørensen 1958: 30–31, DS XVI: 117, XVI: 129). Such written instances should not be taken as indications of reshaping. That they can be the basis for such is shown by the pronunciations of *Abildro* with a stop on the final vowel, which is not correct for original *roth* ‘clearing’ but for the noun *ro*. Similarly, *Børsted* and *Gelsted* with the vowel quality [æ] corresponds with the pronunciation of *sted* but not with original *s + thwēt*.

So-called written transmutation can also sometimes lead to forms that resemble the result of a folk-etymological reshaping. As an example can be named the Funen form *Bolsbanke* (Strib-Røjleskov p., Vends h.), originally *Boesbanke*, which has probably acquired its present *-l-* from a misprint on a topographical map (DS XIV: 233).

⁸ Reshaping against the background of “learned folk-etymology” is discussed above on p. 85.

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

It can also be difficult to delimit folk-etymological reshaping from the instances of partial name-change where there is identity of sound between the old and the new name. The problem can be illustrated by the rather common change of *Fulebæk* to *Fuglebæk* (DSÅ II: 149–52, 158–60). If the reason for this is that the word *ful* ‘foul’ has been thought to be unpleasant, the example falls outside the definition that is given above for a folk-etymological reshaping. Rather it is a case of an external, aesthetically justified motive in connection with an idea as to the meaning of the word *ful*. However, if the background is that *Ful-* has slid over to a more familiar *Fugl-* ‘bird’, then it is in principle a case of reshaping of a folk-etymological nature. There are obvious difficulties in administering this criterion in practice.

On the other hand, the fact that most of the folk-etymological place-name reshapings first come to light in a written manifestation makes it difficult to determine among which circle of language-users they were created. In this connection the fact that certain sources of non-local provenance such as land registers etc. contain many of the earliest instances of place-name reshapings has been emphasised. This has been explained as owing to the fact that the scribes of such sources often lacked knowledge of the dialects and were thus in a situation that offered a good opportunity for making folk-etymological reshapings of whatever information their informants provided. In German place-name research mention is often made of “Beamenetymologie” (e.g. Koch 1963: 164). It is undoubtedly true that many folk-etymological reshapings were brought about by the scribes of the sources but it should be emphasised that scribal reshapings that are the result of lack of familiarity with the local dialect do not in principle differ from other folk-etymological reshapings, and that they, too, contribute to throwing light on the phenomenon. Until a more systematic study has been made, it cannot be decided to what degree these reshapings can be delimited to particular types of sources.

The transmission of the place-names can often throw light on the problem. If a reshaping only occurs in one single source, it would seem to be reasonable to consider it to have been created by the scribe. This is the case for example with the form *Mørkiøb* of the

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

village-name *Mørkøv* (p., Tuse h.), originally a compound of the adj. *mørk* ‘dark’ and the noun ODan *hōgh* ‘mound’. The form, which shows reshaping to *-køb* ‘purchase’ is only recorded in M 1844. The same point of view naturally applies if it can be demonstrated that the reshaping has only been accepted as a written norm or that the reshaping has first and foremost become accepted much later than its first written manifestation. The first case can be exemplified by the Funen *Lilleland* (Dreslette p., Båg h.), the name of a smallish settlement whose local pronunciation still corresponds to the name’s original generic *lung* ‘bog’ (DS XIV: 324). The transmission of the village-names *Rungsted* (Hørsholm p., Lynge-Kronborg h.) and *Karlstrup* (p., Tune h.) will demonstrate the other case. These names are known from older pronunciations [*runsdi*] and [*kawsdråp*], which agree with the old forms 22/7 1346 Runæstigh and 8/9 1326 Caxtorph (DS II: 34, Hald 1977: 512). The reshaping to *-sted* and *Karl-* respectively are none the less evidenced as early as in the 17th century and the younger pronunciations showing reshaping must therefore be deemed to be dependent on the written forms.

If the reshaping results in a form that is unfamiliar to the local dialect, a local development can also be excluded. This is the case, for example, with an original ODan *hæghth* ‘enclosure’ in the name of a small settlement in the north of Sjælland *Harreshøj* (Tikøb p., Lynge-Kronborg h.) (DS II: 8).⁹ At the period in the second half of the 17th century, when the form in *-høj* made its appearance in the written transmission of the name, the local pronunciation of the second component in the diphthong in the appellative *høj* ‘mound’ cannot be assumed to have been [*w*] (cf. Christensen (1971: 72).

In many cases, however, the question as to whether reshaping is to be ascribed to the scribe of the source, or whether it was an accomplished fact expressed in writing for the first time will remain unanswered.

The assumption that the folk-etymological reshaping affects word material that cannot be linked to the living vocabulary, is supported by many place-name examples. For example, the two words

⁹ In DS the generic is explained incorrectly as an original *-hed*, which was supposed to be identical with the noun *hede*.

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

**brok* ‘bog’ and **spyr* ‘track’, which in (*Vester-* and *Øster*) *Egesborg* (p., Hammer and Bårse h.) in Sjælland and in the Jutlandic village-name *Sabro* (p. and h.) are reshaped to *-bro* and *-(s)borg*, have not been transmitted as appellatives in modern Danish and must therefore have been lost from the language at a very early stage (DS XII: 37–38, DS XVI: 168, 213). In a weakly stressed position even well-known words functioning as place-name elements may acquire a form in which they can no longer be recognised. This is the background for the reshaping of M 1664 Steilebierigs huus and 29/6 1387 (vid. 1400) Windebotheholt to *Stillebækshus* (Veflinge p., Skovby h.) and *Vindbyholt* (Roholte p., Fakse h.) (DS XIV: 210, DS XVI: 110). The development in weakly-stressed position which is evidenced in the 18th-century form *Stølpers Huse* and the 16th-century form *Vinndebeholltt*, has given the words *bjerg* ‘hill’ and *bod* ‘booth, hut’ a form coinciding with the forms which may develop from *by* ‘village, town’ and *bæk* ‘brook’ as place-names elements.

Prerequisites like those mentioned above are, however, far from always present when folk-etymological reshaping takes place in place-names. In the following names, all of which presently denote settlements, the reshaping has affected place-name elements having familiar counterparts in the living vocabulary. For instance, *-land* in Jb 1667 Aalands Haue, *-Bierg* etc., which corresponds to the noun *land* ‘land’, is reshaped to *lund*, *Ålund* (Vester Hæsinge p., Sallinge h.), *Kalf-* in 8/9 1326 Caalfslundæ, which corresponds to the noun *kalv* ‘calf’ is reshaped to the masculine personal name *Karl*, *Karlslunde* (p., Tune herred), *Hiort(h)-* in 25/1 or 8/2 134[4] (c. 1500) *Hiortøgh*, which corresponds to the noun *hjort* ‘stag’ or *hjord* ‘herd’, is reshaped to *Jord-* ‘earth’, *Jordhøj* (Slangerup p., Lyng-Frederiksborg h.) (DS XIII: 125, Hald 1977: 512, DS II: 111).

The claim that the words into which the reshaping have been transformed are taken from the living vocabulary needs to be modified in the case of place-names. It is true that this often seems to be the case, for example in the quoted examples of reshaping to *-bro*, *-borg*, *-by*, *-lund*, *Jord-*. Among place-names, however, we also find examples of reshaping to entities that did not exist as living vocabulary at the time of the reshaping, namely obsolete place-name

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

generics and endings such as *-lev*, *-um*, *-drup* (< *-thorp*). Examples include 24/4 1325 Synderlyugh (compounded with ODan **liūgh* ‘swamp’) reshaped to form *Sønderlev* (Skallerup p., Venneberg h.), 28?/8 1508 Sønderleff, in 26/2 1482 Børglan (compounded with ODan **lan*, probably meaning ‘road’ to form *Børglum* (p. and h.), 14/7 1466 Burlom, in 7/7 1480 Rwmrdw (compounded with a noun related to Swedish dialect *drov* ‘cud’) to form *Romdrup* (p., Fleskum h.), LR 1541 Romdroppe (Hald 1965: 82, 1977: 172, 844). The names are only known with denotations as settlements.

A difference can thus be recognised between folk-etymological reshaping of place-names and of appellatives. The explanation for this is undoubtedly that the existing onomasticon has a pattern-forming effect when place-names are reshaped. Many folk-etymological place-name reshapings are probably to be understood primarily as adjustments to the particular structures and norms that are found in the language-user’s onomasticon. Some place-name elements probably signal more clearly than others – perhaps on account of a greater frequency of occurrence or a special association with the particular groups of denotata – that the linguistic entity in question is a place-name. They can therefore be considered to be more functional in usage.

As mentioned above, folk-etymological reshaping most frequently results in expressions that take the form of compounds. The pattern-forming structure is, as far as the reshaping of place-names is concerned, obviously the two-element place-name whose second element allows itself to be identified as a place-name generic. The settlements *Nisted* (Lumby p., Lunde h.), Ldh c. 1510 Nystæ, (< ODan **nisti* ‘hook, corner’) and *Kastelev* (Sværdborg p., Hammer h.), 1/5 1334 Kastællæ (< ODan *kastellæ* ‘castle’) both bear originally simplex names that have been reshaped into compounds in *-sted* and *-lev* respectively (DS XIV: 162, DS XVI: 177). Also originally compound place-names without two clearly distinguishable elements such as, for example, the Funen village-name *Bolmerod* (Skamby p., Skam h.), 13/3 1466 Bolmære (originally compounded

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

with the ODan noun *myr* ‘bog’ in the oblique case), can be reshaped with a new generic, in this case *-rod* ‘clearing’ (DS XIV: 174).¹⁰

As mentioned earlier, folk-etymological reshaping is described as a process that takes place when human beings communicate with each other. Many of the quoted place-name examples have illustrated that the phonetic form of the names has been the basis for the reshaping. This factor is, however, demonstrated particularly clearly by place-name reshaping that have a false subtraction of the original expression as a precondition, as these can only be understood as a product of auditive perception of coherent speech (cf. Jespersen 1894: 27). The basis for reshaping 24/4 1458 Hiortils (i.e. Hjorthals, Dan *hjort* ‘stag’ and *hals* ‘neck’) to *Hjordtal* ‘-valley’ (p., Vester Han h.) is thus a subtracted form *Hjortel*, where the original final *-s* of the name has been taken to be the initial *s-* in *sogn* ‘parish’, a word with which this parish-denoting name has often been linked (Hald 1977: 425). A similar situation can be demonstrated in the case of the name *Øverste Ende* ‘Upper End’ (Endelave p., Nim h.), which must be assumed to be an original **Øvre Stendys* (containing the word *stendys* ‘dolmen’, which can have the pronunciation [*stenis*]),¹¹ of which the *-s* has been considered to be a genitive inflexion in the collocation *Øvre Stendys Nakke* (DS XII: 222).

With respect to the semantic aspect of the folk-etymological reshaping, the reinterpretation, focus has been placed on the fact that the word which has resulted from the reshaping, is not meaningful in the normal appellational sense. This can hardly be transferred to the place-name material because, as is well-known, no word that has achieved the status of proper name retains its meaning in the appellational sense. The semantic difference that can be noted between reshaped appellatives and other appellatives can thus not be expected to be reflected in the place-name material. Of the two semantically secondary settlement-names *Præstø* and *Gevnø*, which both appear to contain the word *ø* ‘island’, the first is an original

¹⁰ The generics *-sted*, *-lev* and *-rod* can have weakly-stressed forms [*-stə*], [*-lə*] and [*-rə*].

¹¹ Cf. forms of the West Jutlandic village-name *Stendis* (DS XVII: 234).

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

nature-name in *-ø*, the second a folk-etymological reshaping of a [gevnə], originally a nature-name in ODan *hōgh* ‘mound’ (DS XVI: 2, 74). In both names *-ø* can be identified with the appellative *ø* but in neither of the names *Præstø* or *Gevnø* does the word classify the localities as being areas surrounded by water. In the formulation that it has received hitherto, the question of semantic differences between folk-etymologically reshaped words and other words cannot be transferred to place-name material.

Seen in the light of the observations outlined above, the description of folk-etymological reshaping that has generally been employed in linguistics is not adequate on all points for a material consisting of proper names, even though it has been implicitly assumed that it was. On the contrary, it can be concluded that place-names can not only make a quantitative contribution to a description of the phenomenon but also by virtue of their special characteristics as proper nouns they can expand and introduce light and shade into the description in a qualitative respect.

Bibliography

- Bach, Adolf, 1953–54: Deutsche Namenkunde II. *Die deutschen Ortsnamen I–II*. Heidelberg.
- Benson, Sven, 1976: Namngivare och namngivning. In: Dalberg, Vibeke, et al. (eds), *Ortnamn och samhälle. NORNA-rapporter* 10. Uppsala, pp. 43–48.
- Christensen [Dalberg], Vibeke, 1971: Udviklingen af *hōgh(-)* i østdanske stednavne. In: *Studier i dansk dialektologi og sproghistorie tilegnede Poul Andersen*. København, pp. 65–74.
- Dalberg, Vibeke, 1980: Såkaldt folkeetymologisk omdannelse af stednavne. In: Dalberg, Vibeke et al. (eds), *Sprogvidenskabelig udnyttelse af stednavnematerialet. NORNA-Rapporter* 18. Uppsala, pp. 165–82.
- Dalberg, Vibeke, 1991: *Stednavneændringer og funktionalitet. Analogisk stednavneomdannelse, epexegetisk stednavnedannelse og stednavneskifte belyst ved danske toponymer*. Navnestudier 33. København.
- DS = *Danmarks Stednavne* I–. København 1922–.
- DSÅ = Kousgård Sørensen, John 1968–96: *Danske sø- og ånavne* I–VIII. København.
- Förstemann, Ernst, 1852: Über deutsche Volksetymologie. In: *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft* 1, pp. 1–25.
- Hald, Kristian, 1965: *Vore Stednavne*. 2. ed. København.
- Hald, Kristian, 1977: various place-name interpretations in: *Nudansk Ordbog*. 9. ed. København.

So-called folk-etymological reshaping of place-names

- Hjelmslev, Louis, 1963: *Sproget*. København.
- Houtzager, M.E., 1935: *Uncounscious Sound – and Sense – assimilations*. Amsterdam.
- Jespersen, Otto, 1894: Om subtraktionsdannelser, særlig paa Dansk og Engelsk. In: *Festskrift til Vilhelm Thomsen*. København, pp. 1–30.
- Johansen, Paul, 1952: Volksetymologie und Ortsnamenkunde, erläutert am Beispiel Livlands. In: *Journal de la Société Finno-ougrienne* 56, pp. 1–33.
- Kjederqvist, John, 1902: Lautlich-begriffliche wortassimilationen. Zur halb-hundert-jährigen geschichte des begriffs der volksetymologie. In: Paul, Hermann & Wilhelm Braune (eds): *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 27, pp. 410–45.
- Koch, Max, 1963: Volksetymologie und ihre Zusammenhänge. In: *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 14, pp. 162–168.
- Kousgaard Sørensen, John, 1958: *Danske Bebyggelsesnavne på -sted*. Navnestudier 1. København.
- Ldh = Landehjælp [Extraordinary tax].
- Leenen, Jozef, 1949: Is volksetymologie volkswetenschap? In: *Taal en Tongval* 1, pp. 49–58.
- Ljunggren, K.G., 1958: Folketymologi och korrektion. In: *Saga och sed. Kungl. Gustav Adolfs akademis årsbok*, pp. 19–23.
- LR = Lensregnskab [County accounts].
- Nicolaisen, W.F.H., 1977: Place-names and their Stories. In: *Ortnamnssällskapet i Uppsala årsskrift*, pp. 23–29.
- Nyrop, Kristian, 1882: *Sprogets vilde Skud*. København.
- Sahlgren, Jöran, 1947: Reaktion och korrektion. En språkpsykologisk och språkhistorisk studie. In: *Namn och bygd. Tidskrift för nordisk ortnamnsforskning* 35, pp. 97–126.
- Sanders, Willy, 1971–75: Zur deutschen Volksetymologie. In: *Niederdeutsches Wort* 11, pp. 1–6; 12, pp. 1–15; 15, pp. 1–5.
- Sandfeld, Kr., 1923: *Sprogvidenskab*. 2. ed. København.