

In Czech, the assignment of grammatical gender to certain place names ending in (what is known as) soft or hybrid consonants is inconsistent, especially in the spoken language. These toponyms used to be treated as masculine nouns but today are overwhelmingly codified as feminine nouns. The present paper takes a look at the way these toponyms are described in linguistic guides and compendia which specify their gender, their origination and their meaning, or describe their use in local dialects. Based on the data in those manuals, the author has created a list of gender-shifting toponyms, with a brief specification of the grammatical gender and colloquial use (exactly as described in the said manuals), so as to allow for their easy comparison. Selected toponyms (which are analyzed in more detail in the grammatical guides, or which were assigned a different gender by different guides and compendia) are the subject of a broader discussion within the context of this work. In another section, the present work references the results of an internet questionnaire designed to map the actual use of grammatical gender for these toponyms by native speakers. This questionnaire examined a number of toponyms that were selected for being generally known, or based on their frequency in various districts. Respondents were given the task to either assign a (genderdefining, in Czech) adjective to the given toponym or plug it into a prescribed sentence in the correct grammatical case (again revealing the respondent's choice of gender). Most respondents use these toponyms 'as if they were feminine', though the vernacular masculine form is still present with several respondents. The final part of this work is devoted to toponyms ending in a soft or hybrid consonant which are always used as masculine nouns (i.e., which were never codified as feminine nor succumbed to bureaucratic attempts to unify the use of similar toponyms).