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TOPONYMS IN ECOLINGUISTICS: CONTRASTS AMONG DIFFERENT STRATEGIES OF NAMING PLACES IN IRAN AND BRAZIL

TOPÔNIMOS EM ECOLINGUÍSTICA: CONTRASTE ENTRE DIFERENTES ESTRATÉGIAS NO IRÃ E NO BRASIL

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ABSTRACT

Ecolinguistics and Toponymy are both marginal to General Linguistics. On one hand, the main contribution that Toponymy can provide is the knowledge of interactions between human and nature inside a linguistic environment. On the other hand, Ecolinguistics can offer distinct methodologies, tools of analysis, and conspicuous frameworks to placenaming. This work discusses theoretical and methodological issues regarding traditional Toponymy studies and the contributions that Ecolinguistics can present to this area. Furthermore, in order to clear up our assumptions on the relations between Ecolinguistics and Toponymy, we analyze data from two distinct places – two linguistic environments – one in Sergipe (Northeastern Brazil) and other in Gilan (Northern Iran), with different naming places mechanisms. The main mechanism is the influence of Territory physical traces on the place name, but there are several other, such as: the relations with the local inhabitants' history or behavior, mental, nature or culture features as well. These naming places instruments reveal information about the Language, the People, and the Territory of those places.

Keywords: Toponymy. Ecolinguistics. Ecosystemic Linguistics. Brazil. Iran.

RESUMO

Ecolinguística e toponímia são de pouco interesse para a Linguística Geral. Por um lado, a principal contribuição da toponímia é o conhecimento das interações dentro de um meio ambiente linguístico específico entre seres humanos e a natureza. Por outro, a Ecolinguística oferece

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diferentes metodologias, ferramentas para análises e abordagens. Este trabalho discute aspectos teóricos e metodológicos dos estudos toponímicos tradicionais e as contribuições que a Ecolinguística pode oferecer. Procurando enfatizar as relações entre Ecolinguística e Toponímia, foram analisados dados de dois meio ambientes linguísticos distintos, a saber: Lagarto, Sergipe (Nordeste do Brasil) e Gilan (Norte do Irã), verificando como se dão os mecanismos de nomeação do ambiente. O principal mecanismo encontrado foi a influência de características físicas do território, mas foram encontrados também outros mecanismos, como: a história local e traços comportamentais, mentais, naturais e culturais dos habitantes locais. Essas formas de nomear os locais revelam informações sobre a língua, o povo e o território.

Palavras-chave*: Toponímia. Ecolinguística. Brasil. Irã.*

1 INTRODUCTION[1]

The present work has the objective of analyzing and comparing the toponyms of two distinct places: Gilan (Northern Iran) and Lagarto (Northeastern Brazil), according to Ecolinguistics theory. The choice of sites was due to the field work carried out by the authors and also to verify if there are any similarities among the placenaming by populations historically, culturally and linguistically unrelated.

Ecolinguistics can provide several tools for toponymy, including theoretical contributions and methodological issues for researching. The main ones are how to study the relations among people, language, places, and names (NASH, 2015, p. 68), and the ways the researcher must interact with the researched community. Even with placenaming being secondary to traditional Linguistics, in the last few years toponymy has been developed with several questions raised and studies relating with other areas, as phenomenology, spatial orientation, anthropology, ethnography and philosophy.[2] But whit this development, Ecolinguistics still has a lot to assist the studies on placenaming, such as: the delimitation of a community being faced and analyzed as an ecosystem; the researched ecosystem can be observed through different perspectives (natural, social, mental and integral) on its interactions; the research focus on interactions inside the ecosystem (individual-individual and individual-elements), including the researcher itself.[3]

Lagarto is a municipality in the state of Sergipe, one of the 26 states of Brazil. The city is located in the Northeastern region of the country and is part of the 'Agreste Sergipano' (the dry region of Sergipe). Approximately half the population is urban, while the other half is located in the rural area, dedicating itself to agricultural activities. The population is about 100.000 inhabitants.

Gilan, a northern province next to Caspian Sea, is the 28th largest province and third in population density with 177 persons per one square kilometer of land area. This province contains 16 counties, 43 districts and over 2500 settlements (including cities and villages).

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[2] For a detailed discussion on this theme and Ecolinguistics contribution to toponymy see Nash (2017).

[3] For the different ecosystems and interactions see Couto (2017). For the relationships among ecosystem, interaction and the eco-linguistic fieldwork on toponymy see Nash (2013).

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Hence, the theory and the methodology chosen by the authors were explained above. Moreover, the places and toponyms collected to be analyzed here were revealed as well.

This text is structured as the following: some further considerations among Ecolinguistics and Toponymy will be elaborated in section (1); the analysis of Gilan and Lagarto toponyms will be conducted in section (2); section (3) is dedicated to the conclusions.

2 ECOLINGUISTICS AND TOPONYMY

Toponyms are the results and the records of interactions between people and their environment through language. Thus, we based our analysis on Couto's Ecosystemic Linguistics which is called due to its central concept – also central concept from ecology - the ecosystem (COUTO, 2013, 2015, 2017). The Linguistic Ecosystem "consists of a people (P), whose members live in their territory (T) and communicate according to the usual way of communicating in their community (L)" (COUTO, 2017, p. 149). Distinct standpoints of language reflect on Linguistic Ecosystem which can be Natural Ecosystem of Language, Mental Ecosystem of Language and Social Ecosystem of Language (COUTO, 2007, 2017).

Furthermore, the interactions are the center of Ecosystemic Linguistics – as Couto (2015) emphasizes the ecology of communicative interactions – and of Nash Ecolinguistic fieldwork, mainly in Toponymy (NASH, 2013). Moreover, we point out that in Iran and Brazil, it is possible to consider that the major languages are ecologically embedded languages, according to Nash (2015), and Nash and Mühlhäusler (2014) criteria, followed by the data analysis in this paper and the conclusions we drawn from both (our analysis and Nash's theory).

Thus, it is possible to point out the clear relationship between toponymy and Ecolinguistics in Couto's Ecosystemic Linguistics, according to its tripartite models – people, (P), territory (T), and community language (L), and the three Ecosystems of Language (Natural, Mental and Social) – and Nash's proposals regarding interaction, ecolinguistic fieldwork and ecologically embedded languages. Both Ecolinguistics models take into consideration the main elements of toponyms, which are the people interacting with their environment in different ways, especially through language.

Finally, using Pal and Mahamadi (2017) and Nash and Mühlhäusler (2014), over thirty settlement names were selected for Gilan and about thirty for Lagarto as well. According their appellation, these place names are categorized in two main categories based on the relationship of human with their surroundings.

3 TOPONYMS CLASSIFICATION: GILAN AND LAGARTO

If the toponym identifies the interaction of settlers with their natural surroundings, it belongs to nature-driven class and if it characterizes the settlers' interaction with society, it is put in society-driven class. This distinction is constantly recognized in Ecolinguistic theory, so called 'natura-cultura' (COUTO, 2013, p. 292). Each category then is divided to sub-categories which further identify the specific type of human-environment interaction. Table (1) demonstrates the categorization on toponyms:

Table 1 – Toponyms classification

	Nature-driven class	Society-driven class
1	Natural elements	Agriculture and industries
2	Topography	Proper names
3	Fauna and flora	Ethnic groups and clans
4	Terrestrial materials	Religion related
5	Colors	Local markets
6	Celestial phenomena	Numbers

Source: Pal e Mahamadi (2017, p. 3).

3.1 NATURE-DRIVEN CLASS

Gilan is located beside Caspian Sea in the northern border and Alborz Mountain range in its southern part. It has the highest rainfall year round and as a result of its unique location, it enjoys species diversity as well as spectacular geographic landscape. As presented in Table 1, this category of toponyms includes nature elements, topography and geography, endemic fauna and flora, terrestrial materials, colors, and celestial phenomena. In the following section we will present more details on each sub-categories.

3.1.1 Natural elements

Four natural elements of fire (*atash, tash, azar*), wind (*va*), soil (*khak*), water (*ab, av*) are actively involved in place naming in Gilan.[4]

Table 2 – Toponyms based on natural elements

	Example from Gilan	Phonetics	Form	Meaning
1	ABROOD	/ɑbrud/	AB+ROOD (water+river)	Settlement near river
2	ATASHGAH	/atæʃɡɑh/	ATASH+GAH (fire+place)	Settlement near fire temple
3	GILEVA MAHALLEH	/gilevɑmæhæle/	GILEVA+MAHALLEH (name of wind+place)	A place where Gileva wind blows
4	KHAK SHOOR	/xɑkʃur/	KHAK+SHOOR (soil+saline)	Land with saline soil

Source: Authors' field notes.

As Lagarto is located in a hot and dry land, the natural element more important for the population due to surviving and the lack of it in the region is water. Furthermore, this is one of the four major classifications for people placenaming in Lagarto.[5] We found villages names related to water, water source, or finding water. The other three are: fauna and flora (due to migrations and the discovering of uninhabited lands with the presence of untouched fauna and flora); agriculture and industries (mainly the agriculture in the region stimulated by Portuguese and Dutch colonizers); religion related (the strong presence of Portuguese colonization has left Catholic roots in the local population).

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[4] For a detailed study of Gilan places see Dadras and Koochaki Zadeh (2014).

[5] Despite our statement on the existence of several Lagarto toponyms and toponyms classification, we don't list all of them here, only the thirty mentioned at the beginning of this text, because this is a preliminary result of our ongoing investigation and some of the data collected is still under research.

- OLHOS D'ÁGUA (Port.[6]) 'water eyes' (eyes + of + water): 'Metaphor for water spring or water source';
- TANQUE (Port.) 'tank': 'huge water tank used by former slaves'.

TANQUE is not directly related to natural elements, only indirectly, but it was mentioned to explain the importance of water for the local people as stated above, there are other examples that will be explained in other subsections which water is marked by its importance, as BREJO (swamp), VÁRZEA DOS CÁGADOS (Tortoises meadow), CURRALINHO (Small Corral) and AÇUZINHO (small water reservoir).

3.1.2 Topography

Landscape features such as mountain (*kooh*), rood and stream (*river, joo*), hill (*poshteh, tappeh*), pool (*estalkh*), puddle (*chal*), valley (*darreh, chak*), and plain (*dasht*) form the main part of toponyms. ESTALKHJAN, PILDARREH, JOOBANEH are three examples of this sub-category.

Table 3 – Toponyms based on topography

	Example from Gilan	**Phonetics**	**Form**	**Meaning**
5	ESTALKH JAN	/estælxdʒɑn/	ESTALKH+JAN (pool+place)	Settlement with a pool
6	PANBEH POSHTEH	/pæmbepoʃte/	PANBEH+POSHTEH (cotton+hill)	Settlement on the hills of which cotton grows
7	JOOBANEH	/dʒubæne/	JOO+BANEH (stream+settlement)	A settlement through which flows a stream
8	PILDARREH	/pildærre/	PIL+DAREEH (big+valley)	Settlement with big valley
9	DARYASAR	/dærjɑsær/	DARYA+SAR (sea+at the top of, by)	A settlement by the sea
10	PALT DASHT	/pæltdæʃt/	PALT+DASHT (maple tree+plain)	Land with maple tree in its plain
11	NARENJ DOL	/nɑrendʒdol/	NARENJ+DOL (sour orange+deep valley)	Land with sour orange trees in its valleys
12	DIVROOD	/divrud/	DIV+ROOD (beast+river)	Land with a big wild river
13	SIAH KOOH	/sijɑku/	SIAH+KOOH (black+mountain)	Land with rough mountains

Source: Authors' field notes.

Lagarto data regards topography is conspicuous since only a few landscape examples were found. We expected the opposite because visual cues from landscape usually is one of the most common strategies for naming places:

- BREJO (Port.) 'Swamp': 'region with muddy soil during the rainy season and also have water springs';

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[6] Abbreviations from languages are the following: Port. > Portuguese; Lat. > Latin; Tup. > Tupian; Spa. > Spanish; Ar. > Arabic.

- VÁRZEA DOS CÁGADOS (meadow + of + tortoises) 'Tortoises meadow': 'creek that formerly was full of tortoises, also standing out for the population due to the presence of water and a wide terrain'.

3.1.3 Fauna and flora

This category includes those toponyms whose main parts consist of the name of animals or plants. It is worth mentioning that those fauna and flora species are (or used to be) endemic to the province. Lion (*shir* in SHIRCHAK), leopard (*palang* in PALANG DARREH), poultry (namely *rooster* or *tela* in TELABON), jackal (*shal* or *shoghal* in DEHSHAL) are examples of animals.

Table 4 – Toponyms based on fauna

	Example from Gilan	**Phonetics**	**Form**	**Meaning**
14	SHIRCHAK	/ʃirtʃɑk/	SHIR+CHAK (lion+valley)	Valley where lions live
15	KOPOORCHAL	/kopurtʃɑl/	KOPOOR+CHAL (carp fish+hole, puddle)	Land with carp fish in its puddles

Source: Authors' field notes.

Walnut (*aghooz* in AGHOOZKALLEH), persimmon (*arbu, arbah* in ARBUSARA), fig (*anjir/anjil* in ANJILAN) are some of the plants and trees found in this region:

Table 5 – Toponyms based on flora

	Example from Gilan	**Phonetics**	**Form**	**Meaning**
16	AGHOOZKALEH	/ɑquzkæle/	AGHOOZ + KALEH (walnut + place)	A place where walnut trees grow
17	ARBUSARA	/ærbusærɑ/	ARBU + SARA (persimmon + place)	Settlement with persimmon trees

Source: Authors' field notes.

As mentioned above, the fauna and flora classification is one of the four with most data for Lagarto toponyms. Since Lagarto is located in a hot, dry and is partially a wild land, there are more fauna toponyms or fauna-related. Flora toponyms are only a few:

- PIABAS 'name of small river fishes with spotted skin', Tup. *pi'awa* 'spotted skin'. In local histories, the inhabitants gave this name to the village, because they found a puddle of water near the road in which appeared some 'piabas';
- URUBUTINGA 'White buzzard', Tup. *uru* 'big bird'; *wu* 'black'; *tynga* 'white': probably a place where a large number white buzzards lived (*Sarcoramphus papa*), usually other buzzard species are black. In local histories, any reference to the term 'buzzard, vulture' is believed to mean 'bad land, poor for cultivation'.

There are different types of fauna-related toponyms in Lagarto. It was found a mixed type of topography-fauna, as VÁRZEA DOS CÁGADOS, already quoted, another mixed one of agriculture/industries-fauna, as SACO DO TIGRE related to hunting/ gaming activities, and even nicknames or anecdotes based on the local fauna were source or strategy of placenaming. The name of city itself, LAGARTO, was based on local history, topography and fauna:

- SACO DO TIGRE 'Tiger sack' (sack + of + tiger): region between the Atlantic Forest and the Caatinga, prone to hunting with wild cats and jaguars, called 'tiger' by locals. 'sack' refers to burrows that were dug by the hunters or the utensils in format of bag used to load the body of the dead animals;
- SUVACO DA CACHORRA 'female dog armpit' (armpit + of + female dog), Lat. *subvacus* 'armpit' > Port. the correct word is *sovaco* > *suvaco* is a local variation. The Portuguese word *cachorra* is 'female dog', and in the local jargon 'to smell like a dog' is the same as 'smell bad' or 'stink': in the 1980s, a local gentleman was known for not bathing and for his particular odor. When there was a sharing of land made by politicians, he was contemplated with a terrain in this region. Neighbors or inhabitants of other nearby villages began to call the still-unnamed village by popular expressions that referred to this gentleman bad smell, such as: ' a Mr. with a stink of armpit ',' the place where live a sir that smell like an old dog/ or doggie armpit';
- LAGARTO 'Lizard': there are two sources for this name. The first states that the name was given due to a river of the region that had the shape of a lizard. The second is based on a local history in which the first inhabitants found an old Portuguese family crest that had a design similar to a lizard.

Flora toponyms in Lagarto, as already stated earlier, are only a few found in our data. Here are the examples collected:

JENIPAPO 'Jenipapo fruit', Tup. *yandï'pawa* 'jenipapo': there are several stories about the origin of the village name. One of them points out that the region was full of jenipapo trees (*Genipa americana*). Other story states that there was a terrain with many jenipapo trees in which the lady owner let slaves take advantage of the shade of the trees, fed them and gave them shelter as well;

- PINDOBA 'type of a palm tree': homonym of a palm tree very found in the region (*Attalea Oleifera*) and in the other states of the Northeastern Brazil (Sergipe and Alagoas). The origin of the word is Tupian to designate this same palm (*pin'dob*) that is harnessed whole for different practices and utilities, such as: manufacture of hook and cover of the houses, with the leaves; edible oil, soap making and lighting, with almonds and seeds; to soften the climate and protection of the sun, with the tree as a whole.

3.1.4 Terrestrial material

Some settlements are given names after materials like stone (*sang*) in SANGJOOB and gold (*tala*) in TALABAR.

Table 6 – Toponyms based on terrestrial material

	Example from Gilan	Phonetics	Form	Meaning
18	SANGJOOB	/sændʒub/	SANG+JOOB (stone+stream)	Settlement near a stream with rocky bed
19	TALABAR	/tælɑbær/	TALA+BAR (gold+beside)	Settlement next to a golden mountain

Source: Authors' field notes.

It wasn't found any data on Lagarto villages names on this classification.

3.1.5 Colors

White (*sefid*), black (*siah*), green (*sabz*), red (*qermez*), yellow (*zard*) form place names in accompany with one or two other lexemes. SEFIDKHANI and SABZ KOOH are among the toponyms of this category.

Table 7 – Toponyms based on colors

	Example from Gilan	**Phonetics**	**Form**	**Meaning**
20	SEFIDKHANI	/sefidxɑni/	SEFID+KHANI (white+spring)	A place in which there is a spring whose water in white (a roaring spring)
21	SABZ KOOH	/sæbzku/	SABZ+KOOH (green+mountain)	Settlement locater in green mountains

Source: Authors' field notes.

It wasn't found any data on Lagarto villages names on this classification as well.

3.1.6 Celestial phenomena

Sun (*khorshid, khor*) is the most frequently used item of all celestial phenomena and KHORGAM is an example of a place name.

Table 8 – Toponym based on celestial phenomena

	Example from Gilan	**Phonetics**	**Form**	**Meaning**
22	KHORGAM	/xorgɑm/	KHOR+GAM (sun+step)	Land from where the sun rises

Source: Authors' field notes.

It wasn't found any data on Lagarto villages on this classification as well.

3.2 SOCIETY-DRIVEN CLASS

The second category of toponyms includes those place names that are in/directly related to human-society interactions and the activities that involve human-human relationship. Livelihood, trade, influential people, ethnic diversity, and religion are sub-divisions of this class and each of them defines a specific aspect of settlers' social life.

3.2.1 Agriculture and local industries

Main local industries and agricultural activities include: silk, rice, and tea farming, grain milling, shoe making, wood works, musicianship, pottery, among other. OWTAR MAHALLEH, and KACHA are toponyms related to music and silk farming, respectively.

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Table 9 – Toponyms based on ariculture and local industries

	Example from Gilan	**Phonetics**	**Form**	**Meaning**
23	ASIYABSAR	/ɑsijɑbsær/	ASIYAB+SAR (gristmill+by)	Settlement near a gristmill (flour mill)
24	OWTAR MAHALLEH	/owtɑrmæhælle/	OWTAR+MAHALLEH (kettledrum+neighborhood)	A place where the settlers play musical instruments
25	KACHA	/kætʃɑ/	KACH (silk farming)	A place where people produce low quality silk

Source: Authors' field notes.

The main activity reflected in Lagarto toponyms is agriculture, as can be inferred by the data, but also it was found other local industries naming places, as hunting, SACO DO TIGRE (Tiger sack), and flour fabrication:

- GAMELEIRO 'Trough User', Lat. *Camellam* > Spa. *Gamella*: name given to an extinct indigenous people, who wore a kind of trough on the lower lip. It is also believed that the name was given due to the indigenous technique of making manioc flour in troughs;
- CURRALINHO 'Small Corral': land inherited from the Dutch by a recognized family of the region (17th century), which used Dutch cattle ranching practices, intensive livestock, in which livestock was raised in small corrals or stone enclosures;
- FAZENDA GRANDE 'Great Farm': in 19th century, it was a vast territory in which was located the farm of a rich family of the region;
- AÇUZINHO 'small water reservoir/ small weir', Ar. *as-sudd* 'dam, obstacle': due to the influence of intensive livestock farming, which has its origins with the Dutch presence in the region, and the aridity of the land, landowners in this region built several dams or water reservoirs, all small in size to supply both cattle and people. The name is a variation of the diminutive of the Portuguese word for 'weir' *açude*> açu-z-inho;
- HORTA 'Vegetable garden': a place where Franciscan priests built a vegetable garden near the monastery, around the first half of the eighteenth century.

There are also data toponyms in Lagarto related to local industries, but hard to classify due to its overspecification, as CARRO QUEBRADO, or in some cases aren't a local industry itself, only an activity, as begging, in TAPERA DO SACO:

- CARRO QUEBRADO 'Broken Car': in the 1970s, during the construction of the Dionísio de Araújo Machado Dam, DNOCS (National Department of Works Against Drought) employees abandoned several vehicles on the road linking Lagarto-Aracaju (Sergipe state capital);
- TAPERA DO SACO 'Abandoned House Sack', Tup. aba uêra, t-aba 'village', uêra 'extinct, abandoned': in the period after the end of slavery, many slaves were left without a source of income and many of them gathered at this location near a road with sacks in hand begging.

3.2.2 Proper names

Some villages and settlements are named after people who were apparently influential in one way or another. Most of those people who are in almost all cases male figures contributed to

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the development of those settlement. QASEM ABAD, REZA MAHALLEH are named after Qasem and Reza, respectively.

Table 10 – Toponyms based on proper names

	Example from Gilan	Phonetics	Form	Meaning
26	QASEM ABAD	/qasemabad/	QASEM+ ABAD (male name+settlement)	A settlement named after Qasem
27	REZA MAHALLEH	/rezamæhælle/	REZA+MAHALLEH (male name+settlement)	A settlement named after Reza

Source: Authors' field notes.

Proper names in Lagarto toponyms collected were only a few and related to persons, families or cities:

- LUÍS FREIRE: Owner of vast lands and cattle rancher, Luís Freire was a historical person recognized when fighting alongside Cristóvão de Barros, who founded the city of São Cristóvão in 1590, in the future this would become the state of Sergipe;
- BRASÍLIA: A place near the road where several workers who participated in the construction of Brasília (Brazil new capital which was transferred in 1960 from Rio de Janeiro to Brasília, a recent construct and planned city), in the 1950s and 1960s, and then returned to Sergipe. The inhabitants of the place began to be known popularly as 'the personnel who work in Brasília' or 'the Brasília people'. There is another version in which it is narrated that the origin of the name is the following: at the time of the construction of Brasilia when the name of the village was to be register as *Santo Antônio*, there was already several villages with this name. Hence, in the impossibility of the registry and in the absence of another the name, 'Brasilia' was decided only because the new capital was being constructed and was a theme commented by everyone by the time.

3.2.3 Ethnic groups and clans

Although Gilan is very small province, many different clans used to live – and some are still living - there. Many settlements have been named after those ethnic groups and clans. Turkish, Mangols, Kakavand (from Kermanshah), Kurds, Khalaj (from Qom, a central Iranian city), Shol (one of Lur tribes from Shiraz, a central Iranian city), Buyids, and Saka (of Achaemenides) are some of ethnic groups, some of which belong to ancient era. BOOYEH (after Buyids) and TORK MAHALLEH (after Turkish) are two examples of this category.

Table 11 – Toponyms based on ethnic groups and clans

	Example from Gilan	Phonetics	Form	Meaning
28	BOOYEH	/buje/	Proper name	After Buyids dynasty, an Iranian Shia dynasty of Daylamite origin, 934-1067
29	TORK MAHALLEH	/torkmæhælle/	TURK+MAHALLEH (turkic+neighborhood)	Settlement where Turkish families live

Source: Authors' field notes.

Brazilian population is basically formed with the mixing of three different ethnic groups: European colonizers, especially Portuguese; Africans, due to slavery; Indigenous, local inhabitants when the land was conquered by the Europeans in 16th century. Thus, this toponym classification is referring to these three groups. In Lagarto, we collected two related to indigenous, GAMELEIRO (Trough User) and CARAÍBAS (Karib), and one related to former African slaves or their descendants:

- CARAÍBAS 'Karib', Tup. kara'ib 'smart': Name given to Indians of non-Tupian origin, usually the Karib;
- CAMPO DO CRIOULO 'Creole Field': unowned land that at the end of the 19th century was found and inhabited by a group of newly freed slaves that were called 'creoles'.

3.2.4 Religion related

Nouns, such as mosque (place where Muslims worship God daily), seyed and sadat, agha (titles for families descended from Prophet's children), sheikh, pir, and baba (titles for people who are respected either religiously or spiritually), Bogh'eh (tomb of either religiously or spiritually respected persons), are used as the main part of a toponym. BABAKOOH, PIRSARA, SADAT MAHALLEH are among those toponyms.

Table 12 – Toponyms based on religion

	Example from Gilan	**Phonetics**	**Form**	**Meaning**
30	BABAKOOH	/bɑbɑku/	BABA+KOOH (an old and respected religious figure or mentor+mountain)	Sacred mountainous land
31	SADAT MAHALLEH	/sɑdɑtæhælle/	SADAT+MAHALLEH (surname for families who are descendants of Muslim prophet+neighborhood)	Neighborhood where Sadats live

Source: Authors' field notes.

This is the last major classification from Lagarto Toponyms. The region has an influence from Portuguese colonizers since 17th century, hence, there is a strong presence of Catholicism with churches, feasts, holidays, local history and also place names. We separate only two, as other data remains understudied to be analyzed in a future research:

- SANTO ANTÔNIO: name of a Portuguese world famous saint, related to marriage and festivals. There are several cities, towns, and villages throughout Brazil with the name as homage to this saint;
- LOIOLA: former Lagarto village, nowadays is a neighbor, has is name as an homage to Saint Ignatius of Loyola, founder of Society of Jesus.

3.2.5 Local markets

Weekly local markets (BAZAR) play a very important role in local people's lives and their livelihood. They provide them with the opportunity of trading their goods and products. BAZARDEH, SHANBEH BAZAR, BAZARGAH are examples of toponyms with focus on market in their names.

Table 13 – Toponyms based on local markets

	Example from Gilan	**Phonetics**	**Form**	**Meaning**
32	BAZARDEH	/bɑzɑrdeh/	BAZAR+DEH (market+village)	A village with a market in it
33	SHANBEH BAZAR	/ʃæmbebɑzɑr/	SHANBEH+BAZAR (Saturday+market)	Settlement in which there is a market on Saturdays
34	BAZARGAH	/bɑzɑrgɑh/	BAZAR+GAH (Market+place)	Settlement which is a place for local market

Source: Authors' field notes.

It wasn't found any data on Lagarto villages names on this classification.

3.2.6 Numbers

Individual numbers of one (YEK), to eight (HASHT) and also two digit numbers like fifty (PANJAH) and sixty (SHAST) are used in naming settlements in Gilan province. HAFTBAND and HASHTPAR are two examples.

Table 14 – Toponyms based on numbers

	Example from Gilan	**Phonetics**	**Form**	**Meaning**
35	HAFTBAND	/hæftbænd/	HAFT+BAND (seven+dam)	Place with seven local dams
36	HASHTPAR	/hæʃtpær/	HASHT+PAR (eight+side)	An octagonal building at the entrance of the city

Source: Authors' field notes.

It was found only one example in Lagarto related to number:

• COLÔNIA 13 (Colony 13): When the construction of this village began, the measurement of the center of it to the center of both neighboring municipalities (Lagarto and Salgado) had the distance of 13 km.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Having presented two major classes of toponyms from Gilan province in Iran and Lagarto in Sergipe, Brazil, it seems that both Gilaki (the major language of the province) and Portuguese (the major language of the entire country) fits well within ecologically embedded languages described by Nash (2015). Furthermore, it is clear that the Ecosystem of Language can be used to describe the interactions that occurs within the communities researched. The Natural Ecosystem of Language is related to Nature-driven class, the Social Ecosystem of Language to Society-driven class, and the Mental Ecosystem of Language works as a link of them.

Finally, in the following the five criteria of such ecologically embedded languages (NASH, 2015, p. 69) are quoted with focus on Gilan's and Lagarto's toponyms:

1. "Words reflect social interaction between humans and their environment":

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Basically, the toponyms from Gilan and Lagarto clearly exhibit this characteristics, since natural and environmental elements (i.g. water, mountain, river and stream, hill, etc.) are present in almost all place names;

2. "Lexical and grammatical forms are not regarded as arbitrary":

Some place names comprise phrases, namely, preposition phrases (e.g. ASIYABSAR, SACO DO TIGRE), adjective phrases (e.g. SABZ KOOH, FAZENDA GRANDE) and noun phrases (QASEM ABAD, GAMELEIRO) with all their linguistic properties;

3. "The same word can be used to describe human and other life forms":

In the case on Gilan, morphemes, such as "SARA", which refers to place or property is used for animals (PALANGSARA, place for tigers), plants (ARBUSARA, place for persimmon trees), and human (HASANSARA, place for Hassan –a male proper name). As for Lagarto, the lexeme SACO can be used to refer to human, objects or animals;

4. "The lexicon and grammar of space reflects topography":

Deictics (e.g. SAR PORDSAR, on top of the bridge, and JIRDEH, the village in lower area) in our place names represent geographic directions which are coincident to either geographic coordinates or topography. VÁRZEA DOS CAGADOS is a mixed toponym, but VÁRZEA can be used to refer to a plain and vast terrain, or a valley, or a soil good for agriculture;

5. "Language is a memory of past interactions between humans and nature":

The place names which belong to society-driven class represent bonds with history of the province (Gilan) or the municipality (Lagarto). For instance, SADAT MAHALLEH used to be the neighborhood where SADAT families would live, but now there are a few of them –if there exists any. Even those toponyms belonging to the nature-driven class also are a part of history since for example today in AGHOOZ CALEH (a place where walnut trees grow) there is no walnut tree anymore, but in the past there used to be plenty of it and that was why settlers called the place such a name. As for Lagarto, CARAÍBA can be a trace of an indigenous non-Tupian origins past presence; CURRALINHO and AÇUZINHO are evidences from the Dutch influence by the time of Dutch invasion in Brazil (17th century); CAMPO DO CRIOULO and TAPERA DO SACO reveal the situation of former African slaves in Brazil when the slavery was abolished in the end of 19th century.

This work is a preliminary result of an ongoing research, but it is possible to attest the contributions that Ecolinguistics can offer to Toponymy studies with distinct theoretical approaches and proposals of methodologies, mainly Couto's (2013, 2015, 2017), Nash's (2013, 2015) and Nash and Mühlhäusler's (2014).

With the ecological approach to placenaming, the researcher is able to do among other: to study his/her research object from several points of view, from the wider to the narrowest/ specific; to insert him/herself in the research without being the neutral/ objective/ fictitious (?) observer; to elaborate a multidisciplinary study inserting other areas of interest to Toponym. Hence, Ecolinguistics has yet a lot of things to offer to Toponymy research and it is up to the researchers to explore these findings.

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