Formation of names of genera of prokaryotes that end on -oides or -opsis. A proposal for addenda to Rule 65(2) and Appendix 9 of the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes

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In view of the current confusion about the correct gender of genus names ending on -oides, and possible confusion in the future for genus names ending on -opsis, we propose non-retrovactive addenda to Rule 65(2) and Appendix 9 of the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes so that new genera to be formed by adding the ending -oides to the stem of an existing genus name or another (Neo-) Latin word must be treated as neuter and genus names ending on -opsis are to be treated as feminine.

According to Rule 65(2) of the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes (Parker et al., 2015), generic or subgeneric names which are modern compounds from two or more Latin or Greek words take the gender of the last component of the compound word. This Rule causes problems for genus names with the ending -oides. As of December 2015, there were 13 such genera with validly published names.

The ending -oides is based on the Greek suffix -oides, which is derived from the Greek neuter noun eidos that which is seen, form, shape, figure. Based on Rule 65(2) it may be argued that all genus names ending on -oides must have the neuter gender, therefore. Methanococcosoides, a genus resembling Methanococcus (masculine), was indeed given the neuter gender (Sowers & Ferry, 1983). However, most of the names have the gender of the genus name or the (Neo-) Latin word that precedes the -oides ending:

- Masculine: Acetobacteroides, Bacteroides, Dehalococcoides, Halobacteroides, Macellibacteroides, Myroides, Parabacteroides, Pseudobacteroides, Thermobacteroides.
- Feminine: Planktothricoides. Suda et al. (2002) named a cyanobacterial genus resembling Planktothrix as Planktothricoides. However, based on the transliteration of the Greek noun thrix, genitive trichos, -trichoides is the preferred ending for such a name.
- Neuter: None found.

The genus Nocardia from which the name Nocardoides was derived is feminine, but for unclear reasons Nocardoides was given the masculine gender (Prauser, 1976). Therefore, the species name Nocardoides fastidiosa (Collins & Stacke-bandt, 1989) was later corrected to Nocardoides fastidiosus (Euzéby, 1998). Nineteen more species names within the genus have the masculine -us ending.

Formally it is possible to consider genus names ending on -oides as adjectives used as a noun. This view was discussed by MacAdoo (1993), who stated:

‘The generic name Bacteroides, for example, is an adjective of this type, but the taxonomist who created it decided to call it masculine, with the result that the name thus pronounced would now literally mean “a rod-shaped man”, which is not at all the idea. (That this particular word has only one ending is a result of transliteration; in Greek letters, the last e would be an eta if the gender were masculine or feminine, an epsilon if neuter.)’

A similar case is the ending -opsis (from Gr. fem. n. opsis aspect, appearance) when used in genus names. Currently there are four such names with standing in the nomenclature of prokaryotes: Allonocardiopsis, Amycolatopsis, Murinocardiopsis and Nocardiopsis. All these are feminine, and by chance there are no problems here as both the older genus names on which the new names were based (Nocardia, Amycolatus) and the Greek noun from which the ending is derived are feminine. But when in the future authors will use the -opsis ending more frequently, they will need to decide whether such genus names are all feminine because of the gender of the Greek ending, or will obtain the gender of the genus name from which they were derived. We propose adopting the feminine gender for all such names. Note that also in the case of the cyanobacterium Camptolyonemopsis lahorensis (named under the provisions of the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants), the feminine gender was adopted for the...
epithet at the time when *Camptylonema lahorense* was transferred to the new genus.

In view of the current confusion on how to designate the gender of genus names with the ending –oides and potential confusion in the future when authors will use the –opsis ending more extensively, we propose the following non-retroactive additions to the Code and to its Appendix 9 (Parker *et al*., 2015; Trüper & Euzéby, 2009):

**Rule 65**

Below

'The gender of generic names is governed by the following.

(2) Generic or subgeneric names which are modern compounds from two or more Latin or Greek words take the gender of the last component of the compound word.'

the following is to be added:

‘Note: names ending on –oides (from Gr. suff. –eides derived from Gr. neut. n. eidos that which is seen, form, shape, figure) will have the neuter gender, irrespective of the gender of the word or word element that precedes the –oides ending. Names ending on –opsis (from Gr. fem. n. opsis aspect, appearance) must be treated as feminine.’

**Appendix 9**

Below Section B(v), the following is to be added:

‘Names ending on –oides are formed by adding that suffix to the stem of the preceding word or word element and have the neuter gender. Names ending on –opsis (from Gr. fem. n. opsis aspect, appearance) must be treated as feminine.’

**References**


