

# Names | A Journal of Onomastics



## An Exploration of River Names in China

**Yuan Sun**

*Foreign Languages College, Jiangxi Normal University, CHINA*

**Xiangyong Jiang**

*Foreign Languages College, Jiangxi Normal University, CHINA*

[ans-names.pitt.edu](http://ans-names.pitt.edu)

ISSN: 0027-7738 (print) 1756-2279 (web)

Vol. 71, No. 1, Winter 2023

DOI 10.5195/names.2023.2410

Articles in this journal are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



This journal is published by [Pitt Open Library Publishing](https://open.library.pitt.edu/).

## Abstract

As a subtype of toponym, hydronyms reflect people's perception, understanding, and contemplation of waterbodies. With data collected from authoritative gazetteers, this study classifies the names of 189 major rivers distributed across Mainland China into seven categories to extrapolate general rules governing river-naming in China. The results show that descriptive names comprise the biggest share. Based on this study's research findings, this article also discusses the complex cognitive processes, including conceptual metonymy, conceptual metaphor, and conceptual blending involved in river-naming in China. Specifically, based on the principles of proximity and prominence, the most frequently employed types were the following metonymies: PLACE FOR RIVER, PROPERTY FOR RIVER, PERSON FOR RIVER, EVENT FOR RIVER, and FUNCTION FOR RIVER. As this research shows, river naming in China is not arbitrary, but highly motivated.

**Keywords:** hydronym, toponym, rivers, cognitive process, China, metonymy

---

## Introduction

Rivers such as the Yellow River, the Euphrates, and the Tigris have played a prominent role in the formation of great civilizations, past and present. Their importance has attracted scholarly attention since ancient times. *Commentaries on the Water Classic* (*Shui Jing Zhu*, compiled by Li Daoyuan 450–527 CE) is one of the most influential books on the study of rivers in ancient China, and was the first comprehensive geographical-based book on the systematic record of waterways (Chen 2004). This work records 1,252 rivers of various size as well as cultural and historical notes concerning local relics, personal anecdotes, and legends associated with these rivers. From an etymological perspective, several scholars have focused on the origin of the two Chinese characters for “river” which are used as generic terms for rivers in China: *jiang* 江 and *he* 河 (Hashimoto 1978; Norman & Mei 1976; Zhang 1998). Most relevant studies have either addressed Chinese rivers from a geographic perspective or analyzed the name of a specific river from a diachronic perspective (Chen 1982). Less attention, however, has been paid to the investigation of China's rivers from an onomastic perspective. Cross-culturally, Saeed (2003) stated that a name is taken as a label or shorthand for knowledge about the referent. This may mean that different rivers possess different names that carry a distinctive meaning of their own. This study aims to reveal the naming motivations and the mechanisms of naming processes under different river naming practices.

Previous studies have cast some light upon the river names or the hydronyms used by different languages endemic to different countries or regions. Many of these studies have focused on hydronyms from the perspective of etymology, such as those related to the English river names *Stour* and *Blyth* (Coates 2006), the Finnish hydronym *Aurajoki* (Blazek 1999), and the Romanian hydronym *Ialomița* (Moldovanu 2009). For example, exploring the origin and meaning of the name *Missouri*, which serves as both toponym and hydronym, Lance (1999) and McCafferty (2012) found that this Algonquian term for ‘people with canoes’ was originally the name for the indigenous Missouri Indians. The river was closely associated with this tribe and subsequently named after them. By analyzing the changing names of Vietnam's modern day Red River between 1,000 and 1,500 CE, Phung (2020) argued that the changes in names given to this river reflected transformations in the relationship between the river and associated anthropogenic activities. Such studies illustrate that river names are not assigned arbitrarily but are rooted in target cultures, contemplative patterns of speakers, etc. To date, there are a great number of etymological investigations of hydronyms, especially those of an Indo-European origin. However, more research is needed to explore the mechanisms and rules employed in river naming practices used by different languages to reveal variation in naming conventions. Furthermore, few studies have been systematically conducted on Chinese river names. In view of these facts, the present study intends to address the two following questions: (i) What Chinese river name categories emerge from the collected data?; (ii) What are cognitive motivations behind Chinese river names?

## Methodology

### Data Source

To confirm source reliability, data used in this study were mainly retrieved from the *Gazetteer of the People's Republic of China* (GPRC) (Cui 1997), local chronicles, and monographs on place names or rivers. The *Gazetteer of the People's Republic of China* is the first large-scale gazetteer (a geographical index or directory) published in China. This gazetteer comprises several volumes, each one corresponding to a single provincial-level administrative region. The place names in all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities are covered. Each volume contains the following components: (i) the names of different administrative regions (name of the province, city, county, etc.); (ii) the names of different types of geographical features (rivers, lakes, mountains, etc.); (iii) the names of water conservation and power facilities; (iv) the names of traffic routes; and (v) the names of scenic spots and historical sites. The GPRC lists approximately 100,000 Chinese place names, approximately 15,000 of which are the names of geographical features. Moreover, people and anecdotes associated with place names are also provided. Historical chronicles which comprehensively and systematically record local geographical features, political structures, economic frameworks, cultural and historical information, and modern societal statuses are another important data source used in this study. Current names of the rivers are provided in the GPRC, along with a brief introduction to their former names and local names. However, only the current names were calculated in our classification and statistics.

### Data Collection

Technically speaking, a “river” is typically defined as a large body of water that flows toward the ocean, another river, or an inland sea. By contrast, the generic term “stream” refers to a small, narrow body of water that is smaller than a river that originates from mountainous water bodies or underground water sources. However, in Chinese nomenclature, not only *he* 河, *jiang* 江, but also *shui* 水 and *xi* 溪 can mean ‘river’. The *Yellow River* 黄河 (*Huang He* in Pinyin), the *Yangtze River* 长江 (*Yangzi Jiang* in Pinyin), the *Qi River* 祁水 (*Qi Shui* in Pinyin), and the *Mulan River* 木兰溪 (*Mulan Xi* in Pinyin) are cases in point. The use of these four generic terms differs both temporally and distributionally. *He* 河 was originally used to signify *Yellow River* 黄河 only in northern China in ancient times, while *jiang* 江 referred to *Yangtze River* 长江 exclusively. In ancient China, it was mistakenly believed to have originated from southern China (Huang 1994). *He* 河 and *jiang* 江 were then used to refer to their tributaries, and finally they became generic terms for rivers located in northern and southern China respectively. Moreover, *shui* 水 was the generic term for Chinese rivers before being replaced by *he* 河 and *jiang* 江. For this reason, very few rivers in modern Chinese use the generic term *shui* 水. According to Zhang & Wan (2009), more than 85% of rivers using *xi* 溪 (literally meaning ‘stream’ but actually referring to a ‘river’) as their generic term are scattered throughout China’s southeastern coastal region under the influence of its local dialect (Min Chinese). So, *xi* 溪 is a much more frequently used river name character than *he* 河 (Meng 2019). In present study, the term “river” is used as van umbrella term to describe all of the rivers.

To verify the representativeness of our samples, we only selected rivers over 100 km. long regardless of their last character, whether it be *he* 河, *jiang* 江, or *shui* 水 and *xi* 溪. For clarity, specific rivers that share the same name with other rivers were marked with the name of their administrative region (e.g., *Huang River* 潢河 [Henan Province 河南省]; vs. *Huang River* 潢河 [Inner Mongolia 内蒙古]). In total, 189 rivers were selected from 22 provinces, five autonomous regions, and four municipalities in Mainland China. Considering the uneven distribution of Chinese rivers, sample numbers varied slightly from region to region. There were 88 samples from northern China and 104 samples from southern China. After data collection, the rivers were categorized according to the meanings and the characteristics of their names.

## Results

This investigation identified seven river name categories. As shown in Table 1, the frequency counts for these categories varied significantly. The river name classification was primarily based on the revised toponym classification scheme proposed by Tent & Blair (2021).

**Table 1:** Number and Percentage of River Name in China

No.	Main Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Names Derived from Other Places or Mountains	57	30.16
2	Commemorative Names	26	13.76
3	Descriptive Names	65	34.39
4	Locational Names	16	8.47
5	Functional Names	5	2.65
6	Names from Blending Certain Features	11	5.82
7	Others	9	4.76
	<b>Total</b>	189	100.00

In the following section, specific findings for each of the classification types displayed in Table 1 are provided.

### *Names Derived from Other Places or Mountains*

Table 1 lists the 57 river names associated with nearby places or mountains. This name category accounts for 30.16%. To analyze this naming practice category with greater specificity, it can be further divided into two subcategories: (i) names borrowed from administrative region names which rivers traverse; (ii) names borrowed from mountain names that rivers originate or traverse.

Furthermore, 44 out of 57 rivers (77.19%) in this category were named after the administrative regions they traverse. For example, the name *Yangtze River* was derived from the name of the fiefdom of Yang in ancient China: it is the name that is mainly used in the West. The *Gui River* 桂江 was named after Guilin City 桂林. Additionally, the names of certain rivers changed along with the names of administrative regions, while others did not. The *Qiantang River* 钱塘江 has different names along its length. These names were derived from different places that the river traverses. For example, in Quzhou 衢, it is called the *Qu River* 衢江, whereas in Lanxi 兰溪, it is called the *Lan River* 兰江 (Ye & Zhang 2013). The *Futun River* 富屯溪 takes its name from *Futun Village* 富屯村 whose name has since been replaced by the name *Fuwen Village* 富文村. Nevertheless, the river name has remained unchanged.

The results show that 13 out of 67 rivers (19.40%) were derived from their mountain source or mountains near these rivers. For example, the *Min River* 岷江 derives its name from the Min Mountain 岷山. However, not all river names in this category are exactly the same as the mountains they traverse. Homophones are ingeniously used to differentiate the river from the mountain. For example, the *Huang River* 黄河 (Henan Province) derives its name from the *Huangwu Mountain* 黄武山. 黄 and 武 are pronounced the same in Mandarin, but by adding the radical 氵 on the left, its close relationship with water is indicated.

Taken together, this category involves conceptual metonymy based on contiguity. These rivers are named after the places or mountains around them. These geographical features belong to a frame from a spatial perspective since they are so close to each other. This type of metonymic relationship can be represented as PLACE FOR RIVER, which is a very productive pattern for river names.

### *Commemorative Names*

26 out of 189 (13.76%) rivers fall into this category. This naming practice is for the commemoration of people or historic events, which can be further divided into three subcategories: (i) named in memory of a person; (ii) derived from an anecdote or a historical event that occurred near the river; and (iii) named after the local ethnic group or tribe.

Moreover, 10 out of 26 rivers (38.46%) are named to commemorate persons who left a positive impression on people. Among these name-sakes, some are officials who made significant contributions to harness floods for local communities through the construction of water conservancy projects. For example,

before the Yuan Dynasty, the *Jialu River* 贾鲁河 was named the *Cai River* 蔡河. During the Yuan Dynasty, the river was dredged upon the orders of an official named Jia Lu 贾鲁; and since then the river has been renamed after him. Other rivers have commemorative people who exemplified noble qualities. The *Cao'e River* 曹娥江, for instance, was named after *Cao E* 曹娥, a girl who jumped into the river to look for her father, from which she was venerated for her filial piety (Ye & Zhang 2013). This subcategory of river naming may help promote the spread of moral values.

Additionally, 10 out of 26 rivers (38.46%) make reference to events in history or legends in their names. The former name of the *Ba River* 灞河 was the *Zi River* 滋水. During the historical Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period in China, *Duke Mu of Qin* was the overlord of Western Zhou kingdom. The name of the *Zi River* 滋水 was changed into the *Ba River* 霸河 (in Chinese 霸 meaning 'hegemony') to celebrate his great achievements (Xu 2014). Later, to indicate that the name made reference to a river, 霸 was changed into 灞.

In the third sub-category, six river names were derived from the tribes living alongside these rivers. The *Salween River* is known as the *Nu River* 怒江 in China. The *Nu River* is named after the Nu people who have lived on its banks for generations. Rivers bearing names associated with ethnic groups can provide information about local minority cultures, especially those minorities whose native languages have subsequently disappeared. Moreover, river names may provide clues for areas inhabited by their ancestors.

This overall category is based on relationships between rivers and local people or events. From a cognitive perspective, the first and the third sub-categories fall into the metonymy PERSON FOR RIVER, which includes 16 rivers, accounting for 8.47% of total river names. The second sub-category, including 10 rivers, belongs to metonymy EVENT FOR RIVER, representing 5.29% of total river names.

## Descriptive Names

According to Table 1, 65 out of 189 rivers (34.39%) fall into this category. These river names are based on unique characteristics and can generally be divided into two sub-categories: (i) names describing the physical appearance of a river (color, shape, and size); and (ii) names indicating objects near the river.

Between these two subcategories, 47 out of 65 rivers (72.31%) fall into the first sub-grouping. Of these, 19 rivers (40.43%) are named after the perceived color of their water. The appearance of water is affected by multiple factors like sand, plants, rocks, and shadows. For instance, the *Hongshui River* 红水河 'Red Water River' gets its name from the reddish-brown color of the water caused by red soil sediment at its upper reaches. Besides color, general shape is another important feature in naming river. The *Taoer River* 洮儿河 derives its name from its curved channel. In Mongolia, 洮儿 means 'curved'. Within this sub-category, metaphors are frequently employed in naming rivers. Owing to its resemblance to a gourd 葫芦, the river was named the *Hulu River* 葫芦河. In Chinese, five river names make reference to their size and associated catchments by means of the rough number of tributaries in their names. The *Sanchuan River* 三川河, for instance, owes its name to its three main tributaries. It is an excellent example in that (川 also means 'river' in Chinese) (Wang 1994). The *Muzhu River* 母猪河 (literally 'Sow River') is composed of many tributaries and bears resemblance to a sow feeding many piglets (Guo 1996).

The second sub-category in this group consists of 18 rivers. Their names refer to specific factors or objects in or alongside them. For example, the *Maotiao River* 猫跳河 derives its name from a particular rock type (called *Maotiao*) that covers its bed. This sub-group of names may describe people's traditional use of the rivers. In China, as in many countries round the world, rivers play a critical role in peoples' lives. They can be used for irrigation, fishing, and transportation. Several river names reflect these uses. The *Mei River* 梅江, literally 'Plum River', originated from large number of plum trees been planted on its banks in ancient times (the Committee of Local Records of Guangdong Province 1999).

This category employs both metonymy and metaphor. The salient quality of a river is often used to refer to the whole river. This type of naming practice exemplifies the metonymic relationship SALIENT PROPERTY FOR RIVER, and falls into the broader family, PART FOR WHOLE metonymy. While this conceptual metonymy is based on contiguity, conceptual metaphor is based on the similarity between two concepts. The usage of metaphor in naming rivers can present a vivid picture of a target river to people and help them remember its name effortlessly.

## Locational Names

In total, 16 river names (8.47%) stem from their location, including their orientation and position in relation to other rivers or places. This category can be further broken down into two sub-categories: (i) names

indicating flow direction; and (ii) names showing their position in relation to other places and rivers. The names of six rivers indicate flow direction with cardinal points functioning as modifiers. Some of these river names can be interpreted literally, while others require cultural knowledge. The *Beiliu River* 北流河, literally ‘North-Flowing River’, as the name implies, flows northwards (Liao 2014). *Bagua*, also known as *Eight Diagrams*, is an important Chinese concept with a set of eight symbols. It is used to explain the relationship between all types of things in Taoist cosmology. In Bagua, *Ding* 丁 corresponds to “south” as shown in figure 1 the Bagua chart below. The *Ting River* 汀江 (radical 氵 of 汀 denoting water) flows southwards. Thus, the name of this river drives from its flow direction (Wang 1992).



In traditional Chinese culture, 南 (South) is at the top.

Figure 1: Eight Diagrams of China

Alongside these names, 10 out of 16 rivers (62.5%) denote their location by using local dialectal noun forms as modifiers to reveal their geographical relationship with other places or rivers, including 东 (east), 西 (west), 南 (south), and 北 (north). The *Jiangnan Canal* 江南运河, for example, derives its name from its location, where its entire basin is situated south of the *Yangtze River*, which in ancient times was called *jiang* 江 for short. The *Liao River* is another case in point. Its major tributary located to the west is called the *Xiliao River* or the *Western Liao River* 西辽河, while the tributary to the east is called the *Dongliao River* or the *Eastern Liao River* 东辽河 (The Board on Inner Mongolia Geographic Names 1990).

### Functional River Names

Five rivers are named on the basis of their functions. For example, the *Guanliao River* 官料河 (官料 denotes ‘imperial timber’ in ancient China) is so named because it was used to deliver imperial timber to build palaces during the Qing and Ming dynasties. The *Guan River* 灌河 (literally ‘Irrigating River’) is used by locals to irrigate nearby farmland. A river’s function can be applied to an entire river. Therefore, there exists a distinct metonymic relationship with a river and its name: FUNCTION FOR RIVER.

### Names Created by Blending Certain Features

The above-mentioned names contain only one river feature. However, names in this category possess more than one feature. We found that 11 rivers (5.82%) were named by blending either two toponyms or other various features. In this way, a novel linguistic expression is coined. The *Ji Canal River* or *Jiyunhe* 蓟运河 was named by combining its geographical location and function (The Board on Hebei Geographic Names 1986). The first character 蓟 was taken from Jizhou City 蓟州, which the river traverses, while the second character 运 denotes its function of transporting grain since the Ming Dynasty. Some rivers are named by blending tributary names or the names of the cities they transverse. The *Chaobai River* 潮白河 was named by combining its two upper reaches, the *Chao River* 潮河 and the *Bai River* 白河, respectively. Most canals in

China are named by blending the names of the cities they flow to and from. The *Jing–Hang Grand Canal* 京杭大运河, also known as the *Grand Canal*, is named in this way. It flows from Beijing to Hangzhou.

The blending naming strategy is in agreement with the Conceptual Blending Theory. In general, there are four mental spaces involved in conceptual blending: two input spaces, a generic space, and the blend space. The input spaces serving as the area wherein two original terms or entities lie. The correspondences between them are mapped onto a generic space, where a totally new expression is finally created within the emergent structure. An example in this category that was created in this way is the *Chaobai River* 潮白河. As shown in Fig. 2, the original names of the two different rivers lie within Input 1 and Input 2. With the character 河, they share mapped onto the generic space. Finally, a new name 潮白河 for a third river is created through blending.

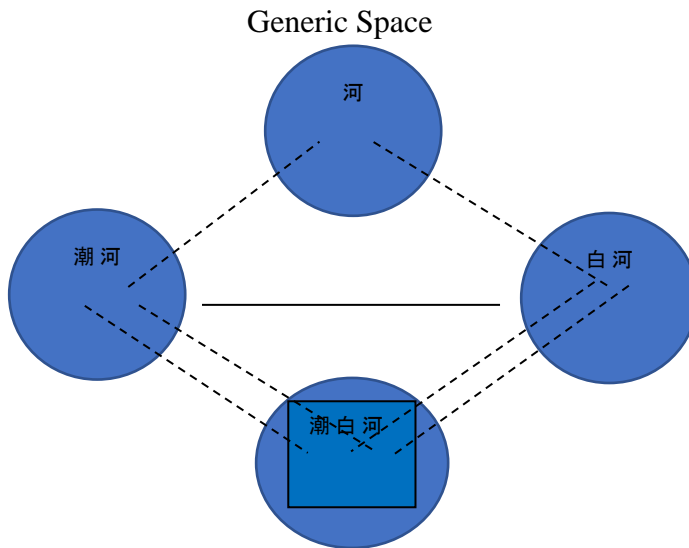


Figure 2: Blending of Chaobai River

### Others

River names that are difficult to classify are grouped into this category (4.76%, or nine out of 189). For this category, the name of each member has a distinctive characteristic, and their individual frequency was insufficiently high to warrant the formation of a separate category. In general, few river names fall into an evaluative category such as names that reflect an emotive reaction or desire of the namer. For example, the once named *Wuding River* 无定河 (literally ‘unstable river’ due to its irregular flow) was renamed the *Yongding River* 永定河 (literally ‘ever-stable river’) by the Kangxi Emperor during the Qing Dynasty. The name change was made in the hope that the river channel would remain stable. In ancient China, it was a taboo to use the personal names of emperors, including homophones of their names. This edict applies to place names that would otherwise have contained the same characters as emperors. The original name of the *Man River* 蛮河 was the *Yi River* 夷水. During the Jin Dynasty, the river was renamed as the *Man River* by Emperor Huan Wen because *Yi* 夷 was pronounced the same as his father’s given name (*Yi* or 彝). The original meaning of *tuo* 沱 was ‘tributary’ in ancient Chinese. So this term was employed to name *Tuo River* 沱江, which is a tributary of the Yangtze River (Tang 2017).

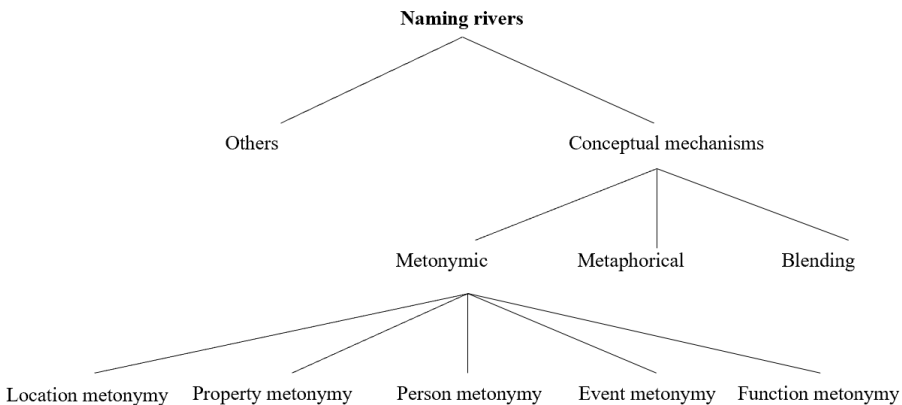
## Summary, Discussion, and Conclusion

River names in China are not arbitrary but have their cognitive motivation. The results of this study showed that cognitive mechanisms, especially conceptual metonymy, have played a critical role in the creation of river names. Before explaining the ways in which conceptual processes work in naming rivers, the general naming patterns described in this study are provided in Table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Cognitive Mechanisms Involved in Naming Rivers in China

Type of Naming	Construct	Percentage	
<b>Metonymic</b>			
1	Location	ASSOCIATIVE PLACE FOR RIVER	30.16
2	Property	SALIENT PROPERTY FOR RIVER	38.62
3	Person	IMPORTANT PERSON FOR RIVER	8.47
4	Event	IMPORTANT EVENT FOR RIVER	5.29
5	Function	FUNCTION FOR RIVER	2.65
<b>Metaphorical</b>		Applying a more concrete concept to describe a river feature	4.23
<b>Blending</b>		Blending existing expressions to coin a term to apply to a name for a river	5.82
<b>Other</b>			4.76

The cognitive mechanisms involved in naming rivers in China are shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3:** Cognitive Mechanisms Involved in Naming Rivers in China

First results from this study confirmed Jäkel's (1999) claim that metonymy is basically a "naming strategy". Two basic conceptual metonymic principles are fully reflected in the strategies used to name rivers in China: contiguity (proximity) and prominence. The naming patterns, including ASSOCIATIVE PLACE FOR RIVER, IMPORTANT PERSON FOR RIVER, and IMPORTANT EVENT FOR RIVER are based on the principle of proximity or contiguity in conceptual metonymy. All river names in these patterns are derived from what is related closely to the rivers. Second, the other two naming patterns (SALIENT PROPERTY FOR RIVER and FUNCTION FOR RIVER) are linked with the principle of prominence, falling into a broader metonymic model: PART FOR WHOLE. The uniqueness of objects can easily motivate names. It is extremely common for people to take one well-understood or easy-to-perceive aspect of an entity and use it to stand either for another, either in its entirety or in part (Lakoff 1987). This explains why people tend to choose the function, color, shape, or other distinctive characteristic to refer to rivers. Therefore, metonymy is a typical cognitive phenomenon type found in naming rivers.

Metaphor is also widely used in naming rivers. The reason is simple. Cognitive comparison of two concepts is often involved in a conceptual metaphor, where one is understood in terms of the other (Hu 2006). Additionally, metaphor allows us to comprehend one aspect of a concept in terms of another (Lakoff &



Johnson 1980). Conceptual blending is also used to name rivers, especially canals. The final name of a river, regarded as the emergent structure within blended space, is characterized by the integration of the core information of the first input space with the second input space. Our detailed analysis of 189 major rivers in Mainland China has also shown that these names are not arbitrary, but are fully motivated by underlying cognitive processes. This investigation has also shown how changes in cognition result in changes in the names given. As a result, river names are not everlasting or fixed but change across time and space. Each time a river name is changed, a new meaning is invested. River names, like the bodies of water they label, are in a state of flux, interrelation, and interaction.

The present study has its limitations. First, the sample size in this study was relatively small. More samples will increase the scientific viability of this topic in the future. Second, China is home to 56 ethnic groups, all with diverse cultures. The river names used by these different language groups were not taken into account here. However, by taking these hydronyms into consideration, future studies can reveal much about these important cultures. This avenue would be a particular fruitful one to explore.

Generally, rivers that flow through regions where minority languages are primarily used are given two names by the local people: a Chinese name and indigenous name. In some instances, the name of the river may be identical in semantic meaning but totally different in form and pronunciation (e.g., the *Daying River* 大盈江). In other instances, the river names are similar in pronunciation but have different semantic meanings and forms (e.g., the *Kongque River* 孔雀河). These contrasts would make for fascinating research. It would also be interesting to explore how river names in minority languages are transliterated into Chinese (e.g., the *Tarim River* 塔里木河). Clearly, there is much more important work to be done.

## Disclosure

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Funding

This work was supported by Jiangxi Provincial Innovation Foundation for Postgraduates under grant number YJ2021078.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the anonymous reviewers and editors for their insightful and helpful suggestions.

## References

- Algeo, John and Katie Algeo. 2000. "Onomastics as an Interdisciplinary Study." *Names* 48, no. 3/4: 265–274. <https://doi.org/10.1179/nam.2000.48.3-4.265>
- Blažek, Vaclav. 1999. "Toward the Indo-European Etymology of the Finnish Hydronym *aura(-joki)*." *Indogermanische Forschungen* 104, no. 1999: 89–94.
- The Board on Hebei Geographic Names. 1984. *Hebei Sheng Di Ming Zhi* [Hebei Gazetteer]. Shi Jia Zhuang: Place Names Office of Hebei Province.
- The Board on Inner Mongolia Geographic Names. 1990. *Neimenggu Zi Zhi Qu Di Ming Zhi* [Gazetteer of Inner Mongolias Autonomous Region]. Tongliao: The Board on Inner Mongolia Geogrphic Names.
- The Committee of Local Records of Guangdong Province. 1999. *Guangdong Sheng Zhi Di Ming Zhi* [Guangdong Local Records: Guangdong Gazetteer]. Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House.
- Coates, Richard. 2006. "Stour and Blyth as English River-Names." *English Language and Linguistics* 10, no. 1:23–29. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1360674305001693>.
- Cui, Naifu. 1997. *Zhong Hua Ren Ming Gong He Guo Di Ming Da Ci Dian* [Gazetteer of the People's Republic of China]. Beijing: The Commercial Press.
- Chen, Kewei. 1982. "On Name, Source and Change of Yellow River." *History Teaching* 10: 7–13.
- Chen, Qiaoyi. 2004. *Li Daoyuan Ping Zhuan* [A Critical Biography of Li Daoyuan]. Nanjing: Nanjing University Press.
- Guo, Yongsheng. 1996. *Shandong Sheng Zhi Zi Ran Zi Li Zhi* [Shandong Local Records: Records of Physical Geography]. Jinan: Shandong People's Publishing House.
- Hashimoto, Mantaro. 1978. *Gengo ruikei chiri ron* [Typo-geogrphical linguistics]. Tokyo: Koubundou Publishers.

- Hu, Zhuanglin. 2006. *Linguistics: A Course Book* (Third Edition). Beijing: Peking University Press.
- Huang, Jingui. 1994. "A Lexical Analysis on Generic Terms 'shui', 'du', 'jiang', 'he' and 'chuan.'" *Journal of Hubei University (Philosophy and Social Science)* no. 3: 69-72.
- Jäkel, Olaf. 1999. "Metonymy in Onomastics." *Metonymy in Language and Thought*. Edited by Klaus-Uwe Panther and Günter Radden. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, George. 1987. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lance, Donald M. 1999. "The Origin and Meaning of 'Missouri'." *Names* 47, no. 3: 281-190.
- Liao, Ziliang. 2014. *Guangxi Di Yu Wen Hua He Di Qu Bai Ke Quan Shu* [The Culture and Encyclopaedia of Guangxi Province]. Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press.
- McCafferty, Michael. 2012. "Returning to Missouri." *Names* 60, no. 2: 105-106. <https://doi.org/10.1179/0027773812Z.00000000013>
- Meng, Yuanyuan. 2019. "A Study on Chinese Toponym 'xi'." *China Place Name* 314, no. 9: 13+12.
- Moldovanu, Dragos. 2009. "The Terminus Post Quem of the Third Slavic Palatalization of the Velars as Reflected in the Etymology of the Hydronym *Ialomița*". *Indogermanische Forschungen* 114, no. 2009: 322-336. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110209006.322>
- Norman, Jerry and Tsu-lin Mei. 1976. "The Austroasiatic in Ancient South China: Some Lexical Evidence." *Monumenta Serica* 32, no. 1: :274-301. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40726203>
- Phung, Hieu. 2020. "Naming the Red River—Becoming a Vietnamese River." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 51, no. 4: 518-537. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463421000011>
- Saeed, John I. 2003. *Semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tang, Lei. 2017. "The Study of Language and Culture of Chinese Toponymy." Dissertation, Wuhan, Hubei: Central China Normal University.
- Tent, Jan and David Blair. 2021. "A Revised Typology of Place-Naming." *Names* 69, no. 4: 30-47. <https://doi.org/10.5195/names.2021.2260>
- Wang, Ming. 1994. *Shan Xi Shan He Zhi* [Records of Mountains and Rivers of Shanxi Province]. Taiyuan: Shanxi Science and Technology Publishing House.
- Wang, Rongguang. 1992. *Min Xi Di Ming* [Toponyms of Western Fujian Province]. Xiamen: Lujiang Publishing House.
- Xu, Chengzhi. 2014. *Zhong Guo Shan Shui Zhang Gu Ci Dian* [Dictionary of Tales of Mountains and Rivers in China]. Beijing: The Commercial Press.
- Ye, Wei and Mingzhuo Zhang. 2013. *Zhejiang Di Li* [Zhejiang Geography]. Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press.
- Zhang, Hongming. 1998. "Chinese Etyma for River." *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 26, no. 1: 1-47. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23756701>
- Zhang, Weibing and Jinhong Wan. 2009. "Geographical Distribution of Rivers' General Names in China and Its Cultural Context." *Journal of Hohai University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 11, no. 1: 16-19+90.

## Notes on the Contributors

**Yuan Sun** is a postgraduate student of linguistics at Foreign Languages College of Jiangxi Normal University. Her areas of interest are onomastics and cognitive linguistics.

**Xiangyong Jiang** is an associate professor of linguistics at Foreign Languages College of Jiangxi Normal University. His areas of interest are cognitive terminology and cognitive linguistics.

**Correspondence to:** Xiangyong Jiang, Foreign Languages College, Jiangxi Normal University, No. 99 Ziyang Avenue, Nanchang, Jiangxi, China 330022. Email: [xiangyongjiang@163.com](mailto:xiangyongjiang@163.com)