

## Endonym, Geographical Feature and Perception: The Case of the Name *East Sea/Sea of Japan*\*

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### 토착지명, 지리적 실체, 그리고 인식의 문제 -동해/일본해 표기 사례-\*

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**Abstract** : In recent academic debates within the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, two contrasting views evolved as regards to the status of the names of transboundary features or features beyond a single sovereignty. The partial view posits that a name is an endonym only for those portions of a feature where the name corresponds to the language used while the whole view argues that a name in its official language is an endonym for the whole feature. In either of these views, the name *East Sea* should be given due respect, for the Korean territorial waters at least or as an endonym for the entire sea. This paper supports the partial view that a geographical feature can be separated and each separated portion can have different name forms and status. Regarding the separation of a feature, the limits to which local people perceive as 'their' sea should be used. The name *East Sea* is proposed as the translated form of an endonym *Donghae*.

**Key Words** : endonym, exonym, geographical feature, perception, Donghae, East Sea, Sea of Japan

**요약** : 최근 유엔지명전문가회의에서는 두 개 이상의 국가에 걸치거나 국경을 초월하여 존재하는 지리적 실체가 갖는 이름이 어떤 지위를 가질 것인가에 대하여 활발한 토론이 진행되었다. 두 개의 상반된 견해가 제시되었는데, 하나는 어떤 실체가 위치한 곳에서 사용되는 언어로 표기된 지명은 그 경계 내에서만 토착지명이라는 관점이며, 다른 하나는 어떤 언어로 표기된 지명은 전체에 대하여 토착지명이라는 관점이다. 전자는 지리적 실체가 나눌 수 있음을 전제로 한다는 점에서 부분적 관점, 후자는 지리적 실체를 나눌 수 없는 전체로 인식한다는 점에서 전체적 관점이라고 부를 수 있다. 부분적 관점에서는 적어도 한국의 영해에서는 '동해'라고 불러야 한다는 점, 전체적 관점에서는 바다 전체에 대해 '동해'는 토착지명이 된다는 점 등에서 볼 때, 어떤 관점에서도 '동해' 지명은 존중되어야 한다. 이 논문은 지리적 실체를 나눌 수 있고 각 부분은 다른 형태의 지명을 가질 수 있다는 부분적 관점을 지지한다. 지리적 실체의 분리에 대해서는 지역 주민들이 자신의 것으로 인식하는 바다의 경계를 사용해야 한다. 영어로 표기된 East Sea는 토착지명 '동해'의 번역된 형태로 분류하는 방안이 제안된다.

**주요어** : 토착지명, 외래지명, 지리적 실체, 인식, 동해, 일본해

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## 1. Introduction

The Wall Street Journal, in its article on the reunions between dispersed families between South and North Korea, on August 30, 2009, used the name ‘East Sea’, prior to ‘Sea of Japan’ to call the sea between Korea and Japan. As a background of earlier actions of North Korea, it wrote, “In late July, North Korea detained the crew of a fishing boat that strayed across the maritime border in the *East Sea*, or *Sea of Japan* (italics added).”

This way of naming, especially in one of the major nationwide newspapers in the United States, was regarded as a noticeable progress for the Korean side who has argued for the name ‘East Sea’ for the last few decades. Most of the American news media, however, insist on the single use of ‘Sea of Japan’, even for the sea area near to the Korean Peninsula (See Figure 1).

It is known that American media’s choice of place names is dependent on the geographical names database that the United States Board on Geographic Names (USBGN) provides. Its database for foreign names, searchable at the website <http://geonames.nga.mil/ggmagaz/geonames4.asp>, adopts ‘Sea of Japan’ as the conventional name for the sea between Korea and Japan<sup>1</sup>). As the whole body of water is standardized as ‘Sea of Japan’, even the sea area close to the Korean coast should be named as such.

This paper begins by raising questions on this issue: would it be appropriate to call a geographical feature belonging to a sovereignty with an exonym, not its endonym, e.g. ‘Sea of Japan’, not ‘Donghae’ nor ‘East Sea’ for the Korean territorial waters? Could a geographical feature be separated by the limits of its sovereignty, and could each separated part be given a differentiated name? What role would

people’s perception play in delimiting the boundary of a geographical feature belonging to their territory?

This problem setting was in part motivated by the intensive e-mail discussions, in the autumn of 2008, between members of the Working Group on Exonyms under the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) on the status of the names of transboundary features or features beyond a single sovereignty. Two contrasting views have been figured out on the nature of geographical feature and the endonym versus exonym status of the name. These views were reported at the 25th Session of UNGEGN and the 15th International Seminar on Sea Names (Jordan, 2009a; 2009b; Woodman, 2009a; 2009b).

After reviewing these two contrasting views, this paper draws out some crucial elements to consider in the context of the name East Sea versus Sea of Japan. Such items as language and



Figure 1. ‘Sea of Japan’ in a U.S. local newspaper

Source: Seattle Times, November 25, 2008, A7. (circle added)

territorial limits in the endonym discussion, the nature of geographical feature, especially the possibility of separation and naming separately, and the issue of people's perception on the ownership of geographical feature are among them. It is expected that this discussion could provide clues to resolve the chronic controversy surrounding the name East Sea versus Sea of Japan<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Contrasting views on the name of transboundary features or features beyond a single sovereignty

### 1) Endonym, exonym or a third terminology?

The debates were initiated by a famous Israeli toponymist Naftali Kadmon's raise of the question on what terminology should be given to maritime features located in international waters or high seas (Kadmon, 2007a; 2007b). Noting the language-centered definition of an endonym, which writes "name of a geographical feature in an official or well-established language occurring in that area where the feature is situated (UNGEGN, 2007)," he pointed out that there would be no endonym or exonym in maritime features in the high seas because no language could be said to 'occur' there. As the convenor of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology, he proposed that a new term be added to define the status of a toponym for a maritime feature in international waters.

Although Kadmon's proposal was not accepted at the Conference or the Working Group meeting in New York, 2007, his arguments were insightful enough to draw attention. He assumed the possibility of separating a single maritime feature and carrying names with different terminological

status for each of the separated parts.

The debates have been extended to encompass both inland transboundary features, e.g. rivers or mountain ranges, and maritime features beyond a single sovereignty, e.g. seas or lakes, but confined to the framework of endonym and exonym divide. Two contrasting perspectives have been identified on the nature of geographical feature and the endonym versus exonym status of the name<sup>3</sup>.

One perspective posits that a name is an endonym only for those portions of a transboundary feature or within a single sovereignty, where the name corresponds to the official or well-established language. Outside these portions or beyond its sovereignty, the same name assumes the status of an exonym (Jordan, 2009a; 2009b). This perspective, given a neutral name 'Position A' by Jordan (2009b), could be called as 'partial view' in that it assumes partial naming of a geographical feature.

The other perspective, in contrast, maintains the view that a name in its official or well-established language is an endonym for the whole feature, even when the feature crosses a language boundary or extends beyond a single sovereignty (Woodman, 2009a; 2009b). In portions where this language is not spoken, however, "the endonym status is not applied (Jordan)," or "it is not a locally endonymic term (Woodman)." This perspective, 'Position B', could be called as 'whole view' in that it assumes naming of a geographical feature as a whole.

Let us repeat the example of the Alps mountains, as discussed by Jordan (2009a; 2009b). According to the partial view, French *les Alpes* is an endonym only in the French-speaking portions of the Alps while German *die Alpen* is an endonym only in the German-speaking portions. The whole view, in contrast, has the position that *les Alpes* is an endonym for the whole transnational feature, even where local

Table 1. Comparison of the views on the name of transboundary features or features beyond a single sovereignty

	Position A: the partial view	Position B: the whole view
endonym status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• given to portions of a feature only within the language boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• given to a whole feature in each language form, but not applied (not locally endonymic) to the portions outside of each language boundary</li> </ul>
exonym status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• given to portions of a feature outside of the language boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not given to any portion of a feature</li> </ul>
nature of geographical feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• separable to portions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not separable to portions, but to be named as a whole</li> </ul>
number of endonyms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one for each portion of the feature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>could be</i> a few for one entire feature</li> </ul>
example of an inland feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Les Alpes</i> is an endonym only in the French-speaking portions.</li> <li>• <i>Die Alpen</i> is an endonym only in the German-speaking portions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Les Alpes</i> is an endonym for the whole feature, but not applied in the German- or Italian-speaking portions.</li> <li>• <i>Die Alpen</i> is an endonym for the whole feature, but not applied in the French- or Italian-speaking portions.</li> </ul>
example of a maritime feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 동해(or <i>Donghae</i>) is an endonym only in the Korean-speaking portions, e.g. Korean territorial waters.</li> <li>• 日本海かい(or <i>Nihonkai</i>) is an endonym only in the Japanese-speaking portions, e.g. Japanese territorial waters.</li> <li>• No endonym exists in the international waters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 동해(or <i>Donghae</i>) is an endonym for the whole feature, but not applied in the Japanese-speaking portions.</li> <li>• 日本海かい(or <i>Nihonkai</i>) is an endonym for the whole feature, but not applied in the Korean-speaking portions.</li> </ul>

population speaks Italian, German, Slovene or other languages. In these other language portions, however, its endonym status is not applied or it is not a locally endonymic term.

As shown in this example, from the whole view, there could be a few endonyms for one entire feature in respective language forms while, from the partial view, only one endonym exists exclusively for each portion of the feature in the corresponding language form. Table 1 summarizes these two positions.

These two perspectives are based upon different views on the nature of the geographical feature. The partial view assumes that a geographical feature can be separated and the name of the feature can be given different status

for each portion of the feature. The whole view, on the contrary, postulates that the entire feature, not a portion or section of it, is the object to be named in the languages concerned (Woodman, 2009b, 3).

The former argues that social and cultural factors, such as people or social group (Jordan, 2009b), perception or propinquity, territorial boundary as well as language boundary, should be considered as backgrounds of geographical names. In contrast, the latter stresses that geographical names are just names and should be free from any political components, e.g. territorial boundaries or borders. There could be many debates on this point. It is the position of this paper that all these external, or fundamentally

internal in some sense, factors discussed by the partial view should be given due attention in the discussions of geographical features.

**2) The status of the name *Donghae* (East Sea) or *Nihonkai* (Sea of Japan)**

Strictly speaking, ‘동해’ or its romanized form *Donghae*<sup>4)</sup>, not East Sea, is an endonym in its true meaning for the sea located in the east of Korea because it is in Korean, the official language occurring in this area. Likewise, ‘にほんかい’ or its romanized form *Nihonkai*, not Sea of Japan, is an endonym in its true meaning for the sea located in the west of Japan because it is in Japanese, the official language occurring in that area<sup>5)</sup>. In other words, both names, East Sea and Sea of Japan, are exonyms according to the definition by UNGEGN.

But these names are translated forms of the endonyms and should be given specific status. This issue will be examined in a more detail in the last part of this paper. In this part, these translated names, East Sea and Sea of Japan, are considered together with their true endonymic forms, *Donghae* and *Nihonkai*.

First of all, it is worth noting the arguments of Kadmon (2007a; 2007b). According to him, the name *Donghae*<sup>6)</sup> or East Sea is an (official?)<sup>7)</sup> maritime name in respect of the territorial waters of Korea. The use of the name Sea of Japan in respect of the territorial waters of Korea generates a Japanese exonym. The terminological status of the toponym East Sea or Sea of Japan as applied to the international parts of this body of water is still undefined because no official or well-established language can be said to occur there.

Although Kadmon does not clearly mention, he assumes the possibility of separating a body of waters with its territorial limits and granting different terminological status to each part. An extension of this assumption is that each part can also be given a separate name or names; one for the territorial waters of A country, one for the territorial waters of B country, and one for the international waters between them.

It seems likely that he hesitates to use the term *endonym* for the name in the territorial waters, e.g. *Donghae* or East Sea as an endonym for the territorial waters of Korea. But he clearly argues that using the name Sea of Japan for the territorial waters of Korea generates an exonym which

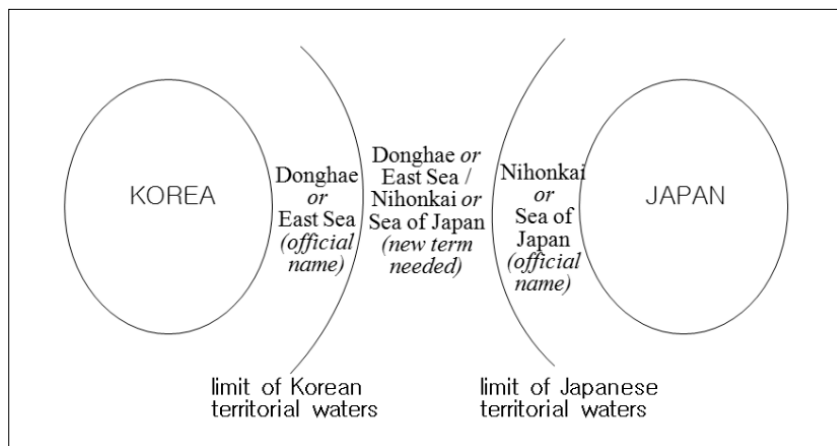


Figure 2. Names and their status for the sea between Korea and Japan, according to Kadmon

Source: drawn by the author based on Kadmon (2007b).

should be avoided in the international use in compliance with the UN resolutions<sup>8)</sup>. For the international areas of the sea, he recommends that any country and any cartographic institution can employ either, and preferably both names, implying that East Sea and Sea of Japan be used together. In sum, Kadmon's idea can be illustrated by Figure 2.

According to the partial view, in which a geographical feature can be separated into parts, *Donghae* is an endonym for the territorial waters of Korea in which Korean is the official language, while *Nihonkai* is an endonym for the territorial waters of Japan in which Japanese is the official language. The use of the name Nihonkai or Sea of Japan for the Korean territorial waters generates a Japanese exonym, while the use of the name Donghae or East Sea for the Japanese territorial waters produces a Korean exonym.

For the international waters between Korea and Japan, neither Donghae nor Nihonkai is an endonym because no official or well-established language can be said to occur there. It is problematic, however, to regard these names as exonyms, based on the dichotomy of endonym and exonym. There is no judging whether

Donghae or Nihonkai differs in its form from the name used in an official or well-established language of the area because no such name does exist. The partial view is shown in Figure 3.

According to the whole view, which perceives and names the geographical feature as a whole, *Donghae* is an endonym relevant to the Korean language used by the Korean people for the sea as a whole, while *Nihonkai* is an endonym relevant to the Japanese language used by the Japanese people for the entire sea. Woodman (2009b) even mentions that there are three endonyms for this sea, including *Yaponskoye More* in Russian.

The name *Donghae* is not applied in the Japanese territorial waters and the name *Nihonkai* is not applied in the Korean territorial waters. In this context, Woodman (2009b, 4) notes, "it would be absurd to believe that for a person standing on the west coast of Japan the endonym *Donghae* has any local linguistic relevance." The whole view is presented in Figure 4.

This paper is in favor of the partial view. Naming geographical features inevitably accompanies the matter of territorial boundary, as well as that of language, and therefore the

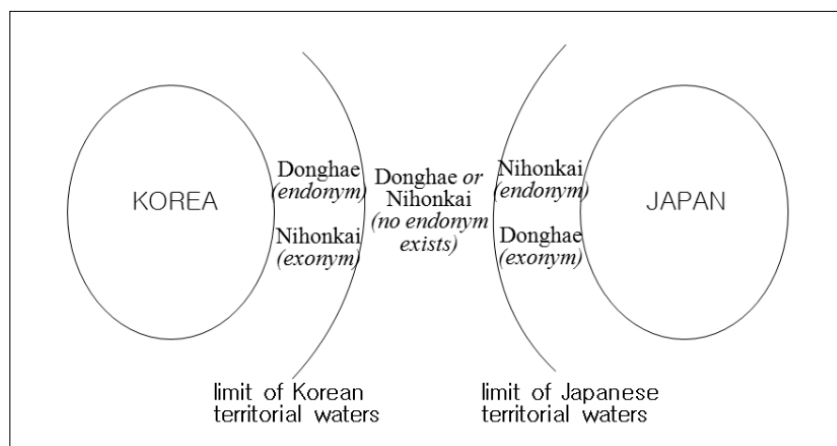


Figure 3. Names and their status for the sea between Korea and Japan, according to the partial view

Source: drawn by the author based on Jordan (2009a; 2009b).

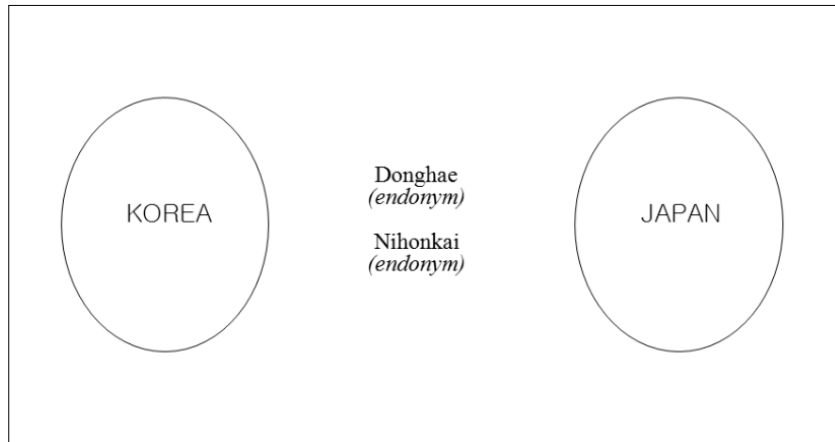


Figure 4. Names and their status for the sea between Korea and Japan, according to the whole view

Source: drawn by the author based on Woodman (2009a; 2009b).

possibility of separating geographical features along this boundary should be considered. In this separation, people's perception would play an important role. The next part will discuss these issues in relevance to the name East Sea or Sea of Japan.

### 3. Discussions

#### 1) Endonym, geographical feature and perception

The glossary of terms published by UNGEGN(2002, 10-11) defines geographical feature as "a portion of the surface of Earth that has recognizable identity." It seems implied in this definition that any topographically discernible entity could be a geographical feature, such as any inland feature divided by mountains, rivers, settlements, etc., or any maritime feature divided by islands, bays, peninsula, etc.

It seems ambiguous, however, to judge whether a feature is recognizable or not. For example, Dover Strait (Pas de Calais) between the

United Kingdom and France was separated from English Channel (La Manche) in the final draft of *Names and Limits of Oceans and Seas* (S-23), proposed by the International Hydrographic Organization in 2002 (Figure 5). No clear recognizable identity other than the Eurotunnel that opened in 1990 can be found here. This implies that recognizable identity could be adopted subjectively, and that there would be no reason to object to adopting territorial or equivalent boundaries as criteria for recognizable identity.

Given the possibility of separating the sea between Korea and Japan, then, what limits should be used for this separation? The limits of the territorial waters of Korea and Japan, twelve nautical miles from the baseline at the coasts of mainland or island, could be a good starting point, but would this be the limit enough to encompass all the true influences of the name Donghae and Nihonkai?

Back to the basics, it is worth noticing again the definition of an endonym; name of a geographical feature in an official or well-established language occurring in that area where the feature is situated. The point here is to what

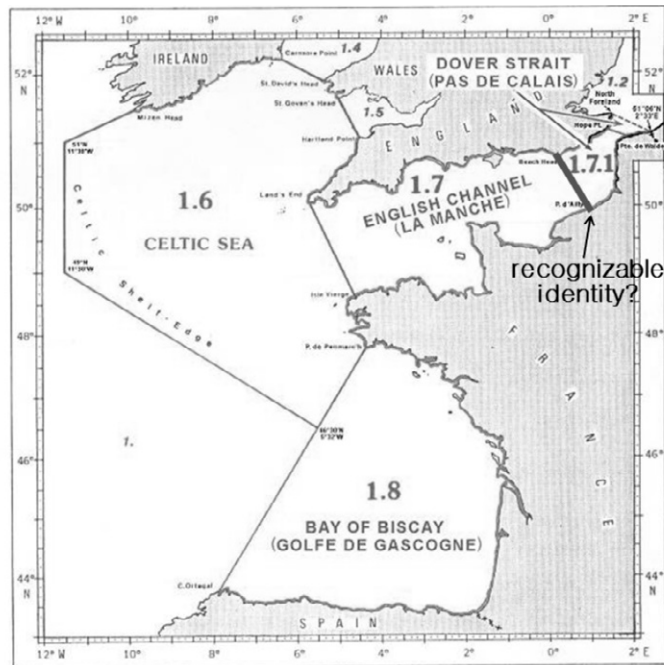


Figure 5. English Channel (La Manche) and Dover Strait (Pas de Calais)

Source: IHO (2002), notation added by the author

limit of sea in the east of Korea Korean is the official language and to what limit of sea in the west of Japan Japanese is the official language. These limits would be well beyond those of the territorial waters and could be reaching up to the limits of the exclusive economic zones in which economic activities including resource mining and fishing are carried out.

What should be noted in geographic sense is people's perception on the sea limits. For example, to what limit of sea in the east of them would Korean people perceive as 'their' sea, *Dongbae*? To what limit of sea in the west of them would Japanese people perceive as 'their' sea, *Nihonkai*?

People's perception is important because it is reflected in naming their places. For example, native Americans regarded themselves as a part of nature, not the master of it. This perception led them to have very descriptive place names

(Ashley, 1996; Bright, 2003). Such names as *Mississippi* meaning 'big river', *Tacoma* meaning 'mother of waters', *Issaquah* meaning 'sound of birds', are among them. Even more, they had such a name as "where there is heap of stones." This is like "the house with red roof at the corner of playground."

The separation of a geographical feature and subsequent naming of each separated part should be based on the perception of people who are embedded into the feature. For example, native Americans' perception on geographical features was confined to a part of river or mountain, not the whole feature. As the result, they did have place names for a bend or a rock, but did not have ones for the whole river or mountain (Hitchman, 1986).

There is also the case to give a collective name. The proposal to unite three inland waters in Washington State and British Columbia, *Puget*



*Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca and Strait of Georgia*, into one ‘Salish Sea’, named after the native American tribe in this area, was rejected in 1990 by the state names board for not having enough evidence to have been used. For almost twenty years after the proposal, however, the name Salish Sea has been used to call the entire body of water as an integrated ecological unit. As people’s perception has increased for one collective name for the entire feature, the name was recently approved officially<sup>9)</sup>.

It would not be easy, without a precise survey, to delimit boundaries of Donghae and Nihonkai based on people’s perception. But ordinary people’s perception, not fishermen’s, nor marine scientists’, would be centered on the coastal areas of either mainland or island, as the place of enjoying the beach and sea bath, fishing, boating, etc. where people have strong emotional ties. An old map made as early as 1530, titled *Paldo-Chongdo* meaning a general map of eight

provinces, clearly shows this point. The name 東海 or *Donghae* does not appear in the sea, but in the eastern coast (Figure 6), where a religious service was given to the maritime god (Lee, 1998), reflecting the people’s perception of the sea centered on coastal waters.

Jordan (2009b) adequately points out that ‘social groups’ of all kinds and sizes inhabit a geographical space, develop a certain culture including a certain language, and attribute a name to a geographical feature as an element of their language. As a social group, Koreans inhabit the coastal area of the sea in the east of them, develop a unique Korean culture including the usage of the Korean language, and attribute the name *Donghae* to the sea. The same will be applied to the Japanese side.

Comprehending all the arguments above, we are still in an unclear position regarding the limits of Donghae and Nihonkai as perceived by Korean and Japanese people, respectively. In



Figure 6. The name Donghae in *Paldo-Chongdo* (1530, General Map of Eight Provinces)

Source: National Geography Institute and Korean Geographical Society (2000).

other words, it would not be easy to divide Koreans' Donghae and Japanese' Nihonkai based on perception and it would require further study on either side of Korea and Japan. But it seems quite certain that there would be very little overlap between these two parts. There would be very few Koreans who perceive the sea which is not visible from Dokdo, the far eastern island of Korea, as Donghae.

This implies that two exclusive names, which could be called as endonyms for each party, can co-exist. But a critical problem happens when there is need to have one standardized name, either for a document or for a map. There could be a serious controversy surrounding this name. Many ill feelings are evoked by a map which writes 'their' name on the sea area we perceive as 'ours'.

## **2) Territorial boundary and language boundary**

The debates made by the members of the Working Group on Exonyms were centered on the nature of the toponymic status of geographical names for the cases of transboundary features or features beyond a single sovereignty, not on the choice of appropriate name itself. The partial view assumes that a geographical feature can be separated and the names of the feature can be given different toponymic status for each portion of the feature. The whole view, on the contrary, perceives a geographical feature as a whole and the names for the entire feature are given toponymic status according to the language used.

Consistent to the definition of endonym and exonym, these two views focus on the language boundary to judge which toponymic status is to be given. The partial view has the flexibility to use the limit of territorial waters along with the language boundary. The whole view, on the contrary, objects to adopting territorial boundary

or sovereignty limit in naming geographical features. This seems to be the main reason for not allowing the separation of features. The following arguments clearly show this viewpoint:

We are not placed in the invidious position of having to decide whether a particular toponymic label should stop at some (possibly disputed) sovereignty limit in the sea, and what other label should apply beyond that limit. Nor are we placed in the position of having to accept that a single maritime feature carries in the same language an endonym label for one portion of its extent and an exonym label for another (Woodman, 2009b, 4).

This transfers the problem just to a more delicate level which toponymy is not capable to solve: Where is the border between coastal waters and open sea? And it adds an unnecessary political component to the topic, which we should absolutely avoid! Our issue should be not to create a new term where actually there is no need for it but to prevent and to stress that assigning a toponym an exonym or an endonym is not implying any political claims (Roman Stani-Fertl, 2008, e-mail correspondence).

It is understandable to argue that toponymy is the field of naming geographical features in a technical manner and should not be influenced by political considerations. But the issue here is to identify clearly the nature of toponymic status of each name, not to bring political matters. In this process, inevitably, territorial boundaries should be intervened.

Regarding this issue, especially for the case of East Sea versus Sea of Japan, two unique characteristics of oriental culture should be taken into account. One is that each of three countries, Korea, Japan and China, even though sharing

Chinese characters, has specific language system which is completely exclusive to each other. Therefore, language boundary is the same as territorial boundary and these two types of boundaries are not to be separable. The other is that attachment to ownership in general is so strong that this becomes an unnegotiable emotional feeling and also appears in naming geographical features. There must be strong desire to have ‘our own’ name for ‘our own territory.’ This would be one of the reasons why a definite delimitation of territory is required.

For some culture, therefore, there must be great legitimacy to consider human beings and their culture tied deeply to the geographical space within their territorial boundary, when investigating their geographical names. This is especially the case for the name East Sea or Sea of Japan, for the people of Korea and Japan.

### 3) Donghae or East Sea?

*Donghae* is an endonym which have long been called by Koreans in their language. Then, why not using this original form instead of a translated one, *East Sea*? It is argued that a due respect should be given to the specificity of oriental languages (Choo, 2007b). Such languages as Korean, Chinese, and Japanese have completely different structure of writing scripts and etymology from those using roman alphabets, and it is therefore very difficult to convey the meaning of the names in the international use. The need for translating geographical names occurs here.

A recent trend of simplifying Chinese transcribed names supports this argument. All the transcribed names in the third edition of *Limits of Oceans and Seas*, S-23, *Tung Hai*, *Nan Hai* and *Hwang Hai* for East China Sea, South China Sea, and Yellow Sea, were deleted in the fourth edition. This implies that it would be agreeable to

Table 2. Deletion of Chinese transcribed names in the S-23

Third edition	Fourth edition (final draft)
Eastern China Sea (Tung Hai)	East China Sea
South China Sea (Nan Hai)	South China Sea
Yellow Sea (Hwang Hai)	Yellow Sea

Source: IHO, 1953; 2002.

use translated names only, not with transcribed names which could be regarded as true endonyms for Chinese.

The name *East Sea* could be categorized as ‘translated form of an endonym’ *Donghae*. This category deviates from the requirements of endonym which should be in an official or well-established language but becomes acceptable when we call it ‘translated form’. Translated forms of *Donghae* other than English will include *Ostmeer* in German, *Mer de l’Est* in French, *Mar del Este* in Spanish, and *Восточное Море* in Russian.

When we focus on the definition of exonym, then we could call it ‘authorized (or approved) exonym.’ ‘East Sea’ is an exonym because it is in English, not an official or well-established language in Korea, but it is authorized by the Korean people and the Korean government. A similar case would be the country name of Korea. Its endonym is ‘대한민국 or Dae-han-min-guk’, but Republic of Korea, as an exonym, is officially used in the international society.

## 4. Conclusion

This study was motivated by the intensive academic debates made by the toponymy experts of United Nations on the status of the names of transboundary features or features beyond a single sovereignty. Two contrasting views have been figured out; the partial view and the whole

view. The former assumes the possibility of separating a geographical feature, while the latter searches for naming one whole feature.

Implications of these views, together with Professor Kadmon's view, have been investigated for the name Donghae or East Sea and Nihonkai or Sea of Japan. According to the partial view, Donghae is an endonym for the territorial waters of Korea, while Nihonkai is an endonym for the territorial waters of Japan. This view extends that, as agreed by Kadmon, the use of the name Nihonkai or Sea of Japan for the Korean territorial waters and the use of the name Donghae or East Sea for the Japanese territorial waters generate exonyms.

According to the whole view, Donghae is an endonym relevant to the Korean language for the sea as a whole and Nihonkai is an endonym relevant to the Japanese language for the entire sea. In either view, there is legitimacy to use Donghae or East Sea for the sea between Korea and Japan; for the Korean territorial waters, at least, by the partial view or for the entire sea, as an endonym, by the whole view.

This paper supports the partial view that a geographical feature can be separated and each separated portion can have different name forms and status. It also agrees with Kadmon that there is a missing term for the name of the feature in the international waters. Regarding the separation of a feature, the limits to which local people perceive as 'their' sea, together with those under the conventions of international maritime law, should be used. These limits could be farther than those of territorial waters. There should be more study on this perception, for which Jordan's notion of 'social group' would be of help.

Wherever the limits may be delineated, it could be hypothesized that there would be very little overlap between *Donghae* perceived by Koreans and *Nihonkai* perceived by Japanese. If this is true, then two exclusive names, Donghae or East

Sea and Nihonkai or Sea of Japan, which could be called as endonyms for each party, can co-exist.

Even when the limits are not clearly drawn, cartographers can preferably adopt both names, *East Sea* for the east of the Korean coast and *Sea of Japan* for the west of the Japanese coast. In small scale maps, where writing all these separated names is not possible, adopting dual names would be a viable solution. This argument is consistent with the position of the Korean government that, as an interim measure, the two names should be used together until there is an agreement for a single name between the two countries.

This practice of using two names, when being widespread, will be a big challenge to the unshakable principle of "one feature, one name," tenaciously maintained by such institution as USBGN.

## Notes

- 1) Included as variant names in this database are 'Japan Sea', 'Mer du Japon', 'Nihon-kai', 'Nippon-kai', 'Tong-hae' and 'Yaponskoye More'. Neither 'East Sea' nor 'Donghae' is entitled to be a variant name for this sea.
- 2) Arguments and counter-arguments from the Japanese and Korean sides can be found in Choo (2007a) and Choo (2007b).
- 3) This summary of two perspectives and their examples are basically adopted from Jordan (2009b). Some revisions and changes have been made from his summary.
- 4) In some cases, 동해 is romanized with a different system, so-called McCune-Reischauer system, into 'Tonghae'. See Lee (2004). But 'Donghae' is the official romanized form conforming to the system adopted in 2000 by the Korean government. It is appropriate to use it as a one word, not separating its generic name, 'hae' meaning sea, according to the conventions of writing Korean words.
- 5) There is an argument that the name Sea of Japan was used by the Western cartographers and explorers and adopted by the Japanese, and therefore should not be

regarded as an endonym. It is also argued that this name was used widespread in Japan after the early twentieth century. It seems, however, appropriate to categorize it as an endonym because the name has been used by local people for several decades in their official language form.

- 6) Kadmon is using the name Tong Hae in conformity of the McCune-Reischauer system. See footnote 3) above.
- 7) Parentheses and question mark are given by Kadmon himself.
- 8) United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) Resolution IV/20.
- 9) The name Salish Sea was approved by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names in late November, 2009. See the website; [http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2010269250\\_apwasalishsea.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2010269250_apwasalishsea.html)

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