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DOG NAMING STRATEGIES IN BEIJING, P. R. CHINA

China has been experiencing a boom in pet ownership since the beginning of the new millennium. The notable number of dog walkers, strolling along the streets and in public parks, are an obvious sign that dogs are one of the most often sought-after companion animals. One of the first steps associated with having a dog is usually the selection of a suitable name. This paper examines how the growing phenomenon of dog breeding is reflected in the Chinese onomastic system. First, it provides the general linguistic characteristics of the dog names, i.e. describing the repeatedly occurring word-formation patterns and thematic categories of the lexical items used to create dog names, as well as addressing the issue of the motives behind the names. Second, it examines whether dog naming practices in China follow the existing conventions described in relation to other languages. The results of the analysis indicate that, unlike the situation observed in Western languages, Chinese dog names seem not only to exhibit signs of anthromorphization, but also to preserve the pre-modern practice of name selection based on the dog's physical and mental qualities or reflecting the circumstances under which the dog came to the family, and thus represent a unique combination of earlier and modern-day dog naming practices.

Key words

Modern Chinese; zoonyms; urbozoonyms; dog names; anthropomorphization

1. Introduction

Pet dog names belong, together with other companion animal names, to the category of proper names called urbozoonyms (Strutyński, 1996; Nübling – Fahlbusch – Heuser, 2015, p. 92).¹ Leibring (2016, p. 62) pointed out that the changing position of dogs in human society, over the last hundred years, is clearly reflected in the dog naming practices. Dog names in the past (just like animal names in general) were often inspired by the animal's physical or mental characteristics, or by other circumstances, such as the time of birth or purchase, function, etc. Nowadays, when dogs in modern societies are treated as members of the family², another practice has prevailed: name-givers often borrow existing personal names, especially given names.

¹ Slavic onomastic studies mention the term “kynonymum” (i.e. cynonymum) while referring to dog names, cf. e.g. Ковачев (1987), Kosyl (1996), Kopertowska (2005), Ковтюх (2010). Note: The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for providing the list of works where this term occurs.

² For more details on this issue, cf. e.g. Franklin (1999).

Compared to the European tradition, there is no official name list in China, which in other words means that name-givers, instead of choosing a name, in fact create a name (see e.g. Li, 2012; Kałużyńska, 2008; Slaměniková, 2017, 2018). As a result, Chinese given names manifest a high degree of diversity and thus one cannot avoid asking if the similarities of the dog names with the anthroponymic system are possible to be identified, and consequently if also Chinese dog names reveal a tendency of anthropomorphization.

Moreover, dog names in Western countries also seem to be fairly gender-specific (cf. Abel – Kruger, 2007; Leibring, 2016). The Chinese language, generally speaking, does not convey grammatical relationships with inflectional morphemes, which in other words means that the grammatical gender is absent. In light of this, the limitations of the phonological form are in the case of given names substituted on the level of graphic representation,³ which is in this aspect more distinctive (Slaměniková, 2018, p. 265). This would, however, be in contrast with the general expectations concerning dog names, i.e. the fact that a great emphasis is placed on sound (Leibring, 2016, p. 624).

The characteristics of dog naming practices in China,⁴ described in this study, are based on a sample of 292 dog names.⁵ The data collection was undertaken during August 2018 in the city of Beijing and was restricted to areas located inside the fourth ring road. Considering dog walking habits, the research material was mostly collected during the morning and evening, in case of the first mentioned especially in the streets near housing areas and in case of the second mentioned in admission-free public parks. The respondents were asked about the dog name, breed, sex and motives leading to the selection of this name.

Small to medium-sized dog breeds constitute the largest part of the sample and almost one third are represented by Toy Poodles. Other toy dog breeds include

³ That is by the choice of a Chinese character whose meaning is associated with either masculine or feminine qualities.

⁴ Speaking of Chinese dog names, a previous study *Pet-Naming Practices in Taiwan* by Lindsey N. H. Chen (2017) has to be mentioned. As the title indicates, not only dogs, but cats as another favourite pet animal are also included. The research material consists of 157 dog names and 164 cat names that the author collected from three different sources: general pet-related web-sites, social media and online news reports. Unlike Chen's study, this paper is firstly based on data collected directly from dog walkers, and secondly focuses only on one kind of pet animal. This procedure enables a more targeted approach to dog naming practices. While Chen provides a general description of the universal attributes of dog and cats names, "a snapshot" as she states, this paper provides a thorough more-level analysis of a coherent set of data.

⁵ It has to be pointed out that some of these names occur repeatedly (see the list of the most frequent names below). There can be found 208 different dog names in the sample.

especially Bichon Frise, Papillon, Chihuahua, Pug and Miniature Pincher. Standard Poodle, Bulldog, Labrador Retriever, Golden Retriever or Samoyed are examples of medium to large-sized dogs, however, only the first mentioned occurred in a higher number. Apart from this, mixed breed dogs can be found in the sample as well. As concerns the gender, the approximate ratio, two male dogs to a female dog, indicate the preference of male dogs in Beijing.

2. The language and writing system

All the respondents were asked to write the name down. The writing system used was not limited to Chinese characters, but the Latin alphabet appeared in the case of 32 (i.e. 11%) names. Although some of them are quite unique, certain recurring name categories can be identified: a) English personal names, such as *Peter*, *Tony*, *Derick* or *Alice*; b) internationally used dog names, such as *Lucky* or *Rocky*; c) names derived from English words, mostly but not exclusively appellatives, such as *Coffee*, *Cherry* or *Seven*. A dog called after a former president of the USA, *Obama*, is an example of a name standing outside these categories. The same can be said about a dog bearing the name of an English greeting *Hello*.

Two unusual names can be found in the sample as far as concerns the used writing system. First, the owner of a dog with a Japanese name *Aki* (meaning ‘autumn’) preferred Latin alphabet letters instead of the corresponding Chinese character 秋. Second, and even more interestingly, a unique mixture of letters and a Chinese character was collected: as the owner of the dog *Der兜* (pronounced *Tr-dòu*) explained, she chose this name because of its pleasant sound combination.

With respect to Latin alphabet dog names, it should also be mentioned that the respondents often produced these words with mixed pronunciation, i.e. some of the letters were pronounced according to rules applied in the Chinese Romanization alphabet Pinyin. ‘T’ in the name *Tony*, for example, was articulated as an aspirated stop, or ‘h’ in *Happy* as a voiceless velar fricative [x].

The overwhelming majority of the names written in Chinese characters are either existing Chinese words, or much more often innovative combinations of Chinese language lexical items, often alluding to a certain meaning. The analysed sample also contains a limited number of borrowed proper names transcribed into Chinese characters (14 dog names, i.e. 5%). Most of them are adopted personal names, such as 迈克 *Màikè* (Mike), 查理 *Cháilǐ* (Charlie), 托尼 *Tuōní* (Tony) or 伊万 *Yīwàn* (Ivan). Apart from them, one brand name also occurs in the sample even twice: the adopted version of the cookie brand *Oreo* appears once in its full form 奥利奥 *Àolì'ào* and once in an abbreviated form as 奥利 *Àolì*.

Finally, it has to be mentioned that several dog walkers were not able to write the name down.⁶ Some of them explained that the only factor they considered during the name creation process was the acoustic value and, thus, they have never associated the name with particular Chinese characters. Others simply stated that they have never had to write the name down. The reason why some older seniors experienced difficulties with noting the name down might be attributed to low or no literacy skills. Nevertheless, the fact that some of the name-givers only pay attention to the acoustic qualities of the dog name indicates a certain shift from the common “character-based” naming practices typical for the Chinese proper name system.

3. Linguistic structure

This section discusses the linguistic structure of the dog names composed of Chinese lexical material (Latin alphabet names and phonetic borrowings are not included). As far as the phonological form is concerned, the sample reflects the overall preference of two-syllable words in Chinese (243 names, i.e. 83% of the sample). It is also consistent with an earlier observation that the two syllable dog names are generally speaking easily pronounceable and, thus, are highly favoured among the name-givers. (Leibring, 2016, p. 623) As can be seen below, name-givers might have chosen an existing disyllabic word, or more often create a new combination of existing morphemes.⁷ The most repeatedly used word-formation patterns are as follows:

a) *Reduplication*

A morphological process, based on an exact repetition of linguistic components, is used in modern Standard Chinese to convey different grammatical functions. Simply speaking, reduplication of nouns and measure words indicates generalization, while reduplication of adjectives implies a higher degree of the described quality and reduplication of verbs denotes the perfective aspect (Švarný – Uher, 2001, p. 154, 159–161). Apart from this, reduplication is a method used to create hypocoristic personal names (c.f. Kałużyńska, 2008, p. 326–342). It is not limited

⁶ For this reason, 16 names in all were excluded from the analysis.

⁷ The Chinese language is characterized by a complex arrangement between the smallest meaningful units and their acoustic and graphic representations. Apart from a few exceptions, one morpheme corresponds to one syllable and is written down with one Chinese character. Considering the relatively limited number of syllables (approximately 1,340 according to Švarný – Uher, 2014, p. 27) on the one hand and the high number of Chinese characters (8,105 characters are listed in the *Table of General Standard Chinese Characters* 通用规范汉字表 *Tōngyòng Guōfān Hànzì Biāo* issued in 2013) on the other hand, it is the written form that is more distinctive in cases when a morpheme is perceived out of context.

to informal appellations of standard names, as expressing affection for the name bearer represents an important motive desired even in relation to official given names and the repetition of a monosyllabic lexical unit is one of the ways to achieve it. Regardless of the word class of the original single syllable word or morpheme, the reduplicated form has a nominal status and conveys a sense of diminutiveness, as far as concerns the personal naming system.

Reduplication is the most productive word-formation strategy adopted by dog name-givers (138 dog names, i.e. 47% of the sample). The majority of them are constructed of reduplicated adjectives (e.g. 甜甜 *Tiántian* redupl. ‘sweet’, 壮壮 *Zhuàngzhuang* redupl. ‘strong’, 多多 *Duōduo* redupl. ‘many’), nouns (e.g. 豆豆 *Dòudou* redupl. ‘bean’, 星星 *Xīngxing* redupl. ‘star’, 梦梦 *Mèngmeng* redupl. ‘dream’) or verbs (e.g. 跳跳 *Tiàotiao* redupl. ‘jump’, 痒痒 *Yǎngyang* redupl. ‘itch’, 添添 *Tiāntian* redupl. ‘add, increase’). Three cases of repeated onomatopoeia (啦啦 *Lālā*, 啾啾 *Jiūjiū* and 嘟嘟 *Dūdū*) and one case of repeated numeral (六六 *Liùliù* redupl. ‘six’) can be found, however, in the research material as well. As can be seen from the examples, the pronunciation of these names is, with the exception of the onomatopoeia, characterized by tone neutralization of the second syllable. Aside from this, name-givers also make use of already existing words created on the principle of reduplication, such as terms of address 格格 *Gége* ‘Princess’ and 妞妞 *Niūniū* ‘Girl’.

b) 小 *xiǎo* ‘small’ + *X*

Combinations with the term ‘small’ in the initial position represent another common pattern used to create hypocoristic given names, or generally to express diminutiveness. 15 disyllabic dog names (i.e. 5%) were created in all on this principle. As can be seen in the list below, the second elements of the compounds are most often nouns or adjectives, while the class of numerals is represented by one name. Names with two colours (i.e. white and black) are used more than once.

小虎 *Xiǎohǔ* ‘small’ + ‘tiger’, 小豆 *Xiǎodòu* ‘small’ + ‘bean’, 小点 *Xiǎodiǎn* ‘small’ + ‘dot’, 小雪 *Xiǎoxuě* ‘small’ + ‘snow’, 小崽 *Xiǎozǎi* ‘small’ + ‘whelp’, 小舞 *Xiǎowǔ* ‘small’ + ‘dance’, 小凯 *Xiǎokǎi* ‘small’ + ‘victorious’, 小白 *Xiǎobái* ‘small’ + ‘white’ (3x), 小黑 *Xiǎohēi* ‘small’ + ‘black’ (2x), 小欢 *Xiǎohuān* ‘small’ + ‘happy’, 小八 *Xiǎobā* ‘small’ + ‘eight’

c) 大 *dà* ‘big’ + *X*

The expression of affection is not limited to diminutive forms, but can also be manifested by lexical items denoting greater intensity. The augmentatives in the research material are compounds with the term 大 *dà* ‘big’ in the initial position. Morphemes or words in the second position carry a positive connotation that is intensified through the term 大 *dà*. It should be mentioned that just as in the case of the term 小 *xiǎo*, this method is also employed by the creation of childhood names (Kalużyńska, 2008, p. 60). Both the terms 小 *xiǎo* and 大 *dà* are extensively

used by the creation of official given names as well.⁸ In the research material, the term 大 *dà* occurs in 7 dog names (i.e. 2%), mostly preceding a noun and in one case preceding an adjective and in one a verb.

大头 *Dàtóu* ‘big’ + ‘head’, 大毛 *Dàmáo* ‘big’ + ‘hair’, 大熊 *Dàxióng* ‘big’ + ‘bear’, 大兵 *Dàbīng* ‘big’ + ‘soldier’, 大宝 *Dàbǎo* ‘big’ + ‘treasure’, 大乖 *Dàguāi* ‘big’ + ‘well-behaved’, 大胜 *Dàshèng* ‘big’ + ‘win’

d) X + 宝 *bǎo* ‘treasure’

There can be found 6 disyllabic compounds (i.e. 2%) with the root 宝 *bǎo* ‘treasure’ in the second position in the analysed sample. The resemblance with the anthroponymic system cannot be neglected once again since the character 宝 *bǎo* also ranks among the most popular characters used in both male and female given names.⁹

三宝 *Sānbǎo* ‘three’ + ‘treasure’, 四宝 *Sìbǎo* ‘four’ + ‘treasure’, 金宝 *Jīnbǎo* ‘gold’ + ‘treasure’, 柴宝 *Cháibǎo* reference to a Japanese dog breed 柴犬 *cháiquǎn* ‘Shiba Inu’ + ‘treasure’, 喜宝 *Xǐbǎo* ‘happy’ + ‘treasure’, 大宝 *Dàbǎo* ‘big’ + ‘treasure’

Apart from these patterns, words with the characters 子 and 丁 seem to be popular among dog name-givers as well, although, both of them may be used with two different meanings. The first mentioned appear either as 子 *zǐ* ‘son’ (such as 王子 *Wángzǐ* ‘prince’, 太子 *Tàizǐ* ‘crown prince’ or 虎子 *Hǔzǐ* ‘tiger’s cub’) or as an atonic noun suffix 子 *zi* (in the analysed sample as part of an existing word 丸子 *Wánzi* ‘small ball; pellet’ or used to create a new word 黑子 *Hēizi* ‘black’ + suffix 子). The second mentioned character carries not only the meaning ‘man’ (being part of an existing word 门丁 *Méndīng* ‘gatekeeper, doorman’ or used to create a new word 豆丁 *Dòudīng* ‘bean’ + ‘man’), but it is one of the characters which is often used to transcribe words of foreign origin (one of the quite popular dog names is 布丁 *Bùdīng* ‘pudding’).

Names composed of one syllable, or more than two syllables are rather exceptional. The first mentioned are represented in the analysed sample by four dog names and with only one exception (i.e. 熊 *Xióng* ‘bear’) all end with a diminutive

⁸ See for example *Xingshi Renming Yongzi Fenxi Tongji* 《姓氏人名用字分析统计》 [Statistics in Characters Used in Surnames and Given Names] (1991) which provides frequency lists of characters used in Chinese given names in four different time spans. In the last period, including persons born between 1 November 1976 and 30 June 1982, the character 小 *xiǎo* ranks at the fourth position and the character 大 *dà* at the one hundred-eighth position. Both of these characters are also listed under the 100 most frequent characters based on a given names analysis from a more recent period (for details see Ma, 2013, p. 144–147).

⁹ In the reference books quoted in the previous footnote, this character ranks at the eighty-fifth position and is also included in the list of the 100 most frequent characters.

r-suffix¹⁰ (e.g. 雪儿 *Xuě'r* ‘snow’ + r-suffix, 欢儿 *Huānr* ‘happy’ + r-suffix, 球儿 *Qiú'r* ‘ball’ + r-suffix). The maximum number of syllables that the dog names composed of Chinese lexical material contain is three.¹¹ Two repeatedly occurring patterns can be observed. The first of them is a combination of a reduplicated term preceded by a modifier, i.e. 黑豆 *Hēi Dòudou* ‘black’ + redupl. ‘bean’, 毛豆 *Máo Dòudou* ‘hair’ + redupl. ‘bean’ and 小跑跑 *Xiǎo Pǎopao* ‘small’ + redupl. ‘run’. The second pattern is characterised by an incorporated surname. Four names have the same structure as personal names composed of a monosyllabic surname and disyllabic given name (see section 5). Apart from these, one dog was called 小不点 *Xiǎo Bùdiǎn* ‘tiny tot’, a word referring to a small child. In the case of the dog name 财财财 *Càicàicài* was the original morpheme ‘wealth’ triplicated in order to intensify even more the desired meaning.

To provide a comprehensive overview of the phonological qualities, it should be mentioned that the r-suffix was added extensively to the dog names, considering the place of the data collection. Generally speaking, the r-suffixation process as a typical feature of the Beijing dialect is applied to either denote “smallness”, or simply to imply a familiarity with the object (Lin, 2007, p. 182–183). One way or the other, its use in dog names is to be understood as another way to express love or affection. Some of the respondents also wrote the r-suffix down, however, in most of the cases it was only produced acoustically. The most popular name 豆豆 *Dòudou* redupl. ‘bean’, for example, was often pronounced with an r-suffix at the end of the second syllable. One unique Beijing dialect dog name can be found in the sample, i.e. a redupl. morpheme 贝 ‘shell’ (among others also used in the popular term of endearment 宝贝 *bǎobèi* ‘darling, baby’) that was pronounced as *Bèirbèir* by two dog walkers.

4. Lexical material

While the previous section discussed the formal structure of the dog names, this one focuses on the used lexical units (morphemes or words, both Chinese and English) that are categorized according to their denotative meaning.¹² It aims to provide insight into the source area of the lexical units used to convey the desired

¹⁰ R-suffixation represents one of the few deviations from the general one to one syllable-grapheme arrangement. It is a combination of two characters, the suffix -r and the character preceding it, that together constitute one syllable with the pronunciation being modified due to the presence of the suffix -r.

¹¹ The longest word (and also the only word longer than three syllables) in the research material is a transcribed foreign name 亚历山德拉 *Yàlishāndèlā* (Alexandra).

¹² A capital letter at the beginning of a dog name indicates that the lexical unit is utilized as a dog name just as it is.

meaning or evoke a particular image. It should be emphasized that the following groups do not cover all the lexical units occurring in the sample, but are rather an attempt to depict the general tendencies.

a) **Qualities** – as dog names are mostly reduplicated, such as 甜 *tián* ‘sweet’, 帅 *shuài* ‘handsome’, 欢 *huān* ‘happy’, 乐 *lè* ‘happy’, 悄 *qiāo* ‘quiet’, 菲 *fēi* ‘luxuriant and beautiful’, 晶 *jīng* ‘bright and brilliant’, 软 *ruǎn* ‘soft’, 脆 *cuì* ‘fragile’, 壮 *zhuàng* ‘strong’, 闹 *nào* ‘noisy’, 娇 *jiāo* ‘graceful’, 笨 *bèn* ‘stupid, clumsy’, 聪 *cōng* ‘clever’ or 臭 *chòu* ‘stinky’. Occasionally, they also occur as modifiers of nouns, as is the case of 胖 *pàng* ‘fat’, 肥 *fēi* ‘fat’, 大 *dà* ‘big’ and 美 *měi* ‘beautiful’.

b) **Food and beverages** – English words for different kind of fruits are quite popular, such as *Cherry*, *Apple*, *Lemon*, *Kivi* (incorrectly written with a ‘v’ instead of a ‘w’), as well as English words or loanwords of imported products, such as *Chocolate*, *Coffee*, 咖啡 *Kāfēi* ‘coffee’, 布丁 *Bùdīng* ‘pudding’ and 可可 *Kěkě* ‘cocoa’. The reduplicated Chinese morpheme 果 *guǒ* ‘fruit’ also ranks among the favourite names. The range of vegetables used as dog names is much more limited. Apart from the most popular lexical unit of all, 豆 *dòu* ‘bean’ (as a dog name reduplicated or otherwise modified), only one other vegetable can be found in the sample, i.e. 土豆 *Tǔdòu* ‘potato’ (which is, as a matter of fact, a compound of ‘earth’ and ‘bean’ in Chinese). Important source of names are also represented by typical Chinese food or ingredients, such as 馒头 *Mántou* ‘steamed bun’, 丸子 *Wánzǐ* ‘meat ball’, 豆包 *Dòubāo* ‘steamed bun stuffed with sweetened bean paste’, 皮蛋 *Pídàn* ‘century egg’, 花椒 *Huājiāo* ‘Sichuan Pepper’, 麻酱 *Májiàng* ‘sesame paste’ and 糯米 *Nuòmǐ* ‘glutinous rice’.

c) **Western given names** – can be either written in the Latin Alphabet or transcribed into Chinese characters (see the examples in section 2).

d) **Animals** – the following animals can be found in the analysed sample: 虎 *hǔ* ‘tiger’ or in English *Tiger*, 牛 *niú* ‘ox’, 龙 *lóng* ‘dragon’, 熊 *xiōng* ‘bear’, 猪 *zhū* ‘pig’, 鹿 *lù* ‘deer’ and 羊 *yáng* ‘sheep’. Some of them are used in the reduplicated form (i.e. 牛牛 *Niúniú*, 羊羊 *Yángyang*, 龙龙 *Lónglóng*, 鹿鹿 *Lùlù*), while others are combined with 小 *xiǎo* ‘small’, 大 *dà* ‘big’ or suffix 子 *zi* (see above). Three of them are specified with an adjective carrying the meaning ‘fat’ (胖虎 *Pánghǔ*, 肥牛 *Fēiniú* and 胖猪 *Pánzhu*). One dog was simply called 狗子 *Gǒuzi* ‘dog’ + suffix 子 *zi*, while another one carried the name 咪狗 *Mīgǒu* ‘meow’ + ‘dog’. Although ‘lion’ itself does not occur in the sample, this animal is represented in the sample by the fictional character name *Simba* from the movie *The Lion King*.

e) **Valuable objects** – first of all, this group includes compounds with 宝 *bǎo* ‘treasure’ as listed above. Apart from this, the word 珍珠 *Zhēnzhū* ‘pearl’, as well as the reduplicated characters 贝 *bèi* ‘shell’ and 珊 *shān* (a character used in a disyllabic morpheme 珊瑚 *shānhú* ‘coral’) can be found in the sample.

f) **Titles** – noble titles are also popular sources of dog names, i.e. 太子 *Tàizǐ* ‘crown prince’, 公子 *Gōngzǐ* ‘prince’, 公主 *Gōngzhǔ* ‘princess’ and 格格 *Gége* ‘princess’. Aside from this, human expressions showing the bearer’s sex can be considered a specific group of titles, i.e. 妞 *niú* ‘girl’ and 妮 *nī* ‘girl’ (as female dog names in a reduplicated versions 妞妞 *Niúniú* and 妮妮 *Nīnī*) and 男 *nán* ‘man’ (as a male dog name modified by the adjective 美 *měi* ‘beautiful’).

g) **Numbers** – are mostly used to refer to the time of birth or time the dog came to the family (see below), they also may reflect the order of the dog in some kind of ranking, e.g. 小八 *Xiǎobā* ‘small’ + ‘eight’ for the eighth of the puppies, or 二黑 *Èrhēi* ‘two’ + ‘black’ for the second black dog.

h) **Colours** – although the spectrum of the used colours is limited, one cannot overlook the fact that the two colours 白 *bái* ‘white’ and 黑 *hēi* ‘black’ quantitatively rank as the most frequent lexical units in the sample. As will be demonstrated later, metaphorical expressions are used to denote other colours of dog fur.

i) **Seasons of the year** – apart from spring, all the other three seasons can be found in the sample and thus in different languages, i.e. summer in English, autumn in Chinese and Japanese and winter in Chinese. In the case of Chinese, the relevant characters 秋 *qiū* and 冬 *dōng* are used in a reduplicated form.

5. Motives leading to the selection of a particular name

Various factors can be taken into account during the name creation process and although the possibilities are truly unlimited, one cannot help noticing that certain motives tend to be more common than others. The following list provides an overview of those that seem to enjoy widespread popularity. Some of the names may fit into more categories, considering the fact that name-givers may select a name conveying a more complex meaning.

a) *Names denoting outer appearance*

These names mostly refer to colour, fur structure or size. Two groups can be distinguished:

a1) Descriptive names, such as 黑毛 *Hēimáo* ‘black’ + ‘hair’; 卷毛 *Juǎnmáo* ‘curly’ + ‘hair’; 小白 *Xiǎobái* ‘small’ + ‘white’; 小黑 *Xiǎohēi* ‘small’ + ‘black’; 毛毛 *Máomao* redupl. ‘hair’; 胖胖 *Pàngpang* redupl. ‘fat’.

a2) Metaphorical names, such as *Chocolate*, 可口 *Kěkǒu* ‘cocoa’, 咖啡 *Kāfēi* ‘coffee’ and 布丁 *Bùdīng* ‘pudding’ indicating the colour of the dog; 球球 *Qiúqiú* redupl. ‘ball’, 豆豆 *Dòudou* redupl. ‘bean’ (more motivations, e.g. small size or two small black eyes), 胖胖 *Pàngzhū* ‘fat’ + ‘pig’ and 点点 *Diǎndian* redupl. ‘dot’ (for a small dog, e.g. Chihuahua) denoting the general body structure or appearance; 煤球 *Méiqiú* ‘coal’ + ‘ball’ and 小雪 *Xiǎoxuě* ‘small’ + ‘snow’ referring to

both colour and body structure. Other physical qualities can also inspire the selection of the name, e.g. the name 豆包 *Dòubāo* ‘steamed bun stuffed with sweetened bean paste’ was bestowed on a Dalmatian with black spots on a white background or the name 花椒 *Huājiāo* ‘Sichuan Pepper’ in which case the white colour inside the opened dog’s mouth reminded the name-giver of opened Sichuan Pepper husks.

b) Names denoting temperament

淘淘 *Táotao* and 皮皮 *Pípi*, redupl. characters taken from the words 淘气 *táoqì* and 调皮 *tiáopí*, both carrying the meaning ‘naughty’; 泼泼 *Pōpō*, redupl. character from the word 活泼 *huópo* ‘lively’; 闹闹 *Nàonao* redupl. ‘noisy’; 乖乖 *Guàiguai* redupl. ‘well-behaved’; 聪聪 *Cōngcong* redupl. ‘clever’; 笨笨 *Bènbè* redupl. ‘stupid, clumsy’ (as a puppy, the dog was too fat and it took him three months to learn how to run); 呆呆 *Dāidai* redupl. ‘silly’.

c) Names alluding to the time of birth or the time the dog came to the family

Summer, *Aki* (Japanese word for ‘autumn’), 五月 *Wúyuè* ‘May’, 六六 *Liùliù* redupl. number ‘six’ (used twice: one of the dogs was born in June, another one came to the family on a Saturday in June, i.e. the sixth day in the week and the sixth month of the year); 秋秋 *Qiūqiū* redupl. ‘autumn’, 冬冬 *Dōngdong* redupl. ‘winter’.

d) Names reflecting the circumstances under which the dog came to the family

多多 *Duōduō* redupl. ‘many’ – the family already had one dog when they bought this one; 壮壮 *Zhuàngzhuang* redupl. ‘strong’ – a stray puppy that was strong enough to survive and find a new family; 托托 *Tuōtuō* redupl. ‘entrust’ – a dog that was entrusted to the current owner from someone else; 六六 *Liùliù* redupl. ‘six’ – the owner bought the dog for six thousand RMB; 伊万 *Yīwàn* – the first character is homophonic with 一 *yī* ‘one’, while the second means ‘ten thousand’ – the owner bought the dog for (one) ten thousand RMB; 小欢 *Xiǎohuān* ‘small’ + ‘happy’ – a small companion that brought his lonely owner happiness.

e) Names referring to something the dog did (usually within the first days in the family) or likes to do (up until now)

丸子 *Wánzǐ* ‘meatball’ – as a puppy, in an unguarded moment, the bearer ate a bowl of dumplings; 小舞 *Xiǎowǔ* ‘small’ + ‘dance’ – as a puppy, the bearer liked to jump all around as if she was dancing; 门丁 *Mèndīng* ‘gatekeeper’ – from puppyhood, the bearer loved to lie in front of the door; 飘飘 *Biāobiao* – the owner chose the reduplicated character 飘 because it is composed of three components 犬 ‘dog’ and the component 风 ‘wind’ indicating that the bearer likes to run very fast; 孟歪歪 *Mèng Wāiwai*, surname after the owner + redupl. ‘crooked, askew’ – as a puppy, the bearer was very clumsy, he waddled from one side to the other while walking.

f) *Names derived from the dog breed*

柴柴 *Cháichái* – redupl. character 柴 is a reference to the Japanese dog breed 柴犬 ‘Shiba Inu’; 啦啦 *Lālā* – for a dog of the Retriever breed, the pronunciation of the character 啦 is homophonic with the first and third character of the Chinese word 拉布拉多 ‘Labrador’; 牛牛 *Niúniu* redupl. ‘ox’ – for a dog of the breed 斗牛犬 ‘Bulldog’ (‘bull’ + ‘ox’ + ‘dog’); 鹿鹿 *Lùlù* redupl. ‘deer’ – for a dog of the breed 鹿犬 ‘deer’ + ‘dog’ (officially called 迷你杜宾犬 ‘Miniature Pincher’); 泰妹 *Tàimèi* – the character 泰 is a reference to the Poodle breed called 泰迪犬 ‘Toy Poodle’, second character 妹 ‘younger sister’ indicates a female dog; 可卡 *Kěkǎ* ‘Cocker’ – for a cross-breed dog where one of the parents was a cocker.

g) *Wish names*

Dog owners most frequently desire a long life for their pet. This hope can either be expressed explicitly, such as by choosing names like 平安 *Píng’ān*, that loosely translated means ‘without accident or danger’, 壮壮 *Zhuàngzhuang* redupl. ‘strong’, 永恒 *Yǒnghéng* ‘eternal’ and 刘大壮 *Liú Dàzhuàng*, i.e. 刘 surname of the dog owner + ‘big’ + ‘strong’; or symbolically, in case of the analysed sample through animals associated with strength, such as 龙龙 *Lónglóng* redupl. ‘dragon’, 牛牛 *Niúniu* redupl. ‘ox’ and 肥牛 *Féiniú* ‘fat’ + ‘ox’. Apart from this, the name 星星 *Xīngxīng* redupl. ‘star’, is also supposed to guarantee its bearer a long life.

A desire for a successful life (a favourite motive in personal names) can be found in the analysed sample as well. To be specific, the following dog names convey this idea: 小凯 *Xiǎokǎi* ‘small’ + ‘victorious’ and 大胜 *Dàshèng* ‘big’ + ‘win’.

h) *Names borrowed from popular culture characters or famous persons*

拉兹 *Lāzī* – the Chinese version of the name of the main male character in the Indian Bollywood movie *Awaara* (The Vagabond, 1951); *Alice* – name of the main character in the book *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*; *Simba* – name of the lion in the Disney movie *The Lion King*; 阿童木 *Atongmu* – named after the main character of the Japanese manga series *Astro Boy*; 一休 *Yīxiū* – Chinese version of the Japanese anime character *Ikkyū-san* which is based on the historical Zen Buddhist monk *Ikkyū* – the dog seemed to be as clever as the anime character; 多多 *Duōduō* – redupl. character 多 that occurs in the name of the Japanese actor 本乡奏多 *Hongo Kanata* who happens to be the favourite actor of the dog owner’s daughter; *Obama* – named after the American president; 欢欢 *Huānhuan* – the owner bought the dog in 2008, the year of the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, *Huanhuan* was the name of one of the five mascots.

i) *Names in pairs*

李小爱 *Lǐ Xiǎoài* and 李小情 *Lǐ Xiǎoqíng*, the first two characters are the same in both names, 李 indicates the surname of the owner and 小 is the endearment

marker ‘small’, last characters together bear the meaning 爱情 ‘love’; 欢欢 *Huānhuan* and 乐乐 *Lèlè*, the word 欢乐 *huānlè* means ‘happy’, each of the characters separately also carries this meaning; 添添 *Tiāntian* and 加加 *Jiājia*, the word 添加 means ‘add; increase’, each of the characters separately also carries this meaning.

j) *Names derived from the name of the owner or his family members*

刘大壮 *Liú Dàzhuàng*, 李小爱 *Lǐ Xiǎoài*, 李小情 *Lǐ Xiǎoqíng* and 孟歪歪 *Mèng Wāiwai* – four dog names containing the surname of the owner; 木木 *Mùmu* redupl. ‘tree’ – the husband’s name is 林 *Lín*, i.e. a character ‘forest’ that is composed of two components 木; 卷毛 *Juǎnmáo* ‘curly hair’ – the son of the owner has the character 毛 in his name.

6. Discussion

The previous section has demonstrated that the spectrum of factors taken into consideration during the name creation process is quite broad. The ordering of the motives in the previous chapter also reflects their popularity: most of the names were inspired by the bearer’s physical or spiritual features. It is obvious that, unlike the current situation observed in Western languages, Chinese dog names do not mainly coincide with the given names, but display a strong tendency to incorporate a certain distinct feature of the name bearer. Nevertheless, despite the obvious manifestation of creativity, there are some names that seems to gain general popularity, even though their use may emerge from different associations.

The following table provides a list of the most popular names. It also clearly demonstrates the most prevalent choices for dog names: with the exception of only two names (小白 *Xiǎobái* ‘small’ + ‘white’ and 布丁 *Bùdīng* ‘pudding’), all the other names with at least four occurrences are created on the principle of reduplication. The most frequently occurring name 豆豆 *Dòudòu* redupl. ‘bean’ was even bestowed on 15 dogs of the sample.

Reduplication is also employed by the creation of given names and it would seem that names flavoured with softness and tenderness are recently becoming increasingly fashionable (Qian – Li, 1999, p. 52). Nevertheless, expressing closeness and intimacy is more closely associated with informal childhood names. Based on an analysis of different studies, Kałużyńska (2008, p. 60–61) summarises the patterns typical of childhood names. Apart from the reduplication, two other methods adopted by the creation of dog names, i.e. patterns with the term 小 *xiǎo* ‘small’ and the suffix 子 *zi*, are also listed under the most common types of informal names given to children by their family or friends. Furthermore, endearing names in general are also listed as one of the categories. As an example, Kałużyńska specifically mentions the term 宝 *bǎo* ‘treasure’, which in the case of dog names repeatedly occurs as the head of an attributive compound.

Table 1: Most popular dog names

Occurrence	Dog name
15	豆豆 <i>Dòudou</i> redupl. ‘bean’
8	欢欢 <i>Huānhuan</i> redupl. ‘happy’
6	乖乖 <i>Guàiguai</i> redupl. ‘well-behaved’ 淘淘 <i>Tàotao</i> redupl. character used in the word 淘气 ‘naughty’
5	点点 <i>Diǎndian</i> redupl. ‘dot’ 牛牛 <i>Niúniu</i> redupl. ‘ox’ 球球 <i>Qiúqiú</i> redupl. ‘ball’ 多多 <i>Duōduō</i> redupl. ‘many’
4	乐乐 <i>Lèlè</i> redupl. ‘happy’ 小白 <i>Xiǎobái</i> ‘small’ + ‘white’ 布丁 <i>Bùdīng</i> ‘pudding’ 皮皮 <i>Pípí</i> redupl. character used in the word 调皮 ‘naughty’ 贝贝 <i>Bèibèi</i> redupl. ‘shell’

As has been pointed out in the Introduction, the open nature of the Chinese anthroponymic system makes it difficult, at first glance, to identify similarities between given names and dog names. Despite this fact, some of the practices, such as for instance wishes which are supposed to guarantee its bearer certain life conditions, can be considered a reference to given names. A three-syllable name structure, with the surname of the dog owner in the initial position, is a more obvious reference to the personal naming system. Both of these practices only occur, however, to a limited extent. It is evident from the research material that the Chinese naming system allows for certain other alternative methods of anthropomorphization. The attribution of human traits is undeniably manifested in the use of the formal patterns characteristic for childhood names. In the research material, there can be found 158 dog names in all (i.e. 54 %) adopting one of the structures listed by Kałużyńska as typical of childhood names. Apart from this, to a considerable extent, the limitations of the naming system are also substituted by borrowings of existing foreign names, especially Western given names. Names, however, taken from human characters from popular culture are also common. To be specific, this is the case of 31 dog names (i.e. 4%) in the analysed sample, including names in the Latin alphabet as well as transcribed by Chinese characters. Considering the fact that only six of these names were used for female dogs, it can be said that unlike the situation observed in other languages (Leibring, 2016, p. 626), the research material does not show evidence that the borrowing of given names will be more striking for female dogs.

Generally speaking, the analysis has supported previous findings of Chen (2017) that Chinese dog names are usually not limited to one sex. It would be wrong,

however, to assume that gender-specific names are not used at all. First of all, as has already been mentioned, the sample contains a significant amount of Western names that are gender-specific. Second, dog names derived from titles (see section 4) also refer to one gender. Third, in order to highlight that the dog is a female, some of the name-givers of the selected characters are typical for female names, such as 妹 *mèi* ‘younger sister’, 娇 *jiāo* ‘graceful, delicate’, 珊 *shān* character used in a disyllabic morpheme 珊瑚 *shānhú* ‘coral’ and 娜 *nà* character used in anthroponyms. (cf. Ma, 2013, 147) One cannot also fail to notice the popularity of characters containing the graphic component 女 ‘women’ as another female name-giving practice that projects in the dog names.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, intimacy and endearment are the properties that resonate in most of the dog names. Word-formation devices, especially diminutive forms, are one of the ways to achieve this. The selection of a lexical item, evoking a certain air of softness and tenderness, would be another one. During the name creation process, an emphasis is laid on the acoustic form of the name. Contrary to the situation in Western countries, dogs have their own naming system that only in limited measure relies on borrowings from anthroponomasticon (and if so, it is mostly achieved by borrowings from foreign languages). Despite this fact, the analysis has uncovered an interesting point that the dog naming system in Chinese represents a unique combination of features assigned to dog names in pre- and post-modern times. On the one hand, many names allude to the bearer’s physical and mental characteristics or recall certain circumstances under which the dog came to the family. On the other hand, they utilize the structural patterns typical of childhood names and are evidence that anthropomorphization is possible without a direct borrowing of items used in the personal naming system. Moreover, dog names in Chinese are quite specific as far as concerns what kind of human traits are attributed to dogs: it is not the human characteristics in general, but those associated with kids. Dogs are supposed to satisfy the urge to nurture a child, this being the message that oscillates in their naming systems. It is also safe to say that this urge arises from the social and economic development of the country: the “One Child Policy” is definitely one of the main (if not the main) factors standing behind this urge. Going into greater detail concerning this issue is, however, beyond the scope of this paper.

Publication of this paper was made possible with the support of the Fond pro podporu vědecké činnosti at the Faculty of Arts, Palacký University in Olomouc (FPVČ2017/16).

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STRATEGIE POJMENOVÁVÁNÍ PSŮ V PEKINGU (ČLR)

Od začátku nového milénia lze v Číně pozorovat rostoucí oblibu domácích mazlíčků. Mezi nejvyhledávanější společníky patří bezesporu psi. Tento článek zkoumá, jak se rostoucí fenomén chovu psů odráží v čínském onymickém systému. V první řadě se věnuje lingvistické struktuře psích jmen, volbě lexikálních prostředků a motivaci výběru psího jména. Zároveň si klade otázku, zda se pojmenovávání psů v čínštině řídí stejnými principy, jaké byly zaznamenány v jiných jazycích. Výsledky provedeného výzkumu naznačují, že obdobně jako v západních jazycích lze i u čínských psích jmen pozorovat tendenci k antropomorfizaci. Zásadní rozdíl nicméně představuje skutečnost, že si zároveň do značné míry zachovávají předmoderní praxi výběru jména na základě fyzických a mentálních vlastností psa či okolností příchodu do rodiny, a představují tak jedinečnou kombinaci dvou různých pojmenovávacích zvyklostí.

Klíčová slova

moderní čínština; zoonyma; urbozoonyma; psí jména; antropomorfizace

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