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NAME-BASED NICKNAME FORMATION AMONG JAPANESE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

This article provides an insight into contemporary Japanese nicknaming practices through an analysis of 989 nicknames formed by modifications of personal names reported by Japanese junior high school students. It identifies and describes the most common name-based formation methods used to create such nicknames. While those received at home are mostly traditional forms of endearment, those created in the school environment utilise either the given name or the surname or both, and with a wider variety of modifications, involving suffixation, reduplication, syllable inversion, different *kanji* readings or English, word similarity or playful associations.

Key words

Japanese nicknames; formation methods; clipping; suffixation; teenagers; youth language

1. Introduction

Over the course of their lifetime most people acquire, in addition to their given name, one or more unofficial names, typically based on some characteristic feature of the person's character, physical appearance, actions, habits, or derived from the person's name. Such unofficial names are referred to variously as nicknames, bynames, hypocorisms, pet names, etc., and the distinctions between these terms are not always clear (e.g., Brylla, 2016, p. 238).

When first selecting a given name, parents usually consider what nicknames the chosen name could possibly trigger. An appealing diminutive form is often one of or even the main reason for choosing a particular name. An easy modification of the name into a pejorative nickname may just as easily, however, preclude a particular name from consideration.

The family circle is the first place where the child is called by a nickname, and in most cultures school is next. Nicknaming is an important linguistic practice enhancing kinship and group identity (Maher, 2011, p. 118). The acquisition of various nicknames seems to be most common during adolescence (Alford, 1987, p. 156). Liao (2000, p. 131) determined that the Chinese in Taiwan acquire most nicknames when in junior high school, followed by senior high school. The same was reported about the Japanese (Matsuda, 2014, p. 139). Nicknames function as a playful expression of intimacy, attitudes, feelings, and friendship, instead of the "impersonal" use of the full given name (de Klerk and Bosch, 1996, p. 527). A nickname often identifies an individual better than his or her official name, especially when several people in a group have the same name (Alford, 1987, p. 82; Maher, 2011, p. 118). Likewise, if two members of a particular group start with the same nickname, one of them will end up with a different one.

Although theoretically anything could be used as a nickname, many share identifiable common features as well as methods of creation. This paper is concerned with the formation of nicknames from Japanese personal names. Several previous studies discuss various aspects of this type of nicknames, including the terminology (e.g., Yamaguchi, 1985), phonological changes in the formation of the most dominant hypocoristic patterns (e.g., Poser, 1990; Rose, 2005), or comment on the length restrictions in Japanese and English hypocoristic forms (Ōta 2008), their different use in public space (Kiyomi, 2011), etc. While these studies focus on the most established forms, the present research aims at identifying and describing processes used in current name-based nickname formation among Japanese teenagers. They were analysed in a sample of 989 nicknames reported by 666 junior high school students from seven different schools. Noticeable tendencies concerning the resultant effects and the use of the various nickname types are also pointed out, as well as the tendency to combine several processes as one form often inspires the creation of another.

In defining nicknames, some writers exclude those which are obvious short forms or derivatives of the first name, while others argue for their inclusion (e.g., De Klerk and Bosch, 1996; Starks, Leech and Willoughby, 2012). This paper takes the standpoint of De Klerk and Bosch (1996, p. 537) who suggest that “when the full name is normally used, any variation from this is perceived as a nickname; when the bearer has a nickname in addition to an abbreviated first name, only the former tends to be regarded as a genuine nickname [...]”

In Japanese, the term nickname roughly corresponds to the terms *aishō*¹ and *adana*. *Nikkunēmu*, borrowed from English, is also used. While acknowledging that it is rather difficult to make a clear difference between them, for Yamaguchi (1985, p. 168) *aishō* includes the feeling of endearment, while *adana* is usually mocking or making light of its bearer. Consequently, while *aishō* is commonly used as a form of address, *adana* is usually not. In addition, *aishō* usually makes no other associations than with the bearer’s official name.

As will be demonstrated, nickname formation based on derivation from a name is a scalar phenomenon, ranging from slight modification to a more complex relationship. Furthermore, the very same process applied to two different names could result in the creation of an *aishō* in one case and an *adana* in another if the latter triggers some association or becomes homophonous with some other word, creating a humorous or mocking rather than endearing effect. For the purposes of

¹ Japanese is transcribed using the Hepburn system of romanisation, which follows English pronunciation. Long vowels are transcribed using the macron, except for toponyms and names of institutions that are more commonly used in English texts without the length indication. Geminate consonants are represented by a sequence of two identical consonants (e.g., *Yukkuu*) except when the gemination involves *ch*, which is preceded by *t* (e.g., *Matchan*, not *Macchan*).

this analysis, the term name-based nickname will be used in its broadest meaning, including any modification of an official name the respondents included in the questionnaire as an *aishō*, *adana*, or *nikkunēmu*.

2. The data

The various nicknames were collected through a simple questionnaire distributed in the winter of 2018 among students of seven junior high schools² located in major cities in four out of the five regions of Honshu, the largest and most populous island of Japan. It was part of a larger survey³ and therefore the questions related to nicknames were limited. The 1009 respondents, of which 701 were girls and 308 boys, mostly from urban middle-class or upper middle-class families, aged 12–15, were requested to write down their nicknames based on their name, personal character, physical appearance, an episode or event, or of other origin, and list with each nickname by whom it was used. Of the 1009 respondents, 666 (491 girls and 175 boys) provided one or more nicknames in one or more of the above categories. The table below shows the numbers in each category. The present paper analyses only the nicknames based on personal names, which were the most frequent type (cf. Starks, Leech and Willoughby, 2012).

Table 1: Types of nicknames

Total nicknames	Name-based nicknames			Other nicknames			
	Given name modification	Surname modification	Full name modification	Physical appearance	Personal character	Event, episode	Others
1307	639	322	28	123	43	68	87

3. Japanese personal names

In Japan, personal names consist of a family name followed by a given name. The most extensive dictionary of Japanese family names, *Nihon myōji daijiten* (Niwa,

² Kanto: Ushiku Minami Junior High School, Ushiku, Ibaraki Prefecture (126 respondents), Gakushuin Girls' Junior and Senior High School, Tokyo (373 respondents); Chubu: Nagakute Shiritsu Minami Junior High School, Nagakute, Aichi Prefecture (226 respondents) and Aichi Shukutoku Junior High School and High School, Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture (32 respondents); Kansai: Hieizan Junior High School, Otsu, Shiga Prefecture (28 respondents), Kyoto Sangyo University Junior and Senior High School, Kyoto, Kyoto Prefecture (99 respondents); Chugoku: Hiroshima University High School, Hiroshima, Hiroshima Prefecture (99 respondents). Most of them are private schools.

³ A survey conducted by Hana Kloutvorová for her doctoral thesis “Teenage girls and female *shōjo manga*: Continuity or Difference in the use of Japanese socio-person deixis?”.

1996), lists almost three hundred thousand distinct family names (cf. Takemitsu, 1998). However, 96 percent of all Japanese have one of the most common 7,000 (Power, 2008, p. C4-4), which is less than three percent of all existing surnames. Furthermore, a full ten percent of the population has one of the top ten surnames. Each of them consists of two Chinese characters (*kanji*), and is three or four-mora long.

Given names can be written in Chinese characters, one of the two syllabaries (*hiragana* or *katakana*), or some combination. The majority of contemporary names, both male and female, are two-*kanji* compounds. Male names are usually two to four morae long, while female names usually have two or three morae. The most common length for both male and female names is three morae (Barešová, 2016).

Most of the nicknames the junior high school students listed originated either in their family context, or were given by classmates, teammates, or other peers.

4. Name-based nickname formation processes identified in the sample

Although, as was mentioned above, there are virtually no limits as to what could possibly be a nickname, the way a name will be typically modified depends to some extent on its length and structure, and also the desired effect that is to be achieved (i.e. to be endearing, funny, etc.). The formation of nicknames often involves clipping, sometimes accompanied by vowel and/or consonant lengthening, affixation, repetition and a number of other processes. Some nickname-formation methods or patterns are used for both given and family names, while others were found with only one or the other. The processes typically involved in the personal name-based nickname formation found in the corpus will be now introduced and explained, including examples of their application.

4.1 Clipping

Contemporary Japanese names are most commonly three-mora long, less frequently two, and male names also have four morae or more. Names that consist of at least three morae are often clipped to a bimoraic form. Final clipping, i.e. retaining the initial part of the name, is the most common type (ex. 1). Initial clipping (ex. 2) and medial clipping (ex. 3), which are significantly less common, seem to be preferred when the resultant form has a more appealing or interesting meaning or sound, or to avoid a form already existing within the group. As Poser (1990, p. 82) observes, the modification, i.e. clipping, does not always take place at the morpheme boundary. It may occur in mid-morpheme as well (e.g., *Ai.ri* → *Iri*, *Haru.ko* → *Ruko* in ex. 2).

As it is the end part of the name that makes it gender specific, the shortened forms sometimes lose this distinction. For example, while *Haruka* and *Haruna* are

clearly female names and *Haruto* is a male name, *Haru* can be either. In addition, many of the clipped forms are identical with existing bimoraic names (e.g., all clipped forms in ex. 1, although *Tomo* is rather rare) so that at first sight they do not look like clipped forms but like already existing names.

Examples:

- (1) **Ayumi** (f), **Ayura** (f), **Ayuri** (f) → Ayu
Haruka (f), **Haruna** (f), **Haruto** (m) → Haru
Momoka (f), **Momoki** (m), **Momoko** (f) → Momo
Tomoka (f), **Tomoyo** (f), **Tomoya** (m) → Tomo
Yurika (f), **Yurian** (f), **Yurie** (f), **Yuriko** (f) → Yuri
- (2) **Airi** (f) → Iri
Haruko (f) → Ruko
Koharu (f), **Miharu** (f) → Haru
Momoka (f) → Moka
Takushi (m) → Kushi
- (3) **Ayano** (f) → Ano
Yurika (f) → Yuka

Family names were also most commonly back-clipped (ex. 4); initial or medial clipping (ex. 5, 6) was less frequent. The surname *Watanabe*, for example, which appeared three times in the corpus, was in two cases front-clipped to *Nabe*, which is homophonous with the word for a ‘pot’. Similar to clipping given names, the resultant word is usually two-mora long, but three morae are preferred if the resultant form is more appealing. For instance, the male nickname *Yoshio*, which resulted from the family name *Yoshioka*, sounds like a male given name. Similarly, *Takashi*, shortened from *Takahashi*, is homophonous with an existing male name. The surname *Koarashi*, back-clipped to three morae, results in *koara*, homophonous with a ‘koala’.

Examples:

- (4) **Fujita** (m), **Fujii** (f) → Fuji
Koarashi (f) → Koara
Shibasaki (f), **Shibata** (f), **Shibayama** (m) → Shiba
Takahashi (m), **Takata** (f) → Taka
Yoshioka (m) → Yoshio
- (5) **Iguchi** (f) → Guchi
Fukushima (m) → Shima
Sumigama (f) → Gama
Tsukamoto (m) → Moto
Watanabe (f, m) → Nabe
- (6) **Takahashi** (m) → Takashi

Such clipped forms are usually accompanied in interaction with the commonly used personal suffixes *-san* for girls or *-kun* for boys, or the diminutive suffix *-chan* or its various modifications (*-shan*, *-tan*, and *-yan*), expressing intimacy and affection.

4.2 Clipping and vowel-lengthening

Another typical type of nickname formation involves reducing the name only to one mora, most commonly the first one, lengthening the stem vowel and usually attaching a suffix (e.g., *-san*, *-chan*, *-tan*), which then becomes an integral part of the nickname. This pattern is used especially for girls, and is usually formed from given names (ex. 7), although several nicknames of this type formed from family names were also found (ex. 8).

Examples:

- (7) **Ayako** (f), **Aina** (f), **Airi** (f), **Asuka** (f), **Ayano** (f), **Ayura** (f) → **Āchan**, **Āsan**, **Ātan**
Chihana (f), **Chihiro** (f), **Chisato** (f), **Chizuru** (f) → **Chī**, **Chīchan**, **Chītan**
Fūko, **Fumika** (f) → **Fūchan**
Kimitake (m) → **Kīkun**, **Kīchan**
Mimi (f), **Misaki** (f), **Mizuki** (f), **Tsugumi** (f) → **Mīchan**, **Mītan**
- (8) **Sawaki** (f) → **Sāchan**
Fujii (f) → **Fūsan**
Murakami (f) → **Mūsan**

4.3 Clipping and consonant-lengthening (gemination)

This pattern involves leaving one mora of the name and assimilating the next one to the suffix onset (ex. 9), making the resultant form rhythmical and affectionate. If the stem vowel is long, it is shortened (ex. 10). This pattern was used mainly with given names, but appeared with a small number of family names as well, in which case the name base left after the clipping varied between one and three morae (ex. 11).

Examples:

- (9) **Koharu** (f), **Kotone** (f) → **Kotchan**
Mahiro (f) → **Matchan**
Miki (f), **Mitsuki** (f) → **Mitchan**, **Mittan**
Nana (f), **Natsumi** (f) → **Natchan**
Tetsushi (m) → **Tetchan**
- (10) **Yūka** (f) → **Yutchan**
Yūki (m) → **Yukkun**

- (11) **Watanabe** (f) → Watchan
Hiramatsu (f) → Matchan
Hashimoto (f) → Hashimotchan
Yamaguchi (f) → Yamagutchan, Gutchan

4.4 Consonant and vowel-lengthening

This pattern involves reduction to two morae and subsequent lengthening of both the consonant (gemination) and the vowel of the second mora. If the name has only two morae then no clipping is necessary. This process is used for both nickname formation from given names (ex. 12) and surnames (ex. 13).

Examples:

- (12) **Akira** (f) → Akkī
Asuka (f) → Assū
Maki (f) → Makkī
Sachiho (f) → Satchī
Yoshiko (f), **Yoshiya** (m) → Yosshī
- (13) **Akiyama** (f) → Akkī
Fukushima (m) → Fukkū
Kashima (f), **Kashiwabara** (f) → Kasshī
Nakamura (f), **Nakayama** (m) → Nakkā
Waki (m) → Wakkī

4.5 Adding a suffix

Suffixation is frequently utilised in name-based nickname formation. Some of the previously described nickname formation patterns involve personal suffixes which are commonly used with names in interaction, such as *-san*, *-kun*, and *-chan* or its various modifications such as, for example, *-shan*, *-tan*, and *-yan*. There are also numerous suffixes that are used especially to create nicknames. The following, listed in alphabetical order, were found in the corpus: *-chi*, *-dī*, *-hime*, *-ko*, *-maro*, *-maru*, *-mon*, *-n*, *-nnu*, *-(no)suke*, *-o*, *-pe*, *-pi*, *-pī*, *-pin*, *-pon*, *-pyon*, *-rin*, *-ta*, *-(t)ti*, *-tī*, *-ton*. The suffixes listed and exemplified in this section are limited to those that appeared at least in two different schools, and are grouped based on their meaning, sound, or some other feature they have in common.

According to Yamaguchi (1985), such suffixes are more commonly used with given names than family names. In this study, the overall number of nicknames based on given names was significantly higher than those based on family names, yet some of the suffixes below were found as frequently with surnames as with given names, and *-mon* was found only with surnames. After clipping and attaching a suffix, some given and family names result in identical forms.

4.5.1 *-ko, -o, -(no)suke*

What these three suffixes have in common is that they are gender-specific. In the past, the suffix *-ko* was used as an honorific or courtesy title (Iwabuchi and Shibata, 1964, p. 36) with bimoraic names when addressing or referring to females of higher social status, and it was also part of the names of girls from the imperial and aristocratic families. For most of the twentieth century, *-ko* (子 ‘child, girl’) was the most common end syllable in female names (*Akiko, Kazuko, Masako, Tomoko, Yukiko*, etc.; see, e.g., Hashimoto and Itō, 2011; Barešová, 2016, 2017). The same *-ko* is also used to form nicknames. Yamaguchi (1985, p. 169) offers the following examples, where the original name is shortened to one mora and *-(k)ko* or *-(n)ko* are attached: *Yoshimi* → *Yokko*, *Noemi* → *Nonko*. Several nicknames created in this way were found in the corpus as well (e.g., *Yui* → *Yukko*), but in most cases the suffix *-ko* was attached either to two-mora names, or names clipped to two morae (ex. 14). Such nicknames are often identical with existing female names. The suffix *-ko* was also found attached to surnames (ex. 15). In two cases it was used to create a nickname for a boy.

Examples:

- (14) **Anna** (f) → **Anko**⁴
Ayura (f) → **Ayuko**
Hina (f) → **Hinako**
Kino (f) → **Kinoko**⁵
Natsu (f) → **Natsuko**
- (15) **Arakawa** (m) → **Arako**
Iguchi (f) → **Guchiko**
Kurimoto (m) → **Kuriko**
Shibasaki (f) → **Shibako**
Yoshida (f) → **Yoshiko**

Just as *-ko* is typically used at the end position of female names, *-o* and *-(no)suke* are used in male names. The final *-o* is in names usually represented by the Chinese characters 夫, 男, 雄, or 郎⁶, all meaning ‘man’. The suffix *-(no)suke*, (之)介, comes from a historical official title and is used in old as well as some recent male names (see, e.g., Barešová, 2016). Interestingly, the nicknames utilizing *-o* attached to given names (ex. 16) and surnames (ex. 17) found in the corpus were all nicknames for girls. The suffix *-(no)suke* (ex. 18) was also found in

⁴ Homophonous with ‘red bean paste’.

⁵ Homophonous with ‘mushroom’.

⁶ Also read as *-rō*.

several nicknames for girls.⁷ The use of such nicknames was explained as the girl being tall or boyish, or dancing the boy's role, etc.

Examples:

- (16) **Haruka** (f) → Haruo
Mari (f) → Mario⁸
Rina (f) → Rinao
Yuma (f) → Yumao
- (17) **Yoshida** (f) → Yoshio
Tsurugai (f) → Tsuruo
- (18) **Fūko** (f) → Fūnosuke
Mako (f) → Mākonosuke
Rua (f) → (Ruaru) → Ruarunosuke
Daiki (m) → Daisuke
Taiki (m) → Tainosuke

4.5.2 The syllabic N (ん), *-rin*

The syllabic N (ん) is added to names (ex. 19) and surnames (ex. 20) to make them more rhythmical and endearing. When added to given names, it may actually become homophonous with an existing name (*Airi* → *Airin*, *Mari* → *Marin*, etc.). The suffix *-rin*, found in three nicknames based on given names (ex. 21), is also used for its cute sound, calling forth an image of a cute girl, inspired by the Japanese idol and model Ogura Yūko, whose nickname is *Yūkorin*. Both suffixes were only found in nicknames for girls.

Examples:

- (19) **Ayame** (f) → Ayamen
Ayano (f) → Ayanon
Koharu (f) → Koharun
Nanami (f) → Nanamin
Yuki (f) → Yukin
- (20) **Kodama** (f) → Kodaman
Kozuke (f) → Kozuken
Shinoyama (f) → Shinoyaman
Suguri (f) → Sugurin
Terada (f) → Teradan

⁷ Yamaguchi (1985, p. 169) also reports its use in a female nickname (*Chieko* → *Chīsuke*).

⁸ *Mario*, a short and plump Italian plumber, is a fictional character in the Mario video game franchise, owned by Nintendo.

- (21) **Mio** (f) → **Miorin**
Yuki (f) → **Yukirin**
Yūko (f) → **Yūkorin**

4.5.3 *-pon, -pyon*

The suffixes *-pon* and *-pyon* (and other suffixes containing /p/) are also primarily used for their cute sound. *-pon* was found in both female and male nicknames based on given names (ex. 22) and surnames (ex. 23), *-pyon* was found only in two nicknames for girls (ex. 24).

Examples:

- (22) **Aina** (f) → **Aipon**
Arisa (f) → **Aripon**
Miu (f) → **Miupon**
Runa (f) → **Runapon, Runaponpon**
Shō (m) → **Shōpon**
- (23) **Miyamoto** (m) → **Miyapon**
Takahashi (m) → **Takapon**
Tanaka (f) → **Tanapon**
Ueda (f) → **Uepon**
- (24) **Nina** (f) → **Ninapyon**
Yumeka (f) → **Yumepyon**

4.5.4 *-chi (-tchi), -pi (-ppi)*

These suffixes are also used mainly for their sound and rhythm, and are attached to both male and female given names (ex. 25 and 26) and family names (ex. 27 and 28), although in the present corpus they were not found with male given names.

Examples:

- (25) **Ayane** (f) → **Ayanetchi, Netchi**
Ayano (f) → **Ayanotchi**
Sara (f) → **Saratchi**
Yui (f) → **Yuitchi**
Yuki (f) → **Yutchi**
- (26) **Asuka** (f) → **Appi**
Honoka (f) → **Honpi**
Kaho (f) → **Kahoppi**
Mahiro (f) → **Mappi**
Rio (f) → **Rioppi**

- (27) **Hamajima** (m) → **Hamachi**
Kondō (f) → **Konchi**
Morino (m) → **Moritchi**
Toki (f) → **Tokichi, Tokitchi**
Tsukamoto (f) → **Motchi**
- (28) **Maeda** (f) → **Edapi**

4.5.5 *-pī (ppī)*

As for the origin of this suffix, respondents point to the nickname *Nori-P* (*Noripī*), of the popular Japanese singer and actress Sakai Noriko (debuting in 1986), which she used in the early years of her career. Her nickname is related to her way of speaking, so-called *noripīgo* ('Noripī's language'), which features the consonant /p/ (*ureshii* 'happy' → *urepii*; *oishii* 'delicious' → *oipii*, etc.). The suffix is used with both female and male names (ex. 29) and was found with one surname as well (ex. 30).

Examples:

- (29) **Kōsei** (m) → **Kōpī**
Mahiro (f) → **Mappī**
Miharu (f) → **Mihappī**⁹
Momoka (f) → **Momopī**
Rika (f) → **Rikapī**
- (30) **Shioda** (m) → **Shiopī**

4.5.6 *-tī, -dī*

The suffix *-tī* originates from the English diminutive suffix *-y/-ie*, and was popularised by the character Hello Kitty, Kitīchan, and then by *Mikitty* /mikiti/, the nickname of pop singer Fujimoto Miki (debuting in 2002), which was created by blending her given name and her favorite Hello Kitty. An affinity towards either of these two may inspire a nickname with this suffix, including the voiced version *-dī*.

Examples:

- (31) **Fūko** (f) → **Fūtī**
Manano (f) → **Manatī**
Miki (f) → **Mikitī**

⁹ Homophonous with the Japanese pronunciation of 'happy'.

- (32) **Kōno** (f) → **Kōtī**
Osayama (f) → **Osadī**
Udagawa (f) → **Udadī**

4.5.7 *-mon*

Nicknames utilising the suffix *-mon* may also reflect the person's favorite character, in this case the Japanese manga series robotic cat, Doraemon. Nicknames ending in *-mon* also resemble traditional male names. The suffix, derived from an official title, was used in old male names, such as *Touemon* (*-uemon/emon*, 右衛門, 'officer of the Right Division of Outer Palace Guards'), *Kyūzaemon* (*-saemon/zaemon*, 左衛門, 'officer of the Left Division of Outer Palace Guards'), etc. (Barešová, 2016, p. 50). In the corpus it was used to create surname-based nicknames for boys and also for one girl (ex. 33).

Examples:

- (33) **Fujimoto** (m) → **Fujimon**
Kajie (m) → **Kajiemon**
Miyamoto (m) → **Miyamon**
Tokumoto (f) → **Tokumon**

4.5.8 *-nnu*

This last suffix, used to create nicknames for girls, is more recent. It apparently comes from the French *-nne* (as in the name *Vivienne*), transcribed to Japanese as ンぬ /*nnu*/. The nicknames containing this suffix sound cute to girls. Its use can be traced to *Mariannu*, the nickname of the voice actress Naganawa Maria (born 1995).

Examples:

- (34) **Aya** (f) → **Ayannu**
Ayaka (f) → **Ayakannu**
Maria (f) → **Mariannu**
Momoko (f) → **Momokonnu**
Nanako (f) → **Nanakonnu**

4.6 Adding a prefix

In contrast with frequent suffixation, prefixation is not particularly common, unlike, for example, in Chinese, where it seems to be a common means of nickname formation (Liao, 2000, pp. 103–107). Several female nicknames were created by attaching the prefix *o-* to a bimoraic name. This imitates a previous

practice of attaching the prefix *o-* to bimoraic names when addressing or referring to female commoners to express respect or affection (Tsunoda, 1987, pp. 45–46; cf. the suffix *-ko* for females of a higher social status).

Examples:

- (35) Michi (f) → **Omichi**
 Mimi (f) → **Omimi**
 Miku (f) → **Omiku**
 Sara (f) → **Osara**
 Yuma (f) → **Oyuma**

4.7 Reduplication

There are various patterns involving reduplication, “a universal word-building mechanism, associated with phono-graphemic musicality and lexical creativity” (Fajardo and Gonzales, 2018). It is a common principle for nickname formation, for example, in Chinese (Liao, 2000). If the name is bimoraic, it can be simply reduplicated (ex. 36). Longer names are usually clipped to two morae and then reduplicated (ex. 37). Another option is reduplicating only the second mora (ex. 38). This pattern of nickname formation was found only with female given names, but also with several family names of both female and male students (ex. 39).

Examples:

- (36) **Ami** (f) → Amiami
Mai (f) → Maimai
Rin (f) → Rinrin
Risa (f) → Risarisa
Yui (f) → Yuiyui
- (37) **Eiko** (f) → Eiei
Maiko (f) → Maimai
Rinka (f) → Rinrin
Tsugumi (f) → Tsugutsugu
- (38) **Arisa** (f) → Ariri
Haruna (f) → Haruru
Honoka (f) → Hononon¹⁰
Sara (f) → Sarara, Rara
Yume (f) → Yumeme
- (39) **Ina** (f) → Inana
Morikawa (f) → Morimori

¹⁰ Here N is added to make the resultant form rhythmical (also *Kanon* → *Kanonon*, *Kanonnon*).

Tamura (m) → Tamutamu

Kimura (m) → Kimukimu

4.8 Blending family and given names

Blending is a popular word-formation method in youth language (e.g., Barešová and Zawiszová, 2012, 2014) and is also commonly utilised in nickname formation. The family and given names are clipped and blended in a single nickname. Most frequent are parallel full blends, where both names are similarly back-clipped (ex. 40). There are also several nicknames in the corpus formed by fore-clipping one and back-clipping the other name (ex. 41). If the given or family name is only two-mora long, it is more frequently retained than clipped and only the other name is clipped (ex. 42). This popular practice can be seen in nicknames of popular persons, such as singers and actors.¹¹

Examples:

(40) **Horiuchi Ayaka** (f) → Horiaya

Kojima Haruka (f) → Kojiharu

Kimura Tomoka (f) → Kimutomo

Miyamoto Kazuki (m) → Miyakazu

Sakai Ryōta (m) → Sakaryō

(41) Furuya Satoko (f) → **Satoko** Furuya → Saya

Umeoka Ayumi (f) → **Ayumi** Umeoka → Ayuoka

Yokota **Yūsuke** (m) → Tayu

(42) **Aoki Mayu** (f) → Aomayu

Kobayashi Riri (f) → Kobariri

Ooyagi Riko (f) → Ooriko

Shibata Miu (f) → Shibamiu

Shinoyama Mari (f) → Shinomari

4.9 Syllable inversion

Syllable inversion has been used in various word games (such as Pig Latin) and argots (such as French Verlan). It can be found in Japanese youth language, especially applied to nouns, nominal adjectives, and adjectives (see Barešová and Zawiszová, 2012, 2014), and thus it is not surprising that it is also used in nickname-formation based on names (ex. 43) and surnames (ex. 44). It typically

¹¹ E.g., *Kimutaku* (Kimura Takuya), *Matsuken* (Matsudaira Ken), *Fukakyon* (Fukada Kyōko), *Gomaki* (Gotō Maki).

involves transferring the final or the last two morae to the initial position, and may be also accompanied by phonological changes, such as a change in vowel length. The inversion may be motivated merely by a funny sounding sequence, or by its final meaning.

Examples:

- (43) Kei (f) → Ike ('pond')
 Maho (f) → Homa
 Mao (f) → Oma
 Rinno (f) → Nori ('sea weed')
 Ryōsuke (m) → Sukeryō
- (44) Katagiri (m) → Girikata, Girikata chokorēto¹²
 Murase (f) → Sērā mūn¹³
 Tamura (m) → Murata¹⁴
 Yamada (m) → Dāyama
 Yasufuku (m) → Fukuyasu

4.10 Playful distortion of names

Some nicknames were created by simply changing a vowel (ex. 45) or consonant (ex. 46) in the surname. Such a change affects the perception of the name, making it sound playful, cute (resembling children's language), teasing, etc. depending on the character of the modification. Most of the nicknames in the corpus were created from surnames.

Examples:

- (45) Andō (f) → Andū
 Kondō (f) → Kondū
 Tōse (f) → Tūse
 Yamada (m) → Yamadū
 Yoshida (f) → Yosuda
- (46) Moriyama (f) → Morimama
 Saitō (f) → Chaitō
 Takahashi (f) → Tagashi, Taga
 Udagawa (f) → Udagyawa
 Yoshino (f) → Yopino

¹² Motivated by *giri chokorēto*, "obligation chocolate", which women are expected to give to men at their workplace, etc. on Valentine's Day.

¹³ *Sailor Moon*, a manga and anime series targeted at a teenage female readership.

¹⁴ *Murata* is also an existing surname.

4.11 A different reading of *kanji*

These nicknames are based on an alternate reading of *kanji* in the name, usually the surname. Most of the Chinese characters used to write Japanese have two sets of reading: native Japanese and Sino-Japanese. For example, the nickname *Suiden* ('paddy field') comes from utilising the Sino-Japanese reading of the surname *Mizuda* 水田. Similarly, the surname *Shioda* 塩田 gave rise to the nickname *Enden* ('saltpan, field for drying salt'), which is the Sino-Japanese reading of the same *kanji* compound.

Examples:

- (47) Mizuda 水田 (m) → Suiden ('paddy field')
 Nemoto 根本 (f) → Konpon ('root, source, origin')
 Sasono 茶園 (m) → Chaen ('tea plantation')
 Shioda 塩田 (m) → Enden ('saltpan, field for drying salt')
 Yoneno 米野 (f) → Kome 米 ('rice'), *O-kome-sama* ('Miss Rice')

4.12 English equivalents

Unlike in some Asian countries, such as Hong Kong (Li, 1997), Taiwan (Liao, 2000) or Singapore (Tan, 2001), the Japanese seldom adopt an English name. Yet English is an important school subject and serves as a source of inspiration when forming nicknames. For example, *Panpukin* (the Japanese rendering of the English word pumpkin) is a nickname for a girl who is plump, while the nickname *Masshurūmu* (Mushroom) is motivated by its bearer's hairstyle. However, only a few nicknames utilising English are based on given names (ex. 48) or surnames (ex. 49), i.e. formed by using an English equivalent of (some part of) the bearer's name. The nickname *Dorīmu* (Dream) corresponds in its meaning with its bearer's name, *Yume*, and the same nickname was also formed based on the name *Nozomi* ('wish', 'desire', 'hope'). The nickname *Kīchan* originates from its bearer's surname, *Kagimoto*: *kī*, the Japanese rendering of the English word *key*, is an equivalent of the Japanese word *kagi*. Similarly, the nickname *Uesuto* (West), which further triggered formation of the nicknames *Īsuto* (East), *Sausu* (South) and *Nōsu* (North), is the English equivalent of *nishi*, which is part of the surname *Nishimura*.

Examples:

- (48) Nozomi (f) → Nozomi ('dream') → Dorīmu
 Sakura (f) → Sakura ('cherry') → Cherī
 Yume (f) → Yume ('dream') → Dorīmu
- (49) Kagimoto (m) → Kagi ('key') → Kīchan
 Nishimura (m) → Uesuto ('west') → Īsuto ('east'), Sausu ('south'), Nōsu ('north')
 Shioda (m) → Shio ('salt') → Saruto

4.13 Word similarity, associations

Finally, some nicknames are based on playful associations, similarity or rhyming of the name with some other word. For example, the male name *Yūto* gave rise to the nickname *Nyūton* (Newton) and *Takushi* to the nickname (*Hey*) *Takushī* (Hey, taxi). The nickname *Okarina* (ocarina) rhymes with its bearer's name *Rina*, and *Banana* with the name *Nana*. Additional examples are listed below.

Examples:

- (50) Hirose (m) → Hakase (expert, doctor, PhD)
- Kokona (f) → Kokonatsu ('coconut')
- Maho (f) → Mahoganī ('mahogany')
- Mari (f) → Maririn Monrō (Marilyn Monroe)
- Risa (f) → Risabon (Lisbon)

5. Summary

The information gathered by this survey provides an insight into contemporary nicknaming practices by Japanese junior high school students, and suggests that personal names are a very productive source of nicknames in many and various ways. The analysis demonstrated that the nicknames given to the respondents by their family members are, not surprisingly, almost exclusively modifications of their given name, whereas those created by classmates or team members also include modifications of their family name, as it is common to use surnames among Japanese classmates. In fact, male students reported more nicknames based on family names than those based on given names. A special type found with both boys and girls were nicknames created by blending family and given names.

The vast majority of the analysed nicknames were formed based on one or more of the processes described in this paper. Those used by the family usually followed one of the three dominant hypocoristic patterns (Poser, 1990; Mester, 1990), whose formation typically involves: 1) clipping the name to a bimoraic stem and attaching a hypocoristic suffix (*Misaki* → *Misachan*; see 4.1), 2) clipping the name to one mora, lengthening its vowel, and attaching a hypocoristic suffix (*Misaki* → *Mīchan*; see 4.2), or 3) clipping to one mora and assimilating the next one to the suffix onset (*Misaki* → *Mitchan*; see 4.3).

Nicknames given by peers are significantly more diverse, ranging from the three traditional patterns mentioned above, which are also formed from family names, and utilising a much wider variety of suffixes (4.5), to various modifications involving reduplication, syllable inversion, sound distortion, different *kanji* readings or English, word similarity, or associations.

These linguistic means create various effects. A sense of familiarity, friendliness and intimacy is accomplished by clipping – the basic word-formation process utilised in nickname-formation – and can be further intensified by diminutive suffixes.

Rhythmicality is created by consonant lengthening, reduplication or suffixation. Expressiveness can be achieved by consonant lengthening, distorting a formal variant of the name, name associations, etc. Name associations can also create a humorous effect, and so can the use of certain suffixes.

Nicknames given by peers are playfully creative. Many nicknames reported by the respondents were created combining several of the nickname-formation processes described and exemplified in this paper. For example, the nickname *Maki-makkī* was derived from the family name *Sakamaki* by initial clipping to a bimoraic base (*maki*), which was then reduplicated and, finally, both the consonant and the vowel of the last mora were lengthened. The nickname *Chāhan* ('fried rice') is based on the syllable inversion (see 4.9) of the hypocoristic form *Hāchan* (4.2), which was derived from the name *Haruka*. The nickname *Matcha* ('powdered green tea') was inspired by the sound similarity with *Matchan*, created by clipping and consonant lengthening (4.3) from the name *Mahiro*.

While most nicknames can be clearly recognised as such, clipping and/or adding a certain suffix can lead to forming a nickname which is homophonous with an actually existing name (e.g., clipping the final *-ko* of a female name on the one hand and attaching the suffix *-ko* to a name which does not feature it on the other hand; i.e. a girl whose name is *Hinako* may end up being called *Hina*, while a girl whose name is *Hina* could end up being called *Hinako*). This is even true of surnames, some of which after clipping may resemble certain given names (e.g., *Yoshio* from the surname *Yoshioka* or *Takashi* from *Takahashi* in 4.1). A frequent consequence of clipping is the loss of gender distinction, which can be either restored or even intentionally changed by choosing a gender specific suffix.

6. Conclusion

Japanese junior high school students often create nicknames for their peers based on a playful and creative modification of their name. The 989 nicknames based on the personal names of 666 junior high school students revealed the richness of the various nickname-formation processes, each of which has its own effect. Many are quite expressive, rhythmical and easy to use. Some nicknames are forms of endearment, others are playful, and the vast majority are positive, although this could be partially attributed to the self-reported method of the nickname collection. In some cases the choice of a particular modification was also motivated by some funny or interesting association. Such name variations play an important role in decreasing distance and creating a sense of belonging and intimacy among group members.

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TVOŘENÍ PŘEZDÍVEK Z OSOBNÍCH JMEN: PŘÍKLADY Z JAPONSKÝCH NIŽŠÍCH STŘEDNÍCH ŠKOL

Príspevek nabízí vhléd do současných japonských způsobů vytváření přezdívek z osobních jmen. Na základě analýzy 989 přezdívek japonských žáků nižších středních škol identifikuje, popisuje a na příkladech dokumentuje nejčastější způsoby vytváření tohoto typu přezdívek. Zatímco v rámci rodiny jsou využívány především tradiční hypokoristické formy jmen, přezdívky vznikající ve školním prostředí vycházejí ze jména i příjmení, případně jejich kombinace, a vykazují různorodější tvůrčí postupy. Zastoupeny jsou mimo jiné reduplikace, inverze slabik, uplatňování anglických ekvivalentů či jiných variant čtení znaků, jimiž je jméno zapisováno, záměny na základě podobnosti slov a nejrůznější hravé asociace.

Klíčová slova

japonské přezdívky; způsoby tvoření; krácení; sufixace; středoškoláci; jazyk mladých

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