

Linguistic Analysis of Nicknames of Junior High School Students

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Abstract

Liao (2000) categorized (nick)naming rules for Taiwanese, leaving plenty of room for further research. This study aims at something more, using another tack to analyze nicknames and their relationship to formal full names in data from the 250 nicknames of 295 junior high school graduates, as eternalized in Graduation Memory Album. Findings include: significantly more males than females had nicknames (91.61% to 78.29%; p-value= 0.001); 110 (44% of 250) nicknames directly linguistically related to their full name, among which 44 (40%) used puns. Such pun-related nicknames constitute 14.91% of the sample size, 'marked' enough to make 82% of Taiwanese parents-to-be studied try their best to avoid homophonic effect in naming children (Liao 2000: 240). Nicknames homophonic with names may not be more derogatory than those not. A naming rule of 'do not let your children have the name homophonic with bad words' should not be taken too seriously. Young children used six rules of Liao's (2000) in nicknaming: one new rule is found, which is not their creation, though. One suggestion to namers and named: produce their own nicknames and promote them.
