Exchange of Terms of Address:

Nicknaming Practices among University Students in Taiwan

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Declaration

I have read and understood The University of Edinburgh guidelines on plagiarism and declare that this written dissertation is all my own work except where I indicate otherwise by proper use of quotes and references.

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Abstract

Unlike personal names (first name and surname), nicknames may vary from time to time and even from group to group depending on familiarity and relations between interlocutors or amongst group members. This paper examines use of nicknames in different communities of practice where members are well-acquainted enough to nickname each other based on personal names (internal variations) or personal features (external variations). The research is conducted in two universities in Taiwan: Tamkang University and National Taiwan University. Students who have constructed a community of practice are observed in their regular activities. Nicknaming practices are analysed and compared against Liao's (2000, 2006) study of Taiwan-Chinese nicknaming patterns.

In this study, the framework of community of practice is adopted in recruiting the subjects and addressing issues regarding gender. With this social theory, we are able to look at how nicknaming practices reveal identity issues of membership in a community of practice. From a sociolinguistic point of view, nicknaming represents a process of constructing individual identities within a group (Thornborrow 2004) and it is also the outcome of social interaction and learning. Membership of a community of practice is indexed by being able to recognise each other's nicknames as well as other linguistic conventions. The results show that each community of practice has its own in-group knowledge that is exclusively understood by the members.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Personal names are labels given at birth by parents or other senior members in a family and may be retained throughout one's lifetime. Nicknames, on the contrary, are likely to vary from time to time and even in different communities. Presumably, nicknames are accrued among well-acquainted members in a group depending on their familiarity and solidarity. In a narrow sense, nicknames can be interpreted as an individual's description tag. In order to look beyond a nickname itself, I intend to investigate nicknames from a practical point of view. That is, I am interested in how a nickname is developed, namely nicknaming practices, when it is used as well as what is embedded in that particular nickname. (e.g. Is it an in-group marker, or does it index one's membership in a group?)

1.1 Motivation

According to Liao (2000, 2006), Chinese nicknaming patterns in Taiwan can be classified into two categories: real-name based nicknames and personal-feature based nicknames. My interest is to look at how relationship can be successfully maintained through nicknaming practices because Liao (2006) has summarised that most nicknames are not elegant. Besides, being courteous has been highlighted in the Chinese culture, and it is worth researching on how people manage courtesy when they are exchanging nicknames, especially those that are not favorable.

Due to McConnell-Ginet's (2005: 84) claim that "nicknaming can be important in certain communities of practice," I have adopted the framework of community of practice (CofP) as an essential condition when recruiting experiment subjects. The subjects are pre-existing focus groups in this research. When CofPs are constructed, nicknaming practices are accessible since nicknames are often generated over a period

of time of getting together. I will draw on how the participants in my data construct their own communities when I introduce the data and the methods applied in the experiment.

Bucholtz (1999: 204) indicates that "the community of practice was introduced into sociolinguistics specifically to address issues of gender." As this is the case, gender issues must be taken into consideration when the social theory of CofP is adopted. McConnell-Ginet (2005: 84) states that nicknaming practices are more common in all-male groups; yet, I expect to find evidence that is contradictory to this phenomenon. Furthermore, I tend to look at nicknaming process of current university students in Taiwan who are called "7th grade generation (*qi nian ji sheng*)" as a result from their birth year in *Min-Guo* 70s[1] (*Min-Guo* is an alternative year system using in Taiwan) and from their "outstanding" creativity for new terms in expressing themselves. They have their own language (called *huo xing wen* 'Mars language') of communication which is not widely known to other generations. Because of this, I assume that a new generation may bring new elements in nicknaming based on their innovative ways of using the language.

1.2 Research questions and issues to investigate

Due to the motivations mentioned above, I find my interest in exploring linguistic cues of nicknaming using Liao's study as an entry to review Taiwanese university students' exchange of address terms. The research questions that will be looked at are:

- How do the students address their peers/fellows (i.e. other members in that CofP) and vice versa?
- Do male students give nicknames to their female peers more frequently than they give nicknames to their male peers in a mixed-gender community?

- Do the majority of students from English Department use their English nicknames for addressing each other?
- Why and how do these students nickname their peers with such a term?
- Does situation matter when the student has more than one nickname?
- How do their linguistic conventions identify their membership in that CofP?

In order to investigate the use of address terms among current university students, the research is conducted as a fieldwork study. The pre-existing CofPs are considered as the focus groups and, this research will address issues in three dimensions. Firstly, the nicknames that have been collected will be unpacked and analysed based on Liao's (2006) study and I will further look at the attitudes when the members of the CofP are exchanging their nicknames. In other words, the strategies applied to the interaction between the nicknamer and the nicknamee will be discussed. Then, I will discuss whether there is gender difference in the nicknaming process. Lastly, I will look at linguistic conventions that are exclusive to the members of the particular community, by which the membership is likely to be identified.

In this research, I argue that nicknames, rather than personal names are the terms used by the members of the CofP to address each other. The linguistic elements of "*ei*" or "*wei*" ('hey' in English) used as vocatives are understood whom they refer to by the community members. In addition, I think nicknaming practices are also pervasive in all-female groups as well as mixed-gender communities. Therefore, it would be interesting to analyse the elegance of nicknames that are given in these different social groups. The students in the CofP have a common interest that may result in their own in-group language as I have assumed that linguistic conventions of a particular community may have an impact on nicknaming practices.

1.3 Definition of nicknames

Phillips (1990: 281) defines a nickname as a subset of informal or unfixed names for someone, usually addressed by acquaintances. In Liao's study, she interprets a nickname as an informal name that is not registered at the Civil Registration Office (2006: 69). Some researchers (Alleton 1981: 45, Blum 1997: 363) directly translate nicknames into "little names" (*xiao-ming*) or "milk names" (*ru-ming*). Fang and Heng (1983: 505) state that a milk name is only used within the family or among intimate friends. However, I would reserve a nickname (NN) for referring to a term that is either developed from one's real name as McConnell-Ginet (2005: 84) does, or a description accrued based on the personal features. Essentially, a NN is a label produced from a shared history or common experience.

In this research, I specifically define a NN as an informal term for an individual, often used by the members in a particular community. It is reasonable to assume that NNs are often developed among acquaintances and most NNs represent familiarity, intimacy and solidarity. I would like to demonstrate the sequence of a Chinese name, which is different from that of an English name. The components of a full Chinese name are a surname X (often monosyllabic) preceding a given name Y-z (usually dissyllabic). As a result, the pattern of presenting a full name is as such: X Y-z (surname and given name). To clarify, Y-z does not count as a nickname in my definition. Despite the fact that Y-z shows familiarity among interlocutors, it does not necessarily indicate intimacy and solidarity. Strangers meeting for the first time might be apt to use Y-z to disclose their friendliness, in which case the address term Y-z is taken as a real name, or to be specifically, a first name, rather than a NN. Except given names (Y-z), forms that are derived from either internal motivation (variants based on any character of a personal name) or external motivation (based on a person's

recognisable features or personal biographies) are defined as NNs (Morgan, O'Neill & Harre 1979).

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Taiwanese nicknaming patterns

Parallel to the formation of Morgan et al. (1979), Taiwanese nicknaming patterns can also be divided into two categories: linguistic orientation (or internally motivated formations) and non-linguistic orientation (or externally motivated formations). Liao (2000, 2006) has proposed ten rules that govern nicknaming as follows. To exemplify, a real Chinese name, *Gao* 高 (X) *Xin* 欣-*ni* 怩 (Y-z), is demonstrated (*Gao* means tall; *Xin* means glad and is homophonic to *xin* 'heart' and *xin* 'new', and similarly pronounced as *xing* 'star;' *ni* means shy and is homophonic to *ni* "mud.")

Table 2. 1 Taiwanese nicknaming rules proposed by Liao (2000, 2006)

No.	Rule	Example	Remarks
(1)	Affectionate names (duplicate one character)	*Ni-ni*	Duplicate last character; pronounced as *ni*(ˇ) *ni*(•)
(2)	Prefix one character of a full name by *ah*, *lao* ('old') or *xiao* ('little')	*Ah-ni* or *Xiao-ni*	
(3)	Homophonic word play	*Xiao-xin* 'little new'	*Xin* and *xin* 'new' are homophonic.
(4)	Opposition to something about the formal name	*Ai-ni*	Surname *Gao* 'tall' is opposite to *ai* 'short.'
(5)	The birth order of the sibling	*Mei-mei* 'younger sister'	
(6)	Fortune-teller's instruction	*Xiao-yu* 'little fish'	A fortune-teller suggested her to get closer to water.
(7)	Describe the person, ability, figure, fondness, etc., or the opposite quality	*Mei-nyu* 'beauty'	She looks beautiful.
(8)	Given by relatives	*Dou-dou* 'pea-pea'	She was extremely small when she was born.
(9)	Birth year, gender, or (Chinese) horoscope	*Mu-chi* 'hen'	She was born in the chicken year (Chinese horoscope) and is female.
(10)	Suffix one character of the full name by *zi/zai* (similar function as prefix *ah*)	*Ni-zai*	

Rule (1) to (4) and (10) are variants from one's full name while the rest involve other individuals in the naming process. Rule (6), fortune-teller's instruction, needs to be slightly elaborated here. In Taiwan, people believe a personal name (PN) has a great impact on one's whole life; that is, a good name brings good luck. However, one's name and his/her *sheng chen ba zi*, the date in the Chinese lunar calendar and the exact time s/he was born, are interdependent. After naming an infant, the parents or the senior in the family traditionally take the infant's *sheng chen ba zi* to a fortune-teller. Often, this fortune-teller is able to read whether the name given to the infant carries good fortune (e.g. good health and a safe life). The *sheng chen ba zi* not only shows one's date of birth but his/her fortunes for the future. Therefore, in Taiwanese tradition, a good name and a good NN is possible to reverse bad fortunes. In the example above, *Xin-ni* explained that her fortune-teller foresaw that she might be under the threat of fire; she was suggested to be nicknamed something opposite to fire (i.e. water) which resulted in her NN, *Xiao-yu*, that has been used for more than two decades in her family.

NNs are intended for representation of a person and most of them are entertainment-oriented. Liao (2006: 70) reviews Berger's (1993) article in which nicknaming is taken as a language technique that demonstrates a sense of humour including allusion, facetiousness, insults, sarcasm, puns, exaggeration, etc. However, it is highlighted that the western style of humour may cause misunderstanding when it comes to the Taiwanese society. For example, Jim Abbitt was nicknamed as Jackrabbit by sports writers for his fast moves (Shankle 1955: vi); on the contrary, a person nicknamed Rabbit in Taiwan is very likely to have two big upper front teeth (Liao 2006: 70). In Liao's (2000) study, NNs based on one's full name are popular among students, and I will illustrate how homophonic wordplay is applied in nicknaming among Taiwanese university students in the discussion section. In addition, Liao's

rules of nicknaming are produced from data mainly collected from high school students. In this case, new rules will be introduced if the data I have collected do not fall into any category Liao has proposed.

2.2 Gender differences in terms of address

The deeply-rooted concept of *zhung nan qing nyu* (men receive higher social status than women) in traditional Chinese society has a great influence on address terms between men and women. Watson (1986) describes the inequality of naming process in Ha Tsuen where a man receives a public NN before getting married and takes a 'marriage name' when he marries. After starting a business career, he takes a 'courtesy name'. Furthermore, NNs are given to gain a reputation for cleverness and they may correspond to the person's physical or personal quality. Women, in contrast, are not treated equally. When a woman marries, using her name as an address term becomes rare. She is therefore addressed by "inner person" (*nei ren*), "a term Chinese husbands use to refer to their wives" (Watson 1986: 626). Alternatively, she may be addressed by kinship terms rather than her PN; the kinship terms have been preserved as a remarkable property and are still used currently even if the western culture has invaded.

Blum (1997: 363) further states that NNs used on women "often suggest sexuality and depravity," such as *biao-zi* 'prostitute, bitch'; on the contrary, the term to insult males is *biaozi yangde* 'raised by a bitch' or *biaozi erzi* 'son of a bitch" (Farries 1988: 293-95). All these examples apparently prove the *zhung nan qing nyu* in Chinese culture. Power or hierarchy determines the forms of address. Specifically, this power determines not only relationship between parents and children, but that between men and women. An extreme case given by Yang (2007: 56) in which women in Chaoshan

"are required to use the same address forms used by their children to call their husbands' families." Under this circumstance, women are not seen as adults but characterized as children who usually have lower status in the family. Married women are discriminated against and I see neither power nor solidarity but humiliation toward women in such a community. Although it is not always or mainly the case, women's social status in Chinese society is still an issue of concern.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) in their article describe gender differences in the Japanese language. They use Brown and Gilman's (1960) research and state that regardless of whether the relationship between the addresser and the addressee is tense or not, the systems for speaking of addressees show either the power semantic of respect and deference or the solidarity semantic of familiarity and closeness. It is said that women tend to use honorific forms to index their femininity and signal their propriety in Japanese culture where the power semantic is strongly concerned (Ochs 1992). In the Japanese language, women use sentence-final particle *wa*, whereas men uses *ze*. Japanese is a language that embraces linguistic features of being able to directly mark men's or women's speech and it has helped constitute gender differentiation (Ochs 1992: 341-343). Similarly, *boku* 'I' itself, used in a less formal situation, indicates that the speaker is male while women say *watashi* 'I' to refer to themselves. Broadly speaking, men can use *boku* as well as *watashi*, but women can rarely use *boku* (nowadays women use *boku* only when they are talking to their close friends.). As we can see, male language and female language are quite different in Japanese.

As Brown and Gilman (1960) claim, in earlier centuries the power between the interlocutors determines the use of *tu* and *vous* (second person pronouns in European languages in the broad sense). Due to the increasing chances of speech, women are encouraged to express themselves and they are getting further away from suppression.

The new female generation has left behind their doctrines concerning a woman's obligations and old fashion of taking themselves as subordinates of men. An obvious fact is that girls now are sent to school and raised with well-educated behaviours. Until now, males' status has been competed with females'. I will discuss later the negotiation between male university students and female ones for NNs that have been addressed or that are created in the interview.

McConnell-Ginet (2005: 84) states that nicknaming practices are more common in all-male groups and the evidence that Liao (2006: 72) presents also proves the high frequency of nicknaming practices among males. In a Graduation Memory Album of Feng Dong Junior High School, it is reported that 119 out of 152 (78.29%) female students have NNs while 131 out of 143 (91.61%) male students have NNs (Liao 2006: 72). However, it should be noted that among eight classes under observation, one class has more female students having NNs than male students. And, surprisingly, three out of eight classes in which all of the students, either female or male, have NNs.

2.3 Framework of the community of practice

The framework of CofP has been largely adopted as a domain in sociolinguistic research. It is a theory defined by a process of social learning (Meyerhoff 2002: 528). In Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992: 464) paper, a CofP is defined as:

> … [A]n aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor.

It is this mutual engagement through social and linguistic practices that congregates

people. Wenger (1998: 73) proposes three essential criteria that formulate the framework of CofP:

1. mutual engagement
2. a joint enterprise
3. a shared repertoire

Different from the speech community in which peripheral members are rarely analyzed, Bucholtz (1999: 108, 210) elaborates that CofP focuses on individuals as well as groups. A table provided by Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999: 179) clearly illustrates that membership of a CofP is internally built up and identity is actively constructed. As a result, voluntary, regular and frequent interpersonal contact in a CofP is required for mutual engagement. Additionally, culture, as Corder and Meyerhoff (2007: 443) claim, plays an imperative role that pulls people together. Instead of the culture in a broad sense (i.e. culture as a society or a nation), each group in my data presents its own community culture. I will present the evidence for this when the data is introduced.

A joint enterprise shows full complex of mutual engagement (Wenger 1998: 77-78) and is established through a process of negotiation. Meyerhoff (2006: 189) elucidates that members of a CofP are in pursuit of common goals and frequent interaction. However, Meyerhoff (1999: 236) argues that the shared goal has to be desirable among the members; otherwise, the enterprise is not strong enough to constitute a CofP and can hardly be distinguished from the term “speech community.”

As the third feature of CofP, a shared repertoire refers to both linguistic and non-linguistic (or behavioural) convergence in the process of negotiation (Wenger 1998: 83-84). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 468) say that linguistic repertoire is developed and adjusted through regular and frequent interaction. In fact, the

interaction is confined to a group of people where memberships are mutually indexed. Corder and Meyerhoff (2007) give an example of a Female First football team using the term “bun” to refer to the football net, and it is regarded as an exclusive in-group token that identifies membership in that community. Non-linguistic repertoires such as routines, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced are also taken as a way of practice (Wenger 1998: 83). The concept of locality of practice raised by Wenger is what I feel the most important element to identify one’s membership in a CofP. Wenger (1998: 125) points out that “learning and the negotiation of meaning are ongoing within the various localities of engagement, and this process continually creates locally shared histories.” These biographies are created by members of an exclusive community that belong to and are possessed by the indexed members.

None of the above criteria can be left out. An example provided by Meyerhoff (1999) perfectly illustrates this standard. Although linguistic repertoire *sore* ‘sorry’ is commonly used by women speakers of Bislama (the creole language spoken in Vanuatu) to express empathy, they cannot constitute a CofP due to lack of the other two requirements (Meyerhoff 1999: 235). Again, I will explain how my data of the university students are qualified to constitute a CofP.

McConnell-Ginet describes nicknaming as an important process in certain communities of practice and NNs are often accrued based on either one’s “real” name or other sources that are significant or exclusive to a particular CofP (2005: 84). Personally, I feel that nicknaming can be regarded as a linguistic repertoire because wordplay of a name or phonetic variations from a name are a result of practices. In addition, nicknames are often created after their regular engagement and sometimes these NNs are embedded with their shared history that identifies individual’s membership. It not only shows familiarity but also solidarity and intimacy. During the

process of nicknaming, the nicknamee negotiates with the nicknamer(s) and, ideally they will come to a NN that both agree on. In some cases, both parties accept the NN peacefully, while in others fierce negotiations may take place as a result of disagreements in the exchange of NNs. An example of this will be given when I draw on the issue of attitudes how the nicknamer and the nicknamee trade their opinion on the proposed NN.

2.4 Identity in the community of practice

Identities can be revealed in practice (Bucholtz 1999: 209). In non-linguistic practice, Eckert (1989) demonstrates how Jocks' and Burnouts' identities are constructed by their behaviour. For instance, Burnouts smoke but Jocks do not; Burnouts wear bell-bottoms and jackets while Jocks wear short, pegged jeans and crew-neck sweaters. From linguistic point of view, names are to give the child strength and they establish individual identity in a particular culture or religion. Once a PN is given, it is important to pay attention to how people use it, which serves the process of setting up individual identities within a group (Thornborrow 2004: 161). This naming practice is exemplified by Simmonds (1998) who has a variety of names that serve different functions and identities in different contexts. NNs, just like PNs, show in-group identities, and they may be a property of a particular community. Through social and language practice in a community, shared knowledge of each other's NN is a source to define one's membership in the CofP.

Moreover, Benwell and Stokoe (2006: 49) point out that "identity is constructed in discourse" and is "performed, constructed, enacted or produced, moment-to-moment, in everyday conversations." By analysing conversations, identity can be self-reflected. In Bucholtz's (1999: 211) study of nerds, a group of high school girls in the US, the

identities are disclosed and displayed consciously through language and other social practices. Meanwhile, Bucholtz (1999: 214-218) presents conversations between nerd girls and explicates how their language represents their nerd identities. Labov's (1972a) study of the language used by street gangs in New York demonstrates that "the core members of groups shared the most linguistic similarities" (Thornborrow 2004: 165). By means of producing innovative language, negotiating the meaning or imitating the language and finally coming to the convergence everyone agrees on, members of the community therefore construct a number of in-group linguistic tokens. For instance, it is possible for students whose major are English to code-mix in their dialogues while having clear understanding with each other. They are also able to comprehend the wording that makes sense only to the student from English Department. Hence, code-mixing and linguistic norms may become linguistic features that are shared by the members of that CofP.

A person's identity in the CofP can be discussed through conversation discourse that may perform his/her identity from several aspects. Some sociolinguists (Coates 1996, 2003, 2004; Holmes 1995; Mills 1995) exploit discourse to illustrate how femininity and masculinity are performed and how their gender identities are presented in their spoken discourse while others (Halliday 1976; Labov 1972b; Trudgill 1983; Eckert 2000) analyse phonetic variations that members of different CofPs or speech communities use to perform their identities. Still, others may look into identities from other perspectives. And I, in this research, will present extracts[2] to look into linguistic markers shared by those who are indexed the membership of that particular community. To be specific, address forms as well as in-group terminology will be the focus in my discussion.

Chapter 3 Data, Methods and Results

3.1 Data

The participants in this study are university students in Taiwan. To observe the exchange of NNs among acquaintances, data was collected from six different groups, four (community A-D) of which were students in Tamkang University (TKU) and two (community E-F) of which were from National Taiwan University (NTU). Community A consisted of ten members of mixed gender (four females and six males) of the TKU student guitar society. They come from different majors and their age varies from twenty to twenty-two. The common interest is their passion for playing the guitar and music.

Community B are five third-grade undergraduates of mixed gender (three females and two males) majoring in English in TKU. They were classmates and often got together for meals or for entertainment.

Both community C and community D are female sophomores of the English Department in TKU. Community C was a study group in which the members took the same option course and they often met for discussion of their group assignment. The members in community D were simply classmates as well as close friends.

Community E and community F are postgraduate students at NTU. The members in community E were classmates whose common interest was playing computer games in their leisure time, while those in community F used to be undergraduate classmates in TKU are now good friends in NTU. The members of community F meet and socialise twice a month by which they are able to enhance their friendship.

3.2 Methods and materials

The focus group is a research technique concerned with "the researcher's interest that provides the focus, whereas the data themselves come from the group interaction" (Morgan 1997: 6). Therefore, I recruited the above groups as my data where the group interaction on the topic was my focus. The communities in my experiment are pre-existing groups in the form of friendship. Bloor et al. (2001: 23) state that recruiting a group that has constructed its own social network may reduce recruitment effort and Kitzinger (1994: 105) claims that friendship groups are more likely to provide natural interaction. These are the reasons that I chose groups where members have known each other for more than six months.

The framework of CofP is also applied in my experiment since group members are supposed to be acquaintances; that makes it possible to address each other by their NNs (Phillips 1990: 281). The framework of CofP (Wenger 1998) offers a fine construct to look into nicknaming processes in a community: it is the regular meeting that makes the community members get together and further understand each other (mutual engagement). They meet for some purpose (e.g. assignment, relaxation, etc.) and negotiate for it (a joint enterprise). Each community has its shared history or knowledge that are exclusive to the community members (a shared repertoire), such as characters in the computer games or persons only known to the group members. The criteria of mutual engagement and a joint enterprise of each community will be described in the following and the shared repertoire of each community will be analysed when I move on to data discussion.

The experiment was conducted in the Chinese language and each followed three steps: a questionnaire, a regular activity and a group interview. The regular activities and the interviews were videotaped by Sony HandyCam DCR-SR300 with the

informed consent of the participants (Appendix). In order to meet the requirements of constructing a CofP, I was not present in any of the activities. Instead, the activities were videotaped so that I could access the spontaneous use of speech in each community. Before the regular activity began, questionnaires requesting the participants' personal information and their NNs addressed outside the videotaped communities were passed out. Asking for NNs addressed outside was designed for the ethnographic interview that followed the activity. The interviews contained two sections: first came the guess-who activity and then a nickname-trade discussion.

The activity videotaped was a regular event the members of each community carry out when they usually meet; therefore they were able to behave as natural as possible when the activity was recorded. Each community had different kinds of activities. Community A was having their meeting as the routine, reviewing the guitar teaching and confirming the progress of their schedule. Community B went to Holiday KTV (i.e. karaoke) where they were free to sing and have light meals. The members of community C were discussing their final assignment in a fast food restaurant where they were also having their lunch together. The place where the all-female community D went was a well-known coffee chain in which they were gossiping and reading a fashion magazine. They were used to hanging out like that, sitting in a café, talking about latest fashion and gossiping. Though most of the members in the community E are postgraduate classmates in the Department of Engineering Science, the common time that everyone shows up in that research room is for playing computer games, which was exactly the activity that was recorded. Based on their questionnaires, they played the computer game together at least once a week. The last community, the all-male NTU students who used to be undergraduate classmates in TKU, had the video taped when they were having their dinner together. It should be noted that not all the participants of each community appeared in the interview because of personal

business even though most participants did take part in both the activity and the interview.

In the ethnographic interview, the "guess-who" game was created based on the questionnaires in which the participants were asked to provide their NNs outside the videotaped community. Firstly, the interviewer called out a NN and the interviewees guessed whose NN it was. It was to observe whether or not the NNs addressed in other communities were identifiable in the current community. After that, NN trade discussion was conducted. During the process, interviewees were encouraged to offer detailed information about the source of NNs currently used in the community.

3.3 Results

The data shows that NNs do not seem to be a common address term among the community members even though most of them have a NN. Rather, after spontaneous use of address terms was reviewed, it discovered that the community members tend to use PNs to address their fellows.

To illustrate (a) NNs outside the recorded community (questionnaires), (b) spontaneous use of address terms (videotaped activity) and (c) NNs used in the videotaped community (interview), the participants' NNs are presented in the tables below. Looking at NNs from these three dimensions, I will analyse these NNs based on nicknaming patterns proposed by Liao (2000, 2006). Participants' Chinese PNs are presented by *Hanyu Pinyin* system. Liao's nicknaming rules as listed above in Table 2.1 will be indicated numerically in the parenthesis. The English translation of any meaningful Chinese character or name, if necessary, is shown in single quotation marks (''). For example, "*Xiao-bai* (7) 'little white'" means that *Xiao-bai* is the NN addressed by the nicknamee's fellows; (7) tells that the nicknaming pattern of

Xiao-bai corresponds to Liao's (2000, 2006) rule number 7, "describing the person, ability, figure, fondness, etc., or the opposite quality." The meaning of *Xiao-bai* is translated in the single quotation mark 'little white.' Please note, an asterisk is indicated beside the NN if it does not fall into any category proposed by Liao. In this case, I will provide new nicknaming rules. It is noticed that a NN may belong to more than one nicknaming rule which will also be included in the parenthesis.

After analysis of naming patterns, I will further discuss in detail how nicknames, either in the videotaped community or outside the community, correspond to individual's PN (internally motivated) or to any personal features (externally motivated).

Table 3. 1 Community A: TKU student guitar society (mixed-gender 6♂ 4♀)

Personal name (X Y-z)	NN outside (questionnaires)	Spontaneous use of address terms (activity)	Term(s) addressed currently (interview)
Chen 陳 Yi 奕-liang 良 (♂)	Da-te (5) 'big'	PN; She-zhang da-ren (7) 'Mr. Chief'	Chen Yi-niang (3, 7)
Chen 陳 Hong 虹-ling 綾 (♀)	Mei-mei-chiang (5) 'younger sister'	PN	Chen Hong 轟-ling (3) (hong 'crazy')
Yang 楊 Chao 朝-dong 棟 (♂)	Ou-da (11*) [His English NN is Owen.]	PN	Go-tui-dong (7)
Dai 戴 Ji 吉-qian 謙 (♂)	Ah-qian (2)	Da-ya-qian (3)	Da-ya-qian (3) 'big toothpick'
Chen 陳 Song 嵩-yang 洋 (♂)	Xiao-hei (7) 'little black'	PN	Xiao-hei (7) 'little black'; Song 鬆-yang 癢 (3) 'loose-itchy'
Xu 許 Bo 博-shou 壽(♂)	Xiao-bai (7) 'little white'	Xiao-bai (7)	Lao-shu (7) 'mouse'; Mo-shou (3) 'warcraft'; Xi-ha-guai-ke (7) 'hip-hop freak'
Chen 陳 Yan 妍-cen 岑 (♀)	Xiao-ke-ai (7) 'little cutie'	[not addressed]	[absent] PN
Tu 涂 Li 立-hong 宏 (♂)	Tu Li-wa (7)	PN	Xiao-hu(-ye) (7)
Zhu 朱 Jia 家-yun 妘(♀)	Xiao-yin (2, 3) 'little silver'	PN	Xiao-yin (2, 3); Zhu-jie (12*)
Huang 黃 Tian 恬-min 敏 (♀)	Min-min (1)	Zhu-xi (7) 'hostess' [in the videotaped meeting]	Pang-zi (7) 'fatty'; Mi-tian-gong (3) 'excrement'

Table 3. 2 Community B: TKU juniors of English Department (mixed-gender 2♂ 3♀)

Ye 葉 Si 思-han 含 (♀)	Fei-fei (7) 'fly-fly'	Ei 'hey'	Xiao-nyu-hai (7) 'little girl'
Lin 林 Nian 念-yao 瑤 (♀)	Susie (11*); Yao-yao (1)	Ei 'hey'	Jing-yu (7) 'goldfish'
Cai 蔡 Guang 光-zhen 鎮 (♂)	Cai Gua-pu (3) 'sponge'	Tan-ke (7) 'Tank' [He was singing Tank's song.]	PN
Yang 楊 Qiao 巧-wei 微 (♀)	Apple (7)	[not addressed]	PN; FN
Chen 陳 Jun 俊-liang 良 (♂)	Hei-ren (7) 'black person'; Ah-liang (2)	Da-lu-ren (7) 'Chinese'; Xiao-ge (7) 'little brother' [named after a celebrity]	Ah-zheng (7); Da-lu-ren (7) 'Chinese'

Table 3. 3 Community C: TKU sophomores of English Department (all female)

Li 李 Ling 菱-shan 珊	Ling-jiao (3) 'water chestnut'; Ge-ji-la (7) 'godzilla'	[not addressed]	Ah-go-go (7→3); FN
Zhao 趙 Yu 郁-rong 榕	Rong-shu (3) 'banyan'	PN	Maggie (11*); Ma-ji (11*); Nigger (7)
Wang 王 Yu 瑀	Xiao-ya (5) 'little duck'	Ei 'hey'	Emma (11*); PN
Yu 余 Shang 尚-huan 桓	Xiao-li (7) [a famous cartoon character]	[not addressed]	Charlize (11*)
Liu 劉 Hui 蕙-xian 嫻	Xian-xian (1)	Jessie (11*)	Jessie (11*)
Chang 張 Ya 雅-yun 雲	Xiao-bai (7) 'little white'	[not addressed]	Xiao-bai (7) 'little white'

Table 3. 4 Community D: TKU sophomores of English Department (all female)

Yu 余 Ping 屏	Yu-pi (3) 'fish skin'	PN; Yu-pi (3)	PN; Yu-pi (3); Jenny (11*)
She 佘 Zong 宗-qian 倩	surmane [homophonic to she 'snake']	[not addressed]	Anita (11*); Ding-shu-ji (7) 'stapler'; Wei-dai-guai-shou (7) 'belly monster'
Chen 陳 Xing 星-yu 羽	Ah-xing (2); May/Mei (5) 'younger sister'	PN	May (7, 11*)
Chang 張 Qiao 巧-ru 儒	Rb (11*)	Ei 'hey'	Ruby (11*); Qiao-ru jie (12*) 'Qiao-ru sister'

Table 3. 5 Community E: NTU postgraduates of Engineering Science Department (all male)

Lin 林 Guan 冠-you 佑	Ou-di (7) 'O-di'	[not addressed]	FN
Wu 吳 Bing 秉-yin 穎	Hei-ren (7) 'black person'	[not addressed]	PN
Liu 劉 Ming 明-han 翰	Liu-mang (3) 'hooligan'	PN	Lo-mua (3) 'liu-mang in *Tai-yu*[3]'; FN
Suen 孫 Zhi 志-jie 杰	Lao-tou (7) 'old head'	PN; wuwu-liuliu (7) 'five-five six six' [nicknamed after a group celebrity called wuwu-liuliu]	[absent] Suen Xie-zhi (3); PN
Chen 陳 Ren 仁-yu 昱	People (3) 'ren means person/people'	PN	People (3); PN
Lin 林 Hao 浩-ting 庭	Hei-ren (7) 'black person'	[not addressed]	Da-shi-xiong (7) 'senior'

Table 3. 6 Community F: NTU postgraduates who used to be undergraduate classmates in TKU (all male)

Wu 吳 Bing 秉-yin 穎	Hei-ren (7) 'black person'	[not addressed]	Bing-ge (12*) 'Bing brother'
Du 杜 Yue 岳-ting 庭	Ah-du (2)	Xiao-du (2)	Xiao-du (2)
He 何 Hong 鴻-xiang 翔	Da-ben-xiang (3) 'big stupid xiang'	Ah-xiang (2)	Ah-xiang (2)
Yang 楊 Zhe 哲-wei 維	Yangway (3) 'impotence'	Biao-ge (7)	Biao-ge (7) 'cousin'
Chang 張 Zhao 兆-zhi 志	Da-tou (7) 'big head'	PN; Jiou-ge (11*→12*)	Jiou-ju (3, 11*) 'George is transliterated'; Jiou-ge (11*→12*)

At a glance, it is apparent that rule (3), homophonic wordplay, and (7), describing the person, ability, figure, fondness, etc., or the opposite quality, are the main sources in nicknaming practices among university students. Rule (4), (6), (8), (9) and (10) are not applicable in any community. Besides, NNs used as the address terms are not as frequent as expected. Instead of NNs, the group members get others' attention or address other fellows by the expressions of *ei* or *wei*. In fact, the participants' meta-linguistic awareness of nickname usage was raised in the interview. They brought up the idea that the more familiar with someone, the more possible they

addressed each other's PNs. Some even commented on the process how one addressed the other by using one's FN, NN or PN.

3.4 Constraints

In this research, the regular activity of each CofP was videotaped; however, the equipment was set still without any person taking the digital video or tracing who was speaking. Therefore, when reviewing and transcribing the recorded video, I found it difficult to follow who was speaking and how those out of the scene behaved from time to time.

It was contradictory to assign someone who did not belong to that particular CofP or to ask one of the members in the CofP to operate the camera. The former would result in failure of constructing a CofP according to Wenger's (1998) criteria and the latter might restrict the operator from spontaneously participating in the activity. Although the observer's paradox most likely occurred (the equipment might somehow affect the members' behaviour since it was not part of their routine to set it up), the groups ought to, at least, meet the requirement of forming a CofP. Another issue that should be paid attention to was the NNs that were indicated as disliked in the questionnaires. It could potentially cause severe embarrassment to the interviewee. Such a mistake was made when interviewing the members of community A. One of the members showed his uneasiness being the target of joke. Some NNs are neutral but some are undesired NNs that have to be dealt with carefully to avoid embarrassment.

Chapter 4 Discussion

I will discuss four major issues based on the above results. Firstly, analysis of nicknaming patterns will be drawn on in detail. Patterns that are not included in Liao's (2000, 2006) study will be proposed here. Second, gender issues will be discussed. Although McConnell-Ginet's (2005: 84) statement that nicknaming practices are more common in an all-male group is the situation in the western culture, it will be evaluated whether it is applicable in Taiwan. In addition, by adopting the "guess-who" activity, membership of the community can be identified. Some members spontaneously asked for the source of each other's NN, especially those not obvious enough to guess whose NN it was. On the other hand, participants were active in providing ideas on how they addressed their fellows or what NN was given. Finally linguistic conventions of each community will be analysed. This convention is a marker not only identifies membership in the CofP but also shows their involvement in that CofP. I assume that both NNs and linguistic conventions can be taken as crucial shared repertoire in a CofP.

4.1 Extra nicknaming rules

Students' exchange of English NNs is an alternative nicknaming pattern that is not included in Liao's category. Those who major in English may have a higher probability of using English NNs, such as Jenny to refer to *Yu Pin* and Anita to refer to *Zong-qian* in community D. Here, by an English NN I mean a name of English style (e.g. Barbara, John, Maggie, etc.). Sometimes students' English NNs are based on their Chinese names while sometimes they are randomly chosen by the students themselves or given by their parents or teachers in the English language school. These English NNs are taken for granted as NNs because they are neither first names nor

PNs and, they are changeable. *Jun-liang* in the community B used to call himself Leo but currently he introduces his English NN as Ryan because one of his classmates whose English NN is also Leo (His Chinese name is *Zhang Li-you*, the FN of which sounds more like Leo). Furthermore, an English NN is likely to be transliterated directly into Chinese. *Zhao-zhi* in community F is a good example of this. *Zhao-zhi*'s NN *Jiou-ju* sounds like George in English so his fellows find it interesting to call him *Jiou-ju*; another reason for them to call him *Jiou-ju* is that they are not confident in speaking English accurately. So, I would like to propose an 11th rule of nicknaming pattern: self or non-self selected names of English style and variants/transliteration of that English name.

University students see each other as grown-ups that results in their adding *ge* 'brother' or *jie* 'sister' at the end of any character of one's full name. For instance, in community D *Qiao-ru* is called *Qiao-ru jie* '*Qiao-ru* sister' and in community F *Bing-yin* is addressed by *Bing ge* 'Bing brother.' This is in fact not an honorific term or a title, rather it is a signal accounting for either solidarity or request for assistance from the addresser. Interviewed, *Zong-qian* elaborated when asking for *Qiao-ru*'s help, she would prefer addressing her as *Qiao-ru jie*. This shows informal hierarchy that only occurs when the addresser extremely looks forward to the addressee's positive response. Whether or not the nicknamee accepts such a term, it is also a prevalent pattern adopted among university students in Taiwan. In order to make collected NNs categorised, I therefore propose a 12th rule: suffix one or two characters of the full name by *ge* or *jie*.

4.2 Nicknaming practices among university students

The most frequently adopted rule of nicknaming among university students is a NN

that describes the person, ability, figure, fondness, etc., or the opposite quality (rule 7). In community B *Nian-yao* is nicknamed *Jing-yu* 'goldfish' which describes her facial appearance. The nicknamer of *Jing-yu* is *Guang-zhen* who explained that once *Nian-yao* was having a drink with a straw, she looked like a goldfish from one side of her face. In community C, one of *Yu-rong*'s NNs is Nigger by which the members refer to her dark skin (I suppose that these students have no idea that Nigger is a taboo word). Specifically, *Yu-rong* is the only one who loves strong sunshine and who expects to have healthy dark skin. It is very different from typical Taiwanese. Most girls and women in Taiwan prefer skin as white as possible. Going against the trend, *Yu-rong* commented that dark skin looked healthier and prettier. No one agreed with her and they, as a consequence, gave her the NN Nigger. This is not translation from Chinese, but because they major in English, they are more likely to give a NN in English than other majors.

The data shows a number of NNs that are derived from skin colour. *Song-yang* (community A) has kept his NN as *Xiao-hei* 'little black' for years. He explained that it was the regular activity of swimming that gave him such dark skin. Similarly, *Bing-yin* (community E) is also nicknamed *Xiao-hei* because of his dark skin. He also complained that those who did not know him very well often assumed that he was a *yuan zhu min* 'aborigine,' who has dark skin as his/her ethnic feature. An extreme example of skin colour occurs on *Ya-yun* (community C) who gets dark skin but is nicknamed *xiao-bai* 'little white.' Vaá (2007) says that names in Samoa may have an inverted meaning. The example given is a girl named Faapuaa, which means "like a pig." However the fact is, compared to her, other girls are like pigs. This inverted meaning of naming can be transformed to nicknaming practices, which means that *Ya-yun*'s NN *Xiao-bai* can be interpreted as "compared to her, others look white." *Ya-yun* is glad to accept this NN given by her high school classmates and she keeps

introducing herself *Xiao-bai* when she meets new friends even though the nickname may be mocking her appearance or serving the function similar to the English "Blue" which is for a redhead.

I find I have encountered some NNs that can hardly be recognised who they refer to because of not being one of the members in that CofP. When I was reading and analysing the data, it is discovered that most NNs that require explanations are concerned with personal features or with story shared exclusively by the members (cf. Davies 2005). Only when we participate in the nicknaming process do we know the factor of giving such a NN. This group-specific story will be discussed as it can be considered as shared knowledge that identifies one's membership in a particular CofP.

Another popular rule of nicknaming is homophonic wordplay based on the PN (rule 3). Intonation of Chinese phonemes has to be elaborated to understand better the transformation of homophonic wordplay.

Generally speaking, there are five intonations in Chinese pronunciation: first (—), second (ˊ), third (ˇ), fourth (ˋ), and light (•). To briefly illustrate, here are five words with same *pin-yin* but they have different intonations that result in different meanings. The first intonation *ma*—means 'mother,' the second sound *maˊ* means 'hemp' or 'sesame,' *maˇ* refers to 'horse' and *maˋ* is 'to condemn.' The light intonation *ma* • is used as a phrase-final particle in questions.

The intonation play has an impact on nicknaming practices as well. For example, *Hongˊ-lingˊ* 'rainbow silk-fabric' (community A) is given a NN of *Hong—-lingˊ* 'crazy silk-fabric' which sounds funny and which also implies *Hong-ling*'s crazy personality. Another example is *Song—-yangˊ* 'mountain ocean' who receives *Song—-yangˇ* 'loose itchy' as his NN in that CofP.

Phonetically, minimal pairs sometimes become the source of a NN. In community A, *Bo-shou* is nicknamed *Mo-shou* 'warcraft,' a popular programme of the computer

game. The only different sound of the real name *Bo-shou* and the NN *Mo-shou* is the /b/ and the /m/ sound. Therefore, *Bo-shou* and *Mo-shou* are considered as a minimal pair. Being so fond of computer games, university students, guys in particular, have inevitably given NNs by adopting the name of the in-game characters as the NN. *Jia-yun* receives the NN *Xiao-yin*; the *yin* and her FN *yun* are also minimal pairs (/ɪ/ and /u/). *Jia-yun* herself described that the /jun/ sound was not as easy as /jin/ owing to the preceding *jia* that was pronounced with a short /ɪ/ sound. *Yu Ping* in community D had the similar explanation of her NN *Yu-pi*. As repeatedly address *Yu Ping*, her fellows found it easier to say *Yu-pi* 'fish skin' than *Yu Ping*. *Zong-qian* added that she sometimes pronounced a sound between /pɪ/ and /pɪŋ/.

When it comes to homophonic wordplay, attentions should also be drawn to the case in which a NN is developed from one character of a full name. In community A *Dai Ji-qian* is nicknamed *da-ya-qian* 'big toothpick' because of the similar *Dai* to *da* sound and same pronunciation of the former *qian* 'humble' and the latter *qian* 'small sharp-pointed stick.'

One fine example of how homophonic wordplay affects nicknaming is demonstrated here. This nicknaming is more complex than simply giving a term similar to a PN. *Huang Tian-min* receives *mi-tian-gong* as her NN; obviously it is derived from the middle *tian* and the minimal pair of *min* and *mi*. *M*in is put to the front and *Tian* remains in the middle. When the characters *mi* 'uncooked rice' 米 (similar sound to *Min*), *tian* 'field' 田 and *gong* 'altogether' 共 are put together vertically, it becomes *fen* 糞 'excrement.' This NN has crossed modalities and it is suggested to be the 13th rule of the nicknaming patterns. Even though this NN sounds vulgar and ironic, such a term seems acceptable in the guitar society. To put it another way, one of the common features in this CofP is to make fun of others by exploiting linguistic games. Initially I was shocked when one of the interviewees provided such

an unexpected term, but I realized that it was one of the linguistic conventions they shared of making fun of each other by giving a peculiar NN. When asked whether she got angry about that NN, *Tian-min* said that it did not hurt at all and she got accustomed to the way her fellows talked. In other words, having been together for almost a year, they are supposed to understand the vulgar language is only for fun and no one should take it seriously. Nonetheless, a tense atmosphere was developed in the focus group and almost out of control as *Li-hong* turned to be the target of the joke. I will talk about it as the issue of attitude approaches. As far as I am concerned, these core members of the guitar society tend to challenge each other verbally and that is often followed by a negotiation. I will elaborate how negotiation goes in different communities and how Wenger's (1998) criterion of jointly negotiated enterprise is applied in constructing each CofP.

The other rule applied in these communities is to prefix one character of a full name by *ah* or *xiao* 'little.' In the all-male community F, *Yue-ting* whose surname is *Du* used to be called *Ah-du* while in the current community he is called *Xiao-du*. He explained that he preferred *Xiao-du* to *Ah-du* because a singer from Singapore was called *Ah-du* as well and *Yue-ting* wanted to distinguish himself from that singer. He used to be asked whether his singing voice was like the singer *Ah-du* or not, but he actually did not like that singer very much. For quite a number of times of being asked such a question, he started to introduce himself as *Xiao-du* instead of *Ah-du*.

However, this prefix *xiao* is confusing to me. When I introduce myself, I say "I'm *Xiao-jing*" which is occasionally preceded by "So, what is your first name?" The interlocutors are confused whether the *xiao* in *Xiao-jing* is a real *xiao* or a prefix *xiao*. In this case, the interlocutor I am talking to would ask how I write the *xiao* of my first name and further explain that *Xiao-jing* might be misunderstood as a NN rather than a first name. Although this does not happen in the data collected, it is possible to take

place in an occasion where the participants do not know each other very well.

Due to the fact that Liao's (2006) subjects from whom NNs are collected were junior high school students, the complexity of nicknaming patterns is not indicated clearly. While analysing the data, I perceived that nicknaming can be developed by two steps. Take *Ling-shan* in community C for example. *Ling-shan* used to be addressed *Ge-ji-la* 'godzilla' because whenever she laughs, she puts her chin up and lays her back, like the Godzilla in the movie. The pattern it follows is describing the person (the most remarkable feature she has). The current NN *Ah-go-go* is basically a variant from *Ge-ji-la* 'Godzilla.' *Ge-ji-la* was initially introduced by *Ling-shan* to her current university friends, but some of them only caught the first sound *Ge* /gə/ ('go /go/' sound in Godzilla). Instead of asking the specific term introduced by *Ling-shan*, her fellows started to call her *Ah-go-go*. The latter NN follows the rule of wordplay (*Ge-ji-la* becomes *Ah-go-go*). Here we can tell that the NN currently used is transformed twice (1. She looks like Godzilla when she laughs therefore being nicknamed *Ge-ji-la* and 2. the NN is misunderstood and the new term *Ah-go-go* is given). The *Ah-go-go* does not provide any cue to be traced back to the initial nicknaming of *Ge-ji-la*. I will return to this as an example of identity presentation. Likewise, *Jia-yun*'s NN *Xiao-yin* (community A) also corresponds to two levels of nicknaming process. Firstly, *yun* and *yin* are wordplay of minimal pairs. *Xiao* turns to be a prefix to *yin* and then NN *Xiao-yin* is developed.

From the above analysis of NNs, we are aware that if the person is not involved in the nicknaming process, the source of the NN can hardly be identified. In other words, understanding the source of a NN is one feature of being one of the community members. To view the identity issue, I will return to some examples that have been analysed and further explicate how one's identity is revealed.

4.3 Gender differences in nicknaming

I would like to classify these six CofPs into three groups based on their gender differences (all-female, all male and mixed-gender) and point out those who are only addressed by their FN or PN. This way we will be able to evaluate how it works when we take McConnell-Ginet's (2005: 84) assertion that nicknaming practices are more common in all-male groups into consideration in the Chinese nicknaming practices.

Table 4. 1 Number of NNs used as addressed terms

Group	Gender	No. of NNs as address terms / no. of people	Percentage of having NN (F: M)	Who does not have a NN in the group?
Group 1 (A+B)	Mixed gender	(F) 5/7 (M) 6/8	(F) 71.4% (M) 75%	♂ Chen Yi-liang (PN) ♂ Cai Guang-zhen (PN) ♀ Chen Yan-cen (FN) ♀ [Yang] Qiao-wei (PN/FN)
Group 2 (C+D)	All female	10/10	100%	N/A
Group 3 (E+F)	All male	9/11	81.8%	Lin Guan-you (FN) Wu Bing-yin (PN)

In the mixed-gender group (group 1), male students and female students almost evenly (M: F = 75%: 71.4%) receive NNs as address terms. However, compared with the all-female group (group 2), nicknaming practices in the all-male group (group 3) are not as common as expected. That is, the result of nicknaming practices among university students in Taiwan does not exactly correspond to McConnell-Ginet's (2005) statement. On the contrary, nicknaming practices are more frequently implemented in all-female groups (100%).

I assumed that those who did not receive NNs were less popular in the CofP, but my assumption was rejected. *Guang-zhen* argued that he had no NN because he neither had peculiar behaviour nor outstanding performance and his PN was too

ordinary to be nicknamed. *Bing-yin*'s peers also claimed that they gave no NN to *Bing-yin* for they could hardly find any extensive meaning from his PN and *Bing-yin*'s personality has nothing special. *Ren-yu*, *Bing-yin*'s research roommate, seriously affirmed his opinion on nicknaming, which has been translated and transcribed[4] in Extract 1.

Extract 1 (27:51)

RY: I don't like the NN that is based on one's appearance. I think that's childish. So I don't nickname people by their appearance. For example, my face is round and big; then people nickname me with this feature or something like this. That seems to be offending. Adopting a NN of one's skin colour may be depended upon the person whether s/he cares or not.

(RY: Ren-yu)

Ren-yu (RY in Extract 1) does not appreciate nicknames that utilize someone's physical features. He emphasized that everyone was born with a fixed physical appearance and it would be extremely rude to create a joke on it. However, he was aware of his self-contradiction when he was telling a story of the group blind date he attended the day before the interview.

Extract 2 (29:33)

(01) RY: even though I've said so (.)
(02) the po shi zhan xiang yesterday… which you might not understand
(03) XJ: yes\ I just heard [part of it
(04) RY: [some things can be talked about in private and it doesn't matter, but not=
(05) XJ: =you went to a group blind date=
(06) RY: =yes
(07) XJ: was she the one you took on your scooter/
(08) RY: no: way (.) if it were the case I wouldn't have the fine leg [to come back]
(09) XJ: [so bad you]
(10) RY: what I mean is that it's fine (.) it'd be immoderate to say so if I say it in front of her (.)
(11) yesterday yesterday in the group blind date…
(12) … h: forget about it (.) nothing nothing (.)=

(13) RY: <looking at XJ but talking to BY>

(14) =I don't' think she understands

(15) BY: she understands\ she understands\ <nod his head>

(16) XJ: I understand\ (.) go on your story

(17) RY: (.) in the blind date guan-you's friend was playing a magic (.) he needs somebody to blow…

(18) and the po shi zhan xiang in particular laughed so loudly (.) she should go to the zoo

(XJ: the interviewer; RY: Ren-yu; BY: Bing-yin)

RY realized that he was going to refer to a lady attending the group blind date by *po shi zhan xiang* 'Persian war elephant' (a "heavy" character in the computer game) so he started with "even though" to tell the story of the blind date and explained why he thought that lady deserved such a terrible NN. When RY was about to begin the story, he noticed that I (the interviewer XJ) am female so he hesitated by saying "you might not understand."

To access the story and in fact I did hear *Hao-ting* (RY's research roommate) mention the date, the strategies of being supportive and showing the eagerness for the story worked out. Initially RY excluded me from his CofP by saying "you might not understand" (line 02). Yet, when I uttered "a group blind date" (line 05), RY seemed to realize that I had known something about his story. Hence, he temporarily treated me as a member of his CofP and began to describe what had happened on that day. He exaggerated he would not have the leg to go home (line 08) if he took the lady on the scooter. Despite of the bad experience of the blind date, he knew that addressing her by *po shi zhan xiang* would be extremely immoderate (line 09).

In line 10, RY talked to BY, even he looked at me, and presumed that I would not understand the implied meaning of what he was going to say. From my point of view, he still excluded me from his CofP subconsciously that made him wonder whether I could catch his point immediately in spite of BY's support ("she understands she understands" in line 15) as well as my confidence of being able to understand what he

meant (line 16). After the interview, RY came to me and restated that he did not want me to regard him as a guy who was critical of women's figures.

Women's body size has been a popular issue since the media in the twentieth century has strongly framed the concept of women's standardized body image of being extremely slim (McRobbie 2000). Ideal women described by the respondents in Wetherell and White's (1992) research are the thin woman and the natural woman. In Guendouzi's research, one participant (a female) implied that "in evaluating a woman's physical appearance, body-size may be the prioritized feature for describing her attractiveness" (2004: 1649). With highly-praised image of women's body by the media, women themselves are internally socialized. Being slim is desirable which can be reflected on the sharp increase of the plastic surgery industry. Women get together talking about body-size, men talk about women's figures when they meet.

Although the researches mentioned above were conducted in different social settings, the notion of women's body-image is also spread to nicknaming practices. In the data I have collected, *Tian-min*'s fellows (community A) kept addressing her either *Pang-zi* 'fatty' or *Mi-tian-gong* 'excrement' when I was asking what NNs were given to her. The NN *Pang-zi* was initially spoken out by a male member, *Chao-dong*, who insisted that she have this NN. In addition, no male participant was addressed by a NN concerning fatness. As mentioned, women's appearance is frivolously given remarks and they can hardly be free of being themselves in the society (Guendouzi 2004: 1651).

4.4 Nicknames as negotiated targets

Adopting *Tian-min*'s NNs as an instance of the negotiated target, I have illustrated the discourse in which *Tian-min* and her fellows negotiated for the NNs due to the fact

that *Tian-min* (TM in the extract) did not agree with the NNs her fellows have mentioned. The nicknamer's and the nicknamee's attitudes are illustrated in Extract 3.

Extract 3 (23:48)

(19) XJ: ok (.) next one (.) huang tian min=
(20) TM: =me
(21) SY: haha
(22) XJ: how do you address her=
(23) YL: =xiao [min
(24) TM: [mei nyu
(25) LH: (.) mi tian gong::=
(26) YL: =pang: zi=
(27) <=laughter>
(28) TM: pang ni ma
(29) YL: [ye shou
(30) LH: [mi tian gong=
(31) TM: =no one calls me mi tian gong
(32) CD: [pang zi]
(33) SY: [pang zi]=
(34) HL (♀): = [<points to SY>
(35) [you always give peculiar nicknames
(36) XJ: wait wait (.) one is mi [tian gong
(37) TM: [no:: one calls me mi tian gong la
(38) <laughter>
(39) YL: obviously mi tian gong=
(40) TM: =who calls me [mi tian gong\
(41) SY: [yes [yes yes
(42) <all the others hands up>
(43) all fellows: [yes yes yes=
(44) CD: =that's it that's it (..) and and also pang zi
(45) TM: no one addresses me by that (.) bull shit
(46) CD: [<points to TM>
(47) [the camera's been obstructed by the pang zi

(XJ: the interviewer; TM: Tian-min; SY: Song-yang; YL: Yi-liang; LH: Li-hong; CD: Chao-dong; HL: Hong-ling)

Negotiation takes place as long as different opinions are present in the CofP. In the

mixed-gender community A, the male students offered different and inelegant NNs when they were asked how they addressed *Tien-mim*. YL kept changing his answer. In line 23, he said the decent NN *Xiao-min*; however, TM self-selected her own NN *mei-nyu* 'beauty,' which was continually rejected by her fellows. To show the complete opposite of her self-selected NN, LH at once said *Mi-tian-gong* 'excrement' (line 25). YL changed his mind and said *pang-zi* 'fatty' (line 26), criticizing *Tian-min*'s figure. The following laughter (line 27) seemed to be a positive signal to nickname TM by *pang-zi* because YL provided another NN *Ye-shou* 'monster' very soon (line 29). TM again rejected that NN by saying *pang ni ma* 'fat your mom' (line 28). LH insisted *Mi-tian-gong* as her NN but TM denied it with a negative statement (line 31: no one…). By then no female fellows suggested any NN until CD and SY insisted on the NN *pang-zi* at the same time. The lady HL defended TM (line 34) and commented on SY's coming back to the NN *pang-zi*. When I, as an interviewer, intended to confirm TM's NNs, TM once again emphasized that no one called her *Mi-tian-gong*. Every participant except TM burst into laughter as soon as *Mi-tian-gong* was mentioned again. Throughout the discourse, except HL (line 34), all female members kept silent without making any clear attitude toward the NN *Mi-tian-gong* until the very end when TM asked her fellow to hand up if there were indeed people addressing her by such a vulgar NN (line 40). However, these female members somehow at the end supported the male fellows' argument that *Mi-tian-gong* is addressed (line 43).

As indicated earlier, a fierce negotiation will occur when the nicknamer and the nicknamee hold different perspectives on the NN, especially an inelegant NN. Indeed, the above example has provided a procedure of their own way of communication: offer and rejection, another offer and rejection and then ultimately an agreement or leaving it unsettled. In this example, TM, as a female student, kept rejecting all the

vulgar NNs by speaking out for herself. As a matter of fact, TM did not accept the NN and just left it out. In contrast, *Li-hong* chose to keep silent no matter how others made fun of his NN, *Tu Li-wa* '*Tu Li*-frog.'

A feature of the negotiation was that members of this community were too impatient to wait for their turn to express their opinions, which caused the situation where their speech was frequently overlapped. Frankly speaking, the interview was slightly out of control because they came up new NNs that were not truly addressed in their community. I was confused and had to reconfirm whether they were normally used or not. Additionally, the argument over individual's NNs was quite violent. The pattern of offer-reject is widely applied when the negotiation occurs. Although some of them did not like a specific NN, they still accept it.

Extract 4 (07: 03)

<HT was coming upstairs and BY saw him>

(48) BY: da shi xiong=

(49) <= turn to XJ> he's our da shi xiong (.)

(50) he always knocks down my house when we're playing computer games…

(51) XJ: do you admit/ <you're their da shi xiong >

(52) HT: no <shake his head>

(53) XJ: when they addressing da shi xiong do you turn your head to them/

(54) BY: yes

(55) HT: yes <nod his head>

(XJ: the interviewer; BY: Bing-yin; HT: Hao-ting)

Different from the negotiation in community A (Extract 3), members of community E have better communication in deciding NNs. BY, who was the confederate in both all-male communities and who clearly understood what I was looking for in this research (it might not be the natural way of speaking) immediately explained the reason why HT was called *da shi xiong* 'big brother' (line 50). In addition to his excellence in computer games, HT also has outstanding performance in

schoolwork. Initially HT denied the NN *da shi xiong* (line 52) but admitted it soon (line 55). He was passively given the NN as a result from the fact that no one would respond if someone calls *da shi xiong*. He is the one others expect to get the response from. In my opinion, the NN *da shi xiong* did not cause serious argument like that in community A because it sounds like a compliment rather than a vulgar tag.

Indeed, some may select their own NNs while others may be passive in nicknaming practices. Some may reject the given NN, some may be glad to receive the NN and others may reluctantly accept the NN. *Si-han* in community B had been wishing to receive a NN and finally got one, *Xiao-nyu-hai* 'little girl,' which was derived from her behaviour when she tried to open the door after her shower. She said that having a NN represented that one had been noticed and the NN was therefore given, no matter if it was elegant or not. Even though Dexter (1949) claims that college students with NNs are more popular, it is not always true in this sample. For example, *Qiao-wei* in community B has no particular NN but she is very welcome in that CofP. She was the confederate who convinced all the other community members to take part in this research. If she were not popular at all, she would not be able to summon them.

4.5 In-group identity indexed by shared repertoires

From the collected NN examples, it is suggested that most of the NNs embrace a story of themselves. They are either internally motivated (PN-like) or with a specific nicknaming process (or externally motivated). In this section, I will discuss three issues that can be the identification of membership in the CofP. One is based on the "guess-who" game in which members of the videotaped community were invited to guess whose NN it was as I randomly chose one. The NN I chose was not expected to

be known to the interviewees except those that have been using as address terms until now. Another issue is concerned with how vocative *ei* is commonly understood by the members of the CofP. It will be discussed in 4.5.2. The other issue is the in-group knowledge that is taken as a token of shared repertoires. The knowledge includes their conversation topics or other features such as vocabulary or behaviour that are exclusively understood by the members. This will be based on the video in which students were encouraged to behave as natural as possible as well as in the interview where as an outsider, I might be confused what the interviewees were talking about or referring to.

4.5.1 Guess-who activity

NNs that are variants of PNs are easier to be recognised, most of which follow Liao's (2000, 2006) nicknaming rules (1) to (4) and (10). For example, *Nian-yao* (community B) is addressed by *Yao-yao* (rule 1) in her family; thus, the other members in her community have no difficulty identifying *Yao-yao* as *Nian-yao*. Similarly, *Ah-xing* (community D) is *Xing-yu*'s NN that was given by her high school classmates. However, NNs that follow nicknaming rule (5) to (9) can hardly be identified, especially when the NN is accrued because of a specific event or as mentioned previously it has a special meaning to the nicknamer or the nicknamee. For example, *Xing-yu* (community D), again, is nicknamed May, which is exactly her self-selected English NN, because she was born in May and in her family her parents call her *mei* /mei/ which is homophonic to May /mei/ and which means younger sister (*mei-mei*) at home. Without knowing the order of her sibling or her birth month, the source of her English NN May cannot be identified in any sense.

Most participants provide NNs addressed in the family as an outside CofP

(McConnell-Ginet 2005: 86). At home some participants are addressed by the birth order of the sibling (rule 5), such as *mei* or *mei-mei* 'younger sister' and some are addressed by *xiao* 'little' or *da* 'big.' For example, *Hong-ling* (coommunity A) is called *mei mei chiang* and *Yi-liang* is addressed by *Da-de* 'big.' *Chiang* is borrowed from Japanese that sounds cutie and is more suitable to address a girl who is younger or little. *Yi-liang*'s parents address him by *Da-de* that is to distinguish *Yi-liang* from his younger brother. He added that his parents addressed his younger sister by *mei-mei* 'younger sister' and her younger brother by *xiao-de* 'little.' *Wang Yu* (community C) is also nicknamed after her sister whose NN is *Da-ya* 'big duck,' given by her grandfather. *Wang Yu* explained her older sister was initially addressed by *Ya-ya* 'duck duck' but changed to *Da-ya* when *Wang Yu* was born. After that *Wang Yu* got a new NN *Xiao-ya* 'little duck' which remains as her familial NN even if she has become a university student. Being asked whether she like it or not, *Wang Yu* showed her fondness and thought it was a lovely NN, hoping her family members could still address her by that NN even if she is getting old.

Some NNs, those developed from personal features in particular, entitle one's membership and often have special meaning for a certain CofP (McConnell-Ginet 2005: 84). I would interpret that the special meaning of the NN can only be understood if s/he takes part in the nicknaming process. Otherwise, even if the NN is recognised to belong to whom, it is insufficient to index one's identity in the CofP. It is illustrated by *Guan-you* in community E. Before he attended the interview, his fellows had been wondering why he was addressed by *Ou-di* for he did not look like the supposed singer *Ou-di* in Taiwan. When *Guan-you* appeared, he explained that his NN *Ou-di* did not refer to the singer; rather, it referred to *Ou-di* 'O-di' in the cartoon Garfield. *Guan-you* used to have a good friend in high school whose figure looked like Garfield; as the best friend, he was therefore addressed by *Ou-di* that represented

their friendship at that time. Another example is *Zhe-wei*'s current NN *Biao-ge*. The interviewer who was not one of the members in community F did not know the source of *Biao-ge*. *Bing-yin* said that *Zhe-wei* was a cousin of *Wang Tong,* a female singer in Taiwan, so he has been addressed by *Biao-ge* since other members knew this fact. These examples illustrate identities and memberships required to share the knowledge of each other's NNs of sources. Without being able to identify the source of a NN, the person can hardly be recognised as a member of that CofP.

In the interview, the participants' meta-linguistic awareness was raised especially in the guess-who game. The meta-linguistic awareness is meant to be the consciousness that the interviewees look for an answer of where their fellows receive the NN and how it is developed. After the guess-who game, the interviewees were encouraged to provide their opinion on when they addressed others by NNs, FNs or PNs. *Yi-liang* in community A suggested that when people met for the first time, they intended to address each other by FNs, expressing their friendliness. As soon as the frequency of meeting got higher, group members were likely to nickname according to the familiarity that had been fostered. The NN can be a marker that shows the limit or boundary of the CofP. To elaborate, the NN may be a polite term (e.g. *Qiao-ru jie* '*Qiao-ru* sister') or a compliment (e.g. *Da shi xiong* 'big brother') or alternatively a neutral form (e.g. *Ah-xiung*); it may otherwise be vulgar (e.g. *Mi-tian-gong* 'excrement') or ironic (e.g. *Xiao-bai* 'little white' but who in fact has dark skin). Each community has different linguistic limits, as one which may be deemed inappropriate in one group is perfectly okay in another. For example, in community D where there are all-female members the term *Mi-tian-gong* is not acceptable. Members of a CofP have the ability to detect whether their speech exceeds and challenges the proprieties agreed by the members although sometimes they may fail to perceive the line. Besides, *Yi-liang* also suggested that members came back for PNs as address terms when they

became much more acquainted. This corresponds to McConnell-Ginet's (2005: 80) claim, "Presumably, the full form can construct intimacy precisely because most mere acquaintances do not use it. It marks the specialness of the couple's own intimate CofP."

4.5.2 Spontaneous use of address terms

In the videos where spontaneous use of address terms was recorded, I discovered that NNs were not the most frequently used terms in addressing. Instead, members called or got attention using PNs, *ei* or *wei* as Extract 5 illustrates. Moreover, while using *ei* or *wei* as address terms, they were accompanied by eye-contact, gestures or physical contact.

Extract 5 (02:39)

<prelude of the MV>
(56) GZ: hello hello hello <testing the microphone>
(57) <SH coming from outside and bringing food>
(58) SH: what's this (0.3) ei/
(59) GZ: please call me tan ke
(60) NY: tan ke
(61) <laughter>
(62) NY: stupid (.) now you feel good/
(63) <background: GZ started singing>
(64) <QW was pouring some drinks and gave one to SH.>
(65) SH: thanks <looking for a seat>
(66) NY: I want to get that as well
(67) QW: the door can't be closed properly <going to close the door>
(68) SH: <still standing and watching the MV> wu zuen's so handsome
(69) <The MV was silent at a sudden unexpectedly>
(70) GZ: <watching the MV> ei::=
(71) SH: =ei: (.) how come
(72) GZ: *I don't feel like this* <in *Tai-yu*>
(73) NY: <laughing> MV: (.) MV: (.)

(74) SH: <laughing and then sitting down>

(75) <GZ started singing again>

(76) NY: ei\ (.) where to get the chopsticks

(77) GZ: there under there <left hand pointing at a position where chopsticks are put>

(78) <GZ kept singing>

(79) SH: ei\ (.) here <picks up the pair on the table> …

(80) NY: ei:\ (.) xiao wu ye (.) so handsome

(81) SH: yeah: (.) gor::geous <kept eating>

(82) <participants either eating food or listening to GZ singing>

(83) GZ: <singing voice overdriven>

(84) <crazy laughter>

(85) SH: <standing up holding her plate, sitting down and standing up again and finally sitting still>

(86) GZ: ei::\ (.) just woke up

(87) NY: all right: all right:

(GZ: Guang-zhen; SH: Si-han; NY: Nian yao; QW: Qiao-wei)

Ei was widely adopted in community A when they were having their activity of karaoke. In the above discourse, *ei* can be either a sort of address term or a marker to get attention. The first *ei* that GZ (line 70) and SH (line 71) almost said at the same time looks like the marker for drawing attention. Presumably, they were not addressing someone; instead, they seemed to addressing the music video because of its sudden silence. Later on, NY was looking for chopsticks and she said *ei* either trying to get attention from anyone in that room to listen to her question, or addressing GZ or SH or both from whom she was expecting an answer where to find a pair of chopsticks. It was hard to tell which the accurate interpretation was because the video was not taking the scene wide enough to show NY's facial expression. Despite of this, both GZ and SH replied, even GZ was busy holding the microphone. It should be noted that in SH's turn, the *ei* that initiated her reply should be seen as an address token that referred to NY, determined by SH's utterance "here" (line 79). NY continued her turn saying that *Xiao-wu* (the NN she gave to *Wu Zuen* in the music video) was such a handsome actor that followed another *ei*. This *ei* should be regarded

as an address form given to SH who had mentioned *Wu Zuen* at the beginning (line 68) of the MV. Later, when GZ's voice was overdriven, he began with *ei* (line 86) which should be interpreted as a marker that addressed those who were laughing so loudly. It is discovered that *ei* is sometimes ambiguous on account of its two-way interpretation of an address term or a signal of getting attention.

Most interviewees are aware that among acquaintances such as members in their CofP using NNs as address terms are not pervasive unless they intend to "summon" someone who is far away from the addresser. It is also observed that the turn-taking in the CofP is usually accompanied by paralinguistic cues such as eye-contact or body movements. Successful paralinguistic cues may infer that the address terms can be omitted.

4.5.3 Conversation topics that define a community of practice

As we see that NNs can be a linguistic marker that identifies one's membership in a CofP, here I would like to discuss other linguistic conventions that are only known to the members and that are exclusively meaningful in a certain CofP. The linguistic conventions include the conversation topic as well as the wording which may be understandable in certain contexts. Extract 6 presents the spontaneous conversation produced in a CofP where members were playing the computer game.

Extract 6 (26: 58)

(86) BY: can I send all the money to others/ I want 5000 (..) suen zhi jie you want more/
(88) ZJ: what money\
(89) BY: gold
(90) ZJ: okay::
(91) HT: why don't you [keep the gold/ (.) you can do other things with it
(92) MH: [kill kill kill kill
(93) GY: ho::(.) rou ma's coming again (.) annoying\

(94) BY: … extremely hate rou ma (.) not necessarily enter the city (.)

(95) I've been defeated by rou ma you know (0.5) they're coming

(96) MH: don't destroy my house=

(97) BY: =if not (.) you'll destroy mine

(98) MH: it's revenge right/ …

(99) (0.6)

(100) BY: ei\ suen zhi jie you get the lowest points

(101) ZJ: right (.) I've been hit from the very beginning

(102) BY: I know:

(103) ZJ: because… bull shit

(104) BY: what/

(105) ZJ: he cheated

(106) BY: who\

(107) ZJ: chen ren yu ah:

(108) RY: oh yeah/ (.) did I/ =

(109) MH: =I did

(110) ZJ: why you keep running

(111) BY: liu ming han\ (.) it's liu ming han

(112) MH: shouldn't xiao ma ge running around/

(BY: Bing-yin; GY: Guan-you; HT: Hao-ting; MH: Ming-han; RY: Ren-yu; ZJ: Zhi-jie)

Without mentioning the context, outsiders may get confused what the conversation above is about. After consulting BY, I realized that *rou-ma* was 'battle horses' and that *xiao-ma-ge* was 'cavalry' in the computer game. I feel that computer games themselves are a virtual society in which virtual citizens, virtual constructions, virtual conversations etc. are created. Though computer game players address each other by their names in the real world, their speech content is completely virtual-world oriented. The *po si zhan xiang* 'Persian war elephant' used to refer to the lady in the group blind date is a character in the computer game that is commonly known to all the members in that CofP. RY uses the character in the computer game to describe the lady which makes it easier for others to imagine the figure of the lady whom they did not see in person. It is their shared knowledge of the character that is

exclusively common to those with the membership of that CofP.

The discourse has illustrated the exchange of address terms in this all-male CofP. In contrast to McConnell-Ginet's (2005: 84) statement, this CofP showed their spontaneous use of address terms was PNs, not NNs. *Ming-han* commented that as people became mature, NNs, especially those related to physical appearances, became less popular for address. As people grow up, they use PNs and adopt them as an individual identity. Simmonds (1998) in her article concerning naming and identity explicates how her full name presents her identity in family and in religion. Simmonds insists that her full name appear on her name tag. Her full name represents her own identity and it contains her own history of her ethnicity (1998: 36). NNs serve the similar function. As a Hakka, *Yu Ping* is called ban∨ban↙ in her clan, which means 'dear' or 'sweetie' in Hakka language. Regardless of any variant of her PN, this NN ban∨ban↙ signifies her ethnic identity and may only be identified by her relatives of Hakka.

4.6 Limits

In 3.4 I have addressed the constraints that might impact on the discussion of the result in this research. On the one hand, it was a shame that the equipment was set in a fixed position which meant not all the participants were videotaped individually for the activity. The environment also matters a lot when collecting the data. For example, the study group of community C was in a fast food restaurant where the radio was on and it was difficult to catch everyone's line of speaking. Besides, the recorder was put at one end of the table so the sound from the other end could be hardly heard in the video. On the other hand, it is predictable that most participants would withhold their inelegant NNs and their stories. Even though some disclosed the disliked NNs, I

would like to protect the participants and reserve their NNs. It is inevitable to use his/her real name to describe the NN so to be anonymous is not that possible.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Nicknaming practices are widely implemented among university students in Taiwan. NNs are used as an in-group tag among acquaintances; they not only reinforce the boundaries but provide a guide to identify an individual's position (Liao 2000: 100). People maintain their relationship via either frequent contacts or regular meetings and therefore become acquaintances. Nicknaming is an activity that reflects the process of friendship construction. Even if some of the NNs are not elegant, they still signal the membership of a friendship group (Wilson 1998: 287).

As a friendship is established by regular contact (mutual engagement), the individuals pursue common goals through negotiation that makes them bind to each other as shared knowledge is developed and a CofP is constructed. Nicknaming practice is a linguistic repertoire that members of the CofP take part in. The nicknamer and the nicknamee are free to negotiate the giving and the reasoning of a NN. Data collected from university students in Taiwan show their nicknaming patterns generally correspond to the categories Liao (2000, 2006) has proposed. In spite of this, there are NNs that are not supported by the patterns in Liao's study. For instance, with the concept of internationalization, students tend to give themselves or to receive English names which in this research are considered as NNs. Students of the English Department are more likely to get English NNs because they are needed in class where professors require the policy of "English-only." Inevitably the English NNs are sometimes transliterated into Chinese (e.g. Maggie becomes *Ma-ji*). The other case is that university students like to suffix *ge* 'brother' or *jie* 'sister' to one or two characters of a full name (e.g. *Qiao-ru jie* or *Bing ge*).

The data including the questionnaires, the videotaped regular activity, and the interviews have presented a fact: NNs are developed to identify people's membership

of the community (questionnaire and interview). However, NNs are not the dominant terms in address (video). In conversations, the turn-taking usually goes with paralinguistic cues so the address terms are not always required. I discovered, when an address term is needed, the members would rather use the PN or FN than the NN. This result can be explained by McConnell-Ginet (2005: 80)'s statement that using one's PN for address is a marker of specialness rather than unfamiliarity between the interlocutors.

Back to the research question: why and how do students nickname their fellow with such a term? In fact, nicknaming processes are not simple. Some of the NNs are developed from the real name while the other may be accrued after regular mutual engagement. In addition, some NNs follow more than one pattern and they may be constituted by many different elements. Only the person who was present in the nicknaming process knew the source or its derivation.

The data in this research have illustrated a high frequency of nicknaming in the all-female groups. It is also worth researching on the quality of NNs. Some NNs are positive (e.g. compliments), some are negative (e.g. humiliating) and others are neutral (e.g. birth order of the sibling). They serve different functions and have different usage. Do males receive more hostile or offensive NNs than females or vice versa? The quality of a NN should be considered when gender issues are discussed in nicknaming practices. In the mixed-gender communities A and B as the data showed, the male students and female students almost evenly received a NN; however, the NN given to the female students were so favorable. For instance, the very undesirable NNs given to *Tian-min* were *Pang-zi* 'fatty' (her figure was criticised) and *Mi-tian-gong* 'excrement' (it is never a NN one likes) which *Tian-min* gave every effort to reject. On the contrary, most male students received NNs that were developed from their real names, such as *Da-ya-qian* 'toothpick' for *Dai Ji-qian* and *Mo-shou* 'a

computer programme, Warcraft' referring to *Xu Bo-shou*. Here we can see that although vulgar NNs are given, the relationship among the members is still successfully maintained because they mutually understood the limit.

On the other hand, although NNs are not like PNs which often contain larger aspects such as familial identity, social identity, ethnic identity, or even national identity, they actually account for the membership of a CofP. The NN is simply a small linguistic token that can signal friendship among a group of people. There are other linguistic conventions such as in-group terminology and discussion topics that are exclusive to the member in the CofP. In order to index the membership, it is essential for the members to identify terms without any effort. In community E, the members have no difficulty identifying the term *rou-ma* 'battle horses' and *xiao-ma-ge* 'cavalry' when they were playing the computer game. However, as an outsider, not until I consulted *Bin-yin* did I realize the meaning of these in-group terms. To look into a broad sense, non-linguistic repertoire such as physical performances, facial expressions or gestures can be analysed to see how members of a CofP share their behavioural conventions.

Activities that concern NN can be applied to occasions where people are supposed to meet for the first time. Adopting the guess-who activity may facilitate mutual recognition and it would be provided with rich personal information that makes others as well as the host get to know each other better. While the participants take turns describing the source of their NNs, the host could simultaneously observe the interaction between participants. The transformation of one's NN from the beginning to a time when a CofP is constructed will be another interesting focus for researching nicknaming phenomenon within the group because some may retain the NN and others may be given a new one depending on how well the members know each other.

This research has provided an entry to view how NNs work within a CofP.

Nicknaming patterns may alter since the creativity and imagination of students in Taiwan have become greater. In this research, the subjects are *qi nian ji sheng* '7th grade generation.' To compare the transformation of linguistic expressions, it is suggested that recruiting students of different generations can be done for further research. I believe as time goes by, there will be an increased of lexicon produced and used in creating a NN. As soon as it is the case, research can be conducted, looking for the functions of NNs and how environment affects the selection of NNs.

Notes

1. *Min-Guo* 70s is equivalent to years from 1981 to 1990. Therefore, the 7th grade generation refers to people of 17 to 26 years of age.
2. The extracts in the study have been translated because the interviews were conducted in Chinese.
3. To distinguish Taiwanese as a people, the language of Taiwanese is indicated as *Tai-yu*.
4. Transcription conventions as follows:

/	rising intonation
\	falling intonation
:	lengthened vowel
…	omitted text
underline	emphatic stress
=	latching (no pause between speaker turns)
h	exhalation
(.)	short momentary pause
(0.5)	timed pause, e.g., five second pause
[ ]	overlap beginning and end
< >	ethnographic information

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Appendix: Informants' consent and general questions

Dear participants:

I sincerely appreciate your participation in being an interviewee for my research which will look at and analyse students' mutual terms of address. The regular activity taking place will be videotaped for reviewing the interaction between the members in detail afterwards. It is prohibited for the researcher to play the video in public without informants' consent. And, to record the spontaneous use of nicknames I will not be present in your activity. So please relax and behave as natural as possible. There will be an interview that follows this activity and that will probably take 40 to 60 minutes, either immediate or within three days. It will be the major part of this research so I hope you are able to attend. Before you start, here are some general questions for you to fill out. Chinese is acceptable.

親愛的同學

非常感謝你願意成為這次研究的受試者，這項研究將觀察並分析台灣大學生之間如何稱呼同一社群的其他成員。為了之後能夠更詳細解讀社群之間的互動，待會的活動（例如：用餐、娛樂、會議等等）將會被錄影存檔，此檔案僅作為此次研究之用，未經受試者許可，研究員不得外洩檔案。另外，為求真實表現，研究員將不會出現在活動過程當中，所以，別緊張，只要按照平常表現即可。在活動過後，會有 40-60 分鐘的即時小型討論(或活動結束三天內)，非常希望你依然可以出席，這也將是研究的一大部分。在開始之前，有幾個簡單的問題想請教各位，用中文回答就可以囉！

Personal Information

Full name 姓名	Gender 性別	☐ M 男	☐ F 女
University 學校	Department 系所		
Email 電子郵件			

General Questions

1. Now, please recall your memory and think about one nickname by which you had been addressed OUTSIDE this community. 請你回憶一下，想一個**不是**這個社群給你的綽號。
   A. Which is the nickname? 你想到的綽號是？
      _____
   B. Who gave it to you? (eg. family, high school classmates) 誰取的呢？(例：家人或高中同學)
      _____
   C. Do you like it or not? 你喜歡這個綽號嗎？ ☐ Yes 喜歡 ☐ No 不喜歡
2. How often do you meet each other in this community? 現在這個社群多久聚一次？(A + B)
   A. ☐ everyday 每天 ☐ every week 每週 ☐ every month 每個月
   B. ☐ once 一次 ☐ twice 兩次 ☐ three times or more 三次或三次以上
3. How do you address other members? 你如何稱呼這個社群的其他人？ (multiple)
   ☐ full name 全名 ☐ first name 名字 ☐ nickname 綽號
4. Please sign below to ensure that you agree to be videotaped. 若你同意接受攝影請於下方簽名。

Thank you very much for answering the questions! 感謝你的完成！

Signature 簽名 _____