

The Dagashi Naming System in Semantic Linguistics

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Abstract.

This study focuses on the naming system of Dagashi, traditional Japanese snacks. The creation of a name serves specific purposes, such as facilitating the recall of identities, whether they belong to humans, places, objects, and so forth. There are 9 factors behind the naming: including naming based on sound imitation, naming based on part mention, naming based on mentioning distinctive qualities, naming based on inventor or maker, naming based on place of origin, naming based on ingredient, naming based on similarity, naming based on abbreviation, and naming based on new naming conventions [1]. The purpose of this research is to know the meaning of dagashi names. Also, to describe the factor influencing the name of *dagashi*. This research used descriptive qualitative methods. The data collected by observation of documents. Then, the data classified based on its naming factors and word origin. The result of the research showed there are semantic aspects of the factors behind and the lexical meaning of the name of typical Dagashi in Japan.

Keywords: Semantics, Naming system, Meanings, Dagashi

1 Introduction

Snacks in Japanese are called "*Okashi*". There are several types of *okashi* in Japan. For example, *Wagashi* refers to traditional Japanese sweets. There are also snacks from western known as *Youngashi*. *Okashi* can typically be found in convenience stores or vending machines in Japan. However, there's a type of *okashi* that is rare to find in Japan, and few people may know about it. These snacks are called *Dagashi*. The term "*Dagashi*" comes from *da* (駄) , meaning cheap, and *gashi* (菓子) meaning snack. It refers to inexpensive snacks that have been around since the Edo period. *Dagashi* are often brightly packaged and sometimes come with prizes inside. They are mainly targeted towards children due to their low price range of about 10 to 200 yen, allowing kids to buy them with their pocket money. Stores that sell these snacks are called *dagashi-ya*.

One of the studies in semantics is the definition, terminology, and naming. Naming is the process of finding linguistic symbols to describe objects, concepts, processes, and so forth, typically utilizing the existing vocabulary, including potential changes in

meanings or the creation of new words or word groups[2]. Naming a thing or concept is based on its distinctive or prominent characteristics, commonly known and recognized [1]. Reasons or events that influencing the naming process: (1) Based on imitation of sounds, (2) Based on part mention, (3) Based on mention of distinctive qualities, (4) Based on inventor or maker, (5) Based on place of origin, (6) Based on ingredients, (7) Based on similarity, (8) Based on abbreviation, (9) Based on new naming conventions.

Based on the background provided, the previous relevant studies include research by Nurjanah [3] on *the semantic study of naming typical foods in Yogyakarta Special Region*. The study focused on the types of word meanings and factors underlying the naming of local foods in Yogyakarta. Another study by Pratama [4] *examined the use of Japanese words in advertisements for Japanese noodle products*, identifying 22 Japanese words used in 19 advertisements on social media platforms. A key difference noted in the previous studies is the focus on *dagashi* as the object of study, which differs from traditional Japanese cultural elements like *wagashi*. The naming of *dagashi* presents an intriguing subject for researchers due to its distinct factors influencing its naming. Based on this background, the researcher aims to explore the naming of *dagashi*, specifically to describe the factors that influence the naming of these snacks.

2 Methods

The research applies a qualitative descriptive method focusing on document analysis. Qualitative methods gather and analyze data in the form of words and human actions without attempting to quantify the data obtained. Data collection involves analyzing documents as the primary source of information using the free-capture conversational (Simak Bebas Libat Cakap) method, followed by note-taking techniques. In this context, data are derived from relevant documents such as magazines and videos discussing *dagashi*. Fifty data points containing names of *dagashi* in Japan were found. The data were then categorized according to the factors influencing their naming. The author selected 9 samples of *dagashi* names for each naming factor. In the data analysis section, the commensurate method is used. The basic technique used is the Pilah Unsur Penentu technique (PUP). The sorting uses the mental sorting power possessed by the researcher. The advanced technique is the Hubung Banding Bedakan technique (HBB). The data obtained is compared to determine the meaning and background of the naming according to the existing types. The results of the data analysis will be presented informally. That is the presentation of the results of the analysis using ordinary words [5].

3 Result and Discussion

After conducting research from various documents, researcher found 50 data in total. In the naming factor categories mentioned, the researcher took one data sample for each factor as follows:

No.	Dagashi names	Kana/Kanji	Naming factors	Word of origins
1	Pachipachi Panic	パチパチパニック (<i>pachipachi panikku</i>)	Sound imitation	<i>pachipachi</i> (adverb/onomatopoeic) + <i>panikku</i> (noun)
2	Megane Choco	メガネチョコ (<i>megane choko</i>)	Part mention	<i>megane</i> (noun) + <i>choko</i> (noun)
3	Yatta-men	ヤッターめん (<i>yatta-men</i>)	Mentioning distinctive qualities	<i>yatta-</i> (interjection) + <i>men</i> (Noun)
4	Sakuma Drops	サクマドロップス (<i>sakuma doroppusu</i>)	Inventor or maker	Sakuma /佐久間 + <i>drops</i> (adverb)
5	Miyako Konbu	都こんぶ (<i>miyako konbu</i>)	Place of origin	<i>miyako</i> (noun) + <i>konbu</i> (noun)
6	Fugashi	麩菓子 (<i>fugashi</i>)	Ingredient	<i>fu</i> (noun) + <i>gashi</i> (noun)
7	Big Katsu	ビッグカツ (<i>biggu katsu</i>)	Similiarity	<i>biggu</i> (adjectival noun) + <i>katsu</i> (noun)
8	Potef	ポテフ (<i>potefu</i>)	Abbreviation	<i>poteto</i> (noun) + <i>furai</i> (noun)
9	Konpeitou	金平糖/こんべいと う (<i>konpeitou</i>)	New naming convention	<i>Confeito</i> (noun)→金平糖 (<i>ateji</i>)

3.1 Factors Influencing the Naming of *Dagashi*

This section provides an explanation and classification of naming types based on their factors. The factors influencing *dagashi* names in Japan include sound imitation, part mention, mention of distinctive qualities, inventor or maker, place of origin, ingredients, similarity, abbreviation, and new naming conventions. The following is a detailed classification of these naming factors for *dagashi* in Japan.

Naming based on imitation of sounds

Data 1 : Pachipachi Panic/パチパチパニック

The naming based on sound imitation is found in the name "Pachipachi Panic" for *dagashi*. *Pachipachi* (パチパチ) is an onomatopoeic word/*giongo* (擬音語) that mimics the sound of clapping or crackling. As the name suggests, this hard candy with a soda flavor is shaped like small pellets and makes a crackling sound when placed in the mouth.

Naming based on part mention

Data 2 : Megane Choco/メガネチョコ

The naming based on part mention is seen in the name "Megane Choco" for *dagashi*. "Megane" in Japanese means glasses or spectacles. The term "glasses" here refers to the packaging shape resembling the number eight or glasses. This *dagashi* has the slogan "besides being delicious, it can also be played with".

Naming based on mention of distinctive qualities

Data 3 : Yatta-men/ヤッターめん

Naming based on mention of distinctive qualities is evident in the name "Yatta-men" for *dagashi*. The word "yatta-" in Japanese is an interjection or *kandoushi* (感動詞) used to express joy or happiness about something. It is named so because this *dagashi* offers a chance to win vouchers *kinken* (金券) worth 20–100 yen, which can be exchanged for other *dagashi*.

Naming based on inventor or maker

Data 4 : Sakuma Drops/サクマドロップス

Naming based on the inventor or maker is seen in the name "Sakuma Drops" for *dagashi*. The name "Sakuma Drops" is derived from the name of the manufacturing company, Sakuma Seika. This candy has distinctive packaging, using a tin can shaped like a box. The way to dispense the candy is by flipping the can upside down, causing the candies to drop out, hence the name "drops."

Naming based on place of origin

Data 5 : Miyako Konbu/都こんぶ

Naming based on its place of origin is found in the name "Miyako Konbu" for *dagashi*. This *dagashi* is made from *konbu*, which is dried seaweed originating from the Miyako region in Japan. *Miyako Konbu* has a dark brown color and is thin and wide in shape, with a slightly chewy texture. It is also known as *sukonbu* (酢昆布), or *konbu* soaked in black vinegar.

Naming based on ingredients

Data 6 : Fugashi/麩菓子

Naming based on its main ingredient is seen in the name "Fugashi" for *dagashi*. The word "fu" (麩) refers to the primary ingredient of this *dagashi*, which is a type of wheat gluten. It has a bread-like form and is commonly used in miso soup. *Fugashi* is sweet in taste because it is coated with brown sugar or *kokutou* (黒糖).

Naming based on similarity

Data 7 : Big Katsu/ビッグカツ

Naming based on similarity is found in the name "Big Katsu" for *dagashi*. Literally, "big katsu" refers to a "large piece of katsu." From its name and appearance, this snack resembles a Western dish called "tonkatsu". *Tonkatsu* typically consists of breaded, deep-fried pork cutlet. However, instead of pork, Big Katsu contains shredded surimi fish. Its size is not large either; in fact, it can be considered thin. Despite being made from fish *surimi*, this *dagashi*'s shape resembles a piece of *katsu* cutlet.

Naming based on abbreviation

Data 8 : Potef/ポテフ

Naming based on abbreviation is seen in the name "Potef" for *dagashi*. The name "Potef" is derived from the combination of the words *poteto* (ポテト) and *furai* (フライ), then shortened. It can be interpreted as "fried potato". True to its name, this *dagashi* is made from thinly sliced potatoes that are fried until crispy and seasoned.

Naming based on new naming conventions

Data 9 : Konpeitou/金平糖

Naming based on new naming conventions is found in the name "Konpeitou" for *dagashi*. "Konpeitou" originates from the Portuguese word "confeito," which means candy or sugar confectionery. This candy has a unique star-shaped appearance with colorful patterns. The size of the candy is very small, typically only 5-10 millimeters in diameter. Around 1569, Portuguese traders introduced *konpeitou* along with castella cake and *aruheitou* candies to Japan[7]. At that time, Japanese society was unfamiliar with refined sugar processing, so these candies were considered luxurious and rare.

4 Conclusion

In Japan, the naming of *dagashi* is influenced by various factors. First, some *dagashi* are named based on sound imitation, such as "Pachi-pachi Panic", which describes the crackling sound when the candy is eaten. Second, some are named based on the appearance of parts, like "Megane Choco", which refers to the packaging resembling glasses. Third, *dagashi* like "Yatta-men" are named based on their distinctive features, offering a chance to win prizes. Fourth, some *dagashi*, such as "Sakuma Drops", are named after the name of the producing company. Fifth, there are those named after their place of origin, like "Miyako Konbu", which comes from the Miyako region. Sixth, some are named based on their ingredients, like "Fugashi", made from wheat gluten. Seventh, *dagashi* like "Big Katsu" are named based on their resemblance to Western food, tonkatsu. Eighth, *dagashi* such as "Potef" are named by shortening the term "*poteto furai*". Finally, some are named using new naming conventions, such as "Konpeitou," adapted from Portuguese for candy. These diverse factors reflect the creativity and innovation within Japanese *dagashi* culture.

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