Linguistic Perspectives on Nominating Human Names

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Abstract--- *This article aims at investigating the nomination of human names through an empirical survey deployed at kindergarten, primary and secondary schools in a selective commune of a province in Vietnam. The data is collected and classified in reference to various educational levels of the national education system. By collecting the primary data related to the nominated names of all the students enrolled in the schools, we employed semantic analysis and comparison methods to analyze and compare the nominating structures, specifically surname, middle name and given name. The data of full names was then separated into groups on the basis of the implied meanings for further investigation. The names containing 4-syllable structures have a direct link with the parents' desire for their children. The meanings of many names are apparently found in flowers, plants, rivers, mountains, communes in districts, asteroids, meteorological phenomena. Another type of nominating proper name that is inherently traditional but also very exclusive is to express happiness, luck in business , hospitality and human morality. The research, therefore, can provide a deeper insight about linguistically critical perspectives of the Vietnamese in nominating things in general and human proper names in particular.*

Keywords--- *Xuan Truong commune, meaning of names, nominate, nomination.*

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I.   INTRODUCTION

Everyone in the world has their own proper name nominated by the relatives. However, understanding the names of individuals or the nomination tendencies of each locality or ethnic group is a domain of linguistic research. This research is one of studies on human names in various localities in Vietnam. This paper, therefore, analyzes semantic features in nominating names to clarify the linguistic approach and semantic perspectives by investigating the number of surnames, syllables, meaning containing in the full names. So far, there has been no other research which has compared the names of people in the local region mentioned above. Therefore, the proper names of students will be the object of the research.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Nomination can be understood as the process of attributing names to things by applying linguistic units. Nomination is one of the criteria to determine words. According to Consanski. G.V (in Le. H, 2013), nomination is the "fixture or mounting of a concept in a language's inscriptions that reflects the significant features of a denotat". According to Y. N.N (2001), nomination is the function of constructing language units by separately nominating the segment of thing and thereby forming corespondent concepts in words, word phrases, idioms and sentences.

In brief, there are many concepts related to nomination, but it can be admitted that nomination attaches to the concept of sound reflecting the concrete features of a denotat in a given language. In other words, nomination is to nominate things, actions, natural phenomena by linguistic materials.

Hung. D.V (2013) considered the Vietnamese syllables in forming human and geographical names. His research mainly focused on the combination of syllables and showed that all syllables in a name may coin word or phrase. According to him, human or geographical namess are meaningful accompanied by their denotats. The Vietnamese, however, always choose the names with implicated or connotative meanings. He concluded that the nominating people or places was characterized by arbitrary function, but normally it could also convey the internal meaning. Other researchers also compared the way of forming birth names in languages, and pointed out the similarities and differences in cultures and cognition of ethnicities (Hao. N.H, 2017). Hong. H.N.N (2015), whereas, considered the nomination of police concepts in Chinese. This research showed the features of nomination of police concepts in Chinese culture and cognition through the concepts.

All previous researchers have applied nomination theory to study a concrete matter but till now there is no research on nominating human names at kindergarten, primary school and secondary school in Xuan Truong commune, Tho Xuan district, Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam.

III.   CIVIL REGULATION ON NAMING NAMES IN VIETNAMESE

According to the civil law, "Individuals have the right to have first and last name (including middle name, if any). The full name of a person is legally determined by his/her last name and birth name". Structurally, the two main factors that make up a person's identity are the first and last name but apart from that, each person may have a middle name or not.

This law also imposes some restrictions to the naming of individual. "The nomination is restricted in case of infringing upon the rights and legitimate interests of others or contrary to the basic principles of civil law. The provisions of Article 3 of this Code. The names of Vietnamese citizens must be in Vietnamese or in other ethnic languages of Vietnam; cannot nominate the name with a number or a character" (Civil law 2015).

However, at present there is no legal document guiding how to come up with a specific name in Vietnamese. In addition, there is no standard guideline in the composition of names in Vietnamese; as such, the surname must precede the given name and vice versa. According to the customs of the Kinh group, in the composition of names, the surname must followed by the middle name (if any) and then the given name. However, the M'Nong people in Dak Lak, Lam Dong, Binh Duong and Song Be provinces, for example, the given name precedes surname (Trang. N.T, 2017). This shows that the nomination pattern varies in different localities and among different ethnic groups in Vietnam.

IV.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses statistic method for collecting and classifying students' names from kindergarten to secondary school in Xuan Truong commune, Tho Xuan district, Thanh Hoa province of Vietnam. By collecting the names of all the students enrolled in the schools, we employed semantic analysis and comparison methods to analyze and compare the names in all three levels of education, specifically their surnames, middle names and given names. The names were then separated into groups based on inherent meanings for further discussion.

V.   DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSION

To serve the research process, a survey was carried out in 2019 to collect a total of 721 names of students at three levels of education: kindergarten, primary and secondary schools in Xuan Truong commune, Tho Xuan district, Thanh Hoa province. Classification statistic and comparison were employed in accordance with of surnames, the number of surnames in a name, the number of syllables in the name and the meaning of name. The results, thereby will be presented below.

The surnames of kindergarten, primary and secondary students

The last name is basically a part in nominative structure of the human name which includes surname + middle name + given name. Through the survey, we can encounter a wide range of surnames in the table below.

Table 1. Students' surnames

No	Surname	Kindergarten	Primary school	Secondary school	Total
1	Đỗ	154	188	116	458
2	Nguyễn	33	42	12	87
3	Lê	22	31	7	60
4	Trịnh	16	18	6	40
5	Bùi	8	4	2	14
6	Trần	5	3	6	14
7	Hoàng	5	4	0	9
8	Vũ	4	2	1	7
9	Đào	1	3	2	5
10	Đặng	2	2	1	5
11	Mai	0	3	1	4
12	Phùng	0	3	1	4
13	Ngô	0	2	1	3
14	Lương	1	1	0	2
15	Cao	0	0	1	1
16	Chu	1	0	0	1
17	Hồ	0	1	0	1
18	Lục	0	1	0	1
19	Phan	1	0	0	1
20	Phạm	1	0	0	1
21	Tạ	0	0	1	1
22	Trương	0	0	1	1
	Total	**254**	**308**	**159**	**721**

In the above table, it can be seen that the surname "Đỗ" has the largest figure in all three levels of education. In kindergarten, there are 154/258 (60%), while primary school has 188/308 (61%) and secondary school 116/159 (73%). The subsequent surname being in favor of is Nguyễn: kindergarten 33/254 (12.99%); primary school 42/308 (13.64%); Secondary school 12/159 (7.55%). The rest includes as follows, Lê: kindergarten 22/254 (8.66%); primary school 31/308 (10.06%); Secondary school 7/159 (4.40%). Trịnh: kindergarten 16/254 (6.3%); primary school 18/308 (5.84%); Secondary school 6/159 (3.77%). We can take a look at the chart below:
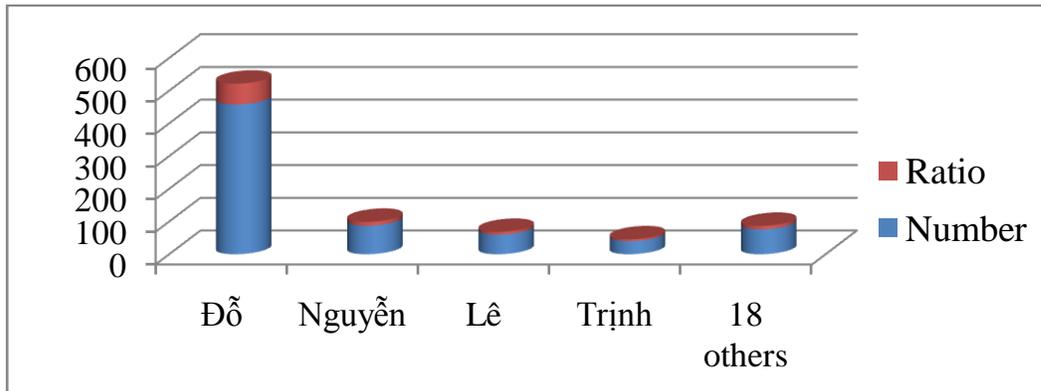
Chart 1: Number and ratio among surnames

As shown in the chart above, the four surnames with the largest number of students make up 89.37% of the total 22 surnames. Of these four surnames, the "Đỗ" accounts for over 63%. In contrast, the remaining 18 surnames account for only 10.63%, in which there are some surnames having 1 case as in Cao, Chu, Hồ, Lục, Phan, Tạ and Trương.

Student's names may contain two surnames

According to the Vietnamese tradition, a person can own surname in reference with biological father/mother or adoptive father/mother. The data, however, shows that of 721 student's full names, there are 676 full names existing 1 surname, accounting for 93.76% and 45 full names with 2 surnames, accounting for 6.24%. It is possible that parents can name children with 2 simultaneous surnames like *Đỗ Lê Diệu Linh, Lê Phan Hà Huy, Nguyễn Đỗ Minh Hiếu*, etc. At present, this is a new tendency in norminating human name, but it appears in some cases.

The number of syllables in full names

Another parameter employed in nominating process was the number of syllables of the names. The results are demonstrated in the table below.

Table 2. The number of syllables in full names

No	The quantity of syllables	Kindergarten	Primary school	Secondary School	Total
1	Two syllables	2	0	5	7
2	Three syllables	159	163	116	438
3	Four syllables	93	145	38	276
	Total	**254**	**308**	**159**	**721**

As shown in the table above, out of 254 kindergarten cases, the number of students with two-syllable name has only 2 cases, accounting for 0.79%, (Đỗ Vinh, Đỗ Dương), the four-syllable name has 93, accounting for 36.61% (Trịnh Đình Gia Hưng, Đỗ Thị Ngọc Lam, Đỗ Phạm Châu Anh), the three-syllable name has the highest with 159 cases, accounting for 62.6%. (Trịnh Ngọc Khánh, Nguyễn Anh Duy, Đỗ Xuân An). In Primary school, there is no child having two-syllable name, the three-syllable name has163, accounting for 53% (Đỗ Xuân Cường, Trịnh Ngọc Phú, Trịnh Đình Đạt), the four-syllable name has 145, accounting for 47% (Lê Huy Hoàng Phúc, Đỗ Như Bảo An, Đỗ Thị Trâm Anh). At Secondary school, 5 students have two-syllable names, accounting for 3.14% (Đỗ Quân, Đỗ Thái, Đỗ Tân, Đỗ Tiến, Đỗ Tuấn), the three-syllable name is 116, accounting for 72, 96% (Đỗ Thanh Bình, Đỗ Thị Oanh, Trần Thu Uyên) and the four-syllable name is 38, accounting for 23.9% (Đỗ Thị Như Quỳnh, Đỗ Thị Mai Khánh, Lê Ngọc Trung Dũng). These figures show that at the secondary school level, the number of four-syllable name is about one-third of the three-syllable name, while the ratio for primary schools is almost the same but kindergarten is almost double. This shows that the trend of nomination with the four-syllable is on the rise. The following is a contrastive chart of the three levels of education in terms of quantity of syllables in a name.
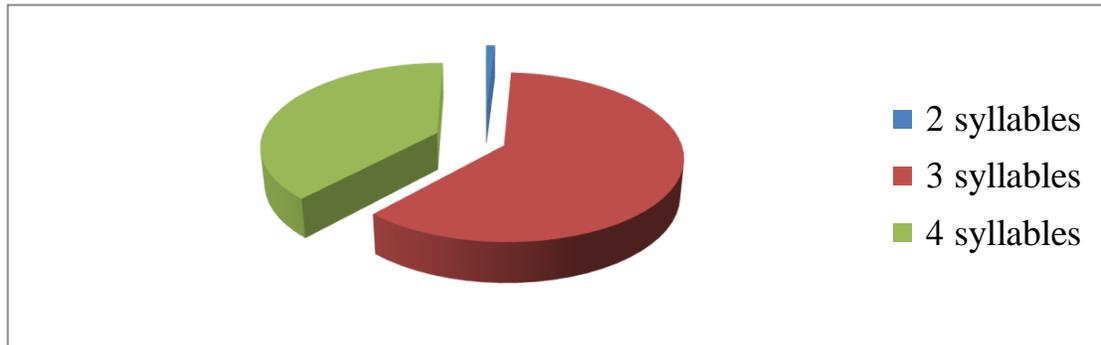
Figure 2. The ratio of the number of syllables in the names of students

On comparing the number of syllables in the names of all 3 levels, the number of students having two-syllable names is only 7, accounting for 0.97%, while the figure having three-syllable names is 438, accounting for 60.75% and the number of children having four-syllable names is 276, accounting for 38.28%. This data shows that nomination with 2 syllables (surname + given name) is not much, in contrast, nomination with 4 syllables accounts for a high proportion, about 2/3 of the number of names with 3 syllables. As explained earlier, the traditional name structure of the Vietnamese comprises the surname + middle name + given name, in which the middle name functions as indicator of gender. However, to take a close look at four-syllable names, it can be seen that the number of syllables in a name has become a trend not only in cities but also in rural areas like Xuan Truong commune. Logically, an increase in syllable in nominating human name provides more linguistic gaps to be bridged.

The meaning of names

Based on the surveyed data, most of names convey an exclusive meaning. This proves that nomination is not done only to purely identify an individual; but also has implied meaning. Name is attached with the nomination of an individual to express the desires of an entire family such as beauty, success, good education, benevolence, virtue, luck, peace and ethnic pride etc.

The names are divided into categories such as nominating in reference to flowers, species, communes, rivers, mountains etc... as follows.

Names nominated in reference to plants

Normally, when coining children's names, parents and grandparents all wish or expect good things for the family in general and for the individual child in the future in particular. For this reason, the names of Vietnamese people imply positive sense. Among them, it is possible to mention the nomination related plants, especially the names of flowers. In a certain three-syllable structured name including surname + middle name + given name, the given name will indicate a kind of flowers, for instance: Đỗ Thị Hồng (rose), Đỗ Thị Huệ (tuberose), Đỗ Thị Lan (orchids) etc.

In addition to the coinage of names indicating flowers, there are also names nominated by precious plants or noble images. Examples include names structured by surname + middle name (indicating gender) + given name (tree) such as: Đỗ Thị Trúc (invory bamboo), Lê Thị Sen (lotus), Lê Thị Kim Ngân (honeysuckle), Đỗ Thị Nhã Trúc (invory bamboo), Đỗ Thị Phương Thảo (fragrant grass). Some names are structured by surname + middle name (indicating genera) + middle name (additive meaning) + given name (tree): Lê Bá Hải Lâm (forest); Đỗ Đình Tùng (cedrus tree), Nguyễn Hoàng Bách (fir tree), Đỗ Xuân Tùng (spruce).

Names nominated in reference to geographic places

Human names are not only derived from flowers but also inspired by places which certify the identity of people through their unique meaning. A child, therefore, could be named in reference to geographic places such as region, place of birth, fatherland, river, mountain etc... In some cases, where names have a certain syllable indicating river or ocean, so we could find the following structures: surname + given name (river/ocean): Trịnh Đại Dương (ocean), Hoàng Hương Giang (Huong river), Lê Hương Giang (Huong river); and in the structure: surname + middle name (indicating gender) + given name (river): Đỗ Thị Trà Giang (Tra river), Nguyễn Thị Hương Giang (Huong river), Đỗ Thị Linh Giang (Linh river); in structure: surname + middle name (indicating gender) + middle name (additive meaning) + given name (river): Đỗ Thị Thu Hà (river); in structure: surname - middle name (indicating genera) + given name (architecture) Đỗ Trí Hải Đăng (lighthouse); in structure: surname - middle name (indicating mother's surname) + given name: Đỗ Nguyễn Hải Đăng (lighthouse). Besides, there are also names referring to mountains/mountain containing in structure: surname + given name (mountain): Ngô Thái Sơn (Thai Son mountain); in structure: surname + middle name (indicating gender) + given name (mountain) such as: Đỗ Văn Sơn (mountain) or in structure: surname + middle name (indicating genera) + given name (mountain):

Đỗ Duy Thái Sơn (mountain), Đỗ Như Hoàng Sơn (Hoang Son mountains), Lê Minh Sơn (bright mountain). Interestingly, there are many names that are nominated with such a structure: surname + middle name (indicating genera) + given name (name of a commune) such as Đỗ Xuân Minh, Đỗ Xuân Hòa, Nguyễn Xuân Hòa, Nguyễn Xuân Vinh, Nguyễn Xuân Sơn, Phùng Xuân Lam, Nguyễn Xuân Hưng, Đỗ Xuân Thắng, Đỗ Xuân Trường.

It is noteworthy that all of the above names have middle names combined with given names related to Xuan Truong commune of Tho Xuan district. This may be a coincidence but it exposes the residents' linguistic perspective in naming the children as in Đỗ Xuân Trường, Đỗ Trần Xuân Trường. In other case, some children whose names coincide with the name of the nation like Đỗ Chí Việt Nam.

Names nominated in reference to asteroids, constellations and meteorological phenomena

Among the students' names at selective schools, there are also names indicating asteroids, constellations or arcs which are considered to have beautiful and positive symbols in Eastern concepts. Nominating structures of these types include: surname + middle name (indicating gender) + given name (asteroid, planets): Đỗ Thị Hằng (Moon Goddess), Đỗ Thị Nguyệt (Moon), Đỗ Thị Thiên Bình (Libra); and in structure: surname + middle name (indicating gender) + middle name (additive meaning) + given name (asteroid): Lê Thị Thu Hằng (Moon Goddess), Đỗ Thị Ánh Nguyệt (Moon Light). In addition to names indicating asteroids, there are names nominated in reference to meteorological phenomena by structures: surname + given name: Đỗ Nhật Quang (Sun nimbus), Nguyễn Ánh Dương (Sun light); in structure: surname + middle name (indicating gender) + given name: Đỗ Thị Vân (cloud), Đỗ Văn Vũ (wind), Đỗ Văn Phong (wind); in structure: surname + middle name (indicating gender) + middle name (additive meaning) + given name: Đỗ Thị Hồng Vân (red cloud), Trịnh Văn Nhật Minh (Sun bright), Đỗ Thị Nhật Ánh (Sun light); in structure: surname + middle name (indicating genera) + given name: Đỗ Trọng Vũ (wind), Lê Thanh Phong (wind), Đỗ Đình Nhật Quang (Sunlight) and in structure: surname + middle name (indicating mother's surname) + given name such as Đỗ Lê Thanh Thiên (infinite sky).

Names nominated in reference to intentions and wishes

Significant periods in history like wartime sometimes serve as inspiration of the Vietnamese in naming their children. Consequently, the way of nominating human is also a critical thinking process reflecting the Vietnamese's linguistic perspective. To prove the above statement, some existing names are as follows: Hùng (hero), Dũng (brave), Chiến (fight), Thắng (victory), Hoà Bình (peace), Thành Công (success), Kiên (perseverance), Cường (powerful), and Thanh Bình (peace). Some names take the structures as follows: surname + middle name (indicating gender) + given name like Đỗ Văn Hùng (hero), Trịnh Văn Mạnh (strong), Đỗ Văn Chiến (fight), Đỗ Văn Thắng (victory); while others have structure: surname + middle name (indicating genera) + given name as in Trịnh Mạnh Hùng (hero), Đỗ Trọng Trung Dũng (loyally brave), Lê Minh Tiến (advance), Đỗ Duy Kiên (perseverance), Đỗ Trọng Cường (powerful), Đỗ Chí Chiến (fight), Đỗ Trọng Thắng (victory), Nguyễn Quang Thành (success) and Đỗ Thái Bình (peaceful). In addition, there are names with the structure: surname + middle name (indicating mother's surname) + middle name (indicating genera) + given name as in Đặng Đỗ Đăng Dũng (brave), Đỗ Nguyễn Trung Kiên (perseverance).

There are also given names expressing success, talent and nobleness as in Tài (talent), Phú (rich), Quý (precious), Châu Báu (treasures), Ngọc (jade), Ngà (ivory), Phát (prosperity) and Tuấn Kiệt (master). They may be structured by surname + middle name (indicating gender) + given name as in Đỗ Văn Báu (treasures), Đỗ Thị Bảo Ngọc (Jade), Lê văn Tuấn Phát (prosperity); and we also find the structure: surname + middle name (indicating genera) + given name as in Đỗ Xuân Anh Tài (smart talent), Lê Duy Tuấn Kiệt (master) and Nguyễn Tài Phát (wealthy).

There also exist names portraying human virtues that Vietnamese parents desire for their children such as: Đạo (morality), Đức (virtue), Phúc (blessing), Hiếu (filial), Thảo (piety), Hiền (gentle), Nhân (humanity), Nghĩa (gratitude), Hòa Thuận (harmony), Hào Hiệp (frefre) Thiện (kind), Thiện Nhân (honest man) An Nhiên (peaceful) etc. These names are structured be: surname + middle name (indicating gender) + given name as in Trịnh Văn Đạo (morality), Đỗ Văn Minh Đức (bright virtue), Đỗ Văn Đức Hiếu (filial virtue); the others are structured by surname + middle name (indicating genera) + given name as in Lê Huy Hoàng Phúc (Kind blessing), Đỗ Ngọc Hiếu (filial), Đỗ Như Minh Đức (bright virtue). Some names are also structured by surname + middle name (indicating another surname) + given name for example Nguyễn Đỗ Chí Thiện (kind), Đỗ Nguyễn Thiện Nhân (kind human), Nguyễn Đỗ Minh Hiếu (bright filial) .

VI.   CONCLUSION

The research conducted a survey of a total of 721 students to provide an insight on linguistic perspective in nominating human name in a commune, of Tho Xuan district, Thanh Hoa province of Vietnam. The results show that, even in rural communes where the urbanization occurs relatively low, the way of nominating human name is rapidly integrated. This reflects the existence of nominated names with up to 4 syllables, which shows the linguistically critical thinking process of the Vietnamese in nominating the human proper names. As a result, many names have meaning of flowers, plants, rivers, mountains, commune names, names of asteroids, meteorological phenomena

and especially many names are derived from the desire for peace and independence of the nation. Another type of nomination that is quite traditional but also very special is to nominate in reference to happiness, luck in business and hospitality and morality. Therefore, it can be said that the nomination of human names in Vietnamese has shown the transition of localities in the integration with other localities throughout the country

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