Application of Nicknames Among Ilami Kurdish Students, West of Iran

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Abstract

The present study was an attempt made to explore the nature of utilizing nicknames, as an insufficiently researched area, in the context of Ilami Kurdish highschools. To realize this purpose, randomly as many as 200 male and female highschool students from both state and non-state schools were asked to participate in the survey by filling in the forms given to them. The elicited nicknames were those commonly used by students in their own mother tongue, that is Ilami Kurdish and not in Persian, as the formal language of people across Iran. The data gathered were then analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that physical characteristics, both for male and female students, accounted for the greatest category based on which nicknames were shaped among highschool students. Moreover, the most nicknames applied by Ilami Kurdish highschool students were found to be neutrally evaluated followed by positive and negative evaluation, respectively. Finally, statistical computation done by SPSS package demonstrated that gender did not act as a significant variable in this inquiry.

Keywords

Ilami Kurdish, gender and nickname, nickname

Diversity existing among cultures has created abundant interesting avenues for research. The behavior and application of nicknames in various languages is one of such appealing areas though it has been little addressed empirically, considering Iran if not internationally meant. By definition, a nickname is a “familiar or humorous name given to a person instead of or as well as his real name, often a short form of the real name, or a reference to the person’s character, etc.” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Encyclopedic Dictionary* 1992). As a quite common incidence, nicknames are not restricted to friends at school or family members rather they run in every arena including sports teams, the army, gangs, political circles, race, and other domains (Thomas 1985; Fenelon 1999; Crozier and Dimmock 1999; Skipper 1984; Zaitzow 1998; Potter 2007; Starks and

Taylor-Leech 2011; Goitein 1970; Gladkova 2003). The importance of nicknames is most likely to be justifiable when their role in social, cultural, and interpersonal relationships is taken into account. Moreover, according to Peterson (2012), the vitality of probing into nicknames lies in its role in underlining identity. Nicknames convey a number of functions. In addition to its function of first names, they provide physical or personal information in association with their bearer and the role they play in community (de Klerk and Bosch 1996; McDowell

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1981; Van Langendonck 1983; Leslie and Skipper 1990). A nickname stands as an indicator of a familiar or humorous name attributed to someone in any language. Yet, it may be referred to someone or something in an unfair fashion. In addition, a nickname serves as a near replacement of one's name in pronunciation. Alternatively, it can be a partial replacement of a person's name. Nicknames also exist as a result of intimacy between two or more people, which can be love or compassion relationship with respect to the length of relationship. A nickname or a shortened name may suggest a minor meaning. Hence, it is considered a source of compassion, familiarity (for example, while addressing kids), or contempt. Nevertheless, it is not always an easy task to differentiate what the nickname is used for. A nickname is mostly taken as positive, which is as a symbol of an acceptable cast though it can be applied ridiculously. Interestingly, in some contexts, nicknames are believed to be of great help. For instance, criminals and wrongdoers make use of nicknames to conceal their real identity. Further, a group of people might think of a nickname as a source of more dignity and validity that ordinary people attribute to them while addressing them. The origin of a nickname is not always identifiable. Most people consider it a game played with their names. Just as nicknames are common in any language, it is quite popular among Ilami Kurds. Nicknames vary with respect to aspects of place of living, physical features, feelings, and other dimensions. Further, from sociolinguistic points of view, various dialects and accents have remarkable effects on the nature of selecting a nickname and give rise to the formation of distinctive classes of nicknames. Ilami Kurdish, the language native to the people in the west of Iran, as a branch of Kurdish language, is not an exception while nickname is taken into account. The concept of nickname is widely prevalent among Ilami speakers and this fact inspires more investigation on this sociolinguistic phenomenon.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The current study made an attempt to carry out a sociolinguistic investigation on the nature of using nicknames among Ilami Kurdish high school students in the province of Ilam, Iran. As no study has ever addressed the issue of nickname, at least in the context of Ilam, it is hoped that the findings of the present survey would open up new aspects with regard to sociolinguistic application of nickname from the standpoints of the students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study attempts to arrive at answers to the following questions on the basis of the data collected from the participants sampled for the purpose of the study.

- (1) Of physical, emotional, and other categories, what is the most used area of nicknames by Ilami Kurdish highschool students?
- (2) Does the overall evaluation of nicknames by Ilami Kurdish highschool students tend to be more positive, negative, or neutral?
- (3) Does the gender of male and female students display any difference in the application of nicknames?

LITERATURE REVIEW

As discussed earlier, nicknaming acts as a source of fun, teasing, looking down or up on somebody, affection, and any other relationship in a range of settings including schools, family gatherings, friendly circles, sports, groups of criminals, and the like. In non-Ilami Kurdish context, a great number of studies on nicknames are available in the literature. Yet, with reference to Kurdish, no empirical study has approached nicknaming and its realization by Ilami natives. Included in this section are some studies done on nicknames in and out of Iran. Mirzamohammadi

(2009) classified nicknames into three main categories, nicknames originating from subcultures, nicknames of those people like poets, scholars, and athletes attributed to themselves, and nicknames attached to people by an organization or state office to appreciate their bravery, honest service, or passing specific courses. In his analytic survey carried out on the structure of nicknames and the social aspects of their application in Iran, he came to the conclusion that most nicknames functioned negatively and were intended for verbal insulting and harassment. They were also used with the aim of belittling or teasing people or groups. Nickname and identity was researched by Ahmadi (2009-2010) in the community of Iran. He underlined the significant role that nickname plays in giving identity to individuals in the society. The remarkable point he made lied in the finding that more dominant groups and classes of the society often do not have nicknames considered as disdaining or degrading which are commonly belonged to the masses. In a study on the relationship between nicknames and the gender-based trends, de Klerk and Bosch (1996) chose an African group of adolescents from mixed socioeconomic background. Their findings revealed that the conventions pertaining to coinage and usage of nicknames were in close interaction with the gender of users and bearers and males held more nicknames than females. Additionally, the application of nicknames among females was more indicators of affection than humor. Having run a research study in an American highschool, Busse (1983) revealed that over half of the boys and less than half of the girls possessed nicknames. Among boys, variations in surnames followed by nicknames on the basis of physical features formed the most applied categories of making nicknames; and for girls, physical characteristics and changes in last name, respectively, stood as the most used categories based on which nicknames were fashioned. Likewise, Crozier and Dimmock (1999) assessed the occurrence of nicknames among British

elementary school students. The survey showed that more undesirable nicknames were reported by girls than boys did. Another major finding of the study was that approximately all the pupils agreed on negative impacts of nicknames on them, leading to distress. Further, Liao (2006) found that nicknaming was quite popular with Taiwanese teenagers. Nicknames play roles in shaping group solidarity, making fun, and teasing. In Taiwan, people select a nickname from one's real name, by making a reference to past events, one's personality, or physical features. Shankle (1995) reported that Americans, compared with other people, make more use of nicknames. They pass nicknames to their friends, kids, family members, enemies, and any other people. To Americans, he added, there is no name carrying sacredness and names are not acting as a base to shift into humorous or insulting sobriquet. The existing scrutiny, having looked at related research studies available as well as theoretical justification, embarked on a quest for nicknaming as fulfilled by Ilami Kurdish speakers in the educational settings of highschools.

METHODOLOGY

Design and Instrument

This investigation was based on a descriptive survey method. To gather the required data, a research-made questionnaire was developed. Prior to structuring the final format of the questionnaire, a pilot study was done among 50 students in both girl and boy highschools. The data in the open-ended questionnaire helped to devise the main questionnaire to be implemented among Ilami Kurdish highschools. The questionnaire included four sections, namely nickname, its referent, aspect or characteristic, and evaluation of the nickname as positive, negative, or neutral. The final draft of the questionnaire came after consulting its content with some scholars and experts in the field.

Participants

High school students in the province of Ilam formed the intended population for the purpose of the study. Out of the whole students, 200 were selected randomly from both males and females equally. To have a representative sample, state and non-state schools as well as schools run by board of trustees were covered. The participants were from among freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. The age of the sample varied between 14 and 16 years.

Procedure

To elicit the required data, the questionnaires were distributed among the participants in Ilam highschools (April 2013). The questionnaire was structured in students' native language in order that any misunderstanding would be avoided. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants clearly before they initiated responding to the questionnaire.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The process of gathering the data lasted for two weeks. The data collected were tabulated on the basis of four categories of: the nickname, the meaning attributed, its aspect, and evaluation of the nickname. Next, in different tables, the frequency and percentage were computed for the categories. The results from data analysis are depicted in the subsequent sections. It is worth mentioning that nicknames in this study are characterized as they are uttered in Ilami Kurdish language, using IPA (International Phonetics Alphabet).

Table 1 below demonstrates the data elicited from Ilami Kurdish highschool girls' use of nicknames. On the basis of the table, one can identify four categories based on which the subjects participating in this investigation provided the data meant by the present study. Initially, the nickname as applied by the population of the study is presented followed by the

origin it makes a reference to. Then, the participants specified the aspect or characteristic of any individual nickname. The last column shows the way the subjects evaluated the nickname as positive, negative, or neutral. As stated earlier, to preserve the authenticity of the nicknames, they are exhibited here as they were used by the sample in their own mother tongue, i.e. Ilami Kurdish. To provide the non-Kurdish readers with more understanding of the nicknames, the English equivalents of them are included in brackets. In addition, for the sake of economy on space, some shortened forms have been used and their complete forms can be found right under the end of the table. Having gathered the required data, the researchers carried out the analysis which is illustrated as follows.

Table 2 displays the results of data analysis from nicknames as applied by Iranian girl highschools. As many as 61 nicknames were provided by the subjects. As is clear from the table, the greatest use of nicknames turned around physical characteristics, by roughly 54%, out of which, more than a half were evaluated by the subjects as negative, about 27% as neutral and around 21% as positive. The second significant figure pertains to the nicknames made based on phonological change in one's name representing about 21% of total statistics. This category was evaluated by approximately 54% as neutral, 31% as positive, and 15% as negative. Other aspects account for 16% of all nicknames applied by the sample, out of which, 60%, 30%, and 10% were evaluated as negative, positive, and neutral, respectively. As to the emotional class, around 5% of nicknames were found to be of this kind, with roughly 67% as positive, 33% as neutral, and no value was assigned to negative evaluation. The least share of nicknames belong to place category, by 3%. Equally here, half of the nicknames pertaining to place were evaluated as positive and the other half as negative.

What happened in relation to Table 2 below goes the same with respect to Table 3. Here, the elicited data on nicknames are presented in the eye of boys

Table 1. Nicknames Used by Ilami Kurdish Highschool Girl Students

Nickname	Its referent	Aspect/characteristic	Evaluation
sîm-e-zærf'uee (sponge)	One's hair	Phys. ¹	Neg. ²
gupâl (local nickname)	Gourab, one's family name	Phon. ³	Neg.
qolmêrad (local nickname)	Pourmorad, one's family name	Phon.	Neu. ⁴
zæhr-ə-mâr (snake poison)	Zahraee, one's family name	Phon.	Neg.
æbru xæfænh (hot-eyebrowed)	Pretty eyebrows	Phys.	Pos. ⁵
bêrnârd (Bernard)	Resembling Bernard in feelings	Emo. ⁶	Pos.
t'ʃaqlu (tubby)	Obesity	Phys.	Neg.
dêrîz (longy)	The tallest one	Phys.	Neg.
kotulê (midget)	Too short	Phys.	Neu.
nîmwêdîzêbi (tiny)	Too short	Phys.	Neu.
Syê (black)	Skin color	Phys.	Neg.
wêz wêz (whiz)	Talkative	Pers. ⁷	Neg.
? æsasi (feeling)	Very emotional	Emo.	Neu.
marmûlêg (lizard)	Like lizard in sight	Phys.	Neg.
sêrbârîk (narrow-headed)	One's head being narrow	Phys.	Neu.
xêndîzî (bowl cut)	A bad haircut	Phys.	Neu.
t'ʃwarlê't' (four-lipped)	Multilayered & big lips	Phys.	Neg.
sêfidê (the white)	Black skin color	Phys.	Neg.
pêrî (fairy)	As pretty as fairy	Phys.	Pos.
fêlfêl (pepper)	Red skin	Phys.	Neg.
dîzêbrê'il (Gabriel)	Good-mannered	Pers.	Pos.
rumî (Romi)	Rouhi, family name	Phon.	Neu.
têxtêpakon (eraser)	One always cleaning board	Other	Neu.
? æsb (horse)	Laughing loudly & with open mouth	Phys.	Neu.
gu'fêl (ear-protruded)	Deshaped ears	Phys.	Neg.
? æqêb mandê zêhni (mentally impaired)	Walking like a mentally impaired person	Phys.	Neg.
ʃêkoftê	Shokofeh, a family name	Phon.	Neu.
ʃêtiâbâd (slums)	Living in suburbs	Pl. ⁸	Neg.
Gêrfîld	Resembling Garfield in face	Phys.	Pos.
dênandêrîz (long-toothed)	Long front teeth	Phys.	Neg.
kêmt'ʃêg dêm (ladle-mouthed)	One's mouth being like ladle	Phys.	Neg.
Æfi	Afsaneh, one's first name	Phon.	Neu.
qêrmêzi (the red)	Hair color	Phys.	Neg.
t'ʃêrkên (dirty)	Not neat & tidy	Pers.	Neg.
mêlt'ʃêft (crooked-necked)	One's head being always slant	Phys.	Neu.
xêj (dummy)	Of low IQ	Ment. ⁹	Neg.
t'ʃê'f'm ?abi (blue-eyed)	Wishing to have blue eyes	Phys.	Pos.
bâ êdêb (polite)	Impolite in speech	Pers.	Neg.
ʃami sêr (melon-headed)	One's head resembling melon	Phys.	Neu.
pêrâzî (parasite)	One interrupting others' talk	Pers.	Neg.
mô'tâd (addicted to drugs)	Mokhtar, one's last name	Phon.	Neu.
dîzudîzê ordêke zê'f't (ugly duckling)	A face afflicted with acne & rash	Phys.	Neg.
?ântên (antenna)	Spy & nosy	Pers.	Neg.
Odkolon (perfume)	Stinky body	Phys.	Neg.
?a'ʃêq (lover)	Tacit & aloof	Emo.	Pos.

Table 1 continued

Nickname	Its referent	Aspect/characteristic	Evaluation
? æqili (Aghili)	Crazy about Aghili, a singer	Pers.	Pos.
Næmæki (sulty)	Amaki, a family name	Phon.	Pos.
Den Den	Coming from Dehloran, a city	Pl.	Neu.
Xodkari (pen-related)	Khodkami, a family name	Phon.	Pos.
Mu:rad	Moradi, a family name	Phon.	Neu.
qasəm	Ghasemzadeh, a family name	Phon.	Pos.
rostæm	Rostamnezhad, a family name	Phon.	Pos.
gopi (having rosy cheeks)	Rotund face	Phys.	Pos.
pârikâl	As thin as Perrine's donkey, animated carâcter	Phys.	Neg.
qanbalu (roly-poly)	Too fat	Phys.	Neu.
Petti (local word for nose)	Big nose	Phys.	Neu.
lêwæ/le:wæ (crazy)	Super in manners & behavior	Pers.	Pos.

Note: Physical¹, Negative², Phonological change in one's name³, Neutral⁴, Positive⁵, Emotional⁶, Personality⁷, Place⁸, Mental⁹.

Table 2. Nicknames Used by Ilami Kurdish Girl Students

Kind of nickname	Frequency	Percentage	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Physical	33	54.09	21.21	51.51	27.28	100
Emotional	3	4.92	66.67	-----	33.33	100
Phonological change in name	13	21.32	30.77	15.38	53.85	100
Place	2	3.28	-----	50	50	100
Other aspects	10	16.39	30	60	10	100
Total	61	100				

studying in highschools. As can be seen, the data required were fed into the framework under four major parts including: the nicknames as used by highschool boys, the origin of the nickname, what aspect or feature the nickname was attributed to, and the overall evaluation of the nickname, whether positive, negative, or neutral. Further, since it was in advance decided that the data (i.e. nicknames) were gathered in students' native language, Ilami Kurdish, the nicknames were illustrated in Kurdish applying IPA. The English corresponding counterparts, as mentioned earlier, are also included. The results of analyzing the data displayed in Table 3 are provided in the following section.

As Table 4 reveals, the most nicknames boys use at highschool are turning around physical themes, by roughly 64%, with the most part evaluated as positive, 35%, 33% as negative, and 31% as neutral. This

finding goes similar to the one found with highschool girls, where they made the most application of nicknames on physically-oriented themes. The second most significant figure in the table pertains to the nicknames formulated on the basis of different aspects hitting almost 22% out of the total rate. They are mostly evaluated to be negative, by about 44%, and around 39% and 17% as positively and neutrally evaluated, respectively. Unlike the results came about girls where the second most used nicknames were based on phonological change in one's name, by 21%, here, highschool boys allocated 7.5% share of their nicknames to this category. And, their evaluation showed 54% as neutral, around 31% as positive, and 15% as negative. The analysis of data supports the fact that both male and female students make emotionally-centered nicknames and nicknames based on place category as the two least used classes of

Table 3. Highschool Boys' Use of Nicknames

Nickname	Its referent	Aspect/characteristic	Evaluation
Syæh (black)	Black skin	Phys. ¹	Neu.
sæktæ (stroke)	Tacit & looking weak	Pers. ⁷	Neg. ²
nokæ (apex)	Tip of nose	Phys.	Neu. ⁴
kəʃməʃ (raisin)	Face color	Phys.	Neg.
tæbær (ax)	One's head resembling ax	Phys.	Neu.
Bâqelæ	From Baskeleh, a village	Pl. ⁸	Neu.
pænir (cheese)	One's face white as cheese	Phys.	Pos. ⁵
Kenti/	Smoking Kent, a cigarette brand	Pers.	Neg.
Sæfær/	After one's father name	Phon. ³	Pos.
Mîtikumân	Resembling Mitikoman, cartoon character	Phys.	Pos.
hadʒi næxæ (hajj pea)	Little and short	Phys.	Neu.
towqi (pigeon)	Dealing with birds	Pers.	Pos.
?erusæk (doll)	Pretty & silent	Pers.	Pos.
hadʒi (hajji)	Good figure	Phys.	Pos.
sædʒadi	Sajad, first name	Phon.	Neu.
xær tʃehræ (donkey-faced)	Ugly face	Phys.	Neg.
darakula (Dracula)	Tall and square	Phys.	Pos.
tærp (turnip)	White skin color	Phys.	Pos.
bæluf (bluff)	Known as liar	Pers.	Neg.
gæwæn (loco/milk vetch)	One's hair like loco	Phys.	Neu.
bædæn (body)	Athlete	Phys.	Pos.
tup (ball)	Fat & short	Phys.	Neu.
tʃubbæstæni (ice-cream stick)	Too thin	Phys.	Neg.
narnændʒæk (hand grenade)	Wearing army designed clothes	Phys.	Neg.
Susano (an actress)	Very ugly & out of shape	Phys.	Pos.
mu ʃ syæh (black mouse)	Black skin	Phys.	Neu.
mîkrob (microbe)	Very neat & tidy	Phys.	Pos.
dæwi ʃ (dervish)	Big skull	Phys.	Neu.
golâbi (pear)	Big jaws	Phys.	Neu.
kiwi sâr (kiwi-headed)	Head resembling kiwi	Phys.	Pos.
m əʒ (fire)	Skin color as red as fire	Phys.	Neu.
mælæwane-e-zəbəl (Popeye)	Having big arms & narrow waist	Phys.	Pos.
xær dənən (donkey-toothed)	Big and unfit teeth	Phys.	Neg.
ʃufaʒ (heater)	Nosy	Phys.	Neg.
dongi (Dong Yi, an actress)	Pretty face	Phys.	Pos.
wa ʃ æ (eagle)	Agile in soccer	Phys.	Pos.
sêwəl (moustache)	Bushy & thick moustache	Phys.	Neg.
? æstærəs (stress)	Too much movement of legs	Emo. ⁶	Neu.
kæbəd kwəna (liver torn)	One's face like liver openings	Phys.	Neg.
?mu puræn (Porang the uncle, TV presenter)	Talking as Porang the uncle	Pers.	Pos.
Peykânbâr sær (van-headed)	Square like head	Phys.	Neu.
Kærim suskeh (Karim the roach)	Karimi, a family name	Phon.	Neu.
mæmæ gholi (Mamgholi)	Mohammad Gholizade	Phon.	Neu.
tæmat? xwær (tomato-eater)	Villager	Pers.	Neu.

Table 3 continued

Nickname	Its referent	Aspect/characteristic	Evaluation
monhæræf (deviated)	Having negative thoughts	Emo.	Neg.
xalu fætøla (Fatolah the uncle)	Ridiculous	Pers.	Neu.
pælæŋ suræti (pink panther)	Wearing pink clothes	Phys.	Neu.
xælaf (crooked)	Doing wrong actions	Pers.	Pos.
ʃêx (clergyman)	Religious	Pers.	Pos.
hosien xælaf (Hussein Khalaf, wrongdoer)	Khalafi, a family name	Phon.	Neu.
Ebi (a singer)	Resembling Ebi in face	Phys.	Pos.
Lâtæ (villain)	Fighting a lot, warlike	Pers.	Neg.
wiktur waldəz (Victor Valdez)	Good goalkeeper	Phys.	Pos.
mânkæn (manniquin/dummy)	As thin as mannikin	Phys.	Neu.
xætær (danger)	Taking lots of risk	Pers.	Pos.
gæmur (Ghomor, a local word)	Ogler	Pers.	Neu.
wəraz (swine)	Powerful	Phys.	Pos.
yaxi (rebel)	Often escaping from school	Pers.	Pos.
meidân (Meidan)	From Meidan, a village	Pl.	Neu.
mêdi næfti (Mehdi the oily)	Having greasy & unclean hair	Phys.	Neg.
pitʃəg (ivy)	Short & little	Phys.	Neu.
gorgæ sær (wolf-headed)	Square like skull	Phys.	Neu.
mæmæd tʃæpâl (Mammad the palm)	Having big hands	Phys.	Pos.
tʃæghæl (jackal)	Looking like a jackal	Phys.	Neg.
mowdʒi (wavy)	Wavy hair	Phys.	Neu.
krâki (cracky)	Resembling an addictive	Phys.	Neg.
meftæ (sponger/hanger-on)	Parasite, seeking advantage without trying	Pers.	Neg.
mu qashaŋ (beautiful hair)	Caring too much about one's hair	Phys.	Pos.
ʃætər (camel)	Lips like a camel's muzzle	Phys.	Neg.
Amin kukâeen (Amin the cocaine)	Involved in wrong doing	Pers.	Neg.
kælæʃər (rooster)	One's hair fashion like rooster crown	Phys.	Neu.
yabu (donkey)	Inconsiderate in dealing with others	Pers.	Neg.
Sæbuti (Sabouti)	Sabohi, a family name	Phon.	Neu.
nəʒi (lentil)	Too short and thin	Phys.	Neg.
muʃ (mouse)	Cunning & shrewd	Pers.	Neg.
dâræk (longy)	Very tall	Phys.	Pos.
mâr (snake)	Dangerous & harmful	Pers.	Neg.

Note: Physical¹, Negative², Phonological change in one's name³, Neutral⁴, Positive⁵, Emotional⁶, Personality⁷, Place⁸.

Table 4. Analysis of Nicknames Used by Ilami Kurdish Boy Students

Kind of nickname	Frequency	Percentage	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Physical	51	63.75	35.30	33.33	31.37	100
Emotional	3	3.75	66.67	-----	33.33	100
Phonological change in name	6	7.5	30.77	15.38	53.85	100
Place	2	2.5	-----	-----	100	100
Other aspects	18	22.5	38.89	44.44	16.67	100
Total	80	100				

Table 5. Pearson Chi-Square Test Computed for Gender Difference

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	6.275	4	.179
Likelihood ratio	6.278	4	.179
Linear-by-Linear association	.059	1	.807
N of valid cases	141		

nicknames. As Table 4 represents, 4% of nicknames accounted for emotional category of nicknames, out of which, approximately 67% were evaluated to be positive and the remaining 33% as negative. As to category of place, the data showed that only 2.5% of the whole nicknames which the participants formed were based on this class and the evaluation was 100% neutral.

To explore whether the gender of Ilami Kurdish students made any significance when application of nicknames was concerned, Pearson chi-square test was computed. As Table 5 displays, since the value of Pearson chi-square amounts to 6.275 and the significance level of .179 exceeds .05, gender showed no significant difference between boys and girls in their applying nicknames.

DISCUSSIONS

The first question the study sought its answer was to discover which of the categories of physical, emotional, and others would account for the greatest use of nicknames among Ilami Kurdish highschool students. The analysis of the collected data points to the fact that highschool students in Iran configure the most nicknames on the basis of physical features of their peers, friends, and classmates. Put together, approximately 60% of Ilami Kurdish highschool girls' and boys' application of nicknames roots in physical characteristics of people around them. As to the second question posed by this investigation, meant to touch upon the overall evaluation of the nicknames, the data analysis about 44% of the evaluation of the

nicknames used by the students was shown to be neutral, and with a slight distance, around 41% of the overall evaluation of the nicknames proved to be positive, while roughly 30% of nickname evaluation by the highschool students was displayed as negative. This finding is incongruent with those of Mirzamohammadi's (2009) study and Crozier and Dimmock's (1999) study. It is most likely due to the determining role of context of use in evaluating the nature of nicknames as positive, negative, or neutral. To make this clear, for an instance, Shankle (1955) contended that people from America mostly do not attach sacredness to names and names are not acting as a base to shift into humorous or insulting sobriquet. Finally, the third question this inquiry particularly endeavored to reply concerned the role of gender of students in developing nicknames. Unlike the previously conducted studies on gender and nickname application (Crozier and Dimmock 1999; de Klerk and Bosch 1996), recall from the data shown in Table 5, this study revealed that gender turned out to be an insignificant variable. This point of disagreement on the findings demands more research to unveil the place of gender in nicknaming.

CONCLUSIONS

Sociolinguistically and socioculturally, the manifestation of nicknames holds significance as it makes up a part of people's identity and plays a leading role in social interactions. Indeed, it acts as a chip of the old block of particular cultural and social life of a social community; therefore, this area

deserves attention and more profound investigation. Through this inquiry, the quality and nature of nicknaming among Ilami Kurdish students in girl and boy highschools was put into research. The major findings of the study are as follows:

(1) The Ilami kurdish male and female highschool students rely on physical traits of people as the category based on which they develop the most nicknames. This is compatible with the research Busse (1983) did on the same area in an American highschool. He concluded that the girls made the greatest use of nicknames based on physical characteristics;

(2) The evaluation of nicknames by Ilami Kurdish highschool students revealed that the highest cases of their nicknames carry neither positive nor negative sense, i.e. neutral. This was followed in turn by positively and negatively evaluated nicknames;

(3) The appraisal of the part gender would play in nickname treatment by the participants left marginal role for this variable. In other words, at least based on the result of this study, gender proved to be of no significance from statistical point of view. As a research attempt made for the first time to address the issue of nicknames among Ilami Kurdish highschool students, the findings of this study are hence believed to contribute to both deepening our knowledge of how such people in this particular context approach construct nicknames and the way they think of them at the time of application. Future research might address the behavior of nicknames in broader spectrum among Kurdish people in the community.

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