

Finnish Female Name Pattern with the Suffix *-iina*

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Abstract

This paper discusses Finnish given names, name formation and variation in the popularity of given names in Finland. The topic of this study is the female names ending in *-iina*, such as *Eveliina*, *Josefiina*, *Katariina*, *Pauliina* and *Vilhelmiina*. The *iina*-ending name type can be considered a productive pattern for creating new Finnish female names, since there are more than 600 different names ending in *-iina* in the data. The data of this study consists of all the given names that end in *-iina* given between the end of the 19th century and the year 2012 to Finnish girls who have Finnish as their mother tongue. The suffix *-iina* is a feminine suffix, since all the names ending in *-iina* are female names, which makes the name type very particular in the Finnish nomenclature. According to the data of this study, the name type is most popular in the late 19th century and again at the turn of the millennium. It is originally a borrowing from Western European name systems and the suffix has originally been written as *-ina* also in Finnish, but since the Finnish names are usually written as they are pronounced, the form *-iina* is nowadays far more common.

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Introduction

A choice of name for a child is never made completely independently. The choice reflects social influences, and the choice is always made within a community. According to Emilia Aldrin (2011), naming a child is not done through a single performative act, but rather a process that has several different phases, such as a phase of inspiration, a phase of comparison, a phase of decision-making and a narrative phase that occurs after the choice is made. Through the naming process the name givers create identities for both the child and for themselves (Aldrin 2011: 34-35, 252-253).

Nowadays in Finland it is increasingly common to give a child a name that is rare or even unique, and the name givers seem to be very creative with their choice of names. Namesakes are often not desired for the child. This is a trend that has begun after the middle of the 20th century. When it comes to choosing a name, a child is nowadays seen as an individual who has to have an individual name, not so much as a member of a community. An individual name choice represents both the child's individuality as a name bearer and also the parent's individuality and creativity as a name giver (Saarelma-Paukkala 2013: 59-60). In the early 19th century a common naming practice was to choose a name that was common in the community, and many children were named systematically after relatives. The stock of different names was narrow. Later the rigidity of name giving has been abandoned, and the changes in name fashion are now more apparent (Kotilainen 2008: 247-270).

However, the need for new names is not a new phenomenon. Because of the Finnish national awakening in the 19th century, many name givers in the late 19th and early 20th century wished to choose a name that was more Finnish than the Christian names that were in

common usage at the time. There were not many Finnish given names in common usage, since the Finnish names had almost entirely been replaced by the Christian names when Christianity spread to Finland, and therefore lots of new Finnish names had to be created in a short amount of time (Kiviniemi 2006: 419–420).

As was noted, in the 21st century it is more usual to favour names that are infrequent. The urge to give a child a rare name has created a need for a larger name stock, and new names are created constantly. According to the Finnish Name Act, which was issued in 1946 and most recently reformed in 2005, a given name has to be in accordance with the domestic practice to name a child. The Act also says that a girl must be given a female name and a boy must be given a male name (Ainiala *et al.* 2012: 188-190). Interpretation of the law is somewhat subjective, though, since the definition of the domestic practice is not unambiguous. On the whole, in Finland naming a child is rather unrestricted and it is also fairly effortless to form a totally new name that no one in Finland has.

The Data of the Study

The data of this study consists of all the given names that end in *-iina* given between the end of the 19th century and the year 2012 to Finnish girls who have Finnish as their mother tongue. The data is from the Population Register Centre and is given for this study by the Institute for the Languages of Finland. The database that this data is based upon has been constructed in 1965 and it contains all Finns that were alive in 1965 or have been born since. There might be some flaws in the database, since the earliest occurrences are from the end of the 19th century and they are interpretations of the handwritings of priests or other clerks.

The present data consists of all given names – that is, both first given names as well as second and third given names. In Finland a child can be given one to three names and generally children are given two or three names. However, they usually are referred to with their first given name and the other given names are not used in the everyday life. The first given name is typically shorter than the other given names, due to a rhythm pattern many name givers prefer to follow (Kiviniemi 2006: 413) – e.g. *Anna Vilhelmiina* is a much more common name than *Vilhelmiina Anna*. Therefore the multisyllabic *iina*-ending names are more common as a second or a third name. As was noted, all the names in the data are given to Finnish girls who have Finnish as their mother tongue. It is notable that although Finnish is marked as the child's mother tongue in the database, it is not necessary that both the child's parents – or either of them – speak Finnish as their mother tongue.

This data includes 608 different names that end in *-iina* and that represent the *iina*-ending name type. Some *iina*-ending names are more similar to compound names than the *iina*-ending name type, such as *Annastiina*, *Eevaliina* and *Maijatiina*. There are quite many names of this type as well, but in these names both the beginning and the ending function more as independent names than as a root and a suffix: for example, *Maija* and *Tiina* are Finnish female names, as is *Maija-Tiina*. These names are more linked to compound names than to the *iina*-ending name type and are therefore excluded from the data of this study. In addition, the names that end in *-iina* but have only two syllabics (*Iina*, *Niina*, *Tiina* etc.) are also excluded from the data.

New Names and Name Formation

Since in Finnish names are usually written as they are pronounced, it is a custom by the Finnish onomasticians to segregate all different variations. Every different spelling is considered to be a different name. The name *Eveliina* has the same origin as the names *Evelina*, *Eeveliina*, *Eveniina*, *Eveliina*, *Ewelina* and *Eve-Liina*, for example, but to an onomastician in Finland, these are seven different names. Nowadays modifying the name's spelling can be seen as a way of forming a new name, but during the first hundred years of the data of this study, different spellings are more or less unintentional, since the spellings of given names were not established until the middle of the 20th century.

In the 1950s approximately 1,500 different female names were given during one year in Finland. In the beginning of the millennium the number was approx. 3,500, and nowadays it is even higher: e.g. in 2012 Finnish girls were given in total 4,048 different names. The annual number of female names given is higher than the number of male names, even though every year more boys are born than girls.¹ Girls are more often given a new, rare, special and even unique first name than boys, who more often are given a traditional name that perhaps runs in the family (Kiviniemi 2006: 32-35, Yliopiston nimipäiväalmanakka 2014: 50-51).

So where do new names come from? When choosing a name for a child, the name giver can find a suitable name among the old names that have been popular a hundred years ago or earlier. An example of a name that was popular over a hundred years ago in Finland and is popular once again is the female name *Emma* (Kiviniemi 2006: 415-419). Another phenomenon is borrowing names from other languages, most commonly due to bilingual families or due to the pursuit of internationality. Names are an element of language that is easily influenced by cultural change or other changes in the world. Names can be easily borrowed from one language to another or from one culture and one naming system to another (Saarelma-Maunumaa 2003). New names can also be found in the world of literature, music, movies and television.

Other selections, where new names can be found, are lexicon and the large variety of nicknames. Parents can name their child *Omena* ('apple') or *Kaneli* ('cinnamon'), for instance. These names can be called homonym names, since the names have the same pronunciation and the same spelling as the lexemes, but the meaning differs. Homonym names were popular especially during the Finnish national awakening in the 19th century, when given names of Finnish origin were favored. On the other hand, nicknames can also transfer into formal given names. *Liisa* is a very common female name in Finland but it is originally a nickname for someone called *Elisabeth* – also the female name *Maija* is originally a pet form of the name *Maria*. Choosing a name that is typically known as a nickname is an ongoing phenomenon in Finland. For example, in the beginning of the 21st century, such names as *Late* (a typical nickname for someone called *Lauri*) and *Valtsu* (a typical nickname for someone called *Valtteri*) have been chosen for boys.

However, names being borrowed from different cultures or names being transferred from lexicon or nicknames becoming formal given names, are not the same as forming new names. Instead, forming new given names in Finnish is either by compounding or derivation,

¹ In 2012 in total 52,294 Finnish children were born in Finland, who have Finnish as their mother tongue: 25,671 girls and 26,623 boys. Finnish boys were given in total 3,313 different given names.

which means that new names are formed by the same principles as new words. Compounding happens usually by using a hyphen (*Maija-Liisa*), but it is also possible to compound two names without a hyphen (*Maijaliisa*). Derivation on the other hand can be very regular: a root plus a suffix make a derivative. It can also be fairly loose, when using models and patterns.

The multisyllabic *iina*-ending name type can be seen as a derivational name pattern. Using existing names as a model is a common way to create new names. For example, existing names as *Vilhelmiina*, *Katariina* and *Eveliina* have likely been used as a model for creating new names such as *Vilmiina*, *Vilmelmiina*, *Katriina*, *Kataliina*, *Aveliina*, *Eevellina* and *Eveniina*. But as the name type becomes more common and there are many given names in the similar shape, it is no longer the individual names that are used as a model, but the name type becomes a pattern.

The *iina*-ending Name Type as a Pattern

The name type that ends in *-iina* is an exceptionally clear pattern. This research shows that in the Finnish speaking community, even new, unique names are recognized as female names, as long as they end in *-iina*. Because of the clear pattern, even if an *iina*-ending name is never heard before, it is usually understood as a given name instead of a random element of language.

In some names the beginning of the name can be considered a root. In most cases (approx. 10% of all the names in the data) the root is a male name: such old names as *Vilhelm* > *Vilhelmiina*, *Josef* > *Josefiina* and *Paulus* > *Pauliina* and such new names as *Antti* > *Anttiina*, *Jussi* > *Jussiina*, *Matti* > *Mattiina* and *Tomi* > *Tomiina*. This can be seen as the origin of the *iina*-ending name type. Originally most of the names are probably derived from male names and therefore *iina*-ending names are originally female forms of male names. For example, *Anttiina*, *Jussiina*, *Mattiina* and *Tomiina* are therefore new names created by using the old model. The new names debut in the data in the beginning of the 21st century, and they only have one or a few bearers. The male names *Antti*, *Jussi*, *Matti* and *Tomi* are all commonly chosen names for boys in the 1980s, so it is possible that these are patronymics and derived from the child's father's name.

According to the data of this study, it is much more untypical that the root is a female name. These names are all fairly new – they debut in the data at the earliest in the late 1900s. Some examples are *Elliina* (< *Elli*), *Jenniina* (< *Jenni*), *Mariina* (< *Mari*), *Nelliina* (< *Nelli*), *Outiina* (< *Outi*) and *Peppiina* (< *Peppi*). The root can also be a lexeme. There are only a few of this category in the data, and they all, too, debut in the data at the earliest in the 1900s, but they are very peculiar and therefore worth categorizing: e.g. *Manteliina* (*manteli* 'almond'), *Sipuliina* (*sipuli* 'onion'), *Vadelmiina* (*vadelma* 'rasberry'), *Vauhtiina* (*vauhti* 'speed') and *Villiina* (*villi* 'wild').

Dividing the names into categories based on their roots is, naturally, not at all unambiguous. It is not always clear if there is a name or a lexeme used as a root when forming the name, or not. The root is most easily found when the name or the lexeme used as a root ends in the letter *i*: *Lauri* (male name) > *Lauriina* and *Emmi* (female name) > *Emmiina* and *Pippuri* ('pepper') > *Pippuriina*. But in most cases the etymology is not that explicit. For

example, the names *Hanniina*, *Janniina* and *Sanniina* might be derived from female names *Hanna* or *Hanni*, *Janna* or *Janni* and *Sanna* or *Sanni*, but they can just as well be variations of the fairly popular name *Anniina*.

Often it is impossible to see a root in a name before the suffix *-iina*. It can be construed that most of the names in the data are formed not by combining a root and a suffix but by using the pattern. It seems that the element before the suffix *iina* can be any given name but also almost any pronounceable element of language: *Adassiina*, *Airiina*, *Alehtiina*, *Almiina*, *Amaliina*, *Carmiina*, *Florentiina*, *Helviina*, *Hyldeimiina*, *Jatriina*, *Jerriina*, *Loliina*, *Luviina*, *Mandeliina*, *Melbiina*, *Obeliina*, *Pepperiina*, *Rullakartiina*, *Sehveriina*, *Sikuriina*, *Westiina*, etc.

In the field of onomastics one often has to take a stand on the concept of name in general. Proper names are separated from common names usually by their function: as Willy Van Langendonck argues, ‘a proper name denotes a unique entity at the level of established linguistic convention to make it psychosocially salient within a given basic category’ (2007: 322). However, due to the existence of the clear pattern, many new and unique *iina*-ending names are understood as female names. So must a given name have at least that one bearer for it to be considered a name? One interpretation is that there is such a group as potential names, which are names that could be given and would be understood as female names – at least among the Finns – but which are yet to be given. Examples of potential names are **Terhiina* (< Finnish female name *Terhi*) and **Maijiina* (< Finnish female name *Maija*) and **Suniina* (does not have a clear root name). According to the data of this study, these names do not refer to an individual and they do not specify anyone or anything.

The name type is originally a borrowing from Western European languages, such as Swedish and German, and it is still known in other European countries and languages as well: for example, *Catalina* and *Caterina* are Spanish and Italian forms of the name *Katharine*. However in French and English the name type usually ends in *-ine*: e.g. *Christine*, *Claudine*, *Katherine*, *Josephine* (Hanks and Hodges 1990: 57, 63, 66, 182). In Finnish the suffix *-iina* has originally been written as *-ina*, but since Finnish names are usually written as they are pronounced, the form *-iina* has been more common since the Finnish national awakening of the 19th century. In the beginning of the 20th century, *Vilhelmiina*, for example, became quickly more common than *Vilhelmina* or *Wilhelmina*, at least among the Finnish natives, since it was considered a more Finnish name. In the data of this study, which only includes girls in Finland with Finnish as their mother tongue, the most common *ina*-ending names are *Annina* and *Kristina*, as they both have a little less than 900 bearers in the data. The frequency for *Anniina*, though, is 14,457 (as a first name 3,880), and for *Kristiina* 78,151 (as a first name 4,284). Originally the suffix is a Latin diminutive suffix, and it is still known for example in Italian: *casa* ‘house’ and *casina* ‘a small house or a cottage’. As the suffix ends in the letter *a*, it is a feminine form. The suffix is still a feminine suffix: all the names that end in *-iina* are particularly female names and a male name ending in *-iina* is not possible.

In most naming systems and also in the Finnish language, male names and female names are usually separated. By knowing a person’s name, the sex of the person is also known. Usually at the time a child is given a name, he or she is also becoming a representative of one or the other sex. By naming a child, we are also representing gender and attesting the sexual distinction. If the given name does not bare the person’s sex, people are

usually confused. In Finnish there are, however, some names that are so-called unisex names, which suit both sexes, but they are rather rare (see Leino 2014). A male name that ends in *-iina* is not possible, so in consequence, a name that ends in *-iina* cannot be a unisex name. Often when forming new names, the name is seen as a unisex name for some time, until it later on usually becomes established in either female names or male names. However, if the new formation ends in *-iina*, it is inevitably seen as a female name. In this sense, the name type is very peculiar in the Finnish nomenclature: usually Finnish given names cannot be all-inclusively divided into female names and male names based on their form alone. Therefore it is notable that this name type is quite popular nowadays, too, when at the same time unisex names are becoming more and more popular and also gender-neutral education is on display in the media. Choosing an *iina*-ending name to one's daughter, the child's sex is represented very clearly to everyone in the community.

Variation in Popularity

In the data there are 608 different *iina*-ending names. Only nine of them are fairly common names in Finland that have a name day in the Finnish name calendar:² *Anniina*, *Eveliina*, *Josefiina*, *Karoliina*, *Katariina*, *Katriina*, *Kristiina*, *Pauliina* and *Vilhelmiina*. Most of the 608 names are very rare: when all the given names are included, in total of 461 different names (76%) are so infrequent that they have fewer than 10 bearers in the data, and 44% of the names are unique among the Finnish-speaking community (see Figure 1).

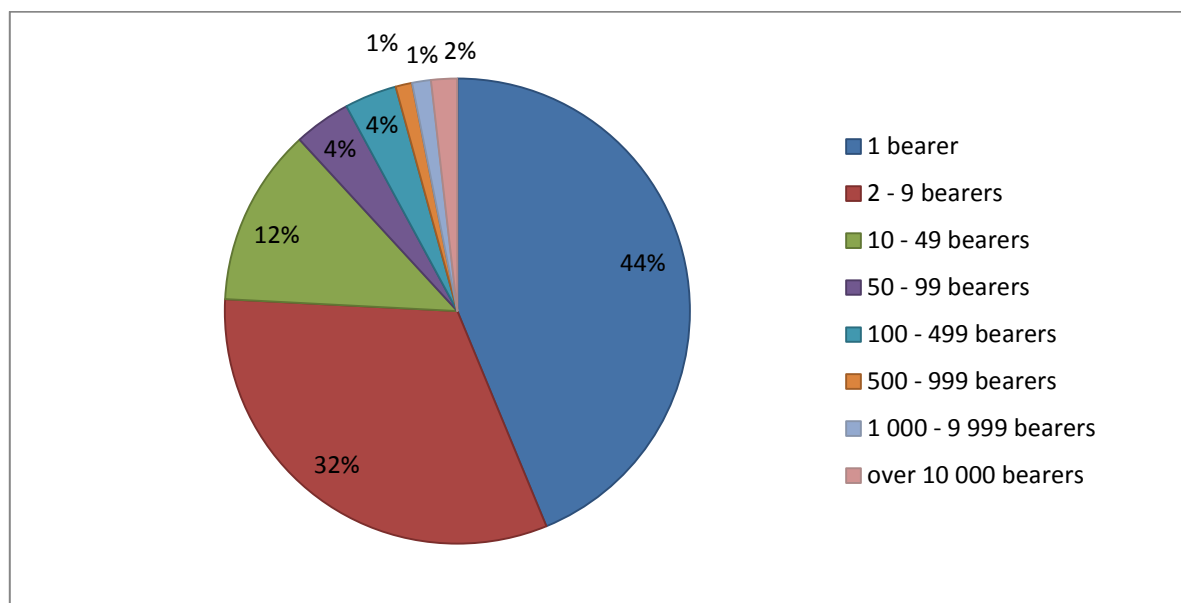


Fig. 20. The 608 different *iina*-ending names divided by the amount of bearers they have in data

The figure shows that all though the *iina*-ending name type is a productive pattern for forming new names, most of the names created are very infrequent. It is a productive pattern, since 608 different names is an exceptional amount of names that are similar in type.

² More about the name day tradition in Finland, see Ainiala *et al.* 2012: 185–186.

However, most Finns are probably not aware of the number of different names of this name type – Finns may not come across most of the different names, since none of the names are really common individually. As a first given name, the most common *iina*-ending name is *Kristiina* (which is Finnish form of *Christina*), as it has 4,284 bearers in the data as a first given name in the Finnish-speaking community, and the second most common is *Katariina* (which is Finnish form of *Katherine*) with 4,111 bearers. As a first given name, neither of them can be considered a popular name. For instance, the name *Maija* has more than 24,000 bearers as a first name, and that is not even considered a highly popular first name in Finland. An example of a popular first given name is *Anna* with approximately 82,000 bearers among the Finnish-speaking community.³ Both *Kristiina* and *Katariina* are clearly more common as a second or a third given name, since in total the name *Kristiina* has 78,151 bearers and the name *Katariina* has in total 54,556 bearers in the data of this study. However, for the sake of comparison, the most popular female names in Finland are *Maria*, *Helena* and *Johanna*, as the frequency for *Maria* is approximately 373,000, for *Helena* approximately 170,000 and for *Johanna* approximately 147,000.⁴ Therefore, the frequencies for the most common *iina*-ending names are not significantly high. Accordingly, it is more practical to study the variation in popularity as a name type than as an individual name, since none of the names by themselves are very popular at any point.

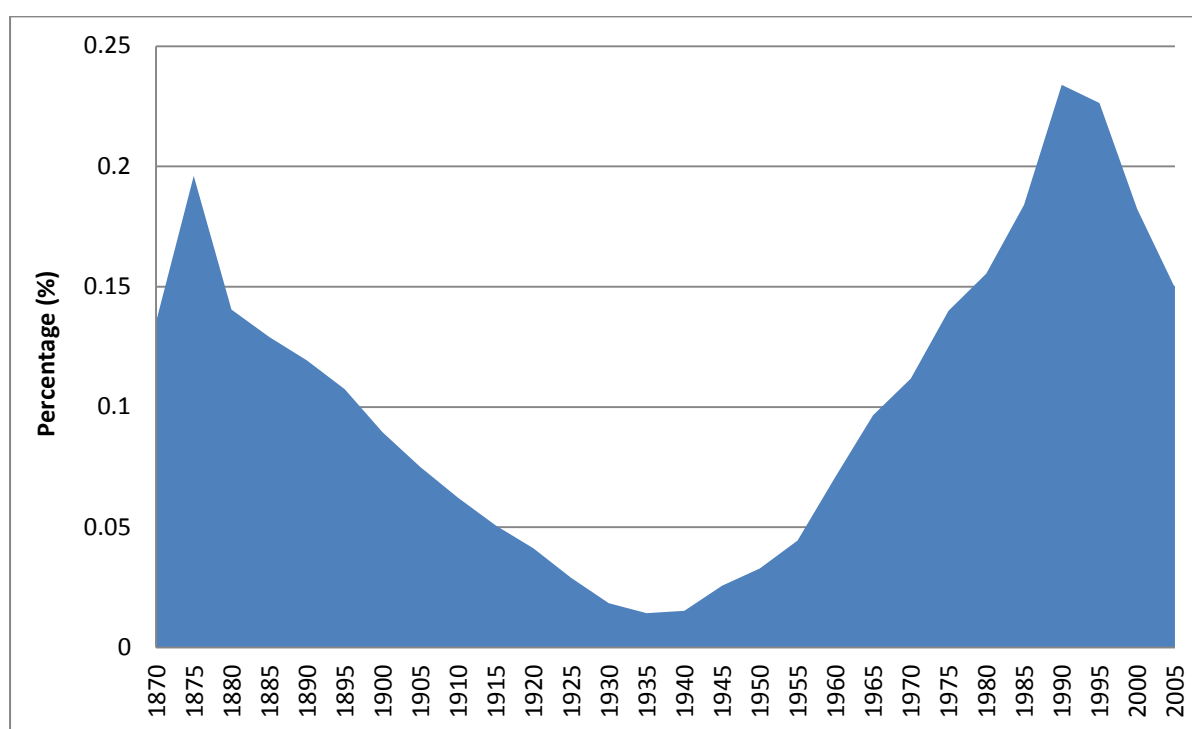


Fig. 21. The choices of given names that end in *iina*, given in Finland between the years 1870 and 2012

³ These numbers for *Maija* and *Anna* are from the data that is received from the Institute for the Languages of Finland and it includes all the female names ending in *-ija* or in *-inna* and given as a first given name to girls who have Finnish as their mother tongue.

⁴ These numbers for *Maria*, *Helena* and *Johanna* include all Finns regardless of their mother tongue. The information comes from the Population Register Center. (<http://verkkopalvelu.vrk.fi/Nimipalvelu/default.asp?L=3>).

The name type's variation in popularity is shown in figure 2. The figure shows the percentage of girls born annually between the end of 19th century and the year 2012 given an *iina*-ending name among the Finnish-speaking community in Finland. According to the data of this study, the name type that ends in *-iina* is most common in Finland in the late 19th century and again at the turn of the millennium.

The first peak of popularity is due to the popularity of several names – primarily due to the popularity of the name *Vilhelmiina*, but also to the popularity of the names *Josefiina* and *Katariina*. The names *Kristiina*, *Katariina*, *Karoliina* and *Pauliina* ascend to peak of popularity from the mid 1900s – yet the later peak of popularity is rather due to the popularity of the name as a whole than due to the popularity of single names, since several new *iina*-ending names are created during the latter part of the 20th century. On the other hand, the reason for the reduction of the name type's popularity towards the turn of the 20th century is presumably due to the popularity of Finnish given names. In consequence of the Finnish national awakening in the 19th century name givers started to choose names that appeared domestic increasingly more often. The name type that ends in *-iina* is originally a borrowing, and therefore name givers at that time might have found it foreign.

However, fashion does not need a specific reason to change, for due to its internal mechanisms fashion changes regularly anyway. According to Stanley Lieberman (2000), as long as there is free choice, there is fashion, since every name's appeal changes in general in the course of time. Fashion is bipartite: on the one hand there is the urge to imitate and be attached to a social group, but on the other hand there is also the need to separate oneself from others and underline one's individuality. Fashion needs to change regularly. Changes in external conditions can cause a fashion to change, but fashion can change without any changes in the external conditions, because fashion has its own internal mechanisms that generate change anyway. The popularity of different names varies, as does the popularity of different kinds of hairstyles, for instance, or pieces of clothing. The big difference is that there is no external gainer who influences how names change. Other difference is, of course, that the name chosen impacts on the name bearer's life and the choice of name has long-term influences on another person – unlike the choice of trousers. However, the changes in fashion should be separated from the existence of customs. It is not a matter of fashion, if, for example, a specific type of clothing is static and unchanging, as it is custom to wear a suit at many offices. In China, for example, it is a custom to choose a name for a child from a rather narrow selection, but however, one cannot say in that case that it is fashionable to pick a name from that stock (Lieberman 2000: 29-37, 66-68).

Conclusion

The multisyllabic name type that ends in *-iina* is a very clear pattern for forming new female names in Finnish. There are more than 600 different names of this name type, which is quite an exceptional amount of different names with the similar type in Finnish nomenclature. Therefore the name type is also considered a highly productive pattern for forming new names. Forming new given names is either done by compounding or derivation, and

derivation can be very regular or fairly loose. Using a pattern is a loose form of derivation, since it is not as regular as combining a root and a suffix.

The name type has two peaks of popularity in the data of this study. The latter and higher peak is in the turn of the millennium when most new *iina*-ending names are also created. The most common multisyllabic names that end in *-iina* are *Kristiina* and *Katariina*, which are also some of the oldest female names ending in *-iina*, but none of the *iina*-ending names is by itself notably popular at any point in the data. Most of the *iina*-ending names are highly infrequent. Approximately 76% of the names have fewer than 10 bearers in the data.

In a pattern the ending can hold a meaning, as it does in this case: the suffix *-iina* is a feminine suffix and an *iina*-ending male name is not possible. Even a new formation that ends in *-iina* is construed as a female name, and not a unisex name, as most new given names. Therefore by choosing a name of the *iina*-ending type, the sex distinction is attested. This is notable at a time when gender-neutral education and unisex given names are also becoming more popular. It will be interesting to see which is more popular in the future for the newborn: new unisex names or the *iina*-ending name type as a pattern for forming new given names.

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