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Three Finnish graphemic first name categories and models: classification and popularity variation

1. Introduction

1.1. Aims and methods

The first aim of this article is to present a method of investigating Finnish first names by classifying names based on their graphemic structure into categories and their hyponymic models. Categories are written in small capitals (e.g., category ELLA) and models in quotation marks with a lowercase first letter (e.g., "anni".) The categories are umbrella terms for existing graphemic structures of Finnish names, and models are hyponyms for them, consisting of names with a certain graphemic structure. The names I am researching are specifically first names, not subsequent names, because there is more variation in first names than subsequent names (KIVINIEMI 2006: 172, 182). First and subsequent names do not have a functional difference in Finland: for example, a person's preferred name can be their first name or any of their subsequent names. However, because most people's preferred name is their first name, people hear first names more often than subsequent names, which is why there is more variation in them than in subsequent names. In summary, a person called *Anna Maria Lastname* can use *Maria* in everyday life, but it would be lot more common for them to use *Anna*. The second aim is to show how these graphemic models have varied in popularity during the first two decades of the 21st century. Three examples of graphemic name categories and six examples of graphemic name models are presented in this article. Category ELLA has three models, "anni", "ella" and "emma". Category HELMI has two models, "helmi" and "lilja". Category EETU has one model, called "eetu".

After the graphemic name categories and the graphemic name models have been differentiated, the focus is on the graphemic naming trends of Finnish names in 21st century. The graphemic naming trends are the voiced consonants *l*, *m* and *n* trend and the long vowel *ee* trend. In my Master's thesis I have defined the trends by counting the numbers of different phonemes in the most popular names given to Finnish-speaking Finnish babies in the 21st century. In this research I discovered that names containing *l*, *m*, *n* are more common than other consonants and *ee* more common than other long vowels. (SZABÓ 2023.) In this article, I have changed the terms phonological and phoneme to graphemic and grapheme, because I am researching written names. The graphemic first name models "anni", "ella", "emma", "helmi" and "lilja"

highlight the voiced consonants' trend and the graphemic first name model "eetu" highlights the *ee* trend. At the end of the article, the focus is on the popularity variation of three models, "anni", "helmi" and "eetu", which all represent a different type of popularity variation.

There are some gender differences between the graphemic name categories and models. However, I will not be discussing these in this article, because the focus here is on the graphemics of names in general. I will, however, mention, which names are female names, and which are male names.

1.2. Defining the terms graphemic first name category and graphemic first name model

In my Master's thesis (SZABÓ 2023), I use the terms *name category and name subtype*. However, the term name type (*nimityyppi* in Finnish) has been used in many other Finnish onomastic studies not relating to first names, for example relating to toponyms (e.g., VIRTARANTA 1951) or other anthroponyms, such as surnames (e.g., NISSILÄ 1951). Therefore, I developed the terms graphemic first name category and graphemic first name model to make terms specifically for the onomastic research of first name graphemic structure.

The graphemic first name category means a group of first names that have a certain structure, i.e. the syllable count and a certain graphemic characteristic. For example, the graphemic category ELLA consists of two-syllable names with any geminate consonant in the middle and a vowel ending. The graphemic first name models, on the other hand, consist of groups of names under the graphemic category that have a certain graphemic characteristic. For example, the graphemic model "ella" consists of two-syllable names ending in a vowel with the geminate consonant *ll* (for example names *Ella, Kalle*) and the graphemic model "anni" consists of two-syllable names ending in a vowel with geminate consonant *nn* (*Anni, Lenni*). Another way to differentiate the graphemic name category and the graphemic model is that the name category is a way to categorize all Finnish names by their graphemic structure, while the name model can be used to describe the temporal popularity variation of names with a certain graphemic structure. Graphemic first name category could be used in categorizing hypothetical names too, while graphemic first name model is used only for existing names.

1.3. Research material

My research material is from the Finnish Digital and Population Data Services Agency (DVV), where I collected the most popular Finnish first names given to Finnish speaking children born between 2000 and 2020. The DVV maintains information about the Finnish population. All parents in Finland are obliged to

submit notification of their child's names to the Population Information System within three months after the child's birth.

I focus specifically on the most popular names, not on all names given in the 21st century. I examine the top 50 female and 50 male names for each year, totaling 2100 names. Many names naturally appear in the data many times, because people have given the same names to their children during the 21 years of the research material. There are 102 different female names and 106 male names in the data. The differences between the number of name bearers in the research material vary. For example, in the year 2020, the most popular girl's name *Aino* was given to 276 girls and the 50th most popular girl's name, *Vanessa*, was given to 92 girls (Nimipalvelu).

In Section 4, the percentages of certain models are measured by counting the number of names in the models, not the name bearers of names. The number of names is determined by counting how many times a specific name appears on the most popular names list. This means that if a name appears in every year of the research material, it is counted 21 times. The percentage of a given model is calculated within its category. For example, when a figure says that 38 percent consists of the model "helmi", this means 38 percent of the category HELMI.

In Section 5, when examining the popularity variation of models, I measure it by calculating the proportion of real-life name bearers of a given model's names among all babies born that year.

2. Earlier research

2.1. Name type

I will use the term name type here because it has been used in earlier research. The terms name type and name model have a similar definition, but they differ in the sense that the name model is, in a conceptual hierarchy, a hyponym of the term name category (SZABÓ 2023: 37). The definitions of the terms graphemic name category and graphemic name model will be discussed further.

Name types have been studied in Finland and in Denmark. The Finnish study is on the classification and popularity variation of name types "seija" and "anja" (SARTJÄRVI 2013), while the Danish study focuses on the classification and the popularity variation of female names ending in *-ine* (for example *Sørbine, Mortine*) (KÆLLERØD 2020). The popularity variation will be discussed in Section 2.2. In this section, I focus on the classification of these name types.

In SARTJÄRVI's (2013) study, the research material consists of Finnish female names belonging to "seija" and "anja" from the year 1870 until 2009. All names in the types are only or mostly given to females. (SARTJÄRVI 2013: 44, 46.) By Finnish law, a name established to be a female name cannot be given to a male or the other way around. However, if a name has been given to at least five people of a certain gender, it can continue to be given to a person of that gender. (Etu- ja sukunimilaki 19.12.2017/946.) "seija" consists of names ending in *-ija* (*Seija*, *Maija*) and "anja" consists of names ending *-ŋja* (*Anja*, *Sonja*). "seija" and "anja" are examples of Finnish name types formed on the basis of phonological structure, in this case endings. (SARTJÄRVI 2013: 44–45.) There are also other ways of comprising name types (SZABÓ 2023), which will be discussed later in the article, in Section 3. There are more female name types than male name types (SARTJÄRVI 2013: 45) and name-givers have developed many more different names for females than males (SAARELMA-PAUKKALA 2017: 67). Name givers create new names by using more popular names as models. For example, using common names *Seija*, *Maija* and *Eija*, name-givers have created uncommon names *Beija*, *Meija* and *Miija*. (SARTJÄRVI 2013: 44–45.)

In this article, I propose using the graphemic first name category to classify names in ways beyond just their endings. The graphemic first name model, however, should continue to be used as in earlier research: to measure the popularity of names sharing certain graphemic features and to track how many new names are formed from the more common ones.

The name types "seija" and "anja" differ in the sense that they have a different number of names in them and the names' popularity varies. "seija" consists of 46 different names that are either common or uncommon. "anja", on the other hand, consists of 66 names that are either common, gaining popularity or uncommon. "seija" was at its most popular in the 1950s and "anja" has been popular in the 2000s. (SARTJÄRVI 2013: 51, 57–58, 63–64.) Finnish name fashion has changed in the 2000s to become more individualistic. Parents choose names that are not ordinary (in Finland) or invent new names (SAARELMA-PAUKKALA 2017: 67). This is probably why in "anja" there are many more different lexical names and names gaining popularity or being popular than in "seija". Even though "seija" was a productive name type, it was not as productive as "anja"; this is probably because "seija" was popular when individuality was not a trend among Finnish name-givers.

Another name type research focuses on Danish name types that were productive in 18th and 19th century. These are female names ending *-ine* (for example *Josefine*, *Sørbine, Karenine*), that have been created either from male names (*Josef, Søren*) or from other female names (*Karen*). The names created

from male names were more popular than those created from female names. *-ine*-names are formed either with just *-ine* (*Josef* to *Josef**ine***) or a consonant and *-ine* (e.g., *Sørensine*, where there is an added *s* and *-ine*). The focus is on names derived from the male names *Søren*, *Jacob* and *Morten* and on names derived from the female names *Karen* and *Birthe*. (KÆLLEROD 2020: 189, 192–193, 195.)

As can be seen from both the studies of SARTJÄRVI and KÆLLEROD, name type studies are usually conducted on female names. There are more female name types (SARTJÄRVI 2013: 45) and in the 2000s in Finland, a greater variety of female names were given than male names (SAARELMA-PAUKKALA 2017: 65), therefore, researching female name types tends to be more natural and essential. However, there are male name types too (SARTJÄRVI 2013: 45) and name types with both female and male names (SZABÓ 2023).

2.2. Popularity variation

The personal name popularity variation has been studied for example in the United States (e.g., HE 2020), Norway (e.g., SIGURD–EEG-OLOFSSON–OUREN 2005) and in Finland (e.g., KIVINIEMI 2006). The term *popularity variation* refers to changes in the popularity of personal names. There are two kinds of popularity variation. The first one is temporal variation, which refers to the changes in naming children at different periods of time. Parents usually do not give their children names that have been popular in their parents' generation or their own, because these names feel too popular or worn-out to them. Another type of popularity variation is regional variation, which means the differences in popular names in the same country, in this case Finland. (KIVINIEMI 2006: 168.) In this article, only the temporal popularity variation is discussed.

The temporal popularity variation is measured by counting the percentage of a certain name from all births in a certain year (KIVINIEMI 2006). The popularity variation of name models can be measured likewise.

2.3. Phonological structures of names

Research on Finnish name types and research on phonological structures of Finnish names are similar in the sense that they both focus on the phonological structures of names. However, in researching name types, they also focus on the popularity variation of the names (e.g., SARTJÄRVI 2013; SZABÓ 2023), whereas studies on phonological structures focus on the phonological structures themselves (e.g., PYLVÄNÄINEN 2011: KIVINIEMI 1982). Another difference between name type research and phonological structure research is that there has been more Finnish name type research, while the phonological structures of names have been studied more for example in The United States (e.g., CASSIDY–KELLY–SHARONI 1999; HE 2020) and Japan (e.g.,

MUTSUKAWA 2014). In both Finnish and non-Finnish phonological structure research, the phonology of male names is usually compared to female names and the other way around (e.g., KIVINIEMI 1982; HE 2020). Both phonological structures and popularity variation are researched in some studies (on Finnish names, see e.g. SZABÓ 2023; on English names, see e.g. HE 2020).

All studies researching male names and female names' (both Finnish and non-Finnish) phonological structures conclude that female and male names have differences (e.g., KIVINIEMI 1982; MUTSUKAWA 2014; HE 2020). The vowel *i* appears more frequently in Finnish female names, whereas the vowel *o* is more common in male names. Consonants *l*, *m* and *n* are more common in Finnish female names, whereas consonants *k*, *p* and *t* are more common in male names. Consonant *r* is popular in both Finnish male names and female names. (KIVINIEMI 1982: 166–167.) In American names, *k*, *f*, and *d* as endings sound are more common in male names than in female names, while vowels are more common in female names. (HE 2020: 620).

2.4. Finnish graphemics

This section focuses on the aspects of Finnish graphemics that are important in analyzing the graphemics of names. A grapheme is always dependent on the definition of a phoneme. In Finnish, one character corresponds to one phoneme and two same characters correspond to a long phoneme (ALHO–KAUPPINEN 2008: 32). This means that for example names *Milla* and *Mila* are seen as different names and are pronounced differently. Because one phoneme corresponds to one grapheme in Finnish[1] I am using them interchangeably in this section, and also when I am discussing long vowels and consonants in Sections 3 and 4.

Thirteen consonants *p, t, k, d, m, n, ŋ, r, l, s, h, v,* and *j* and eight vowels *i, e, ä, y, ö, u, o*, and *a* are native to Finnish language[2] (ALHO–KAUPPINEN 2008: 28). Consonants foreign to Finnish do not appear on my research material. Consonants *l*, *m*, *n*, *ŋ, r*, *v*, *d*, and *j* are seen as voiced (HÄKKINEN 1994: 93). In this article, I suggest that the voicing of *l*, *m* and *n* has contributed to their popularity in the 21st century.

Along with long and short vowels, there are diphthongs and vowel clusters in Finnish. A diphthong means two different vowels in the same syllable. A vowel cluster has two different vowels that have a syllable break. (LEINO 1997: 31–32.) Consonants can form consonant clusters which refer to 2–4 different consonants that are back-to-back (KARLSSON 1982: 107–108, 116).

[1] An exception is *ŋ* (e.g., LEINO 1997).

[2] About consonants foreign to Finnish language, see SUOMI–TOIVANEN–YLITALO 2008.

3. Three examples of graphemic name categories

Table 1 represents three graphemic categories and six graphemic models, which will be discussed in the following sections. Each category represents a group of Finnish names that have a certain graphemic structure. The models were collected from each category based on their popularity variation: if a certain model had a recognizable popularity graph, this popularity was researched in detail.

Category	**Syllable count**	**Ending grapheme**	**The defining characteristic**
ELLA: three models	2	any vowel (V)	a geminate consonant (C2)
"anni"	2	V	*nn*
"ella"	2	V	*ll*
"emma"	2	V	*mm*
HELMI: two models	2	any vowel (V)	a consonant cluster (CC)
"helmi"	2	V	*lm*
"lilja"	2	V	*lj*
EETU: one model	2	any vowel (V)	a long vowel (V2)
"eetu"	2	V	*ee*

Table 1. *Graphemic categories and models.*

3.1. Category ELLA

Category ELLA consists of two-syllable names ending in any vowel with the characteristic of any geminate consonant at the middle of the name. The structure of Category ELLA is (C)V-C2-V, in which C refers to any consonant, V refers to any vowel and C2, the characteristic of this category, refers to any geminate consonant. When the characteristic of the graphemic model is placed in the structure of the category, the model is obtained. This category has seven models in total (SZABÓ 2023: 43), but in this article only three models, "anni, "ella" and "emma", are discussed, as they are examples of voiced consonants *l*, *m* and *n* trend in popular Finnish names from the 21st century. Other models in category ELLA are used as counterparts for "anni", "ella" and "emma" in Section 4, though.

The graphemic structures of models "anni", "ella" and "emma" are shown in Table 2, with names belonging to each model. Female names are shown first, and they are differentiated from male names by **bolding**.

Model	**Syl-lable count**	**Ending grapheme**	**The defining characteristic C2**	**The structure**	**Names:** ***female;*** *male*
"anni"	2	any vowel	*nn*	(C)V-*nn*-V	***Anna, Anni, Enni, Hanna, Henna, Jenna, Jenni, Jonna, Sanni****; Janne, Lenni, Onni*
"ella"	2	any vowel	*ll*	(C)V-*ll*-V	***Ella, Elli, Hilla, Milla, Nella, Nelli, Salla, Stella****; Kalle, Olli, Ville*
"emma"	2	any vowel	*mm*	(C)V-*mm*-V	***Emma, Emmi****; Tommi*

Table 2. *Models "anni", "ella" and "emma".*

"anni" consists of names with the geminate consonant -*nn*-. The structure for model "anni" is (C)V-*nn*-V. The model is represented by nine female names (*Anna, Anni, Enni, Hanna, Henna, Jenna, Jenni, Jonna* and *Sanni*) and three male names (*Janne, Lenni* and *Onni*).

"ella" consists of names with the geminate consonant -*ll*-. The structure of the model is (C)V-*ll*-V. The model has eight female names (*Ella, Elli, Hilla, Milla, Nella, Nelli, Salla and Stella*) and three male names (*Kalle, Olli* and *Ville*).

"emma" consists of names with the geminate consonant -*mm*-. The structure of the model is (C)V-*mm*-V. The model has two female names (*Emma* and *Emmi*) and one male name (*Tommi*).

3.2. Category HELMI

Category HELMI consists of two-syllable names ending in any vowel and the characteristic of any consonant cluster consisting of two consonants. The structure of category HELMI is (C) V-CC-V, where CC means any consonant cluster consisting of two consonants. Category HELMI consists of four graphemic models (SZABÓ 2023: 45–46), but in this article the focus is on two models, "helmi" and "lilja", because they represent the voiced consonants' trend. The other two models are compared to "helmi" and "lilja", though, in Section 4. The structures of models "helmi" and "lilja" are introduced in Table 3.

Model	**Syl-lable count**	**Ending grapheme**	**The defining characteristic CC**	**Model of the structure**	**Names: *female;* male**
"helmi"	2	any vowel	*lm*	(C)V-*lm*-V	***Alma, Helmi, Hilma, Selma, Vilma***
"lilja"	2	any vowel	*lj*	(C)V-*lj*-V	***Lilja, Milja, Silja, Vilja****; Viljo*

Table 3. *Models "helmi" and "lilja".*

"helmi" consists of two-syllable names ending in a vowel and the characteristic of the consonant cluster *-lm-*. The model is represented by five female names, *Alma, Helmi, Hilma, Selma* and *Vilma*.

"lilja" consists of two-syllable names ending in a vowel with the characteristic of the consonant cluster *-lj-*. The model is represented by four female names, *Lilja, Milja, Silja* and *Vilja*, and one male name, *Viljo*.

3.3. Category EETU

Category EETU consists of two-syllable names ending in a vowel with the graphemic characteristic of any long vowel. The structure of Category EETU is (C)V-V2-V, where V2 means any long vowel. Category EETU has five models (SZABÓ 2023: 39), but in this article the focus is on one model, "eetu", because it highlights the *ee* trend. Table 4 presents the graphemic structure of model "eetu".

Model	**Syl-lable count**	**Ending grapheme**	**The defining characteristic V2**	**Model of the structure**	**Names: *female;* male**
"eetu"	2	any vowel	*ee*	(C)V-V2-V	***Eevi, Seela, Veera****; Eeli, Eemi, Eero, Eetu, Leevi, Peetu, Teemu, Veeti*

Table 4. *Model "eetu".*

"eetu" consists of two-syllable names ending in a vowel with the characteristic of the long vowel *-ee-*. The model is represented by three female names, *Eevi,*

Seela and *Veera,* and eight male names, *Eeli, Eemi, Eero, Eetu, Leevi, Peetu, Teemu* and *Veeti*.

4. First name models highlighting the graphemic trends in popular Finnish names

4.1 Graphemic trend of consonants *l*, *m* and *n*

I suggest that the voicing of consonants *l*, *m* and *n* is one reason for the popularity of models "ella", "anni", "emma", "helmi" and "lilja." Finnish name-givers of the 21st century gave their children more names containing consonants *l*, *n* and *m* than names including other consonants and therefore probably perceive the sound of these consonants as more desirable than that of other consonants.

The *l*, *m* and *n* trend can be seen on models "ella", "anni", "emma", "helmi" and "lilja". First the models "ella", "anni" and "emma" and their non-voiced counterparts are introduced. In Figure 1, percentages of models "ella", "anni" and "emma" and other models ("lotta" and "jesse") belonging to category ELLA are presented.

As Figure 1 shows, the models "anni", "ella" and "emma" constitute 80 percent of all models in category ELLA, so these models are popular among 21st century name-givers. As said earlier, *n, l* and *m* are voiced consonants while *t, k* and *p* are voiceless consonants (KARLSSON 1982: 57, 69), so it can be said that voiced consonants are seen as more appealing. In addition, because in Finnish words with geminate consonants refer to different things than word with single consonants (KARLSSON 1982: 116–117), the names in models "anni", "ella" and "emma" may be seen as even more melodious than names with a single consonant.

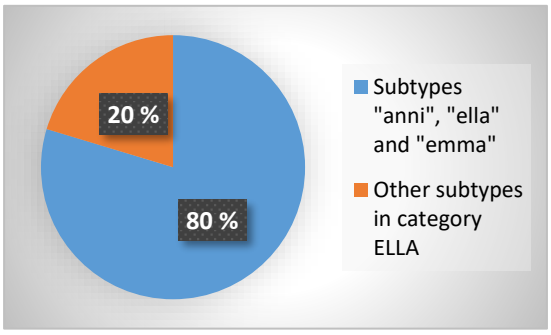

Figure 1. *The models "ella", "anni", and "emma" compared to other models in the category* ELLA *based on the number of occurrences on popular names' lists.*

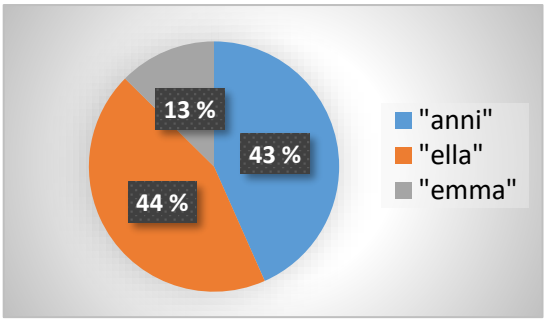

Figure 2. *Models "anni", "ella" and "emma" in the category* ELLA *based on the number of occurrences on popular names' lists.*

Of the models "anni", "ella" and "emma", "anni" and "ella" are very popular, as can be seen in Figure 2, whereas "emma" is not nearly as popular. However, "emma" is a part of the voiced consonant trend with models "anni" and "ella" and can hence be seen as a popular model. Additionally, many of the names in these three models exhibit significant similarities in other graphemic aspects as well. For example, the female names *Elli*, *Enni* and *Emmi* all begin and end with same letters and have therefore contributed to each other's popularity.

Next, the voiced consonant trend in models "helmi" and "lilja" is discussed. In Figure 3, these models can be seen compared to other models in the category HELMI.

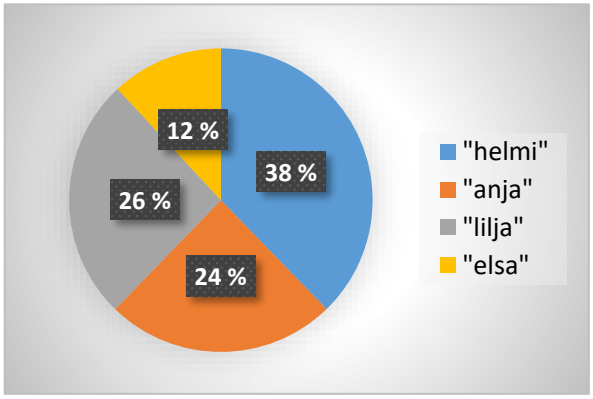

Figure 3. *Models "helmi" and "lilja" compared to other models in the category* HELMI *based on the number of occurrences on popular names' lists.*

First it seems only "helmi" is more common than the models "lilja", "elsa" and "anja", and names belonging to this model do occur more times than names in

the other three models. However, when these different names in models "helmi" and "lilja" are studied, it can be seen that each of them contains five names, while in model "anja" there are only three names and in model "elsa" only two names. Thus, name-givers exhibit greater activity in creating new names belonging to "helmi" and "lilja." This does not mean, though, that models "elsa" and "anja" are not part of the voiced consonant trend. Both include consonant clusters with *l*:s and have names that appear on several lists of the research material, some more frequently than names in "helmi" and "lilja". Names *Vilma* and *Helmi*, though, appear every year, which makes these models popular both in the number of names and in the number of appearances.

4.2 Graphemic trend of the long vowel *ee*

Graphemic naming trend of the long vowel *ee* is shown here with the model "eetu". The difference between the model "eetu" compared to other models in category EETU can be seen in figure 4.

As the figure 4 shows, "eetu" constitutes over one third of names in category EETU and thus is significantly more popular than other models in the category. "eetu" also consists of most names (11), which naturally lifts the probability of its popularity. Furthermore, there are almost as many names in the models "aada" (8) and "iida" (9), but "eetu" is still ten percentage points more common than "iida" and 12 percentage points more common than "aada".

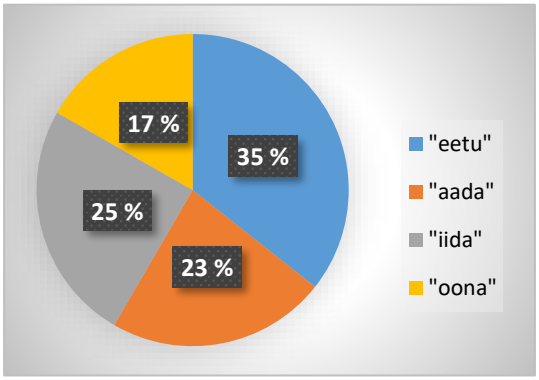

Figure 4. *Model "eetu" compared to other models in the category* EETU *based on the number of occurrences on popular names' lists.*

5. Popularity variation in graphemic first name models "anni", "helmi" and "eetu"

In the research material there are three popularity variation groups: the decreasing or 2000–2009 models, the rising or 2010–2020 models and the

common or 2000–2020 models. The decreasing model means that the model was popular in 2000–2009 and decreased in 2010–2020. The rising model means that the model was not popular in 2000–2009 and rose in popularity in 2010–2020. Common model means that the model stayed consistently popular in 2000–2020. There are significantly more models belonging to either the 2000–2009 or 2010–2020 groups, 18 and 14 respectively, whereas there are only four models belonging to the common models group. (SZABÓ 2023: 72.) In this article the focus is on one model from each group: "anni" in 2000–2009 group, "helmi" in 2010–2020 group and "eetu" in the common group.

Figure 5 presents the popularity variation of the model "anni" during they years 2000–2020. The popularity of the model "anni" decreases throughout the period. In the year 2000, it is at its most popular, at about 42 permilles. After that, it decreases slowly. In the year 2005, it drops significantly from the year 2004, because five names have dropped from the list. In 2008, the model increases back to where it was in the year 2004, when two new names appear and one of the names is at its most popular. Afterwards the model starts to decrease again and from 2012 onwards it decreases steadily. This is because five out of twelve names have disappeared from the list in 2004 or earlier and two names have disappeared in 2009 and 2011. In 2020, there are only three names on the list, the two that appeared in 2008 and the one that was very popular at that time. Even though these names are popular, they do not make new names appear, because "anni" is not popular anymore.

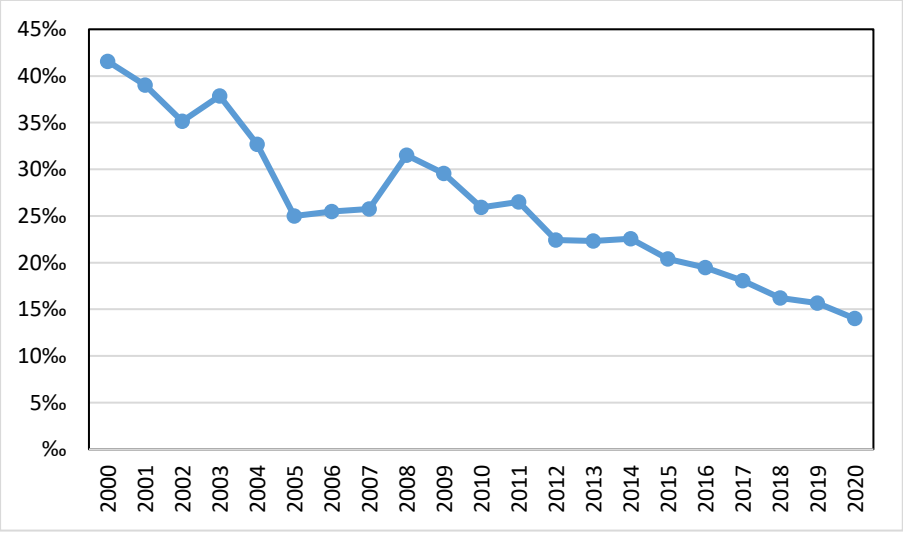

Figure 5. *The popularity variation of model "anni" counted from the number of babies born in 2000–2020.*

Figure 6 presents the popularity variation of model "helmi" in 2000–2020. At the beginning, the model "helmi" makes about seven permilles of children's names. Only two names, *Helmi* and *Vilma*, appear on the lists in 2000–2013 and their popularity increases slowly making the model's popularity rise too. The first more significant rise is in 2014, when the first new name, *Alma*, appears. In 2016 and 2017 two names, *Hilma and Selma*, appear, making the model rise even more. By 2020, *Helmi*'s and *Vilma*'s popularity has declined, while *Selma* and *Hilma* are rising in popularity, which makes the model popular.

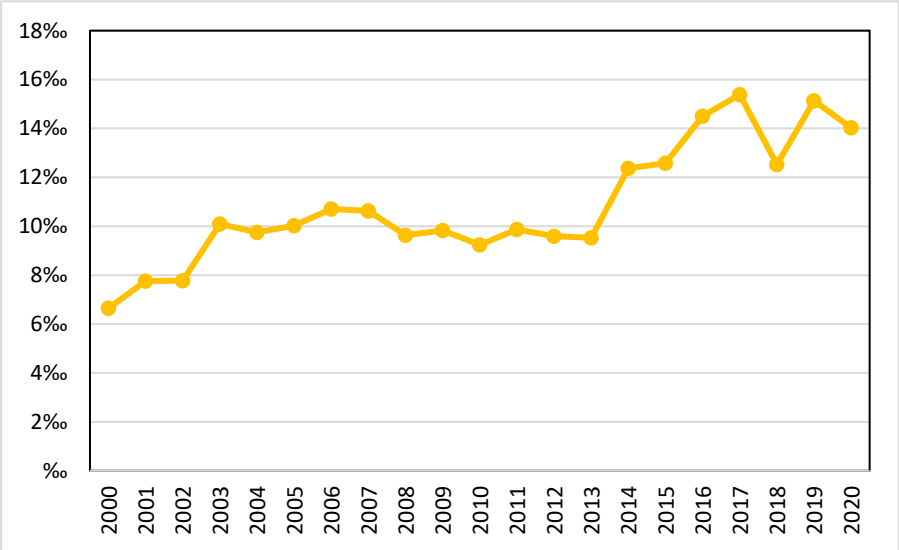

Figure 6. *Popularity variation of model "helmi" counted from the number of babies born in 2000–2020.*

Figure 7 presents the popularity variation of model "eetu" in 2000–2020. The names of the model "eetu" were given to at least 27 permilles of children in the time period and at most to 39 permilles. There are six names that appear in the beginning of the 2000s, which make the model stay in about the 35 permille scale in 2000–2007. Then the model drops to 29 permilles in 2008 and remains around 30 permilles in 2008–2013. In 2009 and the beginning of 2010s, two names that appeared earlier start to gain popularity and three new names appear, making the model gain popularity again in the 2010s. At the end of 2010s, four names are at their most popular. Model "eetu" also has two popularity peaks, both in the 2000s (2001) and 2010s (2018).

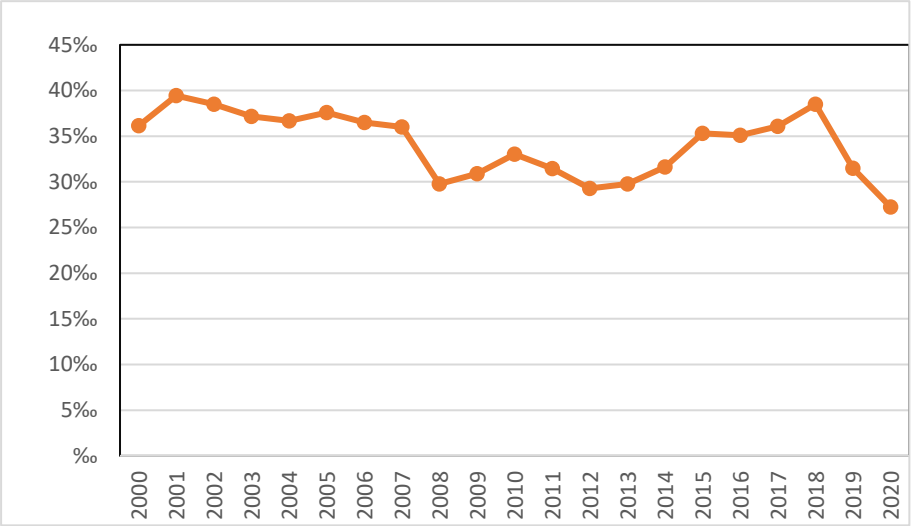

Figure 7. *Popularity variation of model "eetu" counted from the number of babies born in 2000–2020.*

6. Conclusion

The aim of this article was to depict first name graphemic categories and their models. With the models, two graphemic naming trends, the voiced consonant trend and the *ee* trend, are represented. Using three models, the three different types of popularity variations are discussed.

The categories discussed are ELLA, HELMI and EETU. Models "ella", "anni" and "emma" belong to the category ELLA, models "helmi" and "lilja" to category HELMI and model "eetu" to the category EETU. In category EETU and the model "eetu", the graphemic criteria could have been a little different, for example the defining characteristic of the category being a long vowel *ee* + *any consonant* and the defining characteristic of the model being *ee* + *t*. This is because this combines the two important graphemic characteristics from this model: the long vowel and the consonant. However, because I wanted to focus on the *ee* trend, I decided on the current criteria (the long vowel *-ee-* in two-syllable names ending in a vowel).

Models "anni", "ella", "emma", "helmi" and "lilja" represent the voiced consonant trend and the model "eetu" the *ee* trend. Voiced consonants are more common than other consonants and models "helmi" and "lilja" are more productive in creating new names than other models in their category. Model "eetu" comprises over one third of models in category EETU. However, because research material consists only of the most popular names, there might be other

graphemic trends in the 21st century that do not show in the most popular names.

Models “anni”, “helmi” and “eetu” have different popularity variation. “anni” is popular in 2000–2009 and was decreasing in the 2010–2020. Popularity of the model “helmi” rose in the 2010s with new names. “eetu” is popular all through 2000–2020.

This research shows that certain graphemic structures were seen as more desirable in the minds of 21st century name-givers. Even though 21 years is a short time, the trends in naming were seen to change, and new names appeared on the most popular Finnish names’ lists. Finnish name-givers were giving graphemically similar names, whether intentionally or not.

In future research, the difference between graphemic name category and graphemic name model could be clarified even more. There might be categories without any models, where it would be more fruitful to discuss name category only as a classification tool for graphemic structures of names, from where possible models can be selected. Certain names could be selected from the category to test if they form models. The graphemic name categories could also be used for classifying all Finnish names.

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Abstract

Finnish personal names can be classified into graphemic first name categories and graphemic first name models. In this article, three of these categories, ELLA, HELMI and EETU, and six models, “ella”, “anni”, “emma”, “helmi”, “lilja” and “eetu” are discussed. “ella”, “anni” and “emma” belong to the graphemic first name category ELLA, “helmi” and “lilja” to the graphemic first name category HELMI and “eetu” to the graphemic first name category EETU.

The categories and models in this article consist of the most popular Finnish first names from the years between 2000 and 2020. Because of this, the chosen categories and models represent two popular Finnish naming trends in the 2000s: the voiced consonants *l*, *m* and *n* trend and the long vowel *ee* trend. The models “ella”, “anni”, “emma”, “helmi” and “lilja” represent the voiced consonants trend and the model “eetu” the *ee* trend.

The temporal popularity variation is depicted with three models, “anni”, “helmi” and “eetu”. “anni” represents the decreasing trend of names with *nn* and “helmi” the increasing trend of names with *lm*. “eetu” shows that names containing *ee* are popular throughout the whole 2000–2020 period.

Keywords: first name, popularity variation, graphemic structure, Finnish anthroponyms