What Do You Call a Person From…?

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1. Variability in Demonym Suffixes

Demonyms: nominal form(s) for residents of a given area, e.g. a person from *X* is a *Y*: Iceland → *Icelander*; Vancouver → *Vancouverite*; California → *Californian*.

Selected Demonym Suffixes of English

-ish [ɪʃ]	*-ian/-nian* [ijən]/[nijən]	*-an/-nan* [ən]/[nən]	*-ese/nese* [iz]/[niz]	*-er* [ɹ]
-ite [aɪt]	*-(wo)man* ([wʊ])[mən]	*-ois* [wɑ]	*-o* [oʊ]	*-i* [i]

- Some places have many phonotactically acceptable demonymic forms (e.g. Nashvillian ~ [næʃ.ˈvɪ.li.ˌjən], Nashvillite ~ [ˈnæʃ.vɪ.ˌlaɪt])
- Choice of demonymic is not arbitrary among phonotactically acceptable options.

Research Question: What kind of information does a speaker use to select a demonym suffix when there are many (phonotactically) acceptable options?

2. 'Default' Demonym Hypothesis

Hypothesis: When a speaker has existing knowledge of a demonymic, compositional evaluation is bypassed; else the demonym is compositionally formed:

i. Affix selection is limited by phonological constraints on the base and suffix(es).
ii. If many phonotactically acceptable options remain, a 'default' demonymic suffix is applied.

- A web survey tests this hypothesis in a variety of familiarity conditions:

'Real' Conditions		'Fictional' Conditions	
Country (RC)	Locality (RL)	Non-Literary (FS)	Literary (FL)
Canada	*Brooklyn*	*Jellystone*	*Brobdingnag*

- Only compared highly productive suffixes.
- Documented accepted demonymic forms in 'Real' conditions.
- Documented stress properties in 'Real' conditions.

3. Suffix Typology & Predictions

- Generally, suffix choice *for real place names* is explained by phonological conditioning (* = marginal cases):

Suffix ↓	Base Property →	C-Final	V-Final	Final Stress	Non-Final Stress	Stress Shift	Example
-an/n		✔	✔	✔	✔	✗	*Cuban*
-ian/nian		✔	✔	✗	✔	✔	*Bostonian*
-er		✔	✗	✔	✔	✗	*Portlander*
-ese/nese		✔	✔*	✔	✗*	✔	*Sudanese*
-ite		✔	✗*	✗	✔	✗	*Dallasite*

- **Familiarity Effect**: RC & RL should be more familiar than FS & FL. Familiar forms need not be evaluated compositionally, supposing an existing mental representation (i.e., UseListed (Zuraw 2000)).
- **Phonological Conditioning:** When familiarity doesn't apply, conditioning explains selection of demonymic suffix(es) (i.e., PCSA (Smith, 2013)), but this may leave more than one acceptable option.
- **'Default':** Another factor such as 'use a Default' must then select *one* suffix from the acceptable options.
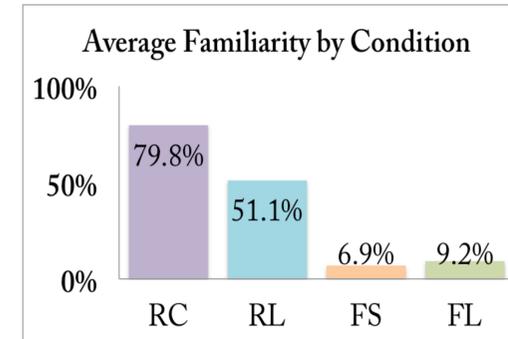
4. Web Survey Methods

English-speaking participants (*n*=50) had 3 tasks per item:

1. select from 5 orthographically-presented demonyms:
   - Saigonan
   - Saigonese
   - Saigoner
   - Saigonian
   - Saigonite
2. Have you heard the term before? (Y/N)
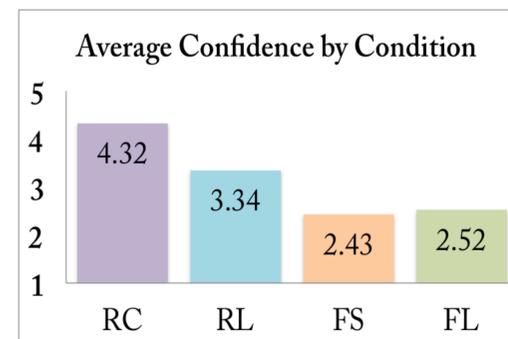3. Rate choice confidence from 1-5 stars

- Survey presented using Qualtrics.
- Participants saw 17 items from each of 4 conditions.
- Participants noted L1 (if not English), home country and locality, and 'personal' demonyms.
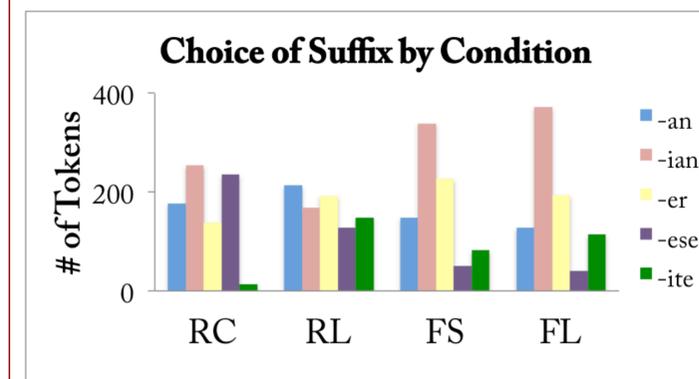
5. Results

- Average familiarity ratings for **RC** and **RL** were higher across items than for **FS** and **FL**.

Average Familiarity by Condition

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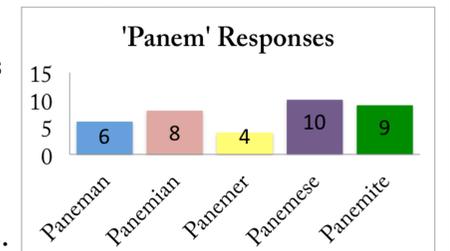

Average Confidence by Condition

- Demonym suffix choices for real conditions tended to match the documented 'accepted' demonymic form; use of demonymic suffixes was spread more evenly across all options, as expected.
- Fictional conditions showed higher incidence of selection of *–ian* and *–er* across items.
- *-ese* and *–ite* were rarely chosen in FS and FL.

Choice of Suffix by Condition

6. Discussion

- Guessing stress properties of fictional bases in orthographic presentation may have been difficult for participants. Panem (FL) ([ˈpæ.nɛm]) has non-final stress but unclear stress shifting properties, thus varied responses.

'Panem' Responses

- Their opposing preferences for stress shifting and final stress in base could explain more frequent use of *–ian* vs. *–an* and *–er* in FS & FL. These were also frequent choices as personal local demonym suffix for participants, indicating good 'default' suffix candidates.

Personal Locality Demonyms (*n*=50)	*-an*	*-ian*	*-er*	*-ese*	*-ite*	Other
	10	21	8	0	6	5

- Analogy to real demonyms may influence suffix choice in Fictional responses: Virgin Island*er* (RC): Cinnabar Island*er* (FL); Eston*ian* (RC): Andor*ian* (FS).
- Phonological conditions exist on base *and* on suffixes; environments that create conditions like vowel hiatus also influence suffix selection. Some base + suffix combinations tolerate hiatus more than others, e.g. Delhi*ite* (RL) but *China*ese* (RC).
- A follow-up study will test stress preferences in fictional and artificial bases.

7. Implications

- For novel/unfamiliar base + suffix formations, phonological conditions alone cannot fully determine a speaker's allomorph selection.
- Some additional information (other than phonological knowledge) is required in the formation of morphologically complex novel words.
- A 'default' allomorph (or a restricted set of allomorphs) must thus be available as options in morphologically complex novel word formation.