

# From *Aunt Chilada's* to *Cactus Willy's*: Gender Naming in the Marketing of Food in Arizona<sup>1</sup>

Alleen Pace Nilsen

*Arizona State University*

Many food products and restaurant names, while apparently genderless, are found to be gender marked. In grocery stores, items divide almost equally between masculine and feminine. More restaurants are perceived masculine than feminine. Personal names on products and restaurants communicate a sense of trust, ethnicity, and formality.

---

Since food is one of the necessities of life, required by males and females alike, the marketing of food is a good area for studying how society might impose gender onto items which appear to be inherently genderless.<sup>2</sup> When I discuss with my students the deep-seated ideas that society holds about differences between males and females, I ask them if restaurants have gender. They say, "Of course not!" They are nevertheless able to classify some restaurants as masculine and others as feminine. For the masculine restaurants, they think of sports bars and steak houses and invariably mention *Stuart Anderson's Black Angus Restaurant*. When I ask why it's a masculine restaurant, they cite the heavy food, the outdoors look of the unfinished wood and the barn-like ceilings, the dark colors, the oversized upholstered booths, and the fact that it bears a man's name. For feminine restaurants, they think of salad bars and ice cream parlors, and then suggest such family style restaurants as *Coco's* and *Marie Callender's*. Furthermore, they seem to be more aware of feminine than of masculine restaurants, probably because they are so accustomed to masculine sounding names that they take them for granted.

### 30 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

In one class where we were discussing gender issues, students felt strongly that restaurants are more often named after men than women, while foods in grocery stores are more likely to be named after women than men. They conjectured that the difference was an attempt to appeal to the person believed to be paying the money — women shop in grocery stores; men take their families or dates out to restaurants.

Taking all of this into consideration, I looked at gender-marked naming patterns used in the selling of food, specifically at two aspects of the issue: names on food products in a grocery store and names of restaurants in Metropolitan Phoenix.<sup>3</sup> The issues investigated can be stated in two hypotheses (these will be stated informally since this study is exploratory and suggestive rather than exhaustive and since no statistical tests for significance are used). The first (null) hypothesis can be stated:

In a population of grocery store food item brand names that can be classified as either masculine or feminine, the percentage of masculine names will not be appreciably different from the percentage of feminine names.

The second (null) hypothesis can be stated:

In a population of restaurant names which can be classified as either masculine or feminine, the percentage of masculine names will not be appreciably different from the percentage of feminine names.

To collect data on the distribution of male and female brand names, I went to Fry's, the largest supermarket in Tempe, Arizona and did a search of food items on the shelves and noted each brand name that was marked as male or female by one or more of the following:

- a male or a female given name such as *Ted's* or *Sally's*,
- a title such as *Mr.* or *Mrs.*, or
- an identifying word generally considered male or female such as *guys* or *gals*.

From the thousands of food items the store carried, I found only 94 gender-marked brand names; of these, 48 were marked as masculine and 46 as feminine (the entire list is shown in Appendix 1). From these figures, it appeared that I could accept the first hypothesis. There did not appear to be an appreciable difference in

## Gender Naming in Food Marketing 31

the number of items marked masculine or feminine. (There were, however, substantial sub-differences as we will see).

To see how this ratio of about 1 to 1 compared to restaurant names, I looked at the yellow-page listings under "Restaurants" in the 1992-93 Phoenix Metropolitan telephone directory. Of the 1,797 restaurants listed there, 296 bore names that were marked as either male or female (these are shown in Appendix 2). Of the 296 names, 208 (70%) were masculine and 88 (30%) were feminine, a ratio of about 2½ to 1. From this distribution, it appears that the second hypothesis can be informally rejected; there is indeed an appreciable difference in the naming of restaurants and the direction of the difference corresponds to my students' general feeling that feminine names for restaurants stand out because they are considerably less common than male names.

It is not, however, entirely true that restaurants tend to carry masculine names and the items in grocery stores tend to be named rather evenly. There are several important considerations. First, there appear to be more masculine names in *all* areas of public naming, not only in grocery items and restaurants. A quick count, for example, of the first 20 pages of Martin Manser's dictionary of eponyms (1990) shows 49 words derived from men's names and 12 derived from women's names. A recent study of "anonymous eponyms" (e.g., *Tom, Dick, and Harry; G.I. Joe; Dumb Dora; Smart Alec; and Nervous Nellie*) found more than twice as many male as female names (Nilsen and Nilsen 1993). Also, a look at studies of place names in virtually any geographical area in the United States (e. g., Barnes 1988, Brown 1957, Gannett 1905, Stewart 1967) will show that it is the exception rather than the rule for women's names to be chosen as the names of towns, streets, parks, rivers, mountains, or other geological formations.

Probably because English speakers are so accustomed to male dominance in public naming patterns, the practically 1 to 1 ratio of female to male names among the grocery store items is the anomaly which must be explained. An examination of the particular items which have been given explicitly male or female names shows much less an even distribution than the overall ratio would suggest; in other words, the male and female names are distributed very unevenly throughout the store and tend to cluster in specific product

## 32 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

areas. Female names, for instance, appeared almost twice as often (10 to 6) on baked goods. The brand names *Mother's*, *Hostess*, *Dolly Madison*, *Aunt Hattie's*, and *Little Debbie* each appeared on a variety of products. An entire section was filled with different types of *Mother's Cookies* (which were counted only once), so the cumulative effect of these brand names is considerably greater than the 10 to 6 ratio would suggest. Several of the male names seem as if they were created as competition for established female names: *Hungry Jack* (a play on *flapjack*) pancake mix as an alternative to *Aunt Jemima's* and *Duncan Hines* cake mixes as an alternative to *Betty Crocker*.

The few male names on baked goods generally connote playfulness and having a good time; they do not suggest that the namesake is responsible for the baking; e. g., *Bugs Bunny* cookies, *Teddy Grahams* (graham crackers in the shape of teddy bears), and *Mickey's Parade* (from *Mickey Mouse*) cookies.<sup>4</sup>

Beverages were equally divided between male and female names: *Donald Duck* orange juice and *Hills Brothers* coffee vs. *Minute Maid* orange juice and *Swiss Miss* hot chocolate. There were slightly more female than male names (9 to 7) in prepared and frozen foods. Here again, the differences are suggestive. The male names were used on "heavier" foods as with *Dinty Moore* beef stew (judged male because of the trademark picture of a Paul Bunyan look-alike which accompanies the name), *Hungry Man* frozen dinners and *Red Baron* pizza. The connotations of the female names, often supplemented with pictures, promoted the image of women as good cooks (*Mrs. Smith's* frozen pies, *Mama Lina's* and *Mama Rosa's* Italian foods, *Sara Lee's* cakes, and *Rosarita's* Mexican foods). Stereotyped pictures reinforced the female connotations of *Cutie Pie* fruit popsicles and the male connotations of *Green Giant* canned and frozen foods.

Men's names dominated the sauces and condiments 14 to 9. I suspect that we find more male names here because the idea of a man barbecuing is part of the image of the "good life" that many of us carry in our minds; hence such names as *Bill Johnson's Big Apple* (from a local restaurant), *Bull's Eye Masterpiece* and *Woody's* barbecue sauces, *Trappey's Red Devil Chili Sauce*, *Johnny's Jamaica Mistake* sauce, and *Hunt's Manwich Sloppy Joe* sauce. The names and photographs on *Chef Paul Prudhommes Seasoning Blends*, *Cardini's*

*Dressings* (with a photograph of chef Caesar Cardini, inventor of the Caesar salad), *Max Mercier's Le Parisien Salad Dressing*, and *Paul Newman's Own* salad dressings reflect a similar kind of prestige associated with men making fancy salads. Women's names in this category tended toward family images with such products as *Grandma's Molasses*, *Mama Rizzo's Spaghetti Sauce*, *Mrs. Butterworth's* maple syrup, *Mrs. Klein's* peppers, and *Mrs. Richardson's* ice cream syrup.

Meats and cheeses were evenly divided with 5 male and 4 female names. However, as I recorded the names, I had a mental image of the men as the ranchers or growers and the women as the cooks or preparers. Such images may or may not have been the intention of the companies which produced the meats and cheeses. Male names included *Jimmy Dean* sausages, *Louis Rich* and *Oscar Mayer* prepared meats, *Mr. Turkey*, and *Chicken by George*. Female names included *Jennie-O Turkey*, *Rose's Chicken Cardon*, *Stella Cheese*, and *Virginia Baked Ham* (named after the state but indirectly after a woman).

Matters of gender were obviously considered when these brand names were chosen, but what both the brand names and the names of restaurants show is that the issue is more complicated than simply giving male names to products for which men are presumed to be the primary customers and female names to products where women are presumed to be the primary customers. There is often a purposeful appeal to the opposite group as when the female referents in the names of *Hooters Restaurants* and *The Mermaid Bar* were chosen to arouse sexual images that would ostensibly attract a male clientele. Still others are ambiguous. It may or may not be true that men would be likely to pick up a *Betty Crocker* mix because it aroused images of their mothers baking at home, while women would pick up a *Duncan Hines* mix because they would rather think of the cake they bake being judged as superior by a male authority figure.

A cross-gender appeal was especially apparent on the supermarket shelves devoted to cleaning supplies where five of the items were marked for gender. (These items were not counted in the totals because they are not foods. I mention them here because they provide an excellent illustration of how advertisers seem to give more weight to desirable connotations than to the gender of potential customers). Both popular culture attitudes and my own life experi-

### 34 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

ences have taught me that when men and women live together, women are the ones expected to do the cleaning. Thus, if we assume that women buy the groceries, they will also buy the regular cleaning supplies. Yet, these supplies were given predominantly male names. The only female-marked name was *Rubbermaid* plastic products (a pun on *made* and *maid*) in contrast to *King Scourer*, *Lil Scrubmaster*, *Libman Wonder Mop*, and *Mr. Scrubmaster*.

These masculine names were most likely devised not to appeal to men as customers or to the idea that men can be flattered into doing housework in the same way that they can be flattered into tending the barbecue or making salad, but instead to connote strength. They reflect the kind of wishful thinking that a few years ago provided the theme for the *Janitor in a Drum* and *Mr. Clean* advertising campaigns. Women are looking for someone or something to liberate them (note the *Libman Wonder Mop*) from the most unappealing and tiresome part of managing a home.

The naming of restaurants is quite different in that the majority of names found here belonged to independently owned restaurants (franchises were counted only once), which means that the owners had the opportunity to put their own names on them. However, very few did.<sup>5</sup> In *The Name Is the Game*, Henri Charmason advises against naming a company after the founder or owner. One reason is that family names are legally hard to protect because if others with the same name or even other members of the family start competing companies, there is no legal way to keep them from using their own names. Also, as companies increase in size it's likely that they will be incorporated and/or sold to new owners who may not want to keep the founding family's name.

But for restaurants there are counterbalancing reasons for giving personal or family names. Chief among these is that consuming food prepared by someone else requires a level of trust, and one way to communicate trustworthiness is to share one's name, especially one's first name. Diners are reassured by the image of Brad, Josie, John, and Ernie at work in the respective kitchens of *Brad's Seafood*, *Josie's Mexican Food*, *Big John's Bar-B-Q*, and *Ernie's Inn*. This relates to what Albert Wilhelm observed about beauty salons where owners make "heavy use of first names to create an impression of intimacy and individualized attention" (1988, 62).

The fact that the personal names on restaurants are usually not the owners' names suggests the obvious questions: Whose names are they and why were they chosen?

The fact that out of the 292 restaurant names in this corpus 99 were semantically marked for ethnicity, indicates that a primary reason for incorporating personal names into restaurant names is to communicate the specialty of the house. That the names also communicated gender was a by-product of the fact that gender is an inherent part of most given names. Nevertheless, the communicating of gender is not random as shown by the fact that the proportion of restaurant names marked as either masculine or feminine differs from one ethnic group to another, as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Ethnically Identified Restaurants<sup>6</sup>

Food Type	N			%	
	M	F	T	M	F
Chinese	6	6	12	50	50
Mexican	26	19	45	58	42
Italian	24	8	32	75	25
Irish	3	0	3	100	0

The owners walked a fine line when choosing ethnically related names. They had to find names that were common enough to be recognized but not so common as to be perceived negatively. They avoided such obviously negative names as *Sambo* or *Hymie* or *Ikey*, but they included several personal names (e.g., *Tony*, *Mike*, *Pedro*, *Don*, and *Sam*) which Allen (1983) identified as "Personal Names that Became Ethnic Epithets." With many of the names, restaurant owners gave the public a double shot by using an ethnic name in combination with some other ethnic clue. Examples include the French restaurant *Jean-Claude's Petit Cafe*; Mexican restaurants *Juan's Cantina*, *Julio's Barrio*, *Pepe's Tacos*, *Roberto's Mexican Food* and *Señor Tobo's*; and Italian restaurants *Gino's Pizza*, *Giorgio's Italian Restaurant*, and *Raffaele's Italian Restaurant*. Apparently *Giuseppe's*, *Antonio's*, and *Niccoli's* were judged to be

### 36 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

so distinctively Italian that they could stand alone, as could the name *Jaramillo's* for a Mexican restaurant. Women's names were not so distinctively ethnic and were nearly always used in combination with an extra clue to ethnicity; for example, *Michelina's Italian Cuisine*, *Mama Carmella's Pasta & Pizza House*, *Rosita's Fine Mexican Food*, and *Viva Maria Mexican Food Takeout*. Using both given and surnames helped to communicate the Irishness of *Butch O'Leary's* and *Casey Moore's* combination restaurant/bars.<sup>7</sup>

A common technique for creating a memorable name is for a restaurant owner to borrow a personal name that is already in the public consciousness. In a circular fashion, this increases the male dominance in names because there are more famous men than women — both real and fictional.<sup>8</sup> Personal names and other identifiers can also help to communicate the tone of a restaurant. Customers won't feel they have to dress up or tip a maitre d' when going to eat at *Cactus Jacks*, *Dos Guys Beef Beans & Booze*, or *My Old Man's Restaurant & Lounge*. The owners of *Flakey Jake's*, *Greasy Tony's*, *Grumpy John's Bar B Q*, and *Ned's Crazy Sub* chose names that reverse the kinds of expectations we have that business people will be positive about their establishments as in *Eddie Chan's Fine Chinese Dining* or *Scott's Famous Bar B Que*. In general, the restaurants with women's names were more conservative. *Messy Bessy's Cafe* is the only one that played with a negative image.

Another difference was that while six men's names appeared on combination restaurant/bars, the closest that women's names came to bars was *Annabelle's Dining and Lounge* and *Millie's Restaurant & Lounge*.<sup>9</sup> Evidently, *grill* is also a word with masculine connotations in that it did not appear in any of the female-named establishments but was part of six of the names identified as male as in *Harry and Steve's Chicago Grill* and *Hoopes McCloskey's Bar & Grill*.

Another difference in tone was that only four of the 88 female-marked names (5%) included both a first and a last name (*Marie Callender's Restaurant & Bakeries*, *Mary Coyle Ice Cream*, *May West Restaurant*, and *Susi Wong*) as compared to 21 of the 208 male-marked names (10%); for example, *Lenny Monti's*, *Oscar Taylor*, *Tommy Tomaso's*, and *Tony Roma's*. This followed a general



pattern where restaurants named for females were made to seem cozier, more casual and more comfortable than those with men's names. *Cafe* suggests a more humble establishment than *restaurant*. Twelve out of the 208 male-named restaurants (6%) incorporated the word *cafe* in the name, while eleven out of the 88 female-named establishments (13%) used the word *cafe*. Other humble sounding names of women's restaurants included *Aunt Pittypat's Pantry*, *Bitzee Mama's Restaurant*, and *Nancy's Country Cupboard*.

The male names attached to restaurants were considerably shorter and more common than the female names. Of the 183 male names that appear on the restaurants listed in Appendix 2, 85 (46%) are one-syllable names, while 76 (42%) contain two syllables, 20 (11%) contain three syllables, and 2 (1%) contain four syllables. In contrast, of the 75 female names that appear on the restaurants listed in Appendix 2, only 12 (16%) are one-syllable names, while 36 (48%) contain two syllables, 23 (31%) contain three syllables, and 4 (5%) contain four syllables. There was also much greater repetition of short and/or easy male names. *Al* is used five times, *Bob* or *Bobby* three times, *Charley* or *Charlie* six times, *Joe(y)* seven times and *Tony* five times.

Overall, the distribution of these names reinforces what we already know about the associations of certain names and certain types of names. Colman, Hargreaves, and Sluckin (1980) claim that "a straightforward positive relationship is likely to be maintained between familiarity and liking for cultural objects, including first names, whose familiarity is responsive to voluntary actions of people" (128). Lawson found through a semantic differential study that with men "common names were preferred over less common" and that men are "usually called by associated short names or nicknames" (1973, 22). Lawson and Roeder (1986) found that women often reacted positively to a short form of a woman's name (*Barb* for *Barbara* or *Sue* for *Susan*) but negatively to what they called "affectionate nicknames" (*Barbie* for *Barbara* or *Susie* for *Susan*). Male respondents in the Lawson and Roeder study, however, reacted more positively to the "affectionate nickname" form, even though it "is perceived as more immature, more dependent, more childish" (183), obviously an image incompatible with running a business.

### 38 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

While some Phoenix restaurants bore women's names which might be viewed as either shortened forms of names or as affectionate nicknames (*Annie, Bessy, Bev, Fran, Gee-Gee, Lil, Lulu, Mag, Millie, Patsy, Patty Ann, Rosie, Susi*), it was much more common to find "fuller" names such as *Annabelle, Michelle, Caroline, Francesca, Hester, Carmella, Marie, Michelina, Rosita* or *Victoria* (see Appendix 2 for more examples). The fact that considerably fewer one-syllable women's than men's names appeared on the restaurants may be because women's names are typically more varied than men's names and that society tries harder to give euphonious names to females, a feat which is difficult with only one syllable. Fifteen restaurants used easily pronounced male names, many of which, interestingly, began with *J: Jack, Jim, Jerry, Joe, or John*. There simply isn't an equivalent set of short and easy-to-pronounce female names, especially if the diminutives, what Lawson and Roeder (1986) call "affectionate nicknames," are excluded. This may be one of the reasons that many of the names that used to be considered masculine but are now being used more frequently for females are easy and short names such as *Chris, Dale, Pat, Lynn, Jamie, Jan, Jean, Jesse, Jodie, Kelly, Lee, Leslie, Lynn, Mike, Pat, and Terry* (Barry and Harper 1993). As women move into mainstream commercial activities, there is apparently a need for straight-forward, easily pronounced names that are neither diminutives nor carriers of the metaphorical connotations that are part of many traditionally feminine names.

As stated above, the first informal hypothesis cannot be rejected. Overall, grocery stores did not stock more products named after women than after men. However, as shown in the discussion, male and female names on grocery store items were distributed unevenly, with male names dominant in some areas, e.g., sauces and condiments, and female names dominant in other areas, e.g., baked goods.

The second informal null hypothesis can, however, be rejected and we can conclude that gender-based restaurant names are more likely to be masculine than feminine. Whether or not this is a marketing strategy to attract men because they more often choose when and where to eat out is speculation at this point, although it would make an interesting topic for further research.

A related finding is that in the marketing of food, gender-marked names are used for purposes other than to communicate the physical

gender of either sellers or buyers. Metaphorical concepts of maleness and femaleness run deep within American culture. Ideas of masculinity and femininity put women's names on baked goods and men's names on "heavy" foods (where men are pictured as the consumers) and on barbecue sauces and salad dressings (where they are pictured as the cooks). These ideas also put women's names on lounges and men's names on bars and grills, and they instill expectations that women's restaurants will be smaller, cozier and more intimate than men's and that women will be called by their first names. Perhaps because of this, female-named restaurants are more likely to use the fuller forms of these names. Replications of this study in other geographic areas might reveal higher or lower proportions of names overtly marked for gender and perhaps ethnicity as well. Such markings may be characteristic of the yuppie generation, which may have more impact in rapidly growing areas of the country such as Arizona. A study in a city with an ethnic mix different from that found in Phoenix might show if the results reported here, especially the findings that the names on Mexican and Chinese restaurants were divided almost equally between male and female names while Italian and Irish restaurants were given predominantly male names, were location-specific or if they are generally characteristic of these ethnic groups.

The names on different commercial products could also be compared. Because of the archetypal connection between women and nurturing, food is a semantic area where we would expect to find women's names, but perhaps the bigger or more noticeable changes over the last twenty years have been in such less expected areas as automobile dealerships, plumbing contractors, and computer products and service.

Another point worthy of further study is the relationship between name length, familiarity, and ease of pronunciation, and how likely the name is to be used on a commercial product. And finally, it would be informative to study the relationships among naming, package design, coloring, and intended consumers. Under what circumstances will consumers be attracted to products or restaurants named for their own sex versus being attracted to products or restaurants named for the opposite sex?

## 40 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Appendix 1  
Gender Marked Brand Names  
Appearing on Food Items in Fry's Supermarket,  
Tempe, Arizona, August, 1993

Male	Female
<b>Baked Goods and Supplies</b>	
Bugs Bunny cookies	Aunt Hattie's breads
Chef's Pride spices	Aunt Jemima pancake mixes
Duncan Hines cake mixes	Betty Crocker cake mixes
Hungry Jack pancake mix	Dolly Madison cakes
Teddy Grahams	Hostess cakes
Mickey's Parade (cookies)	LaLa's Homemade flour tortillas (trademark includes woman's picture)
	Stella Doro breadsticks
	Mrs. Cubbison's croutons
<b>Cereals</b>	
Quaker Oats (male because of trademark picture)	Cocoa Pebbles (named after cartoon character Pebbles Flintstone)
John McCann oatmeal	Fruity Pebbles
Cap'n Crunch	Mother's Rolled Oats
Uncle Ben's Rice	
Uncle Sam cereal	
<b>Meats and Cheeses</b>	
Chicken by George	Jennie-O-Turkey
Jimmy Dean sausage	Rose's Chicken Cordon
Louis Rich prepared meats	Stella Cheeses
Oscar Mayer prepared meats	Virginia baked ham
Mr. Turkey	

## Gender Naming in Food Marketing 41

### Drinks

---

Donald Duck orange juice	Minute Maid orange juice
Hills Brothers coffee	Swiss Miss hot chocolate

### Frozen and Prepared Foods

---

Dinty Moore beef stew (trademark includes picture of lumberjack)	Cutie Pie fruit popsicles (trademark includes picture of little girl)
Chun King Chinese food	Mama Lina's beef ravioli
Chef Boyardee Italian pastas	Mama Rosa's kid pizza
Green Giant (trademark includes picture of male giant)	Michelina's Italian food (trademark includes photo of woman)
Don Miguel frozen Mexican food	Marie Callender's prepared foods
Hungry Man dinners	Mrs. Smith frozen pies
Red Baron pizza	Rosarita's Mexican foods
	Sara Lee cakes
	Mrs. T's various foods

### Miscellaneous

---

Chef's Blend cat food	Aunt Patsy's soup mixes
King Kuts dog food	Baby Ruth candy bars
Johnny Cat cat litter	Dolores pork rinds
Peter Pan peanut butter	Doña Maria cactus products
Three Musketeers candy	Juanita's meatball soup
	La Corona yogurt
	Sun Maid raisins

### Snack Foods

---

Mi Ranchito chips (trademark includes picture of Mexican cowboy)	Santitas Chips (trademark includes picture of female Mexican dancer)
Mr. Phipps Tater Crisps	Laura Scudders chips
Orville Redenbacher's pop corn	

## 42 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

### Sauces and Condiments

---

Bill Johnson's Big Apple barbecue sauce	Contadina's Italian sauces
Bull's Eye barbecue sauce	Grandma's Molasses
Cardini's salad dressings (trademark includes picture of Caesar Cardini)	Mama Rizzo's spaghetti sauce
Chef Paul Prudhomme's seasoning blends	Mrs. Butterworth's maple syrup
Crazy Cajun Bar-B-Cue Sauce (trademark includes picture of man)	Mrs. Klein's peppers
Gravy Master	La Victoria jalapenos and sauces
Hunt's Manwich Original Sloppy Joe Sauce	Mrs. Richardson's ice cream sauce
Johnny's Jamaica Mistake	Regina vinegar
Masterpiece Barbecue Sauce	Blue Bonnet margarine
Max Mercier's Le Parisien salad dressing	
Newman's Own salad dressing (trademark includes picture of Paul Newman)	
Trader Vic's dressing	
Trappy's Red Devil chili sauce	
Woody's Barbecue Sauce	

### Addendum: Cleaning Supplies and Equipment

---

King Scourer	Rubbermaid plastic products
Lil Scrubmaster	
Libman Wonder Mop	
Mr. Scrubmaster	

## Gender Naming in Food Marketing 43

### Appendix 2

Gender Marked Restaurant Names  
Appearing in the Business Listings  
of the Metropolitan Phoenix Telephone Directory, 1992-3

<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Ajo Al's Mexican Cafe	Anabel's Edibles
Al Fresco Patio Cafe	Annabelle's Dining & Lounge
Al Cantar Drive In	Anna's Cafe
All American Boy	Annie's Steak & Pasta Co.
Al's Cutting Board	Aunt Chilada's (Mex.)
Andy's Family Restaurant	Aunt Pittypats Pantry
Antonio's (Ital.)	Barbara's
Arthur's Lounge and Eatery	Bev's Coney Island West
Arturo's Mexican Restaurant	Bev's Kitchen
Big John's Bar-B-Q	Bitzee Mama's Restaurant
Big Richard's For Eat'N & Drink'N	Cafe Amanda
Bill Austin's Open Pit Bar-B-Q	Cafe Michelle (French)
Bill Johnson's Big Apple Restaurants	Carolina's Mexican Food
Bobby D's Restaurant & Lounge	Casa Carmen (Mex.)
Bobby McGee's	China Doll
Bob's Place	China Empress
Brad's Fish & Chips	China Queen
Brad's Seafood	Christina's Mexican Food
Brothers Family Restaurant	Clarita's Mexican Place
Burger King	Coco's Family Restaurant
Buster's Restaurant Grill & Bar	Dairy Queen
Butch O'Leary's (Irish)	Darby's Restaurant and Coffee Shop
Cactus Jacks	Dorothy's Mexican Food & Catering

#### **44 Names 43.1 (March 1995)**

Cactus Willy's Bar & Grill	Eileen's Breakfast & Lunch
Cajun Joe's	Elena's Gold Spot Cafe
Captain D's Seafood	Eliana's Restaurant
Captain Hero	Eva's Restaurant
Captain's Fish and Chips	Evita's South American Cuisine (Mex.)
Carlos O'Brien's Mexican Food	Francesca Italian Gourmet
Carl's Jr.	Fran's Food Service
Casa Reynoso (Mex.)	Gee-Gee's Famous Pizza & Subs (Ital.)
Casey Moore's (Irish)	Gloria's Mexican Food
Charley Brown's	Grace Inn at Ahwatukee
Charlie's	Hester's Texas Style Barbeque
Charlie's on Easy St.	Hillary's Restaurant
Chef Jeff's Corner Cafe	Irma's Cafe
Celo's Mexican Food	Jacqueline's Market Place & Cafe
Chili Charlies Chile (Mex.)	Jennie's Cafe
China Chef	Jean's Kitchen
Christopher's & Christopher's Bistro	Josie's Mexican Food
Claude Cafe & Deli	LaMonica's Restaurant (Ital.)
Cool Charlie's Fish & Chips	Las Glorias Restaurant (Mex.)
Country Boys Restaurant	Lil's Ranchway Restaurant
Crazy Ed's Satisfied Frog	Lulu Belles Restaurant
Danny D's	Lulu's Charbroiled Burgers
Danny's Corner	Lulu's Taco Shop (Mex.)
Denny's Restaurant	Ma Ma Loo's (Chin.)
Dino's Pizza Italian Restaurant	Mags Ham-Bun
Domino's Pizza (Ital.)	Mama Carmella's Pasta & Pizza House (Ital.)



## Gender Naming in Food Marketing 45

Don & Charlies	Mama Eula's Barbeque
Don Jose Mexican Food	Mama G's Italian Kitchen
Dos Guys Beef Beans & Booze (Mex.)	Maria's When in Naples (Ital.)
Dutch Johns Sports Restaurant	Marie Callender's Restaurant & Bakeries
Earl's Restaurant	Marilyns First Mexican Restaurant
Eat at Joe's	Mary Coyle Ice Cream
Ed Debevic's Short Orders Deluxe	Maxine's Restaurant
Eddie's Burgers Deluxe	May West Restaurant
Ed's Fish & Chips	May's Best of the West
Elmer's Tacos (Mex.)	Mermaid Bar at Neiman Marcus
Ernie's Home Style Cafe	Messy Bessy's Cafe
Ernies Inn	Mia's Restaurant
Eugene's Country Buffet & Restaurant	Michelina's Italian Cuisine (Ital.)
Flakey Jake's	Millie's Restaurant & Lounge
Franks Alot	Mom's
Fred's Place	Mona's Mex-Cafe
George's Lunch Bar	Mother Tucker's
Gill's Grill	Mother's
Gino's Pizza (Ital.)	My Mother's Restaurant
Giorgio's Italian Restaurant	Nancy's Country Cupboard Restaurant
Giuseppe's (Ital.)	Nina L'Italiana Restaurant
Grandpa's Pizza Inc.	Patsy's Cafe
Greasy Tony's	Patty Ann's Drive-In
Gregory's Restaurants	Pearl's Restaurant
Grumpy John's Bar B Q	Queen's Wok Chinese Food
Haji-Baba Middle Eastern Restaurant	Rita's Mexican Food

## 46 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Hal O Penos Mexican Cafe	Rosa's Taco Shop (Mex.)
Harold's Cave Creek Corral	Rose's Restaurant & Lounge
Harry & Steve's Chicago Grill	Rosie's Chicago Hot Dog Connection
Harvey's The Wineburger King	Rosita's Fine Mexican Food
Hoopes McClosky's Bar & Grill (Irish)	Rosita's Place (Mex.)
J Edgar's Sandwich Shop	Roxsand Restaurant
Jack-in-the-Box	Ruby Tuesday's
Jaramillo's (Mex.)	Ruth's Chris Steak House
Jean-Claude's Petit Cafe (French)	Susi Wong (Chin.)
Jerry's Restaurant	Victoria Restaurant & Lounge
Jimmy Jacks Hamburgers	Viva Maria Mexican Food Takeout
Jim's Food Service	Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers
Jim's Restaurant	Zia's Cafeteria (Mex.)
Joe Jo's Restaurant Lounge	
Joe's at Orange Tree	<b>Masculine, con't</b>
Joe's Burgerama	Popeye Famous Fried Chicken & Biscuits
Joe's Coffee Shop	Prince Chinese Mexican Food
Joey's Desert Dog	Raffaele's Italian Restaurant
Johnnies Red Hot Chicago	Ralph's La Hacienda Pizzeria & Italian Food
Johnny Rockets	Randy's Resturant & Ice Cream
John's Villa Restaurant (Ital.)	Ray's Pizza
Jon-O's Pizza (Ital.)	Red Devil Italian Restaurant
Juan's Cantina (Mex.)	Ricardo's Mexican Food
Julio's Barrio (Mex.)	Richard's
Julio's Mexican Restaurant	Rick's Cafe
King Wah Chinese Restaurant	Rick's Coffee Shop

## Gender Naming in Food Marketing 47

Kings Chinese Restaurant	Robbies
Kings Coffee Shop	Roberto's Mexican Food
Kings Inn II	Rocky's
King's Table Buffet	Ron's Cafe
King's Wok Chinese Fast Food	Rudy's
Lenny Monti's Restaurant	Sal Rinaldo's Pasta & Pizza (Ital.)
Little King	Sammy B's Pizza
Little Louis Italian Restaurant	Sam's Ole Tyme Burgers
Long John Silver's Seafood Shoppes	Sam's & R C's Sandwich Shop
Lucky Boy Burger Shop	Scott's Bar B Q & Soul Cuisine
Manuel's Mexican Food	Scott's Famous Bar B Que
Marco Polo Cafe	Scott's Generations Restaurant & Delicatessen
Max's Colosseum Dinner Theatre	Señor Tobo's (Mex.)
Max's Gridiron Beef Room	Sir George's Royal Buffets
Max's Kozy Kitchen	Sonney's Restaurant
Mel's Deli	Spencers Deli
Michael's	Spencer's Ranch Barbeque
Michael's Tavern and Restaurant	Stan Stone's Restaurant
Mike's Family Restaurant	Steve's Mexican Food & Lounge
Mr. C's Exquisite Chinese Dining	Stuart Anderson's Black Angus Restaurant
Mr. C's 50's Diner	Submarino's (Ital.)
Mr. Hero	Taco John's (Mex.)
Mr. Lucky's	Tapas Papa Frita (Mex.)
Mr. Submarine	Ted's Burger Shop
Mr. Sushi Japanese Restaurant	Ted's Charcoal Broiled Hot Dogs
Mr. C's Eats & Sweets	Ted's Kitchen East
My Old Man's Restaurant & Lounge	Ted's Tasty Burger

## 48 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Ned's Krazy Sub	Terry's Coffee Corner
Niccoli's (Ital.)	Terry's Place
Nick's Sub Shop (Ital.)	Tex's Smokehouse
Nino's Mexican Food (Mex.)	Three Brothers Restaurant
Orange Julius	Timothy's
Oscar Taylor	Tom Tates Country Buffets
Pancho & Lefty's	Tommy Tomaso's (Ital.)
Pancho's Mexican Buffet	Tommy's Fajita Express (Mex.)
Papa John's	Toms Tavern
Pappy's Restaurant & Sports Bar	Tony & Joe's Upbeat Restaurant & Lounge
Paul's Cafeteria	Tony Roma's
Pedro's Mexican Restaurant	Tony's Cafe
Pepe's Taco Villa (Mex.)	Tony's Italian Kitchen
Peter Piper Pizza (Ital.)	Two Guys Restaurant
Pete's Fish & Chips	Uncle Al's
Pete's 19th Tee	Uncle Luigi's Italian Restaurant
Phil's Lunch Box	Vincent on Camelback
Pistol Pete's Pizza (Ital.)	Zio Johnno's Spaghetti House (Ital.)
Pizza by Angelos (Ital.)	
Pizza by Napoli (Ital.)	

## Gender Naming in Food Marketing 49

### Notes

1. I would like to thank Don L. F. Nilsen, Nicolette Wickman, and two anonymous reviewers for *Names* for their comments and suggestions on an earlier version of this paper.

2. Jack Rosenthal argues in "Gender Benders" that most foods contain "hidden" gender in that when given the names of pairs of related foods such as chicken soup and beef soup, chocolate ice cream and vanilla ice cream, and salt and pepper, people will consistently identify one food as male and the other as female. The same is true for many shapes, objects, body parts, colors, and other concepts. In 1774, grammarian John Fell, who was trying to connect English grammar with Latin grammar, wrote in "An Essay Towards English Grammar"

The passions must be determined according to their different natures: the fiercer and most disagreeable are masculine — the softer and more amiable are feminine. *Mind* is masculine, *soul* feminine; for in the latter term more of the affections are frequently implied than in the former. The *sun* is masculine, the *moon* feminine, the *Heaven* neuter — the *earth* is feminine; the mountains and rivers are commonly masculine; countries and cities are feminine — and *nature* as comprehending all, is feminine.

Linguists no longer try to force English into the model of Latin or other languages with grammatical gender, but instead view expressions of "hidden gender" as revealing more about cultural attitudes than about English grammar. The purpose of this study was to look at naming in a real-life situation (as opposed to the artificial situation in which people are instructed to think of an item as either masculine or feminine) to see whether some items are consistently viewed as masculine while others are consistently viewed as feminine.

3. In both the grocery store and restaurant counts, I excluded such androgynous names as *Pat's Family Restaurant*, *Christie's Place*, and *Lou's Tivoli Gardens* and such double (male and female) names as *Tom & Tiny's Restaurant*, *Angie's & Jimmie's*, and *Dollies & Ray's Cafe*. I included men's or women's names that I recognized from foreign languages where the ending was marked as either masculine or feminine; e.g., *Giorgio's Italian Restaurant* (masculine) and *Micheline's Italian Cuisine* (feminine), but I ignored gender marking on common nouns on the grounds that if such words as *desperado*, *el pollo* or *bandito* were translated into English they would no longer have a masculine or feminine prefix or suffix. I counted two instances containing the French article *la* as feminine because one was followed by the female name *Victoria* and the crown on the second (on *La Corona* yogurt) appeared to be a woman's crown. Also, I had seen a report which claimed that the company purposely looked for a way to use the feminine article *la* (in French, *yogurt* takes the masculine article) because it imagined that weight-conscious women would be its primary customers. Among common words and titles that I counted as markers of male gender were *boys*,

## 50 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

*brother, bull, captain, chef, devil, grandpa, guys, hero, king, man, Mr., papa, prince, sir, and uncle.* Common words and titles that I counted as markers of female gender included *aunt, cutie pie, dolls, Doña, empress, grandma, granny, hooters, hostess, maid, mama, mermaid, Miss, mom, mother, Mrs. and queen.*

Unless the name was accompanied by a trademark picture clearly identifying the restaurant or the product as male, I did not count as masculine items identified only with last names (e.g., *Schlitzky's Deli*), with initials (e.g., *J.B.'s*), or with names that accidentally sounded masculine (e.g., *Him's Chinese Buffet* and *Papalellis*). I also excluded names taken from roles traditionally assumed to be male but which in today's changing society could be filled by females. For example, I did not consider such restaurant names as *Burrito Bandito, Coach's Place, The Fat Mexican, Desperados Restaurant, The Dirty Drummer, Chubbie's, Pirates, Trappers, and Rustler's Rooste* because today we may acknowledge that women as well as men may be coaches or desperados, and fat or dirty. Interestingly, I did not face the same problem with names describing traditionally female roles because neither women nor men are clamoring to be considered *cutie pies* or *dolls*. The names are reproduced here as they appear in the telephone directory, where there was great inconsistency in the use of the apostrophe to indicate possession. There is similar inconsistency on the restaurant signs.

4. I have chosen to consider frozen pies and cakes in the prepared food category; if these had been counted as baked goods, the preponderance of female-named baked products would have been even greater.

5. Because the *Arizona Business Directory* is organized differently from the telephone directory and also because it is not required that companies list their owners in the *Business Directory*, it was not possible to trace the ownership of all 296 restaurants in the corpus. However, owners were identified by first initial, last name, and gender (all the available information in the *Business Directory*) for 79 restaurants. There was a match between the names of the owners and the names on only nine out of 50 restaurants with male names and only four out of 29 restaurants with female names.

6. The numbers were much smaller for other groups with some relying on United States geographical locations instead of names; for example, *The New York Deli* as the name for a Jewish delicatessen. Many Arizonans are nostalgic about their midwest roots, a feeling capitalized on in such names as *Mike's from Chicago, Johnnie's Red Hot Chicago*, and *Rosie's Chicago Hot Dog Connection*. *Cajun Joe's* and *Dutch John's Sports Restaurant* were unique group names, while there were no gender marked names unambiguously reflecting an African American influence probably because African American names — at least for now — do not indicate ethnicity as efficiently as do Mexican, Chinese, Irish, and Italian names.

7. While restaurant owners want names that will communicate their ethnicity, they also want business names that will be easy to pronounce and easy to remem-

## Gender Naming in Food Marketing 51

ber. This is probably why F. Al-Marayti didn't use his own name, but instead chose the more obvious *Haji-Baba Middle Eastern Restaurant*. It may also be why Chinese restaurants rely more on terms describing roles than on individual Chinese names; for example, *China Chef*, *King's Wok Chinese Fast Food*, *Mr. C's Exquisite Chinese Dining*, *China Doll*, *China Empress*, *China Queen*, *Ma Ma Loo's*, and *Queen's Wok Chinese Food*. The only personal Chinese name I recognized as female was *Susi Wong*, a name made famous in *The World of Susie Wong*.

A less common but still important reason that restaurant owners rely on personal names is that names provide opportunities for language play as with the puns in the names of Mexican restaurants *Aunt Chilada's* (c.f., *enchiladas*) and *Hal O Penos* (c.f., *jalapenos*) or the interesting sound patterns in *Anabel's Edibles*, *Jimmy Jack's Hamburgers*, and *Pistol Pete's Pizza*. *Eat at Joe's* is both a command and a catchy name, while *Crazy Ed's Satisfied Frog* is a clever name for a drinking establishment.

W. F. H. Nicolaisen (1974) has made the point that words which are made into names reflect at least three levels of meaning: a *lexical* level based on the dictionary meaning, an *associative* level based on the reason or reasons that the particular word was chosen as a name (this is the level on which connotative names operate), and the *onomastic* or name level. Once a word is recognized primarily as a name, some users no longer see the lexical and associative levels. This process is illustrated by the names *Fat Patties*, *Shell's Oyster Bar and Seafood Restaurant*, and *Jam's Restaurant*. *Fat Patties* implies generous sized hamburgers, while *Shell's Oyster Bar* brings ocean breezes to mind and *Jam's Restaurant* probably makes customers think of breakfast with biscuits and jam. These names are cited as illustrative even though they were finally deleted from the corpus because one of the names (*Patties*) could refer either to a male or a female while the other two are genderless because they are simply lexical items disguised as someone's name. Customers who accept the words onomastically as the names of the owners may perceive the food associations only subconsciously. Names created through a similar process but which are more likely to be recognized as puns include *Mr. Hero* and *Mr. Submarine* sandwich shops, *Franks Alot* hot dog restaurant, and *Mr. Sushi* Japanese restaurant.

8. Famous men whose names have been appropriated for Phoenix area restaurants include *John Henry*, *Marco Polo*, *Casey Jones*, *Bobby McGee*, *Popeye*, *Voltaire*, *Peter Piper*, and *Robin Hood*. Male names with slight variations — probably for legal reasons — include *J. Edgar's Sandwich Shop* and *Charley Brown's Restaurant* (with *-ey* rather than *-ie*). The only references to famous women were *May West Restaurant* and *May's Best of the West* (spelled with an *-y* instead of an *-ae*) and *Evita's South American Cuisine*.

9. The *Mermaid Bar at Neiman Marcus* was counted as feminine although it was not directly marked with a woman's name.

References

- Allen, Irving Lewis. 1983. "Personal Names that Became Ethnic Epithets." *Names* 31: 307-317.
- Barnes, Will C. 1988. *Arizona Place Names*. Tucson: U of Arizona P.
- Barry, Herbert, III, and Aylene S. Harper. 1993. "Feminization of Unisex Names." *Names* 41: 228-238.
- Brown, Thomas P. 1957. *Colorful California Names: Their History and Meaning*. San Francisco: American Trust Company.
- Charmasson, Henri. 1988. *The Name Is the Game: How to Name a Company or Product*. Homewood, IL: Dow Jones-Irwin.
- Colman, Andrew M., David J. Hargreaves, and Wladyslaw Sluckin. 1980. "Psychological Factors Affecting Preferences for First Names." *Names* 38: 113-129.
- Gannett, Henry. 1905. *The Origin of Certain Place Names in the United States*. 2nd ed. Washington: Govt. Printing Office.
- Lawson, Edwin. D. 1973. "Men's First Names, Nicknames, and Short Names: A Semantic Differential Analysis." *Names* 21: 22-27.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Lynn M. Roder. 1986. "Women's Full First Names, Short Names, and Affectionate Names: A Semantic Differential Analysis." *Names* 34: 175-184.
- Manser, Martin. 1990. *Melba Toast, Bowie's Knife & Caesar's Wife: A Dictionary of Eponyms*. New York: Avon.
- Nicolaisen, W. F. H. 1974. "Names as Verbal Icons." *Names* 22: 104-110.
- Nilsen, Alleen Pace and Don L. F. 1993. "Anonymous Eponyms: What They Tell about Every Tom, Dick, and Harry." American Name Society, Toronto, Ont.
- Rosenthal, Jack. 1990. "Gender Benders." *Language Awareness*. Fifth Edition. Eds. Paul Eschholz, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark. New York: St. Martin's P, 303-305.
- Stewart, George R. 1967. *Names on the Land: A Historical Account of Place-Naming in the United States*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Wilhelm, Albert E. 1988. "Pretty Is as Pretty Says: The Rhetoric of Beauty Salon Names." *Names* 36: 61-67.