On the morphological status of complex names in English and Japanese

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In contrast to simple names like Donald, the morphological investigations of complex names like Donald Trump have been scarce (see Schlücker & Ackermann 2017: 315), despite the fact that simple and complex names differ in whether they can undergo derivation. For example, in English, the given name or the family name can undergo derivation (e.g. Reaganize), while the full name cannot (e.g. *[[Ronald Reagan]-ize]). Interestingly enough, this is not the case in Japanese. In Japanese, in addition to the given or family name (e.g. Takuya-ka (lit.) Takuya-ize 'Takuyanize', where Takuya is a given name), the full name can undergo derivation (e.g. [[Kimura Takuya]-ka] 'Kimura Takuyanize', where Kimura is a family name). Based on the fact that unlike words, phrases are immune to derivation (Bresnan & Mchombo 1995), I argue that English complex names are phrases, while Japanese complex names are words or compounds. To explain the morphological difference in complex names between the two languages, I adopt the framework of Distributed Morphology (Embick & Noyer 2007, Morita 2016, among others), which admits morphological movement operations on the PF side. The operations are triggered by morphosyntactic features (cf. Embick & Noyer 2001). Given this property of the operations, I argue that unlike English, Japanese has a morphological feature which is obligatorily introduced when there are two single names. The feature is a trigger of morphological movement, as a result of which two single names are compounded into one complex name. In English, in contrast to Japanese, the feature is not inserted in the same environment. Due to the lack of this feature, there is no morphological movement to combine two simple names into one.

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