Package-Local Nicknames

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1 Specification

1.1 Introduction

This is a specification for the package-local nicknames extension in Common Lisp.

1.1.1 Rationale

Package-local nicknames allow to use short and easy-to-use names for packages locally without potentially introducing name conflict as with normal nicknames.

1.1.2 Current state

Package-local nicknames are implemented in some form in SBCL, CCL, ECL, Clasp, ABCL, Allegro CL, LispWorks. There also exists a pending PR for the CLISP implementation.

Unfortunately, there are multiple inconsistencies between implementations, all implementations lose the **print-read** consistency to some extent, and there are multiple edge cases that aren't always implemented correctly.

1.1.3 Goal

The purpose of this document is to standardize the package-local nicknames extension and to address some existing issues.

[TODO] This CDR also aims to provide an extensive test suite for this extension.

1.2 Description

Package-local nickname (or local nickname) has the same effects as a normal package nickname (later global nickname), except that these effects only apply when *package* is bound to a package for which the nickname has been defined.

That means that calls to find-package with a *local nickname* defined in the *current package* should return the package nicknamed by this nickname.

This also affects all implied calls to find-package, including those performed by the lisp reader.

In addition, to maintain **print-read** consistency, the lisp printer is affected by *local nicknames* defined in the *current package*, for details see PRINT-READ consistency.

Local nickname is allowed to shadow a package name or a global nickname, except for the names #:CL, #:COMMON-LISP and #:KEYWORD which should always refer to their packages.

The consequences of adding *local nicknames* to the packages #:COMMON-LISP and #:KEYWORD are undefined.

1.3 API

1.3.1 defpackage

defpackage options are extended to include local-nicknames-option:

local-nicknames-option ::= (:local-nicknames (nickname package)*)

Each pair specifies a local nickname nickname for the corresponding package.

This option may appear more than once.

1. Arguments and Values: nickname must be a string designator.

package must be a package designator.

2. Exceptional situations An error of type package-error is signaled when a package designated by package does not exists.

Name conflict errors are handled by the underlying calls to ${\tt add-package-local-nickname}$.

See add-package-local-nickname: exceptional situations.

3. Implementation dependent The behaviour is unspecified when a *local nickname* is specified for the package that is being defined.

The behaviour is unspecified when supplied *local nicknames* are at variance with the current state of the package that is being defined. An implementation might choose to remove all present *local nicknames* at the beginning of each redefinition of the package.

1.3.2 make-package

make-package lambda list is extended to include an additional key parameter: local-nicknames.

local-nicknames ::= ((nickname package)*)

local-nicknames defaults to an empty list.

local-nicknames must be a *list* each element of which must be a *list* of form (nickname package). Specifies *local nicknames* in the new *package*.

See also Issue 6.

1. Arguments and Values: local-nicknames must be a a list of pairs (nickname package).

nickname must be a string designator.

package must be a package designator.

2. Exceptional situations An error of type package-error is signaled when a package designated by package does not exists.

Name conflict errors are handled by the underlying calls to add-package-local-nickname.

See add-package-local-nickname: exceptional situations.

3. Implementation dependent The behaviour is unspecified when a *local nickname* is specified for the package that is being defined.

1.3.3 add-package-local-nickname

(add-package-local-nickname nickname actual-package & optional designated-package)

=> designated-package-object

designated-package defaults to the current package.

Adds a package-local nickname nickname for the actual-package in the designated-package.

Returns the package designated by designated-package.

If a nickname is already defined, checks that it is defined for the package designated by actual-package.

1. Arguments and Values nickname must be a string designator.

actual-package and designated-package must be package designators.

designated-package-object is of type package.

2. Exceptional situations If a package designated by actual-package or a package designated by designated-package does not exists, an error of type package-error must be signaled.

If nickname is one of the names #:CL, #:COMMON-LISP or #:KEYWORD, an error of type package-error must be signaled.

If nickname is a *local nickname* for a package different from actual-package, an error of type package-error must be signaled.

3. Implementation dependent **PROPOSAL** (See Issue 4.)

If nickname shadows the designated-package's package name or one of its global nicknames, a style warning might signaled.

1.3.4 remove-package-local-nickname

(remove-package-local-nickname old-nickname & optional designated-package)

=> nickname-removed-p

designated-package defaults to the current package.

If designated-package has old-nickname as a local nickname, it is removed.

Returns true if the old-nickname existed (and was removed), and NIL otherwise.

1. Arguments and Values old-nickname must be a string designator.

designated-package must be a package designator.

nickname-removed-p is a generalized boolean.

2. Exceptional situations If a package designated by designated-package does not exists, an error of type package-error must be signaled.

1.3.5 package-local-nicknames

(package-local-nicknames package)

=> local-nicknames-alist

Returns an alist describing local nicknames defined in a package designated by package.

Each cons cell in local-nicknames-alist is of the form (nickname . package) where nickname is of type *string* and package is of type *package*.

1. Arguments and Values package must be a package designator.

local-nicknames-alist is an alist with keys of type string and values of type package.

- 2. Exceptional situations An error of type package-error is signaled when a package designated by package does not exists.
- 3. Notes The returned alist must be safe to be modified by the user.

1.3.6 package-locally-nicknamed-by-list

Returns a *list* of packages that have a *local nickname* defined for the package designated by package.

- 1. Arguments and Values package must be a package designator. packages-list is a *list* with elements of type package.
- 2. Exceptional situations An error of type package-error is signaled when a package designated by package does not exists.
- 3. Notes The returned *list* must be safe to be modified by the user.

1.4 Affected symbols

1.4.1 defpackage

See defpackage.

1.4.2 make-package

See make-package.

1.4.3 find-package

When argument to find-package is a *local nickname* that is defined in the *current package*, it returns the package named by this nickname.

This also affects all implied calls to find-package, including but not limited to those performed by the lisp reader as well as those performed by export, find-symbol, import, rename-package, shadow, shadowing-import, delete-package, with-package-iterator, unexport, unintern, in-package, unuse-package, use-package, do-symbols, do-external-symbols, do-all-symbols, intern, package-name, package-nicknames, package-shadowing-symbols, package-use-list, package-used-by-list.

add-package-local-nickname, remove-package-local-nickname, package-local-nicknames and package-locally-nicknamed-by are also affected.

There are two exceptions: make-package and defpackage must **not** be affected by *local nick-names* of the *current package*.

1.4.4 rename-package

When a package is renamed via rename-package it maintains all *local nicknames* it is nicknamed by, as well as all *local nicknames* it has defined.

1. Implementation dependent **PROPOSAL** (See Issue 4.)

If a *new-name* or one of *new-nicknames* is shadowed by one of the *local nicknames* of the package being redefined, a warning might be signaled.

1.4.5 delete-package

When a package is deleted via **delete-package** all *local nicknames* defined in other packages that it was nicknamed by must be removed, as well as all *local nicknames* defined in the package that is being deleted.

This also means that a deleted package must not be available by calls to package-locally-nicknamed-by-list and package-local-nicknames.

1.4.6 $\$ *features*

If an implementation supports package-local nicknames it should add symbols: package-local-nicknames and:cdr-15 (per CDR 14) to *features*.

1.5 Examples

[TODO]

2 ISSUES

2.1 Issue 1 ([ADD-/REMOVE-]PACKAGE-LOCAL-NICKNAME return values)

2.1.1 Description

Return values of add-package-local-nickname and remove-package-local-nickname are inconsistent. The first one always returns *designated package*, while the second one returns *true* (generalized boolean) if a nickname was removed.

Moreover, there is no consensus among current implementations as to what the second function (remove-package-local-nickname) should return.

2.1.2 Examples

```
(defpackage #:foo (:use))
(defpackage #:bar (:use))

(add-package-local-nickname '#:nick '#:bar '#:foo)
; => #<PACKAGE "FOO"> (sbcl, ccl, ecl, acl, abcl, clasp, lispworks)
(add-package-local-nickname '#:nick '#:bar '#:foo)
; => #<PACKAGE "FOO"> (sbcl, ccl, ecl, acl, abcl, clasp, lispworks)
(remove-package-local-nickname '#:nick '#:foo)
; => T (sbcl, ccl, ecl, acl, clasp)
; => #<PACKAGE "BAR"> (abcl)
; => NIL (lispworks)
(remove-package-local-nickname '#:nick '#:foo)
; => NIL (sbcl, ccl, ecl, acl, abcl, clasp, lispworks)
```

2.1.3 Current behavior

sbcl, ccl, ecl, acl, abcl, clasp, lispworks: add-package-local-nickname always returns designated package.

sbcl, ccl, ecl, acl, clasp: remove-package-local-nickname returns T if a nickname was removed, and NIL otherwise.

abcl: remove-package-local-nickname if a nickname was removed, returns *true* (more specifically - the package that was nicknamed by that nickname), and NIL otherwise.

lispworks: remove-package-local-nickname always returns NIL.

2.1.4 Proposal DESIGNATED-PACKAGE-IF-SUCCESSFUL

- add-package-local-nickname should return *designated package* if a new nickname was added and NIL otherwise, if the nickname already existed.
- remove-package-local-nickname should return designated package if a nickname was removed and NIL otherwise.

2.1.5 Proposal ALWAYS-T

Similar to use-package and unuse-package:

- add-package-local-nickname should always return T.
- remove-package-local-nickname should always return T.

2.1.6 Proposal ELIMINATE-GENERALIZED_{BOOLEAN}

- add-package-local-nickname should always return designated package.
- remove-package-local-nickname should return T if a nickname was removed and NIL otherwise.

2.2 Issue 2 (PRINT-READ consistency)

2.2.1 Description

Lisp reader uses find-package when reading a symbol, which is affected by the *local nicknames* of the *current package*. That means that to maintain **print-read** consistency when printing a symbol, a good *package prefix* must be used - such that calling find-package on it in the *current package* returns the symbol's *home package*.

There are several situations to consider:

- 1. Symbol is apparently uninterned.
 - In this case it must be printed without any package prefix, preceded by #:.
- 2. Symbol is accessible in the current package.
 - In this case it must be printed without any package prefix.
- 3. Symbol's home package name or one of its global nicknames is not shadowed by any local nickname defined in the current package.
 - In this case that name or global nickname can be used as the package prefix.
- 4. There exists a local nickname defined in the current package for the symbol's home package.

 In this case that local nickname can be used as the package prefix.

5. Symbol's home package name and all of its global nicknames are shadowed by the local nicknames of the current package and there is no local nickname defined in the current package for the symbol's home package.

It is not clear how the symbol must be printed, see PROPOSALS.

2.2.2 Examples

```
(defpackage #:foo
  (:use)
  (:export #:+))
(defpackage #:bar
  (:use #:cl)
  (:local-nicknames (#:foo #:cl)))
(let ((*package* (find-package '#:bar)))
  (print 'foo:+))
; >> FOO:+ (sbcl, ccl, ecl, acl, abcl, clasp, lispworks)
;; In the package #:BAR symbol FOO:+ refers to CL:+
(defpackage #:foo-a (:use) (:export #:quux))
(defpackage #:foo-b (:use) (:export #:quux))
(defpackage #:bar
  (:use)
  (:local-nicknames (#:foo-a #:foo-b)
                    (#:foo-b #:foo-a)))
(let ((*package* (find-package '#:bar)))
  (print 'foo-a:quux))
; >> FOO-B:QUUX (sbcl, ccl, abcl, lispworks)
; >> FOO-A:QUUX (ecl, acl, clasp)
;; In the package #:BAR symbol FOO-A:QUUX refers to FOO-B:QUUX
```

2.2.3 Current behavior

sbcl, ccl, abcl, lispworks: When exists in the *current package*, a *local nickname* is used as a package prefix when printing a symbol.

ecl, acl, clasp: local nickname is never used as a package prefix when printing a symbol.

2.2.4 Proposal SHARPSIGN-DOT

In the case (5) the symbol must be printed using the #. syntax:

```
#.(cl:let ((cl:*package* (cl:find-package "KEYWORD")))
        (cl:find-symbol "BAR" "FOO"))
;; or
```

Note that #:KEYWORD name is reserved for the #:KEYWORD package and cannot be used as a *local* nickname thus this expression will always evaluate to the symbol foo::bar.

If *read-eval* is *false* and *print-readably* is *true* an error of type print-not-readable must be signalled.

2.2.5 Proposal SHARPSIGN-COLON

In case (5) the symbol should be printed using the extended #: syntax:

```
#:(package name)
#::(package name)
Shinmera's idea.
```

2.2.6 Proposal SHARPSIGN-BACKQUOTE

In case (5) the symbol must be printed using the new #' syntax for reading an expression ignoring local nicknames in the current package:

It is *implementation-dependent* whether *local nicknames* are actually removed from the *current* package or not.

2.2.7 Proposal PRINT-UNREADABLY

In the case (5) the symbol must be printed unreadably using the #< syntax:

```
#<SYMBOL IN THE SHADOWED PACKAGE FOO:BAR>
#<SYMBOL IN THE SHADOWED PACKAGE FOO:BAR>

(Specifics are implementation-dependent.)
If *print-readably* is true, an error of type print-not-readable must be signalled.
```

2.2.8 Proposal THREE-FOUR-PACKAGE-MARKERS

In the case (5) the symbol must be printed using ::: and :::: syntax as follows:

```
foo:::bar ; same as (cl:find-symbol "BAR" "FOO") in the #:KEYWORD package foo::::bar ; same as (cl:intern "BAR" "FOO") in #:KEYWORD package
```

2.2.9 Links

See CLHS 22.1.3.3.1 Package Prefixes for Symbols.

2.3 Issue 3 (Local nicknames effect on DEFPACKAGE, MAKE-PACKAGE and others)

2.3.1 Description

It is not clear whether *local nicknames* of the *current package* should affect the resolution of package designators provided in make-package and defpackage, as well as other functions and macros taking a package designator as an argument (in-package, add-package-local-nickname and others).

2.3.2 Examples

```
(defpackage #:foo-a (:use) (:export #:x))
(defpackage #:foo-b (:use) (:export #:x))
(defpackage #:bar
  (:use #:cl)
  (:local-nicknames (#:foo-a #:foo-b)
                    (#:foo-b #:foo-a)))
(in-package #:bar)
(defpackage #:quux-1
  (:use #:foo-a))
(package-name (symbol-package 'quux-1::x))
; => "FOO-B" (sbcl, ccl, acl, abcl, lispworks)
; => "F00-A" (ecl, clasp)
(make-package '#:quux-2 :use '(#:foo-a))
(package-name (symbol-package 'quux-2::x))
; => "FOO-B" (sbcl, ccl, ecl, acl, abcl, clasp, lispworks)
(defpackage #:quux-3
  (:use)
  (:local-nicknames (#:foo #:foo-a)))
(let ((*package* (find-package '#:quux-3)))
  (package-name (find-package '#:foo)))
; => "F00-B" (ccl, ecl, acl, abcl)
; => "FOO-A" (sbcl, clasp, lispworks)
```

```
(import (car (find-all-symbols (string '#:add-package-local-nickname))))
(defpackage #:quux-4
    (:use))
(add-package-local-nickname '#:foo '#:foo-a '#:quux-4)
(let ((*package* (find-package '#:quux-4)))
    (package-name (find-package '#:foo)))
; => "F00-B" (ccl, ecl, clasp, abcl, lispworks)
; => "F00-A" (sbcl)

(use-package '#:foo-a '#:quux-4)
(package-name (symbol-package 'quux-4::x))
; => "F00-B" (sbcl, ccl, ecl, clasp, abcl, lispworks)
```

2.3.3 Current behavior

sbcl, lispworks: only :local-nicknames clause is not affected by local nicknames.

ccl, acl, abcl: all options are affected.

ecl: only the :local-nicknames clause and keyword arguments (:use and :local-nicknames) are affected.

clasp: only keyword argument :use is affected.

Known exceptions in other functions/macros: sbcl: add-package-local-nickname is not affected. lispworks: in-package is not affected.

2.3.4 Proposal ALL-AFFECTED

All defpackage clauses (:use, :local-nicknames, :import-from, :shadowing-import-from) as well as all keyword arguments to make-package (:use and :local-nicknames) must be affected by the *local nicknames* of the *current package*.

All functions and macros taking a package designator as an argument must be affected as well.

A non-exhaustive list of affected functions and macros: export, find-symbol, import, rename-package, shadow, shadowing-import, delete-package, with-package-iterator, unexport, unintern, in-package, unuse-package, use-package, do-symbols, do-external-symbols, do-all-symbols, intern, package-name, package-nicknames, package-shadowing-symbols, package-use-list, package-used-by-list, add-package-local-nickname, remove-package-local-nickname, package-local-nicknames, pack

2.4 Issue 4 (Local nicknames of the package being defined)

2.4.1 Description

It is not clear whether *local nicknames* of the package **being defined** should affect make-package or defpackage.

2.4.2 Examples

```
(defpackage #:foo-a (:use) (:export #:x))
(defpackage #:foo-b (:use) (:export #:x))
(defpackage #:bar
  (:local-nicknames (#:foo-a #:foo-b)
```

```
(#:foo-b #:foo-a))
(:use #:foo-a))

(package-name (symbol-package 'bar::x))
; => "FOO-A" (sbcl, ccl, acl, abcl, clasp, lispworks)
; => "FOO-B" (ecl)
```

2.4.3 Current behavior

```
sbcl, ccl, acl, abcl, lispworks: not affected ecl: :use, :import-from and :shadowing-import-from are affected. clasp: :local-nicknames is affected by previous :local-nicknames clauses.
```

2.4.4 Proposal NO-EFFECT

Local nicknames of a package being defined should not affect other defpackage clauses (:use, :local-nicknames, :import-from, :shadowing-import-from).

The keyword argument :local-nicknames to make-package should not affect the :use keyword argument either.

2.5 Issue 5 (Local nickname shadowing package's own name)

2.5.1 Description

It is not clear whether it is valid to have a *local nickname* in a package shadowing its own name or nickname.

2.5.2 Examples

2.5.3 Current behavior

sbcl, ccl, abcl and lispwork signal an error.

2.5.4 Proposal ALLOW

It should be allowed to use package's own name or global nickname, but a style-warning can be signalled.

2.6 Issue 6 (Additional keyword argument to MAKE-PACKAGE)

2.6.1 Current behavior

sbcl, ccl, abcl, clasp, lispworks: no additional key argument.

ecl: has an additional keyword argument :local-nicknames, but it is undocumented and it segfaults on incorrect usage. The expected value is a list of conses: ((nickname . package)*).

acl: has an additional keyword argument :local-nicknames. The expected value is a list of lists: ((nickname package)*).

2.6.2 Proposal EXTRA-KEYWORD-ARGUMENT

Add: local-nicknames keyword argument to make-package:

```
local-nicknames ::= ((nickname package)*)
```

nickname must be a string designator. package must be a package designator.

local-nicknames defaults to an empty list.

See make-package.

2.7 Issue 7 (Multiple local nicknames)

2.7.1 Description

It is not clear whether package-locally-nicknamed-by-list should be allowed to return lists with duplicate entries (when there are multiple local nicknames in one package).

2.7.2 Examples

2.7.3 Current behavior

sbcl, acl, clasp, lispworks: package-locally-nicknamed-by-list never contains duplicate entries. ccl, abcl, ecl: package-locally-nicknamed-by-list might contain duplicate entries.

2.7.4 Proposal NO-DUPLICATES

package-locally-nicknamed-by-list must return a list without duplicate entries.

2.8 Issue 8 (Interaction with FORMAT)

by |3b|

2.8.1 Description

It is not clear how *local nicknames* should affect format's \~// directive.

First, it would be inconvinient if it wouldn't be possible to use *local nicknames* with the $\$ ^// directive.

Secondly, it would be unintuitive if the function used would depend on the *current package* at the **execution** time. This also might break [existing] code, if a local nickname in the *current package* shadows a package that contains a function used by a control string in another function.

Finally, if the call to format is not compiled, it is hard to impossible to find the function using *local nicknames* of the package that was the *current package* at the **compile** time.

2.8.2 Examples

```
(defpackage #:foo-a (:use) (:export #:ff))
(defpackage #:foo-b (:use) (:export #:ff))
(defun foo-a:ff (stream &rest args)
  (declare (ignore args))
  (format stream "FOO-A:FF"))
(defun foo-b:ff (stream &rest args)
  (declare (ignore args))
  (format stream "FOO-B:FF"))
(defpackage #:bar-a
  (:use #:cl)
  (:local-nicknames (#:nick #:foo-a)))
(defpackage #:bar-b
  (:use #:cl)
  (:local-nicknames (#:nick #:foo-b)))
(in-package #:bar-a)
(defun test ()
  (format t "Called ~/nick:ff/ & " nil)
  (let ((*package* (find-package (quote #:bar-a)))) ; or #.*package*
    (format t "~/nick:ff/~%" nil)))
(test)
; => "Called FOO-A:FF & FOO-A:FF" (sbcl, ccl, ecl, acl, abcl, clasp)
; lispworks errors (NICK package not found)
(let ((*package* (find-package (quote #:bar-b))))
  (test))
; => "Called FOO-A:FF & FOO-A:FF" (sbcl, clasp)
; => "Called FOO-B:FF & FOO-A:FF" (ccl, ecl, acl, abcl)
; lispworks errors (NICK package not found)
```

2.8.3 Proposal NO-LOCAL-NICKNAMES

format's \~// directive must **not** use *local nicknames* of any package when looking up the specified symbol.

Rationale: In the spirit of how when the package is not specified, the symbol is not looked up in the *current package*, but instead in the #:CL-USER package; the *tilde slash* directive should not depend on the value of *package* at any time. Specifying it to use *local nicknames* of the #:CL-USER package instead would risk breaking the existing code when adding local nicknames to that package.

2.8.4 Links

See CLHS 22.3.5.4 Tilde Slash: Call Function.

2.9 Issue 9 (Empty package local name)

2.9.1 Description

It is not clear whether it should be allowed to use "" as a local nickname, and in the case this is allowed, whether it should affect the :xxxx syntax.

2.9.2 Examples

```
(defpackage #:foo
   (:use #:cl)
   (:local-nicknames ("" #:cl)))

(in-package #:foo)

(package-name (symbol-package ':*package*))
; => "KEYWORD" (sbcl, ccl, ecl, abcl, clasp, lispworks)
; => "COMMON-LISP" (acl)

(package-name (symbol-package '||:*package*))
; => "KEYWORD" (ecl, clasp, lispworks)
; => "COMMON-LISP" (sbcl, ccl, acl)
; abcl errors
```

2.9.3 Current behavior

sbcl, ccl: :xxxx is read as a keyword; ||:xxxx is read as a symbol in the package named or nicknamed "".

```
ecl, clasp, lispworks: | |:xxxx and :xxxx are read as a keyword.
```

acl: :xxxx and ||:xxxx are read as a symbol in the package named or nicknamed "". "" is by default a global nickname for the #:KEYWORD package.

abcl: :xxxx is read as a keyword; | |:xxxx syntax cannot be read (attemts result in an error).

2.9.4 Proposal ALLOW-BUT-KEEP-KEYWORDS

The "" local nickname should be explicitly allowed. :xxxx should be always read as a keyword regardless of package names or nicknames. ||:xxxx should be read as a symbol in the package named or nicknamed by "".

2.9.5 Proposal ALLOW-FUN

The "" local nickname should be explicitly allowed. Both :xxxx and ||:xxxx should be read as a symbol in the package named or nicknamed by "".

2.9.6 Links

See WSCL issue 63.

3 Links

 $3\mathrm{b}\text{'s}$ notes on package-local nick names.

phoe's tests.

SBCL's manual entry.

Section 4.3 of the ABCL's manual. (TEX file on github)

4 Copying and License

[TODO]